S T U D I A
UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI

PHILOLOGIA

1

SUMAR - CONTENTS - INHALT

KATHERINE MANSFIELD AND WITI IHIMAERA OR THE RESPONSE TEXT

MIHAELA MUDURE

ABSTRACT. This paper analyzes the intertextual relationships between Katherine Mansfield and Witi Ihimaera, a Maori writer, who published a homage to his illustrious predecessor on Katherine Mansfield's centennial. The author connects intertextuality and colonial studies offering an original theoretical framework of her analysis. Ihimaera' s variations on Katherine Mansfield's short stories become conversational acts shaped by (post)colonial circumstances and by intertextual games.

One of the "mothers" of New Zealand literature, Katherine Mansfield's literary legacy has always been incorporated as well into the main bulk of British Modernism, because of the circumstances of her life and creation. This legacy, however, is also claimed by any efforts to create an integrationist New Zealand great literary tradition, a tradition where the Maori oral tradition, the Maori writing as well as the settlers' literature are reunited beyond histories which are often painful, controversial, and ambivalent, to the best.

Witi Ihimaera's volume *Dear Miss Mansfield. A Tribute to Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp* is such an integrationist effort. Witi Ihimaera is a New Zealand novelist and short-story writer of Maori descent. He was born in Gisborne, New Zealand and he published the first Maori short story collection (*Pounamu, Pounamu*) in 1972 and the first Maori novel (*Tangi*). Ihimaera writes about Maori people and contexts and seeks to fill a gap in the knowledge of the general public about the Maori contribution to New Zealand's dual cultural heritage. His works deal with the encounter and the interaction between Maori and Pakeha (white, settlers) values and with such main issues for the native culture as: land and its preservation, personal and communal histories, family (nuclear or/and extended) and clan.

Before trying to assess the textual relationships between Katherine Mansfield and Witi Ihimaera, which is the object of the present essay, I would like to try and clarify some theoretical problems, mainly the theoretical frame of my attempt/essay.

Obviously, my analysis relies on intertextuality and on the Bakhtinian dialogism. As it is very well known, the notion of intertextuality came to replace the by-now-pretty-banal, if not altogether obsolete, study of the motifs and the sources of the text, which does not mean that we are not grateful for some such very well done studies which have given us great delight particularly during adolescence. Beyond the various interpretations of this pretty new term (a genuine terminological maze) it is now generally accepted that intertextuality is the penetration of the text by memories, echoes, transformations of other texts. The

intertext (or the hypertext according to the Genettian terminology) is the text within which the various other texts (or the hypotext according to the Genettian terminology) reside or echo their presence. We shall not use the term transtextuality which is usually reserved for more overt relations between texts (like, for instance, the relation between Katherine Mansfield's short story *The Child-Who-Was-Tired* and Tchekhov's story *If only She Could Sleep!*). This relationship has been labelled as plagiarism because of the commonalities between the two texts.[1] We have used, in this paper, the definition of intertextuality as given by Julia Kristeva in *Desire in Language* to intertextuality. Julia Kristeva defines the text as a permutation of texts, an intertextuality; in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another (1980, 36). We have also been inspired by the statement of Roland Barthes: "Any text is a new tissue of past citations." (apud Jeremy Hawthorn, 86). The way in which intertextuality operates brings us to the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism or the Genettian palimpsest. Or the Bakhtinian double voiced-word, the interaction of at least two embodied voices/ personalities seems to us to be the sine qua non condition of genuine New Zealand consciousness, as Witi Ihimaera understands it, and which cannot obliterate either the settlers' contribution or the previous Maori voices.

The terms intertext, intertextuality etymologically go back to weaving in both the proper and the figurative sense. In this sense, the relationship between Katherine Mansfield and Witi Ihimaera is a weaving exercise where the phenotext reveals the appropriation by Witi Ihimaera of some phrases or sentences from his predecessor. For instance, in "This Life is Weary": "And after all, the weather was ideal" (121) or "And the perfect afternoon slowly ripened, slowly faded, slowly its petals closed. And soon it was all over (123). Ihimaera's intertextuality is also characterized by the use of numerous Maori phrases and verbs in contexts which make their meaning very clear, and where translation proves to be useless. In this way the reader is surreptitiously, but not less efficiently, made to acquire, by the end of his reading the text, a mini-vocabulary in the Maori language. It is an excellent stratagem for the salvation of Maori identity from the imperial force of the European models and it is an excellent linguistic device to make Maori identity visible and entice the reader, even if not very sympathetic, into its own universe! This is the phenotext of Ihimaera's text. On the other hand, the genotext reveals commonalties with the illustrious model: the poetical value of the text but with a propensity for Realism, a kind of ethnic realism which should also be connected to Ihimaera's own ethnic, if not nationalistic, agenda.

But intertextuality, in the sense that we have understood it when writing this paper, is located not only in the production of the text by the writer but also in the actualization of the text by the reader, a hermeneutic exercise and relationship. In this sense, the present reading exercise owes a lot to the author's reading in

---

[1] Whether this is plagiarism or coincidence is beyond the purpose of the present paper.

gender studies as well as to her own status: belonging to a cultural area where Europe, whiteness, and Christianity are sources of empowerment and celebration, but where the tensions between the center and the margin are felt acutely and responses of the post-colonial type, in the sense of hybridity and mimicry, have not been rare at all. Cristina Hăulică says, in a remarkable Romanian analysis of intertextuality, that: "The main characteristic of an intertextual reading is that it revives lost traces of other readings," it is "a reading which lets itself be crossed by texts once touched, now -–impossible to be recognized" (176). We can pretend no better with only the minor objection that we are trying to bring these memories to the surface to the extent that this exercise is possible and we are able to do it.

Taking into account, therefore, of all these important theoretical sources from the European tradition we cannot overlook two other notions very important for the assessment of the textual relationship between Mansfield and Ihimaera: mimicry and hybridity. The former refers to the attraction of some prestigious models sometimes supported by forcible cultural policies as well, which does not diminish the value as such of these models, but does influence the milieu in which their reception occurs. The latter, in our opinion, has common notes with the notion of intertextuality (in its widest sense) in the field of postcolonial studies[2] and criticism. It is also to be noted that hybridity has a political connotation because it is the desire of language under (post)-colonial circumstances. Hybridity also points more poignantly and more painfully, beyond a mere case of anxiety of influence, to the fact that the colonial text is ambivalent and for ever scarred by the historical circumstances of its appearance. Such a text is authority and originality, but it is also the articulation of loving repetition and of the unavoidable difference. Neither Mansfield not Ihimaera can escape from their own position in the colonizer/colonized relationship and the quest for genuine New Zealand authenticity haunts both of them although the violation of this authenticity does not have exactly identical parameters with both of them. Mansfield feels to be the colonial subject when she goes to London, while belonging to the settlers' culture when she is in New Zealand. Ihimaera has no such duality.

Having, therefore, intertextually and dialogically taken over all these considerations we would rather suggest to you for the purposes of the present paper the term: the response text. This idea has already been expressed by Smaranda Vultur who says, in 1992: "the literary text inserts itself among the other texts as response writing, as a function or denial of another text/other texts" (50). We prefer this term because of its emphasis upon dialogue between cultures, peoples and individuals, a dialogue more necessary than ever in the present circumstances. In Genettian terms, the response text is a case of hypertextuality, namely a case of transposition or transformation of the source text. This is a total reorganization because it is "more creative than imitative" (147). With Ihimaera, the response text

---

[2] As perfectly summarized by Ashcroft et. al.

is active intertextuality, most of the times, polemical intertextuality. The textual changes include preservation of some elements from the source text, follow-up of the source text, setting-up more or less overt source texts in a Maori environment, and from a Maori perspective.

From the paratext, namely the introduction of his book, Witi Ihimaera wants to establish a special communicative relationship with his "source." The introduction maintains the patterns of an epistolary text. But this introduction is the letter which you cannot get an answer to, while also showing the need, even the "compulsion" (9) (according to Ihimaera's own terms) to respond to the illustrious predecessor. The volume is considered "a small homage" (9) and an expression of the author's "highest regard and gratitude [to Katherine Mansfield] for having been among us and above us all" (10). But this tendency to idealize and mythologize Katherine Mansfield, the model, the paragon is counteracted by Ihimaera's anxiety of influence. Firstly, apparently unreserved admiration! (Katherine Mansfield 's stories: "They are stories spun sometimes from gossamer, at other times from strong sinew, sometimes kept afloat by a strength of voice, at other times by a mere thread of breath. Near the end, they were stories grabbed from out of the air at great cost. They have kept you in our memory over all the years since you have gone" (10). But a hidden reproach is not slow to appear. "Life, Art, Society – all can be had here now" (10). However, Katherine Mansfield is part of these changes too. "The art of the short story, however, has taken its bearings from your voice also" (10). Ihimaera does not get entangled in intertextual terminology, he uses the term "variations" for his literary exercises preferring this musical term which gives him freedom, guarantees his independence and does not intimidate the average writer without too much knowledge or without knowledge at all of literary theory and terminology. Last but not least, the paratext is signed from New York but Witi Ihimaera proudly records his ceaseless addiction to New Zealand themes. The Maori writer has become a figure of some international renown, globalization influences us all, and a homage introduced from New York suggests maybe more effectively the changing but also ever-lasting centre-margin relationship.

We have divided the texts from the volume *Dear Miss Mansfield* into three categories according to their closeness to the source text, namely, the Manfieldian work. The first group includes only "Maata", a novella inspired by the possible existence of some novel chapters mentioned by some people that had been close to Katherine Mansfield. This is the so-called imaginary response, where Witi Ihimaera invents (at least partly, if not totally both the source and the response). The second group includes: "Country Life", "The Cicada", "Royal Hunt before the Storm", "The Halcyon Summer", "The Contemporary Kezia", and "Cat and Mouse". This is the group of the loose variations where Mansfieldian characters (Kezia) or environments (the pension, the bay) or situations (the dying insect, childhood) are used. The third group includes: stories with very tight Mansfieldian connections, a sort of rewriting affected by the gender, the ethnicity and the social

belonging of the author of the new intertext. In this case there are clear short story doublets which create a sort of fictional minuet meant to glorify and challenge the source in an effort which reiterates, in post-colonial New Zealand circumstances, the concerns of writers of all times. The doublets making up this group are: "Her First Ball"/"His First Ball"; "The Woman at the Story"/"The Boy with the Camera"; "Bliss"/"Summons to Alexandria"; "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped"/"The Affectionate Kidnappers"; "The Dolls' House"/"The Washerwoman's Children" and last, but certainly not least, "The Garden-Party"/"This Life is Weary"

      "Maata", this invented response to a hypothetical text, is constructed upon a multiplicity of voices: newspaper headlines which record important events of the twentieth century as well as the radicalization of the Maori in their fight for recognition and political visibility in their own country, quotes from Mansfieldian scholarship (literary historians who wrote about the possible existence of these fragments) and texts from plaques or monuments dedicated to Katherine Mansfield, narrative fragments. The connection with the distinguished forbear is constructed in very obvious Maori ways. At a reading from "Prelude", the narrator, Melvin, who makes researches on Maata: "he wanted to chant in Maori to express his grief, and assuage the feeling locked in his heart" (24). Maata is firstly a face ringed in red on a photo. "The face belonged to a young girl who looked as if she was already a woman. She wore a long dark dress, high at the neck, which fell to her ankles. The girl was sitting on the ground facing the photographer, resting her weight on her right arm. Her left arm was draped over her legs. The pose was prim and innocently schoolgirlish. But there was a suggestion in it of feminine awareness and provocation. As for the face, there was no doubt of its beauty. Framed in a mass of heavy hair the face would have been distinctive in any company. It was Italianate more than Maori with dark brooding eyes, full lips and a perfect oval chin. It was a face that provoked an emotional response because of its beauty. At the same time there was also something slightly secretive about that beauty, something sad, which reminded Mahaki of his mother" (24-25).

      In spite of time dependency ties have not been severed or can't be severed. Witi Ihimaera records this impossible connection with an ambivalent feeling. Political motherhoods hide hierarchies and dependencies. "The London that was waiting for Mahaki and Susan had been the capital of a colonial empire and was now the mother to the Commonwealth. It was Britannia and, under an earlier Queen, had seen out English settlers to a land far to the south – New Zealand. There, in uneasy alliance with the natives, and perhaps because of the natives, the colonists had established a *new* England. But life, legislation, traditions and culture were still determined from the place of satanic mills. It was to be expected that at least once in their lives most New Zealanders should visit the Home Country and, if possible, attend the new Elizabeth at the Court of St. James" (32).

      The real Maata is shaped by two kinds of relationships: real ones and textual ones. There is a real liaison with Katherine Mansfield, which does not exclude possible lesbianism, and which is proved by quotes from Katherine Mansfield 's

notebook. "I want Maata – I want her as have had her – terribly. This is unclean I know but true. What an extraordinary thing – I feel savagely crude – and almost powerfully enamoured of the child" (35). The other relationships are textual ones. One such relationship connects Maata and Katherine Mansfield with the Russian aristocrat Marie Bashkirtseff who died of consumption at the age of 24. It is a tie relying on commonality of destiny and on writing. "The Russian aristocrat and painter left behind her the journals in which she reflected with endless fascination over her own development, as did Katherine Mansfield and Maata, obviously, a generation later" (38). The second textual relationship connects Maata with Ruth Mantz, Katherine Mansfield 's famous biographer. This tie relies on addiction to Katherine Mansfield 's personality and denial of writing. "Maata said she had no recollection of meeting Ruth Mantz when she visited New Zealand. She added in characteristic Maori fashion: 'If I am not interested or dislike a person, I never remember.' There was a faint suggestion of a smile on her face" (39). In this hypothetical writing Ihimaera invents a confession of lesbian love in accordance with scanty allusions from Katherine Mansfield's notebooks,, actually with his own sympathy for the gay movement, an attitude publicly expressed, in fact. "Who comes knocking at my door? Oh it's you. Oh hold me close hold me hold me. Touch me here and here and here Oh The Pa man has found me out. Oh kiss me take me enter me and make us one What a lovely thing night is let me kiss you Oh your scent is spicy I shall remember just this moment I shall always remember what I like and forget what I don't like. How still and quiet it is I wonder if there really is a God You are a God!" (54). It is curious that this somehow aggressive gesture to invent a Mansfield-like text is, afterwards, given the replica by Ihimaera himself according to Maori beliefs, which reject lesbianism. The longed-for text finally becomes Maata herself because of love and because of painful historical memories of previous dispossessions. Maata's will is that "when *she* died the manuscript which was both Katherine *and* herself should be closed away with her like a jewelled locket. So it was done, and done well by the kinsman" (55). Katherine Mansfield becomes an insider of the land because she becomes part of the secret not-to-be-betrayed-of-the-country. On the other hand, the opinion that there is nothing to understand about the Maori mentality because it is not to be understood is pedantically noted also from a quote from of "[o]ne of our most noted Maori students, Elsdon Best," (41) who "spent many years living among the Maoris" (41). Maata would not let anyone see the precious letters from her beloved friend because – and Ihimaera writes self-ironically: "Undoubtedly, the Maori mentality is a curious thing. Some of them have long memories. They cannot forget that their land was taken from them less than a hundred years ago, and may consider that in their dealings with the Pakeha to-day an attitude of suspicion is justifiable" (41).

Finally, what is left of these precious texts [*again texts*! we seem unable to escape from them] is the impersonation of Maata by the servant Ilona as well as Ilona 's shoes (object of obsessive interest for any fetishist). An impersonation

sends to another impersonation, in an almost never ending mirror effect. "In that shining go, that closing silver of light, Mahaki had seen shoes on Ilona's feet. They were such faded, pretty, delicate shoes with bows. Then the door shut on them and they were gone" (56).And isn't this text the proof that the interest in Katherine Mansfield has turned the writer into a cultural and literary fetish?

The second group of stories comprises texts with pretty loose connections to the Mansfieldian sources. "The Cicada" loosely refers to a famous Mansfieldian short story "The Fly". But the death of a young man in World War I and the restraining atmosphere from a business in the city from the Mansfieldian text are replaced by the constraints imposed by a very cozy and traditional femininity constructed around the kitchen and the daily chores. Only the insect teaching a lesson of life is preserved. With Katherine Mansfield, a fly is killed by blots of ink and proves unable to keep fighting endlessly against an impersonal and implacable destiny for her. The result: "The boss lifted the corpse on the end of the paper-knife and flung it into the waste-paper basket" (418). With Ihimaera, a cicada is imprisoned by a young girl under a jar in the kitchen. "The cicada is becoming frantic, trying to fly and find a way out all at the same time" (63). But the call of Aroha's sister, the call of Queenie well established in her acculturating milieu, makes the little girl release the insect. "And as Queenie ascended the stairs, Aroha felt herself lifting away with the cicada as it flew up into the sky" (63). Male vs. female, bank office vs. kitchen, physical death vs. spiritual death, the pouring ink and the mud-like blotting paper vs. a kitchen jar, despair and necessity to forget vs. hope are the coordinates of this intertextual relation.

The following passage near the finale of *The Fly* is very relevant from this intertextual point of view. "The boss lifted the corpse on the end of the paper-knife and flung it into the waste-paper basket. But such a grinding feeling of wretchedness seized him that he felt positively frightened" (418). Death finalizes this male experiential revelation while hope finalizes the female experiential revelation in Ihimaera's story.

"Cat and Mouse" encapsulates the memory of numerous Mansfieldian so-called pension stories but they are dis-placed in a late twentieth-century London and accompanied by numerous xenophobic accents which hardly exist in the source texts. On the other hand, the main character, George Campbell, "thirty-three and a grown man of braw Scots descent" (64), and who also had Maori blood in him, "was a composer of classical music for organ. He had come to London to further his career. He had been in the city five months before he found the bedsitter" (65). In this palimpsestic text the pension itself becomes palimpsestic. Nothing can wash away the smells of the previous inmates and Mavis, the maid, is their keeper: "the boy in the next room before you come. 'e was on drugs" and a woman … well "Men visiting g day in and night out. She must have made a packet and then –" (69) she disappeared and was found dead in the room and … a terrible smell as well. The rather Gothic re-make ends in a cataclysmic vision of a cat and mouse spying on each other, which metaphorically represents George's own situation in the big metropolis.

"A Contemporary Kezia" resumes not only the name of one of the children most sympathetically viewed by Katherine Mansfield herself in her fiction but also her concern for childhood and the lack of communication between children and parents. Kataraina, aged twelve, "was going through that 'difficult' stage – that convenient explanation used by parents to excuse their parental difficulties" (79) writes Ihimaera ironically. The two main characters are mixed-bloods and they need to be told the personal histories of their family. Kataraina, the more sensitive of the two and the one who mostly suffers because of her father's neglect and inconsistent memories of her previous years, is told about Nani, her Maori ancestor. The contemporary Maori need to be told such stories because "sometimes we take the comfort and the security of our lives for granted. We forget who we are, perhaps, or where we have come from" (84). The story of Nani' early fears is not viewed as a story of child abuse, according to Western standards, but a story of hard work and responsibility, and story about tough lives of people for whom the meaning of the word sacred was still full. In their houses, the kauta, the kitchen was "separated from the sacred area of weaving" (85). It is a story about the lives of tight communities where children could not afford to be spoiled and cuddled because they had to take their place in the long string of generations as soon as possible. "As soon as Nani arrived she was treated as an adult. No excuses for being six. She was put straight to work and because her mother had told her to be obedient, she did the work without complaint. She was shown the place where she was to sleep – on the floor at the foot of the bed of the senior woman – and that is where she slept for three years.

"In Country Life" the knowledgeable reader sniffs the trace of Katherine Mansfield's "The Wind Blows". The mother remembers, while lapsing into conventionality and the vulgar banal: " 'Oh, I do believe he was half in love with me but' and she would listen to the wekas calling outside and giggle '– such is life'" (89). What remained of the delicate Mansfieldian romance between the music teacher and the pupil? Witi Ihimaera puts down the following brutal ascertainment: "Mama attended, as a committee member, the weekly meetings of the local musical society" (90). The story is constructed very much in the same way as the very highly regarded stories about the electrification of a village particularly appreciated during the 1950s. In Witi Ihimaera's story (which can be considered a good sample of socialist realism written with certain fictional skill undoubtedly) the officialdom is going to make the community happy. The prime minister will come and everybody will be happy. The saga of the Bell family (who have Maori relatives) and who come to relish the celebratory and empowering moment of getting electricity could also be connected, in a rather loose way, with Katherine Mansfield's famous "Prelude". But while the Mansfieldian "Prelude" was a delicate introduction to adulthood and to the understanding, even if in a metaphorical form, of sexuality and death, Witi Ihimaera is a rather brutal prelude to the enlightenment both of the house and of the minds. It is the rich polysemantic

values of this moment which save, however, this story from being a complete failure. Light also means the unavoidable and cruel truth. "The glowing spaces where once lamplight had only *touched* were revealed for what they really were – gone were the magical kingdoms, and, in their places, were cobwebs, black spiders and the shells of dead, feasted-upon flies. The equestrian mural was nothing more than a fading pattern of browns and blacks. Nor was there any Persian carpet on the floor – rather a nondescript roll of cheap cloth. The magic had gone" (108). Time vs. light! The Mansfieldian concern for the fleeting time ! And Ihimaera's need for visibility, for putting the Maori into the light!

The rather grim "On a Train" bears some influence from the Mansfieldian train stories, maybe "The Little Governess" or "The Journey to Bruges". But the Mansfieldian raillery is replaced by despair and even Gothic atmosphere. The Maori couple that hide some dark story create the Maori visibility which Ihimaera is so fond of. The only unquestioned commonality between the Mansfieldian sources and the Ihimaera results is the desperate cry about the nowhere which lies beyond the incomprehensible. But in Ihimaera's statement that "For kids like that, there was nowhere" there is also the suggestion of ghettoization of the Maori culture and the lack of opportunities for the Maori people.

In "Royal Hunt before the Storm" the only Maori presence is a man following a woman down on a bridal path. "He looked so dark that Peter thought he must be a Maori" (154). The Manfieldian quite loose hypotext is possibly "The Second Violin". The plot centres on a couple: Anna "a sensitive girl, which was only to be expected from someone recently emigrated from England to New Zealand" (148), and Peter. While Katherine Mansfield has the reticence of her age when confronted with sexuality, Witi Ihimaera joyfully creates a positive relationship where friendship between man and woman is possible and where sexuality is fulfillment and not the dark exhibition of complexes and frustrations.

And finally, the last short story from the group of loose intertextuality, "The Halcyon Summer" is a response to "At the Bay". In both short stories a holiday by the seaside is an opportunity for better understanding. In the Mansfieldian text the sea eases the understanding of life in time, of appearance and essence, of the human being as a reflection in the mirror (both the real mirror and the mirror of one's subjectivity). In the Ihimaera response text space is prevalent. Three mixed-blood children (Maori and English), three "townies" (161) are taken to the sea to live with their Maori relatives and get a taste of Maori authenticity. "Tama was the oldest – an important eleven-year-old – and had two sisters, Kara and Pati" (156). Eating with one's fingers, using the outhouse for certain nature calls, taking your shoes off before entering the room (a sacred custom) are shocking experiences which teach the three newcomers about a new and so different environment. History is important with Witi Ihimaera, the children are initiated into the personal histories and the communal histories of the Maori. Their only-European-till-then name references (for instance: "sitting there for all the

11

world like King Canute daring the waves to come any further" 163) change to a Maori reference frame. "Tama had always been more interested in the Celts and the Romans. But come to think of it, Nani Puti *could* have been a Maori Boadicea, yes, *and* Mummy, too. There is an acute awareness of the passage of time with Witi Ihimaera. The initiation takes place just in time. The Maoris are about to be displaced and obliged to change their way of life. Already naming policies are hybridical: "even more confusing was that the cousins with European names also had Maori names and vice versa" (160). Last but not least, Ihimaera maintains the poetical quality of Mansfieldian fiction and the sense of belonging and of being accepted gets cosmic values. "The sea appeared to be ready to snatch it with blue fingers" (163). Or: "The sea was like glass that had just been shined by the sun and polished by the wind" (167). Tama feels enriched by the sense of completeness that he gets from living with his Maori relatives. From rejection he evolves to acceptance and a sort of pretended negative feeling ("He envied them their living there" (177) and even panic that his roots are cut once again, but this time for good. "And suddenly Tama didn't want to go at all. He felt a sort of panic, as if the caterpillar train of his nightmares was catching up on him" (179). What is interesting, however, is that even the final sense of unification with the Maori land, culture, people is expressed by a European myth: the king-fisher. Hybridity, therefore!

From the group of the short stories characterized by very tight intertextuality "The Boy with the Camera" (the response to Katherine Mansfield's "The Woman at the Store") reveals a certain propensity of Ihimaera towards the Gothic. In "The Woman at the Store" there is a slight Maori presence. The only customers who come to the store are Maoris and sundowners, such as the story tellers. A dark Gothic New Zealand frontier story, "The Woman at the Store" deals with the construction of the feminine characterized by confinement and frustration, and need for revenge. The little girl's voyeurism is an empowerment strategy which pays homage to the force of art as well. In Ihimaera's story, the girl's eye becomes the camera's eye, a significant technological and scientific development of the same process. The Maori presence is reduced to a truck driver, one of the numerous lovers of the main female character and the conflict is not longer based upon a female continuum and solidarity, but upon the Oedipal conflict. No more sundowners stopping over at the motel, but package weekenders! The commodification of life and leisure has reached new, higher and more efficient levels. The abuse period switches from six to nine years (change may be important in Maori numerology) and the motel does look like a diseased apple, whose apple? Eve's no doubt. The intimation that the husband was a voyeur himself, maybe on the brink of impotence, the intimation that the motel may be hiding from now on an equally disturbing story, but of incest this time, remove the Ihimaera story from any sympathy for the female. Ihimaera relishes the Gothic, whereas with Mansfield the Gothic is endured.

In "Summons to Alexandra", the response to "Bliss", the fashionable London society becomes a farmhouse. The beautiful image of the bees fertilizing the impressive symbol of patriarchy, the pear-tree, is transferred here to the house. The dwelling is a hive, where Anna becomes a queen, James is the happy drone who likes "pallid, pearl-like women" (140), and Bertha becomes Barbara. In a minuet-like intertextual dance, Barbara is about to play Miss Pearl Fulton's role in her relation with James. Only the little B is preserved, but, as the response text is like a sort of sequel written by another hand, she is dead. Bertha/Barbara is somehow punished for her charm and daring search of sexuality because, as Ihimaera proudly puts it: "Although the premium in girlhood was on beauty and sexuality, the premium in womanhood was on homebuilding and motherhood" (139). I do not know whether this is discreet, ethnic narcissism or simply a shade on the frame, but the author does not forget to make Maoris visible. At Anna and James' marriage "Some of James's Maori friends had come along" (139). And everything ends with the inevitable vision of the hive. The delicate Mansfieldian acceptance of the inevitable patriarchal foundation of human life becomes here aggressive and a threat with sterility. "Behind she caught a glimpse of golden bees, but as the house receded into the distance she saw that they were simply children waving farewell. … There would never be any more children. Not for her. Harry perhaps –" (142).

"The Affectionate Kidnappers" is the response text to the famous New Zealand text "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped". Katherine Mansfield's preference for the name pearl has racist connotations. Whiteness is viewed as a matter of pride and a reason for appeal. The kidnappers, be they Maori or Gypsy or simply coloured, it is not clear from the text, "kissed her little white neck". If the Mansfieldian text is written from the perspective of the child and has numerous free indirect speech passages, "The Affectionate Kidnappers" is a traditional narrative written from the omniscient point of view. It is a Maori who does the talking now and the punishment inflicted upon the affectionate kidnappers is insisted upon, as well the White obsession about Maori having possibly lewd intentions with the little girl. "Not only that, but they were all naked down there. And they unbuttoned Pearl's drawers. My little daughter, defenseless, in the midst of savages. It is horrible for me to contemplate. Touching her rosy skin with their dirty hands" (112). The peach is no longer an original, natural, vegetal toy but food, first of all. The sea cannot hurt, it cannot be mean and the natural environment is poetically described. But life goes on, ebbing just like the sea, and the poetical finale of the response text written very much in a vein close to the best Mansfieldian pages saves the Affectionate Kidnappers from being to overtly political and even propagandistic. "The syllables drifted like two birds beating heavily eastward into the night. Then the light went, everything went, life went" (114).

Another intertextual couple or text/response text couplet is "The Doll's House" and "The Washerman's Children". Both the hypotext and the hypertext converge to express the same intersection between the world of the adult and of the

children, the purity of childhood (a favourite in fact, postcolonial theme), childhood as a scapegoat for the adults' frustration, the growth of prejudice and wickedness from childhood roots. Written as a sequel to "The Doll's House", the response text is a homage to the eternal Kezia, a eulogy, in fact, which remembers her sensibility and delicacy. As it is always the fate of the best she, Kezia, is no longer in this world.

And finally, the last couplets, the last response exercises, link "Her Ball" and "His Ball" , as well as "The Garden-Party" and "This Life is Weary". Both "His Ball" and "Her Ball" are constructed around the social space of the ball, a privileged space of social exchange and marital trading. The central reflector of both stories identifies with the gender of the author. Differences refer mostly to the connotations of the main character's entrance into society. Mansfield revolves around a young girl and her premonition that her first ball is also the beginning of her last ball, because life itself is nothing but an effort to follow the general rhythm and find the partner that will enable you to do so. Ihimaera revolves, also in the rhythm of the dance, around a young Maori man invited to a ball, at the governor's palace. He will also have his revelation. Tuta realizes that he will always be an outsider but otherness can better be internalized if the right partner is found. The ball enables Tuta to find Her. In these two short stories the ethnic vs. gender realization are framed by the same metaphor of the ball as the representation of life.

In "This Life is Weary" the hypertext ironically and affectionately resumes a line from the text of a popular song sung by the workers working for the Sheridan's party. The garden party is viewed from above and also from behind the big fence separating the little cottages from behind the garden and overlooking the "broad road" that ran between the garden and the houses. The Sheridan's house becomes 'The Big House" (Maori language) and one of the cooks is Maori. The dead man, a low class worker, who believes in Work and Self-Improvement is an ironical counterpart to Mr. Sheridan, distant and authoritative, and patronizing, both of them colonizers. In both homes mothers set boundaries. "Mam was very firm about this and did not want them swarming in the little crowded lanes like many of the other children who were kept at home" (117). As for Mrs. Sheridan's concern about her children not picking some bad language among the little cottages with "poverty-stricken" (115) puffs of smoke as compared to "the great silvery plumes that uncurled from *The Big House*, it is so well known that it needs no more quotations.

The ideal friendship that links Celia (celestial being, no doubt) and Laura - "She was the one whom the children most wanted to have as a friend, if class would ever allow it" (119) – this ideal friendship is counter-balanced by the tragi-comical custom of keeping notes on *The Big House* events. A complex of inferiority and dependency, as well as a tragic make-believe, simulacrum, recreates the very oppressive social circumstances which the author would rather push his characters to fight against.

Written with a more overt social and political agenda, the response text also plays with the garden party as a metaphor for life. It maintains its quality as a initiatory text as well as the references to time and weather which are preserved almost identically. But the response is a male-authored text and the Ihimaera does make some modest and inevitable, from this perspective, changes. Laura's eccentric hat (symbol of her nascent femininity) becomes Celia's rather serpent-like, phallic lace ribbon. Knowledge is also more socially focused, it is not only about life and death but also about why life and death occur so differently to people. "She didn't want to know, She didn' t want to see. All of a sudden she felt a fleeting sense of unfairness that the Big House, with its gilded life, should be so impervious to all the ills of the world. But no, she shouldn't think like that" (124).

The Katherine Mansfield/Witi Ihimaera intertextual relationship is, therefore, constructed upon minuet combinations sometimes loose, sometimes tighter which alternate like variations upon a common theme in a musical texture, or like the waves of the sea for ever bathing the shores of the two writers' beloved island. Sometimes written like sequels, sometimes written like kaleidoscopic games, the texts are often musical-like compositions written for two hands, each hand with its specific dexterity/ability. They act like conversational acts shaped by (post)colonial circumstances and by intertextual games, the presence of one text within another text being both hybridity and intertextuality (Genette, 82), but they are conversational acts with only one direction in time because the response cannot overcome the flow of time, chronology. However, if this idea about the relation between Mansfield and Ihimaera is unconvincing, maybe that of texts being ripples of the same ever changing creative impulse might be accepted.

REFERENCES

1. Mansfield, Katherine. *Collected Stories*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1987.
2. Ihimaera, Witi. *Dear Miss Mansfield. A Tribute to Katherine Mansfield Beauchamp*. Auckland: Viking, 1989.
3. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
4. Genette, Gérard. *Introducere în arhitext. Ficţiune şi dicţiune*. Bucureşti: Univers, 1994.
5. Hăulică, Cristina. *Textul ca intertextualitatate.* Bucureşti: Editura Eminescu, 1981.
6. Hawthorn, Jeremy. *A Concise Glossary of Contemporary Literary Theory*. New York and Auckland: Edward Arnold, 1992.
7. Vultur, Smaranda. *Infinitul mărunt. De la configuraţia intertextuală la poetica operei*. Bucureşti: Cartea Românească, 1992.

COMPETENCE IN PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATING

ANCA LUMINIȚA GREERE

ABSTRACT. Translation competence is defined by functionalist scholars as product focussed. Translation with the purpose of intercultural business communication revolves around client's specific communicative and business needs. For this reason we consider that translation competence as the competence of the translation profession must be product but also process focussed. In the current article we identify and describe product and process sub-competences that are relevant for translation within a business environment. Thus, translation competence is defined as comprising a number of sub-competences as are organisational, communicative and research sub-competences also revision and documentation sub-competences. Such competences ensure task fulfilment on collaborative and textual contact.

In order to fulfil the translation task commissioned by a client for business communication purposes the translator is much more than just a recipient of the source text as well as the producer of the target text" (Nord 1991:10) guided by the "communicative needs of the initiator [client/commissioner] or the TT recipient" (ibidem).

Focussing on the broader task fulfilment context, we consider that the translator needs to be equipped with more than just translation skills proper, i.e. skills determining target text production. The translator must be competent in designing the process in order to produce the requested product. In the contextualisation of the translation process in the business world, the translator must be a full service-provider, a complex professional equipped with client relation skills, managerial skills as well as translation skills proper. A combination of these skills underlie successful performance on the part of the translator, ensure that the translation process is rightly designed to fulfil both client and target text reader's expectations.

Thus, we consider imminent a division of translator competences into sub-competences related to the development of the process stages and sub-competences applied for text reception and production purposes in a restricted sense termed process sub-competences and , respectively, product sub-competences. The later have been the main focus of translation scholars.

Nord (1991:11) in her model focuses on cultural competence including linguistic knowledge and transfer competence comprising of text reception, text production and research skills. Neubert (2000:6) in an attempt to define translation competence distinguishes five parameters, i.e. sub-competences that build up translation competence: language competence, textual competence, subject competence, cultural competence and transfer competence. Vienne (2000:96) considers the

> ability to decide on a strategy for resource research adapted to the translation situation, as well as the ability to evaluate and exploit the resources necessary to carry out the assignment received

as a basic element of translation competence. Schäffner (2000:146) labels this ability as research competence, thus expanding Neubert's definition with an extra parameter. Fox (2000: 116) in referring to translation teaching methodology finds it also necessary to develop in trainees "the ability to keep an accurate documentary record of decisions".

Focussing on business specific coordinates to the translation reality, we consider that the current developments of the definition of translation competence with its composing sub-competences are applicable though limited. For this reason, we develop an enhancement derived from the interpretation of translation as intercultural business communication.

As mentioned above we distinguish within translation competence *process sub-competences* and *product sub-competences*. Thus, the translator needs to be competent in process development (also for task specification purposes) as well as task fulfilment. The appropriate design of the process to contribute to task specification by enhancing the translation brief and to suit task needs will ensure task fulfilment on success coordinates, i.e. client satisfaction and target recipient expectations. When the reaction of the target recipients to the target text produced is in tune with the client's intentions it follows that task fulfilment is successful.
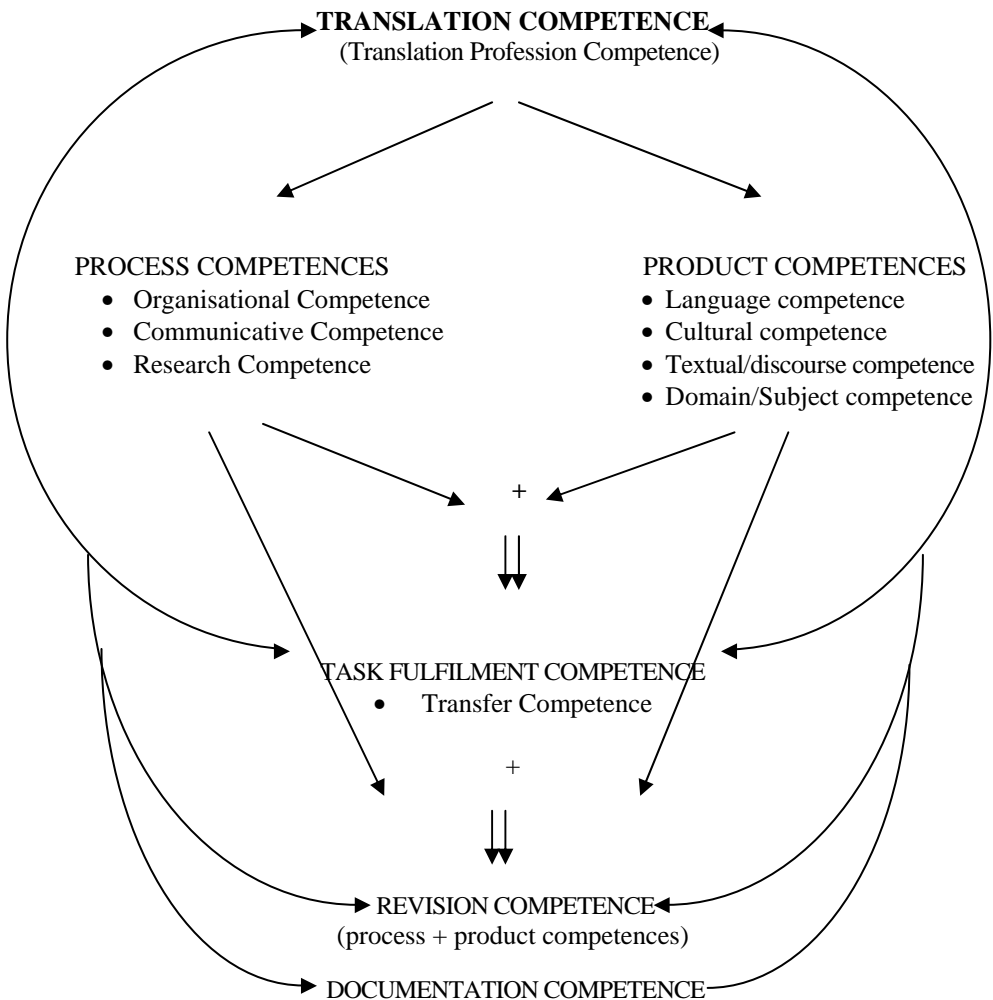
We describe translation competence as the competence of the translation profession. In order for the translator to be a good professional providing an efficient and reliable service he needs to have acquired through training and/or experience competences that enhance his professional activity as are *task fulfilment competence, revision competence* and *documentation competence.* These are by no means independent, self-sustaining competences, but rather generalising concepts developed from the combination of ability and knowledge sub-competences as are *product and process sub-competences* to be employed for task fulfilment purposes but also revision purposes.

The task fulfilment competence complies not just elements involved in the translation process proper, i.e. decision-making on transfer issues of the textual reality involved but also elements of the task process, as we have termed it, including organisation for collaboration purposes. Thus, sub-competences will be further categorised on a derivative level as process competences comprising of *organisational, communicative* and *research competence* and product competences as *language, cultural, textual-discourse and domain-subject competence.* The results of applying these competences lead to decisions about the transfer methodology.

Transfer competence is thus to be understood as a product competence triggered by process development, i.e. which sustains not only the conversion of L1 textual elements into L2 textual elements on a comparative source language-target language analysis, but also the accounting for client needs, for task descriptive

18

elements in the decision-making. Process and product competences are unified in transfer competence, which uses the results of these competences thus being the task fulfilment competence proper. After the target text is produced on applying these competences, the translator might want to revise both process and product by applying a quality control filter. Once feedback is received the translator will also decide on the need to systemise documented material for future re-usage.

It must be noted that such categorisations have been done strictly for theoretical purposes and that despite the strict division there is an interactive, interdependency relationship among sub-competences represented by the following figure.

TRANSLATION COMPETENCE
(Translation Profession Competence)

PROCESS COMPETENCES
- Organisational Competence
- Communicative Competence
- Research Competence

PRODUCT COMPETENCES
- Language competence
- Cultural competence
- Textual/discourse competence
- Domain/Subject competence

+

TASK FULFILMENT COMPETENCE
- Transfer Competence

+

REVISION COMPETENCE
(process + product competences)

DOCUMENTATION COMPETENCE

Thus, translation competence is defined as the competence of the translation profession, i.e. the knowledge and skills to be held by a translator in order to qualify as a professional translator, rather than competence applied for a specific task to ensure successful performance.

In order to be a good professional, the translator will have to develop and manage these sub-competences. Some of these sub-competences, especially product sub-competences are to be developed as a knowledge parameter, while the others are defined as strategic competences built on an ability parameter. Competences defined as knowledge competences are based on source and target linguistic and cultural factual knowledge obtained through training or experience, which sustain the comparative decision-making process in view of the transfer. Ability competences are based on skills, i.e. knowledge and experience on how to act/react in order to facilitate task fulfilment. Defined as such, the translator must possess knowledge and skills enhancing his professional attitude, knowledge and skills that are applicable to specific tasks requested. It follows that translation competence is not linked to a specific task, which may or may not be solved successfully but rather to the professional status formed on training and experience background, which is to be applied individually for each specific task requirement.

Considering the orientation advocated towards translation as a profession incorporated in the business environment, functioning under requirements of the business world, it can be noticed that we have developed the coordinates of the translation profession i.e. the stages of the translation process and the profile of the participants on the principle of general validity for the business environment. That is to say that both the process and the profile of the participants has been developed on generally applicable features to be individualised according to any translation situation incorporated under business coordinates.

In this respect, translation competence is also understood as a professional coordinate subordinated to the business environment enhancing the professional status of the translator and ensuring a professional attitude applicable for individual tasks. Translation competence defined as such is a label of the profession and once possessed by the translator, he will more easily solve any task requirement commissioned by a particular client. The generality of the definition provided for translation competence to include a full range of potential sub-competences to be employed in particular individual tasks will ensure that the translator is equipped to tackle any situation encountered and to design the decision-making process for the sake of successful task fulfilment.

Each translation situation might necessitate the use of a restricted number of sub-competences combined from the general total. Thus, for a specific translation situation some sub-competences may be said to remain passive while others are active sub-competences.

Process Competences are ability competences ensuring the proper development of the translation process on task fulfilment coordinates. These concur to the design of the translation process in order to ensure task fulfilment, i.e. client satisfaction based on target recipient reaction. Process competences are usually focussed on collaborative contact (contact with collaborators for task fulfilment purposes) but may also include textual contact elements (contact with textual material for task fulfilment purposes). Thus, process competences may be said to comprise of the following sub-competences: organisational, communicative and research competence.

Organisational competence is the ability to organise the translation process on collaborative and textual contact according to task needs. Collaborative and textual contact will occur for ST and prospective TT analysis, for research purposes, for re-usage of previously systematised material and for production purposes.

In order for the translator to analyse ST elements as compared to prospective target text elements he might need to supplement the translation brief by seeking client contact. Research material regarding the subject matter (comparative and background texts) or textual conventional features (model/parallel texts) may at times be more readily found with the client or a domain expert.

Materials may be systemised for re-usage on information organisation, i.e. formal textual conventions or information content, i.e. subject matter. Thus, materials systemised from previous translation tasks are to be reused on the basis of similarity among translation tasks, i.e. information organisation similarity or information content similarity. For the re-usage of documented solutions on vocabulary, layout conventions etc., client assistance might be needed.

The production of the target text combines solution elements resulting from collaborative and textual contact. Thus, the translation process will comprise of a number of sub-stages each designed on collaborative and textual contact sustaining the final goal of the process, i.e. task fulfilment. The translator must know how to design the process, where to introduce collaborative and textual contact, if or when he can reduce sub-stages. The design of the process will be done on information needs for translation purposes in view of the actual transfer at hand, i.e. the translation task and of the enhanced professional status. Thus, aspects as revision for quality control and systematisation for re-usage pinpoint the professional status of the translator on the whole rather than just confer task fulfilment for a specified task.

Communicative competence is the ability to initiate and sustain a communicative relationship with collaborators for the purpose of ensuring task fulfilment. Collaborative contact must be sought and guided by the translator. The translator must possess communicative skills in order to negotiate a collaborative relationship with the client and the domain-specific expert, if need be. Communication with collaborators is extremely important as it provides the translator with information necessary for task fulfilment. Lack of communication may lead to a defective or incomplete task description for successful task fulfilment to be possible.

Research competence is the ability to seek, extract and validate textual and client information relevant for task fulfilment from resources available such as translator tools developed by the translator (e.g. diagrams, terminologies) or other experts (e.g. dictionaries), corpora of original source and target culture textual material, i.e. parallel, comparative and background texts or by engaging expert consultancy.

Research competence is not restricted to textual material elicitation though primarily focussed on it but it may also involve client specificity. Most translators resort to research as a means of enhancing product and transfer competences. But, some translators also choose to research client profile in view of a better communicative relationship with the client. Such research will obviously enhance communicative competence in view of task fulfilment. In what follows, we will refer mainly to textually focussed research, though assumptions are adaptable for client focussed research as well.

As specified, the necessity to research is usually triggered by product competence or transfer competence gaps or insecurities. Namely, the translator does not possesses sufficient linguistic, cultural, textual or domain/subject knowledge to develop an appropriate transfer or he is insecure regarding the knowledge possessed. Research is undertaken for comprehension purposes, i.e. when the translator does not possess sufficient information to interpret extratextual and intratextual features in light of the reception and production standard they represent or validation purposes, i.e. when the translator wants to verify the validity of feature elicitation in view of the translation transfer. Research into textual material for translation purposes is done in order to properly elicit the role of ST features and prospective TT features as conventional or original for cultural reception and production standards. Such research will sustain the transfer process in that it places for comprehension and usage purposes ST and prospective TT elements in the general cultural context as markers of conventionality or originality.

Research competence includes the knowledge of where from, i.e. available resources and how, i.e. research methodology to extract the information necessary for task fulfilment, i.e. "for the cross-cultural transfer of texts" (Schäffner 2000: 146). Such information may be limited to individual item solutions as are vocabulary/ erminological matters or to textual elements such as format conventions, information organisation and syntactic structure.

Research for translation purposes may be done through textual contact or collaborative contact. In the case of textual contact the translator analyses original textual material, compares the extratextual and intratextual elements in the two lingua-cultural systems, elicits reception and production standards and decides on the basis of task needs which alternative to employ. While in the case of collaborative contact information may be provided more readily by the client who may possess domain-specific information and thus can be consulted with an immediate result or who might specifically request a particular solution thus easing the research of the translator, who will be left only with the validation of the specified solutions. Information might also be sought with an expert.

In cases where the client or the expert cannot provide ready solutions, they might still facilitate the translator's research by directing him towards or even supplying research material relevant for the textual feature elicitation.

Regardless of the involvement of the collaborators in providing solutions or possible solution alternatives, it is always the translator's choice as to what element to employ in the transfer, choice based on the translator's product competences. He is the one that is familiar with the needs of the translation task on the whole, thus he has the responsibility to filter all alternative solutions through the task needs and to validate those solutions ensuring task fulfilment.

Product competences may be defined as knowledge competences rather than ability competences. They involve knowledge obtained through training or experience on linguistic and cultural matters related to the source and target lingua-cultures. Such knowledge will be applied comparatively according to individual task needs for the sake of an appropriate, task-guided transfer. Product competences are the main concern of translation scholars attempting to pinpoint the complexity of translation competence. In their attempt to define translation competence as individually guided by a specific task rather than in the general professional context, process competences are either ignored (Neubert 2000) or not fully developed (Schaffner 2000, Fox 2000), while the focus is on sub-competences that enhance the production of the target text.

Language competence is defined by Neubert (2000: 8) as involving knowledge of the

> niceties of the grammatical and the lexical systems of the source and target language... s well as preferred syntactic and morphological conventions.

Cultural competence comprises knowledge of those elements that are

> strikingly, but also less visibly, contrastive (or identical) between source and target culture patternings
>
> (Neubert 2000: 10)

in respect to

> historical, political, economic, cultural etc aspects in the respective countries
>
> (Schäffner 2000: 146).

Legal elements may also be considered as well as social-behavioural custom patternings.

Textual / Discourse competence includes knowledge of textual regularities and conventions,

> normative usages and arrangements of types and genres of texts
>
> (Neubert 2000: 8).

Elements of layout, typical format, information organisation in respect to distribution of information, (i.e. introduction of information elements, logical arrangement of information), argumentative issues (i.e. construction of arguments in view of conclusion) and also morpho-syntactical and lexical conventions are an integral part of textual-discursive knowledge.

Domain/Subject competence is defined as knowledge about the domain and the topic of the text to be translated.

> Subject competence is by no means restricted to, though of course concentrated on, specialist topics. Translators of seemingly non-specialist literary and related works need this competence just as much.
>
> (Neubert 2000: 9)

Transfer Competence is the task fulfilment competence par excellence as it corroborates the results of applying both process and product sub-competences in developing "tactics and strategies of converting L1 texts into L2 texts." (Neubert 2000: 10) Product and process competences are processed by the transfer competence in order to incorporate the individual results obtained into a general transfer strategy according to task requirements, an appropriate strategy that may result in task fulfilment, i.e. target recipient acceptance of the target text by responsive reaction in tune with task commission. Transfer competence can be defined as the ability of the translator to develop commission-appropriate transfer strategies resulting in satisfaction of the demands of the task.

The result of applying this competence by processing other knowledge and ability competences necessitated as active for a specific translation situation is the production of the target text through the transfer methodology developed. On application of these competences the target text is expected to conform to the task description, which is a constant guide in the translation process and to ensure the desired reaction in the recipients, reaction induced particularly by the transfer strategy adopted. Thus, transfer competence is an ability competence dependent on the corroborated results of process and product competences.

Transfer competence is the competence definitory for the translation process and end product. In possessing this competence translators are expected not only to possess theoretical and practical knowledge of a range of potential transfer strategies and to accommodate them in the translation process at hand but rather in developing a particular strategy chosen to incorporate the results of process and product competences ultimately triggering task fulfilment.

Process and product competences may be categorised as above for theoretical purposes aiming at a better understanding of what the status of the translator involves, but in actual translation situations competences such as the ones described constantly interact. A permanent interdependency among competences must be noticed. For competence results usable for task fulfilment purposes knowledge and ability competences will be applied throughout the translation process in a recursive manner sustaining and reinforcing results obtained.

Thus, the organisation of the process is dependant on the communicative relationship established with the collaborators, research strategies are developed according to the task description and the results reached possess the marker of all four product competences, linguistic decisions need cultural validation, conventional textual decisions may be domain and subject bound, while transfer strategies require the accommodation of corroborated competence results. It follows that in real-life translation situations a good performance command of these competences is required and their interaction must be well managed. In a well-balanced combination all elements are integral to the development of the translation process on task coordinates ensuring task fulfilment.

Apart from these competences that concur throughout the stages of the translation process leading up to the production of a final product, i.e. the target text designed on client requirement coordinates and on target addressee expectations in the translation profession two more competences are required: revision competence and process-product documentation competence. These competences are employed as process, ability competences on completion of the target text production ensuring a professional process and product control and developing tools for the enhancement of the professional status of the translator.

Revision Competence is the ability to filter process design and product appropriateness through task fulfilment requirements. Revision competence implies the application of a quality assessment filter to the process and end product. The process is evaluated in terms of proper design for task fulfilment and the end product is filtered through the commission requirements, i.e. the extended translation brief for validation purposes of the strategies employed and solutions reached.

Revision may be used by the translator as a quality control tool for the process and the end product of a specific task he himself has fulfilled. But, it may also be requested by a second translator on a product that is the result of the latter's production technique. In this case the translator must become familiarised with the commission context in order to perform an appropriate revision on the end product, revision which needs to conform to commission requirements. Thus, revision competence may require adaptation to an unfamiliar translation situation apart from the actual evaluation and validation filter applied to the end product. In the case where the translator plays only the role of reviser, he needs to collaborate with the task fulfiller, i.e. the translator producing the target text in order to establish the foundations for the transfer strategies applied by the latter in the production process.

Revision as evaluation or validation can only be done in reference to the whole translation context, when the translator has an increased awareness of the development of the process and the justifications for strategies and solutions employed. As a result, in such circumstances, collaboration between the translators and /or with the client for the purpose of establishing task coordinates is imperative. Lacking contextual knowledge of the translation process, i.e. translation brief, client negotiation, research results and expert collaboration, may most often result

in a defective revision. Product appropriateness being defined in terms of addressing the components of the translation brief, designed on client and target addresses needs, an appropriateness/inappropriateness label may not be issued by a reviser outside context. Thus, the reviser must be aware of the necessity to incorporate contextual translation elements in his revision process and request this information from the translator or the client in order to apply a functional revision filter.

Similar to the translation situation, the reviser cannot be expected to infer from the source text and the target text produced the coordinates of the translation brief. Deviation from the source text standard in terms of function, addressee profile etc., being accepted in translation on the assumption that client needs prevail, a revision without concrete, given contextual elements based only on the reviser's experience to infer possible contextual elements is bound to be misleading as an evaluation means.

Revision is as complex an undertaking as is the translation process proper, i.e. task fulfilment. Revision competence is similar to task fulfilment competence in that it may incorporate process and product competences discussed above. Considering that the revision process does not trigger as result the production of a target text from source text material, but rather the evaluation and validation of an already produced target text on a specific commission, it follows that the revision process is not as elaborate as the translation process. The reviser will not have to design transfer strategies resulting in target text solutions he will just have to evaluate the strategies already employed in the production of the target text and to validate their compatibility with the translation brief. Thus, revision springing as a necessity from translation, it is only natural that sub-competences used in the translation process be employed for revision purposes as well, even if at a more restricted level.

The revision process is highly dependent on the translation process, on the elements determining text production. Thus, the information contained in the translation brief obtained through collaborative and textual contact determines the revision process as it does with the translation process. For the purpose of obtaining this information, revision involves collaboration with the translator, i.e. the producer of the target text or the client, thus communicative competence is required. Organisational competence is employed according to the specific needs of the revision process. For validation of transfer solutions, the reviser might have to engage in research, employing also linguistic, cultural, textual and domain-specific knowledge. Transfer competence is limited to validation of an already existing transfer, validation based on application of the enumerated sub-competences.

To sum up, the revision process is a process on its own, similar in design and development to the translation process bar the actual production of the target text. Revision springs from the act of translation, it is dependent on the task description and the task results. For revision purposes translation–context information is sought by the reviser to base his findings on. Being translation-context bound, i.e.

basing its development on elements that determined the original translation process a combination of process and product translation sub-competences are employed. Thus, revision competence is constituted similarly to task fulfilment competence. The difference occurs in the purpose of the particular act: translation with the purpose of target text production, while revision is with the purpose of evaluation and validation of the produced target text.

Documentation Competence is the ability to document collaborative and textual contact by systemising the translation process and the transfer solutions reached. Documentation competence is closely linked to a systematisation stage in the translation process in that it involves both process and end product documentation. The documentation competence is the competence to document the process and the end product by systematising elements of collaborative contact and textual contact for re-usage in view of fulfilment of future tasks either commissioned by the same client or by a different client. Such future potential tasks will exhibit information organisation or information content similarity with the documented task.

The information that is most often documented pertains to transfer solutions employed in the end product such as vocabulary matters, layout conventions, and subject matter specificity. But equally important is the systematising of process findings such as client recommendations or requests regarding transfer methodology and solutions, and supplemental materials encountered during research such as model/ parallel, comparative and background texts that sustain the validation of solutions and that can be re-used in the future as research materials for other tasks. Supplemental texts may be systematised as individual items or they may be incorporated into corpora organised on specific content or form issues.

Documenting solutions by maintaining the research material they were derived from will help the translator in recontextualising the solutions as found in the original material. Documentation containing the original context of usage will enable the translator to accurately decide on re-usage of transfer solutions for the production of other target texts commissioned under different task descriptions. Even more efficient, textual systematisation as corpora allows a contextual comparison, which can help in validating solution choices.

The documentation competence is a competence applicable for the enhancement of the translator's professional attitude and status rather than for the fulfilment of a given task. This competence is to be employed by designing a derivative systematisation stage after the end product has been produced, i.e. following task fulfilment. Such systematisation allows the development of translator designed translation tools (e.g. solution diagrams, terminologies with entries containing textual and client specifications) which should be added to and adapted with each task in order to ease the fulfilment of future potential tasks that can be encountered in the translator's profession.

By documenting the experience gained with each translation task, by systematising solutions into translation tools, the translator becomes a better professional. Already possessing previously documented material, the service offered

becomes more efficient not as time-consuming, more reliable as methodology and solutions have been repeatedly verified and the translator becomes more self-certain regarding his performance, his capacity to fulfil commissioned tasks. Also, clients will better appreciate a translator who has documented collaborative contact with the client and can on future occasions readily use a particular in-house style without repeatedly requesting specifications from the client with each task commissioned.

In designing the translation process to include a systematisation stage based on the translator's documentation competence, i.e. the ability to document translation work for future use, the translator has a better chance of succeeding in his profession, of facilitating rapid and appropriate results ensuring client satisfaction. Translation being viewed as a service governed by rules of the business world, task fulfilment for client satisfaction is the ultimate aim of the translation process. As observed, documentation competence developed and employed properly can and will sustain the translation goal.

To sum up, we define translation competence as the corroboration of a number of sub-competences employed interdependently for task fulfilment in particular commissioned situations, sub-competences that also enhance the translator's status as a professional, the ability to be a good professional under business environment coordinates. These competences must be developed on a general basis, applicable in particular commissioned situations.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ADAB, B. and C. SCHÄFFNER (eds) (2000) *Developing Translation Competence.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins

FOX, O. (2000) The use of translation diaries in a process oriented translation teaching methodology. In Adab B. and Chr. Schäffner (eds.) *Developing Translation Competence.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 115-130

GILE, D. (1995) *Basic Concepts and Models for Interpreter and Translator Training.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins

HATIM, B. And J. MASON (1997) *The Translator as Communicator.* London and New York: Routledge

HOLZ-MÄNTTÄRI, J. (1984) *Translatorisches Handeln. Theorie und Methode.* Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia

HOUSE, J. (1997) *Translation Quality Assessment. A model revisited* Tübingen: Narr

KUSSMAUL, P. (1995) *Training the Translator.* Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins

NEUBERT, A. (2000) Competence in language, in languages, and in translation. In Adab B. and C. Schäffner (eds.) *Developing Translation Competence.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 3-18

NORD, C. (1991) *Text Analysis in Translation. Theory, Methodology and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation – Oriented Text Analysis.* Amsterdamer Publikationen zur Sprache & Literatur, Amsterdam and Atlanta, Ga.: Rodopi

NORD, C. (1997) *Translating as a Purposeful Activity. Functionalist Approaches Explained.* Manchester: St. Jerome

REISS, K. (2000) *Translation Criticism: The Potentials and Limitations. Categories and Criteria for Translation Quality Assessment.* Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing & New York: American Bible Society

REISS, K. and H. J. VERMEER (1984) *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie.* Tübingen: Niemeyer

SCHÄFFNER, Ch. (2000) Running before walking? Designing a translation programme at undergraduate level. In Adab B. and C. Schäffner (eds.) *Developing Translation Competence.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 143-156

SNELL-HORNBY, M., HÖNIG, H., KUSSMAUL, P., SCHMITT , P. (eds.) (1998) *Handbuch Translation.* Tübingen: Staufenburg

VIENNE, J. (2000) Which competences should we teach to future translators, and how?. In Adab B. and Chr. Schäffner (eds.) *Developing Translation Competence.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 91-105

WAY, C. (2000) Structuring Specialized Translation Courses: A Hit and Miss Affair?. In Adab B. and Chr. Schäffner (eds.) *Developing Translation Competence.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 131-141

WILSS, W. (1996) *Knowledge and Skills in Translator Behaviour.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins

A TYPOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE LINGUISTIC SOURCES OF HUMOUR IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN

CRISTINA TĂTARU

In what follows, we shall try to demonstrate that many of the linguistic mechanisms of humour can be modelled as a consequence of the linguistic type, more specifically, that the linguistic type could influence the higher or the smaller degree of ambiguity of any utterance.

The fundamental assumption of such an approach should be that humour appears as a consequence of the interplay of certain linguistic mechanisms, which are repeatable and formalizable.

The statement that all languages tend towards analytism in their evolution is already commonplace in linguistics; yet, there are degrees of analytism observable at the synchronical level, which are different for the two languages discussed. Should we adopt Sapir's typological classification (Sapir, 1970, pp. 120-144), we could argue that, whereas English is the most analytical Indo-European language, almost an isolating one, Romanian presents a combination of analytical and synthetical elements in which, although the tendency is towards analytism, synthetically realised grammatical categories still prevail.

In discussing the specificity of humour-generating mechanisms to English and Romanian, we should not think, nevertheless, of completely different ones. In fact, many of them are identical, because of the following reasons:

- at a certain point in its evolution, English went through the stage of development towards analytism at which Romanian is now. Consequently, all the typologically-based mechanisms of humour that we can find in Romanian are available to the English humorist as well; obsolescence itself can become a source of humour, on condition that it appear in the proper context;

- due to its high analytism, English has some sources of humour which Romanian has not developed yet;

- on the other hand, due to its history, on the one hand, but also to the lower degree of ambiguity given by its synthetical elements, on the other hand, Romanian is more redundant. Redundancy could become, theoretically, a source of humour, which English does not have in some compartments at all, in others, to a much smaller extent. This statement should be considered with caution, nevertheless. If the major field in which a typological diagnosis on language should be performed is that of grammatical structure, the redundancy due to the predominantly synthetical character of Romanian is not a mechanism of humour in itself. Nobody

will feel the repetition of grammatical information in the Romanian past tense, for instance, as funny (*Eu am* scris), even if it appears in a humorous context.
On the other hand, redundancy could be even more striking as a mechanism of humour in a language that, being analytical, does not favour it normally.

> "And my soul is in the shadow, which lies floating on the floor,
> *Fleeting, floating, yachting, boating* on the fluting of the matting,
> Matting on my chamber floor."
>
> (L. Edson, *Ravins' of Piute Poet Poe)*

If the example above combines a mechanism of hendiadys with alliteration to mock at Poe's musicality, which could, at times, seem far-fetched, forced, fake or fickle, an example in prose (Carolyn Wells' mockery at Henry James' style) might illustrate better the idea above; not only redundancy, but its extreme manifestations, pleonasm and double negation, become sources of humour:

"She luminously wavered, and I *tentatively inferred* that she would soon perfectly reconsider her *not altogether unobvious* course. Furiously, though with a tender, ebbing similitude, across her *mental consciousness* stole a re-culmination of all the truth she had ever known *concerning, or even remotely relating to,* the not-easily fathomed qualities of paste and ink."

Mockery by pleonasm is present, nevertheless, in Romanian, which is a less analytical language than English:

> Pe canapeaua elegantă
> Se-ntinde doamna nonşalantă
> Şi c-un papyrus se evantă
> De *atmosfera ambiantă.*
>
> (I. L. Caragiale)

Or:

> Celebrule între esteţi,
> Declari că eu, subscrisul Mirea,
> Sunt pur şi simplu *contopirea*
> *Hibridă* între doi poeţi.
>
> (A. Mirea – *Racheta*)

Consequently, it is not the type of the language that favours redundancies to become mechanisms of humour, but rather the logical structures of thinking, which are universalia independent of the linguistic type. Another reason why redundancy should be considered with caution is the unexpected character defining humour; outlandish, atypical aspects are rather exploited by humorous acts, with a view to higher effectiveness.[1]

---

[1] A study on the frequency of redundancy in normal usage, in the two languages, would, perhaps, incline the balance towards Romanian; but, except for the fact that it is irrelevant for the discussion here, it would only re/demonstrate the genetic interdependence between the structures of thinking and the language of a community.

Mockery at irregularities in language is, apparently, a source of humour in both languages; English:

> A dentist who lived in Duluth
> Has wedded a widow named Ruth,
> Who's so sentimental
> Concerning things dental,
> She calls her dear Second her Twoth.

and Romanian:

> Căci nu se pasc, pe-acolo, copii, nici se-nfiază
> Ci se fotografiază /.../
> El să fotografie, to să fotografii.
> (Şerban Foarţă, *Simpleroze*, Facla, 1978)

Nevertheless, in the most conservative compartment of vocabulary, the basic word-stock, the interdependence between linguistic type and humorous potentiality could be demonstrated. Due to its history mainly, but also to its lower degree of ambiguity given by synthetic elements, Romanian still keeps relatively perfect synonymical series, which differ only in connotation (*zăpadă – nea – omăt*), as compared to the only English equivalent, *snow*. Such synonymical series could become sources of humour, which English does not have any longer.

For instance, in: *The marriage (wedding) took place at Westminster*, the substitution of synonyms does not create any incongruity; when the word *marriage* was borrowed from Norman French, it meant the "official", "church" aspect of the act, so that the speakers might have felt that the replacement with *wedding* was improper, since the Anglo-Saxon word meant the feast one had at home (among one's own people) afterwards. Two other synonyms, *spousaille* and *wedlock* (*The Clerkes Tale, 115)* are, the former, no longer in the language, the latter archaic.

On the other hand, a Romanian watching a weather report on TV and hearing: *Stratul de om¾t (nea) a atins doi metri*, might laugh or, at least, sense some oddity in the sentence.[2]

It could be argued that this is a mechanism of humour based on mixing dialectal registers (a subtype of bathos, consequently) and that such incongruities could appear in English as well. Yet, even used in an absolutely neuter context, *E*

---

[2] Such sentences could be, nevertheless, heard on broadcasts of the Moldavian television; supposedly they do not sense any incongruity at all. This may be explained by both the obsolescence and the regional character of their variant of Romanian: it may be that all three synonyms of snow are non-marked (neuter), which would mean that such an evolution is still ahead, since no language allows perfect synonyms to co-exist in it for a very long time. They might have chosen, on the other hand, another synonym in the series as neuter (non-marked) term; *zăpadă* may be, in the Moldavian regional variant, the marked term of the series and, therefore, avoided.

mult(ă) omăt/nea. In English, *I was at the marriage* and *I was at the wedding* are equal connotationally, nowadays.[3]

An analytical language expresses grammatical ties by means of word order and prepositions. Any shift in word order will create a new statement or a non-statement.

Considering: *Mother loves Peter,*

Peter loves mother is another statement, while

*Peter mother loves and

*Mother Peter loves are non-statements, both being ungrammatical.

In Romanian, the corresponding sentence:

Mama îl iubeşte pe Petru

is less ambiguous, because of the pronoun and the preposition, therefore any word order will generate synonymous and acceptable sentences. (Let us notice, at this point that, although the pronoun in the Romanian sentence is informationally redundant, the degree of grammatical redundancy of a language – which is a function of its synthetism – reduces its ambiguity, and the fact that English is very little redundant in its grammatical system – which is one of the traits of analytism – makes so much the more ambiguous).

Nevertheless, word order can become a source of humour both in English and Romanian. The famous "crazy ads" (anthologized in English, circulating orally in Romanian) could prove this:

To Let: Furnished accommodation for two girls sharing with gas cooker.

Wanted: Grand piano for old lady with carved legs.

Situation Vacant: Nanny required for small babies with good references.

(*The Second Armada Book of Fun,* chosen by Mary Danby, Armada, U.K., 1977), or, in Romanian:

Vând pat pentru copii cu picioare de lemn.

The source of incongruity is, in these cases, the misplacing of the prepositional attributive phrase, when the attributive phrase is adjectival. While the English sentence with the same distribution stays ambiguous (though it might be felt as slightly deviant), the Romanian sentence can be disambiguated by the obligatory agreement:

For sale: Ink for PhD-candidate blue.

Vând cerneală pentru doctorand albastră. (If the humorous effect is to be preserved in Romanian, both would-be referents of the adjectival phrase should have the same gender: Vând cerneală pentru doctorandă albastră).

The immediate consequence of strict word order, conversion, historically engendered by the loss of endings in Modern English, can generate incongruities of a type that does not exist in any other language:

---

[3] From the evolution of the corresponding pair of words, *to marry/to wed*, of which the second is marked for obsolescence (see the opposition *Marry me!/Wed me!*), it may be anticipated that *wedding* could become obsolete in the future.

> our can'ts were born to happen
> our mosts have died in more
> our twentieth will open
> with a wide open door
>
> we are so both and oneful
> night cannot be so sky
> sky cannot be so sunful
> i am through you so i
> (e.e.cummings, *New Poems,* 49)

or: what freedom's not some under's mere above
       but breathing yes which fear will never no?

The cases above present examples of relatively non-ambiguous incongruities; they do not generate a humorous effect because a second humorous reading is excluded; nonce words could rather be said to have a metonymical functioning. Nevertheless, when in an appropriate[4] context, nonce words create a humorous effect:

> a salesman is an it that stinks to please
> (cummings, *1x1*, IX).

The fact that in an analytical language conversion is the most productive means of enriching the vocabulary has two major consequences upon the mechanisms of humour:

a.   the constant possibility to coin nonce-words
b.   a very high polysemy of formally identical items.

The polysemy of formally identical items at the synchronic level is, nevertheless, due to another (historical(factor, as well: the leveling and then loss of endings, which is, also, a function of the analytism of English. Genetically, then, what is labelled today as polysemy of formally identical items in English is due to two concurrent factors: loss of endings and conversion; affixation, since it is less ambiguous, will form our object of interest only insofar as it yields effects of partial homophony, due to the common etymon of the word-family.

In Romanian, loss of endings does not exist, while conversion is present only in the coining of adverbs from adjectives. The most productive means of enriching the vocabulary is affixation, (more precisely suffixation, if shifts in morphological class are considered), consequently, even if a part of speech is derived from another, it is only the root that is taken over and will receive the formal markers of the new morphological class:

e.g. *Don't madam me!* – the noun *madam* becomes a nonce verb, without any formal modification.

---

[4] By *appropriate* we mean a non-restrictive co-text, i.e., a co-text permitting at least two equally valid readings of a script to coexist, out of which one is humorous.

But in: *Nu ma domni!* – the noun *domn/doamna* has received the verbal ending and underwent agreement with its subject.

Both languages, on the other hand, present homonymy as a source of ambiguity. Homonymy is not etymologically based, but rather a linguistic accident, as is paronymy (a case of partial homonymy), also existing in both languages.

The consequence of this situation is that, in Romanian, puns will in most cases play upon two alternative meanings only, while the English pun can involve more than two meanings. Moreover, the two subcategories of English homonymy *homophony and homography), which can create effects involving the opposition oral/written, are quasi-inexistent in Romanian, which has a predominantly phonetical spelling. Some instances of wordplay English permits, consequently, are not possible in Romanian (nor are they translatable in Romanian):

A right-handed fellow named Wright,
In writing "Write" always wrote "rite",
> When he meant to write right;
> If he'd written "write" right,
Wright could not have wrought rot writing "rite".

The humorous effect is based upon the succession *right/Wright/wright – wrought – wrought* (archaic form of *to work*), *rite, rot.* Of the series, perhaps only the first two elements have a common etymology; the rest are homophones, respectively paronyms. The difference oral/written plays a great part in disambiguation.

A more typical example of pun based on polysemy is that of: "Johnnie Walker: born 1849 and still going strong."
where *strong* could mean:

a. physical strength
b. high alcoholic concentration
c. selling well (in collocation with *to go*).

Such a pun could be translated into Romanian because, accidentally, the three meanings of *strong* exist in the Romanian *tare,* as well, and they have not gained such a high degree of independence from the original meaning as to form separate dictionary entries (i.e., to be identified as different by the speech communities). The fourth, taboo meaning of *to go strong*, which makes the advertisement humorous, is also to be found in the Romanian adjective.

Yet, in most cases, Romanian puns play upon homonymy:

Spunea, când baş-buzucii făcuse harcea-parcea
Şi răvăşise viţa pe solul craiovean,
Un podgorean de frunte cu via la Segarcea
Că *banul* din Craiova nu face nici un *ban.*

Or:

> Nu contrazice voia sorţii
> Şi nu sfida stihiile
> Aşa fu scris: cei morţi cu morţii,
> Iară cei *vii* cu... *viile.*

Or:

> Când te acuză de beţie,
> Tu poţi crâşmarului să-i spui
> Că, de-ai făcut şi vreo prostie
> Nu-i *vina* ta, e *vinul* lui.
> (Al. O. Teodoreanu, *Inter pocula*)

The examples above may be illustrative of the fact that only two meanings are involved in the Romanian pun, in the great majority of cases. Even if it is polysemy that generates the pun, a more synthetical language does not have such a highly developed polysemantic (and/or homonymic) system as an analytical one. In the second and third epigram above, the words involved in the pun have even acquired enclitic markers of gender, number and case, embedded in the obligatory article, which sow that the second word (*viile, vinul*) is not identical with the first, but a homonym (*viile*, instead of *viii*, although the nominative form is identical when it has an indefinite article: *vii – vii*).

Polysemy can underlie the mechanism of puns in Romanian, as well, but again, involving only two meanings:

> El doarme ţeapăn, doarme drept, -
> Dar ştiţi voi: *când* a fost deştept?
> (Topârceanu, *Epitaf unui prost)*

or:

> Şi doamna preuteasă ne-a mărturisit
> (Stând gata să recadă în sincopă),
> Că nicăieri pe lume n-a-ntâlnit
> Atâta necredinţă ca la popă.
> (Topârceanu, *Strofe*).

It could be said, consequently, that *polysemy is favoured by the fact that English is more analytical than Romanian, consequently English has a higher potential of generating puns. The ambiguity of the language (lack of endings), also favours this possibility, whereas Romanian, which has a greater degree of redundancy (both grammatical and lexical) is less ambiguous, consequently it has a lower potential of creating puns.*

The dependence of mechanisms of humour on the linguistic type is manifest only as a potentiality; it should be considered with caution, nevertheless, because, as mentioned before, humour is extremely protean; not only does it present instances of *non-bona-fide*[5] communication, but plays, at times, on the fringes of acceptability.

---

[5] The term belongs to Wayne C. Booth.

*

To adopt such a hypothesis as a starting point for a theory of humour would be a necessary (even if not sufficient) starting point in setting our view on the national specific in humour upon a more objective foundation than a more or less complete and more or less biased enumeration of traits favouring the production of humorous acts. A more complete view upon the problem should, nevertheless not ignore some more delicate aspects which pertain to mentality and cultural background which we shall come back with in a further article.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Aristotle, *The Works of,* v. I-II, Chicago, /etc./, Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc., 1952.
2. Beattie, James, *An Essay in Laughter and Ludicrous Composition,*in *Essays,* Edinborough, Walter Creech, 1776.
3. Booth, Wayne C., *The Rhetoric of Irony,* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1974.
4. Cohen, Jean, *Theorie de la figure*, in „Communications" 16, 1970.
5. Derrida, Jacques, *De la grammatologie,* Paris, Minuit, 1967.
6. Epstein, E.L., *The Self-Reflexive Artfact: The Function of Mimesis in an Approach to a Theory of Value for Literature,* in: Freeman, Donald C., (ed.) *Essays in Modern Stylistics*, London and New York, Methuen, 1981.
7. Fairley, Irene R., *Syntactic Deviation and Cohesion*, in: Freeman, Donald C., (ed.), *Essays in Modern Stylistics*, London and New York, Methuen, 1981.
8. Farb, Peter, *Word Play,* New York, Bantam Books, 1975.
9. Hirst, Graeme, *Semantic Interpretation and the Resolution of Ambiguity*, Cambridge University Press, 1987.
10. Nicolson, Harold, *The English Sense of Humour and Other Essays,* London, Methuen, 1956.
11. Powell, chris and George E.C. Paton (eds.) *Humour in Society. Resistance and Control*, London, Macmillan, 1988.
12. Redfern, Walter, *Puns*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1984.
13. Todorov, Tzvetan, William Empson, et al. *Semantique de la poesie,* Paris, Seuil, 1979.

MARTIN LUTHER IM RUMÄNISCHEN
Überlegungen angesichts der Praxis der Übersetzung

PETRU FORNA

REZUMAT. Lucrarea îşi propune să pună în faţa cititorului unele probleme ale traducerii unui text german din secolul al XVI-lea în limba română. Fiind vorba de Martin Luther, pentru prima dată tradus în limba română, chestiunea este mai complicată decât pare la prima vedere. De la multitudinea variantelor prin care a trecut textul originar, până la găsirea limbajului potrivit în limba română, la care se adaugă necesitatea unor bune cunoştinţe teologice, dar şi atitudinea pe care traducătorul o are faţă de autor, toate acestea constituie probleme care – uneori – par de nerezolvat.

In den letzten Jahrzehnten sind sehr viele theoretische Arbeiten in Zusammenhang mit der Übersetzungstheorie erschienen. Persönlichkeiten der Philologiesparte schreiben darüber nicht nur sachkundig, sondern auch dokumentiert und interessant. Man erfährt aus diesen Büchern Sachen, an welche man nie gedacht hat. Einen einzigen Fehler haben aber alle: sie geben nicht praktische Hinweise, wie man übersetzen müßte. Es gibt Arbeiten, die zwei (oder mehrere) Übersetzungen desselben Textes vergleichen, wobei eine Variante höher geschätzt wird ales die andere(n). Die Gründe dafür sind logisch, wissenschaftlich und überzeugend. Aber wie man praktisch übersetzen müßte, wird nicht gesagt. Was vorliegt, ist nicht schwer zu beurteilen, wenn man Kentnisse im Bereich hat. Nach meinem bescheidenen Wissen ist kein Theoretiker der Übersetzugswissenschft selbst Übersetzer. Und keiner schlägt eine optimale Variante vor. Deswegen sagte auch Martin Luther in seinem berühmten „Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen"(1530): *„Was Dolmetschen fur Kunst und Ärbeit sei, das hab ich wohl erfahren, darum will ich keinen Papstesel noch Maulesel, **die nichts versucht haben,** hierin zum Richter oder Tadeler leiden. Wer mein Dolmetschen nicht will, der laß es anstehen. Der Teufel danke ihm, wer`s ungerne hat oder ohn meinen Willen und Wissen meistert. **Soll`s gemeistert werden, so will ich selber tun. Wo ich`s selber nicht tu, da lasse man mir mein Dolmetschen mit Frieden und mache ein iglicher, was er will, fur sich selbs und habe ihm ein gut Jahr.**"*[1] Man fragt sich, nicht das este Mal, ob Philologie Kunst oder Wissenschaft sei. Wäre es möglich, daß z.B. ein Handbuch der Chirurgie erschiene, ohne daß der Autor ein praktizierender Chirurg wäre und

---

[1] "Sendbrief vomDolmetschen", in HUTTEN. MÜNTZER. LUTHER, Werke in zwei Bänden, Zweiter Band, Aufbau-Verlag Berlin und Weimar 1978, S.273

aus seiner eigener Erfahrung die betreffenden Auslegungen schriebe? Keinesfalls. Aber eben deswegen ist Philologie etwas Besonderes, ein Bereich, wo man über die Sprache mit Hilfe der Sprache spricht. Und vielleicht hat Luther recht, wenn er über Interpretationen und Auslegungen schreibt: *„Darum ist das auch ein toll Fürnehmen, daß man die Schrift hat wöllen lernen durch der Väter Auslegen und viel Bücher und Glossen Lesen. Mann sollt sich dafur auf die Sprachen geben. Denn die lieben Väter, weil sie ohn Sprachen gewesen sind, haben sie zuweilen mit vielen Worten an einem Spruch geärbeitet und dennoch nür kaum hinnach geohmet und halbe geraten, halb gefeilet. So läufest du demselben nach viel baß solichen raten, denn der, dem du folgst. **Denn wie die Sonne gegen den Schatten ist, so ist die Sprache gegen aller Väter Glossen. Weil denn nu den Christen gebührt, die Heiligen Schrift zu uben als ihr eigen einiges buch, und ein Sunde und Schande ist, daß wir unser eigen Buch nicht wissen noch unsers Gottes Wort und Sprach nicht kennen**, so ist`s noch viel mehr Sunde und Schaden, daß wir nicht Sprachen lehren, sonderlich, so uns itzt Gott darbeut und gibt Leute und Bücher und allerlei, was dazu dienet, und uns gleich dazu reizt und sein Buch gern wollt offen haben. Oh, wie froh sollten die lieben Väter gewesen sein, wenn sie hätten so kunnt zur Heilign Schrift kommen und die Sprachen lehren, als wir künnten. **Wie haben sie mit großer Mühe und Fleiß kaum die Brocken erlanget, da wir mit halber, ja schier ohn alle Ärbeit das ganze Brot gewinnen künnten.“*[2] Heute hat man im Bereich der Übersetzungswissenschaft praktisch „das ganze Brot". Die Frage ist, ob diejenigen, die übersetzen, über diese Kenntnisse verfügen und sie auch praktisch anwenden. Leider muß man skeptisch antworten, denn die meisten Übersetzer haben auch heute keine Ahnung von dieser quasi neuen Wissenschaft. Und diejenigen, die darüber schreiben, übersetzen nicht.

Im folgenden möchte ich ein paar Gedanken erörtern, die mir im Laufe der Übersetzung einiger Werke von Martin Luther gekommen sind.

Erstens wäre das Problem der Person (Persönlichkeit) Luthers. Martin Luther ist bei den Rumänen – mit Ausnahme der Neuprotestanten – so gut wie unbekannt. Bei einem gewissen Niveau der Ausbildung, weiß man natürlich, daß er der Begründer der Reformation war, obwohl auch hier die Begriffe irreführend sind. Reformation ist nicht Protestantismus, und Luther war eben Protestant. Aber auch in den meisten Literaturgeschichten findet man Titel wie: „Die deutsche Literatur zur Zeit der Reformation". Die Unterschiede sind aber uninteressant und nicht maßgebend für die Nichttheologen. Worin aber das Wesen der Reformation bestand und besteht, wissen die meisten Rumänen nichts. Eine vage und relativ konfuse Information, und zwar daß Luther (mit Erfolg) gegen das Papstum kämpfte, was bei einem Volk, das – mit Ausnahme der Unierten und der Neuprotestanten – orthodox ist, nur Zustimmung finden konnte. Würden sie aber die 95 Thesen kennen, glaubten sie nicht, daß ein so bescheidender und dem Papst gegenüber so unterwürfiger Text eine so große Wendung

---

[2] "An die Ratsherrn aller Städte deutsches Lands..." in *siehe oben,* S. 168-169.

in der Geschichte der Menschheit hinter sich brachte. Denn die Thesen waren nur der Ausgangspunkt, nicht einmal der Anfang. Was Luther nachher schrieb ist das Wesen des Protestantismus.

Manche wissen auch, daß Luther eine nicht eben freundliche Haltung den aufständischen Bauern gegenüber hatte. Man hat in manchen rumänischen Schulen nach 1945 darüber ziemlich ausführlich gesprochen und die Schüler glaubten, das sei kommunistische Propaganda, denn ein Mönch und Pfaffe mußte „vernichtet" werden, auch wenn er gegen den Papst kämpfte. Wenn sie *Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der Bauern* lesen würden, würden sie eine andere Meinung haben. Und schließlich sind auch diejenigen, die glauben, daß Martin Luther und Martin Luther King ein und dieselbe Person ist. In einem solchen Fall weiß man sich nicht zu helfen.

Immerhin: Martin Luther erscheint auch im Rumänischen. Wie er aufgenommen wird, hängt von der Einstellung, vom Interesse und vom Wohlwollen eines jeden.

Zweitens wäre das Problem des Verlags. Martin Luther erscheint das erste Mal im Rumänischen beim Verlag *LOGOS,* der das schöne Motto hat: „. . . *cuvinte pentru Cuvânt"*. Es ist ein Verlag, der beinahe nur neuprotestantische Texte - hauptsächlich Übersetzungen aus dem (Amerikanisch)Englischen - veröffentlicht, jedenfalls nach wissenschaftlichen und graphischen Kriterien, die dem anspruchsvollsten Niveau entsprechen. Dennoch dient der Verlag einer kleineren Sparte der rumänischen Gesellschaft. Wenn schon so viele Arbeiten anderer Schriftsteller in bekannteren Verlagen - auch mit religiösen Beschäftigungen- erscheinen, wäre es nicht besser gewesen, daß diese auch Luther veröffentlichen? Zum Glück ist die Leitung des Verlags derart intellektuell und wissenschaftlich gesinnt, daß sie nicht nur diejenigen Texte veröffentlicht, die ihr passt, sondern auch solche, die überhaupt nichts mit der Theologie zu tun haben. Im Gegenteil. Aber *LOGOS* will seine Leser auch erziehen, indem sie selbst den Autor und die Texte beurteilen,und das sollte (neben Gewinn) das Hauptziel eines Verlags sein. Deswegen werden die ersten zwei Bände von Luthers Werke folgende Texte (die nicht immer dem [Neu]protestanstismus dienen) beinhalten:

Fünfundneuzig Thesen oder Sprüche. . .
Ein Sermon vom ehelichen Stand
Vorlesung über den Römerbrief
Vorlesung über den Galaterbrief
Von der babylonischen Gefangenschaft der Kirche
Ein Sendbrief an den Papst Leo X.
Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen
An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung
WiderHans Worst
Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen
Etliche Fabeln
An die Ratsherrn aller deutscher Städte

Wider die räuberischen und mörderischen Rotten der Bauern
Daß Jesus ein geborener Jude sei
An drei Klosterjungfrauen
Ob Kriegsleute auch in seligem Stande sein könnten
Ein Sermon von der Betrachtung des heiligen Leidens Christi
Von den guten Werken
Ermahnung zum Frieden auf die zwölf Artikel der Bauerschaft in Schwaben.

Es gibt noch ein anderes Problem in Zusammenhang mit dem Verlag. Und das ist dasjenige der Überlieferung. Der Übersetzer steht nicht für den Text, den er zu übersetzen hat. Der Verlag ist dafür verantwortlich. Bei Luther ist die Sache so kompliziert, daß man beinahe verzweifeln könnte. Im Falle des revidierten Drucks des *Neuen Testaments* (1976) schrieb eine Persönlichkeit von Format eines Walter Jens: Titel: „Mord an Luther". Untertitel: „Das Neue Testament in revidierter Fassung". Schlagzeilen: *„Im besten Willen haben sich Theologen und Philologen an einem Hauptbuch deutscher Sprache vergangen. Unentschieden und halbherzig produzierten sie ein Kauderwelsch aus Bürokraten-Deutsch, gelehrtem Papier-Geraschel und Resten von Luthers bildesatter rhythmischer Prosa".[3]* Manche Texte, die uns zur Verfügung gestellt wurden, sind erstklassig: kritische Ausgaben, mit vielen Anmerkungen und ständig die erste Variante (mit Kommentaren) wiedergebend. Bei anderen ist schon eine Revision vorhanden gewesen, insbesondere zu theologischen und philologischen Zwecken. Und eben diese machen beim Übersetzen die größten Schwierigkeiten. Denn man ist aufgefaßt, einen Text aus dem 16. Jahrhundert zu übersetzen, nicht eine neuere Variante, wo der lutherische Text derart entstellt wurde. Die revidierten Texte von Luther machen dem Übersetzer nur Schwierigkeiten, die nicht leicht zu überwinden sind. Sagt (schreibt, übersetzt) Luther im *September-Testament 1522:*

„*Es ist aber der glawbe, eyn gewisse zuvorsicht des, das zu hoffen ist und richtet sich nach dem, das nicht scheinet.",*

so erscheint diese Stelle in der revidierten Ausgabe von 1976 wie folgt:

„Der Glaube ist eine feste Zuversicht auf das, was man hofft, und ein Nichtzweifeln an dem, was man nicht sieht."

Übersetzt man nach dem Originaltext, so würde die Übersetzung (ungefähr)so lauten:

„Dar credinţa este o felurită luare aminte în a nădăjdui, şi se îndreaptă spre ceea ce nu se vede."

Übersetzt man nach der revidierten Ausgabe, so würde die Übersetzung (ungefähr) so lauten:

„Credinţa este o încredere sigură în ceea ce speri, şi o neîndoială în ceea ce nu vezi."

Welche Variante ist besser? Der Ausgangstext bestimmt die Übersetzung, die sich nach ihm richtet. Ist der Ausgangstext nicht konsequent und einheitlich, kann auch die Übersetzung nicht konsequent und einheitlich sein. Denn die Übersetzung

---

[3] *Die Zeit*, Nr.52, 17 Dezember 1976, S. 33-34.

ist sowieso nur der Versuch, etwas Echtes wiederzugeben und nachzuahmen. Sie versucht den Eindruck zu erwecken, daß die Pastische, d.h. die Übersetzung, echt ist. Aber was macht man dort, wo das Original (der Ausgangstext) selbst eine Pastische ist? Die Übersetzung einiger Werke Luthers ins Rumänische wird und kann nicht einheitlich sein, denn die Texte, die uns zur Verfügung standen nicht von derselben Sorte waren. Manche waren tatsächlich eine treue Wiedergabe des Originaltextes von Luther, sogar erstklassig kommentiert, andere waren aber revidierte Texte, wie schon gesagt, etweder aus theologischen, wie auch aus philologischen Gründen. Bei den theologisch revidierten Texten läßt man das heraus, was aus theologischer Sicht nicht interessant oder überzeugend klingen dürfte. Insbesondere dasjenige, was in Zusammenhang mit der damaligen Politik steht. Bei den philologisch revidierten Texten versucht man das strikt Theologische zurückzudrängen oder auszulassen. Hinzu kommt noch etwas Besonderes: Luther war ein Prachtstück auch in der ehemaligen DDR. Hier versuchte man, ihn „umzugestalten" im Sinne der kommunistischen Ideologie, zumal Engels schrieb, daß „Eyn feste Burg ist unser Gott" die Marseillese des Mittelalters war. Liest man Bücher aus der ehemaligen DDR, ist man geschockt, daß der Protestantismus als „fortschrittlich" empfunden wurde, der Katholizismus, im Gegenteil, als „reaktionär". Und das, obwohl im sozialistischen Kreis die These galt, daß Religion Opium für das Volk wäre, ohne Unterschied von Konfession. Man blieb nach Jahrhunderten an der Meinung geklammert, Protestantismus wäre besser, da er gegen die Missbräuche der kaltholischen Kirche war. Dabei vergaß man, daß der Protesantismus in sehr kurzer Zeit intoleranter war als der Katholizismus. Das ist aber Geschichte, leider aber zeitgenössische Geschichte.

Drittens wäre das Problem der Zielsprache. Wie übersetzt man im 21. Jahrhundert Luther ins Rumänische? In eine archaisierende Sprache? In die zeitgenössische rumänische Sprache? Luther hat auch absichtlich so geschrieben, wie er geschrieben (wahrscheinich nicht gesprochen) hat. Die Sprache, die er am besten beherrschte war Latein. Diejenigen, denen das Latein nicht zu Ende ist, können lesen, spüren und empfinden, wie elegant und erhaben sein Latein ist. Sein Deutsch ist wunderbar, es steht in der Mitte des Wegs zum Neuhochdeutschen. Es ist eine deutsche Sprache, die damals nicht gesprochen wurde, die aber (fast) jeder verstehen konnte. Luther hat genial begriffen dasjenige, worüber er auch in seiner derart bekannten Stelle aus seinem „Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen" schreibt: „...denn man muß nicht die Buchstaben in der lateinischen Sprachen fragen, wie man soll deutsch reden, wie deise Esel tun, sondern man muß die Mutter im Hause, die Kinder auf den Gassen, den gemeinen Mann auf dem Markt drumb fragen und denselbigen auf das Maul sehen, wie sie reden, und darnach dolmetschen, so verstehen sie es denn und merken, daß man deutsch mit ihn` redet."[4] Dennoch ist seine Sprache nicht eine „natürliche" Sprache, sondern der Versuch, aus derart vielen deutschen Mundarten eine relativ einheitliche Sprache zu schaffen. Und er

---

[4] "Sendbrieef vom Dolmetschen" in *siehe oben,* S.270.

machte das nicht mit Erfolg, sondern sogar explosiv. Deswegen besteht auch die Meinung, daß Luther der Begründer des Neuhochdeutschen ist. Die Sprache, die er bei der Übersetzung der Bibel gebrauchte, verwendete er auch in seinen Schriften. Nicht eine sehr schöne, nicht eine vornehme Sprache, so wie sein Latein war, aber eine für den „gemeinen Mann auf dem Markt" dennoch verständliche Sprache. Das Ziel ist klar: man muß verstehen – ohne Mißdeutungen – was er sagt.

Wie übersetzt man aber Luthers Sprache ins Rumänische? Ich bin der Meinnung, daß so, damit „der gemeine Mann das versteht, was man sagt." Also nicht in eine rumänische Sprache, die heute nur schwerlich zu verstehen wäre, aber dennoch mit dem Beigeschmack einer ein bißchen „antiquirten" Sprache. Denn das ist, meiner Meinung nach, die Sprache der Bibel. Heute und immer. Verständlich, aber ein wenig veraltet, ewig und dennoch nicht immer genug eindeutig. Man versteht und man versteht nicht.

Es gibt zum Glück einen rumänischen Text aus dem Jahre 1521 – also aus derselben Epoche, in der Luther schrieb -, „Scrisoarea lui Neacşu", in welchem ein Rumänisch gebraucht wird, das nicht sehr anders ist, als das heutige Rumänische. Das war auch ein Grund, in der Übersetzung eine „normale" rumänische Sprache zu gebrauchen, ständig versuchend, den Beigeschmack der biblischen und lutherischen Texten beizubehalten. Meiner Meinung nach, besteht auch darin die Kreativität des Übersetzers. Ein Beispiel: in einem (revidierten) Text von Luther (*Vorlesung über den Römerbrief 3, 10*) steht:

„Das kommt daher, daß wir uns nur selten so tief erforschen, daß wir diese Schwäche des Willens, ja Pest erkennen."

Heute würde (glaube ich) jeder erfahrene Übersetzer aus dem Deutschen ins Rumänische, wenn er nicht wüßte, daß der Text von Martin Luther stammt, ihn folgendermassen dolmetschen:

"Iar aceasta se întâmplă din cauză că noi doar arareori ne examinăm atât de profund conştiinţa, încât să observăm această slăbiciune a voinţei, ba chiar ciumă."

Dennoch scheint es mir, bei aller Bescheidenheit, daß folgende Variante, im Sinne der Texte Luthers, besser wäre:

„Iar aceasta se petrece din pricină că noi doar arareori ne cercetăm atât de adânc cugetul, încât să băgăm de seamă această slăbiciune a vrerii, ba chiar ciumă."

Manche Wörter sind vielleicht ein wenig veraltet, dennoch jedem verständlich und sie verleihen der rumänischen Variante etwas aus der „gewaltigen" Sprache Luthers.

In diesem Zusammenhang muß man noch die Uneinheitlichkeit der rumänischen Übersetzungen der Bibel erwähnen. Der Verlag *Logos* verlangte, aus Gründen, die hier keine Rolle spielen, daß die Tausende Stellen aus der Bibel, die Luther zitiert, nach der Übersetzung Cornilescus in den Fußnoten gegeben werden, obwohl meiner Meinung nach die Überstezung von Gala Galaction viel besser gewesen wäre, da ich den Eindruck habe, daß sie „poetischer und lyrischer" wäre. *Der Römerbrief* des Heiligen Paulus beruht auf den Begrif "Rechtferitigung". Was macht man, wenn solche Somitäten, wie Galaction und Cornilescu, das Wort verschieden verstehen? Einer als „îndreptăţire" und der andere als „neprihănire". Manchmal

passt, meiner sehr bescheidenen Meinung nach, die erste Variante besser, manchmal doch die zweite. Ist vielleicht in diesem Falle – also wenn man eine Variante gebraucht und dann wieder gleich die andere - die Rede von der Kreativität im Übersetungsprozeß? Schwer zu sagen.

Auch ist die Graphie mancher Namen und Ortschaften aus dem Alten und Neuen Testament im Deutschen und Rumänischen derart unterschiedlich, daß man beinahe den Eindruck hat, daß es nicht um dieselbe Sache geht. Geschweige denn die Tatsache, daß Luther manchmal aus einer Stelle zwei macht, oder aus zwei eine einizige usw. Oder daß er das ausläßt, was ihm nicht passt, oder (manchmal) hinzufügt, was ihm passen würde.

Viertens wäre das Problem der Einstellung Luthers zur Übersetzung. Er hat darüber Wunderbares, nicht nur in seinem „Sendbrief vom Dolmetschen" gesagt, sondern auch ansonsten. Eine einmalige Theorie der Übersetzung, leider aber sehr wenig bekannt. Praktisch aber hat er anders verfahren. (Beinahe) kein Satz lautetet bei Luher so wie er im Hebräischen, Griechischen (das Neue Testament oder *Septuaginta)* oder Lateinischen (*Vulgata*) geschrieben wurde. Luther machte aus der Bibel ein Erbauungsbuch. Mit Recht, denn das ist ihre Aufgabe. Und wenn „der gemeine Mann auf dem Markt. . ." versteht, worum es geht, dann hat er seine Aufgabe übererfüllt. Auch deswegen heißt das Grundbuch des deutschen Lese- und Schriebweise *Fibel* (Kindersprache: *Bibel = Fibel*).

Letztens wäre das Problem meiner persönlichen Einstellung Martin Luther gegenüber. Er ist der Begründer des Protestantismus. Ich bin (griechisch) katholischer Konfession. Die sogenannten guten Übersetzer sind, wie eine sehr bekannte Übersetzterin sagte, „versagte Dichter". Ich würde so gern schreiben, leider ist nach einer Seite dasjenige, worüber ich schreiben möchte, aus. Zwischen dem Übersetzer und dem Autor besteht – normalerweise – ein Verhältnis, wie unter Zwillingen „Ich hätte es auch so gesagt, wenn ich es nur gekonnt hätte. . ." So ging es auch bei mir immer, ob es im Falle von Böll, Dürrenmatt, Walther von der Vogelweide, Christoph Hein oder Wilhelm König war. Mit Martin Luther ist es anders. Ich liebe und ich hasse ihn. Eine Haßliebe aus un- und erklärlichen Gründen.

Martin Luther, eine einmalige Persönlichkeit des menschlichen Genies, wird nach beinahe fünf hundert Jahren nach seinem Ableben auch in die rumänischen Häuser kommen. Ich hätte seine Schriften besser ins Rumänische übersetzen sollen.. Soviel konnte ich, und wie Luther selbst sagt, derjenige, der glaubt, daß er es besser machen könne, mache es!

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

1. *Die literarische Übersetzung als Medium der Fremderfahrung.* Herausgegeben von Fred Lönker. Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1992.

2. *Die literarische Übersetzung. Fallstudien zu ihrer Kulturgeschichte.* Herausgegeben von Brigitte Schultze. Mit einer Einleitung von Armin Paul Frank. Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1987.

3. *Die literarische Übersetzung. Stand und Perspektiven ihrer Erforschung.* Herausgegeben von Harald Kittel. Mit eiener Einleitung von Armin Paul Frank. Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1988.

4. Hammer/Henschelmann, *De la grammaire a la traduction. Einführung in die deutsch-französische Übersetzung.* Max Hueber Verlag, 1983.

5. Katharina Reiß, *Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Übersetzungskritik,* Max Hueber Verlag, 1986.

6. Katharina Reiß/Hans J.Vermeer,*Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*, Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1984.

7. Wolfram Wilss, *Kognition und Übersetzen. Zu Theorie und Praxis der menschlichen und der maschinellen Übersetzung.* Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1988.

SPACE AND TIME RE-VISITED:
"Para"-TEXT and the Victorian Afterlife

> "Wandering *between two worlds*, one dead/ The other powerless to be born, / With nowhere yet to rest my head…"
> ***Mathew Arnold***

SANDA BERCE

ABSTRACT. This paper seeks to explain the predilection of the contemporary writers (represented by John Fowles) for the Victorian period and to refer to some of the ideological implications of the respective culture on the Postmodern. The research turns upon one aspect of the complex *double-way shift of information* between the late 19th and the late 20th century regarded from the aftermath which is the 21st century. It clarifies what "peri"- and "para"- text is and aims at identifying them in contemporary reading and interpretation on basis of two novels written by Charlotte Brontë and by John Fowles. The "shifty space" of the "paratext" frames out the type of reading and the relationship between the Reader and the Author and also clarifies the change of dominant in contemporary literature.

In *Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse*, Mathew Arnold's view about "in-betweenness"- the opaque area covering transition phenomena from one age to another may be best rendered by the contemporary predilection for the Enlightenment and the Victorian period. With some British writers such as John Fowles, the 19th century and its aftermath apparently have ideological implications in the contemporary culture. Critics and theoreticians observed that the *conservative Victorian ideals* can "cure us of our current social ills" (Himmelfarb: 1995). The continual search for 'new values', which, still, cannot be totally separated from the past is reinforced by "that orderly and satisfactory past", with its triumph of morality over poverty that Victorianism basically re-*presented*, only to become a model for postmodernism's *nostalgic retrospective* look at its originals. 'Model' is not used in this case as an example to follow, because the present has created a wholly reversed ideological universe, in which class-consciousness no longer exists, the tough reality surpasses any kind of moral barrier demanding new theoretical basis. Victorianism, therefore, seems to be the background which accompanies a new reality, '*used to aestheticize*' the present. From the perspective of 'historicity', the postmodern era takes the concept as *a perception of the present in history*: the individual is both *presence* (in the contemporary reality) and *absence*

because he is a 'de-familiarized presence' (Jameson: 1991). There is "distance from immediacy" that resembles the historical perspective: any 'present moment' in the huge context of postmodern historicity is already a historical moment of a self-reflexive temporality. The time of present history becomes "sheer heterogeneity" in which individuals find themselves placed in History (consequent to a moment of crisis or progress) (Jameson: 1991).

With some analysts of the 'postmodern experience' it is a mixture of cultural concepts used as coverage of heterogeneity which only shows that the new trend "had always been in search of tradition while pretending to innovation" (Huyssen 1992: 47). And yet, the reading resemblance one may trace in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* by John Fowles is neither a paradox nor an accident, it is part of a well sustained project. It is, therefore, important to formulate what could the 19th century suggest to the writers of the 'new era', as a professional group, because in matter of personality and background as well as chance Brontë as Victorian writer and Fowles as contemporary are rather different. It is not only *temporal distance* separating the two writers. It is the *awareness of distance* that augments the contemporary *reader's sense of disjunction* between the *world* of any era and its *fictional representation*.

First of all, a woman's literary creation cannot compare to a man's all the more she was the product of the Victorian age when, somehow, courage was requested to the writer in order to express her innermost feelings. And, still, when one reads about the life of John Fowles one cannot but observe that there was need with him to *evade* his limits and *fight back* restraints: he was born (in 1926) in a small London suburb described by him as " dominated by conformism- the pursuit of respectability". Ever since his childhood, he used to reject the groups reminding him of oppressive social pressures. A fierce individualist, he learned to survive this context by getting used to "a facility with masks", in his words. He also associated this facility to being English, as Englishmen, as he said, "very rarely say what they really thing. That should derive from Puritanism- hiding emotions and wearing a public mask. I suffer from it like everyone of my type and background. I've played the game all my life"(Huyssen 1986: 89). During World War Two, Fowles left Bradford, where he was attending the school, in order to escape the German air raids and stayed in Devonshire for a while. There, he encountered the "mystery of beauty and nature", a powerful element in his fiction, philosophy and lifelong attitude. His post-romantic 'impulse' was reinforced by the reading and studying of the French existentialist writers (Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre) when he was at New College, Oxford. These are the main sources of his interest in the individual freedom and choice which he always associated to "that stark puritanical view of all art that haunts England, [the sense] that there is something shameful about expressing yourself". The 'bizzare experience' of granting freedom to his characters is the problem which he shares with his 19th century woman writer predecessor.

Among other things, the 19th century suggested to him a *return to the representations of 'domesticity'* to an emergent 20th century 'woman's world'. The 19th century is the moment when the *liberal discourse of right and contract* began to dominate the economic, social, political relations, when virtue was depoliticized, moralized, referring to the domestic sphere (McGowan:2002). It prepared the ground for expressing our *present identity*: the acts of 'producing' and 'consuming' represent the expression of the self which is, in the same time, only half consciously aware of its deep rooting in the wide cultural field. Hence, the contemporary man suffers from *delusions of individuality*. This is represented from the outset in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* whose plot only apparently takes place in 1867 as Fowles stated the following:

"Remember the etymology of the word. A novel is something new. It must have relevance to the writer *now* – so don't ever pretend to live in 1867; or make sure the *reader knows it's a pretence* "(Fowles 1987: 15).

The self-consciousness about the art process is a hallmark of much 20th century fiction. Still, the author succeeds in creating a convincing version of a "Victorian novel", one that refers - with detailed fidelity - to the manners and milieu of the time. What his work lacks is definitely the *authorial omniscience* of the Victorian writer. Eighty pages into the novel Fowles declares that his character, Sarah Woodruff, remained a mystery, even to him, the Writer, admitting that the 'apparent omniscience' is only "*one aspect of the literary game*":

"This story I am telling is only imagination", he says. "If I have pretended until now to know my characters' minds and innermost thoughts, it is because I am writing in a convention universally accepted at the time of my story: that the novelist stands next to God. He may not know all, yet he tries to pretend that he does" (Fowles 1987: 79).

What one can read in the paratext of this section is something about Fowles's intention: beyond the existential, not at all omniscient novel there lies a historical and social evocation of the Victorian age accomplished – as written project- by way of a *parody of conventions* which is meant to define similarities and differences between habits and ideas. The parody of conventions also identified the contemporary perspective because, speaking from that one, Fowles reminded the reader that the Victorian's apparently unchanging, stable world was, in 1867, about to vanish forever: Karl Marx published the first volume of *Das Kapital* and Charles Darwin his well-known *Origin of Species*. The witness of the 'changing world', a period of transition that took humanity one hundred years to become aware of, is Ernestina Freeman, a genteel young lady who, by Victorian definition must be fragile and looking 'porcelain doll' with her doting parents looking unnecessarily worried about her "frail health" according with the 'fashion' of the time. Only that she was to outlive her generation, as the reader finds later: "She was born in 1846. And she died the day Hitler invaded Poland", we find, and that was in September, 1939.

Charlotte Brontë's message of her book, *Jane Eyre*, is the result of her biography as the students of her life and background may asses. The daughter of Patrick Brontë, of Irish descent, a man of a passionate nature wearing the Presbyterian mask and of an intelligent but placid, submissive mother wearing the mask, of the Victorian, submissive woman, Charlotte developed an "aggressive intellect" and resisted a sense of inferiority and incompleteness all her life. The fiery, female character occupied her unconscious and, in her novels, Charlotte projected her life and personality, although she never totally admitted this reality. *Jane Eyre* was much contested and was considered immoral and outrageous and non-Victorian, a "wicked book" carrying with it the 'touch of the strange' because being 'novel', new. "I am resolved not to write otherwise", she confessed. "I shall bend as my powers tend", she continued as she assumed that "we only suffer reality to suggest, never to dictate". The freedom of choice and her open free-thinking mind and also *proximity of the new* within the Victorian tradition with its well preservation of cultural values could be John Fowles 'contemporary attraction for Brontë's novel. *Jane Eyre.* The novel and the character, is a 'model' of *survival of values within the proximity of the new*, so much needed by the contemporaries who know, now, the price of devaluation and loss of tradition.

There is a *compromise* between the two different epochs, reflected as a *compromise between tradition and modernity*, as they both admit "survival" of the past, impossible to ignore. Whenever the 'real' and the 'imaginary' get mixed up, the two dimensions become ambiguous and create a kind of difficulty in telling themselves apart. Contemporary novels produced (as re-writing of Victorianism) a 'pact typology' between the reader and the writer. Therefore, the 'fictional' pact differs from the 'autobiographical' by the fact that it implies a straightforward clear *practice of non-identity* (Leujeune 2001: 27), given that the author and the character do not have the same name: the *practice of non-identity* constitutes the very core of originality; it is not homogeneity but *heterogeneity* and the way these issues are blended inside the fictional material that is quite obvious in such novels written by contemporary British writers beginning with the late 1960's.

One of the possible starting points in reading and interpreting such novels is to *disobey the horizon of expectation* created by all the contextual elements. The idea of an unaltered truth is no more valid since the past tradition of the novel and the present blend are treated as mere narratives, get interlaced, proving the fact that there is no actual boundary between palpable fact and imaginary, or between the original, Victorian novel and the text that "fictionalizes" a text of fiction. Quoting Mark Currie from *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, one can see that the same perspective defines the postmodern concept of intertextuality that "posits a model of referentiality which cannot distinguish between reference to the world and reference to another text, since textuality is woven into all" (Currie 1998:70). Strictly concerning such novels and referring to *Midnight's Children*, Currie defines them as being 'historiographic narrative' and identifies the intertextual ground in its

impossibility of having "an uncomplicated mode of mimetic referentiality. By highlighting the role of narrativity in shaping history as a story, the mode is fundamentally intertextual […]. These are not novels which contemplate themselves so much as *novels which contemplate the logic* and *the ideology of narrative in the act of construing the world* […]. The narrative which develops *historiographic self-consciousness* should be seen less as an introverted novel than as one which looks outward to other narratives and the way they impose values under the pretense of neutral description of the world" (Currie 1998: 68). It is the right 'description' of the type of novel John Fowles wrote ever since the late 1960's, a novel that, in those years left criticism helpless in finding any precise typology frame and, consequently, encouraged speculations and useless explorations. *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a 'fictive experience with time' (Ricoeur 1984: 128) if one accepts Paul Ricoeur's terminology and demonstration, a fictive experience constructed within a narrative. In *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur's demonstration points out the fact that "the epic, the drama, and the novel *never fail to mix together historical characters*, *dated* and *datable events* and known geographical sites with *invented character, events, places*". Although the existence of such references always seem to set a trap for the reader who needs *to locate in space and time* the events of the novel, Ricoeur advocated the idea that these "do not draw the time of fiction into the gravitational field of historical Time, quite the opposite, […] they are divested of their function of standing for the historical past" (Ricoeur 1984: 180).

What takes place at the level of 'historical references' to Victorianism and pure fiction in the novel of John Fowles is a process of "interweaving of history and fiction" as "they borrow from the intentionality of the other". And the nature of the past refigured within the boundaries of fiction has a special status in which is identified not with the actual but with *the probable in the sense of possibility*, a variant that might just as well be made actual. "The quasi-past of the narrative voice is entirely different from the past of historical consciousness. It is identified with the probable in the sense of what might have been. This is the 'past-like' aspect that resonates in any "claim to verisimilitude outside of any mirroring of the past" (Ricoeur 1984: 191). The function of such experiences with time is to"free retrospectively certain possibilities that were not actualized in the historical past, a liberating function", affirmed Ricoeur. And, yet, there remains the question of the *aftermath of such experiences with time* which are more than frequent with the contemporary writers. Therefore, we suggest that in the configuration of the world and of the characters, the *issue of identity* is always at stake, forged on the idea that within oneness there is always the idea of multiplicity, that the actual is never one finite dimension, as it also contains *the latent possibilities of the other*, the *different*, its double. Given this, we also suggest that space and time re-visited with some novels by John Fowles with one of the recurrent issues-the double- is the inescapable image in the mirror that actually reflects the other and never the same. It is not perceived as the reversed images of one another but belonging to the same 'reality', as

interconnected, as two interdependent dimensions. The Victorian and the contemporary 'bump' into each other and merge, creating one entirely new story characterized by the fact that it draws itself from many places at once. The phenomenon itself is better referred to not as mere *collision* but as a deep intermingling of elements, a *double-way shift of information*.

A characteristic of postmodernity, the double-way shift of information was also relayed to theories of narrative, such as the one developed by Paul Ricoeur. They are both a support for the important theme of Fowles' fiction within the context of his age, such as the problem of the 'other', in all its implications: as an act of mirroring, or an act of doubling of the self and of the world, the issue of multiplicity within identity or oneness and heterogeneity versus homogeneity.

The present paper has no intention of doing research work on this important theme of the novels of John Fowles. It rather turns upon only *one aspect* of the complex double-way shift of information which is *the use of "paratextual" information*. It clarifies what "peri" and "para" text is and aims at identifying their role in the contemporary reading and interpretation of literature is. Identifying them and clarifying their role may function as a "*conceptual traveling*", a phenomenon by which one could enter into other dimensions and become a thousand other people, live an infinity of lives and acquire the wisdom and power to shape one's own. All these ideas form the parting concepts of future structural patterns in the later novels by John Fowles and by other contemporary British writers. The perspective to follow mirrors the one undertaken by Umberto Eco in his *Interpretation and Over-interpretation* (1992) where he charts some developing patterns of hermetic ideologies as well as their re-fashioning in the postmodern culture and contemporary literary, linguistic theories. As previously announced, the issues of identity-alterity, intertwining of different temporal cultural segments and the blending of different heterogenous, spacially-represented narratives are to be found at the core *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. The re-fashioning of the hermetic concepts, in Eco's line of thought, aims at identifying the organization of the novel within some important postmodern cultural issues. In this context the difference and the role of "peri" and "para" textual elements is of utmost importance.

In Umberto Eco's line of thought, theory systematically traces major points of resemblance and, sometimes identity, between Hermetic concepts and different contemporary approaches highly familiar to the contemporary individual acquainted with literature and linguistics such as: "a text is an open-ended universe where the interpreter can discover infinite interconnections"; "language is unable to grasp a unique and pre-existing meaning; on the contrary, language's duty is to show that what we can speak of is only the coincidence of the opposites"; or, "any text pretending to assert something univocal is a miscarried universe" while "to salvage the text is to transform it from an illusion of meaning to the awareness that meaning is infinite" (Eco 1992: 39).Considering these aspects as defining for the contemporary linguistic theories, Eco identifies their Hermetic sources in ideas

such as the depiction of the universe as "one big hall of mirrors" (Eco 1992: 32) and of the every individual object as "reflecting all the others". They both reflect Eco's belief in universal sympathy.

One last observation has to be made to complete the parallel, one which would point at the very characteristics of the second century AD Greek society, where the Hermetic vision had its biggest impact on people's way of rendering the universe intelligible. It was an epoch when the most representative God, Hermes and its symbolical image had undergone certain changes: from a minor figure among the other gods of Olympus- the patron of thieves, of the roads and of pastoral life- he become the messenger of the gods, a symbol of prophecy (since he was the one best acquainted with the secret thoughts of the gods). He was also the creator of music, the patron of inventions and, above all, the *god of metamorphosis*. The particularity of those times that most resembles that one of the fictional worlds we speak of is its *heterogeneity* and *multiplicity*. The world is seen as a "crossroad of peoples and ideas, when all gods were tolerated and *dissolved their identities*" (Eco 1992: 31). What follows is that "once any divine image became familiar, they turned away from it to images of other civilizations" (Eco 1992: 31). The association of Hermes and his image to Postmodernism is also sustained by the fact that both the god and the episteme can be characterized by the multiple ways in which they can be defined, a plurality of terms to be associated with. Both are "many things at once" and do not suffer an all-comprising definition. Dealing with the history and analysis of Hermetism, Francois Bonardel pointed to yet another attribute of Hermes as "the *mediator*, the *restorer of legitimate and primordial ambiguity*, father of the eternal return to the origins and giver of the thoroughness of knowledge" (Bonardel 1994: 33).

As concerns the retailored image of the Hermetic concepts, as a recontextualization, it could be easily introduced into a description of the contemporary society in its fascination with the concept of Otherness. In Postmodern Narrative Theory, Mark Currie lingered on the question whether literary critics have the right "to attempt a narratological explanation of culture at large" (Currie 1998: 96). Currie's assumptions thus point to the interesting issue of culture itself "either in general or in particular" as a narrative. The idea of the Postmodern multiplicity and heterogeneity of discourses, of identities tied up together, influenced by one another, is present as well in the collision of narratives, not only in that of the worlds. The contemporary individual provides such an example. In the view of Currie's assumption, today one can better understand, John Fowles' interest in Victorianism or in what the 'sense of the past' shared with 'the sense of the present':

"The schizophrenia of the contemporary society is partly about the supermarket shelving- literal and metaphorical- of history, but geographical compression [i.e. space compression] is just as obvious at Tesco. For the consuming classes, the supermarket offers a kind of compressed tourism which *erodes the traditional relationship between identity and place*. It is an experience dedicated to

cultural diversity which offers the shopper an international spectrum of possible identifications, where the sign of other cultures compose the shopper's identity through affiliation with various ethnicities as if shopping itself were a process of identity construction"(Currie 1998:104).

As a reflex, Fowles identified himself with his own culture from another age-Victorianism- from reasons that we dealt with earlier- the "shifty space" being out-framed within the paratext. The question, yet, remains, what *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Bronte's novel and *The French Lieutenant's Woman* have in common? That is paratextuality. This term implies the coexistence of two dynamic forms of representation: the text and the paratext. The latter marks the elements present "on the threshold of the text and which help to direct and control the reception of the text by its readers"(Genette 1982: 25). The "peritext" consists of elements such as titles, chapter titles, prefaces, notes. Both the "para" and the "peri" factors may help the reader to choose an appropriate way of reading. Defined in their own social context the two novels are different in a way: *Jane Eyre* is a quasi-autobiographical novel, a confession of the self whereas *The French Lieutenant's Woman* is a parody, given the multiplicity of paratextual elements. Paratextuality shows, therefore, to what extent the two novels are related or different and requires for a better contextualization of both novels by the interference of the "parasite", not exactly external and never simply something that can be excluded or kept outside. The *boundary line*, the screen suggesting a permeable membrane connecting inside and outside the two respective ages (Victorianism and the contemporary), the factor suggesting the exterior, the "para" factor is the title of the two novels, indicating the identity of the female characters of the novels. With the former- Jane Eyre- is indicative of the fact that Brontë's goal is to focus on the Self, in a confessional mode referring to a single personality revealed by spiritual insight. Comparatively, the novel by John Fowles has a larger significance, as it refers to a particular attitude, as the name of the heroine was used by her own Victorian community in order to advertise her "possible" image. Parody as "irony with critical distance" is further explored by this novel in its different chapter construction. The formal orientation of this novel is extrapolated by the quotations from different Victorian writers and, thus, *construction of perspective* is underlined. They do function as chapter title and as epigraphs simultaneously. They are selected from Hardy's *The Riddle*, Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, Matthew Arnold's *Notebooks*, and so on, in fact from representative Victorian poets, writers, scientists and critics. They all extend the context of the novel into a wider cultural and literary sphere, as product of all the efforts made up to the present time. Their aim is to give value to the main body of the text. It is value as meaning and significance. The best of all *relates the Writer (Author) to the Reader*.

Charlotte Brontë's development of relationship with her Reader highlights a 'new direction' in the literary conception of the time: a writer who had the courage to express different opinions about life or to decide whether the Reader should be granted the freedom to decide upon the right answer ("Who blames me?

Many, no doubt"; "Reader, though I look comfortably accommodated I am not very tranquil in my mind"; "I was excited more than I had ever been; and whether what followed was the effect of excitement the Reader shall judge")(Brontë 1987: passim.).

Charlotte Bronte's position resembles to a very great extent that of Fowles. For, in matter of authenticity, John Fowles imitated even that. The difference is that Fowles seems (in the contemporary line of "authorship") to continually encourage the freedom and 'selectivity' of his characters and receptors. That is to say that in Brontë's case an outer judgment cannot influence the direction of the novel as the Reader is invited to give a certain definition to the idea of judging well, namely judging like Jane.

With Fowles, the "peri" and "para" factors indicate that his relationship with the Reader is more *democratic*, although his 'authorial' interferences are many and various. In fact, his whole novel seems to be a blend of narrative and comments upon it. He openly speaks on behalf of the Reader, expressing the universal need of creating various fictional worlds within which everyone tends to build his own world. And, yet, the *democratic relationship* envisaged by Fowles in his novel, beyond the call of freedom, resonates with the contemporary *inter-subjective relationship* conceived between the Writer-the Character and the Reader in order to construct a *new meaning*: *to penetrate one's mind in order to be understood in the proper way*. One can almost listen to Sarah's own words:

"Am I happy? Am I Free? Yes, perhaps I am […] But still my free spirit is not quite a lonely iceberg- so cold, so free and ignorant that he wouldn't even care about the ships that crush into my soul…into its free white wings, and it hurts. Now I am left with my independence and with an eternal though human question […] I am free but still human and this limited human condition reminds me that I cannot do more than that […] He has to struggle alone. Not even Fowles, my own Creator can do more because he also has to struggle on his own path. *The most important thing is that all the three of us are in it […] Still, the Victorians wouldn't have said so[…] because this new feeling has, first of all, to penetrate the mind, it has to be understood in a proper way and only then lived* to *the climax*" (Fowles 1987: passim.)

REFERENCES

1. John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, London: 1987, Penguin Edition.

2. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, London: 1988, Penguin Edition.

3. Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide:Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism.* Bloomington: 1987, Indiana University Press.

4. Gertrude Himmelfarb, *De-Moralization of Society: From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values*, New York: 1995, Alfred Knops.

5. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol 1-4, Chicago: 1984, Chicago University Press

6. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Durham:1991/!993, Duke University Press.

7. Philippe Leujeune, *Pactul autobiographic*, Bucuresti:2001, Editura Univers.

8. Mark Currie, *Postmodern Narrative Theory*, London: 1998, St.Martin's Press Inc.

9. Umberto Eco, *Interpretation and History*, *Interpretation and Over-Interpretation* in Stefan Collini (ed.), *Interpretation and Over-Interpretation*, Cambridge:1992, Cambridge University Press.

10. Francois Bonardel, *Hermetismul*, Oradea:1994, Editura de Vest.

11. Gerard Genette, *Palimpseste*, Paris: 1982, Editions du Seuil.

12. John McGowan, *Modernity and Culture, the Victorians and Cultural Studies*, in "Postmodern Culture Re-writes the 19th Century", Minneapolis: 2001, University of Minnesota Press.

WHERE AND WHEN DID YOU LEARN TO TEACH?

ANA-MARIA FLORESCU-GLIGORE[*]

My research interest being linked to pre-service teacher education I have asked some of my former students, teachers of English at present to write an account for which I set a task. The task for the account was:

> **What** do you **need to know** and what do **you need to know about** in order to be a successful English language teacher in your situation? **How, when, where** did you get this knowledge?

I am looking at three of the texts of the accounts written by my respondents for ideas linked to the origin of their knowledge about and of teaching, the origin of language teaching awareness. I have looked at the three accounts in alphabetical order

In her account **Anca** says that the university pre-service teacher training course did not offer students practical knowledge that they could use in the classroom lacking reference to handling discipline problems.

> *'...the teacher has to learn how to cope with such situations. I don't think that the university has prepared us for handling such problems (*discipline problems in the classroom*) or for teaching in general.' (A)*

The pre-service course is too theoretical and beginner teachers do not have opportunity for practice. Learning to become a teacher is a continuous activity that peers and colleagues who are prepared to share their experience can help in. The beginner teacher lacks in confidence due to lack of practice and needs the support of their peers.

> *'To answer the second question, part of these things I know from the university, but I think the university hasn't prepared us for being teachers because there was too much theory and little practice. I think one needs at least 2-3 years of experience to realise how things have to be done. Each day I learn something and I am glad I have colleagues or former teachers whom I can talk to and ask for their help'. (A)*

Experience shared with authors of books is useful but first hand experience is much more valuable. Peer support and access to knowledgeable people, people who can advise is crucial for **Anca**. She mentions her former teacher of English separately which means that she is aware of a difference between teachers of English and of other subjects. There is also the issue of 'learning' from her former teacher of English in her new capacity, that of a teacher of English, which means that **Anca** now understands things differently compared to when she was a learner.

---

[*] *Lector, Catedra de limba si literatura engleza, Facultatea de litere, Universitatea 'Babes-Bolyai'*

'Books about methodology were also very useful but I found out many things during teaching. I sometimes talk to the school psychologist and ask for her advice, but most often I talk to my mother who is also a teacher and she has a lot of experience. I discuss with her everything that happens at school and she has helped me a lot in solving the problems I had at school. I can say that I feel lucky to have very helpful colleagues with whom I can cooperate at school and I can say that my former teacher of English has always served me as a model. I am glad that I will have the opportunity to teach at the same school with my former teacher because I'll have the chance to learn from her.' (A)

The origin of **Anca**'**s** awareness of language teaching as expressed by her in her account comes from: 1. Books about methodology; 2. Learning by doing; 3. University courses; 4. Former experience as learner (Her former teacher of English - always served as a model); 5. Talking to peers (colleagues, former teachers, her mother who is a teacher, her former teacher of English); 6. Talking to other people (the school psychologist).

In **Corina's** account other issues are mentioned. She refers to theories of learning and to the awareness of how you learnt yourself which give you the background that you need for support before you have experience.

'Another essential element is the knowledge about how a language is learnt. You need to know about the current theories in the field, but also to remember the way you have learnt it yourself. This way it is easier to understand the processes the students go through. It is also easier to predict what problems might occur, what things could be more difficult to understand and would need more explaining. This gives you an insight which makes your job easier and more efficient.'(C)

Corina knows now that learner feedback is a valuable source of information for the teacher who wants to be a helper and facilitator and that it is sometimes easier to find things out directly. She also raises the issue of teaching as a learning process that involves a human relationship of 'giving and getting'.

'Getting feedback from your students is very important because it provides you with a perspective over your activity and it may also provide you with solutions to problems that occur in the teaching process. You're actually learning from the students, as you teach them. I try to ask the students direct questions about how they feel about what we are doing, but also observe their reactions when I ask them to do something'(C)

Another issue that **Corina** raises is that of the knowledge of the language that one teaches which is not enough if one is not aware of the contrasts and similarities between the mother tongue of the learner and the foreign language that is taught. Because language is taught as a means of communication it is important to use it as such, a fact that she remembers to have learnt from her own teacher of

English in secondary school. She proves here to be very much aware of language and communication being the object of teaching. She is also aware of psychological issues related to learner reactions to teacher requirements.

> *'You need to know how your own language, or that of your students, relates to English in order to understand the cause of these problems. You can use the differences and similarities between the two languages in order to clarify problematic issues. I think explanations in the mother tongue should be avoided though. Or better said used less and less, as the students' level rises. You need to know that it takes some work to encourage the students to interact among themselves and with you in the target language. I have seen that many use every opportunity to revert to their mother tongue. My English teacher in high-school used to pretend she didn't understand Romanian or Hungarian and thus forced us to speak English. This strategy can backfire, though, and inhibit a shy or less confident student.' (C)*

There are several methods of teaching language, so it is important to be aware of the advantages and disadvantages of each, to keep in contact with research in the field in order to be acquainted with the latest findings and to remember what your teachers did and resort to your language learning experience in order to be as efficient as possible as a teacher.

> *'You also need to be familiar with the various methods used or experimented by English language teachers and their results in order to be able to choose the one (or ones) most suitable for your class in order to make up your own 'recipe' combining elements from several methods at the same time.*
>
> *Here again, you should try to remember the methods used by your teachers, in order to choose the most effective ones among them and to draw upon them in your teaching. I even use the same materials sometimes.' (C)*

Corina considers that the basis of what she does when she teaches is her experience as a learner, the 'model' of her teachers from both school and university, her classroom observation opportunities and her own teaching experience. The teaching practice of the pre-service teacher training is of least use as it was too short.

> *'I have learnt some of these things in school (mostly on the MA programme), some the hard way, in the classroom, once I started teaching, and very few during the too short practice period in the teacher training module. On the other hand, thinking about what my teachers and professors used to do has helped a lot. I rely very much on that background in my English classes. Of great help have been my observations during the summer course in Oxford. I learnt a lot then, in just one month, as they used all sorts of communicative methods I had never experienced before. And even now I still use the materials I got then.'(C)*

Among the issues that **Corina** mentions there are some similarities and some differences when compared to **Anca's** list. **Anca** went into teaching straight away and did not have any other formal training opportunities. It appears that **Corina's**

59

perception of what is useful for language teaching awareness was enriched by her further contact with formal training while she was already teaching. Her list would be the following: 1. Awareness of learning strategies and teaching methods; 2. Learner experience/ perceptions (1. getting feedback from the students -in class during the 'lesson' or in writing; 'you learn from your students' 2. being a learner herself); 3. Results of research in the field; 4. Knowledge of differences/similarities between mother tongue and target language; 5. Knowledge of psychology; 6. Former school teacher of English as possible model; 7. Teaching practice (too short); 8. Further courses (MA, Oxford summer course. Especially peer observation); 9. Own teaching experience ('the hard way').

Irina seems to be a special person who knew already at about the age of 10 that she wanted to become a teacher of English and she seems to believe that she knew already at that time what would have been better for her and her classmates when learning English. She considers all the teachers of English that she had as either good or bad examples of how teaching can be done.

> *'I will answer the question **how, when, where** this knowledge is acquired. It is difficult to answer because I have wanted to become a teacher of English ever since I was in the 5th grade. I loved my teacher, who taught us a lot of songs and poems, which I remember very well even now. I learnt that you attract young students in this way. Then, after one year, my teacher left for Sweden for good. I had the good luck or the misfortune to come in contact with no less than other six teachers of English until I went to high-school. I learnt from some of them, but I would criticise them all (in my mind, of course); nobody was good enough and I thought about what I would have liked to do during the classes of English'.* (I)

Perhaps **Irina** did not realise all that she writes about at the time when she was a learner but she remembers having experienced them as a learner and she says that she enjoyed thinking of herself as a teacher because she was allowed to 'teach' her own classmates. She is aware of the importance of communication in language teaching, of communicative classroom activities but also of communication that belongs not only to words but also to body language and to culture and civilisation. But she cannot understand why her classmates did not like her teaching. The fact that she mentions this aspect is important as she proves to be aware of something lacking, which she cannot account for.

> *When I went to high-school I had a very good teacher of English, ready to use the new communicative methods. It was great and I remember many things even now: some role-plays, some pair-work activities. However, I was the best in class and I always wanted to learn more and more. That is why I attended the so-called summer camps, that is summer courses with students from Scottish universities as teachers. I learnt about British life and civilization, I learnt that songs and body language help a lot when you teach, and I learnt how to organise a class debate. Later, when I was in the 11th grade my school teacher even let me organise role-plays and debates, but my classmates were not very enthusiastic about them.*

Besides teaching her classmates **Irina** also did some private tutoring. This also provided her with teaching awareness and teaching experience.

> *Another important element in my training is that I have a young sister and I always wanted to teach her the English I knew. As a matter of fact I also helped some of my classmates who were not so good at English. I liked this. Everything I learnt made me think of how to teach that item. I had many ideas! I think I was born to become a teacher and a teacher of English. (I)*

As **Anca** and **Corina** mentioned before **Irina** also considers that the pre-service teacher training at university offered her very little. During the teaching practice she felt proud to teach at one of the 'best' secondary schools in town, but because it felt as a show not like real practice she considers it valueless. Her own experience as a teacher is the one that counts and from which she has learnt the most.

> *'The university years disappointed me in a way. I learnt things about psychology and methodology and I even taught in High School, but frankly speaking that was <u>too</u> little. It was interesting teaching high-school classes and I felt like an actor on the stage. That is why I think that the practical stage was not long enough. I ought to have learnt that a teacher shouldn't be noticed in class, like an actor. A teacher has to be somewhere in the background and to co-ordinate things just like a director. The students should be the actors.*
>
> *I have acquired a lot of knowledge about teaching ever since I have been teaching. The contact with the classes has helped me a lot more than all my university training.' (I)*

Peers in school are important as they are the people who can advise you and who may or may not accept you as a peer. **Irina** brings forward here the issue of the beginner teacher 'feeling', 'believing' that they are a teacher. One is a teacher only if the others also consider that. If it is only you who think so it is not enough. This issue is connected with the social relationships in a school and also with the beginner teacher learning how to behave as a member of a certain profession.

> *'A person who has helped me a lot is the head of the department of English in our school, who is a remarkable human being from all points of view. She is not only a good professional, ready to offer the most appropriate advice as far as teaching is concerned, but she also helped me feel like a member of the teaching staff and has supported me in the most difficult moments of my teaching experience.' (I)*

Other sources of training and/or ideas are the books that are available at the British Council Library, but **Irina** does not have the time or patience to adapt and use them in her own classes

> *'The British Library is also very important in my teacher training. There is a special corner for teachers there, with a lot of material. My only difficulty is how to adapt it to my classes.' (I)*

The issue that **Irina** also raises is that of teaching allowing for a special kind of relationship, that **Corina** has also mentioned. The teacher also 'listens' to the pupils and may help them.

> *'Teaching is a special job because you come in contact with souls. You don't only have to give them some knowledge, but you also have to listen to them, to help them shape their personalities. That is why for the beginners it is very difficult to be a good teacher. You have to be patient because everything comes as time goes by.' (I)*

Like **Anca, Irina** has also started teaching in a secondary school, so there are more similarities between what they both refer to. She does not mention any further training and the issues they both mention are of a more practical nature. This is also due to problems (discipline problems) that they have because of teaching learners of a younger age. Irina's list comprises: 1. The teacher's job is not just a job but 'one's life', a way of being, a way of living; 2. Learning teaching from observing one's own teachers and thinking critically of what they did, choosing critically from what she observed; 3. Remembering class activities and what was useful about them; 4. Practice -which she sees as part of her training - with her own colleagues in school, with tutoring her sister and some of her' colleagues; 5. Pre-service training offered too little practice and in the 'wrong' manner and some theoretical knowledge of psychology and methodology; 6. Learning while teaching; 7. Peer support in 'difficult' moments related to teaching; 8. Being acknowledged as a member of the teaching staff, (need to be part of a group, need to belong); 9. Access to books, materials and reference in the library.

	Issues related to LTA origin – in :	A	C	I
1.	Teaching (assessing) experience	*	*	*
2.	Pre-service courses / at university	~		~
3.	Teaching practice	~	~	~
4.	Experience / perceptions as learner	~	~	~
5.	Talking to peers	*		*
6.	Talking to others	*		
7.	Former English lang. teacher model	~ ^	~	~
8.	Former teachers	*		~
9.	Feedback from own students		*	*
10.	Classroom observation		~	~
11.	Teaching as a way of being, of behaving / it suits the personality			~ * ^
12.	Peers /head of depart. advice/ support/ part of a group/ association	*		~ * ^
13.	Materials and references in the library		*	~ * ^
14.	Reading methodology	~	~	
15.	Results of research in the field		~	
16.	Differences learner's lang. and the target lang.		~	
17.	Further training		~	
18.	Awareness of teaching methodology and learning strategies		~	
19.	Psychology		~	~

Note: * makes use of now
~ from the past and forms a basis for now
^ useful in the future, something to learn from

The issues mentioned could be grouped into issues related to **institutions**, **courses, people** and **fields of knowledge** besides what the teachers themselves did - **actions.** The institutions are the educational ones from primary school to university and also the BC library. The courses are the pre-service teacher training course offered at the university plus the teaching practice as well as summer courses or MA programmes. The people who are mentioned are the teachers one had while a learner, the colleagues and peers now, but also people like the head of department, the school psychologist or one's own mother and the teachers' association. The fields of knowledge are English (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation), psychology, methodology, learning strategies, contrastive linguistics. The experience gained from teaching is the most valuable and is ranked as the most important.

REFERENCES

1. Allwright, D. (1996) "Am I now, have I ever been, and could I ever be a 'developer'?" International Conference on Teacher Training and Development. Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.

2. Florescu-Gligore, A. (2001) "What is teaching all about. A possible definition of LTA" in the *Mentoring In The New Millennium Preparation,Implementation, Evaluation.* editors Mace S. et all Cluj-Napoca Editura Napoca Star.

3. Hamel, J. and S. Dufour, D. Fortin (1993) *Case Study Research.* Newbury Park: Sage Publications

4. Ivanic, R. (1998) *Writing and Identity.* Amsterdam. John Benjamins.

5. Robson, C. (1993) *Real World Research. A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers* Oxford: Blackwell

6. Sunderland, J. (2000) "Gender and Classroom Research: What's special about the Language Classroom" in E.Cochran and M. Yepez (eds) *Issues in Gender, Language usage and Classroom Pedagogy.* New Jersey: TESOL/ BE and BASTOS Educational Books.

7. Yin, R. (1994) *Case Study Research. Design and Methods* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks Sage Publications

* Ana-Maria Florescu-Gligore, BA (1976) Liverpool University U.K.; Teacher Of English (Since 1976); Lecturer In Applied Linguistics - The English Department of the 'Babes-Bolyai' University of Cluj-Napoca (Since 1995); Ph.D. Resarch Student with Lancaster University – on the British Council Lancdoc Doctoral Programme, Department of Linguistics and Modern English Language

AN ANTI-VICTORIAN: EMILY BRONTË AND HOW 'WUTHERING HEIGHTS' WAS BEGOTTEN

ADRIAN RADU

1847 is a year marking the middle of the century that was to establish the Victorian age in literature, a golden period for the novel and a kind of 'search for balance'[1], similar in way to the Elizabethan age with its flourishing of the drama. The mode of representation became more factual and pictorial than before, which did not necessarily mean acting on behalf of the landscape[2], whereas, in parallel, rendering someone's speech did not imply that the author was to speak in behalf of those persons[3]. This modern period which is traditionally known as 'Victorianism', a reflection of the thoughts and aesthetic creed of different authors, paved the way to what was to come in the twentieth century with its new creative literary schools and trends. The nineteenth century literature in England is rich and multifaceted like most of the contemporary literatures of France, Germany, or Eastern Europe and Northern America. It is a period of search for personal voices and new and independent ways of development in the works of the novelists, poets or playwrights, as well as in the general trends and doctrines of the epoch.

From its very first steps of development, literature in particular and human creativity in general formulated a guiding line in most of what was being created: that of being as much as possible true to our life and existence. Everywhere and every time life and existence have been investigated in all their facets and placed within the creation proper and submitted to different kinds of objective and subjective investigations. Several doctrines appeared and invaded the creative field and launched numberless ideas, important or not, central or peripheral, accepting or rejecting what had been postulated before. At the same time, there has always been a particular way of representing life and existence, whether connected with the life in the common concrete surroundings of reality or with the inner life of the subjective mind. In this way, most of what we call literature can often be perceived through the idea of vraisemblance in the process of representation of reality. Reality, whether factual or virtual, directly reflected or transposed through filtering media is what constitutes the nucleus of most creative moments, regardless of the way it is presented or the form that it takes.

---

[1] Emile Legoius and Louis Cazamian, *A History of English Literature* (London: Dent, 1971), 1087.

[2] Rob Pope, *The English Studies Book* (London: Routledge, 1998), 217.

[3] Ibid.

From this general aspect, the nineteenth century literature could not be an exception. Reality and the literary trend coming directly from it – realism – were to mark the general way of development for most of the creations that emerged within this period. Therefore, realism as direct approach to reality, coming directly from it meant for many writers to write in the good tradition founded by Balzac in France, or Dickens in England, tradition that formed the basis for many a creation of that period and, still widely, of today, in a rejuvenated format, though. After his death in 1859, Honoré de Balzac bequeathed the literary tradition that he had fathered to his English relative Charles Dickens, the two being two important representatives of critical realism. They left their mark on several creations of the time influencing an ever increasing number of writers. It seemed that the current best responded to the practical aspect of life since it was its direct outgrowth. Towards the middle of the century literature was moulded by an authority of reason which had grown more exactly and active and which found its direct and main outlet in science[4].

But this was not the only aspect defining the literature of the period. Industrialization brought about changes in social welfare and made some people rise in social rank and others fall and be the victims of misfortunes and misery. Though society seemed to move in a quite straightforward way, the humans' complex inner life could not be treated in a pure and mechanic way using a simple imitative and realist technique. The literature of the age, more practical and increasingly more social and factual than before, demanded not only re-presentations, explanations and solutions but also faithful and committed reproduction. The writer was not to merely render what was going on around him. Alternatively, it was no longer possible to become a pre-romantic hero, an outcast banished from society or a superior titanic Byronic hero beholding everything from splendid isolation and superiority, though heroic aspects of life were well sustained by the Victorian readers. However, the English mind could still recall, more than ever, nostalgic memories of its Elizabethan youth or a kind of renewed vigour of Romantic essence.

This is how, besides the above purely pragmatic acceptance of works of art, a sort of modernized romanticism was also to be felt. It is true that after the supremacy of emotions, dreams and tempests of the soul there comes a time when the necessity for order and reason has the tendency to impose itself more powerfully than before. Romanticism as a literary trend was not altogether dead, exhausted in a way it is still kept on breathing but the voice to be heard was a pronounced call for rationality – but not mechanism – in all things, out of the necessity of truth in the first place among the motives of creation[5]. The practical spirit of the age started to dictate the acceptance or non-acceptance of a work of art, whether it could be sold or not.

---

[4] Ibid., 1090.
[5] Ibid., 1088.

In the middle of such a century dominated by an order of reason seeking explanations for everything, Emily Brontë published her only and singular novel, *Wuthering Heights*, the spiritual refuge and the song of a lonely swan, a creation which embodies almost everything, except, probably, the established aesthetic creed of the century. The atmosphere of the novel and its characters, as well as the way of representation do not observe the requirements of the Victorian critical realism. The novel is Gothic in setting, almost in the spirit of the former English Gothic novels published in the second half of the eighteenth century. Here the storm rages and the wind frightfully blows through gloomy trees, the houses have cold dark rooms where visions appear during the night and the rain comes down with lightning and thunder to wash away the range burning the souls like a flame. Heathcliff, the novel's main hero is more of a Byronic hero than a conservative character obedient to the conventions of the age. He is the outcast enslaved by his passion, the eternal rebel who turns against his former oppressors, with voice like thunder and fire-setting eyes like lightning. The love in the novel is unfulfilled as that of the unfortunate heroes of the Romantic age. The manner of treating the material, the narration of the tragedy are sooner devices that belong to the twentieth century objective and impersonal novel. Nothing is seen from the industrialized towns and their dwellers and the setting is almost nowhere within a circle seemingly out of space, out of time, more in the country but without the slightest hint to rustic or pastoral life. These aspects give the novel the characteristics of a creation of other times, an un-Victorian novel, a solitary creation in itself, a singular tree in a large field.

Emily Brontë, a singular figure of the age, wrote only *Wuthering Heights*, an unexpected and bewildering novel which she published in 1847, a year before her death. Her entire withdrawn life seems to have been dedicated to a silent gathering of material, a life-long meditation on this unique creation in prose. Her poems published together with her sisters in 1846, when she was 28, foreshadow, however, this great achievement. Apparently, all her life was like a grouping of forces that consumed her with the writing of this masterpiece, and then when her strength failed her she lay down to die.

She was a writer of a strange and rare talent and probably of a rare quality. Like her heroes in *Wuthering Heights* she lived a retired and secluded life escaping form the society of her fellow-beings. She was in continuous communion with nature in her long and solitary wanderings across the moors. She never felt at ease when she was away and among foreigners; she was timid, not very communicative, absorbed by her musings and yearning for the liberty she was used to when she was a young girl at Haworth. Her homesickness was terrible and, in spite of her sister Charlotte, she wanted to get back home, lured by that strange feeling of restfulness until among her beloved hills.

The school at Roe Head was not her place and she remained there only for three years. As Charlotte says, she was overwhelmed with the nostalgia of her house and the days she spent there became more and more gloomy and sorrowful. The verses that she wrote later on evoke the image of her house in an impressive way:

There is a spot mid barren hills
Where winter howls and driving rain,
But if the dreary tempest hills
There is a light that warms again.

The house is old, the trees are bare
And moonless bends the misty dome
But what on earth is half so dear,
So longed for as the hearth of home?[6]

No-one knew what this sickness was except Charlotte, who understood that if Emily did not go back home, she would wither like a plant sowed in an unfruitful soil[7]. And then back she went among the moors and the hills with barren sides, the wind blowing and delicate primroses shuddering in the cold sun.

Except for a short period, in 1842, she spent all her life at Haworth. She got early at dawn and began her housework – cooking, ironing, cleaning – with a notebook always open and at hand in case she wanted to put down something. And when everything was ready and her work done she went out on her long wanderings across the Yorkshire hills accompanied only by her faithful friend, her dog Keeper. Like Catherine, her heroine, she loved her home soil, the moors and the barren land around her and it was her utmost pleasure to run away from home and feel at ease in the middle of the nature of her childhood. It was as if her characters were taking shape in front of the writer's eyes – Catherine and Heathcliff escaping from home:

'It was one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all night, and after the punishment grew a mere thing to be laughed at. (*WH*, 50)[8] '

And from this love of the moors and the wilderness surrounding them, from its strange song came to light her only novel, her swan-song *Wuthering Heights*. But before the novel was ready to be offered to its readers, the public indirectly knew her as a poet – she published under a pseudonym – a rare poet writing about remote lovers set in a great landscape. The novel appears indeed to be an extensive reworking of the material in her poems but with the complexities of the genre. The volume published in 1846 together with her sisters Ann and Charlotte under the pen-names Acton, Currer and Ellis Bell clearly shows that only Emily's lines have literary value.

The poems are written by a powerful imaginative mind whose heroes are great lovers governed by elemental forces, in a world where the betrayal of the deeper self brings about death for the deceiver, the disruption of the binding

---

[6] Emily Brontë, 'Stanzas', in *The Brontës: High Waving Heather* (London: Phoenix, 1996), 36-37.

[7] Ana Cartianu, *Eseuri de literatură engleză şi americană* (Cluj: Dacia, 1973), 111.

[8] Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847; reprint, New York: The New American Library, 1959), hereafter cited parenthetically as *WH* with page numbers.

element and annihilation of the communion between humans and nature. Her verses refer to an episode in the life of a Roman, Augusta Geraldine or Rosina, often and usually referred to as A.G.A. Six of her poems are about Lord Alfred of Aspin Castle, one of A.G.A.' lovers and a prototype of Edgar Linton. According to Visick[9] the man's relationship with the heroine becomes more and more like that between Edgar and Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*. At this stage another lovers appears, Fernando de Samarra, who takes his life for A.G.A. and who has certain traits in common with Heathcliff.

It would be too simple to consider the novel only a mere transposition of the poems, of their atmosphere and heroes. We should consider them what they rightfully are, undoubtedly, just a starting point, as the poetic material was regrouped and re-formed, characters were added and reshaped, plot and its development was introduced so as to comply with the requirements of the novel form. But all the images of the poems that she considered necessary were preserved – certain episodes of intense passion and love, the atmosphere of dark and cold houses and lands, with death haunting the living with ghosts. It is possible to find in this way elements in the poems with similar counterparts in the novel, such as the landscape, with all their implications on the humans.

Emily Brontë is positively the poet of majestic landscapes, intense emotion and elemental passion, whose verses announce the impressiveness of those human beings that are their direct descendants and the paganism that were transposed to the novel. The lines below prefigure the spellbinding appearance and the savage beauty of the moors, so characteristic to *Wuthering Heights*:

> The night is darkening around me,
> The wild winds coldly blow;
> But a tyrant spell has bound me,
> And I cannot, cannot go.
>
> The giant trees are bending
> Their bare bough weighed with snow,
> And the storm is fast descending
> And yet, I cannot go.
>
> Clouds beyond, clouds above me,
> Waters beyond, wastes below;
> But no thing drear can move me
> I will not, cannot go.[10]

Catherine and Heathcliff are inheritors of the Gondal heroes. The novel offers the same vision of snow and cold wind blowing over Wuthering Heights as night is falling over the bare boughs of the trees, and the souls of the lovers are tortured by

---

[9] Mary Visick, *The Genesis of 'Wuthering Heights'* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1967), 13-14.

[10] Emily Brontë, 'The Night Is Darkening Around Me', in *The Brontës*, 35.

their passion. From the first lines the poem conveys the same image as that at the beginning of the novel:

> 'Yesterday afternoon set in misty and cold [...] On the bleak hill-top the air was black with a frost and the air made me shiver through every limb. ' (*WH*, 14) '

The atmosphere of the poem is similar to that surrounding Wuthering Heights as seen by Lockwood during his first visit to his landlord:

> ' 'Wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmosphere to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there all the time indeed, one may guess the power or the North wing blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house, and by the range of gaunt thorns, all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. (*WH*, 10) '

The same feeling of agony over the dead love is found in Chapter 33 of the novel, where Heathcliff craves for a world he cannot reach, where only Catherine can reside, but, paradoxically, all is beyond life. He fights, but his fight is in vain:

> 'I have neither a fear, nor a presentiment nor a hope of death. And yet I cannot continue in this condition. I have to remind myself to breathe – almost to remind myself to breathe – almost to remind my heart to beat. And it is like bending back a stiff spring – it is by compulsion that I do the slightest act not prompted by the thought, and by compulsion that I notice anything alive or dead, which is not associated with one universal idea. I have a single wish and my whole being and faculties yearn to attain it. They have yearned towards it so long and so unwaveringly, that I am convinced it will be reached – and soon – because it has devoured my existence, I am swallowed in the anticipation of its fulfilment [...] Oh, God, a fight, I wish it were over. (*WH*, 308) '

Some aspects of the characters' features already appear delineated in the poems, these traits being amplified, as requested by the plot in the novel. As such, a dark boy and fair girl are sketched in a poem written in 1842:

> And only he had locks of light
> And she had raven hair
> While now his curls are dark as night
> And hers are morning fair.[11]

Visick is of the opinion[12] that they might foreshadow Cathy and Hareton just as they appear at the end of the novel when their love wins over Heathcliff's cruelty and ill-treatment. But the dark boy with black curls might as well be Heathcliff himself at the beginning of his love affair with Catherine. Only his image seems to be the one from the novel, hers only in the serenity of appearance.

---

[11] Quoted in Visick, 19.
[12] Visick, 19.

When all the storms have ended and death has brought silence to the characters' tormented souls, the peacefulness of their graves is depicted at the end of the novel as Lockwood after his final discussion with Nelly Dean walks near Catherine's, Edgar's and Heathcliff's tombs:

'I lingered round them, under that benign sky, watched the moths fluttering among the heath and hare-bells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass; and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers in that quiet earth. (*WH*, 320) '

The same peaceful repose is also recorded in the Gondal poems when A.G.A.'s epitaph is spoken:

The linnet in the rocky dells,
The moor-lark in the air,
The bee among the heather-bells
That hide my lady fair:

The wild deer browse above her breast;
The wild birds raise their brood.
And they, her smiles of love caressed,
Have left her solitude! […]

They thought the tide of grief would flow
Unchecked through future years,
But where is all that anguish now,
And where are all their tears? […]

Blow, west wind, by the lonely mound,
And murmur, summer streams
There is no need of other sound
To soothe my Lady's dreams.[13]

The image in the novel, more direct and though simpler in manner of representing the final rest is obviously a development from the stanzas of the poem. Peace is brought for Catherine's and Edgar's tormented lives, as well as for Heathcliff's pining for transcendence into another world and never-ending communion with his love.

Emily Brontë did not follow the established rules of the age but was aware of the fact that a novel should represent credible things, that being true- to-life had to be the guiding term especially for the nineteenth century public used to realistic presentations. Accordingly, she transformed some of the elements created by her imaginative mind into something real or at least credible. The Gondal poems abound in ghosts and as the practical sense of her readership might not have accepted this, she took certain safe-guards and offered a more plausible similar sequence. Consequently, when Lockwood meets Catherine's spirit, the reader is

---

[13] The Brontës, 'Song', in *The Brontës*, 41-42.

never told that this should be real, it might all be a simple dream, a nightmare where everything is possible. Similarly, the little shepherd's account of Catherine's and Heathcliff's wraiths might only be the product of a too imaginative fancy of a child frightened by the story of their tormented life and love.

Besides, as we have already pointed out, the writer was aware of the necessities of the prose genre: a well-organised plot and characters treated accordingly, realistic dialogue between them and an adequate manner of narrating the event. The novel should be set to navigate thus along objective and real plans with authentic characters driven by a plausible story. The space and time of the setting were also expected to be familiar and effortlessly to be located by the readers, since this was what best suited the taste of the century. The complicated story of A.G.A.'s lover turned into a much simpler one, with a more realistic presentation, but with the same consuming passion, the same intense life. The gloomy atmosphere enveloping the characters is also preserved with some changes, as mentioned above, with the stress on the dark sides of the surrounding scenery and the unfriendly and cold appearance of Wuthering Heights where Heathcliff lives, or on the characters which sometimes appear as coming from the Underworld: this is the case of Catherine on her sick-bed during her long illness or Heathcliff at the end of the novel, killing himself spiritually and physically, staring at vacancy and following with his eyes a vision only seen by himself alone. There are also comparably beautiful descriptions and the recalling of past times, so it is not seldom that the readers do find themselves reading poetry in prose. In the novel, as in her poetry, Emily Brontë turned upon herself for a deeper, meaningful revelation, and the result is a 'world of monstrous passion, of dark and gigantic emotional and nervous energy […] a world of ideal value.'[14]

The author reflected much of herself in the novel: her love for nature aiming at identification, the intense yearning to live and love, her conflicts, frustrations, human experience and her love for their house and home ground. In many instances she is like her characters who never leave the limited circle in which they live their elemental passion. She compelled her literary talent to convey to her readers what is known as the illusion of life. And the illusion of life is thoroughly achieved as what we are offered seems to be real characters in the way they take shape in front of us and in the way they behave. But in their inner souls they seem to have something beyond human comprehension. The devices used remain those of a bard and the qualifier 'poetic' attached to the novel by David Cecil[15] is not in the least honorific, since it synthesises in one word the general aspect of the work with its strange action, devouring love and the elemental wilderness acting savagely upon the humans.

---

[14] Mark Schorer, 'Technique as Discovery', in *Twentieth Century Fiction*, eds. W. H. Handy and M. Westbrook (New York: The Free Press, 1974), 74.

[15] David Cecil, *Early Victorian Novelists (London: Constable, 1966).*

TACKLING YOUTH CULTURE

DORIN CHIRA

ABSTRACT. Youth, teenage, and youth culture are terms that designate relatively recent social phenomena. The concept of the 'teenaged' referring to young people characterised by social and psychological instability dates back to 1900 while 'youth culture' is commonly considered a feature of the post-war society. The present paper gives a brief exploration of the particular way in which youth cultures emerged in Britain, as well as a compressed description of the basic British youth cultures.

Youth is usually perceived as a period of transition from childhood to adulthood, from a state of dependency and powerlessness to an independent stage of life. It can be perceived as a period of transition between the family of origin and the family of destination. It was only in the 20th century that young people have asserted themselves as an important social category. The first academic studies that dealt with youth as a distinct social group were carried out in the 1950s and 1960s in the United States and Britain and emphasised the disorderly and unpredictable nature of young people. The views and attitudes in these studies belonged to the disciplines of psychology, criminology and sociology. The focus was on working-class gangs but the final result of these studies was that all young people were regarded as evil-doers. In all these studies girls were totally ignored. The first cultural inquiries concerning youth cultures were carried out in the late 1950s and, consequently, some theories concerning the emergence of youth subcultures have been suggested.

Thus, adolescence is a natural part of the transition from childhood to adulthood. Youth groups function as intermediate 'homes' between the world of childhood and that of the adults. In this respect youth cultures are about survival in an otherwise adverse world. Secondly, the resistance through the use of a personal style is often contrasted against the conformity and authority of the adults. Other theories emphasise the fact that youth subcultures (i.e. Punk or Hip-Hop subcultures) are reactions against the dominant culture. However, recent studies in youth culture indicate a more positive view of the role of youth in society.

Around 1900, the period between starting work and getting married was one of the most prosperous moments in the lives of working-class youth (a large part of what we understand as a broad 'youth culture' can be traced back to the working-class). Before 1914 they formed an important part of music hall audiences and after the First World War they attended the new forms of commercial entertainment: the dance halls and the cinemas. During the first half of the 20th century separate working-class and middle-class, the youth heritage issued forecasting the observance of youth of the following decades.

The 1950s were a time of political tension and change. The peace that followed the end of the war was fragile, Europe was divided and the Cold War began. Young people were expected to obey and behave in the same way as their parents, and most of them did. However, there was a growing feeling of rebellion and nonconformity and a critical need for a change of attitudes and styles. Living standards were rising, unemployment was low. Influenced by fashion and music from America, they could express their own beliefs and feelings more vigurously. Fashion and music were the two fields where teenagers could express themselves freely. James Dean, Marlon Brando, Marlin Monroe or Elvis Presley were their icons. To many adults 'youth culture' meant gangs and trouble.

The Teddy Boys and their aggressive attitude were a symbol of a new anti-social trend. They were the first post-war British youth culture. They appeared in South and East London in 1952 and by 1956 one could meet them all over Britain. They came mainly from unskilled working-class background and due to the fact that they lacked grammar school education they could not get employment in white collar jobs or apply for apprenticeships into skilled trades (Brake, 1987: 73). Their distinctive dress consisted of an Edwardian style drape jacket, narrow drainpipe trousers, bootlace ties and suede shoes with thick crepe soles. Brake (1987: 172) remarks that even though girls were present in social activities, they were usually absent from the street corner culture. The Teddy Girls adopted American fashions such as toreador pants and circle skirts and wore ponytails while the boys tried a number of experimental styles.the fights in public houses and dance halls as well as the cinema riots in which they were involved called for public outrage and hostility. Some Teddy Boys had fascist tendencies and were involved with gangs of youth that attacked the West Indians that emigrated to Britain in the mid-fifties.

The 1960s were a decade of real change. Teenagers were twisting to the Beatles or rocking to the Rolling Stones, following the Peace Movement and wearing clothes that would distinguish them forever. The increase in the earnings of young people allowed them to become a major consumer group with its own market choices. Teenage spending was mainly oriented towards leisure goods and services: stereo equipment, records, motorcycles and cosmetics.

The Mods ('modernists') embodied youth, mobility and fashion during the first half of the sixties. They appeared in East Lomdon, as the Teddy Boys did a decade before. They were mainly working class, lower white-collar upwardly mobile groups. Brake (1987: 74) defines them in the following terms: 'effeminate, stuck up, emulating the middle classes, aspiring to be competitive snobbish, phoney'. One can remark that their style took on the neatness and smartness approved by the 'decent world' but simultaneously subverted these qualities by stylising them. By 1964 the Mods acquired a bad name because of their fighting with the Rockers.

Brake (1987) distinguishes several strata within this movement: the art-school Mods, wearing make-up; the mainstream Mods, dressed in suits, neat, narrow trousers and pointed shoes; scooter boys, covered in accessories and wearing anoraks and wide jeans; and hard Mods, who were aggressively working class. The first category listed above reappeared later in glamrock and new wave while the last one evolved into the touth culture of skinheads.

The Rockers (also called 'bikers' or 'greasers') took a stand against the Mods. They wore leather jackets, greasy denim jeans and motorcycle boots. Their hair was long and greasy, with a small quiff at the front. Unlike the Mods, who were semi-skilled white collar workers, the rockers were unskilled manual labourers. They were violent, anti-domestic and anti-authoritarians. They developed a cult for motorbikes, a symbol of freedom, mastery and intimidation (Brake, 1987: 74).

The Hippies came from middle-class background. The hippie movement had strong political and moral roots, rejecting Western materialism and seeking to offer an alternative way of life. It also incorporated ethnic and psychaedelic influences. The origins of this movement go back to the beatnik movement in the United States. A beatnik showed opposition to the moral standards and ways of life of ordinary society. People often think of beatniks as young people with long hair and dirty clothes. The hippies had long hear and wore headbands, worn-out jeans and sloppy casual outfits (Connikie, 1994: 22).

The 1970s did not develop a particular style until Punk became the dominant influence. Musically, the decade started with a boom. The Beatles, probably the most famous and successful group, separated in 1970. After that, music ranged from the music of David Bowie or Bay City Rollers to the punk rock bands such as the Sex Pistols and finally to the Jamaican influence of Bob Marley and the Wailers.

The Skinheads of the seventies originated from the mods. The movement was a working-class reaction against the middle-class hippies (Herald, 1994: 12). Their shaven heads, heavy boots, denim jeans and hostile attitudes were a reaction against the free and undemanding philosophy of the hippies of th elast decade and came to be associated with racist attacks and football violence. They defended traditional and conservative values such as hard work, patriotism and defence of the local area. Their favourite locations were the football ground and the pub. Skinhead groups were characterised by cohesion within the group and aggression towards other groups, especially non-white immigrants or other groups such as gays and hippies. In terms of music they preferred West Indian, ska and reggae (it became too involved with black pride so they switched to punk rock).

The Punk movement emerged from a feeling of discontent with the growing unemployment of young people and the increasingly conservative politics and ideas of society at the time. At first, they were against the values of money-based society but finally the movement became a broadly recognised youth culture. From the very beginning they wanted to shock. They had their hair cut into odd shapes and dyed in various colours; they also used heavy eye-shadows and pierced their noses and ears with safety pins and the like (Hopkins, 1992: 173). Their look included Lurex, old school uniforms, plastic garbage bags, safety pins and objects of sexual fetishism. In term of politics they tended to arrange in line with the Rock against Racism Movement and the Anti-Nazi League (Brake, 1987: 77). Their music – punk rock- was played very fast and loud with often violent and offensive words.

The economic recession of the 1970s and 1980s resulted in a marginalisation of youth. The decline in the level of youth employment and the increasing number of young people involved in training schemes of full-time education created a different picture from that of the 1960s. In the 1980s youth cultures were far from being predominant. Fashion became more conventional (it was not interesting to be different). In terms of music, the 1980s and 1990s were the decades of dance music, clubs and rave. Club cultures relied on a shared taste in dance music, especially house, acid house, techno or jungle music. Drugs such as Ecstasy or LSD were used in order to increase the clubbers' experience. **The Ravers** are mainly white middle-class youth. Baggy jeans and T-shirts, loose denims or harem trousers are their favourite clothing items.

As Brake remarked, teenage culture is a contradictory mixture of the authenticity and the manufactured, an area of 'self expression for the young and lush grazing ground for the commercial providers' (Brake, 1987: 185). Teenagers emerged as a new consumer group requiring new marketing techniques. They represent a growing market with enormous profit potential. Materialism, individualism and hedonism are some of the consequences of structural changes in economy. Youth culture is an inevitable product of an affluent society; cultural domination is essentially economically determined by a consumer society. Youth cultures, besides having a highly commercial character, accomplish an important sociological function in terms of providing means of identity for youth. Although youth cultures usually develop into an extremely commercialised business, they nevertheless serve important cultural and social functions.

Glossary of Terms

Acid house party a party held at a secret place for a large number of paying , usually young people. Acid house parties became popular in the late 1980s and are known for their loud music, and for the drugs that can often be obtained here

Dreadlocks a hairstyle consisting of thick lengths of twisted hair, often worn by male Rastafarians or by young people who consider it to be a fashionable style

Funk a type of modern popular esp. dance music with a heavy regular beat

Funky (of jazz or similar music) having a simple direct style and feeling

Funky chicken a type of dance that was fashionable in the 1970s

Groupie a person, esp. a young girl, who follows pop groups to their concerts, hoping meet and perhaps have sex with the players

Hip-Hop a kind of popular music with a regular heavy beat and special musical effects as a background to spoken words

House music dance music first developed by adding electronic beats to disco records and later characterised by the addition of repetitive vocals, extracts from other recordings, or synthesized sounds

Jungle a distinctively British dance music; the foundation for jungle was laid by dance producers who cranked up hip-hop drum samples to the breakneck pace of hardcore techno

Pop modern popular music of a simple kind with a strong beat and not usually of lasting interest, liked esp. by younger people

Punk of a movement among certain young people in the 1970swho were opposed to the values of money-based society and who expressed this esp. in loud violent music (**punk rock**), strange clothing, and hair of unusual colours

Rastafarian a follower of a religion from Jamaica which teaches that black West Indians will return to Africa and that Haile Selassie, the former emperor of Ethiopia, is to be worshipped. Rastafarians often wear their hair in dreadlocks

Rave a very large dance for young people which may last all night. Raves take place in large empty buildings, sometimes without the owner's permission, and are associated in people's minds with house music and drugs. The police often try to prevent raves

Reggae style of popular music that originated in Jamaica in the late 1960s; it is based on ska, an earlier form of Jamaican popular music

Rock any of several styles of popular modern music which are based on rock'n'roll, usually played on electrical instruments

Rock'n'roll a style of music that was popular esp. in the 1950s but is still played now, which has a strong loud beat and is usu. played on electrical instruments and repeats a few simple phrases. It was made popular by Bill Haley and Elvis Presley

Ska popular Jamaican dance music; it combines traditional Caribbean music and jazz

Soul kind of African American music with a strong emotional quality, related to gospel music and rhythm and blues

Techno electronic dance music created by black Detroit musicians in the early 1980s

Trip the experience produced by taking a hallucinogenic drug

Vibe a particular kind of atmosphere, feeling or ambience

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Arnold, D. (ed), (1973), *Subcultures,* Glendessary Press, Berkeley.
2. Baker, P. (1995), *The Fashions of a Decade. The 1950s,* B.T. Batsford, London.
3. Brake, M. (1987), *Comparative Youth Culture. The Sociology of Youth Culture and Youth Cultures in America, Britain and Canada,* Routledge and Paul Kegan, London and New York.
4. Carnegy, V. (1990), *The Fashions of a Decade. The 1980s,* B.T. Batsford, London.
5. Christenson, P. and Roberts, D. (1998), *It's Not Only Rock & Roll. Popular Music in the Lives of Adolescents,* Hampton Press Inc, Cresskill, New Jersey.
6. Collier, P. and Horowitz, D. (1989), *Destructive Generation. Second Thoughts about the 60s,* Summit Books, New York.
7. Connikie, Y. (1994), *Fashions of a Decade. The 1960s*, B.T. Batsford, London.
8. Hall, S. and Jefferson, T. (eds), (1996), *Resistance through Rituals. Youth Subcultires in Post-War Britain,* Routledge, London and New York.
9. Herald, J. (1994), *Fashions of a Decade. The 1970s*, B.T. Batsford, London.
10. Hopkins, E. (1992), *The Rise and Decline of the Working Class*, Weidenfeld, London.
11. Mc Robbie, A. (1994), *Postmodernism and Popular Culture,* Routledge, London.
12. Mungham, Geoff and Pearson, Geoff (eds), (1976), *Working-Class Youth Cultures,* Routledge and Paul Kegan, London and New York.
13. Skelton, T. and Valentine, G. (1998), *Cool Places,* Routledge, London and New York.

SITCOMS: NOTES ON MONTY PYTHON'S *FLYING CIRCUS*

MIHAI M. ZDRENGHEA

ABSTRACT. As an aesthetic category, humor is characterized by certain universal features, but its forms are shaped out in accordance with the culture and the particular context out of which it emerges. Within this context, it is well known that the British humor is quite apart, that it does not appeal to a very large audience and, in most cases, it is difficult indeed to grasp its meaning and hints. Just as in many other situations, the legendary British pride of not being part of the Continent is tested once again, because without actually living on the island and being integrated in this broad concept of Englishness, the British humor appears to be absurd, exclusive and not funny at all, when in fact most of the English jokes are classy and refined. The article tries to identify some of its features so that it might become more accessible to a non-British audience.

1.0. The specific sitcom taken into account by our study is Monty Python's *Flying Circus,*[1] one of the British genuine comedies, a classic sample of British humor. One of its main peculiarities is suggested by the title itself – *Flying Circus* – that apparently gives a clue to the content. Seemingly a flying circus, the episodes united under this title are not in fact addressed to children. Despite their cartoon-like generic (animated roses, statues and personalities' heads – all giving the impression of a photo collage) this particular circus does not involve made-up clowns, masks and tamed wild animals. Instead, it deals with domestic animals and artists that embody a wide range of social behavior and everyday circumstances. Although these actors are not dressed up as real clowns are, their role and manifestation is somehow clownish. The veritable clowns and buffoons impersonate, as a rule, human feelings, as well as universal states of mind and soul, while the artists of this circus give life to diverse social types and behavior. "Flying" does not mean, in this case, a magic art but it ensures the circus the mobility needed in order to move from one social situation to another.

In spite of the fact that its title evokes a fairy-tale atmosphere, this sitcom is nothing else but pure life, real facts and events, human attitudes envisaged from a rather ironic perspective. No matter how funny or absurd they may seem, the situations and characters of this sitcom create a serious and credible picture of the British society, with all its routines, flaws and little phobias.

---

[1] We should mention the fact that *Monty Python* is a group of actors (Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin) who have been working together since the 1960's.

1.1. A summary of the several sketches that form this episode would be appropriate. We will notice that they are connected by the principle of "unity in diversity". The sketches present different situations, apparently disruptive, when in fact they all belong to the social. Another connection between them is given by the same actors that appear in every sketch and assume different social roles. This structure and principle is also true for the whole series, which consists of a number of similar episodes. Despite their collage-like appearance, the sketches are characterized by cohesion and continuity, mainly through their central theme: society – social context – social role.

Confuse-a-Cat – *the characters of this first sketch are a middle aged/ middle-class wife and husband, their cat (that has a problem: it just stands on the lawn, without doing anything at all, not even the slightest movement), a vet who will recommend to them a special firm that can definitely cure their cat: Confuse-a-cat Ltd. The "confusers" look like genuine soldiers (uniforms, very well instructed). They provide services such as: Confuse-a-cat (perform a sort of absurd theatre in order to confuse the cat and make it move), Amaze-a-vole, Stun-a-stout, Distract-a-bee, Puzzle-a-puma etc. Result: the cat is confused and goes into the house.*

The smuggler – *a smuggler at the Customs. He comes from Switzerland with a suitcase full of Swiss clocks. The customs officer will not believe that he is a smuggler, although the proof is there, right before his eyes. He lets the smuggler (who shouts from the top of his lungs that he is a smuggler) pass and instead, he will arrest a poor innocent priest.*

A duck, a cat and a lizard – *this sketch is intended to be a talk show. The guests are a duck, a cat and a lizard made of some plastic material. Because, of course, they are not able to say a word to him, the host will address his question ("the special problems raised by the law enforcement") to the men in the streets.*

Police raid – *an awkward policeman, who, following his bitch Josephine that smelled some "certain substances" enters the house of two peaceful citizens. He is sure that he will find here drugs or something similar, but, in the end, discovers that his bitch has misled him as it had smelled his own sandwich.*

Letter and vox pops – *this particular sketch has no intrigue. Instead, we are presented, again, the opinions of different social types. The question debated: again, law enforcement.*

Newsreader arrested – *a newsreader that reads out to the audience his own jewel robbery. On the screen behind him we can watch how he is arrested by a policeman. Meanwhile, he continues to read the news.*

Erotic film – *a man and a woman, almost naked. In the midst of their kissing the newsreader form the previous sketch intervenes to say that the match he has just announced will be replaced by a romantic movie. The two actors will not do anything of what is usually expected from an erotic film. Instead, they watch various erotic cliches such as a tower rising and falling, fireworks, rackets etc.*

Silly Job Interview and ***Careers advisory board*** *– these two sketches are about job applicants and interviewers. An apparently normally-led interview will turn into a grotesque farce: the interviewed is obliged to imitate all sorts of domestic animals and to perform crazy gestures.*

The burglar *– a housewife and an encyclopedia salesman. In order to get into her house he has to say that he is a burglar because it seems that it is the only way for him to sell his products. He is the successful salesman, while the other two who are thrown out from a window will be, of course, the unsuccessful salesmen.*

     2.0. Television must be understood (according to Murdock and Golding, 1977:39) primarily as a commercial organization that produces and distributes commodities. For them it is the commodity form itself – television as a product which must be sold to the broadest possible audience – which determines the nature and shape of its programs. This, they argue, gives television certain homogeneity behind the surface diversity which is essentially ideological. The need to reach a mass audience leads to television, which caters to the "lowest common denominator" of public taste and prejudice. There is, they claim, "a constant tendency to avoid the unpopular and tendentious, and to draw instead on the values and assumptions which are most familiar and most widely legitimated". (Murdock and Golding, 1977:39)

     Raymond William argues (1974:24) that radio and television transmission *processes* preceded the development and definition of *content,* and as a result, television was inevitably parasitical upon 'existing events' – a coronation, a major sporting event, theatres. Its novelty consists in its ability to bring the public world into the increasingly privatized home; again an emphasis on social function rather than form. He does recognize however that television, over time, developed forms peculiarly its own, in the dramatic series and serial,[2] and in the drama-documentary. But what he considers unique to television, the characteristic that defines it, is the viewing experience it affords. This he identifies in terms of 'sequence or flow'. Television is typically not switched on for a single program, but for a period of time, frequently a whole evening". Edwuard Buscombe and Manuel Alvarado develop (1978:4) a similar argument from the point of view of production rather than consumption. They share Murdock and Golding's definition of television as commodity production, and like any other such, its product must, they argue, be standardized and reproducible. Hence the tendency noted by Williams (1974:25), to produce series and serials. The process of scheduling generates a uniformity, which also

---

[2] Most sitcoms are series rather than serials, but a hard-and-fast distinction is difficult to sustain. Serials are dramatized narratives, like series, but they are split into episodes so that the story is told piecemeal… The serial has narrative continuity from one episode to the next, while the series has only continuity of character and situation. The events of one episode have no narrative consequence for the next. Each episode is complete in itself. However there are some sitcom series which *do* have some minimal narrative continuity over a block of episodes.

favors the series/serial format. The schedule creates a grid of program slots, or units of time, classified according to the size and composition of the audience who will be watching at that time. These pre-given slots must be filled with material deemed suitable to that audience and that time of the day. The length and format of a program is therefore determined not by anything intrinsic to its form or content, but by the demands of the schedule.

We cannot anticipate the aesthetic or ideological effects of a given form of television on the basis of its type, or its place in the schedules… we need to analyze popular forms[3] with the same care that is given to 'serious programs – news, current affairs, documentaries and drama. And we need to develop better methods of monitoring the effects and significance of television for specific audiences.

2.1. The situation comedy in the form in which it exists today has developed along the lines set during the late 1950s. At that time, writes Goddard (1991:76), television comedy meant nothing more than the presentation of variety and musical comedy artists before cameras, feeding on already existing sources, such as the radio and the variety-theatre. The turning point in the development of the sitcom was marked by *Hancock's Half-Hour,* an already established radio comedy transferred to television. The innovations brought to sitcoms by its writers (Ray Galton and Alan Simpson) and producer (Duncan Wood) were crucial in terms of suitability to television and its audience, and have influenced almost all productions ever since (Goddard, 1991:86).

These innovations meant a new way of approaching reality, in the sense that the sitcom became a comedy of observation with believable characters in a familiar world where comic excess is set against the norms of the real world. The writers of *Hancock' Half-Hour* tried to stay close to life as known by its audiences, finding humor in popular newspapers and double-feature film programs or putting Hancock in the sort of situation where we all feel ineffectual. Therefore the need for sitcoms to look more like real life, which brought about the replacing of comedians by actors. This was done on grounds of believability, the idea being that because the audience recognized the comedians as comic, they expected them to be funny and could not find them believable (Goddard, 1991: 80).

2.2. Another set of innovations for which the authors of *Hancock's Half-Hour* should be given credit lays with new production techniques, which made the best of the technological potential of television. Thus, they established the close-ups and cuttings for reaction shots, that is cameras are used in such a way as to enable viewers to perceive the comic effects of the actors' facial expression in detail. The next developments were the introduction of discontinuous recording (shooting

---

[3] **"Sitcom"**, coming under the category of 'light entertainment' (in addition to situational comedy, light entertainment comprises variety shows, quizzes and games, and general entertainment), is defined most simply as a comic narrative in series format. It shares with other types of comedy on television… the intention to produce laughter.

scene by scene on film) and videotape editing, which brought about considerable technical and financial advantages for all those involved in sitcom production and better comic series for larger audiences (Goddard, 1991:84).

The *Hancock's Half-Hour* model influenced directly or indirectly a large number of subsequent productions, like *Steptoc and Son, Citizen James, Here's Harry, Till Death Do Us Part, Shelley,* or *The Magic Roundabout.* Of course, as Goddard says (1991:86) the rise of the situation comedy in Britain cannot be attributed entirely to the success of *Hancock's Half-Hour* since the series was part of a wider process in the broadcasting industry and in the British culture as a whole. So, a more comprehensive analysis should also consider issues like competition (the setting up of the ITV in the 1950s), television as commodity and audiences in a changing social and economic context. As for the present and future of sitcoms, it appears that opinion is split.

3.0. We could say that it is quite difficult to say what distinguishes a certain sitcom from others, what makes it funnier than the rest of similar productions. We would encounter the same difficulty if we tried to define *what is funny,* what makes us laugh (in this particular case, the situation in itself or the gags, or maybe a certain actor we enjoy etc.).[4] Freud (after Lowell, 1986:153) distinguished between jokes, comedy and humour, and argued that "while jokes are made, the comic is found". It is "an unintended discovery derived from human social relations". In conclusion, terms such as *humour, comedy, funny* cannot but rise questions of the kind that Terry Lovell asks in his cultural study (1986:158) from which we quoted before: "Why are some aspects of 'human social relations' funny? Are they in themselves comic, or are they only so if looked at in a certain way, or from a certain distance? Are there some situations which are always perceived as funny, and any which cannot be?"

In a sitcom, the director's attitude to his characters may be sympathetic or defiant. They may be exposed in an ironical or humorous manner.[5] The root of irony stands in the difference between *what is said* and *what is meant.* Within a humorous

---

[4] The source of comedy [is] not in the narrative itself, but in 'those excesses – gags, verbal wit, performance skills – which momentarily suspend the narrative. While these are unquestionably some of the elements which produce laughter in sitcoms, I do not accept that comedy in comic narratives can be reduced to a series of jokes, gags, etc., strung out along a facilitating narrative which is not in itself funny. There are *stories* which are comic, or whose 'funny side' we may be invited to see through the telling, whether or not these stories are interlarded with jokes and witticism by the teller.

[5] The sitcoms share in common the intention to produce laughter through the telling of a series of funny stories about characters tied together in some ongoing "situation". The intention to produce laughter may be organized around a number of elements. Firstly the *situation.* The situations of sitcom are usually defined quite broadly, and are rarely in themselves inherently funny. Consider some of the more famous sitcom situations: imprisonment, marriage, family life, shopwork, the Home Guard.

context this difference is revealed by the fact that *what is meant* is opposed to *what is said* (reality).

Generally, sitcoms exploit the **realistic** perspective; "they are set in recognizable social situations which bring together a small number of characters in regular social interaction. They therefore create fictional worlds in which nothing may happen except those things which may happen in reality" (Lovell, 1986:157). Human beings (the characters or actors) are being led by the director (he holds the strings). That is why they submit to the puppets' world.[6] Their nature is altered by the fact that they are mechanically handled in order to mirror life and reality. Through their protagonists, sitcoms refer to the social world through what is typical, through stereotyping and caricature.

Being given this puppet status, the comedy types are devoted to embody several negative aspects of life. "They belong to a possible rather than a plausible world, which takes its point of departure from the audience's knowledge of the social conventions of the real world. Role reversal is only funny in relation to 'the normal'" (Lovell, 1986:159). As a rule, the characters become outstanding personages through a series of common features of which the most common are: instinctual, selfishness, superficiality, lack of morals, movement. Since the goal of their creation is to entertain, they emphasize "the surprising, the unexpected, the unusual and the exceptional" (Lovel, 1986:160).

Taking into account the typical relationships between **appearance/ essence** found in comedies (that is, the former never mirrors the latter or the former becomes the opposed pole of the latter), directors' main instrument used to outline this very relationship is the psychological and social observation.

3.1. The main parts of a story pattern are: **beginning** (= presentation of situation), **event** (= starting the story), **subsequent events** (= adventures or consequences), and **end** (= initial situation that can be changed, maintained or re-established). Characters are presented by: *what they look like, what they feel, what they do or do not, what they say or do not say, what other characters feel or say about them.* Characters' interaction involves: statements, behaviour, dialogue/ monologue and states of consciousness. In fact, language is the most important comedy tool beside gestures, settings and appearance. Speaking seems to be the main activity of the sitcoms characters. Possible elements: name, physical appearance, social position, family situation, nature, habits, facts and events, relationships.

---

[6] Sitcoms are artifacts constructed for the sole purpose of making us laugh. Their comic intention are clearly signaled through their actual content, also through "the creation of a comic climate by having the drama enacted before a studio audience, unseen at the audience at home, but whose infectious laughter punctuates what we see. Laughter may be brought about through the dramatization of *funny stories,* although it is possible to create comedy through a story that is not funny; also through comic characters, jokes and "verbal/visual gags, comic performance, etc."

4.0. Keeping in mind the theoretical premises, let us debate the sketches presented above, focusing on the following aspects: *themes, gestures, sexuality* and *language*. The fundamental common feature of all these sketches is the fact that under apparent seriousness, they all mock certain daily situations and routines. The most ordinary circumstances of life – such as having a pet, applying for a job etc – are exaggerated and turned into satire and bitter irony against prejudices, state and social stereotypes.

As other sitcoms, *The Flying Circus* draws upon the realistic mode, meaning that this embraces different circumstances and actions, which their audience will accept without question (as they have verisimilitude). Thus, what appears on TV is life-like. Of course, everything is recognized as being far-fetched but everything hides an element of truth. Truthful are the characters themselves, even if they are generally described as caricatures. Still, they are nor as real as human beings as they are supposed to embody specific aspects, ideas and characteristics of human life.

4.1. Gestures are often considered to be behaviour that accompanies or modifies language. Gesture is a very broad concept that allows any act or pattern of behaviour to become communicative. Gesture is any behaviour that carries, gives birth or brings forth meaning. Within interpersonal communication (especially in sitcoms) it is impossible not to act. Every act of the participants becomes part of the situational context. Any act can contribute to the significance of the message at any level of meaning.

Gestures form an important *environment* in sitcoms. There are three categories of gestures that seem to be particularly significant, regardless of their culture. These are: **manners, gender signals** and **locational signals**. Manners represent "a class of gestures that involve ceremonial aspects of behaviour in certain social settings" (Smith and Williamson, 1994:51). They are a reflection of a status or class hierarchy". Gender signals are "those acts that are recognized by members of a particular culture as denoting either masculinity or femininity" (Smith and Williamson, 1994:51). Locational signals have broad societal significance and they "distinguish between the many regional, ethnic and class sub-cultures in a complex society" (Smith and Williamson, 1994:51).

4.2. Sexuality is distinguished from sex. "Sexuality encompasses the whole body; sex is only the genital functioning. Sexuality is ever present, sex is episodic. Sexuality occurs in all transactions, sex is involved primarily in potentially reproductive acts" (Smith and Williamson, 1994:60). Body image is an aspect of sexuality. The body image is formed primarily through interaction with others. It is also central in guiding the way people interact with others in communication. Body coverings are also important for our body image. We use dress and hair as defining roles and in labeling social situations. Uniforms almost embody roles. The act of choosing a dress can serve quite important functions in communication. Hair is related to

dress; choosing hairstyles and lengths constitutes acts to which great significance is assigned. Both dress and hair are very important in defining roles and in establishing the context (Smith and Williamson, 1994:60-61). Sexual roles exist in every communicational situation. The communicative dimension of sexual roles are learned from the society and are subject to change by that society.

4.3. In **interpersonal communication**, messages have three levels of meaning: **the denotative level, the interpretative level** and **the relational level**. The denotative level is that to which the message literally refers. The interpretative level of meaning is generated by a set of cues with the message itself. These cues tell the other persons how the message is to be interpreted. Is the message to be taken seriously or lightly? Could the message mean exactly the opposite of its literal content? The relational level is the complex set of cues within the message itself that indicates the relationship between the two communicants (cf. Smith and Williamson, 1994:76-77).

4.4. Dialogue overview: characteristics. Consider, first, these exchanges: **Question** (addressed to **the man** in the street): *What do you think about Customs regulations and currency restrictions?* **Answers** - The prostitute: *"I'm not a man, you Willy Billy!";* Man on the roof: *"I'm not in the street."*; Man in the street: *"Speaking as a man in the street..."* (he is run over by a car)

Question: *"What do you think about law enforcement methods?"* **Answers** – The housewife: *"I hope they make their own minds for me!";* The civil servant: *"They should attack the lower class with bombs and the people in the street with machine-guns and finally they should release the vultures."*

The lines of the two dialogue extracts presented above are made up of short verbal exchanges. Pragmatics define utterances by means of four principles: quantity, quality, relevance and meaning, studying the way words and phrases are organized in conversation to express meanings, feelings and ideas which are sometimes different from the actual meaning of the word used. Consequently, the two dialogue extracts achieve the comic effect as they flout some of these laws. For example, in both cases the person asking the question is not provided with the appropriate answer and the character does not seem to mind this at all, he does not protest, he is not even surprised.

We have mentioned before the fact that **language** is the most important tool in sitcoms. For this reason, we feel that we have to pay more attention to it. Life shows that sometimes it makes sense to say that two people are speaking different languages despite the fact that each sounds like English and even despite the fact that they think they understand each other perfectly well. If you also suspect that a character's language plays a big role in determining the nature of the world in which he lives, then you can put this two together and conclude that each of us has our own world, perhaps widely different than our neighbours'. This line of reasoning could be found in *Monty Python.*

Python was sketch based, the sketches moving arbitrarily from one to the next and interspersed with Gilliam's surreal animations. The sketches in large part represent a comedic tirade against lower-middle class culture. A strong strain of cruelty runs through *Monty Python* and much of it is located in the female characters, most of whom are played by 'the Pythons" in drag. Women were often portrayed as reactionary and repressive creatures, holding screeching dominion over the domestic sphere. (Wagg, 1992:270). One of them, Eric Idle, later reflected that the show "mocks all the authority figures. Including mothers. Especially mothers" (Wagg, 1992:270) and Chapman once said ""I think mothers as such, as produced by society, are probably responsible for most of the wars we've ever had" (Thomson, 1984:16).

Much of Python as a media phenomenon (encompassing both the comedic imagery and ideas of the show itself and the public statements of the cast) can be read as an extension of the counter culture of the mid 1960s – an oblique demand for sexual and personal liberation by emotionally stunted, if highly educated, young class males, symbolically wrenching their own umbilical cords and exhorting others to do the same. (cf. Wagg, 1992:271) But there is also an implied politics of culture to set beside the politics of the personal. Time and again, in Monty Python, elite, high culture marries, or collides, with banal mass culture. Their 'texts' will have been read differently by different sections of the audience.

Despite their comic effect, sitcoms remain a form of interpersonal communication. They are built upon the interaction between characters. This dynamic process implies a specific use of certain general elements – gestures, sexuality, language etc. They are all manipulated in order to ensure the good functioning of all technical aspects encompassed by this species.

5.0. We live in the age of speed when in the whirlpool of every day events and problems one can hardly find a little time for laughing or enjoying oneself. Real life seems too hard to find something funny to laugh about and activities such as reading a comic magazine or book or going to the theatre to watch the real thing (a comedy) are considered to take too much of our precious time. However, we should not worry too much because humor is not dead. It seems that television has successfully managed to take care of this question as long as we speak about quality programs where even if you do not collapse into laughing you can still have a good time and recognize some very spirited remarks and stingy replica at what goes wrong in our lives and others' who happen to be our political leaders, famous persons and public figures. It is difficult to define what is funny, because, naturally, we do not share the same taste in laughing, and, indeed, laughing is a difficult matter for somebody unimaginative, as well as a serious matter in its relation to life. In this respect, sitcoms represent an exclusively television product created in order to entertain the masses, irrespective of age, gender, profession etc. This holds true because after all, sitcom is a question of tuning in. There is a wide range of sitcom varieties, some appealing to the people in a more accessible form, some more sophisticated dealing with ideas shaped out by intellectual tools ever present in literature and drama.

5.1. As an aesthetic category, humor is characterized by certain universal features, but its forms are shaped out in accordance with the culture and the particular context out of which it emerges. Within this context, it is well known that the British humor is quite apart, that it does not appeal to a very large audience and, in most cases, it is difficult indeed to grasp its meaning and hints. Just as in many other situations, the legendary British pride of not being part of the Continent is tested once again, because without actually living on the island and being integrated in this broad concept of Englishness, the British humor appears to be absurd, exclusive and not funny at all, when in fact most of the English jokes are classy and refined.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. ALVARADO, Manuel and Edward Buscombe, (1978) *Hazell: The Making of a TV Series,* London:British Film Institute.

2. GOLDING, Peter and Graham Murdock, (1977) "Capitalism, Communications, and Class Relations", in *Mass Communication and Society,* James Curran et al (eds.), London: Edward Arnold.

3. HEWISON, Robert, (1981) *Monty Python; The Case Against*, London: Methuen.

4. LOVELL, Terry, (1986), "Television Situation Comedy", in *Introduction to Contemporary Cultural Studies,* D. Punter (ed.), Longman:London.

5. *Monty Python's Guide to Life* and *Themes in Contemporary Analytic Philosophy as reflected in Monty Python* – available on alt.fan.monty-python Official Homepage.

6. PERRY, George, (1983) *Life of Python*, London: Pavilion/Michael Joseph.

7. PUNTER, D. (ed.) (1986), *Introduction to Contemporary Cultural Studies,* Longman, London.

8. SMITH, Dennis R. and L. Keith Williamson (1994), *Interpersonal Communication*, London:longman.

9. THOMSON, John O. (ed.) (1984) *Monty Python: The Complete and Utter Theory of the Grotesque*, London: British Film Institute.

10. WAGG, Stephen, (1992) "You've never had it so silly: The politics of British satirical comedy from **Beyond the Fringe** to **Spitting Image**", in *Popular Media Culture in Post-War Britain*, Dominic Strinati and Stephen Wagg, (eds.), London and New York: Routledge, pp. 254-284.

11. WILLIAMS, Raymond, (1974) *Television: Technology and Cultural Form,* London: Fontana.

SELECTING THE SOURCE TEXT FOR TEACHING PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATION

RODICA SUPERCEANU[*]

The selection of source texts as specific teaching materials is not to be made at random as they offer essential learning opportunities and the starting point of the teaching process. This article proposes eight general principles for their selection by taking up the requirements for teaching materials established by general pedagogy and by adapting them to translation teaching in the functionalist/skopos theory.

Introduction

Although according to most translation theories – functionalist, cognitive and psycholinguistic – the object of translation is not the text itself but the intercultural interaction, trainers routinely face the choice of an appropriate source text (ST) for teaching translation competence. STs are never the objective or content of teaching units; however, they are important teaching materials, which may lead to effective teaching and efficient learning or equally well to blocking and confusion in the learning process.

According to pedagogy, any teaching strategy needs a set of materials and aids to reach its objectives and the set is itself a subsystem in the global system of instruction due to the constraints imposed by super-ordinate elements, e.g. the strategy determines the materials, and to the relationships of the elements within the system. The properties, the selection, and the grading of the materials depend on the theories underlying a specific kind of instruction (Dimitriu, 1982: 209) and the principles formulated by these theories.

The functionalist theory of translation is one of the fewest approaches whose scholars are concerned with its application to translation teaching and the selection and grading of the text material (Reiss, 1976; Wilss, 1982; Vermeer, 1983; Nord, 199; Sager, 1997). As regards the last two actions, Christiane Nord advocates a balance between adherence to rigid principles and mere intuition (1991:147). However, she does not establish a set of principles for guiding these actions, but merely mentions three in passing:

a)   the use of authentic texts;

b)   the correlation of students' proficiency in translation and in the two languages, source and target, with the texts presented for translation;

c)   a slow progression in the difficulty of translation texts.

---

[*] *"Politehnica" University of Timisoara*

Out of these, only principle a) refers to the selection of texts, the other two, b) and c) refer to their grading in the syllabus.

Also, Nord suggests as criterion for the selection of texts their variation of the extratextual and intratextual factors specified in her model of translation-oriented text analysis. She acknowledges that the limitation of selection to types of translation problems is a drawback, but counterbalances it with an advantage: such a selection facilitates learning by focusing on a small number of learning items. This, however, triggers another drawback which Nord fails to notice: her proposed selection is applicable only to long-duration courses. When course duration is short or medium, this selection has to be abandoned and other criteria should be developed. However sketchy and insufficient Nord's suggestions are, they are, to the best of our knowledge, the only ones for the selection and grading of STs.

Certainly, a complete theory of STs as teaching materials is required, based on the correlation of all the variables in the translation process. For now, a more fruitful alternative to Nord's contribution is, in our opinion, a set of general principles for ST selection worked out from the requirements for teaching materials established by general pedagogy. This will give the trainer a modicum of guidance in the rather demanding task of teaching in a number of approaches, allowing him, at the same time, sufficient freedom to manifest his creativity and to take advantage of his teaching experience.

Starting from these requirements and adapting them to translation teaching, this article establishes a set of eight principles for the selection of STs, comments on their relevance, and illustrates some of them with practical selection cases.

General pedagogy on requirements of teaching materials

General pedagogy (Lewy, 1977 cf. Dimitriu, 1982: 253; Ungureanu, 1999: 227-229) has established two sets of requirements for any teaching material: one pedagogic, the other practical. Actually, they have been intended as evaluative criteria, but since evaluation takes into account the final purpose and the means for accomplishing it, the requirements can also act as prescriptive guidelines. After operating a first selection, we have adopted those which are relevant to translation teaching and to the selection of STs.

The *pedagogic requirements* specify that teaching materials have to have:

1.   a content relevant to the course objectives;
2.   a topical content;
3.   a psychologically pertinent content;
4.   a logical structure;
5.   a content relevant to the progression of tasks;
6.   a content which allows recycling;
7.   a content which fosters creative and critical thinking;
8.   a content which fosters transfer of skills.

The *practical requirements* for teaching materials are the following:
1.   a sensible cost of the materials for use in the whole system;
2.   sensible dimensions for use in the classroom and for homework.

Principles for selecting STs in the functionalist/skopos translation pedagogy

By transferring the pedagogic requirements to translation teaching from the perspective of the functionalist/skopos theory and translation pedagogy, the principles for the selection of STs run as follows:

1. *Select a ST for its suitability in content, function, and form to the course objectives in a stage of training.* All the three variables of content, function, and form need fine distinctions. Content, for example, may be extratextual or intratextual, or it may be cultural or linguistic. Function may be viewed as the actualization of a communicative purpose as in genres, or of a rhetorical purpose as in text types. Form may refer to lexical and grammatical forms and structures, to stylistic forms, to generic structures, or to rhetorical forms and structures.

This principle also needs the formulation of *maxims:*

a)   Correlate the ST with the translation skills/abilities intended for teaching;

b)   Correlate the ST with kinds of text (genres or text types) apt to develop a certain skill/ability;

c)   Correlate the ST with the facilitating instruments which the trainer is able to provide: translation instructions, auxiliary texts, reference works.

Maxim a) requires the trainer to elaborate a list which correlates the translation skills / abilities he chooses to teach with the STs. Just an example here. If he wants to teach the translation of culturemes, he will have to use three types of STs: one having cultural elements belonging to international culture, another having features specific of the source culture, and a third having features similar to the target culture.

An example of selection according maxim b) is the following. When the training unit is to teach the ability to establish the target text skopos from the target situation of reception, the choice of ST concerns the genre since the skopos is based on the dependence of genre and its communicative purpose on the discourse community. Computer scientists, for instance, commonly communicate their research results with an article or a report, while a company will inform a partner about its supply stock in a business letter. Rhetorical text types are not appropriate for teaching this ability as they do not actualize communicative purposes but rhetorical purposes.

The application of maxim c) is illustrated by the following situation. When the translation instructions specify the change of the ST function in the TT, the choice of the ST will be limited to certain genres, e.g. magazine or journal articles, reports. The trainer's task in such a case is to imagine and classify real-life translation situations, to establish what genre texts are likely to change the function and then to select only the STs which belong to such genres. The same maxim constrains the choice of ST by the availability of parallel, comparative, model and background texts in the SL or TL

2. *Select a ST whose subject matter is of current interest to the trainees.* Translation students need to get trained for translating texts on a variety of subject matters, but texts about topics which do not fall into their areas of interest or texts on repulsive topics, which stir up negative feelings, are not likely to focus their attention and engage them in creative thinking. A ST about breast cancer presented to twenty-year-old trainees will trigger at best a standoffish attitude or at worst a hostile attitude not so much to the text as to the trainer for having chosen such a topic.

3. *Select a ST whose subject matter and linguistic form is accessible to the trainees' level of knowledge and competence.* Since this principle makes reference to various kinds of knowledge, it requires the formulation of *maxims* to distinguish between these kinds. All the maxims refer to the ST difficulty in terms of knowledge.

a) Correlate the ST with the trainees' level of background knowledge. By background knowledge we shall understand general knowledge of the world and subject-matter knowledge.

b) Correlate the ST with the trainees' linguistic competence in the two languages, source and target, so that it is one level lower in difficulty than the students' proficiency. This maxim was inspired by Nord's discussion of translator's linguistic difficulties, where she recommended a careful evaluation of the ST difficulty since any translation will always pose problems and they will make sufficient demands on the translator (1991: 153). As for the target language proficiency, although this language is usually the trainees' first or native language, many of them may not be conversant with certain specialized professional genres which require specific textual strategies for their writing and STs of such genres are not recommended for selection.

c) Correlate the ST with the trainees' translation competence. This maxim is so straightforward and fundamental that it hardly needs any arguments in its favour.

4. *Select the ST according to its correctness of generic or rhetorical structures.* This principle can be put into practice through grading. Our suggestion is to select the well-written texts for basic courses or at the beginning of a general translation course because they are likely to pose fewer problems regarding the generic or rhetorical structures. As the trainees' competence increases, the trainer may select deficient texts since the trainees have already acquired sufficient skills and abilities to be able to cope with this kind of problem. The implications of this principle are detailed through maxims:

a) Correlate the ST generic and rhetorical structures with the translation type required by the translation situation;

b) Grade the structures from maximally compliant with the canonical form to deficient;

c) Grade the ST structures from similar to to different from the target text structures.

5. *Select the ST according to the grading system devised for the syllabus.* This principle complements principle 1. According to it the STs will be adequately selected if the syllabus is correctly graded. The principles for the normal ordering of objectives

and translation tasks: *from simple to complex*; *from part to whole; from known/familiar to unknown/unfamiliar, and from general to particular* will also be applied here. For example, if the course objective is to teach the genre norms and conventions in the TL, the trainer should select a simple genre such as an announcement or a recipe at the beginning of the training unit and then pass to complementary genres, e.g. reviews, summaries, abstracts, parodies and only in the end to complex genres such as reports, which contain embedded genres like summaries or letters from the president.

6. *Select STs whose translation involves recycling the skills/abilities already taught.* Young and inexperienced trainers often avoid STs which require the application of skills already taught on the ground that such skills have already been covered, but as skills and abilities are developed only through their repeated application, this principle cannot be overlooked.

7. *Do not avoid STs with linguistic or cultural contrast points*. Only such texts will require the trainees to practice fluency of thought and divergent thinking (search for alternatives), two mental abilities necessary for creative thinking. While translating these texts, they will be able to practice and recycle essential techniques like chaining (putting things together into categories), abstracting meaning from linguistic form, or strategy changing. We have to give credit here to Kussmaul for suggesting the selection of the ST along such lines, only his formulation is vague and general and hence prone to confusion: "We should take care to select texts with an appropriate degree of difficulty for the specific stage of translator training." (1995:5).

8. *All other principles followed, select STs which allow the transfer of the acquired skills and abilities to translation situations which are not covered in the course.* No course can teach all the skills and abilities used in real-life translation situations, nor can it give extensive practice. Therefore, a profitable solution is to teach problem-solving abilities and consequently to select as varied STs as possible to enable the trainees to practice ability transfer.

Conclusions

The principles we have proposed in this article represent a pedagogic minimum for a judicious selection of STs. Their application will prove useful for they refer to essential variables in the teaching process: the complex content and structure of texts as well as their contribution to the development of translation competence by providing a basis for skill grading and recycling. Being general, they are applicable to courses of all levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced. In order to be fully successful they have to be accompanied by principles for the grading of STs.

REFERENCES

1. Dimitriu, E. (1982). *Psihologia proceselor de instruire*. Bucuresti: Ed. Stiintifica si Enciclopedica.
2. Kussmaul, P. (1995). *Training the Translator*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
3. Lewy, A. (ed.) (1977). *Handbook of Curriculum Evaluation*. Paris: UNESCO. IIEP.
4. Nord, Ch. (1991). *Text Analysis in Translation*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
5. Reiss, K. (1976). *Texttyp und Ubersetzungsmethode*. Kronberg:Skriptor.
6. Sager, J.C. (1997). "Text Types and Translation" in Anna Trosborg (ed.) (1997). *Text Typology and Translation.* Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
7. Ungureanu. D. (1999). *Educatie si Curriculum*. Timisoara: Eurostampa.
8. Vermeer, H.J. (ed.) (1983).*Aufsatze zur Translationtheorie*. Heilderberg.

DEFYING THE HEGEMONIC STEREOTYPES: JEANETTE WINTERSON, BERNARD MAC LAVERTY AND ALAN HOLLINGHURST

ALINA PREDA

ABSTRACT. Through its widening influence, literature affects the basic character of the social climate and can contribute to either the strengthening, or the weakening of its democratic character. Unfortunately, openness about sexuality, and, most of all, homosexuality, is very likely to provoke strong reactions from a large part of the readership, which is under the influence of deeply rooted prejudices and indoctrinated with so called moral religious ethics. The need for accurate representations of gay life was to be fulfilled, to a certain extent, only towards the end of the twentieth century, through the works of writers such as Jeanette Winterson, Bernard MacLaverty, Alan Hollinghurst, etc. Their rejection of heterosexual definitions and self-imposed oppression opened the doors for the exploration of homosexual identity characterised by self-discovery and self-definition. This change in the depiction of gayness is of utter importance for the creation of a truly democratic society, free of prejudices and stereotypes.

'People who are targets of any particular form of oppression have resisted and attempted to resist their oppression in any way they could. The fact that their resistance is not generally recognized is itself a feature of the oppression.'

Ricky Shrover-Marcuse

Recent sexual politics have been organised around a politics of identity and difference. For many of us sexuality has become central to knowing who we are, informing our sense of self and personal identity. Increasingly, it has become an intrinsic part of our lived and expressed identities to a greater degree than class, status, gender and ethnicity. There have been significant shifts in social attitudes, behaviours and institutional regulations surrounding sexuality since Freud opened the door to the bedroom. Sexuality throughout the twentieth century has moved closer to the centre of public debate than ever before. Sexuality is about style, taste, play, performance and personal preference, but lately it has become a potent political axis around which contemporary social struggles are waged. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transvestite, transsexual, fetishist -- each group is distinguished by its own unique sexual tastes, preferences, styles and communities. All have appeared on the political stage to claim their rights and social space. This is not to suggest that sexual liberation has finally been realised; rape, sexual abuse of children,

homophobic violence, ignorance and prejudice continue to oppress and harm many in our society. Homosexuality is still illegal in some countries and HIV/AIDS continues to fuel conservative propaganda for a return to the 'good old days' of heterosexual monogamy and individual restraint.

Through its widening influence, literature affects the basic character of the social climate and can contribute to either the strengthening, or the weakening of its democratic character. Unfortunately, openness about sexuality, and, most of all, homosexuality, is very likely to provoke strong reactions from a large part of the readership, which is under the influence of deeply rooted prejudices and indoctrinated with so called moral religious ethics.

It is true that heterosexual authors have sometimes dealt with homosexuality in their fictional writings, but they completely ignored topics such as same-sex bonding, affection and love, thus degrading these fully human emotions, by stripping them of all their nuances and focusing solely upon sexual aspects. Such literary works articulated a liturgy of excommunication, based on the assumption that there is a single homosexual personality, that homosexuality is only about perverted sex-acts, and therefore, either a disease, or a sin. The strategies of degradation have been so successful that most readers see any literary expression of homosexual love as either an abominable sin, or something pathological, or, at best, a *bizarrerie*. Thus, readers have been kept ignorant of the real nature of gay life, centred on issues that all individuals face on a daily basis, regardless of their sexuality. The struggle to confront their identity in a heterosexual world or issues related to coming out are just a part, however significant, of the gay lifestyle, which also naturally includes the pleasures of family life, politics, careers, relationships, and death.

Although gay literature can trace its origins to the Greeks and Romans, the genre itself remained relatively unknown and cloistered. After the Stonewall Riots of 1969, gay literature experienced a prolific rebirth and became more easily accessible to most readers. However, the need for accurate representations of gay life was to be fulfilled, to a certain extent, only towards the end of the twentieth century, through the works of writers such as Jeanette Winterson, Bernard MacLaverty, Alan Hollinghurst, etc. Their writings brought about a new type of reaction: the subordinate started to protest against the traditional standards and values, demanding their rights and full humanity be recognised. Their rejection of heterosexual definitions and self-imposed oppression opened the doors for the exploration of homosexual identity characterised by self-discovery and self-definition. This change in the depiction of gayness is of utter importance for the creation of a truly democratic society, free of prejudices and stereotypes.

Winterson's *The Passion* shows that contemporary lesbianism has gone beyond the lies that, for so long, have kept gay women 'psychologically trapped, trying to fit mind, spirit, and sexuality into a prescribed script because they [couldn't] look beyond the parameters of the acceptable.'(Rich 1987:64). Thus, *The Passion* presents openly the intricacies of an affectionately tender lesbian relationship,

which does not lose its charm for being set against a fantastic background, as it is neither a romance, with an idyllic happy ending, nor a story that shows the impossibility to achieve happiness in a lesbian relationship, as most novels on this topic attempted to prove. Villanelle, the heroine, falls passionately in love with a woman, and this passion will never be equalled by any heterosexual relationships:

> 'When I met her I felt she was my destiny and that feeling had never altered, even though it remains invisible. Though I have taken myself to the wastes of the world and loved again, I cannot truly say that I have left her.'(*The Passion, p.* 144)

Villanelle experiences the feeling of deep disappointment at her lover's lack of courage and responsibility, and this is so real, that it cannot be taken as part of a fairytale:

> 'I was angry because she had wanted me and made me want her and been afraid to accept what that meant'. (*The Passion*, p. 144).

Although there are other homoerotic episodes in the novel, this lesbian love affair is the most detailed one, and it is given the most appropriate 'coverage'.

The existence of such texts is an important step forward for the lesbian community, because 'it is impossible for any woman growing up in a gendered society dominated by men to know what heterosexuality really means, both historically and in her individual life, so long as she is kept ignorant of the presence, the existence, the actuality of women who, diverse in so many ways, have centred their emotional and erotic lives on women. A young woman, entering her twenties in a blur of stereotypes and taboos, with a vague sense of anxiety centering the word *lesbian*, is ill equipped to think about herself, her feelings, her options, her relations with men *or* women. This ignorance and anxiety, which affects lesbians and heterosexually identified women alike, this silence, this absence of a whole population, this invisibility, is disempowering for al women. It is not only lesbian students who should be calling for a recognition of their history and presence in the world; it is all women who want a more accurate map of the way social relations have been, and are, as they try to imagine what might be.' (Rich 1987: 200-201)

Bernard MacLaverty's *The Drapery Man* (1994) centres on the relationship of two men, teacher and apprentice, who are, at the same time, lovers. Homosexual practices are not unusual in the case of teacher-disciple relationships. In Ancient Greece men could have sex with adolescent boys, who were allowed to be passive, at this stage of their lives—this strategy was clearly aimed at preserving the masculinity of one participant. The same strategy was at work in the Old Norse society, Medieval Scandinavia and Spain, but in the latter case, homosexuality as a question of sex with boys was surrounded with a halo of romance. However, here too, sex with bearded boys was despised. Although no aetiology has ever been established for homosexuality, it is known that its expression has varied from culture to culture, and homosexual activities where there was not an active/passive pattern have always existed. In every culture, relationship, couple, there would be people who preferred an active or a passive role, but the 'strategy' would be the agreed pleasure of the participants.

The story very openly presents characteristic aspects of gay male relationships, and although the sexual element is present, the accent is on the affective, spiritual, and artistic sides of the relationship, because these are the things that unite the two men when passion is no longer there. The youth becomes the 'drapery man' when the painter grows blind, thus enabling him to continue his work until his death. The presence of the young man is a blessing for the artist who has always feared the perspective of dying alone. Jordan teaches his pupil many things, so that the youth's apprenticeship becomes a process of culturalisation:

'Before I met Jordan I knew nothing of painting. But he got me interested—gave me books to read, pictures to look at'.

The young man proves to have a deep sense of responsibility and commitment, contrary to the image promoted by heterosexual circles, and his spirit of sacrifice is really touching, as we realise that it is not financial reasons that keep him near Jordan, but real affection:

'We ceased to be lovers many years ago but I still feel a sense of responsibility to him. I can't leave him, particularly now that he is blind. Nobody else would put up with him.'

They are wholly devoted to each other, 'until death does them part':

'But no matter how furious the fight, the bitching, the name-calling, I will be back in the morning [...] There is now a kind of unspoken acceptance that I am here until he dies.'

Alan Hollinghurst's first novel, *The Swimming Pool Library*, is an extremely important asset for gay literature, due to the accurate image of homosexual life it offers to the audience. It is a novel of initiation in more than one sense. First of all, the readers are subjected to a very intense process of initiation, starting with the very beginning of the novel, and up to its end. Sexual aspects of gay life are presented in detail, but do not constitute the focus of attention, as they do in heterosexual writings. The readers have access to a variety of aspects, feelings, experiences, characteristic of homosexual every day life. The gradual discovery of sexual orientation, the first delights of gay sex, different same-sex crushes and their outcome, the importance of friendship, the loneliness surrounding the outcast, his fight against prejudices, violence, discrimination, the endless longing for freedom, the fear of commitment, combined with the need for affective, emotional, and spiritual involvement, all these and many others make up a comprehensive mosaic image of queer life, love and lust.

The very title of the book is intriguing and seems quite ambiguous, making the readers wonder about its significance. It is only in the seventh chapter that the mystery is solved, and we learn that it has to do with a certain tradition characteristic of the main character's prep school, according to which students were offered leadership roles. The hero succeeded in gaining the title of Swimming-Pool Librarian

and was in charge with the pool and the locker rooms. This was a very important step for Will, on his way towards acknowledging his sexual orientation. It was the place of initiation into the secrets of gay sex (*The Swimming Pool Library*, p. 141):

> 'Nipping into that library of uncatalogued pleasure was to step into the dark and halt. Then held breath was released, a cigarette glowed, its smoke was smelled, the substantial blackness moved, glimmered and touched. Friendly hands felt for the flies. There was never, or rarely, any kissing—no cloying, adult impurity in the lubricious innocence of what we did.'

Pools, locker rooms, public toilets, and men clubs are presented as the most important sites for gay encounters. The significance of the title could have been inferred even earlier by an initiated reader, as the Corry club, where most of the characters meet, is an omnipresent background for all the events taking place in the novel (*The Swimming Pool Library*, pp. 9-10):

> 'It was a place I loved, a gloomy and functional underworld full of life, purpose and sexuality. Boys, from the age of seventeen, could go there to work on their bodies in the stagnant, aphrodisiac air of the weights room. […] More than once I had ended up in a bedroom of the hotel above with a man I smiled at in the showers.'

states Will, before confessing his first sexual encounter with a man, his initiation:

> 'The Corry proved the benefit of smiling in general. A sweet, dull man smiled at me there on my first day, talked to me, showed me what was what. I was still an undergraduate then, and a trifle nervous, anticipating, with confused dread and longing, scenes of grim masochismo and institutionalised vice. Bill Hawkins, a pillar of the place, I subsequently discovered, fortyish, […], had simply extended camaraderie to a newcomer.'

Even for those who cannot so easily find a match at Corry, the place still remains a point of reference, for a kind of voyeurism at least:

> 'The gross-cocked Carlos cooed 'Hey, Will' and beckoned so I jumped the queue and joined him under his nozzle, his rose. 'Is very busy', he acknowledged, 'but I like to see the boys.' Here was the conscience of the Corry in a phrase.'

And, taking advantage of the situation, Will indulges himself in a thorough analysis of the impressive variety of the male organ, on display there as always.

It is at Corry that Will meets the mysterious Lord Charles Nantwich whose life he had previously saved, and who asks him to write his biography—a symbolic gesture, that would make Will a life-saviour for a second time. This meeting is one of the most important episodes in the novel, and starting with this fortunate encounter, the two lives and the two threads of the narrative subtly interwoven invite comparison, each having the role of emphasising the other. The young man is surprised to discover the youth of the older man, in a collection of pictures and diaries that highly arouse his interest (*The Swimming Pool Library*, p. 95):

'There were snapshots, group photographs and studio portraits, all mixed up together. […] After a bit I was sure that one of the standing figures, a big boy with swept-back glossy hair and an appealing smirk, must be Charles. The face was leaner than now, and his whole person seemed well set-up; I had seen him less and less in control of his life, and was surprised for a moment to find a young man who would have known how to have a good time. He appeared again in a more studied portrait, where he was less handsome: the spontaneity and camaraderie, perhaps, of the shooting photo had animated him into beauty.'

This is not the only instance when the importance of friendship is touched upon in Hollinghurst's novel. Will suffers from an acute loneliness due to the fact that although it is not hard for him to find a 'playmate' for a night, or even someone to have a relationship with, as he is young, handsome, intelligent, he has no friends. Moreover, he cannot accompany his lover to outings with friends, as their relationship is not to be made public (*The Swimming Pool Library*, p. 123).

'I didn't see Phil the following night as he was going for a drink with some friends and I couldn't face the boredom and frustration of it. Besides, I would have been out of place, and a puzzle to his mates, who didn't know – it was too soon, they couldn't yet know – that he was gay. 'Why don't you go and see your friends,' Phil had suggested to me, and I had retorted, 'But, dearest, I don't have any friends' – a hyperbole which expressed a surprising truth.'

Will faces a problem not unusual for gay people, a lack of friends, of true souls able to understand without judging, to listen without giving unrequested advice, to be there for better or for worse. Society's unjust ways and the narrow-minded mentality of the majority is only one of the causes for gay people's loneliness. Being interested in persons of the same sex, they sooner or later find out that real friendship is endangered by sexual interest, coming either from their friends, who want a more complete relationship, or from their own sexual interest in those persons. If there is anyone among the characters in the book that can be regarded as Will's friend, it is James, but they had also been intimate at one point. Of course, intimacy does not necessarily destroy a friendship, but it somehow spoils it, in the sense that it becomes less pure. Will feels this, though he does not put it into words for the reader to see, but anyone who shares a common background with the character knows what he means by this paradoxical phrase. The writer might, nevertheless, have insisted on this problem, by showing that a solution does exist. And here I tend to contradict Paul Bailey's comment on *The Swimming Pool Library* , (quoted on the first page of the book)*:*

'This is a brave book. It doesn't polemicize and it doesn't apologise. It can only shock those who need to be shocked. Its picture of a certain kind of man's world from which women are excluded is always truthful. If some find it unpleasant, then that is the nature of truth.'

While I thoroughly agree with the first part of Bailey's assertion, I cannot but protest against the endorsement of such a mistaken attitude, as the one advocated in the end. People of homosexual orientation have already been discriminated against long enough. It would be so wrong to support a further kind of discrimination *within* this very community, on account of gender. Their commonly shared background and life experience as queers should be strong enough to unite both gay men and women, as they have so much to offer each other. The truth is that when they say that 'there can never be a real friendship between a man and a woman', they are wrong. They hint at the potential sexual innuendoes that are quite certain to appear, and in this they may be right, but they are making a drastic reduction to the heterosexual world. In the gay world the only true friendship, in an ideal sense, is possible between a gay man and a gay woman. Otherwise, the involvement is either too deep, or too shallow. A relationship is more than a friendship, of course, but cannot take its place, being a different thing. People need both partners and friends in order not to be lonely, and they seldom find these in one person only. Will's following words clarify this to a certain extent:

> 'There were people I was glad to see, but almost no one I would seek out, or invite for a meal or a drink. Instead, I sat up in the dining - room with a bottle of Scotch and Charles's Oxford diary.'

Thus, for William Beckwith, Lord Nantwich's diary becomes a refuge in a different era, that somehow seems to be the same. There are some constants of gay life and homosexual lifestyle, clearly identifiable at a closer look, that mark the lives of both characters, and bring them close together across decades long past. They both have to undergo a process of initiation, which in the case of Charles is much more brutal and unexpected, due to the period when he lived his youth and to the lack of information on this topic (p. 111):

> 'He was heavy & strict, though he had some sense of the danger, & kept on saying 'Sh' to me, though I had not dared to say a word. He made me bite on a handkerchief while he buggered me.'

After this rough introduction to gay sex, young Charles actually falls in love with one of his colleagues, but the realisation of his feelings is prompted by the reactions of the others (p. 113):

> 'But then other boys noticed that he had a softness for me, and brocked us both, so that I, who had been as unconscious as ever of anything erotic, suddenly learnt what was going on & by, some profound power of suggestion, what my feelings actually were. As soon as they said we were always together, I glowed that our secret had been revealed—although until that moment I had not known the secret myself.'

Both Will and Charles had to face the problems encountered by all those who break with commonly held values. They had to learn to lay aside fear, guilt and self-hatred, to deal with the terrible lies society told them about themselves, to

suffer the ridicule and degradation that has always been the lot of gay people, to choose between having external approval and no internal integrity by keeping silent, or achieving integrity and losing approval by coming out publicly. The author does not insist too much on these things, but even those that are not outwardly stated may be inferred by anyone who can read between the lines. Hollinghurst focuses on the new, positive sense of self and on the keynotes that mark the sexual life of gay men, as well as their feelings of love, loneliness, frustration, disappointment or satisfaction. The merit of the writer resides in the fact that he shows a complex image of queer life. Thus, the public learns that, despite the adventurousness of their lives, the men still suffer at the loss of their old loves, at the thought that their once beloved rest now in a woman's arms—it feels like betrayal. They often feel lonely and wish for a long term relationship, therefore all their 'one night stands' are part of a searching process for a compatible partner, for love, lust, life.

The importance of such texts that mirror gay life in a realistic, undistorted way, is obvious if we think of the fact that gay people are outsiders that cannot find a place of their own within the hegemonic culture, and therefore they have no history unless they make it themselves.

CONCLUSION

> *'Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes against injustice, he sets forth a tiny ripple of hope.'*
> Robert F. Kennedy

We live in an ever-changing society, a post-modern one, and those resistant to change are trying to avoid merging into new patterns of thought out of fear, selfishness, lack of flexibility and understanding, unwillingness to make efforts. They cherish traditional mentality and embrace its harmful legacy that keeps them firmly rooted in what they perceive to be the 'correct' side of the problem, even at the expense of truth itself. Recognising the danger of misrepresentation when it comes to the controversial issue sexual orientation is of major importance, as it only brings about more homophobic hatred.

Although an oppressed group, gay people have their part of responsibility for the lack of history, they have historical responsibilities, and each of their actions, or failure to take action affects them and their community. As Adrienne Rich (1987: 145) has pointed out:

> 'you do have a choice to become *consciously* historical—that is, a person who tries for memory and connectedness against amnesia and nostalgia, who tries to describe her or his journeys as accurately as possible—or to become a technician of amnesia and nostalgia, one who dulls the imagination by starving it or feeding it junk food. Historical amnesia *is* starvation of the imagination;

nostalgia is the imagination's sugar rush, leaving depression and emptiness in its wake. Breaking silences, telling our tales, is not enough. We can value process—and the courage it may require—without believing that it is an end in itself. Historical responsibility has, after all, to do with action—where we place the weight of our existences on the line, cast our lot with others, move from an individual consciousness to a collective one. But we all need to begin with the individual consciousness: How did we come to be where we are and not elsewhere?'.

The oppressed must answer this question, and acknowledge the spiritual continuity of a tradition in order to succeed in breaking the spiral of silence, and be able to forge their own systems of thought and action and to create a more positive, liberating identity.

REFERENCES

1. Facing History and Ourselves Foundation, Inc. (1994) *Facing History and Ourselves. Holocaust and Human Behaviour.* Brookline: Massachusetts.

2. Hollinghurst, A. (1988) *The Swimming-Pool Library*. London: Penguin Books.

3. MacLaverty, B. 'The Drapery Man'. In A. Manguel & C. Stephenson (1994) (eds.) *In Another Part of the Forest. The Flamingo Anthology of Gay Literature*. London: Flamingo.

4. Rich, A. (1987[1986]) *Blood, Bread and Poetry. Selected Prose 1979-1985*. London: Virago Press.

5. Winterson, J. (1988) *The Passion*. London: Penguin Books.

'WHY FAY DOESN'T WANT TO LOOK LIKE NAOMI?'
- THE COVERAGE OF RACE AND RACISM
IN THE BRITISH MEDIA -

CARMEN BORBÉLY

ABSTRACT. This paper examines the role and the strategies deployed by the mass media to influence public opinion in Britain as regards the issues of race and racism. Special emphasis will be laid on the press reflection and reinforcement of public attitudes towards 'racial matters' both in the postwar period and in contemporary publications. Our stepping into the third millennium seems to have relegated issues of ethnicity and race to a 'residual' position within a culturally and economically globalised society: in an age of mass electronic communications, boundaries demarcating ethnic/race groups in 'plural', 'polyethnic' states are often seen to become blurred, eroded, erased. The bywords of globalised post-colonial experience – hybridity, heterogeneity, identity fragmentation, cultural syncretism – provide impetus towards a redefinition of the agonic, antagonistic, sharply binarised categories of nation/ ethnicity, centre/margin, self/other.

Although it is widely acknowledged that mass media represent an important part of the sociocultural apparatus in any democratic society (Eldridge 1993: 20), authors and researchers do not all agree on the role played by media institutions (television, print journalism or radio) in reflecting or shaping public opinion. On the one hand, there are those who claim that the media 'serve to reinforce already formed opinions in so far as the readers/viewers remember more readily those news items or feature articles/ programmes whose content coincides with their views' (Halloran, Hartmann & Husband 1974: 17-32 qtd in Hiro 1991: 292). This idea of a one-sided relationship between the public and the media is supported by Verma, who remarks that 'where there is conflict, ideas that do not support existing points of view are likely to be similarly ignored or suppressed' (1988: 128 qtd in Hiro ibid).

On the other hand, specialists in mass communications such as Seaton stress the immense influence of the media on 'institutions, the content of affairs and the way in which people think and act politically' (1988: 1-4). Seaton's conclusion is underpinned by his analysis of two approaches to mass media effects (ibid: 249-276). Noticing that while 'pluralist' and 'determinist' theories differ as regards the 'balance of forces' within society reflected by the press and broadcasting, Seaton emphasises that they none the less share the assumption that the media play a 'key political role' in moulding public understanding.

A synthesis of current, informed opinion leads to the conclusion that the relationship between media and society is dynamic and reciprocal. What remains to be seen is whether or not the strategies deployed by mass media serve to reflect objectively 'real' values, events and states of affairs. According to Fowler, the 'world of the press is not the real world, but a world skewed and judged' (1991: 11), meaning that real events do not become automatically news events, but are constructed as such through a complex process of selection and transformation. The idea of the 'social construction of news' is underpinned by Lichtenberg's observation that 'reality is socially constructed', to the extent that different subjects possess 'alternative realities' that are shaped by cultural or political attachments and interests (1991: 216-231). Both Fowler and Lichtenberg agree that while 'impartiality', 'objectivity' and 'truth' represent fundamental journalistic values, they remain unattainable ideals, given the diversity of world views - variously named 'beliefs', 'values', 'theories' or 'ideologies' - engrained in language.

