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Foreword

Nándor Máté Birher

T he past year marked the 30th anniversary of the foundation of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, and we are proud to celebrate this occasion with a renewed commitment to strengthening our presence in all academic fields represented at the Faculty. With this intention, we have decided to launch a new journal, *Pázmány Papers: Journal of Languages and Literatures*, dedicated to the fields of literary studies and linguistics, to be published in English, to complement the Faculty's already established selection of publications with a more internationally visible and accessible scholarly forum. With the help of this journal, we wish to create a platform for scholars from our own university and collaborating institutions both in Hungary and abroad, a platform where they can share their insights, questions and new discoveries, contributing to the ever-evolving landscape of the humanities.

This present inaugural issue of *Pázmány Papers*, with a thematic section aptly dedicated to the topic of "Hospitality", already testifies to our intention to promote cross-cultural dialogue and the welcoming spirit of cooperation. Through rigorous peer review and a commitment to inclusivity, we endeavour to publish articles that not only contribute to existing knowledge but also ignite new debates and discussions within the field. In this way the journal can strive to uphold the highest standards of scholarly integrity, while also embracing the diversity of thought and innovation that is essential for the continued growth of these disciplines. We are confident that this journal will be a valuable resource for scholars, educators, and students alike, providing a platform for the dissemination of ground-breaking research and the enrichment of our collective understanding of the humanities.

The creation and launch of *Pázmány Papers* would not have been possible without the dedicated efforts of our editorial team, who have worked tirelessly to ensure that the quality of scholarship manifested in the articles is matched by the quality of presentation as well. Their expertise and commitment to excellence have been instrumental in making this journal a reality. We are also indebted to our reviewers, who have generously shared their time and expertise to evaluate and improve the manuscripts we have received. I extend my gratitude to the authors who have entrusted

us with their work, and to our readers, who will be the ultimate judges of our success. Your involvement in this intellectual endeavour is both valued and appreciated.

It gives me great pleasure that *Pázmány Papers* can be published using the OJS software. By using Open Journal Systems (OJS), developed by the Canadian Public Knowledge Project (PKP), open source and directly accessible from the university's servers, *Pázmány Papers* can fully meet the professional and technological requirements of our time. In recent years, it has been proven that open access is not only economical and environmentally friendly, but it is also the most reader-friendly format of accessing newly published research. Our faculty is therefore actively committed to the open access of scientific knowledge, which promotes interdisciplinary collaborations and increases visibility while also ensuring the long-term access to papers. By choosing the "diamond" model[1], we publish *Pázmány Papers* open access and completely free of charge for authors – and of course for readers.

We hope that this newly established journal will soon be recognised as an equal member among the Faculty's periodicals, and we will continue to strive to provide a professionally recognized, high-quality publication platform for the diverse fields of linguistics, literary and cultural studies.

Dr. Nándor Máté Birher
Dean
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Pázmány Péter Catholic University

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[1] Different open access types are commonly described using a colour system. Usually recognised names are "green", "gold" or "diamond". Diamond open access means that academic texts are published with no fees to either reader or author (alternative labels include "platinum open access"). In the gold open access model, the publisher makes all articles available for free, but an article processing charge may be charged to the author. In the green model, self-archiving by authors is permitted.

Lectori salutem

Kinga Földváry

It is with great pleasure and with a humble heart that we offer the inaugural issue of *Pázmány Papers: Journal of Languages and Cultures* to its readers. We believe that the greatest strength of the arts and humanities lies in their ability to inspire critical thinking, and it is precisely this critical reflection that powers our research, born out of an insight discovered in an in-depth engagement with our subjects, sharpened through dialogue with students, colleagues and readers. That is why we find it vital to have forums for the dissemination of new ideas that can incite new conversations and in this way inspire new research questions, hopefully followed by even more innovative answers. It is with these intentions that we have established the newest scholarly journal published by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, dedicated to the fields of literature and linguistics, open to publications on all aspects of these broad and constantly evolving disciplines. We hope that this journal will soon be recognised for an excellence manifested in the diversity and quality of research represented on its pages, and it is with this desire that we invite contributions from researchers to our future issues.

In order to offer a forum for the widest possible range of topics, and a publication opportunity for senior and junior scholars as well, both from our own institution and from all over the world, the journal is published in English, overseen by an international editorial board. We follow a rigorous double-blind peer-review policy, followed by a native language review, to ensure that the form of presentation equals the quality of the writings published on our pages. It is our intention to dedicate a section of each issue to a thematic collection of articles, while also reserving space for writings that represent any areas of literary studies or linguistics, from theoretical to practical investigations, case studies and more. As an institution of higher education that places great emphasis on teacher training, the journal's scope also includes studies in applied linguistics, teacher training methodology, together with translation studies. In every issue, original research is complemented by review articles introducing recent scholarly publications, particularly volumes related to the thematic section.

The journal's inaugural issue, perhaps symbolically, is dedicated to the theme of Hospitality, and it is in the spirit of hospitality that we wish to provide a welcoming space for the dissemination of all ideas, turning to all guests – editors, authors and readers – with the openness that must inevitably follow from our Christian identity.

Thematic Section

On hospitality here and now

Anikó Radvánszky[1]

> *"Love ye therefore the stranger"*
> (Deuteronomy 10:19)

The ancient custom of hospitality – hospitium – was already an organic part of life in Ancient Greece. They believed that strangers are under the protection of Zeus, and whoever is kind to newcomers will be well liked by men and the gods. The traditionally obligatory friendly attitude dictated that the host welcomes the stranger, the wanderer coming to his home as a guest, providing shelter, protection, and help, and the mutual friendship and alliance that came of this act applied and was passed on to their children, too.

Beyond the Ancient Greek and Roman practice, hospitality is one of the most meaningful Biblical concepts, which explains, deepens, and expands the relationship between people, and beyond that, the one connecting us to God. The travelling stranger and guest asking for refuge (Prov. 27:8; Ecclus. 29:21) primarily reminds Israel of the time when its ancestors lived as slaves in a strange land (Exod. 19:33), but also of its current situation, when it is a stranger, spending its short journey on Earth as a pilgrim (Ps. 39:13; cf. Heb. 11:13). This guest needs shelter (Deut. 10:18) and loving care in the name of God who loves him.

Jesus not only spoke about the hospitality of God (Luke14:15) but set an example himself: he calls sinners to his table (Mark2:15), washes the feet of his guests (John13:1), takes care of everyone in need (e.g. feeding the multitude in John6:1–15). For him, hospitality is not just about compassion; he makes it a condition for and a measure of salvation (Matt. 25:31–46).Hospitality is given the deepest foundations in his speech about the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:31–46), where the guest is recognized as Christ: he who receives someone as a guest will not only become neighbours with him but as Jesus is present in the guest in some way, he receives or refuses, recognizes or ignores Christ in him. Thus, every believer of Christ receives those sent by Him (Joh. 13:20) – everyone, even the smallest (Luk. 9:48) – in "His name".

For Christianity, the concept of hospitality – beyond its Biblical meaning of welcoming strangers – refers to the attitude towards fellow human beings, and so

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[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, radvanszky@btk.ppke.hu

involves the innermost core of Christian spirituality, and that makes the way in which this concept – together with all its semantic fields and practical applications – became an especially exciting focus of interest in contemporary philosophy. Based on the idea that hospitality is an organic part of European culture, we would primarily like to investigate through the philosophical and literary studies of the first thematic edition of *Pázmány Papers* how humanities today understand this idea. To find our answer, we turn to the thoughts on hospitality of Jacques Derrida, a great influential thinker of contemporary European philosophy. From the '90s, the French philosopher's work is centred on fundamental ethical and political questions (donation, forgiveness, responsibility, loyalty, promise, democracy, etc.). Today, rethinking the problem of ethics builds in a way on the experience of facing the stranger, the other, and the ways in which we respond to it.

Hospitality is present in his oeuvre as the foundation of all ethics, as the ultimate, non-deconstructible horizon of any ethical decision and act. We plan to have a two-part thematic block in which leading international and Hungarian experts studying Derrida look at how deconstruction as free thinking can reopen the realm of ethics for us in the 21st century, and, in connection to that, why any real ethical thinking and action can be considered essentially deconstructive, partly basing their investigation on Derrida's two seminars published posthumously (*Hospitality*, Volumes I & II) and partly looking at the entirety of his oeuvre in general. The different yet interconnected topics unifying the studies collected here are also presented in the context outlined above.

Hospitality and ontology

Lóránt Kicsák[1]

Abstract

Open to the arrival of the other, ready to receive the other unconditionally, the responsibility is born as a response to the eventful arrival of the other. Hospitality, understood in this way, is thus an unconditional condition of possibility for meeting the other, even before any legal institution. In this sense, ethics is more original than law, and the hospitality relationship is more fundamental than any social, political, or legal relationship.

This primordiality also means that Derrida reinterprets hospitality as an ontological relation, which now becomes an openness to the arrival of the arrivant, and a readiness to encounter the other. In coexistence, the absolute presence always poses a question to all beings and expects an answer from all beings. Still, in a certain sense, our ontological relation to all beings is also a responsive and responsible relationship.

Keywords

unconditional and conditional hospitality, Jacques Derrida, ontological hospitality, hospitable ontologie, communicative coexistence, cooperative community, responsitivity, ecological ethics

1. Introduction

In my writing, based on Derrida's reflections, I assess the scope of the concept of "unconditional hospitality," its pure idea, and its phenomenon "worthy of the name". The materials from the seminars held between 1995 and 1997 let us delve into the background of his longer and shorter writings and discussions published during his lifetime. This material was published in two volumes in 2021–22, edited by Pascale-Anna Brault and Peggy Kamuf, titled *Hospitalité I-II.*[2]

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[1] Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, Budapest Metropolitan University, kicsak.lorant@uni-eszterhazy.hu

[2] Jacques Derrida. 2021–2022/I-II. *Hospitalité I-II. Seminaire (1995–1997).* Édition établie par Pascale-Anne Brault et Peggy Kamuf. Paris: Seuil.

The theme of hospitality not only intersects with the questions of gift/donation and forgiveness in Derrida's seminars of the 90s (along the lines of giving/taking, offering/accepting), but also generates similar lines of thought and is guided by a deconstruction process that unfolds in a remarkably similar manner. The examination of these (more ethical and political) phenomena quickly leads to ontological problems that encourage us to deconstruct our ontological perspective. In this, hospitality plays a prominent role.

The purpose of Derrida's deconstructive analyses is not to point out the impracticability in reality of unconditional ideas. On the contrary, he stresses that the pursuit of their realization leads to their perversion. Their role is to guide in the perfectibility of what is always conditionally realizable. In general, to confront us with the fact that the laws that always contain and mark, the actions that always obey conditions, can be perfected. In this sense, unconditional is a synonym of just. At the same time, the requirement involved in "unconditional" compels us to reflect on fundamental convictions and beliefs, which may override not just one of our established views, but entire areas of the organization of our existence. This is what happens in ethics and politics.

The impossibility of realizing the unconditional hospitality in a concrete ethics and politics requires a rethinking of ethics and politics, often leading to at first glance astonishing and unacceptable conclusions, which, if we consider them as possible, however, allow for more just relations. We will see an example of this below in the question of the foundations of Kantian morality: the need to rethink of the meaning and role of rational beings and private property in ethical relation to beings, and rethinking of the definition of ethical relations. But it is also exemplified by Derrida's major theme of rethinking sovereignty. The idea of unconditional hospitality, the expression of responsibility *towards* the other by opening oneself and receiving the other without many existent reserves, poses a serious challenge to the current understanding of political sovereignty, and ethical and legal subjectivity, whose historical-cultural genealogy can convince us that their limits have constantly changed and their content has changed with them.

Deconstructing these institutions and their conditions is not about destroying them. On the one hand, it is an experience of their fragility, and on the other, by challenging established meanings (by creating a context around them or putting oneself in a situation where one has to think about them differently), the same concepts and institutions allow new experiences to be made, which can be incorporated into the institutions and enrich them with new aspects, and thus actually strengthen them. What would be the content of our responsibility to, and

solidarity with, the other, our commitment to their suffering, if we did not know the story of the Good Samaritan and experience through him and in him that devotion to the other cannot tolerate any existent limitation? And this story, the gestures of the agents, extended in the name of justice the experience and the relationship of compassion beyond all the institutions of the time, breaking through the regulated forms and modes of contact, and destroying the institutional framework of solidarity, compassion, and responsibility of the time, breaking through a series of barriers, a series of established rules, and in fact extending the institutional limits of contact with the other, strengthening its content and thus the institution itself.

The known and regulated forms of hospitality, and the other institutions that make them possible (private property, home, sovereign subject, established notions of freedom and responsibility) are similarly "tested" and are "testing" us. Unconditional hospitality (which corresponds to its eidetic essential structure), for example, leads to a reinterpretation, not a destruction, of sovereignty, of the boundaries and foundations of self and other, of home and homelessness, of property and common. The experience of a different kind of sovereignty, a different kind of self, a different kind of property, a different kind of home, comes from subjecting oneself to the test of extended hospitality. These must remain indispensable conditions of hospitality, but we can live with them in a different way, and will thereby find that they are not destroyed, but strengthened, now in another sense. To better fulfill my role as a host, but with different content and in a new position. It turns out that it is meaningful to think about these other meanings: there is another kind of sovereignty, not a sovereignty of "I can do" but a sovereignty of "I let it happen", where freedom is not manifested in living my power but in exposing myself to a new uncertainty, and in this I experience my freedom. There exists an "own" that is not dissociated and detached from and not opposed to the common, but derives its force precisely from sharing a common that is never given up, and in sharing with others is one's own; my ownness and my ownership is not fulfilled in isolation but in my right to share, and the "right to share" does not limit but rather expands ownership. My home is not opposed to the common, but mutually conditional with it, and their ever-changing boundaries are marked and changed in this mutuality; so my home can become a home open to all, returning to where it originated, to the home common we all share. In the sharing of the rights of the host, the free sovereign a home of his or her own, it acquires a whole new experience of itself, of its subjectivity, in which it affirms and fulfills itself. In the face of these experiences, speculations which, from some principle, produce in uncontradicted deductions the concepts and values of sovereignty, property, freedom, and responsibility, lose their force.

Deconstruction confronts these speculations with the test: "Expose yourself to the unconditional reception and acceptance of the other and see what happens to what you have thought about the self, the home, the master, the stranger, freedom, responsibility!" This essay can be seen as a thought experiment for this test, drawing on the Derridean notion of unconditional hospitality and thinking it through.

I know that such a thought experiment, conceived as a test, must unfold in dialogical analysis. And that it opens up a space where, perhaps, the impossibility of thinking otherwise is demonstrated. But what is the experience of thinking if not the search for new possibilities and the affirmation of limits?

2. The eidetic structure of hospitality

Hospitality is a ritualized relationship across cultures and eras under varying circumstances and conditions. It takes place between individuals of different social statuses and in asymmetrical life situations. At its core, it revolves around the arrival and peaceful staying of a stranger, a newcomer, and his or her non-hostile reception. For the hospitality relationship to function and become a reality, an essential prerequisite is the awaiting asymmetry – the necessity of having someone who has the means and opportunity to welcome another person in their home, who needs this service and expresses a desire for this service either because he or she lacks a home or is not at home. Hospitality transforms this asymmetry into equality through peaceful arrival and staying, and non-hostile reception, by recognizing the right to appear and fulfilling the obligation to receive.

According to Benveniste, compensation leads to the precise concept of hospitality, and equating it is the basis of its legal institution. This is the only real form of realization. Its most formal analysis was carried out by Kant. However, the legal-compensatory institution of hospitality always has ethical implications and content. The relationship between human beings inherently carries ethical dimensions at all times because duties and rights emerge when two individuals come together. In the context of hospitality, duty and right emerge from a common origin but do not yet differentiate one from the other. To invoke Kant's definition ("the *obligation* of hospitality is a stranger's *right* to…"); in hospitality, the obligation of receiving and the right of visiting are the same, and correspond to each other. However, no temporal distinction would order the encounter, events, or actions into the schema of first and second, active and reactive, cause and effect, or consequence. Simultaneously, one person's right and the other person's duty emerge from each other, leaving no

time for deliberation, consideration, or calculation. Above all, there is no time for this, and the lack of time does not leave space for questions and answers, active and reactive deeds, or conditional aspects of rights and duties.

By outlining the situation of hospitality, we arrive at the source of the birth of rights and duties. The hospitality situation is akin to the immediate emergence of morality when two individuals meet, where rights and duties arise, and do so simultaneously and mutually. Simone Weil's thoughts can assist in understanding this. From each person's own perspective, they only have duties towards others, while from the same perspective, others only have rights over them. Naturally, from their own perspective, those others also only have duties. Rights are born when both parties acknowledge and recognize each other's duties towards them. This defines the content of rights: we shape rights based on what is the other's duty, and conversely: I have obligations towards you, necessarily entailing that you have rights. It is important to note that this is not a transaction or exchange; I do not grant rights to the other in exchange for their duties towards me. Instead, their rights evolve from the duties I hold toward them; I endow them with rights based on my duties towards them.

3. Conditional and unconditional hospitality

The concept of unconditional hospitality stems from the idea that within the realm of human interaction, which always unfolds under certain conditions, there exists an unconditional moment: the encounter itself, the unpredictable and uncontrollable appearance and presence of another person in their uniqueness and finiteness. To which the unconditional response of the host is to let them be, to be present as they are, in their absolute otherness. Any demand that ties the acceptance of the other to a condition of exchange immediately annuls hospitality. This is evident when, for example, we expect payment for our reception or, more broadly, when we expect anything in return (whether it is a symbolic gesture or the promise of future reciprocity, whether these are hopeful or calculating thoughts). If we impose conditions – dictating what the other should do, say, how they should speak, behave, what qualities they should possess or lack, etc. – we are already engaged in a transaction, and although the reception may take place, and the welcoming and acceptance of the other may occur, it does not happen within the realm of unconditional hospitality, as it fails to meet the essential requirement of hospitality: the ability to receive the other person *despite all circumstances,* before and outside any contractual relationship or legal formalism. If the ritual introduces an "if... then..." scheme, some form of

human interaction and relationship is established – if the encounter even becomes ritualized, as the hyperbolic gesture of unconditional reception goes beyond and shatters any ritual – however, this will not truly correspond to hospitality (e.g., *if* you have documents, *if* you state your name, *if* you speak my language, *if* you adhere to our customs and laws, *then* you can stay at my place). The essence of this lies in the fact that we offer hospitality without regard for any prerequisites, requirements, roles, or choreography. Such hospitality precedes or surpasses all legal regulations and relates to the other person not only lawfully but justly.

If such a thing exists. One can doubt it, and it is equally possible to affirm its possibility. However, if there is unconditional acceptance of another person, it is certainly not dictated by legislation but by an absolute command or law beyond conditions. Some argue that Derrida, in a somewhat schizophrenic manner, dreams of this, while others consider it a utopian fantasy of human relationships. The question "does it exist?" in his case, much like Ricoeur's reflections on forgiveness, shifts into a testimony of "it must be":

> […] absolute hospitality requires that I open up my home and that I give not only to the foreigner (provided with a family name, with the social status of being a foreigner, etc.), but to the absolute, unknown, anonymous other, and that I give place to them, that I let them come, that I let them arrive, and take place in the place I offer them, without asking of them either reciprocity (entering into a pact) or even their names.[3]

The testimony is adequate in this situation not only because Derrida finds traces of archaic institutions of hospitality preserved in major religious traditions. This is not coincidental. The unconditional elevates us to the transcendent realm. It is as if Derrida aims to present a transcendental experience not necessarily tied to religion or religious thinking and concepts. The sanctity of human dignity, which cannot be taken away or denied even from a person deprived of everything, and the sanctity of existence unifies the human and non-human, the divine, the animal, the plant, and everything that exists.

What may seem schizophrenic is instead a reckoning with the fact that humans can exist only at the border of two worlds, where the absolute as transcendent demands of normativity and morality become the measures of social actions, the ethical and political world. We can detach from the representations of religious

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[3] J. Derrida, A. Dufourmantelle, & R. Bowlby. 2000. *Of Hospitality* (Cultural Memory in the Present) (1st ed.). Stanford: University Press. 25.

beliefs, but the experiences embedded in them are connected to the deep structure of human existence. The unconditional welcoming and acceptance of another person is not the fictional desire of an outdated religious tradition or a meaningless and self-serving act of kindness (action gratuite), but a gesture exemplary for every human action, in harmony with the essence of morality; a generous, free gesture, expecting no reciprocity, a gracious act (acte de grâce), which, not incidentally, is a moment of our salvation ("…I was a stranger, and you welcomed me…") and therefore of our duty to ourselves. At this point, we will only mention how little attention Derrida pays to the gospel parables of hospitality (as he generally shows little connection between the gestures of Jesus and hyperbolic ethics). Nevertheless, these parables do not fit into the genealogy of legal-formal hospitality – of Greek-Roman origin, extending to Kant and today's asylum laws (contractual relationship) – nor into the Abraham paradigm found in Abrahamic religions ("you never know whether it is God visiting you"), although it naturally encompasses this. However, they are very much in line with the idea of hospitality without conditions, devoid of calculation, opening up to the uniqueness and finiteness of the other (even the finiteness of God or a finite God in the person of Jesus), not just as an ethical parable or foundation of ethics but as the sole criterion of salvation at the last judgment.

Unconditional hospitality, therefore, serves as a precondition for encountering the other, preceding all legal institutions and creating an ethical situation even before any regulations or rules. In this sense, ethics is more fundamental than law, and hospitality is more fundamental than ethics, because it is more foundational than any social, political, or legal relationship. Every society, every ethics, and every politics is built upon hospitality. At this point, there should exist concrete ethics and politics derived from hospitality. However, it does not take much research to ascertain that not only do existing ethics and politics not have their foundations in hospitality, but unconditional hospitality can never have its ethics and politics because they are embedded in the conditions of actual human existence.

> Let us assume (…) that there is no assured passage (…) between an ethics or a first philosophy of hospitality, and a law or politics of hospitality (…). Let us assume that one cannot deduce from Levinas's ethical discourse on hospitality a law and a politics (…) How, then, are we to interpret this impossibility? Does this impossibility signal a failing? (…) *If there is no lack here, would not such a hiatus in effect require us to think law and politics otherwise?*[4]

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[4] Jacques Derrida. 1999. *Adieu to Emmanuel Levinas*. Translated by Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas. Standford: University Press. 20–21.

However, it is impossible to conceive of law and politics differently (from the perspective of hospitality) without reconsidering our relationships to existence and the existent. Derrida interprets hospitality not only as an ethical but as a fundamental ontological relation, which already becomes an openness to the arrival of what is to come, a readiness for the arrival of the other, and the encounter with the other. Unconditional openness to the other signifies a trust in existence that fully unfolds in relinquishing oneself to being, a releasement (*Gelassenheit*). If the mere fact of existence elevates every existent to an absolute in its uniqueness and finiteness, then the absolutely other is not exclusively a human but can equally be another existent, living being, or an inanimate object. Hence, the sufficient relationship to every existent can be understood as hospitality. In the coexistence of existents, the absolute is their mere presence, which at all times poses questions to, and expects answers from, every existent. In human relationships with each other, this question-answer structure organizes itself into ethics. Can we say that human relations with all existents are inherently ethical? Can ethics be extended to every existent by interpreting our ontological relationship as hospitality?

4. The characteristics of our ontological perspective

Our ontological perspective (whether it is a philosophically elaborated theory of existence or the unexamined and unreflective way of relating to our everyday life) fundamentally shapes our way of being. Neither needs to become thematic; our perspective on being, known or unconsciously influencing us, permeates our thinking, speech, actions, relationships, institutions, aspirations, and goals, reflecting the distinctiveness of a given era, culture, or civilization. The way humans exist, and the possible and distinguished dimensions of their existence, are interrelated, coexisting, and changing together with the characteristics of their perspective on existence.

Today's (globalized European) human condition is determined by the privilege that humans have secured for themselves within the order of *creation* as *zoon logon ekhon*, allowing them to regard themselves as *the masters and possessors of nature*. (The formulation illustrates how the fundamental moments of ancient Greek philosophy, Judeo-Christian religious thought, and modernity merged in the tradition of the Europeans' self-definition.) This conception of existence supports the occupation of the Earth as much as it diminishes the guilt resulting from actions against living beings. It provides a basis for interventions in the natural environment as well as aspirations to explore and conquer the cosmic environment beyond our earthly surroundings.

Human beings differ from other existents and stand above them, and everything that exists serves the unfolding of this privileged human existence, subordinated to humanity. The hierarchical order creates privileges; privileges generate power; power generates rights, primarily the right to sovereign self-determination; sovereignty determines the right to dispose of others; and in relationships with strangers, it shapes the historical forms of hospitality and the right to hospitality.

An ontological view of existence and a way of being based on unconditional hospitality would fundamentally rewrite this ontological perspective and reorganize the way we exist in the world today. In what follows I will examine the conditions that make such a view possible and meaningful, and what – at first glance, difficult to accept – changes it leads to in our fundamental relations to beings. If it makes sense to talk about a non-anthropocentric hospitality in which, *ad absurdum*, non-human existents could become part of law, ethics, and especially politics. This still seems impossible today. However, the same question arises as before: Does not the impossibility of extending hospitality to non-human beings, which, without consciousness or intentionality, cannot be legal subjects or ethical and political subjects, encourage us to rethink our anthropocentric legal system, ethics, and politics instead? For example, in the context of an ecological coexistence theory in which *the unconditional recognition* of the singular and finite existence of *every being* is at its center. The impossibility of this may be due to cultural determinism, which is also indicated by the fact that there are cultures and subcultures (increasingly marginalized due to Euro-Atlantic globalization) in which the unconditional recognition and respect for the existence of beings is self-evident. At the same time, it also poses the task of uncovering and deconstructing the cultural determinisms that prevent hospitality from becoming a general ontological attitude.

5. Hospitality is human. Or not?

Derrida's questioning in this regard emerges right at the beginning of his seminar titled "*Hospitalité*". The seminar starts with an analysis of Kant's famous text, in which, according to Derrida, the legal understanding of hospitality achieved its most complete and formal development. In the *Third Definitive Article for Perpetual Peace*,[5] the right to universal hospitality restricts the cosmopolitan right to the

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[5] Immanuel Kant. 1795. *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*. "Third definitive article for a perpetual peace. The Law of World Citizenship Shall Be Limited to Conditions of Universal Hospitality". http://fs2.american.edu/dfagel/www/Class%20Readings/Kant/Immanuel%20Kant,%20_Perpetual%20Peace_.pdf

conditions of universal hospitality. Every human being, Kant writes, "has the right to become a fellow inhabitant for a certain length of time" on the finite surface of the earth. As long as they behave peacefully, no one can reject them, at least not directly or indirectly. The right to visit (and not to settle) derives from the natural condition that the earth is spherical, and on this finite surface curving back on itself, one cannot isolate oneself from the presence of other humans. However, Kant continues, "originally, no one had more right than another to a particular part of the earth" because the surface of the earth is "our common possession" and we have "the common right to the face of the earth, which belongs to human beings generally". Hospitality, in this sense, is ordained by nature; we may violate it, but we cannot ignore, eliminate, or abolish it. Inhospitality is not the abolishment of hospitality but rather its modification. Unfriendliness can be directed toward or initiated by both hosts and guests. Kant provides extreme but illustrative examples opposed to natural law. The robbery of travelers or the enslaving and plundering of nomadic tribes by the inhabitants of coasts or of the deserts are instances of the *denial of the host's duties*; and the injustices of the civilized and especially of the commercial states, which visited but also in fact conquered foreign countries demonstrate the *abuse of the right to hospitality*. These extremes also reveal the minimum conditions of hospitality: the obligation not to harm the other and to abstain from causing their demise, and the right to hospitality does not extend beyond peaceful coexistence.

The meeting of humans is a result of the natural necessity on the spherical earth, but does it follow that this meeting is immediately inscribed within *the order of hospitality?* After all, there must be more to hospitality than just a meeting compelled by physics! What makes a visit immediately part of the scene of welcoming and hosting? The answer lies in the functioning of the *own* and the *non-own* (of home). The guest's right to appear arises from the fact that "the common right to the surface of the earth" cannot be expropriated. Unlike all my other property, the inexpropriability of the earth imposes the obligation to share. Not the obligation to give up one's own, since one's own home is the basis of hospitality, but the obligation to open and share this home. And to this the guest can form a right, unlike everything else that is my property. In this case, what is mine becomes also yours because the earth's surface belongs to both of us, or, more precisely, to neither of us exclusively. This is also the source of the obligation to host. On earth, we are all newcomers, and in our home, we are guests. By offering hospitality, one guest welcomes another guest. In the selflessness of his hospitality, the host makes an experience of himself and all of us as guests. The newcomer elevates the host to the

guest that he has always been, revealing to him the anachronism at all times of the presence as existence in time.

For Kant, the nature-ordained encounter immediately rises above its natural state. He only considers the institutionalized aspects of human interaction as suitable for grounding rights. Thus, Kant attempts to exclude from the rights of hospitality any elements that cannot be institutionalized: namely the uncertain, vague, and unclarified aspects of emotions. Although our entire being is attuned, and our encounters are never devoid of emotions, he emphasizes that hospitality is not philanthropy but a right belonging to human beings, a duty incumbent upon every human being, regardless of the emotional charge of the encounter. Neither hospitality nor rejection derives from love or hate for humanity, even when the other is personally likable or dislikable (due to their presence, personality, behavior, requests, demands, etc.).

And it is at this point that Derrida poses the question that interests me:

> By specifying that it is a matter of right and not philanthropy, Kant does not intend to suggest that this right should be misanthropic or even ananthropic. It is a human right, the right to hospitality – and for us, this already announces a serious question: the question of the anthropological dimension of hospitality or the right to hospitality. What should we say, or can we speak of hospitality towards the non-human, the divine, for example, towards animals, and plants, to use these three conventional categories? Must we offer hospitality, and is it the right word when it comes to welcoming – or being welcomed by – the other and the stranger, as God, as an animal, as a plant? We will keep returning to the horizon of these questions.[6]

Derrida, therefore, takes Kant's proposition in a different direction, one that Kant did not explore extensively. He shifts the emphasis away from the distinction between law and emotion (if we assume that love is not something more than an emotion) and directs it toward the "antropos". Although hospitality does not entail love for humanity, it is only a human right, and this necessarily implies that it cannot be extended to non-human entities – a suggestion Kant's statement leaves open according to Derrida.

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[6] "En précisant qu'il s'agit ici de droit et non de philanthropie, Kant ne veut pas marquer, bien entendu que ce droit doit être misanthropique, ni même ananthropique, c'est un droit humain, ce droit à l'hospitalité – et c'est déjà pour nous l'annonce d'une grave question que celle de cette dimension anthropologique de l'hospitalité ou du droit à l'hospitalité: que dire ou peut-on parler de l'hospitalité à du non-humain, à du divin, par exemple, à de l'animal, à du végétal? Doit-on l'hospitalité et est-ce le bon mot quand il s'agit d'accueillir – ou de se faire accueillir par – l'autre et l'étranger, comme dieu, comme animal, comme plante, pour se servir de ces trois catégories conventionnelles? Nous ne cesserons de revenir vers l'horizon de ces questions…)." (Derrida 2021–2022/I, 22.) (My translation from French – L.K.)

6. Non-human hospitality

This raises the question of non-human hospitality in every sense: the hospitality offered to non-human entities and the hospitality required from non-human entities. If this is not merely an emotional relationship, then we might consider institutionalizing our relationships with non-humans (Derrida mentions beings, living beings) – which means a system of rights and obligations could be established in our relations with non-human entities as well. If this is possible, then some form of hospitality (or precisely the same form of hospitality as for humans) might exist for both human and non-human entities.

There is much debate around the question of whether this could become a legal institution. However, there is nothing absurd in the idea that I can be (or consider myself as) a host and offer (consider myself as offering) hospitality to a divine being, an animal, or a plant. I can seek to leave them to stay peacefully in my presence, and our presences thus merge into a common, harmonious presence, and they can expect me to do so, without which there would be no meeting between us. But whether I can be their guest, and expect their hospitality, remains meaningless. The same holds true for obligations: I might feel obliged to host non-human entities as a guest and also feel obligated to behave as a guest in their presence, but it is difficult to interpret whether these entities would have such obligations. Kant certainly would argue that in these cases offering hospitality can be my duty towards myself, which extends *regarding* non-human entities, but *not towards* them, they cannot be in a guest-host relationship with me because conscious reciprocity cannot be established.

However, when we look at the cases we can consider as examples of *inhospitality* with non-humans, we do not find the same relationship. It is harder to situate them within the bounds of my duty to myself. Harming and killing non-human beings such as gods, animals, or plants that visit the territory of my "own" home is just as much a violation of hospitality *towards* them as subjugating, plundering, or depriving them within their own terreneum. The radical instances of inhospitality mentioned above involve our full responsibility *towards* divine, animal, and vegetative beings (or any other existent). Thus, if I kill or cause suffering to others, it is not about neglecting my duties toward myself regarding them, but neglecting my duty toward them, which is to let them be in peace. Moreover, with these creatures, the demarcation of my own home from their territories is even more problematic how can I own that which not only cannot be expropriated, but which is the most *naturally* common, and which has to be the most naturally shared? Therefore, it is senseless and unjust to claim that depriving non-human beings of their habitat and life is merely a breach of my duty

towards myself. My duty *towards* the other is also at stake. If the cases of inhospitality towards non-human beings point to the fact that I have a responsibility towards them, it is reasonable to conclude that I have duties towards them.

Kant restricts mutual responsibility and obligations only to rational beings, and thus integrates the moral content appearing in relation to non-rational beings in the "duty towards oneself". However, we could approach this differently: responsibility arises from responding to each other, and beings are in constant communication with each other. In this sense, the responsibility of beings towards each other exists, regardless of whether this applies to rational or non-rational beings, but first becomes recognized, acknowledged, and desired by rational beings. Whether the responsibility of humans towards non-human beings becomes a duty towards them and is enshrined as a right continues to depend on whether non-human beings are capable of recognizing my duty and forming a right based on it. Before hastily assuming that non-human beings, being non-rational and unconscious, are incapable of such recognition, we have to consider that recognition (though not in terms of duties and rights) is essential for them to distinguish between useful and harmful, nourishing and poisonous, and more. Essentially, between self and other. Such differentiation guides the immune system in every living being, resulting in the integrity and lasting existence of the living organism. Therefore, living organisms inherently organize their experiences in their communication with their environment: by differentiating and recognizing, they seek out acceptable and accepting encounters, and avoid unwanted and rejecting ones.

We assume that in the context of hospitality, one of the participants must always be human. Partly because it is challenging for us to imagine that the initiative or interaction would come from non-human entities or that they would relate to each other in this way. However, we are familiar with scenes in the relationships between non-human entities, animals, and plants (beyond individuals of their own species) that have the meanings of acceptance, reception, mutual recognition, tolerance, and care, among other things. Their hospitality is a reality. Therefore, it is not absurd to consider non-human entities in the role of hosts; the phenomenon of caring for offspring, caring for fellow species, and nurturing offspring is widespread in the animal kingdom, and even the plant world is not devoid of nurturing offspring and promoting and ensuring life conditions in the communication with fellow beings. After all, this community of life consists of a variety of species of plants and animals. And of humans and gods, too, as long as they do not exclude themselves from or elevate themselves above it.

If extending hospitality to every being implies mutual recognition, then it seems that the harmony of ecological systems, these enduring, functioning systems, are great witnesses to hospitality.

Clearly, this idea destroys the very conditions enabling the possibility of hospitality when it relativizes the own, the stranger, the home, etc. But it also destroys the very foundations of morality, of ethics, when it extends duty and responsibility to non-human, or more precisely, non-rational beings. In unconditional hospitality, does unconditionality also mean the overriding of these conditions? Perhaps. Remember that we are in a thought experiment. We might just learn from the extension of hospitality what the essence of human-to-human hospitality should be. By contemplating whether it is possible – and if so, how, and if not, why not – to not only speak about hospitality in relation to gods, animals, and plants, but also to relate to them as with humans, in accordance with the institution of hospitality. By imagining what kind of human way of being would emerge if we approached every being with the unconditional giving and receiving of hospitality.

7. Communicative, cooperative, and copoietic co-existence

"Offering hospitality to non-humans, plants, animals, or the divine, does it make any sense? A huge question." This question permeates the atmosphere of Derrida's seminar without thematic discussion. After its initial appearance, it fades into oblivion, only to reappear in the second part of the seminar (Derrida 2021–2022/II, 55)[7], still without elaboration. We do not intend to oversimplify this immense question with a straightforward answer. However, it is also clear from what we have seen so far that our competition-centered ontological approach is fundamentally different from our hospitality-centered ontological approach. The Heraclitean "polemos" and the Anaximanderian "adiké" define the original relation of beings to each other. Out of them evolved an ontology based on the principle of "all against all", a theory of evolution driven by competition and the quest for domination. Even if we accept these two ontological premises, does it follow from them that beings can only strive not to accept each other, but to defeat each other? Does not the moving of "atonement of injustice" and the "creating war" suggest that, despite all the inherent

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[7] ".. vous vous rappelez qu'au début du séminaire l'an dernier (…), nous nous sommes demandé si l'hospitalité était le propre de l'homme; autrement dit, s'il y avait un sens à offrir de l'hospitalité à du non-homme, à des plantes, à de l'animal ou à du divin. Est-ce que cela a du sens? Énorme question." (Derrida 2021–2022/II, 55) (The English version is my translation – L.K.)

antagonisms of beings, existence unfolds in harmonious arrangements? And does this not refer to another principle of organization, which can be called hospitality?

"All things must in equity again decline into that whence they have their origin for they must give satisfaction and atonement for injustice each in the order of time." – Anaximander set the course not only for our philosophical understanding of existence but also for our relationship with beings when he stated that beings commit injustice against each other simply by existing. Therefore, they must be punished, and their punishment is annihilation (decline), which they pay as compensation or reparation (satisfaction and atonement) for the injustice they committed against each other. What does this injustice, stemming from mere existence, consist of? We only need to consider what happens to beings during their necessary and punitive annihilation: they pay for their existence with their existence. They are deprived of everything that enabled their ascent into existence, and they decline to the boundless and infinite, *Apeiron*, where spatial and temporal relations and forms are unknown. Accordingly, injustice lies in the fact that during their (temporary) existence, things expropriate something that is not theirs. By temporarily expropriating shape, space, and time, each being deprives other beings of these possibilities, compelling them to compete and fight for these opportunities.

However, this does not only or necessarily imply a conception of existence as competition and struggle for domination. If the decline of beings is a form of retribution, then they are already in debt when they enter existence: to exist is to be inherently indebted to something that is not a prior loan, unless we consider as a loan the possession of something that is not our own.

The ontological extension of hospitality does not necessarily seek to contradict those ontological interpretations and theories that view existence through the lens of rivalry, perpetual struggle among beings, conflicts, battles, power-seeking, and the principle of "the war of all against all." Instead, it reveals an essential aspect of existence that invalidates the meaning of this power struggle: the fact that in our existence, we own something that cannot be expropriated, and will not encourage us to compete, if we admit that we possess nothing, yet we owe.

The hospitality offered to non-human beings is restrained. Spending time together in (co-)existence, and refraining from letting mere functionality, deterministic expediency or self-interest decide the other. The manifestation of abstention and also the condition of possibility is abstention from destroying the other. To leave-to-be is not indifference or disinterest, not passive toleration, but very active participation in the other's existence by not interfering in their existence.

Abstained togetherness is respecting the other's conditions of being: place, time, form, and environment, supporting its survival or continued existence. Even the modes of evasion, avoidance, and moving on, which are by no means deficits, are not the result of indifference or neglect: evasion and avoidance require serious attention, and moving on requires resoluteness.

In the context of Anaximanderian ontology, an extended view of hospitality allows entities to rectify the injustices committed against each other through their mere existence by engaging in a mutual act of abstention. The ultimate "truth" of their existence lies not in the inevitable punishment, in their decline *but in the opportunity inherent in existence to rectify the injustices through affirmative abstention.* In essence, existence is a reciprocal, gratuitous gift.

Their existence already places the entities in a relationship where their presence becomes togetherness. Within co-presence, every entity in their absolute (or sheer) presence addresses a question to and waits for a response from each one. The temporally enduring and affirmative abstention becomes a communicative coexistence. In this coexistence, flow, movement, transmission, transportation, and exchange all collaborate to establish a lasting, stable, and harmonious community –cooperative and copoietic communitas. In human-to-human relationships, the question-and-answer dynamic organizes itself into ethics. However, every entity in its ability to respond bears responsibility in its relationship with every other entity.

Rather than setting things in place, the hospitable relationship offers a place for them. Leaving entities to be is not a matter of leaving or ordering them in one place; it supports and facilitates their movement within existence. It does not merely let them exist where they are, but where they can be; it participates in their being and shares the possibilities of existence. It is not indifference but rather heightened, vigilant attention. It is not passivity but wholehearted engagement and caring activity. The phenomenological term for this concentrated attention is intentionality, which serves as the driving force not only in the process of theoretical cognition but also in the fundamental ontologic relationship to beings.

Derrida, within Lévinas's philosophy, places significant emphasis on reinterpreting intentionality. According to Lévinas, in our relationship with the other person, a unique form of intentionality operates; it is not the objectifying intentionality that strives for truth and knowledge. "It [intentionality, consciousness of] is attention of the face, hospitality and not thematization." The intentionality of hospitality is not objectifying; even in the most indifferent glance, in routine, calculating practices, it does not lack attention directed toward the other. In encounters, we are directed not

epistemically, but with an intention of attention toward the other. We do not objectify the other in understanding; instead, we lead them into their own being through reception. Intentional attention, without any prior judgments or presuppositions, affirms the existence of the other. Hospitable intentionality is a commitment to the eventful arrival and reception of the other, a predisposition for the future to come, so to speak, a continuous state of readiness for receiving the other as a guest. The mere fact of existence makes not only humans but every entity absolute. We owe it to ourselves to relate to others justly. We can repair the injustices committed against each other not through destruction but through just existence.

8. Primordial hospitality

Derrida, following Lévinas's philosophy, refers to a debt encoded in the temporality of existence "that precedes all forms of borrowing". He names this "anachronism of debt", surprisingly the primordial hospitality (Derrida 2021–2022/II, 95). The anachronism inserts a past never-present-before into the present moment and event of encounter, a precedentless antecedent. In the hospitable relationship, both the giver and the receiver (offering and accepting hospitality) stand in a state of temporal and ontic inequality, in an anachronistic-ontic relationship. This primordial hospitality, says Derrida, "the fact that I'm a guest in my own home means that I'm in debt even before a legal contract, even before I've contracted a debt, I'm in debt." (Derrida 2021–2022/II, 95) But each of them is in an anachronistic situation concerning themselves as well. Their shared destiny is that the existence from which they draw is a precedentless antecedent. Heidegger described it for human beings as follows: to be as the nothingness ground of oneself.

In a hospitable relationship, one must repay a debt that has never been a loan, and the other must shape the right to this gift without becoming in debt. Both are in debt; in their coexistence, they share something that doesn't belong to either of them. "A contracted debt is nothing because it's on a level of homogeneity: I know what I owe, I can pay it off, I can repay it, it's not a radical debt. The absolute debt – this is found in the tradition of Nietzsche, Heidegger, in another style – is a debt that I didn't even contract, that is older than I am, but for which I am responsible." (Derrida 2021–2022/II, 95)[8]

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[8] "Le fait que je suis hôte chez moi, c'est que je suis endetté avant même un contrat juridique, avant même d'avoir contracté une dette, je suis endetté. La dette que je contracte, au fond, ce n'est rien puisque c'est sur un plan d'homogénéité: je sais ce que je dois, je peux m'acquitter, je peux rembourser, ce n'est pas une dette radicale. La dette absolue – on trouve cela dans la tradition de Nietzsche, de Heidegger, dans un autre style – est une dette que je n'ai même pas contractée, qui est plus vieille que moi, mais dont je suis responsable." (Derrida 2021–2022/II, 95) (The English version is my translation – L. K.)

I am thus responsible for a debt that I did not create but simply found myself in by existing. At this point, existence itself is a debt; in this sense, I am not only a host; I, too, am a newcomer or a guest. This both removes my arrogance toward the newcomer and puts me in the newcomer's place. I must give, I must share everything with the other newcomer not as a host but as a guest of a greater Host. I must give not as an owner but as someone who has been given to. The guest elevates the host to guest.

Our debt without prior borrowing is something we want to consider our own, something that belongs to us yet is not ours. We received it, and gratitude and thanks are the only adequate form of reciprocation. We do not have to give it back; we have to share it. We cannot keep it for ourselves; we can only pass it on.

We owe this to ourselves and to others.

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On Hospitality,
or "The Power to Rise above one's Life"

Joanny Moulin[1]

Abstract

What habitat does the notion of hospitality find in the philosophy of life? First terminological snag: "philosophy of life" is a vocable silted up in history, for one hears *Lebensphilosophie*, vitalism, Bergson, Simmel, Dilthey, etc. Further upstream, of course, Hegel, his distinction between the life of nature and the life of spirit (from which were derived the *Geisteswissenschaften*, in the time of Wilhelm Dilthey, long before they became the human sciences, and what in several points of his oeuvre Derrida said about it, more particularly in *La vie la mort*, and twenty years later in *Hospitalité*. But from the very start, even before any reference to what anyone may have said about it, life demands hospitality in some place, to live is to inhabit, and in this uniqueness, this identity of the living and of the inhabiting we understand, immediately, the ambivalence of the notion that Derrida signals by the portmanteau word '*hostipitalité*', that he links to the notion of enclave 'that a general typology of the enclave must organize any theory of ipseity as hospitality or hostipitality'. Naturally, 'enclave' must be understood in the sense of inclusion, but while remembering that etymologically *enclave* derives from the Latin *inclavatus*, locked up, under lock and key.

What habitat does the notion of hospitality find in the philosophy of life? First terminological issue: 'philosophy of life' is a vocable silted up with history, for one hears *Lebensphilosophie*, vitalism, Bergson, Simmel, Dilthey, etc. Further upstream, of course, Hegel, his distinction between the life of nature and the life of spirit (from which were derived the *Geisteswissenschaften*, as the first German translator of John Stuart Mill's

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[1] *Aix-Marseille University,* joanny.moulin@univ-amu.fr

System of Logic chose to render the notion of 'moral sciences'[2], in the days of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), long before they became the human sciences, humanities, social sciences), and what in several points of his oeuvre Derrida said about it, more particularly in *La vie la mort*, the seminar of the academic year 1975–1976, twenty years exactly before *Hospitalité* (vol. 1, séminaire 1995–1996). But from the very start, even before any reference to what anyone may have said about it, life demands hospitality in some place, for to live is to inhabit, and in this uniqueness, this identity of the living and of the inhabiting, we understand, immediately, the ambivalence of the notion that Derrida signals by the portmanteau word '*hostipitalité*', which he links to the notion of enclave /'enkleiv/ (*enclave* /en'kla:v/) – 'that a general typology of the enclave must organize any theory of ipseity as hospitality or hostipitality'[3]. Naturally, 'enclave' must be understood in the sense of inclusion, but while remembering that etymologically *enclave* derives from the Latin *inclavatus*: locked up, under lock and key.

The relevance to life is doubly blatant, because, on the one hand, life can only be *comprehended* as an enclave in the sense that is by definition comprised in a place – milieu, *Lebenswelt*, life-world, world that comprises it – and because, on the other hand, all life is under lock and key, coded, enclaved in the sense of encoded, by a genetic code that, for most living beings, can only be comprehended as comprising alterity (otherness) within its own identity: this is par excellence the principle of sexual reproduction, but this can also be demonstrated of other modes of the proliferation of life, as in the case of viruses, quasi-living quasi-beings that can be defined as continually metamorphosing codes. Is it not, in sum, what Derrida is saying when he asserts that 'a general typology of the enclave must organize any theory of ipseity as hospitality or hostipitality'? There is no *ipseity*, there is no *living subject* (*sujet vivant*) that is not enclaved, enclaving, and that therefore cannot be theorized in terms of hospitality, *hostipitality*. This ambivalence proves crucial for the whole of the 1995–1996 seminar, admirably figured by this neologism (hostipitality) that mutually enclaves hospitality and hostility into one another. The first word derives from the Latin *hospes, hospitis*. The host in English is someone who receives and accommodates another person in his or her own home, and until the 15th century a host was also a hostel, a place of hosting. In French, since the 12th century, *hôte* is a

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[2] 'Book VI On the Logic of the Moral sciences', John Stuart Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive : Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence, and Methods of Scientific Investigation*, vol. 2, London, J.W. Parker, 1843, 649 p.. « *6. Buch. Von der Logik der Geisteswissenschaften oder moralischen Wissenschaften* », John Stuart Mill, *System der deduktiven und inductiven Logik*, trad. J. Schiel, 1868, Braunschweig, 1868.

[3] '[…] *qu'une topologie générale de l'enclave doit organiser toute théorie de l'ipséité comme hospitalité ou hostipitalité*' Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité, Séminaire (1995–1996)*, vol. 1, Paris, Seuil, 2021, p. 252-253.

middle-voice word, for *l'hôte* designates the one who receives as well as the one who is received, the enclaving as well as the enclaved, with or without an 'h', *hôte*, *hoste*, *oste*. Drop the final 'e' and you have l'*ost*, that is to say the army, which is the root meaning of the word *host* in English. The word *ost* is pronounced \ɔst\ in modern French, but it used to be pronounced \ot\, exactly like *hôte*. The other meanings of the word *host* in English are the hostel, i.e. the place of hosting, up to the 15th century, and the *host* as consecrated bread, *hostie* \ɔs.ti\ in French, deriving from the Latin *hostia*, the object of a sacrifice. As for the host as army on the march, you can receive it as you wish, in barracks, or with an exchange of blows on the battlefield, host against host, as a force of liberation, or even with submission.

The other, naturally hostile host, derives from the Latin etymon *hostis*, the foe, the foreigner, but also the token, the pawn in the strategy game *ludus latrunculorum*, in which the pawns or pieces were called *hostes*, because as adversaries, as opponents, they host one another. The *ludus latrunculorum*, also called *latrunculi*, or *latrones*, or even 'game of brigands' or 'game of soldiers', was an ancient Roman ancestor of the games of chess, and of draughts, whose pieces host one another, enclose one another on the chessboard. War is a kind of *hostipitality*: the enemy penetrates your homeland with its hosts, and then you see if you wish to collaborate, or if you resist, and if you will get over it and how, but what is certain, independently of the question of knowing if and how you will get out of the situation, what is certain is that you have been thrown out of your home, out of your *Lebenswelt*, in the sense that the arrival of the other as host has irrevocably changed your life. But *that is life*, as the saying goes in expressing a certain popular fatalism, but also in the sense that what we comprehend as life is no other than this movement, this 'evolution', of action and reaction relatively to negativity as *hostipitality*, or in other words as entrance, as hosting, of an alterity by definition altering and hostile. At this juncture, two remarks are called for: the one on *La vie la mort*, and the other on Bergson.

Firstly, *La vie la mort*: two decades before the seminar on *Hospitalité*, Derrida had sustained a thesis that could be translated today (after having read the 1995–1996 seminar in particular) by the proposition that life hosts death that hosts life; life enclaves death that enclaves life, or, in other words, that the relationship between the two is a rapport of hospitality (*hostipitality*).

So that by saying, with the blank of a pause or the invisible dash of a beyond, 'life death' (*la vie la mort*), I neither oppose nor equate life to death – neither and (*et*) nor is (*est*) – let us say that I neutralize both the opposition and the equation, to signal the possibility, not of another logics, an opposite logics of life and death,

but of another topics, if you wish, from which we could read at last the whole program of the and, and of the is, of positionality and of the presence of being, both remaining always effects of 'life death'[4].

Three key words, three words enclaved, encoded in this citation, typical of the argumentation of this particular seminar: 'logics, topics, program'. It is clearly not indifferent that the first two advance armed with the *other* – '*another* logics, an opposite logics', '*another* topics*, if you wish*' – and it is well known that Derrida's point, in that particular seminar, was to criticize François Jacob's biologism dominated by the notion of program, especially in the genetic sense of the term. In the present argumentation, this amounts to a contradiction of the fatalist's 'that's life' by examining a programmer God, a Great Programmer of the Universe, who, ultimately, has written all destinies in advance. Against the fatalistic and fixistic notions of a program stands the notion of game and gamble (the two words have the same etymology and the French word *jeu* translates both), and game implies strategy, be it only to create the conditions of possibility in which one can seize the *kairos* to triumph in the end.

Secondly, Bergson: it is difficult not to perceive, in this respect, the echo, or rather the ghost of Bergson haunting Derrida's thought, and more particularly the theses Bergson developed in *Creative Evolution* and *The Creative Mind* (*L'évolution créatrice* & *La pensée et le mouvant*)[5]. It is impossible not to hear the echo of Bergson's *élan vital* in this notion of the *escape* of writing from the program. One must insist on this notion of *escape*, *scapes* or moving, changing faces of the world, which, for the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889), who was a disciple of John Duns Scotus (c.1265–1308), converged towards an inaccessible *inscape* of the Platonic idea, or of the *quidditas* of the thing *in se*. On the contrary, we are interested here in these *scapes*, or in these *escapes* of Derrida's text, who at this point is principally working on Kant's notion of 'cosmopolitic right':

The point is here, as you have probably guessed, in *Toward Perpetual Peace*, of the famous *Third Definitive Article in view of Perpetual Peace* (*Dritter Definitivartikel zum ewigen Frieden*), whose title is: 'Das *Weltbürgerrecht* soll auf Bedingungen der allgemeinen

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[4] '*Si bien qu'en disant, avec le blanc d'une pause ou le trait invisible d'un au-delà, "la vie la mort", je n'oppose ni n'identifie la vie à la mort (ni et ni est), disons que je neutralise et l'opposition et l'identification, pour faire signe non pas vers une autre logique, une logique opposée de la vie et la mort, mais vers une autre topique, si vous voulez, depuis laquelle se donnerait à lire, au moins tout le programme du et et du est, de la positionnalité et de la présence de l'être, les deux restant des effets de "la vie la mort".*' Jacques Derrida, *La vie la mort (Séminaire 1975–1976)*, ed. P.-A. Brault et P. Kamuf, Paris, Seuil, 2019, p. 25.

[5] Henri Bergson, *L'évolution créatrice*, Félix Alcan, 1910; *Creative Evolution*, tr. A. Mitchell, ed. I. Edman, 1911, New York, Random House (The Modern Library), 1944. Henri Bergson, *La pensée et le mouvant, Essais et conférences*, 1941, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1950, Engl. trans.: *The Creative Mind*, tr. M. L. Andison, New York, Philosophical Library, 1934.

Hospitalität eingeschränkt sein': '*Cosmopolitic Right* must limit itself to the conditions of universal *hospitality*'[6].

Here, the focus of attention is the restriction, *die Einschränkung* – '*das Weltbürgerrecht soll* […] *eingeschränkt sein*' – the paradox of a cosmopolitical right that must be restrained and restricted to the universal – *auf Bedingungen der* allgemeinen *Hospitalität* –, as well as the corollary reduction of the reciprocity of hospitality, *Hospitalität*, to the univocity of the quasi-synonym *Wirtbarkeit*[7], which is the hospitality of the host – *der Wirt*, the innkeeper. The strong argument of the criticism Derrida addresses to Kant on the question of hospitality bears precisely on this notion of imperative, and consists in saying that 'this unconditional law of hospitality, if one can think that, is a law without any imperative, without any order or duty. For if I practice hospitality as a duty, it is no longer an absolute hospitality given, presented to the other'[8]. He adds that he is saying so 'under erasure or under *epoché*' ('*sous rature ou sous* epokhê'). And it is once again to Husserl that Derrida returns in the fifth session of the seminar on *Hospitality* (of 17 January 1996), where the *escape* that is interpellating us here happens; Husserl, who was, as we know, one of Derrida's decisive *philosophical hosts*, when he elaborated certain key notions of his own philosophy in the ambit of his reading of the philosophy of Husserl, in his long introduction to Husserl's *Origin of Geometry*[9], in 1962. A *philosophical host*, in the sense that Derrida the translator hosts Husserl's voice inside his own, and by doing so he invests Husserl's thinking with his own thinking, to such a point that neither the one nor the other remains unaffected: after this 'Introduction to Husserl's Geometry', neither Husserl nor Derrida can ever be the same as before. But in this fifth session of the seminar on *Hospitality*, Derrida notices, in filigree, a similitude, a shift of the Kantian imperative '*soll*', the '*must*' of Husserlian *epoché* as 'power', as 'I-can'. That is where the *escape*, the *departure*, happens: a swerve from Husserl, whom Derrida situates on the side of 'the whole of transcendental philosophy' ('toute la philosophie transcendantale').

The first examples of proper names could just as well reconduct to all the theories of the faculties, that is to say to the powers [*Vermögen*] that underlie every transcendental

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[6] '*Il s'agit, comme vous l'avez sans doute déjà deviné, dans* Vers la paix perpétuelle*, du fameux* Troisième Article définitif en vue de la paix perpétuelle *(*Dritter Definitivartikel zum ewigen Frieden*), dont le titre est :* "Das *Weltbürgerrecht* soll auf Bedingungen der allgemeinen *Hospitalität* eingeschränkt sein" *: "Le* droit cosmopolitique *doit se restreindre aux conditions de l'*hospitalité universelle".* Derrida, *Hospitalité*, op. *cit.*, p. 20.

[7] cf. *Ibidem*, p. 21-24.

[8] '*Cette loi inconditionnelle de l'hospitalité, si on peut penser cela, est une loi sans impératif, sans ordre et sans devoir. Car si je pratique l'hospitalité par devoir, ce n'est plus une hospitalité absolue donnée, offerte à l'autre*', *Ibidem*, p. 147-148.

[9] Jacques Derrida, 'Introduction', in Edmund Husserl. *L'origine de la géométrie*, 1962, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France (Épiméthée), 2010, p. 3-172; *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry, an Introduction*, trans. J. P. JR Leavey, 1978, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.

philosophy, in its larger tradition, from the Cartesian *cogito* and the Kantian 'I think'—that implicitly links possibility to faculty as power, and sometimes in the legal form—and the Husserlian *cogito*, which, while questioning Kant's transcendental psychologism as a theory of faculties, supposes nevertheless a power, an 'I can', for instance, I can bracket off the existence of the world in phenomenological reduction; I can suspend, in the free conversion of the outlook that is transcendental *epoché*, every life and every existence—the immense power of liberty that seems subtle and ethereal, even speculative, but leads back in fact, this power, to the recapture of a pure transcendental ego, of a pure self, as if from this power that is stronger than the very existence of the world and that life, the *psyche* itself [develop: above life**21**]]¹⁰

It is this addendum in parentheses that interpellates us here, not to say this *enclave*: '[develop: above life**21**]', augmented with a footnote by the editors of the volume: note n° 21. Hospitality of the text, that hosts in this case a thinking as yet absent, oral guest of a written host, writing inhabited by a speech as yet unformulated. This addendum is like a door in the text that opens out onto another *stanza*, another room, which is inhabited, we are told, and which we are invited to visit later. But what are these 'powers […] that underlie every transcendental philosophy, in its larger tradition', and which are clearly here the object of Derrida's criticism, a criticism by which he distinguishes himself from that kind of philosophy? These are the powers of reduction, of *Einschränkung*, of *epoché*—in short, the powers of abstraction; an 'I can', for instance: 'I can bracket off the existence of the world in phenomenal reduction, I can suspend, in the free conversion of an outlook that is transcendental *epoché*, every life and every existence'. Or else: 'immense power of liberty […] that leads back, in fact, this power, to the recapture of a pure transcendental ego, of a pure self, as if from this power that is stronger than the very existence of the world and that life'. And what are these 'powers' blamed for? Their powerlessness, their capacity for illusion and mistake, and the projection they operate 'of a pure transcendental ego, a pure self', and ipseity without hospitality, which would be the host of nothing else, which would be pure in this sense that it would host nothing else, and would be hosted by nothing else. And in a manner rather surprising in Derrida's expression, we

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¹⁰ '*Les premiers exemples ou noms propres pourraient aussi bien reconduire vers toutes les théories des facultés, c'est-à-dire des pouvoirs [Vermögen] qui sous-tendent toute la philosophie transcendantale, dans sa plus large tradition, depuis le* cogito *cartésien et le je pense kantien – qui lie explicitement la possibilité à la faculté comme pouvoir, et parfois dans la forme juridique – et le* cogito *husserlien, qui tout en mettant en question le psychologisme transcendantal de Kant comme théorie des facultés n'en suppose pas moins un pouvoir, un « je peux », par exemple, je peux mettre l'existence du monde entre parenthèses dans la réduction phénoménologique, je peux suspendre, dans la libre conversion du regard qu'est l'*epokhê *transcendantale, toute vie et toute existence – pouvoir inouï de la liberté qui paraît subtil et éthéré, voire spéculatif, mais qui reconduit, par ce pouvoir, à la ressaisie d'un ego transcendantal pur, d'un soi-même pur, comme et à partir de ce pouvoir plus fort que l'existence même du monde et que la vie, que la* psychê *même [développer : au-dessus de la vie²¹]*', Derrida, *Hospitalité, op. cit.*, p. 69.

hear in this passage an irritated tone, a certain exasperation perhaps, concerning the 'phenomenological reduction', the Husserlian *epoché*, or the Kantian *Einschränkung*, for the reason that it is a power, characteristic of 'the whole of transcendental philosophy', an 'I can bracket off the existence of the world', an 'I can suspend […] all life and all existence', a 'power […] that leads back […] to the recapture of a pure transcendental ego, a pure self', a 'power stronger than the very existence of the world and of life, of the psyche itself'. And it is precisely here, at this very significant moment of the text, that the addendum '[develop: above life**21**]' is inserted.

What is so interpellating in this moment of the seminar? First interpellation: it is one of the rare moments when Derrida comes close to a form of axiology in which transcendental philosophy is criticized on the grounds that it impedes *life*, that it brackets it off, that it suspends it, excludes it, in short that it does not host it, that it does not tolerate it any more, does not make room for it, that it extracts itself from it. The philosophical *agon* that we recognize here recoups the *departure*, the *escape*, that occurs in the introduction to *The Origin of Geometry*, where the *clinamen*, the swerve of Derrida's thought takes place relatively to Husserl's taken as a paragon of transcendental philosophy. Hospitality is the middle voice, both active and passive, inscription, enclave, encoding of the other into oneself, and of oneself into the other, and even more of the other to come, of the other as futurity: hospitality thus understood is the paroxysm of *différance* and of writing.

Second interpellation: it is crucial that this should occur incidentally, but by a principal contingency, 'a pure transcendental ego, a pure self', that is the problem that must be resolved in any attempt to theorize biography as a literary genre, or a historiographical genre, that generally projects a 'Self', a pure self, a pure ego – and to say 'pure' amounts to saying 'transcendental' – postulated as independent from the contingences of the existence and of the life of the subject. The whole problem is precisely to find how to resist this power of abstraction, 'stronger than life', this power 'above life' in this sense that it is a power *over* life. How can one enable thinking to resist this power instead of collaborating with it? How can one enable thinking *not to host* this power?

Third interpellation: what the text of this passage pits against reduction as the power that is characteristic of transcendental philosophy is *life and existence*, 'any life and any existence', and through this equation of life and existence can be heard one of the translations of the *Dasein*, and hence the *escape* produces itself towards Heidegger's criticism of metaphysics as the *Leitfrage*, or '*guiding question*', of Western philosophy from Plato to Nietzsche: what is designated here by the vocable

'transcendental philosophy'. But the text repeats itself, it proceeds by iteration, and at the second go, at the second return of the same, it hosts two new lexical guests: 'any existence and any life' becomes '[…] the very existence of the world and of life, […] the *psyche* itself'. The world enters the stage on the same plane as life – 'existence and life' become 'the existence of the world and of life', and it is true that no life can exist but in the hospitality of the world. But finally the escape remains towards Heidegger and the creative rapport to the world, the *weltbildend* relation to the world of the human *Dasein* (but that is a pleonasm).

Most remarkable is the invitation of the *psyche* into this context: 'this power stronger than even the existence of the world, stronger than life, stronger than the *psyche* even [develop: above life**21**]'. Derrida's text becomes the host of new notions in increasing number. Opposite transcendental philosophy and its reduction that produces the pure ego: existence, the world, life, the *psyche*. The resistance coalition grows. But most of all the *psyche* is integrated as an extension of life – '[stronger than] life, [stronger than] the *psyche* itself'. What emerges then in Derrida's text, with this triad of the world, life and the *psyche*, is another horizon that is the horizon of Hegel's thought, which, by the 'Phoenician movement', of which Derrida speaks in *La vie la mort*, describes the passage from 'the life of nature' to 'the life of spirit'. This passage, this transformation, is an *Aufhebung*, that Derrida translated by '*relève*', and which is conceived of, at least at first, as an elevation, a rise. From then on, the addendum, '[develop: above life**21**]', coming, moreover, immediately after the addition of the *psyche*, evokes the life of the spirit *above* the life of nature.

Thus, at this stage of the text two interpretations become possible, or rather we find ourselves not so much before a fork in the road as before a doubling up of interpretations, corresponding to two ways of thinking, that can be followed either separately or simultaneously. The one considers that the *above life* is the power *over* life that transcendental philosophy arrogates to itself by the transcendental reduction that suspends existence, the world, life, and the *psyche*. The other interpretation construes the *above life* as designating *the life above life*, the 'life of the spirit' above the 'life of nature'. Two other textual hospitalities, two other philosophical hosts, so to speak, can be detected here. Besides the presence of Hegel, here can be felt, on the one hand, the presence of Freud, of whom we know that it is by the integration and the analysis of 'A Note Upon the "Mystic Writing-Pad"' (1924) and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

that historically Derrida discovered the North-West passage of his own thinking[11]. On the other hand, and at the same time, this '[develop: above life**21**]' understood as the choice of a philosophy that turns away from transcendental reduction because of its incapacity to account for life and the *above life* inevitably invokes the manes of Bergson, and makes the echoes of pages like this one resonate in the background:

Plato was the first to set up the theory that to know the real consists in finding its Idea, that is to say, in forcing it into a pre-existing frame already at our disposal—as if we implicitly possessed universal knowledge. But this belief is natural to the human intellect, always engaged as it is in determining under what former heading it shall catalogue any new object; and it may be said that, in a certain sense, we are all born Platonists. Nowhere is the [inadequacy] *powerlessness* of this method so obvious as in theories of life. If, in evolving in the direction of the vertebrates in general, of man and intellect in particular, life has had to abandon by the way many elements incompatible with this particular mode of organization and to consign them, as we shall show, to other lines of development, it is the totality of these elements that [we must find again and rejoin to] *we shall have to search for and blend with* the intellect proper, in order to grasp the true nature of vital activity. And we shall probably be aided in this by the fringe of [vague intuition] *confused representation* that surrounds our distinct—that is, intellectual—representation. For what can this useless fringe be, if not that part of the evolving principle which has not shrunk to the peculiar form of our organization, [but has settled around it unasked for, unwanted] *but has been smuggled along*? It is there, accordingly, that we must look for hints to expand the intellectual form of our thought; from there shall we derive the impetus necessary to [lift us] *rise (soar, lift ourselves)* above ourselves. To form an idea of the whole of life cannot consist in combining simple ideas that have been left behind in us by life itself

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[11] Jacques Derrida, 'Freud et la scène de l'écriture', in *L'écriture et la différence*, Paris, Seuil (Tel Quel), 1997, p. 293–340. 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', in *Writing and Difference*, tr. A. Bass, London, Routledge, 1978, p. 246–91. Jacques Derrida, 'Spéculer – sur "Freud"', in *La carte postale de Socrate à Freud et au-delà*, Paris: Flammarion (La philosophie en effect), 1999, p. 275–437. 'To Speculate – on "Freud"', in *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, tr. A. Bass, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 257–409.

in the course of its evolution. How could the part be equivalent to the whole, the content to the container, a by-product of the vital operation to the operation itself?[12]

The same constatation of the 'inadequacy' (but *'impuissance'* is rather 'powerlessness') of transcendental philosophy to account for 'the whole of life' *(l'ensemble de la vie)* – 'every life and every existence' (*'toute existence et toute vie'*) – the same lassitude in front of the *shrinking* operated by the *epoché*, or phenomenological reduction, condemning itself *not to see* 'that part of the evolving principle which has not shrunk to the peculiar form of our organization'. One cannot but see that, at least in this fifth session of the *Hospitality* seminar, Derrida's thinking is inhabited, haunted, by a certain criticism, and even a philosophical stance, which is akin to Bergson's vitalism. For it is this second reading that is favored by Derrida's main text. But it is the first one that is briefly developed in note 21 transcribing a spoken addendum:

21. During the session, Jacques Derrida comments: 'Husserl's transcendental ego, one reaches it via a phenomenological reduction that suspends even the psychic life of the ego, which is only the parallel to transcendental life, therefore above life, power to rise above life. One could then find many such examples[13]'.

Derrida's expression *'s'élever au-dessus de la vie'*, 'to rise above life', echoes (with a difference as echoes will do) Bergson's *'nous hausser au-dessus de nous-mêmes'*, which Arthur Mitchell has rendered as 'to lift us above ourselves', a translation that unfortunately loses the sense of the reflexive pronominal verbe *'se hausser'* – *'c'est là que nous puiserons l'élan nécessaire pour* nous hausser *au-dessus de nous-mêmes'* – 'from there shall we derive the impetus necessary to lift *ourselves (to rise)* above ourselves'. The syntactic necessity of a pronoun is occasioned by the opting for the transitive verb 'to lift'. By contrast,

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[12] From *Creative Evolution*, tr. A. Mitchell, p. 55–56, *with our modifications in italics*. 'Platon fut le premier à ériger en théorie que connaître le réel consiste à lui trouver son Idée, c'est-à-dire à le faire entrer dans un cadre préexistant qui serait déjà à notre disposition, – comme si nous possédions implicitement la science universelle. Mais cette croyance est naturelle à l'intelligence humaine, toujours préoccupée de savoir sous quelle ancienne rubrique elle cataloguera n'importe quel objet nouveau, et l'on pourrait dire, en un certain sens, que nous naissons tous platoniciens. Nulle part *l'impuissance* de cette méthode ne s'étale aussi manifestement que dans les théories de la vie. Si, en évoluant dans la direction des Vertébrés en général, de l'homme et de l'intelligence en particulier, la vie a dû abandonner en route bien des éléments incompatibles avec ce mode particulier d'organisation et les confier, comme nous le montrerons, à d'autres lignes de développement, c'est la totalité de ces éléments que nous devrons rechercher et *fondre avec* l'intelligence proprement dite, pour ressaisir la vraie nature de l'activité vitale. Nous y serons sans doute aidés, d'ailleurs, par la frange de *représentation* confuse qui entoure notre représentation distincte, je veux dire intellectuelle : que peut être cette frange inutile, en effet, sinon la partie du principe évoluant qui ne s'est pas rétrécie à la forme spéciale de notre organisation *et qui a passé en contrebande* ? C'est donc là que nous devrons aller chercher des indications pour dilater la forme intellectuelle de notre pensée ; c'est là que nous puiserons l'élan nécessaire pour *nous hausser au-dessus* de nous-mêmes. Se représenter l'ensemble de la vie ne peut pas consister à combiner entre elles des idées simples déposées en nous par la vie elle-même au cours de son évolution : comment la partie équivaudrait-elle au tout, le contenu au contenant, un résidu de l'opération vitale à l'opération elle-même ?'(*L'évolution créatrice, op. cit.*, p. 52-53). Italics added.

[13] '21. Lors de la séance, Jacques Derrida commente : « L'ego transcendantal chez Husserl, on y accède dans une réduction phénoménologique qui suspend même jusqu'à la vie psychique de l'ego, qui n'est que le parallèle de la vie transcendantale, donc au-dessus de la vie, pouvoir de s'élever au-dessus de la vie. On pourrait après multiplier ces exemples ».' Jacques Derrida, *op. cit.*, p. 79. Our translation.

Derrida's choice to use the *infinitive* form of the pronominal verb '*s'élever*' has the additional consequence of detaching the action from the human subject. Therefore, a faithful translation of these texts into English requires an intransitive verb like 'to rise', for both Bergson and Derrida are speaking of a rising impetus, or a rising power, that is thought of as inherent to life. The 'above', *l'au-dessus*, is precisely not the 'beyond', *l'au-delà*. Derrida puts it clearly, by writing that the 'above life' (*'au-dessus de la vie'*), the 'power to rise above life' (*'pouvoir de s'élever au-dessus de la vie'*) that he has in mind is 'the psychic life of the ego, which is only the parallel to transcendental life' (*'la vie psychique de l'ego, qui n'est que le parallèle de la vie transcendantale'*). For the Bergson of *Creative Evolution* (*L'Évolution créatrice*), the source of this 'impetus to rise', this *'élan vital'*, is 'that part of the evolving principle which has not shrunk to the special form of our organization' (*'la partie du principe évoluant qui ne s'est pas rétrécie à la forme spéciale de notre organisation'*): It is therefore, by definition, what is occulted by the shrinking act of Husserlian *epoché* or transcendental reduction, and which '*we shall have to search for and blend with* the intellect proper' (*'que nous devrons rechercher et fondre avec l'intelligence proprement dite'*) – '*fondre avec*' could also be translated by the verb '*to alloy with*', or '*to melt with*', to maintain the metallurgical simile – the notion being clearly one of assimilation, or, in other words, of accomplished hosting, as Bergson envisages the possibility that the (precise, distinct) intellect and its (confused, indistinct) other shall be *melted* together.

In Derrida's thinking, the first acceptation of the expression 'above life', 'power to rise above life', as defining the attitude of transcendental philosophy is soon abandoned in favor of the second, which construes '*pouvoir de s'élever au-dessus de la vie*' as 'power of life to rise above', the rising power of life, the rising power that we call life. This other acceptation, this other direction of thinking is the one Derrida's discourse welcomes to the point of letting itself be invaded by it:

Another tradition could be Maine de Biran's, who deduces the sense of intimacy, the relationship to oneself, from an 'I can'. In yet another way, the *Dasein* that constitutes the theme of Heidegger's existential analytics, and which is said to be, beyond the egological forms of subjectivity, always, every time, nevertheless *jemeinig*, mine, is explicitly described as 'possibilization', 'can-be' [*Seinkönnen*]; the whole *Eigentlichkeit* is linked to the can-be, and even to the can-be as a whole, or to the can-be for death. Being, as being-there, is an original 'can-be': *Sein und Zeit* can be read

as a book on the possibility as possibilization and as a displacement of the classical concept of possibility and of force or of power [*Kraft, Macht, Könnem, Möglichkeit*, etc.][14].

This 'displacement of the classical concept of possibility and of force or of power', that is also to say the description do *Dasein* as 'possibilization', 'can-be', etc. should be reconsidered as another definition of 'biopower'[15], distinct from Foucault's without contradicting it, that is to say of life as power to rise, or rising power. It is pleonastic to add 'above life' or 'above itself', because life rises by definition, above itself by definition. This ascending movement, this ascension defines life, and it is a hospitality, possibly a hostipitality, because the living subject is such only by the symbiosis by which it hosts the other, by the desiring, symbiotic opening up to the other as futurity, as 'can-be'. Reciprocally, that is the reason why the *epoché* or transcendental reduction is a *Holzweg*, a blind alley.

The following step of Derrida's reflection in this fifth session is to introduce us to a great host whom we had recognized long ago in the crowd of guests to this party: 'If I keep the reference to Hegel for the end – non chronological […] it is indeed the Hegel of *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and of the master-slave dialectic […]'[16]. Incidentally, master and slave are also in a relationship of hospitality, of hostipitality, the one living upon the other and reciprocally, in a dialectic that is bound by its own impetus to reverse itself, and which is the turnstile of the middle voice: the vortex of the host's host, of the master as the slave's slave, and of the slave as the master's master.

Without entering into the analysis of this complex process, one can retain at least this characteristic: lordship ensures self-consciousness by the intermediary of the recognition by the slave and of the slave's labor […] and even if the master, therefore the power of domination [of *Herrschaft*] depends on the slave's work and at a certain moment makes the master the slave's slave, self-consciousness demands the moment of lordship or domination, that is to say *the power to risk death by rising above life*, of which the master is by definition capable, since it is this power over the other that is his lordship, that ensures lordship. To be able to say 'me' is to have the power over the

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[14] 'Une autre tradition pourrait être celle de Maine de Biran, qui déduit le sens intime, le rapport à soi, d'un « je peux ». D'une autre manière, le *Dasein* qui forme le thème de l'analytique existentiale de Heidegger et qui est dit, au-delà des formes égologiques de la subjectivité, toujours, chaque fois, néanmoins *jemeinig*, le mien, est explicitement décrit comme « possibilisation », « pouvoir-être » [*Seinkönnen*] ; toute *l'Eigentlichkeit* est liée au pouvoir-être et même au pouvoir-être en totalité ou au pouvoir-être pour la mort. L'être, comme être-là, est un « pouvoir-être » original. *Sein und Zeit* peut être lu comme un livre sur la possibilité comme possibilisation et comme un déplacement du concept classique de possibilité et de force ou de pouvoir [*Kraft, Macht, Können, Möglichkeit*, etc.]'. *Ibidem*, p. 68.

[15] See Joanny Moulin "Derrida, Foucault, Agamben, and the Thinking of the Beginning", *Malices, The Journal of Literatures and Cultures in the Digital Era*, 13|2022, *Derrida 2021 – Biopolitique et déconstruction*, https://cielam.univ-amu.fr/malice/articles/derrida-foucault-agamben-and-the-thinking-of-the-beginning.

[16] '*Si je garde la référence à Hegel pour la fin – non chronologique* […] *c'est bien le Hegel de La Phénoménologie de l'esprit et de ce qu'on y appelle la dialectique du maître et de l'esclave* […]'. *Ibidem*, p. 69-70.

other by having the power *to rise above one's own life, to risk one's own life [while preserving it, of course*, you know that this is the whole problem, the comedy that Bataille noticed**22**][17]

Note 22 indicates a text of 1962, 'From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve', in *Writing and Difference*. In brief, the master characteristically risks his life, exposing it to the possibility of death, without incurring the pure and simple destruction of his natural life, which Hegel called 'abstract negativity', but while asserting his power to survive the 'negation of consciousness', '*die Negation des Bewustseins*', and it is by this welcoming of death into life, this hospitality granted to one's death in one's life, that enables him to rise above (his) life, by the 'sovereign operation' that Hegel called *Aufhebung*, and which Derrida translated by '*relève*': a *reboot* or *delete-restore*, so to speak. In sum, the master hosts himself. Derrida speaks of Hegel's *Aufhebung* as a 'sovereign operation' in a text where he understands Georges Bataille's 'burst of laughter' as a metaphor of the point at which life rises. This is another phrasing of what, in *La vie la mort*, Derrida called the 'Phoenician movement' or 'Phoenician motif'[18], by which the life of the spirit rises above natural life. In the earlier text the image was that of the *welding* (*la soudure*) of one life with the other. It is the apparent aporia inherent in the Hegelian *Aufhebung* that makes Bataille burst out laughing, but this laughter is itself a metaphor and an expression of the *rise* by which the master wins his life by losing it.

This life is not natural life, the biological existence put at stake in lordship, but *an essential life that is welded to the first one*, holding it back, making it work for the constitution of self-consciousness, truth, and meaning. *Such is the truth of life.* Through this recourse to the *Aufhebung*, which conserves the stakes, remains in control of the play, limiting it and elaborating it by giving it form and meaning (*Die Arbeit… bildet*), this economy of life restricts itself to conservation, to circulation and self-reproduction as the reproduction of meaning; henceforth, everything covered by the name lordship collapses into comedy. The independence of self-consciousness becomes laughable at the moment when it liberates itself by enslaving itself, when it starts to *work*, that is, when it enters into dialectics. Laughter alone exceeds dialectics and the dialectician:

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[17] '*Sans entrer dans l'analyse de ce processus complexe, on peut en retenir au moins ce trait : la maîtrise assure la conscience de soi par la médiation de la reconnaissance par l'esclave et le travail de l'esclave* […] *et même si le maître, donc, le pouvoir de domination [de* Herrschaft*]* […] *dépend du travail de l'esclave et fait à un certain moment du maître l'esclave de l'esclave, la conscience de soi passe par le moment de maîtrise ou de domination, c'est-à-dire par* le pouvoir de risquer la mort en s'élevant au-dessus de la vie*, ce dont le maître est par définition capable, puisque c'est ce pouvoir qui est sa maîtrise, qui lui assure la maîtrise. Pouvoir dire « moi », c'est avoir le pouvoir sur l'autre en ayant le pouvoir de s'élever au-dessus de sa vie, de risquer sa vie [en la gardant, bien sûr, vous savez que c'est tout le problème, le comique que relevait Bataille***22**]*'. Ibidem*, p. 70-71. Italics added.

[18] Jacques Derrida, *La vie la mort: Séminaire (1975–1976)*, ed. P.-A. Brault and P. Kamuf, Paris, Seuil, 2019, p. 20, 67; et cf. Joanny Moulin, "Life as Writing in Derrida's *La vie la mort*", *Malices, The Journal of Literatures and Cultures in the Digital Era*, juillet 2020, https://cielam.univ-amu.fr/malice/articles/life-as-writing-in-derridas-vie-mort.

it bursts out only on the basis of an absolute renunciation of meaning, *an absolute risking of death, what Hegel calls abstract negativity.* A negativity that never takes place, that never presents itself, because in doing so it would start to work again. A laughter that literally never appears, because it exceeds phenomenality in general, the absolute possibility of meaning. And the word 'laughter' itself must be read in a burst, as its nucleus of meaning bursts in the direction of the system of *the sovereign operation* […][19].

Bataille's laughter would be an idiot's laughter if it manifested the belief that a logical contradiction had been found in Hegel's *Aufhebung*. But not if it is Nietzsche's laughter of the 'yes to life', which detects in the *Aufhebung* the 'blind spot of Hegelianism' that thinks it can systematize the sovereign operation, whereas 'the sovereign operation, the point of *nonreserve*, is neither positive nor negative. It cannot be inscribed in discourse, except by crossing out predicates or by practicing a contradictory superimpression that then exceeds the logic of philosophy[20]'. The 'contradictory superimpression', which consists in accommodating various contradictory discourses as one accommodates different guests, is on the whole a philosophical hospitality that hosts diverse other philosophies without necessarily trying to reconcile them or attune them to one another, but that laughs at the inevitable and ceaseless polemic, the risk-taking and the unavoidable gambling that is the runway of the life of the spirit.

[19] Jacques Derrida, 'From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism without Reserve', *Writing and Difference*, tr. A. Bass, London, Routledge, 1978, p. 317-350, p. 323. '*Cette vie n'est pas la vie naturelle, l'existence biologique mise en jeu dans la maîtrise, mais* une vie essentielle qui se soude à la première*, la retient, la fait œuvrer à la constitution de la conscience de soi, de la vérité et du sens.* Telle est la vérité de la vie. *Par ce recours à l'*Aufhebung *qui conserve la mise, reste maîtresse du jeu, le limite, le travaille en lui donnant forme et sens (*Die Arbeit… bildet*), cette économie de la vie se restreint à la conservation, à la circulation et à la reproduction de soi, comme du sens ; dès lors tout ce que couvre le nom de maîtrise s'effondre dans la comédie. L'indépendance de la conscience de soi devient risible au moment où elle se libère en s'asservissant, où elle entre en travail, c'est-à-dire en dialectique. Le rire seul excède la dialectique et le dialecticien : il n'éclate que depuis le renoncement absolu au sens,* depuis le risque absolu de la mort, depuis ce que Hegel appelle négativité abstraite. *Négativité qui n'a jamais lieu, qui ne se présente jamais puisqu'à le faire elle réamorcerait le travail. Rire qui à la lettre n'apparaît jamais puisqu'il excède la phénoménalité en général, la possibilité absolue du sens. Et le mot "rire" lui-même doit se lire dans l'éclat, dans l'éclatement aussi de son noyau de sens vers le système de l'opération souveraine […]'. Jacques Derrida, 'De l'économie restreinte à l'économie générale. Un hégélianisme sans réserve'*, in *L'écriture et la différence*, Paris, Seuil, 1997, p. 369-408, p. 376. Italics added.

[20] Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, *op. cit.*, p. 327, et cf. '*La tache aveugle de l'hégélianisme* […] *l'opération souveraine, le point de non-réserve n'est ni positif ni négatif. On ne peut l'inscrire dans le discours qu'en biffant les prédicats ou en pratiquant une surimpression contradictoire qui excède alors la logique de la philosophie'*. Derrida, *L'Écriture et la différence*, *op. cit.*, p. 380.

The Poetics and Politics of Hospitality and Hostility

János Boros[1]

Abstract

The conceptual pair of hospitality and hostility can be analyzed by means of the two classical ethical paradigms that we owe to Aristotle and Kant. Strangely enough, although ethics is considered normative, neither of the two tendencies is normative: instead, one is descriptive, the other rational, insofar as it is based on the fundamental features of rationality. Most contemporary ethical trends can be classified under one of the original paradigms or interpreted as a combination of them. Where does Derrida's ethics fit in, or does it represent a new way of thinking? I will attempt to put forward some considerations that might help us to understand Derrida's ethics as a third ethical paradigm.

Hospitality and enmity (hostility) are ethical concepts, or at least they can be interpreted and analysed in terms of ethics. One of the basic concepts of ethics is justice, as Aristotle points out:

> Justice then in this sense is perfect Virtue, though with a qualification, namely that it is displayed towards others. This is why Justice is often thought to be the chief of the virtues, and more sublime 'or than the evening or the morning star'; and we have the proverb – In Justice is all Virtue found in sum. And Justice is perfect virtue because it is the practice of perfect virtue; and perfect in a special degree, because its possessor can practise his virtue towards others and not merely by himself.[2]

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[1] University of Pécs, borosjanos54@gmail.com

[2] Aristotle, Nichomachean Ethics, 1129b. https://anastrophe.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/perseus/citequery3.pl?dbname=GreekNov21&getid=1&query=Arist.%20Eth.%20Nic.%201129b

Kant's famous saying rhymes with Aristotle:

> Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and reverence, the more often and more steadily one reflects on them: *the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.*[3]

He who "possesses" the virtue of righteousness looks with constant wonder not only at the starry heavens, but at himself. The human being discovers, lives and experiences in himself the moral law written in his own mind, which is the only possibility of all good in the world and through which he understands his own dignity. According to Kant, the confrontation with a pure moral moving force "teaches man to feel his own dignity"[4]. But Kant also reminds us that we can never possess virtue perfectly. Virtue is self-evident, but to be virtuous is not. Justice is a very simple thing, everyone understands it, but its personal or communal realisation is far from being a given without more. Virtue, according to Kant, is written in our hearts, or rather in our minds. The possibility and condition of virtue is reason itself, the structure or practical rationality of reason (reason can only be rational). One of the main theses of the second critique is that we know what is good from and by reason. The task and the possibility is then to articulate and express the good, to apply it to individual cases, i.e. to make individual cases and actions good. And this requires much more than discovering what is in our hearts: it also requires knowing the world, from the individual, from our own psychology, to the functioning and structure of the community, to the laws of physics. That is, to fully realize justice, we would need to know everything about ourselves and the world. This is why Kant can claim that the realisation of justice or the just virtue is an infinite process for every human being.

