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DIDACTIC ISSUES

Poetics of Flexible Personification Gestalts in Anglo-American Literary Tradition

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1. Introduction

The article deals with a specific characteristic of English poetry – a flexible gestalt of a personified object or phenomenon – which arises from distinguishing features of the English language. Such images can be also called wandering or oscillating gestalts which foreground, in the majority of the cases, different, opposite characteristics of one and the same object, phenomenon or notion by formatting the artistic image alternately, in terms of either masculine or feminine connotations.

Personification or animation of objects and abstract notions as a verbalized way of thinking about the world is a generic feature of poetic speech that dates back to the times of mythological mapping of reality. The global personification which took place in the archaic

epoch had a considerable gnosiological value, for it is through the animation of natural forces and sexualisation of inanimate objects that the human consciousness learned to understand the surrounding world. People learned to perceive or interpret dumb things through bringing the inanimate substances and abstract ideas in correlation with themselves, in other words, through identifying themselves with the objects of cognition. The poetic conceptualization of reality through animated objects, phenomena and abstract notions occurs in much the same way.

2. English personification gestalts

In this article, personification (a variety of metaphor) is considered in the light of the gestalt theory. According to the gestaltist law of contiguity, two or more elements brought together by analogy give birth to a new whole that is other than the sum of its parts. Metaphor-as-gestalt has become one of the important postulates in cognitive poetics, although its understanding as well as the issue of figure-ground relationship may undergo different scholarly interpretations (Freeman 2000, 2009; Stockwell 2002; Tsur 2009, 2012). The view of gestalt adopted in this article correlates with cognitive linguistic findings concerning "an emergent whole", which "involves an act of perceptual restructuring" (Glicksohn, Goodblatt 1993: 89). Such gestalt conception of metaphor is also compatible with Freeman's or Tsur's views, because all three basic uses of the notion "figure" in cognitive poetics (figure-as-gestalt, figure-as-trope and figure-as-icon) "are different but not unrelated" (Vandaele, Brône 2009: 12).

The specificity of English personification stems from those factors that ensure the contiguity of a male or female image and the image of certain object, phenomenon or abstract notion within one semantic framework. In the languages which have the grammatical category of gender, personified images are stenciled basically along the lines suggested by the grammatical gender of the nouns that denote those objects and notions that undergo personification. Thus, any noun of masculine gender becomes the bearer of a masculine image, and, accordingly, any noun of feminine gender carries a feminine image. Such means of metaphorisation that exploits the figurative characteristics supplied by the category of grammatical gender leads to establishing a certain group of personified images with stable masculine or feminine connotations that belongs to the fund of ethnopoetic phenomena. In contrast to these languages, English can often be described as gender-insensitive, because in this language, gender is no longer an inflectional category. Therefore in many cases, poetic personification patterns those conceptual templates that have got implanted in Anglo-Saxon cultural tradition. For instance, the images of Love, Death, Time, Heaven or Winter have developed a stable connection with masculine gender, whereas those of Truth, Art, Beauty, Fantasy or Fortune are invariably associated with females.

This specificity of the emergence of English personification gestalts that lies in complete independence of personification processes from language structure is unknown to many European poetic traditions – French, German, Italian or Spanish. It endows an English poet with a unique liberty in connecting images without any restraints on the part of the language material. Having got such carte blanche for materializing their associations, English authors may freely operate the symbolic gender of inanimate objects or abstract notions by either accepting the traditional way of their gender identification or creating a new image through a deviation from the stereotype idea. The second way of ascribing gender to inanimate objects took place even in the epoch of Romanticism, when the ties of established cultural tradition were rather strong and fixed personification gestalts dominated in Anglo-American poetry. In those times the occurrence of flexible personification gestalts was dictated by some imperatives of the poetic context, which consisted in the necessity to take a fresh look at the personified object or notion. For

example, the concept of Life, which had assumed solely masculine attributes since Renaissance, becomes [+ feminine] in poems by Wordsworth and Tennyson, and, in both cases, this is explained by the specificity of the created images that embody features traditionally associated with womankind – fickleness and excessive emotionality:

> *Oh, no! the visions of the past*
> *Sustain the heart in feeling*
> ***Life*** *as **she** is – our changeable **Life**... (Wordsworth) (PW, 189);*

> ***Life**'s temperate Noon; **her** sober Eve,*
> ***Her** Night not melancholy... (W.Wordsworth) (PW, 187);*

> *And Time, a maniac scattering dust,*
> *And **Life**, a **Fury** slinging flame (A.Tennyson) (OL, 252).*

The radical changes in artistic comprehension of reality at the end of the 19th century had considerably loosened all generally recognized rules and paved way for the legitimization of flexible or wandering gestalts of personified objects and phenomena. That is why, although traditional masculine images of Death and Love, for the most part, retain their prototypic status, the orientation of new poetry to uncommon, subjective semantics resulted in introducing some feminine images. For instance, a respectable lady Life can be juxtaposed to a street hooligan Death:

> ***Madam Life**'s a piece of bloom,*
> *Death does dogging everywhere;*
> ***She**'s the tenant of the room,*
> *He's the ruffian on the stairs (OL, 117).*

A traditional masculine image of Love that caught the fancy of English poets in the Renaissance and Romanticism eras is reexamined in favour of a female image, due to the down-to-earth, prosaic character of the latter in modernist poetry:

> *Over the dewy grass with a small suitcase*
> ***Love** comes trotting and stops to hold on a shoe.*
> *To go away with **her**! (Dunn) (PB, 108).*

An analogous reinterpretation of a preconceived idea is observed in relation to the concept of Death. Death as a female gestalt becomes a convincing representation of weakness and helplessness, in contrast to the vital force of all the happy moments generously granted by Life:

> *Troths*
> *Yellow dust on a bumble*
> *bee's wing,*
> *Gray lights in a woman's*
> *asking eyes,*
> *Red ruins in the changing*
> *sunset embers:*
> *I take you and pile high*
> *the memories.*
> ***Death** will break **her** claws*
> *on some I keep. (Sandburg) (S, 55-56)*

Similarly, the image of Poetry, which alongside Fantasy, Music and Art, has been traditionally treated in English literature as a female being, is portrayed in modern poetic texts as having two gender features simultaneously. The new gestalt of Poetry can emerge, in particular, in connection with the female authorship of the poetic text. Compare, for instance:

> *Tomorrow, I suspect to see you on the hill*
> *going toward your **mistress Poesie** –*

