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CONTENTS

Foreword	5
Planetary Novels?: Cosmopolitanism and Globality In and Out of a National Literature	PETER CHILDS 9
Disordered Reality, Diseased Cities and Desperate Detectives in Thomas Pynchon's <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> and <i>Inherent Vice</i>	T. RAVICHANDRAN 26
Ideology and Microcosm in Steinbeck's <i>Cannery Row</i>	SORIN ȘTEFĂNESCU 36
The Limits of Empathetic Imagination in Ian McEwan's <i>Saturday</i>	MONICA COJOCARU 45
Saira Shah's <i>The Storyteller's Daughter: A Rhetorical Approach to Memory and Identity Crisis</i>	DANIELA VASILOIU 59
<i>East Eats West: The Multi-Centered Reality</i>	CRISTINA CHEVEREȘAN 73
"The Opposite of Disappearing": Jewishness and Globality in Nicole Krauss's Novels <i>The History of Love</i> and <i>Great House</i>	CORINA SELEJAN 87
Cultural Submission in Ralph Ellison's <i>Invisible Man</i>	LAVINIU COSTINEL LĂPĂDAT 97

The Dynamics of Interculturalism in Children's Literature Translation	CRISTINA CHIFANE	106
Literacy in the Network of Shifting Borders	SORIN UNGUREAN	120
Interdisciplinarity in <i>Medicine in Translation – Journeys with My Patients</i>	IRINA PĂNESCU	134
Antinomic Interpretations of Self as Defined by Moral Rights and Copyrights in British Tradition, Spirit and Feelings, and The United States Constitution	ERIC GILDER and MERVYN HAGGER	146
U.S. Universities Lose Lead in Intellectual Social Responsibility	BARBARA MUELLER	170
Notes on Contributors		183

Foreword

It has become a commonplace that far from rendering borders obsolete, globalization has merely redefined them and then proceeded to reinstate their centrality to identity formation, whether personal or communal. Social spaces become contact zones in which unaccustomed cultures meet and either clash or produce constructive *differends*. Psychosocial ontogenesis becomes not less but more complicated: we are not simply all citizens of the world, but rather we are each citizens of the world with a difference. German sociologist Ulrich Beck usefully develops a theory of the pluralist cosmopolitan perspectives that displace the legacy of that Enlightenment discourse, the monological national imagination. Acknowledgement of the fact that, rather than “cultural polarities,” the local and the global exist as “combined and mutually implicating principles” does not preclude “significant conflicts all over the world,” but rather foregrounds them along the many fault lines newly emerging at the sites of the encounter of unmitigated diversities (Beck 17). Complementarily, in the words of Mary-Louise Pratt who has coined the phrase, contact zones are “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (34). This dynamic understanding of the global-local dialectic is enabling of the various epistemological models with which we operate both in our teaching and in our theorizing, according to Pratt. In this changing social, political, economic, and cultural global landscape, such terms as the national, the international, cosmopolitanism, globalization, and otherness, to name only a few, need to be constantly reinvented, redefined, reinterpreted, and reorganized. The articles in this issue bring together insightful explorations of such literary, linguistic, cultural, and interdisciplinary contact zones.

Investigations of the representation of cultural passages in literary works take up roughly the first half of this volume. Peter Childs opens the series by offering a comprehensive catalogue of terms and definitions associated with globalization, exemplifying them with reference to novels by contemporary British novelists. The centrality of concepts such as intensification of interconnectedness, indeterminacy of postmodernity, mondialization, planetarity, globality to the novels of Zadie Smith, Ian McEwan, David Mitchell, Hari Kunzru, and Maggie Gee (to name only a few), Childs points out, foregrounds the inherent imbrication of the national and the planetary as contradistinct to the rhetoric of universalism of earlier humanist accounts.

T. Ravichandran, Sorin Ștefănescu, Monica Cojocaru and Daniela Vasiloiu offer various perspectives on narrative acts in their articles. T. Ravichandran focuses on two novels by Thomas Pynchon, discussing evolutions in the detective mode and the role of textual and narrative indeterminacy in rendering the entropy of postmodern cultural contact zones. In Ștefănescu's analysis of Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*, the narrative technique of microcosm representation is shown to be revealing of the novel's various ideological allegiances, most prominently of Lao Tse's minimalist philosophy. Cojocaru, in turn, reflects in her article on the power of storytelling in McEwan's novel *Saturday*, pointing to the significance of empathetic involvement and to the moral, emotional, and ethical consequences of the lack thereof, as expressed in McEwan's text. Vasiloiu, too, explores the significance of storytelling as a way of understanding one's self, one's emotional quests, as well as issues of cultural identity, heritage, and belonging, as depicted in Shah's *The Storyteller's Daughter*.

In a similar vein, Cristina Chevereșan's article discusses issues of cultural identity and belonging in Lam's *East Eats West: Writing in Two Hemispheres*. Chevereșan analyzes Lam's multilayered perceptions of cultural identity and his reflections on the multitude of aspects that help contemporary immigrants navigate and negotiate their physical, linguistic, emotional, and

cultural belonging to two different worlds. Corina Selejan also engages with issues of cultural, ethnic, and national identity, as depicted in Nicole Krauss's two latest novels. Selejan insightfully captures the complex nuances of textual hybridity and hybrid identities, as well as the globality of the post-Holocaust Jewish experience. Along similar lines of cultural identity and heritage, of multiculturalism and cultural belonging, Laviniu Lăpădat analyzes issues of cultural submission in Ellison's *Invisible Man*, illustrating the manner in which the novel successfully connects "form and identity, action and communication."

As Cristina Chifane and Sorin Ungurean demonstrate in their articles, contemporary local and global issues pervade linguistic and literacy contact zones as well. Chifane offers an overview of contemporary perspectives on translation practices, pointing out that the market for children's literature translation is growing rapidly, and that, as a result of the widespread concept of multiculturalism, translators (including those of children's books) are in the process of becoming more culturally sensitive, aiming to understand better the significance of cultural diversity in written texts. Ungurean, on the other hand, looks at various definitions and instances of literacy and illiteracy, interrogating the complex connections among communication, literacy, and technology today.

In this issue's final section, Irina Pănescu, Eric Gilder and Mervyn Hagger examine various contact zones from an interdisciplinary perspective. Pănescu is concerned with aspects of living in a multicultural world, examined at the intersections of medicine and literature, in Ofri's *Medicine in Translation - Journeys with My Patients*. Her article analyzes instances of physical and cultural dislocation, of inner and outer contact zones, negotiated by Ofri's patients in local and global narrative spaces. Exploring the connections among legal, cultural, and rhetorical contact zones, Eric Gilder and Mervyn Hagger's article interrogates, from a comparative perspective, the differences between "fair use" (USA) and "fair dealing" (UK) when it comes to copyright laws and issues.

Fittingly, the volume closes with Barbara Mueller's analysis of the mission statements put forth by different universities worldwide (Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, etc.), and her call for U.S. universities to become more "actively engaged in improving the social, political, economic, and cultural lives of their nation and the world" in the twenty-first century. This injunction foreshadows further critical engagement with the complexities and paradoxes of the conflicts and predicaments emerging in the globalised world's contact zones.

The Editors

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Planetary Novels?: Cosmopolitanism and Globality In and Out of a National Literature

PETER CHILDS¹

Abstract

The rhetoric of ‘Globalization’ is freighted with both multiple political agendas and with counter-terms like ‘anti-globalization’, such that concepts like globality, cosmopolitanism, and the planetary often work as useful acknowledgements in literary studies of cultural passages in which national boundaries are thought beyond and sought beyond. Writing in the late 20th century, Ulrich Beck avers that “Globality means that from now on nothing which happens on our planet is only a limited local event; all inventions, victories and catastrophes affect the whole world, and we must reorient and reorganize our lives and actions, our organizations and institutions along a ‘local-global’ axis.” Corporate and social media report the major-stage events, but the reorientation of literature on a local-global axis will involve taking the ordinary-local into new loci. There may be a temptation to say that this returns literary focus to a rhetoric of universalism, diminishing the primacy of difference in lived experience, but global, cosmopolitan or planetary fiction need function not as an aesthetic representation of the universal in the local but as a fiction staged against an awareness of the interconnected world. This paper will seek to outline some of the terms and literary investments at stake in this discussion, while using for illustration examples from contemporary British fiction significant to both a national and a global literature.

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Keywords: globality, world literature, mondialization, cosmopolitanism, glocal, multitude, Empire, contact point, planetary fiction.

Since the 1990s, the most cited works on the concept of globalization frequently focus on the view that the discourse on the subject emerges from a perceived critical mass of connectedness. In past centuries, cross-continental interactions were spurred by technology, travel and trade but their expansion in the future will forge a mesh of mutual indebtedness that may make our present seem almost isolationist. In the last 20 years, much of the world has come to a consciousness of globality even though, as Masao Miyoshi explains, “[t]he only novelty is in the degrees of expansion in the trade and transfer of capital, labour, production, consumption, information and technology, which might be enormous enough to amount to a qualitative change” (Miyoshi 248). For Miyoshi, rather than the connections of the global economy, or even the awareness of hybridity explicit in Paul Gilroy’s exploration of roots/routes, it is the common bond to the planet that gestures beyond the ideology of the nation state.

The words that surface in early definitions of globalization suggest that the key terms hinge on an intensification of interconnectedness. Anthony Giddens defines globalization as: “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens 64). Roland Robertson observes the “compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (Robertson 8). Giles Gunn says that globalization should be seen in the longview and refer to the “historical process, by which the world has for several thousand years, rather than for several hundred, been woven and rewoven into an increasingly interconnected organism” (Gunn 21).

Alongside this tendency, many so-called ‘global’ theorists embrace the indeterminacy of postmodernity; conversely,

postmodernists, when pressed to give a name to the perceived 'new' condition, cite globalization. Thus, Jacques Derrida agrees that the political phenomena to which he refers are conventionally called 'globalization' but stresses that he is cautious about the use of this term:

Because today it's a confused concept and it's the screen for a number of non-concepts and sometimes of political tricks and political strategies. Of course something like globalization is happening – not only today of course, it started a long time ago – but today there is an acceleration of this *mondialization*, but as you know, using this word, this key word, allows a number of political appropriations - in the name of the free market for instance. People try to have us swallow the idea that globalization means the free market, or that the concentration of tele-technological communications beyond the States are what makes globalization possible, and should be supported or simply accepted. So I have, and I'm not the only one, many, many, reservations about the use one makes of this word: but I agree ... this is, if not the ground (because I don't think it is a ground), but this is the space in which these problems take their shape. I agree ... but I wouldn't simply rely upon the word 'globalization' in order to name this phenomenon. (Derrida n.p.)

Derrida prefers the term 'mondialization' and regrets the way in which 'globalization' has become a standard term, even in many non-Anglophone countries. Globalization, Derrida argues, obscures the social and historical emphasis of mondialization, and has become itself a sign of the imbalance of power.

In her lectures entitled *Death of a Discipline*, Gayatri Spivak decides that "Globalization is the imposition of the same system of exchange everywhere" (Spivak 72). She argues:

The globe is on our computers. No one lives there. It allows us to think that we can aim to control it. The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan. It is not really amenable to a neat contrast with the globe.... When I invoke the planet, I think of the effort required to figure the

(im)possibility of this underived intuition. (Spivak 72)

Spivak thus favours the term ‘planetary’ because she says it guides us towards how “[t]o be human,” which means “to be intended towards the other,” and inclines us to imagine “ourselves as planetary subjects rather than global agents, planetary creatures rather than global entities” (Spivak 73). Written the year before 9/11, *Death of a Discipline*’s sense of planetary as the assumption of ‘collective responsibility’ seems laudable, like Marx’s species-consciousness, but no less distant in its desire for a defamiliarised humanism.

The term ‘Globalization’, which arose in social studies a long time before it was common in literary studies, is freighted with both multiple political agendas and with counter-terms like anti-globalization, such that there remains an argument for different namings with differently shaded significations, such as mondialization, planetary or ‘globality’. Each has its nuances and ‘globality’ is a useful acknowledgement in literature of a situation in which national boundaries are thought beyond and sought beyond. Such thinking and seeking has always occurred but appears now to be common rather than exceptional. This situation, however, should not downplay the many institutional allegiances of national literatures, their co-option for state agendas, and their relative places in an international, hierarchical field of cultural power relations underpinned by economic, linguistic and other dominances.

Ulrich Beck infers that “[g]lobality means that from now on nothing which happens on our planet is only a limited local event; all inventions, victories and catastrophes affect the whole world, and we must reorient and reorganize our lives and actions, our organizations and institutions along a ‘local-global’ axis” (Beck 11). Applied to fiction, there may be a temptation to say that this returns literary focus to a rhetoric of universalism, diminishing the primacy of difference in lived realities. Globality in literature thus needs to be seen not as an aesthetic representation of the universal in the local but as a fiction staged against an awareness of the

interconnected world. There is additionally the sense in which literary studies, as well as literary production and consumption, is becoming globalised. The newness of this lies in the spread of a globally *disorganized* capitalism, in the everyday interaction across national frontiers, in dense networks with a high degree of mutual dependence, as well as the self-perception of this transnationality (mass media/ tourism/consumption) and the ‘placelessness’ of community, labour and capital, the pervasiveness of a global ecological concern and action, and so on.

Beck lists eight reasons that make globality irreversible:

- 1 the geographical expansion and ever greater density of international trade, as well as the global networking of finance markets and the growing power of transnational corporations.
- 2 the ongoing revolution of information and communications technology.
- 3 the universal *demands* for human rights – the (lip service paid to the) principle of democracy.
- 4 the stream of images from the global culture industries.
- 5 the emergence of a postnational, polycentric world politics, in which transnational actors (corporations, non-governmental organizations, United Nations) are growing in power and number alongside governments.
- 6 the question of world poverty.
- 7 the issue of global environmental destruction.
- 8 transcultural conflicts in one and the same place. (Beck 13)

Fiction may convey the experience of living under these conditions as well as social alternatives and the opportunity to imagine the world otherwise. With an emphasis on interiority greater than almost any other art form, fiction disseminates intellect and affect within the actions and reactions of globality, in or about which character-subjects may be unaware or seemingly uninvolved.

Marx and Engels famously envisaged a world literature in *The Communist Manifesto*:

In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal interdependence of nations. And, as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creation of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature. (Marx and Engels 84)

World literature is an old idea but a literature that takes the world as its context is much rarer outside of departments of comparative literature, whose death Spivak felt she was living through. The national novel remains prevalent but increasingly takes on the complexion of the regional novel, which presents the influence of a particular locale on character and events (see Nak-Chung 222).

There is a danger also of the literature of the nation supporting hierarchical divisions between for example, migrant and national. As Spivak points out, this is the aggressive attitudinal thrust of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988). Conversely, there can be dangers in eliding the association of the cosmopolitan imagination, if narrowly defined, with particular class positions, cultural privileges and educational opportunities, such that some writers see cosmopolitanism as a mask for first-world nationalism and a synonym for the culture of Westernised consumerism, rather than as an 'unconditional hospitality', in Derrida's phrase, or Timothy Brennan's delineation of a quasi existential apprehension of being 'not-quite at-home' in the world (see Connell and Marsh 222-7).

Hence the attack on a writer like Zadie Smith (e.g. see Schoene) because a book such as *White Teeth* (2000) positions itself far from the forces of globalization and gestures towards cosmopolitanism through slang and style. Thus, in the words of one chapter title, the Chalfens are taken to be 'more English than the English'. This is because of their liberal middle-class values, and also their empiricism, which is traditionally seen as a core

characteristic of Englishness. However, they are also third-generation Poles, originally Chalfenovskys: not more English than the English, but as English as anyone else. Smith rings this theme of hybridity and cross-fertilization through numerous parallels, drawn from horticulture, eugenics, and meteorology. One of the dominant extended metaphors belongs to Joyce Chalfen's 1976 book entitled *The New Flower Power*:

Where once gardeners swore by the reliability of the self-pollinating plant in which pollen is transferred from the stamen to the stigma of the same flower (autogamy), now we are more adventurous, positively singing the praises of cross-pollination where pollen is transferred from one flower to another on the same plant (geitonogamy), or to a flower of another plant of the same species (xenogamy)... Yes, self-pollination is the simpler and more certain of the two fertilization processes, especially for many species that colonize by copiously repeating the same parental strain. But a species cloning such uniform offspring runs the risk of having its entire population wiped out by a single evolutionary event. In the garden, as in the social and political arena, change should be the only constant. Our parents and our parents' petunias have learnt this lesson the hard way. The March of History is unsentimental, tramping over a generation and its annuals with ruthless determination. (Smith 309)

As the title of Joyce Chalfen's book suggests, being English for the Chalfens is rooted in a set of 1960s images, such that they emerge as "an ageing hippy couple both dressed in pseudo-Indian garb" (Smith 131). Joyce expresses the idea that miscegenation is valuable in itself, and her marriage to Marcus Chalfen is an expression of their shared belief in 'good genes' rather than 'pure blood'. Consequently, Zadie Smith has been accused of advocating in the novel little more than the 'happy multicultural land' she satirizes.

Making a contrasting point, Padmaja Chatterjee concludes on the approach used in many books that "cosmopolitan political subjectivity as represented in contemporary fiction is conservative

because it is fundamentally spectatorial” (see Connell and Marsh 222-7). This is exploited in Nirpal Singh’s 2006 debut *Tourism*, a novel that attempts a kind of reverse colonization in its depiction of the consumer lifestyle of a young Asian man living in London.² In Singh’s novel, the capital and the English countryside are, as his title suggests, as susceptible to packaged commodification as Mumbai or Bangkok.

A canonical example in British fiction that seems to justify Chatterjee’s accusation of spectatorial conservatism is Ian McEwan’s *Saturday* (2005), which takes place on the day of the February 2003 protest march in London against the second Gulf War. This was the largest protest march that has ever been staged in the British Isles, yet McEwan’s interest appears to be in the bubble of a family’s private life that runs in parallel but not in sympathy with the protestors’ spirit of global concern watched from behind expensive facades by the protagonist Henry Perowne.

However, there are alternative examples conducive to a planetary understanding in the work of other contemporary writers. Thus, for instance, there is a contrast to McEwan’s use of an anti-war march as backdrop to illustrate the threat to the western bourgeois home in Robert Newman’s *The Fountain at the Centre of the World* (2006). This is another novel that begins in London but its narrative snakes across the world describing the lives of different communities affected by the flows of labour and capital. It concludes in a long final section detailing the excessive repression of the anti-World Trade Organisation protestors in Seattle in 1999, and draws in numerous mythological allusions in its story of the fight for the centrality of water or oil supplies in global negotiations.

Very different again, a work that evokes the cosmopolitan non-hierarchically is Geoff Ryman’s *253* from 1998.³ Ryman

² All my examples will be taken from novels that are located, at least in part, in London.

³ Ryman originally developed the book as a website at <http://www.ryman-novel.com/>.

describes the inner and outer life of passengers on a London tube journey. 252 passengers are described, randomly arranged on all the seats in seven cars. Again intimating the unique quality of the novel form to render the familiar strange and the different same, the book scans the appearance of each person in each compartment, as though the reader is also a passenger seeing the apparition of these faces in the crowd, but it also describes their inner life, making plain the human as well as multinational heterogeneity within shared urban living. Most interestingly, Ryman's novel uses the train compartment as contact zone in which the world travels through London, almost as though to dramatize the contention that London is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world.

A book that does something similar by absence and omission is John Lanchester's *Mr Phillips* (2000). It is an unusual novel -- because so utterly banal and entertaining at the same time -- which has drawn comparisons even with *Ulysses*. This is in no way because of its style or complexity, but because it charts a day in the life of a pointedly unexceptional man who wanders around the capital in a way that seems reminiscent of Bloom in Dublin. Mr Phillips is a newly unemployed fifty-year-old accountant, who feels redundant in almost every sense. The entire book, with its world of Neighbourhood Watch Associations, commuter belts, and Pre-Raphaelite paintings, has a sense of suburban *faux* gentility attaching to it. Mr Phillips himself conforms to an archetype of the reserved, undemonstrative, insular, repressed white Englishman. The original book cover shows an improbably clean white unoccupied bench in a green and pleasant spot.

Mr Phillips is a book that self-consciously marginalises issues of community and ethnicity to unexplored sidelines, implying them almost exclusively through their conspicuous absence. The book glosses Mr Phillips with the sheen of *Ulysses*, but his odyssey is one which contains no informal intimacy, no narrative high points, and nothing but quiet amusement as its protagonist walks through London's emblematic spaces of Britishness. These places, ranging from Battersea Park to the Tate Gallery via the sex-cinemas of Soho, are actually quite unfamiliar

to the novel's protagonist; and when Mr Phillips travels on the bus through what he calls the 'glamorous parts of London', he feels an outsider again. Pointing up Mr Phillips' sense of unbelonging, Lanchester's choice of epigraph is a quotation from the French philosopher Simone Weil's book entitled *The Need for Roots* (*L'Enracinement* (1949)): "A man left alone in the universe would have no rights whatsoever, but he would have obligations."

With a deracinated man at its centre, Lanchester's novel is a highly conscious exercise in nostalgia, filtering received images of behaviour through the mind of a man who feels he has lived his life, if not his national identity, vicariously, and now takes a day to explore the capital, where he feels he is an outsider. Mr Phillips is an individual who is in almost every sense in the middle of life but who Lanchester appears to have made step out of the Britain of 1945, the year Mr Phillips was in fact born. Mr Phillips's embodiment of traditional, formal Anglicised Britishness is expressed in the narrator's refusal to address him by his forename from first page to last. Even Mr Phillips, whose ironic first name is Victor, thinks of himself as 'Mr Phillips'.

Edward Said has tried to argue in *Culture and Imperialism* that the imposition of national identity is implicit in the domestic novel in its boundaries, exclusions, and silences -- the Imperial interstices of society that contrapuntal reading can reveal by turning the narrative inside out, temporarily centralizing its supposed margins. This is what Zadie Smith in *White Teeth* seems to have done with the version of London in *Mr Phillips*. *White Teeth*, by contrast to the satirical consideration of the national stereotype in *Mr Phillips*, presents a series of metaphors for the mondialised heterogeneity of Britain since the war. And Smith's title of course plays with the idea that everyone is the same under the skin, but the novel charts the variety of molars, canines, incisors, root canals, false teeth, dental work, and damage that constitute the history behind different smiles. The commonsensical idea of the uniformity of teeth, which can also be divided into a host of shades from pearly to black, is as much a fiction in Smith's novel as the template of 'Britishness' exposed with tender affection in *Mr*.

Phillips.

The negative of *Mr Phillips* might be Gautam Malkani's *Londonstani* (2006), which tells the story of a section of the Asian population of Hounslow, in West London near Heathrow. This narrative overturns the image of Englishness and the reader's assumptions by revealing at its close that the Hindu *Desi* gang hero of the novel, who speaks an urban argot fusing Hindi, cockney and black American hip hop, is in fact white.⁴ *Londonstani* is ultimately not about Asian acculturation in Britain but the chutnification, in Rushdie's phrase, of English identity.

But these novels still fail to give a sense of glocal interconnectedness in their cosmopolitan pictures of London. In a *Time* review Pico Iyer uses the term "planetary novel" to describe David Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* (1999) (Iyer n.p.). The subtitle of *Ghostwritten* presents it as "a Novel in Nine Parts," its formal arrangement comprising nine discrete first-person narratives that trace an imaginative passage from East to West, encircling the globe's northern hemisphere. Though the narrative does come to pass through the more familiar 'centres' of the global cultural economy such as London and New York, much of the novel concentrates on places that have been perceived as alien and mysterious by the Western cultural imagination. Japan, Hong Kong, China and Mongolia have all found themselves refracted through a prism of Eurocentric discourse that has world history radiating outwards from its 'over-developed' centres. *Ghostwritten*'s trajectory is not a *reversal* of this, as in the familiar postcolonial trope of the former empire 'writing back' to the centre, but rather seems to be an alternative recognition of planetary con-temporality and dynamic synchronicity where people and places are inextricably linked regardless of distance. The novel does not merely show events happening around the world at the same time for purposes of comparison, it animates an entire circuitry of global interaction and interdependence between seemingly unconnected

⁴ 'Desi' means indigenous, local or pure, and comes from the Sankrit word 'deśa' which translates as 'country' or 'land'.

characters and events.

Against readings of globalisation that frame it as a process of integration and assimilation homogenising cultural difference, Mitchell's novel suggests that the site of the local is crisscrossed by innumerable paths of movement with varying speeds and directions. Mitchell encapsulates this most directly in the dramatization of a literally disembodied spirit in his chapter entitled 'Mongolia'. The narrator here is a '*noncorpum*' who transfers through touch from one host's mind to another's. It says:

I drift, often on a whim, searching for something to search for. . . . My incredulous Chinese hosts who saw the first backpackers regarded them as quite alien entities. Which is exactly how humans would regard me. All minds pulse in a unique way, just as every lighthouse in the world has a unique signature. (Mitchell 160)

An unacknowledged intertext for Mitchell is Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days* (1873), which has a 'passage' in which the Englishman Phileas Fogg sojourns aboard the steamer *Mongolia* on his way to India, sailing from Brindisi to Bombay. Fogg's journey is arranged in eight legs and has nine departure and arrival points: London, Suez, Bombay, Calcutta, Hong Kong, Yokohama, San Francisco, New York, and London again. As he circles the world, Fogg remains the archetypal travelling colonial Englishman, maintaining at all times his reserve, dignity, and assurance. Published on the eve of the millennium, *Ghostwritten* has a similar scope and number of key locations, but is energised by the mutability of identity created by mass migration and communications: "contemporary nomadism," in Iain Chambers's phrase (Chambers 50).

Mitchell's 'Mongolia' ends with the *noncorpum* tracing a non-genetic family history and weighing up whether to exchange the freedom of disembodied levity, endlessly mindhopping between "presidents, astronauts, messiahs", for the vicissitudes of mortality

(Mitchell 202).⁵ Its identity cycled through a potentially endless process of transit, transformation and translation seems a potent symbol for the advent of a historically unprecedented mode of planetary subjectivity constituted by constant mediation.⁶

One way of approaching this may be as a literary expression of Hardt and Negri's concept of the global multitude. In their works *Empire* (2000) and *Multitude* (2004) Hardt and Negri suggest that the ultimate extension of the circuits of production and exchange has propagated a new logic of structure and rule, which they term 'Empire'. This regime incorporates the entire world within its open, expanding frontiers, regulating the flows of commodities and labour while seeking to exert its control over all human interactions, even human nature itself. The multitude is the other side to these global networks of power; it is the productive, creative subjectivities of globalisation whose movements, modulations of form, and processes of mixture and hybridisation express the desire for liberation from the hierarchies imposed by transnational capitalism. In a similar way, Mitchell's narrators are connected through common needs and desires which have little regard for the borders and boundaries that parcel up their world. Though separated from each other by enormous geographical and temporal distances, their struggle against various forms of subordination is presented as a universal impulse. Hardt and Negri describe the multitude as "constellations of singularities," and this also seems an approximation of the version of subjectivity dominant in Mitchell's novel, whose overall effect is to insinuate that these stories are merely selected actualisations of myriad possible 'untold tales' within one fictional universe (Hardt and Negri 2000: 60). Characters and events seem at once to be distinct and yet tied to

⁵ The *noncorpum* makes an allusion to a "writer in Buenos Aires" who "suggested a name for what I am" (202) – presumably Jorge Luis Borges whose eclectic fictions may well provide the imaginative stimulus for Mitchell's own creation.

⁶ See Hardt and Negri (2000), especially pp. 353-69; for a more involved discussion of this new global body, also see Hardt and Negri (2004).

each other in ways that reveal a small part of the pattern while implying that nothing less than the full multitude of interwoven stories would be sufficient to explain the world, which exists as much in the interior imagination as in external materiality.

In his study *Modernity at Large* (1996), Arjun Appadurai captures this fluid quality of global relations with the analogy of planetary space as an amalgam of shifting landscapes, or, rather, seascapes, composed of financial, cultural, technological and demographic movements (Appadurai 1996: 27-47). A fine fictional engagement with this comes in Hari Kunzru's novel *Transmission*, where the spread of a computer retrovirus becomes the occasion for a meditation on the complexities of transcultural and transnational people movements. The virus code hides behind a picture of a Bollywood star, Leela, and conveys an Eastern threat of cultural, viral and terrorist transmission that instantly connects the world in a way that only the internet can. Kunzru also satirizes the West's perception of news that I alluded to earlier when discussing Beck. The day of the virus is introduced thus:

Around the world, Thursday the twelfth of June was a quiet day. Bombs went off in Jakarta, Jenin and Tashkent. An old single-hulled tanker sank off Manila, releasing its load of crude oil into the South China Sea. In Malawi a man was diagnosed with a previously unknown retroviral infection. At London's Heathrow Airport, two Ghanaian boys were found frozen to death in the undercarriage of a Boeing 747. (Kunzru 119)

By exploiting the West's reliance on communication technologies, Kunzru intimates that transmission is one aspect to Appadurai's scapes, but other aspects are noise and interference, which interrupt and seemingly distort the signal of pure communication and thus control. The retro virus is an autonomous figure of disobedience and dysfunction, a noise in the network, epitomizing Hardt and Negri's declaration that "[t]he age of globalisation is the age of universal contagion" (Hardt and Negri 2000: 136). Kunzru's novel ends in a dissolution of identity as the virus begins to affect knowledges in the real world, leading to the

erosion of myriad world borders that otherwise seem to hold existing systems, hierarchies and discriminations in place.

A final and more far-reaching envisaging of this dissolution occurs in fiction that steps beyond the present. An example of this is Maggie Gee's *The Ice People* (2008). Told from a future in the middle of the twenty-first century Gee's novel reviews the story of one family from the late twentieth century, with its growing threat of global warming, into the dawning of the new ice age which starts around 2030. The Ice People of the title are the Europeans who seek refuge in Africa, fleeing the descending cold to a southern continent that suddenly represents freedom. The northern hemisphere sinks into violent conflict between the remaining de-civilised humans and an increasingly sentient robot class. Gee's novel implicitly criticizes the current generation for its failure to balance human liberties and technological advances, dramatizing this primarily through an ideological and political split between women and men.

The narrator, Saul, tries to justify his kidnapping of their son to his ex-wife:

She didn't know I had sacrificed everything to try to give to Luke a life in the sun, him and his children, our grandchildren, for surely in Africa there would have been children. She didn't understand I was trying to save him from the nanomachines, the thrumming headsets, the speaking buildings and technobirths, the rare sickly children, the lonely sexes, she didn't understand that I wanted to free him from all the debris of the ice people. (Gee 230)

Gee's narrative ends with the contemplation of an uncertain future, with or without humans, who may not survive through another ice age, a metaphor for Euroamerican indifference to planetarity in its many forms.

The novels I have touched on each instantiates a conceptual envisioning of responses to mondialization: turning into fiction economic migrancy and the G8 protests; the unpredictable outcomes of hybridity and exogamy; documenting the nostalgic response to change and the intense conflicts of internecine ethnic

rivalry; or using the predictions of climate change to allegorize cultural failure. Most empowering for fiction studies, some writers also attempt to re-envision the linear form of the novel in ways that communicate the effects of transmigration, mass circulation, and the multiple scapes of the twenty-first century. These are contours that were only imagined in terms of imperialism as the rise of the novel accompanied what in the longview may seem to have been the short-lived historical phase of the formation and dominance of the nation-state.

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Disordered Reality, Diseased Cities and Desperate
Detectives in Thomas Pynchon's
The Crying of Lot 49 and *Inherent Vice*

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Abstract

Unlike in classical detective stories, reconstruction of the hidden plot or crime and subsequent reordering of reality is not possible in postmodern novels such as Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Inherent Vice* owing to the textual indeterminacy caused by a surfeit of information and excess of meaningful cues, which instead of connecting, over-saturate the possibilities of coherence and order. Like Oedipa Maas's clues connecting weirdly from an underground postal system to a Jacobean tragedy to Maxwell's Demon, Larry Doc Sportello's trail leads to an elusive entity named the Golden Fang, which might be a nefarious sailing ship, or a fraudulent celebrity rehabilitation center, or a secretive consortium of dentists or even a dangerous Indochinese heroin cartel. Fraught with doubt, paranoia, and conspiracy, their trails soon link up to every sub/counter-cultural activity that is inherently Californian and prototypically American. California representing the final frontier of the American Dream, Pynchon's psychedelic detectives reveal the "stuff" that such dreams are made of. Unlike Oedipa who hopelessly awaits another array of cues at the end of *The Crying of Lot 49*, Doc drives through the fog that covers and paralyzes the freeways of Los Angeles in *Inherent Vice*: both entropic movements without any progress typify a universal desolation and

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cultural mayhem.