The concept of "justice", writes Alasdair MacIntyre, is that which "requires that we treat others according to their merit or demerit, according to uniform and impersonal standards."[5] This is another formulation of the categorical imperative, or John Rawls's "veil of ignorance" principle that "Principles of justice are selected behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged

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[3] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason,* transl. Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press, 2015, 129, 5:161. "Zwei Dinge erfüllen das Gemüt mit immer neuer und zunehmender Bewunderung und Ehrfrucht, je öfter und anhaltender sich das Nachdenken damit beschäftigt: *Der bestirnte Himmel über mir, und das moralische Gesetz in mir.*"

[4] Immanuel Kant, op. cit. 122. 5: 152. "the pure moral motive must be brought to bear on the soul … because it teaches the human being to feel his own dignity" – "so muss durchaus der reine moralische Bewegungsgrund an die Seele gebracht werden … weil er den Menschen seine eigene Würde fühlen lehrt".

[5] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* Notre Dame, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, 192. "Justice requires that we treat others in respect of merit or desert according to uniform and impersonal standards".

in the approval of principles as a result of natural chance and the contingencies of social circumstances"[6]. The concept of justice is understood by all, even young children feel it is unfair if one of their peers regularly gets a bigger loaf of bread than the other children at nursery school. Aristotle introduces the concept by describing the just man and virtue, while Kant reveals its rational origin and structure. The categorical imperative is the rational formula and procedure of justice.

Aristotle explains the greatness of virtue by the fact that it is practised towards others. For Kant, the virtuous act is the resultant of the subject, but it is always directed towards the other person, although for him the "other" in this sense can be ourselves. Justice always takes place in the community of men; for Aristotle, justice is only possible in the polis.

We may ask what the relation is between justice and hospitality, which Derrida claims is ethics itself. Moreover, he writes that ethics and legislation have a promise structure. We have three basic ethical concepts to start with: justice, hospitality and promise. Derrida adds to these other basic concepts, such as maternal care. It is not possible to examine their relationship here, but we can examine Derrida's ethical language or procedure.

If the concepts are treated with sufficient generality, it is easy to see that they are twin concepts, as one cannot be without the other. We are always acting in the direction of another person, and by "other" we also mean ourselves. Then we make room for the other, we let him or her in, that is to say, we welcome him or her, we are hospitable. In the first step of letting in, I think about the other person's place, about myself, and about the moral action that our relationship requires of me. When I let the other person into my thinking, we are already usually in some shared (physical or otherwise) space and time. These are partly my constructs, and I am letting another person into them. I am already hospitable. If there is a guest, there must also be a host, which I am – while the other party is also a host and I am a guest. If I structure my action according to the categorical imperative, or determine its correctness by means of the categorical imperative procedure, then in the course of the action I want to give the other party what is due to him from the goods to be distributed. Provided that I am in possession of these goods, and that in his situation he can expect me to endow him with them. In fact, the categorical imperative can be understood as hospitality.

The promise can similarly be shown to be a basic concept of ethics, if not identical with ethics. Like the plan of action, the promise is an action-commitment statement for a future time. The condition of human life and, within it, of moral existence, is communal existence, and this cannot exist without promises and the

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[6] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice,* Cambridge Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1971, 12. "The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the conntingency of social circumstances."

keeping of promises. When I choose to be moral or to examine my actions before I act by the process of the categorical imperative, I am assuring myself and the members of my community what, if it depends on me, will happen in the future. They can align themselves to this and formulate their action plans accordingly. Without this, there can be no community life, no morality. Promise is the basis of all law, of all ethics, of all coexistence.

1. Hospitality and hostility

Hospitality and hostility can be analysed using the tools of the two classical ethical paradigms of Aristotle and Kant. Strangely, although ethics is considered normative, neither of the two basic schools of thought is normative, Aristotle's being descriptive and Kant's rational in so far as it builds on the fundamental features of reason.

The first method is to describe ethics, to explore the reasons and motives for our actions, and the characteristics of moral characters. Aristotle's descriptive ethics does not prescribe rules or norms, it merely explores the types of actions and characters. Not infrequently, it constricts virtues between two extremes, the consciously bad and the overworked, over-indulged good. The good loses its goodness like over-salted or over-sweetened food. In Aristotle, we need as much good as we need seasonings. Good is the taste of life. A tasty life is a good life.

And Kant's method would be normative only insofar as the laws of logic are normative. He does not define in advance what good actions are, nor does he list their types, but calls for the practical use of reason. It reveals the laws of rationality which it regards as universal, and the practical application of these laws results in the ability to determine which particular actions are good and which are bad. He gives a simple formula by which each action can be examined. The formula is the principle of a machine, into which, by feeding the structure of an action, it can be determined whether the action is good or bad.

We already know that hospitality is good and hostility is bad, and the procedure of Aristotle and Kant for examining these is well known.

Can Derrida's ethics be classified under one of these modes of analysis, or does it represent a new way of thinking? The result of this analysis will either be that Derrida's ethics is a basic case of one of the two great ethics, or a combination of the two, or that it is a completely new way of speaking about ethics. Is Derrida's ethics a third ethical paradigm?

In Derrida, the term hospitality (*hospitalité*) is immediately followed by the term hostilité. The concepts appear in pairs or groups: either as opposites or as conditions or complements of each other. Each interpretation or definition refers to other interpretations or definitions. "Hospitality is a Latin word of uneasy

and restless origin, a word that carries within itself its own contradiction, a Latin word that allows its opposite, hostility, to prey on it, an undesirable dimension that it carries within itself as its own contradiction"[7]. If we define hospitality, we also define its opposite. Derrida's definitions are never univocal. There is no one word that states one reality. Behind the word, the definition, the utterance, there are "worlds": linguistic ambiguities, history, psychology, individual life paths. Derrida's extraordinary achievement is perhaps precisely this: the recognition of ambiguities, the elaboration of irreducibility to a single meaning. While, for example, his position on ethical concepts is very clear. Hospitality is good, hostility is bad. But how do we get there? Through a year-long seminar, which of course I cannot go into in detail here.[8]

Of course, in the history of ethics, there have been many movements in the modern era, such as subjectivism, supernationalism, intuitionism, emotivism, prescriptivism, duty ethics, consequentialism, narrative ethics, contract theory, virtue ethics. There is also talk of deconstructive ethics. The ethics listed can be understood as variants, applications, or often a combination of Aristotle's or Kant's ethics.

To answer our original question, we need to look at Derrida's outline of ethical thought.

2. Hospitality

Hospitality is another name for ethics: ethics is really fraternal love, Derrida claims. A guest is hosted by someone who is not a guest, who lives locally. The non-guest receives the guest, this is an action towards the guest, and it is called hospitality. The host welcomes the guest who is not him, who comes from somewhere far off, or at least is not in the place where the host is, who does something towards him (the guest) that is good for him.

He who practices hospitality has power over the place and over those who enter it, the place of his house or farm. He welcomes whoever enters its realm, its homeland, its estate, its economy, its oikonomia. The one who has power possesses space, time and action, but to do this he must first of all possess himself, must be himself, which is why Derrida analyses the concept of selfhood, *ipséité*, which is the basis for being a subject of power and action, and a host, a hostess, hospitable.

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[7] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité,* Volume I. Séminaire (1995–1996), Paris, Seuil, 2021. 21. "mot d'origine latine, d'une origine troublante et troublée, mot qui porte comme sa propre contradiction incorporée en lui-même, mot latin qui se laisse parasiter par son contraire, l'hostilité, hôte indésirable qu'il héberge comme la contradiction de soi dans son corps propre".

[8] J. Derrida op. cit. Volume I-II.

Power is being oneself, being oneself in fact: one who exists, dares to exist, has power, place and agency.

In his transcendental philosophy, Derrida fully follows in Kant's footsteps. The philosopher from Königsberg based his philosophy, epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and theory of law on the transcendental subject. His elementary assumption and starting point is that the subject is himself, that he has access to everything, to cognition, to action only through himself, through his own structures and capacities. When the subject comes into contact with another in relation to him, this contact manifests itself in and through his structures. When the subject seeks the law of ethics, he finds it in himself, in his own rationality, in his own original structure which constitutes him. This structure must exist, must stand as an edifice, must occupy its own place and time, must possess itself, in order to be ethical at all. It must have an original possession. Possession of itself. At the same time, he can possess the phenomenal self, but he cannot, of course, possess the transcendental subject. For it (transcendental subject) cannot be possessed by anything, while it accompanies all possessions of its own. According to Kant, the condition of morality is phenomenal possession. "It is therefore an a priori presupposition of practical reason to regard and treat any object of my choice of something that could objectively be of mine or yours."[9] In other words, the condition of ethics is property, possession.

Derrida agrees with Kant, or rather follows him when he writes, though without referring to him.

Hospitality, necessary, it's a right, a duty, an obligation, a law, it's the welcoming of the other stranger as a friend, but on condition that the host, the *Wirt*, the one who receives, shelters or gives asylum remains the boss, the master of the house, on condition that he retains the authority of the self in his own home, that he guards and looks after what concerns him, and thus affirms the law of hospitality as the law of the house, *oikonomia*, the law of his house, the law of the place (house, hotel, hospital, hospice, family, city, nation, language, etc.), the law of the identity which is the basis of his identity.), a law of identity that delimits the very place of the hospitality offered and guards the authority over it, guards the truth of the authority, remains the place of the guard, i.e. of the

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[9] Immanuel Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals,* transl. Mary Gregor, Cambridge University Press, 1991, 69. – *Metaphysik der Sitten,* Akademieausgabe 6:246.§ 2. Rechtliches Postulat der praktischen Vernunft. "Also ist es eine Voraussetzung *a priori* der praktischen Vernunft, einen jeden Gegenstand meiner Willkür als objektiv-mögliches Mein oder Dein anzusehen und zu behandeln."

truth: therefore limits the gift offered and makes this limitation, namely being oneself at home, the condition of the gift and of hospitality.[10]

It would be hard to find more poetic and political, as well as philosophical, words in the history of poetry or thought on the condition of hospitality as defined by Kant and outlined by Derrida. Universal humanity makes hospitality an obligation, a duty, but with conditions. The hospitable host is the one who is at home, the one who receives at home. The home had to be built, the home had to be maintained, so that the possibility of life as a space of staying and receiving could function. If one does not have a home that one has built, created, established and maintained, one cannot practice hospitality. Only when we have that are we capable of morality, of welcome, of hospitality. And here Derrida makes a statement that is often overlooked by interpreters. He invokes the law of identity, that is, he invokes Aristotle and the foundations and beginnings of logic without even saying so, and also refers to Kant, who says that ethics is the culmination of logic and the rationality that derives from it. In addition to ethics, he associates the supremacy of the understanding of the world, or metaphysics, with hospitality. The host has truth, and determines his own truth. If he is offering hospitality, he is in truth: the one who receives, who accepts the reception, must accept the truth of the hospitable place, because this is identical with hospitality itself, with the reception and acceptance of this.

> This is the principle both of the constitution and of the implosion of the concept of hospitality, and my hypothesis is that we shall never cease to verify its effects. As this implosion, or if you prefer self-deconstruction, has already taken place, we could, as I said, stop the seminar here. Hospitality is an inherently contradictory concept and experience, which can only be self-destructing or self-protecting against itself, self-immunising in a way, that is, deconstructing itself -- justly -- by exercising itself justly.[11]

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[10] Jacques Derrida, op.cit. 24–25. "l'hospitalité, c'est bien, il en faut, c'est un droit, un devoir, un obligation, une loi, 'c'est l'accueil de l'autre étranger en ami mais à la condition que l'hôte, le *host*, le *Wirt*, celui qi reçoit au héberge ou donne asile reste le patron, le maître de maison, à la condition qu'il garde l'autorité du soi chez soi, qu'il se garde et garde et regarde ce qui le regarde, et donc affirme la loi de l'hospitalité comme loi de la maison, *oikonomia*, loi de sa maison, loi du lieu (maison, hôtel, hôpital, hospice, famille, cité, nation, langue, etc.), loi de l'identité qui délimite le lieu *même* de l'hospitalité offerte et garde l'autorité sur elle, garde la vérité de l'autorité, reste le lieu de la garde, c'est-à-dire de la vérité: donc limite le don offert et fait de cette limitation à savoir l'être-soi chez soi la condition du don et de l'hospitalité."

[11] J. Derrida, ibid. "C'est là le principe à la fois de la constitution et de l'implosion du concept d'hospitalité dont mon hypothèse est que nous ne cesserons d'en vérifier les effets. Cette implosion ou si vous préférez cette autodéconstruction ayant déjà eu lieu, nous pourrions, je le disais, arrêter ici le séminaire. L'hospitalité est un concept et une expérience contradictoires en soi, qui ne peut que s'autodétruire ou se protéger elle-même d'elle-même, s'auto-immuniser en quelque sorte, c'est-à-dire se déconstruire d'elle-mémé -- justement -- en s'exerçant, justement."

It is not by chance that the term deconstruction appears in this quote. Derrida's procedure is the carrying or carrying out of these contradictions, the refraining from definitions, the giving of space to the free play of concepts, and waiting for them. Hospitality, that is, ethics, must be constantly present, active, Derrida says countless times. It is constantly destroying itself, not only through the incredible force and authorship of its inherent self-establishment, authority and power, but also by the groundless basis that is also commonly described as the pre-ethical occurrence of the choice of ethicality. We know what hospitality is, we know what ethics and justice are, it is written in our minds, Kant would say. But all attempts at logic, etymology, and justification come to a dead end, so there is nothing left but the practice of ethics, the practice of hospitality, the practice of self. "Justly", Derrida insists, using a term, *justement*, which also means "exactly" or "precisely". This is also an activity of deconstruction: while recognizing the inherent conceptual contradiction, the inward explosion, of precision and justice, when theory is of no help, we turn to practice: to strive precisely, justly, to "practice oneself", as Derrida calls it. As Aristotle and Kant have already called for: the condition of ethics, of just thinking and acting, is precision: exact thinking and acting.

The self, the subject, the authority capable of moral action, does not therefore float in the ether, but lives in the world; to possess oneself is also to possess a piece of the world. This is what he explains in the first part of the Metaphysics of Morals, in the Philosophy of Right, where property becomes the fourth postulate of reason, alongside the first three formulated earlier, namely God, freedom and immortality. The necessity of property is not provable, it is a requirement of reason: if it does not possess itself and its own conditions of existence, it cannot act, it cannot moralise. The condition of property is the recognition of this postulate as a right, for all men, which is possible only in civil society.

This "how power, then, is nothing other than ipseity (*ipséité*) itself; the itself of the self, to say nothing of the subject, which is a stabilising, despotic overkill of ipseity, the being-itself or the Selbst as subjectivity".[12]

The indecipherable zero point of ethics, which also puzzled Immanuel Kant, is the place that is capable of acting, which, breaking the automatism of causal chains, is capable of bringing new laws, new actions according to new laws, into the world. The ipseity is freedom itself, not dominated by anything external. It maintains itself, it appears as the subject of action in the world, which it can dominate, of which it can become the despot.

According to the formula, this self interacts with the other, and can be its host or its enemy. When Aristotle describes the types of human relations and actions, and Kant analyses the rationality of action, both use language and the rules of logic.

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[12] J. Derrida, op. cit. Volume I. 56. "comment le pouvoir, donc, n'est autre que l'*ipséité* elle-même; le *même* du soi-même, pour ne rien dire du *sujet* qui est une surenchère stabilisante, et despotique de l'ipséité, l'être-soi out le *Selbst* comme subjectivité".

And what does Derrida do? For him, the workings of language and logic are only the surface. Like a geologist or an architect building the foundations of a house, he digs deep, beneath language and logic, trying to grasp and reveal the processes that generate them. He reveals linguistic and etymological connections, not infrequently in Latin or French.

Ethicists agree that human life is the highest or greatest value. Man, the living man, is the object of all actions and the result of all good deeds. It is life in all its aspects that is to be respected, protected and understood to the best of our ability.

Derrida considers the greatest value, the creation of life, the care of the mother, to be the original, total ethic, the total hospitality. He goes back to life, to the origin of life, where he finds the original form and birth of ethics.

> This solicitude, the mother's solicitude, is undoubtedly an absolute figure of hospitality, and if we define it from its irreplaceability; for the duty of hospitality enjoins me to welcome into my place anyone who arrives, but first of all the arrival to whom no one else in my place will give his place: we must offer our place (I must offer my place) where no one else can offer a place in my place.[13]

And he immediately does exactly the opposite, as Kant does. He does not seek the universal, but draws attention to the unique, unrepeatable situation in which each agent finds himself at all times. Hospitality is the basis of ethics:

> all ethics is undoubtedly the ethics of hospitality … the laws of ethics are always laws of hospitality, hospitality is not just another ethical question[14].

I give up my comfort, the security of the space, the time, the safety of the place I occupy, and the security of being locked into it. By turning towards another, by acting towards or for him, I give him my space, my time. But more than that: my full reality, my selfhood, because I am not preoccupied with taking care of myself, but with taking care of the other. Every situation is unique, irreplaceable, and every situation demands and calls out for the doer, the one who is in the place. In this conception, Derrida is completely Aristotelian. He must let the other into his own place and time. The mother's care is the most powerful ethical act: it welcomes another, a new, hitherto unknown person, a stranger who would not exist without the mother, would not even be a stranger without the mother, whom the mother herself

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[13] J. Derrida, op. cit. 60., "cette sollicitude, la mère, la sollicitude maternelle, est sans doute une figure absolu de l'hospitalité et si on la définit depuis son irremplaçabilité; car le devoir d'hospitalité m'enjoint d'accueilllir dans ma place quiconque comme arrivant, mais d'abord l'arrivant à qui personne d'autre à ma place ne donnera sa place : il faut offrir sa place (il me faut offrir ma place) là où personne ne peut offrir une place à ma place."

[14] J. Derrida, op. cit. 60-61. "toute éthique est sans doute éthique de l'hospitalité … les lois de l'éthique sont toujours des lois de l'hospitalité, l'hospitalité n'est pas une question éthique parmi d'autres".

invites into existence. The coming is the coming into being, the calling into being in the case of the mother. According to Derrida, the example and origin of all hospitality is maternal care.

Undoubtedly, this is the extreme of ethics: we not only do good to someone, we also originally enable the coming into being, the coming to be, of the someone for whom we can do good. We then not only create the condition of our own good action, not only provide the possibility of a new coming of good in the world, but express that we consider human existence itself to be good as a condition of the possibility of good. The condition of good action, according to Kant, is the individual human being, who carries within himself the condition of morality. The mother, the individual, realised, concrete mother, herself as a subject, is the condition of the good, like every other human being. But beyond this, she contributes to the coming into being of the future individual who also carries the possibility of good in the world. This is the logic of redemption, which is also the logic of ethics. When I step out of my own time and space towards the other, towards the one who comes, I share my space and time with him: I redeem, I redeem him from his confinement in his own time and space. There is a price for this redemption on my side: my time and my space. At first sight, this is beyond all business logic, it calls into question the strict law of give and take which is the basis of the economy. At the same time, it also allows it, insofar as the economic contracting parties make promises to each other, in effect declaring that they will act in such and such a way in the future. All parties have an interest in the contract, which implies that, in serving each other's interests, business ethics is ultimately hospitality.

Derrida elsewhere analyses the promise, the making of a promise and the giving of a promise, which is also an elementary component of ethics, as is all politics and legislation. When I decide to do something, I promise myself that I will do it. When I act on my promise, all those affected by my action can rely on it.

But the situation seems paradoxical. By being the subject, the actor, the ipseity, the subject, maintains and secures for himself his own space and time. Only by existing, by having space, by having a home, can one give something to someone, one's own, one's time, one's space. Power and hospitality, and therefore ethics, are closely related, they presuppose each other. Power as possession and power as agency:

> Power in itself cannot be thought of without something like the exercise and possibility of hospitality. To be powerful, to have power, to be master or mistress of one's own home, to be at home, to be oneself in one's own identity, to be or have one's own possibility, is to be capable of hospitality.[15]

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[15] J. Derrida, op. cit. 64. "le pouvoir en soi ne soit pas pensable sans quelque chose comme l'exercice et la possibilité de l'hospitalité. Être puissant, avoir le pouvoir, être maître our maîtresse chez soi, être chez soi, être soi dans son ipséité, être ou avoir son propre possible, c'est être capable de l'hospitalité".

Derrida recognises that excessive and dominant domination, possession, dominance over possession, seems to be precisely the opposite of ethics. At the same time, ethics as sharing and hospitality is only possible if there is something to share, if there is somewhere to invite or let the guest in. On the other hand, where there is property, where there is power, there is exclusion, since these are precisely the conditions of one's having property, whether or not someone else has it. It may be that one has power or property precisely because someone else does not or cannot have it. Power is always twofold: power over oneself and power over others. Power over oneself is what the Greeks discovered as the condition for a full human life. The condition of all ethics is self-control, which in Kant's sense is both freedom from the power of causality and obligation, a commitment to the laws of mind or reason. This commitment, which is the sole moment and condition of the actual fullness of human being and existence.

In giving, in hospitality, we pass on that which is the condition of passing on. Ethics seems to devour itself. But even Plato, Aristotle and Kant recognised that we have duties to ourselves. That is, we must not only give to others, but also to ourselves in equal measure. Since ethics also obliges us towards ourselves, it is impossible for ethics to devour itself or its subject. Moreover, there is something that we cannot give: ourselves, our own place and time. What Derrida calls ipseity, which is the condition of all giving and receiving.

The other, power over others, economic and political power, power over one's own household, is a condition of coexistence that is constantly questionable, renewable but inescapable. The laws of ethics must be formulated with this in mind, alongside it, and not infrequently in opposition to it.

Derrida, following Benveniste, analyses the etymological community of the concepts of lordship, domination and the notion of selfhood, ipseity, which appears in Lithuanian, Iranian and Hittite. He uses examples from the history of philosophy to illustrate the close relationship between these concepts. He does not mention it in this context, but Kant argues that the very condition of ethicality, of the capacity to act well, is self-ownership, which makes freedom, free thought and action possible.

Derrida, accepting Kant's view, writes of the contradictory nature of the situation:

> The *ethos* of ethics would seem to condemn the very thing that makes it possible, namely the possibility of saying oneself, and then becoming a 'host', the possibility of being responsible, as power, as mastery, and above all the possibility of deriving responsibility, the power to be oneself, from power itself, from mastery.[16]

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[16] J. Derrida, op. cit. 72. "L'*ethos* de l'éthique semblerait condamner cela même qui le rend possible, à savoir la possibilité de dire soi-même, et ensuite de devenir « hôte », la possibilité d'être responsable, comme pouvoir, comme maîtrise, et surtout la possibilité de dériver la responsabilité, le pouvoir-être-soi-même du pouvoir tout court, de la maîtrise."

Derrida, interpreting Benveniste's etymological analysis, points to the sociological, linguistic and semantic connections between domination, dominance, power and selfhood, and between being oneself.

"The ethos of ethics" is precisely the choice of ethics before ethics. Ethics determines whether human actions are good or bad. Only our conscious actions can be considered morally good. Likewise, only our own conscious action can be imputed as bad, or indeed be bad. The decision to act, the preliminary determination of whether the intended action is good or bad, is preceded by deliberation. There are rules for deliberation, and it has a basic condition. Does the weigher want his action to be good? Even if we have the principles of a rational procedure for determining the goodness of actions, what can we say about our decision to apply this procedure? To decide that we will seek the principle of good action by the power of our reason. To this decision we cannot apply the rational procedure that prepares the ethical decision. The ethical ethos of ethics means precisely that we decide that we want to do the right thing, that we will do everything possible to do it. It is the ability to anticipate reason that chooses reason. However, there is nothing in the subject above reason that can make a conscious decision. Even Immanuel Kant cannot explain the choice of reason over reason. It is the metaethical choice prior to ethics, the ethos of ethics.

Hence the paradox that we need a decision-maker who is master of the house, but cannot step outside his house, his own skin, his own rationality, and make a decision from outside. Ethics must accept its own impossible and unintelligible beginning.

If hospitality is the basis of all ethics, then hospitality is the manifestation of an impossible, unthinkable ethical decision. The host, the master, the moral agent, has a where and from whence to make his ethically good decision. He has the resources to do so, since decision and action require energy as well as time and space.

The decision for the good is general hospitality. Its opposite is obviously hostility. Derrida is the philosopher of this impossible beginning.

3. A new beginning

As Richard Rorty put it, we have gone through the latest conceptual revolution in political philosophy: we know what is good, and we know what a good society is. Now we must work to make them a reality. Admittedly, developments today seem to contradict this notion, but we can defend Rorty by saying that we know what is good, but we do not do it. Kant called this evil.

Aristotle and Kant, by different procedures, consider the same actions to be good or evil. Moreover, their assessment is broadly in line with the ethical teaching of the Ten Commandments and the Gospels.

The same can be said of Derrida's ethics. But what we can add is that Derrida brings a new method, a new approach to ethics.

Aristotle outlined an ethics, but he did not give a system. Instead, he described good actions and good characters. He sought the good life in the good society. He was convinced that the good life was only possible if society was good. He understood man in his immediate family and political community, in close connection with it. However, he did not have at his disposal the modern human and natural sciences, especially ethnography, linguistics, literature, history and sociology, whose aspects cannot be ignored in an ethical construction of the type Aristotle had in mind.

Immanuel Kant derived the principle of good action from reasoning, from the necessary rational structures of reason. He gave a universal rule for deciding for each action, or more precisely for each principle of action, whether the action is good or not. A priori, rational ethics, normativity belongs exclusively to rationality.

Jacques Derrida finds a new way of thinking about philosophy and ethics. He recognises that philosophy has no method, that to assume one is merely arbitrary. Philosophy is left with endless questioning. The human mind is always working, always asking questions. Philosophy has no end, no definitive system, because the mind goes on with everything it has created. With the new day, with the new generation, new ideas, new questions, new texts are given.

The chain of questions does not end where rationality ends. This was Kant's claim, stating that, because of the limitations of our cognitive faculties, we cannot go further. Derrida assumes that behind, below, above and beyond the conscious and linear thought processes lie worlds not thought through, perhaps not even conceived. His first ethical act is to venture boldly forward, to move on into the unknown behind, below or above the text and the thinking. A single text, a single statement, a single system cannot be the final, the last word. Just as the Greeks recognized that the world before us had depths in space and time, so Derrida came to realize that this was true of thinking about the world itself, and of all the thinking we call philosophical. That is why, he says, we must read texts in such a way that we also read the texts behind them, whether the underlying texts are psychological, linguistic, sociological, historical, specific.

This is what deconstructive reading and writing does: drilling deep into the written language to reveal new historical, psychological, linguistic dimensions. In this sense, deconstructive ethics or Derrida's ethics is a new ethics, which can be placed alongside those of Aristotle and Kant as the third great and new pillar or mode of ethical thought.

Hospitality – Who is the guest?

Possible interpretations of the reversal or mixing of places on the two sides of the boundary based on Derrida's lectures on Hospitality[1]

Mónika Míra Pigler OP[2]

Abstract

In this article I explore Derrida's concept of the host-boundary-customer at the three Kantian levels (between states, communities and persons). The relational difference and essential unity of the persons of the Trinity illuminate the need to distinguish the "other" and the "self" even when it comes to the human person created in the image of God and living in community, in order to create a non-merging unity. God, entering the created world comes as a 'holy guest', while we realise that even we ourselves belong to the divine world and are in fact only guests in this world, that is to say, our essence is one of "ontological strangeness."[3]

Keywords

hospitality, boundary, ontological alienation, Holy Guest, *perichoresis*

"To love purely is to consent to distance,
it is to adore the distance between
ourselves and that which we love."[4]
(Simone Weil)

1. Introduction

The theme of this journal issue[5]: hospitality in Derrida's 1995–1996 university lectures at the EHESS[6], is particularly important today, and we hope that these reflections will be able to contribute to the current and urgent promotion of peace.

When we talk about hospitality, we necessarily assume a relationship between two persons: the guest and the host – a multi-faceted relationship that is hidden and revealed in the symmetrical meaning of the word "hôte" (in French, it means both guest and host) that Derrida explores. This intrinsic mixing of the meanings of the word itself indicates one of the philosopher's central ideas when he speaks of a changing (or rather a substitution[7]) of places between guest and host in his analysis of a chapter of Pierre Klossowski's novel *Roberta Tonight*[8]:

> the host waited for the stranger to cross the threshold, as if the stranger could rescue, free the host, as if the host were a hostage of his own place, his own power, his own self, his subjectivity.[9]

As if the host were a hostage ("otage" – a derivative of the word "hôte") of his own subjectivity. Moreover, by feeling too much at home in the host's home, Derrida argues, the guest appears in order to allow the host to feel like a guest/a stranger in his own home. So who is the guest? Who arrives and who is at home? Why is the guest expected in such an extraordinary way? Why this mutually desired reversal of places?

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[4] Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*. Edited by Gustave Thibon, translated by Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr, 1947. (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), p. 65.

[5] My article is based on the lecture I gave in French at the academic conference "Derrida-Lectures/Derrida-Lectures 2022, In memoriam Jacques Derrida, HOSPITALITY - HOSTILITY – HOSTIPITALITY", held on 14 October 2022 at Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest.

[6] École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, Paris).

[7] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité, Volume I*. p. 161.

[8] Pierre Klossowski, *Roberte ce soir and The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*. Translated by Austryn Wainhouse (Dallas: Dalkey Archive Press, 2002)

[9] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité*, p. 161. … un matre qui attend son hôte comme un libérateur, son émancipateur, (…) comme si l'étranger pouvait sauver le maître, libérer le maître comme si le maître était prisonnier de son lieu et de son pouvoir, de son ipséité, de sa subjectivité… '

In search of possible answers to these questions, I will examine the meaning and quality of the three elements of hospitality (guest, host, and boundary) in Derrida's lectures at three levels: between states, between communities/cultures and, especially, between persons. Within the latter, I will explore the links between the divine and the human person, taking Derrida's reflection further, as the ultimate interpretation of hospitality. In a broad sense, I thus follow for a while Hegel's categories of the philosophy of law quoted with which Derrida sheds light on the communal levels of strangeness: family, civil society, state (nation-state).[10]

The Latin word *hostis*, the origin of the French word *hospitalité* (hospitality), contains yet another opposition, which Derrida deepens: *hospes–hostes* behind *hospitalité–hostilité* (hospitality–hostility). This internal dichotomy is illuminated by the role of the threshold, the boundary in hospitality, in receiving guests, within the problem of transgression. The boundary seems to be something we close when it comes to the enemy, protecting our inner space while also closing in on ourselves, however, when it comes to the guest we open it up, even if only to a certain extent (i.e. the boundary is not completely eliminated), still protecting our deeper integrity.

Alongside the right to hospitality (which assists the stranger who arrives), the author mentions the laws of hospitality, meant to protect the intimacy of the host's home. Derrida speaks of an unconditional and absolute hospitality, the realisation of which (at a legal level), though always conditional, should be the ideal of all hospitality, the supreme principle so to speak, the basis of all ethics. Derrida speculates, in almost poetic phrases[11], on the language of absolute hospitality, which is silence, and on its gesture, to give space to the guest, if possible, without limits, without conditions. On a human level, this is obviously impossible to achieve in practice and the author himself acknowledges it by deconstructing his own ideal. Vertically expanding the absolute principle recommended by Derrida, we can say that the perfect example of the absolute hospitable host would be the silent Absolute, God, who withdraws to give us space, freedom, doing so perhaps in order to make us feel almost at home in the world given to us, yet to make us slowly discover the absence of the Host, longing for his particular welcome.

According to Derrida therefore, we can speak of two kinds of hospitality, practical and ideal, the latter being the basic principle of the former (and of "all ethics"), the common feature between the two being the identity of their components (guest, host,

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[10] "étranger selon les 3 instances de l'ipséité, déterminé en subjectivité communautaire: famille, société civile, État (État-nation)." Op. cit. p. 86.

[11] "viens, je ne demande pas ton nom, ni même d'être responsable, ni d'où tu viens, ni où tu vas", "come, I'm not asking for your name, or even to be responsible, or where you're from, or where you're going" (op. cit. p. 165.).

threshold), while the difference is the degree of hospitality. It should be added that even in absolute hospitality there remains at least a boundary between persons, which, if crossed, would result in the destruction of one or the other, so absolute hospitality also contains a certain prohibition, a limit. In the God we know from Revelation, there are two ways in which we can encounter this unity and difference at once. A non-merging unity of the divine Persons is formulated in the dogma of "*homoousion*"[12] ('same in essence'), and within the Person of Christ, an equally incomprehensible unity and difference, a non-merging unity, is taught by the Church of the co-existence of the two natures of the Son, divine and human, "unmixed (…) and inseparable."[13]

The meanings of the words "boundary" and "limit" thus contain a certain self-contradiction, or rather, in the process of deconstructing the contradictory connotations that exist in them in a parallel way (protection–prison, opening–closing, right–law), this contradiction reveals a deeper meaning that is not explained, perhaps not even expressible. I would illustrate this unexplained content with a simple biological phenomenon: even at the level of cell membranes, the boundary must contain the apparently contradictory capacities of demarcation (closure) and permeability (permeation) both, in order for a cell to survive. Neither absolute boundary nor absolute openness is possible in a living relationship between persons either (although we understand the meaning of the mathematical, geometric word "absolute boundary" at a rational, conceptual level).

2. "Hospitality" at community level

2.1. Between nations

Charles Ramond, in his article "Politique et déconstruction"[14] sheds light on the link between the method of deconstruction and peace. Derrida believes in a future democracy in which violence is eliminated by the deconstruction of the immutable opposing opinions, seen as the source of most violent events.

> Deconstruction, then, is not so much a method as a change of attention. It introduces us to the unexpected idea that "conditions of possibility" are most often and at the same time "conditions of impossibility" (…). It is a highly paradoxical mode: to

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[12] God is one in essence but three in Persons, in Heinrich Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum: A Compendium of Creeds, Definitions and Declarations of the Catholic Church*. Edited by Peter Huenermann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012) DH 125. 325th Council of Nice.

[13] dogma of "*unio hypostatica*": 451st Council of Chalcedon DH 302.

[14] Charles Ramond, *Politique et déconstruction* in *Derrida politique: La déconstruction de l'autorité*, Cités 2007/2 (n° 30), Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, pp. 11–16.

live and survive in constant self-criticism and disequilibrium. The art of remaining restless is both in philosophy and in politics an era of repentance, forgiveness and care for victims of all natures, the end of positions and role-playing.[15]

According to Derrida, the method of deconstruction (the admission, not judgement, of the stranger, be it a person or an idea, ideology – i.e. the practice of hospitality) would break down the walls between opposing positions and boundaries, and thus higher acts of humanity, brotherhood, forgiveness, compassion, uniting persons could be realized. For Derrida, this hierarchy of values is not explicit (it is the structure that is not justified), they seem to be juxtaposed (and precisely because of this), they seem to be mutually exclusive, mutually opposed: political and ideological positions in opposition to each other and sometimes in opposition to some common human value system in which connection, unity and peace predominate. In the name of the latter, in his view, it is necessary to dismantle ideologies and world views, although to justify the primacy of this higher value system (peace, love, acceptance), a thoughtful foundation and justification would also be necessary,[16] and to put it into practice, a structured, operationally developed programme would be essential.

In his third lecture, Derrida makes clear the "swirling"[17] effect of globalisation on borders: the European Union dissolves the status of the foreigner by opening internal borders[18]. With the help of "televisual-technological-scientific" tools (nowadays we would refer more to digital-technological tools, including social media) globalisation is erasing the borders between the inside and the outside, the capable and the unfit,[19] the real impact of which is demonstrated by the serious social crisis of our time, the dissolution of the private sphere: crisis of the family, human identity, moral order. Meanwhile, the borders have been closed even more to foreigners from outside the European Union and to those who are disconnected from the internet.

Derrida seems to be arguing for a move towards unity, towards absolute hospitality, which is in effect a kind of cosmopolitanism (inspired by Kant), a federation, but he adds in a realist or, if you like, deconstructivist way, the need for certain borders.

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[15] Op. cit. p. 16. "La déconstruction n'est donc pas tant une méthode qu'une modification de notre attention. Elle nous familiarise avec l'idée inattendue que les « conditions de possibilité » sont le plus souvent, en même temps, des « conditions d'impossibilité » (…) (C'est un) régime hautement paradoxal, vivant et survivant dans la critique constante de soi et dans le déséquilibre. C'est l'art d'être inquiet, aussi bien en philosophie qu'en politique, l'époque des repentirs, des pardons, du souci des victimes de toutes natures, la fin des positions et des postures."

[16] I.e. what and why should be forgiven in this imbalance, why peace is more valuable than war, etc.

[17] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité,* p. 96.

[18] How can we welcome them if they are no longer foreigners but fellow citizens?

[19] Cf. Derrida, *Hospitalité*, p. 96.

The problem of borders also arises in the relationship between the state and the cities of refuge. Those who need to flee from the potentially unjust laws of a particular state are received in these cities of refuge, but these cities necessarily belong to another state whose laws also bind them. Absolute hospitality, as an ethical principle at the level of relations between states, thus requires both the existence of borders and their controlled opening to the stranger who seeks admission.

Martin Bellerose, in his theological article on hospitality, wisely observes that this concept should perhaps not be used between states: hospitality is only between persons, and at the state level it is not so much a policy of hospitality as a policy of reception.[20] He is indeed right in the strict sense of the term, but by analogy (and especially along the lines of Derrida's associative thought) we can still speak of hospitality at this level, the structural elements and principles being the same.

2.2. Hospitality between cultures and communities

Here I would like to highlight Derrida's reflections on language (Lecture 5), which itself operates in the mode of hospitality. The gesture of welcome is realized in translation, as we let the expressions of another language into our mother tongue. Similarly to reflection, thought also operates in the manner of hospitality when we welcome new knowledge.

Derrida later returns to the rich theme of language when he reflects on whether the mother tongue really remains our last home (*chez-soi*) during an exile, as Hanna Arendt, deported by the Nazis, testifies (Lecture 6).

This line of thought leads to Rosenzweig's theory of the alienation of the Jewish people[21]. According to Derrida, the order of belonging to something is normally: land, blood (kinship) and language. Rosenzweig's *The Star of Redemption* shows that it is precisely because of the holiness and belonging to God of these components (Holy Land, holy people, holy language) that God's chosen people feel alienated, both scattered in other lands and in the Holy Land, which belongs to God. The difference between the sacred language (in which he prays) and his everyday language (in which he speaks to his friend) is the source of the homelessness he experiences in language. This situation "prevents the eternal people from living

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[20] Martin Bellerose, "La périchorèse pour penser l'hospitalité", *Théologique*, Volume 25, numéro 2, 2017, "Théologie de la migration", pp. 146–147.

[21] Rosenzweig, Franz, *The Star of Redemption*, (Notre Dame IN: University of Notre Dame Pess, 1985).

fully in tune with the times (…) in fact, prayer prevents them from ever living in complete freedom free from all constraints."[22]

Underneath the complexity of the strangeness Rosenzweig captures lies a particular notion of freedom. It is as if this freedom were opposed to the freedom of God, as if the world of God, enclosed in this other language and separate from man, were to limit man's freedom as experienced in his own language. The conception of freedom opposed to divine grace and law is the so-called indifferent conception of freedom, which recognizes only the input side of the concept (freedom from something), its only aspiration being that nothing and no one should limit it. But this freedom remains only a possibility, it is not realized in anything, because whatever it chooses, it would already have to limit itself. The whole concept of freedom also has an output side (freedom from something to something), a freely chosen value, ultimately the supreme Good, God, in whom freedom is realized. The latter is the qualitative freedom, which is also capable of limiting itself (renouncing all other values that hinder its own purpose) in order to achieve the good purpose it has found.[23]

This particular homelessness of the chosen people also highlights the human person's ontological homelessness, his or her alienation, not so much because of a frustration at God's nearness as because of a distance on this earth from God and from the past (as his or her own ultimate essential realisation).

3. Hospitality on a personal level

The context that most deeply reveals the meaning of hospitality is the interpersonal level. Here, depending on what is meant by the word "person", several different relationships are possible.

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[22] Jacques Derrida: *Hospitalité,* p. 234. "empêche le peuple éternel de vivre entièrement accorder ou temps… la prière, dans un domaine linguistique saint, elle empêche en réalité de vivre jamais en totale liberté de toute contrainte."

[23] For more on the emergence, causes and ethical consequences of indifferent and qualitative concepts of freedom, see Servais Pinckaers: *The Sources of Christian Ethics.* Translated by Mary Thomas Noble, (Washington: CUA Press, 1995), Chapters 14–15.

3.1. The person as his/her own host[24]

This relationship is illustrated by the Derridean definition of the psychoanalytic method, according to which "psychoanalysis...dislodges the ego from the authority of its home, it attempts to reconstitute... the place of hospitality but also the place of gathering."[25] One can be hospitable to or even reject oneself and psychoanalysis tries to make this inner welcome of the self more possible.

There are dangers in welcoming and hosting the self as other or the other as self. Derrida mentions auto-immune diseases as a case of the body breaking down its own defences and attacking itself as other, as a stranger.[26]

On the other side of this issue – the reception of the other as one's own – Byung-Chul Han in his popular book *The Burnout Society*[27] sees the cause of widespread diseases of our time, including various immune diseases, in confusing the concepts of "difference" and "otherness". The other, the stranger, can no longer trigger the body's necessary and strong immune response due to the extreme 'tolerant' attitudes of people of our time who (broadly speaking) perceive otherness as their own. They open the boundaries of their (unconscious) identity to the stranger, even if it is invasive. Thus, instead of immunisation, there will be hybridisation. The self is thus submerged in the negativity of the other, if it cannot deny it, since it is precisely in relation to the other, the stranger, that it can define and maintain itself.

Derrida, although as a "postmodernist" tolerantly open to difference, to otherness, and proclaiming the moral principle of absolute hospitality, still sees the root of strangeness in the inappropriability of the stranger[28] – the newcomer stranger whom we cannot integrate, make our own, "assimilate", either conceptually (by definition) or at the level of relationship and lifestyle. Here we encounter again the double nature of the concept of the boundary of hospitality that both lets in and excludes. It is as if in the gesture of hospitality the arriving stranger, the other, would find himself in the wide borderland between the different and himself, looking for his own place between the enemy and his own extremes, always remaining in this intermediate state, knocking on ever more inward borders, but never crossing the

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[24] Our relation to our self, the reception and acceptance of ourselves as an other, an "alien", is an integral part of the formation of our narratable (understood) identity, a central theme of Paul Ricoeur, a contemporary of Derrida: Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, Translated by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[25] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité*, p. 275. "la psychanalyse…déloge le moi de son autorité de son chez-soi, elle tente de reconstituer… le lieu de l'hospitalité mais aussi le lieu de rassemblement."

[26] Op. cit. p. 254.

[27] Byung-Chul Han, *The Burnout Society* (Redwood City CA: Stanford U.P., 2015).

[28] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité*, p. 99.

final, most inward border that would dissolve, eliminate the other person. Here the most interesting question is what this innermost boundary is – perhaps the innermost sanctuary of our identity, which is already only connected to God, but even in relation to Him it keeps its own self, does not merge into God, and is connected with Him as a person. It is difficult to squeeze this innermost reality into the symbolism of hospitality, because we try to imagine the soul, something that is by nature outside space and time, within space.

There are other ways in which the question of being hospitable to ourselves, respecting our boundaries, comes up. In Byung Chul Han's aforementioned work, he talks about a paradigm shift at a societal level: instead of a life of self-restraint, we are living a lifestyle of unbridled freedom that values achievement. At work, we no longer have a boss who dictates from the outside, but one that dictates from within, who demands ever greater performance, and as a result we exploit ourselves, which ultimately leads to burnout, among other things.

We see that knowing and protecting our inner boundaries (in relation to ourselves, to our internalised expectations) and opening them at the right time, accepting ourselves is vitally important, and the health of our soul depends on this inner "osmosis".

3.2. Body and hospitality

Is our body a threshold between guest and host? Derrida briefly mentions the virus as a stranger forcibly invading our bodies as an example of the hostile connotation of the concept of hospitality. In the context of the body as a boundary/threshold, he reflects on the overlapping meanings of hospitality and sexuality, creating a new concept of "*hospitasexualité*" ("hospita-sexuality"), whereby sexuality can be understood as a deep desire for hospitality, the embodiment of this desire. Hospitality, the elemental need to welcome the other, is thus unveiled in sexuality, illuminating the inwardly imprinted need to welcome the other, the inalienable law of our bodies.

Derrida does not mention eating as a bodily form of hospitality, which is also a crossing of the boundaries of our bodies, letting the other in – clearly, on a human level, this cannot be hospitality, because we integrate the nourishment into our bodies, thus it does not retain its otherness. Yet God chooses this way of relating to man by coming to us in hospitality in the Eucharist, and although the physical particles melt into our bodies, the substance they carry, God Himself, does not melt into us, mysteriously the most intimate relationship possible with Him remains.

3.3. Hospitality between human persons

Man can only be fulfilled in his intersubjectivity, in his relationships; his subjectivity is always permeated by intersubjectivity. Psychologically the openness to the otherness of the other is a condition of subjectivation. Hospitality is thus in fact a psychological necessity and an ethical imperative in interpersonal relations.

Claudio Monge in his article "Le risque fou de l'hospitalité" ("The mad risk of hospitality")[29] explains the need to maintain a certain boundary in a deep and transparent interpersonal encounter, a boundary that is ethical, that is derived from respect and recognition of the other, and that also allows for a deeper reception of the other: "Where there is a real encounter, there is respect and recognition of the other, as well as responsibility towards the other, which introduces a boundary, a necessary distance, a distance of an ethical nature. It is this that allows the other to emerge in me, at once as a similar and as a stranger."[30]

The dynamic of love brings people together, while respect and responsibility protect them from this. In Derrida's terms, both levels of hospitality, the absolute, unconditional one and the legal, conditional one must be maintained in an authentic encounter. The authentic desire of absolute hospitality is present, that of giving without reservation or limits, but in order to make the relationship possible, a difference must be maintained through the keeping of boundaries. It is in this specificity of absolute and limited human love, unity and relationship that the Trinitarian image of God is made visible in man. The relational difference and essential unity of the three divine persons display and teach the necessity of the parallel presence of difference and non-convergent unity between the "other and the self" in man as well. A human person is realized in communion, a communion which always begins with the gesture of hospitality.

Monge quotes Bonhoeffer's thought on communion and human community. In his doctoral dissertation *Sanctorum Communio*[31]*, the Protestant theologian argues that hospitality justifies the birth of homo ethicus*, operating in responsible freedom, with a logic

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[29] Claudio Monge, "Le risque fou de l'hospitalité, De l'étrangéité ontologique à l'étrangéité théologique", *Théologiques* 25/2 (2017).

[30] Op. cit. p. 38. "Là où il y a véritable rencontre, subsistent le respect et la reconnaissance d'autrui ainsi que la responsabilité pour autrui qui introduisent une limite et une nécessaire distance, une distance de nature éthique. Ce qui permet d'ailleurs que l'autre se constitue en moi, à la fois comme semblable et comme étranger."

[31] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio*: *A Theological Study of the Sociology of the Church*. Edited by Clifford J. Green, translated by Joachim Von Soosten, Reinhard Kraus and Nancy Lukens (Minnesota: Fortress Press, 1998).

of connection and gratuitousness, who corrects the logic of *homo economicus*, who proclaims the utilitarian principle of rational egoism.[32]

The realisation of interpersonal hospitality is made more difficult by the functionalist impersonalisation of social roles. This impersonalisation and functionalisation has been amplified in cyberspace relationships, where it is no longer certain that we are communicating with a human being and not a computer program.

Despite all these obstacles, man longs for life-giving, real personal relationships, for mutual acceptance. The Gospel commandment of love regulates and interprets the three directions of personal love towards oneself, others and God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Mt 22: 37b–40). It reveals the specificity and primacy of our love for God, and the deep connection between love of neighbour and love of self (if I do not love myself, I will not be able to love others, and vice versa). Love of the other as an alter ego, or love of my other self can only be achieved if God comes first.

4. Hospitality between divine and human persons[33]

The theme of God appears repeatedly in the foreground and background of Derrida's writings. On the one hand, he criticises the Judeo-Christian-Islamic monotheistic tradition accusing them of logocentrism. For example, in "Faith and Knowledge"[34] he deconstructs the word "religion", and in other works ("Politiques de l'amitié"[35]) he is interested in the Nazi apostate lawyer Carl Schmitt and his spiritual descendants. On the other hand, the question of God is of direct interest to Derrida. Although he claims to be an atheist, he prays and approaches God through negative theology ("Comment ne pas parler"[36], "Except the name"[37]), through the Jewish tradition

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[32] Claudio Monge, *Le risque…*, p. 50.

[33] Monge distinguishes three levels of hospitality: 1. as a relationship between persons, 2. as a community or state function, where we speak of hospitality, institutionalized service rather than hospitality, 3. as theological hospitality, where we welcome God in some way in every reception of a stranger. (Claudio Monge, *Dieu hôte: recherche historique et théologique sur les rituels de l'hospitalité,* Bucarest, Zeta Books, 2008, pp. 506–507.)

[34] Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge" in Jacques Derrida and Gianni Vattimo: *Religion* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998).

[35] Jacques Derrida, "Politics of Friendship", *American Imago* Vol. 50, No. 3, LOVE, 1993, pp. 353-391, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

[36] Jacques Derrida, "Comment ne pas parler" in *Psyche: Inventions of the Other*, Volume II, Edited by Peggy Kamuf and Elisabeth G. Rottenberg (Redwood City CA: Stanford University Press, 2008).

[37] Jacques Derrida, "Except the name"*, in *On the Name*, Edited by Thomas Dutoit, translated by David Wood, John P. Leavey, Jr., Ian McLeod, (Redwood City CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

(*Glas*[38], *Schibboleth*[39], "Les Yeux de la langue"[40], *Circonfession*[41], *Mal d'archive*[42], etc.), through literature (Joyce, Cixous, Celan, Jabès) and politics ("la démocratie à venir"). For God, the secret, hidden place is the meaning glimpsed through the gap of separation, the lost centre, which is also the place of promise and messianic expectation, the unpredictable deity without presence or power, the deity to come.[43]

In the last, ninth lecture of the seminar on hospitality, Derrida makes explicit the most profound motif of hospitality as the expectation of God's announced coming, of God as a guest. Through the necessity of intersubjectivity, the essence of man also includes an "ontological hospitality", an original openness to the other, a gift that seems to be reinforced by the religious commandments of theological hospitality. Derrida poses the question which grounds the other: is it ontological hospitality that grounds theological hospitality or vice versa? He maintains both hypotheses:

> in one hypothesis, there is an unconditional law against whose background the event of the giving of the Torah appears (…). Or, conversely, is it from the giving of the Torah that the idea of absolute hospitality appears to us, appears in history?
>
> (…) Did the Torah and God's address concerning Elijah and the premessianic come, as a datable and dated event, to promise and command absolute hospitality? Or, conversely… has an unconditional law of hospitality as datability… come to make possible, to ensure a kind of ontological-transcendental and historial dwelling for what the Bible tells us… [44]

Derrida's newer neologism "hospitadatabilité"[45] ("hospitadatability") summarizes on a biblical basis this necessary openness to the absolute Stranger, the Messiah, which links the law of unconditional hospitality to the human law of welcoming

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[38] Jacques Derrida, *Glas*, translated by John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

[39] Jacques Derrida, *Shibboleth for Paul Célan*, Translated by Marc Redfield, (New York City, New York: Fordham University Press 2020).

[40] Jacques Derrida, "The Eyes of Language: The Abyss and the Volcano", in *Acts of religion*, Edited and translated by Gil Anidjar, (New York and London: Routledge Library Editions, 2002).

[41] Jacques Derrida, *Circumfession* translated by Geoffrey Bennington (co-author) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

[42] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression*, Translated by Eric Prenowitz, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

[43] Pierre Delain, *Les mots de Jacques Derrida*, „Orlolivre": *Comment ne pas étudier?*, Edition Guilgal, 2004–2017, accessed 14 Octobre 2023, < https://www.idixa.net/Pixa/pagixa-0508281622.html>

[44] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité*, p. 312. "…dans une hypothèse, il y a une loi inconditionnel sur le fond de laquelle l'événement du don de la Torah apparaît ; (…). Ou, inversement, est-ce à partir du don de la Torah que l'idée d'une hospitalité absolue nous apparaît, apparaît dans l'histoire ? (…) est-ce que la Torah et l'adresse de Dieu au sujet d'Élie et du prémessianique sont venues, comme un événement datable et daté, promettre et commander l'hospitalité absolue ? Ou bien, inversement,… une loi inconditionnelle de l'hospitalité comme databilité … est-elle venue rendre possible, assurer une sorte de logement ontologico-transcendantal et historial à ce que nous raconte la Bible…"

[45] Op.cit. p. 314.

the here-and-now: openness to the Messianic coming, announced with certainty, arriving on a specific day and date, and to the one arriving, knocking at the door here and now, today – to the God who is arriving in his own time and in ours.

It seems that the time and spatial distance given until the certain coming, this time and space, which are the dimensions of our life on earth, are the preconditions of freedom, the freedom needed for true love, for the response to God's revelation of love.

The requirement of hospitality prepares God's people for the arrival of the Stranger, the absolute Other. The biblical commandments present a kind of archetype, an original way of showing hospitality.

4.1. The origin of the other, the stranger, according to the Scriptures

In the creation stories (especially the six-day creation), otherness and diversity are seen as a blessing from God, not a curse ("God saw that it was good"), and the diversity of the created world is a proclamation of God's overflowing love, goodness, beauty and intelligence. God himself, the very Other, created man to be like himself, to be the recipient of his love. Diversity was thus created in order to establish a relationship of love between God and man, and between human persons. Eve's creation out of Adam's open side expresses openness to the Other ("bone of my bone"), communion (rather than fusion) with the Other, the need and desire to complete the Other. The other as a stranger becomes a threat by the fall into sin, Cain realizes after the fratricide that "I must avoid you and be a constant wanderer on the earth. Anyone may kill me at sight" (Gen 4:14b). The Lord gives him a protective sign so that nobody dares to kill him, which is perhaps nothing other than the manifestation of human dignity, of belonging to God. With sin comes the hostile connotation of the other, the stranger. It is this rupture that will be healed by Christ's redemptive, liberating act and his new command to love radically (even in spite of sin).

4.2. The commandment of hospitality in Scripture

In several of the biblical texts on hospitality, we find an explicit command to welcome the stranger (Rom 12:13, 1 Peter 4:9). In several of them, the sacred author also gives the reason for this command. One of the explanations is the similar fate of the chosen people while in exile in Egypt, an event which each of them has to commemorate, to make present, as if this state of affairs would still be the case

today: "You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself; for you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt. I, the LORD, am your God" (Lev 19:34).

The other explicit reason is that while the people themselves may be strangers (immigrants or exiles), the arriving stranger may also be God himself through the agency of his angels: "Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels" (Heb 13:2), as it happened with Abraham when he welcomed the three angels in Mamre (cf. Gen 18:1–16).

According to several commentators this latter story is an emblematic scene of hospitality[46]. Bellerose stresses the reciprocity and equality of the relationship between the characters (first the arrivals stand and Abraham sits, then vice versa, or each party presents the other with a gift), which is essential in a situation of genuine hospitality. Professor Monge, a committed promoter of Islamic–Christian interfaith dialogue, devotes the entire third chapter of his monograph on hospitality to this passage. Comparing the Mamre scene with a similar text in the Koran, he concludes that all three "Abrahamic" monotheistic religions consider hospitality sacred, that hospitality "is not only a matter of morality but always a place of revelation of God"[47], since "in a certain way we are always welcoming a god or a mysterious other sent by God."[48]

In the New Testament, hospitality is a corporal act of mercy, welcoming Christ himself in the person of the stranger: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35). Both the Old and New Testaments praise the one who practices hospitality: "People bless one who is generous with food, and this testimony to his goodness is lasting." (Sir 31:23), (cf. 1 Tim 5:10).

4.3. The divine rules of hospitality

In the Old Testament, the divine rules of hospitality include welcoming the guest, washing his feet, serving him food and drink, even protecting guests and accompanying them when they leave (Gen 18; Job 31:31). Christ asks for a greater selflessness: "Rather, when you hold a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the

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[46] Martin Bellerose, *La périchorèse pour penser l'hospitalité*, pp. 149–152.

[47] Claudio Monge, 'Dieu hôte: rituels de l'hospitalité' *Academia.edu*, 2014. pp. 1–11. accessed 21 September 2023, https://www.academia.edu/6709468/Dieu_h%C3%B4te_rituels_de_l_hospitalit%C3%A9_2014

[48] Claudio Monge, *Dieu Hote, Recherche Historique et Theologique*, p. 8.

lame, the blind; blessed indeed will you be because of their inability to repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." (Lk 14:13–14). This is reinforced by the story of the Last Judgement, in which Jesus identifies himself with the destitute, whose inclusion is the criterion for salvation (I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was naked, I was a stranger, I was sick, I was a prisoner – cf. Mt 25:35–46). The person who has been excluded from or deprived of social roles is left with "only" his essence, his humanity, which is in his relationship with God.

Christ appears at the same time as a host (washing the feet of his disciples) and as a guest, a "neighbour", a stranger to be welcomed, a guest who needs to be loved without means and selflessly. The reciprocity, humility and selflessness of hospitality between God and man and between humans are provided by this teaching.

The welcomed guest, on the other hand, must remain humble, gentle, so that he may be appreciated even more. The good guest is small, humbled and then will be exalted, as was the case with Jesus: "Rather, when you are invited, go and take the lowest place so that when the host comes to you he may say, 'My friend, move up to a higher position.' Then you will enjoy the esteem of your companions at the table. For everyone who exalts himself…" (cf. Lk 14:10–11).

4.4. Who is the guest and who is the host?

4.4.1. God's people as strangers among other peoples

God the Father promises and gives a foreign land to his chosen people, so that the promised land becomes, it seems, their own land: "May God extend to you and your descendants the blessing of Abraham, so that you may gain possession of the land where you are residing, which he assigned to Abraham" (Gen 28:4). Yet God himself declares that they remain in a sense strangers even after the conquest. God is the owner, his people the welcome guests or tenants, "a wandering people in search of happiness". Abraham is the prototype of the man always on a pilgrimage to the land of promise, who calls himself a stranger, a person in transit (cf. Gen 23:4). This basic human condition is what Monge calls "ontological strangeness".[49] The Hebrew word itself means 'wanderer'; in Philo's Platonist interpretation, the Hebrew people are always "wandering from the sensible to the supersensible",[50] from their earthly life to the world of God.

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[49] Claudio Monge, *Dieu hôte: rituels de l'hospitalité*, p. 1.

[50] Philon, *De Migratione Abrahami*. Translated by J. Cazeaux s.j., Cerf, Paris, 1965. Quoted by Bellerose in Martin Bellerose: *La périchorèse pour penser l'hospitalité*, p. 150.

Throughout the history of God's people, the stranger status is heightened when, as a result of their unfaithfulness to God, the Jews suffer captivity in Babylon. Here, however, it is this very vulnerability that will affirm their identity: they belong to no one but God. "As you have abandoned me to serve foreign gods in your own land, so shall you serve foreigners in a land not your own" (Jer 5:19b). The fate of a people in a foreign land is one of suffering and humiliation:

> Whether little or much, be content with what you have: then you will hear no reproach as a parasite. It is a miserable life to go from house to house, for where you are a guest you dare not open your mouth. You will entertain and provide drink without being thanked; besides, you will hear these bitter words: "Come here, you parasite, set the table, let me eat the food you have there! Go away, you parasite, for one more worthy; for my relative's visit I need the room!" Painful things to a sensitive person are rebuke as a parasite and insults from creditors. (Sir 29:23–28)

The foreigner status, the loyalty to identity and thus the guarding of their difference provokes hostility on the land of a foreign people, the price of loyalty necessarily being the cross.

4.4.2. God's people as hosts who do not welcome God

God gives the promised land to his people in a wonderful way: "I gave you a land you did not till and cities you did not build, to dwell in; you ate of vineyards and olive groves you did not plant" (Josh 24:13). But the people remain faithless before and after their Babylonian captivity experience. Yet God prepares his people for welcoming him by extending hospitality, even though they do not recognise his arrival, from his birth in Bethlehem to his crucifixion: I was "a stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me" (Mt 25:43). Even after his resurrection his own disciples fail to recognize him, except by an intimate, personal reminder: "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?" (Lk 24:18b)

In the Holy Land, it is a stranger who gives thanks to God and not someone of his own people: "Has none but this foreigner returned to give thanks to God?" (Lk 17:18) For God's people, who are already quite at home as guests, the Lord remains a stranger until this one stranger recognizes him as a fellow stranger, the unwelcome God.

4.4.3. God is man's host

Already in the Old Testament God is shown as man's host:

> Wisdom has built her house, she has set up her seven columns; She has prepared her meat, mixed her wine, yes, she has spread her table. She has sent out her maidservants; she calls from the heights out over the city: "Let whoever is naive turn in here; to any who lack sense I say, Come, eat of my food, and drink of the wine I have mixed! Forsake foolishness that you may live." (Pro 9:1–6)

This is a rich passage of Scripture; it contains the physical and spiritual fulfilment that goes with God's love, the fullness of the Truth that Wisdom offers.

In the Gospel of Matthew, the king (God) invites special guests to the wedding of his son, but those invited prove to be unworthy. So he sends out his servants to call people from the crossroads, but tests whether they are prepared (cf. Mt 22:8–11). God the host invites all people into his house – those who hear and accept his invitation are allowed to enter. He prepares a festive meal for them, even a wedding supper. According to Christian exegesis, this is the heavenly wedding feast between Christ, the Bridegroom God, and God's Follower, the Church, a feast which God planned from the very beginning of man's creation.

God the host welcomes man with the same gestures of hospitality he commanded us. In the Last Supper described by John, Jesus washes the apostles' feet as the slaves did, thus setting an example of true humility and self-emptying love. He commands his disciples, his guests, to do the same. Here is a meaningful reversal of places on either side of the threshold: the Lord, who acts as a slave, the Host, who asks his guests to become hosts, servants of one another. It is in mutuality and equality that the gesture of hospitality becomes authentic.

4.4.4. The adoption of man, man finds a home with God

Finally, God the Father adopts his unfaithful people in Christ, giving them an ultimate and eternal home with himself: "So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19). When he leads them all out, he goes before them as a good shepherd, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice (John 10:3–4).

Throughout history, God's people have had to recognize that they are far from their true homeland; they are not at home yet, but on a pilgrimage on the way home. In the Gospels, Christ is also presented as a stranger who has no home among

men, neither in his human nor in his divine identity. Who is the stranger in this situation? Is God the stranger and we are at home here, or vice versa? Are we God's guests here in the Garden he created, albeit already somewhat damaged, guests who feel too much at home, who have forgotten their true home, their identity? And thinking of our future, are we – as God's adopted children – more at home with God, and therefore strangers down here; or have we been undeservedly and lavishly hosted in Heaven, we who as creatures belong to this world after all?

The incarnate God has crossed our boundaries: the boundary of our race (he embraced our humanity when he became man), the boundary between the Creator and the creature, the boundary between soul and body, life and death. He also crossed our geographical boundaries by sending the apostles to preach the gospel in every country. Through his Holy Spirit he entered our souls and finally, in an unexpected turn, through the Eucharist, he crossed the boundaries of our physical bodies.

4.5. The relationship between man and God in the light of the Eucharist and the *perichoresis*

In the Holy Sacrament we receive God; we are united to Him in our bodies, while we are the ones who are received into the mysterious Body of Christ, which is the Church. The boundary between the physical and the spiritual sphere is opened, which only the Creator has the power to accomplish, but by this opening He has also made man capable of coming to Him, of entering into the world of God, His home.

Derrida mentions the Holy Eucharist as the Body of Christ during the fifth lecture, though not in an explicitly Christian sense, yet in an understandable parallel with the burial of King Oedipus' corpse in a foreign land, which violates the law of hospitality (since it is part of one's identity to be able to rest in the motherland after death):

> Eudipus asks that he not be forgotten (…) for if he were forgotten, everything would go wrong, and he addresses this injunction to the xenos, to the stranger or the most beloved host, to the host as friend, but to a friendly and allied host who then becomes a kind of hostage of the dead, a hostage held as victim of the gift that Eudipus (a little like Christ) makes of his dying or abiding, "demourance": this is my body, keep it in memory of me.'[51]

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[51] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité*, pp. 155–156. "Eudipe demande qu'on ne l'oublie pas (…) car si on l'oublie tout irait mal, et il adresse cette injonction aux xénos, à l'étranger ou à l'hôte le plus aimé, à l'hôte comme ami, mais à un hôte ami et allié qui devient dès lors une sorte d'otage du mort, un otage retenu est victime du don qu'Eudipe (un peu comme le Christ) fait de sa mourance ou de sa demeurance, demourance : ceci est mon corps, gardez-le en souvenir de moi."

We can identify distant parallels with Christ here: indeed Christ also dies "abroad", outside the walls of Jerusalem, the city of God's peace and glory. The suffering and death of Oedipus was more an atonement for his own sins, while that of the Son of God was for the real redemption and salvation of mankind. After Christ's resurrection, He remains with us in the Eucharist (in a sense a stranger, not in God's home, but ultimately transforming us into it). His body remains here in its own state, as nourishing bread (Eucharistic miracles bear witness to his bodily reality in the bread), and He "also" commands His disciples to "do this in remembrance of me" – if they forget, all would indeed go wrong. This remembrance, however, is not a painful or nostalgic recollection of the past to maintain anger at an injustice suffered, but the making present of the Christ-event in the sacrificial offering by the Holy Spirit, who, by the very act of forgiveness, wipes away the grave consequence of sin.

It is the coincidence of two dimensions, the timeless present of God's "time" and the linear time of man, in which the boundary between the two "worlds" is crossed. Here it is difficult to grasp how the earthly and the heavenly are actually intertwined, how the spiritual reality without space and time permeates this four-dimensional world of ours. In any case, without this intersection, human hospitality is also endangered, and the selfishness inherited and protected by structures in our world soon leads to colonisation or assimilation, depending on whether the guest or the host is stronger.

Martin Bellerose suggests that a model for the practice of hospitality could be the relationship between the Persons of the Trinity, which St John of Damascus tries to capture with the concept of *perichoresis*, primarily to illuminate the unity of the three Persons (the dogmatic concept of which is the unity of the one essence).[52] This intimate image thus illuminates not only the relationship between the divine persons, but also between human beings and between God and man. The early Christian expression can be understood in both static and dynamic terms, the Latin *circuminsessio* expressing rather the static interpenetration, dwelling in one another, while the term *circumincessio* expresses the mutual interpenetration, which can also be understood as a circular dance. These two models are both validated in the social dimension of hospitality: reciprocal dwelling in each other creates a real community between host and guest. Instead of unity, the term 'communion' implies plurality. Notice that it is a celebrated plurality, the joy of dancing in the love of the difference of the other and of this very difference (if there were no difference it would still be only self-love). Plurality requires space, and in this "space" between Father and Son, love is personified, a Third is realized, the relationship itself, the fruit of the

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[52] Martin Bellerose, *La périchorèse pour penser l'hospitalité,* pp.158–162.

selfless self-giving of both in love. On a human level, it is precisely for this "third", the novelty of the relationship which transcends both parties that it is worth taking the risk of love. It is interesting to observe here the "spatial" difference between love and its opposite (indifference, hatred, sin): while true love sets us free, gives us space to form, sin restricts our thinking and action, closes us off from a broad perspective, closes us in space and time (hell is a very narrow "space-experience").[53]

"Perichoretic hospitality"[54] works only under certain conditions at the social level. It needs to occur between sensitive or even irritable persons (interpersonal and not social encounters) who allow themselves to be touched. It is necessary that they have sufficient self-awareness, self-love. To allow differences to emerge (and not be subsumed), we need to give each other space in mutual love, not only accepting the difference, but supporting each other to be fully ourselves, without telling each other what we need to become. It is the reciprocity of hospitality, the equality of the parties, their self-knowledge, their self-love, the value of their particularity in building community, which is evident to both parties, that creates true communion, whether within the Trinity, in the Church or in society.[55] Finally, Bellerose concludes by calling hospitality the essence of society, because without mutual acceptance, community cannot exist and cannot function.[56]

However, the perichoretic conception of hospitality in human relations needs to be complemented. The relationship of the persons of the Trinity is a picture of ideal hospitality, but on a human level we know that, although we may well strive for the ideal, in reality sin and suffering impede us. The cross is therefore still missing from the picture and interpersonal hospitality involves suffering for the sake of the other, and we receive from God the strength to bear and to be faithful to love precisely because of his Holy Hospitality. His welcome enables us to welcome our fellow human beings and ourselves. Christ has already borne the cross of our reception, our hospitality; now He knocks on our doors as a Holy Guest (*Sacrum Convivium*) awaiting His reception in the Eucharist (*Hostia*, the other name for the Eucharist, is also a derivative of the word *hospitalitas*), in which, in the words of St. Thomas, "Christ is received, the memory of his Passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us".[57]

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[53] János Pilinszky, "Spaces" in *Crater. Poems, 1974–5*, Translated by Peter Jay, (Vancouver: Anvil Press Poetry, 1978), p. 17.

[54] Martin Bellerose, *La périchorèse pour penser l'hospitalité*, p. 161.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] St. Thomas Aquinas, *O Sacrum Convivium*, a Latin prose text honoring the Blessed Sacrament. It is included as an antiphon to the Magnificat in the vespers of the liturgical office on the feast of Corpus Christi. *The Aquinas Prayer Book: The Prayers and Hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas*, by Johann Moser, (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2000), p. 116.

5. Conclusion

The attempt to summarise and reflect on Derrida's associative reflections on hospitality has led me to the conclusion that the commandment of hospitality is an ontological, sociological and theological principle of our humanity: for our humanity, for our development, for our community life and for our salvation, we need the reception of the other in the right dose, i.e. not being assimilated or assimilating into ourselves. The key word that sums up these levels could be the word "other" with meanings both of 'stranger, different, often even incomprehensible' and at the same time vital, delightful, valuable and worth celebrating (beloved guest). It is not, of course, the otherness of sin, but the value of the otherness of beings other than myself that enriches me and the community. The positive turn towards the other, the (perhaps incomprehensibly) different from me, is the goodwill that presupposes goodness on the arrival of the unknown, the stranger, maintaining this attitude perhaps even at the cost of one's life – the fruit of this attitude (as the angels taught on the first Christmas Eve) is peace.

So what is the answer to the question in the title? Who is the guest? On reflection, we find that we can be both a guest and a host in relationships, both roles enriching and necessary, though fraught with human dangers. In a relationship with God, only for Him are these two roles dangerous, but out of His unfathomable love and infinite power, He has undertaken for us the suffering that comes with our welcome and hospitality. Moreover, in our fellow human being we receive Him or He receives us, and in us our neighbour may receive Him or we may receive the other in union with the Heart of Jesus. In the encounters and relationships of our lives, God teaches us the ecstatic, liberated, mutually joyful perichoretic relationship in which He lives in His Trinitarian Community, drawing us into this dance, giving us the strength and impetus to dance with Him in the dance of love, freeing ourselves from the grip of the many-layered concave or flying over the shards of sin scattered on the dance floor.

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Deconstruction, Right against the Body of Hospitality[1]

Giustino De Michele[2]

Abstract

The title of this article, "Deconstruction, Right against the Body of Hospitality", contains a quotation from Jacques Derrida's *Hospitality* seminar. Here Derrida, while exposing the impossibility to distinguish a host from a guest (*hôte* from *hôte*, in French), and a friendly from a hostile one (a *hospes* from a *hostis*) – and therefore hospitality from hostility – says: "this is not here a contingent accident. It is a destiny, it is an essential law, inscribed *right against the body of hospitality*, it is the space and time of hospitality".

Keywords

deconstruction, *à même*, finitude of hospitality, enclavement, maternity and solicitude

1.

The title of this article, "Deconstruction, right against the Body of Hospitality", contains a quotation from Jacques Derrida's *Hospitality* seminar.[3] Here Derrida, while exposing the impossibility of distinguishing a host from a guest (*hôte* from *hôte*, in French), and a friendly from a hostile one (a *hospes* from a *hostis*) – and therefore hospitality from hostility – says:

> this is not here a contingent accident. It is a destiny, it is an essential law, inscribed *right against the body of hospitality*, it is the space and time of hospitality.[4]

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[1] This article is a slightly modified version of a paper presented in Budapest in the occasion of the 2022 Derrida-Lectures, organized by Jolan Orbán et Anikó Radvánszky, whom I wish to thank for their lasting hospitality.

[2] LLCP, Université Paris 8, giustinodemichele@gmail.com

[3] Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité, volume I. Séminaire (1995–1996)*, Paris, Seuil, 2021 (hereafter, *HO*). All translation from this seminar, in this article, will be mine.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 256 (the stress is mine).

This is my translation. The French text says *"C'est une destinée, une loi d'essence inscrite à même le corps de l'hospitalité"*. I don't know how felicitous my translation is, but since neither French nor English is my mother tongue,[5] I chose one that could underscore what is, for me, the potentially problematic character of the expression "*à même*". This expression will be my thread, and following it I will try to expose an axiom and a postulate that define hospitality according to Derrida.

In my translation, "right against" stands for "*tout contre*", which in turn renders *à même*" in the sense of a contact which is also a contrast. Thus, the "law of essence"[6] that Derrida evokes would be inscribed right against, right upon the body of hospitality, as a sort of tattoo. Also, "against" resonates with the ambivalence between intimacy and hostility, which structures the essence of such hospitality. Moreover, it stresses a sort of friction of deconstruction against hospitality. Not only against its formal aspects: in this vein, throughout the seminar, Derrida reiterates prudence concerning the perversion of the laws of conditional hospitality and of the law of unconditional hospitality. Not only friction against the form, but also against the body of hospitality. Of course, deconstruction is against any body proper, against any ideology of an authentic material hospitality of sorts. But beforehand, I simply found worth stressing that, in order to offer resistance, to be able to produce some friction, this concept or allegory of hospitality cannot go without some kind of a body.

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[5] Throughout the seminar Derrida reiterates the remarks concerning language, and in particular translation (thus, concerning language as translation, which is to say as an idiomatic performance of auto-hetero-translation, or -affection), as a paradigm of hospitality. It is no accident, then, that Eric Prenowitz's translator's note to Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p. 103–111, is entitled "Right on [*à même*]": if "right on" (no brackets added in the text) is Prenowitz's translation of "*à même*" – cf. p. 8: "*right on* the so called body-proper", and p. 20: "an incision *right on* the skin" (the stress is Derrida's) – our syntagm is identified by the translator as a paradigmatical operator for fashioning and seizing a deconstructive conception of archivation, of the "impression" (as per the subtitle of Derrida's book). In such book and note (see also note 17 *infra*), this operator catalyses a problematisation of the distinctions between an impression without or with lesion, between typographic (inert) and bodily (living) inscription, and between the material (and metaphorical) and the immaterial (and more general, if – and – not proper) sense of archivation ("Right on the ash", gloses Prenowitz, *ibid*, p. 111). Shall we add that, as we will see shortly (see the quotation referenced *infra* by note 11), for Derrida this expression "translates" an indecidable structure? As per the high speculative value of "*à même*", and for a particular translation of this expression ("the overlap", "overlapping"), see Jacques Derrida, *The Postcard. From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, tr. Alan Bass, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p. 283.

[6] "*Loi d'essence*", in *HO*, p. 256, *loc. cit*.

2.

Yet, in fact, I did not concentrate on "*à même*" for these general, theoretical reasons (the motive of language and translation as paradigms of hospitality, that of contact as at the same time intimacy and opposition), but for a contingent interest in it, and upon stumbling into the thematisation that Derrida dedicates to this expression in the 2nd session of the seminar. This made me think of another thematisation of *à même* (the only other, as far as I am aware of), one that struck me since it seemed to establish an opposition – that which would be problematic if coming from Derrida's perspective.

This other thematisation takes place in the unpublished seminar *Manger l'autre*.[7] Here Derrida aims to define what "eating" or "loving to eat the other" means. In the 5th session of the seminar, he deals with milk and breastfeeding between Augustine, Rousseau, and Nietzsche (as many milk brothers, and warring brothers, *frères de lait* and *frères ennemis* within himself, as he defines them). And here, he draws a distinction:

> One has to distinguish here between milk (or sperm), and blood.[8] When the nursling – or whoever mimicries the nursling in a figure or a rhetoric of suckling[9] – suckles right against [*à même*] the breast, "right against" translates or describes at the same time the immediate contact of the hand-to-hand [*corps-à-corps*, again an ambivalence, between fighting and lovemaking], the suction[10] from the source and without intermediaries, but also, normally, without tearing off or without lesion.[11]

Derrida thus employs "*à même*" to distinguish suckling from cannibalism, consuming from eating the other, as lips from teeth or milk from blood. He does so in a long parenthesis in which he convokes psychoanalysis: Freud from the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, of course, but also and notably the Hungarian branch (in particular Karl Abraham, Ferenczi, and Klein) which has a lot to say on incorporating and eating the other. I think that Derrida's distinction remains questionable. But what matters here is to point out two elements that, while they deconstruct the opposition between suckling and biting, also say something about hospitality.

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[7] Jacques Derrida, *Politiques de l'amitié: Manger l'autre*, unpublished seminar (EHESS 1989-90), IMEC archives, Fonds Archives Jacques Derrida / IMEC (hereafter, *MA*). All translations from this seminar, in this article, will be mine.

[8] Derrida writes: "*le lait, le sperme ou le sang*"; milk and sperm are associated (because of their color, and of the fashion of their extraction) as opposed to blood.

[9] In French: "*allaitement*".

[10] In French: "*aspiration*".

[11] *MA* 130.

1) Derrida insists on *Anlehnung*, or Anaclisis: the process by which, according to Freud, the subject's superior functions depend or *lean* on inferior ones. Namely, the sexual function would lean on – or *à même* – the nutritive one, as Derrida says[12] commenting on Freud's example of supplementary auto-affection through suckling one's thumb. For Derrida this scheme goes so far as to include oral auto-affection and *all* its supplements. In other words: speaking, and even writing, would depend on eating. The *langue* (language) leans *à même* the *langue* (tongue), the latter (the tongue) being moreover only one part of a complex bodily apparatus, including lips, teeth, etc. Of course, Derrida criticizes Freud's biologism, but he takes very seriously psychoanalysis recalling that an "irreducible genealogy,"[13] as he says, relates all oral enjoyment – all rhetoric, all discourse – to hunger. All: hence, included about hospitality. And by the way: is not eating the other a way of hosting another?

2) In this digression, Derrida discusses cannibalism in Karl Abraham. He wishes to contest the postulate of an original, non-sadistic oral phase (coinciding with a primal narcissism, during which the nursling would only suckle, or eat *à même* the other). This phase would be followed by the cannibalistic one (when the infant would bite, or eat *the* other, that which entails weaning, frustration, reactive aggressiveness, and so on). To say this very roughly, in order to criticize this position Derrida adopts a Melanie Klein-like theory of development: sadism and ambivalence are original, structural, and this applies to the infant toward the mother *and* vice-versa.[14] In the lexicon of hospitality, we shall say that the bosom or breast (*le sein*) is not the haven of pacified hospitality.

3.

Let us get back to the *Hospitality* seminar. Here Derrida thematizes "*à même*" in the 2nd session, while discussing a passage from Benveniste's *Vocabulary* chapter on hospitality. Derrida spots Benveniste's idea whereby it would be counterintuitive to deduce, from a name denoting "power" or "mastery", the connotation of identity or "sameness" – whereas the contrary, that is, to deduce the proper meaning of mastery from an adjective denoting identity, would be comprehensible. Derrida criticizes this position doubly.

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[12] *MA* 132.

[13] *MA* 133.

[14] On Derrida's relation to Melanie Klein, I permit myself to refer to Giustino De Michele, "Comment le dénier : legs de Melanie Klein", *Bollettino Filosofico*, vol. 36: Silvano Facioni and Fabrizio Palombi (eds.), *Decostruzione e psicoanalisi. A partire da Derrida*, Università della Calabria, 2021, p. 19-33.

1) On the one hand, by showing that in the whole history of philosophy the position of identity has been considered the effect of the manifestation of a power or force (be it the power or force of substance, of spirit, of Being, or will). Benveniste, from a linguist's supposedly objective position – better still, muses Derrida, according to the *ethos* of this position – would remain naively subject to the philosophical force of sameness. This makes him at the same time a formalist and an empiricist.

2) But what matters to us, on the other hand, is Derrida's semantic analysis of the word "*même*". Derrida wants to find "[a] – virtual or explicit – opposition in the very inside [*au-dedans même*] of identity or of equality, of the sameness [*mêmeté*]".[15] And he chooses the expression "*tout de même*" (all the same), as an exclamation of surprise to suggest how sameness can host an objection, how its "hyperbolic excess"[16] can show the alterity lodged at its heart.

In an aside of this semantic analysis, Derrida treats the meaning of "*à même*". This expression involves some trouble of sameness as well, but other than its hyperbolic excess. While stressing the extreme difficulty in translating it, Derrida explains two uses of it.

1) As a prepositional locution, "*à même*" means the "contact, in difference, between one body and another, a contact in an absolute proximity but without confusion, a contact that yields *without* yielding [or leaving: *laisser*] room to a foreign [or a stranger's: *étranger*] body".[17] Such a foreign body "penetrates without penetrating" its support or substrate. Sleeping right on the ground and drinking right from the bottleneck are Derrida's first examples.

2) As an adverb, being "*à même de*" means being capable, or having the power if not the habilitation to do something. In Benveniste's words, the issue is that of the power of the "pos-sessor, as of he who is established (sitting) upon the thing".[18] As for Derrida, he says that all he will say about power and social power, hence about the power of hosting, and *a fortiori* of mastering one's own place, home, or "*chez soi*", depends on this meaning.

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[15] *HO* 55.

[16] Cf. *HO* 57: "*la surenchère hyperbolique*".

[17] *HO* 62, the stress is Derrida's. Here Derrida says of "*à même*" that it is "one of the French expressions that I know by my experience to be one of the hardest to translate and therefore one of the most interesting". This session of the seminar was given on December 13th 1995; the first English version of *Archive Fever*, in the translation of Eric Prenowitz, was published on *Diacritics*, Vol. 25 No. 2, Summer 1995, p. 9-63 and Derrida might very plausibly be referring here to the task of such translation (see note 5 *supra*).

[18] Cf. Émile Benveniste, *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, 2106 p. 65: "**pot-sedère* [...] describes the 'possessor' as somebody who is established on something [*sur la chose*]".

If we combine these two points, then "*à même*" enables us to think about hospitality as concerns the relation that one has to one's power and legitimacy, to its conditions of possibility, to its ground, and as concerns the structure of this ground, substrate, or "thing" (*chose*).

4.

For Derrida, against Benveniste, a subject, or a host, is the hypostasis of a power, and this in turn expresses the *ipseitas* of the *metipsissimum*, of a pre-subjective sameness, of the thing itself. This position is still potentially metaphysical. Then, how to characterize a deconstructive host and hospitality? Just before explaining what "*à même*" means, Derrida had employed an *axiom* to this effect.

Hospitality is finite. "By definition, there is no hospitality among infinite beings; the *hôte*, in both senses of the word [host and guest] must be finite".[19] This finitude is what entails the selection, the restrictions, the interest taken and the preference exerted, according to the tragic legality of hospitality.[20]

This axiom goes almost without saying for Derrida. In fact, I just quoted a passage from further on in the seminar. This, instead, is what Derrida says in the 2nd session, while he discusses Rousseau's trope of the irreplaceable solicitude of the mother:

> How not to abuse of one's irreplaceability, hence, of one's mortality? How to render oneself replaceable, so as to not charge the weight of one's own singularity, and therefore of one's own death, on the other?[21]

Singularity means mortality. I do not know if this equivalence is analytical. In fact, a couple of pages before the digression on "*à même*", I had been struck by this assumption. Cannot a singular being (for example Aristotle's god) be infinite? At least in itself, or by definition? Be that as it may, Derrida assumes that singularity *is* finitude, and most of all that the singularity of the *hôte* is finite. So finitude is the milieu, the ground of hospitality. This condition entails at the same time the irreplaceability of the singular being (since it is singular), and the impossibility of not replacing it (since it is not infinite). This is the cause of the abuse, of the violence and tragedy that inhabit even the best intentioned of hospitable negotiations. As we said, this argument stems

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[19] *HO* 132, n. 2.

[20] Cf. *HO* 309.

[21] *HO* 60.

from a parenthesis of the analysis of the word "*même*", where Derrida comments on (Derrida comments on a passage) passage from Rousseau's *Émile*:

> Other women, or even animals [*des bêtes même*], may give [the nursling] the milk [the mother] denies him. But there is no supplement for maternal solicitude.[22]

Thus, breastfeeding is the figure of the best intentioned and the most natural scene of hospitality, and *tout de même* also of its most radical trouble, or abuse.

This argument on maternity structures a crucial reflection on the mother tongue, in this seminar as well as in *The Monolingualism of the Other*,[23] and even a further parenthesis on solicitude as a sort of synonym for deconstruction itself.

To follow my thread, I will rather remark that the digression on "*à même*" comes right after this one on maternal solicitude. And I would like to point out how, in this vein, the figure of the dual relation of breastfeeding *can* deconstruct the naturality of hospitality and of its embodiment. To begin with, the infant is hosted in the bosom, he is at home by the other, *chez soi chez l'autre*: right on, directly against the other. Moreover (cf. note 14 *supra*), if we follow Derrida elaborating after Melanie Klein, this dwelling is ever split, cleaved, and therefore is the source of satisfaction and frustration, hatred and love. And furthermore: this relation represents precisely the inversion of the host and guest described by Derrida: since the mother (and notably its substance: milk, and milk supplements blood) is not only ethically the hostage of the guest: she is literally hosted, incorporated by the other, and this at the same time on the tangible level, on the symbolic and affective level, and on the phantasmatic level (the psyche of the infant is construed by the ambivalent images of its mother-world). Even more so: some of these incorporated images are in turn trying to incorporate the infant, to tear it apart and swallow it. And this subject is very literally a hostage of the mother. So, if along with Imre Hermann, that Derrida speaks about in a 1975 interview,[24] we notice that the mother is the descendant of the nursling she once was, we can amuse ourselves multiplying *in abyme* the folds of this condition.

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[22] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Émile, ou de l'éducation*, in *Œuvres complètes*, t. 4, Paris, Gallimard, 1969, p. 257 (my translation), cit. in *HO* 58. Mistakenly, maybe symptomatically, in the seminar Derrida says that he had forgotten to mention or comment on this passage in *Of Grammatology* (Corrected Edition, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

[23] Jacques Derrida, *The Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1998.

[24] Jacques Derrida, "Between Brackets I", in *Points… Interviews, 1974–1994*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1995.

5.

