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Proust - the Scientist

Corinna Heiss

University of Alabama, USA
corinna.heiss@hotmail.fr

Abstract

Proust was not only a French writer, but - based on his incredible scientific knowledge and descriptions in his novel - to some extent, a neurologist and psychologist. Far ahead of his time, Proust illustrated in his masterpiece *In Search of Lost Time* a link between personal memories and sensory stimuli. In his novels, he explains the mechanism of memory retrieval after perceiving a sensation.

Without a doubt the most famous scene of *In Search of Lost Time* remains the moment when the taste of a French pastry, called "madeleine," rekindles the childhood memories of the narrator Marcel in the first volume *Swann's Way*. Similarly, listening to Vinteuil's Sonata triggers and maintains Swann's love for Odette and its expression in the second volume of the masterpiece *In Search of Lost Time*.

His descriptions reveal that human senses are not only linked to personal memories, but may also trigger them. Moreover, contemporary studies in the biological field have shown that there are correlations between stimuli and intangible feelings and states of mind, such as love, hatred, and sympathy, primarily located in the amygdala of the human brain.

Reading Proust's masterpiece *In Search of Lost Time* through the lens of current neurological studies opens an interesting and innovative perspective on the subject of memory retrieval and shows that he was not "only" a writer, but also an observational scientist.

Keywords

Proust, memory, neurologist

Richardson and Steen state that "[f]ew critics have as yet produced cognitively informed interpretive readings of literary texts that at the same time fully acknowledge their historical specificity" (5). I strongly agree with them in a sense that "[t]his deficiency is unfortunate" because "recourse to cognitive, evolutionary, and neuroscientific models can usefully extend the parameters and productively complicate the methodologies of literary and cultural history" (6). The emergent field of cognitive literary criticism is the beginning of a "new interdisciplinarity" (Richardson and Crane 123) or "what [also] might be called a 'neural historicism'" (137) where it is important to "forge links between literary studies and cognitive science" (Richardson and Steen 2). Turner and Iser have done some interesting research concerning the reader's mind. Less work has been done, however, on the writer's mind even though "by delineating the models of mental operations that influenced writers working in earlier historical periods, critics can negotiate between these historical models (whether intuitive or explicitly theorized) and the more recent paradigms of cognitive neuroscience" (6). That is why, in this article, I will try to focus on the writer's mind. Which "mental operations" inspired Proust to write a work like *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*? How can we use today's biological knowledge to find out more about former writer's "mental operations" throughout their writing process? This is important because this intuitive knowledge of "writers working in earlier time periods" has inspired in turn today's scientific research.

Furthermore, Richardson and Crane state that "[l]iterary studies will also need to pay new attention to various writers' attempts, through history, to imagine, understand, and represent their own cognitive

processes" (132) because they claim that "university presses attempt to maximize sales with academic titles that can be marketed across disciplinary lines" (123). They solely terminate their article "Literary Studies and Cognitive Science: Toward a New Interdisciplinarity" with the following quote: "Those willing to cross disciplinary lines in the age of cognitive science stand to contribute similarly productive models and to elicit a whole range of new meanings in the texts, practices, and historical and cultural configurations that we study" (137).

"Et pourquoi ne pas se prévaloir de l'œuvre de Proust pour la défense des intérêts scientifiques?" (146) asks Vannucci in his work *Marcel Proust à la Recherche des Sciences*. Indeed. Why not? In times of an evolving and fast moving world, literary scholars need to become more flexible and broaden their knowledge in other disciplines such as hard sciences. Many writers and philosophers have always been interested in and fascinated by contemporary scientific findings. Due to their curiosity some of their scientific knowledge found its way into novels and influenced these writers. That is why, in order to understand the whole extent of literary work, today's critics have to be proficient in hard sciences as well.

Proust is the ideal author to study these intersections between art and science, because "[p]our Proust, représentant par excellence de la culture littéraire, la science et les arts offrent deux approches complémentaires du savoir. Il ne craint pas d'énumérer plusieurs points de contact entre ces deux côtés traditionnels de la connaissance humaine" (Vannucci 159). Critics like Wimmers and Vettard noticed more than one decade ago Proust's link to contemporary scientific disciplines such as physics, psychology, philosophy but also neuroscience. While Vettard is pointing out Proust's connection to Einstein, Wimmers seems convinced that "[r]eading Proust in the twenty-first century will, no doubt, be enriched by ... interdisciplinary perspectives" (182) such as neuroscientific ones. In her work *Proust and Emotion*, she argues "that an interdisciplinary approach to emotions might be the most fruitful" (181). I strongly agree with her viewpoints. In this article I will try to depict the underlying neuroscientific assumptions Proust makes well before scientists had access to brain imaging techniques.

In his work *In Search of Lost Time*, Proust uses the madeleine episode to trigger Marcel's autobiographical memory retrieval. His understanding of psychological and neurological processes in the human brain is impressive, if you take into account that research methods like fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) could not be explored in the beginning of the 20th century. That is why Proust can be considered as a pioneer of his time period. Proust was no conventional author, but could have also pursued a career in neurology, psychology or biology.

Wimmers made similar observations in her work *Proust and Emotion*. She states that "[e]motions ... are best studied within a concrete situation viewed over time and from different perspectives" (181). It seems that Proust knew about this all along from the beginning of the 20th century. In his novels he provides us with concrete situations like the madeleine episode that elicits the odor- and taste-evoked memories of the narrator, but also the Vinteuil Sonata that is undoubtedly somehow linked to Swann's love for Odette and triggers music related memories. Wimmers has observed that

Proust's novel, by allowing us to witness how a character, with a given sensibility, emotions, memory, and views evolves in time, and by providing us, moreover with the retrospective evaluation of a narrator already engaged in the process of giving shape to his life, involves us in an intricate web of associations that is far richer and more revealing about complex emotions than any single theory could possibly be. (180)

It is thus not surprising that Proust is omnipresent in today's biological research. His depictions of memory recall inspired scientists and their discovery was coined "the Proust phenomenon" (Chu and Downes 511). Daselaar, a scientist who was working on auditory recalled memories, found out that "visual and other sensory areas may have their greatest effect late in the process" (226) of memory retrieval. In order to support his theory, he quoted the French novel in his research paper:

Proust (1928/1934) described something similar in his classic account of autobiographical memory wherein the smell and taste of a 'petite madeleine' first produces 'an exquisite pleasure ... detached, with no suggestion of its origin' and then after a time 'the memory returns ... immediately the old grey house upon the street ... rose up like the scenery of a theatre and with the house the town. (Daselaar et al. 226)

Whereas Herz, researcher who studied odor-evoked memories, states that "Proust's childhood memories of his aunt's house in Combreys [sic] that he describes in *Swann's Way* may never have come back to him had he not smelled the linden tea and madeleine biscuit concoction" (223). And indeed, there is compelling evidence that "odors are thought to be 'the best cues to memory' ... not only because of their emotionality, but more importantly because they may be able [to] bring to consciousness memories that would otherwise be forever forgotten" (Herz 223). Since the madeleine episode is the key scene that triggers the story told by Marcel, the narrator of Proust's novel, it would have been very unfortunate, "had he not smelled the linden tea and the madeleine biscuit concoction" and those memories may have been lost to time. Furthermore, research has given evidence that "memories recalled by odors [are] significantly more emotional and evocative than those recalled by the same cue presented visually or auditorily" (217). These scientific findings are consistent with Proust's assumptions in the beginning of the 20th century. That is why the madeleine episode is often referenced amongst scientists. For those reasons we should take note that research indicates that there are connections between sensory perception like odor or music and our autobiographical memories as well as our emotions.

These findings are also consistent with neuroanatomy. Aggleton and Mishkin discovered in 1986 that "the olfactory area is unique among the senses in synapsing directly with the amygdala-hippocampal complex" (Herz 222). In other words, odor-evoked memories are powerful in terms of memory retrieval due to the olfactory cortex in the human brain being directly linked to the hippocampus, the area of the human brain where our declarative memory is located, and the amygdala, the area where our emotional center is located in the brain.

The following diagram shows the activity of different parts of the human brain during memory retrieval. The data was collected throughout fMRI measurements by Daselaar. For this purpose, he presented auditory cues to his participants who were blindfolded and unable to receive any external visual stimuli. The first graph shows mainly the activity in the hippocampus. The second graph demonstrates the activity in the visual cortex of the human brain. Therefore, it can be concluded that "memory access-related activity (i. e. hippocampus ...) are all on a descending slope ... whereas the time courses of the regions associated with elaboration (i. e. visual cortex ...) are on an ascending slope" (Daselaar 222). In other words, the hippocampus seems to be active in the beginning of a memory recall, but its activity is decreasing over time, whereas the visual cortex shows a rather low activity in the beginning of memory retrieval, but rises with time.

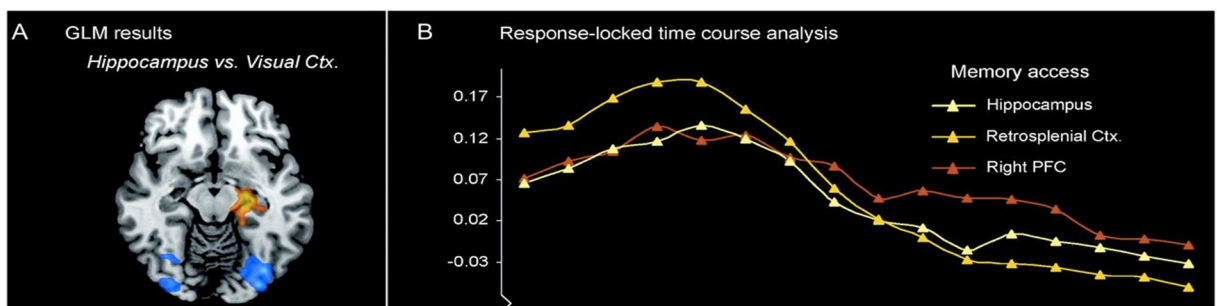


Figure 1: Activity in the hippocampus (yellow) data by Daselaar, Sandar M. et al. "The Spatiotemporal Dynamics of Autobiographical Memory: Neural Correlates of Recall, Emotional Intensity, and Reliving." *Cerebral Cortex*, 2008, 217-29. Accessed 14 Mar 2016.

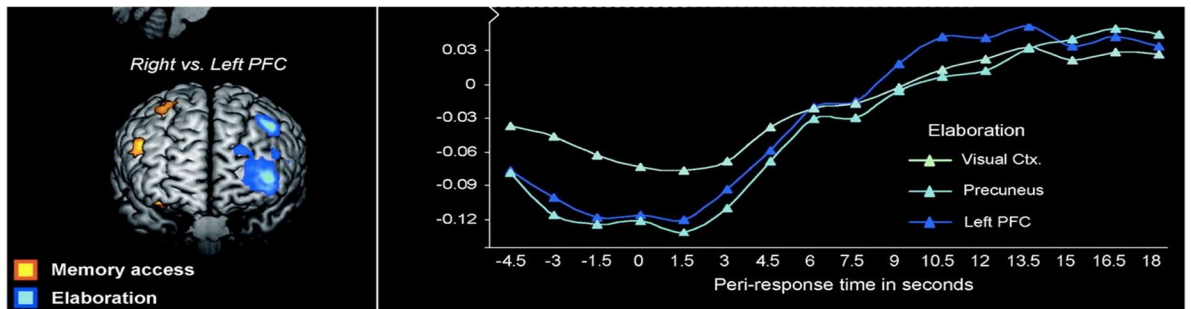


Figure 2: Figure 1: Activity in the visual cortex (green) data by Daselaar, Sandar M. et al. "The Spatiotemporal Dynamics of Autobiographical Memory: Neural Correlates of Recall, Emotional Intensity, and Reliving." *Cerebral Cortex*, 2008, 217-29. Accessed 14 Mar 2016.

I argue that Proust's narrator is referring to the decreasing activity in the hippocampus when he is describing gradual loss of strength in the process of memory retrieval. I also claim that Proust was able to describe "the descending slope" at the beginning of the 20th century in the absence of the technologies described above:

Je bois une seconde gorgée où je ne trouve rien de plus que dans la première, une troisième qui m'apporte un peu moins que la seconde. Il est temps que je m'arrête, la vertu du breuvage semble diminuer. Il est clair que la vérité que je cherche n'est pas en lui, mais en moi. Il l'y a éveillée, mais ne la connaît pas, et ne peut que répéter indéfiniment, avec de moins en moins de force, ce même témoignage que je ne sais pas interpréter et que je veux au moins pouvoir lui redemander et retrouver intact, à ma disposition, tout à l'heure, pour un éclaircissement décisif. Je pose ma tasse et me tourne vers mon esprit. C'est à lui de trouver la vérité. (CS 45)¹

Of course, due to the limited knowledge of brain organization, he cannot call it "hippocampus" and needs to describe the process in other words, but the narrator is aware of the fact that there is something going on in his mind that has to be excluded from every possible distraction. He knows that the memory is fading as time passes. That is why, afraid of losing his memory, he puts down his cup and focuses on his mind. The narrator tells us,

Je veux essayer de le faire réapparaître. [...] et je sens tressaillir en moi quelque chose qui se déplace, voudrait s'élever, quelque chose qu'on aurait désanchré, à une grande profondeur; je ne sais ce que c'est, mais cela monte lentement. (CS 45/46)

In this quote, Marcel's introspection matches the description of the increasing activity in the visual cortex during memory retrieval. The description of "something that leaves its resting-place and attempts to rise" (Proust, *Senses of Consciousness* 41) and the fact that the narrator "can feel it mounting slowly" seem to perfectly describe the graph in Daselaar's data. Moreover, the narrator seems to reinforce my theory by confirming: "Certes, ce qui palpite ainsi au fond de moi, ce doit être l'image, le souvenir visuel, qui, lié à cette saveur, tente de la suivre jusqu'à moi" (CS 46). Albeit a foreign terminology to him, it appears undeniable that he is referring to the visual cortex when depicting the visual memory in this description. Moreover, he seems to be perfectly aware of the fact that the visual experience is somehow linked to that taste.

¹ CS stands for *Du côté de Chez Swann*.

Furthermore, the data of contemporary research, which claims that “memories recalled by odors [are] significantly more emotional and evocative than those recalled by the same cue presented visually or auditorily” (Herz 217) matches Marcel’s discovery in the novel: “La vue de la petite madeleine ne m’avait rien rappelé avant que je n’y eusse goûté” (CS 47). Also Proust’s reasoning behind this process appears to be very scientific: “[P]eut-être parce que, en ayant souvent aperçu depuis, sans en manger, sur les tablettes des pâtisseries, leur image avait quitté ces jours de Combray pour se lier à d’autres plus récents.” This statement is again consistent with today’s findings where there is compelling evidence that our brain is constantly rewiring its neurons throughout lifetime, a phenomenon known as neuroplasticity.

In order to talk about the Vinteuil Sonata, I have to give some information about the importance and quality of musically recalled memories. Interestingly enough, participants of Herz’s study with odor-evoked memories “did not believe that their odor-evoked memories were the most emotional. In fact, they believed that their musically recalled memories were” (Herz 218). Therefore, “[a]udition is an especially important contrast cue because music is considered to be a very potent emotional reminder.”

In addition to that, when Marcel is drinking the tea and eating the madeleine, positive feelings are triggered. The narrator tells us about a “plaisir délicieux” (CS 45) and “puissante joie” he is feeling. These remarks are consistent with Jäncke’s study on music where “songs [that] evoked mainly positive [feelings] such as nostalgia [...] were recognized significantly better than those rated as less positive” (Jäncke 21.4) in terms of retrieved emotions.

However, in spite of odor-linked memories being considered the most emotionally provocative cues, music-linked memories are not less important, since “[i]t is impossible to determine whether it is the odor or the memory that elicited this emotion, because an odor that is linked to an emotional association is just that - the scent and the emotional association are inextricably intertwined” (Herz 222).

We can conclude that memories triggered by a song can also elicit strong emotions. I argue that this is the case when Swann falls in love with Odette by listening to the Vinteuil sonata over and over again. In this context, we have to take into consideration that in Proust’s novels love always develops via esthetics such as art or music, meaning that Swann justifies his love for Odette with the fact that she reminds him of Botticelli’s famous painting of Jethro’s daughter, Zipporah.

A similar mechanism is triggered when he is describing the Vinteuil Sonata experience. Curiously enough, the first encounter of Odette leaves a rather negative impression upon Swann: “[E]lle était apparue à Swann non pas certes sans beauté, mais d’un genre de beauté qui lui était indifférent, qui ne lui inspirait aucun désir, lui causait même une sorte de répulsion physique” (CS 195). After reading this description, it seems safe to make the presumption that Swann is not going to fall in love with this woman, but he does. In contrast, the first encounter of the Vinteuil Sonata leaves an extremely positive impression upon Swann. The narrator tells us about Swann’s “grand plaisir” (208) he experiences while listening to the sonata and tells us that he “avait éprouvé pour elle [la sonate] comme un amour inconnu” (210).

So how would a researcher approach this phenomenon of Swann falling in love with Odette? I claim that there is a progressively developing neuronal connection between the sonata and Odette in Swann’s brain. After that connection was built, a flood of positive emotions mask the negative ones originally felt for Odette. I argue that this neuronal link was built in Mrs. Verdurin’s living room, while Swann and Odette, being forced to sit next to each other on the couch, listen to the pianist playing the Vinteuil Sonata.

The initial description of the Vinteuil Sonata experience that describes Swann’s feeling before he even meets Odette and knows the title of the sonata is pretty interesting because it is an allegory for Swann’s and Odette’s future relationship. This quote is a key quote in the novel, because it can be considered a prolepsis for the whole relationship between Swann and Odette with all its ups and downs. Although the narrator claims to talk about music, Odette and her character of a courtesan who is manipulating and using Swann is already present.

