

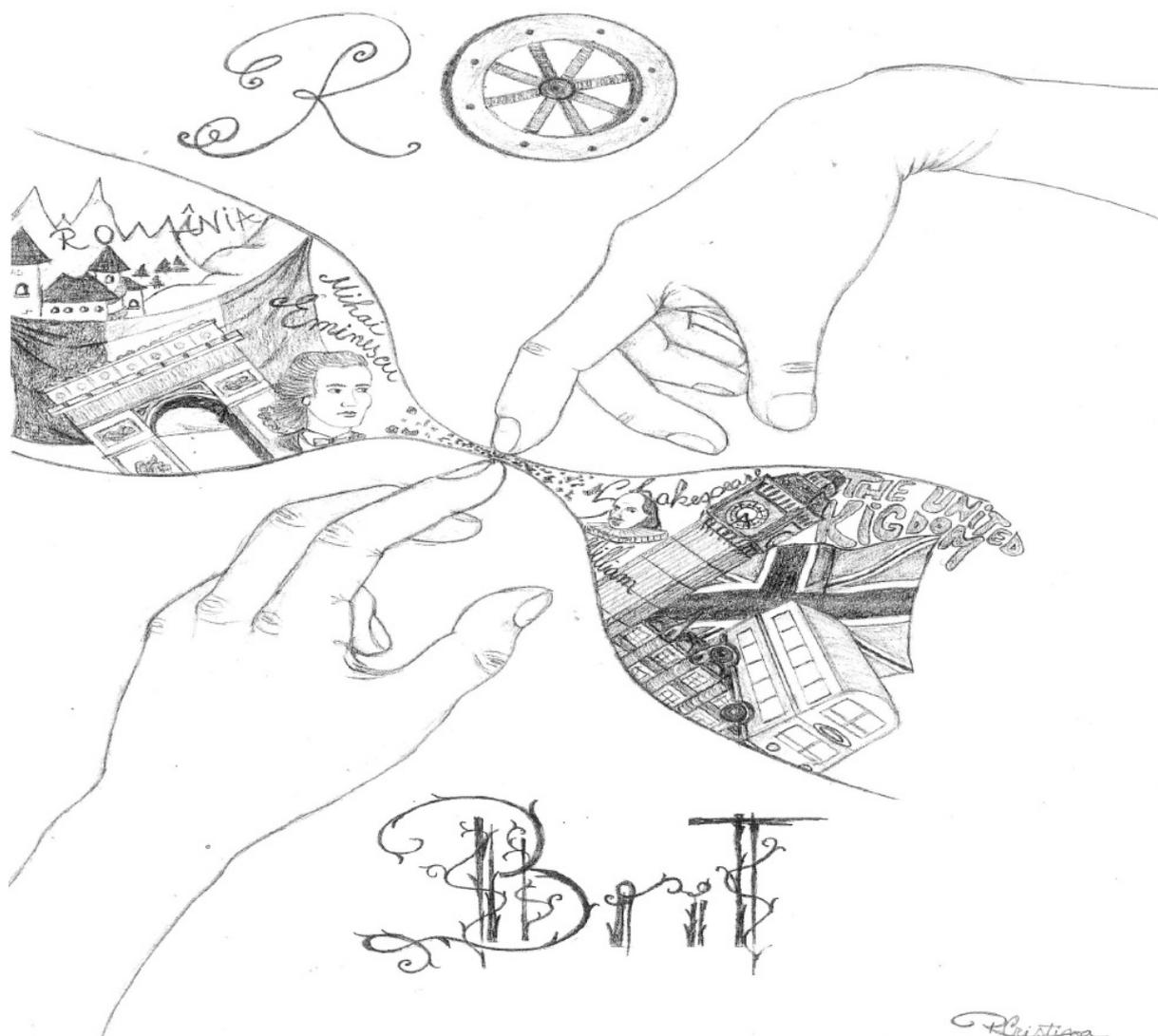


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RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL

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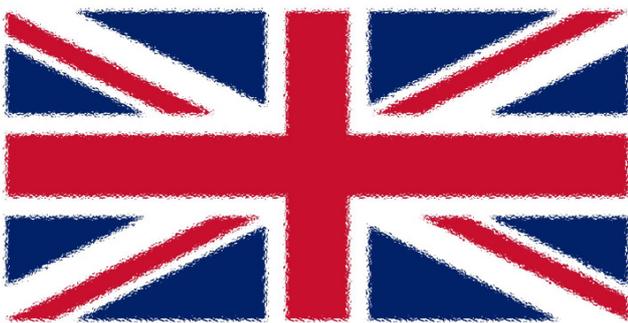
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EDITORIAL

RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL is an annual English journal dedicated to publishing papers written by students in the Faculty of Letters (and not only), under the auspices of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures from “Vasile Alecsandri” University of Bacău.

This journal intends to encourage students to take more initiative in engaging in the English studies, providing at the same time the opportunity for them to have their research and creative writing published. Thus, RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL invites English-speaking students to contribute to the journal through submitting original articles. The journal welcomes submissions on English language, literature and culture,

its purpose being to provide a channel for the publication of original work by Romanian students who love the English language. This is an excellent opportunity for students to allow their research to be seen by their colleagues and to participate in a promising endeavour.



RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL este o revistă anuală în limba engleză dedicată publicării lucrărilor scrise de către studenții din cadrul Facultății de Litere (și nu numai), sub auspiciile Departamentului de Limbi și Literaturi Străine de la Universitatea “Vasile Alecsandri” din Bacău. RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL intenționează să încurajeze studenții vorbitori de limba engleză să scrie și să publice în limba engleză articole cu privire la limbă, literatură și cultură, scopul principal al revistei fiind acela de a oferi un canal pentru publicarea de lucrări originale de către studenții români care iubesc limba engleză. Aceasta este o oportunitate excelentă pentru studenți de a permite ca cercetarea lor să fie văzută de colegii lor și de a participa la un efort promițător.

Being Pamela or Sophia? Models of Eighteenth-Century Femininity

Maria-Laura Bumbu, II, E-F

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Mihaela Culea

1. Introduction

During the eighteenth century, Britain experienced vast social, political, economic, and existential changes, greatly influencing the literary world. It was the age in which a new literary genre began to develop, the novel – a predominantly bourgeois genre. The evolvement of a new middle class, the changing position of women, the increase of the reading public, are some of the causes that contributed to the appearance of the novel. A fundamental concern in the eighteenth-century novel was its preoccupation with realism, and the realistic depiction of society, that came as a response to the public call for a closer correspondence between life and art, the objective presentation of reality, and the achieving of authenticity. It seems that the realistic presentation was intimately connected with the mentality of the society of that age.

The eighteenth century in England witnessed the emergence of realistic fiction that responded to the demands of the middle-class readers (Ian Watt 1957). Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding noted a clear difference in prose fiction regarding the realistic image of customary life. In their works, Richardson and Fielding thought about ways in which they could help people better their morals and manners. Virtues matched with femininity in the eighteenth-century England were communicated and reviewed by them. New images of morality appeared, and they seemed to be necessary under the novel historical and cultural circumstances.

The eighteenth-century period is often considered as a period when women had to live in men's world. There were norms, values, and rules, which tied and controlled women's movements in every part of life. Women were considered inferior to men; therefore, their role was to be at men's disposal, they were obliged to be submissive and servile. Both protagonists, Pamela and Sophia, are presented by the authors as controversially different characters that change the sense of servitude and obedience, in which women do not have to be men's properties.

2. Pamela and Sophia: the feminine moral integrity in the eighteenth century

2.1 *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*

This epistolary novel contains mostly the letters from Pamela (a young maiden) to her parents. Creating a mirror of society, Pamela's letters or those of her parents communicate the life, beliefs, and moral system of two social classes, that of the poor servants (the lower class) struggling to defend moral virtue as opposed to the upper classes (Pamela's master, a libertine aristocrat). Pamela's entire posture is guided by the firm protection of her bodily cleanliness before marriage, with her virginity contemptuously seen as her greatest "jewel" (Richardson, e-text), her greatest honour being dependent on the reputation of being chaste. In turn, "virtue and goodness" create "the true beauty" (Richardson, e-text), the Andrews warn Pamela, a spiritually-grounded beauty, as well as the source of her (moral) liberty. The code maintained by Pamela is deeply rooted in Protestant Christian values that accentuate moral probity resulting from humility, chastity, charity, faith, hope, forbearance, love, self-sacrifice, repentance, belief in divine deliverance and life after death. Richardson's discourse of morality is centred on the active espousal of the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love, backgrounded on chastity and having the other cardinal virtues as a natural concomitant pursuit. Pamela's high moral standards are in particular the result of her prudent observation of this combined set of virtues, whether theological or philosophical in nature.

The novel presents the relationship between master and servant in a domestic setting and refers to the social struggles and usual practices of society. The common practice involved the blind domination of the poor by the rich, while Pamela strives precisely to break this "code" imposed by the society's norms. It seems that Pamela is even more aware of social differences. and the norms attached to social status as she often wonders what was more important, being dutiful to one's social superior, or to God, or one's moral standards? She reminds her master many times of the great distance that separates them and, therefore, of the incorrectness (moral, social) of his assault. Pamela never gives in to forms of abuse (verbal, bodily, moral)

that echo through the novel, her fight being related to individual action, developing a woman's "voice" that goes against her master's wishes. She gains individuality due to her refusal to comply with the master's demands, the emergence of a (low born) woman as an individual agent being something new for that age. This change was done due to her morality, which was even more spectacular. Her interest in education and self-improvement by reading, or doing calculations, emphasizes the importance of intellectual development despite social inferiority and financial scarcity.

Pamela's preservation of virtue directs the squire's gradual reformation and further her own social elevation through a marriage of an uncommon kind, uniting members of two opposite social classes, that defined the importance of the family unit as its foundation, under the guiding light of balance, reciprocity of feeling, respect, merit, decency, prudence, proper education of children, etc. The correction of vice and indulgence in pleasure, along with the placation of the irrational employment of will and power are merits Pamela must be praised for.

2.2 *Sophia Western in The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*

Sophia Western is the new model of feminine virtue proposed by Henry Fielding, presented by the author as a heroine less withdrawn, more morally dynamic, and more attractive than the conventions would have allowed. Sophia is neither idealised nor mocked at and seems to be a more authentic character. She also owns flaws, runs away from home (shows her as independent spirit who chooses or is forced to seek the achievement of her goals elsewhere in the world in keeping in the bravery of her heart) and so she rebels against her father's wish to marry her with a man she did not love. In fact, she is modern in her strive to find love and happiness and to counteract forms of authority (her father, aunt, social conventions). Even if she behaves imprudently, she restrains herself "prudently" according to standards that enforce the virginity of unmarried women of a certain social rank and dictate a respect for property and authority, her virtue is not stereotypical or doubtful.

Sophia is both a symbol to inspire men to pursue virtue – for she attracts Tom into a virtuous, honourable type of living – and a self-supporting moral figure in her own right.

Fielding re-evaluated some key-attributes describing feminine virtue, such as modesty, fearfulness, intellectual and moral capacity, and deference. He reinstated the conventional pattern of feminine virtue with the necessity of courage, assertiveness, and fortitude without putting in danger the condition of ideal femininity. Sophia's escape at midnight is probably her most significant act of resistance to paternal authority. Her "spirit" involves both will and strength of mind as the narrator indicates, but also brings out softness. For her there is no room for pathetic crying or fainting because her steadiness of character is more valuable virtue than the display of immoderate comprehension. She combines solid moral clarity and personal integrity with the astuteness to make an accurate judgement of the merits of those around her. She has a hard time harmonizing her moral strength and will with her duty towards her father, and this conflict is happily resolved only due to her moral clear-sightedness. She responds to the demands of her heart in a natural way. For her, marriage is a union based on happiness, not "a fund in which prudent women deposit their fortunes to the best advantage" (Fielding, e-text), so she takes her life in her hands to avoid ruining her heart.

Sophia is different to other virtuous women due to her refusal to obey the conventions of society in which women were obliged to submit to the male authority. Her dismissal of male authority develops from her moral strength and, ultimately, when united in marriage with Tom, she is presented as the root of Tom's moral reformation. Her vision of domesticity rests on mutuality of feelings and respect, so there is no need of submissive defence anymore.

3. Conclusions

Despite the eighteenth-century mentality of the society, in Samuel Richardson's and Henry Fielding's novels, discourses of the heart, of the body, and of social and gender differences are settled by the force of reason, balance, determination, and unbending virtue. Domestic women were repressed from self-expression mainly because they could threaten the patriarchal order. Therefore, Pamela and Sophia are perhaps two of the few characters who dared to be outspokenly assertive.

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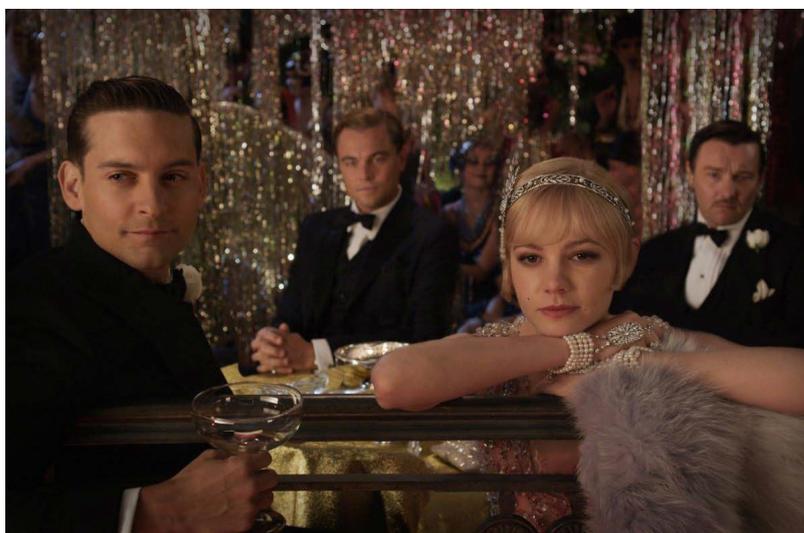
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The Symbolism of the Fallacy of the American Dream in “The Great Gatsby”

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1. Introduction

Lost Generation was more than just a label, it was a process of defining a unique literary life. Gertrude Stein, one of the greatest literary critics and writers in American literature, came up with this creative way of naming a certain group of writers of the 1920s. Writers such as F.S. Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Sylvia Beach, Virgil Geddes, Archibald MacLeish, Hart Crane, and others co-created this definition with their literary work. After World War I, certain illusions were broken and certain promises were forsaken. A lot of young writers, once soldiers, were influenced by a famous English poet, Wilfred Owen, who was not afraid to point at clear dichotomies: US and THEM. His poems bled with reality and later on, so did the new American best-sellers. Once pushed back into the oblivious reality, people could not find a proper “shape” of existence when they came back from the War. A lot of things, being unknown and repressed, created this fallacy of after-war life which imposed new psychological scars which were so blindly embraced by the majority. However, some writers dared to pursue disillusionment through art and realistic fiction that spoke volumes about the manipulation of the common perception and belief system. Such fallacy is described in “The Great Gatsby” by F. Scott Fitzgerald.



2. Analysis

2.1 *The paradox of the American dream*

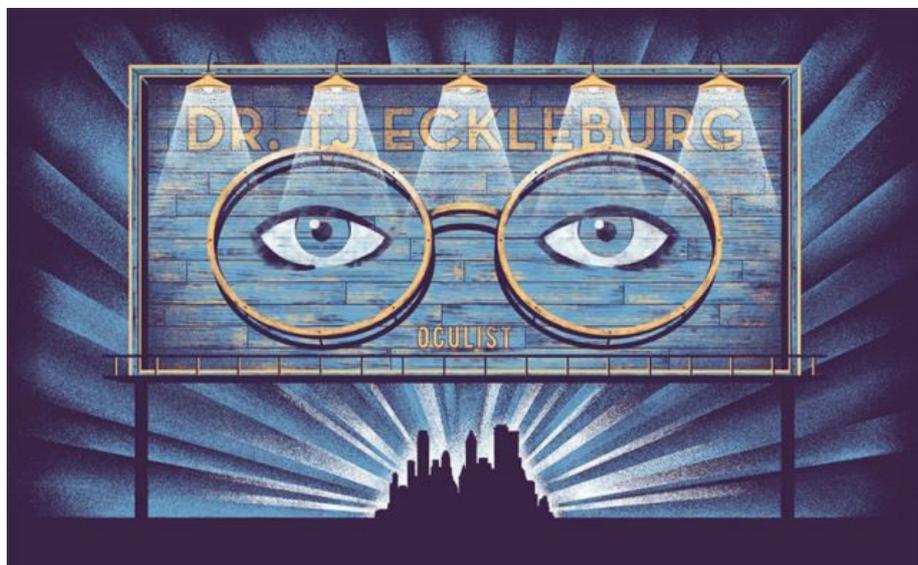
Since the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the concept of the American dream has come into a palpable shape. It referred to the power someone has to become whom they want to be and to achieve what they want no matter their background. The original idea of this concept seemed to have a good purpose; however, it created a multi-layered illusion. In the novel “The Great Gatsby”, we can notice the dichotomy of the Upper and Lower class. It is interesting to point that there is a distinction within the elite as well (Old Money and New money). At the beginning of the novel, the geographical symbolism (East vs. West Ends vs. The Valley of Ashes) imposes a huge gap in sustaining or obtaining a “proper” reputation. Nick Carraway, a young man who just came to the East End after having finished the university, became an objective, though startled, observer and reliable narrator of the compromised reality. Jay Gatsby, his rich neighbor, lives up to his mysterious persona and tries to fill



the emotional emptiness with the “hollow” perception of society. Everything is materialized which alludes to the normalized lack of sensibility in the 1920s. Gatsby’s parties are lavish and incredibly luxurious though there is nothing luxurious, morally speaking, in the eyes of his guests. Like ghosts, they pass through him and he doesn’t “see” them. Nick is perplexed because of the feeling of emptiness devouring the whole room, while shallow small talks, petty gossips, and snobbish laughter echo in the background. Everything Gatsby does, he does it for Daisy, Nick’s cousin who is married to the Old Money Tom Buchanan. When Daisy comes to his house without her husband, Gatsby tries his best to impress her with what he HAS and not with what he IS. Fitzgerald brilliantly satirizes the “logic” behind this behavior, clearly stating that, in those prosperous rooms, there is no space left nor it ever was any for genuine emotion. Shimmering with gold and silver, Gatsby manages to bring out Daisy’s confession of love. Gradually, Nick develops this internalized phobia of becoming one of those people, but his true friendship with Gatsby keeps him sane. Gatsby’s reputation is frowned upon because of his suspicious past and his poor breeding. Money here represents the identity of an individual and it shines as long as “one has everything it takes”. Both animate and inanimate things are viewed as objects. Myrtle Wilson, Tom’s mistress, buys a dog even though she doesn’t show any interest in him. She tries to be someone who she is not - rich. The impoverishment of her character contrasts with the morality of her husband George. The superficiality is emphasized through meaningless conversation at the parties which only highlights the outward reflection of the expected stream of consciousness. Everyone seeks some kind of materialization of their emotions, be that fake love, empty pride, utilized selfishness, desperate approval. Fitzgerald created a vicious circle, walking us through different stages of emotional hell. Characters are chasing their tails trying to find themselves and no one is open to “approving” the existence of another.

2.2. *Hidden symbolism*

One day, Nick and Tom go to Myrtle and her husband. On the way, they pass by the billboard which showcases the blurry glasses, deep eyes, and the name Dr. Eckleburg. Through objectivity, Fitzgerald already implied the common “blindness” among the characters, so it is quite understandable to have someone keeping their eyes open for them and share Nick’s burden of impartiality. Therefore, we can acknowledge that the symbolism behind these eyes represents God and karma. The fact the glasses are blurry only strengthens the implication that people slipped away from Lord’s embrace and that they truly believe they can live without consequences. These eyes lurk in the subconscious mind of the characters, leading them to the slippery road of realization. On the other side of the road, they pass by the so-called Valley of Ashes. The Valley of Ashes represents the symbolism of all social waste being claustrophobically compressed and ignored. The fact that Dr. Eckleburg looks right into the essence of the Valley of Ashes, implication is imposed that God sees everything and knows the address to all the destinies that have gone astray. When Daisy runs over Myrtle and kills her, she leaves the place of the accident without looking back. Later on, George failing to be rational kills Gatsby and then himself. As the novel progresses, the moral degradation gets more and more painful like an eyesore in a reader’s eye. The climax of moral poverty is shown after Gatsby’s death as no



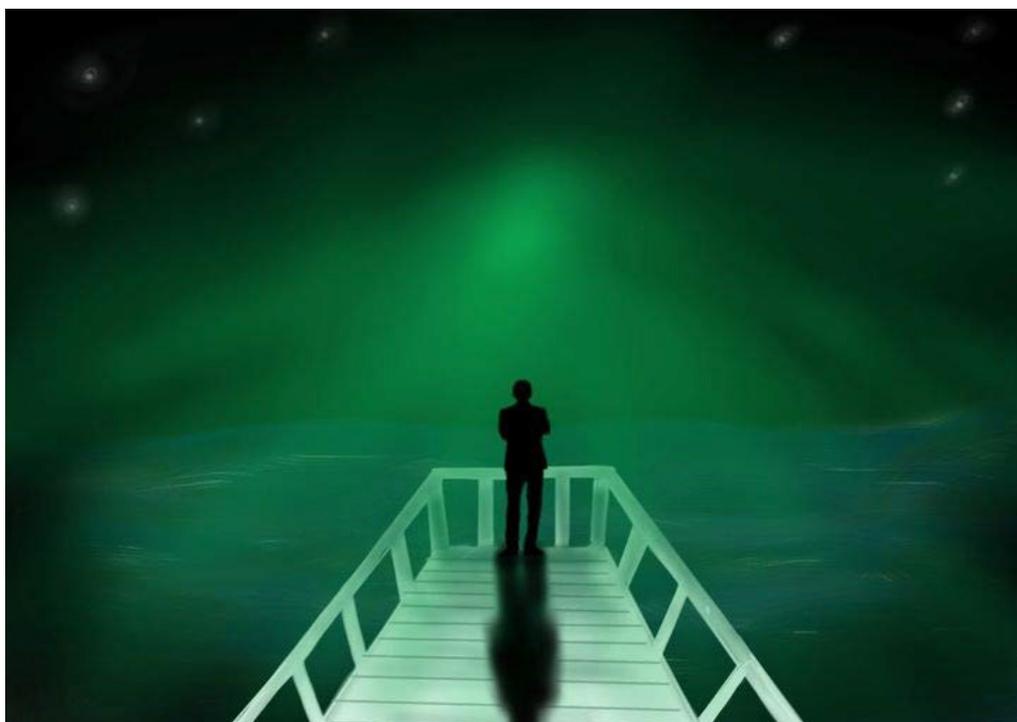
one wants to show up, not even Daisy. We get the feeling that Nick is our moral compass in the novel as he is disgusted with the lack of compassion and decency of the Upper class. When Tom tells him that Gatsby deserved to die, he just leaves without saying goodbye. Fitzgerald channels the art of banalization the human life through Nick’s statement that he felt like talking to a child when he met Tom. Children are always the symbol of a pure heart and empathy. However, the oxymoron is implied to show that

the new generations yet to come will be hollow and without integrity. Also, besides the allusion to Dante's "Inferno", there is the allusion to Thomas Eliot's poem "Hollow Men". Everyone, except for Nick, has "hollow eyes" walking on a thin bridge that is soon to collapse.

Another interesting point to take into consideration is the dichotomy of 'carpe diem' and the obsession with youth. The issue of early marriage is almost overlooked as it is, in fact, one of the most forced elements of the 'carpe diem' way of thinking in the early 1920s. However, the mentioned obsession with youth is rather toxic and destructive but crucial for both the characterization of time and the character development. In 'The Great Gatsby', Daisy Buchanan wishes to remain forever young and carefree which leads her to think that if she uses childish manners and forces immature way of talking, she can think and do whatever and whenever she wants without consequences. Other characters follow her lead but Nick Carraway does not want to fool himself any longer. He clearly distinguishes himself from others by saying: "I'm thirty. I'm five years too old to lie to myself and call it honor." This is the crucial moment when no justification can be made for being selfish, and for feeding illusory abusive and abused psyche¹.

2.3. *The cyclic analogy*

It is very interesting to note that this novel has a cyclic structure. The novel begins and ends the same way with the green light. Generally, the green color represents a mysterious and soothing effect in literature. There is also a flip side to this symbolism; it can represent tiredness and depression. However, there is a different meaning of the green light in "The Great Gatsby". First, we realize that the green light represents the American dream which is unobtainable for Gatsby. Although he is indeed rich, he doesn't have the right breeding. He desperately tries to be accepted by people who could not care less for him and he falls into the trap of creating this cult of glorified persona. Like the American dream implies, Gatsby builds his fortune from nothing, and it is not for us to question how he managed to do so. Nevertheless, all that gold couldn't buy Daisy's love, all those "castles" couldn't keep their "interesting" guests interested for long, all the mysterious shades of his character couldn't afford him respect. Only could his naïve and blind heart earn Nick's empathy and trust. The passionate quest for excessive fortune and success-driven calculations was in vain simply because of the cultural and moral degradation of collective consciousness and conscientiousness. We can also note that the green light represents not only the American dream but also Gatsby's dream of being with Daisy. Unlike Nick, he doesn't realize the fakeness and destructive force of Daisy's love. However, Gatsby isn't in fact in love with Daisy, but with her idealized version which is mirrored in Gatsby's insecurities. At the very end of the novel, Nick observes the green light and reflects on the distorted perception of the reality they all have lived. Unlike Gatsby, he doesn't stare hopelessly at the light itself, but rather at what the light "shines upon". Hauntings from the past and new beginnings are completely intertwined and they have to coexist at the same time for the beauty of paradox.



1 Prigozy, Ruth, ed. 2001. *The Cambridge Companion to F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge: Cambridge University, p.41

3. Conclusion

This novel emphasizes the destructive side to the illusions imposed by the American dream. It created a bigger gap in the class structure of the society, enriched only people's pockets, starved their souls to death both literary and figuratively. It created a paradoxical situation that was supposed to feel good and yet it had fatal consequences. One of the great writers of the lost generation J.Q. Wilson perfectly described this paradox by saying: "The expansion in personal freedom has been accompanied by a deep distrust". Was that freedom then? Probably not as each character felt imprisoned by the outer expectations. Also, there is an intentional omission of the description of nature although the writer so keenly uses the color green. That is to show that a man distanced himself from his instincts, better judgment, and calm rationality and that he plays only by the "binding" law of molding everyone in the same existence. The concept of the American dream idolized the perception of success and twisted the right meaning of true love and empathy. The fog of emotional ambiguity plays with the characters' state of mind which only emphasizes their thorny instability. Many writers of that time, just like Fitzgerald, felt this unbearable thick "air" that wouldn't let them breathe. That is why they would leave for Paris quite often and commit themselves to once again meaningless fun, alcohol, and philosophical discussions that sometimes lacked cohesion and depth, just so that they can escape feeling lost in their homeland. Still, no one got the chance to "go off" this addiction of faking life instead of living it.

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Stepping into the Word of God through... marriage

Dana-Iuliana Alupei (Tiliță), II, LEPC

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu

1. Introduction

“The perfect matrimony is the union of two beings; one who loves more and the other who loves better. The best religion available to the human race is Love.” Samael Aun Weor

The Holy Matrimony is one of the seven mysteries in the church by which the bride and groom share the divine grace that strengthens their bond by becoming one, in the image of the connection between Jesus Christ and His Bride, the Church.

This paper has its roots in two questions that I asked myself: the former is referred to the lack of the vows in the Orthodox church and the latter one is connected with the phrase “Until death do us part”, found in the Catholic church.

2. Theoretical background

In sociolinguistics, a register is a variety of language used for a particular purpose or in a particular communicative situation.

The term register was first used by the linguist T.B.W. Reid in 1956 and brought into general currency in the 1960s by a group of linguists who wanted to distinguish among variations in language according to the user and variations according to use, “in the sense that each speaker has a range of varieties and choices between them at different times” (Halliday et al., 1964). The focus is on the way language is used in particular situations.

Biber and Conrad, two American professors of applied linguistics take into consideration three main components when studying registers.

- The first one is defined by the situational characteristics as it has a huge impact on the choice of a specific register (cf. Biber and Conrad 2009: 6).

- Secondly, registers can be recognized by the distribution of some distinctive lexical and grammatical characteristics, taking into consideration that each register feature plays a particular role in order to match the situational context it belongs to.

- Thus, the third element is responsible for detecting these functions that link the features to the purpose of a specific situation (cf. Biber and Conrad 2009: 6).

We need to consider the register characteristics in identifying the register (Morărașu: 2014):

- should be clear and recognisable
- should have a basis on which it can function
- it ought to contain a particular degree of generality or specificity in order to be easily identified
- should be based on text types that can stand for the full register.