The axiom stating the finitude of hospitality oriented us toward the body, birth, infancy, and toward the milk and blood of a maternal ground. This can be regressive, to say the least. But this can also trouble the ground upon which hospitality is supposed to be fast established: before the social body (family, civil society, or state), the personal body. This is why Derrida reiterates considerations on space and topology often in relation to technical innovations (from communication to medical and genetic technology).

Then, what is the relation between the finitude and the embodiment of hospitality? A finite singularity is embodied insofar as it is not immaterial: it is extended, and therefore divisible, and mutable. This is necessary if such a singularity has to be affected and auto-affected, parasited and auto-parasited. A space susceptible of contradiction, if not space as the condition of possibility of contradiction, auto-immunizes or deconstructs hospitality. Derrida's model is not Cartesian, and not even Kantian.[25] It is a more grotesque spatiality. To see which one, let us return to the first occurrence of the "*à même*" that we considered.

As we saw, Derrida writes: "this *here* is *no more* a contingent accident. It is a destiny, it is an essential law, inscribed *right against the body of hospitality*, it is the space and time of hospitality". This use of *à même* deserves three considerations:

1) It denotes at the same time something essential (not a contingent accident) and a modification (an inscription on a body). This body would always have been inscribed before every possibility of experiencing it as a proper, or a whole one. Thus, *à même* convokes the original secondary of Derrida's notion of writing. Writing is *à même*. *À même* is an imprint. It is also worth stressing that, as Derrida explains, this structure is, "at least by way of a simple analogy, […] 'like' (*comme*) the transcendental esthetics of hospitality".[26] This body is not that of a singular subject (the incarnation of a noumenon); it is not even a transcendental scheme; but the scheme or rather the *Bild*, that is, a model representing the structure of experience itself (therefore comprising or involving more than one singularity).

2) Derrida says: this is not "*here*" a contingent accident. "Here" means "in this impossible- or non-representable-geometry space" (*dans cet espace à géométrie impossible ou non objectivable, non représentable*), a space that entails the "*être chez soi chez l'autre*". This space is the form of the ground of hospitality.

To characterize it, Derrida has recourse to a *postulate*:

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[25] Which is to say: irreducibly oriented, inhabited by an intimate gap.

[26] *HO* 256–257.

a general topology of the enclave must organize all theory of ipseity as hospitality or hostipitality. *Dès lors que* (since) the ipseity of the self and of the by-oneself [*du chez-soi*] entails some enclave, everything becomes more complicated, […] even more so, indefinitely [*à l'infini*], since an enclave can also be cleaved in itself, and a cleaved enclave is also the opening of an enclave in the enclave", and even more so since this "does not even mean an opening-closing '*en abyme*'",[27] not even a figure in a figure…, but rather a fold in a fold…

A bit later Derrida repeats: "*Dès que* (since) there is hospitality, if there is any, there is enclavement", "and invagination".[28] This is the space of hospitality. But what is an enclave? It is "a place, an exterior territory enclosed in the interior, an included exteriority".[29] It "is (a) safe, an outcast outside inside the inside".[30] In one word, it is a crypt, in the very technical sense developed by Abraham and Torok, after the Hungarian bioanalytical vein and the motif of cannibalism, and that Derrida generalizes in "Fors" (cf. note 30 *supra*), and already in *Glas*.

3) The last remark is due to maternity. Here, it is Klossowski's *hôtesse*, the female host, the figure that Derrida employs to impersonate the contradictory topology of hospitality. This woman is "the first motor as of hospitality, the place where one's home is but an invaginated enclave in the other's home", where "*on est chez soi chez l'autre*".[31]

6.

It would be interesting to confront this solicitous first motor with Aristotle's indifferent one, which is maybe singular, but surely infinite; which is thus only the object, but not a subject of desire. And a wholly other ground of hospitality.

We could also compare this solicitous paradigm of hospitality with Benveniste's: a virile and public one, where a man is habilitated to embody the sovereignty over a social body by means of this body's meaningful word.

We could follow the bio- and physiological motif in the seminar, where Derrida renews the traditional motif of the animality of the political, through another model of the living.

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[27] *HO* 253.

[28] *HO* 255.

[29] *HO* 249.

[30] Jacques Derrida, "*Fors:* The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok", Foreword to Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 986, p. xiv.

[31] *HO* 256.

I will rather end on the motif of language. And in particular, based on the definition of a finite and embodied hospitality, on what Derrida says about the inscription, right against a language which in turn works right against the body of hospitality, of what he calls "referential singularities":[32] proper names, dates, and idiomatic happenings.

Let us follow one last time the "*à même*" thread. After an axiom and a postulate, it will lend an example of this referentiality.

Right after the explanation of the "*à même*", Derrida says:

this little word "*même*", whose homonymy, so to speak, with "*m'aime*", of 'I love myself' or of 'you love me', renders untranslatability even more vertiginous […], could be the last reason to remain in this country or to dwell in this language (French).[33]

MEMEME, echoing the MUMMUM from *Finnegan's Wake,*[34] Derrida mimicries lallation. His lips auto-affect (the genealogy of the kiss, for Freud read by Derrida, is the same as that of thumb suckling). Here is a case of supplementary, quasi- or infra-linguistic, embodied, and idiomatic oral enjoyment. This language, arising *à même* the lips, that lie *à même* the teeth, is not "linguistic", as it were. It manifests a more general semiotics. If hospitality adheres to this language and body, then this body and this adherence, and the redoutability of a body *à même* to speak, are what make its condition *more and more complicated*, as Derrida puts it.

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[32] *HO* 166, n. 1; cf. 309.

[33] *HO* 62-63.

[34] On this point, I permit myself to refer to Giustino De Michele "La toilette entre Derrida et Joyce. Une stratégie d'appropriation", *L'inconscio, Rivista Italiana di Filosofia e Psicoanalisi*, n. 13: Claudio D'Aurizio and Fabrizio Palombi (eds.), *Joyce e l'inconscio*, Università della Calabria, 2022, p. 104–131.

To Dream Europe
Derrida, Europe and Hospitality[1]

Fernanda Bernardo[2]

Abstract

At his last conference in France, on 8 June 2004, in Strasbourg, under the title "Le souverain bien – ou l' Europe en mal de souveraineté", Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), always very concerned about Europe and the future of Europe, dared to admit that he dreamed of "a Europe whose universal hospitality and new laws of hospitality or the right of asylum would make it the Noah's Ark of the 21st century". Through the question of *unconditional hospitality* – which, as I try to point out, emphasizes the singularity of Deconstruction as a *philosophical idiom* and through which Derrida re-thinks, with a very different amplitude and justice, the "universal hospitality" of Kantian inspiration – it is the silhouette of hope and of responsibility of Europe, shaped by this dream of Derrida, that I try to sketch here.

Keywords

Deconstruction, Derrida, Europe, Hospitality, Hope, Other, Stranger

1. The Derridian dream of a Europe as a *Noah's Ark* of the "future"

> *"Jamais n'aura été plus urgent*
> *une autre pensée de l'Europe."*
> J. Derrida, *Fichus,* p. 51.

At the time of his last conference in France, on June 8, 2004, in Strasbourg, under the title of "Le souverain bien – ou l'Europe en mal de souveraineté", Jacques Derrida (1930–2004), always very concerned with Europe and with the "future" [*avenir*] of Europe[3], dared to admit

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[1] Extended and annotated, this is the first part of the text of a paper presented at the opening of the colloquium Derrida Lectures 2022 – *Hospitalité – Hostilité – Hostipitalité* at the *University of Pécs* (PPKE: 2022.10.13 PTE BTK Ifjúság u. 6. Kari Tanácsterem). A much longer version of this text will also be published in Portuguese. All translations in English are my own.

[2] University of Coimbra, fernandabern@gmail.com

[3] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Une Europe de l'espoir" in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Nov 2004, p. 3.

that, though without the slightest Eurocentrism or identitarianism,[4] he dreamed "of a Europe, whose universal hospitality and new laws of hospitality, or of the right of asylum, would make it the *Noah's Ark* of the 21st century"[5] – *Noah's Ark* [*Tevat Noah*] symbolizing, from the Bible (*Gen.* 6-9), as it is well known, the *covenant*, that is, the *alliance* between Elohim, Noah and "*every living being in all flesh*" (*Gen.* 9, 15–16)[6]. I italicize the *alliance* with "*every living being in all flesh*" in order to emphasize at this point the very uniqueness of Derrida's Deconstruction, as a *philosophical idiom*; in its deconstruction, that is, in its hyper-critical re-thinking of the *carno-phallo-logo-centrism*[7] of Western civilization and, therefore, in his appeal for an *unconditional* respect for life – in his appeal for an *unconditionally* respectful and compassionate responsibility towards the life of "*every living being*".

In fact, this *alliance* – let us already underline it too – should be *unconditionally* responsible and compassionate towards the life of "*all living beings*" – and not only towards the life of the living human as, in general, the (diverse) humanisms ask for – as, pleading the urgency of undertaking a *war for mercy*[8] – which happens to be also a war for human *dignitas*! – Derrida claims and proclaims almost everywhere in his work.

As a *philosophical idiom*, Derridian Deconstruction is, let us notice and emphasize it already, *a thought* bearing the *promise of new Lights*[9] for the "future", coming not only of *another* Europe, of *another* figure of Europe, but also, and more liminally, of *another civilization* – yes, nothing more, nothing less, for the *coming* of *another civilization* because, as Jean-Luc Nancy also dared to proclaim,

We need a revolution, not politics, but of the politics, or in relation to it. *We simply need (!) another 'civilization*"[10] [My italics].

In this sense, how do we understand this Derridian *dream* of *Europe as Noah's Ark*? What would its silhouette be? In what sense does the Derridian dream of a certain Europe imply the dream of an absolutely other thought and, *ipso facto*, of an absolutely

[4] In Derrida, all identity is thought of in terms of *differance* to oneself – that is to say as *an infinite experience of non-identity to oneself*. Derridian Deconstruction is a deconstruction of the *one*, of the *proper* or of the sovereign identity – of the *uni-identi-ty* or of the *uni-totali-ty*.

[5] Derrida, J., " Le souverain bien – ou l'Europe en mal de souveraineté " in *Derrida Politique* in *Cités*, 30 (2007), p. 113.

[6] *The Bible* in the Chouraqui translation (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1989).

[7] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "'Il faut bien manger' ou le calcul du sujet" in *Points de Suspension* (Paris : Galilée, 1992) 294 ss.

[8] "This is a war about pity" ["C'est une guerre au sujet de la pitié."], Derrida, J., *The animal that therefore I am*, ed. M.-L. Mallet (Paris: Galilee, 2006), 50.

[9] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Voyous* (Paris : Galilée, 2003) 197 ; *Papier Machine* (Paris : Galilée, 2001) 330; *Le droit à la philosophie du point de vue cosmopolitique* (Paris: Unesco/ Verdier) 1997.

[10] Nancy, Jean-Luc, *Politique et au-delà* (Paris : Galilée, 2011) 36.

other civilization? A civilization at every moment attentive to its insurmountable eve and dictated and magnetized by the *unconditionality* of hospitality and of responsibility towards the precious *dignitas* of life? And what would be the role, the responsibility of intellectuals, mainly philosophers, jurists, and economists, in the drawing of this silhouette? In their contribution to the implementation of such a dream?

And what would the role of *hospitality* be in the implementation of the design of such a silhouette? What would be the role of hospitality, in its unconditional and hyperbolic register, in preserving and performing a certain ideal of humanization and civilization? As well as to reveal the importance and the political relevance of the singularity of the European ideal of civilization? In short, how can such a *hospitality* be made capable of responding to the unprecedented situations, tragedies, and injunctions[11] that plague Europe today and endanger its old civilizational ideal?

And moreover: what does this Derridian dream tell us about Deconstruction itself? What does it say about the very *singularity* of Deconstruction as *a philosophical thought idiom* in the context not only of contemporary philosophy but also of the history of philosophy itself? And not only in the context of the history of philosophy, but also in the context of the history and memory of Europe, of which Emmanuel Levinas said that it was Athens and Jerusalem, that is to say Greece and the Bible.[12]

In the memory of Derrida's speech, according to which, above the earth, everything is nothing but a *translation of a translation of the untranslatable*, is already implying not only that Europe and the memory of Europe are, in themselves, merely "*plus d'une*"[13], that is to say that diversity, plurality and, above all, heterogeneity are indeed its configuration, but, in addition to that, it is also implying that *plus d'une* [more than one] is also its provenance – mono-genealogy being always a mystification[14]. A terrible mystification. Mono-genealogy which is always at the origin of any supposed *single* or pure or *proper identity* (*unidentity*) and therefore at the very origin of the phantasms of (cratic) sovereignty (that is, one and indivisible).

Let us then now pay attention to this nourishing eve of Europe, in the eyes of Jacques Derrida, susceptible to making it an exemplary focus for the irradiation of a very new thought (a thought of *meta*-onto-logical and *meta*-anthropo-theo-logical

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[11] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (Paris: Galilée, 1997) 15.

[12] Levinas, E., "La Bible et les Grecs » in *À l'heure des Nations* (Paris : Minuit, 1988) 155.

[13] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Lettre à l'Europe" was first published, under the title of "Double Memoire", in the review *Les Inrockuptibles / Festival d'Avignon*, having been subsequently edited by Nicolas Truong in the book entitled *Le Théâtre des Idées* (Paris: Flammarion, 2008) 15–17. Annotated and translated into Portuguese by Fernanda Bernardo under the title of *Carta à Europa*. "Dupla memória", this Letter is also published in the *Revista Filosófica de Coimbra*, nº 46 (2014), 471-480.

[14] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *L'autre cap, op. cit.*, p. 17; *Le droit à la philosophie du point de vue cosmopolitique, op. cit.*, p. 33.

register) able to carry out the lights for the political-democratic[15] regime of our time and of the "future" of our world and our civilization. This singular attention would have dictated *Derrida's dream* – without teleology, the lucid dream of a *Europe of hope*: "a Europe that sets an example of what a political, a thought and an ethics can be, heirs of the past Lights and bearers of the Lights to come."[16]

2. Europe under the reign of the *"general equivalence"* (J.-L. Nancy)

> *"[…] une vieille Europe en guerre,*
> *avec l'autre et avec elle-même."*
> J. Derrida, *Spectres de Marx,* p. 37.

Although confessed at the threshold of the 2000s by a Derrida at that time already insufficiently confident in Europe as it then was, or seemed to be becoming, we foresee today, without too much difficulty, that this dream is still very far from having been achieved, nor does it seem about to be achieved, while concerns about Europe and its "future" [*avenir*] are today still very far from having been appeased – quite the contrary: in addition to the cruel scourge of war, which strikes today this invaluable *project of peace* which was at the origin of the dream of a European Union, with regard to the hospitality [hospitality being the issue around which we are turning here, in this colloquium, and the issue that, although very succinctly, I am going to approach here in order to draw the silhouette of the Derridian dream of Europe since, in the very saying of *Papier Machine* (2001), hospitality "concentrates today in itself the most concrete and the most suitable to link ethics to politics"[17]: hospitality will then make possible to insinuate the singularity not only of Deconstruction as a *philosophical idiom* (an idea that I care about! And that I want to underline and elucidate) but also that of the Derridian dream of another figure of the Europe *to come* [*à venir*], in what concerns hospitality, as I was saying, and such as the media reported it on July 15 (2022) [the birthday of Jacques Derrida, let us remember it], Europe has abandoned around 27,464[18] *asylum seekers* in the Aegean Sea: the number is brutal… but were it only one, and it would already be too many…

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[15] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Si je peux faire plus qu'une phrase…*, *op. cit.,* 25.

[16] Derrida, J., "Une Europe de l'espoir" in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Nov. 2004, p. 3.

[17] Derrida, J., " Non pas l'utopie, l'impossible " in *Papier Machine*, *op. cit.*, 363.

[18] According to the number disclosed by DIEM (*Democracy in Europe Movement* 2025) quoting the British university agency FORENSIS.

In Europe, the drama of migrants and refugees is omnipresent everywhere and still resounds in the names of horrible memory of *camps* – such as the Camp de Calais or Grande-Synthe – or, at best and at another level – that of the example of a culture of hospitality – in the name of cities of refuge[19] or rebel cities such as Lampedusa, Calais, Lesbos, Paris, Valencia, or Barcelona: cities whose name we insist on saluting and on evoking here and which, in the very venerable biblical tradition of the "refugee cities" (*Gen.* 35: 9–15), as well as in that of a certain spirit of "civil disobedience" (H. David Thoreau), advocate the institution of neo-municipalism, boldly calling on us to "transform and re-found the modalities of belonging of the city to the State"[20], while dreaming[21], as Derrida remarks it in *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (1997), of "an original statute for the City"[22] (and therefore for citizenship) through a *re-newal* of international law likely to allow a true and audacious innovation in the history of the *right to asylum* and/or the *duty to hospitality[23]*. To work for such an innovation is our responsibility and our task – the task which Derrida's Deconstruction calls for and for which it has given us the theoretical instruments.

Everywhere, however, is very dark, and today the horizon of our hospitality seems to have shrunk: indeed, every day countless migrants, countless asylum seekers continue to knock on Europe's locked doors (especially in the south), with heavy political and social consequences for democracy and for Europe – we need only think of the recent *Frontex* scandal (*European Border Cost Guard*) or the *Aquarius* humanitarian ship episode or, still more recently, that of the *Ocean-Viking* (between France and Italy) – or, because of climate catastrophes, because of wars and social and political failures in their own countries – failures that deprive them not only of the chance of a *dignified life,* but also of the guarantee of the security of life itself – either because of the growing food shortage in North Africa and in the Middle East caused, nowadays, by climatic catastrophes, by the ongoing war in Ukraine or by the inequalities of so-called *mondialisation* in the face of what Jean-Luc Nancy calls the accumulation

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[19] Created in November 1993 following the attack on the Algerian writer Tahar Djaout. The *Parlement International des Écrivains*, based in Strasbourg, took on the task of defending freedom of creation – its executive office included Adonis, Breyten Breytenbach, Jacques Derrida, Édouard Glissant, Salmon Rushdie, Christian Salmon and Pierre Bourdieu, and one of the most important of its creations was the *Réseau International des Villes Refuges*, which Coimbra joined in 2003 under the sponsorship of J. Derrida, who signed the adhesion protocol of the municipality of Coimbra with the *Parlement International des Écrivains*.
See also Christian Salmon *Devenir Minoritaire. Pour une nouvelle politique de la littérature* (Paris: Denoël, 2003).

[20] Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

[21] Derrida, J., "Débat: une hospitalité sans condition" in collectif, *Manifeste pour l'hospitalité*, s/d M. Seffahi (Paris: ed. Paroles d'Aube, 1999) 136–137.

[22] Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[23] *Cf. ibid.*, p. 12–13.

and the growth of "*general equivalence*"[24], that is to say of capital, of the "*capitalocene*"[25] (*cf.* A. Malm and B. Lemoine), which, with the help of a neoliberal narrative, everywhere hegemonic and alienating, places the financial markets[26] at the center of everything, especially the financing of public deficits, so that, under the slogan of "good accounts" ["*contas certas*"], democracy is kept under the iron discipline of debt with unpredictable consequences for democratic institutions and democracy itself.

> "We seem to want to maintain an economy of financial rent at all costs", wrote, as early as 2016, Dominique de Villepin in *Mémoires de Paix. Pour temps de guerre.* And he added: "To the detriment of growth, innovation and change, we are collectively engaging in a conservative policy whose priority is to prevent the erosion of our capital. The German saver is the figurehead of a continent-wide movement. *This madness […] threatens to rob us of our hopes.*" [27] [My italics]

This is a madness which, in De Villepin's words, "*threatens to rob us of our hopes*" about democracy as well as about a European Union worthy of the name and of its most luminous memory.[28] No one here doubts that this is fertile ground for the worst forms of violence – violence which today includes environmental crimes, xenophobia, racism, sexism, anti-Semitism[29], religious, ethnocentric, and nationalist fanaticism, hunger, slavery… the violence of what Derrida calls the *carno-phallogocentrism[30]* of philosophical-cultural and of doxic Westernness – that is, *the sacrificial cruelty* of the reign of a *cratic* sovereignty (subjective, parental, citizen or State) of ontological or even onto-theological appearance. A sovereignty which, it should be noted, is the aura of identity, of *uni-identity* and of totalitarian phantoms of all kinds… Derrida will remember and underline that in the European Union and all over the world the international juridical structures are still dominated by the inviolable rule of sovereignty – namely by the rule of State sovereignty. In this sense, it is not surprising that Derridean Deconstruction is, as an *idiom of philosophical thought*, a deconstruction of sovereignty of all kinds – a deconstruction of the said *metaphysics of subjectivity* and/or *of the presence* (*cf.* Heidegger).

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[24] *Cf.* Nancy, J.-L., *Politique et au-delà, op. cit.*, 20.

[25] Lemoine, Benjamin, *La Démocratie disciplinée par la dette* (Paris: La Découverte, 2022) 153.

[26] Lucbert, Sandra, *Le Ministère des Contes Publics* (Paris : Verdier, 2021) 23.

[27] De Villepin, Dominique, *Mémoires de paix. Pour temps de Guerre, op. cit.*, p. 566.

[28] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "*Lettre à l'Europe*" in *op. cit.*, 15–28.

[29] See Jean-François Lyotard, "Europe, les Juifs et le livre in page" "Rebonds", Libération on May 15, 1990.

[30] Derrida, J., "'Il faut bien manger' ou le calcul du sujet" in *Points de Suspension, op. cit.*, p. 294 ; *L'animal que donc je suis, op. cit.*, p. 144.

3. A *future [à-venir] resource* in the memory of the *"old-new Europe"*

> *"Dans l'histoire et la mémoire de l'Europe*
> *[…] il y a une ressource […] d'avenir"*
> J. Derrida, *Si je peux faire…,* p. 30.

Violence that "we recognize too well without having thought them yet"[31], as Derrida already diagnosed and denounced in 1990, in *The Other Cape* – the title of a book that, on the eve of the very institution of the European Union (on 1 November 1993 in Maastricht), was already looking for *another cape* or, more precisely, for *the other of the cape* (i.e. of the point, the advance, the *phallus*, the head, the captain, the capital, the capital [city]) for a future Europe[32] that would come to "sow the seed of a new alter-worldisation [*altermondialisation*] politics"[33]: an *altermondialiste politics* worthy of the name that Jacques Derrida at that time already held as the only possible way out. By the only way out of the neo-liberal or ultra-liberal reign of financialized capitalism that orders Europe as much as the said mondialisation ["mondialisation is Europeanisation"[34]] and which, nowadays, by the disciplinary tool of the public debt to be reimbursed, carries out a successful domination and demolition of the social order: as, bravely Sandra Lucbert denounces it in *Le Ministère des Contes Publiques*[35] (2021), denouncing the reign of the *homo financiarus* under which, endlessly repeated, the rhetoric of "La Dette Publique C'est Mal" has become unquestionable. Hence the need to pay attention to the presuppositions of this reign, which threaten to destroy the ideal of a certain European spirit by making Europe a purely geographical, monetary and economic entity. Hence the urgent need to re-think again and "*tout autrement*" the presuppositions of this reign, which is at the origin of these forms of violence and feeds them.

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[31] Derrida, J., *L'autre cap, op. cit*, 13.

[32] Before its publication in an abbreviated form in *Liber*, *L'autre Cap* was the text of a lecture delivered in Turin, on May 20, 1990, during a symposium on "European cultural identity", under the presidency of G. Vattimo. In Les Éditions de Minuit, *L'autre Cap* also incorporates "The deferred democracy" (p. 103–124), an interview by Derrida with Olivier Salvatori and Nicolas Weill, published in an abbreviated form in *Le Monde de la Révolution Française*, nº 1 (monthly, January 1989).

[33] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Lettre à l'Europe" in *op. cit,* 15–28; *Si je peux faire plus qu'une phrase…*, op. cit., p. 24–26) ; "Une Europe de l'espoir" in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Novembre 2004, p. 3 : Discours prononcé le 8 mai 2004 à l'occasion du 50ème anniversaire du *Le Monde Diplomatique*: http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2004/11/DERRIDA/11677.

[34] "Hence the paradox: *mondialisation* is Europeanisation", Derrida, J., in J. Derrida, Roudinesco, E., *De quoi demain…* (Paris : Fayard / Galilée, 2001) 288.
For the issue of "*mondialisation*" in terms of "*alter-mondialisation*", as well as for the distinction between "*globalisation*" and "*mondialisation*" in Derrida's thought, see, namely: Derrida, J., "Auto-immunités, suicides réels et symboliques" in Derrida, J. Habermas, J. *Le "concept" du 11Septembre* (Paris: Galilée, 2003) ; Derrida, J., "La mondialisation, la paix et la cosmopolitique" in collectif, *Où vont les valeurs?* Jérôme Bindé dir. (Paris: Albin Michel/ Ed. Unesco, 2004) ; Bernardo, Fernanda, *Derrida – em nome da justiça. Do cosmopolitismo à alter-mundialização por vir* (Coimbra : Palimage, 2021).

[35] Lucbert, Sandra, *Le Ministère des Contes Publiques, op. cit.*.

To envision them, to think the presuppositions of this violence in order to find a totally other cape for Europe and for *mondialisation* – since, let us remember and note, in Derrida's own words, "we recognize them too much"; this violence that weighs on Europe and on the world, *"without having thought about them yet"* – this is therefore the urgency and the duty of intellectuals, jurists, economists and, and especially, philosophers – a philosophical–theoretical gesture that in itself is already political, hyper-political, as any political act worthy of the name should be today: the urgency, the courage, the lucidity and the responsibility is today not only to denounce but, at the same time, to think *the source* of this violence in order to approach and to grasp, in the history and in the memory of Europe, *a resource* that could make it the *Noah's Ark* of the "future" [*avenir*]. A *resource* in the history and memory of the "old-new Europe"[36] that is an unfinished *resource* of "future"[37] – a kind of sleepless vigil that never ceases to watch over the "future" of Europe and of the world, just as, according to Derrida, a certain "madness" should keep watch over thought, as reason does.[38]

Only the attention to this *resource* – a paradoxical *resource*, in fact, Jacques Derrida warns – will raise and take into account not only the *double genealogy* of Europe's provenance (The Bible and Greece), but also its *double memory*, thus creating the conditions for making Europe the promise of a place of *refoundation* and of *critical invention* with regard to thought, the human, ethics, the social, culture, the university, politics, law, the economy, the media, tele-technology, democracy, etc., while at the same time causing us to think about the "ethicity of ethics"[39] and justice, both of which dictate, stamp, and magnetize thought and, at the same time, lead us to re-think and, hopefully, to live *tout autrement* the gaps *between* ethics (in the sense of meta- or hyper-ethics as an *absolute relationship to the absolutely other*), politics, social, economic and law, the registers that especially interest us here. These deviations – living traces of every conjunctural response to the injunction of this *resource* from which, at every moment, the other of all capes springs – instigating an invaluable sign of vigilant attention, of concern and of remorse due to the current state of affairs, as much as a desire for increasing perfectibility and justice. Let us note this at once before we go on to try to explain it:

1.) Following Kant and Heidegger, but in a totally different way, counter-signing them, distinguishing thought from philosophy (associated with *logocentric*

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[36] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Lettre à l'Europe, op. cit.,* 17.

[37] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "La mondialisation, la paix et la cosmopolitique" in collectif, *Où vont les valeurs ?* J. Bindé dir. (Paris : Albin Michel/ Ed. Unesco, 2004) 173–174.

[38] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Points de Suspension, op. cit.*, 374.

[39] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Débats" in *Altérités, op. cit.*, 70-73.

metaphysics, of the presence or of the anthropocentric subjectivity), there is in Jacques Derrida's thought and work an equation of thought or, more precisely, of the scope of the *unconditionality* of thought to ethics in the sense of the "*ethicity of ethics*"[40] – understood in terms of *meta-*, *hyper-* or "hyperbolic ethics"[41] – in relation to justice[42] and to hospitality: *the thought of the différance* or *of the absolute* or *secret otherness* is *a thought of hospitality*, *a thought as hospitality* and, in its *unconditionality* or in its *hyperbolicity*, according to Derrida,[43] is ethics itself. A passage from *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!* (1997), which is perhaps worth recalling here, notes this (*hyper*) ethical scope of the *unconditionality of thought* and of *hospitality*:

> […] to cultivate an *ethics of hospitality*. Isn't *cultivating the ethics of hospitality*, moreover, tautological language? Despite all the perversions that threaten it, we do not even have to cultivate an ethics of hospitality. Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic among others. Insofar as it has to do with *ethos*, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, as much as the way of being there, the way in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as to one's own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*, ethics is in every way co-extensive with the experience of hospitality, in whatever way it is opened up or limited.[44]

Since it is always operating[45], attentive to the injunction of this ageless *resource* and therefore deconstructing principiality, originarity, arch-causality, substantiality and theoreticism in general, Derridian Deconstruction not only plays an *act of resistance* and *of reinvention*, but also an *act of faith* and *of hope*[46] (without teleology). There is no doubt that, listening to the piercing scream of Europe and, more broadly, of the world, Derrida's dream *of* Europe and *for* Europe *to come* gets confused with a kind of *credo* – with *an act of faith* without dogma. A *messianic act of faith* in a thought of the event *to come*, of the democracy *to come* [*à venir*], of the justice *to come*, of the reason *to*

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[40] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Débats" in Derrida, J., Labarrière, P.-J., *Altérités* (Paris: Osiris, 1986) 70; J., *De la Grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967) 202.

[41] "This 'exceedance' is what I call 'hyperbolic ethic', an ethics above ethics." ["Cette 'excédance', c'est ce que j'appelle l'ethique hyperbolique', une éthique au-dessus de l'éthique.", J. Derrida, J., "La Mélancolie d' Abraham" in *Les Temps Modernes*, 67 année, Juillet/Octobre 2012, nos. 669/670, 35

[42] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Le lieu dit: Strasbourg" in collectif, Penser à Strasbourg (Paris: Galilée/ Ville de Strasbourg, 2004)m 48.

[43] "[…] pure ethics begins beyond right, duty and debt." ["[…] l'éthique pure commence au-delà du droit, du devoir et de la dette."], J. Derrida, "Auto-immunités, suicides réels et symboliques" in Derrida, J., Habermas, J., *Le "concept" du 11 septembre* (Paris : Galilée, 2003) 193.

[44] Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites de tous les pays, encore un effort!, op. cit.*, 41-42.

[45] "[…] deconstruction is always already at work." ["[…] la déconstruction est toujours déjà à l'oeuvre"], Derrida, J. in Weber, Elisabeth, *Questions au Judaïsme* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1996) 91.

[46] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Papier Machine, op. cit.*, p. 341.

come: a thought that carries and makes the promise of a Europe and of a world that is increasingly more hospitable and righteous…

2.) Without in any way elaborating and providing a political *philosophy*[47], there is nevertheless in the work of Jacques Derrida *a thought* of politics and of democracy[48]: a *thought of unconditional hospitality* and of *justice* which, merging with the *meta*-onto-phenomena-logical allure of Deconstruction as *an idiom of philosophical thought*, happens to be the light to think, and to prompt us to think the promise of a *democracy to come* (which also happens to be *democracy as a promise* and therefore always (still) *to come [«à venir»]* as the *impossible* itself) – a *democracy* which, disconnected from the traditional values of nationality, citizenship, rootedness, and fraternity, would be "like the *khôra* of politics"[49] and therefore like the *khôra*[50] of a totally other *Europe*[51], of an *alter-mondialist* Europe that would become the laboratory and the motor of "*alter-mondialisation*", of a totally other "*alter-mondialisation*" *to come* [*à venir*].

> "I believe very much in *alter-mondialisation*", Derrida confessed in March 2004 in an interview entitled *If I can do more than one sentence…* which has just been published in book form. And he added in clarification: "Not in the forms it currently takes, which are often confused and heterogeneous. But in the future, I believe, decisions will be taken from there, and the hegemonic nation-states and the organizations dependent on them (notably the economic and monetary "summits") will have to take account of this power."[52]

There is, therefore, no theoretical model of politics in Deconstruction – there is, rather, a (political) *thought* of the political that appeals to the effort to keep open the event of alterity that makes politics possible and inevitable. The old inherited words of politics and of democracy are maintained – but, paleonymically rethought from the perspective of "*à venir*" ["*to come*"], they hold new "fundamentals" [fundamentals without foundation, be precise], new configurations and new senses.

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[47] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Voyous, op. cit.*, 14–15.

[48] As Derrida remarks in *Voyous* (*op. cit.*, 64): "The thought of the political has always been a thought of *differance*, and the thought of *differance* has always been a thought *of* the political." ["La pensée du politique a toujours été une pensée de la différance et la pensée de la différance toujours aussi une pensée d*u* politique"].

[49] Derrida, J., *Voyous, op. cit.*, 120; "Terreur et Religion. Pour une politique à venir" (in Revue *Iter*, p. 13).

[50] Derrida, J., *Khôra* (Paris: Galilée, 1993).

[51] "A Europe that sets an example of what a politics, a thought and an ethics can be, heirs of the past Enlightenment and bearers of Enlightenment to come, capable of non-binary discernment.", Derrida, J., " Une Europe de l'espoir " in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Novembre 2004, 3.

[52] Derrida, J., *Si je peux faire plus qu'une phrase…, op. cit.*, 24–25.

4. *Unconditional hospitality* – a name and the hope of Deconstruction

> *L' hospitalité,*
> *c'est un nom ou un exemple*
> *de la deconstruction."*
> J. Derrida, *Hospitalité,* II, p. 152.

The attention to this *resource*, to the injunction that springs from this *resource* coming from the very eve of European civilization in which is inscribed the possibility of the auto-hetero-deconstruction or of auto-immunity as "survival" [«*survivance*»], as an in-finite «survival» or an infinite affirmation of life happening[53], is the mark *par excellence* of Derrida's Deconstruction as *thought*, indeed as a *philosophical idiom*: as the philosopher confesses it in *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* (1996), such attention – which (following Malebranche, Benjamin, Celan and Levinas[54]) Derrida calls the "pure prayer of the soul" – unveils and affirms the *hyperbolism*[55] that, in the trace of *khôra*[56] (from Plato's *Timaeus*), of the *Good* beyond being, *reinterpreted or counter-signed* by Derrida, dictates, magnetizes and rhythms the undeconstructibility of the *meta*-ontological, *meta*-ontotheological and *meta*-anthropo-logical register of the *thought of the différance* or of the *trace*: a *meta*-register that deconstructs the vein of the *possible*, of the *systematic* and of the *oiko-nomic*, and so the vein of *power* and of *power of power* that, hegemonically, dictates, crosses and structures the thought of philosophical-cultural Westernness and lies at the very origin of violence. As Derrida declares in *Marges, de la Philosophie* (1972), *différance* is the tomb of *one's own* ["*propre*"] and the death of the dynast[57].

A *meta*-register – (of attention to the absolute otherness or to the time of the absolute other to which Derrida calls *messianic*) – that encourages and magnetizes an attitude of hyper-critical vigilance, of irredentist criticism and resistance,[58] even of dissidence, in the face of the injustice of the established (dis-)order – an order drawn and consolidated from everything that links the instituted, i.e., law, politics

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[53] "There is survival as soon as there is a trace […] I believe that it is the very form of experience and of inescapable desire." ["Il y a survie dès qu'il y a trace […] je crois que c'est la forme même de l'expérience et du désir inéluctable.", Derrida, J., *Sur Parole* (Paris: Ed. de l'Aube, 1999), 51.

[54] Levinas, E., *Paul Celan – De l'être à l'autre* (Montpellier : Fata Morgana, 2002) 25–26.

[55] Derrida, J., *Le Monolinguisme de l'autre* (Paris : Galilée, 1996) 82.

[56] Derrida, J., "Terreur et Religion. Pour une politique à venir" in revue *Iter*, nº 1 (2018), p. 15–16.

[57] Derrida, J., *Marges de la Philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972) 22.

[58] "If I had invented my writing, I would have done it like an endless revolution." ["Si j'avais inventé mon écriture, je l'aurais fait comme une révolution interminable."], Derrida, J., *Apprendre enfin à vivre* (Paris : Galilée/ Le Monde, 2005), 31. And in *Papier Machine* (*op. cit.*, p. 341), Derrida confesses: "I have always dreamed of resistance." ["J'ai toujours rêvé de résistance."]

and citizenship, to the sovereignty of the (metaphysical) subject: a subject defined in terms of (autonomous) consciousness, intentionality, freedom, will, decision-making, power, responsibility, one-identity and self-presence, and which Derrida says to be nothing but a fable![59] Indeed, because of his finitude, he does not come to him except through the other, through the primacy of the language of the other, and therefore in the scene of an infinite *auto-hetero-nomic experience* – his appropriation (of himself or of the language of the other) is merely an *ex-appropriation*. That is to say, it is not but an infinite, bereaved *appropriation* – the experience of the *proper* or of identification is inseparable, as an experience, from *expropriation* and therefore from mourning or melancholy as well as a movement of *reappropriation*.

A *meta*-register from whose excess and exceedance [*"le pas au-delà"*] spring all the *impossibles*, all the *unconditionals* of the Derridean Deconstruction in its condition of *impossible thought*[60] or of *impossible experience of the impossible*[61] barely (aporetically) *impossible*: time (diachronic or messianic), justice, forgiveness, witness, response and responsibility, decision, blessing, democracy to-come, event, gift, hospitality… – the *gift of hospitality*, precisely (which is also *hospitality as a gift* and not as a duty or a right – a gift that gives what it does not have at all), thought as attention, welcome and *ex-position* or openness (*heterological* or *heteronomical*) to the other, to the unexpected and surprising coming of the other[62], *whoever or whatever he/she/it may be*, as, for Derrida, "*absolutely other is absolutely other*" ["*tout autre est tout autre*"[63]]. Anarchic, unconditional and hyperbolic, hospitality is then the *ex-position* or the opening to the other, to the very other, in its condition of unpredictable *visitor* or *absolute arrival*. Or it is the *ex-position* or the opening *to what happens* or *to who comes*, to the "*arrivance de l'arrivant*"[64], Deconstruction being also a *thought of as the event* or of the "having-place", of the messianic event and of the *singularity*.

Such hospitality – which Derrida will call pure, absolute, unconditional, just, poetic/po-et(h)ical or, in the trace of Levinas's lexicon[65], of *visitation* – such

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[59] "The subject is a fable" ["Le sujet est une fable"], Derrida, J., "'Il faut bien manger' ou le calcul du sujet" in *Points de Suspension, op. cit.*, 279.

[60] J. Derrida in Derrida, J., Roudinesco, E., *De quoi demain…*, *op. cit.*, 200.

[61] "The interest of 'deconstruction', of its strength and its desire, if it has any, is a certain experience of the impossible: that is to say […] of the other." ["L'intérêt de la déconstruction, de sa force et de son désir si elle en a, c'est une certaine expérience de l'impossible : c'est-à-dire […] *de l'autre*", Derrida, J., *Psyché. Inventions de l'autre* (Paris : Galilée, 1987) 27.

[62] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Psyché, op. cit.*, 53.

[63] *Cf.* J. Derrida, in Derrida, J., Malabou, C.*, La Contre-Allée* (Paris : La Quinzaine Littéraire/L. Vuitton, 1999) 263.

[64] Derrida, J., "Fidélité à plus d'un" in *Cahiers Intersignes*, numéro 13 automne 1998, *Idiomes, Nationalités, Déconstructions* (Paris / Casablanca : éd. Toubkal/ éd. de l'Aube, 1998) 261.

[65] "the epiphany of the face is *visitation*." ["l'épiphanie du visage est *visitation*."], Levinas, E., "La trace de l'autre" *in En Découvrant l'existence avec Husserl et Heidegger* (Paris : Vrin, 1988) 194.

hospitality, as I was saying, configures, as a gesture or as an attitude, as a *Stimmung*, an *experience* or an *uncondition*, Deconstruction itself in its condition of *thought of the différance*, of *the trace* or of the *absolute otherness*, while drawing, at the same time, both the hyper-ethical[66] and the hyper-just register[67] of this *thought*, as well as the (already) hyper-political (register): a *trace* of the excess and of the "*excédance*" of the *impossible* or of the other *as other* as the very condition of the possible; this register is, in a saying of Derrida's *Papier Machine* (2001), "the very drive or the very pulse"[68] of Deconstruction. The life of its «*survivance*» ["survival"] in its combination of the movement – arising from the nourishing indestructibility of the excess of its *meta*-ontological register that *loco-moves* it: an excess configured by the timelessness and by the impassibility of an absolute abyss or an eve without tomorrow designated by the historical quasi-names of *messianic* and *khôra*[69] – and of the *hiatus*, the interruption, the break or the deviation (*trace/écart* – *"trace"* as the anagram of *"écart"* as well as of *"carte"*[70]). In "Circonfession" (1991), Derrida confesses that his "only desire remains to give the interruption to be read".[71]

Indeed, let us note: it is not only in relation to justice[72], *to the unconditionality* and *to the messianicity of justice*[73] (in its difference from the law (legal system) and thought, in a certain trace of Levinas, in terms of an absolute relation to the absolutely other or as "a relationship to the unconditional"[74]), that Jacques Derrida has understood ["*comme que*"] "how to" define Deconstruction – "*Deconstruction is justice*"[75], he says in *Force de loi* (1994), while, in *La Contre-Allée* (1997), by accentuating the idea of movement and displacement, in short, the idea of *loco-commotion*, he adds: "deconstruction […] would be a certain experience of the travel, […] of the letters and of the language in travelling".[76] He does exactly the same with the motif of *hospitality* – *hospitality* that he holds to be inseparable from a *thought of justice* and that he thinks originally as a *gift* (and not, it should be noted once again, as a duty or as a right): at the January 8, 1997 session of his seminar on *Questions of Responsibility* entitled *Hostipitality*,

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[66] Derrida, J., *Voyous*, *op. cit.*, 210.

[67] Derrida, J., *Voyous, op. cit.*, 64.

[68] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Comme si c'était possible, 'within such limits'…" in *Papier Machine, op. cit.*, 308.

[69] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Sauf le nom, op. cit.*, 95-97.

[70] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Envois" in *La Carte Postale de Platon à Freud et au-delà, op. cit.*, p. 43.

[71] Derrida, J., "Circonfession" in Derrida, J., Bennington, G., *Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 53.

[72] *Cf.* Bernardo, F., *Derrida – em nome da justiça* (Coimbra: Palimage, 2021).

[73] *Cf.* J. Derrida in Derrida, J., Ferraris, M., *Le goût du secret* (Paris: Hermann, 2018) 26.

[74] *Ibid.,* 23, 26.

[75] Derrida, J., *Force de loi* (Paris : Galilée, 1994) 35.

[76] Derrida, J., Malabou, C., *La Contre-Allée, op. cit.*, 40.

Derrida announces that *hospitality*, as a questioning of the *proper*, of the *same*, of the at home/*"chez soi"*, of the *oikos*, the being *with oneself*, the abode/*"demeure"*, *property*, *appropriation*, *"presence to oneself"*, in short a questioning of *oikonomy* and of *ipséity* or of *cratic* (from *kratia / kratos*) sovereignty (i.e. one and indivisible), so central in *logocentric metaphysics*, as a name and/or as an example of Deconstruction. Let us listen to his words, in what is still the only English version (on this date: October 2022) of this seminar,[77] edited and translated by Gil Anidjar (in *Acts of Religion* (2002):

> […] hospitality, the experience, the apprehension, the exercise of impossible hospitality, of hospitality as the possibility of impossibility […] – this is the exemplar experience of deconstruction itself […], the experience of the impossible. *Hospitality – this is a name or an example of deconstruction.* […] Hospitality is the deconstruction of the at-home; deconstruction is hospitality to the other, to the other than oneself, the other than "its other", to another who is beyond any "its other".[78]

I emphasize: "*Hospitality – this is a name or an example of deconstruction.*" I emphasize this in order to note that while being one of the impossibles or one of the unconditionals of the meta-ontological register of Derridean Deconstruction, the "beautiful rainbow of hospitality", as Edmond Jabès calls it; this major sign of humanity, culture and civilization[79], as much as of risk, danger and promise of re-invention and of "future" not only draws the silhouette of the singularity of Deconstruction as a *thought of the différance* or *of the absolute otherness,* but also draws the (messianic or hetero-auto-nomic) openness to the other and/or to the "future" ["*avenir*"], thus outlining the very *uncondition* of the *subjectivity of the subject*, or, more precisely, of the *a-subjective or différant singularity*[80]: *already always* under the call of the absolute other, the "first come" ["*premier venu*"], the said subject, always late, always late arrived, is for Derrida, following Levinas[81], *arch-originally and unconditionally a guest.* A *guest* and not a *proper* or a *master*! It is as guest, already always *chez soi chez l'autre*, and not as master of the self and of the house, that the said subject welcomes the other in his condition of unexpected visiting *guest* or of absolute arrival.

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[77] This seminar has since been published in French by Pascale-Anne Brault and Peggy Kamuf: *Hospitalité II Séminaire* (1996–1997) (Paris: ed. du Seuil, novembre 2022). This quote is now found on p. 152.

[78] Derrida, J., "Hostipitality. Session of January 8, 1997" in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (NY/London: Routledge, 2002) 364.

[79] "Civilization was born with hospitality", De Villepin, D., *Mémoire de paix, op. cit.*, 564. See also René Schérer in "Zeus hospitalier. Éloge de l'hospitalité" in collectif, *Le livre de l'hospitalité*, s/d Alain Montandon (Paris : Bayard, 2004).

[80] Derrida, J., "'Il faut bien manger' ou le calcul du sujet" in *Points de Suspension, op. cit.*, 277.

[81] "The subject is a guest." ["Le sujet est un hôte."], Levinas, E., *Totalité et Infini* (1998) 334, "The subject is hostage." ["Le sujet est otage."], Levinas, E., *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence* (Dordrecht : Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988) 142.

It should be noted that in French the word "*hôte*" [from the Latin "*hostis*"/"*hospes*": *host/enemy*] can mean both the *hôte/guest*, i.e. the one who asks for hospitality, and the *hôte/host*, the one who gives hospitality – a significant undecidability which J. Derrida plays with to suddenly remind us that there is no host who does not begin by being a guest of the very place where he or she gives hospitality: the language, the house, the family, the heart, the city, the nation, the country…

It is the deconstruction of the autonomous, egological and ontological, if not ontotheological, register of sovereignty (of the giver of hospitality) that is at stake and that is put into question: there is no "at home" ["*chez soi*"] that is not already always "at home at the other one's home": the guest becomes the host of the host, as Derrida says.[82] Implicitly, this is also a critique of Kant's *universal hospitality*, in which the host welcomes as master and lord of the place where he "gives" place, that is, conditionally.

> "The arrival", says Derrida in "Fidelité à plus d'un" (1996), "must be so surprising to me that I cannot even determine him as a human. […] *hospitality open to the arriving person unconditionally should open me to the arriving whatever he or she may be*, but also to what is so easily called an animal or a god. Good or evil, life or death."[83]

I italicize the central passage in order to stress the *meta*-onto-anthropo-logical register of the *unconditionality* of hospitality according to Derrida – hospitality is the welcome of the other, of a wholly other who happens to be *anyone* as, for Derrida, "*tout autre est tout autre*". It is the anthropocentrism of the traditional humanisms, including the meta-ethical humanism of Emmanuel Levinas (*a humanism of the other man*), which is questioned – an anthropocentrism that is the scene of the man's sovereignty or of the man's mastery over women, nature, and animals. And thus, the scene of *carno-phallogocentrism* and of its ruthless *sacrificial spirit*[84].

Drawing the hyper-political and hyper-ethical scope proper to the *meta*-onto-phenomena-logical and *meta*-onto-anthropo-logical register of *deconstructive thinking*, *unconditional hospitality* thus commands to welcome *the other* (whoever he may be) without conditions and without questions – beyond, therefore, the hospitality conditioned by the right to immigration and by the right to asylum, beyond even the right[85] to universal hospitality (*allgemeinen Hospitalität/ Wirtbarkeit*) of which Kant[86]

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[82] *Cf.* Derrida, J., in J. Derrida, Dufourmantelle, A., *De l'hospitalité, op. cit.*, 111.

[83] Derrida, J., "Fidélité à plus d'un" *in op. cit.*, 247.

[84] Derrida, J., "'Il faut bien manger' ou le calcul du sujet" in *Points de Suspension, op. cit.*, 292–293.

[85] *Cf.* Kant, *Projet de paix perpétuelle*, éd. Bilingue, tr. fr. J. Gibelin (Paris : Vrin, 2002) 55.

[86] Kant, *Projet de paix perpétuelle, op. cit*, 54-55.

speaks in the *Third Final Article for Perpetual Peace*: *unconditional hospitality* demands without command to unconditionally welcome *the other*, *the absolutely other*, the *absolute arriving*, and not (yet) *the foreigner*: Jacques Derrida[87] distinguishing the "other" from the "foreigner" in order to re-think this from the primacy of the "other". Synonymous with "citizen", the "foreigner" is always a philosophical and juridical-political concept – it designates the subject of a certain territorialized nation-state – whereas, *a-conceptualizable*, the "other" is synonymous of *otherness* or of *absolute* (*a-solus*) *singularity* (*a-subjective* and, in a certain way, a-political). Not one, the "other" is not "one"/"unit", but unique and secret: "the other is secret because he is other"[88], as Derrida reminds us in his interview with Antoine Spire (2000) – "I am *in the secret* as another. A singularity is by essence in the secret."[89]

Such a difference between the "*other*" and the "*foreigner*" has its origin in the singular Derridean distinction between *unconditionality without indivisible sovereignty* and *conditionality[90]*, between power and unpower, which singularizes the *meta*-ontological deconstructive idiom and which presupposes the singular distinction, as well as the implication and the aporetic reinvention, between meta-ontology and ontology, thus also suggesting how this *unconditional hospitality* is regulated (and regulates!) in a political or legal practice – and thus the singular distinction, as well as the implication, between *The Law of Hospitality* (anomic, absolute, unconditional, just, pure, poetic or visiting) and the *laws of hospitality* (conditional and conditioning, i.e. national and international, ethical, political and legal laws): a distinction that is nonetheless singular, it should be noted, because, by drawing at the same time a relationship of heterogeneity and of indissociability[91], it will also configure the *aporia* or the *antinomy* of hospitality, that is, the "*pas d'hospitalité*"[92]: an *antinomy* which, in the more than living idiom of Derrida's language, the philosopher spells *hosti(pita)lity* to designate, no longer the (juridical-political) *laws of hospitality*, the laws of immigration and of the right of asylum, but the *laws of hospitality* haunted by the *Law of hospitality*; i.e. to designate the always possible anxiety and pervertibility of the *Law of Hospitality* inscribed/*ex-cribed* in the *laws of hospitality*, as these are affected, hetero-affected, inspired, perverted and guided, even haunted by the incalculable *unconditionality* of the *Law of Hospitality*. The political difficulty of immigration lies

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[87] *Cf.* Derrida, J., Dufourmantelle, A., *De l'hospitalité* (Paris : Calmann-Lévy, 1997) 11 ss.

[88] Derrida, J., *Papier Machine, op. cit.*, 397.

[89] *Ibid.*

[90] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Foi et Savoir, op. cit.*, p. 133.

[91] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Le siècle et le pardon" in *Foi et Savoir, op. cit.*, p. 125.

[92] Derrida, J. in Derrida, J., Dufourmantelle, A., *De l'hospitalité, op. cit.*, 71

in the need to negotiate between these two equally imperative laws. Derrida makes this explicit in "Pas d'hospitalité", the fifth session of 17 January 1996 of his seminar around the *Questions of Responsibility* (1991–2003):

> "The antinomy of hospitality", he says there, "irreconcilably opposes the Law, in its universal singularity, to a plurality that is not only a dispersion (*the laws*) but a structured multiplicity, determined by a process of partition and differentiation: by *laws* […] *The law*, in the absolute singular, contradicts the laws in the plural, but each time it is the law *in the* law, and each time *outside the law* in the law. That's the so singular thing that we call *the laws* of hospitality. A strange plural, a plural grammar of *two different plurals at once*. One of these two plurals says the *laws* of hospitality, the conditional laws, etc. The other plural says the antinomic addition, the one that adds to the unique and singular and absolutely only great Law of hospitality, to *the law* of hospitality, to the categorical imperative of hospitality, *the* conditional *laws*. In this second case, the plural is made of One + a multiplicity, while in the first case, it was only multiplicity, distribution, differentiation. In the one case, we have $Un + n$; in the other n + n + n, etc."[93]

Indeed, anomic (*nomos a-nomos*), although before, above and outside the *laws*, the *Law of unconditional hospitality*, which commands openness to the coming of the other beyond the law, beyond the hospitality conditioned by the right to asylum, by the right to immigration, by citizenship and even by the right to universal hospitality of which Kant speaks – which is still controlled by a political or cosmopolitical law[94] – , this *law of unconditional hospitality* must nevertheless be inscribed in *the conditional laws* of the right to hospitality, which it disturbs, transgresses, inspires, and improves, otherwise it "risks remaining a pious, irresponsible desire, without form and without effectiveness"[95] while, on the other hand, the guests thus welcomed would risk looking like parasites or barbarians: "*sans papiers*"/"undocumented":[96] this singular inscription, this *ex*-cription, haunts the *laws of hospitality*, always limited and imperfect, igniting an infinite desire for its increasing perfectibility and justice – in Jacques Derrida's words, by exceeding and overturning the juridical, political and economic calculation of the laws, *the law of unconditional hospitality*, always inadequate to the laws, dictates an attitude and "gives its meaning and its practical rationality

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[93] *Cf. ibid.*, p. 73, 75, 77.

[94] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Voyous, op. cit.*, 205; *Cosmopolites…*, p. 11 ss.

[95] Derrida, J., *Cosmopolites…*, 57.

[96] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *De l'hospitalité, op. cit.*, 57.

to any concept of hospitality."[97] *Unconditional hospitality*, then, is like *the meridian* (in Celan's way[98]) of the *laws of hospitality* – *the meridian* of the laws of immigration and of asylum: "it is an absolute pole", says Derrida, "outside of which desire, concept and experience, the very thought of hospitality would have no meaning."[99]

In *De l'hospitalité* (1997), Derrida highlights and makes explicit this difficult – but necessary – distinction and this inadequacy, this insurmountable gap between the *other* and the *foreigner* (*xenos*), as well as between *unconditional* and *conditional hospitality*, while underlining, alongside the primacy and the *irreducible* excess of the former over the latter, their singular *contamination* and *perversion*, and therefore the blade of antinomy which, as far as *the question of hospitality* is concerned – the question which haunts us as well as haunting the horizon of our time! – leads Derrida to speak of *hostipitality* (of *hos-ti/pita-lity*):

> […] the difference, one of the subtle, sometimes elusive differences between the stranger and the absolute other, is that the latter may have no name nor surname; the absolute or unconditional hospitality, which I would like to offer him or her presupposes a break with hospitality in the common sense, with conditional hospitality, with the right or the pact of hospitality. In saying this, once again, we are taking into account an irreducible pervertibility. The law of hospitality […] appears as a paradoxical, pervertible or perverting law. It seems to dictate that absolute hospitality breaks with the law of hospitality as a right or duty, with the "pact" of hospitality. To put it in other words, absolute hospitality requires that I open my home, my house, and that I give not only to the stranger (with a family name, a social status of a stranger, etc.), but to the absolute other, unknown, anonymous other, and that *I give him a place*, that I let him come, that I let him arrive, and have his place in the place that I offer him, without asking him for reciprocity (entry into a pact), or even his name. The law of absolute hospitality commands to break with the hospitality of right, with the law or the justice as right. Just hospitality breaks with the hospitality of law; not that it condemns it or opposes it, and on the contrary it can put it and hold it in a ceaseless movement of progress; but it is as strangely heterogeneous to it as justice is heterogeneous to the law of which it is nevertheless so close, and in truth indissociable.[100]

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[97] Derrida, J., *Voyous, op. cit.*, 205.

[98] Celan, P., *Le Méridien*, tr. André du Bouchet (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1994).

[99] Derrida, J., "Non pas l'utopie, l'im-possible" in *Papier Machine, op. cit.*, 361.

[100] Derrida, J., in Dufourmantelle, A., Derrida, J., *De l'hospitalité, op. cit.*, 29.

By enjoining us to listen to the "voice of fine silence"[101] which, like an inexhaustible *resource* of "avenir" [future], springs from the distant confines of our civilization's eve and resounds in the interstices of its texture and its cultural manifestations, this *thought of unconditionality[102]* is the bearer of *the promise of new Lights* for the *à-venir* [future] not only of a totally other Europe and a totally other "mondialisation" and new international law to which it calls but, more broadly, of a totally other civilization. Nothing more and nothing less!

As if the dream were more hopeful and more vigilant than the vigil itself, as Derrida suggests in a dreamy discourse throughout *Fichus[103]* (2001), then the outline of Jacques Derrida's dream for Europe – for another [*tout autre*] *thought of Europe* and for *another* [*tout autre*] *Europe*: (for) a *Europe of hope[104]*, of a lucid hope and of the responsibility which, heir of the past lights and bearer of new lights for the future, could become the thinking, the acting and the radiating nucleus of the deconstruction of the ontotheological and ontotheological-political phantasms of sovereignty, and therefore of metaphysics of the national state – the fertile ground of the violence proper to the *sacrificial spirit* – thus making a decisive contribution to the future of democracy (nowadays so weakened and so reduced to a vain word) – of law and international law at the service of new international institutions for a "good living together"[105] in the immense ark that is our world, *with all the living beings*. With all the living beings – human or not – in a respectful attention to their "power" of being affected. A Europe of the social justice that, in light of this demanding and compassionate responsibility, proper to the *unconditionality of thought*, would wage a relentless battle *for life*, *for mercy, for justice* and *for peace* – a war against the indifference and the impiety of "putting to death", of "letting die" or of "giving death", for Jacques Derrida the most eminent sign of sovereignty of an onto-theological and onto-theological-legal-political nature.

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[101] "A 'voice of fine silence', if I hear well, seems to enjoin us […] to re-start again in a different way." ["Une 'voix de fin silence', si j'entends bien, semble nous enjoindre […] de re-commencer tout autrement."], Derrida, J. in Derrida, J., Roudinesco, E., *De quoi demain…, op. cit.*, p. 222.

[102] *Ibid.*, p. 200.

[103] *Cf.* Derrida, J., *Fichus, op. cit.,* 18.

[104] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Une Europe de l'espoir", *op. cit.*

[105] *Cf.* Derrida, J., "Avouer – l'impossible" in *Le dernier des Juifs, op. cit.*, 13-65.

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On the Haunting of Hospitality
Derrida and Benjamin, with Reference to Some Medieval Examples

Francesca Manzari[1]

Abstract

Marcabru noted that Jaufré Rudel calls 'inn of the afar / *alberc de lohn'* both the remote place where his beloved lady of Tripoli resides, and the *locus* where the poets situates himself: an ideal place that Giorgio Agamben calls *topos outopos*. In the N voice or difficult voice of the *trobar*, this figures the contradiction on which the troubadour lives: at once the desire for the inaccessible body of his beloved, and the desire never to reach it. This issue is addressed here as a medieval instance of Derrida's 'hostipitality', with the ungraspable as the most precious good ever hosted in the rooms or *stanze* of the poem, and it is argued that this is primarily a question of translation. As a case in point, this article presents the Magna Curia of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen as a magisterial example of the *alberc de lohn topos*, where the Emperor became his *guests' guest* in a deliberate cultural transference policy that translated Aristotle and his Muslim and Jewish commentators, thus setting in motion a process of reciprocal acclimatization. The article further argues with Walter Benjamin and Antoine Berman, that translation as hostipitality or '*auberge de loin'* inscribes itself in futurity and reaches beyond the linguistic being of man..

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[1] *Aix-Marseille University,* francesca.manzari@univ-amu.fr

What joy will come to me when I ask her, for the love of God, to welcome the host of afar [the inn of the afar]: and if it pleases her, I shall be welcomed near her: Ah what charming talks, when the lover from afar is so near as to enjoy nice goodly words![2]

Thus sang Jaufré Rudel (c. 1125–1148) in his *canso de l'amour de loin* (*Canso of Love from Afar*). Jaufré Rudel calls 'inn of the afar / *alberc de lohn*' a topos that lies at the foundation of Western poetry: the room, or garden, *afar*, *to come*, distant in space or in time, which is the place of a hospitality of a particular kind, essential to the condition of the troubadour, and of poetic creation more generally speaking. Jaufré Rudel falls in love with a lady whom he has never seen, but of whom he has heard many praises, by travelers returning from the distant lands of the Eastern Mediterranean: the Lady of Tripoli. Thus, he composes a *Canso of Love from Afar*, theorizing the symbolic place, the place of places, the place from which to think the relationship of the troubadour to the beloved lady, but most of all the place from which to think the condition that gives birth to the Grand Chant. Contrarily to a common and well-known reading of Rudel's composition that suggests that the lady is placed afar, set at a distance, the better to be sung as an ideal, a certain clue in a dedication by Marcabru (fl. 1130–1150) to Jaufré Rudel leads me to think that the *inn afar* is not only an ideal remote place where the lady of Tripoli resides, but most of all the place where the poet Jaufré Rudel ideally situates himself. In 1147, Marcabru, famous representative of the N voice of the Trobar, that is to say of the difficult voice of the Trobar, sends one of his 'verses' with the melody of its accompaniment to Jaufré Rudel beyond the sea, to Jaufré Rudel overseas, *oltra mar*[3] This is not to say that Jaufré Rudel was actually in Egypt in 1147, but much rather that his friends, foremost among them Marcabru, knew him to be in the *inn afar*, literally a place where the 'afar', the foreigner, can reside, and find shelter. An ideal place that Jaufré Rudel has imagined beyond the sea, a place that Agamben would call *topos outopos*[4], from which to compose in the condition of an ideal *hostipitality*, which alone can guarantee the event of the song.

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[2] 'Be.m parra joys quan li querray, \ Per amor Dieu, l'alberc de lonh : \ É, s'a lieys platz, alberguarai \Près de lieys, si be.m suy de lonh : \ Quan drutz lonhdas er tan vezis \ Qu'ab bels digz jauzira solatz. \ Adoncs parra.l parlamens fis \ Quan drutz lonhdas er tan vezis \ Qu'ab bels digz jauzira solatz.' Prose translation by Alfred Jeanroy : 'Quelle joie m'apparaîtra quand je lui demanderai, pour l'amour de Dieu, d'héberger l'hôte lointain [l'auberge du lointain] : et s'il lui plaît, je serai hébergé près d'elle ; ah, les charmants entretiens, quand l'amant lointain sera si voisin qu'il jouira des doux beaux propos !' Jaufré Rudel, *Les chansons*, ed. A. Jeanroy, Paris, Édouard Champion, 1915, p. 13–14. Our translation.

[3] Cf. Alfred Jeanroy, 'Introduction', in Jaufré Rudel, *Les chansons*, *op. cit.*, p. III.

[4] See Giorgio Agamben, *Stanze. La parola e il fantasma nella cultura occidentale*, Einaudi, Torino, 1977, p. 69.

The lady and the troubadour, secretly closed together in a room of the castle, or else hidden by the trees and flowers of the palace garden, find themselves in an enclave, on a territory within a territory, ruled by other laws than those that prevail in the land that surrounds them. They are held together by a single exercise of hospitality: the ordeal of the *assag*, by which the lady who receives, who hosts her visitor from afar, exchanges with him words that are substitutes for the consent to what, in any case, will not, cannot ever be granted. The troubadour lives on this contradiction; and he makes it the very motor of a desire that is both the desire for the inaccessible body of the beloved being, and the desire never to reach it; the desire that the lady be in flight, that she be the spirit of the song eternally in fugue, an absence about which poetic composition flutters. The lady's body itself remains untouched, while the troubadour's desire increases to enjoy the cruelty of his host. It is a convention, a ritual of hospitality that implies the keeping of the stranger at a distance, a hostility, an objection to there being any physical contact between host and guest, a form of *hostipitality* as a hyperbole of hospitality, as if hostility was indeed the indispensable component of successful hospitality, according to a portmanteau word that Derrida, in the third session of the seminar *Hospitalité*, on 20 December 1995, calls a 'troubling affinity between *hospes* and *hostis*'.[5] To comment on this famous topos of the Trobar, it would be possible to use Derrida's words in the seventh session, of 14 February 1996:

> It would suffice to transfer everything we have said about hospitality, it would suffice to translate it or transpose it or transcode it into the file of the great problem of the belonging [the own, or the proper in this sense], of the proper and the foreign, of the nearby and the afar, of neighborhood, of property and propriety, of intimacy and its contrary, of the inside and the outside, etc. With the possibility and the necessity of such a transfer, we are here, as always, dealing with a discursive dispositive of translation, a logic, perhaps the necessity of a computer program [*logiciel*] […] enabling us, very economically, […] to select in the text [of] what we say about hospitality (that is to say everything we say here), to

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[5] '[…] *affinité troublante entre* hospes *et* hostis', Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité* vol. I *Séminaire (1995–1996)*, Paris, Seuil, 2021, p. 88.

displace it in the computer to place it in the document or the file named 'proper', 'near', 'property', appropriation', or 'expropriation', or […] 'exappropriation'.[6]

We have begun by describing the question named *inn of the afar* in terms of what is 'belonging', 'nearby', 'appropriate' to the poetic: the ungraspable as the most precious good that can ever be kept in the rooms, the *stanze*, of a poem; the appropriation, each and every time unique, of a fugue movement, the appropriation, by the form of the poem, of the expropriation of its object. All these elements are the survival of poetry, but Derrida adds that it is also a question of translation. Right at the beginning of the first session, precisely at the point where, reading Kant, Derrida regrets that François Poirier and Françoise Proust, the French translators of *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (*Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf*), have not rendered the two words used by Kant to speak of hospitality: *Hospitalität*, and its Germanic equivalent *Wirtbarkeit*, Derrida says: 'We shall often speak again of translation and hospitality: on the whole it is the same problem'.[7]

The history of the Middle Ages is teeming with examples of analogous pairings between hospitality and translation. For instance, these are the terms in which one can describe the multilingual Babel of the *Magna Curia* of Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1194–1250). Frederick II created his court as a peculiar place of hospitality in which some of the most illustrious savants of his time found shelter and protection, dedicating themselves to the study and the translation of the texts of Greek antiquity, paying attention more particularly to the translation into Latin and Hebrew of the Arabic versions of the texts of Aristotle. Singular stellar friendships were struck in the Kingdom of Sicily, like the ones between Jacob Anatoli (1194–1256), Michael Scot (1175 – c. 1232), Ibn Sab'in (12216–1271), or Theodor of Antioch (1155–1246). These savants of high renown were invited and welcomed to the court of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. Their company contributed, on the one hand, to the reputation of Frederick II as *Stupor Mundi* and, on the other hand, to making the Magna Curia the 'true medieval center of plurilingualism'.[8]

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[6] '*Il suffirait de transférer tout ce que nous disons au titre de l'hospitalité, il suffirait de le traduire ou transposer ou transcoder dans le dossier du grand problème du propre, du propre et de l'étranger, du proche et du lointain, du voisinage, de la propriété et de la propreté, de l'intimité et de son contraire, du dedans et du dehors, etc. Avec la possibilité et la nécessité d'un tel transfert, nous sommes là, comme toujours, devant un dispositif discursif de traduction, devant une logique, voire devant la nécessité d'un logiciel […] permettant, de façon très économique, […] de sélectionner dans le texte [de] ce que nous disons de l'hospitalité (c'est-à-dire tout ce que nous disons ici), de le déplacer dans l'ordinateur pour le placer dans le document ou le dossier portant le titre de "propre" ou "proche" ou "propriété", "appropriation" ou "expropriation" ou […] "exappropriation".' Ibid.*, p. 244. Our translation.*

[7] '*Nous reparlerons souvent de traduction et d'hospitalité : c'est au fond le même problème'. Ibid.*, p. 21. Our translation.

[8] Patrizia Spallino, 'Le langage philosophique de l'empereur Frédéric II dans *Les Questions siciliennes* de Ibn Sab'in et *L'Aiguillon des disciples* de Ja'Aqov Anatoli', in *Le Plurilinguisme au Moyen Âge. De Babel à la langue une, Orient-Occident*, ed. C. Kappler and S. Thiolier-Méjean, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2009, p. 133-46, p. 137.

The befriending of Michael Scott and Jacob Anatoli, among others, is consistent with Frederick II's political project, which was already Roger II's, who founded the kingdom of Sicily (in 1130),[9] and which would also be endorsed by subsequent monarchs: the point was to give shape to the dream of a strong state, independent from the power of the Church, a state that chose its international alliances independently from the desiderata of the papacy:

> The Catholic Church could absolutely not tolerate this strategy, because of the repercussions that it would imply in the relations with other cultures (the Greco-Byzantine, the Arabo-Islamic, and the Jewish cultures, in relation to which the Latin Roman Church, especially after the schism of the Eastern Church in 1054, saw in the Romanorum rex and its Imperum the only true and strenuous defender of the values of western Christianity.[10]

When Aristotle arrived in the Latin West through the commentaries of Averroes, this triggered a cultural renewal, a tendency to the moderation of religious communities, a new way of conceiving politics, the government of cities and individuals.[11] The Kingdom of Sicily, and in particular the University of Naples, founded by Emperor Frederic II in 1224, were the center from which Aristotle's thinking radiated out into the Latin Christian world, along with other important centers like Toledo, Provence, Montpellier, Catalonia, Salamanca, and Seville. The Kingdom of Sicily became a cultural workshop where Aristotle was translated and interpreted. It was through the prism of Aristotelian philosophy that the Sicilian studies of mathematics, geometry, physics, natural sciences, and medicine were conceived. Frederick II's family had always demonstrated a particular interest in the practice of translation, so much so that it can be said that Frederick II's intellectual activities began with translation. This was a Norman heritage: King William I of Sicily (1120–1166), 'William the Bad', Frederick II's uncle and the son and successor of Roger II , already considered translation a political activity.

In the 13th century, the history of the Sicilian court, thanks to the legendary hospitality of the Emperor, became a history of politics and translation. To the successive popes who continually castigated Frederick and demanded his submission, threatening excommunication and indeed excommunicating him twice, until

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[9] Roger II was the father of Constance de Hauteville, Queen of Sicily, Holy Roman Empress and Queen of the Romans as the consort of Emperor Henry VI, and mother of Emperor Frederick II.

[10] Alessandro Musco, 'Stupor Mundi: Cultures and Differences in Sicily and the Mediterranean World', in Le plurilinguisme au Moyen Âge, op. cit., p. 147-156, p. 148–149.

[11] See Musco, ibid. p. 150.

Innocent IV finally deposed him in 1245, Frederick replied by building an *Inn of the Afar*. Whereas the static, immovable strength of the papacy relied on erasure and exclusion, Frederick II's power based itself on the hosting of strangers in the ceaseless mobility of his own court as a constantly shifting political center of the Holy Roman Empire. The Emperor aimed to bypass the political and ideological fortifications of the Roman Catholic Church and, to counteract the motionless model of its temporal power, conceived the idea of a state founded on Averroes' political ideal, according to which the power of the monarch is grounded in culture and knowledge. In the philosophy of Averroes, the sovereign is 'a sure guide, the sacred symbol of a new, rational society'[12] in which science is not only at the service of the state, but founds the dispositive of power. Knowledge was here both centripetal and centrifugal. The power organism, or state apparatus, called the scientists and philosophers of its time to its support, and in its turn constituted the radiating center from which science and knowledge emanated. Frederick II was exemplary in that he received the gift of hospitality so that it became a gift for others in return. When he gave by welcoming, it was not to impose on foreigners the conditions of his hospitality. He became the guest of his guests, and was himself accommodated in return in the immense knowledge that they brought along with them, so that, by his eminently hospitable practice, Frederick II *became his guests' guest*, a sublime guest, who was both a host, and a guest in his own home. That was because his home, and the economy of his household, let themselves be fashioned by the arriving stranger and readily shed the idiomatic features that would initially have been at the origin of the proper and the improper, of the aboriginal and the foreign.

In his epoch-making biography of Frederick II, Ernst Kantorowicz considered that 'From the intellectual point of view Frederick's new secular State was a triumph of that lay culture which, for the last century, had been spreading in wider and wider circles. This was the first time that profane learning had been concentrated and organized'.[13] And this was achieved by a deliberate practice of hospitality as a means of intellectual, and therefore ideological and political emancipation. The Emperor welcomed groundbreaking thinkers, writers, and above all translators of his time, not merely offering them political asylum, but allowing their teachings to have a strong influence on him and on the ideas that presided over the political organization of his kingdom and of the Empire, and from there to acquire worldwide resonance. One telling example in this respect was Frederick's invitation of Jacob

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[12] *Ibid.,* p. 150.

[13] Ernst Kantorowicz, *Frederick II (1194–1250)*, trad. E. O. Lorimer, New York, Frederick Ungar, 1931, p. 293.

Anatoli, very probably at the request of his court astrologer Michael Scot (c. 1175 - c. 1236), one of the most renowned intellectuals of the time, trained in Oxford and Paris, and having studied in Toledo and Bologna. The Scottish philosopher was a translator from the Arabic of certain texts of Aristotle, and of the comments of the Greek philosopher by Averroes, an accomplishment that he shared with the Provençal Jacob Anatoli (c. 1194–1256) who repeatedly mentioned Michael Scot as one of his two principal models.

Anatoli's other declared master was his father-in-law Samuel Ibn Tibbon (c.1150-c.1230), who had acquired worldwide fame as a translator of Maimonides's *Guide for the Perplexed* into Hebrew. Maimonides (Moses ben Maimom, 1138–1204) or Ramdam, born in Cordoba in Muslim Spain like Averroes (Ibn Rushd 1126–1198), was the other great assimilator of Aristotelian philosophy in the 12th century, acclimatizing it to Judaism, very much as Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) would acculturate it to Christianity in the 13th century. Maimodines's works elicited some resistance in Andalusia and in Provence, where the translations and teachings of the Tibbon family triggered the great Maimonidean controversy that divided the Provençal Jewish community in the 1230s. These events, together with his admiration for Michael Scot, led Jacob Anatoli to accept Frederick II's invitation to join his court as a physician and a translator.[14]

This was in 1231, the year of the *Constitutions of Melfi* (*Liber augustalis*) by which the Emperor, having just reconquered his South-Italian land that the pope had invaded during his absence on the Sixth Crusade, sought to endow his Kingdom of Sicily with a body of rational secular laws. Jacob Anatoli founded a Maimonidean school in Naples, where Frederick II had founded a new University with the political aim of training lay civil servants, judges, notaries, and other lawyers to implement the laws based on the assimilation of the new philosophical ideas.

In addition to the geopolitical issue created by the fact that Frederick II was both King of Sicily and Holy Roman Emperor, thus achieving the territorial union of Germany and Italy that the papacy found utterly intolerable, his open-mindedness to rationalistic philosophical ideas was added to the list of accusations that led to his being twice excommunicated and finally deposed. Chief among the many reasons why Frederick II was Antichrist to the Guelphs and Stupor Mundi to

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[14] See Luciana Pepi, 'Jacob Anatoli', in *Enciclopedia federiciana*, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana (Istituto Treccani), 2005, https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/jacob-anatoli_%28Federiciana%29/; Luciana Pepi, 'Jaqov Anatoli tra tradizione ed innovazione', in *Traduzioni e Tradizioni: Il pensiero medievale nell'incontro tra le culture mediterranee (Siracusa, 26–29 settembre 2011)*, eds. A. Musco et G. Musotto, Palermo, Officina di studi medievali, 2014, ('Schede medievali', 52), p. 333-348 ; H. G. Enelow, 'Anatolio, Jacob Ben Abba Mari Ben Simon (Simeon, sometimes corrupted into Abtalion)', in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*, ed. I. Singer et al., vol. 1, New York, Funk & Wagnalls, 1901, p. 562–64.

the Ghibellines were the social and political implementations of his philosophical convictions, which included the accommodation and the protection of non-Christian communities. Thus, on the occasion of an antisemitic pogrom in Fulda (Hesse), in 1236 the Emperor commanded an inquiry that demonstrated the irrational falsehood of the accusations of ritual child murder waged against the Jews, then seized the opportunity to grant a privilege to German Jews, later extended to all, a *Privilegium et sententia in favorem iudaeorum*[15] that made them 'servants of his household' ('*servi camere nostre*'): typically a gesture of hospitality that amounted to considering the Jews, wherever they were, technically under the protective roof of the sovereign's house. The 1236 privilege in favor of the Jews came to confirm certain legal dispositions of the 1231 *Constitutions of Melfi*, by which 'Jews and Saracens are to be permitted to initiate lawsuits, for "we do not wish them to be persecuted in their innocence simply because they are Jews or Saracens".'[16]

The Saracens, that is to say the Muslims who had colonized the West and South regions of the island of Sicily had been vanquished by several military campaigns in the 1220s, and the remnant populations had been transported, not to some distant outpost, but on the contrary inland, to Lucera, a city in Apulia some twenty kilometers to the North-West of Foggia, where Frederick had elected to set up his principal residence, strategically closer than Palermo and Naples to his realm's northern border with the Papal States. To the scandal of the papacy, these Muslims were allowed to practice their religion on Christian land, and under the protection of the Holy Roman Emperor himself. However, these industrious Saracens paid heavy taxes to their master, and even more significantly they formed an army corps of footmen and bowmen who, impervious to Christian disputes between Guelphs and Ghibellines, played an important part in the struggle of the Emperor against the Pope.[17] Whereas Frederick's hosting of the Saracens presented an obvious military

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[15] '*Hinc est itaque quod presentis scripti serie noverit presens etas et successiva posteritas, quod universi Alemannie servi camere nostre nostre celsitudini supplicarunt, quatenus privilegium divi augusti avi nostri Friderici felicis memorie indultum Wormaciensibus Iudeis et consodalibus eorum dignaremur de nostra gracia universis Iudeis Alemannie confirmare. […] Nos itaque indempnitati et quieto statui Iudeorum Alemannie providentes, omnibus Iudeis ad cameram nostram immediate spectantibus hanc specialem graciam duximus faciendam, videlicet quod imitantes et inherentes statutis predicti avi nostri privilegium suprascriptum et ea que continentur in eo, quemadmodum divus augustus avus noster Wormaciensibus Iudeis et consodalibus eorum concessit liberaliter et indulsit, eis de innata clemencia confirmamus. […] quicunque se Iudeis servis nostris favorabiles et benivolos exhibuerint, nobis deferre non dubitent , ceteris, qui contra presentis confirmacionis et absolucionis nostre paginam venire presumpserint, offensam nostre celsitudinis incursuris.*' Fredericus II, 'Privilegium et sententia in favorem iudaeorun. 1236. iul.', in *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum [1198–1272]*, II, Hannoverae, Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1896, (*Monumenta Germaniae historica*, Legum sectio IV), p. 274-276, § 204, p. 274-275.

[16] '*Iudeis autem et Saracenis etiam et pro eis aliis, officialibus scilicet, in prescriptis casibus imponendi defensas concedimus facultatem, quos non propterea, quia Iudei vel Saraceni sunt, arceri volumus innocentes.*' *Die Konstitutionen Friedrichs II. für das Königreich Sizilien.*, (*Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*, Tomus II Supplementum), ed. Wolfgang Stürner, Hannover, Hahnshe Buchhandlung, 1996, § I.18, p. 170-171.

[17] See Wolfgang Stürner, *Friedrich II. Teil 2: Der Kaiser 1220–1250*, vol. 1, Darmstadt, Primus, 2000, p. 73 etc.

interest, in the case of the Jews his imperial hospitality was repaid by economic advantages, insofar as he allowed Jewish bankers to lend money for interest. These could be viewed as exchanges of services profitable on both sides in the good management of the *oikos*. As an instance of technology transference, the Jews of the Tunisian Djerba were invited to migrate to South Italy to develop the production of silk under royal protection.

Frederick II's hospitality makes the Sicilian court and more generally the Kingdom of Sicily under his reign a multifarious place, in constant transformation, forever and infinitely foreign, in which hospitality, being practiced in all directions, blurred the distinctive features of hosts and guest, of the welcoming and the welcomed, inverting them, and reshuffling them according to the needs of the scientific and political community, and more generally those of the society as a whole. In a text entitled *Frédéric II et l'Islam*, Henri Bresc writes that 'a high and urgent feeling of his duty towards science places [Frederick II] on a par with the Muslim sovereigns of his time and of the past, who were themselves the servants of *hikma*, or wisdom'.[18] Thus, the historical exemplum of the court of Frederick II shows that it is possible to adhere to Derrida's argument in the second session of the seminar on *Hospitality*, when he says:

> Benveniste and those who easily follow him […], others, or ourselves, some ones among us or within us, inhabit a world, a culture, a language, a society in which identity, the self, ipseity, the selfness of the self are not, in any case must not, should not depend on, be derived from, mastery or power. [One must be able to be oneself without this depending on a power, neither one's own nor another's].[19]

In the case of Frederick II, the being oneself comes less from the power conferred upon him by his titles than from a certain *relationship with himself*, which makes him discover an ipseity that is constantly becoming other. This discovery is rendered possible by the translating activity, which is also at work in hospitality as a condition of existence, and which constantly submits the Emperor to the ordeal of dialogue with the other. Thus, the self is an always *other* counterpart, *a constantly other*

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[18] '[…] *un sentiment élevé et urgent de son devoir envers la science rapproche [Frédéric II] des souverains musulmans de son époque et du passé, eux-mêmes serviteurs de la* hikma*, de la sagesse*'. Henri Bresc, 'Frédéric II et l'Islam', in *Frédéric II (1194–1250 et l'héritage normand de Sicile*, ed. A.-M. Flambard Hèricher, Caen, Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2001, p. 79-92, OpenEdition Books 2017 : https://books.openedition.org/puc/10155. Our translation.

[19] '*Benveniste et ceux qui le suivraient facilement […], d'autres ou nous-mêmes, certains parmi nous ou en nous, habitent un monde, une culture, un langage, une société dans lesquels l'identité, le soi-même, l'ipséité, la mêmeté du soi-même ne sont pas, en tout cas ne doivent pas, ne devraient pas dépendre de, être dérivés de la maîtrise ou du pouvoir. [On doit pouvoir être soi-même sans que cela dépende d'un pouvoir, ni du sien ni d'un autre]*'. Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité*, *op. cit.*, p. 68. Our translation.

vis-à-vis, rendered possible by the exercise of hospitality. The self then becomes the place from which it is possible to entertain a reflection on the reciprocal relationship of the same and the other. Without ever acting as a middle term, or go-between, the self comes to enlighten the relationship between the subjects and their others. In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl describes the 'constitution of oneself', *Selbsterfahrung*, as 'self-explication', *Selbstauslegung*, where the ego constitutes itself *qua alter ego*:

> In this intentionality, the new sense of being constitutes itself, which surpasses the boundaries of my monadic ego in my self-specificity, and an ego constitutes itself not as *I-self* [*nicht als Ich-selbst*], but insofar as it *reflects itself* in my proper I [*in meinem eigenen Ich*], my monad. But the second self is not purely and simply given us itself as proper, on the contrary it is constituted as alter ego, so that I am myself in my specificity the ego pointed out as a moment by this expression of alter ego.[20]

The hermeneutic of the self, such as Ricœur practices it, finds its place between the apology of the *cogito* and its destitution.[21] From the moment when the 'cogito posits itself' (*se pose*) to the moment when it 'breaks' (*se brise*) under the assaults of Nietzsche, what we see is the emergence of a Self defined by the Other. If for Rimbaud 'I is another', ('*je est un autre*') for Ricœur 'oneself is another' ('*soi est un autre*'). The question of the link between oneself and the Other remains, for the philosopher, quite as obvious and basic as the question of sameness and otherness, identity and alterity. Unlike the dialectic relationship between the same and the Other, which would be substantially disjunctive, the relationship between ipseity and alterity is to be found elsewhere than in opposition. Alterity does not play the part of a protector against solipsistic drifts, since alterity is already other *in se*. What is at home in itself can at each and every moment be both itself and other.

That is the reason why Derrida convokes another element, besides the one of the same and the other, to deal with the problem that results from the encounter of these two instances. He brings to contribution the figure of the *Other* in a textualizing elsewhere. He convokes the translating activity as a possibility of deterritorialization of the problems linked to the question of alterity. To put it with Walter Benjamin:

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[20] "*In dieser ausgezeichneten Intentionalität konstituiert sich der neue Seinssinn, der mein monadisches ego in seiner Selbsteigenheit überschreitet, und es konstituiert sich ein ego nicht als Ich-selbst, sondern als sich in meinem eigenen Ich, meiner Monade spiegelndes. Aber das zweite ego ist nicht schlechthin da und eigentlich selbst gegeben, sondern es ist als alter ego konstituiert, wobei das durch diesen Ausdruck alter ego als Moment angedeutete ego Ich-selbst in meiner Eigenheit bin*". Edmund Husserl, *Husserliana gesammelte Werke 1 Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, ed. Herman L. van Breda, 2. Aufl., Photomechan. Nachdr, The Hague [u. a.], Nijhoff, 1991, p. 125. Our translation.

[21] Paul Ricœur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Paris, Seuil, 1990, p. 15.

'some concepts of relation keep their good, even perhaps their best signification if they are not immediately related exclusively to man'.[22]

The same unicity, the same junction, the same relation of analogy between hospitality and translation is also noticed by Antoine Berman, the friend whom Derrida pays homage to several times, and who in 1985 had devoted to translation a study entitled 'La traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain' – 'Translation and the Letter or the Inn of the Afar'.[23] Immediately, Berman writes that this is a reference to Jaufré Rudel, to whom he owes the intervention of one of the most striking formulae ever used to speak of the translating space: 'the inn of the afar'. Derrida knew the essay very well, for he was already reading the proofs of the manuscript in 1991, before it was published in book form by Éditions du Seuil in 1999. Antoine Berman was a former student of Henri Meschonnic, with whom he had subsequently fallen out, and it was with him that, from 1985 on (the year of the first version of Berman's essay), Derrida reflected on the movement of translation. In the same year 1985, Derrida published 'Des Tours de Babel' in French and in English translation, although a first published version of the text in Italian translation had already been issued in 1982.[24] It is typical of Derrida that an Italian translation of the text was issued years before the publication of the original, which itself was published as an appendix to its English translation. Incidentally, Berman's migration from Meschonnic to Derrida is closely linked to an intellectual debate between the two philosophers, and respectively between what we could call the stylistic and the hermeneutic schools that animate the new integration of translation into French philosophical studies in the first half of the 1980s.

In 1988, at the *Assises de Traduction Littéraire en Arles*, Derrida gave a conference entitled 'What Is a "Relevant" Translation?' ('Qu'est-ce qu'une traduction "relevante"?'),[25] excerpted from the second session of the seminar that followed the

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[22] '*[Ihm gegenüber ist darauf hinzuweisen, daß] gewisse Relationsbegriffe ihren guten, ja vielleicht besten Sinn behalten, wenn sie nicht von vorne herein ausschließlich auf den Menschen bezogen werden*'. Walter Benjamin, 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. II.4, *Kleine Prosa, Baudelaire-Übertragungen*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp (Suhrkamp-Taschenbuch Wissenschaft n° 934), 2006, p. 9-21, p. 10. Our translation.

