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JESS

THEORY, HISTORY AND LITERARY CRITICISM

JESS

L'ironie proustienne : l'impossibilité de connaître et les projections imaginaires

Diana Stroescu*

Proustian Irony: The Impossibility of Knowing and the Imaginary Projections

Abstract:

This paper aims to analyze an excerpt from *In the Shadow of Young Girls in Flower* (1919), the second volume of *In Search of Lost Time* by Marcel Proust. Fundamental to the understanding of the whole novel, the fragment reveals an epistemological observation: everything is fleeting, the essential remains obscure. While the narrator contemplates the changing figures of Albertine, his way of thinking takes an ontological turn, by giving rise to the idea of the mobility of beings and of the self.

Keywords: Proustian irony, Mobility of the self, Identity, Otherness

I. La complexité héraclitienne de l'être

Situé dans la seconde partie du deuxième volume de la *Recherche du temps perdu* de Marcel Proust, *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, l'extrait suivant constitue une révélation tardive du protagoniste concernant l'idée de la mobilité des êtres et du « moi ». Au niveau structurel, cette réflexion à fonction de dévoilement peut être considérée un échantillon du style proustien parce que le fragment illustre à petite échelle un procédé de composition qu'organise tout le livre: après une observation sur une expérience personnelle, il suit l'explication à caractère générale. Ainsi, les considérations relatives à l'amour pour Albertine favorisent l'ouverture réflexive sur une dimension universelle de l'humain:

C'est peut-être parce qu'étaient si divers les êtres que je contempiais en elle à cette époque que plus tard je pris l'habitude de devenir moi-même un personnage autre selon celle des Albertine à laquelle je pensais : un jaloux, un indifférent, un voluptueux, un mélancolique, un furieux, recréés non seulement au hasard du souvenir qui renaissait, mais selon la force de la croyance interposée, pour un même souvenir, par la façon différente dont je l'appréciais. Car c'est toujours à cela qu'il fallait revenir, à ces croyances qui la plupart du temps remplissent notre âme à notre insu, mais qui ont pourtant plus d'importance pour notre bonheur que tel être que nous voyons, car c'est à

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travers elles que nous le voyons, ce sont elles qui assignent sa grandeur passagère à l'être regardé. Pour être exact, je devrais donner un nom différent à chacun des moi qui dans la suite pensa à Albertine ; je devrais plus encore donner un nom différent à chacune de ces Albertine qui apparaissaient devant moi, jamais la même, comme – appelées simplement par moi pour plus de commodité la mer – ces mers qui se succédaient et devant lesquelles, autre nymphe, elle se détachait. Mais surtout – de la même manière mais bien plus utilement qu'on dit, dans un récit, le temps qu'il faisait tel jour – je devrais donner toujours son nom à la croyance qui tel jour où je voyais Albertine régnait sur mon âme, en faisait l'atmosphère, l'aspect des êtres, comme celui des mers, dépendant de ces nuées à peine visibles qui changent la couleur de chaque chose par leur concentration, leur mobilité, leur dissémination, leur fuite, comme celle qu'Elstir avait déchirée, un soir, en ne me présentant pas aux jeunes filles avec qui il s'était arrêté et dont les images m'étaient soudain apparues plus belles quand elles s'éloignaient – nuée qui s'était reformée quelques jours plus tard quand je les avais connues, voilant leur éclat, s'interposant souvent entre elles et mes yeux, opaque et douce, pareille à la *Leucothea* de Virgile. (Proust, 2016 : 507-508)

La notion philosophique du *devenir* est intégrée par Proust dans sa conception sur l'amour. L'idée du mouvement perpétuel qu'implique le changement trouve ses racines dans la pensée d'Héraclite. L'aphorisme *Panta rei* qui a été attribué au philosophe antique dénonce l'illusion de la stabilité, voire de l'immobilité des choses. Ce qui caractérise l'existence est le flux continu qui transforme incessamment la réalité et, implicitement, l'être humain. De plus, le concept de *contrariété* occupe une place importante dans le cadre de la philosophie héraclitienne parce que conformément à cela l'opposition entre les choses fait naître le mouvement.

Le fragment choisi est la conclusion rétrospective d'une réflexion plus large sur la fluctuation de la figure d'Albertine. Le spectacle de son physique – toujours différent – entraîne une méditation à l'égard des effets créés par le rapport avec la femme aimée sur l'identité du protagoniste.

Dès le début, l'adverbe « peut-être » imprime au texte une nuance dubitative: on fait des suppositions, mais on n'a jamais accès à la vérité, parce que la conscience propre – la seule qu'on peut pénétrer – ne fournit pas objectivement les dates de la réalité. L'écart temporel entre les moments vécus et le moment pensé est marqué explicitement par des indices: « à cette époque » et « plus tard » (lignes 1-2), en établissant une stratification à trois niveaux: le temps éloigné dont le jeune homme contemplant la diversité qu'il trouva dans la personne d'Albertine; le temps transformateur à valeur prospective dont l'amour va déterminer l'identification du protagoniste avec les Albertines imaginées; et le temps « hors du temps » du narrateur-personnage qui, situé à distance de ces moments, observe les liaisons entre eux.

En outre, le rythme discursif rend l'idée de fluidité. Le mouvement apparemment désordonné de la réflexion crée d'abord une impression d'aller-retour entre les différents niveaux temporels. Mais on observe que le regard en arrière a seulement le but de renforcer la notion du *devenir*. Le retour souligne effectivement un changement, une mise en forme distincte. Les verbes composés avec le préfixe itératif « re- » qui exprime d'habitude une reprise identique d'un état initial – « recréés » (ligne 4) « (souvenir qui) renaissait » (ligne 4) « revenir » (ligne 6) « reformer » (ligne 22) – ont dans le texte un rôle contraire, celui de suggérer l'évolution: le rapport entre la conscience individuelle du protagoniste et sa manière de concevoir les mêmes souvenirs liés à Albertine est variable. Voire les catégories établies par la psychologie perdent leur fixité: par exemple, la mémoire non seulement qu'agit par sélection, mais elle est soumise à une sorte de distorsion sous l'empire des affects: « un même souvenir [...] la façon différente dont je l'appréciais » (lignes 5-6).

Le lexique exprime aussi le dynamisme de l'être – « devenir » (ligne 2), « passagère » (9), « succédaient » (14), « changent » (18), « mobilité », « fuite » (19) – et fait penser à la vie qui s'écoule irréversiblement et qui déchire l'illusion de la pérennité, en laissant s'entrevoir la conception de l'auteur selon laquelle l'existence humaine est dépendante de la durée temporelle. Ainsi, parce que l'œuvre de Proust et ses personnages sont étroitement liés au temps, Albertine même apparaît dans ce texte fragmentairement, au fur et à mesure, projetée en temps, comme les hommes de la vie réelle: d'une façon partielle, incomplète et contradictoire. Pourtant, c'est surtout ce caractère contradictoire qui est le ressort de la mobilité de son être. L'originalité de Proust par rapport au philosophe grec réside dans l'idée que le devenir est forcément dû à l'altérité. Non seulement Albertine change dans la conscience du héros, mais aussi lui-même grâce à sa relation avec la jeune fille. Si ce mouvement reste insaisissable quand il est vécu, il devient perceptible et peut être examiné dans le plan de la pensée analytique. Enfin, seule la logique du devenir constitue une constante ontologique.

II. Le reflet épistémologique de l'amour

L'extrait découvre l'idée de l'amour comme expérience nécessaire sur le trajet cognitif de l'être humain. Albertine n'est qu'un prétexte pour que le narrateur oriente la réflexion vers lui-même. Le contact avec l'extériorité – qui, pour le narrateur, est synonyme de l'altérité – produit un éclairage sur l'intériorité du protagoniste. Parmi toutes les formes d'affection, seulement l'amour permet de découvrir et de comprendre la propre individualité. L'opinion que l'être est un résultat des interactions avec les autres a été exprimée par le critique russe Mikhaïl Bakhtine, à l'aide du terme *dialogisme*. Cette idée va

quereller avec la conception de l'être autonome, envisagé par Descartes, qui considère que l'identité de l'homme peut être définie par le rapport entre la conscience et la réalité du *moi* : « Je pense, donc je suis », dit le philosophe. Proust pourrait dire : Je pense à l'autre, donc je sais qui je suis. Le dialogisme suggère ainsi que *l'être en soi* n'existe pas et que l'individu est au carrefour de ses relations humaines.

On peut observer ainsi une question d'optique mentale: « je pris l'habitude de devenir moi-même un personnage autre selon celle des Albertine à laquelle je pensais » (lignes 2-3). Albertine – et par extension *l'autre* – est une construction psychologique du *moi*. L'impossibilité de saisir la spécificité de la personne aimée est subtilement exprimée. On demeure dans le cadre hypothétique de la pensée qui est incapable de pénétrer objectivement la réalité. Toutefois, malgré cette impuissance d'atteindre l'aspect immuable de la nature d'Albertine, il reste l'évidence – en fait, la seule chose qui compte véritablement – que l'identité spirituelle du héros est façonnée par ces projections mentales qui portent le nom d'Albertine: « je devrais donner un nom différent à chacun des moi qui dans la suite pensa à Albertine » (lignes 10-11).

Les croyances que le narrateur invoque placent définitivement sa réflexion dans la sphère de la subjectivité, car le fait de croire s'oppose clairement à une certitude générale, en représentant une vérité personnelle et inconstante. L'amour investie la personne aimée avec les attentes de celui qui aime. Ces croyances, écrit Proust, « ont pourtant plus d'importance pour notre bonheur que tel être que nous le voyons » (7-8). Dans une relation amoureuse il y a toujours un apport psychologique qui finit par construire l'image de l'autre en la transformant dans un objet de fétichisme éphémère : « assignent sa grandeur passagère à l'être regardé » (9-10). De plus, l'intervention de la raison est nulle, parce que ces convictions échappent même à la perception – « remplissent notre âme à notre insu » (ligne 7) – en dévoilant l'adhésion inconsciente de l'individu à l'illusion. Un aspect symptomatique est le fait que la réflexion ne sort pas du contexte de l'apparence: « la croyance qui tel jour où je voyais Albertine régnait sur mon âme, en faisait l'atmosphère, l'aspect des êtres » (lignes 16-17). À l'instar de Kant, Proust pense que la *chose en soi* est inaccessible. C'est pour cela que l'objet de sa pensée est l'aspect des êtres – autrement dit, la superficie perceptible et enrichie par la faculté du héros de former des images sur la nature des autres –, et non pas leurs essence.

Du point de vue compositionnel, un procédé fréquemment utilisé par Proust est la reprise des syntagmes-chef, pour renforcer une idée à l'aide des mots qui jouent un rôle amplificateur : « je devrais donner un nom » (ligne 10); « je devrais plus encore donner un nom » (11); « je devrais donner toujours son nom » (16). Cette mise en relief se fait aussi par l'usage répété des présentatifs – « c'est (...) que/ ce sont (...) que/ il y

a » - qui, auprès de leur fonction indicatrice, assurent une sorte de symétrie syntaxique. Par exemple, dans le milieu de la phrase ample qui commence à la ligne 6: « Car c'est toujours à cela qu'il fallait revenir, à ces croyances (...) » on observe une construction analogue qui met en évidence la référence initiale, reprise non plus par un substantif, mais par des pronoms personnels : « car c'est à travers elles que nous le voyons, ce sont elles qui (...) » (8-9). En outre, les indicateurs qui introduisent l'explication – « parce qu' » (1); « non seulement (...) mais » (4-5); « car » (6); « pour être exact » (10); « plus encore » (11); « Mais surtout » (14) –, regardés au niveau global du texte, sont employés systématiquement en suivant la logique de la progression, c'est-à-dire que l'idée fondamentale autour de laquelle la méditation se construit est illustrée graduellement. Cette dynamique de la syntaxe, créée de façon expresse, relève la convergence entre la structure et le sens du texte qui renvoie à la conception sur la mobilité des êtres. Le changement perpétuel qui influence l'esprit du narrateur traduit la révélation que l'amour pour Albertine fait possible la connaissance du *moi*.

III. L'imaginaire maritime aux échos mythologiques

Un procédé stylistique utilisé par Proust avec prédilection et systématiquement est celui de l'explication par comparaisons. Le rapprochement de la figure d'Albertine de l'image fluide de la mer qui renvoie instantanément à l'idée de mobilité grâce au mouvement ondulatoire des vagues – « chacune de ces Albertine qui apparaissaient devant moi, jamais la même, comme (...) ces mers qui se succédaient et devant lesquelles, autre nymphe, elle se détachait. » (12-14) – souligne l'impossibilité de connaître exhaustivement l'être aimé, parce que ce caractère changeant fait échapper au héros l'essence de la personne sur laquelle il se focalise. L'identification d'Albertine avec une nymphe – divinité féminine qui incarne les forces de la nature – sert à élever l'image de la jeune fille et, en conséquence, à la mystifier. Les influences livresques occupent une place très importante dans la cristallisation du sentiment amoureux. Comme Swann qui, en associant Odette à Zéphora de Botticelli, finit par s'éprendre d'une femme fictive, le protagoniste, fasciné par les auteurs antiques, situe Albertine dans le sillage de la mythologie occidentale et superpose sa figure sur celle d'une naïade. On retrouve ainsi, dans ce changement d'optique, une forme de bovarysme : le refus d'accepter le contingent tel qu'il est et la volonté de l'embellir.

Le motif de la nuée qui change l'aspect des mers – pris comme terme concret de comparaison pour la croyance qui transforme les souvenirs – est également lié à l'idée de mystère qui enveloppe le group des jeunes filles : « nuée qui s'était reformée quelques jours plus tard quand je les avais connues, voilant leur éclat, s'interposant souvent entre

elles et mes yeux, opaque et douce, pareille à la Leucothea de Virgile» (lignes 22-24). La plasticité de cette métaphore renforce la conception selon laquelle la conscience filtre la réalité et empêche de voir sa véritable apparence. De telle manière, les croyances – les instruments optiques du *moi* – propagent sur les filles la vision subjective du héros, en éclipsant leur propre vérité.

La fin du fragment étonne le lecteur par la référence confuse au Virgile. Leucothea, qui est mentionnée furtivement dans *L'Eneide* sous le nom d'Ino, ne présente aucun caractère individualisé. L'œuvre de Virgile passe sous silence le destin et la spécificité de cette déesse marine. C'est surtout Ovide celui qui réalise dans ses *Métamorphoses* une description significative d'elle. Quand même l'auteur de la *Recherche du temps perdu* ne procède pas par ignorance, car il fait le choix de se rapporter au Virgile. La piste d'interprétation suivie l'intention auctoriale de faire une démonstration superlative de la force des croyances. L'affinité élective pour cet écrivain latin découvre la suggestion que la réalité a peu d'importance face à l'imaginaire : le héros-narrateur rejette l'idée de reprendre la figure consacrée de la femme devenue déesse et il brode, à partir d'une allusion trouvée dans *L'Eneide*, sa propre version du personnage mythique. Chez Virgile, l'inexistence des détails concernant Leucothea ouvre au protagoniste la possibilité de construire lui-même l'expression de cette divinité. Les attributs « opaque » et « douce » qu'il lui donne évoquent l'incapacité de voir clairement la substance véritable de l'autre, mais aussi la volupté de l'inconnu qui remue l'image du *moi*.

En conséquence, le fragment indiqué est fondamental pour la compréhension de l'œuvre proustienne dans son ensemble, parce qu'il est le couronnement d'une révélation à caractère épistémologique : Tout est fugace, l'essentiel reste obscur. La réflexion sur les figures changeantes d'Albertine débouche vers une dimension ontologique, en suscitant l'idée de la mobilité des êtres et du *moi*.

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Joyce, *Ulysses* and Postcolonialism

Ehsan Emami Neyshaburi*

Abstract:

Postcolonialism speaks of those people, who have been militarily, politically, and perforce culturally subjected to another nation. This branch of criticism is worth practicing because it plays a very important role at least in the lives of the oppressed all over the world by providing them with pain relief; a pain that still continues to gnaw away at the souls of a large colonized population. Although at the mention of post colonialism most people think of African and Caribbean countries and of black people, this paper signifies that the first and oldest British colony had been Ireland; that exploitation does not make a distinction between black and white. This paper is going to find traces of anti colonialism or decolonization in Joyce's *Ulysses* and to show that how using the colonizer's language, the Irish novelist implicitly writes back to the empire and what extent Joyce's personality has been under the influence of post colonialism. The paper also reiterates that although Joyce regarded Irish Nationalism and Irish Literary Revival as useless and failing, he never surrendered to the language and culture imposed by the colonizer.

Keywords: Colonialism, Ireland, Joyce, Postcolonialism, *Ulysses*

Introduction

Colonialism began when some European powers thought of plundering other nations of their human and natural resources in the late fifteenth century. To discover and dominate the New World Spain, England, Portugal, France, and the Netherlands started to compete with one another. At last, it was England that emerged as the biggest imperial power and managed to capture and gain control of many countries in almost all the other continents and it became a famous saying that 'the sun never sets in the British Empire'. It was especially at the time of Elizabeth the great that England started using navigation technologies to gain the upper hand in this fierce competition. In 1580, Francis Drake had already travelled round the world as Magellan had managed to do it half of a century earlier. Just a few years later in 1583, Humphrey Gilbert accompanied by Walter Raleigh reached the Newfoundland (America) and a bit later Raleigh established some settlements in that land. It should be noticed too, that the explosive growth of the printing industry helped colonialism develop after Gutenberg because it caused

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people to get familiar with literature and intricate maps that cartographers made of the New World. Colonialism came to an end in 1947 when India gained independence and the other colonies followed the same path. Eventually, neocolonialism came into existence which is a modern version of the very colonialism. Colonialism, in most cases associated with violence and disruption, was out of keeping with modern ways of life in the twentieth century and by the same token, colonial powers concocted novel methods of colonization. Tyson briefly refers to some of these modern methods such as establishing puppet regimes who support economic and political interests of a power or using covert military intervention by financing or giving military aid to the troops who prove to be loyal to that power (2006: 425). In other words “capitalism transforms its relationship to its colonies from an old-fashioned imperialist control to market penetration” (Rice, 1996: 319). After a colonial power economically dominates a culture, cultural imperialism comes into being (Tyson, 2006: 425). In this situation values, customs, and above all language of the imperial power replace those of the colonized culture and therefore, postcolonialism is sometimes said to be synonymous with cultural imperialism. Accordingly, because the colonizer and the colonized possessed two different sets of values, the colonized started resisting the colonizer and naturally, “decolonization historically went hand in hand with neocolonialism” (Rice, 1996: 298). After colonialism came postcolonialism. But there is a problem with the term postcolonialism because it “implies that colonialism is a thing of the past. In reality, it is not” (Tyson, 2006: 425).

At the mention of postcolonialism, people automatically think of British or French African and Caribbean colonies; of black people or people of different races. Regarding race, culture, and progress of these mainly white countries, few people think of Canada, Australia or New Zealand as postcolonial countries let alone the United States of America as the only superpower in the world. Basically, it is still debatable whether these should be considered postcolonial especially when many people in these countries may assert that for the time being there is no big difference between them and the mother country, England, because they are all Anglo-Saxon countries and share the same culture, race, and language. If this is so, the division of countries into First World, Second World, Third World, and Fourth World countries and subsuming Australia, Canada, and New Zealand under the category of Second World countries and England and America under the category of First World countries must be controversial, too. There are some big differences between the so called settler colonies, that is, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, on the one hand, and the other British colonies on the other. African and Caribbean colonies were overrun and

annexed to the British Empire mainly by taking military action but people from England and other European countries migrated to and settled in settler colonies. As Gina Wisker says, “Settlers, however ... settle and stay, changing the overall rule and ways of life in the country in which they have settled, making it their own” (2007: 5). Therefore, it stands to reason that in settler colonies whose population is mostly white, as opposed to the other colonies, race does not play an important role. That is to say, the issues of race and ‘otherness’ which are always salient in postcolonial discussions about African and Caribbean postcolonial countries, are not usually taken into account when it comes to settler colonies as the writers of *The Empire Writes Back* also emphasize: “This is especially the case, though, in settler colonies where difference is only inscribed (apparently) in subtle changes of language and where the absence of an alternative pre-colonial metaphysic makes the assertion of ‘Otherness’ more difficult” (Ashcroft, 1994: 137). Wisker mentions another difference between settler colonies and the other group of colonies: “They differ from other colonized people because initially they were the colonizers, though latterly as they develop independently to settle, they were subject to colonial rule” (2007: 62). It is axiomatic that people in African and Caribbean postcolonial countries possess a pre-colonial culture that sometimes melts into, merges with or most of the time opposes the culture imposed by the colonizer but such a discussion about settler colonies is out of the question. So, in comparison with other British colonies “Settler colonies could at least have the temporary illusion of a filial relationship with that dominating culture, whilst the colonies of intervention and exploitation had traditional, pre-colonial cultures which continued to coexist with the new imperial forms” (Ashcroft, 1994: 26).

Ireland

Of course the situation of Ireland is different because as opposed to these settler colonies, this country possesses a pre-colonial culture and language that challenge those of the metropolitan and in this case it resembles African and Caribbean colonies. Just like settler colonies, people hardly think of Ireland as a colony because the population is white and the country comes within the scope of British Isles and the name ‘British’ shows that Ireland has historically been closely associated with Britain. As a result, Ireland is exceptional given its geographical contiguity (Whelan, 2003: 94) and also the country’s long history with England (Said, 1993: 148). Accordingly, some believe that Ireland was once a colony (Pordzik, 2001: 332; Lloyd, 1993: 125; Graham, 2001: 93; and Said, 1993: 220) and some others such as John Mitchel and Arthur Griffith argue that it should not be treated as a colony because this

categorization will lower this civilized European country to the level of non-white Asian or African colonial subjects (Cleary, 2003: 27). And still some others describe this exceptionality as “white postcoloniality” and “Semicolonial” (Orr, 2008: 8-9). However, “Ireland, after about 1530, is progressively redefined as a crucial and strategic springboard for colonialism ... The island also becomes one of the epic battlegrounds in the struggle between Reformation and Counter-Reformation Europe and is transformed from a ‘kingdom’ to a fully-fledged colony by Britain through these processes” (Barry, 2001: 158). As it happens in all colonies, a social revolution occurred in Ireland which replaced Irish social, economic and political structures of late sixteenth century with an English social system. Then, as opposed to many European countries, Ireland became a colonized country rather than a colonizing European country (Barry, 158). In fact, Ireland is Britain’s first and oldest colony. 1000 years after the Romans had captured and modernized England, the Irish Kings were still fighting each other for the position of ‘High King’. One of them (in 1169) made the egregious mistake of asking England’s Henry II, the current Anglo Norman king, to interfere on his side. Henry was famous as militarily the most powerful King and the largest land owner in the whole of Europe. Simply, he decided to annex Ireland to his already huge Empire and parcelled out the Irish land between his barons. After the Reformation, Ireland that was ruled by a Protestant England rejected any form of Protestant Christianity and remained Catholic and this altercation caused many clashes to ensue between the two countries because from then on the English thought of the Irish as their potential enemies and the Pope’s puppets who helped by Catholic France and Spain might conspire against England. Charles I had already infuriated the Irish because he had levied heavy taxes on Ireland and after he was beheaded in 1649, the Irish who had rebelled against England were brutally suppressed by Oliver Cromwell, Charles’s successor. According to Ohlmeyer all these imperialist endeavours were upheld by the British as civilizing missions to a backward Ireland with Roman Catholic beliefs (2004: 32).

When Charles II died, James then a Catholic king, took power and the Irish had hope that this change would bring about a Catholic revival both in England and Ireland but unfortunately for Ireland William of Orange, the Dutch Protestant husband of James II’s daughter, Mary ,in 1690 defeated James in Ireland to which James had fled and consequently, the Irish lost hope. In 1798 the Irish inspired by the French and American Revolutions and supported by a French militia tried to get rid of the British but it again proved to be an abortive attempt. At last, the English convinced the Irish MPs to dissolve the Parliament and under the Act of Union (Jan. 1, 1801), Ireland became a wholly integrated part of the UK and from then on the Irish Protestant ruling classes, had seats in the British Houses of Parliament at Westminster. Irish independence

owes much to Daniel O’Connell (1775-1875). He studied law in London and was called to the Irish bar. In 1797, he joined the revolutionary Society of United Irishmen but refused to take part in the Irish Rebellion of the following year. After the Act of Union dissolved the Irish Parliament, he insisted that the British Parliament abolish the anti-Catholic laws and represent the people of Ireland. He founded the Catholic Association, which attracted so many members that the government could no longer suppress it and this establishment led to Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and O’Connell took a seat at Westminster. This achievement encouraged O’Connell to try to repeal the Act of Union. With Queen Victoria as the Queen of Ireland, he sought for an independent Ireland to govern itself. But it was too radical for the British government to acquiesce. O’Connell was incarcerated and after release from prison his health failed and died. Because the Irish were Catholic and lived in poor economic condition, the British were so inattentive to them that they let a million Catholics starve to death in the four year Potato Famine of 1845-49 in Ireland. Seamus Heaney beautifully describes this famous famine and the British role in it in another story. *For The Commander Of The ‘Eliza’* relates a real military event. ‘Eliza’ is the name of a British warship whose ‘patrol off West Mayo’ was ‘Routine.’ One day the crew discovers a ‘rowboat’ in which there are six starving Irish men who urgently demanded food:

We saw piled in the bottom of their craft Six grown men with gaping mouths and eyes Bursting the sockets like spring onions in drills. Six wrecks of bone and pallid, tautened skin.

There was ‘shortage’ in Ireland but not on ‘Eliza’: “We’d known about the shortage but on board/They always kept us right with flour and beef.” Above all, they “had no mandate to relieve distress.” So “I had to refuse food ... And cleared off. Less incidents the better,” the commander says, leaving the men to fend for themselves and die. At last the commander reports this event to the ‘Inspector General’, ‘Sir James Dombrain’ who apparently “urged free relief/for famine victims ... And earned tart reprimand ...” from the authorities:

Let natives prosper by their own exertions;Who could not swim might go ahead and sink (1966: 34).

In fact, as opposed to Bartlett’s claim that before the Act of Union, Ireland was obviously a colonial possession being deprived of free trade within the British Empire (2004: 67), its relationship with the metropolitan, even after the Union, was not of course an equal one and England remained the dominant power (Kenny, 2004: 14) because Ireland had been “unevenly assimilated ... [into] aspects of British culture” (Lenon, 2004: 168) and by the same token, the country had not managed to develop its agricultural system into an industrial one (Foster,

1989: 321). Catholic Ireland finally gained independence from the Protestant England but the Presbyterian Irish majority in the north voted to remain within the British Empire. Today the Catholic South, the Republic of Ireland, has joined the European Community but the Catholic minority in the north, still part of the UK, keeps up a steady pressure, sometimes violent, for a united Ireland.

Joyce

Postcolonial writing by definition is “writing which resists colonialism and its power politics, produced mainly after the colonial period” (Wisker, 2007: 7). This resistance is, of course, differently put up by different postcolonial writers. As an extremely maverick person, James Joyce in an unusual and singular manner fought against post colonialism on two fronts: England and the Roman Church. As a matter of fact, toward the end of 1902 Joyce decided that the intellectual atmosphere of Ireland ruled by the British army and the Roman Church was too stifling. So, he went to Paris, where he intended to study medicine. He returned to Dublin in April 1903 because of the fatal illness of his mother. On his return home Joyce met Nora Barnacle, a girl with whom he fell in love. Joyce was opposed to marriage (they finally married in 1931) and as they were unable to live openly together in Ireland, they left it and first settled in Trieste, moving to Zurich during World War I and to Paris in 1920. Notwithstanding, “exile did not mean escape but a widening of political consciousness; it did not mean indifference but preserving his intimacy with his country by intensifying his quarrel with her” (Manganiello, 1980: 41). Although many people thought of Joyce as a rootless, politically neutral, and thoroughly cosmopolitan writer with a callous disregard for the Revival, almost at the turn of the century they started to view him as anti colonial: “Joyce may oscillate between Ireland and Europe ... but his modernist narration of Irish history in *Ulysses* is ... equivalent to, if not consanguineous with, the project of the Revival” (Flannery, 2009: 78). Joyce resisted colonialism in his own special way.

In ‘Telemachus’, the first chapter of *Ulysses*, three characters are introduced to the reader: Stephen Dedalus (one of the main protagonists in the novel), Buck Mulligan (a medical student), and Haines (an English man from Oxford who studies Gaelic language in Dublin). They live on the stair head of the Martello tower rented by Stephen. Haines as an English man symbolizes English capitalism that has been imposed on Ireland. Joyce uses this character to ironically crystallize how the British have destroyed the Irish culture. In the morning of the day June 16, 1904 in which *Ulysses* is narrated, an old Irish milk woman brings milk to the Martello Tower for Stephen and his friends. Haines speaks Gaelic to her but she does not understand: “Is it French you are speaking, sir? The old

woman said to Haines” (1992: 16). When she is told that it is Irish, the milk woman is stupefied and asks whether Haines is from west. Buck Mulligan ironically notifies her: “he is English ... and he thinks we ought to speak Irish in Ireland” (16). Joyce implies that even an old woman who belongs to previous generation does not know Gaelic language let alone the Irish youth such as Stephen. It was for the same reason that Joyce rejected

the claims of an Irish cultural nationalism. The young Joyce found the latter especially the recovery of the Gaelic language, occultism, and folklore parochial and backward-looking ... Joyce supplemented his studies with visits to the Capel Street Library in Dublin, whose new books introduced him to the brilliant Continental literature then published abroad. This reading provided an alternative to the imperialistic inflections of the English poetic tradition as Joyce would later represent it in *Ulysses* (Norris, 1998: 4).

Nationalism has always been the first step towards independence but unlike William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and John Millington Synge, Joyce did not believe in Irish Nationalism and did not take part in Irish Literary Revival, too. As mentioned earlier, to extricate Ireland from the tyranny of the English culture, Joyce looked down on Irish culture as the vanquished and instead looked up to the Continent as the source of power and inspiration. It is mostly pertinent that Haines suffers from a kind of hysterical nightmare in which he sees a black panther. This black panther symbolizes destruction as Buck Mulligan later in *Ulysses* thinks about Haines: “Ah! Destruction! The black panther” (Joyce, 1992:539)! In this way Joyce shows that the English capitalism has subverted the Irish language and culture. In addition, Stephen calls himself “a server of a servant” (12), which spells out his relationship to Ireland, a country that is itself a servant to two foreign tyrants: England and Rome. To England, the dominant culture, because Ireland is a British colony and to Rome because Ireland’s main religion is Catholicism. Symbolizing Ireland, Molly too is a slave to her “so English” (905) lover and the lover calls her “my Irish beauty” (886).

There are extracts in *Ulysses* that clearly show how Catholicism and capitalism impinge on Stephen’s character. Mulligan always tortures Stephen by reminding him of his poor mother whose request (when she was on her deathbed) that he pray for her like a Christian, was refused by Stephen. One day Stephen goes to Mulligan’s house. Mulligan’s mother asks him who is in his room and he cruelly answers: “*O, it’s only Dedalus whose mother is beastly dead*” (Joyce, 1992: 8). In ‘Circe’ Joyce reiterates symbolically the brutality of English capitalism imposed on Ireland. In the brothel district Stephen states “But in here it is I must kill the priest and the

king” (688). Private Carr thinks that Stephen is menacing King Edward VII and attacks on him. Actually, Stephen is repeating the adage that Ireland is the captive of the double tyrants of the Roman Catholic Church and Britain. More symbolism is also apparent in Carr’s attack on Stephen. The blow represents English oppression of a nearly defenseless Ireland. Martello tower, too, reminds Stephen of his thralldom to the British Empire as Mulligan harks back to “Billy pitt” who “had them built ... when the French were on the sea” (20) referring to the French who backed the Irish movements against the British.

