



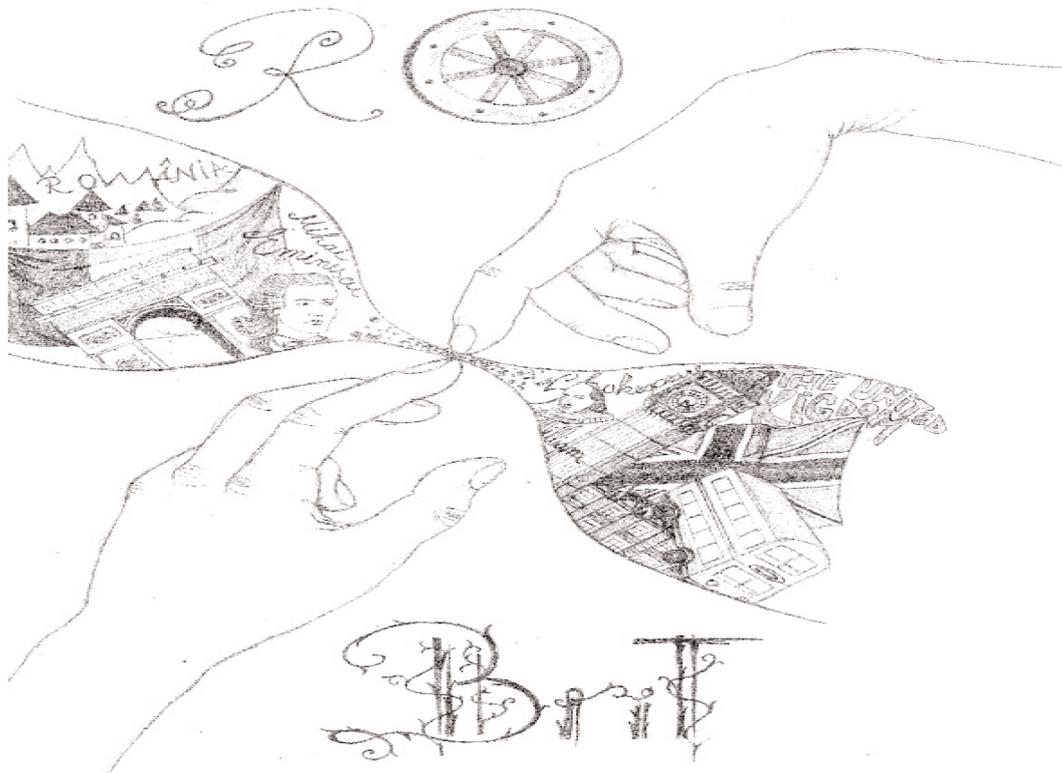
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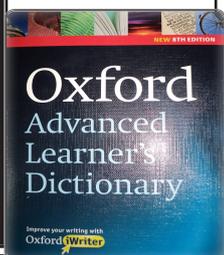
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PREGNANCY.

The Play upon 'THE EFFECT' and 'THE RESULT' of Pregnancy

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1. Introduction

Pregnancy. With the risk of making it sound like a cliché, I strongly believe that this subject regards all individuals, because beyond all gender differentiations, religious or personal beliefs, we all are 'the result' of a pregnancy and, respectively, our womb-stage existence had a certain 'effect' on our mothers. Part of an interdisciplinary approach (artistic representations – paintings-, literary texts, newspaper articles, TV commercials) and a piece of work still in progress, this paper deals with the issue of pregnancy from two different perspectives, which are rooted in the play upon 'the effect' and 'the result' of pregnancy. The article is only a part of a larger presentation delivered during the Expressive Discourse seminar as a first year Master's degree student.

In this article I will focus only on two literary texts that I have chosen to discuss: a section from Chapter VI *Anna Victrix*, from one of my favourite novels, *The Rainbow*, by D. H. Lawrence and the poem *Metaphors*, by Sylvia Plath.

Being two major conceptual aspects which regard my analysis, it is only normal that I should define the concepts of "effect" and, respectively, "result" and offer, as well, my own subjective interpretation of the two key words. According to the Oxford Dictionary¹, the term effect is defined as "a change which is a result or a consequence of an action or a cause" and the term result is defined as "a thing that is caused or produced by something else; a consequence or outcome". As one might observe, the two terms have very similar definitions, but as far as my paper is concerned, these concepts play different roles in shading the play upon 'the effect' and 'the result' of pregnancy. What I mean by 'effect' is the cluster of feelings, sensations, and both the spiritual and physical changes that pregnancy brings upon a woman, and 'the result' of pregnancy is simply interpreted as the resulting baby.

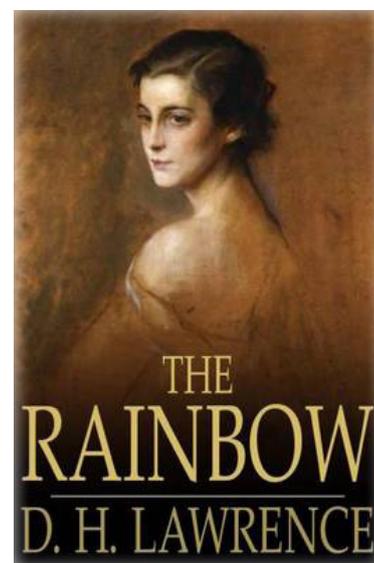
Searching for paintings to match my subject, I was surprised to find out that there were not many (consecrated) painters who chose to do such a piece of art. I could not help asking myself: why? Was it

1. <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition> , accessed March 12, 2012.

because they were men? Was it because pregnancy was considered taboo? Maybe... All I know is that, from a diachronic point of view, early representations of pregnant women were made under the form of family portraits, thus giving me the impression that interest was given to the expected child, the future family member ('the result' of pregnancy), and not to the woman herself; with the emergence of Impressionism, painters started, in my opinion, to emphasize the effect that carrying a baby has upon a woman. This play upon 'the effect' and 'the result' of pregnancy will be further developed in my analysis of the two texts, with examples from the original texts, too.

2. *Anna Victrix* – The climax of feminine individual identity

"On a Saturday afternoon, when she had a fire in the bedroom, again she took off her things and danced, lifting her knees and her hands in a slow rhythmic exulting [...] She stood with the firelight on her ankles and feet, naked in the shadowy [...] And she lifted her hands and danced again, to annul him, the light glanced on her knees as she made her slow, fine movements down the far side of the room, across the firelight. He stood away near the door in blackness of shadow, watching, transfixed. And with slow, heavy movements she swayed backwards and forwards, like a full ear of corn, pale in the dusky afternoon, threading before the firelight, dancing his non-existence, dancing herself to the Lord, to exultation. [...] He watched, and his soul burned in him. He turned aside, he could not look, it hurt his eyes. Her fine limbs lifted and lifted, her hair was sticking out all fierce, and her belly, big, strange, terrifying, uplifted to the Lord [...]"



(D. H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow*, Ch. VI *Anna Victrix*, pp. 170-171)

The paratextual element – the title of the chapter *Anna Victrix* – symbolizes the fact that the feminine character felt victorious through her pregnancy, so this childbearing stage may be seen as a climactic one for manifesting her individual identity. Her dancing naked in front of the fire sends to the idea of primitivism, a strong manifestation of primary instincts (as it is a known fact that Lawrence's writings are strongly influenced by the Freudian psychoanalysis based on the conflict between instinct and intellect; the author argues that instincts and intuitions are superior to reason; he denies the overvaluation of the intellect and the suppression of sensuality²). Thus, Anna's pregnancy is one important facet through which she can freely manifest her instincts and her own individuality. Exultation is a key word in the dancing scene, because she could experience the victory of life through her pregnancy. She felt both powerful and independent as she "danced in the pride of her bigness" (p. 170). The "power in her dancing consumed" Will since now, more than ever, she "knew no man" except for "the unseen Creator" (pp. 170-171).

Her dancing is a kind of ceremony to which only she is allowed; she dances to celebrate her fulfilment and to emphasize her husband's nullity; although he was the father of the child, he could not experience one of the most primary instincts of all, and that is childbearing and motherhood. In my opinion, the author gives so much credit to the woman at this stage in her life, because he wants to highlight the actual effect that pregnancy has on her individuality and not 'the result' of pregnancy, which is the baby. In other words, the effect is more important than the result. The naked belly stands as a proof of the fact that 'she was complete in herself'. At the same time, it can also be seen as a manifestation of her own sexuality: dancing naked, showing her naked belly means that she does not feel ashamed, in any way, of admitting her sexuality.

3. *Metaphors* – The metamorphosis of a body

"I'm a riddle in nine syllables,
An elephant, a ponderous house,
A melon strolling on two tendrils.

2. <http://classiclitt.about.com/od/rainbowdhlawrence/fr/aa-rainbow.htm>, accessed March 12, 2012.

O red fruit, ivory, fine timbers!
This loaf's big with its yeasty rising.
Money's new-minted in this fat purse.
I'm a mean, a stage, a cow in calf.
I've eaten a bag of green apples,
Boarded the train there's no getting off."

(Sylvia Plath, *Metaphors*)



The poem begins by stating to the reader that it is a riddle to be solved, just like Anna's pregnancy is a mystery/riddle to Will. What indicates that the topic in this poem is pregnancy? First of all, the nine syllables and nine lines of the poem, which signify the nine months of pregnancy. The persona states that she is "an elephant, a ponderous house", thus the two metaphors express how she feels about her pregnant body. A comical and, somehow, ironical tone can be sensed in the third line: a melon walking around on its skinny tendrils elicits a humorous image in one's mind. The "elephant", "house", and "melon" seem to signify the largeness of a pregnant woman; thus, the lyrical persona lays stress on the physical effect of pregnancy upon the body of a woman, an effect

which has nothing in common with Lawrence's idea of pregnancy. As a woman, Sylvia experienced this stage and her reaction nullifies the feeling of fulfilment or joy by emphasizing the physical, natural transformations of the body, which gravitate around the same idea of bigness or roundness.

With the fourth line we witness a return to the initial metaphors: "the red fruit" sends to "the melon", "the ivory" sends to "the elephant", and "the timber" to "the house". It seems that the persona refers only to the part which is of interest, which is desired, and not to the entire object or animal. What is desired in a plant is its fruit, not the entire plant; in case of a melon, its red core; in case of the elephant, the precious ivory; finally, when we speak of a house, what matters is the timber it is built from, and not the entire structure.

In my opinion, this only sends to the idea that Sylvia Plath's *Metaphors* is about a woman feeling insignificant in the midst of her pregnancy. So, what is praised is 'the result' of pregnancy, the child, and not the effect that childbearing has upon a woman; once a woman becomes pregnant she turns insignificant as compared to the child which is expected. This idea is reinforced in line 6: "the money" is important and not "the purse"; without

the money in it, the purse would have no use, no purpose. Line 8 may send to Eve and the original sin: she feels that she endures more than Eve herself (for she, the persona in the poem, ate a bag of green apples). Thus, her suffering increases and the pain may not mean only physical pain, but the pain of feeling insignificant. She expresses a deep sense of loss throughout the entire poem. The last line of the poem is a cry of helplessness: “Boarded the train there’s no getting off”.

4. Conclusions

While treating the theme of pregnancy, we can see that the two authors – Lawrence and Plath – divide their points of view according to the play upon ‘effect’ and ‘result’: by emphasizing the effect and not the result, the feminine character, Anna, feels victorious through her pregnancy, the victory of manifesting freely her own individual identity. On the other hand, in Plath’s poem, focal interest is in the result of pregnancy, whilst the effect nullifies the feeling of fulfilment or joy by emphasizing the physical, natural transformations of the body. What is praised is ‘the result’ of pregnancy, the child, and not the effect that childbearing has upon a woman.

Trying to summarize the rest of my research in a few words, my attention was then directed to how pregnancy is seen in the English media nowadays. The tendency, in the English media, is to exploit pregnancy for its negative effects, such as unwanted children, the increasing demands on the Indian surrogate mothers market or the high level of teen pregnancy. In the context of surrogate motherhood it seems that pregnancy has been turned into a profitable business, reduced to a mere material benefit, so its value can now be measured in money (in ads such as “Womb for rent”³ or “Baby factories”⁴). Trying to curb teen pregnancy and other related problems, the English Health Ministry launched in 1999 a programme called *Teenage Pregnancy Strategy* set out to improve young people’s access to contraceptive and sexual health advice⁵.

As I have already mentioned, this is a piece of work still in progress, but from what I have already presented, it is clear that the concept of pregnancy has a large spectrum of representation, being exploited in different areas of interest (artistic representations,

literary texts, newspaper articles, TV commercials, official campaigns), while my central focus has been on the play upon ‘the effect’ and ‘the result’ of pregnancy in two literary excerpts.

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³ <http://www.oprah.com/world/Wombs-for-Rent>, March 13, 2012.

⁴ <http://ibnlive.in.com/news/surrogate-mums-india-dubbed-babyfactory-by-uk-media>, March 13, 2012.

⁵ http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/@dh/@en/documents/digitalasset/dh_4086914.pdf, March 13, 2012.