[23] Antoine Berman, 'La traduction et la lettre ou l'auberge du lointain', in *Les tours de Babel*, Mauvezin, Trans-Europ-Repress (T. E. R.), 1985, p. 32–150 ; rep.: Antoine Berman, *La traduction et la lettre ou l'Auberge du lointain*, Paris, Seuil (L'ordre philosophique), 1999.

[24] Jacques Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', 1st published version: in Italian, tr. Stefano Rosso, *aut-aut*, vol. 189–190 "Paesaggi benjaminiani", maggio-agosto 1982, https://autaut.ilsaggiatore.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/189–190.pdf, p. 67-97. Jacques Derrida, 'Des Tours de Babel', in *Difference in Translation*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, 1st published French version p. 209–248, English version tr. Joseph F. Graham p. 165–207.

[25] Jacques Derrida, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une traduction "relevante" ?', in *Quinzièmes Assises de la traduction littéraire (Arles 1998)*, Arles, Actes Sud, 1999, p. 21-48. Jacques Derrida, 'What Is a "Relevant" Translation?', tr. Lawrence Venuti, *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 27 / 2, The University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 174-200.

one on *Hospitality*, that is to say the 1997–1998 seminar *Le parjure et le pardon*.[26] In his conclusion to the first session of the *Hospitality* seminar, on 15 November 1995, Derrida presents the temporal stakes of hospitality in terms of opening and futurity:

> When we say that 'we do not yet know what hospitality is', we also imply that we do not yet know who and what is to come, nor any more what *is called* hospitality, because first and foremost hospitality *is called*, even if this call does not embody itself in human language[27.]

To which Derrida adds orally, augmenting and overreaching the text he had written for the occasion:

> Neither in a language that might be, to use traditional categories, divine or animal, as long as, stupidly, let us say massively, as long as one determines hospitality as a human thing, one forbids oneself to speak of hospitality concerning God, animals or plants, already, one can be sure that there is something of hospitality that one does not yet manage to think,[28]

The lines that come next are devoted to Heidegger's text *What Is Called Thinking*[29] (1951–1952), which is a text known, in particular, to contain the thinking Heidegger developed about the question of translation from the Greek to the German, and notably when the translator is Hölderlin. But Derrida also cites an autobiographical passage of Heidegger's text in which the philosopher establishes a rapprochement between thinking and the place of thought when it is a mountain top: 'suddenly to lose oneself in the fog', 'not to know what it means to be in a high mountain'.

> In uncertain weather, someone, who may even be alone, leaves a mountain lodge (*Jemand verläßt bei unsicherem Wetter und gar noch allein eine Berghütte zu einer Gipfelbesteigung*) to climb onto a mountaintop. He soon gets lost in the suddenly fallen fog. This man has no idea of what it means (*es heißt*) to be in high mountains.

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[26] Jacques Derrida, *Le parjure et le pardon*, vol. 1, Séminaire 1997–1998, eds. G. Michaud et N. Cotton, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 'Bibliothèque Derrida', 2019, p. 81 sq.

[27] '*Quand nous disons que "nous ne savons pas encore ce que c'est que l'hospitalité", nous sous-entendons aussi que nous ne savons pas encore qui et ce qui va venir, ni davantage ce qui* s'appelle *dans l'hospitalité, à savoir que l'hospitalité, d'abord ça* s'appelle, *même si cet appel ne prend pas corps dans du langage humain.*' Jacques Derrida, *Hospitalité, op. cit.*, p. 38. Our translation.

[28] '*Ni dans un langage éventuellement, pour se servir de catégories traditionnelles, divin ou animal dès lors que, bêtement, disons massivement, dès lors qu'on détermine l'hospitalité comme chose humaine, on s'interdit de parler de l'hospitalité à propos de Dieu, de l'animal ou des plantes déjà, on peut se dire qu'il y a quelque chose de l'hospitalité qu'on ne pense pas encore*'. *Ibid.* p. 48. Our translation. Et cf. p. 22, 184–185.

[29] '[…] *un célèbre texte de Heidegger* Was heißt Denken? *(1951–1952), trad. Granel*, Qu'appelle-t-on penser ?*, PUF, 1959)*'. Derrida, *Hospitalité, op. cit.*, p. 39. Cf. Martin Heidegger, *Was heißt denken ?* Tübingen, Max Niemeyer, 1954 ; *Qu'appelle-t-on penser?*, tr. Gérard Granel, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1973; *What is Called Thinking?*, tr. J. Glenn Gray, New York, Harper & Row, 1968.

He has no idea of what it takes, of the know-how one must have, and of the skills one must master for that.[30]

Between hospitality concerning God, the well-known reference to *What Is Called Thinking* for theoreticians of translation, and the image of the mountain top, what is being deployed in the first session of the seminar is the ensemble of references that inhabit Derrida's theory of translating. First of all, the reference to Benjamin who, in *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers,*[31] the celebrated preface to the German translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*, writes that it would be possible to 'speak of an unforgettable life or moment, even if all men had forgotten them'.

> So one could speak of an unforgettable life or moment even if all men had forgotten them. For if the essence of this life or of this moment demanded that they should not be forgotten, this predicate would contain nothing false, but only a demand to which men cannot reply, and at the same time no doubt the reference to a domain in which this demand would find a response: the memory of God. One should better envisage the translatability of the works of language, even if they were untranslatable for men.[32]

This is a passage that, in *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers*, comes soon after the question raised by Benjamin of the concept of translation. Not to refer it immediately to man leads the philosopher to conceive, as Derrida does for hospitality, of a translation as an apodictic call coming from the memory of God. And just as Derrida asserts that plants and animals would have much to teach us concerning hospitality, Benjamin writes, in his often-quoted letter to Scholem, published under the title *Über Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen* (*On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*). In this letter, Benjamin writes that 'There is no event or thing in either

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[30] '*Par un temps incertain, quelqu'un, qui est peut-être même seul, quitte un chalet de montagne (*Jemand verläßt bei unsicherem Wetter und gar noch allein eine Berghütte zu einer Gipfelbesteigung*) pour gravir un sommet. Il s'égare bientôt dans le brouillard qui tombe soudainement. Cet homme n'a aucune idée de ce que cela veut dire (*es heißt*) que d'être en haute montagne. Il n'a aucune idée de ce que cela exige, de ce qu'il faut savoir faire et de ce qu'il faut dominer pour cela*'. Derrida, *Hospitalité, op. cit.*, p.41-42; et cf. Martin Heidegger, 'Was heisst Denken?' [1954], *Gesamtausgabe. I. Abteilung, Veröffentlichte Schriften 1910–1976*, ed. P.-L. Coriando, Frankfurt am Main, Vittorio Klostermann, 2002, vol. 8, p. 128.

[31] Walter Benjamin, 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers', in *Charles Baudelaire, Tableaux Parisiens*, Heidelberg, Richard Weissbach, 1923, p. VI-XVII, et in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. II.4, *op. cit.*, p. 9-21.

[32] '*So dürfte von einem unvergeßlichen Leben oder Augenblick gesprochen werden, auch wenn alle Menschen sie vergessen hätten. Wenn nämlich deren Wesen es forderte, nicht vergessen zu werden, so würde jenes Prädikat nichts Falsches, sondern nur eine Forderung, der Menschen nicht entsprechen, und zugleich auch wohl den Ver¬ weis auf einen Bereich enthalten, in dem ihr entsprochen wäre: auf ein Gedenken Gottes.*' Benjamin, *Die Aufgabe des Übersetzer, op. cit.*, p. 10. Our translation.

animate or inanimate nature that does not in some way partake of language, for it is in the nature of each one to communicate its mental contents'.[33]

> The linguistic being of things is their language; this proposition, applied to man, means: the linguistic being of man is his language. Which signifies: man communicates his own mental being *in* his language. However, the language of man speaks in words. Man therefore communicates his own mental being (insofar as it is communicable) by *naming* all other things. But do we know any other languages that *name* things? It should not be· accepted that we know of no languages other than that of man, for this is untrue. We only know of no naming language other than that of man; to identify naming language with language as such is to rob linguistic theory of its deepest insights. – *It is therefore the linguistic being of man to name things.* Why name them? To whom does man communicate himself? – But is this question, as applied to man, different when applied to other communications (languages)? To whom does the lamp communicate itself? The mountain? The fox? – But here the answer is: to man. This is not anthropomorphism. The truth of this answer is shown in human knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] and perhaps also in art. Furthermore, if the lamp and the mountain and the fox did not communicate themselves to man, how should he be able to name them?[34]

And this language is also a *call for* translation, it *calls for* translation, it *calls to* translation, just as Derrida would say that 'it calls for hospitality'. This calling, like all vocations, is always unfolding in a future, because, as Benjamin says, the survival of linguistic and spiritual essences is a call for translation, and this call is in itself an accomplishment always to come. But this task of hospitality, the task of 'receiving the unspoken nameless language of things' into the 'naming language' of man,

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[33] Walter Benjamin, 'On Language as Such and on the Language of Man', in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1 (1913–1926), eds. M. P. Bullock & M. W. Jennings, Cambridge, Mass, Belknap Press, 1996, p. 62-74, p. 62. '*Es gibt kein Geschehen oder Ding weder in der belebten noch in der unbelebten Natur, das nicht in gewisser Weise an der Sprache teilhätte, denn es ist jedem wesentlich, seinen geistigen Inhalt mitzuteilen.*' Walter Benjamin, 'Über Sprache überhaupt und über die Sprache des Menschen', in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. II.1, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1991, p. 140-158, p. 140–141.

[34] Benjamin, 'On Language as Such …', *op. cit*. p. 64. '*Das sprachliche Wesen der Dinge ist ihre Sprache; dieser Satz auf den Menschen angewandt besagt: Das sprachliche Wesen des Menschen ist seine Sprache. Das heißt: Der Mensch teilt sein eignes geistiges Wesen* in *seiner Sprache mit. Die Sprache des Menschen spricht aber in Worten. Der Mensch teilt also sein eignes geistiges Wesen (sofern es mitteilbar ist) mit, indem er alle anderen Dinge* benennt. *Kennen wir aber noch andere Sprachen, welche die Dinge benennen? Man wende nicht ein, wir kennten keine Sprache außer der des Menschen, das ist unwahr. Nur keine* benennende *Sprache kennen wir außer der menschlichen; mit einer Identifizierung von benennender Sprache mit Sprache überhaupt beraubt sich die Sprachtheorie der tiefsten Einsichten.* - Das sprachliche Wesen des Menschen ist also, daß er die Dinge benennt. *Wozu benennt? Wem teilt der Mensch sich mit? - Aber ist diese Frage beim Menschen eine andere als bei anderen Mitteilungen (Sprachen)? Wem teilt die Lampe sich mit? Das Gebirge? Der Fuchs? - Hier aber lautet die Antwort: dem Menschen. Das ist kein Anthropomorphismus. Die Wahrheit dieser Antwort erweist sich in der Erkenntnis und vielleicht auch in der Kunst. Zudem: wenn Lampe und Gebirge und der Fuchs sich dem Menschen nicht mitteilen würden, wie sollte er sie dann benennen?*' Benjamin, 'Über Sprache überhaupt…', *op. cit*. p. 143.

the endless and always recommenced task of the translator is 'the task that God expressly assigns to man himself: that of naming things', and, says Benjamin, 'The objectivity of this translation is, however, guaranteed by God'.

> The translation of the language of things into that of man is not only a translation of the mute into the sonic; it is also the translation of the nameless into name. It is therefore the translation of an imperfect language into a more perfect one, and cannot but add something to it, namely knowledge. The objectivity of this translation is, however, guaranteed by God. For God created things; the creative word in them is the germ of the cognizing name, just as God, too, finally named each thing after it was created. But obviously this naming is only an expression of the identity of the creative word and the cognizing name in God, not the prior solution of the task that God expressly assigns to man himself: that of naming things. In receiving the nameless unspoken language of things and converting it by name into sounds, man performs this task.[35]

As for the image of the mountain top, it is indeed in 'What Is a "Relevant" Translation?' that Derrida describes translation as an experience of the sublime. Translation is not equivalence, translation is *relevance*, survival of the original. This is once again a place, a locus, the place of an image of the mountain top that enables us to conceive of one of the possibilities to speak of *hospitality as translation*. One could approach the issue in terms of survival, with all the Hegelian implications that we have learned to associate with survival as *Aufhebung* on reading *La vie la mort*. Hospitality and translation are a matter of survival, because it is impossible to separate them from the *relevance*, the *relieving*, the *relief*, which always makes us inscribe them in a futurity, a '*to-come*', and a '*can-be*' that is not exclusively linked to the definition of the human, but that thanks to an endeavor of relevance, of *Aufhebung*, would reassure us as to the indissoluble union of *physis* and *logos*.

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[35] Benjamin, 'On Language as Such …', *op. cit.* p. 70. '*Die Übersetzung der Sprache der Dinge in die des Menschen ist nicht nur Übersetzung des Stummen in das Lauthafte, sie ist die Übersetzung des Namenlosen in den Namen. Das ist also die Übersetzung einer unvollkommenen Sprache in eine vollkommenere, sie kann nicht anders als etwas dazu tun, nämlich die Erkenntnis. Die Objektivität dieser Übersetzung ist aber in Gott verbürgt. Denn Gott hat die Dinge geschaffen, das schaffende Wort in ihnen ist der Keim des erkennenden Namens, wie Gott auch am Ende jedes Ding benannte, nachdem es geschaffen war. Aber offenbar ist diese Benennung nur der Ausdruck der Identität des schaffenden Wortes und des erkennenden Namens in Gott, nicht die vorhergenommene Lösung jener Aufgabe, die Gott ausdrücklich dem Menschen selbst zuschreibt: nämlich die Dinge zu benennen. Indem er die stumme namenlose Sprache der Dinge empfängt und sie in den Namen in Lauten überträgt, löst der Mensch diese Aufgabe.*' Benjamin, 'Über Sprache überhaupt…', *op. cit.* p. 151.

A Poetic Revolution of the Political
Derrida's Reading of Celan's "Meridian" in *The Beast and the Sovereign*

János Barcsák[1]

Abstract

In this paper I attempt to give a reading of Jacques Derrida's second extended interpretation of Paul Celan's "Meridian." This second interpretation can be found in Derrida's "seminar," *The Beast and the Sovereign*, and differs from the first – which appeared in *Shibboleth: For Paul Celan* – in that it is placed in the broader context of the seminar: the deconstruction of sovereignty. In this context Celan's "Meridian" acquires a special status because Derrida can identify in it a "step," an act of freedom, a way, which can perhaps take us beyond all sovereignty by bringing about what Derrida calls "a poetic revolution of the political." In my reading of Derrida's reading of Celan I try to spell out the "structure" of this step as Derrida conceives it. I argue that it is ultimately in the difference between two poetic gestures, two equally necessary but still distinct acts, that the poetic revolution of the political and thus the step beyond all sovereignty becomes perhaps possible.

Keywords

Jacques Derrida, Paul Celan, sovereignty, The Meridian, poetry

1. The Implacable Contradiction of a Double Bind

One of the most persistent themes in Jacques Derrida's "seminar," *The Beast and the Sovereign* (a lecture series he taught at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, in 2001–2003) (2009) is no doubt the deconstruction of sovereignty.[2] He formulates this theme first in terms of politics, as the task of the deconstruction of the sovereignty of the nation state. As he himself explains,

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[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, barcsak.janos@btk.ppke.hu

[2] Derrida's own summary of what his seminar is about is reprinted in the editorial note to the published text (2009, xiii–xiv).

what I am seeking, elsewhere but in particular in this seminar, is a prudent deconstruction of this logic [that of Carl Schmitt's political philosophy (Schmitt 1996 (2007))] and of the dominant, classical concept of nation-state sovereignty (which is Schmitt's reference), without ending up with a depoliticization, a neutralization of the political (*Entpolitisierung*), but with another politicization, a repoliticization that does not fall into the same ruts of "dishonest fiction" [that Schmitt criticizes] … (2009, 75).

The deconstruction of sovereignty, however, involves more than just the political; for, as Derrida recognizes,

sovereignty [is], even before defining politically the essence or vocation or claim of a sovereign of a nation-state or a people, the very definition of the juridical person, as a free and responsible person, able to say or imply "I, me," to posit itself as "I, me" (2009, 178).[3]

It is, therefore, ultimately this sovereignty, the sovereignty of "he who has the right and the strength to be and be recognized as *himself, the same, properly the same as himself*" (Derrida 2009, 66; italics in original) that is to be deconstructed.[4] This, however, infinitely complicates the task of the deconstruction of sovereignty, or even renders it impossible. For by whom is such a task to be carried out? It is evidently just an "I," a "me" who can accomplish this mission, it is only from the position of a sovereign self that any discourse on the deconstruction of sovereignty can be broached.

This is what traps us in the "terrible logic" that Derrida analyses in the "Eleventh Session" of *The Beast and the Sovereign*: the terrible logic of a double bind (2009, 300). As he puts it,

we must not hide from ourselves that our most and best accredited concept of "liberty," autonomy, self-determination, emancipation, freeing, is indissociable from this concept of sovereignty, its limitless "I can," and thus from its all-powerfulness, this concept to the prudent, patient, laborious deconstruction of which we are here applying ourselves. Liberty and sovereignty are, in many respects, indissociable concepts. (2009, 301)

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[3] This particular formulation occurs in the context of Derrida's criticism of Lacan and Deleuze's privileging of humans over animals on the basis of humans being free and sovereign agents, and therefore responsible for their actions. In other words, he challenges the validity of this assumption. However, he also recognizes the inseparability of the concepts of free agency and of ipseity, as will become apparent from the next quote and footnote.

[4] Derrida introduces the idea of this essential connection between *ipseity* (i.e. 'being oneself', 'being able to say "I"') and sovereignty on the basis of his reading of Émile Benveniste's essay, "Hospitalité" (1969) (Derrida 2009, 66–68).

What constitutes the aporia, the "implacable contradiction" (Derrida 2009, 302) here is that the liberty in the name of which we carry out the deconstruction of sovereignty inevitably entails a reliance on the very notion of sovereignty that is to be deconstructed.[5] In other words, when one launches an emancipatory discourse to undermine the logic of sovereignty, one is inevitably speaking from a position of sovereignty and thereby re-inscribes and reaffirms the very concept which they have set out to undermine. It is enough to state that we *seek to achieve* or that we *apply ourselves to* a prudent deconstruction of the logic of sovereignty and we have already assumed deconstruction to be an act, which is then inevitably ascribed to a free, autonomous agent (*ipse*), and this will inevitably reinstate the discourse based upon sovereignty.

This problem of the double bind is formulated several times in multiple contexts throughout *The Beast and the Sovereign*. One could even say that this is one of the central aporias that organize the economy of Derrida's arguments throughout the sessions of the whole seminar. It is formulated first in the political context, when he points out that

> There is not SOVEREIGNTY or THE sovereign. There is not the beast and THE sovereign. There are different and sometimes antagonistic forms of sovereignty, and it is always in the name of one that one attacks another … In a certain sense, there is no contrary of sovereignty … (Derrida 2009, 76; emphasis in original)

It is only in the name of some sovereignty that any sovereignty can be contested. In this sense, therefore, there is no going beyond sovereignty, and while Derrida presents this insight (deriving from Schmitt's political philosophy) as something that is itself to be deconstructed,[6] he still clearly recognizes the ineluctable force of the argument, which renders the task of deconstruction "more than difficult" (Derrida 2009, 76).

This inescapable double bind, moreover, manifests itself not only in the sphere of the political, but also on the level of the talk about the political or indeed on the level of talk in general: it is the ineluctable foundation of formulating any meaningful utterance. For, as Derrida recognizes, sovereignty, the ipseity of self-assertion, of saying "I," is in fact a precondition for any action: grand scale political action as well as minor actions, such as teaching a seminar. In teaching this very seminar, Derrida remarks in the "Third Session" of *The Beast and the Sovereign*, "I am here using, taking

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[5] In Derrida's own words: "The double bind is that we should deconstruct, both theoretically and practically, a *certain* political ontotheology of sovereignty without calling into question a certain thinking of liberty in the name of which we put this deconstruction to work." (2009, 301)

[6] In fact, he even points out that "recognizing that sovereignty is divisible, that it divides and partitions, even where there is any sovereignty left, is already to begin to deconstruct a pure concept of sovereignty that presupposes indivisibility" (Derrida 2009, 76). Cf. also (Derrida 2009, 302).

account of, my accredited position as a professor authorized to speak, ex cathedra" (2009, 79); in other words, he is relying on a position of sovereignty assigned to him in "the noblest tradition of the university institution, a seminar" (2009, 34). He demonstrates the inevitability of this logic by analysing how he specifies the topic of this session (the "Third Session"). He points out that by announcing the theme of his discussion (the maxim from La Fontaine's *The Wolf and the Lamb* that "The reason of the strongest is always the best") and by making his audience wait for his demonstration of it ("As we shall shortly show"), he in fact assumes the position of the strongest (that is, the sovereign position) and performatively shows the truth of La Fontaine's maxim (Derrida 2009, 78–79). As he himself puts it,

> As the reason of the strongest is always the best, I authorize myself by the reason of the strongest (that I am here, by situation, by hetero- and autoposition) to defer the moment at which I shall show or demonstrate that the reason of the strongest is always the best; but in fact, I've already shown it, already shown it in fact by the very fact of deferring, authorizing myself to defer, I've already demonstrated this prevalence of fact over right. My demonstration is performative *avant la lettre*, as it were, and pragmatic before being juridical and rational and philosophical. I show by the very movement, by doing it, as I go along, by producing the event of which I speak and that I announce I shall speak of, I demonstrate that force wins out over right and determines right, and I do so without waiting. (Derrida, The Beast and the Sovereign 2009, 78–79)

There is no way to escape this logic, as he continues to explain; for if anyone were to challenge the position of sovereignty which he assumes, if anyone were to take away his right to speak, they could only do so from a position of sovereignty and thus they "will merely displace the site of the greatest force, and the reason of the strongest will (still and) always be the best" (Derrida 2009, 79).

When in *The Beast and the Sovereign* Derrida sets himself the task of questioning sovereignty, therefore, he embarks on an impossible mission. So much so that, when the problem of the double bind is formulated again in the "Eleventh Session," he concludes that

> If ever this double bind, this implacable contradiction, were lifted (i.e. in my view never, by definition, it's impossible, and I wonder how anyone could even wish for it), well, it would be … it would be paradise. (Derrida 2009, 302)

2. Poetry: the Step Beyond All Sovereignty

How does one then embark on this impossible mission of the deconstruction of sovereignty? How can we at least get a fleeting glimpse of the paradise we dream of? Apart from the many instances of "prudent, patient, laborious deconstruction" (Derrida 2009, 301) that he applies himself to in the sessions of *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Derrida hardly gives any direct answer to this question raised by himself and arising from the very nature of his project. The only exception is perhaps his discussion of poetry in the "Eighth" and "Tenth Sessions". In these he turns to Paul Celan's famous speech/poem on poetry,[7] "The Meridian" and on the basis of a thorough reading of Celan's text outlines what he calls – after Celan – a *step*, which is not just a "prudent, patient, laborious deconstruction" that calls into question somebody else's ideas, but a real act that can perhaps open a way, a path to move "beyond all sovereignty" (Derrida 2009, 273).

Celan's "Speech," "The Meridian," as Derrida remarks, "was given in October 1960, in Darmstadt, on Celan's reception of the Georg Büchner prize" (2009, 219). In his 1986 book, *Shibboleth: Pour Paul Celan* (Derrida 1986)[8] Derrida had already published an extended discussion of this text. In this he highlights Celan's presentation of the singularity of an encounter that is at the heart of poetry, and focusses primarily on the way in which the date of the poem (or rather its dating, or its belonging to a date) will, on the one hand, mark the singularity of the poem and, on the other, by its very inscription, "will have broken the silence of pure singularity" (Derrida 2005, 9).[9] When encountering Celan's text again in *The Beast and the Sovereign*, Derrida raises similar issues; however, his approach is primarily from the point of view of "majesty," which, he points out, is "another name for the sovereignty of the sovereign" (2009, 214–215). In other words, the main concern in this analysis – just as in the other sessions of *The Beast and the Sovereign* – is the deconstruction of sovereignty. However, unlike his other analyses, Derrida's reading of Celan is not aimed at destabilizing, undermining, questioning, that is to say, deconstructing, the way the concept of sovereignty is invoked in "The Meridian". As I have hinted above, he rather sees in Celan's discussion the possibility of an act, a step, which – beyond undermining somebody else's argument – might open a path, might show a way out of the "terrible logic" of the double bind in which we inevitably

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[7] In both his major discussions of "The Meridian" Derrida emphasizes that Celan's text is not just a treatise, but also a poem on its own right. In *Shibboleth*, for example, he says "This speech, this address, this speech act (*Rede*) is not – not only – a treatise or a metadiscourse *about* the date, but rather the habitation, by a poem, of its own date, its poetic *mise-en-oeuvre* as well" (Derrida 2005, 10). In *The Beast and the Sovereign*, likewise, he refers to "The Meridian" as "this poem" (Derrida 2009, 227) and as "this poem on poetry" (Derrida 2009, 259).

[8] When citing *Shibboleth* I will always use the English version published in *Sovereignties in Question*, which contains a translation of the whole of the French text (Derrida 2005, 173–185).

[9] It is of course impossible and unfair to sum up Derrida's complex analysis in a simple statement, and I will give some more details of Derrida's interpretation of Celan in *Shibboleth*. In this paper, however, the main focus is on the reading Derrida advances in *The Beast and the Sovereign*.

find ourselves caught up as soon as we attempt to challenge sovereignty. Through poetry, by poetry, with the act of poetry, therefore, one can perhaps overcome the double bind. From the place of poetry, and from there alone, one might perhaps broach a discourse that, through doing justice to the claim of the Other, might put us in contact with what Derrida calls in *The Beast and the Sovereign* the paradise we dream of (2009, 302) and elsewhere "the democracy to come" (2018, 38).[10]

This is all the more important because of the explicitly political context that Derrida opens in *The Beast and the Sovereign*, a context in which he wants to overcome the Schmittean logic of sovereignty pitted against sovereignty. This logic, as Derrida makes it clear, inevitably leads to the conclusion that "the reason of the strongest is always the best". To challenge such a logic the mere instances of "prudent, patient, laborious deconstruction" that Derrida performs in *The Beast and the Sovereign* are obviously insufficient, precisely because they are not acts in themselves. They lack the madness (and *bêtise*) of a decision[11] and thus they threaten with the danger of a depoliticization of politics. Challenging or undermining someone else's logic is not in itself a step, it will not make a politics. It will at best provide a method, an imitable way in which arguments premised on sovereignty can be questioned or destabilized. This, however, would clearly reduce deconstruction to a methodology – an idea which Derrida explicitly rejected.[12] This is why it becomes crucial in the context of *The Beast and the Sovereign* that through his reading of "The Meridian" Derrida can outline a real act, a step that makes it possible for him to conclude at the end of his detailed analysis of Celan's text that "we have now (perhaps) moved beyond *all majesty, and therefore beyond all sovereignty*" (2009, 272–273; italics in original).[13] It is only with this step, that is, through a "poetic revolution of the political" that a real political revolution can be achieved. Any other act is just a continuation of the logic of sovereignty against sovereignty. As Derrida himself puts it, "a political revolution without a poetic revolution of the political is never more than a transfer of sovereignty and a handing over of power" (2009, 290).[14]

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[10] Derrida's main discussions of "the democracy to come" are to be found of course in *Specters of Marx* (1993), *The Politics of Friendship* (1994), and *Rogues* (2005). It is, however, remarkable that before all these major expositions he uses this term in the interview with Derek Attridge in the context of specifying the "duty" of literature.

[11] In his discussion of Avital Ronell's *Stupidity* (2003) (Derrida 2009, 170–175) Derrida remarks, "any decision (and sovereignty is a power of absolute decision) is both mad (every decision is madness, says Kierkegaard) and bête, or stupid, that it involves a risk of, or a leaning toward, *bêtise*" (2009, 173).

[12] In "Letter to a Japanese Friend", for example, he clearly states that "Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one" (Derrida 1988, 3).

[13] Derek Attridge points out that Derrida tends to respond differently to literary texts than to philosophical ones: "One striking feature of Derrida's responses to literary texts is their predominantly affirmative mode.… By contrast, the mode of his writing on philosophical texts may seem neutral or even antagonistic" (1992, 20–21). This is perfectly instanced by how he treats Celan's text in *The Beast and the Sovereign*: instead of undermining its logic, he affirms what he takes the text to be doing and tries to put its operations to work in the context of his larger project in the lecture series.

[14] About the significance of literature in Derrida's oeuvre see, for example, (Attridge 1992), (Attridge 2018), (Schuster 2018), (Zhuo 2018), or indeed the whole of (Rabaté 2018). Derrida's own writings about literature have been collected in *Acts of Literature* (1992) and of course in *Sovereignties in Question* (2005).

In what follows, I will try to trace how Derrida uncovers this step in Celan's text, this step, which is poetry, and which alone has the power to bring about a true revolution and to overcome thus the "terrible logic" of sovereignty. My approach will of course inevitably be reductive, since I will confine myself to tracing this one strand in an otherwise extremely rich and multifaceted interpretation. Indeed, Derrida's reading of "The Meridian" is much like its source text; for, as Derrida remarks, Celan's "trajectory follows a line that defies all reconstitution in the form of logical or narrative exposition" (2009, 227), and this can equally justly be stated about Derrida's reading, as well. Focussing just on the *step*, trying to give a logical reconstitution of how poetry can provide us with a possibility to act, inevitably means, therefore, that I will be omitting a lot of important and indeed central questions that Derrida's reading of Celan raises. These omissions I can only justify by again citing Derrida's apology for his own reading of Celan: "I do not hold this interpretative reading to be the only or even the best possible one, but it doesn't seem impossible, and it is important to me in the perspective of this seminar" (2009, 225), or, in my case, in the perspective of this paper.[15]

3. "Long Live the King!"

So, how does poetry provide us with a position, a place from where we can broach a truly liberating discourse? How does a poetic act allow us to take a step beyond all sovereignty? Derrida's answer to these questions is that no *single* act can accomplish this. Reading Celan's "Meridian," however, he is able to identify *two* acts, *two* poetic gestures, *the difference between which* can still provide a position, a place – or rather a no-place, a u-topia (Derrida 2009, 234) – from where such a step beyond all sovereignty becomes possible. Neither of these two acts can in themselves accomplish the impossible mission of taking a step beyond the logic of sovereignty, but the two together – more precisely, *the difference between them* – can still open a space from where, or a way in which one may undertake such a mission. In the remaining part of this paper, I will try to identify these two acts and give an interpretation of their differential relation as the no-place from where a true revolutionary act can be launched.

The first act, then, which Derrida identifies on the basis of Celan's "Meridian" is an act of disruption, an act that goes against the grain (a *Gegenwort*) and thus cuts into the logic of sovereignty. Celan demonstrates such an act with his interpretation

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[15] In *The Beast and the Sovereign* Derrida offers a "less diachronic, more systematic reading [of "The Meridian"], which would be concerned, for the purposes of demonstration, to bring out a configuration of motifs, words, and themes, figures that usually do not appear in this order" (2009, 225). For a more linear presentation of Celan's ideas (in the context of Derrida's reading) see (Pasanen 2006, esp. 230–236), which also provides a profound insight into the philosophical context of both Celan's text and Derrida's analysis of it.

of Lucile Desmoulins's character in Georg Büchner's play, *Danton's Death*.[16] The play is about George Danton, one of the major ideologists of the French Revolution, and in the last act Danton is executed under the guillotine together with his friend – another important figure in the Revolution – Camille Desmoulins. Camille's wife, Lucile is standing near the scaffold on which her husband is to be executed and – unable to bear the thought of living without her husband – suddenly and unexpectedly cries, "Long live the King!" This uncanny utterance – according to Celan – is a truly poetic gesture. He describes it as

> a counterstatement [*Gegenwort*], a statement that severs the "wire," that refuses to bow before the "loiterers and parade horses of history." It is an act of freedom. It is a step.
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> …
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> That, ladies and gentlemen, has no universally recognized name, but it is, I believe … poetry. (Celan 2005, 175)

Derrida explains that Lucile's poetic counterstatement can manifest for Celan an act of freedom precisely because it breaks the context of the discourse of sovereignty. As he puts it,

> To support this claim, namely that this "Long live the King" … is a "step" and an "act of liberty," a manifestation without manifestation, a countermanifestation, Celan must withdraw this cry, this "counterword," from its political code, namely its counterrevolutionary meaning, and even from what a countermanifestation may still owe to this political code. (Derrida 2009, 229)

Derrida is commenting here on the lines that I omitted from the Celan quote above. After stating that Lucile's statement "is an act of freedom. It is a step," Celan continues with the following words:

> To be sure, [Lucile's "Long live the King"] sounds like an expression of allegiance to the "ancient régime".… But these words … are not a celebration of the monarchy and a past that should be preserved.
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> They are a tribute to the majesty of the absurd, which bears witness to mankind's here and now. (Celan 2005, 175)

And Derrida points out that what Celan emphasizes here is that in spite of the apparently political content of this utterance, it is in fact completely divorced from its immediate political context:

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[16] For simplicity's sake, I will always cite Celan's text in Jerry Glenn's English translation included as an appendix in *Sovereignties in Question* (Derrida 2005). Derrida himself used this translation when teaching his seminar on "The Meridian" in English (Derrida 2005, 188). However, in *The Beast and the Sovereign* there are some slight modifications of this translation and whenever the translation is modified, I will use the version as it appears in *The Beast and the Sovereign*.

the homage in this "Long live the King," the taking sides, the profession of faith, the salute (*gehuldigt*) is not pronounced, politically speaking, in favor of the monarchy, of His Majesty the King Louis XVI, but in favor of the majesty of the present, of the *Gegenwart*. This *Gegenwort* speaks in favor of the majesty of the *Gegenwart*. (Derrida 2009, 229)

Lucile's statement, therefore, withdraws itself from its political context – and thus disrupts the logic of sovereignty – because it is not simply an attempt at turning back the wheel of history. Her "Long live the King" does not express any nostalgia for a lost monarchic sovereignty, any allegiance to the *ancient régime*.

This, however, is just one half of how Lucile's cry runs counter to the logic of sovereignty; the other half is that – while it is certainly not counterrevolutionary – it likewise disrupts the logic of the revolution, too. This is how it can become more than just the eloquence of such revolutionary leaders as Danton and Camille. For, as Derrida's interpretation of Celan makes it clear, the revolutionary leaders in fact do not succeed in breaking the logic of sovereignty. In spite of their powerful and artful revolutionary oratory, they merely remain puppets or marionettes, and the strings are pulled by the same logic of sovereignty that they purportedly challenge and attempt to overthrow. This is implied, according to Derrida, by Celan's allusions to Büchner's play when, referring to Camille's death, he uses the words "marionette" and "strings" in quotation marks. Derrida explains the context of this as follows:

The allusion, with quotation marks, to the marionette … and the "strings" is a quasi-quotation from Büchner's play (act 2, scene 5), where those condemned to death compare themselves to marionettes manipulated by history, by the sovereign powers of history: they no longer feel themselves to be responsible persons, free subjects, but figures, or even mechanical figurants in the invisible hands of those supposed to make history; but they suspect that there is not even a puppeteer and a subject of history to pull the strings in this theatre of political marionettes; and they say and think so at the moment they die, saying, "Marionettes, that's what we are, pulled by strings in the hands of unknown powers, nothing by ourselves, nothing!" (Derrida 2009, 252)

The logic of the revolution is purportedly opposed to that of sovereignty. It is opposed, in particular, to monarchic sovereignty on the grounds of the necessity and justice of passing the power from the one to the many, from the monarch to the people. However, as Derrida recognizes already in the context of his analysis of Schmitt's political philosophy in the Third Session, the gesture of challenging monarchic sovereignty in the name of the people cannot break the logic of Schmittean politics. As he puts it, "Even when the sovereign is the people or the nation, this does not

damage the law, structure, or vocation of sovereignty, as Schmitt defines it" (Derrida 2009, 77). This is exactly what the leaders of the revolution recognize in *Danton's Death* when they step on the scaffold. They realize that with their revolutionary acts and fervent anti-sovereignty rhetoric they have merely perpetuated the very discourse from which they wanted to break away. For the sovereignty of the people is ultimately trapped in the same logic as monarchic sovereignty.

"One law for the lion and the ox is oppression," says William Blake and the fate of the leaders of the Revolution in Büchner's play is a good illustration of this insight: the former lion, King Louis XVI becomes the ox for the new lions of the Revolution who must, however, take their turn at being oxen at the hands of a newly emerging lion (Robespierre), while the discourse of oppression, of sovereignty, of war goes on without interruption.[17]

It is this uninterrupted discourse of oppression, of sovereignty, that Lucile's cry "Long live the King" still succeeds in disrupting. And this it can do precisely because it goes against both monarchic sovereignty and the logic of the revolution. This is how it can be a "step," an "act of freedom" that cuts into the seemingly unbreakable web of the discourse of sovereignty, that disrupts the logic that unites on a single platform (the platform of the executions under the guillotine) the old regime and the revolutionaries. And this is how Lucile's cry "bears witness to mankind's here and now" (Celan 2005, 175), or, to use Derrida's phrase, to "*my* now-present, the punctual now-present of a punctual *I*" (Derrida 2009, 232). It is only by breaking the seamless continuity of historical process that a poetic utterance, such as Lucile's "Long live the King," can bear witness to the singularity of an event, the singular here and now of the human. Otherwise, all that remains is just a "theatre of political marionettes" (Derrida 2009, 252), with the invisible hands of an impersonal historical process pulling the strings. And it is only in this singularity, in "the punctual now-present of a punctual *I*" that an encounter with the other – with something wholly other, and therefore in no way trapped in the logic of sovereignty – where an encounter with this wholly other may perhaps become possible.[18]

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[17] Another aspect of the same logic is highlighted by Gilles Deleuze whom Derrida quotes in his discussion of *bêtise*. Deleuze points out that those who purportedly rule the logic of sovereignty, the tyrants, are also merely puppets, and the strings are pulled by the logic of the system they purportedly run. As he puts it, "the tyrant has the head not only of an ox, but of a pear, a cabbage, or a potato. No one is ever superior or exterior to what he profits from: the tyrant institutionalizes *bêtise,* but he is the first servant of his system and the first to be instituted, always a slave commanding slaves" (Deleuze 1968, 196) (qtd. in Derrida 2009, 155).

[18] As Pasanen remarks, it is this "*einmalige, punktuelle Gegenwart*, of 'the unique, punctual present,' which lets what 'the Other has as its most proper, its time, speak,' that received most of [Derrida's] attention" in the lectures that were published in *The Beast and the Sovereign* (Pasanen 2006, 235). I will not here be able to do full justice to Derrida's analysis of the "structure of this now-present" (Derrida 2009, 232); however, I will have more to say about Derrida's emphasis on the advent of the other in the following sections. For Derrida's discussion of the other's advent in the now-present see especially (Derrida 2009, 230–232; 270–273); for a discussion of the philosophical background of this, see (Pasanen 2006, esp. 224–227).

4. Walking on One's Head: Lenz's Terrible Silence

Lucile's cry, however, cannot in itself be this poetic encounter. It needs another act, one further step, without which the other could not be heard, without which it could not enter the dominant discourse ruled by the logic of sovereignty. Celan identifies this further step in another work of Büchner's, his unfinished novella titled "Lenz". The step or the act itself is when the eponymous hero of the story becomes uneasy because he cannot walk on his head. This act, walking on his head, according to Celan, is another disruptive act, another "Long live the King," for, as he explains, "whoever walks on his head has heaven beneath him as an abyss" (Celan 2005, 179). What is important in this act for Celan, what makes it the further step necessary for the encounter with the other, is that Lenz's act is no longer formulated in words, it is rather "a terrible silence".[19] As Celan puts it,

> Lenz … has here gone one step further than Lucile. His "Long live the King" no longer consists of words. It has become a terrible silence. It robs him – and us – of breath and speech. (Celan 2005, 179)

And Derrida comments,

> here is a sort of revolution in the revolution. You remember that Lucile's "Long live the King!" had been saluted as a counterstatement (*Gegenwort*) which was, perhaps …, poetry, in which a homage was rendered, far from the political code of reactionary countermanifestation, to the (non-political) majesty of the absurd that bore witness to the present or the now of the human. Now another "Long live the King," the "Long live the King!" of Lenz … is supposed to go a step further than Lucile's. And this is no longer, this time, a word, nor even a counterword (*Gegenwort* bearing witness to a *Gegenwart*), it is, more particularly, no longer a majesty but a terrifying silence, an arrest that strikes speech dumb, that cuts off breath and cuts off speech. (Derrida 2009, 269–270)

Neither Celan nor Derrida makes it quite explicit how Lenz's act is different from Lucile's or why a nonverbal "Long live the King" goes a step further than a verbal one. From Derrida's reading of Celan, however, we can attempt to spell out this difference. Lucile's cry is thus less than Lenz's terrible silence because it

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[19] It must be noted that Büchner's novella does not say anything further about Lenz's uneasiness as to not being able to walk on his head. Celan picks out this sentence and explains its significance simply by pointing out that "whoever walks on his head has heaven beneath him as an abyss." He says nothing further about why this is an act, why this is a disruptive act like Lucile's, or why it amounts to a terrible silence. He just takes these for granted and Derrida follows him in this, too. In what follows I will therefore likewise take it for granted that Lenz's uneasiness about not being able to walk on his head is an act of disruption and is a terrible silence, and I will only apply myself to explaining the significance that both Celan and Derrida attribute to this silent disruptive act.

is inevitably placed in the context of a power-struggle governed by the logic of sovereignty. We have seen that, according to Celan, Lucile's words "are a tribute to the majesty of the absurd, which bears witness to mankind's here and now" (Celan 2005, 175), and Derrida highlights Celan's use of the word "majesty" here which – as he points out – entraps Lucile's gesture in a discourse of sovereignty:

> Celan's gesture in resorting to the word "majesty" … is a gesture that consists in placing one majesty above another, and thus upping the ante with respect to sovereignty. An upping that attempts to change the meaning of majesty or sovereignty, to make its meaning mutate, while keeping the old word or while claiming to give it back its most dignified meaning. There is the sovereign majesty of the sovereign, the King, and there is, more majestic or differently majestic, more sovereign or differently sovereign, the majesty of poetry, or the majesty of the absurd…. This hyperbolic upping of the ante is inscribed in what I shall call the dynamics of majesty or of sovereignty… (Derrida 2009, 230)

What Derrida is emphasizing here is the excessive, hyperbolic quality of the poetic gesture: poetry has the tendency of exceeding all hierarchies, of "upping the ante" infinitely and by this to call into question the value and legitimacy of any hierarchical structure.[20] As such, however, it inevitably claims for itself a position of majesty, and therefore sovereignty, above all majesty. With its excessive tendency it will of course attempt to go beyond all majesty, all sovereignty, it will try to change, to transform the rules of the game, the very meaning of the words "majesty" and "sovereignty," but – as Derrida's comment clearly shows – it will ultimately remain part of the dynamics of sovereignty, it will remain tied to a power struggle (Derrida refers in a parenthetic aside to the etymology of the term "dynamic" which derives from Greek *dynamis*, which means 'power' or 'potency').[21] We may add to Derrida's analysis, furthermore, that albeit Lucile's "Long live the King" is a *Gegenwort* (a counterstatement), it is still *Wort* (word), and as such it will be caught up in an economy of words which is inevitably dominated by the dynamics of sovereignty.

Lucile's words, moreover, seem to be uttered almost mechanically. She utters them not because she wants to cut the strings of the puppeteer history, but because "she is blind to art" (Celan 2005, 175), she is deaf to the artful eloquence of the

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[20] This is the first part of what Derrida calls the "double division, as it were, a division of division itself, in what I dare to call… Celan's discourse, the discursive logic or axiomatics, that underlies or scans his poem" (2009, 259): poetic majesty is above any political sovereignty. As he himself puts it, "this last majesty, this last sovereignty, poetic sovereignty is not, says Celan, the political sovereignty of the monarch" (Derrida 2009, 259).

[21] In the Tenth Session Derrida identifies this excessive tendency as the most essential quality of sovereignty itself: "What is essential and proper to sovereignty is thus not grandeur or height as geometrically measurable, sensible, or intelligible, but excess, hyperbole, an excess insatiable for the passing of every determinable limit: higher than height, grander than grandeur, etc. It is the *more*, the *more than* that counts, the absolutely more…" (2009, 257).

leading figures of the Revolution.[22] Consequently, although it cuts *certain* strings, her utterance itself is still little more than a mechanical reaction. What is more, her utterance is also repeatable, imitable, programmable and thus in some measure marionette-like. This programmable – and thus insufficiently poetic – nature of Lucile's act is also indicated at the end of Celan's speech when he admits that he intended with his talk to achieve a Lucilean disruption:

> I also had an answer ready, a "Lucilean" counterstatement; I wanted to establish something in opposition, I wanted to be there with my contradiction. (Celan 2005, 183)

Lucile's disruptive "Long live the King" can, therefore, be imitated, copied, repeated, counted on, calculated with and as such it cannot in itself be that singular present, that punctual here and now, in which alone an encounter with the other can take place.

This iterability, furthermore, traps us in the logic of ipseity and hence of sovereignty, as is emphasized by the repetition of the personal pronoun "I" in the quote above. The fact that the Lucilean gesture can be imitated implies that one can plan on repeating it, that an intention can be formed and carried out. Such a plan or intention, however, inevitably entails positing a conscious, free, sovereign self which is in control of these gestures. We find ourselves, in other words, in a discourse governed by the logic of sovereignty, which prevents from the start the singularity of an encounter with the other. Lucile's counterstatement, therefore, cannot in itself bring about or attest to the event that is called poetry.

This is precisely how Lenz's terrible silence is a different poetic act from Lucile's counterword, this is how it can go a step further. For it is word-less: it is a total non-response, a total inaction, a pure letting be of the other, and thus, as Derrida emphasizes, "no longer a majesty" (2009, 270). This is how Lenz's act, his terrible silence, finally succeeds in entirely dispensing with the "I" and thus with the logic of sovereignty. As Derrida makes it clear, any other act – even a Lucilian disruptive "Long live the King" – would inevitably prevent the other from coming, since any other act is necessarily an act of the will and as such inevitably the act of a sovereign "I". As he puts it,

> What I would *make* happen instead of *letting* happen – well, that wouldn't happen. What *I make* happen does not happen, obviously, and one must draw the consequences of this apparently paradoxical necessity… (Derrida 2009, 234; italics in original)

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[22] Celan's (and Derrida's) treatment of the topic of art and of the relation between art and poetry is too complex to discuss within the confines of this paper. The distinction between the two is both made (as in the passage quoted here where art is opposed to Lucile's poetic gesture) and erased (as for example where Celan says that "perhaps [poetry] … travels the same path as art" (Celan 2005, 178); cf. also (Celan 2005, 180)).

Insofar as poetry is a singular encounter, it cannot be planned, repeated, counted on; it can only happen. One cannot *make* it happen; one can only *let* it happen. This means that one can only hear, accommodate, do justice to the other's claim in the event of an encounter insofar as one refrains from speaking, responding, reacting; for any speaking, responding, reacting is inevitably the conscious act of a sovereign "I" (which Derrida highlights in the quote above) and thus invokes the discourse of sovereignty from which the other is excluded from the start.

Lenz's total silence is thus a different poetic act from Lucile's cry; it is more than the latter in that it can let the other be, it can open the possibility of an encounter. On the other hand, however, total silence is not poetry. Or as Celan puts it "But the poem does speak!" (Celan 2005, 180)[23] A complete silence, a total letting be, would in fact even forsake the other, for it fails to provide a means for this other to come into "being"; that is, into the context of the dominant discourse. Lenz's "terrible silence" in itself is, therefore, not enough either. While it does provide the possibility of an encounter with the other, it provides it merely by an impossibility, by the impossibility of utterance, of responding, of reacting. It offers the possibility of an encounter precisely by effacing this possibility. Consequently, for this possibility to materialize, to be realized, to be marked – that is to say, for the poem to speak – another act, a Lucilian counterword is also necessary. Lenz's poetic act, in other words, needs Lucile's "Long live the King" – just as this needs Lenz's terrible silence.

5. "Distinguishing between Strangeness and Strangeness" (Celan 2005, 180)

How do these two acts, then, come together? How can they together open a place from where poetry can speak? Derrida's answer to this question is that it is in the gap between these two acts that poetry finds its place, or rather its way; it is from this difference that a truly poetic discourse, a discourse that goes against all discourse, that gives voice to the other, that lets it be – it is from this difference alone that such a discourse can perhaps be broached. As Derrida himself puts it referring to Lucile and Lenz's acts,

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[23] In *Shibboleth* Derrida interprets this enigmatic statement of Celan's in relation to the singularity of the poem that is marked by its date: the poem, he explains, "absolves itself of the date so that its utterance may resonate and clamor beyond a singularity that might otherwise remain undecipherable, mute, and immured in its date – in the unrepeatable." Apart from marking this singularity, however, the date, as Derrida explains further, also opens the possibility of breaking the silence of pure singularity: "the date, by its mere occurrence, by the inscription of a sign "as a memorandum," will have broken the silence of pure singularity. But to speak of it one must also efface it, make it readable, audible, intelligible *beyond the pure singularity* of which it speaks" (2005, 8–9; italics in original).
Another passage in the "Meridian" that can perhaps explain this structure is where Celan states that
    the poem takes its position at the edge of itself; in order to be able to exist, it without interruption calls and fetches itself from its now-no-longer back into its as-always.
    But this as-always can be nothing more than verbal communication … (Celan 2005, 181)

… in this division between two strangers, two ways of thinking the other and time, in this very division between the two "Long Live the King's" – of which only the first is called *majestic*, of which only the first, Lucile's, requires the word *majesty, poetic* and not *political* majesty – we have now (perhaps) moved beyond *all majesty, and therefore beyond all sovereignty.* (Derrida 2009, 272–273; italics in original)

The two acts are therefore equally necessary, though neither of them can in itself accomplish the impossible task of deconstructing sovereignty. One must, imitating Lucile, find a way of going against the grain; one must, in other words, find a mechanism, a *tekhnē*, an artistic technique, that can disrupt the mechanisms of the dominant discourse, that can cut the strings of the logic of sovereignty.[24] But this in itself does not guarantee success, for there is a difference between breaking the dominant discourse just for the sake of breaking it and breaking it for the sake of the other. And the problem is that since the disruptive gesture, Lucile's "Long live the King," can be imitated and repeated, it can easily become an empty form, a mere mechanism, a *tekhnē*, and can thus relapse into the dominant discourse where the logic of sovereignty pulls the strings.

The only way this can be prevented is by letting the Lucile-type disruptive act be guided by a commitment to a Lenz-type total silence, a complete letting be of the other. This commitment will not make the Lucile-type disruptive act in any way superfluous. In fact, the latter is the only form in which we can gain access to or at least get a glimpse of that other place, "that distant but occupiable realm which became visible only in the form of Lucile" (Celan 2005, 183). Lucile's act, however, will provide this access or glimpse only if it does not lose its connection, its commitment to that other act, Lenz's total silence. And this connection can be maintained by discerning the difference between the mechanical subversive gesture and the total non-response demanded by the other. In every Lucilean act, in every utterance of a counterword, of a "Long live the King," one must remain aware that this act is "not yet 'it'"; it is not yet Lenz's total silence. It is in fact the awareness of this difference, this gap that can alone maintain the possibility of a Lenzean gesture and thus of an encounter with the other.

The problem is, however, that this difference will always remain totally indiscernible. Two subversive gestures – like two peas in a pod – will look exactly alike. There is no way of telling a genuine liberating act apart from a gratuitous

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[24] For Derrida's discussion of *tekhnē* and art in the context of the "Meridian" see (Derrida 2009, 251).

repetitive one.[25] They will both be manifestations of the same recognizable technique, the same structure. One will thus never be able to prove, what is more, one will never even be able to know, that they are performing their subversive gestures for the sake of the other, that their act is ultimately liberating.[26] Yet it is still in this gap – indiscernible and undecidable, but imperative for those who embark on the impossible mission of counteracting the logic of sovereignty – that Derrida finally locates the place where poetry can sound the claim of the other.

This is what can, perhaps, bring about "the poetic revolution of the political" that Derrida calls for (2009, 290). In other words, we must keep on crying "Long live the King," we must keep subverting, undermining, deconstructing the dominant discourse of sovereignty in the name of the ultimate authenticity of an infinitely deferred Lenz. We must act faithfully in the name of the paradise we dream of, in the name of the democracy to come.

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[25] As Derrida explains in a totally different context in the Second Session,

every decision (by its essence a decision is exceptional and sovereign) must escape the order of the possible, of what is already possible and programmable for the supposed subject of the decision, because every decision worthy of the name must be this exceptional scandal of a passive decision or decision of the other, the difference between the deciding decision and the undecided decision itself becomes undecidable, and then the supposed decision, the exceptionally sovereign decision looks, like two peas in a pod, just like an indecision, an unwilling, a nonliberty, a nonintention, an unconsciousness and an irrationality (Derrida 2009, 33).

Similarly, in a Lucilean act it is always undecidable whether it manifests a Lenzian commitment and is thus a "deciding decision," that is, "this exceptional scandal of a passive decision or decision of the other," or just an "undecided decision," that is, a mere indecision.

[26] Derrida comments on the repeated use of the word "perhaps" in the passage where Celan discusses how Lenz's act can open the possibility of an encounter with the Other (Celan 2005, 179–180), emphasizing that the many "perhaps's" "all ultimately aim to withdraw these poetic statements about the event of the poem from the dimension and authority of knowledge" (2009, 270). On the connection between knowledge and sovereignty see also (Derrida 2009, 278–281).

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Exceeding Humanism
Aporetic Relations of Hospitality and Parasitism

Eszter Horváth[1]

We are living all-too-human times, suggested Jean-Luc Nancy, summing up his thoughts on the Covid pandemic in his essay collection entitled *Un trop humain virus (An All-Too-Human Virus)*. He claimed that the pandemic is a symptom of our disequilibrated spiritual, not merely biological, life. The virus, literally "breath-taking", is the most ruthless and brutal manifestation of the breathless spiritlessness of our times, he said, and referred to Nietzsche: it is a human, an "all too human" virus, and there is no doubt that its spread characterizes our civilization, a human civilization that knows no measure and constantly swings from excess to excess. The pandemic is truly "spiritless", *irrational* by definition, as it knows no measure, it has no *ratio*. The pandemic is irrational, and that is what makes it rampant. It is beyond good and evil (continuing on the Nietzschean path), beyond what we have known as a normative spirit throughout our history.

Nancy experienced the pandemic as a suffocating everyday reality of the lack of spirit: a rampant, uncontrollable "spiritlessness". Quite literally, we found ourselves in a situation where a brutal, elemental force tore our otherwise comfortably rational world into pieces, revealing the raw truth behind the facade of "organic integrity" and "health", behind the ideals of the well-organized, the orderly, and the closed structures of reason and reasonable human communities. We found ourselves in a situation where reason was overpowered by raw force. The dethronement of the well-structured organism seemed to be, by the same token, the dethronement of reason: an overflowing spiritlessness beyond the human.

The functioning of the parasite has become emblematic: it parasitized our intellectual and physical lives, an invader, making us realize that our world was undergoing a radical change, that we no longer controlled it – we, humans, the self-proclaimed masters of life and death. During the pandemic we all became "post-humanists" in a more-than-human world, whether we wanted it or not; we became involuntarily involved and could feel the coming of the new world on our own skin, as this other-than human element took control of us.

[1] Budapest Metropolitan University, ehorvath2@metropolitan.hu

The situation created by the parasite has brought to the surface a hidden connection, a hidden truth. As we became aware of the emerging reality, not only our own world but also that of the parasite appeared in a different light. The parasite destroyed, deconstructed, but this deconstruction proved constructive at a certain point: destruction made room for reconstruction. "We must relearn how to breathe and to live, quite simply" stated Nancy immediately after establishing the diagnosis of suffocating, breathless spiritlessness. "Let us be infants. Let us re-create a language. Let us have this courage"[2] – establishing the diagnosis may be the first step towards healing. However, "healing" by no means implies the restoration of our previous state of health. Instead, it aims for a new form of life which can live on in cooperation with its own time, place, and environment.

For Jean-Luc Nancy, the Covid pandemic was just one of many experiences with such parasites. One significant experience that shaped his life was the unavoidable heart transplant that occurred in 1993, which he later documented in his book titled *The Intruder*. This essayistic account, blending subtle observations with brutally weighty insights, is one of Nancy's most frequently cited texts, alongside his *Corpus*. The acceptance of a foreign heart, with all its physical and spiritual weight (the life made possible by the Other, who lives on within me), and, further, the infections of a reduced immune system to prevent rejection, the discovery of one's own microbiome, the multitude of ongoing autoimmune processes – these are the experiences that have defined Nancy's remaining thirty years and, simultaneously, the continental philosophical tradition. The bodily reality of foreignness, the flesh-and-blood experience, becomes the evidence of the multiplicity of our bodily and spiritual identities. Here, the fundamental human experience becomes posthuman in spirit (even if Nancy himself consciously avoids this term since, within his conceptual framework, all of this is not *post*-human as such, but a fundamentally human experience: the experience of being open to the outside, to the others – the fundamental experience of coexistence). In Nancy's testimony, the experience of discord and alienation in modernity is replaced by the experience of original multiplicity, and this plurality is not merely the proliferating virtuality of "bodies without organs" (as in the works of Gilles Deleuze), but the living, real, and own body, with all its known and unknown intricacies: like a networked ecological system – an open system.

> What a strange self! It is not that they opened me wide [béant] in order to change my heart. It is rather that this gaping openness [béance] cannot be closed. (Each X-ray moreover shows this: the sternum is sewn through with twisted pieces of wire.) I am closed open. There is in fact an opening through which passes

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[2] Jean-Luc Nancy: *An All-Too-Human Virus*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2021, p. 25.

a stream of unremitting strangeness: the immuno-depressive medication, and others, charged with combatting certain, so-called secondary effects that one does not know how to combat, (such as kidney deterioration); the repeated monitoring and observation; an entire existence set on a new register, swept from top to bottom. Life scanned and reported upon by way of multiple indices, each of which inscribes other possibilities of death. It is thus my self who becomes my own intrus in all these combined and opposing ways. I feel it distinctly; it is much stronger than a sensation: never has the strangeness of my own identity, which I've nonetheless always found so striking, touched me with such acuity. 'I' has clearly become the formal index of an unverifiable and impalpable system of linkages. Between my self and me there has always been a gap of space-time: but now there is the opening of an incision and an immune system that is at odds with itself, forever at cross purposes, irreconcilable.[3]

So this body – this *corpus* – is open, open to those who establish a connection with it. Open and receptive, devoted, despite all the unpredictability of coexistence, with trust and faith in the future… and as a reader parasitized by the parasite living on this corpus, I cannot myself resist the temptation: I accept it, make it my own, transform it, pass it on, carry it further.

Once again, I seize the opportunity to open Jean-Luc Nancy's *corpus* (*au coeur*, as the French say, literally at the heart) to the rarely, all-too-rarely quoted but omnipresent French connection, the person who introduced the parasite into philosophy, relating it to the everyday experience of multiplicity conceived as parasitic coexistence: Michel Serres is this philosopher, the creator of the epistemological and even ontological model of parasitic relationships. I suggest that his thoughts on parasitism enter in a fruitful dialogue with Nancy's thoughts on the event of the encounter, hostile and hospitable by the same token. Therefore, let me "implant" Serres's parasite, that is, his epistemological reasoning published under the title *The Parasite*[4], into the depths of Jean-Luc Nancy's experiences, his testimonial texts (*au coeur...*) – aware that the questions raised by coexistence with the parasite touch upon the essence, the "vitality" of our present life experiences. The guiding principle of this delicate operation is: "Aime l'autre qui engendre en toi l'esprit"[5] – Love the other who begets in you the spirit.

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[3] Jean-Luc Nancy: L'intrus. In: *The New Centennial Review*, Volume 2, Number 3, Fall 2002, pp. 1–14. Project MUSE - L'Intrus (jhu.edu)

[4] Michel Serres: *Le parasite*. Paris, Ed. Grasset, 1980.

[5] Michel Serres: *Le tiers-instruit*. Paris, Ed. Francois Bourin, 1991. 87.

1. In Statu Nascendi

Recalling his memories about Michel Serres, Jean-Luc Nancy gave a brief but poignant characterization of him as one of his intellectual companions: "I believe he felt similar to the gadfly or stingray to which Socrates compares himself. Not a Socrates who knows that he knows nothing, but one who knows everything and can know everything without needing to create a system or delve into the anxieties of non-knowledge. A perpetual and spontaneous rebeginning of philosophy. A thinker *in statu nascendi* – just as he saw history always in the process of inventing itself, branching off, mutating, and escaping."[6] Michel Serres, follower of Socrates, a nurturing, eternal recommencer who, like his master, spurs the spirit towards continuous renewal: Nancy saw Serres as a whimsically energetic, creative, innovative thinker *in statu nascendi*, a constantly renewing mind.

Michel Serres's philosophy can truly be read as a fundamental turn in the history of system philosophies: it shakes and breaks the closure of any system. It intrudes into its so-called "autonomous unity", its independence, postulating interdependent systems, absolute interdisciplinarity, and absolute dialogue between different forms of thought. Thus Serres can be read as the prophet of continuous rebirth, both within and beyond systems; a free spirit who provides passage between systems, opening them towards each other and stimulating communication. It is not by chance that he chooses Hermes as the advocate of his encyclopedic communication theory masterpiece.[7]

The phrase "*in statu nascendi*" appears frequently in Nancy's late writings – and Nancy himself is a thinker of birth and rebirth, of coming into existence and creation, a creative force, just like Michel Serres. Both are "begetting in beauty," creative thinkers, and successors of Socrates in the act of creation. Therefore I suggest having a closer look at Socrates's "begetting", his maieutic method, as perhaps it can help us understand the work of both his successors, or even the dialogical relationship emerging between their philosophies in recent decades.

The Socratic maieutics is based on the collaboration of participants in the dialogue, working towards a common goal, which is none other than the birth of truth into the world. And let us not forget that truth necessarily comes into the world from "outside the world" – the dialogue enables the reception and understanding of truth that lies beyond the participants' horizons of knowledge, thus emerging "*in statu nascendi*." The midwife must reckon with the unknown, and the re-thinker of system philosophies must reckon with the lack of a system, requiring openness

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[6] Jean-Luc Nancy : «Un recommencement primesautier de la philosophie» – Libération (liberation.fr)

[7] The five volumes of the Hermes-quintology: *I. La Communication.* 1968. , II. *L'Interférence.* 1972. , *III. La Traduction.* 1974. , *IV. La Distribution.* 1977., *V. Le Passage du Nord-Ouest.* 1980.

and, in a certain sense, remaining outside of the system. The midwives of emerging thought systems are not unfamiliar with the lack of a system; on the contrary, their success depends on their ability to effectively collaborate with foreign instances.

2. The Excluded Third Party

Serres's and Nancy's works, especially those dedicated to the parasite case, do not have a "direct" connection. There are no references to each other's texts, no specific debates or dialogues. There is also a significant time lag between the texts. Yet, the dialogue still emerges, and it emerges following the description given by Serres in his interpretation of the Platonic dialogue[8].

How does successful communication work? The observer might think that in a dialogue there are two opposing parties which communicate. They exchange ideas, argue, or simply share information with each other, facing each other in a back-and-forth process, a two-way communication that presupposes opposing participants. However, Serres sees it differently. According to him, the conversants stand on a common platform, together against a common enemy, and this common enemy is the disruptive, meaningless background noise that pervades the environment of any dialogue. This "background noise" seems to be the fundamental element of communication, since the content of the dialogue becomes audible only against the backdrop of some background noise, emerging and differentiating itself from it. On the other hand, background noise, no matter how necessary for successful message delivery, is inherently disruptive, making communication difficult or even hindering it. Serres's solution to this dilemma is to consider communication as a kind of game in which the speakers play with each other. The basic rule of the game is to form a community, to form an alliance against the disruptive factors (whether they are intruding individuals, impersonal interference phenomena, or intrusive noises – all external factors that disrupt communication).

The conversational partners are far from being opposed to each other; they do not play by the rules of classical dialectics. They are bound together by a common interest, namely, to collectively fight against the external factor (the disruptive background noise) that undermines the act of giving a meaning. The goal of the game: to render this disruptive element irrelevant to their dialogue. So, in the dialogue, the speakers play "together", as a pair, bound against the third one, often exchanging roles or positions during their exchanges or shifting away from their original stance as they move closer to each other. Despite the dynamics of the dialogue, as long as they are "playing the game," the speakers always move together.

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[8] Cf. Michel Serres: Le dialogue platonicien et la genèse intersubjective de l'abstraction. In: *Hermès I. La communication.* Paris, Minuit, 1968. 39–46.

Engaging in a dialogue means being together as a pair, but for this, a third party must be postulated, from which their relationship can emerge by differentiating themselves from it. However, it is not enough to postulate; the third party must be identified, sought out, and excluded. The exclusion of the disruptive third party is the key to successful communication. Thus, the most serious problem in communication is not the occasionally contradictory "Other" (as they are just a variation or version of the Same); the genuinely significant problem is the Third. Serres refers to this involved/excluded third party as a "demon" – following the example of Plato's demon, who similarly, from the outside, forcefully intrudes into the thought process and modifies it. The Demon is the personification of noise, according to Serres[9]; it gives voice to the noise.

Serres's essay on the platonic dialogue is part of his Hermes quintology, which contains his introductory explorations in communication theory. But the idea of replaying the platonic dialogue continues to haunt his work, up to his *The Parasite* published in 1980. The demon, the excluded third party, assumes a new role, a new distribution, fulfilling its task as the disruptive background noise that "sucks" the host body, as biological parasites do, or disrupts friendly gatherings as an unexpected guest. It once again draws attention to the communication-theoretical significance of disruptive background noise. Moreover, background noise, or white noise is commonly referred to as "bruit parasite", as the playful French terminology admits this term – thus "parasite" becomes a fundamental concept in communication theory. Such metaphorical functioning of parasitism in "normal" scientific communication spontaneously prepares the ground for Serres's train of thought.

The parasite first appears in a negative light; we view it as a malfunction, an error or noise within a given system. Its emergence triggers the strategy of exclusion. The maintenance of our initial system (our body, environment, worldview) seems primary, and the appearance of the parasite is seen as a potential damage to its integrity, so the parasite must be eliminated. However, this approach ignores the fact that the parasite, like the demon or the third party in dialogue, is an integral part of the system. By experiencing it, the system connects, manages, and integrates it – thus transitioning from a simpler level to a more complex one. Ultimately, the parasite, like Plato's demon, disturbs the system and ensures its development. The parasite is the fundamental condition for development: in representing disorder, it enables the possibility of order. Ultimately, the parasite from within demonstrates the priority of disorder when it creates a more complex order from disorder and through disorder. It introduces something new: the "parasitism" of the irrational on the rational rewrites the rules of reason. The emergence of new rules relies on the irregular collaboration of the irrational in the playful interaction of reason's development.

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[9] Michel Serres: Le dialogue platonicien… 39–46.

3. Parasitic Dynamics

Michel Serres's books are mostly "difficult" texts, and *The Parasite* is no exception. They are irregular, obscure, and layered with increasingly complex strata of literary, scientific, and philosophical texts that serve as the basis for analysis. Guest texts, poetic images, and allegories weave an intricate web of complex meanings. Serres does not simply establish theories about the phenomenon and dimensions of parasitism. Instead, he seeks to demonstrate the parasitic nature inherent in everything, including theory itself – he seeks to show how it works, and how to make it work: the parasite *in actu*. Parasitism becomes a mode of existence where the parasite and the host body cannot be clearly distinguished. We cannot definitively determine where the "illustration" begins and where the discourse of science, logic, or philosophy ends, or by what rules the various genres of guest texts are written upon each other. In *The Parasite* the Book of Genesis, the Acts of the Apostles, the Odyssey, Xenophon, Plato, Molière, and Rousseau's texts intertwine with La Fontaine's thirteen fables. Serres's thoughts penetrate into the network of textual connections along the intricate patterns of interpretation. We could say that Michel Serres reads and writes as a parasite himself, and when reading Serres, it quickly becomes evident that we, too, cannot do otherwise. As readers, we parasitize on the text we read. As writers, we even parasitize on our own interpretation.

The fundamental model of a parasitic relationship is presented in La Fontaine's fable titled "The Town Rat and the Country Rat"[10]:

The City Rat and the Country Rat

A city rat, one night,
Did, with a civil stoop,
A country rat invite
To end a turtle soup.

Upon a Turkey carpet
They found the table spread,
And sure I need not harp it
How well the fellows fed.

Our rats but fairly quit,
The fearful knocking ceased.
'Return we,' cried the cit,
To finish there our feast.

'No,' said the rustic rat;
'To-morrow dine with me.
I'm not offended at
Your feast so grand and free,

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[10] *The Fables of La Fontaine,* translated by Elizur Wright (gutenberg.org)

The entertainment was
A truly noble one;
But some unlucky cause
Disturb'd it when begun.

It was a slight rat-tat,
That put their joys to rout;
Out ran the city rat;
His guest, too, scamper'd out.

'For I've no fare resembling;
But then I eat at leisure,
And would not swap, for pleasure
So mix'd with fear and trembling

[Trans. Elizur Wright]

The guest parasitizes the host, who in turn parasitizes the master by consuming their produce without reciprocation. However, the master is not an independent producer either. Their relationship with the land they cultivate and the animals whose milk they drink and meat they eat is more than problematic. The master is also a parasite, and the relationship is not even one-way, since they parasitize not only on their land but also on their own parasites. When the master of the house enters the scene (perhaps due to the noise of the rat feast), the noise he creates disrupts the feast. The growing background noise changes the existing system, and now it is the human who parasitizes on the rats' feast. In La Fontaine's tale, the noise interrupting the feast also functions as a parasite (thus, the term "bruit parasite" is not an unfounded playfulness in scientific terminology – in La Fontaine's example the expression becomes "literally" understandable).

Parasitism is a relational form where positions cannot be easily determined. Noise is always present beneath every communication channel. A slightly louder or differently sourced noise transforms the meaning of the relationship and creates a new system. The original setup can change at any moment, and since we are never lacking noise sources, it really does change. In the elementary network of the parasitic chain, the three positions interchange to infinity. Thus, instead of the linear model of parasites living off each other, Serres prefers the model of a threefold branching, where all three positions are equivalent, where all three parties are equidistant from each other, and the third is always present.

There is a fundamental relationship between the host body and the parasite, but with every disturbance, every interruption, the basic connection ceases and/or transforms into a new configuration. The parasite becomes a condition for both enabling and disabling every possibility in a system, forcing it to reconfigure itself

each time by excluding the source of disturbance. This means driving out the parasite as a scapegoat and simultaneously designating a new place for it in the game.

What we perceive as a system, potentially as an organization, is not the equilibrium state of "order". According to Serres, equilibrium is nothing more than a temporary slowdown in the unstoppable process of transformations. Serres does not acknowledge the existence of stable systems, only of "black boxes" that we use as closed forms (hiding their chaotic contents) to temporarily conceal our ignorance – or rather our being without knowledge: the experience in which, like Socrates, we know that we have no knowledge because "objective knowledge" (knowledge thought of as something that we can have, something possessable: objective thinking as an object of thought) does not exist. Knowledge is in continuous transformation, it has no static, orderly, logical equilibrium state because knowledge is dynamic. The parasite is the factor that sets the forms of knowledge in motion, a catalyst, not merely a "paralyzer" that kills the system but rather a liberator from the constraints imposed by ignorance, in the so-called "black box". It releases the energies suppressed within order.

4. 'I' and 'We': The Virtuality and Reality of Quasi-Objects

The temporary units of our knowledge are subjected to the energy of the unknown: they are subject-like, or object-like, or, to put it in the terms Serres uses, quasi-subjects and quasi-objects. They are forms of existence on the border between the virtual and the real, more than objectified entities with defined spatio-temporal structures, contours, boundaries, or unique characteristics. They are not 'real' objects in the traditional sense, but rather reality-creating relations. The movement of quasi-objects creates the playground in which beings can play their roles, occupy their places, and fulfil their functions according to the rules of the game. Examples of such quasi-objects are the values and symbols that organize our religious, political, and economic lives: the blood sacrifice guiding the cult, the scapegoat (as the 'excluded third') ensuring our group identity, money organizing our economies, or – one of Serres's favourite examples – the ball defining the dynamics of football.

In the dynamics of parasitic relations, participants are constantly changing positions according to the dynamics of the game, like football players (quasi-subjects) whose movements are governed by the motion of the ball (quasi-object). In this game, the familiar order of our personal and communal existence dissolves as the "quasi-" field, de- and reconstructing it as a game of intersubjectivity. Let me quote Serres's interpretation of the game which coordinates our interdependence:

Philosophy is not always where it is usually foreseen. I learn more on the subject of the subject by playing ball than in Descartes' little room.

While Nausicaa plays ball with her companions on the beach, Ulysses, tossed about by the waves and the undertow, saved from the shipwreck, appears, naked, subject, beneath. Child of the blade, child of the passing of the ball.

This quasi-object that is a marker of the subject is an astonishing constructor of intersubjectivity. We know, through it, how and when we are subjects and when and how we are no longer subjects; *'We': what does that mean? We are precisely the fluctuating moving back and forth of 'I'. The 'I' in the game is a token exchanged.* And this passing, this network of passes, these vicariances of subjects weave the collection. I am I now, a subject, that is to say, exposed to being thrown down, exposed to falling, to being placed beneath the compact mass of the others; then you take the relay, you are substituted for 'I' and become it; later on, it is he who gives it to you, his work done, his danger finished, his part of the collective constructed. The 'we' is made by the bursts and occultations of the 'I'. The 'we' is made by passing the 'I'. By exchanging the 'I'. And by substitution and vicariance of the 'I'.

That immediately appears easy to think about. Everyone carries his stone, and the wall is built. Everyone carries his 'I', and the 'we' is built. This addition is idiotic and resembles a political speech. No. Everything happens as if, in a given group, the 'I', like the 'we', were not divisible. He has the ball, and we don't have it anymore. What must be thought about, in order to calculate the 'we' is, in fact, the passing of the ball. But it is the abandon of the 'I'. Can one's own 'I' be given? There are objects to do so, quasi-objects, quasi-subjects; we don't know whether they are beings or relations, tatters of beings or end of relations. By them, the principle of individuation can be transmitted or can get stuck. There is something there, some movement, that resembles the abandon of sovereignty. The 'we' is not a sum of 'I's, but a novelty produced by legacies, concessions, withdrawals, resignations, of the 'I'. The 'we' is less a set of 'I's than the set of the sets of its transmissions. It appears brutally in drunkenness and ecstasy, both annihilations of the principle of individuation. This ecstasy is easily produced by the quasi-object whose body is slave or object. We remember how it turns around the quasi-object, how the body follows the ball and orients it. We remember the Ptolemaic revolution. It shows that we are capable of ecstasy, of difference from our equilibrium, that we can put our center outside ourselves. The quasi-object is found to have this decentering. From then on, he who holds the quasi-object has the center and governs ecstasy. The speed of passing accelerates him and causes him to exist. Participation is just that and has nothing to do with sharing, at least when it is thought of as a division of parts. Participation is the passing of

the 'I' by passing. It is the abandon of my individuality or my being in a quasi-object that is there only to be circulated. It is rigorously the transsubstantiation of being into relation. *Being is abolished for the relation.* Collective ecstasy is the abandon of the 'I's on the tissue of relations. This moment is an extremely dangerous one. Everyone is on the edge of his or her inexistence. But the 'I' as such is not suppressed. It still circulates, in and by the quasi-object. This thing can be forgotten. It is on the ground, and the one who picks it up and keeps it becomes the only subject, the master, the despot, the god.[11]

Jean-Luc Nancy's experience of heart transplantation is the perfect embodiment of Serres's pass-allegory: in the act of transplantation (the "passing" of the heart), two "selves" encounter and engage in a continuation of life – two selves beyond themselves, in mutual *ex-stasis,* mutually determining each other as subjected to the game. The bodily and spiritual experiences of nearly thirty years following the surgery became the real, bodily experience of coexistence within the parasitic game space described by Serres in 1980. "What a strange self!", as Nancy wonders about himself in the passage from *The Intruder* that we quoted earlier, "I am closed open" he continues a little later, "It is thus my self who becomes my own intrus in all these combined and opposing ways. I feel it distinctly; it is much stronger than a sensation: never has the strangeness of my own identity, which I've nonetheless always found so striking, touched me with such acuity. 'I' has clearly become the formal index of an unverifiable and impalpable system of linkages"[12].

5. Noise

Serres tackles the repositioning of birth and genesis itself in the context of his philosophy of "*in statu nascendi*". His *Genesis* book[13] explores the ontological and epistemological approach to indistinct multiplicities: mass phenomena, herds, hordes, life forms that populate space and move in groups; the sea, the forest, mists and clouds, raging storms, tumultuous human relationships – multiplicities unaffected by the principle of individuation. They are open, boundless, and expansively undefined. Their movement is irregular, turbulent – a dizzying "noise" that reverberates throughout the text. The old French word "noise" resonates with its multiple meanings obscured by time: noise as clamor, a cacophony of quarrels, chaotic turmoil, murmuring, inseparable from the roaring sea, nausea,

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[11] Michel Serres: The Parasite. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1982, p. 228.(Italics mine.)

[12] cf. Nancy, Jean-Luc: L'intrus. In: *The New Centennial Review*, Volume 2, Number 3, Fall 2002. Project MUSE - L'Intrus (jhu.edu)

[13] Michel Serres: *Genesis*. University of Michigan Press, 1995.

and dizziness. The book was originally intended to be titled Noise, but *Genesis*, as the term speaks for itself with a striking simplicity, became the chosen title. However, within "genesis," one can clearly trace the indistinct, primordial, chaotic murmuring reminiscent of beginnings: noise as the background noise of becoming. Serres's book makes this background noise audible, considering it the basic noise of birth and emergence. It opens up the semantic field of the term "background noise", conceived as a basic element of communication theory. Previously known as parasitic disturbance if the system, articulated as "noise" in Serres's *Genesis* the term reaches its ontological dimensions.

It would be a mistake to interpret Serres's playful, poetic, and profoundly parasitic texts as a contemporary mythology, even if it is Aphrodite who emerges from the roiling primordial sea of *Genesis*, her beauty is the first entity to arise, like a "belle noiseuse" – in Serres's text it is though the artwork that becomes the primary instance of creation, not divine beauty alone. The key to understanding Genesis lies in the interpretation of Balzac's short story "*The Unknown Masterpiece*" originally titled *La belle noiseuse*, meaning "a beautiful troublemaker". Serres's interpretation points to the world-creating nature of artistic creation, the divine detail emerging from the chaotic lines in Frenhofer's painting – a captivating foot entering existence as the iconic image of the emerging (*in statu nascendi*) work. Mythology is just one of the parasites that fertilize Serres's thinking (just as it is parasitized in Balzac's writing, which in its turn is parasitized in Serres's thinking). As a scholar, Serres is a trained mathematician and as a philosopher he is considered primarily an epistemologist. When he thinks of multiplicities as instances endowed with world-creating power, it is not merely by an excessive poetic freedom driving towards myth-making. With Serres, theory must also have a scientific foundation. The collaboration between the natural sciences, humanities, and arts is of fundamental importance in all of Serres's work. *The Parasite* and *Genesis* are particularly excellent examples of the revelatory power of inter- and transdisciplinarity. One could say that the natural sciences, humanities, basic and applied sciences, and the various forms of art and poetry all come together in Serres to create the theory of multiplicities… *as* a multiplicity. Thus, it aims to go beyond the objective, external description of the "subject of discourse" and instead focuses on its performative realization, carefully examining and fundamentally transforming the discourse itself. Genre boundaries do not pose obstacles for a parasitic thinker.

There are no boundaries for Michel Serres and Jean-Luc Nancy, thinkers of "coexistence" and "multiplicity". Their works resonate with each other on multiple levels, establishing connections and forming networks, interacting with and (re) shaping each other parasitically. This network is extensive, by nature, with thinkers

such as Whitehead, Bergson, Deleuze, Derrida, Latour, Haraway (to name just a few of the most active and intensive nodes) shaping contemporary thought within the resonance field that emerges among them. In this constellation, the innovative potential of parasitic thoughts is undeniable.

Is it true that the spirit of our times is dominated by parasitic thinking? As Serres would say, we can experience its analytical, paralytic, and catalytic aspects equally. Personally, here and now, I consider it important to highlight the catalytic effects of " being together": our coexistence with parasites results in the liberation of innovative and creative forces, which is undoubtedly a promising and forward-looking phenomenon on the diverse palette of contemporary philosophy.

"We must relearn how to breathe and to live, quite simply. Which is a lot, and difficult, and long – children [les enfants] know this. The infantes ['those without words or speech', 'the mute': Latin plural of infans, 'babe'], don't know how to speak. They don't know how to modulate their breath in speech. But they only ask to learn, and they learn and then they speak. Let us be infants. Let us re-create a language. Let us have this courage"[14]– writes the elderly Nancy as the conclusion of his last parasitic experience. Serres, the Socratic philosopher, provides a method to his colleague's project: the dialogue becomes relevant again through its potential for altering consciousness, becoming the playground or battleground of parasitic philosophy. The connection with the other, the openness to the other, and the thinking together with the Other are the keys to innovation, in the sense of *invention*, that is, the advent, the coming of something fundamentally different. Coexistence, whether it follows the guidance of Jean-Luc Nancy or Michel Serres, necessarily opens up the mind that tends towards closure, allowing the entry of the third, the foreign, the unknown element that carries and develops it further. "Aime l'autre qui engendre en toi l'esprit…"[15] ["Love the other who begets the spirit within you", trans. EH] – that's exactly what happens with Nancy and Serres.

> Under the unique and total sun, the unity of knowledge glows. At dawn, its light extinguishes the countless multiplicity of different stars. From the East, nothing new. Nothing new since this fire has illuminated us, since the ages of light: since the Greek Sun, the one God and classical science, since Plato, the wisdom of Solomon, Louis the Great, and the Enlightenment, this knowledge of the day had lost time. None of these names, none of these so-called new eras, has ever changed the regime, always the same, of light, unique and timeless.
>
> Here's something new. No longer naively opposed to the day, like ignorance to knowledge - what a fortunate chance that the nychthemeral rhythm for

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[14] Jean-Luc Nancy: *An All-Too-Human Virus*. Cambridge, Polity Press, 2021. p.25.

[15] Michel Serres: Le tiers-instruit, Paris Francois Buren, 1991. p.87.

these simple and cruel divisions of error and truth, of science and dreams, of obscurantism and progress! – but seeded with colors and blackness, the night sums up the very days of knowing. Thus, harlequin-like and chromatic, the third instruction, like the previous ones, comes from the night owls of space observatories who blend day with night, which in turn integrates the days of galaxies with the nights of black holes; this mixture engenders a third light.

We have departed from Platonic Good, the age of enlightenment, the exclusive triumph of classical science, the unified history of our forefathers. Never did triumphant religions, glorious politics, the science that believed it was at its zenith when it had barely begun, or an unadulterated history tolerate images of such discretion or restraint, nor the mixture from which time is born.

The age of glimmers has arrived. Knowledge illuminates the place. Trembling. Colored. Fragile. Mixed. Unstable. Circumstantial. Shady. Cluttered. In the ray of clarity, mottled, saturated with dust, atoms dance. The Sun King sees his laurels turned to powder. Far from illuminating the universal, it flickers under the onslaught of powdery abundance. This is the age of local splendors and occultations, the age of twinkling. Perhaps now, in regards to light, we prefer chromaticism to unity, speed to clarity."[16]

Is this knowledge human, or perhaps "all-too- human"? Undoubtedly, it is deeply human insofar as humans are now capable of seeing the rainbow in the light of the eternal brightness of our classical "solar" culture: the multitude of others, their diversity, the variety of relationships that go beyond mere human connections. Michel Serres's interpretation of parasitic thinking gives a clear, explanatory description of post-human condition, acknowledging that this post-human condition is far from burying the human: it offers the possibility of renewal, of rebirth.

Now, let us be infants, again, let us have the courage.

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[16] Michel Serres: Le tiers-instruit, Paris François Buren, 1991., p.77.

Essays by the members of the Hieronymus Translation Studies Research Group

Literary translation flows

From Canada to Hungary
The Unpublished Atwood[1]

Fruzsina Kovács[2]

Abstract

The first Margaret Atwood book appeared in 1984 in Hungarian translation but that does not mean that Európa Publishing House did not follow Atwood's literary work closely during Communism. Both her prose and poetry were reviewed, often shortly after the original English language publication. The paper examines twenty-two reviewing in-house documents that Európa Publisher used as part of the selection process and an informal censorship procedure. First, the study draws the cultural context for the in-house selection tools and then identifies key themes in the anonymized reviewing documents of the era, such as: possible titles for the books, poetry weighed on scales, the practice of multiple reviewing, social classes in translation, relying on paratexts, the reputation of international success behind the Iron Curtain, and in what way is this literature "Canadian"? The paper tracks the publishing paths of all Atwood books reviewed during and immediately after the political change of 1989, concluding that the tools for selecting books for translation have changed, not only due to the political change, but as a result of the accelerated publishing practices that focus on bestseller lists, literary prizes, pitches of literary agencies and a network of personal contacts.

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[1] Originally published in Hungarian by *Tiszatáj Literary Journal* in February 2021.

[2] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, kovacs.fruzsina@btk.ppke.hu

1. Atwood before and after the political change of 1990

According to the reviewing documents of Európa Publisher, nine Atwood books were considered for Hungarian translation between 1974 and 1990, but only one proved to be safe enough to publish. *Surfacing* appeared in Hungarian under the title *Fellélegzés* [Relief] translated by Eszter L. Pataricza in the Modern Library Series in 1984. But how did the first readers, the publisher's reviewers see Atwood?[3]

The dossier containing the reviewing documents about Margaret Atwood's novels and collections of poetry was probably opened in 1974. Her surname on the cover is spelt with two T-s, with one T crossed out later, corrected in blue ink. The dossier is not slim. It contains twenty-two reviewing documents, some in several copies, typed on thin duplicate carbon paper. The name of the Canadian author, unknown at the time, came up again and again, every two or three years after 1974 in connection with a new title, but it was the publisher's final decision that the books would not be translated despite the predominantly positive reviews. The publisher's opinion changed only after 1989. According to the bibliographical data, the number of translated Atwood titles increased only slightly after the political change, which tendency is typical not only of Hungary. According to the translation database of the Central European Association for Canadian Studies (CEACS), data from Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Czechoslovakia – later the Czech Republic and Slovakia –, Romania, and Bulgaria show a similar tendency, that is Atwood's books started to be published in the region only after 1990, that is after the fall of Communism (see Figure 1).