3. Religious register as specialized register

When we say religious register, we refer to “a construct that contains and conveys the knowledge of and about God, through an act of revelation.” Cmeciu (2020:161)

Religious register is a specialized register because we can use it in particular communicative situations. This can be done by a distinctive category of senders and receivers because the linguistic functions need to be valorized somehow.

We can spot some semantic and functional specificities in this type of specialized register and we can find it in three different communicative instances:

- When a priest delivers a speech to other priests (a specialist to other specialists)
- When a sermon is rendered at the end of a mass (a specialist to non-specialists)
- For example, when a priest writes an article to teenagers (building a specialized register about a concept in the area of speech, appealing to some relevant information to the target-audience).

4. From theory to...practice

Whenever we refer to sermons as genres of religious register we mean acts of “hearing the word of God through preaching, within the church service.” Cmeciu (2020:178)

The two samples of religious register brought into your attention represent important parts of the wedding ceremonies.

The former belongs to the Orthodox wedding religious ceremony while the latter one, to the Catholic wedding ceremony.

4.1 Orthodox wedding sermon

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Before we begin the crowning service, I’m charged to say a few words. And David and Elizabeth well know that I am seldom a man without words. But I feel unable really to say what I feel. I feel unable to speak with enough eloquence to describe my love for David and Elizabeth, and my desire and their desire to show their Orthodox faith to you, their family and their friends, and of course, our parish family, who of course already know their faith.

In order to begin to explain, I’d like to ask the question that is answered much differently to an Orthodox Christian than to the rest of the world-and that is “Why should we marry?” What is the purpose of marriage? Well, in the world, people marry because they fall in love, they have a mutual attraction to one another, they have mutual interests, they are compatible, not to be lonely. Those are all good reasons, and those all apply to David and Elizabeth. But the purpose of marriage is identical to the purpose of life, identical to the purpose of monasticism, which involves, of course, no marriage at all, but the celibate life. The purpose of marriage for those who are in the married state is the mutual salvation of the soul.

.....

Now, none of us, if we have any sense about us, should be able to say such things as I just said and not feel some guilt that we have not reached this goal. God forgives, though, those who try, those who help. In marriage we are made strong enough, because God is in everything we do. St. Paul quotes Genesis, “therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” And then he says “and this is a mystery, of Christ and the Church.”

So marriage is an image of our relationship with Christ. Let the world romanticize it; let the world speak of attraction and mutual interests and such things; we will speak of the salvation of the soul. So, David and Elizabeth, your charge before God is to assist one another in the salvation of your souls. That is your task in life, and that is why God has brought you together. Amen!”

Rendered by Priest Seraphim Holland

4.2. Catholic wedding sermon

Becoming One (Gen 2:24; Eph 5:31)

“N and N, I don’t need to tell you that today marks a complete new beginning in the lives of both of you. Your wedding lasts only today, but your marriage is for the rest of your lives. Today you both go back to school again, the school of marriage. Today you begin to learn again, to learn to love each other in a deeper way. You are joining yourselves to each other today to become one, without, of course, losing your individuality. Becoming one doesn’t happen overnight. It is something that you will learn and become better at as you share your married life together. Becoming one means loving each other, sharing your lives with each other, taking each other into consideration always. Becoming one means getting rid of all selfishness out of your lives because there is no room for selfishness in marriage. If selfishness is not rooted out or creeps in later on, it’s sure to cause problems. If God blesses your marriage with children, then you will also take your children into consideration in all that you do. Marriage is a school of love.”

Rendered by Rev Father Richard J. Fairchild

The analytical framework belonging to Biber and Conrad spotlights some situational characteristics that are worth discussing and which share some similarities.

In the context of Catholicism, within wedding ceremonies, a sermon is often referred to as a homily . As for Orthodoxism, this type of sermon has a special addressor in the person of a priest or a deacon, whereas in the Catholic church the addressor is called Reverend father. They render the homilies in front of some addressees, meaning a couple newly married. In both religions, the family, friends and acquaintances

invited to the wedding may be viewed as on-lookers.

As for the relations among the above participants, there is an interaction created between the priest/ the reverend father rendering the sermons and the bride and groom, but also between the guests invited. The relation is established between bride and groom, having the social role of husband and wife (not being single anymore) and also having a personal relation with the guests invited.

In relation to the channel this sermon is rendered, we may highlight that is spoken and interactive, having a specific addressor, the priest/the reverend father and specific addressees: the couple newly-wed.

As for the production and comprehension circumstances of these sermons, the speeches are produced in real time. The priest and the reverend father are producing language at the same time that they are thinking about what they want to say.

The setting is of special importance and we can say that the context of communication is shared by the participants:

- they are here which represents the physical context of communication
- they are in a private communication (due to the event they have been planning), but they are also in a specific setting that is in the church
- in the contemporary time.

The communicative purpose of these sermons draws into our attention its specificity, that of uniting two people in the Holy Matrimony.

The expression of stance includes the priest/reverend father's attitude towards marriage and also in connection with the word of God as they summarize the Gospel they have read from in order to make the couple understand what marriage is. They overtly express both their opinions on marriage and the teachings of God related to the life of the newly married couple.

Even if it is a religious sermon, the topic varies to a sub-register, a wedding sermon, that is why we distinguish among the main register, that of religion, a specific topic, that of marriage.

Besides similarities, these two sermons have also differences. One important difference between the Orthodox and Catholic register is the service performed in these two churches. Both ceremonies have prayers, hymns, beautiful ritual actions but within the Orthodox church there are no wedding vows recited by the couple. The reason for which there is no such a ritual during the religious ceremony is that Orthodoxy views both marriage and the wedding in a very different way.

On the one hand, in Roman Catholic church, there is a sacrament, a word derived from Latin, sacramentum, meaning an oath, a contractual obligation between two parties, so when there is a contract, you need vows as well.

On the other hand, in Orthodox church, the word used for such practices is not sacramentum, but mystery, something incomprehensible, something that one can experience but cannot fully explain. That is why the couple says nothing at all, everything happens around them, it happens to them, they participate but speak not a word because love is not a contract, love is not terms and conditions, but a great mystery that cannot be proved but experienced. They enter the church two separate people and they leave as one single image of this eternal mystery.

Another important aspect that is worth mentioning is that the Orthodox Church strongly believes that marriages contracted on earth remain in place in Heaven, whereas Catholics believe that marriages are dissolved at death.

In analyzing text varieties, linguistic description plays an important part. As Biber and Conrad (2009) propose three perspectives in which we can do that, we will focus on the register analysis, spotting lexical and grammatical features.

Morphologically speaking, vocabulary features are distributed in such a way so that the religious register can turn into a specialized one. We can spot out the typical beginning of the Orthodox sermon: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen" The priest and the reverend father appeal to common words, among which we can enumerate nouns, such as: "marriage", "love", "faith", "salvation", "relationship", "beginning", "school", "selfishness", "children" and also adjectives: "compatible", "lonely", "mutual", "strong". These words are not used in vain but with a certain purpose, having the function of linking not only other parts of speech but building the word of God in the newly-wed couple. Another category of words encountered in both sermons and used as vocatives, are verbs, such as: "explain", "marry", "apply", "involve", "leave", "speak", "last", "join", "become", "bring", "share" that mean to guide the couple and offer them a good start in life.

Notably, at the syntactical level, words are linked in such a way to make up long sentences and clauses (adverbial nonfinite clauses, situated in initial position: “Becoming one means loving each other”, especially in the Catholic sermon, complement that clauses, serving to complete the meaning of a noun or verb in a sentence: “I know that...”; “You see that your task is that of...”. In order to connect with coordinate sentences both the priest and the reverend father try to create more coherent paragraphs when speaking and relate ideas of equal importance.

In the Orthodox sermon, the priest uses some rhetorical questions: “Why should we marry?” “What is the purpose of marriage?”, which seem to be a very effective communication tool while rendering his speech, because these questions provide him a way of controlling both what he is saying and the thoughts of those in the audience. They can also be used with the intent of engaging those present and persuading them to agree with him.

As for the style of the addressors delivering these sermons, specialists in the field have drawn the conclusion that “there are three characteristics that make a good speech: plainness, force and beauty”. While plainness refers to its attribute of being simple, force in speech makes it penetrative. Whereas plainness is more external when connected with the mind, force is more internal. These two qualities can be detected in the above sermons. As for the third element, the priest and the reverend father make beauty of style subservient to plainness and force.

5. Conclusions

As this occasional religious register targets cognitive and actional changes of the audience we observe that the dominant tonality, depends on the both addressors’ capacity of manipulating the linguistic matter. We refer here to the linguistic competence:

- different ways of arranging the linguistic stuff;
- the situational competence, which regards the capacity of the social practices of a certain community, some specialized socio-linguistic practices which govern the speech contract;
- the discursive competence, which refers to the number and nature of the activities realized during the act of communication, these discursive strategies having multiple effects, especially on the audience.

This way, the preachers can not only encourage, teach, suggest, advise on a certain conduct, not because it would not have the deontic authority to do so, but because, especially facing such a diverse audience, the performance of the act of speaking grows with increasing epistemic authority or its confirmation through these speeches they render.

And they lived happily ever after...



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Exploring Racism in *The Lonely Londoners* by Samuel Selvon (1956)

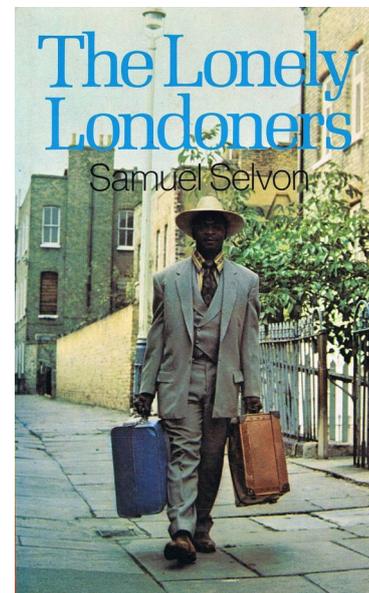
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1. Introduction

This paper aims to explore racism in *The Lonely Londoners*, a 1956 novel by Trinidadian author Samuel Selvon. Its publication was one of the first to focus on poor, working-class Afro-Caribbean people, following the enactment of the British Nationality Act in 1948 alongside George Lamming's *The Emigrants* (1954). Like the author, Samuel Dickson Selvon, who was born in San Fernando in the south of Trinidad on 20 May 1923, the sixth of seven children of Indian origin. He established himself in London, England, in the 1950s, where he worked as a clerk for the Indian Embassy, while writing in his spare time. On a return trip to Trinidad Selvon died of respiratory failure due to extensive bronchopneumonia and chronic lung disease on 16 April 1994.



1.1. Historical context

The historical context of this novel is based on 'The Windrush Generation' whose name refers to a ship 'the Empire Windrush' which left the Caribbean



to travel thousands of miles across the Atlantic in 1948 up

to 1970. The passengers were young men and women who had served in the British armed forces after WWII. By then, many Caribbean countries were still under British rule and not yet independent. This was the first time numerous Caribbean people had come to live in Britain. Many of them experienced racism and discrimination and often found it difficult to get a proper home to live in and to make friends with British people.

1.2. Identity and self-consciousness

The title *The Lonely Londoners* expresses the sense of isolation experienced by Caribbean immigrants when they came to London. The various scenes form a whole to mirror the reality with the central character of Trinidadian origin called Moses Aloetta. He is a veteran émigré who, after more than ten years in London, has still not achieved anything of note and whose homesickness increases as he gets older.

2. Main characters

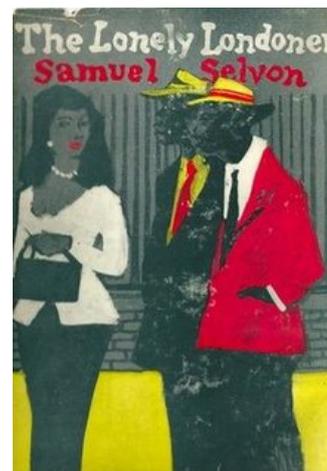
Furthermore, the characters in this novel act as a mirror to reveal the readers how life was at that time. For instance, there is the protagonist Moses - an old veteran in London, who helps new immigrants settle in the city. Thus, there is also Sir Galahad (Henry Oliver) - he is a new immigrant in Great Britain. He is picked up by Moses from Waterloo. Thus, there are also female characters such as Tanty - a character's elderly aunt who migrated to London. Her duty is to take care of the children. Also, there is The Reporter - A newspaper reporter Moses talks to, at Waterloo Station who asks why so many Jamaicans are coming to London.

3. Racism

The issue of racism is a crucial topic that is portrayed in various forms all throughout the novel. Below, there is an example of how prejudiced The Reporter was with Moses. Instead of asking Moses about the consequences of the natural disaster, he preferred to focus on the immigrants coming to London as if it

was a worse issue to consider.

[Reporter] “Excuse me sir, have you just arrived from Jamaica?”
 [Moses] “The situation is desperate, you know the big hurricane it had two weeks ago?”
 [Reporter] “Yes? The reporter say (...)”
 [Moses] “The hurricane blow the roof off”
 [Reporter] “But tell me, sir, why are so many Jamaicans immigrating to England?”. (p. 7)



3.1. Segregation

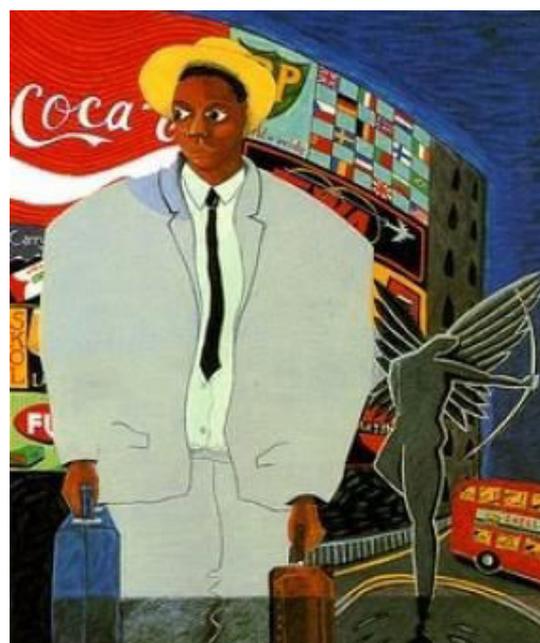
Moreover, the matter of Segregation is also present. The skin color of the characters is broadly mentioned throughout the novel, so being a ‘black’ person coming from Jamaica, represents social and economic differences among the society.

“So don’t expect that they will treat you like anybody special – to them you will be just another one of them black Jamaicans who coming to London thinking that the streets are paved with gold”. (page 22)

3.2. Survival

What’s more, the act of surviving is also present overall because apart from having to find a job and a place to live, the characters in the novel had to manage with economic and social difficulties shown in the following examples.

“So what Moses could do when these fellars land up hopeless, one the doorstep with one set of luggage, no place to sleep, no place to go? (p. 3) [...] “And furthermore, let me give you my view of the situation in this country. We can’t get no place to live, and we only getting the worse jobs [...]” (p. 8)



3.3. Integration

The following example illustrates how stressful and frustrating integration was and how sympathetic the reader can get to the situations described.

[Narrator] “But all the same he went out with them, because he used to remember how desperate he was when he was in London for the first time and didn’t know anybody or anything”. (p. 3)
 Also, this is a topic that is portrayed as an idealization. That is to say, the author conveys the desperation to belong to a racist and unequal society at that time.

3.4. Alienation

This mixture of inequalities provoked a sense of Alienation to some of the characters, as seen in the next example:

“As if he could see the black faces bobbing up and down in the millions of white, strained faces, everybody hustling along the Strand, the spades jostling in the crowd, bewildered, hopeless.” (p. 139)

The main character, Moses, expresses his thoughts of rejection, frustration and hopelessness.

3.4. *Language and racism*

An important feature of *The Lonely Londoners* is the narrative voice. Selvon started writing the novel in standard English but soon discovered that kind of language would not aptly convey the experiences and thoughts of the characters in the novel. When creating a third person narrator who uses the same creolized form of English as the characters of the novel, the author added a multicultural dimension to the traditional novel and enhanced the awareness in both readers and writers of a changing society.

The language used by Selvon's characters and by the narrator contains a vernacular type of language. For instance, in the example below, from a descriptive grammar point of view, there is the use of 'it have' instead of 'it has', there is also the use of the contraction 'ain't' as 'it is not' and the use of the pronoun 'we' in subject function rather than in object function which is the way Standard English works.

“What I mean is the impression on the English people how the papers always talking about fellars coming up here to work and creating problem. I mean, it have a lot of other fellars who come to study and visit and so on. It ain't only hustlers like we.” (p.75)

This type of language shows the authenticity and the reality of London at that time. Multiculturalism and postcolonial topics were present in all contexts. For example, topics such as identity, self-consciousness, the representation of women or even alienation are topics that describe a timeline in the history of Caribbean immigrants.

4. **Conclusion**

In conclusion, racism and other postcolonial topics regarding race injustice are portrayed with the difficulty of getting used to surviving in a foreign country that is not so tolerant. Also, the significant portrayal of the Windrush Generation and their community provides a realistic background to the reader and this fact can help the reader sympathize with the immigrants' situation.

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Woman's ambition as evil

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In the Victorian period, superstitions related to magic - and particularly regarding the woman as a personification of evil magic – were common in England, especially in the rural communities. As an outsider with uncanny powers, a woman would not need to set a house on fire in order to be branded as a worker of black magic by her community. Back in those days, accusations of witchcraft were made to anyone without any probable cause.

The witch represented a challenge to the patriarchal society and the subject made its mark on literature too. At first sight, witchcraft and the supernatural may seem strange subjects through which to approach the works of Thomas Hardy, but his interest in rural traditions gives us a picture of contemporary superstitions about witchcraft.

Any reader of Thomas Hardy's novels is soon aware of the great interest the author lavished on his women characters. "Hardy created a wide range of interesting and irresistible female characters that are guided by instincts and can be defined as 'seductive Eves.'" ¹

Numerous critics are of the opinion that in *The Return of the Native*, Thomas Hardy highlights a complicated and enthralling character in Eustacia Vye. He describes her in terms rather foreign to the common dweller on the heath and thus sets her apart from her fellow human beings – in other words, she is presented as a genuine woman in opposition to an idealised one. It is because of this, I believe, that I found myself rooting for Eustacia over Thomasin.

"Although both Eustacia Vye and Thomasin Yeobright are limited by their surroundings and patriarchal ideology of their society, their attitudes and responses to these limitations reveal the differences between these two characters."² In contrast to Eustacia, whose personality is impulsive, capricious, wayward, and rebellious, Thomasin follows the society's expectations and embodies the stereotypical Victorian ideal of a woman.

Eustacia Vye is first seen as a solitary figure against a fiery background. By revealing her slowly to the reader, Hardy creates an aura of mystery and attraction about her. At first, she is portrayed by the narrator in a simple manner: "That she was tall and straight in build, that she was ladylike in her movements, was all that could be learnt of her just now..." (p. 44)

Furthermore, in the chapter *Queen of Night*, Hardy dwells luxuriously upon Eustacia's dark beauty, her moral isolation, and her nocturnal mystery:

"She had Pagan eyes, full of nocturnal mysteries, and their light, as it came and went, and came again, was partially hampered by their oppressive lids and lashes; and of these the under lid was much fuller than it usually is with English women. [...] Assuming that the souls of men and women were visible essences, you could fancy the colour of Eustacia's soul to be flame-like. The sparks from it that rose into her dark pupils gave the same impression." (p. 74)

He reveals her passionate personality through his description of her sensual beauty and by associating her with fiery images.

The character's position as an outsider, her dark beauty and lonely habits give the heath inhabitants the reason to refer to Eustacia as a witch. In fact, this is how we are first introduced to her:

"He means, sir, that the lonesome dark-eyed creature up there that some say is a witch—ever I should call a fine young woman such a name—is always up to some odd conceit or other; and so perhaps 'tis she.

I'd be very glad to ask her in wedlock, if she'd hae me and take the risk of her wild dark eyes ill-wishing me," said Grandfer Cattle staunchly." (p. 41)

Timothy Fairway is loath to call her a witch as a consequence of Eustacia's youth and beauty, while

1 Cătălina Bălinișteanu-Furdu, *The fabrication of Tess of the d'Urbervilles as femme fatale*, p. 67

2 <http://www.tjprc.org/publishpapers/2-40-1376981394-1.%20Holding%20mirror.full.pdf> (retrieved October 1, 2021).

at the same time it's her attractive wild dark eyes which make this identification probable.

Eustacia's eye-catching beauty is highlighted and expanded in full detail in order to emphasise the difference between her and the women of the Victorian Era. Hardy does not hesitate to describe the heroine in supernatural terms, as when he describes Eustacia "the raw material of divinity" that has such "passions and instincts which make [her] a model goddess [...], but not quite a model woman". In this particular case, the Pagan association can be seen as an expression of Eustacia's ambition to escape from conventions and morals. In John Paterson's opinion, the female character was intentionally "conceived by Hardy as a witch in virtually the literal sense of the term"³. Eustacia's playful reference to herself as the Witch of Endor takes on increased significance through the lens of Hardy's original intent⁴.

Eustacia is branded to such a degree that she is physically assaulted in church, having been blamed for the illness of Susan Nunsuch's children:

"All the folk jumped up and then we found that Susan Nunsuch had pricked Miss Vye with a long stocking-needle, as she had threatened to do as soon as ever she could get the young lady to church, where she don't come very often. She've waited for this chance for weeks, so as to draw her blood and put an end to the bewitching of Susan's children that has been carried on so long. Sue followed her into church, sat next to her, and as soon as she could find a chance in went the stocking-needle into my lady's arm." (p. 129)

In fighting the supposed power of the evil, Susan herself "has taken on some of the functions of a witch"⁵, but "her main purpose here is to serve as an objectification of the community's feelings toward this extraordinary creature"⁶, Eustacia, whose superior qualities of mind, emotion and spirit are misunderstood.

The female heroine was never considered by the people of Edgon Heath as one of their own. Living in her own world without respecting the social conventions and cultural norms, she is thought to be an unconventional woman.

The difference between Eustacia and her husband, Clym Yeobright is also sharply emphasized in terms of personal ambition. Eustacia has a strong will for autonomy and wishes to liberate herself from the conventions of the heath. Clym loves his fellow creatures whereas Eustacia hates them with passion: "I have not much love for my' fellow creatures. Sometimes I quite hate them." (p. 244) John Paterson in *The Poetics of 'The Return of the Native'* (1960) appreciates Eustacia's passionate personality as a reflection of the "Promethean rebelliousness" (p. 220). She "sees the heath as an obstacle to her freedom and to her chance to fulfil her dreams. Frustrated by her role and the place she lives in, she attempts to save herself from the traditional way of life in the heath."⁷ She has no intention of complying with its conventions as long as she cannot understand "why a woman of this sort could live on Egdon Heath?" (p. 74)

Despite the fact that the female heroine does not see people of the heath worthy of her consideration, "she is an idealist whose quarrel is with Fate, not with the inhabitants around her"⁸. As a child she had been left in the care of her grandfather, Captain Vye, who had chosen Edgon Heath as a place to live after his retirement from sea duty. "She hated the change" (p. 78) from Budmouth and "felt like one banished; but there she was forced to abide." (p. 220) With the passing years, Edgon Heath become more and more desolate to her: "I cannot endure the heath, except in its purple season." (p. 220) Only during the spring season, the heath seemed endurable to the Queen of the Night. The rest of the year, as the reddleman affirms, Edgon was jail to her.

Hardy's vision of man's greatness in spirit and his littleness in the Universe "keeps the tragic balance between Fate and personal responsibility"⁹. Eustacia acts against the eternal recurrence of nature (Friedrich Nietzsche) and as a result of her tragic flaw, she harms herself and even endangers the lives of others through the use of her ambition. Because she cannot compromise with reality, similar to Emma

3 John Paterson, *The Return of the Native as Antichristian Document*, 1959, p. 114.

4 Ibidem, p. 65

5 Ruth Lazelle Couch, *Women and Thomas Hardy: A study of sex-linked qualities in the characters*, Arkansas, 1958, p. 135.

6 Ibidem, p. 135

7 <http://www.tjprc.org/publishpapers/2-40-1376981394-1.%20Holding%20mirror.full.pdf> (retrieved October 1, 2021).

8 LuJuana Wolfe Treadwell, *Hardy's dark ladies*, 1966, Arizona, p. 44.

9 Jean R. Brooks, *Thomas Hardy – The Poetic Structure*, London, 1971, p. 18

Bovary, Hardy's heroine seems unwilling to enjoy life with a husband who cannot help her enter the social life she thinks she would enjoy. Finally, as Madame Bovary, Eustacia cannot escape her own nature and dies while still young without having achieved either her wild ambitions or the modest success possible in her environment.

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Racism and the difficulties of assimilation in Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*

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Assimilation stands as a persistent problem in modern times, as well as in the past, and is tackled in revolutionary way by Sam Selvon in "Lonely Londoners". As an immigrant himself, Selvon knows how to perfectly bring to life the everyday struggles of immigrants in larger countries. The reason why "Lonely Londoners" is so special is that it uses a different narrative from novels with similar themes. The narration is done in third person, by a narrator who uses the same form of language as the characters in the novel. Done deliberately by Selvon for the specific purpose of more accurately conveying the issues his characters face every day. The West Indians are plunged into this new world of promise headfirst, only relying on stories told to them by those who had left their homeland before, most with nothing but the clothes on their back. In order to succeed in this new land they must find a way to fit in among the whites, who look down on them, distrust them and even make fun of them for being who they are. Selvon describes the assimilation process in a way that seems perfectly sensible to the immigrants, but completely incomprehensible to white Londoners. This paper will present the many problems Selvon's characters had with assimilation and racism and how it ties in to Selvon's motive and the message his novel conveys, as well as how relevant it is to current times.

Selvon's characters are doomed from the start in a way. Because of their laid-back attitude they are having a hard time adjusting to the new way of life. Their love of women, cigarettes and other vices gets in the way of making a living or holding an apartment. All of them have at least a one problem that prevents them from assimilating, except Moses, who, true to his name, serves a sort of guardian shepherd for all of them, going out to meet new arrivals and helping older immigrants solve their problems. As one of the first immigrants, he knows the most about London and seems to have carved out a decent life for himself, so he ends up trying to help others even though he doesn't want to. The first problem in assimilating is presented early on, with the character Galahad:

"Sir Galahad was a fellar like that, and he was trying hard to give Moses the feeling that everything all right, that he could take care of himself, that he don't want help for anything. So that same morning when they finish eating Moses tell him that he will go with him to help him find a work, but Galahad say: 'Don't worry man, I will make out for myself'." (19)

Galahad is deeply entrenched in his Trinidadian ways and he is used to playing „boldface“ back in Trinidad, so he thinks the same strategy will work in London. Particularly because of that reason he does not succeed in finding a job and asks for Moses' help in the end, which he gladly provides, having proven his point.

The previous point of the immigrants being „doomed from the start“ is further emphasized in the character of Bartholomew, or Bart. As a lighter skinned black immigrant he devised a lie that he was Latin-American in order to be accepted into the community more quickly. He also guards his money viciously, which allows him to stay better-off than his immigrant friends. Unfortunately, he runs into trouble only because of his race, when he gets thrown out of his white girlfriend's apartment by her father before he manages to tell him he is Latin-American, because the father didn't want any „curly-haired grandkids“. So Selvon's immigrants have to work not only around changing their own ways, but also around the racism projected at them by the whites, which, of course, is nearly impossible to do.

The third example of failed assimilation is the Nigerian, Cap. He was actually sent to London to study, but ended up wasting all his money on women and cigarettes, and then went even further by hustling other women into giving him their money to finance more debauchery. This example is a stereotypical presentation of a black immigrant, as seen in the eyes of the racist whites. The character serves the story

to show that not all the immigrants were wronged by the whites and the cruel world, but some of them had a chance to settle themselves, but ended up wasting it. The elder, Moses, gathers the immigrants every Sunday at his place to exchange stories and enquire about other immigrants whom they haven't seen for some time. By doing this, the immigrants are creating a safe haven for themselves in which they are free of responsibilities and injustice. They also change the names of London's landmarks and important locations to something that is easier to remember, in turn making progress in the assimilation process. This, however, proves not to be enough because the constant repetition of their bad habits keeps leading them into tough situations. The western capitalist culture makes it even harder for the immigrants to settle because, as Moses says:

“the people living in London . . . don't know what happening in the room next to them, far more the street, or how other people living. London is a place like that. It divide up in little worlds, and you stay in the world you belong to and you don't know anything about what happening in the other ones except what you read in the papers. Them rich people who does live in Belgravia and Knightsbridge and up in Hampstead and them other plush places, they would never believe what it like in a grim place like Harrow Road or Notting Hill. Them people who have car, who going to theatre and ballet in the West End, who attending premiere with the royal family, they don't know nothing about hustling two pound of brussel sprout and half-pound potato, or queuing up for fish and chips in the smog.” (p. 58)

The very nature of London as a metropolis is such that nobody knows each other, familiar people cannot be randomly seen on the street every day, making the Trinidadians feel even further from home, since that is not the case in their country. The differences between the rich and the poor are so vast that the immigrants sometimes feel insignificant compared to the rich whites. Nobody pays attention to them, nobody cares about their homes, their jobs, their financial status, or the lack thereof. Moses complains about the complete and utter ignorance of the higher class of citizenship towards the West Indians, which makes fitting in that much harder. Unfortunately, the immigrants know nobody cares about them, which gives them a feeling of not wanting to be a part of such an environment.