Frantz Fanon stresses that the imitation of Europe is not the way forward for the colonized nations of Africa and other parts of the globe but is the working out of new schemes on the basis of the unity of humankind: “For Europe, for ourselves, and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work on new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man” (Habib, 2005: 744). It might be true for Joyce because Joyce never tried to imitate the language of the centre in his writings; instead, producing a new language and style he strived to rival it in a completely new way. By the same token, as Habib says he extricated himself from the ties of religion, race, and family to affiliate himself with broader visions of the world (746). Joyce viewed *Robinson Crusoe* as “the epitome of the English imperialist” and entering into dialogue with Defoe, he defeated him as some people such as Andrew Gibson and Virginia Woolf regard *Ulysses* as a counterattack proving its superiority over the English literary tradition (Innes, 2010: 59). Rejection and subversion are two responses to the dominance of the imperial language. Some people like Ngugiwa Thiong’o believe that in postcolonial countries the imperial language should never be used and instead they should use their own original language to annihilate the colonial rule and this is the only way for them to regain their true identity that colonialism has already destroyed. Some other people like Wole Soyinka believe that by using the imperial language in a novel way, they can manage to appropriate and adapt it to suit the demands and requirements of the society in which they live and in this way they can better subvert the political power of the standard language (Ashcroft, 1995: 283-284). Then, ‘English’ is the standard British English inherited from the Empire and ‘English’ is what the language has changed into in postcolonial countries (Ashcroft, 1994: 8). To replace ‘English’ with ‘English’ postcolonial people must go through two distinct processes: abrogation and appropriation. First, they must deny the privilege of ‘English’ and the dominance of the imperial power over the means of communication. Second, they must appropriate and reconstruct ‘English’ to their benefit in such a way that it gets across their ideas and meanings and also fulfils their society’s demands and requirements and becomes different from the standard language (Ashcroft, 1994: 38-39). It seems that in *Ulysses*,

Joyce has already gone through these processes. Look at some examples of the ‘English’ that Joyce has used in *Ulysses*:

“Will? You? I. Want. You. To” (1992: 369).

“Luring. Ah, Alluring” (355).

Of the following examples, the first shows the sound of the sea and also the sound of water smashing on the rocks. The second reflects the sound of Bloom’s farting:

“seesoo, hrss, rsseeiss, oos ... In cups of rocks it slops: flop, slop, slap ...” (62)

“Ppprrpffrrppff” (376).

And in the following examples he coins the words *Sherlockholmesing* and *cowily*. These examples have been derived from the last chapter devoted to Molly. The noise of a train has woken her up; she is speaking to herself, is still drowsy and is stretching herself:

“taking stock of the individual in front of him andSherlockholmesing him up ...” (735)

“a standing woman ... pisses cowily” (578)

And in this one Joyce has put a few words next to each other producing no distance:

“For her birthday perhaps. June julyaugseptember eighth” (214).

Above all, as “Allusion can perform the same function of registering cultural distance in the post-colonial text” (Ashcroft, 1994: 57), Joyce’s style is so highly allusive that the critic can hardly subsume him under the category of ‘British’. Although, Joyce rejected Irish Nationalism and Irish Literary Revival, personally he was highly nationalist and his use of language shows especially to the metropolitan “that the site of the shared discourse-the literary text- is not the site of a shared mental experience” (Ashcroft, 1994: 59).

Many postcolonial texts ‘rewrite’ canonical stories to control the means of interpretation and communication. In other words, they ‘write back’ to the centre of empire to crystallize that the authoritative system in western civilization precludes ‘Other’ development and suppresses or annihilates forms of ‘Otherness’ (Ashcroft, 1995:97-8). A good example is Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* which rewrites *Jean Eyre* to revive ‘the woman in the attic’ form. This novel, in fact, shows how the English husband oppresses and drives her wife to the ‘attic’ and gets rid of her to possess her money and property. To borrow some words from Harold Bloom, like many other ‘strong’ postcolonial writers, James Joyce suffers a kind of ‘anxiety of influence’ which makes him rewrite in an ‘Oedipal struggle’ ‘canonical dead ones’ (Innes, 2010: 73-74). In a very different way, James Joyce not only rewrites but also parodies Homer’s *Odyssey*, a central text in western civilization in which gods, like the colonizer oppress, exploit, destruct, annihilate, segregate, send to heaven

or hell for no good reason. *Ulysses*, just like *The Odyssey*, begins with the son's (Telemachus's-Stephen's) quest for a missing father and soon turns to the hero's (Odyssey's-Bloom's) quest to displace a rival for his wife's affections and resume his proper place in his home (Odyssey slays the suitors and Bloom wants his breakfast in bed, which leads to Molly's 'Yes' to him and symbolizes Boylan's defeat). By common consent, readers of *Ulysses* refer to each episode by a Homeric title. Thus the first episode is known as 'Telemachus', the second is 'Nestor', the third is 'Proteus', the fourth 'Calypso', and so on. As Grose reports, Joyce himself gave the Homeric titles to the chapters but in the final printing he removed them because he did not wish the parallel to be overemphasized and be a distracting influence on the reader (1975: 50).

Displacement is a major feature in postcolonialism. The colonized has lost their home and cannot come to terms with the new place and new culture, too. Therefore, postcolonial identity is a hybrid of native and colonial cultures because as Ashcroft asserts, monolithic perceptions are almost impossible in all postcolonial cultures (1994: 37). "Home is 'back there', but can no longer be home; this new place of residence and its community may not be desired as home or be willing to open itself up to the asylum-seeker" (Wilson, 2010: 133). As a matter of fact, identity in postcolonial societies is constructed by the difference between the colonized and the metropolitan (Ashcroft, 1994: 167). In actuality, home is "a place where you speak to a community and it speaks back to you" (Wilson, 2010: 133). Seemingly, Joyce feels at home neither in Ireland nor abroad. The Irish community does not react properly. He sent his works home to be published but the publishers refused. Joyce's letters to various publishers divulge the difficult labors it was necessary for him to undertake when he wanted to publish something. In a letter to a publisher (Mr. Cerf who eventually agreed to publish *Ulysses*) Joyce poignantly complains: "Publishers and printers alike seemed to agree among themselves ... not to publish anything of mine as I wrote it" (Joyce, 1961: xiii). Once he wrote this poem to take revenge:

This lovely land that always sent Her writers and artists to banishment
And in spirit of Irish fun Betrayed her own leaders, one by one (Joyce, 1971, 42).

And abroad it was only Ezra Pound, the eminent poet and Joyce's friend, who helped him publish his works. A critic has pointed it out in this way: "Pound understood the difficulty of financing modernistic writing whose formal traits-simple, direct language enriched by resonant international erudition and cultural allusion-made it difficult to market to a general public" (Norris, 1998: 10).

Conclusion

When it comes to settler colonies and countries like Ireland, the practice of postcolonialism becomes more complex and difficult because of the close affinities between the colonizer and the colonized in these countries. This complexity becomes apparent when on the one hand as a general consensus some believe that Ireland is not a postcolonial nation although some critics cite the poet W. B. Yeats as an anticolonial nationalist and on the other hand, some others reiterate that Ireland comes within the scope of postcolonial nations and its literature might be examined in terms of contemporary postcolonial criticism. As Ireland's deep affinities with British culture is obvious and she is part of the British Isles, postcolonialism can help widen the scope of analysis for the country's identity and culture and bring about a discourse between the colonizer and the colonized which leads to identity formation, an identity which of course is not British. Undoubtedly, the more the colonizer imposes or encroaches, the more the colonized resists or decolonizes. Although, it is impossible to completely reject postcolonial discourses, postcolonial writing aims at using the language and culture of the colonizer against him that Joyce beautifully performs this task. According to Glanville "migration provides a model for resisting essentialism and cultural nationalism, and hybridity and plurality can challenge monolithic cultures and religions" (Wilson, 2010: 130) and this is precisely the same thing that Joyce did in his life and depicted in his *Ulysses*. Postcolonialism has helped the oppressed nations regard themselves as separate from and independent of the colonizer and has offered a beacon of hope to these people.

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The Conception of the World in Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales

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Abstract:

The present study aims to highlight some themes, directions and ethical aspects revealed by Andersen's fairy tales, the conception of the world, our existence and its meaning. Andersen is a romantic who sees childhood as a pure, but fleeting and sometimes tragic age. Some critics spoke of metaphysical themes and his desire to draw the ideal of humanity but they also offer us a pretext for analysis and meditation.

Keywords: Life, Themes, Motives, Morality, Andersen's fairy tales

Children's literature addresses topics from all areas of knowledge, of experience and subjective or objective human reality, synthesized from different perspectives, on certain general dominants (childhood, adolescence, nature and living things, time, history, family, school, love, magic) and particular (based on classical values such as modesty, generosity, justice, humanity, freedom, knowledge, courage, diligence, pride, stupidity, greed, generosity, work, wickedness, but also destiny, time, fear, abandonment, hunger, social indifference or religion). Especially in the modern period, the themes and the motives have diversified, addressing less comfortable or common issues, such as physical or moral violence, psychological – humiliation, discrimination, threats, hatred, jealousy, death, war, terrorism, racism, feminism or drugs.

In the following, we will approach the work of one of the legendary authors of children's literature: Hans Christian Andersen. This year, on April 2, we celebrate 216 years since his birth. After a life full of deprivation, humiliation and suffering, the writer received full gratitude towards the end of his life, and today his fairy tales are known and valued worldwide. His birthday is celebrated as International Children's Book Day. In addition to his work as a novelist, poet and playwright, Andersen also worked as a storyteller who, together with Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Hauff or Creangă, brought him the literary consecration of the fairy tale. From the first edition of his fairy tales, Andersen stated:

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as a child, my greatest joy was to listen to stories, some of which have remained as vivid in my memory today, others have faded, and others I completely forgot them (...) the fairy tale is the widest field, it extends from Antiquity to the multicolored illustrations of the legend, it encompasses popular literature and literary works” (preface to the 1835 edition).

The fairy tale is a plea for eternal human values, goodness and beauty, addressing to all the ages, and, by repeating elements of compositional structure, through the linearity of the characters, it becomes an exceptional literary material accessible to young children. The fairy tale – wrote G. Călinescu – “is a work of literary creation with a special genesis, a reflection of life in fabulous ways... According to its own procedures of composition and poetic presentation, the fairy tale is a vast genre, far surpassing the novel, being mythology, epic, science, moral observation, etc.” (Călinescu, 1965: 9). “Each people processes the existing themes in the fairy tale according to the geographical environment to which it belongs, the cultural tradition and the social life” (Banța, 2014: 11).

Andersen’s creation is composed, on the one hand, of stories that capitalize on folkloric elements (such as *The tinder box*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *Little Claus and Big Claus*, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, *The Swineherd*, *What the old man does is always right*) and represents the beginning of his creation, and, on the other hand, his own creations (*Little Mermaid*, *Swans*, *The Daisy* etc.). Florica Bodiștean emphasizes that Andersen “is not interested in the fidelity to the popular text, which can be seen, for example, in Brothers Grimm’s collection”, but in “the humanization of the characters’ features (...) and the constant adoption of the child’s perspective on his world values”. (Bodiștean, 2007: 210).

As a child, Andersen came into contact with the popular imagination and you can see this sensitivity to popular tradition, which integrates elements, mentalities or isolated details. Unlike the other storytellers in the world, Andersen does not take the fairy tale as such, his style is alive, full of movement and imagination. The folklorist Claude Gaignebet emphasizes, in Andersen’s case, this originality, his flavor and uniqueness of the stories. The originality of Andersen’s fairy tales lies in the use of spoken language, in the combination of the imaginary with the universal taken from popular legends. His works are singular also through their action, through the presentation of ordinary life. In a fairy tale, through the voice of a heroine, the author says: “In reality, in fact, the most charming fairy tales appear”. Andersen accurately endowed inanimate objects with human features, while opening to his reader an unknown, mysterious and immeasurable world,

awakening “good feelings” in flowers and trees, in the silver coin and the street lamp.

Literary criticism has seen in Andersen’s fairy tales more some sketches or stories, “in which reality – present through frequent forays into his own biography - is intertwined with the fantastic generated by a fruitful imagination, stimulated in turn by a high humanitarian spirit, a strong feeling of solidarity with the poor” (Popa, 1965: 23). In some fairy tales, we find aspects of the author’s biography. According to the researchers, the story *The Ugly Duckling* reflects Andersen’s feelings of alienation, the author himself acknowledging this reflection of his own life. As a boy, he was teased for his look and strong voice, which often made him feel isolated, and later wrote a story about a boy named Hans, whom he laughed at as a child. Like the ugly duckling, Andersen became a “swan” only later in life – a world-renowned cult writer with high-ranking friends.

There is also evidence that Andersen placed his characters in desperate and hopeless situations to reflect his own personal traumas, which included growing up in poverty, losing his father, and the need to work in a factory at the age of 11 for maintaining his mother. The literary critic Paul Binding said that the long-running appeal of his stories, however, goes beyond their authenticity. “It’s true, some of Andersen’s most famous stories – *The Ugly Duckling*, *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, even *The Little Mermaid* – are dramatizations or sublimations of their own dilemmas, but they wouldn’t impress us if they didn’t overwhelm the staff - in language, in observation and in details and in a complicated but discreet structure - to remain alone as perfectly crafted artifacts of universal appeal”, wrote Binding for *The Guardian*.

The reality of his life with all its aspects – exaggerated susceptibility, shyness, fits of mysticism, the need for love, loneliness – all these are found in literary creation, in fairy tale characters such as *She was good for nothing*, *What Old Johanne told*, *Holger Danske*, *The red shoes*, *The Little Match Girl*, *The lovers*, *The little Mermaid*, *Under the willow tree* and *The Nightingale*.

We are often asked how we can form the foundations or principles of **the conception of the world** for preschoolers or schoolchildren. First of all, through fairy tales, folk or literary, through the deep wisdom that it reveals. Compared to some works from children’s literature, which intend to amuse or inform, the fairy tale manages to stimulate, nurture, develop the child’s personality, to facilitate access to the deep meaning of existence. In Andersen’s fairy tales we can meet, as in life, great people, simple and honest people, rich and poor, happy and miserable, satisfied and eternally dissatisfied, but also biblical heroes, characters from the Koran, characters from the

myths of ancient Egypt, or Tristan and Isolde and many others. The values that the heroes aspire to are the Truth, the Goodness and the Beauty, elements on which the spiritual life is based.

Even if they do not depict the specific conditions of life in a modern society, because they were conceived long before, fairy tales “talk about the inner life of a human being and about solutions to get out of delicate situations, solutions valid in any society (...) the child will learn to relate to these specific conditions, provided that internal resources allow it” – says Bruno Bettelheim (1976: 9). The psychologist analyzes, in his study, the emotional, symbolic and therapeutic importance of the Brothers Grimm stories. Starting from his ideas, we can notice a series of similar aspects in reading some fairy tales by H.Chr.Andersen.

The conception of the world, the permanent admiration for Good and Beautiful, is especially visible in the tale *The stone of a wise man*, impressive for its rich content in symbols and wisdom. The descriptions of the Tree of the Sun and the castle are loaded with symbolic elements. In an attempt to retell the fairy tale, we notice that we always omit something. Each row is full of deep meaning. The fairy tale begins with the description of the Sun Tree, at the top of which rises a crystal castle. From its windows a panorama opens in all four corners of the world, and in the walls

Here the whole world was reflected on the walls. One could see everything that happened, so there was no need to read newspapers; there were no newspapers here, anyway. Everything could be seen in living pictures, if one wanted to or was able to see it all; for too much is too much, even for the wisest man. And the wisest of all men lived here.

In the most secret chamber of that castle lay earth’s greatest treasure – the Book of Truth. Page after page, the Wise Man had read it through. Every man may read in this book, but only parts of it; to many and eye the letters seem to fade, so that the words cannot even be spelled; on some pages the writing is so pale that they seem like blank leaves. But the wiser a man becomes, the more he can read; and the wisest men read the most.¹

But the last pages of the Book of Truth – Life After Death – remained for the wise white pages, and in order to read them, he had to find the „philosopher’s stone”.

¹For all the translations of the fairy tales, https://andersen.sdu.dk/vaerk/hersholt/index_e.html, accessed on the 25th of march 2021.

The wise man had five children: four sons and a daughter, beautiful, gentle and smart, but blind. The father spoke to the children about *the good*,

the true, and the beautiful, and explained that these three clung together in the world, and that under the pressure they endured they hardened into a precious stone, purer than the water of a diamond - a splendid jewel of value to God Himself, whose brightness outshone all things; this was called the "Stone of the Wise Man". (...) He told them that, just as man could gain knowledge of the existence of God by seeking it, so was it within the power of man to gain proof that such a jewel as the "Stone of the Wise Man" existed. This explanation would have been beyond the understanding of other children, but these children could grasp it, and in time other children, too, will learn to understand its meaning.

The sons go out into the world one by one to find the stone of the wise man, but fail as a result of their own weaknesses and the devil's interference and they risk losing themselves. Then the daughter goes in search of the stone, but first of all, she took the fork and spun a thread

thinner than the spider's web; human eyes could not distinguish the separate threads in it, so fine were they. She had moistened it with her tears, and it was as strong as a rope. She arose; her decision was made - the dream must become a reality.

It was still night, and her father was sleeping. She pressed a kiss on his hand, and then, taking her distaff, fastened the end of the thread to her father's castle. But for this, in her blindness she would never have been able to find her way home; she must hold fast to that thread and trust neither to herself nor to others. From the Tree of the Sun she broke off four leaves; these she would entrust to the winds to bring to her brothers as letters of greeting in case she should not meet them out there in the wide world.

The girl finally finds the stone and returns home to her father:

Even to the house of my father, she repeated. "Yes, the place of the jewel is on this earth, and I shall bring with me more than the promise of it. I can feel its glow; in my closed hand it swells larger and larger. Every grain of truth, however fine it was, which the wind whirled toward me, I caught up and treasured; I let penetrate into it the fragrance of the beautiful, of which there is so much in the world, even for the blind. To the first I added the sound of the beating heart, doing good. I bring only dust with me, but still it is the dust of the jewel we sought, and it is in ample quantity. I have my whole hand full of it!" Then she stretched forth her hand toward her father. She was home.

She had traveled there with the swiftness of thoughts in flight, having never let go of the invisible thread leading to home.

The hope for a better world, without lies and injustice, in which man, freed from all that is bad and ugly, to always be good and merciful and to fully enjoy every day and every hour of life, is the basis many of Andersen's fairy tales. His fairy tales address various themes and motives, some with social or moral implications, loaded with symbols of the most diverse (kindness, cleverness, modesty, intelligence, courage or immortality, real life or beyond death), some researchers have even debated aspects of the reception of some of the fairy tales by children, wondering if Andersen is necessarily an author for children or also for adults. The fairy tales sometimes hide subtle meanings and significances. Through his works, he conveys explicit and implicit meanings, addressing the human personality, which also touches the "immature" mind of a child, and the sophisticated mind of an adult.

Nicolae Manolescu sees Andersen's stories "bitter and ruthless", and *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* "Andersen's most ruthless story". The critic notices in Andersen a taste for tragic and absurd, and the chance occupies a central place. The Danish writer is "obsessed with two reasons: the aggression against a candid and unarmed human being (like, by the way, most of Andersen's favorite heroes) – the soldier, *Thumbelina*, the ugly duckling, Hans and Gretchen or the little mermaid". Following the narrative thread of the stories, Nicolae Manolescu emphasizes the event that "suddenly takes them out of the familiar space *in the world*: and what a world! At every step a danger lurks. They live in insecurity and fear. The bullets of the hunters rain around the poor duck. A rat holds the path of the soldier. An icy princess steals Hans from home with his sleigh. The fragility of the "heroes" also results from the contrast of their nature with that of the aggressors. These are evil, selfish or downright hideous beings" (Manolescu, 2006: 99-102).

"At some point, Andersen's heroes begin to imagine that they live a nightmare: their travels, their adventures, their destiny are a nightmare - which usually culminates in a kidnapping. This is the second reason for Andersen's literature: the reason for the sequestration". The world is a trap in which the heroes are thrown, they hit by means of a false benefactor: the grandmother, the frog, the snow princess, the mouse. Kidnapped, confiscated, the heroes enter places that seem to have no way out. The fear has hallucinatory and grotesque forms. The lair of the rat, the house of the grandmother, the castle of the Snow Princess or of the emperor who wants to listen to the nightingale represent real "camps", fields, concentration universes.

The little mermaid is not constrained by anyone, but she arrives in such a place, out of love for the prince. He is the “agent of evil”. This closed space, found in Andersen’s world, is best seen in *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*.

N. Manolescu sees in Andersen a “lonely and fearful man, haunted by obsessions like the ones he blames on his heroes, a misanthrope who sees rude bourgeois everywhere, a romantic nature terrified by the traps of practical existence”. (Manolescu, 2011: 99-102)

Andersen examines and convincingly illustrates the spiritual strength of fragile, limp, delicate little girls – like Gerda of the *Snow Queen*, Eliza of the *Swans*, whose heroism and selfless sacrifice overshadow even the actions of powerful heroes, for their souls are pierced by a great love and selflessness who seduces the hearts of millions of children. The fairy tale contributes to the development of fantasy, of artistic taste, to the formation and strengthening of confidence in the triumph of good” (Banța, 2014: 9).

What is important is that his fairy tales, even the saddest or most tragic, address important and real themes, which possess the amazing quality of giving hope and healing the soul. These works have a peculiarity not found in other works for children – the real representations acquire an exceptionally poetic character, they are touching and influential. The heroes find a way in life, they find value in a chaotic world. The children find themselves, in a humanity, somewhere between their ideals, their fantasies about life or what life should be like and the reality of their situation – disappointment and suffering.

In his study, *The Uses of Enchantment. The Meaning and importance of Fairy Tales* (1976), the psychologist Bruno Bettelheim analyzes some stories for children in terms of Freudian psychoanalysis, stating that fairy tales help children overcome existential stalemate, emphasizing that “one-dimensional information feeds the mind one-dimensional, and the real world does not it is exclusively bright” (Bruno Bettelheim, 1976: 13). “Without such fantasies, the child fails to get to know his monster better and is not offered any suggestions on how he can gain control of it. As a result, the child remains helpless in his worst anxieties – especially if he were told fairy tales that give shape and body to these anxieties and also show him ways to overcome these monsters”.

Thus, the message of the fairy tale, says the psychologist, is that the fight against major obstacles in life is inevitable as an intrinsic part of human existence – but if we do not get scared, and face all the difficult and unexpected problems, often undeserved, we will manage to master them, and in the end, to emerge victorious” (Bruno Bettelheim, 1976: 14).

Andersen speaks so poetically about **purity of soul, the best defense against evil**, in *The wild Swans*. Usually, in the human being there are the most different qualities. In *Anne Lisbeth* he is very profound:

So, in a single instant, can the consciousness of the sin that has been committed in thoughts, words, and actions of our past life, be unfolded to us. When once the conscience is awakened, it springs up in the heart spontaneously, and God awakens the conscience when we least expect it. Then we can find no excuse for ourselves; the deed is there and bears witness against us. The thoughts seem to become words, and to sound far out into the world. We are horrified at the thought of what we have carried within us, and at the consciousness that we have not overcome the evil which has its origin in thoughtlessness and pride. The heart conceals within itself the vices as well as the virtues, and they grow in the shallowest ground.

The fairy tale *The ugly Duckling* confirms that man brings all his important qualities with him. Everything I have accumulated is in the “egg”:

But what did he see in the clear stream below? His own image; no longer a dark, gray bird, ugly and disagreeable to look at, but a graceful and beautiful swan. To be born in a duck’s nest, in a farmyard, is of no consequence to a bird, if it is hatched from a swan’s egg. He now felt glad at having suffered sorrow and trouble, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all the pleasure and happiness around him; for the great swans swam round the new-comer, and stroked his neck with their beaks, as a welcome.

Thumbelina was interpreted differently, seen as an adventure story, with a passive character, a victim of circumstances or as a story of the runaway bride, an allegory to arranged marriages, either a fable about the fidelity of love or a story that dramatizes the sufferings of one who is different and becomes the object of ridicule. Other critics have seen a moral story which speaks about the problems and the obstacles of life.

Thumbelina shows us the evolution of human being: *Here’s a grain of barley for you, but it isn’t at all the sort of barley that farmers grow in their fields or that the chickens get to eat. Put it in a flower pot and you’ll see what you shall see.*

In many fairy tales, he talks about the importance **and power of thoughts**. Thus, *The Great Sea Serpent* is the fruit of human thoughts. In the tale *The Hood of the Old Bachelor*, the author shows us that things are loaded with the emanations and thoughts of the owner and “you can not wash them with any soap”.

In the *Hebrew*, it asserts itself to all people, regardless of religion, before God. And in *The Rose Elf* the fact that we are surrounded by many unseen beings from whom we can hide nothing. Or, as the narrator says, *beneath every leaf, no matter how insignificant, is someone who can expose an iniquity*. About the true art that defeats the destroyers, about the fact that the form can be destroyed, but the idea that animates the work does not perish is told in *The Most Incredible Thing* (1870), and in the fairy tale *What the whole family said* (1870) – *Life is the most wonderful of stories!*

But how poetic are the thoughts of gratitude described in the fairy tale *Ole the Tower-Keeper* (1859)

“In the world it’s always going up and down; and now I can’t go up any higher!” So said Ole the tower-keeper. “Most people have to try both the ups and the downs; and, rightly considered, we all get to be watchmen at last, and look down upon life from a height”.

“The thanks are often speechless, but they are not lost for all that. I think these thanks are caught up, and the sunbeams bring the silent, hidden thankfulness over the head of the benefactor; and if it be a whole people that has been expressing its gratitude through a long lapse of time, the thankfulness appears as a nosegay of flowers, and at length falls in the form of a shooting star over the good man’s grave (...) It is a great and pleasant thought to know that a shooting star falls upon our graves”.

Andersen talks about souls in *The Little Mermaid*:

“Human beings, on the contrary, have a soul which lives forever, long after their bodies have turned to clay. It rises through thin air, up to the shining stars. Just as we rise through the water to see the lands on earth, so men rise up to beautiful places unknown, which we shall never see”.

“Why weren’t we given an immortal soul?” the little mermaid sadly asked. “I would gladly give up my three hundred years if I could be a human being only for a day, and later share in that heavenly realm”.

“You must not think about that”, said the old lady. “We fare much more happily and are much better off than the folk up there”.

“Then I must also die and float as foam upon the sea, not hearing the music of the waves, and seeing neither the beautiful flowers nor the red sun! Can’t I do anything at all to win an immortal soul?”

In *The Galoshes of Fortune*, he speaks about the „travel“:

Death is an electric shock to the heart, and the soul set free travels on electric wings. The sunlight takes eight minutes and some odd seconds to travel nearly one hundred million miles. On the wings of electricity, the soul can make the same journey in a few moments, and to a soul set free the heavenly bodies are as close together as the houses of friends

who live in the same town with us, or even in the same neighborhood. However, this electric shock strips us of our bodies forever, unless, like the watchman, we happen to be wearing the galoshes of Fortune.

The fairy tale *The bell* tells us:

The church bell hangs high, and looks far around, and sees the birds around it, and understands their language. The wind roars in upon it through windows and loopholes; and the wind knows everything, for he gets it from the air, which encircles all things, and the church bell understands his tongue, and rings it out into the world, 'Ding-dong! ding-dong!'

This theme is present, in another interpretation, in the fairy tales *The Stone of the Wise Man* and *The Garden of Paradise*. Finally, the prince, being at the castle, looks out the windows where in each window time has imprinted an unforgettable picture. Yes, everything that had ever happened in the world was alive and moving in the windows of the castle. The descriptions of the Garden of Heaven are associated with the legends of the Holy Land: the garden is in the depths of the earth, but in it reigns, as before, greatness, the sun shines as before, and the air is penetrated by an unusual freshness and aroma! Also there was the wonderfully beautiful island of Happiness in which Death does not enter! The road to it passes through the Himalayas, then through the cave reminiscent of the giant crypt (the road of death). The road there is very useful, in the garden there is the source of Wisdom. To stay in the garden you have to go through trials, experiences. The trace of the lost heaven is the morning star.

The one who does not pass through trials has the opportunity to enter the Garden, but Death promises him:

I will allow him to wander about the world for a while, to atone for his sin, and to give him time to become better. But I shall return when he least expects me. I shall lay him in a black coffin, place it on my head, and fly away with it beyond the stars. There also blooms a garden of paradise, and if he is good and pious he will be admitted; but if his thoughts are bad, and his heart is full of sin, he will sink with his coffin deeper than the garden of paradise has sunk. Once in every thousand years I shall go and fetch him, when he will either be condemned to sink still deeper, or be raised to a happier life in the world beyond the stars

In his works, Andersen deals with **the theme of death** in twenty-four fairy tales. One of the fairy tales is also called *On Judgment Day*:

The most solemn of all the days of our life is the day we die. It is judgment day, the great sacred day of transfiguration. Have you really

seriously given a fleeting thought to that grave and mighty last hour we shall spend on earth?

In this fairy tale, the author describes poetically this process:

There was once a man, a staunch upholder of truth, as he was called, to whom the word of his God was law, a zealous servant of his zealous God. With a stern but heavenly look, the Angel of Death stood at his bedside.

“The hour has come; you shall follow me!” said Death, and touched the man’s feet with ice-cold fingers, and his feet became like ice. Then Death touched his forehead, and lastly his heart, and when it burst, the soul was free to follow the Angel of Death.

But during those brief seconds while the icy touch shivered through feet and head and heart, there passed through the mind of the dying man, like great ocean waves, the recollection of all he had wrought and felt throughout his life. (...) In such a moment the terrified sinner shrinks into himself and has nothing to cling to, and he feels himself shrinking further into infinite emptiness. And at such times the devout soul bows its head to the Almighty and yields itself up to Him in childlike trust, praying, “Thy will be done with me!” (...) And the soul followed the Angel of Death, casting only one wistful glance back at the bed where, in its white shroud, lay the lifeless image of clay, still bearing the print of the soul’s individuality. And the soul followed the Angel of Death, casting only one wistful glance back at the bed where, in its white shroud, lay the lifeless image of clay, still bearing the print of the soul’s individuality.

Now they hovered through the air, now glided along the ground. Were they passing through a vast, decorated hall, or perchance a forest? It was hard to tell. Nature appeared formally set out for show, as in the stately, artificial, old French gardens, and through its strange, carefully arranged scenes there passed many men and women, all clad as if for a masquerade.

“Such is human life!” spoke the Angel of Death.

In its path, the soul encounters obstacles, trials and various other incarnations. Some looked and behaved very strangely.

It seemed as if the figures tried to disguise themselves; those who flaunted the glories of velvet and gold were not always the noblest and the richest, neither were all those who wore the garb of poverty the most wretched and vulgar. A strange masquerade indeed! And most strange of all was to see how each one carefully concealed under his clothing something he would not have the others discover. Each was determined to learn his neighbor’s secret, and they tore at one another until here and there the heads of different animals were bared. One was that of a grinning ape, another the head of a goat, still others a clammy snake and a feeble fish.

In all was some token of the animal which is fast rooted in human nature, and which here was struggling and jumping to burst forth. And however closely a person might hold his garment over it to hide it, the others would never rest until they had torn aside the veil, and all kept crying out, "Look here! See! It is he! It is she!" and everyone mockingly laid bare his fellow's shame.

"Then what was the animal in me?" inquired the soul.

The Angel of Death silently pointed to a haughty form around whose head spread a bright glory of rays, with shining colors, but in whose heart could be seen lurking, half hidden, the feet of a peacock.

(...) they cried, "You who walk with Death, do you remember me?" All the evil thoughts and lusts that had lurked within the man from birth to death now called after him in forbidding tones, "Do you remember me?"

These were all the evil thoughts and deeds of the soul. The path of the soul was sprinkled with sharp stones from which he wounded his feet to the blood. Apparently, these were the impulsive, reckless, evil words spoken in life. "Each stone is some careless word you have spoken, which wounded your neighbor's heart far more deeply than these sharp flints that now hurt your feet."