The fact, however, that not a single book by Atwood appeared in Hungarian translation before 1984, does not mean that Európa Publishing House – which was officially commissioned in 1957 to publish world literature – did not follow Atwood's literary work closely, both her prose and poetry, reviewing it often shortly after the original English language publication. In every two or three years, new reviewing reports were requested about Atwood's books. At least two, sometimes three or four opinions written by literary experts were made available to the publisher. The following volumes have been considered for publication by Európa, with the date of the English-language original in parenthesis: in 1974 and 1981 *Surfacing* (1972); in 1977 *You Are Happy* (1974); in 1977, 1981 and 1982 *The Edible Woman* (1969); in 1980,

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1981, and 1982 *Life Before Man* (1979); in 1982 *Bodily Harm* (1981); in 1984 *Bluebeard's Egg* (1983); in 1986 *Dancing Girls* (1977); in 1987 and 1988 *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985); and in 1990 *Cat's Eye* (1988).

Atwood's English language texts had been reviewed by seventeen people, twelve women and five men. The reviewers' gender does not influence, however, whether they supported the publishing of the reviewed book. Among the five male reviewers, only one gave a negative review, that of *Surfacing* in 1974, which was nevertheless selected for translation by the publisher. Four out of twelve female reviewers did not recommend a particular Atwood text to be published in Hungarian at all. The publisher rarely, only on three occasions asked the same person for their opinion. Due to the large number of in-house and external reviewers involved, a wide variety of professional perspectives – ranging from writers, poets, translators, editors, literary historians, scholars, journalists – are present in the initial reception of Atwood. Six out of the twenty-two documents did not recommend the reviewed book to be translated into Hungarian, three recommended a selection of reviewed short stories, and thirteen gave positive critique and tried to get Atwood's text through the publisher's screening process before or immediately after the change of regime.

It is widely known that after 1946, the key actors in the nationalization of literature in Hungary were, among others, the publishers (Czigány 1999: 30–44). Although there was no official censorship, translation and editing were done often by silenced writers and self-censorship was expected and present at all levels of publishing (Haraszti 1986, Czigányik 2011: 223–234, Schandl 2011: 263–270). From 1957, the Hungarian Central Publishing Authority, functioning under the Ministry of Culture, coordinated publishing in line with the political will dictated by the institutions of foreign and domestic policy, according to the principle of the 'three Ps'[4] (Kontler 1999: 445), that is, cultural products were either promoted, or permitted, or prohibited (Czigány 1999, Bart 2002). Some aspects of this mechanism – one 'P' or the other – have been researched by literary historians in publications, pointing out either the ruthlessness of the system (Domokos 1996) or the fact that some "sensitive" books or theatre plays could still become public, although with a delay (Takács 2015: 137). The economic reform introduced in 1968 also impacted the sphere of culture. The reform "communicated with the actors of culture through regulations, prices, deductions, incentives, as well as premium conditions. However, it did not bring about a change in the general principles of cultural policy nor promise or induce the

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[4] László Kontler's terms for the 3 T-s policy in Hungarian: *támogatott, tűrt, tiltott*.

reform in this field." (ibid. 138)[5] Despite the subsidiaries given by the state in the early 1970s, publishers sought to produce books that were of interest and financially profitable to compensate for the increasing costs of publishing, while ideological control persisted up to the change of regime. (Czigányik 2011) The introduction of cultural tax, also known as 'kitsch tax', was in principle levied on works depicting eroticism and violence, but in practice prevented the publication of popular genres, including science fiction (Sohár 1999). It was far from clear, however, what the system meant by "violence" and "eroticism" and how the inspectors would categorize a work, so practically, it could fall into either the permitted, the prohibited or rarely the promoted categories. Sohár points out that from 1968 on, there was a growing interest in popular genres, including translated pulp fiction, crime stories and science fiction (Sohár 2022). This increasing leniency and "thawing" during the Kádár era can also be seen in the reviewing documents that assessed the marketability as well as the financial success of the books to be translated and were discussed in the publishers' planning committees (Czigányik 2011: 225).

Reviewing was one of the instruments of control built into the publishing process, that described the books considered for publishing from a professional and an ideological point of view. The publishers asked both in-house and external reviewers with foreign language skills to review world literature. It was an activity that the publisher paid for. The 2-5 page long typed expert opinions had a set form and were often remarkable short essays or literary analyses, although the literary value alone was not a decisive factor in the publisher's decision (Czigányik 2013:17). Based on personal experiences and the reviewing documents of an editorial office, Mátyás Domokos, an editor and in-house reviewer of Szépirodalmi Publishing House between 1953–1991, in his book *Leletmentés* [Rescuing artefacts], describes the principles of extending an artificial, Socialist Realist control over Hungarian literature and the introduction of a literary policy controlled by state bureaucracy. Through the stories of a number of manuscripts, he describes the impossible struggle that the editorial staff had against an "invisible" censorship in order to publish certain pieces of literature, in a way that is true to the original text, not altered, printed in an appropriate edition and number of copies. Quoting writer Lajos Grendel, Domokos explains that the paradox of the reviewers' work was that "these professionals could at most be right, but had hardly any power or influence; their job was to take a stand, but it was for others to decide whether their stand

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[5] All translations from Hungarian are mine in the paper.

was correct or not (Domokos 1996: 8)." Regarding Pilinszky's volume of poetry, Domokos recalls that

> to those who have lived through the mechanisms of the publishing sector at that time, and are still willing to remember it, it does not need to be proven at length, because they know it with a jolt of their nerves, that these positive or negative opinions played no part in shaping the fate […] of the manuscript. […] The fate of the manuscript was decided on the Olympus of literary politics, where the *other* copy was weighed on scales that was not set to measure the level of poetic value. (Domokos 1996: 92)

The reviews thus had a double role in the publishing of Hungarian literature. On the one hand, the reviews written by renowned literary scholars and editors were the means of selection required by the state apparatus imposing itself on publishing, on the other hand, in some cases, the reviewers were in direct contact with Hungarian writers, poets, letting them know about their acclaim (Domokos 1996) and trying to smuggle some of the writings through the filter of the system.

In the case of world literature, the reviews followed a fixed form regarding the description of the book, and included the name of the author, the original title of the work, an approximate translation of the title, the length of the book in so called manuscript sheets (1 manuscript sheet=40,000 keystrokes), the name of the publisher, the year of publishing, a brief introduction of the author, a summary of the plot, a clear recommendation for publication or rejection, and the date of reviewing (Géher 1989: 10). The description provided an overview of the writer's biography, situated the work within the author's oeuvre, and was also supposed to point out the broader literary context, that is its international reception, which could pose a challenge in the Kádár era, since literary criticism in foreign languages was not accessible.

István Géher, Hungarian literary translator, literary historian, professor of Eötvös Loránd University, publishes his own reviewing reports in a book in 1989 in which he explains that

> the reviewing report is not a scientific publication, nor is it a piece of criticism, or a literary genre. The rights to these reports belong to the publisher. They are confidential, similar to in-house documents, memos, minutes, a work plan, or a travel report. (Géher 1989: 21)

The reviewing documents have been studied by several researchers with scientific purposes from several perspectives (e.g. Bella 2016, Czigányik 2010, 2011, 2013, Gombár 2011, 2013, Hartvig 2013, Schandl 2011).

Next, I will discuss the issues raised in the reviewing documents that considered the publication of Margaret Atwood's prose, short stories, and poetry from the point of view of Translation Studies and will not examine the personal voice or habitus of the reviewers who often express radically different opinions. In the anonymized documents of the era, I aim to trace the mark of Canadian literature, any recurring patterns, and not analyse the way personal opinions were expressed. In the documents, I examine the following aspects from a Translation Studies perspective: possible titles for the books, poetry weighed on scales, the practice of multiple reviewing, social classes in translation, relying on paratexts, the reputation of international success behind the Iron Curtain, and in what way is this literature "Canadian"?

2. The possible Hungarian titles for *Surfacing*

It was in the summer of 1974 that the Hungarian publication of Atwood's *Surfacing* was considered in Európa Publishing House. That year, two reviewers gave their opinions: the first giving a positive, the second a negative review. Seven years later, in 1981, however, a third reviewer recommended the publishing. Apart from that the three reviews, three other reports, one dated 1981 and one in 1982, suggest that Atwood should be introduced in Hungary with *Surfacing*, and a 1981 review on *Life Before Man* also points out that Atwood's earlier works "should be considered" as well. The publisher probably gave in to the repeated "requests" when in 1984 finally published the volume in Hungarian under the title *Fellélegzés* [Relief]. It is worth noting that the title of the published translation does not correspond with the titles suggested by the reviewers: *Felszínre bukkanás* (literal translation: coming to the surface), *Felmerülés* (literal translation: surfacing), or *Felszínre érni* (literal translation: reaching the surface), although these are much closer to the plot of the original novel, and to the recurring Canadian topoi of a search for identity or survival.

3. Poetry weighed on scales

The second volume that was considered by the publisher in 1977 was a collection of poems entitled *You are Happy*. This collection, the ninth among Atwood's volumes of poetry, was published in English in 1974. The invited reviewer describes

Atwood's poetry as "powerful and evocative in every detail." The reviewer refers to the recommendation on the cover of the original, and highlights Atwood's sense for mythology in the events of everyday life, meaning that the "poet constantly gives signs about having a knowledge about how things, phenomena, feelings are connected deep down, at the roots." In the insightful analysis, the reviewer concludes, "I would like to see other works by the poet […], I recommend the translation of her poems based on this one volume as well." Apart from that, several reviews call attention to Atwood's poetry, for example, one in 1974: "The novel shows that its author is an excellent poet. Her style is concise, her imagery abstract, yet these signs make perfect sense," "Five volumes of poetry have been published so far – she is considered to be one of Canada's greatest poets." In 1980, "she is known as a poet worldwide," or in 1982, „She is widely known in Europe already, but first and foremost for her poetry and not for her novels." Despite the fact that the volume of poetry received a positive review, only one review can be found about *You Are Happy* in Atwood's dossier, and it seems that the publisher's attention turned from Atwood's poetry towards her prose.

4. The practice of multiple reviewing

In the 1980s, when the ideological control was somewhat softer, it was not an uncommon practice among publishers to review books again that had been previously rejected (Czigányik 2011: 225). Multiple reviews have been invited by Európa in case of the novel entitled *The Edible Woman*, which was first reviewed in 1977, in the same year when the collection of poems titled *You Are Happy* was considered. Of the two reviewers of *The Edible Woman*, one urged for the publication of the "excellent novel," a critique of consumer society, the other one, although found the subject matter fascinating, rejects the novel, noting that the characters are "not likable," they are part of a passionless, disinterested, declining society. Four years later, in 1981, the publisher decided for another round of reviewing. Both reviews (1981, 1982) recommend the publishing of the book. The third review points out that it is a "sophisticated work of an early career writer", and the fourth document notes that the book is easy to read and enjoyable." The reviewers add, however, that Atwood should be introduced in Hungary through an earlier piece of writing, with the translation of *Surfacing*.

5. Social classes in translation

It sounds archaic today that the two main characters in *The Edible Woman*, Marian and Duncan, meet in a laundromat. The Hungarian reviewer uses the word "Patyolat," the name of a state-owned cleaning company that was very popular during Communism.[6] This "domesticating" translation strategy (Venuti 1995: 1–42) also appears in the way social classes in Canada are described in the reviewing documents. Almost every single reviewer pays attention to describe the social context that Atwood's characters belong to. The summaries, however, use the terminology to describe Canada in the 1960s in a way that is consistent with the Socialist world view of the 1970s and meaningful to the readers of the reviewing documents. Canada as presented in *Surfacing* is "an urbanized, uniformized, and Americanized world" (1974), where the "Francophone-Anglophone conflict appears" but it is not emphasized. The four reviewers of *The Edible Woman* make reference to the USA in one way or the other. The first (1977) points out that the novel "(this early piece of writing already) is a bit anti-American caricature of consumer society." The main character is a "young intellectual woman" (1977, second review), the story takes place in the "world of the young intellectuals: the characters in the story have completed their university studies" (1981, third review), "young Canadian-American intellectuals […] attracted to the order of social norms (1982, fourth review), in other words, "young American intellectuals who belong to the lower-middle class" (1982).

Bodily Harm, also reviewed in 1982, takes place mostly outside of Canada. Two negative and one positive reviews were submitted regarding this novel. The first opinion describes the novel as "remarkable, […] interesting, well written", but does not recommend it for translation, as Joan Didion's *A Book of Common Prayer* (Hungarian title: *Imádságoskönyv*, 1981), which tells a similar story, was published around that time. The second reviewer feels disappointed and expects that the book will attract only "a small number" of readers, concluding that "[t]his book is not ready for publication, at least for the time being." The third review, unlike the previous two, is a five-page document that praises the writer for her brilliance, and gives a detailed description about the plot: "it shows a well-known version of a Latin American scenario: a corrupt dictatorship that pretends to be a democracy, the votes are bought, with a strong but threatened opposition, active, sect-like

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[6] The prices were cheap and fixed, the customer paid only half of the actual costs. When more and more households had washing machines, the company lost some of its prestige.

guerrilla groups." The reviewer is quite blunt when remarking that the protagonist accidentally becomes "a witness of political conspiracies," after "an isolated and hasty uprising attempt fails, and in the hysteria of a bloody retaliation, the police arrests Rennie as well." The description of the social unrest is thus not 'domesticated' according to the expectations of the editors of the publishing house. At the same time, the reviewer probably did not work very often as a reviewer for Európa Publisher, because he or she does not follow the strict form of the review and at the end of the document, a clear statement is missing whether to publish the book or not. The publisher decided not to publish *Bodily Harm* in Hungarian.

In 1984 and 1986, two collections of short stories were reviewed in Európa: *Bluebeard's Egg* and *Dancing Girls and Other Stories*. Three, out of the four reviewers, did not recommend the translation of the whole volume, rather, they suggested a selection. Apart from the excellent portrayal of characters, the reviewers considered the characters and their life situations too commonplace. "Her heroes are everyday women – an elderly farm woman and a simple housewife, young girl and a freelance journalist, a lonely old woman and a woman giving birth – with everyday fates." (1986). The Hungarian word used for an elderly woman living on an isolated farm (*tanyasi asszony*), however, evokes the atmosphere of the Hungarian Great Plains. The reviewer does not use a 'foreignizing' translation strategy (Venuti 1995: 1–42) here, which would make it clear that the story is set in Canada.

Of the two reviews of *The Handmaid's Tale* in 1987, only one recommended a translation. The first reviewer describes the social order of Gilead in short sentences. "The president of the United States was shot, the members of the Congress were disarmed, the military declared a state of emergency. People became disoriented, hid in their homes and watched TV. The Constitution was 'temporarily' suspended. There was no resistance, since no one knew where to look for the enemy. Censorship. Newspapers were banned. The female shop assistants were replaced by men." At the end of the reviewing document, the author notes regarding the "inconsolable hopelessness" of the novel: "Only the lives cannot be replaced any more. /How many times has this been the case in our own history?!/" This overt personal reflection does not appear in any of the twenty-two examined reports before 1987. In the plot description, the reviewer refers to the taboo topics to be avoided, and notes that the relationship between Offred and the Commander are "pronouncedly free of any eroticism", thus it meets the aesthetic requirements of Socialist literature. The reviewer emphasizes that the lack of humour in the novel is resolved only in the last chapter, which does not lack humour and irony. And since

before the political change the genre of science fiction fell into the permitted and mostly in the not promoted category (Sohár 1999, 2022), the reviewer adds: "An excellent writer, a fairly well written sci-fi /without sci/?" The second reviewer is also outspoken but does not recommend the novel for publication. The reviewer rejects the possibility of "a revolution that creates a totalitarian dictatorship" along gender lines and considers the novel to be a copy of George Orwell's prose that carries a "real trouvaille" (1988). The name of the writer is an important reference here, as none of Orwell's books were published in Hungarian translation until 1989 (Czigányik 2011: 226).

After the political change, in November 1990, *Cat's Eye* was reviewed by the publisher, which had been recently published in English in Canada in 1988. The impact of the political change can be noticed in the way the plot is summarized. The first reviewer considers the novel to be "a deservedly successful novel, worth publishing in Hungarian translation" in which a 1956 Hungarian refugee also appears[7], although only briefly, a teacher of Elaine, the protagonist. The second reviewer does not go into detail about the multi-layered nature of Canadian society, but mentions: "Elaine is on time travel between the present time and the time of her childhood and youth, that is the 1940s and 50s' Canada." A clear change can be noticed in the plot descriptions of the reviewing documents: while the reviews written in the 1970s, try to give a precise description of the characters' place in society, in the second half of the 1980s, personal reflections, moreover, in the 1990s, overt political references can be found in the plot descriptions of the novels.

6. Relying on paratexts

Placing the author and the work in the context of national and world literature was an important part of the reviewing documents. However, since the reviewers had no access to literary criticism from the West, they often relied on the paratexts that were surrounding the texts (Genette 1997: 23–32), such as the blurb on the cover, or the foreword. The primary role of these accompanying texts was to help the readers orient themselves on the Canadian and the English-American book market. We find seven references to the blurbs of the original volumes, in 1974, for example: "The blurb describes her as the greatest Canadian poet of our time. In Hungary, as far as I know, she is unknown," or in 1982, "In this case, we can take the words of the blurb literally: 'few authors have such talent to read the soul

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[7] The 1956 revolution was a taboo topic during Communism as the uprising went against the ruling regime.

of the characters as Margaret Atwood."' There are two direct references to the blurbs of the English language original: for example in 1977, *"The Edible Woman was the first novel of the Canadian writer, which the publisher reprinted four years later (in 1973) with a foreword that would fall in the category of a thorough critical essay."* One of the reviewing documents also makes reference to the foreword of Ferenc Takács which was published along the Hungarian translation of *Survival* in 1984. The reviewing documents are paratexts themselves, more precisely – to use Genette's term – epitexts, texts that are texts accompanying the literary piece, so in a way they are subordinate to the text, yet, since they recommend the text, they have a certain "power," and as we have seen it, they draw on paratexts produced earlier in the source culture (Tymoczko & Gentzler 2002: xviii, d'Hulst, O'Sullivan & Schreiber 2016: 135–156).

7. The reputation of international success behind the Iron Curtain

Several documents draw attention to the popularity of the author, regardless of whether Atwood's particular work was recommended or not by the reviewers for Hungarian publication. There are seven references to Atwood's popularity in Canada and eight mentions her international success. The first reviewing document in 1974 highlights, for example, that a year after the book was published in Canada, a "paperback" edition also came out in the UK. According to a review dated in 1981, "Margaret Atwood, poet and novelist, is a recognized and greatly appreciated figure of contemporary Canadian literature even outside of Canada." In 1982, another review says: "She earned herself an international reputation as a poet, while also publishing successful novels." From the 1980s, the reviews refer to a general recognition, as well as the value markers of the English and American book market. In 1982, although the reviewer considers it a bit far stretched, highlights the international prominence of *Surfacing*: "the *New York Times Book Review* called the novel 'one of the most important novels of the 20th century'". One of the two documents dated 1987 references the handbook of *"Contemporary Authors,"* the other one refers to the English-language radio program on books by the BBC World Service. It is worth noting, however, that two reviews dated after 1989 emphasize the value markers of the international book market. The reviewer of *Cat's Eye* mentions that "[t]he *Handmaid's Tale* was an international bestseller, but the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *New York Times Book Review* agree that it is surpassed by […] *Cat's Eye"* (1990). The second opinion, submitted in the same year, highlights that the *Cat's Eye* has

"made it to the *New York Times* bestseller list" and points out that "its publication provides a "glimmer" of hope for intellectual as well as financial success even at the current state of the Hungarian book market /winter of 1990/." Therefore, it can be seen, that in Atwood's reviewing documents during the years leading up to the political change and immediately afterwards, there are an increasing number of references made to the profitability of publishing. References to the value markers having international prestige signal not only the end to a restricted inflow of world literature but also a broadening of references used by Hungarian critics. In the 1970s, in Atwood's reviewing documents, international success was thus partly attributed to the presence of paperback, popular, low-priced editions, while from the 1980s on, success was measured rather by the book's presence in prestigious forums (e.g. BBC, *New York Times*) and on bestseller lists which reflect sales figures.

8. In what way is this literature "Canadian"?

Canadian literature can be considered peripheral from the point of view of the international book market, also less well-known compared to other literatures written in English or French. It is perhaps not surprising that this was no different before the political change. It is worth noting, however, that in the examined reviewing documents, the personal interest of the reviewers is directed not only towards Atwood but also to Canadian literature in general. In the opinions on Atwood's literary work, we find strong images, associations of Canada, for example "raw, stark naturalism in the depiction of details can be noticed in the work of other Canadian writers as well; this shifts sometimes to the almost mythical, pagan worship of the Canadian, wild, natural environment." (1974). In the literary works, the "Canadian wilderness" (1981) is contrasted with urban life. This dichotomy is also pointed out by another reviewer: "in modern Canadian literature, the themes of the city and countryside, urban environment and natural landscape bring forth rather interesting literary developments in their anachronistic rawness, at least for us." (1981). The reviewer of *Bluebeard's Egg* in 1984 mentions the influence of Canada on the literary work as the most important factor. "Themes in Atwood's works have always been determined by her life experiences of being Canadian, a woman, and her relationship with nature." These three themes appear in Atwood's oeuvre. One of the reviewers of *Bodily Harm* reflect on the reception of Canadian literature in 1982:

> Just because Margaret Atwood is the most prominent author of Canada, I have to admit that until I started to read her book, I did not expect much, which is

due to my /superficial/ knowledge of Canadian literature that it often deals with things that are provincial and not-so-important. And by the time … I reached the end of the book, it became clear to me that what I have read is a first-class book by a very contemporary writer who is extremely good, mature, clever and lovable, not only by »Canadian« but also by world literature standards.

This opinion is strengthened by an opinion dated 1986 about *Dancing Girls*, whose reviewer does not recommend the whole book for publishing, and notes that the reason for selection is that "very little of Canadian literature reaches our country" (without date). This observation still holds up till today, although thanks to Margaret Atwood and Alice Munro, Canadian literature is becoming more widely known these days.

As a summary, we can say that before the change of the regime, the editors of Európa Publishing House kept an eye on Atwood. It is worth noting that according the translation database of the Central European Association for Canadian Studies,[8] in the former Socialist block, the Hungarian translation of *Surfacing* was the second book by Atwood in 1984 that was published in the region. It was preceded only by *Lady Oracle* published in 1982 in Bulgarian. The bibliographic data, however, show that even after the political change, it was relatively difficult to introduce Atwood to the Hungarian literary field, while in the surrounding countries, her novels were available well before 2017. Three of the reviewed Atwood-books have been published until 2020 *Surfacing* that was translated fourteen years after its first Canadian publication, *The Handmaid's Tale* twenty-one years later than its English language publication was translated into Hungarian by Enikő Mohácsi in 2006, initially with Lazi Publisher in the city of Szeged. By that time, the book was recommended to the publisher no longer by a reviewing document, but through Katalin Kürtösi, professor at the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Szeged.[9] However, the journey of the book was rather difficult. Although it was published in 2006, it did not find a receptive readership. An edited translation of the novel was re-published by Jelenkor Publishing House in 2017 and since that time, thanks to the HBO-GO series adaptation that came out under the same title in 2017, the book has been reprinted eleven times.[10] The most reviewed book was *The Edible Woman*

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[8] The translation bibliography of the Central European Association for Canadian Studies: http://www.cecanstud.cz/index.php/en/other-activities/projects [Accessed 8 September 2020]

[9] Interview with István Lázár, the director of Lazi Publishing, January 2019, Budapest.

[10] Kovács, Fruzsina. Symbolic capital in the Hungarian translation of Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, Translation in and for Society: Conference presentation at the 1st International e-Conference on Translation, 26 September 2018, KU Leuven, University of Córdoba.

before the change of regime, which was translated by Ágnes Csonka in 2020 for the Atwood-series of Jelenkor , forty-four years after the original Canadian release.

Today, the tools for selecting books for translation have changed. Due to the accelerated publishing practices, it is now rare that publishers would ask external readers for reviews. Bestseller lists available on the internet, the prestige of international literary prizes, pitches of literary agencies and the network of personal contacts serve as a filter to select books that are economically safe to publish.

Table 1. The recommendations of the reviewing documents on Margaret Atwood's literary work

Date of the review	Address (date of publishing in source language)	Recommendation Publishing is	Possible title	Notes
1974	Surfacing (1972)	recommended	Felszínre bukkanás	
1974	Surfacing (1972)	not recommended	Felmerülés	
1981	Surfacing (1972)	recommended	Felszínre érni	
1977	You Are Happy (1974)	recommended	Boldog vagy	
1977	The Edible Woman (1969)	recommended	Az ehető nő	
1977	The Edible Woman (1969)	not recommended	Az ehető asszony	
1981	The Edible Woman (1969)	recommended	Az ehető asszony	First recommends publishing *Surfacing*.
1982	The Edible Woman (1969)	recommended	Az ennivaló nő	Calls attention to the popular book of *Surfacing*.
1980	Life Before Man (1979)	not recommended	Élet az ember előtti időkben	
1981	Life Before Man (1979)	recommended	Élet az ember előtt	It would be worth introducing Atwood through her earlier novels.
1982	Life Before Man (1979)	recommended	Élet az ember előtt	
1982	Bodily Harm (1981)	not recommended	Testi sérülés	

1982	Bodily Harm (1981)	not recommended	Testi hiba	Recommends the publication of her poetry.
1982	Bodily Harm (1981)	recommended	-	
1984	Bluebeard's Egg (1983)	not recommended	Próbatétel	Recommends a selection of short stories.
1984	Bluebeard's Egg (1983)	recommended	Kékszakáll tojása	
-	Dancing Girls (1977)	not recommended	Táncosnők	Recommends a selection.
1986	Dancing Girls (1977)	not recommended	Táncosnők és Más Történetek	Recommends a selection.
1987	The Handmaid's Tale (1985)	recommended	A szolgáló meséje	
1988	The Handmaid's Tale (1985)	not recommended	A szolgáló meséje	
1990	Cat's Eye (1988)	recommended	-	
1990	Cat's Eye (1988)	recommended	Macskaszem	

Figure 1. Source: CEACS translation database 2016.

Published Atwood books: the number of new titles between 1980-2016 in the languages of the CEACS member countries
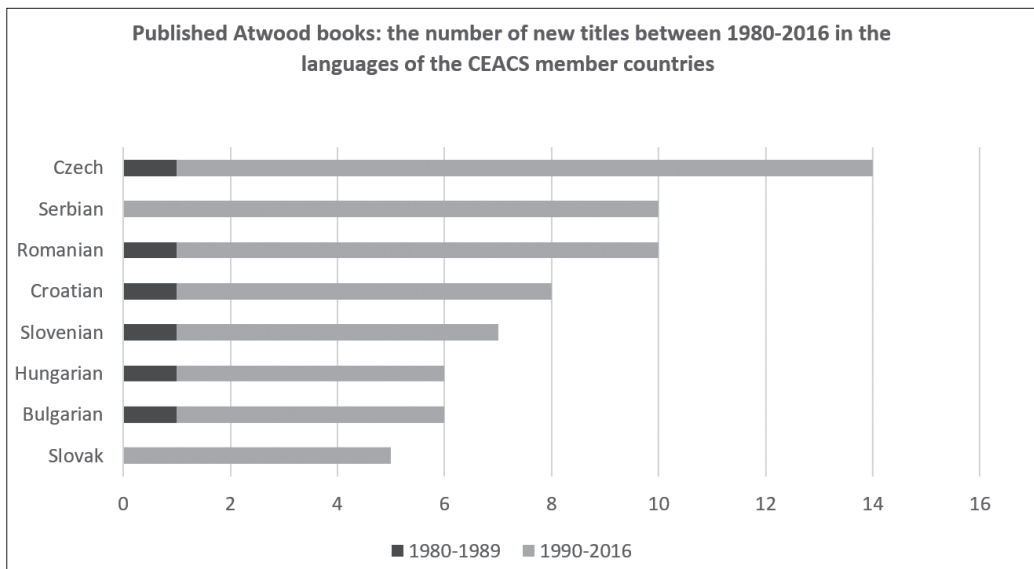
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"Ink and paper"
A Study on the English Editions and the Italian Translations of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

Valentina Rossi[1]

Abstract

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* boasts a peculiar typographical and editorial history. Despite the fact that the version contained in the so-called *First Folio* is "the only authoritative" (Ridley 1954: VII), several variations differentiate the text published in 1623 from the copies that were printed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Nevertheless, such copies ineluctably affected the English contemporary editions as well the Italian translations of the selected Roman play that were published from the nineteenth century onwards. The present paper aims to reconstruct the history of both the English and the Italian editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, in order to understand how the evolution of both the translation theories and the editorial tendencies have shaped the structure as well the stylistic features of the tragedy, consequently affecting its reception.

Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* boasts a peculiar typographical and editorial history, as several variations differentiate the text published in 1623 from the copies that were printed in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. On the one hand, such redactions consisted of the correction of some graphical errors or the adjustment of the lines of the script in order to 'fit the page' before printing the book. On the other hand, the Shakespearian text was altered following the aesthetic taste of the editors. Nevertheless, such copies ineluctably affected the English contemporary editions as well as the Italian

[1] eCampus University of Novedrate, valentina.rossi1@uniecampus.it

translations of the selected Roman play that were published from the nineteenth century onwards.

Organised into 3 sections – the first and the second one aimed at reconstructing the history of both the English and the Italian editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*; the last one presenting two case studies of literary translation –, the present essay seeks to understand how the evolution of both the editorial tendencies and the translations has impinged upon the structure as well the stylistic features of the tragedy, consequently affecting its reception.

1. The English Editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1623–1765)

The starting point of the present investigation is the text that Michael Ridley (Shakespeare 1954: VII) defined as "the only authoritative" version of *Antony and Cleopatra*, that is, the one contained in the so-called *First Folio*.[2] In the manuscript edited by John Heminge and Henry Condell, the Roman play is included in the catalogue with the title of *Antony and Cleopater*, in the section labelled as 'Tragedies,' and it is positioned between *Othello, the Moore of Venice* and *Cymbeline, King of Britain.*

The play comprises 29 pages. By opening the first one, the title is different from the one listed in the catalogue: as a matter of fact, we have *THE TRAGEDIE OF / Anthonie, and Cleopatra*, followed by a banner that bears the writing "*Actus Primus. Scæna Prima.*" The reference is noteworthy, given that there are no other act/scene divisions in the play.[3] Overwhelmingly, the text is easy to read, and the stylistic choices are applied straightforwardly (see Baldini 1962: 5). Nevertheless, according to Hower-Hill (1977: 7; see also Shakespeare 1995: 78–79), the writing does record some inconsistencies in the use of punctuation. Such an irregularity may be due to the fact that the transcription of the lines was carried out by two different compositor, B and E.

The *First Folio* was reprinted in 1632, 1664 and 1685. Although Samuel Johnson (1821: 145) considered only the 1632 edition to be "not without value," considering the other two "little better than waste paper," contemporary critics have remarked

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[2] The references to the 'historical' English editions are drawn from the Internet Shakespeare Editions. http://internetshakespeare.uvic.ca (2023.07.15.).

[3] Concerning this last point, it is worth remarking that *The New Oxford Shakespeare* editors "[attempted] to distinguish between act intervals that have the authority of early performance and those that were merely mechanically inserted (with little regard for artistic effect) for print publication" (Shakespeare 2017b: ixx). Consequently, they opted for a "scene-only counting" (Shakespeare 2017b: xx) for *Antony and Cleopatra*, dividing the text of the tragedy into 43 scenes: no other Shakespearian play has a larger number.

on the propriety of the modernisation of the page layout and graphic rendering proposed in them (see, among others, Braunmuller 2003).[4]

The text contained in the collection that inaugurates the following century, that is *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, published by Tonson and edited by the poet and playwright Nicholas Rowe in 1709, presents some significant alterations when compared with the *Folios*, as argued by Hamm (2004: 179–180):

> *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear* marks a major departure from the folio collections of the previous century. Rowe makes many corrections and improvements to the text of his predecessors: he attempts to normalise spelling, punctuation, and grammar; he clarifies many of the plays' act and scene divisions; he adds robust stage directions, marking localities as well as characters' entrances and exits; he includes a list of *dramatis personae* for each of the plays; and he translates the folio's Latin headings to English. Rowe's *Shakespear* also makes numerous innovations in its treatment of the text: it contains a "life" or biographical account of Shakespeare composed by Rowe; it includes plates depicting scenes from the plays […]; it employs a new page layout that resets the folio's cramped, double-columned text; and it dispenses with the large folio volume, instead portioning out the forty-three plays included in the 1685 edition over six octavo volumes or 3,324 pages […]. [C]ritics have regarded Rowe's edition as a watershed moment in publishing history, one that marks the beginning of the modern Shakespeare text […]. This reputation continues today. […] Rowe's *Shakespear* undoubtedly marks a radical break from the seventeenth-century's Shakespeare.

The publication of the *Works* aimed to legitimise Shakespeare's reputation in England, with several editions devoted to the repertoire of "the quintessential English author, the first among the English moderns" (Hamm 2004: 193) printed in the eighteenth century, such as:

- *THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEAR IN SIX VOLUMES COLLATED AND CORRECTED BY THE FORMER EDITIONS, BY MR. POPE*: edited by Alexander Pope in 1725, with an introduction, footnotes and "an elaborate set

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[4] To provide some examples: the title is modernised in *THE / TRAGEDY / OF / ANTHONY and CLEOPATRA* – with a "y" in "tragedy" and a different spelling for the male protagonist's name; the consonant "v" is not indicated with the vowel "u" – as the line (*F1*) "new Heauen, new Earth" = (*F3*) "New Heaven, new Earth" demonstrates; we do not find the silent "e" at the end of words, such as in (*F1*) Egypte = (*F3*) Egypt or (*F1*) Queene = (*F3*) Queen; corrections of typos and other improvements are made. For instance, on page 342 of *F1*, Mark Antony and Enobarbus exit the scene, but we find no "Exeunt": the stage direction is added in *F2*; on page 344 of *F1*, Cleopatra's chamber lady's name is misspelt as "Chiarmion;" the typo is emended in *F2*.

of typographical symbols to mark what he saw as the 'Beauties' and 'Faults' in Shakespeare's plays" (King 2008: 3);[5]

- *THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE*: a critical edition published in 1733 by Lewis Theobald, an English writer who filled the pages with several footnotes to inform the readers about some personal reflections concerning those cases when two or more translations or interpretations of a term were possible, analogies or references to other Elizabethan works, historical or religious events that were mentioned in the text;[6]

- *THE PLAYS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: IN TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES, WITH THE CORRECTIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF VARIOUS COMMENTATORS, TO WHICH ARE ADDED NOTES*: considered by the critics the first "*variorium* Shakespeare" (Ritchie & Sabor 2012: 353) edited by Samuel Johnson in 1765, who nonetheless showed "less regard" for *Antony and Cleopatra* mainly due to the excessively vulgar language of some characters.[7]

2. The Italian Translations of the Tragedy

In Italy, various intellectuals approached the Shakespearean repertoire during the eighteenth century (see Nulli 1918: 3–63; Ferrando 1930: 157–168; Praz 1944, 1956, 1969; Crinò 1950; Lombardo 1964: 2–13). For instance, Domenico Valentini[8]

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[5] Pope's pioneering edition was poorly judged by Samuel Johnson (1765: 103), who disclosed his malcontent in the Preface of his edition by asserting that "the compleat explanation of an author not systematick and consequential, but desultory and vagrant, abounding in casual and light hints, is not to be expected from any single scholiast". Over time, critics ended up sharing such a position, in the conviction that Pope had exerted "the most unwarrantable liberty" (Lounsbury 1906: 94) when intervening on the Shakespearian texts. On the matter, see also Warren (1929), Butt (1936) and Dixon (1964).

[6] According to Dick (Theobald 1949: 1), Theobald's edition was "the first edition of an English writer in which a man with a professional breadth and concentration of reading in the writer's period tried to bring all relevant, ascertainable fact to bear on the establishment of the author's text and the explication of his obscurities. For Theobald was the first editor of Shakespeare who displayed a well grounded knowledge of Shakespeare's language and metrical practice and that of his contemporaries, the sources and chronology of his plays, and the broad range of Elizabethan-Jacobean drama as a means of illuminating the work of the master writer." About the relevance of Theobald's editorial activity, see also Jones (1966) and Smith (1928); a selection of his amendments on the text of *Antony and Cleopatra* are illustrated in Erne (2016: 66-67).

[7] For instance, concerning the line "Triple-turned whore!" (4.12.13), that is, the reproach that Mark Antony utters towards Cleopatra after he lost the Battle of Actium, Johnson wrote: "Shall I mention what had dropped into imagination, that our author might perhaps have written 'triple-tongued'? 'Double-tongued' is a common term of reproach, which rage might improve to 'triple-tongued'" (as quoted in Payne 1990: 71). If not indicated otherwise, all quotes from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* are drawn from the 1995 Arden edition by Wilders. The line numbers are provided in parentheses after quotes in the text.

[8] A professor of theology and church history at the University of Siena, Domenico Valentini (1690–1762) was the first literatus to complete a full-length Italian translation of a Shakespearian play. As Crinò claims (1949: 330), he decided to approach the Bardian canon after listening to some English friends praising his works.

translated *Julius Caesar* in 1756; Alessandro Verri[9] translated *Hamlet* between 1769 and 1777, and *Othello* in 1777; Giustina Renier Michiel[10] translated *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus* between 1797 and 1801. Although their mediatory operation was indeed remarkable, it is worth remembering that some of them did not base their translations on the English editions of the Shakespearean plays; instead, they drew from the French translations of the Bard (see Delisle & Woodsworth 2012: 68–70; Bianco 2017).

Nevertheless, French was not selected as an intermediary language by those who decided to translate *Antony and Cleopatra*, although this did not happen until the 1800s. Michele Leoni[11] was the first translator of the above-mentioned Roman play in 1819, drawing from Rowe's edition with significant effort, as he remarked in the introduction:

> In *Antonio e Cleopatra*, the action moves from one place to another and travels – so to speak – through the Roman Empire. However, in defence of the negligence [Shakespeare] showed concerning such a matter, when […] the author deals with the manners, the characterisation of the interlocutors, and lets them act or speak appropriately, […] he behaves well, and for the most part, he deserves huge praise (Leoni 1819: 23; my translation).

The second translation of the tragedy was published in 1837 by Carlo Rusconi, in a collection entitled *Teatro Completo di Shakspear*. The sub-title informed the reader that the plays were "translated by the original English version into Italian prose" (my translation) – although the source text is still unknown. Furthermore, between the 1840s and 1880s, Giulio Carcano published *Opere di Shakespeare*: "his translation-interpretation is the best that the nineteenth century has delivered," Duranti claims,

> as it legitimised the literary dignity of a playwright whose poetic and dramatic power was recognised yet feared at the same time in Italy because of the ethical, cognitive and political dimension that is typical of his works. […] Carcano sensed this tension and tried to rouse it in his own time, to provide his contemporaries

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[9] Alessandro Verri (1741–1816) was a poliedric Italian author. His repertoire included novels, tragedies and essays; he was also the co-founder of *Il Caffé*, a magazine. He spent two years in London (1766–1767) and was "fascinated by British culture, especially playwriting; once in Rome, he translated some of Shakespeare's plays into Italian prose" (Orlandi Balzari 2016: 11).

[10] Giustina Renier Michiel (1755–1832) was the first woman of letter to translate Shakespeare in Italy. The results of her efforts culminated in *Opere drammatiche di Shakespeare volgarizzare da una Donna Veneta* ([1798]1801). On the volume see, among others, Bianco (2017).

[11] Michele Leoni (1776–1858) was a writer and a committed translator of English literary works (see Vander Berghe 2019). Concerning the Bard, he rendered a selection of tragedy into Italian during the first half of the nineteenth century (see, among others, Bianco 2019).

with a model of theatre in which civil commitment and moral teaching could merge in an aesthetically and valid form (Duranti 1979: 96, my translation).

With regards to the twentieth-century editions, most translations of *Antony and Cleopatra* were published from the 1950s onwards, except for the one edited by Diego Angeli, published between 1911 and 1913, and the one edited by Augusta Grosso Guidetti, in 1942, as shown by Table 1:

Table 1. The Italian translations of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

Time of Publication	Italian Translator
1800s	Michele Leoni (1819)
	Carlo Rusconi (1837)
	Giulio Carcano (1840–1880)
1900s	–
1910s	Diego Angeli (1911–1913)
1920s	–
1930s	–
1940s	Augusta Grosso Guidetti (1942)
1950s	Aurelio Zanco (1954)
	Cesare Vico Lodovici (1955)
	Alfredo Obertello (1957)
1960s	Gabriele Baldini (1962)
	Salvatore Quasimodo (1966)
1970s	–
1980s	Elio Chinol (1985)
	Sergio Perosa (1985)
1990s	Agostino Lombardo (1992)
2000s	Goffredo Raponi (2001)
	Guido Bulla (2009)
2010s	Gilberto Sacedoti (2015)

Altogether, 16 Italian translations were published between 1819 and the present time, the collation of which sheds light on different issues the translators had to face. For instance, it is worth mentioning the rendering of the mix of prose and verses that is typical of this tragedy: a challenge within the challenge, given that "there

is no Italian correspondent of Elizabethan blank verse," as Agostino Lombardo (1992: 166; my translation) claims. Table 2 groups the Italian editions into three categories, that is the versions in prose; those in verses; and the ones that mirror the alternation of verses and prose:

Table 2. The Italian editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* in prose, verses, prose and verses[12]

Prose	Verses	Prose and verses
Carlo Rusconi (1837)	Michele Leoni (1819)	Salvatore Quasimodo (1966)
Aurelio Zanco (1954)	Giulio Carcano (1840–1880)	Elio Chinol (1985)
Cesare Vico Lodovici (1955)	Diego Angeli (1911–1913)	Sergio Perosa (1985)
Gabriele Baldini (1962)	Goffredo Raponi (2001)	Agostino Lombardo (1992)
		Guido Bulla (2009)
		Gilberto Sacerdoti (2015)

3. A Focus on Literary Translation: Two Case Studies

The present section intends to provide a critical comment about the adoption as well the Italian translation of

1) the adjectives **arm(e)-gaunt[13]/arrogant** used by Alexas in the lines "So he [Antony] nodded / And soberly did mount / an *arm-gaunt/arrogant* steed / Who neighed so high that what I would have spoke / Was beastly dumbed by him" (1.5.49-51; my emphasis);

2) the nouns **Autumn/Ant(h)ony** in the final scene of the play, when Cleopatra tells her dream to Dolabella and utters as follows: "[…] For his bounty, There was no winter in't; / an *autumn/Anthony* it was / That grew the more by reaping" (5.2.85-87; my emphasis).

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[12] The present table does not include Guidetti's and Obertello's choices, as their translations were not available at the moment this research was pursued.

[13] **Arm-gaunt**, *adj.* Meaning and origin uncertain and disputed. This word has been analysed as a compound of GAUNT *adj.*, although the sense and identity of the first element are both disputed. Some commentators, assuming that the compound refers to service in battle ('worn lean by much service in war', 'gaunt by bearing arms', etc.) suggest arm, singular of ARMS *n.*, while others assume a more concrete sense 'with gaunt limbs' and propose ARM *n.* (perhaps compare *arm-great adj.*, ARM-STRONG *adj.*). Alternatively, it has been suggested that arm-gaunt may represent an error for one of several other words: […] Perhaps: either 'gaunt as a result of bearing arms or serving in war', or 'with gaunt limbs' […] *a*1616 W. SHAKESPEARE *Antony & Cleopatra* (1623) (OED, 2023.07.15).

Before focussing on the Italian rendering, it is convenient to investigate the presence/absence of each term in both the 'historical' and the most recent English editions of *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Table 3. Inclusion/exclusion of the selected words in the English editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*

Editions	arm(e)-gaunt	arrogant	Autumn	Ant(h)ony
First Folio (1623)	X			X
Second Folio (1632)	X			X
Third Folio (1664)	X			X
Fourth Folio (1685)	X			X
Rowe (1709)	X			X
Pope (1725)	X			X
Theobald (1733)	X		X	
Johnson (1765)		*	X	
Alexander (Collins, 1950)		X		X
Ridley (Arden[1], 1954)	X[14]		X	
Jones[15] (New Penguin, 1977)		X		X
Wells & Taylor (*The Oxford Shakespeare*, 1986)	*		X	
Wilders (Arden[2], 1995)	X		X	
Taylor *et al.* (*The New Oxford Shakespeare*, 2017)	*			X

The data gathered in Table 3 show that "arm(e)-gaunt" and "Ant(h)ony" were used in the four *Folios* as well as in Rowe's and Pope's editions. However, other editors opted for some variations: for instance, Lewis Theobald selected "Autumn" instead of "Anthony," and he wrote an extensive footnote on the matter:

[…] For his bounty, / There was no Winter in't: an Antony it was, / That grew the more by reaping.] / There was certainly a Contrast, both in the Thought and Terms, design'd here, which is lost in an accidental Corruption. How could an Antony grow the more by reaping? I'll venture, by a very easy Change, to restore

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[14] The editor addresses the case in "Appendix I" (Shakespeare 1954: 221–222).

[15] Emrys Jones (1977) referred to the *Complete Works* edited by Peter Alexander (1950) who, in turn, based his work on the *First Folio*.

an exquisite fine Allusion: and which carries its Reason with it too, why there was no Winter (i. e. no Want, Bareness) in his Bounty. / – – *For his Bounty* / *There was no Winter in't: an Autumn 'twas,* / *That grew the more by reaping.* / I ought to take Notice, that the ingenous Dr. Thirlby [Theobald's collaborator] likewise flarted this very Emendation, and had mark'd it in the Margin of his Book: The Reason of the Depravation might easily arise from the great Similitude of the two Words in the old way of spelling, *Antonie and Autumn* (Theobald 1733: 324 note 62).

Said decision significantly affected the subsequent publications, as demonstrated by the copies of Pope's *WORKS OF SHAKESPEAR IN SIX VOLUMES* that were printed in Dublin in 1747: there, he chose "autumn" instead of "Anthony." The reconsideration finds its reason to be in the following footnote: "(a) Autumn. Mr. Theobald. – Vulg. *Antony*" (Pope 1747: 192); thus, it is fair to assume that he decided to modify the text after reading Theobald's edition. The lemma "autumn" was selected by Johnson, too; nevertheless, he selected "termagant" as a potential amendment of "arm-gaunt," commenting as follows:

I.v.48 arm-gaunt steed] [i.e. his steed worn lean and thin by much service in war. So Fairfax, His stall-worn steed the champion stout bestrode. WARB.] On this note Mr. Edwards has been very lavish of his pleasantry, and indeed has justly censured the misquotation of stall-worn, for stall-worth, which means strong, but makes no attempt to explain the word in the play. Mr. Seyward, in his preface to Beaumont, has very elaborately endeavoured to prove, that an arm-gaunt steed is a steed with lean shoulders. Arm is the Teutonick word for want, or poverty. Arm-gaunt may be therefore an old word, signifying, lean for want, ill fed. Edwards's observation, that a worn-out horse is not proper for Atlas to mount in battle, is impertinent; the horse here mentioned seems to be a post horse, rather than a war horse. Yet as arm-gaunt seems not intended to imply any defect, it perhaps means, a horse so slender that a man might clasp him, and therefore formed for expedition (Johnson 1765: 134).

Moving the focus of the investigation towards the English editions published during the twentieth century, the results of the present study show that both Alexander and Jones chose "arrogant" and "Antony"[16] in 1950 and 1977, respectively; the Arden editions (Ridley 1954[1]; Wilders 1995[2]) presented the opposite variants; in *The Oxford Shakespeare* (1986), Wells and Taylor selected "arm jaunced"[17] and

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[16] "This is *F*'s reading. Most editors adopt the emendation 'an autumn 'twas'. This is plausible, but emendation does not seem absolutely necessary. If it is objected that the *F* reading does not make sense, it should be remembered that Cleopatra is speaking rhapsodically and with startlingly abrupt metaphors" (Shakespeare 1977: 140 note 87).

[17] In the Selected Glossary, they define "arm jaunced" as follows: "joltes by armour" (Shakespeare 1986: 1257).

"autumn," whereas in *the New Oxford Shakespeare* (2017a), Taylor et al. opted for "argent"[18] and "Antony" – providing no explanation for this last change.

In any event, said decisions had a major impact on the Italian translators, whose interpretative choices are illustrated in Table 4.[19]

Table 4. The Italian translations of the selected words

	(1.5.49-51) Alexas: So he nodded / And soberly did mount *an arm(e)-gaunt/ arrongant* steed(e) / Who neighed so high that what I would have spoken / Was beastly dumbed by him.	**(5.2.85-87) Cleopatra**: […] For his bounty, / There was no winter in't; an *Autumn/Ant(h)ony* it was / That grew the more by reaping.
Carlo Rusconi	[…] e con un cenno del capo, montato sull'**agile** suo destriero partì di volo.	[…] La sua bontà non avea stagioni sterili: ricca e feconda come l'**Autunno**, più beni accordava, e più ne avea da profondere.
Giulio Carcano	Disse e il capo chinò: poi salì grave / Sul **focoso** cavallo, il cui nitrito, / Sol ch'io schiudessi il labbro, avria coverto / La mia voce.	Mai sua clemenza non conobbe verno; / Era un **autunno**, che il ricolto istesso / Vie più feconda.
Diego Angeli	[…] Nel dire questo / Accennò con la testa e sul **focoso** / Destriero montò che così forte / Nitriva da assordirmi col suo grido / Bestiale se avessi allora voluto Parlare.	[…] La sua / Larghezza non conosceva l'inverno: / era come un **autunno** fecondato / dalle sue stesse messi.
Cesare Vico Lodovici	[…] Qui, con un cenno del capo, mi salutò e balzò, serio serio, <u>sul suo puledro</u>: e quello diede un così fiero nitrito che soffocò col suo grido ferino quello che stavo per dire io.	La sua munificenza non conosceva inverno: un **autunno**, era, che più si vendemmiava e più dava frutto.
Gabriele Baldini (Arden 1954)	[…] Ciò detto, fece un gesto del capo, e balzò dignitosamente in sella al suo destriero **provato alle armi**, che nitrì tanto alto da impedir bestialmente che s'udisse tutto quel ch'io avrei voluto dire.	Per dire della sua generosità, non c'era inverno in essa: era piuttosto un **autunno**, che più s'accresceva quanto più se ne mieteva il raccolto.

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[18] In a footnote, Taylor *et al.* (2017a: 2585) write: "argent: silver (a textual crux)."

[19] For the sake of this study, I indicated the English editions used by the Italian translators in parentheses. Nevertheless, the information on the matter is lamentably limited, as most literati did not mention the elected source text. Furthermore, the present table does not include data about Leoni's, Guidetti's and Obertello's works, as I did not have access to the selected passages while pursuing this research.

Goffredo Raponi (New Penguin 1777, *The Oxford Shakespeare* 1986)	Indi mi fece appena un breve cenno / e tutto serio in volto balzò in sella / a un cavallo **inguantato d'armatura** / che levò alto in aria un tal nitrito, / da soffocare bestialmente in me / tutto quello che avrei voluto dirgli.	La generosità di quel suo cuore / non conosceva inverno: era un **autunno** / che diveniva sempre più ferace / col mieter dei raccolti;
Aurelio Zanco	Quindi mi accennò colla testa e dignitosamente montò su un **focoso** cavallo che nitriva così forte da soffocare bestialmente ciò che avessi voluto dire.	Quanto alla sua generosità, non c'era inverno in essa; era un **autunno** la cui fecondità si accresceva peri raccolti:
Salvatore Quasimodo	[…] Poi mi salutò con un cenno del capo, / e salì fiero sul suo cavallo **da guerra**, / che con un alto nitrito / disperse brutalmente la mia risposta.	[…] Nella sua generosità non c'era inverno, / ma sempre un **autunno** dove il raccolto / più cresceva dopo il taglio.
Elio Chinol	[…] Poi mi salutò con un cenno del capo / E montò con compostezza sul suo **focoso** cavallo, / che nitrì così alto da soffocarmi nella gola / le parole che avrei voluto dirgli.	[. . .] La sua generosità / Non conosceva inverno: era un perenne **autunno** / Che la mietitura rendeva ancor più opulento.
Sergio Perosa	[…] Quindi accennò col capo / e compunto montò il suo **focoso** destriero, / che nitrì così alto, da soffocare / brutalmente quel che volevo dire.	La sua generosità non conosceva inverno: era un **autunno** che s'accresceva mietendone il raccolto.
Guido Bulla (New Penguin 1977)	[…] Con un cenno del capo, / Montò poi sobriamente sul **bardato**[20] destriero, / Che nitrì tanto forte che ciò che avrei voluto dire / Fu zittito dall'urlo della bestia.	La sua munificenza / Non conos ceva inverno: era un **autunno** / Che s'arricchiva ad ogni mieti tura;
Agostino Lombardo (New Penguin 1977, *F1*)	[…] Accennò col capo / E grave montò su un destriero **bellicoso**[21] / Che nitrì così forte da soffocare brutalmente / Ciò che avrei voluto dire.	La sua generosità non aveva in verno, era / Un **Antonio** che tanto più cresceva quanto più / Veniva mietuto.
Gilberto Sacerdoti (*The Oxford Shakespeare*, 1986)	[…] Poi accennò col capo e montò sobriamente uno **scalpitante**[22] stallone, il quale nitrì tanto forte che ciò che volevo dire venne bestialmente ammutolito.	[…] Quanto a generosità, non conosceva inverno; era un **autunno** che più lo si mieteva e più fruttificava.

[20] "The term arm-gaunt has infinite interpretations (and amendments). I hereby accept the one according to which it derives from the Anglo-Saxon *gaunt* = whole, healthful" (Bulla 2009: 66 note 30; my translation).

[21] Lombardo (1992: 262 note 19; 263 note 51) informs the reader of the "philological background" of the terms "arrogant" and "Autumn" in the Notes.

[22] "The translation emphasizes the contrast between the 'moderation' of the man and the 'restlessness' of the animal; it clearly refers to an unrestrained interior strength" (Marenco 2015: 2915 note 48; my translation).

As far as Alexas' lines are concerned, numerous adjectives qualify Mark Antony's stallion. However, *focoso* [fiery] is frequently used to describe the horse, with 5 Italian translators (Carcano, Angeli, Zanco, Chinol and Perosa) out of 13 deciding to emphasise the fiery attitude of the animal. Other options include:

1) *provato alle armi* [experienced] selected by Baldini;

2) *agile* [quick] chosen by Rusconi;

3) a focus on the harness of the stallion, *inguantato d'armatura* [wearing a suit of armor] and *bardato* [harnessed], used by Raponi and Bulla, respectively;

4) emphasis on the combative spirit of the animal as indicated by the terms *da guerra* [martial] and *bellicoso* [belligerent] employed by Quasimodo and Lombardo, respectively;

5) *scalpitante* [pawing] as in Sacerdoti's translation;

6) finally, Cesare Vico Lodovici decides to neglect such a detail; therefore, he does not add any adjective to qualify the stallion.

Conversely, a much more uniform framework qualifies the second case study here presented: 12 translators out of 13 opted for "Autumn," with the sole exception of Agostino Lombardo, who decided to select "Antony"[23] in compliance with the *First Folio* as well as Alexander's and Jones' editions, to which he referred (see Lombardo 1992: 265).

4. Concluding Remarks

This essay has tried to demonstrate how, from the seventeenth century onwards, editors and translators have shaped Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, eventually affecting its literary reception in both England and Italy. Furthermore, the results emerging from the two case studies here indicate that in some instances the line between editing and translation gets thinner and thinner. Oftentimes, contemporary critics have shed light on the active role played by the translator who deals with any Shakespearian text:

> he does cooperate to give new life to the plays, introducing them into a new language and into a new world, and he can also occasionally contribute new

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[23] It is worth remarking that in 1988 – four years before publishing his translation –, the scholar actively participated in the staging of the Roman play directed by Giancarlo Cobelli. Being he in charge of the translation and the arrangement of the script, he selected "autumn" instead of "Antony." I would like to thank Dr. Fabio Gambetti for kindly providing me with the original script of Cobelli's *Antonio e Cleopatra*. All the edited material regarding the performance are available online at Valeria Moriconi Centre of Theatre Studies and Activities http://www.centrovaleriamoriconi.org/home/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=129 (2023.07.15).

readings to the original texts. […] Trying to unravel such a complex texture, the foreign critic-translator may make some discovery or at least raise some doubts about accepted interpretations, particularly when he has to cope with cruces, neologisms, and hapax legomena (Serpieri 2004: 28–29).

The Italian versions examined above confirm such a statement: by choosing to write in prose, verses or both and, most notably, by dealing with literary cruces, "[t]ranslators [were] no longer merely reproducers of a source text in the target language, but active decision-makers who [assumed] responsibility for the functional adequacy of the translation" (Kaindl 2021: 6). Indeed, they exerted editorial power in omitting details – as Cesare Vico Lodovici did when he refused to translate "arm-gaunt"/"arrogant" –; or neglecting the *First Folio*, by opting for an alternative lemma to fit a specific line, as for the rendering of "autumn"/"Anthony."

If, as Parks (2007: 9) argues, "we can say that given the profound differences between any two languages and cultures, the translator is forced to think hard about the function of the text," it is fair to suppose that, in this case, the Italian translators had a bias toward a purely target-oriented translation.[24] Consequently, in some instances, they intentionally detached from the source text for the sake of the readers. In this direction, the second case study may prove such a hypothesis: the lines "*La sua generosità non aveva inverno, era / Un autunno che tanto più cresceva quanto più veniva mietuto*" ["For his bounty, there was no *winter* in't, an / *autumn* it was that *grew* the more by *reaping*"; my emphasis] would sound reasonable to a diverse public, composed by both experts and theatre enthusiasts, thanks to a semantic *continuum* detectable between the lines, both revolving around nature and its cycle. Conversely, "Antonio" [Antony] as a replacement for "autunno" [autumn] may be interpreted as a hazardous deviation that would jeopardise the semantic structure of the passage, finally destabilising the reader.

In conclusion, the cases illustrated above reveal the complex relationship between the English editions of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* and its Italian translations. However, debating about such a precious legacy contributes to ensuring that "age cannot whither" the text, "nor costum stale [its] infinite variety" (2.2.244).

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[24] In this regard, the evaluation criteria adopted by the Italian translators resemble those of the so-called trans-editors, who "[evaluate] the work of translation from the perspective of target readers' needs" (Hu 2018: 184) and devote special attention to the "functions of texts, analysing semantical and pragmatical equivalences between the source and target texts" (House 2015: 63).

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From the United States (via the Soviet Union) to Hungary

The first Asimov translations in the Kádár era

Anikó Sohár[1]

Abstract

Isaac Asimov was the favourite American science-fiction author in the Kádár era due to extraliterary reasons, many of his works were therefore translated when science fiction, a previously prohibited popular genre was introduced to the Hungarian public. This paper analyses the first two Hungarian translations, that of a short story entitled 'Victory Unintentional' and that of a collection of short stories entitled *I Robot*. Both indirect and direct translations exhibit multiple traces of censorship and revision, significantly changing the structure, atmosphere and message of the original works. The paper also calls attention to the need to gather information about the literary translators of the Kádár era as long as some of them are still alive, make use of oral history.

Keywords

literary translation, indirect translation, translation under Communism, science fiction, censorship

Science fiction was gradually introduced again to the Hungarian readership after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution against the Communist Police State as part of the consolidation process which was launched to placate the rebellious population. Translation always plays a central role when introducing new genres into a literary system (Even-Zohar 1990), and SF was no exception in the Kádár era (1956-89). Most of the published books were of foreign origin, and Asimov's were given pride of place among the non-Communist science-fiction authors. One of his short stories (''Victory Unintentional,'' to be discussed later) was selected for the periodical *Univerzum* published by the Communist Party's

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[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, sohar.aniko@btk.ppke.hu

publisher, Kossuth as early as in 1957; another story was included in the first SF anthology in Hungarian (''Nobody Here But-'', trans. Tamás Katona, 1965); the first American SF short story collection and SF novel translated, *I Robot* and *The Caves of Steel* respectively (both transl. Pál Vámosi, 1966 and 1967), were also his works as was the very first volume of the first Hungarian SF series entitled *Kozmosz Fantasztikus Könyvek* [Cosmos Fantastic Books], *The End of Eternity* (trans. András Apostol, 1969), and when, due to the great public interest in the genre, a science-fiction monthly, *Galaktika* was launched in 1972, the first issue had two of his short stories (''Marooned Off Vesta,'' and ''Anniversary,'' both trans. Péter Szentmihályi Szabó).

Asimov is perhaps the best-known science-fiction writer due to his Foundation series (published between 1942–1993). The original trilogy, written in the forties, won the Best All-Time Series Hugo Award in 1966, and still attracts new generations. According to the rather incomplete UNESCO's Index Translationum database, Asimov is the world's 24th most-translated author. Since his personality, behaviour and beliefs were thought to correspond with Communist norms (for example, he opposed the Vietnam war), many of his writings were rendered into Hungarian during the Kádár era despite the regime's scanty hard currency resources. These include nine novels, three nonfiction books (one about biology and two on astronomy), one collection of eight short stories, and fifty-four additional short stories in diverse magazines and fanzines (five only in fanzines) with several having two translations – the exact number cannot be determined as the translator is sometimes unnamed in the magazines, altogether in 14 cases. Asimov had no distinct Hungarian voice as his works were translated by at least 24 different translators in this time, and only five of them worked with an Asimov text more than once. Perhaps Pál Vámosi comes closest to a real Asimov 'spokesman' as he rendered 25 out of the 74 Asimov texts translated into Hungarian before the political transformation in 1989.

Using the first translation of a short story (1957), and the first short story collection (1966) as illustrations, I will examine how and why Asimov became such a favourite of the era, the institutional and conceptual framework, how these translations were adapted to the norms and expectations of Communist Hungary, to what extent they were changed (for example, which elements were censored or regularly modified) and in what respects. The translations' paratexts will also be discussed as will the differences between different types of publication, since magazines, to say nothing of fanzines, enjoyed much more freedom than books.

1. Introduction

After the 1956 Revolution, the new Kádár regime had to gain the support or at least the tolerance of the population and therefore announced new doctrines and new measures – political, economic and cultural – to achieve this goal, among them allowing the carefully controlled introduction of previously prohibited popular genres, the so-called "entertainment literature" which included science fiction from the West, even from the United States. During the Kádár era Asimov was the most famous science-fiction writer alive. Not only his incredible output – more than five hundred books and an estimated ninety thousand letters – but his sure sense of tackling truly important social, technological and ethical issues, his open-mindedness, eternal optimism, and, last but not least, his "colossal ego" ("Asimov" in Zebrowski 2018) contributed to this fame and favourable reception worldwide. Péter Kuczka, the advocate of science fiction in Hungary promoted his works as Asimov's views and attitudes – for example, his atheism, or his future- and technology-orientation – were in accord with Communist tenets. As far as I know, Asimov never criticised the Soviet Union, or Communist ideology, and never praised the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, which were the most sensitive topics of the Kádár era and would result in an immediate and total ban (Czigányik 2011). He supported the Democrats and civil applications of nuclear power and later opposed the Vietnam War and Richard Nixon. Although Asimov considered himself a feminist and found nothing exceptionable in homosexuality, sex and gender were never the focal points of his narratives, so his works avoided the ban on eroticism and pornography. Thanks to his confidence in humanity, he never wrote horror fiction either, another genre prohibited in Communist Hungary. Perhaps most importantly from the translation perspective, he always said, "I don't ask for anything but publication" ("Asimov" in Zebrowski 2018), that is, he did not really care how much he would be paid for the translation rights of his works which probably counted in his favour behind the Iron Curtain.

> For the most part robots and humans collaborate peacefully toward their common realisation within their dual society. Most of the lower robots are employed in burdensome or boring tasks like housekeeping, manufacturing, or repair, while most of the "Spacer" humans have reached a high standard of contentment and education. Social or political crises are rare, and do not endanger the stability of the society. Robots prevent social conflicts and even attempt to remove individual frustrations. (Idier 266)

Asimov, being a political liberal, also expressed his belief in co-operation and peaceful co-existence of not just robots and humans, but diverse nations and ideologies not only in his fiction, but in public speeches and special forewords written for the audience of Communist countries – for instance, for the Hungarian version of *The End of Eternity*, in which he says "My foremost wish is the friendship of all peoples, because only this may save Earth from disasters. We are not enemies. We have common enemies threatening all of us: famine, diseases, ignorance. Defeat of these enemies (or the warning what happens if we do not overcome them) is the subject of science fiction." (my translation). Such declarations earned him the publication of his works in the Communist camp, but what were these translations like? In chronological order, the first in Hungarian was a short story …

2. "Victory Unintentional"

"Victory Unintentional" about the first contact with an alien civilisation on Jupiter and a sequel to the non-robot short story "Not Final" was published in the August issue of *Super Science Stories* in 1942, and fifteen years later it was selected to be the first Asimov text in Hungarian. It is a classical short story with a (sort of) punch-line: Three robots are sent from the human settlement on the Jovian moon, Ganymede to the surface of Jupiter to assess the threat level from the hostile Jovians, and they return with a promise of eternal peace between Jupiter and humankind due to a misapprehension. Since it refers to a Terrestrian Empire, predecessor of the Galactic Empire, it is often considered a prelude to the Robot/Empire/Foundation series.

The text was translated anonymously, and published in the monthly *Univerzum* by Kossuth, the publisher of the Party – that is, Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the only political party permitted in Hungary – in September 1957. It was the second American science-fiction short story to appear in Hungarian in this period as one of the first generation-starship tales, "The Voyage That Lasted 600 Years" by Don Wilcox, was published a month before. At that time any publication had to be planned well in advance, after a meticulous multistep examination approved it both financially and ideologically, although publications in periodicals were a little less strictly inspected and repeatedly employed as test cases (Bart 2002, Czigányik 2011, Sohár 2022).

The original in English consists of 7,262 words, while 4,265 words comprise the Hungarian version, as 2,466 words (34 per cent of the original) were omitted, and 298 added – to say nothing of the numerous textual modifications to be discussed. Since translated texts are usually a little longer than originals owing to explicitations

and embedded explanations, this text is a downright bowdlerization of the English short story. It is surprisingly honest that the then usual paratext "translation of…" was replaced with a "based on Isaac Asimov's short story," although it would have been even more honest to have confessed: "just reminiscences of Asimov." This seems to be the policy of *Univerzum*: since only works by Soviet science-fiction writers were translated, those by everybody else were adapted to the generally unspoken and most certainly unwritten requirements of the era. First translated into Russian (by D. Zhukov), and only then into Hungarian as the later Asimov translations in this periodical named their sources as "Vokrug Szveta" or "Nauka i zhizny," and so forth, transliterations of Soviet publications. All Asimov translations in *Univerzum*, including "Victory Unintentional," were indirect translations, where Russian was the intermediary language. This finding also explains the systematic anonymity of *Univerzum* translators, since their names would probably have revealed the source language, and might have indicated the unusually numerous, blatant shifts and expurgations. It should not be forgotten that this is the time of the Cold War when an original American text was unavailable to the Hungarian public. Even supposing that it could be acquired somehow, very few people spoke English at the end of the 1950s, as learning English, the language of the arch-enemy Capitalist countries, had been discouraged, and its [English's] teaching widely abandoned.

The content of the translations was radically modified by various cuts and lexical, grammatical and conceptual shifts. Some adaptations such as conversion of units of measurement (for example, mile to kilometre) are consistent with the translation universals that all translations display to some extent: normalisation, simplification, explicitation and levelling-out (Baker 1992). From my point of view, those changes are the most interesting which cannot easily fit these categories, since they may reveal the unspoken translation norms, strategy, policy of the era, and at the same time, offer insight into the introductory phase of a new genre, likely with contradictions and tentative solutions (Even-Zohar 1990). The opening sentence in English – The spaceship leaked, as the saying goes, like a sieve – for instance, immediately astounds the reader who is aware that space is a hard vacuum, so how could anyone survive in such a spaceship? But the Hungarian translation – *A szóbanforgó űrhajó a rossz nyelvek szerint olyan lyukas volt, mint egy szita* [The spaceship in question leaked like a sieve according to gossips] – does away with wonder and implies that the spaceship did not leak at all, only some malicious beings say so. Since the following sentences claiming that this leaking happened according to plan were omitted, the Hungarian reader will not get a sense of wonderment, but of incompetence and confusion.

Asimov was famous for his robots, and indeed, the protagonists of this short story, as has been mentioned, are three robots who visit inhabited Jupiter as envoys of the human race settled on Jupiter's satellite, Ganymede. The word *robot*, coined by Josef and Karel Čapek in 1920, has come into general use in many languages. However, in the first Hungarian translation, they are systematically named *robot-emberek* [robot-men] following the Hadrovics-Gáldi Russian-Hungarian Dictionary (1951). Not only the Hungarian term, but the translator's deliberate additions alter the reader's perception with the strong emphasis on the human aspect. This is the first appearance of the robots in the story – note that the word *ember* [(hu)man] occurs three times in the added part along with the doubled number of words:

> Original: They were simply robots, designed on Earth for Jupiter.
> Translation: Mégis, *emberiek* voltak, mivelhogy *ember* készítette őket. Robot-*emberek* voltak ugyanis, „akiket" éppen a Jupiterre való utazás céljából készítettek. [Yet, they were human-like, inasmuch as humans made them. For they were robot-men, "whom" were particularly designed to travel to Jupiter. (strikethrough: omission, underline: addition, italics: (hu)man)]

In order to uphold his interpretation, the translator leaves out the description of the robots which explicitly refutes their resemblance to human beings (as well as the only reference to a US firm, to Capitalism), two whole paragraphs:

> The ZZ robots were the first robots ever turned out by the United States Robots and Mechanical Men Corporation that were not even faintly human in appearance. They were low and squat, with a centre of gravity less than a foot above ground level. They had six legs apiece, stumpy and thick, designed to lift tons against two and a half times normal Earth gravity. Their reflexes were that many times Earth-normal speed, to make up for the gravity. And they were composed of a beryllium-iridium-bronze alloy that was proof against any known corrosive agent, also any known destructive agent short of a thousand-megaton atomic disrupter, under any conditions whatsoever.
> To dispense with further description, they were indestructible, and so impressively powerful that they were the only robots ever built on whom the roboticists of the Corporation had never quite had the nerve to pin a serial-number nickname. One bright young fellow had suggested Sissy One, Two and Three – but not in a very loud voice, and the suggestion was never repeated.

Despite the author's stress on the robots' similarity to their human designers, the translator questions their selfhood, dehumanizes them with the double quotation marks around whom, and every time when the Hungarian version plays down the robots' personality, and enhances their machine-like characteristics (for example, omitting that ZZ3 sighs at ZZ1's silliness or dropping adverbs such as *philosophically*, *embarrassed* etc.). The altered names of the robots, from ZZ to RE (the numbers remain unchanged), do not imply the ultimate design in robotic production, just an abbreviation of their type, *robot-ember*. Asimov endows both his robots and Jovians with human-like characteristics and nonhuman bodies contrasting diverse forms of monstrosity, while the translator obviously separates the characters into good guys, humans and their representatives, the robots, and bad guys, the Jovians, completely changing the viewpoint, and the embedded values.

At the same time, the translator elevates the robots' status a little: in the original, the robots always talk about their human *masters*, but the word *master* never occurs in the Hungarian version, where the robots are seemingly equal, humans are only once designated as "our creators." It would likely have been unacceptable in a Communist country which, at least officially, dispensed with social hierarchy completely and where everybody was supposed to be equal to everybody else. This assumption is supported by the expurgation as in for example, "he […] began inching his way forward in a curious grovelling fashion" or correction as in, for example, "If your honors will now *condescend* to swear peace" translated as "Ha Önöknek van felhatalmazásuk arra, hogy örökös békét kössenek velünk" [If you are *authorized* to make peace with us forever, my emphasis] – or all instances where references to subordinate behaviour occur in the original. Evidently, social hierarchy could only be tolerated in a rather limited form, excluding the master-servant relationship.

Reducing the strength or effect of expressions is also typical in the translation. Thus a *complete about-face* becomes a simple and neutral *change*, or *swoop overhead* turns into *descend*, resulting in a bland and absolutely humourless style, totally losing Asimov's distinctive voice. This finding corresponds to László Scholz's observation (2011) that literary translations of the period show a rather homogeneous style, but contradicts the later translation norm that demanded a refined literary parlance even in popular genres (Sohár 2022). I find it particularly revealing that during Communism humour was always toned down, and frequently eradicated from literary texts: the political system took everything far too seriously, while all forms of totalitarianism fear ridicule.

The most striking additions are, however, the inserted four headings within the text dividing it into five parts: *Meeting the inhabitants of Jupiter* [Találkozás a Jupiter lakóival],

Visiting the city [Látogatás a városban], *The force field* [Az erőtér], *Sudden turnaround* [Váratlan fordulat], dividing the story into unequal parts: the beginning and the ending sections kept more than 70 per cent of the original content (73 and 74%, respectively), while the middle sections were more radically edited (49, 44 and 40 per cent loss, resp.). Unfortunately, it cannot be ascertained whether the headings were the translator's idea, but from the other translations in this and other issues, it seems plausible that such additions were not the norm at *Univerzum*, and neither the original, nor the Russian translation boasts such headings. Since the people involved had already died, and censorship instructions were never written down, only a meticulous microtextual comparison of the three texts – the original, the Russian and the Hungarian – might provide answers if/when the manuscripts will be found and compared.

The newness of the SF genre to Hungary can also be detected in the translation of new concepts, for example, when the spaceship lands, the Hungarian text uses the nautical term *moor* out of the available vocabulary, and goes on doing this throughout the tale until the spaceship *sails away* at the end and only once employs an aviation term, which seems a little inappropriate in the Jovian atmosphere: "we will gladly promise to make no attempt to venture into space" is translated as "megígérjük, hogy nem zavarjuk a légiforgalmat" [we promise not to interfere with the air traffic]. Or when the spaceship approaches Jupiter's surface, the Hungarian text mentions "only 70 Centigrade," (see Note iv) to which it later refers to as "low temperature," consequently the attentive reader may guess that an insignificant detail, that is, the phrase "below zero" was left out resulting in a 140 degree Centigrade difference. I can only surmise, based on these and other scientifically unsound translation solutions, that the Hungarian translator was no scientist. It is likely that the publisher did not consider the specificity of this new genre and commissioned a tried-and-tested literary translator who did the job as best as s/he could without realizing that laws in physics should not be bent just to sound better. Science fiction fans may take umbrage. The cumulative changes resulted in a simplified narrative in a fundamentally different style and register. It is no wonder that this short story had to be re-translated after the collapse of the Kádár regime.

The other Asimov short stories published in *Univerzum* ("Robbie," "Lastborn," "Nightfall," "Death of a Honey-Blonde," "Youth," "Old-Fashioned," and "It's Such a Beautiful Day") did not fare any better. Indeed, they were not only edited in and out, but also published in two or three instalments, except "Robbie," and "Old-Fashioned," whose length prevented this partitioning. Apart from "Youth," all the others have been re-translated, "Nightfall," twice, "Death of a Honey-Blonde," three times in three years (1987-89), with the last re-translation appearing in a fanzine, anonymously. "Robbie" was officially translated for the first science fiction short story collection, *I, Robot.*

3. "*I, Robot*"

These short stories first appeared in *Astounding*, the leading SF periodical of the era, between 1941 and 1950 – except the first which was published as "Strange Bedfellow" in *Super Science Stories* in September 1940. Later Asimov wrote a frame story for the fixup edition: a reporter asks Dr. Susan Calvin, the first robopsychologist, the number one expert at U.S. Robot and Mechanical Men, Inc. – known from "Victory Unintentional," alas, only by the readers of the English original – about her career on the occasion of her retirement. These tales about man-robot interactions and moral dilemmas are her reminiscences, and the author inserted an introduction, a brief epilogue and five linking texts. James Gunn summarizes the unflagging attraction of the collection: "each story exists as a puzzle to be solved. The delight of the reader is in the ingenuity with which Asimov's characters solve the puzzle. The robots exist to present the puzzle in their behaviour; the characters exist to solve the puzzle" (1996). Despite the title, the stories have a third person omniscient narrator, and the events are not related from the robots' perspective.

By the time of publication, Asimov had formulated the Three Laws of Robotics which were meant to relieve readers of their fear of man-made monsters (cf. technophobia and Frankenstein complex), and play an important role in the collection. In the beginning many people feel frightened by the robots as is shown in "Robbie," and these fears are only allayed somewhat by the end of Dr. Calvin's fifty-year-long career when robots become regular participants in the techno-utopian, transhuman everyday life. By that time, robots have learnt to circumvent the three laws of robotics by adding the so-called Zeroth Law which places the interests of humankind before those of an individual human being – that is, the individual becomes expendable for the common good, a tenet shared by the Communist ideology – and with this innovation the political profession opens up for robots. By investigating the human-robot relationship from several angles, Asimov became a pioneer of SF stories dealing with questions of moral philosophy and ontology (cf. works by Philip K. Dick or Terry Pratchett). The popularity of *I, Robot* is easy to explain: the topic is of current concern, the author focuses on problems which can be solved by accurate assessment of the facts and logical thinking even by the average reader, showing the robots in a favourable – non-threatening – light, and the narrative is as simple as a folk tale. The language has not dated, and Asimov took great care to avoid the technological terminology of his time when he named future devices, he always chose a neutral word or expression (for example, *pocket recorder* in the Introduction), or coined a word (for example, *visorphone*).

The first Hungarian translation was published in 1966, two years after the Soviet edition, and similarly to that, the Hungarian collection was incomplete with the omission of the last short story, "The evitable conflict." (The Soviet translation also omitted "Escape!"). This was probably due to politics, since "The evitable conflict" refers to the Soviet Union as erstwhile state, a federation already obscured in the past by the time of the story (2052), and that was evidently incompatible with the official ideology which hailed Socialism and particularly Communism as the political and ideological systems of the future. A total prohibition against criticism of the Soviet Union in any form was one of the unspoken rules of the structural censorship (Bourdieu 1991) pervading Hungarian cultural life at the time. The first unabridged edition was only published in 1991, after the political transformation.

The significant role of ideology even in the marginal, freshly introduced popular genres is clear from the brief foreword of the collection, which I. A. Yefremov wrote for the Soviet edition (1964). He cuts Asimov and his works down to size: Asimov falls into the permissible category (see Kontler 1999 quoted in Czigányik 2011, Sohár 2022) as he is not interested in autotelic fantasizing, shows great interest in the Soviet Union, inevitably and gradually turns away from science fiction – Yefremov fortunately was mistaken in this assumption. But perhaps we can thank the long-lasting tradition of afterwords in Hungarian science fiction publications classifying the authors and subject-matter and putting them in their proper light to this foreword.

Together with the last short story, the dedication was also omitted, because Asimov dedicated this volume "to John W. Campbell, Jr., who godfathered the robots." This statement sins doubly against the ideology of the period by mentioning a godfather, a religious term on the one hand, and on the other by paying homage to Campbell who was labelled "enemy" on this side of the Iron Curtain (see Kuczka 1973). Since in the sixties, even books meant for adults were often illustrated, *I, Robot* acquired ten black and white illustrations obviously made for this volume by Anna Tedesco (they were omitted from later editions).

As has already been mentioned, Kossuth was the publisher of the Party, so when it brought out the first story of the collection in *Univerzum* in 1965, it meant official approval for the publication. That translation was probably well-received, thus the whole – seemingly complete but in fact censored – collection was then published the next year. Later the already-introduced new genre and author was passed on to another publisher, Móra. Móra specialized in children's and juvenile literature, and from the seventies, also in science fiction (Kozmosz Fantasztikus Könyvek series, *Galaktika*, *Robur*) under Péter Kuczka's guidance. It was not by chance, therefore,

that Móra re-published these Asimov stories in *Robur*, the science-fiction monthly for youth, and later in a volume as well.

I, Robot was translated by Pál Vámosi (1911-91) whose case confirms Venuti's famous claim about the translator's invisibility (1995) for it was difficult to find data about his professional activities. When I was trying to mine more information about Vámosi on the web during the pandemic, all literary translators who had known him agreed that he had been a fine old-school gentleman, originally a bank clerk, later an editor of Európa, a publishing house specializing in world literature in the Kádár era (for more information on Socialist book publishing see Bart 2002, Géher 1989, Lator 2002, Takács 2002), and literary translation had been for him a labour of love. Katalin Dezsényi, who used to edit Vámosi's translations at Európa, wrote to me in a private Facebook group for literary translators, editors and publishers that Vámosi had been an old-fashioned gentleman, but a sloppy translator whose work often had to be re-translated: an old-fashioned, pre-World War II style characterized all his translations. Whereas Márton Mesterházi, a famous literary translator himself, who commissioned a translation of Orange Soufflé, a one-act play by Saul Bellow from Vámosi for Hungarian Radio, called his rendering excellent. This dichotomy is also apparent in this Asimov translation. Besides the translator's possible personal preference, both the marginalized position of the genre and its jargon, its closeness to colloquial expressions and slang could be the explanation for the inconsistent quality of the Hungarian text.

Vámosi also translated philosophy, plays, poems, literary and scientific prose from English, German, Latin, and Russian. As far as I could establish, he did not specialize in science fiction: I found only one popular science text, two novels, and 34 short stories (25 by Asimov) of the genre translated by him. However, his translation of *I, Robot* has proven very successful as it was re-published seven times (1966, 1985, 1991, 1993, 2001, 2004, 2019), while the short story, "Reason" appeared eight times. This translation became so popular that it may even seem untouchable, almost canonized for its fans. Yet it remains uneven. The text displays both qualities and idiosyncrasies typical of the times. For example, Vámosi avoided exclamation marks almost as much as the British or Americans even when they are compulsory in Hungarian, or consistently committed a grammatical error (*magába*(n) *foglal* [include]). The translation is, however, fluent and definitely domesticated so it mostly reads well, but the translator sometimes misunderstands the original or sticks to it so closely that the resulting Hungarian sentence sounds funny, for example, when he chooses a peculiar word order with a verb – colour – which works both literally and figuratively:

Original: He now made a proper addition to the general atmosphere of these meetings on Hyper Base. In his stained white smock, he was half rebellious and wholly uncertain.

Translation: Pecsétes fehér köpenye, teljesen határozatlan, kicsit lázadó egyénisége új színekkel tarkította a megbeszélést. [His stained white smock, wholly uncertain and a little rebellious personality coloured the meeting with new colours.]

After uploading the original and its Hungarian translation into a translation memory, I found some inexplicable changes, for example, seven brief sentences, out of 603, were left out from "Runaround" ("Donovan's pencil pointed nervously."; "If Speedy didn't come back, no selenium"; "What the devil!"; "Are you sure?"; "Silence fell."; "All right."; "He turned away."). Their translation would not pose any difficulty, nor were they ideologically sensitive, so what could cause their excision? Since in the interpolated text linking this story with the previous one, one of the American engineers is named *Gregorej* Powell, perhaps it is not too far-fetched to suppose that Vámosi might have used the Russian translation – at least as an aid – during *his* translating process. This way he could make certain that his translation would not contain any offensive or problematic phrasings. I could not verify this hypothesis yet, but since none of 434 segments of "Robbie" was left out, this may later prove to be true. Interestingly, both the two Hungarian versions of "Robbie" are about a thousand words shorter than the English (7,082 words): the one by the anonymous translator totals only 6,014 words despite adding the Three Laws of Robotics as an epigraph, while that by Vámosi totals 5,933. This occurs partly because of the very different languages and partly due to small truncations (for instance, describing the Talking Robot as *csodabábu* [approx. wondrous puppet] instead of as a *tour de force*).

How is it that the editor – either in Kossuth, or later at *Robur*, or in Móra – did not notice the omissions? Or was it permissible then to take liberties with a text as part of the translator's freedom? Did this happen only in popular genres or were mainstream works also modified? Perhaps even canonized literature? This certainly needs further research, but I can assert that all translations of the Kádár era I have so far examined (approximately a hundred) were to some extent abridged, re-written, or adapted to meet assumed expectations. At the same time, Vámosi did careful work in some instances and paid attention to little details: for example, since the Hungarian title of "Liar!" consists of two words, he changed the number from one to two in the sentence "and of all her turbulent thoughts *only one* infinitely bitter word passed her lips" (my emphasis). It stands out a mile that the short stories are

numbered as if there were chapters, and Vámosi added altogether 13 explanatory footnotes to the text (for example, the meaning of the roaring twenties, conjunction, the rotation of Mercury and so forth). Whenever he thought the audience would not understand the term or the reference, he conscientiously expounded it. This attitude fits the paternalistic enlightening-educational tendency of the Communist era which put popular genres into the service of spreading – approved – knowledge and indoctrination. Perhaps the footnote which explains the Frankenstein complex is the most interesting for us today because Frankenstein is one of the first science fictional novels but was then unknown to the Hungarian public and in addition the translator uses a now outdated word for complex (*komplexum*). From the paratexts it seems evident that the intended target audience for this volume did not consist of intellectuals or university graduates, but the not overly educated. This anticipated readership harmonizes with the initial notion of the genre as literature fit for the entertainment of youth as emphasized in blurbs on science fiction book covers and other publicity materials at that time.

The translation also has surprisingly many misunderstood passages, evident only for those who compare it with the original, such as this typical excerpt:

Original:

[…] I intend to make public the fact that you're wearing *a protective shield* against *Penet*-radiation." "That so? *In that case*, you've probably already made it *public*. I have a notion our enterprising press representatives have been tapping my *various communication* lines for quite a while. I know they have my office lines *full of holes*…

Translation:

– […] Nyilvánosságra szándékozom hozni, hogy *Panet-sugár elleni védőruhát* hord.

– Tényleg? *Akkor* ezt már valószínűleg meg is tette. *Egyébként* az az érzésem, hogy a mi vállalkozó szellemű riportereink már jó ideje lehallgatják a vonalaimat. Azt biztosan tudom, hogy az irodai vonalaimat *át- meg átlyuggatták*.

[I intend to make public the fact that you're wearing *a protective garment* against *Panet*-radiation." "That so? *Then* you've probably already made it. *Moreover*, I have a notion our enterprising press representatives have been tapping my lines for quite a while. I know they *made lots of holes* in my office lines] (256, emphasis added)

The second speaker does not accuse the first in the original, on the contrary, he informs his rival that his conversations are monitored by journalists, and whatever they say will soon be known by the general public. Listening to people talking on the telephone was a delicate question at that time, as state security was known to

do it regularly, so Vámosi may have changed this segment deliberately. However, translating the idiom *be full of holes* literally means that the translator did not know the phrase and could not look it up – we must not forget that the Iron Curtain made it practically impossible to learn or keep up with idiomatic speech, spoken language, particularly slang, so Vámosi cannot be blamed for this. He usually omitted such words (for example, *lickety-split*). Since the Hungarian text is fluent and more or less logical, and the audience still likes and enjoys it, these shifts will probably remain undetected as long as nobody ventures to re-translate the collection.