The immigrants also regard relations with whites as a part of assimilation. Most of the immigrants have relations with white women, they go on dates, make love, or get financed, as in the case of Captain. They consider it a normal thing, a way of getting accepted into the community. In truth it might have helped in some cases, but the boys would never find out. Galahad, for example, made progress in that area as well as finding himself a job after listening to Moses and it turned out he was doing better than anyone imagined. In truth, their adventures with white women and vices are a sort of defense mechanism necessary to pull through the assimilation process.

The biggest problem the immigrants face in London is racism. While not as extreme as American racism was, with strict laws and regulations for blacks, British racism still presents a hurdle in the immigrants' way. The British, being inherently of a polite culture and demeanor, do not bluntly tell the immigrants they are not wanted but instead subtly let them know they are not welcome and deny some service, or provide other services with less quality than they would have done for white Britons. As Moses told it, „In America you see a sign telling you to keep off, but over here you don't see any, but when you go in the hotel or restaurant they will politely tell you to haul—or else give you the cold treatment.“ (24) So the immigrants do have it better in London, although they keep having issues with the local populace. Most of Selvon's characters in this novel are presented as vagrants or hustlers, which further increases the belief in racial stereotypes on the surface. The actual purpose of this kind of characterization was to present the Trinidadian immigrants to the people of London as group of honest men spoiled by the big city. They are not inherently the way they are, but instead the strength to change required of them to adjust to this new way of life was too great, and having failed to do it, they had to make their own way as best they could. At the time the novel was written, racism was still a problem in the western world and Selvon purposefully tried to portray his characters in that way in order to make white readers understand what it means to be a black immigrant. As has always been in history, racism is a product of fear and hate without valid reason. This fear is exactly

the reason why Moses and his boys have such difficulties with Britons. The whites fear them. They fear that the immigrants will have some abilities they don't have. They fear that the immigrants will be too many and take over all of their jobs, even when that is not the case. Once again Moses proves to be an intellectual and rational person:

“These days spades all over the place, and every shipload is big news, and them English people don't like the boys coming to England to work and live.’

‘Why is that?’ Galahad ask.

‘Well, as far as I can figure, they frighten that we get job in front of them, though that does never happen. The other thing is that they just don't like black people, and don't ask me why, because that is a question that bigger brains than mine trying to find out from way back.’”(20)

An age old problem, the irrational fear and hate of those with a different skin color perplexes even the experienced Moses. The other immigrants have come to terms with the injustice of being hated and considered lesser beings just because of their skin color, but not Galahad. Being a little different from the rest, actually wanting to succeed in this world and putting in effort by finding a job, an apartment, dating a white girl and avidly learning names of landmarks in London, Galahad has a hard-hitting monologue while talking to his own hand:

“Color, is you that causing all this, you know...You know is you that cause a lot of misery in the world. Is not me, you know, is you! I ain't do anything to infuriate the people and them, is you! Look at you, you so black and innocent, and this time so causing misery all over the world!” (77)

Galahad just cannot accept that he is wronged simply for being colored the wrong way and he chastises his own hand for bringing all this misfortune upon him. Seeing a man scold his own hand, especially in the twisted form of language he uses is comical, but ultimately tragic. The scene perfectly depicts the heartbreak of one wrongfully mistreated and the realization of not being wanted, in turn triggering the previously mentioned coping mechanisms of indulging in cigarettes, alcohol and women. There is also a fear of the whites imprinted in the immigrants' minds, as seen when Moses has trouble with a sick white girl. He fears what the police would do to him if they found her sick under his watch.

One character who seems to have succeeded is Oliver Harris. He throws a party and is embarrassed by his immigrant friends because he thinks they will turn the dance into a brawl but is put in his place by Tanty. In a sad twist of fate, Harris has assimilated, but is starting to shun and disrespect his fellow immigrants, simply because of being richer than them, similar to the Britons.

Tanty is a character from Jamaica, from Tolroy's family, who is completely oblivious to British racism. She is outspoken and honest, which makes her unable to understand why the British would dislike her. That is evident in the very start of the novel when she is interviewed by a journalist about her reasons for coming to London. Tolroy knows the journalist does not care about them, that he only needs a few statements for the paper, but Tanty thinks he is serious. She calls her entire family over to get their photo taken and frankly tells the reporter that she is there because the pay would be better for her family members. This way she unknowingly enforces the racist and stereotypical representation of black immigrants in London. This whole event does matter a great deal because, according to Moses, the whites regard the newspaper as the Bible and what they see there is what they believe and enforce.

When a bad season for work strikes, everything seems to revert back to the start, when the immigrants were new and had nothing. Galahad and Cap are catching birds for food and Galahad and Moses discuss their difficulties with life in London. Both of them are still not assimilated, even after the three years which this novel covers and things are not getting any better. They express their dissatisfaction with London life but also conclude that they would not go back to their homeland. Here we see the allure of the big city which has trapped so many immigrants and will not let them go. Selvon knows this well, as he was once in their place, albeit not in the same bad conditions.

In the end it all comes back to the safe haven the immigrants have crafted for themselves – the Sunday mornings at Moses' place, recounting interesting events, inquiring about friends, making plans for the future and generally complaining how bad they have it in London. Slowly slipping into monotony,

every Sunday becomes the same for them, and for Moses. Moses is increasingly homesick, but he still doesn't want to return to Trinidad, even though he would have a safe future there, because, in a way, he has assimilated into the poorer citizenship of London. Being there so long and doing the same things over and over again has caused him to stop caring so much about whether he is in London or back home in Trinidad and he has accepted life as it is.

In conclusion, Sam Selvon's "The Lonely Londoners" is a book with a serious social topic that is relevant in recent times as well as in the past. Assimilation is the biggest obstacle any immigrant has in moving to a new country and learning life in it. Selvon portrayed his characters with the purpose to show the white readers how difficult assimilation is and how the immigrants are not a malady set upon them to make their lives harder, but only people in need of a decent living. The same factors apply to an attempt at eliminating racism, stereotypes and prejudices Britons had towards blacks, as well as those the rich had towards the poor. Racism is criticized further in Galahad's heartfelt monologue with a clear message to whites that there is no real difference between them and the blacks but simple geography and misfortune in life and society.

The use of a creolized dialect of English served to bring the characters to life and to bring the Trinidadian immigrant culture closer to Britons. Weaving in comical elements, irony, sarcasm and dark humor with a section written in the stream of consciousness style Selvon made the novel as appealing as it could possibly be to a wide audience. The issues raised in this paper are of great importance to the western world, which is where most immigrants go. In the society of today, there are many Galahads, Captains and similar characters who appear to come straight of Selvon's pen, simply because he told the story exactly how it was. The story of strangers in a strange land trying to carve out a decent life for themselves, ultimately failing and stagnating but teaching millions of readers around the world what it means to be an unwelcome immigrant.

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Contemporary Perspectives on Gender Roles during the Victorian Age

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1. How can we define gender roles?

According to The World Health Organization, gender roles are “socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women”¹. With the conceptions of masculinity and femininity at its core, the term was first used by John Money in 1954 in his study of intersex individuals. There is an ongoing debate as to what extent gender roles are biologically determined, and to what extent they are socially constructed. In this context, we must appreciate the efforts led by the feminist movements which never ceased to try to modify matters of prevailing gender roles they viewed as inappropriate.

2. Aspects of gender roles during the Victorian Society

Women from all classes were expected to marry young (usually about age 18) and to raise a family and so were not considered eligible for a career. Also, women of all classes were regarded as the property of their husbands, together with any wages they earned. Until the Property Act of 1882, all of a woman’s property automatically belonged to her husband. Unmarried women were regarded as the property of their fathers, who could also claim any wages they earned. Most parents, however, wanted to see their children married off, particularly daughters, who might have no means of support if anything happened to their fathers. Few marriages were love matches but were arranged by parents who chose a suitable spouse for their children.

Women had few rights in 19th century Britain and had to perform the same tasks as men at work, but for much less pay. Still, girls were not expected to work, unlike boys from wealthy families who were groomed for a profession. Most girls spent much of their time entertaining, attending balls, the opera or the theatre, so as to be seen by prospective husbands. Upper- and middle-class girls were usually chaperoned when meeting young men. A Chaperone was, at that time, an older woman who went with a young woman who was not married to a social event to make sure that she behaved well.

Young men from wealthy families were expected to gain sexual experience from liaisons with women of a lower social order, but marriage between people from different classes might lead to disinheritance from the family estate. Also, if a woman had a child out of wedlock (outside marriage) she was scorned by society and might become a social outcast, forced to enter a workhouse to survive.

Middle class girls needed another type of education for the new kind of life they were leading. They are not helping their mothers with the housework, as they have servants, so they are at home all day. They need new skills similar to the ones upper-class girls had: learning conversational French, playing the piano, dancing and good manners. Also, they need to marry a man, so they have got to make themselves attractive. Their aim is to get married, to find a husband who is solvent and healthy. Fashion played an important part, but it was very impractical – the corset and the famous crinoline, like a mechanism designed for keeping women “in their place”.

Middle-class girls need to read and to be educated, but not too educated or too intelligent because they could become too masculine. They must avoid becoming a Blue Stocking - an intelligent and well-educated woman who spends most of her time studying and is therefore not approved of by some men (today nerd girl). Also, although being pretty was of high importance for a girl, she does not have to be very conscious about her sexuality or express sexual desire (the example of the two younger sisters Lydia and Kitty in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, who stir the public’s pity for becoming foolish girls far too concerned with what they look like).

Generally, life for women and children in the 19th century was unbearably hard and few born to poverty had the opportunity to better themselves. Social reformers, like Lord Shaftesbury, did much

1 <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/health-topics/gender-equity-and-human-rights>, accessed September 1, 2021.

to improve things. A series of Acts were passed in the 1840s reducing working hours to 10 a day and improving conditions, but unscrupulous employers continued to exploit their work force.

3. Clichés and Stereotypes

We can easily observe the existence of some commonplaces in terms of gender roles in the Victorian society. For example, the fact that women were generally represented as either angels or whores or the division between public and private domains, since women were confined to the home while men were sent into the world.

Also, critics have mentioned the double standard in sexual morals which at one and the same time exonerated male promiscuity and condemned female sexual appetites, celebrated monogamy and tolerated widescale prostitution.

Other stereotypes include the valorization of maternity above intellectual pursuits or the idealization of romantic love and the accompanying repression of sex itself, along with the refusal to acknowledge the existence of unconventional sexualities except in terms of their pathology.

4. Victorian debates about sex and gender were class-based

The woman question was, in fact, a concern of middle-class women, interested in issues such as the right to work, to vote, to higher education and to own property. This is because most working-class women had no choice about combining maternity with work, so career or education were no issues for them. George Gissing in his radical novel of the 1890s, *The Odd Women*, states through one of the characters: “I really don’t think . . . that there can be any solidarity of ladies with servant girls”². Also, we must remark the existence of the sexual double-standard since illicit sexual behaviour was tolerated if private and restricted to one class.

We can therefore depict an image a little different from the stereotypes of oppression and repression through which Victorian society is viewed today. Recent social histories tend to reveal that Victorian sex and gender relations are in fact an extremely subtle and complex topic.

5. Diving deeper into Victorian gender roles

Victorian prescriptions about appropriate male and female behaviour were generally based upon assumptions about the givenness of male and female natures, derived from the Bible and from what some modern researchers define as a Judaeo-Christian tradition of misogyny. In the early nineteenth century, such stereotypes were emphasized by the strength of evangelical religion among the middle classes. Writers such as Sarah Stickney Ellis and John Ruskin subscribed to the idealized virtues of the Angel in the House as qualities natural to women.

Havelock Ellis, in his cross-cultural study of sexual characters in *Man and Woman* revealed that male and female capacities were not only determined by natural law in the spirit of Victorians, but that it was experience rather than social prescription which should determine the fitness of men and women for any kind of work or any kind of privilege, a Darwinian suggestion.

The 19th century witnessed an increase in the number and variety of discourses on sexuality and gender, but those discourses reveal complex and often contradictory attitudes. For example, the trend for producing manuals of sexual conduct and etiquette books ranged from the conservative prescriptions of writers such as Sarah Stickney Ellis in her series of works addressed to the Women, Wives and Daughters of England, to the controversial *Wife’s Handbook* (1886) by H. A. Allbutt which was the subject of a prosecution through the courts for its advice to women on methods of contraception.

6. One step forward?

Women’s Property Acts (1882) gave women the right to become legal agents controlling money and possessing property, but the divorce reformed procedures were so one-sided that women were still trapped by marriage. Similarly, the 1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act originally designed to protect girls from sexual exploitation by men resulted in one of the most draconian measures against any social group: Labouchère’s Amendment criminalized any expression of male – male desire, either in public or private.

2 <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4313/4313-h/4313-h.htm>, accessed September 1, 2021.

7. Conclusions

As a general rule, for feminists and others, sexual difference is biological, while differences of gender are products of culture and society. As we have shown above, Victorian debates about sex and gender were mostly class-based. Nevertheless, it can not be denied that the relationship between ideology, law and actual practice was as complex in Victorian Britain as it is in our own age.

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The problem of racism in "Beloved" by Toni Morrison

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1. Introduction

Toni Morrison is a great twentieth-century writer whose writings explore matters of race, gender, sexuality, social class. As a celebrated American writer, she was greatly concerned with the life and problems of African Americans. Morrison inspired black women writers and generated a new kind of readership that was more alert to issues of race and gender and also more eager to achieve a thorough understanding of these matters. The central theme of most of Morrison's works is the role that race plays in American life. Among the issues she addresses are the victimization of blacks, racial discrimination, motherhood, and the emotional and psychological problems of African Americans in a dominantly white society.

Toni Morrison describes the phenomenon of domination and submission in a master-slave relationship type. The present paper studies racism and slavery in Morrison's novel, aiming at identifying the ways in which the whites used the institution of slavery to dominate the blacks.

Keywords: domination, slavery, racism, submission, trauma

Morrison's *Beloved* focuses on the lives of a few black slaves: Sethe, Halle, Sixo, Paul D, Paul A, and Paul F. They worked on a southern plantation in Ohio called Sweet Home, which belonged to Mr. Garner and his family. They often suffered terrible, insolent, and ferocious treatments from the Sweet Home family members who were all white. When Sethe was pregnant and about to give birth to her child, she planned to escape to Cincinnati with her husband. Sethe's elder three children had managed to go to Cincinnati before her escape. While still pregnant Sethe was sexually abused by one of her white masters. After Sethe, his wife, was raped in front of his eyes, Halle became crazy. Sethe finally gained freedom and went to live in Cincinnati. However, the slave hunters who were working for Sweet Home still pursued her and her family. They found Sethe and her family in Cincinnati and intended to drag them back to Sweet Home as slaves. Sethe did not want her children to be slaves and tried to kill them rather than allow them to be taken away. At that moment death appeared to Sethe as the only way out of slavery.

2. The master-slave relationship

Beloved presents the heart-breaking slavery experienced by black slaves in the United States before the Civil War. White domination in the novel is based on racist attitudes towards the slaves.

The analysis we are going to present is based on the master-slave pattern, as described by the German philosopher Hegel. The central aim of the Master-Slave Dialectic is to explain the essence of what makes us human, that is, self-conscious beings. For Hegel, to become human means to go through a dialectical and historical process of acquiring freedom – where freedom means agency – through self-consciousness.

In this relational pattern, a master enjoys great domination, while the slaves are in a subordinate position. In their subordinate position, slaves have no power and truly submit to the master. This constitutes what is referred physically to culturally as the "dominance-submission" relation. This domination is the principle of subjecting and controlling individuals by exploiting them physically, culturally and religiously in order to gain economic benefits and power. For the slaves this situation has very negative consequences: they have no rights and often endure very traumatic treatments.

For example, the Schoolteacher in the novel



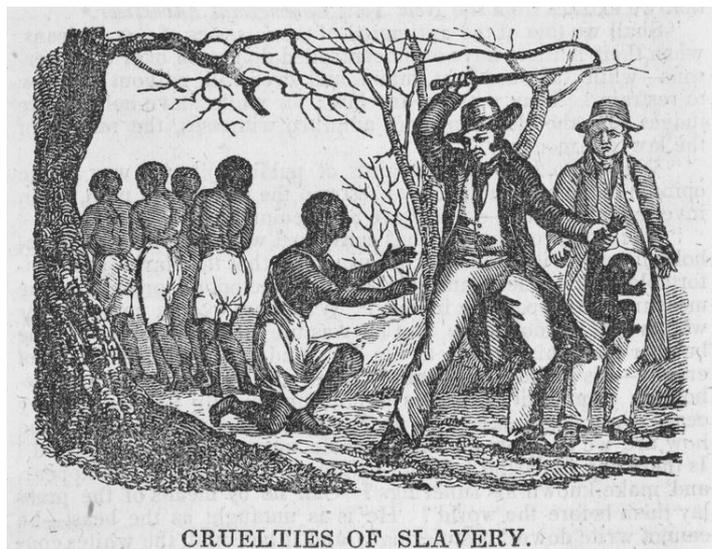
is a master who treats the black slaves very sadistically. One example of his racism is the defamatory type of address he uses with Sixo, one of the black slaves working at Sweet Home. The Schoolteacher treats Sixo as a thief just because he is a black and a slave: “Did you steal that shoat? You stole that shoat”. “The Schoolteacher was quiet but firm, not expecting an answer that mattered. Sixo sat there, not even getting up to plead or deny. He just sat there, the streak-of-lean in his hand, the gristle clustered in the tin plate like gemstones—rough, unpolished, but loot nevertheless” (1950: 94). By saying that Sixo stole a shoat, the Schoolteacher defines Sixo’s identity as a thief. Sixo does not have the power to defend himself because “definitions belonged to the definers – not the defined” (1950: 95). The definers belong to the white class of masters, while the “defined” are group of the inferior slave group.

The Schoolteacher is outwardly very different from Mrs. Garner. He lacks the physical presence of the former. Sethe describes him as “a little man”. “Short. Always wore a collar even in the fields” (1950: 18). He “talks soft and spit in handkerchiefs. Gentle in a lot of ways. You know the kind who know Jesus by name” (1950: 18). The slave men realize that he is physically weak but cunning. The Schoolteacher’s appearance and actions are in opposition to the masculine norms, yet he wreaks the greatest destruction on the Sweet Home men. Morrison uses him to portray the most dangerous and insidious aspects of slavery. As a consequence of the hierarchical position, the black tends to be submissive to the white. The defamation of Sixo proves that the Whites are racist: “everything they touched was looked on as stealing” (1950: 95).

3. Slave identity and the jungle metaphor

White people believe black people do not deserve their respect. Everything done by the black people is considered wild and ill-mannered: “White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet white blood. In a way, he thought, they were right. The more coloured people spent their strength trying to convince them how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how human, the more they used themselves up to persuade whites of something. Negroes believed could not be questioned, the deeper and more tangled the jungle grew inside. But it wasn’t the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place. It was the jungle white folks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through and after life, it spread, until it invaded the whites who had made it” (1950: 99). Morrison uses the jungle metaphor to describe how white people justify black people’s behaviour.

White people consider their colour as a symbol of purity, education and development, while they



believe that the dark skin of the slaves indicates their dirtiness, underdevelopment and inability to adapt to the society of evolved individuals. Stamp Paid considers the ways in which slavery corrupts and dehumanizes everyone who comes in contact with it, including the white slave owners. It makes them fearful, sadistic, and raving. For example, one could say that the schoolteacher’s perverse lessons and violent racism exist because they are his means of justifying the institution of slavery. In his thoughts, Stamp Paid depicts the jungle from a white person’s point of view as something awesome, exotic, and thrilling. He perceives anxiety on the part of the whites about the unknown psyche of the slaves.

The black people are seen in the novel as individuals without a human identity. This is why the whites thought that they could own and use the black people as a sort of animals. The white masters could thus manifest their sense of property over their slaves by mistreating them in every possible way. Garner’s ability to control others makes him a man (or this is what he thinks). He boasts to his neighbours about his power to confer manhood on his slaves. This ends up: “in a fierce argument, sometimes a fight, and Garner came home bruised and pleased, having demonstrated one more time what a real Kentuckian was: one tough enough and smart enough to make and call his own niggers men” (1950: 5).

On the one hand, racism and slavery strengthen white domination. However, on the other hand, racism and slavery have a destructive impact on the black slaves. Psychological disorder and identity loss are two considerable problems experienced by black slaves. Psychological destruction is manifested in the form of excessive trauma. The trauma suffered by the black slaves is the result of insolent treatments to which they are submitted by their white masters.

4. The drama followed by trauma

In *Beloved* the great drama is caused by the extreme abuse to which black women and men are subjected. The climax and perhaps one of the most striking moments in *Beloved* is the scene of Sethe's killing of her own daughter. This is the pivotal moment in which torture resulting from racism drives a mother to commit the act of murder against her own daughter as an extreme gesture of saving the latter from a life of slavery. It is almost impossible to imagine the high level of psychological terror and violence that would lead to this kind of parental dehumanization even though the goal is rescue.

Sethe kills her young daughter when hearing that her old master has returned to drag her and her children back to slavery. The threat of returning to the dehumanizing and abusive condition of slavery prompted Sethe to appeal to an extreme act of violence against her baby. Yet this act was at the same time a reaction triggered by unresolved trauma. This woman wanted to prevent her descendants from suffering any violence in the future: "I'll explain to her, even though I don't have to. Why I did it. How if I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her. When I explain it she'll understand, because she understands everything already. I'll tend her as no mother ever tended a child, a daughter" (1950: 100).

Sethe had lost her own mother, a woman she was denied a relationship with, to hanging, and witnessed the body in the tree. Throughout the novel Sethe tries to regain the lost mother-daughter relationship and come to terms with the horrific pain this caused her. Sethe's trauma is represented by the figure of the ghost *Beloved*. The dead daughter comes back to haunt her mother, Sethe. The latter tries to offer *Beloved* compensations for what she has done to her. The embodiment of the traumatic past in *Beloved* begins to consume Sethe and deprives her of her potential. It becomes so big that it cannot be controlled.

Sethe desperately wants *Beloved* to understand that the trauma of slavery led her to the decision to kill her children. The children are still clean, whereas slavery has sullied her and the other slaves. Those



women and men live an unfortunate life under cruel, unstable owners. They know what it feels like to be unable to protect their own children. Sethe refuses to let her children exist in such a world. When she weighs life under slavery against no life at all, death wins: "That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore" (1950: 125).

One of the most emotionally charged moments is when Sethe cannot even fulfil her desire to mark her child's grave. "Beloved" is the only word engraved on the tombstone of Sethe's daughter. She wished to have her daughter's tombstone engraved with the words "Dearly Beloved", but she only had money to pay for one word, and that was the word "Beloved". And to pay for the word, she had to have sex with the tombstone carver: "The welcoming cool of unchiselled headstones; the one she selected to lean against on tiptoe, her knees wide open as any grave. Pink as a fingernail it was, and sprinkled with glittering chips. Ten minutes, he said. You got ten minutes I'll do it for free. Ten

minutes for seven letters. With another ten could she have gotten "Dearly" too? She had not thought to ask

him and it bothered her still that it might have been possible—that for twenty minutes, a half hour, say, she could have had the whole thing, every word she heard the preacher say at the funeral (and all there was to say, surely) engraved on her baby’s headstone: Dearly Beloved. But what she got, settled for, was the one word that mattered. She thought it would be enough, rutting among the headstones with the engraver, his young son looking on, the anger in his face so old; the appetite in it quite new. That should certainly be enough. Enough to answer one more preacher, one more abolitionist and a town full of disgust” (1950: 2). We can see that in the world of slavery slaves have to sell their dignity to pay for what they want.

When Sethe is pregnant at Sweet Home, she is taken and raped by the owner’s nephews. She is milked as if she is an animal. She is denied any human status and treated as if she were a despicable animal creature. Sethe was once taught a lesson by the schoolteacher on the slaves’ “animal characteristics”: “Then the schoolteacher arrived to put things in order. But what he did broke three more Sweet Home men and punched the glittering iron out of Sethe’s eyes, leaving two open wells that did not reflect firelight”. This experience diminishes her and even though she tries to move on, the cruelty of such a thing ties her down and forces her to hold herself back from ever progressing in life.

5. Conclusion

This paper explores the extent to which Sethe is dehumanized, exploited and traumatized. Sethe is searching for ways and means to escape from slavery. She kills one of her daughters, Beloved, because of her trauma. Her infanticide shows that black female characters suffered much from slavery **and that made** them suffer for the rest of their lives.

At a time when the colour of the skin determined the quality of man and robbed him of his humanity and rights, when the black body became only a currency, black people sometimes lost their souls and cultivated an unhealable hatred for whites, and a burning desire to never go through the same ordeal again. These traumas have repercussions to this day on American soil. The oppressed have not forgotten the horrors their forefathers went through and still hold up their shields.

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Individual and Social Benefits of Culture in the Development and Healing of PTSD in Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*

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1. Introduction

This paper will examine the influence and correlation between culture and personal background as the two principal determinants for the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the case of Leslie Marmon Silko's protagonist Tayo from the novel *Ceremony*. To clarify a common understanding of social aspects of the illness and its overall symptoms, special attention will be paid to the experiences of war veterans diagnosed with PTSD.

The aim is to provide an insight into possible cultural roles in the development and healing of PTSD, as well as to identify possible cross-cultural influences. Since healing across cultures imposes higher rates of responsibility on all members of the human family, the main focus of the analysis will be on personal background, interpersonal relationships and post-war trauma experiences.

Each individual has their way of coping with difficult situations in life, depending on their personalities, cultural background, as well as their past traumatic events. This is because we filter, mediate, negotiate and otherwise interpret the signs and symptoms processed by our bodies through lived experiences shaped by our social and relational worlds (So 2008: 167).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition triggered by a terrifying event, causing flashbacks, nightmares, and severe anxiety, and it has always been a psychiatric disorder that can occur in war veterans and other people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 1980: 265-291). Despite various ongoing research studies focused on examining the nature of PTSD, there is still a lot to learn about the personal factors that can lead to PTSD.

The main focus of this paper is on Leslie Marmon Silko's protagonist Tayo in the novel *Ceremony*. As a point of reference for the analysis of Tayo's condition and state of mind, this work will also use several non-fictional records of PTSD among veterans who served in active combat. However, special attention will be paid to the context of personal background, including culture, ethnicity, stigmatization, and prejudice which marked Tayo in his early childhood; post-war occurrences, such as the reception upon his return home, as well as various symptoms experienced – alienation, rage, somatic disorder. Some of the most prominent symptoms of Tayo's illness include a feeling of invisibility and a memory loss for recent events. There are also physical expressions of his inner struggle, such as vomiting and fainting. These manifestations of his disorder will therefore be the focal point of the examination.

Following the path of Tayo's healing via the sunwise cycle, this research will also focus on the analysis of his dilemmas to reveal the similarities between his thoughts and feelings and those of non-Native Americans who suffer from PTSD. Silko's *Ceremony* is not just a record which deals with Native Americans but with human beings in general, even though the settings and plot may seem hardly comprehensible for those who are not familiar with Indigenous culture and tradition. With his unique personal background, Tayo's character provides a challenging basis for observation of any human who suffers from distress. Since he is a "half-blood", Tayo is also a reluctantly accepted member of the Laguna Pueblo. This position inherently puts him among discriminated minorities within a discriminated minority and leaves him vulnerable to the impact of traumatic experiences. Tayo's role in society forces him to investigate and re-evaluate the course and events of his life, and therefore finally establish the strong sense of identity necessary for survival.

2. Theoretical Framework

It is important to highlight the underlying pillars of connection between the described issues of the fictional character Tayo and medically proven symptoms of PTSD. Bearing in mind that Silko's *Ceremony* was first published in 1977, i.e. three years before the official inclusion of post-traumatic stress disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, it is inherent that PTSD has not been the illness that Silko might have deliberately chosen for the protagonist in her novel. However, for the sake of clarity, PTSD is intentionally selected to support the hypothesis about the author's background idea. The aforementioned is grounded on the assumption that there is a strong compatibility between Silko's depiction of Tayo's condition and officially recognized symptoms of PTSD, which leads us to the premise that the basic concept is the same in both instances.

Silko's construction of the illness indicates that Tayo is a PTSD sufferer since the protagonist is explicitly diagnosed with battle fatigue at the very beginning of the novel (1986: 31). In the light of the aftermath of World War II, when battle fatigue was a frequently used diagnosis for the disorder known as PTSD, the similarity between PTSD and Tayo's condition is obvious. In addition to this, there is a deep analysis of Tayo's deranged mind, his behavioral patterns, as well as his lost connection with the outside world. As the readers break into Los Angeles mental hospital, they encounter the protagonist who experiences all the physical symptoms of PTSD: dry heaving and vomiting, nightmares and repetitive flashbacks, and the inability to separate the past from the present. Furthermore, Tayo's fits of anger and aggression, exemplified in his attack on fellow war veteran and tribal member Emo, where he explicitly enacts physical violence upon others, are also part of this depiction.

