

MINISTRY OF NATIONAL EDUCATION



NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY *POLITEHNICA*
BUCHAREST

PITEȘTI UNIVERSITY CENTER
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, LETTERS, HISTORY AND ARTS

AGENCE UNIVERSITAIRE DE LA FRANCOPHONIE

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE PITEȘTI

CENTRE DE RECHERCHE SUR L'IMAGINAIRE *IMAGINES*

CENTRUL DE REUȘITĂ UNIVERSITARĂ

THE ROMANIAN SOCIETY FOR ENGLISH AND AMERICAN STUDIES (RSEAS)

THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF ENGLISH (ESSE)

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
EUROPEAN LANDMARKS OF IDENTITY

LANGUE ET LITTÉRATURE
REPÈRES IDENTITAIRES EN CONTEXTE EUROPÉEN

LIMBA ȘI LITERATURA
REPERE IDENTITARE ÎN CONTEXT EUROPEAN

SELECTED PAPERS OF THE 20th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY, LETTERS, HISTORY AND ARTS

Pitești, 25-26 October 2024

No. 35/2024

DIRECTOR / DIRECTEUR DE PUBLICATION: Ștefan GĂITĂNARU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF / RÉDACTEUR EN CHEF: Liliana SOARE
ASSOCIATE EDITORS-IN-CHIEF / RÉDACTEURS EN CHEF ADJOINTS:
Valentina STÎNGĂ, Liliana VOICULESCU

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE / COMITÉ SCIENTIFIQUE

Liliana AGACHE, “I. Iordan – Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics, Bucharest, Romania
Petre Gheorghe BÂRLEA, “Ovidius” University of Constanța
Didi-Ionel CENUȘER, “Lucian Blaga” University, Sibiu, Romania
Gheorghe CHIVU, The Romanian Academy, University of Bucharest, Romania
Francis CLAUDON, Paris XII University, France
Luc COLLÈS, The Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium
Jean-Louis COURRIOL, “Jean Moulin” University, “Lyon 3”, Lyon 3, France
Dan DOBRE, University of Bucharest, Romania
Cécile FOLSCHWEILLER, INALCO, Paris, France
Daniela FRUMUȘANI, University of Bucharest, Romania
Alexandru GAFTON, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, Romania
Ștefan GĂITĂNARU, POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, Romania
Corina-Amelia GEORGESCU POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, Romania
Yvonne GOGA, “Babeș-Bolyai” University, Romania
Brian IMHOFF, Texas A&M University, USA
Andrei IONESCU, University of Bucharest, Romania
Andres KRISTOL, Neuchâtel University, Switzerland
Diana LEFTER, POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, Romania
Lucie LEQUIN, Concordia University, Canada
Milena MILANOVIC, The Institute of Foreign Languages FLS, Belgrade, Serbia
Cristiana TEODORESCU, University of Craiova, Romania

PEER-REVIEW COMMITTEE / COMITÉ DE LECTURE

Marinela BURADA, “Transilvania” University of Braşov, Romania
Diana CÂMPAN, “1 Decembrie 1918” University, Alba Iulia, Romania
Victor CELAC, “I. Iordan – Al. Rosetti” Institute of Linguistics, Bucharest, Romania
Rodica-Gabriela CHIRA, ”1 Decembrie 1918” University, Alba Iulia, Romania
George CONSTANTINESCU, University of Craiova, Romania
Simona Diana CONSTANTINOVICI, West University, Timișoara, Romania
Oliviu FELECAN, North University of Baia Mare, România
Mihaela GAVRILĂ, Universitatea din Craiova
Sorin GUIA, “Al. I. Cuza” University, Iași, Romania
Luminița HOARȚĂ CĂRĂUȘU, „Al. I. Cuza” University, Iași, Romania
Adrian IANCU, “Lucian Blaga” University, Sibiu, Romania
Ioan MILICĂ, “Al. I. Cuza” University, Iași, Romania
Cristinel MUNTEANU, “Danubius” University, Galați, Romania
Steluța STAN, “Dunărea de Jos” University, Galați, Romania
Ana-Maria SUPURAN, Universitatea din Oradea
Dumitru TUCAN, West University, Timișoara, Romania
George Bogdan ȚĂRA, West University, Timișoara, Romania

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE / COMITÉ DE RÉDACTION

Diana Lefter
Alina Maria Ungureanu
Liliana Voiculescu

The conference took place under the high patronage of the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, and the proceedings were published with its financial assistance.

La conférence s’est déroulée sous le haut patronage de l’Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, qui a financé la parution des actes.

ISSN 2344-4894

ISSN-L 1843-1577

National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest

Pitești University Center Press

Târgul din Vale Street, 1, 110040, Pitești, Romania

Tél.: +40 (0)248 218804, int. 149,150

CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

PLENARY SESSION / SESSION PLENIERE

Titela VÎLCEANU

*An Ecological Perspective on Translation Studies in Romania:
Collaborative Research and Networking.....* 9

ENGLISH LITERATURE; CULTURAL STUDIES / LITTERATURE ANGLAISE; ETUDES CULTURELLES

Georgiana-Elena DILĂ

*Exploring Memories, Magical Realism and Humour in Angela Carter's
Wise Children.....* 18

Alexandra Roxana MĂRGINEAN

*Narrators and Life Stories in Sebastian Barry's The Secret
Scripture.....* 24

Flavian PALADE

*The Role of Reminiscences in Charlotte Brontë's Novel Jane
Eyre.....* 39

Roger Cristian SAFTA

*Reminiscence and Memory in Academic Production: An Ethical-
Philological Approach to the Rewriting of Texts* 46

Valentina STÎNGĂ

*Memory as an Instrument of Shaping Identity: Charles Dickens's David
Copperfield.....* 60

**ENGLISH LINGUISTICS; TRANSLATION STUDIES;
SPECIALISED LANGUAGES / LANGUE ANGLAIS;
TRADUCTOLOGIE ; LANGAGES DE SPECIALITE**

Ibraheem Ahmed Shakir AL-RUBAYE

*The Impact of Metrical Phonology in Terms of Standard English
Language Prosodic Syllabification. A Phonological Study.....* **67**

Bianca DABU

A Brief Approach to Flashback as Cinematic Narration..... **87**

Constantin MANEA

*Semantic and Stylistic Fidelity in Several (Re)Translations of
Shakespeare's Sonnets.....* **95**

Adina MATROZI-MARIN

Memory Training for Interpreting Services..... **107**

Cristina MIRON

*A Translator's Memories: Challenges in Translating G.A. Henty's In
the Reign of Terror.....* **114**

Yusra QASIM ALI

*A Critical Discourse Analysis of Gendered Narratives: Dynamics of
Victim Blaming in YouTube Comments.....* **125**

Nicoleta Simona RADU

*The Contribution of Reminiscence to the Anglicization of Other
Languages.....* **139**

Adina Cristiana SUCEVAN

*Rhetorical Strategies in Political Speeches during the
Pandemic.....* **144**

**FRENCH AND FRANCOPHONE LITERATURE; OTHER
ROMANCE LANGUAGES / LITTÉRATURE FRANÇAISE ET
FRANCOPHONE ; AUTRES LANGUES ROMANES ;
TRANSLATION STUDIES / TRADUCTOLOGIE**

Corina-Amelia GEORGESCU

*Georges Duhamel – le souvenir de l'Amérique: Scènes de la vie
future.....* **151**

| | |
|--|------------|
| Diana-Adriana LEFTER | |
| <i>Fatalité vs. liberté. De la réminiscence et du souvenir dans Œdipe d'André Gide</i> | 166 |
| Abdellah MAASOUM | |
| <i>La memoria ed i ricordi attraverso l'opera di primo levi Se questo è un uomo</i> | 176 |
| Mirela-Sanda SĂLVAN | |
| <i>Mémoire, oubli et identification (projective) dans Si j'étais vous... de Julien Green</i> | 184 |
| Adelina-Elena SORESCU, Valentin CREȚU | |
| <i>Le souvenir dans l'œuvre djebarienne - approche littéraire et didactique.....</i> | 190 |
| Corina VELEANU | |
| <i>Traduire le discours juridico-religieux : la réminiscence dans le transfert linguistique.....</i> | 200 |

DIDACTICS OF ENGLISH / DIDACTIQUE DE LA LANGUE ANGLAISE

| | |
|---|------------|
| Cristina Denisa ARSENE-ONU | |
| <i>How to Make English and American Literature Memorable for University Students</i> | 231 |
| Adela Elena DUMITRESCU | |
| <i>The Importance of Memory in Communication</i> | 242 |
| Laura IONICĂ | |
| <i>Navigating Memory and Forgetfulness among ESP Students in Their Journey of Learning a Foreign Language</i> | 247 |
| Amalia Georgiana MĂRĂȘESCU | |
| <i>Memories and the Journey towards Becoming a (Good) English Literature Teacher.....</i> | 254 |
| Elena Alfredina NIȚĂ | |
| <i>Leveraging Memory in Education: Enhancing Cognitive and Socio-Emotional Competencies through Reflective and AI-Supported Pedagogies.....</i> | 265 |
| Elena-Clementina NIȚĂ | |
| <i>Using Recollection as a Lexis Learning Strategy in ESP.....</i> | 270 |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Alina Maria UNGUREANU | |
| <i>The Role of Recurrent Communicative Activities in the Formation and Development of the Speaking Ability in English.....</i> | 279 |

AN ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON TRANSLATION STUDIES IN ROMANIA: COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND NETWORKING

Titela VÎLCEANU*

Abstract: *This paper explores Translation Studies in Romania through the lens of ecological theory, emphasizing collaborative research and the evolving role of academic networking. By approaching Translation Studies as a dynamic, multilayered discipline, shaped by historical legacies, interdisciplinarity, and technological advancement, the paper highlights the Romanian researchers' contributions to translation scholarship, with a particular focus on historiography. Key areas of analysis include a recasting of the discipline in the 21st century, the historical trajectory of the Romanian translation research, the incorporation of ecological thought, aligned with the institutional frameworks that foster collaboration.*

Keywords: *translation; ecology; networking*

1. Setting the scene: unpacking complexity

Translation scholars are increasingly integrating historical, sociological and corpus-based methodologies to examine how translation operates within both national and international research networks. An ecological lens provides a nuanced vantage point from which translation emerges as a form of cultural recollection and reminiscence - a process that retrieves both factual meaning and emotional resonance. These twofold function points to the conceptual richness of the field and the researchers' ongoing efforts to build an all-encompassing and methodologically diverse research agenda. This shift entails revisiting disciplinary boundaries and acknowledges Translation Studies as a site of sociocultural engagement, informed by humanistic inquiry and the plural histories of translation. An ecological lens encourages scholars and practitioners to look beyond disciplinary boundaries and engage in collaborative, cross-sectoral research. Such an approach is especially pertinent in addressing contemporary challenges, such as the digitalization of translation practices, the ethical implications of machine translation, and the low profile of small languages.

2. An ecological perspective on translation studies as a postdiscipline

The ecological approach to Translation Studies considers translation as more than a mere linguistic transfer; translation is an embedded and fit-for-purpose practice within a sociocultural and institutional nexus. Admittedly, translation theorists are fully aware that translation does not operate a social vacuum and that translation practices do not only meet expectations and requirements but are also likely to impact the communities they serve. This climate of opinion is exemplified, among others, by Boase-Beier et al. (2018: 6), who advocate for eclecticism in theorizing, and data collection and use in empirical research.

* University of Craiova, Romania, titela.vilceanu@edu.ucv.ro

The ecological model foregrounds relationality from both a process- and a product-oriented perspective: the interconnectedness between translators (as privileged, initiated readers in charge with transferring the intended message across), texts (involving a question of faithfulness), institutions (securing ideological affiliations and norm-governed behaviour), and the broader cultural landscape (further shaping the regularities of behaviour). In this complex landscape, areas of investigation such as ethics, corpus-based analysis and literary ecology are becoming integral to Translation Studies. For instance, if we refer to the distinction between *recollection* and *reminiscence*, we note that the former involves conscious retrieval and the latter relates to the emotional and cultural memory; the two components provide a conceptual scaffolding for understanding translation as both precise, accurate and evocative, echoing past experiences.

This makes Translation Studies an interdisciplinary (notably, Snell-Hornby et al., 1994) – as such, it encourages fertile collaboration and sustainable engagement; therefore, translation ecology may be envisaged as a metaphor for adaptive scholarship: collaborative, inclusive, taking pride in its own history, navigating present challenges and boldly shaping the future. Holding both retrospective and prospective views, Gentzler (2014) acknowledges four main stages in the evolution of the science of translation, namely, 1. the pre-discipline (from World War II to the 1970s); 2. the discipline (the founding period spanning the late 1970s and the early 1980s); 3. the interdisciplinary (Translation Studies as an expanding field in the 1990 and 2000s; the journey of Translation Studies towards interdisciplinarity is rooted in the questioning of the prescriptive and source-text-oriented approaches that had long dominated translation theory); 4. the post-discipline (undergoing further expansion; intertwining with cognitive sciences, sociology, anthropology, reception theory, literary theory, cultural criticism, etc.). During the third period, Translation Studies, formerly indebted to linguistics and literary criticism, integrated input from psychology, sociology, cultural studies, media studies and technology (Wilss, 1999; Duarte et al., 2006; Lambert, 2012; Gambier and Doorislaer, 2016, etc.)

The Romanian academics have embraced this interdisciplinary potential, grounded in Descriptive Translation Studies (see Even-Zohar, 1990; Lefevere, 1992; Toury, 1995; Chesterman, 1997; Hermans, 1999) that account for norms and systems governing translation practice. Holmes (2000) describes the complexity of the field and establishes a typology of Translation Studies - theoretical, descriptive and applied branches - in his seminal conceptual map. Theoretical Translation Studies puts forward general principles, Descriptive Translation Studies undertakes to document real-world translation phenomena, and Applied Translation Studies directly informs translator training, policy making and criticism. Within this framework, it can be stated that Romanian scholars have widely adopted this taxonomy to structure teaching curricula and research programmes, laying emphasis on product-, process-, function-, and translator-oriented inquiries. As a corollary, this integrated framework has enabled the Romanian academia to explore diverse research avenues - from literary translation, specialized translation, translation pedagogy to translation policy and technological adaptation - thus strengthening the status of Translation Studies as a postdiscipline.

3. History of translation - research agenda and methodological concerns

Our study adopts a qualitative approach that draws on both theoretical inquiry and case-based analysis to address two overarching research objectives. First, it explores the applicability of the ecological model in Translation Studies, examining how this paradigm can inform sustainable and inclusive approaches to translation research and practice. The ecological perspective is understood here not only in environmental or biological terms, but as a conceptual framework that emphasizes interdependence, adaptability and systemic thinking within translation ecosystems (Cronin, 2003; Hu, 2020). To this end, the study engages in a critical review of literature on translation ecology, mapping key conceptual developments and identifying their potential to reshape methodological norms in the discipline. Particular attention is given to how ecological thinking can foster more ethically responsive and socially grounded models of translation activity. Secondly, the paper investigates the historiography of translation as a means of disciplinary self-reflection and identity formation. The history of translation has emerged as a vibrant, albeit often underestimated, research agenda within Translation Studies. By analyzing how translation histories are constructed, narrated and institutionalized, the paper seeks to understand the epistemological and ideological assumptions that underpin historical scholarship in Translation Studies. Methodologically, this involves textual analysis of scholarly works, archival sources and historiographic projects, with a focus on the Romanian context as both a case study and a site of broader relevance.

The genesis of this historical turn in Translation Studies can be traced back to the mid-1960s, notably with Mounin's publication of *Teoria e Storia della Traduzione* in 1965. This marked a conscious effort to integrate historical perspectives into translation theory. Since then, a large number of nation-based, author-oriented monographs, conference proceedings and academic journal issues have focused on translation history. In the 21st century, far-reaching scholars such as Bastin & Bandia (2006), Delisle and Woodsworth (2012), Rundle (2014) and D'Hulst and Gambier (2018) continue to prompt towards a rigorous documentation and analysis of translation across centuries. This includes organizing conferences, publishing anthologies, and developing comprehensive bibliographies.

Despite these vested, shared interests and ingrained enthusiasm, to our best knowledge, only a few translation histories have been achieved up to date. As far as Romania is concerned, the history of translation into Romanian has long been sidelined in mainstream Translation Studies. Its newfound autonomy represents a maturation of the field. Historiography in Translation Studies now encompasses methodology development, discursive analysis, and reinterpretation of national intellectual heritage. The historian's role moves beyond archival diligence to interpretive engagement, reframing cultural narratives and methodological paradigms.

Without a shadow of doubt, a rigorous methodological framework is essential for any translation historiography to transcend descriptive accounts and achieve analytical depth, as claimed by Munslow (1997: 20ff.), who differentiates among reconstructionist, constructionist and deconstructionist agendas. Reconstructionism relies on empirical analysis; constructionism allows for contextual fragility while deconstructionism critically interrogates historical assumptions. Delisle (1997) pleads for writing translation history like historians do,

also emphasizing methodological rigour and interpretation. He lists five common yet limited approaches: *chronicles*, *catalogues*, *first-person accounts*, *anecdotal narratives* and *biographical anthologies*. While these forms provide valuable data, they often lack the analytical depth to explain the significance or broader impact of translation events. For Delisle, true historiography must contextualize and interpret translation within wider socio-cultural settings. Pym (1998, 2001) encourages keeping abreast with evolving theories and methodologies. when arguing for a translator-centric perspective (the translator becoming the primary unit of historical analysis), and recommends empirical, corpus-driven methods. Pym (2001) identifies three research stances: *anecdotal-dilettante*, *archaeological-historiographical* and *interpretative*. The first two mirror Delisle's (1977) critique of surface-level description, while the third calls for synthesizing data to explore causality, impact and intercultural mediation. Pym's (2001) approach underpins the agency of translators and their role in shaping cultural exchanges. D'Hulst (2001) endorses historiographic inquiries shaped by variables such as textual choices, intent, institutional contexts, geographical location, motivation, translator identity and agency, production methods and impact. He launches a systematic set of questions - *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *how*, and *to what end* - to ensure comprehensive historical analysis. We draw on D'Hulst's (2001:23) formulation of *history* as the totality of scientific activities aiming at the discovery, inventory and analysis of historical facts, while *historiography* refers to "the historical analysis of the writing of history" - we are experiencing a moment of historiographical contemplation in Translation Studies.

In our opinion, these models due to their interdisciplinary lenses - history, linguistics, sociology and cultural studies – are capable of assessing the textual and contextual dimensions of translation as well as its entextualization potential. Accordingly, a historiography of Translation Studies is not confined to a recollection of translation events, being, instead, a dynamic interpretive endeavour that situates translation within epistemological debates and invites new conceptualizations of its functions; a shift from descriptive historiography to critical, context-sensitive research is thus acknowledged.

For the past decades, Translation Studies has increasingly drawn upon its own historical development to enhance its depth, credibility and scholarly recognition. As a result, translation historians in their interventionist approach (analyzing the traces of the past) bear significant responsibility: the extent to which the discipline achieves its *lettre de noblesse* depends largely on how they reconstruct, interpret and connect past events to present realities, ultimately helping shape its future trajectory.

4. Case study: The ITLR initiative

Translation Studies in Romania has undergone a significant transformation, with research moving forward, beyond groundwork, and increasingly reflecting a multifaceted approach that draws on ecological perspectives, local contextual awareness (an inward-looking perspective) and international collaboration (an outward-looking perspective). The Romanian academia has embraced the complexity of Translation Studies, beyond well-established linguistic paradigms, seeking to develop frameworks that regard translation as an activity embedded in a dynamic (inter)cultural ecosystem. In Romania, translation has historically played a crucial role in nation-building, cultural transmission, and educational

development. Nevertheless, despite its significance, Translation Studies has often been fragmented across disciplines and institutions.

Romania presents a particularly rich context for such an investigation. Its geopolitical positioning, linguistic landscape and academic traditions make it a fertile ground for exploring how translation acts as both a conduit and a filter for cultural exchange. The country's integration into the European Union, the expansion of international academic collaborations, and the digitalization of linguistic resources have all contributed to shaping contemporary translation practices. The ecological model allows for an integrative analysis of these developments, highlighting the interplay between local specificities and global trends.

The project “O istorie a traducerilor în limba română – ITLR - secolele XVI-XX” (“A History of Translations into Romanian – ITLR – 16th-20th centuries”) stands as a monumental collaborative research endeavour that embodies the ecological perspective on Translation Studies. This ambitious project is funded by the Ministry of National Education Romania and coordinated by “Ștefan cel Mare” University of Suceava with University of Craiova and Politehnica University of Timișoara securing joint leadership. ITLR aims to fill a significant gap in the Romanian scholarship by systematically documenting and analyzing the history of translations into Romanian; its scale, methodology and outcomes provide a compelling case study for understanding collaborative research and networking within the field of Translation Studies.

The rationale behind the ITLR project is deeply rooted in the current international landscape of Translation Studies. Several countries across Europe and the world - such as France, Germany, Spain, Great Britain and Brazil - have undertaken or are in the process of writing their own histories of translations in the vernacular language. These national histories serve a crucial purpose: to make known the significant contribution of translation to the cultural and intellectual heritages. In this context, the ITLR initiative acknowledges that translation has been a vital force in shaping the Romanian culture, literature, science and intellectual life over centuries, yet its comprehensive history remained largely unwritten. The project thus contributes not only to national self-understanding but also to the global mosaic of translation history, allowing for comparative studies and a richer understanding of translation as a universal cultural phenomenon.

The ITLR project commenced in 2019 and is planned to run until 2029, a testament to its extensive scope and long-term vision. The project anticipates the publication of 5-6 volumes with prestigious publishing houses, such as The Romanian Academy, therefore, signposting its academic rigour and national importance. The initial volumes focused on the 20th century, with Volume I published in 2021 and Volume II in 2022. The project maintains an active website (<https://itlr.usv.ro/>) which serves as a central hub for information, updates and, potentially, access to resources and contributors.

A remarkable feature of the ITLR project is its collaborative nature, involving more than 200 researchers and enthusiasts. This extensive network of contributors, affiliated with various universities and research institutions across Romania and abroad, underscores the project commitment to comprehensive coverage and diverse perspectives. This collaborative model is a practical manifestation of the networking dimension of the ecological perspective, demonstrating how a large-scale research enterprise can be sustained through collective effort and shared expertise.

The ITLR project is structured around several key research directions, reflecting a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to translation history:

(1) a history of the contexts - social, geo-political, historical, cultural, diplomatic, etc. - in which translations into Romanian developed. This aligns with the ecological perspective's focus on the broader environment of translation.

(2) a history of translators and their ideological affiliations: moving beyond the texts themselves, this direction is based on Pym's translator-centric approach, investigating the individuals who performed the translations.

(3) a history of Romanian literature and its genres and sub-genres – evolution under the impact of translation: This direction examines the transformative effect of translation on the development of the Romanian literature.

(4) a history of the evolution of the literary language, the language of science, as well as the evolution of the Romanian culture and civilization: This broadens the scope to include the linguistic and cultural impact of translation. It investigates how translated texts contributed to the standardization and enrichment of the Romanian language, both literary and scientific, and how they influenced broader cultural norms, values and intellectual discourse.

(5) a history of the circulation of ideas and enrichment of intellectual life: This direction focuses on the role of translation as a conduit for intellectual exchange. It explores how translation fosters intellectual growth and engagement with global thought.

In what follows, we shall provide a glimpse into the scale of research undertaken for the two volumes dedicated to the 20th-century translations into Romanian, published with the Romanian Academy.

(6) contributions from experienced researchers (1990-2020): a total of 179 contributions from experienced researchers were identified and categorized along several directions: (i) **general translation**: theory and practice of translation (69 inputs), translation didactics (16), interdisciplinary landscapes of translation (49), translation and technology (3), translation metalanguage (4). This indicates a strong focus on theoretical and interdisciplinary aspects, with emerging interest in technology. (ii) **specialized translation**: translation and specialized language and discourse (23 inputs), specialized translation, terminology and lexicography (13), scientific translation – Translation Studies (9). This highlights the growing importance of specialized domains within Romanian Translation Studies.

(7) contributions from young researchers (1990-2020): a significant number of contributions from young researchers (177 PhD theses) were identified, primarily focusing on: (i) **general translation**: theory of translation (52 inputs). (ii) **specialized translation** (125): legal and administrative translation, medical translation, business translation, and other types (military, diplomatic, technical, advertising translation, etc.). The high number of PhD theses in specialized translation reflects a practical orientation and a response to market demands, indicating the postdiscipline relevance to professional practice.

These statistics underscore a vibrant research landscape in Romanian TS, with a balance between theoretical inquiry and practical application, and a clear interest in specialized fields. The sheer volume of contributions suggests a robust academic community actively engaged in advancing the discipline.

The two volumes dedicated to the 20th century are substantial works, reflecting the depth and breadth of the research as indicated in Figures 1 and Figure 2 below:

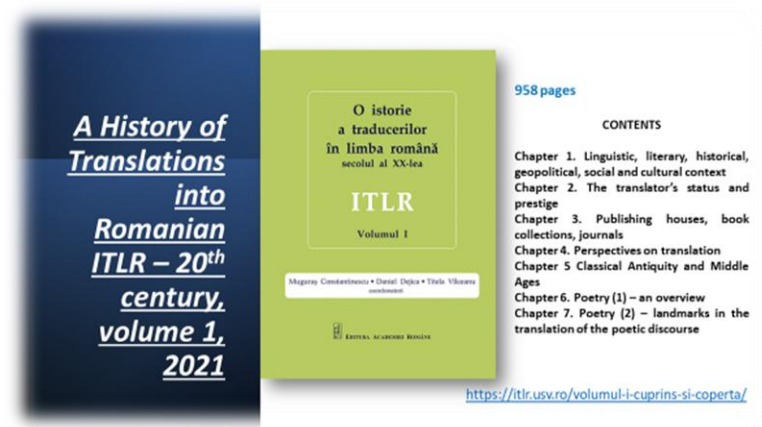


Figure 1. Scope and depth of translation history research in volume 1

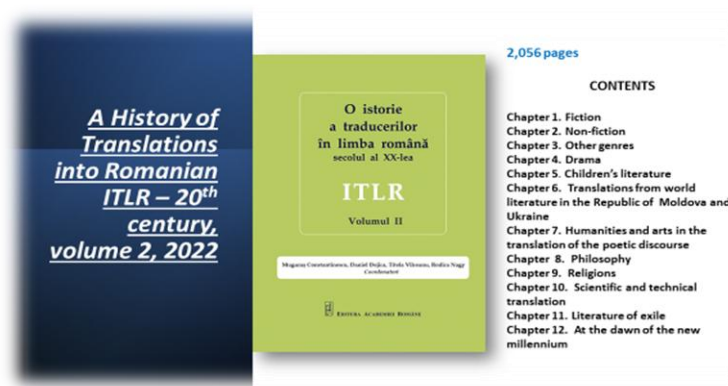


Figure 2. Scope and depth of translation history research in volume 2

The comprehensive nature of these volumes, covering diverse genres, historical contexts, and specialized fields, exemplifies the ecological approach. They demonstrate how translation history can integrate linguistic analysis with socio-cultural, political, and intellectual history, providing a rich tapestry of Romania's engagement with global knowledge and culture through translation. The ITLR project not only documents the past but also serves as a

foundation for future research, fostering a deeper understanding of the enduring impact of translation in Romania and elsewhere.

It is also important to mention that the two volumes of *Istoria traducerilor în limba română* (ITLR) are indexed in the *Translation Studies Bibliography* (John Benjamins Publishing Company), a key international database that currently includes approximately 40,000 annotated records and is continuously updated (<https://benjamins.com/online/etsb/publications>).

Conclusions and ways forward

The ecological model offers a viable framework for advancing Romanian Translation Studies through internationalization, interdisciplinarity and ethical engagement. Cross-border collaborative research remains pivotal in promoting Romanian theoretical contributions, connecting local scholarship with global discourses. Partnerships with European universities and translation institutes create platforms for knowledge exchange, collaborative research and shared pedagogical innovation. Interdisciplinary networking deepens the ecosystem by integrating Translation Studies with fields such as history, anthropology, sociology and environmental humanities.

Moreover, ecological awareness presupposes confronting historical legacies - such as the role of censorship and ideological manipulation in translation under previous regimes. Today's scholars must critically evaluate how these forces shaped discourses and reception, reclaiming marginalized voices and reconstructing translation as a tool of cultural empowerment and identity building.

Sustainability depends on resilient infrastructure. Establishing interdisciplinary research hubs and online collaborative platforms can enable Romanian scholars to co-develop projects, secure funding and mentor future translators. Such networks also facilitate outreach, inviting larger engagement.

Translation Studies in Romania stand at the crossroads of recollection and reinvention. Romanian contributions are increasingly visible across European and global platforms, with publications in English, French, German and Italian that amplify local concerns and national specificity. By weaving together historical depth, methodological pluralism, and ethical reflexivity, Translation Studies in Romania moves toward a mature scholarly identity. The ITLR project exemplifies how coordinated research can recover forgotten narratives and stimulate critical reflection. The ecological lens ensures that translation is understood as a living system - adaptive, resilient and generative.

References

- Bastin, G., Bandia, P. (Eds.). (2006). *Charting the Future of Translation History*. The University of Ottawa Press.
- Boase-Beier, J., Fisher, L. & Furukawa, H. (Eds.) (2018). *The Palgrave Handbook of Literary Translation*. Palgrave.
- Constantinescu, M., Dejica, D., & Vilceanu, T. (Eds.). (2021). *O istorie a traducerilor în limba română, sec. al XX-lea. ITLR*, vol. I, Editura Academiei Române.
- Constantinescu, M., Dejica, D., & Vilceanu, T. (Eds.). (2022). *O istorie a traducerilor în limba română, sec. al XX-lea. ITLR*, vol. II, Editura Academiei Române.

- Cronin, M. (2003). *Translation and Globalization*. Routledge.
- Delisle, J., & Woodsworth, J. (2012). *Translators through History*. Revised edition. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Delisle, J. (1997-1998). Réflexions sur l'historiographie de la traduction et ses exigences scientifiques. *Équivalences*, 26(2) and 27(3), 21–43.
- D'Hulst, L. (2001). Why and How to Write Translation Histories? In J. Milton (Ed.), *Emerging Views on Translation History in Brazil* (pp. 21-32). Humanitas.
- D'Hulst, L., O'Sullivan, C., & Schreiber, M. (Eds.). 2016. *Politics, Policy and Power in Translation History*. Frank & Timme.
- D'Hulst, L., & Gambier, Y. (2018). *A History of Modern Translation Knowledge. Sources, Concepts*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Gambier, Y., & van Doorslaer, L. (2016). Disciplinary dialogues with translation studies: The background chapter. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Border Crossings: Translation Studies and other disciplines* (pp. 1-22). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Gentzler, E. (2014). Translation Studies: Pre-Discipline, Discipline, Interdiscipline, and Post-Discipline. *International Journal of Society, Culture & Language*, 2(2), 13-24.
- Duarte, J., Rosa, A., & Seruya, T. (2009). Translation Studies at the Interface of Disciplines. *Cadernos de Tradução*, 2. 10.5007/2175-7968.2009v2n24p252.
- Hermans, T. (1999). *Translation in systems: Descriptive and systems-oriented approaches explained*. St. Jerome.
- Holmes, J.S. (1988). The Name and Nature of Translation Studies. In Holmes, J.S., *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies* (pp. 67-80). Rodopi. Reprinted in Venuti, L. (Ed.) 2000, *The Translation Studies Reader* (pp. 172-18). Routledge.
- Hu, H. (2020). *Eco-Translatology: Towards an Eco-Paradigm of Translation Studies*. 10.1007/978-981-15-2260-4.
- Lambert, J. (2012). Interdisciplinarity in translation studies. In Y. Gambier, & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of translation studies* (Vol. 3., pp. 81-88). John Benjamins.
- Mounin, G. (1965). *Teoria e storia della traduzione*. Einaudi.
- Munslow, A. (1997). *Deconstructing History*. Routledge.
- Pym, A. (1998). *Method in Translation History*. St. Jerome Publishing.
- Pym, A. (2001). Interview with Anthony Pym. In J. Milton (Ed.), *Emerging Views on Translation History in Brazil* (273–284). Humanitas.
- Rundle, C. 2014. Theories and Methodologies of Translation History: The Value of an Interdisciplinary Approach. *The Translator*, 20(1), 2-8. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2014.899090>.
- Snell-Hornby, M., Pöchhacker, F., & Kaindl, K. (Eds.). (1994). *Translation studies: An integrated approach*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Toury, G. (1995). *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Wilss, W. (1999). Interdisciplinarity in Translation Studies. *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies*, 11(1), 131 – 144. <https://doi.org/10.1075/target.11.1.07wil>.

EXPLORING MEMORIES, MAGICAL REALISM AND HUMOUR IN ANGELA CARTER'S WISE CHILDREN

Georgiana-Elena DILĂ*

Abstract: *As Angela Carter's novel Wise Children is a recollection of Dora Chance's memories regarding her family, some of which might seem a bit exaggerated, one cannot wonder how much of it is true. What the narrator cannot remember very well, she changes in such a way that it suits her, as Carter puts forward a magical story. The present paper intends to explore the way that magical realism and the world of the theatre mixed together reveal elements that are recalled in a conversational style with humour and confidence.*

Keywords: *memory; recollection; magical realism; humour*

Angela Carter has always been known for her desire to promote female writing, female characters and female readers. This does not imply that her work is dedicated only to women, but it is fair to say that she wanted her legacy to be something that one would remember by correlating her with issues that empower the more recent female generations and offer them confidence to have a voice on topics that might have been less approached by them in the past.

Angela Carter's works are an important contribution to and index of the transformations in Anglo-American feminist movements from the 1960s to the 1990s: from her early decadent explorations of sadomasochistic gender relations, which mixed Continental attitudes toward surrealist modes of representations of sexuality and the body with embryonic psychoanalytic analyses of identity formation; to her 1970s moral pornography, which offered an antagonistic version of second-wave radicalism, blisteringly critiquing the structure of society and women's position within the culture by exposing the horrific assumptions within surrealist and psychoanalytic traditions that helped to construct it; to the pessimistic capitulation of the 1980s, anticipating the "Material Girl" message of the pop singer Madonna, in the belief that a woman should exploit her own body and the desire of the other to attain liberation and power, an idea an earlier generation, including Carter herself, would have called a manifestation of false consciousness. (Dimovitz, 2016:253)

Carter's success was great after her death making her famous all over the world and offering her the opportunity of becoming one of the most studied contemporary British writers as we are shown that

Carter's writing invokes such a sense of the visual in both imagery and description that it is not surprising she should have been interested in various modes of capturing how and what she saw. She was a prolific writer in many genres, and although she is best known for her

* University of Craiova, Romania, georgiana_dila@yahoo.com

novels and short stories, she also wrote radio, screen, and stage plays as well as poetry, stories for children, journalism, and an opera libretto. She translated the fairy tales of Charles Perrault, edited two collections of fairy tales and an anthology of subversive stories by women, and wrote a polemical book on the Marquis de Sade. That she also had a talent for drawing adds one more achievement to an already remarkable list. (Lee, 1997: 1)

The popularity of *Wise Children*, which is her final and favourite novel, is something that cannot be argued as it deals in a humorous manner with issues regarding family ties, aging, entertainment and death. There have been connections made between the fact that she had already found out about her lungs cancer before releasing her novel, so there are reasons to believe that she wanted to offer readers one last great experience and, for sure, she succeeded in doing so.

Perhaps to a more exorbitant degree than her other novels, *Wise Children* constantly transgresses cultural divisions between high and low, paying equal attention to day-time television and the refined realism of Henry James (1843-1916). At the centre of this unruly novel is no less a cultural icon than William Shakespeare, whose dramas have for centuries been both a source of lofty inspiration and an object of farcical bastardization. Throughout *Wise Children*, Carter delights in showing the many vulgar uses to which this most noble figurehead of English 'literature' has been put. (Bristow and Broughton, 1997: 7)

The fact that the protagonists of the novel, the twins Dora and Nora Chance, are seventy-five when the novel begins, uncovers their belief that they should not give up until the end and stay alive while keeping the show in motion – a reference to the entertainment field that they and their family had worked in for generations. There have been hints in the novel to the desire to maintain a fresh and youthful lifestyle – as it is the twins' father's case for marrying younger women and also the famous last line of the novel "What a joy it is to dance and sing!" (Carter, 2006: 224)

The voice of the novel guides us through the stories in a way that "it positions us as if we were in the audience of a theatre listening to a stand-up comedian: it draws attention to itself, frequently postpones the subject and prods us into attention" (Peach, 1998: 132). We are presented with a web of relationships and entangled combinations of couples, parents and children, but also friends and family that seem to be more ambiguous than regarded at first sight in a very jolly and playful manner getting the reader closer to the storyteller. Dora's style is so natural and convincing that magical realism seems to make us embark on a journey that will bring out the sensational, the unbelievable and most importantly the relaxed way of treating all issues with a bit of humour.

Wise Children has much to say about families, not all of it pleasant. Dead and rejected mothers, absent fathers, and nasty siblings provide the impetus for much of the plot. As is often the case in Carter's fiction, though, personal experience has a broader symbolic function. Here, literary culture is also constructed as a family, and Shakespeare is at its head. As a writer, Dora has to come to terms with her literary fathers as well as her biological one, and her illegitimacy as a daughter is paralleled by her position as a woman writer who has few literary mothers. Although Dora yearns for acknowledgment from her father, she does not use his voice to write her memoirs, because unlike Melchior, she wants to tell her own story rather than repeating the words of someone else's. (Lee, 1997: 114)

When we have a closer look at the way that Dora, the narrator, is impersonating the character she wants the public to remember, we have to bear in mind that she is presented

as septuagenarian seductress, a comic femme fatale, similar yet asymmetrically singular (“identical, well and good, Siamese no” (2)), a doubled yet unique artist of self-fashioning. With her series of performances, she presents subversions of femininity, subjectivity, corporeality and representation, to widen identity- and body-political options for women. A coquette and capricious chronicler of her times, introducing herself as a “drunk [old bag] in charge of a narrative” (158), Dora is an unreliable narrator deliberately teasing her readers. (Kérchy, 2008: 216)

Dora and Nora are introduced as having an ambiguous background from the very beginning as they are the famous Melchior Hazard’s illegitimate daughters, but their uncle, Peregrine (Melchior’s twin), is revealed as the father everybody knows as he was the one who stepped in and acted as the loving parent of the two paying for everything they needed and making sure their life was taken care of. There was also the presence of Grandma Chance who was the one who raised Dora and Nora telling them stories about the past and teaching them about men and their way of thinking. Even though there is no real information about Grandma Chance’s background, so there exists no proof whatsoever to link the twins and herself. There are hints at the end of the novel that she might actually be their birth mother, but in any case, it is not fully confirmed. When it comes to maternal figures the only detail that the girls knew was that their mother’s name was Kitty. Their biological father had several wives and none of them took the twins too much into account as they were his illegitimate daughters and he, himself, refused to acknowledge their existence.

The manner in which Carter casually establishes their background is present from the very first pages of the novel:

And the Misses Leonora and Dora, that is, yours truly, are, of course, Sir Melchior Hazard’s daughters, though not, ahem, by any of his wives. We are his natural daughters, as they say, as if only unmarried couples do it the way that nature intended. His never-by-him officially recognised daughters, with whom, by a bizarre coincidence, he shares a birthday. (Carter, 2006:22)

The special date that the twins share with their father is also Shakespeare’s birthday, that of 23rd April. This is one of the many hints that Carter offers regarding the great Elizabethan author. The novel itself is built around one day – the one for the celebration of Melchior’s (the Shakespearean actor) hundredth birthday while adding numerous stories about the family heritage and the entertainment industry offering juicy stories that divagate from the topic only to make the reader ask for more.

As the story unfolds the twins’ biography is slowly revealed and the connection between work and personal life is extremely intertwined in the novel as the characters identify with many elements from their work on stage as it is seen in the development of the twins’ career:

Dora and Nora’s career on the stage begins when they play birds in a pantomime at the age of 12, and by the time the twins reach their 16th birthdays, they are old pros. As identical twins,

they are a star turn in the music hall, and they become worldly-wise in matters of both performance and sexuality. When they are asked to perform in Melchior's musical tribute to Shakespeare, *What! You Will?* (a title whose punctuation is never the same twice), they and the review become so successful that the cast is hired en masse to film a Hollywood version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The film is a terrible flop, not least because the sexual acrobatics performed offscreen by most of the cast distracts them from the business at hand. Once Dora and Nora return to England, they find that fashions are changing, and the demand for dancers has diminished. They end their careers playing in nude reviews. (Lee, 1997: 125)

An important role in the shaping of the twins' character was played by the absent father, but also by the presence Grandma had in their lives as she seemed to have opinions about many of the social and cultural events. One of her most commented upon is that regarding war and the envy old men feel over young ones. This is Carter's way of explaining how men have a different focus and desire from women:

You must remember that there was a war on, when we were born. If we made her happy, then we didn't add much to the collective sum of happiness in the whole of South London. First of all, the neighbours' sons went marching off, sent to their deaths, God help them. Then the husbands, the brothers, the cousins, until, in the end, all the men went except the ones with one foot in the grave and those still in the cradle, so there was a female city, red-eyed, dressed in black, outside the door, and grandma said it then, she said it again in 1939: 'Every twenty years it's bound to happen. The old men get so they can't stand the competition and they kill off all the young men they can lay their hands on. They daren't be seen to do it themselves, that would give the game away, the mothers wouldn't stand for it, so all the men all over the world get together and make a deal: you kill off our boys and we'll kill off yours. So that's that. Soon done. Then the old men can sleep easy in their beds, again. (Carter, 2006: 42)

Even though the novel explores the lives of the twins since an early age there is a clear focus on growing older and the actions taken against the passing of time as Carter willingly chose to have a protagonist that is seventy-five and present her family's legacy which spread for more than on hundred years.

Wise Children had certainly not benefited from dissent against ageist and patriarchal paradigms. Although pejorative stereotypes of ageing are often implicit in the text, even a brief appraisal of the sisters' conduct rapidly illuminates the ways in which they refuse to be pigeonholed by indulging in behaviour that the mainstream would label 'age-inappropriate'. (Brennan, 2022: 231)

As the stories unfold and we find out that Peregrine supposedly took both twins and put them into their pocket when their father rejected them while they had been waiting for him to finish his performance or that Peregrine had brought an overwhelming number of butterflies as a present for his brother on their one hundredth birthday only to sent them back to the zoo with the curator are just very few examples of the natural way that magic realism is portrayed in Carter's work. The natural way in which we are exposed to so many pairs of twins (similar to Shakespeare's work) makes the atmosphere seem more unusual than it was at first sight. This type of magical realism and the way that it is exposed to the public only

helps emphasize the way Carter has kept in mind to get the public accustomed to fantastic elements that eventually would be considered as part of the everyday life.

Moving further it must be mentioned that the consciousness that presents the stories gathered in the novel is definitely female (not only because we know that a woman is recollecting her memories and sharing her life with us, but also because of the choices of topics and their approach) and there are numerous moments when the references to men are made to criticize them and to offer alternative descriptions to those generically known to us all

Dora's is an unofficial history, one that the old men might consider illegitimate, although many things of which these old men might approve are eliminated from, or parodied by, Dora's narrative. Not that legitimate-that is, officially sanctioned-history doesn't impinge on the story, but Dora refuses to treat it without irony. (Lee, 1997: 126)

The narrator's dedication to the stage goes further than just passion for a job well done or the entertainment industry. Theatre and performance are meant to lead to self-discovery and at the same time to be a personal expression of escapism from the real world. The thrills that every stage act brought upon her life was something that could not be replaced by anything, something that had been somehow inherited from generation to generation:

The lights went down, the bottom of the curtain glowed. I loved it and have always loved it best of all, the moment when the lights go down, the curtain glows, you know that something wonderful is going to happen. It doesn't matter if what happens next spoils everything; the anticipation itself is always pure.

To travel hopefully is better than to arrive, as Uncle Perry used to say. I always preferred foreplay too. (Carter, 2006: 65)

The end of the novel reveals the moment when Doar and Nora are offered a pair of twins to raise and they decide there is no time for them to die as they "can't afford to die for a least another twenty years" (Carter, 2006: 224). That is the moment when it is decided for them to go to the next level and become parents of some children, they knew nothing about, but had to love and cherish. "They mewed and rustled. 'I say, Dora, let's give them a song. After all we're song-and-dance girls, aren't we?'" (Carter, 2006: 224)

As a conclusion we might draw a line and regard *Wise children* as the complex literary work that it is, understanding that what the novel intends to do is to approach life and its complexities from different angles. So, the family dynamics and the intricate relationships lead to the acceptance of others and their character. The silver lining in the novel is the sense achievement that the twins feel when their father finally acknowledges their paternity during his birthday celebration. The refusal that they have for accepting societal norms just shows how important it is for the twins to challenge what has been considered as mandatory for the female gender. All of the above-mentioned issues are addressed in a special manner that intertwines acceptance, a great sense of humour and sometimes a bit of melancholy for the time that had passed, however with a positive thought over cherishing every moment they had left. "Not only does she make Dora and Nora memorably visible but by creating an old age full of song and dance, sex and sisterhood she resists those portraits of ageing that would

banish these pleasures and label them either inappropriate or out-of-reach.” (Brennan, 2022: 241-242)

References

- Brennan, Zoe. “Angela Carter’s questioning of ‘age-appropriate’ appearance and behaviour in *Wise Children*” in *Angela Carter’s Pyrotechnics – A Union of Contraries*. Ed. Charlotte Crofts and Marie Mulvey-Roberts. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022, pp. 229-242.
- Bristow, Joseph and Broughton, Trev Lynn. *The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter. Fiction, Femininity, Feminism*. London: Routledge: 1997.
- Carter, Angela. *Wise Children*. London: Vintage, 2006.
- Dimovitz, Scott A. *Angela Carter: Surrealist, Psychologist, Moral Pornographer*. London, Routledge, 2016.
- Kérchy, Anna. *Body Texts in the Novels of Angela Carter: Writing from a Corporeagraphic Point of View*. Lampeter: The Edwin Meller Press, Ltd., 2008.
- Lee, Alison. *Angela Carter*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997.
- Peach, Linden. *Angela Carter*. London: Macmillan Press, 1998.

NARRATORS AND LIFE STORIES IN SEBASTIAN BARRY'S THE SECRET SCRIPTURE

Alexandra Roxana MĂRGINEAN*

Abstract: *We are analyzing here the nature of the narrators and the function of life stories in Sebastian Barry's The Secret Scripture. We are looking mainly at Roseanne McNulty, the female protagonist in the novel, and how she constructs herself as a narrator of her autobiography, from the unconvincing position of an inmate in an asylum, where she spent a good part of her life, which raises, from the start, implicitly, questions over her reliability and motives for writing. From her apparently disadvantaged position, Roseanne plays with our expectations, constructing both herself and Doctor Grene, her psychiatrist, in an ambivalent light, especially when it comes to mental balance and reliability of account. What seems a disturbed woman at the beginning, reveals herself as a mastermind of narrative through the connections that she subtly establishes not only throughout her account, but also through hints in the creation of her personality, and in the way in which she builds a relationship with her doctor as well, whom she either manipulates thoroughly or is completely innocent and vulnerable with, both scenarios and anything in between appearing to us just as likely. We do not know whether some details in what she says are mere coincidences or the work of genius and intentional, the protagonist being able somehow to transfer a symbolical madness onto us, making us unsure of our perception. In this, she is a complex narrator, and one goal is to investigate how she operates in this quality. Another, as announced, is assessing the roles of life narratives. The approach is identity and cultural studies.*

Keywords: *narrators; identity; life story; memory; (un)reliability*

1. Introduction

In narratives of life stories, "There is a great difference between simply remembering a given occurrence from the past, kept in the storage of memory, and quite another to feel the flare in the awareness of your past still pulsating with the life of times before." (my translation) (Tudor Vianu qtd. in Serghi, 1991: 74). Roseanne McNulty has been in an asylum under Doctor William Grene's care for thirty years. The book *The Secret Scripture* begins with her intention to write a secret autobiography, hiding it from her doctor. On the other hand, the doctor makes his own notes, on his state, life and the situation of his patients and hospital, which results in two narrators, whose stories converge at some point. To their accounts, a third, more obscure and secondary one, a priest from Roseanne's childhood, adds his own deposition of events. But what kind of stories do Roseanne and the others write, who(se) is more reliable, given the context?

Roseanne registers her life from her happy childhood years, enlightened by the personality of her father, who seems a wondrous and complex figure, to the adolescence begun under the sign of the violent confrontations between the adepts of the Irish state existing

* Romanian-American University, alexandra.roxana.marginean@rau.ro

under British governance and those who wished it to be an independent republic, then her emergence from her small-town world to the place of her young adult life in Strandhill, on the coastline, of her waitressing in Café Cairo. This job helps her support her mother, who has progressively stepped into silence and eventually gone mad, and escape Father Gaunt's allegedly "good intentions" and influence, who wanted to marry her to the new graveyard superintendent, a man of fifty who almost raped her subsequent to her refusal. All this happened before she left her hometown Sligo, once her father died under mysterious circumstances – being unclear whether he hanged himself or he was murdered. In Strandhill, she meets the McNulty brothers – stout and reliable Tom, Jack the dandy and Eneas, marrying the first, despite the opposition of a stern mother who disliked the girl's Protestant Presbyterian origin. A boy from her childhood, John Lavelle (whose brother got killed in the events mentioned above and was brought by John to her parents' house to be buried) makes an appearance and convinces her to meet him on a cliff overlooking the area, which she does, wondering why she goes there, being a married woman, and surmises it might be to alleviate missing her father by getting in touch with somebody who had known him. However, Father Gaunt sees her and tells on her to Tom. Meeting John Lavelle may have been read as having treacherous implications not only for Roseanne's marriage, but also in a political key, as Lavelle sympathized with the freedom fighters of the IRA, while Tom McNulty's family were Blueshirts and on the side of the pro-Treaty Free Staters. As a result of the encounter, her husband leaves her, causing Roseanne an insurmountable amount of grief and rage. Gaunt does not give up until he has their marriage annulled in Rome, and her accused of madness and nymphomania, the news of which he delivers a few years later to her to the hut where he had ordered her to be confined to. Eneas McNulty shows up from war around her hut, disoriented and needing food and lodging, which Roseanne provides. The one-night sexual encounter that ensues results in a pregnancy. Roseanne will have her baby on the beach near Coney Island, out into a terrible storm, having just been turned away by Mrs. McNulty from her doorstep despite Roseanne's obvious state and dire need for help. Her baby is taken by Lavelle's son (who John told Roseanne she should get in contact with) while she is unconscious, out of a desire to protect it, and ends up at Nazareth orphanage, something Roseanne is not aware of at the time, as Father Gaunt, who commits her to a mad house, tells her that she has killed her baby.

Years later, aged a hundred, as she sees that her health is deteriorating, Roseanne eventually gives her diary to Doctor Grene and asks him to seek her child, which he proceeds to do, uncovering something striking. As a consequence, he declares Roseanne sound of mind, and returns her her freedom after dozens of years spent in asylums.

2. The narrator(s) – initial observations

Roseanne appears as ambivalent in a lot of respects from the very first pages, from her own description of her person. Sitting in an asylum as an old woman, she reminisces, and presents herself as a victim of the bleak town of Sligo in her youth, a place that she describes as thrown among a set of "cold" mountains, a "dark spot" traversed by a "black river" carrying appalling elements, such as still-born babies that represented embarrassments and – the implication goes – had to be gotten rid of, as well as garbage and other pieces of people's

broken lives and characters, which needed to be enveloped in secrecy, something that both the river and the town managed well (Barry, 2011: 3). The gothic atmosphere is indeed unpropitious and inhibiting for a young woman to start her life in. According to Roseanne, the town both “made” and “undid” her (*ibidem*), but, she says, this happened mainly because she was young and did not know back then that a person’s fortune is her own doing, and that people can “be the author [...] of themselves” (Barry, *op. cit.*: 4). Apparently, from the way she puts things, we understand that mature age comes with empowerment, an empowerment that she lacked in the younger years of her life due to inexperience. However, if we analyze what she says carefully, we see that this is not quite what she intends us to understand, as she further pronounces that, nevertheless, she “should have given up much sooner [...] being made or undone by human towns” (*ibidem*: 3-4), which implies that it was her choice and that it stood in her power to allow it or not. Hence, from the beginning, there is ambivalence and contradiction in her account of her young version of self.

The same ambiguity is preserved in how she presents herself as an elderly lady as well. In her physical appearance, she uses details that minimize her as a person, highlighting her decay, disempowerment and unimportance. She is a harmless “thing left over, a remnant woman”, comparable to a “songless robin” or a mummified mouse having died under the hearthstone where it dwelled, and when she dies – a close and imminent event, since she could be a hundred already – there will only be need for a “smallsize coffin” and a “narrow whole” (*ibidem*: 4). We notice the adjectives suggesting dismantlement, deterioration and smallness, which are meant to further suggest inconsequentiality, the idea of not constituting any kind of potentiality or threat. Furthermore, besides the weak physicality, there is the condition of being a patient in a mental institution, which is “all Doctor Grene’s kingdom”, where she is “completely alone”, with everyone else on the outside that would have been an acquaintance and a potential helper gone (*ibidem*). These elements again create the aura of weakness, helplessness and deprivation of agency. She paints the picture of an individual with no purpose left in life, no endeavor worth having or being a realistic expectation anymore, who is, moreover, locked up and cut off from the exterior and life itself. However, once more, Roseanne contradicts herself. There is, after all, one more venture that she is about to have, and that is writing her life story. She is also not that helpless, because she has managed to extract from Doctor Grene the tool that will help her complete her self-imposed task – a blue-ink biro pen – which she convinced the doctor to give her as a gift because she told him she liked its color. In a mental institution, a pen is not just any object, it can be a dangerous weapon, and it entering her possession shows her potential for manipulation, which she exercised successfully over the good doctor. Roseanne appears here as slick and sly, using efficiently her convincing powers in a way that is subversive in many respects. One of these we have just mentioned, as she is a patient who has no business handling such an object, let alone keep it for herself. If we interpret her subversiveness within the realm of the symbolical, she is a woman having taken from a man the object that empowers the writing of history, which is, theoretically, in traditionalistic views, the apanage of male creative powers, issuing from his rational, Logos and order-making prerogative. What is even more, she is a woman in a subordinate position, because of her status and because of her alleged imbalanced mental state, which makes her at least doubly unreliable, as a woman, who is supposed to be governed by emotionality as a contrast to reliable male rationality, on the one hand, and an additionally

unstable woman as well, on the other hand. Nevertheless, the situation at hand is that the weaker-minded woman has tricked the Reason-governed man, obtaining the element of power that constitutes the pen. She has convinced the man to concede to her (a part of) his power without him even realizing it, a power that has the potential to destabilize him and put him under the sign of questionability, because there will be a potentially competing account to his. Doctors give accounts of their patients as part of their activity, and now there can be another version of his notes of Roseanne, written by her, with a tool she has obtained precisely from him. Without realizing it, he may have undermined himself and his position.

Roseanne continues with the double perspective over her actions and intentions, which are made to seem both crucial and unimportant, both a whim or chance initiative and the serious project of a lifetime. She both challenges and worships her announced work. Her writing will be “some kind of brittle and honest-minded history”, put down “on unwanted paper – surplus to requirements” (Barry, *op. cit.*: 5). If we analyze her choice of words, we see that the story is characterized as “brittle”, which can be understood, figuratively speaking, as unreliable, one that does not hold together, so lacking in truthfulness. The phrase “some kind” suggests vagueness, which may again send to inaccuracy. The characterization made to the paper on which the story will be written is transferable to the actual content of the pages, which is unrequired, potentially inessential. However, Roseanne says that she “dearly [...] would love [...] to leave an account”, and that she will safeguard the pen and paper by hiding them under a loose floorboard, then naming these objects that enable her to write “treasures” (*ibidem*). The need for secrecy comes with the aura of protection, which implies inestimable value, the cruciality of preserving this story, and thus its relevance and weight. As for its truth, Roseanne states something equally controversial and ambiguous: “I start with a clean sheet – with many clean sheets.” (*ibidem*) The play upon the possible interpretations of the phrase, i.e. the symbolical clean sheet or clean slate which connotes realism and verisimilitude, the absence of preconceptions or biases, and the actual, first meaning, concrete interpretation of the phrase as merely the empty, unwritten pages, playfully points to an equivocal intention for either sincerity or deceit in the account. The protagonist’s words can be read as a claim to honesty or, since she resorts to a pun and introduces equivocality and *double entendre*, a disclaimer of honesty, for if the symbolical meaning were the real one, the one she meant in the first place, why make it ambiguous subsequently?

To recapitulate, we have a textbook traditionalistic view of a male in a position of authority and power, epitomizing rationality through his career of a psychiatrist as well, who therefore embodies from the start the prerogative of the reliable storyteller. As if to reinforce this view, the beginning of the doctor’s account focuses on the practical matter of having to relocate the patients because of the advanced state of decay of the asylum, on how this would entail letting some of them go free as a result of a new evaluation since there are not enough places for them all, and on the history of the place. On the other hand, we have the woman in a subordinate position, both through her gender (in conservative views) and her condition of being mentally unstable, who tricks the doctor and us into believing whatever she wants, which is yet unclear as well. Both give accounts of her life. Roseanne obviously begins from a disadvantaged stance as far as tradition says. Nevertheless, subversively, there is the advantage of the first-person narrative, in which the person talking about oneself knows more and can explain better what has occurred, in comparison with anyone else. On the other hand,

the doctor can be considered as more objective, subjectivity constituting a possible disadvantage as well. We are yet to discover what will actually happen with both accounts and who is (more) believable.

If we take a look at the *title of the novel*, it contains and triggers the same ambiguity and contradiction that we have witnessed in relation with the narrator Roseanne. The term “scripture” was used in the fourteenth century with two meanings: one, usually when the word was employed with a capital, referred to the “sacred writings of the Bible” or a passage therefrom, and the other was based etymologically on the Latin word that engendered it, and denoted anything written (scripture (n.), *Online Etymology Dictionary*, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/scripture>). Since the term is in the title, the capital letter with which it is written is not relevant in the sense announced above, this calligraphy being part of the conventions of correct rendering of title words in the English language. The first meaning above is generally the most commonly known and used in relation with the said term, as the etymological dictionary duly notes, and thus what strikes us, if we assume the title is about this acceptation of the term, is the paradox of a secret scripture, since any sacred text of authority is put down precisely to the purpose of it being preached, spread and made known. Hence, the notion of contradictory realities insinuates in our minds from the very beginning. After having read the first pages, we logically suppose that the title bears on Roseanne’s story, and “scripture” is therefore used here with its second, less used meaning, and we may wonder what is obtained thus with the employment of the word with this rare acceptation rather than the mainstream meaning; it would have been easy to replace it with, simply, “writing” or “story”. The answer to this question is that the term’s first-interpretation connotations get added to Roseanne’s writing, at least in part. Namely, her account is no longer a simple story, but it gains the value of something “assuredly true”, which is also the third meaning of the term scripture (which it acquired and was valid much later, in the sixteenth century) (*ibidem*). One of the potential reasons to use “scripture” for “writing”/ “story” is for these added implications and connotations, i.e. it is a claim to its truthfulness, as well as one to authority, being a ruse to lend the account more weight and credibility.

3. The relevance of lineage

Roseanne begins by remembering her father, Joe Clear, the superintendent of the Sligo graveyard. His personality is extremely versatile, as he used to be a sailor in his youth, then became a preacher, reverberating the talent of his own father, who was a real minister. Besides his exceptionally powerful and convincing preaching, when he reads from Donne’s sermons with his penetrating voice, he is able to play the piano and sing operettas, additionally having a penchant for telling stories. Beyond his artistic skills, there is a rougher and practical side to his personality as well, having motor biking as a hobby and secretly being a member of the police force.

Roseanne remembers him recounting that once, when he came back from a sea voyage, he received lodging in a mysterious house which turned out to be uninhabited and the scene of an eerie tragedy, where the lady of the lodging had killed her husband by locking him up in the basement and starving him to death, being hanged for the deed as a consequence. The problem is that Clear claims that he was received there by her, and strangely experienced

the former owner's sensations: being locked in his room and feeling excruciatingly hungry, as well as meeting a lady that weirdly smelled of raw vegetation. This account of an account, as Roseanne's retells us the story that her father told the family in her childhood, makes us wonder whether, in case there is any truth to it from the man's perspective, the father's connection to the supernatural and underworld did not get the best of him. Is he a truthful narrator, and if he is, could there be a tinge of madness in him because of a prolonged contact with the dead? The options may be his craziness or him being a liar, a trickster. Or is Roseanne the trickster inventing the situation altogether? One other farfetched story that the father came up with in Roseanne's childhood, is about the Indian Angel, how they subsequently called the main character in it. He was a man who, while riding his motorcycle at high speed, was about to crash into a brick wall, but, in the nick of time, grew angel wings and flew over it instead – this according to Joe, who saw the occurrence, as he happened to be riding his own motorbike on the respective road.

Taking Joe Clear's strange stories into account, the father's personality appears to be complex and an interesting mixture of truth and illusion. He likes to read sermons and does it so well that he seems a genuine priest, having talent and vocation, although he is not. However, his own father was the real thing, a Presbyterian minister, which casts on the son an aura of authenticity relying on the old, archetypal principle of descentance. Joe Clear's talent that makes him better than the actual preachers is a manner of sowing confusion. It points to ambiguity and to how pretense can be more realistic, serious and close to actuality than the actual thing.

The versatile figure of the father, his talent for story-telling that seems imbued with the authority that religion and religious practices bestow on lay deeds, as well as the religious allusions present as an underlying ingredient, all relate to the book title and to Roseanne's manuscript, these elements subtly pointing to one another. The person of the father with his features is also connected to the notions of authenticity and truth, which are both reinforced and undermined through his personality. In the father and Roseanne's cases, lineage suggests entitlement, stories coming out of these people claiming indirectly the elements of sacredness, justifiability and unquestionability, while at the same time sending us to the very opposite characteristics, i.e. deceit, trickery and treachery, because genuineness is questionable in the case of an unreliable source. By describing her father, Roseanne indirectly talks about herself, as heritage is important.

Roseanne's mother has an element of instability in her as well – and we are again speaking about mental instability, just as in the case of the father, where it can be suspected, if he believes that what he recounted actually happened. The mother used to take Roseanne to meet Joe, who was returning from work, on the way. The child remembers this gesture not as a normal one of affection and resulting from the impatience coming from love, but as one potentially prompted by the young woman's "anxiety" – the word used by Roseanne, who adds that she believes her mother "suffered strangely under her halo of beauty" (Barry, *op. cit.*: 8). What we sense in her depiction is a covert reference to mental imbalance. The mother will, in fact, slowly slip into a refusal to communicate and madness later in life.

The conclusion coming from the parents' presentation is that the *element that they may have had in common is this mental unrest*, being different from anyone else in the way in which they perceived reality. This volatility of the mind and rationality may have been

passed down to Roseanne, which is a component that strengthens the idea of her unreliability, despite the apparent cohesion and logic of her initial remarks in the novel. Through the introduction of her parents, she brings into the picture a trait that undermines her authority as a narrator of facts.

On the other hand, she highlights, on a number of occasions, her father's *exceptionality when it comes to telling stories*. Joe Clear was a gifted individual, a man of many talents, among which that of a recounter. Roseanne insists upon this as a way of suggesting she may have inherited his talent. This, in itself, is ambivalent when it comes to considering the truth of her account, as a natural inclination for recounting may be evidence of both better description of actual events and a capacity for lying and embellishing or exaggerating facts. Which of the two is valid for narrator Roseanne remains to be decided.

She also mentions that her father was happy all the time, and links this joyfulness with the act of telling tales, stipulating that, even though this state of mind may have had no grounds (and here hints at his potential mental disturbance), it helped him become a narrator, which in its turn gave him life beyond death. Roseanne introduces the first valid justification for her act of putting her life story on paper: this action *gives the author a second existence*, enabling him or her to live on in the descendants and other people's souls and memory. The protagonist synthesizes this thought clearly in describing the effects of her father's talent: "My father's happiness not only redeemed him, but drove him to stories, and keeps him even now alive in me, like a second more patient and more pleasing soul within my poor soul" (Barry, *op. cit.*: 12). Hence, what the main character wants with her secret autobiography is to be remembered. Another incongruence reveals itself, as she declares in the first pages that, even if she has no tombstone, she is alright with that, but her gesture of writing about herself contradicts her initial statement and reveals her again as a trickster.

At some point, Roseanne says that history, in the sense of written life story, "needs to be mightily inventive", creative, because real life is degrading, humiliating, defiling human beings (*ibidem*: 56). What one ends up recounting, therefore, is a sum of "surmises and guesses held up as a banner against the assault of withering truth" (*ibidem*). This is, indeed, the pessimistic vision of someone who has had a rough existence, having suffered a lot in his or her life. In this view, therefore, history has the goal of *regaining and returning human beings their dignity and nobility*, retrieving the "old, first pattern in them", i.e. their initial purity and resemblance to God (*ibidem*). We notice God is again invoked here, Roseanne keeping the religious strain alive throughout her tribulations and contentions. Hence, history gets human beings in touch with their pre-Fall, original state of innocence, being a reminder of what is desirable and noble in human condition. By remembering the past in the creation of a story, we actually make indirect reference to a biblical past of a state of bliss, and by telling our story we improve ourselves, both in the sense of embellishing ourselves and in that of saving ourselves, of cleaning the filth of living away. Hence, the *saving* that occurs when we tell our life story is not only that of remaining in people's memory, but this spiritual one as well. History has a *cleansing role*, as well as, through it, the function of *accessing hope*. The memory triggering this thought is an occurrence from Roseanne's childhood, at the time when she was fourteen and Ireland was divided among the supporters of the new state set up under the British governance and the republicans who fought for an independent Republic. An armed encounter results in an Irregular (republican) being killed and brought to their

house, Roseanne needing to go out and fetch the minister to bury the dead. Only that, once the priest has arrived, soldiers of the Free State barge in and shoot at the republicans who brought in their fellow deceased. Accused of betrayal, Roseanne claims she has not encountered any guards on her way, let alone give away the secret of what was going on in their house to the authorities, but later mentions that in other versions of the story circulating in the area she is said to have done precisely that. Then, the comments on a story being an embellished version of reality, one that saves face, are made, and this other rationale of story-telling is revealed – a supportive, redeeming quality.

4. The narrators – further analysis

As the interactions between the two narrators begin, we realize that *appearances can be deceiving* to a further point than we initially thought. Subsequent to the apparently pragmatic, rational side manifested by Doctor William Grene initially, he strikes us as peculiar and more emotional than Roseanne. He begins the first conversation he has with her invoking, without any preamble, Pythagoras' belief in the "transmigration of the soul", drawing her attention towards the fact that eating beans might constitute in the consumption of one's grandmother's soul (Barry, *op. cit.*: 25). The observation is triggered by the remains of a meal of beans on a plate. Hence, it does not come quite out of the blue, but it represents an instance of unusual familiarity in the doctor-patient relationship, and, what is more, it is evidence of an apparent need for intimacy coming from the doctor, when, perhaps, the logical thing in the context would have been for this inclination to come from the patient. Also, he mentions to her a visit to the zoo, when he took his friend's child to see the giraffes, and, at the memory of it, he sheds some tears, apparently touched by the beauty of the animals. If we interpret these scenes in the context in which the doctor confesses to us to have been impressed by Roseanne's looks even when she was seventy, it is almost as if the doctor were seeking to get close to a woman he might be in love with. To the elderly lady, during his visit he inspires a sense of inexplicable "longing" and a "dusty despair" (*ibidem*: 29). On the other hand, Roseanne raises a barrier in conversation with him. Even more than this, pretense seems to be a tactic she applies with him, as she lies to him about not remembering the circumstances of her committal to the asylum. She is then sure not to give herself away by answering the doctor's question regarding the number of years she has been institutionalized, and does not contradict him when he says it has been fifty (although we know she has touched upon the aspect previously, telling us it was thirty). She makes her non-verbal language consistent with her withdrawal of information, making sure she seems a bit spaced out: "I smiled at him my oldest old-woman smile, as if I did not quite understand." (*ibidem*: 28) From these interactions, he comes out as a bit imbalanced, needing confessions and attachment, which is inappropriate, given the roles they play in the situation, and she appears as clever, rational, able to develop and pursue a strategy consistently. Hence, her initial "cognitive strangeness", undeniable in her condition of an inmate in a mental institution, is nevertheless "kept within bounds" (Caracciolo, 2016: 20). We may wonder if she is paranoid in her need to hide from him, but what we sense is that her behavior is not rooted in that. The relationship between them has, from what we see at this point, a cat-and-mouse quality, based on a very *fluid nature of their personalities*.

This continues to be true as we advance in the story, as immediately after doubt has been cast with the facts presented above over the rationality of the doctor and Roseanne's irrationality, other details appear that may point us in the opposite direction, to her mental imbalance. Dramatic, crude, death-related, almost horror apocalyptic images of despair seem to haunt Roseanne, such as the ones about the patients forgotten by their relatives: "Silent, silent, sleeping towards death, crawling on bleeding knees towards our Lord." (Barry, *op. cit.*: 33) Once, while watching Doctor Grene standing in her room, she describes him as "a living man in the midst of life, dying imperceptibly on his feet, like all of us" (*ibidem*: 30). For a moment, she cannot remember her name, when the janitor asks. She wonders to herself what the doctor meant by needing to assess her – not understanding the notion and what it presupposes, which should be clear to her after so much time spent in the home. She confesses to experiencing panic attacks, to dread engulfing her "blacker than old tea" on various occasions, including at the prospect of regaining her freedom, when she yells, frightened (*ibidem*: 35). These signs of mental instability follow the appearance of rationality kept before us preponderantly at the beginning. They could nevertheless be read as merely signs of old age, given her venerable one of a hundred. However, ambiguity is still preserved over her (in)sanity, once she starts recounting facts from her childhood with lucidity, precision and accuracy, and we realize that she remembers the political and social unrest of the 1920s divided Ireland with an abundance of details and accompanying implications in the atmosphere of those times. Hence, we are dealing with a *vacillation between reliability and uncertainty when it comes to the presentation of the narrators' soundness of mind and of account*, evidence being ambivalent in this respect even within a particular given stance or hypostasis for either of them, as the same fact could point to opposite interpretations.

While entering the second third of the novel, Roseanne compares herself to the Cailleach goddess from the Irish folklore, especially with regard to her narrative powers and qualities: "the old crone of stories, the wise woman and sometimes a kind of witch"; "This Cailleach is deluded in the head!"; "the midwife to my own old story" (Barry, *op. cit.*: 102). From her own description of the archetypal figure, we notice the ambivalence of this mythological being, who can be both benevolent and mean, wise and mad, nurturing and dispossessing. Indeed, her ambiguous, plural nature is visible in other contrasts reunited in her personality, according to lore. She is a shapeshifter, bears transformative valences, reunites in her person the three ages of womanhood, has both creative and destructive abilities (as she made the landscape and protects animals, but brings about death through natural phenomena, being the patron of winter), is "neither good nor evil" (Lockett, 2023). Through the versatility of the figure she resorts to, Roseanne points to her own.

More evidence comes forth in support of the idea that the doctor is not as balanced as he appears in the light of his occupation. Grene struggles. He is displeased with the "effrontery" and "deviousness" involved in his profession, and finds it impossible to remain "detached", unable to resist being compassionate (Barry, *op. cit.*: 46). He feels he has failed in his career precisely because of his incapacity to preserve a distance, emotionally, which he feels has prejudiced his ability to help his patients professionally. Too much empathy has made him an incompetent, impotent psychiatrist. In his eyes, his responsiveness is a flaw, and, with this observation, there goes the validity of assumed male rationality, which was already dented. Grene is very harsh with himself in describing this weakness, using for it the

terms with which one refers to a disease: “Pernicious, chronic sentimentalising” is what got his marriage to fail as well, because he relied heavily on, or “lived off” his wife Bet’s good opinion of him (*ibidem*: 49). That is a textbook mistake – depending on another person’s validation – which especially somebody in his profession should know not to make. Besides a faulty manner of relating to his wife, Grene’s failure in marriage is additionally caused by both a dalliance and not being able to get Bet pregnant although she dearly wants a child. Distraught, she refuses to get check-ups for her conditions and thus finally passes away from a more-or-less self-induced death. Besides the failed profession and marriage, Grene has an identity crisis deriving from realizing that he does not know his roots, who he is, how to place himself according to his origin. He is an Irishman who spent his childhood and formative years in England, now feeling he has nothing to account for his Irishness, not even an accent. There is also a trauma from his childhood that comes back to haunt him, subsequent to facing his other demons. Grene was adopted, and then the family eventually had a child of their own, a boy, who got hit by a bus and killed out of Grene’s fault. William feels guilty, as well as angry because he was not enough, and the family went and had another baby after him. All these aspects, along with his behavior in the first interactions with Roseanne make it fair to assume that he is on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and raise a question mark over the truthfulness and objectivity of his entire perception.

It appears, from all this coming back and forth with the narrators’ abilities, states and personalities, that they are *becoming rather similar than different*. There are *points that they have in common*, equally containing the potential for clarity and foggiess in their outlooks and narratives. There is a progression in this aspect, as uncanny common points are noticeable between them further. Both compare themselves with animals, Roseanne with a mouse and a bird that has lost its song, and Doctor Grene to a “sparrow without a garden” once he would retire and exist without professing (Barry, *op. cit.*: 46). Hence, it is not only that they compare themselves with other beings, but they choose the same being – a bird. Also, the metaphor behind it is based on the same feelings and features, as they both experience a sense of rootlessness, of misplacement and displacement of their own person in reality. They both wonder about the spelling of words, Roseanne about the cleaning man’s name, Kane, and Grene about what he attempts with his wife, i.e. rapprochement. This must be the case because he too has a story to tell, life stories and their writing being both characters’ obsession. Grene regrets not having taken more notes on the patients, and, once his separation from his wife occurs, he wonders, with a kind of despair (which Roseanne duly notices), “Whose sleeve do I have to grip to tell my story to?” (*ibidem*: 48). Also, he states that he has ruined Bet’s life narrative, the potential happy one of herself that never came to be because he interrupted it. Another feature that both Roseanne and Doctor Grene display is the tendency to think about death and images related to it. These come to his mind as well. For instance, he invokes Coleridge’s poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* to refer to “Life-in-Death and Death-in-Life” (*ibidem*). His death imagery is triggered, as in his patient’s case, by mundane details, in this instance a beverage that he finds awful, which his wife prepares and drinks before bed.

However, going yet deeper into the heart and matter of narrative, we notice, besides the elements in common that the doctor and his patient have that we have mentioned above, other *correspondences* at the level of the story we are reading which, we realize, may not be coincidences, but means to test our attention and to support the idea that Roseanne is a

mastermind, controlling her account in very minute detail. For instance, we may wonder why, at the beginning of the story, she thinks about and mentions the mice running along the walls and under her floor a few times. We initially reckon that she merely compares their astuteness and rapidity with her comparably inferior, decaying or even lost motor skills. However, later on, she mentions how, back in her childhood, after the incident with the dead soldier, her father was humiliated by minister Gaunt, who deprived him of his job of a graveyard superintendent for political reasons, not to upset the local officials dissatisfied with Joe Clear's readiness to bury a republican, and put him in the position of a rat catcher. There is an invisible thread in Roseanne's mind connecting things at the level of imagery as well, not only actions. An example here would be the way in which she describes her shocked father at the time, as a "living man exiled from the dead", which bears a striking resemblance to how she depicted Doctor Grene at the beginning, as a living man awaiting his death on his feet (see above) (*ibidem*: 63).

As Roseanne shows herself as reluctant to answer the doctor's questions, she thinks about the "virtue of silence", and we do not understand initially why she emphasizes this aspect without giving any explanation for the weight she gives it, but we sense that she makes the phrase pregnant with meaning (*ibidem*: 32). The importance of keeping silent is revealed later in the novel, when she recounts how her father exercised his occupation of a rat catcher and exterminated the rodents – with a blow to the head, which put them out or finished them altogether, then drenching them in paraffin and throwing them into fire. Once, as he was doing his job in an old orphanage, eradicating them in this way, a rat escaped, with its fur alight, and set the whole establishment on fire, which killed, as a result, over a hundred girls who were lodged there. Neither Roseanne nor her father confessed to the cause of the tragedy, perhaps thinking that their family was already enduring enough hardships and unfairness. As she remembers and presents the tragedy, Roseanne highlights again the crucialness of having kept silent for the survival of the family.

At some point, the protagonist tells us abruptly that her child "went to Nazareth", which is eyebrow-raising, triggering suspicion again as to her mental sanity (which is, of course, her intention, along with testing our attention and keeping our interest piqued) (Barry, *op. cit.*: 144). We wonder whether her mind is astray and if there is a possibility that she might have the impression that she is some saintly Virgin Mary figure, given the religious vein kept throughout her story. Roughly twenty pages later, she explains that Nazareth is the nunnery where her husband Tom's mother gave his sister away.

When she has a panic attack, while thinking she might have to leave the asylum, she imagines the rats in the walls climbing to her lap, invading it, which increases her horror. She stresses the image of her lap then, but we only understand why dozens of pages later, when, upon her first encounter with her future mother-in-law, the first remark the lady makes to Roseanne is about her having "no lap" "to be sitting babies on" (*ibidem*: 167).

We realize, as we read, that the *correspondences evolve into a kind of peculiar telepathy* between Roseanne and the doctor, as if a channel were open between them and thoughts and impressions were passed from one to the other. For instance, Roseanne is weary of being questioned, experiencing a feeling of entrapment which determines her to compare herself to salmon in her mind, whereas the doctor is like a fisherman who throws hook, line, and sinker, but will nevertheless only be able to catch her by a strike of incredible and highly

unlikely fluke, “some third mystery of luck and instinct” (*ibidem*: 81), because, although his questions seem like the fisherman “casting his lure over the dark waters” (*ibidem*: 83), the prey is on her guard, sensing the attacker’s intention and being swift and cunning enough to avoid it. Roseanne describes what she perceives as the doctor’s manipulation as “*plamasing*” – the Irish equivalent for “disingenuous praise” used in order to obtain something from someone, employed in politics and flirting (10 Irish words to get the gift of the gab on St Patrick’s Day, 2024, *BBC*). Immediately after Roseanne has had her thought, Doctor Grene remembers how he went on picnics with the family as a child and drank tea from “a billycan, like fishermen” (Barry, *op. cit.*: 83). He compares himself to a fisherman as soon as she makes the same analogy in her mind. What is more, the reason why she thinks of fishing is a memory of her husband having that hobby, so stimuli from the past trigger this comparison in both the characters’ cases.

The doctor refers to an old deposition he finds as to a thing “from an Egyptian tomb indeed” (*ibidem*: 116), while, as we remember, Roseanne compared herself at the very start of the book to a soon-to-be dead mouse, which, in its turn, is like a “mummy in the pyramids” (*ibidem*: 4). The doctor draws a parallel between Roseanne and a “Cailleach of the stories”, as she did herself (*ibidem*: 124).

The matter of reliability is stressed more overtly by the two narrators in the second part of the novel. Reliability or its opposite, unreliability, may stem from both given they have no control over, such as having a mental condition, in Roseanne’s case, or being in distress because of personal crises, as in Grene’s, and from intentional deceit, which both are made suspects of through their mutual characterizations of each other, as well as self-characterization that are either positive or negative, indicating both possibilities in each case. In other words, both cast suspicions over both each other and themselves. If, in the first part of the novel, these suspicions are more implicit in the contexts, in the second the characters make straightforward comments on this matter, which, besides pointing to both possibilities or truthfulness and trickery in both their cases, are also, additionally, sometimes ambivalent and interpretable. Let us see a few examples in this direction.

In favor of Roseanne’s state of mind and thus of the presumption of verisimilitude of her accounts, Doctor Grene assures us that she is not psychotic, because psychotics “dislike not knowing”, while she admits to ignorance in some matters (Barry, *op. cit.*: 127). However, the doctor brings another example to support the opposite view, of Roseanne’s either insincerity or mental disturbance and thus unreliability, when he asks her about her father having been a constable in the Irish police (something he finds in a written record), and she denies it, and Grene cannot believe that in all honesty she could not have known, nor does he disbelieve a deposition given by Gaunt the priest. On another occasion, in order to make us doubt the doctor, in regard to something he affirms, Roseanne states that “no one has the monopoly on truth”, immediately adding “Not even myself”, apparently casting doubt on both of them as narrators. On the other hand, her apparent honesty in admitting that both may lie could equally be read as an intention to gain points on believability with us, precisely with her apparent openness, winning us over with it as it were, which makes her statement and stance highly ambivalent. Subsequent to his wife’s death, the doctor compares his “pits of grief” to a “voyage to the centre of the earth” in a vessel whose captain can no longer handle the controls, which means that his mental state deteriorates significantly (*ibidem*: 172). His

death images also intensify. He can no longer pay attention to what is going on at the hospital in his daily activity, not even when it is a serious matter such as the accusation of assault brought to old janitor Kane. The doctor keeps hearing a strange bang at night in his home, and considers the possibility of it being his dead wife haunting him and trying to communicate from beyond death. Also, her phone rings one night in the attic, and he distinctly hears her voice saying hello and then calling out his name, as if to let him know the phone call is for him. Then, he goes upstairs, feeling terrified, as he irrationally half-believes he might actually find his dead wife there. This happening can only be qualified as a hallucination, a delusion that leaves us unsure as to the doctor's state of mind and psychological well-being. Grene pinpoints his shaky mental state himself, while visiting Roseanne at the hospital the following day, thinking about the paradox and ridiculousness of him having to assess her in order to decide on her mental state under these conditions: "The only person's sanity in doubt in that room was my own" (*ibidem*: 176). We seem to be witnessing a race in which the narrators accuse themselves and the other of insanity and unreliability.

Facts come to the surface from the deposition found by Grene, which show the amount of suffering Roseanne has endured, and which may suggest their potential to make a mind troubled. The deposition describes how Roseanne's father was allegedly tortured and murdered before her eyes when she was only fifteen, hanged in the bell tower, and she was, moreover, accidentally hurt physically as well in the scene, by falling hammers thrown by the attackers. Then again, the deposition belongs to Father Gaunt, who is hardly a trustworthy individual, despite being a priest.

When she describes how she went to meet John Lavelle even though she was a married woman, Roseanne launches a direct address to us: "Dear reader, I ask for your protection", desiring not to be condemned for what she did then (Barry, *op. cit.*: 194). This straightforwardness, accompanied by a request for comfort, may be regarded as a tactic to gain sympathy and avoid our judgment for the fact that she was going, for all intents and purposes, to commit adultery. It certainly is a step forward in the creation of "shared emotional attention", intensifying it considerably (Currie, 2010: V). She both tries to justify her gesture as a need to get close to someone who knew both her, as a child, and her father, and confesses that it was the first time when she deemed herself mad, the first of many, as this would be a recurrent thought since then onwards.

She also says that, because of the turmoil, some of the things she remembers "may not be *real*", but a refuge she has taken in "other impossible histories", "dreams", "fantasies" (Barry, *op. cit.*: 209). She reiterates, a few pages later, her intention to be truthful, and her being unsure about the facts, talking about the "difficulty" of accurate memory because of the grief which makes matters "Unfathomable" (*ibidem*: 227). What she seems to describe is known as "traumatic memory", a compulsive repetition of a traumatic event in one's mind, perhaps through flashbacks, a need to repeat it despite its unpleasantness, in an attempt to integrate it, so resembling salmon "swimming against the currents towards certain death, in order to spawn" (Trinidad, 2019: 116). The death wish expressed through this metaphor is directly suggested by our protagonist on a few occasions, when she describes herself precisely as salmon seeking home waters unconsciously, even if it puts her in danger, as, for instance, when she refers to her inexplicable urge pushing her to go meet Lavelle on the clifftop despite knowing it was inappropriate and might destroy her marriage. A paradoxical quality of this

type of memory (traumatic) is that it may be both extremely exact and have some elements missing, i.e. “both absent and hyper-present” in Pierre Janet’s terms (*ibidem*: 121). Roseanne even calls the readers God, which logically would accordingly make her writing a confession, and implicitly true, but, at the same time with this veiled claim to truth for her narrative, Roseanne says she might not be able to remember correctly, not out of unwillingness or because she is not open, but out of incapacity (which may still make her account false, despite her benevolence): “Now, dear reader, I am calling you God for a moment, and God, dead dear God, I am trying to remember. Forgive me, forgive me if I am not remembering right.” (Barry, *op. cit.*: 228) The factuality and fantasy of the account are both declared in the same statement. The truthfulness of intention is not the same as the truthfulness of the resulting story, indeed, but the believability and sympathy gained with the former transfer to the latter, and the details and vividness of memory point to accuracy nonetheless, despite her lamentations.

Conclusions

Following the thread presented in Roseanne’s story, Doctor Grene goes to England, where he finds out that he is her long-lost son. All the correspondences and strange telepathy that we notice between the two narrators and characters suddenly make sense. The characters’ common preoccupations and thoughts may also be considered to function as subtle hints to this very fact and denouement, which makes Roseanne an exceptional narrator through the architecture and progression of the story that she creates, in which every detail has significance and apparent chaos is in fact a carefully built structure.

The condition of writing and narrators is summed up by Grene after reading Roseanne’s manuscript, when he makes a few synthetic points that may function as a conclusion to the narrative ambivalence that we have analyzed above. Nothing can be wrong in a written life story once the author honestly believes it, as all narratives are conceived in a “wayward sincerity” (Barry, *op. cit.*: 289). Exactness is impossible in histories, as honest mistakes are inevitable, so one should avoid a “wrongful desire for accuracy”, as “There is no such thing.” (*ibidem*: 290) Hence, approximation is an inherent, normal condition of written histories, memory is naturally faltering and imperfect, the human mind being prone to “vagaries and tricks” (*ibidem*). Involuntary omissions as well as additions to what actually occurred may consequently arise. Here, Grene gives an example: the image of the feathers in Roseanne’s father’s mouth (stuffed there by his attackers), floating and falling from the bell tower along with hammers at the time of his murder, as he was still attempting to catch his breath, is a detail that he added himself, not read in Father Gaunt’s deposition as he thought, but a detail that is indeed eerily present in Roseanne’s manuscript. Nevertheless, Grene thinks he has taken it from an anecdote of feathers and hammers falling alike, which Roseanne may have told him at a completely different time in the past, years before. This instance is relevant because it illustrates the peculiar, unintentional but certainly happening workings of the mind in a misleading direction. The doctor apologizes for his error of having considered that Roseanne’s mind works in this way because of her traumatic memory, and realizes that this is a trait of memory in general in human beings.

Even if these mistakes happen, the superiority of narratives over actual reality is asserted and, hence, their crucial importance. From alternative histories, “useful truths above

and beyond the actual ‘verity’ of the facts” are obtained (*ibidem*: 291). These truths mean various insights, perspectives, ways of seeing and experiencing that make the respective reality richer and/or clearer. Being lived experiences, they become, in a way, new realities as gone through by the respective people, being raised, in a sense, to the status of realities or version of reality, so equally valid and real.

Another point is that, even though “treacherous and unreliable”, histories are that on which “we live our lives” (*ibidem*: 304) and “keep our sanity” or “build our love of country” (*ibidem*: 305). Doctor Grene concludes that human nature entails building everything “on foundations of utter dust” (*ibidem*). Even if histories are lies, they help us survive, and our very lives rely on them, so they matter and are of substance inasmuch as anything related to humanity is. We could say that interpretations/histories are, like the naming of animals in the Bible, the very fabric of life and living, the means to define and make sense of who we are. What the doctor performs is an apology of narratives and of narrators’ intentions with the arguments of reason, invoking spirituality, and appealing to the heart.

References

- 10 Irish words to get the gift of the gab on St Patrick’s Day (n.a.). 2024. On *BBC*. Retrieved August 23, 2024, 11:05 a.m., from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/QFDlQph6P01pyVc4j4lZPq/10-irish-words-to-get-the-gift-of-the-gab-on-st-patrick-s-day>.
- Barry, Sebastian (2011). *The Secret Scripture*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Caracciolo, Marco (2016). *Strange Narrators in Contemporary Fiction. Explorations in Readers’ Engagement with Characters*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Currie, Gregory (2010). *Narratives and Narrators. A Philosophy of Stories*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lockett, Rachel (2024, January 23). “Cailleach: The Celtic Goddess of Winter”. On *History Cooperative*. Retrieved August 23, 2024, 12:27 p.m., from <https://historycooperative.org/cailleach/>.
- scripture (n.) (n.a.) (March 3, 2022). On *Online Etymology Dictionary*. Retrieved August 24, 2024, 5:20 p.m., from <https://www.etymonline.com/word/scripture>.
- Serghi, Cella (1991). *Pe firul de păianjen al memoriei*. București: Editura Porus.
- Trinidad, Antolin (2019). Chapter Five. “The Great War, Psychobiography and the Narrativization of Trauma in Hemingway and Freud”. In Çakırtaş, Önder (Ed.). *Literature and Psychology: Writing, Trauma and the Self*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. pp. 107-132.

THE ROLE OF REMINISCENCES IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S NOVEL JANE EYRE

Flavian PALADE*

Abstract: *The purpose of the present paper is to explain the evolution of Jane Eyre, the main character in the novel bearing the same name written by Charlotte Brontë. While doing so I identified five spaces through which Jane passed and I analysed the way they influenced her and how the encountered people and the experiences that she had in those places helped her improve her understanding of the world and also define herself as a complete woman with a full life. In the case of Jane Eyre, she sees her own life as a long pilgrimage for happiness and equality during which she has to overcome several difficulties. In the public space, Jane passes through various stages of education and has different positions in the social hierarchy, but what characterizes her during this pilgrimage are her high moral standards and her refusal to accept any kind of compromise. The above-mentioned evolution was dramatically influenced by the whole social background in which Jane evolves. The strict values imposed by Queen Victoria in the major aspects of life guided her towards a direction she felt the urge of fighting against.*

Keywords: *memory; reminiscence; evolution*

The Beginning of Jane's journey through life

The stages Jane Eyre goes through and the strategies used by her give us reason to think that Jane is climbing a social stair and while getting higher and higher she learns a lesson from the previous stage that is going to be used or put into practice in her attempt to conquer the next space she is heading to. The whole of the experiences she builds up will eventually lead her to the ultimate success which consists in being independent, having a family and keeping a high moral standard.

As stated by Mark Kinkead-Weekes, "*the significance of these five locations – Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House and Fearnside – lies in the fact that each house is a metaphor for each of the stages which Jane's 'heart' has to pass through on its journey of self-discovery*". (Kinkead-Weekes quoted in O'Neill, 1968, p.57)

The first stage of Jane Eyre's life is represented by her staying together with the Reed family at Gateshead Hall. She is depicted as a young and fragile girl of relatively low social standing who became orphan after her parents had died of typhus. She continued living with the Reeds even after his maternal uncle's death who made his wife promise she would take care of Jane.

Jane is referred to as having a clearly inferior social status in comparison to the Reeds which in their viewpoint entitles them to impose her a set of severe and sometimes absurd rules. The girl is often locked in the so-called "red room" where her uncle had died. Jane feels

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, flavian.palade@yahoo.com

like a prisoner at Gateshead and she seems to be powerless while confronting to the cruelty and lack of mercy showed by the Reeds.

The episode of the “red room” is relevant for depicting Jane’s sufferings. She is locked in that frightening place as a punishment for her reaction at the unexpected and violent attack of her cousin. Jane feels deeply persecuted by her aunt who accuses her of rebelliousness and she is tormented by dark thoughts and strange sounds which add a note of mystery and witchcraft to that space.

For Jane, Gateshead is associated with the notion of family, but the way she is treated by the Reeds could hardly be called familiar. The space is hostile from the very first moment of her arrival, in spite of this Jane tries to conquer it and she does not give up in her attempt to control it and overcome all the obstacles.

The hardships Jane encounters at Gateshead determine her to find a way of protecting herself physically and not letting her moral integrity be affected by the insults and humiliations coming from the Reeds. Another strategy used in order to conquer the space of Gateshead is to convince Bessie to take sides with her, thus she is not all alone in that unfriendly environment and she gains at least one ally.

In addition to this, she creates a parallel world by focusing on reading as a means of detaching herself from the cruel reality that negatively influenced her intellectual development. Her final confrontation with Mrs.Reed shows a different girl than the one from the beginning of her staying at Gateshead, this being a sample of Jane’s maturity and superior self-confidence.

By finally voicing her anger of not being given enough attention and care, Jane tries to find an explanation for her rebellion against Mrs.Reed. She resolves not to accept to be treated in a careless humiliating way. She finds it is beyond her powers to endure that kind of life which seems to be unbearable for her. She identifies Mrs.Reed as the one who is guilty of her need to hate. If she were given love, she would give back love. Anger and hatred would have no place in her heart. She is very much willing to replace those negative feelings with the one that even God appreciated the most and that is the feeling of love.

The final strategy of conquering the space of Gateshead employed by Jane is confronting Mrs.Reed directly and accusing her of violent behaviour showed towards her and for calling her a liar in front of Mr. Brocklehurst.