"I never thought of that!" cried the soul.

And the souls reach at the gates of heaven:

I see it neither in your faith nor in your actions! "The teaching of Christ is forgiveness, love, and mercy!"

"Mercy!" The echo of this rang through infinite space, the gates of heaven opened, and the soul hovered toward the realms of eternal bliss.

But the flood of light that streamed forth from within was so dazzling, so penetrating, that the soul shrank back as from a double-edged sword. And the sound of music was so soft and touching that no mortal tongue could describe it. The soul trembled and prostrated itself lower and lower, and the celestial light cut through it until it felt, as it had never felt before, the weight of its own pride and cruelty and sin.

"Whatever good I have done in the world, I did because I could not do otherwise; but the evil that I did-that was of myself!"

The fairy tales ends with this words:

(...) And as this soul did, so shall we all, on our last day on earth, humbly tremble in the glorious sight of the Kingdom of Heaven. But the infinite love and mercy of our Heavenly Father will carry us through other spheres, so that, purified and strengthened, we may ascend into God's eternal light.

In the fairy tale *Ole-Luk-Oie* (1842), the character meets while sleeping his brother who embodies death, and in the fairy tale *The Child*

in the grave (1859), Andersen tells about life in the afterlife, claiming that our pain and tears shed after the dead man prevents him from passing into the other world, dragging him back to earth.

Not less instructive is the story-parable *The story of a mother*. The death abducted her child. To find out the way, the mother gives her eyes to the lake. Squeezing it to his chest, it begins to turn green and bloom. To enter the garden of death to save her child, she offers the old porter her beautiful black hair in exchange for white hair. But in the end of the story, the mother returns the child to the Death because she understands that this way she saves him from future misfortunes. Breaking her hands and falling to her knees before the Creator, mother asks for forgiveness. This is about the manifestation of prayer and the attitude and relationship towards others.

The galoshes of fortune (1838) talks about the prohibition of the earlier death. The fairy tale *The flax* tells us about **immortality** and the reality of miracles. It is the story of a blue flower brought from Ancient Egypt, whose light petals are like butterfly wings. The beautiful flower goes through a series of transformations.

After some time, the linen was taken into the house, placed under the scissors, and cut and torn into pieces, and then pricked with needles. This certainly was not pleasant; but at last it was made into twelve garments of that kind which people do not like to name, and yet everybody should wear one. "See, now, then", said the flax; "I have become something of importance. This was my destiny; it is quite a blessing. Now I shall be of some use in the world, as everyone ought to be; it is the only way to be happy. I am now divided into twelve pieces, and yet we are all one and the same in the whole dozen. It is most extraordinary good fortune".

Years passed away, and at last the linen was so worn it could scarcely hold together. "It must end very soon", said the pieces to each other; "we would gladly have held together a little longer, but it is useless to expect impossibilities".

And at length they fell into rags and tatters, and thought it was all over with them, for they were torn to shreds, and steeped in water, and made into a pulp, and dried, and they knew not what besides, till all at once they found themselves beautiful white paper.

Paper becomes a book, "even hundreds of books" – reservoirs of wisdom and light. And even if they reach the fire, the ashes fatten the earth, giving birth again to billions of blue flowers. Everything resumes, everything has a beginning, marking the triumph of life. This fairy tale can explain to children that nothing remains without a trace in life and simply transforms.

The fairy tale *Peiter, Peter and Peer* show us the path that the soul crosses, incarnating on the early plane.

Have you ever gazed at the sky on a clear, starry night and watched the many shooting stars? It is as if the stars fall from and disappear into nowhere. Even the most learned persons can't explain what they don't know themselves; but one can explain this when he knows it. It is like a little Christmas-tree candle that falls from heaven and is blown out. It is a soul spark from our Lord that flies toward the earth, and when it reaches our thick, heavy air, it loses its brilliancy, becoming something that our eyes cannot see, something much finer than air itself; it is a little child from heaven, a little angel, but without wings, for it is to become a human child.

Then, softly it glides through the air, and the wind carries it into a flower, which may be an orchid, a dandelion, a rose, or a cowslip

And there, the child sits and rests, gains strength. Next, we read how the geese carry him on the round, large leaves of the water lilies and let him lie in the sun. The baby slides easily from the leaf into the water, falls asleep there and keeps growing, growing until it gets so big that a stork sees it, fishes it and brings it to a family *that has been longing for a sweet little child. But whether it becomes sweet or not depends on whether it has drunk pure clean water or has swallowed mud and duckweed the wrong way; that makes one so filthy!*

In essence, each of Andersen's fairy tales promotes moral, educational value, and confirms the victory of good and justice. Sometimes, however, it seems that some of Andersen's fairy tales are harsh, sad, and have an unhappy ending, but that opinion depends on how we look at them. The well-known fairy tale *The little mermaid*, for example, at first sight, has a sad ending. Seen from another perspective – the mermaid got the chance to become human. After three hundred years (at the end of the fairy tale, the possibility of reducing this term is mentioned), she is turning into a human, for karmic reasons, will meet the prince. And this will be another story, much happier.

The richness of Andersen's fairy tales is immense, offering symbolic suggestions on how the human being can relate to situations: some even extreme, such as death or eternal life, confronting the child with the fundamental dilemmas of human life, the good and the evil being ubiquitous; this duality triggers moral conflict and, consequently, the struggle to resolve it. Andersen's amoral fairy tales, which do not resort to the dichotomy of good and evil, in which the character's victory is achieved by cunning, do not build the character by choosing between good and evil, but give the child hope that even the weakest can succeed in life. B. Bettelheim emphasizes that, in this case, morality is not the

central theme, but rather “ensuring that for every individual there is an opportunity for success” (Bettelheim, 1976: 18).

These are some directions and ethical aspects revealed by Andersen’s fairy tales, the conception of the world, our existence and its meaning. His themes, important and real, which along with those about children’s fears, their impatience, their joys found in small things, are transmitting to them important things and solutions to the problems that trouble them, their experiences. Andersen is a romantic who sees childhood as a pure, but fleeting and sometimes tragic age. Some critics spoke of metaphysical themes and his desire to draw the ideal of humanity and also offer us a pretext for analysis and meditation.

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The Signification of African Spirituality in Selected Short Stories of Tanure Ojaide

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Abstract:

African writers' cultural settings are often reflected in their artistic creations. In his writings, Tanure Ojaide constantly re-affirms his identification with, and indebtedness to, his Urhobo traditional heritage. The short story seems to afford him the opportunity to interrogate the visible (physical) and invisible (spiritual) in the lives of his people which he reflects through his fictional characters. This paper therefore, adopts a pragmatic approach as it examines Ojaide's preoccupation with the place, representation, and implications of spirituality through some stories selected from his four collections of short fiction. The writer projects ideas around African spirituality mainly through the relationship between the living and the dead, the importance of the final resting place for the dead, the existence and operations of supernatural forces capable of oppressive and sexual attacks, and the efficacy of bewitchment on the living. This study will assist in exploring the continued spirituality of Africans as expressed through Christian beliefs and traditional mysticism.

Keywords: African spirituality, Mysticism, Signification, Tanure Ojaide

Introduction

Modern African literature generally reflects the realities of the African condition and existence. That reality includes the norms, values, superstitions, philosophies, traditions and other belief systems peculiar to the African by virtue of lived experiences. For African writers, art is a mirror of reality; hence one can say that African literature incorporates and interrogates the historical and cultural worldviews of the people. Since literature is a cultural production, African writers consciously or unconsciously, in their literary representations, often reflect the lived experiences of their people. This is why some beliefs and practices that are not necessarily grounded on empirical evidence, but which are specific to some groups or make meaning to them as integral parts of their indigenous knowledge systems, form the backdrop of a writer's

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work. Hence, cultural theory explores the signification of material and non-material things such as belief systems as well as how they are represented physically through nature. These factors are important in discussing the works of a writer grounded in the culture, myths, legends, and belief systems of his or her people.

Much as Ojaide is best known as a poet, he is also a fiction writer and has through the decades published several novels and collections of short stories. His short stories collections include: *God's Medicine-Men and Other Stories* (2004), *The Debt-Collector and Other Stories* (2009), *The Old Man in a State House and Other Stories* (2012) and *God's Naked Children: Selected and New Stories* (2018). His stories are marked by cultural reflections that situate his characters, narration, and thematic preoccupations as he has himself admitted that the writer is not an “air-plant” but one rooted in a specific place which has its geography and culture.

Conceptualising Spirituality in African Literature and Society

African spirituality has to do with the understanding that beliefs and practices affect every facet of the life of an African. Njoki Nathani Wane describes spirituality as “not affiliated with a particular religion but was an everyday ritual. It was a way of being, of connecting with the land, the universe and creation” (Wane, 2002: 136). The renowned African scholar of religion and philosophy, John Mbiti avers the African life is filled with spirituality (1990). Specifically, an important aspect of the African belief system is the concept of the existence of two parallel worlds. Commenting on this, Wole Soyinka argues that the African reality can be best understood as a simultaneous inhabitation of the world of the living and the dead as well as the present and the past (1976). He says further that it is the tension between all these coordinates that forms the primary object of mimesis for African art and by extension its literature.

According to Ojaide people who share the same birthplace, culture, and society are connected in their group values and interests (Ojaide, 1999: 236). This assertion is underscored in literary studies by Abiola Irele's observation that the concern with historical and sociological realities makes African literature a more accurate and comprehensible account of contemporary African reality than sociological or political documents (Irele, 1981). It is for this reason that I intend to use African culture in general and Urhobo/Pan Edo culture in particular to study the signification of spirituality in selected short stories of Ojaide. Culture is used here in its broadest implication and this research strives to foster a better appreciation of a minority's belief systems as well as affirm its contribution to global cultures.

In trying to explain the peculiarities of spirituality in the Urhobo culture, Ochuko Tonukari writes:

Traditional Urhobo basically view the universe as comprising basically of two realms: the visible and the invisible realms. They grasp the cosmos as a three-tiered structure, consisting of the heaven above, the physical world and the world underneath. Each of these is inhabited by different categories of beings. The Creator and a host of spirit beings, including arch-divinities, inhabit the heaven above; other divinities, ancestors, and myriads of unnamed spirits dwell in the world beneath; while human beings occupy the physical earth. Human beings may be less powerful, but their world is the centre and focus of attention. It belongs to human beings as sensible beings to maintain the delicate balance in the universe. This is what assures the happiness and prosperity of individuals and the community. http://www.waado.org/UrhoboCulture/Religion/tonukari/Urhobo_community_two_worlds.htm

To the African, spirituality involves beliefs and practices that relate to human life. Sickness, for example, is not only a state of being physically unhealthy but could also connote an imbalance in one's psychological and spiritual life. Although many Africans today have abandoned their various forms of traditional worship or veneration, and embraced non-indigenous religions, the average African is still highly spiritual and still believes in the existence and influence of forces beyond the ordinary in human life. These forces could be benevolent or malevolent. They could be responsible for turns in one's fortune for better or for worse. In cases where benevolent forces are perceived to be at work, humans experience a state of well-being in life's endeavors, while, malevolent forces cause sickness or bad fortune and so require a search for solution or methods of amelioration through supernatural interventions.

Ojaide's stories set in his Agbon and other places reflect the life lived around him. Agbon is a clan in Urhobo land in Delta Central Senatorial District of Delta State, Nigeria into which the writer was born. What happens in real life is replicated through fiction. It is only that fiction sometimes imagines and stretches the humanly possible into fantasy. That is why many aspects of the spiritual fall into the realm of fantasy and myth. The realism that the fiction writer thus aims at is to express the humanly possible even in the imaginary. As far as the invisible and spiritual are concerned in these stories, they are the indigenous beliefs and myths that permeate the characters and ideas of many Africans, including many educated Christianized and Islamized among them.

In Ojaide's short stories, he pries into beliefs of the characters and, often using the omnipresent narrator's viewpoint, shines a searchlight into the complexities of life as lived in the respective environments representing the settings in the stories. Hence, some of his short stories treat the theme of the metaphysical relationship between the living and the dead. What comes out of these stories is that there are alternative realities in the physical mundane life and the spiritual esoteric life. The visible and invisible, which though are contrastive, are expected to merge into one to define a human existence. In other words, the physical and visible must be in agreement with the spiritual and invisible for human life to have harmony and peace.

Elsewhere, Ojaide has written of the "Urhoro" of the Urhobo people which indicates a pre-human existence, which some describe as life in the womb, where people choose their respective destinies before being born to live them out (Ojaide, 1999: 235). This again shows that in his understanding of the Urhobo culture, the spiritual precedes the physical which it collaborates with in life before going back to a spiritual state upon death. In this conception, life is cyclical, moving from the spiritual to the physical and back to the spiritual in an unending cycle. This spiritual or rather supernatural state affects the Urhobo and other Africans who believe in them and many people spend their time and resources to protect themselves from malefactors in the forms of witches, wizards, and other evil forces.

Generally, Ojaide's works are suffused with substances and symbolisms that underscore his unapologetic identification with his Urhobo cultural heritage. Many scholars, including this writer, have written extensively on the influence of Urhobo orature to include folkloric elements in Ojaide's poetry. His novels, especially *The Activist*, have also received critical exegeses in the areas of environmental activism and female agency. But, not much scholarly attention has been accorded his short fiction collections even as I acknowledge here, Stephen Kekeghe's chapter contribution where he lauds Ojaide's use of "his short stories to express mental health situations and challenges, a relevant area of human endeavor not commonly expressed by Nigerian writers" (Kekeghe, 2020: 326) However, my study will not dwell on Ojaide's clinical representation of the theme of madness in literature as his did. Henry Oripeloye (2014) applies a postmodernist reading to Ojaide's *God's Medicine Men* through which he affirms a dismantling and fragmentation of traditional cultural values by post-colonial tendencies. Again, I choose to adopt a cultural examination of Ojaide's interest in the invisible and intangible forces – spirituality – at play in the lives of characters in his short stories.

I will use some of his short stories to interrogate the nature and importance of spirituality which appear to reflect aspects of the author's

people's worldviews. The writer projects this mainly through their beliefs in, for example, the relationship between the living and the dead, the importance of the final resting place for the dead, the existence and operations of supernatural forces capable of oppressive and sexual attacks, as well as the efficacy of bewitchment on the living. Ojaide's preoccupation with these subjects are consistently expressed and reflected in the characters, setting, and thematic concerns in his short stories, yet has not received commensurate critical attention.

The Signification of Spirituality in Selected Short Stories of Tanure Ojaide

In Ojaide's short stories, the reader encounters two worlds – the visible and the invisible, both real in man's physical and emotional/psychological life. The binaries of myth and reality are collapsed into the traditional belief system under which many of the fictional characters in the writer's stories operate. Though one is visible and the other invisible, there is no boundary between the spiritual and physical in the lives of the characters. This could also be described in the sense of reality and fantasy, a blend of which is an important aspect of the spirituality exercised by the characters. These two aspects of life, though one is perceptible and the other unseen, are realities or put in another way, alternative realities of life.

"The Benevolence of the Dead" from *The Old Man in a State House* is one of the short stories Ojaide uses to represent the visible and the invisible, the living and the dead, and their connectedness. The story also underscores Tonukari's assertion that "Ancestors are essentially benevolent spirits –they know and have their families' interest at heart" (Tonukari, n.p.). The narrator is a young girl who loses her father at an early age and has to live with an uncle who mistreats her. He starves her, engages her in arduous tasks, and refuses to cater for her educational needs. One particular night, after having prayed fervently to God for succor from her sufferings, her father visits her in her sleep. Apparently, he is able to see her pitiable plight from his abode of the dead in the invisible world. The little girl's earnest plea for help brings the dead father back to the land of the living as a spirit being. He interacts with her, reassures her that all will be well for her henceforth. Her fortunes soon change for the better as her dead father had promised her in her sleep. He is a benevolent spirit and a guardian who somehow manages from his spirit-world to give her emotional and psychological support as well as ensure that others still alive give his daughter the material and financial support that she needs to develop herself as a young girl.

The foregoing projection is in consonance with an Urhobo belief, replicated in the excerpt below, that the death of a relative does not end the affinity between the living and the dead:

The dead pass through the gates to the spiritual realm when all necessary rituals have been performed. As the departed are never regarded as being really dead in the grave, their offspring and other relations still refer to them as their fathers, mothers, brothers or sisters, which they were before their transition. They are believed to be capable of exercising their parental roles or so, though now in a more powerful and unrestricted way, over their survivors. (Ottuh 2017: 212)

Ojaide portrays a mystical relationship between the living and the dead in the aforementioned story. It is only the narrator who sees and interacts freely with her father whenever he appears to her. It is significant that the man wears the same clothes he was used to wearing when he was alive as another form of identification. However, the writer describes his eyes as if they were stars. So, in appearing to his daughter, the dead father carries both human and non-human qualities. After their encounter in the girl's sleep, the dead father leaves walking backwards. The Urhobo generally attribute to ghosts a weird behavior such as walking backwards.

In any case, on his part, the late father keeps a close watch over his daughter and is sensitive to her travails. He always appears to encourage and support her at crucial moments when she is facing some difficulties. These interventions provide her with the material and psychological stability she requires to thrive as a young woman. For her father, he is at peace in the spirit realm knowing that he is able to perform his parental responsibilities towards her even though he is not physically with her. All he asks of her is to "Always remain a good girl!" (*The Old Man in a State House...*: 6). However, towards the end of the story, he seems to abandon her after she sleeps with her boyfriend when she had not graduated from school. One possible interpretation for this is that as a spirit being, his duty was to guide and guard her through a period when she was relatively innocent, vulnerable, and helpless. That she now has another male companion, a lover, could mean the late father feels his assignment regarding her welfare has been completed and he can quietly retire back to his abode in the invisible world. The young woman will henceforth learn how to cope with life's challenges relying on her abilities and newfound partner.

On the converse side, Ojaide might be implying also that there are physical consequences for disobeying the injunctions or expectations of the dead or spiritual forces. In "The Benevolence of the Dead", we can infer that the spirit of the late father distances itself from the daughter the

moment she has sexual intercourse with her boyfriend. His only expectation of her as he helped her navigate through life's difficulties was that she should "always remains a good girl" which she promised to. When she violates this pact, he separates himself from her physically and spiritually. However, a factor worthy of note in all of all of the narrative is that Ojaide's inadvertently reveals the mutually beneficial relationship which exists between the living and the dead. In the above story, the father is roused from his resting place in the spirit world to come to his daughter's aid in her moments of great need in the human world. He is at peace knowing he is able to ameliorate his daughter's sufferings while the daughter, on her part, experiences a measure of progress and emotional balance from her father's spiritual presence in her life.

This concept of filial responsibility and obligation between the living and the dead is depicted via a reversed perspective in the title story of Ojaide's second short story collection. In "The Debt-Collector", it becomes the duty of the relatives to redeem the image and ensure the well-being of the dead. The body of a dead person is referred to as "*orinvwin*" in Urhobo. David Okpako further elucidates that:

the word *orinvwin* embodies complex emotions associated with the universal fear of the dead e.g. the imperative that the dead body must be treated with dignity, the need to satisfy the family honor in accordance with the status of the dead person and of his descendants; above all, the belief that the person though dead to the living, is alive in *erinvwin*, observing how the descendants deal with what is left of him/her (Okpako, 2014: 6).

Peter Ekeh also corroborates this important cultural rite of passage among the Urhobo when he states:

Living people inhabit Akpo and control its affairs; Erivwin is peopled by the spirits of the dead. Those among the departed who have been properly buried, and for whom prescribed rituals of passage have been performed by their living relations, will live in peace therein. Until the dead achieve such status, their spirits wander in strange places awaiting admission into their final resting places (Ekeh, 2004: 30).

In this story, the corpse of Ituru, a debtor who has been unable to pay back the money he owes his creditor, Shegbe, is forcibly seized by the rich man. This throws the family of the bereaved into double grief for a number of reasons that have deep-seated cultural implications. First, this act amounts to a violation of the spirit of the dead man as the Urhobo, and by extension African, concept of death recognizes the need to accord the body of the dead a final resting place within his family

stead into which he returns in his next life. The traditional thought is that if Ituru's corpse is not reclaimed from his creditor, then "their family would be depleted by one adult: dead or alive" (*The Debt Collector...*: 26) and his "spirit will continue to haunt us" (28). Michael Nabofa also suggests that the spirit in this condition would be restless and suffer serious agony (Nabofa, 2011: 367). In his article, Anthony Agbegbedia describes this relationship within the context of Urhobo culture thus:

... the Urhobo worldview embraces the belief that what we referred to as extended family (*orua*) in this mundane community of people has been pre-existent in the spiritual world (*erivwin*). For them therefore, beings are released from there to populate this earth and at death, one returns to it....Therefore among the Urhobo, there is a belief in what is called *erivwinr'uwevwin* (the spiritual abode of the household), *erivwinr'orua* (spiritual abode of the extended family)....This explains among other purposes, patri-linear family system inclusive, why the Urhobo like Biblical ancient Israelites bury their dead ones in the homestead of their fathers to make sure that when he or she would reincarnate, he or she would come back to life through the same family (Anthony Agbegbedia, 2015: 59).

Yet another reason why the family of the deceased is anxious is that the family's honor is at stake. They can become the butt of cruel jokes, negative references and social stigmatization for generations to come because of Ituru's "shame of indebtedness" (27). A third factor is the fear that the captor might tamper with some vital body parts of the dead for ritual purposes and if the dead reincarnates, these body parts will ostensibly be missing. The family thus resolves that "We cannot shelve our responsibilities. He was ours and still ours. Let us save our man from disgrace – he cannot be a worthy ancestor buried in the bush belonging to the chief" (28). By the evening of the same day, the family lives up to this collective charge and raise the remaining forty pounds which their dead member owed. They return the money to Shegbe who also releases the corpse to them for the final burial. The timely intervention by the living members of Ituru's family affords the dead man respect and a peaceful place of rest in the realm of the spirits and among the pantheon of ancestors.

The above textual examples depict the mutually beneficial relationship that exists between characters in the visible and invisible worlds as portrayed in some of Ojaide's short stories. The dead is seen going out of its way to come back to life to guide and guard the interests and good fortunes of the living as in "The Benevolence of the Dead", while the living do not shirk their duty of restoring the honor of the dead and ensuring their smooth transition or passage to the world of the spirits as in "The Debt-Collector".

The theme of separation as a result of disregarding a spiritual pact is found in “Sharing Love” in Ojaide’s *The Old Man in a State House and Other Short Stories*. The narrator and beautiful Kena are very much in love but are eventually forced to part ways because Kena is a “Mami Wata pickin” (62). This last expression means, although human, Kena has some form of spirit possession and belongs to a female water spirit or deity popularly believed to bestow beauty and wealth to associates. Kena is also projected as being already married to a spirit husband who inhabits the marine world but comes only at night to possess her. Despite several warnings from Kena’s parents that they are not allowed to be together because Kena is already committed to a spirit spouse, both lovers decide to elope to the United States of America. After Kena and her boyfriend enjoy only three days of uninterrupted bliss, Kena falls sick and various medical tests in different hospitals are incapable of diagnosing the cause of the severe headaches she is experiencing. Unable to find a bio-medical solution to her condition abroad, Kena returns to her home country to look for a cure. Once back in Nigeria, she resumes her relationship with the spirit lover who heals her because she spiritually belongs to him and has returned to continue their affair.

Ojaide underscores the idea that the forces that inhabit and operate from the spirit realm are very powerful and disobeying them or going against their wishes will only cause more problems for the living especially those with whom they share a metaphysical relationship. Kena is a person of two worlds as she appears comfortable with each partner in both disparate love relationships. She has a consensual relationship with her spirit husband who does not mind sharing her love with the human lover in so far as all the parties respect boundaries and maintain a tacit understanding. The spirit lover “owns” her at night but the boyfriend can have her during the day. The spiritual husband only demonstrates his hold over her when Kena and her boyfriend try to outsmart him by relocating out of the country. Eloping to the United States of America from Nigeria does not stop Kena’s spiritual experience. By implication, the African belief is that nobody can hide or escape from spiritual forces that affect them by leaving one setting for a distant one.

While it is possible to have mutually satisfying contacts between human and spirit beings, Ojaide also presents a non-consensual association in “God’s Medicine-Men”, the title story of *God’s Medicine-Men and Other Stories*. Endurance, the protagonist, contends with some strange experiences. In school, she is often attacked by an invisible and oppressive weight called an incubus or succubus. She goes home to look for a solution to this problem and is confronted with another dilemma: she gets sexually violated by an invisible presence. In spite of her efforts she could “...not stop the intruder from entering into her at will. She wore rousers to

bed, and yet she woke with a feeling of sticky wetness between her legs” (69). Worse still is that she is the daughter of a pastor and has been brought up in the Christian way to believe that evil forces have no power over her. Yet her prayers do not have any effect on the source or subject responsible for these forceful invasions and body violations. This creates anxiety in her and causes her physical and emotional trauma. Her friend introduces her to Pastor Odele who combines his Christian worship with that of Olokun, the traditional river goddess. He recommends a spiritual bath in Sakpoba River to rid her of these oppressive forces at work in her life after which she gets some reprieve.

The manner through which Endurance’s predicament is finally resolved calls to question the religious practice of some modern-day clergymen. The writer satirizes some of them who seek and employ powers beyond the scope of their Christian faith. Pastor Odele may claim to be a man of the Christian God by virtue of carrying a small Bible, but he has no physical church structure to take his followers. He appears a charlatan even as he combines Christianity with traditional religion (the worship of the water goddess known as Olokun or Mami Wata); hence he and others like Pastor Efe (whom he later empowers) are referred to as “God’s medicine-men”. “Medicine-men” is here used as a paradoxical referent of the known, but often disparaged, practitioners of African traditional medicine. Ironically too, the writer seems to suggest that there are some spiritual problems which require handling in the manner Pastor Odele did Endurance’s against the backdrop of some traditional African thought that power reinforces power. Unorthodox as they may be, the admixture of disparate therapies or alternatives are sometimes capable of restoring balance and harmony to troubled individuals within certain cultural and spiritual contexts.

Ojaide further explores the manifestation of African spirituality in his short fiction by interrogating the effects of superstitious beliefs on the psyche and lifestyle of a person or community. Enajite Ojaruega attests to the possibility of this line of reasoning when she affirms elsewhere that: “The Urhobo also believe in the supernatural. For example, that witches operate in their coven world to cause mischief or harm to those they are envious of” (Ojaruega, 2015: 141). In both “The Cherry Tree Palaver” and “Nobody Loves Me”, Ojaide presents characters whose minds are conditioned to ascribe their problems to the manipulations of spiritual forces. Once this situation arises, such persons are bound to act on this impulse as troubled and seek spiritual healing. This may be despite the fact that these people are only imagining that negative forces are against them. Among the Urhobo and other Africans, many people attribute their sicknesses and poverty to spiritual attacks. This leads many to worry and seek salvation or healing from other than

scientific sources. Hence, many go to traditional healers or to Pentecostal pastors for assistance.

In “The Cherry Tree Palaver”, the people of Unoh village have become disenchanted with the ageless cherry tree and seek “the destruction of the tree’s resident demon” (38) by cutting it down. The people experience short lifespan because of their unhealthy habits but put the blame on witches and evil spirits that they claim meet in coven on that tree. Clearly, the poor villagers lack scientific knowledge to relate their unhealthy lifestyles to the premature death of young villagers. They also lose sight of the tree’s functions in the ecosystem. Worse still, the exuberant pastor and his member exploit the villagers’ naivety. They amplify the people’s fears through religious conspiracy theories and even further propagate the superstition that the sap of the old tree as they cut it down is the blood of the victims of witchcraft. Subsequently, cutting down the old tree did not stop people from dying young in the village. It is noteworthy that at the end of the story, an educated son – a scientist and a professor of Botany – who was skeptical from the outset about the people’s views is able through logical reasoning to convince his superstitious father to change his unfounded beliefs. The sturdy cherry tree becomes a signification of ignorance that leads to superstitions. Ojaide seems to be saying here that many of the conditions attributed to spiritual attacks in Urhobo society (and other parts of Africa) are most likely as a result of ignorance that leads to senseless action as the cutting down of the ageless tree and the destruction of the ecosystem of the area.

Ngozi, in “Nobody Loves Me”, is a very beautiful woman at the prime of her womanhood. However, she is unable to attract the attention of men to seek for her love or fall in love with her despite her frantic efforts. She is troubled by all manners of thoughts and even remembers:

... that her elder sister was still living a spinster at forty-five in Aba. Is it true that the female children of her mother were jinxed not to have men? An old aunt had died after confessing that nothing could be done to remove the curse she had placed on her mother’s children (107).

At this stage, her condition becomes psychosomatic as although not sick physically, her mind is extremely troubled by her unappealing circumstances such that her appearance becomes lackluster. She seeks the assistance of a medicine man but her situation does not change for the better. She falls into depression and ends up committing suicide because she feels nobody loves her. Depression in many traditional African societies is often associated with being bewitched. Often, the fear of stigmatization deprives them from seeking medical help on time and from trained professionals. Because many who suffer from severe depression, as in bi-polar or schizophrenic cases, tend to “hear voices,”

they would prefer consulting traditional healers for solutions to their problems. Ngozi's case does not even degenerate to a severe case of mental disorder before she takes her own life. Her sense of low self-esteem might have just been responsible for her not having male admirers. Her problems appear to be psychological and may not have the spiritual dimension she relates it to.

An important experience of African spirituality surrounds a people's apprehension of their indigenous medical practices and the forces behind it. Ojaide's weaves the story of "The Healer's Favorite Son Dies" from his latest collection, *God's Naked Children: Selected and New Stories* around this cultural trope. Aderha, whose name means "born at a crossroads", is the protagonist and regarded as an enigma for several reasons. His mother, hard pressed by labor pangs on her way to the market gave birth to him at a place where three roads meet. Within the Urhobo and other African traditional cosmology, a crossroads is regarded as the meeting or gathering place of spirits. It is where humans make sacrifices and petitions to the spirits for malevolent or benevolent purposes. The signification of this is that anyone unwittingly caught in this location would either suffer some form of catastrophe or be the recipient of good fortunes from these resident spirits.

In Aderha's case, the spirits were benevolent towards him, thus he grows up as a superhuman imbued with extraordinary powers. He also puts these qualities to good use as he takes up the profession of a traditional healer of mad persons. For the medicines he uses for treatment, he relies on the efficacy of roots and herbs from plants and trees coupled with arcane incantations. The narrator tells us that Aderha spoke and understood the language of the plants as it is believed that the spirits lived in the plants (153). As a result, he was quite famous and celebrated as a great medicine man capable of taming "the spirit of insanity" (144). This affirms the belief among Africans that madness is a form of spirit possession rather than purely a medical condition.

However, Aderha's professional fame and good fortune are put to test when his favorite son and acolyte, Edewor suddenly becomes mad. Always in his father's company during his several forays into the forest to collect herbs for treating patients, Edewor on a particular occasion ventured far into the forest on his own. His father's frantic search for him leads him to the bottom of the *akpobrisi* tree, where he recovers Edewor, already besieged by the spirit of madness. Against the background of Urhobo folklore, the *akpobrisi* tree is said to be the most feared tree in the forest and demands certain rites for fortification before a medicine man can take leaves and barks from it. Aderha had always been the one to do so when the need arises and always kept his son away from this task. It thus appeared as if on this particular occasion, Edewor ignorantly violated this practice when he went out to the forest on his own. He was therefore

assailed by the spirit of the *akpobrisi* tree which is assumed afflicted him with the non-violent but incurable type of psychopathy.

