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Rationale

Identity and the redefinition of identity have become of major significance in the modern world. On the one hand, multiculturalism is perceived as a form of identity politics that tends to advance the interests of particular groups and to determine the cultural values, norms and assumptions through which individual identity is formed. In addition, interculturalism is frequently regarded as a form of acceptance of differences in an atmosphere of interest, tolerance, self-realization, and support for cross-cultural dialogue.

In light of this, the aim of this issue is to discuss the perceived (im)balance between dominant host cultures and transnational / immigrant cultures and also the ways in which identity may be regarded as a reflexive self-concept, self-image or outer perception derived from gender, cultural, ethnic values, and individual socialization.

Negotiation of identity in Scotland's multicultural model

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Abstract: In contemporary democracies, the debate on immigrants and their integration has been salient. In the context of its nation-building project, Scotland is seen to elaborate its own integration model based on civic national identity.

Often likened to Quebec's interculturalism, Scotland has been frequently seen as an example of civic nationalism, promoting a national identification based on territoriality. Scotland's identity is based on territorial criteria rather than ethnic sense of belonging to a tribe, making Scottishness more accessible to different ethnicities. The paper attempts to explain and assess the Scottish multicultural model taking into consideration the already complex multinational situation

Keywords Multiculturalism, interculturalism, civic identity, nationalism, Scotland

Introduction

The debate over the future of nation-states has become increasingly salient in recent years, especially with the rise of nationalisms across Europe. In multinational countries the concept of nation and identity become more complex to analyse as the existence of a strong sense of nationalism at the sub-state level often involves competition with the ultimate objective of achieving independence for nationalist parties. The result is the establishment of a certain conception of identity primarily meant to demarcate itself from the state's identity. In such cases, there might be totally different conceptions and reactions to diversity (Barker, 2015). According to Fiona Barker, approaches to diversity in multinational countries can be either exclusive of minorities and in favour of a strong sense of nationalism or else diversity could be considered as an asset to advance the nationalist cause as is the case of Scotland (Barker, 2015), where the political elite call for a multicultural model of integration.

Nationalist movements have often gained success by voicing anti-immigration rhetoric in their campaigns. However, the strong sense of nationalism in Scotland doesn't raise the same rejection towards immigrants. This merging of ethnic minorities in Scottish society has been to a certain extent thanks to the Scottish government's promotion of a 'civic' Scottish identity and multicultural strategy. Civic identity is based on active citizenship rather than an ethnic sense of belonging which reflects inclusiveness; a multicultural approach to integration further reinforces this inclusiveness through promoting equality. Political actors in Scotland have advanced a very positive image of the country as welcoming to immigrants and an image of Scottishness as an inclusive identity based on territorial markers rather than ethnicity.

The main objective of this chapter is to analyse and assess the policies of integration put in place by the political elite in Scotland. The first part of this chapter is an attempt to define the Scottish multicultural model in relation to the model of interculturalism deployed in Quebec. The second part of this chapter

involves an exploring of the main characteristics of Scottish national identity in reference to the ongoing debate on identity construction. This part is meant to highlight the civic aspect of national identity in Scotland as promoted by the political elite. Other arguments such as Scotland's institutional autonomy and its history of diversity are also explored in relation to the discourse over the development of a 'civic' identity. Finally, a study and assessment of the multicultural model in Scotland sheds light on Scotland's nation-building project in the context of post-devolution multi-level policies.

Scotland's Multiculturalism vs. Quebec's Interculturalism

There are a number of converging aspects between Scotland and Quebec when referring to identity politics and the status of stateless nations with autonomist aspirations. Quebec and Scotland share a number of similarities at the political level including the fact that both nations have a strong sense of nationalism, resulting in a quest for independence. Both nations also enjoy a certain level of autonomy thanks to the decentralization of power and, thus, are able to formulate their own policy strategies independently from their respective state policy. Similarities go beyond the simple classification as independence-seeking nations to involve strategies envisaged towards diversity and migrant countries. Scotland's multiculturalism is often likened to Quebec's interculturalism (Barker, 2015). According to Barker, the presence of diversity may be seen either as an obstacle for the sub-state nation's claims or migrants might prove to be potential allies to the autonomist cause (2015). Following this logic, both Scotland and Quebec attempt to accommodate minority claims through their integration strategies.

At the level of integration, Scotland and Quebec formulated two different approaches to managing diversity: interculturalism and multiculturalism. There is much debate over these two approaches to integration. Meer and Modood (2012) argue that interculturalism is not distinct from multiculturalism, a position shared by Charles Taylor in an article entitled *Interculturalism or Multiculturalism?* Where he claims that despite being called differently, policies dealing with diversity are quite similar (Taylor, 2013). On the other hand, Martyn Barrett, in *Introduction – Interculturalism and Multiculturalism: Concepts and Controversies*, unveils the difference between both approaches and even differentiates between Quebec's interculturalism and the European version of it (2013, p.15). Barrett joins Gérard Bouchard (2011, pp.435-468) in affirming that in the Canadian context, the term interculturalism is used to denote a specific model for managing diversity which has been in explicit opposition to Canadian multiculturalism (Barrett, 2013, p.15).

One of the most prominent works on the subject goes to Gérard Bouchard who recognises the similarities between both models such as embracing pluralism as a basic orientation and attempting to accommodate minorities' claims (Bouchard, 2013, p.95). According to Bouchard, unlike multiculturalism, interculturalism takes shape around a duality between the majority and minority cultures (p.95). Another important aspect of interculturalism is that it is heavily dependent on a successful integration (p.97), accomplished through the elaboration of a 'common

culture' sustained by both majority and minority groups (p.97). Quebec's intercultural model supports a system of 'inclusive secularity' to manage religious diversity (p.97). This facet is completely different from the multicultural precepts of celebrating cultural as well as religious diversity, an aspect often criticized by multicultural sceptics as allowing for a number of misogynist practices to flourish (Modood, 2007).Thus, according to Bouchard, the main difference between both models lies in the fact that the multicultural model does not recognize the existence of a majority culture , whereas the Quebec intercultural model is based on the contextual precedence of majority culture and revolves around this duality paradigm (2013, p.103).

Despite sharing similarities with Quebec's intercultural model, the political elite in Scotland clearly advocate a multicultural integration model. The Scottish National Party (SNP) leader and former First minister Alex Salmond even declared 'Scotland is not Quebec ... the linguistic and ethnic basis [of Quebec] nationalism is a two-edged sword ... we [in Scotland] follow that path of civic nationalism' (*The Scotsman*, 1 November 1995, quoted in Hussain & Miller 2006, p.5). The SNP leader clearly distances Scotland from any ethnic characterization and instead calls for a civic form of nationalism. According to Ferguson, 'Scottishness was never exclusive, but on the contrary, has always been highly absorptive' (1998, p.305). In this respect the Scottish political elite's position on diversity management may be seen as different, even contrasting with Quebec's conception of identity. Nasar Meer gives the example of Quebec leader Pauline Marois and other party leaders who emphasized the importance of *Quebecois de souche* ('old stock') (Meer, 2015, p.10).

Scotland's integration model is centred on a civic form of identity that is based on territoriality and nationality rather than ethnicity. An example of the implementation of a civic conception of identity is the independence referendum voting eligibility. Subject to much controversy over who can vote in the referendum and whether the voting criteria should be based on residence or nationality (Tierney, 2012, p.59-60), this debate may seem unimportant but can be very revealing in showing how questions of 'membership' and 'belonging' are defined (Bond, 2015). At the time, the SNP government opted for an electorate based on residence in Scotland, thus further reinforcing the idea of non-ethnic appurtenance of Scottish identity. According to the electoral commission website, all UK citizens normally resident in Scotland were entitled to vote, in addition to citizens of other EU member states and 'qualifying citizens' of Commonwealth countries (Electoral Commission, 2010). The result was not as expected for the SNP; however, it encouraged ethnic minorities' participation and involvement in the constitutional debate over the future of Scotland, confirming the party's strategy in relation to integration.

Civic Scottishness

One of the main theoretical bases of the nation-building project in Scotland is the construction of national identity. The debate ranges between views of a Scottish national identity finding its expression in a broader sense of Britishness, and a nationalist view of a Scottish national identity articulated in politics. In

multinational countries, the political elite's responses to such issues can be crucial in the determination of the position envisaged towards migrants and diversity. In the case of Scotland, the political elite have been keen to develop a civic and territorial definition of membership (Hepburn, 2014, p.1). This form of nationalist identity is constructed according to Scotland's distinctive educational and legal systems rather than any form of ethno-cultural definition (Henderson, 2007, p.85). This definition has been developed in contrast to the growing anti-immigrant sentiment and opposition to multiculturalism south of the border as a way to distinguish Scotland from the rest of the UK (Barker, 2015).

The civic and ethnic definitions of identity take us back to the debate over identity construction and the question on whether history and thus ethnicity are the main sustainers of a collective national consciousness. In Tom Nairn's *After Britain: New Labour and the Return of Scotland* Nairn, 2000, p.102, Nairn acknowledges the importance of identity in politics and uses different historical accounts to argue for the presence of a strong Scottish identity concealed under Britishness, resulting in a long state of hibernation. Similarly, he admits that long-term considerations of power and collective consciousness are more important than economic matters. He believes that Scottish identity has always been present but has been kept in 'self-subordination' in order to guarantee the continuity and preservation of Scottishness without trouble. This subordination to British identity created an absence of self-confidence and a 'split personality' (Nairn, 2000, p.102).

The same idea highlighting the importance of history in shaping a collective consciousness can be found in Ernest Renan's book *Qu'est ce qu'une nation?* [What is a Nation?]. Ernest Renan defines a nation as an entity based on common values between individuals and a common history that results in a collective identity. 'The nation, even as the individual is the end product of a long period of work, sacrifice and devotion... to have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have accomplished great things together ... That is the essential condition of being a nation' (quoted in Pittock, 2001, p.5).

Benedict Anderson's idea of identity as an 'imagined' entity is different. For Anderson, national identity represents a sense of belonging to an 'imagined' community according to Anderson's seminal work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and spread of Nationalism* (1991). Thus, identities are fluid, chosen, invented and changeable. Ernest Gellner follows the same line of thought as Anderson and presents identity as 'modular' and subject to change (1994, p.97). Identity is influenced by the volatility of and transitory character of allegiances in politics. The same idea of modular identity is used by Stuart Hall, he states that theorising on identity in modern theories is more about 'routes' than 'roots' (1992, quoted in McCrone, 2017, p.12). Identity in this respect becomes contextual, ever changing and shifting as opposed to something fixed and fundamental.

Taken separately, however, none of these definitions completely corresponds to the current reality of complex identity formation. Leith and Soule acknowledge the civic and inclusive aspect of Scottish national identity as presented by the political elite in Scotland but challenge the idea that Scottish nationalism is overwhelmingly civic, open and pluralistic type (2012, p.13). Identity is rather the result of an 'interplay' of civic as well as non-civic forms of Scottish nationalism

(2012, p13). However, the political elite in Scotland promote a civic form of national identity based on plurality and inclusiveness of minorities (Leith & Soule, 2012, p.70).

Identity is an important aspect of the multicultural discourse in Scotland when political actors and academics preach for a civic inclusive plural Scottishness when comparing other forms of exclusive nationalism promoted across Europe. Scottish national identity is promoted by politicians as well as scholars in Scotland as a civic form of identity (McCrone, 2002, p.304). One of the main sustainers of a distinctive civic form of identity is the maintenance and preservation of autonomous institutions (Henderson, 2007, p.85).

Autonomous institutions

The new multi-level system of governance has created an opportunity for the political elite in Scotland to shape their own integration model according to a civic form of Scottish identity (Leith and Soule 2012, p.148; Meer, 2015, p.4). A civic identity would be more inclusive of ethnic minorities and newcomers. This aspect of Scottish identity is said to be the result of Scotland's history of institutional autonomy (Paterson, 1994). In fact, since the Act of Union of 1707, Scotland has retained power over key institutions such as education, religion and law. This resulted in an institutional structure that is thought to be different, i.e. less class-based than its Southern neighbour or what is called the egalitarian myth in Scotland (McCrone, 1992). An example of this difference within institutions is the educational system in Scotland, considered as more 'egalitarian' than the rest of the UK. The result of such institutional autonomy and egalitarian approach is the development of a national identity that is based on civic rather than ethnic markers (McCrone, 2002). Thus, in the context of the post-devolution nation-building project, a civic identity would be more inclusive of ethnic minorities.

The civic aspect of national identity in Scotland becomes a defining feature that distinguishes Scotland from the rest of the UK. It explains the inclusive nature of Scottishness by the fact that Scots have developed a different approach to politics in a civic fashion in reaction to the already existing British system. This allows for the development of distinctive Scottish identity thanks to its history of institutional autonomy (Paterson, 1994), as explained in this passage by Ichijo:

> Civic politics in Scotland was born out of the Scottish people's frustration with the existing political situation and has been articulating and expressing the Scottish people's desire for a constitutional change in the form of literature, declarations, meetings and marches. Just as it became part of contemporary Scottish society, it also contributed to the redefinition of Scottish identity. (2004, p.52)

Several studies have looked at Scotland's civic identity and have attributed it to its distinctive church, legal and educational systems (Withers, 2001, p.159; Henderson, 2007, p.85). National identity has, thus, been essentially perpetuated through the institutions in Scotland. For Graeme Morton, 'one national identity maintained through the institutions and civic culture of civil society, and another in the unthinking patriotism of the British state'. (1998, p.169).

The importance of the myth of egalitarianism in relation to minorities lies in the fact that the myth can evolve to become inclusive of ethnic minorities and

more open to diversity in Scotland than the rest of the UK. In the Scottish elections' manifestos, in different instances, political parties directly refer to equality in relation to ethnic minorities. An example can be found in this passage from 2016 Liberal Democrats' manifesto where the party pledges 'to tackle the barriers to fair representation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people in senior roles in the police and education' (2016, p.22). In this example, equality is promoted in relation to employment and equal opportunity to minorities.

Scots as a 'mongrel nation'

A second hypothesis on the inclusiveness of Scottish identity is related to the history of diversity in Scotland that could create a certain predisposition to accept minorities. It is even claimed that in multinational societies, like the United Kingdom, diversity can be better accepted as it can help push forward regionalist claims against the state (Barker, 2015). According to Barker, migrants could prove to be 'potential allies' for the nationalist cause in multinational societies (Barker, 2015).

The diverse historical heritage of Scotland is promoted by the political elite as an asset. The SNP leader Alex Salmond even celebrates this diversity using an expression coined by Scottish writer Willie McIlvanney 'the mongrel nation'. In a speech in 1995 Salmond states:

> We see diversity as a strength not a weakness of Scotland and our ambition is to see the cause of Scotland argued with English, French, Irish, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese and every other accent in the rich tapestry of what we should be proud to call, in the words of Willie McIlvanney, 'the mongrel nation' of Scotland. (Speech on annual SNP conference, Perth, 1995; quoted in McCrone, 2017, p. 07)

The idea of Scotland being a 'mongrel nation', not only reflects the diversity of the country but also further reinforces the civic and inclusive aspect of Scottish identity and rejects the ethnic and 'pure race' origin of the Scots.

The political elite in Scotland also stress the welcoming nature of the Scots in order to attract immigrants as in the following example from the Scottish Executive website: "Scotland is a multicultural society of just over 5 million. People have been coming to live here from all over the world for centuries, so you can be sure of a warm welcome. And of course, Scottish people are famously friendly" (Quoted in Millar, 2016, p.165).

It is also claimed that shared colonial history may have an impact on the extent of successful immigrant integration as countries with no colonial history have been experiencing more successful integration both for the immigrant and acceptance from host society (Oostindie, 2015). The absence of colonial history cannot apply for the case of Scotland because of its active participation in the building and expansion of the British Empire. However, the political elite in Scotland have always tended to detach themselves from the colonial history of the empire, making the national rhetoric more prone to accept and be accepted by minorities (Meer, 2015, p.11). As Mycock puts it, 'national narratives must remain largely positive and not dwell on the imperial sins of the past' (2010, p.351), this leaves us with a 'conundrum' on the degree of involvement of Scotland in the empire and the national narrative produced in this regard (Devine, 2006, p.02).

Analysis and assessment of the Scottish multicultural model

The political elite in Scotland have articulated a civic conception of identity that is inclusive of ethnic minorities. The main parties have been formulating and advancing a positive view of diversity pushing forward the multicultural agenda (Hepburn & Rosie, 2014). According to Hepburn and Rosie, Scottish political parties have carefully crafted an elite discourse that portrays immigrants as key players in an open, inclusive and multicultural Scotland. (Hepburn & Rosie, 2014).

When examining Scottish parties' manifestos, diversity is also celebrated and encouraged with a commitment to create a place to attract people through the extensive use of the verb 'build', as can be seen in the following examples: 'The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society' (Scottish Liberal Democratic Party, 1999), and 'Labour will take tough action … to help build a Scotland that recognises and celebrates the faiths and cultures of all Scots' (Scottish Labour Party, 2011, p.55). The use of the term 'build' can be very revealing in the context of Scotland as it is a reminder of the newly devolved and autonomous nation that is in the process of being clearly distinguished from the rest of the United Kingdom. The process of 'building' the post-devolution Scottish nation results in the creation of separate policies specific to Scotland's needs.

Another tool used to reinforce the plural aspect of Scottish society is performed through personification. The personification of Scotland is deployed by political parties to portray a plural and inclusive society. Leith and Soule explore the way political parties refer to the civic form of identity through the process of personification of Scotland or 'national personification'. In fact, there are different instances where the nation is described as a person and, thus, becomes 'the embodiment of the same moral and political milieu as citizens' (Leith & Soule, 2012, p.70). In other words, through the personification of Scotland, the nation becomes a person that reflects the values of Scottish society. In this case, Scotland as imagined by the elites would be a 'multicultural' one. An example of national personification can be found in this quote from Labour manifesto 'Scotland's diversity is a strength' (Scottish Labour Party, 2003, p.39) or in the Scottish Conservatives' 1999 election manifesto: 'Scottish Conservatives understand that diversity is one of Scotland's defining characteristics as a country' (Scottish Conservative Party, 1999, p.25). In both examples, Scotland is referred to as a person and thus holds a number of 'defining characteristics'. Leith and Soule conclude that the main objective through the process of national personification is to eulogise the progressive nature of Scotland by presenting it as a civic and inclusive plurality (2012, p.73).

Political parties also continuously stress the welcoming nature of the Scottish people and portray Scotland as attractive destination to live in. An example can be found in the SNP's 2003 election manifesto. The party stresses the openness and welcoming nature of Scotland as follows: 'Scotland has a long tradition of welcoming those who choose to live here.' (SNP, 2003, p.27). The civic aspect of Scotland is highlighted by Scottish Liberal Democrats as 'Scotland's rich and diverse civic society' (2003). The civic aspect of identity is further promoted in institutions such as education.

At the level of government policy, one of the most important initiatives formulated by the Scottish Labour and Liberal Democrats coalition governments of 1999-2007 was the 'One Scotland, Many Cultures' campaign. According to Jan Penrose and David Howard, this initiative has played a fundamental role as it sought to mobilize all Scots such as they recognize racism in multiple guises (2016, p.108). The purpose is to view Scotland as a place of many cultures (2016, p.108). Through the 'One Scotland, Many Cultures' the Scottish government has clearly formulated a vision of a plural Scotland with a clear embracement of multiculturalism. The initiative has been also embraced by successive SNP governments since 2007.

Another important initiative aimed at attracting migration to Scotland was the 'Fresh Talent' initiative. In 2004, the Labour-Liberal Democrat Scottish Executive launched the "Fresh Talent' initiative to address demographic crisis in Scotland. According to former first minister Jack McConnell, the main objective of the government is to build 'a constant flow of fresh talent to flourish alongside our home-grown talents' in reference to the 'Fresh Talent' initiative (Scottish Government, 2004). The campaign promoted inward migration, and with the agreement of the UK Home Office, granted post-study visas to foreign graduates. The initiative was stopped in 2010, by Conservative–led British government as part of its limited immigration policy. However, the main parties in Scotland continue to call for the reinstatement of the post-study visas for foreign students in Scotland (Scottish Labour Party, 2017, p.46; SNP, 2017, p.4).

The SNP, in government, has elaborated integration strategies aimed at progressive refugee integration strategy called 'New Scots'. In the different political manifestos and forewords, immigrants and refugees are also designated as *'New Scots', an expression reflecting inclusiveness and openness towards new comers, a position in harmony with the multicultural model of integration.* In addition, the party initiated a proposal for a more liberal citizenship policy (Hepburn, 2014). As a party, the SNP has also encouraged ethnic minorities and immigrants to join and contribute to Scotland's rich 'tartan' tapestry of faiths and cultures (Quoted in Hepburn, 2014). Bashir Ahmed, the first ethnic minority MSP, stated: 'it isn't important where you come from, what matters is where we are going together as a nation' (quoted in *The Independent Newspaper*, 2009), hinting at the multicultural orientation of the Scotland's management of diversity. Ethnic minority involvement was encouraged especially during the Scottish independence referendum, where different groups such as Scots Asians for 'Yes', Africans for an Independent Scotland, Poles for an Independent Scotland, and even English People for Scottish Independence, were created (Hepburn, 2014).

More recently, important work has been performed to emphasize the importance of granting equal opportunities for ethnic minorities in Scotland. An example is the formulation of a 'Race Equality Framework for Scotland', an initiative that sets a 14-year plan on race equality with special focus on strategic areas of work such as fighting discrimination at work in the public sector. The overarching objective of this is initiative is "that by 2030 Scotland is a place where people are healthier, happier and treated with respect, and where opportunities, wealth and power are spread more equally" (Scottish Government, 2016, p.15). The Race Equality Framework was the result of extensive studies and research on

race related issues in Scotland with the help of different organisations and the third sector.

Assessment

The importance of national identity in relation to the immigration and integration discourses is revealed in the way political actors depict Scottish identity. Scottish nationalism has been formulated in terms of a civic inclusive society, which puts much focus on its institutional distinctiveness. At the same time, this civic aspect is contrasted by a discourse that is more oriented towards Scotland as the *ethnie*, praising Scotland's cultural distinctiveness and its unique natural beauty. This swinging between civic characteristics and non-civic ones raises questions about the civic aspect of national identity as promoted by the main political actors in Scotland, and the degree of its inclusiveness of minorities.

This civic nature of Scottish identity was challenged by Leith and Soule who emphasize the contradiction in the political discourse in Scotland that uses both civic and non-civic articulations, such as the celebration of Scotland's distinctive nature and cultural distinctiveness, thus, confirming that Scottish identity is not exclusively civic. Scepticism about Scotland's growing nationalism was formulated by David Craig on reflections on the independence referendum (London Review of Books, 2014)

> A free Scotland would be founded on a nationalism roughly coterminous with race, and I grew up in a world where racist nationalism was the most abhorrent and dangerous tendency under the sun… I mistrust any party which is founded on nationhood as such – as a self-evident good – and for that reason, if I still lived in Scotland, I would vote NO.