The Influence of Kinetic Imagery on the Characters' Identity in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Iacinta Rupii, I, EF

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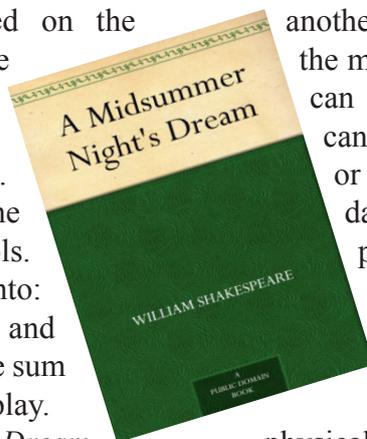
Imagery is an approach based on the dynamics of art and literature that integrates visual and kinaesthetic elements in different stages within the writing process. Imagery is meant to give form to the play's themes, motifs and symbols. Imagery can be further divided into: tactile, auditory, caloric, olfactory and kinetic imagery. The latter involves the sum of all movements realized during the play.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a comedy in five acts, first written in 1595, which was meant to be played at The Nuptial Festival. Although the audience consisted mostly of common people, the play is filled with some pretentious imagery, which could be understood only by an educated/cultivated mind. My essay focuses on the kinetic imagery, which, along with the other types of imagery used in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, helps reveal the main themes of the play (order vs. disorder, love, nature) to the spectator or the reader.

In order to classify the kinetic spaces, the reader is advised to experience firstly a spatial plunge-in, and, as a result, three types of movements can be distinguished: controlled moves (during daylight: performed by body, mind and spirit), partially-controlled moves (during the night: the body and mind can be controlled, but the spirit is controlled by the magic herb) and uncontrolled ones (neither the body, nor the mind, nor the spirit can be controlled, thus, emphasizing the unconscious activity: the dream). The only one who has a dream is Hermia and this dream is important because, in a particular way, it anticipates the next actions.

HERMIA: *Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best/ To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!! Ay me, for pity!-What a dream was here!*
–Act II, scene 2.

Another classification of the kinetic spaces in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is based on three antinomies: night versus day, city versus forest, and body versus spirit. The first one is strongly related to the second antinomy. In relation to one



another, they create a web, which converges the moments of the plot when the characters can get involved. For example, the fairies cannot control the city ruled by Theseus or the actions, which happen during the day. But these alone could not define the play as being a dynamic one, if it were not expressed by the key antinomy of the kinetic image of body-spirit. Regarding this last dichotomy, there must be mentioned that at the physical level, the movements do not seem to be remarkable. The space in which the characters move is limited: the city of Athens and the forest nearby. The only one who suffers some physical transformations (=movements) is Bottom, who receives an ass (donkey) head. This transformation does not have any purpose in itself but it is performed as a hilarious means to mock Titania. Remarkable are the movements within the spiritual level, where the majority of the protagonists, controlled or uncontrolled, affected directly or indirectly by the intervention of the fairies, change the before-hand planned intentions. The origin of all these inner movements is the play's quintessence, the magical herb.

Two of the characters who are the most influenced by the magical herb are Demetrius and Titania. The fairy queen can be regarded as the source of this chaos planned by her husband, Oberon, the fairy king, but unpleasantly put in action by Puck. Disregarding the wish of Oberon to have the Indian boy, and disregarding the fact that she should obey her husband (OBERON: *Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?* Act I, Scene 2), she refuses to hand over the changeling, without thinking even for a moment at Oberon's proud and stubborn personality. In a way, it can be said that, through her own stubborn attitude, she forces Oberon to resort to harsh methods. The fairy king receives from Puck, his goblin servant, Cupid's magic herb, which he uses to enchant his wife in order to fall in love with the first being that she sees. This being is carefully chosen. In order to create the ridiculous – hilarious situation, she first sees an ass-headed human named Bottom.

Shakespeare chose the donkey figure because it is the ultimate symbol of the freedom of mind (French originated idea) and he also chose a common man, at the *Bottom* of society because, only by combining these two elements, humans can enter and see the fairy world. Titania's love is almost unbelievably blind and she totally surrenders into the arms of her new lover (TITANIA: *I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again; Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note. So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape* – Act III, scene 1).

Taking advantage of Titania and her lover's blissful ignorance, Oberon gets the control over the changeling and afterwards he releases Titania from the love enchantment. Somehow, in this great chaos, the fairy couple finds a type of order: Titania's identity remains unchanged (her social status, her debts are the same); without any remorse, she reunites with Oberon and goes to bless the marriage of Theseus and Hyppolita. This can be understood only from the point of view of their immortal world. Mistakes can be made and they can be forgiven easily based on the idea that life depending problems do not exist.

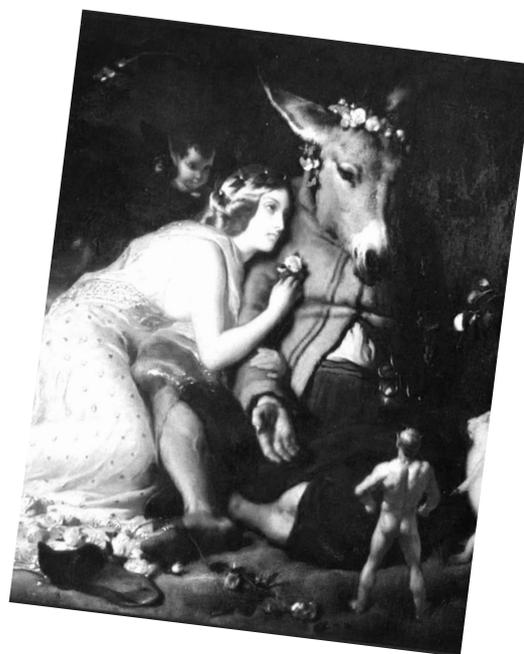
Demetrius is the mortal, who undergoes the most notable transformation. Being convinced that Hermia belongs to him, although he is loved by Helena (whom he almost hates: DEMETRIUS: *Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit/ For I am sick when I do look on thee* – Act II, scene 1), he enters the magical world from the forest determined to obtain her at any cost, but he comes across the fairies. The fairies totally change the course of Demetrius' actions in order to bring justice to Helena's cause (she herself becoming a "goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!"). Although Demetrius is destined from the beginning to be bewitched, Puck commits a mistake, and Lysander becomes himself Helena's false lover. In the end, it can be said that Demetrius wins this twisted battle due to an absurd game understood only by the fairies and, at the same time, due to humanity's ignorance (because nobody doubts Demetrius' feelings for Helena). This act reveals one of the play's comic climaxes and the unanimous need for a happy ending.

The junction between different subplots and different worlds highlights the different realities involved in each of these features. Dreams and various perspectives serve as methods to explain the different characteristics of the diverse realities. Each reality is connected to its beholder and therefore explains how he visualizes it in connection to his circumstances.

In conclusion, it can be said that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a very dynamic play from the point of view of its kinetic imagery, beautifully displayed throughout the entire play; not only for its unique perspective, but also for its complexity and its frames. We can be led to the idea that the general movement obliges the characters to revolve around the main themes and to join forces in creating the delightful comedy created under the keen eye of the Shakespearean mind.

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Good or Evil Nature of Characters in William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Lear*

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In most of his plays William Shakespeare analyzes the human being's condition under various forms. The protagonists usually transmit his ideas upon or about the world. One of the ideas that William Shakespeare tries to emphasize in his work is how 'good' Nature finally outweighs the evil, created by men. For example the presence of evil in "The Tragedy of King Lear" is opposed to the existence of human virtue, fidelity and self-sacrificial love.

The main characters in the play are used to portray the author's idea of evil in the world. William Shakespeare presents the conflict between good and evil by dividing the characters into two groups in order to bring out the opposite attitudes towards life. With most of his characters, the author clearly indicates that human nature is either entirely good, or entirely evil.

While some characters are totally good (Cordelia) and others are totally evil (Edmund), other characters experience transformations that profoundly change one's nature. For example, King Lear's nature is transformed when he realizes his mistakes and his descent into madness.

Cordelia clearly loves her father, and she realizes that her blunt honesty will not please him. Yet, her nature is too good to allow even the slightest deviation from her morals. A pompous speech similar to that of her sisters might have prevented her from the tragic end, but Cordelia is so honest that she could have never considered such a thing. Later, when she is banished for her honesty, she still loves her father and displays great compassion and grief for him. Cordelia could be expected to at least blame her father for the injustice he did to her but clearly, she is a character who is entirely good, unmarred by any trace of evil throughout the entire play.

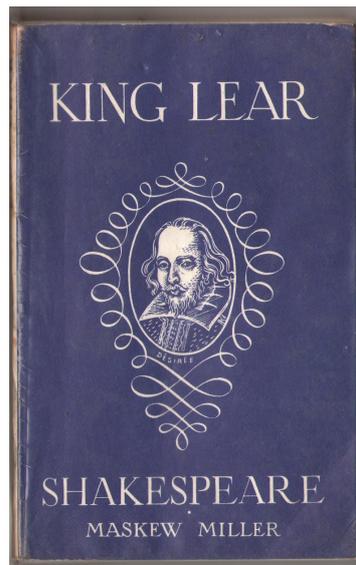
As an example of a totally evil character we take Edmund, the bastard son of the Earl of Gloucester, because he devised a plan to discredit his brother Edgar in the eyes of their father. Clearly,

Edmund is fully aware of his evil nature, and he decides to use it to his advantage. He does not feel even the slightest remorse for any of his actions. Edmund further instructs his captain to take Cordelia and Lear away to prison and to kill them, and make it look like suicide. Obviously there is no limit to the depths of Edmund's evil. William Shakespeare has created a perfect villain, with no regret, no compassion, and despised by the readers of the play. American Heritage Dictionary defines the villain as "a cruelly malicious person who is involved in or devoted to wickedness or crime; or he is a character in a play, novel, who constitutes an evil agency in the plot"¹. Besides performing all kinds of villainous deeds, Edmund also tends to have a negative effect on other characters: we discover his bad influence on Gloucester (when the earl

banishes his own son on the account of evil rumours), or on the sisters Goneril and Reagan (when one kills the other out of jealousy and love for him). In the end, mortally wounded, Edmund regrets his actions and even attempts to undo some of the sufferance he has caused, so perhaps we might say that Edmund is one of the characters who undergo a transformation in the end of the play. However, up to this point, he is a classic villain, whose human nature is entirely evil.

In what concerns Lear, at the beginning of the play we see him as a proud, vain and quick-tempered old king, not necessary evil, but certainly not good. His mistake leads to the exile of his only truly loving daughter, Cordelia, having later experienced the revelation that Regan and Goneril's declarations of love were deceitful. Therefore in the storm Lear screams: "I am a man/ More sinn'd against than sinning" (III, 2, 56-57). Here, Lear still believes he is the victim, but he admits that he has his part of guilt in the matter.

After the storm, when Lear's madness has run its course, both he and Cordelia are taken prisoners



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by Albany's army. We can see the transformation in his joy at the reunion with his daughter. This new Lear is certainly not the arrogant king we have seen in the beginning of the play. His joy when meeting his daughter outweighs any other concerns he might have. Lear's transformation is not necessarily from evil into good, but rather from symbolical blindness to clear perception of reality (if in the beginning he is blind, in the end he sees things clearly without distortions of reality).

The play focuses on deception, cruelty and misjudgment. Often the disguise or deception is not physical, but emotional. The few characters that must disguise themselves in the play are the ones that are not motivated by darker emotions. Kent and Edgar disguise themselves: one to help the king, the other to escape punishment. In the end, Shakespeare points out their pure and decent motives. The dukes and the two eldest daughters however who do not hide their face or their actions, conceal in reality their true nature. The daughters trick their father into believing that they love him above all else. Edmund, too, tricks his father into believing he is a loving devoted son, just to hide his true greediness.

In *The Tragedy of King Lear* we have seen that Shakespeare skilfully built his characters and clearly defined their human nature as being good or evil. We cannot doubt Cordelia's absolute goodness, or Edmund's sheer evil displayed until his plans are all ruined. Besides them we see in this play some flawed figures that by misfortune and loss finally come to revelation and personal transformation. In this sense the characters are perfect tragic figures (some are tragic heroes and others tragic villains), perhaps not necessarily realistic, but powerful and moving nonetheless.



Temporality in William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth*

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Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* presents the struggle of a man who tries to seize an opportunity for greatness, by defying time; then he desperately tries to resist the same force that seems to turn against him.

The Tragedy of Macbeth cannot be read without noticing the repeated references to time. The past, the present, and the future are constantly invoked throughout the play. Human life is embedded in time. We live in the present, we plan for the future, and we are constantly invaded by past memories. Time plays a crucial role in this tragedy. The clock is always ticking for the characters. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, more than any other Shakespearean characters, seem to be mesmerized by the future and constantly haunted by the memories of their hideous crimes.