The ultimate irony here is the inability of an acclaimed traditional healer of persons with extreme forms of mental disorders to cure his favorite son of even a supposedly mild form of insanity. Aderha's life story which started on a good note ends in pitiable tragedy as he not only loses his favorite son to a sickness which he is famous for curing in others, but also might himself soon succumb to. This is because an attack from the spirit of the *akpobrisi* tree is imminent as in his hurry to retrieve his son, he forgot to perform the rites required for protection. Aderha's fate reminds one of the tragedy of Ezeulu, the Chief Priest of Ulu upon the death of his favorite son, Obika in Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*. Both are remembered as male characters who were abandoned by their spiritual sources of powers in their moments of greatest needs. Maybe, the lesson to take home from these representations is that the spirits do not have favorites!

Conclusion

From the focal stories interrogated, Ojaide presents characters whose physical lives and psychological conditions are associated with, and controlled by spiritual dimensions against the cultural backdrop of an African epistemology. The writer's characters live the spiritual world in the physical world. Both worlds coalesce to determine the reality of the living. Even though there are visible and invisible aspects to the lives of the characters, their portrayal is realistic in the sense that these configurations are interwoven in reality. Some aspects of the unfathomable and spiritual may look like fantasy (such as the dead counseling the living, a lover or husband in the spirit world having a wife in the living world, and witches meeting at night in coven on top of a cherry tree), but these are beliefs that many Africans harbor in their minds and perceive as affecting their lived lives. They also have to be reconciled in the destinies of humans in order to be able to survive backlashes from evil humans and spirits. Clearly, for many Africans, the physical and the spiritual have to be in sync with each other for emotional and psychological peace and harmony.

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The Rose and the Nightingale: Allegorical Gardens in the Debate Poetry of Parvīn E'tesāmī

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Abstract:

The significance of Parvīn E'tesāmī's poetic garden as a complex allegory, constructed out of several smaller metaphors, has received little detailed treatment. The present study proposes to explore this garden as an instance of classical Persian allegorical gardens that generally have didactic functions. As this study will argue, Parvīn's allegorical garden is most often rendered into a number of debates between conflicting characters selected from a vast array of entities and endowed with particular 'moral' qualities interacting without being subordinated to the authorial voice of the poet. The metaphorical pair of lovers, 'the rose and the nightingale,' with a range of earthly and divine meaning, is at the heart of this 'garden clash' motif, confronting other figures of this garden, notably the thorn, water (both as raining cloud and as stream), the ant and the moon. Though the garden represented through these debates can be seen to function within a religious framework, it does not lead to spiritual quietism and suppression of human efforts.

Keywords: Personification, Didactic, Fatalism, Mortality, Gnosis, *Carpe diem*

Introduction

Classical Persian poetry is rich in nature imagery, especially imagery relating to gardens (*bāgh*, *Būstān*) filled with roses and nightingales, evoking a world of love, beauty and virtue. As Giamatti (1966) notes, the word *paradise* itself "derives from the Old Persian word *pairidaeza*" which means "the royal park, enclosure, or orchard of the Persian king" (11). For although gardens flourished in the Arab lands, Arab literary ideals remained predominantly those of the desert; and except for some mystical writings, their treatment of the garden was essentially descriptive (Meisami, 1985). The same holds for the early Persian *qasidas* of such poets Onsorī, Farrokhī, and Manuchehrī, who

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employed “descriptive, concrete, and highly stylized nature and garden imagery” (232). In the romances of the twelfth century, however, gardens figure as settings for courtly life and romantic episodes enriched with allegorical imagery. In such writings, as Meisami (1985) argues, a new symbolic significance of the garden as a place of learning and discovery is born; one notable example being Nezāmī’s *Haft Paikar*, an allegory of a spiritual journey, which features seven gardens, each embodying a lesson in kingship for the protagonist, Bahrām Gūr. Allegorical Gardens also appear in the mystical writing of this period particularly in the *ghazals* of the thirteenth-century poet Jalal Al-Dīn Rūmī as the reflection of the beauty and majesty of its creator. For Rumi, allegory served as a “stylistic means for the depiction of spiritual *invisibilia* through the portrayal of the *visibilia* of nature” (245). Here, in contrast with Nezāmī, little descriptive details are given of the outward aspects of the garden whose inhabitants are all engaged in ritual actions of praise and adoration of God the Sovereign; a ‘cosmic celebration’ motif built on Qur’anic verses¹. Likewise, in the courtly *ghazal* of the fourteenth-century poet, Hafez Shīrāzi, the garden functions as an important center of life where nobles, scholars and bards gathered for feasting and the recitation of poetry. In such poems, Hafez takes the reader “from the ostensible setting, the courtly garden, into the world-garden, the Book of Nature itself” (Meisami: 245).

Though significant differences in terms of both time and genre separate the medieval poets from the twentieth-century Parvīn E’tesāmī (1907-1941)², they are linked by a common interest in the allegorical use

¹ Whatever is in Heaven and whatever is on Earth celebrates God the Sovereign [Who is] the Holy, the Powerful, the Wise! (Friday: 1).

² Rakhshanda E’tesāmī, known by her nom de plume, Parvin, was born in 1907 into a highly educated family in Tabriz. Her Father, Yusof Etesami, was a prominent journalist and man of letters who taught his precocious daughter solid training in Arabic and classical Persian literature, encouraging her to render into verse some literary pieces that he had translated from western sources, eleven of which is printed in his monthly magazine, *Bahar*. He also encouraged Parvin to recite her poems amongst the leading male literati of her day in his private literary salon and to accompany him on several trips in Persia and Iraq. Early in her life, Parvin’s family relocated to Tehran where she received formal education in Iran Bethel, an American high school for girls. After graduation, she taught Persian and English for a year at her school and was also invited to tutor the queen of the Pahlavi at court but she declined the offer, choosing instead to work at the Library of the Teacher Training College in Tehran. In 1934, she married one of her father’s acquaintances and moved to Kermanshah; the marriage, however, was dissolved in a few weeks and Parvin returned home. The first edition of her *dīvān* which her father had blocked before her marriage appeared in 1935. See Dominic Parviz Brookshaw, 2015. *Women Poets*, in

of garden imagery. However, Parvīn chooses a different stylistic technique known as ‘debate’ (*Munāzere*) to convey her interpretation of this concept.³ Parvīn’s debates are rather akin to a narrative or dramatic prose, in that they furnish a platform for the plurality of conflicting characters selected from a vast array of entities and endowed with intellectual, emotional and moral qualities to interact rather than being subordinated to the authorial voice of the poet. She composes these debates in the traditional form of *qet’e* (fragment)⁴ and *masnavī* (rhyming hemistiches)⁵ avoiding Persian new form (*še’r e nou*) altogether. Some critics have detected elements of both Khorāsānī and Iraqī styles in her debates; the dominant didactic tone echoes that of the masters of the classical period (Brookshaw: 304).⁶ Others have noticed instances of old-fashioned language in her debates with a tangibly archaic feel to them (304). Notwithstanding her classicism, the relative simplicity of Parvīn’s language in these debates combined with what Moayyad calls her natural and moderate use of rhetorical figures has preserved her popularity in Iran until today (184).

Despite several studies on Parvīn’s poetry, no research has yet treated the garden as an important allegorical construct in her debates.

Literature of the Early Twentieth Century from the Constitutional Period to Reza Shah, edited by Ali-Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, New York, I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd.

³ According to Seyed Gohrab (2014), the origin of *munāzera* goes back to pre-Islamic times; the most famous debate poem being the Middle Persian text *Drakht-i Āsū rīk* which depicts the arguments between a goat and a date palm. Later, the poet Abū Mansūr ‘Alī b. Ahmad Asadī of Tūs (born ca. 1010) includes *munāzara* in his *qasīdas*. Rather than commencing his *qasīdas* in *taghazzol*, he introduces disputes between day and night, heaven and earth, the bow and lance, and a Muslim and a Zoroastrian etc. See: Asghar Seyed-Gohrab (2014), *The Rose and the Wine: Dispute as a Literary Device in Classical Persian Literature*, “Iranian Studies”, 47(1), p. 69–85.

⁴ *Qet’a* is a one-stanza poem of at least four lines in which all the ‘even’ lines rhyme (abcb).

⁵ A prosodic variety where the rhyme changes for each *hemistiches* (aa bb cc dd). A popular vehicle for mystical verses of Attār and Rūmī, *masnavī* was also a favorite with Parvīn as its flexibility in length and topic allowed her to frame various moral anecdotes.

⁶ Epic panegyric Khorāsānī style (Eastern Persian style) marks the first period (from the ninth century to the second half of the twelfth century) in which “poetry aimed at *sahl-i mumtani* ‘or inimitable simplicity’, clarity of expression, and soft rhythm. Khorāsānī poets made limited use of Arabic jargon, compared to the next period of Persian poetry called *sabk i ‘Iraqi*, a lyrical style that uses mystical notions, which begins in the middle of the twelfth century in Western Persia and ends in the sixteenth century. See Ali Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry*, Boston, Brill, 2012.

The present study proposes to explore Parvīn’s debate poetry as an instance of classical Persian poetry characterized by an allegoric use of the garden as a place of learning and contemplation. We will argue that her allegorical garden is most often built upon an opposition between various characters, all personified and given a moral role (or roles) that might sometimes be portrayed inconsistently. As we shall see, the conventional Persian pair of lovers, the beautiful rose and the sweet-singing nightingale, with its broad range of earthly and divine symbolism, is at the center of this ‘garden clash’ motif, confronting other figures of this garden such as the thorn, water, the ant and the moon.

The Rose and the Nightingale

A striking feature of classical Persian gardens is the abundance of flower imagery (*gol*), an emblem of all that is feminine, fragile, and fading, most often associated with nightingale (*bolbol*), the next recurrent garden metaphor representing ‘a lover’ whose love for the rose is sometimes unrequited. In the spiritual gardens of mystical writing, the rose was declared “to be the manifestation of God’s glory” and “the sanction of religious experience” to which the nightingale, a metaphor of “the longing soul, is once and forever bound to love” (Schimmel, 1975: 299). Thus the innumerable roses and nightingales in Persian mystical poetry take on this metaphysical connotation of “soul-bird and divine rose” (299). Likewise, in the courtly gardens, the “rose’s fate foreshadows the passing not merely of earthly splendor, but of all that is beautiful” and the “nightingale’s lament arises from his knowledge that ‘there is no token of fidelity in the rose’s smile’” (Meisami: 249). Parvīn utilizes this conventional pair of lovers in several poems including “Today and tomorrow” to explore the significance of beauty in the spiritual journey as that which leads to divine love, staging a debate between a rose and a nightingale as representatives of two conflicting views on beauty: mundane vs. divine. This poem opens rather erotically in a garden at night, capturing a nightingale infatuated with the fine petals of the freshly-blooming rose:

The nightingale whispered to a flower one night,
saying: “There is a request I wish to make to you.

I have reached a decision to be united with you,
if you, too, are of the same view (119).

The poem, very soon, deviates from the romance genre by introducing the motif of ‘spiritual beauty’ into the tale that appears to

allude to a famous *ghazal* by Hāfez.⁷ Like the speaker in Hāfez's poem, the rose in "Today and tomorrow" conceives of love as a subtle feeling that does not stem from the physical realm but that requires a gift of "clear vision":

The flower said: "come again to the garden tomorrow,
to see what a fine spectacle there is".

If your purpose is to praise our beauty,
You will find many pretty faces there

Wherever you step you will find fine petals,
and on every side there is a delicate sweethearts...

Thus you will observe the hidden secrets,
if you have an eye with clear vision (119-120).

By the same token, in "The hidden flower," Parvīn looks at the spiritual vision of love and the ephemerality of human life through the image of a chaste rose that refuses the advances of a flirtatious nightingale in her quest for "the appreciation of the gardener" (316). Here, the invocation of 'the gardener' as the metaphor for God may allude to a Qur'anic verse referring to God as he who "caused lovely gardens to grow", (The ant: 60-61) – a view that, according to Meisami, informs Rūmī's garden imagery but is less obvious in that of Hafez (260).⁸

A flower concealed its face under a leaf,
And the nightingale said: "Hide not; for, you gladden our heart".

Don't make us burn with your separation,
I have been in love with you all my life.

The rose answered: "Be not surprised at my seclusion;
for, I conceal myself from evil eyes..."

"He who gets light-headed reduces his worth,
Thus this deal has frightened and made us heavy."

⁷ Wherefrom love ariseth is a hidden subtlety

Whose name neither the ruby lip nor the auburn hair is

The person's beauty is not the eye, nor the tress, nor the cheek, nor the mole

In this matter many a thousand subtlety heart-possessing is (Hāfez: 66).

⁸ For Rūmī, the gardener is God, "who knows the hidden nature of the seed as of the human soul", see Meisami: 260.

The flirt of oglers last one or two days;
But the appreciation of the gardener is enough for us” (316).

The rose and the thorn

The rose and the nightingale often co-occur with a variety of other garden imagery that also enjoys symbolic roles in Parvīn’s gardens. The first is the thorn which usually figures sorrow, tribulation, and passion; the thorn and the rose together depict “the antithesis of pain and pleasure, suffering and joy” (Cooper: 170). In Persian medieval literature, the thorn is “often associated with spiritual blindness, the incapacity of Reason, and the obscuring veils of physical existence” (Meisami, 1985: 243). Also, the man’s “perception of mortality is symbolized in the world garden by the thorn that, in the garden of love, figures the lover’s suffering (249)”; as Hafez reminds us, “without the calamity of the thorn, none plucked a rose”(456). Parvīn exploits the traditional significance of thorn in “A faultless flower”, introducing it as a ‘fault’ of the rose that vexes the nightingale:

At dawn a nightingale said to the red rose:
“Why do you have so many thorns around you?”

“Such a lovely and sweet-smelling flower as you
Should not have a thorn as companion.”

“For, such as association lowers your worth,
And disgraces anyone who comes close to you” (312).

Though argumentative by nature, “A faultless flower” displays a passive attitude towards the inevitable; a fatalistic motif recurring throughout Parvīn’s poetry that Zarrinkub (1999) traces as far back as Faxr od-Dīn e Gorgānī’s *vīs o rāmīn*, in which, the life of the lovers and their conflicts are referred to as inevitable events sealed before their birth. Fatalism also plays a dominant role in the poetry of later poets including Khayyam and Hāfez who claim supports for their views in the Qur’anic references to *qalam* (the Pen) and *lawh* (the Tablet), meaning that whatever occurs in the world was written by God with the Pen of the Divine Will (*qalam-e mašīyat*) on the Tablet of the eternal decree (*lawh-e qazā*). The same allusions to Qur’anic expressions such as *qazā wa qadar* (fate and destiny) that inform classical poetry also abound in that of Parvīn, illustrating the perennial influence of this motif in Persian poetic tradition (Zarrinkub: 396-398). If we interpret “The faultless flower” on these fatalistic grounds, we may conclude that God decreed that every rose (human) must have a thorn (fault) for “only God is the faultless flower” (314):

A Rose is obliged to have a thorn as companion;
For, the garden and meadow are ruled by fate...

“What other expectation can one have from this world?
For the firmament is most audacious.”

Don't complain of the scales of destiny
For it always diminishes the weight of everyone...

When the sphere offers you a companion, sit by it,
And what the Lord considers proper, is right (313).

The theme of human imperfection recurs in “A flower and a thorn”, a debate between the rose and the thorn as two metaphors for arrogance and humility which begins thus:

One morning in a garden a flower said to a thorn:
“Aren't you ashamed of your ugly face?”

A garden is a spot for a rose, lily, and sweet basil.
A thorn had better find a place in a salt-marsh

Anyone who lacks colour, odour, and fruit
Is dejected, sorrowful, and disgraced...

The thorn laughed and said: “you have seen no hardship;
For, anyone who suffers pain is distressed” (322).

As evident in the numerous references to fate (“sphere”), the motif of predestination dominates the present poem too. Furthermore, the use of the flower as a symbol of transient life in the last line of the extract, which recalls the imagery used by Omar Khayyam in his quatrains, intensifies the gloomy fatalism overshadowing the poem.⁹

“I am placed here, not with my own consent,
And if you are wise, laugh not at the fallen one.”

The sphere does not look upon a recluse favourably
And such a hope or expectation is futile...

⁹Oh, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown forever dies (xxvii).

The decorator of the sphere did not make up my face
So, don't ask me why I have no suitors...

Whether we are a thorn or a flower, annihilation is the end,
And no flower remains eternally in the world's garden (323-324).

For all her classicism, Parvīn is not consistent in the use of garden imagery, purposefully reversing their significance whenever the context requires so. As her next poem "The unworthy" testifies she occasionally represents the thorn as the snob that, ironically, attributes its "ugly face", "unpleasant smell" and "uneven leaves" to a freshly-bloomed flower:

"Your red colour has dazzled my eyes,
And your ugly face has made the air gloomy."

"Your unpleasant smell has wearied me,
What design and purpose was in this?"

This fruitless bough of yours is a disgrace,
And your uneven leaves teach a lesson

You are full of defects, while we are perfect,
We are noble, and you are only a ruffian (358).

Though the thorn's exaggerated account of its merits and that of flower's defects is fairly comical, its greater aim is to offer constructive criticism, using wit to draw attention to social abuses and lack of empathy, a critical view that characterizes much of Parvīn's debates. As a poet whose writing career coincided with the tyrannical reign of Reza Shah (1925-1941), the period when many Persian poets wrote poetry with prince-flattering contents, Parvīn chooses to address the ethical issues quietly, hiding behind the allegorical imagery as "this disguised mode of expression" allowed her to vent her feelings of dissatisfaction at human follies (Moayyad 164). To amuse the reader, her treatment of these figures is initially witty and humorous but her tone often shifts to stark sarcasm as is the case with the rest of "The unworthy" which, in retaliation, the flower reminds the thorn of its own "ugly" and "abject" state, thereby directing the signification of the title to the latter:

The flowered laughed at it and said: "You unkind one,
Though you are ugly, your words are right..."

how can we whose origin has been pure,

contaminate your existence?

Have you ever seen a thorn shy away from a flower?
Or seen a flower to become a thorn and hurt others?

Your mates are abject and none else,
How can a flower be worthy for you, capricious one?

“When one considers a worthy one to be unworthy,
He is bound to be vexed at his presence” (359).

The rose and water

An emblematic “source of all potentialities in existence,” water is associated with birth, fertility, refreshment, and the fountain of life (Cooper: 188). It plays an important symbolic role in many religions, including Islam which refers to water in several Qur’anic verses as what “revives the earth,” from which classical poets might have derived the motif of ‘water of life’ (Bees: 65). For instance, in his epic romance *Haft Paikar*, Nezāmī compares his beautiful Egyptian hero, Māhān, to a thirsty man in quest for water: “As soon as Māhān heard the words of Khizr,... a thirsty man, he saw the Font of Life” (212). Similarly, Hāfez likens his prince’s sword to “the stream of the country,” exhorting him to plant “the tree of justice” and pluck “the root of ill-wishers” (390). The motif of water appears in Parvīn’s “A red rose” in the figure of a ‘cloud’ which also signifies “fertility” and “compassion” by virtue of its reviving rain (Cooper: 38). This poem opens in a sunny garden where a fading flower entreats a passing cloud (*abr*) for some raindrops to survive:

A red rose was withered one day by the heat
And the bright sun took away its colour.

In the moment of being sick and withering
A small cloud was passing above it.

When the flower saw that passing cloud,
It cried aloud and became impatient,

Saying: “O life-giving cloud, linger a little;
For lack of moisture has taken away my hue...

“That same nightingale who had acted as a dear friend,
And had leapt on around me joyfully all the time;”

“On seeing his beloved in such a distress,
Departed from the garden not to return” (318).

Sadly, when the cloud returns to rain the rose was already dead. In a sense the raining cloud can be seen to serve as a metaphor for the resourceful people who hesitate to help those in need (the rose); the last line of the following extract, “what medicine can a doctor give to a dead man” which figuratively echoes the ‘moral’ of the tale, i.e., ‘help before it is too late,’ reinforces this interpretation. As with most of Parvīn’s allegorical gardens, melancholia is the most salient feature of “A red rose,” illustrated in the fading image of the rose and the consequent infidelity and the abandon of the nightingale, as well as the unceasing tears of the cloud at the end of the poem:

When that cloud came back again to scatter pearls,
It looked around for that lost rose.

It saw a broken flower, lacking all hue and odour,
full of expectation and full of aspiration.

It washed her face with unceasing tears,
but what medicine can a doctor give to a dead man? (319-321)

Water also recurs in Parvīn’s allegorical gardens in the figure of ‘running water’, a popular metaphor with several classical poets, particularly Hāfez who used it to refer to ‘the passing of time’¹⁰. Parvīn utilizes the same motif in “The flower’s message”, capturing a beautiful rose anxious to send a secret message to her beloved nightingale, through ‘the running water’ which refuses the task on account of its own ‘fleeting nature’ and the flower’s ‘brief existence’:

A flower said to the running water: “I want you,
To tell the secret which I’m uttering to the nightingale”

If he sends a message, bring it for me,
And if he prostrates himself, wash off his dust.”

“Tell him that we are constantly gazing at the door;
for him to come tomorrow and smell us.”

The water said: “such a task is useless to give to the running water,
For you won’t find me even if you search a life-span.”

¹⁰ On the margin of the passing stream, sit and the passing of life behold
For this example of the passing world is for us enough.
See also Hāfez, *The Dīvān*, translated by Henry Wilberforce Clark, London:
Octagon Press, 1974: 268.

“send your message by another messenger,
Since your hope in me leads to nothing.”

“Once I pass by this spot, I can never return,
And once you are withered, you won’t grow again” (151)

The nightingale and the ant

Despite the recurrence of the ‘transient life’ motif in Parvīn’s poetry, her perception of which never leads to the doctrine of the *Carpe Diem*, “a Latin phrase from one of Horace’s *Odes*” meaning “seize the day” which has become “the name for a very common literary *motif*, especially in lyric poetry” (Abrams and Harpham, 2009: 31). In a typical *carpe diem* poem, the speaker emphasizes that “life is short and time is fleeting in order to urge his auditor – who is often represented as a virgin reluctant to change her condition – to make the most of present pleasures” (31). A set of variations on this motif has spread throughout Persian poetic tradition; one notable work being *The Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyam which communicates “the poignant sadness – or else desperation – of the pursuit of pleasures under the sentence of inevitable death” (31). A brilliant moral counter to the *carpe diem* motif could be discerned in the debates of Parvīn, particularly in “The nightingale and the ant” which captures a nightingale in a spring garden, joyfully singing and flying over the rose bush, invites an ant to seize the moment:

A nightingale enamoured with the beauty of a flower
Was full of joy in the spring season.

It entered a meadow and sang a beautiful song,
And danced gleefully and opened its wings.

It flew here and there with ecstasy,
And perched at last on a rose-bush

Thus when it was close to the sweetheart,
It noticed an ant at the foot of a tree

The enamoured bird looked at the ant
With pride and surprise for some moments.

And said laughingly: “O you ignorant one,
I have never seen an ant so short-sighted as you.”

“Now is the time of joy, not work,
And not the time of grief and hoarding” (132).

The ant, symbolic of ‘diligence,’ opposes this epicurean vision of the nightingale, reminding the idle lover of the hard times (“riot of autumn wind”):

The ant turned to it and gave this answer;
“You are negligent, O impatient and frenzied lover...

“So, O friend, like me build a dwelling,
And prepare a place for your means of living...

“A flower is your guest only for a day or two,
Since the riot of autumn wind will carry it away” (132-133).

As the tale advances, warm seasons draw to a close and the flower fades away, leaving the nightingale heartbroken and in desperate need of food and shelter to survive. In vain the epicurean bird seeks the ant’s aid:

The ant said: “I have nothing for you in my house,
For, a sponger of an ant can only be an ant”

“Go away, for, I have shut my door,
For, now is not work time, and I am very tired” (135).

The motif of season, the nightingale and the rose utilized in this poem abounds in Persian poetry; particularly in the quatrains of Khayyam for whom the Nightingale seems to be “the Bird of Youth” which upon the disappearance of the spring and the rose, “leaves our branches, flies off beyond mortal sight and perception” (Maiti: 508). To wash down the care of this evanescent life, he seeks solace in “wine,” a metaphor for the spiritual ecstasy which, according to Schimmel (1975), signifies the obliteration of human attributes and annihilation of man in the object of adoration; “Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring,” exhorts Khayyam (VII). Parvīn is no less haunted by this sense of impending doom, as the rose figuratively reminds the nightingale, “we are betrothed to the wind of autumn” (316), yet her perception of mortality is hardly disguised in any epicurean imagery. For all her yearning for the ‘world’s gardener,’ Parvīn considers life in terms of small and steady efforts: “I am a worker on the earth... and my wage is what destiny has given me” (E’tesāmī: 133) – another view inspired by Qur’anic teachings that warn “everyman receives only what he makes an effort for” (The Star: 39).

The nightingale and the moon

Traditionally represented as the feminine power (queen) with the sun as the masculine (king), the moon “is the eye of the night as the sun is the eye of the day (Cooper: 106-107). In medieval courtly gardens, the moon (*mah*, *māh*) generally figures ‘the lustre and the beauty of the beloved,’¹¹ a motif with which Parvīn opens “Link of light,” featuring a nightingale in a garden praising the ‘moon’ as the most glorious celestial light by virtue of which the beloved flower receives illumination at night. This light-hearted flattery, very soon, turns into a heated argument as the nightingale calls the daily disappearance of the moon a ‘selfish’ act:

In a garden once at night
A nightingale whispered to the moon saying:

“when at night you remove the veil from your face,
The visage of a flower receives illumination”

There is nothing more pleasant for me
Than to see the dews on the petals for a while...

“Be kind and tell me why you sit on such a lofty place;
Since it is not fitting for the good to be selfish”

“You are a light, and no light sleeps with dark
And no doctor turns away from the sick” (153)

The lengthy response of the moon is strikingly didactic in its dignified tone and allusions to religious and literary texts. The early metaphorical reference to the moon as the ‘reflection of the sun’s glory,’ which appears to allude to the *Qur’anic* verses describing the moon as the trail of the sun,¹² introduces the moon as an emblem of ‘modesty’ and ‘gratitude’. Shortly afterward, the figurative use of the moon as ‘the gleaner’ to the sun’s harvest, recalling the sowing imagery in a *ghazal* by Hāfez, adds on to its instructive and moral significance:¹³

The moon said: “In facing the glory of the world-illuminating sun,
I have no choice but to go to sleep.”

¹¹ O the splendor of the moon-beauty from the illumined face of Thine
The lustre of beauteousness from the chin-dimple of Thine. See also Hafez, *The Dīvān*, 12.

¹² By the sun and its radiance, and the moon as it trails after it... (*The Qur’an*, The Sun, 1-2: 595)

¹³ The green expanse of sky, I beheld and the sickle of the new moon/To me, recollection came of my own sown-field and of the time of reaping (Hafez, 407)

“This brightness and purity is not due to myself,
This light is the reflection of the sun’s glory.”

All the rays that you see in me belong to him,
And here I am a gleaner, and he owns the harvest (154).

The debate concludes soon after the moon states the overall didactic theme, “he who humbled himself becomes lofty” (154), by inviting the reader to reflect on the tragedy of life in the light of ‘the inevitability of fate’, ‘evanescence of life’, ‘finality of death’, ‘passage of time’ and ‘importance of human efforts;’ in a sense summarizing all the motifs examined in this study:

“Our lot is to be hidden and evident now and then;
And this order has been given by the revolving sphere”

“From the beginning we are worried about performing our task;
For, time is a lender and we are debtors.”

“When the passage of time makes us rich,
Next day on its demand we must pay it back” (155).

Conclusion

The poet considered in this study, separated by time and the nature of the genre from her medieval precursors, represents an individual approach to the writing of poetic allegory; the differences in her style could be discerned by comparing her use of a common source of imagery, the garden. She sets out to construct a poetic garden out of many small ‘debates’ between varied entities, each serves a moral purpose. This ‘garden clash’ motif finds its formal expression in her extensive use of personification; an important metaphorical device in medieval Persian poetry that does not enjoy the same prominence as an allegorical technique as it does in the poetry of Parvīn. With most Persian poets, as Meisami argues, “individual personifications are rarely sustained and remain on the level of tropes; their cumulative effect is to people the poems with an abundance of lively images” (240). Here, in contrast, all the lively images are contrived to signify a second, correlated order of signification, clearly witnessed in the treatment of the rose and the nightingale along with all the other garden imagery examined in this study.

Parvīn’s knowledge of classical Persian literature, however, enriched her poetic garden with several important motifs including fatalism, evident in her ample metaphorical references to fate; as well as the motif of transient life, often represented in the images of the rose and

the running water. Though in formal terms these motifs figure within the same religious framework that informed those of her predecessors, they often lead to a different conclusion. As indicated earlier, the failure to find a logical answer to the question of mortality leads the mathematician-poet Khayyam to the hollowness of life and “the sublimity of the *carpe diem* motif” (maiti: 491). His lyricist successor, Hafez, welcomes the same epicurean doctrine “from the door of joy” and writes: “Reckon plunder; and, in the rose-garden, drink wine: For till another week, the rose is not” (162). Meisami reminds us that the exhortation to “reckon plunder” and “drink wine” is not to be interpreted as “an invitation to self-indulgence but to the wise employment of life’s brief span in dedicated service on the path of love” (250). Regardless of the disputed mystical signification of ‘wine,’ ‘cup’ or ‘goblet’ as metaphors for ‘spiritual ecstasy,’ such imagery is generally lacking in the poems discussed in this study. For all her spiritual reflection, the temporariness Parvīn is concerned with is not the kind that could lead to quietism and inaction; as the ant repeatedly urges the nightingale “Rise and plaster your roof with mud” for “work has more weight and worth than words” (E’tesāmī: 133).

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The Narrative of Manufactured Division and Artificial Segregation in *Train to Pakistan* and *Cracking India*

Sheikh Zobaer*

Abstract:

Indian author Khushwant Singh's novel *Train to Pakistan*, and Pakistani author Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Cracking India* recount the events of the partition of India. Both the novels are written against the backdrop of India's partition from different perspectives. The setting of *Train to Pakistan* is a rural Indian village called Mano Majra close to the India-Pakistan border in Punjab, whereas *Cracking India* mostly depicts the Pakistani city Lahore during the tumultuous period of partition. Despite this difference, both the authors are in dialogue with each other in terms of their treatment of India's partition where they highlight how the partition disrupted communal harmony and incited violence in the Indian subcontinent. Both the authors speak to each other when it comes to the portrayal of India's socio-cultural diversity, the increasing communal tension during partition, riots, and mass migration. In this essay, I will investigate how both the authors are in dialogue with each other when it comes to the portrayal of India's partition through which they highlight the negative outcomes of the partition and call into question the success of the partition of India.

Keywords: Partition, Violence, Diaspora, Religion, South Asia

India's Partition: A Brief Context

Train to Pakistan is the first partition novel in English which Khushwant Singh wrote from his personal experience (Roy, 2010: 34). The novel vividly captures the tragedy of India's partition in 1947. It embodies an extremely powerful literary representation of India's partition from the perspectives of ordinary Indian people who either suffered during the partition, or caused others to suffer. *Train to Pakistan* tells an epic tale of solidarity and communalism, sacrifice and vengeance, trust and betrayal, and above all, it tells the story of people's untold suffering emanating from the mass hysteria of the partition. *Cracking India*, on the other hand, tells a similar story of the partition from the perspectives of people who used to live in present-day Pakistan during the partition of India. With *Cracking India*, Bapsi Sidhwa

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“attempted to give a Pakistani perspective to the Partition of India” (Roy, 2010: 64). The novel is narrated in the form of an adult Pakistani woman’s recollection of childhood memories during the tumultuous period of partition. One of the highlights of this novel is the representation of violence against women and children during partition.