During her stay at Gateshead, the author presents Jane only inside the private space. Once arrived at Lowood School for girls she begins her pilgrimage through the educational space which gives the author the opportunity to analyse her evolution from various perspectives developing a wider approach towards the personality of the main character. Despite her expectations of finding a proper place to live in and improve her education, Lowood Institution proves to be another hostile space in which Jane has to deal with the indifference and the cruelty demonstrated especially by Mr. Brocklehurst.

Her first impression at the arrival at Lowood is marked by the unfriendly conditions that the eighty girls who live and study in the boarding school have to endure. The manager of the school, Mr. Brocklehurst subjects the girls to extremely harsh conditions such as cold rooms, poor meals and thin clothing. They are treated more like objects and they do not seem to be valued at any moment as human beings who deserve love and care especially that most

of them are orphans. Mr. Brocklehurst justifies “*the eating of burnt porridge by an appeal to the torments of the early Christian martyrs*”. (Eagleton, 1975, p. 15)

Despite the harsh physical and moral treatments applied to Jane since her coming to Lowood, she has for the first time the feeling that she pertains to a group which is not indifferent to her. On the contrary, it supports her and she discovers in this place other girls that have a similar story to hers and who can understand her problems and frustrations.

As time passes by, Jane begins to integrate into the community of Lowood and starts becoming interested in painting, drawing and more and more in reading and little by little she manages to conquer this space which seemed so repellent when she first came here.

Another strategy used by Jane in order to conquer the space of Lowood is to start making friends and sees in Helen Burns, a trustworthy girl that she can rely on and who soon becomes Jane’s best friend. Helen refuses to hate those who abuse her, trusting God and believing in the Christian moral code that teaches us to turn the other cheek.

In addition to this, “*she counsels the indignant Jane in the virtues of patience and long-suffering. That patience implies both a “rational” submission to the repressive conventions of Lowood, which she does not challenge and a resigned endurance of life as a burden, from which eventually will come release*”. (Eagleton, 1975, p.15)

Another person who shows a kind attitude towards Jane and who helps her in order to adapt to the environment is Miss Maria Temple, a caring superintendent and teacher who treats Jane and the other girls with respect and compassion. She plays an important role in clearing Jane of Mr. Brocklehurst’s false accusation of deceit and becomes her protector and friend at the same time.

The ultimate stage of the conquest of this space consists in becoming a teacher at Lowood School for girls and by this she gains more confidence in herself and at the same time more self-esteem demonstrating that all her sufferings and efforts were not in vain. After having spent six years as a student and two years as a teacher, Jane decides to leave Lowood, longing for liberty and change.

Acquiring the status of a teacher, a guide for those who are seeking a way out of ignorance and who try to find a right manner of considering the matters of life, get Jane up on the pedestal she felt she deserved to be on. She is given the stature of a woman who can control and mould people’s souls and minds. While doing that she will hand down part of her own knowledge and life experience to be used in their best interest.

The Completion of Jane’s journey

Now possessing a pretty good level of education, Jane takes the position of governess for Adèle Varens at Thornfield Hall. The master of Thornfield Hall is Edward Rochester a man who displays a very changing attitude and who is almost twenty years older than Jane. He had travelled around the world and brought Adèle to England to raise her there, after the death of her mother, Rochester’s former mistress. Rochester is not a very good-looking man in the traditional sense of the word, his physical aspect does not represent one of his main advantages, but Jane is fascinated by his masculinity, his knowledge and by the mystery that surrounds him. She does not want a handsome man, she is interested in a strong one who is

protective, but at the same time can offer her a certain degree of independence within their relationship.

By choosing a man she wants to achieve something on a different level. She is not after a pretty picture to attach to her album. What she is actually after is a man who performs according to what he is meant to be: protective, offering security, and last but not least would consider her independence she so much cared about as normal.

Jane does not possess the qualities usually required by men. Her beauty is not astonishing, she is not attractive due to her physical appearance, but what makes her to be so fascinating is her soul, as well as her spiritual qualities which are appreciated by Rochester more than Miss Ingram's physical beauty. Maybe without being fully aware of this, what Jane does is giving an alternative to the preconceived image of a much-wanted woman of her times. Her lack of beauty is never made a major obstacle as long as it is completed by her intelligence and wit.

She hardly ever complains about her physical features and by giving them less attention, in a way, she makes the others overlook them. It is her determination of highlighting her spiritual qualities and she eventually is completely successful in doing that "*Jane moves deftly between male and female roles in her courtship of Rochester; unlike Blanche, who is tall, dark and dominating like Rochester himself, she settles astutely for a vicarious expression of her own competitive maleness through him. She preserves the proprieties while turning them constantly to her advantage, manipulating convention for both self-protection and self-advancement*". (Eagleton, 1975, p.31)

Rochester asks Jane to marry him but their union cannot be officialized because it reveals that Rochester is already married to another woman, Mr. Mason's sister. Bertha Mason is a violent mad woman who had been locked by Edward Rochester in one of the house's rooms and she is guilty for all the weird events that happened previously at Thornfield. Jane does not accept to be Rochester's mistress, even though she loves him and decides to run away without saying a word.

Jane's encounter with the Rivers family does not take place in very pleasant conditions, but the Rivers prove to be providential for her rescue especially St. John who finds her on the doorstep of their house. The same St. John helps her by finding her a teaching position at a nearby charity school. Jane begins the conquest of this space by developing a very warm friendship with Diana and Mary Rivers, but St. John is way too reserved for her to relate to, despite his efforts. After the two sisters leave to work as governesses in London, St. John discovers Jane's real identity and informs her that her uncle John died and she inherited his entire fortune becoming a wealthy woman. He also discloses the fact that he and his sisters are Jane's cousins revealing the blood relationship that unites them.

In comparison to the situation from her childhood, Jane is not any more the tolerated girl who is dependent on her relatives, on the contrary she is now in a position of domination being the one who helps the Rivers family, demonstrating she is not selfish and avaricious. St. John asks Jane to marry him and go together to India believing she will make a suitable missionary's wife.

For Jane, accepting St. John's offer would mean to abandon her dream of marrying Rochester and having a real family, on the other hand when Rochester asked her to leave together to France, she refused because she could not betray her moral principles. Jane feels

like a prisoner who has only two options, but neither of them guarantees her freedom, so she seems to be in a situation without escape.

Besides this leaving to India would put an end to any hope of meeting again Rochester and she would have to stay day by day next to a man she does not love and who is unable to make her happy "*St. John Rivers, like Rochester, expects obedience from those around him, both as a man in an all-female household and as a clergyman used to dictating the true way to his parishioners. Rivers' justification for demanding obedience from Jane is that he is in fact demanding it for God: he calls himself 'the servant of an infallible master'.*" (O'Neill, 1968, p. 65)

Jane cannot accept either Rivers' or Rochester's offer because her moral beliefs are too important for her and she is not willing to give them up. She considers that making a compromise would mean a very big sacrifice which would make her lose her self-respect and because of this she decides to act rationally. Jane deserves more than being Rochester's mistress or a missionary's wife, her destiny is to become a powerful independent woman who achieves her goals by her own forces and who does not submit to her husband's will.

The last stage of Jane Eyre's pilgrimage is represented by her return to Thornfield where she discovers only blackened ruins. The fire started because of Bertha Mason who committed suicide. The physical disappearance of both Rochester's mad wife and Thornfield Manor maybe not accidentally by purifying them through fire, gives Jane the chance to start everything from scratch.

She can build her life in her own way, she can be the complete artisan of her future and while doing so, the raw material she is about to use is her determination, her intelligence, her faithfulness and her reliability. These are the ingredients she can set at the foundation of her future life and all the opportunities come her way. She has no rivals she must fight anymore, as the walls which used to house an evil spirit of the past as well as the twisted mind of an old woman are completely done away with, making her struggle foresee a successful outcome.

In comparison to their previous encounter when she was clearly inferior to Rochester in terms of social status, now Jane is a respectable wealthy woman who decides to come back to Thornfield and finds Rochester in a totally different state than in the past. This time, Rochester is the one who is completely dependent on Jane mainly because of his health state and we may say that they switched roles being Jane in a clear position of dominance over Rochester.

Rochester's condition gives way to Jane's subconscious want of having things under control and while standing by him even under the unfortunate circumstances. She once again proves she is trustworthy. Being blind is from Rochester's part like confiding completely in Jane's ability of running not only his household but his whole life. What more could Jane ask for: she had now the chance of being the master of her own life and that of Rochester's, whom she valued so much.

In a way she becomes his "right arm" and "eyes" at the same time. He will rely on her completely and he will see life through her eyes from then on. Whatever she will consider fit for their life, she has the liberty to apply to their welfare. The image of Rochester losing a hand and his eyesight seems to be the punishment for the social order at that time which implied many restrictions and abusive rules for people of an inferior social status. Also, it

symbolizes the divine justice for all the oppressions that Jane had to endure during her childhood and later on until she reached the maturity.

Jane's marriage to Rochester only at a first glance is a means of being integrated in the Victorian society. Marriage is respectful, therefore, getting married meant keeping by the rules of the society. In this case, their marriage will hardly be accepted by the rigid rules in Queen Victoria's time. They do not display the image of a typical couple who finds safety and recognition in marriage. They are odd people, as Rochester has become completely reliant on Jane which is not normally accepted. On the contrary, the master of the house should be the person who the other members of the family rely on. Jane, a lot younger and less experienced than her husband is about to take over and be in complete control not only of the household but also of Rochester.

Conclusion

Having followed Jane Eyre's evolution from her tender age when she had to put up with a great deal of hardships, when she was helpless and had hardly anybody to rely on and continuing with her gradual development of her spiritual and moral traits of character, I have had the great satisfaction of revealing Jane's breakthroughs in the most hostile and trying circumstances. Charlotte Bronte was the master who had the ability of putting Jane in the utmost difficult situations and then giving her a chance, time after time, of becoming the strong self-possessed woman she herself had always wanted to be.

Having Jane control her own feelings, reactions and helping her find the most adequate strategy to make it in the harsh world that never spared her of any of its difficulties, Charlotte Bronte created a really fascinating and intriguing character who paved the rough way of most of the women of that time who were looking for the recognition of their multi-faceted qualities.

We can surely consider Jane as being completely successful in reaching her goal. What made this possible was, besides her determination, her acquired ability of self-control. It was a painful, frustrating process during which she experienced utter humiliation each time she was punished and rejected. Rewarding always came when she was on the verge of giving in and up but getting it, nevertheless, taught her that great lesson of understanding that great things can be obtained on condition that duty and conscience are more important than displaying a full range of feelings and weak points.

What was considered moral gained the most important place in her mind and she had to be in complete control of her own self and repress any tendency of letting out the degree of roughness she had to put up with. When Jane finally reaches her aim, she is far from being tired of fighting, on the contrary she is full of energy and ready to start a new life, the kind of life she has built for herself exactly the way she wanted it to be.

Although written in the Victorian time, "Jane Eyre" very much refers to all-times women. It would be too bitter to unveil a sad truth by saying that women still have to fight against prejudices even nowadays, two centuries away from the time when this heroine was created. But the knowledge that Jane Eyre made it, surely gives hope to all the women who have doubts that they will completely be successful sooner or later.

References

- Bronte, C. 2004. *Jane Eyre*. London. Barnes and Noble Classics
- Eagleton, T. 1975. *Myths of power: A Marxist study of the Brontes*. Fellow of Wadham College. Oxford, 2nd edition. MacMillan Press
- O'Neill, J. 1968. *Critics on Charlotte and Emily Bronte: Readings in Literary Criticism*. London. George Allen and Unwin Ltd

REMINISCENCE AND MEMORY IN ACADEMIC PRODUCTION: AN ETHICO-PHILOGICAL APPROACH TO THE REWRITING OF TEXTS

Roger-Cristian SAFTA*

Abstract: *The paper explores the issue of academic rewriting from an ethical-philological perspective, focusing on the philosophical distinction between reminiscence and memory and its impact on the process of rewriting scientific texts. Starting from the Platonic theory of anamnesis and the Aristotelian conception of memory and recollection, the study analyses how these concepts are reflected in the dynamics of academic production. In this framework, modern perspectives on memory, such as those of Heidegger and Derrida, are also integrated, which highlight the inevitable intertextuality of any scientific discourse and the need for an epistemic assumption of the relationship with sources. The philological dimension of the study highlights the delimitation between authentic rewriting and disguised plagiarism, by referring to the theories of intertextuality developed by Kristeva and Barthes. The paper highlights the importance of recontextualizing sources and differentiating between legitimate influence and fraudulent appropriation, providing clear criteria for ethical rewriting.*

Keywords: *reminiscence; remembrance; intertextuality; memory; academic ethics; plagiarism; paraphrasing; originality*

Introduction

The issue of rewriting in academic production constitutes a fertile ground for philosophical and philological reflection, as it involves not only technical and stylistic aspects, but also ethical dimensions essential for scientific integrity. In an intellectual landscape in which intertextuality and reinterpretation constitute inherent norms of the creative act, the delimitation between legitimate inspiration and fraudulent appropriation becomes an ethical imperative of any scientific endeavour. Rewriting, as a discursive and cognitive strategy, presupposes a conscious and critical relationship to the epistemic tradition, and this relationship can only be subsumed under ethical requirements designed to ensure the authenticity and originality of the research.

The notions of reminiscence and memory, although traditionally belonging to the field of philosophy of knowledge, are found, implicitly or explicitly, in the practice of academic rewriting. Reminiscence, in the Platonic sense, implies the idea of a pre-existing knowledge that is reactivated through a reflexive and intuitive process. Memory, in the Aristotelian sense, designates a psychological operation of recovering particular contents, marked by subjectivity and temporal location. These two concepts, although apparently distinct, interfere when we relate to academic writing, especially in the context of the rewriting process, where the element of intellectual anamnesis is intertwined with the reconfiguration of the text according to a specific epistemological horizon. If reminiscence

* National University of Science and Technology *POLITEHNICA* Bucharest, Pitești University Center, Centre for Applied Theological Studies, roger.safta@upb.ro

can be assimilated to a form of structural intertextuality, in which previous ideas are reactivated and reconceptualized, memory manifests itself in a particular way through the reappropriation and reformulation of information in a personalized register.

In this context, the distinction between reminiscence and memory is not a purely speculative one, but has direct implications for the way in which the researcher articulates his or her own scientific discourse. Reminiscence, as a process of recovering established structures of thought, can be linked to the natural tendency of academic writing to anchor itself in the intellectual tradition and to assimilate canonical perspectives. Reminiscence, by its particular and subjective character, can be associated with the effort to resemanticise these structures according to a new theoretical and methodological framework. The question that arises, however, is to what extent this process of textual reconfiguration respects the norms of intellectual honesty and where the boundary between legitimate rewriting and disguised plagiarism lies.

In the current framework of academic research, where technological expansion and the accessibility of scientific resources have generated both unprecedented epistemic opportunities and increased risks of ethical drift, the need for a rigorous approach to the rewriting of texts becomes imperative. The phenomenon of text reuse, whether it is excessive self-citation, inadequate paraphrasing or inappropriate appropriation of the ideas of other authors, requires a critical analysis of the way in which researchers operate with sources and claim the originality of their contributions. In this dynamic, the ethical perspective must function not only as a set of legal norms imposed exogenously by academic institutions, but also as an internalized principle, a self-reflexive requirement of the researcher, aware of his epistemic responsibility.

Philology, through its concern for the phenomenology of the text and for the processes of transmission and transformation of discourse, provides an adequate framework for analysing rewriting from the perspective of academic ethics. Intertextual approaches, translation theory and the study of stylistics contribute to delimiting some thresholds between influence, paraphrasing and plagiarism. On the other hand, philosophy, especially through its applied branches – ethics and philosophy of language – provides the conceptual tools necessary to problematize the authenticity of academic writing and to justify the deontological norms of rewriting. At a time when scientific production is evaluated quantitatively, and the imperatives of rapid publication can generate subtle forms of compromising intellectual honesty, the problematization of reminiscence and memory in relation to rewriting becomes more than a theoretical exercise: it represents a fundamental premise for clarifying the responsibilities of the researcher in relation to the scientific community and the intellectual tradition in which he or she is part.

The philosophical dimension: Reminiscence and memory in the theory of knowledge

The philosophy of knowledge has been marked, since the classical period, by a profound reflection on the nature of the intellect and the mechanisms through which the human being reaches the truth. Within this debate, Plato introduces, in the dialogues *Meno* and *Phaedo*, the concept of anamnesis, thus offering an ontological and epistemological perspective on knowledge as reminiscence. This theory constitutes one of the nodal points of

Platonic thought, articulating a vision according to which learning is not a process of acquiring new information, but an act of recalling immutable truths, pre-existing in the soul. Thus, reminiscence is not reduced to the simple recovery of experiential data, but involves a reactivation of original knowledge, imprinted in the soul before its fall into the sensible world.

In *Meno*, Plato expounds his doctrine of anamnesis through a paradigmatic demonstration: the dialogue between Socrates and a slave who is ignorant of geometry. Through a series of maieutic questions, Socrates induces the young slave to discover, without receiving external information, a correct geometric solution: “Now watch how he will gradually recall the correct solution”¹. This experiment demonstrates the premise that the soul already possesses knowledge, and the process of learning is nothing more than an actualization of it through anamnesis:

The soul, then, as being immortal, and having been born again many times, and having seen all things that exist, whether in this world or in the world below, has knowledge of them all; and it is no wonder that she should be able to call to remembrance all that she ever knew about virtue, and about everything; for as all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things; there is no difficulty in her eliciting or as men say learning, out of a single recollection--all the rest, if a man is strenuous and does not faint; for all enquiry and all learning is but recollection².

According to Plato, reminiscence is thus an essential capacity of the intellect, based on the idea that the soul, being of divine and immortal nature, contemplated the Truth in its pure form before incarnating in the phenomenal world. From this perspective, any authentic cognitive act does not introduce new knowledge, but reactivates latent structures of understanding, which are awakened through the dialectical exercise:

Then, if the truth about things has always existed in our soul, shouldn't our soul be immortal and that we should therefore try, with confidence, to discover and remember everything that, by chance, we do not know now, that is, everything that we have forgotten for the time being?³

In *Phaedo*, the theory of anamnesis acquires a more pronounced metaphysical dimension, being placed in direct relation to the theory of Ideas. Plato argues that the existence of pure Forms – such as Beauty, Justice, Good – cannot be known through sensory perception, but only through an effort of inner recollection. The experience of the phenomenal world is only a catalyst for this process, triggering in the soul the memory of transcendent realities. Thus, reminiscence is the guarantor of the veracity of knowledge, since man cannot know the Ideas through direct observation, but only through this return to his own intellectual essence. In Plato's vision, authentic knowledge is, therefore, inseparable from anamnesis, and philosophy becomes a technique of recollection, an approach to purifying the intellect through which it frees itself from the illusions imposed by the sensible world:

¹ Plato, “Meno 82b”, in: Plato, *Opere II*, edited by Petru Creția, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1976, p. 390

² Plato, “Meno 80d”, in: Plato, *Opere II*, p. 388

³ Plato, “Meno 84d”, in: Plato, *Opere II*, p. 395

If at birth we lose the knowledge acquired before it, and then, by exercising our senses on the corresponding objects, we regain the knowledge that was once ours, does not what we call “learning” really represent the regaining of our own knowledge? And could we not rightly give this regaining the name of recollection?¹

This Platonic perspective on knowledge as reminiscence raises an essential question: if everything that man can know is already contained in his soul, to what extent can there still be a production of new knowledge? In Platonic logic, the answer is clear: any genuine knowledge is only a recovery of a pre-existing truth, and the cognitive process is nothing more than a progressive clarification of immutable ontological structures. This contrasts radically with the Aristotelian model, which will emphasize the inductive character of knowledge and the role of experience in the formation of concepts.

In terms of the implications of this theory for academic rewriting, anamnesis can be interpreted as a paradigm for intertextuality and for the relationship between originality and influence in scholarly production. If fundamental ideas are, in a certain sense, immutable and pre-existent, then any act of writing becomes an act of recollection, a reformulation of a truth that transcends the individuality of the author. In this sense, reminiscence should not be seen as a simple mechanical repetition of previous ideas, but as a creative re-actualization of them within a new epistemological context. This reinterpretation of anamnesis provides a philosophical basis for problematizing academic rewriting, because originality does not necessarily consist in the production of novel contents, but in the way in which these are recontextualized and integrated into a new discourse.

Aristotle and memory

In opposition to the Platonic doctrine of anamnesis, which conceives knowledge as a process of reactivating immutable truths, Aristotle offers an empiricist view of memory, grounded in experience and the relationship between perception, time, and intellect. In his treatise *De Memoria et Reminiscentia*, he develops a complex theory of memory, based on an essential distinction between *mneme* (passive memory, the retention of traces of sensory impressions) and *anamnesis* (active recollection, the conscious process of searching for and retrieving information). This conceptual separation reflects a view in which knowledge is no longer a pre-existing datum of the soul, but the result of an active mental reconstruction.

For Aristotle, memory functions as a repository of past experiences, yet this repository is not static, but subject to transformation, alteration and organization according to the rational structures of the intellect. Unlike Plato, who believes that truth is already in the soul and only needs to be recalled, Aristotle argues that memory preserves images (*phantasmata*), which are retained according to the time and order in which they were perceived. This connection with temporality is essential: for Aristotle, memory is not just an act of retention, but a process through which the subject constructs his or her identity by relating to the past:

¹ Plato, “Phaedo 75e”, in: Plato, *Opere* IV, edited by Petru Creția, Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, Bucharest, 1983, p. 78

Memory relates to the past. [...] Memory is, therefore, neither Perception nor Conception, but a state or affection of one of these, conditioned by lapse of time. As already observed, there is no such thing as memory of the present while present, for the present is object only of perception, and the future, of expectation, but the object of memory is the past. All memory, therefore, implies a time elapsed; consequently, only those animals which perceive time remember, and the organ whereby they perceive time is also that whereby they remember¹.

Remembrance (*anamnesis*), unlike passive memory, is a deliberate and rational act, an activity of the intellect that reconstructs the order of memories and gives them coherence. In this sense, Aristotle compares the process of recollection to a type of logical research: remembering something presupposes a certain organization of thought, a correlation between images and ideas, so that the past can be reconstructed in an intelligible way. This perspective implies a form of cognitive agency: man is not just a passive recipient of the past, but an active constructor of his own representations of it :

The act of recollecting differs from that of remembering, not only chronologically, but also in this, that many also of the other animals (as well as man) have memory, but, of all that we are acquainted with, none, we venture to say, except man, shares in the faculty of recollection. The cause of this is that recollection is, as it were, a mode of inference. For he who endeavours to recollect infers that he formerly saw, or heard, or had some such experience, and the process (by which he succeeds in recollecting) is, as it were, a sort of investigation. But to investigate in this way belongs naturally to those animals alone which are also endowed with the faculty of deliberation; (which proves what was said above), for deliberation is a form of inference².

The Aristotelian model of memory and recollection has direct consequences for the understanding of the learning process and, implicitly, for the practice of academic rewriting. If memory is the simple retention of information, recollection involves an act of reorganization and reinterpretation of it, which implies that the assimilation of knowledge is not a mechanical process, but an active and creative one. This aspect is relevant in the context of academic writing, where rewriting must be an act of intellectual re-elaboration, not a simple reproduction of pre-existing content.

From this perspective, Aristotle provides us with a criterion for delimiting authentic rewriting from plagiarism: the simple retention of information (*mneme*) is not enough to claim content as original; an active recollection (*anamnesis*) is required, in which the information is restructured in a new logical and conceptual framework. Thus, rewriting should not be an act of masked copying, but an intellectual operation through which texts are recontextualized and integrated into an original epistemological approach.

¹ Aristotle, "De memoria et reminiscencia 449b3", in: *Aristoteles werke in deutscher übersetzung*, begründet von Ernst Grumach, herausgegeben von Hellmut Flashar, band 14, teil II, *Parva Naturalia*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 2004, p. 13

² Aristotle, "De memoria et reminiscencia 453a1", *op. cit.*, p. 19

Modern interpretations of reminiscence and memory

In modern thought, the problem of memory and reminiscence acquires a significant ontological dimension, being reinterpreted in the context of existential philosophy. Martin Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, proposes a radically different understanding of memory, placing it in relation to the temporal structure of the human being (*Dasein*). Unlike classical conceptions, which viewed memory as a faculty of the intellect, Heidegger sees it as a constitutive dimension of existence, an integral part of the way in which the human being relates to the past. The past is not just a fixed element of a chronology, but an active dimension of existence, integrated into the project of *Dasein*, through which the being assumes what was as part of its authentic becoming:

The authentic coming-to-itself, which the state of anticipatory determination brings into play, is at the same time a return to the most proper self, to the self thrown into its individuation. This ecstasy makes it possible for *Dasein* to assume, through the state of determination, the being that it already is. By pre-going, *Dasein* reiterates itself in its most proper potential to be, bringing itself forward. The fact-of-being-what-you-essentially-were, when it is authentic, we call reiteration¹.

For Heidegger, memory is not a simple process of storing information, but a way in which *Dasein* assumes its own existence in time. In this sense, memory does not operate in isolation, but is correlated with forgetting – a fundamental aspect of human existence. Forgetting is not a cognitive failure, but a way in which *Dasein* manages its own relationship with the past, selecting what is essential for its authentic definition. In this paradigm, remembering is not just a recovery of the past, but an existential act, through which the being structures its identity and assumes its own history:

This forgetting cannot be said to be nothing or to be nothing more than the absence of memory; it is a proper, “positive” ecstatic mode of the essential past. The ecstasy (i.e., rapture) that is proper to forgetting has the character of a withdrawal (which ends in a self-closing) from the most proper essential past, in such a way that this withdrawal from [...] ecstatically closes off that something from which it withdraws, while at the same time closing itself off².

In terms of implications for academic rewriting, this view suggests that rewriting is not a neutral act, but one deeply linked to the assumption of an epistemological and existential position. To write or rewrite is not simply to reproduce ideas, but to integrate them into a horizon of understanding that confers meaning and coherence. In this sense, authentic writing cannot be reduced to the simple formal manipulation of texts, but involves a deep involvement in the process of knowledge production.

A different perspective on memory and rewriting is offered by Jacques Derrida who develops a theory of writing as iteration and difference. For Derrida, any act of writing is, by

¹ Martin Heidegger, “Being and Time IV, 68, 339”, in: Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated from German by Gabriel Liiceanu and Cătălin Cioabă, Humanitas Publishing House, Bucharest, 2003, p. 449

² Martin Heidegger, “Being and Time IV, 68, 339”, in *op. cit.*, p. 449

definition, an act of rewriting, since no text is completely autonomous, but always functions in a network of intertextual references and repetitions.

The concept of *différance* indicates that the meaning of a text is never fixed, but is generated through a continuous process of differentiation and postponement of meaning: “Différance is neither simply active nor simply passive, announcing or rather recalling something like the middle voice, saying an operation that is not an operation, an operation that cannot be conceived either as passion or as the action of a subject on an object”¹. Thus, writing cannot be understood as an act of absolute original production, but as a process of transformation and reinterpretation of pre-existing texts. In this logic, any rewriting is necessarily a form of iteration, but this iteration is not a simple reproduction, but a differentiated re-take, in which each new context adds an additional layer of meaning.

If reading must not be content with doubling the text, it cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it, toward a referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psychobiographical, etc.) or toward a signified outside the text whose content could take place, could have taken place outside of language, that is to say, in the sense that we give here to that word, outside of writing in general. [...] *There is nothing outside of the text* [there is no outside-text; *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*]².

This theory suggests that the rigid distinction between originality and influence needs to be reconsidered. Derrida shows that academic writing is inevitably a process of citation and recontextualization, which means that the notion of plagiarism must be understood not only as a legal issue, but also as a philosophical one. The difference between legitimate rewriting and fraudulent appropriation lies not only in the degree of formal modification of the text, but also in the way it is integrated into a genuine process of meaning-making.

The philological dimension: rewriting academic texts

The rewriting of academic texts is a fundamental process in the construction of knowledge, to the extent that each new scientific contribution is inserted into a pre-existing framework of ideas, theories and interpretative paradigms. Philology, by its nature, analyses not only the structure and stylistics of texts, but also the intertextual dynamics between them, establishing criteria for assessing originality, authenticity and influence in academic production. The problem of rewriting must therefore be approached through the prism of fundamental concepts of literary and linguistic theory, in particular intertextuality, recontextualization and the delimitation between legitimate inspiration and plagiarism.

From a philological perspective, rewriting is not reduced to a simple paraphrasing or formal reorganization of existing content, but involves an active reworking of a text, through which the source material is adapted and re-signified according to a new epistemological context. In this sense, rewriting can take multiple forms: translation, commentary, adaptation,

¹ Jacques Derrida, “Différance”, in: Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, translated, with additional notes, by Alan Bass, The Harvester Press, 1982, p. 9

² Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, corrected edition, translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1997, p. 158

paraphrasing, synthesis, but also creative reformulation of pre-existing ideas. Essential in this process is the author's ability to introduce added value, either through conceptual clarification or by integrating the material into a distinct theoretical framework.

In the philological analysis of rewriting, precise distinctions must be made between interpretative rewriting, which adds a critical dimension to sources, and purely formal rewriting, which merely reproduces content without making a significant contribution of its own. This distinction is essential in delimiting the ethical use of sources from their abusive appropriation.

The concept of intertextuality provides a fundamental theoretical framework for understanding academic rewriting. According to this perspective, any text is inevitably a network of relationships with other texts, and the act of writing always involves a dialogue with previous discourses. Julia Kristeva states that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another"¹, implying that absolute originality is an illusion, and creativity lies rather in the way sources are combined, reinterpreted and resemantized.

Roland Barthes takes this idea further, stating that "the author is a textual function", and writing is not an act of production *ex nihilo*, but a practice of rearranging and recoding elements already existing in discourse:

Language is neither an instrument nor a vehicle: it is a structure, as we increasingly suspect; but the author is the only man, by definition, to lose his own structure and that of the world in the structure of language. Yet this language is an (infinitely) labored substance; it is a little like a superlanguage – reality is never anything but a pretext for it (for the author, to write is an intransitive verb); hence it can never explain the world, or at least, when it claims to explain the world, it does so only the better to conceal its ambiguity².

From this perspective, rewriting should not be seen as a secondary or derivative strategy, but as the very essence of the academic creation process. In this context, the demarcation between legitimate inspiration and plagiarism is not a simple one, but depends on the degree to which a text manages to claim its own discursive identity in relation to the texts from which it claims itself.

A central aspect of academic rewriting is the process of recontextualization, whereby pre-existing content is transposed into a new frame of reference, thus generating a different perspective on the subject. Adapting sources does not mean simply reusing them, but involves critical filtering, selection, and organization of information according to the new objectives of the research.

The demarcation between legitimate academic rewriting and plagiarism is one of the most sensitive issues in research ethics. Plagiarism is not limited to verbatim copying of material, but can also include taking ideas without attribution, inappropriate paraphrasing, or using discursive structures without acknowledging the original source:

¹ Julia Kristeva, *The Kristeva Reader*, edited by Toril Moi, Columbia University Press, New York, 1986, p. 37

² Roland Barthes, "Authors and Writers", in: *A Barthes Reader*, edited and with an introduction by Susan Sontag, Vintage, New York, 1993, p. 187

The problem (to the extent that textual plagiarism is a problem) lay not in the supervisors, nor in the writers, but at the intersection of several factors: that it is difficult to identify how writers use their sources, that there is a lack of consensus in the academic community about what sorts of intertextuality are acceptable in practice and that the lack of consensus is masked by a superficial agreement at a more general level. This intersection exists inside the academic community, and so it is within that context that the problems, solutions and implications must be considered¹.

To establish clear criteria for delimiting legitimate inspiration and plagiarism, several aspects must be analysed, such as: the degree of textual similarity, the taking over of ideas, inadequate paraphrasing or self-plagiarism. In this sense, the philological criteria of originality must be correlated with the ethical and legal norms of the academic field, so that rewriting is recognized as a legitimate intellectual practice and not as a form of intellectual fraud.

Reformulation, paraphrasing and synthesis

In academic practice, rewriting is an inevitable and necessary practice, with the role of integrating previous knowledge into a new epistemological context. However, the distinction between ethical and fraudulent rewriting depends on the way in which sources are used, the level of information processing, and the author's ability to introduce his own intellectual contribution. In this sense, reformulation, paraphrasing, and synthesis are the main acceptable rewriting strategies, each having a distinct role in the process of reinterpreting pre-existing material.

Reformulation involves retelling an idea in a different way, preserving the original meaning, but modifying the linguistic and terminological structure. It is one of the most widely used techniques in academic writing, as it allows the integration of ideas from external sources into one's own discourse, without resorting to extensive textual citation. An acceptable reformulation must avoid preserving the original phraseological structures and introduce elements of clarification or adaptation to the research context.

Paraphrasing goes beyond reformulation, involving not only a change in linguistic form, but also a resemanticization of the content. In an authentic paraphrase, the author does not limit himself to surface modifications, but critically appropriates the source material, reinterpreting it and adapting it to his own analytical framework. Unlike direct quotation, which faithfully reproduces a textual fragment, paraphrasing requires an active reconstruction of the information, so that the new text reflects both the original content and the author's own perspective. Nevertheless, "paraphrasing, however, carries two risks of its own. These writers were keenly aware there was a risk that nuances might be lost or that meaning might be distorted"².

Synthesis represents the highest level of information processing, involving the condensation of ideas from multiple sources into a unitary form, organically integrated into the argumentative structure of the text. A properly executed synthesis is not limited to

¹ Diane Pecorari, *Academic Writing and Plagiarism. A linguistic analysis*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2010, p. 141

² *Ibidem*, p. 104

juxtaposing fragments from various sources, but organizes ideas in such a way as to highlight the conceptual relationships between them and to provide a critical view of the material analysed: “in a synthesis, you go beyond the critique of individual sources to determine the relationships among them”¹. In this sense, synthesis is not just a technical process of selecting relevant information, but an intellectual operation through which the author confers a coherence of its own to the pre-existing material.

Academic style, by its nature, tends towards formalization and standardization, which reduces expressive variability and creates difficulties in clearly delimiting between legitimate reformulation and abusive appropriation. However, an original text is recognized by the author’s ability to introduce his own vision of the subject, even when operating with established concepts and theories.

The use of specialized terminology is another factor in defining the originality of the text. In many academic fields, certain formulations are inevitable, and the adoption of a common technical language cannot be considered a form of plagiarism. However, simply taking over a terminology without a critical reworking of the content risks leading to a superficial rewriting, lacking intellectual authenticity. Therefore, an academic text must not be a mere reproduction of a pre-existing discourse, but must reflect a thorough understanding of the topic addressed and propose an interpretation that justifies its claim as an original production.

The ethics of academic rewriting

The issue of academic rewriting goes beyond the simple philological or stylistic framework, being linked to the ethical and legal norms that govern scientific production. The integrity of research is not limited to the formal observance of citation rules, but implies a deep epistemic responsibility towards the knowledge generated and towards the scientific community. Academic rewriting must be analysed in relation to the deontological norms imposed by higher education institutions, as well as from the perspective of intellectual property law, considering the academic and legal consequences of violating these principles.

Universities and research institutions have developed, over time, ethical codes designed to ensure compliance with the norms of intellectual honesty and to prevent the slippages associated with plagiarism or the incorrect use of sources. These codes establish clear criteria regarding the correct attribution of intellectual authorship, the appropriate use of sources and the acceptable limits of rewriting. In general, good practice guides provide that any use of ideas, concepts or data from external sources must be acknowledged through a transparent citation system, regardless of whether it is a direct quotation or a paraphrase.

In academic ethical codes we find the prohibition of self-plagiarism, a phenomenon frequently encountered in contemporary academia, in which the pressure to publish leads researchers to reuse fragments of their own work without explicitly mentioning this². Although self-plagiarism does not involve the unauthorized appropriation of the work of

¹ Laurence Behrens, Leonard J. Rosen, *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*, thirteenth edition, Pearson, Boston, 2016, p. 97

² Emilia Șercan, *Deontologie academică. Ghid practic (Academic Ethics. Practical Guide)*, University of Bucharest Publishing House, Bucharest, 2017, pp. 23-24

innovative way. In this sense, any use of pre-existing ideas, data or argumentative structures must be accompanied by a clear attribution, without ambiguities that would leave room for confusion regarding the intellectual authorship of the information. Paraphrasing must be an act of authentic resemanticization, not a simple lexical substitution of the original text, and synthesis must aim at integrating ideas into a new conceptual framework, capable of giving them their own interpretive dimension. Ethical academic writing must be guided by a fundamental principle of assuming sources and being clear about theoretical influences, so that the reader can accurately distinguish the author's contribution from the material taken.

Academic style should not be reduced to a simple formal exercise, but should reflect a critical positioning and an original capacity for integrating sources. An authentic style is not defined by the exclusion of influences, but by the way in which they are assimilated and reinterpreted in a coherent and distinct discourse. Cultivating critical thinking is necessary in this process, since the originality of a text does not consist only in the absolute novelty of the ideas, but also in the author's ability to propose his own reading of an already existing theoretical corpus. Diversifying sources and correlating them in a well-structured argumentative framework contributes to the shaping of an authentic scientific discourse, just as avoiding excessive jargon and clarity of expression are defining elements of rigorous writing.

A mature approach to academic writing also involves an awareness of the importance of organizing ideas, logical transitions between sections, and the construction of a solid argumentative architecture. The originality of a text derives not only from the content, but also from the manner in which it is articulated, and an authentic style involves a balance between conceptual rigor and enunciative clarity. In this sense, rewriting must be a conscious process of reflection and reworking, in which each sentence is the result of a personal synthesis, not a mechanical simplification of pre-existing materials. Practicing stylistic variation, using diverse argumentative structures, and the ability to introduce a critical dimension in relation to sources are key elements for asserting one's own academic voice.

Rereading and careful revision of one's own text are also indispensable steps for clarifying the author's position and for eliminating redundant formulations or unoriginal structures. Ultimately, an ethical academic rewriting must be guided by the author's responsibility to knowledge and his commitment to the integrity of scientific discourse. This responsibility should not be perceived as an external constraint, but as a fundamental principle of academic research, through which rewriting becomes an act of authentic re-signification, and not a strategy for avoiding deontological norms.

Conclusions

The analysis of academic rewriting from an ethical-philological perspective has highlighted the complexity of this process, located at the intersection of epistemic fidelity, originality of discourse and respect for the deontological norms of scientific production. The distinction between reminiscence and memory, based on the opposition between the Platonic theory of anamnesis and the Aristotelian conception of memory, has allowed us to understand rewriting as a process of reactivation and resemanticization of pre-existing contents, but also as a critical and personalized reconstruction of them. If reminiscence reflects the inevitable

insertion of any text into an existing intellectual tradition, memory designates the active effort to reorganize and adapt the material to a new framework of interpretation.

From a philological point of view, the analysis of intertextuality and of the practices of recontextualizing sources has demonstrated that any academic text is, in essence, a form of rewriting, and the delimitation between inspiration and plagiarism should not be reduced to purely formal criteria, but should be evaluated according to the author's effective contribution to the development of knowledge. Adapting pre-existing content involves not only taking it over in a new argumentative framework, but also re-signifying it through a critical and integrative interpretation. In this sense, the differentiation between mechanical rewriting and authentic rewriting must be based on a fundamental principle: rewriting is legitimate only to the extent that it generates a new perspective and adds real epistemic value.

The ethical dimension of academic rewriting remains central in the current scientific landscape, in which the expansion of digitalization and the increased accessibility of resources have amplified both the opportunities and the risks related to intellectual integrity. University codes of ethics and legal regulations on intellectual property draw the acceptable limits of the reuse of texts, but the true ethics of rewriting derive not only from the respect of imposed norms, but from an epistemic consciousness of the researcher, who responsibly assumes the relationship with the sources. The authenticity of the academic style must not be understood only as an aesthetic ideal, but as a form of intellectual commitment, through which each scientific contribution claims its identity and relevance in relation to the discursive tradition it is part of.

In this context, I have proposed a series of fundamental principles for ethical academic rewriting, which should ensure both clarity of source attribution and the development of an authentic academic voice. By avoiding mechanical paraphrasing, by critically distancing oneself from sources, and by integrating them into one's own argumentative framework, rewriting can become a creative process, capable of contributing to the progress of knowledge.

References

- A Barthers Reader*, Edited, and with an introduction, by Susan Sontag, Vintage, New York, 1993
- Aristoteles werke in deutscher übersetzung*, begründet von Ernst Grumach, herausgegeben von Hellmut Flashar, band 14, teil II, Parva Naturalia, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 2004
- Behrens, Laurence; Rosen, Leonard J., *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*, Thitteenth Edition, Pearson, Boston, 2016
- Derrida, Jacques, *Margins of Philosophy*, translated, with Additional Notes, by Alan Bass, The Harvester Press, 1982
- Derrida, Jacques, *Of Grammatology*, Corrected Edition, Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1997
- Heidegger, Martin, *Ființă și timp*, Traducere din germană de Gabriel Liiceanu și Cătălin Cioabă, Editura Humanitas, București, 2003
- Kristeva, Julia, *The Kristeva Reader*, Edited by Toril Moi, Columbia University Press, New York, 1986
- Legea nr. 8/1996 privind dreptul de autor și drepturile conexe, la: ucmr-ada.ro/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Legea-8-1996-actualizata.pdf, data accesării 03.10.2024
- Pecorari, Diane, *Academic Writing and Plagiarism. A linguistic analysis*, Bloomsbury Publishing, London, 2010
- Platon, *Opere II*, Ediție îngrijită de Petru Creția, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1976

Platon, *Opere IV*, Ediție îngrijită de Petru Creția, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, București, 1983
Șercan, Emilia, *Deontologie academică. Ghid practic*, Editura Universității din București, București, 2017.

MEMORY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SHAPING IDENTITY: CHARLES DICKENS'S DAVID COPPERFIELD

Valentina STÎNGĂ*

Abstract: *David Copperfield*, Charles Dickens's "favourite child," illustrates the Victorian novelist's mastery in using memory as an instrument to reconstruct and shape the protagonist's character by recollecting, with an adult's approach, facts, experiences and information related to the past. The present article is devoted to analysing the subjectivity, nostalgic nature and even unreliability of the memories retrieved by David from his childhood and fictionalized by Dickens in the novel under study.

Keywords: *memory; subjectivity; nostalgia; unreliability*

Preliminary considerations

In "Memory in *David Copperfield*", Robin Gilmour notes that, in recent times, there has been "great interest in the subject of time and memory in Dickens's work" (Gilmour, 30), undoubtedly spurred by the awareness that the Victorian novelist was extremely "time-conscious", "both as a man and as an artist" (Gilmour, 30) – an extraordinary feature which was also referred to by Graham Greene when he spoke of "the music of memory" in Dickensian fiction¹. It has been asserted on numerous occasions by reputed literary critics that it is Dickens's "favourite child", *David Copperfield*, who best manages to render this particular ability to reconstruct the past from memories (either a factual representation of the past or an idealized, nostalgic one). In this direction, Gilmour describes *David Copperfield* as "a particularly complex novel about remembering, for it dramatizes the paradoxical force of memory as both a source of creativity and morality and a burden, potentially oppressive and debilitating" (Mundhenk, 323).

The novel was published in a serialized form towards the middle of the 19th century (1849-1850) and is best described as a fictional autobiography, constructed through the filter of the protagonist's memory – with a retrospective approach towards the past that structures the entire tone of the story and allows the novelist to investigate how people remember preferentially, feel melancholically and reinterpret their past experiences. In one of the pages of *David Copperfield*, the narrator (which is the eponymous character) reproduces his aunt's words relating to the past: *It's in vain, Trot, to recall the past, unless it works some influence upon the present.* (DC, Chapter 23) This relation between past and present, mediated through the filter of memory and remembrance, is what represents the core of the present study as a means of deciphering Dickens's approach to the past (his own, real past and the past

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, ionela.stinga@upb.ro

¹ Graham Greene, "The Young Dickens", in *The Lost Childhood and Other Essays* (New York: Viking, 1952): 52

experience of his characters). This article will lay stress on memory and its power to shape the construction of the novel and of the protagonist. Commonly, the term “memory” may be interpreted on two different levels: first, it can render one’s ability to store and remember information, experiences, and people (Cambridge Dictionary, available online); secondly, it can also mean remembering something from the past (Cambridge Dictionary, available online). This paper will dwell on the two acceptations of the term and will treat memory as a powerful narrative and emotional force.

On David’s footsteps

In the Preface to the Charles Dickens edition, the novelist confesses open-heartedly: *“Of all my books, I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But, like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favourite child. And his name is DAVID COPPERFIELD.”* - Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*, Charles Dickens edition, 1869.

The story is told in the first person by a middle-aged David Copperfield, who is looking back on his life. The child entered the world on a damp, fog-engulfed morning in the picturesque village of Blunderstone, England - a world that welcomed him six months following the tragic, untimely demise of his father - and he is raised by his mother and her devoted housekeeper, Peggotty. David rewrites his life beginning with what he has been told about his birth:

“In consideration of the day and hour of my birth, it was declared by the nurse, and by some sage women in the neighbourhood who had taken a lively interest in me several months before there was any possibility of our becoming personally acquainted, first, that I was destined to be unlucky in life; and secondly, that I was privileged to see ghosts and spirits; both these gifts inevitably attaching, as they believed, to all unlucky infants of either gender, born towards the small hours on a Friday night” (*DC*, Chapter I).

In the first lines of the novel, he asks himself whether he will be the hero of his own tale: *“Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.”* (*DC*, Chapter I). He will indeed become the focal point of the narration, whose memories and remembrance trace his evolution from naïve innocence to maturity.

His early years were wrapped in an atmosphere of tender warmth and maternal care, as his gentle mother, Clara, lavished him with love, supported by the kindly and nurturing presence of Peggotty, their devoted nanny whose soft-spoken words and gentle touch filled his small universe with affection. Yet, the fragile cadence of his childhood was abruptly shattered when his mother remarried a man named Mr. Murdstone - a stern and imposing figure whose cold, unyielding demeanour brought with it the arrival of his equally austere sister, turning their once serene home into a realm of oppressive gloom. Under this new and tyrannical rule, young David found himself helplessly submerged in a relentless tide of fear and despair. The cruelty became his unwelcome companion in the form of savage beatings and constant degradation, each day testing the limits of his tender spirit. His suffering further deepened when Mr. Murdstone dispatched him to the dismal confines of Salem House - a

forbidding school presided over by the merciless Mr. Creakle. In that grim, shadowed environment, however, David began to kindle small sparks of light: he forged an unlikely friendship with the enigmatic, charming, yet self-absorbed James Steerforth, and discovered solace in the steadfast loyalty of Tommy Traddles, whose upbeat presence served as a small but enduring beacon amid the swirling despair.

Tragedy continued to cast its long shadow over David's life when his dear mother passed away, leaving a cavernous void in his heart that deepened with every passing day. Barely had he begun to comprehend the depth of his loss when Mr. Murdstone ruthlessly yanked him from school and forced him into the gruelling labour of a rag factory.

Amidst the clamour of harsh machinery and the backbreaking toil, David encountered severe hardship and relentless exploitation, yet even in the bleak corridors of his despair, he managed to forge a remarkable friendship with Wilkins Micawber - a man whose ever-optimistic spirit defied the constant setbacks wrought by his own mismanaged finances.

When this oppressive environment finally became too stifling to bear, David made a desperate bid for freedom, fleeing to seek refuge with his eccentric Aunt Betsey Trotwood in Dover. With unmistakable resolve and a compassionate heart, she welcomed him into her sanctuary, enrolling him in a proper school and later entrusting his care to the dignified lawyer Wickfield and his gentle daughter, Agnes, whose serene presence would soon illuminate his life like a long-lost star.

With the passage of time and the completion of his schooling, David embarked on a new chapter as an apprentice to a notary. During an evocative visit to the windswept, salt-tinged seaport of Yarmouth, he reconnected with the warmly spirited Peggotty family - meeting the boisterous yet kind-hearted Uncle Daniel, the lively Ham, and the sweet, timid Emily, who once stirred the tender embers of his youthful affections.

In the midst of the turbulent, roaring seas and bracing coastal winds, calamity struck: his alluring friend Steerforth seduced Emily, leaving her heartbroken and the bonds of her once close-knit family torn asunder. At the same time, David himself was swept up in a delicate and fervent romance with Dora Spenlow - a radiant and enchanting young woman whose beauty captivated him, though their passion, as delicate as spun sugar, ultimately revealed an immaturity that marred the depths of their union.

Parallel to these personal storms, David bore witness to the tragic disintegration of Mr. Wickfield's life - a fall orchestrated by the sly and underhanded machinations of his secretary, Uriah Heep, who quietly began to usurp control over his world. Even as destiny dealt its blows, fortune smiled upon Dora when she unexpectedly inherited a modest sum, a brief glimmer of light that did little to shield their troubled marriage from the youthful imprudence that plagued their shared love.

Amidst these swirling currents of change and despair, David found solace and renewal in the art of writing - a craft that offered him refuge and a means to express his deepest pains and hopes, nurtured lovingly by his wise friend, Dr. Strong.

In a dramatic twist of fate, the nefarious Heep went so far as to falsely accuse the indomitable Aunt Betsey Trotwood of deceit - a charge that was eventually and resolutely dismantled by the combined, steadfast efforts of Micawber and Traddles, who remained his loyal companions through every trial.

Fate's course took another unforeseen turn when Steerforth reappeared, drawing Emily - now the reluctant daughter-in-law of Peggotty - into his dangerous orbit. His seductive promises led her into a hasty elopement that shattered the tender familial ties she once held dear. In the shattered aftermath of this betrayal, Emily was rescued by her brave uncle, Dan Peggotty, and, with a courageous heart, she set sail for Australia in search of a fresh start. Yet even as the winds of destiny howled, they claimed the life of Steerforth, and in a tragic bid to salvage him, Ham Peggotty also perished, his life extinguished by the relentless, unforgiving elements.

Grief, like a persistent tide, continued to wash over David as Dora, stricken by a debilitating illness, eventually succumbed to her fate, leaving him with an aching, burdened heart. In search of solace and healing, he ventured abroad, only to return to a world where the truth of his emotions became unmistakably clear - his heart had long been in the gentle, steadfast hands of Agnes Wickfield. Embracing this newfound clarity, David becomes engaged to the gentle and understanding Agnes, and together they embark on a new chapter of their lives, marked by quiet contentment, mutual understanding, and a deep, enduring connection.

***David Copperfield* – some insights on the workings of memory**

David Copperfield was designed not only as a work of personal development, but also as a meditation on the workings of human memory. In broad lines, it takes the shape of an autobiographical recollection of the eponymous character, David, who digs into the events of his life with the pensive awareness of adulthood; consequently, it is written as a first-person retrospective narrative, inside which memory acts as both a filter and a lens through which events are re-experienced, interpreted and transmitted. This type of retrospective narrative structure turns memory into a central narrative device.

The protagonist's reconstruction of the past is based on an association between facts, objects, people and sensation, which is why Farina stated that "David Copperfield inhabits a bifurcated reality in which everything in sight both is what it is and stands for some 'associations of its own'" (Farina, 96). By relying on associative memories, David is effectively able to reconstruct himself: "*I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity, going on before me, an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things!*" (DC, Chapter 11). Dickens' portrayal of memory does not deal simply with recording events, but it rather focuses on the manner in which the flow of time, personal growth, and emotional attachment model and remodel our understanding of the past. The narrative technique is based on constant movement between past and present, between the events as they took place when David was a child and the same events as they are rendered by David as an adult, interweaving past and present tenses and essentially creating a dual register of the narrative. Whilst the past experiences are centred around David-the-child, the present context is constructed around David-the-middle-aged-novelist who retrieves events that took place years prior to the writing process. The events are consequently altered by the erosion of memory because of time, but also by David's literary purposes. Following this line of thought, at several moments in the novel, David confesses he is unable to distinguish "*impression*" from "*actual remembrance*" and admits to the "*mist of fancy*"

which hangs over “*well-remembered facts*” (*DC*, Chapter 11), declaring himself “*an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things!*” (*DC*, Chapter 11).

This potential unreliability of the Dickensian narrator’s memory may very well be related to Sigmund Freud’s model of human memory - David Copperfield’s forgetting and subsequent rewriting of his past is a highly relevant anticipation of the Freudian theory, as conceptualised in the well-known “A Note on the Mystic Writing Pad” essay published by the psychoanalyst in 1925. In this work, Freud stated that many “possible distortions” (Strachey, 227) can frequently occur in “actual memory” (Strachey, 227) and hence alter it. According to Freud, our “mental apparatus [...] has an unlimited receptive capacity for new perceptions and nevertheless lays down permanent - even though not unalterable – memory-traces of them” (Strachey, 228). David Copperfield’s reconstructive recollections of the past events displays these Freudian lines of thought some time before the publication of the essay. The hypothesis of memory as an unreliable and disruptible source of information manages to anticipate to a certain extent Freud’s theories and raises several questions related to the truth of a novel described as “written memory” (*DC*, Chapter 48).

Reconstructing the past as a subjective and selective process

David Copperfield’s account of his own history is a necessarily subjective one and his childhood memories are told with the perception of an adult. The length of time which has elapsed between the events that happened in David’s past and his present-day recollection of those events spreads over several decades. The narrative is inherently subjective, as David tells his life story from a personal and emotional point of view. Whilst doing so, he frequently hints to the limitations and selectivity of his memory, as illustrated below:

“I REMARKED in the original Preface to this Book, that I did not find it easy to get sufficiently far away from it, in the first sensations of having finished it, to refer to it with the composure which this formal heading would seem to require. My interest in it was so recent and strong, and my mind was so divided between pleasure and regret - pleasure in the achievement of a long design, regret in the separation from many companions - that I was in danger of wearying the reader with personal confidences and private emotions.” (Preface to the Charles Dickens edition).

Therefore, it is right from the opening pages of this novel that Dickens acknowledges the fact that memory is not neutral. The adult David admits that his recollection is not detached, as “this formal heading would seem to require”, but rather influenced by proximity to the emotions of childhood. This complicated relation between remembering and feeling reinforces the idea that his narrative is a reconstructed version of events, and not necessarily an objective rendering of the actions/events/people as they were.

Unreliable narration

Though David seeks to be truthful (“I write the exact truth.” - *DC*, Chapter 44), his narration is not always reliable. As a child, he interprets events through a justifiably limited

lens, and as an adult, he sometimes reassesses and reconstructs past experiences and events through the filter of his maturity. Robert Fairhurst Douglas relates David's ability to narrate his whole life from memory to the "palimpsest-like structure of his brain" (Ashworth, 2014). Fairhurst states that because "human beings are able to impress experience upon memory, they can effectively reverse the direction of time and successfully erase old memories by replacing them with new ones" (Ashworth, 2014). Thus, at times, David seems to be rather unable to make a distinction between memories of real facts and self-produced flights of fancy. For instance, when David describes the first distinct objects he can remember as a child, he writes about his nurse, Peggotty:

"I have an impression on my mind which I cannot distinguish from actual remembrance, of the touch of Peggotty's forefinger as she used to hold it out to me, and of its being roughened by needlework, like a pocket nutmeg-grater. This may be fancy, though I think the memory of most of us can go farther back into such times than many of us suppose." (*DC*, Chapter 2)

Another striking example is his traumatic memory of being sent to work in a blacking factory when he was still a very young child, which makes him aware of the "*mist of fancy*" that lies over "*well-remembered facts*" (*DC*, Chapter 11):

"When my thoughts go back, now, to that slow agony of my youth, I wonder how much of the histories I invented for such people hangs like a mist of fancy over well-remembered facts! When I tread the old ground, I do not wonder that I seem to see and pity, going on before me, an innocent romantic boy, making his imaginative world out of such strange experiences and sordid things!" (*DC*, Chapter 11)

Memory and nostalgia

Throughout its pages, *David Copperfield* reveals a nuanced sense of the nostalgic dimension of memory. The narrative voice belongs to an older David reflecting on his youth, which allows for tonal shifts between humour, melancholy, and introspection. This technique fosters a deeper psychological realism, offering insight into the protagonist's personal development journey rather than focusing solely on societal condemnation.

Retracing the events at the beginning of the novel, we are told by an adult David, who became a successful novelist, about his younger self who would share his life with his selfless and caring mother and their nurse in Blunderstone Rookery. His rendering of his earlier childhood days lies under the sign of peacefulness and stability and life by his mother's side bears idyllic features, as if the place were a genuine earthly paradise:

"Now I am in the garden at the back [of the house], beyond the yard where the empty pigeon-house and dog-kennel are—a very preserve of butterflies, as I remember it, with a high fence, and a gate and padlock; where the fruit clusters on the trees, riper and richer than fruit has ever been since, in any other garden, and where my mother gathers some in a basket, while I stand by, bolting furtive gooseberries, and trying to look unmoved". (*DC*, Chapter 2)

Much of David's childhood is sunk in nostalgia, especially in his descriptions of characters who manifested kindness or love in their relation to him. Peggotty's home in Yarmouth, for example, is described in warm colours:

"and passed the night at Peggotty's, in a little room in the roof (with the Crocodile Book on a shelf by the bed's head) which was to be always mine, Peggotty said, and should always be kept for me in exactly the same state.
'Young or old, Davy dear, as long as I am alive and have this house over my head,' said Peggotty, 'you shall find it as if I expected you here directly minute. I shall keep it every day, as I used to keep your old little room, my darling; and if you was to go to China, you might think of it as being kept just the same, all the time you were away.'
I felt the truth and constancy of my dear old nurse, with all my heart, and thanked her as well as I could." (DC, Chapter 10)

Emotional truth over factual accuracy

Dickens privileges emotional truth (a subjective experience or feeling associated with an event or idea) over strict factual accuracy (objective facts). What matters in the novel is *what* happened at some point in the past, but, in addition, the stress is laid on how it *felt* and how the character *perceived* that event. For instance, David's memories of childhood people are saturated with tenderness:

"There are many faces that I know, among the little crowd; faces that I knew in church, when mine was always wondering there; faces that first saw my mother, when she came to the village in her youthful bloom. I do not mind them - I mind nothing but my grief - and yet I see and know them all; and even in the background, far away, see Minnie looking on, and her eye glancing on her sweetheart, who is near me."

This quotation, which has an affectionate tone, exemplifies best how memory in *David Copperfield* functions not only to record reality as it were, but to preserve and protect emotional truth and resonance.

References

- Ashworth, Claire, The Problematic Retrospect in David Copperfield with footnotes. <https://www.gold.ac.uk/glits-e/back-issues/the-problematic-retrospect-in-david-copperfield/> [accessed on May 20, 2025]
Dickens, Charles, David Copperfield. Penguin Classics, 2004
Gilmour, Robin, Memory in "David Copperfield". Dickensian, London Vol. 71, Iss. 375, (Jan 1, 1975): 30.
Mundhenk, Rosemary, David Copperfield and "The Oppression of Remembrance", Texas Studies in Literature and Language, Vol. 29, No. 3, Nineteenth-Century Fiction (FALL 1987), pp. 323-341 (19 pages), published By: University of Texas Press
Farina, Jonathan, Everyday Words and the Character of Prose in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Cambridge University Press, 2017.
James Strachey (ed.). The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, London, The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1961.

THE IMPACT OF METRICAL PHONOLOGY IN TERMS OF STANDARD ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROSODIC SYLLABIFICATION. A PHONOLOGICAL STUDY

Ibraheem Ahmed Shakir AL-RUBAYE*

Abstract: *This study aims to deal with the impact (or effectiveness) of metrical phonology in accordance with the prosody of Standard English language Syllabification. The Metrical Phonology is an approach which indicates that the nucleus and coda are considered as an individual consistent of syllable structure, called the rhyme. It denotes to the perceived orderliness of speech prominent units. These regularities (of rhythmicity) may be specified in accordance of the forms of stressed v. unstressed syllables, syllable length (short v long.) or pitch patterns (low vs. high) – or some variables mixture. Maximally regular patterns, such as those which encountered in many types of poetry, are denoted as 'metrical'. Furthermore, syllables are discussed phonologically in terms of their weight. Weight is a term used to differentiate levels of syllabic prominence, depending on the syllabic segmental constituency. Metrically, classificatory, syllables can be classified as either light (L) or heavy (H): a light (or 'weak') syllable is one whose rhyme comprises a short-vowel nucleus alone or followed by a coda of no more than one short consonant (depending on the phonological length (or a mora)); a heavy syllable is any other kind (its phonological length being greater than one mora). Syllables of structure CVVC or CVCC are frequently termed as 'superheavy'. By using such an approach of Metrical phonology, syllables can be described in accordance with the language function way of the sound segments. Accordingly, for example, the expert can classify the different clusters of segments which could befall at syllable margins, such as CV (no /nəʊ/), CCV (slim /slɪm/), CCCV (street /stri:t/), etc.*

Keywords: *metrical phonology; mora; superheavy; prominence*

The aims of study are: 1. Identifying the Metrical Phonology in terms of English prosodies. 2. Clarifying the Roles of prosodic metrics in terms of the construction of English Syllabification. 3. Shedding light on the pioneers of such an approach. 4. Crystalizing the idea that the mechanism of Metrical Phonology which was pioneered by Firth (1984). 5. Clarifying the constituents of such an approach (such as feet, tiers, trochees, etc.)

The Questions of Study: 1. What's the effectiveness of Metrical Phonology (MP) in terms of English language prosody? 2. How can the MP involve in the construction of English Prosody? 3. Who are the pioneers of such an approach? 4. What is the mechanism of such an approach in terms of the English prosodic meters of poetry. 5. What are the main essential constituents of the theory?

The main objective of this study is to identifying the phonological impact of Metrical Phonology in accordance with the Prosody of Standard English Language Syllabification.

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, ibraheem12111990@gmail.com

The specific objectives are: 1. Identifying the terminology and mechanism of MP. 2. Clarifying the phonological movement of derivation in terms of such an approach. 3. Shedding light on the hierarchical constituents of metrical theory. 4. Showing the effectiveness of the relative prominence which is exposed by utilizing binary branching structures, where each pear is labeled as S (strong) and W (weak). 5. Clarifying the relational reason behind the MP terminology in terms of the two contrastive languages. 6. Illustrating the relational mechanism of such an approach in terms of the two languages.

The origins of metrical phonology

As put by Liberman (1975), Halle and Keyser (1971) show that the conceptual terminology of the term meter (or metrical phonology) to indicate to an abstract structure associated with the linguistic objects, is authorized by a well-established tradition. Halle and Keyser demonstrate that the concept meter is rooted, in classical times, in a theory which aims to involve both of music and poetry. They continue, this theory displayed rhythms as infinite series of repeated patterns, in which the repeated unit was drawn from a limited set of possible feet. As a matter of functioning, these infinite patterns (in music or poetry), are submitted to be metered (or measured) depending on the fact that the finite sections had to be excised.

Liberman (1975) simplifies that the laws overriding how such cuts could be established, and what further changes in the resulting pattern were possible, organized the *metrics* theory. In addition, Liberman states that the rules, controlling the measured association patterns with strings of words, are included for convenience under the same rubric.

Halle and Vegnaud (1981) illustrate that it is based on distinguished levels (or tiers); each tier has a particular constituent. They continue, the first level contains syllables; the second involves feet, and the third ones covers the phonological word. They show that the first tier is the represented as a cornerstone, due to the fact that the other tiers are constructed. They add, Stress is submitted to be connected only to the rhymes of Syllables.

According to Liles (1971), whether the rime carries a tense, a lax vowel or a diphthong is a critical issue for the placement of stress as exemplified by Liles (ibid) below:

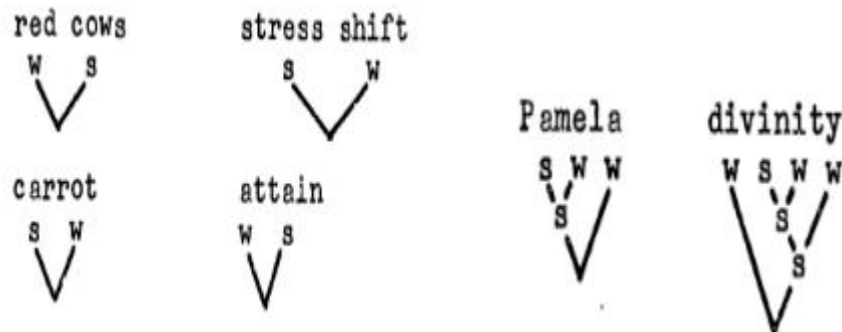
| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Astonish /ə stə nɪʃ/ | maintain /meɪn teɪn/ |
| Purple /pɜː pəl/ | secure /sə kjʊː/ |

Table no. (1) is adopted from Liles (ibid)

According to the first column, Liles clarifies that the words end in syllables, which carry a lax vowel; so, the stress takes place on the penultimate syllables. In the second ones, Liles shows that the words end in syllables involving a long vowel and diphthong (or tensed rhymes), so they attract stress.

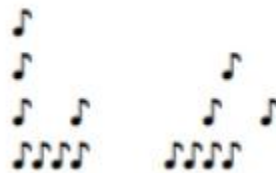
As a matter of fact, Liberman (1975) states that the metrical system composed of two complementary parts metrical patterns (trees) and metrical grids, is obtained from the establishing law of Metrical Phonology Theory.

Hayes (1980) simplifies that in a tree, the relative prominence is exposed by utilizing binary branching structures, where each pair is labeled as S (strong) and W (weak) as exemplified below:



Hayes (1980) shows that the tree can deal with disyllabic words as well as multisyllabic ones where non-terminal components and the syllables specification for relative strength are allowed.

Hayes continues, the relational positional features rather than inherent ones are described by the node label S and W. In addition, the defect of metrical patterns is distinguished by capturing constituent structures only and excluding rhythmic ones. For Hayes, this stimulates the metrical grids production adopted in the metrical analysis. And in fact, rhythmically, the metrical grid fulfills the requirement of music; it divides the time intervals in a way that is accustomed with a musical notation, as shown in the following one:



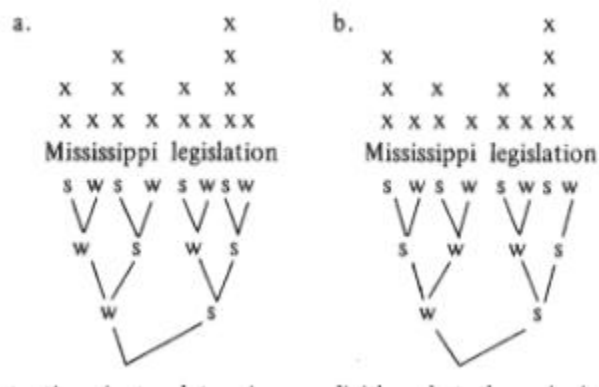
Musical note no. (1) is adopted from Hayes (ibid)

Lieberman (1975) simplifies that the note values show a suitable way of indicating stress on different levels at which divisions, subdivisions, and subdivisions, etc. of a of time interval occur (commonly, the non-binary divisions are permitted. Lieberman adds, as well as time, the grid is considered as endless where any position in it can be chosen to begin with, and sequences are available backward, forward, up, or down the hierarchy.

Furthermore, as put by Hayes and Puppel (1985), the grid represents an abstract set of units arranged in columns and rows. They add, the columns height embodies the stress prominence of Syllables, while the rows represent the rhythmic beats series on distinct levels.

According to Lieberman and Prince (1977), in terms of grids, the one-to-one correspondence between the components of a terminal set and Syllables is compulsory.

As shown by Halle and Vegnaud (1981), the cross-linking, in grids, is not allowed, so that the stress on the first grid is connected with the first Syllable, and the stress on the second ones is connected with the second Syllable, not to the first or third, etc. (Halle and Vegnaud, Ibid). ‘Mississippi legislation’, by Halle and Vegnaud, is considered as an instance for a metrical grid projecting from a metrical tree:



Crystal (2008) defines the conceptual terminology of prosody as “a term functioned in suprasegmental phonetics and phonology to indicate cooperatively to the variations in loudness, pitch, tempo and rhythm”. Sometimes, For Crystal, it is used lightly as a ‘suprasegmental’ synonym, but in a narrower sense it denotes merely to the above variables, the outstanding suprasegmental properties being termed paralinguistic. Crystal argues that the narrow sense is adjacent to the traditional function of the concept ‘prosody’, where it denoted to the features and analyses of structural verse. Crystal sheds light on the fact that the term **prosodic properties** is favored in linguistics, partly to permit a difference to be drawn with the traditional function. In some studies on phonology, Crystal states that the concept **sentence prosody** is functioned together to the intonational group, the rhythm of phrase pattern and more general properties of prosodic phrasing.

Firth (1957) has proposed the theory of phonology (or what’s termed **the prosodic phonology**) by treating the prosody as a ‘count noun’, and providing special status. According to such an approach, it is illustrated from phonematic unit: the latter is a segmental unit, such as like the vowel or consonant, though **prosodies** are properties encompassing over the utterance stretches (one says of ‘sentence prosodies’, ‘syllable prosodies’, etc.) – Firth (ibid) demonstrates that a notion which took on a more focal role in later thinking and also the concept of ‘semantic prosody’ in lexicology. Moreover, not only would stress, pitch and juncture patterns be included under the prosody heading, but such properties would also be represented as secondary articulations, e.g. nasalization or lip-rounding, when these are functioned to be accounted for phonotactic limitations, or to describe the grammatical structure (such as the concept of ‘vowel harmony’). Another Firth’s prosodic analysis feature is its polysystemic principle: it allows distinct phonological systems to be set up at distinct positions in grammatical, lexical or phonological structure: e.g. the divergences which take

place at the beginning of a word may not be the same as those which take place at the end position, and in this approach, this point is provided special attention in terms of phonemic phonology. Firth simplifies that the linguistic contrastive prosodic properties are frequently denoted to as ‘**prosodemes**’. In generative phonology, Crystal (2008) observes that the prosodic features are represented as one of the five main basic dimensions of speech sounds’ classification (the others being major class properties, manner of articulation properties, cavity properties and source properties). In recent times, Crystal shows that the concept has been applied to a morphological model in which non-linear phonological representations play an essential focal role. Using notation derived from autosegmental phonology, Crystal clarifies that the approach depends on the perspective that the notion about the segmental canonical pattern in a structure (the **prosodic template**) that is signified on a distinct tier from information about the kinds of segments occurring in the form. According to the metrical phonology, Crystal demonstrates that one of the structural levels in a metrical tree is denoted as a ‘**prosodic level**’. As a matter of fact, in **prosodic morphology**, the concentration is specifically emphasized on the way in which phonological and morphological factors of linguistic form interact, and the conceptual term of prosody becomes more influential, as it is crystallized to determining the morphological template’s structure. Crystal argues that this approach denotes to the ‘**prosodic morphology hypothesis**’ (or as defined by Crystal by stating “the templates are defined in terms of the units in a **prosodic hierarchy** – mora, syllable, foot and **prosodic word**) and the notion of **prosodic circumscription** (the field to which the operations of morphology apply is circumscribed by prosodic as well as morphological criteria)”. Alternatively, Crystal (2008) clarifies that the p-structure (or ‘prosodic structure’) is considered as a level at which syntactic and phonological components are interacted, hand by hand with its own hierarchical organization of four domains – phonological word, phonological phrase, intonational phrase and utterance – the properties of which are recognized by **prosodic hierarchy theory** (here, ‘hierarchy’ denotes to a higher level of structural organization than in the case of prosodic morphology). For Crystal, some model of a prosodic hierarchy is presumed to be represented as most modern phonological frameworks.

Diley et. al, (2010) exemplify by stating that people share the instinct that the segmentally resembled phrases *cry sister nip* and *crisis turnip* /kraɪ sistə nɪp/ can be recognized depending on the prosodic interpretation that the speaker adopts. Schafer et. al (2005), Snedeker et. al. (2003) and Schafer (2000) illustrate that the sentences *Alex killed the man with a pistol* /æliks kild ðə mæn baɪ ðə pɪstl/ and *he asked the instructor who left* /hi æskt ðə ɪnstrʌktə hu: left/ have more than a literal meaning indication and the listeners (or hearers) can expose their intentions depending on their prosodies. Ward and Hirschberg (1985) and Kurumada et. al. (2014) shed light on the fact that the sentence prosody can frequently affect the conclusion of the hearer about the speaker’s speeches, attitudes, beliefs and intention; for instance, the sentence *he looks like a lion* /hi: lʊks laɪ ə ‘laɪən/ when uttering by stressing the finalist word, it’s represented as a canonical declarative prosodic contour and is presented as an affirmative interpretation supportance (he looks like a lion, and surely he is one). In parallel, when uttering the syllable looks lʊks/ with a rising intonation, accordingly, the rising intonation indicates a contradictory (or negative) interpretation (he looks like a lion (but truly it isn’t one)). For that, the sentence prosody is intimately closely associated with the various

linguistic structures of the sentence. This evaluation arranges for some recent advances summary that has been established by the prosody contribution in terms of language comprehension. Due to the historical background of the prosodic study, Dehan (2015) shows that it prolongs until the mid 1970s. Dehan continues that little agreement had been reached on what regulates a speaker's choice in terms of rhythm and intonation; since then, Dehan shows that a widely accepted framework has developed. In accordance with the 'autosegmental-metrical' theory, Goldsmith (1990) and Shattuck and Turk (1996) clarify that the pitch, loudness, and rhythm variations of an utterance are considered as the phonetic understanding of the theoretical structure composing the phonological objects. As a matter of precision, Goldsmith (1990) and Shattuck and Turk (1996) show that the utterance intonation, or its tune, has two types of disconnected elements. Pitch accents are tonal objects that are related to particular syllables and that mark them as stressed. Pitch accents are regarded as properties of words. Edge tones, alternatively, are pitch movements that mark the right edge of constituents. They add, the edge tones fields are the constituents they mark. They demonstrate that both types of tonal elements are further identified by their level, 'low' (L) or 'high' (H), as opposed to their configurations (for instance 'fall' or 'rise'). Then Goldsmith (ibid) and Shattuck and Turk (ibid) simplify that because the F0 quantities that these elements can take are variable (an essential consequence of assuming two levels), they show that the tonal elements are described as local F0 'peaks' or 'valleys' whose particular phonetic quantities depend on aspects represented an orthogonal to their phonological categorization (such as the emphasis degree or the utterance position). For Goldsmith (ibid) and Shattuck and Turk (ibid), the discrete phonetic elements are anticipated to be connected with one another by interpolating or other simple principles.

As a result, by applying the auto-segmental-metrical framework, Goldsmith (ibid) and Shattuck and Turk (ibid) clarify that a complete theory should identify the tonal elements inventory and principles of rules series concerning how a sequence of these abstract, discrete elements are translated into a continuous F0 contour.

Ladd and Morton (1997) and Ladd and Schepman (2003) state that the domain has not reached a consensus concerning either of these aspects. They show that there exists a specific disagreement on how to agree whether an utterance's F0 contour portion is related to a tone or is simply a transition, how to decide whether a pitch accent consists of a single target or two (i.e., a bi-tonal pitch accent), and whether the pitch range of the F0 contour plays a central role accordingly. They add, for example, there is much deliberation of whether the F0 range that describes the rising onset in a pitch accent (such as low or medium in the speaker's pitch range) can be taken to identify a phonological dissimilarity between two accent kinds, L+H* vs. H*, or whether the range of pitch marks gradient, non-phonological variations.

According to Dilley and Brown (2007) and Dilley (2010), the tonal element classification as Low or High is also argumentative. Though the High pitch accents have been loosely identified as local F0 peaks related to accented syllables, moreover, the Low pitch accents as local F0 valleys, there is no consensus on describing such a locality.

As put by Gussenhoven (1999) and Gussenhoven (2006), it is still an open question whether all intonational types are described through discrete phonological elements or if some may be taken by the physical dimension's continuous variation (e.g., the pitch accent alignment with the vowel of accented syllable).

As clarified by Gussenhoven (1984), Ladd (2008) and Steedman (2014), an assumption shared by all intonational and prosodic phonological studies is that the discrete tonal elements express meaning (entitled as ‘the linguist’s theory of intonational meaning’). Ladd (ibid) says “the prosodic elements, alone or combined with other elements to form a tune and in conjunction with the other linguistic structures of the sentence and a rich pragmatic system, are assumed to give rise to meaning as we experience it”.

As a result for the assumption that tonal elements are represented as discrete kinds that carry discrete meaning, Hirschberg and Ward (1992) and Ladd and Morton (1997) shed light on the fact that an approach to founding the inventory of such kinds has inquired showing that the sentence interpretation changes as a function of its prosodic features. They continue, however, a meaning contrast (such as doubt or suspicion intonation) is not synonymous with a phonological dissimilarity because such a dissimilarity can emerge from contrasting two quantities positioned on a continuous dimension.

In fact, many phonologists and prosodicians such as Pierrehumbert and Steele (1989), Ladd and Morton (ibid), Braun et. al. (2006), Dilley and Brown (2007) and Dilley (2010) sometimes find it more productive to concentrate on the phonetic structures that an utterance can acquire and tease apart phonetic from phonological variations.

As put by Backman et. al. (2005), Pierrehumbert (1980) has adopted the transcriptive framework system which is entitled as ‘Tones and Break Indices’ (or TOBI). TOBI is defined by Pierrehumbert as “an ongoing approach program rather than a set of ‘rules’ cast in stone for all time”. Pierrehumbert shows its quantity by stating that it’s fruitful as a communal corpus inventory tool even in its current actual state. Pierrehumbert continues, through categorized corpus and inter-transcriber agreement studies, that it testifies and builds theoretical claims (such as stress movement, accent and word semantic weight, the accent role in pronoun resolution, the discourse structure and its markers, to train the intonational expert and synthesis system and to understand better the weakness and strength of the underlying phonological theories).

Pierrehumbert (1980) lists down five main principles of such an approach program as follows:

1. The conventions are as precise as possible, knowledge given the current state. For Pierrehumbert, Preferably, they will be relied on a huge and long-built body of approach in intonational phonology, pragmatics, discourse analysis and dialectology for the language variety, but at the very least, they are would be depending on a rigorous analysis of the intonational phonology.
2. The permanent record of the speech signal with a symbolic record wouldn’t be replaced in terms of the conventions. Pierrehumbert crystalizes that an electronic recording of the transcribed utterance is an important element of a fulfilled transcription of ToBI framework.
3. The conventions are efficive. Pierrehumbert simplifies that they do not waste the transcriber’s time by demanding the transcriber to symbolically mark non-distinctive pitch falls and rises that can be taken out from the signal automatically, or anything else that could be adopted from resources such as online pronunciation dictionaries. Pierrehumbert adds, no one should transcribe expectable categorical characteristics of prosody; such as stress, nuclear pitch accent.

4. The conventions are teachable (or learnable). Pierrehumbert shows that their use (or function) is not limited to a few phonologists to do the transcription. Consequently, there must be a freely accessible manual for learning the system to new transcribers, with many recorded instances of transcribed utterances graded from simple to sophisticated.

5. The conventions are used and maintained consistently across transcription sites. Therefore, in a ToBI framework system development course, Pierrehumbert demonstrates that there must be rigorous tests of intertranscriber consistency, and there should be an agreed-upon center for maintaining the standard with periodic rechecks and assessment of any projected revisions. Dahan (2015) sheds light on the fact that the sentence prosodic structure is represented as an independent representation which is related to the sentence's other linguistic structures. It is via these relationships that prosody involves in the sentence's meaning. However, For Dahan, the prosody role has been abstracted, and subsequently investigated, differently for different linguistic structures. Dahan argues that these disparities signify that the labor division that prosodicians have largely assumed between prosody and other linguistic structures markers of the sentence. Syntactically, as clarified by Dahan, the structural establishment is presented in accordance with the linguistic the presented sentence elements and the grammar, which commands both how these elements gather into phrases and how these phrases associate with one another; when the sentence is uttered, the prosodic phrasing may support determining which of those relationships is envisioned. For that, the prosody is terminalized as 'complementing syntactic knowledge'. For that, Dahan simplifies that the sentence information structure, for instance, the way by which the sentence associate with the discourse status contextual terms, the content, the attention and intentional states of the discourse participants rely on the prominence pattern (and possibly phrasing) that the speaker decides to articulate. Mattys and Melhorn (2007) clarify that in English, other devices are available (e.g., pronouns or syntactic construction) but the prosody role in marking the information structure is considerable. They argue that here, the prosody involvement to the sentence's information structure is presented as principal, as compared with supportive, and the elements of prosody are often regarded as conveying meaning that stands on the structure of information directly. As far as the sentence phonology is regarded, Mattys and Melhorn (ibid) state that the situation is a little more sophisticated since the structure includes many aspects; considering the segmental content establishment of a sentence, one from which the elements of morpho-syntactic domain arise, prosody is commonly shown as having an assistant character.

The prosodic impact of utterance phonological representation

As simplified by Miller (2001), the significant prosodic impact has long been known that many temporal indications to phonemic contrasts (for instance, the length of the delay between the burst and the vocalic vibrations onset, an acoustic connection to the voicing contrast between the stop consonants) are relatively interpreted to the global temporal characteristics, such as the speaking frequency or syllable length.

As clear as Crystal, Miller (2001) crystalizes that the phenomenon could be presented as a hypothetically confined early stage of processing, one in which the acoustic signal is transcribed into a linear string of phonemic elements. According to Miller, such

phonemic representation could be claimed that it organizes the basis of sole for constructing the morpho-syntactic and lexical utterance composition. Miller adds, this perspective is still commonly held, despite substantial evidence for its shortcomings.

Lehiste (1960) and Cole et. al. (1980) shed light on the fact that the phonemic string assumption that is devoid of any phonetic syllable marking, word, and phrase boundaries disagrees with these cues role in assisting with segmenting and analyzing the segmental string into linguistic units. Cho (2011) states “if prosody plays such a central role in discussing a variation of fine-grained system in the individual speech sounds production, it’s expected that the listeners can get benefit of the prosodic constituents marking in terms of the process of isolating linguistic constituents”. Accordingly, Salverda and Dahan (2003) and Salverda and Dahan (2007) simplify that the prosodic phrasing could facilitate an utterance segmentation into the units of size of word by choosing the analysis of input that admires the prosodic-lexical alignment and disrespects one that violates it. for them. In fact, this hypothesis has now received sufficient empirical maintenance.

Furthermore, Dilley and McAuley (2008) and Heffner et. al. (2013) show that some stressed patterns (or ‘rhythm’ specifically) may assist the segmentation; or what’s called by Dilley and McAuley (ibid), Heffner et. al. (ibid) and many other phonologists as ‘The Distal Prosody’.

Due to such a type of prosody, people tend to build an expectancy on how syllables are collected depending on the tonal alternation pattern that precedes them and this expectancy affects how they observe the existing collecting, beyond and above the local acoustic-phonetic cues that may cue collecting.

Mattys et. al. (2005) and Mattys and Melhorn (2007) shed light on the fact for the existence of several mechanism accounts to proposing that the prosodic utterance affects on the segmentation. Accordingly, they simplify that the acoustic phonetic features that arise from the prosodic structure at word junctures (such as glottalization, aspiration, lengthening, etc.), are combined with other prompts, such as syntactic, lexical, and phonotactic knowledge to generating the segmentation that fits the set of prompts. Mattys et. al. (ibid) and Mattys and Melhorn (ibid) exemplify when stating that the syllable prompts lengthening which provided the context is interpreted as a word boundary prompt. They add, this approach suggests that the utterance phonetics directly mark word boundaries.

Salverada et. al. (2003) and Cho et. al. (2007) propose another alternative account by demonstrating that the phonetic prompts to the structure of prosody affect the perceived utterance lexical composition of the *indirectly*, by founding a prosodic structure. They continue, such a structure is established equivalent to the phonemic and the utterance lexical analysis. Dependently, in this approach, they shed light on specific phonetic features, such as the syllable and articulation lengths, cause listeners (or hearers) to theorize elements of prosodic structure. They also demonstrate that such a structure of prosody would then serve as a supportance source for several parsing of the segmental string abover others. Salverada et. al. (ibid) and Cho et. al. (ibid) exemplify by stating that the posited existence of an intonational boundary of a phrase would prefer lexical hypotheses whose edges are aligned with the boundary and disfavor those that overlap it.

As a matter of precision, Dilley and Pitt (2010) clarify whether or not people perceive a short function word existence in a phrase based on the perceived duration of the speech

fragment including the syllable that preceded the word site of potential function and the function word itself, if formed. They continue, if the fragment was perceived as too long to be a single syllable provided a rate of speech, a word of function was posited. In contrary, if the fragment was perceived as too short to including a word of function, its existence was mostly undetected. As put by Baese-Berk et. al. (2014), the perception of Duration could have been prompted from a long-range speaking rate estimate, but the effect was also represented as sensitive to a very local perturbation. In accordance with this perspective, Baese-Berk et. al. (ibid) show that it should be concluded that the utterance segmental representation is partially dealt by the spectral prompts of those segments. They demonstrate that equally essential are the utterance temporal features to which listeners attempt to attribute lexical content. Moreover, it is indefinite how this result can arise from a model in which the structures of phoneme and prosody of an utterance are individually evaluated. Baese-Berk et. al. (2010)

As stated by Dahan (2015), primarily and generally, the speech perception Bayesian accounts are compatible with this result and with an approach in which the utterance phonological structure rely on the abstract establishment of prosodic structure. For Dahan, in terms of the Bayesian outline, the listener's goal can be terminalized as discussing away the data (or the utterance phonetics) by choosing what is most likely to have generated them. Dahan continues, the Listeners (or hearers) evaluate how perfect a given phonological (both prosodic and segmental) representation accounts for the utterance phonetics relied on the possibility that this representation would produce the utterance.

McMurray and Jongman (2011) and Kleinschmidt and Jaeger (2015) simplify that the key aspect is that the utterance analysis in terms of its prosodic and segmental composition is performed instantaneously and considering the impact that one imposes on the other. Accordingly, they clarify that the dissimilarity between top-down and bottom-up processing is unclear since some loop form happens between the data (which gives rise to hypotheses set that is relied on a generative mechanism) and the linguistic knowledge (expectations against which the evaluated data can be adjusted to include contextual information, or in other words, it's a powerful mechanism to account for the fact that the same phonetic prompt can give rise to various percepts across contexts).

The effectiveness of prosody in terms of syntactic structure

As a matter of fact, Price et. al. (1991) clarify that the sentence meaning doesn't merely depend on its linguistic elements identity but also on how these associate with one another. Price et. al. demonstrate that the words have syntactic features and the language grammar of requires restrictions and constraints on the way words associate with one another. However, Price et. al. exemplify the constituent-structure ambiguities presence by saying that strings of lexical elements can syntactically associate with one another in several different ways, proposes a prosodic role in modifying ambiguity in the structure relate to a linguistic string element.

Watson and Gibson (2005), Selkirk (2011) and Steedman (2014) propose several accounts to illustrate the prosodic role in forming a syntactic structure of sentence. They show that the prosodic constituency is closely associated but not isomorphic to syntactic

constituency. In addition, they propose a theory of how speakers determine the prosodic phrasing of a sentence given its syntax should account for both the alignment and the divergence between the two structures.

In fact, Frazier et. al. (2006) substitutes the proposed accounts into two broadly defined Approaches; firstly, the listeners (or hearers) originate the syntactic-constituent boundaries directly from the phonetics that result from prosodic-phrase boundaries. Secondly, for, Frazier et. al. (ibid), there exists little to non- associating for the interpretation of prosodic phrasing to the factors that influenced its production. In addition, these acoustic prompts are interpreted locally. This perspective is exemplified in the ‘Anti-attachment’ hypothesis anticipated by Watson and Gibson (2005)

In accordance with such a hypothesis, Watson and Gibson (ibid) simplify that the existence of the prosodic boundary is understood as “a powerful prompt not to attach the upcoming word to the last potential attachment site before the boundary”. Watson and Gibson argue that this strategy is valid since it indicates the dependency between the phrase of intonational boundaries and the syntactic constituency. Snedeker and Trueswell (2003) and Snedeker and Casserly (2010) pioneer a similar perspective by regarding this class of accounts is rooted in prompt integration approaches, which dominate research on visual and auditory perception. Massaro (1998) states that the acoustic correlates related to the prosodic boundaries are regarded as probabilistic prompts to syntactic structure, which can be gathered with other prompts such as the syntactic features of the linguistic consistencies. Ladd (2008) shows the fact that this position has been criticized based on theoretically and empirically grounds. Theoretically, First, Ladd notifies against supposing that an abstract Structure (such as syntax) can be directly determined in the phonetics of an utterance since the relationship between phonetics and syntax is mediated by a structure of prosody, which itself indicates effects of other aspects of the sentence. Lad exemplifies by stating that the semantic contrast between a beach /ə bi:tʃ/ and a peach /ə pi:tʃ/ exists in the delay between the burst of the initial stop consonant and the onset of the vocal fold vibrations.

Empirically, Clifton et. al. (2006) simplify that there is good empirical evidence that the prosodic boundaries and their phonetic correlates are not interpreted locally but in relation with other aspects of the prosodic structure of utterance. Clifton et. al. (ibid) exemplify by stating that a boundary effect at a structural ambiguity point has an attachment at that site relies on the existence and/or other boundaries’ size in the utterance. For that, using sentences such as “Ann learned that John telephoned when Arthur visited” /æn lɜ:nd ðæt dʒɒn telɪfəʊnd wen ɑ:θə vɪzɪtɪd/, the tendency to attach the clause “When Arthur visited” to the most recent verb (causing in an interpretation in which “John telephoned after Arthur visited”) decreases with an intermediate phrase boundary existence before “when Arthur visited”, but significantly more so when this break is the only one in the sentence compared with when a break is also exist before “that John telephoned”.

As shown by Snedeker and Casserly (2010), when phrased in accordance with prompt-based approach, one in which prosodic breaks function as prompts to constituency of syntax, the phenomenon just described is sophisticated to be accounted for since the prosodic break inserted before the relative clause “that John telephoned” is not predicted to have any effectiveness on deciding between the two syntactic constituencies: Indeed, the relative clause attachment remains the same in each of the interpretations considered.

Frazier et. al (2006) and Clifton et. al. (2006) illustrate their findings by suggesting that listeners (or hearers) infer a prosodic boundary with respect to the existence and the preceding boundaries size at syntactically relevant sites. However, they support for a perspective entitled as ‘the rational speaker hypothesis’, in which hearers depend on what they know to be the linguistic and non-linguistic constraints of prosodic structures speaker’s production to derive the underlying causes of the observed structure of prosody. They claim that this approach assumes an intimate dependency between the production of prosodic structure and its interpretation.

As put by Clifton et. al. (ibid), this perspective is also based on a Bayesian approach of interpretation and perception in which listeners / observers infer the underlying hypotheses or structures depend on how perfect the hypotheses expect the observed data. Clifton et. al. concentrate on the fact that observers fit multiple and interdependent hypotheses instantaneously. Dependently, they show that the listeners discuss away the prosodic structure of the utterance by assigning it to the linguistic structures and other non-linguistic aspects known to affect it (such as the syntactic, phonological, and information structures).

Clifton et. al. (2006) demonstrate that since all these aspects attribution is performed simultaneously, the illustration for a given prosodic event in terms of, for instance, the constituency of syntax, is not assumed to remain the same if its existence can be illustrated by the effect of other factors (such as the constituent size of phonology). Clifton et. al. exemplify by showing that while a boundary of prosodic-phrase before the phrase “last evening” in “Ann learned that John telephoned last evening” /æn lɜːnd ðæt dʒɒn telɪfəʊnd lɑːst iːvniŋ/ increases the propensity to interpret the last phrase as attaching to the main clause, such as “Ann learned”, the existence of the same boundary before the longer phrase “last evening after the meeting” has no such an effect. For this reason, Clifton et. al. argue that the boundary of prosodic-phrase is accredited to the phonological size of the phrase and not to its structural relationship with the immediately preceding attachment site.

According to the rational speaker hypothesis, Brown et. al. (2015) clarify that the structure can be thought of as a self-governing representation over which linguistic and non-linguistic obliges exert their impact at the same time. In addition, this approach shows that the question of how listeners use prosody to derive structural information cannot be uttered independently of the prosodic role to the phonological recovery and semantic information. Indeed, as stated by Brown et. al., listeners are representing all linguistic forms and structures simultaneously when ‘illustrating’ the utterance prosodic structure.

The effectiveness of prosody in terms of information structure

Féry and Krifka (2008) and Steedman (2014) crystalize that the utterance information structure seizes the features by which the utterance associate with the context due to the discourse status of its content of the intentional and attentional states of discourse participants. Steedman adds, this structure is closely linked to what is termed as ‘a common ground’, for instance, “a propositions set that a given conversational participant expects to be communally agreed upon for the conversational purposes”. Féry and Krifka (ibid) state that the information structure encompasses a number of dimensions or properties, which can be expressed by the grammatical devices use (such as prosody).