The destructive power of time starts to use its tool on Lady Macbeth from the moment she receives a letter from her husband, in which Macbeth relates to her the prophecy that the three witches made for him. This uncertainty, seen as a possible future, stirs the ambition of Lady Macbeth, and from that moment on, she becomes determined to secure the future predicted. She is willing to do everything in order to materialize the prophecy meant to provide greatness to her husband, even at the cost of King Duncan's life: "Glamis thou art, and Cawdor shalt be. What you are promised" (Act I, scene 5). Thus, she encourages her husband to act accordingly, but fearing his nature might prove too mild to commit a murder, at night, driven by her growing ambition and cruelty she attempts to murder the old king herself. But her courage fails her at the sight of the sleeping king as the desire to bring the future to the present time is replaced by the past memory of her father. "Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it" (Act II, scene 2).

The will to make her husband king is so strong that she not only encourages the murder of King Duncan, but she also smears the grooms' faces with blood, so that the fault of the crime may fall

upon them. This opportunity to take a glimpse into the future, to look into "the seeds of time" fascinates her to such extent, that her ambition begins to overrule her motherly feelings, and the gentleness/kindness characteristic for a woman.

"I have given suck, and know/

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me

I would while it was smiling in my face/

Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,

And dashed the brains out, had I sworn as you

Have done to this." (Act I, scene 7)

While her husband appears to battle with sanity, seeing the ghost of Banquo, she remains her own confident; as the prophecy has been achieved, and she now feels the past is behind her.

But the past eventually catches up with her, and the constant memories

of Duncan's murder haunt her violently, causing her to lose her battle with sanity. She suffers, and that is reflected in the sleepwalking scene when Lady Macbeth is constantly rubbing her hands into a desperate attempt to get rid of the bloodstains that she remembers from the murder:

"Out, out, damned spot, out I say! One, two, why then

'tis time to do't. – Hell is murky. – Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier, and

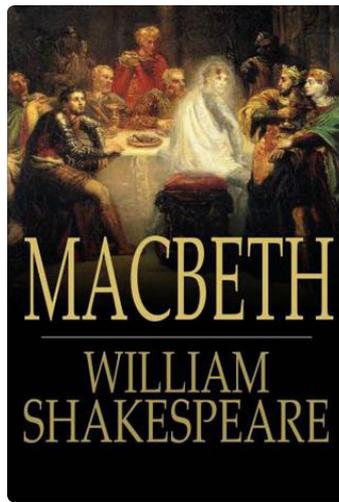
afear'd? What need we fear who knows it, when none can call our

pow'r to account? – Yet who would have thought the old man to

have had so much blood in him?" (Act V, scene 1).

The past cannot be eluded, and when you commit a murder, you cannot undo it:

"Come, come, come, come give me your hand./ What's done can't be undone./ To bed, to bed, to bed." (Act V, Scene 1).



There is nothing left to do, but live with these consequences, ultimately she kills herself.

Macbeth's wish to accelerate the future, to bring it into the present ensues the moment he and Banquo meet the "weird sisters". Macbeth is greeted by the witches with titles such as "thane of Glamis", "thane of Cawdor", and "Macbeth, that shall be king hereafter" (Act I, Scene 3). The fulfillment of one of the prophecies ("thane of Cawdor") causes Macbeth to think that the witches could be equally correct regarding all their prophecies. This stirs his latent ambition and imagination, and he proceeds to secure the one prediction that is yet to be fulfilled. Under the repeated incitements of his wife, Macbeth proceeds to kill Duncan. Although at first fear overcomes him, his ambition wins, and Macbeth eventually commits the crime: "Sleep no more! Macbeth doth murdered sleep!" (Act II, Scene 2)

The past is also an issue for Macbeth: he believes the murder of the king will be an event that can be done, and then forgotten about "If it were done when 'tis done, and then 'twere well it were done quickly" (Act I, scene 7)

But just like imagination brings Macbeth closer to his imagined future, memory provides a doorway to the past. Macbeth's memories of his dreadful deeds he has performed in order to become king stalk his every step. Perhaps the most suggestive illustration is the scene in which Banquo's bloody ghost interrupts Macbeth when he is throwing a banquet:

"Avaunt, and quit my sight, let the earth hide thee!
Thy Bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with!" (Act III, scene 4)

He now begins to dread the future for which he worked so hard to secure. Not being able to stand the tension of what is in store for him, Macbeth visits the witches again. Here we have the image of a banquet of the dead created by the "weird sisters". The evil forces from the cauldron embody forms of the future or of the past. The armed head, reminding that of Macdonwald, suggests the idea of chaos and disorder. He warns Macbeth: "Macbeth, Macbeth, beware Macduff" (Act IV, Scene 1). This apparition is followed by that of a bloody child who suggests: "Be bloody, bold and resolute, laugh to scorn" (Act IV, Scene 1). The third apparition – a child, crowned, with a tree in his hand enforces the former uttering: "Be lion metted, proud and take



no care, Who chafes" (Act IV, Scene 1). The eight kings that appear afterwards suggest the creative process of time, the same one that Macbeth wishes to murder. He has taken hold of his future too fast, and now wishes to annihilate the future of others, too. Banquo's ghost that appears at the end, along with the image of the crowned child, trigger in him the resolution that one of Banquo's descendents might take his crown. Therefore, Macbeth orders the bloodshed in a desperate attempt to annul this possibility. "He makes assurance double sure" by killing Macduff's family, so that he might "sleep in spite of thunder" (Act IV, Scene 1).

Despite all his efforts, time eventually catches up with him, and Macbeth begins to see that he was tempted by an Ideal future, and tricked into thinking it would be easily obtained. He realizes the errors in his way of acting: the future is never secure, and no one can evade the past. Macbeth lost the battle with time by making the wrong choices and by failing to make his life meaningful. The political authority he tried to impose is rapidly crumbling down as Duncan's son, Malcom, returns from England to take up arms against his usurper.

In the midst of this whole turmoil Seyton arrives with the news that Lady Macbeth is dead. Macbeth's response to this news is one of his most famous speeches:

"She should have died hereafter
There would have been a time for such a word
Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty place from day to day
To the last syllable of the recorded time
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death
Out, out brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage"
(Act V, scene 5)

His words accentuate the tragic consequences of his own actions. Macbeth has become an emotionless creature, unable to feel even the most basic emotion. This poem dedicated to time shows a Macbeth already in despair at what his life has become. The passage is profoundly pessimistic and expresses the meaningless of human life. The 'tomorrow' that should have brought him joy never came, his 'yesterdays' have been foolish, and the present is a living hell. He always refers to tomorrow as this could provide an escape from the past and the present. But they cannot be escaped, so he has nothing to do but move forward towards his death. Throughout the play we get the feeling that Macbeth has cursed time through his murder of Duncan, so in the end when Macduff kills Macbeth and observes "Time is free" (Act V, Scene 8), we can see that time has been restored, and Macbeth is freed of time. The play ends now, because time has won and Macbeth's faith has finally caught up with him.

The evolution of the two characters is supported by means of expression, by stylistic devices. The change in Macbeth's character is highlighted by a change in the epithets and metaphors. If in Act I he is perceived as a "peerless kinsman", "noble Macbeth", his nature being "too full of the milk of human kindness", in Act IV he is described as "this tyrant, whose sole name blisters our tongue", while in Act V he becomes a "usurper", and a "butcher". Lady Macbeth goes from being "most kind hostess" in Act II, to being viewed as Macbeth's "fiend like queen".

The play shows that time is not an entity we can control, and Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are vivid proofs of that, as their attempts to control time brought them their doom. Therefore we should not make enemies of time by challenging our fate.

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The Dystopian Society of Laputa and Balnibarbi

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Jonathan's Swift most renowned book, *Gulliver's Travels*, comprises four journeys, among which, in the third book, that to the flying island of Laputa and Balnibarbi. Laputa is dominated by men and represents the abode of the court, being inhabited by 'educated' people that are keen on subjects such as mathematics, astronomy, technology and music. Balnibarbi is the continent below, living under the rule of the "airy" Laputans and described in words such as "the whole country" lying "miserably waste, the houses in ruins, and the people without food or clothes". The capital of this continent is Lagado, famous for its "academy of projectors".

The interpretation given to this journey is that of a satire to the Royal Society in London and its scientific theories, and also to those people that believe they can reach the truth by ignoring their sensory impressions and human concerns. All but two theories developed at the Academy of Lagado seem to be founded on real theories from *The Philosophical Transaction* and other publication of the society¹. Even the mechanism upon which the island manages to fly, detailed at length by the narrator, proves to have its basis on a real theory, that of Gilbert's theory of magnetism².

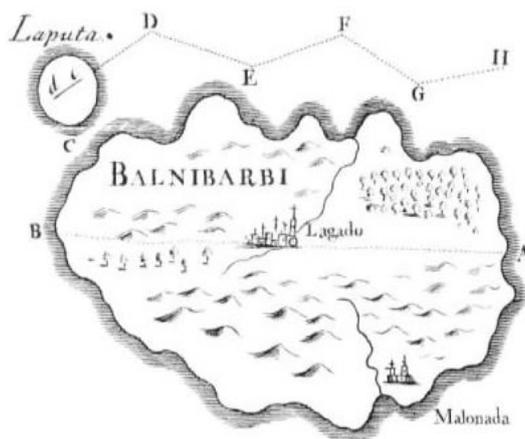
A deeper interpretation and analysis would be, in my opinion, that of seeing the voyage to Laputa and Balnibarbi also as an implied 'representation' of the relation between the ruling orders (here, the king) and the people (country). The flying island is, apparently, all-mighty and the king can punish his 'lower' subjects as he sees fit, either by blocking

the sunlight or the rain, or by throwing rocks and even lowering the island and destroying places. Furthermore, the new ideas and theories that had led the country to "waste" were advanced by 'great thinkers' from the island. However, Laputa is basically 'tied' to the continent in its very system of functioning, being depended on the magnetic quality of the dominion and not being able to approach to it too much. If it did, it would result in disaster, something that no one can understand and explain. Every movement the king makes is dependent on the fixed ground below, symbolizing that man,

whatever his role in society might be, is dependent on the other men and on the natural laws he cannot alter or fully understand³.

Lord Munodi is one of the last persons that refused the new way of seeing and making things of the new society. His lands are richly cultivated, his house was of a "noble structure" and everything was "disposed with exact judgment and taste", according to Gulliver.

But this is no longer the 'normality' of the society and Munodi acknowledges that he would have to fall into rank with the rest of the people. The king, surrounded by courtiers that share the same interests, is distinctly separated from the other members of the society through the fact that he has never been on the continent. He regulates the world of his subjects, not being or refusing to be aware and even to reason that his laws do not create a flourishing inhabitable dominion. On the contrary, he cruelly punishes the people when they rebel against him. All the theories from the Academy of Lagado are much praised, together with their inventors, suggesting that the citizens have adopted the views and ideas of the "airy" king, who literally lives with his head 'in the clouds'. Founded on



1. K. M. Jan, S. Firdaus, *Perspectives on 'Gulliver's Travels'*, New Delhi, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2004, p. 99.

2. Merton, C. Robert, "The 'Motionless' Motion of Swift's Flying Island", in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1966), University of Pennsylvania Press, p. 275.

3. K. M. Jan, S. Firdaus, *Perspectives on 'Gulliver's Travels'*, p. 98.

reason and science, the society of the island and its 'lower' continent fails from every point of view in the eyes of an outsider and has become dystopian. 'Dystopia' was coined as the opposite of 'utopia', pointing to an undesirable society, where current social norms are taken to nightmarish extremes, normally written as a warning or satire⁴. The prototype of the dystopian society in fiction is the totalitarian dictatorship, putting its whole population constantly on trial, enslaving its members, lacking the qualities of a traditionally justified community, being, on the whole, dysfunctional. The elite offer a utopian promise to establish a just, lawful society and the result is the miscarriage of justice and conspiracy against his own people⁵. The Laputa elite see themselves as giving a perfect model for the society to follow, ruled by a king that has never set foot among his subjects. The society is no longer capable of renewal, despite the academy's constant inventions, a fact reflected on the earth/ground itself, which is completely barren and sour. Its citizens live in a constant fear of the king's intentions of punishment, which are here exaggerated in order to pinpoint exactly to what degree a dystopian society, or simply a dysfunctional one, can affect and determine a person's inner thoughts and actions, which could lead, in the end, to his dehumanization, no longer acting as a personality, but as a mass. The king's punishments are gradual, beginning with blocking the sunlight or the rain, which does not only affect men physically, but also psychologically, by depriving them of two elements that constituted the 'normality' and the world as they knew it. Sunlight here could also be interpreted as symbolical, the king taking away their ability to perceive the truth. The next two punishments imply the partial or complete destruction of the individuals not willing to obey the ruling order. The society, finally, comes to feed on itself.

Swift's journey to the flying island and its continent can be, thus, interpreted, as an extreme critique against the monarchy and its members, who had no notion of the people's real situation, exactly like Laputa's king. Still they had the right to rule, and were considered on a much higher position compared to the citizens, thus, justice was not able to reach them, as they were the ones holding its reins. Beyond the particular allusion to the monarchy of England, the reader could further

superinduce to this journey an allegorical manifest against rearing a society sprung from the ideas of lavishness and the divine right to rule of tyrannical leaders, who endeavour to create and believe in the 'perfect' image they create and which the people accept, despite its destructive nature.

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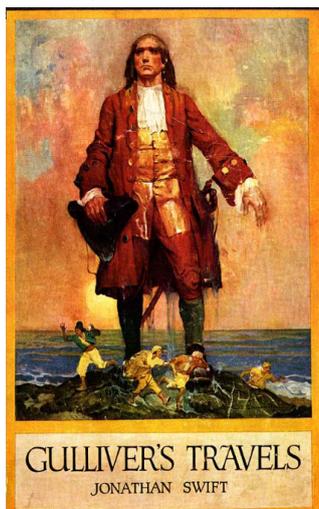
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The Use of Comic and Irony in *Gulliver's Travels*

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Though the 18th century novel tries to present mostly serious and natural themes, such as love in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* or orphanhood in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, there are works which seem to contradict this direction. Contrary to Richardson and Fielding's novels, Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* is based on events that are unlikely to happen. In *Gulliver's Travels* we may note that the situational comic is not used in order to approach a vulgar or humble reality but as a means to classify and comment upon it¹.



The main character reaches by chance different destinations among which Lilliput, Brobdingnag, Laputa Island and the

land of Yahoos are the most significant ones. In our essay we focus on a certain episode from Gulliver's third voyage in order to emphasize the author's use of comic and irony in presenting the people from Laputa, the flying island, with their way of living and of developing science. Here, Gulliver visits an academy where he meets all kind of scientists, involved in strange projects. One of them tries to extract sunbeams from cucumbers; another one tries to turn excrement back into food; another one wants to turn ice into gunpowder. An architect designs a strange way to build houses from the roof to foundation, using the model of a spider, whereas a blind master teaches his apprentices to mix colors for painters according to smell. This episode is meant to satirize the 'Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge', which was a scientific society founded in 1660².

The description of the scientist, involved in the extraction of sunbeams, displays more an industrious mineworker rather than a scientist, and

this presentation is due to emphasize the ridiculous aspect: "*The first man I saw was of a meager aspect, with sooty hands and face, his hair and beard long, ragged and singed in several places*". The other ingenious project regarding the building of houses is in fact inspired from nature, the scientist imitating the way bees and spiders make their houses. This project not only proves to be the application of a flawed idea, but it also shows the scientists' absurd preoccupations in that period. The episode with the blind master teaching his blind apprentices to mix colors by feeling and smelling them suggests the artists' lack of talent and imagination in that period, their lack of artistic vision, the inability to create, but also the fact that the professors' competence was as mediocre as that of their students. The narrator's serious tone emphasizes even more the hilarious situation: "*It was indeed my misfortune to find them at that time not very perfect in their lessons, and the professor himself happened to be generally mistaken*". The scheme for abolishing all words in the advantage of health and brevity creates a clear view on the unfounded medical theories and on the scientists' inability of coming up with correct and consistent solutions. The paragraph ends in a misogynist tone by showing the women '*vulgar and illiterate*' confined in their mentality, reluctant to any change and ready to raise a rebellion if needed in order to preserve their habits: "*(the women) threatened to raise a rebellion, unless they might be allowed the liberty to speak with their tongues, after the manner of their ancestors*".

The description of these strange scientists and of their odd researches is in fact an attack against the science in the 17th and 18th centuries. The context of the novel is very important and thus, it should be taken into consideration when analyzing Swift's work. The 18th century is called the Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason. This is an age when new lands were discovered, a period of great progress in many fields such as science, philosophy and learning, an age of optimism in which the scholars wanted to explain the whole universe and they were very confident in the power of progress and science.

1. Olteanu, Tudor, *Morfologia romanului european in secolul al XVII-lea*, Ed. Univers, București, 1974, p. 166.

2. http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Society- retrieved on December 16, 2011.

As we have already mentioned, the scientists performing researches at the Royal Society of London for the Improving of Natural Knowledge inspired Swift while writing his novel. This was a scientific society (founded in 1660) which played an important role in the development of science in Europe. Isaac Newton was one of the most important members of this scientific society. The purpose of the Royal Society was to improve the quality of human life using the new scientific techniques. Despite its major purpose, this society was more successful at observing and discovering natural phenomena than it was at creating useful technologies.

Swift expresses his doubt about the success of such projects by means of irony, the major literary device used in *Gulliver's Travels*. The fragment presented in our analysis satirizes the man's vanity, his illusions and pride, and his attempt of defying nature in the name of the progress. There is a clash between the great expectations of the members of the society and the reality in which they live, a clash between innovation and tradition (“*after the manner of their ancestors*”). Despite their great ambitions (someone has worked eight years to extract sunbeams from cucumbers!) they seem to ignore the evidence and the common sense of the natural laws.

The academy creates useless projects while the people suffer outside its walls. The projects depicted (the extraction of sunbeams from a cucumber, the new method of building houses, the linguists' work) are not only impossible to achieve, but also without any purpose. Even if they started from a scientifically correct hypothesis, they serve no real purpose for people and they become absurd. The quality of people's life remains the same.

Usually, a distinction is made between verbal and situational irony. The situational irony results from the contrast between appearance and reality, between self-image and the absurdity of their work, between what these scientists pretend to be and what they are in fact. They give much importance to their ambitious projects, but the results of their schemes are useless and even impossible to achieve. Their arrogance is underlined with the help of verbal irony and the use of comic. The architect who wants to build a house, by beginning at the roof, is “*a most ingenious architect*”, the blind master mixing the colors was “*encouraged and esteemed by the whole fraternity*”. People who do not belong to the academy and do not agree with the “*entirely abolishing of all words*” are “*illiterate*”, an example being the women from that society, because they want to speak “*after*

the manner of their ancestors”, they do not want to evolve, but on the contrary they rebel against everything that is scientific and new.

It is important to mention that irony is not used for the simple entertainment of the audience. On the contrary, an old Latin proverb says that *ridendo castigat mores* (“comedy is a great tool to criticize”). When it is difficult to face the reality around us and to point out the absurdity of a situation, satirists try to change people's minds by means of humor, comic, irony, by exaggerating certain features of the characters or certain projects. The purpose of irony and comic in this excerpt is to laugh at the ridiculous way of thinking, to show how deplorable the human being is.

The rejection of the heroic deeds corresponds to this new type of comic. The journey carried out by Gulliver has nothing from the grandeur of the antique odyssey. Swift uses the motif of the sea journey not to give his protagonist the chance of achieving some heroic deeds, but because the immensity of the watery space allows the author to introduce the reader and his character within the limits of the possible incredible adventures³.

In conclusion, we may say that Jonathan Swift, involved in all the disputes of his time, in ecclesiastical issues, in the argument between Wigs and Tories, between ancient and modern tradition, uses comic and irony to satirize the 18th century English society.

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The Exiled In *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Lord of the Flies*

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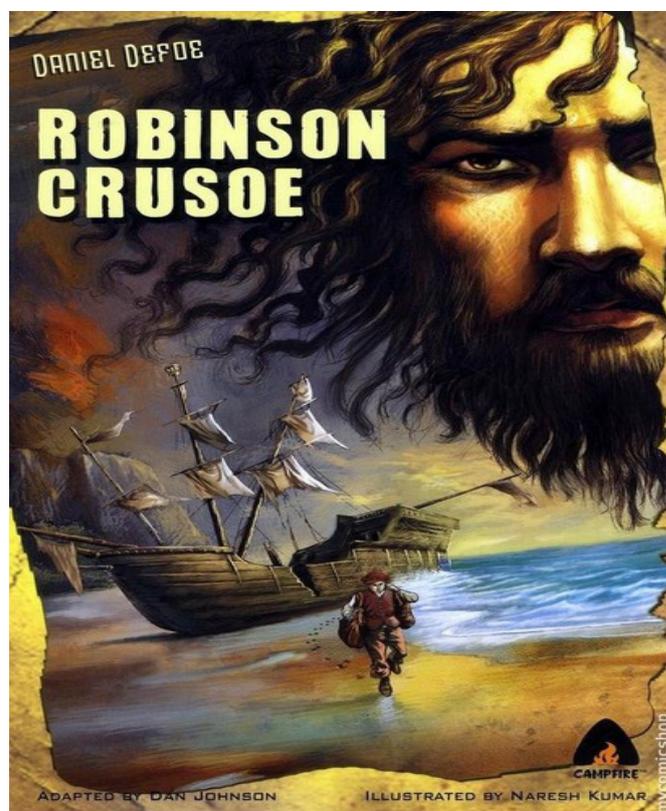
Coordinator: Professor's assistant Mariana Tîrnăuceanu

It is always interesting to follow a character's behavior along a novel's plot, his thoughts, the trigger point of his actions, his emotions. Moreover, it is captivating to watch the character in difficult, unusual and stressful situations. These two major novels, belonging to different centuries and artistic trends, are quite similar in their plot.

Firstly, in both cases, the authors carefully chose their characters to be cast away on a desert island, because only special individuals are able to face the "experiment" of being left alone, isolated and obliged to manage in a world different from what they know. This background is a good occasion to study human behavior, and this turns characters in "lab-mice".

Secondly, the location, the island, is also very important, as it is created as a parallel world, in which normal rules do not apply anymore, everything is new, mysterious, frightening. The island becomes a metaphor, when it represents, imaginatively, an enclosed space, entrapment, isolation and exile. The exile permits a new and maybe different kind of self-development. New rules are being created, new chiefs are being chosen (in the persons of Robinson Crusoe, and Jack and Ralph respectively), new mentalities are being formed. For example, Robinson Crusoe discovers that surviving and living by one's self can be a chance to re-discover one's inner self and to "start over" a world that has failed, because of the over industrialization. The fear of being all alone from the beginning is replaced, gradually, by the certainty and the hope of making a better place to live in.

In the case of *The Lord of the Flies*, mentality changes in a too drastic way, when children are forced to discover the harsh truth of life, that one has to manage by himself, defeating both outer and inner enemies. Therefore, the effects of exile can be observed differently in these two novels; there are both changes for the better and changes for the worse. We can speak about progress in the case of *Robinson Crusoe*, where the exiled individual, bare-handed, creates a better replica of the conventional society in which man, through work, can live peacefully in prosperity. Crusoe makes his own



home, grows crops, raises animals, plants and fruit; money and weapons are no longer important.

On the contrary, in *The Lord of the Flies*, humans appear to go back in time, in the primitive era. The children-characters have to find shelter, to hunt for their meal and learn, by instinct, how to defend themselves. Hunting, for instance, a habit so deeply rooted in all cultures, is well underlined in this text. Jack is obsessed with hunting a wild boar, he feels an insatiable desire to kill; he even abandons the fire (that previously helped the ships trace them) in order to hunt. The lust for blood goes further, from hunting animals to killing two of his mates and stalking Ralph. Jack represents the animalistic side of the human, all that is evil and hidden in our subconscious.

In both novels, the instinct of survival is revealed differently: in *Robinson Crusoe*, it evolves into a constructive way of thinking, because it makes the character imagine various solutions for problems such as building a fortress, or where and how to store food. In relation to Friday, this instinct definitely makes Crusoe think he should be the "master" – it is the so called "colonizer instinct", which dictates

that the white man is superior to any other races, considered savages.

In *The Lord of the Flies*, this instinct creates monsters, fear, panic; it divides the boys into tribes and makes them fight against each other. Here, Jack wants no longer to be the leader of his tribe, he wants to be the absolute master; he simply does not want to help his mates for fear that he might lose his authority. He steals Piggy's glasses, which once helped them light the signal fire, just to strengthen both his control over the others and his position of absolute chief (the bearer of the fire has the supreme power – an instinct strongly rooted in our ancestor's mentality).

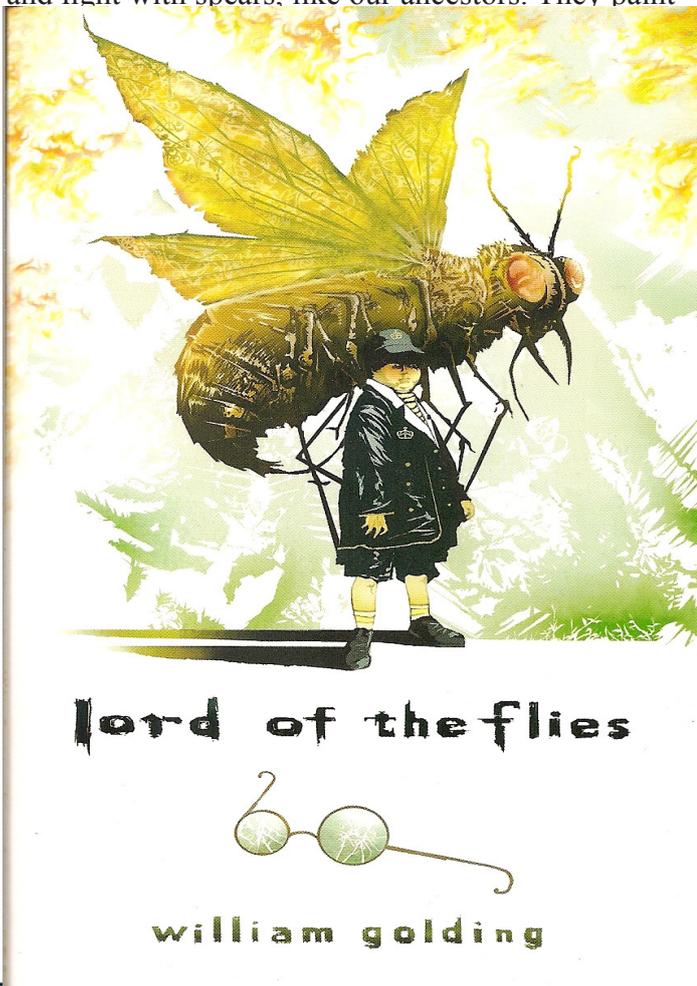
Both novels are constructed around problems such as wilderness vs. society, savage people vs. civilized persons. In Defoe's book, the border between savages and educated Europeans is well traced. Crusoe is the representative of manners, culture, education, religion, of civilization - as it was seen in the 19th century, and Friday, even if a friend now, is still a barbarian, with rituals (like having a god for everything in nature) hard to understand for his "master".