Silko's construction of illness is masterfully crafted, and in comparison with clinical symptoms of PTSD, the compatibility is evident. According to Van Der Kolk, McFarlane, and Van Der Hart, the difference between patients who develop PTSD from those who are temporarily stressed out is that they experience continuous traumatic stress by reliving it "in thoughts, feelings, actions, or images" (2007: 419). Moreover, Kai Erikson explains that special attention should be paid to the list of trauma symptoms that include:

"periods of nervous, restless activity – scanning the surrounding world for signs of danger, breaking into explosive rages, reacting with a start to everyday sights and sounds – against a numbed, gray background of depression, feelings of helplessness, a loss of various motor skills and a general closing off of the spirit as the mind tries to insulate itself from further harm" (1991: 462).

In addition to the development of a character who suffers from PTSD, this novel also illuminates the culture of Laguna Pueblo, which means that a considerable amount of Tayo's thoughts and experience would seem relatively unfamiliar to a PTSD sufferer coming from a different cultural background. To identify possible trans-cultural aspects in Tayo's condition and demeanor, it is essential to look at certain extracts from *Soldier's Heart*, the collection of essays and poems written by non-Native American war veterans who had an intense experience of PTSD, which will be discussed in the evaluation part of this paper. Therefore, it is essential to highlight the individual sufferer's perspective in the environment where surrounding culture and interpersonal relationships play an indelible part both in the development and curing of the disorder.

Researching this topic, Fischer derives that "culture is often seen as a shared meaning system that is passed on through socialization processes within specific groups, which requires communication of key symbols, ideas, knowledge, and values between individuals from one generation to the next" (2009: 29). As members of society, despite various stereotypes of ethnic or social background, human beings are bound to interact with each other at a certain point. Through the process of socialization, individuals often mirror themselves as the interdependent part of their community and are apt to encounter a great deal of suffering when confronted with rejection, misunderstanding, and hostility of their fellows. Accordingly, part of Tayo's post-traumatic stress disorder comes up as a result of being baffled by the influence of two different concepts of beliefs and cultures, not knowing which way to turn.

Cultural diversity among human beings who share the same habitat can influence in many different ways. According to DeVries, culture can be viewed as "a protective and supportive system of values, lifestyles, and knowledge, the disruption of which will have a deleterious effect on its members," yet once

thoroughly established, tends to be strongly resistant to change (2007: 400). As a consequence, it can “buffer [...] its members from the potentially profound impact of stressful experiences” (2007: 400). However, certain disadvantages come up as a result of being exposed to diverse concepts of two different cultures. If an individual is not well-adapted to a particular set of norms derived from the prevalent culture, their strictness may cause numerous harmful consequences. In such instances, “social extrusion and stigmatization may result as a cultural defense reaction to the unwanted information or behavior” (DeVries 2007: 401). To be more precise, cultural violence opens the floodgates to traumatic experiences. Consequently, its impact leads to the gap between an individual and the prevailing culture, especially if the experience takes place in a context unfamiliar to the culture and is seen as taboo. Furthermore, if the trauma sufferer is deprived of recognition, understanding, and acknowledgement on behalf of other members of the surrounding culture, disintegration sets in and can lead to a feeling of total isolation and rejection. Consequently, these factors increase the likelihood of developing PTSD.

The procedure of re-establishing meaningful communication with the rest of the world is one of the crucial components when it comes to recovering from the effects caused by PTSD trauma. Bearing in mind that long-term recovery is needed and that establishing a dialogue with others is not easy to obtain and yet remain unaffected, this disease is not easy to cure since social factors are crucial for the recovery.

However, Vickroy emphasizes that literary materials and narratives about trauma are not a reliable source of information and should therefore be disputed since they usually contain “distortions and intentions,” as well as “intrusive literary conventions such as chronology, characterization, dialogue, and a directive narrative voice” (2002: 5). Nevertheless, she also claims that verbalization of traumatic experience “resists the narrativizing, chronologizing, and moralizing and that serious trauma writers attempt to guide readers through a re-created process of traumatic memory in order that this experience be understood more widely” (2002: 7-8). Since the narrative of Silko’s *Ceremony* is anything but chronological and is rather fragmented, randomly interrupted with short stories and poems, the aforementioned assumptions are justified.

Vickroy is also addressing Silko’s moralizing throughout the novel, such as “taming” the problem of traumatic experiences by applying “political purposes” to trauma narratives and “the reconfiguration in the 1980s of Vietnam veterans as victims and the war in more positive terms” (2002: 7). On the contrary, *Ceremony* is a novel that holds a grudge against the glorification of war and reveals that taking responsibility and action to escape victimization is essential to the recovery of the protagonist as well as to convey a noble message to the readers. For example, to acknowledge the importance of re-establishing a connection to the world and all the creatures in it; and to point out that, in creating new patterns necessary for the sustainability of our planet, the role of each individual is important. In addition, it is necessary to mention that *Ceremony* has been recognized as a part of the literary canon of the Ecocriticism movement – an interdisciplinary study of Ecology and Literary Criticism. However, even within ecocriticism, the *Ceremony* is subject to certain critical reviews, mainly because of its rather utopian ending. Greg Garrard, in his book *Ecocriticism*, uses the following arguments:

“By reducing social, national, and ecological conflicts to a dualistic spiritual confrontation of “witchery” and “ceremony, or natives and destroyers,” Silko forfeits the subtle discrimination needed to respond to environmental justice issues in favour of a one-off drama that can only issue in disaster or utopia”. (2004: 129)

The flow of the novel, with its uniquely constructed structure of memory, poems, events, visions, and spiritual journey, is written in third person narrative and is presented from Tayo’s point of view. The story traces the impacts of trauma on Tayo’s mind while coping with his physical and psychological torment after the war is over, as well as the development and changes of his image regarding the world, humanity, and himself in it. To rediscover his place in the world, and thereby his sense of self, the critical milestone in Tayo’s life is his decision to quit following medical prescriptions of the white doctors from the Los Angeles hospital and turn to customs of his own culture that offers him the support he needs despite his mixed ancestry.

3. Analysis

3.1. *Invisibility as a Symptom of Mental Disorder*

Tayo returns to America, shocked by his brother's death and bloodiness of the war, only to be placed into a mental hospital and treated for battle fatigue. He dwells in the vastness of his forlornness in a hospital ward, where everything is white: the walls, the ceiling, his sheets, and even the doctors. Disintegrated and lost, Tayo dissolves into "white smoke" (Silko 1986: 14). For a while, he even enjoys being "comfortably numb" because "white smoke had no consciousness of itself" (Silko 1986: 14), and since it is also dense, "visions and memories of the past did not penetrate there" (Silko 1986: 15). In other words, being white smoke enables Tayo to shield himself from the painful memories and all the losses he had suffered, as well as from anyone who might prod him into reliving the memories.

Tayo's mental image of himself as being invisible to the rest of the world symbolizes a deeper perspective of his trauma. This impression becomes more vivid as more details of the inner fog landscape are exposed to the reader. When Tayo sees himself "inhabiting a gray winter fog on a distant elk mountain where hunters are lost indefinitely and their own bones mark the boundaries," his impression reflects the "earthbound hunting culture of his native people" (Silko 1986: 15). Another hint that leads the reader to conclude that Tayo's mental image of illness and the absence of identity is metaphorically related to the oppression of Native American lineage is reflected in the words he picks out to explain his condition. When a doctor asks Tayo if he has ever been visible, Tayo replies in the third person: "Tayo spoke to him softly and said that he was sorry but nobody was allowed to speak to an invisible one" (Silko 1986: 15). This peculiar response refers to the inability of the Indigenous minority to identify themselves under the suppression of the prevailing white culture, in which Indigenous people have "an invisible tongue" (Silko 1986: 15).

The fact that Tayo is referring to himself in the third person indicates the projection of the response that he believes will meet him when he returns home: "He can't go. He cries all the time. Sometimes he vomits when he cries" (Silko 1986: 16). Drifting in time and space and experiencing everything at once without any frame of reference, Tayo is also distressed by his inability to control the crying. The feelings of embarrassment, shame, and guilt are intertwined and seem rather obvious, despite Tayo's futile attempts to hide his inner distress from the rest of the world.

The lack of understanding and support makes it harder to work through any challenging mental issue. Inherently, negative feedback can harm or even paralyze the process. In disorders such as PTSD, a patient needs to regain a sense of belief and confidence in people and events. Otherwise, their mental health may deteriorate. Hansel et al. define healing from PTSD as

"a process of making connections and continue to say that the reality of this fact, even though it may seem self-apparent to family members or therapists, is not so obvious to veterans, who struggle against feelings they may neither understand nor connect to their combat experience" (Hansel et al. 1995: 15-16)

However, recovery from PTSD disorder is more complex than it seems at first glance. Namely, the sufferer is aware of the need to reconnect and resocialize but cannot act upon this knowledge due to the underlying fears that often deepen emotional and psychological trauma. The account of war by nurse Dana S. from *Soldier's Heart* lends evidence to this issue: "I believe my ultimate healing from the trauma of the war will be found in reconnecting to the human family, but my trauma itself lies partly in the rejection I experienced and causes me to flee all connections" (Hansel et al. 1995: 98). Likewise, the alienation Tayo develops during his hospitalization is evident since the deep-rooted feelings of shame and embarrassment prevent him from establishing a genuine connection with the doctors, and he "gags and vomits" instead (Silko 1986: 16).

Somatization is a medical term for Tayo's vomiting, which is an involuntary, psychosomatic representation of his distress, and denotes "physical symptoms and somatic complaints, with no known organic cause" (So 2008: 168). According to medical experts, somatization is regarded as a phenomenon that almost exclusively affects non-western cultures. So argues this idea in his article about the "correlations between mind, body, and the sum of lived experience" (2008: 170). Therefore, he claims that somatization is not a "psychiatric exotic," since it can affect anybody, not just what Western scientists like to label as "members of a society where there is a lack of semantic network to express emotional states, that is, non-

western, least developed countries” (2008: 168). Furthermore, So explains that, when it comes to Western societies, the low rate of reported cases of somatization is not realistic since Western medicine does not acknowledge the legitimacy of the complaints and labels its patients as “excessive users of healthcare resources in a country with universal healthcare” (2008: 169). In line with this view, we can draw some parallels when it comes to Tayo’s treatment at the Los Angeles hospital. Namely, when the doctor says to Tayo: “it’s easy to remain invisible here, isn’t it,” and afterward decides to discharge him from the hospital, the doctor intends to tell Tayo that he is not as sick as he would like to appear. Thus, he unintentionally leaves Tayo to the care of his family and tribe.

Tayo, however, believes that his condition is still critical and his determination to stay alive depends on the level of energy he gains to accumulate as the days go by since it takes “a lot of energy to be a human being and energy is one of his rarest commodities” (Silko 1986: 25). When Grandma finally decides to call in the Pueblo healer Ku’oosh, Tayo sees it as a last chance to improve his condition: “If this didn’t work, then he knew he would die” (Silko 1986: 39). However, he finds that he became indifferent to whether he lives or dies, which gradually leads him to a rather peculiar conclusion that it is “easy to stay alive now that he didn’t care about being alive anymore” (Silko 1986: 39).

3.2. *What Lies Beneath Tayo’s Illness?*

Tayo is a mixed-blood Native American, the only child of a Laguna Pueblo woman named Laura and an unknown white man. His white-skinned father abandoned his mother before he was born. Laura’s Pueblo community is shocked both with her lifestyle and her acquaintances with white men, and it is her family that has to bear the brunt of rumors and gossip. This is especially difficult for her elder sister Thelma. She blames Tayo for his mother’s misbehavior in the past, for the fact that he is half-white and half Indigenous, that he is sick, and even that he was not the one who died in the war. Edith Swan explains that Auntie is waging a fight that only Tayo sees and apprehends, namely “the war between her Christian, ambitious self, and the old ways of the culture that surrounds her” that she perceives as obstructive and limiting, partly because “rules of lineal descent give Auntie no choice about her obligation to raise the half-breed child of her dead sister since that child is viewed as her son” (Silko 1986: 312).

Unlike Thelma, Uncle Josiah, who is unmarried and resides with his maternal family, becomes Tayo’s only true friend in the world. The wisdom of his teachings gave Tayo’s life meaning, direction, and purpose. However, Josiah’s death has a detrimental effect on Tayo’s health. Consequently, this effect is enhanced due to the pervading memories of a fever hallucination that has plagued Tayo during the war. The hallucination causes Tayo to see his uncle standing amidst a group of Japanese soldiers lined up to be shot by Tayo and his fellow soldiers. Still, Tayo stands “stiff with nausea” and watches “his uncle fall,” unable to pull the trigger (Silko 1986: 8).

Upon his return home, Tayo does not feel like he is welcome at all. Overwhelmed with a sense of shame and guilt because of his cousin Rocky’s death under Japanese captivity, he endures his aunt’s accusations. Tayo’s horrible suffering seems to be invisible to his remaining family, but when “the sickness and his crying overwhelmed them,” Grandma finally decides to reach out to Tayo and thus give him a sense of acceptance and belonging. She insists that Tayo is “[her] grandson” (Silko 1986: 32) and that he should be seen by a Laguna medicine man, “never mind what the Army doctor said about Indigenous medicine, never mind what the neighbors will say about giving traditional treatment to someone who is not full blood anyway” (Silko 1986: 33). Therefore, Grandma decides to ask the Laguna healer Ku’oosh for help. Ku’oosh tells Tayo that “this world is fragile,” and reveals to him how important it is to find the right words, describing it as “the responsibility that went with being human [...], the story behind each word must be told so there could be no mistake in the meaning of what had been said” (Silko 1986: 35-36). Although Tayo anticipates the meaning of the message that Ku’oosh is trying to get across, he is unable to do what is put before him as a task. He laments over his incapacity to find the right words because tumultuous and divisive events that marked his culture during the war – radically different from anything he had ever known – made him invisible, desperate, and numb. Although Ku’oosh’s ritual is not sufficient for the recovery of Tayo’s health and sense of belonging, the fact that his family has recognized his illness as worthy of a tribal healer seems to have a positive effect on Tayo.

Tayo feels the need to tell his story to cope with the psychological and spiritual trauma. Similar to other war veterans, he yearns for a conversational partner who would understand his sufferings. This issue

is repeatedly addressed in *Soldier's Heart* and employs an even deeper, more spiritual character: "I often feel that there is no one out there like me, no one with whom I can experience that wordless, intuitive kind of sharing that to me connotes true intimacy and understanding. [...] The war took something important from me, but I can't even define it, much less begin to get it back" (Dana S., Hansel et al. 1995: 98).

Tayo and Dana S. represent discriminated minorities, often exposed to prejudices, repression, and rejection in their communities. As a Laguna, Tayo is discriminated against by the white majority in his country; he is half-blood and there is also a crisis for his loss of identity. Nevertheless, unlike his peers and fellow veterans who vilify their ancestors and undermine the relationship between humankind and nature and between human beings through envying the white people's wealth in the same instance as they curse their demeanor, Tayo is determined to follow in the footsteps of his uncle, who has brought him up in a traditional way. Although Ceremony has some war stories in the plot, Indian veterans who epitomize evil and gradually lose their sense of self seem to have different motives to narrate them. They indulge in reconstructing the memories of wartime adventures and glory, recollecting how it was to feel like they belonged, as they mattered. However, Tayo breaks this process of psychological identification since he talks about the painful side they all want to forget, and all he achieves is to "spoil [...] it for them" (Silko 1986: 42).

When it comes to Dana S. from the *Soldier's Heart*, a woman's role in a conservative society is strictly based on predefined ideas and her sense of self comes from society and tradition, which provide a behavioral pattern for each gender. She is recruited to Vietnam as an army nurse, taking on the traditional female role of a caretaker. Having seen the horrors of the war, Dana experienced trauma that left deep scars on her soul. However, the things that awaited her upon her return home were even more devastating. According to the prevalent opinion of her community, "she was a nurse, not a veteran; she was a woman, supposed to take care of others, not supposed to be taken care of by others" and "she could not possibly be suffering from PTSD, because, as she was politely informed at her local Veterans' Centre, women don't develop PTSD" (Hansel et al. 1995: 98).

Similar to Tayo, Dana S. is confronted with incapability to connect to her fellow veterans due to their unwillingness to speak openly about certain sore spots that Dana S. herself was unable to mask or push aside. Like the Indigenous World War II veterans shown in the novel – Harley, Emo, and Leroy – who had to convince one another and themselves at the same time so that they could fight the pain they felt after the war was over by remembering their "glorious times," these non-fictional veterans used to tell the war stories exclusively with pleasant or amusing memories. Dana S. describes the nature of such situations as follows: "we shared the same esoteric vocabulary and arcane geography, but it seemed we didn't share the same emotional terrain" (Hansel et al. 1995: 97).

3.3 *The Path to Healing*

According to Hansel et al., many early cultures "required a ritual purification of the soldier returned from the war" (1995: 45). The reason for this was that "the warrior, as well as his friends, family, and community recognized and accepted the reality of the warrior's participation in combat, accepted the fact that he was changed by it, and that he needed to be re-integrated and welcomed into society upon his return" (1995: 45). However, this flow of acceptance, support, and purification "can become disrupted or even be made impossible due to a variety of circumstances" (Hansel et al. 1995: 45). When it comes to the consequences of the war, it was difficult to perceive and accept the complete picture of US veterans' harsh realities distorted by a multitude of controversies since Vietnam was the only war the United States has ever lost. On the other hand, the Indigenous veterans who had survived the war did not struggle to gain psychological wholeness and consequently succumbed to long-term effects in the form of drinking bouts, drug abuse, and violence, since their reasons for failing to readapt were different. Although indigenous cultures practiced the aforementioned purification rituals, these were not enough to prevent them from the metaphorical demons of war.

The recurrence of Laguna Pueblo mythology is vital for the recovery from the trauma caused by the war. However, when Tayo undergoes the scalp healing ceremony of the Laguna healer Ku'oosh, he is seemingly aware that this is insufficient to help him untangle the turmoil that is suffocating his soul. Ku'oosh's methods follow the patterns and images of the world that are not appropriate anymore since they are based on old stories. Hence, Tayo has to invent a story of his own, the one which adequately reflects his

way of coping with the predicament. The importance of the quest for self, as well as an act of salvaging the cultural heritage of the community – necessary for the recovery from cultural trauma – has been instilled into him through his matrilineal culture, which says the following about the significance of storytelling for the well-being of the people: “They are all we have, you see,/ all we have to fight off/ illness and death. [...] So they try to destroy the stories,/ let the stories be confused or forgotten. [...] [W]e would be defenseless then” (Silko 1986: 2). Therefore, it is Tayo’s mission to find a way to fix his inner turmoil by putting the things that happened to him into a larger perspective: the story of himself, his life, and the world that surrounds him. To regain his inner peace and balance, Tayo must rediscover his role in an all-embracing design that makes up his world, i.e. he has to find out who he is, where he comes from, and where he wants to be.

At first, Tayo is unaware of the fact that he has been given a quest. He still resides in the past, overwhelmed with the crushing guilt that haunts him – the guilt he feels for having cursed away the rain in the Philippine jungle and that is now sorely lacking in the fallow desert of his homeland, and the guilt for letting both Rocky and Josiah die without doing anything to save them. Survivor’s guilt is common in war veterans. This mental condition occurs when a person believes they have done something wrong by surviving a traumatic or tragic event when others did not and is usually very hard to overcome. It is mentioned in almost all of the veterans’ accounts in *Soldier’s Heart*. A thorough analysis of the events that cause the survivors’ guilt would likely reveal that hardly any of them have any reason to blame themselves; the survivors’ emotional accounts are quite different. Hansel et al. emphasize that reaching a state of acceptance is crucial for solving this issue (1995: 172).

Tayo’s process of acceptance begins when his uncle Robert takes him to Betonie, the Navajo medicine man. It is only when he meets Betonie that Tayo begins to see the chaotic complexity of his life story. Betonie’s home is in the infamous city of Gallup, where the clash of Indigenous and prevailing white culture is apparent: homeless Indigenous people dwell on the outskirts of Gallup, poor and treated with contempt. Since Betonie’s house is filled with strange artifacts, herbs, roots, old newspapers, telephone books, and calendars, Tayo suspects him of being a wizard and is temporarily convinced that his family has sent him here to get rid of him. “Despair, mistrust and fear” are the words that Hansel et al. use to identify the feelings that “commonly occur in veterans who are taking their initial steps in the process of seeking help” (Hansel 1995: 59). After rejecting and feeling rejected by society, “vets are forced not only to admit their weakness to a stranger but also to invest something they have jealously guarded for many years - their trust” (Hansel et al. 1995: 59). In line with the descriptions of veterans by Hansel et al., Tayo also feels that he is stepping out on the uncertain ground with this new approach to dealing with his illness. Aware of Tayo’s doubts, Betonie suggests that Tayo leaves before nightfall if he cannot trust the medicine man. This approach turns out to be successful since Tayo decides to stay and confide in Betonie.

Betonie, who is a half-blood Indigenous, manages to recognize and address the core of Tayo’s issue. Unlike other healers, Betonie is unconventional in his views and disputes the attitude of more conservative members of the local tribes that the traditional ceremonies must not be changed under any circumstances. According to Betonie, the contact with the Europeans required an adaptation of the old rituals since they should be able to cure new illnesses. Hence Betonie confides to Tayo that his ceremonies already incorporate these changes and his conviction is based on the teachings of his Mexican grandmother who used to say that “things which don’t shift and grow are dead things” (Silko 1986: 126).

Betonie’s ceremony consists of chants and sand paintings, which is a traditional Navajo concept. However, the underlying idea is to re-establish a place in the world for Tayo by placing him in the middle of the sand painting and guiding his mind back home by letting him step through several hoops along with the painted footprints of a bear. In the end, Betonie points out to Tayo that specific images he has seen in his visions during the ceremony – a star constellation, spotted cattle, a mountain, and a woman – will be necessary for Tayo on his further path to self-discovery. He also admonishes Tayo that “one night or nine nights won’t do it anymore [...] the ceremony isn’t finished yet” (Silko 1986: 152). At this point, Silko’s novel reaches a crossroads since the storyline becomes more linear and chronological, following Tayo’s hero quest.

Discovering one’s mission and coming to terms with the past is a key determinant in curing the symptoms of PTSD disorder. Unfortunately, many war veterans diagnosed with PTSD are unable to cope with the fatigue and concomitant depression and therefore never reach the point where they feel ready

to guide their lives in a positive direction actively. In line with this, Hansel et al. mention three tempting possibilities, i.e. “healing, acceptance, and integration” that were dismissed since “most veterans do not experience themselves as fully healed, integrated, or able to accept the nature of their experiences” (1995: 170-171).

Tayo goes through several stages on the way to his recovery. Namely, following Ku’oosh’s instructions, he reaches Betonie whose ceremony carries him onto a new, much higher level. With the help of Betonie, Tayo quickly unravels the nature of his mission. First, he has to accept his Uncle Josiah’s inheritance: the spotted cattle. By reclaiming the lost cattle, Tayo can fulfill Josiah’s dream of creating a new, tough, and robust breed that manages to survive on the reservation’s barren land even during the exhaustive droughts. Consequently, this leads to liberating the inhabitants of the reservation from the status of victims, providing them with tools to overcome poverty.

However, Silko pursues a more encompassing path for her protagonist. She puts before him several more challenges, tempting him to follow the seemingly easier way – alcohol, denial, corruption – which the destroyers led by Emo have intended for him. It is only when Tayo overcomes his fears and doubts that Silko allows him insight into

“the pattern, the way all the stories fit together – the old stories, the war stories, and their stories – to become the story that was still being told. He was not crazy; he had never been crazy. He had only seen and heard the world as it always was: no boundaries, only transitions through all distances and time”. (Silko 1986: 246)

As the readers reach the end of the novel, Tayo has successfully rejoined the community and his family, while his re-established self-esteem has even gained him the acceptance of his aunt, who cannot find anything “left to watch for” (Silko 1986: 259). When it comes to Tayo’s former friends, whose corruption reaches the point of no return, the end of their story is the death of Harley, Leroy, and Pinkie at the hands of Emo who does not end up in prison but is sent off into exile from the tribe. The ending of the novel leaves the readers with an impression that Tayo’s story has only just begun: “Sunrise/ accept this offering/ Sunrise” (Silko 1986: 262).

4. Conclusion

Silko’s narrative Ceremony inhabits the framework of Indigenous culture and defines the protagonist of a hybrid legacy, whose personal background is strongly influenced by the traditional values of the Laguna Pueblo community. However, the novel’s vital issues can be applied as valid even within a larger frame of reference. The underlying layers of psychological flow that Silko depicts in her novel do not only apply to her protagonist Tayo but also shed new light on the perceptually processed accounts of non-fictional American war veterans diagnosed with PTSD disorder. Their most conspicuous commonality is the fact that all of them have lost the connection to their old frame of reference, that is, to their friends, their culture, and their former self-image. Though Tayo’s struggles are part of a larger system and his “cure could be found only in something great and inclusive of everything” (Silko 1986: 125), it is not uncommon for PTSD-suffering war veterans to turn to spirituality in their struggle to combat the disease and find the meaning in their experiences.

Even though the ceremonies in Silko’s novel are more related to rituals of recovery, there are certain aspects in the novel that may seem peculiar and possibly offensive to the readers who come from a different culture and view these ceremonies from a different perspective. In a closed system of differences, which is constructed by a diversity of discourses, there is a strong emphasis on the supremacy of white people. The internalized colonization had its harmful and deteriorating effects on Indigenous people. The Europeans have stolen the land from the indigenous people and exploited it without regard to possible negative consequences, and therefore they are described in the novel as being the “only tools” that have been invented by Indian witchery to draw away attention from the real issue at hand: “the witches’ secret plot to plunge the world into chaos and destruction” (Silko 1986: 132). Nevertheless, it may be quite malicious to qualify Ceremony as a typical attempt to boast the image of the “Ecological Indian who cares so much more about the fate of the world than white people do” (Garrard 2004: 120).

However, Ceremony certainly has a much deeper meaning and there are several implications that it neither fosters the anger against the white people nor overlooks the wrongs they caused to the Indigenous people. Betonie observes the changes surrounding him, which leads to advising Tayo to evaluate each

person individually, despite their racial or ethnic origin, which is one of the most important indicators. It is therefore inherent that Betonie's advice advocates the status quo: white people exist, and no matter how they came into this world, they still cannot be condemned as a whole. To avoid essentialism and see things from a different perspective, according to Betonie, white people, who equally partake in the making of the new stories and ceremonies, should be thoroughly accepted and therefore cannot be dismissed. On the other hand, by qualifying Emo and his followers as the disreputable members of the Indigenous community, the author emphasizes that it is not enough to be a full-blooded Indigenous – "if you desecrate the land, you desecrate the land."

To conclude, it is important to emphasize that both Tayo's experience, as well as the accounts of non-fictional war veterans from *Soldier's Heart*, serve as evidence that the challenges Tayo is facing are not restricted to one particular culture. In a changing world, it is necessary to embrace this hybrid condition, to be open to difference since Tayo's story is also the story of many other people who, notwithstanding their cultural background, have been cut out of their world as they knew it either by a traumatizing event or a disorder. Since Ceremony engages in the subversion of dominant discourses and bridges the gap between two cultures, the chance given to Tayo should encourage all the people to formulate and share their story with the rest of the world. Therefore, by sharing their individual experiences of pain, the witnesses of the alterations "contribute to and benefit from the formation of a communal narrative memory" (Garrard 2004: 126).

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A Pragmatic Study of Jokes

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1. Pragmatics and Humour

In order to understand how pragmatics affects jokes we should first define the two terms from the title of our paper. Pragmatics is, broadly speaking, the study of language in use. According to Brown and Levinson, pragmatics is “the study of the relations between language and context, that are grammaticalized (encoded in lexicon, morphology and syntax or phonology), or encoded in the structure of a language”¹. It can be a source of humour.

Humour has attracted scholars’ attention over the years. It is a specific characteristic of humanity, an established means of releasing stress and tension. It definitely is, as Sigmund Freud beautifully described it, “a soul-emptiness filler”.

Humour has specific dimensions (linguistically speaking) by which it is generated, including: puns, irony, sarcasm, wittiness, and contrastive utterances in relation to the speakers of those utterances. We use humour to express social criticism (by using humour, it is possible to say the truth elegantly, and softly, without hurting someone’s feelings).

Rod Martin described humour as “a unique feeling of well-being that is described by such terms as amusement, mirth, hilarity, cheerfulness and merriment”; “...it replaces the feeling of anxiety, depression and anger”².

The most widely accepted theory of humour is the Incongruity theory, which argues that humour is based on the difference between what we expect and what we get.