D'un rythme lent elle le dirigeait ici d'abord, puis là, puis ailleurs, vers un bonheur noble, inintelligible et précis. Et tout d'un coup, au point où elle était arrivée et d'où il se préparait à la suivre, après une pause d'un instant, brusquement elle changeait de direction, et d'un mouvement nouveau, plus rapide, menu, mélancolique, incessant et doux elle l'entraînait avec elle vers des perspectives inconnues. Puis elle disparut. Il souhaita passionnément la revoir une troisième fois. Et elle reparut en effet, mais sans lui parler plus clairement, en lui causant même une volupté moins profonde. Mais, rentré chez lui, il eut besoin d'elle : il était comme un homme dans la vie de qui une passante qu'il a aperçue un moment vient de faire entrer l'image d'une beauté nouvelle qui donne à sa propre sensibilité une valeur plus grande, sans qu'il sache seulement s'il pourra revoir jamais celle qu'il aime déjà et dont il ignore jusqu'au nom. (CS 210)

Consequently, this description illustrates the connection between the sonata and the women. The woman and the composition have both a massive influence on Swann. They have such a power over him that they can lead him everywhere they please. This quote proves that Odette and the sonata are inextricably intertwined in Swann's mind. The text even states explicitly the existence of such a connection: "La petite phrase² continuait à s'associer pour Swann à l'amour qu'il avait pour Odette" (CS 236).

The quote "Mais, rentré chez lui, il eut besoin d'elle" (CS 210) illustrates Swann's emotional dependence on Odette. Swann is obsessed with this woman and incapable of living or being without her. Research has indicated that there is a reward area in our brain, which is active in a very similar way when we either listen to music, or see the person we are in love with, or take drugs. And indeed, "[à] voir le visage de Swann pendant qu'il écoutait la phrase, on aurait dit qu'il était en train d'absorber un anesthésique qui donnait plus d'amplitude à sa respiration" (237). Hence, while listening to the sonata Swann himself looks like he is on drugs.

In conclusion, based on scientific knowledge, I argue that Swann learned to love Odette. There is compelling evidence that some forms of love are forms of addictions. I claim that this is the case for Swann's love to Odette. Swann is on the one hand addicted to the sonata and therefore, he will listen to it over and over again. However, in his mind, the sonata is strongly linked to Odette. Consequently, every time he listens to the sonata, he will think of Odette and he will relive moments with her. Since the Jäncke study taught us that positive memories are more likely to be recalled than negative ones, Swann will mostly remember the positive moments with Odette and get the feeling of nostalgia. His love for Odette seems to be the result of a learning process similar to classical conditioning. How else could it be that he falls in love with a woman for whom he had initially feelings of repulsion?

This process is similar to the pattern of revising for an exam. If we revise something often enough, we will memorize it better and our memories will be transferred from the short-term to the long-term memory, a process that takes place in the hippocampus of the human brain: "Glutamate receptors in the hippocampus appear to trigger the complex cascade of biochemical reactions that convert short-term memories into permanent ones, a process called long-term potentiation" (Powledge 517). Thus, if we can connect memories to positive feelings, the learning effect will be higher. This is often used in an educational and pedagogical context, where teachers try to positively reinforce their students in order to get better results in terms of learning. Addiction researchers are also interested in this phenomenon: "Because craving and reinforcement are aspects of learning, it is not surprising that addiction researchers are interested in glutamate, the neurotransmitter most associated with the learning process."

Last but not least, let me share three thoughts. Firstly, I think it is obvious that Marcel would have been the ideal study participant of Daselaar since he was describing the process of memory retrieval and further elaboration similar to the data Daselaar has collected. Secondly, Swann is addicted to the

² The sonata is often referred to as "little phrase" in the novel.

Vinteuil Sonata and therefore also to Odette. His love for her is the result of a learning process. Thirdly, I think Proust could have succeeded in a scientific career. He would have been pleased, had he had access to today's scientific vocabulary. His long sentences testify to his struggle for words in order to describe the complexity of psychological and neuronal processes in the human brain. According to Luckhurst, Proust asserts that "[a]rt, too, uncovers laws and truths and [that] these truths are just as necessary as those of physics or chemistry" (Luckhurst 48). I claim that reading *Du côté de chez Swann* through the lens of modern neuroscientific discoveries has proven that he was right. I will defend the same statement as Luckhurst does, when he argues that "[l]iterary truth is equated with scientific truth, and defended as such" (49). I also agree with his statement that "[w]hat fascinates Proust is not so much the science but, rather the revolutionary and revelatory effects which science can have on perception, 'votre vision des choses'" (53). *In Search of Lost Time* and its underlying psychological insights seem to leave no doubt that Luckhurst was right when making this assumption.

Even though Proust was more than once compared to Einstein, because his contemporaries were aware of the fact that both of them revealed big natural laws,³ Proust always stayed modest and pretended to know and understand less of Einstein's theories than he actually did. Becoming widely known at about the same time of the 20th century, both Einstein as the scientist and Proust as the scientific artist contributed in a crucial way to today's scientific knowledge.

What does this mean for literary research? Richardson and Crane mention the work of the two cognitive psychologists Richard Gerrig and Raymond Gibbs and consider it very promising in terms of "new interdisciplinary work," but at the same time, deplore that "neither has much to say about ... additional evidence from neuroscience" (135). This might be because there is a lack of detailed neuroscientific knowledge among scholars of other disciplines. Vannucci claims in that context that "[o]n peut d'ailleurs noter, en passant, qu'en règle générale, les scientifiques possèdent davantage de culture littéraire que les littéraires de culture scientifique" (Vannucci 145). I strongly promote a change in this attitude. In order to fully understand contemporary literary work, scholars have to deepen their knowledge in both disciplines, science and literature, in order to be capable of interdisciplinary approaches. "Pour Proust la distance entre les deux domaines, sciences et arts, n'est pas insurmontable" (162). Consequently, it should not be insurmountable for us, the critics, as well.

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³ Einstein discovered the relativity, whereas Proust discovered the deep psychological mechanisms that underlie love and memory retrieval.

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Contact

Corinna Heiss
1761 Commons North Loop
App. 1303
35406 Tuscaloosa, AL
USA
corinna.heiss@hotmail.fr



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Phototextuality as a Phenomenon of Present-Day British Prose

Volha Sudliankova

Minsk State Linguistic University, Belarus
korsud@mail.ru

Abstract

Like many other world literatures, the English literature of the last few decades has been marked by an intensive search for new narrative techniques, for innovative ways and means of arranging a plot and portraying characters. The search has resulted, among other things, into merging literature with visual arts like painting, film and photography. This phenomenon got the name of ekphrasis and has become a popular field of literary research lately.

Suffice it to cast a glance at several of the novels published around the year 2000 to see that incorporation of photographic images into fiction allows writers to use new means of organizing literary texts, to employ non-conventional devices of structuring a plot and delineating personages as well as to pose various problems of aesthetic, ethical, ideological nature.

We suggest to look briefly at seven novels published in the last three decades to see the various roles assigned to photography by their authors: *Out of this World* (1988) by Graham Swift, *Ulverton* (1992) by Adam Thorpe, *Master Georgie* (1998) by Beryl Bainbridge, *The Dark Room* (2001) by Rachel Seiffert, *The Photograph* (2003) by Penelope Lively, *Double Vision* (2003) by Pat Barker and *The Rain Before It Falls* (2007) by Jonathan Coe.

The scenes of the novels are set widely apart and have time spans of various duration. *Ulverton* and *Master Georgie* have a mid-19th century setting, *The Dark Room* is centered round WWII, *Out of this World* and *The Rain before It Falls* contain their heroes' long life stories, while *The Photograph* and *Double Vision* are set at the end of the last century and their characters are our contemporaries. The novels also differ by the particular place photographs occur in the novels, by the roles they play there, as well as by the issues associated with them.

Keywords

ekphrasis, initiate/trigger a plot, merging of literature and photography, phototext, phototextuality, plot structuring element, verbal representation, visual images

Since ancient times, literature has been allied to other forms of art like painting, sculpture, music, dancing. With the advent of new media, photography and cinematography in the 19th-20th centuries, literature began to interact with them, too.

Verbal representation of visual images in literary works got the name of ekphrasis. The study of ekphrasis has become a popular field of research lately. Suffice it to mention such books as *Museum of Words: The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (1993) by J. A. W. Heffernan, *Writing for Art: The Aesthetics of Ekphrasis* (2008) by S. Cheeke; *Ekphrastic Medieval Visions: a New Discussion in Interarts Theory* (2011) by C. Barbetty, *Экфразистические жанры в классической и современной литературе* (*Ekphrastic Genres in Classical and Contemporary Literature*) by a group of scholars from Perm University in Russia (2014); or a collection of articles *Ekphrasis in Russian Literature* issued in Moscow in 2002, to see that the study of interplay of literature with other forms of art is a sort of front line in literary studies nowadays. The popularity is undoubtedly due to the fact that contemporary writers, postmodernist ones especially, have been very ingenious in new ways and means of literary creation, in combining text with various kinds of so-called ready-made material – paintings, films, photos or documentary sources.

Like many other world literatures, the English literature of the last few decades has been marked by an intensive search for new narrative techniques, for innovative ways and means of arranging a plot and

portraying characters. The search has led, among other things, to merging literature with visual arts like painting, film, photography. Take, for example, the novels *Chatterton* (1987) by Peter Ackroyd and *Headlong* (1990) by Michael Frayn whose plots are centred round real or fictitious paintings, or the novel *What a Carve Up!* by Jonathan Coe (1994) which is a parody of a horror film under the same name and a number of other pictures made in the 1960-70s.

It should be noted that the interaction of literature and photography started, practically, as soon as the latter came into being. The term 'phototext' was coined by an American photographer and writer Wright Morris in 1946 to characterize the relationship between image and text in his own books *The Inhabitants* and *The Home Place*. But the phenomenon itself had existed for almost a century before that. As Blatt points out in his article, photography and literature have been involved in an almost constant dialogue and process of intersemiotic cross-fertilization since the advent of the new medium (108). Yet this border-crossing got a new impetus in the postmodern era which was marked by coexistence of visual arts and music, theatre and literature, conventional arts and authentic mass media as well as other so-called ready-made material.

Phototextuality is a form of ekphrasis though it is less spread and, consequently, less studied than, say, correlation between word and more traditional forms of visual art, though the last few decades saw a number of various publications dedicated to it, for example, the above mentioned article by Blatt, or an anthology *Phototextualities: Reading Photographs and Literature* (Bryant 1996), to name but a few. Concerning the use of photographic images in fiction, Brunet wrote "...since 1970 writing and photography have been closely allied in various artistic practices, whether narrative, fictional, or polemical" (32). This tendency is not on the wane now; on the contrary, it seems to gather momentum. According to the same author:

... from an early twenty-first century standpoint, many signs suggest that photography, or at least some prominent branches of it, have indeed managed to espouse literature, while much of literature has turned to photography for the renewal of its sources and forms – to the point of producing a hybrid, a 'photo-literature' or 'phototextuality' concerned primarily with the exploration of its own structures and practices. (11)

Suffice it to cast a glance at several of the novels published around the year 2000 to see that incorporation of photographic images into fiction allows writers to use new means of organizing literary texts, to employ non-conventional devices of structuring a plot and delineating personages as well as to pose various problems of aesthetic, ethical, ideological nature. (By "incorporating" I do not mean inclusion of photographic book illustrations but verbal descriptions of photographs and the stories woven round them, i.e. the phenomenon of ekphrasis).

I suggest to look briefly at the following seven British novels published in the last three decades to see the various roles assigned to photography by their authors. These novels are *Out of this World* (1988) by Graham Swift, *Ulverton* (1992) by Adam Thorpe, *Master Georgie* (1998) by Beryl Bainbridge, *The Dark Room* (2001) with its three novellas by Rachel Seiffert, *The Photograph* (2003) by Penelope Lively, *Double Vision* (2003) by Pat Barker and *The Rain Before It Falls* (2007) by Jonathan Coe. (None of these novels has been analysed from the standpoint of phototextuality before).

To begin with, the scenes of the novels are set widely apart and have time spans of various duration. *Ulverton* (to be more precise, one of its chapters, "The Shutter," which is under discussion in the present paper) and *Master Georgie* have a mid-19th century setting, *The Dark Room* is centred round WWII, *Out of this World* and *The Rain Before It Falls* contain their 20th century heroes' long life stories, while *The Photograph* and *Double Vision* are set at the end of the last century and their characters are our contemporaries.

The novels also differ by the particular place photographs occur in them, by the roles they play there, as well as by the issues which are associated with them. The amount of space dedicated to descriptions of photos in the reviewed novels varies. It ranges from what may be called extended ekphrases, which offer detailed presentations of pictures, contracted ones and zero ones, the latter being limited to a

mere mention of a photo. Thus, *The Photograph*, *Master Georgie*, *The Shutter* and *The Rain Before It Falls* contain extended ekphrases, while in *The Dark Room*, *Out of This World* and *Double Vision* all the three types can be observed.

One of the key ideas of Swift's *Out of This World* "Every picture tells a story" is true of all the above mentioned novels as each of them is centred round some photographs. All these novels narrate of the past, they are associated with some real events, though instead of deriving "authority from documentary data" they offer fictitious "extratextual documents as traces of the past" (Hutcheon 156).

Undoubtedly, the most obvious case of merging photography and literature is, judging by the title, Penelope Lively's psychological novel *The Photograph* where a photo triggers the plot. Its hero Glyn Peters, a landscape archaeologist, finds among his papers a photo of his late wife holding hands with her sister's husband and sets out to meticulously investigate the events and circumstances associated with the picture. The sentence "To remove one will bring the lot crashing him like an ill-judged move in that game involving a tower of balanced blocks" (Lively10) refers not only to the physical scene of pulling a file out of a heap of papers but also to the effect the found photo would play in Glyn's life ruining his thoroughly built citadel. His efforts gradually turn into a sort of self-quest and eventually help him realize the true reason for his family drama and his wife's suicide. The photograph also provokes a rift within another family the healing of which is long and painstaking.

A picture found in the family archives also serves as a plot initiating element in the novella *Micha* which is part of Rachel Seiffert's book *The Dark Room*.

While in the above mentioned works a photo launches the plot, in other novels photographs look like stepping stones upon which the plot progresses, that is, they have a plot-structuring function. Beryl Bainbridge's novel *Master Georgie*, related to the events of the Crimean War (1853-1856), consists of six chapters called 'plates' which look like monologues of the three principal personages. Each of the monologues adds something to the portrayal of the main character – a doctor and amateur photographer George Hardy. The chapters' titles are defined by the nature of the photos which form the key moments of each plate. Irrespective of the place of the photo in the chapter – its beginning, middle or end – it is explicitly or implicitly connected with every detail of the story. Thus, the first plate dated by 1846, is called 'Girl in the Presence of Death' and is framed by the scene of taking a picture of the dead body of George's father while the main part of the story contains the events prior to it. The final chapter dated by 1854 and ironically entitled 'Smile Boys, Smile' carries several pictures. Its narrator Pompey Jones, a photographer's apprentice, proudly surveys the photos he made in the Crimea: "The first was a study of a heap of amputated limbs; arrayed against a white background, they had the gravity of a still life. I was pleased with the tuft of grass spraying up from a clenched fist. The second was of the funeral ceremony held in the region we had recently quitted" (Bainbridge 199). Pompey's cold-blooded and cynical commentaries can be accounted for by his orphaned childhood devoid of any human warmth and of the months of his sordid war experience.

A similar technique of arranging the plot round a set of photos can be also found in *The Rain Before It Falls* by J. Coe and in the chapter *The Shutter* by A. Thorpe. Coe's novel is structured as a series of twenty photos that the heroine, a seventy-three-year old Rosamund, selects from her album and bequeathes them to her young distant relative Imogen. As the latter is blind Rosamund accompanies the pictures with her stories which she records on her tape-recorder. Her narration is an attempt to overcome time limits, to go beyond the concrete facts, to reveal the implication of each scene and, eventually, to bring order and sense into the entangled life stories. Coe's heroine also meditates upon the possibilities of photographic art, upon the correlation between a visual and a verbal record. Thus she states that sometimes a photo fails to register and convey the brightness of the images preserved by human memory but it triggers memories which turn into stories even if they are not spoken out. At times, however, she is distressed at the imperfection of her narration and has to admit that a photo is more expressive than words. She arranges the photos in a chronological order to grasp and convey to her addressee the logic of life. Yet, eventually she realizes that it is an illusion, a dream which will never come true, like the rain before it falls. It is noteworthy that the colour scheme of the photos reflects Rosamund's changing perception of the world – the white-and-black colour of the early records

corresponds to her youthful idea of reality as a sharply outlined conflict between good and evil while the polychrome range of the more recent ones coincides with her realization that life is not a mere opposition of those two but is much more complex and diverse.

Thorpe's novel *Ulverton* covers a 300-year history of an eponymous fictitious town in Oxfordshire and treats of some important events of national or world significance affecting the lives of twelve generations of its inhabitants. One of the chapters, the 8th one, is titled *The Shutter*, the word referring to a part of a camera. It is dated by 1859 and is compiled as a commentary to seventeen photos made by an anonymous female photographer and storyteller in Ulverton and in Egypt. It is common knowledge that photography was invented in 1839, so in 1859 it was still a novelty that's why the commentator refers to her art as 'my humble lens', 'the new art of the lens' (Thorpe 167,172). The pictures she takes and the comments she makes become a document of the time because she records the village sites, makes individual and collective portraits of its inhabitants, quotes the local stories and legends. Moreover, her comments contain a number of ideas concerning her art itself – she ponders on correlation between photography and painting, between visual images and narrative; she shares her experience of taking pictures and gives various advice to her potential colleagues whom she calls 'my contemporaries in the field of both plate and canvas' (Thorpe 168). It should be noted that making a woman a photographer is not a far-fetched fact on the author's part. It is known that there were quite a large number of women among photographers in the 1850s. Thorpe also makes the heroine a proponent of the views and opinions on photography current in the middle of the 19th century and proclaimed or recorded in the book *The Pencil of Nature* (1846) by William Henry Fox Talbot as well as in numerous photographic albums issued at that time. Thus, the photos in *The Shutter* play a double role: firstly, they are a record of the mid-19th century English rural life, secondly, they convey the views on photography current at that time. In both cases in *The Shutter* photography is used as a device of literary documentation interwoven into an intricately written historical novel.