Culture-specific items also had to be re-written or adapted since the Hungarian readers did not know much about the United States of America in the Kádár era as the dissemination of information and people's ability to travel were restricted. Hence the generalizations: instead of *gingham* he wrote *szövet* [cloth], *collie* became *juhászkutya* [sheep dog] and *Virginia reel* was replaced by *virginiai tánc* [Virginian dance]. However, in the sixth chapter ("Little Lost Robot"), Vámosi translated *general* as a typical Soviet military rank, *vezérőrnagy* (approx. major general), which brings up a potential Russian source again. Units of measurements are inconsistent, they are sometimes taken over, sometimes transformed, even within one short story (for example, the Hungarian "Robbie" has a half-mile tall Roosevelt Building, but twenty-five square yards of coils and wires becomes twenty-five square meters, increasing the Talking Robot's size). Vámosi indeed seems to like archaic, literary expressions (for example, *früstököl* approx. break fast), and always employs a determinedly domesticating strategy: conversion of units of measurements, using sayings and idioms (for example, *amíg ebből a kátyúból ki nem kecmergünk* approx. until we do not wriggle out of this difficulty), so readers may have the impression that the text was written in Hungarian until they chance upon a catachresis (for example, a confusion of mind with brain in an idiom: *De az agya még jól vágott* [approx. he still had a sharp mind]) or nonsense, for instance, mixing up university and academic degrees (translation: *2008-ban bölcsészdoktori diplomát szerzett* [approx. in 2008, she obtained a Master of Arts], original: In 2008, she obtained her Ph.D.), or sending the Westons on an *instructional* instead of an *exhibition* trip. I am convinced, however, that these few blunders are hardly noticeable to the average reader.

Before starting to discuss the translation, I wondered whether the translator managed to follow Asimov in avoiding a dated technological terminology. The answer is no, his terms are usually bound to the era, therefore they sound obsolete today. When Asimov cleverly shuns naming the medium writing "They brought about five tons of figures, equations, all that sort of stuff," the Hungarian translator

adds *paper*. The already mentioned pocket recorder became *zsebmagnó* (pocket tape recorder) although this may sound science fictional enough for the young generations these days because of its outmodedness. Vámosi altered quite a few other futuristic concepts as well: we read *cosmic jump* instead of *interstellar jump*, *spaceship theory* instead of *Franciacci's space-warp theory*, *four dimensional space* instead of *hyperspace*, *beam field generator* instead of *field generator*. These Hungarian terms – the second and the third especially – fail to evoke estrangement which Suvin (1972) considers the essence of science fiction. Recall that this is still the introductory phase of science fiction in Hungary and Suvin's views will very much influence the cultural import of this genre later on (Kuczka 1973, Szélesi 2019, Sohár 2022).

All in all, although this collection is re-written to a lesser extent than "Victory Unintentional," the translation is still ambivalent. Obviously, only some of the manifold and conflicting loyalties expected from a translator worked here, mainly loyalties to the client, the one who commissions the translation and to the target audience, resulting in a version well-adapted to the target culture's norms, which of course explains its long-lasting popularity. Science-fiction fans still insist on a domesticated translation, preferably in a refined literary register (see readers' comments on Moly and occasionally on Goodreads). But it creates a false Asimov image which still pervades public opinion about his writings in Hungary, that is, he focussed on ideas and plotlines, almost completely ignoring characterisation and descriptions, he therefore falls into the storyteller category, and could not be called a stylist. While it is true that Asimov did not pay special attention to style and mainly concerned himself about contingencies and concepts, he did have his own characteristic voice and idiom. As George Zebrowski noted Asimov "speaks in a gracefully lucid and sophisticated voice," and I would add has a sly sense of humour lurking in the background, which is less apparent in the Hungarian translations than in the English original.

4. Concluding remarks

Asimov as a science fiction writer and a supporter of societal changes was indeed privileged in the Kádár era, but this privilege seems limited to the number of publications and certainly it did not include the publication of his writing unabridged and uncensored. This small sample proves that the early Asimov texts, instead of receiving a straightforward translation, were adapted and re-written to an unusually great extent – but whether this was carried out due to the newness of the genre, the short prose form, the person or the nationality of the author, or the translators, or possibly other factors needs further investigation.

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Essays by the members of the Hieronymus Translation Studies Research Group

Translating non-standard language

Translating Non-standard Language
Andrea Camilleri in Hungarian

Dóra Bodrogai[1]

Abstract

Andrea Camilleri has gained significant success in the last decades with his works written in a special language: by creating a language similar to Sicilian dialect but understandable to other Italian speakers he heavily involved his Sicilian cultural heritage as well and brought it closer not only to an Italian, but a worldwide audience. How are this idiolect and the cultural elements translatable into other languages? There are various approaches, as shown in Quaderni camilleriani 3, and the techniques depend greatly on the target language. In Camilleri's novels, not only the aforementioned diatopic, but also diastratic and diaphasic variation are characteristic, which is another factor the translator has to take into consideration.

In this paper I would like to examine the translator's choices in Hungarian regarding this multilingualism. Currently there are seven volumes available in Hungary, four of them translated by Margit Lukácsi, one by Noémi Kovács and Kornél Zaránd, and the last two by Ádám András Kürthy. The paper is also a parallel work to Giulia Magazzù's, which aims to examine the translations in English of three novels, two of which are in common with this paper: *Il cane di terracotta* and *La forma dell'acqua.*

Keywords

Andrea Camilleri, Sicilian literature, dialectal literature, translation, translation studies

Andrea Camilleri has gained significant success in the last decades with his works written in a special language: by creating a language similar to the Sicilian dialect but understandable to other Italian speakers he heavily involved his Sicilian cultural heritage as well and brought it closer not only to an Italian but a worldwide audience. The author confirmed that this special

[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, dora.bodrogai@gmail.com

language was used in his home, it was a sort of slang used by parents and kids, and that the dialectal part corresponded to the emotions, while the standard Italian was used for official discourse (Demontis, 2001). Some have seen his use of dialects "as a vulgar attempt to pander to his readership" (Russi 2018 citing Cotroneo 1998, Merlo 2000), while others have attributed functions to it.

In Camilleri's novels, not only the diatopic but also diastratic and diaphasic variations are characteristic, which is another factor the translator must take into consideration. Camilleri's special use of language has been analysed on numerous occasions (Storari 2004, Arcangeli 2004, Sottile 2019, Matt 2020), but Hungarian translations have not yet been at the centre of attention. This paper aims to fill this gap by examining aspects of the Hungarian translations of two Camilleri novels, *Il cane di terracotta* and *La forma dell'acqua*.

La forma dell'acqua is Camilleri's first Montalbano-novel, published in 1994 by the small Sicilian publisher Sellerio. The novel introduces the key figures, like Montalbano himself, and establishes the location in Vigàta, Sicily. The second Montalbano novel is *Il cane di terracotta* (1996, Sellerio) and to date it remains Camilleri's most translated novel; according to Caprara, it has been translated into 27 languages (Caprara, 2019). It is worth mentioning that *La forma dell'acqua* is second on this list with 26 languages. It is not difficult to see why this novel was so successful among the audiences: while Montalbano tries to deal with the arrest of one of the most-feared criminals, Tano the Greek, he stumbles upon a half-century-old mystery: two lovers are found in the closed-up part of a cave in a layout that resembles a ceremony or ritual.

Camilleri's story in Hungary began with the publisher Bastei Budapest (since then dissolved): they published four of his novels in the years 2001–2002 in the translation of Margit Lukácsi. These novels were the following: *Il ladro di merendine* [The Snack Thief] (Az uzsonnatolvaj, 2001), *Il cane di terracotta* [The Terracotta Dog] (Az agyagkutya, 2001), *Il birraio di Preston* [The Brewer of Preston] (A prestoni serfőző, 2002), and *La voce del violino* [The Voice of the Violin] (A hegedű hangja, 2002). The series was discontinued; the next publication in Hungary was the novel *La forma dell'acqua* [The Shape of Water] (A víz alakja) in 2004 by another publisher, Mágus Design Kiadó as part of a series called Gyilkosság-sorozat [Murder Series] and was translated by Noémi Kovács and Kornél Zaránd. The latest chapter in Camilleri's presence in Hungary opened in 2017 with the translation of *Un mese con Montalbano* (Montalbano. Egy hónap a felügyelővel) [Montalbano. A month with the detective] by Ádám András Kürthy, followed in 2020 by *Gli arancini di Montalbano* (Montalbano felügyelő. Karácsonyi ajándék) [Detective Montalbano. A Christmas gift] by the same translator. These last two books were

published by Európa Kiadó, one of Hungary's major publishing houses, which could potentially also guarantee the reach to a wider audience.

Seen that Camilleri in Hungary has more than one translator, it might be worth our while to compare the different translations, and how the translators chose to translate moments of linguistic interest. Vizmuller-Zocco (Vizmuller-Zocco 1999) identified three contexts of the Sicilian dialect: (1) speech of the lower social class characters and mafiosi, (2) proverbs and magic spells, and (3) synonyms. As assessed rightly in Russi (2018), though, she seems to have only considered *Il cane di terracotta*, and no other works were referenced. Santulli also thinks that Sicilian is linked to the mafia and lower-class characters, while Italian is the language of the law, of the government, which is "distant and detached from the local and everyday reality" (Santulli 2010 cited in Russi 2018: 202).

In a later study, Vizmuller-Zocco addressed the question of language again and considered it to be one of the six tests of (un)popularity. She also affirmed that dialects carry different functions which can typically be found in all literary texts that make use of these varieties. The three functions are "*ludica*" (playful), "*casuale*" (incidental), "*definitoria*" (defining). In the first one, the linguistic form is not linked to the plot and only serves the linguistic play; in the second, it is the case of a grammatically correct Italian that Camilleri wants to "flavour" with the Sicilian vocabulary; in the third, the language serves to identify the location (Sicily), a person (e.g. from different regions of Italy), or to "divide concepts from sentiments" (Vizmuller-Zocco 2001: 42), because the dialect is able to express emotions and feelings that the standard language cannot. In the following, I would like to examine the use of these functions in the two aforementioned novels.

La forma dell'acqua, linguistically, contains much fewer dialectical characteristics than the other novel in consideration, the language used most of the time resembles the Italian neostandard. However, Camilleri consistently uses some words that lead us to the typical Sicilian language and show his intention of adapting his own narrational voice that is different from other writers. These words include *magari* [maybe] in the sense of *anche* [also], *nèsciri* [exit, walk out], *trasìri* [enter], *tanticchia* [a bit] and others. Russi, in her analysis of *Il ladro di merendine*, the third novel of the Montalbano series, distinguished three groups of the lexicon used by Camilleri: (1) authentic Sicilian items, (2) Sicilian items recognizable to non-Sicilian readers, and (3) "a 'core' Sicilian lexicon comprised of items that, basically, have acquired a fixed status in Camilleri's work" (Russi 2018: 191). All of these groups are also present in the novels analysed in this paper; however, the narration and the standard

enunciations are translated into standard Hungarian language. On the other hand, there are some key moments in the novel in which the use of language becomes of significance, and which the translators (should have) translated accordingly.

Just by looking at the first pages of the original Italian text of *Il cane di terracotta* it really stands out how Camilleri's use of language has changed: the Sicilian or Sicilianized words are not sporadic anymore, they are now a continuous part of his own narrational voice. As confirmed by Pagano, "the language choices were not static because, just like the author with his novels, the director of the series decided to gradually, and more often, insert dialectisms that are typical and identifying" (Pagano 2021:193). Luigi Matt wrote the same concerning Camilleri's use of dialect:

> If one looks at Camilleri's narrative output as a whole, one has the impression of discerning in it a progressive immersion into Sicilianism. Especially following the developments of the Montalbano cycle, we can say that after an all-too-cautious start, once readers (many of whom are known to be loyal) became familiar with moderate amounts of dialect, it was possible to increase the dose, up to the extreme outcomes of the recent books (Matt 2020: 49).

The Hungarian translator of the second book, Margit Lukácsi, chose to adapt the standard Hungarian language for most of the narration but used a differentiated language for the dialogues.

There are no examples of the playful function of the Sicilian language in the two novels, but there are still cases in which the translator has had to deal with wordplays and puns. Many of these are linked to the figure of Catarella, not present in the first novel and introduced in the second. Catarella is a character of low intelligence, only employed at the police station because of his family ties. He uses a language defined as *italiano maccheronico* [macaronic Italian], his enunciations are not coherent which apart from being funny, also causes confusion from time to time. I chose to highlight one of these Catarella-moments and two others not linked to him. In the first example, Montalbano and Catarella are talking about his "venereal sickness," which he understands as something that comes and goes, confusing the verb *venire* [to come] with the adjective *venerea* [venereal]. In her solution to this semantic problem, Margit Lukácsi chose to keep the image of the illness, as *vérbaj* [blood disease] is a synonym for syphilis, but she connected it with nosebleeds which come and go, thus conducted to the meaning that *vérbaj* is, in Catarella's mind, bleeding that comes at certain intervals and stops.

«Specialista di cosa, Catarè?».	– Milyen specialistát akarsz, Catarè?
«Di malattia venerea».	– Vérbajban specialistát.
Montalbano aveva spalancato la bocca per lo stupore.	Montalbanónak tátva maradt a szája a megdöbbenéstől.
«Tu?! Una malattia venerea? E quando te la pigliasti?».	– Neked? Vérbajod? Mikor szedted össze?
«Io m'arricordo che questa malattia mi venne quando ero ancora nico, non avevo manco sei o sette anni».	– Ahogy így visszaemlékszek, ez a baj még csimotakoromba gyütt rám, hat-hét éves se vótam.
«Ma che minchia mi vai contando, Catarè? Sei sicuro che si tratta di una malattia venerea?».	– Miféle baromságot hordasz itt össze nekem, Catarè? Biztos vagy benne, hogy vérbaj?
«Sicurissimo, dottori. Va e viene, va e viene. Venerea».	– Teljesen biztos, felügyelő úr. Az orrom: hun vérzik, hun meg eláll, vérzik meg eláll. Vérbajos.
(*Il cane*, 25–26)	(*Az agyagkutya*, 25)

The second example is the comment made by secretary Ferdinand Biraghìn: the joke is possible because *tenore* in Italian means both *tenor* (singer) and *content*. Since in Hungarian there is no such polysemy, the translator used the word *veleje* (*velő*) which means *bone marrow*, but also *essence*, and so diverted the joke from the field of singing voices to the structure. This seems like a good solution to the problem albeit the result is a little less amusing. It would be interesting to look at the English translation, as the joke could probably work the same way as in Italian.

«Mi perdoni, certamente lei ignoro il tenore della telefonata».	– Bocsásson meg, bizonyára nincs tudomása a telefonbeszélgetés velejéről.
«Non solo non ignore il tenore, ma conosco anche il baritono, il basso e la soprano!».	– Nemcsak a velejéről van tudomásom, de az elejéről, sőt még a hátuljáról is!
E rise. Quant'era spiritoso Ferdinando Biraghìn!	És felnevetett. Milyen szellemes ez a Ferdinando Biraghìn!
(*Il cane*, 100)	(*Az agyagkutya*, 115)

The third example is Montalbano's slurred words when he wakes up from a nightmare in the hospital: he is scared that because the bullet compromised his intestines, he will have to eat mushy food. The doctors present try to guess his words, which, obviously, rhyme with the original word. In Hungarian, the words also rhyme, but while in Italian it is all substantives that end in the same morpheme *(-ine)*, the Hungarian words also contain a verb (*lelövöm*) [I'll shoot (him)]. It is also interesting to note that the second set of words (*scarpine* [small shoes] and *mezőkön* [on fields]) could result absurd from the inspector's mouth, the third set (*rapine* [robbery] and *lelövöm*) is linked to his profession, which makes it more plausible.

«…pappine?» fece finalmente la voce di Montalbano, l'orrore di quella prospettiva gli aveva riattivato le corde vocali. «Che ha detto?» spiò il primario volgendosi ai suoi. «Mi pare abbia detto scarpine» disse uno. «No, no, ha detto rapine» intervene un altro. (*Il cane*, 178)	– … pempőkön… – jött ki végre hang Montalban torkán, ez a rettenetes kilátás újra működésbe hozta a hangszalagjait. – Mit mondott? – kérdezte a főorvos a munkatársaihoz fordulva. – Mintha mezőkönt mondott volna – felelte az egyik. – Nem, dehogy, azt mondta, lelövöm – szólt közbe a másik. (*Az agyagkutya*, 208)

As for the incidental function, when the Sicilian serves to give "flavour" to the story, there are examples in both novels. The following one is about an activity, *tambasiàre*, which means going from room to room without a goal and thinking about other matters. The translator chose to translate this activity with the verb *keringeni* [to orbit], which is part of the standard Hungarian vocabulary. The translator could have opted for a less used, maybe even dialectal term to describe this action.

«Ora mi metto a tambasiàre» pensò appena arrivato a casa. Tambasiàre era un verbo che gli piaceva, significava mettersi a girellare di stanza in stanza senza uno scopo preciso, anzi occupandosi di cose futili. E così fece, dispose meglio i libri, mise in ordine la scrivania, raddrizzò un disegno alla parete, pulì i fornelli del gas. Tambasiàva. Non aveva appetito, non era andato al ristorante e non aveva manco aperto il frigorifero per vedere quello che Adelina gli aveva preparato. (*La forma*, 151)	Na, nekiállok keringeni egy kicsit – gondolta magában, ahogy hazaért. Keringeni – nagyon szerette ezt a szót, azt jelentette számára, amikor minden cél nélkül körbe-körbe járkált egyik szobából a másikba, és teljesen haszontalan dolgokkal foglalta el magát: szépen elrendezgette a könyveket, rendet rakott az íróasztalán, megigazított egy képet a falon, kipucolta a tűzhely sütőjét. Egyszóval keringett. Nem volt éhes, se étterembe nem ment el, se a hűtőt nem nézte meg, hogy mit készített neki Adelina. (*A víz alakja*, 132)

In the following section, there are two words that are used for this purpose: on the one hand, the *cangiu di la guardia* [change of guard] which is translated *őrségvátás*, later repeated in its correct form *őrségváltás* [change of guard]. The first variant contains a dialectal element, the use of /i:/, the close high front unrounded vowel instead of /e:/, the close-mid front unrounded vowel, a typical element in

northeastern Hungarian dialects. The other change, the disappearance of 'l' is not a dialectal element, just the simplification in the pronunciation (see volt > vót, bolt > bót, váltás > vátás).

Arrivò alla mannara alle cinque, ora che Gegè chiamava «cangiu di la guardia», il cambio della guardia consistendo nel fatto che le coppe non mercenarie e cioè amanti, adùlteri, ziti, se ne andavano dal posto, smontavano («in tutti i sensi» pensò Montalbano) per lasciare largo al gregge di Gegè […]	Öt órakor ért ki a kocsisorra, abban az órában, amelyet Gegè "őrsígvátás"-nak hívott, az őrségváltás abból állt, hogy a nem üzleti forgalmat bonyolító párok, azaz a szeretők, a félredugók, a kanbaglyok levonultak a terepről, szedték a sátorfájukat ("mindenféle értelemben", gondolta Montalbano), és átadták helyüket Gegè nyájának […]
(*Il cane*, 144–145)	(*Az agyagkutya*, 169)

On the other hand, we have *la mànnara*, a place just outside of Vigàta that Montalbano's friend, Gegè, uses for business purposes as he is a pimp. The *mànnara* gets bigger attention in *La forma dell'acqua* as part of the investigation is conducted there. The Sicilian word means *fenced-off territory for animals* (Camilleri INDEX) for which Zaránd and Kovács's translation seems more accurate in terms of the meaning (*legelő* means *pasture* in Hungarian). On the other hand, the word used by Lukácsi *kocsisor* means not only *line/row/procession of cars*, but is also used to describe the place where prostitutes are to be found, so the two connotative meaning complement each other more. In the following examples from *La forma dell'acqua*, a foreigner, Ingrid puts the accent on the wrong syllable and gets corrected by Montalbano twice. The word *mannàra* exists in standard Italian as an adjective, it means *someone capable of taking on feral features* and is usually found in the term *lupo mannaro* [werewolf]. The difference in Italian is only in the length of the vowel. In Hungarian, on the contrary, 'e' and 'é' are two completely different sounds: 'e' /"/ is an open-mid unrounded vowel, 'é' /e:/ is a close-mid front unrounded vowel. Since in Italian it is a mere question of length, in Hungarian it would have sounded more natural by elongating the consonants 'g' or 'l' rather than by using two significantly different vowels, e.g. legellő.

«Avevo curiosità di vedere questa mannàra…». «Mànnara» corresse Montalbano. (*La forma*, 125)	– Kíváncsi voltam arra a Légelőre… – A Legelőre – ismételte meg helyesen Montalbano. (*A víz alakja*, 108)
«[…] gli aveva suggerito la storia della mannàra». «Mànnara» corresse pazientemente Montalbano, quell'accento spostato gli dava fastidio. «Mànnara, mànnara» ripetè Ingrid. (*La forma*, 137)	[…] és ő a Légelőt javasolta. – Legelőt – helyesbített türelmesen Montalbano, akit idegesített ez a visszatérő hiba. – Legelő, Legelő – ismételte Ingrid. (*A víz alakja*, 120)

In the conversation below, a dialectal word is used to describe the pieces of wood which Montalbano cannot remember the name of in Italian. In the Hungarian translation, Lukácsi utilized a Hungarian dialectal word, *celőke* [stick, cudgel], which is as distant to Hungarian readers as the original word, *farlacche*, is to the Italian ones.

[…] Il pavimento è stato ricavato con una decina di farlacche inchiodate l'una all'altra e posate sulla terra nuda». «Cosa sono queste farlacche?» spiò il questore. «Non mi viene la parola italiana. Diciamo che sono assi di legno molto spesse. (*Il cane*, 93)	[…] A talajt vagy tíz egymáshoz szegelt celőkével fedték, közvetlenül a puszta földre rakták le őket. - Mik azok a celőkék? – kérdezte a rendőrkapitány. - Nem jut eszembe az olasz szó. Mondjuk, hogy jó széles deszkák. (*Az agyagkutya*, 106)

The most commonly found category is the third one, *definitoria* [defining], which is used to characterise a person or the ambient. The reason for it seems obvious, as the characters are more likely to speak in a certain way depending on their origins and education. Catarella, as mentioned, speaks a macaronic language, meanwhile, Montalbano changes his language and style based on the situation: for example, while talking to his elementary school friend, Gegè, he uses mostly dialect, which we can observe in both novels. This is also affirmed by Vizmuller-Zocco: Montalbano is capable of juggling between those who speak in dialect only (as he does, for example, with Adelina, his maid), or in dialect and Italian (for example with Tanu 'u grecu), or in a macaronic language (with Catarella), to those who try to express themselves in an Italian without any sign of origin" (Vizmuller-Zocco 1999).

In Kovács and Zaránd's translation, this passage from dialect to Italian is not marked at all, while Lukácsi is trying to imitate it by using Hungarian dialectal and

diastratic elements, such as *gyüssz* instead of *jössz* [you come], *vóna* instead of *volna* [would], which represents the pronunciation of people of lower social classes. It would seem like a good solution, as these distortions are translated almost exclusively in relation to people of lower social status.

«Scendi Salvù» disse a Montalbano « godiamoci tanticchia di quest'aria buona» […]	– Szállj ki! – mondta Montalbanónak. – Élvezzük ezt a jó levegőt. […]
« Salvù, io lo so quello che vuoi spiarmi. E mi sono preparato bene, puoi interrogarmi magari a saltare». […]	– Salvu, tudom, mit akarsz megtudni tőlem. És én jól felkészültem, kikérdezhetsz „ugratva" is. […]
«Come sta tu soru?» spiò il commissario. «L'ho portata a Barcellona, che c'è una clinica specializzata pi l'occhi. Pare che fanno miracoli. M'hanno detto che almeno l'occhio destro ce la faranno a farglielo recuperare in parte» […]	– Hogy van Marianna? – kérdezte a felügyelő. – Elvittem Barcelonába, egy szemészeti klinikára. Állítólag csodákra képesek. Azt mondják, hogy legalább a jobb szemét részben használni tudja majd. […]
«Fatti trasferire alla buoncostume e lo vieni a scoprire. A me farebbe piacere, così aiuto un miserabile come a tia che campa di solo stipendio e se ne va in giro con le pezze al culo» *(La forma*, 46–47)	– Gyere át az erkölcsrendészethez, és megtudod. Én örülnék neki. Tudnék segíteni rajtad, nyomorulton, aki csak a béréből él, és akinek kilóg a segge a gatyájából. *(A víz alakja*, 37–38)
«Pronto, Salvo? Gegè sono. Lasciami parlare e nun m'interrumpìri dicendo minchiate. Haiu necessità di vidìriti, l'haiu a dire na cosa». «Va bene, Gegè, stanoti stissa, se vuoi». «Non mi trovo a Vigàta, a Trapani sono». «Allora quannu?». «Oggi che jornu è?». «Jovedì», «Ti va beni sabatu a mezzanotti a u solitu posto?». «Senti, Gegè, sabatu a sira sono a mangiari con una pirsona, però pozzu vèniri lo stesso. Si ritardo tanticchia, aspettami». *(Il cane*, 126–127)	– Halló, Salvo? Én vagyok, Gegè. Hagyjá beszélni, és ne szakíts félbe mindenféle marhasággal. Találkoznunk kell, mondanom kell neked valamit. – Rendben, Gegè, akár máma éccaka, ha akarod. – Nem vagyok Vigàtában, Trapaniban vagyok. – Akkor mikor? – Máma mi van? – Csütörtök. – Jó neked szombaton éjfélkor a szokott helyen? – Várjál, Gegè, szombat este vacsorálok valakivel, de attól még mehetek. Ha kicsikét késnék, várjál. *(Az agyagkutya*, 147–148)

Other educated characters are also capable of changing the register which we can see in the next example. Saro, while talking to Montalbano, changes from dialect to standard Italian without missing a beat: *Che non l'avevo trovata* [That I hadn't found it] is correct standard Italian. However, in the translation, this passage is not visible at all, all of the dialogue is carried out in standard Hungarian.

«Quando l'hai trovato?».	– Mikor találtad meg?
«Lunidia a matinu prestu, alla mànnara».	– Hétfőn, korán reggel a Legelőn.
«L'hai detto a qualcuno?».	– Elmondtad valakinek?
«Nonsi, sulu a me muglieri».	– Senkinek, csak a feleségemnek.
«E qualcuno è venuto a spiarti se avevi trovato una collana così e così?».	– És nem jött senki, aki érdeklődött volna nálad, hogy találtál-e egy ilyen nyakláncot?
«Sissi. Filippo di Cosmo, che è omu di Gegè Cullotta».	– De. Filippo di Cosmo, Gegè Cullotta egyik emberje.
«E tu che gli hai detto?».	– És te mit mondtál neki?
«Che non l'avevo trovata».	– Hogy nem találtam meg.
«Ti cridì?».	– Hitt neked?
«Sissi, mi pare di sì. E lui ha detto che se per caso la trovavo, dovevo dargliela senza fare lo stronzo, perché la cosa era delicata assai».	– Igen. Azt hiszem, igen. Azt mondta, hogy ha megtalálom, át kell azonnal adnom neki, minden tréfát félretéve, ugyanis fontos dologról van szó.
(*La forma*, 64–65)	(*A víz alakja*, 52–53)

In the following conversation, the inspector is talking to an immigrant woman called Fatma. She is using a language typically attributed to beginners: she uses infinitive instead of conjugated verbs (*tu aspettare – te várni*) [you wait], there are missing or wrongly used parts in verbal and adjectival structures (*io molta sfortuna* [I much bad luck] – *én nagyon szerencsétlen* [I very unlucky]; *detto* [said]). These characteristics are rendered very similarly in Hungarian: verbs in infinitive form, missing copula (*be*), and missing articles. However, the Hungarian translators felt the need to include a stronger phrase (*kapaszkodik hozzám* literally *he is hanging onto me* instead of just *fond of me*) and a wrong inflection (*emberje* instead of *embere* [his man]) to render the grammatically incorrect nature of Fatma's speech.

«Non ti spaventare » disse il commissario.

«Io non spavento. Io molta sfortuna».

«E perché?»

«Perché si tu aspettare qualche giorno, io non era più qua».

«E dove volevi andare?»

«C'è signore di Fela, me affezionato, a lui io piacere, domenica detto me sposare. Io credo lui».

«Quello che ti viene a trovare ogni sabato e domenica?».

Fatma sgranò gli occhi.

«Come tu sapere?».

Ripigliò a piangere.

«Ma ora tutto finito».

«Dimmi una cosa. Gegè ti lascia andare con questo signore di Fela?».

«Signore parlato con signor Gegè, signore paga».

[…]

«Oh sì! Venuto signor Filippo, che lui uomo signor Gegè, detto a tutti noi se troviamo collana d'oro con cuore di brillanti dare subito a lui. Se non trovata, cercare».

«E sai se è stata ritrovata?».

«No. Anche stanotte tutte cercare».

(*La forma*, 59)

– Ne félj – mondta a felügyelő.

– Én nem fél. Én nagyon szerencsétlen.

– És miért?

– Mert ha te várni néhány nap, én nem lenni többé itt.

– Hova akartál menni?

– Van Felából egy kliensem, kapaszkodik hozzám, én tetszeni neki, vasárnap mondta, engem elvesz. Hiszek neki.

– Aki meglátogat téged minden szombaton és vasárnap?

Fatma nagyra meresztette a szemét.

– Te honnan tud?

Újra elkezdett sírni.

– De most minden vége…

– Mondd, Gegè hagyja, hogy elmenj ezzel a felai úrral?

– Úr beszélt Gegè úrral, úr fizet.

[…]

– Ó, igen! Jött Filippo úr, aki Gegè úr emberje, mondta mind a lányoknak. aki találni arany láncot nagyköves szív rajta, rögtön neki adni. Ha nem talált, keresni.

– Az tudod, hogy megtalálták-e?

– Nem, ma este is minden lány keresni.

(*A víz alakja*, 47–48)

The following three sections are all related: the Cardamone family tends to employ foreigners as maids who speak similarly to Fatma in the previous example. Although they speak more correct Italian, their speech is still marked by some strong elements, such as wrong consonant use. The use of the /g/ instead of the /k/ in the first example could be an indication of the Genovese dialect, but in the story, Montalbano is unable to distinguish where the servant is from, so it is probably not the case. The verb *guardare* [to watch] is also conjugated incorrectly

(*io guarda*), while the last verb, *tu aspetta* [you wait] is used incorrectly because it contains the personal pronoun, which should be left out in the imperative. In Hungarian, the same mechanism was used by the translators: they changed the /k/ sounds into /g/ and rendered the wrong imperative with a missing closing consonant, which, with the help of the narration, could lead to the same assumption as in Italian.

«Ghi è tu ghe palla?».	– Gi bezél?
«Sono Giovanni, c'è Ingrid?».	– Giovanni vagyok, Ingrid ott van?
«Ga ora io guarda, tu aspetta».	– Aggó most én megnézni, te várjá!
(*La forma*, 100)	(*A víz alakja*, 85)

The second example is almost identical to the previous one: the maid uses voiced consonants instead of the voiceless ones (/b/ instead of /p/, /dz/ instead of /s/) and incorrect verbal structures. In Hungarian, this incorrectness is only indicated by the wrong inflection of the verbs (e.g. *Ki beszélsz?* [Who (you) talk?] instead of *Ki beszél?* [Who's talking?] and *vársz* instead of *várj* [(you) wait]), so Lukácsi chose not to imitate the consonant changes and limit the incorrectness to the verbal structures.

«Bronto? Chi balli? Chi balli tu?».	– Halló! Ki beszélsz? Ki beszélsz ott?
«Ma dove le vanno a raccattare le camerier in casa Cardamone?» si domandò Montalbano.	– Honnan verbuválják a házvezetőnőket Cardamonééknál? – tette föl magában a kérdést Montalbano.
«C'è la signora Ingrid?».	– Ingrid asszony otthon van?
«Zì, ma chi balli?».	– Van, de ki beszélsz?
«Sono Salvo Montalbano».	– Salvo Montalbano vagyok.
«Tu speta».	– Te vársz.
(*Il cane*, 66)	(*Az agyagkutya*, 74–75)

In the third example, still a case of a maid of the Cardamone family, the pattern repeats: the maid, a foreigner, does not know how to conjugate verbs, in some cases, they are completely missing (e.g. *Non casa signora* [Not home lady]). The use of the title of a painting by Gauguin indicates the erudition of the inspector, although it does not get him any closer to being understood. At the end of the conversation, Montalbano, a bit mockingly, imitates the speech of the maid. The Hungarian translation, in this case as well, was mostly limited to the wrong inflection of verbs: Lukácsi chose to use these instead of the infinitives.

«C'è la signora Ingrid? Lo so che è tardi, ma devo parlarle».	– Ingrid asszony otthon van? Tudom, hogy késő van, de beszélnem kell vele.
«Non casa signora. Tu dire, io scribare».	– Nincs házban asszonyom. Te mondasz, én írsz.
I Cardamone pativano la specialità d'andarsi a cercare le cammarere in posti dove manco Tristan da Cunha aveva avuto il coraggio di mettere piede.	Cardamonééknak megvolt az a gyengéjük, hogy olyan helyekről hoztak maguknak házvezetőnőt, ahová még Trisztán de Cunha se merte volna betenni a lábát.
«Manau tupapau» fece il commissario.	– Manau tupapau – mondta a felügyelő.
«Niente capire».	– Semmit nem értesz.
Aveva citato il titolo di un quadro di Gauguin, era da escludere che la cammarera fosse polinesiana o di quei paraggi.	Egy Gauguin-kép címét mondta be, vagyis ki van zárva, hogy a házvezetőnő Polinéziából vagy valahonnan arról a tájról származna.
«Tu essere pronta scribare? Signora Ingrid telefonare signor Montalbano quando lei tornare casa».	– Tudsz írsz? Ingrid asszony hazajön telefonál Montalbano úrnak.
(*Il cane*, 245–246)	(*Az agyakutya*, 291)

In the next example, Montalbano is talking to Saro's neighbours. There are obvious errors in the translation: in the sentence *Turiddru! Turiddru!* the old woman calling to her husband named Turiddru to go quickly to her, she is not inviting the inspector in like in the Hungarian text. Another error of translation is towards the middle: the old lady is saying "You see that they have fled as to not finish in jail?" not, as the Hungarian translation says: "If they hadn't fled, they would have gone to jail for sure!".

Also, Saro's child is referred to as *picciliddro* simply meaning *child*, but in Hungarian the translators used the words *rascal*, *little thief*: this might be a result of the wrongfully assumed etymology of the word from *piccino* [small] and *ladro* [thief]. In reality, *-iddro* is just a diminutive ending, also observable in other words like *ciriveddro* [brain]. Those who have read the novel know that the child is very sick, therefore the Hungarian words *tolvajfióka*, *csibész* lead out of the actual context, as he is not capable of being a rascal. According to the CamillerINDEX, the word appears seven times in the novel, and it was translated as follows: *tolvajfióka* [little thief] (8), *kisgyerek* [small child] (26), *kislegény* [little guy] (51), *kisgyerek* (51), *gyerkőc* [kid] (52), *kicsi* [little one] (77), *tolvajfióka* (130) and *csibész* [rascal] (130), so we can conclude that the translator knew the real meaning of the word. In contrast, in *Il cane di terracotta*, Lukácsi consistently uses the word *csimota* for *picciliddro*, a dialectal noun meaning *child*.

«Mi perdoni, signora, cercavo i signori Montaperto».
«Signuri Montaperto? Ca quali signuri! Chiddri munnizzari vastasi sunnu!»
Non doveva correre buon sangue fra le due famiglie.
«Lei cu è?».
«Sono un commissario di pubblica sicurezza».
La donna s'illuminò in volto, pigliò a fare voci con note acute di contentezza.
«Turiddru! Turiddru! Veni di cursa ccà!».
«Chi fu?» spiò apparendo un vecchio magrissimo.
«Chistu signuri un commissariu è! Vidi ch'aviva raggiuni!? Vidi ca i guardii i cercanu? U vidi ca eranu genti tinta? U vidi ca sinni scapparu pi nun finiri in galera?».
«Quando se ne sono scappati, signora?».
«Mancu mezz'ura, havi. Cu u picciliddru. Si ci curri appressu, capaci ca li trova strata strata».
«Grazie, signora. Corro all'inseguimento».
Saro, sua moglie e il picciliddro ce l'avevano fatta.

(*La forma*, 148)

– Bocsásson meg, asszonyom, Montaperto urat és családját keresem.
– Montaperto urat és családját? Méghogy urat! Szemtes [sic] az, nem úr!
Bizonyára nem volt túl jóban a két család.
– Maga kicsoda?
– Felügyelő vagyok a rendőrségtől.
Az asszony arca felragyogott és éles, örömteli hangokat hallatott.
– Ejha! Jöjjön be gyorsan!
– Mi történt? – jelent meg a színen egy csontsovány öregember.
– Ez az úr itt egy felügyelő! Látod, mégiscsak igazam volt! Mondtam én, hogy keresi a rendőrség. Megmondtam, hogy rossz emberek ezek. Ha nem menekültek volna el, biztosan dutyiban végzik!
– Mikor mentek el, asszonyom?
– Nincs egy fél órája. Vitték a kis tolvajfiókát is. Ha utánuk szalad, még lehet, hogy elcsípi őket az úton.
– Köszönöm, asssszonyom! Már indulok is!
Ezek szerint Sarónak, feleségének és a kis csibésznek sikerült lelépnie.
(*A víz alakj*a, 130)

Agent Balassone is the only character in the two novels who speaks a different dialect, Milanese. Lukácsi chose to translate the first segment, but not the second one: seen that the first enunciation is easier to understand because it is more similar to the standard language, Italian readers and as well as Montalbano can understand it without any complications. The second one, on the other hand, is not so clear, and the translator chose to conserve its alienness in the context.

L'agente Balassone, malgrado il cognome piemontese, parlava milanese […]. «De là del mur, c'è» disse sibillinamente Balassone che oltre ad essere malinconico era magari mutànghero. «Mi vuoi dire per cortesia, se non ti è troppo di peso, che c'è oltre la parete?» spiò Montalbano diventando di una pericolosa gentilezza. «On sit voeuij». «Vuoi usarmi la cortesia di parlare italiano?». (*Il cane*, 107)	Balassone hadnagy piemonti vezetékneve ellenére milánói dialektust beszélt […]. – A falon túl van valami – mondta szibillai hangon Balassone, aki azon kívül, hogy mélabús, talán látnok is volt. – Volnál szíves megmondani, ha nem esik túlságosan nehezedre, hogy mi van a falon túl? – kérdezte Montalbano fenyegető udvariassággal. – On sit voeuij. – Megtennéd, hogy olaszul beszélsz velem? (*Az agyagkutya*, 123–124)

The next example is a written note by Adelina, Montalbano's maid. The written text presents characteristics of the Sicilian and is very similar to the spoken language, so we can conclude that she is not very well-educated. The Hungarian translation reflects this: wrong consonants, dialectal words (e.g. *máma* [today]), and contracted phrases (e.g. *nemehet* [cannot eat]).

«Il prigattere Fassio mà dito chi ogghi vossia sini torna a la casa. Pighlio parti e cunsolazione. Il prigattere mà dito chi lo deve tiniri leggio. Adellina». (*Il cane*, 187)	"Fassio törsőrmester aszonta hogy máma az úr hazagyün. Örülök neki. A törsőrmester aszonta hogy nemehet nehezett. Adellina" (*Az agyagkutya*, 220)

Apart from the dialectal elements, there are also other linguistic moments worth of attention. In *La forma dell'acqua*, Giorgio is described as an angel-like creature, which is in total uniformity with the Stilnovo thought of the dame being an angel, a mediator between God and the poet. The small section cited below reflects the Stilnovo language, not only in the choice of words but also in the melody of the phrase, a component missing in the Hungarian translation. The words used in the Hungarian translation are not particularly poetic, thus are not able to carry the style of Stilnovo poetry.

accanto alla donna con eleganza s'inginocchiò (*La forma*, 111)	elegánsan az asszony mellé térdelt (*A víz alakja*, 95)

Since Montalbano is a police officer, he has to be able to carry out official conversations with his superiors. In the first example, Montalbano is talking to the prefect in Montelusa, using the typical language of bureaucracy. As we can observe here, the Hungarian translation does not render the legal language which differs from normal speech on more than one level (e.g. vocabulary or syntax): the complicated syntax of the Italian sentence is divided into two separate sentences; the words highlighted (*acclarare*, *ribadire*, *trasparenza*) are not ones that the prefect "uses often" but which "are part of the prefect's vocabulary" as a member of the legal system and should thus be translated with lexemes from the legal language.

La mia richiesta, signor prefetto, come ho già detto al dottor Lo Bianco e ribadisco a lei, è dettata da una volontà di trasparenza, allo scopo di troncare sul nascere ogni malevola illazione su una possibile intenzione della polizia di non acclarare i risvolti del fatto e archiviare senza i dovuti accertamenti. Tutto qui. Il prefetto si dichiarò soddisfatto della risposta, e del resto Montalbano aveva accurato scelto due verbi (acclarare e ribadire) e un sostantivo (trasparenza) che da sempre rientravano nel vocavolario del prefetto. (*La forma*, 40)	A kérésemet, prefektus úr, ahogy már mondtam Lo Biancónak, de most önnek is elmondom, átlátszó szándék vezérelte. Az a cél, hogy gátat vessünk minden rossz szándékú vádaskodásnak, miszerint a rendőrség nem akarja megvizsgálni a körülményeket, és a szükséges vizsgálatok nélkül akarja szőnyeg alá söpörni az ügyet. Ennyi az egész. Úgy tűnt, a prefektus elégedett volt a válasszal. Montalbano szándékosan választott két olyan szót (megvizsgálni és átlátszó), melyeket beszélgetőtársa is sűrűn használt. (*A víz alakja*, 33)

The same thing happens when Montalbano gives a certificate to Saro: it is considered a legal document, and the language needs to reflect that. The language is the same as in the previous example, but this time the sequence is not divided into different sentences and with few exceptions, even the legal language is rendered faithfully. On the other hand, it is missing the closing formula *In fede* [Yours faithfully], a must-have element of these documents.

Apart from the linguistic consideration, in the original, the quoted part is also distinguished typographically (smaller and separated with space above and below), meanwhile in the Hungarian translation it is inserted seamlessly into the rest of the chapter.

Io sottoscritto Montalbano Salvo, Commissario presso l'ufficio di Pubblica Sicurezza di Vigàta (provincia di Montelusa) dichiaro di ricevere in data odierna dalle mani del signor Montaperto Baldassare detto Saro, una collana di oro massiccio, con pendaglio a forma di cuore, pur esso d'oro massiccio ma tempestato di diamanti, da lui stesso rinvenuto nei pressi della contrada detta «la mànnara» nel corso del suo lavoro di operatore ecologico. In fede. (*La forma*, 66)	Alulírott Salvo Montalbano, a Montelusához tartozó Vigàta város közbiztonsági részlegének vezetője kijelentem, hogy a mai napon Baldassare Montaperto úr, azaz Saro kezeiből átvettem egy tömör arany nyakláncot szív alakú medállal, mely szintén színarany és gyémántokkal van kirakva, és amelyet ő maga talált a Legelőnek nevezett területen, ökológiai munkálatai során. (*A víz alakja*, 53)

As we have seen, both novels contain linguistic variations which are worth the attention of translation criticism. Lukácsi, in her translation of the novel *Il cane di terracotta*, tried to render the linguistic variety present in Camilleri's novels by making use of dialectal words such as *csimota* [child], *éccaka* [night], *máma* [today], *gyüssz* [(you) come] and *vóna* [would], and also utilizing dialectal-sounding suffixes like *-bül*. In contrast, Kovács and Zaránd, in their translation of *La forma dell'acqua*, did not attempt to do this, but it is also worth noting that the novel translated by them contains not many significant moments of linguistic interest, as it was Camilleri's first Montalbano-novel and he was probably trying not to "overuse" the Sicilian elements in his book, but make readers get used to it. From Russi's analysis (Russi 2018) emerges that the phonological features have a higher incidence than morphological, morphosyntactic, or lexical ones, which contradicts claims that "the lexical level is the most used by Camilleri" (Santulli 2010: 97 cited in Russi 2018) or that Camilleri's operations "concern only the lexical level and it leaves intact the grammatical and syntactic structures" (Pistelli 2003: 22 cited in Russi 2018). Similar changes in phonology can be (and have been) made in Hungarian: the use of /i/ instead of /"/ or /e/ (e.g. *békében* > *békiben* [in peace], *nyelvén* > *nyelvin* [in his/her language]) or even the closing of /o/ in /u/ (e.g. *honnan* > *hunnan* [from where]) can be observed in Lukácsi's translation. However, these changes appear mostly in dialogues, so it is limited to the portrayal of characters and does not appear in the narrator's voice.

But do these changes affect the reception of the works? A simple way of checking readers' opinions of a book is consulting the website *Moly.hu*, the best-known Hungarian place to get advice on specific books. Readers can rate books, leave comments, have conversations, and cite their favourite quotes similarly to *Goodreads.com*. As of August 2022, the website has more than 320.000 members, over 10 million reads, 4 million ratings, and 14.5 million comments on the over 500.000

books listed (Moly.hu). All of Camilleri's books have their own page, including the two taken into consideration in this paper. *Il cane di terracotta* has only one comment regarding the translations, and it says "I love the style, you can't put the book down, the situations are good and life-like, the jokes are good – (and they work even in Hungarian thanks to the translator)." (Moly.hu – *Az agyagkutya*). When looking at the pages of the other three books translated by Lukácsi, among the comments are several ones that are general statements. Some of them, for example, express opinions about the names translated,[2] but there are some interesting opinions regarding the use of dialectal words.

Many comments touch on the use of *csimota* [child]: "[The language is] very old style, it didn't capture me. Plus the translator uses interesting words. The "*csomita*" [sic] was just the icing on the cake. I guessed what it was, but I still had to look it up. Well, it hasn't been used here in Hungary in the last 20-30 years (or ever?)"; "For a light summer read it's flawless, but I wish they would not keep repeating the word *csimota* all the time.. I think I'll move over to the film". One person on the other hand wrote: "I don't know what the other readers' problem with the word *csimota* is, we still use it today" (Moly.hu – *A hegedű hangja*). As *csimota* is a dialectal word not much in use, it's easy to recognize why the majority of the readers would find it harder to understand. There was one comment regarding the language of Catarella: "The Italian names were a bit of a mind-bender, I couldn't easily remember who was who, which made it difficult to read, and also how interestingly it was translated. The characters communicate in dialect, especially my favourite policeman, who is a bit of an idiot and is only trusted to take phone messages at the station. Well, I died at his first utterance: 'Hello, boss? Is that you, boss, personally in person on the phone?'" (Moly.hu – *A hegedű hangja*).

While these remarks on the translation are enclosed in general comments, there is a much longer one that deals in more detail with the language use and the translation:

> […] Because the translation…. well, I'm increasingly sure that the odd use of words (which will really peak in the fourth novel) is meant to represent the Sicilian dialect, but it's not clear why it needs to be used in the non-dialogue parts, for example? […] nowhere does [the translator] add any explanation, although perhaps a good translator's footnote would have been in order, if only because [s]he is trying to recreate this Italian dialect using mostly old or vernacular words

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[2] "I just noticed the names of the cops: Capon, Rooster, Dove and then one of the secret service guys: Pear" (Moly.hu – *Az uzsonnatolvaj*); "There was only one thing disturbing me in this volume, namely that many characters had Hungarian names, e.g. Rooster, Capon, Dove. I couldn't really identify them [based on the tv series]" (Moly.hu – *A hegedű hangja*).

which I'm not sure all Hungarian readers will understand…. but otherwise, the characters speak in a completely average "Hungarian", only occasionally appear some little-known, old-fashioned words… In particular because among the characters Catarella, a character in the series (but sometimes other minor characters) speaks like an uneducated jerk. It's strange because in Hungarian it's so non-existent that it grates me to see it in writing, when he's using the suffix *-suk/sük*[3], uses *naccsága*,[4] bites off suffixes, which we don't associate it with a plain dialect, but with someone who can't express themselves at all, that he's so uneducated that he speaks so INCORRECTLY (not being a grammar nazi, just an impression). And then the fact that she translated the names (Rooster, Capon, Dove) is also weird. These three because they are such birdy names that I was constantly thinking if they are speaking names, or maybe nicknames, or does it have a sense and importance why they are birds. It does not. And the fact that the man who appears at the end of the episode is called Pear is just ridiculous. I understand that it may have been like that in Italian, but I don't know how it sounds in Italian, whether it sounds more natural. If not, then it's the writer's fault, of course, for giving it a surname like that but does not confirm for a moment that it's for a joke […] If it does sound more natural, then it's about as bad to translate it as it is to translate the bird flock, because it doesn't make any sense, it's just confusing (the translator of the first part didn't do it, by the way!) […]

Overall, I would say that the second part is the best: the story is great, the translation is by this translator but it's not too distracting yet. And then the first one is not bad either, which was translated by someone else, and you can see what the translated names were in the original (because he didn't translate them, as he left the Sicilian dialect to our imagination). The story of the third and fourth part is a tie, but these two have the most annoying translation (but since the fourth one even has the word *kamara* [chamber] instead of *szoba* [room], I vote it the worst of the four) […] (Moly.hu – *Az uzsonnatolvaj*).

As we can see, readers are not especially content with the use of dialectal words for various reasons: they either cannot understand them or think they are distracting or old-style. Still, the translation is overall considered good.

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[3] A phenomenon usually considered to be a grammatical error. It refers to when the positive of the definite verbal conjugation ending in -t is formed with the forms corresponding to the imperative mode in the same way as verbs not ending in -t, e.g. *meglátjuk > meglássuk* [we will see].

[4] The uneducated greeting form for someone of higher ranking (correct form: *nagysága* [madam]).

The translation of *La forma dell'acqua* also motivated readers to express their opinions: "Why I gave fewer stars is the terrible slobby/unconcentrated work of the editor or proofreader… I was glad to see the new names in the translation, maybe it was necessary(?) to include the language of everyday life(?) and to reflect it well and faithfully(?) – and maybe I would have expected more because of that(?) I can't tell because I don't know whose fault is the many errors in the novel" (Moly.hu – *A víz alakja*). Another comment also reflects on the typos, errors, and editing in the book: "Unfortunately, the translation also detracts from the value of the book. Spelling mistakes abound, and on page 74 it says that Montalbano's body has been found. It is very disturbing that the paragraphs are not as they should be. The rules of word-processing say that the first lines of paragraphs should be indented, but unfortunately, this has not been done here" (Moly.hu – *A víz alakja*), but it's worth noting that this person was already biased because they saw the films first and read the novel later. What could be considered positive feedback on the translation is this: "[Montalbano] always chooses his words and his manner of speaking according to his current interlocutor" (Moly.hu – *A víz alakja*)., so even in translation the use of register is perceptible. In conclusion, one person expresses what many readers must be thinking about reading Camilleri in translation: "Even if the translation is good, Camilleri is not the same as in Italian" (Moly.hu – *Az uzsonnatolvaj*).

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Translating Non-standard Language
Andrea Camilleri in English

Giulia Magazzù[1]

Abstract

With the flowering of literary works written in a non-standard variety, especially in dialect, translation studies have tried to partially delineate theories, methods, and models to apply when translating these kinds of work. Despite this, translating a literary work written in dialect always represents a challenge for a translator. This difficulty is due to the main characteristics of dialects: they are spoken in a very restricted area and depict a specific cultural world. An example is represented by the language of Andrea Camilleri's novels. In fact, by examining some linguistic features and expressions taken from the English translation of three of Camilleri's detective novels, this paper offers an analysis of the linguistic choices made by the American translator Stephen Sartarelli, with a particular attention on Sicilian culture.

Keywords

Camilleri; Montalbano; Literary Translation; Dialect; Diatopic variation

Translating non-standard language in literature represents one of the most demanding tasks for a translator, who must find a compromise between the source text and the target text. The translator must take into account not only the unique linguistic characteristics of a non-standard variety, but also the extralinguistic and sociocultural aspects that that variety encompasses. This is why finding the right strategies and solutions requires much ability and a great effort on the translator's part. Hence, the aim of the present study, which intertwines aspects of sociolinguistics, translation theory and translation practice, is to establish whether and to what extent features of a non-standard variety, such as dialect, can be rendered in translation and which translation strategies can be applied. In this regard, the English translation of three of Andrea Camilleri's detective novels by Stephen Sartarelli will serve as example. Extracts from the novels *La forma dell'acqua, L'odore*

[1] "Gabriele d'Annunzio" University of Chieti-Pescara, Italy, giulia.magazzu@unich.it

della notte and *La luna di carta* will be presented in order to reveal the linguistic choices made by the translator and the translation strategies he adopted in the target text, with a particular focus on Sicilian culture.

1. Translating non-standard language[2]

As Gavurová (2020) underlines, dialects belong to the world of oral tradition and they present many features that distinguish them from the standard variety. She further points out that the differences are usually not just phonetic, but that dialects are characterised by an original expressive word order, which is the word order of the spoken discourse and orality. Buonocore shares this idea: "*la scrittura dialettale, anche quella poetica, ha privilegiato le caratteristiche dell'oralità*"[3] (Buonocore 2003: 23). Moreover, dialects are strongly characterised by the use of idiomatic expressions, which are language-specific and unique (Buonocore 2003). Buonocore (2003) observes that idiomatic expressions, allusions, elliptical constructions, metaphors, adverbial phrases and metonymies represent the thorniest problems for a translator. Bonaffini (1996) believes that the "*punte idiomatiche troppo accentuate*"[4] do not allow the translator to produce a good translation and they must be removed, if they cannot be rendered. Nevertheless, these elements contribute to the expressiveness of the text, which is one of the major characteristics of a text written in a vernacular form, but also to its implicitness.

Many scholars remark how important it is to understand the function that a dialect may have in the text, before translating it. In fact, as Newmark (1988) points out, the most relevant factor in translating non-standard varieties is the identification of its functions in the original text. Hence, he tried to identify three main functions that a dialect usually has in the source text (ST). It can be used to show a slang use of language, to highlight social class contrasts, and to indicate local cultural features. Once they have been identified and established, the translator can choose what language to adopt in the target text, keeping in mind that these functions should be maintained in the target text (Newmark 1988).

Similarly, Pym (2000) asks whether the markers of linguistic varieties should be translated or not. He admits that the "question is a chestnut allowing any number

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[2] In this article I will mainly refer to prose. Dialectal poetry and theatre in translation imply other issues and problems that will not be treated in this discussion.

[3] "The writing system of dialects, even the one used in poetry, reflects the characteristics of orality" (my translation)

[4] "Too accentuated idiomatic peaks" (my translation).

of platitudes" (Pym 2000: 1). He states that the translator has first to distinguish between the two main functions that a vernacular language may have in a literary text. These categories are: "parody" and "authenticity." In the first case, vernaculars are used to "lubricate the less intelligent characters" and to amuse the readership (Pym 2000: 2). In this case, the translator is not faced with a linguistic variety as such, but a "functional representation of the variety, shorn to just a few stereotypical elements" (Pym 2000: 2). There are a few markers of the variation and they are continually repeated and reproduced. When markers are seen as "typical" elements of a variety, then parody occurs. In the case of authenticity, the markers of variation are balanced between lexis and syntax in order to make the linguistic variety a "real thing" (Pym 2000). Pym's solution is to render the linguistic variation from the norm, but he points out that it is not the source-text variety that is to be rendered, but a kind of variety, no matter what it is.

Ramos Pinto observes that generally dialects appear in dialogues, rather than in the narrative voice and their main function is to define the sociocultural background of the characters and their "position in the sociocultural fictional context" (Ramos Pinto 2009: 3) and to contribute to the social stratification of the various characters. Likewise, in 2010 Hejwowski (in Szymańska 2017) stresses that the functions of the language varieties signal differences of the characters concerning social status, education, ethnic identity, the character's knowledge of a language or his/her foreign origin, but that they also signal temporal distance or introduce linguistic humour.

Hodson (2014) also underlines that the most canonical part of a literary text where one can find dialect is in direct speech; in that case, its main function is to associate a character to a social group. Nevertheless, it is quite common to find dialect or non-standard varieties in the narrative voice and in free indirect speech. In the case of the narrative voice, Hodson (2014) references the novel *Castle Rackrent* written by Maria Edgeworth as an example. In her novel, the narrator is Thady Quirk, an uneducated Irish servant who tells the story from his point of view and in part using his own variety, Irish. As for the free indirect discourse, Hodson's (2014) example is Alan Sillitoe's novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, whose protagonist's point of view is rendered through non-standard free indirect speech. This "heteroglossia", as reported in Hodson's above mentioned study, is a choice of the writers, who decide to compose their works of multiple voices and languages, including the narrative voice, which adopts a different style to tell the story. Hodson describes the effect of the narrative voice in dialect as "often highly oral, as if the narrator were speaking directly to the reader" (Hodson 2014: 86).

Miszalska (2014) sums up the various functions that the use of dialect may have in a literary work[5]. The first is *cultural* and *symbolic*. The use of sayings, proverbs and expressions typical of dialect evoke stories, beliefs and myths linked to the culture that the dialect conveys. The second function is *expressive* and *aesthetic*, especially in poetry. In this case we may also include what Hodson (2014) defines as "eye dialect." It is a kind of respelling that "gives the impression of being dialectal when the reader looks at it, but it does not convey any information about the pronunciation when the reader sounds it out" (Hodson 2014: 95). It is used to mark the speech of a character as non-standard, though only visually (that is why it is called "eye dialect"). Dialect may also be used on purpose with the function to contrast the hegemony of the standard language, thus in an *ideological* or *polemical* way. Another function may be *intimate* or "psychoanalytical", as Miszalska (2014) defines it. The use of dialect in this case sets in motion feelings and thoughts belonging to our subconscious; the dialect is thus a tool that allows the writer to express what is usually considered "taboo." Writers may use dialect in a *comical* way, that is to say to amuse the audience and the readers. This is typical of dialectal theatre. The last function may be represented by the *realism* that authors want to convey in a text. Therefore, they use dialect to depict everyday life experiences.

2. Camilleri's Language in the Montalbano Novels

In his detective novels, Camilleri juxtaposes different language varieties. In fact, the books featuring Montalbano teem with a consistent number of characters with different social and cultural backgrounds and many of them make use of one or more linguistic varieties or their own idiolect. Nevertheless, the linguistic mishmash experimented by Camilleri mainly consists of three different varieties: Sicilian dialect, standard Italian and the regional Italian of Sicily. His language, often called *camillerese* or *vigatese*[6] (Cerrato 2018, Marci 2019), is a "personal language" (Marci 2019) made up of Sicilian words and elements, of words and expressions taken from his familiar idiolect, but also of invented words:[7] all this occurs with the interference of the Italian language. Camilleri alternates and mixes standard Italian and Sicilian dialect; sometimes the readers find dialectal words and expressions

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[5] These functions are also investigated by Accorsi (1978).

[6] The term comes from the town "Vigata", the fictional town where Montalbano lives and investigates.

[7] Camilleri himself stated that he made use of invented words. Yet it is relevant to say that he plays with both Italian and Sicilian dialect, he does not coin neologisms (Matt 2020).

used in an Italian structure, and it is not unusual to come across a hybrid word whose basis is Sicilian, yet it is influenced by Italian morphology. At other times the characters of the novels speak entirely in dialect while others make use of the code-mixing and code-switching phenomena and so on. This mix is evident everywhere in the novels, both in the narration and in the dialogues, as we will see in the analysis of the texts.

Camilleri felt a sort of unfamiliarity with Italian, and this is why he did not use it in an exclusive way for the kind of novel and narrative style he had in mind (Matt 2020). After all, his family, which belonged to the old Sicilian middle-class, communicated in a blend of Italian and dialectal elements, as many Italian families used to do and still do (Matt 2020). Many words, metaphors or idioms are those heard at home when he was a child and from people from different parts of Sicily and thus having a different pronunciation. In many interviews, in fact, Camilleri explained that this language came from his childhood and, through the novels, he tried to reproduce it. He tried to make his "mother tongue" live again in order to recall the past (Cerrato 2018). Moreover, the use of this mixed language is a way of avoiding a flat and anonymous Italian and of conveying more expressiveness (Caprara and Plaza González 2016), which is achieved through a process of functionalisation of his language, which adjusted to the literary world he was building. As Camilleri himself admitted, the invented words we find in his books are the result of his creativity and imagination, and inherited from his grandmother Elvira. Very often she used to address him with words that she had completely made up to play with her grandson, who had to guess their meanings (Sanna 2019). As Cadeddu (2017) points out, Camilleri's language is also characterised by the use of different registers. Camilleri's multilingualism is made up not only of diatopic and diastratic variations, but also of diaphasic variation. While reading, in fact, we can notice that the writer makes use of all those register variations, ranging from the colloquial one to the bureaucratic one. Yet Caprara and Plaza González (2016) admit that sometimes it is difficult to understand whether the writer makes use of a register or of a diatopic and diastratic variety. According to Cerrato (2018), Camilleri moves within the linguistic *continuum* both of the standard language and of the dialect and makes use of every variety within it as he pleases. Vizmuller-Zocco (2001) observes that Camilleri's linguistic mixture has three functions: the first one is *humorous*, the second is *casual*, and the last one is *definitory*. The particular language used by the writer clearly creates a comic and humorous effect; he achieves this effect by scattering Sicilian terms or invented words without any reasonable criterion. As for the last function, the *vigatese* defines

the characters and helps to separate "*i concetti dai sentimenti.*" Italian is the language of "concepts" of reality, while dialect is the language of "feelings and emotions"; so when Camilleri uses exclusively Italian, he is referring to the concepts, while when he uses dialect, feelings and emotions are usually at play.

3. Camilleri in Translation

Camilleri's novels on Montalbano, which are edited by Sellerio, have been translated into English by Stephen Sartarelli for the publishing house Penguin. Stephen Sartarelli is an American poet and translator; he has translated important Italian authors such as Umberto Saba and Pier Paolo Pasolini, and he has been working on the translation of Stefano D'Arrigo's *Horcynus Orca* for fifteen years. He is the translator of Camilleri's novels on Montalbano both for the American and British book market. Both Camilleri and Sartarelli were awarded the CWA International Dagger Award for Translated Crime in 2012 for the *Il campo del vasaio* (The Potter's Field*)*. Thanks to Sartarelli's translations, Camilleri is greatly appreciated by English readers. Sartarelli is faced with Camilleri's multilingualism, which renders his role full of difficulties; the translator must take into account that the language used by Camilleri cannot be overlooked. However, as Sartarelli (2002) remarks, the dialectal forms used by Camilleri are inherently local and they cannot be rendered with local English varieties in translation. He observes that

> Montalbano's world of cops, hoods, lovely ladies and eccentric petit-bourgeois could hardly be made to speak American ghetto jive or Scots or Faulknerian Mississippian or any other geographically specific idiom without appearing absurd (Gutkowski 2009: 8).

This does not mean that the translator cannot intervene and nudge the language in a certain direction. In fact, Sartarelli decides to create "new spaces" in the target language; for instance, he managed to coin a new expression, *curse the saints,* whose original Sicilian expression was *santiare*, and he noticed that many reviewers cite this expression when praising his work (Sartarelli 2017). Yet, as Sartarelli (2002; 2009; 2017) has reminded his readers on many occasions, the book market in the USA is a rigid one, especially as regards translations. Unlike the British book market, the American one is not tolerant of linguistic experimentation and foreign works need to be "Americanised" in order to be accepted. As he points out, the majority of Americans do not read translated books, do not watch foreign movies or listen to

foreign music (Sartarelli 2002); on the other hand, American authors are constantly translated worldwide.

In this section, three of Sartarelli's translated novels will be examined; they were translated into English with the titles *The Shape of Water, The Scent of the Night*[8] and *The Paper Moon* and were published in 2002, 2007 and 2008, respectively. The purpose is to analyse both the strategies and the solutions adopted by the translator and to understand the reasons for the success of Sartarelli's translated versions.

3.1 The Narrative Voice and Free Indirect Speech

The first chapter of *L'odore della notte* opens with Montalbano's awakening caused by a shutter slamming outside the window of his bedroom (Table 1). The verb *slammed* in Sartarelli's version is the translation of *sbattì*. The same procedure is used with verbs such as *s'arrisbigliò, s'arricordò, aveva addeciso, principiò*, which are rendered respectively with standard English as *woke up, reminisced, decided* and *began*. Nouns such as *sciato* and *moccaro,* are translated as *breath* and *mucus*. It is relevant to note that from the first pages Sartarelli prefers standard English renderings for the narrative voice; the English equivalents, in fact, belong to standard language. It is inevitable that the non-standard elements of the source text are lost. In her analysis, Gutkowsky (2009) argues that the translator might have opted for less standard terms, such as *snot* rather than *mucus,* which has a more scientific connotation. Yet, as seen before, Sartarelli (2009) himself stated that he preferred to maintain the fluency and naturalness of the discourse rather than creating a linguistic mishmash, which could negatively affect the quality of Camilleri's stories.

Table 1

Original text	English Translation
La persiana della finestra spalancata sbattì tanto forte contro il muro che parse una pistolettata e Montalbano, che in quel priciso momento si stava sognando d'essiri impegnato in un conflitto a fuoco, s'arrisbigliò di colpo sudatizzo e, 'nzemmula, agghiazzato dal friddo. Si susì santiando e corse a chiudere. [...]	The shutter outside the wide-open window slammed so hard against the wall that it sounded like a gunshot. Montalbano, who at that moment was dreaming he was in a shoot-out, suddenly woke up, sweaty and at the same time freezing cold. He got up, cursing, and ran to close everything. [...]

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[8] The version for the American public was entitled *The Smell of the Night* and it was published in 2005 by Viking Penguin, New York. The version used for the analysis is the one published in Great Britain in 2007 by Picador. As for *The Shape of Water* and *The Paper Moon,* I used the versions published by Viking Penguin, New York.

Si fece forza, si susì e raprì l'anta dell'armuar dove c'era la roba pesante. Il feto di un quintale o quasi di naftalina l'assugliò alla sprovista. Prima gli mancò il sciato, poi gli occhi gli lagrimiarono e quindi principiò a stranutare. Di stranuti ne fece dodici a fila, col moccaro che gli colava dal naso, la testa intronata e sintendosi sempre più indolenzire la cassa toracica	Making an effort, he got up and opened the armoire where he kept his heavy clothes. The stink of several tons of mothballs assailed his nostrils. At first it took his breath away, then his eyes started watering and he began to sneeze. He sneezed some twelve times in a row, mucus running down from his nose, head ringing, the pain in his chest growing sharper and sharper
(*L'odore della notte*, 9–10).	(*The Scent of the Night*, 3-4).

In many cases, despite using standard language, Sartarelli renders the idea conveyed in the source text faithfully enough, drawing on colourful terms and expressions belonging to a more colloquial register, as in the case below (Table 2). *Si sbafò* is translated as *he wolfed down; sbafarsi* stands for eating greedily and abundantly, while *to wolf down* means eating something very quickly and in big pieces. On the other hand, the translated equivalent of *liccò,* which stands for flirting, is *he reveled in,* which means gaining pleasure from an activity. Though not perfect equivalents, the English verbs used by Sartarelli give the target text the same nuance of meaning that can be found in the original.

Table 2

Original text	English Translation
Conzò il tavolino della verandina e **si sbafò** la caponatina mentre il pasticcio si quadiava. Then Appresso, si **liccò** col pasticcio (*La luna di carta*, 32).	He set the table on the veranda and **wolfed down** the caponata as the pasticcio was heating up. Then he **reveled** in the pasticcio (*The Paper Moon*, 37).

Sartarelli decides to "neutralise" (Berezowski 1997) the non-standard variety of the source text and to translate it with the standard language also in the case of the free indirect speech, which gives voice to Montalbano's thoughts and points of view. The free indirect speech presents more features of orality than the narrative voice; the features are maintained by Sartarelli, who endeavours to reproduce the same irony the reader can find in the source text (Table 3).

Table 3

Original text	English Translation
Macari questa ci voleva a **conzargli** bona la giornata! Lui che **trimava** di **friddo** e Livia che **sinni** stava **biatamente stinnicchiata** al sole! Ecco un'altra prova che il mondo non **firriava** più come prima. Ora al nord si moriva di **càvudo** e al sud arrivavano le gelate, gli orsi, i pinguini (*L'odore della notte*, 12).	This was all he needed to make his day. Here he was, shivering with cold, while Livia would be lying blissfully in the sun. Still further proof that the world was no longer turning the way it used to. Now up north you died of heat, and down south you'd soon be seeing ice, bears and penguins (*The Scent of the Night*, 6).

3.2 Catarella's Idiolect

The most hilarious character in these novels is Agatino Catarella, one of the police officers working with Montalbano. His main job at the police station of Vigàta is to receive phone calls and to report them to Montalbano. As Cerrato (2018) remarks, at a certain point in the novels it is revealed that Catarella managed to become a policeman thanks to his contacts in politics. Most likely, he was given the job of phone operator because it was the easiest task (Cerrato 2018). Yet his awful relationship with the standard language and its grammar prevents him from doing his job well. In fact, Catarella is "the desk sergeant who answers the switchboard at the police station and mishears almost everything he is told" (Bailey 2006). Catarella's language, or *catarellese* (Vizmuller-Zocco 2010), is a linguistic stew, whose basis is the so-called "italiano popolare." This variety is also labelled as "semi-literate Italian" and it is the kind of Italian spoken by dialectal speakers, who learned it during their few years of schooling (D'Achille 2010). Catarella's semi-literate Italian, blended very often with bureaucratic formulas and attempts to use formal language, generates malapropisms, linguistic misunderstandings, mispronunciations, solecisms, and hypercorrection phenomena.

Among Catarella's main expressions, the reader can find pleonasms, such as the typical *Vossia di **pirsona pirsonalmente** è?* (*L'odore della notte,* 12), which is usually rendered by Sartarelli, who tries to reproduce the same pleonasm in English, as *Is that **you yourself** in person, Chief?* (*The Scent of the Night,* 7). Catarella's language is characterised by a hotchpotch of pronunciation and meaning mistakes, which create extremely ironic situations. Sartarelli shapes a linguistic mixture to render Catarella's idiolect; this mixture is grammatically incorrect, made up of invented words and short forms. In an interview with Tomaiuolo (2009), Sartarelli explains

that he used a Brooklynese accent "with occasional echoes of the character of Curly from the old slapstick comic series of short films of *The Three Stooges*" (Tomaiuolo 2009: 16) in order to create an English version of *catarellese*. He adopts some Brooklynese forms because many of the policemen working in New York City used to come from Sicily or were of Southern Italian origin, as he states in the preface to Gutkowski's essay (2009). By adopting these solutions, the translator reproduces the same puns and ironic situations we find in the source text, as the conversations between Montalbano and Catarella show:

Table 4

Original text	English Translation
C: "Maria santissima, dottori! Maria, chi grannissimo scanto che mi pigliai! Ancora attremo, dottori! Mi taliasse la mano. Lo vitti come attrema?" M: "Lo vedo. Ma che fu?" C: "Tilifonò il signori e Quistori di pirsona pirsonalmenti e mi spiò di vossia. Io ci arrisposi che vossia era momintaniamente asente e che appena che fosse stato d'arritorno ci l'avrebbi detto a lei che lui ci voliva parlari a lei. Ma lui, cioeni il signori e Quistori, mi spiò se c'era un superiori ingrato." M: "In grado, Catarè". C: "Quello che è, è, dottori, basta che ci si accapisce" (*L'odore della notte*, 80-81).	C: "Maria santissima, Chief! What a scare I got! I'm still shaking all over, Chief! Look at my hand. See it trembling, see it?" M: "I see it. What happened?" C: "The c'mishner called poissonally in poisson and axed for you. I tole 'im you's momentarily absint an' a soon as you got back I'd a tell you he wants a talk t'you. But then he axed, the c'mishner did, to talk to the rankling officer." M: "The ranking officer, Cat". C: "Whatever is, is, Chief. All 'at matters is we unnastand each other" (*The Scent of the Night*, 81-82).

In the first odd dialogue between Catarella and Montalbano, the translator renders the same misunderstanding, which takes place because of Catarella's mispronunciation of the expression *in grado,* which is turned to *ingrato*. In translation, Catarella's mispronunciation of *ranking*, which becomes *rankling,* creates the same pun in the text. In this case, the pleonasm di *pirsona pirsonalmenti*, which is usually translated as **you yourself** *in person*, becomes *poissonnally in poisson*; the translator's purpose is to maintain the repetition of the sound, no matter whether *poissonnally in poisson* does not make any sense to an English-speaking reader. The distorted form "in poisson" used by Sartarelli creates a double cross-reference; on the one hand, it recalls the expression "in person", on the other, the term "poison". The purpose of the translator is to recreate the same oddity we can find in the source text. Moreover, Catarella's language is redundant and the translator tries to convey the same redundancy in the

target text, as in *but then he axed, the c'mishner did.* In addition, Montalbano addresses Catarella with the diminutive *Cat,* which is closer to an English form, and not *Cataré,* typical of Sicilian noun short forms. Finally, we can notice that the term *dottori* is domesticated and rendered as *chief,* which is the English equivalent.

3.3 Eye-Dialect in Translation: Adelina

Adelina is Montalbano's housekeeper, who expresses herself almost exclusively in dialect. As seen the examples below, in Adelina's speech we can thus find dialectal lexical features (*dumani, figliu, spitali, quattru, peju, adenzia, picciotta*) and also morphosyntactic ones (*Adelina sugnu*). Adelina's dialect in the dialogues is rendered in translation with expressions and ways of speaking typical of a colloquial, informal register, such as *gotta*; the sounds at the end and at the beginning of the syllables are often omitted, as in *an'* (and), *'is* (his), *'em* (them), *er'* (her), *don'* (don't), *younges'* (youngest), as in Table 5. Moreover, in the original text, Adelina addresses Montalbano with the title *dottori*, which is a mix between the dialect *dutturi* and the Italian *dottore*. The solution Sartarelli adopts for Catarella's *dottori* cannot be applied for Adelina's as well, because the English term *chief* denotes someone who is higher in rank; in Adelina's case, Montalbano is not her chief, rather her employer. Sartarelli does not find an equivalent in English and prefers to maintain the Sicilian nuance, borrowing the Italian term *Signore* and not translating it as *Sir,* which is the English equivalent.

Table 5

Original text	English Translation
A: "Nun m'arriconosci, dottori? Adelina sugnu". M: "Adelina! Che c'è?" A: "Dottori, ci vuliva fari avvirtenzia che oggi non pozzo avveniri." M: "Va bene, non…". A: "E non pozzo avveniri né dumani né passannadumani". M: "Che ti succede?" A: "La mogliere di mè figliu nicu la portaro allo spitali ch'avi malo di panza e io ci devu abbadari 'e figli ca sunnu quattru e il chiù granni ch'avi deci anni è unu sdilinquenti peju di sò patre". A: "Va bene, Adelì, non ti dare pinsèro" (*L'odore della notte*, 57).	A: "Don' you rec'nize me, signore? Is Adelina." M: "Adelina! What's the matter?" A: "Signore, I wanted a tell you I can't come today." M: "That's OK, don't…" A: "An' I can't come tomorrow neither, an' a day after that neither." M: "What's wrong?" A: "My younges' son's wife was rush to the hospital with a bad bellyache and I gotta look after 'er kids. There's four of 'em and the oldest is ten and he's a bigger rascal than 'is dad. M: "It's OK, Adelina, don't worry about it" (*The Scent of the Night*, 56).

On the scraps of paper she leaves for Montalbano (Table 6), Adelina's dialect is adjusted to the written form and becomes a pseudo-dialect; almost none of the forms she writes down belong entirely to Sicilian dialect (*totori, manno, anichi, amangiari, tonno*). She tries to write in what she thinks might be a more correct variety of language, perhaps closer to Italian, because she wishes to appear educated or formal; yet the result is the hyper-correction phenomenon. When translating Adelina's notes, Sartarelli tries to reproduce a non-standard variety in the target text, or rather an "eye-dialect," as Tomaiuolo (2009) points out. He makes use of what Berezowski (1997) identifies as the *speech defect* strategy, which implies the creation of lexical items and syntactic patterns, with the adoption of the target language (TL) spelling conventions and phonology. In fact, Sartarelli takes forms that belong undoubtedly to an informal register (*workin, gonna*), but he also manipulates words and endeavours to find phonetic stratagems in order to give the impression of being dialectal (*Im, neece, somtin, beck, afta, tomorra*). Sartarelli's intention is to mark visually the speech of Adelina as non-standard, as he does with other dialect-only-speaking characters that feature in the novels.

Table 6

Original text	English Translation
"Totori, ci manno a dari adenzia a la me niputi Cuncetta ca è piciotta abbirsata e facinnera e ca ci pripara macari anichi cosa di amangiari io tonno passannadumani" (*L'odore della notte*, 88).	Mr Inspector, Im sending my neece Concetta to help out. She's a smart an hard workin girl an she gonna make you somtin to eat too. I come beck day afta tomorra (*The Scent of the Night*, 89).

3.4 Culture-Specific Items: Food

Culture specific items related to food occupy a relevant part of the novels on Montalbano. One of the main strategies adopted by Sartarelli when faced with food terms is borrowing. For instance, in *The Scent of the Night,* Sartarelli rarely translates the terms related to food, but rather borrows them from the source text. *Pirciati,* (48), *nunnatu* (83), *tumazzo* (94), *patati cunsati* (94), *biscotti regina* (114), *pasta 'ncasciata* (179) are all left untranslated in the target text. Sartarelli very often adds extratextual glosses to explain the borrowings, such as in the case of *pasta 'ncasciata*:

One of the main forms of southern Italian *pasta al forno,* that is, a casserole of oven-baked pasta and other ingredients. *Pasta 'nscasciata* generally contains small macaroni, *tuma* or *caciocavallo* cheese, ground beef, mortadella or salami, hard boiled eggs, tomatoes, aubergine, grated Pecorino cheese, basil, olive oil and a splash of white wine (*The Scent of the Night,* 233).

Even in the extratextual gloss, whose purpose is to explain the foreign term, Sartarelli draws on borrowings from Italian; this shows how the items related to food are closely connected to and rooted in the culture to which they belong. On many occasions, the translator decides to "Italianise" the Sicilian terms; for instance, *mustazzola* (*L'odore della notte,* 111) is turned into the more Italian *mostaccioli* (*The Scent of the Night,* 114). Sartarelli decides to bring the word phonetically closer to an Italian form, rather than maintaining the dialectal one. In other cases, when the terms are less culture specific or denote dishes whose ingredients are widely recognisable, Sartarelli prefers translation (Table 6), though he does not always find the right English equivalent, as in the case of *pasta di mandorle* (*L'odore della notte,* 111) which becomes *marzipan pastries* (*The Scent of the Night,* 114), which stands for another kind item, different from the original one. Most likely, Sartarelli decides to translate them because otherwise the target text readers would find themselves overwhelmed by foreign words.

Table 7

Original text	English Translation
triglie di scoglio freschissime (La forma dell'acqua, 73).	very fresh striped mullet (The Shape of Water, 74).
pasta ad aglio e olio pasta ad aglio e olio (La forma dell'acqua, 87).	pasta with garlic and oil boiled shrimp (The Shape of Water, 90).
Salami, capocotte, sosizze (*L'odore della notte*, 27).	a variety of sausages and salami (*The Scent of the Night*, 22).

In rare cases, Sartarelli seems to overlook the connotation related to food items; an instance is the term *passuluna* (Table 7), which stands for black olives soaked in salt, cooked in an oven and then dressed in olive oil, fennel, and red chili pepper. It is a culture-specific term, perhaps complex to render in translation and for the sake of a fluent text, the translator decides to render it as *black olives.* He opts thus for a neutral term, removing any foreign connotations of the culture-specific items of the

source text; this strategy is defined as "absolute universalisation" by Aixela (1996). The extracts below also show that Sartarelli sometimes adds intratextual glosses, such as *cheese* after *caciocavallo* in order to explain the term to the foreign reader.

Table 8

Original text	English Translation
Raprì il frigorifero e lo trovò vacante fatta cizzione di **passuluna**, angiovi condite con aceto, oglio e origano, e una bella fetta di caciocavallo (*L'odore della notte*, 172).	He opened the fridge and found it empty, except for some **black olives**, fresh anchovies dressed in olive oil, vinegar and oregano, and a generous slice of caciocavallo cheese (*The Scent of the Night*, 178).

4. Conclusion

The overall aim of this paper was to understand to what extent a non-standard variety in a literary work can be transported in translation and to investigate the strategies that a translator may adopt to render it. I have tried to do this by analysing extracts from three detective novels written by Andrea Camilleri and translated into English by the American translator Stephen Sartarelli. In his novels, Camilleri draws on a non-standard variety, which is represented by the Sicilian dialect. The writer also makes use of standard Italian and the regional Italian of Sicily; this linguistic mishmash brought him incredible success. In fact, Camilleri is well known not only in Italy, but also in many other countries, and his novels have been translated into many languages. This success abroad has encouraged a rich debate around the various ways of translating Camilleri's *vigatese* and the culture behind it.

Before analysing the extracts, I tried to outline the role of dialect in Camilleri's production; in many interviews, he stated that in writing he felt the need to draw on dialectal expressions and words, and that dialect was the right variety to convey the stories he wanted to write. For Camilleri, using only the standard language would have meant writing in a flat and anonymous language; he needed a compromise which could give expressiveness to the text. However, the language he uses pervades the entire structure of the novels: we can find non-standard speech in the narrative voice, in free indirect speech and in the dialogues. The use of non-standard language has the function both of conveying irony and of representing reality through the different characters' voices.

The issues mentioned above cannot be overlooked by a translator. This is why Sartarelli tries to maintain faithfully the function of Camilleri's language. However, many linguistic features are lost in translation. In fact, Sartarelli neutralises the narrative voice and the free indirect speech of Montalbano's thought and renders them in standard English. The reason is explained by him in many interviews: he preferred to maintain the rhythm and fluency of Camilleri's discourse in the source text. He also neutralises dialogues between many characters who draw on dialectal forms. Yet, despite using a standard language, Sartarelli attempts to recreate the same irony as the source text. He achieves it by using borrowings, literal translations, glosses within and outside the text, and colloquialisms. The text appears exoticised; for instance, the readers can easily come across Sicilian words referring to food, which are then explained by the translator; they can also find entire Sicilian idioms, which are sometimes left untranslated or translated literally and then explained. These strategies and others used by Sartarelli render many nuances typical of Sicilian, and also Italian, culture.

Sartarelli's ability to play with what the English language could offer him can be seen in the translation of Catarella's idiolect and of Adelina's language. Catarella's linguistic mixture is the result of dialect interfering with a poor knowledge of the Italian language and of a "melting pot" of pronunciation and grammatical mistakes, which generates malapropisms, pleonasms, and ironic misunderstandings. Sartarelli reproduces this linguistic stew in the target text by creating an English version of Catarella's language; he draws on forms belonging to the Brooklynese variety spoken by those policemen working in New York who have Sicilian origins. Moreover, he tries to manipulate the English language in order to shape the same puns and ironic misunderstandings that we can find in the source text. As for Adelina's dialect, he manages to create an "eye-dialect" in the target text using a "speech defect" strategy (Berezowski 1997). This means that he creates lexical items and syntactic patterns by playing with TL spelling conventions and phonology. In the target text, Adelina thus gives the impression of speaking a non-standard variety of English.

By adopting these solutions, the translator manages to remain faithful to the role of Camilleri's language in the source text. Despite the neutralisation of the ST dialectal features, in many cases, Sartarelli compensates by adopting strategies that foreignise the target text. It is relevant to underline though that readers of detective novels may not be willing to make an effort to understand a linguistic experiment; this is why Sartarelli considers fluency and readability more important than a possible linguistic attempt at recreating Camilleri's non-standard language. In this way, the American translator manages to balance readability and faithfulness to the source text.

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General Section

Postcolonial Studies
Polemics at the Turn of the Millennium

Attila Tárnok[1]

Abstract

Postcolonial theory over the years has become an inflated term. The field of study that initially dealt with literatures originating in regions with a colonial past gradually grew to encompass broad social, political or cultural aspects arising in diverse societies with no colonial history. In my article I am concentrating on the original use of the term and going to argue that the research area has turned from being a TOPIC of investigation to a general METHOD. What led to this transformation was the commodification of a post/colonial heritage: during the 1990s the exotic became a marketable cultural product. As primary texts appeared to be profitable ventures on the international publishing scene, postcolonial theory has flourished with key figures occupying cushioned academic positions and creating a body of secondary literature detached from the original mandate of postcolonialism in the original sense of the term.

Keywords

postcolonial studies, exotic, academic market, literary theory, turn of the millennium, commodification

In the following pages I am going to discuss the discrepancies surrounding recent changes in what once was termed 'postcolonial theory'. Discrepancies arise from the fact that the field of research once related to a relatively narrow topic concentrating on literatures written (in the language of the colonizer) in late colonial regions after colonized nations have achieved full or partial independence, has been broadened to encompass various aspects and spheres of societies, cultures, literatures and attitudes that are no longer specifically colonial or postcolonial but in some respect present or reflect patterns of a colonial or postcolonial setting. I am considering postcolonial theory here as a

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[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, tarnok.attila@btk.ppke.hu

narrow or 'classical' phrase and going to focus on changes at around the millennium and disregard later transformations of the original theoretical field. A possible step in the future might be to discuss specific regions or individual authors as case studies to support some of the points I here only highlight as general observations, but such a detailed and expanded discussion is beyond the scope of the present investigation. My aim here is simply to draw attention to a change in postcolonial theory from being a research area which studied postcolonial cultures and literatures to becoming a general approach: from being a topic of investigation to becoming an overall method of cultural studies. Perhaps this change is inevitably a consequence of globalization, of marketing exotic cultures, of inviting and emancipating regions that once had been colonized, but aspects of these broader sociological trends would also unnecessarily stretch the boundaries of my present endeavour.

1. Cultural Identities

V. S. Naipaul, the Indo-Caribbean, British novelist, was often seen and criticized as a controversial character who played the detached role of someone withdrawn from the noise and daily scuffle of postcolonial affairs. However, Naipaul's figure as a type of character is far from unique. At the core of postcolonial polemics is the discrepancy that, on the one hand, postcolonialism is treated as if it were a uniform whole, while on the other hand, it is fractured or even splintered by consisting of individuals who in their strife for international recognition stand in conflict with one another competing for key positions on platforms that shape a global or local postcolonial culture. A postcolonial author cannot escape representing a political stance, but this is not the daily politics of government and current affairs, rather, a politics of voice by which he immediately separates himself from the local and negotiates his position in the global scheme of a post-imperial world order. As soon as an Indian or West African author uses English, for example, he has already committed himself to supporting a cultural base which originally had not been his own.

A postcolonial author writing in English belongs to at least two literary traditions: one inherited as his native, often oral, tradition, and the tradition of English literature. To the latter he is indebted not only through the language he uses but also by a mentality received in his colonial schooling. In his quest for a postcolonial identity, a transculturated self is in danger of turning into an advocator on the colonizer's side; his "ambivalent mandate to *experience* but not to *become*" English is "doomed from the start to distress and failure." (Achebe 1988, 34) Belonging to two worlds often

means being alien in both by being divided between the two. However, this division of the self by leading to internal tensions boosts energies which as a surplus form a compelling urge to arrive at a new definition of identity through self-expression.