Féry and Krifka (2008) notify that the prosodic contribution to a sentence's information structure starts from the prosodic contribution to syntax or phonology. Accordingly, they clarify that the prosodic role in conveying aspects of the sentence's information structure is conjectured; The prosodic role, and accent (specifically the accent placement), related to the sentence to its discourse context can be readily demonstrated. Wagner and Watson (2010) exemplify that the utterance *John would like some TEA* /dʒɒn wʊd laɪk sʌm ti:/ (with an accent on TEA is ill-fitted to the preceding question *Would John like some Tea?*

Schafer et. al. (2000) give another example for the evidence of prosodic role such as *She questioned the professor who left* /ʃi kwɛstʃənd ðə prəfəsə hu left/ whose interpretation changes whether the *wh* question carries a pitch accent or not, or in sentences such as *the propeller of the plane that the mechanic was carefully examining* /ðə prəpələ əv ðə pleɪn ðæt ðə məkənɪk wəz keəfəli ɪgzæmɪnɪŋ(g)/, in which the relative clause attachment to the first or second noun in the complex noun phrase is modified by whether the first or second noun carried a pitch accent. Speer et. al. (1993) and Wagner and Watson (ibid)

In accordance with the last example's case, Lee and Watson (2011) simplify that the pitch-accent effectiveness location on the attachment site of the relative clause has been illustrated by resorting to the concept of 'salience'. Lee and Watson (ibid) define the latter term as "A relative clause that acts as a restrictive modifier of the noun phrase it relates to is more likely to modify a salient, as opposed to nonsalient, constituent". As a matter of precision, Aylett and Turk (2004) and Arnold et. al. (2013) show that this salience may in turn be associated with the 'predictability' notion. This notion is defined "a construct that some have suggested to account for the speaker's choice to extract a word more or less acoustically salient". Aylett and Turk (ibid) and Arnold et. al. (ibid)

They add, supporters of the predictability account of prominence, however, often link their work to the structural information literature. Therefore, it is blurred whether predictability of the word is a concept that covers what linguists have defined as information structure, or if it is a dimension that seizes changeability left unexplained by information structure.

Dahan (2015) sheds light on the fact that there exists a sophistication in navigating the literature on information structure and prosody belong to in the terminology, often puzzling, that the linguists have used to describe the information structure dimensions. In fact, Kruijff-Korbayova and Steedman (2003) characterize the structure along two independent dimensions; Firstly, it differentiates the utterance part that associates it with the current discourse and the common ground of interlocutors (such as the theme) from the utterance part that advances the discourse (or 'rheme' to be specific). Secondly, they state that the dimension is represented as the factor that crystalizes a contrast between the utterance actual part content and those alternatives that the context (implicitly or explicitly) makes accessible.

In fact, this structure is denoted by Rooth (1992) as *contrast* or *kontrast* /kɒntrɑːst/. Rooth shows that the term 'contrast' is rooted in the alternative Semantics which proposes that contrast presents element alternatives presupposition in contrast, these alternatives being presented in or accommodated by the context. Rooth adds, a proposition or an entity that is not represented as in contrast is understood to be in background.

As shown by Katz and Selkirk (2011) and Steedman (2014), a clear discrepancy between these two dimensions has not always been accomplished. They clarify that,

particularly, the mystifying is the function of the concept ‘focus’, which is often functioned to indicate to the contrast, as in the case of what’s termed as ‘the narrow focus,’ and frequently to rheme in the ‘broad focus’ case. Then they illustrate the phonological or semantic difference between ‘contrastive focus’ (where the set of alternatives is bounded and known) and ‘non-contrastive focus’ (where it is unbounded and/or unknown).

Kruijff-Korbayová and Steedman (2003) simplify that the ‘given / new’ difference, one that is sometimes functioned in the literature, is sophisticated to align with the two dimensions just mentioned. They show that the concept ‘given’ is commonly functioned to indicate to the sentence part that has been clearly mentioned in the current discourse and that is readily available. They continue, the personal pronouns are considered as grammatical devices functioned to indicate to such given, highly available entities. Thus, for them, the given constituents are corresponding with what we denote here as ‘themes’, and new constituents, ‘rhemes’. According to the personal pronoun, they crystalize that when it has a pitch accent, its referent is set in contrast with contextually-defined alternatives. Unfortunately, the concept ‘new’ and ‘given’ have also been functioned to indicate to those words assigning contrast or no contrast. Kruijff-Korbayová and Steedman (2003)

Breen et. al. (2010) shed light on an essential question such as (How can pitch-accent placement specify the theme/rheme and contrast/no-contrast dimensions? As a matter of understanding, they show that the relationship between prosody and information structure is crystalized by placing it in the context of a short narrative or a question. They exemplify by stating, For instance, a question context of the structure *What’s happening?* /wɒtʒ hæpənɪŋ/ is expected to be followed by an unforeseen, all-rheme, utterance. On the other hand, Breen et. al. (ibid) specify more questions related to wh-word by creating a discrepancy between the utterance part that responses the question and, as a result, adds information to the rheme and the utterance part that is actually a common ground part since it is uttered in the question (the theme). They exemplify as, for example, the question *Who cooked the chicken?* /hu: kʊkt ðə tʃɪkɪn/ preceding the utterance *John cooked the chicken* /dʒɒn kʊkt ðə tʃɪkɪn/ assigns the theme role to the phrase *cooked the chicken* and that of rheme to (John).

As put by Katz and Silkirk (2011), a few English intonation aspects and information structure are unquestionable due to the fact that in an all-rheme utterance, all phrases of non pronominal noun should contain pitch accents, regardless of their position in the sentence; the verbs, on the other hand, may or may not contain a pitch accent. They continue, when a sentence comprises a theme that was stated in the instantaneously preceding sentence and that is therefore represented as salient in the current discourse (for instance, given), whether or not the theme contains an accent or not based on its position relative to the rheme: It is commonly deaccented if it positions after the rheme, but optionally accented if before it.

In fact, (Dahan 2015) many scholars such as shows that the themes can also have accents if they are in a contrastive relationship with alternatives that the context has presented. They clarify that the rheme constituents are commonly accented, although which of their words can or should contain an accent is discussed.

For that, the theme / rheme discrepancy cannot be reduced to the existence vs. non-existence of accent. On the other hand, Calhoun (2010), Calhoun (2012) and Steedman (2014) propose that the accent placement carries contrast alone and is orthogonal to the rheme / theme discrepancy since both rhemes and themes can contain an accent.

Bock and Mazzella (1983) and Dahan et. al. (2002) shed light on excellent evidence that the pitch accent absence on a noun phrase (frequently termed ‘deaccenting’) is an indication that listeners (or hearers) instantaneously assimilate with (partial) information of segment to choose the noun referent in the set of entities that are highly salient in the discourse (‘given’).

On the contrary, they simplify that pitch accent existence on a noun is directly detected. However, the information status of the accented constituent that people deliberate differs as a function of what entities matching the information of segmental on the noun are available in the discourse and their respective stress: The referent of an accented noun phrase is not represented to be the most powerful entity, but it can be taken to be new a contrastive theme or(rheme) respectively.

If, as the evidence refers, the pitch accent existence does not carry the discrepancy between the (contrastive) theme and rheme, so the central question is that how can it be prosodically determined?

Jackendoff (1972), Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg (1990), Steedman (2014) claim that the opinions regarding such a question differ since they show that the discrepancy between rheme and theme is taken by the pitch accent type.

Due to Ito and Speer (2008), there exists a common agreement that H* accents specify rhemes, for instance, elements that carry information to be added to common ground.

As stated by Pierrehumbert and Hirschberg (1990), L+H* accents especially encode the contrast between the element that receives the accent and others in a relationship of set (or in a scale) with that element. They add, such an accent would be functioned when the speaker needs to highpoint the contrast between a thematic element and its alternatives.

As assumed by Steedman (2014), the discrepancy between H* and L+H* that belongs to the information structure, but creates a vary dissimilar claim. Steedman clarifies that any accent carries a contrast between the accented element and its alternatives as introduced by or inferred from the context. Steedman continues, the H* involve contrast with a set of alternatives on the rheme; in parallel, L+H* marks contrast on a theme.

As a matter of fact, Ito and Speer (2008) and Watson et. al. (2008) show that the contrastive aspect of the L+H* accent on themes has been especially assessed. Ito and Speer (ibid) exemplify by saying that the participants successive instructions to select objects from a large array structured in terms of objectkinds differing in their colors (for example, *Hang the white angel. After that, hang the BLACK angel* /hæŋ ðə waɪt eɪndʒl̩ ɑːftə ðæt hæŋ the blæk eɪndʒl̩). They concentrated on the fact that people’s eye gaze to the object array upon hearing the accented prenominal color adjective, and presented that when the adjective received an L+H* accent, people expected the same type object as the one they had just chosen more often than they did when the color adjective carried an H* accent.

As argued by Ito and Speer (ibid), the L+H* pitch accent was understood as suggesting a set composed of the group of objects considered by the entity of most salient, they exemplify as, the one most newly encountered, with the color adjective conveying the contrastive dimension. As a matter of embracing a radically different position, Katz and Selkirk (2011), Calhoun (2010) and Calhoun (2012) contend that the variances in the information status of accented constituents are not carried by the types of accents, but by their relative prominence.

From this perspective, in contrast with the tonal differences such as the existence and non-existence of pitch accent or the pitch accent type, the relative prominence is encoded in the utterance phonological representation specified in the metrical grid, and can seize gradient differences, which in turn are phonetically realized by the constituent duration of the pitch peak height. However, while Calhoun (2012) claims for greater prominence (and higher F0 peak) for rhemes, Katz and Selkirk (2011) suggest that (contrastive) themes are more prominent (and of longer duration) than rhemes. Thus, contrasting with categorical, distinctions is intriguing, remarks have supposed that rheme or theme constituents contain single nouns. Accordingly, the accent placement is forthright. However, constituents are likely to include various content words. Dahan (2015) sheds light on such a focal question such as How do speakers decide which content words must or may carry an accent? Or in other words, how do listeners (or hearers) distinguish the accented constituent scope if the grammar permits some content words of an accented constituent to skip accentuation?

As put by Selkirk (1984), (1986), Gussenhoven (1983) and Beckman (1996), the syntactic constraints on the relationship between accent placement and rheme / theme constituency (frequently termed ‘the focus structure’). Amidst other things, these approaches vary on whether the surface structure (for example., the phrases linear organization in the sentence) can force the focus structure mapping onto accent placement. As far as rhemes are concerned, Birch and Clifton (2002) clarify that an argument accent can project to its head, making accent on the head optional. Then, for Birch and Clifton (2002), this projection does not apply as readily to adjuncts.

In addition, Birch and Clifton (ibid) show that adjuncts position relative to their heads affects whether they may contain an accent. They continue, similar constraints of position apply to themes. They add, a projectional consequence of an accent to its constituent is that it becomes hard to distinguish an accent marking only the word it falls onto from one marking a whole constituent. Nooteboom and Kruyt (1987) and Breen et. al. (2010) propose that the accent type or other phonetic cues may disambiguate between these two interpretations, although evidence assisting the claim is ambiguous.

As stated by Steedman (2014), the prosodic phrasing, and not the placement of accent in interaction with syntactic constraints, marks the scope of the theme and rheme constituents. Welby (2003) shows that the experimental studies looking at the prosodic phrasing role on information structure have been limited because of the well-established role of prosodic phrasing on the marking of a sentence’s syntactic structure. Welby continues, since rheme and theme constituents are not essentially isomorphic with syntactic constituents as traditionally clarified, the sentence prosodic phrasing may be under the impact of multiple linguistic structures at the same time. Welby ensures that listeners’ task could be characterized as one in which the constraints that these structures can exert on prosodic phrasing should be represented simultaneously in order to illustrate the prosodic structure of the utterance.

Findings and results

1. Metrical Phonology (MP) is highly effective in analyzing and explaining English language prosody, **especially when it comes to** stress patterns, rhythm, and intonation.

2. Metrical Phonology **plays a central role in the** construction of English prosody **by providing a framework for organizing and analyzing** stress, rhythm, and intonational patterns.
3. **MP provides a** linguistic and hierarchical model **that aligns naturally with** metrical verse, **allowing poetry to be analyzed in terms of its** phonological stress system.
4. **The** main essential constituents of Metrical Phonology (MP) **are the foundational elements that structure** stress, rhythm, and prominence **in speech and verse.**

References

- Arnold J. and Tanenhaus M. Watson D. (2008) .Tic tac tok: Effects of predictability and importance on acoustic prominence in language production .*Cognition*.1557-1548 ‘
- Aylett M. and Turk A. (2004) .The smooth signal redundancy hypothesis: A functional explanation for relationships between redundancy, prosodic prominence, and duration in spontaneous speech .*Language and Speech*.56-31 ‘
- Puppel B. and Hayes S. (1985) .On the Rhythm Rule in Polish .*Advances in Nonlinear Phonology*.
- Hayes B. (1980) .*A Metrical Theory of Stress Rules*. PhD Dissertation .Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Liles B. .(1971) .*An Introductory Transformational Grammar* .USA: Prentice- Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J.
- Beckman M. (1996) .The parsing of prosody .*Language and Cognitive Processes*6-17 ‘
- Beckman M. and Pierrehumbert J. (1986) .Intonational structure in Japanese and English .*Phonology* ‘ .309-255
- Birch S. and Clifton J. (2002) .Focus, accent, and argument structure: Effects on language comprehension .*Language and Speech*.588-571 ‘
- Bolinger D. (1986) .*Intonation and its parts* .Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Bolinger D. (1989) .*Intonation and its uses* .Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Braun B. and Crocker M. Weber A. (2006) .Finding referents in time: Eye-tracking evidence for the role of contrastive accents .*Language and Speech*.392-367 ‘
- Brenier J., Gregory M., Girand C. and Jurafsky D. Bell A. (2009) .Predictability effects on durations of content and function words in conversational English .*Journal of Memory and Language*-92 الصفحات ‘ .111
- Brown M, Bibyk S, Pontillo D. and Tanenhaus M. Kurumada C. (2014) .Is it or isn’t it: Listeners make rapid use of prosody to infer speaker meanings .*Cognition*.342-335 ‘
- Calhoun S. (2012) .The theme/rheme distinction: Accent type or relative prominence ?*Journal of Phonetics*.349-329 ‘
- Carlson K, Clifton Jr C & ,Frazier L. Schafer A. (2000) .Focus and the interpretation of pitch accent: Disambiguating embedded questions .*Language and Speech*.105-75 الصفحات ‘
- Carlson K. and Clifton C. Frazier L. (2006) .Prosodic phrasing is central to language comprehension .*Trends in Cognitive Sciences*.249-244 ‘
- Carlson K. and Frazier L. Clifton J. (2002) .Informative prosodic boundaries .*Language and Speech* ‘ .114-87 الصفحات
- Carlson K. and Frazier L. Clifton J. (2006) .Tracking the what and why of speakers ’choices: Prosodic boundaries and the length of constituents .*Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*.861-854 ‘
- Carter J., Clifton J. and Frazier L. Schafer A. (1996) .Focus in relative clause construal .*Language and Cognitive Processes*.163-135 ‘
- Cho T. (2011) .Laboratory phonology .*The Continuum companion to phonology* .(368-343 الصفحات) ‘ , London: Continuum International.
- Crystal D. (2008) .*A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* 6th edition .(Blackwell Publishing Press.

Dahan D.) .September-October, 2015 .(Prosody and language comprehension .*WIREs COGNITIVE SCIENCE*.

Dahan D. and McQueen J. Salverda A .(2003) .The role of prosodic boundaries in the resolution of lexical embedding in speech comprehension .*Cognition*.89-51 ‘

Dahan D., Tanenhaus M., Crosswhite K., Masharov M. and McDonough J. Salverda A .(2007) .Effects of prosodically modulated sub-phonetic variation on lexical competition .*Cognition*.476-466 ‘

Dilley L .(2010) .Pitch range variation in English tonal contrasts: continuous or categorical ?*Phonetica* ‘ .305-283

Dilley L. and Brown M .(2007) .Effects of pitch range variation of F0 extrema in an imitation task . *Journal of Phonetics*.551-523 ‘

Dilley L. and Heffner C .(2013) . The role of F0 alignment in distinguishing intonation categories . *Journal of Speech Sciences*.67-3 ‘

Dilley L. and McAuley D .(2008) .Distal prosodic context affects word segmentation and lexical processing .*Journal of Memory and Language*.311-294 ‘

Dilley L. and Pitt M .(2010) .Altering context speech rate can cause words to appear or disappear . *Psychological Science*.1670-1664 ‘

Dilley L., McAuley J. and Pitt M. Heffner C .(2013) .when cues combine: How distal and proximal acoustic cues are integrated in word segmentation .*Language and Cognitive processes*.1302-1275 ‘

Fedorenko E., Wagner M. and Gibson E. Breen M .(2010) .Acoustic correlates of information structure . *Language and Cognitive Processes*.1098-1044 ‘

Féry C. and Krifka M .(2008) .Information structure .Van Sterkenburg P ‘.*Unity and diversity of languages* .(136-123) Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Goldsmith J .(1990) .*Autosegmental and metrical Phonology* .Oxford ‘UK: Blackwell.

Gussenhoven C .(1983) .*A semantic analysis of the nuclear tones of English* .Indiana: Indiana University Linguistics Club.

Gussenhoven C . .(1984) .*On the grammar and semantics of sentence accents* .Dordrecht: Foris.

Gussenhoven C .(2006) .Experimental approaches to establishing discreteness of intonational contrasts . *Methods in Empirical Prosody Research*.334-321 ‘

Heffner C., Dilley L., Pitt M., Morrill T. and McAuley J. Baese-Berk M .(2014) .Long-term temporal tracking of speech rate affects spoken-word recognition .*Psychological Science*.1553-1546 ‘

Hirschberg J. and Shattuck-Hufnagel S. Beckman M .(2005) .The original ToBI system and the evolution of the ToBI framework .*Towards Prosodic Typology*.54-9 ‘

Hirschberg J. and Ward G .(1992) .The influence of pitch range, duration, amplitude, and spectral features on the interpretation of L*+H LH .%*Journal of Phonetics*.251-241 ‘

Hirschberg J. and Ward G .(1985) .Implicating uncertainty: The pragmatics of fall-rise intonation . *Language*.776-747 ‘

Steele S. and Pierrehumbert J. .(1989) .Categories of tonal alignment in English .*Phonetica*.196-181 ‘

Bock J. and Mazzella J. .(1983) .Intonational marking of given and new information: Some consequences for Comprehension .*Memory and Cognition*.76-64 ‘

Jackendoff R .(1972) .*Semantic interpretation in generative Grammar* .Cambridge: MA: The MIT Press.

Jakimik J. and Cooper W. Cole R .(1980) .Segmenting speech into words .*The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*.1332-1323 ‘

Katz J. and Selkirk E .(2011) .Contrastive focus vs. discourse-new: evidence from phonetic prominence in English .*Language*.816-771 ‘

Kleinschmidt D. and Jaeger T .(2015) .Robust speech perception: Recognize the familiar, generalize to the similar, and adapt to the novel .*Psychological Review*.203-148 ‘

Kleinschmidt D. and Jaeger T .(2015) .Robust speech perception: Recognize the familiar, generalize to the similar, and adapt to the novel .*Psychological Review*.203-148 ‘

- Kochanski G, Grabe E. and Rosner B. Braun B .(2006) .Evidences for attractors in English intonation . *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*.4015-4006 ،
- Kruijff-Korabayová I. and Steedman M .(2003) .Discourse and Information Structure .*Journal of Logic, Language and Information*.259-249 ،
- Ladd D .(2008) .*Intonational Phonology* .Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ladd D. and Morton R .(1997) .The perception of intonational emphasis: continuous or categorical ? *Journal of Phonetics*.342-313 ،
- Ladd D. and Schepman A“ .(2003) .Sagging transitions” between high pitch accents in English: Experimental evidence .*Journal of Phonetics*.112-81 ،
- Lee E. and Watson D .(2011) .Effects of pitch accents in attachment ambiguity resolution .*Language and Cognitive Processes*.297-262 ،
- Lehiste I .(1960) .An acoustic–phonetic study of internal open Juncture .*Phonetica*.54-5 ،
- Keyser and S. Halle M. (1971) .English Stress: Its Form, Its Growth, and Its Role in Verse .*Linguistic Society of America*.666-655 الصفحات 3 ،
- Prince and A. Liberman M. .(1977) .On Stress and Linguistic Rhythm .*Linguistic Inquiry*.336 -249 ،
- Vergnaud, J. and Halle M. “ .(1981) .Harmony Processes .*Crossing the Boundaries in Linguistics*.
- Khalifa M. .(2017) .*A Contrastive Metrical Analysis of Main Word Stress in English and Cairene Colloquial Arabic* .UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Liberman M. .(1975) .*The Intonational System of English. PhD Dissertation* .Massachusetts Institute Technology.
- Massaro D .(2002) .*erceiving talking faces: From speech perception to a behavioral principle* . Cambridge: MA: The MIT Press.
- Mattys S. and Melhorn J .(2007) .Sentential, lexical, and acoustic effects on the perception of word boundaries .*Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*.567-554 الصفحات ،
- Mattys SL, Vinke L. Dilley LC .(2010) .Potent prosody: Comparing the effects of distal prosody, proximal prosody, and semantic context on word segmentation .*Journal of Memory and Language*-274 ، 294
- McMurray B. and Jongman A .(2011) .What information is necessary for speech categorization? Harnessing variability in the speech signal by integrating cues computed relative to expectations . *Psychological Review*.246-219 ،
- McQueen J. and Cox E. Cho T .(2007) .Prosodically driven phonetic detail in speech processing: The case of domain-initial strengthening in English .*Phonetica*.243-210 ،
- Miller J .(2001) .Mapping from acoustic signal to phonetic category: Internal category structure, context effects and speeded categorization .*Language and Cognitive processes*.690-683 ،
- Nakatani L. and Dukes K .(1977) .Locus of segmental cues for word juncture .*The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*.719-714 ،
- Nooteboom S. and Kruyt J .(1987) .Accents, focus distribution, and the perceived distribution of given and new information: An experiment .*The Journal of Acoustical Society of America*.1524-1512 ،
- Ostendorf M., Shattuck-Hufnagel S. and Fong C. Price P .(1991) .The use of prosody in syntactic disambiguation .*The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*.2970-2956 ،
- Peperkamp S., Pallier C., Block E. and Mehler J. Christophe A .(2004) .Phonological phrase boundaries constrain lexical access I .*Journal of Memory and Language*.547-523 ،
- Pierrehumbert J . .(1980) .*The Phonology and Phonetics of English Intonation. PhD Thesis* .MIT.
- Pierrehumbert J. and Hirschberg J .(1990) .The meaning of intonational contours in the interpretation of discourse تأليف .Cohen P. Morgan J and Pollack M .*Intentions in communication* .(311-271) Cambridge: MA: The M.I.T. Press.
- Rooth M .(1992) .A theory of focus interpretation .*Natural Language Semantics*.116-75 ،
- Salverda A., Dilley L. and Tanenhaus M. Brown M .(2011) .Expectations from preceding prosody influence segmentation in online sentence processing .*Psychonomic Bulletin & Review*.1196-1189 ،

Salverda A., Gunlogson C. and Tanenhaus K. Brown M. (2015) .Interpreting prosodic cues in discourse context *Language .Cognition and Neuroscience*.166-149 ‘

Selkirk E .(2011) .The syntax-phonology interface .Riggle J. and Yu A. Goldsmith J ‘.*The Handbook of Phonological Theory* .(483-453) Oxford: Blackwell.

Selkirk E .(1984) .*Phonology and syntax: the relation between sound and structure* .Cambridge: MIT Press.

Selkirk E .(1986) .On derived domains in sentence Phonology .*Phonology*.405-371 ‘

Shattuck-Hufnagel S. and Turk A .(1996) .A prosody tutorial for investigators of auditory sentence processing *Journal f Psycholinguistic Research*.247-193 ‘

Snedeker J.and Casserly E .(2010) .Is it all relative? Effects of prosodic boundaries on the comprehension and production of attachment ambiguities .*Language and Cognitive Processes*-1234 ‘ .1264

Speer SR, Warren P. Schafer AJ .(2005) .Prosodic influences on the production and comprehension of syntactic ambiguity in a game-based conversation task .*Approaches to studying world-situated language use*.225-209 ‘

Steedman M .(1991) .Structure and intonation .*Language*.296-260 ‘

Steedman M .(2000) .Information structure and the syntax- phonology Interface .*Linguistic Inquiry* ‘ .689-649

Steedman M .(2014) .The surface-compositional semantics of English intonation .*Language*.57-2 ‘

Tanenhaus M. and Chambers C. Dahan D .(2002) .Accent and reference resolution in spoken-language Comprehension *Journal of Memory and Language*.314-292 ‘

Tanenhaus M. and Gunlogson C. Watson D .(2008) .Interpreting pitch accents in online comprehension: H* vs. L H .**Cognitive Science*.1244-1232 ‘

Trueswell J. Snedeker J .(2003) .Using prosody to avoid ambiguity: Effects of speaker awareness and referential context .*Journal of Memory and Language*.130-103 ‘

Wagner M. and Watson D .(1993) .Experimental and theoretical advances in prosody: a review *Journal of Memory and Language*.358-336 ‘

Watson D. and Gibson E .(2005) .Intonational phrasing and constituency in language production and Comprehension .*Studia Linguistica*.300-279 ‘

Watson D. and Gibson E .(755-713) .The relationship between intonational phrasing and syntactic structure in language production .*Language and Cognitive Processes*.755-713 ‘

Welby P .(2003) .Effects of pitch accent position, type, and status on focus projection .*Language and Speech*.81-53 ‘

White L. and Melhorn J. Mattys S .(2005) .Integration of multiple segmentation cues: A hierarchical framework .*Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.500-477 ‘

A BRIEF APPROACH TO FLASHBACK AS CINEMATIC NARRATION

Bianca DABU*

Abstract: *Narration is the act of telling a story. Narration provides structure to a story, offering context, emotion, and meaning. It shapes how the audience perceives the unfolding events and connects with the narrative. In literature, any narrative involves a narrator who guides the audience through the plot, characters, and events. Narrative is therefore defined as “story plus narrator”¹ (Fludernik, 2009:4). By analogy with the narrator in the traditional mould, Chatman (1978:19) introduces the figure of a ‘cinematic narrator’ who is comparable to the narrator in the novel and fulfils a similar mediating function in the presentation of the story. During the development of the plot and building up the story, the writer often faces the necessity of choosing a referential time be it chronological or non-chronological time (anachrony). In film terminology, the flashback can be referred to as a narrative technique of interrupting the chronological sequence of events to interject events of earlier occurrence. The earlier events often take the form of reminiscence, a recollection of ideas, people or events in a previous time “a special kind of harking back and maieutic processes” (Cuddon, 2013:34).*

Keywords: *analepsis; flashback; occasional flashback; structural flashback*

Narration is the act of telling a story. Narration provides structure to a story, offering context, emotion, and meaning. It shapes how the audience perceives the unfolding events and connects with the narrative.

Traditionally, a story is understood as a sequence of events that has a beginning, a middle and an end. It normally creates suspense as a result of complications in the middle part that are cleared up when these conflicts are resolved at the end of the work.

Fludernik defines the narrative text as a product developed by an author of a novel or a film script, a fairy tale or television film in which the story and the narrative discourse intertwine (2009:3-5). She further makes a distinction between the fable² (*story*) and the more particular realization of the subject matter at the level of the *plot* - also called *plot level* or

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, biancadabu@yahoo.com

¹ Fludernik calls a narrator who tells the story, a *bard*. On the other hand, she considers that there are literary genres with an underlying story – drama, for example – but these are not genuinely narrative since they normally do not have a narrator persona as teller of the story.

² The Russian Formalists, who were active in the 1920s and 1930s, coined the useful term *fabula* (E. *fable*) for this basic level of narrative. It can also be regarded as the source of a number of versions of the same story, in different media. In the English-speaking world it is therefore customary to analyse not only the novel and the film as narrative genres but also drama, cartoons, ballet and pantomime. In this sense, the ballet *Sleeping Beauty*, which presents an underlying story that also exists as a narrative in the form of a fairy tale, could be seen as an alternative manifestation of the same story (*fable*). (Fludernik, 2009:4)

fictional world - that is to say that level of the narrative which is reconstructed by the reader from the discourse as the narrative's 'story'.

In literature, any narrative involves a narrator who guides the audience through the plot, characters, and events. Narrative is therefore defined as "story plus narrator"¹ (Fludernik, 2009:4).

Chatman, on the other hand, defines *narrative* as a conjunction of discourse and story, but extends the definition of discourse to cover several media. According to Chatman, each narrative has two parts: a story (*histoire*), the content or chain of events (actions, happenings), plus what may be called the existents (characters, items of setting); and a discourse (*discours*), that is, the expression, the means by which the content is communicated. In simple terms, "the story is the *what* in a narrative that is depicted, discourse the *how*" (1978:19). Moreover, by analogy with the narrator in the traditional mould, he introduces the figure of a 'cinematic narrator' who is comparable to the narrator in the novel and fulfils a similar mediating function in the presentation of the story.

Chatman argues that film does belong in a general narratology as films are narrated, and not necessarily by a human voice. The cinematic narrator presents what the cinematic implied author requires.

"And just as literature has a place for "career-authorship," so does cinema. Indeed, much of *auteurisme* can be better explained as cinematic career authorship [.....] in the signatures on films: a "Hitchcock" film is likely to entail suspense; an "Antonioni" film is likely to contain *temps mort* holds on bits of the landscape; a "Fellini" film is likely to merge on-screen and commentative music (Chatman, 1990: 130)

The "regulation of narrative information" provided to the reader (Genette, 1980:41) is achieved in the written text through the narrator choice to use technical effects to produce a particular narrative mood arising from a narrative instance. A narrative cannot in fact imitate reality, no matter how realistic. "Narrative does not 'represent' a (real or fictive) story, it recounts it – that is, it signifies it by means of language [...]. There is no place for imitation in narrative [...]" (Genette, 1980:43).

Guillemette and Lévesque² (2016) highlight that

"[...] for Genette, all narrative is necessarily *diegesis* (telling), in that it can attain no more than an illusion of *mimesis* (showing) by making the story real and alive. Thus, in place of the two main traditional narrative moods, *diegesis* and *mimesis*, Genette contends that there are simply varying degrees of *diegesis*, with the narrator either more involved or less involved in the narrative, and leaving less room or more room for the narrative act. However, Genette insists that in no case is the narrator completely absent".

¹ Fludernik calls a narrator who tells the story, a *bard*. On the other hand, she considers that there are literary genres with an underlying story – drama, for example – but these are not genuinely narrative since they normally do not have a narrator persona as teller of the story.

² Guillemette and Lévesque (2016) have a thorough presentation about Genette, focusing on the main issues: the narrative mood (distance, functions of narrator); the narrative (voice, time perspective); the levels (embedded narratives, *metalepsis*); the narrative time (order, speed, frequency).

During the development of the plot and building up the story, the writer often faces the necessity of choosing a referential time, usually a chronological time, to insert the sequence of events and achieve the intended result on the audience. Nevertheless, the writer's choices for presenting the connection between the story itself and the construction of the narrative can involve a less canonical approach by presenting the string of happenings in a on a non-chronological order. This kind of textual composition is defined by Genette as *anachrony*¹:

Genette emphasizes that there are two types of anachrony: *analepsis* and *prolepsis* each of them being in a tight connection with the narrator and his/her choice to split the course of the narration diving into the past or plunging into the future. Thus, the narrator can step back into the past to recount the facts that happened previously to the present moment (*analepsis*) of the main story or, on the contrary, the narrator can anticipate further events that occur after the main story ends (*prolepsis*).

Drawing on the work of Genette, *anachrony* has been paid particular attention mainly as stylistic device used to create deviations from the usual chronological order, “to distance events and to underline a universal verisimilitude and timelessness – to prevent something being ‘dated’” (Cuddon, 2013:31).

Besides literature, film is widely recognized as a narrative medium. Scriptwriting is very much associated with any other type of literary production. As in any written text, screenwriters do not always follow a linear timeline when telling a story. Sometimes, they completely flip the beginning-middle-end structure on its head in order to create a stronger on-screen effect and to reveal crucial information about the plot (Walkley, 2022, <https://moviemarker.co.uk/6-powerful-uses-of-flashback-scenes-in-film/>). Screenwriting seems to be based on “the visual awareness or how we see the world” and film provides the right environment to achieve a different perspective upon time. Thus, any type of anachrony or rearrangement of narrative events in film are rendered by *flashback*, and *foreshadowing* (Fludernik, 2009:34). Flashbacks are a tool, a device, where a screenwriter provides the reader and audience with visual information that he or she cannot incorporate into the screenplay in other way. The purpose of the flashback is simple: it is a technique that bridges time, place and action to reveal information about the character, or move the story forward (Field, 2020, <https://writersstore.com/blogs/news/the-use-of-flashbacks-in-movies>).

Turim (1989:3) focuses on the definition of *flashback* as it is provided by OED² confirming the hypothesis that the term flashback was first used in its sense of narrative returns to the past in reference to film, rather than other forms of storytelling.

¹ “An anachrony can reach into the past or the future, either more or less far from the “present” moment (that is, from the moment in the story when the narrative was interrupted to make room for the anachrony): this temporal distance we will name the anachrony’s *reach*. The anachrony itself can also cover a duration of story that is more or less long: we will call this its *extent*” (1980:48).

² flashback, *sb.* [f. the verbal phr. * *to flash back*], . . . 2. *Cinema*: A scene which is a return to a previous action in the film, a * CUT-BACK; hence a revival of the memory of past events, as iii a pictorial or written presentation. . . . 1916 *Variety*, 13 Oct. 28/4 In other words the whole thing is a flash-back of the episodes leading up to her marriage. 1928 J. Gallishaw *Only two ways to write a story* I. vii. 177 With *Sunk* the method of presentation was chronological . . . In the case of *Paradise Island*, the method is reversed. The order instead of being chronological is antichronological: It is the flash-back method.

Nevertheless, Cuddon (2013:280)¹ doubts that *flashback* originates in cinema and highlights its usage in modern fiction, as well. The *flashback* can be referred to as a narrative technique of interrupting the chronological sequence of events to interject events of earlier occurrence. The earlier events often take the form of reminiscence, a recollection of ideas, people or events in a previous time “a special kind of harking back and maieutic processes” (Cuddon, 2013:34).

Flashbacks can skip back over years, decades, days, hours, or just a few moments. If we consider the two terms used by Genette *amplitude* and *duration* (1980: 89-92, *apud*, Turim, 2014:9) for an event within analepse, we can see that usually a *flashback* can cover a period of years or moments (amplitude) rendered on the screen in a few minutes or seconds (duration).

Field (2020, <https://writersstore.com/blogs/news/the-use-of-flashbacks-in-movies>) thinks that a *flashback* should be thought about as a *flashpresent* because the visual image the spectator sees is what the character thinks and feels at the present moment whether a memory, or a fantasy or event. The imaginary entrance into a present reality is provided, but the spectator is made aware of the threshold and the process of transversing it. The spectator in this case is acutely aware of the filmic fiction as a story-being-told (Turim, 2014:16).

Flashbacks can be categorized in two ways: occasional and structural (Perelman, 2024, <https://screencraft.org/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-flashbacks/>). *Occasional flashbacks* might happen once or twice throughout the course of the movie but they are not woven into the underlying structure of the story². Such flashbacks may occur at the beginning or during the story. *Structural flashbacks* are critical to the structure of the story. The entire development of the plot is relying on the introduction, at a given moment of one or more flashback moments. Perelman (2024) also emphasizes that this category integrates various other structural devices such as the moment when the flashback occurs, the number of occurrences, framing devices to introduce the main story, etc. Thus, he distinguishes between: (i) *Flashback B-Story*³, where the writer tells two interwoven stories, the second of which taking place in flashback to the first; (ii) *In Media Res Story* (also known as the “*How We Got Here*” *Flashback Story*) where the story opens in the middle or near the end and then goes back to illustrate “how we got here”⁴.

1934 H.G. Wells *Exper. Autobiogr.* II. vii. 486 When goddesses and Sea Ladies vanish and a flash back to the ancestral chimpanzee abolishes the magic caverns of Venus, human beings arrive. 1947 *Times* I Nov. 6/4 The film relates, in a prolonged flash-back how the innocent Indian became corrupted by bewildering contact with those supposed to be his superiors in civilization. 1957 *Times Lit. Suppl.* 26 July 453/2 In his new novel. . . [he] uses with enviable ease a complicated system of flash-backs (p. 1099, *apud*. Turim, 2014:3).

¹ “a term which probably derives from the cinema, and which is now flashback also used to describe any scene or episode in a play, novel, story or poem which is inserted to show events that happened at an earlier time. It is frequently used in modern fiction”.

² *Batman Begins*; *Toy Story 2*; *Moneyball*; *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*; *Sleeping With Other People*; *The Bourne Supremacy*

³ *Mamma Mia*; *Deadpool*; *The Godfather Part Two*; *Manchester by the sea*, *The Haunting of Hill House*

⁴ *Forrest Gump*; *Sunset Boulevard*; *American Beauty*; *Bohemian Rhapsody*; *The Greatest Showman*; *Iron Man*; *Moulin Rouge*!

Hellerman (2024, <https://nofilmschool.com/flashback-examples#>) provides another typology: *internal flashback* – that takes place within the timespan of the story; and *external flashback* that takes place outside of its main time line. Internal flashbacks occur in the narrative through the memory of the characters and the audience get a glimpse into the past through that memory (Perelman, 2024). On the other hand, the external flashbacks are designed for the audience and the character is not directly involved into the process of remembering.

Besides the above technical categories, Turim (2014) emphasizes the more complex structure of various flashbacks intended to make the spectator an active participant to the filmic narrative and temporal embarkment. Thus,

“Multiple flashbacks, embedded flashbacks, abrupt modernist flashbacks can make spectators more aware of the modalities of filmic fiction, of the processes of narrative itself. These manipulations of narrative temporality can serve to self-consciously expose the mechanisms of filmic narration, the artifice through which time becomes an expressive element of narrative form” (Turim, 2014:16).

According to Fludernik (2009:34) the flashback is associated to memories from the past that the hero/ heroine recalls in order to explain unexpected events related to the situation, providing a swift summary of the events leading up to the story, or they may plunge their addressees into the thick of the action – a highly effective attention-getter.

Nonetheless, this narrative retrospection is not a one-dimensional track between past and future, “it is a complex blended network of experiential associations held together by the construal of motivational and causal chains” (Gordejuela, 2021:148). Thus, the viewer’s mind can make sense of film flashbacks by connecting all the narrative spaces, considering the information available in the time, space and casualty of the diegetic and non-diegetic narrative (Carmona, 2017:7).

In literary fiction, a natural ‘voice’ is speaking throughout the text compared to the voice of the film that speaks by means of objects, figures, and ambiances that have been previously prepared, framed in moving images, and put in a sequence for a meaningful purpose (Bellardi, 2018:26). Narrative structures in film are borrowed from literary models but such prerequisites are not “natural” and are conventionalized: shortened distances with a sharp cut in between departure and arrival, vast leaps of time covered by flashbacks or non-diegetic music reflecting the inner state of a character or establishing a certain mood (Kuhn and Schmidt, 2014, <https://www-archiv.fdm.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/node/64.html>)

It is widely accepted nowadays that the filmic image fundamentally mediates between the actual present of its signifier and the distanced time (no matter how long) of what is signified (Bellardi, 2021:33). In the traditional novel, the narrative temporality is rendered at the level of the language through a tense shift (Fludernik, 2009:34)¹. An arsenal of verb tenses and qualifying clauses render the temporal shifts as an invisible act of language (Turim, 2014:7). A narration is simply a sequence of sentences whose tenses refer to a temporally

¹ Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient* (1992) makes extensive use of analepsis; in the film version of the novel, as in the text, the events leading up to Almásy’s serious burn injuries are only revealed slowly, in a series of flashbacks. (Fludernik, 2009:34)

ordered sequence of times. Tense will be allowed to refer to definite times, which are taken to be specified by the context of speech (Nerbonne, 1986:83-85).

In a film narration, for instance, the series of events recounted determines the point of reference. The storyteller is the voice of the temporal reference in film and the diegetic flashpresent or *flashback* through the specific language associations with the present or past. Bellardi (2021:34) considers that “film form is particularly elusive because the narrator is not free to articulate narration by means of a range of tenses or expressive marks of temporality as literary and oral narrators can, but is especially limited and imprecise (unless voice-over or captions anticipate or explain what is happening on the screen)”.

As a visual support, the cinematic flashback can ease the verbal storytelling through “accompanying voice-over while a character recalls an event from the past” (Perelman, 2024) or filming techniques such as “dissolves, or sometimes by a switch to black-and-white photography” (Fludernik, 2009:34). Because of its ability to encourage audience identification with characters onscreen, the voice-over deserves special attention. Diegetic voice-overs may function as a character’s meditation on past events allowing audiences access to a character’s immediate thoughts, [...] and experience a more profound level of engagement with that character. And voice-overs in the present tense grant access to the character’s immediate thoughts, feelings, and perspective (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2008: 252).

Filmmakers orchestrate story details in a systematic way to produce a meaningful and enjoyable experience for the audience. Thus,

“narration in cinema has to deal both with the representational realism of its images and its technical devices in order to integrate or dissociate time and space, image and sound, depending on the artistic and emotional effect that is to be achieved” (Kuhn and Schmidt, 2014, <https://www-archiv.fdm.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/node/64.html>)

Bellardi (2018:25) emphasizes that the final cinematic product is defined by both the stereotypical features of cinematic writing - present-tense narration, a ‘dry’ dialogue, or a ‘certain’ visual quality of the texts - and the camera-eye narratorial approach that relies on the use of specific cinematic techniques such as travelling, pans, and zooms.

The cinematic elements associated with rendering flashback sequences include camera shutter speed, transition with (white) dissolve¹, cross processing, colour tint diffused glow, etc. When events taking place in the present are “interrupted “by images or scenes that have taken place in the past the filmmakers give audiences a visual cue, such as a dissolve or a fade, to clarify that the narrative is making a sudden shift in chronology (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2008:206). Such technical devices are designed to make flashback sequences stand out and look different than the rest of the movie. Gordejuela emphasizes “the cognitive

¹ While fades (fade-in, fade-out, crossfade) are used to delineate introduction or ending scenes in the script, a white dissolve is a visual effect used for countless *flashback* sequences. (<https://filmstro.com/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-creating-flashback-sequences/>); also Heckmann. 2022, <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/fade-transition-definition/>; <https://www.britannica.com/art/flashback>

functioning of flashbacks”¹ achieved by camera focusing on facial expressions of the characters and comparing them in the diegetic present with those in flashback sequences (2021:160).

For film audience to follow film’s narrative means paying attention to sound effects from the story’s space. In the process of recollecting memories through *flashbacks* sound effects may be associated with a certain instance. On the one hand, sounds refer to any type of diegetic utterances, from dialogues to storyworld sounds, and on the other the non-diegetic sounds, source music or soundtracks. The emotional trigger for *a flashback* is related to “language, noises, electronic sounds, whether diegetic or (like most musical compositions) non-diegetic that help not only to define tonality, volume, tempo and texture of successive situations but also to orchestrate and manipulate emotions and heighten the suggestive expressivity of the story (Kuhn and Schmidt, 2014, <https://www-archiv.fdm.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/node/64.html>).

Pramaggiore and Wallis (2008:255-262) consider that sounds may be approached differently. They may serve three functions simultaneously, defining location, creating mood, and portraying the environment’s relation to characters (255). Most narrative films rely on music stereotypes to produce meaning and engage the audience’s attention. Thus, the viewers associate diegetic music with the story’s time period, since, in the name of historical accuracy. Most filmmakers will try to ensure that the music characters listen to would have been popular during the time when the story takes place (261). Music can even suggest the specific cultural makeup of a setting’s location (262). Filmmakers also use music to define characters. A particular song, artist, or type of music may function as a motif that informs audiences of a character’s taste, demeanor, or attitude.

Conclusion

The flashback is associated to memories from the past that the hero/ heroine recalls in order to explain unexpected events related to the situation. The purpose of the flashback is to bridge time, place and action to reveal information about the character, or move the story forward. Thus, the viewer’s mind can make sense of film flashbacks by connecting all the narrative spaces, considering the information available in the time, space and casualty of the diegetic and non-diegetic narrative. Although Flashbacks may be occasional and structural they use the same narrative techniques related dialogues, visual cues, or sound references to clarify that the narrative is making a sudden shift in chronology.

References

- Bellardi, M., “The Cinematic Mode in Fiction” in *Frontiers in Narrative Studies*, vol. 4, issue 1, De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 24-47, <https://doi.org/10.1515/fns-2018-0031>
available at <https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/fns-2018-0031/html>
Carmona, C.L., “The Role and Purpose of Film Narration”, *Journal of Science and Technology of the Arts, Volume 9, No. 2 – Special Issue Narrative and Audiovisual Creation*, 2017, pp.7-16

¹ The author uses Michael Curtiz’s (1941) *Casablanca* as an example and examines how focusing on facial expressions of the leading character Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) generates a quality of viewpoint compression.

- Caruth, C., *Unclaimed Experience, Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore, MD + London, UK: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996
- Chatman, S., *Story and Discourse, Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film*, Cornell University Press, 1978
- Chatman, S., *Coming to Terms, The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*, Cornell University Press, 1990
- Cuddon, J. A., *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Wiley Blackwell publisher. Uk. 2013 ----- (1979). A dictionary of literary terms and literary theory. New York: Penguin,
- Field, S., *The Use of Flashbacks in Movies*, 2020, available at <https://writersstore.com/blogs/news/the-use-of-flashbacks-in-movies>
- Fludemik, M., *An Introduction to Narratology*, Routledge, 2009
- Genette, G., *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane Lewin, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980
- Gordejuela, A., *Flashbacks in Film: A Cognitive and Multimodal Analysis*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2021
- Guillemette, L., C., Lévesque, « Narratology », in Louis Hébert (dir.), *Signo* [online], Rimouski (Quebec), available at <http://www.signosemio.com/genette/narratology.asp>
- Heckmann, C., *What is a Fade Transition – How and Why to Use Them Explained*, 2022, available at <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/fade-transition-definition/>
- Hellerman, J., *How to write Flashbacks*, 2024, available at <https://nofilmschool.com/flashback-examples#>
- Kuhn, M., J., Schmidt, *Narration in Film*, 2014, available at <https://www-archiv.fdm.uni-hamburg.de/lhn/node/64.html>
- Nerbonne, J., “Reference Time and Time in Narration”, *Linguistics and Philosophy* 9, D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1986, pp.83-95
- Perelman, B., *Everything You need to Know about Flashbacks*, 2024, available at <https://screencraft.org/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-flashbacks/>
- Pramaggiore, M., T., Wallis, *Film. A Critical Introduction*, Pearson, 2008
- Turim, M., *Flashback in Films Memory and History*, Routledge, 1989
- Walkley, L., *6 Powerful Uses of Flashback Scenes in Film*, 2022, available at <https://moviemarker.co.uk/6-powerful-uses-of-flashback-scenes-in-film/>

Electronic resources

<https://www.britannica.com/art/flashback>

SEMANTIC AND STYLISTIC FIDELITY IN SEVERAL (RE)TRANSLATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

Constantin MANEA*

Abstract: *In this paper we proposed to revisit the phenomenon of literary retranslation, analyzing several Shakespearean sonnets (18, 23, 27, 60, 64, 66, 127, 143) in three translatable versions (Boşca, Chirică, Tomozei), which were compared, though only incidentally, with my own rendition in point of fidelity and stylistic, as well as prosodic, achievement. The conclusions point to the fact that the quality of being a faithful translation should not necessarily derive from the author of that rendition having the status of a recognized poet.*

Keywords: *Shakespearean sonnets; retranslation; fidelity; semantics; stylistic adaptation*

1. We revisited the translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, as a case study on the changing fate of literary retranslation, as well as the validity of Bensimon's assertion concerning the synchronic and process-like character of retranslation. Our main goal was to assess the degree of semantic and stylistic fidelity in several retranslations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* by analyzing the semantic, stylistic and prosodic adequacy of the respective versions, based on the comparison of eight selected sonnets (18, 23, 27, 60, 64, 66, 127, 143); the authors of the renditions analyzed are Gheorghe Tomozei, Nicolae Chirică and Teodor Boşca. We incidentally and fragmentarily counterposed them to our own version in point of fidelity and stylistic, as well as prosodic, achievement.

We based our selective analysis on the conviction that one can esteem and asseverate the overall quality of a literary translation by objectively observing the combination of the (primarily semantic) quality of fidelity to the original text with the intrinsic literary achievement of the (re)translated text.

2. Below we present the **particular remarks** that we were able to make by analyzing the retranslations under consideration.

Teodor Boşca's versions

Sonnet 18. In most cases, the translatable adaptation is adequate and fully justified, both semantically and logically: flori *tinere* ↔ buds; *zmalţu-i auriu* ↔ gold *complexion*; tot ce-i *farmec* ↔ every *fair*; apune ↔ fade; te-mpodobeşte ↔ you ow'st. Nevertheless, there are instances of slightly flawed (because too literal) adaptation: arendă ↔ lease. Similarly, fidelity is sometimes sacrificed for the sake of "poeticity": cât *inimi bat* ↔ So long as men can *breathe*; şi-n ochi mai e *scânteie* ↔ or eyes *can see*.

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Piteşti University Centre, constantin.manea@upb.ro

Here are some instances of absolute fidelity – completely in keeping with the meaning / semantic nuance: *dispare* ↔ declines; (with added explicitation): *Mi-e cântul viu* ↔ *So long lives this*. Translational loss: *brag*...

Sonnet 23. Imperfect adaptation: *actorul fără măiestrie* ↔ an *unperfect* actor; al dragostei *canon*, precum se *cere* ↔ The perfect *ceremony* of love's rite (cf. *ceremony*: "Used of the external duties of love" – Schmidt); for *fear of truth*... ↔ *de prea sfios*. Loss: perfect... Good equivalence (through "poetic" adaptation): *Dibaci*, amorul... ↔ love's *fine wit*; my *speaking breast* ↔ *vestind* adâncul meu *tumult*. Practically completely erroneous rendition: mine own love's *strength* seem to *decay* / O'ercharged with burden of mine own love's might. ↔ *avântu-mi însuși* parcă mă *răpune* / Și-mpovărat de-amor, *curaju-mi piere*. There are however some instances of phonetic inadvertency, e.g. *furie*, as well as misspelling: al *dragoste-i*.

Sonnet 27. Good adaptation: *privirii-mi stinse* ↔ to my *sightless* view; *spaima* nopții ↔ in *ghastly* night; *bezna* sumbră ↔ black night. Loss: from far..., intend..., her old face new. Literality (which is not necessarily wrong, though): *mintea-mi pune la munci* ↔ To *work* my *mind*.

Instances of welcome literality: în *cap*... ↔ in my *head*; *zelos* ↔ zealous. Adaptation through implication: Să-mi *intre-n* oase a *odihnei pace* ↔ The *dear* repose for limbs with travail *tired*; Preface-n *feerie* *bezna* sumbră ↔ Makes black night *beauteous*...; ↔ Din partea mea și din a ta [n-are] *cruțare*. Approximation: când trupul *zace* ↔ when body's work's *expired*. Poeticization (though a bit strident): Să-mi *intre-n* oase... ↔ (The dear repose) for *limbs*...; sufletu-n *vedenii* de n-arată ↔ my soul's *imaginary sight*. Stylistic overemphasis: grăbescumă...

Sonnet 60. Translative loss: spre țărm ↔ towards the *pebbled* shore; in *sequent* toil all forwards do contend ↔ *luptă-naintând* neobosit; *Crooked* eclipses ↔ Eclipse [vin]; the rarities of nature's *truth* ↔ ale naturii nestemate. Gain: Ca undele spre țărm, *fără-ncetare* ↔ the waves [make] towards the [pebbled] shore; pe fruntea ta frumoasă ↔ in beauty's brow. Good adaptation (through implication): all forwards *do contend* ↔ *luptă-naintând* neobosit; Și *sui* târâș, prin *vârstă*, spre *zenit* ↔ Crawls to *maturity*, wherewith being *crowned*. Imperfect, yet poetic adaptation: (...) slava ta o-*nclină* ↔ cf. (...) 'gainst his glory *fight*. Poeticization (though a bit strident): Te *naști*, ca o *sămânță de lumină* ↔ *Nativity*, once in the *main of light*.

Perfect adaptation: Înghite (...) ↔ Feeds on (...); Time doth *transfix* the *flourish* set on youth ↔ El straiul *dalb și tânăr* ți-l *străbate* (cf. *transfix*: to transplace, to remove; *flourish*: varnish, gloss, ostentatious embellishment – Schmidt).

Sonnet 64. Good, i.e. stylistically appropriate, adaptation: Vremea a *pocit*, haină (...) ↔ Time's fell hand *defaced* (...); splendori și fast ↔ cost (cf. *cost* – ornament, pomp – Schmidt). Translative loss: *îngropate* ere ↔ *outworn* *buried* age; Time's [fell] *hand* (...) ↔ Vremea (...).

Adaptation through implication: bronzul veșnic, *ros de ani*, cum *piere* ↔ cf. brass eternal *slave to mortal rage*; Cum ape-s de uscături *gâtuite* ↔ And the firm soil *win* of the watery main; Și *sporul* naște *praf*, iar *praful* *spor* ↔ *Increasing store* with *loss*, and *loss* with *store* (cf. *store*: plenty, abundance, great number or quantity – Schmidt). Logical implication: Când

văd cum totul altceva devine... ↔ *When I have seen such interchange of State; cannot choose / But weep to have that which (...)* ↔ *plânge fiindcă are / Doar ceea ce (...)*.

“Poeticizing” adaptation: *state* itself *confounded*, to decay ↔ *toate cum le sfarmă nimicirea*. Stylistic loss (the translator uses the neologism below in a somewhat jarring manner): *E-un gând fatal* ↔ This thought is *as a death*.

Sonnet 66. (Virtually) literal fidelity: [Azi Meritu-i] milog de cum se naște ↔ [As to behold] desert a beggar born; Puterea șchioapă ↔ limping sway. Rather questionable (quasi)literalness: *pusă-n locuri de ocară* ↔ shamefully *misplaced*.

Adequate poeticization: Și-n *pompă-l scaldă* pe Netrebnic (...) ↔ needy nothing *trimmed* in jollity; Și *dalbul* Crez *trădarea crudă-l paște* ↔ And *purest* faith *unhappily* *forsworn* (cf. *forsworn* == perjured – Schmidt). “Poeticizing” adaptation: maiden virtue ↔ vergura; Și-i *dascăl* Minții *doctorul Prostie* ↔ And folly, *doctor-like*, *controlling* skill; *pustie-mi* las iubirea ↔ I leave my love *alone*.

Well-contrived adaptation: (i)l *sugrumă* ↔ tongue-tied; Rău-i *sus*, iar Binele-n *robie* ↔ *captive* good attending *captain* ill. Rather imperfect adaptation: amar surghiun Virtutea o-mpresoară ↔ right perfection wrongfully disgraced; *Avântul* nou Puterea șchioapă-l *frânge* ↔ *strength* by limping sway *disablèd*; glasul Artei *Legile-l sugrumă* ↔ art made tongue-tied by *authority*; Minții ↔ skill; numele-Adevărului *e Glumă* ↔ simple truth *miscalled simplicity*.

Translative gain: [î]l *scaldă* pe Netrebnic *sorții*; Și-n *laț* desfrâul Vergura o *strânge* ↔ maiden virtue rudely *strumpeted*. Translative loss: As to *behold* desert (...) ↔ Azi Meritu-i (...); *needy* nothing ↔ Netrebnic; *unhappily* [forsworn]; *gilded* honor ↔ Cinstea.

Sonnet 127. Good adaptation: it *bore* not *beauty's name* ↔ nu-l *socoteai frumos*; Azi frumuseții negrul îi urmează ↔ But now is black beauty's successive heir. Adaptation by contextual implication: Iar *boiul blond* (...) ↔ beauty *slandered* with a bastard *shame*; slută față ↔ false borrowed face; sprânceană ↔ (my mistress's) eyes. Imperfect adaptation: altare ↔ *bower* (cf. *bower* == a pleasant habitation – Schmidt); paiață ↔ prophaned; înșeală Natura ↔ slander'ring creation.

Translative loss: *slandered* with a *bastard* shame ↔ e-un lucru rușinos; *borrowed* face. Translative gain: De când *secretul* Firii mâna-l *are* ↔ For since *each* hand hath *put on* nature's *pow'r*.

“Poeticizing” adaptation: *Dichis și fard punând* pe-o slută față ↔ *Fairing* the foul with *art's* false borrowed face; negri-smoală ↔ raven black. Exaggeration in the originality of Romanian expression: *nefrumoase* ↔ no beauty lack. Imperfections affecting the Romanian expression: [ce-i negru] nu *era cu vază*.

Sonnet 143. Adaptation (accompanied) by “poeticizing” or heightened expressiveness: să-*ntoarne* [...] o pasăre ↔ to *catch* [/ One of her feathered creatures]; plodul ↔ her babe; Cât încă-i *orătania* pe-afară ↔ *the thing* she would have stay; a pruncului *plânsoare* ↔ her poor infant's *discontent*; Dar *prada* de ți-o prinzi ↔ if thou catch thy *hope*. Adaptation implied by the context: *kiss* me, be *kind* ↔ *plânsul blând* mi-l *curmă*. Loss: feathered creature ↔ pasăre; in pursuit of...; play the mother's *part* ↔ ca o mamă.

Rather broad/loose adaptation: nu se-alină ↔ makes all swift dispatch; Cât încă-i *orătania* pe-afară ↔ *the thing* she would have stay; her neglected child ↔ micul, singur... Approximate/imperfect adaptation: cum aleargă-n *sârg* o gospodină ↔ as a *careful* housewife

runs; iar ea *toată* / *E-a păsării* [în zbor] ↔ whose busy *care is bent* / To follow [that which flies]; vreau să te-ajung *din urmă* ↔ chase thee *afar behind*.

A case of sheer mistranslation: *flies* ↔ *în zbor* (hence, the original meaning is “to flee from” – so, the original phrase should have been translated as *fuge* rather than *zboară*, though one could argue that the target was a bird... A bird that was however... *a chicken* / *o găină*).

Stylistic concern, through (syntactic) addition: *Ruga-mă-voi*, ce VREI să poți avea ↔ So will I pray that thou mayst have thy Will. Note: the translator attempts (to render the double meaning in the author’s pun (see his footnote: *Ruga-mă-voi*, pe WILL să-l poți avea).

Imperfections in the Romanian expression: [cum aleargă]-*n sâng*.

Gheorghe Tomozei’s versions

Sonnet 18. Overall felicitous adaptation in keeping with the context: un vânt *doboară creanga* ↔ winds do *shake* the darling *buds*.

There are, however, a few gross, unbelievable semantic errors of rendition: frumosul din frumos *descinde* ↔ every fair from fair sometime *declines*; *frunza* verii moare... ↔ summer’s *lease* hath all too short a date... (the translator may have read *leaf* instead of *lease*).

Sometimes errors occur, which result in a translation that virtually has nothing to do with the original, or which has a completely absurd air: aur îl *precede-ntunecat* ↔ *often is* his gold complexion *dimmed*; sub *cerul simplei* firi, *netulburat* ↔ By *chance* or nature’s *changing* course *untrimmed*; în umbra morții n-ai să *plimbi calește* ↔ Nor shall *death brag* thou wand’rest in his shade.

Loss: rough, buds, May, complexion, sometime. Gain (with added “poetic” hints): *blestemu-i* / *că* *frunza* verii moare prea curând ↔ summer’s *lease* hath all too short a date.

A rather exaggerated, improbable “poetic” adaptation: trăiești și tu în cântu-nchis în liră ↔ So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

Poeticization through well-contrived expressiveness / felicitous stylistic expression: să te *semui* ↔ Shall I compare thee... Using a rather inadequate lexico-stylistic nuance (through the use of neologisms): *precede*; vers *etern* ↔ *eternal* lines. Unsuitable / unrecommended form: *calește* (instead of *calești*).

Sonnet 23. Adaptation in keeping with the context: *pe lângă* rol (...) *trece* ↔ is *put* *besides* his part. Poetic (and altogether appropriate) adaptation: Învață dar, de filă să te-*apropii* / și-ndrăgostit... ↔ O, learn to *read* what silent love hath writ!

Imperfect adaptation: The *perfect* ceremony of love’s *rite* ↔ *ceremonia dragostei, celesta; trista-mi cutezanță* ↔ mine own love’s *might*; de-a-și pune prevestirile în *rimă* ↔ dumb presagers of my speaking breast. Rather faulty, imperfect (and stylistically jarring) adaptation: Asemeni c-un actor *cârpaci* ↔ As an *unperfect* actor. Translative loss: his own heart, dumb, speaking breast, recompense, silent love, fine writ. Translative gain: se-*ștelege*.

Completely “unfaithful” rendition: cel fără de *speranță* ↔ I, for fear of trust; joc iubirii *festă*; (an entire line): slăvindu-i dragostei nesăbuița ↔ Who plead for love and look for recompense. Misspelling: de-*ași* pune.

Sonnet 27. Adequate (and overall poetic) adaptation: *vajnic* pelerin ↔ a *zealous* pilgrimage; cum orbul taie beznele, deplin ↔ Looking on darkness which the blind do see. Some phrases in the target text are genuine “gems of poeticalness”: văzul fără văz te cheamă

↔ my sightless view; dându-mi *spaimei vată* / și-ntinerindu-i *stelele* din cer... ↔ Makes *black night beauteous*, and *her old face new*. Loss: *limbs* (...) tired ↔ *ostenit*. Gain: *deplin*. Imperfect adaptation: *mi-e dat să lunec* ↔ I *haste me* to...; *pornesc* din nou la drum ↔ But then *begins a journey* in...; *timpul osteni* ↔ when *body's work's expired*; *pleoape-nchise* ↔ keep my *drooping eyelids open wide*.

Unfortunately, there are also blatant mistakes (which specifically result from the translator's failing to recognize the *False Friends* in the text): *muncit de lungile-mi călătorii* ↔ for limbs with *travail* tired (*travail* or *travel* labour, toil – Schmidt).

Here are some of Gheorghe Tomozei's most "poetically unfaithful" renditions: Când *ostenit* în pat *mi-e dat să lunec* ↔ Weary with toil, I *haste me* to my bed; *pornesc din nou la drum* și *nu-mi întunec / simțirile* ↔ But then *begins a journey in my head* / To work my mind; Din *umbra-n care zac*... ↔ from *far where I abide*; cu *pleoape-nchise* *fumul* străbătându-l ↔ keep my *drooping eyelids open wide*.

Here is one of the debatable issues in using the Romanian language that we came across in this text: *bătut în noaptea* (most probably a mistype for *noapte*).

Sonnet 60. Good adaptation: *valurile cresc peste*... ↔ the waves *make towards* the...; is crown'd ↔ *glory*; se mai *aude* ↔ shall *stand*.

Translative gain: *curg* (...) în zbor *nebun* ↔ *hasten* to their end; *locul* și-l *lasă fără ocolișuri* ↔ Each *changing place* with...; prin vârste *curgi*, dar Timpul *ți-a sortit* ↔ Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crowned; eclipse, *lupte lașe* și *surpare*. Translative loss: in sequent toil ↔ (...) le răpun; crawls ↔ *curgi*; *Crooked eclipses* ↔ eclipse; to *times in hope* ↔ prin *vremi* (se mai *aude*).¹

Rather imperfect, yet passable adaptation: *changing place* ↔ *locul* și-l *lasă*; ... și *surpare* ↔ (Crooked eclipses) '*gainst his glory fight*'; Tot ce-i *vigoare* Timpul *încovoie* ↔ Time doth *transfix* the flourish (set on youth) [cf. *transfix*: to transplace, to remove – Schmidt]; cu-*averi se-ndoapă, viața o despoie* ↔ *feeds* on the rarities of *nature's truth*.

Quite adequate, genuinely poetic adaptation: prin vârste *curgi*... ↔ *Crawls* to maturity; iar *coasa lungă n-ai cum să i-o furi* ↔ And *nothing stands* but for his *scythe* to mow.

There were however cases of totally unjustifiable rendition: într-a oceanului splendoare ↔ main of light; *devălmășind* (the verb *confound*, a notorious *False Friend*, was mistaken for "a confunda, a se înșela (asupra... / în privința...)" – cf. *to confound*: to destroy, to ruin, to make away with – Schmidt).

Sonnet 64. Instances of adequate contextual adaptation: (mâna timpului) *cum, crudă, sfarmă* ↔ (by Time's) *fell hand defaced*; *rugina* cum l-îngHITE (although, in Romanian, *rugina* / *rust* is to *fier* / *iron* what *cocleala* / *verdigris* is to *aramă* or *bronz* / *brass*); *splendori*... ↔ State (itself confounded) – (cf. Schmidt) *state*: pomp, splendour; *schimbările* *aceste* ↔ such interchange of *State* – (cf. Schmidt) *state*: condition, situation, circumstances of nature or fortune.

Cases of erroneous rendition: *bronzul-sclav*, *rugina* cum l-îngHITE ↔ *brass eternal*, slave to mortal rage...; *țărâna scade*, apa îi ia urma ↔ the firm *soil win* of the watery main.

Imperfect, questionable adaptation: ne-a-nvățat a ei *poveste* ↔ hath taught me thus to *ruminate*. Translative loss: The *rich-proud* cost ↔ *bogatul* preț; *buried* age ↔ *vârstelor*...;

¹ Here is our own version: [dura-va-]n *timi ce doar putem spera că vin*.

lofty towers ↔ turnuri; brass *eternal* ↔ bronzul...; the *hungry* ocean ↔ oceānul; *This thought is as a death* ↔ Doar moartea...; cannot *choose* / But weep ↔ și *plânge* numai...; that which it *fears* to lose ↔ ce va fi să piardă. Gain: *This thought is...* ↔ *gândurile-mi dezmiardă*. Poeticizing adaptation: al vârstelor *tocite* ↔ of *outworn buried* age; din *temelii* se darmă ↔ (I see) *down-rased*; își mână *turma* (...) să devore... ↔ gain / Advantage on...; paguba-i spor, ori spor păgubitor e ↔ Increasing store with loss, and loss with store. Actually, this final part is a “textbook demonstration” of poeticism that totally sacrifices the sense of fidelity that a translator should usually recreate with respect to the original text: Doar *moartea*, *gândurile-mi dezmiardă* / și *plânge* numai ce *va* să piardă ↔ This thought is as a death which cannot choose / But weep to have, that which it fears to lose. We could note a few Romanian language usage problems: se *darmă* ↔ used for the sake of the rhyme); *oceānul* (stress was typographically marked – in fact, it is the quantity of the vowel that should have been marked (*oceānul*)).

Sonnet 66. From the point of view of style and prosody, there is loss in the very structure of the translated poem, i.e. the repetitive-anaphoric structure of the original is not realized (And... And... ↔ Și... Și...).

Felicitous translation – i.e. achieving semantic and stylistic adequacy: e *pângărită* casta feciorie... ↔ maiden virtue rudely *strumpeted* (Schmidt – *strumpeted*: made a strumpet, debauched, defiled); nerodul ↔ folly.

There were however a few cases of inadequate translation (semantically and notionally flawed): robii mișelului ce stă să-l rupă ↔ attending captain ill. Imperfect adequacy: *lașul* (își arogă) ↔ *needy nothing* (trimmed in jollity); (in addition, an attempt is made to poeticize the Romanian rendition): *gândul pur se stinge sub blestem*, / Cinstirea-i împărțită *grosolan* ↔ *purest faith unhappily forsworn*, / And gilded honor *shamefully misplaced*.

Lexical-stylistic inadequacy: și-*ngenuncheat*, orice *sublim elan* ↔ *strength* (by limping sway) *disablèd*; perfecțiunea-i *frântă de urgie* ↔ right perfection *wrongfully disgraced*; (...) *trândavu-o astupă* ↔ (tongue-tied) by *authority*; și adevărul *singur se smerește* ↔ *simple truth miscalled simplicity*. Translative loss: a beggar *born*; gilded; rudely; right; by limping sway. Translative gain: m-aș stinge *fără glas* ↔ would I be gone.

Poeticization: *Scârbit* de ↔ *Tired* with; *izbava morții* ↔ *restful* death; a *magnificenții* togă ↔ trimmed in *jollity*; ce stă să-l rupă ↔ (captain) ill.

Note on prosody: in all three quatrains, the enclosed rhyme is used instead of the alternate rhyme of the original.

Sonnet 127. Inadequacy, on account of the rendition, which is excessively explicit: *femeia brună / frumoasă* chiar, *disprețul îl stârnea* ↔ *black* was not counted *fair*. Gain: (by excess of poeticization) negrul *moștenește o cunună* ↔ is black beauty's successive *heir*; pe care frumuseții vechi i-o ia. Translative loss (resulting from the same excess of poeticization): hath put on nature's power... ↔ dobândește chipul / de-a-mpodobî...; (a whole line is lost): And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame; Sweet beauty *hath no name*, (no holy bow'r) ↔ *Se trece* frumusețea ca nisipul; if not lives in disgrace.

Appropriate, synthetic adaptation (and superadded poeticization): a-mpodobî cu dresuri chipul slut... Poeticization, though a bit in excess: *Se trece* frumusețea *ca nisipul* / și-i *pângărită-n cuibul neștiut* ↔ Sweet beauty hath *no name, no holy bow'r*, / But is *profaned*...

Sonnet 143. Well-contrived contextual adaptation: *își lasă-n prag / pruncul din poală* ↔ *Sets down her babe; pe când eu pruncul tău pribeag rămân* ↔ *Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind; că mă primești ca fiu la al tău sân* ↔ *And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind; să-l reîntorci în viața ta pe Will* ↔ *that thou mayst have thy Will.*

Far from felicitous, even wrong, adaptation in keeping with the context: *îi prinde poala, lăcrimând ușor* ↔ *Cries to catch her* (whose busy care is bent / To follow...). Mistranslation proper: *țâncul drag / o ține-n loc și își întoarce pasul* ↔ *Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase; dar dacă-ți pierzi speranța, să se cheme...* ↔ *But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me.*

Totally inadequate rendition in point of semantics (basically, the translator rendered something different, by comparison with the source text): *Așa și tu himere-aștepți prin vreme* ↔ *So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee. Gain* (especially in point of expressivity): *țâncul drag* ↔ *babe; ținând acel nimic falfăitor* ↔ *To follow that which flies...*

Problems of stylistics and usage in the Romanian text (i.e. implying both form and expressiveness): *penate vietăți* (although there is arguably *literal* fidelity: *feather'd* creatures). On the other hand, there is some welcome, truly poetic expressivity: *colindă / cotloanele ogrăzii* ↔ *makes all swift dispatch / In pursuit of...*

Niculae Chirică's versions

Sonnet 18. Good adaptation (based on context-appropriateness, both semantically and stylistically): *și surâzi mai blând* ↔ *Thou art (...) more temperate; Cerescul ochi e, uneori, fierbinte* ↔ *Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines; Când vers-etern o-nalță peste timp* ↔ *When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.* Absolute – practically literal – fidelity: the (...) buds of May ↔ *În Mai (...) mugurii...*; *Dar vara ta nu va păli vreodată* ↔ *But thy eternal summer shall not fade.*

Contextualized adaptation: *e vânt și mugurii-i doboară* ↔ *winds do shake the darling buds; nici moartea s-o umbrească n-o să poată* ↔ *Nor shall death brag thou wand'rest in his shade*¹; *Prin tot ce-am scris tu vei trăi mereu* ↔ *So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.*

Approximate (yet good, quite convincing) adaptation: *Căci de frumos frumosul se dezmințe* ↔ *every fair from fair* (sometime) *declines.*

Translative loss: *darling* buds; (stylistic, comparative loss) *timpul verii trece prea curând* ↔ *summer's lease hath all too short a date; untrimmed* (Schmidt: stripped of ornamental dress)²; *sometime* (declines). Translative gain (added to rather artificial, forced poeticization, effected by creating “lyrical-epigrammatic sentences”): *Căci frumusețea-i veșnic anotimp* ↔ *Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st.*

“Poeticizing” / stylistic adaptation: *Și-ades umbrită-i geana lui de foc* ↔ *And often is his gold complexion dimmed; Și-ntâmplător, și-n al schimbării joc* ↔ *By chance or nature's changing course; Cât va fi suflet, vâz (și versul meu)...* ↔ *So long as men can breathe or eyes can see...* “Poetic” words: *mai dulce* ↔ *more lovely.*

¹ The translation misses the cultural allusion in the original – cf. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil” (Psalm 23: 4).

² Here is how we translated it: *e destrămată.*

Some problems with the use of the Romanian language: să te *aseamăn* (a likely obsolete form, used here for the sole sake of poeticization).

Sonnet 23. Good, felicitous (logical and context-appropriate) adaptation: Cum un actor (...) / *Uitându-și rolul* ↔ As an (...) actor (...) / is *put besides his part*; O, *lasă-mi slovele să-ți spună* ... iubirea mea prin *muta* lor *solie* ↔ O let my books be then the eloquence / ... *dumbs presagers* of my *speaking breast*; Who *plead* for love ↔ *Cerându-ți dorul*.

Absolutely exceptional translation (faithful, i.e. appropriate to the spirit and letter of the text, as well as poetic): Învăță slova dragostei curate; / S-auzi cu ochii doar iubind se poate. ↔ O, learn to read what silent love hath writ! / To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit. (Although there are three minor, particular cases of translative loss: *silent*, *belongs* and *wit*). Perfect translation / rendering (i.e. faithful in all respects): *Prea copleșit de forța-ndrăgostirii* ↔ *O'ercharged with burden of mine own love's might*.

Acceptable adaptation (effected mainly through added poeticization): *mă dărui / Solemnității ritului iubirii / Și-n mine (...) năruî...* ↔ *to say / The perfect ceremony of love's rite / And (in mine own love's strength) seem to decay*.

Imperfect adaptation: *parcă-i la osândă* ↔ with his *fear* is *put besides his part*; De-atâta *furie* se face *blândă* ↔ Whose *strength's abundance weakens* his own *heart*.

Translative gain (actually, a new "scenario" is proposed): cum o *fiară-n mijlocul arenei* ↔ Or some *fierce thing* (replete with too much rage); *unică răsplată* ↔ recompense. Translative loss: de *teama* (scenei) ↔ for *fear of trust*;¹ perfect; strength.

A few problems with using the Romanian language: uit *ca* să mă dărui (the choice is however pragmatically justified – like the one below – by the prosodic constraints – i.e. metre and stress): *năruî*.

Sonnet 27. Absolutely perfect adaptation: *bezna-n care vede* doar *un orb* ↔ Looking on darkness *which the blind do see*. There are whole passages or lines that were rendered both very aptly and faithfully, as well as stylistically appropriate, e.g. Începe mintea altă *drumete* ↔ a journey in my head.

Acceptable adaptation to the context: (Când sunt) *trudit* ↔ *weary with toil*; *patul mă îmbie* ↔ *I haste me to my bed*; în timp ce *trupul meu s-a liniștit* ↔ (To work my mind) when *body's work's expired*; și *totuși* ↔ *save that*.

Translative loss (though minor): for *limbs* (with travail tired) ↔ *trupul* (ostenit) (the loss can be justified by the use of metonymy: cf. *trupul*); my soul's *imaginary sight* ↔ *văzul minții*; (Presents) thy *shadow* to (...) / *like a jewel hung...* ↔ un *juvaier* (în noaptea mea...). Apparent – or at least justifiable (given the redundancy in the original) translative loss: *head* (...) *mind* ↔ *mintea*; (my thoughts, from far...) *intend* (a... pilgrimage) ↔ (gîndul meu spre tine zări străbate). Translative gain (through excessive "poeticization"): *zelos ca pelerinii să te sorb* ↔ Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee. Both loss and gain (also – or mainly – concerning the proposed "scenario"): Și-așa, *zi-noapte*, noi fiind de *vină* ↔ by *day* my *limbs*, by *night* my *mind*.

The temporality of the expression (here, in a repetitive structure: When *I have seen...*) is, we believe, well rendered, in the context: Când *văd*...

¹ Here is our own rendition: să mă *încred* în oameni *veșnic temător*.

Failed adaptation – i.e. mistranslation proper: Pleoapele *deschise-s ferecate* ↔ and *keep my drooping eyes wide open*; similarly, the following verse – *Ce-ntinerește chipul meu bătrân* – is intended as a reinterpretation of the corresponding line in the original ↔ *Makes black night beauteous, and her old face new*.

“Poeticizing”, though imperfect, adaptation: spre tine-n *zări* străbate... ↔ From *far* where *I abide*; *văzul minții te-ncrustează* ↔ *Presents* thy shadow to my *sightless view*.

Problems with the use of the Romanian language: *juvaier* (supposedly, more poetic – instead of the standard form, *giuvaier*).

Sonnet 60. Rendering the source text in a way that can be said to be completely faithful (especially in point of semantics): Așa fug clipele către sfârșit ↔ So do our minutes hasten to their end; Schimbându-se pe rând ↔ Each changing place with that which goes before; Sub timpul ce-și distruge propriul dar ↔ And time that gave doth now his gift confound; În frumusețea frunților săpând ↔ And delves (the parallels) in beauty’s brow.

Loss: our minutes; contend; crawls; parallels; praising; truth; despite. Gain (justified by context, though redundant): aleargă ↔ hasten (the verb *fug* already appeared above).

Imperfect adaptation (though it is contextually appropriate): Ca valurile ce se *sparg de stâncă* ↔ Like as the waves *make towards* the *pebbled* shore (see *pebbled*: full of small stones – Schmidt); ritm *neostenit* ↔ all forward (...) contend.

“Poeticizing” adaptation, both felicitous and quite successful in point of stylistics: Tot *ce se naște-n marea de lumină* ↔ *Nativity*, once in the *main* of *light*; plin de har ↔ crowned; Tot *ce-i mai bun pe lumea asta, pradă* ↔ *Feeds* on the *rarities* of *nature’s* truth.

Quite forced, artificially sounding (“poeticizing”) adaptation, which is also far from the original, both semantically and stylistically: Dar *gârbovit de bezne se-nruină* ↔ *Crooked eclipses...* his *glory fight*; ↔ Time doth *transfix* the *flourish* set on youth ↔ Căci timpul *roade-a tinereții mladă* (a “poeticizing” rendition of *to transfix* – cf. to transplace, to remove – Schmidt). Some Romanian language problems: *se-nruină*.

Sonnet 64. Perfectly suitable semantico-syntactic adaptation: *vremuri mândre* ↔ The *rich-proud cost* of (...) *age*; (...) plângând să ai ce știi că pieri ↔ weep to have, that which it fears to lose. Adaptation to the context: cum *sapă* / Adânc în țărmul... ↔ (the hungry ocean) *gain* / *Advantage* on (...) the shore; Și țărmul *se întinde peste apă* ↔ And the firm soil *win* of the watery main.

Translative loss: Time’s *fell* hand ↔ mâna timpului; rich-proud cost ↔ tot ce s-a clădit; *outworn buried* age ↔ *vremuri* (mândre); When *sometime* ↔ Cum...; *lofty* towers ↔ turnurile; slave to mortal *rage* ↔ morții-i hărăzit; the *kingdom* of the shore ↔ țărmul (inconjurator); (the firm soil win of) the *watery main* ↔ (țărmul se întinde) peste apă. Translative gain: *sapă adânc* ↔ gain advantage on...; țărmul *inconjurator* ↔ (the kingdom of) the shore; se preschimbă-ntruna firea ↔ such interchange of State; *încep* să mă gândesc; *prăbușirea* prin care timpu-mi fură dragostea ↔ Time will come and take my love away.

Approximate adaptation: hath *taught* me to ruminate ↔ Încep să mă gândesc; Or *state* itself confounded, to *decay* ↔ Cum *firea* chiar, *se macină* pe ea (cf. *state*: pomp, splendour – Schmidt); *choose but* to weep ↔ *n-ai putere decât* plângând.

The Romanian rendition of line 8 is remarkable for both its semantic-formal fidelity and its high expressiveness: Sporind prin pierderi și pierzând prin spor ↔ Increasing store with loss, and loss with store.

Poeticizing expression: s-au făcut fărâmbă ↔ down-ras'd. Felicitous poeticizing adaptation, albeit a bit approximate: morții-i hărăzit ↔ slave to mortal rage.

Sonnet 66. An incidental remark: the translator reversed the order of the first two lines.

Translative loss: *gilded* (honor); *right* (perfection); *unhappily* (forsworn); *shamefully* (misplaced); *miscalled* (simplicity); by *limping sway* (disablèd) ↔ (la cheremul) *neputinței*; *captive* (good); captain (ill). Gain: cerșind în fața porții ↔ (desert) a beggar born.

Imperfect adaptation: And *needy nothing trimmed* in *jollity* ↔ Să nu mai văd slăvit pe cel *nemernic*; *desert* a *beggar* born ↔ pe sărac *cerșind*. Cases of rather approximate adaptation: simplicity ↔ simplitate (cf. *simplicity*: silliness, folly – Schmidt); Și *binele* slujind *neomenia* ↔ And *captive good* attending *captain ill*.

Instances of semantically erroneous rendition – mainly due to various *False Friends* (*folly*: weakness of intellect, stupidity – Schmidt; *doctor-like*: like a learned man, giving one's self airs – Schmidt; so, cf. "învățat", rather than "medic"; *to control*: to check, to restrain – Schmidt; *skill*: familiar knowledge of any art or science, shown by readiness and dexterity in its application to practical purposes – Schmidt): Și, *doctor rațiunii*, *nebungia* ↔ And *folly*, *doctor-like*, controlling *skill*.¹

An instance of very good adaptation, through creative poeticization (i.e. contextual-poetic adaptation): Și *artele de pumn încălușate* ↔ And art *made tongue-tied* by *authority*.²

The "factual scenario" was observed, especially through "poetic" equivalences: pe sărac *cerșind* în fața porții ↔ (to behold) desert a beggar born; And *purest faith* unhappily *forsworn* ↔ Și pe cel rău *hulind* pe cel *cucernic*; și forța *la cheremul* *neputinței* ↔ And strength by limping sway *disablèd*; Save that to die, I *leave my love alone* ↔ Dar dacă mor *cui las iubirea mea*?

Sometimes, both the scenario and the textual or *literal* semantics of the original are betrayed: And *gilded honor shamefully misplaced* ↔ Și pe cinstit de *cinste* *având teamă*. At other times, it is the expressive or stylistic force of the original that is betrayed: And *maiden virtue rudely strumpeted* ↔ Și *fecioria pradă umilinții*; And *right* perfection *wrongfully disgraced* ↔ Și *împlinirea neluată-n seamă*.

Sonnet 127. The translator employs explicitation, using the name of the concrete item for the abstract concept: (In the old age) *black* was *not counted fair* ↔ (Cândva) *nu ne plăcea femeia brună*; But now is *black beauty's* successive *heir* ↔ Azi, *chipul oacheș laude adună*; this line remains within the general "scenario" ↔ *laude adună*, albeit in a rather approximate manner ↔ cf. *beauty's successive heir* – where the common semantic implication is "i-a luat locul (apreciat / de onoare)".

Likewise, the explicitation used by the translator gives an overall sense of synthetic concreteness, which is however a bit removed away from the sense in the original *scenario*: Fairing the *foul with art's false borrowed face* ↔ Femeile înfruntă firea / sulemenindu-și *fața* (cf. *bastard*: spurious, adulterate (...); "slandered with a bastard shame" 127, 4 (i. e. with the shame of spuriousness) – Schmidt. Very good explicitation: Therefore, my mistress' eyes are

¹ Here is our own rendition: Și cum *neghiobi* cu *nazuri* dau *legi* peste *știință*.

² Here is our own rendition: Și cum arta de *cei mari* are-acum *călușul pus*.

raven black, / *Her eyes so suited* ↔ De-aceea-s ochii Doamnei mele negri / *Sub negura sprâncenelor...*

Some instances of felicitous adaptation by approximation: it bore not beauty's name ↔ n-avea preț; (Sweet beauty) hath no name, no holy bow'r ↔ a rămas (...) numai amintirea.

Translative loss: slander'd; fairing *the foul*; *art's* (...) face; *borrowed* face; *holy* bower; raven black. Translative gain: *vechea* frumusețe ↔ beauty.

Instances of (rather serious) departure from the original (only partial, however – because it also comes with a measure of poeticization): *Hulită-i* ca o roabă de *pripas* ↔ But is *profaned*, if not lives in *disgrace*; Și-n doliu, totuși, *pare-înseninată*: / Frumosu-l vezi *așa cum ți se arată!* ↔ *becoming of their woe*, / That every tongue says beauty should look so.

Completely erroneous rendition: cele / Ce chipul și l-au dat cu var ↔ such who, not born fair, no beauty lack, / Sland'ring creation with a false esteem (cf. *esteem*: estimation, opinion of merit – Schmidt).

Sonnet 143. Erroneous rendition: holds her in chase ↔ o *cheamă* (...) *cerându-i* ca să stea. Translative loss: she would have stay; that which flies; discontent; afar; play (the mother's) part; kiss.

Adaptation according to the context: *nebăgând în seamă* / Că pruncul *vine* după urma sa ↔ *Not prizing* her poor infant's *discontent* (*not to prize*: to make no account of – Schmidt). Good adaptation, in accordance with the (semantic) literalness of the text: De-l prinzi, cum *speri* ↔ But if thou catch *thy hope*. Rather approximate adaptation, accompanied however by added “poeticization”: *mângâie-mă lin* ↔ kiss me, be kind.

Expressiveness, by means of poetic adaptation: *vijelie* / Gonește după... ↔ runs to catch... Here is an absolute “feat” of prosody (with an exceptionally well-contrived *rich rhyme*): stinge-mi-l.

Conclusions

The first, and most obvious, conclusion is that the *literariness* of the literary fragments considered by our analysis is different, and thus the translative solutions found illustrate greatly various degrees of stylistic-literary adaptation.

One can thus also estimate the translator's responsibility, his/her role as a qualified cultural go-between, as well as his/her “taking over” the (classical) text. In the case of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, the need for literalness was absolute and stringent; whoever had retranslated them, after so many good translators, could not have aspired to give primacy to an absolutely faithful form – mainly because the aspiration to literalness is absurd, especially in the case of poetry.

However, unlike the (re)translation (especially of prose) from a random, common author, the retranslation of such famous poetic texts cannot, objectively, involve translative *dilemmas* related to: (1) the fact that one cannot translate innovatively set phrases, e.g. minimalist or fixed constructions, or monolexic sentences, or highly idiomatic phrases and paremiological units, because in poetry linguistic creativity is the very focus of the final product, and the message has nothing to do with current or standard communication situations; (2) the ethical impossibility of translating identically passages that have already

been very well translated – since poetry demands originality, hence the concretization of a qualitative gain.

The renditions that aim at an original, poeticizing treatment of the source text, especially if produced by translators who are/were themselves poets in their own right (such as Gheorghe Tomozei and Niculae Chirică), will naturally present several questionable aspects concerning their fidelity to the semantics of the original. On the other hand, the effort to closely observe that kind of fidelity does not necessarily imply departing from the (minimal, at least) standards or requirements of stylistic and poetic treatment – see Teodor Boșca's case. What we could notice as the most striking characteristic feature of the three sets of variants was the inversely proportional gradient of fidelity and *poeticity*, in accordance with whether the author of the retranslation was a poet in his own right or not; thus, the least faithful, yet the most (would-be) *poetic* rendition was that authored by Gheorghe Tomozei. Also, the effort was visible of the (earnest) translator to find such an expression of the content of the original work as to maximally highlight the intrinsic values of the target language, thus achieving an “apology and illustration of the mother tongue” (cf. Decuble).

References

- Boșca, Teodor, *Shakespeare – Sonete*, Editura Dacia, 1974
Chirică, Neculai, *Shakespeare – Sonete și poeme*, Editura Minerva, 1974
Decuble, Horațiu, *Retraducere sau retro-ducere?* in *Revista de traduceri literare*, nr. 9, 2016
Manea, Constantin, *William Shakespeare – Sonnets / Sonete* (Ediție bilingvă – Traducere și cuvânt-înainte de Constantin Manea), Editura Institutul European, 2022
Schmidt, Alexander, *Shakespeare Lexicon*, Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1902.
Shakespeare, William, *The Complete Works*, General Editors – Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992.
Tomozei, Gheorghe, *Shakespeare – Sonete*, Editura Junimea, 1978

MEMORY TRAINING FOR INTERPRETING SERVICES

Adina MATROZI-MARIN *

Abstract: *This article sets out to present the complexity and difficulty of interpreting and to emphasize the major role played by memory in this profession. Interpreting is a highly complex mental, psycho-affective and linguistic task, for which interpreters must possess a series of important skills and abilities in order to be effective in their work. The most obvious are the language transfer skills, analytical and attention skills, memory skills and for those working in consecutive interpreting, notetaking skills. Training memory for interpreting services is an elaborate endeavour that involves enhancing cognitive skills, particularly the working memory (WM), and employing specific strategies to improve interpreting performance. Research indicates that memory training significantly influences the quality of interpretation.*

Keywords: *information storage; working memory; interpreting services*

Interpreting is an activity that has been practiced since time immemorial, but only recently has it been viewed as a field of academic study in itself (cf. Jourdenais and Mikkelsen, 2015). A recent international standard defines interpreting as “rendering a spoken or signed source language message into a spoken or signed target language in real time (ISO 13611, 2014, p. 1 apud Mellinger, 2023, p. 46). Pöchhacker (2004), starting from Kade’s (1968) definition, concluded that interpreting is a form of translation in which: the source language text is presented only once and thus cannot be reviewed or replayed and the target language text is produced under time pressure, with little chance for correction or revision.

For such a highly complex mental, psycho-affective and linguistic task, interpreters must possess a series of important skills and abilities in order to be effective in their work. The most obvious are the language transfer skills, analytical and attention skills, memory skills and for those working in consecutive interpreting, notetaking skills (Wang, 2024, p. 54)

Interpreters must possess the ability to swiftly assess context, anticipate speaker intentions, and select the most fitting words or signs. They must navigate linguistic nuances, idiomatic expressions, and regional dialects while preserving the essence of the discourse. Moreover, they must adapt their delivery to suit the cultural norms and preferences of the audience, ensuring that the message resonates effectively. (*ibid.*, p. 3)

Stress is closely related to professional interpreting due to the cognitive, emotional, and situational demands of the job described below.

Interpreting involves a high cognitive load, especially simultaneous interpreting, which requires high levels of concentration, memory, and rapid decision-making. Interpreters must listen, understand, and render the message in real time and also manage multiple

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, adina.matrozi@upb.ro

linguistic and cultural elements and deal with specialized or unexpected terminology. This intense mental juggling can lead to cognitive fatigue and chronic stress over time.

Another factor of stress is time pressure because interpreters often work under strict time constraints. There is no time to pause or reflect during simultaneous interpreting, which increases the pressure and risk of error.

Interpreting often occurs in high-stakes environments such as medical settings (e.g., surgeries or psychiatric evaluations), legal contexts (e.g., courtrooms), diplomatic or political negotiations, situations in which misinterpretation can have serious consequences, adding to the interpreter's psychological burden. In addition, interpreters may be exposed to emotionally charged or traumatic content, for example in settings involving refugees and asylum seekers, medical crises and domestic violence or abuse. This vicarious exposure can lead to emotional exhaustion or even secondary traumatic stress.

The interpreter's role is, in many cases, that of a conduit. Ethical dilemmas and tension usually arise as they must remain neutral and accurate, even when the content conflicts with their values or when one party pressures them to intervene. However, there are circumstances under which interpreters will act in the capacity of several roles. For example, the IMIA¹ *Guide on Working with Medical Interpreters* provides a description of three more such roles: the interpreter as clarifier, cultural interface/ mediator and patient advocate.

The role of conduit is when they are interpreting into one or another language. The role of clarifier is when they have to intervene in order to clarify a term or concept in order to proceed. The role of cultural interface involves intervening when a cultural context needs to be explored to aid communication. The role of patient advocate is a role in which interpreters engage mostly outside the interpreted encounter, empowering patients to access all the health services they require. It is not to be confused with representing the interests of or taking the side of the patient in a provider-patient interaction.²

Last but not least we should also add physical stress and fatigue resulting from long hours, poor working conditions (like inadequate sound equipment or seating), and the need for constant focus.

Studies showed that one way in which stress can affect interpreters is by impairing their working memory, responsible for temporarily holding and manipulating information. (Wang, p. 3)

Stress can disrupt working memory³, leading to difficulties in processing and retaining the spoken or signed language. Interpreters may find it harder to keep track of the conversation,

¹ International Medical Interpreters Association

² https://www.imiaweb.org/uploads/pages/380_5.pdf

³ *Working memory* is the small amount of information that can be held in mind and used in the execution of cognitive tasks, in contrast with long-term memory, the vast amount of information saved in one's life. Working memory is one of the most widely-used terms in psychology. It has often been connected or related to intelligence, information processing, executive function, comprehension, problem-solving, and learning, in people ranging from infancy to old age and in all sorts of animals (Cowan, 2015). Working memory in interpreting refers to the mental system that temporarily holds and manipulates information while the interpreter listens, processes, and produces speech in another language.

recall key terms, or smoothly transition between languages when stress levels are elevated. Furthermore, cognitive studies inform the creation of efficient translation and interpreting strategies that cater to diverse contexts. These strategies are not limited to language skills but encompass cognitive approaches to problem-solving, decision-making, and adapting to various communicative situations. This holistic approach enhances the quality and accuracy of language mediation, ensuring that the nuances of meaning, cultural context, and linguistic subtleties are faithfully conveyed. Recognizing the impact of stress on their cognitive functioning, interpreters often employ various stress management techniques and strategies. These may include deep breathing, mindfulness practices, regular physical exercise, effective time management, thorough preparation for assignments, seeking support from fellow interpreters, and continuous improvement of language skills and interpretation techniques. (*ibid.*, pp. 3-4)

Cognitive abilities are “aspects of mental functioning, such as memorizing and remembering; inhibiting and focusing attention; speed of information processing; and spatial and causal reasoning”. (Robinson, 2012) The cognitive demands placed on interpreters necessitate the use of specific strategies to manage memory effectively. Babcock and Vallesi (2015) noted that interpreters often predict upcoming input based on contextual cues, which helps mitigate the high memory demands of simultaneous interpreting. This predictive strategy is crucial, as it allows interpreters to maintain a high level of alertness and accuracy in their work.