Schopenhauer³ explained incongruity in humour by writing:

The cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity.

Schopenhauer saw the essence of humour as the creation of an incongruity between a concept and the real object:

The intentionally ludicrous is the joke. It is the effort to bring about a discrepancy between the conceptions of another and the reality by disarranging one of the two.

2. Humour and Jokes

Throughout the centuries, jokes have accompanied people’s lives being part of the fabric of civilisation. Jokes are social practices, with a strong social impact on people’s everyday life, an expression of people’s joy of life in happy times and a means of escaping the harsh reality in difficult times. The jokes we are going to mention in this paper emerged in a difficult period for the Romanian people emphasizing its strength and sense of humour when dealing with difficult life conditions.

3. The Pragmatic Aspect of Joke

As already mentioned, in order to understand a joke, the context is a key element. The language

1 Apud Bonta, Elena, *Pragmatics of the conversational discourse (suport de curs și seminar)*, Alma Mater, Bacău, 2015, p. 7.

2 Martin, Rod, *The Psychology of Humour: An Integrity Approach*, Department of Psychology University of Ontario, Canada, 2007, p.8.

3 Schopenhauer, Arthur, *The World as Will and Idea*, Vol.2, London, Routledge, 1909, p. 271.

code (a matter of semantics) is not enough in order to understand a joke. The background knowledge is not only necessary but of ultimate importance in order to be able to make inferences to get the joke, which is a matter of pragmatics. These two elements, the language code and the background knowledge, are intertwined and interdependent.

The purpose of the joke is to attain satisfactory goals not only for the jokester but also for the others “satisfying individuals’ needs, establishing social order; giving a sense to the socio-political events, maintaining, chaining them.”⁴ All these goals can be accomplished taking into account the two main elements mentioned above.

At the same time, jokes respond to humour, socially, emotionally and psychologically, because they trigger many benefits for individuals (be they of motivational, cognitive, emotional or psychological type).

The pragmatic aspect of the joke is represented by an intention to amuse, to create a feeling of enjoyment for an audience and to enliven casual conversation. It also refers, as Bonta said⁵, to the consequences the joke teller might “suffer” in the case of voluntary or involuntary social conventions violations.

4. The Taxonomy of Jokes

The taxonomy of jokes takes into consideration certain variables among which:

a) the type of act at its basis: verbal jokes- based on the linguistic act; practical jokes, pranks - based on a physical act; individuals are fooled, annoyed, embarrassed: for example pranks made on Halloween or April Fool’s day.

b) the content: political jokes; blonde jokes; ethnic jokes; religious jokes; genre jokes; animal jokes; military jokes etc.

c) the cognitive effort required from the audience: cognitive jokes- based on abstract cognitive processing in the brain and jokes based on lower level of cognitive processing in the brain (the other jokes).

d) the manner in which the jokester organizes and tells the joke: question-answer jokes- resembling riddles; nonsense jokes; narrative jokes; fixed form jokes.

e) functions of jokes: entertainment, aggression, establishing rapport between and among people.

Telling a joke is a complex verbal act, as jokes are ruled-governed practices and their mechanism implies a problem-solve type of activity, meant to conciliate the incongruities between the exposed and the imposed meaning. The rules operate at three levels:

1) The level of joke structural organisation. A joke has two basic structural elements: the set-up which offers the content material within a certain interpretative script and the punchline, usually in the final sentence which is followed by the audience’s response.

2) The subjective level. The joke teller’s intentions and mode of presentation make up the subjective frame of the joke. As a rule, the joke teller must be skilful in presenting the content.

3) The social level. The linguistic competence, associating the signifier with the signified according to the language rules and the encyclopedic competence based on the “shared knowledge” between the joke teller and the audience. As already mentioned, the joke teller must use a common code and knowledge belonging to the same social, ethnic and cultural universe of discourse.

The pragmatic approach of the joke discourse helps us identify some of its elements:

1) the orientation - having in view the interlocutor(s) it is addressed to, its goals and development in time;

2) the discourse power - given by the linguistic choices made by the jokester and by the narrating strategy;

3) the permanent constraints exercised by the contextual, social and discursive norms upon it;

4) the discourse evaluation - the fact that it is evaluated in relation to a set of discourses and shared knowledge is of ultimate importance.

All these elements allow for different levels of analysis of what is said and how it is said.

4 Bonta, Elena; Druguş, Liviu, *The EMMY Style and the Management of the Political Discourse in Socio-Human Interactions and Transactions. Style*. Belgrade, Republic of Serbia, No. 6, 115-138, 2007, p.121.

5 Bonta, Elena, *Semiotic Practices within the Framework of Social Semiotics, in Semiotics beyond Limits*, Proceeding of the first ROASS conference, Alma Mater, Bacău, 2006, p. 370.

5. Jokes during Communism in Romania

Our paper focuses on Romanian jokes and telling jokes during the communist regime in Romania emphasizing the importance of context when telling or listening to a joke.

During the communist regime, Romanians did not lose their sense of humour and jokes had a profound significance, reflecting people's attitudes and values in front of the hostile reality they had to cope with. Romanians are fun loving by nature, having an innate sense of humour, no matter the circumstances, the context or the regime.

5.1. *The Romanian Communist Jokelore*

The Romanian communist jokelore forms a complex system, nurtured by an insatiable popular desire to symbolically attack an order that seemed everlasting and unyielding.

Indeed, a joke could "land" one in jail in communism, under the incidence of the infamous 209 article of the penal code that criminalized "conspiracy against social order". This did not prevent an immensely rich folklore from flourishing, generating sub-species focused on specific aspects of communist life – the endless lines in front of grocery stores, the precariousness of everyday life, encompassing food shortages, lack of electricity, heating, hot water, the Securitate and its one million informers in the 1980s, the Party ideology and its impact on the general population.

5.2. *The Characteristics of Romanian Jokes during Communism*

The main characteristics of Romanian jokes during communism are:

- 1) the set-up was adequate to the realities of the time;
- 2) they enlivened the daily conversation brightening the day;
- 3) people took a great pleasure in telling them although they knew they might "pay" for it;
- 4) their decoding was based on the people's cultural general knowledge;
- 5) they were told within groups and contributed to group solidarity;
- 6) most of the jokes belonged to the narrative type;
- 7) the linguistic choices made by the jokesters contributed to a vivid image of characters and situations and increased humour;
- 8) they represented a form of satire;
- 9) they contributed to the creation of a concrete feeling of enjoyment for the audience;
- 10) the humour generated by jokes stemmed from the recognition of the implied meaning;
- 11) their value was of an experiential relational and expressive nature.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse some typical jokes and make a study of how humour arises via pragmatical effects. We are going to focus on narrative jokes, specifically Romanian jokes and joking during communism.

Our analysis draws on some characteristics of political jokes, from the perspective offered by Chiaro⁶: the tellability of jokes, the role of the reader, the role of the listener, the discourse strategies in making jokes, the creative uses of puns, wordplay and ambiguities.

5.3. *The Classification of Jokes during Communism in Romania*

Our classification of jokes has in view: jokes about the Romanian people's frustrations in everyday life, jokes about Ceaușescu and his staff, jokes about people's attitude of disgust against the leader; jokes about people's bitter disappointment and a sense of no hope of getting rid of the dictator; jokes about the solutions people found for their problems, etc.

6. Jokes Analysis

6.1. *Jokes about the Romanian People's Frustrations in Everyday Life:*

Question: How comes that in communist Romania, shops are built at minimum 5 kilometres away from each other?

Answer: So that the queues should not tangle.

⁶ Chiaro, D. , *The Language of Jokes: Analysing Verbal Play*, London, Routledge, 2006.

The joke hints at the harsh reality in the country. People had to queue in front of shops for many hours in order to secure their food and the things they needed. The queues were usually very long as the food supplies were not enough for all people.

The deliberate exaggeration “5 kilometres away from each other” enhances the sense of humour and the power that people still found in facing the situation and coping with it in their own way.

6.2. *Jokes about Ceaușescu’s Staff*

Two guys were talking. At one point, one of them says:

“Come closer, I’ll tell you a joke about Ceaușescu.”

“Listen man, are you looking for trouble? I work for Security...”

“No problem then. I’ll repeat the joke until you get it.”

This joke represents the satiric treatment of a stereotype. The implied meaning of the joke is based on the Romanian’s shared knowledge: the people working for Security, the secret police, were so stupid that they were unable to get the meaning things explained to them (they needed things to be explained to them by someone for twice or three times).

6.3. *Jokes about People’s Bitter Disappointment and a Sense of no Hope of Getting Rid of their Leader*

Two students are talking:

“Have you heard? Mahatma Gandhi was shot...Sadam Hussein was shot...J.F. Kennedy was shot...”

“Ummm...So there IS a solution after all!”

The joke is somehow different from the previous ones.

The difference lies in the cognitive effort a non-native is forced to make when hearing it. The surface structure is clear for both Romanian natives and non-natives while the deep structure gets a meaning only for the natives.

The joke did not seem to have anything to do with the Romanians and their communist leader. It could have been told any moment and any place without the joke-teller’s fear of being heard or punished. Being a Romanian means that it is not necessary for the listener to make inductive inferences to understand the joke. The facts mentioned made the Romanians think there existed some hope for them, too.

The paraverbal marker (rendered in written form by capitals) enhances the idea.

6.4. *Jokes about Ceaușescu’s Absurd Rules*

What is specific of communism is the relationship of the joke teller to the participants sharing a dangerous moment – that of laughing at power, at that moment an act punishable by law. A similar joke directly includes Ceaușescu, and turns a joke about illegal humour into an irreverent remark about the dictator’s sexual politics, indirectly alluding to the official control of reproduction beginning in 1966:

Work visit at a correction facility. Ceaușescu wants to know who had received the harshest sentence and why. An elderly, thin man is brought in. The director informs Ceaușescu that the man had been condemned for telling political jokes, including jokes about the general secretary himself.

“If you tell me a joke that does not involve me, I will pardon you!” Ceaușescu promises.

After a brief moment of thinking, the man puts on a brave face and says:

“Comrade Elena Ceaușescu is pregnant.”

“And what is the punchline?” Ceaușescu says nervously.

“The punchline is that it does not involve you,” the man smiles.

7. **Conclusions**

Meant especially to enliven casual conversations, jokes make use of verbal, nonverbal and paraverbal signs in order to make meaning of things, people, events and actions of everyday life.

They are especially based on an indexical context which stresses the idea that the meaning of such practices is strictly dependent on the person performing them and the context in which they are performed.

Indeed, there are constraints of genre, age, social status of joke tellers, limits in respect to their competence of telling jokes, as well as constraints regarding the type of audience, situation and moment of narration.

In conclusion, jokes are very complex verbal acts that require a certain level of pragmatic competence to perform in an appropriate way. Therefore, taking into consideration Yule's definition of pragmatics⁷ as the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker, in our case, the joke teller, and interpreted by a listener, when telling or listening to a joke, pragmatic issues should be taken into account and pragmatic competence is of paramount importance.

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7 Yule, George, *Pragmatics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 3.

Shakespearean clown(s) and fool(s) in the tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

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1. A Survey on Buffoonery/Clownery

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a clown is “an entertainer who wears funny clothes, has a painted face, and makes people laugh by performing tricks and behaving in a silly way”¹. Despite its current role of making us laugh, during William Shakespeare’s time, the clown had a deeper meaning, hence its recurrent presence in the author’s works. Shakespeare’s fools were typically witty peasants or commoners who used their wits to outsmart people of higher social status. The clown was a hilarious caricature of a peasant to some extent; his comedy was earthy and plain, frequently incorporating awkwardness and uncertainty, such as inadvertently comic language usage, but there was also an element of cleverness².

Although the Elizabethans used the terms interchangeably, the clown was widely distinguished from another Shakespearean character type, the fool. Nonetheless, there is a clear distinction between the two humorous roles. The fool is purposefully funny, but the clown’s humorous effects are unintentional results of his clumsy nature. Clowns, on the other hand, frequently operate outside of the major plots and speak to the audience in elaborate asides, generally narratives. The fool, on the other hand, is more concerned with the main characters and speaks more analytically³.

From Roman times to the Medieval age, fools had delighted a wide range of audiences. As the jester in aristocratic courts across Europe, the fool may have reached its pre-Shakespearean zenith. Aristocratic homes were entertained in several ways by the jester, including through songs, music, storytelling, medieval satire, physical comedy, and, to a lesser extent, juggling and even gymnastics. William Shakespeare not only drew inspiration from this multi-talented jester tradition, but he also started rethinking it. Shakespeare’s fool, considered one of the most innovative strategies in theatre, became a complicated character who could emphasize more significant themes or symbols, whereas the court jester frequently regaled his audience with varied skills targeted at amusement. The fool, like the rest of Shakespeare’s characters, began to transgress the narrow limits of exemplary morality. He often dealt with love, psychological agony, personal identity, among many other themes that show up in Shakespeare and modern theatre⁴.

There are many plays written by Shakespeare that include the buffoon. For example, in *Titus Andronicus*, the clown appears in Act 4, Scene 3, carrying two pigeons in a basket. Titus negotiates with the Clown a price for the pigeons to send them as a gift to Emperor Saturninus; after several dialogues, the Clown reveals himself to be a delightfully naive rustic. Titus encloses the dagger with a taunting message of his own. When the unlucky Clown delivers his birds and Titus’ message to Saturninus in Act 4, Scene 4, the enraged emperor orders his execution. He walks away, exclaiming “Hang’d by ‘r-Lady! then I have brought up a neck to a fair end” (4.4.48-49). This play integrates one of Shakespeare’s early Clowns, and his authentic, if dim-witted, voice provides a simple, earthy moment of relief from the brutality that dominates the play⁵.

Another example is in *The Tragedy of Othello*, where the clown is a minor character, a jester, or fool in Othello’s retinue. In Act 3, Scene 3 the Clown makes lewd jokes with the musicians before dismissing them with Othello’s payment. He jokes with Desdemona briefly in Act 3, Scene 4 before delivering a message to her. The Clown, as comedic relief, offers little to disperse the play’s increasing tension; he may easily have been a standard figure, anticipated by Shakespeare’s audience and so given by the playwright⁶.

1 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/clown> (accessed on February 9, 2022).

2 Charles Boyce, *The Wordsworth Dictionary of Shakespeare*, Wordsworth Reference, Hertfordshire, 1996, p. 116.

3 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shakespearean_fool (accessed on February 9, 2022).

4 Idem (accessed on February 9, 2022).

5 Charles Boyce, *The Wordsworth Dictionary ...*, op. cit., p. 115.

6 Idem, p. 115.

2. Yorick or the Death of Buffoonery

In *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, the fool appears in Act 5, Scene 1 and is being portrayed by Yorick, the deceased court jester. It is already known that in most of his plays, Shakespeare does not name the buffoons, so the fact that Yorick has a name means that even in his death he has an important impact on the characters, in our case on Hamlet.

Hamlet's recollection of Yorick brings pleasure to his mind: the clown used to be an intelligent and creative person, with an excellent imagination, a jester from whom he learnt many life lessons. When he picks up his skull, Hamlet realizes that nothing in this world matters and everything is inconsequential, especially mankind. His soliloquy in the graveyard emphasizes the idea that even if someone dies, their spirit never leaves, it is just the body that does not mean a thing in the world. No matter what they were in their past life, a great man or a beggar, they both will end as dust. Thus, he gives us the example of Alexander the Great who died a long time ago and who turned into dust and dirt that now may be used to stop the holes in a barrel. His remark has both a biblical reference ('from ashes to ashes, dust to dust') and a need for someone of noble origin to give up his status which would help him restore things to normal. Hamlet's obsession with the physicality of death is also present when he envisions some of Yorick's physical features, such as his lips and skin that have decomposed from the skull.

However, Yorick's skull is a symbol of the truth that is buried, representing a major symbol in the play. The buried truth may represent the silence of the society and its helplessness in front of a corrupt king. People from Elsinore were in desperate need of a truth-teller, of a brave person who would be capable of being frank without offending the rich people and without the risk of being sentenced to death. Shortly said, they needed a buffoon. Without a buffoon, no one was able to tell the truth, to take a stand against the decaying state of the society, to say the things as they were, so this role needed to be taken up by someone else. This role is eventually taken up by Hamlet who becomes the new buffoon, entertaining the people with his feigned madness.

The jesters are said to stir things up, which is what Yorick does to Hamlet, even in the afterlife. Therefore, the graveyard becomes for the prince a place where he confesses his feelings, a place where he admits his love for Ophelia, and where he ceases to act formally for a short period, for us to observe his sensitive side, not just the vengeful and rational one.

Yorick's name is a unique one as well, and its etymology has still remained uncertain. It may come from the name Eric, a name appropriate to the play's setting in Denmark; from Jörg, which is the Danish equivalent of George; or from Rorik, the name of Hamlet's maternal grandfather in older forms of the tale. Whichever might be the case, Yorick remains a symbol for both the ephemeral condition of mankind and for the death of the buffoonery⁷.

3. The Grave-Digger - A Possible Clown

We also encounter the two Grave-diggers in Act 5, Scene 1 ("the grave-digger" and "the other") who are talking about Ophelia, Polonius' daughter; she is one of the victims in the manipulative hands of the parents from the play⁸ (Polonius, Claudius, Gertrude) who drowned herself and who is permitted to have a Christian burial even though she committed a sinful act. They emphasize the fact that the moral and biblical laws do not apply to the rich people, because they (in this case Claudius, the King and his royal court) can defy and alter the rules as they wish, without consequence. If Ophelia had been a commoner, a peasant, she would not have received this kind of 'treatment', and the sextons know it. This scene also indicates a grotesque parody of Hamlet's earlier "To be or not to be" soliloquy in Act 3, Scene 1, illustrating the collapse of every lasting value in the play into uncertainty.

It may seem that the Grave-digger is the clever, but uneducated person, who tells the facts funnily and morbidly, and "the other" is considered the echo of the society, the people who know just to assume, to judge based on no evidence. As an example, the latter one was the one who admitted that Adam, the biblical figure, did not have arms, even though the biblical writings and the former Grave-digger can contradict him.

Even Hamlet notices how clever the Grave-digger is when he states that the grave that he was in was his, not Hamlet's because he was the one digging it and also when he jokes about how a person's

7 Charles Boyce, *The Wordsworth Dictionary...*, op. cit., p. 729

8 Cătălina Bălinișteanu, *Hamlet- the Adult's Seduction of the Child*, in Cultural Spaces and Identities in (Inter)Action, INTERSTUDIA, nr. 6, Ed. Alma Mater, Bacău, 2010, pp. 95-102.

corpse, who once sold leather, would last longer because his skin had an extra layer of leather from his trade. Although his jokes may entertain the audience, they have a deeper meaning. When asked who was the grave for, a man or a woman, he said that it belonged to someone who was a woman, but not anymore. This amplifies the fact that when you die, you are no longer a man or a woman, but a simple, insignificant corpse. Also, when he was asked how to better preserve a corpse, he pointed out that some of the corpses were rotten before death, implying that the rotten you are on the inside during your life, the quicker you will start to decay from the outside after you die. The entire scene has a macabre tone because their jests and jibes are all made in a cemetery, in a sacred place, where people mourn the lost ones, but it is also a comic relief before the climax comes.

Most importantly, their attitude, behaviour, and remarks reflect the play's attitude towards death: it is our fate, as individuals, to die, and we need to accept life as it is and to realize that death and decay are normal stages of the human experience on earth. The Great-digger is a fine example of a character type, the rustic clown, in his unsophisticated yet knowing humour, and some critics, particularly the earliest ones, designate him as such in stage directions and speech headers⁹.

4. Conclusion

Needless to say that Shakespeare's plays are considered theatre masterpieces, in which are portrayed various themes and motifs and, according to their genres, but we have to underline the tension between characters which may or not bring their fatality. In my opinion, Hamlet succeeds in holding the audience's breath until the final act, when he gets the long-awaited revenge because of the way William Shakespeare's characters are built. Thus, Hamlet, with his feigned madness accomplished his revenge of having Claudius punished/killed, but, at the same time, Hamlet also gained the sympathy of his people. Because of his freedom of speech due to his new status as a buffoon, he did not face any direct judgment or consequence. Unlike Yorick and the Grave-diggers, who were peasants, Hamlet's social status helped him be an absolute tool in revealing the truth and stirring things up. If Hamlet can be considered an untouchable jester, Yorick and the Grave-diggers are the representation of the lower class, whose words were nothing compared to what rich people did or said. Therefore, even if Hamlet succeeds in taking up the role of the fool, he is nothing compared to the others, because his social status made him less credible in his role, while Yorick and even the Grave-diggers had to come up with funny and clever ways to be frank, in order not to upset the King and not to be sentenced to death.

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9 Charles Boyce, *The Wordsworth Dictionary...*, op. cit., p. 228.

”Things Fall Apart”, Chinua Achebe’s legacy about the Igbo culture

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1. The founding father of African fiction, Chinua Achebe

Born in the traditional Igbo village of Ogidi, in Eastern Nigeria, Chinua Achebe was christened Albert by his parents, who had converted themselves to Christianity¹. Because he grew up as a Christian, he was allowed to observe his native world more clearly and to make a distinction between the writings and the truth about his own tribe. Even though, at his local missionary school, the children were forbidden to speak the Igbo language and they were also encouraged to separate their existence from their traditions, Achebe was absorbed by his mother’s folk tales, stories described by the author himself as having “the immemorial quality of the sky, and the forests.”²



In terms of his motivation of writing, we may mention the fact that the English curriculum closely followed the British versions of writings describing the Igbo tribe’s culture (such works are Joyce Cary’s African novels³ and Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*⁴) and he wanted the world to read and to inform itself through the eyes of a person who was part of the tribe, who had the power to write an original, truthful and authentic work, which has the power to transmit the real story of his people.

His well-known work, *Things Fall Apart*, has the power to recreate an oral culture and a strong consciousness laced with an authentic agrarian way of living. This demonstrates “that African peoples did not hear of civilisation for the first time from Europeans”⁵. It depicts the complex customs and traditions of the Igbo people, portraying how Okonkwo’s world is tossed and turned by the appearance of Christian missionaries.

Being considered the one who gave African people a voice, Achebe believed that tradition is that one element which holds the people together, but also, it has the power to destruct them, to set them apart. He also attempts to construct an image of his native land and people in a language that respects the national traditions of his home country, while recognizing the demands of an international audience. It is to this specific type of audience that his novel is truly addressed. By doing this, Achebe aims to regain and to reclaim his heritage. His writing appears when countries are gradually adapting to the “global economy” syntagm and they are responding to the pressures of an international cooperation system.

Chinua Achebe has become renowned throughout the world as the father of African literature, essayist and professor of English language, and most important, the one who had the courage to stand tall and tell us the story of his people. They can also be found in different parts of the world, due to the transatlantic slave trade. They migrated to other countries, including Jamaica, Cuba, Barbados or even Belize.

1 The Gospels record the command of Jesus Christ that his disciples go forth and teach all nations (Matt. 28:19); Christian missions are the response to this command. The history of missions is, to a large extent, the history of Christianity, because missionary efforts are recorded in the Acts of the Apostles and have continued to the present.

2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uys3XuJBnro>, Chinua Achebe Interview (1964), link accessed on January 12th, 2021;

3 Anglo-Irish novelist.

4 Novella by Polish-English novelist Joseph Conrad about a narrated voyage up the Congo River into the Congo Free State in the Heart of Africa

5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uys3XuJBnro>, Chinua Achebe Interview (1964), link accessed on January 12th, 2021;

2. The Igbo people

The Igbo people, also known as the Ibo people, are found in the south-eastern territory of Nigeria, and they are one of the biggest and most influential tribes in Africa.

In their folklore, it is mentioned that they are descended from Eri, a divine figure who was sent from heaven to begin a civilization on Earth.

As for their culture and traditions, the Igbos have a colourful repertoire. Regarding their political system and their government form, they have a traditional republican system, based on a consultative assembly of people, ensuring equality to citizens. Traditionally, the Igbo people were mostly farmers, craftsmen or traders, and their most important food was the yam, a significant part of their traditional diet. They were known for their variety of soups, which can be made from locally grown vegetables, fruits, even seeds. The most popular ones are oha, nsala, akwu, okazi and ofe owerri⁶.



Furthermore, the Igbo people left us important moral lessons, known at a global level. We may mention here the most famous one, dating back to May 1803, the Igbo landing story, or the Igbo massive suicide. The story tells us that a group of Igbo people, among other West Africans were embarked on a ship to Savannah, Georgia, because they were purchased for 100 dollars each. When they realized that they were about to be enslaved, one night, they marched one by one into the waters of Dunbar Creek, singing and enchanting, committing a mass suicide. They left a moral lesson, which is to live freely, not enslaved and a song, which is sung even today across the globe: “Oh freedom, oh freedom, oh freedom over me/ And before I’d be a slave I’ll be buried in my grave/And go home to my Lord and be free ...”⁷.

Due to the diversity of the Igbo people, it is almost impossible for us to find or to mention a pure Igbo style, this particular characteristic enhancing their uniqueness.

3. Things Fall Apart, a short Analysis

Published in 1958, Chinua Achebe’s novel helped the creation of the Nigerian literary renaissance of the 1960s. The novel is not only a chronicle about the life of the main character, Okonkwo, but also a fresco of the Igbo “society”. It recounts the story of an Igbo leader and all the events, from the one leading to his banishment from the community to his seven years of exile and, finally, his return. The novel abounds in traditional Igbo proverbs, and it describes the simultaneous disintegration of both its protagonist, Okonkwo, and his village. In addition, it is considered a novel based on a realistic treatment of tribal beliefs and social unravelling.

3.1. Structure of Characters

The characters are constructed according to the list of values imposed in the Igbo society. For instance, in traditional Igbo culture it is required for a real man to detain an important quantity of yams, to have at least two wives and to always pay one’s debts. As an example, we may make a comparison between the novel’s protagonist, Okonkwo, and his father, Unoka. While Unoka is seen by his tribe as a coward or a “woman”, because he never took even a single title in his life, he borrowed money but never returned it to their owners, and that he feared the sight of blood: “Unoka was a drunkard who had only one wife, not many yams and had no titles to his name by the time of his death...”



6 Medicinal leaves, utazi leaves, palm nut, afang leaves, cocoyam.

7 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptjN6oMiV40&t=254s>, Auntie Zya: The Igbo Landing Story, link accessed on January 12th, 2021.

(Achebe, 1958), Okonkwo is the true definition of an Igbo man. He is an influential clan leader in Umuofia, a brave warrior and an exceptional fighter; he is also a wealthy man, capable of supporting his three wives and all his children.

As for the women, they have their own, important role in the Igbo society. Their powerful positions are connected to their specific functions: spiritually – priestesses, symbolically – earth goddesses, and literally – true nurturers of the Igbo people, caretakers of yams, mothers, educators, tutors.

Regarding their social hierarchy, as it has been mentioned before, most of the Igbo tribes did not have a king, but a tribal assembly, a system based on the respect and heroic deeds, of course, according to their set of values.

Unfortunately, this type of society is tossed by the arrival of the colonists⁸. For years, stories told about white men enslaving people of their kind were given little credibility in Umuofia. This reveals the paradoxical innocence of the Igbo people, because, even though they are known for some barbaric rituals or practices⁹, they are too innocent to think that a man could do such a cruelty, to enslave another or to sell them as pieces of meat. In addition, they are both afraid and astonished when, in a nearby village, after the first white missionary was killed, all the people are slaughtered by the British colonists' guns. The ones who claim to come in peace and to preach them about the real God are in fact madmen, sent to disturb their gods and their peace.

3.2. *Themes and Symbols*

The novel gravitates around the struggle between tradition and change, it deals with how the prospect and reality of change affect various characters, such as Okonkwo. He resists the new political and religious orders and he tries to sustain the tribe's values and principle, as he believes that he will not be a true Igbo man if he tolerates or join the new practices. His resistance is also due to his fear related to his social position or his social status, because he is, in fact, a man, whose sense of self-worth is dependent upon the traditional standards by which his people, his society judges him.



On the other hand, on a bigger level, the villagers are usually caught between resisting and embracing the new doctrine and they face different dilemmas of trying to determine what the best way of dealing with the current situation is. Some of them are excited about the new opportunities they have, opportunities brought by the white colonists, such as schools, hospitals, maybe a better political system. Despite all this, the European influence threatens to extinguish their cultural identity, by banishing their traditions, rituals, and their beliefs, by stripping them of their personality and their customs.

As for the other themes, we may mention the various ways of interpreting the idea of masculinity, the language as a sign of cultural difference, the family – the biggest treasure a real man can have, pride – friend or foe, the musical language of drums, so forth.

In terms of symbols, there are a few worth mentioning, such as: the chi, the animals, the locusts, the fire, the kola nut, the white paint.