In *The Lord of the Flies*, this line becomes very faint, the boys have to defend against the others and fight with spears, like our ancestors. They paint

their faces with clay and become wild hunters. All in all, the instinct wins over sensibility and culminates with Roger's smashing Piggy's head with a rock.

The endings are quite the same: both Crusoe and Ralph are being rescued from the island, and the reason for that might be the humans' need to be saved and the impossibility for them to live alone, however far they are pushed from civilization. It is for them a signal that they need safety, shelter, and the comfort of an easier and a modern life, a need for evolution.

In conclusion, Defoe and Golding have created two masterpieces that put people in unusual situations and make them experience regression in time, in order to make us learn that the line between civilization and wilderness can be blurred sometimes; in a way it is a page of history.



Marilyn Monroe: the Icon, the Legend, the Goddess

“If I’m a star, then people made me a star.”
Marilyn Monroe

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Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Nadia Morărașu

The name Marilyn Monroe brings to our memory diverse images of a “phenomenal” presence. It may be a commonly attributed name in America, but, on its own, it sends to an unmistakable and irreplaceable historical person.

Marilyn Monroe is not just a star and a legend, she is an iconic figure discussed and celebrated in countless biographies. After almost half a century since her death, Marilyn Monroe still fascinates us with her beauty, her femininity, and especially with her tragic story. We are wondering what is that fascinating about her and the answer may lie even in the fact that “her star faded when she still had so much to offer. Moreover, her seductive white dress (in ‘The Seven Year Itch’ movie) still ranks as the most iconic fashion moment of all times.”¹

Born Norma Jean Morthensen, but baptized Norma Jean Baker², Marilyn’s name history is quite complicated. While still in her teens, she became a professional photographer’s model and started dreaming of a movie career, too. Her successful modeling brought her to the attention of Ben Lyon, a 20th Century Fox executive, who was impressed with her looks and commented: “It’s Jean Harlow all over again.”³

The year 1943 was the point at which Norma Jeane began her remarkable metamorphosis, by “shedding” her real name and shifting in appearance. What she created was the iconic look that would be an inspiration for thousands of women worldwide: platinum blonde hair, red lipstick and sexy outfits. Although Norma Jeane’s face was known even



“The mere name alone represents different images for different people. For some, it suggests the absolute standard of female sensuality. Beauty. Grace. Sophistication. For others, insecurity comes to mind. Misery. Tragedy. However, in order to appreciate the complex and fascinating life of this enigmatic star, one must attempt to put aside any preconceived notions about her—certainly no easy feat, considering her iconic status.” (Taraborrelli, J. Randy: *The secret life of Marilyn Monroe*)

before she became Marilyn, it is the image of “the blonde bombshell, innocently seductive, that most of us are accustomed to.”⁴ *In my opinion, the studio actually wanted to reinvent Jean Harlow in making this character called Marilyn Monroe. Monroe herself admitted that Jean Harlow was her role model and she certainly played an important part in setting herself up on a parallel path to her idol: “She really wanted to be Jean Harlow. That was her goal. She always said she would probably die young, like Harlow; that the men in her life were disasters, like Harlow’s; that her relationship with her mother was complicated,*

*like Harlow’s. It was as if she based her life on Harlow’s.”*⁵

How did she get the name Marilyn Monroe? At first, Ben Lyon had chosen the name Carol Lind as her stage name, although she disliked that. Eventually, she chose her mother’s maiden name of Monroe. Three names were drawn up as possibly stage names. The first was Norma Jeane Monroe, the second Jean Monroe, and the third Marilyn Monroe. Although Norma Jeane liked Jean Monroe because it preserved some of her name, Lyon convinced her that Marilyn Monroe was more sonorous. She clearly stated afterwards that she did not like her new name: “I’ve never liked the name Marilyn. I’ve often wished that I had held out that day for Jean Monroe. But I guess it’s too late to do anything about it now.”⁶

She may not have liked the name, but Marilyn Monroe surely rhymes better than Jean Monroe. And considering the etymology of the name Marilyn, which means ‘star of the sea’ in Latin, that was a

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6. <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm000054/bio> , retrieved on March 17th, 2011.

truly suitable name for a Hollywood star. While looking up for the etymology, I also found out that the name Marilyn Monroe has become a common noun, being used as an eponymous noun: a Marilyn Monroe is “a female representing an ideal type of physical beauty and glamour.”⁷

Another thing that I want to mention is the impressive variety of definite descriptions (titles) related to her: “*the most memorable legend of our time, the established icon of American movies, sex symbol, tragic legend, tragic beauty, the delicate flower, everlasting star, love goddess, the blonde bombshell, the greatest female icon, the beautiful and tragic queen of the fifties.*”⁸ Obviously, people named her differently across the years, but what I consider to be universal are just these three names: icon, legend and goddess. Moreover, she seems to be the first person being called a *sex symbol* in 1959.⁹ Both her platinum locks and her glamorous wardrobe set an unparalleled standard for American beauty. Some other celebrities that have tried at least once to be in Marilyn’s shoes are other gorgeous showbiz blondies: Madonna, Britney Spears, Paris Hilton, Scarlett Johansson, Charlize Theron, Christina Aguilera, Kylie Minogue, Lindsay Lohan, Anna Nicole Smith, and of course, the list may go on. This is not surprising at all, as ABG Chairman and CEO Jamie Salter stated: “*Marilyn Monroe is recognized around the world as the embodiment of beauty and glamour. Quite simply, her name and her image have timeless appeal.*”¹⁰

Although it is easy to put a label on someone, it is very difficult to see what lies behind that label. Who was the woman behind the glitter, the glamour and the rumors? The answer must be a complex one: “She was a dreamer that lived a nightmare. She was part myth, part media creation, and part orphan. She was ambitious, but at the same time she was weak and vulnerable; she was charismatic and magnetic but emotionally unstable and even paranoid”¹¹. And, despite the dumb blonde appearance, she actually was a very intelligent woman. I think the point is that, under the glamorous surface and physical perfection, she was a blank canvas on which people

could impose their own picture of what they thought she was. “*The truth is I’ve never fooled anyone. I’ve let people fool themselves. They didn’t bother to find out who and what I was. Instead they would invent a character for me. I wouldn’t argue with them. They were obviously loving somebody I wasn’t. When they found this out, they would blame me for disillusioning them---and fooling them.*” (Marilyn Monroe)¹²

Marilyn Monroe has not inspired only the look of celebrities, but also their fashion lines. For example, when Christina Aguilera was asked who her beauty muse was for her new fragrances ‘By Day’ and ‘By Night’, she replied: “*I thought of my favorite classic beauty icons when I started making the fragrances. I wanted to incorporate old Hollywood vintage glamour and that red lip into a sexy and sensual feeling. Marilyn Monroe is my favorite — I think she evoked sensuality in her look, walk and talk — and she just oozed natural confidence.*”¹³ Lindsay Lohan also stated that Monroe was the muse for her fashion line: “*Inspired by the iconic Marilyn Monroe and the timeless, confident glamour her memory represents, 6126 is named after her birth date. The confidence and sophistication Monroe exuded is something we don’t see today. (...) Yes, I really did try on every piece of the collection to make sure it had the right feeling and fit. It is really important that the products speak to my vision and pay respect to my icon, Marilyn Monroe.*”¹⁴

Monroe’s legacy is amazing. It includes 29 completed films within 13 years. Numerous books with photographs of Marilyn have been published over the years and other new, never before published photos continue to appear. Monroe’s life served as source material for several films, including ‘Marilyn: The Untold Story’ (1980); ‘Norma Jean and Marilyn’ (HBO, 1996) and ‘Blonde’ (2001).

Today, the name ‘Marilyn Monroe’ still connotes beauty, sensuality and glamour, whereas its bearer has become a classic female icon, who is “as familiar to people born after her death as it was to her contemporaries.”¹⁵

7. http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Marilyn_Monroe, retrieved on January 31st, 2011.

8. <http://www.allthingsmike.com/CulturalBlender/marilyn.html>, retrieved on March 17th, 2011.

9. <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=Marilyn+Horne>, retrieved on January 31st, 2011.

10. <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/content/view/49483/>, retrieved on January 31st, 2011.

11. Books, A. And Mars J., *Marilyn Monroe*, Andrews McMeel Publishing, 1995, p.8.

12. <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000054/bio>, retrieved on March 17th, 2011.

13. <http://themarilynmonroecollection.blogspot.com/2010/11/christina-aguilera-on-marilyn-monroe.html>, retrieved on January 31st, 2011.

14. <http://www.blackbookmag.com/article/lindsay-lohan-on-her-fashion-icon-marilyn-monroe/21832>, retrieved on January 31st, 2011.

15. Horton, Ros and Simmons, Sally, *Women Who Changed the World*, Quercus, 2007.

Al Bundy – Between Prototypical Loser and Contemporary Cultural Icon

Cora-Anca Moian, II, MA

Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Nadia Morărașu

Once we agree that, through the act of naming, the person is given a specific identity which helps him/her to differentiate from another, there also exists a fictional identity of a character inside the fictional universe constructed by a narrator, director or producer, with the help of a written or unwritten scenario/script. Hence, we have a very complex linguistic and non-linguistic context, in which the characters speak, move, breathe, think, fight, fall in love, die, inspire people, allure them to read the book or watch the movie or the serial and become role-models and cultural icons for a large community of people, or, the opposite, they create chaos in people's minds, they offer them a negative example through biased beliefs, bad conduct and inappropriate behavior.

Personally, I strongly believe that the mixture of these two models (the positive and the negative one) is what makes a fictional character a very authentic, believable and desirable one in people's eyes. We need someone we could identify with and relate to and feel that he/she represents the embodiment of our expectations, values, fears or incapacities of making our life better. A simple and common character, who has more weak points than high ones, who does not really take life too seriously and even mocks at it, who treats people as ignorant and useless human beings, who has a very private and stifling universe, marked by unhappiness and indifference towards the other members of his family, who treats dramatic and serious situations with laughter and contempt, who uses in his spoken words, gestures and facial expressions a great deal of irony and sarcasm and who thinks that everything, beginning with him, is a hilarious joke, has every chance in the world to become natural, credible and a true cultural American icon.

I have decided to analyze the name of the fictional character "Al Bundy" as a cultural icon, on account of the fact that this character generated strong responses for a long period of time, people identified with him, and some of them still do, in a positive or a negative way and the name itself stands for a group of related things or values¹.

I believe that the majority of people, the American ones, know very well that, through the name of Al Bundy, I refer to the main masculine character from the famous prime time television series of "Married... with children", which had about 11 seasons (1987-1997) and was created by Michael G. Moye and Ron Levitt. Originally "created" as Alphonse Hercules Bundy, few people would know this character under this full name that engenders an obvious clash between the pompous French-style Alphonse, the mythological Hercules and the typically American surname form. In fact, it is especially Hercules (which stands for the concept of physical strength, of unlimited power, of mythical force), that is to be interpreted as ironical, as long as Al's powers imply getting into and winning bar fistfights.

Choosing to promote the shortened, more familiar Al name was a clever decision and a wise strategy because it is easy to recall and could be associated with whatever the public wants to. We deal, of course with a charactonym, which is a name used for naming a character. Accepting the fact that this name is nothing but a convention (the real person who gives life to Al Bundy is, in fact, the actor Ed O'Neill), we have the process of "performative nomination"², meaning that a specific name is given to a specific character, the married shoe-salesman, who has two children and lives a very predictable life in Chicago, Illinois.

The family name, Bundy is also short, as it is meant to remain for as much time as possible in the collective memory. It is the truthful testimony that it is not the name itself which gives the coordinates that we deal with a humorous character, but the character itself who confers the name a social and cultural charge. But, anyway, the family name anticipates somehow the trades of the character.

Referring to the referent of Al Bundy, we may consider that he is the prototype of a middle-class American, whose life divides into being a husband, *An Encyclopedia of the People, Places, and Things that Have Shaped Our Culture*, Volumes 1-3, Greenwood Press, 2006.