2. Modes of Assimilation

Patrick Colm Hogan explains the various possible standpoints from which postcolonial authors may relate to the larger postcolonial world and to their former colonizers. "Colonial contact disrupts indigenous culture […] and ends the easy performance of traditional practices". (Hogan 2000, 9) Colonial contact compels indigenous societies to reassess their self-understanding and to negotiate a new identity. To what extent an individual accepts or rejects changes caused by colonial contact and to what degree he incorporates elements of the cultural scheme of the colonizer into his original culture forms the base of a conviction by which then an author presents his characters and thus represents himself. Between the extremes of "orthodoxy" and "alienation" Hogan describes a set of possible attitudes that may characterize a postcolonial person integrating cultural changes caused by colonial contact.

By "orthodoxy" Hogan generally refers to individuals who advocate a return to precolonial practices. An array of possible positions are inherent in this broad category depending on differences in degree. An "originalist" believes that precolonial traditions were once pure and have degenerated by colonial contact, therefore, original practices should be revived without changes. A "reactionary traditionalist" "tries to eliminate from indigenous culture all elements that it shares with European culture" (Hogan 2000, 12) even if some of these had been truly original practices. This view is akin to fundamentalism as it rejects previously accepted elements on the basis that colonial contact has infected and deteriorated what once had been pure. The standpoint which advocates a return to original practices but which at the same time accepts that original practices may change and may be modernized, in Hogan's terms, "open-minded orthodoxy" adopts changes "as advances on traditional ideas and practices, either for empirical or moral reasons." (Hogan 2000, 11) "Unreflective conformism," in contrast, is "the thoughtless repetition of […] practices of a tradition, not only without criticism, but without understanding of their relations and purposes." (Hogan 2000, 11)

In parallel with orthodoxy, "assimilation" for Hogan is "the full acceptance and internalization of the other basic culture" (Hogan 2000, 14), while in parallel with reactionary traditionalism is "mimeticism," "the repudiation of indigenous

traditions" including "the repudiation of those aspects of English culture that overlap with indigenous traditions." (Hogan 2000, 15) Hogan terms "syncretist" those who attempt to combine elements of both the metropolitan and the traditional culture and he asserts that this attitude is "preferred by the bulk of Anglophone postcolonization writers" but "by no means typical of postcolonization people." (Hogan 2000, 16) Finally, by "alienation" Hogan refers to

> the paralyzing conviction that one has no identity, no real cultural home, and that no synthesis is possible. […] The character […] internalizes the alien culture after extensive education, typically including a period in the metropolis. His/her racial or ethnic origin prevents true acceptance in the foreign culture, and the internalization of the foreign culture makes him/her (in Achebe's phrase) "no longer at ease" in the home culture as well. (Hogan 2000, 17)

Since nobody attains a fixed, unchanging cultural identity with birth, over time an individual may cross over from one possible standpoint to another, for example, "a colonized person who ends up as a reactionary traditionalist will very often do so after having passed through a period of mimeticism." (Hogan 2000, 15) Furthermore, most people advocate one standpoint with regards to some aspects of their culture and society, while they may subscribe to another standpoint without contradicting themselves when considering another aspect of the same culture or society. The patterns and circumnavigation among these possible strands and their combinations define the cultural identity of individuals in a postcolonial world.

3. Theory Enforced

Postcolonial theory over the years has become an inflated term. The field of study that initially dealt with literatures originating in regions with a colonial past gradually grew to encompass broad social, political or cultural aspects arising in diverse societies, even ones with no colonial history. Here, however, in this essay I am concentrating on the original or classical use of the term as in the last decades of the twentieth century it evolved to describe cultures and societies that recently attained independence from a colonial regime. I am going to argue that postcolonial theory as a research area has turned from being a TOPIC of investigation to a general METHOD. What led to this transformation was, partly, the commodification of a post/colonial heritage: during the 1990s the exotic became a marketable cultural product. Graham Huggan (*The Postcolonial Exotic*, 2001) and Sarah Brouillette (*Postcolonial Writers in the*

Global Literary Marketplace, 2007) explored ramifications of the emerging new field of postcolonial literatures. As primary texts appeared to be profitable ventures on the international publishing scene, similarly, postcolonial theory has flourished and become a marketable product with key figures occupying cushioned academic positions and creating a body of secondary literature disconnected from the original mandate of postcolonialism in the original sense of the term.

Graham Huggan in the concluding chapter of *The Postcolonial Exotic* asserts that "the most recent work in the field of postcolonial studies gives the impression of having bypassed literature altogether, offering a heady blend of philosophy, sociology, history and political science in which literary texts, when referred to at all, are read symptomatically within the context of larger social and cultural trends." (Huggan 2001, 239) Earlier, John Thieme has already warned of the peculiar turn of events; in his view, creative writers may easily be "in danger of becoming the new subalterns of postcolonial studies." (Thieme 1996, 6) Huggan claims that "in the overwhelmingly commercial context of late twentieth-century commodity culture, postcolonialism and its rhetoric of resistance have themselves become consumer products." (Huggan 2001, 6) He says, it has "become more fashionable to attack postcolonialism than to defend it – a sign […] of its increasing commodification as a marketable academic field." (Huggan 2001: 2-3) The attacks were directed against established theorists' rigid adherence to entrenched academic opinions that denied space for the formulation of new critical perspectives that would attempt to dismantle the trenches themselves. Of course, the position of critics towards the field displayed an array of possible stances. "Some of them might wish to disclaim or downplay their involvement in postcolonial theoretical production. […] Others might wish to 'opt out' of, or at least defy, the processes of commodification and institutionalization. […] Still others, however, have chosen to work within, while also seeking to challenge, institutional structures". (Huggan 2001, 32)

Introducing *Colonialism and Cultural Identity*, Patrick Colm Hogan complains that readers of his manuscript "have been troubled by the lack of 'theory.' One colleague actually went so far as to ask, 'Why isn't there any theory in your opening chapter?'" (Hogan 2000, 24) Hogan extends the view of his proofreaders to a wider academic society:

> my colleague is not alone in tacitly reducing "postcolonial theory" to a handful of prominent poststructural critics. Indeed, he appears to be in the majority – so much so, that if one sends out an article or book manuscript on postcolonization literature, it is very likely that one will be required to treat Bhabha and/or Spivak as a condition of publication. (Hogan 2000, 25)

Hogan returns to the topic in his "Afterword", thus showing that the predicament he experienced during the process of writing his book was not a fleeting thought of a single colleague, but a persistent "dogmatism in postcolonial studies: it seems to be increasingly difficult even to publish in this field without adhering to the ideas associated with Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, and a few other poststructural writers." (Hogan 2000, 305)

4. Anomalies Revisited

Postcolonial theory grew out of the area of literary studies earlier designated as 'Commonwealth Literature' or 'New Literatures in English.' Over the years postcolonial studies have expanded to include cultural areas without a colonial past, studies on the 'subaltern,' for example, are extended to the social classes in the Western world who present a parallel to historical colonization. Thus, people on the verge of society, silent minorities, people living in diasporas, homeless wanderers, patients treated in hospitals, children bullied at school, supervised workers, gays and lesbians as outsiders to the accepted norms of society (cf. the emerging social wave of the LGBTQ movement), and ultimately people who are slow in thought, who are unskilled, helpless, frustrated, abashed or shy – everyone, who in any kind of social relation feels he is subordinated, oppressed, exploited or discriminated, is in a way subject to subaltern studies, is internally 'colonized.' Paradoxically, however, as Arif Dirlik points out "the term *postcolonial*, understood in terms of its discursive thematics, excludes from its scope most of those who inhabit or hail from post*colonial* societies." (Dirlik 1997, 300) Millions of people, the majority of the population of the developing world is untouched by and unconcerned with the twists of theory launched by critics cushioned in the comforts of Western academia.

Robert Young, a professor of Oxford University and editor of *Interventions*, a journal of transnational cultural studies, asserts that postcolonialism

> stands for empowering the poor, the dispossessed, and the disadvantaged, for tolerance of difference and diversity, for the establishment of minorities' rights, and cultural rights within a broad framework of democratic egalitarianism that refuses to impose alienating western ways of thinking on tricontinental third world societies. It resists all forms of exploitation (environmental as well as human) and all oppressive conditions that have been developed solely for the interests of corporate capitalism. It challenges corporate capitalism's commodification of social relations and the doctrine of individualism that functions as the means through

which this is achieved. […] The sympathies and interests of postcolonialism are thus focused on those at the margins of society, those whose cultural identity has been dislocated or left uncertain by the forces of global capitalism – refugees, migrants who have moved from the countryside to the impoverished edges of the city, migrants who struggle in the first world for a better life while working at the lowest levels of those societies. (Young 2020, 113-4)

In contrast with Young's view, postcolonial theorists at the turn of the millennium seemed to be unconcerned with social discrepancies; they embarked on fabricating theoretical models that do not help the lives of people living in postcolonial societies at all. Some of these authors, like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak or Abdul JanMohamed, bearing the burden of growing up in a third world society, has become entrenched in elitist Western universities where, enjoying the fringe benefits of an academic setting, they leaned toward obscurity, organized conferences, and contrived new studies that seemed to explore and aid who they called the subaltern. The publishing and academic industry surrounding the field offered space to verbosity and interlocutions of the initiated instead of addressing real problems arising from the postcolonial situation. By interlocutions of the initiated I simplify what Graham Huggan defines as the "self-enclosing affiliative network in which the intellectual validity of any given theoretical project consists in its ability to cross-reference other, preferably canonical, theoretical works." In his view, postcolonialism "risks mystifying not only the social, historical and economic circumstances of imperial encounter it seeks to abstract from, but also the specific material conditions underlying its own institutional development." (Huggan 2001, 259)

Such contradictions shed light on the tension among critics working in the field of postcolonial studies. Key theoretical models within the field fail to relate to the social strata they describe; the models remain merely descriptive, and as such, by legitimating the privilege and access of an academic elite to scholarship, they consolidate the isolation and the discrimination of subordinated spheres of postcolonial societies.

What has become of postcolonial theory fails to assert effects in the direction of democratic egalitarianism, as Robert Young would like to make it seem: for people occupying key positions of authority resigning from authority is just as difficult as for the suppressed to represent their interests. The conclusion of Gayatri Spivak's seminal and celebrated essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is that the subaltern cannot voice their intentions because of their being subdued by a dominant actor. Yet, Spivak's conclusion is a simple case of tautology, since as soon as the subaltern

becomes able to represent his interests, we cannot designate him as subaltern: with this shift he comes to be the representative of an unsuppressed interest group which then competes for authoritative positions at, ideally, more or less equal terms with other interest groups. The subaltern is *per definitionem* deprived of the ability to represent his interests, is deprived of rights and justice, and as a result of his disadvantage, he is often unable to formulate a congruent opinion.

Among the critics who put forward arguments against the hegemony of postcolonial theory, Aijaz Ahmad warranted his theoretical stance by his career: as the research fellow of Nehru Museum and Library in New Delhi, he was not dependent on Western academia and thus his opinion may carry some elements of truth from an outsider's perspective. He argues

> that postcolonial theory is simply one more medium through which the authority of the West over the formerly imperialized parts of the globe is currently being reinscribed within the neocolonial "new world order" and is, indeed best understood as a new expression of the West's historical will to power over the rest of the world. […] Postcolonial theorists reproduce within the academic sphere the contemporary division of labour authorized by global capitalism. (Cited in Moore-Gilbert 1997, 59)

Postcolonial theory in recent years, in contrast with its morphology, is not a theoretical investigation *following* the period of colonialism, much rather it is the confirmation, extension and reinforcement of colonial relations: the term is a euphemism for the much less justifiable term, 'neocolonialism.' The independence of many of the formerly colonized nations is a quasi-independence: a variously determined, in their political, economic, and cultural existence restricted and bonded, relative independence embedded in colonial pasts. Independence for India after partition, for Nigeria by being moulded into a multi-ethnic society where descendants of formerly often hostile tribal traditions are forced to live as a single nation, clearly, is not the same independence these territories had enjoyed prior to European colonization. Independence in the West Indies is anything but that of the native Caribs and Arawaks, who are practically extinct as a result of European encounter.

A pre-colonial independence can never be regained, but at the same time, as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out "colonizers never eradicated the pre-colonial culture." (Ashcroft et al. 2003, 195) In parallel, independence cannot instantly eradicate the trauma of colonization; the legacy of the colonial period is bound to remain with newly independent regions for a long time. To try and come to terms

with this legacy, to try and understand its effects and the transformations that it had left behind is inevitably the main preoccupation of most postcolonial writers.

Postcolonial discourse of the 1990s disregarded the fundamental contradictions outlined above, instead, the aim seemed to be to construe theoretical models. In John Guillory's view, postcolonial studies failed "to compensate for the *real* social inequalities their deployment is apparently designed to redress." (Huggan 2001, 249-50) Even Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, who are deeply entrenched in the academic field of postcolonial theory, so much so that in fact, recently a collection of essays appeared commemorating and celebrating their original and seminal study: *The Empire Writes Back* (see Zabus 2015) admit that "the validity of the post-colonial lies in its efficacy. Whatever its function as an academic discourse, we need to ask how well it has served to empower post-colonial intellectuals and assisted in implementing strategies of decolonization". (Ashcroft 2003, 203)

Curiously enough, however, such critics as Aijaz Ahmad, Benita Perry and Arif Dirlik, who represented dissident views on postcolonial theory, were often included in anthologies on postcolonialism, and thus, perhaps in contrast with their original intention, have become integrated into the discipline. Some harshly critical articles that originally appeared in periodicals like *Third Text* or *Critical Inquiry* criticizing established bastions of postcolonial theory were subsequently selected into general Readers that aimed to introduce postcolonial studies; thus, some authors have become part of the theoretical framework which they had originally rejected. When an author who criticizes postcolonial theory is defined as part of postcolonialism, a procedure of quasi-recognition, a melting into and ultimately a dismantling process commences that may lead to the silencing of the original critique.

Obviously, the editors of postcolonial Readers somehow strain to represent a broad approach to the area of study and hope to offer a complete view, but a critic's aim when turning against postcolonialism, if authentic and credible, is exactly not to melt into the discipline or to earn royalties by way of his critique being corrupted. Aijaz Ahmad laconically summed up his dissatisfaction with the tendency to commercialize theory: "Theory itself becomes a marketplace of ideas, with massive supplies of theory as usable commodity, guaranteeing consumers' free choice and a rapid rate of obsolescence." (Ahmad 1992, 70) The predicament of the critic, however, is insurmountable. If, on principle, he rejects the publication of his article as part of postcolonial theory, he deprives himself of the possibility of voicing his opinion and relegates himself to the position of the subaltern who is unable to find a forum to express his views, or else, he takes up the role of a sceptic, but either

way, he remains marginalized. As soon as, however, he becomes integrated into the 'industry' of theory, his views, at least in part, lose authenticity.

The publishing industry and academic elites at times might disorient authentic scholarship. The access to various awards, to competitions for posts, to publication forums and to other forums for voicing opinions can quite easily be restricted to specified target groups or even target persons in line with the interests of persons or groups of people in positions of authority distributing resources. Scholars who devote more time to monitoring and submitting applications and demonstrate better skills in public relations are bound to advance more rapidly than those who merely pursue scholarly research. Conferencing, publishing and academic scholarship in recent years have become an affluent market where the laws of a market economy apply. In this sense, art, culture, science, philosophy, social studies as well as politics, or any intellectual endeavour, become intangible merchandise, marketable products.

5. After Postcolonial Theory

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin claim that "forces such as globalization are the evidence of the continuing control of the 'West' over the 'Rest'" (Ashcroft et al. 2003, 194), and that "[t]he most extreme consequences of imperial dominance can be seen in the radical displacement of peoples through slavery, indenture and settlement. More recently the 'dispersal' of significant numbers of people can be seen to be a consequence of the disparity in wealth between the West and the world." (Ashcroft et al. 2003, 217) Thus, as our world at the turn of the millennium was becoming homogenized through forces of global market economies on the one hand, on the other hand, it remained divided by disparities reinforced through quasi-democratic, quasi-egalitarian ideologies and through the restriction of access to privileges by the counter-selective distribution of key positions of authority. Consumer behaviour, commercial media, a market of new entrepreneurship, the logic of Western democracy, modes and styles of mass communication, changes in education and technology – all these dissolved participating regions into a broader, uniform world. According to Arif Dirlik, the homogenizing processes were only

> an appearance of equalization of differences within and across societies, as well as of democratization within and among societies. What is ironic is that the managers of this world situation themselves concede that they (or their organizations) now have the power to appropriate the local for the global, to admit different cultures into the realm of capital, […] and even to reconstitute

subjectivities across national boundaries to create producers and consumers more responsive to the operations of capital. Those who do not respond […] – four-fifths of the global population by the managers' count – need not be colonized; they are simply marginalized. […] Those peoples or places that are not responsive to the needs (or demands) of capital, or are too far gone to respond 'efficiently,' simply find themselves out of its pathways. And it is easier even than in the heyday of colonialism or modernization theory to say convincingly: It is their own fault. (Dirlik 1997, 311)

Challenging global problems calls for global participation: this is the rhetoric why peoples and cultures were becoming homogenous and uniform. The transculturation of the world was a double-edged weapon: "the flow of culture has been at once homogenizing and heterogenizing; some groups share in a common global culture regardless of location even as they are alienated from the culture of their hinterlands while others are driven back into cultural legacies long thought to be residual to take refuge in culture havens that are as far apart from one another as they were at the origins of modernity." (Dirlik 1997, 312) Wherever we look, aims to liberalize always competed and conflicted with aims to preserve the *status quo*. The subaltern would forever be deprived of authority, of self-representation, of the ability, the drive and occasionally the opportunity to enforce his interests and to exercise his rights. A strive for equal rights among people would always remain in conflict with the natural inclination to strive for a better life and the conviction that people want to become equal with someone who is *superior* and not *inferior* to them. "The liberal, pluralistic self-image of the university can always be pressed to make room for diversity, multiculturalism, non-Europe; careers can arise out of such recognitions of the cultural compact. But this same liberal university is usually, for the non-white student, a place of desolation, even panic; exclusions are sometimes blatant, more often only polite and silent." (Ahmad 1992, 84)

If detached from its original mandate of investigating the culture and society of regions with a colonial background, postcolonial theory fails at what it claims to pursue. Construing twisted models of theoretical thinking, the heavy fog of jargon does not create empathy for colonized societies of late. Just the opposite: it alienates and places these societies at a greater distance. Efforts as those of Janet Wilson, Cristina Sandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh, to keep postcolonial studies intact by 'rerouting' and 'remapping' the scene, seem a futile attempt to consolidate vested interests. (Wilson 2009)

Let me repeat. Postcolonial theory over the years has become an inflated term. The field of study that initially dealt with literatures originating in regions with a colonial past gradually grew to encompass broad social, political or cultural aspects arising in diverse societies with no colonial history at all. In my essay I concentrated on the original use of the term and attempted to argue that the research area once designated as postcolonial studies has morphed and shifted from being a TOPIC of investigation to a general METHOD. What led to this transformation was the commodification of a post/colonial heritage. During the 1990s the exotic became a marketable cultural product. Merchandise that appealed to Western consumers often included various artistic forms: African sculptures, small or large wooden figures of a naked black person often believed to have a devotional value but most of the time only a fake depiction of folk mythology for disinformed tourists; incense sticks were imported from India; what we now term as world music infiltrated Western popular songs; novels, plays and poems written by authors living or coming from a region of the world with a colonial past were welcome by Western readers; exotic, international restaurants were established and food ingredients of various oriental cuisines became widely available anywhere we live. As primary texts of postcolonial literature appeared to be profitable ventures on the international publishing scene, similarly, postcolonial theory has flourished and become a marketable product with key figures occupying cushioned academic positions and creating a body of secondary literature disengaged from the original mandate of postcolonial studies in the original sense of the term. What was at stake at the turn of the millennium was the integrity of the field. What would justify and validate postcolonial theory once it turned away from its original target area and consequently has very little to do with the post/colonial phenomenon? Postcolonial theory fabricated in Western academic settings in recent years had no major impact on postcolonial societies. It seems Sarah Broulliette's viewpoint is justified by developments in recent decades: "Postcolonial literature, once theorized as Third World literature, perhaps [is] soon to be recategorized again as global literatures, or as the literatures of globalization." (Broulliette 2007, 174) It is not obvious that postcolonial theory has a future. The case might be that it has run its course and would soon become outdated as other theoretical approaches earlier (positivism, structuralism, deconstructionism) and give way to newly emerging approaches with new perspectives ready to explain developments and situations, evolving from globalization, migration, climate change, geopolitical contests, wars, ecological and economic problems. Then, we shall treat postcolonial theory from a historical point of view because it was nothing more than a vanishing phase in the history of literary theory in the last decades of the twentieth century.

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Family in the Woods
Countercultural Utopia in *Captain Fantastic* (2016)

Károly Pintér[1]

1. Introduction: Utopia in America, America as utopia

As utopian studies scholars are well aware, the noun 'utopia' but especially the adjective 'utopian' have almost as many definitions as the users of these terms. At one extreme, there is Ernst Bloch's universalist understanding of "the utopian function" detectable in a broad array of cultural products as the anticipation of unrealized hope, fulfillment and happiness;[2] at the other, there is the traditional, restricted understanding of utopias as specific blueprints proposed by various individuals over the centuries about how a superior social organization should be established and maintained. Between these poles, lots of different instances of the utopian imaginary[3] are possible, but despite their bewildering variety, they tend to share a few common features regarding their inspiration: dissatisfaction with and criticism of the status quo; yearning for a better way of existence; and the outlines of an alternative arrangement to achieve or at least approach the desired state. According to Lyman Tower Sargent, such utopian inspirations may manifest themselves in three forms: "literary utopia, utopian practice, and utopian social theory" (Sargent 2010, 5). All three manifestations display close associations with the intellectual concept of America and have left their imprint on the history of the United States. As Krishan Kumar remarks in his summary of 19th century American utopianism, "Everything about America has inspired, and continues to inspire, utopianism" (Kumar 1987, 69).

America as the potential or actual location of otherness and the promise of a different and better way of life loomed large in the imagination of Englishmen as well as other Europeans a long time before actual colonization. A notable example

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[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, pinter.karoly@btk.ppke.hu

[2] See Bloch 1995, 142–175 on "the utopian function" and his detailed discussions of "medical, social, technological, architectural and biological utopias" as well as utopia represented in art and philosophy (451–920).

[3] The expression "imaginary" used as a noun is an English translation of the French term *l'imaginaire*: see Braga 2007, 62–64, and his introduction to the "Utopian Imaginaries" conference of the Utopian Studies Society/ Europe in July 2023 (http://phantasma.lett.ubbcluj.ro/en/conferences/).

is the foundational text of the literary genre, Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), which projected its eponymous imaginary island somewhere in the (at the time, still half-legendary) New World (More 1989, 10–12). The New England Puritans' venture to found the "City upon a Hill" or a new Christian commonwealth in the North American "wilderness" in the early 17th century (Boorstin 1988, 3–31) has added a utopian dimension to the origins of the United States. The earliest reports about the Edenic lifestyle of the natives evoked ancient Golden Age myths in European travelers' minds (Kumar 1987, 70–71), which is reflected in John Locke's famous metaphor in his *Second Treatise of Government* (1690) that "in the beginning all the world was America, […] for no such thing as money was anywhere known" (Locke 1952, 29). The presumed emptiness of the vast continent (an idea that consistently disregarded the existence of Native Americans), its abundance in natural resources, and the lack of established social hierarchies or political regimes inspired the imagination of writers and poets, attracted dreamers and adventurers to the new colonies, and provided philosophers and social planners with a clean canvas to sketch their alternative schemes on. "America was, to all intents and purposes, empty, a virgin land ready and waiting for settlement and civilization. Here mankind could make a new beginning" (Kumar 1987, 71).

Kumar argues that the creation of the European colonies in America and the foundation of the United States themselves can be understood as large-scale utopian projects (72–78), but he also borrows an argument from philosopher Robert Nozick to view the young US as a "meta-utopia", or a political and legal framework that allowed a variety of small alternative associations to be established within its boundaries (Kumar 1987, 81; Nozick 1974, 312). In the colonial era, most experimental settlements were founded by religious communities of European origin, like the Moravians of Pennsylvania or the Shakers of New York (Bestor 1970, 23–26). The early 19th century saw the zenith of utopian communitarianism in the expanding United States, especially along the thinly populated frontier: well-known examples include New Harmony founded by early socialist pioneer Robert Owen in Indiana in 1825 (Bestor 1970, 101–110, 160–201); Brook Farm, established in 1841 in Massachusetts and made famous by several Transcendentalists who joined the community, as well as some two dozen other phalanxes inspired by the ideas of French Socialist Charles Fourier and his faithful American disciple, Albert Brisbane (Bestor 1970, 280–282; Fellman 1973, 15–16); or the Oneida Community, a strange heterodox sect practicing "complex marriage", founded by John Humphey Noyes in 1848 in upstate New York (Fellman 1973, 49–60; Kumar 1987, 87–90). Few of these

experimental communities lasted longer than a couple of years; those established on secular ideologies typically collapsed a lot sooner than religiously inspired ones, but a general decline in the popularity of communitarianism can be observed in the late 19th century (Kumar 1987, 94–95). Nonetheless, the wealth of the American tradition of practical utopianism has few equals in the history of Western culture (see also Claeys 2011, 129–139).

Perhaps it is due partly to the ease of propagating radical reform ideas and the ubiquity of various alternative communities that literary utopia remained an uncommon genre in early American literature. In his meticulous bibliography of English-language utopian literature, Sargent lists only a handful of obscure American utopian works from the early 19th century, the earliest of which was published in 1802 (Sargent 2016)[4], in sharp contrast to the long history and richness of the British utopian tradition. Kumar concurs:

> As a metaphor or symbol, utopia is practically everywhere in American literature. But as a detailed portrait of an ideal society it is relatively rare. It is almost as if, because Americans thought they were already living in utopia, there was no need to represent it in imagination. Utopianism, the idea of America's special destiny, was a central part of the national ideology – almost *the* national ideology. […] But this ideological or 'pragmatic' utopianism, a unique and almost contradictory blend, had the paradoxical effect of driving out almost entirely the formal literary utopia. (Kumar 1987, 81, original italics)

There was a perceivable uptick of writing with utopian overtones in the 1840s, which coincided with the rising popularity of alternative communities. A Prussian immigrant, John Adolphus Etzler, published several visions of a utopia relying on revolutionary technology harnessing wind, water, and the sun (Sargent 2016). Although his advocacy of clean and renewable energy has since proved prophetic, his inventions turned out to be impractical and unusable. A late novel by classic American author James Fenimore Cooper, *The Crater* (1847), is a sea adventure story, but it depicts the emergence of a small idyllic colony on a Pacific island (Sargent 2016). In 1849, Edgar Allan Poe wrote a strange utopian/dystopian story taking place in the far future, "Mellonta Tauta", in which he savagely satirized the democratic political institutions of the contemporary US and suggested that the island of Manhattan, destroyed by an earthquake, would become "the emperor's garden" in the 19th century (Poe 1976, 322).

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[4] The earliest full-fledged literary utopia published by an American author is probably *Equality: A Political Romance* from 1802, attributed to a certain John Lithgow (https://openpublishing.psu.edu/utopia/content/equality-political-romance).

In 1852, Nathaniel Hawthorne published *The Blithedale Romance*, a narrative based on his experiences at Brook Farm a decade earlier, which expressed his tactful skepticism of the utopian experiment while avoiding a detailed discussion of how the community emerged and how it was organized (White 1998, 80).

Yet none of these can be considered a proper literary utopia, and in the next thirty years, while the nation was preoccupied with the all-consuming conflict over slavery and then the traumatic experience of the Civil War, the genre practically disappeared from American literature, until it made a comeback in the 1880s, under very different circumstances: the new age of rapid industrialization and urbanization, as well as that of drastic social transformation, challenged contemporaries once again to envision better alternatives to the problem-ridden present (Sargent 2016). This new ferment produced the first classic American literary utopia, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888), which prophesied that the United States of the millennium would become a single "Great Trust" managing an entirely nationalized economy on essentially socialist principles, in which all able-bodied adults perform a compulsory service in the "industrial army" until retirement (Bellamy 2000, 37–42). Bellamy's book became an instant national success and made a huge impact not only in the US but also in Europe, spawning a network of Nationalist Clubs intent on putting the principles outlined in Bellamy's book into practice (Roemer 1983, 207–210) as well as fictional responses and literary imitations from such significant British writers as William Morris and H. G. Wells (Kumar 1987, 134). The novel's outstanding international success is indicated by the fact that, along with several other European languages, it was also translated into Hungarian as early as 1892 (Mohay 1970).

But Bellamy's book signals the irrevocable end of an era: Fellman argues that American utopianism was replaced by progressivism by the early 20th century, a more practical and reform-oriented movement of social-political innovation, which was also motivated by idealism but dismissed the bold visions of utopists as unrealistic (Fellman 1973, xix). Social utopianism on a large scale would not be revived until the wide-ranging cultural ferment of the 1960s, which produced the hippie subculture and boosted several other kinds of influential countercultural activism from the civil rights movement to second-wave feminism and beyond (for details, see Isserman and Kazin 2000), while also inspiring several "critical utopias" in the 1970s, such as Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Dispossessed*, Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*, or Samuel R. Delany's *Triton* (for details, see Moylan 1987).

The overwhelming majority of 19th century American utopian fiction as well as practical experiments were based on some variety of communitarianism[5] and egalitarianism: they typically imagined a democratic community guided by elected leaders, sought to provide for all members equally, and limited or even eliminated private property. They also attempted to do away with money in economic transactions in favor of some kind of barter. In all these ambitions, they were clearly opposed to the dominant traits of the young United States: individualism, laissez-faire capitalism, market competition and social-political inequality based on wealth and inherited privilege. Besides this communitarian-socialist version of utopian thinking, inspired primarily by European religious and philosophical traditions, however, there existed another, rival version of utopian imagination in the US which was rooted in the powerful experience of living in proximity to the North American wilderness. While the conventional American imagery invariably pictured wild nature as a female figure and used sexist and militaristic language in relation to it (Bollobás 2005, 82) – wilderness was supposed to be "penetrated", "explored", "subdued" and "tamed", and ultimately turned into a civilized, (hu)man-dominated landscape exemplified by the farm or the garden (Kumar 1987, 72–74) – for a minority, it also represented a refuge from the corruption of civilization, a place where exceptionally robust, disciplined and determined individuals may create their own private utopia, seeking to fulfil another ancient human ambition of living in harmony with nature, a distinct feature of Golden Age myths.

The first literary manifestation of this narrative trope, also known as the myth of the "American Adam",[6] is the Leatherstocking tales (1823–1841) of James Fenimore Cooper, whose protagonist, Natty Bumppo (known under a variety of nicknames in the five novels) became the first internationally famous American literary hero. He is a man of the frontier, intimately familiar with and perfectly self-sufficient in the wilderness, who exists continuously at the periphery of the expanding American civilization and has combined his European heritage with vital elements of Indian

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[5] Communitarianism was defined by Bestor as "all those colonies that were established for the definite purpose of creating a richer, nobler, more equitable social life by bringing men and women together to share their lives in closely knit communities. The term is broad enough to include those societies which adopted community of goods as well as those which did not" (quoted in Kumar 1987, 444).

[6] The term entered wider circulation after R. W. H. Lewis published his eponymous book in 1955, who defined it as

the image of a radically new personality, the hero of the new adventure: an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; and individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. […] Adam was the first, the archetypal, man. His moral position was prior to experience, and in his very newness he was fundamentally innocent. The world and history lay all before him. (Lewis 1959, 5)

culture through his lifelong friendship with Chingachgook, a Mohican chief. Despite his lack of education and sophistication, he is morally superior to all those rapacious white settlers whose main priority is to enrich themselves from the wealth of the continent and who despise both Native Americans and their respectful view of the relationship between man and nature (House 1987, 96–103).

The classic philosophical statement of this back-to-nature utopian desire in American culture is Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854), an essay reflecting on a period of more than two years (between 1845 and 1847) he spent in a self-constructed wooden cabin at Walden Pond outside Concord, Massachusetts (Thoreau 2004, 39–48). Although Thoreau did not exactly renounce civilization, as he remained in the heart of New England (which was by the mid–19th century several hundred miles east of the real frontier), within walking distance from a small town and in the vicinity of Boston, relied on odd jobs from the local community to maintain himself, and dined at his friends with some regularity, his book has nonetheless become a classic American text expounding the virtues of self-reliance and rugged individualism as well as a trenchant criticism of modern civilization. Thoreau carried out and recorded a premeditated experiment to find out what the essential needs for human survival and self-fulfillment are: he came to the conclusion that beyond simple food, shelter and fuel, there is very little that is indispensable for a meaningful and happy life while most of the luxuries offered by civilization isolate people from nature and create material burdens that force them to toil miserably throughout most of their life. His rejection of material comfort and the 'blessings' of civilized life as well as his extolment of the subtle beauties of nature has served as a touchstone for generations of Americans who have wished to abandon and escape from the increasingly urban, mechanized and artificial existence that 20th and 21st century United States offered.

Thoreau's criticism of the materialism and mercantilism of his own age differed from most of his utopian contemporaries in one significant aspect: he put forward his critical views from an emphatically individualist point of view, speaking exclusively in his own name and repeatedly emphasizing that he is not trying to set an example or provide a model way of life for anybody else. As he put it, "I would not have any one adopt *my* mode of living on any account; […] I desire that there may be as many different persons in the world as possible; but I would have each one be very careful to find out and pursue *his own* way, and not his father's or his mother's or his neighbor's instead" (Thoreau 2004, 68, original italics). This strong idiosyncratic streak in Thoreau both assimilated him more strongly to mainstream

individualist American thinking than his communitarian-socialist peers and added a strangely anti-utopian frame to his reflections as he expressly refrained from prescribing any ideal way of life for the wider community, in diametrical opposition to standard utopists. Kumar describes the paradox of *Walden* as "the *reductio ad absurdum* of American utopianism. One man does not make a community, even a utopian community" (Kumar 1987, 82, original italics).

The myth of the American Adam and Thoreau's testimony of how to eke out a livelihood by adapting to one's environment and utilize all the resources available in wild nature have reverberated in subsequent American culture, creating a special kind of individualist tradition critical of modern technological civilization and ready to retreat from it into the wilderness, the impact of which can be traced up to such contemporary young adult dystopian stories as Susan Collins's *Hunger Games* trilogy (see Limpár 2021, 181–183). In the following, I wish to examine a representation of the Thoreauvian utopia and its clash with the wider American utopia in the narrative of *Captain Fantastic*, an independent drama that won multiple awards and received mostly appreciative reviews (see e.g. Kermode 2016, Dargis 2016, Debruge 2016, Kohn 2016), although it was also criticized by others (e.g. Brody 2016, Chang 2016, Watson 2016).

2. *Captain Fantastic* as a clash of utopias: from the wilderness to the garden

Thoreau describes the main motivation of his move to Walden Pond in the following famous words:

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. […] I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms (Thoreau 2004, 88)

This quote could have served as a motto for *Captain Fantastic,* written and directed by Matt Ross in 2016. Its protagonist, Ben Cash, a father of six in his late 40s or early 50s,[7] lives with his entire family in the depth of the forest in the

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[7] A telltale clue regarding Ben's age is a tattered T-shirt he wears in a late scene (01:33:20), which reveals he was a supporter of Jesse Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign, so he must have been at least a teenager, but more likely a college student, in the late 1980s, which would put his birthyear around 1966 to 1970.

American Northwest (probably in Washington state[8]) in a self-constructed dwelling, as completely isolated from mainstream American society as possible. Cash and his family can be conveniently viewed as an intentional community[9] attempting to exist in a Thoreauvian simplicity close to and in harmony with nature. While sheltering his children from the harmful influences of modern civilization and training them to survive in the wilderness, Cash also undertakes an ambitious and radical educational program predominantly informed by left-wing radicalism to inculcate alternative cultural values in their kids, encouraging individual thinking and a strongly critical attitude to mainstream American culture. The plot is set in motion by the sudden suicide of his wife, which forces Ben to return to "everyday America" with his family and confront both the consequences of his parental decisions and his potential responsibility for his wife's death.

The movie meets at least two fundamental generic criteria of fictional utopias: satire and antithesis. As such narratives inevitably emerge from displeasure with the author's familiar status quo, they always present some sort of criticism of it, which typically takes the form of (explicit or implicit) satire. The generic subcategory of satirical utopia, employed by certain authors (see e.g. Vieira 2010, 15–16), is actually a misnomer, since all utopias are satirical albeit to varying degrees, as Northrop Frye and Robert C. Elliott have convincingly demonstrated: they take aim at the perceived follies, inequities and absurdities of their own contemporary society in the form of sarcastic references, comic exaggerations or even explicit parodies and build their nonconformist vision on the ambition to correct or replace the exposed deficiencies of empirical reality (Elliott 1970, 3–24; Frye 1990, 223–239, 308–311). The second criterion is the presence of a specific alternative arrangement, an antithesis to the familiar and conventional, as the path out of the predicament of the status quo. This alternative may not be feasible on a global or even on a national level, but it may prove attractive to a small but dedicated group of people; most intentional communities of human history have emerged out of such reformist zeal.

Captain Fantastic ticks off both criteria. It skillfully satirizes some of the characteristic features and attitudes of mainstream American culture through the

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[8] Although their exact location is never precisely identified in the movie, the pine forests and tall mountains suggest the Northern Rockies. While travelling with the family in an old school bus, they are crossing a wide river on a highway bridge in an urban area at 00:31:30, and a quick shot briefly shows a traffic sign: they are on the I-405 to Beaverton, which suggests that they are crossing the Willamette River in Portland, Oregon. Since they are traveling southward toward New Mexico, and Portland is due south of the state border with Washington, their point of departure must have been in rural Washington.

[9] Note, however, that Sargent excludes nuclear families from his definition of "intentional communities", arguing that it should be a voluntary combination of at least a few unrelated adults (see Sargent 1994, 14–15).

eyes of the children, cultural outsiders who experience them in person for the first time, and through the confrontations of the father with the conventions and expectations of established society. In fact, much of the movie dramatizes a clash of utopias, as the downsides and failures of the conformist and self-satisfied American utopia (as defined by Kumar above) are subjected to a trenchant criticism from the perspective of the Cash family's private utopia, and the audience is repeatedly invited to compare and judge. Some of the targets of these satirical episodes include rampant consumerism, the obesity epidemic, the underperforming state education system and the lack of tolerance for dissent. Furthermore, the first part of the movie also presents an alternative way of life that is resonant with the primordial desire of reuniting with nature, evoking a rich theme of American culture going back at least to Thoreau's *Walden* and Cooper's frontier tales.

The opening scene (*Captain Fantastic* 00:01:00–00:01:35)[10] is a broad aerial vista of an immense pine forest with sloping mountainsides in the background: a timeless visual representation of the untamed wilderness. The first cut takes us below the canopy: we get glimpses of tall pine trees, a mountain stream and finally a solitary roving deer in the forest. The Edenic idyll is interrupted by a single human face, painted dark, intensely watching the deer while hiding among the foliage (00:02:32). It soon becomes clear that the deer is being hunted in an ancient and brutal fashion: the man jumps at the animal and, after a brief struggle, cuts its throat with a knife (00:02:54–00:03:24). As soon as the prey is killed, a strange company of other humans emerge on the other side of the stream to join the young hunter: several children aged from about 6 to 16, male and female, their faces also painted dark like primeval warriors but wearing a motley of modern clothes, wade across the water accompanied by a single long-haired and bearded adult man (00:03:25–00:04:00). The man takes his own knife and carves out a piece of raw meat, then he makes a sign on the young hunter's forehead with his bloody finger: "Today the boy is dead; and in his place – is a man." (00:04:00–00:04:45). Then he offers the bloody meat to the young hunter, who readily bites off a mouthful and begins to chew. Only then start the opening credits of the movie (00:05:10).

Such an opening of the movie is mystifying, especially in view of the subsequent story: the first impressions suggest a weird primitive tribe or cult practicing sacramental killing and some sort of astonishingly savage initiation ritual.[11] Immediately afterward,

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[10] In the following, all time codes refer to the same movie, therefore repeated references are omitted.

[11] One reviewer interpreted the opening scene as a comment on the cultic character of families: "What are families, after all, beyond autonomous little sects forced to operate within a broader social context?" (Debruge 2016)

however, these dark associations are dispelled: the family washes themselves in the stream, playfully splashing around and making fun, quickly shedding their primeval image. They carry the deer's carcass back to their dwelling and begin to process it. Then the father announces, after glancing at an old-fashioned pocket watch: "Training is in 60 minutes" (00:05:15–00:05:54). The movie's narrative arc opens in a wilderness idyll, shocks the audience with images suggesting feral savagery, but then quickly offsets the disturbing scenes by ushering us into a rudimentary but well-organized small community living in the middle of the forest.

In the following few minutes of the movie, viewers get a quick visual introduction to the family's way of life: we see a wooden cabin where they sleep, a greenhouse where they grow plants; there are rows of pickled vegetable jars, a huge plastic water container, washed-up dishes next to a sink. The inside of the cabin (00:06:35–00:06:40) is anything but nomadic: there are cupboards and shelves full of books, pictures of the family, a sewing machine, even a record player is momentarily visible in the background. The initial images of a savage tribe are soon displaced by glimpses of a family living in reasonable comfort in the forest, not lacking the fundamental necessities of civilized existence.

But the father also trains the children to survive under extreme circumstances in the wilderness and therefore subjects them to a tough physical regimen: they run and exercise every day, climb rocks and learn hand-to-hand combat as well. They spend their evenings by the fire reading and studying, with the father acting as a rather stern schoolmaster, questioning some of them about how they are progressing and reminding them of upcoming tests (00:09:11–00:10:50), all of which reveals that the children are homeschooled, a practice that is legal and not uncommon in the US.[12] This scene offers the first hints at the authoritarian side of the father's personality: his eldest daughter, Vespyr, responds nervously to his questions, while his small blond daughter, Zaja, is reading her book with a gas mask on, as if trying to hide from her father, but later she removes it with a huge sigh of relief (00:10:52). Yet the tension is soon dispelled by the father bringing out a guitar and initiating a spontaneous jam session, with all the children happily taking part (00:10:55–00:13:00).

All in all, the opening part of the movie depicts a closely-knit family living a rugged yet almost idyllic life in the woods under the resolute but loving guidance of their father – but the absence of the mother is conspicuous from the start. Viewers get a passing glimpse of her when a wedding picture is briefly shown inside the

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[12] See the data of National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) about homeschooling (https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=91)

cabin (00:06:55) but her absence is unexplained until the kids start asking questions about her (00:13:25–00:14:10): the conversation reveals that she has been missing from the family for months because she has been hospitalized due to her struggle with depression. Soon after, while Ben is visiting a nearby town to sell hand-made trinkets and shop for supplies, he calls a woman called Harper (later revealed as Ben's sister) to find out that his wife, Leslie, has committed suicide (00:16:35–00:17:30).

This unexpected tragedy disrupts what initially seemed a backwoods utopia: the grief-stricken family is further shocked by the attempt of Leslie's father to ban them from the funeral. Jack, who clearly blames the husband for his daughter's illness and death, warns Ben over the phone not to attend or he would be arrested (00:21:45–00:22:55). The children protest in dismay, employing the radical left-wing terminology of social and political criticism learned from their father, denouncing their grandparents as "fascist capitalists" (00:23:32) among other things, but Ben makes it clear that if he were arrested, the kids could be taken away from him, a risk he is unwilling to take.

After attempting to maintain their old routine, Ben – clearly sensing the children's grief and disappointment – makes an impulsive decision: first he lectures the kids about how the powerful control the lives of the powerless and they have to shut up and accept that, then suddenly declares in a defiant gesture: "Well, fuck that" (00:29:08–00:30:00), and they embark on a long trip in an old converted school bus to join the mother's funeral who had been hospitalized by her parents in New Mexico. This decision sets the family on a collision course that threatens to destroy their collective utopia and their entire community. They do not know it yet, but they would never return to the woods.

In *Captain Fantastic*, the journey, which is an age-old plot device of narrative utopias,[13] is the inversion of the well-established pattern familiar from More's *Utopia* and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* down to Bellamy's *Looking Backward*: it is not the representative of the author's familiar society who travels far and away to report on the mysterious land of otherness, but the young citizens of Utopia set out to discover mainstream America – which is mostly a *terra incognita* for the children who have rarely left their home in the forest before. They represent a variety of another utopian trope, the noble savage visiting civilization and revealing its weird and absurd character from an estranged perspective, a ploy exemplified by Voltaire's *L'Ingenu* (1767) or Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932). This situation offers a

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[13] The renaissance utopias after More liked to employ the conventions of contemporary travel literature for satirical effect, both to provide an aura of authenticity to the narrative and concurrently to subvert that impression by various ironic, parodistic or absurdist means. An outstanding example is Robert Hall's *Mundus Alter Et Idem* (1605), see Maczelka 2019, 168–184.

rich source for satire, but also exposes the limits of the children's education and, by extension, questions the father's ambitious schooling program, which is the heart of the parents' backwoods utopian project. While the kids have apparently read and studied widely about the history, culture and politics of the United States, the only person who is intimately familiar with the reality of the outside world is their father, also the supervisor of their entire education, whose philosophy betrays a fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, he promotes an eminently progressive pedagogical program, constantly pushing the kids to be critical and independent-minded in their thinking, not to accept ready-made opinions and unsupported claims. On the other hand, he has deliberately isolated the children from any personal, first-hand experience about the wider world: all the information available to them has been carefully selected and filtered by Ben, which effectively prevents the kids from forming truly independent and self-reliant views. Furthermore, he has inculcated his own radical left-wing critical views about the evils of American capitalism, consumer society, the rule of the wealthy and the corruption of the political system in his kids, so on balance he has carried out a textbook example of ideological indoctrination while preaching the importance of individual judgement and critical thought. Sheila O'Malley, who self-evidently identifies the family's way of life in the forest as a "utopia", severely criticized this aspect of Ben's education in her review, calling the children "little robots" who "parrot back to him his words [and] share his world view without question", and sums up her impression in the following summary judgment: "It's Family as Cult" (O'Malley 2016). In Ben's figure, the narrative compellingly dramatizes the fundamental paradox of parenting: fathers and mothers effectively rule over their children's lives like absolute monarchs, making all the crucial and far-reaching decisions about them and rarely asking their opinion or consent, in the firm conviction that they act in their best interest. Ben's case differs from other families mainly in the radicalism of his parenting choices and the almost total power he exercises over his children.

The fundamental ambiguity of Ben's character is brilliantly if metaphorically summarized by Kielyr's analysis of *Lolita*, arguably the key scene of the entire movie. During their bus trip, Ben notices his daughter reading Nabokov's classic and questions her about it. Kielyr describes the book as "disturbing" because it's written from the main character's point of view, which makes the reader sympathize with him even though he is a "child molester" who effectively rapes the young girl. "But his love for her is beautiful […] I hate him and somehow I feel sorry for him at the same time" (00:31:40–00:33:05). Although Ben is certainly no child

molester, he does violate his children's freedom in several crucial ways, yet the movie's narrative places him squarely in the center and this way generates mostly sympathy and admiration for his incredible devotion to parenting. Matt Ross, the movie's scriptwriter-director has explicitly identified as the main question of the movie whether Jack is "the best father in the world or the worst" (qtd in Kermode 2016), and it is small wonder that the complexity and ambiguity of Ben's character provoked diametrically opposite reactions from reviewers: Chang describes him as an "objectively intolerable human being" affected by "raging narcissism" (Chang 2016) and O'Malley calls him a "sanctimonious bully" (O'Malley 2016), while Dargis opines that "The clan's father isn't a superhero, but […] he's the next best thing" (Dargis 2016). O'Hara offers the most balanced opinion by identifying Ben as "both the hero and the villain" (O'Hara 2016). Either way, the family's clash with the real world exposes the shortcomings of Ben's educational ideals, so the satire ultimately cuts both ways: the values, conventions and underlying contradictions of the great American utopia and the family-sized backwoods utopia are both interrogated and undermined in the story's confrontations.

The journey provides plenty of occasions for satirical episodes: the children have never seen a restaurant or a supermarket before, are completely ignorant about popular culture (like commercial food and fashion brands or TV shows), they are shocked by the obesity of the average Americans. But in another sense, they have been carefully prepared for "the other world" along the lines of Ben's radical anticapitalistic ideology. As the father's instruction of "Remember your training!" (00:35:50) illustrates, he has trained them to treat mainstream America as a dangerous and hostile world, where they should act as a disciplined and coordinated team of outsiders to defend themselves (for instance when they scare away a police officer during a routine traffic stop by pretending to be a fundamentalist Christian sect [00:35:20–00:37:40]), or to obtain supplies by disregarding other people's property (they try to hunt sheep along the road with bow and arrow [00:37:52–00:38:30] and carry out an organized stealing raid in a supermarket [00:40:25–00:42:40]).

The most ironic illustration of Ben's countercultural radicalism is the episode in which the family celebrates "Noam Chomsky Day", apparently one of Ben's intellectual heroes and a famous left-wing critic of the United States (see e.g. Milne 2009). After the successful theft, Ben wants to celebrate with the kids, therefore he presents a chocolate cake and declares that today is Noam Chomsky Day even though – as one of the kids remarks – his birthday is on December 7. It soon becomes clear that this private family holiday serves as a substitute for Christmas: the kids

bring out a portrait of Chomsky, they sing a little song and everybody gets presents – invariably hunting knives, bows and other forest weapons (00:42:40–00:42:40]). But Rellian, the second oldest boy who has displayed a rebellious streak before, is unimpressed and challenges the father: why can they not celebrate Christmas like everyone else? Ben's response is entirely consistent with his educational philosophy: he calmly offers Rellian the opportunity to argue for his position and try to convince the others. But the game is obviously rigged, since he, the only person of authority present, is firmly opposed to the idea and he has indoctrinated the rest of the family, so Rellian would have an uphill struggle trying to persuade an unreceptive audience. He sullenly and silently walks away instead (00:42:40–00:45:35]).

This episode includes multiple layers of irony: on the one hand, it showcases the typical ambition of an alternative intentional community to consciously differ from the mainstream. Ben strongly dislikes Christianity (which is also illustrated by his subsequent provocative speech at Leslie's funeral ceremony [01:10:00–01:11:40]) and refuses to celebrate Christmas, enforcing his preference on his family without tolerating any dissent despite his seemingly patient invitation to his son to argue for his opposite position. It reveals the same combination of authoritarian utopianism couched in the language of individualism and tolerance that his entire method of education displays. On a more abstract level, turning Noam Chomsky into the patron saint of a family holiday also works as an absurd joke that can be interpreted as a satirical comment of the scriptwriter-director on the personality cult around some of the intellectual heroes of the American left.

A different kind of cultural clash is dramatized during the family's visit at Ben's sister Harper: during the dinner, Ben scandalizes Harper by offering wine to his children but even more when he does not avoid the painful topic of his wife's mental illness and suicide when asked by one of Harper's sons (00:46:30–00:51:30). His unflinching and brutal honesty stands in sharp contrast to Harper's and her husband's pious attempts to change the subject and pretend that Leslie's death was natural – in line with conventional American social norms that mental illness and death are unpleasant subjects that kids should be sheltered from. Harper clashes again with Ben the following day when she suggests that he should take the children to school, an idea flatly rejected by Ben. The ensuing argument sharply delineates their opposing priorities: Ben claims he teaches his children to survive alone in the wilderness while Harper says they are kids who need to go to school. In response to that, Ben invites Harper's teenage sons into the kitchen and asks them about the American Bill of Rights. Their total ignorance and lack of interest is spectacularly

contrasted to his 8-year-old daughter, Zaja, who gives fluent and detailed answers to Ben's questions (00:54:35–00:58:00).[14]

Ben wins this argument easily by demonstrating the superior effectiveness of his educational methods. He meets a much tougher opponent, however, in the person of his father-in-law, Jack. When the family arrives late at the scene of the funeral service in quirky colorful clothes, Ben interrupts the priest and makes a provocative speech in which he declares that Leslie hated organized religion, practiced Buddhism, and would never wish to be buried in a coffin. Then he proceeds to read out her last will in which she stated that she should be cremated, and her ashes should be flushed down a public toilet. At this point, Jack orders security guards to forcibly remove Ben from the church (01:08:20–01:12:00).

This scene is the most public and most spectacular conflict between Ben and the "normal world" of America and contains multiple moral contradictions. Ben's bright red suit (Jack calls him a "hippie in a clown outfit" [1:13:33]) and his gate-crashing oration is intended to scandalize the mourners, and his deliberate flouting of funeral conventions, while providing yet another great satirical occasion to parody the empty pieties of a traditional service, feels so outrageous and disrespectful that his forcible removal appears an appropriate response from Leslie's father. On the other hand, Ben and his children have every right to be present at his wife's and their mother's funeral: Jack's arbitrary and unilateral decision to exclude them generates sympathy for the family. Furthermore, Ben essentially acts in accordance with Leslie's written wishes when he announces Leslie's last will, honoring his wife's legacy in his own unorthodox way. Two strong-willed and domineering characters, father and husband thus lock horns over who should determine the final rites of their loved one, and Ben is destined to lose this fight: Jack explicitly threatens to call the police on him outside the church, and when he seems determined even after that to interrupt the funeral, his eldest son, Bodevan, finally stops him with the desperate appeal "Please, we can't lose you too!" (01:12:45–01:14:40).

The confrontation, which illustrates Ben's willful and headstrong character, also exposes the fraying harmony and brewing tensions within the family. After they stop for the night in a trailer park, Rellian tells Bodevan that their father was responsible for their mother's illness ("Dad made her crazy! Dad's dangerous!") and when the latter reacts with an incredulous chuckle, Rellian bursts out: "Do you think our lives are so great? Do you think Dad is so perfect?" (01:16:00–01:17:30) This exchange makes

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[14] At least one reviewer questioned whether an 8-year-old would or even should be able to give such mature answers about the Bill of Rights and found the scene stilted and didactic (Chitwood 2016).

Bodevan finally pluck up the courage to tell his father that he had secretly applied to several top-class Ivy League universities and has been accepted to all. A slightly drunk Ben's reaction is angry and hurtful instead of appreciative: he accuses Bodevan of deceiving him by conducting the entire application process behind his back. He is shocked by his son's reply: "It was Mom. She helped me with everything. We did it together." And when Ben retorts that he has nothing to learn in college, Bodevan also loses his temper like Rellian before: "I know nothing! I'm a freak because of you! You've made us freaks! And Mom knew that, she understood! Unless it comes out of a fucking book, I don't know anything about anything!" (01:17:45–01:19:45)

The harsh and angry words of the eldest son, who has obviously been the apple of his father's eye and the pride of his utopian educational project, eventually throw several hard truths into Ben's face: his schooling program, despite all its merits touted by Ben, is fundamentally deficient because it leaves his children unprepared for the real world, that is, the everyday realities of modern civilization, and they will be unable to fit in due to their lack of social and cultural skills.[15] He is also forced to swallow the embarrassing fact that Leslie was privy to Bodevan's secret desire to go to college, and she helped him fulfill his dream despite Ben's clear disapproval. All this suggests a dictatorial father ruling over an intimidated family rather than Leslie's full and equal participation in parental decisions about the children's education that Ben repeatedly claims.

These conflicts bring into sharp focus the central mystery of the movie's entire plot: the dead wife/mother's character and the circumstances of her illness and death. Leslie is the most conspicuous lacuna in the narrative as she remains practically invisible during the entire story. Except for some photos, the audience only catches fleeting glimpses of her in two brief dream sequences of Ben, in which she smiles at him lovingly and says things like "What we are doing out here is so incredible" and "The kids are amazing" (00:24:30–00:25:00), which seem to confirm Ben's repeated claim that leaving civilization behind and moving to the forest was a joint parental decision with Leslie's complete consent. However, Leslie's true character, her opinions and especially the causes of her mental breakdown are shrouded in ambiguity, as different people reveal contrasting pieces of her personality. Her father, Jack, is firmly convinced that Ben is responsible for her mental illness, and he does not hesitate to tell him in the face; Rellian confirms the same to Bodevan when he says he hardly remembers his mother laughing and her condition was very

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[15] The movie's funniest illustration of their social incompetence is Bodevan's brief love affair with a blond girl in a trailer park during the trip, when he confesses his love and asks her to marry him after their first kiss, acting like a 19th century romantic hero from one of the classic novels his father has required them to read (00:58:00–01:06:00).

severe (psychotic episodes, hallucinations, self-harm), blaming his father for Leslie's symptoms. Leslie's presumably violent mood swings are indirectly attested by her last letter her mother shows Ben: she refuses to leave the forest (although a brief reference suggests that she had asked her mother to rescue her in a previous letter) and explicitly identifies their project as a utopian one by comparing it to Plato's famous utopian vision in *The Republic*:

> What Ben and I have created here may be unique in all of human existence. We created a paradise out of Plato's *Republic*. Our children shall be philosopher-kings. It makes me so indescribably happy. I'm going to get better out here. I know I will because we are defined by our actions not our words. (1:29:45–1:30:15)

This final letter seems to vindicate Ben, yet it is no definitive proof considering the circumstances: she had apparently written something very different before, and soon after she was finally committed to a mental hospital where she ended her own life. Two crucial questions remain hanging in the air throughout most of the movie: did Leslie fully support the withdrawal into the wilderness, or was it Ben's idea who imposed his iron will on her just like he has done with the kids? Has the tough way of life in the woods contributed to Leslie's mental decline and is Ben indirectly responsible for her death by refusing to give up his utopian dream?

Ben consistently denies responsibility even after Rellian defects from the family and seeks refuge at his grandparents. When Ben turns up to take him back, Rellian yells at him: "You killed Mom!", while Jack coldly and dispassionately confronts him with all his risky and dangerous parental decisions: the theft from the supermarket, presenting the children with hunting weapons, Rellian's accident, the bruises on his body. He accuses Ben of child abuse and informs him that he is ready to file for legal custody over the other children, while Rellian is staying with him (01:21:00–01:24:30). Ben refuses to back down: he instructs Vespyr to climb into Rellian's window from the roof and bring him back to the family. The oldest daughter, however, slips on the tiles and falls from the roof, breaking her leg and hurting her neck (01:24:50–01:26:30).

Vespyr's accident is the last straw to Ben's crisis of conscience: he is forced to finally understand that his willfulness almost cost his daughter her life. The family is taken in by the grandparents, where they seem to enjoy the comfort provided by the large mansion. Struggling with his guilt, Ben makes another radical decision: he tells the children that he is going to leave them with their grandparents and return to the forest alone. When they protest, he admits that he made a "beautiful mistake"

when he believed that living in the forest would make Leslie feel better, but it was "too much" for her, and he was aware of that. With these halting, hesitant, teary-eyed words he finally takes responsibility for his wife's fate and concomitantly gives up on the utopian project he has pursued for a decade. When one of the smallest kids asks him why they cannot stay with him, he responds tersely: "Because if you do, I'll ruin your lives" (01:30:40–01:32:50).

If the story had ended here, one could simply describe it as an anti-utopian tract, but the script does not allow the protagonist to fail completely: in a somewhat miraculous and improbable twist, his children all hide on the bus when he leaves the grandparents' mansion, and they rejoin him after he has already given up on them (1:37:00–1:39:00). While it stretches credibility that six children would be able to hide silently in a small, closed space for half a day, the final twist carries an important moral lesson: this is the first time the children have had a say in their own future, and they all chose to stay with Ben rather than in the safety and comfort provided by the grandparents. At the same time, they also disobeyed their authoritarian father's will because of their love for him. The new-found agency of the children restores the balance of power between them and Ben: they are no longer subjects – or, depending on one's viewpoint, victims – of his pigheaded utopian experiment but willing participants in the family community: they exercise the kind of independent judgement and decision-making that their father has repeatedly preached but rarely allowed them to practice. Indirectly, the father's renunciation of his absolute leadership of his utopian mission brings the most impressive proof of success of his alternative education – while also conforming to Thoreau's exhortation that each individual should follow their own path rather than the one prescribed by their parents.

The kids even persuade Ben to honor Leslie's final will, completing the symbolic reunification and healing of the family: they collectively dig up her coffin, giving the children an opportunity to see her for the last time and say farewell, then they burn her body among the mountains in a touching ceremony while Kielyr sings her favorite song ("Sweet Child of Mine" by Guns'n'Roses) and the rest of the family members play music and dance around (1:39:00–1:47:15). Even the dumping of her ashes occurs in a public restroom of an airport where they also take leave of Bodevan, who decides to travel to Namibia, a place he has randomly selected from the map (1:47:15–1:50:05).

The closing scene of the movie carries a strong symbolism, similarly to the opening one: we see Ben and the family living on a farm, with the bus converted to a chicken coop. The kids collect eggs and vegetables from the garden, while Ben

prepares their presumably organic meal in paper bags and warns them that the school bus is coming in 15 minutes. While they are eating their breakfast, reading, and writing their homework, the father is looking around the table and then stares wistfully out through the window (1:50:05–1:52:45).

Such a conclusion to the movie represents an obvious compromise compared to the radical utopian project witnessed by the audience at the outset: the family abandoned the wilderness in favor of the garden, another age-old symbol of English-speaking cultures, and they symbolically also re-entered society by Ben allowing the kids to go to proper school. This decision, which has apparently been made by the whole family as a community and no longer by Ben alone, also carries an echo of Thoreau, who ultimately also gave up his experiment at Walden Pond and returned to civilization. The pastoral ideal, itself a reconciliation of such antagonistic opposites as nature and civilization or the animal and the rational side of humans (see Marx 2000, 102), is depicted in pastel-colored images of the farm, and the harmony of the family breakfast is only slightly ruffled by Ben's pensive, resigned demeanor. Overall, he looks like someone who has finally made his personal peace with civilization and has given up enough of his radical utopianism to be willing to live on its periphery – which is actually the closest approximation of Thoreau's ideal.

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Peter Carey's *"Homo Australiensis"* in *A Long Way from Home*

Gábor Török[1]

Abstract

The paper examines Peter Carey's first book about Indigenous Australians, a topic which he had neglected for decades. Until *A Long Way from Home* (2017) was written, the two-time Booker Prize winner renowned for portraying Australian identity had yet to confront this crucial matter which he believed was a fundamental issue of the country. Reasons behind this seemingly contradictory and lengthy absence are highlighted along with certain methods with which the author gradually exposes Australia's shameful past in the treatment of First Nations people. Carey's approach stays true to his body of work, namely the Aboriginal subject is complemented or intertwined with his portrayal of another layer of Australia's history: the pan-European heritage of non-Indigenous Australians. But why and in what manner does he integrate European topics into a novel aiming to shed light on the maltreatment and neglect of First Nations Australians? Does this addition not dilute the original aim of paying homage to Indigenous Australia?

My paper argues that Carey successfully utilises certain European identity themes to help show the gravity of sins committed against Australian Indigenous people. The author's *modus operandi* is to piece together seemingly neglected fragments of the European legacy with First Nations Australia to reveal a unified entity. Via Willie Bachhuber, a character who most Australians can connect or identify with, Carey joins together various Australian identities which may not have been connected beforehand. With this technique Carey helps ensure the novel is about and for all Australians. I believe that *A Long Way from Home* crowns Peter Carey's career as fully depicting Australianness without including Aboriginal people has up until now meant a quite incomplete *oeuvre*. An ultimate Australian character so-far elusive to Carey, a *Homo Australiensis* has come to life via a pseudo-German-Balt-Hungarian-Australian, who is actually a First Nations Australian with a white biological father.

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[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, gabphone2014@gmail.com

Around-Australia car race, the Redex Reliability Trial is the surface, backdrop, or as the author would say, a "door opening" (Carey 2018b) into a room where Australia's most illustrious writer has not gone before: Indigenous History. Carey's fourteenth novel, *A Long Way from Home* (2017) is his first full foray into exposing Australia's shocking past in the treatment of First Nations people.

Seemingly few if any can claim to capture Australia better than Peter Carey. He has written so voluminously about the country with a "fresh and magical and reimagined" (Carey, Kanowski 2017) outlook. As Andreas Gaile sums up, practically all of Carey's writings can be seen as reconceptualizing notions of Australianness, past and present (Gaile 2010, 287) and the two-time Booker Prize winner "returns to the country's past obsessively" (Gaile 2010, 5). The illustrious author has also usually not shied away from the controversial, negative sides of Australian identity. Alexander Moran described it as Carey's "career-long fascination with the dark underbelly of Australian history" (Moran 2018).

Despite diving into a new theme, the author simultaneously stays loyal to his previous body of work. Namely the main topic is complemented or intertwined with his portrayal of another layer of Australia's history and identity that he has consistently attempted to depict: the pan-European heritage of non-Indigenous Australians with the inclusion of some previously neglected identities.

1. Questions and Aims

Questions immediately arise. First of all, there is a great contradiction in the sentences above, namely, one surely cannot represent Australianness or fully capture the country's essence until they have written in greater detail about the oldest Australians. Why has the internationally recognised Australian author not, or only peripherally written about Indigenous Australians for many decades? What events or motives caused the shift and eventual writing of the novel? After all the sins against the First Nations population, why does European Australia receive such a crucial role in a book where Carey has committed himself to writing about Indigenous Australia? How and why does Carey incorporate seemingly peripheral European identities into a novel predominantly aiming to shed light on the brutal maltreatment and neglect of Indigenous Australians? Even if adding another theme will prove to be justified, will Carey still be able to deliver a coherent, credible message and what will the final sculpture look like?

Besides aiming to answer these questions I will attempt to highlight that apart from the dominating Indigenous thread, various European identity themes are also crucially, positively and legitimately prevalent in the book in order to strengthen the original aim. Australian Indigenous history cannot of course be understood without examining the devastating and lingering effect of the European invasion and its repercussions. Carey successfully covers this topic previously not elaborated on, yet he also concurrently exposes the fact that discrimination existed against various white Europeans entering the country. By dissecting and eventually amalgamating these focal points the writer presents a plot and a character who can symbolically unite all Australians. Carey's *modus operandi* with which he attempts to portray an integrating character in *A Long Way from Home* is to collate fragments of the European legacy, then piece them together with Indigenous Australia to reveal a potential unifying entity. Willie Bachhuber is the "integrator within the poles" (Carey 2018a). Through the central hero the author connects several dots of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia which may not have been joined together beforehand.

2. Carey's Route to Aboriginal Australia and *A Long Way from Home*

The contradiction of being an internationally renowned author whose main skill was perceived to be displaying Australian national identity and this same writer also neglecting to fully focus on the very Australians who had originally inhabited the country demands scrutiny. *Ad fontes* style we should go to the source of the problem: Peter Carey himself. A huge discrepancy of this kind was not lost on the writer. "I'm an Australian writer and I haven't written about this? Well, that just seems pathetic to me" (Convery 2017) and "I was wrong. Really, really wrong" (Carey 2018b) were self-verdicts voiced in separate interviews. In a *London Review of Books* interview with Nicholas Spice Carey reveals the causes in greater detail. Here he acknowledged the fact that sins of colonialism committed against Indigenous Australians were a "fundamental issue" (Carey 2018a) of the country. "It's always been there, if you can't be an Australian and not think about this, whose country it is…I think it is essential it be addressed and it was normally addressed in my work." (Carey 2018a) The word address was fine-tuned in another interview, where Carey said he "didn't address it directly" (Carey 2018b).

The most crucial element of his reasoning which appeared in several interviews (Carey 2017b; Carey 2018a; Carey 2018b), was the citation of a playwright's conference in Canberra in 1985, where Aboriginal activist Gary Foley forthrightly informed the

mostly white participants that non-Aboriginals writing about Indigenous people was causing more harm than good and there was enough "misinformation" and "false imaginings" (Carey 2018a). Carey accepted that this may not have been the correct decision, but he rightly or wrongly made it "deliberately" (Carey 2017b) primarily based on the views of an important Aboriginal figure. "I really had no problem with what he was saying, it made a lot of sense to me. Now whether I was right to listen to him or not right to listen to him I certainly listened to him." (Carey 2018a) In an interview with Sarah Krasnostein, Carey also noted that before putting pen to paper with this work he was "terrified" to be representing Indigenous people. "In that book the things that I was sort of terrified of was sort of representing Indigenous people in a way that Indigenous people would read and find to be true and real and not offensive and so that was a scary thing." (Carey2021) It seems Carey fully accepted Gary Foley's thesis, or in his words he showed "no resistance" (Carey 2018b) to the request, feared potential negative consequences and decided to more or less avoid the topic for decades. He was certainly not alone with his stance, yet this was the decision he made at the time.

It was far from a complete evasion of the theme, because *Illywhacker* (1985) and *Oscar and Lucinda (1988)* were published in the same year or shortly after the conference. *Illywhacker* seemingly takes a firm stance: "The whole nation is based on a lie which is that it was not already occupied when the British came here." (Carey 1985, 307) The German Carey expert Andreas Gaile in 2010 believed that the Australian author's work addressed "the unfairness of Aboriginal dispossession" (Gaile 2010, 6) and "the feeling of guilt over Aboriginal dispossession and victimization and, related to this, the attempts at reassessing the doctrine of terra nullius" (Gaile 2010, 6). Yet, for a novel where "a sprawling 600-page-invention featuring ghosts, dragons, disappearing tricks, a mysterious hybrid kept in a bottle of shining liquid" and one "clearly concerned with the wider canvas of Australian history" (Gaile 2010, 75) the terse or rather virtually non-existent circumscribing of Aboriginal Australia remained a glaring hole. Thus, it can be stated that *Illywhacker* only scratched the surface of the topic, yet *Oscar and Lucinda* was referred to by Carey as a novel alluding to the white takeover of Aboriginal land. (Carey 2018b) The opening phase of the book displays a vivid confrontation of the Aboriginal theme:

> I learned long ago to distrust local history. Darkwood, for instance, they will tell you at the Historical Society, is called Darkwood because of the darkness of the foliage, but it was not so long ago you could hear people call it Darkies' Point, and not so long before that when Horace Clark's grandfather went up there

with his mates – all the old families should record this when they are arguing about who controls the shire – and pushed an entire tribe of aboriginal men and women and children off the edge. (Carey 1988, 2)

An emphatic start, but one which was only partially followed up in the subsequent pages. Overall, the crucial topic was significantly averted, albeit Carey refers to Indigenous Australia in the concluding part of the 1980s when he followed Foley's advice: conquest of First Nations land was acknowledged, but not elaborated on.

Seeing that the theme was not completely omitted from his works, Carey may have decided to deliberately execute a form of indirect addressing rather than just purely ignoring the topic. In her study on Carey's 2012 novel, *The Chemistry of Tears* Barbara Klonowska dissects how the author utilised the concept of ellipsis as "a powerful tool to both conceal the undesired or censored notions and simultaneously to reveal, via exposing the gap between what is said and what is left unsaid, the issues which are difficult – for various reasons – to express" (Klonowska 25). Incidentally, Klonowska also categorised *A Long Way from Home* and *The True History of the Kelly Gang* as "difficult history" (Klonowska 26). Carey acknowledged the challenging nature of the task in the Author's Note in an advanced copy cited in an interview with Sarah Kanowski. Here Carey stated that "this is a novel I spent my whole life not knowing how to write…I didn't know how to do it, so I didn't do it" (Carey 2017b). Combining the author's words about the degree of difficulty being too high and Klonowska's interpretation of his use of ellipsis, this time in a different novel, we may suppose that for Carey the First Nations theme was simply too difficult to write or for various reasons, too complex to express in full, hence, he utilised a technique of ellipsis to partially cover this base. A few indirect allusions in his pre-2017 works may have been conscious attempts at adhering to Gary Foley's advice yet simultaneously not completely ignoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia.

A lot of water had passed under the bridge since 1985 and with time it slowly washed away Carey's previous angsts. The Mabo decision, the Native Title Act, the Native Title Amendment Act and Kevin Rudd's apology had all eventuated. Australian society and the mindset regarding Indigenous rights had also significantly evolved over the years. But even after passing 70 years of age Carey was still penning novels which did not incorporate Aboriginal Australia. *Amnesia* (2014), which "gives a panoply of Australia over the last several decades" (Birns 2015, 206) fell short of covering the gaping hole in the *oeuvre*. It was at about this phase of his life where the two-time Commonwealth Writer's Prize winner realised that as a novelist renowned for portraying Australia and its history, he could not exclude the First Nations theme

from his work any further and simply had to enter waters previously uncharted in his *oeuvre*. Although in the Spice interview he specifically denied it was a matter of urgency (Carey 2018a), in the Wolinsky podcast Carey singled out age as the main factor (Convery 2017; Carey 2018b) in deciding to finally grasp the keyboard and fully address the theme. Age brought with it more experience. In a discussion with Sarah Krasnostein Carey only briefly talks about *A Long Way from Home*. Still, there is a statement which underpins the notion that although it took a long time for him to shrug off the previous state of being scared to write this novel, he finally had the confidence to do so. "But I think if one is patient and humble enough and is prepared to show one's work to other people those things can be overcome." (Carey 2021) This quote is also vital for another reason. Carey stuck true to his belief that First Nations people should guide him when he writes about them. It is clear that by "other people" the writer was referring to Indigenous voices. It seems he believed it was the right time to seek the advice of First Nations people other than Foley and he was now comfortable in integrating their advice into his watershed book. The anthropologist Catherina Wohlan from The Australian National University and Steve Kinnane were engaged from the Aboriginal community during the writing process (Convery 2017). We can conclude that ultimately his age, his experience and First Nations guidance convinced Carey to do what he, by his own admission, had always wanted to, yet did not possess the knowledge of how to carry it out until the fear of time devouring the opportunity convinced him to take the plunge. A great contradiction in Australian literature was about to be dissolved.

3. Willie Bachhuber's European Australian Identities

Carey's main character treads a complex path, one fitting of the Redex Reliability Trial's topsy-turvy route. Willie Bachhuber's identity is an equation the author only wishes us to solve after continuous ambiguity. It is revealed glacially, as it "bubbles to the surface" (Carey 2018b) and the process of enlightenment is most probably a longer one for non-Australian readers. "I spent my entire life in Australia with the conviction that it was a mistake, that my correct place was elsewhere." (Carey 2017a, 9) Not exactly a lead-off sentence or motto befitting a potentially unifying Australian character.

A deeper analysis of the main character's complexity will help lead us to the solution. Willie's identity *sans* nationality is worth a story alone. He yearns to be loved, "the only thing I ever wanted" (Carey 2017a, 110) yet due to a tragic

misunderstanding, he left the love of his life and their child right after birth. Pseudo-rich to the outside world due to cheques he cannot cash on a quiz-show he dominates, in reality, he is a poor schoolteacher who soon finds himself without work. A bookworm whose residence is untidy to the point of being a fire-hazard due to the voluminous amount of books resembling a library. Willie's intelligence and wide-ranging, deep knowledge may possibly symbolise the fact that it is the oldest Australians who possess the greater wisdom despite being dispossessed by White Australians presenting them with fake cheques.

Regarding national identity, Willie is first presented as fair-haired, with "strange German eyes" (Carey 2017, 37). He is not attempting to conceal his background despite the negative connotations of this heritage, with the recently concluded World Wars. At the same time, he recollects remarks regarding his German nationality on several occasions. "My name was obviously German but I was not, as far as anyone could see, a sissy." (Carey 2017a, 27) After being denigratingly called a "kraut" (Carey 2017a, 27) he insists on being called Bachhuber instead. Willie goes on to say "I smiled and was as misunderstood as I had wished to be. Soon I got a hamstring injury. That seemed the only safe response." (Carey 2017a, 27) The incident is repeated later in the book (Carey 2017a, 368). This plethora of remarks regarding his background make it obvious that racial vilification played a role in the main character's early years and this theme is not purely by chance or just an incidental peek into 1950s Australia. In an interview Peter Carey stated that Willie knows "people will hate him for being German" (Carey 2017b). The author's specific intent was to create a character who was vilified for his European identity. In White Australia a white identity from the Old Continent could also be racially discriminated against.

Vilification regarding his heritage continues with a different European nationality in the next critical stanza of his life. As a schoolteacher he handles a class none of his colleagues wanted to teach, the "untouchables" (Carey 2017a, 29) to the praise of his peers, but gets into trouble for hanging a student, Bennett Ash out the window by his ankles. Of critical importance is the fact that the pupil questioned the legitimacy of the tutor being in Australia. "What about you, sir? Why did they let you in?" (Carey 2017a, 29) This malicious brace of questions was preceded by a class discussion on the so-called "Balts", a key theme in the 1950s.

> I asked him what he thought a Balt was.
> He thought it was a reffo, sir. He meant a refugee, a person displaced by war.
> I could have escorted him to the map of the world, that is the pink British Empire and the other bits. I could have shown him that Balt was short for Baltic, or a person from the Baltic states. But could he even recognise the Baltic Sea?

> How could I possibly 'teach' him that the Australian government had deliberately misnamed the displaced persons Balts? That was the path by which the word had entered his vocabulary. How many weeks might it take to have him understand that the Australian government were selecting light-skinned 'Nordic types' as future citizens and that they had, for the sake of obfuscation, named them Balts? (Carey 2017a, 28)

Although the pupil is potentially discriminating against all those entering Australia at the time, through the incident Carey highlights discrimination against a certain European group. The "Beautiful Balts" constituted a unique episode in Australian immigration. The first contingent of these newcomers was a hand-picked selection of displaced World War II refugees, predominantly with blonde hair and blue eyes. A manipulative media campaign highlighted their external features. Calculated political motives aside recruiting post-war refugees was an ultimately successful move by Arthur Calwell, the Labor Minister for Immigration, who otherwise was an exponent of the racist White Australia policy. Amongst other reasons, success came because the Australian public eventually accepted and integrated not only the "Beautiful Balts" but the "Balts" sans beautiful and also the other European groups arriving with or following them (Brett 2013, 124–125).

It must be clearly and unequivocally stated that reception of these new immigrants was far better than the treatment First Nations Australians received at the time; still, full equality for the European arrivals was another matter. Without detailing other atrocities, Indigenous children were ripped from their families as 1950s Australia was very much still a Stolen Generations[2] age, a main theme of the novel. Although there can be no comparison between the two types of injustice, the new white European arrivals were still subject to discrimination. Even the otherwise racially sensitive positive character Irene Bobs, who is quite obviously close to Carey (in the Wolinsky interview there is a reference to her potentially representing the writer's real mother: Carey2018b), drops a denigrating comment in the novel about characters originating from Eastern Europe. Sebastian Laski, who is from Poland

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[2] Adding to the long list of atrocities committed against First Nations Australians, predominantly but not exclusively mixed race or using the contemporary derogatory term, "half-caste" children were forcibly removed from their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Originating from the "protection," in reality segregation and assimilation policies of the 19th century with the notion that Indigenous people of Australia are doomed for extinction anyway, the official aim of Federal and State governments was to assimilate these children into European Australian families and institutions, that is the "higher civilisation" (Haebich, A., Kinnane, S. 2013, 335). Commissioned by Prime Minister Paul Keating (1991–1997), The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families* (HREOC 1997) detailed the "systematic removal of Indigenous children from their families by successive Australian governments" (Walter 2013, 182). The shocking policies spanning from 1910 all the way to the 1970s irrevocably affected all First Nations generations. With ensuing debates regarding an official apology, initially denied by Prime Minister John Howard (1996–2007) then delivered by Kevin Rudd (2007–2010, 2013) in 2008, along with the arguments regarding the Indigenous Voice in Parliament in full swing at the time of writing this article, the Stolen Generations theme is still at the forefront of Australian politics (Goot 2013, 207; Haebich, A., Kinnane, S. 2013, 333; 356; Mackinnon, A., Proctor, H. 2013, 435).

and his wife, Dorotea are very close to Willie. "And what a wild and woolly lot the burglars were, a pair of Balts quite obviously." (Carey 2017a, 347) Carey utilised this line to highlight how even generally good, kind people could easily fall into the trap of stereotypes and prejudices. This comment is most probably inserted to show how widespread this negative phenomenon must have been in 1950s Australia.

The novel represents that for those individuals discriminated against, these episodes were potentially life-changing moments. This classroom conversation about the "Balts" is a watershed moment for Bachhuber, who loses his composure. "I am a calm man, have been so all my life. I grabbed the heel of the boy's hobnailed boot, and yanked him off balance and pushed his body out the window and held him there while he bawled and shouted." (Carey 2017a, 29) No physical damage is done but the provocative remark from the student would ultimately cost Willie his job. To rub salt into the wound, attacks regarding his identity continue. The father of the boy tries to avenge the act, "'Barkhumper,' he said clearly delighted to see me jump. 'You don't know who I am, do you?' 'I don't think I've had the pleasure.' 'No pleasure,' he said, and I recognised, in those familiar angry eyes, the father of Bennett Ash'." (Carey 2017a, 43) Apart from being an offensive sexual reference "Barkhumper" is a general racially vilifying remark as it plays on the victim's name. Mr. Ash also presumes the teacher is a "Balt": "I'll hang you out the window you f..ing Balt" (Carey 2017a, 43) is a much more specific "reference" to a group of migrants. No-one is physically harmed in the incident as Willie escapes. There is no direct continuation of the thread apart from Bachhuber not being angry with his attacker, supposing he too would be upset if the same thing had happened to his son (Carey 2017a, 44). Still, this almost physical, verbal attack symbolises the psychological effects of such malice. Willie has suffered another form of racial vilification because of his supposed European origins.

Carey not only covers an episode of Australian history containing racial discrimination, but he has also widened the scope of Bachhuber's national identity. By classifying him as a "Balt", he could potentially originate from a number of European countries. Specifically, from the Baltic areas of Europe such as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania but due to the "Beautiful Balt" episode and the generalisation that came with it, basically any white, non-Anglo Saxon European country. Consequently, Carey incorporates a greater ethnic share of the Old Continent. Willie has now been a victim of "Balt" jokes after the ordeal of receiving remarks regarding his German identity. The author has skilfully created a character who is a representative of several more nations on top of being German.

The derogatory word "reffo" which was used by Bennett Ash also needs to be explored. Utilised by the pupil as a demeaning word like "Balt", a differentiation in interpretation can be made. The term could refer to a bigger, predominantly

slightly later wave of arrivals to Australia after the original post-World War II refugees of 1947–52. With a "loosening" of the White Australia policy in the 1950s a greater number of Greeks, Italians and from 1956 Hungarians were allowed to enter Australia, who were referred to by this derogatory term. "Reffos" from these countries were frequently portrayed in a positive, light-hearted manner[3] after the 1950's before times and "utilisation" of these stereotypes changed from approximately the 2000s onwards, yet we must not forget that Carey's book is about Australia in the 1950s. Current or retrospective reception of communities now fully integrated into Australian society cannot change the fact that amongst other hardships of entering a new distant country, being racially vilified with such a term would have had a deleterious effect on the new European arrivals. Once again, direct comparisons can in no way be made with how the oldest Australians were discriminated against at the time. Still, Carey rightly brings up discrimination of this type aimed at new European Australians. In a *Long Way from Home*, the Bacchus Marsh schoolteacher symbolically stands up for all Australian refugee communities as a whole, whether they are "Balts" or "reffos" and irrespective of whether they arrived before or after the Redex Reliability Trial referred to in the novel.

Bachhuber's national identity is made even more complex, what is more, a Central-European thread emerges during the presentation of Willie's devotion to maps.

> In self defence I summoned an urgent interest in my grandmother's coloured atlas of the Holy Roman Empire. I laid it before her and she admired it and listened to my unshakable belief that I did not belong where my mother had delivered me. I had no reason to be in the hot streets of wartime Adelaide, not when my true home must be in the atlas of the Hapsburg[4] Empire and the lands of Hungary. There was no map of Adelaide that could produce the longing aroused by the dense fibrous universe of that atlas, which, being hand-painted in a slightly unconventional if not eccentric manner, had the mellow colours of a closely woven Persian rug, in which our red Hungary had turned a greyish brown, Salzburg was the colour of dried straw, Croatia was pale pink. Bohemia like the other states was now foxed and speckled brown. The crumbling coast of Dalmatia in the south was what I believe is known as Spectrum Violet. (Carey 2017a, 97)

In typical Careyesque style Bachhuber's relationship with Glenda Cloverdale is integrated into this virtual historical round-trip.

> There was her gorgeous silk skinned leg, folded beneath her dark private hair glistening with dew and here were all these lands with their diverse peoples,

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[3] For example, *Acropolis Now* which ran from 1989–1992 on the Seven Network and *Ladies in Black*, which was released by Sony Pictures for the big screen in 2018.

[4] Hapsburg or Habsburg are both accepted in the English language. Carey used the p in this quote and elsewhere, whilst I have used spelling with a b.

Germans, Magyars, Spanish Jews, Romanies and Mohammedans, which had been a source of wonder to my childish imagination. My grandmother told me that an ancestor of ours, a Venetian nobleman, had been called to advise an Imperial Council in Vienna. What he had done there or what became of him we could never know but he was the reason that I had curiously splayed 'Italian toes' and although blonde haired as my father the pastor, would turn 'brown as a Mediterranean berry' in the Australian sun. (Carey 2017a, 97–98)

Lengthy quotations are utilised as conclusive evidence to prove that Bachhuber cannot exclusively be called German, a "Balt" or a "reffo" especially when he supposes his origins to be in "our Hungary", that is the Hungarian part of the Habsburg Empire. A plethora of other nationalities are also specifically mentioned, some of which cannot be linked to the three identities above and all of which are present in today's Australia. Along with the reference to the sun, Carey has now linked several more European identities with Australia. Cartography had played a central role in Carey's 1975 short story "Do You Love Me", a "suggestive exploration of Australian identity and history, especially perhaps for non-Indigenous people" (Corbett 2015, 45), but here Europe is specifically extrapolated. In order to execute his point, the author has listed all these European identities in detail to summon a great variety of ethnicities in a few short passages.

Historically and geographically speaking, the Hungarian Kingdom of the Habsburg Empire fits the above descriptions. Because of the words "our Hungary" and references to multi-ethnic Empires we can clearly state that Carey has deliberately created a character with multi-thronged Central European "origins". Not only Hungary, but Bohemia (today's Czech Republic), Croatia and several other nations within the Vienna-centred state are mentioned in the passage.

The Habsburg Empire was a unique conglomerate in history which Carey could unearth to find his distinctive Australian meaning. The state which collapsed after World War I in 1918 was utilised by the writer as a country to use in matters of national identity. Australia could possibly relate to this multi-ethnic land where a person could belong to more than one nation, have more than one identity yet still be part of a united country. Although only via the aid of a virtual map, our central character was now capable of representing several more European nations. Along with the previous European themes it seems Carey's aim was to portray a pan-European origin mirroring the various European and other nations that are present in today's Australia. The technique of not creating Bachhuber as a German born and bred in that land, but forming him to be a German supposedly rooted in a country with multi-ethnic communities makes the hero in question especially in line with the image of modern multicultural Australia.

The multi-lingual European country on the map could also quite possibly be a reference to the fact that Indigenous Australia possessed several hundred languages, in contrast to "my monolingual land" (Carey 2017a, 25) which Bachhuber refers to when talking about Australia. The monolingual, "We know nothing. It is *l'État australien*" (Carey 2017a, 98) Australia here is to be understood as 1950s White Australia of course, which seemed to know nothing or disregarded the new European languages let alone its several hundred Indigenous languages which had been present on the continent for tens of thousands of years.