Regarding the concept of chi, it is important to mention what it stands for. The chi stands for an individual's personal guiding spirit or personal god, whose merit depends on the person's good fortune, an element primordial for the person's fate. As an example, we may

discuss Okonkwo's fate, which is seen by the clan as a merit of a bad chi: "man could not rise beyond the destiny of his chi" (Achebe, 1958). But Okonkwo is more or less responsible for his tragic death due to another Igbo saying: "when a man says yes, his chi says yes also" (id.). He shifts between two poles: when

8 British colonialism in particular was structured as a dictatorship, using violence to pacify the colonial subjects and to maintain order.

9 Example: female circumcision – unlike the male circumcision which involves partial or complete removal of the foreskin around the genitals, the female circumcision involves total removal of the genitals just to preserve the woman's chastity. Thanks to education and media, this practice is actually reduced in the country.

things go well for him, he is confident and believes that he masters fate, but when he encounters obstacles or unfortunate events, he quickly disavows responsibility and laments about how ill-fated he is.

As for fire, it is a symbol encountered throughout the entire novel. Okonkwo is described as a powerful fire, concept alluding to his intense, dangerous anger, which is in fact the only emotion allowing himself to display his true nature. But the problem of fire is mentioned a few times in the novel, as the fire destroys everything it consumes, as well as Okonkwo. He destroys both physically (by killing Ikemefuna and Ezeudu's son) and mentally (as he does not accept his feelings for Ikemefuna or Ezeudu, and he adopts a colder, sadistic attitude towards their situations).

4. Proverbs: the Igbo legacy in Chinua Achebe's novel

By reading Achebe's novel, we notice a gamut of African proverbs, which are prevalent in the characters' thoughts and dialect. By examining them, the text provides us an insight into the traditional African culture and society, and their use allows all the stories and legends of the Igbo people to appear vivid and vibrant in front of us. Language here plays a major role, as the characters' actions and relationships are based on it. The power of language is explained by Achebe himself, as he affirms that "among the Igbo, the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten" (Achebe, 1958).

By using this long list of traditional African proverbs, Achebe creates a bond between us and his culture, in order to understand the Igbo people and their mentality easier. We are able to say that the author teaches us history and interculturality by means of ludus, or by means of games, because learning proverbs can be regarded as a knowledge game among the younger generations. As an example, we may analyse the following proverb: "the bird says that since men have learned to shoot without missing, he has learned to fly without perching" (Achebe, 1958). At a first sight, we are able to understand the strong bond that the Igbo people have with nature itself and with its elements, here: the animals and birds. Similarly to the bird, the man has learned to protect himself, to protect his freedom and to use his environment, in order to avoid certain dangers. He may also have learned to use what nature offers him for his benefit.

Other remarkable proverbs (Achebe, 1958):

- * "When the moon is shining, the cripple becomes hungry for a walk."
- * "A man who pays respect to the great paves the way for his own greatness."
- * "If one finger brought oil, it soiled the others."
- * "A child cannot pay for his mother's milk."

Therefore, by introducing these proverbs in *Things Fall Apart*, the author gave us the opportunity to enter his world in order for us to see how it works.

5. Conclusions

The novel teaches us that, without its culture, the Igbo society is as good as dead, hence the significance of Okonkwo's death in the end. Like Okonkwo, the Igbo tribe committed suicide by not being suspicious of the white missionary's intentions on their land and by not raising questions about their arrival. As a true, authentic African novel, written in English, Achebe's novel is considered a ground-breaking work. The author's role in making modern African literature a part of world literature cannot be underestimated.



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Orientalism in Victorian Literature. Influence, Symbols, Motifs

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1. Victorian Literature. Shaken by Oriental influences

In what the Victorian literature and its interaction with the concept of Orientalism is concerned, we can safely assert that many writers were fascinated by the mysterious and alluring aura that Oriental territories and their culture exerted over them. In this respect, we may mention that the development of Orientalism in Victorian literature had origins in many phenomena and events, from which we will mention just three.

First of all, both the European, as well as the British culture were fascinated, beginning with the 18th century, with the *The Arabian Nights*¹, as they were translated in French, in 1704 by Antoine Galland². The translation revealed the Oriental world as a place of mysteries, wonders and, first of all, wealth. Following the period of the Enlightenment, many romantic writers became infatuated with the danger and aroma of oriental territories, as we may observe from the works published by Percy Bysshe Shelley and George Gordon Byron.

Later, the Victorian writers also wanted to explore and at the same time to exploit the same subject as their predecessors. In this sense, Orientalism was all pervasive and present in the works of great writers, such as: William Thackeray, Willkie Collins, Joseph Conrad and even Rudyard Kipling. Other writers that wanted to create different works on this subject were Benjamin Disraeli, Oscar Wilde and George Elliot, as well as Robert Louis Stevenson.

As for the poetry, the ones “performing” in this field did want to take part in this European trend of exploring the Oriental cultures and myths by creating meaningful poems that would describe and reveal the true nature of Asian fields. As an example, *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*³, a key text written by Edward Fitzgerald, focuses upon the unavoidable truth of life, which is “Life is short and has to end”⁴. Another lesson that was specific at that time for the Oriental fields was that a great life is usually composed of the smallest pleasures, and in order to enjoy it, we must learn to love and cherish the little things.

As for the motifs and symbols that occurred frequently in different Victorian texts, we may mention the most famous one, which was opium. Opium is an element that appears in the works written by Dickens, Wilde, Carroll and even Kipling, as the literary influence came along with the material one – China exported enormous quantities of opium to the British aristocrats, as the latter were becoming more and more addicted to the drug.

Furthermore, we may choose a few great Oriental influences and try to analyse them from a historical point of view, as well as a literary one.



2. Great Oriental influences

As we have mentioned before, this paper focuses and analyses great Oriental influences that left an

1 <https://www.britannica.com/>, link accessed on October 17th, 2021.

2 Idem.

3 <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/246/246-h/246-h.htm>, link accessed on October 17th, 2021.

4 Idem.

impressive mark upon the British literature, especially during the Victorian times. In this respect, this paper chose two of the most significant Oriental influences, the Indian and the Chinese.

2.1. *The Indian influence*

2.1.1. *The British Raj. A history of both India and Pakistan*

As many of us know, the British Empire achieved its peak during the reign of Queen Victoria, most exactly, from 1840s, to the beginning of the first World War, 1914. Furthermore, it is important to mention that a staple part in this Empire was played by the newly conquered territories, also known under the name of “colonies”⁵.

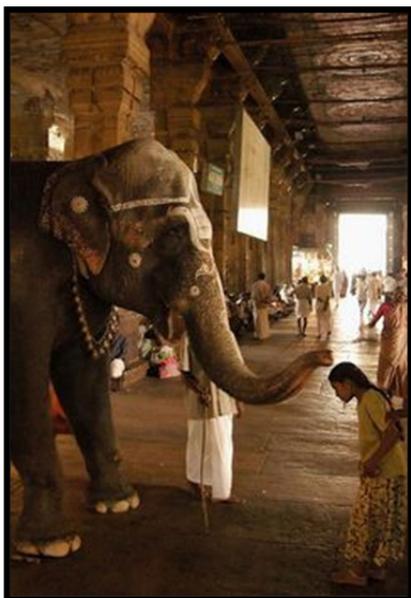
Regarding the context of the British colonies, this paper analyses and tries to argue upon the influence of different colonies, such as India, upon the development of British literature.



2.1.1.1. *The British colonies. Historical background*

As the *Longman Online Dictionary* records, the term *colony* defines “a country or an area that is under the political control of a more powerful country, usually one that is far away”⁶. We may extend this definition by remembering what territories the British state occupied, beginning with the Renaissance period, when king Henry VIII⁷ decided to develop, as well as to improve the Royal Navy, for both economic and political purposes⁸. After his reign ended, he was followed to the throne by his three children: Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. It was not until the reign of the Virgin Queen⁹, i.e. Elizabeth I, that England began its transition from a mildly European power, to a colonial empire.

We may better understand this enormous and important change in both the political and financial fields of England by making a comparison between the late 1615s to the late Victorian period, meaning that from almost 13 colonies established only on American territories, the British Empire subdued impressive parts of other continents, such as Asia¹⁰ and Australia¹¹.



This context links us to the theme of this paper, which is the influence that Orientalism had on the development of British literature. Thus, first of all, it is necessary to understand the context in which the Indian lands were annexed to/by the British Empire.

2.1.1.2. *India, the Victorian jewel*

Even though India had been considered a valuable trade provider since ancient times, most of the colonial powers of the XIXth century seemed to discover it pretty late, we may say. The first ones to acknowledge the great potential of Indian treasures were the Portuguese, who, even though they wanted to exploit all the resources that the Oriental fields possessed at that time, ended up having a quite peaceful “collaboration”, as, at that time, the Indian states were ruled by the Mughal family¹², known for their brutality and violence, and not by the Portuguese governors.

Taking this into consideration, in the following years, three other major European powers entered the political game: the Dutch, the French, and of course, the British. After

5 <https://www.britannica.com/topic/American-colonies>, link accessed on October 18th, 2021.

6 <https://www.odoonline.com/>, link accessed on October 18th, 2021.

7 King of England (1509-1547), well-known for his numerous marriages and for breaking with the Catholic Church

8 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Henry-VIII-king-of-England>, link accessed on October 18th, 2021.

9 Elizabeth I, Henry VIII’s second daughter, queen of England (1558-1603), known as the Virgin Queen because she never married.

10 Starting with 1757, in Bengal.

11 Starting with 1788, when the British established a penal colony on Australian lands.

12 Indian emperors, from which we name Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb.

a series of civil wars and different types of confrontations, the British East India Company¹³ gained control of almost the entire India. Later, the British occupation would be solidified after the subduing of Bengal, in 1770.

2.1.1.3. What was the British Raj?

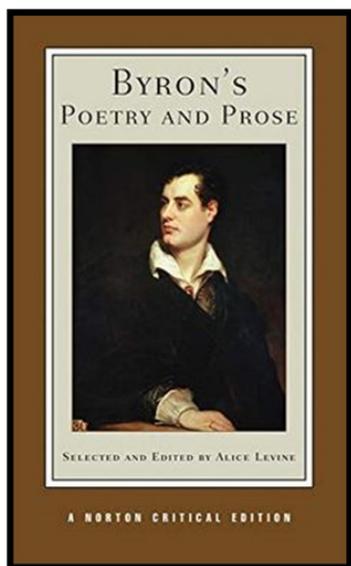
The history of colonial India changed when, in 1858, the British Crown, meaning Queen Victoria, took the power from the East India Company, and established a new political method of conducting the country, as the term “raj”, a loan from the Hindi dialect, meaning “to rule”.

Even though the Indian were eager to see the positive effects of the new rule, they were quickly disappointed, as they received in return racist remarks and disrespectful treatment, as well as the other colonies. These factors lead to many rebellions and other civil wars, such as the First War of Indian Independence¹⁴.

Even though these rebellions were perceived as mainly Muslim uprising, it is noted in many historical records that beside them, there were many Hindus, as well as local princes and princesses, who were enraged by the British system. One of the most famous royal heirs that conducted a war against the British occupation was princess Lakshmi Bai¹⁵, who began to fight against the British when they tried to annex her kingdom, in 1850s.



2.1.2. From the romantic heroes to the colonial bandits and to the Indian stereotypes



The influence that the Indian culture brought to the British literary heritage had a very interesting transformation, from the Romantic theme of heroic deeds, to the controversial model of the colonial bandit.

First of all, during Romanticism, writers such as Byron and Scott were widely known and appreciated, a fact that would later determine the power of Oriental influences on both Romantic and Victorian literature. They were also known for implementing through literature metropolitan models, that would later serve as a source of great inspiration for novels and poetry that centre various representations of the colonial India.

As an example, let us stress upon the Byronic hero, a model that served many writers, such as Henry Barkley Henderson, an officer from the British army that was determined to create a text, known under the following name: “The Dacoit: A Fragment”. This text was heavily criticised by different literary personalities and was concluded to be “the voice of a colonised voice and a presence while simultaneously disempowering it”¹⁶. This text is considered to be a creative copy of Byron’s “Giaour”, as the protagonists are

both of Hindu origin and it implies a treason made out of rage and love. Furthermore, the male protagonist, Omeer, was given a name that would emphasize the barbaric and passionate profile of an Indian, as the text implies ““blood-stain’d, bold decoit”¹⁷.

All in all, the initial hero is transformed into a bandit, a dramatic and yet a compelling figure from a psychological point of view, whose purity was tainted, all under the authority and the injustice of a colonial state.

The transition from the hero to the bandit was soon followed by the trend of the “national tale”¹⁸, an

13 A British organization that was established in 1600, for the exploitation of trade in the East and Southeast part of India.

14 Indian Mutiny, also named Sepoy Mutiny, an Indian Rebellion, that took place between 1857-1859.

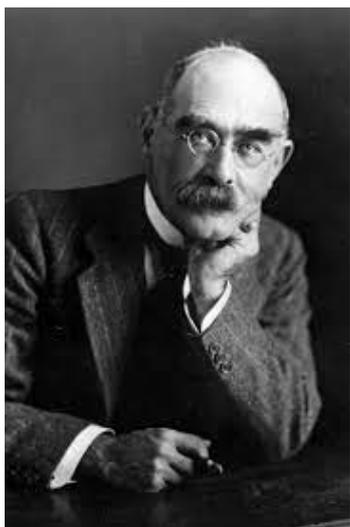
15 Queen of Jhansi territory and leader of the First Indian Mutiny.

16 Kennedy, Valerie, *Orientalism in the Victorian Era*, Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Literature, Oxford, 2017.

17 Idem.

18 <https://www.ferris.edu/HTMLS/news/jimcrow/links/essays/reversal.htm>, link accessed on October 18th, 2021.

influence that emerged from the people's culture and social habits, as well as the tumultuous relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. It is a paradox, as, during this period, India was not developing as a proper nation, as it was divided even more by the new, European influences, as well as the political decisions that the British Crown imposed upon the colonized people.



As an example, we may take almost all the novels published by Rudyard Kipling. The two books related to the Indian stereotypes, "The Jungle Books", which were published in 1894 and 1895, and as we all know too well, present the story of Mowgli, a boy that is raised by the wolves in the Indian jungle, and who grows to be the friend of Baloo, the bear and Bagheera, the black panther.

Although many people see it just a children's book, many historians and literary critics argued that these stories seem to be a relic of the colonial past, shared by the Indian people and the British Crown. The stories can be interpreted as an allegory, as the main character, Mowgli, who is, in fact, the only human in the story, seems to have the same attitude and behaviour towards the animals as the British had towards the people of India. But, as well as real people do, the characters in the story do not conserve the same attitude towards their enemy. Furthermore, this is the reason why it is better not to treat the human and the animal characters in the book as distinct as we may be appealed to.

For example, we may take aside both Mowgli and Bagheera. A human and a dangerous wild animal. At a first glance, they are very distinct, but after having a closer look, they are described in the same manner, as their identity is shaped in the same way, as we can see in the following paragraphs:

(1) "as cunning as Tabaqui, as bold as the wild buffalo, and as reckless as the wounded elephant"¹⁹;

(2) "Mowgli the wolf have I said that I am. Now, Mowgli the ape must I be before I am Mowgli the buck"²⁰.

From these two paragraphs, we may understand that even if the two creatures are described in the same manner by the author, they have the power to claim that their nature is different, as the groups of animals used by the author to describe either Mowgli and Bagheera come from different species, classes and even families.

All in all, we may observe that there are absolute differences between the British and the Indian, a concept in close connection to the idea of imperialism and the white colonial supremacy. In conclusion, we can affirm that the Indian influence in Victorian literature consisted in ideas preached by the doctrine imposed by imperialism and the concept of the British empire.



2.2. *The Chinese elements present in Victorian literature*

2.2.1. *Opium, the poison of both pleasure and death*

As we all know, the substance called Opium is a narcotic usually extracted from the unripe seedpods of the beautiful flower named Poppy (*Papaver somniferum*)²¹. It appeared on the market between the late 6th and the early 7th century, and the ones that introduced it were the Chinese, followed by other people, such as the Indian and the Arabs.

19 Kipling, Rudyard, *The Jungle Book*, University of Michigan, Michigan, 1920 (p. 9).

20 Kipling, Rudyard, op. cit., 1920 (p. 61).

21 <https://www.britannica.com/science/opium>, link accessed on October 18th, 2021.

Firstly, it was used as a medicine, but gradually the Europeans grew more and more addicted to this substance, which, quickly became the most consumed drug between the 18th and the late 19th century.



For those wondering what the evolution of opium trade has to do with the evolution of Victorian literature, the answer is pretty simple, if not evident. By 1773, the British had already discovered this pharmaceutical product, and soon, almost all noble British became addicted to it. This year also marks the moment when the British noblemen became the primordial clients that the Chinese opium trade counted on.

In addition, it is noted that the Chinese weren't the ones to plant and to harvest the poppies, but the Indians. The Chinese were only the ones manufacturing the final desired product, opium. Thus, when the British East India Company discovered this aspect, it established an enormous opium cultivation programme on Indian territories, abusing even more the subdued population

of India. As a result, the quantity of opium that China detained increased from almost 200 chest/year, in 1729, to about 10.000 chest/year, in 1830. If these numbers do not say much, we may mention that the amount of opium which was transported in just one chest was of almost 63,5 kilograms²².

It is safe to say that the British noble classes were so addicted, that many writers approached this element in their literary works. Such writers are Oscar Wilde, Charles Dickens and even Lewis Carroll.

In the following chapter, we will analyse how the works of two of these three authors that we have mentioned before exploited the theme of opium.



2.2.2. The writers' addiction to opium

2.2.2.1. Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray* and the consumption of opium²³

In Wilde's vision, the element opium constituted the focal point of the so-called "opium dens", which were located in a specific, remote, part of London, that have the mission of representing the internal, psychological state of Dorian, the protagonist. The existence and also of the consumption of opium is a key-element that stands for the evolution of Dorian's life.

As we have already mentioned, his addiction is connected to the illicit, mysterious spaces, named opium dens. We may also confirm the fact that his addiction for opium is strongly related to the one of aesthetic pleasure and sexual desire.

As an example, in the second chapter, the opium dens are described as spaces which give him freedom, a sort of liberation from the Victorian society, as well as from his own feelings and emotions. Thus, the connection that opium makes with both aesthetic and sexual pleasure grows into more brutal behaviour, which includes compulsive behaviour, excessive pleasure and, finally, addiction, as Destiny Wynnelle Kaus²⁴, affirms in the work published in 2020²⁵.



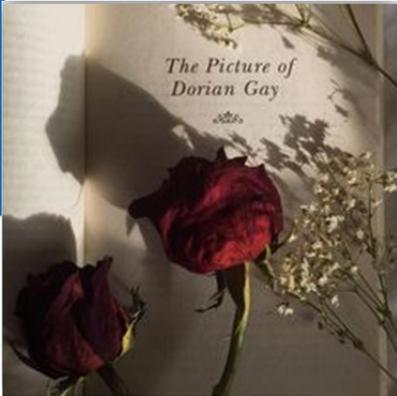
(1) "As soon as he was alone, he lit a cigarette, and began sketching upon a piece of paper, drawing

22 <https://www.britannica.com/science/opium>, link accessed on October 18th, 2021.

23 Wynnelle, Kaus, Destiny, *The Spaces of Addiction in Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray*, MA Graduation Thesis, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan, 2020.

24 Idem.

25 Idem.



flowers, and bits of architecture, first, and then faces”²⁶.

(2) “Then he shook hands with Dorian Gray, lit a cigarette, and flung himself down on the sofa”²⁷.

All in all, Dorian Gray is the reflection of the Victorian man, addicted to opium and all the adjacent pleasures that come with it, as many of them were during that time.

2.2.2.2. *Smoking dreams with the Blue Caterpillar*

As the third most read book ever, after the Holy Bible and Shakespeare’s works, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland²⁸ is more than just a simple children’s book. It is a highly symbolic book, that is destined for both

casual reading and detailed analysis.

As for the references to the Oriental elements, there can be remarked the presence of opium, as well as other types of drugs that were imported from China especially, from among which we may mention the psychotic mushrooms. As well as the Chinese influence, we may also observe the presence of the smoking hookah²⁹, an item that was imported by the British mostly during Victorian times, an item of Indian origin.

First of all, the use of psychotic substances is very clear in the book, as all the characters from Wonderland seem to have consumed some.

Second of all, the truculent mouse is an allusion to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus³⁰ needs to be mentioned – in history, it is mentioned that most of the philosophers and priests used psychotic substances in order to have the so-called visions and premonitions, which were, in fact, hallucinations from the used drugs.



(1) “We, indeed!” cried the Mouse, who was trembling down to the end of his tail. “As if I would talk on such a subject!”³¹.

In addition, another element is the Blue Caterpillar, which stands on a mushroom and smokes a hookah. The mushroom that the Caterpillar stands on is a reference to the Psilocybin³² mushrooms, a type of mushroom imported only from China that induced strange and sometimes, violent hallucinations, as well as the hookah.

(1) “The Caterpillar and Alice looked at each other for some time in silence: at last, the Caterpillar took the hookah out of its mouth”³³.

All these references and many more denote the fact that even writers, such as Carroll or Wilde were no strangers to the influence of the Oriental lands, as they decided to include personal experiences of this kind in their greatest books.

3. Conclusions

26 Wilde, Oscar, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, University of Buckingham, Hertfordshire, 1992 (p. 215).

27 Wilde, Oscar, op. cit.(p. 53).

28 <https://www.britannica.com/>, link accessed on October 17th, 2021

29 Idem.

30 Idem.

31 Carroll, Lewis, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, Chicago Publishing, Illinois, 1998 (p. 27).

32 https://www.britannica.com, link accessed on October 17th, 2021.

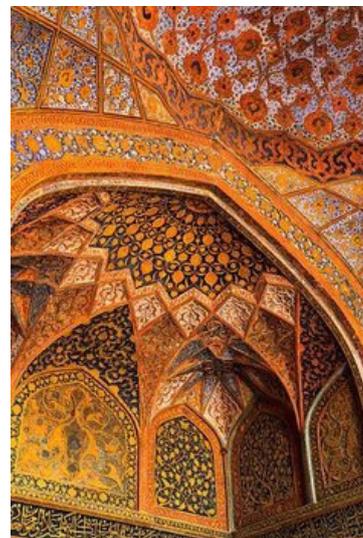
33 Carroll, Lewis, op.cit. (p. 59).

All in all, it is important to mention that the Victorian literature did not focus only on the Victorian principles and ideas that the society had and performed. Thus, we may affirm that there are many more influences, of which we did not talk too much, such as the Arabic or the Persian ones.

As for the most prominent ones, we analysed the Indian influence on great novels, such *The Jungle Book*, written by Rudyard Kipling, as well as poems of both Byron and Scott, that constituted a great source of inspiration for many Victorian poets.

As for the Chinese influence, the focal point was the consumption and the trade of opium, mainly, and, of course, of other psychotic substances, that managed to enslave the minds of many gentlemen. Also, this subject was exploited, both in real, material world, as well as in fictional, narratological worlds, created by Lewis Carroll and Oscar Wilde.

Finally, we can affirm that most of the influence that was exerted upon the Victorian literature was the result of specific Victorian events, such as colonialism and the import of exotic substances and products.



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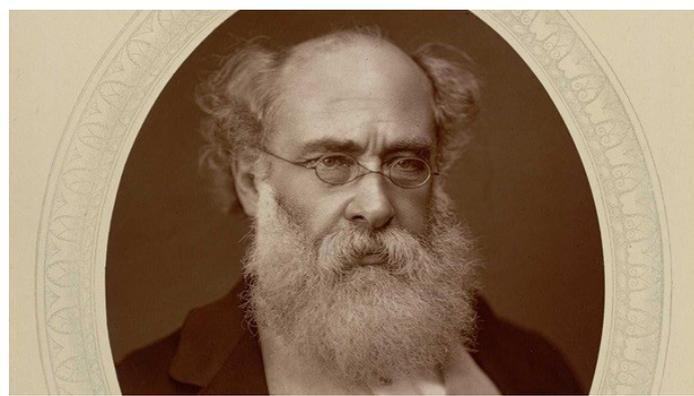
An Eye For An Eye by Anthony Trollope

Lorena-Paula Chiriac, I, LEPC

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Andreia-Irina Suci

1. The author

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was a famous Victorian novelist, who also wrote an autobiography, short stories and travel articles. He became one of the most successful, prolific and respected English novelists for writing amazing novels about politics, social and gender issues and other conflicts of his days. One of his greatest achievements involved a steady, consistent and sincere vision of the social structures around Victorian England.



Trollope grew up as the son of a farmer.

He spent the years of 1834-41 as a junior clerk in the General Post Office, but he was then transferred to Ireland, where he began to enjoy a social life. He married in 1844 an English woman named Heseltine and settled in Tipperary. In 1859 Trollope moved back to London, resigning from the civil service in 1867 and unsuccessfully standing as a Liberal parliamentary candidate in 1868. His final years were spent in village of Sussex where he continued to write despite facing a crippling health and increased melancholy. Ultimately, he died in London stricken with paralysis, afterwards his son Henry published some of his novels¹.

2. The Victorian Common Disease

Rank and status were the key elements in the eyes of the Victorian society. Some critics have evaluated Trollope’s work as a glance at the fallen-woman crisis from a male perspective. In the novel



An Eye for an Eye, Mrs. O’Hara was prepared to allow her daughter to marry the future Earl of Scroope for financial gain and a stable life. As this comes in contrast to Lady Scroope’s wishes (Fred Neville’s mother), due to rank position and religious reasons, she convinces him otherwise: instead of marrying her, to live with her (Kate) unofficially. Also, the theme of religion is heavily approached, especially in Lady Scroope’s envision of a lady. For the simple difference in religious views, she decides to keep a safe distance from the O’Hara family. The subject is not aimlessly chosen as it resembles the Northern Ireland Conflict, in which the Protestant unionists (Scroope) fought against Roman Catholic nationalists (O’Hara) for Ireland’s Independence². The blinding struggle for wealth was engraved in Mrs. O’Hara’s mind after being deserted by her husband, leaving her to raise their daughter and approaching desperation which each plea of her daughter.

In the eyes of the Victorian highly-moralistic society, Lady O’Hara would have been seen as “damaged goods”, but the author sympathized with her, because in that age a woman without a husband was surely damned to struggle. It is in his novels that women are the ones who suffer the most out of this prejudice in society who portrayed women as either mothers/angels of the house or drain.

1 <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Anthony-Trollope>, Anthony Trollope British author, accessed 24th October 2021.

2 <https://ellenandjim.wordpress.com/2013/10/03/trollopes-an-eye-for-an-eye/> Anthony Trollope, *An Eye for An Eye* blog, accessed on 12th December, 2021.

3. The “feminist” author

The author has been well recognized for giving his female characters the “voice of a man” or rather the power to act for themselves. Despite the tragic outcome Lady O’Hara endured at the end of the novel, Trollope presented the manner in which women can take matters into their own hands, making or not the best of choices.

“It is his women who speak out with most vehemence against a society that made marriage the only acceptable career for a woman. Without money a woman had to find a husband in Trollope’s world or become the appendage to the nearest relation prepared to support her. It is not men but women who complain about the social order, and their criticism comes from the heart.”³



In an impetuous manner the women of Trollope’s novel present how a strong female mindset and determination can end catastrophically. Despite possessing only the purest intentions for her daughter, Lady O’Hara drowns into madness and takes Fred’s life after destroying Kate’s potentially stable future.

Standing as a single woman in the 19th century England meant leading a life without clear definition, yet, with courage and determination, a single woman could carve out a place for herself in society which would allow her to live a life with dignity. By tracing Trollope’s single women through his novelistic career, readers can observe the changing attitudes of their creator towards the issue. Not only does he portray the women in his later periods more sympathetically, he also deepens their psychological development.

4. Short Analysis and Characters

Fred Neville, heir of the Earl of Scroope and a lieutenant of cavalry stationed in Ireland, was a self-indulgent young man. The Earl, his step-father, wanted him to marry the eminently suitable Sophia Mellerby, but he had already fallen, in love with Kate O’Hara, a young girl living in the vicinity of his barracks. She and her mother, Lady O’Hara had been deserted by Kate’s father, who had fled to France to escape punishment for other crimes. Fred and Kate’s love blossoms until the issue of status and religion come into frame and Fred is persuaded “not to take accountability for his pregnant fiancée”. Infuriated with rage, Lady O’Hara, Kate’s mother, claims the life of Fred Neville, after refusing to marry her daughter, thus condemning her to an unholy life. The tragic ending concludes with Fred’s death and Lady O’Hara being institutionalized into an asylum with Kate reuniting with her father. Ethically, the story provides a religious moral episode which revolves around the saying: “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth”. This main phrase is transferred as the title of the novel, borrowed from The Bible. It is continued with: “If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also”. Trollope adjusts this phrase to the message that he wishes to send to his readers, that even on the verge of desperation taking matters into one’s hand is not a solution, but rather a revengeful option that does not settle the score.

Short List of Characters:

Fred Neville: The so-called black sheep of the family, lacking in self-control and responsibility, but adopted and taken as the future Earl of Scroope, treated as a true son, but failing to rise to the expectations when his amorous interest blocks his path to success.