Keywords: Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*, *Inherent Vice*, California, Postmodernism, American Dream, Popular Culture, Detective Mode, Ordering of Reality, Disorder, Entropy

Two of Thomas Pynchon's Californian trilogy—*The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) and *Inherent Vice* (2009)—interestingly use the detective mode for exploring reality. While, Oedipa Mass of *The Crying of Lot 49* functions as a detective in collecting clues to unravel and contour the property owned by her ex-boy friend, a Californian real-estate Mogul, Pierce Inverarity, Shasta Fay Hepworth in *Inherent Vice* employs her former lover, a professional detective, Larry Doc Sportello, to avert a probable abduction and subsequent brainwashing of her new boy friend, a billionaire real estate tycoon, Mickey Wolfmann. Unlike in classical detective stories, reconstruction of the hidden plot or crime and subsequent ordering of reality is not possible in these novels owing to the textual indeterminacy caused by a surfeit of information and excess of revelatory cues, which instead of connecting, over-saturate the possibilities of coherence and order.

The narrative indeterminacy is evidenced from the very beginning. The perspectives of Oedipa as well as Doc are in doubt because of their unreliable mental states. While Oedipa receives the information that she is a co-executrix when she is intoxicated owing to the drink mixed in her fondue in a sale's party, Doc receives Shasta when he is hallucinating due to pot-smoking. Pynchon makes numerous references to drugs, drunkenness, intoxication, hallucination as part of the psychedelic reality which typified the LSD, hippie, counter/new culture of the Sixties and the Seventies, especially in America.

Nonetheless, the quests begin with much hope and enthusiasm. On his first journey to Channel View Estates owned by Wolfmann, Doc drives "under a sky like watered milk, and white bombardment of a sun smogged into only a smear of probability"

(19), which is in stark contrast to the fog that not only blocks his view but paralyses the movement of the entire city. Similarly, Oedipa leaves Kinneret and travels to a town near Los Angeles called San Narciso. San Narciso is Pynchon's invention and satirical echo of the actual city San Francisco. When Oedipa arrives on the edge of San Narciso and sees the township spread out below her, it almost seems to form some sort of significant pattern. She senses for the first of many times an odd feeling as if she is confronted with some mysterious meaning beyond her comprehension: ". . . a hieroglyphic sense of concealed meaning, of an intent to communicate" (24).

In this context, while critic David Bennet alludes to San Narciso as "a world of artifice in which nothing is gratuitous or natural, everything implicit with some intention or design" (34), Narciso, reverberating of the narcissistic images that abound in the novel, is also symbolic of the country's narcissistic self-preoccupation. Later Oedipa stops at a hotel called Echo Courts, outside which there stands a huge metal statue of a nymph whose face coincidentally resembles Oedipa's. Obviously, San Narciso and Echo Courts allude to Narcissus of the Greek legend, who, not only rejected the nymph Echo but also fell in love with his own image reflected in a pond. Thus these self-referential place names suggest that Oedipa may be getting involved with some sort of reflection of herself and/or something reflexive of a culture with a dream-image of itself. As Hanjo Berressem succinctly puts it: "Oedipa is in love with the narcissistic culture of which she herself is so much a part. . . . Oedipa's language is never her own but consists of cultural fragments she merely reflects" (95).

Nonetheless, Pynchon's use of Narcissus myth owes much to McLuhan's interpretation of it. McLuhan establishes the identity between closed systems and narcissism by relating the myth to its root meaning. He observes:

"Narcissus" is from the Greek word *narcosis* or numbness. The youth Narcissus mistook his own reflection in the water for another person. This extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions

until he became the servomechanism of his own extended or repeated image. The nymph Echo tried to win his love with fragments of his own speech, but in vain. He was numb. He had adapted to his extension of himself and had become a closed system. (51)

Pynchon incorporates this interpretation of the myth as social metaphor into *The Crying of Lot 49*. When Oedipa drives into San Narciso, she feels she is on the other side of the soundproof glass in a radio station, and that the businesses are silent and paralyzed. The road along which San Narciso stretches Oedipa fancies is a “hypodermic needle, inserted somewhere ahead into the vein of a freeway, a vein nourishing the mainliner L. A., keeping it happy, coherent, protected from pain and whatever passes, with a city, for pain” (26). Strangely connected are her perceptions in the Echo Courts, where, “nothing moved” (27). Critic Thomas Schaub’s comments, which link American culture with numbness, are relevant here. He notes:

American culture, in short, is numb and addicted to what protects it from pain (and, ultimately, death). In McLuhan’s terms, our culture has become addicted to the material forms which the American Dream has assumed. Of course, the dream and the culture, like Narcissus and his image, are inseparable; and it is in this convolution that Oedipa finds herself. (54)

Although Oedipa is self-absorbed, she is determined as a detective to change the disorder and uncertainty of the world she discovers around her into useful information and meaning. The frequent allusions to Oedipa’s sorting of masses of information evoke the idea of Maxwell’s sorting Demon. For Oedipa, the Demon is something that establishes a point of order and connection in a system of random occurrences. As she conjectures, the Demon is “the linking feature in a coincidence” (121). Like Maxwell’s Demon, Oedipa soon tries to link occurrences, to establish a point of order in what seems to be a random system of information. She vows to be “the dark machine in the center of the

planetarium, to bring the estate into pulsating stelliferous Meaning” (82).

This pulsating desire for order leads her to the discovery of “Trystero,” a mysterious organization involving a bizarre underground mail system called WASTE. Oedipa audaciously endeavors to unravel the nature and extent of WASTE and Trystero, without realizing till the end that it would take her all over Southern California. Just as the Demon, by sorting the molecules, gains information about them, so Oedipa shuffles through countless people and places, gathering information about the elusive Trystero. Pondering the information gained from watching *The Courier’s Tragedy*, a Jacobean revenge play which contains references to the Trystero, she apprehends that “these followups were more disquieting than other revelations which now seemed to come crowding in exponentially, as if the more she collected the more would come to her” (81). All the clues and symbols that Oedipa collects have only one linking point—Inverarity. Frustrated in the end, she presumes that Inverarity might have owned the whole of America or even the whole of Europe. Realizing the ever-stretching boundaries of Pierce’s assets, she wonders:

Pierce may have owned these factories too. But did it matter now if he’d owned all of San Narciso? San Narciso was a name, an incident among our climatic records of dreams and what dreams became among our accumulated daylight, . . . There was the true continuity, San Narciso had no boundaries. No one knew yet how to draw them. She had dedicated herself, weeks ago, to making sense of what Inverarity had left behind, never suspecting that the legacy was America”. (178)

A disordered America permeates through the cues that Doc in *Inherent Vice* chases and desperately coheres to order. Detectives are traditionally tasked with following trails, deciphering codes, discerning patterns, and solving puzzles. Thus, Doc, as a detective, is asked by an old girlfriend, Shasta Fay Hepworth, to protect her current boyfriend, the real estate mogul Mickey Wolfman. According to Shasta, Mickey’s ex-wife is plotting to put him in an

insane asylum and grab his fortune because he is suddenly bitten by a philanthropic impulse to donate all his fortune to the underprivileged community. Apart from her natural reluctance to approach the police on principle alone, it appears that there is some sort of Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) involvement in this case. Hence, Doc goes to investigate, but ends up getting distracted in a massage parlour and wakes up to find Mickey missing and one of his bodyguard's dead.

Glen Charlock, Wolfmann's bodyguard, gets killed even before Doc meets him. Mysteriously, his ex-girl friend, Shasta, also disappears after contacting him. Soon, Hope Harlingen wants Doc to find her husband, Coy Harlingen, who is supposed to have overdosed on heroin and rumored to have died. Like Oedipa's clues connecting weirdly from an underground postal system to a Jacobean tragedy to Maxwell's Demon, Doc's trail leads to an elusive entity named the *Golden Fang*, which might be a nefarious sailing ship, or a fraudulent celebrity rehabilitation center, or a secretive consortium of dentists or a dangerous Indochinese heroin cartel. *Golden Fang*, as "A big schooner. . . . Brings stuff in and out of the country, but nobody wants to talk about what exactly" (87). Her original name was *Preserved*. The Owners of the schooner are listed as a consortium in Bahamas. Once the schooner was associated with smuggling of some illegal goods, and later it was sent on some spy mission against Fidel Castro. It is also linked up with anti-Communist projects in Guatemala, West Africa, Indonesia. It is also involved in the operation of shipping CIA heroin from the Golden Triangle.

Fraught with doubt, paranoia, and conspiracy, Doc's trails soon link up to every sub/counter-cultural activity that is inherently Californian, prototypically American. There are frequent references to crime groups such as the Aryan Brotherhood, a white prison group formed by a group of bikers in 1964, the Black Guerilla family, a prison gang, and, most terrifyingly, Charles Manson's Family. There are similar references to classical detectives such as Sherlock Holmes (96); Philip Marlowe, Sam Spade, and Travis Mc Gee (97). But as Sam Anderson rightly observes: "Doc is no

Sherlock Holmes: He's reckless, disorganized (he takes case notes on matchbook covers and old grocery lists), gullible, unprofessional (he rarely gets paid), and crippled by 'Doper's Memory'." He is also no Sam Spade, the famous detective of Dashiell Hammett's bestsellers. In this regard, what critic Bob Callahan refers to as Paul Auster's era is quite relevant to the one constructed by Pynchon in *Inherent Vice*: "In Dashiell Hammett's world, decent, tough-minded individuals called private detectives still succeed in restoring the social order, by redressing the crime of sin. In Auster's era—our own era—crime is inherent: it can't be reversed. And the social order will not be restored, for it never existed in the first place" (iii).

America, as represented through the Californian cities in *Inherent Vice*, is seen as a psychedelic and hallucinatory country. Doc notes: "On certain days, driving into Santa Monica was like having hallucinations without going to all the trouble of acquiring and then taking a particular drug, although some days, for sure, *any* drug was preferable to driving into Santa Monica" (50). From hallucination, Doc, like Oedipa, ends up in a state of paranoia when he too realizes that "everything is connected" (108). Gradually, Doc feels "disoriented" in "trying to find his way through a labyrinth that was slowly sinking into the ocean. Here it was all dry desert and scuffed beaverboard, but Doc had the same sense of a rising flood, a need at all costs not to panic" (241). And elsewhere: "The surf, only now and then visible, was hammering at his spirit, knocking things loose, some to fall into the dark and be lost forever, some to edge into the fitful light of his attention whether he wanted to see them or not. Shasta had nailed it. Forget who—*what* was he working anymore?" (314). Towards the end, he even starts wondering "Whether the Golden Fang, which Bigfoot didn't believe in to begin with, even existed?" (350)

As a critic points out, "The 'moral ambiguity' of the novel is not so simply located in specific characters or entities like the Golden Fang; instead, it is the entire milieu of LA that has slipped its moral moorings and seems adrift, waiting for the next big wave to roll in off the Pacific" (Duyfhuizen 4). The same critic elaborates

on the significance of vice within the narrative economy of the novel:

As the novel's title suggests, there is 'vice' inherent in nearly every aspect of LA life, and 'moral ambiguity' (7) surrounds nearly every event and every decision the characters make. Part of the text's project is for the reader to determine which forms of 'vice' truly threaten society at large and which are harmless. The hippie dopers are essentially harmless (only a danger to themselves), but the vast heroin cartel of the multivalent 'Golden Fang' needs to be taken down. Given the suspected police and government corruption protecting the cartel, the task falls in large part to Pynchon's protagonist, Larry 'Doc' Sportello, hippie private investigator, or gumsandal. (Duyfhuizen 1)

Another critic connects the theme of decay, moral and otherwise, to the title of the novel: "The title of *Inherent Vice* comes from a legal definition of spoiled cargo, its tendency to deterioration, which is a version of the theme of entropy that has been in Pynchon's work since those early short stories" (Flusfeder 2). Inherent vice refers to stuff that marine policies do not like to cover, which usually applies to perishable cargo for whose deterioration nobody takes responsibility. Reviewer Fred Vulin identifies the inherent flaw of Pynchon's setting as follows:

That drug culture was a dead end is one version of "inherent vice," a legal term meaning something like original sin, the inherent defect in a product that you can't see and can't get insurance for. But something more serious is the underlying theme of "Inherent Vice." Southern California, America's leading edge and symbol, is not a promise of paradise gone sour. This Eden had a fatal flaw from the beginning. Real estate, a persistent theme in Pynchon's American stories, "Against the Day," "Mason & Dixon," "Vineland" and "The Crying of Lot 49," is the herald of New World doom. The empire has been built on the graves of Native Americans, dispossessed and nearly annihilated from one coast to the other. (1)

Thus, with Doc stumbling upon a New World doom and Oedipa personifying an eclectic American consciousness, Pynchon's use of entropy, connoting the running down of the American Dream, also underscores the irredeemable, 'inherent vice' embedded in the entire culture. Appropriately, Oedipa's San Narciso has already become an 'infected city,' while the one that confounds Doc is finally enveloped in dense fog that has immobilized entire movement in the city. Overall, as determined players of the roles of detectives, Oedipa as well as Doc fail to order reality, as reality itself is metaphysically impaired by diseased cities. California representing the final frontier of the American Dream, Pynchon's psychedelic detectives reveal the "stuff" that such dreams are made of. As Oedipa hopelessly awaits another array of cues in *The Crying of Lot 49*, Doc drives through the fog that covers and paralyzes the freeways of Los Angeles: these are both entropic movements without any progress which typify a universal desolation and cultural mayhem.

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Ideology and Microcosm in Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*

SORIN ȘTEFĂNESCU⁸

Abstract

The paper contains a brief overview of the ideological landmarks underlying John Steinbeck's novel *Cannery Row* as well as the synthetic treatment of one of his most important narrative techniques, microcosm representation. After identifying Lao Tze's *Tao Teh Ching* as one of the informing sources and discussing its minimalist philosophy of success in failure, an obvious Empsonian pastoral streak is singled out followed by the recognition of the novel's arbitrary form with intermingling time levels. An argument about the evolution of the position of narrator ends the ideological component of the paper. In the latter part instances of a microcosmic setting for the manifestation of processes and phenomena are identified and examined, as one of the multiple techniques that ground the narrative. The microcosm is considered in the infinite diversity of *Cannery Row* as a quarter, in its dignity as standing for the whole world, in its quality as miraculous universe and a realm of wonders.

Keywords: ideology, Taoism, pastoral, narrative technique, microcosm, diversity, miraculous universe

In the composition of *Cannery Row* (1945) the author of earlier writings who is struggling to achieve recognition has given way to the relaxation of the acknowledged writer who displays an appetite for novelty and experimentation. Although this is not an argument on the meanings of the novel, I will not be able to justify its

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mythical approaches without a brief overview of its ideological foundation, as it was perceived by criticism. The critic who is instrumental in this clarification is Peter Lisca.

He points out that “The novel’s informing spirit is the *Tao Teh Ching* of Lao Tze, a Chinese philosopher of the sixth century B.C. Like *Cannery Row*, the *Tao Teh Ching* was written in a time of brutal war . . . and, in reaction to those conditions, presented a system of human values devoid of all those qualities that had brought on that war” (116). Lisca also tries to mark out the contours of this philosophical doctrine, which is so visible as an influence on Steinbeck:

Taoism rejects the desire for material goods, fame, power, and even the holding of fixed or strong opinions—all of which lead to violence. Instead, man is to cultivate simple physical enjoyments and the inner life. To be obscure is to be wise; to fail is to succeed; in human relationships force always defeats itself; even laws are a form of violence; the moral life is one of inaction. (118)

We cannot be sure when Steinbeck came into contact with Lao Tze’s philosophy, but a clear manifestation of the exact ideas from the quotation above are reflected in the character of Junius Maltby, as early as *The Pastures of Heaven* (1932).

A second ideological circumscription of *Cannery Row* is established by Stanley Alexander, who rightly sees it as a pastoral novel. He agrees with William Empson’s *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1938) and claims that the novel preaches the “old need for oneness within humanity itself and oneness with the forces of nature” (Davis 136). Alexander prefers to quote from Empson’s discussion of the wise fool theme in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* in order to characterise the pastoral features of our novel:

The simple man becomes a clumsy fool who yet has better “sense” than his betters and can say things more fundamentally true; he is in “contact with nature,” which the complex man needs to be . . . he is in contact with the mysterious forces of our own nature, so that the

clown has the wit of the Unconscious; he can speak the truth because he has nothing to lose. (Davis 140)

Lisca also embraces this vision by noting that the novel “is firmly in the pastoral tradition” because it “brings together again in the unchanging world of art those qualities of life that—hastened by the war—had passed never to return, and for which Steinbeck felt a deep nostalgia” (114).

Prompted by the author’s own admission, Lisca appreciates that the novel is “arbitrary in form,” “as the seawater in which the specimens are held has no shape except that imparted by its container” (114). The critic then goes on to discuss the patterning and structure of *Cannery Row*, whose intricate organisation seems to confirm our suspicion that Steinbeck was essentially a writer of short stories. “About half of the thirty-two chapters pick-up the tenuous narrative thread”; “‘the little inner chapters’ (as Steinbeck once called them) sometimes add to our knowledge of the main characters and sometimes introduce material of no causal relationship. Generally, however, all these inner chapters serve in some way as comment or contrast to the novel’s major theme” (Lisca 115). Also in Lisca’s view, there is a causality between the novel’s ideology and the way it is structured, the integration of the two essential features of narration producing a totalising effect of unity:

The openness and freedom of the novel’s structure is a formal expression of those same qualities in the Cannery Row community itself, upon which no convention or authority imposes conformity or direction. It has instead the natural order of a biological organism, manifesting its own inner dynamics. (Lisca 115)

Considering that the novel fulfills the pattern of an escapist literary piece, Peter Lisca also establishes the “twin themes of *Cannery Row*” as being “the escape from Western material values—the necessity to ‘succeed’ in the world; and the escape from Western activism—the necessity to impose order or direction”

(123). Additionally, he notices with great pertinence that the narrative time of the novel is organised on levels that overlap and explains the free intermingling of various time levels in the following way: “It is a world not of whole cloth, but of bits and pieces, varying in chronology, recollected in nostalgia and lovingly assembled, like the patchwork quilt presented to Doc by the girls of Dora’s whorehouse, or one of the fantastic collages done by Henri, the novel’s eccentric artist” (113). Lisca goes on to signal “a haunting effect of timelessness, achieved in part by the relative lack of plot (movement) and in part by the recurrence of specific descriptions and acts” (114). He then ultimately points out that the novel’s “blurring of chronology and the sharp reoccurring detail, are the very essence of homesickness, out of which Steinbeck said he wrote the book; his close friend Ed Ricketts . . . described it as ‘an essay in loneliness’” (114).

A very interesting observation belongs to John Ditsky in one of his articles on *Cannery Row*. In the development of Steinbeck’s fiction he notices an evolution of the position of narrator, fulfilled by the author in his early works culminating with *The Grapes of Wrath*, and then by Doc in the years of influence from Ed Ricketts, of which *Cannery Row* is a landmark, and by the author again in the later novels, after Rickett’s death. Ditsky’s way of putting it is also interesting:

Cannery Row is not only a remarkably innovative book for its time in terms of form, but for present purposes the volume in which Steinbeck can be seen in retrospect to achieve a career crossing point, the crux of a kind of X. In another sense, Ed Ricketts himself—“Doc”—can be seen as the “X” of Steinbeck’s career—the algebraic sense, that is. Because Doc as an objective, scientific cipher peaks as an influence on Steinbeck in *Row* whereupon the authorial voice one hears tried out in *Grapes* more and more takes over the job of articulator of ideas thereafter. By *Sweet Thursday*, the two sides of the street are jaywalking and Doc’s presence is on the decline even as the author’s is on the increase. The Del Monte Express that killed Ed Ricketts only

confirmed what Steinbeck as author had been working on for some years. (5)

Finally, Steinbeck's confessed technique of letting the stories crawl into the novel by themselves "is also a moral statement" in Lisca's opinion (122). Nothing which is "forced" will come out right, so it is the moral duty of the author to let himself be guided by the stories he tells and allow them the required freedom of expression. A book that writes itself, with the author as medium and facilitator, this is the extent to which novelty was detected by critics in *Cannery Row*.

In evaluating the *mythical approaches* that this novel displays, we will only refer to the narrative technique that permanently accompanies Steinbeck's fiction, be it short or otherwise. This technique is the creation of a *microcosm* as a setting for the manifestation of the described processes and phenomena. As a result, the microcosm is always found at the opening of the narrative, where its boundaries are established, and the scientist in Steinbeck has imposed the same pattern on *Cannery Row* too.

The infinite diversity of Cannery Row, as a district of Monterey, is presented as a secluded universe with very peculiar features, which the narrator can only capture in a poetic mood by simply enumerating its various identities in a famous list:

Cannery Row in Monterey in California is a poem, a stink, a granting noise, a quality of light, a tone, a habit, a nostalgia, a dream. Cannery Row is the gathered and scattered, tin and iron and rust and splintered wood, chipped pavement and weedy lots and junk heaps, sardine canneries of corrugated iron, honky tonks, restaurants and whore houses, and little crowded groceries, and laboratories and flophouses. (Steinbeck 1)

The diversity of the microcosm elevates it to the dignity of standing for the whole world, receiving the right to a claim of universality. On the other hand, the universe of Cannery Row is shown as unique, as a laboratory in which the best human qualities

are exercised against an ideal setting. John Ditsky has noticed that “Susan Shillinglaw, in her fine introduction to the new Penguin edition of *Cannery Row* . . . draws our attention to the more abstract terms and to how those ‘first seven nouns flow from art to life to art’ (xxii)” (5). As a result of this, Ditsky goes on to prove that “Cannery Row as a metaphor runs through all of Steinbeck’s writing” and, because of this, he prefers to call it “a passageway in the heart” (6).

The microcosm as a miraculous universe, typical of this place of marvels which is Cannery Row, is well represented by Lee Chong’s grocery. It is probably not a coincidence that the grocer on the Row, who is, as T. B. Allen was in the Pastures of Heaven, the centre of gravity for the whole community, is Chinese, in the light of Steinbeck’s connection with Taoist philosophy. Anyway, this grocery is another expression of the world’s diversity. “Lee Chong’s grocery, while not a model of neatness, was a miracle of supply” (5), we are informed from the very beginning. Another long list follows then, including such diverse merchandise that “a man could find everything he needed or wanted to live and to be happy” (5). The list ends with an irony that announces the tone of the entire book: “The one commodity Lee Chong did not keep could be had across the lot at Dora’s” (5).

Later on in the book, in chapter 20, when the boys contemplate the decoration of Doc’s lab before the party, Lee’s grocery comes under scrutiny again as the same unusual place, to say the least. Every marketing technique is upturned here, so that Lee is as original a shopkeeper as are the inhabitants of the Row masters of survival. The subversion of marketing rules is reflected in what the text calls Lee’s several “unorthodoxies.” For instance, his merchandise is never out of season. “You could buy Valentines in November at Lee Chong’s, shamrocks, hatchets and paper cherry trees in August.” Then, he never throws away the unsold goods. “One of the mysteries was where he kept his stock since his was not a very large store And there was one other unorthodoxy in Lee’s way of doing business. He never had a sale, never reduced a price and never remaindered” (122). These were practices as

foreign to him as middle class respectability was foreign to the Cannery Row.

In chapter 5, the Western Biological Laboratory is another realm of wonder. It “deals in strange and beautiful wares” (25). A long list of marine animals, as well as terrestrial ones follows which can only indicate three things. First that Steinbeck is acquainted with the field and even loves marine biology. Second, by extension, that these animals are a symbol of life itself, in all its variety and miraculous character, in which man only has a rank and file position. The mention of “little unborn humans” (25) in jars points to the primitivism of humanity’s adaptability within the vast concerto of species. Here, the certainty of the human race as dominating the biological world is subverted. And third, that the long list of virtually unknown and, for most people, meaningless marine invertebrates, points to a lush world of tiny miracles, incorporated into the larger miracle which is Cannery Row.

An interesting detail is Doc’s safe. It is supposed to remain open because, when it is shut by mistake, no one knows the combination. The morphology of the sentences regarding the safe indicates many users, as if the laboratory were a public place, an early warning of how public it will soon become. Remarkable is a whole passage in which the smells of the laboratory are suggested in their great diversity:

From this room come smells—formaline, and dry starfish, and seawater and menthol, carbolic acid and acetic acid, smell of brown wrapping paper and straw and rope, smell of chloroform and ether, smell of ozone from the motors, smell of fine steel and thin lubricant from the microscopes, smell of banana oil and rubber tubing, smell of drying wool socks and boots, sharp pungent smell of rattlesnakes, and musty frightening smell of rats. And through the back door comes the smell of kelp and barnacles when the tide is out and the smell of salt and spray when the tide is in. (26-27)

This is an olfactory combination that is as diverse and lavish in detail as the visual one. It points to the syncretic character of the sensations through which the realm of the Western Biological

Laboratory produces the strong impression of the miraculous. On close inspection we notice the paradoxical narrative power of the enumeration in the part about “brown wrapping paper and straw and rope,” which points to the unexpressed and ambiguous narrative of receiving and unwrapping an order of laboratory materials, or the one about “drying wool socks and boots,” which recompose the story of a possible collecting trip. Some smells are so real that we can detect them in our imagination, like the smell of chemicals or salty sea-water, others are smells that are only imagined by the narrator, like the “smell of fine steel,” which is a contamination of the visual with the olfactory to create an image of outstanding syncretic quality.

The “library or music room, or whatever you want to call it” (27) is a little out of place within a world of primordial, archetypal miracles. The symbols of the great artistic achievements of humanity—paintings, books, and musical records—come, exactly as the human embryos, low on the list of the world’s wonders. The pinned reproductions are displayed “so that you can look at them *if you want to*” (emphasis added, 27). Only after three pages of description of this laboratory, world, universe, attention is drawn to Doc, the owner, but just as an appendix to the utterly versatile microcosm, turning macro.

Likewise, in chapter 6, a two-page description of the tide-pool, the other realm of miracles for Steinbeck, also falls into the category of microcosm. The description ranges from the sublimely aesthetic (“Orange and speckled and fluted nudibranchs slide gracefully over the rocks, their skirts waving like the dresses of Spanish dancers” [30]) to the effectively technical (“It leaps savagely on the crab, there is a puff of black fluid, and the struggling mass is obscured in the sepia cloud while the octopus murders the crab” [31]). It shows the author’s great passion for the domain and exposes, for the first time in literature, the fascination of underwater diversity. An enormous richness of kinetic, colourful, and olfactory detail overwhelms the miracle-stricken reader with the most sumptuous description that Steinbeck has produced.

Apparently, with the narrator's opinion about competence in mechanical work that tends to add to the microcosmic wonders, Steinbeck's preference for biological organisms is displaced. But in chapter 11, when the boys attempt to repair Lee's Model T Ford, mechanical skills are never a matter of experience or learning, they are always a mystical ability or a supernatural quality that one either possesses or does not. "Indeed, there are men near whom a car runs better," the narrator proclaims (63). Great honour is bestowed upon Gay who is an out-of-the-ordinary mechanic and who could work practically anywhere, except that he does not. This honour is expressed in the following terms: "He was such a wonder, Gay was—the little mechanic of God, the St. Francis of all things that turn and twist and explode, the St. Francis of coils and armatures and gears" (65). When it started, "the Ford of Lee Chong chuckled and jiggled and clattered happily as though it knew it was working for a man who loved and understood it" (66). As we can see, in the narrator's biological extension the car seems to be assimilated to a domestic animal, hungry for the love of its master.

Steinbeck was the acknowledged master of microcosmic depiction, naturally capable to render the minute details of the universe he described. But to interpret these descriptions in the key of a complex and contradictory narration remains the task—or the choice—of the reader.

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The Limits of Empathetic Imagination in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*

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Abstract¹⁰

Ian McEwan's novel *Saturday* foregrounds an essentially humanist, empathy-centred morality, illustrating how stories can influence our ethos by involving our imaginative understanding of other people. Although this empathetic involvement is one of the novel's main concerns, it is not presented as a given, but as an act that gives way to guilt, uneasiness, ambiguity, and moral dilemmas. The lack of empathetic imagination leads to misunderstandings and traumatic events, and, conversely, the ability to imagine oneself as another eventually proves a precious tool, charged with redemptive value, empowering a new vision of life. By drawing attention to the power and function of storytelling, McEwan points to the different ways of interpreting the world, and shows that we are confronted with a welter of contradictory yet not mutually exclusive truths, with a plurality of competing narratives, all reflecting coherent worldviews, none of which acquiring a superior position.

Keywords: Ian McEwan, *Saturday*, imagination, empathetic engagement, ethical value, violence, trauma, science

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What novels give us is not new information but a new capacity for compassion with beings different from ourselves; in this sense, novels are more part of the moral sphere than of science. The ultimate horizon of that experience is not truth but love. (Tzvetan Todorov)

Standing wide awake at the window of his bedroom in the small hours of the morning of Saturday, 15 February 2003, Henry Perowne, the accomplished, forty-eight-year-old neurosurgeon and liberal-minded, down-to-earth protagonist of McEwan's a-day-in-the-life novel *Saturday* (2005), reflects on the role of fiction in contemporary culture and concludes that he does not "want to be a spectator of other lives, of imaginary lives,...and [that] it interests him less to have the world reinvented. He wants it explained. The times are strange enough. Why make things up?" (65). This passage frames the 'policy' of the novel, anchoring it in a world that can present us with such appalling spectacles as that of 9/11, a world in which the dream of a peaceful world order has shattered as destruction, terrorism, and war make the headlines of the new millennium, and trauma permeates the contemporary collective consciousness. All of a sudden, as Perowne ponders, "the nineties are looking like an innocent decade" (33), and this state of the world lends legitimacy to Perowne's query about the power of narratives to act as reliable sources of knowledge.

Nevertheless, Perowne's lack of interest in having the world reinvented also betrays an imaginative inability, and his unwillingness to imagine outside the bounds of his own experience has serious consequences in the novel. He is indisputably right that literature cannot furnish absolute answers or totalising explanations of the world. What it can still do, as McEwan suggests by orchestrating the culminating scene of the novel, where his protagonist is taught a lesson on the storyteller's power over the mind of the reader/listener, is shape the chaos of human experience, articulate the moral confusion of our lives, and, in the words of the American critic Kenneth Burke, provide us with "equipment for living" (qtd. in Rueckert 78). Literature is granted an ability to

communicate ideas through the unique mediation between storyteller and reader.

Set in central London, the novel is tied into the British reality, though it makes a claim to cosmopolitanism from the outset by drawing on a passage from Saul Bellow's *Herzog* which acts as its epigraph. In the passage, Bellow's protagonist raises the universal question of "what it means to be a man. In a city. In a century. In transition. In a mass. Transformed by science. Under organised power. Subject to tremendous controls. In a condition caused by mechanisation. After the late failure of radical hopes" (201). It means, as Herzog concludes, living "in a society that was no community and devalued the person," "made the self negligible," and "permitted savagery and barbarism in its own great cities" (201). It also means becoming more liberal, and benefiting from "the beautiful supermachinery" of scientific breakthroughs. But above all, it means assuming responsibility for being "a child of this mass and a brother to all the rest" (201). The burden of these rights and responsibilities subjugates the protagonists of both Bellow's and McEwan's novels. Herzog has frequent visions of being crushed and is anguished "[b]ecause he let the entire world press upon him" (201). Likewise, Henry Perowne is distressed by the persistent infringement of public events upon private life, and sceptical about the possibility "to enjoy an hour's recreation without this invasion, this infection from the public domain" (McEwan 108). Yet, as *Saturday* evinces, cutting oneself off from the world is both unwise and hazardous.