Willie Bachhuber: First Nations Australian and European Australian

Later in the novel, Willie Bachhuber is revealed to be of Indigenous descent. Willie's mother is Aboriginal, whilst his white father previously murdered her true First Nations love. Thus, using the terminology of the age Willie is genetically a "half-caste", that is half Indigenous, half European. He is forcefully ripped from his family by Welfare (Carey 2017a, 282), by which the authorities ruined Willie's mother to the extent she eventually dies in prison. The tragic sequence of events causes irreparable damage to the same community, who now tearfully welcome Willie or "Uncle Redex" (Carey 2017a, 275) back decades later. Apart from the previous identity twists and turns Willie Bachhuber now also represents First Nations Australians and even more specifically, the Stolen Generations.

Due to the revelation of Bachhuber's real roots, one might ask whether the character's supposed "German" and other European origins and longing for the Old Continent have become irrelevant or rather less important. The starting point of this issue is when Willie himself claims that when he believed he was German, he suffered from a "phantom homesickness" (Carey 2017a, 295). "But now I was in my real birthplace and finally knew my father's name." (Carey 2017a, 295) He adds that "The pastor had known, of course, that my ancestral home could never have been, a Schloss in Germany." (Carey 2017a, 297) Self-doubts about his identity linger within Willie before and after him finding out all the details of his "pre-German" life. "I was a white man, a kartiya, who saw only death." (Carey 2017a, 268) "I wondered if I was the stupid whitefellah or if I was the blackfellah inheriting the story." (Carey 2017a, 298–99) Other instances and characters also solidify this uncertainty, from both the Indigenous and European Australian perspective. When Alice, the First Nations girl checks Willie's skin, it is different to hers. "Alice rested her Bible in her lap and touched my cheek and pinched my arm and watched to see how the blood fled the skin and then came rushing back. Her own black skin did no act like this, she showed me." (Carey 2017a, 276) Barry Carter, the brutal white

pastoralist landlord who ends up getting beaten by Willie calls him white. "You're a white man, mate, no matter what you think." (Carey 2017a, 320) It is clear that whether he is black or white or neither continually causes doubts in Willie's mind. It is a phenomenon with which Carey exposes some of the psychological scars people from the Stolen Generations had to and have to endure: they can easily mistakenly believe that they do not fully belong to any Australian community.

Despite his doubts, the question still remains: how relevant are Willie's European origins? By the end of the story Willie is first and foremost portrayed as an Aboriginal and Carey's main aim is to pay homage to Indigenous Australia. Having said that, it is crucial that Bachhuber's biological father was white and he was brought up in a Lutheran community, perceiving himself to be German. What is more, throughout his life he felt his origins were in Central Europe, not in today's Germany (geographically speaking) but in the multi-ethnic Habsburg Empire, so it is fair to say that these origins form an indelible part of his identity. If we compartmentalise certain sides of his character, there is definitely a "German-Habsburg-European part" of Willie Bachhuber.

Whichever of the European and/or First Nations identities readers assume for Willie Bachhuber, he still has to deal with discrimination. It is a common denominator, a glue among his various identities. He is the character who gets upset at people who make fun of his European origins, and is the same man who is infuriated by negative references to the "reffos" along with leaping into defence of Indigenous interests, before and after finding out he is actually an Aboriginal. Willie Bachhuber is therefore a credible and legitimate representative of the European communities even after the revelation that he actually originates from a First Nations community.

Carey has created a character possessing what we can call an "anti-discrimination coalition" identity. Referring to Carey, Andreas Gaile wrote about the "magic mirror of his [Carey's] fictions" (Gaile 2010, 293). Utilising this Gaile term we could say the writer is weaving his magic pen, this time integrating Indigenous Australia into one of his characters. Since there were "complicated threads of racism" (Carey 2018b) in 1950's Australia, the author had to create a complex character accordingly. As a *Kirkus* book reviewer opines, "racial identity may not be as simple as black and white" (Kirkus) and Bachhuber displays this complexity. If Carey had simply wanted Willie to be an Aboriginal with a white biological father, one who solely represents Indigenous Australia and the Stolen Generations, all the "Balt", Habsburg Empire and "our Hungary" material etc. would have been superfluous for his craft. It is precisely by incorporating all these other European, non-Aboriginal identities that Carey has masterfully concocted a character who can represent such a huge slice of Australians. Willie Bachhuber is neither purely a European Australian nor a First Nations Australian, but simply a *bona fide* or locally put: a fair dinkum Australian.

Conclusion

Carey has taken the reader on a journey of Australian history where the sins of White Australia are rightly on display, yet the outcome is not exclusively one of guilt, instead a possible compass for a responsible future is presented through the medium of a mixed-identity character. Since a majority of Australians including not least German-Australians, Lithuanian-Australians, Hungarian-Australians etc. can in some way identify or connect with Willie Bachhuber, he is the character who, by means of Carey's magic and unique methodology, embodies as much as literally possible of what the positive spirit of European Australia could be. Because of his Indigenous roots, he can also manifest the oldest Australians. In an ABC podcast the author poses and answers the question himself: are the Indigenous people in *A Long Way from Home* representative of the whole Aboriginal population? "Of course they're not." (Carey 2017b) A similar question can be validly asked and answered here too: is the protagonist representative of all Australians? Of course not. It is impossible to create a literary character who represents every community in Australia. Yet, Bachhuber is a symbolic pool collecting voluminous drops of today's Australia and thus helping people of the country not only identify and face their past but also to provide a possible route of conciliation in the future via his homecoming. Willie Bachhuber has found his home, whether this is the extremely symbolic Ark, or the classroom where he teaches his First Nations students. Thus, he potentially represents a possible symbolic homecoming for all Australians.

After *A Long Way from Home* one would seldom trust anyone else other than Peter Carey to create a literary character who best represents Australia. Andreas Gaile penned in 2010:

> Women, Aborigines, and migrants from a non-European background can relate to this fictional biography as much as can Anglo-Celtic males who traditionally eclipsed all others in representations of history and identity. Seen in their entirety, Carey's fictions can reassure Australians of their collective identity, of what they share in all their ethnic and cultural diversity. (Gaile 2010, 297)

It seems to me that at the time the German expert was not yet completely correct with the analysis above and this quote can probably only fully stand seven years later, after the publication of *A Long Way From Home* in 2017. Gaile believes the concept of mythistory (Gaile 2010, 31–43) is the most appropriate term for Carey's works (Gaile 2010, 43) where the Antipodean writer searches for a unique Australian national identity. My argument is that until Carey finally extrapolated the

Indigenous Australian topic, the task of painting a complete picture of Australian identity, a true Australian mythistory could not be accomplished. Until the author brought Willie Bachhuber to life, generating a character who could claim to depict so many Australians was not possible. Yet in Willie Bachhuber, Carey has finally found the character that he has been searching for. A figure who, I argue, quite possibly crowns his literary career. In *A Long Way from Home*, through a pseudo-German-Balt-Hungarian-Australian, who is actually a First Nations individual with a white biological father, Peter Carey has found the ultimate Australian, a "*Homo Australiensis*:" embodying as many Australians in a novel as possible.

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Exploring the Complexities of L2 English Academic Writing
Towards a Comprehensive Approach to Teaching English for Academic Purposes[1]

Csilla Sárdi[2]

Abstract

L2 English academic writing, now a well-established field of study, incorporates a large number of interrelated issues from the perspectives of context, participants, process and textual realisation, informing various instructional models of English for academic purposes in university contexts globally. This paper looks at a number of major theoretical traditions and relevant research findings focusing on the characteristics of academic texts, writers, readers and the writing process, and shows how each tradition has inspired the development of particular approaches to teaching L2 English academic writing. Textual features are discussed from the points of view of genre and register analysis, and contextual features are looked at in terms of individual novice L2 writer characteristics, including writing strategies, the relationship between L1 and L2 academic writing, and the cultural background of writers. Related instructional models include product-, process-, and genre-based approaches whose operationalisations are closely linked to particular theoretical traditions. The paper argues that the pedagogical considerations stemming from different theoretical backgrounds and empirical research results can complement each other in a useful way leading to a more comprehensive pedagogical approach, and that the application of a well-informed, carefully selected and carefully sequenced combination of teaching techniques and accompanying materials can contribute to the successful development of L2 English academic writing skills.

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1. Introduction

Second language (L2) writing refers to the process of composing written text in a language other than the writer's first language (L1) (Godwin-Jones 2022). It is a complex process that involves various linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural factors, and is influenced by the writer's prior writing experiences, cultural background, and language proficiency level (see Godwin-Jones, 2022; Matsuda and Silva, 2020). While these features apply to L2 academic writing as well, the latter is also characterised by particular genre- and register-specific features which are typically used in academic prose. This is because the specific communicative purposes of academic writing are fulfilled in a contextually situated way, and because academic writers, both in L1 and L2, are expected to follow a set of discourse community-specific conventions that reflect the values, beliefs, and practices of the academic community (Hyland and Wong, 2019; Paltridge, 2004; Swales, 1990).

To succeed in university education, students must develop their academic skills: the ability to comprehend and interpret academic texts, and the ability to create written texts in various sub-varieties of academic writing, such as summaries, persuasive essays, laboratory reports and dissertations. This is a considerable challenge even in the students' native tongue (L1), because academic discourse differs markedly from other text varieties students may be familiar with, such as casual face-to-face conversations, fiction or news (Biber and Conrad, 2019). A significant objective of university education, then, is to help students master the specialised language of a particular profession, such as electrical engineering, finance, or English language education. Achieving success in any field of study requires, among other things, learning to make sense of and effectively use the specific language that is appropriate for particular situations and serves relevant communicative purposes in academic contexts.

In the past decades, L2 English academic writing has become an increasingly important field of study in applied linguistics (Flowerdew, 2020). This is because the global demand for English proficiency in academic and professional settings continues to rise, and because language intensive degree programmes have required and continue to require students to develop and demonstrate their academic literacy skills, including academic writing. In this paper, the term 'language intensive degree programmes' is used to denote English Medium Instruction (EMI) environments, in other words settings where English is used as a working language to teach academic subjects in countries where the L1 of the majority of the population is not English; traditional study programmes in languages such as English Studies

and English Language Teaching degree programmes for students whose L1 is not English; and degree programmes for English as a Second Language (ESL) students in inner-circle countries such as the UK and the USA (Coleman 2006).

In such contexts, L2 English university students are expected to fulfil writing tasks using text varieties that fall within the umbrella term of academic prose facing a significant challenge when it comes to understanding the differences between and creating text varieties relevant in their study programmes. Traditionally, such students were taught general vocabulary and grammar rules to prepare them for advanced study (Paltridge, 2004, p. 94). Recent research in Applied Linguistics has shown, however, that this is insufficient for success because of the differences in linguistic features between general and academic texts (Biber and Conrad, 2019; Flowerdew, 2020). To meet this challenge, the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has emerged, focusing on teaching English-language skills specifically for the text varieties relevant in university contexts. Indeed, the ultimate goal of EAP is to develop and implement instructional approaches and materials that help students use the particular language varieties in their fields in a purposeful and effective way (Basturkmen 2021).

The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, it looks at characteristics of L2 English academic writing from the points of view of (1) the language features of academic prose, and (2) its context including the process of writing, and the writers as well. Secondly, it provides an overview of prominent pedagogical approaches available for the EAP profession for the enhancement of L2 English students' academic writing. In doing so, the paper argues that the pedagogical considerations stemming from different theoretical traditions and empirical research results can complement each other in a useful way leading to a more comprehensive pedagogical approach, and that the application of a well-informed, carefully selected and carefully sequenced combination of teaching techniques and accompanying materials can contribute to the successful development of L2 English academic writing skills.

2. Understanding L2 English academic texts: Genre and register

In order to describe different text varieties (both oral and written) and better understand their characteristics, several perspectives to text analysis have been introduced, including genre, register, style and domain (Lee 2001). Since these perspectives serve the purposes of analysing texts from different points of view, the same texts can be looked at using any or all of these perspectives. In this paper, I will focus on two perspectives: genre and register, because these are the

concepts which have been widely used in the EAP literature (Matsuda and Silva 2020). Since, over the past decades, the two terms have been defined differently by different authors causing some confusion among researchers and practitioners alike (Lee 2001), I will rely on the corresponding definitions provided in Biber and Conrad (2019), and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

The concept of 'genre' points to language features which are used to structure a text in ways conventionally associated with a particular text type (Biber and Conrad 2019, p. 2), while the concept of 'register' is concerned with the prevalent linguistic characteristics of a given text (Biber and Conrad 2019, p. 2; Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, p. 29). What is common in the two approaches is that the same philosophical underpinning guides their text analysis. Both perspectives posit that written text construction always takes place in cultural and situational context that is shaped by the relationship between the writer, the reader, the text, and reality. It is further posited that the situations are dynamic in nature, meaning that the relationship between the elements is not stable. Since written discourse cannot provide an exact depiction of reality, it will show, instead, the writers' interpretation of reality, which they arrive at by socially and discursively negotiating meaning in any given communicative situation.

As pointed out above, 'genre' is regarded an approach to text analysis which is primarily concerned with the structural elements of complete texts. Although every communicative situation is unique, there are situations that are similar and require typified rhetorical actions. These actions are developed and shared by readers and writers working in a particular communicative context. For example, in the case of research papers, business letters or news reports, the linguistic elements traditionally associated with the beginning, main body and ending of each text type show considerable differences which are conventionally determined, and the use of the typical linguistic solutions in any of the above cases will depend on these conventions. Taking typified rhetorical actions while also observing their sequence and applying corresponding linguistic choices help writers navigate the intricacies of writing and aid readers in comprehending the text (Bhatia, 2014; Tardy, 2009).

In comparison, the 'register' of a text refers to the typical occurrence of particular lexical and grammatical features in regard to the situation in which the text serves a purpose. This is because a register perspective to text analysis assumes that linguistic features serve communicative functions, and that particular language features are used in a large proportion, because of the purpose they serve in the situational context of the text. For example, abstract nouns and expanded noun phrases can frequently

be found in theme position in academic prose, because texts in this category tend to foreground participants in order to keep reality still for the purposes of observation and interpretation. In narratives, however, the use of pronouns in the theme position is a prevalent feature because they help foregrounding actions and processes in a story giving participants an assistant role (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2014).

When taking a register-centred approach to academic text analysis, the inherent variability and diversity of text varieties within the academic domain need to be taken into consideration. This is because academic writing encompasses a wide range of disciplines, and each of these is characterised by its own specific registers and conventions (Hyland, 2004). To further complicate the matter, academic prose is also characterised by a lack of clear boundaries between registers (Biber and Conrad, 2019). This means that academic texts often involve a mixture of different registers, blending features of formal, technical, and abstract language in varying ways and proportions. This diversity and complexity cautions against defining a single and unified academic register. Indeed, research has repeatedly pointed to the disciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of academic registers (Hewings, 2006; Hyland, 2004), which suggests that a careful consideration of disciplinary characteristics is needed for the development of a comprehensive understanding in regard to the register features of academic prose.

Academic texts are also characterised by complex textual features that are prevalent in a particular register. These features comprise both lexical choices and grammatical structures. In terms of lexical choices, academic texts include technical terms specific to various disciplines (e.g. the term *morphology*, which has its own specific and very distinct meaning in biology and linguistics, respectively), as well as academic vocabulary shared by but might be used differently in various disciplines (e.g. the use of *analysis*, *method*, *function* in physics, economics and language pedagogy, respectively) (see Hyland and Tse, 2007). Grammatical structures are characterised by complexity in terms of syntactic patterns. Sentences are often longer and more elaborately constructed, featuring subordination and coordination where clauses serve different functions. Complexity also manifests in the form of embedding, passive constructions, nominalisation and extended noun phrases. These language features make it possible to convey precise and nuanced meanings, to present ideas in a sophisticated manner, highlight relationships between concepts, and provide a detailed analysis of the subject matter.

3. Understanding the process of L2 English academic writing

We have seen above that the textual aspect of academic writing is concerned with the physical realisation of the meaning-making process the writer goes through while negotiating their ideas, creating a relationship with the readers, and helping them navigate through the text. To do so, writers need to construct a coherent piece of writing, one that contains logically and semantically consistent units of meaning in a conventionally acceptable way for their audience, while also applying lexical and grammatical devices which serve relevant purposes. In order to respond to a rhetorical situation, L2 academic writers go through a series of complex processes applying various strategies to support the writing activity. Below, an overview of academic writing strategies is provided first, followed by research findings in relation to the characteristics of L2 academic writers.

3.1 L2 English academic writing strategies

The concept of 'language learning strategies' has been defined as the (largely) conscious processes and actions employed by L2 learners which serve the purposes of supporting an individual's learning and use of the L2 (Oxford, 2011; Rose, 2015). Consequently, L2 writing strategies comprise a set of processes and actions applied by writers when developing a written text, and a considerable amount of research (see Paltridge, 2004) has focused on L2 writing strategies of novice writers in academic settings, taking two basic approaches.

One approach regards the states of the writing process, i.e. planning, drafting, and revising, as an organising principle when identifying and grouping individual writing strategies (Matsuda and Silva, 2020). For example, at the planning stage, writers may find it useful to apply strategies such as creating a mind map to help collect, categorise, organise and evaluate content points and arguments they plan to include in their text. Drafting is a crucial stage of the process, and several workable strategies have been identified. Writers often find it useful, for example, to focus on particular elements of writing (e.g., content points) while ignoring others (e.g. accuracy and appropriacy) in order to reduce cognitive load and initial anxiety at the early stages of drafting. As for the revision stage, some strategies for editing and proofreading include seeking advice from peers, letting the text sit for a while before revision, and checking the clarity of content points without paying attention to language usage.

The other approach to writing strategy classification suggests that learning strategies in general, and writing strategies in particular may be categorised and placed in a taxonomy based on their orientation. For example, Mu and Carrington's (2007) as well as Raoofi et al.'s (2017) taxonomy organise academic writing strategies into the four major categories of rhetorical, cognitive, metacognitive and social/affective orientations. Rhetorical strategies include processes that writers use to organise and present their ideas in line with the writing conventions acceptable to the discourse community in a particular rhetorical situation, and serve the purposes of organisation, text cohesion and genre awareness. Cognitive strategies encompass actions that writers use while undertaking the actual writing process such as generating ideas, imitating features of similar texts and revising draft versions of own text, while metacognitive strategies refer to the actions writers use to consciously control the process of writing for the purposes of planning, monitoring and self-evaluating. Finally, social/affective strategies denote actions that writers undertake to interact with others (i.e. supervisors and peers) in order to clarify content points and to regulate emotions and attitudes during writing. Also, drawing on previous writing experience, reducing anxiety and maintaining motivation and self-confidence are examples of writing strategies which belong in this category.

While major studies on L2 English writing strategies do not categorise the use of computer- and internet-assisted typing tools (i.e. checking inconsistencies in spelling, grammar, punctuation, as well as detecting plagiarism and suggesting linguistic solutions in line with the register of the text) as constituent parts of writing strategies, recent research findings indicate that the application of typing assistants and training in artificial intelligence-powered writing tools can promote the effective use of writing strategies and the development of a positive attitude towards technology acceptance in English academic writing contexts (Campbell, 2019; Nazari et al., 2021).

There has been some debate in the literature regarding the comparability of experienced and novice writers' strategies and the usefulness of overtly teaching the strategies applied by the former group (Adel and Erman, 2012). While not all writing strategies are used consciously by experienced writers, research has shown that students can benefit from explicit instruction regarding the effective use of such strategies (Hyland 2003). There has been some debate in the literature regarding the relationship between and transferability of writing strategies regarding the L1 and the L2 (Canagarajah, 2002; Jarvis, 2000; Silva 1993). These issues will be discussed in 3.2 below.

3.2 L2 English academic writers

A characteristic feature of novice L2 academic writers is that their proficiency in terms of morphological, syntactic, and lexical knowledge develops parallel with the development of their academic writing skills (Matsuda and Silva, 2020). L2 English students' actual knowledge base of grammar and vocabulary is different from that of their native speaker peers, and empirical research has repeatedly shown that L2 English students tend to produce texts that are shorter, less coherent and cohesive, and contain more errors than those written by their L1 peers (Hyland, 2003; Matsuda and Silva, 2020). These findings align with L2 English students' perceptions as to their relative slowness and insufficiency in text production caused by linguistic issues (Dong, 1998; Hwang, 2005).

Another feature of L2 English academic writers is that such writers have already developed their writing skills in their L1 by the time they are required to write academic texts in L2 English. While findings on the extent and nature of the impact of L1 on L2 English writing vary (see e.g. Chen and Baker, 2010; Yigzaw, 2013), it has been shown that proficiency in L1 writing may not always be successfully transferred to L2 writing situations (Björk et al., 2003; Hyland 2003). This is because not all aspects of proficiency in L2 writing have a direct link to L1 writing abilities. For example, students who are competent writers in their L1 may still find it difficult to develop high-quality texts in L2 English due to different textual and rhetorical conventions in their L1 and L2. Some of the consequences are that the composing processes in the two languages may differ, setting goals and collecting ideas in L2 may be more demanding, writers in their L2 may be less fluent and, as a consequence, their text will be less effective (Leki, 2000; Silva 1997).

Cultural differences are also regarded as an important feature in L2 academic writing (Hyland, 2003). Culture in applied linguistics is broadly understood as a network of socially formed and shared meanings that affects a group of people's knowledge and understanding of the world and shapes the activities they engage in, how they think, and what decisions they take (Kramsch, 2012). Since language use is inextricably linked to culture, the cultural background of L2 academic writers can strongly influence the ways they think about the aims of a writing task as well as about the process and product of writing. Students' and their teachers' differing cultural values can easily lead to different and even conflicting interpretations as to the aims, nature, and requirements of academic writing tasks.

Divergent attitudes to academic writing may also stem from the way 'knowledge' is conceptualized in different traditions (Hyland, 2003). In Western cultures, for

example, knowledge can be extended through analysis, critical thinking, speculation, and transformation, while many Asian cultures value existing knowledge and support the reiteration, description, and summary of well-established ideas. Such divergent attitudes have consequences in terms of beliefs about text quality and what is regarded as a piece of good writing: individuality, creativity, and originality from a Western, and a display of knowledge and respect towards outstanding scholars from an Asian point of view. This is closely linked to issues in writer identity as well. Thus, while expressions of the author's individually, authorial self, and voice are encouraged in Western cultures, L2 English writers from more collectivist cultures may find it difficult to realise these expectations (Ramanathan and Atkinson, 1999).

Differences in attitudes explain why students and their teachers with divergent cultural backgrounds may regard uncited borrowings from other people's work either as homage or plagiarism. As for L2 English students' attitudes towards plagiarism in European EMI environments, Doró (2016) has found that although students are aware of the negative judgment regarding plagiarism, they find it difficult to clearly identify instances of uncited borrowings and to understand why and how these should be avoided. Culture-based beliefs about knowledge, text quality, and writer identity can have an impact on the academic writing process and influence the evaluation of the end-product as well. This is particularly the case in cross-cultural teaching and learning contexts if the teachers are not aware of possible writing-related cultural differences, and the students do not clearly understand the expectations towards good quality academic texts in the given context.

4. Pedagogical approaches to L2 English academic writing

In the past decades, instruction in L2 academic writing has drawn on a range of theoretical frameworks, including the ones discussed above, enabling researchers and practitioners to better understand the complexities of the context, process and product of writing. As a consequence, several significant advancements have taken place in the field of L2 academic writing instruction. Since these advancements have been influenced by prevalent theoretical perspectives on language, learning, human behaviour, and the social aspects of academic writing, they have unfolded in a somewhat chronological manner mirroring the zeitgeist of any given time period. Therefore, it would be possible to place them in their historical context and enter into the dialogue accordingly (see e.g. Matsuda and Silva, 2020 for a historical perspective). The discussion below takes a different approach, and focuses on

the ideas themselves showing the link between the theoretical perspectives and the relevant pedagogical responses. This is done in order to suggest that existing theoretical underpinnings and pedagogical solutions remain relevant and valuable starting points and offer useful insights for effective L2 academic writing instruction within the framework of language intensive degree programmes.

Prevalent approaches to L2 academic writing instruction include product-, process-, and genre-based approaches. Their respective pedagogical considerations and characteristic features are outlined below.

4.1 Product-based approaches

Product-based approaches to L2 academic writing instruction are closely linked to theoretical and empirical work on the register analysis of academic texts (Paltridge, 2004). Such approaches (e.g. current-traditional rhetoric, paragraph pattern approach, contrastive rhetoric) focus on language patterns which serve particular rhetorical functions, and which may be used effectively at the sentence, paragraph and text level of written academic discourse. Accordingly, instruction is centred on rhetorical functions (e.g. compare and contrast, cause and effect, problem and solution), which are seen as textual organisational patterns. At the sentence and paragraph level, the major concern is the logical construction and arrangement of these patterns and the accurate and appropriate use of lexico-grammatical features which are commonly used to form these patterns in particular text varieties. At the text level, the major concern is the extension of the above principles so that they also become operational larger stretches of language beyond the paragraph level (e.g. for introductions or conclusions), and for complete texts (e.g. essays).

Since these approaches primarily focus on the organisational aspects of writing according to specific patterns at different textual levels, mastery of writing is regarded as developing the skills to identify, internalize, and reproduce these patterns within an academic context where the instructor's evaluation is in line with the conventions of the academic discourse community.

In line with the principles described above, instruction is primarily form-focused. Classroom tasks include the selection of appropriate sentences among various options within a given paragraph or text, as well as reading and analysing model texts and applying these insights to the students' own writing. A more complex task for students is to create a text on an assigned academic topic which requires the compilation and categorisation of relevant facts and ideas, the preparation of

an outline, and the composition of the text by developing a thesis statement, topic sentences and supporting claims and arguments based on research and in line with the outline. The text is composed of increasingly complex discourse structures, such as sentences, paragraphs, and sections, with each component nested within the larger structural level. All of this occurs within an academic context where the instructor's evaluation is regarded as representative of that of the discourse community.

4.2 Process-based approaches

Process-based approaches owe their existence to a shift, at a theoretical level, in focus from the organisational and formal features of the text to content, ideas in line with the writer's communicative purpose, emphasising the recursive, exploratory and generative nature of the writing process (Susser, 1994). This approach conceptualises writing as a multifaceted, exploratory and imaginative endeavour that shares similarities between L1 and L2 writers, where the development of proficient and efficient writing strategies is regarded crucial to becoming a skilled writer. This is because the writer's role involves exploring and conveying meaning, and the resulting text is of secondary importance, as its form is shaped by content and purpose.

This shift has resulted in a focus on the individual writer and their writing strategies in the process-oriented classroom, where it is the responsibility of the writer to identify the task and the audience, ensuring that the response to the task fulfils the needs of the intended readers. In such an environment, instructors guide, rather than control, students through the writing process. Instead of assigning the formal features of the academic text in terms of organisational patterns or syntactic and lexical characteristics, instructors encourage students to focus on their communicative purposes and to select and use language which serves these purposes and help successfully convey meaning. Consequently, the classroom is seen as a positive, encouraging and collaborative workshop environment, where instructors allow students sufficient time and minimal interruption to engage in their writing process. The aim is to assist students in cultivating effective strategies for initiating, drafting, revising, and editing their writing, thereby contributing to the enhancement of effective academic writing skills.

4.3 Genre-based approaches

The pedagogical approach that introduces genre analysis into EAP has been laid out in Swales (1990, p. 58). His work defines written academic discourse as a communicative event with a specific communicative purpose which is realised with the help of stages and move structures by members of discourse communities. This points to the students' needs to be aware of the genre-specific purposes of academic text varieties and be able to follow a set of conventions and expectations when pursuing their communicative goals in writing, because it is essential for success to become equipped for the demands of academic settings. This also means that a higher priority is given to the expectations and needs of the audience (i.e. university lecturers, supervisors, editors and publishers) than to the writer's personal experience, creativity and expressive power (Tardy, 2020).

Accordingly, genre-based instruction in L2 academic writing aims at facilitating students' effective navigation of the academic environment, recreating, to the greatest extent possible, the conditions of real-life university writing, focusing on written genres students need to able to produce in and out of classroom settings (Hyon, 2017). This involves becoming familiar with academic genres and the specifications of writing tasks, analysing language and discourse features of different genres as well as the social and cultural context in which particular text varieties are produced. Additionally, instruction also entails carefully selecting and thoroughly studying materials that are suitable for a specific task, as well as evaluating, filtering, integrating, and organising pertinent information.

To reach these aims, academic writing instruction relies on needs analysis seeking answers to the question as to why students need to develop L2 English academic writing skills (Brown, 2016). Investigating learners' needs may entail a focus on necessities (i.e. what the learners need to know in order to successfully fulfil academic writing tasks), lacks (i.e. the gap between the learners' knowledge and abilities and what they are expected to be able to do), and wants (the learners' own perception as to what they need) (Sárdi, 2002). Carrying out a needs analysis makes it possible to carefully consider the target situation in terms of tasks, knowledge and language requirements. This information is taken into consideration during the design and implementation of an L2 English academic writing course creating a strong link between academic requirements, student needs and academic writing courses.

5. Conclusion

This paper has shown that a wide-range of instructional approaches to L2 English academic writing have been developed and put to practice in language intensive degree programmes in the past decades. Based on their orientation, it is possible to classify them as product-, process- and genre-based approaches. Depending on the focus of the theoretical principles and research findings which inform these respective approaches, each defines differently the focus, aim, content, and methodology of academic writing courses emphasising the aspects and features of academic writing it is concerned with the most. Thus, product-based approaches put an emphasis on the characteristics of academic text in terms of the purposes it serves in a given academic context and the corresponding lexico-grammatical features which are used to fulfil these purposes. Process-based approaches foreground the novice L2 writer, their individual characteristics including their cultural and linguistic background, and focus on the stages of writing students go through while engaging in the creative process that leads to text production. Genre-based approaches highlight the readers, whose role is to decide whether to initiate novice writers into the academic discourse community. Here a focus on academic genres becomes instrumental, because it helps raise students' awareness as to the structure of academic texts in terms of the rhetorical actions they perform, and shows how to present ideas in a way that is in line with the conventions of the discourse community and the expectations of the readers.

A comprehensive view on L2 academic writing clearly points to the complex and multi-faceted nature of L2 academic writing. Research into the field has offered a plethora of invaluable insights as to the characteristics of and links between related factors offering both (1) an extra-textual perspective: the cultural and situational contexts including the goals and topic of the text, the writer, the reader and their relationship, as well as decisions as to the kind of text that is being created, and (2) an intra-textual perspective: the linguistic realisations of extra-textual factors including the expression of meaning using lexico-grammatical tools.

The apparent complexity of L2 academic writing indicates that a focus only on one or some of these factors may render pedagogical approaches to L2 English academic writing less effective if they fail to adequately address aspects of academic writing which might be needed for the marked improvement of novice L2 writers' skills and achievements in any given situation. What is needed, then, is a comprehensive examination and reassessment as to the nature of L2 English writing instruction in order to avoid relatively simple and straightforward solutions

to complex issues. A careful evaluation of existing knowledge can serve as a valuable starting point for synthesizing information and developing relevant pedagogical models acknowledging that there is no single universal solution applicable to every situation. Such an endeavour can provide an opportunity for practitioners to break away from specific traditions, and challenge traditionally established institutional approaches to L2 academic writing instruction and critically evaluate readily available instructional models. Such an approach can be instrumental in determining what is relevant and meaningful for the purposes of teaching and learning in the specific institutional contexts of higher education.

Finally, although a focus on artificial intelligence (AI) has been beyond the scope of this paper, the rapid development of AI-based text generation tools, most notably the release for public use of the technology company OpenAI's ChatGPT on November 30 2022, needs to be mentioned here. While the chatbot's full impact on the future of education remains to be seen, its remarkable potentialities (e.g. generating text of required level of detail, length, style, genre and register), limitations (e.g. providing nonsensical answers to questions), as well as potential threats (e.g. evading plagiarism detection) have given rise to many speculations as to its effective use in educational contexts, especially writing instruction (Tate et al. 2023). Research is needed to understand how text generation tools will change the process and product of writing and how they can best serve the needs of novice writers and their teachers in the process of developing L2 English academic writing skills.

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Validating a Qualitative Interview Schedule on Multilingualism and Second Language Vocabulary Attrition and Maintenance

Hanae Ezzaouya[1]

Abstract

This paper focuses on the validation process of a qualitative interview schedule designed to investigate the nuanced dynamics of multilingualism and second language vocabulary attrition and maintenance. The interview schedule was developed to gain insights into the complexities of the participants' language experiences, identities, as well as vocabulary learning and retention strategies. Second language speakers of English with diverse linguistic backgrounds were selected for the study to ensure the reliability and validity of the interview. The piloting stage played a pivotal role in laying the ground for refined interview questions, where data authenticity was ensured through the creation of a comfortable environment that helped participants provide genuine responses and avoid offering socially desirable ones. The interview questions were piloted multiple times to identify and resolve any inconsistencies in the participants' responses. The validated interview schedule can serve as a dependable data collection tool and prompt researchers to consider the implications of second language vocabulary attrition and maintenance for pedagogical practices.

Keywords

L2 vocabulary attrition and maintenance, qualitative research, interview schedule, multilingualism, bilingualism.

[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, ezzaouya.hanae@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Numerous theories have been put forward in the fields of language acquisition and language attrition to decipher and understand the mechanisms of language development and language deterioration, respectively. Specifically, second language vocabulary acquisition and maintenance and second language vocabulary attrition, which are the focus of the study, play an essential role not only in the formation of solid language faculties for the L2 learners, but also in the establishment of proper pedagogical materials which are vital to fulfill their needs. Observing the phenomena of second language vocabulary acquisition and attrition, one becomes naturally inclined to contemplate and endeavor to explain the correlation between them. While a substantial body of research has been conducted in these fields (Olshtain 1989; Schmid 2006; Wei 2014; Schmid 2022; Ding 2021), they have received little attention in the Moroccan and Hungarian research domains. Thereafter, this study aims to depict the validation process of an interview schedule on multilingualism in relation to second language vocabulary attrition and maintenance in the Moroccan and Hungarian contexts. This is one of the data collection tools of a larger study that aims to shed light on the various factors leading to second language vocabulary attrition, the applicability of theories of acquisition and attrition in the above-mentioned contexts, the research participants' practices to promote second language vocabulary maintenance, and the implications and impacts of these findings on language pedagogy.

Of the numerous lexical and grammatical areas that can be studied in second language acquisition and attrition, only vocabulary will be given central focus in the larger study. This is because the lexicon is said to be the first linguistic area that is commonly and rapidly affected by attrition, even more than grammar (Kuhberg 1992). Furthermore, it was concluded that production skills (i.e. speaking and writing) are at a higher risk of attrition than receptive ones (i.e. listening and reading). Albeit vocabulary is not considered a skill, productive vocabulary knowledge is still at a higher risk of attrition than the receptive one (Hedgcock 1991). Productive and receptive vocabulary knowledge, also known as active and passive knowledge, can be defined from a pedagogical perspective as the ability to recall and correctly use a word in a written text or speech, and the ability to understand a word in its spoken or written form, respectively (Pignot-Shahov 2012). Furthermore, vocabulary attrition is claimed to result from a lack or reduction of access, meaning the inability to recall a word either due to memory decay or interference from other learning (Cohen 1989). Accordingly, the attention is directed to the measurement of both productive and receptive vocabulary attrition and maintenance.

Three factors will be investigated to detect attrition: *factors of language knowledge and use, individual factors, and factors of input* (Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer 2010). To measure the factors of language knowledge and use, *change in the vocabulary, accuracy, and fluency* will be quantitatively examined to account for any language production issues that could relate to attrition. Concerning the change in vocabulary, the number of retained or lost words per task, and the total number of retained or lost words shall be inspected. For accuracy, the number of errors per response, and the number of error-free responses will be analysed. As for fluency, the number of recalled words per task, filled and unfilled pauses, false starts, repairs, the number of pauses between utterances, length of unfilled pauses, elapsed time between question and response, and length of speaking time are going to be examined.

Although these quantitative measures are needed to delineate and assess the production of and access to vocabulary items, they are not indicative of the reasons for their attrition or maintenance. To unveil these reasons, a qualitative measurement of individual factors will be put forward. This incorporates age, gender, motivation, strategic competence (i.e. verbal and non-verbal strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication: paraphrase, repetition, hesitation, guessing, etc.), the multilingual background of the participants comprising the origin (nature), function (proficiency and use), competence, and identification with the L2 (Bardovi-Harlig & Stringer 2010).

Another qualitative measure concerns the factors of input. This includes the duration and nature of the extensive program of instruction, the duration and nature of the instruction during the disuse period, the duration and nature of the reduced input and use. This is closely related to the concept of "learning situation level" of motivation (Dörnyei et al. 1994), which can be divided into three components: "*Course-Specific Motivational Interest* (relevance, expectancy, satisfaction), *Teacher-Specific Motivational Affiliative Drive* (authority type, modelling, task presentation, feedback), and *Group-Specific Motivational Goal-Orientedness* (norm & reward system, group cohesion, classroom goal structure). The study by Dörnyei et al. (1994) serves as groundwork for understanding the impact of the learning situation on motivation and how instructional practices and classroom dynamics impact learners' motivation.

For the purpose of this qualitative paper, only one individual factor will be studied: *the multilingual background* of the target population. This is assumed to be an important indicator of the factors leading to second language vocabulary attrition or maintenance. To test this hypothesis, the data collection tool deemed to be the most effective and suitable is the in-depth interview. This is because "the depth of

the conversation, which moves beyond surface talk to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings" (Maykut & Morehouse 1994, 76) gives a much greater opportunity to gain full access to the interviewees' multilingual profiles and backgrounds. More so, because the definition of a multilingual person depends heavily on the person's perception of multilingualism and self-identification not only with regard to the languages spoken, but also to the identities they bring along.

To be able to form a comprehensive image of the multilingual profiles of the interviewees, several open-ended questions are needed to elicit answers regarding the various dimensions involved in multilingualism, including the origin (nature), function (proficiency and use), competence, and identification with the spoken languages, all of which are tackled in detail below. Accordingly, the main research focus is on Moroccan and Hungarian students' experience of English language vocabulary attrition and maintenance in light of their multilingual profiles.

2. Literature review

This section of the paper examines the existing literature to explore the conceptualizations and definitions of multilingualism in order to shed light on nuances associated with this dynamic linguistic phenomenon, and to develop a theoretical framework for scripting the qualitative interview schedule.

There are two distinct, but not completely separate dimensions of multilingualism; the first one is individual, relating to a single person's multilingual ability, the second one is societal, relating to a society's overall multilingual state (Cenoz 2013). For the interest of this paper, some societal aspects will be taken into account as they are part and parcel of a person, but the focus will mainly fall on the individual facet of multilingualism since the studied phenomenon of language attrition requires an in-depth qualitative investigation on the individual level.

An important distinction to be made when tackling multilingual matters is that of the "multilingualism" versus "bilingualism" dichotomy. Whilst there is no universal agreement on the exact difference between the two terms, different scholars adopt various positions. For instance, Cenoz (2013, 5) concludes that some traditionally use "bilingualism" as a "generic term" to refer to research involving two rather than multiple languages, but with the possibility of including more than two (Cook & Bassetti 2011). Some follow a mainstream position and use "multilingualism" as a "generic term" to refer to two or more languages, with bilingualism or trilingualism being examples of multilingualism (Aronin & Singleton 2008). Yet others use bilingualism

and multilingualism as two distinct terms where "bilingualism" refers to the use of two languages, and "multilingualism" refers to the use of three or more languages (de Groot 2011**).** Moreover, while in sociolinguistics, bilingualism and multilingualism are generally seen to synonymously denote more than one language, especially when tackling the societal level, in psycholinguistics the exact number of spoken languages needs to be identified, especially when tackling individual matters such as language acquisition and language loss. For the purpose of this study, bilingualism and multilingualism will be used as differentiable terms with "bilingualism" referring to the exclusive knowledge/use of two languages, while "trilingualism" denoting the knowledge/use of three, and "multilingualism" the knowledge/use of more than three languages. This is because the exact number and nature of the spoken languages of the research participants are of key significance in this study.

A four-way definition of bilingualism is proposed by Skutnabb-Kangas (1990, 11) to shape the given conception of the term. This includes "origin, competence, function, and identification". Origin relates to whether an individual was born into a bilingual situation, and how the languages are accordingly used. As for competence and function, the former revolves around the individual speaking more than one language at a certain level, and the latter around the frequency of use of the languages. Identification concerns whether an individual internally identifies themselves as bilingual and part of the two languages' culture, and whether they are externally, by other members of the society, identified as native speakers of the two languages.

Furthermore, two noteworthy dimensions, "proficiency" and "use", involved in the definition of bilingualism are pointed out by Bassetti & Cook (2011, 1) who conclude that the scholarly definitions take two directions. One group of definitions "consists of a maximal assumption where being bilingual means speaking two languages with equal fluency in every situation". The other group "takes the minimal view that bilingualism refers to any real-life use of more than one language at whatever level". Taking this line, Bloomfield (1933) for instance states that "nativelike control of two languages" (56) is a necessity, while Weinreich (1953) asserts that it is "the practice of alternately using two languages" (1) that is most important, and Haugen (1953) claims that "the point where a speaker can first produce complete meaningful utterances in the other language" (7) is where bilingualism begins. De Bruin (2019) adds that bilinguals can show dissimilarities in various aspects such as "age of acquisition, language proficiency, use, and switching practices in daily life" (200), and that even when two bilinguals have attained native-like mastery in both languages from an early stage, they can still show significant differences in their actual language use.

Hoffman (1991) takes the view that both groups of definitions are flawed, for, on the one hand, it is wrongful to presume that a bilingual individual's competence ought to be equal to that of two monolingual individuals, and on the other hand, it is not sensible to measure the "use" of a language of bilinguals in comparison to that of monolinguals, especially that factors such as "codeswitching, translanguaging, and translation" are only specific to bilinguals (23). Bassetti & Cook (2011) proceed to raise additional issues with these definitions, namely the fact that language skills(i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are not given due emphasis (2). In fact, a speaker's productive (speaking and writing) and receptive (reading and listening) skills in a second language are not necessarily concurrently proficient. This means that some bilingual speakers may have a solid receptive grasp of one language, but still not be able to fluently produce it.

Similarly, in the words of Wardhaugh (2015), "most people who are multilingual do not necessarily have exactly the same abilities in all the languages (or varieties) they speak; in fact, that kind of parity may be exceptional" and "the level of competence in a code is, of course, developed based on the need of the speaker to use a language in a particular domain or for a particular activity" (84). Whilst this interestingly suggests that the development of competence in a language depends heavily on the need for its use, an even more interesting new feature that appears in this claim is the term "varieties". One may naturally wonder if individuals speaking two language varieties or more are considered multilingual.

"Bidialectalism" is the term coined to refer to this phenomenon. Waleed & Mubarak (2019) summarize the existing scholarly definitions of bidialectalism moving from Chambers and Trudgill (1998) defining it as "speaking a dialect in addition to a standard language", through Crystal (2004) describing it as "the use of two distinct dialects (of the same language) for different social purposes" to Crystal (2008) extending it to a "speaker's ability to use two or more dialects, and to know how to code-switch appropriately between these different varieties" (23). Bilingualism and bidialectalism are distinct complex fields, yet it cannot be denied that both play a major role in affecting a multilingual individual's linguistic and sociolinguistic state. For this reason, this study will not discriminate between standardized and non-standard varieties. The full linguistic background of the target group shall be accounted for along with their language varieties based on their language use in and out of the EFL/ESL setting in order to form a comprehensive image of the linguistic background of the participants.

Coming back to the dimensions involved in defining bilingualism, de Groot (2011) notices that some scholars classify bilinguals based on the "relative competence in both languages", in that there are some who are "balanced bilinguals who possess similar degrees of proficiency in both languages" and others who are "dominant (unbalanced) bilinguals […] with a higher level of proficiency in one language than in the other" (4). Also, this dimension is directly linked to and varies in accordance with the context; specifically, how much (exposition), where (natural or formal setting), and when (age) the languages are acquired.

Speaking of the context, Cenoz (2013) explains that bilingual individuals may acquire the languages either "simultaneously or successively by being exposed to two or more languages from birth, or successively by being exposed to second or additional languages later in life" (5). The former case concerns individuals who are labeled "early bilinguals". This means that their acquisition of the mother tongue and the second language happens either at the same time (simultaneously) or one before the other (successively) during childhood. The latter case also concerns "late bilinguals" falling into the categories of "adolescent bilinguals" and "adult bilinguals" acquiring the additional languages in different stages of life starting from puberty. As was mentioned previously, age is generally an essential factor in the study of multilingualism.

In a similar vein, de Groot (2011) mentions "compound bilingualism" that occurs in a natural context, for example at home, in which the two languages are spoken interchangeably. This type of bilingualism is differentiated from "coordinate bilingualism" that emerges under a firm separation of the domains where the two languages are used, for example, either at home or at school and in public places respectively (5).

Finally, another crucial aspect of bilingualism relates to the social status of the languages spoken by a bilingual individual. Along these lines, de Groot (2011) also differentiates between "additive and subtractive bilinguals". The former blooms when both the native and the second languages have a high social value and are both used frequently, and the latter emerges when one of the acquired languages, mostly native, is looked down on and devalued socially, discouraged to use, and forced to disappear (5). This is directly linked to the social aspect of multilingualism and brings into light phenomena such as "language shift", which is concerned with groups or communities shifting to the explicit use of one dominant language, "language maintenance", which is related to the continuous use of two languages,

and "ethnolinguistic validity" which is associated with the likelihood of the maintenance of a language (Wardhaugh 2015, 83). For the purpose of this paper, this aspect is especially significant, for it has a direct influence on the overall cognitive competences of the bilingual individuals, which then influences their language use. This is relevant here because the current study aims to investigate whether some of the multilingual participants identify with these types of bilingualism.

To sum up, as each individual and each purpose needs a relative definition, it remains essential to be aware of and able to detect the diverse and unique background and features of bilingual individuals before starting an interview in order to be able to establish a correlation between dimensions of multilingualism and aspects of second language vocabulary attrition.

3. Validating the interview schedule

As it is arduous to grasp the emotions, cognition, and behaviors that occurred at some point in past time, the organization of the world, and the attachment of meaning to the world from different individuals by mere observation, one may naturally resort to tools that ensure access to these complex yet significant elements (Patton 2002). One of these tools deemed to be effective is the qualitative interview, for one major purpose of interviewing is to gain access to the other person's perspective (Patton 2002). Qualitative interviewing establishes a predetermination whereby the other's perspective is seen as meaningful and prone to be made explicit by means of posing relevant questions. In light of the complex nature of the phenomenon of multilingualism, the wideness of its scope, and its altering definitions from one individual to another, choosing the qualitative interview has the purpose of gaining a deep insight into the interviewees' perceptions on multilingualism, their language history, experiences, thoughts, and even feelings, all of which will contribute to framing their multilingual profiles in regard to the origin (nature), function (proficiency and use), competence, and identification, of the spoken languages and their possible implications on second language vocabulary attrition or maintenance.

The approach to an interview is as crucial as its selection as the main data collection tool. Maykut & Morehouse (1994) summarize the different descriptions

given to interviews in the form of a range of formats moving from "structured" to "unstructured" (76). The actual structure of the formats is said to depend on the degrees of the development of the interview questions prior to the actual interview time, which leads to a categorization of three formats: "the unstructured interview, the interview guide, and the interview schedule" (76).

On the one hand, the unstructured interview, or in Patton's (2002, 342) words the "informal conversational interview" is most fit for emergent studies which require a maximal suppleness in gathering data and looking for information in whatever course of action that seems fitting. With the focus of inquiry clearly set in mind, the questions are only posed and formed while the interview is being conducted (Maykut & Morehouse 1994, 78).

On the other hand, the interview guide and interview schedule fall into the structured category where the former is made of a sequence of general inquiries that provide the researcher with the freedom to delve into various topics with the interviewees, and the latter consists of a comprehensive collection of questions and prompts (Maykut & Morehouse 1994, 78).

While the interview guide is prepared beforehand to guarantee that basic inquiry lines are equally tracked with each interviewee, but with the possibility of introducing new questions onsite, the interview schedule, which follows the standardized open-ended interview approach, is a well-prepared set of detailed open-ended questions which acts as the same stimulus for all the participants (Patton 2002). Although all these formats differ in terms of structure, they all share one crucial feature: the presence of open-ended questions which aim at revealing what needs to be known about a studied phenomenon (Maykut & Morehouse 1994).

Relating these formats to the study of the multilingual profiles of the research participants, it appears that using an interview schedule prepared in advance for an in-depth structured interview is the most suitable for examining the aforementioned foci of inquiry: origin, identification, competence, and function. This choice is relevant because the information sought involves events about which little is known to the interviewer, because it is crucial not to miss out on any information related to these specific foci, and because it is important to ensure that the same set of questions are similarly posed to all the participants, so that the gathered data is consistent.

4. The setting

The participants were selected from the following two universities after receiving authorization and consent to conduct the study:

- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Pázmany Péter Catholic University, Budapest, Hungary.
- Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdelah University, Fes, Morocco.

Interviews were carried out online using Zoom to facilitate the process of recording and transcription.

5. The participants

To select the research participants, purposive sampling proved to be the most suitable sampling strategy. This is because "it seeks only to represent itself in a similar population, rather than attempting to represent the whole, undifferentiated population" (Cohen et al. 2007, 113). Using the purposive sample approach, a group of second-year BA students of English Studies from the aforementioned universities will be selected to participate in the study. The reasons why second-year students have been chosen include their high likelihood of staying engaged in the longitudinal study, their already established familiarity with university life and acquaintance with the research world, their less busy schedule compared to their third-year peers, and the high probability of finding them on campus in case of contact loss. Moreover, the two nationalities have been selected based on the researcher's access to both the Moroccan and Hungarian sites. Accordingly, the target group will subsequently be divided into two homogenous sub-groups; a Moroccan and a Hungarian one. Bearing in mind that the participants are native speakers of Arabic and Hungarian, respectively, they constitute a suitable target group because they are multilingual individuals who have expectedly reached at least an intermediate level of proficiency in English as a foreign language.

6. The interview design

The research method follows Maykut & Morehouse (1994)'s general procedure for developing an interview schedule. The different stages of their procedure are as follows:

- writing down the focus of inquiry
- brainstorming key words related to the focus of inquiry
- grouping categories of inquiry
- selecting relevant categories to be included in the interview
- developing open-ended questions for each category of inquiry using index cards
- arranging the categories into a sequence
- drafting the interview
- piloting the interview
- making revisions
- beginning the actual interview

It is worth noting that since the interviewees are participating in a longitudinal study, this interview only serves to collect data about the participants for the time being. Later on, the collected data will be used to make inferences about the relevance of the multilingual profiles to second language vocabulary attrition and maintenance. Moreover, since this paper reports on work in progress, only the first eight stages of interview schedule development will be discussed below.

7. Developing categories of inquiry

Having arranged various brainstorming sessions, ideas about the focus of inquiry (i.e. the multilingual profiles of the individuals) were drawn based on the theoretical framework established with the help of the literature. Then, similarities in these ideas were clustered together and grouped into categories of inquiry. For example, questions exploring the participants' spoken languages and how they became multilingual were all identified and grouped under the category "origin". The categories chosen for the interview are labeled (1) "origin", exploring themes related to native and second languages, (2) "function", exploring the frequency of language use, (3) "competence", exploring the participants' self-assessment of their linguistic competencies, and (4) "identification", exploring the participants' identities in relation to language. These categories serve to account for the diverse and unique

background and features of bilingual individuals and to establish a correlation between these characteristics and aspects of second language vocabulary attrition.

8. Developing open-ended questions

Patton (1990) established a guide to developing interview questions listing six types of questions:

- experience/behavior questions aiming to describe what informants do or have done,
- opinion/value questions aiming to investigate the informants' beliefs,
- feelings questions aiming to explore the informants' affective states,
- knowledge questions aiming to unravel the informants' acquaintance with the topic,
- sensory questions aiming to tackle the informants' corporal experiences,
- background/demographic questions aiming to characterize the informants.

Amongst these open-ended questions, only the sensory type was disregarded, for it is not relevant to the focus of inquiry. Each of the rest was used when investigating the established categories of inquiry. For instance, the question "what language(s) do you personally identify as your *second language* and why?" aims at revealing background and value answers, and the question "what feelings do you hold towards this second language?" aims at unraveling the participants' affective states in relation to their linguistic identity.

9. Drafting the interview

A first draft of the interview was formed including an introduction of the interviewer, a statement of confidentiality, an informed consent form to be signed by the interviewees, a request for permission to record the interview, and a statement about the goal of the interview. Here, it is important to note that to minimize the observer's paradox, the participants were not told that the study is explicitly meant to examine second language vocabulary attrition and maintenance, instead, they were informed that it is a mere analysis of their multilingual profiles. The interview draft was then edited to become the official interview schedule after the pilot phase. To have a look at the interview questions, see the Appendix.

10. Piloting the interview

The interview was piloted with five Moroccan students. This proved to be sufficient to gather adequate data about the foci of inquiry. Some questions were omitted to avoid repetition, and others emerged during the interview. To ensure the internal validity of the schedule, data authenticity was maintained throughout piloting. For example, participants were incited to provide authentic and genuine responses based on their unique language experiences and encouraged to avoid providing socially desirable responses. This was facilitated through a secure non-judgmental interview space that allowed participants to express their thoughts freely. Accordingly, the collected data reflected the participants' legitimate language experience and provided in-depth insights into multilingualism and second language vocabulary attrition.

Reliability was enhanced through the careful piloting of the interview schedule, the highly structured formatting of the interview design, and the consistent wording and sequencing of the questions throughout the five pilot sessions. More elaborately, the consistency and replicability of the interview questions were continually assessed when conducting the five pilot interviews allowing the rephrasing of ambiguous questions and facilitating the elicitation of consistent responses across interviews.

The piloting stage has played an important role in refining the official interview checklist and identifying inconsistencies in the wording of questions so as to ensure clarity and coherence. Moreover, feedback from the participants regarding their understanding of questions and suggestions for improvement were considered, making sure that the yielded responses were comprehensive and accurate. The insights gained from the pilot study has ultimately led to the validation of a robust and reliable tool that explores the relationship between multilingualism and second language vocabulary attrition.

11. Conclusion

The present paper has reported on the validation of an interview schedule designed to investigate the intricacies of multilingualism in order to provide an understanding of the relationship between the linguistic background of bilingual EFL students and their vocabulary attrition and maintenance in English. The final version of the interview schedule makes it possible to effectively capture rich and nuanced insights into the participants' language experiences. Participants with diverse

multilingual backgrounds have been selected to ensure reliability and validity, which enables this tool to elicit detailed narratives and explore factors influencing vocabulary attrition and maintenance. For example, participants of the pilot phase have illustrated the challenges they faced as regards maintaining vocabulary during prolonged disuse periods, and in the absence of repeated exposure to the target language. Also, they have provided insights into their linguistic identity outside of the socially constructed ones. Additionally, the paper has demonstrated the vital role of qualitative research in allowing a deeper understanding of the social and individual dimensions of vocabulary attrition and maintenance. By using this interview schedule, the participants' unique vocabulary maintenance strategies can be explored. Indeed, the narratives provided during the pilot phase have shown that mnemonic techniques, extensive reading, contextual guessing, and word formation strategies are popular and effective in vocabulary maintenance.

The validation of this interview schedule makes it a reliable tool that can be used by researchers exploring multilingualism and vocabulary attrition. The interview questions enable uncovering and exploring rich data comprising authentic examples and stories. Using this tool in future studies can potentially inform educational practices to support learners in maintaining their vocabulary proficiency and avoiding occurrences of attrition.

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Appendix

Interview Schedule

Second Language Vocabulary Attrition and Maintenance: An Analysis of the Multilingual Profiles of Second-Year BA Students Majoring in English Studies

Introduction

Greetings! Thank you very much for your willingness to take part in this interview. I will be your interviewer for this study. My name is Hanae Ezzaouya. I am studying for a Ph.D. at the Doctoral School of Linguistics in Pázmány Péter Catholic University in Budapest, Hungary. I am currently conducting research on language pedagogy. You are one of the five students who agreed to take part in this longitudinal study and to participate in this interview from your university.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to explore the multilingual profiles of students majoring in English studies. I am particularly interested in your perspective, experience, and feelings as they relate to your life as a multilingual individual and as a multilingual student. I have prepared a series of questions which I will also use with the other students. Once I have collected all the students' answers, I will analyze them towards the end of the longitudinal study and include the findings in my dissertation. The findings may also be used in journal articles and conference papers.

First category of inquiry: [origin]

Let's start out with some questions about the languages you speak and how you grew to be a multilingual person. I will be asking you both about your native language(s) and your second language.

- What language or languages can you currently speak? Please include the dialects as well.
- Which one(s) did you grow up speaking until the age of 12?
- Tell me about the family members you grew up with and the languages they spoke at home.
- What about the friends you would hang out the most with until the age of 12? What was the main language(s) they used?
- What was your neighborhood culture like until the age of 12 and what language(s) did your neighbors speak up until you reached the age of 12?
- What is your full history of learning English?

Second category of inquiry [identification]

Now, we will talk a bit about how you identify with these languages.
- What language(s) do you identify as your *native language*? Why?
- What feelings do you hold towards this/these native language(s)?
- What views do your family members hold about this/these language(s)?
- What views or beliefs are widely spread in your society about this/these language?
- What is your opinion about these beliefs?
- What language(s) do you identify as your *second language*? Why?
- What feelings do you hold towards this second language?

- What views or beliefs are widely spread in your society about this/these language(s)?
- What is your opinion about these beliefs?
- What word do you think describes you the best and why? Monolingual, Bilingual, Trilingual, or multilingual?
- What are your motives behind learning English?

Third category of inquiry [competence]

Let's talk about your competence now.
- If you were to make a self-assessment of your competence in the languages you speak, which would you choose as the one(s) you're most proficient at? Why?
- Have you ever taken any language tests to assess your level of proficiency in any of the languages? When did you? What were the results?
- What are some practices you adopt to develop your English?
- What is your experience with learning English vocabulary?
- What are some practices you adopt to retain the vocabulary you learn?
- How often do you experience forgetting a word or expression? What do you do about it?
- What do you think of the language proficiency of people who frequently experience the loss of second language vocabulary?

Fourth category of inquiry [function]

I just have a couple more questions about the frequency of your language use.
- What language do you most often use at home, at university, and with your friends?
- How many approximate hours do you practice your English per week?
- How often do you interact with native speakers of English?
- Have you ever used English in a country where English is the native language? If so, what was the experience like? Did you learn any new words? Do you still remember some of them?

Thank you very much for your time and enlightening answers. I appreciate it.

Reviews

The Game of Metaphysics and the Sign.
Sign – Writing – Origin. (Con)texts of Deconstruction by Anikó Radvánszky, Kijárat, Budapest, 2015

Eszter Horváth[1]

The book *Sign – Writing – Origin* by Anikó Radvánszky draws attention to the early period of Jacques Derrida's work, to the fundamental texts that elaborate the basic concepts and logic of deconstruction, as well as its intellectual strategy. Following this logic, it interrogates the contexts of Derrida's emerging philosophy, taking account of the need for the innermost critique of Western philosophy. We are talking specifically about an internal approach – not overturning the existing order according to the criteria of a newly introduced structure of thought but examining the 'disorder' inherent in the existing order from within, exploring its role and processes and rethinking the system in question. In Derrida's case, what is at stake is the reconsideration of the metaphysics of fixed meaning-structures, subjecting metaphysics to its own internal critique:

> *There is no sense* in doing without the concepts of metaphysics in order to shake metaphysics. We have no language – no syntax and no lexicon – which is foreign to this history; we can pronounce not a single destructive proposition which has not already had to slip into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest. To take one example from many: the metaphysics of presence is shaken with the help of the concept of *sign*. (Derrida 1980, 354, my italics)

The book begins with a key statement from Jacques Derrida's lecture "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", given at Johns Hopkins University in 1966, and accordingly, questions the possibilities of metaphysics in the 20th–21st centuries. This book is about metaphysics, in the language of metaphysics, considering its 20th century destabilisation and exploring its conditions of possibility in the given circumstances.

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[1] Budapest Metropolitan University, ehorvath2@metropolitan.hu

What is the presence-shaking effect of the operation of the sign? Why this shock? How, in what way, where does it lead? What conclusions should we draw from the necessity of the emergence and spread of deconstruction, or, in Derrida's terms, its dissemination? The book questions the genealogy of deconstruction, which at first glance seems to be a heretical idea in relation to the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, who addressed genealogy as such with the deepest Kantian critique – an unorthodox approach, no doubt.

But once the first surprise has passed, we must realise that Anikó Radvánszky's excellent book, its perspective, its strategy of thinking faithfully following Derrida's, forces us to take a step back: we change perspectives, we must rethink everything we thought, or even assumed we knew, about genealogy as we follow the analyses of the book. Genealogy, as history and study of origins, traditionally presupposes a linear sequence of thought, an orderly series of correlations of cause and effect, a story that can be told in a meaningful and clear way. Anikó Radvánszky does not make use of this reductive claim to linearity, far from narrowing deconstruction to a single dimension, she opens genealogy to the context, or even contexts, of deconstruction. Saussure's semiotics, Paul de Man's literary theory and Walter Benjamin's theory of translation are three possible focal points of interpretation. Derrida's work offers certainly much more, but the monographer's choice of these three interrelated areas is not accidental: in her interpretation deconstruction became an age defining, genuinely pivotal, paradigm-shifting way of thinking by moving within the space marked by these three theories – since it opened up and rewrote Western metaphysics for the interpretational horizons of the 20th–21st centuries by reinterpreting the concept of writing.

The key is the dynamic otherness of *différence* and *différance* condensed into a single signifying irregularity: the emergence of "a" (a single, phonetically imperceptible change, merely a change in graphic form!), that opens up worlds. The free play of the grapheme leads the thinker out of the rigid, closed world of structured system philosophies, and this brought about truly profound changes in the 20th century, especially in the philosophical fields that had been assumed as fundamental. It is safe to say that the legacy of deconstruction is an existential question – nothing more, nothing less: the question of Being, ontology, and rethinking its central problem of ontological difference – which was of fundamental importance in the second half of the 20th century in a wide range of social sciences, far beyond theory. *Différance* is inscribed, meaningfully in the history of the 20th century. In Derrida's words: "In a certain aspect of itself, différance is certainly but the historical and epochal unfolding of Being or of the ontological difference. The 'a' of différance marks the movement

of this unfolding." (Derrida 1982, 22, quoted in Radvánszky 2015, 119) The author traces this unfolding meticulously in her book, focusing on the semiotic workings of language and thus of our thinking. She begins by analysing the Derridean reading of Saussure's theory of signs, and then, through an interpretation of Saussure's anagram studies, she explores the creative power of the irregularity of language use. Then, widening the scope further, indulging in the dissemination of the operation of signs, she seeks to understand the translatability of texts, or more precisely the overwhelming Babelic experience of untranslatability. The game of differences rewrites our world in ever-widening waves (the genealogical line chosen by the author illustrates this beautifully), it opens up more and more dimensions of otherness to us, and this multiplicity, indeed, overwhelms the thinker as the confusion of Babel, no matter how much they try to navigate it with an understanding openness.

The governing idea of the book, that is, the contemporary significance of a *genealogical* reading of Derrida's différance, becomes clear from the Babel experience of deconstruction. Derrida's recurring reading of Genesis, and in particular his writing *The Towers of Babel*, has an emblematic meaning regarding the message of the oeuvre according to the author. Genesis is a history of origins, and within it the Tower of Babel story speaks about the origin of languages, or more precisely, the history of origins that explains the multiplicity of languages and the origin of the differences between languages – Radvánszky's *Sign – Writing – Origin* is a fascinating text that goes beyond academic writing, especially when read from the perspective of the interpretation of Babel in the last few pages. This is where the author's own position, the desire for origin pervades the text, her own personal decision becomes pronounced – far from the nostalgia that recalls the past, it is more about the wilfulness of the thesis: Anikó Radvánszky lives and understands her own desire for origin as a call, even as a command.

Far from being an errant in the Babelic confusion of the intellectual dimensions opened up by deconstruction, she shares with us from her position of conscious and determined decision-maker what she has experienced through Derrida's semiotic texts as the compulsion of reason to falter in the finality of assumed meanings. In Derrida's case, from the tension between semantics and semiotics, semiosis, understood as the free play of signs, emerges as the victor. A linguistic operation that breaks the boundaries of interpretation and meaning, bypassing all intentionality and deliberate creation. Derrida's writing is the event of an act of meaning without fetters, freed from the constraints of referentiality, of rule-following – its origins are obscured, one might even say: uninteresting. The grapheme, which, as the author

excellently points out, is a synonym of difference in Derrida's texts, is a deviation from the "original", the creator of difference, the agent of *différance*: a creative force, creativity unleashed. To such an extent that the concepts of creation, creativity, play, writing, (etc.) are also displaced and reinterpreted in the process: the freedom of play implies that the rules are rewritten in the process of playing. Even creation is not "the same as before": it is no longer enough to have the intention and ability to create – creation no longer originates from the creator and the creator's intention, its origin has become ambiguous, being created is no longer purely derived from the act of creation, and is best understood through the example of invention: the new can only be realized, can only come into being in our world if we make room for the unknown that is revealed to us, for what is to come (see: *invention < Latin: inventio* [*invention, discovery*] *<invenio* [*to come, to enter*] *< in-* [*in-; prefix*] *+ venio* [*to come*]), wherever it comes from – if we become attentive recipients. There are no linear origin stories to follow in the Babel of free-flowing reason. Gone is the omnipotence of metaphysics, it lives on as a narrative in the multidimensional world of fictions (i.e. creation). Nevertheless in the Babel of freely expanding textual worlds that are arranged in multidimensional spaces of horizons of reason, Anikó Radvánszky hears the voice, even the command, of Reason: the Reason that announces itself as a multiplicity. "In the beginning (there was) the difference, behold what has happened, behold what has already happened, there, behold what was, when language was an act and language was writing. There where this was, was Him" (Radvánszky 21, 138; my translation), the divine voice is amplified considerably in the pages of the *Ulysses gramophone*. For Derrida himself had been listening to this voice throughout his work. He heard it himself; he was far from being a stranger to this "tone". Metaphysics, in its own divine voice, also addressed him, the deconstruction of metaphysics is far from being a devastating critique of theology – but Derrida never heard the voice of an only god. *"Plus d'un"*, there is always more than one of everything, Derrida heard the divine voices in chorus. Always more than *one* cause (especially if 'ultimate'), more than *one* origin, more than *one* god – this is why the Judeo-Christian tradition so often haunts his work: the tradition of differentiating theology with difference inherent in itself. Ultimately, deconstruction does not exclude, does not suspend, but reinterprets the theological tradition: the uncontainable process of creation, the overflowing being, the unnameable god of dissemination makes his voice heard in it, who is always more than can be said of him, the excess of being over the existing, the excess of creation

over the created. The author is perceptibly attracted by this unattainable, ungraspable excess: He, the unknown but capitalized, the distant, not present, metaphysical polyphony echoing the voice of others for lack of his own. The eternal truth may not speak in the voice of *one* god, may not even "speak", since in the absence of presence, the voice also takes the form of a message – that is, a graphic, writing-like one: it leaves a trace in us, echoes, awaits an answer. The monographer hears the polyphonic harmony of the cacophonous sound of Babel – as a person affected and addressed, she responds to it: in writing, how else? … in her book *Sign – Writing – Origin*.

Translated by *Petra Zsófia Balássy*

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Dons et résistances: Études sur Jacques Derrida, edited by Jolán Orbán and Anikó Radvánszky, L'Harmattan, Paris, Budapest, 2019.

Bence Matuz[1]

As Jacques Derrida does not use theorems and axioms in the traditional sense, his thinking appears to be rather difficult to approach. His concepts, such as *différance, trace* or *writing*, do not primarily intend to facilitate positive statements, but rather the observation of internal contradictions within philosophical premises. Hence the paradoxical position of the Derridean thought, in which a completely free attitude towards concepts in fact does not exclude the basic assumption that "there is nothing outside the text". This conceptual freedom in principle allows the individual to conceive the world free of schematic constraints, while the text, with nothing outside it, appears as an absolute schema. In other words, the text in the Derridean sense, i.e., the set of spatial and temporal articulations brought about by the fact and dynamics of differentiation, presupposes a continuum of transitions in which the individual is forced to reconstitute his linguistic strategies of utterance, given that in *différance* all utterances are deconstructed. Deconstruction thus reveals itself as an intellectual attitude of radical ambiguity, which requires unfaithful loyalty in the application of its principles. The collection of essays on Derrida discussed below, *Dons et résistances* [Gifts and Resistances], attempts to assess the relevance of this line of thought, with particular reference to the fields of "metaphysics and epistemology", "politics and ethics", as well as "art and literature".

The three main sections are divided into five chapters. The first chapter, "Resistance towards Metaphysics", examines questions of Cartesian cogito, transcendence and the perception of space through a Derridean paradigm. The second, "The Gifts of Writing", explores Derrida's concept of writing and its impact on philosophy and art. The third, "The Power of Music", explores a rarely discussed theme in Derrida's philosophy, his relationship with thoughtful music. The fourth, "Pharmacology, Hospitality, Performativity", focuses on the ethical and political

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[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, matuzbence97@gmail.com

implications of Derrida's philosophy. Finally, the fifth, "More than a Work of Art", explores the possibilities of a biography in the Derridean sense and the afterlife of the author's oeuvre. The volume thus sets out to explore almost every aspect of the philosopher's thought. Given that Derrida's philosophy does not acknowledge the existence of independent substances, dividing the totality of the thought in question into chapters is intended to guide the reader and render the volume more accessible, rather than to provide any methodological reflection on the subject matter itself. In other words, in Derrida's view, metaphysics, ethics, politics and the arts cannot strictly be separated. As Zsolt Bagi notes, "[…] I am indebted to [Derrida], not only for theoretical thought, but also for political and ethical thought, which for him have never been distinct, absolute domains." (29).

The suspicion towards separation is already evident in the first chapter. Jean-Luc Nancy's article on the Derrida-Foucault debate on the *History of Madness* stresses that the Derridean reading of Descartes' *First Meditation* contradicts Foucault's in that it does not interpret the distinction between reason and madness as an exclusion of the latter, but rather posits madness as an elementary doubt inherent in reason itself. "Thus, Derrida must consequently identify himself," writes Nancy, "with madness in which reason ea ipsa [in itself] evacuates as soon as it recognizes itself – provided that the opposite is not true, that is, Derrida must have arrived at philosophy driven by the madness he discovered in himself, which is on a forced course towards philosophy" (15–16). In another text, also in the context of the Derrida–Foucault debate, Zsolt Bagi asks why one could not apply the Derridean and the Foucauldian readings simultaneously to the analysis of the *First Meditation*. For, according to Bagi, the two philosophers have a different understanding of the reduction found in Descartes' writing: "I would describe the difference between their interpretations of Descartes' *First Meditation* in such a way that whereas Derrida sees a reduction (or, to be more precise, a demonic, hyperbolic doubt, a deconstruction that appears as phenomenological reduction), Foucault sees subjectivation. My hypothesis is very simple: why not see reduction *as* subjectivation?" (emphasis in original, 31). Bagi's starting point, then, drawing on Derrida's argument, fits into a non-exclusive logic based on the generality of reason (cf. 30). Along similar lines, Eszter Horváth stresses the inseparability of the body (through touch) and the intellect as the result of meaning-making. "With touch, reality is no longer conceived as a (self-)reflexive entity in itself. The sensual, as touch, challenges the introspection of the thinker – to touch one must be outside, one must 'touch from outside', one never touches 'oneself'. The touch challenges the closedness of thinking and the closedness *in* thinking: all this is exploration, invention" (44).

Finally, Anikó Radvánszky's text discusses the conceptual separation of space and time: "[…] one could say that the master of deconstruction [Derrida] is primarily interested in how *time becomes space and space becomes time* in the process of meaning-making" (emphasis in original, 59). The writings in the first chapter thus reveal a critical stance against separations on the metaphysical plane, which in the case of Derrida's thought is a critique of metaphysics as such.

The second chapter, "The Gifts of Writing", also stresses the denial of a strict separation of the different fields. This is evidenced by Michel Lisse's text, which, referring to Derrida's *The University Without Condition*, explores the conditions of the possibility of a writing, that does not fit into either philosophical or literary tradition, and yet combines the two. The stakes of this mode of writing would be the creation of an essentially free and unconditional discourse. To paraphrase the *The University Without Condition*, Lisse concludes that "the university must be without condition, unconditional, in so far as it is necessary to conduct all research in all fields of thought and art within its framework" (69). The theoretical foundations of such generally liberating tendencies of Derridean philosophy are, according to Jolán Orbán, to be found in his *Of Grammatology*. Orbán draws on the theories formulated in *Of Grammatology* in order to analyze Derrida's relationship with certain artists such as Simon Hantai or Valerio Adami. In exploring this complex web of inspiration, Orbán emphasizes that "the multigendered, multivocal, multidimensional, delinearized writing that Derrida lays down is not merely a philosophical construction, a theoretical constellation, but also a way of writing that he employs, which produces textual events quite alien to philosophy and quite close to literary text and artistic activity" (84). Derrida's multidimensional thinking can also be observed in his contributions to visual culture, which Anna Keszeg analyses through the prism of the Platonic notion of Khôra. This proves to be a central notion in Derrida's work as well, especially in his description of space as a 'container', i.e. a neutral framework that gives space to everything. Using this concept, Keszeg concludes that "Derrida's Khôra is the fundamental expression and category of the medial culture of our time […]" (109). The writings in this volume thus once again reveal a philosophy in which transmission, mediation and the crossing of boundaries are of primary importance.

The third section, "The Power of Music", comprises three chapters that explore similarities between Derrida's writing (both as a philosophical concept and as a writing practice) and music. Marie-Louise Mallet sheds light on the aspects of Derrida's thought that have made new approaches to music possible: "[…] Derrida's deconstruction of the intuitionism of total presence, of the logocentrism of the accumulation of meaning under the unifying configuration of the concept, removes

many obstacles and allows a way of approaching music that philosophy as ontology or even as phenomenology almost necessarily misses" (120). Indeed, the notions of trace, *espacement*, or *différance* challenge the linearity of music in the same way that they shake the belief in the linearity of writing. In her own article, Anikó Radvánszky also notes that "by deconstructing the concept of sound, rooted in the philosophical tradition, Derrida reinterpreted the hierarchy of writing and sound in a way that was deeply embedded in writing, and it was precisely because of the conclusions he drew about the written character of music that he laid the foundations for a sound-based critique of logo-phonocentrism." (148) Finally, Adrián Bene's text thematizes the similarities between Nietzsche's and Derrida's writing through concepts of musicality, polyphony, and even dance: "to write, for both Nietzsche and Derrida, is to whirl. Thinking is movement" (156). These three texts, which discuss Derrida's concept of music, help to dispel the misconception that music plays only a minor role in the thought of Derrida. The essays of chapter three demonstrate that music is an integral part of his philosophy, both as an object of reflection and as an inspiration.

The fourth chapter raises the question of the ethical and political application of deconstruction, with particular reference to the Derridean concepts of *trace*, *hospitality* and *performativity*. In his essay, Bernard Stiegler criticizes the concept of trace, which in itself may prove inadequate to describe becoming an individual. To complement the concept of trace, which refers to the Husserlian dynamics of retention and protention, Stiegler proposes the use of the concept of tertiary retention. The latter denotes the information-bearing conditions that precede individualization: "[…] one would like to think […] that the formation of intentional consciousness constitutes the psychic side (as a stage of individuation) of the technical formation of tertiary retentions such as literacy in the strict sense" (169). By this, Stiegler wishes to contribute to the development of a new critique of political economy, since the concept of tertiary retention is useful for a modern analysis of alienation. In another essay, Lóránt Kicsák discusses Derrida's notion of unconditional hospitality, reflecting on its possibilities and necessary conditions. Following Derrida, Kicsák concludes that "unconditional hospitality does not tolerate any condition, any calculation, any exchange that would prevent both encounter and reception in the literal sense, reducing the relation with the other to a legal-economic relation" (196). A similar form of unconditionality reappears in another text by Kicsák, which analyses the performativity, or even eventuality, of deconstruction as a result of its unconditionality: "Since it deconstructs institutions, deconstruction eliminates the institutional conditions of its own unfolding, and thus can only rely on itself: it is forced to provide its own specific activity, which always requires a performative

procedure" (230). The fourth chapter also contains an essay by Fernanda Bernardo, which also examines the unconditionality of deconstruction. Through this feature, deconstruction, according to the author, can open up radically new perspectives in philosophical and political thought. Drawing on Derrida's *University Without Condition*, Bernardo stresses that "it is only in the light of this affirmation of 'unconditional freedom' that the University can truly become a definitive source of resistance and a home for invention" (217). The texts in chapter four thus explore the political-philosophical possibilities of Derrida's thinking, emphasizing its capacity to take on a performative character even as it deconstructs its own conditions of possibility.

The fifth and final chapter examines the legacy of Derrida's life and philosophy, and the work of posterity. The first two texts explore the prospect of a possible biography in the Derridean spirit, which would question the definite separation of the life and the philosophy of the individual. Benoît Peters states that "what is most often missing from the biography of significant people are precisely those things that give life its real content: thinking, creating or loving in their very essence" (259). János Boros continues this line of thought by concluding that, since such elements of biography are in fact inaccessible, "the ethics of biography consists of the recognition that it is impossible to know the subject in the very way he or she forms himself or herself. The biographer's only chance is to describe the subject's impact on other subjects and on the common language" (270). Finally, Eszter Horváth asks whether Derrida founded a school of thought and, if so, how this school relates to the search for truth. Horváth concludes that "although he is critical of all possibilities of the real presence, Derrida nevertheless puts his faith in the real event that disintegrates reality, that is different and which generates difference […]" (277). If there is a Derridean school, then, it consists in a hypercritical thinking that advances the search for truth by an in-depth examination of the concept of truth itself, which opens the way to the development of a number of different, radically new philosophies.

The essays found in *Gift and Resistance* shed light on a philosophy that does not stop at deconstructing traditional schools of thought. Derrida's philosophy is based on a certain performative thinking; an event-oriented thinking that always seeks to extend its philosophical, political, ethical and artistic questions beyond the existing, beyond the given. It is also able to ground itself through a critique of its own conditions of possibility, and to this extent deconstruction is truly thinking without condition, which resists any simplistic appropriation. It is indeed at once gift *and* resistance.

Translated by *Gábor Patkós*

Seeing a Face, Reading a Face,
edited by François Soulages, Anikó Ádám and Anikó Radvánszky, L'Harmattan, Paris, 2023.

Bence Matuz[1]

The human face, as a subject of reflection since Antiquity, has raised questions in a wide variety of fields. The face has been in the focus of interest of art, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, and numerous other disciplines. *Seeing a Face, Reading a Face* is a collection of scholarly essays that takes a pluridisciplinary approach to the representability of the face in art and literature, while considering the links between the face and subjectivity, and between identity and mutability. In other words, the problem of the face is rooted in the fact that its subject is the most general and the most particular of human qualities at the same time. The face is self-identity and identity in every sense of the word, both as a fundamental element of identity, as a par excellence characteristic of the individual, and as a universal quality that is common to all human beings, given that everyone possesses it. The volume thus focuses on observations of self-identity and variability, and of the general and the particular. These observations cannot be neglected when thinking about art and literature, considering that these, like the face itself, present us with objects that are constantly open to interpretation and that are enigmatic and given at the same time.

This dichotomy also characterises the structure of the volume. As its title suggests, *Seeing a Face, Reading a Face* is divided into two sections called "movements". The first examines the face as a visible entity, while the second considers the face as a literary topos, i.e. a text. Consequently, the first part addresses the conditions of the possible representations of the face in visual arts, while the second part contains essays that discuss semiotic and literary issues of this motif. The structure of *Seeing a Face, Reading a Face* thus refers to the dialectic that can be observed between the sensory and the conceptual, similarly to its Hegelian form. Although the essays in this volume do not explicitly refer to the problematics of the face as formulated in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, the structure of this collection alone reflects the dialectical

[1] Pázmány Péter Catholic University, matuzbence97@gmail.com

movement of the perception of the face. For the face makes the invisible visible through the concrete features of a given mimic, in other words, the psychological functioning and subjectivity that cannot be reduced to precise definitions.

The pluridisciplinary approach of *Seeing a Face, Reading a Face* explores the theme of the face in all its complexity. The first movement of the volume analyses the representations of the face in twelve essays, each approaching it from a different perspective: from aspects of philosophy, visual arts, film aesthetics, informatics and plastic surgery – among others. Each of these areas enables the texts to develop a particular vision, capable of analysing the impact of the current state of the discipline on the face as an object of artistic representation. The second movement concerns the approaches to the representation of the face in literature, stemming, among others, from the relationship of literary texts to fine arts, philosophy, psychology, or stylistic procedures. The major methodological difference between the two movements of the volume, however, is that the second movement is more reflective in its interpretation of the face than the first. The second part examines the face mainly as an allegory of personality and subjectivity, while the first part deals with representations in the visual arts and considers the face as a somewhat more direct expression of personality, largely due to its thematic approach, which is closer to sensuality. In other words, the analyses of the first section put greater emphasis on the materiality of the face, while those of the second present the face as allegory.

Along with the differences, there are also similarities between the methodologies of the two movements. The methods used are, in the majority of the writings, organised around common concepts, namely: identity and variability. In examining the representational possibilities of the face, the researchers and the works analysed encounter the difficulties of objectifying and articulating a fundamentally intangible human characteristic. The central question in most of the texts is how to represent what is, on the one hand, the same in each individual and, on the other hand, resistant to all forms of systematisation, and is hence variable.

In the hope of capturing, or at least delineating the face, François Soulages' opening essay offers a fruitful solution to the above-mentioned problems in the form of the concept of *intervisage* (19). The concept accounts for the essentially communal nature of the face, in other words, for the fact that the face exists only in interpersonal relations. "The face," Soulages writes, "is interactive, or rather interpersonal; it is the fruit of interaction between at least two persons." (16) This statement is explicitly or implicitly present throughout the essays in *Seeing a Face,*

Reading a Face, such as in Marie-Gersande Raoult's writing, which explores an important aspect of Claude Cahun's photographic oeuvre. Cahun undertakes a form of artistic self-creation when he finds it necessary to "escape from himself, to make and see himself as ungraspable, and finally to move the self towards other entities, other subjects, other identities, in order to arrive at the ultimate question" (45). In another analysis of Giorgione's painting *Time*, Biagio d'Angelo stresses that "outside of me there is Time, outside of me there is Being, a Being of the Self that allows me, as I know it, to say Self" (58). The photographer Gilles Picarel, when reporting on his project *Resident* [Résidant], also notes that "taking a photograph of another's face evokes a 'creating-together' in the midst of a situation in which everyone is a stranger to the other." (67) In her examination of the projects of the performance artist ORLAN, Sophie Armache Jamoussi points out that the artist who resorts to plastic surgery, by creating his own face as an art object, engages in a programme in which "he speaks from within himself, in fact, of being human: of the other who is at the same time identical to him" (97). The principle of the *intervisage* is predominantly explicit in the first movement of the volume but is nevertheless used in the second movement as well. Some of Anikó Ádám's statements point to certain connections between the notion of the *intervisage* and the mask. "The mask does not hide anything, but – as figure and face – reveals. Its readability, the confident knowledge of the codes it assumes, presupposes the viewer as a reader who is able to see and interpret everything. In this way, meaning is revealed to our eyes." (160) These reflections on the mask are all the more illuminating for the notion of *intervisage* as they explain the literary strategy of Marcel Proust, who, because of his special mental disorder, had difficulty identifying human faces. By developing caricaturistic or abstract masks, the author was able to create and memorise characters despite his condition. Thus, Proust provides striking evidence of the intersubjective nature of the face, which the mask does not obstruct but, on the contrary, can facilitate. In the light of the analyses above, the intersubjective aspect of the face is of particular importance, given that even the most self-centred artistic projects depend on interaction with the community.

Although the concept of *intervisage* allows for an approximate explanation of the face, the volume also thematises the crisis affecting the face. According to François Soulages, the latter derives from the fact that the face, which remains elusive, is characterised first and foremost by its presence, which

is different from, or even contradictory to, representation; we have either an uncommunicative experience of the face or one or more representations of it, knowing that this multiplicity may initially appear to be an easy way forward, but very soon becomes the source of difficulties. For the face is never exhausted in the combination of representations; a possible philosophy of the face is not so much phenomenological as existential. (17)

In analysing this problem, Soulages raises the question of whether art can represent the face without objectifying it. The crisis of objectification is strikingly revealed in Vincent Duché's essay and in the art projects he analyses (*FACES* [2014], *Profil* [2016]). These are based on the use of softwares that can reconstruct the face without the presence of the subject. Duché concludes that "with the emergence of the numerical double, the individual is no longer a constitutive element of their representation, to the extent that they have been completely displaced from the latter" (107). This conclusion thus questions Soulages' thesis that the face presupposes presence in all cases. In this way, a rupture in the sign ["*rupture indicielle*"] (106) is produced, which aggravates the crisis of the face.

In addition to the notions of the *intervisage* and crisis, the notion of mystery is also addressed in the volume. The essays focusing on the indefinability of the face are in a sense the antithesis of the aforementioned crisis, relying on the idea that the elusive nature guarantees the (self-)identity of the individual and subjectivity. In accordance with the highly subjective nature of the face, François Soulages concludes with a prose verse addressed to the human face (22–244). Nevertheless, most of the essays attempt to capture subjectivity in less lyrical terms. In her essay on Emannuel Levinas's thoughts on the face, Anikó Radvánszky starts from the hypothesis that "*the conceptual structure of the idea of the infinite is expressed in the face*" (170, emphasis in original). The face as the infinitely other appears here in its radically original state. In another essay, Ágnes Tóth analyses Maurice Carême's short stories *Medua* and *Nausica* through the Medusa myth. The interpretation of the two works and the myth leads the author to the conclusion that "the mirror-shield held by Perseus represents the distance that makes visible the Other, the other self; the detachable Gorgon head reveals the process leading to the depictable, the transparent" (200–201). The mention of the Other, the necessity of the distance and the decapitation of Medusa suggest an endless search for identity. The decapitation of the "other self" is necessary to get to know and handle it, otherwise the person risks the petrification and the obfuscation of identity. Self-identity, like the face of Medusa, is therefore never fully attainable, and proves to be a mystery par excellence.

Seeing a Face, Reading a Face thus raises meaningful questions about the representation of the face and, through it, identity. The essays evoke reflections that fit into the paradigm of the concepts outlined above: that of the *intervisage* that postulates the face as a node of interpersonal relations; that of the crisis which manifests itself in the displacement of the subject's presence from its representation; and finally, that of the mystery, guaranteed by the highly contradictory nature of the face, in a constant uncertainty between identity and variability. This volume does not undertake to provide a definitive, systematic solution to these questions, but it nevertheless mentions useful concepts for reflections on the representation of the face in art and literature.

Translated by *Petra Zsófia Balássy*

PÁZMÁNY

Pázmány Péter Catholic University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences