

# TROPES OF TRANSFORMATIONS

# **Kultúrák, kontextusok, identitások**

A Debreceni Református Hittudományi Egyetem  
Interkulturális Tanulmányok Kutatóintézetének  
kiadványsorozata  
5. kötet

Főszerkesztő és felelős kiadó:  
*Baráth Béla Levente, rektor*

A sorozat szerkesztői:  
*Gaál-Szabó Péter, Kmeczkó Szilárd, Bökös Borbála*

# **Cultures, Contexts, Identities**

Series of the  
Intercultural Studies Research Institute of  
the Debrecen Reformed Theological University  
Volume 5.

Editor-in-chief and publisher in charge:  
*Béla Levente Baráth, rector*

Series editors:  
*Péter Gaál-Szabó, Szilárd Kmeczkó, Borbála Bökös*

# TROPES OF TRANSFORMATIONS

Editors:

Péter Gaál-Szabó, Szilárd Kmeczkó, Andrea Csillag, Ottilia Veres



Debrecen Reformed Theological University – Debrecen  
Partium Kiadó – Nagyvárad  
2024

Tropes of Transformations

Editors: Péter Gaál-Szabó, Szilárd Kmeczkó, Andrea Csillag, Ottilia Veres

Cultures, Contexts, Identities, Volume 5.

Editor-in-chief and publisher in charge:

*Béla Levente Baráth, rector*

Published by:

Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Debrecen, 2024

ISSN 2631-1674

ISBN 978-615-5853-67-8

Partium Kiadó, Nagyvárad, 2024

**Descrierea CIP a Bibliotecii Naționale a României**

**Tropes of transformations** / ed. by: Péter Gaál-Szabó, Szilárd Kmeczkó,  
Andrea Csillag, Ottilia Veres. - Oradea : Partium ; Debrecen : Debrecen  
Reformed Theological University, 2024

Conține bibliografie

ISBN 978-606-9673-76-8

ISBN 978-615-5853-67-8

I. Gaál-Szabó, Péter (ed.)

II. Kmeczkó, Szilárd (ed.)

III. Csillag, Andrea (ed.)

IV. Veres, Ottilia (ed.)

81

008

© Debrecen Reformed Theological University

© Partium Kiadó

Cover illustration: "Returning Habitats" ["Visszatérő élőhelyek"] by Sándor Imreh

Technical editor:

*Éva Szilágyiné Asztalos*

Printed by:

*József Kapusi, Kapitális Nyomdaipari Kft., Debrecen, Hungary*

# CONTENTS

PREFACE	7
<b>1. TRANSFORMATIONS OF SOCIAL AND ETHNIC/RACIAL CONSTRUCTIONS</b>	
<i>ANDRÁS TARNÓC</i> Narrating the Unspeakable: Manifestations of the Gothic in Slave Narratives	13
<i>HANNA IVÁN-GÁL AND PÉTER GAÁL-SZABÓ</i> The Deep-South as <i>lieux de mémoire</i> in Arna Bontemps's <i>The Sad-Faced Boy</i>	25
<i>ALEXANDRA ERDŐS</i> “The Problem of the Color Line”: A Source of Opportunity?	35
<i>LIU MENG</i> The Use of Chinese Characters as Mnémotechnique	47
<i>EDIT GÁLLA</i> Institutions of Betrayal: The Social Construction of Reality in Katherine Anne Porter's “Flowering Judas”	61
<b>2. CENTRAL EUROPE: STORIES, IDENTITIES, AND TRANSFORMATIONS</b>	
<i>SZILÁRD KMECZKÓ</i> Guilty Weekdays in Bačka (Bácska): The Figure of the Modern Detective under the Living Conditions in Sombor (Zombor) at the Turn of the Century	77
<i>JÁNOS ANTAL</i> The Romanian Greek Catholic Church: A Bridge between East and West	89

<i>FLORIN CIOBAN AND BORBÁLA BÖKÖS</i>	
The Folklore of Children in Transylvanian Regions	95
<i>ALICE EGED</i>	
Unexpected Heritage: The Relationship between Prince Louis Ferdinand von Preußen and the National Socialists	109
<b>3. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LANGUAGE USE</b>	
<i>ANDREA CSILLAG</i>	
The Prepositions <i>out of, from, to, by, for</i> and <i>of</i> in English Expressions of Happiness	123
<i>BORBÁLA BÖKÖS</i>	
The Challenges of Teaching Consecutive Interpreting: Methods, Pedagogical Skills, and Effective Learning Strategies	137
<i>IULIANA BORBELY</i>	
Embracing the Dichotomy: Prescriptivism, Descriptivism, and the Role of AI-Powered Writing Assistants in Grammar Editing	159
<i>TITUS POP</i>	
Quoting or Not Quoting: The Language of Shakespeare as Shared Cultural Capital	171
LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS	177

## PREFACE

*Tropes of Transformation* is the fifth volume of the *Cultures, Contexts, Identities* series of the Intercultural Studies Research Institute of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University. The aim of the book series remains the same, namely, to present the latest results of literary and cultural studies from as many perspectives as possible, which hopefully will be reflected both in the structure of the study volume and in the results of the individual essays. When editing this volume, we decided to create three sections to indicate the concepts and perspectives that form a bridge between the topics, ways of approach, or angles the respective articles take of the problems in each section.

The section “Transformations of Social and Ethnic/Racial Constructions” contains five essays, each of which investigates the possibilities of the transformation of consciousness structures and their dynamics either within a theoretical framework or through personal destinies. In the first study, András Tarnóc examines Gothic elements in various slave narratives, bearing in mind the possibility that the Gothic genre can be used to bring American racial history into sensual proximity to make it tangible as an inescapable dimension of American history that still haunts and overshadows much of what we know today. He sees the aesthetic quality of the Gothic as both pleasure and terror, while related to the concept of the sublime as developed by Edmund Burke. Hanna Iván-Gál and Péter Gaál-Szabó examine the applicability of Pierre Nora’s *lieux de mémoire* in relation to the Deep South in the early novel *The Sad-Faced Boy* by Arna Bontemps, a major figure of the Harlem Renaissance. The sometimes futile efforts of young black men who migrate from the American South to the big cities of the North to integrate, and their experiences in the big city, which reinforce their sense of homelessness, make them perceive their former residence in Alabama as an abandoned place that now draws them home. The return offers a powerful experience of an emotional rediscovery of the house, the street, and the landscape surrounding the settlement. The analysis of the co-authors also

examines the dynamics of the influences that encourage and shape the process of change. Based on a 1903 prediction by W.E.B. Du Bois, according to which one of the major problems of the 20th century will be racial discrimination, Alexandra Erdős argues that the duality at the level of the organization of consciousness gives rise to a dual identity. In addition to its schismatic nature, it also presents opportunities for those who are forced to live their lives in the United States as both Americans and Blacks. The conflicting relationship between the two organizations of consciousness is the starting point of the path to an integrated state of consciousness as true self-consciousness. Liu Meng explores Chinese calligraphic writing as a vehicle of Chinese cultural memory. Its starting point is that the transmission of knowledge elements between generations takes place in the linguistic medium, so the importance of Chinese calligraphic texts for the preservation of cultural memory is beyond dispute. They are visual signs of the process of cultural and spiritual dynamism, because with a mastered mnémotechnique, in the case of readers and depicors, they strengthen their historical imagination and play a significant role in the recreation of traditional memory content. Edit Gállá analyzes Anne Porter's highly acclaimed short story *Flowering Judas*, tracing the transformation of consciousness of a protagonist with strong left-wing commitments in revolutionary Mexico. Initially, he is actively involved in the service of noble ideals, and then real experiences lead to disillusionment with the revolutionary idea since he sees that, by their own activities, the advocates of revolutionary ideas are recreating all the social relations that they promised to overcome. Part of the literary reception has seen the protagonist's disillusionment as a specific case of betrayal. Edit Gállá takes a strong stance in this long-running debate.

The essays in the section "Central Europe: Stories, Identities, and Transformations" take the reader on a journey through multi-ethnic Central Europe. They offer historical, literary, ludological, and cultural anthropological possibilities to understand the phenomena observed today. In the first study, Szilárd Kmeczkó examines the modernizing life of a small, multi-ethnic town in Vojvodina, far from the imperial centers of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in Róbert Hász's detective novel trilogy. Tracing the criminal threads reveals the conflicting relationship between the gendarmerie as a traditional institution and the still unaccepted corps of urban detectives, as well as the contradiction between the detective's work of restoring moral order and the detective's work reduced to case management, also brought to the surface by modernization. János Antal examines the troubled relationship between the Romanian Greek Catholic Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church

---

in the period following the change of regime. He identifies different views of history as the main source of the conflict. The orthodox position, which stresses Romanian exceptionalism and self-sufficiency, had to face a Greek Catholic viewpoint that challenged it from 1989 onwards, which emphasizes Transylvania's spiritual affinity with Catholic Western Europe. The author also explores the historical preliminaries of the confrontation. Florin Cioban and Borbála Bökös, in their jointly written study, show some characteristic features of the Transylvanian folklore of children, after reviewing the relevant literature on the theoretical background of play as an activity. The research focuses mainly on children's folklore in the villages along the upper course of the Barcău River including group games played by Slovak, Hungarian, and Romanian children in different age groups and, in doing so, on linguistic borrowings and meaning changes. Alice Eged examines the relationship of one of the sons of the last heir to the German throne, Louis Ferdinand, to the National Socialist movement in the last years of the Weimar Republic and the first years of the National Socialist system. Contrary to previous beliefs, she argues that Louis Ferdinand's activities played a significant role in the acceptance of Hitler's personality and system in the United States. She emphasizes that his meetings with Henry Ford and Franklin D. Roosevelt proved to be significant in this regard.

The last section of the volume "Cultural Heritage and Language Use" contains four studies. Andrea Csillag examines examples of the English language expression of happiness, as well as the meaning-forming role of the related prepositional structures *out of*, *from*, *to*, *by*, *for*, and *of*, based on the source material of monolingual and bilingual dictionaries. She concludes that the linguistic forms containing these prepositions mainly refer to the causes of happiness, while the prepositions do not occur in their original spatial or functional meaning, but in a figurative sense, forming different metaphorical meanings. Borbála Bökös reviews the teaching methods, pedagogical skills, and effective learning strategies of Consecutive Interpreting emphasizing that it is also necessary to create an appropriate repository of best practices. An appendix is attached to the study, which gives practical versions of the different types of Learning Strategies. Iuliana Borbély examines the dichotomy of prescriptivism and descriptivism in linguistics in the light of the use of AI-powered writing assistants that support grammar editing. She concludes that the strict dichotomy cannot be maintained, since the two sides are difficult to separate and complement each other in the fields of publishing, education, and administration. Even though writing assistants fit the idea of prescriptivism, they also use elements of descriptivism, as they

provide users with options and suggestions. Titus Pop examines Shakespeare's language as shared cultural capital in Bourdieu's sense through the analysis of the practice of conscious and unconscious citation. Since Shakespeare's language is present in all the different communication systems that we have today, even in things like texting, rebuses, chatspeak, and the use of emojis, it can be argued that the Shakespearean influence will be evident in the use of the English language for a long time to come.

The fifth volume of our series, like the previous volumes, presents the reader with a comprehensive range of investigations. We hope that it will contribute to the broadening of the scientific exchange of ideas and provide interesting and useful reading for all those seeking to understand phenomena at the intersection of different cultures.

*The Editors*



# 1. TRANSFORMATIONS OF SOCIAL AND ETHNIC/RACIAL CONSTRUCTIONS



## Narrating the Unspeakable Manifestations of the Gothic in Slave Narratives

### I

According to Teresa Goddu “the Gothic is able to rematerialize the ghosts of America’s racial history and enable the African-American to haunt back” (1997, 132). One potential vehicle of this “haunting” is the slave narrative. While one of the primary attractions associated with the Indian captivity narrative was its capability to provide a blood-chilling reading experience, the graphic details of the slave narrative qualify the accounts of former bondsmen and bondswomen into the category of the “penny dreadful” as well. The system of slavery was partly based on physical and psychological intimidation demonstrated by the administration of various punishments in an ad hoc manner. The ordeal associated with the Middle Passage along with the physical and psychological anguish of the plantation slave not only shocked but brutalized potential readers.

In my essay, I examine the manifestations of the Gothic via powerful images conveyed by the narratives of Frederick Douglass, Francisco Manzano, Olaudah Equiano, Henry Brown, and Harriet Jacobs. In addition to the exploration of the impact of the given description on the reader, I will perform a narratological analysis of selected examples as well.

### II

The emergence of the Gothic is simultaneous with the rise of the Romantics and that of the modern novel. The Gothic consciously builds on the fear and apprehension inherent in the human psyche promoting in Fred Botting’s words a “negative aesthetic” (1996, 1). The main features of the Gothic can be categorized as physical, psychological, and aesthetic. The well-known physical attributes include the desolate landscape, the threatening wilderness, and the isolated and haunted mansion. The psychological aspects probe or cater to the darker side of the human soul entailing “uncontrolled passion, violent emotion, revulsion, fear, abhorrence, dislocation” (2). The aesthetic

angle of the Gothic is impacted by Edmund Burke's concept of the sublime combining pleasure and terror (7).

What factors justify the use of the Gothic in slave narratives, better yet why can we recognize the traces of the Gothic in the accounts of former bondsmen and bondswomen? According to Linda Martin "the very life of the slave is also inevitably a gothic existence" (Martin n.d.) demonstrated among others by the fact that the protagonist of the slave narrative is in a transitory state trying to prove its belonging to Anglo-Saxon culture while distancing himself or herself from the master.

While the abolition movement willingly resorted to the Gothic in demonizing slavery, it led to the objectification or commodification of the slaves themselves. Furthermore, the Gothic helped the definition of white identity by separating it from the black identity and at the same time increased the distance between the representatives of the two cultures. Just as in the case of the Indian captivity narrative, the captured white female became a site of contention for the control of the land. As asserted by Rebecca Blevins Faery, the whipped slave embodies the struggle over the nation's psyche and moral integrity (1999, 77). Abolitionists primarily opposed the peculiar institution on religious and ethical grounds and the suffering slave became an ideal vehicle to represent the depraved nature of slavery.

Among the Gothic themes of the slave narrative, one could mention darkness, objectification, the sublime, liminality, and the nefariousness of the villain. Darkness functions as a starting point of progress from slavery toward freedom represented by light. Objectification, treating the slave as property is also a standard component of the genre. In addition to being commodified at the slave market, the slave undergoes an additional ordeal, the loss of his or her humanity via the violation of personal integrity and dignity. The graphic details of whipping and other forms of brutality, on the one hand, shocked mainstream audiences, but on the other, invoked the sublime implying guilty and voyeuristic pleasure (Goddu 2013, 76). Nonetheless, in addition to the slave narrative, those with a morbid interest could gain adequate information from Theodor Weld's encyclopedia and picture book titled *American Slavery as It Is* (1839) commemorating the more intriguing aspects of the "peculiar institution." Liminality, or suspension between two worlds or spheres of existence is represented by the actual transitory state of the slave author attempting to distance himself or herself from the slave owner and the chattel status and inscribe himself or herself into mainstream society. Naturally, the slave narrative cannot reach its desired effect of either shocking or triggering emotional identification with the reader without

the inclusion of the villain, usually represented by the cruel overseer or unscrupulous slave owner.

The most potent forms of Gothic imagery entail the whipping and the enclosure. The latter comes in various forms including a virtual entombment as illustrated by Harriet Jacobs' recounting her time spent in the garret of her grandmother's house, or Henry Brown escaping in a box from his owner. Another form of enclosure is the dungeon or stockade and its movable version, the slave ship.

In the forthcoming analysis of several emblematic Gothic episodes of slave narratives, I look at the actual scene, identify the respective manifestations, and explore the given impact on the narrator and the reader as well.

The first example is the whipping of Aunt Hester commemorated by Frederick Douglass. Hester, an attractive black woman slave's punishment is motivated by her master Captain Anthony's jealousy. The female body hoisted on a hook and oozing profuse blood while releasing blood-chilling screams undoubtedly belongs to the pages of a Gothic novel:

After crossing her hands, he tied them with a strong rope, and led her to a stool under a large hook in the joist, put in for the purpose. He made her get upon the stool, and tied her hands to the Hook. She now stood fair for his infernal purpose. Her arms were stretched up at their full length, so that she stood upon the ends of her toes. He then said to her, "Now, you d—d b—h, I'll learn you how to disobey my orders!" and after rolling up his sleeves, he commenced to lay on the heavy cowskin, and soon the warm, red blood (amid heart-rending shrieks from her, and horrid oaths from him) came dripping to the floor. I was so terrified and horror-stricken at the sight, that I hid myself in a closet, and dared not venture out till long after the bloody transaction was over. (Douglass 1989, 836)

This episode provides an apt illustration of Botting's negative aesthetic. The physical scene, the stretched-out body of the woman, and the very act not only illustrate shocking brutality but reflect the objectification of the black body. The act triggers psychological anguish and intimidation as Douglass is compelled to hide from the hideous sight. The term "terrified and horror-stricken" conveys a sense of revulsion and at the same time projects a distancing effort in an ironic way. That is, not only the white reader is appalled, but the black witness as well, and the fact that the young Douglass went into hiding expresses his desire to remove himself from the incident. At issue here is more than just slavery, but its impact on the female body. Douglass witnesses the cruelty of slavery as a child and is placed in the same

position as the white reader, yet despite his effort to distance himself from the scene, he cannot break out of its physical proximity.

Ballinger et al. identify three manifestations of the Gothic in the slave narrative: the internalization of torture, objectification of the female body, and figurative and literal homelessness in the sense of the slave being passed from one owner to the other (2005, 216). The profound intimidation felt by Douglass represents the internalization of torture as witnessing the whipping impacts him only psychologically at this point. While the physical aspect of the punishment is endured by Aunt Hester, she only appears through Douglass' words; thus, in a certain way, she suffers mutual objectification. Her master considers her personal property, deprives her of mobility and human dignity, and even Douglass allocates her into an object position.

In this image, liminality appears both in physical and metaphysical form. The actual position of the woman's body extended from the ground and precariously balancing on the stretched-out toes relegate her into an already tenuous physical state. Thus, not only does she have to suffer the horrendous corporal punishment, but a disoriented status exacerbates her trauma as well. In addition to physical liminality, the respective language including such terms as "infernal, heart-rending, terrified, horror-stricken" suggests being stranded between reality and the world of "obscure, otherworldly phenomena" (Botting 1996, 2). The "infernal purpose" of the slave owner is juxtaposed with the pain Hester undergoes in the real world. The reader experiences the shock through the eyes and the words of Douglass witnessing the incident. Thus the narrator functions as a buffer as it absorbs the first shock, and when it reaches the reader it is somewhat "processed," or even lessened. Consequently, in this case, the Gothic operates in an indirect manner.

Based upon a model forwarded by Szilárd Tátrai while utilizing the research of Gérard Genette, I explore the scene from a narratological angle as well. Accordingly, I focus on the manifestations of deixis, the concept of focalization, and the respective narrative transactions performed by the given text. As Tátrai asserts, the production of a narrative requires a narrative horizon reflecting the narrative distance, a feature enabling the narrator to compile or combine the three temporal planes (past, present, and future) into a separate story. The narrative distance also enables the speaker or writer to separate themselves from the information or data related to the given situation (2002, 23).

Deixis is a "linguistic act of pointing to an entity in space, performed by an authorized speaker and directed to an unfocused addressee." Thus a

deictic expression results in the construction of “a mental space in which the speaker and the addressee are co-present at the same time” (Marmaridou 2000, 100). Consequently, a narrative qualifies as a deictic expression. The crucial point of any deictic expression is the deictic center. The deictic center includes the person creating the narrative either by speech or writing, the time during which the actual events take place, and the location of the respective events. The deictic center is defined by the social status of the speaker or writer (Tátrai 2002, 55). According to Gérard Genette, narratives can be homodiegetic and heterodiegetic. In the case of a homodiegetic narrative, the narrator is part of the story and in the heterodiegetic narrative, the narrator is not present in the story (1980, 245). Also, when the narrated self is the protagonist, the narrative is considered autodiegetic (252).

Focalization indicates the point of view from which the narration originates. While focalization has temporal and spatial aspects, in a wider sense it can be considered a moral, or intellectual evaluation system (Genette 1980, 185–189). In the case of external focalization, the narrator is an outsider, represented by Cotton Mather’s account of the violent self-liberation of Hannah Dustan from Indian captivity or the report on the ordeal of Mary Smith among the Kickapoo Indians by an “unknown gentleman.” Internal focalization is applicable when the narrator is part of the story.

The implied author identified by Wayne C. Booth and the implied reader suggested by Wolfgang Iser also play a crucial role in narration. The implied author, an aggregate sum of persuasion techniques reflects the way the real author wants to impact the actual reader; in other words, it represents the authorial strategy derived from the text (Tátrai 2002, 35). The implied reader is at the receiving end of the literary communication and stands for the impact of the text on the reader (36).

Texts can include or reflect narrative transactions. When the text is realistically motivated the narrator is responsible for all of his words, as it is suggested by the theory of the autobiographical act by Elizabeth Bruss. One way to ensure this credibility is by providing linguistic markers related to the acquisition of the respective information contained in the narrative. In the case of non-realistic motivation, there is no accountability (Tátrai 2002, 85–89). If the narration is impersonal there are no deictic markers or no indications of the roles fulfilled by the participants in the discourse. Naturally in the case of personal narration, such references are present. The realistic motivation of the given texts can be promoted by factive predicates including such terms as “I know,” “I remember,” or expressions of epistemic modality reflecting the attitude of the narrator (142).

Having applied the abovementioned criteria, the following conclusions can be made regarding Douglass's report. The narrative horizon reflects a perceivable temporal distance as the protagonist reveals an episode from childhood. The implied author utilizes graphic details and examples of physical as well as psychological intimidation. The reader not only recoils in terror but also sees how a child is impacted by the cruelty of the institution. The implied reader entails the condemnation of slavery. The deictic center primarily due to the narrator's passive witness status is partly occupied by Douglass. The narration is autodiegetic and the emphasis is on the moral aspect of focalization, along with the physical and psychological brutality of the institution. The text is internally focalized as the author, albeit in a passive position, is also part of the story.

The motivation of the narrator is realistic as it describes dual objectification. Anthony treats Hester as an object, and she is also assigned into object position in Douglass's description of the incident. Yet, there is a third level of objectification, the actual reader viewing all three participants in the scene: Douglass, the actual witness, Hester, the victim, and Anthony, the perpetrator.

For the sake of further analysis, I quote the introductory section of Douglass's description of the incident: "I remember the first time I ever witnessed this horrible exhibition. I was quite a child, but I will remember it. I never shall forget it whilst I remember anything. It was the first of a long series of such outrages, of which I was doomed to be a witness and a participant" (Douglass 1989, 835). The introductory segment contains the markers of realistic motivation with such factive predicates as "I remember" and "I never shall forget it." The attitude of the author or epistemic modality is suggested by the term "doomed," conjuring a Gothic image in itself. Another indicator of the negative attitude towards the scene and the suggestion of Douglass's troubled conscience is the expression "participant."

Douglass feels that by being a passive observer of the horrendous episode, he contributed to the suffering of Hester. This is reminiscent of William Lloyd Garrison blaming the whole nation for the institution of slavery and pointing out that the North as a passive witness to slavery proved to be an accomplice in the actual transgressions of the "peculiar institution." At the same time, Paula Rabinowitz's observation concerning Douglass's "impotent complicity in the sexualized racial violence of slavery" is applicable as well (2002, 228).

It is noteworthy, however, that despite a seemingly dominant position in the deictic center, the author also implies a detachment from the scene, and

viewed from this perspective his motivation can be considered non-realistic. After all, it is not the narrator, who suffers the punishment, as he only reports it. Consequently, no accountability can be expected from him. The temporal aspect of the narrative horizon, however, raises the issue of truth value. Thus, one can question the narrator's ability to recall the horrific episode witnessed during his childhood down to the last-minute detail.

The next image is taken from Francisco Manzano's narrative. Manzano's report written in 1835 was the first slave narrative produced in Spanish and due to censorship, it could not be published in the Hispanic world until 1937. The text written with the purpose of raising money to purchase Manzano's freedom and translated into English by the Irish anti-slavery activist Richard Robert Madden became a powerful call for abolition on both coasts of the Atlantic.

While serving his mistress Marquesa de Amena in Cuba, Manzano is exposed to a series of punishments and retributions administered at random. As a house slave he is constantly on duty and when he falls asleep or allows a lamp to run out of oil, he is not only beaten but locked up in a stockade where he is exposed to physical and psychological anguish:

What I suffered from hunger and thirst, tormented with fear, in a place so dismal and distant from the house, and almost suffocated with the vapours arising from the common sink, that was close to my dungeon, and constantly terrified by the rats that passed over me and about me, may be easily imagined. My head was filled with frightful fancies, with all the monstrous tales I had ever heard of ghosts and apparitions, and sorcery; and often when a troop of rats would arouse me with their noise, I would imagine I was surrounded by evil spirits, and I would roar aloud and pray for mercy; and then I would be taken out and almost flayed alive. (1840, 60)

After his mistress smells geranium on his hand and is accused of stealing from her garden he is shut in the coal cellar:

I was taken to the stocks, which were in a building, formerly an infirmary, and now used for a prison, and for depositing the bodies of the dead till the hour of interment. My feet were put in the stocks, where shivering with cold, without any covering, they shut me in. What a frightful night I passed there! My fancy saw the dead rising and walking about the room, and scrambling up to a window above the river and near a cataract, I listened to its roar, which seemed to me like the howling of a legion of ghosts. (1840, 67)

The given images reflect the second major trope of Gothic literature—entombment or enclosure. In this case, the most severe aspect of the punishment is psychological intimidation or fear. The narrator's references to such standard elements of Gothic literature as ghosts or the supernatural substantiate Botting's idea of conjuring the "otherworldly." Unlike Douglass's account of the whipping of Aunt Hester, Manzano's description is not as graphic and its impact on the reader is limited. The narrator in the previous case acts as a conduit passing on the shock to the reader and Manzano's euphemistic yet belletristic depiction of enclosure could fall short of evoking empathy. Nonetheless, Manzano's account of the cruelty of slavery exposed via the ordeal of a child generates sympathy with the sufferer.

The very purpose of the report, that is, promoting the goals of the abolition movement makes the narrative transaction realistically motivated. The narrative horizon generates a narrative distance and the factive predicates indicating first-person narration and the fear-ridden epistemic modality of the narration provide a vicariously Gothic experience for the reader. The story is focalized from the point of view of the narrator, it is he who fully occupies the deictic center. The authorial strategy of the implied author indicates the internalization of fear via such expressions as "tormented," "suffocated," and "terrified." The term "surrounded by evil spirits" suggests psychological entombment in addition to that of the physical. The second quote dominated by passive voice conveys a sense of objectification, and as demonstrated by the hallucinations the resulting demobilization of the victim threatens his psychological integrity. The implied reader is appalled and intimidated at the same time as the images of mental suffering can evoke empathy.

A similar image of terror is conveyed by Olaudah Equiano encountering the sea and the slave ship:

[the slave ship] then riding at anchor, and waiting for its cargo. These filled me with astonishment, which was soon converted into terror, which I am yet at a loss to describe [. . .] I was now persuaded that I had gotten into a world of bad spirits, and that they were going to kill me [. . .] I saw a large furnace of copper boiling, and a multitude of black people of every description chained together, every one of their countenances expressing dejection and sorrow [. . .] I was quite overpowered with horror and anguish [. . .] The shrieks of the women, and the groans of the dying, rendered the whole a scene of horror almost inconceivable. (Equiano 2004, 203–205)

In this case, enclosure takes place in a dual sense. The endless body of water precludes any chance of escape and the bottom section of the slave ship where the slaves are treated as cargo functions as a moving dungeon. Equiano's fear is passed on to the reader, as the slave ship is described as an omnivorous monster devouring its prey. The reference to bad spirits creates a parallel with Botting's otherworldly phenomena; in fact, we are witnessing the narrator's delusion. Equiano also exposes the reader to the suffering of others, and his description is a powerful reminder of the inhumanity of the slave trade. The passage highlights the psychological aspects of the protagonist's ordeal and the encroachment of the irrational into the mind of the reader and narrator alike.

Harriet Jacobs' work *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* also abounds in Gothic motives. Georgia Kreiger points out three examples of figurative entombment or enclosure. One episode is about a slave, who was locked in the cotton gin. The tremendous sufferings resulting in death reflect an absolutely passive position, or being deprived of agency. The next example is her daughter Ellen, who was caught hiding under her mistress' house. The entombment in this case is not complete yet the lack of agency is indicated (2008, 613). One main feature of the Gothic is the lack of agency. The fear either created by external sources like the forest or a haunted house, or by internal trepidation renders the protagonist into passivity. According to Kreiger the confinement of Jacobs in her grandmother's garret as part of an effort to escape from the sexually exploitative conduct of her master indicates both submission and resistance to contemporary expectations posed toward women (2008, 607). On the one hand, it functions as a punishment for violating contemporary mores and alludes to escape from slavery, on the other. She spent seven years hidden from the world, dead to all appearances. In her case, the question of slavery as a spectacle can be reconsidered. While the pictorial images of whipping put the white reader of such works as the aforementioned *American Slavery as It Is* into the position of the voyeur, Jacobs will be able to see the outside world via a hole made by a gimlet. Consequently, she will enclose her tormentor, Dr. Flint into her gaze, thereby framing him into her own story and eventually performing the aforementioned voyeur function.

Henry Box Brown's narrative abounds in Gothic motives as well. He presents both the physical and psychological aspects of terror brought on by slavery. The cruel retribution after the Nat Turner rebellion creates a spectacle of horror for the northern reader: "Great numbers of slaves were loaded with irons; some were half hung as it was termed—that is they were

suspended from some tree with a rope about their necks, so adjusted as not quite to strangle them—and then they were pelted by men and boys with rotten eggs” (1851). He also describes the psychological horror of slavery and with it the greatest ordeal, a father seeing his son being sold into bondage: “These beings were marched with ropes about their necks, and staples on their arms [. . .], but what should I now see [. . .], but a little child looking towards me and pitifully calling, father! father! This was my eldest child, and I was obliged to look upon it for the last time that I should, perhaps, ever see it again in life” (1851).

The Brown narrative provides a powerful illustration of slavery as death and the objectification of the self as an escape route. Accordingly, with the help of sympathetic whites in the South, among them a person having slaves on his own (!) he was able to reach freedom via being mailed from Richmond to Philadelphia. Enclosed in a crate suggesting a form of live burial, he traveled for 27 hours toward liberty and resurrection. After a grueling journey, he arrived in Philadelphia to rise “as a free man from the grave of slavery” (Brown 1851).

### *III*

The Gothic elements of the slave narrative zoom in on the suffering of the slave, and while the description of whipping or mutilation can be overpowering, the use of such literary tools does not promote identification. It shocks the reader and will facilitate distinction from the very act or practice. The distancing effect results not only in the condemnation of slavery but also reinforces the white reader’s moral superiority over the slaveholder and his victim. Therefore, the mainstream reader in the North can flatter themselves as they place themselves on a moral high ground in comparison to the uncultured Southerner. It is ironic, however, that the path to this strengthened identity leads through the victimized black body.

In Kari Winter’s view, the Gothic expresses “the terror of the familiar, the routine brutality, and injustice of the patriarchal family, of the conventional religion, and the classist social structure” (1992, 613). Douglass’s account of Aunt Hester’s ordeal recalls how the familiar surroundings of a young slave relatively protected from the horrors of the peculiar institution turn into “the blood-stained gate, the entrance to the hell of slavery” (1989, 1650). The reports of Manzano and Equiano serve as evidence of the psychological impact of the given routine brutality. The slave narrative and its author are

stranded in a liminal position with objectification and social death on one end and full membership in mainstream society on the other.

The Gothic reinforced the voyeuristic tendencies of the northern reader as it converted the institution of slavery and with it the respective ordeal into a spectacle. The Gothic, however, was capable of gaining the attention of the anti-slavery public, in fact forcing it to confront the haunting presence of the injustice and immorality of slavery. In fact, by narrating the unspeakable, the Gothic revealed the hidden horror of slavery. The respective descriptions of whipping and other forms of torture call Elaine Scarry's views on pain to mind. Accordingly, pain cannot be fully communicated or conveyed as it destroys language while separating the mind from the body (Scarry 1985, 4). Yet commemorating the atrocities of slavery the slave narrative and the Gothic as well helped the slave to find his own self via language.

The slave naturally forced into the position of the abject was excluded from the public and political discourse of both the Southern and Northern mainstream. The slave narrative not only gave voice to the muted but even if indirectly, also triggered potential feelings of guilt in the reader. Despite its questionable tactics promoting voyeurism and objectification, the Gothic was a means to reaching a worthy goal. Just like Socrates's gadfly, the horror awakened in the reader made them turn away from the given scene, yet an eerie and uneasy feeling, perhaps pangs of a guilty conscience over indirect complicity in the institution of slavery itself contributed to the resistance and eventual elimination of this shameful institution based on human bondage.

### References

- Ballinger, Gill, Tim Lustig, and Dale Townshend. 2005. "Missing Intertexts: Hannah Craft's 'The Bondswoman's Narrative' and African-American Literary History." *Journal of American Studies* 39 (2): 207–237.
- Botting, Fred. 1996. *Gothic*. London: Routledge.
- Brown, Henry. 1851. "Narrative of the Life of Henry Box Brown." *Documenting the American South*. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/brownbox/brownbox.html>.
- Bruss, Elizabeth. 1978. *Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of a Literary Genre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Douglass, Frederick. 1989. "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave." In *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, edited by Nina Baym et al., 833–864. New York: Norton.

- Equiano, Olaudah. 2004. "The Interesting Narrative." In *Unchained Voices*, edited by Vincent Carretta, 185–318. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.
- Faery, Rebecca Blevins. 1999. *Cartographies of Desire: Captivity, Race, and Sex in the Shaping of an American Nation*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Genette, Gérard. 1980. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Translated by Jane E. Lewin. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Goddu, Teresa A. 1997. *Gothic America: Narrative, History, and Nation*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- . 2013. "'To Thrill the Land with Horror': Anti-slavery Discourse and the Gothic Imagination." In *Gothic Topographies: Language, Nation-building, and 'Race'*, edited by P. M. Mehtonen and Matti Savolainen, 73–86. London: Ashgate.
- Jacobs, Harriet A. 1861. "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl." *Documenting the American South*. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html>.
- Kreiger, Georgia. 2008. "Playing Dead: Harriet Jacobs's Survival Strategy in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*." *African-American Review* 3–4: 607–621.
- Manzano, Juan Francisco. 1840. "Life of the Negro Poet, Written by Himself." *Documenting the American South*. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/manzano/manzano.html>.
- Marmaridou, Sophia S. 2000. *A Pragmatic Meaning and Cognition*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Martin, Linda. n.d. "Early Expressions of Black Gothic and Slave Narrative Rewritings." Accessed January 8, 2019. <https://www.atmostfear-entertainment.com/opinions/readings/early-expressions-of-black-gothic-and-slave-narrative-rewritings/>.
- Rabinowitz, Paula. 2002. *Black & White & Noir: America's Pulp Modernism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Scarry, Elaine. 1985. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*. Oxford University Press.
- Tátrai, Szilárd. 2002. *Az 'Én' az elbeszélésben: A perszonális narráció szövegtani megközelítése*. Budapest: Argumentum.
- Winter, Kari J. 1992. *Subjects of Slavery, Agents of Change: Women and Power in Gothic Novels and Slave Narratives, 1790–1865*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.

## The Deep-South as *lieux de mémoire* in Arna Bontemps's *The Sad-Faced Boy*

The Harlem Renaissance writer, Arna Bontemps's juvenile novel *The Sad-Faced Boy* (1937) illustrates well that despite Bontemps's few direct personal childhood memories of the various cultural spaces of the Deep South, it profoundly defines his politics of memory, "reveal[ing] a deep, abiding affection for the Old South in general and for his native Louisiana in particular" (Jones 1993, 180). The palpable nostalgia is no mere affection for a mythical past and region with all the paradoxes it nurtures for African Americans due to the experience of slavery and Jim Crowism; much rather, it precipitates an identity-constructive maneuver for Bontemps to re-enliven self and community through remembering collectively a place of belonging. The present essay scrutinizes the meaning of the Deep South for Bontemps by mapping the protagonists' journey to Harlem.

Bontemps himself expressed the strong bond to the Deep South in his essay called "Why Did I Return?" (1965), which he wrote looking back on his own life while he was teaching in a black private university in Tennessee: "For my own part, I am staying on in the South to write something about the changes I have seen in my lifetime, and about the Negro's awakening and regeneration. That is my theme, and this is where the main action is" (Bontemps 1970, 332). He highlights the fact that it is necessary to have changes after the traumas of the South and that the Deep South is the place where these changes can happen in the lives of black people. This is supported by Bontemps's colleague, John W. Work's observation that the cultural environment of the Deep South is far more stimulating than anything he might discover in the North (331).

In his novel, Bontemps emphasizes the beauty of rural Alabama life in relation to Harlem as a place for the creation of an authentic black identity. W.E.B Du Bois also pointed out the importance of rural life as a counterpoint to the popularity of urban life: "We must imagine a little city of black people scattered far and wide over three hundred lonesome square miles of land, without train or trolley, in the midst of cotton and corn, and wide patches

of sand and gloomy soil” (2007, 80), underlining the diversity of black people’s character that they are “sturdy, uncouth country folk, good-natured and simple, talkative to a degree, and yet far more silent and brooding than the crowds of the Rhine-pfalz, or Naples, or Cracow” (80). It is logical to assume that in his novel *Bontemps* presents the dilemma of his own life because although “his attention turned to urban settings [. . .] revising reader expectations of the black South remained central” (Smith 2004, 260).

The story was inspired by Bontemps’s own life. As he explains the connection in his “The Sad-Faced Author” (1939), the characters refer to his friends, who also went to Harlem and who after initial success, returned to their homeland when the situation turned bad (Bontemps 1939, 11–12). Similarly, the novel is about three brothers—Slumber, Rags, and Willie—who leave their home, Alabama and return to it. The curiosity about living in a big city and the discovery of the unknown takes them to the Harlem district of New York, which Slumber, the sad-faced boy, always wanted to see, because “there’s some powerful tall buildings up there” (Bontemps 1937, 7). The title of the novel shows the importance and relevance of Slumber’s—the eldest brother’s and at the same time the main character’s—sadness. The fact that he “was sad-faced and never laughed,” that he “always thought about sad things” and that he “could almost never see anything funny” (2–3) fundamentally defines his life and identity. Sadness could easily be seen as Slumber’s main character trait for an outside observer, turning him into a stock character, but Bontemps emphasizes his complexity: “Slumber’s face was still long and sorrowful, but inside he was feeling better—much better. And that was the strange thing about Slumber. Even when he felt a little happier, his face remained sad. In fact, the happier Slumber felt the sadder he looked” (10). Smith identifies the contradiction between Slumber’s outward sadness and his feelings with trickster characteristics known from African American literature (2004, 260). This is confirmed by the boys’ misunderstanding when they arrive at their uncle’s place: “Aw, you’s trying to fool me—you old sad-faced boy, you” (Bontemps 1937, 20), implying that Slumber wears a “mask that threatens to defraud its viewer” (Smith 2004, 262). Although the archetype of the trickster figure with a complicated personality is well-known in black literature (see Gates 1988), it is more about Slumber’s “masking” tormented by trauma, which has evolved as a reaction to the events experienced in the South. This is supported by Laura Gray-Rosendale’s opinion: “Slumber’s paralysis and sadness are due in large part to the adversities that this young African American male has endured within the rural South” (2001, 151), suggesting that Slumber was pushed into the “state of social, cultural, psychological, and identity-based immobility” (151). The

term “immobility” used by Gray-Rosandale can further be inferred from Slumber’s name since the word “slumber” refers to an inactive, sleeping, and dozing condition—also emphasized by the boys’ family name Dozier. His condition only changes when his siblings and he leave their family behind and, at the same time, the traumas of slavery and institutionalized racism by going to Harlem. The change in Slumber’s behavior becomes clear to his brothers through his harmonica play: “How come you play so sweet now?” Slumber paused. ‘I’m on my way, big shorty, and it make me feel kind of good inside” (Bontemps 1937, 7). Despite their conscious decision to leave the Deep South, Slumber is unable to abandon it altogether as his thoughts continue to be haunted by the cultural spaces of the Deep South:

There was, first of all, a row of sunflowers his mama had planted on one side. At the back doorstep there was the lilac bush. Slumber could tell his Uncle Jasper Tappin, who lived in the part of New York City called Harlem, how sweet the world smelled when that lilac bush bloomed. He could tell him how the family stuck eggshells on its bare twigs in winter, making the bush look like an egg tree. Then there was the vine that covered the front part of the cabin. (Bontemps 1937, 11).

Such a detailed description of his memories, covering all the details, appear as a place of memory, that is, in Pierre Nora’s terminology, “the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists” (1989, 7), by activating Slumber and his brothers’ past and memory of Alabama. Slumber’s memory is sometimes fed by “out of focus or telescopic” (Nora 1989, 8) memories, which, in Bontemps’s scheme, can only restore continuity after his getting back to Alabama. To obtain a constructive interpretation of his memories, he must ascend to Harlem, which enables him to tap into but also to strengthen the cultural memory of the community.

The train journey to create distance and thus to facilitate remembering itself can be considered a site of memory as African Americans as train people found restricted freedom in mobility (see McPherson 1976, 9), but it also reveals Bontemps’s communicative memory as the boys’ journey offers a parallel with that of the Scottsboro boys. In Smith’s evaluation, through the boys’ journey to Harlem, Bontemps directs our attention to the Scottsboro case, the case of 9 African-American youths who were innocently accused of raping two white women in 1931, reworking the train scene to “emphasize[] the innocence of black male adolescents traveling the rails as a means artfully to counter the derisive portrait of the Scottsboro boys” (Smith 2004,

262). Bontemps's preoccupation with the case comes to the foreground in the historical novel *Black Thunder* (1936; see Carlton-Alexander 1991, 317).

Arriving in Harlem the pulse of the city captivates the boys: "Their mouths dropped open and their eyes got bigger and bigger. They looked at everything on the ground, turning slowly round and round as if they were just waking from sleep. [. . .] Harlem was just too wonderful for words" (Bontemps 1937, 14–15). Slumber expresses his mood, which is affected by the new, exciting, and inspiring city, with the help of his harmonica: "I'm just making it up [new tune] as I go. It's a song about three country boys in a great big city. [. . .] The music trickled out sweetly" (32). In addition to the fact that music helps Slumber's self-expression, music creates an opportunity for the boys to have "alternative realities within the words they set to music" (Gray-Rosendale 2001, 155), which helps them to avoid facing the harsh reality of the city. With the reality in which there is no time to rest or calm down, because one must constantly "got to get a move on" (Bontemps 1937, 26), and where one can be easily replaced: "If you did your work to suit them, they'd employ you. If you did not, they'd let you go. They wouldn't waste many words talking about it. They could always find, and very easily too, somebody to take your place" (38). Even though the African American boys encounter less overt incidents of racism, the feeling of substitutability, for which they have to "the struggle to maintain their jobs" (154), predestine their alienation from the city. It is supported by Bontemps's rhetorical techniques using different kinds of noises: "The clamor on the outside grew louder and louder. There were bells ringing, motors popping, wheels rattling, voices shouting, and overhead a roar like thunder" (12–13)—estranging sounds of the modern city for the boys used to rural landscapes. Although the three boys appear to be "completely ignorant" of the rules of the system, they are still able to notice the negative effects of the market-driven economy on society (Smith 2004, 262). Their ignorance becomes evident as dramatic irony when the boys start laughing out loud in a public library at a story they read about a dark-colored gingerbread man who, after coming to life, runs away from the white baker: "'Oo—wee!' he cried. 'Look at him go! Hee-hee-hee! He's an old gingerbread man, and see there, he's done hopped out of the oven and started down the street. Oo-wee! Go it, Mister Gingerbread Man!'" (Bontemps 1937, 67). Unable to recognize themselves in the (self-fulfilling) story, they notice, however, and are not too happy about the "economic operations of the North" such as the "overabundance of goods for sale" (Gray-Rosendale 2001, 153). With all this, the boys unwittingly "call attention to Harlem's incongruities, destabilizing

the city's authority and advancing by comparison the virtues of country life" (Smith 2004, 260), which ultimately leads to their debunking ideals of the North and their consequent disillusionment.

Although the North is considered initially "as a site of liberation or freedom and mobility" (Gray-Rosendale 2001, 153), the boys' "career path" wearing sandwich boards shows that the fulfilment of their hope for social mobility becomes almost impossible, validating their later return to Alabama: "He [Slumber] felt terrible. The band was broken up. He was tired of Harlem, and he wanted to go home" (Bontemps 1937, 111). After they have discovered all the attractions in the city, the excitement of the new is gone and so is their alternative reality created by their music. Since their band broke up, they are no longer "observers of this economy, but participants" (Gray-Rosendale 2001, 153). Thus they are forced to take jobs that they are reluctant to do, since "Harlem is definitely not a place to be without money. Harlem made you want things you never wanted before" (Bontemps 1937, 88). The outlook on life demanded by Harlem causes Slumber's maladjustment, which results in his permanent alienation from the city. Slumber realizes that just as he "cannot understand the appearances of the city, neither can urban people construe Slumber" (Smith 2004, 260), which makes it clear to him that he cannot unfold his own identity in Harlem. The dream of establishing and fulfilling the new black urban individual fails because the boys and in general the African Americans are invisible in the North in the eyes of white society. They become depersonalized because society does not see them, even commodified as what the advertisements they are carrying denote.

The imagery that they see on Seventh Avenue parallels the memories of Alabama triggering homesickness in Slumber and later the confident decision to return home:

And now things had come to a turn where he must make a decision. He looked up and saw the leaves falling from the trees along the Avenue and presently a great sadness came to his face. Before he knew it there were tears. "Do something hurt you, Slumber?" Willie asked kindly. "No," he said, "nothing don't hurt me." "What you crying about then?" Rags demanded. "Nothing," Slumber said. "Just them old trees put me in the mind of something down home." "What they put you in mind of?" Willie asked, still sympathetic. "They puts me in mind of some trees down along the pike that runs by home," he said. (Bontemps 1937, 115-116)

Bontemps highlights the impact of the boys' decision on their personalities, confirming its validity: "Now they were all smiling now, even Slumber" (118), so Slumber is no longer a "sad-faced boy," i.e., his identity is also changing due to their return to Alabama.

Bontemps consciously avoids relying on "stories of old plantation life," rather he captures the attention of the youth through an exciting adventure of the Dozier brothers while making them aware of "their own background" (Allee 1938, 85), i.e., their connection to the Deep-South. It is supported by the fact that the illusion of freedom offered by the city, in view of the boys' experiences, lasts only for a while but the impulses and memories of the Deep South evoke real happiness and positive personality development.