In *Lora*, which is the second of the three novellas constituting Seiffert's book *The Dark Room* there figure various kinds of photos but the most important ones are those of victims of Nazi concentration camps which in 1945 began to bring home to the Germans the truth of the Holocaust.

Five of the works under study have photographers for their main characters. These novels can be viewed as a modification of the genre of *Kunstlerroman* because they touch on the cardinal problems typical of the genre: choice of profession, freedom and aim of art, responsibility of the artist, interrelationship of the artist and society. The most representative of this group of novels is *Out of This World* by Graham Swift. This is what Malcolm Bradbury, the renowned English scholar, wrote about this novel: "Through the complicated technique of the photographer, different layers of long, dark, twentieth-century history are set into a postmodern collage" (434). On the one hand, the novel is a profoundly psychological family drama treating of the complicated love-hatred relationships between three generations, on the other, it is a kind of aesthetic treatise on the art of photography, on its mission, on correlation between humanity and professional duties. Its protagonist Harry Beech refuses to inherit his father's arms producing business and becomes a professional news photographer instead. With his camera he records some of the most significant events of the 20th century – the bombing of German cities during World War II, the Nuremberg trial, the Vietnamese war. Beech considers that the mission of photography is a truthful representation of events. His idea that "without the camera the world might start to disbelieve" (Swift 107), runs practically through all the novels under examination thus stressing the fact that photography is a means of documentation, of truthfully recording events of private and world history.

Yet Graham Swift, as well as Beryl Bainbridge, shows also the opposite role of photography. These writers expose cases of using the medium for manipulating the public opinion. It is common knowledge that it was during the Crimean War of the mid-19th c. that pictures became not only a means of recording events but also a form of public influence, of war propaganda, in the first turn. Beryl Bainbridge illustrates it in the final plate of her novel called 'Smile, Boys, smile'. The absurdity and falsehood of the official propaganda is exposed in the cynical photo of "a posed group of survivors to show the folks back home" (Bainbridge 211) taken by a professional photographer. To make the picture

more complete and symmetrical he had the dead body of George propped among live soldiers and urged them to smile. Ordinarity of the unordinary is the leitmotif of Bainbridge's antiwar novel.

The protagonist of Swift's *Out of This World* Harry Beech recalls his series of pictures about a US mariner taken during the Vietnam war. In the first one the soldier is portrayed as a symbol of USA's valour. "His right arm is stretched back, his whole body flexed, beneath the helmet you can see the profile of a handsome face. It's a pure Greek statue, pure Hollywood, pure charisma. And it's how it was. It must have been. Because the camera showed it" (Swift 120-121). A second later the mariner was shot dead by a Vietnamese and Harry recorded the tragedy in several pictures, too. Yet his newspaper published only the first photo and it was reproduced by many other mass media, was used for posters, T-shirt prints, etc., in a word, it was turned into a brain-washing tool.

A similar exposition of truth distorting facts can be found in Pat Barker's novel *Double Vision*. The novel touches on various aspects of news photographer's ethics: the aims and responsibility of the profession, choice of objects and their interpretation, motivation of professional risks, correlation between duty and ethics, etc. The title of the novel may be interpreted in several ways. At least three possible interpretations are, in our opinion, associated with photography. Firstly, it is interaction between the verbal and visual presentations, secondly, the correlation of photography and reality, thirdly, the difference and likeness of photography and painting. Still another meaning of the title 'Double Vision' concerns the problem which has become very acute nowadays. It is the ethic side of mass media demonstration of scenes of violence and the viewers' perception of them which, as one of the characters, Justine, asserts, turns into a kind of voyeurism. She hates watching news programmes considering such pastimes a kind of egotism as they make viewers concentrate on their own emotions instead of empathy for the victims. Her opponent, Stephen Sharkie, on the contrary, thinks that closing one's eyes to other people's sufferings is a still worse form of egotism. This double vision of the correlation between visuality and ethics in the novel is substantiated, on the one hand, by its epigraph from Francisco Goya's commentary to his pictures: "No se puede mirar. One cannot look at this. Yo lo vi. I saw it. Esto es lo verdadero. This is the truth", which stresses the significance of visual images for registering the truth however severe it is. On the other hand, Pat Barker asserts that she shares Susan Sontag's negative assessment of photography because it "has set up a chronic voyeuristic relation to the world which levels the meaning of all events" (Barker 309). By referring to these two diametrically opposed opinions Pat Barker stresses the complexity and ambiguity of visuality in mass media. The open end of the novel leaves it to the readers to make their own conclusions about this and many other problems raised in the novel.

The novel *The Dark Room* by Rachel Seiffert differs from the above ones by its structure and manner of narration (unlike the previous works it is presented as a 3rd person narrative) as well as by the function photography plays in it. The novel consists of three detached novellas called after their main characters – Helmut, Lora and Micha – common Germans whose lives are linked with the events of WWII. The three parts differ by their setting and genre properties. The first one, set in the pre-war and wartime Berlin, can be viewed as a kind of Bildungsroman. The second one which treats of wanderings of three children about the ruined post-war Germany looks like a picaresque novel, while the third one which starts as a family story turns into a profound ethic and psychological investigation.

The eponymous image of a dark room, which initially means a room for developing a film, acquires various symbolic connotations in the three novellas. Helmut, the principal character of the first one, becomes a professional photographer and, since he is an invalid, is denied the chance to volunteer for the Nazi army. He stays in Berlin and registers both the Third Reich's triumph and its fall. He is unable to grasp the essence of the events, his professional zeal screens from him a clear view of the developments. He remains forever in the dark room of his ultrapatriotic delusions. The second novella, *Lora*, on the contrary, traces the process of insight and perception of truth of the war by the German nation itself. The sun lighting the commonly darkened room of the children's grandparents' house is a symbol of the revelation.

The hero of the third novella, *Micha*, is our contemporary who undertakes what turns out to be a complicated and painful search of the truth about his grandfather's involvement in the Nazi occupation

of the Soviet Union. He fails to find any concrete proofs of his relative's crimes but after visiting the sites of his grandfather's military service and meeting the native people who tell him of the war time he comes to understand the sordid secrets of his family history thus leaving the dark room of his doubts and torments.

It is only natural that with the invention of photography the new medium began to vie with the old ones, especially with painting. It is in *The Shutter* that the problem is covered most widely. More than once the enthusiastic woman photographer stresses the advantages of her art before painting. Thus in the very first commentary she declares: "... I am emboldened to suggest that no brush, wielded by whatever genius could fashion the rushing water about the rocks so fine as my humble lens" (Thorpe 167). She opposes the naturalness of photographic portraits to the artificiality of painted ones: "Far preferable, to my mind, is the human subject when revealed in its natural habitat, than in the studio: how much more possible this is, with the instantaneous brush of the photographer's art, than with the slow dab of the painter's" (Thorpe 181). She even dares to suppose that Leonardo da Vinci might have envied the clarity of details in the photos. Yet paintings by great masters still remain for her a criterion for judging the quality of her works and while taking photos of wall paintings in the Egyptian pyramids she has to admit that a pencil and paper would have succeeded where her camera failed. So Adam Thorpe leaves the question of supremacy between the two arts open which, in our opinion, is done deliberately to depict the controversy current in the 1850s and in this way to recreate the intellectual atmosphere of the period.

Thus, in all the novels under review documentation is one of the main functions of phototextuality, providing a visual proof of events supported by their verbal representation. It contributes to the verisimilitude of fictionalized events of private and public life described in the novels. Photographic images also play the role of plot structuring means – depending on their number and the place they occupy in the novel they either initiate the plot or account for its progress. Photos and the stories woven round them are also one of the devices of delineating personages which is especially evident in the novels which treat of photographers.

Besides the traditional problems characteristic of literature in general the reviewed novels raise specific issues provoked by the presence of photographic images in them – ekphrastic (correlation between the visual and the verbal representation), aesthetic (relations between painting and photography), ideological and moral ones (mission of a photo journalist).

Thus, the brief survey of the seven novels shows how popular phototextuality is with contemporary writers, how fruitful the merging of literature and photography is for renovation of literary techniques, how diverse are the writers' ways and purposes of employing photography in present-day literature, and how instrumental the incorporation of photographic images into literary texts is for posing essential acute problems of today's life.

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Contact

Ptitytskoho Str. 52-108

220121, Minsk, Belarus

korsud@mail.ru



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On Mystical Metamorphosis in Christianity and Islam: Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Rumi's *Masnavi* in Comparative Perspective

Nour Seblini

Wayne State University, USA
nour.seblini@wayne.edu

Abstract

Journey emerges in multiple faces in literature. But when this substantial subset of quests adopts the mystical aspect, it creates a mystery that triggers the discovery sense in human beings. The present article develops a comparative analysis on the complex nature of mystical metamorphosis as expressed in two of the most influential writings of the East and West: Rumi's *Masnavi* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. The first part discusses the concept of mysticism and poetry, and reveals the nature of their connection. The second part of this work investigates the historical setting of Dante's and Rumi's lives in relation to the social environment of the time. The last part emphasizes the idea of mystical metamorphosis as expressed in the *Divine Comedy* and *Masnavi* through two fundamental vehicles: love and faith. This work demonstrates how, in a world rife with wars and misery, mysticism provides a vital key to building a strong bridge between Islam and Christianity, and on a larger scale, to metamorphosing the "clash of civilizations" into a "confluence of civilizations".

Keywords

Dante, Rumi, Divine Comedy, Masnavi, comparative mysticism, poetry, spirituality

Introduction

Longing to discover whatever is mysterious has powerfully excited the interest of human nature. At its most profound ranges, entering into zones that desire to be spoken is that which defines the mystical experience. Those who aspire to solve uncertainties and reach beyond the promised paradise to unite with the creator of paradise are the seekers of mystical truth. What is presented in this work is a comparative analysis of the mystical metamorphosis as personified in two great masterpieces of the East and West: Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Rumi's *Masnavi*.

The study introduces mysticism and poetry and discusses the relationship between both concepts. The first chapter of this work contextualizes the setting of Dante's and Rumi's lives within a socio-historical framework. As for the second chapter, it emphasizes the idea of mystical metamorphosis expressed in *Divine Comedy* and in *Masnavi* through two fundamental media: love and faith.

Mysticism

Can the knowledge of God Himself be acquired beyond the fact that He exists? Can the soul with her living in corporeal matter attain the vision of His Essence? An answer to these questions can be achieved when the human soul undergoes a purifying process that allows her to contemplate and to gaze upon holier spheres. Spurgeon declares in her book *Mysticism in English Literature* (1913) that such mystic vision is that of a unity underlying diversity.

It is not an easy task to construct a precise definition of mysticism especially knowing that from a mystical mode of perception reality is ineffable. In "Paradise I", Dante accepts that the ineffable cannot be put into words.

Words may not tell of that trans human change:
And therefore let the example serve, though weak,

For those whom grace hath better proof in store"
In a similar mode, Rumi expresses in *Masnavi*:

Naught but love itself can explain love and lovers!
None but the sun can display the sun,
If you would see it displayed, turn not away from it.

"Do not ask me what love is? Don't ask anybody ask love itself what is love? (Rumi, *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*)

Therefore, what can be done to appreciate the range of the term *mysticism* is an examination of the ideas associated with the concept.

Mysticism celebrates the matrimony of spirit and matter, and of time and eternity. It surpasses all the differing theological divisions of religions and by that creates a region of harmonious encounter between all faiths. Beyond laws and ordinances, religion is conceived as an experience of eternity. By believing in the possibility of coming into contact with the Divine, the soul unites herself with the interminable enjoying the fruition. This experience is not merely abstract as it deals with the very concreteness of human progression; that is the self, sin, death, life, joy. In mysticism, what is expressed is the profound yearning for self-knowledge as well as the hunger to experience the Divine through love and belonging. It is in this way that mysticism comes to form the motivating force in Dante's *Divine Comedy* as it does in Rumi's *Masnavi*.

It is indispensable to include in this discussion where poetry stands in relation to mysticism. In his article "Mystical Poetry," Lings highlights that poetry in the world of mysticism acts as a means of actualizing presence in absence. The distance between the Divine and the Human is only exterior, but it remains crucial to the internal soul of the latter to experience it concretely. Poems in their wording dominated by the sighs of love form here the necessary discourse that attempts at making the Divine present. In other words, poetry by uttering words of separation from the One and at the same time expressing the experience of His presence plays the role of a mediator that bridges the gap between the Divine and his creature

In both *The Divine Comedy* and *Masnavi*, poetry functions as a vehicle that allows the aesthetic expression of the mystical quest. In a transcendent journey towards the encounter with God through visions, words admit their insufficiency to describe the indescribable and for that must make use of imagery to convey the idea of the ineffable. In front of this incredible endeavour, only a talented few have the power to express the unspeakable reality and these are the ones whose hearts have been touched by the experience of true love converting them into Poets: Rumi and Dante are among the gifted few.

Poetry externalizes the inner contemplative state of the poets. According to Elmor (2007), the creative language shared by God and human uncovers the hidden and mysterious layer of meaning that lies beyond the literal sense of the text. Dante has Beatrice show how poetry functions to express the theological understanding of the inexpressible. Beatrice asserts that due to the limitation of human language in revealing divine truths, metaphoric language is a must to substitute for its referent. According to Schildgen, Beatrice reveals that the allegorical mode uses literal language and imagery to connect with human senses. In this way, allegory suits Dante's intellect because for him the souls must represent their spiritual state concretely so they can be apprehended through the senses.

And in *Masnavi*, the allegories employed by Rumi are parable as they mention at the end the moral lesson to the audience. In his poetic creation, Rumi states:

And when I write a letter
To my beloved friends,
The paper and the inkwell,
The ink, the pen is He.
And when I write a poem

And seek a rhyming word—
The one who spreads the rhymes out
Within my thoughts, is He! (Schimmel, *I Am Wind You Are Fire* 45)

What is emphasized here are both the material existence and the dynamic efficiency of the Divine. He, the creator, is the very fundamental reality of all poetic manifestation. In other words, poetry is a participation in the Divine Act of creation and the poet is a transmitter of that which is expressed through Him.

What can be said is that poetry in Dante and Rumi's works draws a moral frame that mirrors the design of the universe and of creation. Both poets transcend external appearances by conjuring up the mystical inner reality, while being entirely realistic about the limitations of their words.

Historical setting of Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*

European civilization would not have arisen had it not been for great minds such as Dante Alighieri. A poet, philosopher, and political thinker of the Middle Ages era, Dante paved the way for an anthropocentric movement in which the human being comes at the centre of life, literature, and art. It is in his masterpiece *Divine Comedy* that Dante lies down an encyclopaedic map before our eyes from which we are guided to knowing the eternal implication of any particular earthly human act. An aim that was achieved with a firm presentation of the general principles on which Dante believed God's plan is based.

Dante, an abbreviation of Durante, was born in 1265 to a noble Florentine family. He had the opportunity to receive an education that would enable him to exercise politics in the future. And though he was attracted to poetry since childhood, he had no teacher on the subject, and for that he tried to learn on his own taking as a reference the Sicilian school, Siculo-Tuscans and Guido Guinizzelli among many other artists belonging to *Dolce stil novo* (Dante).

But it is his beloved Beatrice Portinari that had the greatest influence on Dante. After her death in 1290, he converted his ideal love for her into a veneration that formed the central axe of his extensive narrative poem, *Divine Comedy*. Moulded in 100 cantos and divided into three massive parts, the masterpiece narrates Dante's imaginary journey throughout the afterlife kingdoms: Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise.

Historical setting of Rumi's *Masnavi*

Jalaloddin Rumi was born in 1207 in the city of Balk (at the borders near Afghanistan) and comes from a family of eminent theologians. It is said that Rumi became enkindled by the Sufi doctrine under the influence of a former disciple of his father, Borhanoddin Mohaqqueq along with two big figures of Persian mystical poetry, Attar and Sana'i. The main concern of the teachings he received was to pass all stages of mystical life in order to reach the complete union with the Beloved.

However, it is the encounter with Shamsoddin of Tabriz that can be considered the turning point of Rumi's life (Nicholson). It is in this *dervish* that Rumi perceived the perfect image of the Divine. The spiritual connection between Rumi and Shams absorbed Rumi in a way that he showed indifference to social duties. This triggered a great distress in the religious community of Konya. And, Shams disappeared under obscure circumstances leaving Rumi heartbroken yearning for his beloved who he finds finally in himself, alive beyond the confines of the material world. Therefore, Shams becomes the inspiration of the *Masnavi* as Beatrice was for Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Rumi's *Masnavi* is a massive epic poem composed of six volumes: the first two volumes are principally concerned with the evil tendencies of the *nafs*; the third and fourth volumes share the main themes of Reason and Knowledge which come personified in the Biblical and Quranic figure of Moses; the last two volumes present the universal ideal that human beings must deny their earthly physical existence in order to understand God's existence. Therefore, in *Masnavi* Rumi narrates a spiritual journey to the Divine driven by his profound sense of loss of Shams. Rumi calls everybody to love regardless of their religion and differences in attitudes and beliefs:

Come, come, whatever you are, it doesn't matter
Whether you are an infidel, an idolater or a fire-worshiper,
Come, our convent is not a place of despair
Come, even if you violated your swear
A hundred times, come again. (Rumi, *The mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*).

Mystical metamorphosis in Dante and Rumi

A search for absolute morals expressed with intense emotions and a spiritual ardour is a value shared in Rumi's *Masnawi* and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the most influential medieval works of the East and West, respectively. Their inner selves undergo a purifying process from sins and get beautified with traits that permit their union with the Divine.

Vehicle of Love

Love transforms the human heart by purifying its mirror and consequently prepares it to attract the Divine. Its personification comes in the figure of Shamsoddin of Tabriz that reflects the Sun of Truth for Rumi; while for Dante what is synonymous with such kind of love is the figure of Beatrice. Both poets, as it will be demonstrated in more details in this work, present love as the divine essence making the beloved a fundamental element in human's search for the Eternal; in this way, love becomes the animating spirit of mysticism which in turn lies at the very heart of Dante's and Rumi's work.

In the *New Life*, Dante's declaration that "ladies understand Love's every way" signals that love is the soul of knowledge. Dante the poet is seeking wholeness through love. A thorough examination of his mystical journey shows that since the beginning the quest was set by his love for a woman, Beatrice Portinari, with whom his relationship evolved back on earth in Florence, who would lead him through a synchronicity of time and eternity to his ultimate transcendence as he attains redemption.

For, Beatrice, when I thought to see,
I saw instead a senior, at my side,
Rob'd, as the rest, in glory. Joy benign
Glow'd in his eye, and o'er his cheek diffus'd,
With gestures such as spake a father's love.
And, "Whither is she vanish'd?" straight I ask'd (Dante, *The Divine Comedy*)

This reveals how the love for a woman comes as the escort to the culmination of the Divine. And, in Paradise I

I saw Beatrice turn'd, and on the sun
Gazing, as never eagle fix'd his ken.
As from the first a second beam is wont
To issue, and reflected upwards rise,
E'en as a pilgrim bent on his return,
So of her act, that through the eyesight pass'd
Into my fancy, mine was form'd; and straight,
Beyond our mortal wont, I fix'd mine eyes
Upon the sun. Much is allowed us there,
That here exceeds our pow'r; thanks to the place
Made for the dwelling of the human kind. (Dante, *The Divine Comedy*)

Beatrice appears as the muse that incarnates material eros and spiritual agape. Also, in Paradise XVIII and X,

his only-of that moment-can I tell:

that even as I gazed at her, my soul
was free from any other need as long
as the Eternal Loveliness that shone
on Beatrice directly, from her eyes,
contented me with the reflected light.

The one who guides me so from good to better
is Beatrice, and on our path her acts
have so much swiftness that they span no time.

Dante reveals that beauty is a fundamental element in the road towards salvation. He sees God's manifestation in Beatrice, but is aware that the ultimate goal is not his union with her but with God. He departs from God's love as manifested in his beloved Beatrice only to realize during the spiritual journey that the real goal is seeking the essence of His love and not the form of it:

O lady in whom my hope shall ever soar
And who for my salvation suffered even
To set your feet upon Hell's broken floor;
Through your power and your excellence alone
Have I recognized the goodness and the grace
Inherent in the things I have been shown.
You have led me from my bondage and set me free
By all those roads, by all those loving means
That lay within your power and charity.
Grant me your magnificence that my soul,
Which you have healed, may please you when it slips
The bonds of flesh and rises to its goal.
(Dante, *The Divine Comedy*)

Accordingly, Beatrice's romantic love guided him to the Divine knowledge which made Dante love her more. Beatrice is a means of perception of God. And, this explains why Dante does not seem to be concerned primarily with Beatrice's physical appearance, rather he focuses on her force of good that removes all evil intentions from him.

From the point of view of eternity, Dante experiences reality at the moment the coalition of the inner and outer realms occurs. Dante muses aloud questioning himself. But, his existential awakening does not take place until he meets Beatrice. His love to Beatrice transcended the incident of her death. Beatrice becomes the revelation of his soul as he undergoes the purifying process in his quest of unity with the Divine. Thus, Dante's mystical metamorphosis starts with his love to Beatrice who holds the source of his inspiration and his salvation and expands until it transforms into the union with God. And in a mystical moment, Dante recognizes that for the union to be flawless, it has to be that of love and free will.

but my desire and will were moved already—
like a wheel revolving uniformly—by
the Love that moves the sun and the other stars. (Dante, *The Divine Comedy*)

At this point, Dante's emotional and intellectual being comes to perfection.

For Sufi mystics, reality is what "neither philosophy nor reason can reveal. Only the wisdom of the heart, gnosis, may give insight to some of its aspects" (Schimmel 4). Therefore, the heart is considered the central axis of human spiritual consciousness. Every love should lead to the divine love, that is the infinite

kind of love known as *Al-'Ishq Al-Hakiki*. "The feet of the philosophers are wooden / And the wooden feet are not stable" (Masnavi 4:2).

In these verses, Rumi clearly reflects the priority of love over thought.

"Come, Shams-it-Tabrizi, source of light and radiance for this illustrious spirit without your splendour is frozen and congealed." (Rumi, *Mystical Poems of Rumi*)

In this plain, I am the All Merciful nightingale
Do not look for my limit and border – I have no limits.
Shams-i- Tabriz has nurtured me through love
(*The Sufi Path of Love*, 349)

Shams and Beatrice are the equivalent of muses that inspire their poet lovers to dialogue with what they see as the absolute reality that makes experimenting divinity possible. For Rumi, *Mawla* "Master" Shams is the pure Saint that reflects the Divine. While for Dante, Beatrice is the incarnation of God's love in human form. In both cases, Rumi and Dante find their beloved ones a necessity to unite with the One. And in both cases, their attraction towards the beloved is not sexual.

Rumi in Masnavi says: "The people are kids except the man of God / There is no wise man except one who is free from lust" (4:11).

Also in more than one instance Rumi declares the necessity of Shams in the spiritual ascendancy mentioning that Shams made him ageless and that the emanation of his light protected him from burning in the fires of hell.

Therefore, what is revealed in Masnavi is a universe created because of love, and without which God would not have created anything.

Vehicle of Faith

In *Divine Comedy*, Dante embarks on a query for individuation and self-knowledge. The poet undergoes the process of becoming "lighter" in a journey that Rountree (2007) calls a "Divine pilgrimage to love". The creative endeavors of this soul's voyage aim to provide Dante with an ultimate healing for his desolate midlife passage.

Dante's mentor was Virgil. In the inferno, Virgil states:

But as for thee, I think and deem it well
Thou take me for thy guide, and pass with me
Through an eternal place and terrible"
and Dante's reply comes as
"Poet, I thee entreat,
By that same God whom thou didst never know,
So that I may escape this woe and worse,
Thou wouldst conduct me there where thou hast said,
That I may see the portal of Saint Peter,
And those thou makest so disconsolate. (Dante, *The Divine Comedy*)

And it is Virgil who ceded Dante to Beatrice who would enlighten Dante's heart giving it the key to transform into a revelation of the mysterious divine. And with that metamorphosis, Dante's soul is reborn in gaining new life.

The concept of oneness with the Divine appears in Paradise, XXVI where Dante declares to St. John

Philosophy," said I, "hath arguments,
And this place hath authority enough
"T' imprint in me such love

In Dante's masterpiece, God appears to be the Eternal light from which all other rays derive. Therefore, human beings become good due to His source of goodness. This can be deduced from Beatrice's definition of Dante's intellect as a shining existence from which springs the Eternal light. She asks him to follow the Eternal light, the creator, and not to follow His rays, His creation

Well do I see how the Eternal Ray,
which, once seen, kindles love forevermore,
Already shines in you. If in your way
Some other thing seduce your love, my brother,
It can only be a trace, misunderstood,
Of this, which you see shining through the other. (Dante, *The Divine Comedy*)

Beatrice leads Dante to San Bernardo who will substitute her place in guiding Dante in the 10th heavens. This is essential because it reveals the necessity of a saint figure in opening the last gate towards accessing the transcendent union with the Divine. With such coexistence, the human construction of time collapses as the past, present, and future lose themselves in the festivity of simultaneity.

From human to divine had past, from time
Unto eternity, and out of Florence
To justice and to truth (Dante, *The Divine Comedy*)

This asserts that mystical metamorphosis occurs outside the continuum of time as this is ordinarily constructed by humans in the kingdom of earth. Rather, a new form of reality is created in the kingdom of light and is lived by the spirit only after moral regeneration.

In Paradise XXXIII, Dante grasps the conception of the illuminated light, God's representation in creatures and the illuminating light which refers to creatures as a manifestation of God.

"What then I saw is more than tongue can say.
Our human speech is dark before the vision
The ravished memory swoons and falls away.
As one who sees in dreams and wakes to find
The emotional impression of his vision
Still powerful while its parts fade from his mind-
Just such am I, having lost nearly all
The vision itself, while in my heart I feel
The sweetness of it yet distill and fall."

Here, the mystic Dante reaches through religion what Sufis call the state of *baqa* or permanence in which the achievement of perfection from human's union with the Divine makes a human being speechless.

As for Rumi's works, transcendentalism appears in them as a fundamental dimension in mysticism as it affirms that knowledge is not limited to observation and experience.

The knowledge of men of heart bears them up,
The knowledge of men of body weighs them down.
When 'tis knowledge of the heart, it is a friend;
When knowledge of the body, it is a burden. (Rumi, *The mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*)

Rumi confirms the difficult task of leadership and sees that not every individual in society can be enlightened. In such a case an enlightened leader is needed to show the path to those who are not enlightened. This parallels Dante's view on the purification process in terms of the necessity of a leader

when undergoing the journey of progressive cleansing from error. However, Dante inflames in everyone the obligation of involvement in the cleansing circle to acquire the ability of creating a larger circle that encompasses everyone.

Bausani states that the Saint is the guarantee of the existence of a dialectic man-god. In Rumi, the perfect saint comes reflected by the Divine Sun Shams. Furthermore, Rumi underlines that our seeing is full of mistakes (causes and effects). "Go and solve your seeing in the seeing of ultimate Truth (God)" (Rumi, *The mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*).

This idea has also been expressed in *Divine Comedy* and the *Liber Scale Machometi*. To know whether or not the *Divine Comedy* was influenced by Arabic texts, one needs to prove that correspondence is not merely thematic but rather formal. And it is important here to indicate that Dante was able to blend together many different texts in one singular imaginative creation; that is *Divine Comedy*.

Dante did not know Arabic, and for that the mediation of Latin or Old French or a familiarity with the Arabic text within the literary context of the Florentine poet was indispensable. Regarding the *Liber Scale Machometi* written in the 8th century, it was translated into Latin and Old French by Bonaventure of Siena and its content was most likely carried on to Dante by Brunetto Latini.

In *Divine Comedy*, a similar analogical model to the *Liber* appears in regard to the situation dealing with the presence of light in the heavenly afterlife. Dante like Mahometa recurs to the idea of the substitution of the heart for the eyes (Corti and Hall).

... my vision almost
Wholly fades away, yet in my heart
The sweetness born of it is still distilled
(Dante, *The Divine Comedy*)

This means that the splendour of the divine light can be grasped by the human eye but only indirectly. Not to forget to mention that Dante stresses this also through a continuous reflection of God's light through Beatrice's eyes fixed upon the poet. The worship of a creature here is to reconcile his worship of the Divine.

Conclusion

Dante has become the embodiment of Western culture. But, this does not exclude ipso facto his responsiveness to non-Western influences. The dichotomic equation of Islamo-Arabic and Christian-Latin is mistakenly established when gazing back at the Middle Ages from today. The comparative analysis between *Divine Comedy* and *Masnawi* written by the Florentine poet Dante and the Persian poet Rumi respectively presents both writers as wayfarers on a spiritual journey attempting to get to the gates of eternal homeland.

Dante and Rumi close the Middle Ages, because although all their works have medieval thinking, they introduce new concepts about life, death, and the world. The epic storytelling of their works draws the allegorical map of the human condition leaving its mark on our collective consciousness. The real fulfilment is realized after the completion of a spiritual quest about the Divine which does not denounce human love, but rather embraces it as the vehicle to unite with the Divine. In this study, it has been demonstrated that it is Dante's and Rumi's mystical metamorphosis using love and faith as vehicles of enlightenment that allowed them succeed at the end of their journey as they unite with the Divine.

The world today is rife with wars and misery, but by turning to the writings of Dante and Rumi, we can discover that mysticism is the area where the "clash of civilizations" undergoes a metamorphosis and turns into a "confluence of civilizations." This, by broadening our understanding of each other and acceptance of one another, helps us solve the answer to a dilemma that has been questioned for long: How can we put an end to the chaos in our minds, relations, and the modern world of today?

The answer provided by Dante and Rumi is the following:

The only way towards salvation is love. Once the depth of love is understood, all interference of evil thought is erased and in a situation of perfect vision of the heart, every individual, whether Christian, Muslim, or from any other religion, can reach peace and freedom.

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Contact

Nour Seblini
Wayne State University - CMLLC
Attn: Nour Seblini
906 W. Warren #487
Detroit, MI 48201
nour.seblini@wayne.edu



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“Which is the Merchant and which is the Jew?” a Žižekian Reading of the Jewish Question in *The Merchant of Venice*

Shih-pei Kuo

National Chengchi University, Taiwan
hemufemale@gmail.com

Abstract

This essay borrows Žižek’s interpretation of racism which combines the Marxist and psychoanalytic perspectives to read Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*. I argue that Shylock, the Jewish usurer, embodies both the structural contradiction of capitalism and the social contradiction which characterizes the Venetian setting torn by capitalism and Christianity. As Shylock exposes these contradictions which the Christian Venetians refuse to confront, he is destined to be a scapegoat. From the Marxist point of view, the survival of capitalism relies on incessant production, which also means incessant investment of capital. Therefore, an active financial system is requisite to sustain the prosperity of capitalism. Paradoxically, this necessary condition of capitalism which facilitates the maximum use of cash is also its inherent vulnerability: once the circulation of cash is disrupted, it can lead to the crisis of the overall domino-effect collapse. The usury represented by Shylock indeed reflects such inherent contradiction of capitalism. Also, usury, which excludes any human factor and only engages the direct monetary exchange, also contradicts the Christian orthodox belief of generosity and unrequited devotion. These central Christian values are certainly questioned as Bassanio’s courtship of Portia, based on his disguised wealth, is indistinguishable from a profitable enterprise. From the psychoanalytic point of view, Shylock’s fascination with money and revenge also mirrors the Christians’ clandestine longing for these two forbidden enjoyments. However, what is more puzzling and hostile to the Christians is Shylock’s paranoid insistence on bloody revenge beyond the concern of monetary gains, “che vuoi,” an unexplainable desire of the other. Therefore, Shylock the other must be vanquished, by converting him to Christianity, in other words, by homogenizing him, to disguise the Christians’ problematic of desire.

Keywords

the Jewish question, enjoyment, Shakespeare, capitalism, desire, racism

The Jewish question is paradoxically old and new. To the western civilization, it is a haunting specter which never leaves but always returns unexpectedly. It is also a question which various modern theories try to answer. The Jewish question is an issue which the Slovenian theorist Slavoj Žižek has repeatedly articulated his concern with. Even though the issue seems to be exhausted, Žižek’s approach is still distinctive for the combination of Marxism and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* is an old text whose racial issue has received much discussion in the recent decades. The application of Žižek’s contemporary theoretical framework to the Elizabethan play helps to further clarify the function of the controversial character Shylock the Jewish usurer in the Christian context.

Previous scholarship has seen Shylock as the incarnation of capitalism. Draper reads the symbolic meaning of Shylock against the historical background of Elizabethan economic reality, which underwent a transition from feudalism to capitalism. Shylock represents capitalism, while Antonio the medieval ideal (39). Draper boldly argues that the conflict between Shylock and Antonio is a purely economic one, irrelevant of race and religion (39). The conclusion of the play signifies the triumph of this medieval ideal

over the spirit of capitalism.

Even though the economic issue plays a significant role in the play, Draper simplifies the complex relationship between Shylock and Antonio and downplays the anti-Semitism in the play. If Shylock represents a "modern capitalist" who only cares about profit as Draper claims, why does he insist to require one pound of Antonio's flesh instead of any monetary repayment? Shylock's maniac demand is, as Cohen describes, "beyond the bounds of rationality and against the practices of a ruthless modern business man" (Cohen 75). If the enmity between Shylock and Antonio is only due to their conflict of economic ideals, why does Antonio require Shylock to be converted into Christianity rather than just to give up his occupation of usury? These examples demonstrate that Shylock's conflict with Antonio involves factors other than economics.

To clarify Shakespeare's attitude towards capitalism, Cohen finds the portrayal of Shylock contradicts economic reality in the Venetian society at that time. The Jews of Venice, according to him, "contributed to the early development of capitalism not as usurers but as merchants involved in an international, trans-European economic network" (75). The Jew of Venice, instead of being the despised usurer, became the respectable merchant. Shakespeare's obsolete characterization of Shylock in fact reflects the Elizabethan English's anxiety toward Jews, the racial, religious and economic other. In Cohen's view, Shylock and Antonio represent not new capitalism and old feudalism but "Jewish quasi-feudal fiscalism" and "native bourgeois mercantilism" (76). Even though Draper and Cohen disagree upon what economic forms Shylock and Antonio should embody respectively, they both agree that Shakespeare's depiction of the conflict between the two reflects the transition to capitalism in contemporary Elizabethan England when the need for a great amount of cash was generated.¹ Both critics cite contemporary religious tracts and legal regulations to prove how usury was condemned at that time. But still they acknowledge the necessary existence of usury in promoting the later banking system and enabling economic prosperity. Draper's and Cohen's views are opposite, but they interpret the characters of Shylock and Antonio by allocating them to different representations of economic systems. But the threat posed by Shylock should be explained not only by his business model different from the Christians' but also by his racial and religious "other," which jeopardizes the Christians' identity. The complexity of Shylock's contradictory position in the play should not be reduced to only an economic function.

Approaching the Shakespearean Jewish question in a racial and religious way, Adelman accurately observes that *The Merchant of Venice* is permeated by Christians' anxiety over whether they share the same lineage with Jews and whether converted Jews can be successfully incorporated into Christian society (36). For the Venetian Christians, it is this kind of sameness within differences, differences within sameness which arouses their extreme fear and anxiety. According to Adelman, Shylock the Jew mirrors the stranger within the Venetian Christians. Adelman observantly sees Christians' anxiety over the collapse of boundary between Jews and them. But she focuses on the racial and religious issues too much to take into account Shylock's economic function.