> *the flag drops down like Quixote's…*
>   *(Mark Mc Morris) (ANP, 147)*
> *I'm married to poetry*
> *and **he** says But don't let **him** go*
> *and I don't for a little while longer*
> *but now everything is changed and not*
> *as bad as I bed down with poetry and myself*
> *whom I each love intwined real love and*
>   *would welcome another   (L.A.Brown) (ANP,110)*

At the same time there has always existed a group of personified creatures with an ambivalent gender that resulted from the absence of a well-articulated tradition in poetic gender identification of the corresponding objects or notions. For example, the image of the sea can be interpreted as both a masculine and a feminine creature, subject to those connotations that are relevant for being actualized in the given poetic context. Such flexible gestalt of the sea correlates with its symbolic ambivalence as "the lower ocean", a mediator between the amorphous substances (air and gas) and those given a shape (earth and solid things), associated simultaneously with life and death (the archetype of mother). Accordingly, Wordsworth presents sea as a male when its might is contrasted with its ability to be mild and submissive:

> *Comes that low sound from breeezes rustling over*
> *The grass-crowned headland that conceals the shore?*
> *No; 'tis the earth-voice of the mighty **sea**,*
> *Whispering how meek and gentle **he** can be! (PW, 356).*

However, if the sea manifests itself as a treacherous and unpredictable natural element, having considerable destructive power, it assumes the aspect of a female:

> *Sea waves are green and wet,*
> *But up from where they die,*
> *Rise other vaster yet,*
> *And those are brown and dry.*
> *They are the **sea** made land*
> *To come at the fisher town,*
> *And bury in solid sand*
> *The men **she** could not drown.*
> ***She** may not know cove and cape,*
> *But **she** does not know mankind*
> *If by any change of shape,*
> ***She** hopes to cut off mind…   (CP, 330).*

The flexibility of personification gestalts manifests itself in a most conspicuous way within the framework of an individual poetic mapping of the world offered by a certain author. Thus, Byron is rather consistent in following the masculine pattern of Love images that embody a militant or heroic spirit:

> *Against all noble maladies **he** [i.e. love – E.D.]'s bold,*
> *But vulgar illnesses don't like to meet,*
> *Nor that a sneeze should interrupt his sigh,*
> *Nor inflammations redden **his** blind eye (B, 73)*;
> *…**He***
> *Seems **Love** turn'd a **lieutenant of artillery**! (B, 338).*

However, he can occasionally admit a female presentation of Love to foreground its entirely different characteristics:

> *Devotion and her **daughter Love** (SB, 161);*
>
> *Oh, **Love**! of whom great Caesar was the **suitor**,*

Titus the master, Antony the slave (B, 119).

3. Conclusion

As hopefully demonstrated here, the decline of grammatical gender, a characteristic of the English language exploited in the poetic conceptualization of the world has turned into a source of fascinating image-building opportunity for Anglo-American authors and has resulted in the emergence of flexible personification gestalts that constitute a distinguishing feature of their poetry.

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Abbreviations

NP = Jarnot, Lisa, Leonard Schwartz, Chris Straffolino (eds.) 1998. *An Anthology of New (American) Poets*. Jersey City, New Jersey: Talisman House, Publishers.
B =   Byron, George Gordon 1948. *Don Juan.* Moscow: Izdatelstvo literatury na inostrnnyh yazykah.
CP = Frost, Robert 1967. *Complete Poems of Robert Frost*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
OL = *The Oxford Library of Words and Phrases.* 1990. Volume I. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Second Edition. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press.
PB = Blake Morrison, Andrew Morton (eds.) 1982. *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry*. London: Penguin Books.
PW = Wordsworth, William 1946. *Poems of Wordsworth*. Chosen and edited by Matthew Arnold. New York: Macmillan and Co., Ltd.
S = Sandburg, Carl. 1994. *Chicago Poems.* New York: Dover Publications, Inc.
SP = Wordsworth, William 1996. *Selected Poems*. London: Penguin Books.
SB = Byron, George Gordon 1979. *Selections from Byron*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.

ESP / ASP in the Domains of Science and Law in a French Higher Education Context: Preliminary Reflections

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1. Introduction

In a globalised world, the issue of language is of paramount importance. Teaching and learning foreign languages has become a social, institutional and professional challenge for the French education system.

One consequence of the predominance of English has been to promote its teaching in higher education, so much so that French universities are gradually teaching other subjects through English to students whose language skills do not necessarily match the standards required for such curricula, and by lecturers who are not specialised in English. Against that backdrop, this article addresses what research about "Anglais de spécialité" (ASP) is in the current, institutional context of the ever-developing French "ASP" sector, with a particular focus on English for science and English for law, and hopes to encourage similar studies across Europe. Exploring the epistemological dimension of research in didactics and ASP is essential in order to assess what stage of development it has reached, what directions it is likely to take in France and in Europe, and how a reflection on education and programmes of ASP could be implemented in higher education in different countries. But the present contribution paves the way for a pragmatic approach, since it aims to bring an institutional solution to the debate that has agitated the French academic world for the past decades.

Most discussions on learning and teaching in a university context intersect with the issue of language, and the place of English is of particular concern to the French higher education system, as well as other European contexts. Teaching and learning foreign languages has become a social, institutional and professional challenge in France. Economic globalisation has encouraged companies and institutions to use English as the medium for international exchanges, be they political, judicial, scientific, academic or economic. One of the immediate consequences of this growing predominance of the English language has been to promote its teaching in primary and secondary schools in France as well as in higher education, so much so that universities are introducing modules, degrees or diplomas that are taught in English to a student body whose language skills do not necessarily match the standards required by such curricula, and by lecturers who are not specialists in English. Teachers of English and lecturers in university language departments, on the other hand, are typically well-versed in the humanities (literature, cultural studies, history, linguistics) of the linguistic sphere in which they have specialised. These academics are now recruited to teach English applied to various specific areas that they are not familiar with (Van Der Yeught 2010: para. 11), and this is the case with hard sciences, social sciences and medicine.

One of the paradoxes of this situation is that French universities offer many more positions in applied English, sometimes called "Anglais de spécialité" or LANSAD (LANgues pour Spécialistes d'Autres Disciplines, 'languages for specialists of other subjects') than in the traditional areas of the humanities, and find it difficult to fill vacancies because the prospect of teaching English in a domain for which lecturers feel they have no real competence is daunting. Over 70 per cent of the lecturing or teaching positions in higher education concern, or will concern, LANSAD, as the yearly list of publications for lecturing positions on the French national portal *Galaxie* has indicated in the last decade. Although it has become necessary for everyone and everything, English studied for its own sake seems to be losing some of its intrinsic professionalising value, like most humanities. It lies therefore in an ambiguous and uncomfortable position: it is simultaneously a crucial and subordinate subject, compared to more vocationally deemed curricula (Van der Yeught 2010: para. 12). Besides, there are disagreements within the teaching community regarding the relevance of teaching highly technical languages, when the basic requirements of communication in English are not even met by most French students, let alone the tasks that their future work environment will expect them to perform (speaking in public, answering the phone, writing e-mails, having conversations and small talk, etc.). The difficulty remains, even though useful tools in language skills evaluation have been available for over a decade; the Common European Framework for Languages (Council of Europe 2001) provides a wide array of criteria that enable the

French teaching community, the learners and the professionals to assess the degree of competence that must be reached for the use of English (and other foreign languages) in the workplace, for instance. But it does not address the issue of teacher training regarding the degree of technicity required to teach "langue de spécialité", nor the minimum standard required for any other specialist to use English as a medium of instruction. Moreover, the French government's policy of protecting the national language and its status as an international medium of communication adds to the difficulties encountered in the discussion.

Against that backdrop, the present article is an essayistic-like argumentation that integrates several concepts borrowed from linguistics, language philosophy and sociology. Its authors wish to appeal to both the international as well as French research community in favour of a complex interdisciplinary concept of English as a foreign language in European higher education. The article primarily aims to revisit what research about "Anglais de Spécialité" (ASP) is in the current institutional context of the ever-developing LANSAD sector in France, which is more a teaching sector than a well-structured research domain (Van Der Yeught 2014: para. 32) with a particular focus on English for science and English for law. This research is being currently developed in the LAIRDIL laboratory[1], which has set up a research group focusing on the epistemological study of the LANSAD sector. Additionally, the question will be asked why didactics should develop its own conceptual tool in order to deal with its teaching at university level. Exploring the epistemological dimension of research in the area of didactics and 'anglais de spécialité' is essential for assessing what stage of development it has reached, what directions it is likely to take and how a reflection on education and ASP programmes could be implemented in higher education. It cannot be disconnected from a pragmatic approach, since it aims to bring an institutional solution to the protracted debate that has agitated the academic world for the past few decades in France, and this will be the article's main argument. We believe that the French dimension of this contribution can be used as an entry to a broader debate on the issue of English language teaching to specialists of other professional domains with different cultural and institutional backgrounds.

It also advocates an on-going research on the emergence of didactics of English as an interdisciplinary field of research that is both epistemological and foundational.

2. Description and state of the art
2.1. Overview : English language teaching in French higher education

The political dimension of the issue in France cannot be underestimated. French has been a language of international exchanges and culture, and is spoken in many countries. The growing hegemony of English has generated many negative responses from policy-makers, institutions, the world of arts, and teachers. The latter deplore that globalisation is gradually destroying whole swathes of culture, lesser-used languages, and even deprives English of its cultural dimension, to wit the generalisation of the word "Globish", which reduces the language to a *lingua franca*, devoid of any traces of culture and idioms (Forlot 2010: 98, Chini 2010: 125).

2.1.1. Growing needs for research in English language for non-specialists

Teachers' organisations like the APLIUT (Association des Professeurs de Langues des IUT/*Organisation of Polytechnics/Vocational college teachers*) conduct research and implement the results of research in didactics in the above-mentioned contexts. National

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[1] Laboratoire Interuniversitaire de Recherche en Didactique de LANSAD (Inter-University Research Laboratory in Foreign Language Teaching & Learning).

academic circles, like the GERAS for English (Groupe d'Étude et de Recherche en Anglais de Spécialité/*Research Group in English for Specific Purposes*), develop reflections and research on the specificity of "anglais de spécialité" (which, interestingly, does not exactly translate the idea of "English for specific purposes", as we shall see), but the concept that has emerged in the last twenty years is not completely detached from other, more traditional paradigms in which the cultural dimension dominates. Humbley (2007: para.2) points out that research in languages for specific purposes (LSP) in countries where German plays a vehicular role is characterised by the emphasis on theoretical models and systematic processing of the data collected. A criticism that is most often heard in France about studies on LSP is their lack of theoretical ambition. While this opinion does not really correspond to reality, it may be useful to examine how other European researchers in LSP integrate theory and scholarship in their intellectual approach (Humbley (2007: para.3). Van der Yeught (2010, para. 13) adds: "Until now, ASP researchers have not set a goal to establish these "languages for specific purposes" (LSP) of English as objects of study in its own right or as independent structure fields of knowledge" (our transl.).[2]

There have been disagreements between French and Anglophone teachers of English as to what constitutes the teaching of English to non-specialists (Van Der Yeught 2012: 9), because they belong to a different academic and pedagogical tradition, and one can say that their respective approaches have, paradoxically, coexisted and developed both separately and conjointly. If both communities have identified an identical need for more English in higher education for non-native speakers, the diagnoses have been somewhat different. The following paragraphs should provide an insight into these two approaches.

2.1.2. LANSAD: the emergence of a new subgroup

Naming and scope: English studies in French higher education classically distinguish English for specialists, which emphasises the study of English culture, literature, civilisation and linguistics, from the teaching of English to non-specialist students, who should only be concerned with acquiring an acceptable degree of fluency in the language so as to use it in their everyday life or in a specific professional environment. The latter covers many different circumstances, many situations, and it is clear that this teaching sector has been defined by default under the very broad and academically less prestigious category of LANSAD. Although often confused more or less implicitly, the words "LANSAD sector", "ASP" and "didactics of English" remain distinct, even though they often play complementary roles in the research on university education in English, probably because the didactics of English for non-specialist students (from the LANSAD sector) constitutes the most visible part (SAES 2012). This teaching area has been rooted in a dedicated academic subject matter and a field of research in its own right. Besides developing quality tools to serve such purposes, the key players within academia have relentlessly affirmed the cultural dimension of languages and speech for non-specialists that a reductionist vision of English as a mere medium for international communication has discarded. This has paved the way for a movement among scholars to promote high quality standards for the teaching of such domains by inciting the universities' Boards of Directors, and the French Department of Higher Education and Research (MESR) to appoint senior lecturers to carry out the task of teaching in the LANSAD sector. This novel area of research has since developed, seminal works have been published, so that a

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[2] "Jusqu'à présent, les chercheurs en ASP ne se sont pas donné pour but de fonder ces « langues de spécialité » (LSP) de l'anglais en tant qu'objets d'étude à part entière ni de les structurer en tant que domaines de connaissance indépendants."

crucial distinction is now made between LANSAD as a sector of language teaching, English for specialists of other fields (in French ASP, or "Anglais de Spécialité") as an object of study, and the didactic approach, the aim of which is to guarantee high standards in the teaching/learning process of English in that context. However, there seems to be a dearth of specific training that would apply the findings of research in that domain in French higher education.

Teacher training: Indeed, teacher training in France acknowledges the growing importance of language learning at all levels of the school and university curriculum, but there are not many specific Master's Degree devoted to the specificity of teaching a foreign language for specific/special purposes in higher education (Masters of ASP / 'anglais de spécialité'). These Masters offer general training and do not specifically prepare students to teach one of the variety of the specialised languages that the LANSAD sector requires. For example, the Master "ASPects" co-founded by ENS[3] Cachan and Université Paris Diderot prepares students to major in the areas of English for Specific Purposes (scientific, legal, economic and medical English), but without specialising in one particular area (Van der Yeught 2010: para.12).

2.2 Definitional issues

In a French academic context, "langue de spécialité"[4] has always included the cultural aspect of the domain it explores and circumscribes (Van der Yeught 2010: para.16). This approach is also characteristic of the FLE teaching sector (_French as a Foreign Language_, FLE in French, the equivalent of ESOL, or _English for Speakers of Other Languages_), which does not disconnect language and culture. However, the need for a more immediate, ready-made response for English in a more specific context has prompted many teachers to fall back on a mass of existing teaching tools and materials published by English-speaking for-profit organisations and powered by very dynamic research, fostered by academic institutions. These tools and materials neglect the connection between language and culture. The problem is not commercial or economic, but one of approach. That is the reason why it is difficult to use English (or American) labels and acronyms like ESP _in lieu of_ their French counterparts, precisely because they do not refer to the same theoretical vein, and this is what we are now going to identify and describe in the following paragraph.

2.2.1. ASP/ESP in the French universities where English for non-specialists (LANSAD) is taught

In French universities, ASP is studied more as a cultural object, by resorting to well-known academic categories, than as a tool for language acquisition. It is not unusual, in the current landscape, that publications focusing on a pedagogical tool or approach are not as well-rated as more theoretical ones in France, even though they are central to the development of ESP in the Anglo-Saxon pedagogical tradition. This may be due to the fact that ASP is still trying to struggle for recognition among academics, and the abstract principles are essential for reaching such a status, the more so as the scope of the CNU, the National Council of Universities[5] Section 11 (Langues et Littératures Anglaises et Anglo-saxonnes/_English and Anglo-Saxon language and literature_) does include ASP as one of its axis of research. Conversely ESP clearly focuses on pragmatic approaches to

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[3] Ecole Normale Supérieure.
[4] "Une langue de spécialité est l'expression d'un domaine spécialisé dans une langue", ou "Un domaine spécialisé est un ensemble de connaissances et/ou de pratiques mis au service d'une même finalité".
[5] A supervisory body of elected academics deciding on the eligibility of candidates for positions in higher education and career advancement.

language teaching and on classroom development. Thus, in France, ASP is supported by researchers, while teachers tend to favour the ESP approach.

There was one way out of this dilemma: the development of adequate methods in the pragmatic domain of teaching has in fact been provided for by international institutions such as the Council of Europe or European projects urging for standardisation in teaching practice, its goals and its assessment.

Research in didactics in the LANSAD sector emerged and developed in science faculties, medical and law schools, as well as in economics departments, because a more traditional approach to language teaching did not meet the ever pressing demands for a more professionally-oriented type of teaching. Indeed, LANSAD English should ideally enable graduates and post-graduates to use English in a professional or academic context, which means that those who routinely use it should be able to perform some tasks through its medium. Yet, even at a time when English has established itself as the world's primary means of communication between companies or institutions, many French students do not meet those basic requirements, and, what is more, they have the acute feeling that somehow the school system has failed to bring them up to speed in the global landscape and this may be the result of the divergence between ASP and ESP supporters in France. It is the task of teachers and researchers to question the ability of public policies and traditions to motivate students in language learning: indeed it has often been noticed that such motivation is clearly disconnected from the perception of its utility, and the contents of courses, along with the teaching methods, are often being blamed. This is partly due to the growing heterogeneous nature of the French student body, the diversity of schooling backgrounds, and the perception that there is a huge gap between the required standards of language acquisition in secondary school and universities.

This divergence can also be felt in the way the various domains of ASP are represented at university level: let's take the example of ASP in science and in law, which contributes to the confusion as to what ASP is and aims to do. In "hard" scientific curricula, English teaching is perceived as providing a lexicon and a few syntactic elements. By contrast, English for law seems to be endowed with a specific culture, that of the Common Law legal tradition. Teaching English for law and for science is not based on the same premises, and the language input in first year and at Masters' level is not the same: it varies with the degree of complexity of the knowledge acquired in the dominant subject matter.

In ASP, the word "spécialité" is not determined by the teaching objectives (which would otherwise entail that it has been artificially created for teaching purposes); it is part and parcel of language *and culture*, insofar as the "langue-culture" concept is shaped, first and foremost, by the society that has nurtured it (French academics have adopted the concept of "langue-culture" that does not separate the linguistic and the cultural aspects of language). In other words, "specific purposes", as the Anglo-American academics define it in ESP, exist only because society is (increasingly) based on specialised activities that necessitate specific language uses. These are pre-existing conditions that can pave the way for teaching. But foreign language acquisition, even in a professional context, conveys as many cultural insights into that foreign society as any other area of study (cf. Petit n. d.).

2.2.2. ESP versus "anglais de spécialité"

There are current stakes in the debate around defining what research in "Anglais de spécialité" is in the French context, as opposed to ESP.

English as an academic subject matter has emerged and developed from the classic category of "culture" (literature, history, linguistics), to the extent that it has formed a new area of study under the name of "civilisation", a post-1968 creation, which combines

sociological, historical, political or economic approaches in the overall study of a country or a broader geographical area. In 2002, Michel Petit gives a more thorough definition of "anglais de spécialité": a branch of "anglistique"[6] which deals with the language, discourse and culture of professional communities and anglophone specialised social groups, and the teaching of this object (2002: 2-3). The "anglais de spécialité" is now the fourth branch of "anglistique". Thus ASP is now a subject matter, that is to say, a "branch of knowledge, and [as such it] includes research" (Petit 2004: 8). But the concept of "anglais de spécialité" is still ill-defined, or is defined by default. First, there are still ongoing debates as to the name this area of study should be given: the expressions used in French (ASP) and English (ESP) do not cover the same reality. The English phrase (English for Specific Purposes) seems particularly oriented towards specific professional needs. If the expression ESP is used for research, it is often referred to by the specific fields of study such as discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, pragmatics, sociolinguistics and ethnography. English for Specific Purposes evokes teaching rather than research in a particular field. In contrast, the area of "anglais de spécialité" seems wider, the boundaries of its respective domains of research are sometimes blurred, but this is due to its status as an emerging field: the development of research in ASP in France is closely linked to the development of education (Mémet 2008: 16).

The turn that ASP took is due to the fact that French academia has included a strong cultural dimension in what is perceived by Anglophones as a tool for communication in a distinct environment. This is particularly clear with the introduction of popular literature, more specifically novels of the thriller genre, set in a specific professional context well-known to their authors, in the English language classes under the name of FASP ("Fiction À Substrat Professionnel"[7]), first defined by Michel Petit (1999). The cultural dimension, in its book or film version, has simply been re-conducted in a new guise for students of other subjects. Thus FASP is both a lively way of introducing ASP to a student audience who has already been trained to read and analyse book extracts and an admission that the reflection on the didactics of ASP hasn't been translated into teaching. The problem in France is that of institutional conservatism in which the elite of researchers tends to reproduce its model schools.

2.3. Institutional issues
2.3.1. The French academic dichotomy

There are notable differences between France's educational system and that of other countries', and these help understand how LANSAD can be synonymous with both ASP and ESP. This is explainable by the nature of institutional recruitment in French higher education.

On the one hand, holders of a PhD are eligible for lecturing positions[8]. These lecturers are recruited on their academic merit by universities after being "qualified" by the national institution of the CNU section 11's peers, who do not do not fully recognize ASP as one of their fields of interest.

This can produce two types of situations: either the lecturers pursue their initial research in literature, civilization, or linguistics and disconnect it from their teaching practices, or they try to redirect their research toward didactics in LANSAD, even if they do not necessarily have a background in that domain. Thus ASP will be seen as a convenient area of development for them.

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[6] This new coinage has no direct translation into English but can be approximately rendered by 'English Studies'.

[7] Again, there is no strict English equivalent to this expression.

[8] This includes lecturers ('Maître de Conférences') and professors ('Professeur des universités').

On the other hand, universities also recruit personnel that are experienced in teaching, but not necessarily versed in research (PRAG, PRCE[9] and contract holders). These teachers will tend to adopt a pragmatic ESP approach.

The debate develops around who should teach English in the LANSAD sector and which approach to adopt. One possible answer comes from the influence exerted by the establishment of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework for Languages and the Bologna Process.

2.3.2. The European contribution to the didactics of languages

In 2001, the Council of Europe published the results of a vast project for the harmonisation of assessment methods in language acquisitions under the name of the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (CEFR). The aim of that document was to enable European countries, decision-makers in the field of education, but also of recruitment, to validly assess the level of competence of a foreign language speaker. Several skills were thus identified (oral comprehension, written comprehension, spoken interaction, sustained oral expression and written expression), each of which corresponds to a particular task performed in any given foreign language. One of the most interesting principles it involves is that each language skill may be disconnected from the others in terms of achievement. This provides an interesting tool for teachers, depending on which competence needs to be focused on. Furthermore, progress in each language skill can be measured by applying a universally valid grid, ranking from A0 (absolute beginner) to C2 (proficient user). It must be noted that native speakers do not form part of the ideal level to reach; the framework does not include them, and they do not constitute a model to imitate, contrary to the shared values in the traditional French education system, for which the "native speaker" is a paradigm, albeit an ambiguous one, that perpetuates the exclusion of learners of a second language who would not achieve perfection (Lee 2005). We may add that the traditional image of the "native speaker", presented as a model for the learner, is also biased. Indeed, speaking a language from birth does not guarantee the use of complex, elaborate vocabulary and syntactic patterns, as favoured by academics. In fact, the model of the native speaker is the college-educated native speaker, preferably versed in literature. What the Framework endeavoured to change was precisely that model. Language was no longer an end in itself, but a skill that could be acquired and applied to various circumstances and social contexts. Thus, the approach to language acquisition was transformed, and the proficiency levels determined in terms of what the learner "could do" efficiently, in other words, without thinking much about it. The level of error acceptability is therefore higher than in traditional French foreign language teaching, something that is being resisted in many academic circles. Another crucial aspect of the CEFL is its close connection to the task-based teaching implied by this "can-do" approach, which generated many acronyms generally synonymous with CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). In the French higher education context, this clearly indicates that teacher training should be overhauled.

Since 1988[10], the Bologna Process has pledged to transform and harmonise European universities so as to encourage mobility and student participation in the

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[9] PRAG: 'Professeur Agrégé', PRCE : ' Professeur certifié'. These correspond to the administrative grades granted to secondary school teachers after passing national competitive exams and having first completed their Master's Degree. Traditionally, the 'agrégés' sit a more academic exam where litterature, history/sociology and linguistics dominate, whereas the 'certifiés' who pass the CAPES ('Certificat d'Aptitude à l'Enseignement Secondaire' or 'Professional Teaching Certificate') are more professionally-oriented.

[10] *Magna Charta Universitatum*, Bologna, Italy September 18, 1988.

education process, foster the social conditions required to broaden the access to higher education, and promote employability. This paved the way for a two-tier reflection on the development of CLIL: first, the multiplication of syllabi taught through English and open to a wide range of students, and, second, the inclusion of foreign language teaching in French higher education that would comply with the Bologna requirements and the tightening links between all European higher education institutions. For specialists in the didactics of English, the whole issue concerned the objectives of blending content and language acquisition in dedicated modules, where language is no longer central, but becomes a tool that opens access to knowledge and know-how pertaining to other areas of expertise. In that perspective, Taillefer (2004: para.2) has shown that in modules where language acquisition and expert knowledge are treated on a par, both benefit, but this has not become the norm in French higher education. Marsh et al. (2001, qtd. in Taillefer 2004: para.4) have shown the strong correlation between teaching and learning, which makes it difficult, even for research purposes, to dissociate language skills from the teaching skills involved in the process, because they feed off one another to the highest degree. One positive conclusion (Gajo 2009: 22) is that such a complex method, sustained by a thoroughly well-thought approach to teaching/learning, does not result in more complicated learning and teaching processes. However, the research community is still facing an obstacle: the field was deserted by theoreticians, leaving teachers to design and implement their methods, at least in France. This is not the case in Northern European countries, where the interaction between fundamental research and practice is well-documented and branches out to the devising of efficient public policies that give a central role to CLIL, while reshuffling the respective roles of researchers, lecturers in language acquisition, specialists of other fields, and the student body (Hellekjaer, Westergaard 2003, qtd. In Taillefer 2004: para.2). Academic interest in CLIL in France is relatively recent, and discussions do not really focus on the qualitative aspect of such a teaching/learning process. Some research papers insist on the risk of marginalising languages in higher education, should CLIL be implemented in a haphazard manner. Besides, there has not, to this day, been any global assessment of foreign language teaching policies nationwide, even though this has recently become one major objective in the granting of chairs and positions of assistant professors in higher education. No major study of students and lecturers' representations in that field has been carried out, to identify the needs for a coherent and harmonious public policy on language teaching. ASP, in its LANSAD aspect, is connected to CLIL, and is situated at the junction between language and content. It is thus ideally placed as a transdisciplinary mediator between theory and practice. Consequently, implementing CLIL necessitates a thorough reflection on the major features of teaching and learning processes in a non-specialist context, notably on its objectives, and the role of language teachers involved in LANSAD. More generally, it cannot eschew the thorough analysis of its societal implications, while avoiding the two pitfalls of "didactic-scientific ignorance" and "political-institutional requirements" (Gajo 2009: 18).

Consequently, there is a need to change paradigms and social models toward the profession and representations within France's academia: thus, part two of this paper will deal with the way in which research can help implement an alternative epistemological analysis to establish "anglais de spécialité" as a fully-fledged category of English teaching in higher education.

3. Prolegomena for the didactics of specialised English

Our contribution aims at reflecting on the manners of integrating both dimensions, that is to say the epistemological and the practical dimensions, in order to ameliorate the teaching practices of teachers of English in higher education and more particularly in the

domains of science and law. Law, an essential element of social life, cannot be considered without the language that transmits it and allows its practice, unlike the science, where work largely consists in experimenting. English for law, which is inseparable from Common Law, is now being used as an international language, particularly with the development of International and European Law, in the same way as English has emerged as the globalised language of science. As an emanation and representation of a culture, it deserves special attention, but does it mean that English for science can be reduced to a vehicular language without any references to culture or cultures? This issue should be examined as part of a broader debate: on the one hand, teachers of legal English are expected to acquire at least some knowledge of law; on the other hand, those teaching English for science are told to base their teaching mainly on available scientific publications and focus on vocabulary. No basic scientific background is required of them, and these paradoxical and heterogeneous representations of teaching English for non-specialists need to be revised.

3.1."Langue de spécialité" as an emerging complex concept

One serious objection to the emergence of "anglais de spécialité" as a concept would be to contend that the domain it covers is both vast and ill-defined. The lack of theoretical framework concerns the notion of "anglais de spécialité" which is not really defined for science, whereas it is based on culture for law. Basically, the assumption among linguists is that whatever does not concern literature, culture (itself a mixed concept aggregating various subjects around the idea of "civilisation") or linguistics either belongs to "general English", to "English for communication", or to "specific purposes". The difficulty here is to decide where to place the limit of the fields of study, and to justify this. As Morin (1990: 98) says, a concept is not defined by its limits but its core and it is this core that we will determine in our case. Even a category like "English for science" is hard to define because it changes with the ever growing complexity and fragmentation of the world of science itself. Should we then say that "English for chemistry" differs from "English for mathematics" or "English for medicine", or that they all share common features? It is clear that examining all forms and variations of English applied to scientific sectors would be beyond the scope of the present contribution. The question remains: which domain would be more representative of our approach?

3.2. The paradigm of English for law vs. English for science

Even if this contribution cannot hope to be exhaustive, it must aim to find a suitable paradigm that will justify its objectives. Relying on our personal and professional experience and knowledge, we have concentrated on two segments of ASP: English for science and English for law. Although all scholars accept that language cannot be dissociated from its cultural dimension, to the extent that foreign language acquisition always includes that aspect, there are many disagreements about the cultural dimension of specialised uses of languages. If the language of law is closely tied to the history of legal systems and institutions that have developed their own, idiosyncratic concepts and principles, and are closely connected to a specific culture, the language of science has always privileged the clarity of communication among scholars and researchers. In other words, English for science is seen as a vehicle for a universal truth. Thus, did those scientists really sacrifice their own sociocultural background to a so-called universal language, to the extent that some academics argue that there is practically no language input in math classes taught through the medium of English, whereas jurists only converge in a specific field called "comparative law", for instance? One possible conceptualisation of this hiatus in the development of the languages of law and of science can be found in the notion of "territoriality" devised by Deleuze and Guattari (1980: 382).

According to them a "territory" is first "territorialised": it means that it can only exist as an act that affects its constitutive elements, like "milieu" and rhythms (Deleuze, Guattari 1980: 386). A territory can thus be identified and singularised by its "signature" (Deleuze, Guattari 1980: 387). Accordingly, the signature of law can be found in its construction of a fixed territory that coincides with borders, institutions and the social representations that are attached to it, language being one of its instruments of power. Science, on the other hand, can be interpreted as a nomadic assemblage (Deleuze, Guattari 1980: 446-50), the unity of which results in the cooperation of individual, molecular input of scientists. Contrary to law, its signature does not coincide with geographical boundaries, even if state apparatuses have endeavoured to capture its results to serve their political or economic ends. Its signature lies, rather, in its discourse on truth, organised on an abstract plane of reference (Deleuze, Guattari 1991: 138) represented by the logical proposition, itself praised as a "perfect language" by scientists and philosophers alike[11]. It seems therefore legitimate to analyse the impact of such a factor on the formation of the concept of "ASP", and the way in which it should be taught in the context of a language class by a teacher of English (Piaget 1970: 5).

3.3. Syntagmatic relations

This paradigmatic approach should be completed by a series of closer, more syntagmatic considerations, i.e. it should establish how knowledge has been articulated around our subjects, and this should include fields of knowledge and approaches such as history, philosophy and sociology. Besides the association of literary genres to the notion of "anglais de spécialité" (cf. end of 2.2.2.), analyses have come from other fields, such as sociology, cognition, pedagogy, neuro-sciences, in an effort to elicit what constitutes this nascent object of study. Research has now gathered a diversity of approaches in the definition process, without forming a self-contained and coherent whole: this stage in the research process corresponds to the "pre-paradigmatic" phase in the conceptual elaboration of a new subject (Fourez & Larochelle 2004: 88), which is gradually disengaging from its parent subjects, forming its own autonomous concepts. ASP is not yet widespread or standardised, and it is also influenced by the social and institutional conditions of its emergence, be it public policies, the university as a social institution, or the economy.

From these premises, it is hoped that a stronger epistemological reflection will contribute to the elevation of "anglais de spécialité", by taking into account the different reflections in the domains of specialisations in the teaching context. It will be carried out on the assumption that subjects (subject matters) are no longer based on a limited set of theoretical assumptions, but can be more loosely construed as complex and fluid systems (Morin 1990: 12-13; Deleuze, Guattari 1980: 22) that adapt to the social representations and contexts that have shaped them (Narcy-Combes 2005: 79-80). Once ASP accesses its own autonomous existence in the eye of the scientific community of linguists, through an epistemological break (Bachelard 1938: 23), it will acquire the status of fully-fledged knowledge. When that turning point has been properly analysed and assessed at the junction of context domain and language as culture, it will be possible to envisage a reflection on the teaching of English for science.

Another approach pertains to the social dimension of language teaching as a concept as well as an activity (Maingueneau 1992: 115). This means examining the

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[11] Notably Leibniz and his *Characteristica Universalis*, which was never published in his lifetime. For further reference to the French text, see Couturat, Louis. 1901. *La Logique de Leibniz*. Paris: Felix Alcan, particularly chapter 3, 51-80.

impact of history and sociology on English teaching practices, particularly in two respects: firstly in the formation of ASP as a concept in its own terms, which implies carrying out an epistemological survey and analysis of how what is referred to as ASP, which was primarily a notion based on practical teaching considerations, became an object of academic study at a later stage; secondly, in terms of representations about language in the academic areas where English gradually imposed itself over French as a medium of study in some French higher-education institutes and universities. The latter aspect mainly concerns two groups within the French teaching and research community: those, among the researchers, who have had to adapt to a new world, where English language publications have become the benchmark for the assessment of research papers worldwide, and where interest in language is quasi-nil, and those whose task is to teach highly-specialised students in English, without resorting to the traditional categories of knowledge, like arts, literature, culture and linguistics. Most of the time, it is a shared experience among teachers of English that initiating a dialogue between these two domains remains difficult. Examining these preconceptions, these prejudiced attitudes, is a key factor in the elaboration of ASP. We will now proceed to expand on those aforementioned aspects.

3.4. Focus on social and professional representations

One of the most essential issues that the present contribution aims to address is the plurality of representations involved in the didactics of English for non-specialists, and this state of affairs is also reflected in the absence of a grand unifying theory or method of analysis. The first question to deal with is the definition of the scale that a scientific study should encompass; the second concerns the relevant context (or social reality) of research, and the third is about defining its object in terms of the perspectives adopted (Lahire 2012: 226). One of the pitfalls encountered in social sciences is the tendency to generalise from one segmented, partial observation of broader contexts, to the detriment of the data and results obtained in field work. Another difficulty is to gather those data and incorporate them into a coherent narrative that takes experience, history, pedagogy, public policies and implementation, social context and situations into account (Ricoeur 1985: 391-414). Wittgenstein's (1953, §7: 5; §23: 11) concepts of "language games" and "forms of life" provide an adequate guideline from a theoretical point of view. Language is structured around social activities and is usually shared by members of any given group, in that meaning and practices are social constructs: "reference" and "meaning" may be characterised by a varying number of elements, some being more prominent than others, depending on the speaker's social role, as Putnam (1973: 705) described them: words and meanings are not solely in the speaker's mind, but are also in the collective mind of the social community, and this allows for a variety of uses and degrees and types of comprehension in context. This theory affects the manner in which the various actors dealing with English in an academic or professional context react when faced with its implementation within their teaching practices. People on both sides of the dividing line, i.e. lecturers using English as a mere medium that does not raise any question other than the degree of proficiency to be achieved on the one hand, teachers of English who insist on the language skills involved in the practice of a specialised language in context and use, on the other hand, contribute to the low level of achievement among French students.

3.5. Objectives: a "complex" praxeology

Bringing together research and teaching, theory and practice in an ever-expanding field of knowledge is the main objective and positioning of the present approach. Thus learning (under its scholarly name of *mathetics*) and teaching (i.e. *didactics*) cannot be dissociated, but the nature of their interaction is often perceived "by default". Many methods enable

specialists of that field to highlight one or the other perspective, but keeping a balance between the two or even bringing the nature of that connection to the fore can prove a daunting challenge in epistemological terms. The various components of learning/teaching ASP should be taken into account. Understanding the nature of each component and the way the set of interactions reverberates on the components is best carried out by means of "action research", because it strengthens the links between theory and practice, thus building each of these two essential components of LANSAD.

Such a theoretical/practical approach can only be relevant if the scale of observation is adequately chosen: it must be coherent enough in its characteristics, but it should also be paradigmatic enough to allow for a reasonable degree of generalisation, or, as Lahire (2012: 228) states, a certain capacity for field observation to be "transposed". One such obvious criterion coincides with the creation in 2006 of regional academic hubs known as PRES (Pôle de Recherche de l'Enseignement Supérieur)[12], because it offers a large variety of implementation of ESP/ASP choices, sustained by a homogeneous industrial and economic fabric.