1. Hall, Dennis R. and Susan Grove Hall (eds.), *American Icons:*

2. Lyons, apud Morărașu, Nadia, *English through Naming Acts* (note de curs, electronic format), Bacău, 2010.

a father and a shoe-salesman, who is always dissatisfied with his job, his wife, his life, but doesn't do anything to change it, who has no future goals or projects, his only escape from this dull existence being his favorite activity, watching T.V. More than that, he has a profound despise for the weak sex, especially for those ladies who have a considerable weight and his misogynistic approach to women mingles with his almost pathological search for food and his persistent irony towards his own family. By breaking so many taboos (death, sex) Al Bundy becomes a very smooth and likeable character for a consistent majority of people who tend to identify themselves with many situations the character has to go through and even to imitate his behavior whenever the context permits them to do so.

Bundy's most important weapon in fighting his boring existence is humor, which he uses even in some unacceptable circumstances: the death of someone (a relative), the despair or sadness of someone (his friends). Although inappropriate, his humor does not necessarily disturb the viewer, on the contrary, it represents the easier way of getting under someone's skin.

At the same time, we could mention the so-called "Al Bundy style" which means "the act of sitting on a couch, drinking a beer and having your left hand tucked inside your pants. Usually done while watching T.V. after dinner"³. We may also accept the significance of the Al Bundy character as given in the same unofficial Urban Dictionary: "a shoe-selling, beer-ingesting, hormone ranging hero to people of all races and ages. A fictional super-man from Chicago, Illinois, who from 1987-1997 spoke for every man who lived in a repetitive nightmare of a dysfunctional matrimony and a life devoid of interesting activity."⁴

As a paradox to what the character of Al Bundy represents, the verb "to bundify" is derived from the name of the U.S.A. all-time serial killer, Ted Bundy and it is similar to the "act of unthinkable massive violence against a single person or against several human beings, carried out by a mentally disturbed/undeveloped psycho."⁵ There is not, of course, any similarity between the two, just a coincidence of family name. Maybe, the only similarity could be that both of them had a deep

contempt for women. The main difference is that, while Al Bundy showed this at a discursive level, the other one did this in the most obvious and extreme manner, by murdering more than 30 women.

The description of the Al Bundy character as being a very funny and even delightful character in his static world, where things seem to happen at random, without any direct implication from his part, makes him become a spectator watching his life pass without having an active participation during it. I think that each of us have a small Al Bundy inside and this is the reason why the name of the character is to



be considered an iconic sign, as it represents the metaphor of a stable, but unsatisfactory home.

Instead of a typical conclusion, here are the Nine Commandments of "bundyism", "a religion that closely follows the tenets of philosopher and male hero Al Bundy"⁶, embraced by misogynist husbands all over the world and strongly resented by

any woman:

1. It's okay to call hooters "knockers" and sometimes "snack trays."
2. It is wrong to be French.
3. It's okay to put all bad people in a giant meat grinder.
4. Lawyers: see rule three.
5. It is okay to drive a gas guzzler if it helps you get babes.
6. Everyone should car pool but me.
7. Bring back the word "stewardesses."
8. Synchronized Swimming is NOT a sport.
9. Mud wrestling IS a sport."

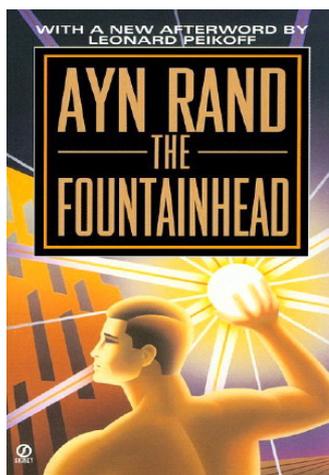
3. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=bundy%20style>, retrieved on March 16th, 2011.

4. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=bundy%20style>, retrieved on March 16th, 2011

5. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=bundy%20style>, retrieved on March 16th, 2011.

6. <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=al%20bundy>, retrieved on March 16th, 2011.

Ayn Rand: *The Fountainhead*



“...Rand’s vast, self-commissioned work is a novel and something more than a novel. It’s a metaphysical statement, a treatise on psychological theory, an aesthetic manifesto, a commentary on American architecture, an analysis of ethics, a declaration of political principles. It has often been seen as a palace, fortress, treasury, and temple” (Stephen Cox)

Written in 1943, *The Fountainhead* was Ayn Rand’s first novel to bring her literary recognition, together with financial success and fame. Its bilateral critical reception emphasizes the main feelings the reader experiences when reading this modern American novel: it either produces instant fascination and appraisal or utter tediousness and bitter criticizing. *The Fountainhead* always succeeds in stirring the interest and arousing controversy.

The Fountainhead tells the story of Howard Roark, an individualist architect, whose personality seems to encompass all the greatness, power and innocent truthfulness that the human being was first designed with, but which he unfortunately seems to have lost on his way through life. At twenty-one years old, expelled from the Stanton Institute of Technology for refusing to comply with their ways, Howard is not in the least taken aback. He knows exactly what he wants to do and what he will do: “He knew that the days ahead would be difficult. There were questions to be faced and a plan of action to be prepared. He knew that he should think about it. He knew also that he would not think, because everything was clear to him already, because the plan had been set long ago, and because he wanted to laugh” (p. 6). He feels an unerring love for the soil, he is self-confident and he confides in what he loves doing – building edifices that could stand and represent themselves through what they are,

1. Cox, S., *The Literary Achievement of “The Fountainhead”*, <http://www.atlassociety.org/literary-achievement-fountainhead> (Retrieved on March 23rd, 2012)

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giving them their own personality – “These rocks, he thought, are here for me; waiting for the drill, the dynamite and my voice; waiting to be split, ripped, pounded, reborn; waiting for the shape my hands will give them” (p. 7).

Everything at him fluctuates between the extremes – his views, his ideas, what he is, what he builds, even his love - there is no middle way. In a world that constantly rejects him, where nobody seems to understand him, except a handful of people, he has to make room for what he wants to build. Behind his buildings and the passion he puts into erecting them, there lies an entire web of ideas – individualism, originality, loneliness, self-fulfilment despite all the second-handers’s² barriers, different perceptions of beauty, all reigned by the man himself, a man with god-like authority who chooses to be different, to be himself at all costs.

The book speaks about human life and the whole array of emotions and trials that must be surpassed in a lifetime. It speaks about men and what they are capable or not of doing when they are faced with the danger of losing their power, it also speaks about generosity and betrayal, about acceptance and rejection, about making oneself known or being and acting just for oneself, regardless of the outer world. Last, but not least, *The Fountainhead* speaks about an intriguing, yet fascinating sort of love, that one could find repulsive, but to which he might secretly be allured through its strength.

We recommend this novel because, as Bill Wasik stated: “*The Fountainhead* is a masterpiece, integrating theme and plot; characterization; and writing craftsmanship together in one tightly wrapped story that will remain in the hearts and minds of the American culture as the Mt. Rushmore³ of a New Age.”⁴

2. Persons who go with the flow, who adopt the collective opinion and do what they are asked, leaving aside originality; they re-construct what has already been done.

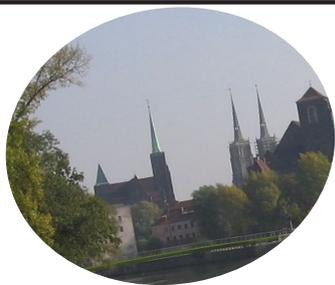
3. Mount Rushmore of the National Memorial – granite sculpture carved into Mount Rushmore of the faces of former United States presidents [George Washington](#), [Thomas Jefferson](#), [Theodore Roosevelt](#) and [Abraham Lincoln](#).

4. Wasik, B. A Review of Ayn Rand’s “The Fountainhead”, <http://www.mcsweeneys.net/articles/a-review-of-ayn-rands-the-fountainhead> (Retrieved on March 23rd, 2012).

A Beletristic View over WROCLAW, POLAND

Adrian Varga, III, EF

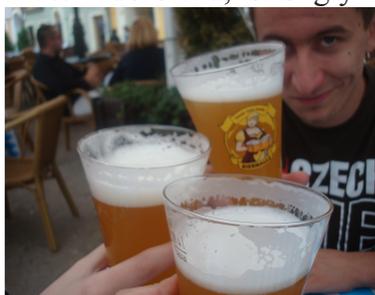
Coordination: Professor's assistant Cătălina Bălinișteanu



The magical strings of a hippie mandolin player are heard as an echoing background on the streets surrounding Ostrów Tumski, the biggest cathedral in Wrocław (pronounce it correctly and nobody will see you as a fool). As you



get near the mandolin player, you can hear him sing a sad song about some of his most significant losses. He is the bard that announces the dusk of a beautiful sunny day. When the sun sets down in a magical coordination, every shop closes their doors; the nuns sing the Polish versions of the evening prayers; far away at the Centennial Hall, the Fontana is filled with colour and music, the gas street lamps are lit by a whistling guy in a cape and a high-top hat and the sound of the stilettos are amplified by the historical pathways around this quarter. A magical orchestra plays the prelude of how I was about to live a promising night, all seen through the eyes of an enthusiastic fresh Erasmus student – an experience intensely enhanced by a glass of cold white Żubrówka, strongly recommended by any



Pole. While enjoying a glass with a group of friends the most common toast is: Na zdrowie! (pronounced 'n a z - d r o - v - y e h ') meaning 'to your health!

The glorious Poland: it is a live show and a natural art museum at the same time, seen through the flapping flowery skirts of beautiful blonde girls who pass by through an evergreen city. God seems to have carved the angels on top of historical buildings to gaze at the street merchants that sit on woolly Communist-pattern blankets as if they were immigrants in their own town. Through their yelling to attract buyers and through their negotiating dialogues they recreate the feeling that you are in a huge bird cage full of finches.

The troubled historical past of Poland creates difficulties for the novices that may adventure on the Polish streets. For instance, their tremendous coinage system eases a continuous pocket bombardment, so never be tempted to give away the first coins that may come to your hand. A handful of coins means a lot of noise, and a lot of trouble counting when put in the situation to pay for something. Nobody is in a rush here. Ever!

But keep in mind: at night, on an empty stomach, you can always find diverse temptations! Cheap student restaurants are everywhere, but in order to eat at the best ones, we pass by the Love Bridge full of hanging locks, which are a serious literature when you want to find out how Polish people call themselves when put in the situation of using their curious alphabet.



In our way around the town centre, we pass by libraries, taverns, cafés and university departments. The multitude and variety of intellectual activities that can be performed here challenge any foreign student, and might create the feeling that half of his Erasmus experience will take place in these buildings. And yes, the public library serves coffee, pączek (creamy!) and has a Nintendo

Wii; surrounded, of course, by numerous English, French, German books, all at your disposal.

Our destination is Bazylia, from where we can admire, while eating our meal, a public statue of a naked swordsman. The well carved sword is extremely symbolical and psychoanalytic. The Polish cuisine is hearty – it is rich in meat and winter vegetables (such as cabbage or some pickled vegetables) and its traditional dishes sometimes require a lot of time for preparation. Poles enjoy a lot their festive meals, which might take several days to prepare, such as Wigilia (Christmas eve dinner) and the Easter breakfast. On the night of my city tour I served their pickle soup (żurek) and baked potatoes with meat-filled naleśniki (it originates from the pancake concept). While eating I recognized some of the Romanian voices behind the nowadays dance-pop hits sung in English; you may be surprised to hear them on Polish radios everywhere.

After 21:00, the only shops opened at that hour are the “sklep monopolowy”. The magic about these shops is that everybody can distinguish what they are exactly. Even if you have never been to the free Polish lessons sponsored by university, you know for sure they are off-licences. How? Everybody exits from there with happy faces and their windows are full of suggestive signs: such as brand bottle drawings, “alcohol”, ”piwo”, ”wodka” writings and sometimes you can see funny cartoons. Everywhere in the city, at every hour, you can observe that at each corner there is a long haired Woodstock-wannabe guy singing Polish–American songs and playing some acoustical guitar. Their main festival is somewhere in April, where around 5 – 6000 people gather to sing the same song. Hendrix’s “Hey Joe” was the hit at the last festival.

In fact, there are a lot of festivals around here, and all of them are related to Słodowa Island. Słodowa Island, which is an islet situated between the religious sites and the academic buildings of the city, hosts, especially during the summer season, a lot of concerts and festivals – the most known being the Students’ Day celebrated in May, which in the end turns into what Bacchus once imagined as a utopian land for his worshippers. It even has its own Wikipedia page! It is where I became an advanced Polish speaker; I acquired significant sociology knowledge by observing and by discussing with various international students from exotic Brazilian

young people to Scottish lassies and lads; it is where everyone can enjoy well baked sandwiches; it is a place where everybody plays joyfully African drums and tambourines and guitars and where occasionally you can get a Frisbee in your back head. During this whole experience you will never see anyone disturbing this paradise of youth.

Wrocław is the perfect place to experience a limited period of time such as an Erasmus scholarship. The Polish flavour adds up to the feeling that somehow you were born in the wrong country. The dawn of a new day brings sadness to me. The view of the sun shining from the direction



of Szczytnicki Park brings you to the harsh reality and reminds you that you have a plane to catch in 4 hours that will take you back to *The Land of Choice*, the land you came from. Everyone has their own version of Erasmus, everyone has their own way of seeing Poland or any other country, the only thing we all seem to have in common in the lights of the sunrise is youth and the desire for adventure.