“There was still left to him a son, – a youth indeed thoughtless, lavish, and prone to evil pleasures.”⁴

Kate O’Hara was a beautiful, kind-hearted girl, living at the edge of poverty with her mother after being abandoned by her father, who sadly fell in love with the future Earl of Scroope, carrying their illegitimate child. But their child was the main reason Fred could not marry her, as status and wealth made her an unfit match, condemning her to uncertainty.

³ <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3981&context=rtds>, Dissent women in Anthony Trollope’s fiction: A sympathetic portrayal, accessed on 12th December, 2021.

⁴ <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/16804/pg16804-images.html> Anthony Trollope, An Eye for an Eye, The Complete Works.

“Kate O’Hara was in face very like her mother; – strangely like, for in much she was very different. But she had her mother’s eyes. “

Mrs. O’Hara: considered the main protagonist of the novel, is presented at the beginning of the story, depicted in a mental asylum, “an unfortunate lady, as to whom there has long since ceased to be any hope that she should ever live elsewhere.” After the introduction, the rest of the novel follows her story through a male perspective. By taking matters into her own hands and condemning the life of a man, her future dreams collapsed after the demise of Fred. Her hopes were pure and they entailed only the desire to provide for her daughter, but as time passed, life without wealth seems impossible for her.

Without means to provide a safe future for her daughter, Lady O’Hara places all of her hopes and dreams in the man who seems to be able to fulfil them. When faced with disappointment, she acts out of rage and punishes the man by pushing the future Earl of Scroope to his demise, following a path of madness (“She slowly took the path, not to the cottage, but down towards the burial ground and Liscannor, passing the car which was waiting in vain for the young lord. On she walked with rapid step, indifferent to the heat, still proud of what she had done, – raging with a maddened pride.”) Failing to experience any sort of guilt for her actions (“Yes: – an eye for an eye! Death in return for ruin! One destruction for another! The punishment had been just. An eye for an eye!”), she had lost her moral sense alongside her daughter, whom later managed to find solace in the reconciliation with her father⁵.



5. Themes

5.1. *Religion and Madness*

The theme of religion is heavily employed, especially in the case of Lady Scroope. For the simple difference in their religious backgrounds, she decides to keep a safe distance from the O’Hara family. The subject is not aimlessly chosen as it resembles the Northern Ireland Conflict, in which the Protestant unionists (Scroope) fought against Roman Catholic nationalists (O’Hara) for Ireland’s Independence (“The laws have been so altered in favour of the Roman Catholics, and against the Protestants, that a priest can do almost just what he likes”).

The title of the novel has a biblical background rendering the importance of the religious doctrine and of the religious philosophy in the Victorian society.

The subject of madness has always been a matter of interest for Trollope as some other works of his focus on this element such as *He Knew He Was Right* or *Phineas Finn* (1869). Trollope was clearly fascinated by the subject of madness. In 1869 he declared: “There is perhaps no great social question so imperfectly understood among us at the present day as that which refers to the line which divides sanity from insanity”⁶.

5.2. *Marriage*

Marriage has always been represented as the quintessence of Victorian society, yet Trollope managed to figure a way into incorporating the act of marriage into an allegory for the relationship between England and Ireland. Almost as if England/Fred tried to colonize Ireland/Kate, by offering empty promises only to leave when the deed is done. The historical and political background that form the basis of this allegory of marriage is worth in depth analysis at the level of ideas and language.

5 <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/16804/pg16804-images.html> Anthony Trollope, *An Eye for an Eye*, *The Complete Works*.

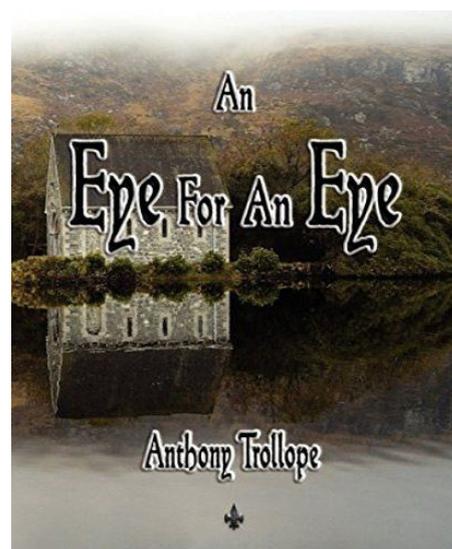
6 Allan Beveridge and Edward Renvoize, *The presentation of madness in the Victorian novel*, *Psychiatric Bulletin*, 1988

6. Conclusions

An Eye for An Eye is a rather brave attempt of the author in confronting the (political, religious, ideological) problems between Ireland and England at that time. It builds itself as a warning for the future relationship between the two countries. Trollope loved Ireland, and saw that England was using Ireland in a manner typical of the relationship victim/subject–victimizer/mistress. He feared that this attitude would lead to a long-term conflict. The tense relationship regarding the two countries was however portrayed as a simple love story gone wrong between a young Englishman and a Catholic Irish girl, transmitting an aestheticized signal of such a possible threat/danger⁷.

As Victoria Glendinning wrote in her biography of Trollope: “Those who read his books know him best”.

In an autobiography, Trollope declared that his books had been the source of his greatest happiness: “I have been able to imbue myself thoroughly with the characters I have had in hand. I have wandered alone among the rocks and woods, crying at their grief, laughing at their absurdities, and thoroughly enjoying their joy. I have been impregnated with my own creations”. Anyone who has read a Trollope novel will know what he meant⁸.



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COVID 19 and social changes in the UK

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1. What is this virus? Which are the symptoms and the damaging effects on the bodies?

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2 that caused a pandemic starting with 2020. Coronaviruses, themselves are nothing new, they are a large family of viruses that may cause numerous diseases, ranging from the common cold, influenza, and through to SARs.

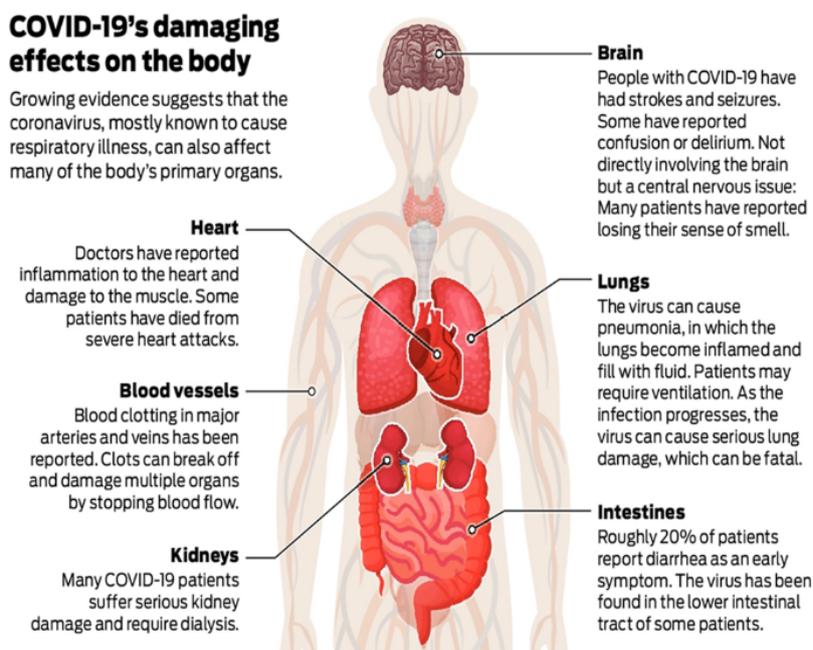
Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and can recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop a more serious illness.

1.1. Symptoms

The symptoms of this infection may appear in 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19, many of the symptoms are similar to other medical conditions, thus causing confusion to the patient and to the medical staff alike. The patient may suffer from intermittent fever or chills, a dry nagging cough, and general tiredness. One of the earlier defining symptoms is the loss of smell and taste; patients complain that all food is “like eating cardboard”.

Less common symptoms are sore throat, headache, muscle pain, again these symptoms are synonymous with influenza. Also present may be diarrhoea, skin rash, and irritation of the eyes. These symptoms, although uncomfortable, are not in themselves life-threatening. However, in more serious cases, due to a reduction of oxygen in the blood, the patient may experience great difficulty in breathing, confusion, chest pains, and loss of mobility. Equally, it is quite common, especially among younger and healthy individuals to be totally asymptomatic, showing no signs, or symptoms whatsoever.

1.2. The damages caused to the human body by COVID¹



1 <https://www.sfchronicle.com/health/article/The-insidious-coronavirus-can-invade-heart-lungs-15230192.php>.

1.3. *Actions which were taken to prevent the spread of COVID*

Initially, advice from The WHO, and national governments, was not dissimilar to that given almost a century earlier, during the Influenza epidemic of the 1920's. "Coughs and sneezes spread diseases, keep them in your handkerchief". However, with the growing seriousness of the disease throughout the countries, more sophisticated and far reaching actions were required to try and protect the public. Primarily a face covering, which quickly progressed into the wearing of a mask; one tightly fitting, and of quality, so as not to allow the passage of vapour droplets. This in conjunction with keeping a distance of at least 1 metre from anyone else, whether they were infected or not. As it was soon known that the virus could be transmitted via surfaces, other measures were to wash ones hands regularly, with soap and water, as well as using an alcohol-based hand rub. Try to keep away from enclosed areas, but if not possible, keep them well ventilated, open windows and doors.

If someone felt unwell, they were to stay at home, and self isolate for 10-14 days. This also applied if you were "pinged" by the NHS Covid app. This told you that you had recently been in close proximity to someone, who had been tested positive for the virus. But the most effective thing a patient could do, for both themselves, and the country, was to get vaccinated. Only with mass vaccination, it is said, could the UK have a fighting chance of controlling Covid-19. It was made clear time and time again, that both the State and the individual had responsibilities in controlling this outbreak, and only by working together, with total commitment would the UK return to any sense of normality.

2. **Coronavirus and social impacts on the UK**

The Office for National Statistics Opinions and Lifestyle Survey provides evidence on some of the social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 70% of those surveyed are either very or somewhat worried about the effect of COVID-19 on their life, and almost 48% say their wellbeing is being affected.
- Disabled people are more likely to be worried about the impact of COVID-19 than nondisabled people, with 83.4% very or somewhat worried.

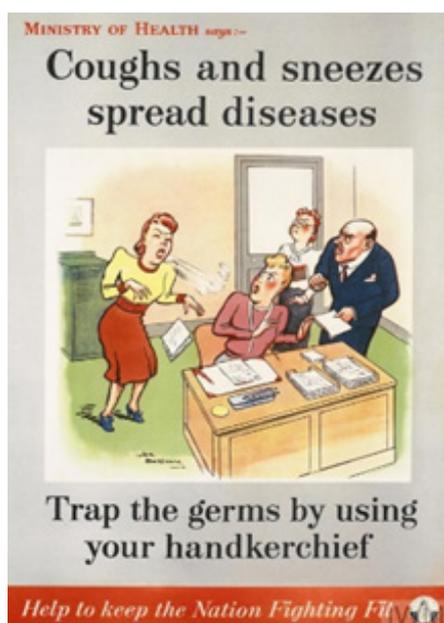
This may be because only 19.6% of disabled people felt safe when outside their home, compared to 34.9% of non-disabled people².

Levels of anxiety have fallen since April 2020 but remain 20% higher than pre-pandemic. Isolation and reduced social contacts have also had an impact on loneliness, with 27% of those surveyed reporting feeling often or always lonely. The effects on many people, not being able to visit friends and relatives, whether they be in their own homes, sheltered accommodation, or even medical facilities have brought great stress and trauma to a large percentage of the population.

Recently published studies show that time out of school in the 2019/20 academic year may have affected primary pupils' performance in reading, maths and spelling, punctuation and grammar assessments, as well as basic skills for independence in younger children – reinforcing the importance of keeping children in classrooms.

Learning at home may be particularly challenging for disadvantaged pupils. The Education Endowment Foundation has estimated that the disadvantage 'gap' in achievement could widen as a result of the pandemic. This will be exacerbated further if educational settings are not kept open. As of yet, there are no concrete plans to "catch up" or "redo" the terms that have been affected. Also, due to schools being closed, students have not been able to sit in the important national examinations, such as GCSE, AS, and A levels. This has led to much stress, especially from older students, who were preparing for university.

Attending school is also important for the mental health and wellbeing of children – especially vulnerable children who are most likely to be affected due to increased risk of abuse and harm associated with isolation and financial stress.



² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/methodologies/opinionsandlifestylesurveyqmi>

There has been a 19% fall in the number of victims of crime in England and Wales when comparing April to June 2020 and January to March 2020, largely driven by a 30% reduction in thefts over the same period.

The ONS has published some evidence on domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Police recorded crime data shows a large increase in offences flagged as domestic abuse-related during the COVID-19 pandemic. With families at home 24 hours per day, parents were trying to work online, as well as to look after their children. The stress from that, and the fact that those on furlough only earn 80% of their pre-pandemic wage, are all major factors in the acceleration of domestic disputes.

Britain's coronavirus-ravaged economy shrank 9.9% in 2020, the biggest annual fall in output since modern records began, but avoided heading back towards recession in the final quarter of the year. Britain's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 1.0% between October and December versus the previous quarter, the Office for National Statistics said, compared with forecasts in a Reuters poll of economists for growth of 0.5%.

The job market also negatively suffered. Since the early days of the crisis last March, 813 000 payroll jobs have disappeared, including 355 000 in hotels, restaurants and pubs, and 171 000 in shops. During the pandemic more than half of the fall in the number of employees has been among the under-25s. Many restaurants, shops and businesses were closed at the start of the year, as the UK entered lockdown once again to fight the coronavirus pandemic. The unemployment rate for December 2020 to February 2021 was 4.9%, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS)³.

2.1. *Other social changes in the UK*

On Christmas 2020, all of the UK went into another full lockdown, including schools. Travel was banned from the UK, unless absolutely essential, and even then permission had to be granted prior to travel. Even travel within the UK itself was affected, especially those living in the red areas, of highest infection rates.

The main concerns reported by adults were a lack of freedom and independence (54%), and personal travel plans being affected (54%). However, lockdown led to worsened mental health, and an increase in suicide rates. The National Health Service was swamped treating Covid patients, routine operations had been postponed, and even patients undergoing cancer treatment were having their treatment delayed. All these factors led the general public feeling more isolated, and with far less control of their daily lives.

On the plus side the UK became the first country to authorise and begin use of the Pfizer–BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in a mass vaccination programme. By early 2021, the UK had one of the highest vaccination rates in the world, and the highest in Europe.

In late January, testing and quarantine rules were imposed on all incoming travellers. Serious cases fell sharply, and schools re-opened in March.

3. **Conclusions**

So far, COVID-19 has had a major impact on health, economy and society. Similar to many other diseases, COVID-19 has had a more serious impact on vulnerable groups, including the elderly, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and people living in disadvantaged areas. The United Kingdom had its worst recession ever. The path of the economy does not only depend on the course of the virus and Government restrictions or lockdowns, but also on how the population views the risk from the virus and their job security, and how that in turn impacts on consumer and business confidence. The fight against the virus is a priority both economically and sanitary-wise.

Young people are surprisingly resilient, but the long-term impacts on their paths and opportunities are crucial, especially for those already affected by inequality. Many young people may need support over the coming months and years. Everything has been done correctly to confront the pandemic situation. People realized that a country without education and economy cannot survive.

3 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandlifeexpectancies/methodologies/opinionsandlifestylesurveyqmi>

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Dark humour: the epitome of sadism or a manifestation of repulsion?

Zamfira-Maria Petrescu, II, LEPC
Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

“Life is like coffee, the darker it gets, the more it energizes.”
(Ankita Singhal)



1. Introduction

Most of us use humour as a defensive weapon against the shocks life has to offer us: from mild incidents (which are “Small t traumas”) to hideous crimes and despicable experiences (also named as “Big T traumas”). In order to cope with these events, the human mind has developed its own self-protection system that would soften the long-term effects of such episodes. For the victims of the events, dark humour presents itself as a part of the healing process, since it is globally acknowledged that humour bares therapeutical virtues.

In the following paragraph, I am going to introduce you to the notion of dark humour. We are all accustomed to the saying: “If life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”, which is the perfect ground for dark humour to work on: “If life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Then find someone whose life has offered them vodka and throw a party!” What does dark

humour do? It offers a negative situation (“If life gives you lemons”), which is inevitable, a positive finish (“make lemonade”) and a comical touch (“Then find someone whose life has offered them vodka and throw a party!”).

Some would say this type of humour is either too dry to be considered as funny, or too sophisticated, euphemistically speaking, to be assimilated. Since it touches sensitive topics, the users of this kind of jokes should tread carefully in order not to hurt the audience’s feelings or to cause any grievances. The best way of preventing any kind of misunderstandings is to make sure that both the speaker and the hearer have the same social background, which would subsequently imply the success of the joke, without entailing the speaker’s ignorance to suffering or the hearer’s narrowmindedness regarding the humour in question.

Even though individuals think that black humour and dark humour might be synonyms and that we use either one term or the other for the sake of variety, the French Surrealist André Breton isolated in his work¹ in 1940 the term dark humour from the other term - black humour - the latter being referred to when talking about jokes with reference to black people. However, the term black humour did not become common until around the 1960s.

In the following subchapters, I will clarify the definitions of the humour at issue, point out the characteristics of dark humour, illustrate and put in plain English some samples of dark humour jokes and, finally, draw some conclusions concerning the topic.

Keywords: dark comedy, tragedy, taboo, suffering, surrealism, satire, gallows humour

1 Breton, Andre, *Anthologie de l’humour noir*, Paris: Éditions du Sagittaire, 1950.

2. Definitions for Dark humour

Were we to provide a comprehensive description of the term Dark humour, we would define it as a kind of humour that treats sinister, taboo subjects like death, disease, deformity, handicap or warfare with bitter amusement and presents such tragic, distressing or morbid topics in humorous terms. Most of these matters are too sensitive to talk about, let alone laugh about them, this is the reason why dark humour encompasses the futility of looking for easy and neat answers to the tragedies of life.

According to *Merriam Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature*², Dark Humour or Black Humour is a kind of humour which is marked by the use of 'morbid, ironic, or grotesquely comic episodes that ridicule human folly'.

3. Characteristics of Dark Humour

Dark humour, often called grotesque, morbid, gallows or sick humour is used to express the absurdity, insensitivity, paradox and cruelty of the modern world. Characters or situations are usually exaggerated far beyond the limits of normal satire or irony, potentially requiring increased cognitive efforts from the part of the hearer/reader to get the joke. Furthermore, black humour, often uses devices associated with tragedy, is sometimes equated with tragic farce and is perceived as morbid, nasty, psychopathic, twisted and often very funny.

At its heart, dark humour focuses on normally not-funny-at-all things, like the belief that existence is meaningless, the likelihood that humanity will destroy itself, or more personal tragedies, like death or illness. It uses these scary or depressing ideas as the punchline (= the line that ends the joke) of jokes or somehow uses them as an element of comedy.

As stated by scholars, there are four main traits dark humour renders: it expresses the (1) insensitivity, (2) paradox, (3) cruelty and (4) absurdity of the modern world. The entertainer's insensitivity materializes as he is telling the joke; he does not care about the audience's feelings regarding tendentious topic (i.e. emotionally troubled persons, challenged subjects, etc.). Most of the time, these jokes evade cultural restrictions.

Based on Abrams³, paradox is a statement which seems on its face to be self-contradictory or absurd, yet turns out to make good sense. Moreover, Abrams explains that a paradox encloses all deviations of qualification of common perceptions or commonplace opinions.

Humour which contains violence can be seen as cruel, especially when the joke that is created causes harm or puts someone's life in danger. Paraphrasing Roberts and Jacobs' book⁴, cruelty is the part of farce or a condition when a great deal of physical abuse takes places.

As far as absurdity is concerned, it characterizes the situation that has the quality of being unreasonable or contains a double sense; the situation that is grotesquely comic and also irrational and non-consequential. The insensitivity of joke characters contradicts the common attributes of being human, hence the absurdity of dark humour.



2 Black Humor | Definition of Black Humor by Merriam-Webster, accessible at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/black%20humor>

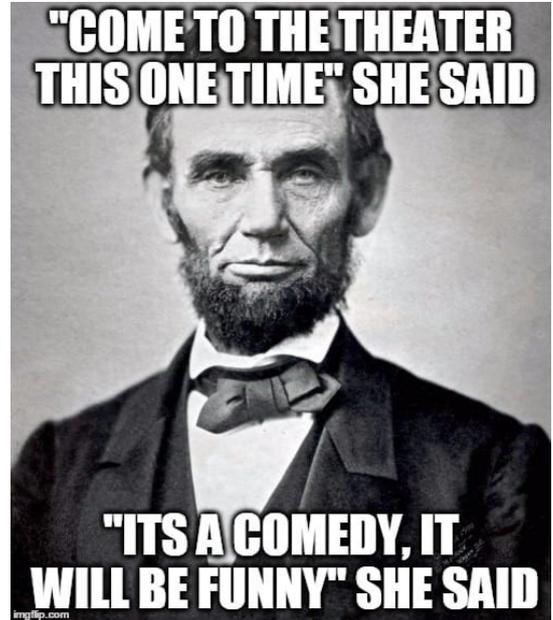
3 Abrams, M.H., *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc. 1993.

4 Roberts, Edgar V., Jacobs, Henry E., *Fiction: An Introduction to Reading and Writing*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1987.

4. Examples of dark humour traits in Memes and jokes

(1) insensitivity (left side image below): We don't speak ill of the disabled, who are sensitive to any type or remarks.

(2) cruelty (right side image below): Abraham Lincoln was shot to death in a theater by the actor John Wilkes Booth, but the text makes reference to the woman who invited President Lincoln, saying that it would be a comedy – 'Our American Cousin' – a farse, not knowing that an assassination might occur.



(3) paradox (left side below): Something so serious like World War II is explained like an innocent joke, apparently. Churchill's Victory Sign and the 'Heil Hitler' sign are mistakenly taken for the signs found in the children's game - 'Rock, Paper, Scissors'. Scissors cut Paper.

(4) absurdity (right side below): Lisa can easily be taken for a mother who worries too much. Actually, the man in the photo kidnapped a boy on his date and she agreed to a second date if he stopped kidnapping children.

The absurdity: Who kidnaps children instead of having a good time?



5. Conclusions

Within this sort of humour, the lines between fantasy and reality and between tragedy and comedy keep shifting, making it difficult for the public to laugh sincerely or display repulsion towards the subject at hand. Dark jokes unravel the various interpretations of humour that can simultaneously exist, leaving the analysis of the joke to the audience.

As (un)funny as these jokes sound, people are able to find humour in the darkest topics/issues/things

and they have been doing that for a long time. Humans laugh because they do not know what else to do, it is their most effective weapon against life's tedium, anguish and interpersonal turmoil. Laughter itself is a testament to the strength of the human spirit in showing that people can laugh in spite of bewilderment, death, and chaos.

How we come to attribute the characteristics of being “humorous” to something is worthwhile investigating, as this is how that humour is said to be understood and how individuals belonging to various cultures interpret it.

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Self-reference in advertising - Intu Lakeside (Shopping Centre)

Ana-Maria Bostan, II, LEPC (graduated)

Coordinator: PhD Professor Elena Bonta

1. Introduction

The present paper aims to present the methods and channels of disclosing the self, the collective and individual self of an urban space –the mall, Intu Lakeside Shopping Centre in Great Britain.

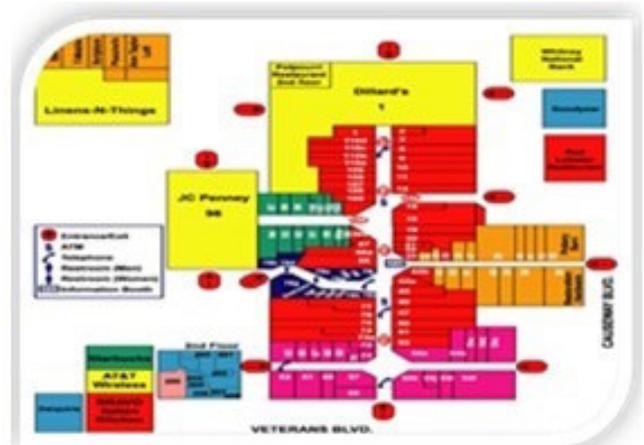
Advertising is “the action of calling to attention of the public especially by paid announcements” (online Longman Dictionary¹), “advertising leaves its hallmark on the individual/consumer, setting up an interdependence relationship” (Chandler, 2002: 85), “it plays with the individual’s psyche, achieving targets, the retailers “present the product as the ideal object where the subliminal force controls everything” (Popescu, 2005:250).

Popescu (2005:58) underlines the characteristics of the advertising process as “having a strange materialization, one perceives its objectives, reaching it not by imagination but by means of senses, as if one knows what to look for”.

Advertising can also be perceived as a “dreams’ machine”, a lab where ideas are materialized and act upon those who interact with it.

Built on the site of a former chalk quarry, opened on 25 October 1990 by Princess Alexandra, The Honourable Lady Ogilvy, Marcus Bradford and Angus Ogilvy, Intu Lakeside² has on average 500,000 visitors per week.

One of the largest shopping areas in a single location within Europe, with almost 2,600,000 square



feet (240,000 m²) of retail space on a 1,434,000 sq ft (133,200 m²). There are House of Fraser, Debenhams, Primark) Alexandra Lake with a PADI certified d

2. Advertising vs The self

“The advertising campaign aims main function is the objective one” (Ba 1996: 108).

A campaign has the power to consolidate the consumers’ opinions for a longer period of time” (Barry, 2008: 90). “The main objective of the advertising campaigns is to build up a long-term brand not to induce confusion or to be a short-term event” (Barry, 2008: 92)

The negotiation is a dynamic communicative process, an exchange where each participant (retailer-



tain with Spencer, ce named

ts sale, its udrillard,

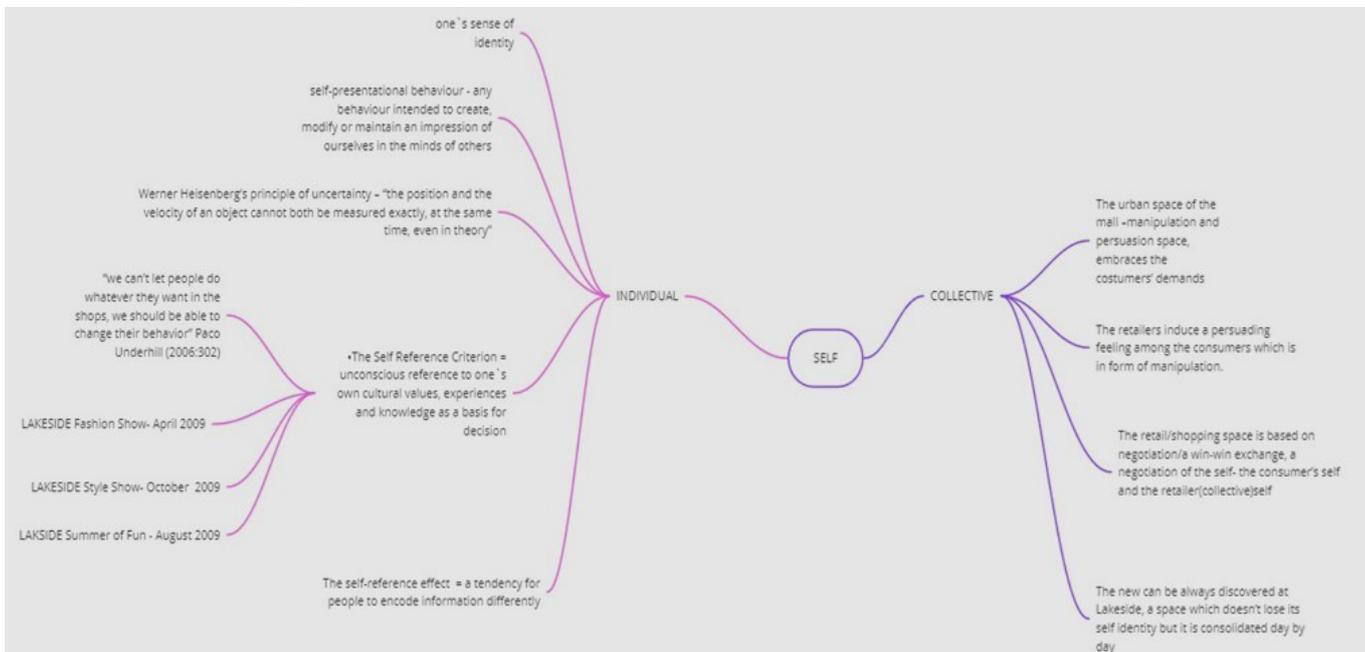
1 <https://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/advertising> , accessed on 25th September 2021

2 <https://lakeside-shopping.com/> , accessed on 25th September 2021

shop keeper-consumer) aims to reach previous set up goals.