In connection with certain descriptions of the novel, Bontemps's excessive love and bias towards the Deep South come to the foreground, which is also explicated by Aaron Douglas: "If one could discount the sadness, the misery, the near-volcanic intensity of Negro life in most of the South, and concentrate on the mild, almost tropical climate and the beauty of the landscape, one is often tempted to forget the senseless cruelty and inhumanity the strong too often inflict on the weak" (Bontemps 1970, 332). However, Bontemps also emphasizes the double standard of the Deep South through the boys' journey. By the fact that the Dozier boys leave their home, he highlights the negative determining effect of the memory of slavery and racism. The imprints of black cultural trauma have made Slumber a "sad-faced boy." On the other hand, the fact that they still decide to return to their home after what they have experienced in Harlem proves that their roots and the source of their identity are in the Deep South. The nostalgic aspect of Bontemps's politics of memory is supported by what Robert Stepto formulates the "ascent and immersion narrative" (1979, 163). Bontemps appears to combine the two narrative forms as the Dozier boys first ascend to the North very much in Stepto's sense:

The classic ascent narrative launches an "enslaved" and semi-literate figure on a ritualized journey to a symbolic North; that journey is charted through spatial expressions of social structure, invariably systems of signs that the questing figure must read in order to be both increasingly literate and increasingly free. The ascent narrative conventionally ends with the questing figure situated in the least oppressive social structure afforded by the world of the narrative, and free in the sense that he or she has gained sufficient literacy to assume the mantle of an articulate survivor. (167)

The vertical movement of the Dozier brothers from Alabama to Harlem represents a narrative of ascension, as they find themselves in a freer and less oppressive social structure in the North. However, at the same time, this freedom is rather relative, since it often comes with giving up one's roots, with total alienation from one's home (167). Their return to Alabama marks immersion in the South, which although a place of racial traumas, is where family and community ties are rooted:

the immersion narrative is fundamentally an expression of a ritualized journey into a symbolic South, in which the protagonist seeks those aspects of tribal literacy that ameliorate, if not obliterate, the conditions imposed by solitude. The conventional immersion narrative ends almost paradoxically, with the questing figure located in or near the narrative's most oppressive social structure but free in the sense that he has gained or regained sufficient tribal literacy to assume the mantle of an articulate kinsman. (167)

The paradox Stepto explains is summarized by Pavlić in that the result of the circular narrative is a person “who is conscious of modern individuality, reconnected with community, and still living in relation to the unmitigated pressures of the symbolic South” (Pavlić 2002, 19). The “new ground” (Hale 1998, 6) narrative includes the mindset that negative discrimination and trauma did not crush black people, but instead showed black people's strength and character, embodying and activating their “memorial consciousness” (Nora 1989, 12). Ralph Ellison expresses a similar attitude towards the past of African Americans. He condemns the popular idea that blacks were permanently “damaged” by slavery, segregation, and institutional racism, which at the same time were used to interpret the Deep South negatively. Instead, Ellison highlights its power of shaping identity:

“Any people who could endure all of that brutalization and keep together, who could undergo such dismemberment and resuscitate itself [...] is obviously more than the sum of its brutalization,” Ellison said. “I am not denying the negative things which have happened to us and which continue to happen, but I am compelled to reject all condescending, narrowly paternalistic interpretations of Negro American life and personality from whatever quarters they come, whether white or Negro.”(Cannon, Raphael, and Thompson 1967, 81)

With this mentality, he indirectly validates the Deep South as the cradle of African American identity through this forward-looking interpretation of the black past. Making a constructive interpretation of the black past was one of Bontemps's major goals with this novel since one of the significant segments of Bontemps's memory politics is that he considers the Deep South as the wellspring of African American culture, where black people had their past and will have their future (Eyerman 2004, 63). His approach is consistent with the idea conceived during the Harlem Renaissance, in which a "new" black persona appears, who integrates the events of the past into the present in a self-constructive way so that they can then look to the future while being aware of both traumas and values.

The boys reminiscing about "riding on a load of cotton, all soft and nice" (Bontemps 1937, 114) embrace the South as a place of nurture, an oneiric place in Gaston Bachelard's footsteps to inhabit it as a "dream-memory" (Bachelard 1994, 15). They finally decide to go back to Alabama, performing a "will to remember" (Nora 1989, 19). The disillusionment in the North drives them, which goes beyond mere nostalgia:

Finally Slumber stopped and put his foot down emphatically. "Dog my cats, big shorty, I'm going on back down home to Alabama." [...] So up the hill they went, not remembering to take the sandwich boards back to the man who owned them, not looking down at the park or the trees from which the leaves were falling and not minding the stains that were on their faces from crying. They were all smiling now, even Slumber. (Bontemps 1937, 117–118)

The slumbering character of the sad-faced boy awakens and smiles when the direction and the horizon become clear to him. The idea of the journey back re-immerses the boys in the South and the Southern landscapes envisioned "re-member" them as members in the African American mnemonic community much as remembering is seen by Melvin Dixon as repopulating (see Dixon 1994, 21). The coming of age in terms of understanding and embracing roots, presence, and vision reintegrates them in the black community, which, for Bontemps the educator, marks a clear way of becoming in a programmatic way.

References

- Allee, Marjorie Hill. 1938. "Books Negro Children Like." *The Horn Book Magazine* 14 (March–April): 81–87.
- Alexander, Jeffrey C., Ron Eyerman, Bernard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, eds. 2004. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bontemps, Arna. 1937. *Sad-Faced Boy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- . 1939. "Sad-Faced Author." *The Horn Book, Magazine* 15: 7–12.
- . 1970. "Why I returned." In *Black Voices: An Anthology of African-American Literature*, edited by Abraham Chapman, 321–332. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Cannon, Steve, Raphael Lennox, and James Thompson. 1967. "A Very Stern Discipline: Interview with Ralph Ellison." *Harper's Magazine* (March): 76–95.
- Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt. 2007. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dixon, Melvin. 1994. "The Black Writer's Use of Memory." In *History and Memory in African-American Culture*, edited by Geneviève Fabre and Robert O'Meally, 18–27. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bachelard, Gaston. 1994. *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Carlton-Alexander, Sandra. 1991. "Arna Bontemps: The Novelist Revisited." *CLA Journal* 34 (3): 317–330.
- Gates, Henry Louis. 1988. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gray-Rosendale, Laura. 2001. "Geographies of Resistance: Rhetorics of Race and Mobility in Arna Bontemps' Sad-Faced Boy (1937)." In *Alternative Rhetorics: Challenges to the Rhetorical Tradition*, edited by Laura Gray-Rosendale and Sibylle Gruber, 149–165. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Hale, Grace. 1998. *Making Whiteness*. New York: Vintage.
- Jones, Kirkland C. 1993. "Bontemps and the Old South." *African American Review* 27 (2): 179–185.
- McPherson, James A. 1976. "Some Observations on the Railroad and American Culture." In *Railroad: Trains and Train People in American Culture*, edited by James Alan McPherson and Miller Williams, 3–17. New York: Random House.
- Nora, Pierre. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." *Representations* 26 (Spring): 7–24.

- Pavlić, Edward M. 2002. *Crossroads Modernism: Descent and Emergence in African-American Literary Culture*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Smith, Katharine Capshaw. 2004. *Children's Literature of the Harlem Renaissance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Stepto, Robert B. 1979. *From behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

## “The Problem of the Color Line” A Source of Opportunity?

### *Introduction*

“The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line” (2007b, 3), prophesized W. E. B. Du Bois in his 1903 book, *The Souls of Black Folk*. As he formulates it, the African American subject in the United States faces the problem of “double consciousness,” that is, a “two-ness” of being both “an American; [and] a Negro” (8). Stemming from black Americans’ historical consciousness and shaped by the two hundred and forty-four years of slavery and the failed Reconstruction that saw the rise of racist groups and lynchings, African Americans faced the intricate contradiction of a permeating dualism that, most times, manifested in visible frustration. As a product of racial discrimination, of being concurrently citizens and non-citizens (see Gilroy 1993, 6), African Americans’ intrinsic duality incorporated “*being simultaneously human and not quite human legally, socially, and culturally* in an increasingly urbanized, industrialised, and imperialist United States” (Smethurst 2011, 29; emphasis added). Thus, dualism was not “primarily rooted in the psychological [...] but also [in the] political, cultural, social, economic, and increasingly, spatial in the early Jim Crow” (Smethurst 2011, 180), assigning it a sort of a multidimensional characteristic.

Scholars and critics of African American culture and literature in the past century understood double consciousness as a schism; however, in my current paper, I contend that it also entails a possibility that facilitates subject construction and represents a tool through which they can reclaim their agency. Although living in a condition of doubleness can cause African Americans to experience such an internal struggle, the ability to transcend such duality also appears to be a sign of their resilience that forged their strength to overcome the hardships of their experience.

*Unveiling Dualism: Multiplicity as “true self-consciousness”*

Even though double consciousness is often read in a reductive way that simplifies the dualism into the American self (the free and equal person as delineated in the Declaration of Independence (a person who has the right to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” in the United States) and the African self (victimized and stigmatized black person “born of slavery,” who endured its torture and race prejudice), Du Bois does not accept it as a prevalent split. Rather he formulates it to critique those who accept its permanence by asserting that he seeks to transcend the doubleness while unwilling to give up either of his “two-ness,” even though it is a “state that cannot and should not stand” (Smethurst 2011, 57). Du Bois wants to see the “American Negro” as a whole—including his “African racial feeling” (2007a, 58)—while struggling to consolidate his argument “that these Negroes were Americans” (58). The ambivalence is further heightened by his recognition in *The Souls* that the experiences of African Americans in the North (who inarguably face and experience fewer hardships compared to their Southern brethren) further enhance this schism.

As a New England Victorian (Early 1993, xx) born into a Protestant middle-class African American family of mixed ancestry in Massachusetts, in a “free state traditionally sympathetic to the relief of the ‘African condition’” (Lincoln 1993, 197), Du Bois had little exposure to African American culture throughout his childhood. Characterizing himself as “a child of Emancipation” (2007b, 11), he extrapolated his inner turmoil rooted in the American society’s quest to define “the Negro problem” (2007b, 14), during a time when the American society “was engaged in an uncertain struggle for identity and validation” (Lincoln 1993, 196). He considers himself to be part of the new generation of black Americans, able to speak about his own blackness and sees himself in a juxtaposition with the rest of the community. Although his stance is valid and stems from the spirit of the age, from the “articulatory principles of one historical bloc” (Mocombe 2009, 14)—Boasian cultural relativism and, as Paul Mocombe claims, his “liberal Protestant bourgeoisie values” (2009, 15)—, it is dissimilar to how African Americans see and understand themselves in, say for example, Georgia or Mississippi. His quasi-estrangement from the reality of African American culture gives him the sufficient, and necessary, attitude required to discuss both sides of the color line. Thus, as Mocombe argues, the basis for Du Bois’s double consciousness as articulated in *The Souls* is rooted in “the ideological articulation of the liberal black bourgeoisie’s ambivalence” (40–41), a background that profoundly shaped his worldview.

The task readers face lies in deciphering the meaning behind the Du Boisian double consciousness. In an attempt to place Du Bois's concept in a wider anthropological framework, Ernest Allen suggests that his "concerns appear far narrower, focusing instead on what he considered as conflicts engendered by (unspecified) double thoughts, (equally unspecified) double strivings, (vaguely defined) double aims, and (comparatively well articulated) double ideals" (2002, 218). Despite the simplicity, the themes and categories are multidirectional; for example, in certain passages, he talks about duality in political or legal terms, but elsewhere it has sociological or spiritual connections. It is as if he does not realize from which angle he approaches the problem. It is possible, however, that he exposes his own ambivalence, revealing his divided loyalties (see Rampersad 1990), which he projects onto black society as a whole. C. Eric Lincoln formulates it palpably when he writes, that it is in "the society and the culture in which he was to be immersed and to which he was to struggle to relate to [that] lies the answer to much of the Du Boisian dubiety" (1993, 194–5).

Introducing African Americans as the "seventh son" of the world, Du Bois does not only present the complexity of African American life (and its multicultural background) but also the multiethnic diversity of mankind in the same assertion:

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (2007b, 8)

He establishes the equality of all humans, regardless of race, and encapsulates the "local" into the global that concerns the general human race. The juxtaposition supports the humanity of African Americans with the rest of the world set "in a global framework [which] demonstrates how he was also at home in the world" (Gates 2007, xxxii).

At the same time, however, the racial heritage of America facilitates the construction of “the veil,”<sup>1</sup> which signifies metaphorically a double life—a “double bind” as Sandra Adell (1994) calls it—i.e., a forced two-ness they must live. The image implies the duality that suffuses the African American experience since the black subject can recognize an external (white) and an internal (black) world. The result is that black Americans find themselves in a debilitating and restrictive situation, where they are confined to stereotypical categories. They are faced with the dissonance between needs and expectations (set by both white Americans and black Americans). As described by Du Bois, the subject is predisposed to a split in ideals, which bears down on their split consciousness. Tension arises because African American and white American expectations are conflicting, creating emotional distress for the subject who is stuck between resolving the tension and solving the situation—the latter being quite impossible at the turn of the century.

Much as the veil is a metaphor for the gift that endows African Americans with a “second-sight,”<sup>2</sup> “an enlarged vision” (Balfour 1998, 349), it incorporates the “misery inflicted upon African Americans” caused by “an internal echo of white America’s judgment of them” (1998, 349). The panoptic gaze of white America naturalizes African Americans into race and, as a consequence, African Americans are trapped under the omnipresence and objectified in the structure of the “white gaze” (see Yancy 2008). Such a position “provoke[s] endless introspection about the nature of the self and identity” (Smethurst 2011, 33), leaving them conflicted with the tension of dependence.

The veil presumes the opposition and the delusion experienced by African Americans, resulting in the “two warring ideals,” as those ideals clash during the process of their identity construction. Such a clash presupposes tension and “unresolved *angst*” (Allen 2002, 224) felt by African Americans. The “existential dread,” as Søren Kierkegaard describes it, stems from the “process

---

1 Du Bois, as a Protestant, was most certainly familiar with the image of the veil from the Bible (Exodus 26:31–37). The Biblical use of the image is referenced to the Temple where a large curtain separated the “holy of holies” from the rest of the public. He, however, does not specify if he had the Biblical story in mind but “his use of the veil symbol as a metaphor for his philosophy of education and civil rights receives an added depth of meaning when seen against this background of Biblical theology” (Savory 1972, 336), and given the importance he rendered to African American religion and the black church.

2 Gerard Early argues that it should not be a contradiction but, based on European and African American folklore, “be considered a person gifted with supernatural powers or at least supernatural insight” (1993, xviii). The African American seen as the seventh son of “national groups of the world is charged with some supernatural suggestiveness” (xviii).

of *misrecognition*" (224), i.e., the refusal to recognize and acknowledge black Americans' humanity. As "anguish" (Smethurst 2011, 191) permeates the whole of African American life and consciousness, they "could not help but have internalized at least some of the negative sentiments that white society held towards them" (Allen 2002, 224). Because of the conflict between the negative sentiments internalized and the African American will-to-power, which Du Bois characterizes as "our own belief in our great destiny, our own implicit trust in our ability and worth" (2007b, 185), fragmentation occurs; hence the two "ideals" at war with each other. For Du Bois, those are the American and black ideals that clash during the process of the subject's self-construction. Historically, the American social system treated African Americans as "good-for-nothing" (Johnson qtd. in Allen 2002, 224) who have accepted this classification of themselves, and in many instances seek to appear as such to please whites. As a result, they are conditioned to "act as stereotypes" and give up the distinctive characteristics of their race and racial selves, as the larger society "expected that African Americans would both look and act the part of the inferior being" (Pinn 2003b, 83). Henceforth, it establishes that the dilemma of ambiguity is between the consciousness created by racism and "by conflicting perspectives on life" (Bruce 1992, 306).

Du Bois highlighted the contrast between what he deemed to be qualities of the African American character and those of the dominant American majority. He considered such dictions to be complementary rather than incompatible with one another. Although he shifts his viewpoint towards the American dream, he also attempts to reject the idea that "any kind of warring incongruities existed between them" (Allen 2002, 220). It is a personal dilemma for Du Bois, because the education that he received from Fisk University, Harvard, and the Congregational church of Great Barrington "socialized [him] to be a white man" (Lincoln 1993, 202) and to adapt to those taught values. When he writes, "[the] two world races may give to each other those characteristics which both so sadly lack" (Du Bois 2007b, 13), he refers to an idealized extrapolation of a "cryptic disparity between principle and practice, ideal and illusion" (Lincoln 1993, 201). In reality, albeit quite precisely, he writes that African Americans, who are the "oasis of simple faith and reverence" (Du Bois 2007b, 14), represent the "pure human spirit of the Declaration of Independence" (14), gave America the dance, music, fairytales, and folktales similar to European ones, and the "innate love of harmony and beauty" (9). In exchange, America gave freedom, education, and "the power of the ballot" (13) to be able to participate in "work, culture, and liberty" (13). However, it seems as if Du Bois also conforms to pre-set roles and their

characteristics as interpreted from a white point of view. In fact, he refers, from a black point of view, to the integration into the American Dream—a term that was only coined in 1931. His formulation indicates the ideals set forth by the Declaration of Independence, which refers to an openness to include black Americans into the “melting pot” of the United States with equal opportunities and rights for all its members.