To see Shylock as a mirror and a scapegoat is certainly nothing unprecedented. Recognizing the danger of the traditional liberals' way to vindicate Shylock by highlighting his humanitarian portrait, Girard approaches the role analysis of Shylock by observing the undifferentiation between the Christians and Shylock the Jew as the famous "Which is the merchant and which is the Jew?" clearly indicates (IV.i. 175). However, he limits the similarity they share only to their moral defects such as greed and eagerness to revenge. Without analyzing how Shylock's position as a double of the Christians leads to his fate of being a scapegoat, Girard suddenly leaps to the simplified contention that Shylock is a scapegoat (97). Therefore, Halpern points out the weakness of Girard's argument since this indistinguishability between the Christians and the Jew seems only to suggest that they are equally corrupted: being Jewish becomes a

¹The transition to capitalism causes "the rise of banking; the increasing need for credit in industrial enterprises; and the growing threat of indebtedness facing both aristocratic landlords and, above all, small independent producers, who could easily decline to working-class status" (Cohen 73).

measure of evilness, a label of downfall (Halpern 179). It is reasonable that Halpern doubts the critical perspective of Shylock's image as a mirror and a scapegoat. However, I am not satisfied that the issue of Shylock's mirror and scapegoat is only reduced to a question of morality as Girard's supposition that the Christians see their evil in Shylock's evil. In my opinion, Shylock reflects not just the Christians' moral corruption, but more subtly, the problematic of the Christians' desire, which also involves the structural problem of capitalism. These two issues of desire and capitalism, the fundamental concerns of psychoanalysis and Marxism, are the theoretical framework adopted by Žižek to explore the Jewish question. In this paper, borrowing Žižek's Lacanian reinterpretation of racism to examine how the conflicts between the Christians and Shylock the Jew in *The Merchant of Venice* demonstrate their respective relation of enjoyment to the Thing, I would like to argue that the Christians' hostility to Shylock is due to the fact that Shylock possesses the two enjoyments, money and revenge, which are desired by the Christians but can never be fulfilled openly in the Venetian society split by capitalism and Christianity. Thus Shylock is necessary to be scapegoated to avoid the Christians' direct confrontation with their inner contradiction.

The distinction of Žižek's approach to anti-Semitism is his reexamination of the anti-Semitism in the light of the Lacanian conception of the desire of the other. Racism, as Žižek defines in "Enjoy Your Nation as Yourself!", is a more instinctive reaction than a result of the ideological manipulation (*Tarrying with the Negative* 201-05). To retrace the root of racism, Žižek brings the Lacanian conception of jouissance to illustrate racists' psychological mechanism. According to Žižek, national identification should not be simplified as symbolic identification, but is upheld by the fantasy that we, a certain group of people, have a privileged accessibility to the "Thing." The Thing, though too abstract to describe, is ubiquitously present in the detail of everyday life. In other words, it is difficult to conceive the Thing idealistically, but is easy to perceive it as "our way of life," a community's unique way to organize their enjoyment such as the habits and customs of eating, drinking, dressing and dwelling (*Tarrying with the Negative* 201). Therefore, it demands no political instigation but a nuanced difference of an exotic smell to provoke one's hatred to another ethnic group. This instinctive antipathy is fully exemplified by Shylock's emphasized incompatibility with the Christians' habits and impossibility to have any relationship beyond transaction when Bassanio invites him to have a meal with him:

... to smell pork, to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into? I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following. But I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you ... (I. iii. 29-33)

Bassanio's benevolent invitation receives, instead of a positive and polite reply, a scathing and aggressive ridicule. The intensity of Shylock's response is probably perceived as a narrow-minded overreaction at first sight. However, his purposeful distinguishing eating, drinking and praying from the Christians, if interpreted based on the conception of enjoyment, is understandable since these activities embody "our way of life" the most. It is this shared accessibility that consolidates the cohesion of the community and constitutes their national and racial identity. However, this possessive enjoyment of privileging the Thing is also accompanied by the anxiety that the Thing is constantly menaced and stolen by the Other and this anxiety becomes the racist hatred to other ethnic groups. Žižek further reveals that the imputation of the stolen enjoyment to the Other in fact suggests that the Thing is forever inaccessible to us. The belief that our Thing is stolen by the Other is only invented to enable us to avoid confronting the disillusioning fact that we never possess the Thing. The imputation of the stolen enjoyment to the Other only mirrors our lack (*Tarrying with the Negative* 201).

Žižek also observes the connection between anti-Semitism and capitalism as Fascists always impute the symptom of capitalism, an excess of production, to Jews (*Tarrying with the Negative* 210). Despite the

victimization shared by Shylock and his descendants persecuted by fascists, the initial reading of *The Merchant of Venice* is incongruous with Žižek's observation on the scapegoating of the Jews for the inner antagonism in capitalism with Shylock's situation. While Fascists impute the excess of production inherent in capitalism to Jews, the accusation Shylock provokes against the Christian community is, by contrast, due to the non-productivity of his usury enterprise. Despite the same circumstances of being a scapegoat, Shylock is charged by a different or even opposite crime compared with his Jewish descendants persecuted by Fascists. Shylock's usury is apparently irrelevant to the excess of productivity as the inner antagonism of capitalism mentioned by Žižek; they are, as a matter of fact, inextricably interconnected.

What Shylock represents, the loaning enterprise, which later evolves into the complicated and mature financial system, preconditions the recurrent circuit of excessive production. The normal operation of capitalism, according to Žižek, is carried on by this abnormal excessive production, its "inherent structural imbalance" (*Tarring with the Negative* 209). While Žižek exposes the inner antagonism of capitalism which repeats the Sisyphus-like expansion of production, the realm Žižek does not continue to explore is the investment of capital entailed by the aggrandizement of production.

The invested capital before being accumulated to a certain extent, is irrecoverable. Therefore, the initial investment necessitates later growing contribution to the enterprise. The intermission of investment only renders preceding expenditures in vain. In *The Merchant of Venice*, in persuading the loyal and generous friend Antonio to sponsor him Bassanio capitalizes upon the shaft allegory to stress the inevitability of persistent investment in his extravagant disguise purposed for the entrepreneurial courtship to Portia: "...when I had lost one shaft, / I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight / The selfsame way, with more advised watch, / To find the other forth; and by adventuring both, / I oft found both..." (I.i. 143-147). Analogous to the loss of the first shaft, the initial investment is destined to be irrevocable unless the second shaft—the following investment—is shot. Only by continuing to invest can Bassanio recover his costs and even earn profits; in other words, he can win Portia's heart. Bassanio's wish is actualized since Portia willingly shares her property with her husband. However, since the vicious circles of both the excess of production and of the interlocking demand of capital venture must remain constantly revolving to sustain the operation of capitalism, where is such great amount of money available to supply the incessant and various economic activities? The capitalism's answer is the financial system, which guarantees the perennial accessibility of capital, the fluent and dynamic circulation of capital and most importantly, maximum utilization of capital. The representation of this financial system in *The Merchant of Venice* is Shylock the usurer, to whom Antonio is able to resort to transform the unsold merchandise into cash for Bassanio.

However, since many achievements of productions depend on debts and borrowings, the prosperity of capitalism constructed under the mechanism of the effective and efficient exploitation of capital is essentially as vulnerable and even illusive as Bassanio's spendthrift image which is sustained by the capital obtained by Antonio's mortgage loan. Also, this prosperity is haunted by the inherent crisis, which explodes once the mechanism malfunctions, once the rule of financial market is violated, that is, once the circulation of capital is disrupted as Antonio's merchandise destroyed by the storm. This disaster embodies the structural weakness of the financial system in the capitalist society, where every use of capital is interconnected and any disruption of the circulation of capital can lead to the overall domino-effect collapse of the financial system.

Shylock's enjoyment of profiting from usury, which elicits the Christians' antipathy, in fact reflects what they desire but forever remains prevented. Shakespeare's Venetian society, where Christianity and capitalism coexist, is essentially contradictory. The conflict between the fundamental Christian doctrine of unrequited devotion and the capitalist spirit of maximizing self-interest erupts in the Christians' confrontation against Shylock, who incarnates both an ethnic minority and an occupation against the commandment of Christianity. The controversy of Shylock's usury is the purest form of capitalism which excludes any human factor and only engages the direct monetary exchange. The incompatibility between Christians' views on fortune gathering and Shylock the Jew's is clearly indicated in Antonio's negotiation

with Shylock over his loaning. It is suggested that the feud between the two can be traced back to Antonio's founding of the nonprofit financial organization to provide the interest-free loaning to the poor and Antonio's charity obviously threatens the survival of Shylock's occupation. Antonio's adage

...lend it not
As to thy friends; for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty

contains not only an ironical advice to Shylock but also a Christian doctrine that a Christian's devotion, even a pecuniary one, should be unrequited (I.iii. 129-34). Antonio also realizes this adage by supporting Bassanio's courtship to Portia as he almost loses his life for his friendship. However, the Christian doctrine of unrequited devotion and selfless sacrifice becomes questionable when their practices are further scrutinized. Antonio's generous aid to Bassanio and his self-sacrifice for friendship seem to be unconditional and selfless; however, they have been interpreted by Sinfield as Antonio's strategy to compete for Bassanio's love to Portia when Antonio is at a disadvantage in the love game.² The competitiveness between Antonio and Portia is accentuated by Bassanio's claim that he is willing to desert everything including Portia to rescue Antonio and also by Antonio's persuasion that Bassanio should give up the ring to value Antonio's love "against your [Bassanio's] wife's commandment" (IV.i. 464). Another example of Christian generosity is Portia's sharing of property with Bassanio. Even though this sharing can be considered sincerer than Antonio's, this virtue falls prey to Bassanio's manipulation to guarantee the eventual fiscal return of his wooing. And this indistinguishability between love and venture is implied by Gratiano's metaphor that the Venetian merchants are "the Jasons," who "have won the fleece" (III, ii.247)³. Lim insightfully points out that "economic and commercial interests generate the effect of compromising any idealism that may be attached to the various forms of human relationships dramatized in the play" (359). In Shakespeare's Venice, love, generosity and self-sacrifice are exploited as effective means of profit calculation, or these virtues embellish the profit-oriented motivation and action.

Therefore, the merchants of Venice, who can enjoy seeking profit only in a covert and detouring way, are essentially as acquisitive as Shylock. Read from Žižek's perspective, Shylock's usury, an explicit enjoyment of accumulating personal wealth whose accessibility is only privileged by the Christians in their fantasy, is naturally accused as stealing the Christians' enjoyment. Therefore, Shylock's scapegoating is unavoidable as the Christians impute the deprivation of such an enjoyment to Shylock.

Shylock's enjoyment exposes the split of the Christian merchants' subjectivity between the orthodox Christian doctrine and the spirit of capitalism. The Venetian society, characterized by the inner antagonism between Christianity and capitalism, has to make sure its operation to be normal and peaceful. Therefore, it is necessary to ascribe this antagonism to Shylock the outsider.

Shylock, on the one hand, is scapegoated by this antagonism; on the other hand, he is the necessary existence to support the fantasy of the consistency and integrity of the Venetian Christian community. Paradoxically, even though Shylock's lucrative concern as his top priority stimulates the Christians' animosity to him, his refusal to take the lucrative factor as the first priority aggravates the Christians'

² See Alan Sinfield's "How to Read The Merchant of Venice without Being Heterosexist" in *Alternative Shakespeares*, Volume 2, ed. Terence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 123-39.

³ The idea, though deriving from Girard, has one major distinction. While Girard notices "the parallel between the amorous venture of Bassanio and the typical Venetian business of Antonio" in the metaphor, I emphasize the binary nature of love and transaction in their respective pursuits (92). Bassanio's courtship is also a pursuit of wealth, and Antonio states his property to prove his love to Bassanio.

loathing, which is even infused with terror when Shylock insists on executing Antonio's penalty of cutting one pound of flesh. Here Shylock's another enjoyment—taking revenge—is more abhorrent than his enjoyment of earning money for the Christians. Indeed, being informed of Antonio's bankruptcy, Shylock unrestrainedly expresses his pleasure: ““I am very glad of it. I'll plague him; I'll torture him. / I am glad of it” (III.i. 98-99). The causes of the chronic enmity between Shylock and Antonio, which include their rivalry in loaning businesses and Antonio's verbal insult and violence on Shylock, has been sufficiently indicated before. However, when asked about the incentive behind his request, which is beyond Shylock's usual materialistic consideration, Shylock, instead of giving a convincing explanation, emphasizes that his demand is causeless by virtue of a list of metaphors:

You'll ask me why I rather chose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that,
But say it is my humor. Is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What—are you answered yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, when the bagpipe sings i'th'nose,
Cannot contain their urine...
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio . . . (IV.i. 41-62)

Shylock's hatred, instead of being a consequence of the traceable conflict between him and Antonio, here degenerates into a primitive congenital maniac repulsion which cannot be comprehended and illustrated by rationality.

According to Žižek, to the anti-Semites, Jews, whose desire and enjoyment always remain clandestine and even concealed, pose an eternal enigma. Thus, the fantasy of the Jewish conspiracy is necessary to answer 'che vuoi'—what they want, to fill the blank “opening of the desire of the Other,” and to evade the anti-Semites' incapability of “translating this desire of the Other into a positive interpellation, into a mandate with which to identify” (*The Sublime Object* 115). The mysterious and ambiguous nature of Jews which marks them as the target of racism stems from the Jewish God, who incarnates the most radical form of this 'che vuoi,' this enigmatic desire of the Other as exemplified by his arbitrary will imposed on Abraham and Job. Furthermore, as Žižek points out, Jews' persistence in “this enigma of the Other's desire, in this traumatic point of pure 'Che vuoi'” which resists to be “symbolized, 'gentrified', through sacrifice or loving devotion” arouses the anti-Semitic fear and anxiety (*The Sublime Object* 129).

Indeed, read from this Žižekian perspective, Shylock's paranoid request for the incision of Antonio's one pound of flesh, which is even not allowed to be substituted for the restitution of tenfold principal, is characterized by irrationality and incomprehensibility of the desire of the Other. Accordingly, Portia's well-known discourse on mercy should be seen as the Christians' endeavors to “symbolize” and “gentrify” Shylock's radical gesture of 'Che vuoi':

The quality of mercy is not strained...
It is an attribute to God himself,
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice by thy plea, consider this—

That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation. (IV.i. 188-204)

In this famous quotation, one can see a confrontation between mercy and justice and that between their perspective personifications - Christ and the Jewish God. In contrast with Jewishness, Christianity is "to be conceived as an attempt to 'gentrify' the Jewish 'che vuoi' through the act of love and sacrifice" (*The Sublime Object* 116) It is the same attempt which Portia intends.

Nevertheless, Portia's exhortation is refused by Shylock. This failure, representative of the failure to "gentrify" the unsettling 'che vuoi', renders the Christians' panic unrelieved. Therefore, the outcome of the judgment is to confiscate Shylock's property, to deprive his enjoyment of the unrestrained accumulation of wealth. This deprivation of the other's enjoyment, which implicitly actualizes the Christians' longed for but thwarted enjoyment of revenge still has to be embellished by the Christian virtues of love and forgiveness as Antonio appeals for a lessening of Shylock's punishment with two other supplementary conditions: Shylock has to convert into a Christian and to bequest his property to his betraying daughter Jessica and her Christian husband Lorenzo. Antonio's request, apparently a gesture of benevolence and mercy, in fact further deprives Shylock's another enjoyment—revenge by imposing such Christian virtues as love, forgiveness, and generosity to Shylock.

As a marginalized Jewish usurer, Shylock, who mirrors the inevitable inner antagonism of capitalism and the Christians' forbidden desire, is destined to be burdened with the guilt avoided by the Christians and to be homologized to render their mutual desire invisible. Shylock's eventual compulsory conversion into a Christian conveys a significant message about his position as a mirror: the Christians only permit Shylock's likeness to them rather than their likeness to Shylock.

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Contact

Shih-pei Kuo
1F, No.729, Minghu Rd., East Dist., Hsinchu City 300, Taiwan
hemufemale@gmail.com



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Popularization and/or Trivialization of Philosophy in Voltaire's Narrative *Candide or Optimism*

Ivana Majksner

Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia
ivana.majksner@gmail.com

Tina Varga Oswald

Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek, Croatia
tvarga@ffos.hr

Abstract

Voltaire produced his works within the literary-historical period of Classicism and Enlightenment, in which the prevalent role of literature was educational. The period also dictated what genre, theme, style and structure authors should follow. However, more and more changes of literary genres appear, and the process of stratification of literature into high and trivial takes place. The aim of this paper is to describe the polarization of two mutually different processes involved in the literary shaping of Voltaire's philosophical narrative *Candide or Optimism*. In Voltaire's narrative, the popularization of philosophy, in order to simplify and illuminate the philosophical writings of G. W. Leibniz, results in the changes of style and content that become understandable to the general readership since they work within the scheme of an adventure novel. In this process, trivialization does not affect only the genre, but is also present in other parts of literary analysis and interpretation such as the theme, motifs, structure, characterization, narrative techniques, stylistic features, and so on.

Keywords

Voltaire, *Candide or Optimism*, Leibniz, popularization, trivialization

Introduction

The 18th century was crucial for the affirmation of the European novel, since it achieved an inconceivable poetic rise and won both the general and more educated audience. Historical and social events were responsible for the diffusion of the novel in terms of deviations from the set classicist conventions and the introduction of comments in accordance with the principles of rational critical analysis of social life. The novel also, more than other literary genres, proved to be suitable for the application of the "literary syncretism" much needed for the reconciliation of expectations between different layers of readership (Žmegač 48).

However, the influence of the bourgeois Enlightenment did not only relate to the rational explanation of the existing social events, but it also promoted civil moralism as opposed to aristocratic hypocrisy. Within these oppositions one should reflect and interpret Voltaire's narrative *Candide or Optimism* that, on the one hand, contains progressive tendency of tolerance and liberalism, whereas on the other, reflects the moral corrective of the society. A distinctive, pervasive irony that derives from this gives the right to determine Voltaire's philosophical tale as a literary genre that both popularizes and trivializes the philosophy of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz.