Confronted by the chaos of the external world, Perowne, like Herzog, moves toward unburdening himself. He takes refuge in nostalgia for earlier, simpler times, when people could indulge in an attitude of credulity:

How restful it must once have been, in another age, to be prosperous and believe that an all-knowing supernatural force had allotted people to their stations in life. And not see how the belief served your own prosperity—a form of anosognosia, a useful psychiatric term for a lack of awareness of one's own condition. Now we think we do see, how do things stand? After the ruinous

experiments of the lately deceased century, after so much vile behaviour, so many deaths, a queasy agnosticism has settled around these matters of justice and redistributed wealth. (73-4)

He also seeks shelter in the small, simple, private pleasures of life: in a game of squash with his co-worker; in music—Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Coltrane, and Miles Davis, artists to whom he attributes “a ruthless, nearly inhuman element of self-enclosed perfection” (67); in the works of Rothko, Parker, Hodgkin, and Einstein, betraying his penchant for the abstract; in cooking his favourite recipe of fish stew; in the “biological hyperspace” (52) of love-making with his wife; in his son Theo’s playing his latest song; in performing neurosurgery, which gives him “the pleasure of knowing precisely what he’s doing” (258) and allows him to live in a “pure present,” in “a dream of absorption that has dissolved all sense of time” (266); in Darwin’s *Origin of Species*. He is not totally devoid of aesthetic sense, but his preferences reveal his taste for perfection, harmony, faultless mechanisms (such as the brain), for attaining “a coherent world, everything fitting at last” (177).

While running his errands around London, he seeks his moral compass by making an effort to deal with the complexity of living in a modern city, but fails to reach an empathetic understanding of the people around him, his endeavour being partly hindered by his lack of appreciation of artistic genius. Theo, his more artistic son, is much more perceptive and can intuit the threat in his father’s encounter with Baxter, warning him: “You humiliated him. You should watch that...These street guys can be proud” (154). Daisy, his daughter and an aspiring poet, does not keep secret her belief that her father is “a coarse, unredeemable materialist” who “lacks an imagination” (135). She does her best to refine his literary understanding by recommending classic novels like *Anna Karenina* and *Madame Bovary* to him, but literature, in Perowne’s opinion, possesses only a referential function, and Daisy’s reading lists do nothing more than convince him that “fiction is too humanly flawed, too sprawling and hit-and-miss to inspire uncomplicated

wonder at the magnificence of human ingenuity, of the impossible dazzlingly achieved” (McEwan 67), lacking the purity and abstraction of music, painting, and science.

Against the study of literature, he pits his rationalist outlook on life, and what he believes to be the supremacy of scientific discovery. His explanation is that “[a] man who attempts to ease the miseries of failing minds by repairing brains is bound to respect the material world, its limits, and what it can sustain—consciousness, no less... [H]e knows it for a quotidian fact, the mind is what the brain, mere matter, performs” (66). To Henry Perowne, science is the grand narrative that maintains stability; therefore, he relies on his scientific knowledge to make sense of the world out of its chaos in an attempt to alleviate his anxiety. His excess of rationalism accounts for his puzzlement when he notices the apparently burning cargo plane from his bedroom window, as “[h]e doesn’t immediately understand what he sees, though he thinks he does” (12). His rational imagination further compels him to assume that he is witnessing a meteor or a comet travelling across the London sky. Later on, noticing from the same window two teenage girls quarrelling in the square, he describes one of them in medical terms as having “amphetamine-driven fornication” or “exogenous opioid-induced histamine reaction”(58).

His profession as a neurosurgeon serves as a metaphor for a world suffering from a terminal disease which needs curing. McEwan’s accurate descriptions of Perowne’s consummate skill in neurosurgery evoke the power that science has to explain, relieve, and cure serious maladies. Surgery can even have unexpected powers as it facilitated his encounter with his wife Rosalind when he was a young intern. Yet science cannot secure total success: his mother suffers from vascular dementia which gradually leads to the degeneration of her mental faculties, and Baxter’s Huntington’s disease is a neurological condition that is only granted a short remission through surgery. Science does not hold all the answers, and it inevitably comes into conflict with other ‘truths,’ such as those valued by art and religion.

But Perowne debunks religious faith as being, like literature, merely “a problem, or an idea, of reference. An excess of the subjective, the ordering of the world in line with your need, an inability to contemplate your own unimportance” (16-7). He is a “professional reductionist” who believes that bad luck is stencilled in “invisible folds and kinks of character, written in code, at the level of molecules” (281), and that no social justice can make amends for misery. His conviction explains his ambivalent feelings about politics and ethics when, reflecting on the march against the 2003 invasion of Iraq upon which he comes across on the street during his errands in the city and from which he chooses to turn away, he becomes aware that he “can’t feel, as the marchers themselves probably can, that they have an exclusive hold on moral discernment” (73). His hesitations are those of a cultivated man who is aware of the risks of both action and non-involvement. He is worried about the fate of Iraqis through his friendship with a former patient, an exiled Iraqi professor, and also takes seriously his children’s concerns about the war, but, in spite of his concern about the state of the world, Perowne remains dissociated from the dangers and tribulations of contemporary reality, as if he lacked a genuine sense of imaginative empathy for those less fortunate than himself.

Safe within the walls of his comfortable apartment in Fitzrovia, he feels insulated from the violence that suffuses the world beyond his window. He looks down on the square with god-like detachment, noting with surgical precision the anxieties of the people who “often drift into the square to act out their dramas” (58). From this vantage point, he believes that he can shield himself and his family from such traumatic incidents as those of 9/11, which he perceives as external. He is distrustful of the young academics from Daisy’s college who “like to dramatise modern life as a sequence of calamities” (77), for whom, he argues, “happiness is a harder nut to crack” (78), as they consider “the idea of progress old-fashioned and ridiculous” (77), and prefers to celebrate the evident advance in the lives of the greater number of people:

The street is fine, and the city, grand achievement of the living and all the dead who've ever lived here, is fine too, and robust. It won't easily allow itself to be destroyed. It's too good to let go. Life in it has steadily improved over the centuries for most people, despite the junkies and beggars now. The air is better, and the salmon are leaping in the Thames, and otters are returning. At every level, material, medical, intellectual, sensual, for most people it has improved. (*Sat* 76-77)

Nevertheless, despite his contentment with his privileged upper middle class life and confidence in scientific progress, Henry Perowne experiences a state of anxiety, fuelled, on the one hand, by his disengagement with the fates of other people, and, on the other, by living in a world replete with incidents of violence, his false sense of security being shaken as soon as he is out on the streets. His anxiety parallels a general, collective one manifested through the close focus on London, which, in spite of its apparent robustness and glitter, is portrayed as a vulnerable, fear-ridden city, under the constant menace of terrorist attacks. This latent violence threatens to destabilise the order of Perowne's comfortable life which is exposed as precarious, and to throw him out of his almost complacent contentment.

When he eventually realises that the fiery object he sees in the sky is in fact the wing of an airplane, Perowne is horrified, the scene evoking images of large-scale catastrophes, as he starts to imagine details of the victims' last moments on board, "the screaming in the cabin partly muffled by that deadening acoustic, the fumbling in bags for phones and last words, the airline staff in their terror clinging to remembered fragments of procedure" (15). The plane incident reminds him of Schrödinger's Cat, which, "hidden from view in a covered box, is either still alive, or has just been killed by a randomly activated hammer hitting a vial of poison. Until the observer lifts the cover from the box, both possibilities, alive cat and dead cat, exist side by side, in parallel universes, equally real" (18); nevertheless, he dismisses the experiment as just "another example of a problem of reference" (18), and rather cynically concludes that "whatever the passengers'

destination, whether they are frightened and safe, or dead, they will have arrived by now” (18).

Theo manages to control his anxiety about world affairs by embracing the philosophy of ‘small thinking,’ concentrating on the immediate pleasures of having a new girlfriend, making a new song, or taking a snowboarding trip: “When we go on about the big things, the political situation, global warming, world poverty, it all looks really terrible, with nothing getting better, nothing to look forward to. But when I think small, closer in...then it looks great” (35). Perowne’s mother is protected from worry by her old age and senile dementia. Yet, as Richard Rorty argues in his review of the novel “A Queasy Agnosticism: *Saturday* by Ian McEwan,” McEwan does not urge his readers to think small, but reminds them that they are prone to do so. Henry Perowne, as a responsible and sensible adult, has no other option than to extend his empathetic participation in the world’s moral tangle. Empathy becomes more and more onerous, forcing him to see things from the perspective of his mother, his children, his Iraqi patient, and even fish. As he goes to the fishmonger, he reflects on the potential feelings of the fish he plans to cook for dinner, and reasons that “[t]his is the growing complication of the modern condition, the expanding circle of moral sympathy. Not only distant peoples are our brothers and sisters, but foxes too, and laboratory mice, and now the fish” (128). The solution to human success, he concludes, lies in sympathetic selectiveness (128).

But his selectiveness also extends to human beings and it is precisely this failure to empathise imaginatively with other people that will turn out to be a potential source of conflict for Perowne. Without delay, he is thrown out of his smugness by a minor car accident and its consequences. It is only when he must face violence that his attitude of self-contentment is challenged. By diagnosing Baxter, the aggressive driver of the other car involved in the accident, with Huntington’s disease, a neurodegenerative genetic disorder, “biological determinism in its purest form” (94), Perowne manages to escape unharmed from the encounter, yet humiliates Baxter by revealing this weakness in front of his cronies,

which eventually will cause the ruffian to seek revenge by following Henry home, holding his family hostage with a knife, and threatening to rape his daughter. It is this random event, Henry's clash with Baxter, that allows the author to bring fates into collision and call into question the self's ability to deal compassionately with the other. At first, Perowne attempts to settle this potentially traumatic encounter by adopting the attitude that has come to his rescue so far: detaching himself from the incident and shunning a close moral self-scrutiny: "It's been a tough week, a disturbed night, a hard game. Without looking, he finds the button that secures the car. The door locks are activated in rapid sequence, little resonating clunks, four semiquavers that lull him further. An ancient evolutionary dilemma: the need to sleep, the fear of being eaten. Resolved at last by central locking" (121).

In an essay written in response to 9/11, entitled "Only Love and Then Oblivion. Love Was All They Had to Set against Their Murderers" and published just a few days after the attacks, McEwan expressed the need for loving compassion, imagination, and empathy, which, as he suggested, are filled with ethical value: "Imagining what it is to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality." In the novelist's opinion, the terrorists were guilty of "a failure of the imagination," the evil being the consequence of a lack in the natural ability to empathise with other people: "If the hijackers had been able to imagine themselves into the thoughts and feelings of the passengers, they would have been unable to proceed. It is hard to be cruel once you permit yourself to enter the mind of your victim." The only defence that the victims could put up against their attackers were those "snatched and anguished assertions of love" made on the telephone.

McEwan had previously elaborated on the link between morality and writing in an interview with Liliane Louvel, where he explained that

[w]hat underlies morality is the imagination itself. We are innately moral beings, at the most basic, wired-in neurological

level...Our imagination permits us to understand what it is like to be someone else. I don't think that you could have even the beginnings of a morality unless you had the imaginative capacity to understand what it would be like to be the person you're considering beating round the head with a stick. An act of cruelty is ultimately a failure of the imagination. Fiction is a deeply moral form in that it is the perfect medium for entering the mind of another. I think it is at the level of empathy that moral questions begin in fiction. (70)

It is the task of the novelist to create opportunities for imaginative participation by shaping fictional universes that the reader can relate to. Storytelling provides a vehicle for representing ethical complexity and, as Wayne Booth suggests in *The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction*, the process of reading fiction involves our experience of the "full 'otherness'" (136). The novel is a laboratory where ethical questions are examined through the lenses of aesthetic categories, particularly by providing surrogate life experiences that can serve as material for exercises in empathy. Conversely, empathy becomes an effective instrument for ethical improvement, since, through empathy, we can ethically profit from literature, by making an imaginative leap and living through the (textual) other, while maintaining a distance and reflecting on complex situations. Vicarious reading refines our ethical savvy in real life, empowering us with an awareness of the singularity of restricted universes and particular situations.

The novel asks questions about the various competing ways of viewing the world, and Henry's scientific reasoning is exposed as inadequate at the end of the novel. When Baxter and his accomplices invade Henry's home and threaten his wife and children, it is literature (his daughter's reading of a stanza from Matthew Arnold's poem "Dover Beach") that dispels Baxter's anger, converting him from "lord of terror to amazed admirer" (231-2), and saves the Perownes from the irrational violence that ultimately cannot be fully or satisfactorily explained by Henry's modernist scientific outlook. Anxiety consummates in an epiphany of love, forgiveness and reconciliation as the redemptive power of literature is cast upon Baxter, revealing that he is not totally

deprived of aesthetic sense and imagination, and therefore he is incapable of completing his acts of cruelty. It is only at this moment that Perowne ceases to regard Baxter as a medical case and starts considering his humanity, empathetically imagining the story of his life. Although he never comes to understand Baxter fully, he is filled with guilt for his privileged social position, for being more genetically fortunate, and for deceiving him with his medical authority and knowledge. He finally makes up for his earlier lack of empathetic vision by bridging the gap between self and other, and thus restoring the novel's ethical balance.

In his essay "Redemption from Egotism: James and Proust as Spiritual Exercises," the American philosopher Richard Rorty, turns to the aesthetic and the literary, and emphasises the redemptive value of fiction, arguing that literature cures us of our self-sufficiency, of our egotism, helping us to understand the human condition better and, accordingly, lead more meaningful lives. When we read literature, novels in particular, the philosopher explains, we "are seeking redemption from insensitivity rather than from impiety or irrationality...[and] worry about whether [we] are sufficiently aware of the needs of others" (qtd. in Voparil and Bernstein 395). Rorty gives narrative an important place in the content of morality and considers the ascendancy of ethical fiction over ethical modern philosophy, arguing that the novel as a genre is "a safer medium than theory for expressing one's recognition of the relativity and contingency of authority figures" (107). In his opinion, the novel is the privileged form of moral discourse as it best articulates particular moral practices, which are the ones that actually carry the weight in ethics, rather than universal principles:

For novels are usually about people—things which are, unlike general ideas and final vocabularies, quite evidently time-bound, embedded in a web of contingencies. Since the characters in novels age and die—since they obviously share the finitude of the books in which they occur—we are not tempted to think that by adopting an attitude toward them we have adopted an attitude toward every *possible* sort of person. By contrast, books which are about ideas, even when written by historicists like Hegel and Nietzsche, look

like descriptions of eternal relations between eternal objects... (107-8)

McEwan expresses similar beliefs in a number of interviews, where he explains that the novel is able to express matters at the heart of morality much better than other artistic forms:

At least since the early '80s, it's begun to fill out for me as an idea in fiction, that there's something very entwined about imagination and morals. That one of the great values of fiction was exactly this process of being able to enter other people's minds...And with the novel we have happened to devise this form, this very elastic, mutable form that can allow us moments of real human investigation...It's an open-ended way of looking at our image, in ways that science can't do, religion's not credible, metaphysics is too intellectually repellent on its surface—this is our best machine, as it were. (Smith 112)

The novel is supreme in giving us the possibility of inhabiting other minds. I think it does it better than drama, better than cinema. It's developed these elaborate conventions over three or four hundred years of representing not only mental states, but change, over time. So in that sense, yes, I think that 'other minds' is partly what the novel is about. If you saw the novel as I do in terms of being an exploration of human nature—an investigation of the human condition—then the main tool of that investigation has to be to demonstrate, to somehow give you, on the page, the sensual 'felt' feeling of what it is to be someone else. (Koval)

The novel acts as a repository of ethical awareness by evoking the experience of alterity, the moral investment being the assumption of empathetic engagement through imaginative projection, without running the risk of explicit moralising. This awareness is apparent in *Saturday*, where compassion and empathy eventually prove precious tools, as they allow Henry to embrace a greater awareness of self and society, feeding his moral growth. The experience of trauma has bred a new vision of compassion and love, which will cause Perowne to decide to operate on Baxter, who

suffered head injury during the confrontation, and not to pursue charges against him “because it won’t last much longer, because the door of his consciousness is beginning to close” (288-9). Though he never manages to see the world through Baxter’s eyes, Perowne starts to see him as a human being, not merely as a medical case. Moreover, he realises that he is responsible for having set in a train of events that could have ended in disaster.

The final scene of the novel parallels the opening scene, with Perowne staring out of his window, this time with a changed world view, a new vision of compassion and love. At the end of his Saturday, Perowne no longer feels confident, but “timid, vulnerable...weak and ignorant, scared of the way consequences of an action leap away from your control and breed new events, new consequences, until you’re led to a place you never dreamed of and would never choose—a knife at the throat” (287). Randomness and brutal reality have invaded his personal life, this Saturday in his life threatening to become his private 9/11, a day which “is bound to be marked out from all the rest” (52). He concedes to the frailty of a world where the threat of violence is ever present and asks the same abiding question that Arnold’s “Dover Beach” does: Who are we and how do we live since

we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night?

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Saira Shah's *The Storyteller's Daughter*
A Rhetorical Approach to Memory and Identity Crisis

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"I've given you stories to replace a community. They are your community." "But surely stories can't replace experience." (*The Storyteller's Daughter*)

Abstract

Saira Shah's *The Storyteller's Daughter* (2003) delves into the issue of narrative as a means of self-expression and construction of meaning and a discursive condition for remembering and retelling stories of self and society. In the light of David Herman's view of stories as emanations from "cultural understandings of emotion", this study intends to explore ways of Self-/sense-making in a world in profound crisis. Shah's novel provides models of the world through stories, exploring the relation between personal and collective experience. Accounts of wartime Afghanistan and of different selves in different cultural milieux give the story a strong rhetorical force which challenges the reader cognitively, emotionally and ethically.

Keywords: narrative, rhetoric, identity, narrating self, storytelling, experience, crisis, memory

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“Why do we use story as the form for telling what happens in life and in our life?” is one of the questions addressed by Jerome Bruner in *Making Stories, Law, Literature, Life*, and a particularly apt starting point for the present exploration into how Saira Shah’s *The Storyteller’s Daughter* accomplishes to turn narrative into an unflinching account of the Self from both the inside and the outside. Bruner theorises about the causal elements and implications at the core of storytelling, a process that seems to have given Homo sapiens its evolutionary advantage. The double-meaning etymology of *to narrate*, namely telling (*narrare*) and knowing (*gnarus*), prompts Bruner to warn that there is no easy and definite answer to the vexed issue of human psyche, representations and experience.

Indeed, the innateness of our addiction to story (Bruner 27) may be a contentious issue. Bruner’s seminal premise that narrative is “one of the most ubiquitous and powerful discourse forms in human communication” (77) construes the concept of story as a “language product”, a “locution with a specific purpose”, a “natural vehicle” which “mediates between the canonical world of culture and the more idiosyncratic world of beliefs, desires and hopes” (52). ‘Story’, ‘memory’, ‘identity’, ‘crisis’ represent the recurrent themes which inextricably intertwine with one another throughout Saira Shah’s narrative, and their problematic nature contribute to the dynamism and rhetoric of the story. In addition, “communication”, “negotiation”, “purpose” of the story line and those expressions related to states/ feelings, such as “beliefs”, “desires”, “hopes” that audiences develop while reading substantiate a rhetorical approach to the set text. The rhetorical strategies which raise *The Storyteller’s Daughter* to the status of that ‘particular’ and memorable story that “yields our cognitive and emotional involvement and challenges us ethically” (James Phelan, 1996:14) will be within the scope of the following enterprise.

Storytelling or *storying*, as relevant here, is defined by scholars primarily in narrative and/ or rhetorical studies as an “instrument for adjusting those systems of emotion, terms and concepts to lived experience” (Herman 6), but also that “ineluctable

human side to making sense” which calls upon our cognition, emotions, desires, hopes, values and beliefs” (Phelan 19) in order to communicate knowledge. Herman’s article, *Cognition, Emotion and Consciousness* highlights four dimensions of the mind:

the construal or conceptualization of events from one or more perspectives in the storyworld; characters’ inferences about their own and one other’s minds; the use of discourse pertaining to emotions; and *qualia*, a term used by philosophers of mind to refer to the felt, subjective character of conscious experience (247-248).

By this, Herman acknowledges that he hopes to illuminate the “dialectical interplay” between narrative and consciousness. He carries on his remarks with the perspective according to which stories “caught up in that interplay, both shape and are shaped by what minds perceive, infer, remember and feel” (257). I would argue that it is the interplay of perceptions, inferences, remembrances and feelings that places stories and the diverse mixture of subjective emotional experiences embedded in them in a rhetorical context.

The rhetorical aspect of this venture into the human mind is related to determining what to communicate of one’s experience, the internal (at the level of the mind) and external negotiation (with the world) of what would be socially, culturally and ethically correct (as no experience is gained in a cultural and social vacuum), what the purpose of this endeavour is and whom we want to convince. Not only is narrative profoundly rhetorical in the sense that it aims at convincing what has been generally termed as audience or readers, but also in the sense that the narrating self embarks on this enterprise to somehow convince oneself that one’s story is worth telling. It is the power of that particular story that enables one to “reduce the bewildering complexity of the external world to comprehensibility” (Baskin 4).

However, before proceeding to a closer analysis of the text and looking into what ways the process of *storying* challenges us rhetorically and how narrating one’s life supports a sense of self, it

is necessary to overview some basic tenets of rhetoric as it shall be viewed here in more specific terms.

Originally oriented towards political discourse, rhetoric has nowadays percolated through a great number of domains. Rhetoric, as classically referred to, is the art of using language to communicate effectively and persuasively, involving audience appeals through, in Aristotle's terms, *logos* (reasoned discourse), *pathos* (appealing to the audience's emotions) and *ethos* (the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize a community). However, rhetoric in connection with narrative has gained, apart from its classical meaning of constructing an argument with the definite aim of manipulating the audience, other connotations such as a medium for the facilitation of meaning-making and sense of one's self in relation with oneself and the others, of surviving (especially traumas) or structuring memory to make sense of past experience. In turn, this is not an aimless process, but part of human development which is liable to self-interrogation and permanent questioning and exploration of the surrounding world. In other words, when eliciting responses from the inside, the self experiences new emotions, representations of one's self alone or in relation with the others. Furthermore, the externalization of experiences (be it even at the subconscious level) in the form of a story is bound to the purpose of stirring emotions, reactions and judgments.

Narrative is what Kristin Langellier views as both "a story- (intelligible as a world) and a -telling (assignable to a speaker, or narrator)" (83-90). From a rhetorical stand, James Phelan, for instance, argues that rhetoric is "the synergy occurring between authorial agency, textual phenomena and reader response" (xii); then, he narrows down the discussion by placing storytelling at the core of *narrative of rhetoric* – "someone is telling a particular situation for, presumably, a particular purpose" (4) – and then he brings in the concept of *narrative as rhetoric* making reference to the distinctive and powerful medium of narrative for the narrator to communicate knowledge, feelings, values and beliefs to an audience. Furthermore, the values upon which the authorial

audience's judgments are based, the way those values are deployed in the narrative, and finally, the values and beliefs implicit in the thematizing of the character's experience" (100) ensure the ethical dimension of the story.

In *Notes towards a Rhetoric of Narrative*, John Rodden advances a slightly different ordering of the term from Phelan's, namely a *rhetoric of narrative*. In his view, the *enthymeme* (the rhetorical syllogism that deals in probabilities rather than proofs) is the instrument of rhetoric whose aim is to build upon a 'grammar' and 'logic' of narrative. He contrasts narrative with "rhetoric of narrative", with the former facilitating our judgment making, whereas the latter implies understanding meaning not as "coded" text but as "hi-fi performance" (Rodden 153). Storytelling is viewed as "a speaking subject, communicating his or her fictional experience to a listener" (156), with *telling* as a speaker-reader connector. The aim is not to find the truth as there is no truth about the self, just as there is no core self as psychologists acknowledge, but to give access, mediate between worlds.

Experience and meaning are shaped through our constant construction and reconstruction of "our selves to meet the needs of the situations we encounter, and we do so with guidance of our memories of the past and our hopes and fears for the future" (64) through the 'voice' of narrating self "who not only recounts but also justifies" (Bruner 121). Bruner also proposes a "restoration of meaning-making as the central process of a cultural psychology" (59) because "meaning itself is a culturally mediated phenomenon that depends upon the prior existence of a shared symbol system" (69). Walter R. Fisher's view of human beings as "story animals" comes to reinforce the concept of storytelling as a form of communication and production of meaning. They embark upon a series of ongoing narratives, each with its own moments of conflict, and make use of stories to reflect their own personal principles. Furthermore, narrative, in Phelan's perspective, represents "a multi-layered communication" which "typically engages the audience's intellect, emotions, ethical values and aesthetic sensibilities" (310), and the proposed method of analysis is focusing on the

interrelationship between narrative progression and narrative judgments. The former synthesizes two types of dynamics: the textual, or the governing movement which accompanies narrative from the beginning to the end, and the readerly, with reference to the audience's reactions vis-à-vis the trajectory of that movement.

Considering Kenneth Burke's classic pentad of an Agent, an Action, a Goal, a Setting, and Instrument and Trouble, Phelan devises a classification of principles of a rhetorical narrative. It is the instability-complication-resolution pattern that is to provide us with a working scheme to see how "crisis" or "tension" influences the readerly dynamic in order to make judgments. This is what Bruner associates with "the breaching of cultural legitimacy" in *Narrative Construction of Reality*. Thus, he locates "crisis" in the "breaching of cultural legitimacy", and that happens when an initial "canonical state is breached" and the attempt to redress it fails. As instantiated in *Acts of Meaning* as well, "our culturally adapted way of life depends upon shared meanings and shared concepts as well as upon shared modes of discourse for negotiating differences in meaning and interpretation" (13).

In addition, as Neal Norrick argues in *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*, there are stories which do not "reach the lower-bounding threshold of tellability" while others are "so intimate or (frightening) that they lie on the dark side of tellability" (136). Consequently, within the scope of expectations we may have with regard to the trajectory of the story, negotiation of the personal choices of the appropriate experiences to tell about becomes a prerequisite for the upper boundary of 'tellability'. This concept has been discussed in connection with narrative, but as it represents an instrument of evaluation and is a constituent of the story, it can be equally applied to the rhetorical narrative.

In this light, what gives rhetorical force to Shah's story is the way it evidences the "unusual" (cf. Bruner, *Narrative Construction*) and the inner conflicts of the narrating self which mirror Phelan's reformulation of the Burkean pentad, namely the instability-complication-and resolution pattern. Numerous signals of the text "click" to rearrange themselves into our new system of

intelligibility, (see Peter J. Rabinowitz's discussion of detective stories). Furthermore, the narrator's critical moments stem from her dislocation – or canon breach as mentioned above – from a “culturally adapted way of life”, the West, to the East to which she is connected through her father's stories. Upon arrival in a ravaged country, storytelling, however, seems to become the only instrument able to facilitate sense making and becomes a “mode of discourse for negotiating differences in meaning and interpretation” (Bruner 13).

Put in a nutshell, *The Storyteller's Daughter* is the enthralling first-person narrative of a young woman who grows up in Kent nurtured by her father's extraordinary stories about Afghanistan, a “magical place” with a “fairy-tale landscape” (3) and people defined by “generosity of spirit, courage, boundless self-confidence and, above all, a sense of humour”(18). However, her feeling “drenched in the over-saturated colour of early memory” (25) of the dream-like lost homeland will be the *Trouble* to trigger the *Complications* of the story. Urged by her longing to discover her homeland and her own identity, at the same time as she was never allowed to forget her Afghan background as a child, Saira sets off to Afghanistan as a war correspondent. Later, in April 2001, she returns to Afghanistan to secretly film the documentary *Beneath the Veil* to shed light on the ravages of the civil war and the Taliban totalitarian regime and abominable cruelty towards the Afghan people, especially women.

To advance and exemplify my line of argument, I shall use Phelan's aforementioned pattern to illustrate how these essentials of a rhetorical approach to narrative function at the story level in Shah's novel, how they reveal attitudes, reconcile expectations and experiences and construct identity/ies. As Monika Fludernick emphasizes, it is not the sequence of events that represents the ultimate concern of narrative, but “the fictional worlds in which the characters in the story live, act, think and feel” (5-6). “Actions, intentions and feelings”, she continues, “are all part of the human experience which is reported, and at the same time, evaluated in narratives” (109).

To give sense and continuity the self is in a dialectic interaction with the outside as the storyteller suggestively puts it in the definition of story below:

Stories are like these onions – like dried experience. They aren't the original experience but they are more than nothing at all. You think about a story, you turn it over in your mind, and it becomes something else. [...] It's not fresh onion – fresh experience – but it is something that can help you to recognize experience when you come across it. Experiences follow patterns, which repeat themselves again and again. In our tradition, stories can help you recognize the shape of an experience, to make sense of and to deal with it. So, you see, what you make for mere snippets of myth and legend encapsulate what you need to know to guide you on your way anywhere among Afghans. (*The Storyteller's Daughter* 7)

Enticing reflections on the power of storytelling like this are woven together with images of the ordeals of a country at war throughout the novel, undoubtedly with the aim of intensifying emotions through opposing images. On one hand, we have the present Afghanistan devastated by war and its horrendous implications and effects on people's lives. On the other hand, references to a fairy tale-like Afghanistan with magical rose gardens and glorious past are meant to increase the story tension and the identity crisis within the narrating self: "I have torn up my map of tales and – as if I have upset some delicate organ – my sense of balancing is teetering: I can no longer tell dreams from reality" (225).

Hence storytelling appears as the individual's necessity to create more beautiful realities to the mind's eye, all in the attempt to diffuse tension and survive the war traumas. The example of the poet Sa'adi's pursuit to construct his own "rose garden – his great work, the Gulistan – out of stories that time, or in this case, war, could not destroy", may be associated with the narrator's own attempt to stabilize the chaos caused by the 'loss' of her homeland and inability to place herself within a cultural space that should

provide her with the sense of belonging. Fictionalizing the narrating *self* through storytelling thus becomes instrumental in the communication and interpretation of experiences so that the individual may make sense and preserve that feeling of belonging to a community.

The storyteller's reasoning behind his telling stories to his daughter on the first pages of the novel – "I've given you stories to replace a community. They are your community [...] But surely stories can't replace experience" – seems to allude to the identity crisis that is to follow. The memories of his homeland, real or only "invented to stem the terrible loneliness of being for ever outsiders" (47) as they may be, fail to bear any resemblance to reality. So much did they fire up the daughter's imagination in childhood that conflict is imminent when Saira decides to go and visit that place for herself. In the light of the events to follow, only by embarking upon a continuous process of storytelling for oneself (monologue) or for the others (dialogue), the narrating self is likely to gain a coherent and developed sense of belonging. Consequently, the storyteller and his daughter seem to be poles apart: he appears to be involved in the telling of stories to create a version of reality mostly for himself "to stem the terrible loneliness of being for ever outsiders" (48), whereas the daughter retells the story in the present geopolitical context.

The novel commences with a powerful figure of a father presiding over the family meetings in the early years of Saira's life. He is a writer who knows "the value of stories" (4), as his daughter acknowledges. However, the moment Saira sets out on her journey, the more she advances towards the belligerent zone, the more she starts doubting her own identity, fearing that part of it may be just an imaginary version of reality. Consequently, the figure of the father and his stunning stories fade out at the sight of a *tableau vivant* of a "shattered" and "broken" country:

My father's mythological homeland was a realm where I could live through the eyes of the storyteller. In my desire to experience the fairytale for myself, I had overlooked the

staggeringly obvious: the storyteller was a man. Here, in the real world, the enchantment was at an end. (57-58)

Not only the country she has found is in profound crisis in all aspects, but so is she. Caught up between two disparate worlds – the liberal, sophisticated, sensitive Western and the fearless, passionate Afghan – she realizes that she has spent her adult life “chasing the dream of a national identity”, her “allegiance to a set of values” (14). Consequently, Shah embarks on storytelling herself to share her feelings of personal shame for being afraid for her life at times, of anger, of doubt, of denial (“but I am from Britain. I am from the West” (250), but finally, of hope. In one of her disheartening moments of self-doubt and despair, she remembers the poet’s words, “the myths we choose to tell reflect the message we wish to preserve” (25).

Therefore, Saira’s choice to end her story with another of her father’s stories is not only thought-provoking, but also challenges the audience to reflect upon their own values and experience of another culture (the Afghani) in relation/ contrast with theirs.