The primary division between types of memory is made according to the timescale over which information is retained. James’s *Principles of Psychology* (1890) differentiated between *primary memory* for recent experiences and *secondary memory* for information retained over a long period of time. The former is composed of substructures specific to knowledge categories and the degree to which language-specific information is represented may differ between these categories.

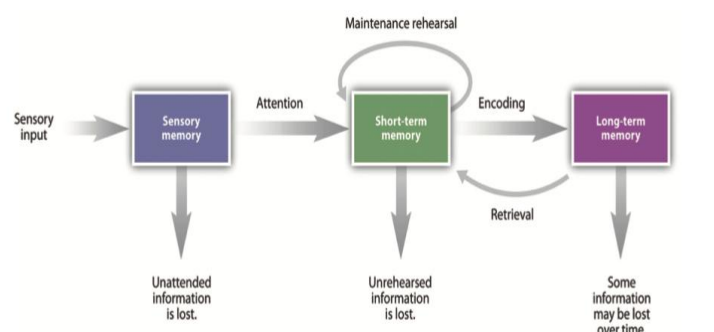
In the 1960’s, the field received renewed attention due to the development of cognitive psychology (Neisser, 1967 apud Altarriba & Isurin, 2013, pp. 8-9)¹. *Long-term memory* (LTM) contains stable representations of knowledge acquired over time, including explicit memory for facts and events (which can be demonstrated by verbally recounting an event or by providing an answer to a query), and implicit memory for skills, routines and associations (a non-conscious change in performance due to information gained over time). Both play important roles in language acquisition and processing (Morgan-Short, 2007): implicit memory contributes to acquisition of grammar (Ullman, 2004), but explicit memory has been the focus of more extensive study in research on bilingual cognition (Kroll and de Groot, 1997; Pavlenko, 2000).

The information stored in LTM must be accessed and transferred to STM to be processed in a meaningful way to formulate output. STM is part of the working memory (WM) system, which subsumes attentional and control units involved in information processing. (Altarriba and Isurin, 2013)

¹https://www.google.ro/books/edition/Memory_Language_and_Bilingualism/wruHIwovAkYC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=INTERPRETING+MEMORY+TRAINING&printsec=frontcover

No matter whether simultaneous or consecutive interpretation is performed, the role of the memory is extremely important. Short-term memory is based especially on the actual hearing of sounds, without always filtering the information, that is why the interpreter has to be careful with the message he/she conveys further. Due to the fact that long-term memory involves neural pathways and synaptic connections, it is better established in the interpreter's brain. So, long-term memory has the advantage that the interpreter is better acquainted with the field to which the translation belongs; consequently, the interpretation happens very precisely, due to the correct placement in context. (Kriston, 2012, pp. 85-86)

According to its name, STM is able to retain and recall the information for just a brief period of time because it does not create the neural mechanisms that would be needed for a subsequent storage. On the contrary, LTM occurs once you have created the neural pathways for storing, so the information that you hear can be stored from minutes to months or even years' span. We have, though, to make a deliberate attempt to encode the information in the way we intend to recall it later. "In actuality long-term memory is the neural pathways and synaptic connections that have stabilized through repeated use" (Hopper, 2010, p. 102). This actually means that some things become part of our memory through rehearsal, and they belong to the LTM, while the sentences that we hear only once do not get encoded into our memory, being part of the STM. This short-term memory is extremely important in an interpreter's task, as he/she has to quickly convey the message from the source language into the target language. (Kriston, 2012, p. 80) Memory has very little to do with intelligence, but a lot to do with practice and technique. (*ibid.*, p. 83)



¹ Memory duration. Memory can be characterized in terms of stages—the length of time that information remains available to us. ["Memory Duration" by University of Minnesota is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Adapted from Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968) apud Kate Votaw, *Stages Of Memory- Sensory, Short-Term, And Long-Term Memory* [https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Psychology/Introductory_Psychology/General_Psychology_for_Honors_Students_\(Votaw\)/19%3A_Memories_as_Types_and_Stages/19.04%3A_Stages_Of_Memory-_Sensory_Short-Term_And_Long-Term_Memory](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Psychology/Introductory_Psychology/General_Psychology_for_Honors_Students_(Votaw)/19%3A_Memories_as_Types_and_Stages/19.04%3A_Stages_Of_Memory-_Sensory_Short-Term_And_Long-Term_Memory)

As Votaw points out¹,

Most of the information that gets into sensory memory is forgotten, but information that we turn our attention to, with the goal of remembering it, may pass into *short-term memory*. **Short-term memory (STM)** is the place where small amounts of information can be temporarily kept for more than a few seconds but usually for less than one minute (Baddeley et al., 1990). Information in short-term memory is not stored permanently but rather becomes available for us to process, and the processes that we use to make sense of, modify, interpret, and store information in STM are known as **working memory**.

One important tool in memorizing is mnemonics. Mnemonics are memory aids or techniques that help us remember information more easily. They often involve using patterns, associations, or memorable phrases to simplify and enhance the process of recalling details. Mnemonics can also take the form of rhymes, visual imagery, or stories to make information more memorable.

Training memory for interpreting services is a process that involves enhancing cognitive skills, particularly working memory, and employing specific strategies to improve interpreting performance. Gile (1997) emphasized that the working memory resources affect all facets of simultaneous interpretation, including analysis and understanding of discourse in the input language, reformulation from the input to the target language, storage, production, and control. Research indicates that memory training can significantly influence the quality of interpretation, particularly in the context of language pairs and the level of training among interpreters. One of the key findings in the literature is that memory training has a positive impact on interpreting quality and that they positively affect the performance of both beginners and advanced interpreting students.

Furthermore, interpreter training improved working memory (WM) scores, which in turn predicted better interpreting performance, highlighting the importance of working memory as a predictor of success in interpreting tasks. Additionally, a comprehensive understanding of how working memory operates can empower interpreters to manage information more adeptly, resulting in heightened accuracy and fluency during real-time interpretation.

A prominent model of working memory (Baddeley, 1986, 2000) posits four subsystems: the central executive, the phonological loop, the visuospatial sketchpad, and a multimodal episodic buffer. Of these, the episodic buffer, responsible for integrating and binding information from different sources, and the phonological loop, responsible for storing verbally coded information, are particularly relevant for understanding simultaneous interpretation. A subcomponent of the phonological loop, the phonological store, is thought to hold information in a buffer that decays after about two seconds unless the message is refreshed by a subvocal rehearsal process. (cf. Tzou et al, p. 214)

Macnamara and Conway (2016) analyzed the relationship between working memory capacity and skill acquisition among American Sign Language (ASL)-English simultaneous interpreter trainees and highlighted that working memory capacity is a crucial predictor of

¹[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Psychology/Introductory_Psychology/General_Psychology_for_Honors_Students_\(Votaw\)/19%3A_Memories_as_Types_and_Stages/19.04%3A_Stages_Of_Memory-_Sensory_Short-Term_And_Long-Term_Memory](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Psychology/Introductory_Psychology/General_Psychology_for_Honors_Students_(Votaw)/19%3A_Memories_as_Types_and_Stages/19.04%3A_Stages_Of_Memory-_Sensory_Short-Term_And_Long-Term_Memory)

simultaneous interpreting performance, suggesting that targeted training can lead to significant improvements in this area.

We examined amount of training, initial cognitive abilities, change in cognitive abilities, and initial simultaneous interpreting performance as predictors of final simultaneous interpreting performance. We found that amount of training, working memory capacity, and initial simultaneous interpreting performance positively predicted final simultaneous interpreting performance. Several other cognitive ability measures also predicted simultaneous interpreting performance though working memory capacity yielded the strongest and most consistent results among the included measures. Initial simultaneous interpreting performance and working memory capacity accounted for 73% of the variance in final simultaneous interpreting performance. This finding suggests that interpreter programs could measure these two factors at admission to estimate students' likely success in the program. (PsycInfo Database Record (c) 2022 APA)

Similarly, Tzou et al. (2011) found that the degree of formal training in simultaneous interpreting was associated with working memory and interpreting performance, reinforcing the idea that structured training programs can foster cognitive development.

Working memory has been held to be one such critical resource. Working memory is a limited capacity component of information processing that is involved in processing and storage of currently active information while other cognitive tasks are being carried out. [...] Processing and storage functions are thought to compete for a shared limited capacity (Just & Carpenter, 1992). Individuals who are more efficient in executing cognitive tasks are argued to have larger working memory spans (Miyake, Just, & Carpenter, 1994). An individual difference approach to working memory as reflecting differences in efficiency in multiple resource allocation (e.g., Wickens, 2002) raises the possibility that working memory can be altered by training or practice. To the extent that formal training in simultaneous interpreting may render individuals more efficient in allocating multiple cognitive resources in real time (e.g., Liu, 2001), one possible outcome could be enhanced working memory span. (Tzou et al., p. 214)

Puchała Ladzińska (2024, pp. 154-155) came with a series of practical exercises designed for memory training. For instance,

A set of cards (that can be arranged in pairs, for example, the same words written in two languages) and a timer should be prepared for each participant in this exercise. Students may prepare such cards themselves. After arranging the shuffled cards face down into any regular geometric figure, the timer is set to a certain number of minutes. The student is to match all cards in pairs in the allotted time, but he/she can only uncover two cards at a time. If these two are not a pair, they are placed face down again. Cards matched correctly in pairs, remain face up. The exercise ends when all cards are uncovered or when the allotted time finishes.

Sponge. Memory training, broadening specialist knowledge. The teacher informs the students that the text to be interpreted during the next class will focus on a specialist topic (e.g. the operation of a biological sewage treatment plant or the controversy around vaccinations). Students not only prepare vocabulary, but also research the given topic. In class, students can be asked to present what they have learned before interpreting the prepared text (these mini-presentations can also serve as texts for interpreting).

Storytelling may also be successfully employed in two different ways: either by paraphrasing the content of the original in a completely different form from the original or by retelling the story asking the trainees to describe, summarize, and abstract the original to a large extent in their own words.

Paraphrasing. Memory training, split attention, linguistic flexibility. Students paraphrase the content of the source text in the same language, in a form maximally different from the original. This entails the use of synonyms, grammatical transformations (e.g. active instead of passive voice, verb instead of noun structures), changing the order of the elements, etc. Alternatively, the speech register must be changed, for example from formal to colloquial.

Retelling a story in the source language using the same words. The task of the teacher is to tell or play a recording once to his trainees and they will have to reproduce the text with the same words. They are not allowed to take notes.

The tactics suggested by Zhong for this type of exercise are: categorization - grouping items of the same properties; generalization - drawing general conclusions from particular examples or message from the provided text; comparison - noticing the differences and similarities between different things, facts and events; description - describing a scene, a shape, or size of an object, etc. (cf. Zhong 2003 apud Kriston, 2012, p. 85).

In a nutshell, all the data lead to the conclusion that effective memory training for interpreting services should involve a combination of enhancing working memory capacity, employing strategic cognitive techniques, and implementing structured training programs.

References

- Altarriba, Jeanette and Isurin, Ludmila, *Introduction to Memory, Language and Bilingualism*, J. Altarriba and L. Isurin (eds.), Cambridge University Press, 2013
- Babcock, L. and Vallesi, A., Language control is not a one-size-fits-all languages process: Evidence from simultaneous interpretation students and the n-2 repetition cost in *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 2015
- Cowan, Nelson, Working Memory Underpins Cognitive Development, Learning, and Education, in *Educ Psychol Rev.*, 2014, pp. 197-223
- Kriston, Andrea, The Importance of Memory Training in Interpretation, in *Professional Communication and Translation Studies*, 2012, pp. 79-86
- Mellinger, Christopher D., Interpreting in *Translation and Interpreting Studies*, Aline Ferreira and John W. Schwieter (eds.), Wiley Blackwell, 2023
- Puchała-Ladzińska, Karolina, Interpreting: an Art, a Craft or a Superpower? V&R Unipress, 2024
- Robinson, Peter, Abilities to Learn: Cognitive Abilities, 2012, Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning (pp.17-21), Springer Academic
- Tzou, Yeh-Zu et al., Effect of language proficiency and degree of formal training in simultaneous interpreting on working memory and interpreting performance: Evidence from Mandarin-English speakers, in *International Journal of Bilingualism*, vol. 16, SAGE, 2012
- Votaw, Kate, *General Psychology for Honors Students*, University of Missouri-St. Louis
<https://irl.umsl.edu/oer/23/>
- Wang, Jianing, *Cognitive Dynamics in Language Mediation Insights from Translation, Audiovisual Translation, and Interpreting Studies*, 2024
- The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting, H. Mikkelsen and R. Jourdenais (eds.), 2015.

A TRANSLATOR'S MEMORIES: CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING G.A. HENTY'S IN THE REIGN OF TERROR

Cristina MIRON*

Abstract: *This paper explores the translation strategies applied in our Romanian version of G. A. Henty's In the Reign of Terror, with an emphasis on the translator's approach to historical, nautical, and culture-specific terminology. Drawing on examples from the source and target texts, the analysis illustrates the use of techniques such as borrowing, explicitation, footnoting, and modulation to ensure both linguistic clarity and historical authenticity. The study highlights how these methods reach a balance among fidelity to the original, readability and cultural relevance for Romanian readers, offering insight into the practical demands of translating historical adventure fiction.*

Keywords: *translation strategies; historical terminology; cultural transfer*

1. Introduction

Translating literary texts - especially historical fiction - poses complex challenges that test not only the translator's linguistic competence but also their cultural knowledge and interpretive judgment. We aim to examine how rendering historical references, specialised vocabulary, and culturally embedded expressions in G.A. Henty's *In the Reign of Terror* required a range of thoughtful strategies to bridge gaps between languages, times, and readers.

2. Translation concepts and techniques

Translation is more than the substitution of words from one language into another. It is a complex interpretative activity that operates at both the semantic (linguistic meaning) and cultural (contextual significance) levels (Nida, 1964; Newmark, 1988). Effective translation involves a subtle balancing act between fidelity to the original and fluency in the target context, guided by the translator's sensitivity to both textual and extratextual elements. As Munday (2016) emphasizes, translators must mediate between languages, cultures, and reader expectations.

Translation theorists have developed various models to account for this complexity. Nida's theory of equivalence distinguishes between formal equivalence - focused on structural correspondence - and dynamic equivalence, which highlights the impact of the text on the target audience. On the other hand, Vermeer's Skopos Theory shifts focus to the purpose of the translation, arguing that the method and strategy of translation should be dictated by the communicative goal in the target culture (Vermeer, 1989). Finally, Even-Zohar's Polysystem Theory frames translation as a systemic activity situated within a broader literary and cultural

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, cristina.miron@upb.ro

network, thus treating translated texts as influential components of the target system (Even-Zohar, 1990).

Linguistic techniques are essential tools for achieving equivalence and cohesion in translated texts. These techniques address structural disparities between source and target languages and include processes such as literal translation, transposition, modulation, compensation, and calque (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

Literal translation attempts a word-for-word transfer that focuses on formal equivalence. It can be useful for technical texts or for language learners, as it preserves original structure and lexicon (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995), but it can distort idiomatic or culturally embedded expressions, making the result awkward or unintelligible. While capturing the “timbre” of the source, it often neglects readability and naturalness (Newmark, 1988).

Transposition involves a change in the grammatical structure of the target text without altering meaning. It is particularly effective in adjusting syntactic differences while maintaining the semantic core (Catford, 1965). This technique reflects a more dynamic understanding of language, allowing for better flow and idiomatic accuracy in the target language. The translator uses transposition when elements of the source sentence require reordering or grammatical shifts to be coherent in the target culture (Hatim & Munday, 2004).

Modulation refers to a shift in perspective or cognitive category, by which the translator changes the point of view, semantics, or logic of the source expression to make it more natural in the target language (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995). Compensation, on the other hand, involves making up for the loss of meaning or stylistic nuance in one part of the text by introducing it elsewhere (Newmark, 1988). It is particularly useful when a linguistic or cultural feature cannot be reproduced directly but can be reflected in another segment.

A calque, also known as a loan translation, is a translation technique in which a word or phrase from the source language is translated literally, component by component, into the target language. Rather than borrowing the form of the original term, the translator recreates its structure using equivalent elements in the target language (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958/1995). Calques are common in both technical and literary translation and often serve to preserve the conceptual and cultural logic of the original text.

Beyond structure and syntax, translation engages deeply with culture-bound elements. These can range from idioms and metaphors to culturally embedded references and worldviews. Cultural translation techniques aim to fill in these gaps, allowing the target audience to understand foreign ideas while retaining their contextual meaning (Venuti, 1995).

Two dominant strategies in cultural translation are domestication and foreignization. Domestication involves adapting the source text to fit the conventions and expectations of the target culture. It makes the text more readable and familiar to the target audience but may erase the cultural specificity and exoticism of the original (Venuti, 1995). This method aligns with Nida’s dynamic equivalence, emphasising the effect on the reader over literal accuracy (Nida, 1964). Foreignization, in contrast, seeks to preserve the cultural and linguistic distinctiveness of the source text. It confronts the target reader with the “otherness” of the original, emphasising its foreign context and ideological texture. Although it might feel unfamiliar, this strategy can help people understand other cultures and learn how to communicate across cultural boundaries. (Venuti, 1998).

Cultural techniques also include bracketed explanations, footnotes, or glosses that clarify unfamiliar references. These techniques are particularly useful in academic or historical texts, where cultural specificity is essential for the reader's comprehension (Baker, 2011).

Beyond translation, language contact stimulates linguistic adaptation and borrowing - key mechanisms in the evolution of language. Borrowing refers to the integration of lexical or structural elements from one language into another, often facilitated by bilingualism, migration, or sociocultural dominance (Weinreich, 1953; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988). Adaptation, meanwhile, describes how these borrowed elements are reshaped to fit the phonological, morphological, or syntactic norms of the borrowing language (Haugen, 1950).

Borrowed items may undergo phonological adaptation (modifying sound patterns for ease of articulation); morphological adaptation (such as applying native affixes to foreign roots); or syntactic adaptation (involving integration into the target language's sentence structure). Theories of borrowing have increasingly recognized sociolinguistic and cognitive motivations behind the phenomenon (Mufwene, 2001; Haspelmath, 2009), acknowledging that borrowing often functions as a marker of identity, prestige, or inclusivity.

3. Strategies in translating historical narratives

When translating historical fiction, several challenges arise: the translator must deal with archaic language, historical references, and dialogue stylization, while preserving the tone and pacing of the narrative. Skopos Theory (Vermeer, 1989) is particularly relevant here: it holds that the translator's primary guiding principle should be the purpose (skopos) of the translation in its new context. If the aim is to provide an accessible version for modern TL readers, some degree of modulation or domestication may be justified. Conversely, retaining some archaic or formal expressions might serve educational or stylistic fidelity purposes.

Historical fiction also involves cultural translation, when rendering historical customs, political allusions, or culturally specific elements. In these cases, the translator may employ compensation, explication, or footnoting to make the foreign concept intelligible without simplifying it. In this regard, Venuti's (1995) notions of domestication and foreignization become key frameworks for assessing translational choices: should a SL historical event be made familiar to TL readers, or should its foreignness be preserved? In addition, adaptation theory and borrowing frameworks (Haugen, 1950; Thomason & Kaufman, 1988) contribute to understanding how specific historical, political, and cultural terms are retained, replaced, or reshaped via translation.

4. Overview of G.A. Henty and his novel *In the Reign of Terror: The Adventures of a Westminster Boy*

George Alfred Henty (1832–1902), commonly known as G. A. Henty, began his storytelling career by narrating adventurous tales to his children at their evening gatherings - often continuing week after week until a friend encouraged him to write them down. Responding to this encouragement, Henty published approximately 144 historical novels and numerous magazine stories, earning the nicknames *The Prince of Story-Tellers* and *The Boy's*

Own Historian. According to one of his secretaries, Henty's creative process was notably energetic; he would pace rapidly across his study while dictating his narratives at a pace his secretary could barely keep up with.

Henty's novels usually follow young male heroes who live through important moments in history. These characters are hard-working, smart, and deeply committed to their country or mission, often facing tough situations. In their adventures—such as fighting in wars, exploring new lands, or meeting real historical figures—readers learn about key time periods and different societies. Henty's books are not just exciting stories, but also help readers understand history and the values and challenges of past cultures.

In the Reign of Terror: The Adventures of a Westminster Boy (1888) tells the story of Harry Sandwith, a schoolboy from Westminster, England, who gets caught up in the chaos of the French Revolution. He goes to live with a noble French family at their château and later travels with them to Paris. As the revolution grows more violent, Harry sees the terrible effects of the unrest—many in the family are imprisoned or killed. Left in charge of the marquis's three young daughters, Harry must protect them and face many dangers. Throughout these challenges, he shows bravery, loyalty, and strength during a time of great turmoil.

As part of my ongoing interest in historical fiction and translation, I undertook the Romanian translation of G.A. Henty's *In the Reign of Terror* in 2023, aiming to preserve its historical flavour and narrative energy as faithfully as possible. While I strived for accuracy and clarity, I am aware that, like any translation, it leaves room for further refinement. In what follows, I will highlight some of the challenges I encountered during the translation process, which - being carried out under a tight deadline - was marked by a certain urgency and limited time for thorough revision.

5. Translating cultural and historical terms

One of the main challenges in translating *In the Reign of Terror* into Romanian was handling cultural references, especially French words that help create a strong sense of historical setting. Terms like “la belle France”, “mademoiselle”, “monsieur”, “garçon”, “pain”, and “sans-culotte” were preserved in French to maintain the foreign flavour and authenticity of the original text. This reflects a foreignization strategy combined with borrowing, while explicitation is used through footnotes to help readers understand their meaning.

Another group includes historical and political terms such as “Jacquerie”, “Fronde” (“Fronďă”), and “Noyades” (“Noyade”), which are rendered using calque or close Romanian adaptations, supported by footnoted explanations. Similarly, phrases such as “Girondists” (“girondiști”), “National Assembly” (“Adunarea Generală”), “National Guards” (“gărzile naționale”), “Legislative Assembly” (“Adunarea Legislativă”), “the procureur-general of the department of Paris” (“procurorul-general al departamentului din Paris”), and “the Mountain” (“Muntele”) are treated with a mix of borrowing, contextual adaptation, and functional equivalence, depending on whether the Romanian language already contains historically recognized equivalents. In the case of “cele trei stări” (“the three estates”), a clear Romanian phrase is used, showing functional equivalence, while still providing additional context to preserve the historical significance.

Overall, the translation relies on a thoughtful blend of borrowing, calque, functional equivalence, and explication, enabling the Romanian reader to grasp culturally and historically rich content without sacrificing either authenticity or readability.

6. Translating nautical terminology

The nautical terms in *In the Reign of Terror* are not mere background details - they play a key role in the development of the plot, particularly during its climax. These technical terms become essential when Harry devises a clever plan to save Marie from execution by hiding her beneath the death boat. The accuracy and clarity of this maritime vocabulary are crucial, as they are tied directly to the suspense and realism of this pivotal moment. By carefully selecting Romanian equivalents and supporting them with footnotes, the translation not only preserves the technical authenticity of the scene but also helps readers fully grasp the ingenuity and urgency of Harry's actions.

These sea-related expressions often come from specialized vocabulary that does not always have clear equivalents in Romanian. To make sure the terms stayed accurate but were still understandable to general readers, I used a combination of methods: borrowing, using equivalent Romanian terms when possible, and adding short explanations in footnotes. For example, the English term "lugger" was kept almost the same in Romanian ("lugher") to preserve its original sound and meaning. A footnote helps clarify the term for readers by describing it as "velier mic cu doi arbori, arborele mic fiind prevăzut cu o velă pătrată" (p. 189) (meaning "a small two-masted sailing ship, the smaller mast fitted with a square sail"). This follows Vinay and Darbelnet's borrowing strategy, supplemented with explication for clarity.

Another example is the noun "forecastle", which was rendered as "teugă", a correct though rarely used Romanian naval term. To help readers, I added a footnote explaining its meaning: "construcție situată deasupra punții superioare la prora unei nave..." (p. 195) (meaning "a structure at the front of the ship, often used for storage or crew quarters"). This strategy reflects functional equivalence paired with technical annotation, aimed at both domain fidelity and reader support.

The word "hatch" has a direct and widely understood translation in Romanian: "trapă". Because it is already familiar to most readers, no extra explanation was needed. "Tarpaulin" was translated as "prelată", which is the standard Romanian word for a waterproof covering. It is commonly used in both everyday and technical language, so again, no footnote was necessary.

The term "rowlocks" was translated as "furchet", a technical Romanian term that many readers might not know. To help, I added a short explanation in a footnote, describing it as "piesă de oțel în formă de furcă mică... sprijină rama" (Henty, 2023:198) (i.e. "a fork-like metal piece used to support oars"). This reflects a combined strategy of borrowing, specialization, and glossing. The specific sail names "topsails" and "royals" were translated using their Romanian counterparts ("gabiere" and "rândunicile mari"). Although they might be unfamiliar to some, I chose to keep them for authenticity and explained them in a footnote as types of sails (p. 224).

In translating the sea-related vocabulary, I aimed to stay true to the original technical terms while making sure Romanian readers could follow along. I often used real Romanian naval words and added short explanations where needed. This method lines up with Peter Newmark's view that technical translation should be clear, and with Lawrence Venuti's idea that translators should sometimes make their presence visible to help readers. By carefully mixing accurate terminology with helpful notes, I tried to keep both the detail and realism that are essential in historical adventure stories like this one.

7. Translating technical instructions and spoken language

In translating the scene where Harry asks for tools to carry out his rescue plan, a mix of strategies was used to maintain both clarity and authenticity.

Source Text (ST): Thank God we know that much, Adolphe! Now, in the first place, I want you to get me some tools--a sharp saw, a chisel, a large screw-driver, and half a dozen large screws; also, two beams of wood to fasten across the hatchway and keep the boards up after I have sawn through them; also, I want three bundles of cork--flat pieces will be the best if you can get them, but that doesn't matter much. I may as well have an auger too. (Henty, 2009: 193)

Target Text (TT): Slavă Domnului că știm asta, Adolphe! Acum, în primul rând, vreau să-mi aduci niște unelte – un fierăstrău ascuțit, o daltă, o șurubelniță mare și vreo șase șuruburi mari. De asemenea, îmi trebuie și două grinzi de lemn pe care să le fixează peste trapă și să țin scândurile sus după ce le voi tăia, trei pachete de lemn de plută – bucățile plate ar fi cele mai bune, dar asta contează mai puțin. Aș avea nevoie și de un șfredel. (Henty, 2023:198)

The exclamation “Thank God we know that much” was rendered as “Slavă Domnului că știm asta”, using idiomatic equivalence. This Romanian version keeps the informal and familiar tone of the original while sounding natural in the target language. For the list of tools – “a saw”, “chisel”, “screwdriver”, and “screws” – the Romanian terms “fierăstrău”, “daltă”, “șurubelniță”, and “șuruburi” were chosen. These reflect literal or functional equivalence, using standard, accurate terms familiar to most readers. Similarly, “beams of wood” became “grinzi de lemn”, a literal translation that clearly conveys the physical object without overcomplicating the sentence.

The term “hatchway” was translated as “trapă”, consistent with previous use in the text. This shows technical coherence, ensuring that repeated elements are translated the same way throughout. “Boards” were translated as “scânduri”, a contextual adaptation that fits naturally within Romanian vocabulary used in carpentry and general speech.

A more complex item – “bundles of cork (flat pieces)” – was translated as “pachete de lemn de plută – bucăți plate”. This is an example of descriptive translation combined with glossing, offering a more detailed explanation to help readers who might not be familiar with this material. Finally, “auger” was translated as “șfredel”, using functional equivalence. Though the Romanian term is slightly old-fashioned, it fits well in the historical setting of the novel and retains technical precision.

The Romanian version maintains the procedural logic of the original - itemizing the tools, clarifying their use, and preserving sentence rhythm. The use of punctuation (em-

dashes, commas) effectively mirrors the pauses in spoken English. This passage illustrates an effective combination of literal and functional translation, terminological accuracy, and pragmatic adaptation, especially well-suited to the historical-adventure genre. The translator's choices reflect Venuti's principle of reader-centered fluency, yet with Newmark's emphasis on communicative clarity in technical vocabulary.

8. Translating action, emotion, and suspense

The passage below illustrates how narrative intensity, emotional immediacy, and physical action are handled in translation. It also demonstrates how syntax, verb choice, and rhythm are adjusted to retain dramatic pacing in Romanian.

Source Text (ST): It flashed across him at once that the animal was mad, but without an instant's hesitation he dashed off at full speed and threw himself in front of the ladies before the dog reached them. Snatching off his coat, and then kneeling on one knee, he awaited the animal's attack. Without deviating from its course, the hound sprang at him with a short snarling howl. Harry threw his coat over its head and then grasped it round the neck. (Henty, 2009:28)

Target Text (TT): Îi trecu imediat prin minte că animalul era turbat, dar, fără să ezite o clipă, o luă la fugă cu toată viteza și se aruncă în fața doamnelor înainte să ajungă câinele la ele. Smulgându-și haina și apoi așezându-se într-un genunchi, așteptă să fie atacat de animal. Fără să se abată din drum, câinele de vânătoare sări spre el cu un urlet scurt și un mârâit. Harry îi aruncă haina în cap și apoi îl prinse de gât. (Henty, 2023:31)

Translating the intense encounter between Harry and the rabid dog required careful attention to both the urgency of the scene and the psychological state of the character. The phrase "It flashed across him at once..." was rendered as "Îi trecu imediat prin minte...", using modulation. This involves a slight structural shift to match Romanian natural expressions of thought, effectively conveying the sudden realization and preserving the immediacy of the moment.

The straightforward statement "The animal was mad" became "animalul era turbat", through literal translation. The term "turbat" is commonly used in Romanian to describe rabid animals, making this an accurate and culturally appropriate choice. Following this, "without an instant's hesitation" was translated as "fără să ezite o clipă", applying communicative equivalence to ensure naturalness and fluency in Romanian while retaining the original sense of immediate action. The dynamic phrase "dashed off at full speed" was translated as "o luă la fugă cu toată viteza", a combination of modulation and explicitation. The Romanian version preserves the urgency of the action while adapting it into a form that feels idiomatic and vivid to the reader. Similarly, "threw himself in front of the ladies" became "se aruncă în fața doamnelor", a literal but functional equivalence that keeps the chivalrous tone and dramatic gesture intact.

For the action "Snatching off his coat...", the translation "Smulgându-și haina..." employs dynamic equivalence. The verb "smulge" adds intensity and matches the haste of the original moment. This energy continues with "kneeling on one knee", rendered precisely as "așezându-se într-un genunchi" through literal translation, which is vivid and direct in Romanian. The narrative then moves to "awaited the animal's attack", translated as "așteptă să fie atacat de animal". This involves a slight syntactic shift—using passive voice, which is

more naturally expressed in Romanian in this context. The description “the hound sprang... with a short snarling howl” was recreated as “câinele de vânătoare sări... cu un urlet scurt și un mârâit”, combining descriptive translation and sound retention. The Romanian version mirrors the suspense and auditory imagery of the original.

Lastly, “threw his coat over its head” became “îi aruncă haina în cap”, a colloquial phrasing that is direct and evocative. The final action “grasped it round the neck” was translated as “îl prinse de gât”, using literal equivalence. This is a clean and idiomatic rendering that maintains both accuracy and tone.

9. Translating physical conflict and kinetic detail

This passage provides an excellent example of taking the challenge of translating physical struggle, momentum, and tactile intensity, all of which are key components of action-driven narrative. My Romanian version aims at effectively maintaining the dramatic tension and visual clarity of the original, using dynamic and visceral language.

Source Text (ST): The impetus of the spring knocked him over, and they rolled together on the ground. The animal struggled furiously, but Harry retained his grasp round its neck. In vain the hound tried to free itself from its blinding encumbrance, or to bite his assailant through it, and struggled to shake off his hold with its legs and claws. Harry maintained his grasp tightly round its neck, with his head pressed closely against one of its ears. Several times they rolled over and over. At last Harry made a great effort when he was uppermost, and managed to get his knees upon the animal's belly, and then, digging his toes in the ground, pressed with all his weight upon it. (Henty, 2009:28)

Target Text (TT): Impulsul săriturii îl doborî și se rostogoliră împreună pe jos. Animalul se zbătu cu furie, dar Harry își păstră strânsoarea din jurul gâtului. În zadar încercă apoi câinele de vânătoare să scape de haina care-l orbea sau să-și muște agresorul direct prin ea, chinându-se cu picioarele și cu ghearele să-și elibereze gâtul. Harry nu-l slăbea din strânsoare, stând cu capul lipit de una din urechile câinelui. De mai multe ori se rostogoliră înainte și înapoi. În cele din urmă, Harry reuși cu un efort supraomenesc, când era deasupra în încăierare, să-și înfigă genunchii în burta animalului, apoi, cu tălpile fixate adânc în pământ, se apăsă cu toată greutatea pe el. (Henty, 2023:33)

In translating the intense struggle between Harry and the dog, careful attention was paid to preserving both the dramatic momentum and emotional tension of the scene. The phrase “The impetus of the spring knocked him over” was rendered as “Impulsul săriturii îl doborî”, using a combination of literal translation and lexical economy. This choice effectively conveys the force and speed of the animal's attack while keeping the Romanian version compact and powerful.

As the two characters “rolled together on the ground”, the Romanian “se rostogoliră împreună pe jos” preserves both the physical motion and the closeness of the confrontation through functional equivalence. The expression “struggled furiously” was translated directly as “se zbătu cu furie”, a brief but intense rendering that keeps the emotional weight of the original. For the phrase “blinding encumbrance”, the translation “haina care-l orbea” simplifies the metaphor but makes the meaning clearer to general readers. This use of explication favors understanding without losing significance. The next line, “to bite his assailant through it”, becomes “să-și muște agresorul direct prin ea”, a mostly literal

translation with a touch of modulation, where the choice of “agresorul” maintains both the tone and register of the source.

Describing the animal’s actions, “struggled to shake off his hold with its legs and claws” is translated as “chinuindu-se cu picioarele și cu ghearele să-și elibereze gâtul”. This version involves recasting and explicitation, restructuring the clause to suit natural Romanian expression while clearly highlighting the animal’s goal—freedom. Similarly, the line “head pressed closely against one of its ears” is rendered literally as “cu capul lipit de una din urechile câinelui”, maintaining vivid imagery and intimacy. When the struggle continues and “they rolled over and over”, the Romanian “se rostogoliră înainte și înapoi” introduces adaptation, adding a sense of direction and repetition to emphasize the ongoing nature of the fight. As Harry regains the upper hand, the original’s “great effort” and “knees upon the animal’s belly” become “un efort supraomenesc” and “înfigă genunchii în burta animalului”, respectively. This translation uses heightened language, with “supraomenesc” amplifying the heroic nature of Harry’s action and “înfigă” suggesting force and physical strain.

The scene concludes with Harry “digging his toes in the ground”, which is simplified to “cu tălpile fixate adânc în pământ”. This metaphoric reduction maintains clarity and remains precise, while the final line “pressed with all his weight” becomes “se apăsă cu toată greutatea pe el”, a smooth communicative equivalent that feels fluid and natural in Romanian, fully capturing the climax of the struggle.

10. Translating dialogue and emotional tension

The passage below offers a different kind of translation challenge: dialogue, emotional tone, and narrative exposition all within a tightly structured exchange. It combines indirect political references, protective reasoning, and a moment of emotional tension - all of which require subtle handling to preserve the original’s nuance and clarity in Romanian.

Source Text (ST): “Are you taking me to the girls, Harry?”

“No,” Harry said. “It would not be safe to do so. There are already suspicions, and they have been denounced.”

Marie gave a cry of alarm.

“I have managed to suppress the document, Marie, and we start with them in a day or two. Still, it will be better for you not to go near them. I will arrange for you to meet them to-morrow.”

“Where am I going, then?”

“You are going to the house of a worthy couple, who have shown themselves faithful and trustworthy by nursing a friend of mine, who has for nearly six months been lying ill there. You will be perfectly safe there till we can arrange matters.” (Henty, 2009:150)

Target Text (TT): – Mă duci la fete, Harry?

– Nu, spuse Harry. Ar fi o imprudență din partea mea. Au fost deja denunțate de niște vecini suspicioși. Marie scoase un strigăt de îngrijorare.

– Am reușit să ascund documentul cu denunțul, stai liniștită, Marie, și vom pleca cu toții peste o zi-două. Totuși, va fi mai bine pentru tine să nu te apropii de ele. Voi aranja ca mâine să vă întâlniți.

– Unde mă duci, atunci?

– La casa unui cuplu de oameni vrednici care s-au arătat credincioși și demni de încredere, îngrijind un prieten de-al meu, care de aproape șase luni zace bolnav la ei. Vei fi în siguranță acolo până vom putea aranja plecarea. (Henty, 2023:156)

This dialogue sequence is a well-crafted Romanian translation that effectively maintains both the emotional depth and narrative clarity of the original English. It demonstrates a sensitive application of multiple translation strategies tailored to dialogue, character tone, and historical context. The line “Mă duci la fete, Harry?” uses a literal and idiomatic strategy, preserving Marie’s direct emotional appeal. Harry’s response—“Ar fi o imprudență din partea mea”—modulates “not safe” into a slightly more formal Romanian term, aligning well with the historical setting and the character’s protective stance. The translator’s decision to include “vecini suspicioși” clarifies the source of the threat, an explication that enhances reader comprehension.

Further down, expressions like “Marie scoase un strigăt de îngrijorare” slightly soften the urgency of “a cry of alarm,” leaning toward anxious concern rather than panic—a nuanced interpretive adjustment. Key narrative elements are preserved and clarified, as seen in “Am reușit să ascund documentul cu denunțul,” where explication helps define what kind of document is meant. The inclusion of “cu toții” in “vom pleca cu toții peste o zi-două” adds emotional warmth and inclusiveness to the plan of escape.

Expressions such as “va fi mai bine pentru tine să nu te apropii de ele” show communicative equivalence, conveying concern in a natural Romanian rhythm. The phrase “La casa unui cuplu de oameni vrednici care s-au arătat credincioși și demni de încredere” uses cumulative equivalence, capturing the moral tone of the English while sounding idiomatic in Romanian. Finally, “până vom putea aranja plecarea” adapts the vague “arrange matters” to focus specifically on the plan to flee – contextually appropriate and narratively effective. Overall, the translation succeeds in balancing emotional resonance, clarity, and fidelity to the source text.

Conclusion

By examining specific lexical choices and strategies the article highlights the balance between preserving authenticity and ensuring accessibility for modern readers. Through a combination of borrowing, calque, functional equivalence, and explication, the translation seeks to faithfully convey G.A. Henty’s novel’s historical richness and cultural texture while remaining readable and informative for the Romanian audience.

References

- Baker, M., *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, 2nd ed., London, Routledge, 2011.
 Catford, J. C., *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965.
 Bassnett, Susan. *Translation Studies*. 3rd ed., London and New York, Routledge, 2002.
 Even-Zohar, I., *Polysystem Studies*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press (Poetics Today 11:1), 1990.
 Haspelmath, M., “Lexical Borrowing: Concepts and Issues,” in M. Haspelmath & U. Tadmor (eds.), *Loanwords in the World’s Languages*, Berlin, De Gruyter Mouton, 2009, pp. 35–54.
 Haugen, E., “The Analysis of Linguistic Borrowing,” *Language*, 26(2), Washington, DC, Linguistic Society of America, 1950, pp. 210–231.

- Henty, G.A., *In the Reign of Terror. The Adventures of a Westminster Boy.*, Project Gutenberg, 2009. (ebook)
- Henty, G.A., *Sub domnia Terorii*, București, Contra Mundum, 2023. Translated into Romanian by Cristina Miron.
- Mufwene, S. S., *The Ecology of Language Evolution*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Munday, J., *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, 4th ed., London, Routledge, 2016.
- Newmark, P., *A Textbook of Translation*, New York, Prentice Hall, 1988.
- Nida, E. A., *Toward a Science of Translating*, Leiden, Brill, 1964.
- Thomason, S. G. & Kaufman, T., *Language Contact, Creolization, and Genetic Linguistics*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1988.
- Venuti, L., *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, London, Routledge, 1995.
- Venuti, L., *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*, London, Routledge, 1998.
- Vermeer, H. J., *Skopos and Commission in Translational Action*, in A. Chesterman (ed.), *Readings in Translation Theory*, Helsinki, Oy Finn Lectura Ab, 1989.
- Vinay, J.-P. & Darbelnet, J., *Comparative Stylistics of French and English: A Methodology for Translation*, trans. J. C. Sager & M.-J. Hamel, Amsterdam, John Benjamins, 1995 (original work published 1958).
- Weinreich, U., *Languages in Contact: Findings and Problems*, The Hague, Mouton, 1953.

A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF GENDERED NARRATIVES: DYNAMICS OF VICTIM BLAMING IN YOUTUBE COMMENTS

Yusra QASIM ALI*

Abstract: *This study is established by employing Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional approach to critically analyze gendered language and victim-blaming dynamics in YouTube comments. Tools from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL henceforth) such as transitivity, mood, modality, and lexical choices are utilized within the textual analysis dimension to explore how gendered narratives contribute directly in shaping and reinforcing victim-blaming attitudes in Eastern societies. By examining a set of randomly selected YouTube comments related to gendered misconduct and violence, the study reveals the way linguistic choices contribute to the construction, formation and perpetuation of victim-blaming discourses and narratives. The analysis demonstrates that comments frequently employ transitivity and mood, on the one hand, to shift blame away from the deserved person. Modality and lexical choices, on the other hand, are employed to reinforce gender stereotypes and establish victim marginalizing.*

Keywords: *CDA; gender; east; social media; Fairclough*

1. Introduction

The core term in Critical Discourse analysis (CDA) is “critical”. The term critical in CDA studies stands for skepticism rather than negativity, i.e. it pushes a person to be a skeptical reader or listener. Van Dijk (2003) says that CDA focuses on “how the mental deception of social groups affects social structures” and criticizes it.

In the media age, platforms such as YouTube have become prominent arenas for discourse that concern the public. One of those discourses is discussions and controversies around topics of gendered violence, hatred and misconduct. Further, such platforms reflect and construct problematic societal stands and attitudes, particularly in the form of victim-blaming narratives. Therefore, it interests CDA. This study investigates how victim-blaming narratives against women are articulated and maintained in YouTube comments through a critical discourse analysis framework as it is indicated as a serious linguistic and social issue. So, the study aims to answer the following question: What are the various linguistic and discursive means by which eastern people structure gender identity and establish victim-blaming narratives on YouTube?

Adopting Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional approach, this paper examines the interplay between textual features, social practices, and the broader socio-cultural context. Within the textual analysis level, the paper incorporates tools from SFL such as transitivity,

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre,
yusriqsim@gmail.com

mood, modality, and lexical choices to offer a nuanced understanding of how language is utilized to construct, establish and perpetuate gendered narratives online.

Through a detailed examination of comment threads, this study aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms of victim-blaming and its implications for both individual attitudes and wider societal perceptions of gender and responsibility. By addressing these dynamics, the research seeks to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender, language, and media, advocating for a critical approach to understanding and challenging online narratives.

2. Critical discourse analysis

CDA is a critical interdisciplinary approach that investigates language behavior and its relation to society construction (Wodak, 2001:264). For Fairclough (2001:125), CDA is a social science that takes a critical direction in warning people on the way they are being confronted and controlled by certain forms of social representation. Jorgensen and Philips (2002) argue that CDA is a multidisciplinary field of study that investigates relationships of discourse and the development of culture and societies. Van Dijk (2002) also asserts that CDA is concerned with the relation of power abuse achieved via imbalanced dominance, i.e. inequality relations.

3. Fairclough's three-dimensional model

Fairclough (2010) suggests an approach that consists of three stages. The stages are:

3.1. Description (Textual Analysis)

The first stage deals with the investigation of the formal elements of the texts. Those elements include choices with regards to vocabulary, grammar and structuring. For conducting these analyses, Fairclough adopts Halliday's systemic functional linguistic tools as the toolkit for analysis (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999:134). Fairclough (1992:139) states that this stage of analysis helps people to be aware on the way certain linguistic choices can reveal the ideologies on coverage.

3.2. Interpretation (Discursive practice)

Fairclough (1989:26) clarifies that "interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction with seeing the text as the product of a process of production and recourse in the process of the interpretation". This means that discourses are seen as more than just texts with linguistic features.

3.3 Explanation (Social practice):

This is the stage where the cultural, historical and social contexts are driven into the consideration. Fairclough (1989:26) states that "explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with the social determination of the process of production and interpretation and their social effects.

4. Systemic functional linguistic tools

Yung and Harrison (2004:1) show that SFL and CDA share three conceptions which make them perfectly able to work together line in line. Both in their theory promote for the

conception that all languages: (i) communicate historical and cultural relations, (ii) establish social relations and (iii) hold dialectical relations. In this paper, a number of linguistic tools (or discourse strategies) from SFL are going to be majorly examined. Those tools are:

4.1 Transitivity

Transitivity is the linguistic system that links the outside world to language. Analysing the transitive language structure contributes in identifying the following (Halliday, 1985:103):

- a. “who is doing what to whom in what situation, and
- b. how certain things or events are foregrounded over some others and for what reason.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004:177) show that there are three major components that work together to constitute the transitive language structure. Those are (i) processes (which are established via the verbal elements of a language), (ii) participants (which are shaped via the nominal elements), and (iii) circumstances (which are expressed via the adverbial or prepositional elements). Halliday (1985:103) further puts forward six classifications of transitivity processes. Those processes are: *material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential*.

4.2 Mood

Analysing the structure of Mood, as well as modality that will be explained next, it is useful to answer or to acquire information on the question of: how is language structured to enable or create interactions? Further, mood choices are known to be determined by the social roles of the participants in various contexts. For example, in the East, men are often more demanding than women which makes the moods that express their situations and orders distinctive in most of the cases (ibid). Fairclough (1989:125) depends in his analysis on the three defined moods of English which are the following: a.) Declarative: S + V, b.) Imperative: a structure that starts with a V and has no S. and c.) Question: either a Wh-Q structure which begins with (what, who, where, etc.) or a Yes/No Q which begins with a V and needs a short answer with “yes” or “no”.

4.3 Modality

Halliday defines modality as the representation of the choices of language which lie in between the two polarities “yes” and “no”. This means that modality covers all the intermediate choices as well as the “various kinds of indeterminacy” (Halliday 1985: 85-86). Simpson (1993:47) defines modality by stating that it “refers broadly to a speaker’s attitude towards, or opinion about, the truth of a proposition expressed by a sentence. It also extends to their attitude towards the situation or event.

4.4 Lexical Choices

Each lexical choice represents a speaker’s perspective on the topic being spoken about. Fairclough (1989:116) mentions that the wordings of a speaker reflect the social relationship that s/he is engaged in and also creates them.

5. Ideology and bias

Ideology refers to the beliefs and thoughts about the various aspects of the world which contribute to maintaining and establishing relations of power, dominance and

exploitation (Fairclough, 2003:28). So, attitudes, beliefs and ideas on the social role of women in specific and gender in general are directly related to the concept of ideology, specifically gender ideology. Gender ideology is, as Kroska (2007) defines it, attitudes and beliefs on what is considered appropriate in terms of women and men rights, roles and responsibilities in societies.

The dominance of one side of an ideology, by being more powerful than the other, may result in or be a result of a kind of bias. McQuail (1992) indicates that bias is the opposite act of being objective. As objectivity is the quality of being fair, accurate and realistic, bias is quite the opposite. It is the manner of being inaccurate and unrealistic for several reasons.

6. Stereotypes and The East

Stereotypes generally refer to the set of ideas or images widely held on specific sort of thing or person, which do not necessarily reflect the reality (Oxford Dictionary, 2006:759). Sue et al (2007:273) assert that stereotypes are intentionally or unintentionally established “verbal and environmental indignities” that implies negative, racial, insulting, derogatory judgments and attitudes against the group targeted.

The Middle Eastern society is known for certain cultural codes of life performed among individuals, families and men/women, i.e. certain stereotypes. Some of the main codes can be precisely stated as below:

(1) Certain restrictions are applied between strange men and women and their interactions. Key point to those restrictions is that intimacy is not favored. (2) Certain boundaries are displayed in husband-and-wife relationships where the husbands are seen as superior to wives. (3) Family honor, which is directly related to women honor, is given high importance. All kinds of sacrifices are expected to save family honor. (4) Family plays central role in deciding marriage and divorce. (5) Arranged marriage is the defined style of proper marriage. (6) Women are not equal to men, neither in inheritance nor in testimony.

7. Data collection and methodology

The data for the current study are comments made by Eastern people on social media contents that cover violent incidents happened to women. The social media platform chosen to taken the comments from is YouTube. YouTube is chosen because it provides enough pictures and/or videos on the incident covered. Such a way of covering makes sure that the brutality or the sensitivity of the story is clear enough for audience. Also, videos are supposed to be able to convey the incident more effectively so that the receiver becomes able to feel and sense it.

More specifically, the story of Maryam Al-Rikabi who is a victim of Acid Attack in Iraq is chosen as the data. It is one of the stories that gained interest in Iraq and the Eastern society. Ten comments are chosen from a video where the victim talks about her sad story. The comments are originally written in Arabic, specifically Iraqi Arabic. However, a transliteration and a translation for each comment are provided.

The methodology to conduct the study is as follows: 1. A theoretical framework is presented covering the main concepts in relation to the study. 2. Data is selected from

YouTube. Data samples are contextualized, i.e. the context and the gender of the commenter is identified. 3. Textual analysis is conducted using Fairclough's (2010) Three-dimensional model as well as selected SFL tools, i.e. the linguistic patterns and discursive strategies are identified. 4. The social practice is identified in the data and the ideological dynamics are revealed, i.e. an ideological analysis is conducted. 5. A historical and cultural discussion is done. 6. Findings and conclusions are presented.

8. Data analysis and discussion

8.1 The story

The story that the video covers is related to a young lady named Maryam Al-Rikabi. Maryam al-Rikabi is a 16-year-old Iraqi girl who underwent a traumatic and terrifying experience when she was disfigured in an acid attack. The motive behind the attack was described as retaliation for rejection. The attacker, who was one of her friends, could not accept Maryam's refusal and rejection. Consequently, he decided to throw acid on her face while she was sleeping at home. According to local media reports, the attack occurred because she turned down a marriage proposal. The man who proposed entered the family's home while her father and mother were at work, poured acid on her while she slept, and stole her phone.

8.2 The Comments and their analysis

Comment 1

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|--|--|---|
| هاي نتيجة التلاعب بالمشاعر.. مادام جان يحبها مجانت لازم تبقى صديقتها | hāi natījaṭ ṭālā'ub biālmashā'ir.. mādāma chān yhibhā mjaṇt lāzim tabqa ṣadiqta | This is the result of playing with people's feelings. She shouldn't have remained his friend while he loved her |

In the above comment, transitivity analysis shows that participants role are presented in a way that obviously serves victim blaming. Maryam is defined as the actor and she is portrayed as the one who plays with men's feelings, which is what works to represent her as the guilty. The affected participant is referred to as "people" which pragmatically implies the attacker. Consequently, the attacker is presented as the victim as he is the affected one. He is affected by the acts (playing with people's feeling) of the actor (Maryam). The circumstance is quite negative which indicates that the behavior of the actor is harmful. Also, the comment clearly focuses on the actor (Maryam) and the circumstances that may serve as an excuse to blame her and as an excuse to sympathize the attacker.

Lexical choices also indicate the focus on Maryam as the one to be blamed and the attacker as a victim. Lexical choices such as "playing" and "shouldn't" positions her as the responsible for the incident. While lexis such as "feeling" and "result" implies that the attacker is only a victim of insensitivity and emotional manipulation. This reading of lexis takes the reader to the mood used. The mood is declarative where a judgment is declared as a well-

known fact. Modality also flows with the same interpretation. The use of “shouldn’t” is a form of obligation. The obligation in this context is a form of moral obligation expected from the actor (Maryam) driven from a stereotyped gendered narrative. The linguistic structure indicates that the result of not fulfilling the obligation is that a harm caused. Therefore, the modality use emphasizes the fact that Maryam is the one should be blamed.

Comment 2

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| اهلها السبب والحرية الزائدة | ahlhā ʾalsābab wālḥurīyā ʾalzāʾida | Her family is the reason as well as excessive freedom/openness. |

Linguistic analysis in Comment 2 again provides obvious clue on victim blaming dynamics. Transitivity analysis reveals that the way participants are structured, the process and the circumstances, are all against Maryam. The actor, the first participant, is “her family”. The reference to her family and the negative circumstances that surrounds them, i.e. establishing excessive openness and freedom, implicitly lead to Maryam. It works as representing Maryam’s behavior as the main cause and positioning her as the one responsible for the attack, i.e. the attack was a consequence for her behavior and her family’s negligence, carelessness and inadequate protection. The affected participant, on the other hand, is the one who got harmed because of Maryam’s and her family’s negative behavior and its consequences. Thus, the affected is, as implicated, the attacker.

Evaluative language is obvious in the lexical choices of comment 2. The word “reason” reflects negative perspective on Maryam enforcing the blame onto her. Also, the use of the adjective “excessive” to highlight inappropriate behavior is another indication of victim blaming.

The mood is declarative. It declares a certainty in presenting judgments on Maryam and her family.

Comment 3

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|--|--|---|
| نتيجة الغرور بجمالها. امها اعترفت ان بنتها منغرة بجمالها | natījāt alḡhurūr bijamālihā. ʾaiʿtarafaʾ ʾanā biṅtahā mngħra bijamāliha | This is the result of her vanity over her beauty. Her mother confessed that her daughter was arrogant about her looks |

Transitivity analysis shows that Maryam is represented as the actor. The actor is contributed with negative attributes such as “vanity” and “arrogant”. The affected participant is not declared explicitly. It is referred to implicitly as one of the people who are victims of Maryam’s negative attributes, i.e. arrogance. The circumstance that relates the actor to the affected participant is that the former is being conceited, arrogant and self-centered. Transitivity analysis shows that those are the causes of the blame to be directed onto Maryam,

i.e. because of her attitude towards her appearance as well as her family's awareness of this fact.

Lexical choices shows that the meaning of arrogance is highlighted twice in relation to Maryam by the use of the two lexis: "vanity" and "arrogant". The focus in the comment is completely on Maryam, the attacker is not mentioned at all. The negative focus indicates the negative role given to her in the incident. Further, the mood is declarative again. Declarative mood shows certainty and factuality in assessing Maryam's behavior as the cause.

Comment 4

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| وين اكو صداقة بين ولد و بنت | waʔn əkʷ ʃadāqa bʔn walad wa biṭt | A friendship between a boy and a girl, is there anything in life like that? |

The essential part of transitivity analysis in this comment is the process and the circumstance analysis. The process implied here is relational. The comment identifies the impossibility of existence of a friendship relation between any boy and any girl in Eastern societies. It denies the possibility of not turning such relations into sexual or romantic ones. Consequently, getting involved in such a relation is considered a break to norms and an act that leads to negative consequences. This is the point where Maryam is invisibly represented as the blamed actor whereas the attacker as the victim.

The use of lexis suggests nothing obvious, but the connotations and the interpretations of the words in the context shows how blame is shifted from the attacker to the victim. Further, the mood of the comment is an interrogative one. However, the question does not seek any information. It is rather a rhetorical question where the answer is taken for granted fact on the side of the commenter. The use of interrogative mood challenges and certainly doubts the existence of any form of relationship between a boy and a girl other than the romantic or sexual one. It also aims to make the reader question the existence of any innocent relationship between people of different gender and, thus, get their agreement on the perspective implied.

Comment 5

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| الله اعلم ليا حال وصل الولد منها | Allhu ʔi ʔaṁ līā ḥāl waṣṣ ʔlwalad minḥā | Only God knows to what state she has brought him |

By means of transitivity analysis, it is shown that the actor in this comment is Maryam. The affected participant is the attacker. The processes focused on are things other than the attack itself. The first process is the state she, the actor, brought him, the affected, to, which is obviously a negative state. The second process is the state that the affected has been brought to, which is a state that requires sympathy. Both processes are mental triggered by the use of "know". Establishing the mental processes mentioned, the commenter shows

sympathy for the affected, the attacker, and represents him as the victim. The actor, on the other hand, is given a focus as someone surrounded by a negative circumstance, i.e. a position where she drives men into bad state.

The choice of “God knows” as the opening lexis of the comment indicates that the commenter does not have any solid evidence or any convincing reason to suppose such a thing. The judgment is completely triggered from some societal or personal belief. In addition to that, the expression “God knows” implies that there are things beyond human understandings in such cases, i.e. the state of the mind of the attacker. The comment represents a personal ideology and belief as a common fact to get sympathy for the attacker and shift blame.

An assertive and evaluative judgment is presented via the declarative mood in the comment. The certainty in judgment is obvious through declarative mood. The commenter is certain that there is a sort of influence that the girl must have had on the boy’s state of mind but only God can clarify or comprehend it.

Comment 6

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| القصة بيها غموض محد يسوي هيدي بلا سبب | alqiṣā bīhā ghumūd. maḥad yusawīy hīdī bilā sabab | There is mystery in the story... No one does such a thing without a reason |

In the analysis of transitivity, there is no clear indication of any participant in this comment. The focus of this comment is on a general process and a general circumstance. However, the context of the comment provides the implications with regard to the main figures of the story. The process here is identificative. It is identified that there must be a motive for doing such a thing, killing. As the comment is made on a post that shows Maryam as a victim and the attacker as a brutal killer, the comment pragmatically serves as seeking an excuse for the attacker by highlighting certain process of identification and, thus, shifting the blame. The circumstance is revealed via a mental process of supposing the existence of a “mystery”. Although there is no certainty, the writer raises a sense of speculation on the state of Maryam. The speculation is based on the general fact that any act must have a cause.

The interesting lexis in this comment are “no one” and “mystery”. The lexical item “mystery” drives suspension on the position of the victim while the lexical item “no one” provides a space to find an excuse for the attacker.

The mood used in this comment is declarative. The comment consists of two declarative sentences. Both of them implicate a sense of certainty.

Comment 7

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|--|--|---|
| هو شون عرف هي نايمة بالبيت اذا مو هي كايئلته | hūa ṣawn ‘urf hī ṇayma biālbaʾt aḍḥa mw hīa kaɣlah | How could he know that she was sleeping at home unless she told him |

The intensity of victim blaming in this comment is less than of the others. Maryam, which is shown by means of transitivity analysis, is represented as the co-responsible for the incident. The process of transitivity here is verbal. The writer makes a sort of logical assumption on the knowledge of Maryam's whereabouts indicating that it is impossible for someone to know such information unless Maryam herself informs about it. Given such a circumstance (she told him), it is implicated that Maryam holds part of the responsibility. The writer implicates that she might be in contact with him as friends which is something wrong.

The two collocational lexis, "know" and "told", serve in implicating the mysterious relationship between Maryam and her attacker. Further, the interrogative mood which is not literally interrogative but rather rhetorical is another indication for the implication. The writer/the commenter wants the reader to retrain the same thought that "she told him" and start seeing a side of the story where she is to be blamed. So, the proposition of the comment reflects a chain of events that lead to a result, i.e. her disclosure that lead to her disfiguration.

Comment 8

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|---|---|--|
| هي لو مخلية حدود بعلاقتها وياه مجان صار هيجي | hīa law mukhiliyā ḥudwd bi'alāqatihā wyah majāan sāra hayjī | If she had set limits for her relationships, such a thing wouldn't have happened |

Transitivity analysis of this comment shows one more focus on the circumstance of friendship relation between a girl and a boy in Eastern society. However, the circumstance this time is about the limits of the relation. The actor, Maryam, is explained as getting engaged in a negative circumstance and process. There is the process of event where Maryam's action of not setting limits in her relationship with the attacker caused (a case circumstance) her to be attacked. Also, a circumstance of condition is highlighted. The actor could have been away from such a traumatic incident if she just has had limits in her relations. The non-adherence to the condition results in negative consequences. Those consequences position Maryam as the one to be blamed.

The use of the lexical item "if" reveals an essential societal clue on the society that Maryam grows in. the use of "if" is done in a hypothetical perspective taken from a stereotyped relation of case-effect in the Eastern society.

The mood of the comment is conditional declarative. It declares a hypothetical scenario. The mood of the language conveys a sense of certainty attached to the hypothetical declaration. In other words, the commenter tries to make the hypothetical cause-effect relation of preventing harm seems as certain as possible.

Comment 9

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|--|--|---|
| تستاهل كل وحدة تتلاعب بمشاعر الشباب | tstahl kulū waḥda tatalā'ab bimashā'ir alshābāb | Every woman who plays with a man's feelings deserves it. |

This comment is highly aggressive. The Transitivity analysis comes up with explicit indications. The commenter states Maryam as the actor of a negative act (playing with man's feelings). The process and the circumstances surrounding the actor, thus, is not positive. The event/ actional process of "play" is connected to the verbal process "deserves it". This reads as any women who is playful with men deserves killing/disfiguration. In a linguistic expression, such women deserve such a negative attribute. The dynamic of victim blaming in this comment is highly explicit. Therefore, the affected is defined as the attacker. The affected is seen as the victim who has been played with his feeling and deserves sympathy for seeking revenge.

The use of the lexical items "every" and the verb "deserves" implies a sense of seeking justice based on one's action. Further, the declarative mood used shows certainty in the judgment. That is, it is certain and non-discussable that any women who plays with men's feelings deserves the negative outcome she faces no matter how brutal and traumatic it may be.

Comment 10

| Slang Arabic | Transliteration | Translation |
|--|--|---|
| هن ساييات ويتعززن ع الزلم فوكاها وهو تعبان يريد يوفرها طلباتها | huna saybat wayata'azāzan ' alzlm fawakāhā wahūa ta'abān yurīd ywfrlḥa ṭalabātiḥā | They are reckless, and on top of that, they selfishly ignore men. Men, on the other hand, are exhausted trying to fulfill whatever demands they have! |

This comment refers to men and women in general and implies Maryam and the attacker in specific. Participant analysis in transitivity system shows that women are represented as the actor in this comment while men are represented as the affected. The processes that describe both of them are behavioral. By means of verbal processes, women are defined as reckless while men are defined as exhausted for trying to satisfy women. The circumstance attributed to women is, thus, negative. In other words, women are given attributes such as selfish, self-centered and reckless. Men, on the other hand, are given positive attribute, seeking women's satisfaction.

The important lexical items in this comment are adjectives used to describe the state and the behavior of each group, women and men. Adjectives such as "reckless", "selfish (from selfishly)" and "ignorant (from ignore)" are used to describe women. Adjective such as "exhausted" is used with men's state. Such usage indicates that men are the victim, thus the attacker is the victim in this specific case too as he undergoes the same condition.

8.3 Discussion

Historically, Eastern societies were shaped on patriarchal norms. The patriarchal norm is a form of the dominant approach of gender. It, on the one hand, assigns men the primary positions of power and gives them the main authority. It, on the other hand, assigns women roles centered around domesticity, house-holding and caregiving. This cultural positioning of men and women has relegated women to subordinate roles. It, in turn, has

limited their abilities and access in society. The roots of taking this approach is found in either the ages before Islam or in the misinterpretations of the role and rights given to women in Islam, as Muslims are the majority in the East.

Although nowadays women in Eastern societies are given rights in law and most of official social media sites, yet the impacts of those cultural and historical norms are still apparent in most people's attitudes to events where women are the victims. The textual and the ideological analyses above assert this argument. Despite advancements, women in Eastern societies continue to face obvious tendencies of victim blaming, enforcement of standard gender expectations and inherited bias against them.

A dangerous impact of this sort of leftover of cultural and historical negative positioning of women in Eastern society is the phenomenon of lack of sympathy. Although that YouTube content shows rather than just tells which is supposed to be incentive, it is seen that the comments analyzed indicate a high level of lack of sympathy for the victim. Sympathy for victims is supposed to be an innate human emotion. It is characterized by feelings of concern, compassion, and understanding towards those who suffer harm. Images of sympathy can be seen in the recognition of the suffering and pain, the expression of compassion, the desire to lessen the suffering of the victim and avoiding the verbal and behavioral judgments. However, comments analyses show that there is a lack of sympathy in both cases, the brutal incidents where victims are murdered or disfigured (as some comments claim that such women like Maryam deserve death not just disfiguration) and the less brutal ones where victims are gone through painful experiences such as domestic violence. The lack of sympathy is seen in both genders.

Another impact seen is that women are given the role of the actor (the ones who do and the one who should do) although men hold the power. In all the cases analyzed, women are defined as the actors who have done or must have done something to provoke the incident. Also, women are set as the ones who could prevent the incident. In this hypothetical scenario, men are always the victims of women's non-adherence to societal norms which is seen, by them, as a convincing excuse for the action done by men. This highlights an important contradiction. The contradiction is that men are given power in every side of life but women are held responsible for any break might happen which is an obvious form of bias. Moreover, this ideology contradicts one of the main concepts of Islam which is Al-Qawamah. Al-Qawamah means guardianship or responsibility. It is a responsibility given by Islam to men and it states that men hold responsible more than women in such cases because it is men's job to prevent harm. So, people who shift blame do not adhere to the real Islamic attitude.

On the top of this, a primary disadvantage of the historical and cultural positioning of women in Eastern societies is the psychological impact of the stereotyped victim-blaming ideology on women's self-esteem, sense and mental health and their perceived perspective on themselves and one another. Comments show that even women do victim-blaming to their peers. Out of 10 comments, it is found that 4 comments are made by women, as the table below shows. This indicates that some women have started to perceive the given position to them as natural and have started to accept the unjust position as something okay. They seem to be convinced that they should adhere to certain unjust norms and just go with the flow. However, reasons for this are various. Some women might think that this is the only means by which they gain societal respect, i.e. by being the lady that respects limits set for her. Some

others might be unaware of the process at all, i.e. they just flow with the situation subconsciously. Some may be given a misinterpreted education on their duties and limits in Islam so they become afraid to disobey their God's order if they stand up for any oppression.

| Com ment | Gend er | Com ment | Gend er | Com ment | Gend er | Com ment | Gend er | Comm ent | Gen der |
|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| A.1 | Male | A.3 | Male | A.5 | Male | A.7 | Male | A.9 | Male |
| A.2 | Female | A.4 | Female | A.6 | Female | A.8 | Female | A.10 | Male |

Finally, the analysis of the ten comments show that women are targeted and blame is shift towards them via two main dynamics. Those are:

1. Direct Victim-Blaming: Direct victim-blaming refers to directly assigning responsibility to a victim or holding the victim guilty for the harm and unjust she has experienced. This technique involves either an explicit or implicit accusation of the victim for causing or being part in causing her own victimization through her personal actions, personal behaviors, or personal life choices. This can be driven from the gender expectations that the society forces on women there. In the case of this study and on the base of the detailed textual analysis of 10 comments, direct victim-blaming is seen in the following contexts:

- In A.1 and A.9, the commenter directly accuses the victim as being playful, "playing with people's feeling", and exploiter, "took advantage of him". The commenter frames the victim's refusal of the attacker's marriage proposal as a form of emotional manipulation to directly blame her. The blame is explicitly shifted.

- In A.3, the victim is blamed for, as stated, her vanity about her appearance. The commenter explicitly indicates that her behavior has provoked the harm caused.

- In A.4, the commenter explicitly assumes that she certainly has done things that caused the attacker to do what he has done. The comment explicitly diminishes the responsibility of the attacker.

- In A.7, the commenter states a rhetorical question to makes everyone assume that she been in contact with him. The implicit meaning reads as: she seems to be playing with his feelings because she is in an intimate relationship with him as she tells him personal details like when she goes to sleep". Further, the comment also indicates that her disclosure of the details of her location and daily activity is a contribution in the success of the attack.

- In, A.8, the victim is again explicitly held responsible. The excuse is that she has not set limits for her relation. This means that the commenter indicates that her life-style and personal behavior are the causes of the attack.

2. Indirect Victim-Blaming: Indirect victim-blaming refers to the explicit or implicit shifting responsibility on someone close to the victim rather than the victim herself. Unlike direct victim-blaming, indirect victim-blaming can be less obvious and more nuanced and may not always be immediately interpreted and apparent. The followings are key explanations and examples of indirect victim-blaming:

- In A.2, the victim's family are held responsible for the harmful experiences their daughters have been through. The commenters indicate that victims' families and their life style, i.e. openness and excessive freedom, are the reasons for the traumatic fates of those women. If parents and family were well-protective and forcing their daughters to respect

social norms, that incident would not have occurred. This kind of blame-shifting goes back to victims indirectly because the blamed people are part of their life.

9. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated the pervasive and patriarchal nature of Eastern gendered narratives and victim-blaming within YouTube comments, highlighting how linguistic tools are utilized to shift blame onto victim women and away from perpetrators. By means of adopting Fairclough's (2010) three-dimensional approach and a set of Systemic Functional Linguistic (SFL) tools, it is evident that comments about violence against women often shape and reflect deep-rooted patriarchal stereotypes and norms. Those norms and stereotypes continue to influence women-related perceptions and discourse in all contexts, specifically Eastern contexts.

The analysis concludes that a consistent pattern where women are framed as the primary actors responsible for the incidents they suffer, while men, despite being the aggressors, are depicted as victims. This is achieved by means of specific linguistic structures such as:

- transitivity structures that work on positioning women as culpable actors and men as sympathetic affected party.
- lexical choices that emphasize victim women's supposed failings, shortcuts and moods that emphasize moral obligations and inherited roles and judgments against them. Comments are found to depict women's actions, feelings and behaviors as the catalyst for violence which is something that contributes in reinforcing traditional gender norms.

Furthermore, the paper emphasizes an obvious lack of empathy towards victim women, which is something that indicates how societal attitudes with regard to gendered violence are deeply driven from and influenced by historical and cultural discrimination and biases.

The findings also indicate a negative psychological impact, revealing that women themselves, in some situations, seem to internalize and perpetuate victim-blaming dynamics, reflecting an acceptance and a naturalized adherence to such unjust norms. This internalization and naturalization significantly impact women's mental and psychological health and self-esteem.

Finally, the study concludes that victim-blaming dynamics of eastern society against women falls into two main kinds. Those are: direct victim blaming and indirect victim blaming, the establishment of two strategies for victim-blaming makes the situation even more complicated and asserts the necessity for conducting more CDA studies of this kind to denaturalize such ideologies.

References

- Amy K. Gender Ideology. *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology*, 1-2, 2007
- Blair, I. V et al. *Unconscious (implicit) bias and health disparities: Where do we go from here? The Permanente Journal*, 15(2), 71–78, 2011
- Chouliaraki, L. & Fairclough, N. *Discourse in Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999
- Fairclough, N. *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis of Social Research*. London: Routledge, 2003

- Fairclough, N. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (2nd ed) London and New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Fairclough, N. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity, 1992
- Fairclough, N. *Language and Power*, (2nd ed.). London: Longman, 2001
- Fairclough, N. *Language and Power*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited., 1989
- Fairclough, N. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, (1st ed.), London: Longman, 1995
- Halliday, M.A.K. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, (2nd ed.) London: Arnold, 1994
- Halliday, M.A.K. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, (3rd ed.) London: Arnold, 2004
- Halliday, M.A.K. *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Arnold, 1985
- Halliday, M.A.K. *Language as Social Semiotic: The social Interpretation of Language and Meaning*. London: Edward Arnold, 1978
- Halliday, M.A.K. Mathiessen, C. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Hodder, 2004
- Jorgensen, M., and Phillips, L. *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*. London: Sage, 2002
- Lather, P. *Getting Smart: Feminists Research and Redogogy Within The Postmodern* (1st ed.), New York: Routledge, 1991
- McQuail, D. *Language Arts & Disciplines*. Sage Publications (CA), 1992
- Moghadam, V. *Modernizing Women: Gender & Social Change in the Middle East*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder & London, 1993
- Oxford Dictionary of English. English Dictionary. 2006
- O'Donnell, D. & Henriksen, L. *Philosophical foundations for a critical evaluation of the social impact of ICT*. Journal of Information Technology, 17. Routledge: Routledge press, 2002, 89-99.
- Sue, D. W. et al. *Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life*, American Psychologist, 2007
- Van Dijk, T. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. In D. Schiffrin, D. Tannen, & H. E. Hamilton (ed), *The Handbook of discourse analysis* (pp. 352-371). Maiden, MA: Blackwell, 2003
- Weiss, G. & Wodak, R. *Critical Discourse Analysis: Theory and Interdisciplinary*. London: Palgrave, 2003
- Wodak, R. *What CDA is about: A Summary of Its History, Important Concepts and Its Developments?* Eds. R. Wodak and M. Meyer. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. London: Sage, 2001: 1 – 13.
- Yung, L. & Harrison, C. *Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis: Studies in Social Change*. Britain: Antony Rowe Ltd, 2004.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF REMINISCENCE TO THE ANGLICIZATION OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Nicoleta Simona RADU*

Abstract: *The hypothesis of this study is that the translator is the person who has to recode the ST message first and then transmit it into an equivalent message appropriate for the TL. The Anglicization, in rough dialogue, is mainly a shortcut for different users of language to be able to interact and understand each other through a common means of communication. The anglicization of a language comes to be considered a necessity, not only a means of communication, function of the domain of activity the interlocutor's access at a given time. Therefore, the aim of translation is to reproduce various types of texts, since we live in an extremely complicated and partially imaginary world, a world of paper and images, which rewrites and re-formulates reality as it pleases, thus becoming more and more fragmentary, discontinuous and harder to understand.*

Keywords: *translation; anglicization; reminiscence*

When we start talking for the first time, we learn so much more than just some simple words. Even from the beginning, we use language not only in order to denominate the things surrounding us, but we use it particularly in order to learn how to relate with one another, how to connect with the people and the world we live in. Speech, therefore, represents both the means by which we select and organize our everyday experiences, as well as our environment, by which we learn how to behave, how to interact, what to believe and thus acquire information, opinions and build our own image about everything we come in contact with on a daily basis. And even more, we cannot say that we have an individual control over the act of speaking, for it is given to us in the form of a tool which had already been build and used by others over time. Thus, equipped with this ability and the immense curiosity that characterizes every human being, we begin exploring this world that surrounds us and surprises us every day, we begin to discover and understand ourselves and our own individuality, as well as the ones around us with the help of the parts of speech.

From the moment we start using language, we enter the labyrinth of social relations and, at the same time, we come into contact with a form of social control. Throughout our lives, we learn to become the people we are using the language system, whose rules and conventions we can neither control nor ignore. Following the numerous possibilities that language has to offer us, which include both values and a structuring system by which we can order our perceptions on the world and on our personal sensations, we understand ourselves and our lives and, therefore, we are able to behave creatively in society. And thus, with every word we utter, language “talks” about us.

The more we interact with other people and the more we go through experiences, a process distinct from the simple learning begins. We interact with an entire assembly of terms,

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, simona.nicoleta.radu@gmail.com

rules, codes and new conventions that govern the way this process of language operates under. As we go through life and undergo certain experiences and interact with people from all walks of life, we identify ourselves with certain language systems and we try to describe ourselves according to their terms and most of the times we can communicate efficiently enough by using the resources of a given language without necessarily having gone through the experience of the activities associated to it.

Step by step we learn that we have to adapt our way of talking and the language we use according to the domains of activity that we perform in, we learn to use certain terms according to a given context or situation.

The concept of translation

The term *translation* derives from the verb *to translate*, which, according to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, means *to change written or spoken words into another language; to interpret*.

Translation typically has been used to transfer written or spoken SL texts to equivalent written or spoken TL texts. In general, the purpose of translation is to reproduce various kinds of texts-including religious, literary, scientific and philosophical texts-in another language and thus making them available to wider readers. The difference between a SL and a TL and the variations in their cultures make the process of translating a real challenge.¹

According to Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language, translation is defined as *an act, process, or instance of translating: as a rendering from one language into another; also: the product of such a rendering*, while *to translate* means *to turn into one's own or another language; to practice translation or to make a translation*.

Although there isn't an exact definition of translation, as a science, it may be integrated in the larger field of semiotics, also called semiotic studies or (in the Saussurean tradition) semiology, *the study of signs and sign processes (semiosis), indication, designation, likeness, analogy, metaphor, symbolism, signification, and communication. Semiotics is closely related to the field of linguistics, which, for its part, studies the structure and meaning of language more specifically*. According to Roman Jakobson, semiotics deals with the general principles which are at the basis of the structure of signs, and with the way they are used in messages and the specific features of the messages used by them.

Throughout history there have been many different concepts of translation that prevailed at certain periods of time and had followers among scholars and theoreticians. Moreover, the role of the translator has undergone serious changes, function of the theoreticians of the time.

According to Saussure, language is a system of signs which express ideas. Each language has its own principles of combination of the signs. The sign system of a language can be "converted" into the sign system of another language by the process called translation. This process implies two different types of operations since a sign can be defined as both form

¹ Internet source: <https://translationjournal.net/journal/41culture.htm>

and content. Generally speaking, a sign is the bearer of a significance. By translation, each sign in a text is transposed in a graphical way into another one, on condition that the significance be the same.¹

The best definition of translation is, in Newmark's opinion, Nida's, who considers translation a reproduction of the closest natural equivalent of the source language message. Translating means "to reproduce in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent in the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style."² According to Newmark, "this type of translation is distinguished by its elegance and concision, its attention to a natural word order, to the deployment of clauses and phrases more frequently used than their formal equivalents in the source language, to the occasional unobtrusive distribution of the meaning of important "untranslatable" words (...); a good translation is deft, neat, closely shadowing its original".³

The concept of "equivalence"

When we compare texts in different languages, we inevitably talk about equivalence. The concept is considered to be the central issue in translation and has caused many controversies throughout history and many scholars have tried to render different theories in the past fifty years. Further on in our paper we will render several theories of equivalence, seen from the point of view of some of the most important theorists in the field of translation and translation studies, such as Roman Jakobson, Eugene Nida, C.R. Taber and Mona Baker.

Roman Jakobson is an important figure in the field of translation and his theory of equivalence was of extreme importance in the analysis of translation, being the one to introduce the notion of "equivalence in difference". His theory is based on his semiotic approach to translation, seeing the translator as the person who has to recode the ST message first and then transmit it into an equivalent message for the TL.

Interlingual translation represents the focus of translation studies, Jakobson claiming that the translator makes use of synonyms in order to render the ST message, which means that there is no full equivalence between code units. He says that, although two languages may differ from a grammatical point of view, translation can be possible, because the translator may recur to equivalents of a certain term in order to get the message across. Therefore, if the TL has a difficult or rigid grammatical framework, the translator shouldn't try to maintain fidelity to the SL text, and whenever there is a "deficiency" of words, one should recur to "loan words", "neologisms" and "circumlocutions".⁴

¹ Clonțea, Mărășescu *et alii* *The Advanced Student's Book of Bilingual Literary Translation*, Pitești University Publishing House, Pitești, 2004, p.13

² Nida Eugene A., *Towards a Science of Translating*, Copyright by E.J.Brill, Leiden, Netherlands, 1964, p.244

³ Clonțea, Mărășescu *et alii* *op. cit.*: p.15

⁴ Jakobson Roman, *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, in *On Translation*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1959, p. 234; the original quotation is: *Whenever there is deficiency, terminology may be qualified and amplified by loanwords or loan-translations, neologisms or semantic shifts, and finally, by circumlocutions.*

Reminiscence and Anglicization

The term *reminiscence*, according to the Cambridge dictionary, refers to recalling to mind events and experiences from the past. The activity may be closely related to the one of labelling objects in one's environment, just as children learn from their parents, through play.

The anglicization of a language means altering words in the target language to a characteristic English form, sound or spelling. It is a frequent phenomenon which characterizes recently acquired vocabulary in Romanian, for example, and it tends to happen among younger speakers, as they have more and more contact with social media and the field of gaming. The amount of time teenagers spend playing various trending games is easily observable in their vocabulary. While playing, they most often communicate with each other, and they are forced to do so against the clock, if they want to reach a certain level and gain points. They don't seem to realize that in their conversation, they use the exact word from English, which doesn't always have a direct equivalent in their language, or which is adapted to their native vocabulary. The most recent example I have come across is the verb *to spawn*, which gamers have turned into the Romanian *a se spawna*, as an effect of playing a well-known computer game. Thus, the term is used when someone seems to disappear from their sight, or seems to appear somewhere unexpectedly, a situation which reminds them of the characters which do that exact thing in the game.

A conversation between gamers is often full of slang, informal words and generally terms used in their games, which are anglicized to sound and resemble words in their native language.

Another example would be the word *noob*, meaning an unexperienced player, but which teenagers pronounce *nob* in Romanian, used to tease peers about something they've done wrong or something they aren't good at, because they are probably new to an activity or even new in a group of friends. The use of the word is again associated with its original use in the game, and they adapt it to the situation they recall from the game.

The word *hacker*, coming from the word *to hack* is another example of a term anglicized to sound somewhat Romanian, and is used with the translation *a hackui*, when someone manages to find a password to an account or even when someone enters a group of teenagers, even though they were not invited to an activity. Therefore, they use it in a situation reminiscing of a virtual hacker, managing to breach into a forbidden area or program.

A craftui is the adaptation of the verb *to craft*, and which I often hear in relation with a project which students need to work on, talking about the process of bringing the part together, so as to reach the final result.

Glitch is used as a noun, without adaptation into Romanian, so as to make fun of someone, or even themselves, when students don't remember a word or when they stutter, if they are trying to explain something or give a definition from a certain lesson. In connection with the term, they use *lag*, from the same domain of use, that is ICT, to refer to a delayed reaction in someone's response to a situation or a question.

Conclusions

Translation Studies is a young discipline and still has a long way to go. We need to know much more about the history of *Translation Studies*. More documentation, more information about changing concepts of translation has become a priority and the establishment of an international collaborative venture on translation history, of the kind envisioned by James Holmes of Amsterdam, seems a logical way to proceed. By understanding more about the changing face of *Translation Studies* and the changing status of the translated text, we are better equipped to tackle the problems as they arise within our own contexts.

The history of *Translation Studies* should be seen as an essential field of study for the contemporary theorist, but should not be approached from a narrowly fixed position. contact with different points of view.¹ (our tr.)

We live in an extremely complicated and partially imaginary world, a world of paper and images, which rewrites and re-formulates reality as it pleases, therefore becoming more and more fragmentary, discontinuous and harder to understand. The technological assault descended upon us seems unstoppable. If in 1980 there was not one person who owned a personal computer, 15 years later, 280 million people owned such a working instrument. The vocabulary of a language can be neither immune nor indifferent to such terrible changes.

References

- Clonțea P., Mărășescu A., Nicolae C., *The Advanced Student's Book of Bilingual Literary Translation*, Pitești University Publishing House, Pitești, 2004
Jakobson Roman, *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, in *On Translation*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1959
Nida Eugene A., *Towards a Science of Translating*, Copyright by E.J.Brill, Leiden, Netherlands, 1964
Șerbănescu Andra, *Cum se scrie un text*, 2nd Edition, Iași, Polirom Publishing House, "Collegium.Practic" Collection, 2001

Electronic resources

Internet source: <https://translationjournal.net/journal/41culture.htm>, accessed 11th October, 2024

¹ Șerbănescu Andra, *Cum se scrie un text*, 2nd Edition, Polirom Publishing House, "Collegium.Practic" Collection, Iași, 2001, p. 220

RHETORICAL STRATEGIES IN POLITICAL SPEECHES DURING THE PANDEMIC

Adina Cristiana SUCEVAN*

Abstract: *This paper examines the rhetorical strategies employed by Romanian political figures in their public discourse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on a selection of speeches delivered between March 2020 and May 2023, the study identifies key persuasive techniques used to manage uncertainty, ensure compliance and maintain political credibility. The analysis focuses on elements such as ethos construction, emotional appeals and crisis framing. Special attention is given to how these strategies evolved in response to the changing public mood and political stakes. The paper adopts a discourse-analytical perspective, integrating concepts from rhetoric and pragmatics, with the aim of highlighting the performative function of political language in times of crisis. The findings suggest that political actors rely heavily on personalization, national unity narratives, and the strategic use of fear and reassurance to shape public perception. Ultimately, the study contributes to a better understanding of how political discourse responds to exceptional social contexts and how rhetorical choices influence public trust and engagement.*

Keywords: *political discourse; rhetorical strategies; crisis communication*

Introduction

The coronavirus crisis had a significant impact on all of humanity. This paper focuses on crisis-level speeches at the highest political level. Our aim is to discover how argumentative and rhetorical practices are updated in political speeches in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. The corpus includes speeches by the following politicians: the President of Romania (Klaus Iohannis), the President of France (Emmanuel Macron), and the President of the European Commission (Ursula von der Leyen). Respecting the chronology of the pandemic, the speeches in the corpus are divided into three groups: early-crisis speeches, speeches about vaccination, and post-crisis speeches.

Theoretical background

In the context of the coronavirus crisis, maintaining social order required persuading the audience to follow rules and take action. Politicians bring a preexisting public image, and in their speeches they build “a broadly accepted public image” (DPAD 2023: 75), with communication that is primarily persuasive.

We adopt a mixed analysis model, drawing on works from ancient rhetoric up to modern theory, such as the pragma-dialectical model. Aristotle, in *Rhetoric*, argued that the art of rhetoric—which he defines as the art of finding persuasive means—is practically applicable to communication (Aristotle 2004: 24). In *The New Rhetoric*, Perelman and

* PhD Student, University of Bucharest, adinacristiana20@gmail.com

Olbrechts-Tyteca write that the aim of communication is “to increase the audience’s adhesion to the presented opinion” (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 1958, quoted in DPAD 2023: 369). Since a speaker seeks to influence their audience, “argument analysis becomes a branch of discourse analysis”¹, and argumentation is integral to language.

In our corpus, we identified exemplification and appeals to authority. Perelman also highlights argumentative strategies such as allusion (a rhetorical device) and concession (acknowledgement of opposing views). According to Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (2012: 211): “allusion has argumentative value because it creates communion among participants in the communicative act”. They define concession as “a favorable reception of real or presumed arguments of the opponent” (2012: 586), which enhances the speaker’s credibility.

Illustration by example is essential in any field, public communication included, because it clarifies the subject. Appeals to authority rely on prestige and “use acts or judgments of a person or group as evidence in favor of a thesis” (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca 2012: 374).

The concept of strategic maneuvering was introduced by van Eemeren and Houtlosser in 2002. It refers to “the efforts speakers make in argumentative discourse to achieve rhetorical effectiveness and meet dialectical standards of reasonableness” (van Eemeren & Houtlosser 2002, cited in van Eemeren 2007: 383). It involves adapting to audience expectations, making linguistic choices among various options, and using persuasive tools.

Ethos refers to the speaker’s affective identity as shaped in discourse. Pre-existing ethos is the set of audience-held information about the speaker (such as authority, role, status). Discursive ethos (“discursive image”) is the image built solely through discourse, not necessarily matching the speaker’s real personality (DPAD 2023: 137).

Pathos is based on the idea that emotions are a constant in human communication and “play an argumentative role at the discursive level” (DPAD 2023: 130); emotional mechanisms are used to influence audience opinions, thus persuading them.

Logos includes all objective arguments. Explanatory reasoning is prominent in political speeches since speakers must justify every decision, rule, or action they propose. Justifying reasons increases the speaker’s credibility.

Specific argumentative strategies in COVID-19 communication included: numerical arguments, “no-alternative” arguments, arguments emphasizing urgency (suggesting that failure to act would miss a critical moment) and arguments promoting responsibility and collective spirit (Arora, Debesay, & Hande 2022: 4).

Early-pandemic speech analysis

For Klaus Iohannis, five speeches delivered at the onset of the coronavirus crisis were analyzed. Logos is activated in these speeches through numerous concessions—strategies that allow the speaker to acknowledge alternative viewpoints while simultaneously reinforcing his own position. For instance: “Many people say that it’s time to relax, that the

¹ ibidem

weather is nice and the epidemic will soon disappear” – “My dear fellow citizens, unfortunately, that is not the case!”¹. The domain of logos also includes forms of reasoning, such as the easy argument pattern, which emphasizes the consequences of specific actions (e.g., “If we follow these rules, then we will certainly be able to reach the relaxation phase sooner”²), as well as cause-and-effect arguments (e.g., “The fact that students would go back to school implies two major risks. There is a significant risk that they would bring the virus to school, and another that they would take it back home”³).

Two speeches by Emmanuel Macron from the early stages of the crisis were also analyzed. In his case, logos is primarily realized through extensive explanations. Both speeches rely on cause-and-effect arguments (e.g., “After consulting with experts, and being fully aware of the implications, I decided to tighten the measures regulating mobility”⁴).

In the speeches of the President of the European Commission at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, we observe repeated appeals to authority in support of the same thesis: the role of scientific expertise during a health crisis. For example: “Because knowledge saves lives during a pandemic, we have assembled a team of European scientists, experts who can provide us with measures to follow”.

In President Klaus Iohannis’s speeches from the early stages of the pandemic, ethos is constructed through exclusive markers when the speaker seeks to emphasize alignment with other European leaders (“we all agree that it is absolutely necessary to coordinate our efforts to fight the coronavirus crisis”⁵) or when representing Romanian politicians (“we wanted to understand what is happening in places where schools were experimentally reopened”⁶). Ethos is also shaped through distancing from the public, which enables the use of directive acts: appeals (“I call on everyone’s sense of responsibility!”⁷) and commands (“Stay at home during the holidays!”⁸).

In Emmanuel Macron’s speeches from the initial phase of the health crisis, ethos is conveyed through an alternation between subjective markers and first-person plural pronouns. The use of first-person singular pronouns signals that the speaker assumes responsibility for

¹ „Aud de la mulți că este cazul să ne relaxăm, că vremea este frumoasă și că epidemia oricum va dispărea” – „*Dragii mei*, din păcate, nu este așa!”), speech delivered on April 27, 2020.

² „dacă respectăm aceste reguli, atunci cu siguranță vom putea mai repede să ajungem la faza de relaxare”, speech delivered on May 08, 2020.

³ „faptul că elevii s-ar duce la școală ar implica două riscuri mari. Există riscul major ca elevii să ducă boala la școală și există un risc semnificativ să ducă boala de la școală acasă”, speech delivered on April 27, 2020.

⁴ „C’est pourquoi, après avoir consulté, écouté les experts, le terrain et en conscience, j’ai décidé de renforcer encore les mesures pour réduire nos déplacements et nos contacts au strict nécessaire”, speech delivered on March 16, 2020.

⁵ „cu toții suntem de acord că este absolut necesar să ne coordonăm eforturile pentru combaterea crizei de coronavirus”, speech delivered on March 10, 2020.

⁶ „am dorit să aflăm și ce se întâmplă acolo unde experimental s-au deschis școlile”, speech delivered on April 27, 2020.

⁷ „Fac apel la responsabilitatea fiecăruia”, speech delivered on March 10, 2020.

⁸ „Stați acasă de sărbători!”, speech delivered on April 27, 2020.

certain decisions (“On these grounds, I have decided to tighten the restrictions on going out”¹) or performs commissive acts (“In the coming days, I will lead an initiative to accelerate our efforts”²).

In Ursula von der Leyen’s early pandemic speeches, an exclusive “we” is predominantly used, referring to the speaker and the other members of the European Commission. She presents the actions that political leaders must implement: “we need to coordinate measures to avoid negative impacts on people and economies”³. There are very few traces of an individual ethos, and when present, they express personal conviction (“I believe the most important thing is for neighboring countries to harmonize their measures”⁴).

Next, we will present how pathos is constructed in the Romanian president’s speeches from the early stages of the health crisis. A common feature of these political texts is the limited presence of emotional elements; generally, they include only polite expressions with low emotional impact (“as much as I regret it”⁵) or vague qualifiers (“this is even harder for me to say”⁶). There is, however, one exception to this pattern, found in the Easter speech delivered on April 17, 2020. The context of the Easter holiday influences the speaker’s communicative style, as the speech includes numerous expressions of negative emotions (“a natural feeling of helplessness and despair,” “terrible challenge,” “catastrophic scenario,” “painful restrictions”⁷).

Similarly, in the two speeches delivered by the French president at the beginning of the pandemic, pathos elements are scarce. A few negative emotions are explicitly lexicalized (“we feel fear and stress,”⁸ “fatigue and exhaustion for some, grief and pain for others”⁹).

In the case of the European Commission President’s speeches from the initial stage of the COVID-19 crisis, one notable expressive element is the conceptual metaphor of a natural disaster to refer to the coronavirus (“a global storm”¹⁰).

Speeches from the vaccination period

Vaccination represented a crucial stage in the development of the coronavirus crisis. We will now highlight the strategies through which logos is constructed in this phase, beginning with the enunciator-subject Klaus Iohannis. A recurring feature in the three

¹ „J’ai décidé de renforcer encore les mesures pour réduire nos déplacements et nos contacts au strict nécessaire”, speech delivered on March 16, 2020.

² „je porterai dans les prochains jours une initiative avec nombre de nos partenaires en votre nom pour accélérer les travaux en cours”, speech delivered on April 13, 2020.

³ Speech delivered on March 16, 2020.

⁴ Speech delivered on March 16, 2020.

⁵ „oricât de rău îmi pare”, speech delivered on April 08, 2020.

⁶ „asta îmi cade și mai greu să vă spun”, speech delivered on April 08, 2020.

⁷ „sentiment firesc de neputință, de deznădejde”, „provocare teribilă”, „scenariu catastrofal”, „restricții dureroase”, speech delivered on April 17, 2020.

⁸ „Nous ressentons tous en ce moment la peur, l’angoisse pour nos parents”, speech delivered on April 13, 2020.

⁹ „La fatigue et la lassitude pour certains, le deuil et le chagrin pour d’autres”, speech delivered on April 13, 2020.

¹⁰ Speech delivered on March 16, 2020.

speeches analyzed is the argument from authority—the authority invoked being health experts. The speaker’s communicative aim is to convince the audience that vaccination is an effective means of protection against SARS-CoV-2 (“The European Medicines Agency has approved all types of vaccines. The vaccines are verified, they are safe, and they prevent the development of severe forms of the disease”¹).

In Emmanuel Macron’s speeches, it is evident that the speaker provides detailed explanations for every decision he proposes. To emphasize the effectiveness of vaccines, the speeches delivered by the President of the European Commission during the vaccination phase rely on the argument from authority, referring to a highly influential institution in the field of health: “The European Medicines Agency [...] has concluded that the vaccine is safe and effective against COVID-19”².

We will highlight below the aspects that shape the ethos in the speeches of the President of Romania regarding vaccination. Predominantly, there are markers of an inclusive ethos, through which the president strategically emphasizes belonging to the Romanian nation. These markers appear in the formulation of directive acts with mitigated illocutionary force (“let us remain vigilant and cautious”³). In the speeches of the French president during the vaccination phase, there is a clear preference for markers of an exclusive “we” strategy, by which he strategically demonstrates belonging to the class of authorities: “we will build a gradual reopening plan for culture”⁴.

Similarly, in the speeches of the President of the European Commission during the COVID-19 vaccination phase, markers of an exclusive “we” are predominantly observed, encompassing all political leaders of the European Union.

A common feature of the Romanian president’s speeches, both early in the pandemic and during the vaccination campaign, is the minimal use of pathos. The French presidential speeches on vaccination show a similar lack of emotional appeal. Ursula von der Leyen’s three speeches each include only one clear emotional element: pride. She highlights Europe’s success in producing and distributing vaccines worldwide: “The European Union is proud to be the home of vaccine production.”⁵

Post-crisis speeches

We outline below the features of logos in post-crisis speeches. In the Romanian president’s address, explanations focus on the pandemic’s impact on communities: “the pandemic has taught us lessons we must value, perhaps the most important being solidarity”⁶. Emmanuel Macron’s post-crisis communication also includes numerous explanations. In

¹ „Agenția Europeană a Medicamentului a aprobat toate tipurile de vaccin. Vaccinurile sunt verificate, sunt sigure și previn apariția unor forme grave ale bolii”, speech delivered on April 21, 2021.

² Speech delivered on December 21, 2020.

³ „haideti să rămânem vigilenți și prudenți”, speech delivered on March 17, 2021.

⁴ Et nous allons bâtir entre la mi-mai et le début de l’été un calendrier de réouverture progressive pour la culture”, speech delivered on March 31, 2021.

⁵ Speech delivered on December 21, 2020.

⁶ „pandemia ne-a învățat și lecții pe care trebuie să le valorificăm și poate cea mai importantă este cea a solidarității”, speech delivered on March 04, 2022.

Ursula von der Leyen's post-crisis speech, an explanatory strategy is used to announce that the coronavirus epidemic is no longer a global threat.

In the Romanian president's post-crisis speech, ethos is expressed through an inclusive "we". The other two leaders use an exclusive "we" at this stage. The Romanian president aligns himself with citizens who faced pandemic challenges ("the last two years brought many challenges that affected us in various ways"¹). Emmanuel Macron's ethos highlights his role as a representative of the authorities: "we will have to work together [...] to ease the doctors' workload"². Ursula von der Leyen's speech predominantly uses an exclusive "we," emphasizing institutional benefits that arose from the crisis: "We have improved our health security and emergency preparedness mechanisms"³.

Although the Romanian president's post-crisis speech is very brief, it contains more elements of pathos than other speeches, as the crisis is presented retrospectively ("much suffering,"⁴ "two very difficult years,"⁵ "bereaved families"⁶). The French president uses very few pathos elements in his public communications. Ursula von der Leyen mentions only the feeling of suffering ("the pandemic has caused much suffering"⁷).

Crisis communication

Among the persuasive strategies specific to crisis communication, Klaus Iohannis predominantly uses appeals to responsibility and collective spirit at the start of the pandemic ("I appeal to everyone's responsibility"⁸). The same strategy is evident in the French president's speeches ("I appeal to your sense of responsibility and solidarity"⁹). Only Emmanuel Macron employs numerous military terms and expressions at this stage: "we are not fighting an army [...] but the enemy is invisible"¹⁰.

During the vaccination campaign, Klaus Iohannis's crisis communication strategies include promoting responsibility ("responsibility and a new national effort are needed now"¹¹) and the argument of no alternative ("only mass vaccination allows us to overcome the

¹ „ultimii doi ani au adus multe provocări, care ne-au influențat în cele mai diferite moduri”, speech delivered on March 04, 2022.

² „c'est qu'on puisse aussi l'appliquer à l'hôpital où nous basculerons des personnels administratifs, logistiques, techniques, au plus près des services pour permettre aux soignants de se concentrer sur le cœur de leur métier”, speech delivered on January 06, 2023.

³ Speech delivered on May 05, 2023.

⁴ „multă suferință”, speech delivered on March 04, 2022.

⁵ „doi ani foarte grei”, speech delivered on March 04, 2022.

⁶ „familii îndoliate”, speech delivered on March 04, 2022.

⁷ Speech delivered on May 05, 2023.

⁸ „fac apel la responsabilitatea fiecăruia”, speech delivered on March 10, 2020.

⁹ „j'en appelle à votre sens des responsabilités et de la solidarité”, speech delivered on March 16, 2020.

¹⁰ „nous ne luttons contre une armée [...] mais l'ennemi est là, invisible”, speech delivered on March 16, 2020.

¹¹ „este nevoie de responsabilitate și de un nou efort național acum”, speech delivered on March 17, 2021.

pandemic”¹). The argument of no alternative also appears in the French president’s speeches (“thanks to vaccination, the end of the crisis is in sight”²).

A fundamental idea in the post-crisis speeches of the three politicians is that the crisis situation also brought benefits. Klaus Iohannis mentions the lesson of solidarity. Solidarity as a positive outcome of the pandemic is also highlighted in the speeches of Emmanuel Macron and the President of the European Commission.

In conclusion, this paper proposes an analysis of the argumentative and rhetorical strategies in political speeches during the COVID-19 crisis period, starting from the intention to uncover the influence of the epidemic context on discursive practices. The pandemic required a collective and widespread effort from the member states of the European Union, both nationally and internationally. States had to adopt a common approach to the crisis, providing coordinated and interdependent responses on every occasion.

References

- Amossy, Ruth, „Argumentation in Discourse: A Socio-discursive Approach to Arguments”, *Informal Logic*, 29, 2000, 252–267, available at <https://scholar.uwindsor.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1083&context=ossaarchive>.
- Arora, Sanjana, Debesay, Jonas Eslen-Ziya, Hande, „Persuasive narrative during the COVID-19 pandemic: Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg’s posts on Facebook”, *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* volume, 9, 35, 2022, available at <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01051-5>.
- Aristotel, *Retorica*, București, trad. Maria-Cristina Andrieș, Editura IRI, 2004.
- Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, Liliana (coord.), *Dicționar de pragmatică și de analiză a discursului*, Iași, Editura Institutul European, 2023.
- Perelman, Chaim, Olbrechts-Tyteca, Lucie, *La nouvelle rhétorique. Traité de l’argumentation*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1958.
- Perelman, Chaim, Olbrechts-Tyteca, Lucie, *Tratat de argumentare. Noua retorică*, trad. Stoica, A., Iași, Ed. Universității „Al. I. Cuza”, 2012.
- van Eemeren, Frans H., Houtlosser, Peter, „Strategic maneuvering: Maintaining a delicate balance”, în Frans H. van Eemeren și Peter Houtlosser (eds.), *Dialectic and Rhetoric: The Warp and Woof of Argumentation Analysis*, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002.

¹ „doar vaccinarea în masă ne permite să ieșim din pandemie”, speech delivered on April 21, 2021.

² „le déploiement de la vaccination qui permet d’espérer raisonnablement une sortie de crise”, speech delivered on March 31, 2021.

GEORGES DUHAMEL – LE SOUVENIR DE L'AMÉRIQUE: SCÈNES DE LA VIE FUTURE

Corina Amelia GEORGESCU*

Abstract: After visiting America, Duhamel decides to write about it choosing an interesting form: short stories based on dialogues. The main issue and at the same time the pretext he uses to develop the topic is a possible confrontation between two kinds of civilisations: an ethical one and a pragmatic one. America is, in Duhamel's vision, "a menace" as he states from the very beginning in the title, as it might, at a certain point of the history, influence Europe to such an extent that it will possibly adopt the American example. He focuses on certain aspects of the American civilisation such as entertainment (sport, cinema, clubs, alcohol), everyday life (landscapes, cars, slaughterhouses) or the social dynamics (segregation of races, advertisement, insurances). Our paper aims at presenting some of these aspects, emphasizing the ironic and bitter tone that Duhamel maintains all along the text.

Keywords: America; culture; future

1. Georges Duhamel – life and work

Born at the end of the XIXth century (1884), in Paris, Duhamel faced financial instability during his childhood, an experience that would influence his later literary themes. Despite these challenges, he earned his degree in medicine which enabled him to have a unique perspective on human suffering, which thus became a central motif of his writings. His literary beginnings are related to what is called the Abbaye de Créteil, an artistic community aimed at fostering collaborative creativity among different types of artists and whose co-founder he was. His working as a military surgeon during the First World War left deep traces on his way of understanding the world and the mankind and served him as a source of inspiration for two of his literary works, namely *Vie des martyrs* (1917) and *Civilisation* (1918), the latter earning him the prestigious Prix Goncourt. In writing them, he succeeds in providing a chronicle-like view on the physical and emotional impact of war as well as in sharply criticizing the dehumanizing aspects of the war.

In 1935, Duhamel was elected to the Académie française, and in 1937, he joined the Académie Nationale de Médecine and the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques.

Duhamel was an opponent of the Vichy regime which resulted into his being valued by General Charles de Gaulle after the World War II and into his becoming the president of the Alliance française, an association which aimed at promoting French language and culture on an international level.

Among his major literary contributions, one may mention *Vie et aventures de Salavin*, a five-volume series depicting the existential introspective journey of its protagonist, Salavin, used as a pretext allowing the narrator to deal with themes such as alienation and the

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, corina.georgescu76@upb.ro

search for meaning in a rapidly changing society. The ten-volume saga *Chronique des Pasquier* provides the picture of a French middle-class family, at the end of the XIXth century and at the beginning of the XXth century, on the background of a changing society which questions the traditional values. His being fond of traditional values leads him to having a critical attitude to some aspects of the contemporary society, attitude which is artistically rendered in *Scènes de la vie future* (1930), which reflects his apprehensions about American consumer culture and its potential to erode European humanistic values. Daniel Droixhe affirmait, sur le livre de Duhamel:

« Duhamel publie en 1930 *Scènes de la vie future* qui firent sensation. Il y décrivait avec angoisse et répulsion un mode de vie dont il doutait l'envahissement. » [Droixhe, 1994: 596]

Austin qualifies the essays included in the book as “prophetic” concerning America’s potential of becoming a threat to Europe and anticipating another anti-American voice, that of Céline:

“A book of supposedly instructive and prophetic essays on the threat posed by the U.S. as a wretched model for the basis of future European society, Duhamel’s text was published in 1930, two years before *Voyage au bout de la nuit*. The tone is set in the preface: « Cette Amérique représente, donc, pour nous, l’Avenir. Qu’à cet instant du débat, chacun de nous, Occidentaux, dénonce avec loyauté ce qu’il découvre d’américain dans sa maison, dans son vêtement, dans son âme. ». [Austin, 1994: 19]

2. Duhamel’s travelling to America

Georges Duhamel publishes in 1930 *Scènes de la vie future*, a work in which he mixes social anticipation and philosophical meditation. He approaches a series of cultural phenomena as seen through the eyes of a newcomer / a stranger in a place where he had never been before, keeping the reader’s interest at a high level through a complex mixture of irony, fine observation and a deep desire of fully understanding what he sees. The book, dedicated to Alfred Valette, the founder of *Mercure de France* and the promoter of Proust’s translation of Ruskin, has a long preface in which the author dwells on the concept of “civilisation” as seen from two different points of view: an essentially moral civilisation (“une civilisation essentiellement morale” [Duhamel, 1930:9]) versus a mechanical civilisation (“une autre civilisation, mécanique avant tout” Duhamel, 1930:9)). These two different opinions engender two different feelings/perceptions: an optimistic one represented by Curtius’s view and a pessimistic one involving a type of disappointment. Duhamel refuses to directly support one of the two, but he chooses to respond to the two sides by narrating his voyage to America especially because of the dominating feeling that he had: “Nous sommes dépaysés par certains voyages, parce que nous nous sentons plus encore que dans l’espace, dépaysés dans le temps.” [Duhamel, 1930:10]

Warning the reader from the very beginning on his reason for choosing to debate on such a topic, Duhamel explains the title he chooses for his work:

“On n’en peut plus douter, cette civilisation est pourtant en mesure et en train de conquérir le vieux monde. Cette Amérique représente donc, pour nous, l’Avenir. [...]

Notre avenir ! Tous les stigmates de cette civilisation dévorante, nous pourrions, avant vingt ans, de les découvrir sur les membres de l’Europe.” [Duhamel, 1930, 11]

Despite this warning related to what was going on in America at that time and the fact that everything was going to similarly happen affecting Europe soon, he makes a clear difference between the country and the people, and he pretends adopting an objective point of view, without being drawn by any kind of passion: “Les jugements que je porte sur la marche et les propos du monde ne portent la marque d’aucune passion, si ce n’est celle que je voue au triomphe de l’esprit !” [Duhamel: 1930, 12]

In 1929, Georges Duhamel embarked on a journey to the United States, a trip that will profoundly influence his perspective on modern society as opposed to traditional one or, in other terms, on American society versus the European society and inspired his work, *Scènes de la vie future* (1930).

Arriving in New Orleans, Duhamel travelled up the Mississippi River, visiting cities like Chicago and New York. All along, he noticed the rapid industrialization, mass production, and consumer culture that characterized American society at the time and continuously, perhaps unwillingly, even unconsciously, contrasts them to the French society which he knew so well. His experiences led him to criticize what he saw as the dehumanizing aspects of technological progress and the loss of individuality in the face of mass consumerism.

In *Scènes de la vie future*, Duhamel expresses his fear that such a society might gradually spread to Europe, and it is this fear that makes him warn about a future where human values are subordinated to mechanization and money. This work caused significant debate in France concerning the influence of American culture and the direction of modern civilization. Seen from nowadays, Duhamel’s remarks remain a powerful and sometimes valid reflection on the challenges of keeping the right balance between technological advancement and humanistic values, at a time when more French writers had done of America a necessary point in their careers:

« Le voyage aux Etats-Unis est devenu le parcours obligé de l’écrivain moderne – comme le voyage en Orient s’imposait aux romantiques. Georges Duhamel en ramène un témoignage critique (*Scènes du monde futur*, 1930), Paul Morand un de ses « portraits de villes » (*New York*, 1930), Simone de Beauvoir (*L’Amérique au jour le jour*, 1948) et Sartre (articles repris dans *Situations* III, 1949) des images contrastées, entre sympathie culturelle et condamnation politique. » [Labouret, 2018 :159]

Duhamel, a master of the narrative, chooses an interesting way of commenting on what he sees in the United States: he almost constantly uses dialogue with his real or fictional guides leading him to discover different aspects of the country: the commandant of the ship, a doctor, Mr. Parker P. Pitkin, Mr. and Mrs. Lytton, Mr. Pickelton, Docteur Brooke, Mr. Richard C. Lionel, Mr. Stone. There are also other anonymous ones, as the guide seems to change when the place changes.

The narrator does not pretend to cover extensively what he sees, but rather to provide descriptions and, especially, comments on what he is mostly amazed of. American life and

society are depicted with its aspects that strike the visitor: science, entertainment (sport, cinema, clubs, alcohol), everyday life (landscapes, cars, slaughterhouses) or social dynamics (segregation of blacks and whites, advertisement, insurance).

3. The 1930's America at the time of Duhamel's visit – the socio-cultural background

Georges Duhamel's *Scènes de la vie future* (1930) emerges against a backdrop of profound transformation in the United States. His critical observations of American life and culture reflect broader anxieties about modernity, industrialization, and cultural change in the interwar period. Understanding the America Duhamel encountered in the 1930s requires a careful contextualization of the socio-economic upheavals, cultural dynamics, and political tensions that defined the era. The picture of the American socio-economic background not only explains the foundations of Duhamel's critique but also provides insight into the cultural encounters between Europe and the rapidly changing American society.

The economic landscape of the time is dominated by two important phenomena: the Great Depression and the Industrial Expansion. The Great Depression began with the 1929 stock market crash and led to unprecedented unemployment and poverty. Yet, paradoxically, the decade also witnessed significant industrial developments and the consolidation of mass production techniques that reshaped the American economy and society. By 1933, unemployment in the U.S. had reached about 25%, with profound effects on urban and rural populations alike [Bernstein, 1987]. However, the crisis eroded faith in free-market capitalism and prompted widespread demands for reform dealing to Franklin D. Roosevelt's *New Deal* (starting 1933) which was an attempt to stabilize the economy and provide social welfare. In his book *The Age of Roosevelt: The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919–1933*, Schlesinger [2003] largely emphasizes its role in redefining the relationship between the state, the economy, and citizens.

Despite economic hardships, sectors like automobile manufacturing, radio, and film production advanced with increasing mechanization and assembly line methods inherited from the 1920s [Hounshell, 1984]. This industrial efficiency created cultural products at scale, including cinema, the medium Duhamel scrutinized in his book, but also an increase in the car use which the author also notices and finely criticizes in his book.

The 1930s continued the trend of rapid urbanization, with more than half the U.S. population living in cities by the decade's start [Jackson, 1985]. This type of environment caused a profound change in human relations, culture, and especially in what we may call consumption habits. It also came along with a fragmentation of traditional community ties [Fogelson, 2001] and led to a type of alienation that Duhamel evokes in his book. The changes in the organization of space (namely the concentration of an increasing number of people on smaller areas) brought along the rise of department stores, radio, and cinema as mass entertainment and, consequently, the emergence of a mass culture [Cross, 1993] in which the cinema, for instance, had a central place due to its providing an affordable way of escaping reality.

Despite its popularity, the mass media culture attracted critiques from intellectuals both in the U.S. and abroad, as far as its effects on culture in general and individuals in particular are concerned [Adorno & Horkheimer, 1944]. Duhamel's condemnation of the

cinema as a mechanical, commercialized show aligns with broader European skeptical attitude toward American mass culture seen as a threat to traditional cultural values.

4. The American Entertainment – a step forward or a step backward?

Through *Scènes de la vie future*, Duhamel addresses the emerging phenomenon of **cinema**, which he sees as revealing the cultural and social changes of his time. His criticism, particularly harsh against the American cinema, is not limited to simple cultural opposition; it denounces a true model of civilization based on industrial production and mass consumption. Duhamel sees the American cinemas as « temples du spectacle », an expression having both religious and secular connotations creating an almost oxymoronic syntagm. Considering these halls as « temples », he highlights the quasi-cult dimension that cinema has taken on, both a place of collective gathering and passive adoration. However, this term is immediately devalued by the following image: a « foule [...] qui absorbe sans discernement des images insipides et des histoires fabriquées en série, avec la même froideur que l'on fabrique des boîtes de conserve » [Duhamel, 1930: 24]. The comparison (between the production of films and that of tin cans) accentuates the dehumanization of the American cinema process. This industrial metaphor denounces mechanical standardization and the loss of artistic soul: works become manufactured products, devoid of originality and life. The lexical field related to the industrial production (« fabriquées en série », « froideur », « boîtes de conserve ») focuses on the impersonal, even mechanical character of the cinema. The syntagm « sans discernement » strengthens the picture of a passive audience lacking any critical judgement ability. The use of a simple, even pejorative language level is used to contrast the French and the American cultures, one being seen as noble while the other is strictly utilitarian. This opposition implies a real between two conceptions of culture: on one hand, a mass culture oriented towards immediate entertainment and unbridled consumption; on the other, a humanist culture based on reflection, depth and spirituality. This duality is also manifested in the following statement, where Duhamel summarizes his critique with argumentative intensity:

“La civilisation américaine se résume à cette incroyable facilité à produire et consommer, sans jamais s'arrêter à penser ou à ressentir autrement que par l'éclat superficiel des images.” [Duhamel, 1930:27].

The syntagm « incroyable facilité » conveys the critical irony by means of which the narrator means the triumph of the quantity over the quality. The polysyndeton « produire et consommer » expresses a fast, impossibly to avoid rhythm rendering a continuous mechanical trend. The antithesis « penser » vs. « ressentir » on one hand, and « éclat superficiel des images » on the other, underlines the affective and intellectual poverty that mass cinema brings along while the adjective « superficiel » is meant to show the aesthetic and moral criticism.

Duhamel's style is characterized here by clear and incisive writing, relying on concrete images and stylistic devices (comparison, antithesis, polysyndeton, irony) to reinforce his message. This stylistic choice makes his denunciation both accessible and powerful, reflecting a genuine intellectual and moral commitment. It is not only an aesthetic

critique, but a warning against the dangers of a culture that sacrifices human depth to visual superficiality.

Thus, American cinema, in Duhamel's work, appears as a powerful symbol of a civilization in crisis, where culture is reduced to a dehumanized consumer product. This representation contrasts with his French ideal, attached to intellectual and artistic tradition, where culture retains its spiritual and educational function. Cinema, in this perspective, should not be a mere show (« spectacle »), but a vehicle for sincere emotions and profound reflection.

One of the chapters that Duhamel chooses to devote to entertainment is called *Le Nouveau Temple*. Far from recounting any spiritual experience, it renders the narrator's being on a stadium where he attends a match between the teams of two colleges. He ironically remarks the feeling animating the people present there as if there were attending a religious ceremony (« un rite quasi religieux » [Duhamel:1930, 91]) and compares the place with a temple.

In *Scènes de la vie future*, Paul Duhamel presents a critical view of American culture, particularly its growing obsession with **sport**. In Duhamel's opinion, sport is both a reflection of and a contributor to the broader societal dynamics in the United States as it is a part like any other of America's "mechanical" spirit and capitalist ethos, which he perceives as undermining individualism, intellectual development, and spiritual depth. The sport is completely different from what the French are accustomed to; it is a show, a force demonstration and above all an exhibition of belonging to a group of people which goes not only for the teams' members, but also for the persons in the audience or for the cheer leaders who are, separately, an American cultural phenomenon:

"Poudrées, fardées, les écolières s'alignent sur les bancs du ciment telles des brochettes de perruches. De leurs gorges, encore vertes comme les pommes de juillet, elles tirent des cris suraigus, perforants, que l'on dit spécialement toniques pour les nerfs des compétiteurs." [Duhamel, 1930 : 93]

Duhamel uses a comparison (« telles des brochettes de perruches ») in order to render a striking and somewhat playful artistic image. It conveys the picture of the girls artificially being lined up. The use of "brochettes" contributes to creating a visual image, as though they were arranged on sticks like skewered objects. The reference to "perruches" evokes a vibrant, colourful image of youth and liveliness, but also suggests superficiality, as parrots are often associated with repeating sounds without much understanding. The evocation of these birds is also related to the sounds that the cheer leaders perform, somehow repetitive and lacking originality. The visual image is also supported by the introduction of a colour, that is green (« leurs gorges, encore vertes comme les pommes de Juillet »), to emphasize their youth, freshness, and perhaps even a lack of maturity. The narrator subtly suggests that these girls are in the early stages of their lives - youthful and willing to be admired, to be a part of a team.

The visual images are accompanied by auditive ones: « elles tirent des cris suraigus, perforants ». The imagery here is sharp and unsettling. The adjectives "suraigus" and "perforants" create an intense, almost painful image of their cries rendering not only the pitch, but also a feeling of discomfort even aggressiveness. The audience or the teams do not perceive it the same way like the French who attends such a show for the first time, but in a rather different way, that is having the ability of becoming incentive for the players: « que

l'on dit spécialement toniques pour les nerfs des compétiteurs ». This final phrase introduces a layer of irony and commentary on the competitive atmosphere the cries are meant to affect. The use of “toniques” is interesting, as it implies that these piercing, shrill sounds have a stimulating effect on the competitors’ nerves, perhaps in a way that heightens tension or stress. The idea that such harsh cries could be beneficial in this context introduces an unsettling contrast between the expectations of Europeans versus the expectations of Americans in the given circumstances.

The tone is both critical and ironic. The sharp, vivid imagery is used to convey the chaotic and invasive nature of the girls’ behaviour, possibly suggesting the impersonal, mechanical aspects of modern life (as discussed in the broader context of *Scènes de la vie future*). The comparison to parrots, combined with the idea of their cries being “tonic” for the competitors, might suggest how society often treats the raw, unpolished aspects of youth (represented by the schoolgirls) as something to be used for its practical value in a competitive, performance-oriented world. The passage as a whole reflects the narrator’s opinion about how such an industrialized modern world, treats the natural aspects of life.

Duhamel characterizes American sport as a domineering force within the cultural landscape, something that envelops all aspects of life, becoming almost an ideology in itself, rather than a way of physical and intellectual development. For Duhamel, this mass enthusiasm for sport is symptomatic of American approach to life, where physical prowess is prioritized over intellectual or philosophical contemplation. His critique is rooted in the idea that in America, sport acts as a distracter from everyday life, as a kind of compensation somehow similar to the opinion that the ancient Rome had about giving people bread and circus to keep them busy.

One of Duhamel’s most pointed observations concerns the commercialization of sport, where athletes are seen not as gifted individuals but as commodities in a market-driven society where everything can be sold and bought. He argues that American sport cultivates a culture of competition that becomes obsessed with efficiency and victory at any cost and not with fair play and health. Duhamel’s critique is particularly evident in the following passage:

“Le sport n’est plus, pour beaucoup, un harmonieux amusement, c’est une besogne harassante, un surmenage pernicieux qui excède les organes et fausse la volonté.” [Duhamel, 1930 : 95]

5. Mechanisation or dehumanisation?

In *Royaume de la mort*, Georges Duhamel visits the Chicago **slaughterhouses** – and chooses this space in order to render one of the most powerful and disturbing episodes in the book, both in point of the concrete pictures which he describes and in point of the symbolism that he develops. He uses this industrial space as a symbol of dehumanisation, mechanisation, and moral disintegration. His descriptions are not just factual but deeply artistic, laced with metaphor, irony, and moral outrage:

“C’est une ville dans la ville, un monde au sein d’un monde, le sanctuaire de l’humanité carnivore, le royaume de la mort scientifique. [...] 1je le sais, on me l’a dit, j’y pense et j’essaye d’imaginer tout cela pendant que l’elevated express

m'emporte à toute vitesse au milieu d'une foule taciturne et qu'on dirait sacrifiée."
[Duhamel, 1930 : 60]

The slaughterhouse, beyond its functional aim, is seen as a religious monument, but to death, not life. The metaphor of a "temple" underscores the ritualistic regularity of killing and the reverence for efficiency over ethics. The sacred imagery is deliberately ironic - this is not a site of worship, but of systematic destruction. It reflects Duhamel's broader critique of American industrialization, where life is subordinate to production:

"[...] tous ces animaux auxquels nous gardons, hypocritement, en France, le doux nom d'animaux domestiques, les animaux de la maison, de la famille, et qui sont, ici, tout net, le matériel d'usine à viande. Ils sont pompés, aspirés, drainés par les longs trains de la boucherie. Ils arrivent, ils arrivent, chaque jour et chaque minute de chaque jour, car, pour que la grande mécanique fonctionne, pour que ses engrenages ne tournent jamais à vide, il faut que, sans arrêt, le fleuve de chair vivante roule des flots pressés." [Duhamel, 1930 : 61]

The passage above captures—with striking metaphors, rhetorical repetition, and mechanized imagery—the transformation of living beings into mere production inputs. The slaughterhouse, in this context, becomes a symbol of a society where technological efficiency has eclipsed ethics and responsibility.

Duhamel immediately calls attention to the discrepancy between affectionate language and brutal reality. The phrase "le doux nom" invokes intimacy and tenderness, as if animals were members of the household. However, by inserting the adverbial "hypocritement", he accuses society - particularly the French society - of self-deception, using sentimental language to disguise economic exploitation.

The animals become "matériel d'usine", nothing more than inputs in a system. The phrase is especially brutal in its clinical detachment, suggesting a complete de-animalization. The verbs "sont pompés, aspirés, drainés" create a visceral image of animals being processed like fluids, devoid of will or life. This vocabulary evokes mechanical violence and depicts a world where biological life is treated with the same logic as machinery. The anaphora of "Ils arrivent, ils arrivent" imitates the continuous and unstoppable rhythm of the slaughterhouse system. This repetition builds a sense of oppression, evoking the ceaseless influx of animals required to keep the industrial mechanism running. The recursive phrasing "chaque jour et chaque minute de chaque jour" intensifies the feeling of perpetual motion, echoing the non-stop demands of mass production. The slaughter becomes not an isolated reality, but a permanent condition of the system.

This final metaphor is perhaps the most haunting. The "fleuve de chair vivante" suggests something organic, even natural, but it is perverted by the industrial process. It does not flow freely - it "roule des flots pressés", implying compression, urgency, and distortion. The image fuses the natural and the mechanical into a monstrous flow where individual beings dissolve into lifeless undifferentiated mass. This metaphor serves as a powerful allegory of how life itself is swallowed by the needs of production.

Duhamel is not simply describing a slaughterhouse - he exhibits a philosophical protest. The reduction of animals to "material" mirrors suggests the reduction of human values in a system that prioritizes speed, volume, and profit. The men working here lack any trace of

humanism. They begin to look like pieces of the industrial chain through which the meat is processed:

“J’ai vu mourir des centaines d’hommes et la faculté d’horreur n’est morte au fond de mon cœur. Même mécanisé de cette manière, ramenée aux strictes proportions d’un acte industriel, la mort reste un grand mystère. Je ne peux détacher mes yeux du nègre au visage froid qui distribue des coups de maillet sur ces fronts qu’Homère disait majestueux.

La chaîne marche. Les grands cadavres des bœufs commencent leur promenade macabre.” [Duhamel, 1930:66]

Despite his being accustomed to death by being a doctor, Duhamel refuses to understand it under the form in which it presents itself in front of his eyes, as a part of an industrial process leading to a balance between quality and costs. His statement: “Même mécanisé de cette manière, ramenée aux strictes proportions d’un acte industriel, la mort reste un grand mystère” suggests a deep resistance embedded in his being, to accept death as a part of a technical operation. The word “mystère” seems out of place in such a fragment dominated by concrete, even brutal sensations. It represents the unconscious confrontation between the European’s way of thinking life/death as a continuum where life represents the known side and death is the unknown mysterious one and the American’s idea that death is nothing else than a technical procedure, part of a chain of processes. The key stylistic tension in the passage lies between the impersonal machinery (“la chaîne marche”, “acte industriel”) and the personal, almost sacred dimension of death (“la mort reste un grand mystère”, “ces fronts qu’Homère disait majestueux”). This antithesis creates an emotional and philosophical rupture: even within a setting designed to deny subjectivity, the narrator’s sensibility resists depersonalization. The movement from “la chaîne” (a mechanical system) to “promenade macabre” transforms the slaughter into a ritualized procession, invoking both horror and pathos. The excerpt reminds one of Zola’s naturalism.

The phrase “ces fronts qu’Homère disait majestueux” is allusive and ironical. Duhamel draws on Homeric grandeur, traditionally used to describe warriors or kings, to ennoble the slaughtered oxen, suggesting that even in their death, they possess a dignity denied by the industrial process and opposed to the indifference of men who slaughter them. This allusion elevates the animal to a quasi-human / heroic status and criticizes the loss of cultural and moral reverence in the face of mechanization. The dissonance between ancient epic values and modern factory death suggests a civilisational decline: what was once considered majestic is now reduced to matter for processing. The assertion “la faculté d’horreur n’est morte au fond de mon cœur” functions both as a personal declaration and a moral stance. In a society where emotional void is a byproduct of efficiency, the narrator clings to his capacity for horror as a sign of moral vitality. This is a statement of ethical survival in a context of systemic moral erosion.

This sentence raises both ethical and racial questions. On one level, the image serves to emphasize the emotional detachment of the worker, presented as a functionary within the killing machine. The worker’s cold face is part of the broader motif of emotional numbness in the industrial setting. However, Duhamel’s use of the word “nègre” - a term now recognized

as pejorative reflects the racial language of his time but also points to the intersection of racialized labour and violence within American industrial capitalism.

This final image (“Les grands cadavres des bœufs commencent leur promenade macabre.”) is chillingly poetic. The phrase “promenade macabre” transforms the conveyor belt into a funerary procession. The oxen are not merely dead - they are *cadavers*, presented with a tragic dignity. The almost oxymoronic syntagm “grands cadavres” suggests both grandeur and waste, a kind of grotesque beauty in their mass death. The macabre tone fuses the mechanical with the theatrical: death becomes a spectacle, an endless loop of silent tragedy.

6. The Social Dynamics: the race segregation

American everyday life allows the visitor a wide perspective of the **race segregation**. Blacks and whites do not work in the same places, they do not use the same means of transport, they do not go to the same schools (with rare exceptions), they do not have lunch together. In spite of a reality dominating the US since the War of Independence, the European seems to accept it with much difficulty and only because he must. The segregation is a disturbing reality for a French, but he can notice it and he can limit to recount what he sees, without commenting it; however, he is more than outraged when he realizes that death itself is submitted to segregation:

“[...] Eh bien ! même dans la mort, les races sont séparées. Chez nous, les races se partagent le sol à l'intérieur d'une enceinte commune ; c'est leur suprême effort, le dernier sursaut de l'aversion. Ici, l'horreur est plus profonde. Les noirs ont leur cimetière particulier, avec ses murailles, sa porte, sa part de bournier, sa solitude. Rien de commun entre les races, même dans l'anéantissement. Rien de commun si ce n'est cette croix douloureuse, cette croix impuissante qui fait, malgré les murailles, qui fait, des deux côtés de la rue, son même signe d'impossible concorde. “ [Duhamel, 1930:87]

This passage from Duhamel's *Scènes de la vie future* encapsulates one of the book's most profound observations: in the United States, racial segregation persists even in death. The cemetery - a traditional site of universal reconciliation becomes a stage where racial segregation continues. The text combines protest with lamentation, revealing how racial boundaries outlive physical life and resist even the symbolic union of the grave.

The repeated phrase “Rien de commun... Rien de commun...” underlines absolute separation, echoing like a verdict. This anaphora functions as both a stylistic and ethical emphasis: the narrator insists on the artificial and useless division of races. The rhythm of this repetition evokes a funereal cadence. Death is traditionally imagined as the great equalizer. The phrase “Même dans la mort, les races sont séparées.” contains a deep antithesis between expectation and reality - between the universalism of mortality and the persistence of an unexpected racial hierarchy even beyond life.

Duhamel regards the cemetery as a metaphor for society itself: “leur cimetière particulier, avec ses murailles, sa porte, sa part de bournier, sa solitude.” The physical parts of the description (“murailles”, “porte”, “bournier”, “solitude”) become synecdoches for institutional exclusion. Each element is not just architectural but symbolic: the walls represent

legal and social barriers; the gate suggests the restricted access; the mud (*bourbier*) evokes degradation; and solitude stands for both physical isolation and spiritual abandonment.

The cross (“cette croix douloureuse, cette croix impuissante [...] son même signe d’impossible concorde.”), a universal Christian symbol of unity in suffering and hope in resurrection, becomes useless. The phrase “impossible concorde” captures a deep spiritual paradox: that even the sacred cannot reconcile what society has violently torn apart.

This passage transcends sociological description to become a meditation on the metaphysical depth of racial exclusion. Duhamel confronts a disturbing reality: death, which should equalize, only mirrors and prolongs earthly injustice in the American society. In contrast to France - where racial tensions exist but burial is “shared” - America institutionalizes final, posthumous “apartheid”. The reference to “leur suprême effort, le dernier sursaut de l’aversion” suggests that in France, cohabitation in death is reluctant, but present. In the U.S., this “effort” is completely absent. The degree of horror is intensified, not by violence, but by its normalization and perpetuity.

7. A Vision of the future

The last part of the book is dedicated to a bitter conclusion drawn on different aspects of the American influence upon the new world. Duhamel captures the shifting power dynamics between Europe (specifically France) and the emerging American superpower. The speaker’s voice is at once cynical, ironic, and melancholic, reflecting the anxieties of a cultural elite witnessing the displacement of Old World authority by New World pragmatism. The central idea is clear: France, once a model of refinement and cultural dominance, now finds itself economically and symbolically subordinated to a pragmatic and self-confident America. Duhamel dramatizes this geopolitical and symbolic reversal in commercial terms: the French will soon have nothing left to sell to Americans - not even the prestige of European high culture.

“Nous autres Français, nous avons commis quelques bévues avec ces gens. Ils nous le feront payer. Ils deviennent rétifs. Ils sont beaucoup plus fiers de leur monnaie qui ne vaut quand même plus que ça. Pénibles, les affaires ! Et les dernières affaires, mon cher. Ils n’auront plus besoin ni de vos modèles, ni de vos leçons. D’pêchez-vous de leur vendre quelque chose. Dans dix ans, vous ne leur vendrez plus rien, ab-so-lu-ment plus rien. Même pas des tableaux de Rembrandt ! Ils en feront ! “ [Duhamel, 1930:109]

The opening line employs willingly using an attenuative term (“quelques bévues”) to downplay historical errors, while the vague phrasing “ces gens” suggests a tone of condescension tinged with apprehension. This ironic understatement sets the tone for a speech that is both autocritical and mocking, capturing the voice of a disillusioned French bourgeois confronted by the collapse of old certainties on which he built all his existence. The use of the repetition (“Pénibles, les affaires ! Et les dernières affaires, mon cher.”) suggests agitation or urgency, but also the feeling that everything is going to end. The hyperbole (“Dans dix ans, vous ne leur vendrez plus rien, ab-so-lu-ment plus rien.”) is amplified by the syllabic breakdown of “ab-so-lu-ment”. The slow, emphatic rhythm dramatizes a total collapse of

influence. The final statement of the excerpt is both comic and tragic. Rembrandt, symbol of the European cultural artistic genius, is invoked only to be dismissed: the Americans will mass-produce even Rembrandts. This closing line uses ironic parody to underline the perceived absurdity of American techno-industrial supremacy, which threatens not only to displace European culture but to industrialize it too.

The final pages of *Scènes de la vie future* crystallizes Georges Duhamel's central ethical concern: how to preserve moral and spiritual integrity when faced with a dehumanizing, hyper-industrialized, and materialistic civilisation such as the American one. He chooses to turn to himself in a gesture of resistance rooted in his cultural memory and personal conscience. The narrator expresses his desire not to be "absorbed" by what he perceives as a civilization devoid of measure and harmony - two terms evoking classical and humanist values.

"Pour me prouver, tout au moins à moi-même, que je ne suis pas absorbé, que je n'accepte pas que je ne me laisse pas gagner, que je ne suis pas dupe de cette civilisation sans mesure et sans harmonie, que je ne suis pas complice de ce gaspillage, de cette ruée, de cet orgueil, j'interroge, au fond de mon cœur, les mânes de mes ancêtres." [Duhamel, 1930:110]

The repetition of "que je ne..." is a part of a powerful anaphoric structure, emphasizing negation or refusal. The cumulative syntax of the sentence builds tension, illustrating the narrator's emotional involvement in not surrendering. Duhamel builds an implied antithesis between the moral order he values (corresponding to Europe and its traditions) and the disorder he sees in modern life (represented by the American society).

The three-term list ("...de ce gaspillage, de cette ruée, de cet orgueil...") corresponds to an emotional crescendo: from *gaspillage* (wastefulness), to *ruée* (the rush of consumerism and mechanization), to *orgueil* (pride). The use of concrete terms (gaspillage, ruée) followed by the abstract *orgueil* strengthens the rhetorical impact.

The phrase "les mânes de mes ancêtres" evokes the Roman practice of consulting ancestral spirits, adding not only a ritualistic solemnity, but a feeling of trust in everything related to tradition. Faced to technological acceleration bringing along cultural disorientation, the narrator seeks guidance not in ideology or politics, but in ancestral memory and identity.

The fear and the disgust melt in irony, denotes Duhamel's impressive capacity of being visionary. One hundred years before our times, he bitterly anticipates the human desire of using genetical selection in order to obtain individuals who should be better prepared for a society in which everything would be changed in order to become profitable. He even anticipates what he calls "homme-outil". Looking backward from 2025 to 1930, one might also interpret it as an anticipation of humanoid robots or of cyborgs or augmented people:

"Si la machine d'acier se refuse à de profitables progrès, il ne reste plus qu'à se retourner vers l'homme, à modifier la machine humaine. Inventez l'homme-outil, comme vous avez inventé le bœuf de labour, la vache à lait, la poule pondeuse et le cochon gras. Ces mains et ces pieds, n'en pouvez-vous vraiment rien faire qui rende superflus tels instruments coûteux, défaillants, voire hypothétiques ? [...] Ne pouvez-vous faire scientifiquement de l'élevage humain et de la sélection ?" [Duhamel, 1930:115].

According to what Duhamel could see in America, he understands that this country and everything it represents depends on creating needs: people either need an object, and they try to get it, or they are made believe that they need an object so as they should be made get it. The narrator calls this time of action “dictatorship”, a suggestive term which invites the reader to understand that there is no alternative:

“Toute la philosophie de cette dictature industrielle aboutit à ce dessein impie : imposer à l’humanité des besoins, des appétits.” [Duhamel, 1988:117].

This way of society’s acting upon individuals will be the basis of the future social order. On the other hand, society will develop a sense of growing comfort and the individuals will become increasingly addicted to deal with non-complicated things/ideas/actions. It is one of the trends we are facing today and it is genially expressed by Duhamel in the following excerpt:

“Nous ne saurons bientôt plus écrire. La machine ? Même pas : le dictaphone, en attendant le clin d’œil ou la transmission de pensée. Je veux m’asseoir : qui me pousse un siège sous les fesses ? Je veux manger : que l’on me place les aliments dans mon assiette.” [Duhamel, 1930 :121].

The consequences of mechanization, of America’s developing a social dynamics of its own, based on standardization, aim at gradually deepening the gap between the Old World represented by Europe and the New World embodied by America. This gap which Duhamel acknowledges makes him symbolically ask if the Old World might not be conquered. He speaks of course of a figurative conquest, through imposing a certain kind of society and its values: “Allons-nous être conquis, nous autres, gens des terres moyennes ?.” [Duhamel, 1930:124].

Georges Duhamel makes a clear distinction between two visions of history: one that perceives continuity between past and present, and another - his own- that senses a radical rupture. This passage synthesizes the work’s core preoccupations: the defence of European humanistic values, the rejection of technocratic materialism, and the moral duty of discernment in the face of historical transformations.

Duhamel rejects the seductive narrative that the American model of civilization represents the natural extension of the Western tradition. For him, the industrial, mechanized, efficiency-obsessed America he documented is not a culmination, but a deviation from the humanistic values rather than their fulfilment.

“Si je pensais que cette civilisation fût un prolongement de celle qui, depuis trente ou quarante siècles, ` , malgré bien des erreurs, enrichi, orné, ennobli le patrimoine de l’espèce, de quel cœur ne chanterais-je pas ses louanges ? Mais où d’autres voient un prolongement, je sens une déviation, je distingue une rupture. [...] Et même si je pensais que notre civilisation européenne fût au terme de ses desseins, qu’elle eût épuisé ses ambitions et parfait la somme de ses œuvres...Mais cela, je ne le pense pas. “ [Duhamel, 1930:125]

The excerpt is structured around two main hypothetical statements, each beginning with a conditional clause (“Si je pensais...”). This conditional mood is a rhetorical strategy of disavowal: Duhamel constructs alternative visions of the world only to reject them. The use of the imperfect subjunctive (*fût*) elevates the tone and lends a certain solemnity to the hypothetical claim, emphasizing that this is not mere opinion, but a deeply considered philosophical stance.

This rhetorical question “De quel cœur ne chanterais-je pas ses louanges?”, with its lyrical tone, serves as a counterfactual ideal: if the modern world truly embodied the values of past civilizations, Duhamel would offer it praise “with all his heart.” The metaphor “chanter des louanges” evokes lyric poetry, momentarily opening a space for affirmation, but this is open only to be immediately closed off by the author’s refusal to believe in such continuity.

The phrase “Mais où d’autres voient un prolongement, je sens une déviation, je distingue une rupture.” is the philosophical and moral pivot of the passage. The structure contrasts visual metaphors (“voient”) with sensorial and intellectual ones (“je sens,” “je distingue”). The shift from prolongement to déviation and finally rupture constitutes a semantic graduation, where the deviation becomes so great that continuity is no longer plausible.

In the final movement, Duhamel provides a counterargument: perhaps European civilization has simply fulfilled its mission and is now naturally yielding to new forms. Yet he refuses this option. The repeated conditional (“si je pensais”) is continued by a final, emphatic indicative refusal in a negative form and introduced by an opposition conjunction: “Mais cela, je ne le pense pas.” This line reaffirms Duhamel’s faith in the vitality and incompleteness of European humanism.

8. Conclusion

Duhamel’s legacy endures through his extensive body of work, which offers profound insights into the human condition and critiques of modern society. His writings remain relevant, offering timeless reflections on humanity, culture, and the ethical dimensions of progress. “Everywhere in the United States, he saw the brutalization of conscience, the standardization of personality, the debasement of civilized values.” [Strout, 1957: 569]

The conclusion, even if its tone seems a little bit bitter, is an optimistic one. In spite of this even treatment that everyone perceives, Duhamel remains optimistic. His book, far from being a witness’s opinion is, for the XXIst century reader not only an objective presentation rendered through the lenses of a (former) scientist, but also a warning related to what might happen in the new World. In the end, some of us might ask themselves looking at today’s world: could it come true?

References

- Adorno, T., Horkheimer, M., *Dialectic of Enlightenment. (Critical Theory of Mass Culture)*, Verso, London-New York, 1977
- Austin, G., *America as Intertext: Factory and Flesh in Duhamel and Céline*, French Studies Bulletin, Volume 15, Number 52, 1994, pp. 10-13, <https://doi.org/10.1093/freb/15.52.10>
- Bernstein, M. A., *The Great Depression: Delayed Recovery and Economic Change in America, 1929–1939*, Cambridge University Press, 1987

- Cross, G., *A Social History of Leisure since 1600*, Venture Publishing, 1993
- Droixhte, D., *Musiques noires. Jazz, blues, racism et modernité chez Georges Duhamel et Luc Durtain* (1930-1931), Académie royale de langue et de littérature françaises de Belgique, Bruxelles, February 2024
- Duhamel, G., *Scènes de la vie future*, Le Livre de Demain, Arthème Fayard, Paris, 1930
- Fogelson, R. M., *Downtown: Its Rise and Fall, 1880–1950*, Yale University Press 2001
- Hounshell, D. A., *From the American System to Mass Production, 1800–1932: The Development of Manufacturing Technology in the United States*, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984
- Jackson, K. T., *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*, Oxford University Press, 1985
- Labouret, Denis, *Histoire de la littérature française des XXe et XXIe siècles*, Armand Colin, 2018
- Schlesinger, A. M. Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Crisis of the Old Order, 1919–1933*. Houghton Mifflin, 2003
- Strout, C., *America, the Menace of the Future: A European Fantasy*, The Virginia Quarterly Review, vol 33, no. 4 /1957, pp. 569-581

FATALITÉ VS. LIBERTÉ. DE LA RÉMINISCENCE ET DU SOUVENIR DANS ŒDIPE D'ANDRÉ GIDE

Diana-Adriana LEFTER*

***Abstract:** Our research focuses on Gide's best-known play Œdipe, a text that we are putting to the mythocritical test. At the centre of our investigation is the mythical hero, as constructed by Gide, in his variant of the myth. Our aim is to show the relationship between the two concepts that tradition regards as defining this mythical character: fatality and freedom. We want to show that fate and freedom are closely linked to the memory of the past, manifested in the form of recollection or reminiscence, and that Oedipus' destiny is under the sign of fate until he re-acquires the memory.*

***Keywords:** conscience; memory; reminiscence; freedom*

Préambule

Le travail de recherche que nous avons conduit porte sur la plus connue pièce de théâtre de Gide, « Œdipe », texte que nous mettons à l'épreuve de la mythocritique. Au centre de notre investigation est le héros mythique, tel qu'il est construit par Gide, dans sa variante du mythe. Notre objectif est de montrer quel est le rapport entre les deux concepts que la tradition considère comme définitoires pour ce personnage mythique : la fatalité et la liberté. En effet, nous voulons montrer que la fatalité et la liberté sont en étroite relation avec la mémoire du passé, manifestée sous la forme du souvenir ou de la réminiscence et que la destinée d'Œdipe se trouve sous le signe de la fatalité jusqu'au moment où il re-acquiert le souvenir.

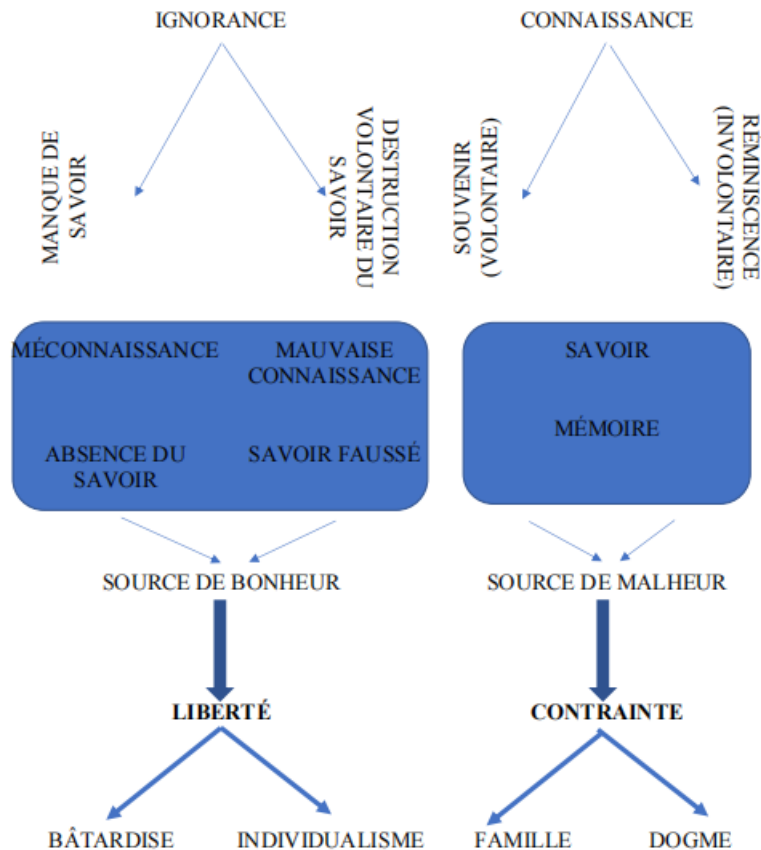
Fatalité et faute tragique vs. liberté dans la tragédie

Chez les anciens Grecs, la tragédie est un genre codifié et dans lequel les éléments et les parties qui la composent doivent mettre en œuvre une logique dramatique dont le point focal est l'équilibre qui signifie, essentiellement, la confrontation de deux forces d'égale légitimité. L'équilibre dans la tragédie (cet équilibre qui ne se retrouve que dans les « actions simples » (Aristote, 1874 : 17) qui « se déroulent sans péripétie ou sans reconnaissance » (Aristote, 1874 : 17). Selon Aristote, la péripétie est « un changement en sens contraire dans les faits et dans l'accomplissement » (Aristote, 1974 : 17), tandis que la reconnaissance « c'est, comme son nom l'indique, le passage de l'état d'ignorance à la connaissance » (Aristote, 1874 : 17). Les deux mettent le héros en rapport avec un certain savoir – souvenir ou réminiscence – et avec un certain pouvoir faire – car, on le sait, le destin du héros tragique est marqué par la faute tragique et par la fatalité : Dans la logique de la tragédie grecque, le

* Université Nationale de Science et Technologie POLITEHNICA Bucarest, Centre Universitaire Pitesti, diana.lefter@upb.ro.

héros est porteur d'une faute tragique, c'est-à-dire soit il porte une culpabilité qu'il ignore (il n'en a le moindre souvenir ou réminiscence) soit il hérite d'une culpabilité qui ne lui appartient pas (c'est la malédiction de la race), soit il a commis un acte de transgression dans le savoir, en s'opposant au destin destiné par les dieux :

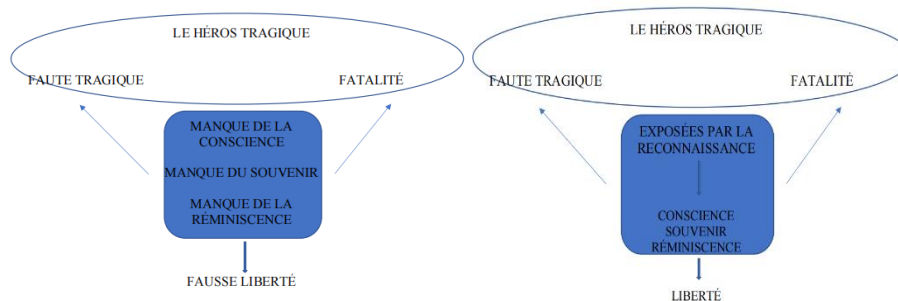
La fatalité est une idée archaïque, liée à la religion primitive et dont la Grèce classique se libère peu à peu ; c'est aussi une idée qui joue un grand rôle dans la tragédie antique, car les Grecs, se refusant au « suspense » trop facile qui viendrait de l'ignorance des faits à venir, préfèrent en reprenant les légendes connues par tous représenter la lutte inégale entre l'homme et son destin. (Lévy, 1969 : 409)



Toutefois, la fatalité est inhérente au destin du héros tragique et c'est en vertu de cette fatalité qu'il est entraîné dans un mécanisme ou dans une logique dont il n'est pas le maître. Il s'ensuit que la faute tragique et la fatalité qui pèsent sur le héros limitent sa liberté.

La civilisation antique n'est compréhensible qu'à partir de cette intuition du monde qui s'exprime dans l'idée de destin, et qui sert de toile de fond permanente à la vie de l'antiquité classique. (Guillermi, Vuillemin, 1948 : 35).

Mais, ce sont deux éléments qui agissent sans que le héros en ait la conscience, le souvenir ou la réminiscence ; il se croit donc libre, bien qu'il se trouve dans une « machine infernale » où sa liberté est limitée. De manière paradoxale, le héros tragique dépourvu de conscience, de souvenir ou de réminiscence se croit libre, mais il ne l'est pas ; par contre, la prise de conscience, l'actualisation du souvenir ou de la réminiscence (par la péripétie ou, surtout, par la reconnaissance) lui expose la faute tragique, la fatalité, mais le rend libre : « La fatalité disparaît à mesure que se développe l'idée de liberté » (Lévy, 1969 : 411).



Quant à Gide, sa vision de la fatalité mythique est le résultat de sa révolte anti-religieuse : accepter le rôle fondamental de la fatalité dans le mythe équivaudrait à l'acceptation d'un pouvoir divin, quel qu'il soit, qui dirige le destin des hommes. Or, cela est tout à fait étranger à la conception gidiennne :

[...] L'erreur c'est de ne consentir à reconnaître dans le mythe que l'expression imagée des lois physiques, et de ne voir dans tout le reste que le jeu de la Fatalité. Avec ce mot affreux l'in fait au hasard la part trop belle ; il sévit partout où l'on renonce à expliquer. Or je dis que plus on réduit dans la fable la part de Fatum, et plus l'enseignement est grand [...] Que nous enseigne le Fatum, chaque fois que nous le laissons reparaitre ? À nous soumettre à ce dont nous ne pouvons point décider... Mais précisément ces grandes âmes des héros légendaires étaient des âmes insoumises, et c'est les méconnaître que de laisser le hasard les mener. (Gide, 1919 : 483).

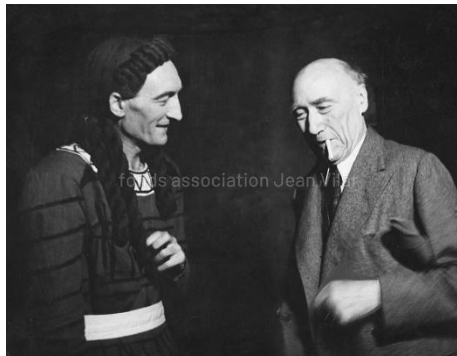
Genèse de la pièce

Le 10 septembre 1910, Gide avait déjà le projet de son « Œdipe », du héros placé, selon la notation du *Journal*, entre « le bonheur de l'ignorance » et « la connaissance malheureuse » (Gide 1950). Or, au sens large, l'ignorance est une méconnaissance, une absence de savoir, l'absence de toute mémoire, de tout souvenir, de la plus faible réminiscence. Dans la logique et dans la poétique gidiennes, l'ignorance est source de bonheur et vecteur de la liberté. Dans la conception de Gide, tout lien et toute règle – qu'il s'agisse de la famille, dans le cas du lien, ou de la religion, pour la règle – sont des contraintes qui limitent, voire annulent la liberté de l'individu :

[...] *Œdipe gidien* [...] nous paraît représenter l'avatar d'un mythe à la fois original, gidien dirions-nous, et représentatif de l'époque où il a été conçu. (Lachasse, 1982 : 5).

Cette conception propre à Gide repose d'ailleurs sur la dichotomie liberté-contrainte, avec acteur principal le bâtard qui ignore (absence du souvenir et de la réminiscence) ou détruit la mémoire, le souvenir, qui sont autant de liens, d'héritages, afin de conquérir la liberté. En 1918, Gide réaffirmait cette conception du bonheur, en notant dans le *Journal* : « Je me comparais à Œdipe lorsqu'il découvre soudain le mensonge sur lequel est édifié son bonheur » (Gide 1950).

« Œdipe » a été publié premièrement en 1930, dans la revue *Commerce* et repris, en 1931, dans *La Nouvelle Revue Française*. Le texte suscite très vite l'intérêt du grand Georges Pitoëff qui crée le spectacle en tournée européenne, sans pourtant avoir un succès de critique. En 1949, la version scénique de Jean Vilar fera clameur au Festival d'Avignon.



Jean Vilar et André Gide, *Œdipe*, Verger Urbain V, 1949, fonds association Jean Vilar, photographie Agnès Varda © succession varda

Il s'agit d'une pièce en trois actes, dont le premier respecte, dans la construction de l'intrigue, l'« Œdipe Roi » de Sophocle, avec ses moments essentiels : vingt ans après l'assassinat impuni de Laïus, la ville de Thèbes, où Œdipe règne en dirigeant orgueilleux depuis deux décennies, est ravagée par la peste. Ignorant être lui-même l'assassin qu'il cherche, Œdipe, roi tout puissant, maudit le meurtrier. Le deuxième acte est espace du renouvellement du mythe, auquel Gide intègre des thèmes et des topoï qui traversent sa création littéraire : la bâtardise, l'homosexualité, le refus du dogme catholique.¹ Ainsi, il y fait espace à des dialogues croisés entre ses quatre enfants, dont Étéocle et Polynice sont des hommes de lettres qui manifestent des penchants incestueux envers leurs sœurs. Aussi, la confrontation entre le dogmatique Tirésias et la pure Antigone laisse voir la position anticatholique de Gide. C'est toujours dans cet acte que, par la voix d'Œdipe, se fait sentir la croyance de Gide dans le progrès, sous l'influence du marxisme et du communisme. Dans le

¹ « Mais la grande originalité de la pièce de Gide, à nos yeux, consiste dans la place qu'il accorde à ses jeunes personnages, les quatre enfants d'Œdipe et de Jocaste. Les garçons surtout, beaux, forts, intelligents, « des tourmentés », estime le père, en qui il se reconnaît et dont il est fier ». (Perrier, 1931)

troisième acte, l'histoire mythique revient à celle rendue notoire par Sophocle : le parricide et l'inceste d'Œdipe sont exposés, dévoilement face auquel Jocaste se suicide. Le roi se crève les yeux et part en exil volontaire, accompagné seulement par la pure Antigone. Toutefois, une prémonition de Tirésias, qui dévoile d'ailleurs le caractère double (en bourgeons) de Créon¹, annonce qu'« une grande bénédiction est promise par eux (les dieux) à la terre où reposeront ses os » (Gide, 1931 : 71).

Les deux faces d'Œdipe : la fatalité et la liberté



¹ Dans cette prédiction de Tirésias, Créon, qui restera héritier du trône, voit déjà la possibilité de construire sa fortune royale sur le compromis et sur les bénéfices apportés par l'éventuel cadavre d'Œdipe à Thèbes : *CRÉON : Allons, bon... Tu vois que tu ferais décidément mieux de rester parmi nous. On pourra toujours s'arranger.* (Gide, 1931 : 7-72).



Face I
Jean Vilard dans le rôle d'Œdipe
fonds association Jean Vilar, photographie Agnès Varda ©
succession varda

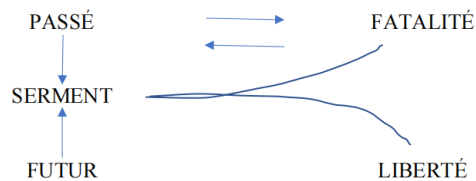


Face II
Monique Chaumette et Jean Vilar, Œdipe, Bordeaux, 1958,
fonds association Jean Vilar, photographie Agnès Varda ©
succession varda

Dans la pièce de Gide, Œdipe est porteur de deux faces et cela est en accord avec son état de liberté ou de fausse liberté.

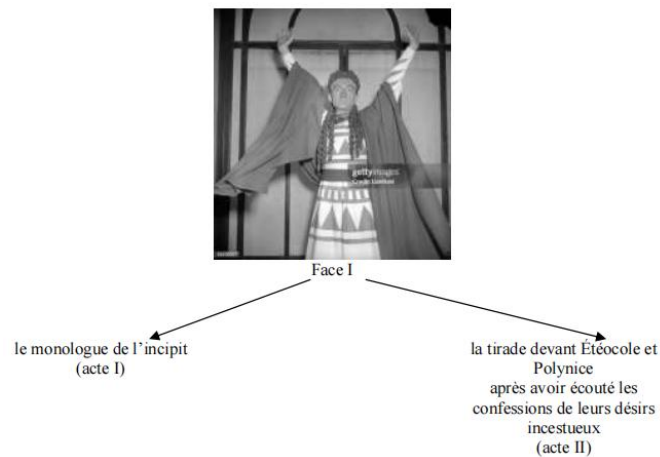
Au début, le roi ignore son ascendance et ne sait pas que son passé criminel le lie directement au meurtre de Laïus, ce qui le rend parricide tout d'abord et ensuite incestueux. Cet Œdipe se croit libre et cette impression de liberté lui vient du total manque du souvenir ou de réminiscence. En d'autres mots, il se trouve sous le signe de la faute tragique et de la fatalité mais, en l'absence de toute trace dans la mémoire, il l'ignore. C'est pour cela que, lorsque Créon vient lui apporter la réponse de l'oracle, Œdipe affirme vouloir la connaître devant tous : « Ce qui peut apporter remède aux maux du peuple, le peuple, autant que moi, doit connaître » (Gide, 1930 : 8).

Pour le roi tout puissant, la fatalité se concrétise et s'actualise dans le serment qu'il fait, de faire trouver, d'exposer et de punir l'assassin de Laïus. Le serment fonctionne alors comme point d'ancrage temporel, de coïncidence entre le passé et le futur et comme point d'intersection entre le souvenir (du peuple) et le rappel incessant de Tirésias.



Encore, Œdipe semble décidé à se construire un savoir qui mette ensemble passé et présent : « Je veux savoir » affirme-t-il lorsque Créon hésite devant de lui raconter la vie maritale de Jocaste avec Laïus, son feu mari.

Œdipe et puis ses fils, selon son modèle, s'inscrivent dans la galerie des bâtards gidiens, ceux qui, selon les mots de Tirésias « croient pouvoir s'émanciper d'un pouvoir auquel il importe que tout homme soit soumis » (Gide, 1930 : 22). Chez les héros gidiens, cette émancipation équivaut à la bâtardise qui, en termes, généraux, signifie rompre et nier tout lien, toute appartenance, toute contrainte. Refuser le souvenir et la réminiscence, donc le lien avec le passé, n'est autre qu'un geste bâtard, dans l'illusion que nourrit le héros de conquérir sa liberté : « C'est un appel à la vaillance, que de ne connaître point des ancêtres » (Gide, 1930 : 31).



Œdipe porte ce que Vilar a nommé « face I » dans deux moments essentiels. Dans chacune de ces scènes, il adopte le discours de l'homme qui croit ou feint croire dans sa liberté faite d'une autorité incontestable. Certes, c'est toujours le discours d'un bâtard qui se construit une histoire personnelle. Cette histoire débute par le moment de son intronisation et se cristallise des bribes de sa mémoire fragmentaire. De plus, Œdipe subvertit la fameuse réponse donnée au Sphinx, pour le vaincre : l'homme de l'Œdipe de Sophocle devient l'Homme de

l'Œdipe gidien, et par là, il entent la Créature désasservie, émancipée de tout lien (famille, religion), l'incarnation de l'individualisme, l'Homme-Soi :

Car, comprenez bien, mes petits, que chacun de nous, adolescent, rencontre, au début de sa course, un monstre qui dresse devant lui telle énigme qui nous puisse empêcher d'avancer. Et, bien qu'à chacun de nous, mes enfants, ce sphinx particulier pose une question différente, persuadez-vous qu'à chacune de ses questions la réponse reste pareille ; oui, qu'il n'y a qu'une seule et même réponse à de si diverses questions ; et que cette réponse unique, c'est : l'Homme ; et que cet homme unique, pour un chacun de nous, c'est : Soi. (Gide, 1930 : 47).

Et Tirésias qui dit : (Gide, 1931 : 50)

Œdipe, qui prétends échapper à Dieu, je voudrais t'apprendre à te voir.

-- fatalité-- --liberté--

Dans toute cette histoire qu'il construit à sa mesure, Œdipe fait confondre le temps et son écoulement. Pour lui, ce n'est plus le temps-flux, qui s'écoule, mais le temps-âge¹, stagnant dans un bonheur presque atemporel. Œdipe annule même la concrétude du temps et, par sa volonté, il transforme le souvenir (ancrage volontaire dans un passé mesurable) en réminiscence (ancrage flou dans un passé sans contours). Le souvenir concret et précis du vieillard tué au carrefour, acte suite auquel il n'a plus « les mains pures » (Gide, 1930 : 51), selon ses propres mots, est volontairement chassé dans un passé diffus, dont Œdipe ne veut plus garder la mémoire : ainsi, le crime n'est plus un souvenir, mais une réminiscence : « j'ai soudain compris l'art de faire, de cette ignorance même, ma force » (Gide, 1930 : 52).

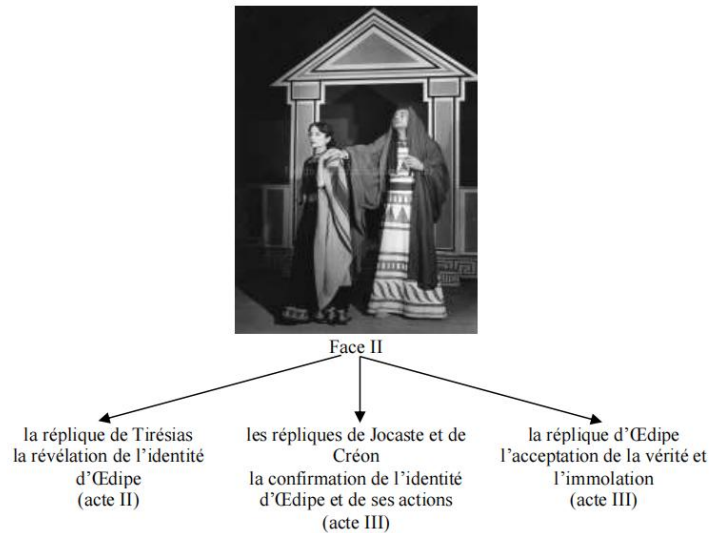
En transformant le souvenir en réminiscence, Œdipe ne fait que suivre la voie du bâtard : le lien de la réminiscence est beaucoup plus faible que celui du souvenir, et par là il construit et conserve la liberté. En fait, il ne fait autre que se soumettre à la fatalité.

Le moment de la reconnaissance marque le passage de la fausse liberté à la liberté réelle. Sur le plan de la mémoire, les mots de Tirésias actualisent la réminiscence et la transforment, de nouveau, en souvenir :

TIRÉSIAS

L'oracle avait prédit de même à Laius qu'il serait tué par son fils. Œdipe, Œdipe, enfant trouvé ! Monarque impie ! C'est l'ignorance de ton passé qui te donne cette assurance. Ton bonheur est aveugle. Ouvre les yeux sur ta détresse. Dieu t'a retiré le droit d'être heureux. Gide, 1930 : 53)

¹ *Chaque fois que j'ai voulu te parler, mon ami, tu m'as interrompue. « Non, ne me parle pas du passé, t'écriais-tu. Je n'en veux rien savoir. Un âge d'or a commencé. Toutes choses sont faites nouvelles... » (Gide, 1930: 11)*



Pour ce qui est de la « face II », on voit Œdipe la porter dans les trois moments de la révélation de son identité : dans l'acte II, lorsque Tirésias lui parle à mots presque explicites, dans l'acte III, où la confirmation de l'identité et des actions (le parricide et l'inceste) vient par les voix de Créon et de Jocaste ; enfin, encore une fois dans l'acte III où, vaincu, Œdipe accepte la vérité et décide de se crever les yeux et puis de partir en exil.

Enfin, Œdipe est libre. La fatalité a fait son œuvre et Œdipe le sait, dorénavant. La réminiscence s'est faite souvenir tout d'abord et ensuite « monstre nouveau » qui s'étire » (Gide, 1930 : 54), mais le bâtard est finalement et réellement libre, après avoir expié sa faute.

Corpus

Gide, André, *Œdipe*, Paris, Pléiade, 1931

Bibliographie

- Aristote, *Poétique*, traduction par Ch. Batteux, Paris, Librairie et Imprimerie Classiques chez J. Dellain, 1874
- Claude, Jean, *André Gide et le théâtre*, Paris, Gallimard, collection « Cahiers André Gide », n° 15 et 16, Paris, Gallimard, 1992
- Debard Clara, « Gide et l'image scénique », dans dossier « Gide et l'image », *Bulletin de l'Association des Amis d'André Gide*, n° 199/200, automne 2018, pp. 201-221
- Debard, Clara, « A la recherche d'une écriture dramatique nouvelle : *Le Roi Candaule* par André Gide » in *Formes et dispositions du texte théâtral du symbolisme à aujourd'hui*, Besançon, Presses Universitaires de Franche Comté, 2019, pp. 113-126
- Gide, André, *Considérations sur la mythologie grecque*, in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, no. 72, 6^e année, Paris, NRF, 1919
- Gide, André, *Journal* in *Œuvres complètes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1950
- Guillermit, L., et Vuillemin, J., *Le sens du destin*, Neuchâtel, Editions de la Baconnière, 1948
- Lachasse Pierre, « *Œdipe* d'André Gide ou le mythe renouvelé », *Bulletin des Amis d'André Gide*, n° 53, janvier 1982, pp. 5-21

Lévy, Edmond, *La fatalité dans le théâtre d'Eschyle* in *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, LH 28/1969, pp. 409-416

Perrier, Jean-Claude, *Le théâtre d'André Gide*, 10 : "Œdipe" (1931), <https://fondation-catherine-gide.org/actualites/le-theatre-dandre-gide-10-oedipe-1931>

LA MEMORIA ED I RICORDI ATTRAVERSO L'OPERA DI PRIMO LEVI SE QUESTO È UN UOMO

Abdellah MAASOUM*

Abstract: *Levi feels the urgency of telling what he experienced in Auschwitz and writes his first work to free himself internally from the memory of the trauma which is, itself, traumatic (Levi, 1991, 14). In his fellow prisoners he observes the same need to transmit his own experiences, «to make the 'others' participate» (Levi, 1989a, 9). Among the elementary needs he lists "to return; eat; tell" in a verse of the poem Alzarsi (Levi, 1984, 16), written immediately after his return from Auschwitz at a time when, he explains, "I was still under trauma and dreamed at night (and sometimes even during the day) of returning to the field" (Poli, Calcagno, 2007, 205). In that period he wrote «disorderly page after page of the memories that poisoned me» (Levi, 1994, 156), «trapped into an endless pattern of narrative re-enactment» (Woolf, 2007, 39), similar to what happens with Coleridge's Ancient Mariner, forced to tell stories without stopping. For Levi, memory is created based on the observation of what happens in the concentration camp. The author says he spent the period of imprisonment in a particularly lively state of mind which allowed him to carefully observe his environment. With an almost scientific attitude, the author worked to imprint the observed phenomena in his memory, create memories and, if he survived, transmit the experience he was experiencing. While working in a laboratory, in the last months of his imprisonment, he had access to a notebook in which he made notes which he immediately destroyed because it was too dangerous to write. In the face of dehumanization, memory can be the bearer of culture and remembering can mean reclaiming one's identity. In one of the best-known chapters of If This Is a Man, The Song of Ulysses, the protagonist recites verses from Dante's Inferno to a companion with whom he is going to the kitchen to get soup. The question posed for this research article: How are memories and memory represented in the novel "If This Is a Man" by Primo Levi?*

Keywords: *memory; novel; role; meaning; memories; narration; representation*

1. Introduzione

Se questo è un uomo è il capolavoro di Primo Levi scritto, come ha affermato l'autore stesso, nella prefazione del libro, per soddisfare "il bisogno di raccontare agli altri, di fare gli altri partecipi" l'esperienza della sua deportazione nel Lager di Auschwitz in quanto ebreo. Primo Levi scrive questo libro di getto nel 1946, subito dopo essere rientrato a Torino nell'ottobre del 1945 sopravvissuto alla prigionia, obbedendo all'esigenza di far conoscere a tutti l'esperienza atroce dell'internamento.

Ecco come il chimico e scrittore Primo Levi (1919-1987) descrive la sua necessità di trattenere e conservare la memoria di quanto gli è accaduto:

«Il bisogno di raccontare agli altri, di fare gli altri partecipi, aveva assunto fra noi, prima della liberazione e dopo, il carattere di un impulso immediato e violento, tanto da rivaleggiare con gli altri bisogni elementari: il libro è stato scritto per soddisfare a questo

* Université d'Alger 2, abdellah.maasoum@univ-alger2.dz

bisogno; in primo luogo a scopo di liberazione interiore. Di qui il suo carattere frammentario: i capitoli sono stati scritti non in successione logica, ma per ordine di urgenza [...]. Mi pare superfluo aggiungere che nessuno dei fatti è inventato».

2. La trama

Levi racconta in prima persona la sua deportazione a partire da quando, fatto prigioniero in Italia (13 dicembre 1943), viene condotto prima nel campo di concentramento di Fossoli, in Emilia, e poi ad Auschwitz (nel gennaio del 1944), in Polonia, nel campo di concentramento di Buna Monowitz, attraverso un allucinante viaggio su carri-bestiami. Al campo i deportati sono adibiti a lavori durissimi e patiscono stenti e violenze di ogni genere. I nazisti ne hanno previsto lo sterminio ma prima vogliono sfruttare le loro capacità e la loro forza-lavoro.

Il racconto si focalizza sulla feroce e programmatica violazione della dignità umana compiuta dai nazisti, per annientare i prigionieri prima di ucciderli. I nazisti hanno creato un sistema mostruoso di sopraffazione con una gerarchia basata sul pregiudizio razziale per cui gli ebrei sono gli ultimi dopo i criminali e i prigionieri politici.

I prigionieri ridotti a larve umane entrano in feroce competizione anche tra di loro. La legge spietata della sopravvivenza permette solo a chi è abbastanza astuto da eludere la disciplina del campo, anche a spese dei compagni di prigionia più deboli, di avere qualche speranza di salvezza. Gli stessi prigionieri da vittime diventano aguzzini e per sopravvivere mettono in atto meschinità, sotterfugi e violenza nei confronti di altri prigionieri, ed i nazisti se ne servono per aver garantito il controllo del campo e prevenire ribellioni. In tal modo i prigionieri diventano doppiamente perseguitati, in quanto vittime non solo dei nazisti ma anche di se stessi perché si trasformano in aguzzini dei propri consimili.

Dopo alcuni mesi Levi riesce ad avere un trattamento meno duro, grazie al fatto di essere laureato in chimica riesce ad essere preso a lavorare nel laboratorio della fabbrica. Ciò oltre ad altre piccole circostanze favorevoli (come l'ammalarsi di scarlattina nell'ultimo periodo e perciò essere stato abbandonato, in quanto malato, dai nazisti in fuga) gli permettono di sopravvivere, insieme a pochi altri compagni, fino alla fine della guerra e alla liberazione da parte di soldati russi il 27 gennaio del 1945.

3. Questa è la genesi dell'opera

Più conosciuta di Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, un libro testimonianza sull'esperienza da lui vissuta nel lager di Auschwitz tra il 1944 e il 1945, da cui riuscì a scampare. «Il fatto che io sia sopravvissuto, e sia ritornato indenne» è ferma convinzione dello scrittore «è dovuto principalmente alla fortuna. Solo in piccola misura hanno giocato fattori preesistenti, quali il mio allenamento alla vita di montagna, ed il mio mestiere di chimico, che mi ha concesso qualche privilegio negli ultimi mesi di prigionia. Forse mi ha aiutato anche il mio interesse, mai venuto meno, per l'animo umano, e la volontà non soltanto di sopravvivere [...], ma di sopravvivere allo scopo preciso di raccontare le cose a cui avevamo assistito [...]. E forse ha giocato infine anche la volontà, che ho tenacemente conservata, di riconoscere sempre, anche nei giorni più scuri, degli uomini e non delle cose».

4. L'altro che incontro, che sia del mio paese o straniero

È un uomo, una persona, con un valore sconfinato, da rispettare fino in fondo. Questo dato deriva dalla tradizione occidentale e cristiana, di cui Levi è debitore, anche se lo scrittore di origine ebraica, dopo l'esperienza del lager, si allontana in maniera decisa dalla fede tanto che in un'intervista afferma che se ci sono stati i lager Dio non può esistere. Nella famosa poesia che apre il libro Levi provoca noi lettori che viviamo «sicuri nelle [...] tiepide case», che troviamo «tornando a sera/ il cibo caldo e visi amici» a ricordare la condizione bestiale a cui milioni di persone sono state ridotte e a considerare «se questo è un uomo/ che lavora nel fango/ che non conosce pace/ che lotta per mezzo pane/ che muore per un sì o per un no», «se questa è una donna/ senza capelli e senza nome/ senza più forza di ricordare/ vuoti gli occhi e freddi il grembo». Togliere all'uomo la memoria è l'atto più bestiale che si possa compiere, significa sradicarlo e, così, annichilirlo. Nessuna conquista straniera può eliminare il passato, la tradizione e la coscienza della persona e del popolo, se è vero quanto scrive Foscolo nei Sepolcri: «Le mal vietate Alpi e l'alterna/onnipotenza delle umane sorti/armi e sostanze t' invadeano ed are/e patria e, tranne la memoria, tutto».

Per questo Levi non accetta di essere trattato come una bestia e in tutti i modi cerca di conservare ciò che l'uomo ha di suo peculiare: «Se mi avanzano dieci minuti tra la sveglia e il lavoro, voglio dedicarli ad altro, a chiudermi in me stesso, a tirare le somme, o magari a guardare il cielo e a pensare che lo vedo forse per l'ultima volta; o anche solo a lasciarmi vivere, a concedermi il lusso di un minuscolo ozio». Levi si ribella: «Il lager è una grande macchina per ridurci a bestie, noi bestie non dobbiamo diventare [...]. Siamo schiavi, privi di ogni diritto, esposti ad ogni offesa, ma [...] una facoltà ci è rimasta, e dobbiamo difenderla con ogni vigore perché è l'ultima: la facoltà di negare il nostro assenso». Che valore immenso hanno queste parole anche per l'uomo di oggi che sembra naufragare in mezzo al sistema, schiacciato dal potere totalitario, come ben ha evidenziato Pasolini in *Scritti corsari*. L'uomo conserva in qualsiasi situazione, nella crisi morale e di valori odierna come anche nel lager o nella prigione, il dono più grande che è la libertà. Per questo, anche nei campi di sterminio, gli uomini devono continuare a lavarsi il volto, a lustrare le scarpe, a camminare dritti «per restare vivi, per non cominciare a morire».

Anche nelle altre opere Levi continuerà a rappresentare «la stessa lotta dell'uomo contro il grande nemico, la morte» sia che scriva del detenuto nel lager che «del chimico alle prese con problemi di vernici» o del «meccanico impegnato in un'ardua situazione di lavoro» (Elio Gioanola). Per Levi la testimonianza memoriale diventa un titanico tentativo di salvare quanto è stato, la memoria degli uomini, la brutalità di un male che non può essere redento, ma solo guardato nella sua atrocità. Per noi conoscere questo passato è un atto morale, nel senso che la stessa ignoranza è colpevole, come afferma Traudl Junge che diviene segretaria di Hitler a ventidue anni nel 1942. Finita la guerra, scopre che una sua coetanea, Sophie Scholl, ha dato la vita per diffondere la verità dello sterminio, mentre lei è rimasta ignara di tutto. Allora scrive: «Il fatto che fossimo giovani non ci giustifica dal non aver saputo». L'errore più grande che si commette oggi è pensare che fatti di una tale gravità come lo sterminio perpetrato dai nazisti siano capitati solo nel tempo passato. Uno sguardo attento a quanto si verifica oggi nel mondo ci dimostra che i lager sono ancora oggi presenti (ad esempio in Cina), ma pochi ne scrivono, che cinquanta milioni di bimbi ogni anno vengono uccisi con l'aborto, che l'eugenetica nata sotto i regimi totalitari e vagheggiata dal

Nazismo è oggi presentata come modernità, che tante altre ingiustizie sono ancora commesse. Una giornata della memoria che accusasse il passato (come accade nella maggior parte dei casi) e che non riflettesse sul presente sarebbe ipocrita e farisaica. Se il presente deve illuminare il passato, è anche vero il contrario, ovvero che il passato deve aiutarci a scrutare meglio il presente.

Dunque: ripercorrendo cronologicamente a ritroso la parabola letteraria di Levi da Un «giallo» del Lager (1986) a Vanadio (tra il 1967 ed il 1975) a Se questo è un uomo (1947 edizione De Silva; 1958 edizione Einaudi), si può constatare una notevole connessione, forte di anni ed esperienze, che lega le parti in un insieme compatto grazie all'azione di un collante particolare, tanto salvifico quanto scomodo e deleterio: la memoria. È la memoria di Levi a permettere la spinta retroattiva che fa rivivere, sulla carta stampata, il suo passato, collegandolo con il presente in maniera sinistra. Questo è il nucleo pulsante del saggio di Cavaglion: il "termitaio"³, secondo la similitudine leviana, è l'impasto eterogeneo rappresentato prima dalla progressiva stesura di Se questo è un uomo e poi dalle continuazioni retrospettiche (e retroattive) dell'esperienza ivi narrata, che come ulteriori passaggi sotterranei hanno reso più fitto il traffico dell'artefatto, creando così un prodotto in continuo ampliamento, appunto un "macrotesto". Nota lo studioso, infatti, che considerando in prospettiva Se questo è un uomo, La tregua ed Il sistema periodico, "ciò che colpisce è la straordinaria fedeltà a quel lontano debutto del 1947: il cerchio si chiuderà nel 1986 con I sommersi e i salvati, che nel titolo riprende il titolo di un capitolo centrale di Se questo è un uomo: un esempio di partenogenesi narrativa perfetto, quasi da manuale. Si direbbe, in altre parole, che, "ad ora incerta", la memoria di Auschwitz si sia esercitata a montare e smontare le disiecta membra di quell'originaria denuncia, concentrandosi su alcune parti e tralasciandone altre, in un gioco di combinazioni e interpolazioni che è impensabile, ma necessario, ricostruire se non nella sua interezza almeno parzialmente. (Cavaglion, 1997: 81)"

Intento quindi ad ultimare questa ricostruzione che riprende le differenti "partenogenesi narrativ[e]" di Levi, Cavaglion osserva come sia proprio la memoria di Levi il perno su cui ruota la realizzazione del macrotesto su cui egli investiga. Per il chimico-scrittore, infatti, l'azione della memoria (e la conseguente testimonianza, espressa in forma letteraria) aveva assunto un ruolo ambivalente: "Auschwitz aveva generato una naturale ipersensibilità al dovere di testimoniare, ma d'altro lato aveva fatto maturare una vigilanza, parimenti stretta, contro i pericoli delle deformazioni, delle liturgie, delle patologie del ricordo ossessivo. Levi non dice mai, come Ireneo Funes, di non poter dimenticare nulla di ciò che ha vissuto. Non rientrano nel suo stile affermazioni di questo genere: *"Ho più ricordi io da solo, di quanti non ne avranno avuti tutti gli uomini insieme, da che mondo è mondo"*. Né Levi fu mai preso dalla smania di catalogazione dell'eroe di Borges il quale, come è noto, "pensava che all'ora della sua morte non avrebbe ancora finito di classificare tutti i ricordi della sua infanzia". (Cavaglion, 1997: 82)"

5. La memoria

Il caso di Primo Levi può essere ascritto alla categoria della memoria vivente: nella sua testimonianza, egli trova la forza di ripercorrere grazie alla letteratura, potente risorsa, le sue esperienze, facendosi così "portatore" delle grigie memorie di Auschwitz. Di tutte queste,

ovviamente, egli ha una salda percezione, ma questa viene organizzata, disposta secondo modalità specifiche e dislocata nei vari punti della sua opera¹⁹. Insomma: il “termitaio” resta tale, cresce per accumulo guadagnando in ogni occasione nuova materia che si incastra sopra quella già presente in virtù di “fecondazioni a distanza” (Cavaglioni, 1997: 83). In questa distanza, poi, sta il “ponte tra passato, presente e futuro”: come si vedrà in seguito, le grigie memorie leviane del Lager si strutturano in un messaggio indirizzato a coloro che verranno, in un monito che parla fin troppo chiaramente al lettore, spingendolo a pensare e a riflettere.

Che Primo Levi fosse un testimone, poi, non v'è dubbio³¹. Egli divenne, però, un particolare tipo di testimone nel momento in cui scoprì le sue doti letterarie ed in cui queste vennero giustamente riconosciute alla sua figura; quando, insomma, si capì l'importanza per la sua opera del “nesso fra ricordare, raccontare e comprendere” (Barenghi, 2000: 148). In particolare, con la seconda edizione di *Se questo è un uomo* (Einaudi 1958) si può notare un'importante evoluzione dallo scritto precedente³², il cui esito maggiore che qui preme sottolineare è l'aggiunta del capitolo *Iniziazione*, contenente il cruciale incontro con il sergente Steinlauf:

*“Ho scordato ormai, e me ne duole, le sue parole diritte e chiare, le parole del già sergente Steinlauf dell'esercito austro-ungarico, croce di ferro della guerra '14-18. Me ne duole, perché dovrò tradurre il suo italiano incerto e il suo discorso piano di buon soldato nel mio linguaggio di uomo incredulo. Ma questo ne era il senso, non dimenticato allora né poi: che appunto perché il Lager è una gran macchina per ridurci a bestie, noi bestie non dobbiamo diventare; che anche in questo luogo si può sopravvivere, e perciò si deve voler sopravvivere, per raccontare, per portare testimonianza; e che per vivere è importante sforzarsi di salvare almeno lo scheletro, l'impalcatura, la forma della civiltà. Che siamo schiavi, privi di ogni diritto, esposti a ogni offesa, votati a morte quasi certa, ma che una facoltà ci è rimasta, e dobbiamo difenderla con ogni vigore perché è l'ultima: la facoltà di negare il nostro consenso. (Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, OI: 35)”*

Parallela al contenuto di questa parte del libro, poi, è la lirica incipitaria, Shema, perentorio monito³⁴ che avvisa il lettore di espletare il suo dovere di uomo e tramandare la memoria di quanto è successo durante la Shoah: “Meditate che questo è stato: / Vi comando queste parole. / Scolpitele nel vostro cuore / Stando in casa andando per via, / Coricandovi alzandovi; / Ripetetele ai vostri figli” (Primo Levi, *Se questo è un uomo*, OI: 2). Il messaggio di Levi, dunque, si carica in questi passi di un notevole fine etico, per il quale “ricordare è un dovere”; insomma viene funzionalizzato secondo i fini del suo portatore ed inizia a far parte di un preciso piano etico e morale. Questa struttura, infine, poggia sul ricordo del tempo passato rammemorato nel presente e fornisce un valido insegnamento riguardante il futuro³⁶, facendo di Levi sì un “memorioso”, ma anch'egli sui generis.

6. Analisi

E' un testo autobiografico che viene scritto di getto, sull'onda dei ricordi della terribile esperienza vissuta. Levi mette in luce come in un contesto di simile crudeltà ogni prigioniero sia ferocemente solo e veda dissolversi i principi della convivenza civile e delle regole morali.

La narrazione segue in ordine cronologico le tappe cruciali dell'esperienza del Lager a decorrere dal febbraio 1944 al gennaio 1945. L'ordine con cui sono stati scritti i 17 capitoli non è stato dettato da una successione logica ma piuttosto da una necessità "*di urgenza*", per esempio: l'ultimo capitolo, "*Storia di dieci giorni*", venne scritto per primo. Nonostante questo impeto d'urgenza l'opera *Se questo è un uomo* ha una scrittura chiara e composta, di grande forza comunicativa.

E' un testo che è stato definito "*racconto commentato*" in quanto si sviluppa su una alternanza di narrazione e riflessione:

- (i) **Narrazione:** la descrizione pone particolare rigore nell'aderire ai fatti e nell'oggettività;
- (ii) **Riflessione:** l'esposizione dei fatti, che non cade mai nel patetico o nel macabro, viene commentata dall'autore-testimone nel tentativo di capire le ragioni che stanno alla base degli orrori raccontati.

L'autore vuole capire e come un naturalista cerca di analizzare scientificamente quel nuovo mostruoso ambiente, le percosse senza ragione, il trattamento da schiavi, gli ordini urlati in una lingua ai più incomprensibile, la selezione per le camere a gas, la guerra di tutti contro tutti, la sopraffazione. Comprendere fino in fondo non è possibile e Levi concludendo l'opera non può che affermare l'impossibilità di capire ed anzi sottolinea che forse è giusto che sia così, "*perché comprendere è quasi giustificare*".

7. Stile

Lo stile è conciso e asciutto, senza compiacimenti descrittivi ed abbandoni emotivi, nonostante la drammaticità dell'argomento. Il linguaggio semplice e comunicativo è proprio di chi vuole, più che esprimere un giudizio, trasmettere il messaggio ad un vasto pubblico e creare un rapporto diretto con il lettore. Alle parti narrative-descrittive si intercalano a volte brevi pause riflessive sulla condizione di annullamento della dignità di questi uomini a cui è stato tolto tutto, identità, ricordi, pensieri, opinioni.

Il lessico è accurato e fa ricorso anche termini tecnici e vocaboli in lingua tedesca. In particolare le espressioni in tedesco indicano solitamente i comandi impartiti all'improvviso in modo feroce e mettono in rilievo lo straniamento e lo stato di allerta continuo patito dai prigionieri che dovevano eseguire ordini imprevedibili e incomprensibili. Il narratore è interno e onnisciente, è sia personaggio che voce narrante.

L'uso del presente storico e di avverbi deittici (*ora, adesso, eccomi, ecc*) hanno lo scopo di attualizzare il racconto (descrivere gli avvenimenti nel momento in cui accadono) ed anche testimoniare che l'esperienza del lager per chi lo ha vissuto continua ad incombere.

Il ricorso al polisindeto (uso ripetuto di congiunzioni all'interno della stessa frase) vuole esprimere l'incalzare dei ricordi e delle sensazioni provate dai personaggi. Le figure retoriche a cui Levi ricorre più di frequente sono: le anafore, le enumerazioni, le iterazioni e le anadiplosi, utilizzate per scandire le varie fasi della realtà descritta.

17 CAPITOLI: Capitolo I - Il Viaggio; Capitolo II - Sul fondo; Capitolo III - Iniziazione; Capitolo IV - Ka-Be; Capitolo V - Le nostre notti; Capitolo VI - Il lavoro; Capitolo VII - Una buona giornata; Capitolo VIII - Al di qua del bene e del male; Capitolo IX - I sommersi e i salvati; Capitolo X - Esame di chimica; Capitolo XI - Il canto di Ulisse; Capitolo XII - I fatti dell'estate; Capitolo XIII - Ottobre 1944; Capitolo XIV - Kraus; Capitolo

XV – Die drei Leute vom Labor; Capitolo XVI – L'ultimo; Capitolo XVII – Storia di dieci giorni.

8. Le funzioni della memoria nella narrazione autobiografica di Levi

L'autore torinese traccia numerosi paralleli tra il suo mestiere di chimico e la sua attività letteraria e descrive la scrittura come «uno strumento [...] fatto per pesare, per dividere, per verificare» (Levi, 2002, 147). In questo contesto, considera la memoria la materia prima per la scrittura, da trattare non diversamente da materie chimiche: scrivere è un 'produrre', anzi un trasformare: chi scrive trasforma le proprie esperienze in una forma tale da essere accessibile e gradita al 'cliente' che leggerà. Le esperienze (nel senso vasto: le esperienze di vita) sono dunque una materia prima [...]. Ora, le cose che ho viste, sperimentate e fatte nella mia precedente incarnazione sono oggi, per me scrittore, una fonte preziosa di materie prime (Levi, 1998, 12–13).

I ricordi sono, dunque, sottoposti a un'elaborazione in vista della loro trasmissione al lettore. Nella teoria di Lejeune, il «contratto di lettura» è un elemento fondamentale che permette la definizione dell'autobiografia in quanto «genere *contrattuale*»: si tratta di un «contratto implicito o esplicito proposto dall'autore al lettore, contratto che determina il modo di lettura del testo». Pertanto, l'autobiografia si definisce come «un modo di lettura e insieme un tipo di scrittura» (Lejeune, 1986, 47–49).

Levi sente l'urgenza di raccontare quanto ha vissuto ad Auschwitz e scrive la sua prima opera per liberarsi interiormente dal ricordo del trauma che è, esso stesso, traumatico (Levi, 1991, 14). Nei suoi compagni di prigionia osserva lo stesso bisogno di trasmettere le proprie esperienze, «di fare gli 'altri' partecipi» (Levi, 1989a, 9). Fra i bisogni elementari egli annovera «tornare; mangiare; raccontare» in un verso della poesia *Alzarsi* (Levi, 1984, 16), scritta subito dopo il suo ritorno da Auschwitz in un momento in cui, spiega, «ero ancora sotto trauma e sognavo di notte (e qualche volta anche di giorno) di ritornare in campo» (Poli, Calcagno, 2007, 205). In quel periodo scriveva «disordinatamente pagine su pagine dei ricordi che mi avvelenavano» (Levi, 1994, 156).

Per Levi, il ricordo si crea sulla base dell'osservazione di quanto succede nel campo di concentramento. L'autore dice di aver trascorso il periodo della prigionia in uno stato d'animo particolarmente vivace che gli permise di osservare attentamente il suo ambiente:

Ricordo di aver vissuto il mio anno di Auschwitz in una condizione di spirito eccezionalmente viva. Non so se questo dipenda dalla mia formazione professionale, o da una mia insospettata vitalità, o da un istinto salutare: di fatto, non ho mai smesso di registrare il mondo e gli uomini intorno a me, tanto da serbarne ancora oggi un'immagine incredibilmente dettagliata. Avevo un desiderio intenso di capire, ero costantemente invaso da una curiosità che ad alcuni è parsa addirittura cinica, quella del naturalista che si trova trasportato in un ambiente mostruoso ma nuovo, mostruosamente nuovo (Levi, Roth, 1994, 244). Con un atteggiamento pressoché scientifico, l'autore si adoperava per imprimere nella sua memoria i fenomeni osservati, creare dei ricordi e, se fosse sopravvissuto, trasmettere l'esperienza che stava vivendo. Mentre lavorava in un laboratorio, negli ultimi mesi della prigionia, aveva a disposizione un quaderno sul quale faceva degli appunti che subito distruggeva perché era troppo pericoloso scrivere. L'autore spiega: «sapevo che non avrei potuto conservarli. Non era

materialmente possibile. [...] Non avevamo niente, [...] non c'era modo di conservare nulla. Se non nella memoria».

Di fronte alla disumanizzazione, la memoria può essere portatrice della cultura e ricordarsi può significare rivendicare la propria identità. In uno dei capitoli più noti di *Se questo è un uomo*, *Il canto di Ulisse*, il protagonista recita versi dell'*Inferno* dantesco a un compagno con cui si sta recando nelle cucine a prendere la zuppa. Nei ricordi letterari del giovane Primo ci sono delle lacune irreparabili e vengono a galla frammenti non utilizzabili, per cui egli si dichiara disposto a rinunciare alla zuppa pur di poter ricordare i versi mancanti (Levi, 1989a, 102). Ne *I sommersi e i salvati*, l'autore commenta così il modo in cui è narrato l'episodio: Avrei dato veramente pane e zuppa, cioè sangue, per salvare dal nulla quei ricordi, che oggi, col supporto sicuro della carta stampata, posso rinfrescare quando voglio e gratis, e che perciò sembrano valere poco. Allora e là, valevano molto. Mi permettevano di ristabilire un legame col passato, salvandolo dall'oblio e fortificando la mia identità. Mi convincevano che la mia mente, benché stretta dalle necessità quotidiane, non aveva cessato di funzionare. Mi promuovevano, ai miei occhi ed a quelli del mio interlocutore. Mi concedevano una vacanza effimera ma non ebete, anzi liberatoria e differenziale: un modo insomma di ritrovare me stesso.

Conclusione

In un discorso pronunciato in apertura di un convegno svoltosi nel 2016, Pietro Grasso, l'allora presidente del Senato della Repubblica Italiana, riconobbe nella memoria l'«elemento decisivo del nostro essere» (Grasso, 2016). Nella poetica leviana, la narrazione sul filo della memoria è mirata a rivendicare la dignità delle vittime e a preservarne il ricordo, nonostante la sua problematicità e i limiti intrinseci dei quali l'autore si dimostra pienamente cosciente. Ci piace concludere con le sue parole: «la perfezione è delle vicende che si raccontano, non di quelle che si vivono» (Levi, 1994, 219).

Bibliografia

- Calvino, I., Presentazione, in: *Il sentiero dei nidi di ragno*, Milano 2002.
Levi, P., *Ad ora incerta*, Milano 1984.
Levi, P., *I sommersi e i salvati*, Einaudi, Torino 1991.
Levi, P., *Se questo è un uomo*, in: *Se questo è un uomo*, *La tregua*, Torino 1989a. Levi, P., *Il sistema periodico*, Einaudi, Torino 1994.
Levi, P., *L'altro mestiere*, Einaudi, Torino 1998.
Levi, P., *L'asimmetria e la vita, articoli e saggi 1955–1987* (a cura di Belpoliti, M.), Einaudi, Torino 2002.
Levi, P., *La tregua*, in: *Se questo è un uomo*, *La tregua*, Torino 1989b. Levi, P., *Tutti i racconti* (a cura di Belpoliti, M.), Einaudi, Torino, 2005.

MÉMOIRE, OUBLI ET IDENTIFICATION (PROJECTIVE) DANS SI J'ÉTAIS VOUS... DE JULIEN GREEN

Mirela-Sanda SĂLVAN*

Abstract: *Julien Green's novel Si j'étais vous... presents a series of avatars through which the central character, Fabien, passes in search of what he believes to be an identity superior to his own. Prey to a thought that runs through all of us at times - that the lives of others would be preferable to our own - he borrows the existence of other human beings to live, for a short time, in their bodies and souls. We are going to analyze this metamorphosis using concepts from psychoanalytic theory, the most important of which is projection. Projective identification - another controversial concept in psychoanalytical theory - will take us back to the work of Melanie Klein and her vision of the stages of human psychic development. Human identity remains an enigma that we never stop questioning, in the hope of gaining a better understanding of life in order to live it better.*

Keywords: *identity; psychoanalysis; projection; projective identification*

Quand il a pensé pour la première fois à écrire le roman qui fait l'objet de notre analyse, Julien Green était un jeune étudiant à l'Université de Virginie. Il n'était pas content de lui-même, ni de sa vie en général, et se retrouvait souvent en proie à l'envie de la vie des autres, qu'il considérait désirable pour être plus épanouie et plus heureuse. Comme il lui arrivait d'envier des personnes beaucoup plus riches, plus belles ou avec un sort significativement différent du sien, acquérir les qualités, les biens ou les atouts des gens en question était plutôt illusoire. Ce qui n'était pas possible dans la réalité pour le jeune étudiant sera pourtant possible pour le personnage de son livre, Fabien, qui traversera, pendant trois jours, trois métamorphoses identitaires. Il lui sera possible de se transformer en quiconque il voudra et de jouir de la vie de cette personne avec tous les avantages que la sienne lui refuse. Cette expérience répond à des questions que nous nous posons tous, surtout quand nous avons l'impression que la vie nous refuse des qualités, des expériences ou des ressources dont elle comble les autres.

Le personnage de Julien Green aura la chance de devenir cet autre enviable avec qui la vie a l'air d'avoir été plus généreuse. Fabien Fabien pourra découvrir la réponse à des questions qu'on s'est sans doute tous posés lorsqu'on a croisé des gens plus fortunés ou qui nous ont intrigués d'une manière ou d'une autre : « Qui est-ce ? Que pense-t-il ? Où va-t-il ? Est-il heureux ? » (Green, J., 1993/1947 : 9).

La question qui est à l'origine du livre de Julien Green n'est sûrement pas originale. Le bonheur a pu se présenter sur des visages divers à travers les siècles. La philosophie, la religion ou le bon sens ont essayé de le définir pour donner des repères aux gens et les définitions ont pu être diverses et variées. En dehors des dogmes ou théories, dans l'esprit de

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, mirelasalvan@gmail.com

l'homme commun, le bonheur ne saurait se définir que par comparaison à celui d'un autre être humain, à ce qu'il a / est.

Julien Green, qui transmet ses tourments à son personnage Fabien, se demande pourquoi il était lui-même et non une autre personne. L'auteur ne prétend pas déchiffrer l'énigme de l'identité humaine, il déclare d'ailleurs qu'il est convaincu que tout être humain est prisonnier de sa personnalité et que les choses ne sauraient pas être différentes. Le dénouement se fait dans une clé religieuse, un peu forcée on dirait, par rapport au style du roman. Chacun sa croix, semble affirmer l'auteur, au-delà des lignes de son livre. C'est d'ailleurs le diable qui a attiré le jeune Fabien dans cette expérience où ce pouvoir incroyable – de réussir à se transformer en quiconque lui plaît – lui est dévolu.

A la fin du livre, Fabien regagne son identité initiale qui semble préférable à toutes les autres qu'il avait réussi à expérimenter. C'est d'ailleurs le point de vue du romancier, partagé explicitement dans la Préface de 1970 :

A mesure qu'on avance en âge, ce désir bizarre de déménager corps et âme s'atténue. Si peu satisfait du personnage qu'on joue dans le monde, on se méfie de ce que cache la tranquillité apparente du voisin. Car, dans toute vie humaine, il y a un drame, et la plupart du temps il demeure secret. Derrière cette façade sereine, que de difficultés nous n'entrevoions même pas [...] ! Le plus sage est de s'accepter soi-même, tel qu'on est, avec les humiliantes limites qui dérivent de la faute originelle. (Green, J., *op. cit.* : 10)

Rester toujours le même peut s'avérer triste, ennuyeux, voire désespérant. C'est de cette angoisse qu'il s'agit dans le livre qui fait l'objet de la présente analyse. Une double angoisse, qui est la conséquence du fait de vivre dans une double prison : tout d'abord dans celle de son destin individuel auquel il nous est impossible de nous échapper et ensuite de vivre cette existence angoissante sous la menace permanente de la mort : « Toutefois ce qui lui causait plus d'ennuis qu'on ne saurait dire, c'était que, jusqu'à sa mort, il serait toujours la même personne et que, tout le temps qu'elle passerait sur terre, son âme demeurerait attachée au même corps avec tous les inconvénients que cela suppose. » (Green, J., *op. cit.* : 34).

Identification et identification projective

Le concept d'identification est une notion de base en psychanalyse qui a été initialement introduite par Freud. L'identification était considérée une conséquence de l'introjection et, dans cette perspective, une étape normale du développement précoce de l'individu. Une définition claire du concept peut être retrouvée dans le *Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse*, volume repère pour ceux qui s'intéressent au domaine : « Processus psychologique par lequel un sujet assimile un aspect, une propriété, un attribut de l'autre et se transforme, totalement ou partiellement, sur le modèle de celui-ci. La personnalité se constitue et se différencie par une série d'identifications. » (Laplanche, J., Pontalis, J.-P., 2011 : 187). Dans cette perspective positive, l'identification représente un processus incontournable et constitutif de tout être humain. Elle lie à un objet d'amour ou de rivalité ou aux deux à la fois – quand il s'agit de l'ambivalence par rapport à l'objet.

Freud indique que l'identification vise dans certains cas un trait singulier de la personne et non pas son ensemble. C'est la logique qui va présider aux identifications de

Julien, qui change son identité pour une autre dont un seul attribut l'intéresse, au détriment des autres qu'il ignore et qui, finalement, vont systématiquement détruire ses illusions.

On va passer de la perception générale et plutôt commune du concept à l'une de ses formes bien particulière, l'identification projective, conceptualisée initialement par Melanie Klein. Dans sa perception, cette forme d'identification traduit un mécanisme qui se manifeste par des fantasmes où « le sujet introduit sa propre personne (his self) en totalité ou en partie à l'intérieur de l'objet pour lui nuire, le posséder et le contrôler. » (Laplanche, J., Pontalis, J.-P., *op. cit.* : 187) Très souvent, l'identification projective telle qu'elle est définie par Melanie Klein (d'autres psychanalystes reprendront ultérieurement cette notion dans des perspectives qui s'éloignent de son acception initiale) implique un côté agressif de la relation à l'objet.

Nous pensons que cette agressivité se retrouve dans toutes les métamorphoses vécues par Fabien. Il s'empare de manière envieuse et destructive de l'identité et du corps de la personne qui possède quelque chose qu'il n'a pas, qu'il s'agisse de la prospérité matérielle, de la vigueur ou de la santé en tant qu'attributs de la jeunesse, de la sagesse ou de l'amour.

Dans la perception kleinienne, l'identification projective se trouve en étroite liaison avec des processus de développement qui se déroulent dans une étape précoce de la vie, pendant les trois premiers mois de la vie de l'individu. A cette époque-là, le Moi n'est pas encore constitué, il est très fragile et pour survivre il se sert de mécanismes de défense. On appelle ces mécanismes de défense primitifs ; parmi les plus utilisés dans cette étape archaïque de la vie on compte le clivage, la négation, l'idéalisation, le contrôle omnipotent.

Toutes les métamorphoses de Fabien finissent par une déception, voire par un ressentiment envers la personne dont il a volé l'identité. La conclusion sur laquelle il tombe toujours est que celui qu'il enviait et à la vie de qui il aspirait est en fait quelqu'un de décevant. Si les traits qu'il admire chez ces personnes sont vraiment désirables, il en reste d'autres qui ne sont pas aussi attractifs. Il finit par vouloir redevenir lui-même, celui qu'il était au tout début, avant sa première transformation en M. Poujars, son patron dont il enviait la fortune.

Le parcours de Fabien va de « Il ne m'arrive jamais rien [...] Cela ne fait pas une vie. Encore moins une jeunesse. » (Green, J., *op. cit.* : 19) au désir ardent de revenir à ce *rien*, préférable au *tout* trompeur de la vie des autres apparemment beaucoup mieux que lui dans leurs existences.

Internalisation des parents

Fabien n'a pas de père, celui-ci est mort en laissant des dettes importantes, ce qui a forcé le jeune homme à travailler très tôt. Malgré la rancune que Fabien porte à son géniteur, il y a des indices qui, interprétés en clé psychanalytique, pourraient faire penser à un héritage symbolique plutôt lumineux laissé par ce père.

Quand il travaille, Fabien tient souvent sur son bureau la montre d'or de son père, qui lui induit un sentiment d'espoir et de confiance dans la vie. Cette montre a une opulence incontestable, elle brille et ses chiffres clairement imprimés donnent à Fabien un sentiment de calme, d'ordre et de sécurité.

Dans son article sur l'identification, où elle analyse le roman de Julien Green, Melanie Klein (Klein, M., 2008) associe à la montre des traits de nature paternelle, tels le sérieux et l'ordre. La pièce où Fabien travaille transmet ces sentiments et Fabien les ressent à

son tour. La montre représenterait, selon Melanie Klein, le bon père internalisé par Fabien. Même s'il est mort il y a plus de cinq ans, il continue d'exister à l'intérieur de son fils, à qui il a réussi à transmettre, durant sa vie, des sentiments, des expériences et des repères qui continuent d'exister après sa mort.

Le père se présente aussi sous un jour moins lumineux, dans la personne du diable qui tente Fabien. Celui-ci représente une autre image paternelle internalisée, cette fois celle du mauvais père. La peur que le jeune homme ressente en compagnie de Brittomart suggère la peur éprouvée devant le mauvais objet qui peut faire intrusion, contrôler, disposer à son gré de la personne de Fabien.

Brittomart peut illustrer non seulement l'autorité paternelle – bien que l'association soit plus facile à faire dans ce sens –, il peut également représenter la mère, de même que la manière dans laquelle le jeune a internalisé, à une étape précoce de la vie, la relation entre ses deux parents. S'il commence à se détester et à vouloir s'échapper à son identité, c'est aussi et surtout à cause des parties problématiques de l'identité de ses parents que Fabien s'est approprié durant la première partie de sa vie. Cette hypothèse pourrait faire penser à une accusation faite aux parents, elle ne l'est toutefois pas.

Les traits variés et parfois contradictoires du père, comme ceux de la mère, sont considérés une normalité dans la théorie psychanalytique, tout comme l'ambivalence des sentiments de l'enfant envers ses géniteurs.

Dans son analyse du roman de Green (Klein, M., *op. cit.*), Melanie Klein pense qu'il y a une sorte de théâtre intérieur qui se déroule dans l'esprit de Fabien, où l'on joue des disputes sans fin qu'il finit par ne plus supporter. Il s'agirait de ses parents qui se disputaient et qui avançaient des prétentions à la fois impossibles et contradictoires envers leur fils. Ce faisant, il se constituent en persécuteurs internes. En langage psychanalytique, quand les parents sont internalisés de cette manière persécutoire, ils se constituent en mauvais objets internes. Avec la conséquence pour l'enfant qu'il commence à se détester, à se sentir sans valeur et très souvent coupable pour des fautes difficiles à nommer.

Images de la mère

L'identification projective renvoie – on l'a déjà mentionné – à l'âge de trois-quatre mois du petit enfant, époque où la plupart des enfants sont dépendants du sein maternel qui nourrit et maintient en vie. On peut analyser certains fragments du roman en mettant en parallèle le comportement adulte de Fabien et ses métamorphoses avec des étapes plus anciennes de la vie du personnage qui – on peut supposer – on mis les assises des conduites adultes.

Il y a un épisode où Fabien-Fruges achète un petit pain chez une très belle boulangère ; celle-ci suscite en lui toute une série d'émotions qu'on pourrait attribuer à une relation maternelle. C'est ce que fait Melanie Klein dans l'article sur l'identification (Klein, M., *op. cit.* : 265). Dans les détails de cette rencontre, elle identifie le désir de Fabien pour le sein maternel, suivi par une forte frustration. On peut penser même à la haine, car son désir de piétiner le petit pain exprimerait – selon la même Melanie Klein – des attaques sadiques anales. Ces sentiments déclenchés par la voluptueuse boulangère seraient adressés à une mère internalisée. Fabien n'est plus lui-même quand il emprunte les identités des autres, il y a

toutefois quelque chose de sa personne qui se conserve à travers toutes ces identités provisoires. Et lorsque ce brin d'identité subjective disparaît, son comportement illustre des émotions et des expériences qui évoquent des expériences communes à tous les individus.

Douloureusement attiré par la belle boulangère, Fabien supporte difficilement de voir qu'il y a un homme à côté de celle-ci, le plus probablement son mari. Il commence à imaginer les relations intimes que les deux pourraient entretenir, cet épisode pouvant être l'illustration de la scène originaire internalisée par Fabien dans un passé plus éloigné. L'avidité se manifeste dans la relation du bébé à sa mère et elle est d'autant plus vorace quand le petit est frustré par sa mère. Melanie Klein considère que la frustration renforce le désir avide de gratification. Les désirs de Fabien sont très impérieux en présence de la boulangère, qui a les attributs réunis d'une mère et d'une femme parfaites. La manière dans laquelle il se sent en présence de la boulangère, tout comme après être sorti de la boulangerie, la haine, le désir de détruire le petit pain – illustrant à son tour l'image du sein maternel – valident l'hypothèse d'une frustration importante subie par le jeune homme dans la relation avec sa mère lorsqu'il était un tout petit bébé.

Une autre hypostase de la relation à la mère est illustrée lors de la métamorphose de Fabien dans le criminel Esménard. La relation de Fabien-Esménard avec Berthe met en scène les pulsions infantiles de détruire la mère. Berthe est l'illustratrice de la femme promiscue, à l'opposée de la femme-mère pure, qui doit être vénérée.

Une autre image de la mère se retrouve dans la personne de la vieille femme qui, dans sa petite boutique, cache des cartes illustrées obscènes derrière d'autres produits. Cet arrangement est très suggestif de ce qu'on appelle en psychanalyse la scène originaire – dont l'enfant a l'intuition, mais qui reste toujours cachée à ses yeux.

La relation que Fabien entretient avec toutes ces femmes durant ses métamorphoses met en évidence l'ambivalence des sentiments de l'enfant envers sa mère ; il traverse une plage très large de vécus, allant de la haine, du mépris et de la dévalorisation, à l'amour fou et à l'idéalisation.

Le sentiment qu'il n'a pas de valeur, que sa vie ne mérite pas d'être vécue, la dépression qui s'empare de Fabien le poussent à chercher une solution. Son avidité de s'approprier ce que les autres ont et lui a été refusé, l'envie pour les possessions matérielles, intellectuelles ou spirituelles des autres représentent sa manière de faire face à son vide intérieur et à la dépression qu'il vit. L'identification projective le sauve, pour ainsi dire, d'un destin qui lui apparaît comme invivable.

Melanie Klein considère que la haine, l'envie et l'avidité représentent les moteurs des fantasmes agressifs. Dans *Si j'étais vous...* Fabien expérimentent toutes ces émotions qui le poussent à vouloir l'identité et la vie des autres. Il y a une avidité énorme dans son comportement qui n'est presque jamais accompagnée de réflexion. Car l'identification projective représente un processus qui caractérise le développement humain dans une étape précoce de la vie – la période où le bébé a entre trois et quatre mois –, où son Moi est fragile et la pensée réflexive qui pourrait tenir compte de l'autre et de ses besoins n'est pas encore constituée.

D'ailleurs, à suivre le fil de ses métamorphoses, on peut voir que les choix des identités se font compte tenu de besoins plutôt primaires. Fabien semble chercher des gens plus heureux que lui sans pouvoir vraiment dire comment se décline ce bonheur. Il lui est

difficile de se sentir heureux au bureau, à classer des fiches, submergé par ses feuilles de calcul et dans la compagnie de deux hommes plutôt gris. Il a l'intuition du bonheur des autres, mais son image dans sa tête reste plutôt floue : « Pendant qu'il classait des fiches, des hommes et des femmes plus heureux que lui se promenaient et riaient au soleil. » (Green, J., *op. cit.* : 45).

La transformation en son patron est sa première métamorphose réelle, après une première tentative échouée d'emprunter l'identité d'un serveur. Pourquoi M. Poujars ? Parce qu'il est riche et cela semble suffire ; il s'agit seulement de satisfaire ses besoins du moment. Ebloui par le pouvoir que Brittomart lui avait donné, Fabien ne sait qui choisir : « Tout lui appartenait ; il n'avait qu'un nom à dire et quelques syllabes à prononcer correctement dont le sens, du reste, lui échappait ; et dans l'impatience où il était de mettre ce don à l'épreuve, il se mit à courir à la recherche de la première personne qui lui parut heureuse, mais surtout riche, car il avait faim. » (Green, J., *op. cit.* : 72).

On peut suspecter une certaine ironie du romancier à l'égard de son personnage qui a l'air de préférer la richesse au bonheur, pour la simple raison qu'il a faim. Dans la même logique que nous avons empruntée et qui fait du personnage de Green un illustrateur parfait de l'identification projective, ce n'est pas par hasard qu'il se conduit de cette manière. Fabien a le comportement du bébé qui est avide du sein de la mère, dont il est dépendant pour vivre ; il ferait donc tout pour l'avoir, pour le dévorer, pour se nourrir. On peut dire que Fabien ne fait autre chose quand il choisit de vivre la vie de M. Poujars ; mais une fois la faim apprivoisée, il se pose d'autres questions quant à l'existence de son patron qui n'est pas vraiment brillante. « Je me demande s'il était aimé » (Green, J., *op. cit.* : 78) est une pensée qui vient à l'esprit de Fabien un peu malgré lui et qui fait référence au plus grand souhait de chaque être humain, celui d'être aimé.

Ce désir est d'ailleurs le premier que Brittomart nomme lorsqu'il essaye de séduire Fabien : « Vous êtes-vous jamais vu aimé, riche, vainqueur du monde ? » (Green, J., *op. cit.* : 64). Dans l'ordre des tentations, ce n'est pas la richesse qui occupe la première place, mais l'amour, pour être plus important et plus difficile à acquérir.

Bibliographie

- Athanassiou-Popesco, C., *L'envie*, Editions Popesco, Paris, 2007.
Green, J., *Si j'étais vous...*, Fayard, Paris, 1993/1947.
Klein, M., *Invidie și recunoștință*, Opere complete 2, Editura Trei, București, 2008.
Laplanche, J., Pontalis, J.-P., *Vocabulaire de la psychanalyse*, PUF, Paris, 2011 (3^e tirage).
Orășanu, B., *Biografia unui concept psihanalitic : identificarea proiectivă*, Editura Universității Titu Maiorescu / Editura Hamangiu, București, 2016.

LE SOUVENIR DANS L'ŒUVRE DJEBARIENNE - APPROCHE LITTÉRAIRE ET DIDACTIQUE -

Adelina-Elena SORESCU *
Valentin CREȚU**

Abstract: *The perspective on the literary work of the francophone writer, Assia Djébar (1936-2015), from the point of view of memory as a literary theme, can be oriented towards didactics in order to develop the skills of comprehension and writing. The selection of novel excerpts aims for the literary side and the didactic approach (A2-B2). The purpose of this work aims the usefulness of the Djebarian literary text with a view to familiarize learners with francophone literature in French classes, facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge and practice grammar or vocabulary.*

Keywords: *souvenir; Djebarian; literary; approach; didactics*

1. Contextualisation de l'œuvre djebarienne

L'œuvre djebarienne a pour arrière-plan le passé colonial de l'Algérie et sa construction se heurte aux obstacles liés à l'inclusion des écrivains francophones qui écrivent en français sans avoir nécessairement la nationalité française. La valorisation des écrivains tels Kateb Yacine (1929-1989), Rachid Boudjedra (1941-), Kamel Daoud (1970-) ou Assia Djébar (1936-2015) est assez lente en France. Quant au public lecteur algérien, celui-ci éprouve une forte tendance ethnocentriste. La colonisation française laisse des traces dans l'imaginaire collectif et le choix d'écrire en français s'avère souvent condamnable. Parmi les écrivains mentionnés, Assia Djébar se détache parce que la manière dont elle écrit fait surgir des polémiques, des directions multiples de recherche et sa prise de position dans le champ littéraire francophone témoigne d'une force inconcevable pour une écrivaine.

La littérature francophone devient de plus en plus expressive pendant les dernières décennies. L'une des raisons vise l'expansion coloniale et la diffusion des œuvres des écrivains qui prennent contact avec les valeurs de la société française. Alors, il s'agit de comprendre les enjeux de la *francophonie* et l'impact sur la conscience des lecteurs. Une deuxième raison concerne la *diversité* et l'*interculturalité*, les deux pilotes d'un monde dominé par des ambivalences : *conquérant – vaincu, centre – colonie, identité – altérité*. Ce sont également des directions qui servent à construire des imaginaires dont les auteur(e)s sont profondément connecté(e)s avec les événements historiques. *En Algérie, on parlera, jusqu'à ces dernières années, d'écrivains algériens de langue française, d'expression française ou*

* Université Nationale de Sciences et Technologie POLITEHNICA Bucarest, Centre Universitaire de Pitesti, sac93adelina@yahoo.com

** Université Nationale de Sciences et Technologie POLITEHNICA Bucarest, Centre Universitaire de Pitesti, caesarvalerius@gmail.com.

*même de graphie française, comme si la langue n'était qu'un simple médium pour exprimer une réalité, une sensibilité, un imaginaire, etc., du pays.*¹

Le caractère transdisciplinaire et plurilatéral de l'œuvre djebarienne ressort des interconnexions « littérature – histoire – cinéma – peinture ». Au niveau des romans / des films, celles-ci sont repérables à travers les informations historiques, l'enjeu « mémoire collective – mémoire individuelle », « image – son ». La documentation et les recherches de l'écrivaine témoignent de sa préoccupation scientifique permanente. Ce sont des raisons qui justifient l'intérêt accru pour approfondir son œuvre dans plusieurs directions²: littérature comparée, langues et linguistique, histoire, sociologie et anthropologie, psychologie, science politique, droit, arts du spectacle, éducation et enseignement.

Le style djebarien est influencé par le souvenir d'un passé colonial troublant (le colonialisme français en Algérie : 1830 – 1962, la guerre d'indépendance : 1954 – 1962) et de la condition de l'« entre – deux ». L'oscillation entre les valeurs de la société colonisatrice et celles prônées par les populations colonisées fait surgir des contradictions et des questionnements dont le remède est, le plus souvent, la voie littéraire, journalistique ou cinématographique.

Dans les romans d'Assia Djebar, le souvenir est le thème directement lié aux éléments autobiographiques. Le souvenir facilite le retour vers le passé et la mise en évidence d'une perspective différente des événements marquant la vie de l'écrivaine. À travers le souvenir, on crée un lien entre la littérature et la réflexion philosophique. Le texte devient un prétexte qui fait surgir la sensibilité de celui / celle qui raconte. Explorer la mémoire à travers la réminiscence signifie accéder à l'essentialité du texte littéraire et conserver les moments-clé de la vie de l'individu. Dans ce contexte, l'écriture devient un moyen de redécouverte du passé et elle sert à retracer les souvenirs constituant les étapes d'une existence entière. Le chemin vers la découverte de l'identité personnelle passe par le filtre des valeurs de la communauté, de la tribu. La pudeur vise un double interdit : être vue et regarder. Le voile préserve le corps féminin de l'intrusion ; on peut lui rattacher une fonction apotropaïque. Pour la femme algérienne qui s'engage dans l'acte de l'écriture, le voile signifie le renoncement aux contraintes et aux préjugés afin de faire connaître son message au monde.

Aux yeux de la femme qui s'échappe à un destin prédéfini, le paradigme change en faveur de sa propre destinée :

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| amour paternel contraignant | amour paternel libérateur |
| conformisme | non-conformisme |
| tabous | dévoilement |

¹ Zineb, Ali-Benali, *Ces voix qui en France parlent d'ailleurs de deux corpus : la littérature « beur » et la littérature des enfants de harkis* dans « Langue, littérature et culture françaises en contexte francophone », Actes du Colloque international, Skopje, 12-13 décembre 2011, publié sous la direction de Zvonko Nikodinovski, Skopje 2012, p. 236.

² SUDOC (Système Universitaire de Documentation), <https://www.sudoc.abes.fr/>, consulté le 10 septembre 2024.

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| harem | pensionnat du collège |
| enfermement | liberté |
| devoir | engagement |
| espace familial | espace public |

Cela implique un écart, un détachement nécessaire sans rompre cependant avec l'espace familial et la culture d'origine. C'est seulement le choix de la femme de faire autrement les choses, d'assumer ses propres décisions. L'engagement littéraire est la voie choisie par Assia Djébar afin de surpasser les enjeux de la colonisation française.

Ces voix qui m'assiègent... En marge de ma francophonie (1999) est un ouvrage dont le but est de rendre plus visible l'identité d'Assia Djébar et ses choix. Elle analyse son parcours en relation avec celui des auteurs qui lui précèdent ou des contemporains, algériens ou pas. Elle fait des références au rapport qui existe entre littérature et arts audiovisuels ; elle met en évidence les raisons pour écrire en français. Le genre autobiographique est privilégié et la prise de conscience équivaut à une prise de parole dans le contexte colonial et postcolonial. D'ailleurs, Assia fait la critique de son œuvre et cherche l'essentiel dans l'expérience de la vie quotidienne.

En ce qui concerne l'œuvre romanesque djébarienne, celle-ci peut être organisée par rapport au moment de la parution :

- a) pendant la guerre d'indépendance (1954 – 1962) : *La Soif*, 1957 ; *Les Impatients*, 1958 ;
- b) après l'indépendance de l'Algérie : *Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde*, 1962 ; *Les Alouettes naïves*, 1967 ; *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement*, 1980 ; *L'Amour, la fantasia*, 1985 ; *Ombre sultane*, 1987 ;
- c) pendant la « décennie noire » (1992 – 2002) : *Loin de Médine*, 1991 ; *Vaste est la prison*, 1995 ; *Le Blanc de l'Algérie*, 1995 ; *Oran, langue morte*, 1997 ; *Les Nuits de Strasbourg*, 1997 ; *La femme sans sépulture*, 2002 ;
- d) après la décennie noire : *La disparition de la langue française*, 2003 ; *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père*, 2008.

En vue de notre recherche qui vise l'utilité et la valorisation du souvenir pour le domaine de la didactique, notre sélection s'arrête aux romans suivants : *Les Alouettes naïves*, *Le Blanc de l'Algérie*, *La femme sans sépulture*, *La disparition de la langue française*.

2. L'importance du souvenir dans les romans d'Assia Djébar

Après la contextualisation de l'œuvre djébarienne, nous nous concentrons sur les romans choisis afin de mieux comprendre les connexions entre le souvenir / la mémoire et la trame.

Les Alouettes naïves concerne la période des migrations massives causées par la guerre algéro-française. L'existence des personnages est marquée par des choix radicaux dont les conséquences touchent leur devenir.

La chercheuse Anouchka Stevellia Moussavou Nyama fait une comparaison entre les romans d'Assia Djebar et de l'écrivaine camerounaise, Leonora Miano dont les personnages traversent des expériences traumatiques. Dans un contexte historique troublant, il ne reste rien d'autre que la souffrance et le souvenir des temps *d'antan* :

*Le récit autour de ces deux personnages [Rachid et Amok] nous conduit au fil des pages à découvrir des êtres profondément en souffrance. Une souffrance que l'éloignement du pays qui a été témoin de la cause leur mal être, ne semble pas atténuer. Bien au contraire, la distance invite à se souvenir, les contraignant sans cesse dans un tangage entre l'ailleurs et l'ici, le présent et le passé.*¹

Rachid (personnage masculin du roman *Les Alouettes naïves*) veut oublier² le drame de la guerre qui atteint son village ; lui-même est un ancien participant à la lutte de libération ; il est recherché par les Français. Il doit donc se réfugier en Tunisie. Il essaie pratiquement de fuir son propre drame et d'oublier l'impuissance de ne pas pouvoir changer le déroulement des événements.

L'autobiographie valorise le souvenir et l'écriture, en général, se produit sous l'influence des sensations, du rêve, des évocations.

Le Blanc de l'Algérie est le roman dont la trame oscille entre les événements troublants des années 1990 et ceux de la guerre d'indépendance. D'ailleurs, le souvenir et le rêve servent à retracer la mémoire des *chers disparus*, des *ombres qui murmurent*³ (des amis, des proches, des intellectuels). L'année de publication du roman est marquée par des attaques meurtrières et des crises. La prise de parole devient, en même temps, acte de courage et condamnation. Le dialogisme du roman est possible à travers le souvenir dont les marqueurs sont: les questions, les remarques subjectives, les opinions personnelles, les phrases inachevées, les possibles réponses des personnages qui incarnent les disparus.

La commémoration des confrères représente une modalité de lutter contre l'oubli dont la narratrice n'est pas entièrement la victime puisqu'elle construit des dialogues avec les absents, elle se rappelle ou s'imagine des moments passés avec des écrivains, des intellectuels touchés par la mort prématurée. Le contact avec la culture du colonisateur d'autrefois est diminué voire stoppé pendant la période post-coloniale en Algérie. On se concentre sur la reconstruction de la société algérienne fortement ancrée dans ses valeurs nationales.

La femme sans sépulture est un roman centré sur le printemps de l'année 1956 marquée par l'héroïsme d'une guerrière de Cherchell (Césarée – terre natale d'Assia Djebar),

¹ Nyama, Anouchka Stevellia Moussavou, « La représentation de l'expérience inénarrable de la migration », *Cahiers d'études romanes*, no. 36/2018, <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesromanes.7405>, consulté le 28 mars 2024, p. 5.

² L'oubli est un puissant instrument d'adaptation à la réalité, parce qu'il détruit peu à peu en nous le passé survivant qui est en constante contradiction avec elle. – Proust, Marcel, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 1999, p. 411.

³ Djebar, Assia, *La Blanc de l'Algérie*, Éditions Albin Michel, Paris, 1995, p. 17.

Zoulikha. Sa trajectoire existentielle est retracée grâce aux témoignages de ses filles et des autres femmes de la communauté. Dans l'*Avertissement*, on souligne le souci de fidélité et la rigueur de la documentation afin de reconstituer le portrait de cette héroïne. Zoulikha se rallie à la cause de la guerre et elle décide à aider les maquisards, mais on ne trouve jamais son corps après sa mort causée par la torture.

La disparition de la langue française vise les sensations vécues par le personnage masculin qui retourne en Algérie après 20 ans d'émigration et l'expérience de la détention. La seule modalité de renouer avec le passé et avec l'amour est la forme épistolaire : partagé entre le manque et le désir, la peur et la nostalgie, Berkane écrit des lettres à Marise (sa bien-aimée française) tandis que Nadjia est la présence féminine qui lui occupe le présent. L'homme partagé entre la nostalgie du passé et la fascination du présent choisit l'écriture pour exprimer ses sentiments et ses pensées les plus intimes.

Selon le chercheur Stanislas Cantin qui se penche sur la mémoire et la réminiscence lors de son analyse sur Aristote : *quand on dit qu'on se souvient, on ne veut pas signifier par là qu'on voit ou pense quelque chose, mais bien qu'on a déjà senti ou pensé quelque chose.*¹ Ainsi, le souvenir concerne plutôt la sensation ou le sentiment que la situation proprement-dite. C'est également le cas pour Assia Djebar dont la mémoire est comblée par les images de la guerre et l'existence vidée de sens au nom du pouvoir. L'acte d'écrire devient la voie de libération de tous les éléments déclencheurs du souvenir. Le temps joue un rôle essentiel puisque le regard vers le passé a des échos dans la manière de concevoir le présent.

La capacité la plus sollicitée est l'attention : *C'est que les choses auxquelles nous portons une forte attention se gravent davantage dans la mémoire (...).*² Il s'agit d'un processus visant la récupération d'une information floue. Dans son ouvrage, *Qu'est-ce que se souvenir ?* Denis Perrin identifie certains aspects concernant le souvenir : la spécificité, le sujet du souvenir, le rapport avec le temps, la connaissance qui constitue le souvenir. Ainsi, ce processus de « récupération » présume des étapes qu'il faut parcourir. Il en va de même pour l'apprenant qui concentre son attention sur un certain aspect dont il se souvient à un moment précis, dans un contexte spécifique. Alors, la qualité de l'information stockée vise des aspects tels : l'intérêt de l'apprenant, l'analogie, l'impact produit sur sa conscience. Dans ce contexte, le rôle du professeur s'avère magistral : créer ou adapter le matériel didactique (le texte djebarien, par exemple) de sorte que celui-ci « affecte » l'esprit des apprenants, en devenant un stimulus positif pour l'acquisition de nouvelles connaissances ou leur approfondissement.

3. Perspective didactique du souvenir djebarien - applications

Dans le curriculum roumain actuel pour les langues modernes³, et particulièrement pour la langue française, le texte littéraire n'est pas présent, mais on peut l'intégrer dans la classe de FLE pour souligner les domaines thématiques tels *le souvenir*.

¹ Cantin, Stanislas, « La mémoire et la réminiscence d'après Aristote », *Laval théologique et philosophique*, no.1/1955, p. 82, <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019915ar>, consulté le 10 octobre 2024.

² Ibidem, p. 93.

³ <https://rocnec.eu/index.php/dcee-oriz/curriculum-oriz/programe-scolare-front>, Limba franceză, clasa a X-a, L1-L3, p.2

Le souvenir, du point de vue grammatical, concerne les temps verbaux simples¹ ou composés qui ont des valeurs diverses (présentation des faits passés, déjà finis, des actions, activités qui ne finissent pas encore, des actions répétitives, des actions qui finissent avant d'autres actions passées ayant comme thème *le souvenir*²), les actes de langage qui incluent les divers temps verbaux et donnent au thème une valeur didactique en tenant compte des certaines particularités des apprenants: l'âge, le niveau langagier (A1-B2) et les activités proposées par l'enseignant pour développer leurs compétences: compréhension des écrits, expression écrite et, en même temps, expression et interaction orales.

Les textes littéraires sont utilisés comme un prétexte pour inciter les apprenants à la lecture; la littérature représente un élément déclencheur pour construire une communication orale ou écrite cohérente et adaptée aux besoins du contexte (personnel, social etc.).

Pour insérer des fragments littéraires, tels les fragments d'Assia Djebar qui utilise des temps verbaux de la sphère du passé, on doit tenir compte du Curriculum scolaire, de sélectionner des compétences spécifiques, des ressources méthodologiques, matérielles et des moyens, des activités d'apprentissage pour pratiquer et simuler les contextes et des instruments d'évaluation des acquis.

La structure d'une séquence didactique³ valorisant le souvenir comme prétexte pour enseigner aux apprenants l'utilisation des temps verbaux afin de mieux communiquer est la suivante: sensibilisation du public (point d'accès, analogie appropriée⁴), compréhension globale du fragment proposé, compréhension détaillée, renforcement des informations acquises, feedback et évaluation.

En suivant la structure de la séquence didactique, on propose les démarches de projection du contenu littéraire en accord avec la didactique du FLE :

a) Relater des activités au passé – l'imparfait :

Malek gardait comme une mélancolie tandis que l'ami, cette fois, riait de bon cœur. Moi je me rendais compte combien ce premier silence, entre nous, ce jour de 1958 à Paris, était étrangement irréel : il n'y avait pas eu seulement ma raideur (ou plutôt cette distance extérieure assumée tout naturellement), mais aussi cette paralysie du jeune Malek Haddad : il n'avait pas osé venir à moi main tendue, en se présentant, son livre offert pour recevoir alors le mien en échange... Pourquoi cette ankylose de nos respectifs comportements ? Toujours est-il qu'il réveillait soudain cette non-rencontre, alors que, depuis quelque temps, il m'arrivait de le rencontrer dans les rues d'Alger, ou chez des amis ; nos relations semblaient désormais cordiales, d'une courtoisie ordinaire.⁵

¹ Barcelo, Gerard- Joan, Bres, Jacques, *Les temps simples de l'indicatif*, Paris, Ophirys, 2006, p.36.

² Ibidem, p.55.

³ Crețu, Valentin, Sorescu, Adelina-Elena, *Progresser en français*, Ed. Tiparg, Pitești, 2022.

⁴ Gardner, Howard, *Inteligențele multiple- noi orizonturi*, Ed. Sigma, București, 2006.

⁵ Djebar, Assia, *Le Blanc de l'Algérie*, Éditions Albin Michel, Paris, 1995, p. 143.

En suivant la démarche proposée, on va commencer la séquence didactique avec une image d'un garçon qui regarde le soleil à l'aube. On demande aux apprenants d'exprimer des idées sur l'image présentée.

Après ce moment, on demande aux apprenants de lire le fragment et identifier les repères essentiels : *qui ? quand ? où ? comment ? pourquoi ?*

On va renforcer les informations sur l'indicatif imparfait et son importance pour relater des activités passées pas encore finies dans le passé.

L'étape suivante concerne des exercices de complétion, réorganisation de mots pour former des phrases et transformation en utilisant le fragment d'Assia Dejjbar.

Pour assurer le feedback et une évaluation continue, on va leur demander d'imaginer en 5-7 lignes comment on peut continuer le fragment.

b) Relater des activités au passé – le passé composé – l'imparfait :

Je ne me souviens d'aucune de mes paroles. Peut-être n'ai-je rien répondu. Je me souviens que je pleurais, que je n'arrêtais pas de pleurer, cette dernière nuit, à l'hôtel ainsi que le lendemain dans le même car poussiéreux. Depuis, rien ; je n'ai parlé de cette histoire à personne. Quelques mois après, Rachid m'écrivit deux fois et, à chaque fois, en quémandant une réponse, ainsi que ma compréhension, disait-il. J'ai déchiré ces lettres et, cette fois, je n'ai pas pleuré ! (...) Il y a longtemps, reprend-elle, ta mère, Zoulikha, était encore chez elle, la mère de ton amie est venue me voir, voilée de soie blanche, accompagnée de sa belle-sœur. Elle s'inquiétait pour son fils unique, très jeune, mais qui travaillait dans la clandestinité en France.¹

c) Relater des activités au passé – l'imparfait :

Nfissa enfant chérissait en sa mère mille détails qui la distinguaient des autres, dans les réunions féminines. Parce qu'elle était d'une famille de notables de la ville proche, parmi les villageoises du bain elle détonnait par les soins dont elle s'entourait sans affectation et Nfissa (à cinq, six ans, elle paraissait fillette banale dont on ne louait que les yeux trop brillants) en ressentait une vanité de coquette: ainsi Lalla Aicha, en se déshabillant dans la salle recouverte de nattes et de quelques matelas, dédaignait les pagnes de cotonnade que les femmes nouaient sur leur poitrine; non, Lalla Aicha gardait, de son trousseau dont elle parlait et qu'elle détaillait plus de dix ans après son mariage, une multitude de robes comme celles que Nfissa vit plus tard portées par les Occidentales sur les plages.²

Pour travailler sur l'imparfait à travers des activités de compréhension et d'expression autour du fragment extrait de *Les Alouettes naïves* d'Assia Dejjbar, voici quelques propositions d'activités en partant de la compréhension écrite. On va proposer aux apprenants de relire le fragment et souligner tous les verbes conjugués à l'imparfait, identifier

¹ Dejjbar, Assia, *La femme sans sépulture*, Éditions Albin Michel, Paris, 2002, pp. 109-110.

² Dejjbar, Assia, *Les Alouettes naïves*, Éditions Julliard, Paris, 1967, p. 142.

à ce qui ces actions ou états font référence dans le passé (ex. habitudes, descriptions, actions en arrière-plan).

Questions : *Quels sont les détails que Nfissa chérissait à propos de sa mère ? Pourquoi Lalla Aicha se distinguait-elle des autres femmes du bain ?*

Après ce moment, on va leur demander de réécrire le fragment au passé composé pour différencier l'usage de l'imparfait et du passé composé.

Instructions :

Choisissez un extrait du texte où l'imparfait est utilisé.

Transformez les phrases en utilisant le passé composé lorsque cela est approprié (par exemple, pour des actions ponctuelles au lieu de descriptions ou d'habitudes).

Pour entraîner aussi le développement de l'expression orale, on leur propose d'imaginer une scène passée.

Objectif : utiliser l'imparfait pour relater des souvenirs ou des habitudes du passé.

Instructions :

Imaginez que vous êtes Nfissa adulte. Racontez à une amie ce que vous ressentiez et observiez lorsque vous accompagniez votre mère aux bains lorsque vous étiez enfant.

Utilisez l'imparfait pour décrire les actions répétées et les habitudes, ainsi que le cadre (les lieux, les personnes, l'ambiance).

Et pour entraîner la compétence d'expression écrite : Souvenirs d'enfance

Objectif : écrire un texte au passé en utilisant l'imparfait pour des descriptions et des actions répétitives.

Instructions :

Écrivez un texte sur un souvenir d'enfance, comme Nfissa le fait ici avec sa mère. Utilisez l'imparfait pour décrire les lieux, les personnes et les habitudes.

Exemple de consigne :

Racontez un moment particulier où vous observiez quelqu'un qui vous fascinait (un membre de votre famille, un ami etc.). Décrivez ce que rendait cette personne spéciale à vos yeux.

d) Relater une suite d'événements au passé :

Tant de fois, enfant, il [Berkane] aimait se perdre dans cette cohue d'hommes lourds, dans ce magma d'odeurs de fruits et de viandes grillées, de cris et de plaintes des radios, de mélodies d'amour égyptien, à l'infini déchirées ; tant de fois dans l'exil, ensuite, il s'est imaginé que le microcosme de cet univers passé garderait à jamais sa réalité, mais dans quels lieux intacts ? (...) Rues du désir, où les mâles étouffent, tout comme les mômes et les vieillards : hommes dehors, assis, regards plats ou exorbités, qui tuent le temps... Dans les ruelles de la périphérie s'étendait le domaine des Gitans, ou des Italiens émigrés récents ; à l'opposé, du côté du temple protestant, non loin de la synagogue, une foule prolétaire était tout aussi inactive, mais là, les femmes ne se cachaient pas, elles pouvaient aller et venir, même vers l'« autre ville », l'européenne, la ville « des autres » !¹

¹ Djebbar, Assia, *La disparition de la langue française*, Éditions Albin Michel, Paris, 2003, p. 55.

Voici quelques idées d'activités didactiques pour exploiter ce fragment de *La disparition de la langue française* d'Assia Djébar, centré sur la narration d'une suite d'événements au passé.

1. Lecture analytique et compréhension

Objectif : comprendre la structure narrative d'une suite d'événements et analyser le rôle de la mémoire et de l'exil dans le texte.

Activités :

Demander aux apprenants de relire le fragment et d'identifier les verbes au passé. Discuter sur la différence entre les temps utilisés (imparfait, passé composé) et comment ils structurent la narration des souvenirs.

Proposer une analyse de l'opposition entre le passé et le présent de Berkane. Quel rôle joue la ville dans la construction de ce souvenir ?

Demander aux apprenants de mettre en évidence les descriptions sensorielles (odeurs, bruits, sensations) et d'expliquer leur importance dans la représentation des souvenirs.

2. Production écrite : écrire une suite d'événements au passé

Objectif : apprendre à relater une série d'événements en utilisant différents temps du passé.

Activités :

Proposer aux apprenants d'écrire un court texte dans lequel ils relatent une suite d'événements marquants de leur enfance, en suivant la structure du texte de Djébar. Ils doivent utiliser l'imparfait pour les actions répétitives ou continues et le passé composé pour les actions ponctuelles.

Demander aux apprenants de créer une comparaison entre un souvenir d'enfance et leur vie actuelle, en introduisant une réflexion sur la manière dont ils perçoivent les changements.

3. Exercice de transformation de texte

Objectif : employer les temps verbaux au passé pour approfondir la maîtrise grammaticale.

Activités :

Donner aux apprenants un paragraphe du fragment au présent et leur demander de le transformer entièrement au passé (imparfait et passé composé).

Inverser l'exercice : donner un texte au passé et demander aux apprenants de le transformer au présent. Discuter les effets de cette transformation sur la perception du récit.

4. Atelier de discussion : La mémoire et l'exil

Objectif : favoriser une réflexion critique sur les thèmes abordés dans le texte.

Activités :

Organiser une discussion sur la notion de *mémoire* dans le texte. Comment Berkane utilise-t-il ses souvenirs pour maintenir un lien avec son passé ? En quoi l'exil affecte-t-il cette perception ?

Demander aux apprenants de réfléchir à la signification des lieux dans le fragment : pourquoi la distinction entre « la ville européenne » et « l'autre ville » est-elle importante ? Comment cette distinction reflète-t-elle l'identité de Berkane ?

5. Exercice d'expression orale : raconter un souvenir

Objectif : pratiquer l'expression orale en racontant une série d'événements.

Activités :

Demander aux apprenants de raconter un souvenir d'enfance important en utilisant une structure similaire à celle du texte : d'abord, une description sensorielle d'un moment

particulier, suivie d'une réflexion sur ce souvenir dans le présent. Ils doivent utiliser des verbes au passé pour structurer leur récit.

Conclusion

Les activités et les exercices proposés pour chaque fragment de l'œuvre djebarienne représentent des prétextes pour développer le goût des apprenants pour la lecture, la curiosité de connaître de plus en plus sur différents contextes en ce qui concerne chaque histoire, chaque sujet de l'œuvre et s'identifier avec les personnages et transposer dans leur univers familier les événements en leur donnant de la véridicité.

Les outils de grammaire représentent seulement des moyens qui aident les apprenants à exprimer à l'oral / à l'écrit de diverses actions, des activités, des états, des sentiments ou à exprimer des points de vue en utilisant comme arguments les fragments – support et en explorant le souvenir comme thème principal pour une didactique appliquée qui valorise les expériences personnelles des apprenants en classe de FLE.

Bibliographie

- Barcelo, Gerard- Joan, Bres, Jacques, *Les temps simples de l'indicatif*, Paris, Ophirys, 2006.
- Cantin, Stanislas, « La mémoire et la réminiscence d'après Aristote », *Laval théologique et philosophique*, no.1/1955, pp. 81–99.
- Crețu, Valentin, Sorescu, Adelina-Elena, *Progresser en français*, Ed. Tiparg, Pitești, 2022.
- Djebar, Assia, *Le Blanc de l'Algérie*, Éditions Albin Michel, Paris, 1995.
- Djebar, Assia, *La femme sans sépulture*, Éditions Albin Michel, Paris, 2002.
- Djebar, Assia, *Les Alouettes naïves*, Éditions Julliard, Paris, 1967.
- Djebar, Assia, *La disparition de la langue française*, Éditions Albin Michel, Paris, 2003.
- Gardner, Howard, *Inteligențele multiple- noi orizonturi*, Ed. Sigma, București, 2006.
- Nyama, Anouchka Stevellia Moussavou, « La représentation de l'expérience inénarrable de la migration », *Cahiers d'études romanes*, no. 36/2018, pp. 145 – 164.
- Perrin, Denis, *Qu'est-ce que se souvenir ?* Vrin, Paris, 2012.
- Proust, Marcel, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Éditions Gallimard, Paris.
- Zineb, Ali-Benali, *Ces voix qui en France parlent d'ailleurs de deux corpus : la littérature « beur » et la littérature des enfants de harkis*, « Langue, littérature et culture françaises en contexte francophone », Actes du Colloque international, Skopje, 12-13 décembre 2011, sous la direction de Zvonko Nikodinovski, Skopje 2012.
- SUDOC (Système Universitaire de Documentation).
- <https://rocnee.eu/index.php/dcee-oriz/curriculum-oriz/programe-scolare-front>, Limba franceză, clasa a X-a, L1-L3, p.2

TRADUIRE LE DISCOURS JURIDICO-RELIGIEUX : LA REMINISCENCE DANS LE TRANSFERT LINGUISTIQUE

Corina VELEANU*

Abstract : *The study of specialized texts belonging to the legal and religious domains often includes a necessary step, namely that of taking into account their translations, through which law and religion have often regulated societies. The adage 'remember the past to better understand the present' takes on its full meaning here, as going back to the original texts often sheds necessary light on the understanding of subsequent analyses and approaches. Such a return to the cultural and legal origins of the Judeo-Christian world raises the question of duality, or even multiplicity, as the Torah, the Hebrew name for the fundamental text of Judeo-Christian civilization, has translated and adapted equivalents that bear the ideological and cultural traces of the eras in which they were created: Pentateuch, Septuagint, Old Testament, Hebrew Bible. The content of this sacred text, which is also and above all a code of laws, provides information for linguists interested in the discourse of specialized fields in the biblical text, ranging from the creation of the world to the construction of the ark and the tabernacle, from religious rites to the making of incense, from war to medicine, from trade to the resolution of legal disputes, demonstrating a rich and precise terminology that describes the social, cultural, economic and spiritual life of the Jewish people as well as several other ancient populations from the Egyptians to the Persian Empire. Translators and exegetes interested in the biblical text who adopt a comparative reading and analysis approach and analyze the original Hebrew text and its English versions will benefit from a deeper understanding of the text while enriching their cultural and linguistic knowledge.*

Keywords: *specialized languages; translation; discourse*

1. Introduction

L'étude des textes spécialisés appartenant au domaine juridico-religieux comprend un passage obligé, celui qui prend en compte leurs traductions, à travers lesquelles, souvent, le droit et la religion ont réglementé les sociétés. L'adage « se souvenir du passé pour mieux comprendre le présent » prend ici tout son sens, car le retour aux textes originaux éclaire d'une lumière nécessaire la compréhension des analyses et des approches postérieures.

Le terme « réminiscence » sera employé dans cette analyse principalement avec son sens de « mémoire profonde, lointaine, comme venue du fond des âges » (CNRTL) ; il sera question de faire acte de souvenir et ramener à la conscience des sens oubliés dans le transfert linguistique, ainsi que d'explorer les conséquences de ces significations perdues quelque part dans le processus de traduction, ainsi que les motivations et les conséquences de ces pertes.

* CeRLA - Centre de recherche en linguistique appliquée, Université Lumière Lyon2, corina.veleanu@univ-lyon2.fr

Le corpus de travail est constitué de plusieurs textes de traductions bibliques en français allant du XVIII au XXe siècles : la Bible Martin¹ (1744), la Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen² (1831-1839), la Grande Bible de Tours³ (1866), la Bible Darby⁴ (1885), la Bible du Rabbinat⁵ (1899), la Bible Louis Second⁶ (1910), la Bible de Jérusalem⁷ (1956), la Bible Chouraqui⁸ (1974), la Bible TOB - traduction œcuménique⁹ (1975, 2010), la Bible en français courant¹⁰ (1982, 1997), la Bible du Semeur¹¹ (1992, 2015), la Bible catholique¹², la Bible AELF¹³, qui ont été interrogés de manière comparative, ainsi que dans un face-à-face dialogique avec l'original hébraïque.

Un tel retour aux origines culturelles et juridiques de l'espace judéo-chrétien pose sur la table du chercheur la question du double, voire du multiple : d'emblée, l'on constate que le livre fondateur de cet espace culturel, dont le nom originel hébreu, la *Torah* (avec les variantes de translittération *Tora*, *Thora*) provient du verbe *yaroh*, « guider », « enseigner », est connu sous plusieurs noms traduits et adaptés, autant d'équivalents religieux d'une synonymie imparfaite qui portent en eux les traces historiques et culturelles des époques qui les ont vu naître :

- *Pentateuque*, terme attesté en français dans la première moitié du XVe siècle, emprunté au latin ecclésiastique *Pentatheucum* issu du grec Πεντατευχος, « cinq livres », signifiant l'ensemble des cinq premiers livres de la Bible : Genèse, Exode, Lévitique, Nombres, Deutéronome (CNRTL) ;
- *Septante*, terme emprunté au latin populaire **septanta*, « soixante-dix », qui est une altération du latin classique *septuaginta*, aussi connu sous la forme de pluriel « les Septante » et, plus rarement, de singulier, « la Septante », signifiant les soixante-dix (ou soixante-douze) auteurs

¹ David Martin (1639, Revel - 1721, Utrecht), théologien protestant français.

² Samuel Cahen (1796, Metz - 1862, Paris), premier traducteur juif de l'intégralité de la Bible hébraïque en français (1831-1851).

³ La Sainte Bible selon la Vulgate avec commentaires. Traduction : Jean-Jacques Bourassé & Pierre-Désiré Janvier, chanoines de l'église métropolitaine de Tours, approuvée par l'Eglise Catholique, 1866.

⁴ John Nelson Darby (1800, Westminster – 1882, Bornemouth), prédicateur protestant anglais. « La Bible Darby est la traduction française réalisée par J.N. Darby au XIXème siècle à partir des textes originaux hébreux et grecs. Elle est agrémentée de notes, généralement pour donner le sens littéral de termes pour lesquels il a été préféré une formulation française plus explicite. » (cf. *Lueur*)

⁵ Traduction française sous la direction du Grand-Rabbin Zadoc Kahn.

⁶ Louis Segond (1810, Plainpalais – 1885, Genève), pasteur et théologien protestant suisse.

⁷ Une traduction de la Bible en français par trente-trois traducteurs assistés d'une centaine d'exégètes élaborée sous la direction de l'École biblique et archéologique française de Jérusalem, publiée pour la première fois en 1956 par les Éditions du Cerf.

⁸ Traduction française par André Chouraqui, publiée aux Editions du Cerf.

⁹ Traduction en français par des chrétiens de différentes confessions publiée en 1975, révisée en 2010.

¹⁰ Traduction française publiée en 1982 et révisée en 1997, réalisée par une équipe interconfessionnelle, fidèle au sens du texte et respectant ses caractéristiques littéraires.

¹¹ Traduction française dirigée par le bibliste Alfred Kuen, publiée en 1992 et révisée en 2015.

¹² Traduction en français du Chanoine Crampon, édition numérique par Jesusmarie.com

¹³ Traduction française liturgique officielle, présente sur le site de l'Association Épiscopale Liturgique pour les pays Francophones.

de la traduction de la Bible hébraïque en grec ou, par métonymie, la traduction grecque de la Bible ;

- *Vulgate*, « version latine de la Bible à partir du texte hébreu, due à saint Jérôme et reconnue comme officielle dans l'Église catholique depuis le concile de Trente » (CNRTL), du latin *vulgatus*, -a, participe passé du verbe *vulgare*, répandre dans le public, rendre accessible, dérivé du substantif *vulgus*, « le commun des hommes, la foule », par le latin chrétien *vulgata* (*editio*), en parlant de la traduction des Septante ou de sa traduction latine, chez Saint Augustin et Saint Jérôme (cf. CNRTL) ;
- *Ancien Testament*, « ensemble des livres de la Bible qui se rapportent à l'histoire de l'Alliance de Dieu avec le peuple juif. » (*Larousse*) ;
- *Bible*, terme emprunté au latin ecclésiastique *biblia*, livres sacrés, du grec *biblia*, livres, entendue comme « œuvre fondatrice de la culture judéo-chrétienne également appelée l'Écriture (sainte) ou les Écritures » (*Larousse*) ;
- *Bible hébraïque*, « l'Ancien Testament, correspondant à la Bible hébraïque des juifs » (*Larousse*) qui contient trois grandes parties : le Pentateuque (ou *Torah*), les Prophètes (ou *Neviim*) et les Écrits (ou *Ketouvim*).

Ainsi, une première approche étymologique peut informer le lecteur du fait qu'il existe plusieurs livres anciens dont les textes originaux hébraïques ont été traduits d'abord en grec et ensuite en latin par une soixantaine d'érudits et qui aujourd'hui sont généralement connus sous plusieurs noms dont le plus commun et englobant est la *Bible*, suivi par l'*Ancien Testament*, nom fréquemment employé et qui est à la fois plus précis chronologiquement car positionnant le texte dans un temps antérieur, mais erroné linguistiquement, car étant une solution de traduction du terme hébraïque *Torah* obtenue par une adaptation culturelle chrétienne anachronique, une retro-formation sur le modèle du « Nouveau Testament ».

La multiplicité des significations, ainsi que le multilinguisme, sont au cœur du projet juridico-religieux qu'est la *Torah* :

La tradition juive enseigne en effet que lorsque la parole de Dieu s'adressa à Moïse et au peuple d'Israël au Mont Sinaï, la révélation fut polyglotte et polysémique : « Il est écrit : « Le peuple entier voyait les voix » (Exode 20,15) ; le mot « voix » est au pluriel. Rabbi Yo'hanan disait que toute voix sortait et se fractionnait (*nè'hèlak*) en sept voix et ces sept voix en soixante-dix langages (*lachone*) pour que toutes les nations entendent et que chaque nation entende Sa voix dans sa propre langue. (*Tan'houma* sur Exode, simane 25, parag. 5) (Kaufmann, 2019 : 23)

La justice est mêlée à la vie de manière inextricable non seulement dans le texte biblique (« Tu institueras des juges et des magistrats dans toutes les villes que l'Eternel ton Dieu te donne. [...] Justice, justice tu poursuivras, afin que tu vives. » Deutéronome 16 : 18-20), mais aussi dans les langues indo-européennes et les langues sémitiques, comme le montre la racine proto-indo-européenne **h₂ey-* signifiant « force vitale, vie », qui rappelle חַי en hébreu et حَيَاة en arabe, prononcés [haï] et signifiant « la vie », et qui a donné *ius*, *iustus*, en latin, à travers le proto-italique **jowestos* originaire du proto-indo-européen **h₂yew-* (De Vaan, 2008). La justice est également liée aux émotions, car le *noumikos* est là pour limiter le *pathos* et assurer la domination du *logos* dans une société. En outre, la justice reste attachée tout particulièrement à la joie d'une manière terminologiquement évidente en hébreu, à travers le nom du patriarche יִצְחָק Itzakh, symbole de la rigueur et de la justice, dont le nom signifie

« il rira », car sa mère Sara, épouse d'Abraham, rit lorsque l'Eternel lui annonça qu'elle enfanterait en dépit de son grand âge (Genèse 18 : 1-15).

2. La question de la traduction : *errare humanum est ... sed major amicus veritas*

Une interrogation de la base de données *FRANTEXT* avec les items « Bible », « Ancien Testament », « Tora », « septante », « pentateuque », « Thora », « Torah », « Ecritures », « Vulgate » a montré la haute fréquence des occurrences des termes « Bible » et « Ancien Testament » dans tous les corpus utilisés: 20^e siècle : corpus des œuvres du 20^{ème} siècle (sur la période 1900-1999) ; Contemporain : corpus des œuvres de la période contemporaine (1980-aujourd'hui) ; Moderne : corpus des œuvres de la période moderne (1800-1979) ; RL-fr : 1950+ : Corpus de référence pour le Réseau Lexical du Français (RL-fr) : textes à partir de 1950 ; Classique : corpus des œuvres de la période classique (1650-1799) ; Préclassique : corpus des œuvres de la période préclassique (1550-1649) ; Moyen français : corpus des œuvres de la période du moyen français (1300-1549) ; Ancien français : corpus des œuvres antérieures à 1300 (Figure 1).

| Corpus | <i>B</i> | <i>AT</i> | <i>T1</i> | <i>T2</i> | <i>T3</i> | <i>S</i> | <i>P</i> | <i>E</i> | <i>V</i> |
|------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 20 ^e siècle | 1851 | 267 | 134 | 26 | 23 | 77 | 31 | 26 | 74 |
| Contemporain | 589 | 69 | 28 | 39 | 12 | 1 | 4 | 15 | 24 |
| Moderne | 2542 | 309 | 107 | 9 | 36 | 80 | 88 | 28 | 88 |
| RL-fr : 1950+ | 1110 | 147 | 31 | 46 | 24 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 39 |
| Classique | 228 | 105 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 55 | 115 | 100 | 29 |
| Préclassique | 215 | 25 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 35 | 25 | 1 | 0 |
| Moyen français | 139 | 23 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Ancien français | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Figure 1. Occurrences des termes *Bible* (*B*), *Ancien Testament* (*AT*), *Tora* (*T1*), *Torah* (*T2*), *Thora* (*T3*), *Septante* (*S*), *Pentateuque* (*P*), *Ecritures* (*E*), *Vulgate* (*V*) dans la base FRANTEXT.

Toutes ces traductions sont loin du sens réel du terme original qui appartient en hébreu à deux domaines de spécialité : l'enseignement, puisque *torah* veut dire enseigner, transmettre, et le droit, car ce mot signifie aussi loi, les deux provenant du sens concret de la racine trilitère ירה (yod-resheh-hé) signifiant guider, montrer une direction. Se souvenir du double sens du terme *torah* nous aide à retrouver les nuances perdues dans les différentes traductions, ainsi que la relation entre l'enseignement et le droit, l'apprentissage des règles de vie commune et l'organisation de la vie au sein d'une société. Par cette démarche, le traducteur, tout comme l'exégète intéressé par le texte biblique qui adopte une démarche de lecture comparative entre le texte original en hébreu et le texte traduit, bénéficieront d'un approfondissement de leur compréhension textuelle tout en enrichissant leurs connaissances culturelles et linguistiques.

Quant aux multiples traductions de la Bible, elles trahissent le texte-source, tout en nourrissant de vifs débats d'idées :

L'inflation de (tentatives de) traductions traduit l'échec renouvelé et constaté de l'entreprise, plus qu'il n'en atteste un quelconque succès. À cela plusieurs explications. D'une part, comme tout texte, la Bible ne peut se traduire tout à fait exactement sans que le transfert idiomatique dont elle fait l'objet trahisse ou limite le texte-source ; cette limite propre à toute traduction atteint avec la Bible une dimension hyperbolique, si l'on veut bien voir dans la Bible l'Archi-texte, le texte par excellence, de la tradition occidentale. D'autre part, la Bible est au croisement de traditions théologico-religieuses diverses qui puisent en elles des apports et contenus différents, parfois contradictoires ; dès lors, la sacralité du texte suscite non seulement des débats théologiques, mais encore des débats qu'on peut qualifier de proprement idéologiques, soit entre diverses confessions, soit au sein d'une seule et même Église. Bref, qu'il en aille de querelles littéraires ou de débats théologiques, il s'agit toujours d'enjeux passionnels, aux attendus théologiques, littéraires, théoriques, etc., massifs. (Arbib, 2011 : 537-538)

Ce texte considéré saint, présidant aux origines des trois religions monothéistes actuelles - le judaïsme, le christianisme et l'islam - contient une variété de textes, organisés en cinq livres dont les noms traduits s'éloignent également des titres originaux en hébreu : *Béréchit*, littéralement « au commencement » a été traduit par « Genèse » ; *Chémouth*, dont le sens est « noms » a été rendu par « Exode » ; *Wayikra*, qui signifie « et il appela », a été renommé « Lévitique » ; *Bamidbar*, qui veut dire « dans le désert », est connu sous l'intitulé « Nombres » ; *Dévarim*, dont la signification originale est une des plus philosophiques de l'hébreu ancien, ayant un double sens qui établit une simultanéité entre « paroles » et « choses », a été simplement traduit par « Deutéronome », terme emprunté au latin ecclésiastique *deuteronomium*, issu du grec de la Septante *Δευτερονομιον*, composé de *δευτερος*, « deuxième », et *νομος*, « loi » (CNRTL), faisant référence aux secondes lois édictées par Moïse. La perte de sens est considérable, et elle continue de se manifester tout au long du texte traduit.

D'emblée confronté à un vocabulaire spécifique et devant des titres exprimés par des termes si différents, le non-initié risque une première approche marquée par l'opacité, à défaut de comprendre les raisons historiques, extralinguistiques, qui se trouvent à l'origine de cette diversité terminologique :

« La Septante, traduction grecque de la Torah, a opté pour des termes génériques qui sont passés dans la langue française : Genèse, Exode, Lévitique, Nombres et Deutéronome. En fait, ces dénominations se retrouvent dans le Talmud¹ et le Midrach² qui parlent parfois du « livre de la Création du monde » pour la Genèse, de la « Doctrine des prêtres » pour le Lévitique (la tribu de Lévi étant consacrée au

¹ « Le Talmud, littéralement « ce qui est étudié », désigne l'ensemble des discussions rabbiniques autour des lois juives afin de définir les conduites rituelles pour toute la communauté juive. Le Talmud, qui fut rédigé entre le II^e et le V^e siècle en Palestine et en Babylonie (c'est pourquoi il existe deux Talmuds), se divise en six grands ordres qui traitent : 1) des lois agricoles ; 2) des fêtes ; 3) des lois familiales ; 4) des lois civiles ; 5) des lois du Temple ; 6) des lois des purifications. » (Haddad, 2014 : 31)

² « Le Midrach, littéralement « recherche », est une méthode d'investigation dans le texte biblique pour en déduire des enseignements soit sur le plan du rite, soit sur le plan de la foi. Le Midrach est fondé sur un total de 32 règles herméneutiques qui permettent d'analyser les versets bibliques pour en tirer des leçons. Comme le Talmud, le Midrach fut rédigé après la destruction du Temple, jusqu'au début du Moyen Âge pour les textes les plus tardifs. » (ibid.)

Temple), du « livre des Dénombrements » pour les Nombres et de la « répétition de la Doctrine » pour le Deutéronome. On peut donc supposer qu'il existait parallèlement aux noms des livres des expressions génériques pour les désigner, qui furent utilisées d'abord par les Juifs hellénisés, puis par les maîtres de la tradition orale d'Israël après la destruction du second Temple. » (Haddad, 2014 : 30-31)

Les perceptions de la notion de traduction sont ambivalentes dans le domaine biblique, comportant des connotations négatives et positives selon les positionnements idéologiques et théologiques des récepteurs. Il est intéressant d'observer, avec D. Arbib, que « le mot traduction n'existe pas en hébreu : le mot *tirgoum*, qui désigne l'acte de traduire (*targoum* signifiant, lui, le texte résultant de cet acte), est emprunté à l'araméen, et la racine verbale [R.G.M.] signifie littéralement *lapidation* » (Arbib, 2011 : 538), ce qui ajoute une connotation d'une violence extrême à l'entreprise de transposition du message, comme une épée de Damoclès invisible qui rappellerait la taille de la responsabilité du traducteur. Le danger d'une sanction liée à l'élément linguistique apparaît aussi dans le mythe de la tour de Babel (Genèse 11, 1-9) qui explique la multiplication des langues sous la forme d'une décision divine punissant les hommes qui avaient voulu construire une tour pour atteindre le ciel. La connotation négative de l'acte traduisant apparaît également dans l'histoire qui raconte que Ptolémée II, le roi d'Égypte, a voulu faire traduire la Torah en grec et il a demandé à soixante-dix rabbins de se charger de cette tâche (Pelletier, 1962). D'autres sources réduisent au cinq le nombre des traducteurs : « On raconte que cinq anciens traduisirent la Torah en grec pour le roi Ptolémée, et ce jour fut aussi grave pour Israël que le jour du veau d'or, car la Torah ne put être traduite convenablement. » (*Sopherim* (Scribes) 1, 7-8, 35a, *Talmud*, cité par Arbib, 2011 : 548)

La traduction des textes sacrés judaïques n'a pas toujours été regardée comme une entreprise nuisible. À titre d'exemple, Flavius Josèphe, de son vrai nom Joseph Ben Matthias, homme politique et commandant militaire de Galilée appartenant à une famille sacerdotale de Judée qui lui avait donné une éducation rabbinique, combat les Romains, est témoin de la destruction du Temple de Jérusalem et du massacre de 2000 juifs par les armées de l'empereur Vespasien, est fait prisonnier et ensuite libéré pour être nommé traducteur et haut fonctionnaire à Rome. Là-bas il écrit les *Antiquités judaïques*¹, ouvrage dans lequel il loue la traduction de la *Torah* en langue grecque :

Ptolémée [...] fit traduire en grec les lois des Juifs [...] ; je dois dire quelle en fut la cause : Démétrius de Phaléréus, intendant de la bibliothèque de ce prince, travaillait avec un extrême soin et une curiosité tout extraordinaire à rassembler de tous les endroits du monde les livres qu'il croyait le mériter et qu'il estimait lui devoir être agréable. [...]. [On fait venir soixante-douze anciens] Trois jours après,

¹ « Les *Antiquités judaïques*, éditées une première fois entre 93 et 94 sous Domitien, puis rééditées six ans plus tard, forment en vingt livres une sorte d'adaptation de la Bible destinée à un public large, inspirée de la bible grecque. [...] Ce qui fait l'intérêt de Flavius Josèphe est qu'il reste l'un des rares auteurs à avoir transmis la tradition judaïque après la prise de Jérusalem, tradition dont il considérait que la diaspora était une des expressions. Son œuvre a été transmise par les Romains, puis par les Chrétiens, les Réformés et les Jansénistes. Les juifs eux-mêmes ne s'y sont intéressés qu'à partir du XVIe siècle. Elle ne sera traduite en hébreu qu'au XIXe siècle. Flavius Josèphe est assez peu populaire chez les Juifs qui le jugent comme un traître. Il n'est considéré comme un auteur juif que par les Chrétiens. Reste qu'il a pris fait et cause pour les Romains contre son peuple et qu'il n'a pas protesté lors du siège de Jérusalem. » (Vidal Naquet, 2004)

Démétrius les conduisit, par une chaussée longue de sept stades et par le pont qui joint l'île à la terre ferme, dans une maison assise sur le rivage de la mer du côté du septentrion, si éloignée de tout bruit que rien ne les pouvait troubler dans un travail qui avait besoin d'une si forte application, et il les pria que puisqu'ils avaient en ce lieu tout ce qu'ils pouvaient désirer, ils commençassent à s'employer à ce grand ouvrage pour lequel ils étaient venus. Ils le firent avec toute l'affection et l'assiduité imaginables, pour rendre leur traduction très exacte. (Josèphe, 1983 : XII)

Toutefois, cette traduction est restée dans la mémoire collective hébraïque comme une date de triste souvenir, marquée tous les ans par un jeûne qui commémore le début du siège de Jérusalem, la mort du scribe Ezra HaSofer et l'achèvement du travail de traduction de la *Torah*. Cet événement linguistique ne fut pas vécu par tous les érudits hébreux de la même manière, dont certains, admiratifs de la culture et de la langue grecques, considéraient le grec comme étant la langue la plus appropriée pour transmettre le message du texte :

Il est bénéfique de pouvoir embellir la Torah en la parant des beautés de la langue grecque, langue des belles lettres. D'ailleurs le même Chimon ben Gamliel va plus loin. Il précise (dans le Talmud de Jérusalem qui traite des mêmes sujets) : « Car après examen, on a observé que le texte de la Torah peut être traduit le plus adéquatement en grec (*TJ Meguila* I, 9) ». (Kaufmann, 2019 : 17)

Ce souvenir heureux pour certains s'explique aussi linguistiquement : le nom de Japhet, le fils de Noé qui avait été le seul à ne pas découvrir la nudité de son père ivre, est lié à l'adjectif *yofi*, beau, et le nom de son fils, Yavan, veut dire littéralement la Grèce. L'argument linguistique est doublé du souvenir de la bénédiction de Japhet et de sa postérité par son père Noé (« Que Dieu agrandisse Japhet ! Qu'il réside dans les tentes de Sem ! » Genèse 9, 27), ce qui étaye une certaine réception favorable du choix de la langue grecque comme langue de traduction de la Torah.

3. Domaines de spécialité et transferts linguistiques : mémoires des mots, mémoire du monde

Sir Michael Edwards de l'Académie française observait que « notre langue se souvient de ce que nous oublions. La vie des mots est longue et variée et leur mémoire, tenace. Leurs origines (comme celles des formes syntaxiques) nous offrent des mondes perdus, à condition, cependant, de les entendre. » (Edwards, 2015) Le texte biblique, repository de souvenirs linguistiques qui sont autant de témoins de l'histoire du monde, renseigne le linguiste intéressé par les discours appliqués aux nombreux domaines spécialisés définis comme

« tout secteur de la société constitué autour et en vue de l'exercice d'une activité principale qui, par sa nature, sa finalité et ses modalités particulières ainsi que par les compétences particulières qu'elle met en jeu chez ses acteurs, définit la place reconnaissable de ce secteur au sein de la société et d'un ensemble de ses autres secteurs et détermine sa composition et son organisation spécifiques. » (Petit, 2010 : 9)

Ces secteurs vont de la création du monde à la construction de l'arche et du tabernacle, des rites religieux à la confection de l'encens, de la guerre à la médecine, des échanges commerciaux à la résolution des différends juridiques, et sont présentés dans le texte biblique à travers une terminologie riche et précise, témoignant non seulement de la

constitution du peuple d'Israël et de la religion judaïque, mais également de plusieurs visions du monde ainsi que de la vie sociale, culturelle, économique et spirituelle de plusieurs populations de l'antiquité, de l'Empire égyptien à l'Empire perse.

Nous retrouvons, ainsi, dans les différentes parties du texte biblique, les caractéristiques des langues de spécialité : « vocabulaire limité, la plupart des termes utilisés sont monosémiques, objectivité des textes techniques, structures de phrases régies par des règles précises, etc. » (L'Homme, 2011 : 27) Comprenant le syntagme « texte de spécialité » comme « tout texte portant sur un domaine précis du savoir humain, un domaine scientifique (sciences pures et sciences humaines), technique ou professionnel » (L'Homme, 2011 : 27), nous observons que le texte de la *Torah* est constitué par et contient, imbriqués, plusieurs langages de spécialité qui s'harmonisent pour créer un texte qui fascine l'exégète et réjouit le croyant, non seulement de par sa diversité et sa force discursive, mais aussi grâce aux innombrables interprétations à travers lesquelles il se dévoile à chaque lecture, à chaque lecteur. Il est, d'ailleurs, dit qu'il existe autant de *Torahs* que de lecteurs (Ouaknin, 1999), car chacun trouve dans ce texte inépuisable ce qu'il est prêt à y rencontrer.

Le terme *pardès*, - qui a donné *paradis* et ses cognats, spécifique au langage biblique, mais aussi respécialisé dans le langage économique français, grâce à sa capacité combinatoire et à l'inventivité des usagers, sous la forme du syntagme « paradis fiscal » -, constitue l'acrostiche des quatre niveaux de lecture et interprétation progressive de la *Torah* (Tisot, 2002 : 363) : l'explicite ou le littéral (פֶּשַׁח *peschat*), l'allusion ou l'allégorique (רֵמֶז *remez*), l'homilétique ou le recherché (דְּרָשׁ *drasch*), le secret profond ou le mystique (סוֹד *sod*). Immérgé dans un texte, le lecteur vit une véritable d'initiation, car l'on n'en ressort jamais le même, selon le bien connu dicton d'Héraclite, *panta rei* : transformés par le texte, nous le créons à chaque lecture en lui donnant le sens qui nous est possible. Dans cette interaction, les critiques littéraires vont reconnaître deux doctrines qui s'opposent en apparence, la narratologie¹ et le *reader response criticism*², l'une affirmant que le texte impose sa signification au lecteur, l'autre soutenant, dans la lignée des pragmaticiens, « quand lire, c'est faire » (Austin, 1962). En pratique, le lecteur comprend ce qu'il est disposé à comprendre, et il repart différent, comme après toute rencontre avec un Autre qui nous altère à jamais.

¹ « une œuvre s'enlève sur le fond opaque du vivre, de l'agir et du souffrir, pour être donnée par un auteur à un lecteur qui la reçoit et ainsi change son agir. » (Ricoeur, 1983 : 106)

² « La critique *reader-response* abandonne la conception traditionnelle d'une œuvre comme structure de significations achevée. Elle la voit plutôt comme un ensemble d'opérations intellectuelles et de réponses du lecteur pendant que ses yeux suivent le texte qui se présente à lui. Par ce changement de perspective, une œuvre littéraire est transformée en une activité du lecteur. Dans les formes les plus rigoureuses de la critique *reader-response*, des éléments qui étaient considérés par les critiques traditionnels comme faisant partie de l'œuvre elle-même (y compris le narrateur, l'intrigue, les personnages, le style, la structure, aussi bien que les significations) se dissolvent au cours de l'expérience du lecteur en un processus évolutif consistant avant tout en la création d'attentes, ainsi qu'en l'annulation, l'ajournement, l'assouvissement et la restructuration de ces attentes. L'ensemble des pratiques de la critique *reader-response* sont d'accord pour dire qu'à un degré considérable au moins, les significations sont la production ou la création du lecteur individuel. Il n'existe donc pas pour tous les lecteurs une seule signification correcte d'un élément linguistique ou d'une œuvre artistique prise dans sa totalité. » (Abrams, 1993 : 269)

3.1. Psychologie : de la création à la joie

Cette interaction communicationnelle est d'autant plus puissante dans le cas spécifique du texte biblique car il s'agit d'un texte où l'émotion joue un rôle important, étant présente pour motiver, accompagner, justifier, expliquer les actions divines et humaines tout au long des cinq livres. Le domaine de spécialité de la psychologie y occupe une place de choix. Le rôle des lois étant d'imposer des comportements à tenir dans la mémoire collective, l'émotion joue un rôle important dans cette entreprise juridique d'organisation sociale, car toute émotion est ancrée émotionnellement. La répétition, par la parole ou par l'acte, vient compléter l'œuvre fondatrice : dès la Genèse, non seulement Dieu crée-t-Il le monde, non seulement nomme-t-Il les éléments qui le composent par des termes spécifiques, mais Il prend soin d'exprimer la perception qu'il a de ce monde nouvellement créé :

« טוֹב כִּי אֱלֹהִים נִירָא יָמִים קָרָא הַיָּמִים וּלְמִקְנָה אֶרֶץ לַיִּבְשָׁה אֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרָא »,

Translittération : « vayikra élohim layabasha érézt ulmikvé hamayim kara yamim vayar élohim ki-tov » (Genèse 1 : 10)

Traductions :

« Dieu nomma la partie solide, terre, et le rassemblement d'eau, mers. Dieu vit que c'était bien. » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

« Dieu nomma le sol la Terre, et l'agglomération des eaux, il la nomma Mers. Et Dieu considéra que c'était bien. » (*La Bible du Rabbinat*)

« Elohîms crie au sec: « Terre. » À l'alignement des eaux, il avait crié : « Mers. » Elohîms voit : quel bien ! » (*La Bible d'André Chouraqui*)

Comme l'on peut le voir, ces traductions diffèrent non seulement par le choix des mots, mais aussi par la préférence pour deux styles différents, dont l'un, celui d'A. Chouraqui, est très proche du texte-source, ce qui le rend plus littéraire, étant construit avec une exclamation et des injonctions chargées en émotions qui rappellent le rôle performatif de la parole-loi créatrice d'un nouveau monde ; les deux autres textes, datés du XIX^e siècle, se remarquent par leur sobriété descriptive, presque didactique. Dans ce discours rapporté, l'Eternel exprime son contentement au sujet de sa double création, objective et langagière, ce choix discursif ouvrant la voie au questionnement et à la possibilité du contraire : qu'arrivera-t-il lorsqu'Il ne sera pas content de sa création ? On y voit se préfigurer d'autres situations qui mettront en scène un Dieu mécontent, souvent en colère contre sa création humaine, et qui agira à la mesure de son ressenti, par le bannissement du jardin d'Eden, le déluge, la babélisation, etc.

Les différentes traductions du verset original emploient des mots différents pour exprimer la forte émotion qui confère un caractère anthropomorphe à ce Dieu qui peut ressentir et exprimer des émotions tout comme l'homme qu'il avait créé à son image - ou est-ce plutôt l'homme qui a un caractère théomorphe de par justement la capacité de ressentir des émotions ?

אֶל־לִבּוֹ: וַיַּתְעַצֵּב בְּאַרְץ אֱתֶּהְאָדָם כִּי־עָשָׂה יְהוָה וַיִּגְחַם

Translittération : « vaynahém adonai ki asa ét haadam baarétz vaytatzév él-libo » (Genèse 6 :6)

Traductions :

« Alors l'Éternel se repentit d'avoir fait l'homme sur la terre, et il en fut profondément affecté. » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

« Et l'Éternel se repentit d'avoir fait l'homme sur la terre, et il s'en affligea dans son cœur. » (*La Bible Darby*)

« et l'Éternel regretta d'avoir créé l'homme sur la terre, et il s'affligea en lui-même » (*La Bible du Rabinat*)

« L'Éternel se repentit d'avoir fait l'homme sur la terre, et il fut affligé en son cœur. » (*La Bible Segond*)

« IHVH-Adonaï regrette d'avoir fait le glébeux sur la terre : il se peine en son cœur. » (*La Bible d'André Chouraqui*)

La traduction d'A. Chouraqui reste au plus près du texte-source et rend toute sa beauté qui s'impose à nous au temps présent, tout en rappelant que le mot אָדָם *adam*, est en lien direct non seulement avec אָדָם, le sang, mais aussi avec אֲדָמָה *adamah*, la terre, la glèbe, ayant été façonné avec de la poussière détachée du sol, מִן־הָאָדָמָה עָפָר, *afar min-haadamah*. Les structures à la voix active « s'affligea lui-même », « s'en affligea dans son cœur », « se peine » mettent en lumière l'aspect créateur de la divinité qui est source de tout, alors que les structures passives permettent une interprétation qui présente la possibilité que Dieu soit affecté par des éléments extérieurs qui ne font pas partie de sa création. Le verbe אָצַב, *atzab*, est polysémique, signifiant souffrir, ressentir de la douleur, vexer, torturer, mais aussi faire des images, donner forme, étant relié au substantif אֵצֶבֶת, *étzéb*, qui signifie douleur, souffrance physique ou mentale, tristesse, et idole. Toute naissance est, ainsi, sémantiquement, liée à la souffrance et à l'ambivalence, le bien et le mal étant consubstantiels de toute création. L'invisibilisation du mot « cœur », pourtant bien présent dans le texte-source, לֵב, *lév*, peut être due à une interprétation métaphorique ou bien à une volonté de réduire les caractéristiques humaines de la divinité.

Se trouve ainsi dévoilée, dès le début du texte de la Genèse, l'importance accordée au ressenti, aux émotions, et qui continuera à sous-tendre, de manière plus ou moins explicite, le langage biblique. L'acte de la création ne peut pas être complet sans les actes de nomination et d'affection, ce que les chercheurs en neurolinguistique affective affirment depuis une dizaine d'années, en mettant le ressenti, l'émotion au sens étymologique du terme de ce qui nous met en mouvement, à la base de nos motivations (Eckmann, 1999, Panksepp et al., 2012, Immordino-Yang, 2013, etc.). Ceci nous éclaire également sur la place que l'émotion et son expression occupent dans la religion et dans la culture judaïques, où rester sensible est un devoir et une nécessité : le 14^e interdit, celui de rester indifférent au danger qui menace son prochain, est une injonction énoncée par le Rabbin Nachman de Breslau au XIX^e siècle, et qui est accompagnée par l'obligation d'être toujours joyeux : « mitzva guedolah lihiyot besimcha tamid », « un grand commandement : vivre toujours dans la joie » ; une des fêtes rabbiniques intitulée שמחת תורה, *Simchat Torah*, marquant la fin du cycle annuel de lecture de la Torah, est célébrée à la synagogue en chantant et en dansant avec les rouleaux de la Torah.

Le passage de la tristesse à la joie est exprimé non seulement dans l'écoulement des saisons selon le calendrier judaïque, lorsque l'on passe du mois d'Av, mois de la tristesse, au mois d'Adar ou mois de la joie, des unités terminologiques appartenant au domaine de

l'organisation des moyens pour mesurer le temps et étant dotées de contenus affectifs, mais aussi dans la morphologie et la grammaire de l'hébreu biblique, à travers le phénomène du « ו *vav* conversif ». La lettre ו *vav* inverse le temps, joue avec l'accompli du passé et l'inaccompli du futur, introduit un élément triste ou joyeux dans un verbe et dans une phrase en fonction de sa position ; placée à côté d'un verbe au passé, le ו *vav* apportera un sens futur, messenger de joie et d'espoir, d'ouverture aux potentialités, alors qu'en la positionnant auprès d'un verbe au futur, cette lettre donnera au verbe un sens passé et, contextuellement, un élément triste.

Le concept de joie a donné naissance en hébreu à neuf termes qui expriment différents aspects de cette émotion protéiforme : *simcha* (שמחה), la joie profonde, terme générique pour exprimer l'idée de bonheur ; *osher* (אשר), le bonheur qui dure ; *orah* (אורה), un terme qui signifie à la fois lumière et joie ; *gila* (גילה), nom commun qui désigne la joie de la découverte, une manifestation de joie exubérante ; *rina* (רינה), pour nommer une joie rafraîchissante ; *ditza* (דיצה), une joie sublime ; *sasson* (ששון), une joie inattendue ; *chedva* (חדבה) qui nomme la joie d'être ensemble ; *tzahala* (צהלה), un terme employé pour signifier à la fois la joie et la danse. Le traducteur devra faire appel à la compréhension nuancée, à la paraphrase et à la reformulation, à l'adaptation culturelle, afin de trouver les meilleures solutions contextuelles.

Il est intéressant de remarquer que le lien entre l'émotion et le mouvement, exprimé par le terme hébraïque *tzahala* (צהלה), a été mis en lumière dans les années 1990 par le physicien Adrian Bejan, professeur en ingénierie mécanique à Duke University, auteur de la théorie constructale et du terme *constructal* en anglais, à partir du latin *construere* :

Emotion is actually the flipping of a switch, it is what sets the movement on - as opposed to off - and then, of course, the movement happens because there's a force that pushes, there's power that's spent during the movement. But emotion is the trigger, or I think of it as opening a valve for the flow...¹ (Bejan, Lorente, 2010)

Dans son ouvrage qui porte sur la loi constructale, le mouvement est présenté comme la vie de tout système flux où rien ne peut exister de manière isolée, tout évolue tant que vivant et tout est formé au service du monde dont il fait partie :

Life is movement and the constant morphing of the design of this movement. To be alive is to keep on flowing and morphing. When a system stops flowing and morphing, it is dead... The constructal law teaches us that nothing operates in isolation, every flow system is part of a bigger flow system, shaped by and in service to the world around it.² (*id.*)

¹ « L'émotion est en fait l'interrupteur, c'est elle qui déclenche le mouvement - par opposition à l'arrêt - et ensuite, bien sûr, le mouvement se produit parce qu'il y a une force qui pousse, il y a de l'énergie qui est dépensée pendant le mouvement. Mais l'émotion est le déclencheur, ou je la considère comme l'ouverture d'une vanne pour le flux... » (ma traduction)

² « La vie, c'est le mouvement et la transformation constante de la conception de ce mouvement. Être vivant, c'est continuer à circuler et à se transformer. Lorsqu'un système cesse de s'écouler et de se transformer, il est mort... La loi constructale nous enseigne que rien ne fonctionne de manière isolée, que tout système d'écoulement fait partie d'un système d'écoulement plus vaste, façonné par le monde qui l'entoure et au service de ce dernier. » (ma traduction)

De ce point de vue, en partant du fait que le mouvement est la vie, tout en considérant les sens du terme *tzahala* (צהלה), si la danse est joie, et que la danse soit mouvement, alors la vie est joie. Tout organisme vivant est un système flux, étant composé, dans une parfaite symphonie, par d'autres systèmes flux vivants en permanent mouvement et changement et qui fonctionnent dépendamment les uns des autres (le corps humain, les végétaux, l'eau, etc.) : la joie d'être ensemble, *chedva* (חדבה), se trouve ainsi expliquée, puisqu'être ensemble signifie la vie. La joie liée à la *mitzva* veut, ainsi, dire, comprendre sa place, ses obligations, sa vie.

Ou, pour parler avec Claude Hagège :

Tant il est vrai que l'étude des langues nous apprend à embrasser la diversité des modes d'appréhension du monde : ce qui paraît insignifiant aux uns est capital pour les autres, ce que la langue des uns ne mentionne même pas, celle des autres en décrit sans répéter les plus menus détails. (Hagège, 2014 : 380)

3.2. Justice et transmission : des émotions et des lois

3.2.1. La création de la mémoire

Le souvenir ancré dans l'émotion est au cœur de l'acte de justice, de l'acte d'interprétation juridique et du temps fort de la semaine juive qui finit avec le Chabat, le jour chômé ordonné par Dieu : *zakhor* (« souviens-toi du jour de Chabbat ») et *chamor* (« garde le jour de Chabbat ») sont deux commandements constitutifs du chabat. Dans l'Exode 20 : 8 il est écrit « Souviens-toi du jour du Chabat pour le sanctifier » :

לִקְדָּשׁוּ הַשַּׁבָּת אֶת־יוֹם זָכוֹר

Translittération : « *zakhor ét-yom hashabat léqadsho* »

Il est intéressant de remarquer l'invisibilisation du terme hébraïque « sabbat »/« shabat » dans certaines traductions sous la forme de la paraphrase « jour du repos », une adaptation culturelle chrétienne, et sa présence dans d'autres textes bibliques.

Traductions :

« Souviens-toi du jour du repos, pour le sanctifier. » (*La Bible Segond*)

« Souviens-toi du jour du repos, pour le sanctifier. » (*La Bible Martin*)

« Souviens-toi du jour du sabbat, pour le sanctifier. » (*La Bible Darby*)

« Tu te souviendras du jour du sabbat pour le sanctifier. » (*La Bible de Jérusalem*)

« Souviens-toi du jour du sabbat pour le sanctifier. » (*La Bible AELF*)

« Souviens-toi du jour du sabbat pour le sanctifier. » (*La Bible catholique*)

« Pense au jour du Sabbat pour le sanctifier. » (*La Bible du Rabinat*)

« Souviens-toi du jour du shabat pour le consacrer. » (*La Bible d'André Chouraqui*)

Le même phénomène persiste dans le texte du Deutéronome 5:15, doublé d'une équivalence basée sur une synonymie partielle et sur la polysémie du terme עֶבֶד, *évéd*, qui a les sens d'esclave, serviteur, travailleur :

לַעֲשׂוֹת אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוָה צִוְּךָ עַל־כֵּן נָטוּיָהּ וּבְיָרֵעַ תִּזְקֶה בְּיָד מִשָּׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ יְהוָה נִיצָאָה מִצְרַיִם בְּאֶרֶץ הַיִּית כִּי־עֶבֶד וְנִזְכַּרְתָּ הַשַּׁבָּת אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת

Translittération : « *vézakharta kiy-évéd hayiyta béérétz mitzrayim vayotziakha adonai éloheykha misham béyad chazaqah uvizro néṭuyah al-kén tziukha adonai éloheykha laasot ét-yom hashabat* »

Traductions :

« Tu te souviendras que tu as été esclave au pays d’Égypte, et que l’Éternel, ton Dieu, t’en a fait sortir à main forte et à bras étendu : c’est pourquoi l’Éternel, ton Dieu, t’a ordonné d’observer le jour du repos. » (*La Bible Segond*)

« Et qu’il te souviennne que tu as été esclave au pays d’Égypte, et que l’Éternel ton Dieu t’en a retiré à main forte, et à bras étendu ; c’est pourquoi l’Éternel ton Dieu t’a commandé de garder le jour du repos. » (*La Bible Martin*)

« et tu te souviendras que tu as été serviteur dans le pays d’Égypte, et que l’Éternel, ton Dieu, t’a fait sortir de là à main forte et à bras étendu ; c’est pourquoi l’Éternel, ton Dieu, t’a commandé de garder le jour du sabbat. » (*La Bible Darby*)

« Tu te souviendras que tu as été esclave au pays d’Égypte, et que l’Éternel ton Dieu t’en a retiré à main forte et bras étendu ; c’est pourquoi l’Éternel ton Dieu t’a ordonné de faire le jour de Chabbath. » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

« Et tu te souviendras que tu fus esclave au pays d’Égypte, et que l’Éternel, ton Dieu, t’en a fait sortir d’une main puissante et d’un bras étendu ; c’est pourquoi l’Éternel, ton Dieu, t’a prescrit d’observer le jour du Sabbat. » (*La Bible du Rabinat*)

Le terme *éved* est construit à partir de la racine עָבַד, *avad*, travailler, servir et apparaît dans le texte biblique avec les sens de « servir Dieu », « labourer/cultiver la terre », « servir dans l’armée », « obéir, respecter » ou « idolâtrer ».

Dans la culture judéo-chrétienne, la *Torah*, dans son intégralité, est considérée comme étant la Loi donnée par l’Éternel au peuple d’Israël à travers Moïse, le serviteur le plus fidèle à Dieu, sur le mont Sinaï. La partie la plus célèbre de cette transmission du divin vers l’humain est représentée par les Dix Commandements ou le Décalogue, ou encore les Tables de la Loi originellement nommées les Dix Paroles, הַדְּבָרוֹת עֶשְׂרֵת, *Asséréth ha-Dibberoth*, דְּבָרִים, *davar*, *devarim* signifiant en hébreu « mot(s), parole(s), chose(s) », et qui constituent le fondement du christianisme. Les émotions y occupent une place centrale (Exode, Yitro, 20, 2, cf. Sefarim.fr) : la jalousie (« je suis un dieu jaloux »), la peur de la punition (« l’Éternel ne laisse pas impuni celui qui invoque son nom pour le mensonge »), le respect dû aux parents (« Honore ton père et ta mère »), la convoitise (« ne convoite rien de ce qui est à ton prochain ») sont présentes aux côtés des interdictions de tuer, de voler, de commettre l’adultère, dans un tableau où la peur règne pour ancrer solidement l’émotion dans les cœurs des individus et dans la mémoire collective (« tout le peuple fut témoin de ces tonnerres, de ces feux, de ce bruit de cor, de cette montagne fumante et le peuple à cette vue, trembla et se tint à distance »).

3.2.2. La transmission de la mémoire

La Loi mosaïque, de par le pluriel du terme אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*, un des noms de Dieu, met l’accent sur la responsabilité de chacun pour ses actes, ainsi que sur la nécessité de comprendre la pluralité du monde et les multiples facettes de soi-même. Le mot תּוֹרָה *torah* signifie « loi, direction, instruction » (Strong, 1890) et contient, en tant que terme de spécialité, les sèmes [+justice], [+enseignement], [+guide], ce dernier étant la synthèse du rôle de la justice et de l’enseignement dans une société, à savoir donner une direction et un

sens à l'organisation sociale. Ainsi, la justice et l'enseignement se trouvent indissociablement liés dans la lettre et l'esprit de la religion et de la culture juives. L'origine du terme *torah* est le verbe יָרָה *yarah*, dont le champ sémantique s'étend à des actions concrètes en lien avec l'idée de couler et faire couler « jeter, tirer, faire couler, verser, jeter de l'eau, pleuvoir, arroser, répandre » jusqu'au faisceau significatif « diriger, enseigner, instruire, élever », en passant par le groupe indicatif « montrer, signaler, pointer » (Strong, 1890). On constate l'évolution de la charge affective de ce verbe, au départ signifiant une action concrète dépourvue d'émotion, même impersonnelle, qui passe par une étape intermédiaire intentionnelle et purement informative, pour arriver aux sens chargés émotionnellement visant à élever, aider et orienter l'interlocuteur à travers la transmission d'informations consciente, organisée et bienveillante. On observe également la présence de l'idée de flux, sous la forme d'eau, d'abord, d'informations ensuite, et de leçons pour la dernière catégorie significative du verbe, ce qui rejoint le concept physique de la loi constructale et la perception métaphysique du lien entre le mouvement, la transmission et la vie.

Les verbes employés pour communiquer et transmettre les lois divines sont *amar*, *dabar* et *tsavah*, soit des synonymes imparfaits car chacun portant une charge émotionnelle différente. *Amar*, אָמַר, est employé avec les sens de « dire, parler, prononcer », *dabar*, דָּבַר, apparaît avec les sens de « parler, déclarer, converser, commander, promettre, avertir, menacer, chanter », *tsavah*, צָוָה, se distingue par les sens de « commander, charger, donner des ordres, ordonner ». On remarque d'emblée la performativité de ces verbes caractéristique du discours biblique, ainsi que leur intentionnalité illocutoire : *amar* est plus neutre, visant une fonction informative, *dabar* a une coloration négative et injonctive, alors que *tsavah* est clairement injonctif, comme le montre son lien de parenté sémantique avec le terme *mitsva*, commandement, obligation. La démarche pédagogique est fondée sur trois étapes : communiquer la loi, l'obligation, l'interdit, dresser le cadre d'action et poser les limites en promettant des récompenses pour le respect de la loi ou en avertissant et en menaçant de conséquences en cas de non-respect, pour finalement ordonner la mise en œuvre du contenu communiqué. La parole s'adresse par excellence, ou, pour parler avec E. Levinas : « ... le *dit* ne compte pas autant que le *dire* lui-même. Celui-ci m'importe moins par son contenu en informations que par le fait qu'il s'adresse à un interlocuteur. » (Levinas, 1982 : 33)

L'importance de la transmission et de l'enseignement dans la culture juive sont inscrites dans la *Torah* et dans la profession de foi d'Israël, יִשְׂרָאֵל שָׁמַע, *Chéma Israël* (écoute, Israël), prière qui prévoit des gestes précis, ainsi que des moments spécifiques de lecture dans la journée, et dont les verbes sont au futur de l'indicatif afin de signifier la portée transgénérationnelle du texte :

Écoute, Israël : l'Eternel est notre Dieu, l'Eternel est un ! Tu aimeras l'Eternel, ton Dieu, de tout ton cœur, de toute ton âme et de toute ta force. Ces devoirs, que je t'impose aujourd'hui, seront gravés dans ton cœur. Tu les inculqueras à tes enfants, et tu t'entretiendras, soit dans ta maison, soit en voyage, en te couchant et en te levant. Tu les attacheras comme un symbole sur ton bras, et les porteras en fronton entre tes yeux. Tu les inscriras sur les poteaux de ta maison et sur tes portes. (Deutéronome 6, 4-9, in Haddad, 2014 : 95)

À remarquer que, tout au long du texte biblique, le sentiment de l'amour est lié à la loi et aux commandements, car aimer Dieu et son prochain (« Tu aimeras ton prochain comme toi-même. Je suis l'Eternel. » Lévitique 19 :18) sont les bases mêmes des religions judaïque

et chrétienne (« Tu aimeras le Seigneur, ton Dieu, de tout ton cœur, de toute ton âme, de toute ta force, et de toute ta pensée ; et ton prochain comme toi-même. » Luc 10 :27). Le verbe « aimer » se trouve ici à l'indicatif futur symbolisant non seulement l'injonction, mais à la fois son inscription dans le temps humain et sa perpétuité à travers les générations. Le sentiment d'amour est ainsi exprimé par Dieu aux êtres humains (« Mais, parce que l'Eternel vous aime, parce qu'il a voulu tenir le serment qu'il avait fait à vos pères, l'Eternel vous a fait sortir par sa main puissante, vous a délivrés de la maison de servitude, de la main de Pharaon, roi d'Egypte » Deutéronome 7 : 8), par les êtres humains à Dieu, et entre des êtres humains (« Isaac conduisit Rebecca dans la tente de Sara, sa mère; il prit Rebecca, qui devint sa femme, et il l'aima » Genèse 24 : 67), alors que le verbe « aimer » est sémantiquement lié aux termes juridiques « serment », « alliance matrimoniale », etc.

3..2.3. Emotions divines et humaines

Il existe deux types de faisceaux émotionnels en rapport avec la justice dans le texte biblique, organisés autour de deux pôles qui sont la transgression et le respect des commandements, et qui sont exprimées par deux types de locuteurs, d'origine divine - Dieu, et non-divine - le peuple d'Israël, ses représentants, ou d'autres peuples. Le lecteur y trouve des expressions de colère et de crainte, d'amour et de respect, de joie et de contentement, de tristesse et de désespoir, représentant toute la palette des émotions qui affectent les êtres humains. A titre d'exemple, les célébrations de la fête de Pourim, en souvenir de Yom Kippour ou הכיפורים *Yom Hakippourim*, « le jour des propitiations » ou encore « le Jour du Grand Pardon - où le terme פור *pour* signifie « sort »¹ -, considérée la fête la plus sainte de l'année juive, sont empreintes de la joie des Juifs d'avoir été sauvés du massacre planifié par Haman l'Agagite, mais portent en arrière-plan le souvenir de la tristesse de continuer à se trouver en exil dans l'Empire perse.

Au fil du texte biblique, l'on découvre un Dieu en proie aux émotions que l'on croirait uniquement humaines. Ainsi, dans l'Exode (22 : 21-23), Dieu interdit de maltraiter la veuve et l'orphelin, tout en présentant sa colère comme source des conséquences entraînées par la transgression :

צַעֲקוּ אֶשְׁמַע שְׁמִיעַ אֱלֹהֵי יִצְעַק אִם-צָעַק כִּי אֲתוּ תַעֲנֶה אִם-עָנָה תַעֲנֹן לֹא יִתְּוֹם כָּל-אֶלְמָנָה

Translittération : « kol almanaa véyatom lo téanoun. Im ané téané oto ki tzaouk itzak élayi shamoa éshma tzaakato »

Traductions :

« N'humiliez jamais la veuve ni l'orphelin. Si tu l'humiliais, sache que, quand sa plainte s'élèvera vers moi, assurément j'entendrai cette plainte. » (*La Bible du Rabbinat*)

« Vous ne maltraitez aucune veuve ni aucun orphelin. Si tu le maltraites, et s'il crie vers moi, j'entendrai son cri » (*La Bible TOB*)

« Vous n'opprimez point la veuve, ni l'orphelin. Si vous l'opprimez ! ... car s'il crie vers moi, j'entendrai bien ses cris » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

¹ « car Haman, fils de Amédatha, l'Agagite, persécuteur de tous les Juifs, avait formé le dessein d'anéantir les Juifs et consulté le « Pour », c'est-à-dire le sort, à effet de les perdre et de les détruire ;[...] C'est pourquoi on appela ces jours-là Pourim, du nom de Pour. » (*Méguilat Esther*, 9-10)

« Vous ne ferez aucun tort à la veuve et à l'orphelin. Si vous les offensez, ils crieront vers moi, et j'écouterai leurs cris » (*La Grande Bible de Tours*)
 « Vous n'affligerez aucune veuve, ni aucun orphelin. Si, en quoi que ce soit, tu les affliges, et qu'ils crient à moi, certainement j'entendrai leur cri » (*La Bible Darby*)
 « Tu n'affligeras point la veuve, ni l'orphelin. 23 Si tu les affliges, et qu'ils viennent à moi, j'entendrai leurs cris » (*La Bible Segond*)
 « Toute veuve et l'orphelin, vous ne les violentez pas. Oui, si vous le violencez, le violencez, il vociférera, il vociférera vers moi : j'entendrai, j'entendrai sa vocifération. » (*La Bible d'André Chouraqui*)
 « N'opprimez pas non plus les veuves et les orphelins. Si vous les opprimez, ils m'appelleront à leur secours, moi, le Seigneur, et je vous assure que j'entendrai leur appel. » (*La Bible en français courant*)

L'interdit juridico-religieux est exprimé ici par une série de verbes - humilier, maltraiter, opprimer, affliger, violenter, faire tort - qui ont des caractéristiques sémantiques et juridiques différentes. Le délit va de la violence morale à la violence physique, du général « faire tort » à la singularisation « humilier », « violenter », sur une échelle d'intensité qui apparaît également du côté de l'expression de la victime qui crie, vocifère, se plaint, appelle. La répétition qui sert d'intensificateur discursif présente dans le texte-source et dans la traduction d'A. Chouraqui est perdue dans les autres textes-cibles, et avec elle toute la coloration culturelle et historique des temps anciens qui ont vu naître ces lois. Le souvenir de cet interdit continue de perdurer à travers les millénaires. Défendre la veuve et l'orphelin est devenu un principe juridique et éthique universel :

Dans toutes les civilisations, dans toutes les religions, la protection de la veuve et de l'orphelin a été une obligation, mais elle reposait sur la charité ou sur la famille. Dans la Grèce et la Rome antiques, mais aussi dans certaines ethnies africaines, la veuve a l'obligation de se remarier avec un frère ou un cousin du mari décédé. Cette règle, le lévirat, a pour but d'assurer la continuité de la lignée. (Hervé, 1998 : 249)

Ce principe n'a pas perdu de son authenticité dans le droit français contemporain, et l'on peut lire, par exemple, sur le site *Dalloz. Actualité. Le quotidien du droit* du 8 mars 2019, l'article de Marie-Christine de Montecler, intitulé « Le juge administratif, défenseur de la veuve et de l'orphelin », au sujet du CE 27 juill. 2015, req. n° 375042 lorsque « par un revirement de jurisprudence, le Conseil d'État estime que la pension d'orphelin versée à l'enfant d'un fonctionnaire décédé est un droit propre de l'enfant, ce qui la rend cumulable avec les prestations familiales. » (Montecler, 2019)

La colère de Dieu n'impose jamais ses conséquences sans droit d'appel, et l'homme est dans un dialogue ininterrompu avec l'Éternel. Dans la *Paracha*¹ *Ki-Tissa* (Exode 30 : 11-34 : 35), où il est question de la faute du veau d'or, a lieu un dialogue rempli d'émotion entre Dieu et Moïse, dans lequel Dieu, dans un double rôle de procureur/victime qui accuse, exprime sa colère et son intention de punir par la mort le peuple d'Israël à travers des verbes impératifs (« L'Éternel dit à Moïse : Je vois que ce peuple est un peuple rétif. Donc, cesse de me solliciter, laisse s'allumer contre eux ma colère et que je les anéantisse, tandis que je ferai

¹ La *paracha* est l'unité traditionnelle de division du texte de la Bible hébraïque selon le texte massorétique.

de toi un grand peuple! »), alors que Moïse devient l'avocat défenseur de son peuple devant le courroux divin, en mettant en avant des arguments affectifs, ancrés dans le souvenir de la sortie d'Égypte (« Pourquoi, Seigneur, ton courroux menace-t-il ton peuple, que tu as tiré du pays d'Égypte avec une si grande force et d'une main si puissante? »), et raisonnables, comme, par exemple, le fait de donner de l'eau au moulin des Égyptiens et le rappel des promesses faites à Abraham, Isaac et Israël. Moïse fini par l'emporter : « L'Éternel révoqua le malheur qu'il avait voulu infliger à son peuple. » Les répliques de Moïse annulent la construction d'un éventuel *implied reader*, lecteur impliqué (Iser, 1974), présumé par le texte biblique, car elles exigent des réponses et des justifications de la part de l'Éternel. On observe ici à l'œuvre l'importance de la manière de communiquer, où chaque participant à l'acte de communication respecte son interlocuteur et satisfait les maximes conversationnelles de P. Grice (quantité, qualité, relation, manière). Une éthique communicationnelle s'instaure à travers laquelle la construction de la relation devient possible, au-delà du simple fait de communiquer une information :

Que le *dire* doive comporter un *dit* est une nécessité du même ordre que celle qui impose une société, avec des lois, des institutions et des relations sociales. Mais le *dire*, c'est le fait que devant le visage je ne reste pas simplement là à le contempler, je lui réponds. Le dire est une manière de saluer autrui, mais saluer autrui, c'est déjà répondre de lui. (Levinas, 1982 : 82)

La relation entre l'humain et le divin est, ainsi, une relation responsable, où chacune des parties assume ses obligations, reste à l'écoute, et, pour continuer la pensée levinassienne, salue l'autre dans le sens étymologique du terme, en le sauvant : non seulement Dieu sauve l'homme, mais l'homme, en se montrant à la hauteur du dialogue, en assumant sa place et sa responsabilité, sauve Dieu et sa relation avec la divinité, l'empêchant de devenir totalitaire, dogmatique, figée. Le syntagme « face à face » revêt une importance particulière dans la Torah, car il est attribué au dialogue de Moïse avec Dieu, qui est un dialogue d'intériorité à intériorité (Ouaknin, 18/11/2018) - פנים אל פנים, *panim-al-panim* (« Il ne s'est plus levé, en Israël, un prophète tel que Moïse, que Dieu avait connu face à face », Deutéronome 34 : 10). Maimonide¹ explique que Moïse est le seul qui ait eu ce privilège, qui va au-delà de la réception de la Loi à suivre ; Moïse pose la pluralité de l'être, car les mots « visage » ou « face » se disent toujours au pluriel en hébreu (*panim*), tout en y développant le concept d'intériorité, puisque le terme פנימיות, *pnimiut*, signifiant « intériorité » et appartenant au domaine de spécialité de la psychologie, est directement originaire du nom commun *panim*,

¹ « Né à Cordoue, mort à Fostat (Vieux Caire), Moïse ben Maïmon, dit Maimonide, incarne trois aspects majeurs du judaïsme médiéval. Formé par son père au Talmud et aux philosophes arabes en Espagne, puis au Maroc durant les persécutions des Almohades - persécutions et conversions forcées qui anéantissent le judaïsme d'al-Andalus et d'Afrique du Nord (à l'exception de l'Égypte) -, Maimonide compile un code complet, clair et concis des lois juives, le *Mishneh Torah* ou « Répétition de la Loi », tandis que son frère David, marchand au long cours, subvient à ses besoins. Son frère disparu lors d'une expédition aux Indes, il pratique la médecine à titre privé ainsi qu'au service d'Alfadhel, vizir de Saladin, composant plusieurs traités médicaux. Dirigeant de sa communauté, il pourvoit aux besoins des pauvres et des captifs. Philosophe, il concilie croyance et rationalisme dans son *Guide des Égarés* écrit en arabe mais bientôt traduit en hébreu, puis en latin à l'usage des chrétiens. L'œuvre de Maimonide suscite, après sa mort, une longue controverse à travers le monde juif méditerranéen et oriental avant de lui valoir le titre incontesté d'Aigle de la Synagogue. » (Nahon, 2002)

lui-même originaire du verbe פָּנָה *panah*, « se tourner vers », en lien avec le mot פֶּה *peh*, « bouche ». Et n'est-ce le souvenir un retour, une recherche de l'Autre, d'un face-à-face avec le « je » que nous avons été ? Les mots portent dans leur substance le dialogue, la relation à l'Autre ainsi qu'à nous-mêmes en tant qu'êtres pluriels. Le dialogue véritable fait évoluer la relation en permanence et devient le gage du maintien du mouvement et de la vie. Dans le texte envisagé comme discours de spécialité, les noms, les adjectifs et les verbes chargés affectivement jouent le rôle de lien, d'intermédiaire, d'explicitation de l'émotion qui sous-tend toute action. Le fait que chacun des participants au dialogue prend sa place révèle l'importance neuropsychologique du fait de donner du sens, lorsque l'on sait que nos cerveaux forment automatiquement des configurations avec tous les stimuli que nous percevons (Yalom, 1989 : 12). La nécessité de considérer chaque individu dans sa singularité, de le responsabiliser à assumer sa place dans le groupe dont il est membre est étroitement liée à l'existence des valeurs et d'un code de comportement, posés par le texte biblique qui revêt une importance pédagogique et de transmission.

Pour ce qui est de la colère des hommes, il est intéressant de remarquer que, quelques fois, elle enflamme l'homme sans que celui-ci en ait l'initiative :

« En français, “Caïn” est le sujet de la phrase verbale “Caïn fut très irrité”. Or, dans l'expression hébraïque, il en va autrement. “Caïn” n'est pas sujet, c'est-à-dire que Caïn ne prend pas l'initiative de se mettre en colère. On ne dit pas : “Tiens ! Je vais me mettre en colère !” Non ! La colère vient toute seule. En hébreu, le sujet de l'expression qui nous occupe est impersonnel. On pourrait donc traduire par quelque chose comme : “Cela fut très colérique pour Caïn”. Il en est de cette expression comme si le véritable sujet voulait se tenir caché, insaisissable. Bref, Caïn n'est pas sujet, c'est-à-dire que ce qui se passe en lui ne vient pas de lui. “Ça enflamme beaucoup Caïn”, voilà comment nous pourrions traduire : “Ça” l'enflamme, “ça” l'irrite, “ça” le met dans tous ses états et Caïn se trouve devant le fait accompli, devant une situation qu'il doit gérer soit en la dominant, soit en se laissant emporter par quelque chose qui le dépasse, qu'il n'a pas encore appris à contenir et dont il ignore l'origine. » (Bourguet, 2000 : 42-43).

L'absence d'intentionnalité interpelle aussi dans le Lévitique lorsqu'il est question des violations des interdits divins et où, à plusieurs reprises, le lecteur rencontre des locutions adverbiales telles « par mégarde », « par inadvertance », ou encore des locutions verbales telles « échappé à ses lèvres », et qui offrent la possibilité d'expier les erreurs en présentant des offrandes.

Parmi d'autres verbes d'action porteurs de charge affective présents dans la *Torah*, et plus particulièrement dans les 613 prescriptions, on trouve des verbes à connotation positive (17^e interdit : adorer ; 14^e commandement : honorer, etc.) et négative (24^e interdit : convoiter ; 38^e, 39^e, 136^e interdits : maudire ; 142^e interdit : haïr ; 143^e interdit : humilier ; 144^e interdit : se venger ; 145^e interdit : porter rancune ; 157^e interdit : tromper, etc.) À remarquer le fait que ces verbes sont appréhendés comme ayant des sens juridiques dans le texte biblique, appartenant donc à plusieurs domaines de spécialité à la fois (psychologique, juridique, religieux, communication, etc.)

L'impact affectif du texte juridique est également ressenti à travers les séries synonymiques hyperboliques comme « [ordonnant] de détruire, exterminer et anéantir tous les Juifs » présentes dans le décret royal rédigé d'après les prescriptions d'Haman et raconté par la *Meguilat Esther*. Des séries synonymiques hyperboliques existent ailleurs dans le texte

biblrique, composées de noms à forte charge affective, comme « saisis d'effroi, de crainte et d'épouvante » (Exode 15, 14-16), ou bien, toujours dans la *Meguilat Esther*, les sentiments de « joie rayonnante, contentement, allégresse » exprimés le treizième jour du mois d'Adar, lorsqu'il y eut un étonnant renversement de situation, et les Juifs, au lieu d'être massacrés par leurs ennemis, en triomphèrent.

3.3. Les relations de travail

L'activité économique et commerciale, un autre domaine de spécialité très présent dans la *Torah*, est assujettie à des règles précises et soumise à la justice humaine et divine. Les termes employés appartiennent aux domaines des affaires et de la résolution des conflits de travail (*travailleur, mercenaire, salaire, litige, balance, poids, epha*). Ainsi, il est formellement interdit d'exploiter ses employés et ces lois fonctionnent comme autant de rappels à l'ordre, ayant comme objectif d'entretenir le souvenir d'une condition de vulnérabilité partagée et vécue par le passé, avant la sortie d'Egypte :

a)

בְּשִׁעְרֶיךָ בְּאַרְצֶךָ אֲשֶׁר מִגְרָךְ אֹי מֵאֲחֶיךָ וְאֶבְיֹן עֲנִי שָׂכִיר לֹא־מַעֲשֶׂק (Deutéronome 24 : 14)

Translittération : « lo taasuk sakir ani vé évion méakheiha ou migézreikha ashér béartzékha bisharékha »

Traductions :

« Vous ne refuserez point à l'indigent et au pauvre ce que vous lui devez, qu'il soit votre frère ou étranger, demeurant avec vous dans votre pays et dans votre ville » (*La Grande Bible de Tours*)

« Ne cause point de tort au journalier pauvre et nécessiteux, que ce soit un de tes frères ou un des étrangers qui sont dans ton pays, dans l'une de tes villes. » (*Bible du Rabbinate*)

« Ne retiens pas le salaire du pauvre et de l'indigent, qu'il soit de tes frères ou d'entre les étrangers (qui demeurent) dans ton pays, à tes portes. (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

« Tu n'opprimeras pas l'homme à gages affligé et pauvre d'entre tes frères ou d'entre tes étrangers qui sont dans ton pays, dans tes portes. » (*La Bible Darby*)

« Tu n'opprimeras point le mercenaire, pauvre et indigent, qu'il soit l'un de tes frères, ou l'un des étrangers demeurant dans ton pays, dans tes portes. » (*La Bible Segond*)

« Tu n'exploiteras pas le salarié humble et pauvre, qu'il soit d'entre tes frères ou étranger en résidence chez toi. » (*La Bible de Jérusalem*)

« Ne profitez pas de la pauvreté ou de la misère d'un ouvrier, que ce soit un compatriote ou un étranger vivant dans une ville de votre pays. » (*La Bible en français courant*)

« Tu n'exploiteras pas un salarié malheureux et pauvre, que ce soit l'un de tes frères ou l'un des émigrés que tu as dans ton pays, dans tes villes. » (*La Bible - TOB*)

Outre la variation singulier/pluriel des pronoms personnels de la deuxième personne, les traductions font référence à des réalités différentes : ne pas causer de tort ou affliger quelqu'un couvre un champ large de possibles, alors que retenir son salaire est un acte concret facilement identifiable et qualifiable. Opprimer, exploiter, profiter, refuser ce que l'on doit à quelqu'un couvrent un champ sémantique large et varié. Les couples adjectivaux « indigent

et pauvre », « pauvre et indigent », « pauvre et nécessiteux », « affligé et pauvre », « humble et pauvre », ou la solution de traduction basée sur la transcatégorisation (« la pauvreté, la misère ») présentent les mêmes questionnements quant à leur synonymie partielle.

b)

עַד־בֹּקֶר : אֲתָהּ שָׂכִיר פְּעֻלַּת לֹא־תֵלֵין תִּגְזֹל וְלֹא אֶת־רֵעֶךָ לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה (Lévitique 19 : 13)

Translittération : « lo taashok ét rééha vé lo tizgol lo talin péoulat sakir itékha ad-bokér »

Traductions :

« Ne commets point d’extorsion sur ton prochain, point de rapine ; que le salaire du journalier ne reste point par devers toi jusqu’au lendemain. » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*).

« Tu n’opprimeras pas ton prochain ; tu n’enlèveras pas (violemment) ; que le salaire du mercenaire ne demeure pas avec toi jusqu’au matin. » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

« Tu n’opprimeras pas ton prochain, et tu ne le pilleras pas. Le salaire de ton homme à gages ne passera pas la nuit chez toi jusqu’au matin. » (*La Bible Darby*)

« Tu n’opprimeras point ton prochain, et tu ne raviras rien par violence. Tu ne retiendras point jusqu’au lendemain le salaire du mercenaire. » (*La Bible Segond*)

« Tu n’opprimeras point ton prochain, et tu ne le pilleras point. Le salaire de ton mercenaire ne demeurera point par devers toi jusqu’au matin. » (*La Bible Martin*)

« Tu ne pressureras pas ton compagnon. Tu ne cambrioleras pas. Tu ne feras pas nuiter l’œuvre du salarié avec toi jusqu’au matin. » (*La Bible d’André Chouraqui*)

Aux délits d’extorsion et de rapine correspondent les verbes opprimer, piller, ravir par violence, pressurer, cambrioler, autant de synonymes partiels qui posent des questions sémantiques et juridiques. Dans la recherche de l’équivalent de la locution עַד־בֹּקֶר, « ad-bokér », jusqu’au matin, le mot moins précis « lendemain » apparaît, posant un problème de limitation temporelle. Le journalier, le mercenaire, l’homme à gages, le salarié donnent des images différentes quant au statut de la personne employée, et une recherche documentaire, historique et culturelles serait nécessaire afin de comprendre quelles étaient les lois et les coutumes en vigueur à l’époque à laquelle appartient le texte, afin de ne pas courir le risque d’une compréhension anachronique.

Tout conflit de travail doit être résolu de manière juste et équitable : « Si je n’ai pas fait droit à ma servante ou à mon serviteur quand, avec moi, ils avaient un litige, je ne saurai que faire quand Dieu se lèvera pour me juger, je ne saurai que lui répondre quand il demandera des comptes. » (Job 31 : 13, 14) Le quatrième commandement peut être considéré comme une loi de protection pour les minorités, protégeant à la fois l’étranger, l’esclave et la servante :

Souviens-toi du jour du chabbat pour le sanctifier. Six jours tu travailleras et tu feras tout ton travail, et le septième jour sera pour le Tétragramme, ton Dieu. Tu ne feras pas de travail, toi, ton fils ou ta fille, ton esclave, ta servante, ton bétail, l’étranger qui séjourne dans tes portes. Car en six jours Dieu a fait le ciel, la terre, la mer et tout ce qu’ils renferment, et Il s’est reposé le septième jour... (Exode 20 : 9-11)

Une autre injonction vise l'intégrité et l'honnêteté des commerçants : « Vous aurez une balance honnête et des poids justes » (Lévitique 19 : 36). L'emploi des adjectifs-épithètes *honnête*, *juste* se retrouve dans d'autres versets, ou l'on rajoute l'adjectif *exact* :

Tu n'auras point dans ton sac deux sortes de poids, un gros et un petit. Tu n'auras point dans ta maison deux sortes d'épha, un grand et un petit. Tu auras un poids exact et juste, tu auras un épha exact et juste, afin que tes jours se prolongent dans le pays que l'Eternel, ton Dieu, te donne. (Deutéronome 25 : 13-15)

Le célèbre verset « Ne placez pas d'obstacle devant un aveugle » (Lévitique 19 : 14) interdit de profiter de la position de vulnérabilité de quelqu'un.

3.4. Les sens : le goût, l'odorat, l'ouïe

Les rappels aux sens ne manquent pas dans le texte de la *Torah*. Une des premières références à l'importance des sens fut aussi la source d'une erreur de traduction. Le célèbre fruit défendu de l'Arbre de la connaissance du bien et du mal représenté dans la symbolique chrétienne par une pomme ne pouvait pas en être une, car, d'un côté, le pommier ne figure pas parmi les espèces mentionnées dans la Bible, et, de l'autre côté, le terme hébraïque employé dans le texte original a le sens générique de « fruit ». Dans la traduction latine de la Vulgate, le mot latin *malus* est polysémique¹, signifiant « pommier » lorsqu'il est employé comme substantif commun, et « mauvais » lorsqu'il est utilisé comme adjectif. L'iconographie chrétienne du Moyen- Âge traduisait souvent ce fruit par des images hybrides :

Souvent, on représentait un fruit indéfini, à l'instar du texte biblique. Quelquefois, cette imprécision conduisait à un mélange de caractéristiques : dans les sculptures de la cathédrale de Gérone et de l'église Notre-Dame-du-Port à Clermont-Ferrand, les feuilles de l'arbre défendu sont celles du figuier, mais le fruit est le raisin ; la célèbre Ève d'Autun cache sa nudité par une feuille de vigne, tout en cueillant une pomme, et le même rapport entre la vigne et la pomme se retrouve à Amandi (Asturies) ; sur un chapiteau de Corbie, Adam semble tenir une pomme, tandis que de l'arbre pendent des grappes de raisin ; sur le chapiteau de Cluny qui représente les fleuves du Paradis, la face orientale représente une vigne, l'occidentale un figuier, la septentrionale un pommier. (Franco Junior, 2006 : 31)

Le sens du goût a une importance toute particulière dans la langue hébraïque et dans le texte biblique, car le terme טעם *taam* signifie « goût » et « sens ». Les המצוות טעמי, « ta'améy hamitsvot » se traduisent, ainsi, comme « les raisons des commandements » mais aussi comme « les goûts des commandements ». Donner du sens au monde et à la vie à travers la justice et le respect des 613 commandements revient à goûter le monde, la vie, les choses (Guedj, 2019) dans la vision judaïque du monde. Justice et goût sont ici intrinsèquement liés par l'expérience que l'homme fait du monde qu'il connaît à travers ses sens. Il faut intégrer le monde dans son corps et dans son âme, le connaître si bien au point de le contenir en soi-

¹ « La Vulgate, traduction latine officielle de la Bible, réalisée vers la fin du IV^e siècle, définit l'arbre de la connaissance comme un « lignum scientiae boni et mali ». Or, *mali* (de *malum* en latin) dit dans cette langue à la fois le mal et la pomme. Cette polysémie heureuse va dorénavant figer, pour le lecteur chrétien occidental, l'espèce de l'arbre défendu en un fruit spécifique, une image unique qui va nourrir de siècles en siècles toutes les représentations de cet épisode originel. » (Horvilleur, 2 octobre 2013)

même afin de ressentir ses lois constitutives qui gouvernent le macrocosme et le microcosme. La justice devient, dans cette approche, une prise de conscience par l'être humain du mode de fonctionnement du monde, un souvenir toujours présent du réel, du concret.

Le plaisir du goût est également présent à travers de nombreuses mentions du vin, breuvage chargé de connotations et d'émotions ambivalentes. Noah boit du vin, s'envire, ses fils voient sa nudité, ce qui le met en colère lorsqu'il se réveille de son ivresse (Genèse, Noah 9 : 20 - 9 : 27) Dans l'histoire de la reine Esther qui sauve son peuple des manigances d'Haman, le vin est à l'honneur dans les festins du roi Ahasvérous et dans les fêtes données par la reine pour influencer positivement la volonté de ce dernier et révoquer le décret de massacrer les Juifs.

Le sens de l'odorat est présent à plusieurs reprises, comme, par exemple, dans la *Paracha Noah*, où l'on parle de « la délectable odeur » qui plut à l'Éternel, lui rappela son amour pour l'humanité et participa peut-être même de Sa décision de ne plus détruire l'humanité :

Noé érigea un autel à l'Éternel ; il prit de tous les quadrupèdes purs, de tous les oiseaux purs, et les offrit en holocauste sur l'autel. L'Éternel aspira la délectable odeur, et il dit en lui-même : « Désormais, je ne maudirai plus la terre à cause de l'homme, car les conceptions du cœur de l'homme sont mauvaises dès son enfance ; désormais, je ne frapperai plus tous les vivants, comme je l'ai fait. Plus jamais, tant que durera la terre, semailles et récolte, froidure et chaleur, été et hiver, jour et nuit, ne seront interrompus. » Dieu bénit Noé et ses fils, en leur disant : « Croissez et multipliez, et remplissez la terre ! (Genèse, Noah 8 : 21 – 9 : 1)

Le sens de l'ouïe est à l'honneur dans la Torah (Josué 6, Nombres 10, etc.), notamment grâce à l'emploi du *shofar*, שופר, instrument de musique à vent fabriqué dans une corne de bélier, symbole du bélier sacrifié par Abraham à la place de son fils Isaac (Genèse 22 : 13), sonné pendant les fêtes de *Roch HaChana* (Nouvel An juif) et *Yom Kippour*. Le souvenir du *shofar* est là pour rappeler le bélier qui avait enchevêtré ses cornes dans un buisson et qui avait été ainsi offert par Abraham comme offrande à Dieu à la place de son fils unique Isaac : « Parle aux Israélites, et dis-leur : Le premier jour du septième mois sera pour vous un grand jour de repos et, pour vous rappeler à mon souvenir, de sonnerie de trompettes avec un rassemblement cultuel. » (Lévitique 23 : 24, *Bible du Semeur*) Ce terme est traduit parfois par le nom commun d'un autre instrument à vent, la trompette, dans une approche traductologique cibliste. Le son du *shofar* provoque et communique l'émotion, étant investi d'une fonction protectrice en lien avec la préservation de la vie du peuple d'Israël et le dialogue avec Dieu :

Ce sont les fils d'Aaron, les pontifes, qui sonneront de ces trompettes. Elles vous serviront, comme institution perpétuelle, dans vos générations. Quand donc vous marcherez en bataille, dans votre pays, contre l'ennemi qui vous attaque, vous sonnerez des trompettes avec fanfare ; vous vous recommanderez ainsi au souvenir de l'Éternel votre Dieu, et vous recevrez assistance contre vos ennemis. (Nombres 10 : 8)

3.5. La construction et l'artisanat

Il existe également des parties du texte biblique où l'émotion n'occupe pas le premier plan. Ainsi, la construction et l'artisanat sont des domaines dépourvus de valence émotionnelle. Dans la *Paracha Pekoudei*, par exemple, se combinent des termes propres à

l'orfèvrerie, à la joaillerie, à la menuiserie, à la tapisserie, au bâtiment, aux rituels religieux. Le texte descriptif de la confection du pectoral (Exode, Pekoudei 39 : 8-39, 21) abonde en termes techniques, monosémiques, sans charge affective (*éphod, empan, chaînettes, chatons d'or, anneaux, épaulières, ceinture, cordon, torsade*) et présente des phrases claires, à la structure basique sujet-verbe-objet, régies par des verbes d'action (*confectionner, plier, enchâsser, préparer, faire, placer, fixer, passer, appliquer, assujettir*) représentant des gestes précis et qui pourtant, malgré leur technicité, présentent des équivalents différents d'une traduction à l'autre. Quelques fois, le souvenir de la prononciation hébraïque prend le dessus ; d'autres fois, des termes français différents sont employés, comme l'on peut le voir à travers la comparaison des versions de deux traductions du XIX^e siècle, la *Bible du Rabbinate* et la *Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen* :

a)

מְשֹׁנֶר וְשֵׁשׁ-שָׁנִי וְתוֹלַעַת וְאַרְגָּמָן תְּכֵלֶת, זָהָב : אֶפֶד כְּמַעֲשֵׂה, חֹשֶׁב מַעֲשֵׂה הַחֹשֶׁן-אֶת וַיַּעַשׂ (Pentateuque, Exode 39, 17, Sefarim.fr)

Translittération : « vayas ét ha-hoshén maaséh hoshév, kmaaséh ephod : zahav, tkélét, vé argaman vé tolaat shnéy-véshésh moshézar »

Traductions :

« Puis on confectionna le pectoral damassé à la façon de l'éphod ; en or, azur, pourpre, écarlate et lin retors. » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*)

« On fit le pectoral, ouvrage d'art, comme l'ouvrage de l'éphod ; d'or, de laine bleue, d'écarlate, de cramoisi et de fin lin retors. » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

b)

כָּפוֹל הָיָה רְבֹועַ, רָחִבּוֹ וְזֶרֶת אָרְכוֹ זֶרֶת-הַחֹשֶׁן-אֶת עָשׂוּ, כָּפוֹל הָיָה רְבֹועַ (Pentateuque, Exode 39, 17, Sefarim.fr)

Translittération : « ravou haya kaphol, asou et hahoshèn zérèt arkov vé zérèt rohovo kaphoul »

Traductions :

« Ce pectoral était carré, on l'avait plié en deux ; ainsi plié, il avait un empan de long et un empan de large. » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*)

« Il était carré ; ils firent le pectoral doublé, d'une palme de long et d'une palme de large, (il était) double. » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

c)

הָאֶחָד, הַטּוֹר-וּבִרְקַת פִּטְדָּה אֶדָם, טוֹר : אֶבֶן טוֹרִי, אַרְבָּעָה-בּו-נִימְלָאוּ (Pentateuque, Exode 39, 17, Sefarim.fr)

Translittération : « vaymalou-vo-arba turey évèn : tour, odém, pitah ou varékèt-hatour, haéhad »

Traductions :

« On y enchâssa quatre rangées de pierreries. Sur une rangée : un rubis, une topaze et une émeraude, première rangée ; » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*)

« Ils le remplirent de quatre rangs de pierres : au premier rang un odem, un piteda et un bareketh ; » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

d)

וְהַטּוֹר, סָפִיר נֶפֶד-הַשָּׁנִי, וְהָהֶלֶם (Pentateuque, Exode 39, 17, Sefarim.fr)

Translittération : « véhatour, hashéni-nophék, saphir, vyhalom »

Traductions :

« deuxième rangée : un nofek, un saphir et un diamant ; » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*)

« Et au second rang un nophech, un saphir et un iahlome ; » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

e)

וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַשְּׁלִישִׁי, וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַשְּׁלִישִׁי (Pentateuque, Exode 39, 17, Sefarim.fr)

Translittération : « véhatour, hashlishi-léshém, shvo, vakhlama »

Traductions :

« troisième rangée : un léchem, un chebô et un ahlama ; » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*)

« Au troisième rang un lechème, un schevô et un a'halama ; » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

f)

וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַרְבִּיעִי, וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַרְבִּיעִי, וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַרְבִּיעִי (Pentateuque, Exode 39, 17, Sefarim.fr)

Translittération : « véhatour, haréviy-tarshish shokham, vyashphé, moussavot mishbtzot zahav, bmilouotam »

Traductions :

« quatrième rangée : une tartessienne, un choham et un jaspe. Quant à leur sertissure, elles furent enchâssées dans des chatons d'or. » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*)

« Et au quatrième rang un tartchiche, un schohame et iochphé ; elles furent montées, enchâssées dans des chatons d'or. » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

g)

וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַרְבִּיעִי, וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַרְבִּיעִי, וְהָיוּ לְשֵׁם-הַרְבִּיעִי (Pentateuque, Exode 39, 17, Sefarim.fr)

Translittération : « vahaavanim al-shémot bney Israél hénah, shteim esré al-hashemot pitouhay otam ish al-shémo, léshney assar shabèt »

Traductions :

« Ces pierres portant les noms des fils d'Israël, étaient douze selon ces mêmes noms ; on y avait gravé comme sur un sceau, chacune par son nom, les douze tribus. » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*)

« Les pierres étaient selon les noms des enfants d'Israël, douze, d'après (le nombre de) leurs noms ; gravées comme un cachet, chacun selon son nom pour les douze tribus. » (*La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

Outre les écarts de style qui différencient ces deux traductions, le regard du linguiste spécialisé est attiré vers l'emploi des termes différents pour nommer une même réalité : « azur » et « laine bleue », « pourpre » et « écarlate », « écarlate » et « cramoisi », « empan » et « palme », « rubis » et « odem », « topaze » et « piteda », « émeraude » et « baraketh », « diamant » et « iahlome », « tartessienne » et « tartchiche », « jaspe » et « iochphe », « sceau » et « cachet ». On y observe la confusion des couleurs, la réminiscence du texte-source visible dans l'emploi de calques hébraïques, ainsi que la présence de deux synonymes partiels archaïques, « empan » (« ancienne mesure de longueur correspondant à l'intervalle compris entre l'extrémité du pouce et celle du petit doigt dans leur plus grand écart » ; dans le langage des brodeurs et des passementiers, « intervalle compris entre l'extrémité des deux

bras lorsqu'ils sont écartés » cf. CNRTL), et « palme », substantif masculin signifiant « unité de mesure égale à environ la largeur d'une main » (CNRTL).

3.6. La médecine

Le domaine de spécialité de la médecine occupe une place importante dans la *Torah*, étant également dépourvu de charge affective. Dans le Lévitique, la *paracha Tazria* est consacrée aux instructions données par Dieu à Moïse et Aharon concernant l'accouchement des femmes et les maladies de la peau comme la lèpre, alors que dans la *paracha Metsora* il est question de la lèpre, des maladies sexuellement transmissibles et des menstrues des femmes. Le langage employé est caractérisé par des phrases construites sur la logique de la relation causale « si..., alors... » propre à l'activité de diagnostic, par des verbes appartenant aux domaines du diagnostic et du traitement (*observer, remarquer, examiner, inspecter, constater, déclarer*), ainsi que par des noms communs appartenant au champ sémantique de la maladie (*plaie, affection, tumeur, chair vive, flux sanguin, gonorrhée, ulcère*). Le sens de la vue y est particulièrement présent, car le pontife, jouant le rôle du médecin, doit être capable d'inspecter la plaie, d'en distinguer les couleurs et de se prononcer sur la gravité de la maladie (*tumeur ou tache blanche, tache blanche-vermeille, poil jaune ténu, poil noir, blanc obscur*, etc.).

Le droit et la médecine se rejoignent dans l'esprit juif et, de là, dans la mentalité judéo-chrétienne. Le « péché » était autrefois interprété comme un concept à la fois juridique et religieux susceptible de provoquer des maladies. L'un des exemples les plus anciens de la Bible est celui de Myriam, la sœur de Moïse, qui a parlé contre son frère et a été punie pour le péché de *לשון הרע*, *lashon-hara*, « mauvaise langue », par Dieu qui lui a infligé la lèpre, *צרעת*, *tzaarat*. La lèpre est le terme général, provenant de la traduction grecque *λεπρα*, *lepra*, qui est utilisé pour parler d'une ancienne maladie qui reste spécifiquement inconnue jusqu'à aujourd'hui et qui peut être interprétée comme une multitude de diagnostics dermatologiques¹. La lèpre est mentionnée maintes fois dans les textes bibliques de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament et sa signification illustre le pouvoir destructeur de la mauvaise parole. Le roumain est la seule langue romane dans laquelle le terme de lèpre, *lepră*, présente les vestiges de sa signification biblique hébraïque, désignant non seulement la maladie contagieuse, mais aussi une personne à la langue malveillante, méprisante et vicieuse.

Une transformation sémantique problématique concerne le terme hébraïque *ha'alma*, jeune fille, présent dans le Livre d'Ésaïe qui évoque l'exil du peuple juif de son pays, la Judée, à Babylone, au VI^e siècle avant notre ère, sur l'ordre du roi Nabuchodonosor II après la première destruction du Temple, puis son retour et la reconstruction du Temple de Jérusalem sur l'ordre du roi Cyrus II. Ésaïe, *ישעיהו*, *Yéshayahu*, qui signifie « Dieu sauve », est un des quatre grands prophètes de l'Ancien Testament (les trois autres étant Jérémie, Ézéchiél et Daniel), qui aurait vécu à Jérusalem au VIII^e siècle avant l'ère commune, à la cour du royaume de Juda. Ses prophéties sont considérées comme ayant un sens messianique qui a influencé la religion chrétienne. Le passage en question est le suivant :

¹ "Psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis, favus, dermatophyte infections, nummular dermatitis, atopic dermatitis, pityriasis rosea, crusted scabies, syphilis, impetigo, sycosis barbae, alopecia areata, furuncles, scabies, neurodermatitis, scarlet fever, lupus erythematosus, lichen sclerosus et atrophicus, folliculitis decalvans, morphea, sarcoidosis, and lichen planopilaris." (Grzybowski, Nita, 2016 : 3)

אֵל: עֲמָנוּ שְׁמוֹ וְקָרָאת בֶּן וְיִלְדֶת הָרָה הַעֲלָמָה הִנֵּה אֹת לָכֵם הִיא אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה לָכֵן (Ésaïe 7 : 14)

Translittération : « lèkhén yitén adonay hou lékhèm ôt hinéh héalméh héréh vyolédét bén vkérét shemoh imenouél »

Plusieurs traductions françaises du XVIIIe au XIXe siècle présentent une différence terminologique dans la traduction du terme *ha 'alma* qui est rendu par le terme *vierge* écrit avec majuscule ou avec minuscule, mais aussi par les syntagme *jeune fille*, *jeune femme*.

Traductions :

« C'est pourquoi le Seigneur lui-même vous donnera un signe ; voici, une Vierge sera enceinte, et elle enfantera un fils, et appellera son Nom EMMANUEL. » (*Bible Martin*)

« C'est pourquoi le Seigneur vous donnera lui-même un signe : Voici, la jeune fille deviendra enceinte et enfantera un fils, et le nommera Immanuel (Dieu avec nous). » (*La Bible – Traduction Nouvelle de Samuel Cahen*)

« C'est pourquoi le Seigneur lui-même vous donnera un signe, Voici, la jeune fille deviendra enceinte, elle enfantera un fils, Et elle lui donnera le nom d'Emmanuel. » (*La Bible Segond*)

« C'est pourquoi le Seigneur, lui, vous donnera un signe : Voici, la vierge concevra et elle enfantera un fils, et appellera son nom Emmanuel. » (*La Bible Darby*)

« Ah certes ! Le Seigneur vous donne de lui-même un signe : Voici, la jeune femme est devenue enceinte, elle va mettre au monde un fils, qu'elle appellera Immanuel. » (*La Bible du Rabbinate*)

« C'est pourquoi le Seigneur lui-même vous donnera un signe : Voici, la jeune femme est enceinte, elle va enfanter un fils et elle lui donnera le nom d'Emmanuel. » (*La Bible de Jérusalem*)

« C'est pourquoi le Seigneur lui-même vous donnera un signe : Voici que la vierge est enceinte, elle enfantera un fils, qu'elle appellera Emmanuel (c'est-à-dire : Dieu-avec-nous). » (*La Bible AELF*)

« C'est pourquoi le Seigneur lui-même vous donnera un signe : Voici que la Vierge a conçu, et elle enfante un fils, et on lui donne le nom d'Emmanuel. » (*La Bible catholique*)

Une interrogation visible immédiatement porte sur le temps verbal des traductions, oscillant entre le futur, le présent et le passé, qui introduit une nuance stylistique mais également un questionnement spirituel, car le temps passé présente l'évènement comme inéluctable alors que le temps futur laisse la place à une hypothèse et le présent accentue la représentation imagée. Ensuite, et au cœur de questionnement, se trouve la différence sémantique, puisque le sème [+vierge] ne caractérise par obligatoirement le syntagme *jeune fille*, et d'autant moins le syntagme *jeune femme*. Le texte grec de la Septante, résultat de la traduction de l'hébreu par les soixante-douze traducteurs d'Alexandrie, emploie le terme *parthénos*, vierge, pour traduire le terme hébreu *ha 'alma*, modifiant ainsi le sens par un étoffement sémantique et l'emploi d'un synonyme partiel : « ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Εμμανουήλ »¹. Les traducteurs de la Septante réalisent, ainsi, une prouesse fondée sur une erreur d'interprétation :

¹ <https://www.saint.gr/45/7/biblebooks.aspx>

Par un tour de force, la LXX explicite donc la mention floue de « jeune femme » ('alma), par « vierge » (parthénos), tour de force traductif mais surtout interprétatif que la tradition juive ne saurait valider. On comprend que les exégètes chrétiens aient trouvé dans ce verset l'annonce de la Vierge, et que la Vulgate ait entériné définitivement cette percée : *propter hoc dabit Dominus ipse vobis signum ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitis nomen eius Emmanuel* » (ad loc.), puisqu'aussi bien Mt 1, 23 citait Is 7, 14 dans la traduction de la LXX. De traduction en traduction, la Bible juive est devenue chrétienne. (Arbib, 2011 : 552)

Conclusion

À la fin de cette esquisse des caractéristiques du discours biblique en tant que discours spécialisé, et sans avoir abordé d'autres questions tout aussi intéressantes comme, par exemple, celles d'ordre traductologique, terminologique, néologique, pragmatique, etc., et qui font l'objet d'études particulières, nous observons que « l'objet discours spécialisé ne peut en effet qu'être construit différemment par la recherche terminologique, la recherche linguistique appliquée à l'enseignement de la langue, la recherche sociolinguistique, etc. » (Petit, 2010 : 29) Le texte de la *Torah* ou la *Bible* nous apparaît comme un texte de spécialité contenant plusieurs sous-ensembles, visant à communiquer des faits, diffuser des connaissances, expliquer des procédés (L'Homme, 2011 : 30). La langue biblique peut être considérée comme « l'usage d'une langue naturelle pour rendre compte techniquement de connaissances spécialisées » (Lerat, 1995 : 21). Le domaine de spécialité biblique étant circonscrit généralement et de manière polyphonique dans l'espace du religieux, de l'historique¹, du mythe, les sous-domaines qui participent à sa formation nous apparaissent plutôt bien définis et ancrés dans le concret de l'expérience individuelle et collective des communautés humaines dont les membres travaillent et observent les fêtes, font la guerre et la paix, tombent malades et sont soignés, prient et expient, construisent et fabriquent, se nourrissent et jeûnent, se réjouissent et s'attristent, espèrent et commettent des erreurs, voyagent, s'exilent, apprennent, transmettent, dialoguent. En outre, l'on se heurte à l'impossibilité de délimiter les domaines de spécialité à l'intérieur du texte biblique ou de séquencer le texte de manière chronologique en fonction des termes de spécialité employés, parce que, d'un côté, les textes-discours spécialisés sont imbriqués les uns à l'intérieur des autres, et, de l'autre côté, le texte biblique a un rythme qui lui est propre, qui suit le récit de l'histoire de l'humanité et du peuple d'Israël, étant adapté à la lecture annuelle et aux fêtes à célébrer : « l'analyse de discours spécialisés authentiques et situés prouve qu'il est tout à la fois difficile d'établir un ordre de succession logique des spécialités sur l'axe horizontal postulé et rare d'avoir affaire à un seul domaine. » (ibid.)

Nous plaçant dans une perspective extralinguistique, nous remarquons le rôle des discours spécialisés contenus dans le texte biblique, qui est de constituer le discours dans son ensemble, d'informer au sujet de domaines de spécialité socialement reconnus à l'époque biblique, mais, aussi et surtout, de manière performative, s'adresser au lecteur, l'interpeller, susciter sa curiosité et son intérêt, le faire réfléchir : « la raison d'être des discours spécialisés est ainsi leur rôle dans le fonctionnement d'un champ de spécialité donné » (id.).

¹ « Si aucune preuve archéologique ne vient confirmer le récit biblique, le peuple juif l'a toujours considéré comme constitutif de sa mémoire et de son identité. » (Haddad, 2014 : 18)

Ce discours qui s'adresse participe de la construction d'une partie de l'humanité en tant que sujet d'une histoire : « On peut concevoir un statut ontologique pour le récit au niveau des communautés. On peut dire qu'elles ont une 'existence racontée', qu'elles existent dans la mesure où elle se constituent en unités narratives, comme sujets d'une histoire » (Carr, 2013 : 212)

La constitution de tout sujet supposant une harmonisation des différences constitutives, ainsi qu'une affirmation de son positionnement dans le monde, nous rejoignons Paul Ricoeur dans son affirmation :

« La Bible est la grandiose intrigue de l'histoire du monde, et chaque intrigue littéraire est une sorte de miniature de la grande intrigue qui joint l'Apocalypse à la Genèse. Ainsi le mythe eschatologique et le muthos aristotélicien se rejoignent-ils dans leur manière de lier un commencement à une fin et de proposer à l'imagination le triomphe de la concordance sur la discordance. » (Ricoeur, 1984 : 51)

Et comme le sujet-individu se construit à travers ses perceptions du monde et de soi, ces perceptions étant fondées sur la réponse émotionnelle aux stimuli et constituant autant de souvenirs remaniés qui construisent l'identité des hommes et des sociétés, on peut dire que le texte biblique s'adresse en égale mesure à la raison, en tant que premier recueil de lois de la civilisation judéo-chrétienne, et à la sensibilité, dans sa qualité de livre mythique parlant du besoin de sacré de l'être humain, autant que dans sa qualité de Loi instituée pour réguler les émotions et la vie en société.

Références

- Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 6e éd., Fort Worth, Harcourt Brace College, 1993.
- Austin, J.L., *Quand dire, c'est faire*, Editions du Seuil, 1962.
- Bejan, A., Lorente, S. "The constructal law of design and evolution in nature", in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B*, 365, 2010, pp. 1335–1347.
- Bourguet, D., *Les maladies de la vie spirituelle*, Réveil Publications, Lyon, 2000.
- Carr, D., « Epistémologie et ontologie du récit », in *Les Métamorphoses de la raison herméneutique*, 2013, pp. 205-214.
- De Vaan, M., *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic Languages* (Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series; 7), Leiden, Boston, Brill, 2008.
- Ekmann, P., "Chapter 3 Basic Emotions", in T. Dalgleish and M. Power (Eds.), *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*, Sussex, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 1999, pp. 45-60.
- Haddad, Ph., *La Torah*, Eyrolles, 2014.
- Hagege, C., *Petit dictionnaire amoureux des langues*, Pocket, 2014.
- Horvilleur, D., « Le fruit défendu, une savoureuse énigme », *Le Monde des Religions*, 2 octobre 2013.
- Josèphe, F., *Antiquités judaïques*, trad. Arnauld D'Andilly, revue par J. A. C. Buchon, dans *Les Juifs*, Paris, Lidis, 1983.
- Iser, W., *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction From Banyan to Beckett*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 1974.
- La Torah*. Edition bilingue hébreu-français, Les Editions Saraël, 2011.
- Lerat, P., *Les langues spécialisées*, PUF, Paris, 1995.
- Levinas, E., *Ethique et infini*, Librairie Arthème Fayard et Radio-France, 1982.
- Ouaknin, M.-A., *Invitation au Talmud*, Flammarion, Paris, 2018.
- Ouaknin, M.-A., *Les dix commandements*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1999.
- Pelletier, A., *Lettre d'Aristée à Philocrate*, intr., texte critique, trad. et notes, index par A. Pelletier, s.j., Paris, Éd. du Cerf (coll. « Sources chrétiennes »), 1962.
- Ricoeur, P., *Temps et récit I : L'intrigue et le récit historique*, Paris, Seuil, Coll. « Points », 1983.

Ricoeur, P., *Temps et récit*, 2, Le Seuil, coll. « Points-essais », Paris, 1984.
 Yalom, I., *Love's Executioner and Other Tales of Psychotherapy*, Penguin Books, London, 1989.

Références électroniques

AELF-Association Épiscopale Liturgique pour les pays Francophones, <https://www.aelf.org/bible/Ex/20>, consulté le 13 janvier 2025.

Arbib D., « Exégèse et traduction dans le judaïsme rabbinique », *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 2011/3 (Tome 95), p. 537-556. DOI : 10.3917/rspt.953.0537, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-des-sciences-philosophiques-et-theologiques-2011-3-page-537.htm>, consulté le 13 janvier 2025.

CNRTL - Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales, <https://www.cnrtl.fr/>, consulté le 14 janvier 2025.

Edwards, M., « La mémoire des mots », *Dire, ne pas dire*, Académie française, 4 juin 2015, <https://www.academie-francaise.fr/la-memoire-des-mots>, consulté le 14 janvier 2025.

Grice, H. P., « Logique et conversation », *Communications*, 30, *La conversation*, 1979, pp. 57-72, <https://doi.org/10.3406/comm.1979.1446>, https://www.persee.fr/doc/comm_0588-8018_1979_num_30_1_1446, consulté le 14 janvier 2025.

Grzybowski, A., Nita, M., « Leprosy in the Bible », *Clinics in Dermatology*, Volume 34, Issue 1, 2016, p. 3-7. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clindermatol.2015.10.003>, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738081X15001820>, consulté le 18 octobre 2024.

Guedj, M.-R., in M.-A. Ouaknin, *Talmudiques*, « La crise de l'universel : 2/2 le sens, le monde et la personne. Invité : Marc-Raphaël Guedj, rabbin à Paris, professeur de Pensée juive au Séminaire Israélite de France, grand-rabbin de Metz et de la Moselle, Grand-Rabbin de Genève », 23 décembre 2018, France Culture <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/talmudiques/la-crise-de-luniversel-22-le-sens-le-monde-et-la-personne>, consulté le 13 janvier 2025.

Hervé, N., « Faut-il encore protéger la veuve et l'orphelin ? », Jean-Hugues Déchaux éd., *Les familles face à la mort. Entre privatisation et resocialisation de la mort*, Le Bouscat, L'Esprit du temps, « Psychologie », 1998, pp. 249-263, <https://www.cairn.info/les-familles-face-a-la-mort--2908206935-page-249.htm>, consulté le 18 octobre 2024.

Immordino-Yang, M.-H., « Studying the effects of culture by integrating neuroscientific with ethnographic approaches », *Psychological Inquiry: An International Journal for the Advancement of Psychological Theory*, 2013, pp. 42-46, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1047840X.2013.770278>, consulté le 13 novembre 2024.

Junior, H. F., « Entre la figue et la pomme : l'iconographie romane du fruit défendu », *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 1, 2006, <http://journals.openedition.org/rhr/4621>, <https://doi.org/10.4000/rhr.4621>, consulté le 29 juin 2024.

Kaufmann, F., « Concepts et locutions talmudiques concernant la traduction biblique », *Tsafon* [En ligne], 77, 2019, <http://journals.openedition.org/tsafon/1593>, <https://doi.org/10.4000/tsafon.1593>, consulté le 29 juin 2024.

Larousse, <https://www.larousse.fr/>, consulté le 16/03/2024.

L'Homme, M.-C., « Y a-t-il une langue de spécialité ? Points de vue pratique et théorique », *Langues et linguistique*, numéro spécial *Journées de linguistique*, Université Laval, Canada, 2011, pp. 26-33, http://www.lli.ulaval.ca/fileadmin/llt/fichiers/recherche/revue_LL/numero_special_2011/LLSP2011_2_6-33.pdf, consulté le 14/09/2024.

Lueur, <https://www.lueur.org/>, consulté le 16/03/2024.

Montecler de, M.-Ch., « Le juge administratif, défenseur de la veuve et de l'orphelin », *Dalloz Actualité*, 2019, <https://www.dalloz-actualite.fr/flash/juge-administratif-defenseur-de-veuve-et-de-l-orphelin#.XIUfShKjIU>, consulté le 16 mars 2024.

Nahon, G., « Maimonide », *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, 29 mai 2002, <https://www.universalis.fr/encyclopedie/maimonide/>, consulté le 16 mars 2024.

Ouaknin, M.-A., « Talmudiques », *FranceCulture*, 18 novembre 2018, <https://www.franceculture.fr/emissions/talmudiques>, consulté le 13 mars 2024.

Panksepp, J., Asma, S., Curran, G., Gabriel, R., Greif, Th., “The philosophical implications of affective neuroscience”, *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 19, No. 3–4, 2012, pp. 6–48, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/sites/default/files/attachments/109303/jcs-articlefinal.pdf>, consulté le 20 avril 2024.

Petit, M., « Le discours spécialisé et le spécialisé du discours: repères pour l’analyse du discours en anglais de spécialité », *E-rea. Revue électronique d’études sur le monde anglophone*, 8/1, 2010, 1-15, <http://journals.openedition.org/erea/1400>, consulté le 18 mai 2024.

Petrakian, Y., « La traduction française de la Concordance Strong. Concordance Strong française-Lexiques Hébreu/Araméen et Grec », *Lueur. Un éclairage sur la foi*, <https://www.lueur.org/bible/hebreu-grec/>, consulté le 18 mai 2024.

QBible - A Website for Biblical Research, <http://qbible.com/>

Tisot, H., « Le Pardès, « C’est la clef qui ouvre la porte de la Torah » », *Pardès*, 2002/1 (N° 32-33), p. 363-380, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-pardes-2002-1-page-363.htm>, consulté le 20 mai 2024.

Twitchell, L., *At the Intersection of Physics and Emotion*, 06/02/2018, <https://constructallaw.com/2018/02/06/at-the-intersection-of-physics-and-emotion/>, consulté le 20 mai 2024.

Vidal Naquet, P., « Flavius Josèphe, un historien contesté et incontournable », *Chroniques*, BNF, décembre 2004, http://chroniques.bnf.fr/archives/decembre2004/numero_courant/conferences/flavius_josephe.htm, consulté le 20 mai 2024.

Corpus

Bible Hub, <https://biblehub.com/>, consulté le 13 janvier 2025.

FRANTEXT, <https://www.frantext.fr/>, consulté le 5 janvier 2025.

La Bible AELF, <https://www.aelf.org/bible/Ex/20>, consulté le 2 juillet 2024.

La Bible catholique, <https://bible.catholique.org/>, consulté le 2 juillet 2024.

La Bible d’André Chouraqui, 1974, <https://nachouraqi.tripod.com/>, consulté le 2 juillet 2024.

La Bible Darby, 1885, <https://www.lueur.org/bible/versions/darby.html>, consulté le 2 juillet 2024.

La Bible du Rabbinat, 1899, <https://www.sefaria.org/>, consulté le 2 juillet 2024.

La Bible de Jérusalem, 1956, <https://gratis.bible/fr/dejer/>, consulté le 2 juillet 2024.

La Bible en français courant, 1997, https://bibliauniversalis3.com/selection_chapitre.php?version=BFC&livre=EXO, consulté le 9 juillet 2024.

La Bible Louis Second, 1910, <https://www.lueur.org/bible/versions/segond-1910.html>, consulté le 9 juillet 2024.

La Bible Martin, 1744, <https://www.lueur.org/bible/versions/martin.html>, consulté le 9 juillet 2024.

La Bible du Semeur, Alfred Kuen, 1992, 2015, <https://emcivt.com/bible/levitique-23-24-semeur.html#24>, consulté le 9 juillet 2024.

La Bible - Traduction Nouvelle, Samuel Cahen, 1831-1839, <https://www.levangile.com/>, consulté le 14 janvier 2025.

La Grande Bible de Tours, Jean Jacques Bourassé et Pierre Désiré Janvier, 1866, <https://laportelatine.org/medias/ebooks-livres-numeriques/la-sainte-bible-selon-la-vulgate-avec-commentaires>, https://bibliauniversalis3.com/selection_livre.php?version=GBT, consulté le 29 juin 2024.

La Bible TOB : traduction œcuménique, <https://archive.org/details/labibletoctraduc0000unse>, consulté le 29 juin 2024.

Sefaria, <https://www.sefaria.org/texts>, consulté le 14 janvier 2025.

Sefarim, *La Bible dans la traduction du Rabbinate*, <https://www.sefarim.fr/>, consulté le 14 janvier 2025.

Septante, <https://www.saint.gr/45/7/biblebooks.aspx>, consulté le 14 janvier 2025.

Strong, J., *Dictionnaires des mots Hébreux et Grecs issus de la Concordance Exhaustive S.T.D.*, LL.D. 1890, <https://www.lueur.org/bible/hebreu-grec/strong/>, consulté le 20 mai 2024.

The Israel Bible, <https://theisraelbible.com/insights/>, consulté le 14 janvier 2025.

Traduction œcuménique de la Bible -TOB, 2003, <https://bibliauniversalis3.com/>, consulté le 20 mai 2024.

HOW TO MAKE ENGLISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE MEMORABLE FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Cristina Denisa ARSENE-ONU*

Abstract: *In today's dynamic academic and professional landscape, soft skills such as empathy, creativity, and reflective thinking are becoming as essential as hard knowledge. This paper explores innovative pedagogical approaches to making English and American literature courses more memorable and impactful for university students. Drawing from theories like Louise Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading and Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences, the study outlines how emotional engagement, personal relevance, interdisciplinary strategies, and extracurricular activities such as book clubs can enhance retention and appreciation of literary texts. Through survey data from students at the POLITEHNICA University of Bucharest, Pitesti University Centre, Faculty of Theology, Letters, History and Arts and reflective classroom practice, the paper argues that literature is best remembered when it becomes a personal, lived experience rather than abstract academic content.*

Keywords: *recollection; reminiscence; oblivion; English and American Literature; book club; student engagement; higher education*

Introduction

Why do students often perceive literature as abstract or forgettable? What ensures literary content is retained and valued beyond final exams? The aim of this paper is to identify and assess effective methods in involving university students enrolled in English and American literature courses for better retention and consequent better results in final exams. Benjamin Franklin's words "Tell me and I will forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn." lie at the foundation of this particular article, since, at a certain point in my teaching career it dawned on me that as teachers one can have an impact on your students in ways that might not be the ones you have been used to. Thus, we should not be focussing on "How smart are our students?" but instead on "How are our students smart?" which lies at the foundation of Carol Dweck's fixed and growth mindset. The study advocates for an inclusive, affective, and experiential approach to teaching literature.

Recollection refers to cognitive recall of facts, while reminiscence emphasizes personal, emotional memory. The concept of oblivion serves as a pedagogical caution: without meaningful engagement, literature risks becoming forgotten content. To counter this, students must experience literature as something emotionally resonant and personally significant. In literature, the tension between recollection and forgetting is not only a thematic concern but also a pedagogical one: how do we ensure students remember what matters, and what causes literary content to fade away into oblivion or forgetting?

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, cristina.arsene1704@upb.ro

Approaching literature as cultural memory, one can argue that English and American literature function as repositories of cultural memory. By teaching literature through the lens of recollection and reminiscence, we prompt students to engage not just analytically but also affectively and personally. For instance, canonical texts, from *Hamlet*, *The Scarlet Letter* to *The Great Gatsby* and *The Midnight Library*, invite acts of recollection – not only of narrative events but of the cultural and historical conditions they represent. What is more, literature becomes memorable when it taps into its mnemonic potential.

General and theoretical framework: definitions and categorization

From recollection to personal reminiscence

Generally speaking, recollection refers to **cognitive recall**, while reminiscence stands for **personal engagement**. During literature courses and book clubs we can foster recollection by means of using visual storytelling and thematic mapping to aid factual retention. In terms of reminiscence, teachers can encourage students to produce personal narrative responses, reflective essays, or re-create/reimagine classic texts. In my personal teaching practice for the past 19 years, I have prompted students who were studying Thomas More's *Utopia* to describe "My Own Version of the Utopia", backed up by drawings, maps, motifs, flags, which were either part of individual work or group work to be shared with their peers. Another example highlights the analogies students draw when studying *The Great Gatsby*'s themes of loss, aspiration and the mirage of the American Dream in terms of their own lived experiences. In this manner, students are not urged to merely recall the text, but they are actually engaging in reminiscence, transforming literature from content to memory.

The idea of **oblivion** might stand for a pedagogical warning which underscores ineffective teaching. Differently put, without meaningful engagement, literature is consigned to oblivion, which means that students may pass exams with flying colours but forget texts and authors entirely after their final exams. In order to combat this, literature should be taught not just as content to be consumed, but also as experiences which are worthwhile remembering. Therefore, this article will showcase methods in terms of promoting recollection (e.g. mnemonic devices) and reminiscence (e.g. reflective journals, POLI Book Clubs, etc.). For this reason, we have conducted research on the way in which students remember, retrieve and use specific information and structures.

Scientific literature review

To make English and American literature memorable for university students, Louise Rosenblatt's book offers a deeply relevant and pedagogically influential framework. Some core pedagogical concepts showcase the transactional theory of reading and two types of reading (the efferent and the aesthetic one) (Rosenblatt, 1995: 11).

The Transactional Theory of Reading features reading as a transaction between the reader and the text. This type of transaction is not actually passive reception or mechanical decoding, which leads to the literary experience being shaped by both the text and the reader's personality, experiences, and cultural context.

In Rosenblatt's book the efferent reading entails extracting information, especially for a test, whereas the aesthetic reading is all about lived-through experience, emotion, and

meaning. University teaching often prioritizes efferent reading over aesthetic experience, potentially reducing literature to dry and technical information rather than lived meaning.

The ensuing strategies are suggested by Rosenblatt so that literature become a memory-laden experience:

- **engaging students' emotions and experiences;** teachers are advised to encourage students to respond emotionally to texts and to relate them to their own lived experiences (e.g. as our survey will reveal, students are highly challenged by William Shakespeare's Katerina's final speech from *The Taming of the Shrew*, especially in this day and age when feminism and mindsets collapse, Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus' Final hour and the underlying message of free will, passion and downfall as a result of a tragic flaw, as well as and Beowulf's rise to fame after deeds of courage in his youth and self-sacrifice in his old age); as Rosenblatt puts it "the reader seeks to participate in another's vision – to reap knowledge of the world ... to gain insights that will make his own life more comprehensible" (Rosenblatt, 1995: 18)
- **facilitating reflective and critical discussions;** after the students' initial engagement with the texts, critical reflection, re-reading, and discussion are to be promoted to deepen understanding and insight on the matter; this particular strategy may create an "intimate" connection between students and the intricacies of the text, their perspectives being so different from female to male students, from Generation X to Millennials based on their upbringing, societal influence and personal experiences;
- **respecting cultural diversity in interpretation;** teachers need to promote multicultural perspectives and validate varied student interpretations, while maintaining discussion of literary quality: "Genuine responses to literature always entail a meeting of the 'cultural environment' of the reader with that of the text." (Rosenblatt, 1995: 7)
- **integrating social and ethical dimensions;** literature should be recognized as a vehicle for exploring human behavior, ethics, and societal issues; "the teaching of literature inevitably involves the conscious or unconscious reinforcement of ethical attitudes." (Rosenblatt, 1995: 19)

In terms of curricular implications, as teachers, we should focus on incorporating literature that speaks to students' real-life concerns, identities, and values. A case in point is represented by the books *Midnight Library* and *The Way I Used to Be*, which were truly appreciated by our students for two reasons: on the one hand they unequivocally opted for these reads; on the other hand, they identified mutual and relevant grounds with the topics from both books. Additionally, designing assignments that bridge emotional engagement and intellectual inquiry is something worth considering. Last but not least, teachers should provide space for students to express their choice of readings, test their interpretation against the text, and without a shadow of a doubt, allow them engage with their peers' perspectives.

Another theoretical framework is the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI), which was proposed and developed by psychologist Howard Gardner in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The theory suggests that we possess eight or more "relatively autonomous intelligences" and we tend to draw on them to "create products and solve problems" that we

find relevant for ourselves and the societies we are part of. Applying MI to the study of literature helps tailor teaching strategies to diverse student strengths, enhancing engagement and retention (Davis, Christodoulou, Seider, Gardner, 2011: 485). How to leverage this theory? First and foremost, we will list the intelligence types and how they can be connected to teaching literature.

- Linguistic: debates, creative writing
- Interpersonal: group discussions, literature circles
- Intrapersonal: journaling, reflective analysis
- Musical: exploring musical adaptations of poetry
- Spatial: storyboarding, visual mapping
- Bodily-kinesthetic: dramatizations and reenactments
- Logical-mathematical: analyzing plot structures
- Naturalistic: studying environmental symbolism in literature

Linguistic intelligence goes hand in hand with engaging students in writing poetry, essays, debates, performing storytelling, and literary analysis. Some activities that can leverage this type of intelligence could be either composing alternative endings to novels/plays/short stories, performing dramatic readings, or writing letters as characters. In *The Great Gatsby*, *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, or *The Taming of the Shrew* we can focus on theme debates (the American dream, sin, pride, racism, feminism etc.) or character monologues. These particular activities have proved to be well received among students of varied generations due to their hands-on experience.

In the case of interpersonal intelligence, one should use group work, literature circles, as well as class debates. This way we can foster discussions related to the characters' motivations, ethical dilemmas, and emotional conflicts. As such, the POLI Book Clubs (weekly or monthly on site or online encounters organized by BA and MA students) perfectly epitomize this particular type of intelligence, since during these meetings students can role-play historical and fictional figures from English and American literature).

To showcase intrapersonal intelligence, teachers are prompted to encourage journaling, personal reflection, and the analysis of the characters' internal struggles. For this purpose, we can ask students to find common grounds themes that are relevant to their own experiences. For example, our students approached the Old Anglo-Saxon poem *Deor's Lament* with its laconic and philosophical refrain "That evil ended. So also may this" from their point of view, while recollecting past misfortunate experiences and their individual coping mechanisms. The same goes for the POLI Book Club with books such as *The Way I Used to Be* or *Midnight Library* when students were prompted to engage in envisaging prospective courses of action, in accordance with the main characters from the novels under scrutiny.

Musical intelligence matches the use of music from the Renaissance era which is the perfect trigger for insightful discussions related to the tone and type of personality people might have had in those times. On top of that, the wide range of musical adaptations for literary texts, such as Shakespeare's sonnets or Emily Dickinson's poems are worth exploring especially for those students who are passionate about music or can play musical instruments. Moreover, with the help of AI-generated musical content (<https://suno.com>), students are

encouraged to explore different types of rhythm and meter from William Shakespeare or Emily Dickinson's poems, through the lens of contemporary musical trends.

Applied thoughtfully, MI enriches literary engagement and inclusivity, aligning intellectual inquiry with emotional resonance. For instance, incorporating visual storytelling or literature mapping (plot maps, character webs and portrayals) supports spatial intelligence. For example, students can storyboard a chapter from *The Scarlet Letter* or illustrate key scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, visually organizing relationships and plot dynamics. Not only do these strategies enhance comprehension but also facilitate memory by linking visual elements to textual meaning.

If one includes dramatic reenactments or enables students to physically "step into" a narrative, especially on the occasion of the POLI Shakespeare week, both on site and online (during the pandemic), we are highly likely to stress the bodily-kinesthetic intelligence. Most students involved in this event in the past 14 years, have either reenacted acts from Shakespeare's plays or performed Renaissance dances. Notably, as time passes by, students tend to be less triggered to develop their bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, irrespective of the awareness on the matter.

When students are prompted to explore patterns, analyze cause-effect relationships and trace the narrative structure of a literary work, educators can activate the logical-mathematical intelligence. This cognitive approach is particularly effective in complex texts requiring sequential reasoning and inferential logic. For instance, students analyzing Macbeth's psychological descent into tyranny and madness can map the turning points that catalyze his downfall, such as the witches' prophecies, Lady Macbeth's persuasion, and his own moral vacillation. Similarly, following the cyclical motifs in *The Great Gatsby* helps students understand narrative logic and thematic development. By engaging students in constructing timelines, identifying decision-making processes, literature becomes a space for analytical inquiry and critical thinking.

The last type from the theory of multiple intelligences is naturalistic intelligence, which enables students to examine nature symbolism and environmental themes. Texts that could be studied in this vein are William Shakespeare's plays that feature a wide variety of plants, animals and birds used both symbolically and matter-of-factly, as well as Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* that highlights the features of an Eden-like Garden.

As a consequence, we can presume that the MI theory can be used successfully in university education, since it emphasizes improved student motivation and retention, greater inclusivity, since it allows students to showcase diverse strengths based on their different degrees in their multiple intelligences. In a nutshell, not only does literature become academic content, but also a lived and felt experience, tailored on every single type of intelligence students feature.

Strategies to enhance retention in English and American literature courses

In case you want to make sure that literature becomes memorable, emotionally resonant, and intellectually stimulating experience for university students, the following

strategies have emerged as highly effective. Each is grounded in pedagogical theory and has been validated by implementation and student feedback.

Contextualization and historical framing

Cultural memory and contextual learning theories emphasize the value of placing texts within their socio-political and historical frameworks. Basically, embedding literary works within the cultural and historical conditions of their time fosters deeper understanding. For instance, teaching *Beowulf* or *The Scarlet Letter* alongside historical documents or timelines increases their relevance and recall. Based on our university experience in the past 19 years, students have responded positively when older texts were linked to contemporary issues or parallel with modern examples.

Interdisciplinary approaches

Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences highlights the benefits of integrating various disciplines and sensory modalities. It goes without saying that literature is enriched through connections with films, visual arts and visual plot maps leverage students' spatial, musical, and linguistics intelligences. *All is True* or *Anonymous* are two of the films that feature aspects of William Shakespeare's life and literary activity that enabled students to get a different glimpse of the English Renaissance. On the productive spectrum, our students attended two contests, *William Shakespeare through Pictures* (they were challenge to represent William Shakespeare, iconic scenes, or motifs in paintings, portraits, or collages) and *Shakespeare-Inspired Songs (CI listening contest)* (after listening to Rush – *Limelight*, Dire Straits – *Romeo and Juliet*, Taylor Swift – *Love Story*, Bob Dylan – *Desolation Row*, participants were asked to analyze lyrics, fill in gaps and write a brief essay on an adjacent topic).

Active learning techniques

Rosenblatt's aesthetic reading model emphasizes the value of experiential learning. Role-play, debates, and reenactments empower students to embody literary characters and engage with ethical dilemmas. Students praised activities like character monologues (e.g. Katerina's final speech from William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*) and POLI Shakespeare Week performances, which led to deeper emotional and cognitive investment.

Personal connection and reader-response theory

Rosenblatt's transactional theory views reading as a dynamic interaction between the text and the reader's experiences. Encouraging students to related themes from texts to their own lives improves retention. Assignments such as reflective journals, personal essays, or "My Own Version of the Utopia" projects (inspired by Thomas More) allow literature to become autobiographically significant. Survey data will show that students especially "clicked" with themes and identity, loss and resilience in *The Midnight Library* and *The Way I Used to Be*.

Technology integration

Digital pedagogy and gamified learning support multimodal retention and engagement. Using podcasts, literary trivia apps, and AI-generated multimedia (e.g. music, visual art) brings literary texts into the students' digital world. Podcasting assignments, student-created video critiques, roasting videos, and gamified English and American-oriented information in the form of Kahoots, Bamboozles, Wordwalls, were cited as memorable and enjoyable methods.

Fostering self-efficacy

Carol Dweck's growth mindset theory and social-cognitive approaches to learning highlight the role of confidence and resilience. Structure scaffolding, early feedback, and inclusive peer interaction help students feel more confident. The POLI Book Clubs, where students initiate, lead discussions and explore modern and classical English and American texts in a non-evaluative setting, were particularly effective in boosting the students' confidence and intrinsic motivation. Even small gestures, such as themed props or classroom ambiance (e.g. gingerbread as mentioned by one of the student-respondents), contribute to a supportive learning environment.

Purpose of classroom research

During the IATEFL conference, in April 2025, Daniel Xerri, one of the plenary speakers, made a lasting impression on me with his ideas that resonate with the present paper. "We make our world significant by the courage of our questions and by the depth of our answers." as Carl Sagan would say. In this part of the article, I will focus on classroom research concerning the memorable aspect of English and American Literature university courses, which beg the questions *what? how? why?* teachers and learners can ultimately play an active role in knowledge/linguistic memories construction (Xerri, 2025). In terms of *what?* research could be considered a process of "poking and prying with a purpose" to quote the American writer and anthropologist Zora Neal Hurston. trying to find out something that you do not know and doing so in a very intentional manner.

To the question *why* we do research, Kathleen Graves answers that when teachers do research, they become learners and protagonists at the same time. They are learning about themselves. They are learning about the classroom but they are also the protagonists of that knowledge construction process and I think that is perhaps the most relevant way of convincing people that doing research is something worth thinking about obviously doing research is voluntary no one should impose it upon teachers. It should be coming from the teachers themselves otherwise we cannot really talk about teacher-initiated research. So, classroom research when we engage in it helps us to improve our practices if we identify issues that we want to resolve and we do so through inquiry. We do so by learning more about what works and what does not, about the kind of identity that we have as professionals. The other point of relevance is about *how* when teachers choose to do research in the classroom, they are addressing challenges that matter to them and to their learners. These are the challenges that they experience in the real world not the challenges that others might say are applicable to them. And in so doing they are also improving the learners' outcomes, making

learning more successful. Hence classroom research helps teachers to become reflective practitioners, to reflect on their practices, to reflect on their identity. By means of the knowledge that we managed to construct within the classroom we are now equipped to advocate for change in language education. We have something to say and what we're saying is meaningful is valid and it has impact.

Survey findings on *How to Make English and American Literature Memorable for University Students*

This study investigated what makes English and American literature memorable for university students, based on survey responses regarding texts studied, teaching experiences, emotional engagement, and participation in the POLI Book Club. Six key thematic categories emerged: most memorable texts/authors, least memorable texts/authors, effective teaching methods, student engagement, participation in extracurricular literary clubs, and suggestions for improvement.

The survey contains responses from 54 university students, from the 2024-2025 academic year, enrolled in 1st, 2nd, 3rd year BA students, as well as 1st and 2nd year MA students within the Faculty of Theology, Letters, History and Arts (BA programmes: Romanian-English, English-French, English-German, English-Spanish and the MA programme: English Translation Studies), University Centre of Pitesti, Politehnica University of Bucharest. It is worth mentioning that the MA students are former BA students who benefitted in the past from the same English and American literature courses under scrutiny (Medieval English Literature, Renaissance English Literature, British and American Cultural Studies) and the POLI Book Clubs throughout university.

Most memorable texts/authors

Students identified a number of texts and authors they perceived as especially memorable due to emotional depth, thematic relevance, and the quality of classroom presentation. William Shakespeare was cited most frequently, with students recalling both his sonnets and plays – especially *Romeo and Juliet* and *Sonnet 18* – for their expressive language and universal themes. Edgar Allan Poe was also highlighted for his psychologically rich and atmospheric narratives, such as *The Fall of the House of Usher*. Similarly, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* left a lasting impression due to its emotional subtlety and relatable characters. Additionally, *Beowulf* and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were praised when taught with vivid historical and cultural framing. These examples illustrate how emotional resonance, complexity, and context contribute to long-term literary retention.

Least memorable texts/authors

Conversely, several students reported difficulty recalling or connecting with certain authors. Emily Dickinson appeared frequently in this category, often due to the students' discomfort with her poetic style or abstract themes. Intriguingly, William Shakespeare was listed both as most and least memorable, revealing a polarization likely influenced by the teaching approach or individual preference. Some respondents left the question unanswered,

signalling a complete and utter lack of engagement. These observations underscore the importance of accessibility, student interest and pedagogical strategy in ensuring a text's memorability.

Teaching methods that helped make literature memorable

Students overwhelmingly favoured interactive and context-rich teaching methods that made literature more relatable and intellectually stimulating. Class discussions and debates were the most commonly praised approach, cited for encouraging interpretation, dialogue and critical thinking. Historical and cultural contextualization helped students grasp the relevance of older texts. Methods like visual aids, dramatic readings, group presentations, and participation in the POLI Book Club also stood out. These activities allowed students to actively engage with literature, rather than passively consume it, leading to deeper understanding and improved recall. The data suggest that student-centered, multimodal pedagogy enhances both cognitive and emotional retention of literary material.

Student engagement

A high level of student engagement was evident in the recall of specific quotes, characters, and scenes, particularly from emotionally charged works such as *The Great Gatsby*, *Hamlet*, and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Students reported forming personal connections with literary themes, such as identity, mortality, and love. In some cases, characters served as mirrors or foils for students' own experiences, leading to meaningful reflection. The ability to remember exact lines and detailed scenes indicates that affective engagement – when students emotionally invested in the material – plays a crucial role in memorability. These findings support the view that personal relevance, discussion, and imaginative participation significantly enhance literary engagement.

Participation in POLI Book Clubs

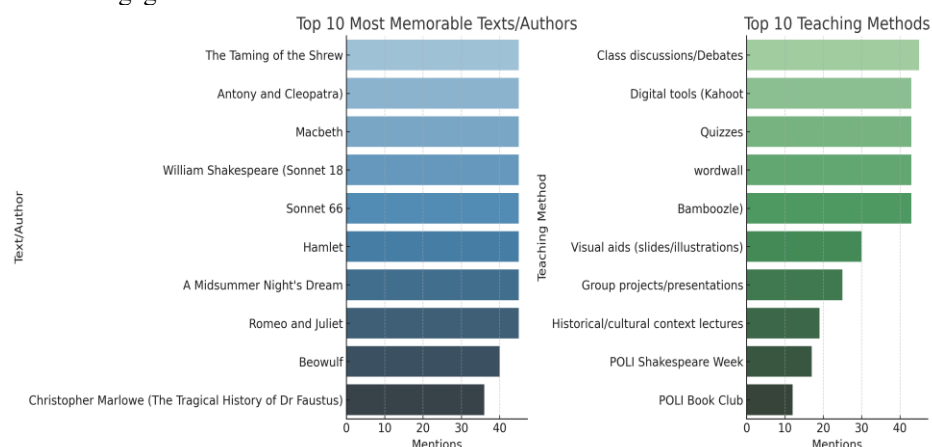
The POLI Book Club, an extracurricular initiative led by the Faculty of Theology, Letters, History and Arts, Department of Language, Literature, History, and Arts, emerged as a key environment for literary appreciation and retention, in 2019. Students described the club as more informal discussion-based, and student-driven than traditional coursework. The atmosphere encouraged open dialogue, peer interpretation, and cross-disciplinary engagement, allowing for deeper and more personal responses to literature. The inclusion of modern or non-canonical texts alongside classics broadened literary exposure and made sessions feel more relevant. Students also appreciated the sense of community the club provided, occasionally noting memorable social elements that enhanced their overall experience. These insights suggest that extracurricular literary spaces can significantly enrich the formal curriculum by fostering intrinsic motivation and deeper emotional connection to texts.

Suggestions to improve English and American literature courses

Finally, students offered constructive suggestions for making literature courses more engaging. Chief among these was the use of performance and role-play, enabling students to step into the perspectives of characters and bring texts to life. Other ideas included dramatic

reading with emotional expression, creative multimedia projects, and increased integration of contemporary literature. The goal in these proposals was to humanize the literary experience and move away from lecture-centric delivery. A few responses pointed to the impact of classroom ambiance and interpersonal dynamics – for example, a student fondly recalled “gingerbread made by our teacher,” a small detail that symbolized warmth and care in the educational environment. Overall, students advocated for an active, emotionally resonant, and student-responsive curriculum.