Du Bois’s idea of two-ness refers to an “unresolved split personality” (Smethurst 2011, 63); however, in another reading doubleness is understood as a choice that has the potential to counter victimization. It becomes the conscious choice of the individual to demonstrate agency through the interconnection of the two selves where both co-exist, rather than existing independently from one another. Thus, they are able to benefit from being both black and American. It creates the grounds for African Americans to be able to transcend the “strivings” of American society without losing or prioritizing one identity segment over the other. These selves, however, will not completely merge, but rather, as Smethurst states, “coexist in a sort of multicultural state that does not threaten to split the black subject” (2011, 58). The coexistence Smethurst suggests is more a convergence and not a merging, of these “two more or less unintegrated consciousnesses” (2011, 29) within the black body. The possibility of such a choice allows African Americans to jump between one and the other self, which grants a distinct viewpoint through which black Americans can reflect on their identity, employing the veil as a means to establish a space of agency and even deploying it as a counter-discourse.

To understand and develop one’s consciousness in its complexity, they are required to view it through multiple lenses, as opposed to only a white-black binary. The various identity segments (race, class, gender, religion, etc.) intersect within the individual to shape and transform African Americans’ perception of themselves. So, to supersede the multifaceted duality, the “unhealthy state for the individual and for the group” (Lattany 1993, 167–168), the black individual is able to dismantle fixed structures of identity that function as barriers against the integrated self and the wholeness of consciousness.

What Du Bois calls “true self-consciousness,” Paul Gilroy formulates as “unfinished identities” (Gilroy 1993, 1) in *The Black Atlantic*. For him, it displays the ambiguity representative of African Americans, since the subjects stand “between (*at least*) two great cultural assemblages” (1; emphasis added), where both (or more) interconnect to facilitate change in the consciousness of the African American. Consequently, Gilroy notes

that the hybridity of African American culture—similarly to his Anglo-African experience—is rather an unsatisfactory way to describe it much as the concept does not convey the “process of cultural mutation” (2), which affirms its cultural diversity. He asserts that a “tension between a politics of fulfillment and a politics of transfiguration” (112) arises referring to the opposition between “the social and political promise that [the] present society has left unaccomplished” (37) (that being the status of African Americans in the larger American society). It demands the “bourgeois civil society [to] live up to the promises of its own rhetoric” (37), and the emergence of new desires and new social relations that are articulated by the racial community to aid (racial) cultural reproduction resisting the dominance of the “erstwhile oppressor” (37). It can justify the idea that African Americans experience a double bind between the struggle to “remain true to black culture” and “conform[] to the expectations of whites” (Gingras 2010, 83). The complexity caused by the interconnectivity of the two poles culminates in a sort of creative energy that they use for identity performance. Instead of holding America accountable for “African Americans’ clouded perception of themselves” (Gingras 2010, 83), African Americans often strive to transcend this duality. It gives them the chance to veil their real identities, which works in two ways: on the one hand, they do not allow the dominant society to fixate them, that is, force them into already existing categories, such as Uncle Toms, Nat Turners, or coons and Sambos. It can be seen as a mask to show themselves as something else—as the African American that white America wants to see, but hides behind it, so they can be who they want. On the other, the veil becomes the tool to display black identity playfully. These are the practices that the “New Negro” generation will adopt to celebrate their racial individuality and to be able to turn their anxiety into creative energy—as a representation of subjectivity—as opposed to uncertainty and melancholy. Nevertheless, when Henry Louis Gates Jr. asserts that “double consciousness, once a disorder, is now the cure” (2007, xv), he likewise refers to a representation of the self that breaks with previous stereotypes to give way to a (conscious) subjectivity that is “neither African nor American, but genuinely Afro-American” (Mocombe 2009, 8). According to Nico Slate, Du Bois’s “global conception of color” (2014, 32), as seen through his metaphor of the “seventh son,” is what allowed him to “transform double-consciousness from a burden to an opportunity” (32).

As Stanley Crouch asserts in *Lure and Loathing*, “consciousness is much more complex than double” (1993, 87) since it is an essential part of the human condition considering that “humanity is best defined by ‘ambiguity,’

a complexity and multidimensionality” (Pinn 2003b, 80–81). To develop an identity that incorporates the multiplicity deep-rooted in African American culture, one must transcend the dichotomy of American race relations by establishing a multiple consciousness.<sup>3</sup> To understand its meaning, Anthony B. Pinn’s theory of a “complex subjectivity”<sup>4</sup> (2003a, xiii) comes the closest to explaining what it implies. It is a “quest for a more amplified and self-determined notion of selfhood” (Reddie 2018, 73) to counter the schism understood in the Du Boisian double consciousness. Pinn’s terminology is of particular importance because it seeks, contrary to an identity formation that centers on citizenship in the United States, “to hold together, to bind together all of these various threads of identity development in a way that makes them essential components of a larger, tangled, and all-encompassing sense of life meaning” (2011, 64). While opposing the objectification of African Americans, it assists the dynamic progress of identity construction, and above all, aids in reclaiming subjectivity and demonstrating agency. As he asserts, complex subjectivity is “meant to maintain this multidimensional notion of being [that] involves an unfolding, a continuous yearning and pushing for *More*” (2011, 65). Such multidimensionality is rooted in African Americans’ history, politics, psychology, multiracial nature, and, probably the most important for Du Bois, religion and spirituality. Not seen as a medical condition but as a basis for identity, multiple consciousness combines these “unfinished identities” that are simultaneously active in African American life. It echoes Du Bois’s hypothetical question, which, knowing his life and education, upholds such multiplicity: “What, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both?” (2007b, xii). However, the question answers itself. For Du Bois, the construction of their true self-consciousness, which incorporates all dimensions of the multiplicity, is “*not* absorption by the white Americans” (183) but serves “to conserve [their] physical powers, [their] intellectual endowments, [their] spiritual ideals” (183) where like a “black nation within a nation” (Mocombe 2009, 40), “[they] must strive by

---

3 The notion incorporates both the doubleness of Du Bois and the multiple identity politics proposed by Carl F. Graumann, which, thus, becomes more characteristic of African American’s psychological turmoil, and serves as a solution to overcome the tension and anxiety.

4 Even though Anthony B. Pinn coined the term in relation to African American religion, the conversion experience, and black religion as the quest for complex subjectivity, the notion is equally important in connection to African Americans’ multiple consciousness and identity formation, especially as it also refers to the multidirectional basis of “identity production of the community” (Gaál-Szabó 2022, 134).

race organization, by race solidarity, by race unity” (Du Bois 2007b, 185). Thereby, Du Bois expresses a kind of an accommodation politics, as opposed to integration, to reclaim their agency “not as individuals, but as races” (183). In his multiple identity politics, Du Bois constructs his identity in a complex way through the identification *with* and *by* their environment (Graumann 1983, 309) and the social group(s).

### *Conclusion*

In the midst of Jim Crow America, Du Bois’s notion of double consciousness is widely taken to characterize the inner schism experienced by the African American individual. However, it characterizes the black Americans’ strife to attain their integrated selfhood to “merge his double self into a better and truer self” (Du Bois 2007b, 9) without losing one identity segment for the sake of the other. In fact, black subjects are required to uphold the doubleness, instead of merging the selves, to achieve a healthy and “true self-consciousness.” As Berndt Ostendorf concludes, the double consciousness of black culture arises from “the indirectness of a culture of adversity, [present in] the ‘I’m-laughing-to-keep-from-crying’ (1952, 82) attitude and sentiment that African Americans, including artists and writers, embraced and instrumentalized to translate it into their life and art. Making use of such sentiment to create a strong sense of one’s being African Americans are also required to find meaning and harmony through their duality.

Contrary to the understanding of Du Bois’s double consciousness as a debilitating split in the psyche, the two-ness is affirmative, since the doubleness itself is characterized by multiplicity, where the poles overlap to develop into a multiple consciousness that serves to validate the desired integrity and “true self-consciousness.” Maintaining multiplicity in duality achieves the idea of wholeness in “the confines of identity itself” (Gates 2007, xv). Thus, incorporating both segments into one set of ideals—constant work as “warring” suggests—serves as the grounds for the black subjects to be able to “live above the Veil” (Du Bois 2007b, 76).

References

- Adell, Sandra. 1994. *Double Consciousness/Double Bind: Theoretical Issues in Twentieth-Century Black Literature*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Allen, Earnest, Jr. 2002. "Du Boisian Double Consciousness: The Unsustainable Argument." *The Massachusetts Review* 43 (2): 217–253.
- Balfour, Lawrie. 1998. "A Most Disagreeable Mirror: Race Consciousness as Double Consciousness." *Political Theory* 26 (3): 346–369.
- Bruce, Dickinson D., Jr. 1992. "W. E. B. Du Bois and the Idea of Double Consciousness." *American Literature* 64 (2): 299–309.
- Crouch, Stanley. 1993. "Who Are We? Where Did We Come From? Where Are We Going?" In *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity, and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, edited by Gerard Early, 80–94. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Du Bois, William Edward Burghardt. 1999. *Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil*. Second Edition. Mineola: Dover.
- . *Dusk of Dawn*. 2007a. Edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . *The Souls of Black Folk*. 2007b. Edited by Brent Hayes Edwards. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Early, Gerard. 1993. "Introduction." In *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity, and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, edited by Gerard Early, xi–xxiv. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Gaál-Szabó, Peter. 2022. "Cultural Memory, Context, and Multidirectionality." In *Forms of Critical Thinking*, edited by Emilia Parpală and Carmen Popescu, 130–138. Craiova: Editura Universitaria Craiova.
- Gaumann, Carl F. 1983. "On Multiple Identities." *International Social Science Journal* 35 (2): 309–321.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. 2007. "The Black Letters on the Sign: W. E. B. Du Bois and the Canon." In *Dusk of Dawn*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., xi–xxiv. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gilroy, Paul. 1993. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. London and New York: Verso.
- Gingras, Britta. 2010. "'Double Consciousness' and the Racial Self in Zitkala-Ša's *American Indian Stories*." *Undergraduate Review* 6: 83–86.
- Lattany, Kristin Hunter. 1993. "Off-Timing: Stepping to the Different Drummer." In *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity, and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, edited by Gerard Early, 163–174. New York: The Penguin Press.

- Lincoln, C. Eric. 1993. “The Du Boisian Dilemma and the American Dilemma: Two Levels of Lure and Loathing.” In *Lure and Loathing: Essays on Race, Identity, and the Ambivalence of Assimilation*, edited by Gerard Early, 194–206. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Mocombe, Paul C. 2009. *The Soul-less Souls of Black Folk: A Sociological Reconsideration of Black Consciousness as Du Boisian Double Consciousness*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Ostendorf, Berndt. 1952. *Black Literature in White America*. Totowa, N. J.: Barnes & Nobles Books.
- Pinn, Anthony B. editor. 2003a. *Terror and Triumph: The Nature of Black Religion*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- . 2011. *What is African American Religion?* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- . 2003b. “Black Bodies in Pain and Ecstasy: Terror, Subjectivity, and the Nature of Black Religion.” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 7 (1): 76–89.
- Rampersad, Arnold. 1990. *The Art and Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Reddie, Anthony G. 2018. “African Derived Religions, Complex Subjectivity and Black Agency: Living the Intersections from Within.” *Black Theology* 16 (1): 73–84.
- Savory, Jerold J. 1972. “The Rendering of the Veil in W.E.B Du Bois’s *The Souls of Black Folk*.” *CLA Journal* 15 (3): 334–337.
- Slate, Nico. 2014. *The Prism of Race: W. E. B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Paul Robeson, and the Colored World of Cedric Dover*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Smethurst, James. 2011. *The African American Roots of Modernism: From Reconstruction to the Harlem Renaissance*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Yancy, George. 2008. *Black Bodies, White Gazes: The Continuing Significance of Race*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield.



## The Use of Chinese Characters as Mnémotechnique

### *Introduction*

Language is an integral part of the knowledge passed down from generation to generation within a group and one of the vehicles of group communication. Chinese calligraphic texts—as linguistic symbols and cultural memory carriers—and calligraphy instruction have become mnemonics to embody Chinese cultural memory. As a means of socio-spatial memory and a visual trace of cultural memory depicting cultural and spiritual dynamism, calligraphic texts can trigger historical imagination and contextual restoration of the visualizer’s memory. The teaching of calligraphy has a fixed order, fixed forms of stationery for learning calligraphy, physical movements, etc. Students memorize by imprinting scenes and images in their minds, following a “mnemonic technique.” The paper investigates how Chinese characters are used as a mnémotechnique for individual and group memory.

### *Chinese Characters and Chinese Calligraphy*

The origin and formation of known Chinese characters have not been agreed upon until today. What is clear, however, is that the earliest known Chinese characters were carved on the shoulder bones of large animals and tortoise shells (called oracle bones) and were used for divination purposes. These writings show that people made different symbols for different things. In the time of the Shennongs, people tied knots to keep records. On the other hand, the sages of later generations used writing for the same purpose (Rutt 2002, 23) Shuowen Jiezi Xu thinks that back when Cangjie initially began drawing characters, the majority of them were dubbed “wen” (文; “word, culture, or literature”) and were made to resemble objects. Afterward, each character became pronunciation-based, and it was called a “zi” (字; “word”) (2012, 5). As Shi Hu said, “Chinese characters have a way; the way gives birth to images, and images give birth to sounds and meanings. With images

placed alongside each other, all things are embodied within them” (1996, 8). From this, Chinese characters are more than mere symbols; they represent the process of the Chinese nation’s spirit infusing into and interacting with the physical world. This process is described as one in which the Dao generates images, images give rise to sounds and meanings, and through the combination of these images, the entirety of existence is encapsulated within Chinese characters.

Furthermore, Xu Shen of the Eastern Han Dynasty said in his *Shuo Wen Jie Zi Xu* that the character is the basis of the scriptures and the arts, the beginning of the king’s government, and it is the reason why people in the past were able to recognize the past and the reason why people in the future will be able to recognize the past (1773). The Chinese characters have shown their unique, edifying function with their vital inclusiveness. The concept of the “Chinese character cultural circle” (汉字文化圈) (He 2001, 174) is formed based on the Chinese language and script, and the Chinese characters serve as the inner spiritual power. It is evident that humans create symbols, and in turn, symbols create human nature (Cassirer 1985, 35).

The essence of cultural symbols is a medium capable of carrying, expressing, conveying, and storing certain cultural messages and ideas. The German philosopher Ernst Alfred Cassirer emphasized that the various forms of symbols, such as myth, language, art, and science, are the true mediators of human creation, through which humans are able to separate themselves from the world, and it is precise because of this separation that he has made himself intimately connected with the world (2000, 25). The cultural symbols of a country or nation are never single but rich in systems. For example, the cultural symbols of the Chinese nation include calligraphy, Chinese painting, traditional Chinese medicine, Peking Opera, tea ceremony, flower arrangement, silk, ceramics, and so on. Especially Chinese calligraphy, with China’s history, continues to develop and move forward. It has a six-thousand-year history and is a significant cultural symbol of the Chinese nation.

Calligraphy, as the ideogram of Chinese characters, is an art form used to convey emotional attitudes and embody imagery through the writing of Chinese characters. Through the ages, calligraphy has undergone many changes in definition, each from a different perspective. The representative ancient theories of calligraphy include, for example, Yang Xiong of the Han Dynasty, for whom “calligraphy is a kind of externalization of the inner

cultivation of people” (n.d.).<sup>1</sup> During the Tang dynasty (618–907), Zhang Huaiguan in *Liu Ti Shu Lun* said, “The calligraphy, all things in nature.” For Hao Jing of the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368), “calligraphy is the law of the heart.”

Similarly, Liu Xizai of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911) contended in *Yi Gai* — *Shu Gai* that “calligraphy is a kind of appearance, showing the aspirations of the writer, his learning, his talent. In short, it is the book as the person.” Contemporary calligraphy theories include Xu Liming, who asserts that “Calligraphy is an abstract art that takes Chinese characters as its material, and lines and their constituent movements as its form, to express the realm of the spirit of nature and to embody the ideal of aesthetics” (2020, 2). When discussing the definition of calligraphy, Wo Xinghua claimed that calligraphy is the method of writing brush characters (2019, 3). Zhao Jiashi believes calligraphy is originally the method of writing and the law of writing. The word ‘书’ here is written, and ‘法’ is the meaning of method/rule (1996, 3). Hu Chuanhai defines it “as taking Chinese square hieroglyphs as the basis for occurrence and existence. With Chinese unique pen, ink, paper, and ink as the creation tool, a class of art formed under the guidance of traditional Chinese aesthetic thought and aesthetic way” (1978, 74). Whether the definition of calligraphy is discussed in ancient times by means of abstraction, analogy, or symbolism or in modern times by the straightforward discussion of calligraphy as the art of writing with a brush, there is a lack of readiness to reflect on the connotations and symbolic extensions of calligraphy. Thus, calligraphy seems to have been reduced to an art that uses a brush and ink to shape Chinese characters uniquely.