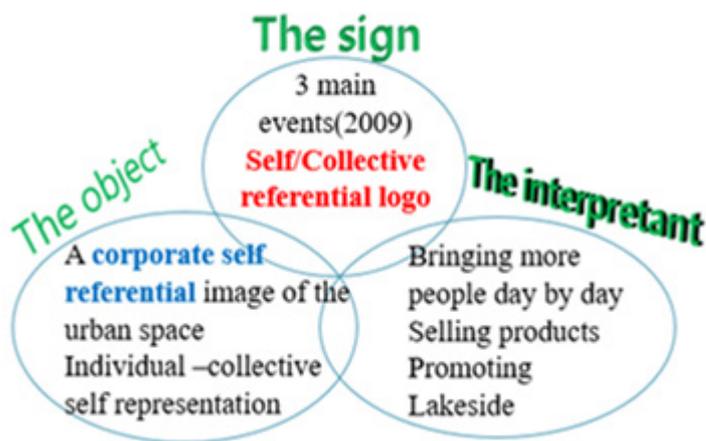
“The self is governed by the reality principle, a mediator within one’s reality and the surrounding reality, sometimes suppressing the individual’s wishes” (Freud, apud Bonta, 2004: 62). The self uses self defense mechanisms in order to ensure balance throughout individual’s life, once defined the individual becomes aware of his values, needs and actions.

The representation map bellow has been created for the reader to better understand how the disclosure of self is being done and should be perceived as an instrument throughout the disclose of social self within the urban space the mall.



Moreover, using Charles S. Pierce’s triadic sign model we have analyzed three posters created by Lakeside Marketing department for the events which the shopping center had planned in 2009.

As outlined in Pierce’s triadic model Sign-Object-Interpretant, we can identify a corporate self-referential model, which easily interferes with the individual and collective/community representation due to its common objective revealed by the need of consumerism.



The other element which we have analyzed in order to understand how the disclose of the self is being produced at the level of advertising and the identity of an urban space was the shopping concept of their own bag.

A shopping concept³ is “a container made of paper; cloth or thin plastic, that usually opens at the top”. We could understand this shopping bag as the reconstruction of Maslow’s pyramid of needs where the objective is to attract new

customers day by day, Sleep and Eat are the vital needs and Shop is a postmodernist vital need for the individual who exists within a consumerist society.

Furthermore, another perspective used to analyze the Lakeside Shopping bag was Halliday’s Functional Grammar. There are the mental processes such as seeing, feeling, thinking; whose visual representation is blue, the material processes like doing, acting, creating, changing; whose visual representation is red and the relational processes represented by having identity, symbolizing; whose visual representation is yellow.

Having in mind all these elements, we can conclude that the one side logo is a subliminal message

3 <https://www.1doceonline.com/spellcheck/english/?q=shopping+concept> , accessed on 28th of September 2021

The scotch tape that held together my year, Erasmus

Miriam-Carla Calapod, III, E-F

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Mihaela Culea

I'm sure you've asked yourself before: should I risk my sanity and go abroad for six months or a year, to -pretty much- study? If someone had asked me about going four or five years ago, I would've immediately said no, because I was shy and scared of failure. But, I'm here to tell you that even if your mobility is not as good as you imagined it, there is still stuff to learn and digest, so it's a win-win situation, really.

A little bit of a backstory: when I was a senior in high school, I went to my first Erasmus+ experience, for a week. It was for an entrepreneurship project with a couple more countries and I happened to travel to Poland for that. If I had any doubts back then about such an experience during my college years, after it I was convinced that it was what I wanted. So, I guess you could say I've been preparing for this moment for quite some time. I just knew that in order to get rid of some more of my anxiety, I had to take the next step and travel somewhere alone, that could help me be more independent and set goals and standards for my future life. In this "piece", I will tell you what made me happy about my mobility and give you advice so that you have a meaningful experience, as well as tell you what I didn't particularly like (I feel like a lot of people skip the negatives but I won't hold back!). Maybe this is the sign you needed before making a definite decision?

Let's start with the basics, which would be... the process of application. What I did was compose two CVs, in both English and French, because, to be fair, I was still a little indecisive. Basically, I decided to write the same info in two languages so I could have more room for change. THIS IS A PSA (public service announcement), PEOPLE! But please, pleaaase, start your applications early! You need time to gather everything and,

later when you're chosen, prepare all the papers before you leave. Be careful that your documentation doesn't contain mistakes. Now, where I went overboard was with my diplomas. I had been saving them since high school and they were for pretty important achievements. Maybe you specifically don't need to do as I did in that realm, but I wanted to feel as if I could prove to myself as well as the committee that I indeed had the skills I had advertised in my CV and letter. You have to sell your produce very efficiently, it's better that you have something extra.

My trip to France was an adventure, to say the least! I had booked a flight for two or three days before starting my courses (a very standard practice, methinks) and everything was perfectly fine... until my company decided to cancel my flight, less than 72 hours before! I was angry and frustrated but I managed to book something else, a bus. Thus... the road to independence in Poitiers lasted for about two or three days.

The room I stayed in was a nice surprise, though. I knew it would be small, which is why I chose it in the first place, but I



didn't expect the luxury which came with it. I had my own bathroom, a big drawer to put my clothes in (when I say big, I say it was from the ceiling to the ground!). I dare say I had too much space, because another awesome surprise were the shelves I had over my bed and the little space with an outlet, built into the furniture. But the happiest I was about the study table. It was huuuge! For the first time in my life, I had a space that I could maintain myself and be proud of. The view from the fourth floor was amazing and I could always squeeze in a little workout, even if I was just going downstairs to pick up free food or my packages. Every day was leg day!

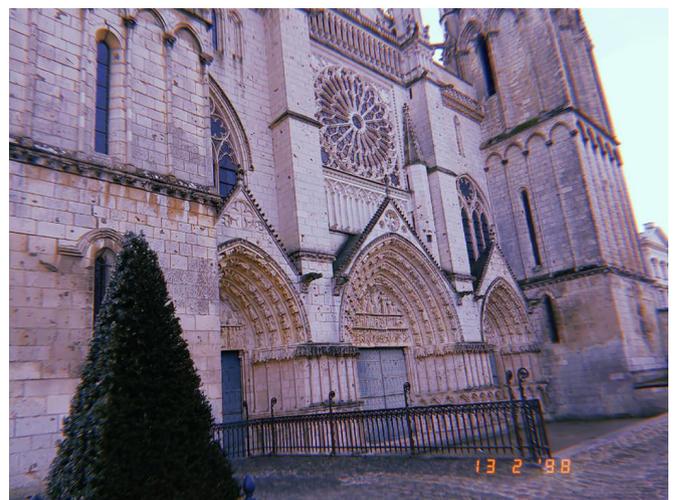


Since I travelled during Covid times, I actually didn't have the chance to study in a classroom setting with my mates and professors, so my courses and seminars were streamed on Webex. However, I can't say I hated it. On the other hand, I was a bit jealous because at some point our university in Poitiers decided we could go on campus, but I had chosen only online courses, without knowing. I stayed a lot indoors and maybe I didn't go out as much as I could've, but that was more my decision than anything else. The facility I used the most was the library. I have to say I was truly happy about it because I hadn't seen one like this before... it looked like one of those libraries you see in the coming-of-age movies!

About the courses I chose, I will say that maybeeee I overestimated myself? When you take a look at the list that they provide you with, everything seems very interesting and easy. But don't be fooled by the obvious: the subjects are harder than you might think. I admit, they were interesting and very engaging, but what seemed easy peasy lemon squeezy sure wasn't! Be ready for different standards than those at your own

university and it's a lot better if you don't expect to perform exceedingly good! You're in a foreign setting after all. I struggled with the stuff that I was most confident in, which was discourse analysis and English literature. These two in particular I had some issues with, due to the fact that I didn't know exactly what the professors wanted from me. Discourse analysis focuses on the finer lines of meaning in texts and speeches and how the speaker is perceived during the acts of communication. My colleague and I had to do the final project twice because the prof wasn't satisfied. The first time we finished she wasn't happy about our trial and I guess we can say we were lucky to be given a second chance. The second time around I felt we did better but she still wasn't content, but she gave us a passing grade in the exam, which was a breath of fresh air and a worrying issue at once. In English literature I had to write an essay on one topic out of a list of three, pretty easy huh? So I thought as well, UNTIL I GOT MY GRADE. It was a passing grade, which frustrated me a bit. The explanations she gave for my result were super complex, a little bit too much to handle (or at least that's what I thought at the time). That was when I also started questioning myself, in the fashion of the iconic Alyssa Edwards in the RPDR, All Stars 2, Snatch Game: you think you're clever, don't you? Luckily, I didn't give in to the pressure and calmed myself down. Moments like these can be your psychological demise.

What was funny was the fact that my highest exam grade was the one where I was scared as hell! I had heard that prof was the student of the famous literary critic Roland Barthes and he was pretty demanding overall, which meant he didn't give very high grades in his classes. I was thrilled to know he liked my paper: although my answers were short, they were qualitative. I was livid, in a good way! Close second came my grade in American history, which I had taken for the very first time. A good reminder, by the way, is that although very high grades give you satisfaction,



you don't need to sacrifice your mental state and health in order to chase them. Be disciplined, have a set schedule and find time for yourself. Read something nice, make a goal out of writing a reflection piece daily. And most of all, don't pull all-nighters like I do!



When your mental health feels like the pits of hell (hot and painful), nature helps. Or days when you go visit things. Luckily for me, the area I was in was very warm for the most part (if we don't mind the rain that seems endless!) and I couldn't really feel that it was winter. What I can say right now after the fact, is that I much preferred to go to places where there was splendid nature, rather than buildings. Oh, and I went to the Saint Paul church almost every Sunday because it was so beautiful and the

mass felt like an intimate ritual. Everything was so colourful yet simple... and the windows looked amazing in the sun! I "hiked" in places such as the forest right beside the Clain river, the Blossac park, the Roseraie park... the Sainte-Radegonde church was particularly charming and I made sure to digest the beautiful architecture (with my big eyes, of course). I will let the pictures down below speak for themselves. The one thing I couldn't take photos of was the Sainte Croix Museum ('cause we weren't allowed), but be assured that seeing all that beautiful art was really cool. And I had another leg day by that means, because the museum is really huge. The detail was off the charts and they have pretty good deals for students (on Tuesdays you could go visit for free and if you are a student, you could get free access to some exhibitions all the time I think), so in France they can get very easily accustomed to the fine things in life and the talent that came and revolutionized art in general. They sure do love their culture very much and we could learn a thing or two.

This trip helped me realize how much I needed to be alone to think, lonely time is sometimes good for the soul. I was able to filter my feelings, feel like a real adult with responsibilities and deal with things on my own. The disadvantage was that I had some depressive first two weeks, but you know what? That made me realize, in a way, that you don't need to be social and busy all the time, I needed to recharge my batteries and you may need it too! With so much time indoors and on my own- spare time- I was able to focus on my artistic endeavours and develop a sense of pride when it came to my work. I was in fact very sad to leave and come back because it was definitely something I would repeat, especially since I didn't get to socialize that much, but it helped that I tried to go into this without preset expectations, big thing for me, considering I am a raging INFJ who loves structure. This is my ultimate advice: don't expect anything, because sometimes expectations are premeditated resentments (Katya Zamolodchikova, "UNHhhh", ep. 152)





Professor Jeremy Price – Holding Past and Present Together

Miriam-Carla Calapod, III, E-F

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Mihaela Culea

1. Please tell us more about the Man behind Professor Price. Where did your passion for history come from?

Well, I'm really a very modest historian but yes, I do have a passion for the subject. This comes partly from my grandfather who was a history teacher in a Grammar School in Blackpool, in the North West of England. He often used to tell stories of his time in the RAF (the British Air Force) during the Second World War when he was away for 5 years, stationed in many different countries (South Africa, India, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Libya, Italy etc.). He would take any opportunity to bring my brother and myself to meet older folks (friends and family members) who had interesting stories to tell. Also, with age (I'm 56 years old) I have become increasingly interested in family history and in history in general. Having my own family now (3 children) I believe history is essential to avoiding past mistakes, to better understanding the world around us, who we are and where we come from individually and collectively.

2. Is it difficult, teaching such an important subject in these times?

The only difficulty I have is that I worry that my teaching isn't always as good as I would like it to be, as good as the students deserve. I have three teenage children so I really understand how important it is for teachers to really try to do their best for students who are also often passionate about their studies. We really owe it to young people to help them keep their dreams alive.

3. Is there anything you would have done differently, were we to have a face-to-face class?

Not that much. I think I would definitely have tried to get more discussion going in a face-to-face situation. I miss not getting to know the students better.

4. I think teachers and professors are important human beings in society and they surely also struggle when it comes to mental health. That being said, how has this pandemic changed your attitude and what you do?

I've already had pneumonia a couple of times over the past 5 years (had to go to hospital once) so I was pretty scared when it started (really scary when you have difficulty breathing). I must say that I felt very modest and humble when learning of the incredible bravery of front-line health workers. I really don't know if I would have been brave enough to do what they did: treating Covid patients when they had no PPE (personal protective equipment) at the beginning of the epidemic. Some older health workers were seriously at risk and many of them died or became seriously ill.

5. You are one of my favourite professors right now and you do things with such passion... Do you ever feel like you are tired of teaching? Are you ever tired in general? I am asking this question, specifically, because some of my friends and I have been prone to burnouts lately and we could use some advice :).

Thank you very much! To be honest I usually really enjoy the actual teaching part. In fact, time seems to fly by (most of the time, not always!) and I'm sometimes disappointed when the class seems to end too early. The preparation is heavy though, as I never know what's going to work. And I am really fed up with the administrative work which represents at least a third of my working time. To be honest the admin can become unbearable with several hours of E-mail to deal with some days. To avoid burnout, I think it's really important to schedule time for yourself every day. A friend of mine, now deceased unfortunately, once told me there are 24 hours in a day: 8 for working, 8 for sleeping, and 8 for whatever you want or need to do. But eating well, sleeping well, getting some exercise and activities which are good for the spirit are the fundamentals I think. Taking time to recharge batteries is very important. Over the years various activities have helped me relax and recharge: walking, swimming, cycling, ice skating, inline skating, inline hockey...

6. If you hadn't become a professor, where would your career path have taken you?

I had a couple of dreams when I was younger. Becoming a university lecturer was one of them in fact, but

I also had a couple more. I was a keen rock climber from age 15 to 35 so I sometimes dreamt of becoming a professional climber! I also love music, and used to strum guitar and sing in a group, so that was another dream. I still regret sometimes that I didn't pursue those dreams further...

7. *What, do you think, is the secret to being a successful educator? What is the most important aspect of this career? Has this changed during the pandemic?*

I think the most important thing is to have empathy for other people. That's really the main thing. My wife is a primary school teacher and she's really a much better educator than I am. She's so hard working and kind and generous. Another humbling experience for me! You do need to develop your natural authority though, as well, since there are sometimes trouble makers in groups of people!

8. *Do you consider that the number of people who are passionate about British culture and civilization has increased or decreased? What is your take on that?*

I think it waxes and wanes but I think all cultures and languages are fascinating. There are wonderful things in all cultures. In fact, I'm a bit embarrassed about the prevalence of a certain Anglocentrism in culture, economics and education.

9. *Give me, please, three words that have defined your career so far!*

Work, passion, stress!

10. *What would you advise us, the students, right now?*

I think that young people should try to follow their dreams, what they really want to do. My daughter, aged 13, wants to become a ballet dancer however difficult it may be and I think that's wonderful. Probably good to have a plan B though since it's not always possible to fulfil all our dreams (like becoming a professional musician or rock climber!).

11. *Are there any misconceptions about the subject you are teaching? How can we fight them?*

I am rather worried by the fact that many people throughout the world seem to have forgotten, or perhaps never had the opportunity, to learn the lessons of history (the dangers of totalitarianism for example). Ignorance, conspiracy theory and negationism are a serious danger, I think. I'm worried extremists may return to power in several countries which could be disastrous.

12. *Last but not least: what can you say to those of us who struggle to find a path in life?*

Again, I think that you should try to follow your dreams because if you are passionate about a subject or a job, then you'll probably do it well and enjoy it. It obviously also requires hard work. But above all, don't underestimate yourselves! You're just as good as all the people who have gone before you. Give it a try or you may regret it at some point. If you have the passion and the interest chances are you will do it well, although of course everybody needs time and training and method to become good at something. Being in the right place can help. If you want to become a top climber, like I once did, then it's best to be near a place with plenty of climbing, like the Alps for example.

13. *Anything else you might want to add for us?*

The whole Covid experience has been very humbling for me. It has made me realize that there are so many good, brave people out there leading their lives as best they can, helping other people, looking after their families, taking care of themselves.

Jeremy Price has been a PhD Lecturer at the University of Poitiers since the year of 2002. He is one of the professors that I have heard good things about before my Erasmus+ mobility and whose course made me want to read even more on the delicate subject of British culture and civilization. He has kindly agreed to answer my questions, which I am very grateful for. Not only that, but during our seminars he always made sure to maintain a good mood and discuss things outside of the academia. His efforts to make this teaching period easier and connect with us are very much appreciated. Great job, Prof. Price! I thank you and applaud you!

Safe at last

Safaa Shalash, II, LEPC

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu

Nada wasn't an exceptional woman, but she was exceptionally beautiful. Her Arabic name took you back to the first dew and gave you the feeling of an explosion of joy, changing your whole life like a victorious sunrise.

Walking to her school like always, she heard some unusual sounds and voices. Her feet quickly carried her into the school where she thought would be safe away from them. The children were already in the class. No bells rang as a signal to queue up and enter in an organized way, and a ghostly atmosphere was taking over the place. The faces were pale. As she passed them by, no one uttered a word. She ran up the stairs two steps at a time heading to her class. She tried to change the horrifying atmosphere. "Time for English," she said with joy, but the kids were trembling in fear.

She tried to pull herself together for the children. Ignoring the life-or-death matter, her brain was looking for a way out of this mess. She took a minute to breathe. Then, as she was taking the pen out of her purse, a thundering sound roared forcing her to scream with her hands covering her ears and her eyes shut.

Her voice grew tender as she called the students to gather around her in the middle of the class lying between the desks where they might feel safe. Heavy explosions were roaring not far from them, with some shots coming from behind. Nada knew that something bad was about to happen. Fear was spreading like a plague and silence suddenly prevailed.

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star," she whispered softly, raising her hands to imitate the twinkling star as a bullet almost hit her hands, narrowly missing them to hit the silent wall behind her. Shrieking shouts came from the children who were helpless around Nada. Nada held in her hands the tiny heads of the kids hugging them in an attempt to save what was left of their innocence. She asked each one of them to come closer and closer to the rear corner. A deafening blast hit the school. The screams of the kids made Nada's heart sink into a helpless feeling. Ala'a cried non-stop, and with the tears dropping from his eyes he said, "Mum must be scared now. She is all alone and she fears explosions." Miss Nada drew a comforting smile on her face. "Don't be scared, sweetie," she said, "There is nothing in there. Your mum is safe and we will be safe to go back to our families soon." Alaa hugged her tightly and soon he was asleep.

Ten minutes passed. Everything was quiet except for the hearts which were racing to get to a safe haven. She asked the students to stay at their places quietly. She stood up slowly and started walking leaning against the wall as a shelter. She opened the door to take a glance; smoke was covering everything at the school. She turned her face back insisting that the kids stay where they were and then she resumed her walking through the smoke. There, to the left of the library something had happened. Thinking about the children, Nada tried to overcome her deadly fear. She stepped out of the school to find out that half of it was destroyed. Nobody was in there. Wiping away her tears, she rushed outside looking for any living people. She saw a flash of light and then she heard footsteps. Someone shouted from behind, "Quickly! You must leave the town. It's too dangerous. They are all around us and there is no coming back from here." She went back inside, crying out for the children to get down. And soon they were on the way back to their homes with trusted company and she was in a strange car, dashing through terrifying fields with fire shots all around hoping to see her family again.

Five years passed. It was Spring. Nada walked to her school like always. However, today the kids' laughter prevailed. Birds were flying freely high in the sky. A child ran toward her with a smile on his face. It was Ahmad. He hugged her very tight putting a gentle kiss on her cheek. "I am going to talk to Mummy today, my grandma told me that Mum said goodbye to Dad before he flew to heaven with the birds, and that she might be able to come back for me," he said happily. Nada held his hand and together they entered the class. With the students gathering around her, she said, "We are going to draw a picture of peace today."

She rushed out of school to reach the organization she was working for, as a volunteer in a social therapy program. Her hair was glittering like the sun rays with every blow of the wind. Miss Nada received

a text message. To her surprise, it was from Ala'a. It reads: "Hello Miss. I am safe now along with Mum. Thank you for being there for me. One day, I will be back home to see you. How are you? Are you still fine?" Nada smiled with hope and texted him back, "I will be safe soon"

Nada was an exceptional woman as she knew all through her life that no matter how bad things can get, they will eventually pass. However, she needed to give each grief the right amount of time to strengthen her well-being as pain is a new resurrection for the phoenix within our souls. The phoenix shall rise again one day.

If I Tried to Make You Love Me...

Miriam-Carla Calapod, III, E-F

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Andreia-Irina Suciu

Had I tried to make you want me,
You'd've noticed just how much
I'd've let your words define me,
But I never wished
 Your touch.

And by touch, I mean those words
That are mean and often big,
Maybe carrying your own storms
While there was no happiness
 From within.

Jealousy is a disease,
And I wish you speedy healing,
'Cause what good is it when you
Spit out what you might regret soon
 Just so you can feel fulfilled?

When you say I don't deserve it
And you point them fingers elsewhere,
You forget to put in work,
That'd be necessary stone
In the process of succeeding.

Had I trusted you before
When you said I wouldn't make it,
I would for sure have had no future
Or even a set of hopes
For the better.

If I tried to make you love me...
I for sure would not have seen
All this beauty that comes out
When I flourish from within.



Orphans in the dark...

Miriam-Carla Calapod, III, E-F

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Andreia-Irina Suci

(original poem inspired by Charles Dicken's novel, 'Great Expectations' and the main character's fictional destiny)



There was once this boy who lived
Poorly in a little town.
Darkness was all he knew about,
Had no hope of one day seeing
A Sun.

The graves so much he liked to see
Because he felt so dead inside,
His parents were never seen to be...
Like a crow he felt -
Alone.

Expectations came about
And seemed to wipe away his worry,
One that he'd never be embraced
As the child of the cemetery.

The child of darkness was in love,
Thought every pain had gone away,
He didn't know that money was
A demise in a love's way

Graves, the powerless, the marsh,
As cold as his destiny, they were;
The expectations like a liquid
And as a dream, just went away.



Powerless, are the orphans
Of the moon and of the cold...
Empty hearts they're said to have,
All their days that's what they're told.

Couple therapy

Alin Țugui, I, E-R

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Andreia-Irina Suciu

The cabinet of a psychologist. A desk with two chairs on one side and one on the other. A sofa on the side. Shandosă, the nurse, is standing and checking a list. Nick, the psychologist, sitting at the desk, is writing something in a notebook. On the desk there is also a Newton's cradle and the photo of a dog.

NICK (while writing): And... here! (shows the notebook to Shandosă) I told you! I always win at Tic Tac Toe.

SHANDOSA (impressed): What can I say, doctor Nicholas? You are quite a genius!

NICK: Indeed. But now let's get back to serious business! What's the next appointment?

SHANDOSA (checking the list): The Brown couple!

NICK: (a little bit irritated): Shandosă! I can't believe what I'm hearing! This is a prestigious institution. Here, racism can't be accepted. We don't define a couple by their colour.

SHANDOSA (still calm): Jack and Monica Brown. That's their name. A very sweet couple!

NICK: I hope you didn't start eating people, Shandosă! Just joking. Let them in!

Shandosă opens the door.

SHANDOSA: Mrs. and Mr. Brown? The doctor is waiting for you. You may come in.

Monica enters head first, then turns back to Jack.

MONICA: How do we say, Jack?

JACK: Thank you, ma'am!

MONICA: Good!

SHANDOSA: I'm sorry for asking, but... you are husband and wife, right?

Monica is showing her ring. Jack is also showing it, but more reserved.

MONICA: Of course, we are!

NICK: Please! Take a sit!

The couple sits down. Awkward silence.

NICK: So... How do you feel about your surname?

SHANDOSA: DOCTOR!!!

NICK: Sorry! I shouldn't have asked that! Let me introduce myself! I am your psychologist, doctor Nicholas. But you can call me Nick.

MONICA: I am Monica. He is Jack.

Monica and Nick shake hands. Jack wants to shake hands, too with the doctor, but he stops when he sees that his wife is talking for him.

NICK: What's the problem?

MONICA: He! He is the problem! Always him!

NICK: Yeah! I see your point of view. What about you, Jack? How do you feel?

JACK: Well... I don't know.

MONICA: He doesn't know. He never knows.

SHANDOSA: Doctor, how do you feel about therapy by play?

NICK: Yeah, I would like some!

SHANDOSA: No, not for you! For them! (then to Jack and Monica) What's your favourite game?

MONICA: We love chess!

JACK: I actually prefer checkers.

MONICA: No, you don't!

JACK: Yes, I do. Truth be told, I hate chess.

MONICA: You've never told me about THIS.

JACK: Because you've never asked. (to himself) Just like how the priest never asked if I want to take you as my wife. Nobody asks me anything.

MONICA: Because you never talk, so we already know your answer. If you were be a song, you would be The Sound of Silence.

NICK: Let's stop talking about your marriage and get back to what truly matters! The games.

SHANDOSA: What are your opinions motivated by?

MONICA: I love the queen! She's so powerful!

JACK: I hate the king! He's too weak!

MONICA: Just like you.

SHANDOSA: Mister Brown, do you feel dominated by your wife?

MONICA: No, he doesn't.

SHANDOSA: Mrs Brown, why do you have this need to rule, to give orders?

MONICA: Because I am a natural born leader. I was born in a very prestigious noble house. I am royalty. Or... I was. Until I got married to this... hobo.

SHANDOSA: I don't know. Mister Brown looks pretty presentable.

JACK (feeling more confident, smiling): Thanks!

MONICA (menacing): He's taken!

NICK: But when do we get back to the important part? The games.

SHANDOSA: Doctor, I think you should try to concentrate.

NICK: Yes, you are right, Shandosa. As always. So, what you were saying Monica? That you were part of royalty?

MONICA: Indeed. Born in a very prestigious noble house.

NICK: You made me curious. Which house?

MONICA: House Monica.

NICK: So... before marriage you were... Monica de Monica?

MONICA: Don't be silly, doctor! We are not French. Monica of the House Monica.

Shandosa is looking through the open door.

SHANDOSA: Nick, I believe the real doctor is coming.

Nick is taking off the robe.

NICK: Well, I think I should go back to my room. It was nice meeting you, Jack and Monica. Shandosa?

SHANDOSA: Yes, Nick?

NICK: Could you ask the doctor not to use electroshocks this time?

SHANDOSA: I will try my best.

Shandosa is escorting Nick to his room.

JACK (yelling): Wait! Wait! It was my time to talk. What have I paid for? (crying) Don't leave me alone with my wife!

Thoughts...

Alexandra-Vasilica Diaconu, I, R-E

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Andreia-Irina Suci

Humanities – always a need, never a want

We live in a world where technological advancement happens at the speed of light. In a world where things seem to be moving at an abnormally fast rate. In a world like this, don't we all need to un-plug from time to time? And precisely this is why we crave for art in its every form.

Art is the earliest expression of humanity. We cannot, by any means, separate being human from making art. From cave paintings in the earliest of times, artistic means of expression have always seemed to be a kind refuge of the human spirit.

However, in today's era, art seems to be unjustly undervalued compared to the glorious times of the Renaissance, for instance. Anyone can create. Which must mean nothing we create is special anymore, right? Completely wrong!

Anyone can create, and that's the most beautiful aspect of making art! It is something so characteristic of us, something so deeply a part of our DNA, that none of us can escape the urge to at least appreciate art, if not create it.

Why do we do that? Well, besides being the cheapest form of therapy out there, it is also a way of bonding with others. When we stumble across the lyrics of a song, or a poetry book, or perhaps a film that reflects our inner world just as it is, we feel less alone. We feel heard and seen.

And this, beyond anything else, is the greatest value of art.

Mother

I have my father's eyes,
But when my mother cries,
I seem to have her eyes.
And with each of her tears,
My heart in pieces tears
Because, if she's in pain,
Then all life seems in vain.

But when she smiles, oh my!
My heart reaches for the sky!

What Life Is Made of...

Life is made of the way my mother's mouth curves every time she smiles at me. Life is when my dog looks into my eyes lovingly, anticipating the affection he's going to receive. Life is each time I fall, bruise myself a bit and get up quickly. Life is the last sunset. And the one before it. Life is my friend's hearty laugh when I tell a bad joke and the snorting that comes with it.

What is life measured by? Moments so small and fleeting, you almost miss them. Life is never about "having", it's always about "feeling"... And "being"...

Oh, how great it is that we're allowed to be as flawed and inconsistent as we are. It took me a long time to learn that I shouldn't be waiting for anything. Life happens right now.