The notion of popularization and its realization

In order to develop such an analysis, one should first determine what popularization in fact signifies. It refers to the effort and action to present and illustrate the scientific knowledge in an accessible manner with the aim of making the scientific content understandable for the general public. The

persons engaged in the popularization of science, and philosophy for that matter, work strenuously in order to convey their knowledge to the public in a funny and accessible way. Can Voltaire be one of them considering that the subtitle of *Candide* suggests it is a philosophical narrative? Does this mean that Voltaire struggles to bring philosophical ideas closer to a wider audience in a funny and imaginative way? There are two things that one has to consider. First, Voltaire wrote *Candide* just before "Poem on the Lisbon Disaster" in which he, inspired by the earthquake, introduces the topic of evil (Radner 669-686). After Rousseau had tried to prove him otherwise in one of the letters, namely that "there is no evil in the world, for which the responsibility falls on Providence," Voltaire created *Candide* (Šinko 150). Second, the story became a "rude puerility" in the author's eye only when it provoked an outrage among the educated audience (Marion 127). Nevertheless, Voltaire's narrative experienced forty editions during his lifetime, although he valued his tragedies and the heroic epic *Herniade* more (Solar 175). The next chapter will present the reasons why Voltaire thought that his narrative is "trivial literature."

Easy or difficult literature. When does literature become trivial?

Trivial literature is a concept that emerged in the 1920s in German literary scholarship, and denotes texts of a lesser quality than those that were considered to have an artistic value. *Trivial literature* is also referred to as an *entertaining* or *easy literature*. However, the concept of the *entertaining literature* includes both the *easy* and *trivial literature* that reflect a lower quality and complexity of the text. Therefore, an *easy reading piece* is a text that is actually empty and unoriginal.

It should be noted that the process of stratification of literature began in the Middle Ages, when the literature of the educated coexisted with the strong tradition of folk culture. This process flourished in the periods of classicism and the Enlightenment because the occurring changes, in terms of the genre system, resulted in today's distinction between the trivial and high-brow literature. In other words, ever since the 18th century one can identify and specify a particular kind or a particular type of literature discussed here (Solar 307).

At the time when *Candide* was written (1759) it was a common idea that literature should educate and not entertain, and the themes, style, composition, and stylistic figures were strictly proscribed in order to establish a firm hierarchy of literary genres. Taking that into consideration, as well as the philosophical subtitle, it seems that *Candide* is a failed project that is no match for the canon. Still, if one considers literature in its entirety, and how the oppositions between the easy and difficult literature mutually permeate each other instead of separate, it is obvious that there are no fixed boundaries. This results in the borderline literary genres - between traditional literary values and those belonging to entertaining literature. The following chapter will define the features of an adventure novel.

The trivialization of the adventure novel in Voltaire's *Candide*

Next to the crime, romance or science fiction novels, one should consider the complex issue of the stratification of literature and the relationship between the trivial and the high-brow in adventure novels as well. On the one hand, it is a literary genre whose audience does not require nor expect any aesthetic value, while on the other hand, the compliance with the set genre conventions of the adventure novel causes analytical thinking and reasoning, for both the readers and the authors. There are three most important features of adventure literature that should be taken into account: the romantic space, the inciting incident and the pronounced vitality of the characters. As entertaining literature does not directly point to the core problems of modern society, it nevertheless indirectly speaks of the need to escape from reality. In this sense, it again entertains the reader and sets some new frontiers in the world of imagination. When it comes to Voltaire's *Candide*, the irony turns out to be the omnipresent feature that connects the high-brow and trivial literature.

First of all, it should be noted that the scheme of such novels is characterized by its simplicity. The opening description of the main character Candide confirms this statement: "In the country of Westphalia, in the castle of the most noble Baron of Thunder-ten-tronckh, lived a youth whom Nature had endowed with a most sweet disposition. His face was the true index of his mind. He had a solid

judgment joined to the most unaffected simplicity; and hence, I presume, he had his name of *Candide*" (Voltaire 1).

The twisted simplicity and sentence structure is typical of a fairy tale, as well as the Hellenistic romance novel, in which the initial love of the young couple, *Candide* and *Cunegonde*, is disrupted by life struggles. This indicates the author's denial of reality and an attempt to entertain which is arranged so that it is already detached from reality: "...being expelled from the castle upon her account, I could not write to her, especially as soon after my departure I heard she was dead; but thank God I found afterwards she was living. I left her again after this, and now I have sent a messenger to her near two thousand leagues from here, and wait here for his return with an answer from her" (Voltaire 70). Furthermore, the romantic environment is ironic from the opening chapter: "The Baron was one of the most powerful lords in Westphalia, for his castle had not only a gate, but even windows, and his great hall was hung with tapestry" (Voltaire 1). The same chapter speaks of the inciting incident: "The Baron chanced to come by; he beheld the cause and effect, and, without hesitation, saluted *Candide* with some notable kicks on the breech and drove him out of doors" (Voltaire 2). In addition, this is the irony of philosophy presented by David Hume in *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

One should not disregard the frequent travels, a feature that essentially triggers the plot, such as the sailings on the Atlantic and Mediterranean, shipwrecks, chases and stunts, and which followed the inciting incident: "While he was arguing in this manner, the sky was overcast, the winds blew from the four quarters of the compass, and the ship was assailed by a most terrible tempest, within sight of the port of Lisbon (Voltaire 10). Furthermore, the irony penetrates the lives of the characters as well: "At the expiration of two months, being obliged by some mercantile affairs to go to Lisbon he took the two philosophers with him in the same ship; Pangloss, during the course of the voyage, explained to him how everything was so constituted that it could not be better. James did not quite agree with him on this point (Voltaire 10). With this, Voltaire refers to his contemporary J. J. Rousseau, who remained untouched by the earthquake victims of Lisbon in 1755, and indirectly pointed to the social reality:

Honest James, forgetting the injury he had so lately received from him, flew to his assistance, and, with great difficulty, hauled him in again, but, notwithstanding, in the attempt, was, by a sudden jerk of the ship, thrown overboard himself, in sight of the very fellow whom he had risked his life to save and who took not the least notice of him in this distress. *Candide*, who beheld all that passed and saw his benefactor one moment rising above water, and the next swallowed up by the merciless waves, was preparing to jump after him, but was prevented by the philosopher Pangloss, who demonstrated to him that the roadstead of Lisbon had been made on purpose for the Anabaptist to be drowned there. (Voltaire 11)

Therefore, one can conclude that the character of Anabaptists is actually an irony of J. J. Rousseau's attitudes. Such irony is evident in the mockery of Rousseau's stand of the noble savage personified in the old man from El Dorado that tells *Candide* about the wisdom of savages: "Those princes of their family who remained in their native country acted more wisely. They ordained, with the consent of their whole nation, that none of the inhabitants of our little kingdom should ever quit it; and to this wise ordinance we owe the preservation of our innocence and happiness" (Voltaire 48).

Finally, the structure of *Candide* echoes the scheme of an adventure novel thus exhibiting another feature of trivial literature. This begs the question: is it not Voltaire's intent to make the readers think? The permanent polarization between the trivial and high-brow literature is reflected at the end as well: "'Excellently observed,' answered *Candide*; 'but let us cultivate our garden'" (Voltaire 97). Therefore, it is necessary to explain the philosophical ideas that have been made ironic in the context of the social conditions of the existing period.

The author's perspective – social conditions from which *Candide* emerges

Voltaire develops his desire for freedom and spontaneity early on, as well as his sceptical view of all ruling religious and moral authority. He began his literary work with the satirical poem written against the regent of Philip of Orleans that brought him anything but glory, and similar problems will follow

him later in life. This struggle with authority, in this case the literary one, remains present in the period of the Enlightenment (Marion 129).

The poetics of rationalism characterized the Enlightenment and were a basis for sceptical philosophical perspectives built on Descartes' assertion that all should be doubted using the common sense (Descartes 10). The era of rationalism sharply criticizes the society, as well as religion and metaphysics since they do not conform to empirical principles. At the same time, it defends the principle of the individual, as illustrated in Voltaire's work: "Excellently observed," answered Candide; "but let us cultivate our garden" (Voltaire 97). Numerous philosophical points of view arise from this and other examples contained in Voltaire's *Candide* - notably Leibniz's stand of metaphysical optimism that Voltaire mocks throughout *Candide*. With this procedure, consciously or unconsciously, Voltaire also popularizes Leibniz's philosophical stand. This is evident in the character of the teacher Pangloss who, in the novel, presents Leibniz's philosophy of "the most perfect of all possible worlds" (Leibniz 67) to the general public. Therefore, it is necessary to describe Leibniz's metaphysical optimism that serves as an actual foothold in comparison with the teachings of the fictional character, teacher Pangloss.

Leibniz's Metaphysical Optimism

For the clarity of this chapter, it is important to first explain the concept of metaphysical optimism. Leibniz takes the stand of metaphysical optimism in his *Monadology* asserting that "since in the ideas of God there is an infinity of possible universes, and since only one can exist, there must be a sufficient reason for God's choice of that one—a reason that leads him to choose one rather than some other of the possible universes" (53). The reason for such a godly choice lies in the degree of perfection that this particular world owns (54). Leibniz further states: "Thus the actual existence of the best that wisdom makes known to God is due to this, that His goodness makes Him choose it, and His power makes Him produce it" (55). Metaphysical (philosophical) optimism is essential to Leibniz. In ethics, he is the representative of philosophical optimism believing that this world is the best of all possible worlds. In order to defend the positions of such optimism, Leibniz attempts to explain the problem of evil in the world. In his opinion, there are three kinds of evil: metaphysical, physical, and ethical; the first being a consequence of an imperfect monad (a limited individual), the second represented in the absence of pleasure in conscious monads, and the third being the lack of aspiration for perfection.¹

If Voltaire's work is interpreted by the definition of metaphysical evil as a result of the imperfections of the individual, the irony is perfectly highlighted and presented in the form of the teacher Pangloss. He, despite all the problems that prove the contrary, believes in his idea of the best of all possible worlds, which is often caricatured in the following statements: "the most magnificent of all castles" (Voltaire 1) or "the best of all possible baronesses" (1), and other examples that accumulate superlatives throughout the work thus retaining the position of unlimited and unconditional optimism. Besides that, such optimism is confirmed by those parts in the novel where Candide scrutinizes Pangloss' teachings: "If this is the best of all possible worlds, what are the others?" (14). The similar is expressed at the end of the work in Pangloss's words: "I have always abided by my first opinion," answered Pangloss; "for, after all, I am a philosopher, and it would not become me to retract my sentiments; especially as Leibnitz could not be in the wrong: and that preestablished harmony is the finest thing in the world, as well as a plenum and the materia subtilis" (91).

The character of Pangloss as a caricature of the philosophical thought

Pangloss, perhaps the most famous character in *Candide*, the comical scholar and pseudo-philosopher, is often the subject of entertainment, but also ridicule. Although most scholars considered him a comical figure, he can also be characterized as a tragic one. In *Candide*, Pangloss suffers more than all the other characters – he was hanged, dissected, and whipped. Even before all these hardships, he was infected with syphilis and, although cured, remained disfigured for life. The grotesque style, the

¹ See Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, *Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm*. <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=35902>. Accessed 27 Nov 2015.

underlined expressiveness, is reflected in terms of overly emphasized traits or personality, which in some cases results in a caricature (Tamarin 56). The presentation of any deficiency or anomalies, well-known since Hugo's *Quasimodo*, creates the most effective impression of the grotesque as it combines the synesthesia of different senses. Pangloss' optimism in the form of comfort helps him to fight against these hardships, but only partially, because his mantra that "this is the best of all possible worlds" is entirely relativized and trivialized after a long repetition: "Pangloss avowed that he had undergone dreadful sufferings; but having once maintained that everything went on as well as possible, he still maintained it, and at the same time believed nothing of it" (Voltaire 95). However, such optimism keeps Pangloss alive, it is his entire world view reflected in the mix of the tragic and the comic, which ultimately causes no sympathy in readers.

The grotesque of Pangloss leads to depersonalization also reflected in language. Voltaire uses puns, for example, when he claims that Pangloss "taught the metaphysico-theologo-cosmolonigology" (fr. *nigaud* - stupid). This pun, together with the names of the Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh and the city Wald-berghofftrarbkdikdorff, can be considered a mockery of the German city names, the names in general, and the philosophical terms by means of onomastics (Voltaire 1-3). Pangloss' attitude is enhanced by many superlatives given to characters, for example, the character of Cunegonde whom Candide introduces as "the best of all possible baronesses" or objects, the baron's castle described as "the most magnificent of all castles" (Voltaire 1).

The use of hyperbole connected to motivation and the structure of the plot is expressed through inciting incidents and fantastic events which, due to mixed causes and consequences, have no logical sequence. In other words, we have a world devoid of any laws of logic and critical thinking. The connection based on reason and experience is ignored, and the center of action is reserved for Pangloss' optimism. Pangloss is hanged in the sixth chapter, but later reappears, as well as the character of the previously murdered son of Baron Thunder-Ten-Tronckh, whom Candide and Cacambo meet again during their journey across the Black Sea in the twenty-seventh chapter.

By mixing different layers of reality, optimism turns into a grotesque. In this respect, one should compare the marvelous description of the country of El Dorado, where only gold, emerald and ruby exist, with the description of other parts of the world such as Paris and its pronounced misery. Such ambivalence of different levels of reality is also expressed in the fact that Candide at first follows, and later questions Pangloss' optimism. The novel concludes with the parody of a happy ending - the beautiful Cunegonde turns into a scarecrow and treasure disappears:

It was altogether natural to imagine, that after undergoing so many disasters, Candide, married to his mistress and living with the philosopher Pangloss, the philosopher Martin, the prudent Cacambo, and the old woman, having besides brought home so many diamonds from the country of the ancient Incas, would lead the most agreeable life in the world. But he had been so robbed by the Jews, that he had nothing left but his little farm; his wife, every day growing more and more ugly, became headstrong and insupportable; the old woman was infirm, and more ill-natured yet than Cunegund. (Voltaire 94)

The optimistic attitude that stretches throughout *Candide* disappears when Candide, Martin, and Pangloss meet a good, old man. He responds to their inquiries about the event in Constantinople: "I never inquire what is doing at Constantinople; I am contented with sending thither the produce of my garden, which I cultivate with my own hands" (Voltaire 96). Such conclusion makes it possible to see how the choice of the genre, style, and, means of characterization oppose the poetics of the Enlightenment, which advocated the popularization of science. Therefore, the next chapter deals with the popularization of philosophy in Voltaire's *Candide* in the given period.

The Enlightenment as a literary period that popularized philosophy

Literary scholars assert that the readers taste significantly changed in the late 17th and early 18th century (Solar 163). This shift is also noticeable in the field of philosophy. Considering the conflict between rationalism and empiricism, the Enlightenment finds itself in a similar position since it was

based on the English empiricism. By extension, this is also reflected in literature that served as a means of spreading the ideas of the Enlightenment, visible in Voltaire's works as well. In philosophy, Leibniz belongs to the rationalists; therefore, it is not surprising Voltaire opposes his philosophical standpoint. Voltaire, having disapproved of metaphysical stands in *Candide* can therefore be considered a follower of empiricism. This is supported by the fact that *Candide* contains the elements of empirical, i.e. Hume's philosophy. When a man who spoke of mercy asks Candide "what brought him thither and whether he was for the good old cause?" the simple-minded boy answers: "I conceive there can be no effect without a cause" (Voltaire 7). In this regard, it is obvious that Voltaire adopts the empiricist attitude of David Hume. In his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Hume claimed that "any quality, which binds the effect to the cause, and renders the one an infallible consequence of the other. We only find, that the one does actually, in fact, follow the other" (Hume 44).

However, the idea of reason is the basic assumption both for the Enlightenment and rationalism; therefore, despite the conflict that took place between rationalism and empiricism, it is wrong to limit the period of the Enlightenment to one or the other. It is important to highlight the fact that the idea of political liberalism played a major role in the period of the Enlightenment: ² "Neither the French Enlightenment, nor the encyclopaedists, were a unique philosophical movement and the circle of thought. Each of the philosophers of the period had his original opinion and contribution to the problems of the society" (Sunajko 26). The objection of philosophy was to reform the monarchical absolutism, and the French Encyclopaedists tolerated the Church less.³ The political rift formed the three groups of thought. This first wan was represented by the royalists, Voltaire, and "his supporters who had opted for the institution of the king . . . who stands above all other classes and institutions for the purpose of the rule and for the sake of the kingdom as a whole. The French royalists' founded their postulates on the English tradition of thought, which relied on the philosophy of F. Bacon, less in the form of a parliamentary rule, but more due to the system of civil liberties and religious tolerance" (Sunajko 27).

The tendency of popularization of philosophy is evident in the social conditions of the time and, consequently, philosophy ceases to be only theoretical. Some philosophy scholars went even further and interpreted the Enlightenment as "the progressive thinking with the aim of making people the masters, but in its result, it returns to the myth, and the evil triumphs in the enlightened world" (Jelkić 258). A similar attitude is expressed in Voltaire's *Candide*, in which evil triumphs in most cases, despite the position of metaphysical optimism. The negative attitude towards the Christian tradition, the new and revolutionary attitudes of the Enlightenment, and the removal of the Church from the society open a place for the popularization of philosophy. The negative attitude towards the Christian tradition is expressed in the quote depicting Pangloss' hanging thus demonizing the institution of the church: "oh my dear Pangloss! my beloved master! thou greatest of philosophers! that ever I should live to see thee hanged, without knowing for what!" (Voltaire 14). Finally, it is still necessary to determine the ways in which Voltaire's *Candide* popularized philosophy.