Stories are like a tree growing, on the horizon. March towards the tree, and it will keep you in a straight line. But the tree itself is not your goal. When you reach it, you have to let it go, and pick another point further on. (253-254)

The Storyteller’s Daughter succeeds in challenging our ethical values through its own inside-outside account of a culture and complex set of circumstances that shatter our own expectations and experiences detached from those nightmare visions that any war is likely to inflict on a nation, on humanity. There is no entertainment element in this story to prove what Labov terms as “tellability”, but the exceptional nature of the events narrated constantly in the light of mythical, legendary stories, definitely make this tale worth telling. The making of this story is a fusion of memory and imagination in a process of constructing, reconstructing and stabilizing through the arrangement of memories of personal and national identity.

The rhetorical force of this story consists in the cinematic techniques with sometimes out-of-sync scenes that Saira Shah uses to impress even those who are not familiar with the topic or may be biased against it, albeit without specifically mentioning it. The reading experience of this story compels a keen sensory grasp of the text during the sharply contrasting descriptions of both mythical against war-time Afghanistan, triggering sympathy with the narrator's emotional turmoil, and reflections on our individual experience:

Smell: cordite and blood. Sound: a rushing noise – maybe blood in my ears – maybe the swooping of shells. Feet running? It is hard not to project, the mind tries to fill in the gaps. Sight: a shell plunges nose down, embeds itself in the road, quivers there like a dart. Tarmac melts, enfolds it like an envelope. Sparks fly out of its nose, a daytime firework. I stand and watch it, numb. Surely it is fizzing, but on my tape it is mute. A woman runs by, and her mouth is moving. She is shouting, but I can't hear her. When I see there is silence; when I smell, I am deaf; when I hear I am blind. In my memory, the evidence of my senses is stored on different tapes. (194)

This misconnection of senses heightens tension, and it does so through synaesthesia, a pervading rhetorical figure which operates on the semantic level to mirror the devastating consequences of war. The subsequent sensory impressions which are released determine what Phelan refers to as “the shape and effect of the story” (Phelan 4), and provide a cognitive and comprehensible scheme for readers to infer meaning and “come to terms with the surprises and oddities of the human condition” (Bruner 90).

In lieu of conclusions, here are only a few of the questions *The Storyteller's Daughter* is suffused with: “How do you choose between jail in the present or a future without hope?” (19) “Is this the culture I was brought up to admire?” (29) “Who will teach these children what to pray for?” (30) “Does the Afghanistan of our myths really exist? Are we still Afghans? And if I am not an

Afghan, what am I?”(43) “ How could I believe any of my other myths about Afghanistan?” (178) “To this day, I dreaded the question “Where are you from?” Why did it matter to me that I could never answer in just one word? I had always longed to belong to a single place: why couldn’t that place be the West? “(221)

Without doubt, rhetorical questions like these add to the dramatism of the story and function as expressions of the human spirit in its struggle for survival, productions of personal quests for truth, hallmarks of reflexivity upon the self and others, and rhetorical tools. At the end of her quest Saira’s makes the following self-reconciliation remark meant to resolve the conflict:

I never found the mythical Afghanistan I spent so many years chasing, but the journey has taken me to places I could never have imagined when I started out. And, at last, I have learned the true value of my father’s bequest. I carry his stories in my heart; if I listen for them, they are with me wherever I go. (254)

The story achieves discursive coherence indeed through its support of the sense of the narrating self throughout the instability-complication-and resolution scheme, thus meeting the rhetorical basic requirement of a convincing argument. To resume Phelan’s viewpoint, *The Storyteller’s Daughter* successfully involves us cognitively (producing knowledge through the story worlds created), emotionally (through the joys and pains evoked by the narrator’s different selves) and challenges us ethically (by adhering to our personal experiential terms and set of cultural values).

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East Eats West:
The Multi-Centered Reality

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Abstract

“As someone who straddles both sides of the Pacific, my ambition is to describe the marriage of East and West, their growing interdependence and, in the footsteps of V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie and Edward Said, convey a world of human flux and shifting borders and, ultimately, redraw the map of America, one based on a trans-Pacific sensibility”. This is how Vietnamese-American writer and journalist Andrew Lam introduced himself and his intentions in the 2004 PBS documentary *My Journey Home*.

His 2010 volume *East Eats West: Writing in Two Hemispheres* sets itself to fulfill the author’s declared goals. It is a complex, intriguing, informative and touching collection of essays, which retraces Lam’s experience as a constant traveler between worlds and languages. The mechanisms of cultural definition and negotiation are sharply and wittily captured, as the writer illustrates his and his family’s gradual integration into the ‘global tribe’. Where hemispheres overlap, there are uncharted territories to explore. Lam’s personal and professional discoveries reveal the potential of contact zones and offer insightful perspectives upon (im)migration and cultural identity.

Keywords: Asian-Americans, California, cosmopolitanism, diversity, hybridity, (popular) culture, Vietnam

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1. Speaking on Behalf of the (Combi)Nation

Highly personal, the essays in *East Eats West* focus on various aspects of a Vietnamese-American's everyday reinvention of a self shaped by two continents and two distinct mindsets. The author's introductory note announces the main topics to be discussed, which range from the obvious to the subtle, from the visible to the ineffable.

Over the years I have watched the East and West pas de deux as forces of history as well as my own fragmented biography. The differences I learned very early on. In Vietnam you do not look your teachers in the eye unless it is to challenge them. In America if you fail to look your teachers in the eye they may think you shifty, that you have something to hide. Americans are fond of saying, "I love you." Vietnamese don't share words of affection very easily, if at all. No, they show it; it's all in the gestures – working three jobs so your kids can go to private school, saving the best apple for your spouse while eating the bruised one yourself. Americans celebrate birthdays. Vietnamese light incense and have feasts on death anniversaries of important relatives. American children can't wait to leave home at eighteen, Vietnamese children stay around long into adulthood, and often even after they marry. In Vietnam individualism is equated with selfishness. America elevates it to an ideology, it demands it: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. America whispers rebellion of the individual against the communal: Follow your dream. (Lam 2/3)

The volume's overarching themes can, thus, be easily deduced. While acknowledging and meditating upon dissimilarities between his two backgrounds, Lam affirms his determination to invent a new vocabulary of transition and transformation, to capture the type of fertile creativity that may stem from complex cultural encounters. In this context, the reader may remember the 1998 volume dedicated to *Multilingual America: Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and the Languages of American Literature*, in which Jules Chametzky was highly praising the advent of the "multi"-

model shaping the passage between millennia, thus acknowledging the formation of a new American canon:

Now the Cold War is over, our best writers are multiethnic, multicultural, and increasingly multi (or bi) lingual. I think of Leslie Silko, Maxine Hong Kingston, Toni Morrison, Gloria Anzaldua, Martin Espada, Irena Kleipfisz, and a host of others. Our sense of ourselves as a society is more complex (and more interesting?) than ever – our newer writers as pilots navigating the ever-changing river of America are showing us new depths, and through the new and expanding work of scholarship, a richer multilingual ancestry. To which this would-be multilingualist says Shantih, Selah, Salud, Sholem Aleichem! (350)

Twelve years and several key historical moments later, Andrew Lam tries to stretch the boundaries of both language and imagination to accommodate the needs and realities of a new age. He does so by taking his native state as an example. Looking at contemporary California, particularly San Francisco, through enamored, yet critical eyes, he attempts to reinterpret some of the basic terms of today's cultural heteroglossia: hybridity, cosmopolitanism, diversity. He acts as an informed spokesman on behalf of the innumerable children of the modern (combi)nation, and resorts to inter-textual references to clarify his position: "I think of it as something like Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*, in which a set of complicated characters with variant and divergent histories decide to populate an abandoned villa, and in it they argue and fall in love, and in between, they tell each other their stories" (Lam 2).

1. Reuniting Hemispheres

By looking at social and cultural interaction from the point of view of the narratives they engender, Lam advocates a fresh approach, in keeping with the latest critical stances as to modern American nationhood: it is not an abandonment of identity that (simple or multiple) hyphenations require, but rather an enrichment.

Whereas many earlier immigrant accounts tended to present assimilation and acculturation as destructive processes, which ultimately annihilate background and heritage, the essayist would rather focus on what is gained when everything seems to be lost. He thus places himself in the post-multicultural frame that various theoreticians have attempted to apply to the “two thousands” in the U.S.: “America’s post-multiculturalist settlement is a powerful and functioning alternative to the narrowly assimilationist trajectory, though a path periodically tested by immigration and by America’s self-presentation abroad” (King 170).

Lam openly declares himself in favor of such reinterpretations of state and nationhood, and insists on revealing various advantages of mutual adaptation. He focuses on bi- rather than mono-directional influences that are to be acknowledged in the contemporary structure of America, providing basic, transparent examples, there for everyone to see and experience in everyday life.

West has become part of East. Yoga is the new aerobics (my instructor is a redhead) and acupuncture is now accepted by HMOs (my favorite acupuncturist is French). Many women and men of American letters now have South Asian or Chinese last names, which is no longer new. You can find fish sauce and wasabi down the aisle in Safeway. Turn on the TV and the Food Network will teach you how to make pho soup and Thai curry. Asian cultures have become so much part of America that they’re tattooed as Chinese or Sanskrit characters on alabaster skin, and often it’s non-Asian Americans who peddle Asian cultures to everyone, including Asians. (Lam 20)

By relying upon the regular and the familiar, and by opening up to a readership that is not limited to the academia or high intellectual circles, Lam emphasizes the multiple valences of globalization. While America is commonly seen as the overwhelming factor of influence in today’s world, the essays point out that California - and not only – witnesses an increasingly strong Asianization, that the East has permeated the West in ways that would have been inconceivable of some mere decades ago, when

exclusion acts and immigration quotas were still in place. The direction that Lam sees as prominent and sets himself to promote is a unifying one which could, eventually, annihilate physical and mental borders. The gist of the essays, therefore, has to do with harmonious border crossings, with the idea of finding a common language to describe a universe defined by communication rather than contradiction, controversy or competition.

Language is my weapon, invention, martial art. I seek to marry the New World to the Old Continent, fantasies to memories, and, through the act of writing, reimagine the hemispheres as one. (Lam 22)

On the one hand, the writer fights off accusations, making it clear that he realizes the difficulty of his task: “No, I am not so naïve as to believe we have moved into a Utopia [...] Yet I cannot help but be optimistic, for is this not the original promise of America: “E pluribus unum” – out of many, one?” (Lam 120) On the other hand, he supports his claims with examples taken from his native California, which offers a model of what can be perceived as a perfect social and cultural fusion. His attempt is to extrapolate and apply statal features to what he sees as the ultimate definition of the American nation. Speaking about the Bay Area as the embodiment of “both here and there”, he resorts to impactful imagery: on account of the 112 languages spoken locally, San Francisco is associated with the Tower of Babel (Lam 6), while California is introduced to the reader as the essentially global territory *avant-la-lettre*.

California’s diversity is, of course, nothing new. Multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual – even if differences were not historically celebrated, all these delineations were part of the Golden State from the get-go. Native Americans in California were forced to forfeit their lands to early settlers, and another epic collision came when Latin and Anglo-America met East Asia, and the result was modern California. Long before Webster acknowledged the word, globalization had already swept over the Bay Area. (Lam 7)

One can easily notice, therefore, that Lam's portrayal of California draws upon the long-standing tradition of pluralism he both observes and advocates. Placed at the crossroads between civilizations, the "golden state" seems to exert a particular type of fascination on the beneficiaries of its cultural fluidity. It is the essayist's firm belief that its particular historical trajectory has made California an example worth following by today's America as whole.

2. Adjusting to the Multi-Centered Reality

Lam's description of Californian diversity can be supported by a multitude of theoretical, fiction and non-fiction texts. For instance, one of the seminal works in the field of Asian-American studies, Lisa Lowe's *Immigrant Acts*, speaks about the particular type of literal and mental adjustments that co-habitation triggers, addressing the case under discussion:

The first reason to emphasize the dynamic fluctuation and heterogeneity of Asian American culture is to release our understandings of either the "dominant" or the emergent "minority" cultures as discrete, fixed, or homogenous and arrive at a different conception of the terrain of culture. In California, for example, it has become commonplace for residents to consider themselves as part of a "multicultural" state, as embodying a new phenomenon of cultural adjacency and admixture; this "multiculturalism" is at once an index of the changing demographics and differences of community in California and a pluralist attempt at containment of those differences. For if racialized minority immigrant cultures are perpetually changing – in their composition, configuration, and signifying practices, as well as in relations to one another – it follows that the "majority" or "dominant" culture, with which minority cultures are in continual relation, is also unstable and unclosed. (68)

Lowe points out that cultural “hegemony” is a fluid concept and that, in the context of such diversity as the one Lam addresses, “dominant” cultures are increasingly permeable and, therefore, malleable. One of the main issues to have been discussed for quite a while in terms of racial and ethnic distinctions is the contemporary U.S.’ growing resistance to binary oppositions, its breaking away from simplistic, black-and-white descriptions of identity and belonging. In a world of free association and affiliation, loosely shaped by mutable boundaries, in the age of transnationalism and interracialism, ethnic purity stands out as an obsolete, socially constructed myth. It is, as many contemporary theoreticians point out, a universe which has transcended the admirable multicultural frame, one which requires a large-scale upgrading of terminology and policies.

Lam’s essays seem to be the creative expression and continuation of theoretical approaches that affirm the rise of a “post” American reality, grounded in either “post-ethnicity,” as David Hollinger puts it, or “post-multiculturalism,” to quote Desmond King. Hollinger’s *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism* draws attention to the limitations of multiculturalism, arguing that a post-ethnic perspective goes beyond it and “favors voluntary over involuntary affiliations, balances an appreciation for communities of descent with a determination to make room for new communities and promotes solidarities of wide scope that incorporate people with different ethnic and racial backgrounds” (3). Andrew Lam’s text abounds in once unforeseeable categories, bringing to the fore a new kind of norm(ality) in terms of (Californian) social interaction.

Relying upon social research and personal observation, the journalist foregrounds the growing need for official, not just personal, flexibility and adjustment to ever-changing realities:

This is the age of “hybridity,” as coined by G. Pascal Zachary, in which individuals claim multiple memberships. Children born from so much intermixing have coined new words to describe themselves – Blaxicans, Hindjews, Chirish, Afropinos, Caureans, Japoricans,

Cambofricans, Chungarians, Zebras, and Rainbows – coinages that confound the standard categories offered by the U.S. census. What to do indeed when the category of “Other” threatens to be as large as anything like “Black” or “Hispanic” or “Asian”? Lonny Shavelson and Fred Setterberg, authors of the book of photos and essays *Under the Dragon*, remind us that nearly a quarter of UC Berkeley students polled in 2004 identified themselves as “multi-racial” or “multi-ethnic”. But if the center does not hold, or rather, if we now live in a multi-centered reality [...], what possible metaphor can capture it all? (Lam 10)

While enumerating the inventive adjustments language has made to accommodate emerging identity categories and designate new types of individual affiliation, Lam also exposes the inefficiency of a public administration system that is still lagging behind, failing to efficiently identify its members’ diversity beyond color lines. He thus makes his voice heard in an entire chorus that has been addressing census issues in more than a decade now. In 1995, David Hollinger was speaking about the ethno-racial pentagon dividing the U.S. population, for census purposes, into African American, Asian American, Euro-American, Indigenous and Latino segments. Although convenient from the point of view of multiculturalism and its support of cultural diversity, this model fails to further take into account mixed heritage and voluntary affiliation. Hollinger pointed out the paradoxes of the above-mentioned pentagon: “Fewer and fewer Americans believe in the biological reality of races, but they are remarkably willing to live with an officially sanctioned system of demographic classification that replicates precisely the crude, colloquial categories, black, yellow, white, red and brown” (8).

The change in the structure and mentality of the United States was to be reflected in the Census 2000, which allowed respondents to identify themselves as ‘multiracial’. Thus, in 2003, A. Robert Lee could applaud a significant moment and call for an even stronger enforcement of reconfigurations, pointing out that:

Even 'mixed race' hardly covers matters. Is not, in, of, and for itself, almost another kind of 'ethnic' meta-identity in play? Little wonder that the 2000 census, for the first time, gave Americans the opportunity to designate themselves, and their children, as being of more than any one ethnic-racial stock. (4)

The model Andrew Lam proposes must take into consideration a 2010 multilingual America that reflects plurality and complex determining factors in what private and public identities are concerned. While such simplistic dialectic as the center vs. margins, majority vs. minority one seems obsolete, what Lam pleads for is cultural collaboration, mutual respect, personal agency and the open-minded and hearted-ness he is convinced he has already glimpsed in his Californian experience. Although the presented image might seem natural to some, there are voices that warn against misleading appearances and disclose aspects of the post-multicultural nation which cannot be overlooked. Thus, Desmond King resorts to cold, yet telling, numbers in order to point out that rhetoric does not necessarily breed change, nor does it transform statal exception into nation-wide trend.

Close to a million white Americans have left metropolitan Los Angeles since the early 1990s for other states in the nation. California both receives waves of new immigrants and watches native-born Americans move elsewhere; other large immigrant-receiving states such as New York, Florida, Illinois, and Texas, have some comparable trends of losing white native-born Americans to other less-diverse states [...] Throughout the twentieth century, Americans have perceived and classified others through the lenses of race, ethnicity, and national background. It may be that the projected growth of the populations of Latino and Asian Americans will mean the dissolution of concepts such as race and ethnicity in public discourse and will make such distinctions irrelevant. But this will require a shift in the very concepts employed in the Census and in government policy. (172/173)

Such an approach defies idealization: while supporters of the professed dissolution of ethnic and racial boundaries can offer

indisputable evidence of progress throughout the past half-century, close observation of public acts and mentalities reveals the importance of a stronger correlation between this particular type of critical discourse and official policies.

3. Reconciling Divergent Codes

Without pushing theoretical boundaries, Andrew Lam's eclectic case studies do illustrate the concerted movement towards a significant shift in identity theory and practice alike. He employs – as arguments and incentives – a wide range of issues, from exile to cuisine, from technology to the visual arts, war and politics. One of the overarching assumptions goes as far back as Columbus' chance discovery of an unexpected territory. "America's birth, in essence, was the vision of the Far East, and Native Americans were mistaken for Indians. Ever since then, that hunger for the Far East, and all of its mysteries and treasures, has endured" (Lam 156). Starting from and rounding up with this statement, the essayist makes it a point to identify the ways in which the East is shaping the West and not, necessarily or permanently, vice-versa. By constant references to California's complexity, Lam advocates a reconciliation of apparently divergent cultural codes and expectations.

Take the sign that used to hang on the Sun Hop Fat #1 Supermarket on East 12th Street, a few blocks south of Lake Merritt, in Oakland. It said, "American-Mexican-Chinese-Vietnamese-Thailand-Cambodia-Laos-Filipino-Oriental Food". Some saw it as evidence of a diversity gone bad, a multicultural mess – that is, too much mixing makes things unpalatable. I, on the other hand, see all those hyphens as complex bridges and crossroads that seek to marry otherwise far-flung ideas, tastes, and styles, after all, creativity is fertile when nourished in the loam of cultural diversity and cultivated with openness and a disposition for experimentation. (Lam 86)

While perfectly aware of the existing and perpetually evolving critical discourses that shape current perceptions of diversity, Lam never ceases to experiment, personalize and look for his own ways of articulating beliefs. Retracing an entire history of European conquest and Western domination, he uses his contemporary experience to dismantle Asian inferiority complexes and prove them wrong. He investigates his community and his parents' roots and grounding in past events in order to understand emotions and reactions which may seem incomprehensible to the '1.5 generation.' Thus, he negotiates with historical, political, social factors that may, in various cases, counterbalance natural, personal affinities, and searches for an original narrative formula to answer questions already asked by theoreticians such as Homi Bhabha as early as the beginning of the 1990s:

The discourse of the minority reveals the insurmountable ambivalence that structures the equivocal movement of historical time. How does one encounter the past as an anteriority that continually introduces an otherness or alterity within the present? How does one then narrate the present as a form of contemporaneity that is always belated? In what historical time do such configurations of cultural difference assume forms of cultural and political authority? (308)

Lam's essays oscillate between references to Vietnamese history and tradition, and observations of elements of contemporary American (popular) culture. Although academic and political discourse rarely take such instances of everyday life into account, the latter come across as essential to the new generations growing up in today's world. Apart from an entire range of culinary treats that have conquered the post-imperial world, Lam foregrounds, for example, the rise of the *manga* and *anime*, which rank among the worldwide phenomena of recent years:

While many articles have been written about the ebb and flow of Eastern and Western cultural influences in the age of globalization, and in particular the enchantment of the West by Japanese pop

culture, what is barely touched upon is how the modern-day American childhood is increasingly informed by a set of narratives that diverge radically from those told to children a generation or two ago. (Lam 108)

Preoccupied with communication and perception, Lam looks at contact zones and conflict areas between East and West. Moreover, he insists upon the ways in which bygone experiences influence current reactions, while different positions in history can generate different understandings of both communal circumstances and particular, individual events. While it has become fashionable for enemies of globalization to deem the boom of social networks dangerous and invasive, Lam chooses to talk about the importance of such media to the Vietnamese diaspora, otherwise shattered and disconnected from its origins:

While some native-born Americans may blame technology – the ATM, the automated gas pump, the Home Shopping Network, the Internet – for breaking down community and family ties, many Asian immigrants will tell you it has had the reverse effect on their lives. With the advent of communication technology, Vietnamese living today can generate and disseminate their own media, their own history, information that's close to their hearts. (Lam 62/63)

Thus, communal practice appears to constitute a universe in itself, perfectly coherent with its own past circumstances and present priorities. While the over-technologization of everyday living may seem aggressive and alienating to people who do not depend on it for staying in touch with their families and roots, in the case of transplanted communities it often gains completely different valences.

4. Agency and Affiliation

Two physically and mentally separated entities, East and West, seem thus increasingly closer together with the aid of virtual space, which is often far more permissive than reality. Lam does

not shy away from presenting differences that still seem irreconcilable in order to emphasize the long way that many hyphenated (Asian) Americans have come. “When a woman at a party told me casually she was bicoastal, she did not mean the tired New York-San Francisco trajectory. She summers in San Francisco but winters in Shanghai” (Lam 7). Appreciating the freshness of both the term and the approach, Lam looks at both sides of this innovative experience, analyzing living in the contact zones. The Asians’ communal spirit opposes American individualism, and the “I” and “We” are many a time challenging to reconcile for those coming from either side.

Many of the issues that Lam brings to the readers’ attention are deeply rooted in the different worldviews that the two hemispheres are based on. Different aims, different roads, different reactions are part of the legacy that Asian-Americans in general, and Vietnamese-Americans in particular, must learn to reconcile. Exposing pluses and minuses of today’s cultural projects and accomplishments, expressing both hope and disappointment, Lam places an essential emphasis upon *choice* and agency. His view of Asian-Americanness as a heuristic category draws upon the internal heterogeneities that make it difficult for both critical and fictional or journalistic discourse to articulate a coherent and cohesive web of truthful, steady group denominations and definitions of identity.

“If there’s a theme to America 2.0, it is hybridization, remix and diverse heritages” (87) says Lam. His essays translate the multi-centered reality of the United States for and on behalf of identifiable communities. While not aiming to elaborate a critical treatise on competing influences in contemporary American culture, the essayist manages to grasp the reader’s attention by means of sharp commentary and clever observation. Living at the crossroads of a global society, Lam mixes lyricism and irony, humor and melancholy into his own savory, composite, “salad bowl” of contemporary America.

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“The Opposite of Disappearing”: Jewishness and
Globality in Nicole Krauss’s Novels
The History of Love and *Great House*

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Abstract

The paper addresses issues of cultural, ethnic and national identity as they emerge from Nicole Krauss’s two latest novels. They deal, among other things, with a hybrid and unstable Jewish identity in its evolution from the Holocaust and its aftermath into the contemporary global(ised) context. Central to almost all characters’ attempts to define themselves in ethnic, national and cultural terms are writing and literature. Thus, *The History of Love* is the title of both Krauss’s and one of her central characters’ books and in *Great House*, all of the four intermeshed narrative voices belong to either a writer or a passionate reader. Literature is seen as “an opportunity for compassion” (in Krauss’s own words) and thus as a ‘road’ to (moral) cosmopolitanism. Both novels emphasize, to different degrees, the globality of the post-Holocaust Jewish experience. The differences between *The History of Love* (which is the earlier novel of the two) and *Great House* are significant and unveil a disturbing progression: as the setting gets global, the tone becomes grave and the questions explicit: “What is a Jew without Jerusalem? How can you be a Jew without a nation?” (*Great House* 278). By operating with Bakhtin’s terminology (heteroglossia, dialogism, hybrid constructions), I intend to interrogate both the texts’ hybridity and the hybridity of identity that the texts thematise.

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Keywords: Jewishness, cosmopolitanism, identity, hybridity, heteroglossia, dialogism, Bakhtin.

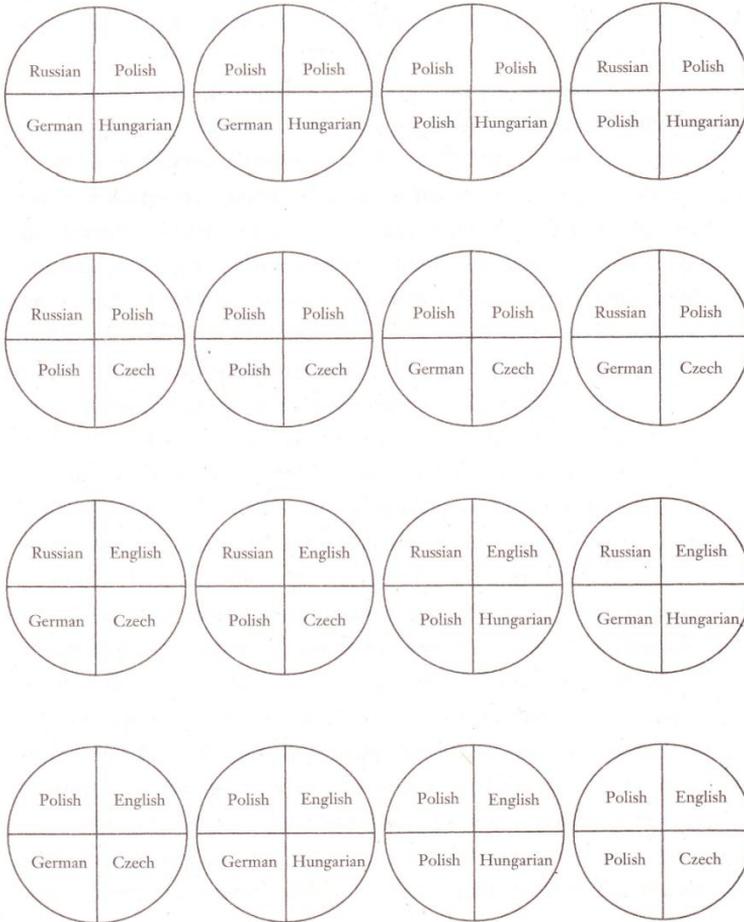
The History of Love and *Great House* share similar architectures: the criterion for division of the narrative material into sections (or chapters) is the narrative voice, mostly materialised in 1st-person narratives of various narrators or, as Bakhtin would have it, “posited authors” (312). In *The History of Love*, the seventeen chapters of the novel alternate between four narrators: Leo Gursky, a Polish Jew who fled the Nazi regime and has since lived in New York, Alma Singer, a fourteen-year-old girl who also lives in New York, her younger brother, “Bird”, (who only ‘speaks’ in two chapters), and a blatantly omniscient narrator who, from a 3rd-person perspective, tells the story of Zvi Litvinoff, Leo’s friend from Poland, whom the latter had entrusted with his manuscript before leaving Poland. The manuscript is entitled *The History of Love* and will be published by Litvinoff under his own name, in Chile, where he takes refuge from the Nazi regime. At the outset of the novel and a long way into it, the connections (of plot) between the narrators/characters of these chapters are obscured from the reader’s view. By the end of the novel, the neatly interconnected narrative strands are revealed as such to the reader and *The History of Love*, Leo Gursky’s first book, written in Poland before WWII, is the element that finally ties all the stories together.

Great House operates in a similar way. It is divided into two sections, each comprising four chapters, all narrated in the 1st person by five narrators who act as posited authors. However, in *Great House* there is no ‘higher narratorial instance’. Krauss herself called it “a novel without a centre” (*PBS* interview, online reference). The connections between the four stories are revealed even later in the novel than is the case with *The History of Love*, yet there is a higher degree of stylistic coherence at work, almost to a fault, as the voices of the five narrators ‘contaminate’ each other. The element that unites the four stories is, this time, an enormous desk, a powerful symbol of literature.

In his 2002 article *The Cosmopolitan Society and Its Enemies*, Ulrich Beck states that “the central defining characteristic of a cosmopolitan perspective is the ‘dialogic imagination’”; he goes on to clarify that “by this [he] means the clash of cultures and rationalities within one’s own life, the *internalized* other”(18). The “dialogic imagination” is also a central concept with Bakhtin, who applies it to language, which he sees as existing in a perpetual state of “dialogised heteroglossia” (272), i.e. an “internal stratification present in every language at any given moment of its historical existence”(263) “into social dialects, characteristic group behaviour, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashions, languages that serve the specific socio-political purposes of the day, even the hour ...” (262/3). It is clear by now that Bakhtin views these many languages co-existing within one national language as embodying particular world views, particular belief systems and value judgements.

The generic stratification of language pervades *The History of Love*. Bakhtin regards this type of stratification, i.e. “incorporated genres”, as “one of the most basic and fundamental forms for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel” (320). Various genres (or elements of them) are inserted into the fabric of the novel, e.g. obituaries (Isaac Babel’s, Franz Kafka’s and Leo Gursky’s), Bird’s diary entries, the letters exchanged between Alma Singer’s mother, who translates *The History of Love* into English, and Isaac, Leo’s son, who is also a writer and who is not aware of the existence of his (biological) father until he actually reads the translated book. Leo Gursky makes refracted use of elements of the fairy tale to tell his own story in his second book, *Words for Everything*: thus, the first five paragraphs start with “once upon a time”. Entire chapters of Gursky’s *History of Love* (i.e. the book within the book) are inserted into the novel (“The Age of Silence”, “The Age of Glass”, “The Age of String”, “Love among the Angels”, “The Birth of Feeling”, etc.). Finally, even a diagram drawn by Alma’s mother to show her how many different

constellations of identity she could draw up for herself, is included (96):



The diagram is highly illustrative of the hybridity of identity the Jewish people have developed for two millennia of diaspora and particularly in post-Holocaust times (hence the conspicuous absence of “Jewish” from the diagram). Alma, who is part of the generation most removed from the Holocaust and its aftermath in this novel, rejects both her mother’s hybrid conception of identity

and her brother's unqualified claim to Jewishness by shouting "I'M AMERICAN!" (97).

The "play with a posited author" is regarded by Bakhtin as "characteristic of the comic novel" (313):

This particularity, this distancing of the posited author or teller from the real author and from conventional literary expectations, may occur in differing degrees and may vary in its nature. But in any case a particular belief system belonging to someone else, a particular point of view on the world belonging to someone else, is used by the author because it is highly productive, that is, it is able on the one hand to show the object of representation in a new light (to reveal new sides or dimensions in it) and on the other hand to illuminate in a new way the "expected" literary horizon, that horizon against which the particularities of the teller's tale are perceivable. (313/4)

The "alien word" (276) of 'the other' thus enters the novel. The discourses of the narrators in *The History of Love*, particularly Leo Gursky and Alma Singer's discourses, are highly idiosyncratic: Leo Gursky is, at times, highly comic as both narrator and character, in spite of the repeated blows life deals him: the loss of his family in World War II and of his childhood friend Bruno (whom he keeps fictionally alive, meeting him and talking to him daily, until very late in the novel, when the reader is informed Bruno actually died in Poland), the forced separation from Alma Mereminski, the woman he loves, who is sent to America and who gives birth to his child after marrying another man – he finds her, of course, too late – and finally the death of his son Isaac before the latter has the chance to contact him. Alma 'speaks' in numbered paragraphs which are always accompanied by a title, as if she were trying to make sense of her loneliness in the wake of her father's death, to go about it in a structured, orderly manner (her paragraphs are perfectly structured, the thesis statement in the title is flawlessly and logically developed in the paragraph following it). Alma is the one to finally reveal the true authorship of *The History of Love* (i.e. Leo Gursky instead of Zvi Litvinoff) and she goes about this task

systematically, forensically even, drawing up lists of clues. Elements of the detective novel genre are thus inserted into *The History of Love* as well, further enriching the novel's heteroglossia and hybridity of style. Detective fiction and contemporary Holocaust fiction have been frequently linked, as Anna Richardson remarks: "the narrative device of Historian-As-Detective is practically a standardized feature of contemporary Holocaust fiction, replicating as it does the reader's own quest for understanding the Holocaust" (159). In Linda Grant's *The Clothes on Their Backs*, for example, Vivien Kovacs, the Jewish central character, enacts the same quest for her family's and her own past.