However, Calligraphy remains closely related to Confucianism. Calligraphy is the representative art image of the abstract art of the East, as Xiong Bingming called it, “the core of the core of Chinese culture,” the national art of China, with the unique function of passing down the history and civilization of China (1991, 261). This is also consistent with the philosophical outlook of Confucianism. Confucianism attaches importance to the indoctrination of human beings, and the highest ideal of Confucianism is to enable everyone to attain a state of benevolence. To reach a state of benevolence in the world, Confucianism directly links calligraphy to civilizing and education, emphasizing the orderliness of rites.

On the one hand, Calligraphy requires straight, upright, and robust lines, consistent with the Confucian pursuit of uprightness and integrity.

---

1 All Chinese translations are mine. LM

Confucianism emphasizes etiquette, i.e., order. Stressing the proverb “The emperor is the emperor, the minister is the minister, the father is the father, and the son is the son” highlights the harmony of the social order (de Bary and Bloom 1999, 44). On the other hand, calligraphy emphasizes norms and programs, such as the Small Seal Script, Clerical Script, and Regular Script, which highlights the standards of the strokes, the rigorous structure, and the unity of the chapters. This unity of strokes, form, and branches reflects traditional social relations, harmony, and unity. In conventional social relations emphasizing dominance and obedience, calligraphy emphasizes the main and subsidiary strokes. Traditional society emphasizes courtesy and concession, and calligraphy does the same. Just as traditional culture emphasizes order and norms, calligraphy emphasizes the brush standards and the structure’s coordination. Calligraphy displays social norms and “ethical relationships.” For example, the main text should be large, the inscription should be small, the main text should be the main, and the inscription should be complementary. The paragraph should be attached to the main text. The upper paragraph of the paragraph should be higher than the lower paragraph, and so on. Not only that, in the way of writing, the movement of each stroke contains the significance of Confucian philosophical indoctrination. As a calligraphy teacher in Hungary, Zheng Boyuan claims,<sup>2</sup>

Each stroke in the Regular Script consists of a starting stroke, a traveling stroke, and a finishing stroke. In the Regular Script, the start of a brush stroke (the beginning of a stroke) is usually a reverse-front start, which is squarer in shape. In other words, the direction of the starting strokes follows “left before right, up before down,” which is the opposite of the direction of the strokes. This also symbolizes the good and bad times in life. When things go wrong, you should “start the brush against the trend” and face them with courage. When you are in good times, you need to be vigilant and take the good times as the bad times. [. . .] The left pointed horizontal, and the right pointed horizontal writing method of writing from thick to thin or from thin to thick, close the penlight. The writing style of “big head vertical” and “small head vertical” is similar to that of “horizontal,” also from thick to thin or from thin to thick, with a light closing stroke. It is also written from thick to thin or thin to thick, with a light finish. This style is usually written with the thin end closer to a stroke, reflecting the humility of the strokes. The Chinese often say that a character is like a person, which also reflects the need to be humble. (2023)

---

2 The resource comes from the author’s interview with teacher Zheng Boyuan at a Chinese-German bilingual school in Hungary.

As a result, calligraphy became central to the construction of personality in Chinese culture. Calligraphy serves as a tool for nurturing people as a means of harmonizing individuality, the individual, and the group. Similarly, calligraphy is expressed in Taoist doctrine as the tracing of nature. At the time when Taoism was prevalent, the expression of calligraphic aesthetic standards favored the expression of natural individuality. The resulting classic texts and styles of calligraphy that have been handed down to subvert tradition express the Chinese concept of freedom at that time. Therefore, whether it is the calligraphic styles influenced by Confucianism or the calligraphic texts handed down by Taoism, the Chinese “person” is labeled and formulated through writing (Yen 2004, 74). Writing expresses the idea that words are like people. By practicing writing, the Chinese practitioner is convinced that handwriting can reveal certain aspects of a person (morals, character traits, appearance, etc.). In addition, people distrust beautiful, deft handwriting and prefer clumsy, ugly, but authentic handwriting. Finally, scribbled or ugly handwriting is sometimes perceived as misrepresenting the better person. In short, handwriting can be either revelatory or deceptive, and according to Yuehping Yen, characters are considered to be extensions of the “human” body. In addition, the Chinese habit of reading symbols from body shapes has contributed to the constant desire to read symbols as handwritten characters (2004, 75). The Chinese exegesis on the link between the handwriting and the person teems with bodily images, which means the “body” enters the discourse of Chinese graphology (75).

Since calligraphy uses a fixed form of writing posture, it suggests that the practice of calligraphy “indicates the inscription and encoding of memory in somatic and somatized forms” (Lambek and Strathern 1998, 13). Indeed, literature in the Confucian tradition repeatedly emphasizes the importance of the body in the learning process. Self-cultivation in the literary sense means “Xiu Shen” (cultivation of the body). In other words, calligraphy training is considered to be the training of the body. The field of anthropology of the body has advanced significantly since Marcel Mauss ([1936] 1979) brought attention to “body techniques.” The body has been reframed as “the locus of social practice” (Csordas 1993, 135; see also Lock 1993; Bourdieu 1977; Comaroff and Comaroff 1985) rather than as the source of symbols (Hertz 1973; Douglas 1973) or as a template for social classification (Lock 1993, 136). In the meantime, the “socially informed body” (Bourdieu 1977) is seen to be the place where subjectivity is formed and from which social identity is produced, rather than only the place where discipline or power leaves its mark (Turner 1995, 145). It is worth noting that the body has been central

to Confucianism for over two thousand years (Bray 1997, 41; see also Tu 1983) since bodily action is seen as shaping identity. As Weiming Tu puts it, its goal is to transform the body into an appropriate expression of the self in our daily existence (1983, 60). The practice of calligraphy, therefore, shows the dynamic embodiment of memories. Through the somatization of memories, “the relationship between the memory material and the subject is renegotiated, re-contextualized and concomitantly, actualized” (Gaál-Szabó 2022, 135).

### *Calligraphy as a Mnemonic Device*

Calligraphy, a significant symbol of Chinese culture, is considered a tool for representing Chinese collective memory. According to Halbwachs, objects of memory have a dual nature. They are not only material objects depicting a material reality, such as a statue, a monument, or a place in space, but they are also symbols, or something with spiritual meaning, something attached to and imposed on this material reality, which is shared by the group (2002, 40). That is, when matter is given a specific symbolic meaning by humans, it is transformed into a symbol. Regardless of whether the object of memory is a material object or an immaterial symbol, in the end, they can be remembered by people because they are endowed with a certain symbolic meaning, i.e., the material object no longer exists as a pure material (Feng and Wang 2022, 54–60).

However, not all symbolic meanings make their way into the Chinese collective memory because “memory is a series of symbols that are selected, commandeered, and given meaning” (Zhao 2015, 43). Aleida Assmann believes that those elements in the memory material that are potential, inactive, or subject to certain historical and cultural constraints do not enter into the framework of people’s memory because of the nature of the metasemiotic activity, the form and meaning of which have been significantly altered after the re-narrated symbolic text generates a new symbol (2012, 27). As a meta-symbol, however, calligraphy has existed in shaping Chinese cultural memory by constantly returning to the traditional symbolism embedded in the ancient classics. In other words, calligraphy, as a symbol of cultural memory, functions in a similar way to what Juri Lotman understands by the symbolic process:

As an important mechanism of cultural memory, symbols carry over texts, plotlines, and semiotic formations from one cultural stratum to another. An immutable

set of symbols passing diachronically through a culture assumes to a significant degree the function of unifying that culture; as a culture's memory of itself, symbols prevent a culture from disintegrating into isolated temporal strata. (2019, 163)

Lotman believes that, on the one hand, symbols achieve their invariance by crossing all levels of culture; on the other hand, they are actively associated with new cultural contexts. In influencing new cultural contexts, they also change: "Its invariable essence is realized in its variations," as Lotman puts it (2019, 164).

The process transmits cultural meaning layer by layer and creates a shared space of memory. The main symbols are inevitably accompanied by other symbols and are closely related to them. These symbolic relationships constitute the Chinese cultural picture. Chinese culture is characterized by a high degree of integration of ancient symbols into all areas of life (Ma 2015, 196). The meaning represented by the calligraphic symbols, as well as the interactions and dynamics of calligraphy as "folded generators of cultural memory" (Prots 2008, 95) with the accompanying other symbols, are ingrained in Confucian values, the Chinese characters themselves, the calligraphy-learning process, and the relationships with other symbols. For example, in *The Psychology of Chinese Handwriting* Ma Pengcheng, when talking about the unity of Chinese characters in the characteristics of phonic notes, points out that Chinese characters are symbols for recording language and that each character is an independent whole and is harmonious, balanced, proportional, and neat in appearance. The writing of Chinese characters is always permeated by the way of thinking in traditional Chinese culture, which always contains the way, reason, and law of seeking overall harmony (2006, 6). Chinese characters, in this way, have a strict logical and systematic symbol system, reflecting a way of thinking, results of thinking, and habits of thinking (Wang 2008, 114–118). It can be traced back to the ancient Shang and Zhou periods when calligraphy was largely a reflection of the socio-political, cultural, and other aspects of the time. Both the oracle bone inscriptions and the gold inscriptions of the Shang and Zhou periods, as well as the clerical scripts of the Han Dynasty, were used to record social activities, which included ceremonies held at that time, including a series of religious rituals and war campaigning ceremonies. The ceremonial activities reflected the passionate feelings of the people of that era towards religion. Because the art of calligraphy itself has the connotation of ritual, the combination of these ceremonial activities and time gave the memory space the role of expressing meaning. Whether it was a religious ceremony or a war

marching ceremony, when these activities connected to the real space, people put their passion for religion and love for the country in common ground to form a momentary reality, thus forming a symbol of group regiment and group membership (Collins 2012, 24).

In the ritual practice of calligraphy, the arousing energy of symbols serving emotional mobilization is realized through the setting of space-time scenarios and the value of auditory symbols and visual symbols in the process of ritual interaction. The visualization of Chinese common consciousness appeals to emotion as well. As in the case of rituals in general, appealing to emotions begins with the physical sensations of emotional arousal. It continues with the emotional experiences through the interactions of the members of the community (Turner 2009, 151). Rituals aggregate these emotional experiences through the participants' mutual attention and communication. The emotional connectivity in calligraphy is stimulated through imbuing its emotional content through visual/technical representation, revealing shared experience and immersion of mental processes and mental constructions, linking impressions and ideas (Hume 1996, 317–319). For example, oracle bones used to record the activities of people's lives covered a wide range of topics, from national events to the lives of ordinary people, showing that these contents cut into the emotional hooks of people's cognitive practices.

The ritual activities embodied in calligraphy even today reflect how Chinese cultural memory is at work. Calligraphy, especially in the form of end-of-the-year decorations and prayers for good fortune and disaster, constitutes an important part of Chinese folklore life (Tao 2012, 93–94). For example, Li Jiang notes that the culture of fortune has a strong symbolic nature in calligraphy, and the expression of the character “福” (“fortune”) in calligraphy is not only the writing of words but also reflects the wishes for prosperity, happiness, and longevity. Through different calligraphic styles, the character of Fu in calligraphy reflects the deep cultural values and aesthetic preferences of Chinese society (2019, 9–10). During the Chinese New Year, every family will put “Fu” characters in various calligraphic styles on the house's door, wall, and lintel. It is a long-standing custom in China to post the Chinese character “福” on the doors of houses and walls. And there are lucky words to such a sticker, indicating good fortune to the family. The most common form of calligraphy in folk culture is pillar calligraphy. As a unique way of expressing Chinese culture, pillar calligraphy expresses the ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism in traditional Chinese culture in a very popular, visual way. Confucian couplets and their calligraphy are the embodiment of Confucian culture and have the function of spreading

Confucian enlightenment. The purpose of Buddhist couplets engraved or hung in temples is to increase people's understanding of Buddhist culture, from the content of these couplets to promote the Buddhist doctrine, to praise the virtues of Buddhism, or to reveal the practice of the Dharma. The calligraphy of Taoist couplets is based on Taoist thought, which persuades people to accumulate virtues and do good deeds, to be free and open-minded, to change customs, and finally to achieve the purpose of educating people's hearts. In a word, the couplets indirectly convey the meaning of spreading culture and indoctrination. Calligraphy, as a symbol loaded with people's communal thoughts, interprets the psychologizing mechanism of Chinese people's emotional resonance through the chain of the relationship between the content of the words of the couplets and the configuration of the field of memory. Calligraphy, as a symbol of memory, triggers the sense of identity of Chinese people, thus stimulating their thinking through spontaneous emotional relations, cognition, and experience of revisiting the past. The process triggers the recognition of the common consciousness of Chinese people and the reproduction of the former history and common experience.

### *Conclusion*

Calligraphy is a cultural practice that is reflected in the human mind. It is also an activity of the human spirit and mind, an understanding of the objective world through aesthetics, and a way of thinking and spirituality that allows people to transform both the objective and subjective realms. It intuitively expresses philosophical essence and connotations by ordering and beautifying the writing of Chinese characters and using pen and ink lines to record words in a relatively fixed order. Through the square structure of Chinese characters and their characteristic distribution of dots and lines, writers can express human temperament, personality, and sentiment through strokes, forms, and the art of composition.

The study of calligraphy and Chinese cultural memory cannot be separated from Chinese Confucianism. As Liang Shuming said, "Almost all Chinese culture before Confucius was in the hands of Confucius, and almost all Chinese culture after Confucius came out from Confucius" (qtd. in Fang 2018). Confucian culture has a deep-rooted influence on the cultural psychology and structure of Chinese people. The spiritual connotation reflected in calligraphy complements the spirit of Confucianism.

It can be seen that calligraphy is the crystallization of traditional Chinese culture and a typical representative of Chinese art. Because of this, calligraphy,

as the unique art form and cultural symbol of traditional Chinese culture, profoundly reflects the unique cultural psychology of the Chinese people and thus has become a mnemonic expression of Chinese identity, reflecting the unique role of Chinese characters being used as a mnemonic technique for individual and group memory.

### References

- Assmann, Aleida. 2012. “昨日重现：媒介与社会记忆。” [“Yesterday Revisited: Media and Social Memory.”] In *记忆理论读本* [*An Introduction to Cultural Memory Theories*], edited by Astrid Erll and Fang Yalin, 20–42. Beijing: Peking University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Bray, Francesca. 1997. *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Cassirer, Ernst. 1985. *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House.
- . 2000. *The Logic of the Cultural Sciences: Five Studies*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Collins, Randall. 2012. *Interaction Ritual Chains*. Translated by Lin Jurun, Wang Peng and Song Lijun. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Comaroff, John, and Jean Comaroff. 1985. *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Csordas, Thomas. 1993. “Somatic Modes of Attention.” *Cultural Anthropology* 8 (2): 135–56.
- De Bary, William Theodore, and Irene Bloom, eds. 1999. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. Vol. 1. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Douglas, Mary. 1973. *Natural Symbols*. New York: Pelican.
- . 1984. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Fang, Wei. 2018. “Kong Zi Zhi Wei Ji Da Cheng.” Academy of Confucius, July 26. <http://kongzizy.org/plus/view.php?aid=2287>.
- Feng, Yueji, and Wang Liya. 2022. “Cultural Memory and the Building of Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation.” *Journal of South-Central*

- University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)* 9: 54–60.
- Gaál-Szabó, Peter. 2022. “Cultural Memory, Context and Multidirectionality.” In *Forms of Critical Thinking*, edited by Emilia Parpală and Carmen Popescu, 130–138. Craiova: Editura Universitaria Craiova.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. 2002. *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Jinhua Guo. Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Publishing House.
- Hao, Jing. n.d. “Ling Chuan Ji” 中华典藏. Accessed November 22, 2023. <https://www.zhonghuadiancang.com/leishuwenji/11442/>
- He, Qunxiong. 2001. *Chinese Characters in Japan*. Hong Kong: The Commercial Press.
- Hertz, Robert. 1973. “The Pre-eminence of the Right Hand: A Study in Religious Polarity.” In *Right and Left: Essays on Dual Symbolic Classification*, edited by Rodney Needham, 3–31. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hu, Chuanhai. 1978. *The Dense Pen and Ink: The Cultural Perspective of Calligraphy*. Shanghai: Fudan University Press.
- Hume, David. 1996. *A Treatise of Human Nature*. Translated by Guan Wenyun. Beijing: Commercial Press.
- Lambek, Michael, and Andrew Strathern. 1998. “Introduction: Embodying Sociality: Africanist-Melanesianist Comparisons.” In *Bodies and Persons: Comparative Perspectives from Africa and Melanesia*, edited by Michael Lambek and Andrew Strathern, 1–25. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Li, Jiang. 2019. *Zhong Guo Chuan Tong Fu Wen Hua Yan Jiu*. Beijing: China Light Industry Press.
- Liu, Xizai. n.d. “Yi Gai—Shu Gai Volume 5.” Zhong Hua Dian Cang. Accessed November 22, 2023. <https://www.zhonghuadiancang.com/xueshuzaji/yi-gai/49541.html>.
- Lock, Margaret. 1993. “Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22: 133–55.
- Lotman, Juri. 2019. “The Symbol in the System of Culture.” In *Juri Lotman—Culture, Memory and History: Essays in Cultural Semiotics*, edited by Tamm, Marek, 161–173. Cham: Springer Nature.
- Ma, Guansheng. 2015. “Food, Eating Behavior, and Culture in Chinese Society.” *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 2 (4): 195–199.
- Ma, Pengcheng. 2006. *Psychology of Chinese Handwriting*. Shenyang: Liaoning University Press.