The popularization of philosophy in Voltaire's *Candide*

Although Voltaire wrote *Candide* exclusively for entertainment, and the subtitle reveals the philosophical character that is infused throughout the work, one should consider the authors intention of popularization. One must, however, bear in mind that Hume speaks of the two types of philosophy in his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. The one he simply calls the "light and simple philosophy" (Hardcastle 283) penetrates everyday life by encouraging people to act, up until the point when it ceases to be called philosophy and turns into popular culture (Hardcastle 283).

The idea of nonsense in philosophy starts with Hume and Kant (Richardson 254). The philosophical and revolutionary fertile ideas are developed through the presentation of philosophy in a way that any *serious* philosopher considers them to be nothing more than the utter nonsense. How to depict

² See Leksikografski zavod Miroslav Krleža, *Prosvjetiteljstvo*, <http://www.enciklopedija.hr/natuknica.aspx?id=50722>, Accessed 11 June 2016.

³ Ibid.

something transcendent, as the ideas of metaphysics for example, through the simple-minded characters and their humble lives? Easily. Through the carefully weighed, although sometimes caricatured, irony of events with the final purpose to enlighten people, "to free the spirit of the unnecessary bonds and to defend the human right to their own opinion" (Duda 5). The philosophical irony is also portrayed in Voltaire's *Candide* in an extremely lively and colorful way with many humorous references to the certain aspects of philosophy. This is evident in the parts where Pangloss and Candide, despite the ill fortune that follows them throughout the work, represent the position of metaphysical optimism. For example, in the episode in which Candide and Cacambo encounter the savages and eventually establish communication. The irony achieves a comical, even grotesque effect, and it also confirms the triviality in the form of the happy ending characteristic for the resolution of the adventure novel. Alan Richardson claims that it would be better for philosophers to recognize that they are dealing with comedy and to reveal something about the nature of the world by the conscious construction of comic scenarios (254). He later added that the philosophy that reaches self-awareness simply becomes humor.

In this respect, philosophical ideas can come to life through the imaginative illustrations of the author's own ideas and descriptions of daily events in an ironic way, as numerous examples in *Candide* illustrate (Duda 9). The parody, also present in *Candide*, is created by the constant ridicule of metaphysical optimism and has the satirical effect. Because it represents the method of criticism, it must use other, original texts that it processes and mocks (Zlatović 70). With this procedure Voltaire brings Leibniz's ideas closer to the general public and popularizes them by using a simplified and comical form.

Conclusion

The analysis of Voltaire's philosophical narrative *Candide or Optimism* suggests that this work could be considered as a means of popularization empiricist and rationalist philosophy, especially G. W. Leibniz's ideas on metaphysical optimism. The numerous examples in which Voltaire makes Leibniz's stand ironic represent his philosophy in a new and funny way, thus fulfilling the requirement of the definition of *popularization*. One can, therefore, talk about the popularization of philosophy through the *trivial*, i.e. *entertaining literature*, because Voltaire himself thought that his *Candide* belonged to the *trivial literature*. However, if one takes into account the modern meaning of the term, it is more precise to refer to *Candide* as a part *entertaining*, and not *trivial literature*. By the means of irony, Voltaire brings Leibniz's stand on metaphysical optimism closer to the general audience in a funny way. Voltaire also incorporates the elements of Hume's philosophy in his work which further contributes to the idea of the popularization of philosophy through his philosophical narrative. Thus, Voltaire's *Candide or Optimism* in a unique way popularizes philosophy and confirms the possibility of entertaining literature to offer even non-trivial contents to a wider reading public, bringing closer more demanding, even philosophical ideas to a non-specialized reader. He achieves that through many literary methods; the structure, the narrative technique, the caricature, the irony, the onomastics, and even the topic characteristic of adventure fiction, but mostly through the character of Pangloss. All these methods contribute to the trivialization of *Candide* and make it popular among the wider audience.

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Contact

Tina Varga Oswald
Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek
L. Jägera 9
31000 Osijek, Croatia
tvarga@ffos.hr

Ivana Majksner
Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek
L. Jägera 9
31000 Osijek, Croatia
ivana.majksner@gmail.com



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Text and Image in Translation

Milena Yablonsky

Pedagogical University of Cracow, Poland
milenayablonsky@gmail.com

Abstract

The primary objective of the following paper is the analysis of selected issues related to the translation of comic books. The paper aims at investigating the relationships between the text and the image and their implications in the process of translation. It reflects on the status of the translation of comics/graphic novels - a still largely unexploited area within Translation Studies and briefly presents a definition and specificity of the genre. Moreover, it discusses Jakobson's (1971) tripartite distinction into interlinguistic, intralinguistic and intersemiotic translation. The paper concludes with the analysis of certain issues associated with the Polish translation of *V like Vendetta* by Alan Moore, a text that is copious with intertextual and cultural references.

Keywords:

graphic novel, comics, *V like Vendetta*, Jakobson, constrained translation, intertextuality

Introduction

The translation of comic books still occupies a rather unexploited area within the discipline of Translation Studies, maybe due to the fact that it "might be perceived as a field of lesser interest" (Zanettin 273) and comics are usually regarded as an artistic form of a lower status. In *Dictionary of Translation Studies* by Shuttleworth and Cowie there is not a single entry on comics. They refer to them only when they explain the term "multi-medial texts" (109-110) as: "... The multi-medial category consists of texts in which the verbal content is supplemented by elements in other media; however, all such texts will also simultaneously belong to one of the other, main text-type ... Songs, comic strips, plays and writing for radio or television are all examples of this type."

In the first edition of the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (Baker 1998) comics are mentioned in two entries: on "compensation" and "semiotic approaches". In the entry on "semiotic approaches" Eco and Nergaard (220) claim that text semiotics "... can provide tools and suggestions ... also for the countless translations of mass-communication texts which often involve more than one semiotic system ... such as television programs, film, advertising, comic strips, and so on." The author of the entry on "compensation" – Keith Harvey, mentions the translation of puns giving as an example a rendition of the French comic strip *Asterix* into English. However, in the second edition of *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (2011) there is already a separate, detailed entry on "comics" by Zanettin. It includes a brief history of comics, their publication and distribution process as well as translation. The scholar also admits that "the number of research articles on translation of comics has been growing since the mid-1990s, but it remains relatively limited" (Zanettin 39). There are also some other significant publications contributing to the development of this realm of research and to a better understanding of the process of comics translation (notably Kaindl, Zanettin, Celotti, Rota). It means that today comics translation is starting to be considered as an important and serious field of investigation.

Definitions of the genre

According to McCloud, one of the best-known contributor to comics research, a good definition of the term “comics” is hard to find, because “the world of comics is a huge and varied one [and a] definition must encompass all these types while not being so broad as to include anything which is clearly not comics” (4). Hence, in this part of the article different approaches to the term *comics* will be provided to give a wider perspective of the subject discussed.

William Eisner, another well-known artist and researcher on comics, in his work *Comics and Sequential Art* defines comics as a form of “sequential art” which constitutes “means of creative expression, a distinct discipline, an art and literary form that deal with the arrangement of pictures or images and words to narrate a story or dramatic idea” (5). McCloud in *Understanding Comics*, which is a seminal graphic book on comics, presents the history of comic strips, the mechanisms of how they work and the multitude of means in which comics can convey meaning and it is accompanied by examples to illustrate each point. He terms comics as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (9). He claims that the comic strip is “an invisible art” since the most important is what connects particular pictures, what exists between them.

Comic book is a hybrid form of art and literature, a synthesis of literary and artistic interrelations. This connection of images and words is a main characteristic differentiating this medium from traditional literature, which is based on words only. Moreover, it means that comics may convey a story in a more flexible, multidimensional way and, according to Laaniste, due to their visual nature they are more expressive and engage the reader on a deeper emotional level than the written word (108). It is relatively easy to alter the mood of the story or emphasize some aspects of it by modification of an image, which can allow for various interpretations of the message. Pedro Moura, a Portuguese researcher of comics, claims that comic books are actually an independent mode of artistic expression independent from literature, painting, cinema or theatre (16). According to Zanettin, “comics have been variously termed as a 'genre', 'medium', 'language', 'semiotic system' (5). Yet another definition worth mentioning is given by Kaindl in his article on the translation of comics. He proposes the following definition of comics:

Comics are narrative forms in which the story is told in a series of at least two separate pictures. The individual pictures provide context for one another, thus distinguishing comics from singleframe cartoons. Comics involve linguistic, typographic and pictorial signs and combinations of signs as well as a number of specific components such as speech-bubbles, speed lines, onomatopoeia etc., which serve particular functions. The form and use of these elements are subject to culture-specific conventions. (Kaindl 264)

The text presented for the analysis in this article, however, is a graphic novel. Like a comic strip it is composed of verbal and visual elements, but what differentiates this type of picture writing from typical comics is a theme and volume. Campbell in his manifesto terms a graphic novel as “a movement rather than a form” explaining that this movement's goal is “to take the form of the comic book, which has become an embarrassment, and raise it to a more ambitious and meaningful level. It is forging a whole new art which will not be a slave to the arbitrary rules of an old one” (quoted in Gravett 2). The emergence of a new type of picture writing is strictly connected with Art Spiegelman and his graphic novel about Holocaust *Maus*, which was awarded the Pulitzer prize in 1992. Other artists also published this new type of comic book: in 1986 Frank Miller and Klaus Janson created *The Dark Knight Returns* and in 1986 Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons released *Watchmen*. The superheroes in these books were not completely flawless and the line between good and evil was blurred. Another defining characteristic of graphic novels is their intertextuality (Harris 6-10) Thanks to that, this genre ceased to be only associated with trivial stories about superheroes and villains. Contemporary comics deal with various topics from insignificant to serious ones. Graphic novel are stories that present a deeper and more mature approach to certain issues and constitute a complete, finished story of a bigger volume and are

bound like books (Kurc 10). They are designed for a more mature audience.

The language of comics - an interplay of verbal and visual elements

According to Zanettin, "in semiotic terms, comics can be described essentially as a form of visual narration which results both from the mixing and blending of pictures and words" (12). Comics is called a multimedia genre of popular culture. It is placed on the border of literature and art but does not belong to any of them. Moreover, the hierarchy of what is more important: either words or images cannot be established. The most important is an adequate expression of those two layers. Text and illustration in comics complement each other and depend on each other. Words name things, introduce objects, people, help readers follow the story while images shows the world, shapes, characters and their actions. All those elements constitute kind of a symbiosis that as a whole creates a comic book (Biesiadowska 46).

The visual

Images in comics take different forms and shapes, which always serves the same purpose – conveying certain messages and creating a visual story. The visual consists of various elements: layout, size and shapes of panels, balloons and gutters, colouring, and lettering that creates an iconic unity. The character and personality of characters are shown by means of applying the same artistic technique, e.g. thick and dynamic lines may indicate rough personality, negative characters usually have distorted faces and bodies. Appropriate shapes guarantee that the reader will see not only what is happening but also may feel the atmosphere that a given panel is conveying (Biesiadowska 47). The shape of a panel is also important, for example a cloud-shape is used to express a recollection. The gutter is significant as well, and as McCloud says: "the heart of comics lies in the space between the panels where the reader's imagination makes still pictures come alive" (1). In this "empty space" exists information suggesting what happened between the pictures and a reader deciphers this information through imagination. It often happens that panels show situations after or before something happens, omitting an important event, hence it is a reader's role to discover relationships between pictures in order to combine them into one message. Sometimes, for some stylistic purposes there may be no gutter between the panels, so readers have to imagine a division of a page into panels or a part of a panel can go over or beyond the border of another panel.

Analyzing comics as a combination of interrelated images, we may find similarities between comics art and movie making. An author of comics uses similar techniques in frame construction as a film maker. A comics' page, like a movie frame, shows people and actions in a particular place and time as seen from a specific point of view. For example, there is a general composition, zooming in and zooming out. All these methods serve to create a particular visual effect or provide some information. They are used to get the reader's attention to certain happenings in comics (Szyłak 45).

The textual

Words are equally important elements of comics as images. Words also have a graphic nature, different colours and layout which makes them "part of the picture". Moreover, as Eisner states, lettering "treated 'graphically' and in the service of the story, functions as an extension of the imagery (10)." Texts appearing in comics have to be hand-written by a creator and harmonize with the pictorial content. Words similarly to images are a creation of the author, hence s/he gives them his/her personal touch.

According to Celotti (38-39), the following types of texts can be found in comics: speech balloons, captions, titles and linguistic paratext. Speech balloons contain the dialogue of the characters and their thoughts. Captions – usually inserted in rectangular boxes at the top or bottom of the panel usually indicate time and spatial changes or may include commentaries to the pictures. Titles serve to get the reader's attention. Also in comics very frequently appears, what Maria Grazia Margarito terms, linguistic paratext. It denotes verbal messages outside the balloon and inside the picture and includes graffiti, newspaper titles, road signs, posters, various inscriptions, etc. Their purpose is to give a wider

context of what is being presented in the pictures (Celotti 39). Sounds are represented by onomatopoeic words that may vary according to the language of comics. In comics, they are used very extensively. When they appear inside the balloons, they are accompanied by apostrophes, whereas outside them, they constitute an integral part of the visual content of comics.

The verbal content of comics is not included only in balloons and caption boxes. Some of it may be rendered graphically, hence it becomes an inherent part of the graphic creation. Kaindl differentiates three types of onomatopoeia – “interjections, derivations of nouns or verbs and invented words, which are formed from vowels and consonants for their specific auditive quality” (274). Onomatopoeia and sound effects can represent background noise and helps create a certain atmosphere.

Multimodality and comics translation

Worth mentioning in terms of comics translation is Jakobson's consideration on “Linguistic Aspects of Translation” (1959) in which he distinguished between three types of translation: intersemiotic, interlingual and intralingual translation. Intersemiotic translation or transmutation is described as “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems”, interlingual translation (translation proper) as “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of another language” and intralingual translation (rewording) as “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of the same language” (Jakobson 145). In Jakobson's distinction, translation is a process intrinsically bound with an interpretation of verbal signs. Examples of intersemiotic translation may include translations from verbal language into visual language as in arts, architecture, and photography (Zanettin 10). In this article, intersemiotic translation will be understood as deciphering the meaning of comics from their interplay between the visual and verbal modes, their interpretation by the readers.

The meaning and expressiveness of comics results from the unique combination of words and pictures, their multimodality. Kress and Van Leeuwen define multimodality as “the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event” (20). In a comic book two modes, namely visual and verbal, interact with each other and complement each other creating a meaning as whole. In semiotic terms, comics can be defined as “a form of visual narration which results from the mixing and blending of pictures and words” (Zanettin 12). In comics, verbal and visual elements are connected through certain formal elements such as speech balloons. Text's expressiveness in comics partially results from its interaction with pictures, so it is important to study the relationships between the two modes while translating. According to Zanettin, “semiotic systems are co-present and interplay at different levels, and are culturally determined along dimensions of space and time (13). It means that in a multimodal analysis both elements are significant. Comic book protagonists express their emotions and interact not only via speech balloons but also through gesture, eye contact, body posture, facial expression, spatial orientation. These nonverbal elements are a vital part of meaning conveyed by comics and deciphered by readers (Borodo 24). One of the first studies to concern the multimodal nature of the translation of comics was done by Kaindl. He investigated the interplay between the textual and pictorial content of comics such as *Asterix*, *Tintin* and *Peanuts* in terms of humour translation. He demonstrated how humorous content is conveyed by the two modes. Another scholar, Celotti in her article “The translator of comics as a semiotic investigator” underlines the relevance of the interrelations between the two modes and their importance for translators saying that “the visual language can be a resource rather than a constraint for the translator” (35). Translation of multimedia text has sometimes been referred to as ‘constrained translation’, a concept created within Translation Studies that goes back to the 1980s: “Constrained translations as translations that are, for practical or commercial reasons, spatially limited, such as, for instance, advertisements with brief and catchy slogans, cartoons, comics and subtitles They [comics] are limited spatially in that translations must fit into balloons or panels and in that they have a specific objective.” (quoted in Celotti, Grun and Dollerup 198).

As Celotti states “the aim of the translator should be to translate all verbal messages, but in reality not all of them will be translated in comics” (38). She delineates four areas of verbal messages (balloons,

captions, titles, and the linguistic paratext) with their own functions in the narrative. Moreover, she mentions that within Translation Studies, for the translation of multimedia text, including comic strips, there has been created a specific concept, namely 'constrained translation'. According to the scholar "the debate on comics translation has been characterized by a view of the presence of the balloons as limitations to the freedom of translators, operating in much the same way as lip synchronization in dubbing (34).

The translation of comics encompasses not only rendering written material but also transferring visual content and sometimes adapting it to the target culture. Obviously such a situation does not concern all comics. A general decision must be made as to what extent comics must be adapted to the target culture. Sometimes factors that may cause the changes are: different cultural norms and standards as to what a comic book is expected to be, and a need for political correctness. Celotti (36) gives few examples of the changes: in the Swedish version of the comic Morris' Lucky Luke's cigarettes were converted into a blade of grass to make it more appropriate, and the name of Groucho Marx was changed for Felix in the American version of *Dylan Dog*.

Analysis – V for Vendetta

V for Vendetta is a graphic novel written by Alan Moore with illustrations by David Lloyd (with additional art by Tony Weare), published by DC Comics. At first, the series was created for the British magazine *Warrior* and the first episodes appeared in black-and-white between 1982 and 1985. David Lloyd omitted all sound effects, thought balloons and captions as well as he created illustrations of either darkness or blinding light (Gravett 126). This black-and-white imaginary was a rather radical departure from comics-writing at that time, however, stylistically it gave the book its deep naturalistic feel. After the cancellation of *Warrior*, DC Comics republished a ten-issue series in colour in 1998 and continued the publication of the series until its completion. A subtle colour palette was added that gave the novel new depth but the gloomy atmosphere of Lloyd's original illustrations was preserved (Kannenberg 357). Then in 2005 it was published in the form of one, complete graphic novel. The novel was translated into Polish by Jacek Drewnowski and it was issued by Post publishing house. On the basis of the comics, The Wachowski Brothers created a political thriller with the same title in 2006.