As I have already mentioned above, in *Great House* Nicole Krauss goes one step further in her experimentation with authorial and narratorial voice and chooses not to employ a clearly distinguishable authorial voice, but to let five other voices tell four seemingly unconnected stories. Nadia is a 50-year-old writer of fiction living in New York who has sacrificed the relationships to people in her life for the sake of her work and who now faces deep doubts about her choice, as well as about her work. She suspects a deep "deficiency of spirit... of strength, of vitality, of compassion" (36) in herself, which makes her hide behind her words "instead of exposing the hidden depths of things" (36). Nadia's discourse is not a monologue, though she is the only one actually 'speaking'; she addresses a second person with "Your Honor" and her discourse is highly self-explanatory, always anticipating a response, a truly dialogised discourse. The reader may well interpret her addressee to be the absent author of the novel (though the reader does find out late in the novel that her addressee is a judge she had run over with her car). At the same time, however, Nadia's dilemmas are the dilemmas every writer faces. The entire first chapter grants the reader a unique insight into the act of writing, into what it is like to be a writer. The reader cannot therefore but suspect a 'contamination' of Nadia's discourse with that of the absent author,

whether their relationship is one of agreement or one of opposition¹⁴. As Bakhtin remarks:

The narrator's story or the story of the posited author is structured against the background of normal literary language, the expected literary horizon. ... [it is] set against them *dialogically*: one point of view opposed to another, one accent opposed to another... This interaction, this dialogic tension between two languages and two belief systems, permits authorial intentions to be realized in such a way that we can acutely sense their presence at every point in the work. The author is not to be found in the language of the narrator, not in the normal literary language to which the story opposes itself ... – but rather, the author utilizes now one language, now another, in order to avoid giving himself up wholly to either of them. (314)

The de-centredness of this novel's language begs to be correlated to Therborn's conception of globality: "There is no longer any legitimate centre point, from which to look out and to communicate with the rest of the world" (qtd. Beck 21). Ulrich Beck links globality to cosmopolitanism, which "rejects the either-or principle and assembles the this-as-well-as-that principle – like 'cosmopolitan patriots', patriots of two worlds" (19). Jewishness, so inextricably associated with diaspora for the last two millennia, has always entailed a state of 'patriot of two worlds'. "In relation to the concept of 'globality' (Albrow, 1996; Robertson, 1992) cosmopolitanism means: *rooted* cosmopolitanism, having 'roots' and 'wings' at the same time. So it rejects the dominant opposition between cosmopolitans and locals as well: there is no cosmopolitanism without localism" (19). The '*rooted* cosmopolitanism' Beck advocates¹⁵ antithetically rings back to

¹⁴ The word "compassion", used above by Nadia, has been repeatedly used by Krauss in interviews: "In no other art form can you step so directly, so vividly without any mediation into another's inner life.... You inevitably form a kind of compassion" (*PBS* interview, online reference).

¹⁵ See also Beck's concept of 'glocalisation' = globalisation + localisation (23).

Stalin's 1949 antic cosmopolitan campaign against the Jewish intelligentsia, who were considered to hold "antipatriotic views" and were pejoratively called "rootless cosmopolitans" (Zubaida, online reference).

Another posited author in the novel is Aaron, an Israeli judge who addresses his son Dovit, himself a judge (though in London), the same that is hit by Nadia's car near Jerusalem at the end of the novel. Dovit had always wanted to be a writer, but was always discouraged by his father: "You write and you erase. And you call this a profession?" (50). This remark enters into a dialogic relationship with Dovit's aspirations, with the previous chapter (in which Nadia privileges writing over everything else), with the author herself and, of course, the reader. It also speaks dialogically to a character in the next chapter, Lotte Berg, also a writer, and a Jewish German refugee married to Arthur Bender (who is the posited author of the chapter), an Oxford don specialising in Romantic poetry, who discovers after decades of marriage that his wife had had a child before she met him and had given it up for adoption. Finally, the fourth narrative strand tells the story of a family of Jewish Hungarian refugees, the Weisz, from the perspective of Isabel, the American girlfriend of Yoav Weisz. George Weisz, the father, is a widower obsessed with reconstructing his father's study exactly as it was before the war, which is why he is permanently searching for the desk that passes from Lotte Berg to Daniel Varsky (a Jewish Chilean poet) to Nadia and finally to his own daughter, Leah Weisz¹⁶. In spite of a certain professional heterogeneity in the narrators themselves (a writer, a don, a student, a judge and an antique dealer), what Bakhtin calls the professional stratification of language is not sufficiently

¹⁶ On a first reading, the characters seem ethnically heterogeneous (their cosmopolitanism is largely responsible for that, but it would be a "cosmopolitan fallacy" (Beck 29) to claim that all the characters are cosmopolitan); however, a second, more 'targeted' reading reveals them all to be Jewish, except for a few minor characters such as a Romanian superintendent and a Romanian woman cleaner from Constanta.

developed, the characters' language is not sufficiently idiosyncratic. There is a reciprocal contamination, mostly with poetic language. Aaron, the harsh judge, occasionally uses colloquial expressions, but even he displays to some extent the propensity to metaphor and to imaginative scenarios introduced by "as if" that the other narrators abundantly make use of. The connection of the different plot strands that is refused to the reader until very late in the novel is atoned for by this uniformity of language and by a unitary intensity of affect, yet these are not novelistic virtues, as Bakhtin would surely argue. There are other unifying aspects in the different narrators' discourses, the most striking one being all narrators' insistence on alterity, on 'the other' and on the degree to which we can know 'the other', ranging from Aaron's "What is it like to be you?" (50) to Arthur's "All my life I had been trying to imagine myself into her skin" (272).

The problem of Jewishness is dealt with explicitly in *Great House*, through George Weisz's voice: "What is a Jew without Jerusalem? How can you be a Jew without a nation?" (278). The answer is delivered immediately by Weisz himself and it draws on a collective Jewish memory, on Jewish history, on the 1st-century rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, who, having fled the Romans, founded a new school, the "Great House", and replaced the Temple by the Talmud (i.e. a building by a portable book), a historical fact used by George Weisz to justify his restlessness and uprootedness.

Although *Great House* labours under a much darker, graver tone than the humorously-nostalgic *History of Love*, the Holocaust and loss in general loom large in both novels. The actual narrations related to the Holocaust itself are few, but what Bakhtin terms the "apperceptive background" of the reader, the "environment of alien words" present in his/her consciousness is "pregnant with responses" (281) and the novelist counts on the readers' historical awareness.

If judged in Bakhtin's terms, *The History of Love* would have to be deemed an altogether more accomplished novel than *Great House*. In *The History of Love*, the "centrifugal forces of language" (Bakhtin 272) are predominantly at work: the generic, generational,

professional and ethnic stratification of language is striking. *Great House*, on the other hand, is a seemingly de-centred novel in which, however, the “centripetal forces of language” (270) prevail and the tendency towards a “unitary language” (272) can be distinctly perceived. One might assert that what *The History of Love* shows, *Great House* tells, as both novels grapple with hybrid identities and alterity, advocate compassion and cosmopolitanism and posit literature as *the* art form which best enables us to connect with ‘the other’.

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Cultural Submission in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

LAVINIU COSTINEL LĂPĂDAT¹⁷

Abstract¹⁸

The last two decades have witnessed an ever-growing interest amongst scholars all over the world in the literature of the American ethnic groups, the most outstanding of all being the example of African-American literature. Many books have been written, and prestigious conferences devote special workshops to the literature of the African diaspora. Such an interest springs from a world-wide preoccupation with *multiculturalism*, a dynamic concept that can energize the individual into searching for an authentic depiction of self and group life. Most often a multicultural approach uses several disciplines to highlight neglected aspects of social history, particularly the history of minorities. Concepts of identity, religion, race, class, culture, gender, and ethnicity are the driving themes of a multicultural approach, which also promotes respect for the dignity of the lives and voices of the forgotten. These driving themes will form the structure of this study of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

Keywords: Ralph Ellison, identity, race, multiculturalism, ethnicity, class, politics

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Invisible Man is a novel designed to contain a manifold of interconnected processes that place under paramount relevance the analysis of consciousness, acknowledging but ultimately rejecting definitions of self and identity prescribed by deliberately limited individuals, in an attempt to underscore the virtues of ruling out gregarious ideologies and shameful extremism. Ralph Ellison rarely passes judgment directly, preferring reflection and observations which tend to the rigorous sensibilities of his righteous audience (the readership), offering nourishment to the ideals of tolerance and fluid, transformational, evolving humanity.

Ellison masterfully attaches imagination to history tinkering with principles of chronology and topography, offering true working functionalities in the development of the narrative in *Invisible Man*. Throughout the prologue, for example, time falls prey to the whims of selective and independent consciousness, toying with explicit and implicit relevance when trying to clarify issues that are deeply rooted in chronology and history as a whole. Time, therefore, becomes a frequency of both consciousness and conscience, without stating a clear line of intent, referring to the inexplicit, opting to generalize rather than individualize the context.

The first chapter of the novel comes across as an open invitation for one and all to expose, decode and deconstruct history. Ellison's encrypted renditions of Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Thomas Jefferson, Marcus Garvey, and even of the Great Depression itself, "throw down the gauntlet" in their desire to pulverize postwar conformity, aligning progressive images within *Invisible Man's* historical and conceptual apparatus. The novel's historical methodology is cast under a great veil of uncertainty and enclosed metaphors. The author uses the novel as a gatekeeper of history, implementing both accountability and suppressed responsibility in order to better absorb affairs of clarified history, embracing a higher sense of duty to 'set the record straight' and bring that which has been forged or dragged inside the darkness into the proverbial light. The mechanisms of exterior corruption are thereby successfully infiltrated, allowing the truthful present to

shed some hints of truth on the shady past of America's long forgotten victims of shame.

In his letters to Albert Murray, Ralph Ellison exposes a deeply personal, precognitive approach towards the usage of metaphors and adaptive narrative tools when dealing with history and temporal displacement. *Invisible Man* becomes the spawning pool for concrete changes that will mark American society for the coming decades. It is the prophetic bugle which announces the emergence of the Black Power movement, the rejection of restrictive conformity, the emancipation of women, the bane and malediction of substance abuse and the ultimate political showdown that will mark the fall of Communism.

In terms of form, Ellison's novel can easily be included in Henry Louis Gates's predication which states that "the fundamental structuring principle of Negro art-improvisation was also the essence of American democracy" (Gates 66). Its power resides in its ability to envisage reality through Afro-American perception. Ellison overtly rejected the Jamesian novel and the so-called "hard boiled" novel deeming them constrictive, denouncing their inability to capture the teeming life and fluidity of the African-American experience. He viewed the writing systems of Hemingway and Richard Wright as prone to violence and cynicism, thus hindering his literary higher calling of improvisation, identity-oriented narrative and the pursuit of change for the betterment of the individual and society as a whole. The narrative structures Ellison viewed as obsolete or simply incompatible with his debt towards instruments of mental and spiritual depth are perceived and disallowed as being addressed to a very limited, so-called elite audience and non-responsive to the justifiable cravings of the common man whose spirit is enriched by traditions, humor, folklore, honesty, jazz and the need for redemption. His novel borders on epiphany and revelation of pure truths, calling and responding, trying to guide his character and us along with him on the path of righteousness, tolerance and equanimity.

The central metaphor of the novel (invisibility) encompasses a complex, dynamic adaptation to American thematic reality.

Ellison's use of invisibility can develop a functional infrastructure which deals not only with the dilemmas of blacks but of all people, regardless of race or ethnicity. The author accumulates a tremendous amount of ideological and social density around a singular word, which on a very basic level can be perceived as a reductive factor of the human condition, but one must also bear in mind the empowering effect of invisibility. Those who go unseen become free from the corruptive effect of tainted individuals, therefore gaining the chance to be the inventors of a beautiful and extremely independent personal identity. At a primary level, invisibility is a living testament to racism and bigotry. The concept is however able to transcend race and time, ascending to a level of universal representation, taking *Invisible Man* along for the ride: "a prototypical story about being not only a twentieth-century American but also a twentieth century man, the Negro's obvious predicament symbolizing everybody's essential predicament" (Murray 167). Society itself is a blind and blunt instrument of human perception. It does not necessarily crush our dreams; it simply ignores them into uneventful submission, managing to drown us in solitude inside a sea of lost but potentially kindred souls. *Invisible Man* is not a novel which advocated for perfection or unattainable goals; it [It] embraces innocence and the flaws that come with it. It aims at endowing us with freedom, moral responsibility and an all-around robust sense of humanity. It seeks to educate our thirst for freedom and individuality, through respect for the voices and dignity of others. Ellison recognizes the inseverable connection between the black experience and the American experience. He views both as being crippled by the frightening evasion of identity. Irony and intimate generalizations operate within the specifically formulated décor of the American experience. The universality of the novel is paradoxically rendered by the particularity of its narrative elements. However peculiar this may appear, depriving the novel of its black American lineage, its explicit language and direct improvisation-oriented approach would entail depriving it of its universal calling.

Ellison honors the legacy of Melville and Twain, creating a literature of emergence based on recognizing freedom not as a simple necessity but as the inability to defy or deny the multiple possibilities which have the potential to change our lives. The human mind is placed above all prerequisites and deemed worthy to do battle with the chains that are defiantly cast towards the seekers of hope and progress.

The connection between Ellison and his narrator resembles that of a jazz band struggling with creative differences, but always improvising the right formula, “winging it” towards the proper objectives. The reader is carried through the intimidating labyrinth that is picaresque America, surging outside the confines of time, granting it atemporal recognition. The narrator causes quite the outrage when parading around a vast apparatus of despicable men and women who congeal into an indistinguishable blob which threatens to assimilate the unnamed protagonist. Ellison sanctions both characters and deeds or events alike. Racist ritualization, incest, riots, black extremism, maladive wisdom, perverted sermons, wolf-in-sheep’s clothing manipulation, and even offering deceptive information concerning one’s true identity are all punished and carefully disassembled under Ellison’s careful literary tutelage. Ellison’s labyrinth has multiple minotaurs at its disposal: Bledsoe, Norton, Brother Jack (and who can forget the man with the toilette name Wrestrum). They function as disruptors of destiny, but also as trials which our African-American Theseus must overcome in order to reach his full human potential. Evil characters are the possessors of visibility, the defilers of human decency and innate goodness. Through their dark sermon they preach oblivion, through their involvement in the lives of the innocent they strive to bring it. *Invisible Man* takes on the noble task to sing the previously unsung heroes who carry on tradition, those who from their suffering create the beauty and complexity of the blues, or simply the men and women who work and earn their bread in silent honesty. In spite of his heightened perception of the spiritual and physical filth afflicting humanity, Ellison professes a profound sense of trust in our humanity, in our ability to purge ourselves

from the malefic and the bringers of inequity; he is a believer that one day Jack the Bear will shrug off his debilitating state of torpor, emerge from his winter slumber, and take back his life.

Invisible Man is a novel that endorses eloquence and verbal persuasion. The narrator is thus compelled to cross certain unseen but pivotal cultural boundaries and become an orator. The quality and veracity of the novel are dependent on this successful metamorphosis. Through language, Ellison manages to immerse the readership into 1940's Harlem or the capricious multiverse that is the American South. The process of eloquence is at times hindered by the uncoagulated, uncatalogued perspectives on democracy and identity. Eloquence is linked to perception and understanding, and a limitation of the two can cause blackouts in the proper development of the verbal flow. A lack of information or precise specifications can be easily compensated by an essential factor of randomness that Afro-Americans possess in abundance: improvisation. Countless generations of African-Americans have used the multiple modalities of expressing improvisation such as jazz, the blues and their vast oral tradition not just as means of communicating but as tools of coping both mentally and physically, instruments of their survival as a culture and as individuals. This survival strategy has often wrongly been deemed dishonorable, severely lacking in courage or dignity. That couldn't be farther from the truth. Improvisation is synonymous to courage, a lack of inhibitions and there is nothing more honorable and just in the world than creation and creativity. Ellison does not just use improvisation as a narrative facilitator, he relies on it; he in effect builds his novel around this manifesto of random cognitive intervention. The jazz jam session expresses the relevant functionality of the literary act, the mechanisms of blending all the systemic elements into a cohesive and eclectic narrative achievement. Each and every band member must be in perfect synchronicity with the others but at the same time challenge them, force them to bring their proverbial A game, defy and define the flow of creation, reach a previously untapped potential. A similar creative tug of war occurs inside the writer who must choose from a vast array of thematic and verbal elements, and

decide which interior facets of the self he must grant voice to and which he must silence into perdition and submission.

The success of every novel is substantiated by its ability to assert eloquence when pitted against a diverse audience. Men and women, black or white, Southern or Northern, intelligent or simple-minded, prone to pessimism or excessive joy, they must all come to embrace and accept it, empathize with the characters, accept the narrative. Were one to oversimplify the approach to *Invisible Man*, one [we] would be left with unfortunate events, skill and human will. The voice of the internal narrator is keenly merged onto limitations of status, raw necessity and the religiously charged call-and-response vector of comprehension. Ellison sets out to become persuasive by relying heavily on improvisation and reverse improvisation techniques. The dramatic recoil of his utterances initiates a string of inconsistent permutations that provide drastic opposition to his initial intentions. His discourse often provokes unwarranted responses from the audience, gradually challenging the intellect of his readership as well as his own. Returning to the unnamed protagonist in *Invisible Man*, we can divulge a deliberate failure in eloquence which is instantaneously compensated by irony, positive reinforcement, optimisms and the uneasy acceptance of one's vocation and purpose. Ellison's perception of eloquence in the literary text commandeers similarity in its approach to the perspective of Ralph Waldo Emerson. (According to Emerson, oratory is an act of heroism as the author is faced with constant challenges and trials in evoking matters having to do with identity or improvisational identity as is the case with Rinehart, who is a multilayered, multifaceted trickster/character.) The orator's power is heavily reliant on the power of the word to convince and convert, to liberate, to help people not only to accept freedom but to compel them to fight for it, to inspire a hunger for democracy. The word is the fuel, the essential catalyst of knowledge and action. Underestimating the volatile but crucial importance of language can alienate the audience and lead to a failed act of communication in terms of literary relevance.

Ellison does not overcharge his words with meaning. A considerable amount of assertions are very light, pleasantly digressive and non-disconcerting. The readership is not stretched too thin and allowed to smoothly take in the narration in a manner that is copacetic for both the author and his esteemed audience. However, this writing strategy does not entail that Ellison is a 'soft' writer or that he lacks the courage to express his convictions. He is simply very selective in the expenditure of his conflictual impulses in *Invisible Man*. He knows full well when it's time to push the envelope, increase the verbal tempo and harness his accumulated energy in order to generate the adequate narrative drive his novel needs to make a meaningful impact on its public. Overusing the intensity of utterances would undoubtedly make his literary undertaking burn itself out, collapse under its own futile weight, surpassing the attention span and sympathies of the readers who would come to reject and denounce it as premature or over-anxious.

In his writing, Ellison launches a pre-emptive strike against frustrated, self-conscious conformity. He does not seek a docile response from his readers, he yearns to be challenged, undermined, have the potentially vulnerabilities of his novel exposed and sanctioned, reach a peaceful resolution to what must begin as a merciless confrontation of ideas. Words are simple variables in the complex equation of power that is defined by the fiendish grip of illusory soul burners who attempt to sin against the freedom and dignity of their fellow man. The author must be in full command of his work and not the other way around. Questioning the idea of literary leadership regarding any work of fiction means voicing concerns over the quality of the work itself. As a consequence, the author must never lose touch with the story, its mythology and story-telling technique, set the pace when it comes to verbal manifestos of either intimacy or conflict.

An educated readership must be able to discern between genuine eloquence and faux eloquence, to decode all possible symbolic ramifications and astutely comprehend the clean meanings behind deliberately encoded utterances and assertions, perceive literary possibility through literary form. A true writer

must rise and fall, live and let die thorough eloquence together with his work. Ralph Waldo Ellison's novel successfully bridges the connections between form and identity, action and communication. Language is reaffirmed here as a nexus of contradiction under which the novel gains its prophetic eloquence. Writing is a tremendous, all engulfing element of transformation. It changes and generates the narration; it moves the reader and forever causes a shift or rather a mutation around the paradigm of the author. This transformative power of a literary work is the objective indicator of its success and intrinsic quality. True transformation can even have the audacity to alter history or trigger epiphany under the direst of circumstances.

Invisible Man thus transcends mere entertainment or well-informed descriptions. It operates as an overt anticipator; it offers not only revelation but self-revelation, a profound reasoning in attempting to understand invisibility as a source for future visibility, supplying incontrovertible proof that mere words cannot only hasten decisions but liberate them from their secluded servitude to narrow-minded ideologies.

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The Dynamics of Interculturalism in Children's Literature Translation

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Abstract

Current developments of Children's Literature Translation Studies prove that the globalization of the children's book market and of children's culture have had a major influence on translation proper as well as on the scholars' interest in the field. The intercultural turn in translation studies in general becomes evident in translating literature for children too. The aim of this paper is to show that there are a number of clear-cut changes in translation practices according to the impact of translation on the target culture. Although there is still a discrepancy between translation into English and translation from English into other languages, target readers are more than willing to accept a mutual exchange.

Keywords: potential change, interculturalism, translational alterity

1. Multiculturalism in Translating Literature for Children

Multiculturalism has had an impact on almost all peoples worldwide as well as on the international relations emerging from the current new world order. Translators are faced with 'culture-bound' elements such as proverbs and idiomatic expressions whose origin and use are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture concerned. Thus the success of a cross-cultural translation will depend on the translators' understanding of the culture they are working with. They must be both bilingual and bicultural if not multicultural.

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If, as Young argues, “groups cannot be socially equal unless their specific experience, cultural and social contributions are publicly affirmed and recognized” (37), it follows that equality involves the policy of active support of linguistic and cultural difference, a policy generally referred to as one of multiculturalism. In this respect, the discourse of multiculturalism often serves to legitimize or justify, for example, the provision of community interpreting services to a particular group. The problem is that a multiculturalism which is entirely based on difference refers to ethnic groups as unchanging cultural communities, predicated on a static notion of culture and consequently ignores the constant flux and changing nature of human, social groups.

Translation involves a process of cultural de-coding, re-coding and en-coding. The process of transfer or re-coding across cultures should possess a number of attributes necessary to ensure credibility in the eyes of the target reader.

Alkman identifies some of the aims of translating children’s literature. One of them is “to make more literature available to children” (Alkman 3). Another aim would be “to further children’s international outlook and their knowledge of different cultures” (3). Furthermore, she considers that if the translator removes the cultural specific elements, then the latter aim could not be achieved.

The translator of children’s fiction is aware that some of the elements of the cultural context are not known to the same extent to the readers of the target text as to the readers of the source text: “Children may not have the knowledge of the foreign culture that is required to fully understand the text and the translator therefore has to change more than in a text for adults” (Alkman 3).

Defining the concept of multiculturalism, Pascua indirectly stipulates one of the objectives of translating children’s literature: “[...] to create a multicultural reader-child through books of different countries, getting to know each other thanks to translations” (17). From my perspective, both Alkman’s and Pascua’s opinions hold valid in the sense that translating for children involves an expansion of the children’s perception of the world outside their immediate surroundings.

Literary heritage in multicultural Europe should be available to the target readers. With all the attention directed toward multiculturalism and diversity, translators of children's literature should reconsider their position especially with respect to the issue of cultural specificity in the case of both source culture and target culture.

In the present age of multiculturalism, images and voices from other cultures should be seen and heard, challenging the prevailing domestic literary and ideological views. Translators in general and translators of children's literature in particular are expected to appreciate cultural diversity and stay sensitive to cultural differences. Helping children to become acquainted with cultures of other children from different parts of the world represents a genuine desideratum of the professional translators who are interested in educating the young people not only to tolerate but also to enjoy and respect cultural specificity: "As an academic, translator and educator, I am interested in looking closely at multicultural children's literature and its translation because translation is an act of intercultural communication" (Pascua 276).

2. The Intercultural Turn – between Potential Change and Translational Alterity

In his article *Coming to terms with and against nationalist cultural specificity. Notes for an ethos of translating studies*, Pym disagrees with UNESCO's 1982 recommendation on intercultural relations: "Intercultural cooperation depends on respect for cultural identity, for the dignity and value of each culture, for independence, for national sovereignty and for non-intervention" (11). He is against the ideal picture of a world of static national specificities since translation depends on some degree of transcultural movement and intervention. In Pym's opinion, recognition of potential change might be a major element of an ethos for translation studies. I consider that Pym's interpretation of UNESCO's recommendation on intercultural relations is too strict in the sense that there are instances when a translator has to preserve the culturally specific

elements to the benefit of the target readers. This does not implicitly mean that he rejects change and intervention in the translational act.

From my point of view, different situations involve different limitations and require different strategies. Accepting and understanding the importance of cultural specificity in translation studies does not imply that a translator overlooks all the other principles involved in the process of translation: communication, interculturality, potential change and translational alterity.

Other authors warn about the difficulty of grasping the meaning of multiculturalism in a way in which it would not exclude interculturalism or the principles of potential change and translational alterity. In Baker and Saldanha's *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, Cronin discusses the danger of understanding multiculturalism signaled exclusively through difference:

Interculturalism as distinct from multiculturalism is more concerned with the dynamics of interaction and developing reciprocal relations of understanding. Given that translation, by definition, is engaged with the business of communication and understanding, albeit sharply circumscribed by the power relationships present in any situation, it inevitably finds itself in greater dialogue with the emerging interdisciplines of intercultural communication and intercultural studies in the human and social sciences. (129)

Unlike the linguistically-oriented approaches to translation of the 1960s and 1970s and the cultural studies of the 1980s and the 1990s, the intercultural turn in translation theory and practice is based on the findings and strategies of the previous periods with the distinction that it looks at the entire translation process from a different perspective, that of accelerated globalization. Consequently, the relationship between dominating and dominated languages influences the intercultural transfer most frequently to the detriment of the dominated languages whose books for children are rarely translated into the dominating languages such as English.

On the other hand, if the transfer is supposed to be mutual, children from the dominating cultures have something to lose too, in the sense that many valuable books for children will not be available to them due to the cautious and financially-oriented attitude of the publishing houses. Manipulation affects the translation of books for children no matter if it is ideologically, morally or economically motivated.

Issues of ideology in the adoption of different translation strategies for a young audience have attracted the attention of a number of scholars. Fernández López (2000) discusses intercultural ideological factors in the translation into Spanish of the work of Roald Dahl and Enid Blyton. The eradication of racist and sexist language from the work of these authors during the 1970s and 1980s was ignored in Spanish translations that returned to earlier, 'unpurified' versions of source texts, thereby creating a mismatch between English and Spanish versions published in the same period. Political and social factors in the Franco and post-Franco eras in Spain have clearly influenced translation practice. Comparably, Thomas-Wohlgemuth (2003) investigates the issues of translation under state control enhancing the primacy of the ideological factor in the selection of children's texts for translation in the German Democratic Republic. The officially-adopted translation policy compelled translators and publishers to submit to the ideological prescriptions of the state which laid emphasis on the educational value of the book and its contribution to the construction of a socialist society.

Furthermore, Seifert (2005) and Frank (2007) draw on developments in image studies for their case studies on the translation of Canadian fiction into German and Australian children's fiction into French respectively, pointing out the ways in which images of a nation and locale are constructed as children's texts move from one language and culture to another. Seifert considers that the pre-existing image of a culture or nation is a deciding factor in the selection of children's texts for translation.

Resorting to image studies in the translation of English-Canadian children's literature into German, Seifert (2005) seems to

have understood that ideology is an element of children's literature translation in accordance with the historical tendency towards national stereotyping in children's books. Frank's (2007) findings with respect to the translation of Australian children's fiction into French have proven that French translations identify Australia with its rural outback and that contemporary urban Australia is underrepresented.

Desmet's (2007) investigation of the translation into Dutch of narrative fiction for girls reaffirms Shavit's emphasis on literary status as a determining factor in the degree of adaptation and abridgement in translations for children, while historical research has uncovered evidence not only of changes in translation practices according to contemporary constructions of childhood, but also of the impact of translations on the target.

In Baker and Saldanha's *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (2009), Lathey indicates two major studies published at the turn of the millenium (O'Sullivan 2000 and Oittinen 2000) which take a different direction by addressing the complexities of narrative communication with the child reader.

First and foremost, O'Sullivan (2000, 2005) applies the insights of a comparatist to books written for the young, offering a number of case histories that inspire a fresh look at the international history of children's literature. Adapting existing theories of narrative communication by Schiavi and Chatman, O'Sullivan pleads for a translation model that distinguishes between the implied child readers inscribed in source and target texts. She cites instances where translators have inserted additional materials or explanations for the attention of the child reader in the target culture, thereby creating an implied reader who needs information that the author of the source text could take for granted. Such additions also demonstrate a further aspect of O'Sullivan's model: the presence of the implied translator whose voice can be detected within the translated text. Pointing out the translator's visibility, O'Sullivan (2003) argues that in translated children's literature, the implied translator is often more tangible than in literature for adults due to the asymmetrical nature of the communication in and around

children's literature where adults usually act on behalf of children: "As an adult, the translator does not belong to the primary addressees of most children's books. S/he has to negotiate the unequal communication in the source text between adult (implied) author and child (implied) reader in order to be able to slip into the latter's role" (203).

Secondly, drawing on Bakhtin's theories of dialogism, Oittinen (2000) argues that translation for children constitutes a series of playful and subversive social interactions that take place between the translator and the source text, between the translator and the potential child reader and between the child reader and the translated text. She encourages freedom and creativity in the translator whose goal should be child-friendly translation that constitutes a 'positive' manipulation of the source text.

In comparison with literature written for adults, children's literature tends to be more directed towards its readers. According to Oittinen, translating for children "should rather be defined in terms of the readers of the translation" (61). No matter their personal opinions or misconceptions regarding the children's level of understanding translators should "[...] give priority to the child as a reader, as someone who understands, as someone who actively participates in the reading event." (5). The authority to alter and manipulate the original text in order to adjust it to the target readers' age and level of understanding is acquired only if the children's interests are above everything else in the translators' minds. Understanding translation for children as communication between children and adults, one should keep in mind not only the peculiarities of child-speech and the language and reading characteristics of children of different ages but also the demands of the intermediary groups (e.g. parents, teachers, librarians, editors, publishers, translation theorists, critics).

Other professional translators besides Oittinen have made thought-provoking contributions to debates on translating for children, notably Bell's witty 'notebooks' (1985 and 1986) on the translation of names, tense, gendered nouns and other 'delicate matters', and Hirano's (1999) depiction of the challenges presented

by subtle degrees of politeness inherent in personal pronouns in Japanese young adult fiction. In a more recent article *Translation as Illusion*, Bell (2004) is proud to be thought of as a translator of children's books and welcomes the increasing willingness in English-language publishers to look at foreign children's literature and even publish some of it.

There are clear distinctions between the situation of children's literature translation in the past centuries and its present status in the technological era. Current developments of Children's Literature Translation Studies prove that the globalization of the children's book market and of children's culture generally have had a marked effect on translation. The international marketing strategies of recent volumes of the *Harry Potter*, *His Dark Materials* or *Twilight* series and the rapidly decreasing interval between the publication of the original and worldwide translations demonstrate this idea.