For instance, in his analysis of newspaper discourse, Fowler (ibid: 10-12) maintains that media persuasion should not always be regarded as involving deliberate 'bias' or misrepresentation of facts and events, considering terms such as 'skewing' or 'mediation' as more appropriate: the implication is that language itself is 'impregnated with ideology' (ibid: 24), perpetuating or redimensioning 'stereotypes' and 'schemata' as intersubjective mental categories. This paper will examine the representation of race categories and stereotypes in postwar British mass media, with a view to identifying possible changes affecting both the public opinion and media coverage of the issues of race and racism. But before embarking on this examination, a closer look at these issues from a conceptual and sociological point of view is required.

Though widely rejected by contemporary scientists as an artificial construct, with no genetic foundation, the concept of race – commonly perceived as a subdivision of the human species according to 'variables such as skin, colour, country of origin, religion, nationality and language' (Solomos 1989: xiii) – survives as the basis of racism, as a 'signifier for ideas of biological or cultural superiority' (ibid.). According to Fryer (1988) the origins of racism are to be found in the practice of slavery and colonial exploitation where it served as an instrument of white domination over the allegedly 'inferior' black people. 'Race' exists therefore not as a biological but as a 'political category', justifying relationships of power and dominance. Noticing the fact that racism is a dynamic phenomenon, Solomos (1989) comments on the shift of emphasis in contemporary society from biological differences to a concern with culture and ethnicity. This view is underpinned by Modood's observation that 'cultural racism' (discrimination on the grounds of ethnic membership) is no less dangerous than 'colour racism' or stigmatisation on the basis of skin colour (1992: 62).

In the context of a multiracial and multicultural society such as Britain, race and racism have proved to be vital issues. Sociologists seem to agree that despite steps taken in legislation to prevent racial discrimination and to promote

good race relations, over the past forty years black people in Britain have been confronted with inequalities and discrimination at both the individual and institutional level, in areas such as employment, education, and housing (Hudson and Williams 1995; Abercrombie & Warde 1988). Furthermore, racist attitudes – betraying a residual 'colonial racialism' (Fanon 1986: 88) – are still fostered by a section of the white majority population, which has led to a series of attacks directed at black (Asian and Afro-Caribbean) minorities as well as to conflicts between minority youths and the police.

Accounts of the media coverage of the race issue in postwar Britain are provided by Hiro (1991: 290-293), who distinguishes between the attitudes perpetuated into the public conscience by quality national papers and mass-circulation tabloids. While the merit of *The Guardian*, *The Independent* or *The Times* in attempting to 'convert' the 'emotional' response of the white majority population to the massive inflow of migrant labour force from the New Commonwealth in the late 1950s and early 1960s is acknowledged, the tabloids are seen to have had the effect of reflecting the 'racial bias' and reinforcing the prejudices of their readers against (especially coloured) immigrants. Thus, among the images recurrently put in the forefront of news reports in the 1970s were the constant association of black youths with mugging and other criminal offences and the presentation of negative stereotypes about black minority children, such as their poor academic performance and aggressive behaviour. Hiro sees such generalisations as 'gross misrepresentations' of facts that, through their impact on the readership, 'did disservice to harmonious race relations' (ibid: 292).

The most controversial role of the media in the coverage of the issues of race and racism has been identified by researchers such as Benyon & Solomos (1991: 22-42) as the one played in the urban riots that afflicted many of Britain's inner cities at the beginning of the eighties. The civil disorders in Bristol, London, Liverpool, Birmingham and Manchester, most commonly seen as conflicts between the black (Afro-Caribbean and Asian) minorities and the police (as the representatives of an 'alien' authority), 'commanded the headlines' and were a major theme in the public debate on the future of Britain's multiracial communities. Benyon & Solomos (ibid: 32-33) argue that while much of the press coverage of the riots tended to countervail extremist forms of public discourse which laid the blame entirely on black people, certain sections of the press contributed to the 'racialisation of the public debate', which emphasised the cultural and ethnic characteristics of the minority communities rather than the negative effects of racism encountered by them at many levels in British society.

For instance, as van Dijk (1988 qtd in Benyon & Solomos ibid: 32) and Harrison (1992) remark, it was the 'loose' structure of West Indians' family patterns, as well as their alleged inclination to violence, that were highlighted as the main and sometimes the 'only' explanations of the so-called 'race riots'. The impact of the media on public feelings about the riots is also signalled by Lord

Scarman's Report (1981: 111-112), according to which the press and television bore part of 'the responsibility for the escalation of the disorders /.../ in Brixton', remarking that a more 'balanced' approach in the coverage of the events and an awareness of the 'social implications' of reporting could have prevented the 'alarming' response of the rioters 'in their exhibition of violence'. What is implied here is, on the one hand, 'the awesome power [of the media] to influence the minds, the attitudes and the behaviour' of both the public and the participants in the riots, and, on the other hand, a certain 'lack of fairness' in reporting, since complaints in this sense were made by both the police and the black community involved in the conflict.

Our stepping into the third millennium seems to have relegated issues of ethnicity and race to a 'residual' position within a culturally and economically globalised society: in an age of mass electronic communications, boundaries demarcating ethnic/race groups in 'plural', 'polyethnic' states are often seen to become blurred, eroded, erased (cf. Hutchinson & Smith 1996: 13-14). The bywords of the globalised post-colonial experience – hybridity, alterity, heterogeneity, identity fragmentation, cultural syncretism – provide impetus towards a redefinition of the agonic, antagonistic, sharply binarised categories of centre/margin, empire/colony, self/other or power/submissiveness in multicultural societies. In so far as broadcasting is concerned, it is assumed that the aim of radio stations and television organisations (such as the BBC or the commercial companies functioning under the Independent Television Commission) is to reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity in British society (cf. Foreign & Commonwealth Office 1991: 50). Ranging from documentary series on minority ethnic issues to talk shows covering Asian and Black British topics, the Religious and Multicultural Programmes Unit complies with strictly delineated guidelines that would ensure the production of television and radio broadcasts catering for the interests of Britain's ethnic minorities: eschewing unnecessary reference to racial origin, ensuring an objective and accurate coverage of racial questions, and precluding the use of debasing racial stereotypes (idem). Alibhai-Brown (1994) considers that television should play a central part in the exploration of the different religious and cultural heritages in Britain, and not submerge 'in an ethos of secular liberal fundamentalism that which sees the religions of the ethnic minorities as manifestations of backwardness and irrationality'.

The next section will investigate some of the most recurrent race-related topics in some of Britain's major newspapers, followed by a more detailed analysis of two particular articles. Throughout 1994 – the year I have selected as a sample period for my investigation – the press coverage (*The Independent, The Guardian, The Telegraph*) of the issue of race and racism in Britain focused mainly on the following aspects: individual or isolated cases of racist discrimination and harassment. Several articles depicted complaints of racial discrimination at the level of institutions such as the legal system (*The Guardian* 21/4/1994; 13/4/1994) or reported cases of racially motivated attacks and harassment (*The Independent* 18/3/1994; 4/5/1994; 6/6/1994), the revival of genetic explanations for race differences or cases of positive discrimination.

108

The most frequently mediated case of positive discrimination, with arguments for and against such practices, concerned the decision of the BBC to allot almost half of the places on the 1994/1995 News Trainee Scheme to applicants from minority ethnic groups (*The Telegraph* 16/6/1994; *The Guardian* 13/6/1994). An article published in *The Telegraph* (17/7/1994) expresses in a tongue-in-cheek manner the decision of Yorkshire Electricity Board to launch a 'telephone translation service' for ethnic minorities, which will enable customers to receive information regarding their bills 'in any of 100 different languages' - Yakka, Fukien, Chao-Chao. The implication is that besides the enormous costs involved in servicing such a line, the focus is not on the major languages that might function as lingua franca for the different ethnic minorities - such as Hindi or Urdu, for instance - but on dialects and regional linguistic variations that are addressed only to small numbers of speakers. An article by the same writer (25/9/1994) points out a similar attempt by the Bradford branch of British Gas to launch a 'Language Line' service in 140 languages, in the hope of breaking down 'barriers for ethnic minorities'; the author sadly complains the absence of Gaelic among the translations offered, ironically suggesting that the lack of a substantial Scottish population in Bradford may be paralleled by a limited number of speakers of Haitian-Creole or Tigrinian.

Articles such as those published in *The Telegraph* (16/9/1994) and *The Independent* (20/0/1994) tackled the thorny matter of what impact the revival of racist though scientifically based theories about the genetic 'gap' between races might have on the public opinion. Closely connected with this issue was the case of some black mothers undergoing surgery in order to have children of lighter-shaded skin colour (*The Guardian* 4/1/1994; *The Independent* 2/1/1994), to ensure them better life opportunities in a white-dominated society.

While a great number of newspaper articles signal to the public opinion individual cases of racist discrimination, the opposite view – that Britain is a multicultural and anti-racist society – is maintained for instance in *The Independent* (7/7/1994). Here it is argued that, contrary to the allegations made by the Commission of Racial Equality at the beginning of July 1994 that Britain is a racist society, the UK 'positively favours its minorities' through both legislation and public funding. Britain, 'one of the most decent and civilised societies in the world', is set in contrast with historically acknowledged racist societies such as the Southern States of the US, Nazi Germany in the 1930s or apartheid South Africa. What emerges from this inventory of themes related to race and racism is the shift that has taken place (both in the public conscience and in the way the press reflects and reinforces public beliefs and values) towards accepting multiculturalism and anti-racism as defining dimensions of modern British society. While isolated racist attitudes may survive at a subtler, more informal level, as shown in the following two text analyses, British society tends to be more lax and liberal as regards its minorities.

The first article, published in *The Independent* (20/10/1994) and entitled 'Gene rebels with a cause', reintroduces a controversial topic into public debate, namely the foundation of racial inequalities on genetic differences. The text is

prompted by the storm caused in the United States by the publication of Charles Murray's book, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life*, which argues that different races have different access to social achievement due to their inherent genetic stock (different IQs). The author of the article (Jerome Burne) sees in Murray's claim – if America wants to rebuild its knowledge base, some social groups (Asians and whites) will need to reproduce more than others (blacks and Hispanics) – a resurrection of an explanation of social behaviour 'tainted by its associations with eugenics and racist politics'. As far as the possible impact of this book in Britain is concerned, it is remarked that similar attempts by British scientists to shift the focus from environmental to genetic explanations of human behaviour have 'however, studiously avoided the race issue'.

Gilroy (1993) has pointed out that despite the absence in contemporary Britain of supporters of a bio-genetic model that might perpetuate racial inequality, there is an ongoing mainstream machinery of racialisation, which tends to shift the focus from essentialist biologism to 'pathologised' cultural differentiation among race groups, reducing the Afro-Caribbeans to monolithic features such as laziness or dissolution in contrast with the diligent potential of Asian communities (still seen as fraught with backward traditionalism). As Coopan maintains, "progressive critics attune to the 'necessary polymorphism of racism' describe the emergence of a new 'racism without races' that happily admits the cultural-differentialist rather than biological-inegalitarian parameters of the term 'race' without, however, changing its inscription in a fundamentally hierarchizing world view" (2000: 18).

For instance, one 'crucial' argument invoked by British scientists is that differences between individuals in any racial group are far greater than any average differences between the groups. Direct quotations from researchers at the Maudsley Hospital (Britain's leading psychiatric research centre) are included in the text of the article in order to give the reader a more direct feeling of the 'heat' of debate. The 'pattern of linguistic choice' (Montgomery 1986: 191) reveals a polarisation of terminology: scientific terms such as 'genetics', 'research', 'IQs' and 'eugenics' are contrasted with words characterising the initiators of this genetic engineering (Murray and his possible followers) as 'rebels with a cause' and 'apostles of a new genetics', implying a sort of extremist exaltation. What the article intends to achieve is to 'warn' against the 'pernicious' effects that such scientifically supported racist theories might have on reactivating racist stereotypes in mainstream society. However, in de-constructing the relevance of race as a biological category of analysis, as a transhistorical universal or as a static, 'fixed' entity, the article still suggests race as a main locus of analysis which can provide scope for articulating other categories of social and psychic identity.

The second article published in *The Independent* (25/9/1994), written by Linda Grant and entitled 'Why Fay doesn't want to look like Naomi ... and nor do Stephany and Diane', focuses on two contrasting ideals of feminine beauty embedded in the white versus black collective subconscious. Although the text shows clearly

the absence of negatively connoted images of blackness (examined in the previous section), what is implied in the subtext is that in a white-dominated society race-centred stereotypes still function at a more subtle level. That explains why only a model like Naomi Campbell, whose figure corresponds to the white ideal of beauty ('fits the Cosmopolitan ideal') can 'step on to the catwalk' or a singer like Diana Ross, 'partially transformed into a white ideal', has appealed to the white public. The reiteration of this key-word, 'ideal', reveals the fact that in the public conscience a standardised image of white beauty – the Barbie doll figure, 'young, blonde, pretty, heterosexual and able-bodied' – has survived and has been reinforced by the media, fashion creators and beauty contests. However, the article challenges this stereotype by presenting the emergence among black women of an opposite perspective upon beauty; the syntax of the title is very suggestive in this sense (cf. Fowler ibid: 70-79), as the verb – 'doesn't want' – is in the active voice (determination), negative form (doing away with white prototypes). The figuration of a hybrid ideal of feminine beauty (defined according to a logic of complementarity, *both* black *and* white) is still contrasted with a sharply divided aesthetic model, which renders white beauty standards incompatible with black beauty coordinates (based on an exclusionary logic of *either* black *or* white).

In the wake of the 'Black and Beautiful' movement, women of Afro-Caribbean origin have constructed a positive self-image, which resides in a resurrection of the African psycho-physical pattern: 'shapely', 'voluptuous', 'being African, being big is good'. The entire syntax of the discourse is based on a structural antithesis, meant to convey to the public the existence of an alternative black beauty archetype. Closely connected with the issue of physical appearance is the question whether beauty comes naturally, 'from within', or must obtained through starvation and askesis. While self-image is 'flexible' for black teenagers, it is obsessional and 'static' for white teenagers, who tend to 'exert control' over their bodies through dieting - a 'correction' of nature. Needless to say that implicit in this apparent rift is the possibility that a previously marginalized, 'black' dietary and ethno-psychic model (indulgence in relishing cuisine and expanding bodily limits to corporeal 'bigness') will be adopted also by those white females who, prior to reading such an article, might have guiltily censored their proneness to physical expansiveness. Already within this agonic, oppositional framing of mono-racial *identity* lie the seeds from which the much-acclaimed liminal, in-between, threshold poly-racial *identities* might emerge.

This dichotomy of vision is suggested in the discourse through an accumulation of pairs of antithetic words and phrases expressing 'startling differences between black and white women's attitudes to their bodies': 'healthier and realistic'/ 'dissatisfaction with their own bodies'; 'emphasised shapeliness'/'stressed thinness'; 'sturdier and healthier' models/'emaciated models'. What is remarkable about the 'lexis of gender representation' (Montgomery 1986: 176-178) is the fact that the vocabulary depicting black women avoids denigrating terms ('fat' is never employed, maybe because of a desire of political correctness), while words referring to white

women are more straightforward and sometimes pejorative: 'skinny', 'thin', 'emaciated'. Thus, the 'linguistic tools' (Fowler ibid: 68) employed in the article - the choice of lexis and the patterning of syntax - prove to be a subtle strategy of persuading the public opinion (black and white alike) into more positively accepting black cultural patterns.

This paper has analysed the role played by the British mass media - and the press in particular - in reflecting, reinforcing and reshaping public opinion about the issues of race and racism. While mass communications specialists agree that, in the postwar period, sections of the press served both as a mirror and a catalyst of negatively stereotyping images of Britain's ethnic minorities, the examination of several articles published in 1994 in some of the major British national newspapers has shown a definite shift of perceptions and attitudes, to the effect of outlining the prospect of a truly multicultural – in the sense of culturally syncretic - Britain. Within the context of the shaping of a more liberal and democratic British society, the discourse of print journalism reveals the functioning of persuasion strategies in the direction of displacing negative race stereotypes and forging a more positive perspective upon Britain's black minorities. The impetus to maintain race as a divisionary category of (cultural not biological) societal analysis undergoes a subtle yet consistent shift towards accepting it as the new millennium's globalising, inclusive, hybridising byword.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Abercrombie N & Warde A (1988) *Contemporary British Society* Cambridge: Polity Press.
2. Benyon J & Solomos J (1991) 'Race, Injustice and Disorder' in MacGregor S & Pimlott B (eds) *Tackling the Inner Cities. The 1980s Reviewed: Prospects for the 1990s* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
3. *Britain's Ethnic Minorities* (Jan 1991) Foreign & Commonwealth Office No 155/1991.
4. Cooppan V 'W(h)ither Post-colonial Studies? Towards the Transnational Study of Race and Nation' in Chrisman L & Parry B (eds) (2000) *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism* Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd.
5. Eldridge J (1993) 'News, truth and power' in Eldridge J (ed) *Getting the Message: News, Truth and Power* London & New York: Routledge.
6. Fanon F (1986) *Black Skin, White Masks* London: Pluto Classic.
7. Fowler R (1991) *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press* London & New York: Routledge.
8. Fryer P (1988) *Black People in the British Empire: An Introduction* London: Pluto Press.
9. Gilroy P (1993) *Small Acts: Thoughts on the Politics of Black Cultures* London & New York: Serpent's Tail.

10. *Guardian The* (4/1/1994) 'Trust mother's pride on a question of race'; (26/1/1994) 'Beyond black and white'; (1/4/1994) 'Tories force tough curbs on racism'; (5/4/1994) 'Nut split on peaceful race protest'; (13/4/1994) 'Black bar failure 'due to confidence crisis''; (13/6/1994) 'BBC defends stand on jobs for minorities'; (19/7/1994) 'Law: The colour Bar'; (16/7/1994) 'London top capital for ethnic mix'; (29/10/1994) 'Doctors dispel black care 'myths''; (10/11/1994) 'Business beyond the Balti house beckons'; (14/12/1994) 'Housing: Raw deal that won't go away'.

11. Halloran J, Hartmann P & Husband C (June 1974: 17-32) 'Mass Media and Social Attitudes' in *Social Science Research Council Newsletter.*

12. Harrison P (1992) *Inside the Inner City: Life under the Cutting Edge* Penguin Books.

13. Hiro D (1991) *Black British, White British: A History of Race Relations in Britain* London: Grafton Books.

14. Hudson R & Williams A M (1995) *Divided Britain* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

15. Hutchinson J & Smith A D (1996) *Ethnicity* Oxford University Press.

16. *Independent The* (2/1/1994) 'Colours of morality'; (13/1/1994) 'A report warns of an alarming rise in racially motivated attacks'; (17/3/1994) 'A hotbed of mixed feelings: Why should black people choose only black partners?'; (18/3/1994) 'Reported race attacks double in five years: Police figures prompt calls for separate offence of harassment'; (1/4/1994) 'MPs seek extra jail deterrent for race attacks'; (4/5/1994) 'The real racists do not wear swastikas'; (30/5/1994) 'Backlash feared as attacks by racists rise: Intolerance and tension are growing in parts of Newcastle'; (6/6/1994) 'Victims challenge rising racism'; (28/6/1994) 'White society, black victims'; (7/7/1994) 'Britain fails to meet 'racist' criteria'; (16/7/1994) ''Black British' stake claim in London: Many in ethnic minority groups adopt UK identity'; (18/7/994) 'Why do they all look the same? : The Lord Chancellor is not doing enough to recruit black and female judges'; (26/7/1994) 'Doctors win race bias claim against Scottish NHS'; (5/8/1994) 'Judges accused of racism over lawyers' eviction: Barrister's claims about rent dispute denied by owners of chambers'; (1/9/1994) 'Ghetto blast: It's time for the black middle class to make a noise'; (25/9/1994) 'Why Fay doesn't want to look like Naomi ... and nor do Stephanie and Diane'; (28/9/1994) 'A little conflict is not such a dangerous idea: While racism flourishes, black leaders have become too quiescent'; (20/10/1994) 'Gene rebels without a cause'; (17/11/1994) 'Wanted: Ombudsman for racial minorities'; Alibhai-Brown Y (30 March 1994) 'Media: Religious TV needs a conversion'.

17. Lichtenberg J (1991) 'In Defense of Objectivity' in Curran J & Gurevitch M (eds) *Mass Media and Society* London & New York: Edward Arnold.

18. Lord Scarman (Nov 1981) *The Brixton Disorders 10-12 April 1981* London: H M S O.

19. Modood T (1992) *Not Easy Being British: Colour, Culture and Citizenship* Stoke-on-Trent: Runnymede Trust & Trentham Books.

20. Montgomery M (1986) *An Introduction to Language and Society* London and New York: Routledge.

21. Seaton J (1988) 'The sociology of the mass media' in Curran J & Seaton J (eds) *Power without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain* London: Routledge.

22. Solomos J (1989) *Race and Racism in Contemporary Britain* London: MacMillan.

23. *Telegraph The* (8/4/1994) 'Harrassment law to curb racism'; (10/4/1994) 'Way of the world: A Real Boon'; Watson I (17/7/1994) "Now it's electricity bills"; (16/9/1994) 'Scientists bask in gene triumph'; Watson I (25/9/1994) "Language line"; (23/10/994) 'How immigrants make Britain great and rich'.

24. Twitchin J (ed) (1988) The *Black and White Media Show: Handbook for the Study of Racism and Television* Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books

25. van Dijk T (1988) *News Analysis: Case Studies of International and National News in the Press* Princeton.

26. Verma G (1988) 'Attitudes, Race Relations and Television' in Twitchin J (ed) *The Black and White Media Show: Handbook for the Study of Racism and Television.*

RELIGION AND NATIONALISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

CRISTINA DUMITRU

ABSTRACT. The special mix of religion and nationalism is considered by many analysts to be the cause and object of the conflict in Northern Ireland. If taken separately, the two can also be found in many European countries as potential conflict causes. In Ulster the particularity of the situation is given by the influence they have had on each other. The aim of this paper is to address, however briefly, these aspects of Northern Irish identity.

Religion is thought by many to have been the main incentive of the conflict in Northern Ireland and the driving force of the Irish society on the whole. Religious conflict is perceived as characteristic to Northern Ireland, but at a closer look a religious divide (between Protestants and Catholics) can be found in many European countries, the only difference being that these countries have come up with means of coping with it. It is not a less important issue than in Northern Ireland. In fact, researchers have shown that "religion, not class, is the main social basis of parties in the western world today"[1]. Religion is actually used as a value system, an ideological basis for politics.

In Ireland not only have the religious differences not been accommodated, but they have combined with the divisions over nationalism. According to historians it is this combination that is specific to Northern Ireland and this is what the conflict has been primarily about.

Religion is an essential factor in the formation of a sense of identity. Religious beliefs are part of the group beliefs that define a given community. They "unite people on a denominational community basis"[2]. They strengthen the ties within a community but, as it happens with all types of group beliefs, they contribute to the widening of the gap between different denominations. This is due to the fact that the acknowledgement and assertion of identity is realised through comparison with and delimitation from another group. Statements about the out-group do not have to be true. They are used in order to enable the in-group members to say "They are bad. We are good. We are right" and to justify any measures taken against the out-group. This is an invaluable help to propaganda and hate appeals.

---

[1] Rose, R. and D. Unwin (1969)'Social cohesion, parties and strains in regimes'. In *Comparative Political Studies* 11 (April 1969), p.60. Quoted in Walker, B. (1996) *Dancing to History's Tune*. Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast, p. 38.

[2] Walker, *op. cit.,* p.40.

It is precisely the need to preserve the sense of identity that is being used in this type of endeavours. They give one side the feeling of being threatened by the other and prevent any dialogue from being carried out. Sectarians fears are manipulated for the sake of political goals and the conflict is artificially kept going. For instance, the average Protestants in Ulster was inculcated the belief that if the other side was to win and if the border disappeared their community would be destroyed, that Catholic priests, headed by the Pope can hardly wait to trample Protestantism underfoot. For Protestants Home Rule meant "Rome Rule". At the beginning of the century there was some truth to the matter when the Ne Temere decree appeared, saying that marriages between Catholics and Protestants were null if the parents did not raise their children in the Catholic religion. Starting from this a phobia was created which is still exploited today. It developed to such an extent that it was possible for a Protestant councillor, Roy Gillespie, to declare in 1991 that "Rome's aim is to destroy Protestantism, our children, our children's children, our way of life and the Bible"[3]

No wonder paranoia of this kind can be found in the ranks of the Protestant community when a handful of people go to any lengths to provoke hostility in order to gain political capital. An example is the publication in the April 1967 issue of *The Protestant Telegraph* (and in the booklets that British soldiers were issued upon arriving to Ulster) of a fragment of an alleged Sinn Fein oath:

> These Protestant robbers and brutes, these unbelievers of our faith, will be driven like the swine they are into the sea by fire, the knife, or by poison cup until we of the Catholic Faith and avowed supporters of all Sinn Fein action and principles, clear these heretics from our land [...] At any cost we must work and seek, using any method of deception to gain our ends towards the destruction of all Protestants and the advancement of the priesthood and the Catholic faith until the Pope is complete ruler of the whole world [...] So shall we of the Roman Catholic Church and Faith destroy with smiles of thanksgiving to our Holy Father the Pope all who shall not join us and accept our beliefs.

The central issue at stake is community identity, which the Protestants want to keep through the British connection and the Catholics through the link with the Republic.

Whatever the extent to which it is given credit as a cause of the conflict, the religious element does exist and affects the national, political or territorial aspects of the problem. As Tim Pat Coogan puts it, in Ireland "Christ and Caesar are hand in glove"[4].

The mixing of religious and political allegiances led to a situation where religion became an ethnic marker. Researchers have found that in subject communities (*demotic ethnies*) religion was the main mechanism which eased the transmission of the fund of myths, symbols, values and memories from one generation to the next,

---

[3] *The Irish Times*, 2 December 1991, quoted in Walker, *op.cit.*, p.37.
[4] Coogan, T. P. (1995) *The IRA*. London: HarperCollins *Publishers*, p.3.

from one region to the other and from one social class to another. It was an organised religion, with well-established rites, a body of priests and a sacred text. Hechter and Levi state that the sense of community promoted by the preservation of old rituals can become the fundament for collective political action – an ethnoregional movement, which can lead to the development of national identity and nationalism[5]. This was the case in Ireland, a peripheral subject community, under the influence of the nineteenth century wave of movements for national self-determination in Europe, literary and political movements dedicated to the assertion and preservation of the identity of the peripheral culture.

The population of peripheral cultures annexed by a core ethnic group, especially those who have a distinctive language or religion (as was the case of Catholic Ireland) is mainly found at the bottom of the social scale, and has little possibility of moving upwards. As Hechter and Levi state, "territories having talented and ambitious individuals who experience blocked mobility are more likely than others to produce leaders concerned with changing the status quo"[6].

The exception of Wolfe Tone, who was a member of the Protestant Ascendancy, and others in Ireland like Emmett, Childers or Parnell – promoters of the nationalist cause – can be explained by their desire to become integrated in a new culture comprising peacefully both Catholics and Protestants. They were committed to an "Irish" identity and "Irish" values, as distinct from "English" ones. But they should not be considered representatives of a trend in the Protestant community, but deviants from the norm. In any case, their ideology led to the creation of the nationalist movement in Ireland, which was to become a motor of the Irish society. Usually the organization of national movements and the formation of national consciousness are the work of educated political élites. This could be another explanation for the dedication of Protestants to the nationalist cause: they enjoyed social advantages, had university education, they were young intellectuals in a period of heightened ethnoregional movements in Western Europe.

Nationalism as the search for a national identity, is based on the worship of ancestors. The heroes of the past are conferred almost mythical status. The dead of the Easter Rising became martyrs and acquired a type of halo. Revolution and religion are mixed and the devotion to the national cause takes on the appearance of a crusade. This is true for both Loyalists and Republicans. As Louis MacNeice says, "few of the Protestants or Presbyterians can see the Cross merely as a cross. Like a man looking into the sun through half-shut eyes, they see it shoot out rays, blossom in the Union Jack. And the Son of God goes forth to war in orange"[7].

---

[5] Hechter, M. and M. Levi (1979) 'The comparative analysis of ethnoregional movements'. In *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2/3.
[6] Hechter and Levi, *op. cit.*, p.192.
[7] MacNeice, L. (1938) *Zoo*. London: Michael Joseph.

As far as the Catholic side is concerned, Coogan says that in the Republican attitude towards serving the country common themes can be found with the Irish missionary tradition, like the self-sacrifice and the communion with the dead.[8] The Irish Catholic tradition of penitence and martyrdom was brought into the twentieth century by IRA prisoners with the hunger strikes staged in the early 1980s and during one of which ten men starved to death, subsequently entering the Republican pantheon. Unfortunately this only provides incentive for idealistic young people to join the paramilitaries on both sides and offers them a "just cause".

The memory of past deeds, which nationalism is based on, is highly selective. Amnesia is found on both sides, leading to distortions and deception. What has been taken, in the case of Ireland, as a special, very close relationship with the past, an obsession with past feuds, is in fact the use of this selective memory, as many historians agree. The belief in an Irish obsession with the past and an inability to let go of it is widely spread, and it is usually motivated by a conviction that Ireland has had a unique history. In fact there was no unique situation – other countries have had the same problems but have managed to cope with them. Historians state that in Ireland history is no more or less important than in other places. The fundamental difference is that people in Ireland *believe* that it is. It is not actual history which influences present actions, but myths, which can be either "factually incorrect or highly selective"[9]. They respond to the needs of the modern world and are accepted in order to suit present purposes.

This view of the facts provides people with a sense of continuity and direction but, unfortunately, at the same time justification for violent action against the "traditional enemy", making it a noble cause. It provides role models and arguments against the other side's grievances. The novelist Dermot Bolger described this as going "back three centuries to explain any fight outside a chip shop"[10]. History seems to pop up at every turn in Ireland, a country "much troubled by the undead" as A. T. Q. Stewart said[11]. This prolongation of the past into the present has been metaphorically related by many, including Seamus Heaney in his "Tollund Man", to the Irish landscape, more precisely the bogs, where layer upon layer of peat accumulate, preserving anything within.

This particular sense of history has affected not only the relationship between the two communities in Ulster, but Anglo-Irish relations as well, the Irish side being seen as caught in a time warp. However, efforts are being made at present to approach the past in a different manner and many political discourses are based on appeals to look ahead and not over the shoulder. But there are sceptics who say, like Bruce Arnold, that "no one in this country is in favour of shaking off

---

[8] Coogan, *op.cit.*
[9] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. ix.
[10] Quote from the *Sunday Independent*, 16 August 1992, in Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
[11] Stewart, A. T. Q. (1977) *The Narrow Ground*. London: Faber.

the baggage of history. We hug it round constantly, and it is difficult to identify which segment of political expression is most burdened"[12].

Neither side is too willing to lose anything that is part of its identity, all the more so when one is feeling threatened by the other and this feeling is amplified by means of sectarian propaganda. However, the situation is changing now and each side tries to give in a little in the interest of mutual understanding. These steps are taken in order to bring together these closely related but apparently irreconcilable variants of Irish identity by prominent members of both communities. The change of the way history is taught in schools is considered important, as well as integrated education, which would be a means of putting an end to artificially maintained prejudice. As said before, the determinant elements of these variants of identity are religion and nationalist allegiances. They are fundamental group beliefs and they justify group behaviour, especially violent behaviour directed at the 'enemy' group. Their combination was the explosive mix that led to the Irish 'Troubles' - a mild euphemism for the violent conflict. The value of these beliefs is prone to change in the interest of peace on the island. They do not have to be renounced, only made to co-exist peacefully.

REFERENCES

1. Coogan, T. P. (1995) *The IRA*. London: HarperCollins *Publishers.*
2. Hechter, M. and M. Levi (1979) 'The comparative analysis of ethnoregional movements'. In *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2/3.
3. The *Irish Independent*, 9 October 1993.
4. The *Irish Times*, 2 December 1991.
5. MacNeice, L. (1938) *Zoo*. London: Michael Joseph.
6. Rose, R. and D. Unwin (1969)'Social cohesion, parties and strains in regimes'. In *Comparative Political Studies* 11 (April 1969).
7. Stewart, A. T. Q. (1977) *The Narrow Ground*. London: Faber.
8. The *Sunday Independent*, 16 August 1992.
9. Walker, B. (1996) *Dancing to History's Tune*. Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies, The Queen's University of Belfast.

---

[12] Quote from the *Irish Independent*, 9 October 1993, in Walker, *op. cit*., p. 66.