- Mauss, Marcel. (1936) 1979. *Sociology and Psychology: Essays by Marcel Mauss*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Prots, T. 2008. "The Concept of 'Symbol' in Philosophical and Sociological Theories: Two Competing Ways of Interpretation." *Social Dimensions* 11: 93–105.
- Rutt, Richard, trans. 2002. *The Book of Changes (Zhouyi): A Bronze Age Document*. Translated with Introduction and Notes. East Asia Series 1. Durham: Routledge.
- Shi, Hu. 1996. "Lun Zi Si Wei." *Poetry Exploration* 2: 8–10.
- Tao, Siyan. 2012. "On Calligraphy and Folk Art." *Journal of Nanjing Arts Institute: Fine Arts and Design* 2: 93–94.
- Tu, Weiming. 1983. "The Idea of the Human in Mencian Thought: An Approach to Chinese Aesthetics." In *Theories of the Arts in China*, edited by Susan Bush and Christian Murck, 57–74. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Turner, Jonathan. 2009. *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory*. Translated by Sun Juncai and Wen Jun. Beijing: Dongfang Publishing House.
- Turner, Terence. 1995. "Social Body and Embodied Subject: Bodiliness, Subjectivity, and Sociality among the Kayapo." *Cultural Anthropology* 10 (2): 143–70.
- Wang, Wei. 2008. "The Semiotic Characteristics of Chinese Characters and Their Humanistic Significance." *Journal of China Environmental Management Cadres College* 18 (3): 114–118.
- Wo, Xinghua. 2019. *Chinese Calligraphy History*. Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Press.
- Xiong, Bingming. 1991. *Calligraphy and Chinese Culture*. Shanghai: Wenhui Press.
- Xu, LiMing. 2020. *History of Chinese Calligraphy Style*. Nanjing: Jiangsu Phoenix Art Publishing House.
- Xu, Shen. 1773. *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*. Library of Congress. Accessed November 22, 2023. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021666449/>.
- Yang, Xiong. n.d. "Fa Yan—Wen Shen Juan Volume 5." 古诗文网. Accessed November 22, 2023. [https://so.gushiwen.cn/guwen/bookv\\_1b48fe45cb36.aspx](https://so.gushiwen.cn/guwen/bookv_1b48fe45cb36.aspx).
- Yen, Yuehping. 2004. *Calligraphy and Power in Contemporary Chinese Society*. New York: RoutledgeCurzon Taylor & Francis e-Library.
- Zhang, Huaiguan. n.d. "Liu Ti Shu Lun." 中华典藏. Accessed November 22, 2023. <https://www.zhonghuadiancang.com/wenxueyishu/liutishu-lun/36287.html>.

- Zhao, Jiayi. 1996. *Calligraphy Art and Calligraphy Teaching*. Beijing: Beijing Educational Press.
- Zhao, Jingrong. 2015. *Cultural Memory and Identity*. Beijing: Sanlian Bookstore.



## Institutions of Betrayal The Social Construction of Reality in Katherine Anne Porter's "Flowering Judas"

Katherine Anne Porter's personal and writerly identity is fraught with contradictions: she was the only notable literary star of her native state, Texas, even though she repudiated Texan culture (Tanner 1991, 1, 8); she claimed to have genteel origins but was brought up in an impoverished, working-class family (Givner 1991, 17–18); she converted to Catholicism (Walsh 1992, 18), then went on to embrace socialism and an antireligious stance (Stout 2013, 37); she acted the part of a Southern belle (Graham 1990, 59) even though she led a nomadic existence, spending considerable time in Europe and Mexico (Unrue 1996, 3); she was prone to despondence and depression (Walsh 1992, 22) yet managed to mingle with the leading political and literary figures of her time (Stout 2013, xvi). These conflicting tendencies in her attitude indicate a certain lack of consistency but perhaps this very refusal to persist in occupying any particular ethical, intellectual, or philosophical position afforded her an insight into the workings of ideological systems that underpinned the societies she lived in.

By all accounts, her first sojourn in Mexico provided a powerful source of inspiration for her first original work (Unrue 1996, 10) and, therefore, may be said to have had a decisive impact on her entire artistic development. She moved in influential Communist circles, writing articles for a leftist magazine editor, Thorberg Haberman and she also undertook "informal" political commissions for an important functionary in Obregón's revolutionary government and the leader of the radical labor union, Luis Morones (Stout 2013, 34–35). However, her enthusiastic idealization turned into bitter disenchantment as soon as she was confronted with pragmatic realities. It was Porter's desire for social justice that attracted her to Marxist ideas, but she soon had to face the corrupt practices of Mexican revolutionaries that, instead of relieving the misery and exploitation of peasants and the working class, only served to perpetuate social inequalities and diffusing an atmosphere of intimidation (34; Stout 1995, 80).

Nevertheless, her short fiction based on her experiences in Mexico is regarded as her best work and secured her a literary reputation “as an important modernist American writer” (Unrue 2010, 35). Perhaps the most highly acclaimed of her short stories inspired by her life in Mexico is “Flowering Judas,” the title of which is derived from T. S. Eliot’s “Gerontion” (Givner 1991, 218). The story’s title and its final dream sequence featuring the titular judas tree confirms the story’s covert references to betrayal; accordingly, most criticism has focused on this pivotal theme. A related issue concerns the attribution of responsibility for betrayal: most critics focus on the heroine’s, Laura’s, betrayal of various values such as the symbolic power of language (Jiménez-Placer 2008, 113) or human love (Unrue 2009, 52–54). Mary Titus cursorily comments on the “personal and cultural malaise” (2005, 137) that are intertwined in this story; Thomas F. Walsh also pinpoints “cultural alienation” as its central motif (1990, 82); however, the social dimension of this malaise or alienation has not been as thoroughly explored as the heroine’s personal or psychological anomalies.

Therefore, in the present study, a theoretical framework is applied that allows the interpretation of Laura’s estrangement from her environment with particular attention to this social milieu, while it also gives some insight into the protagonist’s personal motives. Berger and Luckmann’s seminal work, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* examines meaning-making both on a social or objective level and on an individual or subjective plane. The paper argues that the motifs of betrayal, rejection, and estrangement in “Flowering Judas” can only be properly interpreted in the context of the social setting of the short story; more precisely, by examining the social practices and activities in the story by means of which reality is constructed for Laura and other characters. Laura’s betrayals are the result of her rejection of and alienation from, the society around her, which, in turn, are the effects of her undesired insight into the constructed quality of the “revolutionary” Mexican society around her.

Interpreting the title of their work, Berger and Luckmann declare that “a ‘sociology of knowledge’ will have to deal [. . .] with the processes by which *any* body of ‘knowledge’ comes to be socially established as ‘reality’” (1991, 15). They clarify that they are concerned, first and foremost, with the construction of everyday, common sense knowledge that governs people’s lives in a society (15). It is important to note, however, that Berger and Luckmann’s work was first published in 1966, at a time when the catchphrase “socially constructed” had not been in circulation; in fact, they were the first to use the term “social construction” (Hacking 2000, 24). No serious

author, Hacking asserts, has argued for the socially constructed quality of all phenomena, and Berger and Luckmann's work is no exception. Their aim was simply "to understand the taken-for-granted and experienced world that each person in a society shares with others" (2000, 25).

Hacking identifies various stages of social constructionist arguments according to their level of commitment: the highest stage is represented by the revolutionary constructionist, who, in the manner of a social activist, intends to change the world in terms of a particular "socially constructed" phenomenon (2000, 20). The conjunction of the terms "socially constructed" and "revolutionary" draws attention to the close affinity between social constructivism as an intellectual stance and the political ideology of revolutionary politics. Revolution is defined by Samuel Huntington as a "rapid, fundamental, and violent domestic change in the dominant values and myths of a society, in its political institutions, social structure, leadership, and government activity and policies" (qtd. in Sanderson 2020, 1). Huntington's definition suggests a sudden and profound transformation that a society undergoes as a result of a revolution, however, as Knight remarks, few revolutions in history meet Huntington's criteria. In reality, continuity persists to a greater extent than the casual observer notices or the revolutionaries themselves admit (1986, 313).

The ambivalence between ancient customs and progressive ideologies provides the background to Laura's cultural unease as she navigates the world of professional revolutionaries, which is nevertheless rigorously structured along the lines of a gendered division of society into public and private realms. As the revolutionary leader's, Braggioni's, errand girl, Laura brings the imprisoned comrades "food and cigarettes and a little money" as well as "their favorite narcotics" (Porter 1993, 38), performing the role of charitable lady, dispensing comfort to those in need. As a young and attractive woman, she must also endure the obnoxiously obese Braggioni's courtship as well as the wooing of other Mexican men. In addition, Laura has a modest position as an English teacher in a school for Indian children.

In all of her roles: as visitor, messenger, and school teacher, Laura, while simultaneously the object of male desire, is a "type of actor" who performs "habitualized actions." According to Berger and Luckmann, people establish a routine method for performing a particular action, which relieves them of the nervous tension of having to make decisions. If there are more actors concerned, these specific routines become institutions (1991, 70–72). In an institution, both the action and the actor are typified. If actors can regard each other's actions as matter-of-course, routine goings-on, they will not be

surprised or threatened by them so other people's actions become predictable (74–75). Berger and Luckmann highlight that institutions control human behavior “by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible” (72). In other words, institutions constrain the conduct of individuals but also relieve them of the tension of free choice. Institutions cannot come into existence or be maintained without roles and, by behaving accordingly, individuals represent their roles and particular institutions. Since roles are inseparable from institutions, they also “represent the institutional order.” Moreover, playing roles allows individuals to participate in society, and by strongly identifying with their roles, the institutional world becomes their internalized, subjective reality (91–92).

In “Flowering Judas,” all characters perform their predefined and gendered roles, thus maintaining the institutional order. Braggioni is “a leader of men, a skilled revolutionist” (Porter 1993, 34), to whom his minions turn for help when they are imprisoned, persecuted, or starving. Their trust in him is unshaken by his failure to assist them. Despite his complete indifference to the suffering of his subordinates, Braggioni has thoroughly internalized the role of revolutionary leader as it is apparent from the impassioned speech he gives to Laura, “speaking in the hypnotic voice he uses when talking in small rooms to a listening, close-gathered crowd” (46). He also plays the role of an irresistible womanizer, who continually brags about his amorous dalliances and expresses his contempt for women: “When he was fifteen, he tried to drown himself because he loved a girl, his first love, and she laughed at him. ‘A thousand women have paid for that.’ [. . .] ‘One woman is really as good as another for me, in the dark. I prefer them all’” (44). Braggioni's wife participates in the organization of political meetings and strikes for women workers and tirelessly plays the role of the faithful and devoted wife, who forgives her man the most grievous infidelity and neglect: “His wife, who works so hard for the good of the factory girls, employs part of her leisure lying on the floor weeping because there are so many women in the world and only one husband for her, and she never knows where or when to look for him” (45).

Roles are played not only in public, but also in private life. Part of the reason why the amorous passions aroused by the beautiful Laura do not come to fruition and do not even incite gossip is that the behavior of the young men courting her is boringly predictable: “A young captain who had been a soldier in Zapata's army attempted [. . .] to express his desire for her with the noble simplicity befitting a rude folk-hero” (Porter 1993, 39–40).

The captain behaves according to predetermined patterns, thus upholding the institution of the noble and simple folk hero, since even passion manifests itself in conformity with traditional patterns.

As the protagonist of the story, Laura is presented in the most detailed fashion, therefore, her character is witnessed to perform a multiplicity of roles instead of only one or two. Apart from being a tactful and reliable comforter of prisoners and men in hiding, she is the adored teacher of Indian children, an unapproachable beauty, and Braggioni's confidante and disciple. Although she is clearly unwilling or unable to internalize her roles, she takes care to outwardly demonstrate her compliance, and thus, in effect, contributes to the maintenance of the current order as much as any other character. When "she looks at Braggioni, frankly and clearly, like a good child who understands the rules of behavior" (Porter 1993, 35), she accepts—despite all her internal conflict—Braggioni's tutelage over her and relegates herself into a completely powerless, childlike position out of fear of the consequences of overt revolt against the roles allotted to her.

However, most characters act out their predetermined roles not primarily because they are afraid of potential retribution in case they transgress, but because the roles they play and the institutions they uphold seem to have the authority and permanence of natural and universal laws: routine human activities assume the force of necessity or fate. This means, paradoxically, that "man is capable of producing a world that he then experiences as something other than a human product" (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 78). The process whereby human products acquire superhuman significance is called objectivation. Berger and Luckmann assert that every institution—including the roles that represent and sustain them—is objectivated (78). The behavior of another of Laura's suitors, a "shock-haired youth" exemplifies this point: he serenades Laura for hours, follows her across the city and leaves his own poems at her doorstep. This apparent perseverance, however, "means nothing except that he is [. . .] observing a convention with all propriety, as though it were founded on a law of nature, which in the end it might well prove to be" (Porter 1993, 41). Similarly, Mrs. Braggioni's abject suffering on account of her husband's unfaithfulness is regarded as her inevitable fate, which cannot be changed, only endured.

An indispensable element of experiencing reality and participating in social life is language. Berger and Luckmann expound on the various features of language that make it crucial in society. The first feature of language, its capacity of "making present" a variety of objects that are spatially, temporally and socially absent from the "here and now" (1991, 52) can be demonstrated

by Laura's unexpected remark about Eugenio's suicide in prison. Laura's statement that suddenly conjures up the vision of a dying Eugenio represents an abrupt change of topic as Braggioni has been musing about a specific armed confrontation between Catholics and Socialists that he is orchestrating. For the second quality of language, its power to objectivate and stabilize the self (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 52–53), Laura's several short internal monologues serve as examples such as when she repudiates responsibility for encouraging the hopeless suit of the shock-haired youth and justifies this on ethical grounds, "persuad[ing] herself that her negation of all external events as they occur is a sign that she is gradually perfecting herself in the stoicism she strives to cultivate against that disaster she fears, though she cannot name it" (Porter 1993, 42). An utterance that illustrates both the third quality, namely, that language can objectify and typify subjective experiences so that they become recognizable and comprehensible to other people, and the fourth, which is the capacity of language to construct abstract symbols, which nevertheless become part of everyday reality (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 53–55) is Braggioni's succinct account of establishing power in Mexico City: "Once I dreamed of destroying this city, in case it offered resistance to General Ortíz, but it fell into his hands like an overripe pear" (Porter 1993, 46). Braggioni summarizes the Communists' conquest in symbolic terms: the image of the overripe pear symbolizes both the riches of the city that is now at Braggioni's disposal and the citizens' inability to struggle against their natural destiny. Lastly, language is a unique medium by means of which a vast common stock of knowledge can be accumulated in society (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 56). This manifests itself in Laura's internal recitation of a quote "from some forgotten philosophic primer" (Porter 1993, 37). In this case, the quote conveys a segment of a stock of knowledge, belonging to the specific body of knowledge constituted by philosophy.