Lathey (2009) acknowledges the fact that there is a still a clear discrepancy between translation into English and translation from English into other languages:

Translation into the English language continues to lag behind translation from English into other languages; nonetheless, prizes for the translation of children's literature into English such as the Marsh Award in the UK and the Mildred L. Batchelder Award in the USA testify to the range and quality of translation for children and young people within a limited market. (33)

The international exchange of children's books has always been uneven, partly because stories enjoyed by children do not constitute a separate 'children's literature' in all cultures and languages. At the same time, interest in the field continues to grow as children's literature and translation scholars work towards a more complete picture of the role of translation in the dissemination of children's literature across the world. From Lathey's (2011) perspective, a diachronic view on children's literature translation can be enriching if the goal is to demonstrate the existence of a variety of conceptual and methodological backgrounds. To support her ideas, she

mentions “Tabbert’s (2000) comprehensive overview of critical and theoretical approaches to the translation of children’s literature” which “includes an international bibliography, and remains a useful point of reference” (213). Lathey’s *Reader* (2006) gathers together, for the first time, essays upon the *Translation of Children’s Literature* since this is the title she considers appropriate to use in order to provide a synthetic account of what has been achieved in the field over the last thirty years. Van Coillie and Verschuere’s anthology *Children’s Literature in Translation: Challenges and Strategies* (2006) comprises 11 articles which explore a variety of aspects involved in the translation process such as: the impact of translational norms, the paradigmatic shift from the source text to the target text, the choice between foreignizing and domesticating translation and the dual audience (children and adults).

A greater emphasis on empirical research regarding children’s responses to translations is required to discover just how much ‘foreignness’ young readers are able to tolerate, especially in view of research on the degree of sophistication with which young readers respond to texts. Research into reader response to translations may lead to a review of the widespread practice of contextual adaptation for children at a time when the practice in general is regarded as exploitative in its appropriation of the source culture (Venuti 341). Moreover, the development of new research methods in translation studies has the potential to offer new insights into the translation of children’s literature. From Lathey’s (34) point of view, advances in process-oriented studies such as psycholinguistic and cognitive approaches and think-aloud protocols may shed light on how translating for children differs from translating for adult audiences, and large-scale computer analysis of corpora may pinpoint cultural trends and linguistic patterns in translations for the young. I would also add the audiovisual theory since translating literature for children in the wider context of globalization means being aware of the multiple and different modes of translating in contemporary society in which the audio (radio), the audio and the visual (screen), or the written,

the audio and the visual (multimedia) channels could represent the source text.

To sum up, more recent studies are liable to bring us back to contemporaneity by focusing on intercultural education and the translation of children's literature. Some warn against the danger of underestimating the child readers' potential: "Translations of children's books often underestimate the abilities of young readers to make sense of an unknown universe or of different cultures" (Hélot 44). From this perspective, the role of translation is to offer an encounter with otherness through the mediation among different cultures.

3. Cross-Cultural Communication

A passionate researcher in the field of CLT, Oittinen deliberates over the necessity of translating for children stating that its aim is not "to set norms for translating for children but to try to understand what processes are at work in translating for children, that is, how we communicate with children through translation" (6). As a consequence, she examines translation as "cross-cultural communication - including child and adult culture - especially from the point of view of different readers" (6). Differentiating between the aim of an original text dedicated to children and its translation, Oittinen declares:

The scopus of a translation may well be, and to my understanding, always is, different from that of the original, because the readers of the texts, the original and the translation, are different: they belong to different cultures, they speak different languages, and they read in different ways. Their situations are different. (12)

Indeed, one cannot expect a translation of an 18th or 19th century children's text to have the same impact upon a 21st century child-reader as it used to have upon the implied reader of the respective time. For instance, Charles Dickens's novels for children were initially published in monthly instalments, the author permanently keeping his readers' interest in the development of the action. This

is the case of *Oliver Twist*, a novel which was originally published in *Bentley's Miscellany* as a serial that began appearing in the month of February 1830 and continued through April 1839. When publishing this timely novel, Dickens did not address children in particular; in fact, he wanted to draw his contemporary adult citizens' attention upon the greatest evils of his time: child labour and the recruitment of children as thieves and criminals. If the effects of industrialism on 19th-century England were stringent at the time when Dickens wrote his novel, the same realities would no longer be familiar to the 21st-century child-readers. Nevertheless, there are still enough themes, motifs, characters and situations in the novel which could appeal to a 21st-century child-reader as long as reprinting and translations take into account the necessity to explain the historical references and the child's willingness to discover new worlds.

One of the ways one can recognize the problems of cross-cultural communication in a literary work is by drawing attention to the way in which language is used to indicate social relations. Particular terms are used to indicate familiar and other social relationships or to show the position people occupy in the society as a whole. In addition to this language, symbols are used to designate certain referents which do not exist in the alien culture. In as relatively simple a form as the folk-tale, the express purpose of the tale is to inculcate in children an awareness of the society's values - and this may be lost in translation into the language which does not share these values.

When we see translation as cross-cultural communication we first of all see translation as enabling a widening of the audience of a particular text across language boundaries. Texts are normally produced for addressees in one particular culture, and they have normally fulfilled their original function in the source culture (the primary communicative situation). When they are to be translated there is a need to get to know what the text is about, and this need may be related to the addressees in the target community or to the text producers in the source community. Understanding language and culture in terms of "dynamic, flexible, open systems"

(Schaffner 90), the translator in general and the translator of children's literature in particular needs to possess a linguistic and cultural competence of the source text in order to decode them as well as an ability to recognize the intertextual cultural web and repropose it in its complexities in the target text.

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Literacy in the Network of Shifting Borders

SORIN UNGUREAN²⁰

Abstract

Experiencing globalization as we do, with 'networking' the label for across-the-border communication since the end of the twentieth century ('border' taken in more senses than the most plausible one), we witness major shifts in long-established cultural patterns and consequently in the social and political *status quos* of most nations. There are such major contrasts between the astonishing technological breakthroughs achieved in IT, and the very nature of communication thence resulting, that the very substance of communication degenerates into a global, ceaseless, ever-mounting super-babble. It is against this general background that national and international governing bodies with ambitious social goals on their agendas have to cope with an abundance of illiteracy (as well as with other forms of social inadequacy) on the part of their citizens – who in turn claim more and more liberties (a fact that is apt to make generous humanist ideals hard to attain in the present historic context). Evidently, with such changes at hand, re-discussing definitions of fundamental cultural and social concepts is an unavoidable liability.

Keywords: communication; heroes for society; (functional) illiteracy; (functional) literacy; networking; re-defining cultural concepts.

“The ozone hole of over-information broke the protective bubble of literacy.”(Nadin: sub-chapter “Contrasting characters”)

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1. Preliminaries

Statistics published in April 2011 by Eurostat²¹ show that fifteen-year-old Romanian students are at the bottom of the European heap in terms of functional literacy, according to PISA standards (“Low reading literacy performance of pupils”²²). The relevant figures given are for 2006, and Romania scored 53.5%; in contrast, Finland has a 4.8% rate; Ireland 12.1%; Poland 16.2%; and commiserating neighbor Bulgaria 51.1%²³. The contrast is most likely even more acute if youth who have dropped out of school (an endemic state of affairs for Romania) are included. I find this particularly relevant as my present-day students are precisely the generation sampled five years ago – and the Eurostat findings in no way deny the conclusions I have reached in school.

²¹ A Directorate-General of the European Commission whose mission is to provide statistical information at European level.

²² Description of assessment methodology: “Reading literacy focuses on the ability of students to use written information in situations which they encounter in their life. The data are coming from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) which is an internationally standardised assessment that was developed by the OECD and administered to 15-year-olds in schools. In PISA, reading literacy is defined as understanding, using and reflecting written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential and to participate in society. Proficiency at Level 1 and below means that the pupils are not likely to demonstrate success on the most basic type of reading that PISA seeks to measure. Such students have serious difficulties in using reading literacy as an effective tool to advance and extend their knowledge and skills in other areas.” Retrieved May 1, 2011 from

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/dataset?p_product_code=TSDSC450

²³ “Low reading literacy performance of pupils. Share of 15-year-olds who are at level 1 or below of the PISA combined literacy scale”. Information retrieved May 1, 2011 from

<http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=0&language=en&pcode=tsdsc450>

As Global Adult Literacy statistics showed during the last two decades of the communist régime (1970s and 1980s), Romania enjoyed a 95-99% literacy rate, among the highest in the world (and more recent reports still preserve similar figures). The contrast between one instance of statistics and the other can be explained in relation to several different factors: (a) obviously, the *modus operandi* as well as the subjects for the two opposite descriptions of literacy differ; (b) those in charge of numbers would, as a rule, fabricate positive reports whose conclusion was the 'wisdom' of the then-ruling Romanian Communist Party policies; (c) with the change of times, a significant change in the nature of literacy (and of the people endowed with it alike) has occurred. While reading books or going to the theater were some of the few cultural options that Romanians had in the years before 1990, now many spend most of their time zapping on cable television or browsing colorful Internet pages, indulging, as a rule, in tabloid materials.

Romanian youngsters are among the most actively involved in virtual-reality environments – blogs, social networks, forums²⁴ etc, as we also enjoy some of the world's top-speed Internet connections on our local networks. (Our national propensity toward digital computing is illustrated in addition by the high rate of worldwide success enjoyed by our programmers and other IT specialists²⁵). Altogether, the shift in attitude and approach in literacy from the 1970s–1980s to the 2000s–2010s can be explained not just in the (relative) extra convenience of operating a personal computer instead of reading or writing into a book, but also in the

²⁴ In excess of 3.2 million users since the beginning of May 2011; penetration of online population ca. 43%; of which aged 18-24 34%. Information retrieved May 1, 2011 from <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/romania>

²⁵ We rejoice in the quite legendary fame of contributing heavily to the success of Microsoft Corporation where, it is said, “Romanian is the second language spoken”. (Simultaneously, at home, we enjoy some of the highest piracy rates worldwide, with various *Windows* OS and *Office* suites as predilect targets.)

trendiness of displaying powerful (as well as expensive) portable devices in one's group of peers. That is of course a self-feeding kind of conduct among younger generations (by definition prone to assimilate any such catchy gadgets). In the same vein, it may help to understand things saying that for the past decade, the permeation rate for mobile phones in Romania has spectacularly exceeded the rates in most western countries. Finally, it is also a matter of modernization, badly needed after decades (significantly, the 1950s through the 1980s) of lagging behind the rest of Europe in the implementation of advanced technologies of all relevant kinds.

Several decades ago, possession of a voluminous dictionary or specialized atlas would make the happy owner (a school boy or girl) appear as something of a local hero. But today, on average, knowledge acquired via PC (as far as selected knowledge is concerned) is less substantial than that acquired via books – in the sense that it will help build a culture more volatile than the kind previously developed in many a generation of 'slow readers'. In addition, the Internet makes it easy to use shortcuts in one's education, for instance to cheat in the assessment of literacy (making somebody else's text or other material yours takes seconds), therefore the new-media means has “the functional upper hand” in relation to classic (i.e. slow) means of learning. It is we who shift the borders to accommodate our permanently growing, changing needs – but they are confusing us nonetheless. This is a driving force of change that we find extremely hard to resist. With borders shifting (and having all information “a few clicks away”, as they say), it certainly feels like now we're all “Big-League players” – of course we won't question what appears as mere erasing of borders (i.e. limitations).

Talking about heroes: the collective image of who or what best symbolizes the idea of success, our models to look up to, is something that explains a society's general orientation, as well as identity, at a given time in its history. You could think that in the digital age, this would be the image of the cultivated person who is actively involved in the advancement of a society based in its functioning on a solid idea of social justice. Yet, our eternally

confusing Romanian transition promulgates the dominion of the slick, wily, mostly illiterate “entrepreneur” who has speculated the fissures in the liberal organization of society to acquire illicit wealth and, with it, social status, fame, admiration – eventually the vacant position of a people's hero. Such a train of events will in no way help consecrate the values of yesteryear as they have been consecrated in the traditionally literate mode of running a society.

2. About literacy and its challenges

Literacy is commonly defined as “1. The condition or quality of being literate, especially the ability to read and write. [...] 2. The condition or quality of being knowledgeable in a particular subject or field: cultural literacy; biblical literacy.”²⁶ Literacy and its progress in history turns out to be one of the most protean cultural constructs. Naturally, the changing of relations in society and the advancement of economy and living standards brought about various forms of re-formatting literacy, as well as of writing, education, and thinking – the several major guises literacy has assumed in history. While in the European Middle Ages literacy could mean mastery of Latin and/or ancient Greek (written rather than spoken) by an exclusive minority, at later times it implied, for more and more people, being able to read the Sunday paper and sign your name; reading and writing well enough to interact successfully with the local administration; or simply “knowing your three Rs” (*readin', writin', and 'rithmetic*). In our day, in the Global West, literacy tends to mean being able, basically, to interact with other people via computing machines in a satisfactory manner, socially as well as professionally.

The history of literacy goes back to the invention of writing, an estimated five millennia ago; its evolution and spreading was slow, so only during the past two centuries can we see literacy as a common social good in western countries. Movable

²⁶ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition, 2000.

type and the printing press in Europe from the mid-fifteenth century onwards opened broad and fruitful prospects for literacy, but it was the technical developments around the middle of the nineteenth century that ensured papers and books “for all”. Still, even before that moment, at the time of the American Revolution, an estimated 90% of New-England adults could read, thanks to the Puritan belief in the importance of reading the Bible.

And yet, a general view of present things places literacy among forms of tradition whose cyclic evolution has apparently arrived at the final stage before dissolution, as “Requirements of globality, distribution, economies of scale, of elements pertinent to engineering, communication, marketing, management, and of service-providing experiences need to be met within specific educational programs. *The fulfillment of these requirements can never be relegated to literacy.*” (Nadin: sub-chapter “Relevance”; italics mine). It is not unlikely that in the near future – just several generations ahead – literates (at least in the traditional sense of the twentieth-century Western World) will be again a tiny minority of the general population. What we cannot say for sure is whether that minority is going to be an elite group, or ...mere riffraff in the big scheme of things to come.

Literacy is traditionally about the ability to read (decode) and write (encode); such skills come second in human existence, though, both on an individual and a general level, to oral communication (speaking and listening comprehension). What could prove to be one element favoring frailty of literacy is the fact that nevertheless, in formal training, they come first. As a particular form of tradition established and refined throughout recorded history, it follows that education can only rely on, and hope to achieve literacy, if society aims at enhancing its human capital in a lasting, sustainable manner... Except that re-formatting social relations ask for a re-formatting of illiteracy.

As far as the present is concerned, a pragmatic attitude toward literacy and/or education is gaining ground that hinges on that ever heavier portion of society's needs which is *economic efficiency* in such a way that can be expressed, basically, as follows:

“economic efficiency is not the most important thing – it is the only thing”. Not all scholars believe unconditionally in the intrinsic and immovable importance of literacy. Romanian-German-American academic Mihai Nadin, a man of undoubtedly massive culture (as made clear in his book *The Civilization of Illiteracy*, 1997) explains the decline of literacy with brutal honesty, as follows:

Literacy embodies a far less significant part of the current human practical experience of self-constitution than it did in the past. Still, literacy-based education asserts its own condition on everything: learning what is already known is a prerequisite to discovering the unknown. In examining the amount and kind of knowledge one needs to understand past experience and to make possible further forms of human praxis, we can be surprised. The first surprise is that we undergo a major shift, from forms of work and thinking fundamentally based on past experience to realms of human constitution that do not repeat the past. Rather, such new experiences negate it altogether, making it relatively irrelevant. Freed from the past, people notice that sometimes the known, expressed in texts, obliterates a better understanding of the present by introducing a pre-understanding of the future that prevents new and effective human practical experiences. The second surprise comes from the realization that means other than those based on literacy better support the current stage of our continuous self-constitution, and that these new means have a different underlying structure. (Nadin: sub-chapter “Coherence and connection”)

Why is it so difficult to accept such pragmatism? Instinctively, one for whom tradition rings true in claiming one's identity will try to find arguments against giving up the gains obtained after so many generations pushed in the same direction (i.e. the shaping of the world via literacy). One could therefore invoke the following winnings of the past to point out what is lost along with literacy:

- 1.a (more or less) universal sense of time (history) and of space (geography);
- 2.foreign-language mastery, and cultural interactivity on a big scale;

- 3.rigor – as in rigorous recording of facts, scientific texts, or philosophy;
- 4.access to established values of humanity, and their further development;
- 5.participation in social life, exchanges needed on all levels of 'self-constitution';
- 6.the power of the human mind over nature, and all it has given humanity in its history.

All of the above are reasonably considered a fundamental part of what and who we are to such an extent that a humanity deprived of these values may be considered no longer the same (or is literally deemed “the end of civilization as we know it”).

The market is a powerful factor in the erosion of literacy. It pushes the cultivated to the periphery, promotes specialized/efficient professionals: by comparison, “knowing lots of stuff about many things” will hardly pay your bills – but “knowing just enough about one thing” apparently does. Of course, literacy comes at a massive cost, as most education (primary education, at least) consists of, or relies on teaching reading and writing, as well as science implying such activities; and cutting costs is the one universal objective on which decision-makers agree at present. Moreover, many of us spend as long as a quarter of their lives in school, a lot of time implying a lot of expense on the part of society, and with an utterly unsatisfactory outcome in the vast majority of cases at the end of the day (although the critical assessment of what remains of one's education at middle age is, unfortunately, not customarily part of the general evaluation of an educational system).

Genuine literacy is an integral part of the virtuous circle of human activity along with health, wealth, wisdom, and democracy. It is no surprise that the most literate nations live in also in the most developed countries (which are also statistically the most democratic – or at least so show Human Development Indices²⁷).

²⁷ See for detailed reference <http://hdr.undp.org/en/>

Literacy is about knowledge and vice-versa, and acquired knowledge is what being human is very much about. Moreover, the memory of humankind (with all conceivable benefits and burdens) is preserved in the writing upon which this frail literacy rests. The Good, Truth, and Beauty are stored in the literacy of the world. And yet, literacy is a form of alienation (to the extent to which writing is a form of indirectness, a second-degree reflection of the “world of experience” – often no more than a graphic representation of speech, in other words); being literate is actually being able to cope with such alienation. It is hard to explain completely how, after the global index of illiteracy halved in 1970-2005, literacy is now endangered, other than by mentioning the massive cultural changes in progress at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Literacy is now being re-formatted in yet another attempt made by “recent man” (in the famed terms of Romanian thinker H.-R. Patapievici) to free himself from the constraints of established traditions – this time, a particular manner of acquiring the wealth of knowledge, based on hierarchy and implying life-long efforts. Constraints of many types were in a close relation to the making and preservation of literacy in history; once the liberalization of Post-modernity has spread, freeing oneself from said constraints is expected. The literacies of the day shift toward the visual. Multimedia gives instantly what books would offer in exchange of hours, even days of one's life at a time. In a way, the difference between the dominion of literacy and the dominion of its substitutes is similar to the difference between the reign of reason and that of the senses. We can ask ourselves what a world without literacy (or “literacy in the traditional sense”) will be like; contemplating certain phenomena makes it more clear, once the literacy-driven force of moving society forward is absent; for what it's worth, the world of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*, or that of George Orwell's *1984* remain potential possibilities for our future.

One such attempt at re-formatting literacy has to do with re-defining literacy via types; for instance, Stuart Selber suggests an acceptance of different *multiliteracies*: 'functional literacy'; 'critical

literacy'; and 'rhetorical literacy'. Any assortment can be added here, such as: artistic; cultural; digital; health; information-manipulation; mass-media; political literacy etc. Such a degree of specialization and sophistication may tend to invade concepts like "education", even "know-how" or "expertise", but could also allow for a better administration of the issue at hand (fatally depending on who exactly does the administering). There are other new and broadened definitions of literacy, meant to fit the changing needs of society:

Some have argued that the definition of literacy should be expanded. For example, in the United States, the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association have added "visually representing" to the traditional list of competencies. Similarly, in Scotland, literacy has been defined as: "The ability to read and write and use numeracy, to handle information, to express ideas and opinions, to make decisions and solve problems, as family members, workers, citizens and lifelong learners."²⁸

New literacies reflect another approach to literacy management:

Commonly recognized examples of new literacies include such practices as instant messaging, blogging, maintaining a website, participating in online social networking spaces, creating and sharing music videos, podcasting and videocasting, photoshopping images and photo sharing, emailing, shopping online, digital storytelling, participating in online discussion lists, emailing and using online chat, conducting and collating online searches, reading, writing and commenting on fan fiction, processing and evaluating online information, creating and sharing digital mashups, etc²⁹.

²⁸ Information retrieved May 1, 2011 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literacy>

²⁹ Information retrieved May 1, 2011 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_literacies

The same way that literacy is contrasted to illiteracy, functional literacy is to functional illiteracy, defined as inability to “read well enough to manage daily living and employment tasks that require reading skills beyond a basic level” (see Schlechty 2000). The dynamics of functional illiteracy is complex and difficult to track, as individuals evolve in a variety of contexts and have different degrees of illiteracy in one area or another. Illiteracy has its preferred forms of manifestation, in verbal, artistic, and political expression, which causes further cleavages in society (noticeable in Romania as well). Illiteracy cuts short the ability to find one’s way across space and time (which is, partly, how all sorts of mistaken beliefs are explained). Functional illiteracy is also contrasted to “pure illiteracy”; it varies in relation to social and cultural context. A strong mutual-causality connection exists between (functional) illiteracy, poverty, and crime. Illiterates are *proximate* (living or working among literates), and *isolated* (among other illiterates), and so specific social and psychological implications are brought forth in either of the two scenarios.

Some sources of illiteracy are to be found in the impossibility of regulating factors to keep up with communication growth – as, for instance, exchanges often amount to hundreds of Megabytes of information per communicator per day. Illiteracy thrives in areas where those who are supposed to control it and bring remedies are already the byproduct of illiteracy – for instance educators, from pre-school levels to post-academic, who share some of the typical flaws of illiteracy with their students. Other sources lie in politically-correct policies and attitudes seeking to change language in order to subsequently change the thinking; literacy is therefore transforming itself, “fleeing away” into the “knowledgeable” sense. Finally, the continuous pragmatization of existence is another major source of illiteracy.

3. Conclusions

The effects of illiteracy are made evident in the huge social costs (and maybe more stringent in the dramatic lack of perspective for

“literacy as we used to know it”, with all its benefits); they are more diverse than any instances of the discordant fracture between what used to be known as *langue* v. *parole* – in other words, between what language with its “rules and regulations” says and the way people actually use language. There is also a direct competition made evident along generation gaps, between traditional literates and new (i.e. digital) ones. The idea of literacy (along with various language uses, reasoning, and education) “going to the dogs” is given by the new unfolding of pragmatic urgency in structures formerly exempt of (much of) an obligation towards economic efficiency, but now pushed toward making a profit. Many structures housing the making of literacy are now run by managers who are prone to deny “art for art's sake”-type attitudes in their organizations. In a way, “economic efficiency” of literacy is to be taken in the sense invoked by the challenges that public television or radio stations have to face, when some decision-makers try to run them the way commercial stations are run.

In the meantime, faulty literacy – which is going to turn into solid illiteracy, sooner or later – comes at a clear cost (long years of “education” wasted), to which the future costs are yet to be added. Make no mistake about the fate of the few actual literates remaining at that not-so-distant time in the future – the new politicians and decision-makers won't be happy to have them³⁰. But what do we really want to use education for? Do we want it to follow society, or to shape it? It is an unavoidable question at this crucial point, as education and research alike seem now (see for illustration the Bologna Charter and its effects in academic Europe) to be a mere appendix of the workforce market, almost totally subordinated to the pragmatic satisfactions of the regulating powers that be. Education – a mere auxiliary to pragmatic satisfaction?

Literacy has an intrinsic as well as a practical value, and our

³⁰ Find criticism of contemporary relativism and pragmatism in Allan Bloom 1986; Andrei Cornea 2003, and H.-R. Patapievici 2001 etc.

civilization cannot sustain itself in the absence of what literacy yields in either of its two qualities, and in all instances of human mastery of nature. Beyond any form of “art for art's sake” (or equivalent) that the individual cannot maybe account for is something bigger, something that our species (...or this world?) needs and can definitely account for: survival. The ultimate alternative to literacy is not illiteracy, eventually, but extinction. “This is a radical teaching but perhaps one appropriate to our own radical time, in which proximate attachments have become so questionable and we know of no others.” (Bloom: 382)

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Interdisciplinarity in
Medicine in Translation – Journeys with My Patients

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Abstract

Danielle Ofri, both writer and physician, touches on, through fiction, some issues that emerge from living in a global world. Thus, the reader can acknowledge primarily the cultural conflicts that exist as a result of coming in contact with *the other*. Nevertheless, Ofri's journeys shed light on how language barriers, religious and racial differences can also offer fruitful, positive examples of identities, cultures and civilizations. Ofri pictures many challenges that are a consequence of our multicultural society, writing on the intertwining of medicine with the reality of globalization at Bellevue Hospital as well as worldwide. Her creative way of bridging cultural gaps is fundamentally based on rich insights into the human condition.

Keywords: global world, language barriers, cultural conflicts, racial differences, insight

Published in 2010, *Medicine in Translation – Journeys with My Patients* is a fascinating book that can enrich the reader's views about the world at large and the human being in particular, suffering from dislocation, both at physical and cultural level. It is an extremely interesting writing in the context of the changing global landscape, centering on such themes as: 'national' versus 'international', 'you' versus 'the other', 'social and economic

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borders' versus 'religious and political conflicts', to name just a few. The author, Danielle Ofri, who is also an attending physician at Bellevue Hospital, New York, has manifested a deep interest in linking medicine to literature. Thus, she gave birth to incredibly profound works that were to appear in *Best American Essays*, *Best American Science Writing*, *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New England Journal of Medicine* and *Lancet*. Her previous books: *Singular Intimacies: Becoming a Doctor at Bellevue* and *Incidental Findings: Lessons from My Patients in the Art of Medicine* only opened the gates for a most complex and complete work that appeared under the title of *Medicine in Translation* in 2010.

This writing, a novel – if it can be called that – being roughly 250 pages, is a great mixture of multiple lives and spheres of reality that explain, describe and ultimately justify the reasons why a physician like Dr. Ofri found that it was a pleasure and a necessity to put the experiences together and create an excellent example of how useful the interdisciplinary approach can be for a person who passes through a globalization process but has not touched much of foreign lands yet. The book is, therefore, inspired from the author's life as well as from her patients' lives, Bellevue Hospital functioning as a contact zone.

Medicine in Translation is organized into three parts and thirty chapters. Apart from the specific location of the oldest public hospital in the country where the author metaphorically embarks on journeys with her patients, learning about their experiences as outsiders or immigrants in America, there is another contact zone, namely Costa Rica, where the author, her husband and her two children move for quite a long period of time, and where her third daughter is born. What is indeed interesting is that she herself becomes a patient in a foreign country, where she comes to understand the complicated nature of being in-between cultures and experiences a feeling of loss and not-belonging within the frontiers of her own nation when she comes back. Consequently, "[...] there is also a powerful psychological dimension to globalization" (*Global Issues* 4); the process implies so many aspects that by

simply remaining around the walls of your own civilization and not even encountering people from outside those walls, you may be misled into thinking that ‘becoming global’ only hints at the issues of language and culture. The author herself has origins in Eastern Europe and Yemen: “[...] on my father’s side my grandparents were from Yemen [...]” (Ofri 140). She thus certainly comprehended that there was more about the process of coming into contact with the other, given that language barriers are accompanied by religious and racial differences, as well as emotional and practical difficulties.

The present essay introduces the question of perceiving the global world in its contradictions, through the vast melting pot of American society, as it is depicted in Danielle Ofri’s work. Yet, beyond the hospital, there should also be fertile zones in terms of cultural identity as the cofounder and editor-in-chief of the *Bellevue Literary Review* provides stories that cannot be more timely in point of access to the crossroads of the world’s cultures. These pieces of lives, gathered in a few pages of literary work, demonstrate the power of fiction to convey, through words, in books, the most beautiful and yet painful sides of being human in a new era marked by: cosmopolitanism, globalism, openness. Therefore, these pages can also take the form of lessons as they teach us about the reinvention, reorganization or, at least, reinterpretation of predetermined borders. Consequently, the reader should enter the book and translate medicine into something that is closer to enhancing the quality of interdisciplinary writing as the patients reveal facts that are valid both in sickness and in health. This study undoubtedly invites us to digest Danielle Ofri’s telling beyond the medical concerns, thus, rendering medicine should be translated into further issues, connected to realities that may begin in the hospital but do not remain limited to the ward. If *Medicine in Translation* is interpreted as a book on globalization, then it certainly promotes the idea of people(s) in contact, as “[a]lthough the literature on globalization presents a multitude of definitions, what these seem to have in common is that globalization refers to a process of integration that leads to increased linkages among

different countries and individuals around the world” (Cockerham 6).

The first chapter is written in the third person singular as it is entirely dedicated to Samuel Nwanko, a Nigerian who was brutally attacked in his homeland and came to America in an attempt to start a new life and maybe create a new reality for him that was to be forever split into parts: his past and his present. His sad experience in Nigeria took place in his apartment, with him thinking: “It would probably take five to ten minutes for those guys to break down two wooden doors with locks. The police – if he managed to get through to an officer who wasn’t taking a cigarette break and who didn’t demand an up-front bribe – might take thirty minutes to arrive” (Ofri 4). Still he tries to phone for help, but with no positive result as he goes through the worst nightmare when he is forced to drink sulfuric acid, a stage that is described in a very relevant way. The writer follows closely his thought processes and expressively suggests that first he has no knowledge about the water they give him as being acid: “Water, Samuel thought. He knew of this routine – after the beating, thieves would give the victim water to help him recover just a bit, just enough to reveal where the money and valuables were hidden” (Ofri 6). Later on we learn that the attackers were some cult members, a common thing in Southern Nigeria universities. As a consequence, Samuel underwent six surgeries in Buffalo and his healing process – a long and complicated one – was marked by his wish and need to get rid of Nigeria, of Africa, of his past. Samuel’s experience proves the point made by Kathryn Jacobsen in *The Health of Special Populations*, where she explains why people travel from one place to another nowadays: “People move from one community or country to another for a variety of reasons. Some move voluntarily to be closer to family, to start a new job, or to pursue educational opportunities, while others are forced to move because of violence, persecution, or natural disasters” (94). The reasons why Samuel had to leave his home country are even more evident now.

Being written by an author who is primarily a doctor, *Medicine in Translation* offers as many explanations as necessary

to encompass all ideas that lead to understanding the medical conditions of the patients, the intrusion into their inner fears and hopes being displayed openly and compassionately: “Sulfuric acid melts skin and muscle in a process called coagulation necrosis” (Ofri 16). Samuel Nwanko’s fiancée leaves him much in the way he leaves his country, hoping for a better future elsewhere. His story reveals man’s fears for a new start in a new state, which implies his wish for people’s fighting superficiality and seeing him beyond his face. The narration grows in pathos as it becomes clear that he remains an outsider, both because he inhabits a foreign land and because of his physical appearance: “I took a moment to contemplate the capacity of American society to set aside superficial appearances and consider the person beneath the face. I was not optimistic” (Ofri 89). Samuel Nwanko is the first protagonist who exemplifies the terror, suffering and self-rejection experienced in being caught between cultures, identities, harsh memories and unkind realities. He is confronted with the impossibility of finding sense for his existence, endlessly continuing his resignation, desperate to reach a balance in renouncing and moving on. Danielle Ofri understands very well his incapacity to adapt or re-adapt within a world that refuses to accept him. She ultimately concludes: “Whenever I asked about support systems, the answer was never husband, friends, coworkers, relatives, neighbors. The answer was always the same – the church” (Ofri 142).

The book does not provide a linear sequence, it bounces from here to there, from this patient to that patient, from English to Spanish, as people who enter the hospital come from different places, have different health problems and speak different languages. Danielle Ofri herself shows different interests and passions that are to suggest the multiple facets of our nowadays man, who can indulge in various activities that complement each other and result in producing a round picture for the modern personality: “Tuesdays I did not work in the hospital. Tuesday mornings I devoted to writing, and Tuesday afternoons were my cello lessons” (Ofri 17). Largely speaking, the variety of life styles

proves the fact that reality in a global way is far from being simple and predictable. There are many cultural benefits at stake. Moreover, “as a nation of immigrants from the 19th to 21st century, the United States has been a recipient as much as an exporter of global culture. [...] American culture has spread throughout the world because it has incorporated foreign styles and ideas” (*Global Issues* 25-26). Dr. Chan and Mrs. Geng – immigrants from China – nicely state their truth concerning the speed of living in a rapidly changing world: “Life in China... regular, Dr. Chan said. Life in America... irregular” (Ofri 21). On the other hand, Mrs. Uddin – “a heavysset woman from Bangladesh” – represents the patient who over-uses the medical system and shows comfort in remaining true to her traditions. Dr. Ofri openly confesses her failure to perceive the woman in a positive light due to her inability to comply with the norms of America which do not support indoctrinated beliefs: “[...] how much I hated that stultifying, dehumanizing veil. [...] I had my own personal discomfort with the concept of the veil” (Ofri 25-26). Mrs. Uddin’s daughter, Azina, experiences a sad encounter with someone who blames her for the attack on 9/11 and even scares her with his physical threats:

I was waiting for the bus, on my way to school, and there was this guy at the bus stop. [...] He was looking at me funny, then he started to talk to me. ‘The attack on 9/11 was your fault’ he said. ‘You killed three thousand Americans.’ So I said to him, ‘I’m Bangladeshi. Bangladeshi had nothing to do with 9/11.’ But he did not stop at that: ‘You people ruined our country’ he yelled. I couldn’t move. He had me pinned against the wall. Then he reached over with the knife and tore off my veil and head scarf with it. I was so scared he was going to stab me. (Ofri 195-196)

As a result, Azina gave up wearing the veil because it was too dangerous. At this stage, we get some clues about the difficulty of people accepting one another, tolerating the differences between them and growing into a superior consciousness that says we are all equal and special in our uniqueness. Ultimately, as the following statement explains, “[i]f we do not invent ways to make

globalization more inclusive, we have to face the prospect of a resurgence of the acute social confrontations of the past, magnified at the international level.” (*Global Issues* 5) Although it is true that organized crime and terrorism are also major beneficiaries of globalization (a fact that is enlarged upon in *Global Issues* 42-45), the phenomenon should not provide a fruitful context to endanger the security of the individual who has no involvement in terrorist acts.

At Bellevue Hospital, the SOT (solid organ transplant) patients best embodied the cruel consequences of cultural clashes, racial, religious or identity conflicts. In *Health and Globalization* – relevant in this respect – the authors mention the organ transplant, explaining that: “Globalization has fostered a rise in medical tourism, which refers to patients in one part of the world travelling to another part in order to obtain medical treatment or drugs” (Cockerham 29). Yet, *Medicine in Translation* goes further and suggests the risks these patients take, i.e. to lose their lives in the name of a sacred principle or for the sake of a bleak idea; thus, they are the people who express the sorrow of mankind’s helplessness either to accept change or to deny it peacefully. Moreover, they are the victims of infinite attempts to fill the hole between discrepancies and form a whole new world in which the local is naturally included in the global, no longer secluded or excluded:

The energy, effort and creativity invested in destroying the human body and spirit seemed limitless. [...] No matter what I said or did with my SOT patients, it always felt useless. It was a different feeling of uselessness than I felt, for example, for a patient dying of cancer. Disease – no matter how painful or humiliating or even self-inflicted – was something that occurred. [...] Torture, on the other hand, had a face. Somebody, an actual person, did it. A human being raised the knife, poured the acid, [...], set the fire. [...] And that, I think, was what made these patient encounters so unsettling, above and beyond contemplating the horror that the victim himself had endured. *Somebody* did this, some member of our humanity, and, whether I liked it or not, I was part of that same humanity. (Ofri 203-204)

This quotation is relevant in so far as human nature appears to behave in situations that imply negotiating the views of life in a modern or, specifically, post-modern era. Subsequently, globalization begins *within*, that is, it starts inside each and every human being who cannot be separated from the rest; inner responses to the politics of redrawing the borders have a decisive role in the re-formation of the Earth. There should thus be a balance between *yes* and *no* to happily living together: “I sometimes felt as though I had to stack up Vivaldi, Lully, and Bach against Mugabe, Hussein, bin Laden, and all the random dictators who littered the globe. There had to be a counterbalance in this world [...]” (Ofri 204)

The fact is that we are still governed by invisible inadequacies that sometimes disturb any desirable equilibrium. Coming into contact is many times a matter of dissonance, first and foremost dictated by nationality and adherence to personal unshakable beliefs: “Julia Barquero is a thirty-six-year-old Guatemalan female with an exacerbation of congestive heart failure [...] The resident was a Filipino who’s been raised in Cleveland [...] Amadon Sow is a forty-nine-year-old man from Senegal [...] admitted a week ago with lung cancer, metastatic to his bones” (Ofri 28-31). And the list of patients does not end with only this mixture of lives: Mr. Mezondes, 24 years old, comes from Brazzaville, Congo. Danielle Ofri specifies his having emigrated from Africa and lived in Canada first. It is he who tells us “[...] how different Canada was from America” (Ofri 41).

An interesting topic in *Health and Globalization (How Global Is Contemporary Globalization?)* refers to the fact that there are people who remain *outside* the globalization process:

While the Internet is the fastest and least expensive means of global communication and information, 91 percent of users live in the richest states, which have only 19 percent of the world’s population. Additionally, about 80 percent of websites are in English, a language spoken by less than 10 percent of the world’s population (UNDP 2002). As a result, it is apparent that the world

is divided among people that are connected to the globalization process and others who are isolated from it. (Cockerham 15)

Most of the Bellevue clerks are Hispanic, bilingual in English and Spanish. But the hospital reflects the facts mentioned in *Health and Globalization*. Due to the many nationalities it supports, the institution enjoys a modern system for language interpretation, an indispensable reality as even the elevator operator is Ukrainian. Thus, when the patient starts his visit with the doctor, it is the latter who will press a button in order to have access to the Medical Interpretation Service. The author very much enlarges upon the challenges of communication in America, suggesting that it is extremely hard to really have a conversation with the patient who does not speak your language. It is because of this inconvenience that simultaneous interpretation seems a great invention. But we also learn how difficult it is for the interpreter to keep the pace both with the patient and the doctor. The French interpreter explains how a doctor may simply say, for example, HIV and he cannot translate these letters because they would not make sense in French. Therefore, he has to say: *virus de l'immunodéficience humaine*, while the doctor keeps on addressing the patient. Language barriers become evident, moreover when the patients “[...] overwhelmingly preferred direct communication—even if somewhat flawed – to the unnatural stiffness of an interposed interpreter, no matter how perfect the translation” (Ofri 59). Wilamena Ortiz is from Peru and we learn that Peruvian Spanish is clear, each word being fully articulated. Azad Aptekin is from Turkey, born in a family of eleven children, most of them living in Europe or America. Other patients come from New Zealand, the Republic of Cameroon, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Yemen, Tibet or Puerto Rico. The author mentions her wish to write about the patients who had some impact on her; the narrative ultimately moves back and forth in fictive time, halting on different stories that only add rhythm, pushing ahead the overall story.

There are some evasions from medicine, however. Dr. Ofri sees her luthier (a repairer of stringed instruments), the Romanian

Sebastian, an immigrant to America, who examines her cello; she also travels with her family to Costa Rica and decides to stay there for about a year, in spite of being aware of the fact that she is carrying an unborn child with her: “What surprised me the most was that I did not miss medicine” (Ofri 117). Costa Rica is meant to be a great opportunity for using Spanish and her hopefully learning the language, apart from being a safe place to give birth to the child, a girl. For the author herself, the period lived in a foreign country proves to be a source of understanding her past way of living, with all the stress “back there”, in New York. Moreover, it is now that she learns about the American way: “In the United States, the difference – and indifference – was palpable” (Ofri 119). It is now that she can fully acknowledge Mr Amal’s feelings of isolation, loneliness, bafflement and disappointment: “Nobody talks to you in America... They are polite and greet you [...] but they don’t actually want an answer [...]” (Ofri 158). The author thus emphasizes the gap between illusion and reality, between imagining how things can be in a country and how they really are. As Jacobsen argues, “[d]isplaced people who settle in new areas often face challenges associated with learning new cultural practices, overcoming language and communication barriers [...]” (96) Danielle Ofri offers a genuine picture of life at Bellevue Hospital, shedding light upon the situation of the immigrant and the side-effects of any process that refers to bringing people of different cultures under the same roof: “If we’d been in a private hospital with an American citizen, we’d be discussing the ways this disease could be cured. [...] To a policymaker, it made perfect sense to limit organ donation to citizens only” (Ofri 38). At this point, we can easily notice the issue of *health inequalities*:

The constitution of the World Health Organization (Appendix II) states that health is a fundamental right of all people regardless of race, religion, political belief, economic or social condition. We could add to that list other categories like age, sex, nationality, immigration status, educational level, occupation, ethnicity, health insurance type and marital status. Yet significant differences in health continue to exist between groups. [...] Inequalities in health,

differences in health experience and health status, exist at many levels. (Jacobsen 20)

It is only in the third part of the book that we receive final information about the author and her husband. At this level we are deeply implicated into questions of religious debate. The name Ofri identifies the residents of Afar, Yom Kippur – the holiest day for the Jews. This day finds the doctor working as she can no longer enjoy a free day according to the hospital rule which says that patients are to be informed long before their visit is postponed. Danielle Ofri confesses her wish to write a book and asks for her patients' approval to share their stories. It is obvious that she had thought about this prospect in advance and admitted the doctor in her as well as the writer in her. Still, her primary orientation gave rise to a piece of writing that abounds in medical terms, such as: glioblastoma (a brain tumor), laparoscopic surgery, cardiovascular, blood-pressure, meniscus, gastritis, medications, mammograms, hepatitis C, cholesterol, renal cyst, glaucoma, back pain, ventricular tachycardia, prophylactic procedure, cardiologist, X-ray. Clinic and even medical abbreviations are also present: MMP – multiple medical problems, AICD – automatic implantable cardioverter defibrillator. Nevertheless, the book does not focus on medicine, it only starts from health problems at the hospital. Ultimately, Bellevue comes to represent the world while the patients can be the people relating to each other either because of some similar disease or because of random encounter. In each case, it is the translator who performs the linking between them all, bridging not only people but also cultures.

The word *home* carries with it the sense of belonging or owning in times when the land is possessed and walls are built to enclose spaces where identity can be best hidden. The author's use of Spanish as the language of communication reveals an undeniable truth: to start with, we cannot be perfectly united as long as we speak and love in a different language and, as long as we do not accept the other. There are many Spanish words and phrases in the book, but also French and some Arabic ones. This linguistic

openness may very well show the author's view of the world being *one*, of *home* being anywhere and everywhere, of the man thinking *globally*. Yet, as the writing reveals, "[...] cure meant home" (Ofri 239) and home, for Danielle Ofri's patients and close friends or relatives, is where you own your house, where you speak your language or where you are culturally and religiously accepted.

Medicine in Translation is meant to provide a new, fresh impetus to see the contact between people as an opportunity, not as a threat. Kathryn Jacobsen's statement that "global interconnectedness impacts health" (Preface, XI) can be read not only in a negative way – meaning that contact creates the premise for the transmission of disease – but also in a positive way, that is, we have the possibility to be cured – literally or metaphorically – precisely because we can come in contact. Therefore, Ofri's book is a powerful example that sustains the existence of a psychological dimension to globalization (a fact that is clarified at the very beginning of this essay). And it is, without doubt, somehow connected to John Lennon's lyrics: "Imagine there's no countries. It isn't hard to do."

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Antinomic Interpretations of Self
as Defined by Moral Rights and Copyrights in
British Tradition, Spirit and Feelings,
and The United States Constitution

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Abstract

Why is the use of copyrighted materials in the United Kingdom referred to as a process of ‘fair dealing’, while in the United States it is referred to as a process of ‘fair use’? Because of the universality of communications and the ever expanding use of the Internet to facilitate the free flow of published expression between readers in the United Kingdom and the United States, works have comingled their respective copyright notices that are attached to them. At first glance ‘fair dealing’ and ‘fair use’ might appear to be synonymous terms having the same meaning in law, but they are not. But then, neither is there a simple explanation as to what either term means. To find an answer it is necessary to reference a supreme written law to understand both their parameters and penumbras defining national law on copyrights, as modified by international treaties.

Keywords: Copyright law; moral rights of authors; “fair use”; “fair dealing”; US Constitution; UK law, freeborn rights.

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WHEN ALL, AND NOTHING AT ALL, IS “FAIR”

For obvious reasons, a discussion on national copyrights is really an interpretive extrapolation of legal history and current laws,³⁴ and because a world government does not exist, ‘international law’ is in reality a reference to national copyright treaties ratified by individual national governments. Such treaties are of necessity written instruments which can be tested in national courts of law. Therefore, when any nation that is not operating under a written contract with its own People, then enters into a copyright treaty with another nation, or it tests that treaty in a court of law, a question should arise as to whom that nation is representing, if it is not ‘The People’ inhabiting that nation.

Although the United Kingdom began life a mere two years after the United States became a nation,³⁵ the UK does not have a written Constitution defining its sovereignty, powers or laws. However, operative agents of the USA perform executive, legislative and judicial undertakings in accordance with the contractual terms and conditions of a supreme Constitution written in the name of ‘The People’. While it governs the affairs of that nation, in the UK there is no such contract with ‘The People’, and therefore a degree of pretense has entered the picture in what might be classified as a ‘legal fiction’.³⁶

³⁴ As of this publication was about to go to press the duration of UK copyrights were in the process of being retroactively extended.

³⁵ The USA in 1789; the UK in 1801.

³⁶ A legal fiction is a ‘fact’ created out of thin air with the agreement of a court in order to overcome a legal ambiguity. In the USA a company created by a State and registered as a corporation, has many (but not all) of the same rights under law as a natural person, and for this reason it is considered to be a person in law requiring licensed legal representation, even though the company-corporation may only have one stock owner, but only licensed attorneys can practice law by representing another party. Even if the single owner is a licensed attorney, it still may be necessary for the company-corporation to obtain its own legal representation in order to avoid charges of comingling of assets and conflict of interest. In this instance it is a legal fiction to claim that the company-corporation is a

In the instance of the United Kingdom, this legal fiction creates the illusion of a Constitution where none exists in reality. It begins when references are made to the ‘unwritten’ Constitution of the United Kingdom; the seemingly contradictory claim that an unrelated written body of work represents the written Constitution of the United Kingdom,³⁷ or referring to a series of ‘Conventions’ which give the impression that supreme law in the UK exists by another name.³⁸ It is circular reasoning that provides a *modus operandi* for the British Crown, but its *modus operandi* does not exist in writing as a single document authored by and in the name of The People of the United Kingdom.

Fiscally speaking, in 2011, The Crown Estate claims ownership of large areas of the United Kingdom:

The Crown Estate is administered by The Crown Estate Commissioners as a unified estate. There is no separate accounting

‘person’ having rights under law. In another example an adopted child may be provided with a new birth certificate which replaces the original birth certificate, so that the names of the natural parents who caused the birth of the child are replaced with the names of adopting parents as though they were the natural parents. For this reason it is a legal fiction to claim that the United Kingdom has a written Constitution when no single document exists by that name. Consequently some scholars assert that the UK does not have a written Constitution, while other scholars citing a legal fiction may claim the exact opposite, and both statements may be true given the circumstances.

³⁷ Even the fabled ‘Magna Carta’ falls into this category, since it forms part of the history of the Kingdom of England. It has no relationship to the legal history of the former Kingdom of Scotland which in 1707, joined England to form one half of the Kingdom of Great Britain, that was absorbed in 1801 into the new United Kingdom.

³⁸ A prime example of this took place on the BBC Radio 4 showcase program ‘Today’ when former Speaker of the House of Commons Betty Boothroyd referenced the ‘Conventions’ in the context of discussing the existing relationship between the House of Commons and the House of Lords, regarding a proposal to turn the House of Lords into an elected chamber.

for the income generated by The Crown Estate in Scotland – all income after meeting costs is paid to the UK Treasury.³⁹

Politically the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is a fractured state composed of English regions and other ‘nations’.⁴⁰ This ‘flimflam’ first came to the attention of the general public over the issue of ‘Home Rule’ for Ireland in the Nineteenth Century, and then it arose again in the Nineteen Seventies when serious propositions were made to ‘devolve’ governmental power to the ‘nations’ which form the United Kingdom. This terminology is in itself perplexing, because it implies that the UK is not a singular nation but a confederation of kingdoms.⁴¹ In 1977 it prompted Tam Dalyell to write his seminal book *Devolution: The End of Britain?*⁴² Dalyell, a Member of Parliament at Westminster who represented a constituency in Scotland, warned the House of Commons that this ‘Pandora’s Box’ called ‘devolution’ could not be opened just a little, because once the latch was lifted, the lid would eventually open up until devolution eventually led to the total secession of Scotland. This was the end result of ‘Home Rule’ in Ireland, although it was not the original intent. Therefore devolution could lead to other areas of the UK following suite.⁴³

³⁹ Cited in “Our History.”

⁴⁰ The BBC uses the word ‘nation’ to describe its internal operations: “BBC Nations & Regions is the largest regional broadcasting operation in the UK...” (“Key Facts”)

⁴¹ That was its status after June 19, 1566, when King James VI of Scotland also became King James I of England on March 24, 1603; but on May 1, 1707, Queen Anne became the first Queen of the new and singular Kingdom of Great Britain which preceded the formation of the United Kingdom on January 1, 1801, after the separate Kingdom of Ireland joined the existing union of England and Scotland to form yet another new nation.

⁴² cf. Dalyell, 1977.

⁴³ See Dalyell, p.229. In 1977 Tam Dalyell stated two possible results from a reformulated Parliament of Scotland after the original was merged

THE FOUNDATION OF “SOVEREIGN POWER”

A written Constitution is not just an interesting idea; it is a necessity that may be compared to a master budget covering all expenditures, versus an emergency expenditure during an interim period of time while a master budget is pending completion. When a nation holds itself out to be an absolute monarchy, a theocracy or even an atheistic, nepotistic dictatorship, it is possible to reach an understanding with that nation as to what its law is, and what its law is not, since all law flows from a central command with absolute power to enforce it. But when a nation holds itself out to be a democracy which claims to represent the will of the governed, yet it does not produce any written instrument that affirms this to be a matter of proven fact, then ambiguity immediately arises as to what is, and what is not the will of ‘The People’.

In the matter of copyright law we begin with the issue of ‘self’, because a copyright is a manifestation of ‘self’, as opposed to a self-contained and unexpressed internalized idea. For this reason, it is not possible to copyright an idea *per se* without demonstrating some tangible manifestation of that idea, which others can see, and judge its validity. In the United Kingdom, “copyright protects the expression of an idea and not the idea itself,”⁴⁴ where “...for literary, dramatic and musical works [the author is defined as] the person who created the work,”⁴⁵ and copyright protection is afforded by successive Acts of the Parliament at Westminster, which have been made in accordance with international treaties. In

in 1707 with the English Parliament under the Acts of Union: 1) Britain becomes a federal state with a written Constitution; or 2) the United Kingdom is dismantled and Scotland becomes an independent nation once again. In 1997 a successful referendum led to the Scotland Act 1998 and on May 12, 1999 a new Scottish Parliament met for the first time in Edinburgh. Since that time more power has been devolved to the new Scottish Parliament and in 2011 the majority Scottish National Party affirmed that they will hold a referendum on Scottish independence.

⁴⁴ cf. Lowe, p. 83.

⁴⁵ See Cornish, p.23, s.67 and p.10, s.25.

the United States, protection is derived from legislation created by authority given under Article I, Section 8, of its written Constitution:

The Congress shall have Power ... To promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries...⁴⁶

Unless the expressed manifestation has fiscal worth, the legal system has no methodology of addressing a remedy for breaches of copyright, since the concept of copyright is a legislative enforcement of the right to copy a creative work. However, a variation of copyright law has arisen under the classification of ‘moral rights’,⁴⁷ although there is no universal agreement as to the application of moral rights with regards to copyrights.⁴⁸ It is in this

⁴⁶ See “Copyright Law of the United States of America and Related Laws Contained in Title 17.”

⁴⁷ See the excellent Internet web pages covering copyright law and the moral rights of authors in the context of the laws of both European and United Kingdom and the Constitution of the United States, written by Dr. Ronald B. Standler.

⁴⁸ Although nations had undertaken selected agreements with regards to copyright control prior to 1886, in that year the *Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works* came into effect as the descendant of the 1883 *Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property*. The Berne Convention focused upon the ‘moral rights’ of the author (*droit d’auteur*), rather than the work produced by the author. See Standler, “Some Observations on Copyright Law.” The driving force behind the Berne Convention was author Victor Hugo who represented both the French Association Littéraire et Artistique Internationale, and the International Peace Movement pressing for European unification. Following the 1806 collapse of the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, Hugo hoped that he could help bring about a United States of Europe by using the United States of America as his source of inspiration. See also: Gilder, Eric and Hagger, Mervyn. “Prophecies of Dystopic ‘Old World, New World’ Transitions Told,” pp. 205-23.

international arena relating to moral rights and fiscal worth where copyrights are interpreted by ‘fair dealing’ and ‘fair use’, that a legal fog descends.⁴⁹ Within this legal fog a vast army of lawyers derive high standards of living from the opaqueness of ambiguity conducted in courts of law. The basic problem is that there is no simple and universal understanding as to the meaning of either “fair dealing” or “fair use” of copyrighted materials, which is instantly available to interpret any given situation. Both terms require specialized legal knowledge, but individuals who are most likely to reference copyright works in new creative and copyrightable works, are least likely to understand the subject of copyright law.

Compounding basic problems concerning an understanding of copyright law is the fact that the history of copyright law in the UK, and copyright law in the USA, has followed two separate paths. Because the subject of copyright law arose within the context of freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of religion, it also became a point of collision between related, but antinomic laws, on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. To understand how and why these different interpretations emerged it is necessary to review the origins of both nations.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BIRTHS OF NATIONS

Although it is common to think of the history of the United Kingdom as ancient,⁵⁰ its origins can be traced back to the year

⁴⁹ Because copyright control is an area specifically addressed by the U.S. Constitution, while other areas address issues concerned with freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of religion, it was not until 1988 that the United States joined the Convention with caveats concerning areas that may cause conflict with its Constitution and legislation subsequently created to administer copyright control in the USA.

⁵⁰ As touched upon within this article, it is a common mistake to assume that the name ‘British’ or ‘Brit’ for short refers to the English and England. Geographically ‘British’ refers to the archipelago called the British Isles, of which the island of Great Britain is the largest and serves as the main land location (but not all) for England, Wales and Scotland,

1801 and the merger of two kingdoms – Great Britain and Ireland. The United States of America was formed in two stages that began in 1776 when thirteen colonies in British North America declared their independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain, and formed a confederacy called the United States of America under *Articles of Association*. This arrangement was superseded in 1789 by the federal nation-state which retained the original confederate name. The basis for both its laws and sovereignty was defined in a written Constitution that was authored collectively in the name of ‘The People’. Ten amendments which became known as the *Bill of Rights* were added to the original document before ratification and adoption, with the First Amendment to the Constitution mandating that:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.⁵¹

Problems can arise over interpretation of this basic statement when freedom of speech and freedom of the press, include speech to which an author has been granted copyright protection under Article I, Section 8, of the main body of the U.S. Constitution. That is because both the ‘Copyright Clause’ and the First Amendment are subject to further extrapolation under powers granted in the Constitution to the United States Congress, and legislation in the first part (Copyright Clause) can set it upon a collision course of interpretation with the second part (First Amendment). When such ambiguity arises in the United States, its Supreme Court has the final say by issuing an Opinion of the Court. From its findings has

with both political divisions of Ireland being situated primarily upon a neighboring main island of that same name.

⁵¹ See “The Bill of Rights” at *The Charters of Freedom*.

arisen a general concept known as ‘fair use’,⁵² a highly subjective explanation that has no single legal definition, but it does remove the apparent conceptual conflict between the wording of the Copyright Clause and the First Amendment in the Constitution. However, specific interpretations concerning the applicability of ‘fair use’ to any given situation, often results in further lower court deliberations.

TRADITION, SPIRIT AND FEELINGS

The history of current copyright law in the United Kingdom began, not so much in the proverbial ‘mists of time’, but not too long ago in the recurring and shifting machinations of religiously motivated ideologues. Its beginning can be traced to the birth of the Kingdom of Great Britain in 1707 when Queen Anne simultaneously but independently, became the last Queen of England, and the last Queen of Scotland and the first monarch of the new Kingdom of Great Britain.⁵³ Under fiscal pressure, the Kingdom of Scotland

⁵² ‘Fair use’ allows for copyright materials to be used for purposes of commentary and criticism, with the caveat that such use does not deprive the copyright owner of income. Because this interpretation is entirely subjective it has resulted in an entirely new body of case law. See “Copyright and Fair Use” *Stanford University Libraries*. Also, one of the rights accorded to the owner of copyright is the right to reproduce or to authorize others to reproduce the work in copies or phonorecords. This right is subject to certain limitations found in sections 107 through 118 of the copyright law (U.S. Copyright Law, Title 17 U.S. Code). One of the more important limitations is the doctrine of “fair use.” The doctrine of fair use has developed through a substantial number of court decisions over the years and has been codified in section 107 of the copyright law. See U.S. Copyright Office, “Copyright: Fair Use.”

⁵³ Great Britain is the island upon which England and Scotland are located and home of the Kingdom of Great Britain from 1707 to 1801. The Kingdom of Great Britain was joined by the Kingdom of Ireland to form the new nation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Yet another change took place when the most of Ireland became an independent republic, leaving only a rump called Northern Ireland as part of a reconstituted United Kingdom.

agreed to close-down its independent Parliament and have representation in a new British Parliament located at the former Palace of Westminster⁵⁴ in London, England.

Although the original Kingdom of Great Britain had nominally been formed by merging the kingdoms of England and Scotland, the historical, legal and cultural legacy of Scotland which developed separately from England, was for the most part ignored, and this has now resulted in the potential break-up of the United Kingdom.⁵⁵ As a result of the fallacy that British means English, a widespread perception has been fictitiously established that British legal history is merely a continuation of English legal history. Illustrating this interpretative falsity is an entry on page 399 of the *Diaries 1973-76* written by British Cabinet Minister Tony Benn:

Thursday, 12 June (1975): Cabinet began.... The first item was how we should handle the American bicentennial celebrations. ... One idea was that there should be a joint meeting between both Houses of Parliament and Congress at Westminster Hall and a facsimile of *Magna Carta* should be presented. Willie Ross [Labour MP for Kilmarnock and Secretary of State for Scotland] was against that because *Magna Carta* had no connection whatever with Scotland.⁵⁶

This objection by Willie Ross was later ignored when Westminster Hall which accommodates 2,000 people and adjoins

⁵⁴ Most of the present site of Parliament was destroyed by a major fire on October 16, 1834, after which it was restored and it was partially rebuilt again when German incendiary bombs destroyed the House of Commons on May 10, 1941, during WWII. See Cormack, pp. 728-757.

⁵⁵ While the English evolved from primarily Norman, Anglo-Saxon and Viking influences, the Scots, like the Cornish, Welsh and Irish, have a Celtic genealogical, cultural and legal history which was continually pushed aside. Until the process of devolution which has sparked a revival of Scottish identity, the term 'British' had become another word for 'English'. For the argument against devolution prior to it taking effect, see Dalyell, 1977.

⁵⁶ cf. Benn, Tony, 1989.

the Houses of Parliament, was host to the 1985 convention of the American Bar Association (ABA). Their venue was described as the “historic precinct of English law” and the ABA joined “British counterparts to pay tribute to a common heritage. ...early kings called the councils that gave birth to Parliament and to the law courts that met here for centuries.”⁵⁷

However, the USA which was born in 1776 after severing ties to the Kingdom of Great Britain derived much of its organic legal tradition from Scottish, rather than English, historical sources. But an even bigger flaw in this act of homage by the ABA was being ignored: The foundation of the Kingdom of Great Britain and then United Kingdom resided in the sovereignty of the Crown, whereas since 1789 the sovereignty of the USA has always resided in its written Constitution. But in the first instance of the UK, total power was reserved to a few people, and then in descending layers, it devolved to many more under a system of privileges. In the second instance of the USA, power continues to be held equally as rights by increasing numbers of people,⁵⁸ and they delegate their authority to a few people who perform duties on their behalf. Whenever this principle has been ignored by US politicians, they have run into trouble.⁵⁹

NO WRITTEN CONSTITUTION IN THE NEW GREAT BRITAIN

As a creation of the institution of the British Crown in 1707, the new Parliament of the Kingdom of Great Britain was not bound by anything resembling a written Constitution authored by ‘The People’. Therefore legislation flowed from bestowed monarchical privileges, rather than from edicts written in the name of ‘The People’. Because Parliament was not under any form of restrictive

⁵⁷ Cormack, pp. 742-743.

⁵⁸ Taking into account the extension of voting rights to former slaves and to women.

⁵⁹ The forced resignation of President Richard Nixon is only one of many such examples.

control that prohibited it from enacting specific types of legislation, and it could and it did establish a religion; it limited the free exercise of religion; it abridged freedom of speech, and the press, and it also restricted 'The People' from assembling peacefully in order to petition their Government for a redress of their grievances. In short, the new British Parliament had a blank check (cheque) issued by the British Crown. Copyright laws flowed from this same system of bestowed monarchical privileges, rather than from edicts written in the name of 'The People'.

Under the authority of the Kingdom of Great Britain the new foundational British copyright laws were given the name *Statute of Anne*⁶⁰ after its first monarch, Queen Anne. This legislation became effective in 1710, and it was expanded in scope by various amendments from 1734 to 1800, when the Kingdom of Great Britain vanished like many other kingdoms on the island, into the mist of history. In 1801, the Kingdom of Great Britain merged with the Kingdom of Ireland to become the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Its central Parliament in London issued its own laws on copyright that were based upon modifications to the *Statute of Anne*, and they were amended in 1814, 1833, 1835, 1842, 1862, 1882, 1888 "...and 1906, dealing further with musical copyright."⁶¹ It is important to note that this selective international expansion

⁶⁰ An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned and referenced as The Statute of Anne. See "Statute of Anne, London (1710)." This Act came into effect on April 10, 1710, and it not only laid the foundation for the British copyright laws that followed, but it filled a void which was created in 1662 when the Licensing Act of the Kingdom of England expired, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain was created in 1707 to take its place. "*The Statute of Anne* introduced two new concepts - an author being the owner of copyright and the principle of a fixed term of protection for published works." See "Statute of Anne" *Intellectual Property Office* (UK).

⁶¹ "Impending Changes in the Law of Copyright *The Times* (London).

was facilitated by the Privy Council,⁶² and not by an Act passed by the half-elected⁶³ Parliament:

The international aspect of the [copyright] question was, as has been said, first recognized by the International Copyright Act, 1844. That Act enabled the Crown by Order in Council to direct, as respected works of art first published in a foreign country, that authors should have the same copyright as if the work were first published in the United Kingdom.⁶⁴

By rolling back the hands of time in search for the origins of the foundational *Statute of Anne*, the record shows that this copyright law of 1710 grew out of events precipitated by Henry VIII when he severed the Kingdom of England from Papal authority. Henry VIII assumed those same powers formerly held by the Holy See, and with the assistance of colleagues they were reclaimed in the name of the Kingdom of England.⁶⁵ Even though the Kingdom of England was extinguished in 1707 upon its merger with the Kingdom of Scotland to form the Kingdom of Great Britain, this claim was maintained in England, even though it was unrelated to Scotland.

With merger of the Kingdom of Great Britain and the Kingdom of Ireland in 1801 to form a new United Kingdom, those same powers relating only to England, continued to be claimed by the supposedly unified institution of the British Crown institution.

⁶² “All Cabinet ministers are, upon appointment, sworn into the Privy Council by an oath administered in the presence of the Sovereign. This oath ... imposes a special duty upon all ministers to preserve the secrecy of government and Cabinet business to which they become privy. It is a powerful reinforcement of the *Official Secrets Act* in relation to ministers.” Benn and Mullin, p. 125.

⁶³ The House of Lords remains unelected, and in the House of Commons: “Not until 1928, after a series of Parliamentary Reform Bills spanning a century, was every man and woman over the age of 21 given the right to vote” [for an MP in the House of Commons]. See Cormack, p. 744.

⁶⁴ “Impending Changes in the Law of Copyright”, *The Times* (London).

⁶⁵ See Gilder and Hagger, “I Started a Joke,” pp. 39-62.

This claim was then continued into the Twentieth Century after the majority of Ireland gained independence and left the British Crown in control of an Irish rump in the northern sector of the island. The resulting United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, continued to claim this process of assumed power that began with King Henry VIII of England, which he obtained from the Holy See. In 2011, it is this tenuous chain which still forms the basis for British copyright law.

WHY SANS CONSTITUTION IN THE UK?

As of this writing the UK still lacks a written Constitution. In response to the following question asked by co-author Mervyn Hagger, the reason why the UK does not have a written Constitution was answered by Roy Hattersley, former Deputy Leader of the British Labour Party (1983-1992), and Member of Parliament (1964-1997):⁶⁶

Hagger: Now that the Labour Party has a fresh start⁶⁷ to champion the cause of human rights for the average person, why

⁶⁶ Hagger communicated by phone from Arlington, Texas with Hattersley during an interview Hattersley had at CSPAN (“Life and Career,” November, 17, 1989).

⁶⁷ This question was originally asked after the 1979 General Election defeat of the ability of the Labour Party to form a government at Westminster. Harold Wilson had led the Labour Party in government from 1964 to 1970. After losing the General Election, Wilson again became Prime Minister from 1974 to 1976 after which James Callaghan took office from 1976 to 1979. After losing the General Election to the Conservative Party led by Margaret Thatcher as Prime Minister, the Labour Party then underwent internal rivalry for leadership between Michael Foot and Tony Benn on its left-wing and Denis Healey on its right-wing, with Michael Foot becoming the Leader of the Opposition in 1980. This caused a Party split leading to the formation of the Social Democratic Party and another major defeat in the 1983 General Election. Foot was replaced by Neil Kinnock as Leader, and Kinnock was heavily supported by Billy Bragg leading a youth division called ‘Red Wedge’. Bragg was also sympathetic to Gerard Winstanley and recorded the anthem ‘*World Turned Upside Down in 1649*’ about the Christian-

doesn't Labour rally around a new centerpiece, push for a written Constitution, and adopt as its hero, Thomas Jefferson's family ancestor, 'Freeborn John' Lilburne?⁶⁸

Hattersley: ...why don't we have a written Constitution? I think there are three reasons ... and I'll try to put them into one sentence and try to describe each one. First of all it doesn't fit our Parliamentary system of government. If we incorporated a written Constitution into our processes, any government could overturn it in a single line Bill. The tradition of Great Britain, the spirit of Great Britain, the feelings of The People of Great Britain is that we run by individual items of legislation and you can't superimpose a written constitution onto a system where People are expecting and reacting and supporting something quite different. That's one. Point two is that...⁶⁹ [to give] the powers of human rights, let's say,

communist 'Diggers'. In the years that followed, Bragg visited George Gimarc at KZEW in Dallas where he talked about his political views. At this time 4FWS which was promoting the legacy of Freeborn John Lilburne, was also working with Gimarc and broadcasting its 'Freedom Flashes' over three licensed Dallas and Fort Worth radio stations in Texas. Labour lost again during the 1987 General Election, but the majority of the breakaway Social Democratic Party was eventually forced to merge with the Liberal Party to form the Liberal Democrats Party. Kinnock expelled the communist left wing and the Labour Party moved towards the center but lost again in the 1992 General Election. Kinnock was replaced as Party Leader by John Smith who died of a heart attack in 1994. The Labour Party won the 1997 General Election with Tony Blair becoming Prime Minister representing 'New Labour' which established a national minimum wage, and began the process of devolving power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and reestablishing the Greater London Authority, with its own elected Mayor. Under Blair, Labour won both the 2001 and 2005 General Elections, and continued in power under Gordon Brown from 2007 to 2010, when the coalition government of David Cameron and Nick Clegg took power in the name of the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties.

⁶⁸ For the relationship of John Lilburne to Thomas Jefferson and the U.S. Constitution, see Gilder & Hagger, "Pedigree," pp. 217-26.

⁶⁹ This redacted text has been transcribed by Hagger from recorded but impromptu remarks made by both Hagger and Hattersley. The complete

to a declaration, to a statement, to a Constitution is putting the interpretation of those powers into the hands of the courts, and in our experience, the sort of freedoms that we want to see, the sort of extensions of liberties are not best interpreted by courts, but by politically motivated, intentionally motivated Parliaments, which leads me to the third point which is related to the second. Written constitutions by their nature entrench the privileges and freedoms of those people who enjoy them already. It's a written constitution that enables the electors or the voters in California, to vote for a tax cut because they don't want to pay any more in welfare. You never get a written constitution that enables the electors to demand higher taxes and more welfare. The European Declaration of Human Rights entrenches the right of people to send their children to private schools. It doesn't entrench the rights of people who can't afford it to have a decent education for their children in the state school system. I think written constitutions entrench the negative view of freedom, the absence of restraint, rather than the positive view of freedom, the provision of opportunities. I am sorry you get a philosophical answer, but serve you right for asking me a philosophical question.⁷⁰

However, as a result of membership in the European Union, and the process of devolution which created a new Scottish Parliament with limited powers, there is now increasing friction and controversy in the United Kingdom, because its law courts are now ruling upon issues involving human rights.⁷¹ Strange as it may seem, when Hattersley said: "I think written constitutions entrench the negative view of freedom..." he was not opposing the concept of a written instrument mandating what a government cannot do.

recording also contains additional questions by Hagger and responses by Hattersley relating to 'pirate radio'; Margaret Thatcher and employment figures. These items and repeated statements or audible pauses have been omitted, without altering the substance or meaning, of either the question asked, or answers given in relation to the Constitutional issue reported here.

⁷⁰ These questions and answers were later rebroadcast in January 1989 over 4FWS (Four Freedoms World Service).

⁷¹ See "Serious Concerns' over UK Supreme Court Change."

He was just opposed to The People being the authors of a written Constitution. On the other hand, his colleague Tony Benn expressed a view that was more in line with the view that Hattersley had previously expressed to Hagger:⁷²

We began work on *Democracy, the Individual and the Community*. ... Hattersley had put in a proposal about the encroachment of rights which would mean that a Labour Government couldn't repeal those rights without the consent of both Houses of Parliament, and without having another General Election. I opposed that strongly, and quoted Tom Paine's remark that it would be the dead controlling the living. I was defeated 20 to 3.⁷³

When Hattersley made mention of "The tradition of Great Britain, the spirit of Great Britain, the feelings of The People of Great Britain..." he was in large part referring to a Crown tied to a State Church, and a union-based ideology which grew out of a backlash against laissez faire capitalism that began in earnest during the Industrial Revolution.⁷⁴ UK copyright law emerged from religious censorship as a means of controlling publications by licensing the printers, and consequently UK copyright history is quite different from developments in the USA where religion, speech and press are protected by the First Amendment to its

⁷² See the Tony Benn's diary entry for Tuesday May 9, 1989, in which Hattersley has made derogatory comments about Benn's authorship, which brought this response: "Well, you can make living publishing rubbish and nobody knows it better than you." See Benn & Winstone, *Free at Last*, p. 220.

⁷³ cf. Benn and Winstone, *The End of an Era*.

⁷⁴ "...the origins of the Labour Movement in Britain can be traced...are the Bible, the seventeenth-century Levellers, the work of Karl Marx and the Labour Party's own Constitution...absolute human equality-and the emphasis on the common ownership of land and natural resources-speaks to us today with the same power as when these words were written by Winstanley [referring to] The Diggers, or True Levellers as they described themselves..." (Benn, *Arguments for Socialism*; pp.23; 26; 27).

written Constitution. These issues are directly related to Hagger's unanswered question to Hattersley about "Thomas Jefferson's family ancestor, 'Freeborn John' Lilburne,⁷⁵ who began a career quite by accident after he was arrested and brought to trial in 1637 for importing 'pirate', or unlicensed publications. As a result of that trial and others that followed, his accomplishments became footnotes peppering many United States Supreme Court decisions.⁷⁶ Prior to asking Hattersley about human rights and a written Constitution, Hagger recited how the Labour government had closed down the American-influenced offshore stations of the Nineteen Sixties by bringing in a new censorship law.

The Labour Party⁷⁷ government minister responsible for that action was MP Tony Benn, and while he has distanced himself from being classified as a Marxist,⁷⁸ since 1973 he has embraced the Christian communist ideology of Gerard Winstanley.⁷⁹ It is

⁷⁵ See Gilder and Hagger, "Pedigree," pp. 217-26.

⁷⁶ See Gilder and Hagger, "Pedigree," pp. 217-26.

⁷⁷ "...one can see the right wing of the Parliamentary Labour Party as the Presbyterians, rigid ... on the side of Puritanism and Socialism.... The Levellers are broadly the Labour movement as a whole." (Benn, *Against the Tide*, p. 50).

⁷⁸ "Thursday, July 5, 1973: Lunch with the German Ambassador, Karl von Hase, at the Embassy. He and his officials conducted a sort of interrogation ... The Ambassador said to me, for example, 'Marxism is becoming pretty widely understood in the Labour Party now, isn't it, as in Germany?' He presumably wanted to tempt me into saying I was a Marxist. I said, 'I don't know really; it's a foreign ideology. The British Labour movement is fundamentally based on Christianity, expressing itself through the trade unions...'" (Benn, *Against the Tide*, p. 52).

⁷⁹ On May 15, 1976, three years after his diary entry about the Levellers, True Levellers and Diggers, Tony Benn delivered a speech that was subsequently published confusing the achievements of Lilburne with the aims of Winstanley: "The Levellers, and still more the Diggers, would add a new and moral dimension to the movement for conserving the earth's limited resources by remind man of his duty to his fellow citizens and his descendents, not to squander the earth's 'Common Treasury' – because it is God's gift to each generation in turn, a powerful argument for common

unfortunate that either his instructor was none too clear, or Benn was none too attentive,⁸⁰ because Benn confused the ideology of Lilburne's individualism with the communistic works of Winstanley:

I had no idea that the Levellers had called for universal manhood suffrage, equality between the sexes, biennial Parliaments, the sovereignty of The People, recall of representatives and even an attack on property: concepts which later emerged in the Constitution of the United States and indeed in the French Revolution.⁸¹

Forming Winstanley's core belief in communistic ideology is a Biblical text in the Book of Acts 22:24-24 [as translated in the King James Authorized Version⁸²], which has echoes in other passages:

ownership and a classless society" (Benn, "The Levellers and the English Democratic Tradition," 1976; and Wolf and Benn, "The International Significance of The Levellers and the English Democratic Tradition," 2000).

⁸⁰ "Tuesday, June 26, 1973: I have been absorbed by my reading of the English Revolution and I asked Jack Mendelson the Labour MP for Penistone, a former University lecturer, if he would give me a private tutorial on the English Revolution. We had about an hour in the Tea Room on the Levellers and the Diggers or True Levellers, who comprised a radical group in Cromwell's army. It was fascinating. He gave me a list including Christopher Hill on Cromwell, so I ... am concentrating on the serious ideological and historical stuff. All the parallels with the situation today are there" (Benn, *Against the Tide*, p. 50).

⁸¹ Benn: *Against the Tide*, pp. 50-51.

⁸² The King James Bible is one of the last remaining vestiges of Church-State censorship through the copyright system that emerged from the Roman Catholic Church and its 'Index' of prohibited books. When King Henry VIII of England severed both his religious and political ties to the Holy See, he assumed all of the powers previously held by the Pope, and this included the right to censor by means of restricting the right to copy by printing, published works. Although the copyright system in the United

And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.⁸³

It is this aspect of communism that resonates in socialism today, and it required Benn to distance himself from Marxism, due in part to the historical and political entanglements of the British Labour Party, with the atheistic dictatorship of Joseph Stalin which developed in the now defunct USSR.

THE FAUX RELIGION OF COPYRIGHT ENFORCEMENT

By shrouding communism in Christianity via a Bible authorized and copyrighted by the Crown, it has been possible to transform it still further into Christian socialism. It requires obedience and subservience to a system of government claimed to be ordained by God under the shroud of an officially Established State religion in England,⁸⁴ even though England ceased to exist as a nation long ago. In this devious and dubious manner the British are told that they are not independent human beings, but subject-citizens⁸⁵ who have privileges and obligatory duties to the Crown,

Kingdom has now been relaxed by the British Crown to allow almost anyone to print and publish almost anything, the King James Bible remains under copyright control of the British Crown. Consequently the printing and publishing of this book in England and Wales is exclusively licensed to Cambridge University Press, while other licensing arrangements have also made by the Crown for Scotland and Northern Ireland that are not subject to the State Church of England.

⁸³ Benn, "The Levellers and the English Democratic Tradition," 1976; and Wolf and Benn, "The International Significance of The Levellers and the English Democratic Tradition," 2000.

⁸⁴ Church of England.

⁸⁵ In 1981 for reasons relating to immigration from the former British Empire, indigenous subjects within the British Isles were renamed citizens, although they were still subject to the Crown as before.

instead of freeborn rights expressed in their own written Constitution.

The British interpretation of copyright also borrows from the French idea of moral rights which have never been totally accepted as a separate legal mantra from copyright law by United States jurists and legislators.⁸⁶ However, it is by the subtle employment of moral rights that various copyright agencies who enforce the rights of large member manufacturing companies, rather than individual artists, have also retained various ‘star’ figures to preach to the masses about the ‘evil’ of ‘piracy’. This approach has been most effectively used by industries engaged in music and film/video reproduction, where illicit duplication of product is more likely to occur and create a detrimental financial impact.⁸⁷ This is one reason why there is no simple explanation of ‘fair dealing’,⁸⁸ whereas ‘fair use’ has a more clearly defined, although not situation-specific explanation.

Perhaps it all stems from fact that in the land of ‘fair dealing’, copyright control grew out of the English Church-State relationship which has ambiguously become a part of the United Kingdom legislative process that was always more interested in censoring freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of worship, than in promoting freedom of expression in those areas.

⁸⁶ Cf. Standler, “Moral Rights of Authors in the USA” (1998).

⁸⁷ “When some people hear the word ‘copyright’, they think of a complicated legal term that doesn’t apply to them. Yet, copyrights provide us consumers with a guarantee of quality, the quality that the creator intended” (“Stop Movie Piracy”).

⁸⁸ “Fair dealing is a concept, which has never been defined. What it seems to be saying is that there may be good reasons for copying something so long as the copying does not harm the copyright owner but nevertheless benefits either the individual or society generally. ...How much of a work can be copied under fair dealing? Nobody knows for certain – it is a matter of individual judgement in each case. ... So is there no guidance at all? In the law, no.” (Cornish, 2004. p. 1).

This is in contrast to the ‘fair use’ concept born in America, whose heritage dates back to those thirteen original colonies that washed their hands of a monarchy they left behind, long before the first incarnation of the United Kingdom.

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U.S. Universities Lose Lead in Intellectual Social Responsibility

BARBARA MUELLER⁸⁹

Abstract

In the 1960's, many U.S. college students became disillusioned with the country's social policy and began to demonstrate for equality and justice for the oppressed in America. These young visionaries became role models throughout the world while fighting for "freedom for all." Fifty years later, and the major problems facing society such as sustainable development, human rights, and peace initiatives, have become global concerns. But rather than being in the forefront and actively confronting these issues, most American students and universities today are simply maintaining the status quo. (That is, perhaps with the exception of touting a "green campus" that uses recycled paper for napkins in the cafeteria or provides bicycles for student use.) While the United States is lagging behind in intellectual social responsibility, other universities throughout the world are actively engaged in improving the social, political, economic, and cultural lives of their nation and the world, and see it as their duty to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Keywords: intellectual social responsibility, corporate social responsibility, globalization

Background: On March 15, 2011, Kiyotaka Akusaka, Under-secretary for Public Information at the United Nations, delivered a speech at the University of Ovidius in Constanta, Romania, entitled

⁸⁹ Casper College, USA

“UN and Present Global Challenges.” In the Q & A session following, one of the students in the audience asked what youths can do to foster the goals of the UN. Mr. Akusaka responded that while businesses throughout the world have, or are in the process of embracing corporate social responsibility, the students need to promote “Intellectual Social Responsibility”, which is not yet being pursued by most institutions of higher education.

He went on to explain that while businesses are obviously concerned with earning a profit, there is a growing realization that in order to be successful, they must also be socially responsible. This entails:

- 1) following labor laws to protect workers, especially children
- 2) protecting the environment
- 3) pursuing human rights
- 4) fighting corruption

Research indicates that a corporation that embraces (and publicizes) corporate social responsibility (CSR) can attract customers, increase employee commitment, enhance the company’s reputation, and lure stockholders; that is, CSR is good for the bottom line. Consider the mission statement of some of the top Fortune 500 companies in the U.S. for 2011. While Wal-Mart’s sense of social responsibility is questionable, the other major corporations have addressed one or more of the qualities necessary to be labeled “socially responsible.”

Number 1 - "Wal-Mart’s mission is to help people save money so they can live better."⁹⁰

Number 2 - Exxon/Mobil’s mission statement is: “We must continuously achieve superior financial and operating results while adhering to the highest standards of business conduct.”⁹¹ Number 3 – Chevron’s vision is: “At the heart of The Chevron Way is our

⁹⁰ http://walmartstores.com/sites/sustainabilityreport/2009/ec_overview.html

⁹¹

http://www.exxonmobil.com/Corporate/Newsroom/Publications/XOMGlobalCap/page_2.html

vision ...to be the global energy company most admired for its people, partnership and performance.” Our vision means “Thinking and behaving globally, and valuing the positive influence this has on our company.”⁹²

Number 4 – “The mission or purpose of ConocoPhillips is to use their pioneering spirit to responsibly deliver energy to the world.”⁹³

Number 5 – Fannie Mae (Not a corporation; Fannie Mae is a government-sponsored enterprise (GSE) chartered by Congress)

Number 6 – General Electric doesn’t have a mission statement per se but its statement to its stockholders stresses that “GE’s approach to corporate citizenship and to business are driven by a common understanding of the role we can play in helping to solve the world’s toughest problems. Our goals are to make money (strong, sustained economic performance), make it ethically (rigorous compliance with financial and legal rules), and make a difference (ethical actions, beyond formal requirements, to advance GE’s reputation and long-term health).” And like many corporations, General Electric has a foundation because “Philanthropy plays an important part in our goal to be a good global citizen. It allows us to connect with people and make a positive difference in the communities where we do business and also those beyond our direct reach.”⁹⁴

Number 38 – Microsoft, which ranked 38 on the Fortune 500 list, is probably the strongest proponent of corporate social responsibility. “At Microsoft, our mission and values are to help people and businesses throughout the world realize their full potential.”⁹⁵ Additionally, “Every successful corporation has a responsibility to use its resources and influence to make a positive impact on the world and its people. Microsoft’s Global Citizenship Initiative is focused on mobilizing our resources across the company and around the world, to create opportunities in the communities where

⁹² <http://www.chevron.com/about/chevronway/>

⁹³ <http://finance.mapsofworld.com/company/c/conocophillips.html>

⁹⁴ <http://www.gecitizenship.com/our-commitment-areas/>

⁹⁵ <http://www.microsoft.com/about/en/us/default.aspx>

we do business, and fulfill our commitment to serving the public good through innovative technologies and partnerships.”⁹⁶

Not surprisingly, Microsoft ranks fourth in the 2010 Corporate Social Responsibility Index (CSRI) developed by the Reputation Institute in conjunction with the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship. Johnson and Johnson, Walt Disney Company and Kraft Food ranked even higher on the CRSI which measures social impact (Citizenship, Governance and Workplace) in addition to economic and market driven results (Products/Services, Innovation, Leadership, Performance.)⁹⁷

In contrast, consider the mission statement of the top Ivy League universities in the United States. Some of these institutions make no mention of intellectual social responsibility at all; others appear quite committed...at least on paper since there is no comparable University Social Responsibility Index to measure performance as there is in industry. (There are, however, several tools to assess service learning but civic engagement does not have the global focus of intellectual social responsibility.)

- Brown University: “The mission of Brown University is to serve the community, the nation, and the world by discovering, communicating, and preserving knowledge and understanding in a spirit of free inquiry, and by educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation.”⁹⁸

- Columbia University: Columbia University “seeks to attract a diverse and international faculty and student body, to support research and teaching on global issues, and to create academic relationships with many countries and regions. It expects all areas of the university to advance knowledge and learning at the highest level and to convey the products of its efforts to the world.”⁹⁹

⁹⁶ “Fortune 500.” *CNN Money*. n.d. web. 15 June 2011

<<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/2011/>>

⁹⁷ “Most Socially Responsible Corporations in the U.S. in 2010.” *Boston State College Center for Corporate Citizenship*. n.d. web. 15 June 2011.

<<http://www.bccccc.net/pdf/CSRIRreport2010.pdf>>

⁹⁸ <http://www.brown.edu/about/mission>

⁹⁹ http://www.columbia.edu/home/about_columbia/mission.html

-Cornell University: “Cornell's mission is to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge; produce creative work; and promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community. Cornell also aims, through public service, to enhance the lives and livelihoods of our students, the people of New York, and others around the world.”¹⁰⁰

-Dartmouth: “Dartmouth College educates the most promising students and prepares them for a lifetime of learning and of responsible leadership, through a faculty dedicated to teaching and the creation of knowledge.”¹⁰¹

-Harvard: “Harvard strives to create knowledge, to open the minds of students to that knowledge, and to enable students to take best advantage of their educational opportunities.”¹⁰²

-Princeton: “Princeton University is a vibrant community of scholarship and learning that stands in the nation's service and in the service of all nations.”¹⁰³

-Yale University: “Like all great research universities, Yale has a tripartite mission: to create, preserve, and disseminate knowledge. Yale aims to carry out each part of its mission at the highest level of excellence, on par with the best institutions in the world. Yale seeks to attract a diverse group of exceptionally talented men and women from across the nation and around the world and to educate them for leadership in scholarship, the professions, and society.”¹⁰⁴

While the words “service to the world,” “globalization,” and “internationalization” are gradually becoming incorporated into the mission statement for most, but certainly not all, of the most renowned institutions of higher learning, these terms are still missing in the goal statement of many smaller colleges and universities in the United States. And even in those universities that include globalization or a similar term in their mission

¹⁰⁰ <http://www.cornell.edu/about/mission/>

¹⁰¹ <http://www.dartmouth.edu/home/about/facts.html>

¹⁰² <http://www.harvard.edu/faqs/mission-statement>

¹⁰³ <http://www.princeton.edu/main/about/>

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.yale.edu/about/mission.html>

statement, there is the question of whether this objective is actually incorporated into the classroom curriculum and made an integral part of the student's involvement in campus activities.

In 1999, Julie Andrzejewski and John Alessio in their article, *Education for Global Citizenship and Social Responsibility* stated that:

Our educational experiences did not provide us with the information and tools to understand what is happening in the world, how it affects our lives, the lives of others and the planet itself. We were not taught how we, as ordinary (non-rich) people, might live our lives and actively participate in creating a safer, more humane, sustainable world... Furthermore, teachers will not learn to value and include issues of socially responsible global citizenship if teacher educators, administrators and policymakers do not. If teachers/faculty are not aware of global issues, if we are not active citizens ourselves, if we do not question, investigate and critically analyze the social and economic institutions in our lives, it will be difficult for us to foster these behaviors in others.

According to the authors, the skills that students need to develop for global citizenship include:

- 1) Understanding of a citizen's responsibilities to others, to society and to the environment:
- 2) Understanding of ethical behavior in personal, professional and public life:
- 3) Developing...knowledge and skills for involved responsible citizenship at the local, state, national and global level.¹⁰⁵

Meanwhile, it is impressive how many other universities outside of the United States, in advanced as well as developing nations, have fully embraced the concept of responsible citizenship.

¹⁰⁵ Andrzejewski, Julie and John Alessio. *Education for Global Citizenship and Social Responsibility*, Vol. 1, No. 2, John Dewey Project on Progressive Education, Spring 1999, College of Education and Social Services, University of Vermont. Web. 15 June 2011.
<<http://www.uvm.edu/~dewey/monographs/glomono.html>>

Taking the lead in Europe in intellectual social responsibility, as defined by Andrzejewski and John Alessio, is the University of Sunderland, which is located in Great Britain. Click on “About the University” on the institution’s homepage and there is a direct link to “Social Responsibility” which states: “As a University we are acutely aware of our social responsibilities and we are confident in stating that we already go well beyond what is expected of an organisation.” The University asserts that its mission “is to be recognized as one of the new generation of great civic universities – innovative, accessible, inspirational and outward looking, with international reach; and with remarkable local impact. Our approach to corporate Social Responsibility will help us to achieve this vision. We aim to make a difference, and to create and nurture an inclusive environment in which we all can flourish.” Like the major corporations in the U.S., the University of Sutherland notes in their “Making A Difference” publication that “Research indicates that organisations that take a fair approach to their activities deliver a better service, maximise their potential and operate more productively in an increasingly competitive world.”¹⁰⁶

The pursuit of intellectual social responsibility is not only evidenced in Europe, but in Asia, Africa, South America and the Caribbean as well. For example in Asia, the mission of Kyoto University is “to sustain and develop its historical commitment to academic freedom, and to pursue harmonious co-existence within the human and ecological community on this planet.”¹⁰⁷ In Thailand, Chiang Mai University promotes as its mission “To be a premier university seeking excellence in the advancement of dissemination of knowledge to meet the challenges our nation faces in a globalizing world.”¹⁰⁸ And Bangkok University simply states “The outcome is betterment of education and a greater service to

¹⁰⁶ “Social Responsibility.” *Sunderland University*. 10 Dec. 2010. Web. 15 June 2011. <<http://www.sunderland.ac.uk> >

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/profile/ideals/basic/index.htm/>

¹⁰⁸ http://www.cmu.ac.th/about_eng.php?menu=50

the society.”¹⁰⁹ The mission of Chinese University of Hong Kong is “To assist in the preservation, creation, application and dissemination of knowledge by teaching, research, and public service in a comprehensive range of disciplines, thereby serving the needs and enhancing the well-being of the citizens of Hong Kong, China as a whole and the wider world community.”¹¹⁰

In Africa, the vision of the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania is “To become a reputable world-class university that is responsive to national, regional and global development needs through engagement in dynamic knowledge creation and application.”¹¹¹ The vision of the University of Lagos is “To be a top-class institution for the pursuit of excellence in knowledge through learning and research, as well as in character and service to humanity.” The university’s mission is to “To provide a conducive teaching, learning, research and development environment where staff and students can interact and compete effectively with their counterparts both nationally and internationally in terms of intellectual competence and zeal to add value to the world.”¹¹² Meanwhile, “The core mission of the University of Mauritius is the creation and dissemination of knowledge and understanding for the citizens of Mauritius and the international community.”¹¹³ And in Ethiopia, “The mission of Addis Ababa University is to foster a democratic university, which gives pride of place to its students in instruction and provision of services while encouraging the robust exercise of academic freedom. This will be achieved by developing vibrant graduate programs and by nurturing professional competence, a humanistic education, a scientific culture, academic excellence and a committed, ethical citizenship.”¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ http://www.bu.ac.th/th/index_en.php

¹¹⁰ <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/english/aboutus/mission.html>

¹¹¹ http://www.udsm.ac.tz/about_us/mission_vision_values.php

¹¹² <http://www.unilag.edu.ng/pages.php?page=our-vision-and-mission>

¹¹³ <http://www.uom.ac.mu/aboutus/INTRODUCTION/missionvision.html>

¹¹⁴

http://www.aau.edu.et/change/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=58&Itemid=122

In Latin America, the institutions of higher learning have joined together to form the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC). This organization “aims to promote the development and renewal of higher education in Latin America and the Caribbean so that it will have the necessary quality, capacity and relevance for meeting the region’s present and future needs, and for supporting a culture of peace and the sustainable development of human resources.” Moreover, “Its fundamental mission is to contribute to the development and transformation of the tertiary education...in order that higher education in the region becomes an effective promoter of a culture of peace that allows to make viable - in an age of globalization - the human sustainable development based on principles of justice, equity, freedom, solidarity, democracy and respect of the human rights.”¹¹⁵

There are several worldwide organizations committed to promoting social responsibility as well. For example, “The Global University Social Responsibility Alliance (USR Network) is an organization that belongs to all global citizens who want to strengthen awareness of social responsibility at the university level and who want to make universities better places and to ensure that students graduate with the ideas of sustainable social responsibility in mind.” When analyzing the site’s “Resources in English,” there were many submissions from Europe, South America, and the Asia–Pacific region but very few contributions from the U.S.

The USR Network was established in the U.S.A. in 2008 by Saninuj Sawasdikosol, a native of Thailand, and held its’ First University Social Responsibility Conference in Bangkok, Thailand in January, 2009. The attending participants from around the globe formulated the basic framework for the organization.

¹¹⁵ “Mission.” *International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC.)* Web. 15 June 2011.

<http://www.iesalc.unesco.org.ve/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=427&l=en>

The Global USR Network is an organization that belongs to all global citizens who want to strengthen awareness of social responsibility at the university level and who want to make universities better places and to ensure that students graduate with the ideas of sustainable social responsibility in mind.” “...given that the principle role of universities is to educate, the Global USR Network proposes that social responsibility must become the fundamental basis on which all university teaching is grounded. An integral part of every course subject should be the application of social responsibility to that knowledge. Every graduate should not only be well versed in his or her field of study, but even more so, the students' minds must have instilled within their learning the selfless desire and ultimate goal to be completely socially responsible, without any desire for reward of any kind other than the realization that what he or she does is improving the lives of all mankind and making the Earth a better place on which to live.

According to the organization, “Many universities have accepted our ideas and have become members. Some of these member universities have established new departments called “USR,” (university social responsibility) and these departments are in charge of taking care of issues of social responsibility in education for their universities. Some of them have a strategic plan solely regarding the USR.”¹¹⁶ In the United States, for example, the Social Responsibility Masters Degree program at St. Cloud State University, “...collaboratively developed by the Human Relations, Sociology and Women’s Studies programs, addresses a citizen’s responsibility to others, society and the environment. The objective of the program is to provide students with practical skills for involved citizenship at the local, state, national and global levels within a democratic and culturally diverse context.”¹¹⁷ While this is

¹¹⁶ “Objective.” *Global University Social Responsibility Network*. 21 Dec. 2010. Web. 15 June, 2011. <<http://globalusrnetwork.org/resource.html>>

¹¹⁷ “Social Responsibility.” *St. Cloud University*. 7 Jan. 2011. Web. 15 June, 2011. <<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/SocialResponsibility/about.asp>>

an admirable program with important goals, it does not address the mission of the entire university but is only one small degree program within the institution.

Similarly, the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) was established in 1999 by UNESCO, the United Nations University (UNU), and the Technical University of Catalonia (UPC) after UNESCO's World Conference on Higher Education in 1998. Its purpose is "to contribute to the strengthening of higher education's role in society through the renewal and innovation of higher education main issues across the world under a vision of public service, relevance and social responsibility." It is composed of almost 200 institutions from 68 countries, with only six member institutions from the United States.

The organization publishes an annual report to foster the exchange of ideas between higher education institutions and society. "This may be achieved through reconsidering the role that is assigned to higher education in terms of its contribution to human and social development in economic, political, social, human, environmental and cultural spheres."¹¹⁸ In its 2009 report, *Higher Education at a Time of Transformation: New Dynamics for Social Responsibility* which included papers from 52 eminent scholars from around the world, there were only a handful of U.S. contributors.

Finally, The Charter of Human Responsibilities is a far-reaching organization aimed not just at universities but advocates in its Preamble that "every one of us must take up his or her responsibilities at both the individual and the collective level... every human being has a role to play in redefining responsibility and has responsibilities to assume."¹¹⁹ There are 16 members serving on the Charter Facilitation Committee, which, by design,

¹¹⁸ "About GUNI." *Global University Network for Innovation*. 2009. Web. 15 June 2011. <<http://web.guni2005.upc.es/info/default.php?id=1>>

¹¹⁹ "Preamble." *Charter for Human Responsibilities*. 10 Nov. 2007. Web. 15 June, 2011. <<http://www.charter-human-responsibilities.net>>

includes one American, but only a few American authors have published in the organization's publications.

In summary, rather than leading the effort to promote intellectual social responsibility, United States' institutions of higher learning are lagging behind the universities in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and South America. Institutions of higher learning in the United States need to review and reevaluate their mission statement. Is there a clearly articulated goal to promote intellectual social responsibility? And if there is, how committed is the college to this goal? Is there an action plan describing how this goal will be accomplished in the University's Strategic Plan? Are administrators, faculty members and students aware of this goal? Are they committed to promoting social responsibility, not only on their campus and within their community, but in a global context as well?

The growing interdependence of countries and the increasing realization of the impact that a group's actions have on the social and natural environment, make intellectual social responsibility no longer an option, but a requirement for human survival. The United States was a leader for social justice in the 1960's and has an obligation to play a defining role in intellectual social responsibility today.

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Guidelines for Contributors

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