In the comics Alan Moore presents a dystopian, alternative reality of 20th century England, which after atomic war has turned into a totalitarian state and succumbs to a fascist dictatorship – the Norsefire political party. In the novel it is presented as a corporate body consisting of organs that harmoniously cooperate for the common good. The unity of the state depends on the condition of all organs. In the novel it is represented by five institutions gathered around Adam Susan: "The Eye" - the surveillance organization, which constantly watches over the citizens, "The Nose" - the detective institution, "The Mouth" - the state-controlled media that deals with spreading propaganda through society and "The Fingers" or "Fingermen" - the branch that enforces law. Its effective cooperation is crucial for the survival of the regime (Lewandowski 32-31). Post-apocalyptic Britain is a place where all human rights are repressed, there is no freedom, no tolerance. The party controls the population through the Fate computer and secret police.

The novel begins on November 5, 1997 in London, when V, the only person who decides to stand against the totalitarian government, detonates a bomb in the Old Bailey, the Central Criminal Court. He is a mysterious, masked figure in a Guy Fawkes mask that attracts the existing regime, destroys symbolic London landmarks and aims at killing high-profile people connected with the Norsefire party. His actions force the police headed by Eric Flinch to unearth V's identity, discover his motives and capture him. The complex plot of the novel deals with various figures associated with the government, and throughout the story the reader can observe divisions within the regime. Another important character is Evey Hammond, the young woman who V saves from the Fingermen. Through her, the reader finds out more about V's identity and his motives. Moreover, thanks to V she undergoes a transformation to understand that "whoever you are isn't as big as the idea of you". It also conveys the message of the novel that ideas are eternal and "bullet-proof" and what V embodies will live forever.

The style of this narrative is hard to classify as Allan Moore and David Lloyd took an unconventional

approach to the protagonist. According to the Kannenberg, they “reject the traditional comic-book simplicity of heroes versus villains in favour of a morally ambiguous storyline that pits an anarchists against a fascist state” (Kannenberg 357). Moore never shows V’s real identity, he only lets the readers see what V has experienced in Larkhill – a death camp. The writer encourages the readers to have their own opinion on V’s conduct and actions and it is left for them to decide whether the protagonist is morally right or wrong, whether he is a terrorist or freedom fighter. Actually, V, whose name is just a symbol, is not to be analysed as an individual as he stands more for an idea, namely he is a representation of anarchy and resistance that is contrasted with fascism represented by Norsefire.

The script is characterized by intertextual links to various works of music, art, and literature, rendering it a challenge for the reader to decipher all hidden meanings and allusions. The novel refers to utopian and dystopian traditions of defining a new, better world and a human being ready for that world. We can find references to *Utopia* by Thomas More or Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* – those books are visible on the shelves in V’s library. The narration is also full of symbols, two of them the letter “V” and number five are very significant in the novel. References to this number and the letter V can be found throughout the novel. Every chapter begins with letter “V” (e.g. The Villain, The Voice, Victims, Vaudeville, Versions, etc.), the protagonist plays Beethoven’s Fifth symphony and the bombings take place also on the fifth of November and 23rd of February (2 plus 3 equals five) or he quotes from Thomas Pynchon’s novel *V*. The protagonist’s symbol V surrounded by a circle is the symbol for anarchy turned upside down. This depiction can be found in many places in the novel and one of the most prominent is the one showing dominoes set on the floor in this shape. The protagonist’s name refers to his history in room five at Larkhill where he was kept as a scientific subject.

The illustrations created by Lloyd convey the tone of the book and harmoniously blend with Moore’s writing. The novel uses mostly dark, de-saturated colours or minimal colouring that contributes to the mood of the novel. However, sometimes colours vary and are more distinct in crucial scenes in the novel, for example during the bombing of Old Bailey. Most of the narration is conveyed through six panels per page, but this pattern also changes when particular scenes are of more significance, e.g. the panels at the beginning of the fourth chapter are full-page images in black and dark red.

Dissatisfied with Margaret Thatcher’s policies, Moore and Lloyd created an impassioned piece of art glorifying freedom, and hence becoming timeless. *V for Vendetta* is an absolutely powerful and complex story of the importance of independence, ideas and identity. Through this complex novel presenting Orwellian order, Moore provokes his readers to question authority in our society and the kind of world they wish to live in: either The Land of Do-As-You-Please (freedom) or The Land of Take-What-You-Want (Chaos). *V for Vendetta* is a thought-provoking story that deals with various important issues, achieving an amazing goal, namely that comics/graphic novels can convey the same depth as other literary works.

Text analysis

In this part, I would like to concentrate on the textual analysis of the Polish translation of *V for Vendetta*. Special emphasis will be given to aspects connected with the specifics of comics translation as well as the intertextual character of the verbal content for the novel. All presented pictures come from *V for Vendetta* issued in 2008 and the Polish translation from 2014 by Jacek Drewnowski.

Intertextuality and domestication

As it was mentioned before, *V for Vendetta* is a graphic novel copious with intertextual elements that may pose a challenge in the process of translation into the Polish language.

The first intertextual element found in the novel refers to the title of the first book, which is “Europe After Reign”. It refers to Max Ernst’s painting “Europe After the Rain” created as a protest against war, and contains the play on words “reign” vs “rain”. It acts as a harbinger of the political situation to be depicted in the comic book. The masterpiece created by Ernst in 1942 shows the destructive power of war, which leaves behind a landscape of ruins, desolation, and despair. Moore using the word “reign” suggested the return of the totalitarian order. The Polish translation does not refer to the painting but

attempts at conveying the same message and evoking similar emotions as the English. It was rendered into "Nowa, Wspaniała Brytania" ("Brave, New Britain"), which obviously makes reference to "Brave New World" by Aldous Huxley.

The next problematic aspect appears in the translation of the scene where the bishop is murdered. The main character V utters the following words: "Please allow me to introduce myself, I'm the man of wealth and taste", which comes from the song "Sympathy for the Devil" by the Rolling Stones. It could have been literally translated into Polish, however the translator decided to use a more elaborate approach. This particular scene is significant in the novel as it is a culmination point of the diabolic pact made between Evey and V. Moreover, in the novel we can also find a quotation from Faust by Goethe, which is used to emphasize the character of the relationship between the main characters. An Englishmen reading the original version of the novel will for sure discover the text from the Rolling Stones and decipher its allusion to the meeting scene between Mephistopheles and Faust. Whereas in the Polish version, the translator adopted the domestication procedure and rendered V's utterance into "Zemsta nierychliwa nagnała cię w moje sieci..." from the Polish humorous ballad "Pani Twardowska" by Adam Mickiewicz. This ballad is based on the Faustian theme and presents a nobleman Twardowski who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for magical powers and immense knowledge.

In the second book of *Vendetta* there is an analogous problem to the previous one. In one scene V says to Evey "I'm waiting for the man", which is a title of the song by The Velvet Underground. Here, again the translator used the technique of domestication to create analogous effect on the target readers as the original has. It was rendered into "Czekam na sygnał z centrali...centrala nas ocali", which comes from the significant and influential Polish post-punk band Brygada Kryzys and perfectly suits the atmosphere of the graphic novel.

Another element of the translation worth mentioning refers to the cultural adaptation into the Polish realities of the phrase "security officers", "children's hour" and "Punch and Judy man". The first one was rendered into "oficerów Bezpieki", which is a colloquial expression for security service established in Communist Poland responsible for maintaining the order. The second one was translated into "domowe przedszkole", a television programme for children. The third one in "klaun", which simply denotes type of a person "Punch and Judy man" embodies. All three renditions were meant to evoke similar connotations that the source language expression does.

Linguistic paratext and titles

Linguistic paratext is a typical element of comics. Celotti (39) calls it one of the loci of comics translation verbal messages that exhibits a high degree of variability when it comes to its rendition. She delineates six procedures that can be applied to its translation depending on the paratexts' importance and relevance to the depicted story and visual content. It can be translated when it plays a similar function to that of a speech balloon or translated with a footnote in the gutter when the text is a part of the the drawing that is vital to the story. The third strategy is a domestication strategy, so cultural adaptation of the paratext. The next one is leaving paratexts in their source language, and it happens in the case when "they have a function which is more visual than verbal [...] and their non-translation does not give rise to any semantic gaps – they serve as a reminder of the story's setting" (Celotti 41). Another strategy that a translator may resort to, is simply deletion of the paratext. The last strategy that Celotti enlists consists of mixing various strategies: deletion, partial translation, and cultural adaptation. Regarding rendition of titles, they are usually translated, however, sometimes "they can be maintained and in this case they reveal their origin and may provide an exotic touch". Moreover, that translator should also pay attention to the possible relation between the title and the pictures. In case of translation of linguistic paratext in the analysed graphic novel, it has been left unchanged in its original form (see fig. 1 and 2). Maybe, it resulted from the fact that translation it into Polish would cause changes in the graphic elements that would be too costly for the publisher. The same strategy was applied to the rendition of the chapters' titles (see fig. 3). They were left in English with a Polish translation in a footnote. It resulted from the fact that in the graphic novel all the titles begin with the letter 'v' that has a symbolic meaning to the story and finding Polish equivalents also starting with the

same letter would be unfeasible.

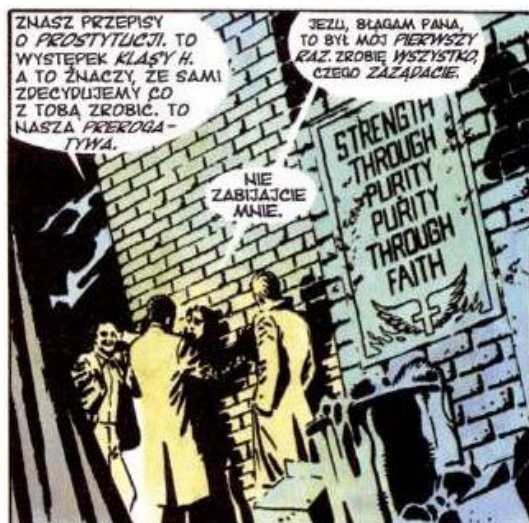


Figure 1 Linguistic paratext



Figure 2 Linguistic paratext



Figure 3 Titles

Condensation and deletion of the message

According to Celotti “the aim of the translator should be to translate all verbal messages, but in reality not all of them will be translated in comics (39). As it was explained above, in terms of multimedia text, constrained translation is very frequent and instances of that can be found in the Polish version of *V for Vendetta*. Due to space limitation in speech bubbles and the fact that the Polish language is usually lengthier than English, some of the messages must be condensed or even omitted. Below, there are a few selected instances of the condensed Polish translation or elimination of some elements in translation. It usually happens due to spatial constraints as in fig. 4. “Westminster Abbey” was simply rendered as “opactwo” without defining it by adding the noun “Westminster” and in fig. 5 the second “wakey” was omitted in the translation. In the example presented in fig. 6 the English utterance has been condensed in the Polish translation while still the conveyed message is analogous to the original version.

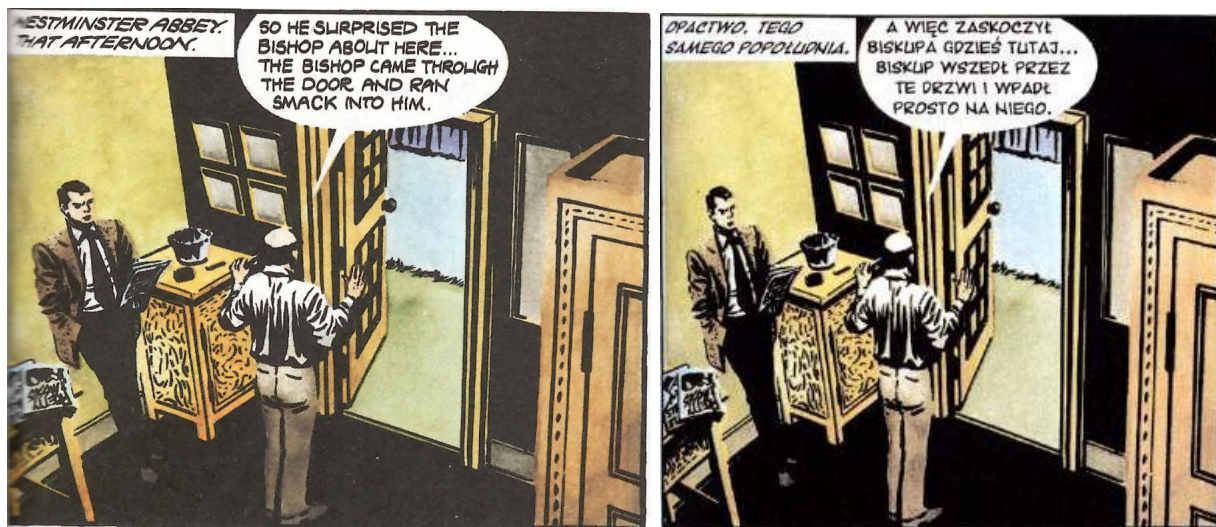


Figure 4 Deletion



Figure 5 Deletion

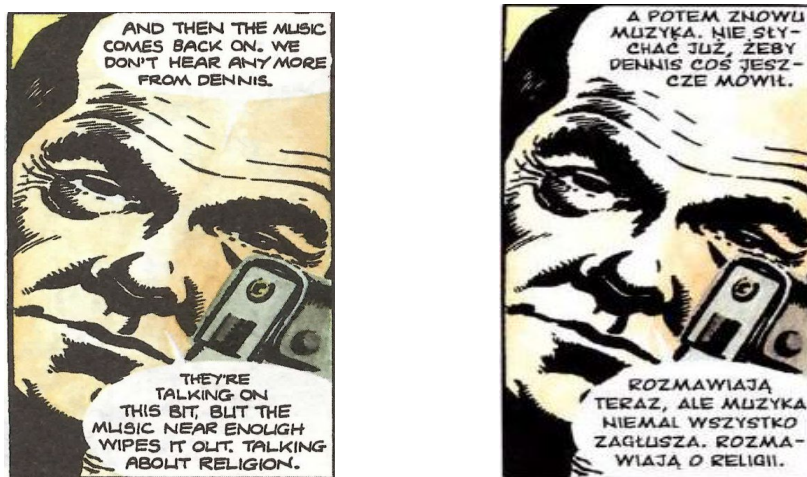


Figure 6 Condensation of the message

Onomatopoeic expressions

Onomatopoeia is a phenomenon that is intrinsically bound to comics. It refers to words that phonetically mimic or resemble the sound of the things they describe. For instance, the words used to denote animal noises are all onomatopoeic, e.g. a dog's "bark," a cat's "meow," or a cow's "moo." The onomatopoeic words for animal sounds slightly differ from one language to another since the words must fit into the larger linguistic system. Therefore, while a pig says "oink" in English, it says "knor" in German. Onomatopoeic expressions help comics create a particular atmosphere and make readers experience the process of reading more thoroughly/deeply. There are a few classifications of onomatopoeia. One distinction between lexical and non-lexical onomatopoeia was provided by Attridge. The first one refers to sound-imitating words, for example: "hiss", "bang", "slurp" and the other refers to a "cluster of sounds which echo the world in a more unmediated way" (67) for example, "pfft" the sound for a gun with a suppressor. Below, there are some examples of onomatopoeic expressions in the original version of the graphic novel contrasted with the Polish translation. Fig. 7 shows a translation of an onomatopoeia "uhhh...heh", which signifies confusion, embarrassment, used in awkward moments. An expression "ruh...ruh...ruh" that is used to denote angst was rendered into "uuu...uuu...uuu" (see fig. 8) and the last example (fig. 9) shows the rendition of onomatopoeia "ah...uh" that signals that something someone just said or did was right

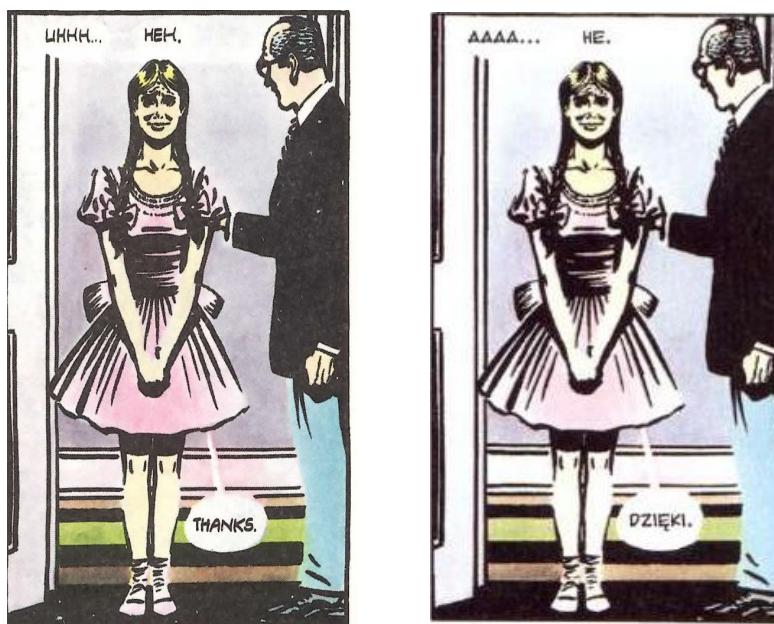


Figure 7 Translation of "uhhh...heh"



Figure 8 Translation of "ruh...ruh...ruh"



Figure 9 Translation of "ah...uh"

Conclusion

Comics is a unique combination of verbal and visual content that requires from both the reader and the translator a thorough "reading" of the text and images to decipher the meaning that a given comics book was meant to evoke. They should focus on both layers of the comics creation, and the translator must take into consideration their mutual interaction while translating. Obviously, every comics book is different and whether the pictures will be changed in translation or not depends usually on the publisher and the culture of the creation of comics in a particular country.

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Contact

Milena Yablonsky
Pedagogical University of Cracow
address
milenayablonsky@gmail.com