P.S. The street merchants are not everywhere, they are not like a pest (as the dogs in Romania), they can be found most commonly around the main public market, Hala Targowa.

A Pencil Mark on a Map...

Ionela Brânză, III, EF

Coordination: Professor's assistant Raluca Galița

A year ago, by this time, my feet were in the Atlantic Ocean, my heart in Romania and my mind was molding new dreams. I was in France, as Erasmus student, at the Michel de Montaigne University, in Bordeaux.

I thought a lot about what I should write concerning my Erasmus experience...I have postponed the writing of this article for a month or so...Each day was *I'll do it tomorrow!* and, as we all know, tomorrow never dies. It is difficult because I have to choose between telling the story of an experience or the story of my *journey* from a world of dreams and aspirations into a world of magic reality. You would say that *magic* and *real* are such opposites that could not ever collocate. Maybe, but what would you say if today you were looking in the mirror, asking yourself *Should I go to university? I speak some English, but in French I mostly grunt...I think it's kind of late and a job should be my priority. What the heck, I think I'll go to university anyway!* and, the next thing you know is that you are looking at yourself again in the mirror, this time *un miroir*



d'eau, which reflects a mingled image of history and present: it is you and *La Palais de la Bourse*. You are an Erasmus student, this means that you were offered a scholarship to study abroad by your own university and, if you have to think well, you weren't the best of your class either, but here you are, having your chance to explore something that you forgot you had dreamed about some time ago. This is the magic of reality: today you dream, tomorrow you live your dreams.

I study English and French, but not because I love these languages very much. Language is just

a vehicle. I am more into the essence of the meaning it carries. If you know well a few foreign languages you have access to much more knowledge. Each culture has given some of its greatness to this world and it will be such a loss if we just live in our own cave. For example, after my first semester of studies at "Vasile Alecsandri" University I had good results and I got a scholarship for my studies. I do not know where it came from, but I remember wondering if I could get the same results as a student if I were to study abroad. I looked around the map and I placed a point with my pen on another land, close to the ocean. That was *the university*. I said to myself that I have to have them both, someday: the books and the ocean. By that time, I had no idea of the Erasmus scholarships or if there was any possibility to study abroad. Thanks to those who believed in me as a student, I lived my dream. Moreover, I own a little bit of this to those who are the top of my class too: *Hey buddies, thanks for not applying!* I guess this was my chance and I enjoyed every moment of it.

When I arrived in Bordeaux, all I had with me were 35 kg of clothes and a needle worked picture of an Amerindian. I was told that I did not have to share my room with another student. Great! After the first three days, solitude was already my companion. I felt as if the walls were staring at me, so here I am hanging my Amerindian on the wall. Two days after, I felt that the furniture's galls were scratching my eyes. I opened the window to breathe *l'air de France* but the huge rocks on the lawn, under my window, were enlarging and multiplying right before my eyes. I asked one of the ladies in the administration office about them. *Les roches là-bas? Ils sont là à cause des tziganes. D'où viens-tu?* Thus, I found out that the rocks had been put there on purpose, to avoid that the gipsy people would settle there their caravans. Later on, by mid-April, on the same lawn, here and there, among the rocks, small groups of students from all over the world were getting sun-tan, drinking, eating, singing and dancing. Me and my Erasmus friends loved the lawn in front of the library, right by the tram line, which was said to be the threshold between two worlds: that of the letters, with students impersonating some

strange characters, as if it were a sort of postmodernist aesthetic movement: *readers imitate characters* and, the world of economics and law, the necktie spectators of the eternal tragicomedy played on the stage of life, across the tram line. The first time I saw a student wearing a top hat I thought that Stendhal or Dickens would give anything to rise from their grave and write another novel. To be an outsider makes you a great critic, yet, lingering around with your critical eye too long, you might become “the sow that eats her farrow”, to quote Joyce. I never liked beer and never drank on the street. For the carnival I was in the Bordeaux’s centre with my friends, wearing a horrifying t-shirt, blue sprayed hair, dancing, drinking can beer(-s to be more precise) and all this while I was following the carnival’s parade all over the town. Coming back to my room I found a *to be*



continued of the carnival: bugs everywhere! They decided to fight my solitude, ignoring my new entry, Charlie Chaplin, placed on my right, by the bed. He was supposed to bring me a smile each morning, but the ache in my heart was too deep. I had my room right across the kitchen. How cool! Don’t you think so? My answer is: do not. The spices of the world were my new perfume. My closet seemed to be a larder. As I couldn’t decide what to wear at school, the Asian flavor or the African, or even more, the everlasting Romanian garlic/onion in everything we cook, I decided to wash my clothes during the night and hope that they were dried and covered in plastic bags by morning. Anyway, my squeamish attitude arrived to a dead end. My daily routine to disinfect the room and to wash during the night were replaced by long hours of reading and writing essays. When I made my schedule, during my first week, it seemed to me that I was more in my room than at school, so I kept on going to the international relations office to add another class on my list. By the third time, they told me that was going to be difficult to cover all the classes and, while every Erasmus was having a party or going to the beach, I would be breathing the dust over my books. I went to the ocean a few times, I traveled, I had my Fridays and Mondays nights out, I studied, wrote my essays and got good results. I had it all! It was not easy; there were many sleepless nights, even a bit of panic, especially when I entered

a three hundred students room for my linguistics exam. Everything you had was to be placed on the floor: bags and cell phones. You were allowed to have only a pen and a piece of paper. They changed the room at the last minute; it took me a while to find it and that is why I arrived late. All eyes on me. I placed my bag on the floor and went to find a seat. I needed a clarification regarding my subject so I went to reach the professor and I stumbled over one of the bags on the floor. All eyes on me. I came back to my seat and my cell phone rang. It was in my pocket. All eyes on me. But all this was gone once I stepped out of the room.



I was definitely fascinated by Bordeaux, by its people, by the ocean or by what I discovered there, at Michel de Montaigne University. Maybe you ask yourselves what I brought home with me. There are two things: a poem and some of the Peaceful People’s wisdom. The poem is called *A Song of Hope* and I discovered it during my commonwealth class on Australia. It speaks about the overcoming of oppressions by the Australian indigenous during the European colonies. To preserve the hope within ourselves was the essence of its message, because “The hope assigned you/ Shall the past replace” and to “look up” not only for us, but even for our children’s children “glad tomorrow”. Nevertheless, it is also said to be careful what you wish/hope for. The Peaceful People or the Hopis were named after the corn they chose. All the Amerindian tribes ran to catch the biggest corn and when it came their time to choose, it was left only one small corn. As in our Romanian story *Fata babeiȘi fata moȘneagului*, greatness stands in small simple things. I remembered that years ago, while I was needle working my Amerindian, I was so fascinated by the colors on his clothes and I wondered if they had a meaning. Moreover, I always loved the sounds of nature interwoven in their chants. In a way I brought everything to me without even knowing. Thus, my Erasmus experience was the fulfilling of my dreams, dreams that re-presented themselves in my mind only by experiencing them.





ROMÂNIA
MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI, CERCETĂRII,
TINERETULUI ȘI SPORTULUI
UNIVERSITATEA „VASILE ALECSANDRI” DIN
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Cultures and Genres



– students' circle –

This student's circle is just like any other students' circle and yet it is not. It is just like any students' circle because its main actors/ participants are students from "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, and yet it is different as these students choose to make it through their participation and as unique as they are. It is the perfect opportunity for students to use their knowledge and skills and pour everything in the pattern of original and personal thinking. We encourage choice of original topics and writings so that students might have the chance to show themselves as they are with their preferences, yearnings, propensities, preoccupations.

This year's general topic unfolds under the sign of cultural celebrations addressing mainly the students from the Faculty of Letters, but also ecological or sports celebrations addressing students from the other faculties with the only purpose of investigating various aspects of culture and genres and encouraging free, creative thinking and collaboration between students from different departments. Thus, the entire year develops under the large heading of cultural Anglophone celebrations with the following topics:

2012 – CULTURAL ANGLOPHONE AND GLOBAL CELEBRATIONS

January writers – minibiographies: E. M. Forster, J. D. Salinger, J. R. R. Tolkien), Jack London, Susan Sontag, Anne Bronte, Edgar Allan Poe, Edith Wharton, Virginia Woolf, Lewis Carroll, David Lodge, Norman Mailer; short biographical films, biographical presentations, readings from their works, re-writings of their works, writings, inspired from their works.

From a Queen of history to a King of Literature:

1. *Dickens 200* (200 years from the writer's birth): a life in pictures (from family pictures to book covers; from classical film to postmodern films; two centuries old characters or atemporal characters; what makes me Dickensian; Magwitch revisited – from Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* to Peter Carey's *Jack Maggs*).
2. *Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee*: QE II and the royal family – a life in pictures; QE II and politics; QE II and royal etiquette; QE II – from documentary to film and media representation; QE II and the royal weddings; QE II as a national emblem and cultural icon; QE II's fashion style; events celebrating the jubilee: from cultural values to commodified culture.

March – the month of lighting genres and cultures

1. *World Writers' Day* (3rd March)/ *World Poetry Day* (21st March)/ *World Theatre Day* (27th March) special event: presenting Pygmalion from myth to paintings, sculptures, poems, plays, short stories, novels, opera/ ballet/ video clips, films and TV series, games.
2. *Uniting the Earth's culture(s) under the 3 Rs* (Reduce–Reuse–Recycle) – special event *Earth Hour* outside (31 st of March)

People that help the Earth's culture/ the Earth helping people's culture

1. *World Book and Librarians Day* (23rd April) – topic: *Books that make Romania*; special event: volunteering to help the Faculty Library for one day.
2. *International Earth Day* (22nd April): documentary presentation.

Drama/ Fiction and its ethos – (re-writing) contemporary plays and ideology – special event: participation during the students' annual scientific conference

From the cultural environment to the natural environment:

1. *London 2012 Cultural Olympiad*
2. *The International Day of the Environment* – 5th of June; trip to Hemeiuși Park.

Let the next turn on your life's road be Culture!

Coordinator: PhD assist. **Andraia Suci**
Collaborator: **Mihaela Culea**

Visiting Britain

Ioana Alexandra Sion, I, MA

Coordinator: Professor's Assistant Raluca Galița

Good morning everyone, and welcome to Britain! My name is Sion Ioana Alexandra and I will be your guide for today. Today we will have a special program and we will focus on sports, visiting the **Chelsea Museum and Stadium** and the **Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum**.

Our first stop will be at the **Chelsea Football Club**, where you will embark on an unforgettable interactive tour of the successes, emotions, sights and sounds that have contributed to one of the most fascinating stories in football.

Today you will be able to explore the club's evolution from the humble beginnings in 1905 to the global fame it has nowadays. Whether you are a Chelsea fan or not, this museum has something for everyone: exciting interactive exhibits, user-friendly touch screens and pioneering audio-visual shows. Treasures from pre-World War I period to the club's most recent successes will be on display, including shirts and mementos belonging to the Blues' greatest players.

The opening times for tours are from Monday to Sunday between 09:30 – 17:00.

I will also give you a phone number, the address, e-mail and website if you come back some other time: **Address:** Chelsea Football Club, Stamford Bridge, London SW6 1HS, **telephone:** 0871 984 1955, **email:** tour@chelseafc.com, **website:** <http://www.chelseafc.com/tours>.



(an inside view of the museum)

The next stop will be at the **Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum**, which provides a remarkable multi-dimensional tour of the traditions, triumphs, sights and sounds that have made Wimbledon the



The Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum

most coveted title in tennis. You can explore the game's evolution from a garden party pastime to a multi-million dollar professional sport played world-wide: with interactives, touch screens, and audio guides (available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Japanese and Mandarin), people of all ages can experience the artistry and athleticism of modern tennis. Some of the main attractions are:

- The Championship Trophies
- John McEnroe speaking about the game and his well-known opponents in the very dressing room he once used
- 200° Cinema capturing the Science of Tennis
- Film and video footage of the most memorable and exciting tournament matches
- An unsurpassed collection of tennis memorabilia dating back to 1555

When visiting this museum you can also discover equipment, apparel, mementos, and souvenirs belonging to the greatest players to set foot on Centre Court.

The museum is open for tours throughout the year, daily from 10.30am – 5pm. Here are the contact details that might interest you: the address: All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club Church Road London SW19 5AE, the telephone: +44 (0)20 8946 6131, the email: museum@aeltc.com, and the website: <http://www.wimbledon.org/museum>

This was all for today, thank you for coming, and I hope that you enjoyed our tour. Hope to meet again in other presentations. Have a nice day.

Good-bye everyone!

Interview with Professor Doina Cmeciu

Ionela Brânză, III, EF

What were your dreams for the future when you were a child?

When I was a child I thought of being a teacher, nothing else.

When did you discover literature?

I discovered it at a very early age, with The Iliad and Spartacus. These were my two books which had a great influence on me and which made me discover the world in fact.

What was your favourite book as a teenager?

Spartacus! I read this novel when I was a child (I suppose I was nine years old). Then, I enjoyed reading it again and reading other historical novels (Walter Scott's Ivanhoe, Sadoveanu's novel, Adam Sienkiewicz's Quo Vadis and The Teutonic Knights) or Irving Stone's The Agony and the Ecstasy, which is a biographical novel of Michelangelo's life.