Such a geographical framework should facilitate the analysis of the "social representations" at work among academics, students, and recruiters, and the status of the English language in higher education has long been a bone of contention among the various players. It can be described in terms of "knowledge deficit" on all parts, and defined along the following lines:

- Specialists of science or law, teaching through English, privilege the transmission of content, to the detriment of precision, and deny language its intrinsic cultural dimension. What matters most to them is the international visibility of their teaching and researching tasks;
- Specialists of English, by contrast, emphasise language as culture, and give precedence to language input and fluency in the way they structure their course, with the added difficulty of access to the specialised content; they also resent the ancillary nature of their teaching conveyed by ASP, because culture is offset by the "can do" approach promoted by the industrial or commercial sector;
- Recruiters routinely reproach teachers for being disconnected from their work environment, and for not insisting on teaching scenarios that would put learners in context, in preparation for their future professional activities;
- Learners/students may deplore the limited number of teaching hours devoted to languages, but they also react negatively to the absence of needs assessment that they think should be carried out at the opening of the language modules, or to the lack of communication between language teachers, or between language and specialist teachers.
- Institutions like universities rarely tackle the issue of implementing a coherent language policy for non-specialists, students and teachers alike; more often than not, the role of language teachers is marginalised.

3.6. Theoretical perspectives

The general scientific structure of the approach is both foundational and pragmatic, and its aim is to provide a viable answer to the following questions: in foreign-language teaching, linguistic skills and cultural content are treated equally and as a matter of fact. However, ASP teaching dissociates those two elements, which leads to a set of theoretical and practical issues, and can be listed in the following set of questions: how can content, which is no longer intermingled with language, be construed as a separate object, and

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[12] The acronym was changed to COMUE (Communauté d'universités et établissements) in 2013.

included in teaching? Who holds the position of the expert in such a context? Is it the language teacher, or the specialist of that specific subject matter? Is this dissociation a product of the human activity of knowledge acquisition or an artificial and conceptual creation of didactics? On a more pragmatic level, how would these questions impact the teacher-learner relations in an ASP context?

How can the results be included and implemented in the curricula in higher education with a view to raising consciousness among the teaching and research community about the challenges posed by the multiplication of the degrees and diplomas taught in English by experts in the relevant field of knowledge who have, sometimes, a limited command of English? What place should English language teachers and lecturers be granted in this changing landscape? What change in research paradigm does this entail?

The aim of the reflection is twofold: first, to establish that research and teaching cannot be dissociated, and that they should in fact contribute to the emergence of a broader academic reflection in the field of ASP, as an activity that produces performative concepts (Deleuze, Guattari 1991: 25-26) rather than scientific objects of study; secondly, to assess that there is a clear need to question the traditional dividing lines between the academic fields (literature, civilisation, linguistics), simply because language teaching, as an activity that encompasses all kinds of contents, cannot be taken for granted by the mere reconduction of artificial categories that work to its detriment, a bit like the hyperspecialisation in social sciences (Lahire 2012: 320-323). These preliminary remarks provide an *a priori* justification for the methodology that could be used throughout the completion of a possible implementation.

4. Conclusion

The weight of tradition is all the stronger as the national recruitment exams (CAPES, *Agrégation*) do not specifically target ASP in their relevant curriculum. Moreover, teaching a foreign language to all primary schoolchildren requires that the teacher-training centres (IUFM) encourage young trainees to engage in Master's theses on that particular issue. In spite of the gradual change in the educational landscape nationwide, few students of English devote their Master's degree to the didactics of English or to any deep reflection on the nature or scope of the LANSAD sector (ASP). In fact, the linguist community is gradually out of tune with what is happening within the teaching community, as though research and pedagogy were drifting apart in an even more obvious manner.

In order to solve a part of the above-mentioned problem, we will work on the emergence of a new academic field of study, which is the didactics of ASP, by refusing/avoiding the traditional, analytical descriptions that tend to discuss the various elements of such environments separately. We will relate them one to the other and address the notion of complexity by refusing to avoid areas of uncertainty (Bertin et al. 2010: 2). On that particular aspect, the theory of rhizomatic thought devised by Deleuze and Guattari (1980: 80) may provide some means of unifying apparently distinctive elements in the general didactic field of study, so that, through various phases of transformation, the emergence of a new academic field of study may be facilitated. Therefore, it is hoped that this contribution will generate interest among the research and teaching community in European higher education; this is an invitation for non-specialists to develop, share and compare national experience and epistemological reflection on English by including elements of their cultural, professional, economic and institutional contexts and contrast it with the ESP approach.

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INTERVIEW

"You Have to Face Your Past" - An Interview with Paul Bailey

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Writer and broadcaster Paul Bailey was born in London on 16 February 1937. He won a scholarship to the Central School of Speech and Drama in 1953 and worked as an actor between 1956 and 1964. In 1967 he became a freelance writer. His first novel At The Jerusalem *(1967), set in an old people's home, won a Somerset Maugham Award and an Arts Council Writers' Award.* Peter Smart's Confessions *(1977) and* Gabriel's Lament *(1986) were both shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction.* Kitty and Virgil *(1998) focuses on the love affair between an Englishwoman and an exiled Romanian poet, a refugee from the Romanian regime of Nicolae Ceauşescu. In* Uncle Rudolf *(2002), the narrator remembers how, as a young boy, he was rescued by his uncle, a lyric tenor, from a fascist Romania.* The Prince's Boy *(2014), his latest novel, tells the story of Dinu Grigorescu, a Romanian writer in his sixties, who reminiscences about his youthful adventures in the bohemian Paris.*

Interviewers: After *A Dog's Life* and *Chapman's Odyssey*, your latest novel, *The Prince's Boy*, recently translated into Romanian, marks a return to Romania. You have dedicated a trilogy to our country: *Kitty and Virgil*, *Uncle Rudolf*, and now, *The Prince's Boy*. How did this love affair with Romania develop?

Paul Bailey: It began in 1989, when I came here. I was so intrigued: I'd seen nothing like it! It was a hellish place; I couldn't believe it. I was here at the invitation of the Romanian Writers' Union. They took me to all sorts of places, but they kept canceling all my lectures. I went all the way to Iaşi just to be told that my talk had been canceled. I was asked to give a talk at the University of Bucureşti on the Friday, and I was told they'd been expecting me on the Tuesday. A lady called Mickey Irimia got on the telephone with her boss and, within an hour, about a hundred students turned up. This was breaking the law, because all the necessary forms had been signed for three days previously. Anyway, I remember the students being incredibly interested in life outside Romania. They wanted to know what was happening in the English theater, in the cinema, in art in general, so it was a very rewarding experience. They would have been denied it because the system was playing games with me.

I knew nothing about Romania when I came here. When I went back to England, I thought I'd read about its history, which is pretty bloody, but then, so is most history. I used to belong to The London Library. I took out books that hadn't been read since the 1920s or '30s, by English people who'd gone to Romania. The picture they gave of the country was