The partition was a tumultuous period of extreme violence and mass migration as “at least sixteen million people – Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims – were forced to flee their homes and became refugees; at least two million were killed in ethnic violence” (Daiya, 2008: 6). According to the famous Muslim leader of Indian National Congress and India’s first minister of education Abul Kalam Azad, “the whole of the Punjab, East and West, was becoming a graveyard of destruction and death” (Azad, 1988: 228). Such tragedy of the partition is successfully captured by both novels. Both authors give authentic and vivid description of communal violence and mass migration that affected the lives of millions of people in the Indian subcontinent during the partition of India. In this regard, both Khushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidhwa are in dialogue with each other. Apart from portraying communal violence, the novels depict how life was in the undivided India, and how people used to live in an environment of peaceful coexistence despite their differences with regards to religion, cast, and creed. However, the partition changed it all. As the partition approached, agitation grew among the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs in India. Suspicion and mistrust took the place of solidarity and brotherhood, and such rift between the people of different faiths eventually became a deadly catalyst for a series of communal riots so vicious in magnitude that they left an indelible scar in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Both *Train to Pakistan* and *Cracking India* masterfully capture this grim picture of India’s partition.

India before Partition

India, throughout its history, has always been considered to be a melting pot of a multitude of cultures. Socio-cultural diversity has always been a significant feature of undivided India. The glorious legacy of assimilation and peaceful coexistence of different cultures goes back centuries prior to India’s partition in 1947. People of various religious, ethnic, and socio-cultural backgrounds coexisted in united India. As a result, diversity became a fundamental feature of Indian society. This significant aspect of India’s history is highlighted in Jawaharlal Nehru’s (1994) famous book *The Discovery of India*. Nehru points out that the unparalleled cultural diversity of undivided India is the most remarkable facet of the “long panorama of India’s history” (p. 52). Eminent politician and postcolonial scholar Shashi Tharoor also highlights this fact in his highly acclaimed book *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*. Tharoor (2017) points out that communal and religious

harmony was a key feature of India before partition because “Indians of all religious communities had long lived intertwined lives” (p. 113). Islam blended with Indian culture quietly nicely, as “Islam itself got transformed by India, intermeshing with it and ultimately being absorbed by it as an integer” – a process that took “almost a millennium and a half to evolve” (Singh, 2009: 4). In her book *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan*, renowned Oxford historian Yasmin Khan (2017) emphasizes on the fact that the Hindus and the Muslims, in most part, coexisted peacefully in undivided India. Khan points out that the forced migration of millions of people and the subsequent refugee crisis after the partition irreversibly disturbed the socio-cultural as well as the political fabric of the Indian subcontinent (p. 187). This reality was captured by both the novels in question. In undivided India, people of different religions coexisted for centuries despite their differences, and this fact calls into question the two-nation theory and interrogates whether or not the ultimate segregation in the form of India’s partition in 1947 was warranted. Both novels in question show the coexistence of people of different socio-cultural, ethnic, and religious background in undivided India, and how, because of such diversity, the implementation of the two-nation theory was practically impossible without causing unprecedented communal violence and disturbing the socio-cultural as well as the geopolitical fabric of the Indian subcontinent.

The small, remote village which is the setting of *Train to Pakistan* is called Mano Majra. The village is situated close to India-Pakistan border, a village that is “lost in the remote reaches of the frontier” (Singh, 2016: 2). Similar to many other villages in India, people of different faiths, casts, and creeds live in Mano Majra. In this village, Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims live in peace with mutual respect and a shared tolerance for each other’s religions until the unhinged frenzy of partition violently triumphs over solidarity, brotherhood, and sanity. Religious freedom is present in Mano Majra, as along with a mosque for the Muslims, there are also two gurdwaras or Sikh temples for the people of the Sikh faith. It is also important to note that despite the presence of Sikhism, Hinduism, and Islam in Mano Majra, the influence of organized religion is not very deep-rooted as a “three-foot slab of sandstone that stands upright under a keeker tree” is considered to be a “local deity, the *deo* to which all the villagers – Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, or pseudo-Christian – repair secretly whenever they are in a special need of blessing” (Singh, 2016: 2-3). Meet Singh is the Sikh guru in this village, and Imam Baksh is the imam of the mosque who is also the community leader of the local Muslims. Both Meet Singh and Imam Baksh are respected equally by all. Meet Sings’ remarks manifests the respect and tolerance people in Mano Majra have for one another’s religions:

“Everyone is welcome to his religion. Here next door is a Muslim mosque. When I pray to my Guru, Uncle Imam Baksh calls to Allah” (Singh, 2016: 39). As Mano Majra is a small village, people of all classes and religions depend on one another. Ram Lal is a wealthy Hindu villager who lends money to the locals, the Sikhs own most of the farming lands, and the Muslims are predominantly tenants in Mano Majra who also “share the tilling with other owners” (Singh, 2016: 2). A few families of sweepers also live in Mano Majra “whose religion is uncertain” as they do not strictly follow any particular religion (Singh, 2016: 3).

Religious identity of people has never caused division among the villagers in Mano Majra, and even during the tumultuous period of partition when one village after another start to succumb to communal violence, Mano Majra stands tall against communalism. Despite the outbreak of riots in nearby villages, the Sikhs in Mano Majra vow to defend their Muslims neighbors. Meet Singh promises Imam Baksh: “As long as we are here, nobody will dare to touch you. We die first and then you can look after yourselves” (Singh, 2016: 133). However, as communal violence escalates in other villages, the Muslims of Mano Majra are eventually left with no other option but to evacuate. But such displacement is anything but desirable as Imam Baksh laments: “What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst you as brothers” (Singh, 2016: 133). As the Muslims depart, the “Sikh and Muslim villagers fell into each other’s arms and wept like children” (Singh, 2016: 135). It is evident that people of different religions lived peacefully in Mano Majra, and that religion had never been a catalyst for division until the partition.

Bapsi Sidhwa’s *Cracking India* is quite different from *Train to Pakistan* when it comes to the settings of these two novels. *Train to Pakistan* unfolds in a rural setting, whereas the setting in *Cracking India* is much broader. *Cracking India* depicts life both in urban and rural setting, and captures the religious and cultural diversity of the part of Punjab that now belongs to Pakistan. The novel highlights the diversity of the historic city Lahore where Parsis, Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus live together peacefully prior to the partition. Lenny, the child narrator of this novel, is from a Parsi family. Mr. Singh is one of her closest family friends who is a Sikh. Her ayah Shanta is a Hindu, and Ayah’s lover Ice-candy Man is a Muslim. Here, people of four different faiths have friendly relationships with one another, and Lenny’s family functions as a microcosmic representation of the entertained life that people of different faiths in Lahore had before the partition. The town where the narrator lives in is a place where tolerance, reverence, and friendship among people of different religions are present. Local Muslims go to the Badshahi mosque, Sikhs go to the Data Shahib’s shrine, and Hindus go

to the Hindu temple. All three places of worship for people of three different faiths are situated in close proximity, which is symbolic of the peaceful coexistence of people regardless of their religious differences. The bond among Muslims, Parsis, Sikhs, and Hindus that exists among Ayah's friends and acquaintances is emblematic of the communal and religious harmony in Lahore before the partition. One of Ayah's Muslim friends is Masseur, who says that "there are no difference among friends" of different religions, as the Sikh faith originated in the Indian subcontinent "to create Hindu-Muslim harmony," which is why "the holy Quran lies next to the Grantha Sahib in the Golden Temple" (Sidhwa, 1991: 140).

Just like *Train to Pakistan* portrays a remote village called Mano Majra, *Cracking India* depicts a small village called Pir Pindo, which is far away from Lahore. Like Mano Majra, Pir Pindo, too, embodies communal harmony as people of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh faith live peacefully in this village. *Train to Pakistan* shows how the Sikhs in Mano Majra are committed to saving their Muslim neighbors amidst communal violence, and how devastated they feel when the Muslims are being evacuated. Similarly, *Cracking India* shows how the Sikhs in Pir Pindo vow to save their Muslim friends from riots. Jagjeet Singh is one of many young Sikhs in Pir Pindo who are ready to put their lives on the line to ensure that their "Muslim brothers" are safe (Sidhwa, 1991: 65). This is how both novels capture the communal harmony, unity, and brotherhood that prevailed among people in both India and Pakistan prior to the partition in 1947. This is a significant meeting-point between these two novels. However, unlike *Train to Pakistan*, *Cracking India* portrays characters who are aware of the pathetic charade that the British colonial rule is. One such character is Mr. Singh, who is a friend of the narrator's parents. Mr. Singh is passionate about India's independence and accuses the colonial administration of using religious difference to play a "divide-and-rule monkey tricks" with the people of India so that they remain busy fighting among themselves while the colonial administration remains unchallenged (Sidhwa, 1991: 72). Mr. Singh passionately utters: "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh: we all want the same thing! We want independence!" (Sidhwa, 1991: 71). This is how *Cracking India* captures communal unity among people in undivided India.

Both novels in discussion highlight the fact that the inhabitants of undivided India were living in a peaceful coexistence despite their religious and communal differences. They had reverence and tolerance for one another's religions. Community-feeling and Companionship triumphed over difference and division among people. Unfortunately, the partition upended such long-established social stability. A number of political analysts claim that the British colonial administration

implemented a divide-and-rule strategy to incite religious conflicts and to prevent unity among the people of undivided India. Historian Bimal Prasad (2001) maintains that such calculated incitement of religious conflict was the British colonial administration's "strategic position" to deter a mass unity among people of all religions in India (p. 257). He also asserts that "because of their strategic position, the British could easily play one community against the other" and this is something they "always did" (Prasad, 2001: 257). Renowned Indian politician Shashi Tharoor (2017), in his much-acclaimed book *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*, argues that the British colonial administration used religion "as a useful means of divide and rule" to create animosity between the Hindus and the Muslims as a "deliberate strategy" to thwart any kind of united resistance against colonial rule (p. 111). Tharoor (2017) also maintains that the British rulers had "a particular talent for creating and exaggerating particularist identities and drawing ethnically-based administrative lines all their colonies" (p. 102). It is manifestly evident that the British rulers deliberately augmented communal division to weaken the unity among people as Sengupta (2016) argues that "even before the partition of 1947, the politics of communalism complicated the nationalist dream of freeing the country [India]" (p. 16). Farooqui (2015) is also in dialogue with Prasad and Tharoor as he claims that "colonial rule in India was based upon the strategy of divide and rule," and the partition of India followed by unprecedented communal violence "demonstrate[s] the success of the strategy" (p. 49).

This Hindu-Muslim division provided sparks and tinder to violence and communalism which eventually led to a political crisis making the partition of India inevitable. However, many critics questioned whether or not dividing India on religious ground was a pragmatic solution as it was virtually impossible to divide India on the basis of religious majority because of the century-long legacy of Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus living together, sharing a common territory. This issue is addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru (1994) in his famous work *The Discovery of India*. In this book, Nehru asserts that it is impossible to "separate the followers of these two principal religions [the Muslims and the Hindus] of India, for they are spread out all over the country" (p. 528). This is a phenomenon that both novels in discussion explore quite extensively. The novels show that since people of different religions used to live together in undivided India, and since there was no absolute territorial domination by the followers of any particular religion as such, the idea of dividing India based on religious majority was not pragmatic. This is the reason why as the partition approached, religious tension grew among people of different religions which eventually led to a series of violent communal riots that took the lives of millions, and forced

million more to migrate, giving rise to one of history's most tragic humanitarian crises ever.

Religious and Political Tension during the Partition

As religious tension started to heighten during partition, mistrust, agitation, and suspicion started to rise among the people of undivided India threatening religious and communal solidarity. Many who had always been for unity, became communal. *Train to Pakistan* vividly captures this tragic fact. The villagers in Mano Majra have never been communal, but many of them become so when the news of riots in nearby villages reaches Mano Majra. The entire village descends into "a heavy brooding silence," as "everyone felt his neighbor's hand against him" (Singh, 2016: 124). Muslims, being the minority in this village, become vulnerable to retaliation as Sikhs and Hindus in Muslim-majority villages are being persecuted. Imam Baksh, "for the first time in the memory of Mano Majra," does not call for the evening prayer from the mosque. Many local Sikhs in Mano Majra become livid as they hear harrowing accounts of brutality against the Sikhs in Pakistan at the hands of Muslims. They become "sullen and angry," and start to agitate others by preaching hateful messages like "never trust a Muslim," and "Muslims [have] no loyalties" (Singh, 2016: 128). Many Sikhs bring up history to fan the flame and claim that "all through the Muslim period of Indian history," Sikhs have been persecuted by Muslims for "refusing to accept Islam" (Singh, 2016: 128). The angry Sikhs say: "What are we to do with all these pigs [Muslims] we have with us? They have been eating our salt for generations and see what they have done! We have treated them like our own brothers. They have behaved like snakes" (K. Singh 130). When a "trainload of Sikhs massacred by Muslims" (Singh, 2016: 128) appears in Mano Majra, many incensed local Sikhs vow to take revenge by attacking a Pakistan-bound train of Muslim refugees claiming that "a Muslim knows no argument but the sword" (Singh, 2016: 158). As a result, it appears to the Muslims that as if "every Sikh in Mano Majra" has become "a stranger with evil intent. His long hair and beard appeared barbarous, his kripān menacingly anti-Muslim" (Singh, 2016: 128). The narrator recalls that after such tragic turn of events, the Muslims who would say: "What have we to do with Pakistan?" (Singh, 2016, p. 133), found Pakistan to be "a refuge where there were no Sikhs" (Singh, 2016: 128).

Cracking India also captures a similar picture of communal and religious tension during partition quite vividly. Much like *Train to Pakistan*, *Cracking India*, too, holds a pellucid depiction of how hatred and sectarianism triumph over communal solidarity. The child narrator Lenny, despite being too young to understand the ongoing communal

tension, is able to realize that the Muslims, the Hindus, and the Sikhs in Lahore are not friendly with one another anymore. They no longer enjoy each other's company in the Queen's Garden anymore. The Sikhs in Pir Pindo village, angry and frustrated, declare that they will not "live with the Mussulmans [Muslims] if there is to be a Pakistan" (Sidhwa, 1991: 116). This sudden tension among the Sikhs and the Muslims emanating from the prospect of partition eventually turns into violence when India's partition becomes an ineluctable destiny. On one hand, the Sikhs vow to "fight to the last man" to make sure that "the Muslim swine" do not get the opportunity to carve out Pakistan (Sidhwa, 1991: 143); on the other hand, the Muslims double down on their demand of Pakistan and threaten that they will "play Holi with their [the Sikhs] blood" (Sidhwa, 1991: 144). Just like the way the Sikhs of Mano Majra village in *Train to Pakistan* bring up the history of Muslim violence against the Sikhs, in *Cracking India*, the Muslims of Lahore also recall the memories violence committed against the Muslims by the Sikhs. The Muslims of Lahore refer to the Sikh "tradition of violence", mentioning how they "butchered every single Mussulmans [Muslims] from Ambala to Amritsar" just a century ago during the final days of the Mughal empire (Sidhwa, 1991: 140). The Hindus of Lahore also become the victims of Muslim hatred as major Muslims characters including Masseur and Ice-candy-man are convinced that the Hindu leaders of the Congress will manipulate Viceroy Mountbatten's decisions in favor of the Hindus (Sidhwa, 1991: 99). They are also reluctant to put their trust on Gandhi's leadership, and call him a "non-violent violence monger" whose "business [is] to suit his tongue to the moment" (Sidhwa, 1991: 100). This is how *Cracking India* portrays the unexpected decline of communal harmony and the alarming rise of communalism among the inhabitants of Lahore just before the partition of the Indian subcontinent.

The characters in both novels show a great deal of political awareness. The Sikh and the Hindus support the Indian National Congress led by Nehru, while most of the Muslims rally behind Jinnah-led Muslim League. This is precisely why the rivalry between the Congress and the Muslim League affects the stability of communal harmony in these novels. *Cracking India* shows how the Muslims despise the Congress, and more specifically, the party's Hindu leaders. Being a Muslim, Ice-candy-man hates the Congress and believes that Nehru is a "sly" politician who will "walk off with the lion's share" for the Hindus by manipulating Viceroy Mountbatten's decision (Sidhwa, 1991: 141). The local gardener, who is also a Muslim, is convinced that the Congress "didn't like Muslim League's victory in the Punjab elections," and Masseur, "with histrionic fury," calls Gandhi, Nehru, and Vallabhbai Patel "bastards" (Sidhwa, 1991: 99). *Train to Pakistan* portrays how the Sikhs in Mano Majra despise the Muslim League and

the idea of Pakistan. Even police officers, for whom it is imperative to be above communalism, show their biases. Iqbal – an atheist social worker – is arrested under the suspicion of being an undercover “Muslim League worker” after the sub-inspector finds out that Iqbal is circumcised (Singh, 2016: 69). The sub-inspector labels Iqbal as a “political agitator” and contemptuously says: “You are a Muslim. You go to Pakistan” (Singh, 2016: 77). Through the portrayal of characters who are politically aware, both Khushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidhwa highlight the fact that during the tumultuous period of India’s partition, people in India were clearly divided into two opposite camps: one group supported the Congress, and the other group rooted for the Muslim League. Many historians argue that the provincial election in 1937 rendered a fatal blow to the Congress-ML relationship, and subsequently to the Hindu-Muslim relationship in the Indian subcontinent as well. After the election, the Congress “offered a share of government to the Muslim League politicians in UP only if they ceased to function as a separate group” (Talbot & Singh, 2009: 32), and such “suicidal condition” given by the Congress to the Muslim League was a “blunder of the first order” because such decision forced the Muslims to think of the Congress as a “worse boggy than British raj had ever been” (Hodson, 1993: 67). “By the end of 1946, it was clear that there was no possibility of conciliation or agreement between the Congress and the League” (Panigrahi, 2004: 338).

Many critics believe that the Muslim League-Congress political conflict played a significant part in the partition of India. Ali (2009) points out that Jinnah joined Muslim League and left Congress because “he realized that Muslim interests would be difficult to protect under a Congress dominated by Conservative Hindus” (p. 84). Jinnah also believed that the Muslim League must be “turned into a mass movement” if it wanted to be “effective” as a “Muslim organization” (Ali, 2009: 84). Jawaharlal Nehru, On the other hand, “often labeled the [Muslim] League as a reactionary organization” (Ali, 2009: 82). Nehru maintained that the “alleged animosity between Hindus and Muslims” was a colonial ploy by the ruling British “to divide the Indian people to prevent them from uniting against the imperial power” (Embree, 1987: 49). Nehru also believed that “religious identity was irrelevant to the struggle of freedom” (Embree, 1987: 49). It is clear that Jinnah and Muslim League did not trust the Congress to protect the rights of the Muslims, while Nehru and the Congress thought the exact opposite. Such conflict of interest between these two parties, also among the Hindus and the Muslims in general, became a significant precursor of the partition. This phenomenon is captured by both novels in question, as they address this issue by portraying characters who have political awareness, and therefore, are influenced by politics.

Partition and Communal Violence

During India's partition, the entire subcontinent was ravaged by communal violence which was "unprecedented" both in terms of "scale and method" leading to one of history's biggest human migrations with disastrous consequences (Pandey, 2001: 2). The British rulers could do nothing as "unprecedented communal violence engulfed India" (Panigrahi, 2004: 339). Shashi Tharoor argues that Britain had to quit India because it could no longer afford to hold on to India due to the economic collapse Britain suffered after the Second World War. "Bled, bombed and battered for six years, Britain could divide but it could no longer rule" (Tharoor, 2017: 146). Britain "wanted to cut and run," and was "prepared to 'cut' the country [India] quite literally before running" (Tharoor, 2017: 138). As Britain's first priority was to quit India by dividing the region on religious ground, the colonial administration hardly took into consideration the consequences of such forced, artificial segregation. Britain adopted the partition of India as its official policy to quit India, and this policy gave the British an escape route while the entire Indian subcontinent descended into communal violence of unforeseen magnitude. "Over a million people died in the savagery that bookended the freedom of India and Pakistan; some 17 million were displaced, and countless properties destroyed and looted" (Tharoor, 2017: 144). Communal violence started like wildfire and spread like chain reaction largely among the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs. The bordering areas between India and Pakistan were the sites of the most gruesome incidents of communal riots. Millions of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were displaced from their homeland during the partition of India leading to the largest human migration in history. "Out of ninety million Muslims, thirty-five million remained in India—making India the country with the biggest Muslim population outside Muslim states" (Daiya, 2008: 103). Yasmin Khan (2017) points out that Punjab was the province in the north-west of undivided India that was "most brutally sliced into two parts in 1947, and was the bloody battlefield of Partition where by far the greatest number of massacres of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims occurred" (p. 7). Jeff Hay (2006) mentions that around ten million people migrated across the border of Punjab, and these "migrations were accompanied by communal violence that left hundreds of thousands dead" (p. 84).

Both *Train to Pakistan* and *Cracking India* capture the horrors of communal riots, particularly in the vicinity of the province of Punjab. Even though the partition was done to carve out a separate country for the Muslims, the partition of Punjab in the process "presented a particular danger to the Sikhs" who made up "only 2 percent of India's population, but the Punjab was their traditional homeland and was where most Sikhs lived" (Hay, 2006: 76). *Train to Pakistan* portrays the

partition of India from the perspective of an Indian male author, whereas *Cracking India* captures the partition from the perspective of a Pakistani female author with vivid descriptions of riots among the Hindus, the Muslims, and the Sikhs during the partition. However, the most significant meeting point between these two highly acclaimed novels is that both of them give graphic description of communal violence, reveal the causes and effects of such atrocity, and investigate to what extent such violence was warranted.

In *Cracking India*, the British police officer Mr. Roger warns Mr. Singh of communal riots predicting that the people of India will “bloody fall at each other’s throats” if the British quite (Sidhwa, 1991: 71). Unfortunately, this is exactly what happens as the novel progresses. The news of the riots in Bihar and Bengal unsettles the Punjabi village Pir Pindo. Lahore is no different as communal riots spread like wildfire throughout the city. The Sikhs and the Hindus are evacuated completely, and those who stay are brutally slaughtered by the Muslims. To the utter disbelief of the narrator, even Ice-candy-man rejoices when he watches the houses of the Hindus and the Sikhs burn. As a reaction against the killings of the Hindus, Muslims are attacked in Amritsar and Jullundur. Lahore is “suddenly emptied of” all the Sikhs and Hindus whose places are taken by “hordes of Muslim refugees” (Sidhwa, 1991: 187). A particularly harrowing account of the genocide of the Muslims at the hands of the Sikhs in at least five villages is given by the little boy Rana who survives the riot. He describes the rioting Sikhs as “swarm of locusts, moving in marauding bands of thirty and forty thousand” killing, looting, raping, and setting houses on fire (Sidhwa, 1991: 209). Ice-candy-man tells the narrator and Ayah another harrowing story of a trainload of mutilated dead bodies of Muslim refugees who were trying to escape from India. Marauding Sikhs and Hindus attacked the train carrying the Muslim refugees, slaughtered them all, and let the train carry the dead bodies to Pakistan. According to Ice-candy-man, “there are no young women among the dead! Only two gunny-bags full of women’s breasts!” (Sidhwa, 1991: 159). Such atrocities against women prove that during the partition of India, women became the “primary symbolic and literal targets of communal violence” who suffered a “staggering range of sexual brutalities” (Misri, 2014: 55).

Train to Pakistan also gives a detailed and disturbing account of communal violence, and it starts with the arrival of a trainload of mutilated dead bodies of Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan – just like a trainload of dead bodies of Muslims arrive at Lahore from India in the novel *Cracking India*. Hukum Chand, the district magistrate, goes to the station of Mano Majra to cremate the dead bodies and watches “corpses of men and women and children being dragged out” from the train

(Singh, 2016: 89). The riots are so rampant, and the death toll is so high that mutilated dead bodies litter the Sunlit River near Mano Majra; “some were without limbs, some had their bellies torn open, many women’s breasts were slashed” (Singh, 2016: 151). Several days later, another trainload of dead bodies of the Hindus and the Sikhs arrive at Mano Majra station; and this time the bodies were buried. Such brutalities against the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan evoke extreme outrage among the Sikhs and the Hindus in India, and Mano Majra is no different. As the refugees from Pakistan share their experience of Muslim brutality in Pakistan, the Sikhs in Mano Majra become vengeful. As a result, Mano Majra no more remains safe for the Muslims who soon evacuate from the village. Their properties are ransacked by some of the local Sikhs who are joined by the refugees from Pakistan. The local Sikhs and the refugees join together to undertake a mission to avenge the death of the Hindus and the Sikhs in Pakistan by slaughtering the Muslims in refugee camps and attacking trains and road convoys carrying Muslim refugees to Pakistan. Their slogan is, “for each Hindu or Sikh they kill, kill two Mussulmans. For each woman they abduct or rape, abduct two. For each home they loot, loot two. For each trainload of dead they send over, send two across” (Singh, 2016: 157). According to the sub-inspector who is in charge of the Muslim refugee camp, “there are mobs of twenty to thirty thousand villagers thirsting for blood” who may attack the Muslim refugee camp at any moment (K. Singh: 167).

A comparative textual analysis of the pattern of communal violence portrayed in these two novels reveals the reactionary and retaliative nature of communal violence during the partition. In both India and Pakistan, communal riots between the Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs took such severe form because people of each faith thought that they were being ruthlessly persecuted by the people of a rival faith, and the only way to seek vengeance was to hit back with more brutality and ruthlessness. A mass hysteria engulfed the entire region as communal violence spiraled out of control. Friends became foes, neighbors became aggressors, and even lovers became molesters. Perhaps, this is the biggest tragedy of India’s partition, and both novels present an authentic portrayal of this tragedy. *Train to Pakistan* starts with the omniscient narrator’s remarks that “Muslims said the Hindus had planned and started the killing. According to the Hindus, the Muslims were to blame. The fact is, both sides killed. Both shot and stabbed and speared and clubbed. Both tortured. Both raped” (Singh, 2016: 1). *Cracking India* also captures a similar reality. Needless to say, nobody, not even the most avid advocates of India’s partition, could ever envision such a heart-wrenching vivisection of the Indian subcontinent. However, in reality, this is exactly what transpired, and both novels capture this aspect of India’s partition quite vividly and authentically.

Conclusion

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* are among the most famous South Asian English novels about the partition of India. Both novels tell the story of the partition and portray how it affected people's life. Even though the novels examine the partition from the perspectives of two different countries, both authors are in dialogue with each other when it comes to their treatment and portrayal of the partition of India. Both authors show that people of different religion had been living peacefully in undivided India until the partition brought about division and violence. Both authors provide authentic portrayal of the partition, and give genuine insight into the negative outcomes of the partition including mass migration, riots, plundering, manslaughter, and other crimes against humanity. Famous American historian and Indologist Stanley Wolpert believes that the tragedy of India's partition and the ensuing suffering of millions of people could have been avoided had the British colonial administration and the leading Indian politicians acted sensibly. In his book *Shameful Flight: The Last Years of the British Empire in India*, Wolpert (2006) puts it:

I believe that the tragedy of Partition and its more than half century legacy of hatred, fear, and continued conflict – capped by the potential of nuclear war over South Asia – might well have been avoided, or at least mitigated, but for the arrogance and ignorance of a handful of British and Indian leaders (p. 4).

By vividly depicting the grim picture of the partition, both Khushwant Singh and Bapsi Sidhwa question the success of such artificial segregation; and by questioning the success of the partition, the authors ultimately raise the question whether or not the partition of India was necessary at all.

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SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

JESS

De l'approche communicative à la perspective actionnelle : une démarche qui passe par le CECRL

Cătălina Șerban (Burcea)*

From the communicative approach to the action perspective: an approach that goes to the ECFL

Abstract:

This article presents the recent methodologies such as the communicative approach and the action perspective. At the same time, it shows the importance of the *Common European Framework for Languages* and the changes that establish according to the principles stipulated in it. Written like a classification, this article shows us the objectives, the competences that we are supposed to develop and also the critics that existed for each one of the two methodologies that we discussed.

The meaning and the purpose of this work are also to highlight the role that the literary text may play in a foreign language class. For both approaches the literary text is present and it comes with aspects of culture and civilization. The CEFL offers the information that guide the progress of our activity and in the same time it underscore the changes that happened in the last few decades in the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: Methodologies, Communicative approach, Action perspective, Literary text, ECFL

Les méthodologies d'enseignement des langues étrangères ont subi des changements au long du temps. La place et le rôle du texte littéraire n'est pas restée le même lui non plus... Ce travail se propose de prendre en discussion les approches les plus près de nos jours, il s'agit de l'approche communicative et de la perspective actionnelle tout en passant par le CECRL (Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues) et de mettre en évidence la position du texte littéraire lorsqu'on parle de celles-ci.

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1. L'approche communicative

L'approche communicative est connue également comme « méthode fonctionnelle » ou « notionnelle-fonctionnelle », comme « méthode cognitive » (aux États Unis) ou même « méthode communicative ». Finalement, elle s'est imposée comme « approche communicative » et le choix du terme « approche » vient aussi du désir de s'écarter de la lignée des méthodologies précédentes. Cuq souligne que « le recours à un terme comme *approche* et l'usage occasionnel du pluriel tendent à marquer une distance par rapport aux courants antérieurs et notamment [par rapport] à une méthodologie audiovisuelle réputée plus dogmatique » (Cuq, 2003 : 24). Cette approche

a comme point de départ l'élargissement de l'Europe et les besoins linguistiques que cet événement a mis en valeur. De l'autre côté, il y a les nouveaux acquis de la linguistique de l'énonciation, de l'analyse du discours et de la pragmatique qui ont permis une réorientation dans le domaine de la didactique des langues, l'accent étant mis sur la compétence de communiquer en langue étrangère (Georgescu, 2011 : 72).

L'approche communicative apparaît et se développe suite à l'échec de la méthodologie audio-visuelle car celle-ci, sauf les évolutions qu'elle a connues dès son apparition, n'a pas eu les résultats préconisés. Le facteur politique intervient et, vers 1970, le Conseil de l'Europe prend part à l'élaboration d'une nouvelle pédagogie qui puisse combler les lacunes d'un enseignement qui n'accorde pas d'importance à l'aspect social du langage : ce type d'enseignement ne réussissait pas à atteindre de la communication et de répondre aux besoins des apprenants. Entre autres, les discussions portaient sur les voies d'accès plus facile à l'enseignement des langues étrangères, sur l'ouverture à des échanges dans les pays membres et sur les modalités de promouvoir le patrimoine culturel et linguistique de l'Europe. Les efforts menés par cette organisation visent un renouvellement du processus d'enseignement/apprentissage et situe la communication au premier plan en faisant des pas vers une pédagogie qui va au rythme d'une discipline toujours en évolution.

Dans l'approche communicative la langue est perçue comme un instrument de communication et d'interaction sociale par opposition avec son statut de la méthodologie audio-visuelle, celle-ci tient compte aussi des conditions sociales d'où l'intérêt qu'elle prête à l'interaction socioculturelle. Pour communiquer, la langue ne suffit pas par elle-même ; sauf l'appropriation d'un lexique correcte et des règles de grammaire, l'apprenant doit être capable de mettre en pratique les règles à travers le discours dans lequel il y a aussi d'autres facteurs impliqués :

le contexte ou la situation de communication, l'intention de la communication et l'interlocuteur et les réactions possibles de celui-ci. L'apprentissage de la langue étrangère dans ces circonstances implique plus que l'appropriation et la maîtrise des aspects linguistiques : la connaissance des aspects liés au plan social, cognitif et affectif de la langue d'arrivée est nécessaire. On sollicite à l'apprenant des capacités intellectuelles plus développées, plus complexes.

Ainsi, l'apprenant doit adapter la forme linguistique de ce qu'il veut transmettre au contexte de la communication tenant compte de ses intentions. Cette relation constitue la « double dimension adaptative de la langue ». L'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère est décrit par S. Moirand par quelques aspects de la situation de communication, dont :

- Une composante linguistique, c'est-à-dire la connaissance et l'appropriation (la capacité à les utiliser) des modèles phonétiques, lexicaux, grammaticaux et textuels du système de la langue.
- Une composante discursive, c'est-à-dire la connaissance et l'appropriation des différents types de discours et de leur organisation en fonction des paramètres de la situation de communication dans laquelle ils sont produits et interprétés.
- Une composante référentielle, c'est-à-dire la connaissance des domaines d'expérience et des sujets du monde et de leurs relations.
- Une composante socio-culturelle, c'est-à-dire la connaissance des règles et normes sociales et l'appropriation des modes d'interaction entre les personnes porteuses de cette langue (Moirand, 1990 : 25).