Craig's comment sheds light on the dangers of nationalism and clearly conveys the idea of nationalism being related to ethnicity rather than territoriality as promoted by the political elite in Scotland.

Conclusion

Despite sharing similarities with Quebec as a stateless nation with a strong sense of nationalism, Scotland diverges from the latter in its approach towards managing diversity. The main difference lies in the fact that Quebec's intercultural model is framed around a duality paradigm, involving a conception in terms of majority and minority. By contrast, the integration model in Scotland is centred on a multicultural vision and civic conception of identity formulated and promoted by the political elite in Scotland in the context of the nation-building project. It is clear that the political parties in Scotland are working on reconstructing a nation that is distinctive from the rest of the UK in its approach towards multiculturalism through the articulation of a civic form of nationalism. This civic national identity is mainly the result of Scotland's long history of institutional autonomy that helped develop the myth of egalitarianism as well as maintain the civic aspect of Scottish national identity. In addition, the history of diversity of the country can be seen as paving the way for accepting ethnic minorities into the country as 'New Scots'. The multicultural model of integration

in Scotland is promoted through initiatives from successive Scottish governments, such 'One Scotland, Many Cultures' and the 'Fresh Talent' initiatives. The intentions of political parties in this choice for multicultural approach to integration can be questioned but as Nasar Meer points out the elite political actors can play a crucial role in ensuring that appeals to nationhood in Scotland can be meaningfully calibrated to include minorities too in contrast with the more hostile discourse South of the border (2015).

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Afro hair as a signifier of racial identity in African American children's literature

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Abstract: African American children's literature has always been marked with the rhetoric of resistance. In response to the racist assumptions about black body, many children's authors celebrate the beauty of natural Afro hair. This article analyzes bell hooks's picture book *Happy to Be Nappy*, in which Afro hair is used as a signifier of black identity and racial pride. It makes reference to previous publications on the topic of black hair and explains the importance of the books in the tradition of African American children's literature as defined by W.E.B. Du Bois.

Key words: nappy hair, bell hooks, identity politics, empowerment, race

African American children's authors have always been concerned with the issue of Afro hair as it is frequently the object of criticism and ridicule experienced by many young Americans. Colored children are exposed to different forms of discrimination from their white peers, especially if they live in integrated neighborhoods. Verbal abuse, mocking and rejection cause that many young African Americans are ashamed of their appearance and suffer from very low self-esteem. They start to believe that they are second-class citizens and will never be as successful as white members of the society. Such feelings affect their future and become a serious obstacle to them making progress in their private as well as professional lives.

Almost a hundred years ago African American scholar and educator William E.B. Du Bois promoted the belief that children's literature can be an important tool of raising young people's awareness of their identity and improving their self-esteem. In 1919 he published an article in *The Crisis* magazine, in which he addresses children's authors with seven imperatives. The first one is "to make colored children realize that being colored is a normal, beautiful thing" (286). According to Du Bois, changing black people's attitude towards their bodies is a necessary step in overcoming the state of "double consciousness," which he defines in his seminal publication *The Soul of Black Folk*:

> (…) the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, - a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (7).

For many African Americans the feeling of "double consciousness" is a surviving strategy, especially in multicultural settings. Du Bois believes it should be overcome by a true immersion in one's culture and understanding that appearance is part of one's identity.

Although Du Bois had a wide range of supporters in educational institutions, no one in his times dared to publish a children's book that would specifically focus on the topic of Afro hair. It was not until the end of the twentieth century that young colored Americans could read positive stories about their looks. Du Bois's ideas about children's literature are still popular with African American authors and educators. The picture book format is especially preferable for those who want to celebrate the beauty of the black skin and nappy hair. Within the last two decades American children's publishing market has seen over twenty titles with the images of happy young African Americans on the covers. Whereas the books of lesser known authors have been hardly recognized, there are a few titles which gained popularity due to the name of the author who had previously been popular for other publications. bell hooks, one of the most outspoken and controversial black intellectuals in contemporary America, a cultural critic, feminist theorist, and author of social theory books, turned to writing children's books in a latter part of her career.

At the turn of the century, hooks began to develop her interest in children, who, in her view, are the most directly and profoundly affected by the existing negative images of blackness. Black children frequently become victims of racism in their own families, if they appear to be darker than other family members or at school when they find themselves in a racial minority. Children's literature, according to hooks, is of fundamental significance in the process of building self-esteem and a sense of pride in African American children. Her children's books, with a clear political agenda, like hooks's other writings, empower young African Americans and transform them into critical observers of black life in America. Writing her children's books with the intention of exerting social changes, hooks is inspired by her "intellectual guide" Lorraine Hansberry. In *Rock My Soul*, she evokes Hansberry's words - "The acceptance of our present condition is the only form of extremism which discredits us before our children" – and says that "They [These words] remind me that black children have suffered and continue to suffer because grown people, of all races, but most especially black folks, have not created and sustained the cultural revolution that would make it simple, easy, the birthright of any black child, to be given the gift of a sound foundation for the building of healthy self-esteem" (186-187). Except for hooks's observations of the contemporary situation of black children in America, the pain she experienced herself as a black girl growing up in the 1960s became the basis for the creation of her children's books. Realizing that she was just one of thousands of black children suffering from race-based discrimination, she made her own life story the center of her political agenda and gave it literary form. Therefore, her rhetoric is inevitably politicized. Significantly, instead of exploring the trauma many blacks experience growing up in America, she transgresses the mainstream practices of presenting African American children as trouble-makers or as objects of ridicule and provides positive, or even utopian, examples of black boys and girls who accept their own race with all the physical characteristics.

hooks has written five children's books: *Happy to Be Nappy* (1999), *Be Boy Buzz* (2002), *Homemade Love* (2002), *Skin Again* (2004), and *Grump Groan Growl* (2008), all of which revolve around racial issues, such as the standards of beauty, the meaning of skin color, black masculinity, black rage, and the concept of self-love. They have been acknowledged for their literary and artistic value by several critics and have been put on a par with hooks's main body of work rather than treated as an appendix to her critical essays. All of these works fall into the genre of children's picture books because the texts are enriched with exuberant illustrations made by artists Chris Raschka and Shane Evans. The main themes of the books are reflective of hooks's educational and political theories discussed in her earlier works. Since speaking to ordinary people outside of academic circles is an important aspect of hook's political agenda, writing for children seems to be a relevant step in achieving her aims after she has addressed adult audiences in her personal essays, press articles, and public talks.

The illustrations traditionally included in children's books are particularly important because they help readers visualize the writer's words. In hooks's works, they have yet another function, because, in many cases, they are more telling than the text, specifically when it comes to resisting racist stereotypes. As Manuel observes, the pictures in hooks's children's literature are attacks against the racist iconography that was present in books for African American children written in the 1980s and 1990s. hooks herself writes of such images of black children: "Much of the children's literature published since the seventies with black children as the perceived audience reinforces the racist assumption that black children are really mini adults. Illustrations in books aimed at young black readers usually depict them without eyes or mouths, resembling cartoon characters rather than real people" (102). What hooks wants to achieve with the publication of her own children's books is to subvert those negative images of young blacks. Although she does not make the illustrations herself, she closely collaborates with the artists, and she always has the final say on the visual components of the books. hooks believes that the illustrations have a subliminal effect on black children, and the images remain with them for the rest of their lives shaping their perceptions of reality and of themselves.

hooks's largest thematic concern is the shame and self-hatred many blacks feel in the U.S. due to their failure to conform to the white standards of beauty. In her critical essays, she reflects on the genesis of the problem, which is necessary to analyze in order to fully understand the ideas presented in her children's books. In *Salvation*, a collection of essays on the power of love, hooks claims that many black people internalize racist assumptions about their bodies in their own homes, where the white supremacist thinking prevails over the black norms of beauty. They tend not to accept their own looks for their hair texture, skin color, flat noses or thick lips, and instead they subscribe to the Eurocentric beauty ideal. Many African-Americans still look at themselves through Du Bois's concept of "double consciousness," which has a bad impact on their psyche. Thus, according to hooks, there is a great need for positive images of blackness that would raise the consciousness of both black and white people that blackness can be perceived in positive terms.

Two of hooks' picture books, *Happy to Be Nappy* (1999) and *Skin Again* (2002), both enriched with illustrations made by Chris Raschka, provide a new insight into the above-mentioned theme. Given the trauma many black children experience in America because of the negative perception of their bodies, hooks focuses on the issues of black skin and nappy hair in order to change the low self-esteem of African American children by offering new images of blackness. She does not emphasize the pain connected with such experiences but presents certain aspects of black looks in a new light. In both of the books she combines the body issues with the concept of self-love, about which she writes in *Salvation*: "Self-love is first expressed by the way we tend our bodies. We must work hard to love our black bodies in a white supremacist patriarchal culture" (89). The love of their body, according to hooks, seems to be a necessary survival strategy for blacks living in the U.S.

Happy to Be Nappy focuses on the "hair politics," which has always been connected with resistance and protest. Many African American writers, like hooks, perceive natural hair as a social rather than biological construct. Kobena Mercer explains that "hair is never a straightforward biological fact, because it is almost always groomed, prepared, cut, concealed, and generally worked upon by human hands. Such practices socialize hair, making it the medium of significant statements, about self and society and the codes of value that bind them" (33). This way of thinking has produced a number of binary concepts used with reference to hair—good and bad, black and white—in both literature and in popular culture. hooks celebrates African American hair by rejecting the notion of "good hair," which is defined by white people's standards as smooth, straight, long, or fine, and the notion of "bad hair," described as kinky, coarse, or nappy. Inspired by a popular slogan of the 1960s, "Happy to be nappy," which was supposed to discourage black people living in America from internalizing racist assumptions about their bodies, hooks revises the derogatory meaning of the word "nappy." Neal A. Lester writes that the choice of words to describe black hair is not a trivial issue at all. He points out that "nappy" has multiple meanings depending on the social context, for instance, it can be a term of derision, a symbol of seduction, or a token of rejection (1999, 181). In the past in African-American communities, it was generally used to describe the unmanageability of Afro hair. As Michelle Martin writes in her article "Never Too Nappy," since hair-straightening has been a common procedure among African American women for over a century, being called "nappy-headed" for a long time suggested that one was too poor or too careless to do something with one's hair (283). But for hooks, "nappy" becomes synonymous with the natural state of Afro hair and begins to function as a prominent trait defining racial identity. For whites, however, the term has always had a pejorative meaning and it has indicated the inferiority of blacks.

The subject of nappy hair has always been present in African American literature, folklore, and popular culture, as well as in many sociological studies on blackness. The stories included in Richard M. Dorson's 1956 *American Negro Folktales*, such as "Why the Negro Has Kinky Hair" or "As Crinkly as Yours," are classic examples of the stereotypical perception of black hair. The first tale is a story of black people who were late as God was giving out hair at the world's

creation: "The only hair that was left was what other people didn't want . . . So the colored people had to put on kinky hair . . . while the other people, Chinese and Japs and whites, put the hair on and smoothed it down" (176). A similar tone prevails in minstrel and plantation songs that mock black people's hair and further presume the negativity of nappy hair. Another popular practice touching upon the hair issue is the ritual of "snaps," i.e. linguistic insults, such as "yo mama's hair is so short and nappy that when she plaits it, it looks like stitches" or "yo mama's hair is so nappy, when she combs it, the teeth bleed." Lester writes that "the act of 'dissin' about hair was one way of appropriating a negative image from a Eurocentric culture that does not value nonstraight, non-European hair and making that the source of a celebratory communal storytelling ritual" (2007, 100). Drawing on folk tradition, many contemporary black authors still deliberately change the meaning of certain phrases to describe black hair in positive terms.

The white beauty ideals regarding hair are addressed in many literary works, most of which feature young black females experiencing a personal conflict between themselves and the generally accepted white standards of beauty. For instance, young Marguerite in Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970), associating her black body with ugliness, dreams about having long blond hair. Similarly, Pecola Breedlove in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) desperately prays for blue eyes, yellow hair and pink skin. For Janie Crawford, a mulatto female protagonist of Zora Neale Hurston's novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), hair indicates a sense of identity and a social status. And, in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), a young college-educated black female thinks her processed hair does not necessarily signify cultural assimilation. In all of the books, the descriptions of the rituals connected with doing hair are a rhetorical strategy drawing the reader's attention to the characters' oppressions and dreams of a different reality.

Many black writers have devoted parts of their scholarly works to the hair issue, with the most inspiring texts coming from bell hooks ("Straightening Our Hair," 1992), Michele Wallace ("Anger in Isolation: A Black Feminist's Search for Sisterhood," 1990), Alice Walker ("Oppressed Hair Puts a Ceiling on the Brain," 1998), and Audre Lorde ("Is Your Hair Still Political," 1998). All of these texts are political manifestos, in which the authors use black hair as a symbol of resistance to the constraints imposed on blacks living in America. Wearing natural black hair, except writing about it, became a symbol of nationalist sentiments in African American communities, particularly in the times of intense black struggles, like the period of the Black Power Movement. For example, African-American activist and writer Angela Davis wore an Afro in the 1960s and 1970s to denote her political consciousness and express her sense of black pride. Gloria Wade-Gayles, writing in the 1990s, explains the significance of natural hair for black people in her story "The Making of a Permanent Afro," in which she recalls her experiences of the Civil Rights Movement:

> Our appearance had to speak the truth before our lips stretched to sing songs. Never again, I decided, would I alter my hair. In its natural state, my hair would be a badge, a symbol of my self-esteem and racial pride. An act of genuine bonding with black women who were incarcerated in jails all across America and those

> who were in psychological jails, accepting less from everyone because they believed they deserved less than anyone. I decided to wear an Afro (157).

Wade-Gayles's story proves that black people's natural hairstyle can be interpreted as an expression of their involvement in the fight for the rights of black people. Since many contemporary African American women writers still act as the voices for black communities in the U.S., they are also interested in how the politics of hair relates to the construction of African American female identity.

Prior to the publication of hook's *Happy To Be Nappy*, only a few authors and illustrators treated African American hair in their children's picture books in a celebratory form. The most significant works are Camille Yarbrough and Carole Byard's *Cornrows* (1979) and Alexis DeVaux and Cheryl Hanna's *An Enchanted Hair Tale* (1987), both exploring the artistry of cornrows and dreadlocks as special hair styles. Other books include Natasha Anastasia Tarpley and E.B. Lewis's *I Love My Hair!* (1997), Nikki Grimmes's *Wild, Wild Hair* (1997), Rita Williams-Garcia's *Catching the Wild Waiyuuzee* (2000), and Carolivia Herron and Joe Cepeda's *Nappy Hair* (1997), celebrating natural black hair. A growing number of literary critics begin to see the importance of these books within the African American literary canon as well as the African American culture as a whole. Martin, for instance, observes that all these picture books are "way ahead of African-American popular culture in that they resist conforming to white standards of beauty and affirm the beauty, versatility, and historical significance of natural Afro hair" (285). Bishop sees publication of these books as an expression of the need of many contemporary black writers and artists to continue the tradition of using children's picture books as vehicles of affirmation. The books authenticate the lives of African American children and encourage them to see themselves in a positive light.

Two titles, *Cornrows* and *Nappy Hair*, published before *Happy To Be Nappy*, are considered by many literary critics the most important contributions to the discussion of hair politics in American literature. *Cornrows* places black hair in a historical context. The main character, an elderly black lady, while doing the hair of her great-granddaughters, evokes the African American spirit and tells the stories of the achievements of her people. The message it conveys is that Afro hair, unlike language, religion, music or art, is the only thing that endures after African Americans were brought to the U.S., and, in Martin's words, "It cannot be moussed or gelled into submission. It just is, and . . . it is beautiful and perfect" (287). The book is based on the author's childhood memories of being mocked by her family because of her nappy hair as well as her experience of visiting Harvard Divinity School, where she conducted classes on race issues. The structure of the book is that of a story within a story. The storyteller, Uncle Mordeca, talks of a young girl who has the nappiest hair the family has ever seen. The other members of the family respond spontaneously to what they hear, thus engaging in a call-and-response ritual, a common practice in black churches. The girl's hair becomes a metaphor of resistance because she objects to having her hair straightened. But the resistance has a deeper meaning than that. Lester writes that Herron's book is a direct allusion to the historical positioning of black people, as well as a challenge to the beauty industry that insists that black girls process their hair. For Lester the practice of straightening hair is a kind of "cultural aggression" that

imposes on black girls' white standards of female beauty (92-93). With the same belief, Herron does not address only black children, but she also aims to alert their parents so that they, too, do not negate the fact that nappy can be synonymous with happy and beautiful.

Nappy Hair is well-known in the U.S. for the controversy it caused when a white teacher, Ruth Sherman, read it in the black vernacular to her black and Hispanic third-grade students in Brooklyn, New York, in November 1998, and allowed them to take home copies of the book's illustrations. The teacher consequently received threats from the students' parents, who, upon seeing the pictures, associated the incident with white mockery of blacks and felt deeply offended. The main problem here was that of the connotations associated with the term "nappy," which is generally perceived as a negative word, and for many blacks it carries historical and emotional baggage stemming from the psychological pain regarding hair and skin-based discriminatory practices. What the black parents failed to understand was the fact that the author of the book tried to present a negative concept as positive rather than mock black people's hair. Traditionally defined as unattractive or ugly, "nappy" here means happy with one's natural looks. According to Lester, many parents probably perceived the white teacher's imitation of black talk while reading the book aloud as an echo of minstrelsy, that is, the practice of whites mocking and ridiculing blacks through exaggerated language, behavior, and gestures (194). Overall, despite the objections of many blacks, the book received rave reviews for opening up discussions about race on the interracial rather than intraracial forum. It also introduced the theme of nappy hair into academic settings and spurred a myriad of scholarly debates.

Happy to be Nappy, the first and the most widely discussed of hooks's picture books, is an important work in the current debate on the race politics of hair. hooks creates a positive image of Afro hair by introducing nappiness into a public discourse. Unlike the earlier authors of picture books for children exposing the difficulties arising from possessing nappy hair as well as emphasizing the polarity of Eurocentric and Afrocentric ideals, hooks's approach is that of the affirmation of one's cultural identity with no reference to the opposite systems of beliefs. Present throughout the book is the attitude of self-acceptance on the part of the characters, who, as Lester notes, are "devoid of adult confusion about beauty politics and female identity" (206). Although young readers most probably recognize just the funny side of the story, with nappy hair being the main plaything, subconsciously they may embrace the strong political statement of resistance embedded in the book. hooks created the characters in a way that shows her audiences that resistance to white standards of beauty is a prerequisite for African American citizens to feel contented.

Happy To Be Nappy never caused as much controversy as *Nappy Hair* two years before, although both of the books convey parallel messages. Bishop mentions several reasons why hooks's book received a totally different response from critics and ordinary readers. First, hooks has a positive stance towards nappy hair and exposes the beauty of its natural state rather than teases its texture when describing the straightening ritual. There is no mention of the polarization of Eurocentric and Afrocentric ideals. Instead, hooks demonstrates that talking about black hair in public does not have to cause political divisions between black

and white people. Second, the abstract illustrations created by Chris Raschka for *Happy To Be Nappy*, without making much difference between characters of different races, contributed to the success of the book. In contrast, Cepeda's pictures in *Nappy Hair*, caused a lot of controversies because they evoked the comical images of black people. Finally, the fact that *Happy To Be Nappy* was published after the debate around *Nappy Hair* made it safe for hooks to focus on the topic of black hair, and, specifically, to use the term "nappy" (Bishop 140). Several critics note that the book is indeed a song of praise for nappy hair, since the illustrations depict a great variety of hair types of brown-skinned girls, and the text includes a myriad of positive words about their hair.

The physical appearance of the book, which creates the reader's expectations of the story, is a signifying quality that cannot be left out of the overall analysis. The format of *Happy To Be Nappy* is typical of contemporary children's picture books. It is a hardback square-shaped volume, thirty pages long, including a biographical note about the author and the illustrator, as well as several words of appraisal from the publisher on the dust jacket. The book cover, including an illustration of a happy black girl depicted in different pictures later in the book, establishes the mood of the story. From the very first page the readers can see that being black does not have to deprive the character of possessing positive feelings. For adults, the book may seem as simple as that, but they may be surprised to discover deeper meanings than this one in the seemingly simple illustrations and text on later pages. The layout of the book varies from page to page, with most of the illustrations being positioned over double-page spreads and the text, in the hand-written font, in different places all over the page. The changing format of the pages adds energy to the story, indicating the eventfulness of the characters' lives. All of the watercolor illustrations are made in Raschka's signature style, resembling minimalist art forms, marked with schematic images of black figures, strong lines and patches of paint in warm pastel colors. The pictures are surrounded by a white space, which here and there includes one or two lines of text. Perry Nodelman writes that, like hooks and Raschka, many picture book authors/illustrators intentionally use the absence of background to focus the readers' attention on the actions and appearance of the figures than their relationship to the setting (131). In most of hooks's picture books, a number of black characters seem to be enmeshed in intense emotions caused by their own choices and decisions, not by any external circumstances. Thus, the lack of the implications of the setting leaves the readers with certain gaps that they need to fill in to from their own experiences or simply draw inferences, and this may result in generating multiple meanings by different audiences, which is characteristic of postmodern picture books. Although there is some sequence between certain pictures, the book generally does not follow the narrative genre. In fact, every single picture or written statement has its own message and can be analyzed on its own.

The first ten pages of the book present the whole figures of black children or just their faces in close-up accompanied with short sentences defining nappy hair and expanding the meaning of the visual narrative. The book starts with the following statement:

> Girlpie hair smells clean and sweet

> is soft like cotton, flower petal billowy soft,
> full of frizz and fuzz (*Happy to Be Nappy*, unpaged).

By using such positive words, hooks rejects the racist stereotypes of black hair and responds to the curiosity of whites about its texture and smell. It is a direct allusion to many situations from her own life, in which white people wanted to touch her hair, an experience familiar to many African-Americans. On the following pages of the book, hooks compares the Afro hairstyle to a "halo" and a "crown," words usually associated with spirituality and power, and thus implying the empowerment that nappy hair can bring to its possessors. Then it is described with such phrases as "smooth, patted down, pulled tight, cut close, or just let go." Although some of the words used by hooks may generally have pejorative meanings in "white" English - for instance, the adjectives "frizz" or "fuzz" – here they acquire unequivocally positive connotations.

Many of the adjectives used by hooks sound like they were taken from the advertisements of hair straighteners. Noliwe M. Rooks, in her overview of early twentieth-century beauty advertisements, notes how cosmetic manufacturers used negative language to describe the condition of African American hair before the straightening process, and more positive words to refer to hair texture after treatment, which can be noticed in the following advert from *New York Age* magazine of 1910:

> Race men and women may easily have straight, soft, long hair by simply applying Plough's Hair Dressing and in a short time all your kinky, snarly, ugly, curly hair becomes soft, silky, smooth, straight, long and easily handled, brushed or combed (34-35).

This short text is based on the dichotomous concept of black and white hair, with the first one being presented as inferior to the other. The use of such language definitely affects the racial identity of African Americans, who are told that their African ancestry, at least at the level of their bodies, subjects them to a lower social status. However, in *Happy to Be Nappy*, hooks transforms "the language of the oppressor" by introducing new meanings to adjectives with a negative connotation as well as attributing new qualities to African American hair.

The biggest advantage of having nappy hair is expressed by the author's use of verbs referring to what can be done with such hair, as well as the visual representations of these activities. The overall message is that one can have a lot of fun playing with one's hair. Statements like "Hair for hands to touch and play!" or "Hair to take the gloom away" are accompanied with illustrations depicting black children jumping and running around, dancing, and playing with their hair. The book's signature statement "Happy to be nappy!" confirms the characters' infatuation with their looks. It is placed above the page-size pictures of two black children's heads as well as on the final page, being some kind of conclusion to the book, below the figure of a black girl looking as if she is ready to dance. Similar statements - "Happy with hair / all short and strong" and "Happy with locks / that twist and curl" - accompany the picture of thirteen black children, each with a different hairstyle, playing in a circle.

The book does not only feature child characters who seem to be happy about their hair. The heart of the book is a picture showing four women, themselves wearing elaborate hairstyles, engaged in doing the hair of their daughters, with

the following words placed underneath the illustration: "Hair to comb, hair to brush, to twist and plait or just lie flat." It is a familiar image to be found in picture books on the topic of black hair, for example, in Yarbrough's *Cornrows* or Imani's *Gift at Kwanzaa*. The pictures usually show a black girl sitting on the floor between her mother's or grandmother's knees, having her hair combed or braided, and at the same time being engaged in a conversation. In hooks's book, the scene is an expression of her own childhood memories of having her hair processed. Importantly, hooks's position on processing hair is highly ambivalent. Although female members of her family had to put a lot of effort into straightening their hair in order to conform to the white standards of beauty, their weekly women's gatherings had a more complex meaning than that. In *Bone Black*, hooks writes: "For each of us getting our hair pressed is an important ritual. It is not a sign of our longing to be white. It is not a sign of our quest to be beautiful. We are girls. It is a sign of our desire to be women. It is a gesture that says we are approaching womanhood—a rite of passage" (92). The ritual of pressing hair, despite the suffering involved, was also empowering in that it created a kind of bondage between black women, and it was for them a way of celebrating their blackness. For a black girl, having her hair processed was equal to being perceived as a woman rather than a child, and being given a chance to share black women's secrets and sufferings. In her essay "Straightening Our Hair," hooks writes that hair pressing was also "a moment of creativity, and a moment of change" (18). The picture of the four female characters of *Happy to Be Nappy* who are having their hair done resembles more a beauty salon than a home kitchen, which is where hair doing usually took place. It is culturally important because beauty shops for African Americans were traditionally sites of social meetings, during which people supported each other and shared their life stories. The following words from Willi Coleman's poem, "Among the Things That Use to Be," clearly express the "secondary" functions of black beauty parlors:

> Lots more got taken care of
> than hair
> Cause in our mutual obvious dislike
> for nappiness
> we came together
> under the hot comb
> to share
> and share
> and share (213-214).

Black women visiting such places were not only talking about their private concerns but also larger social and political matters. As Coleman writes, "Beauty shops / could have been / a hell-of-a-place / to ferment / a …. revolution." No other place can thus be a better setting to research the politics of African-American hair than a black beauty shop.

Consistent with the overall idea of the book, which is to encourage its readers to accept who they are and teach them not to apply racial categories when judging others, there is one particular image which expresses the characters' sense of freedom derived from wearing natural hair. The illustration depicts several black girls dancing in a circle. They seem not to care about the white standards of

beauty, but they are enjoying their freedom to do whatever they want with their hair. The accompanying text says: "These short tight naps or plaited strands all let girls go running free." Each of these girls has a different hairstyle, a different facial expression, and different skin color—things that indicate the girls' defiance to the white norms of beauty as well as the freedom to do whatever they want with their bodies. Lester accurately refers to this scene as "an eternal circle of personal and communal defiance" and "a performance of black girlpie happiness in their celebrated nappiness" (2007, 208). *Happy to be Nappy* is thus a call for self-love as well as love for others, which, according to hooks, can affect social and political change.

Both the content and the form of the book cause that it can be placed in the category of political literature. The rhetoric of hooks's signature statement, "Happy to be nappy," is particularly inspiring for black readers to love their blackness and to resist the existing stereotypes. Revising the derogatory connotations of words pertaining to Afro hair is another rhetorical strategy used by hooks to persuade black children that being "colored" is a normal thing. The format of the book, with varying layouts and fonts, minimalist illustrations allowing for multiple interpretations, the absence of setting, and the manipulative use of colors, is also an important element that conveys the author's positive approach to blackness.

This kind of literature, though it may seem simple and primitive, is empowering for both young and mature readers whose natural features prevent them from accepting their racial identity. As Patricia Hill Collins observes, "As the Others, U.S. Blacks are assigned all of the negative characteristics opposite and inferior to those reserved for Whites" (89). There are lots of controlling images that derogate African American children even if they play and are supposed to relax. Children's rhymes, especially those known in black communities, are a good example of popular culture which elevates whiteness over blackness. They are usually based on the binary thinking about skin color:

> Now, if you're white you're all right,
> If you're brown, stick around,
> But if you're black, Git back! Git back! Git back! (Collins, 89)

hooks's picture book may be surprising to those readers who know they are not able to live up to the prevailing standards of beauty. But once they get access to the book, they are more than likely to grow towards a positive self-definition.

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Traces of Transnationalism and Multiculturalism in a Literary Context

Migrants' identity construction in contemporary fiction

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Abstract: The article takes a cue from the idea that the failure of the current notion of multiculturalism does not rely on a problem of biological "race" but on a conception of space/place which implies that, according to common belief, people should stay in their "own place" (Bauman 2005). The relationship between spatial definitions and identity is at the core of the recent diaspora theories. The aim of the article is to analyse the interrelationships among multiculturalism, identity processes, space, and migration through postcolonial literature: Shoba Narayan's *Return to India*, Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*, and Arinta Srivastava's *Looking for Maya* will be used as tools of investigation of these same phenomena.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, Spatial Turn, Identity, South Asian Migration, Literature.

1. Migrant identities and spatial theories in a multicultural system

In 1996, in his essay *Modernity at Large*, Arjun Appadurai described the possibility of the creation of a multicultural and deterritorialized world system. According to his innovative model, the role of concepts such as homeland, community, space, and identity had to definitively and drastically vary, as a consequence of the changes in the international balances which had generated different movements of people after the end of World War II. In this light, also the approach to the culture and literature produced by contemporary societies had to change towards a transnational perspective. In particular, Appadurai has stressed the importance of contextualizing the study of culture. In this light, culture can acquire different meanings in different periods, thus creating a multiplicity of definitions which should indicate that we live in a peculiar "postblurring [state], in which ecumenism has – happily in my opinion – given way to sharp debates about the word, the world, and the relationship between them" (Appadurai 51). From this "postblurred" perspective, "it is crucial to note that the high ground has been seized by English literature (as a discipline) in particular and by literary studies in general", and "the hijack of culture by the literary studies [has generated] internal debates about texts and anti-texts, reference and structure, theory and practice" (Appadurai 51). This new approach to the relationship between word and world has led to a sort of transnational view in which imagination and fantasy have become central elements of the social life. In this light, postcolonial literature has acquired a fundamental role since it does "write the cultures", especially when the idea of culture is linked to the

contemporary notions of displacement and disorientation, well depicted in the experiences of migrant people.

Migration literature is actually able to criticize the contemporary world system and its unbalanced identities whereas, at the same time, it creates new forms of individualities and incites people to react against the social injustices and old forms of the colonial apparatus which still exist also in modern and multicultural societies. Indeed, after the end of colonialism, western nation-states and their cultural industries have tried to make and maintain national traditions and "spaces". This is the reason why it is still quite difficult to talk about a healthy form of multiculturalism, although it is also worth noting that the new tendencies towards the definition and the study of transnational movements and diasporas have enhanced the situation. This is particularly evident in the migrant context: both migrants and diasporic people are perceived as those who do not belong to the country where they live, especially when the differences of cultures and traditions between the community of departure and the community of arrival are insurmountable. This situation does not rely on a problem of biological "race" but on a notion of space/place which means that, according to common belief, people should stay in their "own place": this is the primary reason which might explicate why local governments have always encouraged migrants to return to their ethnic homelands (Tsuda 27). This racial connotation has always embodied a deep plague in migration and diaspora's history, especially because it makes "prediction about people's character, abilities of behaviour on the basis of socially constructed markers of difference" (Castles 2003: 35). The development of racialization is typical of all the capitalist and postmodern societies, and it is a tangible element also in Great Britain: recent processes of neo-liberalism have exasperated this situation by giving an aggressive character to the already self-asserting concept of national identity (Gold, Nawyn 232).

The relationship between spatial definitions and identity is at the core of the recent diaspora theories. Indeed, changes in the global relations of power among different areas of the world have promoted new routes of migration, as well as new migrants' flows which have altered also the idea of home, thus creating multicultural societies and global citizens potentially deprived of a real and secure place where living. However, as Bhabha puts it, "To be unhomed, is not to be homeless" (Bhabha 9), and this assumption creates a quite unstable situation which stands at the base of the paradigmatic postcolonial condition. Diasporic identities can only try to come to terms with this position by creating new "spaces" and new "homes", following the so-called "spatial turn". This peculiar turn has affected also the perception of what "homeland" and "home" mean, as well as the formation of multicultural and diasporic identities and communities. In this light, migrant and diasporic displacements are perceived as a "global space of flows" (Warf, Arias 4), with different linkages among places which imply a multiple dimension of identity. By contrast, the notions of "place" and "space" can be also considered as counterpoint to globalism and diaspora, a fact that, according to Dirlik, could be the main responsible for a supposed migrants' rejection of their ancestral origins and identities. This perspective seems to find a correspondence in the concrete sociological reports and investigation about the contemporary multicultural societies, since the concept of hybridity which identifies these communities is often perceived as an element of "destabilization" by migrants

themselves, as Dirlik points out (103). On the other hand, in my opinion, hybridity should be the fundamental characteristic which helps migrant and diasporic people to accept themselves and to create a new form of identity erected on the idea of multiculturalism, or better, interculturalism. Indeed, although the position towards it is still ambivalent and many countries still reject the idea of a real multicultural, and therefore totally hybrid, society (Gowricharn 223), insisting on the importance of the defence of multi- and interculturalism is a central question in order to avoid the prejudices which usually depict them as synonyms for conflicts or ethnic disorders, rather than the realm of hybridity and tolerance.

Academic and literary scholars have already started to give way to the recognition of plurality and difference. Elleke Boehmer, for instance, talks about the shift of attention from the "ambivalent colonial space, to exploring the creative, but also unstable and ambivalent interstices and interfaces of metropolitan cultures" (Waugh 356), even though she also recognizes the cautious role played by postcolonialism, which can support only the kind of multiculturalism invoked by multinationals and neo-liberal governments for their expansionist desires (Waugh 357).

In order to understand literature's role in the spread and defence of multiculturalism, Stefano Harney brings up Gayatri Spivak's words:

> the text [in] the sense we use it, is not just books. It refers to the possibility that every socio-political, psycho-sexual phenomenon is organized by, woven by many, many strands that are discontinuous, that come from way off, that carry their histories within them, and that are no within our control. (Harney 3)

It is for this deeply connoted social function, its transdisciplinary character, and for its capacity to investigate the stories and the more intimate aspects of human life that literature can be used to examine migrant and multicultural phenomena, even though different scholars have different approaches to the same theoretical aspects. In this sense, Eleonor Byrne has emphasized the recent developments in postcolonial diasporic literary theory, questioning if this kind of criticism has or has not reached a sort of impasse (19). In particular, Byrne underlines "the emergence of a strain of melancholic postcolonial" (19), also in the field of diaspora studies, connected to Paul Gilroy's definition of the English (post)modern condition in his *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (2004). In his essay, Gilroy points out a substantial inability of the UK to face the consequences of the end of colonialism and its new multicultural society: the postcolonial theorist does not hide his pessimism about the possibility to live in a totally cosmopolitan and multicultural world, as well as the utopian and naïf vision of dwelling convivially with difference, because of global inequalities and generally spread conflicts (Gilroy 5). However, from this perspective, diaspora is seen as the essential element of the new global character of contemporary Britain and, as Gilroy describes it, it is perceived as a hopeful issue which does not provoke melancholia. So, in this light, diaspora is a healthy form of considering loss or change for the migrant community, as well as a way to relate to migrant movements and displacements, and to a genuine multicultural society. Nonetheless, John McLeod deeply criticizes this position, especially in relation to the sense of hope that Gilroy attributes to some specific black identities' forms of

representation, such as street music (McLeod 2008: 6). McLeod's position may be compared to Dirlik's assertion about a general tendency to cultural reification typical of the modern multicultural societies. Dirlik affirms that,

> The anti-assimilationist mood (expressed most fervently in liberal "multiculturalism") itself has contributed in no small measure to such cultural reification by a metonymic reduction of the culture of the Other to "representative" ethnographic elements or texts divorced from all social and historical context that may then serve purposes of self-representation by the diasporic population or selfcongratulatory consumption in the carnivals of the society at large. (97)

From this perspective, diasporic identities in their reification do not overcome English racial prejudices, and this situation is even amplified by the passage from a national to a transnational standpoint where migrants' constant relationship with their ancestral homelands and traditions implies the creation of a sort of spatial continuum through which cultural peculiarities, as well as prejudices, can easily pass from a nation to another, linking the "centre" of the world to its "periphery". In this way, diasporic culture can become a marker of exclusion which goes against the notion of cultural pluralism and interculturalism. Therefore, each country of immigration should re-examine its understandings of what belonging to a transnational society means, taking into consideration that monocultural or homogenous nations can no longer resist.

2. First and second-generation identities and the right to be "chez soi"

The situation described in the previous paragraph affects both the first and the second generation of diasporic people living in the UK. The 1980s have been marked by an intense social and political change in Britain: the transmission of citizenship to the second generation is the fundamental novelty of the period, although this crucial step did not change the common perception towards Black British people. Indeed, they were still depicted as criminals and muggers, thus creating a sort of moral panic towards them (Kim 12). As a result, also second-generationers currently have to deal with the problem of discrimination and racism, as well as with the instabilities due to their in-between identities. In particular, the social conflicts between white people and the so-called "Desi"[1], as well as the resurgence of the anxieties around the incompatibility between cultures, have led to the current crisis of British multiculturalism, while the internal differences of class and religion among the South Asian community have marginalized some groups by furthering others (Kim 33). Moreover, second-generationers are considered "internal others", a term which marks the existence of a still racialized perception and gives them an even more hybrid connotation, torn between a partial integration into the British society and a still strong

[1] The term "Desi" derives from a Sanskrit word used to describe the South Asian identities of migrants in contemporary Britain, and it refers also to British Asian music, literature and films. It literally means "of the homeland"; in this sense, anyone with Asian ancestry can be considered as a "Desi" (Kim 34).

perception of their "Othering". As a reaction to this situation, these young people are trying to construct their own spaces in specific places in the UK, so that it is possible to say that they are trying to redraw their own boundaries of "Desi" in order to solve their fears. The postmodern philosopher Zygmunt Bauman as well does not hesitate to admit that migrants still desire a place to belong to, as well as a stable home which allows them to feel a sense of kinship, association, and inclusion without having the necessity to move away. He also affirms that, in an era in which modernity has tried to destroy every kind of belonging, the ideas of community and tradition, as well as roots, blood, nationality, and the joy of being "chez soi", are fundamental values which cannot be called into question (Bauman 2005: 258). However, it is crucial to underline that, if on the one hand, the importance of the creation of a sort of "human habitat" (Bauman 1998: 259) is still very present, on the other hand, the nature of this habitat has changed, since the traditional notion of nation-state has been replaced by multicultural and transnational communities constituted by diasporic people. In this way, the concept of nation is converted into a transnational matter, in which different communities preserve a special ideological kinship with different places of origin (Appadurai 172). However, despite the need to look for a more global concept of nation in the contemporary mosaic of nationalities and flows of people, is it still possible to talk about a kind of "loyalty" to a nation or a nonterritorial transnation (Appadurai 173)? This is a central question because the recent tendency towards heterogeneity and interculturalism is likely to be substituted in the long term by a repulsion for the same aspects it should support. This is exactly what is happening in the current society, where a high claim for heterogeneity is being replaced by the aversion to strangers and immigrants and by acts of racism and discrimination against the marginal immigrant community, "the uneasy place of the subject who comes to the city for a new life, but finds access to metropolitan identity complicated and often simply impossible" (Warf, Arias 118). As a result, it is maybe possible to postulate that, in a quite paradoxical way, the more a country presents globalized characteristics, the more it is probable that it hosts pockets of fundamentalism and racism.

Interculturalism, more than multiculturalism, situates in this context in order to respond to the need of a much clearer sense of justice and equality and to establish a spirit of belonging, while multiculturalism is still heavily focused around the idea of "race". The UK has adopted the so-called "pluralistic multiculturalism" (Barrett 18), that is "a more civic integration of cultural minorities and migrants through concrete dispositions, such as language classes, civic courses to put in contact migrants with the host country" (Barrett 23). In this context, integration means that both the host and the migrant culture make accommodation to each other; as a result, intercultural dialogue should reduce prejudices and stereotypes in public life, but this utopic condition still seems far to be reached. The attempt of establishing a more civic integration is well portrayed also in literature, especially taking into consideration the spatial turn's assumptions. In a fundamental paper dated 2004, David Harvey recalls the importance of the relational space, which implies that space is composed of relations rather than structures:

> [...] There is another sense in which space can be viewed as relative and I choose to call this relational space - space regarded in the manner of Leibniz, as being contained in objects in the sense that an object can be said to exist only insofar as it contains and represents within itself relationships to other objects. (Harvey 2)

Thus, contrary to Bauman's position, Harvey affirms that it is impossible to extricate *place* and *time*, since a spatial approach helps to conceptualise political and collective memories by linking the spatial characteristics of such issues to the time when they happen. In this way, the social and political facts of a precise era can be understood only in relational terms, that is by considering and examining them through both time and space. Hence, this conceptual frame allows to reconsider and grapple many aspects of the contemporary political consciousness, such as the concept of identity. From this perspective, Harvey calls into question Lefebvre's conceptualization of the existence of a "right to the city" (13), by considering who has the right to be in a space that is nominally designated as public and what this has to do with how politics is conducted in the public sphere. He also asks: "What happens when we construe that right [...] as a right to change and transform the spaces of the city into a different kind of living environment compatible with quite different social relations by attacking both its material forms as well as dominant discourses of representation?" (12). I will deal with these topics in the next paragraph by analysing three novels by the Indian novelists Shoba Narayan and Arinta Srivastava, and the Pakistani Nadeem Aslam who describe migrants' experiences by insisting on the unsuitability and cultural misunderstanding affecting post-war western multicultural societies. I will particularly consider that a relational conceptualization of space and place has to regard also dichotomic terms like global/local, near/far, inside/outside which affect the British multicultural society and migrants' identity construction.

3. Different kinds of migrant identity construction in the literary representation: Shoba Narayan, Nadeem Aslam, and Arinta Srivastava's novels

As already mentioned in the previous paragraph, transnational identities are composite and contradictory issues, and this is also related to the loss of value of the idea of nation-state and the migrants' tendency to congregate in, and address their loyalty to, other kinds of social groups. It is for these reasons that migrants started to feel solidarity with their co-ethnics abroad since the first migrant flows in the 1950s. The colonial notion of national belonging was replaced in the postcolonial context by concrete constructs with the same value, such as contemporary cosmopolitan transnational communities. However, also the recent concept of transnationalism, in spite of its ability to cross cultural boundaries and build multiple or hybrid identities, still presents some problems, especially concerning the question of the real value of multiculturalism. In this light, transnationalism still appears as a "revalorization of exclusionary ethnic identity, and transnational communities take on the form of exile diasporas, determined to establish their own nation-states" (Castles 2002: 1158). Hence, transnational communities have led to contradictory and fluctuating identities which make migrants feel constantly disoriented because of their need to find a

balance among their participation in host societies, their relationships with homelands, and their links to people of the same community.

The situation is even more complicated by the ambivalent value of the notion of community itself, especially when it is defined as a cross-cultural group in which migrants and "proper" citizens live together in a heterogenous and hybrid space, a mobile world of open societies and communities, in which these same characteristics should not be seen as threatening, but as highly desirable. So, in this context, the notion of loyalty to one single place cannot be taken into consideration, as it is an icon of old-style nationalism that has little relevance for migrants in such a mobile world (Castles 2002: 1159). For those who have migrated from the former colonies to work or study in the prestigious western universities, integration in this kind of multicultural society – hybrid only in appearance – is part of a hard process which involves a double form of acceptance. Migrants, in fact, had to enter both the city and the university or work environment, trying to be recognised in both these awkward ecosystems without altering their balances.

In the autobiographical novel *Return to India*, Shoba Narayan depicts the "cacophonous group [of students] speaking different tongues, wearing exotic clothes and eating unusual foods" (Narayan 63) that she found in the small town where she had moved from India to study at the university. The new western environment is juxtaposed, however, by her Indian friends' behaviour, especially that of Vicky and Midnight, a couple of Indians who helps her to feel at home:

> I cooked dinner and spent the evening with them before heading back. Although their apartment was tiny and spartan, it was the closest thing to home for me. […] On Sundays, we […] spent the afternoon hanging out in Vicky's comforting, spice-scented apartment that turned out to be the "home" for many of the Indian students. (66-67)

In spite of the initial opposition to their homeland, and the consequent desire to study abroad, these young migrants have created a space of aggregation in the foreign land in which they can preserve their Indianness. In fact, after their arrival, they find western people "intimidating or boring, or both" (78), so that they prefer to spend their free time with their own compatriots. Nevertheless, the risk of being absorbed by the host culture and of losing their roots is constantly present, such as in the case of Shoba's friend Zahid, "simply an Indian who was distancing himself from India" (71). This condition can be seen as a reaction to the "traumatic moment" (Mishra 8) of migration, that is an answer to the loss of homeland through the assimilation of the habits of the new country. However, this kind of loss persists because "there is no substitution for it [homeland] in the new 'object of love' (in the nation-state in the case of diaspora)" (8); so, the correct answer to this migrant mourning is to come to terms with this sense of loss, trying to mix Indian and foreign cultural elements in a healthy form of hybridity. In Narayan's novel, this is the case of Gyta, an old Indian migrant whose hybrid identity is exemplified by her house, a mix of Indian, African, and European pieces of furniture and cultural symbols:

> Portraits of the family, in traditional garb, dotted the coffee tables. On the mantel were souvenirs of the Taj Mahal, African masks and Austrian crystal. A procession of brass elephants marched straight into a German cuckoo clock. On the bar, a

> small silver Nandi – Lord Shiva's bull and emblem of purity – calmly took stock of the liquor bottles and wine racks surrounding it but didn't seem to take any offense from these symbols of debauchery. (Narayan 84)

Narayan's position in favour of multiculturalism and hybridization is expressed by the peaceful conviviality among different cultures in Gyta's house: this strange collection portrays an exaltation of diversity which implies the acceptance of the persistence of difference located in the in-between (Mishra 136). Only through such a conceptualization of diversity and transnationalism, "relics from India" and "Nintendo" (Narayan 84) can coexist without negating each other's history. This is also Shoba's initial way of living her experience abroad: she decides to live with other Indian girls who share her same desire of preserving their roots while, at the same time, she also marries the western lifestyle. It is for this reason that she can eventually freely decide to accept her traditions and an arranged marriage with an Indian boy, Ram, not for this denying her education of independent international student. After all, the project of multiculturalism must acknowledge that its principles of universalism "were themselves 'particular' (linked to a specific Western historical formation) and this particularity (now rendered as a universal) is *a particularity that may be located within all particularisms*" (Mishra 182; my emphasis). This statement emphasises the role of the single particularisms of any historical formation in the process of multiculturalism, as well as the importance of accepting and incorporating also diversity because "self-enclosed identities that make no reference to what are outside are neither 'viable' nor 'progressive'" (Mishra 183). So, universality cannot exist apart from the particular, and this is even more true when first-generation migrants have to deal with their children. For Shoba Narayan, the passage from singlehood to her life of wife and mother is an epiphany suggesting the need to pass on her Indian values and culture to her children (Narayan 121). In this context, however, it is fundamental to avoid the risk of an excessive "Indianization". Shoba decides to enrol her daughter Ranjini on "Camp India", a cultural association whose purpose is to make a bridge between second-generation migrants and their Indian heritage. In this regard, Shoba and her husband have different standpoints: Shoba's cooking of traditional Indian food (134) is opposed by Ram's acknowledgement that Ranjini has the right to exploit her hybrid condition, as well as the best of western culture (130). Hence, her initial forced "Indianization", strongly sponsored by Shoba, ends up not being the right way of shaping the young girl's identity because it just pushes her to hate the Indian temple, her name, and her cultural legacy (140-141). Shoba's decision to make her daughter Indian, and as a consequence to come back to the subcontinent, is not, however, a total rejection of multiculturalism and hybridization, because even their return cannot delete Ranjini's – and her mother's – hybridity. Narayan simply prefers to put ahead her *roots*, rather than her transnational *routes*, thus embodying the typical migrant's perspective. Hence, the tension between locality and globality is solved in favour of the former, and although Shoba "would have loved to be a global citizen" (181), she simply chooses to be an Indian mother and woman. One solution, however, does not exclude the other because her identity can be seen as the product of a globalized hybridization which is the result of a particular kind of locality: from this standpoint, diasporic identities retain the sense of "a centre,

nation, locality, territory (that is homogeneous, indigenous, 'settled') *from* which communities migrate" (Procter 14), and to which they return, both physically and mentally. As a result, Narayan's subjectivity has been mostly shaped by both her Indian traditions and the western lifestyle, and this is the real kind of multiculturalism Shoba is looking for, "not the élite 'global citizens' that Ram talked about but people in the trenches of life" (Narayan 182).

Narayan's hope for a possible healthy form of multiculturalism is completely opposed to the aspirations of the protagonists of Nadeem Aslam's *Maps for Lost Lovers*, a novel where the sense of an exclusive community is, instead, at the base of the migrant context.

In his novel, Aslam depicts a group of Pakistani migrants who strongly rely on their small community in the UK. According to their strict rules, those who wish to escape from the suffocating control of other members in order to follow the western customs have to be punished. This is what happens to Jugnu and Chanda, the two lovers of the title, who pay with death their desire to live together and love each other without being married. In the Pakistani transnational community of the little English city of the novel their fault assumes the shape of a real outrage: the diasporic community described by Aslam shows the typical traits of a transnational group caught between the sense of belonging to an ancestral home and the longing of preserving it at any cost. The murder of Jugnu and Chanda has to be read in this perspective, since it is the final drastic example of an insane exaltation of transnational bonds. After all, from the 1950s to nowadays a number of migrants from a myriad of different South Asian countries – Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan – had arrived in the not mentioned city of the novel (Aslam 29), and each of them have tried to impose their own traditions and cultural symbols, starting from the renaming of the city landscape: "The men who arrived in this town in the 1950s had re-christened everything they saw [...] the various nationalities of the Subcontinent have changed the names according to the specific country they themselves are from" (28-29). In this struggle for imposing their culture, each community feels strongly tied to its own tradition, as it is the case of the Pakistan family of Jugnu and Chanda. The smell of incense which saturates the house of Shamas, Jugnu's brother, or his wife's traditional dishes are just some examples of the symbols widespread throughout the novel, so that it soon appears evident that "each community maps out its own culture onto the grid of the town regardless of its former meaning" (Lemke 172), in an attempt of appropriation of the host country which rejects any form of multiculturalism. As a result, the entire plot is constructed on the constant tension between different ways of conceiving life in England by different members of the same community. So, if on the one hand the nonconformist relationship between Jugnu and Chanda reflects a westernized way of life, in line with 1990s-British context in which they live, on the other hand Shamas and his wife Kaukab embody the traditional couple of Pakistani migrants strongly attached to their values and not willing to integrate in the multicultural scenario in which they live.

Shamas and Kaukab's segregation in the narrow space of their community is especially evident in the woman's behaviour. Indeed, she carefully follows Pakistani prescriptions for clothes and food, and she is voluntarily confined in her house: "I don't go there [to the garments shop] often – white people's houses start soon after that street, and even the Pakistanis there are not from our part of

Pakistan" (Aslam 42). Therefore, she seems totally distant from the assimilationist process described by Stephen Castles, which involves "to learn the national language and to fully adopt the social and cultural practices of the receiving community. This involves a transfer of allegiance from the place of birth to the new country and the adoption of a new national identity" (Castles 2002: 1155). Kaukab, however, does not desire to be assimilated or integrated; she actually seems to be scared by the English world around her, and she tries to avoid any contact with white people, in a sort of racism in reverse which may be the result of her sense of inferiority (Lemke 175) and of the contrasts with other migrant communities.

Moreover, the situation is further complicated by the contrast between first and second generation. The conservative choice of Shamas and Kaukab is totally rejected by their children who discard their parents' traditional habits and customs in favour of a western life: this is why the eldest son, Charag, refuses to meet the Pakistani girls that his mother has chosen for him after his divorce from the English Stella, while the youngest, Ujala, decides to go away leaving his family behind. Nonetheless, the last hope of creating a real hybrid context in *Maps for Lost Lovers* is actually assigned to the second generation, and in particular to Charag, a young artist who tries to combine his English education with his Pakistani heritage through his art. Throughout the novel, he works to a collage of old photographs of migrants through which he wishes to rewrite the history of Britain by highlighting the multi-ethnic character of the British environment and the emergence of different cultures. The multicultural connotation of his project allows Charag to totally exploit his mixed condition, as well as to turn away from his family and to question their values (Lemke 182) and the role of transnational communities. Actually, discrimination and multiculturalism are both characteristics of the global city, and in *Maps for Lost Lovers*, discrimination can lead to the creation of closed off communities, while real multiculturalism would stimulate the formation of intercultural communities with benefit in terms of cultural openness and opportunities.

This last point, however, is not always true, and this is particularly evident for the South Asian second generation, for whom the tension between local and global, racism and multiculturalism, is widely depicted in relation to politics of space and place. In *Looking for Maya* the protagonist Mira lives in London and, as a young second-generation woman, she considers the former British mother-country as her home. She is not interested in starting an emotional and actual trip to India in order to (re)appropriate her "real" identity because she already feels at home in the UK. She has an English boyfriend, Luke, and unlike her parents, she is not obsessed with pointing out racial differences or nosing out connections to mark her origin (Srivastava 5). In fact, she is quite annoyed by her boyfriend's interest in the eastern culture, music, and people, as well as by his tendency to "like…everybody so much", in particular "ethnic people, black people, people who are not English" (18). In fact, the westerner Luke seems more interested in discovering the eastern world than in his girlfriend, and he "had started his investigation of Eastern music long before we had come together, although sometimes I wondered if I was part of the research" (18). Mira, instead, would like to be appreciated beyond her roots, indeed she affirms that "I don't care. I'm not lost. I'm not looking for my roots or trying to live something down. I just want to

live" (37). She does not want to stand out in Arts and Sciences as all Asian girls are expected to do (37), and she is not interested in her culture of origin or in the "Black politics" in vogue at her university (18). Her attitude is not totally in contrast with the general behaviour of the second generation in the last years of the XX century: the novel is actually set in mid 1990s, when "the 'Black Experience' and the 'urban landscape' have become increasingly integral" (Kelleher 241), and the claim for the incorporation into the British environment for the children of migrants had gradually been quite welcomed. This progressive form of integration is the reason why Mira did not pay particular attention to the Postcolonial Literature course she had taken in her final year of university, and she "hadn't attended many of the lectures either, intimated by the earnest class and the amount of background reading required" (Srivastava 21). The "background" required to understand the postcolonial lessons is her own rejected background, but it is not seen as a means to appreciate and discover her past, but just as something far from her, a heavy burden in view of the exam. As a result, she is almost totally unaware of her Indian heritage, and what is worse, she does not care about it. Her point of view about the concepts of roots and "race memory" is quite sceptical as well. She does not believe that "you might not have been born in India or Africa for instance, but the memory of your ancestors lingers in your blood" (41), and her position is even more paradoxical considering that her English boyfriend instead agrees with this standpoint: "'Makes sense,' he said. 'D'you think so? It sounds like nonsense to me. You can only remember what happened for real. All the rest is suggestion and fantasy'" (41). According to Mira, the lack of a direct contact with homeland is a major obstacle for the understanding of her origins: the South Asian region is the realm of fantasy and suggestion for her, while the UK represents reality and certainty. In other words, Mira does not know her homeland and she is not interested in it, despite the visits to "home" she made with her parents Ravi and Kavi when she was a child, and their dedication to recreate an Indian house in London. This goal, however, is achieved in the wrong way, as they recreate their Indianness through ethnic objects and texture they had bought in "Haus Khas Village" in Dehli, a real village turned into shoppers' paradise for well-heeled Indians (20). These surrogates of a real Indianness – outcomes of globalised goals – cannot compensate for Mira's need of roots, so that they just obtain the opposite result, that is distancing Mira from India even more. However, Mira's identity is not confused, and she actually struggles to affirm her right to be English, even when she is in India with her parents and she actually behaves like a British tourist:

> My dad warned me that if they charged excess baggage to bring all the material through Customs because it exceeded twenty-five kilos, I would have to abandon it with my uncle who had come to see us off. Implicit in this warning was the bald criticism that (as usual) I had not considered things, that (as usual) I had not thought of the consequences when I had exuberantly rushed into the tailor with reams of hand-woven blue cotton. "It's so cheap, Dad." "You're in India," he said, "not in Habitat. You should compare like with like. No one here would think it was cheap." "But I don't live in India, Dad. I don't know what to compare it with, other than with Habitat." RaviKavi had a policy about being Indian. Just because you live abroad, just because you are earning "ponds", doesn't mean you can go

> to India and throw your money around. At the very least it shows a lack of culture. It gives you a respect which is not earned. (76)

Mira's behaviour in India demonstrates that she knows nothing about her ancestral culture, and that she thinks of herself as an English woman visiting India. She is not familiar with its customs and traditions: she does not mind offending her own "compatriots" with her behaviour because she has not the cultural tools to realize that she is insulting them. After all, as noted for the first generation as well, "symbols of ethnic pride and cultural identity [...] became signals that barred access to resources and employment in the larger society" (Zhou 998), so the second generation has learnt to avoid using cultural signs in order to totally integrate into the British system. It is for this reason that Mira hates the "smell of garlic" (Srivastava 106) which, according to her, was responsible for her lack of friends at school when she was a child. The result is a generation of migrants' children who have become undistinguishable from their westerner peers, except for the colour of their skin, and feel uncomfortable in relation to their culture of origin.

The void left by the absence of the "homeland" is filled by Mira's relationship with Amrit, an Indian writer much older than her, who supplements to her lack of knowledge about her ancestral community and identity by bringing Mira closer to her Indian heritage. In this light, he functions as a sort of bridge between the young girl and India because he helps her to understand the importance of roots. Indeed, despite the lack of a happy ending for their relationship which is ravaged by the age difference and their distant aspirations, Amrit certainly helps Mira to appreciate her origins, included the hated smell of garlic of her childhood: "Now it smelled of home. I would cook dahl and lace it with a sizzling tarka, a concoction of seared garlic and chillies, and breathe in the aroma" (Srivastava 106). Amrit helps her to understand the importance of home and of its tradition, in spite of his apparent mask of Indian man educated at Cambridge and perfectly at ease with the British habits. His ties with his Indian past are still really strong; in fact, as Mira will later discover, it is not by chance that his only wife was an Indian girl, Maya. As a young man, Amrit has been forced to divorce from her sole love, and the title of the novel, therefore, embodies not only his impossibility to forget his wife, but also his and Mira's search for roots: "looking for Maya" actually means looking for a return – though figurative – to their Indian legacy.

Hence the bond with India as well as different perceptions of multiculturalism are highlighted throughout the novel. In this way, Mira does not need to physically return "home" in order to shape her identity and her sense of community; the author still manages to underline the importance of both roots and routes by stressing the fact that Mira is the product of multicultural education, where

> mothers from council estates regularly complained to the school because their child knew more about Diwali than Christmas. And at home, India had continued as surely as it had in Dehli and Bombay: Hindi was spoken, food cooked, values drilled, connections given, histories recounted, gods entertained. (Srivastava 142)

This paradoxical condition is a mirror of the current British multiculturalism, a context in which children study the Bangladeshi communities in the East End

(213), and English people dream to fly to India. Moreover, the juxtaposition between the clamour of the Indian space and the calm of London described by Mira can sound a bit strange considering the vital character of the contemporary British metropolis, but it shows her consideration of her two "homes": she actually perceives the multicultural and cosmopolitan London as a relaxing place where people can think and reorient themselves if compared to the confused and chaotic India, and this is the reason why she prefers the English capital to her Indian "home". However, it is interesting to note that also her negative considerations about home contributed to constructing her hybrid identity. She realises it by remembering a conversation with her father:

> "These people, your uncles and aunties and neighbours who you don't know, all these people who keep asking you the same question…" "Do you like it here or do you like it there?" I mimicked in Hindi, twisting my face in disdain. "All that and this, the toilet without a door and flies. Your feeling of disgust and discomfort and despair. Remember it. Remember all of it. Don't let anyone make you forget it." (169)

By recalling this conversation, Mira understands that her past experiences and memories, both positive and negative, forged what she is now. For her, following her Indian roots is not an inevitable requirement, but just one possibility among many other possible scenarios given by the multicultural and vital London's milieu.

4. Conclusion: towards a post-postcolonial scenario

The selected novels have demonstrated that combinations and intersections among different generations of migrants, global structures, cultures, and situations can produce specific effects on migrant identities in a multicultural system. From the first-generationer Shoba Narayan to the child of diasporic parents, Mira, in Srivastava's novel, it is clear that the unbalances between dominant multicultural host cultures and transnational communities still maintain their relevance. In order to solve this tension, it is important to overcome the old tendency to compartmentalise the general way of thinking about the multicultural question and the definition of identity. The examples depicted in the novels and their attempt to go beyond such perspective recall a sort of post-ethnic and post post-colonial way of seeing the world (Stein 113) which re-invents the whole migrant identity far from the concept of Englishness and from the colonial experience, but also from the idea of Britishness and the label of "Black British". In this light the notion of multiculturalism applied to the first and second-generation experience can be seen of limited use, since the contemporary idea of multi and interculturalism is often rejected by migrant identities who, instead, are claiming for a post-racial optic that "demands we dispense with daft ideas about race, nation and indigeneity while recognizing the persistence of prejudice that stands in our way" (McLeod 2010: 49). These prejudices should be fought through the raise of a new consciousness which goes beyond geographical and cultural boundaries, as well as unhealthy forms of multiculturalism, maintaining at the same time a special consideration for ethnic traditions.

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Man (not) fitting the landscape

The cross-cultural mediations of otherness in V.S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*

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Abstract: The main purpose of this essay is to investigate how V.S. Naipaul's autobiographical novel *The Enigma of Arrival* describes the ways in which a transcultural, hybrid subjectivity is performed in the form of a series of multiple linguistic acts in which the narrator positions himself within an ever-changing reality. The dynamic pattern through which the protagonist's subjectivity comes into being will be analysed in the light of the multiple relations with otherness that the novel stages at different levels. Also, the essay deals with issues of self-reflexivity, since *The Enigma of Arrival* deals with the development Naipaul's relationship to writing and also with the composition of the novel itself.

Key words: identity, otherness, hybridity, mediation, writing, self-reflexivity

> The noblest impulse of all – the wish to be a writer, the wish that ruled my life – was the impulse that was the most imprisoning, the most insidious, and in some ways the most corrupting, because, refined by my half-English half-education and ceasing then to be a pure impulse, it had given me a false idea of the activity of the mind. The noble impulse, in that colonial setting, had been the most hobbling. To be what I wanted to be, I had to cease to be or to grow out of what I was. To become a writer, it was necessary to shed many of the early ideas that went with the ambition and the concept my half-education had given me of the writer. (Naipaul 245).

"Noble", but also "imprisoning", "insidious" and "corrupting": this is how V.S. Naipaul describes his desire to become a writer in his widely acclaimed, autobiographical novel *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987), from which the above-quoted extract is taken. As it articulates the contradictions that shape the author's ambitions, the text also establishes an interesting equation between writing and identity. Naipaul's claim that "[t]o be what [he] wanted to be, [he] had to cease to be or to grow out of what [he] was" (ibid.), suggests that becoming a writer should be regarded as much more than just learning to tell stories and convey content. Writing is certainly linked to an increasing self-awareness and maturation, as well as with the development of a personal style and an individual voice that make a writer's text unique. Even more significantly, writing has to do with assuming a point of view, a subject-position that will allow writers to insert themselves within a schema of relations with an imaginary *you* (the implied reader of the text), as well within the culture in which the text will be composed and received. The quotation above intimates that this *positioning* is even more crucial and problematic in the case of writers who, like Naipaul, are caught among different

cultures and different worlds, and decide to explore the conflictual nature of their *inbetweenness* in writing. Born in Trinidad in 1932 to a family of Indian descent, Naipaul emigrated in the UK at the age of eighteen to pursue his literary career. In his writings, the tension between expectation and experience, the desire to belong and the feelings of alienation derived from his colonial background become the starting point for a quest for identity that also engages with issues of difference and alterity. Not only does Naipaul's migratory experience figure in the text as a theme, it also informs the structure of the narrative and allows the reader to get valuable insights into the multiple negotiations that give shape to the textual performance of the writer's hybrid self.

The Enigma of Arrival may well be regarded as an extraordinary *mise-en-abyme* of the coming into being of a subject never fully coinciding with himself, struggling to assign himself an unstable residence in the world as well as in writing. The text deals the author's settling in Wiltshire, a place in which his presence, as the product of a history of displacement and colonial relations, is somewhat at odd with the apparently peaceful, unblemished reality of rural England. As it describers the progressive mutation of a world that slowly opens up to change and otherness, it also depicts Naipaul's growth from what he refers to as the product of a "half-English half education" (ibid.) into a more complex, sophisticated self. Yet this maturation is not presented as the result of a set of life experiences (as it would be expected, for example, in a *Bildungsroman*) but rather through the description of a series of mediations that happen in language, literature and culture. *The Enigma of Arrival*, in other words, stages the transformation of the narrator from a passive recipient of colonial discourse – especially of the colonial discourse carried through literature – to that of an active producer of a cross-cultural counter-discourse. Reading/interpreting and writing emerge as interconnected activities in which the self-writing subject develops a way of feeling and perceiving, as well as a sense of home. The narrator represents himself both as a reader of the reality around him – which he accesses through discourse and representation – and as a writer.

The main purpose of this essay will be precisely to chart the ways in which a transcultural, hybrid subjectivity is performed in the form of a series of multiple linguistic acts in which the narrator positions himself within an ever-changing reality. In his collection of essays *The return of Eva Perón and The Killings in Trinidad* (1980), Naipaul wrote that "[a]n autobiography can distort; facts can be realigned. But fiction never lies. It reveals the writer totally", (67). As a matter of fact, *The Enigma of Arrival* is subtitled "A Novel" despite dealing with highly autobiographical subject-matter, such as the author's journey from Trinidad to England, and his relocation to Wiltshire, an area to which he seems to be attracted because of its apparent remoteness from his hybrid, cosmopolitan existence. Paradoxically enough, the authenticity of Naipaul's self-representation starts from a declaration of inauthenticity. What will be shown here is that, by exposing the fictionality of his book, Naipaul also exposes the provisional quality of the identity performances that are achieved in the text. In other words, the truthfulness of the episodes narrated – some of which may already be known or recognizable to the reader who is familiar with Naipaul's previous writings or with the literature produced about him: interviews, essays, monographs and so on – is not to be found in their correspondence with real-life events but rather through

the textual enactment of the self.[1] Rather than focussing on the self as a centre of experience, Naipaul accounts for how language, literature and cultural expectations construct his perceptions of the world and of the roles he plays in the society in which he is looking for inclusion.

The relational pattern through which the protagonist's subjectivity comes into being will be analysed in the light of the multiple relations with otherness that the novel stages at different levels. As it refers to the desire to become a writer as "corrupting" and "imprisoning", the epigraph that introduces this essays hints at the author's conflict with the dominating, disciplinizing gaze of the colonizer. The essay will show that Naipaul's novel may be indeed read in the light of Homi Bhabha's concept of *mimicry*, i.e. the formation of identity through imitation of and identification with the image of the Other, but it also multiplies and diffracts the very idea of *otherness*. Bhabha draws the idea of *mimicry* from Lacanian psychology to describe how, with the support of strategies of reform and discipline, colonial subjects come into being in relations to their colonizers in such a way that they are "*subject of a difference that is almost the same but not quite*" (Bhabha 122; italics in original). Imitation does not involve the harmonization or repression of contrasts, but it israther a form of resemblance which entails a difference that colonial discourses also wish not to erase. Mimicry is therefore the sign for an identification which can never be completed, but always produces its slippages, "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other" (ibid.) who nonetheless cannot and should not be completely assimilated. "Mimicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask", claims Bhabha, referring both to the colonizers and the colonized (Bhabha 127.). Also, identity does not pre-exist the relational identification with the Other for either of them, and emerges as the product of a disciplinizing gaze which can, nonetheless, "shatter the unity of man's being through which [it] extends [its] sovereignty" (ibid.). *The Enigma of Arrival* certainly relies on similar relational, unstable conceptions of identity. Yet the *Other* takes multiple forms and is not only associated with the duality of the colonizer/colonized relationship. Naipaul construct "otherness" as a series of rival spaces, or "heterotopies", to refer to Michel de Foucault's terminology, i.e. spaces that may simultaneously be material or abstract, in which discrepancies, difference, and even conflicts are articulated and made visible.

[1] In this sense, *The Enigma of Arrival* significantly distances itself from the "pact of truth" which characterizes autobiographical writing, and which Philip Lejeune described in his influential *Le pacte autobiographique* (1975). For Lejeune, the *truth* of an autobiography is the result of an implicit pact established between the author and the reader, the latter accepting that the author, the narrator and the character are to be identified as the same person. The identity of the narrator is guaranteed not only by the "honored signature" reported on the cover jacket of the book, but also by the necessary premise of the identification of the self with the self. This premise of ipseity is considered by Lejeune as the product of an historical narrative (he defines autobiography as a "retrospective prose narrative that a real person creates about his own existence when he emphasizes individual life, particularly the history of his personality", Lejeune 14, quoted and translated in Regard 4)

The location of *Otherness*

The idea of *heterotopy* may transversally be read also in the very title of the novel. The Enigma of Arrival is an oxymoronic expression which combines the idea of relative safety and accomplishment usually associated the word *arrival* with the eerie quality of the word *enigma*. An *enigma*, in fact, exists only insofar as it is not solved. As a matter of fact, the text makes it clear that, however hard Naipaul tries to make his cottage in Wiltshire his home, the centre of his emotional life, he is *not there yet* but he is, simultaneously, also *somewhere else*. Naipaul's real-life uprootedness and transcultural background, emerge in the text as the forces that bring about the displacement of a subject from himself, from his fantasies and from his conceptions of the world, and that makes him observe and interpret the reality around him from an estranged perspective. This translates into the fact that the first-person narrator is always presented as a foreigner, someone not perfectly in tune with his surroundings. In the first chapter of the book, for example, he claims that "[f]ifty years ago, there would have been no room for me in the estate; even now my presence was a little unlikely. But more than accident had brought me here. Or, rather, in the series of accidents that had brought me to the manor cottage, with a view of the restored church, there was a clear historical line" (Naipaul 52). Along with that, the narrator's alienation is not only personal, but also historical, and connected to wider, historical processes: "The migration, within the British Empire, from India to Trinidad had given me the English language as my own, and a particular kind of education. This had partly seeded my wish to be a writer in a particular mode, and had committed me to the literary career I had been following in England for twenty years" (52-53). Naipaul ascribes his wish to become a writer to larger movements of people, which determined the circumstances of his language and education. Also, he implies that the link between his writing and his alienation is even deeper, and that his being in the world is always connected to the psychic disjunction that derives from his British-Trinidadian identity

Another interesting way in which the concept of *heterotopy* can be applied to the book is that the very idea of selfhood goes much beyond the individual. Not only does Naipaul consider himself a fragment a broad diasporic process, sometimes his autobiographical writing is not about himself, but about other people. Although he is the undisputed protagonist of the novel, and also its main focalizer, sometimes his story his not his own, and the narrating "I" fades into the background in order to leave space to other narrative threads. Differently put, the story of the writer's move from Trinidad to England at the age of eighteen and the later development of his literary career is only narrated in occasional flashbacks. Most of the novel is occupied with the writer's reflections, observations and growing familiarity with the place he has chosen as his residence, as well as with the stories of other people – neither real friends nor people playing a significant role in the life of the protagonist – but rather casual acquaintances whom the writer meets in his otherwise rather isolated life. Accidents happening to other people are sometimes reported, but in an almost causal way. None of the characters Naipaul meets occupies a central role in the plot, and none of their stories figure prominently as a central narrative core. What is more, the author seems quite uninvolved with them and he usually points out not his possible

identification with them but rather his difference, his alienation from them. Nonetheless, while at the level of the chronology of the personal development of the author these characters seem quite irrelevant, they become central in the cultural operation of positioning him within a certain landscape – geographical, cultural and, above all, linguistic. They become part of a narrative whose structure is not linear at all, but it includes multiple digressions or and represents subjectivity in a highly relational way.

It is, nonetheless, in the very description of the narrator's perceptions of the world around him that it is possible to observe the construction of heterotopies. For example, the novel begins with a retrospective micronarrative that summarizes the processes of personal growth and maturation that will be told in the following pages. In the first lines, the narrative describes Naipaul's arrival in the English countryside not in terms of a series of actions, but rather in terms of the writer's ability to decipher the alien world that he has elected as his new residence:

> For the first four days it rained. I could hardly see where I was. Then it stopped raining and beyond the lawn and outbuildings in front of my cottage I saw fields with stripped trees on the boundaries of each field; and far away, depending on the light, glints of a little river, glints which sometimes appeared, oddly, to be above the level of the land.
>
> The river was called the Avon; not the one connected with Shakespeare. Later – when the land had more meaning, when it had absorbed more of my life than the tropical street where I had grown up – I was able to think of the flat wet fields with the ditches as "water meadows" or "wet meadows", and the low smooth hills in the background, beyond the river, as "downs". But just then, after the rain, all that I saw – though I had been living in England for twenty years – were flat fields and a narrow river. (Naipaul 5)

First, the passage overlaps more than one temporality: the time of the narrator's arrival in Wiltshire and his perspective as an older, wiser self. Secondly, the passage introduces the very idea of the mediation of the *other* in the process of self-construction. In order to make the place his home, Naipaul has to start to see like the other Wiltshirians and, most significantly, he has to use *their* words. The idea of not being able the vernacular properly, as locals would do (i.e., when the narrator confesses to not being able to conceptualize the ditches" as "water meadows" or "wet meadows" or to call the hills "downs" even though he had been living in England for two decades) is strictly associated with the idea of blindness. Naipaul incapacity of seeing, which is initially attributed to the heavy rain, is later revealed as a cognitive problem. The author is not able to conceptualize the landscape in which he has moved because he lacks the right terminology, and therefore the right competence. The second paragraph instead synthesises a successful process of homing, of establishing a bond between the narrator and the landscape, in terms of a translation accomplished both in language and in the self.

The linguistic passage from "ditches" to "water meadows" is a passage which the narrator justifies with the expansion of his horizon of experience, as he claims that it became possible "when the land had more meaning, when it had absorbed more of my life than the tropical street where I had grown up" (EA: 5). The use of the verb "absorb" is extremely significant, because it implies the reciprocity of the development of the self and of his linguistic capacities. Differently put, the

paragraph shows that language is not just a mirror of the widening of the horizon of experience of the narrator, but also the very site in which his own experience of the world comes into being. Progressively, the novel reveals that it is not the narrator who attributes meaning to the landscape, but rather that meaning as an external, shared construct takes in the narrator and allows for him certain new possibilities of existence. Naipaul, in other words, does not speak English, but he is spoken by English; his capacity to produce utterances that are able to conform with someone else's expectations and definition of the place make him a different kind of subject, a subject who is aware of his previous lack, and that might even feel threatened by his old ignorance.

Language therefore also figures in the novel as a site of *otherness*. Language is an historical, material phenomenon, something that goes beyond the individual speaker, and which is rather linked with communities of speakers who share cultural values and expectations. Despite being Naipaul's native language, English figures in the text almost as a second, acquired language. The knowledge of English is often explicitly mentioned as an indirect knowledge, a knowledge that the speaker has acquired from afar and embedded in a very different experience of the world than the one required to inhabit his cottage in Wiltshire. The narrator mentions that in his native island he could only imagine what words like "winter" could mean, and that when he could have his first-hand experience of them they turned out quite different from what he had expected ("The idea of winter and snow had always excited me; but in England the word had lost some of its romance for me, because the winters I had found in England had seldom been as extreme as I had imagined they would be when I was far away in my tropical island", EA: 5). Most significantly, the narrator gets acquainted with the English spoken in the countryside through the philological expertise he acquired through books and research, but still somehow disconnected from his experience, creating a horizon of expectation which proves somehow unfitting: "I knew that 'avon' originally meant only river, just as 'hound' originally meant a dog, any kind of dog. And I knew that both elements of Waldenshaw – the name of the village and the manor in whose ground I was – I knew that both 'walden' and 'shaw' meant wood. One further reason why, apart from the fairy tale feel of the snow and the rabbits, I thought I saw a forest", EA: 7).

Interestingly, the very fact of speaking is presented as a form of an inauthenticity and as a potential threat to the landscape he has decided to inhabit. At the opposite end of the spectrum of the narrator's odd presence in the English countryside, and of his sophisticated verbal awareness, is the figure of Jack. Jack, a middle-aged English farmer and a gardener whom Naipaul occasionally meets on his walks in the countryside, is a character apparently perfectly integrated in his social, cultural and geographical context, an image of plenitude whose perfection will be questioned, deconstructed and re-signified throughout the narration: "Jack himself, however, I considered to be part of the view. I saw his life as genuine, rooted, fitting; man fitting the landscape. I saw him as a remnant of the past (the undoing of which my own presence portended)" (EA: 15). Jack's integration with the landscape is initially configured as an idealized absence of the mediation between him and language. The empathy between the farmer and the narrator is not formed through words, but rather through gestures. It is after Jack becomes acquainted with the odd presence of the narrator – who tries to

imagine himself from the viewpoint of the old man working in the garden as "a stranger, a walker, someone exercising an old public right of way in what was now private land" (EA: 28) – that they start exchanging some extra-linguistic, and yet extremely meaningful signs of sympathy and recognition: "But after some time, after many weeks, when he felt perhaps that the effort wouldn't be wasted, he adopted me. And from a great distance, as soon as he saw me, he would boom out a greeting, which came over less as defined words than as a deliberate making of noise in the silence" (EA: 28). Jack never speaks, the only direct utterances about him are those produced by his wife after his death, words which by their unexpected change of viewpoint will reveal a completely different aspect of Jack to the narrator.

The Enigma of Arrival therefore reveals the inconsistency of an identity which had been initially described as *full*, perfectly integrated with its surrounding and untouched by otherness. Just like the narrator himself, Jack is someone whose "[m]imicry conceals no presence or identity behind its mask", as Bhabha would put it (127). He too experienced conflicts with his own surrounding and with other people (it is suggested that Jack "[p]erhaps in his own way had been tyrant, imposing, in addition to the long hair and the bun, a style and way of life that had been irksome to his wife", 94). Jack's idealized, non-linguistic identity is unveiled as an illusion: he is also embedded in social interactions, historical and material. His presence as a speaking being had real consequences onto the life of those around him, who had, in turn, to negotiate their needs and actions with him. Language did make him, like Naipaul himself, a man (not) fitting the landscape.

Translating the self. The mediation of otherness and the narrator's assignation of residence in writing

"[T]he only way we have of understanding another man's condition is through ourselves, our experiences and emotions", says the narrator as he explains the cognitive processes that he enacts in order to feel at home in his new community (244). It has already been argued that what the narrator calls "ourselves, our experiences and emotions" (ibid.) is not a pre-existing entity, but rather the result of external dynamics of identifications with multiple Others. The inner-life of the narrator, his conscience, his feelings, his perceptions are, in other words, always-already embedded in a social, external relations. The book highlights the linguistic components of these processes of identification. This section of the essay will deal with the process in which the hybrid identity of the narrator comes into being through a process of *self-translation* that allows him to project the multicultural components of his existence onto a world that he initially perceives as alien. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the narrator's symbolic *assignation of residence*, i.e. the learning of the vernacular of the English countryside, is made possible through a process of multiple linguistic mediations because the narrator already speaks a second language, the language of literature, art, and representation. The starting point of the process of the nararator's self-translation onto the rural landscape of his surroundings is therefore a process already taking place based on a highly mediated and estranged experience: "But knowledge came

slowly to me. It was not like the almost instinctive knowledge that had come to me as a child of the plants and flowers of Trinidad; it was like learning a second language" (EA: 30),

The Enigma of Arrival deals with the writing process also as a form of interpretative process: being a writer is strictly connected with being a reader and an interpreter of languages, texts, and even of reality. Interpretation emerges from The Enigma of Arrival as a process at the centre of which there is not the deciphering of something unknown, but rather a pragmatics in which the text acts as a prop for a language-game and in which the author and the reader are produced as places within what, in his essay *Interpretation as Pragmatics* (1999), the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Lecercle described as a *structure of interpellation*. A term that he draws from Louis Althusser, *interpellation* is the process through which ideology the process by which ideology addresses the pre-ideological individual and produces him or her as a subject. In Lecercle's view, interpretation is to be understood as a form of translation and intervention. The reader is not just a passive recipient of the presumed meaning produced by the author; he or she actively contributes not just to the construction of the meaning of a text, but also to the creation of a fiction of an author. Jean-Jacques Lecercle's formulation of the theory of interpretation goes beyond even Iser and Jauss' reception theories insofar as it reads interpretation as a process taking place within a structure which comprehends the following five elements, the initial letters of which significantly compose the word ALTER: Author, Language, Text, Encyclopedia, Reader. What circulates within this structure is not meaning, but rather interpellation. Both the author and the reader are captured as places within this structure, but this capture is not a static one, as it involves a continuity of counter-responses.

A highly meta-reflexive passage, which deals with the composition of the novel itself, may cast some light on how interpretation works in Naipaul's text. This episode, which is narrated in the second chapter of the novel ("The Journey"), describes the narrator's retrieval of a reproduction of the painting by the Italian surrealist artist Giorgio de Chirico titled precisely *The Enigma of Arrival* ("The cottage at that time still had the books and some of the furniture of the people who had been there before. Among the books was one that was very small, a paperback booklet, smaller in format than the average small paperback and with only a few pages. The booklet, from a series called the Little Library of Art, was about the early paintings of Giorgio de Chirico. There were about a dozen reproductions of his early surrealist paintings", 97). The translation of the visual artefact into words (*ekphrasis*) gives way to further interpretations which develops into a series of stories that develop into other stories, converging then into Naipaul's autobiographical narrative:

> Technically, in these very small reproductions, the paintings did not seem interesting; they seemed flat, facile. And their content was not profound either; arbitrary assemblages, in semi-classical, semi-modern settings, of unrelated motifs – aqueducts, trains, arcades, gloves, fruit, statues – with an occasional applied touch of easy mystery: in one painting, for instance, an overlarge shadow of a hidden figure approaching from round a corner. But among these paintings there was one which, perhaps because of its title, caught my attention: The Enigma of Arrival. I felt that in an indirect, poetical way the title referred to

> something in my own experience; and later I was to learn that the title of this surrealist painting of Chirico's hadn't been given by the painter, but by the poet Apollinaire, who died young in 1918, from influenza following a wound, to the great grief of Picasso and others. (97-98)

The text shows that the verbal rendition of the painting is also mediated by another verbal interpretation before being brought back to the author's personal circumstances. The title that Apollinaire gave to the painting becomes, in fact, a second text that will support the narrator's interpretation of the image.

In a subsequent paragraph, dealing with the ekphrasis of the painting, the narrator establishes a new connection between the de Chirico's painting and Apollinaire, himself and the painting, himself and Apollinaire:

> What was interesting about the painting itself, The Enigma of Arrival, was that – again perhaps because of its title – it changed in my memory. The original (or the reproduction in the Little Library of Art booklet) was always a surprise. A classical scene, Mediterranean, ancient-Roman – or so I saw it. A wharf; in the background, beyond walls and gateways (like cutouts), there is the top of the mast of an antique vessel; on an otherwise deserted street in the foreground there are two figures, both muffled, one perhaps the person who had arrived, the other perhaps a native of the port. The scene is of desolation and mystery: it speaks of the mystery of arrival. It spoke to me of that, as it had spoken to Apollinaire. (98)

In claiming that "it [the painting] spoke to me of that [the enigma of arrival], as it had spoken to Apollinaire" (ibid.), the narrator performs at least three important functions. First, he postulates, years after Apollinaire had given a title to the painting, what Lecercle calls "a constructed mythical moment of origin" (1999: 22), which is, in fact, a double moment. Naipaul imagines that the painting is the bearer of an original meaning which de Chirico gave to the painting, and which emerged verbally through the title that Apollinaire gave to it. Secondly, by claiming that he knows what the French poet had meant by 'The Enigma of Arrival', he produces a representation of the author Apollinaire. Thirdly, the narrator usurps the role of the author Apollinaire by proclaiming his own identification with the French poet. The identification with Apollinaire emerges as much more significant than any possible identification with de Chirico not only because both the narrator and Apollinaire are writers, working with language rather than with image, but also because their production is revealed as a form of reading and interpreting someone else's artefact.

In other words, Naipaul thus becomes the writer that he is meant to be by identifying with the Other – two producers of visual or verbal narratives (de Chirico and Apollinaire), which are in turn produced by him through the structures of language, in what Lecercle would identify as a form of interpellation. As he tries to interpret the meaning of the painting and its title, Naipaul constitutes Apollinaire and de Chirico as subject, but he does so in a way that is clearly influenced by his own personal perspective. Interpretation is described by Lecercle as a form of translation and intervention happening through re-contextualization: the text is de-contextualized and re-contextualized by every act of reading. This, on the one hand, implies that the story of the de Chirico painting that "[m]eaning varies (increases and multiplies, or wilts and wanes) with every link in the chain of the serial arrangement" (Lecercle 1999: 78). The narrator later

claims: “What was interesting about the painting itself, The Enigma of Arrival, was that – again perhaps of the title – it changed in my memory. The original (or the reproduction in the Little Library of Art booklet) was always a surprise” (EA: 98). When the narrator says that “[t]he scene is of desolation and mystery: it speaks of the mystery of arrival” (ibid.), what is implied is that this “desolation” and mystery” also change according to the different scene in which the story is re-contextualized.

Subsequently, many versions of the story of the De Chirico painting emerge as a result of *différance* – the separation between the author and text as well as reader and text as formulated by Jacques Derrida. As Lecercle puts it “writing belongs to the realm of the different (there is no iteration without alteration), of differing and deferring (the contact between speaker and hearer occurs in praesentia; the absence of contact between author and reader is due, in the first instance, to a temporal gap), and of differends (the type of 'dialogue' that will ensue is agonistic, made up of verbal struggle and games rather than cooperative and irenic)” (1999: 78). Naipaul not only displaces the temporality of the action, but also intervenes and translates it onto different contexts which he refers to his own life. Each of these translations depends then on specific conjunctures, determined by the moment in which the reading of the De Chirico painting is performed:

> My story was to be set in classical times, in the Mediterranean. My narrator would write plainly, without any attempt at period style as historical explanation of his period. He would arrive – for a reason I had yet to work out – at a classical port with the walls and gateways like cutouts. He would walk past that muffled figure on the quayside. He would move from that silence and desolation, that blankness, to a gateway or door. He would enter there and be swallowed by the life and noise of a crowded city (I imagined something like an Indian bazaar scene). The mission he had come on – family business, study, religious initiation – would give him encounters and adventures. He would enter interiors, of houses and temples. Gradually there would come to him a feeling that he was getting nowhere; he would lose his sense of mission; he would begin to know only that he was lost. His feeling of adventure would give way to panic. He would want to escape, to get back to the quayside and his ship. But he wouldn't know how. I imagined some religious ritual in which, led on by kindly people, he would unwittingly take part and find himself the intended victim. At the moment of crisis he would come upon a door, open it, and find himself back at the quayside of arrival. He has been saved; the world is as he remembered it. Only one thing is missing now. Above the cutout walls and buildings there is no mast, no sail. The antique ship has gone. The traveler has lived out his life. (98-99).

The story should be linked to the painting in an *ut pictura poesis* way: the pictorial techniques utilized by de Chirico should be reproduced in the text (“My narrator would write plainly, without any attempt at period style as historical explanation”, ibid.). The image is translated into words in a way that reveals a transformation of a static image into a recontextualized narrative. The characters are not precisely identifiable; the reason why the traveller finds himself in a foreign city are unknown or omitted; the incidents that occur on his way remain untold. These new elements added to the image are a production of the narrator/ interpreter's

experience as well as of the specific conjunctures in which his reading and interpreting takes place.

The vagueness of this account of an uncanny arrival in a dangerous city and of the impossibility of departure constitutes the basis for a model that repeats itself in several variations and in different contexts in the chapter. First the narrator tells of a book he is writing about an African colony, a story in which he recognizes the same narrative pattern of "a sunlit journey ending in a dangerous classical city" (99) to the point that he is not able to recollect which of the two stories comes before the other. Then he realizes that the same story is the version of a recurring dream ("Nor did it occur to me that it was also an attempt to find a story for, to give coherence to, a dream or a nightmare which for a year or so had been unsettling me", 100). Afterwards, the narration shifts to a story which he had been trying to write and which did not come out as expected, an episode in which Robert Hamner (44) recognizes the author's breakdown after his rejection of the manuscript of *The Loss of El Dorado* (1969). Then, the narrator relates his own uncanny experience of arrivals, first in New York – a short stop-over in the journey of migration that brought him, as a student, to England – and then to London.

The most significant reiteration of the story appears nonetheless at the end of the novel. As his novel draws to a close, Naipaul reminisces again the episode of the retrieval of the painting and endows it with new, additional meaning:

> I had thought for years about a book like The Enigma of Arrival. The Mediterranean fantasy that had come to me a day or so after I had arrived in the valley – the story of the traveler, the strange city, the spent life – had been modified over the years. The fantasy and the ancient-world setting had been dropped. The story had become more personal: my journey, the writer's journey, the writer defined by his writing discoveries, his ways of seeing, rather than by personal adventures, writer and man separating at the beginning of the journey and coming together again in a second life just before the end.
>
> My theme, the narrative to carry it, my characters – for some years I felt they were sitting on my shoulder, waiting to declare themselves and to possess me. But it was only out of this awareness of death that I began at last to write. Death was the motif; it had been the motif all along. Death and the way of handling it – that was the motif of the story of Jack. (343)

This final reinterpretation of the story is particularly relevant because it reinforces the multiple identifications that have been described before and connects them to what could be described as a *metalepsis*.[1] Metalepsis is a figure of speech which disrupts the distinction between the different levels of the narration, for example, by allowing the extra-diegetic narrator to intrude in the diegetic word. Metalepsis plays a fundamental role in *The Enigma of Arrival* insofar as the narrator, through his acts of interpretation, transgresses not only different narrative levels, but also his role as reader, author, narrator, and character. The narrator depicts

[1] In *Interpretation as Pragmatics*, with the word *metalepsis* Lecercle refers both to Austin's theory of the speech-act – claiming that a text is a multi-layered, extended speech-act in which several different speech-acts may take place at the same time (for example both illocutionary and perlocutionary) and to Genette's theory of metalepsis as a contamination between the world of the telling and the world of the told.

himself simultaneously as the observer of a painting, he identifies with the interpreter who gives it a title (Apollinaire), he becomes the author of a story which "speaks out" (the word "ekphrasis" etymologically means precisely "speaking out" or "telling in full", Heffernan 1991: 302) the events depicted in the painting as well as of a novel whose story is later revealed to him as another version of *The Enigma of Arrival*. Metalepsis, as Lecercle claims, "inscribes within the text, in a paradoxical form, the possibility of interpellating more than one set of actors, of projecting from the same text more than one structure of actants" (1999: 81). In this case, metalepsis, which is embedded in the act of interpretation of the painting, in the version of the story that the narrator tells also becomes the means through which the extra-diegetic enters the diegesis, in which the narrator transforms what is subtitled as "a novel" into an autobiography, and which re-creates, in a completely new way, the pact of truth which Philip Lejeune considers to be the basis of autobiography.

Conclusion

Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival* deals with writing and with the construction of the hybrid identity of the narrator in parallel ways. The main theme of the novel is not only the process of personal growth that the author undergoes during his lifetime spent in the alien space of Wiltshire, it is also the development of his relationship to writing. What is more, writing is treated as a way to perform identity through a constant mediation with otherness. Conflicts and difference have emerged as central concepts in this analysis, as Naipaul's novel describes the coming into being of an autobiographic subject through a process of self-translations into the context of a foreign, elusive landscape. Yet, this self-translation, in fact, passes through a series of imperfect meditations – it is marked, so to say, by the stain of untranslatability, of the impossibility of completely conflating the self and the other. Indeed, Naipaul utilizes his own condition of exile to maintain a sort of detachment that does not allow him to be assimilated – or completely and exclusively spoken by – the language of his new home.

By traversing the space of the diegetics and the extra-diegetic, the novel certainly casts new lights on the complexity of literary texts. It provides new insights in how literature elaborates and redefines the experiences of societies that are currently dealing with the societal challenges posed by ever-growing global interdependencies and newly formed cultural and semiotic contexts. As a matter of fact, literature does not only reflect, it also triggers off processes through which individual and collective subjects relate to a world that is ever more composite, hybrid and transcultural. In this perspective, subjectivity can be understood as a continuous self-reinvention on the part of speakers who express themselves with different languages and styles. The peculiar feature of literature, as well as its ethical challenge, is precisely that of constantly elaborating new ways to give voice to otherness.

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Minority Languages between Scylla and Charybdis

or How Commerce Has Inculcated a Lingua Franca

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Abstract: There is no sanctioned definition of a *global* or *world* language, but it basically refers to a language that is learned and spoken internationally and is characterized not only by the number of its native and second language speakers, but also by its geographical dispersal, and its use in international organizations and in diplomatic relations. As a predominant tool of communication, it avails itself of authority of a very special kind. Within the relation of language and power there is little doubt that it includes an element of domination too. This kind of language domination can be spoken of in terms of cultural imperialism, which formerly occurred in the sense of colonization and political supremacy, now it is less obvious but nonetheless widespread.

Key words: language, domination, structure, domestication, foreignization, translation

1. The Twenty-first Century Language Horizon in Europe

At the height of the Roman Empire, Latin was the lingua franca of most of Europe, Asia Minor and North Africa. The Roman doctrine was to simultaneously enhance its monolithic rule by the imposition of its own values while taking from other cultures what it deemed useful. The twenty-first century has seen some new trends which threaten to reduce the cultural variety of the once diversified European continent. In a broader view, people speak over 6,500 languages worldwide. Some are known to only a very few while others are spoken by billions. One is dominating. Cultural identity and political self-determination, and their internal relations are particularly timely for debate given the background of European integration, which aims at forming a common European identity while at the same time alleging to pursue the goal of preserving and fostering cultural variety as a core element of European identity.

While the advantages of business operation taking place in English advantages are self-evident, there are some legitimate concerns that a dominant global language could also have some built-in drawbacks and legislative constraints. There is, nevertheless, an acute awareness that the increased adoption of a global language may lead to the weakening and eventually the vanishing of minority languages (and, ultimately, it is feared, all other languages). It is estimated that up to 80% of the world's 6,500 or so living languages may die out within the next century, and some commentators believe that a too-dominant

global language may be a major contributing factor in this trend. Conflicts and competitive struggles are frequent and the *major* languages English, French and German win them more often than the smaller ones. (Taalunie 1999:2). This wide spread and tacitly accepted cultural invasion in former, more indelicate times, manifested itself in the form of colonization and political domination. The actual dominant position of English in the world language system can also be explained by its "Q-value", a concept introduced by De Swaan who argues that:

> The languages of the world together constitute a global system held together by multilingual people who can communicate with several language groups. The position of each language in this system may be characterized by its "communication value" (Q), the product of its prevalence and its centrality. Languages represent a very special class of economic goods: they are not only collective goods, but also display network effects. Such non-excludable communication networks may therefore be called "hypercollective goods". All texts, recorded or memorized, together constitute the accumulated cultural capital of a language group, once again hypercollective in character. The special characteristics of languages, language groups, and their accumulated textual capital help to explain the dynamics of language acquisition, conservation and abandonment.' (1998a: 63).

Language supremacy emerges in international trade and industrial development beyond individual borders when promoted by a powerful country. Countries which fall prey to excessive foreign contributions find themselves heavily in debt. If we accept Nida's definition of culture as "the total beliefs and practices of a society" (2002, 157), it would transpire that cultural invasion is particularly noticeable in developing countries where certain cultural aspects of the donor of aid suffuse the receiver, closing the eyes to the latter's own culture. The most notable effect of cultural invasion can be seen in economically dependent countries whose economies had to resort to welcoming international financial organization (typically the Word Bank and the International Monetary Fund). Wherever cultural invasion occurs the most prominent and likely mark for the next-in-line loss is that of the indigenous language.

1.1. Emergence of a lingua franca

There is hardly any denial that, increasingly, the world's common language is English. English is the nearest thing there has ever been to a global language. Its worldwide reach is much greater than anything achieved historically by Latin or French, and there has never been a language as widely spoken as English. Many would reasonably claim that, in the fields of business, academics, science, computing, education, transportation, politics and entertainment, English is already established as the de facto lingua franca. There is so much overwhelming evidence that the preeminence of English is beyond questioning, and consequently, speaking, reading and writing it are critical skills for workers in the global economy. To further corroborate this, we can also use research results published by Labrie (1993), Lopes Sabino (1999), Mamadouh (1995, 1999) and De Swaan (1999) who explain how, when and why actors in the EU use one or more languages. Consequently, when new countries join the European Union it is not inconceivable that, for reasons of an utilitarian and financial-economic

nature, there will be a shift in favour of the exclusive institutional use of English in the long term.

As the current lingua franca of science, business, IT, and higher education, English finds itself at the pinnacle of this consideration. Its ascendance to such an unprecedented supremacy has had its antithesis in a rapid decline of the importance of other languages. One may wonder if there is perhaps some truth in the cold argument that until English is truly the only language left on Earth, language gaps will only be creating barriers to the transfer of knowledge that are costing everyone. Even if there is truth to it, it does not erase the fact that the first language acquired by an individual necessarily become his *natural language*. Everything that he or she latter processes mentally and construes cognitively can only be analysed and interpreted by his comprehension apparatus and finally, when the foreign language cognition is exhausted, they must always reach back to the level of their natural language.

Traditionally, the crucial factor for the instituting of a global language is that it is spoken by those who have power. Again, referring back to the example of Latin, which was the lingua franca of its time, even though it was only ever a minority language within the Roman Empire as a whole, it was the language of the powerful leaders and superintendents and of the Roman army - and, later, of the clerical power of the Roman Catholic Church - and this is what propelled its upsurge to global language eminence. Accordingly, language can be said to have no self-determining existence of its own, and a specific language only dominates when its speakers dominate (and, likewise, fails when the people who speak it fail).

1.2. The Role of Education

Most of this paper's consideration was based on the examination of patterns of scientific achievement, and the statistically skewed outcomes of the educational process. Pioneering work of Bourdieu and Boltanski (1970) on this subject centered upon on the process of social selection through education. In the focus of their argument is the notion that schools contribute to social inculcation of domination through acquisition of foreign languages and cultural patterns. Successful communication, as the common erudition indicates, depends not only on language skills but on an understanding of other people's cultures. Accordingly, it would transpire that culture is not a *material phenomenon*, consisting of *things, people, behavior, or emotion* (Goodenough 1964, 39-40). Instead, it is an organization of these things since words only have meaning in terms of the culture in which they are used, and although languages do not determine culture, they certainly tend to reflect a society's beliefs and practices. A case study carried out by Loos (2000) analyzes how advisers at the European Parliament, belonging to different political groups and originating from different national cultures with distinct mother tongues succeed in producing - without support of translators and interpreters – compromise motions for resolutions to be adopted at the plenary session in Strasbourg each month.

Most of the time they use English or French. The drafts they use to compose these compromise motions are written in several languages depending on the nationality of the author. Even though it would appear that those who gain from

this misbalance are native speakers of English, the opposite can also be said, implying that the people most in need of cultural enlightenment are Brits, Americans, and others whose first language is English: the fact that one's professional or academic colleagues all speak English "so we don't need to bother learning about their language or culture" is a recipe for disaster. One of the modest measures to combat this, was the establishment of the International Mother Language Day, whose goal is "to promote linguistic and cultural diversity", which is not only desirable in itself, but also vital for successful communication across cultures.

2. Invisible scientific achievements

One of the most important tools for exerting language domination policies is the monopoly on scientific work publication. Those of us who publish papers from time are acutely aware of how difficult it is to publish a paper if is in any other language but English. A consequence of this travail is the statistical factuality, which is inherently wrought with gaps. Such gaps lead to skewed data. For example, sweeps of current scientific knowledge, or systematic reviews, are biased towards evidence published in English, leading to over-representation of certain results and no representation of others. De Swaan uses metaphors from the same semantic field. By considering languages as a special class of *economic goods* linked to accumulated cultural and textual *capital* he is able to explain why: "English may make inroads into new speech domains and the indigenous language may lose additional functions that carry high prestige". (1998b: 122). And the source of this problem is not solely in the English-speaking countries. Goethe Institute, for example, in explaining the programme "Power of Language", stresses that it is essential that the Goethe Institute on the one hand translate these general reflections into concrete individual questions and thereby enter into the variety of cultural experience acquired in the work of individual Goethe Institutes; and on the other hand, link these reflections to the general goals and practical work of the Goethe Institute, and in this way in turn reflect on them, but also translate them into generally comprehensible and publicly effective projects.

The thus designed concrete projects and events can be focused in sets of themes. Decisive here is that language be seen not only under the instrumental aspect and in its function within, for instance, the spheres of power and politics, but also always in its inner dynamics and own special power. Consequently, Peter France points out to the fact that theoreticians today have a far more complex task than the mere differentiation between what is good and what is bad; what they are concerned with nowadays is the different options that authors can utilize and the ways they can be adapted in conformity with the historical, sociological and cultural context (2000; 24). To further corroborate the point, consider that the United Nations organization, the closest thing we have, or have ever had, to a global community, currently uses five official languages: English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese, and an estimated 85% of international organizations have English as at least one of their official languages (French comes next with less than 50%). What is even more enlightening is the piece of information that about one third of international organizations (including OPEC,

EFTA and ASEAN) use English only, and this number goes up to almost 90% among Asian international organizations.

2.1 Familiar versus formal consciousness

Cultural invasion is severely grave in its effects where the invading culture overpowers and extinguishes the integrity of the receiving culture. This is best seen in the case of indigenous groups whose homelands have been taken for economic development. Deprived of their ancestral lands, and with their way of life disordered, they lose their self-governance and self-esteem; unable to amend to altered economic conditions, they fall into scarcity and meagerness, thereby undercutting any future attempt of linguistic diversification. One of the phenomena it can lead to is the so called *diglossia*, which occurs when speakers of the minority language use their mother tongue only with intimate interlocutors, while the higher-class language is used in more formal and more socially prestigious situation (Ferguson 1959), as was evident and described by the Valencian writer Ferran Torrent in the book *Un dinar un dia qualsevol*, depicting a common situation in the Valencian Country (Spain) some decades ago.

His novel's main character tells how when he was a child his mother used to switch the language that she spoke with him (Catalan) to Spanish as soon as they left their village of residence to go to the big city of Valencia. Specifically, she would suddenly switch to Spanish not only to talk to strangers, but also to him. Situations like these fit nicely with Katan's (1999, 26), definition of culture as a "shared mental model or map" for interpreting reality and organizing experience of the world. In such an arena, culture can be seen as a "system of congruent and interrelated beliefs, values, strategies and cognitive environments which guide the shared basis of behavior". It can also be explained by the fact that for a long time, especially during the Spanish regime at the time (1939-1975), most Valencian Catalan speakers conducted their familiar/personal relationships in Catalan, but they changed to Spanish as soon as they interacted with people outside of their social environment. This is a good example of what Giddens (1984: 25) calls "duality of structure": the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize.

2.2 Linguistic branding

Another study, by Cambridge University researchers, published in Plos Biology, explains that scientific information is in many cases lost or made unattainable when it is not disseminated to the global community when published in a language other than English, and it is not being conveyed to locals for use when published in English. This is an unprecedented concentration of power within one language. In a broader sense, this incarnation of the "power of language" is a matter of the instrumentalisation of language for the purpose of exercising power, as the gradual path from linguistic to commercial matters is unavoidable. This, in turn, creates all the necessary preconditions for subsequent forms of domination; by its superior products and technologies which create a demand; by its cultural achievements whether they are scientific, literary, artistic, intellectual or social; and negatively, by coercion trough size and nearness, and by involuntary political

and military agreements. In 2003, Anderson underlined the importance of taking into consideration both the 'etics' - the superficial level of the language - and 'emics' - the symbolic level of the language - while dealing with the text at hand (2003: 391).

This debate can be placed in a larger context and especially suggests the usefulness of a comparative approach to see how much scientific research is currently being published in more resilient languages. Revealing insights may be hoped for from the comparison of, for example, the prospects of the major European languages like German, French and Russian in a (linguistically) globalised world. Nida's belief (1994, 157) that words only have meaning in terms of the culture in which they are used, and although languages do not determine culture, they certainly tend to reflect a society's beliefs and practices. Some of those could act as a reserve alternative, for when cultural dominance is perpetuated without sensitivity to, and respect, for indigenous ways of life, it is imperialistic and expansionist, feeding on its own success. If a global language policy is to be pursued conscientiously, aspiring to become useful as a lingua franca, it ought to strive to become a common language that enables people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities to communicate on a more or less equitable basis, rather than imposing rules and annihilating differences. That has so far not been the case and the conceptual terms employed by the international community, whether in diplomacy, commerce, intergovernmental organizations, or the media, are introduced and reinforced by the powerful countries using relatively few languages. The most evident example is the increasing use of English in international relationships of varying types. Bourdieu's publication *Language and Symbolic Power* explains this unwillingness of member states to grant another language recognition: an official language can be considered as linguistic capital which affords its holders symbolic power (Bourdieu 1992: 50-52).

2.3 Cultural biasness

Many of the terms used to describe the internal relations among countries carry an inherently biased linguistic charge. These terms are culturally biased against the wider range of concepts current in the larger variety of languages used in developing countries. The term *development* for example, has an uncomplimentary connotation when expressing the objectives of the south and east of Europe. It masks the root problems that have to be overcome. Thus while this term was articulated and disseminated by the industrialized nations, some in the Third World wanting to themselves name the critical target, have expressed it as liberation. In such a paradigm, there are developing or under-developed nations and regions, but ones in which suppression of freedoms and rights calls for a term that encompasses the need for radical change.

In the European Union the citizens have the right to communicate in one of the official languages (Article 8d of the EC Treaty1), which has considerable

[1] 'Every citizen of the Union may write to any of the institutions or bodies referred to in this article or in Article 4 in one of the languages mentioned in Article 248 and have an answer in the same language.'

organizational and financial implications as a great number of translators is required to assure the communication with these citizens. Even though EU officials at the Commission use French, English and to a lesser degree German as working languages (Labrie 1993: 111), the member states do not seem to be willing to accept one of these languages or another language as the lingua franca for the EU and to give up their national language (De Swaan 1999: 15). There does not seem to be enough political will, neither among the political elite nor the population of the EU, to reduce the number of official languages (Mamadouh 1999: 122). The fact that there are not only EU translators for written communication, but also EU interpreters who assure oral communication in the official languages at all EU institutions (Labrie 1993: 88-135) shows that multilingualism in the EU also applies to oral communication.

3. The current stage

In 1993, approximately 800 million people spoke English, which made it obvious that it was quickly becoming the international language, thus creating undue advantage for natives of English-speaking countries. It is also hindering countries which are actively trying to eradicate vestiges of colonialism by English-speaking powers and rebuild a national language and identity. The use of English has not be decreed de jure within the EU, English can be considered as its lingua franca de facto (European Cultural Foundation 1999: 7). In a distant future, it is not unimaginable for English to become the common language in the EU:

> 'As English continues to spread as the first second language in the Union, sooner or later the moment will arrive in one country after another that one can speak English, fluently, with every fellow-citizen. What is more, all functions that carry prestige may be fulfilled by English. At that point people might begin to neglect their mother tongue, switch to English even among friends and relatives, and, finally, not even bother any longer to speak their mother tongue with their children who then will learn English as their native language. In the end, the indigenous language might entirely disappear.' De Swaan (1999: 22).

This is not unique just for the EU, in Malaysia and Indonesia, for example, there is concern that the spread of English is undermining the preeminence of Malay and Indonesian. As always, when *power* is spoken of, the first association is that of the power of man over man, of power as suppression of the free will by *commands* and *obedience*. Power can easily appear in this connection as the root of all evil in human societies and as the opposite of freedom as such. Yet the problem of power is in truth more complex. And especially in the case of the *power of language*, the problem is multi-layered. The influence of any language is a combination of three main things: the number of countries using it as their first language or mother-tongue, the number of countries adopting it as their official language, and the number of countries teaching it as their foreign language of choice in schools.

3.1. Linguistic industrialization

Ever since the nineties, the rise of English has appeared to be unstoppable. In Austria, for example, applications for official funding of scientific research

programmes have to be submitted in English: the researchers may all be German-speakers, but the experts who review the proposal probably will not be. The way people perceive their situation (in this case the sanctions of the linguistic market) makes them act in a certain way.

People adapt to an enacted environment, an environment which is *constituted* by the actions of interdependent people (Weick 1969: 27). Through such, less apparent aspects, speaking, reading and writing became the critical skills for workers in the global economy. For example, the automaker Volkswagen recently announced that its official language is now English, not German. Company bosses have been instructed to converse in the language, whatever their native tongue. The reason for the change, VW said, was to attract employees. The Internet too, in terms of services, software and content, has, from its inception, been dominated by the English language, giving English-speakers an unfair advantage as well as distorting understanding into terms articulated through English. It is often argued that the modern "global village" needs a "global language", and that (particularly in a world of modern communications, globalized trade and easy international travel) a single lingua franca has never been more important.

3.2 Attempts to counterweigh the domination

February 21st is UNESCO's International Mother Language Day, which is intended to "encourage people to maintain their knowledge of their mother language while learning and using more than one language". This annual event was established to commemorate a protest march at the University of Dhaka (in what is now Bangladesh but was then in the eastern part of Pakistan) on 21st February 1952. The government of Pakistan had tried to impose Urdu as the sole national language: Urdu was, and is, the dominant language of (West) Pakistan, but in the eastern part, the great majority had Bengali as their mother tongue. The demonstration was violently broken up by police, with the deaths of four students. The ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) movement could also be seen as a response to the growing dominance of English in global communication.

ELF does not get a very good press in Paul Emmerson's post on the subject, but the ELFers make a good point when they advise "native-speakers" to avoid culturally-loaded words and expressions which are likely to be unfamiliar to many of the people they're dealing with. Another major complex of themes revolves round the question of the possibilities of political intervention and influence in the field of language (for example, through targeted advertising for and policies of promoting the German language) on the one hand, and round the autonomous dynamics of linguistic development on the other. More and more leaders from under-developed areas are coming to regard 'development' as the lexicon of palliatives. Their recourse to the vocabulary of liberation is a vigorous measure of self-defence, aimed at overcoming the structural vulnerability which denies them control over the economic and political forces which impinge upon their societies.

Any attempt to curb the domination through language is an uphill battle for as long as it is an individual strife. This way or another, all countries need to be part of international organizations. With the advent since 1945 of large international bodies such as the United Nations and its various offshoots - the UN now has over 50 different agencies and programs from the World Bank, World

Health Organization and UNICEF to more obscure arms like the Universal Postal Union - as well as collective organizations such as the Commonwealth and the European Union, and the pressure to establish a worldwide lingua franca has actually never been greater. One of the frequently cited arguments as to why a lingua franca can be useful, is that up to one-third of the administration costs of the European Community is taken up by translations into the various member languages.

4. The linguistic switch

Going back to the carmaker communication example, we must seriously wonder if the described linguistic switch does actually make sense. Britain's Bentley, France's Bugatti, Italy's Ducati and Lamborghini, Czech Republic's Skoda, Sweden's Scania Trucks, and Spain's SEAT, are all under VW's control. A large Volkswagen Group of America operation also makes cars in the US. The German company is a corporate giant with tentacles extending far beyond its original home in Wolfsburg, Germany. The number of employees and their families depending on the production is vast, and where a population is susceptible it may experience cultural invasion from more than one source.

The properties of such a market endow linguistic products with a certain value. Each speaker in a linguistic community possesses a certain quantity of linguistic capital which allows him to produce expressions which are highly valued on a particular market. The more linguistic capital a speaker possesses, the more he is able to exert symbolic power (Thompson 1992: 13-18). For example, it may adopt as an additional language one that is foreign; it may follow consumer patterns from another model; and it may accept ideologies from still a third source. Bourdieu (1980: 113-120) argues that people in a community act on a market, a structured space of positions in which the positions and their interrelations are determined by the distribution of different kinds of capital.

Populations may become culturally dependent on foreign importations, stifling their own development in literature, science, education, mass media, behaviour and language, and in economic growth. Some have seen a planned or constructed language as a solution to this need. In the short period between 1880 and 1907, no less than 53 such *universal artificial languages* were developed. By 1889, the constructed language Volapük claimed nearly a million adherents, although it is all but unknown to day. Today the best known is Esperanto, a deliberately simplified language, with just 16 rules, no definite articles, no irregular endings and no illogical spellings. A sentence like "It is often argued that the modern world needs a common language with which to communicate" would be rendered in Esperanto as "Oni ofte argumentas ke la moderna mondo bezonas komuna linguon por komunikado", not difficult to understand for anyone with even a smattering of Romance languages. This would all make the case for its popularity, and yet, it never did take off significantly.

The reason for its doom was too easily overlooked. In its process of growing up, in the formation of its person and personality, language is not an element that the individual acquires at a certain point, but rather the acquisition of language is precisely this process in which the individual constitutes himself, not only as

individual but also as an independent subject. By means of language a person attains to a consciousness of themselves and their environment. They acquire competencies to act and to make themselves understood; in a word, they not only learn to interpret their world, but they also perceive their world through and as language. That however is not something that is fathomable, or even important, for that matter, in the eyes of commerce. Companies go where there is opportunity and that can mean making adjustments. Last year, the carmaker Honda announced that it was abandoning its native Japanese for English by 2020. Bourdieu (1992: 43-65) distinguishes not only economic capital (material wealth), cultural capital (knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions, i.e. educational or technical qualifications) and symbolic capital (i.e. accumulated prestige or honour. In his work he also focuses on linguistic capital, the capacity to produce expressions for a particular market: "(…) all speech is produced for and through the market to which it owes its existence and its most specific properties" (Bourdieu 1992: 76).

4.1 A frisson of optimism

It seems likely that this is actually only an imminent threat in areas where the global language is the natural first language (e.g. North America, Australia, Celtic parts of Britain, etc). On the other hand, there is also some evidence that the very danger of suppression by a dominant language can also spur and reinforce attempts to upkeep and safeguard marginal languages (e.g. Welsh in Wales, French in Canada). The main issue in multilingual contexts, is the fact that problematic assemblages commonly arise from the fact that one language is elevated to the status of the official language and consequently the language of the elites and the controlling, while other languages are downgraded to a lower status and discriminated against. Between places where people are banned by law from using their first language and language shift, there are a lot of government policies that limit language.

This has been the case in countless political and historical backgrounds, and regularly where a multiplicity of indigenous and partly unprinted languages are subjugated to an official language in state affairs and dealings. This is principally the case in post-colonial Africa, where the issues of de-colonialization within the perpetuation of colonial authority arrangements may be manifested in the linguistic relations. There is no denying that grouping many languages under one umbrella has a repercussion on the identities of these languages and their speakers, leading them to dissociate themselves from or "unlearn" their native languages in favour of the language dominant in education and in the job market. However, the process of dissociation from one's mother tongue or neighbourhood language goes on at a much larger scale in a much more intense manner with regard to English. The Germans also insist on the use of German in written and oral institutional communication (Deutscher Bundestag, 1990, 14-15; Deutscher Bundesrat 1991). The chancellor demands once a year that German be included among the working languages French and English (De Swaan 1999: 15). The German government complains that translations in German are not always available during meetings and that there are often not enough interpreters present, and that German EU officials therefore have to use German.

5. Conclusion

Language carries culture but has an inextricable association with politics and economy. We have spoken primarily of the *power of language* as the *language of power*. This basically means that all power must ultimately use language, be transmitted through it and manifested in it. Those who speak the same language not only can make themselves understood to each other; the ability of making oneself understood also generates a sense of belonging and, more importantly, belonging together.

This identity-forming prowess of language is not an ancillary effect through which individuals can conscript themselves into small or large social cohorts, or with whose help the social interconnection of societies or state and supra-state amalgamations can be nurtured; it takes hold much earlier than these. Places named by Helder De Schutter (2014, 1044) as linguistically mixed constellations, where there are more than one linguistic (non-migrant) group coexisting in the same space and there are not too many options of territorially segregating them (regardless of whether such a thing was desirable or not) are seen as paragons of coexistent linguistic diversity.

In such places, the different language groups share cities and neighbourhoods. Research on language choice and symbolic domination in schooling can be seen as one approach to one of the major sociological questions regarding education, namely the role of education in social and cultural reproduction. Sociologists and anthropologists of education have long argued that, while schooling often is supposed to be a major means of meritocratic, and hence democratic, access to social success, in fact its evaluation procedures favour the already successful. In other words, schooling simply reproduces existing social hierarchies, whether based on class, ethnicity, race, religion or gender. And again in a double sense: on the one hand, an individual becomes an individual by participating, in his innermost core, in a language; and on the other, through language he acquires membership in a culture and a group. Regardless how ruptured his experience of this membership may later become, it remains a foundational element of his individuality.

The EU's official languages are protected by the member states (Scheffer 1999: 2; De Swaan 1999: 18, 22) which may limit the risk that languages will disappear, but commerce has a life of its own, one that pursues pecuniary rather than egalitarian mantras. It is those pecuniary aspects of modern society that actually pose the greatest threat for the survival of minority languages. Politicians may adopt protective strategies, but strategies gradually dissipate under the weight of commerce. Until indefatigable regulations come into place to protect the multiplicity of linguistic and cultural heritage, any statement of the brightness of the future of linguistic diversity is a bet made by affection rather than statistics.

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Mark Nixon. *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936-1937*. London and New York: Continuum, 2011.
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Following the announcement that Beckett's German Diaries are to be published by German publishing house Suhrkamp (with a Faber English edition to follow after that), it is with some enthusiasm that one must greet the first in-depth study of these texts by well-known Beckett scholar Mark Nixon. Found in a trunk by Edward Beckett following the death of his renowned uncle, the Diaries were first mined by Beckett's official biographer James Knowlson in his 1996 biography *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. The picture of Beckett dragging himself round Nazi Germany, plagued by illness and fatigue, while heroically maintaining (most of) his arduous art-historian's itinerary, emerges from Knowlson's account as does the then (1996) under-appreciated connoisseurship Beckett attained in the visual arts. Knowlson's always sympathetic account nonetheless recounts a Beckett rather at the end of his tether and, as we know, the frustrations of a completed, but unpublished *Murphy*, and a lack of a creative direction were perhaps factors which drove Beckett to his German journey and which preoccupied him on the road.

And so, we read in Beckett's *Letters* (volume 1) the following diatribe to Mary Manning Howe written from Berlin in December 1936: "The trip is being a failure. Germany is horrible. Money is scarce. I am tired all the time. I keep a pillar to post account [the Diaries], but have written nothing connected since I left home, nor disconnected. And not the fhart of a book beginning. The physical mess is trivial, beside the intellectual mess. I do not care, & don't know, whether they are connected or not. It is enough that I cannot imagine anything worse than the mental marasmus, in which I totter & sweat for months. It has turned out to be a journey from, and not to, as I knew it was, before I began it." This revealing letter sets the tone for much of Beckett's self-evaluations in the Diaries themselves. Without self-pity, Beckett recounts his various woes – mental, physical, financial, creative – after the fashion of his own post-war creations. It is perhaps significant that Nixon omits full quotation of this letter from his account since for Nixon, the journey to is ultimately to the triumphs of the post-war fiction and *Godot*, works which can be seen to retrospectively justify Beckett's rather stuttering progress during the 1930s. Nixon's study, just as Knowlson before him, shows an ever inquisitive Beckett immersing himself in German art, literature, philosophy and music all of which will resurface in his subsequent writings and creative statements. The Diaries themselves are a goldmine of biographical data and Nixon is an expert guide and mediator of this material. But there remains the

important sense that Beckett was in a rut, unable to write his way out of a creative dead-end and the Diaries serve as a substitute for the writing which Beckett was *not* doing, just as note-taking would serve to fill a creative vacuum both before and after Beckett's German trip. Nixon's overall conclusion is that the Diaries articulate an artistic struggle within Beckett's psyche to rid himself of the inessential and to write from the depths, as it were, as he does in the post-1945 writing. We can agree with the documentary value of the Diaries while also acknowledging the essential aimlessness of Beckett's German journey. Indeed, this is the very sentiment Beckett conveys to Mary Manning Howe while also dwelling on the physical and mental mess and his all-pervading sense of failure. All the ingredients of Beckett's post-war work are there in this brief self-analysis to Manning Howe. What Nixon achieves in this study is to fill out and evaluate the multiple cultural strands which would embellish and reinforce the basic pointlessness and futility of Beckett's vision as expressed in this letter.

Usefully, Nixon reminds us of the cultural history behind the diary as a literary form. Unlike some modernist writers (Kafka and Woolf spring to mind), Beckett was not an habitual diarist. His German Diaries conform to the particular sub-genre of the travel diary and they minutely record the experiences from Beckett's journey. In doing so, the Diaries range from miscellaneous observations on art and literature down to everyday life. This juxtaposition of high and low, art and pathology, the sublime and the ridiculous is, in itself, a Beckettian paradigm reminding us of the contradictions in the most moving moments of Beckett's art (the ending of *Waiting for Godot* comes to mind). The diary is also, importantly, a series of entries based on the present state of the author and it is a mode which would influence Beckett's most important fictional work, for example, Malone's notebook and pencil antics in *Malone Dies*. Furthermore, as Nixon also notes, diary writing is, of its nature, fragmentary, a series of snapshots rather than a chronological panorama. The diary can present a succession of moods, events, activities without giving them a schematic logic. And this sense of the discontinuity in experience is of course central to all of Beckett's fiction.

Equally valuable, is Nixon's exposition of the manner in which a diary can problematise the autobiographical self who writes it. Thus, "[b]y splitting the self into a recording 'I' and a recorded 'I', a distancing perspective is established which allows even more observation of the self [...] the immediacy and the specifically self-reflexive nature of the diary collapses this gap between the teller and told, resulting in a self-contained act of self-writing." These insights enable Nixon, towards the close of his analysis, to link Beckett's self-writing in the Diaries with his use of first-person narrators for his most important post-war prose beginning with the war-time novel *Watt* (itself a kind of journal or diary of the oddities in Mr Knott's domain) through to the famous, problematic narrators of the *Trilogy*. If Beckett in London in 1934-35 had attempted a talking-cure with Wildred Bion, in Germany from 1936-37, he attempted a writing cure with his Diaries. If neither mode of therapy was notably successful, both provided Beckett with insights and materials which would emerge fully after the war. Nixon's book provides invaluable information on the numerous writers, artists, collectors, art historians, book dealers whom Beckett encountered in Germany and as a whole, Nixon's book is provides an excellent overview for English readers of Beckett's engagement with German language, art and literature. However, what

distinguishes the book is Nixon's superb analysis of Beckett's artistic development during a period when nothing of substance was being created by him. In retrospect, it was an incubatory period during which Beckett's creative methodologies were still being formed. But Nixon's exhaustive archival research has given us the best guidance possible as to how these seemingly aimless wanderings through Germany actually yielded artistic insights which would serve Beckett well as a mature writer.

Finally, we cannot ignore that fact that Beckett visited Germany as it was entering into the darkest period of its history. Indeed, Beckett's visit from September 1936 to April 1937 coincided with a general tightening of Nazi regulation in the cultural sphere so that many of the Expressionist paintings Beckett most wanted to see were banished to basements and were not accessible (although Beckett showed great resourcefulness in accessing paintings officially off-limits). In addition, Beckett encountered museum curators, artists and art historians whose livelihoods had been taken away by Nazi edict. Beckett's Diaries show a predictable fatigue and disgust with what he saw of the Nazi regime. However, as Andrew Gibson notes, "To intellectuals hungry for a meditated Beckettian dissection of contemporary Germany, the diaries may seem frustrating [...] Beckett's responses to Nazi Germany were quite often visceral as much as intellectual, and frequently turbulent and intense, if in some ways contained." Beckett could see the sinister and also (for a foreigner) absurd and comic malignity of the system and its leaders. He could sympathise with German intellectuals adversely affected by the regime and indulge in some offhand anti-Nazi satire in the Diaries without taking a systematised political stance against Nazism. This has sometimes surprised Beckett scholars given Beckett's wartime record as a decorated member of the French Resistance. However, it is clear that Beckett saw and absorbed what was going on around him, including his reading of German newspapers and acquisition of banned or soon to be banned books, and Nixon demonstrates Beckett's awareness of the Kulturkampf surrounding him. The long-range influence of this close-up encounter with Nazism on Beckett's political outlook should not be underestimated.

Nixon's book is an important intervention in Beckett studies. We are unlikely to see a more coherent and persuasive analysis of Beckett's pre-war encounter with German culture and Nixon's citations from the Beckett archive are exemplary. It now appears that the influence of German culture on Beckett is far more visible for Anglophone scholars than it was two or three short years ago. Alongside Nixon's book, there is a 2010 edition of the *Journal of Beckett Studies* (Volume 19, Number 2), co-edited by Nixon and Dirk Van Hulle, on *Beckett and Germany*, which contains useful review articles on contemporary German scholarship on Beckett along with a "Dossier" on "Adorno's Notes on Beckett". It seems that Knowlson's revelation of the Unknown German Diaries has now borne scholarly fruit. But no doubt discussions and debate will continue up until and after the publication of the *Diaries* themselves, an event which we expectantly await.

George O'Brien. *The Irish Novel 1960-2010*, Cork: Cork University Press.
xxix + 224pp. ISBN: 978-185918-495-0

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In this study George O'Brien offers fifty-one discrete readings of Irish novels - one for each year from 1960 to 2010. These analyses do not view the novels through any particular lens; instead, O'Brien has sought to present a wide and disparate array of novels, the majority of which are examined in terms of their social relevance, while others receive a more formal analysis. As a result, each of the fifty-one reviews (which are approximately 1,500 words long) stands alone and is entirely independent of its neighbours. Such an organisation inevitably means that students will find this a very useful book - they will zoom in on the discussion of the text they are working on and find there a recapitulation of the plot of the novel shot through with O'Brien's invaluable accumulated critical insight (as an Emeritus Professor of English at Georgetown University) and supplemented by an outstanding thirty-page bibliography that lists an enormous range of secondary texts. However, the utility of the book particularly for undergraduates is somewhat reduced by O'Brien's choice of texts. Eschewing any notion of "a hierarchy of 'greatest' works" (p. xxvi), he not only throws light on texts that have fallen by the wayside of critical opinion (for example, Sam Hanna Bell's 1961 *The Hollow Ball*, Anthony C. West's 1968 *As Towns with Fire* and Ian Cochrane's 1974 *Gone in the Head*), but also focuses on lesser-reputed novels in the *oeuvres* of more famous writers. This is particularly noticeable in the case of perhaps the two most important novelists of the period: we have John Banville's *Kepler* (1981) rather than *The Book of Evidence* or *The Sea*; and instead of John McGahern's *Amongst Women*, O'Brien examines *The Pornographer* (1979), which he describes as "probably McGahern's least popular novel" (p. 70). But while these by-roads offer stimulating alternative perspectives, they also raise questions about the overall depiction of the period. Having decided to examine only one novel per author, O'Brien nonetheless contends that his choices provide "a representative view" (p. xxvi) of the writers' bodies of work. Gathering these texts together, therefore, must also constitute a representative overview of the field of Irish fiction. And for O'Brien this is a plural and heterogeneous landscape; as he asserts, his book underscores "the difficulties presented by the contemporary Irish novel to canon formation and [...] the idea that there is one specific notion of tradition that the novel, or any other literary form, should maintain." (p. xxvi) No doubt this is an accurate reflection, but even so it is open to the suspicion that such a fractured panorama is the inevitable outcome of the anthologist's choices.

In terms of deracinating established traditions, O'Brien tends to frame 1960 as something of a year zero in Irish writing, employing O'Faoláin's 1962 assessment of "the comparative failure of the Irish novel" (p. ix) as a way of dismissing all that came before as a cultural desert created by years of draconian censorship; there is, for instance, not one mention of Elizabeth Bowen in the book. At the same, this radical decontextualisation is silently breached by the thematic threads O'Brien points to in the novels he has assembled. One of the

dominant clichés about Irish novelists is that they have had to struggle to escape from the oppressive shadow of Joyce. Notably, Joyce is only mentioned eight times in the course of this book. While it is salutary to avoid setting up Joyce as the ultimate reference point of Irish letters, it is impossible to read O'Brien's Introduction without feeling his ghostly presence. Surveying the concerns of the novels he analyses, O'Brien offers a series of very general motifs and themes that he sees running through these in a non-formulised fashion. These include: change, choice, disruption, youth, a splitting from home and nation, a critique of history, a search for privacy, and a grappling with sexuality. In short, issues that permeate *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*.

What is interesting is how these themes have been developed and played with in the novels O'Brien selects. Versions of the dissipative, stay-a-bed male student protagonists that feature in works of Joyce, Beckett and Flann O'Brien, who live more in their heads than in the world, can still be found in Michael Farrell's *Thy Tears Might Cease* (1963) and Francis Stuart's *Black List, Section H* (1971). But these are being supplanted by, amongst others, more dynamic female characters - tellingly this survey opens up with Edna O'Brien's 1960 *The Country Girls*. As George O'Brien argues "sexuality is the major marker of difference in the contemporary Irish novel" (p. xx), and his survey draws appropriate attention to the diversity of sexualities and experiences portrayed in novels such as Emma Donoghue's 1995 *Hood*, Glenn Patterson's *The International* (1999) and Keith Ridgway's *The Parts* (2003).

Another theme that can be related back to Joyce – emigration – is foregrounded in the novels that O'Brien has chosen to examine from the mid-1980s onward. But what is most noticeable is how tales of Irish emigrant experience in London, such as those found in J.M. O'Neill's *Open Cut* (1986) and Carlo Gébler's 1987 *Work and Play*, are succeeded by texts that confidently articulate the experiences of other cultures. For instance, Joseph O'Neill's *Netherland* (2008) and Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin* (2009) have been hailed in the USA as two of the most important 9/11 novels, Hugo Hamilton's *The Last Shot* (1991) is, on many levels, a German novel, while Colm Tóibín's 2004 *The Master* is a consummate imaginative immersion into Henry James's existence.

Of course, as with any anthology, one can always raise questions about writers who have not been included. Despite flagging the boom in Irish crime fiction, chick lit and fantasy (p. ix), no representative text from these genres is considered. This is indicative of the fact that O'Brien does not register the role of the Irish writer in the world literary marketplace. In the period under discussion, Irish writers have moved from the periphery to the centre of the Anglophone literary sphere and are as at home in New York and London as they are in Dublin or Belfast. The ways in which this influences their careers is not considered. There is also no space here for the Northern Irish writers Ronan Bennett, Robert McLiam Wilson and David Park. Indeed, O'Brien tends to avoid framing the Troubles as a separate category, and instead sees thematic convergences between novels from either side of the border: in both cases they "dwell on the modern person's choices" (p. xvi). At times in the Introduction this approach sounds like a paean to modernisation, but in his readings of texts such as Dermot Bolger's 1990 *The Journey Home* and Anne Haverty's *One Day as a Tiger* (1997), O'Brien is alert to

the undersides of this process. Tellingly, he concludes by seeing in Paul Murray's *Skippy Dies* (2010) "a report card" on the crippling crisis that has followed Ireland's Celtic Tiger years, and which has left a generation to "stumble through a mismanaged and fragmented present without the remotest idea of what difference their doing so will make to securing a future" (pp. 183-4). Through its account of the ways in which Irish novelists have chronicled and come to terms with the diverse shifts in Irish society over the fifty years it surveys, O'Brien's study suggests that they will continue to be guides to this uncertain future.

Shaun Regan, ed. *Reading 1759: Literary Culture in Mid-Eighteenth Century Britain and France*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2013.
viii, 255pp. ISBN 978-1-61148-478-6.

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1759 was a truly remarkable year in the cultural history of Britain and France, marking as it did the turning point in the Seven Years War. With the defeat of the French in a number of transatlantic battles, British global supremacy was cemented for over 150 years until the empire began gradually to break apart in the aftermath of the two World Wars. A new, indestructible self-image as the modern-day version of Alexander's Macedonians was forged. Intellectually, the achievements of that year are no less notable either, for 1759 saw the publication of Samuel Johnson's important Orientalist novella *Rasselas*, Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and the first volume of Laurence Sterne's block-busting comic-epic *Tristram Shandy*. Meanwhile France, Britain's rival in the empire-building stakes, had been making its own contributions to the European Enlightenment. Before the year was out seven volumes of Diderot's *Ecyclopédie* had been published, and Voltaire's enduringly significant *Candide* had also appeared. Against this background of intellectual inquisition and war on a global scale between the world's two major military forces, *Reading 1759* is an attempt to concentrate scholarly efforts on the cultural output of that significant year for European, and indeed, world history.

The book has a most adventurous approach. The collection of essays, as editor Shaun Regan outlines in his clear-sighted introduction, is the first study of the eighteenth-century literary culture since 1982 that is solely focused on a single year. Yet for all the momentousness, and indeed influence, of the various accomplishments of 1759, is it worth studying the literary output of a single year, what Regan calls an annualized reading of literary culture? Although there have been some surveys of single years, most prominently in the field of history, such an approach has yet to take root in literary studies. The answer to the question, however, as exemplified by these authorative essays, is certainly yes. If one drawback of such a microscopic focus on a single year is that a broader historical context may be lost, the collection more than demonstrates the illuminations of

such an approach by making all the more apparent the complexity and dynamism of any given moment in time. That the collection emphasizes dispute over consensus is welcome and is itself a reflection of how this particular moment in history was a ferocious theatre of controversy.

In placing essays under broad headings that deal with military conflict and expansion, ethical and sexual questions, aesthetics, the Enlightenment quest for knowledge, and the possibilities of an all-conquering new literary form in the shape of the novel, a picture of the vibrancy of mid-eighteenth culture in this most important of years emerges. The collection is divided into five parts, with a sixth providing for a conclusion. Each of the five parts contains two essays, covering a broad range of topics and cultural concerns that would have been immediate to 1759. The first part, "Writing Empire", juxtaposes a reading of *Rasselas* with *Candide*, situating readings of those texts in the context of the wave of imperial glory that followed in the wake of Britain's defeat of France in the Seven Years War. Exploring the 'topicality' of *Rasselas* as a book in response to the war, James Watt places Johnson's own view of himself as a writer of the 'human condition' against the contemporary geo-political tensions that emerge in the novella. Johnson's ambivalence to the war is teased out, as Watt argues that his enthusiasm for the expansion of Christianity was tempered by his understanding that the public sentiment was being manipulated by government. Simon Davies also emphasizes the importance of the war in contextualizing Voltaire. He stresses the global aspects of *Candide* and, like Johnson, Voltaire's hesitancy towards what the new globalized dispensation might signify for humanity. The editorial placing of these two works together pays off handsomely, as the complexity of the intellectual responses not only to the war, but to the effects of colonization, slavery, and ultimately, globalization are reflected in these two remarkable literary works.

Part two, entitled "Sentimental Ethics, Luxurious Sexualities" offers two fascinating essays on concerns about social participation in 1759. Nigel Wood explores the first edition of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, lucidly demonstrating that although this work is often thought to be a staging-post for the development of Smith's moral theories, it is an important work in its right because Smith outlines in it a need for ethical recognition in the pursuit of social advancement. Indeed, as Wood convincingly articulates, the *Theory* shows that Smith was aware of a "sense of the frailty of common feeling" and just how much this frailty needed to be protected. Questions of morality are also explored in Mary Peace's essay on the appeal of the lives of famous eighteenth-century courtesans. It was in the eighteenth century that the modern distinction between the public and private sphere developed, and Peace's work offers a fascinating perspective on the growing mid-century interest – both voyeuristic and commercial – in private sexuality.

So much of contemporary understanding of aesthetics has been shaped by the ideas about autonomy, imagination and genius that would define the best of art at the end of the eighteenth century. Yet, as Terry Eagleton has argued, what literature meant in the 1700s is a far cry from what it would mean by the time the social, economic and political upheavals of mass industrialization and the implications of the French Revolution were being felt. In this context, part Three of *Reading 1759* deals with the crucial issues of authorship with our contemporary

awareness of the Romantic idea of the creative artist aloof from society in mind. As Adam Rounce points out, the very idea of what the role of the author was, the business of literary production and the concept of authorship were themselves the subject of two important works in 1759: Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* and Oliver Goldsmith's *Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*. Again, as in other essays in the collection, Johnson's *Rasselas* is an important touchstone because it contains many of the contradictions surrounding the idea of the artist in the period: Johnson's hero in the novel is an artist figure who is motivated by vocation, while Johnson himself was motivated to write the story to make some money. Just as Rounce's essay offers useful points of comparison between these writers on this interesting topic, Rosalind Powell's contribution also emphasizes how nuanced, multi-dimensional and discursive mid-eighteenth-century aesthetics was, by demonstrating how Christopher Smart's *Jubilate Agno* challenges "the contemporary view of divine sublimity as described in Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry*".

No consideration of 1759 would be complete without a discussion on the *Ecyclopédie*, as this was the year when the project, according to Rebecca Ford, "hit its greatest crisis". The first essay in Part Four of *Reading 1759* examines the progress of Diderot's great enterprise in that year. Although the project had begun life in 1751 with the approval of the French court, by 1759 the enterprise had been denounced as dangerous and was forbidden to be sold. Ford's account of the crisis, which involved political condemnation and eventual suspension of the work, stresses that "had the project ended at this point, there is little doubt that the second half of the eighteenth century would have developed, and thought, very differently". As with the discussions on art and aesthetics in Part Three, what emerges in essays such as Ford's is the vociferousness of the public debate in this year, when the very soul of the future of modern European intellectual, cultural and literary life was being wrestled over. This debate, one might suggest, threw the very idea of truth – the great Enlightenment quest – into question. In the third essay to deal directly with *Rasselas*, for example, James Ward positions Johnson's scepticism alongside that of Hume's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* in order to tease out some of the philosophical controversies over causation that preoccupied the preeminent thinkers of the day.

Johnson's may well be the most discussed text in *Reading 1759*, but there can be no doubt that the most extravagantly famous and astonishing literary contribution to the year was Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. Moyra Haslett, the editor of a recently published edition of Thomas Amory's idiosyncratic *The Life of John Buncle, Esq,* explores the eccentricity and originality of Sterne's wonderful book. It is one of the strengths of this collection that so many of the essays complement each other across a range of headings and themes; in this case, Haslett's contribution is not only a fine piece of scholarship on the originality of the eighteenth-century novel (and Sterne's in particular), but its meditations on authorship echo many of the themes in Rounce's essay.

As a collection of essays on British and French literary culture, *Reading 1759* perhaps has one minor imbalance in that the bulk of the essays here deal with British works. Naturally, it could be supposed, for a text written in the English language, the majority of essays focus inevitably on British writing. Indeed, only two essays out of a total of eleven deal directly with French texts: Simon Davies's

essay on Voltaire and Rebecca Ford's contribution on the *Ecyclopédie*. Nonetheless, what emerges in *Reading 1759* is a remarkable picture of the intellectual vibrancy of Britain and, to a lesser extent, France in this astonishing year. It is essential reading for any scholar of this period and also, importantly, the collection offers a template for further annualized studies.

Julian Murphet and Mark Steven, eds. *Styles of Extinction: Cormac McCarthy's* The Road London: Continuum.

pp. 163. ISBN: 978-1-4411-8505-1.

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Styles of Extinction is the first text entirely devoted to Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and, thanks to an extensive range of perceptive analyses of the novel, this collection of essays is a timely and significant contribution to the field of studies on McCarthy's fiction. *Styles of Extinction* opens with a reflection on the medium of the book and on the tension between its seeming *extinction* in the post-apocalyptic world depicted by *The Road* and the *stylistic* affirmation represented by the language of the text. It is this tension between the novel's nihilism and its more optimistic dimensions which is variously fleshed out throughout the collection.

The first two essays focus on formal aspects of *The Road*. Through a comparison with Beckett's "poetics of gray" (9), Chris Danta argues that McCarthy deploys the colour to reflect the consequences of the apocalypse, in particular the gradual loss of values. As opposed to Beckett, however, a strategy of personification, from the pathetic fallacy to the embodiment of the good in the "good guys", allows McCarthy to isolate an indestructible core of humanity amidst the devastation. Sean Pryor, instead, examines McCarthy's rhythmic prose and suggests that this not only reflects the post-apocalyptic world, but ultimately represents the surrender to the wasteland. Pryor argues, indeed, that in *The Road* the apocalypse is the inevitable result of the rhythm of the cosmos itself.

Several essays in the collection foreground *The Road*'s allegorical dimension. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's conceptualization of melancholia, Grace Hellyer frames this feeling as one of utterly diminished agency. Hellyer contends that allegory, in particular religious imagery, allows the man in *The Road* to alleviate his melancholia and to preserve the illusion of the possibility of meaningful actions in the post-apocalypse. Three essays further explore the allegorical significance of *The Road* by emphasizing its connections with the present historical conjuncture and by reading the text as a political allegory. Mark Steven argues that *The Road* allegorizes what Alain Badiou terms "worldlessness", namely, "the nonexistence of any unified 'world'" (64) in late capitalism, to then turn this condition on its head and offer a glimpse of a utopian new world through the character of the boy. According to Steven, the boy gestures toward a potential

community of *homines sacri* – those excluded from the nation-state and hence defined by "bare life" – a community which is instead essentially negated by worldlessness. Focusing on a scene which takes place in a devastated library, Julian Murphet contends that the destruction of the literary archive allegorizes that of the world in *The Road*. Indeed, what ultimately dies with the books is their promise of the continuation of the world itself. Unlike Steven, though, Murphet suggests that to deploy worldlessness as the historical context of this allegory would entail the risk of ignoring a fundamental aspect of the narrative, the conservative frame of reference which makes *The Road* a "right-wing Apocalypse" (124) and which is most evident in McCarthy's view of mankind as inherently fallen. Paul Sheehan interprets the novel as a political allegory of post-9/11 America. Sheehan underlines the various signifiers of the end of American capitalism in the text – from cannibals to refugees, from a dying orchard to the road itself. Contrary to Steven and similarly to Pryor, Sheehan contends that *The Road* frames its dystopia as already inscribed in the present and, hence, as unavoidable. In particular, Sheehan's argument is that, through the character of the man, McCarthy voices the dangers of fundamentalism, understood not as the Other of the West, but as inherent to American policies after 9/11. Like Danta, Sheehan also foregrounds common aspects shared by *The Road* and Beckett's writings.

Drawing on Jacques Derrida's reflections on 9/11 and on the notion of event, in the first part of his essay Paul Patton theorizes the unrepresented and undefined apocalyptic catastrophe of *The Road* as an example of hermeneutical sublime. This is "produced by those phenomena that threaten to overwhelm . . . our capacity to understand or identify the phenomena in question" (133-134). Similarly to several other scholars featured in the collection, in the second part of the essay Patton focusses on the ethical dimension of *The Road*. He contends that the metaphor of carrying the fire substitutes the pre-apocalyptic belief in a supernatural realm and that it thus manages to preserve a stripped-down morality in the post-apocalypse. Even more than the apocalyptic catastrophe, this moral order alludes to a truly unrepresentable and unimaginable future of humanity.

The afterword by Mary Zournazi discusses John Hillcoat's film adaptation of *The Road* and on how this differs from typical road movies, as well as from post-apocalyptic and science fiction films. Just like the book, in fact, the movie primarily raises the ethical issue of what being human means and Zournazi points out that the answer to the question is embodied in the character of the boy. Zournazi also draws attention to the realism of the film and argues that Hillcoat deploys the familiar imagery of homelessness, together with news footage from 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, in order to shoot "a film of *contemporaneity*" (146).

Indeed, all the essays of *Styles of Extinction*, notwithstanding their various theoretical standpoints, ultimately agree on the relevance of *The Road* to the present historical conjuncture, suggesting the suitability of the post-apocalyptic metaphor to capture the contemporary. The diversity of approaches and of interpretations, especially of the ending, frames and illuminates the richness of issues raised by the text, richness which is enhanced and not diminished by the minimalistic and reticent prose. In this respect, style proves to be a lens to interpret the novel, for register and form are the main strategies deployed by

McCarthy to conjure up an apocalypse which remains unrepresented and yet is, perhaps for this reason, much more powerfully haunting in its cautionary message.

Julia Novak, *Live Poetry. An Integrated Approach to Poetry in Performance.* Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2011.

271 pp. ISBN: 978-90-420-3405-1

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Live Poetry is inspired by the author's professional experience in the UK, where she witnessed a renaissance of poetry readings and performances. Julia Novak wrote her work with double aims: on the one hand, she attempted to integrate heterogeneous disciplines to design a coherent set of tools for the methodology of interpreting live poetry. This innovative toolkit was established with the desire to incorporate live poetry into the mainstream of literary research and criticism.

The first chapter gives an insight into the theoretical component of this cutting-edge methodology. It provides a detailed overview on the orality/literacy debates, and reconsiders the critical studies on live poetry. The conclusion: live poetry is a bi-medial art form which integrates both writing and performing. As for the performative feature, Novak suggests reading live poetry as poor theatre since its essence lies in the direct, live communication with the audience, and exists without make-up. The difference between the written poem and its oral performance is explained on the basis of Engler's categories of score, contradiction, comment, complement, and contrast. The emerging principle is that live poetry alternates from the printed poem in its various modes of representation, flexibility, and meaning.

The study of audiotext and body communication provides the analytical frame for the methodology. When examining the acoustic features of the audible text, the non-verbal sounds, the articulatory and composite parameters should be taken into consideration. Regarding the non-verbal sounds, Anthony Joseph's presentation of his poem *Aranguez* indicates that the body's rhythms can create an atmosphere of disorientation, illustrate feelings like suffering, and demonstrate activities like shaking and rattling. The articulatory parameters suggested for observation are rhythm, pitch, volume, articulation, and timbre. These supra-segmental features qualify both verbal and non-verbal utterances. Tone of voice and accent are further composite aspects of an audiotext which shape the overall effect. Choman Hardi's performance of her poem *Journey through the Dead Villages* proves that vowel and consonant formation, stress patterns and intonation may reflect cultural habits as well. The numerous examples presented highlight that the different levels of acoustic features should be perceived as an interconnected web of individual choices.

A final audiotextual question to be clarified is the position and function of the paratext in performance. Although Novak employs Genette's terms, she points

out that the paratextual elements such as the author's name, the title, the preface, or illustrations are separable only in case of a book. She also extends Genette's one-sided view on the purpose of the paratext. While Genette identifies the commentative role as the core of the paratext, the quoted paratextual lead-ins to the poems demonstrate additional functions that are absent from the print publications. However, the poet's conscious application of the informational, social, dedicative, or promotional functions can have significant effects on the audience.

To understand live poetry performances holistically, spectators must be able to read the body signs of a performer. Body signs are not simply substitutes or supplements of speech; they have in fact various functions which can modify the meaning. They are applied to express emotions towards the addressee or topic of speech; they enrich performer or persona characterisation or govern interpersonal relationships. Gestures, postures, mimics, and artefactual communication contribute to the uniqueness of live poetry, and thus, all these dimensions should be carefully considered in a full-scale analysis.

A researcher of live poetry ultimately faces the challenge of representing acoustic and kinesic processes. Investigating the methods suitable for the transcription of aesthetic speech communication, Novak assesses the pros and cons of integrated verbal notation, musical notation, amplitude graphs, and verbal description. She proposes the application of verbal description for the recoding of non-verbal aspects of poetry performances. The author is committed to this transcription technique since it is appropriate for the representation of both acoustic and bodily features. In addition to this, it is accessible and flexible like natural language, and it can also accompany different transcription systems.

The closing step in establishing a coherent methodology of live poetry is the explanation of the speech situation. Novak offers a communication model which reflects that live poetry is related to different social and spatio-temporal contexts simultaneously. This model also visualises the fact that a poem's fictive speaker is coexistent with the physically present real poet. The participants, that is, the overt participants (e.g. poet-performer, MC, audience) and the covert participants (e.g. curator, producer) determine the aims and format of a live poetry event. As poet-performer and audience play a decisive role in the contextualisation of live poetry, an integrated approach should summarise their basic characteristics such as age, gender, ethnicity, political orientation, and social background. Evaluating reception and response, spectator-performer communication (such as catcalls and clapping) and spectator-spectator communication (such as contagious laughing) should also be monitored.

In live poetry poet and audience work together for a shared aesthetic and social experience. This teamwork occurs at a certain time and in a definite space. The exploration of spatial and temporal aspects shed light on the different nature of the poem in print and the poem performed. Moreover, it repeatedly corroborates the quintessence of the study: that the constituent elements of live performance are mutually dependent, and they should be interpreted in relation with each other.

In a sample analysis of Jackie Hagan's performance of the poem *Coffee or Tea?* Novak demonstrates how her methodology works in practice. A checklist for the analysis and a collection of videos on *www.livepoetry.net* provide further

practical support for a keen researcher of poetry performances. As the author combines theoretical knowledge and practical experience, scholarly writing and informal style, her book is recommended to anyone with an interest in live poetry.

Homage

Farewell words for Professor Martin A. Kayman

Fernando Galván and Hortensia Pârlog[1]

Professor Martin A. Kayman (Cardiff University) stepped down a few weeks ago, with the publication of issue 22.1 (April 2018), as Editor of the *European Journal of English Studies*, *EJES*, the official journal of ESSE. Our Society is not yet 30 years old, and Martin A. Kayman has been active serving it for more than 20 years, i.e. over two thirds of ESSE's life. He has been working hard for more than two decades, initially editing *The European English Messenger* (or *The Messenger,* as all of us call it), and later, our journal *EJES*, which is certainly not a minor task, as anybody with an experience in editing academic journals knows very well.

Although the two of us, Aba and Fernando, served ESSE in different periods and for many years in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decades of the 21st century, neither of us has been so deeply involved in ESSE matters as long as Martin has been, but we have certainly known him ever since ESSE became into existence and have always followed and admired his activity on behalf of our Society. Because, even if he was elected as editor of *The Messenger* at the Board meeting held in Debrecen in August 1997, and took over its editing immediately afterwards, following Neil Forsyth and starting his job with volume VII.1 (January 1998), he had been very active in the Society in previous years as well. In fact, he had published in *The Messenger*, in 1994 (then edited by Helmut Bonheim), an article entitled "'ESSE' or 'TELOS': English Studies in Europe" (spring issue, III.1, pp. 35-54). The same year that he was elected editor of *The Messenger*, he also published the first article in the first issue of the first volume of *EJES* (April 1997), then edited by Catherine Belsey, Herbert Grabes and Jean-Jacques Lecercle – the very illuminating essay "On Difference and Difficulty: Theorizing English in Europe" (pp. 10-32): this was a sort of manifesto, personal of course, but also, to a certain extent, collective, about the situation of English in Europe in the mid-1990s and its future prospects.

Martin was well equipped to do that because he was already devising at the time an ambitious project to study the condition of English Studies in Europe, covering both the 'old' Western European countries and the then 'new' Eastern European perspectives, a few years after the Fall of the Wall. That project was formally launched at the 1997 Debrecen Board meeting and received support from the British Council. As a result, he produced a remarkably well-documented *Survey of English Studies*, presenting the methodology, the degree structure, the

[1] **Hortensia** (aka **Aba**) **Pârlog** was a Board member, representing the Romanian association, in the period 1996-2002, then Secretary of ESSE (January 2002-January 2008), and Editor of *The European English Messenger* (2012-2015); and **Fernando Galván** was a Board member, representing the Spanish association (2001-2005), and President of ESSE (January 2007-January 2013).

components of the degree and their contents, and the working conditions (size of classes, ratio male-female, number of contact hours, number of students per member of staff, forms of student evaluation) and personnel (load, salary, ratio senior-junior, male-female staff) in universities belonging to 29 European countries. It proved to be a very useful tool in the development of the Bologna Process in many of our countries across Europe, as well as in setting and clarifying standards in the discipline and the profession.

So, when Martin took over the editorship of *The Messenger* from Neil Forsyth, he was very well aware what English Studies in Europe meant at the time and what the cultural wars about the concept of *lingua franca* and other ideas about the internationalisation of English implied for Europe and European culture as a whole. Martin is a Briton, but his long years in Portugal as Professor at the University of Coimbra and his Jewish ancestry in Eastern Europe made him probably sensitive to many of these aspects of English Studies. His concluding words in that essay published in the first pages of *EJES* in 1997 are a testament to his conviction about the paradoxical need to keep English as *foreign* and *difficult* –contradicting those who advocated the view of an *easy* and *basic* English as *lingua franca*—, because in doing so English would not occupy the ground of other national languages and cultures of Europe:

> It is then in that sense that I would keep English as a *foreign*, rather than international, culture in Europe, precisely in order to foreground the 'element of resistance', the *difficulty* of inter-cultural translation, on *both* sides of the exchange –as opposed to the fluency of an idealized communication. This is emphatically not a resistance to barricade oneself behind, but to be analysed and studied, to be trans-lated across boundaries and borders, to be negotiated, like meaning itself, until *both* parties come to an understanding in which their relationship is mediated and consequently transformed. To invoke again the word pertinently introduced by Tom Healy into a discussion of this topic at the 1993 ESSE conference, it is in this sense that it is well that the study of English remains a 'difficult' subject. (*EJES*, 1.1 (1997): 32)

Martin A. Kayman's ideas about English and its role in Europe and in the European Higher Education have been his preoccupations for decades now. He has written on some of the key concepts, trying to clarify different issues in the debate with relevant data and first-hand information about the reality and the perspectives of English Studies across Europe. We think he is undoubtedly one of the best-informed scholars about the condition of our discipline and our profession and one of those who have done more for theorizing our subject from multiple angles. Some of his reflections can be read in short pieces published in *The Messenger*, such as "The Faces of English Studies" in spring 1998 (VII.1: 2-3), "The Foreignness of English" in autumn 2003 (XII.2: 52-3), "English Studies in Europe: Past, Present, and Future" in autumn 2004 (XIII.2: 8-10); or "A Survey of English Studies in Europe" in spring 2005 (XIV.1: 15-30).

His extreme sensitivity and understanding of the role of the English language and culture all over Europe and its significance for English Studies on the continent can be gauged, for instance, when he addresses the issue of English as a *lingua franca* and warns about its danger, as its use "may turn out to be, now in the name of universal communication, another way of annulling foreignness and effectively disavowing ownership. [...] The more English claims the status of

global *lingua franca*, the more it will drive out demand for other languages; and the more it claims the status of a tool of communication, the more it will make the paraphernalia of literary studies, linguistic theory and cultural critique seem redundant" ("The Foreignness of English", p. 53).

His editorship of *The Messenger* for six years (1998-2003) was one of the best things that have happened to ESSE in its history. He gave cohesion and superbly expanded the previous work started by Helmut Bonheim and Neil Forsyth, who edited it between 1991-1993 and 1994-1997 respectively, after that fantastic Zero Issue (with a stunning cover featuring Kazuo Ishiguro), edited in June 1990 by Paul-Gabriel Boucé. As one of us wrote when he stepped down as editor of *The Messenger* in 2003, "we must all be extremely thankful to Martin Kayman for his extraordinary commitment to editing *The Messenger*; he has invested in it an enormous amount of time and work, maintaining a very high standard of the publication".[1]

Indeed, those years covering the *fin de siècle* and the arrival of the 21st century saw the transformation of *The Messenger* from the initial stapled A5 booklet to the "distinguished-looking publication" produced by Gráfica de Coimbra press. Martin A. Kayman was for half of that period Professor at the University of Coimbra, before moving in 2000 to Cardiff University, and managed then to negotiate in Coimbra the best conditions ever for the publication of our newsletter, which extended until its last printed issue in the winter of 2015 (vol. XXIV.2).[2] But apart from the materiality itself, *The Messenger* edited by Martin A. Kayman also attracted the interest and participation of some of the most distinguished members of the profession all over Europe, as well as of a number of very interesting and acclaimed writers.

If Martin's editorship of *The Messenger* was decisive in the evolution of this important publication of ESSE, no less so was his involvement with *EJES*. As already stated, Martin A. Kayman was the first author to publish in *EJES* that essay on the theorizing of English in Europe, from which we quoted before. He became one of its editors some years later, in 2005, after working during autumn 2004 with the two other editors, Angela Locatelli and Ansgar Nünning, on the new policy and vision of the journal for its relaunch. Both of us were Board members at the time and took part in the ESSE Executive activities (Aba as Secretary between 2002 and 2008; and Fernando as President between 2007 and 2013), and so were privileged witnesses to the multiple negotiations and difficulties that Martin had to face with many people in order to shape the 'new' *EJES*, which had also changed publishers a year before, from Swets & Zeitlinger to the present Taylor & Francis.[3]

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[1] Hortensia Pârlog, "The Secretary's Column: Oxford!", *The European English Messenger* XII.2 (autumn 2003), p. 3.

[2] Martin A. Kayman has also written in some detail about that period and the importance for ESSE of Gráfica de Coimbra in a piece published in the penultimate printed issue of *The Messenger*: "Printing *The Messenger*: The End of an Era" (XXIV.1, summer 2015, pp. 6-9).

[3] The last issue published by Swets & Zeitlinger was 7.2 (August 2003), as Routledge Taylor & Francis Group took over with issue 7.3 (December 2003).

What Martin did then, with the cooperation, of course, of the other two general editors (initially Angela Locatelli and Ansgar Nünning, and later Greta Olson and Stephanos Stephanides), was to lead a transformation of the official journal of ESSE. He edited *EJES* for the longest period, twelve years (2005-2017), more than anybody else in the history of ESSE, covering the issues from 9.3 (December 2005) to 22.1 (April 2018). What he did during those years was certainly outstanding, as he succeeded in consolidating the prestige of our journal, to the extent that, in 2011, *EJES* was accepted for inclusion in the Thomson Reuters Citation Index. As is well known, that Index actually comprises several sub-indices, and *EJES* was accepted into both the Arts and Humanities Citation Index, and also the Social Sciences Citation Index, which meant that the journal (due to this latter inclusion) started to receive an Impact factor in 2012 (covering initially 2009-2011). Possibly nobody who has not edited an academic journal of the quality of *EJES* can really imagine the amount of energy, of concern, of generosity, and of perseverance that Martin A. Kayman has had to put in making possible the publication of the three annual issues which appeared punctually according to schedule.

In April 2018 Martin stepped down as general editor of *EJES*. Our Society owes indeed a great debt of gratitude to him, for that great job he did as editor of our two serial publications, *The Messenger* and *EJES*. What he did as editor of *The Messenger,* with his talent and hard effort, contributed decisively to consolidating ESSE all over Europe, and especially in Central and Eastern countries. For some of our colleagues, publication in *The Messenger* –and Martin helped dozens and dozens of scholars in this respect— was fundamental in the development of their academic careers. When he came to editing *EJES*, he had the advantage of previous knowledge, an excellent knowledge of the discipline, of the profession, and of the task of editing English Studies in Europe. He did it wonderfully, giving again the opportunity to many scholars (some of them excellent young researchers) to print their essays in a world-class academic journal, adding thus further evidence to those motives that justify our gratefulness and recognition for his dedicated and generous work. Well done, dear Martin! Many thanks for such a great job and for all those more than twenty years of dedication to ESSE and to English Studies in Europe. Many thanks for your professionalism, your commitment, and your critical position. You have completely fulfilled that initial *motto* of *EJES*: "The cause is Europe… the cause is also English… the cause is debate".

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Notes on Contributors

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