Do you remember your favourite teacher? Or the one who had a great influence upon your future career?

First of all, my first teachers were my parents. My father was a teacher of Romanian and he was the first who read The Iliad to me and for me, and who made me love Homer. My mother was a kindergarten teacher and I remember working with her for a variety of activities: putting tales, fairy tales, actually, on stage, making costumes for dances and for lots of sketches, or helping her with the kindergarten children in doing different things. So, they were my first teachers, I would like to say that, and I remember them from this perspective. The other one was my high school teacher of English. I loved his way of teaching, his way of being and he made me, in fact,



follow this career and pursue this goal and aim of my life.

I read in your CV that a few years after you graduated from Al. I. Cuza University, in Iasi, you had a scholarship for Aberdeen University in Scotland. What was the greatest thing you brought with/within you back home after that experience?

It was my first travel abroad, and I was impressed by everything I saw there. It was a course on British literature, culture and civilization and it made me perceive literature within a cultural background, but I was impressed by Scotland as a whole, by the Scots, by the environment ... I cannot say that I was impressed by their way of teaching, but by the atmosphere which I discovered there. It was my first journey, not travel, but a journey into the British culture.

You give lectures on Old English literature, Shakespeare, Victorian literature and the 20th century literature. My question is: what was your first choice when you were young and taking the first steps towards this profession?

Well..., this is an interesting question I taught all types of literature. I even taught American literature, practical courses, English for specific purposes, culture and civilization. So, if I like something, that 'something' is literature! I like literature from its beginnings up to the 21st century with everything that IT comes to mean.

Students tend to believe that your favourite author is Shakespeare. Are we wrong?

They are and they are not (she laughs). Perhaps I teach Shakespeare in a much more passionate way! Or I teach Virginia Woolf in

a different way, or Joyce As I have already mentioned, I like all those authors who know how to work with words and who come to the centre of the human being. So I love Shakespeare but, at the same time, I love Joyce as well, or D.H. Lawrence, or Virginia Woolf, or David Lodge, or it doesn't matter which whatever other author of British or world literature. I cannot say that I love only Shakespeare. But it is true, I love mythology and Shakespeare. I consider that if you know Shakespeare and Joyce, the Bible and mythology it is enough, you know a lot about the whatness of a human being.

Joyce considers that books are not an escape from daily life but its very essence. Have you ever found yourself in a character?

I do not want to think too much when answering your questions I do not want my answers to be very elaborated (she laughs). I can't say ... Because I can find myself, for example, in Hamlet, although he is a male figure, - not that I am doubtful, no - but there is something of the essence of man which is there. I may say that Mrs. Ramsey is another character that I like, even Stephen Dedalus. In fact, I like those characters that "wrestle with words", this is a quotation from another great English poet, T. S. Eliot.

When I was a 1st year student, during my first class with you, you gave us a ten minutes' test after your lecture. You wanted to check how much information we acquired but also to find out which were our expectations at the end of your literature courses. I simply wrote: to give back what I have received. When I was a second year student, during a lecture, you were teaching us the narratological approach, having a short sentence from Hardy's Jude the Obscure as an example. You said so many things that we were all amazed in the class ... It was the moment when I realized that I would never be able to give back so much. None of my fellows forgot that lecture, that sentence... I wonder what you think about us, the postmodernist students?

That you are inquisitive minds! What I'd like to find with you, and I have found such things with most of you, is that you are curious, although apparently you hide such a thing. You do not want to show it openly. This is what I like:

the fact that you are curious, inquisitive and that you want to know more. I think this is what pleases and satisfies any of your professors.

I know that many of our teachers were your students and now they are your colleagues. I imagine you are very proud of them. My curiosity pushes me further: do you remember something funny about any of them, when they were your students?

No. I do not remember something funny! It depends on what you mean by funniness or by being funny. And yes, I am very proud of them! What I remember is the fact that they asked me books to read and that, generally, they wanted to be as best as possible. And this is what I admire and appreciate with my very young colleagues.

Before I left for Bordeaux, as an Erasmus student, both you and associate professor Elena Bonta took care that I was provided with everything I needed when being there. Your daughter, who is an English lecturer at Galați University, helped a Pole student by lending her some money, because she didn't receive her Erasmus scholarship in time to pay the rent. Every time I had a problem or I needed something such as a piece of advice, a book or it does not matter what, here at "Vasile Alecsandri" University, I have always found an open door for me, a smile and somebody from the academic staff willing to help me. How much can a professor do for a student, beside his/her lectures and seminars? I am afraid my fellows do not know that.

As much as a student wants me to do for him or for her. I'll do that with pleasure. So, as much as you want! But I wouldn't put your question into 'muchness'. I'd like to put it into value rather than into quantity. It's the quality that you ask from us that I appreciate and from this point of view I'd like to open all the windows of my soul towards you.

In your book, Signifying Systems in Literary Texts, there is a motto taken from Frost: *We dance round in a ring and suppose, / But the Secret sits in the middle and knows*. Would you like to share with us the secret path towards the center?

I like these two lines! Each word in these

two lines is a sign. I hope you don't like me to interpret and to decode the meanings and the significations of these signs now, this very moment (she smiles), but what I can tell you is that I do not want to find **the** centre. I'd like to think that each day is a new centre, so that a centre is something dynamic because it makes me really live. And the centre depends even on the students ... I place this poem within the context where I live and the idea is to make this centre as strong as possible, but to make it be dependent on my students, on what they want to be and to become in life.

A few weeks ago I was standing by the door of C2 where you had a lecture and I accidentally heard a student, who did not get her five for the semestrial test – an important test which allows us to give our final exam –, saying to one of her fellows: “Did you hear? She said I can give it again. I will get a 10 next time!” I said to myself: “What a fool! She never gives a ten for such tests”. But I was the fool. She was hopeful. Where are we wrong? I mean us, the students, and I am not speaking only about those tests, but in general about us along our path towards knowledge. Where do you think we get stuck in general?

I don't think you get stuck somewhere... but I think you have not learnt how to open yourselves up. Some of you are so childlike, this means innocent, that you consider that there is a barrier or a divide between teachers and students. Try to be free! This is what I think you should do or must do. Don't feel yourselves as being imprisoned. If the teacher opens up to you, then respond in the same manner. Don't think of marks! It seems to me that such marks are the first impediment and the first obstacle which you yourselves create, so don't think of marks. Just think of how you can become somebody. And, if you become somebody, if you can stand in yours shoes as I say, then you'll feel free and comfortable with yourselves. You'll feel at ease in your own realm. Try to build this realm for yourselves and put inside as much knowledge as possible from all the teachers around you, not only from one or another or the other. Try to feel the world around you with open eyes and then your world will be richer.

Did your passion become you profession? Or you have other ones?

Yes. I like reading very much. I like travelling, I like flowers very much, this means I like nature and everything that surrounds me. But this is in fact my profession, my career, my way of seeing life ... I really love what I do.

What projects are you involved in at the moment?

It is an European project approved of by the European Commission in Brussels and it refers to bringing the European policies to the local community.

One last question: What can we do for you? Are the undergraduate students able to get involved in your research group?

Yes, of course. What you can do for me is: to love what you do! If you enjoy doing something then my 'mission' has been accomplished and carried out. It is rather difficult to be a professor or a teacher because you have to give a lot, but when you make the other ones understand themselves and apprehend the beauty of things around, here is the best thing to have in life or to be in life. I have used two verbs, to be and to have, but I prefer to be: to be somebody, to become somebody, to make somebody understand that that self is always a work in progress. So, this is what you can do for me.

Computer tricks everyone should know about

Alisa Cătălina Olariu, III, EF

Coordination: Professor's assistant Cătălina Bălinișteanu



Everyone nowadays owes at least one computer and makes daily use of it, especially when speaking about students. Used either for fun, 'sociability' purposes or 'academic' ones, the personal computer is an accessory each and every student would choose to take if stranded on a deserted island. Provided it comes with an Internet connection, of course 🌐.

Despite the fact that all people know how to use a computer, there are many tricks and secrets of which many people are not aware, ranging from useful unknown shortcut-keys to how to send a bigger file. Hopefully, the following simple tips will come in handy.

1. How to Recover Overwritten Files

Overwriting a file, thus possibly losing something important, is a surprisingly common mistake, which generally happens when you save a file on your computer with the same name as another file or when Word accidentally crashes down without your file having been saved. Usually, the system prompts and asks you if you are sure you want to overwrite the original document. Once you have hit 'yes', there is no going back. Anyway, this little inconvenience has a solution. Most Windows versions provide an easy way to restore older versions of your file. Just click the right mouse button on the file you want to restore and click Properties. In the Properties window, click the "Previous Versions" tab, where you have the possibility to "Restore", allowing you to keep the old version and to delete the work you have done since the 'accident', and "Copy", which lets you keep both the old and the

new version.

2. How to Send Large Files

Most e-mail accounts have large storage size, but none of them allows you to attach files larger than 20MB. So the perfect solution would be a transfer site. However, most of them have 1GB or 2GB restrictions, forcing you to either send the material piece by piece or comprise the file. The solution is <http://www.filedropper.com/>. It does not require registration, it is completely free and you can upload files up to 5GB. After the upload, you can give the provided link to whoever you might want to send the file(s) to.

3. Keyboard Short-cuts

I have been told many times that I use my mouse too much, when I could very easily use keyboard shortcuts. It is faster and more efficient. Here are some shortcuts that not many people know about:



Windows + Up/Down – this allows you to maximize a window to full up the screen or minimize it.

Windows +Left/Right – by pressing these, a window will automatically fill up half of your screen to the left or to the right, without using your mouse. This proves useful especially when you are extending your desktop across multiple monitors.

Windows +P – this is a handy shortcut when you are managing your multiple-monitor, opening up a small overlay which lets you configure a projector or second display.

Windows + [Number] – you can launch programs pinned to your Taskbar by pressing Windows and the number corresponding to its placement on the Taskbar. For instance, Windows + 1 will start the first application, Windows +2 the second and so on. This is handy when you are downright immersed in work and you do not want your hand to leave the comfort of the keyboard.

Windows + Space - pressing these keys allows you to view your desktop, making every active window transparent. They remain as such only as long as you hold down the keys.

4. How to Remove Objects from a Photo

This is a simple task for which most of us use Photoshop and its kind. However, these are not just pricey (if acquired legally), but they also need some time for learning how to use them. A free tool that allows you to remove objects is <http://www.webinpaint.com/>, where you can simply upload an image and highlight the object you want removed. After the object is removed, click “Inpaint” and the object is gone and the image brand new. Finally, you click on the diskette next to “Load Image” to save it to your PC. Yet you should not expect each and every image to work out perfectly – choose an image where the object is clearly distinct from the others. The bright side is that it can surely remove moles and pimples for your Facebook profile photo



5. How to Make an Invisible Folder

To let you in on a very funny computer trick, you can make an invisible no-name folder. First of all, you have to make a no-name folder – right-click on the folder and click rename. Delete the name, hold ALT button and type 0160 from the num pad block (be sure numlock is on and do not release ALT while you are typing). When you complete the code, release ALT and press ENTER – your folder will have no name. For the second part, right-click on the same folder, click Properties and go to “Customize” tab. There you should click “Change Icon”. Many available icons should appear, but you should look

for a blank, an place where there is no icon. Select the icon and then “Apply” and voilà, you have an invisible no-name folder. (You can also make it invisible without removing the name.) This funny trick proves practical when you are not the only user on a computer and you want to store information where no one can find it.

These are some of the myriad of tricks one can apply when using the computer, some of them being handy and others funny. The list is extremely long and could extend forever, but that is why the Internet exists, isn't it?? Everything you need in terms of computers, google it! If it has a solution, you will surely find it! As a parting gift, here is a funny, magical Microsoft Word trick – open a new Word document, type =Rand(200,99) and then press enter. Enjoy!



Vocabulary

~ words used in a literary criticism~

Ciprian Iovu, III, ER

A review = *a critical appraisal of a book, play, film, etc. published in a newspaper or magazine*

to write a review of something; to review something

a critique

critical

a critic

to criticize

To analyze = *examine (something) methodically and in detail, typically in order to explain and interpret it*

an analysis (pl. analyses)

to assess; to evaluate

an assessment; an evaluation

a comment on

a commentary on

to comment on something

A synopsis = *a brief summary or general survey of something*

an abstract

a summary; a résumé

to summarize; to sum up

to quote

to interpret

an interpretation

To express = *convey (a thought or feeling) in words (or by gestures) and conduct*

to express something well/badly; to put something well/badly

expression

to be a sign of something

a context

contextual

In my opinion = *a view or judgement formed about something, not necessarily based on fact or knowledge*

in my view

from the point of view of ...

as the author points out

in the final analysis

on the whole; by and large

in a word

On the one hand, ... on the other (hand) = *used to present factors which are opposed or which support opposing opinions*

to a certain extent

in some degree

to the extent that

up to a point

concerning

as regards; with some respect to

in relation to

in a similar vein

in spite of; notwithstanding

his talent notwithstanding

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2. <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition>, retrieved on March, 26th 2012.