L'approche communicative utilise des recherches en didactique et en linguistique qui puissent aider l'apprenant à se débrouiller dans des situations de communication diverses. Cette nouvelle approche pédagogique diversifiée vient plus près de son public et tente de trouver des solutions pour répondre aux besoins et aux attentes de celui-ci. L'évolution observable en termes d'objectifs, de méthodes et de contenus va marquer le moment d'une ère nouvelle dans le domaine de la didactique des langues étrangères vivantes.

1.1. Objectifs

L'objectif principal de l'approche communicative est de placer la langue en tant que moyen de communication et d'interaction socioculturelle. Ainsi la langue devient moyen d'interaction sociale et l'apprenant doit être capable de mettre en pratique ce qu'il vient d'apprendre. C'est la finalité de l'enseignement/ apprentissage, trouver la modalité de mettre en pratique les notions transmises et cette approche s'avère le plus près pour répondre aux besoins des apprenants.

1.2. Activités

Les activités déroulées pour atteindre les objectifs proposés sont très variés ; les exercices structuraux des méthodologies précédentes ont été remplacés par des jeux de rôle, des débats, des discussions collectives pour obtenir un résultat, des simulations etc. « L'exercice de référence de l'AC était la simulation, où l'on demande à l'apprenant en classe de faire comme s'il était un usager en société. » (Puren, 2006 : 37-40) À ce propos, Germain (1993 : 211) ajoute que « les activités communicatives ont le but de faire circuler l'information et qu'elles impliquent des choix linguistiques adaptés à la situation et à l'intention du discours et un *feedback* de l'interlocuteur. » On retrouve parmi les activités spécifique de cette approche la traduction et les explications grammaticales caractéristiques à la méthodologie traditionnelle « parce qu'on considère que tout apprentissage met en jeu des processus cognitifs et que l'apprenant doit exercer un contrôle réflexif sur ce qu'il apprend. » (Besse, 1985 : 46). Cette approche innovante réalise un cumul de méthodes, de procédés et d'activités pour pouvoir entraîner toutes les capacités de la part de l'apprenant. Ainsi les activités de systématisation alternent avec celles de compréhension ou d'expression. La connaissance implicite et aussi explicite de la langue suppose des objectifs divers.

1.3. Compétences

L'approche communicative met l'accent sur toutes les quatre compétences, à savoir la compréhension orale et écrite, l'expression orale et écrite.

1.4. Le texte littéraire

Les questions liées à la culture de la langue étrangère ne peuvent plus être ignorées parce qu'à ce niveau on prend en considération même l'implicite et le sous-entendu d'où la nécessité de trouver obligatoirement un équilibre entre toutes les composantes de la langue. Le choix du document authentique support doit répondre aux besoins de l'apprenant et il doit le préparer à faire face à une situation d'échange oral avec un natif.

La perception sur l'enseignement des langues étrangères vivantes est soumise à un renouvellement. Dans ce contexte, l'élève devient « apprenant » et il va prendre part au processus d'enseignement/apprentissage, dorénavant il devient acteur et selon les mots de Cuq « de sujet passif, l'apprenant est transformé en vecteur du processus d'apprentissage » (Cuq, 2003 : 21). Cette vision apporte des changements et l'enseignant doit faire un inventaire des besoins réels de l'apprenant et tenir compte de sa progression pour atteindre les objectifs proposés. Les programmes sont élaborés après avoir identifié non seulement les besoins mais aussi les particularités des apprenants d'un

groupe donné et les matériels pédagogiques se trouvent en corrélation avec ceux-ci. L'intention de communication est saisissable à tout niveau et la progression des apprenants n'est plus évaluée par le vocabulaire et les structures apprises, sinon par les savoir et les savoir-faire. Cette progression n'est plus linéaire, elle se fait en spirale vu que l'enseignant intervient en différents moments et situations du processus d'enseignement. Maintenant, le rôle de l'enseignant est celui d'un guide qui facilite l'apprentissage car il n'est plus l'acteur sinon l'apprenant qui doit jouir d'autonomie.

Les aspects liés à la culture et à la civilisation y compris à la littérature sont considérés comme prérequis nécessaires pour une compréhension meilleure de la langue et pour réussir une communication plus efficace.

La place du texte littéraire dans l'approche communicative est variable, étant mis en relation directe avec la culture. Le texte littéraire renvoie au concept de document authentique rencontré aussi dans les méthodologies précédentes et son authenticité est celle qui suscite l'intérêt car il n'est pas un simple document, il a des particularités qui correspondent à cette approche. En plus, sa variété permet à l'enseignant de plier ce type de texte sur les besoins des apprenants pour réussir, à travers des méthodes variées, à atteindre plusieurs objectifs.

En tout cas, dans l'évolution de l'approche communicative, l'emploi du texte littéraire connaît deux périodes bien différentes : la première période accorde une place privilégiée à l'oral et à l'emploi de documents fabriqués en majorité ; de plus, la présence des documents authentiques et notamment du texte littéraire se fera à partir du niveau intermédiaire et avancé, de manière progressive, tandis que la deuxième période se caractérise par l'importance accordée à l'écrit et à la prépondérance des documents authentiques par rapport à ceux fabriqués.

1.5. Critiques

À partir des objectifs et des contenus bien établis selon la vision de cette approche, on met les bases du Niveau-Seuil qui a comme but l'appropriation de tout apprenant d'une compétence minimale de communication, comme par exemple faire, accepter/ refuser une invitation ou demander/ donner des informations sur un événement, etc. Les actes de paroles du Niveau-Seuil sont trop conventionnels et les critiques ne tardent plus d'apparaître. Il n'y a pas une situation réelle de communication ou d'interaction sociale et ainsi il en résulte des doutes en ce qui concerne la compétence de communication fournie par une telle approche. L'effet immédiat de ces critiques va constituer l'essai de remplacer les contenus déjà fabriqués en vue d'être exploités par des « documents authentiques » et celui-ci représente également le moment

de début de l'insistance et de l'intérêt accordé à ce nouveau type de document pédagogique à exploiter en classe de langue étrangère, c'est-à-dire le « document authentique », document qui met aussi l'accent sur les aspects sociaux et culturels à la fois.

Puren décrit cette approche comme un double éclectisme et il ajoute que « à l'éclectisme pragmatique des praticiens et concepteurs de cours confrontés à la complexité des situations d'enseignement / apprentissage et à la diversité des démarches didactiques, répond l'éclectisme de principe des didactologues, confrontés à la complexité du contexte intellectuel et à la diversité des modèles idéologiques » (Puren, 1994 : 54). Il considère l'approche communicative différente des autres méthodologies qui se sont succédées, à son avis, c'est un éclectisme qui n'ayant pas de noyau dur, de lignée définie et de bases théoriques et empirique claires, va gérer plus difficilement sa complexité, non seulement en ce qui concerne la réalisation du support pédagogique, mais aussi pour ce qui est de la formation des enseignants. Puren ajoute également que la cohérence et la cohésion de cette approche seront difficiles à établir à cause de l'absence d'une dominante méthodologique claire et forte.

L'approche communicative marque certainement un pas bien avant dans la didactique des langues étrangères vivantes. Elle apporte des changements qui resteront désormais des constantes dans l'évolution de la didactique des langues : l'enseignant a le rôle de guider l'apprentissage il n'en sait plus tout à l'avance et il n'est plus l'acteur ; l'élève devient apprenant, il est acteur et aussi le personnage central dans son apprentissage, il a de l'autonomie et il est mis dans plusieurs situations de communication ; on peut jouir maintenant de toute une panoplie de documents support, les documents authentiques les plus diverses et ainsi le manuel ne représentant plus le seul support pédagogique. Cette approche, quoi qu'elle ait reçu aussi des critiques, reste un moment de grande importance pour l'étude des langues et annonce l'apparition du Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les Langues en 2001.

2. La perspective actionnelle et le CECRL

En 2001, le Conseil de l'Europe, publie le Cadre Européen Commun de Référence pour les langues. « *Le but du Cadre de référence n'est pas de prescrire ni même de recommander telle ou telle méthode, mais de présenter diverses options en vous invitant à réfléchir sur votre pratique courante, à prendre des décisions en conséquence et à définir en quoi consiste exactement votre action* » (CECRL, 2005 : 6) et d'offrir « une base commune pour l'élaboration de programmes de langues

vivantes, de référentiels, d'examens, de manuels, etc. » (CECRL, 2005 : 9). Il « *représente le dernier stade d'un processus activement mené depuis 1991 et qui doit beaucoup à la collaboration de nombreux membres de la profession enseignante à travers l'Europe et au-delà* » (CECRL, 2005 : 3).

L'approche communicative n'apparaît plus dans les manuels et sa place commence à être prise par une nouvelle perspective ou approche qui, selon les affirmations de ses auteurs, ne se propose pas de « dicter aux praticiens ce qu'ils ont à faire et comment le faire. Nous soulevons des questions, nous n'apportons pas de réponses » (CECRL, 2005 : 4). Le CECR apporte des niveaux de compétences qui permettront à l'enseignant de mesurer l'évaluation de l'apprenant à chaque étape de son apprentissage, « un cadre de référence sur six niveaux généraux couvrirait complètement l'espace d'apprentissage pertinent pour les apprenants européens en langues. » (CECRL, 2005 : 24) Ainsi, pour en mettre en place, le Cadre comprend six niveaux :

- Le Niveau introductif ou découverte
- Le Niveau intermédiaire ou de survie
- Le Niveau seuil
- Le Niveau avancé ou utilisateur indépendant
- Le Niveau autonome ou de compétence opérationnelle effective
- La Maîtrise.

Il propose également les descripteurs pour les objectifs généraux et spécifiques de chaque niveau en permettant d'apporter des modifications, des subdivisions supplémentaires localement ou à un niveau européen. Ainsi, ils laissent de la liberté aux personnes autorisées pour l'adapter compte tenant de la situation d'emploi, « L'élaboration d'un ensemble de points de référence communs ne limite en aucune façon les choix que peuvent faire des secteurs différents, relevant de cultures pédagogiques différentes, pour organiser et décrire leur système de niveaux » (CECRL, 2005 : 25). Il y a des descripteurs de compétences pour chaque niveau, descripteurs qui sont présentés de manière détaillée en fonction de l'activité langagière déroulée. Ces paramètres descripteurs ont également le rôle d'aider les enseignants élaborer un programme d'apprentissage adapté aux niveaux et besoins des apprenants qui par la pratique de l'autoévaluation ont conscience de leurs besoins, objectifs et surtout de leurs compétences et seront partenaires à pleins droits dans le processus d'enseignement/apprentissage.

La perspective actionnelle et l'approche par compétences seront dorénavant dans les manuels de FLE et les didacticiens cherchent trouver et définir les principes de cette nouvelle vision qui est en train de

s'imposer. Apprendre – Enseigner – Evaluer, ces sont les trois axes que le Cadre traite avec priorité et dont l'importance est soulignée dès son apparition ; ainsi il va constituer un support pour tous les partenaires impliquées dans le processus d'enseignement/ apprentissage : aider les apprenants à apprendre, être un support pour les enseignants et en même temps offrir les critères pour l'évaluation. C'



est le fruit de plusieurs années de recherches linguistiques menés par des experts des Etats membres du Conseil de l'Europe. Publié en 2001 il constitue une approche complètement nouvelle qui a pour but de repenser les objectifs et les méthodes d'enseignement des langues. Il est le résultat des travaux activement menés entre 1993 et 2000 pour répondre à l'objectif général défini dans les Recommandations R (82) 18 et R (98) 6 du Comité des Ministres qui visait une unité plus grande parmi ses membres par l'adoption d'une démarche commune dans le domaine culturel (CECRL, 2005 : 9).

En tenant compte de l'opinion de didacticiens comme Jean-Claude Beacco, Évelyne Bérard et aussi basé sur le propre texte du CECR, Puren (2011 : 5) (<http://www.christianpuren.com>, consulté le 2 juillet 2020) affirme qu'il n'y a pas eu une rupture entre l'approche communicative et la perspective actionnelle, même s'il y a quelques distances entre les deux (les tâches comprises d'une manière plus globale, pas seulement comme des tâches langagières et la validation du sens des actes de parole au sein d'un contexte social). Alors, on ajoute que l'approche communicative voit sa continuation dans la perspective actionnelle.

La cohérence et de la continuité du travail mené par le Cadre se basent sur trois principes essentiels:

1) La diversité linguistique et culturelle de l'Europe représente une « ressource commune précieuse qu'il convient de sauvegarder et de développer et que des efforts considérables s'imposent dans le domaine de l'éducation afin que cette diversité, au lieu d'être obstacle à la communication, devienne une source d'enrichissement de la compréhension réciproque » (*Ibidem* : 10).

2) Uniquement à l'aide d' « une meilleure connaissance des langues vivantes européennes que l'on parviendra à faciliter la communication et les échanges [...] et à éliminer les préjugés et la discrimination » (*Ibidem* : 10).

3) Pour pouvoir développer la coopération entre les différents membres de l'union, Le Conseil de l'Europe ajoute qu'il faut adopter et développer une politique nationale dans le domaine de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage des langues vivantes surtout par l'intermédiaire d'une

« coopération suivie entre eux et une coordination constante de leurs politiques » (*Ibidem* : 10).

L'apparition du Cadre représente un moment important pour la didactique des langues étrangères vu son grande influence continue. Le CECRL permet de valider les certifications nationales à un niveau européen et aide également à établir les langues connues par une personne et ses compétences par l'intermédiaire des biographies langagières. En fait, c'est un moyen commun de gradation des compétences qui rend plus facile la mobilité des Européens.

L'approche employée par le CECRL se concrétise dans la perspective actionnelle et la justification pour ce choix est la suivante :

Un Cadre de référence pour l'apprentissage, l'enseignement et l'évaluation des langues vivantes, transparent, cohérent et aussi exhaustif que possible, doit se situer par rapport à une représentation d'ensemble très générale de l'usage et de l'apprentissage des langues. La perspective privilégiée ici est, très généralement aussi, de type actionnel en ce qu'elle considère avant tout l'utilisateur et l'apprenant d'une langue comme des acteurs sociaux ayant à accomplir des tâches (qui ne sont pas seulement langagières) dans des circonstances et un environnement donnés, à l'intérieur d'un domaine d'action particulier. *Si les actes de parole se réalisent dans des actions langagières, celles-ci s'inscrivent elles-mêmes à l'intérieur d'actions en contexte social qui seules leur donnent leur pleine signification* (*Ibidem* : 15).

2.1. Objectifs

L'objectif principal de l'approche actionnelle est de mettre la langue au service de l'action. On peut remarquer que cette approche mise en route par le CECRL met l'accent sur le concept de « tâche » et l'apprentissage se déroule en action vu que l'apprenant utilise la langue pour agir. Christian Puren (2009 :3) parle de cette nouvelle perspective actionnelle sous le nom de « perspective de l'agir social ». En ce sens, « *La perspective actionnelle fait écho aux préoccupations des nations de former des acteurs sociaux : des personnes capables de travailler en collaboration sur des projets à long terme avec des partenaires étrangers* » (Thibert, 2010 : 1).

2.2. Activités

Les activités menées moyennant l'approche actionnelle visent la partie pratique. L'apprentissage de la langue se fait par action. Le processus d'enseignement/ apprentissage ne repose plus sur des exercices ; maintenant les activités déroulées en classe de langue sont appelées « tâches ». « (...) Il y a « tâche » dans la mesure où l'action est

le fait d'un (ou de plusieurs) sujet(s) qui y mobilise(nt) stratégiquement les compétences dont il(s) dispose(nt) en vue de parvenir à un résultat déterminé. La perspective actionnelle prend donc aussi en compte les ressources cognitives, affectives, volitives et l'ensemble des capacités que possède et met en oeuvre l'acteur social.» (CECRL, 2005 :15)
 Selon les mots de Paulo Da Costa (2010 :4)

Par rapport aux exercices traditionnels centrés prioritairement sur des acquisitions linguistiques de vocabulaire et syntaxe, la tâche s'inscrit dans un cadre qui permet à l'apprenant d'être confronté à une activité contextualisée (par un lieu, une situation-problème, un objectif à atteindre...). Et cet effort de contextualisation de la tâche conforte notre thèse selon laquelle la perspective actionnelle est une forme de socialisation linguistique (<http://www.edufle.net/regards-sur-laperspective-html>, consulté le 10 juillet 2020).

Ainsi, le rôle des « tâches » est d'esquisser la personnalité de l'apprenant en tant qu'acteur social et de développer un individu dans toute sa complexité.

2.3. Compétences formées

La notion de compétence est redéfinie par le CECRL et la compétence de communication aura une nouvelle définition. Donc, le Cadre (2005 : 15) stipule que la compétence est « l'ensemble des connaissances, des habiletés et des dispositions qui permettent d'agir ». Cette définition place les compétences au centre des moyens qui permettent aux apprenants d'agir ; les compétences langagières lui offrent la possibilité d'accomplir des tâches et des actions en même temps.

2.3.1. Les compétences générales individuelles

Les compétences générales individuelles de l'apprenant mises en évidence par le CECRL reposent sur les savoirs, les savoir-faire et les savoir-être :

- les savoirs ou connaissances déclaratives sont définis par le Cadre comme « des connaissances résultant de l'expérience sociale (savoirs empiriques) ou d'un apprentissage plus formel (savoirs académiques) » (*Ibidem* : 16). Les savoirs visent plusieurs domaines d'intérêt et peuvent être individuels ou universels. La production et la compréhension de textes en langue étrangère sollicite des savoirs académiques mais elle suppose également des savoirs empiriques.
- les savoir-faire et les habiletés « relèvent de la maîtrise procédurale plus que de la connaissance déclarative, mais cette maîtrise a pu nécessiter, dans l'apprentissage préalable, la mise en place de savoirs

ensuite « oubliables » et s'accompagne de formes de savoir-être, tels que détente ou tension dans l'exécution » (*Ibidem* : 16). Pour l'appropriation des automatismes de ce type il est nécessaire premièrement d'une explicitation suivie d'une décomposition et l'habileté en question est intégrée, n'étant plus le cas d'y revenir.

- les savoir-être « sont à considérer comme des dispositions individuelles, des traits de personnalité, des dispositifs d'attitudes » (*Ibidem* : 17). Ils touchent à l'image de soi et des autres, au caractère introverti ou extraverti manifesté dans l'interaction sociale. Reconnus comme facteurs d'acculturation, les savoir-être changent de manière constante et cet aspect est valable d'autant plus dans l'apprentissage des langues étrangère.

- les savoir-apprendre « mobilisent tout à la fois des savoir-être, des savoirs et des savoir-faire et s'appuient sur des compétences de différents types » (*Ibidem* : 17). L'apprenant doit toujours être attentif à ce qui se passe autour de lui pour observer les situations, participer et essayer d'y apprendre parce que

Dans une visée d'apprentissage, les stratégies que l'individu sélectionne pour accomplir une tâche donnée peuvent jouer de la diversité des savoir-apprendre qu'il a à sa disposition. Mais c'est aussi au travers de la diversité des expériences d'apprentissage, dès lors que celles-ci ne sont ni cloisonnées entre elles ni strictement répétitives, qu'il enrichit ses capacités à apprendre (*Ibidem* : 17).

Les savoir-apprendre ont comme caractéristique principale d'offrir à l'apprenant « la capacité de relever de façon plus efficace et plus indépendante de nouveaux défis dans l'apprentissage d'une langue, de repérer les choix différents à opérer et de faire le meilleur usage des possibilités offertes » (CECRL, 2005 : 85).

2.3.2. La compétence à communiquer langagièrement

Pour aboutir à la communication, un apprenant a besoin, sauf les aptitudes générales énumérées, de ce que le Cadre appelle compétence communicative. Celle-ci comprend trois composantes :

- les compétences linguistiques,
- les compétences sociolinguistiques,
- les compétences pragmatiques.

La compétence linguistique renvoie aux savoirs et savoir-faire qui concernent le lexique, la phonétique, l'orthographe, la phonologie, la morphologie et la syntaxe, la sémantique et implique la qualité des connaissances linguistiques, leur accessibilité dans l'emploi de la langue.

La compétence sociolinguistique rend compte sur les paramètres socioculturels de l'utilisation de la langue.

La compétence pragmatique suppose :

la connaissance que l'utilisateur/apprenant a des principes selon lesquels les messages sont:

- organisés, structurés et adaptés (compétence discursive)
- utilisés pour la réalisation de fonctions communicatives (compétence fonctionnelle)
- segmentés selon des schémas interactionnels et transactionnels (compétence de conception schématique) (*Ibidem* : 96).

CECRL fait une présentation détaillée de ces compétences et propose des liste complètes et exactes pour que les enseignants sachent exactement ce qu'ils doivent enseigner et de cette manière l'usage soit plus facile. Ces listes ont le grand inconvénient de pouvoir être incomplètes précisément par leur précision mais cette démarche du Cadre (2005 : 87) « n'a pour ambition que de présenter comme outils de classification des paramètres et des catégories qui peuvent s'avérer utiles à la description d'un contenu linguistique et comme base de réflexion » et le schéma permet d'en ajouter ou d'éliminer des éléments selon le désir et les besoins de ses utilisateurs. Chacun doit tenir compte des propositions faites par les auteurs du Cadre mais il y a quand même la possibilité d'adapter le contenu proposé à son propre contexte d'enseignement- apprentissage.

Une échelle de compétences accompagne chacune de ces compétences énumérées. A son aide, l'enseignant a la possibilité d'établir le niveau des apprenants et d'identifier les besoins qu'ils peuvent avoir compte tenant de la situation d'usage de la langue et à la fin, réussir établir un trajet pour sa démarche.

2.3.3. Les activités langagières

Les activités langagières de l'apprenant se réalisent moyennant les compétences à communiquer langagièrement. Ces activités langagières relèvent de la réception orale et/ou écrite, de la production orale et/ou écrite, de l'interaction et la médiation (précisément les activités de traduction et d'interprétation). L'interaction se produit lorsqu'au moins deux acteurs prennent part à un échange oral et/ou écrit. Dans ce sens, « apprendre à interagir suppose plus que d'apprendre à recevoir et à produire des énoncés » (*Ibidem* : 18). Les participants à l'échange verbal doivent anticiper tout d'abord, s'écouter pour pouvoir préparer un message comme réponse et pour cela il y en a besoin de compétences particulières. Quant à la médiation, les activités écrites et/ou orales offrent la possibilité « de produire à l'intention d'un tiers une (re)formulation accessible d'un texte premier auquel ce tiers n'a pas

d'abord accès direct » (*Ibidem* : 18). La médiation vise la traduction, l'interprétation, le compte rendu ou le résumé en impliquant la production et la réception dans des activités écrites et/ou orales. Les activités de médiation occupent une place importante dans le contexte sociale.

Actuellement, les activités langagières sont au nombre de sept :

- Compréhension de l'oral
- Compréhension de l'écrit
- Expression orale en interaction (dialogue)
- Expression orale en continu (exposé, récit...)
- Expression écrite en interaction (échanges de courriel, chat...)
- Expression écrite en continu (courrier, article...)
- Médiation écrite ou orale.

Des stratégies propres à la communication viennent avec la reformulation de ces compétences au niveau de la médiation et de l'interaction. Celles-ci ne restent plus sous-entendues, maintenant, elles sont présentes de manière explicite dans le programme du Cadre. En d'autres termes, les activités langagières représentent des activités qui mobilisent la capacité de l'apprenant à communiquer langagièrement et non pas seulement des capacités mises en œuvre pour aboutir dans une activité quelconque. Les objectifs du travail déroulé en classe de langue peuvent être reformulés grâce à cette inversion et son importance consiste notamment dans le fait qu'elle restitue les tâches communicatives et les activités.

2.3.4. Les tâches

CECRL offre une nouvelle définition pour la notion de tâche.

Ainsi,

est définie comme tâche toute visée actionnelle que l'acteur se représente comme devant parvenir à un résultat donné en fonction d'un problème à résoudre, d'une obligation à remplir, d'un but qu'on s'est fixé. Il peut s'agir tout aussi bien, suivant cette définition, de déplacer une armoire, d'écrire un livre, d'emporter la décision dans la négociation d'un contrat, de faire une partie de cartes, de commander un repas dans un restaurant, de traduire un texte en langue étrangère ou de préparer un journal de classe. (CECRL, 2005 : 16)

Pour la redéfinition de la tâche, les auteurs du Cadre ne se limitent pas seulement au niveau communicatif. On remarque une multitude de tâches possibles et la situation d'enseignement-apprentissage d'une langue étrangère impose ses composantes qui varient en fonction des besoins de l'apprenant et des objectifs proposés. Toute catégorie de tâches suppose une compétence à communiquer de la

part de l'apprenant et ces tâches peuvent être générales ou « tâches spécifiques » et « tâches d'apprentissage » qui se combinent avec les activités. Les tâches ne se présentent pas seulement de façon langagière parce que le Cadre promeut une approche basée sur l'action. Dans ce contexte, « communication et apprentissage passent par la réalisation de tâches qui ne sont pas uniquement langagières même si elles impliquent des activités langagières et sollicitent la compétence de communiquer du sujet » (*Ibidem* : 19). Pour la mise en application de ces tâches, l'apprenant doit avoir une stratégie parce que celles-ci ne se réalisent pas de manière routinière ou automatique. Pour aboutir à leur accomplissement il est nécessaire d'aborder des activités langagières qui visent la réception, la production, l'interaction, la médiation de textes oraux ou écrits.

De toute forme, « La relation entre stratégies, tâche et texte est en fonction de la nature de la tâche » (*Ibidem* : 19).

La tâche peut être essentiellement langagière, ainsi, elle suppose principalement des activités langagières et que les stratégies visent d'abord ces activités langagières, par exemple lire un texte et en faire un commentaire, compléter un exercice à trous, prendre des notes pendant un exposé.

La manière de réalisation d'une tâche tout comme son résultat sont influencées par la situation de communication. Les compétences générales individuelles et les compétences communicatives sont mises en œuvre pour que l'apprenant soit capable de mener à fin ces tâches qui dépassent par la cohérence de leurs éléments d'interaction verbale.

Coste (2009 : 21) affirme que la tâche « présente l'avantage de définir des entités autonomes de travail, des blocs concrets à objectif en principe clair pour les acteurs qui y sont engagés, apprenants et enseignants » et ainsi influencer la motivation des apprenants dans l'accomplissement de la tâche pour aboutir au but ultime indifférent s'il est de nature langagière ou pas. Donc, le concept de tâche peut être caractérisé selon Puren (2004) comme une « **unité d'activité à l'intérieur du processus conjoint d'enseignement/apprentissage** » (<https://apliut.revues.org/3416>, consulté le 13 janvier 2021).

2.4. Le texte littéraire

La présence du texte littéraire dans l'approche actionnelle ou plutôt dans le CECRL reste une question non pas conclue. Dans le chapitre 4 du CECRL, le texte littéraire apparaît comme un type de document parmi d'autres, support pour développer des activités d'enseignement/ apprentissage avec des descripteurs à plusieurs buts et finalités. La présence de la littérature dans le Cadre est rendue de

manière différente et sa situation s'avère ambiguë étant donné ses diverses hypostases. Tout d'abord, le texte littéraire est considéré un type de texte écrit, un « document authentique parmi d'autres » (CECRL, 2005 : 19) comme on peut remarquer du schéma suivant :

4.6.4.2 Les genres et les types de textes écrits

Les supports comprennent à l'écrit, par exemple :

- les livres, romans et autres, y compris les revues littéraires
- les magazines
- les journaux
- les modes d'emploi (livres de cuisine, etc.)
- les manuels scolaires
- les bandes dessinées
- les brochures et prospectus
- les dépliants
- le matériel publicitaire
- les panneaux et notices
- les étiquettes des magasins, des marchés et des rayons de supermarchés
- les emballages et étiquettes de produits
- les billets, etc.
- les formulaires et questionnaires
- les dictionnaires (mono et bilingues), les *thesaurus*
- les lettres d'affaires et professionnelles, les télécopies
- les lettres personnelles
- les exercices et les compositions
- les notes de service, les comptes rendus et les rapports
- les notes et messages, etc.
- les bases de données (informations, littérature, renseignements, etc.).

Figure 1 – CECRL. 4.6.2 Genres et types de textes (Conseil de l'Europe, 2001 : 76- 77)

Une deuxième hypostase envisage le texte littéraire employé « pour le rêve ou pour le plaisir » (*Ibidem* : 47) ce qui apporte à l'attention le poétique et l'aspect esthétique de la langue. Et finalement, une troisième utilisation ou hypostase de l'apparition du texte littéraire dans le CECRL l'envisage comme support pour des activités ludiques, des jeux de société comme les devinettes, jeux de mots, énigmes. Cependant, on remarque une valorisation du texte littéraire étant donné que les aspects qui visent la culture et l'interculturelle également sont promues par le Cadre (2005 : 47) car

Les littératures nationales et étrangères apportent une contribution majeure au patrimoine culturel européen que le Conseil de l'Europe voit comme « une ressource commune inappréciable qu'il faut protéger et développer ».

Les études littéraires ont de nombreuses finalités éducatives, intellectuelles, morales et affectives, linguistiques et culturelles et pas seulement esthétiques.

2.5. Critiques

La place du texte littéraire ne semble pas trop claire... On a quand même un problème vu que la présence du texte littéraire se manifeste seulement dans les niveaux avancés, à partir de B2 (Niveau indépendant), dans les descripteurs et les grilles d'auto-évaluation des niveaux de compétence.

	B2	C1	C2
LIRE	Je peux comprendre un texte littéraire contemporain en prose.	Je peux comprendre des textes factuels ou littéraires longs et complexes et en apprécier les différences de style.	Je peux lire sans effort tout type de texte, même abstrait ou complexe quant au fond ou à la forme, par exemple un manuel, un article spécialisé ou une œuvre littéraire.

Figure 2. Niveaux communs de compétences -Grille pour l'auto-évaluation (Conseil de l'Europe, 2001 : 27)

La manière d'approche du texte littéraire dans le Cadre laisse lieu à des interprétations en ce qui concerne sa présence dans diverse méthodes de FLE. A cet égard, quant à sa place et à ses fonctions, Riportella (2010 : 25) ajoute que parmi les aspects mauvais il y a « la suppression complète du texte littéraire dans les programmes de l'enseignement, l'utilisation d'un texte littéraire comme « prétexte » pour une autre tâche, le renoncement à la compréhension approfondie, la réduction au phénomène de la compréhension à une série d'activités orales et / ou écrites déconnectées entre elles. »

En conclusion, on peut ajouter qu'après avoir fait ce travail, on constate que la présence du texte littéraire dans le CECRL est ressentie tardivement, aux niveaux B2, C1 et C2. Par conséquent, la question « Comment procéder avec les débutants ? », s'impose. Il y a des spécialistes qui considèrent que l'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère doit commencer dès âges les plus jeunes pour que le succès soit assuré. Et, en même temps, on est d'accord que la magie du texte littéraire peut servir aussi dans le cas des débutants ! La littérature est si riche et pleine

de textes variés pour qu'on puisse trouver des solutions pour tout type de publique sans négliger leur niveau et leurs particularités.

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JESS J

La relation mentorale

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The Mentoring Relationship

Abstract:

In recent decades, the interest that education systems give to mentoring has been growing, given its decisive role in professional integration. Based on the definitions offered by several researchers and the presentation of the objectives of mentoring, this article will try to analyse the way in which the relationship between the experienced teacher and the beginner is built and what are the stages to be followed. Special attention will be given to the mentor and mentee, their expectations, responsibilities and difficulties.