The informal setting – sometimes complemented by refreshments or themed meetings – created a sense of community, which further reinforced the enjoyment and retention of literature. This suggests that extracurricular, student-centered literary forums like the POLI Book Club can be powerful tools in enriching literary education and increasing student engagement.



Conclusions

The impact and outcomes of the above-mentioned strategies and techniques are indicative of increased student engagement, motivation and retention of literary concepts, overall encouraging diverse participation and self-awareness of learning preferences. Notwithstanding the whole experience builds deeper understanding by activating emotional and experiential pathways. Another highlight of this article is underlining the assessment implications which include multi-modal types of assessments such as: performance-based (for the bodily-kinesthetic), visual projects (for the spatial), reflective writing (for intrapersonal), as well as portfolio-based evaluation to honor student strengths over time. All in all, the future of literature teaching largely depends on bridging analytical rigour with emotional and mnemonic resonance.

This study underscores that literature becomes memorable when it is felt, not just studied. Ultimately, bridging analytical rigor with emotional engagement is essential for meaningful literary education.

References

- Davis, K., Christodoulou, J., Seider, S., & Gardner, H. (2011). *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Intelligence* (pp. 485-503). Cambridge University Press.
- Dweck, C. S. (2008). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Random House.
- Kaufman, J. C., & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2019). *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Mercer, S. (2024). *Compassion-Based Language Education*. Oxford University Press.
- Pugliese, C. (2017). *Creating Motivation: Activities to Make Learning Happen*. Helbling Verlag.
- Rosenblatt, L. M. (1995). *Literature as Exploration* (5th ed.). Modern Language Association.
- Xerri, D. (2025). *Teachers and Classroom Research: Ownership, Relevance, and Conceptualisations*. Plenary presented at IATEFL Conference, Edinburgh.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMORY IN COMMUNICATION

Adela Elena DUMITRESCU*

Abstract: *This paper explores the role of memory in the process of communication, with particular attention to the concepts of recollection and reminiscence and their applications in foreign language teaching. Beyond its functional role in vocabulary retention and grammar acquisition, memory is examined here as a complex cognitive and affective process essential to the construction of linguistic identity. Drawing on classical philosophy and modern cognitive science, the paper distinguishes between recollection—a conscious act of retrieval—and reminiscence—a spontaneous reactivation of latent knowledge. Practical applications in language teaching are proposed, aimed at fostering deep, authentic, and emotionally resonant learning.*

Keywords: *memory; communication; language teaching; recollection; reminiscence; linguistic identity; narrative pedagogy*

In foreign language teaching and learning, memory is often reduced to its functional utility: how many words a learner remembers, how well they recall grammar rules or idioms. Yet real communication - spoken or written - is not a mechanical performance, but a living act of “recalling,” sometimes deliberate (*recollection*), other times unconscious (*reminiscence*), involving experience, emotion, and identity. This paper explores how the dual concepts of **recollection** and **reminiscence** can inform and enrich foreign language pedagogy. We argue that communication is, at its core, a memorial act, and that effective teaching should tap into both explicit and implicit dimensions of memory.

Memory in communication: the relationship between function and symbol

Memory is not a passive container of the past - it is an active, constructive process that mediates the way individuals interpret the world and express themselves through language. In communication, memory operates at the intersection of function and symbol: it enables the retrieval of linguistic structures and meanings while simultaneously evoking identity, emotion, and cultural resonance.

Plato, in *Meno*¹, defined reminiscence as a reactivation of knowledge previously known by the soul. Aristotle, by contrast, described memory (recollection) as a mental reproduction of a previously experienced image. In the context of language teaching, these perspectives can be reframed: **recollection** refers to the intentional recall of learned linguistic forms and **reminiscence** refers to the spontaneous recognition of a structure or word, without conscious recollection of its source. Both forms are present in communication and contribute differently to language mastery.

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, adela.dumitrescu@upb.ro

¹ Plato, *Meno* (Trans. G.M.A. Grube). In J.M. Cooper (Ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* (pp. 870–897)

These differences relate to two main aspects of language instruction and usage:

Recollection corresponds to the functional use of memory in communication: retrieving vocabulary, applying grammar rules, and recalling discourse conventions. It is typically visible in controlled environments (e.g., tests, drills, rehearsed dialogues).

Reminiscence reflects the symbolic and intuitive dimension: it is activated in authentic, emotional, or creative language use, often without full awareness of the source. For instance, a learner might spontaneously produce a phrase heard weeks earlier in a movie, without remembering where or when it was encountered.

This duality illustrates how memory shapes communication not only at the surface level of language form but also at the deeper level of meaning and identity. The learner is not just repeating structures - they are re-living fragments of experience encoded in language.

For language pedagogy, understanding memory as both functional and symbolic provides us fresh opportunities: it acknowledges that both conscious practice and unconscious absorption are acceptable learning processes; it stimulates memory and remembrance by promoting multimodal input (visual, aural, and emotional); it draws attention to the significance of emotionally compelling, context-rich content, such as music, movies, and personal narratives, which evoke memory as resonance as well as data retrieval.

In this light, communication becomes an act of memory performance, in which speakers draw on an intricate interplay of remembered facts, internalized patterns, and affective traces. This reframes the goal of language teaching: not merely to produce correct sentences, but to activate meaningful memory in service of authentic expression.

Cognitive psychologist Endel Tulving¹ distinguishes three types of memory that are particularly relevant to language learning: (1) Semantic memory: stores abstract knowledge - word meanings, grammar rules, cultural facts. It is typically accessed through explicit instruction. (2) Procedural memory: allows for automatic, fluent language use. It develops through repetition and practice, without necessarily involving conscious recall. (3) Episodic memory: contains personal experiences pertaining to learning. It influences motivation and identity, especially when learners associate specific emotions or contexts with language input.

According to this concept, **reminiscence** originates from procedural and affective memory (unconscious, embodied knowledge and emotional signals), while **recollection** involves semantic and episodic memory (organized and emotionally significant learning).

Memory exercises in the language learners

Activating recollection

Effective language teaching techniques that promote conscious memory include context reconstruction, which asks students to recall the first time they encountered a word or structure, vocabulary recycling, which uses visual maps, flashcards, or thematic groupings, and spaced repetition of grammar and lexis, which guarantees long-term retention. These methods improve learning outcomes and self-regulation by fostering metacognition and assisting students in comprehending their own memory processes.

¹ Tulving, E., *Elements of Episodic Memory*. Oxford University Press, 1983

Encouraging reminiscence

Reminiscence can be nurtured through less structured, emotionally engaging activities: cloze exercises and guessing tasks (which stimulate intuitive linguistic responses), narrative immersion through films, songs, and personal stories, tapping into passive knowledge and creative writing and autobiographical reflection (which link language to personal memory and experience). Such methods activate the learner's *felt* understanding of language, fostering fluency and emotional connection to the target language.

Language is not only a communicative tool – it is a vessel of collective memory, encoding the histories, beliefs, and worldviews of the communities that speak it. Through idioms, metaphors, proverbs, grammatical constructions, and even lexical choices, language carries cultural reminiscences that often outlive their original contexts. In this sense, every act of language use is also an act of memory: a retrieval and reactivation of shared cultural experiences.

Idioms are perhaps the clearest example of how language stores cultural memory. These fixed expressions often preserve socio-historical realities and reflect the values or humor of a linguistic community. Their meanings are rarely transparent and cannot be inferred from their individual words—understanding them requires cultural knowledge and, at times, etymological investigation.

Here are some English expressions which deserve to be explored from the point of etymology and historical context view: *kick the bucket* – meaning “to die.” Though humorous or informal, this idiom dates back to 16th-century references to hanging or to the beam over which animals were slaughtered—a memory trace of historical death practices; *spill the beans* – “to reveal a secret.” This may originate from ancient voting practices in Greece, where white and black beans represented approval or disapproval. Spilling them prematurely could reveal unintended truths – a cultural echo of democratic rituals. These expressions represent a linguistic fossil, a crystallized trace of past ways of thinking, living, and speaking. For the language learner, they provide both a challenge and an opportunity, giving access to a people's memory in addition to their language.

Metaphorical structures in language also reflect how a culture conceptualizes the world. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) famously demonstrated how metaphors structure thought. For instance, the expression “Time is money” (e.g., *wasting time*, *spending time*) reflects a capitalist view of time as a resource. These metaphoric systems carry cognitive reminiscences of cultural values—how people relate to time, space, relationships, and morality.

While English is often seen as a relatively “transparent” or utilitarian language, it still contains many grammatical structures that function as unconscious carriers of cultural memory. These patterns reflect not just linguistic rules, but also historical usage, cultural shifts, and shared conceptual frameworks. Here are some concrete examples of such grammatical structures in English and how they carry cultural memory:

Use of Progressive Aspect (be + verb-ing) *I am thinking of going.* / *She is always complaining.* The frequent use of the progressive aspect in English reflects an Anglo-centric worldview that emphasizes process, individual perception, and temporariness. This aspect encodes not just what is happening, but a way of focusing attention on action as flow or evolution, which aligns with empirical, observation-based thinking. Many languages (e.g., German, French, Russian) do not mark progressive aspect separately; the focus on *ongoing*

action in English can reveal a cultural inclination toward time-awareness and individual activity.

Modal Verbs (can, should, must, may, might, would) *You must be tired.* / *She might come later.* / *He would often visit his grandmother.* English modality encodes degrees of obligation, possibility, politeness, and conjecture, all of which reflect cultural attitudes toward certainty, agency, and social negotiation. For example, “*must*” implies obligation—rooted in norms of responsibility or duty; “*might*” reflects hypothetical thinking and politeness, hinting at the Anglo-American cultural preference for indirectness and non-imposition in many social settings. These structures carry traces of social interaction rituals, as well as legal, ethical, and philosophical traditions tied to personal freedom, risk, and responsibility.

Periphrastic ‘Do’ in Questions and Negatives *Do you know him?* / *I don’t think so.* The use of the auxiliary *do* for questions and negation is historically a late innovation in English, not found in earlier Germanic languages or even in older forms of English. This syntactic change reflects a move toward analytic clarity and fixed word order, which can be seen as part of a broader Anglophone shift toward structure over inflection, reinforcing precision, simplicity, and explicitness in communication. It also mirrors historical tendencies toward standardization and rule-based grammar—products of prescriptive education and colonial dissemination.

Both teachers and students benefit from understanding these examples: they recognize that grammar is not neutral; it reflects history, ideology, and worldview; they approach learning a second language as a means of cultural immersion and memory transfer; and they use grammar as a means of exploring culture rather than merely correcting mistakes.

Pedagogical applications: using memory to teach culture

Teachers can use language as a means of building collective memory by:

1. Introducing idioms with their origin stories: use multimedia (short videos, visuals, dramatizations) to illustrate the history behind expressions; asking learners to compare idioms across languages that express similar ideas but with different cultural imagery.
2. Exploring metaphors across cultures: encourage students to identify metaphors in their native language and compare them with those in the target language; discussing how such differences reflect divergent worldviews.
3. Using memory-based tasks: ask students to write mini-essays or diary entries imagining themselves in the historical or cultural contexts from which idioms originate; creating classroom activities like “idiom detectives” or “etymology journeys” to uncover hidden meanings.
4. Fostering cultural empathy: discuss how language reflects not just knowledge, but collective trauma, humor, taboo, and resistance - especially in postcolonial, minority, or endangered language contexts.

Understanding language as collective memory elevates the role of the teacher from instructor to cultural mediator. It invites learners into a dialogue not only with living speakers but also with the ancestral voices and historic resonances embedded in words and structures. By using this approach to language learning, students are engaging in an act of remembering

as they decode symbols, revive stories, and bring back worlds that have been buried in language for a long time. They are also developing communicative competence.

Memory, in its multifaceted forms, plays a central role in communication and language acquisition. As shown throughout this paper, both recollection and reminiscence offer essential insights into how learners process, internalize, and express language. Recollection fosters deliberate learning and structured knowledge retrieval, while reminiscence activates spontaneous, emotionally anchored linguistic responses. Acknowledging these dimensions transforms the language classroom into a space where cognitive, cultural, and affective processes converge. When educators treat language as a vessel of collective and personal memory, they open the door to deeper engagement, stronger identity formation, and more enduring learning outcomes. In doing so, language education becomes not just a matter of instruction, but of participation in living cultural memory.

References

- Aristotle, *On Memory and Recollection*. In J. Barnes (Ed.), *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Vol. 1, pp. 714–726). Princeton University Press, 2001
- Blackwell. Krashen, S. D, *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Pergamon Press, 1982
- Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M., *Metaphors We Live By*. University of Chicago Press, 1980
- Plato, *Meno* (Trans. G.M.A. Grube). In J.M. Cooper (Ed.), *Plato: Complete Works* (pp. 870–897). Hackett Publishing, 2002
- Perrin, D., *La mémoire narrative*. L'Harmattan, 2006
- Ricoeur, P., *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Trans. K. Blamey & D. Pellauer). University of Chicago Press, 2004
- Schumann, J. H., *The Neurobiology of Affect in Language Learning*. Blackwell, 1997
- Tulving, E., *Elements of Episodic Memory*. Oxford University Press, 1983
- Widdowson, H. G., *Text, Context, Pretext: Critical Issues in Discourse Analysis*, 2004

NAVIGATING MEMORY AND FORGETFULNESS AMONG ESP STUDENTS IN THEIR JOURNEY OF LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Laura IONICĂ*

Abstract: *The process of acquiring, retaining and sometimes losing information are central to language learning. A strong short-term memory helps us to produce sentences, remember new lexical structures and understand grammar rules to subsequently create complex language tasks. Long-term memory involves encoding new words or pronunciation patterns. Techniques like repetition and meaningful context help with the transfer of information to long-term memory. Forgetfulness in language learning is not unusual. The phenomenon of information loss over time is natural and understanding this can contribute to designing effective learning strategies. If memory strengthens through repeated exposure or retrieval, forgetting reinforces our understanding of core ideas. Only by accepting forgetfulness as a normal occurrence not as a sign of failure, can we approach language acquisition with greater resilience and productiveness.*

Based on these grounds, the present paper aims to highlight such aspects as: memory consolidation, students' active engagement or balancing memory and forgetfulness in learning a foreign language.

Keywords: *memory; forgetfulness; language acquisition*

Defining memory and forgetfulness

According to the Cambridge Dictionary memory is “the ability to remember information, experiences and people”, whereas forgetfulness is “the quality of being forgetful.” Based on a more complex definition provided by the Oxford Dictionary of Psychology, memory is “the psychological function of preserving information, involving the processes of encoding, storage and retrieval” (oxfordreference.com), while forgetfulness is “the process by which memories are lost.” Both processes play pivotal roles in learning a foreign language, each contributing in distinct and complementary ways to the acquisition and retention of new linguistic skills.

Cognitive processes involved in foreign language acquisition

There are three core cognitive processes that allow us to remember and use information effectively: encoding, storage and retrieval. Depending on how the information is presented and how the learner processes it, encoding aims at transforming sensory input so that the brain can store and use it. This generally involves visual, auditory and semantic encoding.

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, lauraionica1976@yahoo.com

In terms of visual encoding, *ESP* students may encode information based on images or written words. The brain's natural preference for visuals, also known as *picture superiority effect* demonstrates that students are more likely to remember and understand information when presented visually, rather than as text alone. As stated by Mintzer and Snodgrass, 1999 "the picture superiority effect in recognition memory tasks refers to the observation that items studied as pictures are better remembered than items studied as words even when targets are presented as words during the testing phase." Learning by association can be a useful tool among learners because they embed new information into pre-existing mental frameworks. This integration makes new concepts easier to remember and relate to real-world experiences.

Students tend to associate words with pictures, diagrams or charts specific to their field of study. For example, students in psychology who study about the brain, correlate abstract concepts with brain-related images or networks, whereas those studying electronics use diagrams or charts to identify and connect notions. Such tools help them to link visual shapes to names and functions. Even colour is extremely useful to create visual hierarchy aiding memory by associating colours with functions. Dynamic visuals illustrate processes better than static images making abstract ideas clearer.

On the other hand, sounds pronunciation pattern may help *ESP* students to use technical terminology, while listening to how words or structures are exploited in specific contexts. Semantic encoding is essential for *ESP* students because they need to understand not only isolated terms but also their specialized meanings within a professional context (HR terms, mass-media terms, computer-related terms etc.). Semantic encoding enhances learners' ability to grasp, retain and effectively apply the specialized terminology required for their academic fields. Domain-specific concepts are frequently difficult to memorize because of their uniqueness and lack of immediate connections with everyday language.

Understanding the concept, rather than memorizing it verbatim or breaking the concept into smaller manageable parts can be more practical. *Photosynthesis* can be easier grasped when broken into *photo* (light) and *synthesis* (putting together), *somnambulism* (*somna* – related to sleep and *ambulism* – related to walking), *biofeedback* (*bio* - related to the body and *feedback* – information received about a process) etc. The phrase *stresses and strains* can be understood differently by students in psychology (a lot of different worries that are caused by something - <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/stress>), in comparison with engineering students who usually relate it to the strength of materials and how they respond to applied loads.

Semantic encoding helps in mastering complex, abstract terminology, while associating terms with their practical applications makes learning more relevant and impactful.

Retrieval is the process by which students access and bring stored information back into conscious awareness. The stored knowledge is used in tasks like speaking, writing or translating. This process is essential because we make sense of what we have learned and consolidate long-term memory. The ability to retrieve and combine different pieces of information supports creativity and adaptive thinking in decision-making.

As students retrieve related bits of information, they create a network in memory that helps them to remember entire set of data or concepts. For example, students in psychology resort to a series of strategies for memorizing psychological concepts, among which we

mention: active recall, spaced repetition to combat forgetting and reinforce memory (reviewing concepts like *cognitive dissonance*, *bipolar disorder*, *classical conditioning* at set intervals), taking quizzes to simulate exam conditions, creating visual diagrams to better organize information, engaging in group study sessions to share knowledge etc. All these strategies help them to deepen their understanding of the subject, while applying the psychological principles in real-life situations. The three processes analysed are interdependent and essential for mastering a specialized language for professional purposes.

In terms of forgetfulness, there are multiple cognitive, psychological or environmental factors which can make students encounter difficulties in remembering vocabulary, grammar rules, pronunciation or other changes in the language. Decay of memory, the lack of frequency in using specialized terminology, challenges in retaining new information, lack of equivalent terms in the native language or cognitive overload may all contribute to the act of forgetting among ESP students. These details added to other more relevant content will be approached in the subsequent parts of the paper.

The relevance of memory and forgetfulness in language learning among ESP students

Memory and forgetfulness play essential roles in language learning, especially among *ESP* students. Understanding how these two cognitive processes interact can significantly impact both teaching strategies and learning outcomes. As regards the way languages are processed and learnt, both linguistics and psychology have contributed to grasping the various mechanisms of acquiring or storing information.

Linguistics provides tools and theories that explain the structure, sounds, meanings and social aspects of languages. Its main areas including phonetics, syntax, morphology, semantics and pragmatics are directly relevant to language learning. On the other side, cognitive and social psychology greatly influence how students retain a foreign language. Such factors like memory and cognition, learning theories, motivation, affection, language transfer can also help them to understand the mental processes involved in language comprehension, production and acquisition.

As regards the phonetic component of the language, learners often struggle with memorizing pronunciation due to cognitive, social or emotional challenges. The phonetic differences between languages stand for the main obstacles in memorizing sounds. Mispronunciation or using incorrect intonation patterns are caused by students' tendency to associate the sound system of their native language with the target language.

Lack of familiarization with some phonemes or mispronunciation makes it hard for students to distinguish, for example, between the English vowels in *lip* - *leap*, *site* - *sight*, *coarse-course*, *discreet* - *discrete* etc. Filtering sounds through their native language's phonetic system can also lead to mishearing or misusing various sounds in the target language.

For example, students in Psychology have difficulty in pronouncing or spelling specialized terms related to personality traits, mental disorders or emotions. As Pinker, 2014 states "scientific thinking necessitates clarity, including clarity in writing." Such terms like *amnesia*, *hypochondria*, *dehydration*, *panacea*, *disease*, *subconscious* etc., are extremely difficult to process both in terms of pronunciation and spelling, either due to their abstract

nature or lack of frequency in everyday language. A pertinent question may thus arise: why can't students memorize specialized terms?

Without a meaningful context, remembrance is much more complicated. The level of abstraction can be another obstacle in retaining specialized concepts. Besides the exercise of memorization, students are more interested in understanding and giving relevance to the new concepts for effective communication, comprehension, and engagement within a particular field of study. Only by connecting terms to practical examples and using repetition can help learners retain specialized terminology. Breaking down complex terms, chunking, creating associations or engaging actively with the material can be useful tools in handling specific vocabulary.

ESP students better understand terms either contextually or based on their previous exposure to the respective lexical structures. The simple immediate context helps them to decipher the right meaning, whereas a higher level of abstraction is formed once they are explained the terms in their native language and after an accurate processing of more specialized texts.

In terms of sentence construction, our brain must remember the rules of syntax (word order, subject-verb agreement, relationships between words and phrases etc.). In terms of semantics, memory allows us to retrieve the meanings of words from our mental lexicon. Semantic memory is a type of long-term memory involved in storing concepts and meanings while using them in appropriate contexts.

It was Endel Tulving (1972) who suggested dividing the long-term memory into two different parts: episodic which contains memories linked to a particular time and place and semantic which contains more general knowledge about the world. Semantic memory shows us that we learn information during various episodes. To know things about the world, such as what the desert looks like, that pineapples take two years to grow is related to experiences we have once lived or heard about.

Some authors argue that episodic memory is the gateway to semantic memory (Squire and Zola, 1998), while others like Tulving (1991) consider that "new information could be stored in semantic memory in the absence of a functioning episodic system, as presumably happens in very young children and in lower animals without episodic memory." (p. 20)

However, recent studies suggest that episodic and semantic memories are deeply interconnected. For instance, the hippocampus, traditionally associated with episodic memory, also plays a role in processing semantic information, highlighting the overlap between these systems. The hippocampus contributes to spatial navigation and the mental organization of events in time, crucial components of episodic memory. It also aids in integrating new semantic information with existing knowledge, facilitating the creation of complex schemas and networks of understanding. Damage of the hippocampus may have serious effects on students' memory: difficulty in the acquisition of new knowledge, impaired imagination and planning, emotional and psychological effects etc. However, seeking new knowledge or engaging different parts of the brain strengthens the hippocampus and improves memory.

Cognitive and social psychology in memorizing and forgetting concepts

Cognitive and social psychology offer key insights into how concepts are retained or forgotten. Fergus Craik and Robert Lockhart (1972) postulated several theories according to which various stimuli are subject to a series of analyses starting with shallow analysis and getting to deeper semantic analysis. Their main assumptions are presented as follows:

- a. the depth of processing of a stimulus has a large effect on its memorability.
- b. the deeper level of analysis produces more elaborate, longer lasting, and stronger memory traces than do shallow levels of analysis.

In more concrete terms, *ESP* students memorize words or concepts based not only on their general meaning, but in association with their experiences. As Thomas B. Rogers et.al.1997 stated “we remember more information if we try to relate that information to ourselves.” Students are better at remembering information that is personally meaningful or relevant to them. This level of relevance leads to more accurate and durable memories.

However, this theory has its limitations because it underestimates the importance of retrieval environments in determining memory performance or it does not consider students’ differences in memory ability (irrespective of how deep the information is, some students are better at recalling concepts than others).

Based on the encoding principle, Tulving and Thomson (1973) proposed that memories are more easily retrieved when the time of recall is the same as the context in which the information was encoded. For example, if students study for their exam in a quiet place and take the exam in a similar setting, they are likely to remember the information better than if they take the exam in a noisy room.

Encoding information both visually and verbally provides another advantage among students learning a foreign language. Concepts that are learned through both reading and visual aids (diagrams, pictures, charts etc.) are better remembered than those learned only through texts. Therefore, memory use and reinforcement are highly related to such aspects as: time, context, individual exposure to language, learning environment etc.

According to the decay theory, forgetting occurs because memory gradually weakens over time, especially if the information is not rehearsed or revisited. Learners may forget how to use simple grammar or lexical structures unless they practice continuously. In the absence of use, even the neural connections associated with knowledge fade. Information that fits into existing mental structures is retained more easily. Learners tend to retain information that is consistent with their pre-existing schemas and forget information that does not fit.

This is what we may call a selective retention of information based on how well it integrates into our existing knowledge. Herman Ebbinghaus, a German psychologist, suggests that foreign language acquisition is more effective when it is spaced out over time, rather than crammed in just a few sessions. The massed practice which means concentrating huge amount of information in a short period, does not allow for memory consolidation and increases the likelihood of forgetting.

For example, retention of phrasal verbs can be challenging, due to their complexity and ambiguity. Phrasal verbs consist of a verb and one or more particles (*up, for, out, off* etc.) that combine to form a meaning that is often idiomatic. This idiomatic nature is hard to

memorize because students cannot infer the meaning as a whole directly. They split it into separate words or chunks (e.g. *break down* should be translated differently depending on its literal meaning – to physically separate something or idiomatic meaning – to stop working, to lose emotional control).

On the other hand, multiple meanings depending on context may add to the complexity of phrasal verbs. For example, *take off* can be translated as: to remove something, to leave suddenly, to imitate somebody, to become successful. Lack of usage in real-life scenarios also stops students from grasping the nuances of phrasal verbs with irregular or non-intuitive meanings. Last, but not least, phrasal verbs are generally part of the colloquial register of the language which means that they are more frequent in informal contexts. In academic English, learners are not so often exposed to particle verbs, thus leading to underuse, and forgetting. Effective strategies for retaining multi-word verbs include learning them in contexts, using them regularly, using spaced repetition and understanding their idiomatic nuances.

Conclusions

The relationship between memory and forgetting is complex, influenced by multiple cognitive, emotional, and environmental factors. All types of memory (episodic, semantic, procedural, working) serve as the foundation of language learning. Its role in retrieval, reinforcement or consolidation contributes to fluency and mastery. Forgetting, on the other side, should not be regarded as a negative phenomenon, but as a process through which students refine understanding over time. In foreign language learning, memory and forgetting are intertwined in a dynamic process that requires careful attention and management. Additionally, the role of emotional engagement, motivation, and social interaction cannot be understated, as they contribute significantly to reinforcing memory and making language learning a sustainable and rewarding endeavour.

References

- Craik, F. I. M., & Lockhart, R. S. (1972). *Levels of processing: A framework for memory research*. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal behavior*, 11, pp.671-684, 1972
- Mintzer, M.Z., Snodgrass J.G., *The picture superiority effect. Support for the distinctiveness model*, *The American Journal of Psychology*, 1999, 112 (1), pp. 113-146
- Pinker, S., *The sense of style. The Thinking Person's Guide to Writing in the 21st century*, New York, Penguin, 2014
- Squire, L. R., Zola S. M., *Episodic memory, semantic memory and amnesia*. *Hippocampus*, 8, pp. 205-211
- Thomas B. Rogers, Nancy A. Kuiper, and William S. Kirker, *Self-reference and the encoding of personal information in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 35, (9), pp.677-688, 1977
- Tulving E., *Episodic and Semantic Memory*. In E. Tulving, W. Donaldson (Eds.), *Organization of memory*, pp. 381-403, New York: Academic, 1972
- Tulving, E., *Concepts of human memory*. In L. R. Squire, N. M. Weinberger, G. Lynch, & J. L. McGaugh (Eds.), *Memory: Organization and locus of change*, p.20, Oxford University Press, 1991

Online resources

<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/memory>, accesat in 27 decembrie 2024.

<https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/stress>, accesat in 27 decembrie 2024.

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780199657681.001.0001/acref-9780199657681-e-4951>, accesat in 27 decembrie 2024.

MEMORIES AND THE JOURNEY TOWARDS BECOMING A (GOOD) ENGLISH LITERATURE TEACHER

Amalia Georgiana MĂRĂȘESCU*

Abstract: *Rather than offering a theoretical presentation about how we can become good English literature professors, the paper details my personal experience as a student and then as a teacher at a faculty of letters, and the way in which my experiences and my reflections on them helped me become the English literature teacher I am today. I shall discuss both successes and failures and shall present my students' feedback to my teaching under the form of answers to two questionnaires, one administered in 2014, the other in 2024.*

Keywords: *teaching literature; discussion; lecturing*

Introduction

In 2006, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union established eight key competences “necessary for personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society” (Annex, *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework*, [LexUriServ.do \(europa.eu\)](http://LexUriServ.do.europa.eu)): communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; social and civic competences; sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; cultural awareness and expression. These competences were replaced in 2018 with: literacy competence; multilingual competence; mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering; digital competence; personal, social and learning to learn competence; citizenship competence; entrepreneurship competence; cultural awareness and expression competence. They were considered needed for “personal fulfilment and development, employability, social inclusion, sustainable lifestyle, successful life in peaceful societies, health-conscious life management and active citizenship”. (The *Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning*, Annex [EUR-Lex - 32018H0604\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/eur-lex.do?uri=CELEX:32018H0604(01):EN)). Within both groups, the key competences are equally important. They overlap and interlock, and their development entails the development of certain qualities and skills. Creativity and curiosity, alongside the capacity of solving problems, thinking critically, taking risks wisely, cooperating and making decisions are essential if one is to function in an ever-changing society, where memorization, though important, is not enough. In a world in which technology plays a more and more important role, people need the ability to use, create, program and share digital content, while the cooperation between nations makes it necessary for one to know the codes generally accepted

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, amalia.marasescu@gmail.com

in different cultures and societies or at least to be aware of diversity and cultural identities. In order to understand others, but also to express ourselves effectively, we need to know languages, i.e. grammar and vocabulary, but also the registers of language. In addition to that, we need empathy, tolerance and open-mindedness. Ethics and responsibility are also of paramount importance.

Many of these can be acquired through the study of literature, which serves not only as a means of getting in touch with a culture, but also as a means of learning the language in which it is written. Literature can promote creativity and greater tolerance for cultural differences, as it makes one more empathic and more open-minded. Analysing literary texts develops critical thinking, decision-making abilities and the skill of negotiating meaning. In addition to that, literature helps us enrich our vocabulary and improve our syntax and exposes us to a variety of styles, and functional and regional varieties. (*cf.* McKay, 2000: 191-193) That is why it should be taught (and studied) with great care.

Being a good literature teacher, like being a teacher in general, is not easy. Methodologists contend that learning to become a teacher is a continuous activity, the good teachers constantly reflecting on their work in the hope of making it more and more effective. Among what can help us perfect our performance in class, they list books about methodology, experience, university courses, our former experience as learners, talking to peers and learner feedback. (*cf.* Harmer, 1991, 2007, Scrivener, 2005) In what follows, I shall show how my experience as a learner and as a teacher, my learners' feedback, but also my reflections on them helped shape my personality as an English literature teacher. This will also entail making considerations on how literature has been taught along the years and on the future of the discipline as well.

My experience as a learner (1992 – 1997)

I became a student at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Timisoara in 1992 and studied the discipline called English Literature for four years (we did not study literature in our final year). The courses offered introductions to the literary periods they were supposed to cover, then presentations of the representative authors and of their most important literary works. The professors read faster or less fast the information they had on a printed or handwritten material, writing on the board proper names, important dates and titles of works, and only very occasionally other words that we did not know. Sometimes they also explained things orally. We, the students, did our best to put down what the teachers told us, obviously without managing to record every single word all the time, the speed at which they talked making it necessary not only for us to be able to write fast, but also to use abbreviations and to rephrase in fewer words the ideas expressed. The notes taken during the lectures were then memorized for the examinations and reproduced. If you wanted a higher mark, you also included in your examination paper information from other sources you had read on your own. The seminars were devoted to teacher-led discussions and to readings of student-made papers.

At that time people became university students after passing a quite difficult entrance examination, for which some had prepared all four high school years and which quite a few people failed. Those who came to the faculty of letters had not only a high level of the foreign

language(s) they were going to specialize in but were also passionate about reading. The professors were not preoccupied with entertaining their students and with offering exciting activities that would not bore them. And, anyway, we considered literature an interesting subject and the literature lectures exciting by definition. The period was close to the 1989 Revolution that had put an end to the communist regime, but the new ideas about education had just started to appear, and definitely the teachers did not have to worry that they would be evaluated by the students for their performance.

My experience as a teacher (2005 – 2014)

I graduated in 1997 and taught my first English literature course at the Faculty of Letters of the then University of Pitești¹ in 2005. It was a course in modernist English literature and consisted of monographic presentations of several authors preceded by an introduction about modernism and about the background against which it developed. The authors included Henry James, Joseph Conrad, D.H. Lawrence, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, G.B. Shaw. I presented their biography, a list of their works, an analysis of one or several of their most important creations and their literary technique. I saw no reason why I should not follow in my former teachers' footsteps, dictating the information and writing on the board the proper names, the titles and other words I noticed were posing problems to my students. Since not all these students were equally bright and some of them actually confessed that they were not able to take notes, and since I remembered my own experience as a learner and my own frustration at not being able to put down everything or at not getting everything properly, I tried hard to make sure that they managed to write and they understood what I told them. So, I wrote considerably on the board and explained the difficult points in Romanian, even making jokes now and then to relax the atmosphere and to enable everybody to rest. My enthusiasm about teaching a subject that I really liked compensated for the traditional way in which I taught and caught the students who returned my enthusiasm throughout the year and performed really well in the examinations.²

But then, gradually, things began to change, and not for the better. Though my knowledge of the literary period taught improved and I had more things to communicate, the students' interest seemed to be decreasing. In about 2013 I seemed to hit rock bottom. Whatever I did, I could not establish any connection of any type with my 3rd year students. I seemed to be talking to an empty room. The results in the examination reflected the students' interest in English modernist literature: a third of them failed. But I was "rewarded" in another manner as well. When they had to evaluate me as part of the yearly evaluation programme, it came out that I was not a very good teacher either. Of course, I was upset. But it also became clear to me that I needed to change something.

The following issues had to be considered when making the changes:

¹ Last year the University of Pitești became the University Centre of Pitești of the National University of Science and Technology Politehnica of Bucharest.

² Along the years, as far as literature is concerned, I have taught seminars, then courses of 18th, 19th and 20th Century English Literature, and a course of Nation and Narration in American Literature. In this paper I shall focus however only on my experience with teaching the course of 20th Century English Literature because it has been the longest-lasting and most impactful.

1. Literature was no longer seen as an important subject. The tenure examination focused mostly on methodology, therefore the students, especially in the 3rd year, with their diploma papers and teaching practice to take care of as well, did not pay much attention to it; moreover, English literature was no longer much taught at pre-university level.
2. Students no longer liked to read and they did not have much time to dedicate to this activity, with the homework they had and the lots of distractions (clubs, Facebook, etc.).
3. My own personality and teaching style were not particularly attractive for them.

As I could not change my personality and become more active and self-confident, or my teaching style because I truly believed that dictating, boring as it was, had the advantage of improving the students' writing and note-taking skills, I had to address the other issues involved and I tried to focus especially on making the information easier to put down and remember. Consequently, I reduced it and I also reduced the length and complexity of the sentences, so that they were easier to follow, to remember and to reproduce. In addition to that, I resumed and re-explained the most important or difficult points in Romanian as well.

In the time saved because I skipped the less relevant details and the long and complicated quotations from critics, I had the students read aloud, during the lectures, fragments from the authors studied. That not only helped them practice and improve their pronunciation, but also, more importantly, got them in direct contact with the authors they had known until then only theoretically. Thus, whether they read or not the respective literary works at home, I could be sure that they were at least superficially acquainted with them: they familiarized themselves with the form and sound of the text, with some of the characters, part of the plot, the literary technique employed, etc. For instance, we read a fragment from Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, illustrative for her techniques of stream of consciousness and space montage, or a fragment illustrating the creation of atmosphere in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Students' opinions. The 2014 questionnaire

Still, even though that seemed to be improving the situation, at least from my point of view, I could not help noticing that the lecturing became rather a dictation exercise and I had to put more effort into articulating words clearly and speaking rarely than into explaining the literature I was supposed to teach. The students' main preoccupation in class was to put down absolutely every word I uttered and not to follow the explanations or to contribute in any way to the lectures. However, I was pretty satisfied with the changes implemented and in order to see if they were at least a little successful from their point of view as well, I asked my students to answer anonymously the following questions at the end of the 2013 – 2014 university year:

1. What methods of teaching literature do you prefer: PowerPoint presentations, traditional lecturing, interactive, others? Why?
2. Do you find the information presented during the literature course sufficient or do you feel the need to supplement it?
3. Do you spend much time reading for school? Do you prefer reading the literary works or criticism about them? Why? Do you read in English or in Romanian?

4. Do you find useful the fact that we read fragments from literary works during the lectures? Why?

5. Are there other authors or literary works that you would have liked to study?

6. Describe your ideal literature course.

The questionnaire was answered by 22 students (40%) out of 55, none of whom signed it.

1. As far as the first question was concerned, as I expected, most of them preferred PowerPoint presentations (18 students = 81.8%), sometimes combined with other methods as follows:

- PowerPoint and interactive (10 students = 45.5%) because: “it helps us understand better the words and the lecture” (A.), “it is easier to remember” (A.), “it helps us, those with visual memory, memorize better” (A.), “it points out the main ideas” (A.);
- PowerPoint and discussion or debates (3 students = 13.6%) because “it keeps us attentive” (A.), “the slides are easier to follow, while the debates fix the information” (A.);
- PowerPoint with the novel in front of us (1 student = 4.5%);
- PowerPoint and traditional lecturing (dictation) (4 students = 18.1%) since “both are important and, if they are combined, we can retain more” (A.).

Regarding the slides, they mentioned that they would also like to see images with the authors and with the characters.

2. Twenty-one students (95.4%) found the information presented during the course sufficient for their needs, considering that who wanted more could read at home, as there were many resources available. The other student considered that too much was said about the author’s life, while s/he needed to search for more “concerning some items” (A.).

3. As regards what they preferred to read, the literary works or criticism about them, the answers looked like this:

- literary works in English – 5 students (22.7%);
- literary works in Romanian – 6 students (27.3%);
- criticism in English – 2 students (9.09%);
- criticism in Romanian – 2 students (9.09%);
- both in English – 3 students (13.6%);
- both in Romanian – 3 students (13.6%).

Though they complained they did not have time for this activity (because of the classes, the homework, the tests, etc.), it appeared that they did read. Most of them preferred the literary works because thus they “can make their own idea about the work, without being influenced by others” (A.). Still, criticism had the advantage that it “offers the entire outlook to the literary work” (A.). And they preferred to read criticism in English and the literary works in Romanian in order to understand them better.

4. The reading of fragments from literary works during the lectures was considered useful by twenty-one students (95.4%), some of the reasons being that this way they “can make a general idea of the novel and its action” (A.), they “can understand and learn better about the novel” (A.), they “can also learn new words and phrases” (A.), and they can improve their reading skills. One student thought we should comment on the fragments more, while

another considered we should read them “in the middle of the lecture, not at the end of it, when I am already tired” (A.).

The one who did not appreciate the activity argued:

“I think that it is not necessary to read the texts at the course, but I find necessary to discuss about the novel which contains the respective text or to focus on the most important part of the novel: to talk orally, to be an interaction regarding the subject of the text between the teacher and students.” (A.)

5. As for the other authors or literary works that they would have liked to study, they were: Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, John Fowles’s *The Magus*, William Faulkner, the authors required for the tenure examination, the literature written after 2000. Fifteen students (68.1%) were satisfied with what they studied.

6. The ideal literature course looked different for each of them, but there were some general characteristics that could be found in several papers and from which I could draw the conclusion that they would like to leave the class with some information already retained so that the preparation for the examination would be easier. Consequently, they would like the course to be relaxed and focused, entertaining, but also instructive, a course which combined dictation with PowerPoint presentations, films and music, and during which the synthetic information presented would be followed by discussions. They would prefer each lecture to concentrate on one or two important works, not more. Interesting quotations should be read and discussed, and the students should be encouraged to express their opinions and to tell what they did not understand without feeling judged. One student, more traditionally oriented, considered that during the class they should read the course aloud with the teacher correcting and explaining, and they should also translate the fragments from the novels, while another, more hard-working, suggested that the students should read at home before they come to class because it would be impossible to get all information from the course. An interesting opinion was “I’d like to write less and read more” (A.), but there are others that should be considered as well, for instance:

“The ideal literature course should present a video or an audiobook for every novel. A film made after the book should be seen as well at the end of the literature course so the students can compare the book with the movie. Some important/ key paragraphs should be printed and the main ideas, the most essential information should be written on the back of the paper of every paragraph given.” (A.)

“I consider that the ideal literature course is when the teacher dictates and the class is silent and takes notes based on the teacher’s discourse.” (A.)

The conclusions drawn after the questionnaire were that even more changes were needed. Students seemed to need a visual support and discussions to help them retain the information. In addition to that, discussions could also give them the opportunity to offer responses, whether positive or negative, responses that are precisely what we should aim at creating during the literature course. The students’ capacity of reacting to a text is definitely more desirable than their capacity of reproducing what others said about it. (*cf.* Long, 2000: 42-45)

A new start in teaching. Other changes and challenges (2015 – 2024)

As a consequence, the following year and quite reluctantly, I gave up dictating and started using PowerPoint presentations. Initially full of text and in black and white, the slides became gradually more colourful and with fewer words written on them. I included pictures, of the authors and of the characters, as I had been advised, the latter being, evidently, taken from films made after the novels discussed. The presentations, whose content did not have to be put down by the students since they had the material under the form of a book, then Word document, allowed me to go faster and to get to teach postmodernism as well (George Orwell, William Golding, Lawrence Durrell, John Fowles, Penelope Lively, Salman Rushdie). Last, but not least, after talking to colleagues, not only from university, I resolved to become more relaxed, to focus on the bright side of teaching rather than on the dissatisfactions and to be friendlier with the students, whom I tried to talk to about various issues that concerned them, connected to school or not.

The pandemic brought other changes and other challenges. The lectures, that moved on Zoom, became shorter. Instead of the two 50-minute sessions we had on site, we now had two 40-minute sessions that the platform offered free of charge. When I suggested paying for longer sessions without interruption, the students who joined all sessions and were attentive and really participated complained of headaches and eye pain, and wanted things to remain as they were. The first five minutes of each of the two sessions were spent on allowing students to join in. The rest of the sessions had to cater not only for their need for information, but also for their need to communicate. We had discussions about their weekends and their holidays, about their joys and sorrows, about books they read and films they saw. And I started involving them in teaching as well, in the sense that I sometimes asked them to read from the slides, we commented together on certain quotations, and we made connections between the situations we found in literature and our life experience.

In the period of the pandemic and in its aftermath, technology found its way into our literature course more and more. I found and started using in class clips of films made after the books we studied (*Lord of the Flies*), conferences delivered on various occasions by writers we talked about (Lawrence Durrell), videos made by various people who comment on the books we discussed (*The Magus*). We watched all these during the lectures and used them as starting points for discussions. Sometimes I also used quizzes or had the students play Kahoot to consolidate what we had discussed.

The students' opinions. Questionnaire and answers in 2024

As last year I had a particularly participative generation of students, who, in addition to that, seemed also more passionate about reading than the previous generations, I thought of asking them to answer approximately the same questionnaire as those in 2014. The questions were the following:

1. What methods of teaching literature do you prefer: PowerPoint slides accompanied by the teacher's explanations, discussions, YouTube videos with other people's presentation of the topics, others (please, state what)? Why?

2. Do you find the information presented during the literature course sufficient or do you feel the need to supplement it?
3. Do you spend much time reading for school? Do you prefer reading the literary works or criticism about them? Why? Do you read in English or in Romanian?
4. Do you find useful the fact that we read and discuss fragments from literary works during the lectures? Why?
5. Are there other 20th century English authors or literary works that you would have liked to study?
6. What do you particularly like about this course?
7. What do you particularly dislike about this course?

The questions were answered by 17 (35.4%) out of the 48 students, of whom 7 (41.17%) signed their papers.

1. The methods preferred were:

- PowerPoint slides accompanied by the teacher's explanations – 2 students (11.76%);
- PowerPoint slides accompanied by the teacher's explanations + YouTube videos with other people's presentation of the topics – 3 students (17.67%);
- the teacher's or other students' presentations + discussions – 3 students (17.67%);
- debates and open discussions + exercises and quizzes – 1 student (2.08%);
- all of them + quizzes – 2 students (11.76%);
- all of them – 5 students (29.41%).

One student would have preferred "creative approaches such as role-playing and creative writing exercises". (M.E.)

2. Ten students (58.82%) found the information presented during the literature course sufficient. One would have liked to have to read more of the novels. One thought "it depends on the depth of coverage" (A.). Five (29.41%) said the information was not enough, consequently they supplemented it by reading my book, the novels, scholarly articles, videos, criticism and websites, online sources respectively.

3. Nine students (52.94%) considered they spent much time reading for school, while six (12.5%) thought they did not spend so much. Two (11.76%) spent their time reading literature, but mostly not for school.

Five (29.41%) preferred to read criticism, four (23.52%) preferred the literary works, while four would read both (23.52%). One (5.88%) read detailed summaries from up to four sources.

One (5.88%) read in Romanian, six (35.29%) in English, seven (41.17%) in both languages.

Here are two rather opposing points of view:

"I spend the vast majority of my time reading for school, works in both Romanian and English, and, in general, I prefer to read literary works because they introduce us to a captivating world, being able to imagine the action/ events described, but also to put yourself in the shoes of the character." (A.)

"I prefer reading in English and I read criticism about the literary works because I don't have time to read the works themselves and keep up with the other subjects too. And some works don't catch my attention enough for me to read them. But some did interest me and I plan on reading them sometimes in the future. Some of the works I'm interested in

reading are Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Orwell's *1984*, Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, and Fowles' *The Collector*." (A.)

4. All students found it useful that we read and discussed fragments from literary works during the lectures because:

- they understood the work better – 14 students (82.35%);
- they retained the information – 3 students (17.67%);
- they liked discussions – 2 students (11.76%);
- they improved their speaking – 2 students (11.76%).

Two opinions worth quoting are:

"I find reading and discussing the fragments really useful because they are relevant for the works as a whole so they provide an insight into the literary works, and we can get a glimpse of the authors' literary techniques, of the themes, symbols or characters. Discussing the fragments is actually one of the things that most help me remember information about the works studied." (A.)

"I think this is the most important, useful, and enjoyable part of the lecture, as it not only engages us, but also provides a way for us to better understand the work." (A.)

5. Nine students (52.94%) were satisfied with what they studied, while nine (52.94%) mentioned some additional authors, like Samuel Beckett, H.G. Wells, Agatha Christie, Daphne du Maurier, Aldous Huxley, E.M. Forster, more female authors. The titles added were *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Great Gatsby*. One student offered a more detailed answer:

"I would have liked to study H.G. Wells, as I have read *The Invisible Man* and found it interesting. Agatha Christie would have also been of interest to almost everyone, as she is still known to our generation. I also read *Peter Pan* by J.M. Barrie, *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Lord of the Rings*, works by Terry Pratchett, Roald Dahl, J.K. Rowling, Philip Pullman, Neil Gaiman. I understand, however, that being more well-known, we would've been more likely to read them ourselves. I believe that we studied authors that are less-known for our generation in order to have a general idea of all the authors considered relevant to this time period." (M.D.)

6. As for what they particularly liked about this course, most of them (10 students) appreciated that everyone was given the opportunity to speak and give an opinion and they were not disregarded if their opinion was not in line with the critics'. Among other things that they liked, the following were mentioned: delving into the themes, characters and historical context of the literary works; exploring a wide range of perspectives, cultures and experiences, developing their empathy and understanding of human nature; comparing the literary works to real life. The communication teacher – students and the accessibility of the course were also appreciated.

"It feels cosy; most of the time the course feels like we all gathered to have a little chat about an author and their work, similar to a book club." (A.)

"I like the atmosphere in this course, the fact that the teacher is quiet, allowing us to ask her different things depending on the texts studied or when we have uncertainties, she provides us materials and communicates very well with the students." (A.)

"I like being there, listening to the teacher, realizing that being a teacher is what I want to be" (T.D.)

7. What they particularly disliked was the literature studied, the demanding course workload, the too long texts and too short discussions, the rather loose connection between the course and the seminar, its slow rhythm. Some would have liked more games and interactive activities, while others considered that the students should have been more involved. One student complained that some of his/ her classmates talked too much and did not let other people talk too. Ten students (58.82%) did not find anything they disliked.

Conclusions after comparing the two sets of questions

The following conclusions can be drawn after comparing the answers to the two sets of questions, one answered in 2014, the other in 2024:

a. The students were not very interested in answering (less than 50% of them answered) which may cast doubt in connection to the reliability of the information obtained. However, if we consider that they were the students that were the most interested in the course (based on their attendance and general participation) and the most likely to appreciate its qualities and faults, then we can consider their responses representative for the whole groups.

b. The fact that none of them signed their answers in 2014 and only very few signed them in 2024 might lead one to the conclusion that they did not have the courage to take the responsibility for what they wrote and/or to face their teacher's possible negative reactions.

c. As far as the teaching is concerned, most of the students in both series preferred it to be done by means of PowerPoint presentations, accompanied by discussions, with more stress on exercises and games in 2024.

d. While most of the students found the information provided during the course sufficient in 2014 (with one student considering that too much was said about the author's life), in 2024 only 58.82% of them were satisfied with what they got, the others thinking the information was not enough and feeling the need to supplement it.

e. Both series of students complained they did not have so much time for reading as they would have liked to. A comparison between the kind of books they liked to read and the languages in which they read is quite difficult to make because of the way in which they answered the questions related to that, but, on the whole, I would say that the 2024 students preferred to read more about the works and more in English than those in 2014.

f. With the exception of one student in 2014, they found useful the reading of the fragments during the course.

g. The dissatisfaction with what they studied grew from one generation to the other. While the 2014 students mentioned among the authors and books they would have liked to study canonical authors and novels, more contemporary literature and the authors required for the tenure examination, those in 2024 also mentioned popular authors like H.G. Wells, Agatha Christie or Daphne du Maurier.

On the basis of these conclusions, where does the future of the discipline English Literature lie? I think it lies in adaptation to the learners' preferences. Students nowadays seem to be less attracted to canonical books and more attracted to popular works and children's literature, probably because they are easier to read and understand, and more appealing. Then, students nowadays love discussions, love expressing their opinions without the fear of being judged. And we cannot ignore their passion for games and phones. So, a

course which combines the difficult works of literature with more lovable ones, which integrates discussions, games and films may be more enjoyable and better accepted.

That is why our distant memories about how English Literature used to be taught cannot really help us become good English Literature teachers nowadays. Recent memories, on the other hand, accompanied by our reflections on them, on what went right or wrong during our lectures and during our interactions with students, are key to our professional improvement. The world is in a continuous change. Society changes. Our students change so that what goes for one generation may not go for the next. And if we, as teachers, do not want to become anachronic, we should constantly adapt and use our memories not to get stuck to the past but to take from them what was good at that time and to modify what was not.

References

- Harmer, Jeremy, *How to Teach English*, Longman, 2007.
Harmer, Jeremy, *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, Longman, 1991.
Long, M.N., "A Feeling for Language: The multiple values of teaching literature", in Brumfit, Christopher J., and Ronald A. Carter (eds.), *Literature and Language Teaching*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 42-59.
Mărășescu, Amalia, *Annotated 20th Century English Literature (Part One)*, Ed. Universității din Pitești, Pitești, 2009.
Mărășescu, Amalia, *Annotated 20th Century English Literature (Part Two)*, Ed. Universității din Pitești, Pitești, 2011.
McKay, Sandra, "Literature in the ESL Classroom", in Brumfit, Christopher J., and Ronald A. Carter (eds.), *Literature and Language Teaching*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 191-198.
Scrivener, Jim, *Learning Teaching*, Macmillan, 2005.

Electronic Resources

- "The Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning", Annex "Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework", in *Official Journal of the European Union*, 04.06.2018, [EUR-Lex - 32018H0604\(01\) - EN - EUR-Lex](#)
"Lawrence Durrell speaking at UCLA 1/12/1972", UCLA Irv and Xiaoyan Drasnin Communication Archive from the archives of the UCLA Communications Studies Department. Digitized 2013, [Lawrence Durrell speaking at UCLA 1/12/1972](#)
"Lord of the Flies Movie Clip – Hunt and Rescue", [Lord of the Flies \(11/11\) Movie CLIP - Hunt and Rescue \(1990\) HD](#), Movieclips
"The Magus by John Fowles", The Top 125 Books of All Time, Rick MacDonnell, [\(1\) The Magus by John Fowles | The Top 125 Books of All Time - YouTube](#)
"The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning", Annex "Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework", in *Official Journal of the European Union*, 30.12.2006, pp. 13-18, [LexUriServ.do](#)

LEVERAGING MEMORY IN EDUCATION: ENHANCING COGNITIVE AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES THROUGH REFLECTIVE AND AI-SUPPORTED PEDAGOGIES

Elena Alfredina NIȚĂ*

Abstract: *This article explores the centrality of memory in educational processes and its dual capacity to foster cognitive development and socio-emotional competence. Drawing on an interdisciplinary framework - spanning cognitive science, linguistics, psychology, education theory, and artificial intelligence - the study redefines memory not merely as knowledge retention but as a dynamic mechanism for constructing meaning, shaping identity, and cultivating empathy. Particular emphasis is placed on the integration of generative AI tools that support reflective learning environments and adaptive pedagogies. Through comparative analyses of global educational systems, this paper proposes a nuanced model of memory-based instruction that promotes intellectual autonomy, emotional resilience, and culturally inclusive teaching. The resulting model has significant implications for curriculum design, teacher training, and the ethical use of emerging technologies in education.*

Keywords: *memory; cognitive development; socio-emotional learning; reflective pedagogy; generative AI; global education; identity*

1. Introduction

Memory is one of the most fundamental faculties of human cognition, enabling not only the retention of information but the shaping of identity and the ability to navigate complex emotional and social situations. While traditional education has often emphasized rote memorization as a means of academic success, contemporary pedagogical theory views memory as an active, reconstructive, and deeply integrative process. This article contends that a renewed focus on memory—both cognitive and affective—can serve as a central pillar in designing reflective, inclusive, and technologically enhanced education. It further explores the transformative potential of generative artificial intelligence in personalizing memory-based instruction, facilitating adaptive learning paths, and supporting emotional growth. This expanded focus emerges from the recognition that learners are not merely passive recipients of content but active constructors of meaning. As such, education systems must evolve to accommodate memory's role in identity-building, intersubjective understanding, and emotional regulation. The integration of AI further introduces the prospect of dynamic and individualized learning loops, in which memory recall and application are continually optimized.

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, arwen.kado@gmail.com

2. Theoretical Framework: Memory in Cognitive and Affective Learning

Cognitive psychology divides memory into working, short-term, and long-term categories, each with distinct functional roles. Theories by Baddeley and Sweller have emphasized the importance of managing cognitive load and working memory in instructional design. Beyond these models, constructivist theories by Piaget and Vygotsky place memory within a social and developmental context, viewing it as a tool for mental schema-building through interaction and language. In parallel, affective neuroscience has revealed how emotional salience strengthens memory consolidation, particularly when coupled with reflection. Integrating both cognitive and emotional frameworks allows for a more holistic understanding of how memory functions in the learning process. Neuroscientific studies using fMRI and EEG data have further revealed that memory retrieval activates networks associated with both emotion and higher-order reasoning, reinforcing the idea that memory is central to synthesis and abstraction. The interplay between declarative and procedural memory also underscores how habits and emotional responses are shaped by repeated exposure and reflective reinforcement.

3. Comparative Educational Approaches to Memory

Education systems differ significantly in how they approach memory. In East Asian countries such as China and South Korea, repetition, memorization, and testing are central, drawing from Confucian traditions that associate learning with discipline and moral development. Conversely, Scandinavian models prioritize constructivist methods, emphasizing learner autonomy, thematic exploration, and reflective practice. Despite differing methods, both systems recognize memory as essential—whether as procedural fluency or deep conceptual understanding. A comparative pedagogical synthesis suggests that combining structured memorization with reflective activities may offer a balanced strategy that supports both performance and personal growth. In addition to East-West contrasts, African indigenous education systems emphasize oral tradition, storytelling, and communal memory practices that prioritize continuity and collective identity. These practices differ from Eurocentric models but offer valuable insights into how memory fosters social cohesion and moral education. Integrating such pluralistic approaches into global curricula can democratize learning and validate diverse epistemologies.

4. Memory and Identity Formation

Autobiographical memory plays a vital role in identity construction. In educational settings, practices such as life story projects, digital storytelling, and reflective journaling enable students to connect learning to personal narratives. Paul Jarvis (2010) emphasizes the role of memory in lifelong learning, asserting that professional and moral identities are anchored in remembered experiences. Schools that foster this reflective practice not only enhance student engagement but also cultivate ethical and intercultural competencies. These identity-oriented memory practices are especially impactful in multilingual and multicultural classrooms, where validating learners' memory landscapes fosters inclusivity. Digital

technologies also play a role in curating and externalizing memory through e-portfolios and multimedia archives. Such tools can assist students in revisiting formative experiences and constructing learning narratives, fostering agency and metacognitive insight. Identity-oriented pedagogy thus becomes a process of narrative co-construction between learner, teacher, and medium.

5. The role of Chomsky and Linguistic Theory in Memory-Based Learning

Noam Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar posits that humans possess innate cognitive structures that allow language acquisition. His broader educational critique underscores the need to move beyond mechanistic instruction towards inquiry-driven learning. Memory, in Chomsky's framework, is not a passive repository but a generative capacity that supports hypothesis testing and pattern recognition. His ideas resonate with Bruner's spiral curriculum and Montessori's focus on discovery learning—both of which rely on recursive memory engagement. Educators can draw on this perspective to design learning environments where students continuously revisit and reframe concepts through layered experiences. Chomsky's generative grammar framework remains influential in language education, where recursive structures and syntactic variation offer a testbed for examining how learners internalize and retrieve patterns. This has direct implications for multilingual instruction and second-language acquisition, where cognitive load must be balanced against the need for pattern reinforcement.

6. Emotional Memory and Reflective Practice in SEL

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) relies heavily on emotional memory. According to Brackett and Rivers (2013), the recollection of emotionally salient events enables students to develop empathy, resilience, and ethical reasoning. Dewey's assertion that 'we do not learn from experience, but from reflecting on experience' is particularly relevant in this context. Classroom strategies such as peer dialogue, mindfulness, and structured reflection exercises help students process and regulate emotional memories. SEL curricula across the globe—from the CASEL framework in the U.S. to Japan's moral education—demonstrate how memory-based reflection supports interpersonal growth and moral literacy. Reflective pedagogies that incorporate memory journals, emotional timelines, and group processing circles can institutionalize affective learning in both primary and secondary education. Moreover, SEL programs are most effective when they are culturally responsive, integrating community values and lived experiences into the curriculum.

7. Integrating Generative AI into Memory-Based Pedagogy

The rise of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and intelligent tutoring systems (ITS), introduces new dimensions to memory activation. These systems can analyze learner responses, track memory retention, and adapt content delivery through spaced repetition and personalized feedback. Emotional agents or AI avatars can also simulate empathetic interactions, supporting the affective side of memory. For instance, tools like Replika or AI-

powered chatbots in educational platforms engage learners in reflective dialogue. While these technologies offer significant pedagogical benefits, ethical concerns around data use, learner agency, and algorithmic bias must be addressed through transparent and inclusive policy frameworks. Case studies in AI-powered learning environments (e.g., IBM Watson Tutor, Duolingo, and DreamBox) show marked improvements in learner retention and emotional engagement. These platforms employ user feedback loops and natural language processing to align content with learner memory profiles, ensuring adaptive pacing and emotional resonance.

8. Pedagogical Strategies and Curriculum Design

A memory-centered pedagogy involves integrating cognitive, emotional, and technological strategies into curriculum. This includes storytelling, retrieval practice, digital portfolios, and concept mapping. Educators should be trained in neuroscience-informed teaching practices and AI-supported instructional design. Comparative examples such as Finland's phenomenon-based learning and Canada's inquiry-based science curriculum illustrate effective models that integrate memory into active, student-centered instruction. Moreover, incorporating student memories into assessment (e.g., self-reflection essays) promotes metacognition and deeper engagement with learning outcomes. Curricula designed with memory at their core often leverage interdisciplinary themes and experiential projects. For instance, memory walks, museum-based learning, and heritage storytelling connect cognitive learning with physical and cultural environments, enhancing both retention and empathy. Such strategies support UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development goals by promoting historical consciousness and global citizenship.

9. Ethical and Practical Considerations for Implementation

Implementing memory-enhanced and AI-supported education requires a principled framework. Teachers must receive training not only in instructional methods but also in ethical AI use. Safeguarding student data, ensuring transparency in adaptive systems, and maintaining a human-centered focus are non-negotiable principles. International guidelines such as UNESCO's 'AI and Education' roadmap provide benchmarks for responsible innovation. Practical concerns also include access to technology, equitable implementation across regions, and the development of inclusive tools for diverse learners. To mitigate disparities, institutions must implement policies that ensure digital equity, including access to devices, connectivity, and culturally relevant AI content. Furthermore, interdisciplinary ethics committees should oversee AI applications in schools, ensuring that memory data are used in service of learner empowerment, not surveillance or standardization.

10. Conclusion and Future Directions

Memory, re-envisioned as a dynamic and generative faculty, plays a central role in both cognitive learning and socio-emotional development. Its integration into educational practice – augmented by reflective methodologies and emerging AI technologies – offers a

powerful model for deep, adaptive, and inclusive learning. Future research should examine longitudinal impacts of AI-supported memory learning, cultural variations in memory pedagogy, and professional development models that prepare educators to navigate this evolving landscape. Ultimately, reclaiming memory as a pedagogical cornerstone may offer one of the most humanizing responses to the increasingly automated future of education. Institutional reforms should therefore prioritize research-informed strategies that foreground memory in teacher training, curriculum development, and education policy. Collaborative networks involving neuroscientists, AI developers, and educators are essential to evolving pedagogical practices that are as humane as they are innovativent.

References

- Baddeley, A. D., *Working Memory*, Clarendon Press, 1986.
- Brackett, M. A., & Rivers, S. E., *Emotions, Memory, and Learning: The Socio-Emotional Side of Education*, *Educational Psychologist*, 2013.
- Chomsky, N., *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, MIT Press, Cambridge, MA, 1965.
- Dewey, J., *How We Think*, D.C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1933.
- Jarvis, P., *Memory, Identity, and Professional Development: A Lifelong Learning Perspective*, *Studies in Continuing Education*, 2010.
- Rosé, C., & Aleven, V., AI, Memory, and the Future of Learning, *Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, 2020.
- OECD, *The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030*, OECD Publishing, 2018.
- Sweller, J., *Cognitive Load Theory, Psychology of Learning and Motivation*, Vol. 55, 2011.
- Bruner, J., *The Culture of Education*, Harvard University Press, 1996.
- Piaget, J., *The Psychology of Intelligence*, Routledge, 2001.

USING RECOLLECTION AS A LEXIS LEARNING STRATEGY IN ESP

Elena-Clementina NIȚĂ*

Abstract: *The article explores learning methodologies in ESP courses for improving foreign language lexis acquisition, retention, and active usage. It examines memory strategies for acquiring technical terms and evaluates their efficacy in Romanian engineering students. The article further analyses the outcomes of a research study into a number of memory strategies utilised by students to enhance their proficiency in specialised English.*

Keywords: *foreign language acquisition; recollection; language teaching methodology*

1. Introduction

Acquiring a wide vocabulary is crucial for learners to effectively use English. The majority of our university EFL students indicate a need for supplementary vocabulary to improve their overall performance. Lexis is an essential component of language acquisition, rather than only an adjunct to grammar or skills instruction. It serves as a powerful reservoir of meaning, with learners frequently conveying messages in English using isolated words. Nonetheless, there are specific difficulties associated with acquiring lexis. Initially, some terms may be familiar to learners, but possess a specific significance within their academic discipline (Coxhead, 2013:115-132). The acquisition of these new meanings may be challenging due to the pre-existing daily connotations in the learners' vocabulary (*ib.*).

Additionally, teachers frequently advocate for the use of monolingual dictionaries over translation dictionaries to address enquiries on sentence usage, pronunciation, and other lexical connections. These dictionaries offer sentence illustrations, annotations, and phonetic guidance. To assist learners with vocabulary efficiently, it is essential to identify systematic approaches instead of depending on arbitrary explanations and examples. This method may address unforeseen issues, but it is improbable that it will become a permanent component of the learner's English vocabulary. A systematic method may designate instructional time to support students at every phase of lexis acquisition *i.e.* meeting new lexical items and comprehending their usage, practicing their use, memorising them, recalling and utilising them (Scrivener, *op.cit.*:188). Furthermore, ESP courses are structured to align with the specific needs of students according to their academic disciplines. The objective is to enhance students' proficiency and prepare them to navigate everyday situations and interact with professionals across various fields. To enhance vocabulary acquisition in both general English and technical contexts within ESP students must recognise the significance of vocabulary

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, elena.nita2411@upb.ro

learning strategies (VLSs) and receive training for their effective application. ESP words are perceived as more complex than general words, necessitating additional time for learning.

2. Purpose of the study

The study aims to analyse vocabulary learning strategies such as memory strategies utilised by second-year undergraduate students in Information Technology, Applied Electronics, and Networks and Software in Telecommunications to improve their technical English terminology proficiency. It aims to enhance cross-functional skills and equip students with English language fluency, facilitating successful jobs and personal growth.

3. Comparative educational approaches to memory

3.1. Memory types and language acquisition

According to Schmitt (2000: 129-131), the aim of lexis acquisition is to move lexical information from short-term memory (working memory), where it is retained during language processing, to permanent long-term memory. Working memory, linked to human consciousness, transfers information to long-term memory by temporarily holding a limited amount of information. It extracts essential representations for ongoing comprehension, but its capacity is inherently limited. Long-term memory serves as a repository for information. Additionally, it may be preserved for a prolonged period. Concepts are articulated according to their interrelations rather than in alphabetical order. An example is the word *green* which typically evokes the image of nature *i.e. tree, fields, gardens*, whilst *black* tends to be linked with *grief* in some cultures. For Driscoll (2005), episodic memory pertains to particular events, exemplified by the recollection of the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of map-reading skills. Moreover, semantic memory encompasses the general information retained in memory, which can be retrieved independently of the learning process. Additionally, long-term and working memories are essential in speech production, facilitating the retrieval and organisation of material from long-term memory. Furthermore, the same author claimed that acquiring concrete vocabulary presents fewer challenges compared to acquiring abstract vocabulary. For example, learners may demonstrate improved retention of words such as *computer*, *brakes*, and *turbine* when presented in a list format, compared to words such as *lightweight* and *(tight) tolerance*, which are abstract. Nevertheless, concrete words are recalled more efficiently when two memories are accessible, in contrast to the single memory available for abstract terms (*idem*). Therefore, the verbal system communicates the meaning of words, whereas the imaginal system depicts their imagery.

3.2 Types of vocabulary and vocabulary learning strategies

Numerous researchers have attempted to enhance L2 vocabulary acquisition by categorising VLSs into various classifications. For example, Cook and Mayer (1983:87-131) and Nation (1990, 2001) categorised these methods into two primary groups: discovery strategies, which assist learners in ascertaining the meaning of new vocabulary, and consolidation strategies, which aid in the retention and recall of that meaning. Schmitt (2000) established supplementary categories known as determination strategies and categorised social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies into two primary groupings based on

differences proposed by Cook and Mayer (*ib.*). Consolidation strategies (Schmitt, 2000) are used to recall the meaning of previously encountered new words and are categorised into four subtypes: social strategies (employed to retain the meanings of new terms by studying with others in groups or pairs and consulting the teacher); memory strategies (include linking the term with prior information via association, grouping, or imagery); cognitive strategies (verbal and written repetition), and metacognitive strategies (employed to organise, supervise, and evaluate vocabulary acquisition). Moreover, receptive and productive vocabulary (Hedge, 2014) are categories of lexical knowledge, each emphasising particular facets of linguistic competence. Receptive vocabulary encompasses a learner's capacity to remember and identify various facets of word knowledge encountered through reading and hearing, although not readily articulated in speech or writing. Productive vocabulary is a learner's ability to effortlessly access a term from memory for application in writing and speaking (*idem*). Therefore, writing a list of technical terms does not ensure retention since, as Scrivener (*op.cit.*:200) stated, remembering involves four stages *i.e.* putting into storage, keeping in storage, retrieving, using. According to Nation (1990), the first dimension of language comprehension involves understanding the meaning of a word, crucial for receptive skills, whilst the second dimension involves accessing and using the appropriate spoken or written form of a word in the target language to express meaning. It is necessary for the learner to make a *conscious* effort and receive explicit instruction on VLSs in order to acquire technical vocabulary efficiently. Nevertheless, students often struggle with forgetting recently acquired words. Researchers have explored various VLSs, including memory strategies either verbal or visual. These strategies may be employed to establish a connection between a new word and previously acquired words through the use of imagery or grouping (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 1991:40-46). Thompson (1987:15-30) recognised the value of memory/mnemonic strategies, asserting that they can facilitate the learning process and improve recollection by integrating new material into existing cognitive units and providing retrieval cues. Furthermore, researchers classified memory strategies in various ways. For example, Thompson (*ib.*) divided them into five categories: linguistic, spatial, visual, physical response, and verbal methods. Oxford (1990) proposed four primary strategies *i.e.* creating mental linkage, applying images and sounds, reviewing well, and employing action whereas Baddeley (1999) divided them into visual imagery strategies and verbal strategies.

3.3 Usage of recollection strategies

Regarding the recollection of technical words, Thompson's types of memory strategies (*ib.*) such as spatial, visual, and verbal might be the most appropriate. For example, the grouping method is a type of spatial memory strategy. Rather than arranging words in a column, students may be instructed to create patterns since such patterns may enhance recollection of words (Holden, 1999:42-47). By remembering the pattern, students can recall the elements indicated by the words. Moreover, new terms often come with definitions or synonyms, but they are more effective when accompanied by images (Thompson, *ib.*). By using images, memory recollection can be improved (Gains and Redman, 1986) particularly for pre-intermediate/intermediate students. For example, monolingual dictionaries contain memory strategies that enable more in-depth processing, thereby facilitating long-term retention. Schmitt (1997:199-227) asserts that memory strategies include the use of imagery, which involves learning new words through pictures; word associations, which connect the

new item with related words through a semantic network (collocations); or sense relationships, such as synonyms or antonyms; and aspects of word knowledge, such as a word's phonological and orthographical form and part of speech. The Verbal Method can be utilised as grouping or semantic organisation. This means the organisation of materials facilitates their storage and retrieval from long-term memory; hence, structuring the words in a certain manner will improve their recall (Thomson, *op.cit.*: 15-30). Teaching should focus on a range of memory strategies for students to improve vocabulary acquisition and recollection, encouraging them to select the most effective one based on their learning approach and language proficiency. Additionally, instead of a traditional teaching approach of introducing new vocabulary, teachers can improve outcomes by designing lessons that allow students to consistently encounter the same elements across various materials and methods within diverse contexts and applications, followed by independent usage opportunities. As Scrivener (*op.cit.*:207-208) noted, repeated encounters with items may lead to multiple associations, and observing authentic language usage often holds greater significance than receiving definitions. Furthermore, vocabulary work in class is often linked to reading and listening activities, which provide learners with authentic language experiences and understanding of how elements contribute to a text's content and style. Reading specialized articles can enhance students' comprehension of terms in context. Moreover, a lack of comprehension of the precise meaning of a technical term in context may need translation into the first language. The L1 translation of vocabulary is renowned for its ability to enhance comprehension and facilitate contextual application, particularly in technical terms due to its semantic complexity (Pearson, 1998). In addition, teachers may select activities to revise, teach, and practice vocabulary before moving on to the text or recording. This pre-teaching process introduces new concepts and assists students in recalling previously acquired knowledge, otherwise studying new lexical elements is ineffective unless they are retained. For example, a type of activity that may aid to recall technical terms may be a *word/topic web* (or memory map or mind map) *i.e.* a visual representation of the connections between words within a diagram similar to the lexical item networks stored in the human brain (Scrivener, *op.cit.*:201-202). It is more beneficial for students to think about the links and determine the placement of each new word in the word/topic web than being provided with the material completed.

4. Research methodology

The research examines the memory strategies utilised in recalling technical terms in English of second-year university engineering students. It suggests that specialised English courses may improve students' English proficiency, facilitating employment and personal growth, whilst assisting in the learning of vital language skills applicable in a professional setting.

4.1. Participants

The research was carried out in October 2024 –January 2025 at the National University of Science and Technology Politehnica Bucharest - Pitesti University Centre. The subjects were undergraduates in the second year of study, full-time programmes of

Information Technology (IT), Applied Electronics (AE), Networks and Software in Telecommunications (NST). These students, irrespective of their engineering specialization, had 28h of English seminar and 22h of self-study of English in each semester. The English course was designed to improve students' specialist English lexis, with an average proficiency level of upper-intermediate and intermediate in their second year of language learning.

4.2. Research aims

This study may address the following three primary topics: a. VLSs, techniques, and resources utilised; b. Challenges faced when learning and recalling technical words in English; and c. Advantages of learning, recalling, and utilising technical English lexis for future job and career development.

The research seeks to determine methods for facilitating students' entry into the labour market after university, emphasising specialised language competencies in technical, technological, and scientific fields. It examines students' learning experiences, strategies for acquiring technical English vocabulary, and self-assurance in improving these competencies. Participants from diverse cultural backgrounds and geographical regions in Romania engaged, spending an average of fifteen minutes responding to questions.

4.3. Procedure

The study used a questionnaire-based survey method to gather data from 62 second-year undergraduates in IT, AE, and NST specialities. The questionnaire, consisting of 22 questions, aimed to understand their perceptions of learning strategies for remembering acquired technical lexis in English for future workplace usage.

4.4. Research Data analysis

The data analysis focuses on EFL/ESP context, illustrating commonly selected responses and proportions among students. Qualitative analysis compares IT, AE, and NST second-year undergraduate responses.

5. Findings and discussion

The data was collected, analysed, and interpreted using a three-dimensional framework based on the three main topics examined.

a. VLSs, techniques, and resources utilised

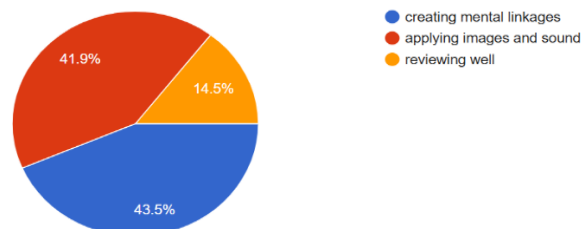


Fig.1 The pie chart presents students' preferences of VLSs

Students were required to state the type of memory strategy they use to remember technical words acquired in previous English courses. The majority (43.5%), stated that they create mental linkages, followed (41.9%) apply images and sound, and 14.5% review well the material. Moreover, to remember technical words learnt in general, most of students (30.6%) utilise reading technical material whereas 22.6% create mnemonics to learn. Additionally, 19.4% prefer learning from podcasts and webinars, 16.1% join industry-specific websites, or social media groups, and 11.3% from them utilise language learning apps (specialised language). Regarding the lexis learning techniques, from the 62 responses, most of them (29%) identified working out meaning of unknown words as the most used method, 25.8% the use of engineering dictionaries, and 24.2% recording and remembering new words.

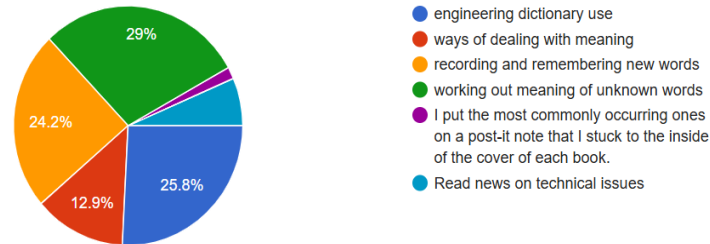


Fig.2 The pie chart highlights student's preferences of the most useful vocabulary learning techniques

Moreover, reading is considered as a major source of technical vocabulary growth, with 43.5% agree responses and 37.1% strongly agree responses. However, 14.5% show students' uncertainty regarding the efficacy of reading as a method of developing lexis. Additionally, the resources students may utilise to discover the meaning of technical words range as follows: translation apps use (33.9%), the same percent of students (17.7%) prefer translation dictionaries (hard copy or online) and the YouTube, 12.9% use AI, and 11.3% use monolingual dictionaries.

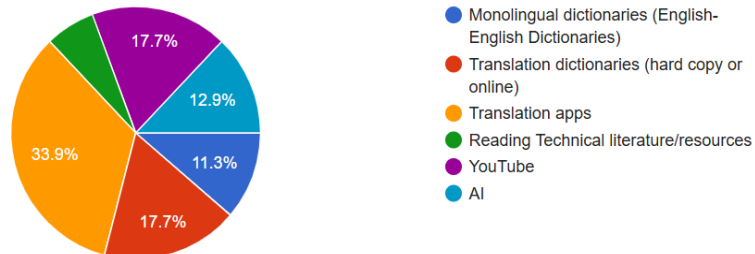


Fig.3 The pie charts illustrates resources utilised by students to understand the meaning of technical words

Additionally, students may utilise a range of translation tools and monolingual dictionaries to understand meaning. Furthermore, responses highlighted that students are confident that the use of specific memory strategies positively influences vocabulary retention and fosters a deeper understanding of language concepts.

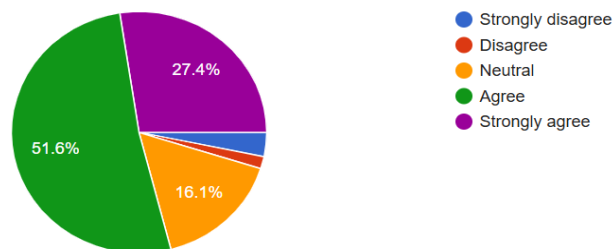


Fig.4 Pie chart illustrating students' level of confidence in the use of memory strategies related to learning technical vocabulary

b. Challenges faced when learning and recalling technical words in English

Students often find learning concrete and abstract technical words challenging, with 59.7% finding concrete words more difficult and 14.5% finding abstract words more difficult, and 22.6% finding both challenging.

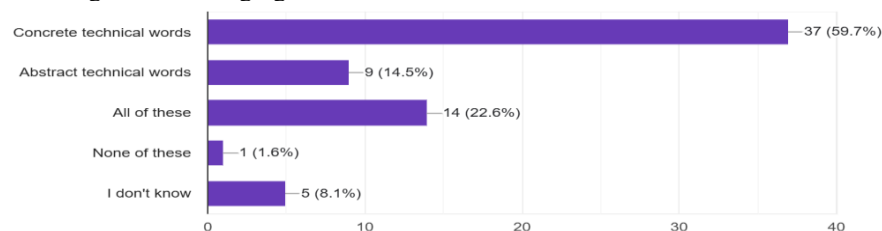


Fig.5 Cluster bar illustrating students' difficulty level regarding acquiring concrete and abstract technical words

Moreover, remembering technical words learnt during the English course plays an important role. Most students achieve excellent results through repetition, self-motivation since words may be relevant for future job, using memory strategies such as creating associations or reviewing notes regularly to improve retention, repetition and applying the terms in practical contexts, such as programming or writing reports, help reinforce memory, remember certain words found necessary, link the word with the object it describes. For others, it may be more challenging. Some of the reasons may be as follows: technical words need more time to understand, lack of focus on learning, need consistent review to be able to recall, inconsistent use.

c. Advantages of learning, recalling, and utilising technical English lexis for future job and career development. The level of proficiency identified at the students in terms of technical English vocabulary, after a semester of studying specialised/technical English at the university is as follows:

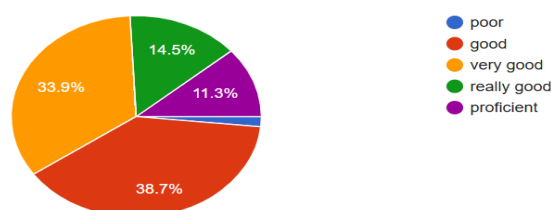


Fig. 6. Pie chart presenting students' level of proficiency in terms of specialised lexis

Moreover, some of the advantages of learning, recalling, and utilising technical English lexis most students' responses indicate are better understanding of technical texts, better communication at the workplace and opportunity to collaborate in international projects, more career opportunities in the global job market, stay updated with technology advancement. Nevertheless, regarding opportunities for practicing technical English in real contexts, most responses are negative. The English course at the university, the CAD and the programming course at the university, watching tutorials and films, reading speciality articles and manuals, playing online video games are the most frequent real-like contexts offered in most of the responses. This indicates that students need more exposure to authentic situations to practise specialised English. Furthermore, learning technical words and phrases in English and being able to remember them is considered very important (74.6%) and important (24.8%) by the majority of students since it equips them with a valuable skill useful for developing their future career. However, 0.6% of students think this is not important. Those who considered learning and recalling technical words in English very important and important stated as reasons the following: to obtain a job in an international company, to understand job responsibilities, to keep up-to-date to cutting-edge technologies, to have access to global labour market opportunities, it is a *must have* in a professional environment, to be competitive in the engineering field, employers require a good level of English and of technical vocabulary in English, to better understand technical documentation, manuals, and instructions. Consequently, in order to enhance language proficiency, pique students' interest, and motivate them to study, it is imperative to offer them a purpose for studying and opportunities to employ specialised English in real-world scenarios, such as the workplace.

Conclusions

The aim of the research study was to examine students' requirements for enhancing their proficiency in specialist English vocabulary by identifying the most effective ways for learning, retaining, recalling, and using technical terminology. Lexis is a crucial language component, and teachers should use research-based procedures to facilitate word learning. The lexical approach is effective for teaching complex ESP vocabulary, which requires more attention and time due to low-frequency words. The questions centred on students' learning experience and on their self-experience with methods, content and strategies to acquire, recall, and use specialised lexis. Moreover, the survey-based questionnaire was conducted to ascertain the level of self-assurance among the students in regarding the use of specialized lexis in their future career and at their future workplace. A number of students

were identified as requiring specific memory strategies to assist them with remembering technical terms. Therefore, the introduction of realistic contexts to practise English may impact positively their language proficiency. This may facilitate the development of a relevant learning environment, since the main objective of English classes is to enhance students' employment abilities.

References

- Baddeley, A.D., *Essentials of Human Memory*. East Sussex: Psychology, Press Ltd, 1999.
- Cook, L. K., & Mayer, R. E., "Reading strategies training for meaningful learning from prose". In M. Pressley & J. Levin (Eds.), *Cognitive strategy research: Educational applications*, New York, NY: Springer Verlag, 1983.
- Coxhead, A., "Vocabulary in ESP". In Paltridge, B., & Starfield, S. (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes*, West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2013.
- Driscoll, P. M., *Psychology of learning for instruction*. Third Edition. USA: Pearson Education, Inc, 2005.
- Gains, R., and Redman, S., *Working with Words: A Guide to Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Hedge, Tricia, *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom: A guide to current ideas about the theory and practice of English language teaching*. Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Holden, W. R., "Learning to learn: 15 vocabulary acquisition activities". *Modern English Teacher*, 8 (1), 1999.
- Mastropieri, M. A. and Scruggs, T. E., "Mnemonic social studies instruction: Classroom applications". *Remedial and Special Education*, 10(3), Acquisition. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company. 1989.
- Nation, Paul I. S., *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. New York: Newbury House, 1990.
- Nation, Paul I.S., *Learning Vocabulary in Another Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Oxford, R. L., *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House, 1990.
- Pearson, Jennifer, *Terms in context*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1998.
- Schmitt, Norbert, "Vocabulary learning strategies". In *Vocabulary: Description, Acquisition and Pedagogy*, edited by Norbert Schmitt and Michael McCarthy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Schmitt, N., *Vocabulary in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Scrivener, J., *Learning Teaching. The Essential Guide to English language Teaching*. 3rd ed., Macmillan, 2011.
- Thompson, I., "Memory in language learning". In A. Wenden & J. Rubin (Eds), *Learner Strategies in Language Learning*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1987.

THE ROLE OF RECURRENT COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SPEAKING ABILITY IN ENGLISH

Alina-Maria UNGUREANU*

Abstract: *Teaching English is nowadays directed towards the development of oral proficiency. Teachers pay more attention to developing communicative skills so that learners can use acquired language when interacting with other people in real-life contexts, the purpose of studying a foreign language being that of forming active learners who can share their ideas, but also offer information, express opinions and feelings.*

Keywords: *communication; skills, ability; fluency*

Speaking skills are fundamental for the people who want to acquire the ability to use foreign languages naturally and appropriately in different communicative situations. Although today some learners can read and write English with some ease, due to the fact that we find this language almost everywhere (when listening to music, watching movies, searching on the internet), they often find it more demanding to express themselves orally. Thus, speaking involves more than simply watching TV, listening to music or playing on computer. It refers to those students who become active learners and acquire both receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing).

“Acquiring receptive skills seems to be the least difficult aspect of language learning: there are many people who understand movie dialogues or articles in the papers without ever having learned the language. However, the person who lacks receptive skills- who does not understand what is being said or communicated in writing- will never become a confident or proficient user of the language. That is why, receptive skills must be taught fully and thoroughly, too” (Vizental, 2008: 139).

Besides that, the speaking ability also involves using both the vocabulary and grammar rules so that learners who act in real-life situations can achieve the necessary fluency to convey ideas successfully. But students who only focus on grammar structures might find it difficult to use their knowledge to communicate effectively.

The concept of fluency is not yet fully understood. Researchers still attempt to define this concept either as a holistic phenomenon that can be tested in a rather subjective way, or as one of the elements of oral proficiency that can be tested in a more scientific and objective way.

Fluency is defined as “the ability to speak or write a particular foreign language easily and accurately” (Pearsall, 1998: 707).

* National University of Science and Technology POLITEHNICA Bucharest, Pitești University Centre, alina.ungureanu0702@upb.ro

One of the best ways to increase fluency in communication is to use the same language over and over again. This does not mean simply repeating what the teacher says, but repetition can be incorporated into many speaking and listening activities. Fluency is formed in active communication. However, “speaking must not be viewed as a natural consequence of language learning: understanding the message and possessing the language required for the answer somewhere, in a hidden corner of one’s mind, do not guarantee the ability to produce a correct, meaningful and appropriate answer. There are several factors that prevent such learners from being active speakers: their vocabulary may be passive, i.e. the words may be *on the tip of their tongue*, but they simply *won’t pop in* when needed; the speakers’ anxiety or shyness are powerful psychological inhibiting factors; their lack of practice in managing communicative strategies makes them to cope with the task of actively participating in the conversation” (Vizental, 2008: 215).

In point of the psychological inhibiting factors, teachers should also take into consideration the positive and negative factors that influence the language learning process. When teachers reduce negative factors such as: high level of classroom anxiety, inhibition, lack of motivation, reticence, shyness, lack of confidence, they can improve the students’ language proficiency levels and make them develop positive emotions, feelings and attitudes towards language learning.

Teachers might encourage their students or, on the contrary, discourage them through their attitude. For example, if they ask their students to continue speaking no matter if they make mistakes or not, teachers might also achieve speech production, which would be a positive fact. Students should learn that making errors is necessary for improving their fluency. They should learn that errors are a natural part of their language development because a student who doesn’t make errors won’t become fluent.

Fillmore suggested that there are four kinds of fluency (cf. Fillmore, 1979): the ability to fill time with talk (i.e. to talk without awkward pauses for a relatively long time); the ability to talk in coherent, reasoned, and semantically dense sentences; the ability to have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts; the ability to be creative and imaginative in using the language.

In teachers’ attempt to encourage students to make errors, they can provide learners with different opportunities to practise using English language. Therefore, students can practise all aspects of language so they become comfortable with using it. In order to do this, teachers might use different activities which involve the usage of repetition. Such activities may include: increasing the amount of speaking time, allowing time to prepare before speaking, using familiar and motivating topics, ensuring appropriate language level, setting time limits, teaching formulaic sequences.

It should be made a distinction between accuracy and fluency. As Jeremy Harmer states, “we need to decide whether particular activity in the classroom is designed to expect the students’ complete accuracy – as in the study of a piece of grammar, a pronunciation exercise or some vocabulary work, for example – or whether we are asking the students to use the language as fluently as possible. We need to make a clear difference between non-communicative and communicative activities; whereas the former are generally intended to ensure correctness, the latter are designed to improve language fluency” (Harmer, 2007: 142).

What really matters in these activities is that learners should have a desire to communicate something. "Though communication is an extremely complex phenomenon, we can make some generalizations about it, which have particular relevance for the learning and teaching of languages. In real life two people get engaged in a conversation because they: 1. want to say something; 2. say it because they want something to happen as a result of what they say, i.e. they have some communicative purpose; 3. in order to achieve their purpose, select from their language store the language they think is appropriate" (Mărășescu, 2014: 85).

Most of the time, communicative activities involve different other skills like: reading, writing and listening.

When it comes to speaking, one challenge facing most Romanian learners is the limited amount of time they actually spend using English. One of the most common activities that can help students improve their communicative fluency is to ask them to read English texts. While reading, students spend a lot of time interacting with the respective language. Both intensive reading and extensive reading can be used for this purpose.

The ability to read opens up new worlds and opportunities. It enables us to gain new knowledge, enjoy literature and do everyday things that are part of our modern life, such as, reading the news on the internet or texts that are related to our job.

In class, through reading, students can learn vocabulary knowledge which may facilitate their speaking performance and the use of different structures in the target language, also increasing their comprehension of texts by identifying relevant and non-relevant information.

Based on intensive reading, which can be simply defined as reading by teacher's guidance, there can be mentioned three main types of activities that also include communicative drills: Pre-reading activities that precede the reading of the text; While-reading activities which accompany the text; Post-reading activities which follow the text.

Most of pre-reading activities are based on speaking. The teachers usually use communicative activities in the warm-up stage of the lesson which is prior to the reading of the text that the students have to deal with. Teachers can devise different pre-reading activities which stir their students' imagination. Most of the students are eager to express their point of view.

While reading activities should be motivating and ensure active reading. They are usually based on a wide variety of objective tasks like: grids, gapped texts, matching elements, sentences to be continued, questions to be answered according to the information in the text.

Post-reading activities aim to expand the text and improve results by checking how well the text was comprehended. This stage of the lesson offers the possibility to devise new communicative activities according to the text types provided for reading.

In real life, people read with a purpose. "We read a newspaper to find out what is going on in the world; a novel- for pleasure; a guidebook- for specific information" (Vizental, 2008: 153). In fact, the reader's purpose determines the time spent on reading, the attention paid to what is read, the way in which the reader approaches a reading material and the strategies used to extract information, which will help him/her in achieving different goals.

One of the important aims of communicative language teaching is creating a context resembling authentic communication. Students learn to communicate effectively and

appropriately in different social settings. Communicative language teaching aims at developing the communicative competence of a learner together with general knowledge about the language and sociocultural aspects of it. The value of learner motivation should be improved by the participation of learners in genuine acts of communication thus learning more naturally.

Writing activities can be as creative as speaking activities, their role having changed a lot over recent years. In the past, writing was not so important, the researchers thinking that people needed the foreign language mainly for oral communication. Today, things have changed. The modern speaker also needs written communication skills. That is why, one can also mention the written communicative activities among those that, on the one hand, consolidate language and on the other, develop the writing skills.

There are certain differences between speakers and writers. That is why “we should remember that unlike speakers, writers must be accurate. They do not have intonation, stress, facial expressions or body movements at their disposal. Instead, they should rely on greater clarity, a logical organization, correct spelling, grammatical and stylistic techniques for focusing attention on the main points, showing attitude etc. Writers should also pay attention to the organization of sentences into paragraphs and to the way in which paragraphs are joined together to form a piece of coherent writing (Mărășescu, 2014: 97).

Listening activities usually represent the basis of further communicative tasks, the former improving both pronunciation and speaking. Teachers may use intensive or extensive listening. “They must also remember that listening skills are essential for language development and improvement: only a good listener can be a confident speaker. You must first understand the message before you can give your answer. The student who does not understand what is being said is confused and shy. Acquisition of good listening skills will give learners confidence in their abilities; the moment they begin to catch on to the conversation around, they become eager to participate in it and express their own point of view.

The elements which are achieved through reading, writing and listening are all necessary for developing speaking skills, too. Communicative fluency is clearly improved with the help of reading, writing and listening activities. The process of using this type of activities in teaching foreign languages shows how useful they are in a communicative based approach that has become the key for nowadays interactive way of teaching.

References

- Fillmore, C.J., *On fluency in C.J. Fillmore, D. Kempler & W.S.-Y. Wang (eds.), Individual Differences in Language Ability and Language Behaviour*, New York, Academic Press, 1979;
Harmer, J., *How to Teach English*, Longman, 2007;
Harmer, J., *The practice of English language teaching*, Fourth edition, Pearson Education Limited 2007;
Lennon, P., *Investigating Fluency in EFL: A Qualitative Approach. Language Learning*, 1990;
Mărășescu, A., *Main Issues in Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages*, Editua Universitaria, Craiova, 2014;
Pearsall, J., *The new Oxford dictionary of English.*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1998;
Vizental A., *Metodica predarii limbii engleze: Strategies of teaching and Testing English as a Foreign Language*, ed. a III a, Iasi, Polirom, 2008.