Keywords: Mentor, Mentee, Development, Competency, Mentoring relationship

1. Considérations théoriques

Le mentorat existe depuis l'Antiquité mais, en tant qu'activité socio-humaine formelle, organisée, est apparu dans la première moitié du XX^{ème} siècle aux États-Unis, dans le domaine économique. Peu à peu, il s'est infiltré dans les affaires et le management, pour entrer, au début des années '80, dans le domaine de l'éducation. Pour réduire le taux d'abandon du personnel enseignant débutant, les spécialistes américains ont introduit le mentorat comme programme d'induction, afin de faciliter le passage de la formation initiale à la formation continue.

Les préoccupations liées à la valorisation du mentorat existent partout dans le monde, mais les États-Unis, le Canada, la France et la Grande Bretagne ont réalisé le plus grand nombre de recherches.

Le mentorat s'est implanté dans l'enseignement puisqu'il permet de répondre aux besoins des novices, contribue à l'amélioration du rendement des mentorés, aide à briser l'isolement caractéristique aux débuts et facilite l'intégration des professeurs dans la nouvelle école. De plus, c'est un moyen efficace de diminuer le stress des enseignants débutants et d'augmenter leur sentiment de sécurité.

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Au fil des années, la définition du terme a été enrichie. Le mentorat est expliqué comme « le soutien professionnel au débutant (novice) de la part d'un collègue expérimenté » (Dumoulin : 2004)¹. Lusignan (2003)² souligne l'aspect relationnel et coopératif du processus:

une forme d'accompagnement par laquelle une personne expérimentée soutient une personne novice, à travers une relation de coopération, dans une transition vers une nouvelle réalité et dans ses apprentissages vers le développement de son potentiel personnel et professionnel.

Christine Cuerrier (2003)³ met en évidence l'aspect volontaire, la primauté des compétences à développer par le mentorat, qu'elle perçoit comme

une relation interpersonnelle de soutien, d'échanges et d'apprentissage, dans laquelle une personne d'expérience investit sa sagesse acquise et son expertise afin de favoriser le développement d'une autre personne qui a des compétences à acquérir et des objectifs à atteindre.

Selon Bergevin et Martineau ((2007)⁴, le mentorat « peut être assimilé à un processus d'accompagnement et d'enseignement entre un enseignant expérimenté et un enseignant débutant ». Pour Paul (2004 : 43), la relation mentorale se définit comme « une relation d'apprentissage sur une base de réciprocité et de solidarité intergénérationnelle, entre une personne d'expérience [...] avec une personne moins expérimentée ».

Plus ou moins ressemblantes, les perceptions des chercheurs se complètent et nous donnent la possibilité de synthétiser quelques éléments qui conduisent à définir le mentorat comme une relation bilatérale, volontaire, basée sur la réciprocité, où le mentor soutient la démarche didactique du débutant; c'est un échange des savoirs et savoir-faire, qui entraîne l'analyse, la réflexion, les discussions (formelles, le plus souvent), mais sans impliquer l'évaluation. Le mentorat est à la fois une forme de support émotionnel et d'accompagnement professionnel à double rôle: personnel (le développement du débutant) et collectif (son intégration dans l'équipe de l'école).

¹ www.crifpe.ca

² www.collections.banq.qc.ca/ark

³ citée par Légaré, C, Trudeau, JF, Le mentorat comme moyen de favoriser le renforcement des liens intergénérationnels: applications en l'éducation et au monde du travail, www.bibliotheque.assnat.qc.ca

⁴ cités par J. De Stercke, B. De Lièvre, G. Temperman, *Le mentorat en enseignement*, 2011

Les objectifs du mentorat sont différents d'un système d'éducation à l'autre, selon les exigences ou les besoins de la région, mais il y a des traits communs, tels le développement des compétences, la socialisation et la construction de l'identité professionnelle.

J. De Stercke, B. De Lièvre et G. Temperman (2011 : 41) expriment l'idée que le mentorat poursuit simultanément trois finalités:

1. informer le débutant sur la culture organisationnelle de l'établissement et améliorer sa formation en l'engageant dans un processus de perfectionnement professionnel continu (soutien à la professionnalisation autonomisante);
2. favoriser les rapports positifs entre le novice et ses collègues (développement de communautés de pratiques réflexives);
3. soutenir psychologiquement le novice, l'appuyer, l'écouter.

Dans « Perception du mentorat » (2013)⁵, on apprend que Bergevin et Martineau (2007)⁶ trouvent que les dispositifs de mentorat peuvent avoir comme buts le développement d'un sentiment de compétence professionnelle, proposer des pistes au novice, le soutenir, éviter le décrochage professionnel, partager des idées et des pratiques.

2. La relation mentorale

Lorsqu'on parle du mentorat, on pense tout de suite à la relation qui s'établit entre le professeur expérimenté (*le mentor*) et le débutant (*le mentoré*). Cette relation est caractérisée par ouverture, réciprocité, confiance et confidentialité, respect mutuel et honnêteté, où les participants doivent pouvoir s'exprimer librement, sans peur. Elle se construit à long terme et se développe, le plus souvent, dans un cadre formel.

Brunet (2009)⁷ présente la relation mentorale en trois phases:

- *le commencement* (qui est caractérisé par une relation inégale entre le mentor et le mentoré, quand le dernier a la tendance d'imiter son mentor);
- *le déroulement* (la relation commence à devenir égalitaire, le mentoré a de nouvelles compétences);
- *le dénouement* (c'est la séparation et la relation peut être jugée comme accomplie ou non).

Nous trouvons qu'avant le jumelage mentor-mentoré, le dernier devrait passer par une période d'auto-réflexion, pour mieux se comprendre. Le jumelage doit se faire dans les premières semaines de

⁵ www.revuededucationformation.be

⁶ Bergevin, C, & Martineau, S, cités par Devos, C, Mouton, M, Marigliano, S in *Perception du mentorat*, www.revuededucationformation.be

⁷ cité dans *Guide pour les mentors et les mentorés: Qu'est-ce que le mentorat*, 2015, www.adgeps.com/2015/09

travail du débutant. La première rencontre est dédiée à la création du climat positif. Après, le mentor doit élaborer la planification de l'activité, les feuilles d'observation, dresser le calendrier des rencontres et tous les documents nécessaires. L'étape suivante, c'est le travail proprement-dit, accompagné de rencontres périodiques pour des débats, conseils, discussions, afin d'améliorer la planification initiale, si c'est le cas, ou d'adapter les stratégies.

Le mentor est la personne expérimentée « qui possède l'assurance et la sagesse qui l'incite à valoriser le transfert de ses acquis à d'autres personnes moins expérimentées [...] »⁸. Il accepte de guider, de soutenir, d'encourager, de provoquer le mentoré à réfléchir, afin que celui-ci arrive à se découvrir et à construire sa propre voie professionnelle.

La formation des mentors est très importante, parce qu'ils mettent l'empreinte sur le développement professionnel d'un nouveau professeur. Habituellement, ils sont formés à travers des stages qui envisagent à la fois le côté professionnel et le côté personnel du travail du mentor. Le savoir pratique suit le développement des compétences professionnelles, telles l'écoute et l'observation actives, la communication, tandis que le savoir stratégique concerne la manière d'être en relation, de conseiller, d'aider.

Les fonctions du mentor sont multiples. Du point de vue psychologique, il soutient moralement le novice au cours de son intégration dans l'équipe. Parfois dans une relation avancée, le mentor peut même devenir le confident du débutant et l'aidera à surmonter l'éventuel blocage émotionnel dû aux facteurs internes ou externes. Du point de vue professionnel, le mentor entraîne le novice à acquérir des habiletés et des attitudes liées à la pratique du travail, lui transmet les savoirs du métier, propose des défis, fournit des occasions de faire des choix, offre la rétroaction directe, objective et constructive.

Un bon mentor sait d'abord écouter; il fait attention non seulement à ce que le mentoré lui communique directement, mais aussi à ses gestes, à son langage non-verbal, aux pauses dans le discours, aux réactions. Il donne au novice le sentiment de sécurité par son empathie, sa discrétion et la confidentialité de leurs discussions; il manifeste une attitude ouverte, accepte les alternatives et les opinions différentes, sait communiquer et fait preuve de flexibilité. Il est disponible, compréhensif, capable de travailler en équipe. Et surtout, un bon mentor n'essayera jamais de transformer le novice en une clone, au contraire, il l'encouragera à trouver son style et sa voie.

⁸ Mentorat Québec, 2014, in Guide pour les mentors et les mentorés: Qu'est-ce que le mentorat, www.adgeps.com/2015/09

En Roumanie, l'activité du mentor est stipulée dans La Loi de l'Enseignement⁹. Dans le chapitre I, art.247, section 3, concernant les fonctions didactiques et didactiques-auxiliaires apparaît le titre de « mentor »: « [...] dans l'unité d'enseignement, pour assurer la formation initiale et l'insertion professionnelle des enseignants: le mentor ». L'article 248 vient compléter: « Pour occuper les fonctions didactiques, il est nécessaire d'effectuer un stage pratique d'une année dans une unité d'enseignement [...] sous la coordination d'un professeur mentor. » Dans une institution d'enseignement pré-universitaire roumaine, le mentor en FLE devrait d'abord:

a) *au niveau administratif:*

- présenter au débutant l'organisation institutionnelle (les départements);
- montrer les documents scolaires et les façons dont il faut les compléter (catalogues, différents registres);
- présenter les comités et décrire leur activité.

b) *au niveau de la spécialité:*

- familiariser le novice avec les manuels utilisés et le *Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues*;
- expliquer la rédaction des planifications annuelles et semestrielles;
- donner des conseils quant à la réalisation des fiches de travail ou des tests, selon la/les compétence(s) visée(s);
- vérifier la capacité du mentoré de projeter son activité;
- parler de l'organisation des concours scolaires.

c) *au niveau psycho-pédagogique:*

- présenter la clientèle scolaire;
- conseiller en matière de gestion des collectifs difficiles (soit comme discipline, soit comme niveau des connaissances);
- proposer/expliquer le travail différencié.

Le mentoré est la personne « en quête d'accomplissement personnel et professionnel, motivée à utiliser les connaissances, les habiletés, les valeurs offertes par un senior, afin que soit facilitée l'atteinte de ses objectifs personnels et professionnels »(2010)¹⁰.

Il doit d'abord être capable à identifier et à exprimer ses besoins, ses doutes, ses attentes et manifester la volonté d'apprendre et de se développer. Il faut aussi que le mentoré soit conscient de ses faiblesses, recherche des solutions aux problèmes rencontrés, analyse sa pratique et fasse appel aux connaissances et aux conseils de son mentor. De plus, le

⁹ <https://legeaz.net>, consulté le 03/02/2020

¹⁰ Mentorat Québec, 2014, in *Guide pour les mentors et les mentorés: Qu'est-ce que le mentorat*, sur le site www.adgeps.com/2015/09

novice doit continuer sa formation et développer ses compétences de communication et professionnelles.

La réussite de la relation mentorale dépend en égale mesure des deux participants. De son côté, le mentoré devrait manifester une attitude ouverte, ni de défense devant les points faibles identifiés par le mentor, ni de passivité. N'oublions pas qu'il doit être un participant actif, d'autant plus qu'une relation adéquate et constructive le concerne directement!

Habituellement, l'échec de la relation d'accompagnement est attribuée au mentor. Claire Duchesne (2010)¹¹ montre que « la recension des 151 recherches portant sur le mentorat effectuée par Hansford, Ehrich et Tennent (2003) a révélé que 28,5% de celles-ci attribuaient à l'attitude négative du mentor l'insuccès de la relation mentorale alors que 7,9% l'imputaient à l'attitude négative du mentoré ».

Pour mieux comprendre les besoins du débutant et pour donner plus de chances à la réussite de la relation, nous pensons que les questionnaires (prédictif, formatif et sommatif) appliqués par le mentor pendant la première année pourraient jouer un rôle très important. Le premier, le prédictif, a une fonction diagnostique, mais aussi pronostique. Il permet au mentor de comprendre la typologie, même la personnalité du débutant. Le formatif offre un feedback informel, prend les échecs comme points de départ pour améliorer les méthodes, les stratégies, les pratiques et, finalement, la relation. Le sommatif permet la compréhension de l'évolution du mentoré, met en évidence ses progrès et mesure l'efficacité de l'activité déroulée.

Exemples:

Questionnaire 1

- 1) Quelle est ta formation?
- 2) Pourquoi as-tu choisi la carrière didactique?
- 3) Comment trouves-tu l'expérience de pratique en tant qu'étudiant ?¹²
- 4) Quelle a été ta relation avec le professeur qui a conduit ce module?
- 5) Comment t'es-tu senti dans le rôle de professeur?
- 6) Selon toi, quels ont été les points faibles et les points forts de tes classes?
- 7) Le mentorat te semble-t-il nécessaire? Pourquoi?
- 8) À présent, quelles sont tes craintes? À quoi sont-elles liées?
- 9) Quelles sont tes connaissances sur l'organisation d'un établissement scolaire?
- 10) Quel est le niveau de tes connaissances dans le domaine des TIC?

¹¹ <https://www.erudit.org>

¹² En Roumanie, les futurs professeurs suivent un module pédagogique dans une école en dernière année à l'Université et ils ont l'occasion d'assister aux classes d'un mentor et d'enseigner deux classes.

- 11) Choisis cinq mots qui te définissent!
- 12) Quels sont tes objectifs pour cette année?
- 13) Que signifie, pour toi, une situation difficile?
- 14) Sais-tu concevoir une fiche ou un test?

Questionnaire 2

- 1) Comment as-tu ressenti le choc de la réalité (tes attentes/ la réalité)?
- 2) Comment te sens-tu à présent?
- 3) Quelle est la relation avec tes supérieurs? Mais avec tes collègues?
- 4) Quelles sont les difficultés auxquelles tu t'es heurté au niveau de l'institution?
- 5) Quelles sont les compétences que tu penses avoir développées?
- 6) As-tu déjà utilisé les ressources TIC? Quel en a été l'impact sur les élèves?
- 7) Comment trouves-tu notre programme, la fréquence de nos rencontres? Faudrait-il faire des changements?
- 8) Te sens-tu membre de l'équipe de l'école?
- 9) As-tu suivi des programmes/ des cours/ des stages de formation continue? Si oui, à quels bénéfices?
- 10) As-tu atteint une partie de tes objectifs?
- 11) Quel est le niveau de stress par rapport au début de l'année?
- 12) T'es-tu familiarisé aux normes/règles/rigueurs de l'institution?

Questionnaire 3

- 1) Après cette première année, te sens-tu en sécurité à l'intérieur de l'institution/du système?
- 2) As-tu trouvé ta place dans l'équipe?
- 3) T'es-tu senti à l'aise dans notre relation?
- 4) As-tu eu la possibilité de prendre des décisions?
- 5) Les interventions du mentor ont-elles été constructives?
- 6) As-tu eu les conditions pour te développer, pour te construire comme enseignant?
- 7) As-tu atteint tes objectifs?
- 8) As-tu fait confiance à ton mentor?

Toutes ces questions offrent des indices, plus ou moins exprimés directement, que le mentor comprendra et pourra, par la suite, choisir la voie à suivre.

3. Conclusions

Les bénéfices du mentorat sont une réalité. C'est la raison pour laquelle l'intérêt au sujet est croissant, la littérature de spécialité s'enrichit, les recherches sont de plus en plus ciblées sur les divers aspects de la relation mentorale. C'est l'époque de la vitesse, alors il faut que le professeur soit très compétent et puisse faire face aux défis du métier dès ses débuts et c'est à l'aide du mentor qu'il a la possibilité de réduire la période des doutes.

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Digital Activities in Teaching/Learning a Foreign Language for Specific Purposes, Technical/Scientific Domain

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Abstract:

The present pandemic has determined the teachers to adopt new methods of on-line teaching and learning and the specific activities within the classes of foreign languages for special purposes, technical and scientific domain are part of these new orientations. Thus, the teachers adapted their materials to the on-line tendency by digitalizing their various courses. The present article focuses on several activities used within certain on-line apps dedicated to teaching foreign languages for specific purposes. In the first part we will make suggestions for the on-line didactic use of a video clip with *EdPuzzle* and *VideoAnt*. Next, we will present certain apps available for oral presentations during foreign language classes and we will demonstrate how to use *LearningApps* for the making of self-corrective exercises and on-line games. Finally, we will focus on *Jamboard* from *Google* as virtual board during the classes of foreign languages for specific purposes, technical and scientific domain.

Keywords: Didactic activities, On-line applications, Foreign language for specific purposes, Technical and scientific domain.

Introduction

The presence of the digital in our life is a reality that cannot be ignored anymore. The nowadays context of teaching/learning a foreign language for specific purposes (FLSP) imposed a series of modifications in the foreign languages' didactics. Each and every teacher had to adapt his own didactic style to the on-line teaching context brought by the epidemiologic situation in the entire world.

Lately, the FLSP teacher has been interested in creating didactic activities on-line and/or off-line for his students in order to set them in a learning context that is as authentic and as close to the reality of their future professional environment as possible. The teacher is responsible for the production of attractive didactic scenarios without leaving aside

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the correct usage of the foreign language and the digital instruments. Thus, these activities are both a way and an objective in the complex process of teaching/learning a foreign language for special purposes, technical and scientific domain.

In order to create, deliver and participate in digital didactic activities, one has to have first of all, a good Internet connection, but also various electronic devices (computer, microphone, webcam, speakers) that would facilitate the development of the FLSP courses. What is left for the teacher to do is to select, coordinate and suggest different didactic scenarios, choosing from the multitude of the authentic sources (articles, video clips, images, documentaries, games etc.) available on the Internet. The role of the teacher is to create didactic activities adapted to the respective learning situation, which would provoke the students to interactively participate, stimulating this way their interest for the digitally taught content.

We will discuss in this article several on-line didactic activities correlated with various e-learning platforms and applications used in the FLSP courses. Thus, we will present different pedagogic actions through which an on-line video clip can be exploited. We will also pay particular attention to certain applications used in the on-line oral presentations as well as other activities that can be created in a series of applications such as games or exercises of expressing ideas on a virtual board.

On-line Didactic Exploitation of a Video clip (*Edpuzzle*, *VideoAnt*) in teaching FLSP, Technical and Scientific Domain

The FLSP teachers can adapt their methods of teaching the foreign language for technical/scientific domain by exploiting certain videoclips, i.e. adding to them open questions, multiple choice exercises, true/false exercises, audio notes or various written/spoken commentaries. Based on our own experience as teachers, we can affirm that the students who learn FLSP, technical/scientific domain, are very attracted by this kind of didactic activities. We believe that it is much more captivating for the students to learn the vocabulary related to the functioning of a Diesel engine by watching a tutorial-videoclip that explains the four stages of this engine from the mechanical point of view. We also believe that the use of this application would increase the technical students' motivation to learn FLSP.

One of the web apps that allow the editing of the on-line video clips is *Edpuzzle*. This application has been created to didactically use the video clips on-line, and it has the following functions: cut, voiceover, questions. The videoclips' editing with the option „cut”

allows the choosing of the exact part which the teacher wishes to pedagogically exploit. The most important advantage of this function is that the teacher can save valuable class time by choosing only the videoclip fragment which focuses on the subject taught and is relevant for his students. The option “voiceover” works like a microphone. During the videoclip, the teacher can record his own voice asking various questions, making commentaries, or offering additional explanations. These recordings can be made in his mother tongue and/or foreign language and can offer information when certain situations of misunderstanding certain words or expressions from the technical/scientific domain appear. One last very useful option of *Edpuzzle* is „Questions”. With this function one can ask questions so that the teacher can check whether the students understand or not the message in the videoclip. Multiple choice questions, open-ended questions and notes can be added. The teacher can use multiple choice questions if he wishes to automatically write the students’ answers. To mark a correct answer the teacher clicks the green checkmark; moreover, he can also add as many answer options as he wishes, including the feed-back, too. The open-ended questions encourage the students’ critical thinking. The teacher can evaluate the students’ answers, by giving feed-back. The advantage of this type of questions is that it also allows audio answers, checking, thus, the students’ speaking skill – one very useful activity for the teaching and assessing the knowledge of a foreign language for specific purposes, technical and scientific domain.

The videoclip uploaded online through *Edpuzzle* can be publicly or privately shared. If the clip is privately shared, the teacher has the possibility to manage his own group of students by following and assessing the evolution of each and every one of them. In this case, the student has to create his own *Edpuzzle* account. If publicly shared, the activities’ videoclip is available to all *Edpuzzle* users.

The didactic activities created with the *Edpuzzle* app can be synchronized with various on-line teaching programs, like *Google Classroom*, *Moodle*, *Schoology*, *Blackboard*, *Power School*. Moreover, the app will soon allow the sharing of tasks with the classes created on the on-line Microsoft Teams platform. For the moment, without this function the teacher who uses Microsoft Teams as on-line teaching platform can share his own *Edpuzzle* account with the students. The video clip can be watched and the exercises can be solved directly, frontally, during the foreign language class, allowing the teacher to orally assess the students’ answers.

Another application that allows the didactic exploitation of an on-line video clip is *VideoAnt*. In this case, the FLSP teacher together with his students can annotate and comment on an on-line videoclip during its watching. The pedagogic advantages of this app include the didactic ones of using video resources, oral and written interactions with the students and the re-writing of these interactions for a later revision.

This application can be exploited freely by the FLSP teacher after he created an account. Only videoclips imported from *You Tube* can be used, and *VideoAnt* works as a virtual screen sharing of an on-line presentation in order to allow the watching and commenting of a video clip for more participants. To create a virtual meeting, the teacher has only to name the class during which the video clip will be watched and to invite the students by sending them a link. The screen will be divided into two parts: on one part the video will be watched on-line, on the other open part, each participant is invited to make commentaries which lead to the exchange of new ideas and impressions about the respective video clip. One of the advantages of this app is that the students do not have to make an account. At the end of the session, the teacher can save all the commentaries and send them to his students via e-mail or message.

The use of *VideoAnt* in the process of FLSP teaching, technical and scientific domain, can stir the interest of the students from the Informatics domain, for example. The watching of a video clip through *VideoAnt* in which various social networks used by the young people nowadays are presented can generate many commentaries pro or against the use of a certain type of social network among students. All these opinions can be written down in this app and can become a starting point for different texts or discourses in which the students have to support their point of view on a certain subject suggested by the teacher. We think that this application offers the students a higher degree of liberty in expressing their own opinion, and the use of the ideas collected during the videoclip contributes to the later development of the writing and speaking skills.

Oral Presentations in FLSP Didactics

For the technical students, one of the challenges of oral presentation delivery is speaking in public. Language fluency is not a guarantee that this delivery will go smoothly, and other aspects should also be taken into consideration: the fact that the students are non-native speakers, cultural matters, the lack of experience in delivering a presentation in their mother tongue etc.

For the final exam, the technical students are required to have their support material as visual aids presented in *PowerPoint* or *Prezi* and for that, a whole seminar is dedicated to how to make these visual aids.

PowerPoint represents an excellent tool for organizing and presenting the information in the most attractive possible way, but it can also be menacing due to its many features and options. Therefore, at the beginning of the class the students will be grouped and each group will make a part of their *PowerPoint* presentation with the technical material chosen by them. They have to explore the program and, later on, to present their findings in front of their colleagues. After all groups have finished presenting their results, the teacher offers a sample by showing a sample of a presentation. At this point, it is important to show them how to create the various graphs/charts and the 3D options offered by *PowerPoint* as they are technical students focused rather on technological subjects.

A very useful feature is offered by *Google Slides*. As mentioned before, one of the major challenges for the technical students and not only is the public speaking, mainly the use of their voice. This app allows the students to record themselves during the class when practicing the delivering of their presentation and then to listen to themselves and correct their use of voice.

In the case of presentation delivery, the main purpose is to keep alive the audience's interest for the presented material and this goes for the teacher, too. An interactive presentation can be the best solution and, in this respect, *Kahoot* is of great help. This program cannot be used for the making of visual aids, but one can import the *PowerPoint* presentation and, most importantly, can insert quizzes during it, checking in real time whether the audience (be it technical students) understands the information and making thus the presentation as attractive as possible.

Interactive Activities in FLSP, Technical/Scientific Domain

The FLSP teacher is the main performer that contributes to the creating of certain interactive activities dedicated to breaking the monotony of the class, offering, thus, the students the necessary motivation to learn the foreign language. One of the applications that allow the making of interactive on-line activities is *LearningApps*. In the case of this app, the teacher creates various activities and types of self-corrective exercises for his students in order to systematize and repeat the language/vocabulary content taught previously.

After creating an account within the app, the teacher can choose from the multitude of templates for self-corrective exercises or games adaptable to the development of the class. These interactive activities are called *apps*. The different created apps can be saved either privately so that the other users with *LearningApps* accounts can see their own exercises, or publicly, so that everybody can have access to the link with the suggested exercise or game. *LearningApps* proposes a high variety of exercises and games which can be played by many students at the same time. Among these, several types on the *LearningApps* site can be mentioned: matching pairs, group assignment, number line, simple order, free text input, matching pairs on images, multiple-choice quiz, cloze text, audio/video with notices, *The Millionaire Game*, *Group-Puzzle*, crossword, word grid, *Where is what?*, *Guess the word*, *Horse race*, *Pairing game*, *Guess?*, matching matrix, fill table, quiz with text input.

With the help of *LearningApps*, the teacher can send an app to each student's account. This allows the distribution of various exercises to the students, whose activities can be monitored statistically. At the same time, the teacher can also insert certain games as front activity with the whole class, sharing the screen with the on-line activities on the different platforms used for teaching/learning (*Microsoft Teams*, *Google Classroom*, *Zoom* etc).

During the FLSP technical/scientific domain teaching, we noticed that these apps can be used specially to reinforce grammar. It is a well-known fact that sometimes the grammar exercises and aspects can be monotonous for the students, demotivating them. Therefore, to systematize the present indicative (a tense highly used in technical and scientific texts) we suggest games like *Horse Race* from *LearningApps*, which would bring *a breath of fresh air* to the reinforcement of the various grammar notions.

Another application that supports the creating of on-line interactive activities is *Jamboard* from *Google*. *Jamboard* works like an on-line virtual interactive board. The use of this on-line application during the FLSP, technical/scientific domain contributes significantly to the improvement of the students' writing skill. Thus, the teacher can write on *Jamboard* the different solutions to the suggested exercises or various new words, unknown to the students, or can invite them to give the correct option to the exercises in progress.

The way to access *Jamboard* is very simple. The teacher sends the students the virtual board's link via message or e-mail, they access the link without the need of an account and from that moment on, the lesson can go on. *Jamboard* offers various functionalities like the

following: setting of the background, the use of colors for the font type, deleting the words or the on-line correction of misspelled words, insertion of images, using the laser to underline certain ideas.

One of the interactive activities used very often during the FLSP classes within *Jamboard* comes in the form of a brainstorming. The teacher displays on *Jamboard* a major theme to be discussed during the FLSP class (for example: “The best communication means for the professional domain is...because...”) and this can be the trigger of the lesson correlated with the one about the professional e-mail. The students are invited to write on *Jamboard* all their ideas, words that come to their minds. The written expressions represent the starting point of the subject’s introduction as well as an essential point in the development of the students’ motivation for the improvement of their professional writing skill. Thus, *Jamboard* from *Google*, this application for a virtual board, can successfully replace the physical board from an ordinary classroom.

Conclusion

Nowadays the FLSP teacher cannot imagine the foreign language class without the necessary digital instruments which represent the future of teaching. The modern technology makes the lesson a lot more attractive increasing, thus, the motivation of the student in general, and in particular that of the technical student.

Another advantage of the use of digital tools is represented by the high degree of authenticity brought to the class, an approach closer to the real life which obviously improves the students’ learning of a foreign language for specific purposes, technical and scientific domain.

On the other hand, one disadvantage of these programs is that they are time consuming for the FLSP teacher for whom the entire preparation of the lesson takes more time: he must take into consideration not only the specialized material as support for his class, but also only those programs that can be best used with the specific types of texts or language subjects.

In the end, if the result is the technical students’ improvement of foreign language use, the effort is worth making. The applications mentioned above are meant to contribute to the efficiency of on-line teaching and could offer valuable support for less experienced teachers in digital matters. However, they yield better results when used in combination with frontal teaching strategies.

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The Moral Duty to Struggle for Gender Equality for Women

Mark Omorovie Ikeke*

Abstract:

Despite the many international human rights declarations affirming the equality of men and women, and the techno-scientific accomplishments of humanity, in many non-Western societies and indigenous cultures there are still much discrimination against women. The discrimination and violence against women on the basis of their sex and their being perceived as subservient to men by some cultures, societies and persons are morally unacceptable. Discrimination and violence against women are wrong for they offend against the ontological status of women as human beings; violate their human dignity/ rights as persons. The arguments that some persons have used to treat women as unequal to men are flawed. It is an issue of morality for it speaks of how human beings should act. This paper uses a critical analytic, hermeneutics and evaluative methods to examine the issues. The issues of gender equality will be dissected and interrogated. The value in gender equality through all these methods will be highlighted. The paper finds that there are gender inequalities still prevalent in some parts of the world. The paper concludes that all societies, cultures and persons have a moral duty to struggle against gender inequalities. This will help to create a more harmonious world.

Keywords: Morality, Duty, Gender, Gender equality, Women, Feminism

Introduction

Despite the many international and regional human rights declarations, and other documents that endorse vividly equality of men and women and the need to protect women from discrimination; in still many places in the world, especially in indigenous traditional cultures, the global South and non-western societies women are still seen as the lesser/weaker sex. They are treated as subservient to men. The United Nations Children Education Fund notes that there have been some gains in achieving gender equality such as more girls being able to access primary education, child marriage declining; and national health, education, water, and sanitation systems are being more responsive to

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girls and women (United Nations Children Education Fund, 2019). Despite all these:

Even now, 1 in 3 adolescent girls will experience female genital mutilation (FGM), and 1 in 5 will be married while they are still children. Worldwide, 1 in 4 girls aged 15-19 are in neither education, employment nor training, compared with 1 in 10 boys. Moreover, adolescent girls still account for 3 out of 4 new HIV infections among adolescents aged 10-19 and nearly 4 out of 10 girls think wife-beating is justified (United Nations Children Education Fund, 2019).

The United Nations declared the decade running from 1975 to 1985 as the international decade for women. One of the sustainable development goals is achievement of gender equality. The reality of gender inequalities and disequilibrium informed the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1979), Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1967), and Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1993). Ayodele states that:

The societal structures of gender insensitivity, inequality, oppression, marginalization and discrimination are still universally pronounced. Gender issues, in spite of recent debates and discourse, still remain largely unfavourable and discriminatory to feminine sex (2004: 1).

For much of human history, women have suffered from a great deal of discrimination, violence and dehumanizing practices against them arising from the fact that they are seen as unequal to men (Aina, 1998: 65; Akorede, 2012:20; Owhovorirole, 2012: 213). Because they are seen as unequal to men they are often treated in a hostile manner, excluded from men's assembly, political participation and blamed for childlessness in marriage. The statistics on global gender inequalities are troubling. Of the world's girls 33,000 are forced into marriage as child bride daily; 40 billions' hours are spent annually by girls collecting water in rural Africa depriving them of opportunities for other activities like education; only 6 countries in the entire world have given women equal legal rights like their male counterparts; only 22% of Artificial Intelligence professionals are women; men are twice more to be film characters than women; in car clashes women are more likely to suffer severe injuries as the safety features are designed for men (Whiting 2019). Of the parliamentary seats in the world only 24% are held by

women, among the about 193 heads of government only 24% are women, women receive less payment than men in the labour market, and the number of women who are CEOs in S&P companies is less than 6% (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). The whole international movement of feminism, feminist thoughts, feminist philosophy, and feminist theory; are a sign that women have suffered various forms of oppression and inequalities from ancient times. The fact that there is gender inequality is indisputable.

This paper argues that gender equality should not be an illusion, a utopia or something unattainable. With the globalization of knowledge all societies should accept and protect gender equality. The rights to human dignity, life, happiness and many other rights cannot be fully enjoyed by women if they are treated as unequal to their men counterparts. This paper shall examine this phenomenon of gender inequalities especially as it pertains to and affects women with a view of proffering some ideas to help in fostering gender equality. Critical analysis, evaluation and hermeneutics are adopted in this paper. The issues will be dissected and examined to see the value and worth in gender equality. The key words and concepts in the paper will also be interpreted along the way.

Factors Precipitating Gender Inequalities

It is imperative first to define gender equality before examining the factors that inhibit it and cause gender inequalities. Gender is the social perception and construction of the roles played by males and females within a given society (Igube, 2004: 19). Oyekanmi argues that in many societies the roles played by the male folk are assigned higher value than those played by females (2004: 41). Even when the male and the female perform similar roles and functions in the workplace, economic, and social life; that of the male is more valued and even receives a higher salary than the female. Kendal says that gender is the “culturally and socially constructed differences between females and males found in the meanings, beliefs and practices associated with ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’” (Obi, 2018: 1). Another definition of gender sees it as:

... a human invention, like language, kinship, religion and technology, like them, gender organizes human social lives in culturally patterned ways. Gender organizes social relations in everyday life as well as in the major social structures, such as social class and the hierarchies of bureaucratic organizations (Lorber, 1994:6).

As generally understood in much of the literature today, gender is more than one's physical sex, rather it has to do with how a particular culture or society describes and understands the roles of the sexes (Obi, 2018: 1). Gender perceptions are different from culture to culture. But one thing that is clear is that for much of history the female sex has been perceived to be lesser than the male sex and they have been treated as such. Gender equality is concerned with equal rights to both males and females in the enjoyment of socio-economic opportunities, resources and welfare; and that none is discriminate against (Díaz-Morales, 2017). Gender inequality is a serious global problem. Gender inequality means that men and women are not perceived and treated as equal human persons. It is also "discrimination against women based on their sex" as they are considered to be weaker and placed on a subordinate role (Arinze and Ugochukwu, 2018: 19).

Cultural perceptions and attitudes to males and females are key factors that cause gender inequalities. In some African and Asian cultures the male (boys and men) are more valued than females (girls and women) and the males are even seen as superior to the females (Oyekanmi, 2004: 41). The preference in some Indian cultures is for males and parents try to ensure that they get a male child. The United Nations Children Education Fund reveals that all countries in South Asia have patriarchal values and socio-cultural norms inhibiting gender equality; and discriminatory practices predate birth of children (2020). There are cases of parents who continue to give birth even after having many girls in the hope of getting a male child. Some parents become sad if it is a female child that comes at childhood (Olomjobi, 2013: 24). Thus even before a child is born parents have rejected the girl child in preference for the male. There are still some places where the girl-child is deprived of formal education (Edewor, 2001: 36-37). Some parents will not just border to send their girl-child to school on the excuse that the girl-child will be married out. Male chauvinistic beliefs that see women as intellectually inferior to men, as sexual objects for satisfaction of men and domestic keepers have also enforced these cultural norms and continue to impede the progress of women in society (Sperber, 1974: 131). There are also sexist beliefs and ideologies which are aspects of most cultures in the world. Perceptions about women matter a lot and can be great obstacles to achieving gender equality. The United Nations Development Programme reported that almost 90% of women and men are biased against women and this has posed an obstacle to breaking the Glass Ceiling (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). The Gender Social Norms Index shows that of the women and men in the globe, almost half feel men are better political

leaders, and 40% think men are better in business leadership than women and also that men should have more right to jobs than women, and 28% think that there is nothing wrong if men beat their wives (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

Traditional cultural practices that continue to re-enforce negative perception of women are a major contributor to perpetuating gender inequalities. Socio-cultural ideologies that see the role of the woman as simply child-bearing/rearing and home management have resulted in many females not receiving formal education and made some remain illiterate thus lacking skills for high paying jobs (Okeke, 2004: 33). Till today in some rural communities and hinterlands in Africa and other regions of the world some fathers still believe that the woman's place is in the kitchen, the girl is to be prepared for marriage so they don't need formal education (Akomolafe, 2005: 47). The practice of patriarchy grounds much of the negative actions meted to women. Though there are various definitions of patriarchy it is generally understood as social systems in which the father or man rules and dominates the household members both in the house and outside the house in the public square. Patriarchy has been practised all through history and still prevalent in many non-western societies. It is a given in a patriarchal culture that women are not equal to men. Not until the 19th century to the present time, many people born into patriarchal systems follow up in treating women as lesser than men.

Religion which is a powerful aspect of culture and a crucial institution has also played a role in perpetuating gender inequalities. For much of history, many religions both western and indigenous perceive women as the weaker sex, inferior, impure and sinful. In some Muslim societies women are to remain in Purdah and their place is at home, so public functions is not expected of them (Akomolafe, 2005: 47). For many indigenous and traditional religions there are many taboos, sanctions, and rituals such as widowhood rituals that continue to keep women in bondage (Ebiringa, 2010: 275). In the Christian religion, some people have misused passages from the Pauline epistles (1 Corinthians 11: 5-12, 1 Corinthians 14: 34-35, 2 Timothy 2: 8-15) to justify discrimination against women.

Early childhood socialization has a great role to play in gender differentiation that often leads to gender discrimination. In many societies the male child is socialized into how to be a man with certain roles reserved for him, and the female-child is socialized into how to be a woman. The female-child is most often restricted to domestic chores at home, while the male-child is socialized into many of the duties outside the home. When children see their mothers doing household chores like

cooking, washing the dishes, sweeping the house, fetching water from the stream, and mending the clothes; they are made to believe that those chores are for females, and when they see their fathers engaging in more difficult work like fixing the car and electronic equipment their perception is that the more difficult works are for men thereby thinking men are necessarily stronger than women (Obi, 2018: 2). Children who grow up with stereotypes of what the male and female are expected to do or not do are likely to live following those stereotypes.

Theories and ideologies matter a great deal. Many of the social thinkers of humanity were people of their age and time. When it comes to gender equality they could not think ahead of their times. The enunciations of some thinkers through history have informed people's disposition to women. For Aristotle, women are inferior to men in everything, are to be confined to the home, and men are to rule over them (350). Rousseau though a philosopher of the French enlightenment advocated gender inequality in the education of the sexes. Men and women are to be educated differently. The whole purpose of a woman's education is to serve and satisfy men. He opined thus:

To please men, to be useful to them, to raise them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them, to make their lives agreeable and sweet-these are the duties of women at all times, and they ought to be taught from childhood (1979:365).

Women are to make themselves attractive and charming to men. They are to be modest and live in subordination to men. Women are not to study the arts, sciences and philosophy.

There are cultures in various parts of the world who may not have heard of Rousseau's teaching but have the same mentality as him. The notion that nature has created women to adorn the lives of men; and that women are weak is unacceptable. From a creationist perspective as found in the book of Genesis, man and woman share in the same ontological essence in being created in the *Imago Dei* (God's image and likeness). Attributing gender inequalities to divine prescription as some religious persons do is fundamentally flawed. Discriminatory religious texts were written within particular cultural milieus. They should not be transported and transposed into contemporary situations without proper critical hermeneutics and re-imagining. For Plato, women lack souls and are not directly created by the gods [360]. Weber theorized that women are inferior and weak (Sydie, 1987: 183-185). Even the great philosopher Marx fails to take adequate cognizance of the contribution of women to social life in labour value theory, argued Johari (2012: 672). Until the rise of feminism and the women's movement most if not

all theories in the social sciences rarely take women into consideration as equal agents of human destiny (Johari, 2012: 672). Some scholars and persons have used the issue of biological differences between the sexes to argue that women are weak and lesser in status to men. Randall opines that women's physique makes them vulnerable to male domination (Randall, 1982).

In closing this section, it is imperative to critically challenge the viewpoints above that perceive women as not equal to men. As some feminist thinkers have argued, biological differentiation between the sexes does not imply intellectual inferiority. Biological differences between men and women do not amount to women's weakness. The United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have rightly averred that both boys and girls are entitled to the same advantages and disadvantages in schooling. They are to be treated equally with access to equal benefits in education (UNESCO, 2015). Women education must be extended beyond conventional informal training to embrace formal issues in public and social life (Maduabuchi, 2018: 34). Biological differentiation should not amount to weakness, inferiority, defect or subordination of women for biological differences are indication that women are a separate sex (Enrenreich, 1999; Johari, 2012: 671).

The Consequences of Gender Inequalities

There are many consequences of gender inequalities in society. Rights and access to some political positions are denied women as they are erroneously perceived to be not capable or unworthy of those positions. There is the wrong belief in some cultures that women cannot be trusted with key positions. For women to participate in politics in some regions of the world they have to get permission from their husbands who often are likely to refuse as the husbands don't like assertive women; and because women are burdened with the responsibility of taking care of all the domestic chores they have little or no time to engage in politics (Odebowale, 2012: 203).

It negatively impacts socio-economic development. Women can suffer from lack of good self-esteem and image of themselves as a result of verbal abuse from men. This can affect their psychological health and wellbeing. Because women are treated as "inferior" and unequal to men they are often subjected to being suppressed and beaten down. They are not to be seen unless with the permission of men and they are not to be heard.

There are many women who have suffered from many forced marriages. In some cultures the woman has no say even in the marriage affecting them. Their objection is not taken into consideration in

negotiating the marriage contract. It is simply done between her family and that of the suitor. Whether she likes the man or not is out of the question. She has no role in determining who to marry. In societies where polygamy is practiced a man can go and marry more wives without telling his already existing wife. The likely acrimony and negative impact on the already existing wife is not even given consideration by the man.

Society is deprived of a lot of gifts and resources when women are denied equal opportunities with men. The wisdom and insights of women that could be fully tapped into for the betterment of society are lost. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women affirms that gender inequality “is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of the prosperity of society and the family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their countries and of humanity” (United Nations General Assembly, 1979). The world cannot experience full and total development, full global wellbeing and genuine peace if it is deprived of the maximum contributions of women in all fields of human endeavours (United Nations General Assembly, 1967). Ebiringa rightly notes that: “Women are agents of change and development, therefore denying them equal rights with their male counterparts, is reducing the economic and intellectual developments of any country” (2010: 278).

The failure to recognize women as equal to men has often made many men to see them as inferior and subjected women to violence. Violence against women can take various forms such as sexual abuse, verbal abuse, wife battery, etc. It can also be psychological violence, dowry related violence, rape, trafficking in women, forced prostitution, and so forth (Obioma and Ogbenna, 2010:328-329). Violence against women can negatively affect their educational and psychological development. It can cause health problems, contribute to low self-esteem, shame, guilt, depression, and create dysfunctional relationships (Obioma and Ogbenna, 2010:336). There are many cases of women who have been beaten to death by their male partners. Some have suffered bodily injury and have their reproductive systems damaged. In many countries in the world women continue to experience physical and sexual violence and have their basic rights denied (O’Connell, 1993: 12).

Some Actions to Eradicate Gender Inequalities

One vital action that can be taken to struggle for gender equality is transformative and transgressive education to reform and change the

minds and hearts of those who endorse gender inequalities. Women are as trustworthy and capable of key positions in life as men. In many cultures all over the world women have played and carried out enormous leadership functions both in peace and war times. The position that women cannot be trusted with leadership positions is not theoretically and empirically sound.

The law and public policy remain powerful instruments to eradicate gender inequalities and imbalance. Every society should make laws and create policies that promote equal access to all socio-economic and political opportunities to all sexes. Discriminatory laws such as those that perpetuate barbaric widowhood practices on women, disenfranchise women from inheriting properties, etc should be abrogated. Unjust and discriminatory laws that give no inheritance to women have to be legally abolished. In a place like Nigeria even if there are laws in place for female inheritance, the laws favour the male child more than the female and the laws promoting inheritance for females are not even enforced; and in a place like Igboland in Nigeria the brother of the deceased can forcefully take away all the properties of his brother (Akomolafe, 2005: 48). Law and social policy is crucial in remedying the situation of discrimination against women. There are persons who will never act for justice for women unless they are compelled by the law. Customary and legal constraints that have been used to subjugate women have to be redirected to facilitate the release of their potentials (Tong, 1989: 2). Recognizing the role that legislation can play in promoting gender equality, Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women affirms that women's right to vote in election, be voted for, hold public office and play public functions should be guaranteed by national laws. This document states: "All appropriate measures shall be taken to educate public opinion and to direct national aspirations towards the eradication of prejudice and the abolition of customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women" (United Nations General Assembly, 1967).

Critical hermeneutics of religious texts is also necessary in the struggle against gender inequalities (Umoren, 2005: 57-87; Uchem, 2005: 43-57). Since some persons and religions have used religious texts to support some forms of discrimination against women, it is also important to re-assess those texts. Religious language is crucial in re-asserting the dignity of women. Religious texts and language that are hostile to human rights and flourishing and the wellbeing of women are culturally conditioned. Within every religion there are critical progressive voices that have advocated for the rights and empowerment of women. These voices should not be ignored. Ruether has argued that

central to feminist theology is advancement of the full humanity of women and anything in religious texts that denies or degrades the full humanity of women is not redemptive and does not reflect the divine nature of God (1983: 18-19).

The transformation of minds and hearts especially of men is vital in reconstructing gender relations. People's beliefs matter a great deal and inform their behaviours and actions. The struggle for gender equality requires mental revolution and psychological re-setting in which females separate themselves from complacency, passivity, and self-induced inferiority complex; while on the other hand the males shun egocentric thinking and give support to the female folks in their struggle for gender equality (Ayodele, 2004: 10). In this regard, to struggle against gender inequalities there should be programmes, events, conferences, seminars and other enlightenment opportunities to promote women empowerment. The annual celebration of the International Women's Day is of vital importance. The role of women who have made significant and giant strides in all endeavours of life should be highlighted and celebrated to inspire other women. These women include Professor Dora Akunyili in the health sector in Nigeria, Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala at the World Bank, Hilary Clinton and Madeleine Albright (both former US Secretaries of State), Margaret Thatcher and Theresa May and many others. Okeke rightly notes that the accomplishment of women should open the eyes of other women, inspire them to know that they can achieve like their male counterpart if not better (2005: 34). They should never abandon the spirit and the determination to struggle to improve their lots. No doubt, the lives of millions of females who are working to sustain their families and promote the local economies of their nations should also be celebrated in a manner that positively value their contributions.

The following recommendations can also be helpful in fighting gender inequalities and disparities: (1) gender sensitivity in recognition of the equal dignity and rights of women should feature in the educational curriculum from the earliest stages, (2) men and women should take it as their duties to fight against gender inequalities, (3) national governments should end all forms of gender-based discriminatory policies in all education, social, political, and health sectors of society, (4) there should be creative affirmative action to ensure there are equal representation for women in decision making processes of society, (5) verbal abuse of women for sexual wrongs of which men are equally guilty should be stopped, (6) domestic responsibilities should be mutually shared to allow women have time for public life, (7) society should guarantee the equal access to qualitative

education of the girl child, (8) there should be empowerment programmes for women to enable them realize their opportunities, (9) sex stereotyping of women should be stopped, (10) parents are to guide against early marriage of their children (Ebiringa, 2010: 277).

Arising from the above it is vital to promote authentic feminist values. Feminism as understood here advocates for subversion of sexist practices, correct all evils, injustice and discrimination against women, while affirming that women are disadvantaged compared with their men counterpart (Johari, 2012: 671). All societies at the local, national, and international levels should galvanize to struggle for and ensure gender equality.

Struggling for Gender Equality as a Moral Duty

A word on what a moral duty is will be helpful here before arguing for struggling for gender equality as a moral duty. A duty is a moral commitment and implies strong feeling in doing something (Prabhat, 2018). The citizen of a country for instance has a duty to obey the constitutions and the laws of the land. Frazier explains that a duty is a normative and binding requirement that someone has to satisfy in carrying out an action (1999).

There are various kinds of duty such as political duty, moral duty, religious duty, professional duty, family duty, etc. It can also be classified in different manners depending on the perspective taken. For instance, Chaturvedi writes that there are moral and legal duties; legal duties are those required of the human being by law and have penalties attached to them for non-compliance, while moral duties arise from moral grounds (2006:4). A moral duty is an obligation to act ethically for what is right and good in carrying out responsibilities required of you. For instance you have a moral duty as a human being to act in a humane manner and not harm your neighbour or a fellow human being. Duties have justification backing them for the duty to be carried out though there can be a higher justification for not carrying out a duty (Frazier, 1999). A soldier for instance may have a duty to obey his commander but if his/her commander requires him/her to kill innocent civilians then that command is troubling and unjustified. A duty is an obligation that should be carried out. Something is moral when it is good and right.

A moral duty is a requirement emanating from moral reality. The New World Encyclopedia argues that duty is connected with “ought” and “obligation” and implies a moral action that is required (2020). Kant has opined that there is a moral duty to obey and follow the categorical imperative to treat each human being as an end not a means (1959). For Christians, morality is based on duty. The duty is to obey

what Christianity asserts as divine precepts from the sacred book. Duty is living in accord with conscience that is informed with human rational nature grounded in divine order (Fox, 1909). Fox arguing from a religious perspective says that human beings have three kinds of duties; to God, to oneself and to others. Duties to others are rooted in the golden rule to enhance the wellbeing and welfare of others and not harm them.

Acting for gender equality is a good thing. It is the right human behaviour to undertake for it enhances the wellbeing and health of human persons. Harming women in any form such as discrimination and violence against women are social evils and offends against the wellbeing of women. Women are human beings like men. To deprive them of their rights is to harm humanity. Crimes against women are crimes against humanity.

With regard to struggling for gender equality, it is a natural duty as distinguished from acquired duty. It is a natural duty for as moral agents it is implied in acting in accord with being a human being to accord respect to every human being without discrimination. Natural duties for instance include not harming a fellow human being, helping others, doing justice and mutual respect for others (New World Encyclopedia, 2020). The cited Encyclopedia avers that natural duties derive from one's role in the human community of moral agents and all moral agents are bound by natural duties (2020). Fostering gender equality arises from that fact of a common humanity and personhood. It should be realized that: "One of the central characteristics of civilized states is that freedom from discrimination is a hallmark of social equality" (Olomjobi, 2015:24). Joseph and Sumption write that "A system founded on inequality is against nature" (1979: 83).

The rights of women are human rights also (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2014: 3-4). Women's rights to life, happiness, freedom of speech and association, health, etc cannot be fully fulfilled or obtained if they are denied equal status as men, if they are denied their dignity as full human beings. Every human right implies duties that are to be upheld by society for that right to be achieved. Women's right to life and freedom from discrimination necessarily mean that all persons in society have a duty to enhance the right to life of women. This is the moral thing to do. This is the right thing to do. From various human rights declarations the state is obliged to treat every human being irrespective of their sex with equal concern and respect and ensure that inequalities in opportunities and goods are abolished (Donnelly, 2003: 46). What the state is obligated to do, the citizens of the state equally are obliged to do for the state is made up of persons and these persons are not to live in violations of the goals of the

state. Rights without duties (obligations) will amount to lawlessness (Johari, 2012: 216). Citizens have an obligation or duty to obey the laws of the state. Today most states have recognized the need for gender equality and have made laws to enforce it. There are reasons to obey these laws on moral, legal, natural and rational ground.

Struggling for gender equality for women is a moral duty on many levels. One fundamental moral rationale to strive for gender equality for women is that women are human beings like men. A human being is a human being no matter the sex, ethnicity, race, etc of the person. Every human being is entitled to some fundamental human rights and these rights have been well acknowledged (United Nations, 1948). Human rights are inalienable, apply regardless of your status in life, and are moral norms specifying standards of human behaviour that should be accorded to the persons due those rights (Arinze and Ugochukwu, 2018: 18). Fundamental human rights subsist in every human being and these rights are not given by society rather they are recognized by society. The fundamental human rights have been proclaimed by international and various human rights instruments and all states are obligated to ensure they are safeguarded. To fail to protect fundamental human rights is to fail in a duty. The foundation of all human rights is the right to human dignity and personhood. Every human being is entitled to be treated with dignity, male or female. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights is also clear that there is a right to equality. All human beings are equal no matter their sexes. Treating women as not equal to men is unethical and amounts to a failure in a moral duty. Realize that: “discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity” (United Nations General Assembly, 1979).

Conclusion

Struggling for gender equality is a moral duty for it is a fundamental requirement grounded in the moral norm of respect for each human being and dignity, international norms, and state legislation. The human rights instruments are clear in putting an obligation on states and societies to foster gender equality. Gender equality is vital for the good of every society. Humanity cannot fully attain its potentials without full realization of gender equality.

This paper argued forcefully for the need to work on realizing this issue of gender equality. The paper revealed that women have suffered from various forms of oppression and discrimination. Some of the factors that lead to gender inequalities were examined. Some of the grave consequences and solutions to gender equality were also

discussed. In the light of the above the paper showed that struggling for gender equality is a moral duty for societies and all members of society for it is the right thing to do. With full gender equality achieved a better and more harmonious human society will be achieved.

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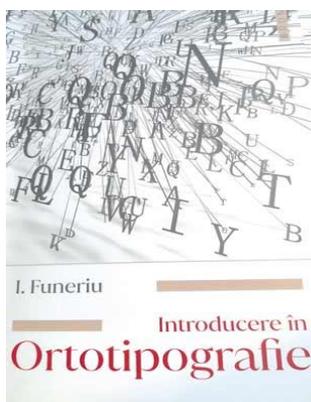
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REVIEW ARTICLE

Despre necesitatea unui cod tipografic: Ionel Funeriu, *Introducere în ortotipografie*

Laura Adela Ponta*



Ionel Funeriu este cunoscut în lumea umanioarelor românești ca un reputat stilistician, lingvist și profesor universitar ale cărui studii au excelat în domenii mai puțin frecventate de specialiști cum sunt versificația și textologia, ramuri ale filologiei în care a lăsat două lucrări originale, cu puternice note polemice: *Versificația românească*, Editura Facla, 1980 și *Alexandru Macedonski. Hermeneutica editării*, Editura Amarcord, 1995. L-am avut profesor, în studenție, nu cu prea mult timp în urmă. Îmi amintesc cu nostalgie de orele sale când ne împărtășea, la cursuri, propriile idei și experiențe privitoare la drumul scrisului și al scriiturii, cât și pe ale altor umaniști, exemple menite să ne motiveze și să ne ghideze în domeniul științelor socio-umane. Plecând de la bazele teoretice ale celor două cărți amintite, a scris și în specialități adiacente: stilistica (*Reflecții filologice*, Editura Universității „Aurel Vlaicu“, 2006), etimologia (*Biografii lexicale*, Editura Brumar, 2019), jurnalistică și politologia (*Editorialiști români*, Editura Augusta, 1998, *Eseuri lingvistice antitotalitare*, Editura Marineasa, 1998). În 2015 a publicat o carte de memorialistică dedicată mentorului său spiritual (*G. I. Tohăneanu, optimus magister*, Editura Universității de Vest, 2015).

Odată cu apariția primelor editoare informatice, a revenit în forță la critica textuală, cu referire concretă la ortotipografie (cod tipografic) care, precum ortografia, ar trebui să ne unească pe toți sub semnul coerenței culturale. Un prim pas îl făcuse între anii 1993 și 1994 când, în câteva conferințe, articole și studii, a militat pentru redactarea

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unui asemenea cod. Între anii 1995 și 1996 a continuat demersul, prin redactarea cărții *Principii și norme de redactare computerizată* (carte concepută în vremea lui WORD 2.0). În 2021, sesizând că multe lucruri s-au schimbat în această perioadă în care cu toții am suferit transformări majore pe toate planurile, ne propune o a doua carte, *Introducere în ortotipografie* (Abrevieri, Indice de autori, Lista surselor citate, revizia finală: Delia Badea, Florina Diana Cordoș, Timișoara, Editura Brumar, 2021). Autorul preia, fără modificări esențiale, tot ce a rămas valabil din 1998, dar, în același timp, sincronizându-se cu ultimele ameliorări ale programului WORD și cu mersul epocii (presiunea uzului), introduce o mulțime de corecțiuni și emendări. E o carte destinsă, substanțială, ce ne oferă soluții *savoir-faire* numeroase, pe care programele computerizate din zilele noastre ni le pun la dispoziție cu generozitate. Fiind un fin observator al detaliilor, un adevărat *optimus magister*, domnului profesor Ionel Funeriu nu îi scapă niciun amănunt atunci când vine vorba de *textologie* (textologia fiind, cum am văzut, marea sa pasiune).

Abordarea cărții este una inovatoare și, deși, prin forța lucrurilor, destul de tehnică, e în același timp, cursivă și „prietenoasă”, care seduce cititorul, printr-o subtilă stilistică a participării, cum ar fi adresarea directă și scrierea la persoana I singular, ca să nu mai vorbim de pigmentarea textului cu elemente legate de aventura scrisului; subiectul trezește interesul cititorului, fie că acesta este implicat direct sau indirect în tehnoredactarea computerizată. Este o carte scrisă în stilul aparte al domnului profesor, un stil personal în care presară elemente autobiografice, subliniind atât experiența omului Funeriu care s-a izbit mai mereu de problematica „semnelor tipografice” ce apar în timpul tehnoredactării, cât și dorința dascălului de a lăsa în urmă un îndrumar folositor tuturor celor care se îngrijesc de coerența scrierii într-o societate entropică în care timpul zboară, parcă nemaiaivând aceeași unitate de măsură.

Să faci lumea să citească o carte de specialitate în zilele de astăzi, când lucrurile se precipită, și să reușești să fascinezi prin explicații simple și concise, legate de tot ceea ce reprezintă *literele, cifrele, evidențierile grafice, semnele ortografice și de punctuație, simbolurile, pagina tipografică, alineatul și paragraful, rândul tipografic, despărțirea în silabe*, asta înseamnă să ai capacitatea de a te face înțeles și plăcut, în același timp, de toată lumea, nu doar de către cunoscătorii din domeniile editorial, informatic și lingvistic.

Publicată în anul 2021 la editura Brumar din Timișoara, *Introducere în ortotipografie* a fost bine primită de specialiști, fiind onorată de cuvinte entuziaste și, cu siguranță, de viitoare recenzii favorabile. Cartea este o privire de ansamblu asupra evoluției

tehnoredactării computerizate, aducându-ne aminte, cum spune și autorul, de faptul că „tipografia plumbului a dispărut complet”, iar „uneltele de scris de altădată” au devenit, „piese de muzeu”; este o „ediție a doua, îndreptată și adăugită” în măsura în care sunt preluate pasaje ample din lucrarea din 1998, dar, în același timp, este o carte de sine stătătoare, independentă în măsura în care, sincronizându-se cu inovațiile informatice de astăzi, autorul a fost nevoit să dea credit noilor tendințe fixate de tirania uzului și să-și contrazică astfel aserțiunile conservatoare, tradiționale, de acum douăzeci și cinci de ani și mai bine. Începe „bătălia” dintre nou și vechi, dintre clasic și inovator, iar „judecătorii” vor fi cititorii.

Elementul central îl constituie codul tipografic și exemplificarea normelor privitoare la scrierea în limba română prin texte proprii, unice. Numărând 316 pagini, cartea cuprinde paisprezece părți prin care autorul dorește să ne avertizeze că de cele mai multe ori facem greșeli în mod ne-voit, iar acestea ajung să se răsfrângă asupra noastră și asupra celor din jurul nostru, care, dacă „nu-s dedați la umanoare” (cum zicea, odată, Șerban Cioculescu) ori dacă le lipsește spiritul critic, le preiau și le transmit mai departe utilizându-le ca atare.

Liantul dintre cartea apărută în 1998, *Principii și norme de redactare computerizată*, de același autor, și *Introducerea în ortotipografie* este *Prefața* unde autorul recunoaște că acordă atenție deosebită uzului, „în raportul lui cu norma”. Astfel, cartea se adresează în primul rând utilizatorilor anonimi și apoi persoanelor specializate în exercițiul limbii române: rectorilor, decanilor, secretarilor științifici, profesorilor, studenților, masteranzilor, doctoranzilor și cercetătorilor.

În *Argument*, Ionel Funeriu ne prezintă, prin exemplificare concretă (*Metafora științifică*), cum „se vede” o pagină tipărită ce respectă regulile și normele general acceptabile, îndemnând în primul rând cadrele didactice din mediul universitar să pretindă studenților și nu numai, aplicarea acestora.

Literele sunt discutate sub aspectul dimensiunii, stilurilor și a tipurilor de literă. *Cifrele* sunt tratate cu tot ceea ce presupun ele, de la scrierea literală, la scrierea cu cifre romane, respectiv arabe. Oricât ar părea de curios, chiar dacă se află la poli opuși, de preferat este cifra arabă, în detrimentul exprimării literale, după cum scrie și autorul.

Capitolul *Evidențieri grafice* se ocupă de efectul unor contraste grafice care scot în relief anumite litere, grupuri de litere, cuvinte, sintagme, frânturi de fraze ori fragmente compacte, de dimensiuni mai întinse. În această parte, autorul detaliază regulile ortotipografice ale limbii române în contrast cu limbile engleză și franceză, aducând totodată și exemple concrete. Tot aici, vorbește despre evidențierea pe

care o realizează majuscula și scrierea cu italice, subliniind situațiile specifice.

Următorul capitol configurează statutul tipografic al semnelor ortografice și de punctuație, urmărind totodată și funcționalitatea lor. Ionel Funeriu ne poartă prin istoria scrisului, pe tărâmul sunetelor, al cuvintelor, al literelor de pe vremea scribilor antici, până la scriitorii „orali”, după cum îi denumește. Printre problemele discutate, care reprezintă și titluri de subcapitole, se numără: *Virgula, Punctul și virgula, Apostroful, Punctul, Punctele de suspensie, Rândul de puncte, Punctele de ghidaj, Două puncte, Semnul întrebării și semnul exclamării, Asteriscul, Linii orizontale, Bara oblică, Ghilimelele, Parantezele, Diacriticele, Blancul.*

Partea privind *Pagina tipografică* cuprinde subcapitolele *Pagini inițiale, Pagini finale, Pagini obișnuite, Paginarea prefeței, Punerea în pagină a versurilor, Punerea în pagină a textelor dramatice, Notele de subsol.* Totodată, autorul scoate la lumină informații legate de punerea în pagină a formatului de text, urmărind direcția și logica evoluției informaticii și aducând exemple în acest sens.

Alineatul și paragraful, rândul tipografic, despărțirea în silabe sunt alte probleme care, pe cât par de simple, pe atât sunt de importante și de riguroase. În final, capitolul *Corectura*, poate unul dintre cele mai importante, ne dă de înțeles cât este de anevoios drumul pe care îl parcurge textul de la faza de manuscris, până la forma finală. Aici ni se prezintă, într-un mod clar și coerent, avantajele și dezavantajele noilor tehnici de tehnoredactare, cu exemplificări și cu o importantă lecție de reținut, căci, după cum afirmă însuși autorul: „oricât de evaluate ar fi programele, ele nu pot... suplini inteligența umană...”

Bogata *Listă a surselor citate*, cu numeroase intrări din literatura de specialitate internațională și *Indicele de autori* încheie volumul.

Ionel Funeriu reușește să ofere răspunsuri la întrebările referitoare la disciplina tipografică, apelând la ultima variantă a WORD-ului, cea din 2019. În urma exemplurilor și a observațiilor personale pe care autorul le oferă, putem conchide că *Ortotipografia* se distinge totodată și prin nota de familiaritate, păstrând în același timp structura riguroasă a unui text științific. În câteva tușe sigure și expresive, cartea pledează pentru impunerea unor reguli legate de ortotipografie în cadrul instituțiilor (administrație, presă, școală, universități), dar și în orice activitate scriptică personală, susținând, în chiar miezul ei, ideea că felul în care vorbim și scriem în limba maternă reprezintă cartea noastră de vizită.

EDITURA UNIVERSITĂȚII
AUREL VLAICU



A R A D