As the repository of knowledge, language makes the emergence of theory possible. Theory is here defined, by a Berger-Luckmannian turn of phrase, as "a particular definition of reality" (1991, 141). However, language is not a sufficient condition for the rise of theory as it is also tied to social conditions. These are the division of labor and an economic surplus, both of which are required for the emergence of a "theoretical life." Theories are propounded by specialists who do not have to engage in any other productive activity, thanks to the accumulated economic surplus and the complex division of labor (1991, 98–99). When a particular theory becomes affiliated with the interest of specific social groups who can apply political pressure, it may be labeled as ideology. Ideologies can only be said to exist if there are several

competing interpretations of reality present simultaneously in a society (1991, 141).

Braggioni is the sort of specialist whose theory is also an ideology as it is closely connected to his Communist power interests and opposed to the bourgeoisie. His opulent garments and accessories, as well as his corpulence are signs of the accumulated economic surplus that he appropriated by arrogating the social prestige of specialists to himself and despite doing little else than concocting plots, giving speeches, and exhortations. His obesity is a marker not only of his affluence and social prestige but also of his physical inactivity, all of which characterize specialists in the Berger-Luckmannian sense. Braggioni's speech, delivered in a "hypnotic voice," condenses the ideology that underpins his ruthless exercise of power and justifies cruelty, paradoxically, with the ostensible aim to eradicate it: "Nothing shall survive that the stiffened hands of poverty have created for the rich and no one shall be left alive except the elect spirits destined to procreate a new world cleansed of cruelty and injustice, ruled by benevolent anarchy" (Porter 1993, 46). This utopian ideology legitimates the taking of both property and lives by ideologists like Braggioni.

Legitimation, explain Berger and Luckmann, serves the purpose of establishing logical connections between the disparate institutions so that they appear as a consistent institutional order that is "subjectively meaningful" to each individual. Therefore, legitimation can be defined as the "process of 'explaining' and justifying" institutions (1991, 110–111). There are four levels of legitimation. The first level consists of inventing words that designate particular institutions. The second level is comprised of basic theoretical explanations that are still closely attached to everyday practice, in the form of moral injunctions, wise sayings, and proverbs (112). An example of this is Braggioni's saying that "No woman need go begging," referring to the ease with which women may find lovers (Porter 1993, 46). At the third level of legitimation, explicit theories are formed to justify particular institutions. For instance, the industrialization of the agrarian society of Mexico is underpinned by the theory that "the machine is sacred, and will be the salvation of the workers" and the seemingly corrupt practices of revolutionary leaders are, in fact, proof of their "developed sense of reality" (35–36). Finally, the fourth level is constituted by symbolic universes, which are theories integrating "different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality" (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 113). In contrast to theories of legitimation, a symbolic universe has no direct reference to any pragmatic reality in everyday life, yet it extends to

all provinces of meaning, serving as an abstract explanation for all human experience (1991, 113–114). Braggioni's apocalyptic vision of a violently rearranged world which only the elect spirits will live to see is a case in point.

In addition to legitimating the institutional order, the symbolic universe plays a significant role in ordering the life of the individual. This function is especially important in terms of "marginal situations," when individuals encounter realities different from the ones experienced in everyday life such as dreams, irrational fears, and madness. Such situations threaten the reality of the routine existence established by the institutional order. The symbolic universe ensures that premonitions of the illusory nature of the comprehensible social order and the existence of a "night-side" reality can be convincingly categorized as insane thoughts and that the predominant validity of society's routinized existence remains intact (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 115–116). In other words, the symbolic universe helps individuals cope with their own psychic life by essentially denying it or, at the very least, by asserting the supremacy of institutional behaviors and roles over the inscrutable workings of the human psyche.

Even though the symbolic universe is designed to integrate marginal situations, it cannot fully protect against them. The psychic life of the individual, by reason of its extreme volatility and unknowable quality, makes individual identity precarious. Dreams and fantasies continuously threaten to engulf the subjectively experienced daylight reality of the institutional order (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 118). The most threatening marginal situation is the inevitability of one's own death and the death of significant others. Due to the terror that death holds for each individual, it posits the gravest threat to the institutional order and, consequently, the greatest challenge for the symbolic universe, which must set itself the task of "enabl[ing] the individual to go on living in society after the death of significant others and to anticipate his own death with, at the very least, terror sufficiently mitigated so as not to paralyze the continued performance of the routines of everyday life" (118–119). Berger and Luckmann lay special emphasis on the "terror-assuaging character" of symbolic universes, especially in terms of death, which is "the marginal situation *par excellence* for the individual." Aloneness also holds comparable terrors for people because they are fundamentally social animals. Ultimately, even the most terrifying marginal situations can be held at bay by the symbolic universe because "[o]n the level of meaning, the institutional order represents a shield against terror." However, if the individual refuses to accept the institutional order and cannot acquiesce in the explanations

provided by the symbolic universe, the individual is “exposed, alone, to the onslaught of nightmare” (119).

Laura is precisely this sort of isolated and exposed individual because her disillusionment in the Mexican revolution amounts to a downright rejection of its institutional order even though this repudiation remains carefully concealed from other people. Laura “is not at home in the world,” which means that she does not feel safe in the institutional order. She senses a constant, indeterminate threat, against which the symbolic universe, once rejected, can no longer protect her. This ubiquitous, amorphous sense of “disaster she fears, though she cannot name it” (Porter 1993, 42) crystallizes, in moments of acute tension, into the fear of death, “a purely physical sense of danger, a warning in her blood that violence, mutilation, a shocking death, wait for her with lessening patience” (37). Outside the pale of the symbolic universe, Laura “feels herself bogged in a nightmare” (45).

A recurring motif that amplifies Laura’s generalized claustrophobic anxiety is that of incarceration. The political prisoners, including Eugenio, who restlessly wait in their cells for deliveries of narcotics and messages from outside, are the only ostensible captives. However, other revolutionaries, who are technically free, but are hiding in deserted houses, in fear for their lives, thinking that they are being searched for and might be executed, are, in effect, also prisoners. Moreover, in a moment of insight before falling asleep, Laura regards herself as a jailor and her pupils as prisoners: “The children will say tomorrow, good morning, my teacher, the poor prisoners who come every day bringing flowers to their jailor” (Porter 1993, 48). In turn, Laura is also called a prisoner when she dreams of Eugenio talking to her: “Then eat these flowers, poor prisoner, said Eugenio in a voice of pity” (49). It seems that the institutional order of revolutionary Mexico is essentially carceral in nature, which is evocative of Baudrillard’s claim that “prisons are there to hide that it is the social in its entirety, in its banal omnipresence, that is carceral” (2006, 12). Laura’s recognition of the carceral quality of the institutional order has more serious consequences than mere disenchantment; this insight entails her expulsion from the symbolic universe.

Laura’s emotional paralysis is not exclusively her fault since the entire institutional order is “bogged” down and “transfixed” like herself. None of the characters seems to embrace the revolutionary cause with fervor, instead, they seem preoccupied with their own personal problems, stagnating in unresolved situations. The prisoners are anxious to be released from jail, or at least, to mitigate their terror and frustration by any means; the comrades still at large want to avoid imprisonment or execution; the starving peasants who

have newly joined the Communist organization wish to relieve their poverty by securing a well-paid job; even the comrades who feel relatively safe from persecution, such as the captain in Zapata's army and the shock-haired youth, an organizer of the Typographers Union, spend their time in ridiculous amorous dalliances as a way of killing time. However, the character that best encapsulates the immovability of an entrenched institutional order that remained fundamentally untouched by the external upheaval of the Mexican revolution is Mrs. Braggioni, who, despite ostensibly being an active trade union leader, spends most of her time lamenting her husband's infidelity. She is an embodiment of both female enslavement and learnt helplessness, and is also reminiscent of Mary Magdalen, when washing the feet of Braggioni, who is her personal savior (Unrue 2009, 80).

Betrayal is a crucial motif in the story and is inextricably intertwined with the problem of Laura's degree of culpability. West argues convincingly that Laura's disillusionment in both religion and Marxism resulted in a complete inability to believe (West 1993, 96). Despite her loss of faith, Laura goes on paying lip-service to both ideologies by secretly visiting churches to pray, and diligently carrying out her errands as a member of Braggioni's Communist organization. However, West also equates Laura with Judas Iscariot, condemning her as the story's arch-traitor who betrayed faith, love, and life, which are graver sins than Braggioni's self-serving cruelties and who is, unlike Braggioni, beyond redemption (1993, 96). In contrast, Unrue's assessment is more sympathetic to Laura and conveys a more balanced view. She contends that Laura's act of betrayal should be measured against the betrayals committed by other characters. Moreover, she should not be interpreted as a completely heartless woman but as one who feels compelled to withhold love as it would expose her to the brutality of men like Braggioni "who will grudgingly honor the ideal of chastity" in Laura as long as she remains unapproachable (144).

In terms of the Berger-Luckmannian social constructivist theory, Laura can be regarded as a "traitor to herself." Berger and Luckmann explain that the institutional order must be internalized by individuals, which entails a basic understanding of social reality. Internalization is implemented by means of socialization. As a result of primary socialization, which takes place in childhood and is based on strong emotional identification with significant others, a stable identity is formed. The child acquires language and accepts the basic legitimation theories, regarding them as natural. The impact of secondary socialization, the purpose of which is to acquire role-specific knowledge, is less profound and more precarious than that of primary

socialization since there is no emotional attachment to the socializing personnel and less identification with the role (1991, 149–167).

In many cases, however, especially in developed capitalist societies, socialization is unsuccessful due to a variety of reasons. Unsuccessful socialization, defined as an asymmetry between objective and subjective reality, occurs, for example, when the socializing personnel in primary socialization transmit discrepant worlds, that is, widely different interpretations of social reality. In this case, the child is presented with a choice of identities and a hidden, private self emerges along with the externally acknowledged, public self (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 187–189). While “all men, once socialized, are potential ‘traitors to themselves,’” the problem of self-betrayal is significantly complicated when a person has several selves: a public and a private one. Whenever this individual fulfills the duties belonging to one of his identities, he necessarily betrays the other (190). A similarly divided self can result from a discrepancy between primary and secondary socialization. There can be two possible results. In the first case, the individual is presented with several “alternative realities and identities” to choose from and he may subjectively identify with one that is not objectively attainable to him; consequently, his identification will be deemed “a foolish ambition.” In the second case, the individual will coldly and manipulatively display the signs of having internalized the institutional order transmitted in secondary socialization, without having done so (191–192).

The notion of unsuccessful socialization describes Laura’s situation fairly accurately, given that “she cannot help feeling that she has been betrayed irreparably by the disunion between her way of living and her feeling of what life should be” (Porter 1993, 35). Her primary socialization made her identify with Catholicism, whereas her subsequent pursuit of Communist revolutionary goals caused her to betray her Catholic self; nevertheless, she also compromises her Communist self by secretly remaining partly attached to her religious upbringing. In addition to this dilemma, she is also uncomfortably aware that her subjective identity as a member of the revolutionary movement is regarded as a foolish ambition by the people around her who “cannot understand why she is in Mexico” (39).

Even though the other characters, who are all Mexican, seem less divided in their identities than the American Laura, it must be noted that Laura’s betrayals that necessarily follow from a divided self, are by no means exceptional in modern societies. Berger and Luckmann contend that in industrial societies, an increasing array of discrepant worlds are on display, which necessarily results in the relativization of individuals’ perception of

social reality, thus, “one’s own” world “is now subjectively apprehended as ‘a world,’ rather than ‘the world.’” Consequently, there is less identification with roles and identities and more manipulative control of them, essentially establishing a society where individuals do not strongly identify with any one of their roles, merely acting as if they did (1991, 192). In this context, Laura’s divided self can be considered emblematic of modern individuality rather than anomalous. Ultimately, Laura’s character reflects and conveys the intractability of modern social realities in terms of subjective interiorization, resulting in maladjusted individuals, whose multiple and conflicting selves necessitate treacherous conduct and a resulting malaise both in the objective social realm and their internal, subjective world.

### References

- Baudrillard, Jean. 2006. *Simulacra and Simulation*, translated by Seila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Berger, Peter L., and Thomas Luckmann. 1991. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books.
- Givner, Joan. 1991. *Katherine Anne Porter: A Life*. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press.
- Graham, Don. 1990. “A Southern Writer in Texas: Porter and the Texas Literary Tradition.” In *Katherine Anne Porter and Texas: An Uneasy Relationship*, edited by Clinton Machann and William Bedford Clark, 58–71. College Station, Texas: Texas A & M University Press.
- Hacking, Ian. 2000. *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.
- Jiménez-Placer, Susana M. 2008. “Laura’s Unconscious Rejection of the Short Story in Katherine Anne Porter’s ‘Flowering Judas.’” In *Scribbling Women and the Short Story Form: Approaches by American and British Woman Writers*, edited by Ellen Burton Harrington, 112–127. Lausanne: Peter Lang.
- Knight, Alan. 1986. *The Mexican Revolution, Volume 1: Porfirians, Liberals and Peasants*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.
- Porter, Katherine Anne. 1993. “Flowering Judas.” In “*Flowering Judas*”: *Katherine Anne Porter*, edited by Virginia Spencer Carr, 31–49. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Sanderson, Stephen K. 2020. *Revolutions: A Worldwide Introduction to Political and Social Change*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Stout, Janis P. 1995. *Katherine Anne Porter: A Sense of the Times*. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia.

- . 2013. *South by Southwest: Katherine Anne Porter and the Burden of Texas History*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press.
- Tanner, James T. F. 1991. *The Texas Legacy of Katherine Anne Porter. Texas Writer Series Number Three*. Denton, Texas: University of North Texas Press.
- Titus, Mary. 1991. *The Ambivalent Art of Katherine Anne Porter*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.
- Unrue, Darlene Harbour. 1996. "Introduction." In *Katherine Anne Porter's Poetry*, edited with an introduction by Darlene Harbour Unrue, 1–62. Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press.
- . 1993. "Revolution and the Female Principle in 'Flowering Judas.'" In *"Flowering Judas,"* edited, with an introduction by Virginia Spencer Carr, 137–152. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- . 2010. "New York, Connecticut, and Mexico, 1920–1931." In *Katherine Anne Porter Remembered*, edited by Darlene Harbour Unrue, 35. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press.
- . 2009. *Truth and Vision in Katherine Anne Porter's Fiction*. Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press.
- Walsh, Thomas F. 1990. "From Texas to Mexico to Texas." In *Katherine Anne Porter and Texas: An Uneasy Relationship*, edited by Clinton Machann and William Bedford Clark, 72–85. College Station: Texas A & M University Press.
- . 1992. *Katherine Anne Porter and Mexico: The Illusion of Eden*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- West, Ray B., Jr. 1993. "Katherine Anne Porter: Symbol and Theme in 'Flowering Judas.'" *"Flowering Judas,"* edited, with an introduction by Virginia Spencer Carr, 89–97. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.





## 2.

# CENTRAL EUROPE: STORIES, IDENTITIES, AND TRANSFORMATIONS



Guilty Weekdays in Bačka (Bácska)  
The Figure of the Modern Detective under the Living Conditions  
in Sombor (Zombor) at the Turn of the Century

*Introduction*

Kornél Szenteleky, a prominent figure of Vojvodina (Vajdaság) literary life after Trianon, complains in his poem “My Life” (“Az életem”) (1923) about the uneventfulness of daily life in the village of Sivac (Ószivác), where he works as a doctor. The city he longs for is not Subotica (Szabadka), Novi Sad (Újvidék), Sombor (Zombor), or Zrenjanin (Nagybecskerek), but Paris. The poem “Night in Bačka” (“Bácskai éjjel”) (1928) reveals the spiritual loneliness in the village environment, for which self-cultivation, the study of the poetry of Hölderlin and Rimbaud, the paintings of van Gogh or the philosophical texts of Nietzsche are no cures. His passionate interpretation of the works, which can create a dialogue between the author and the receiver, does not replace the genuine milieu that appreciates intellectual achievements and inspires creators. However, “morbus anticulturalis” is considered a mass disease after the turn of the century, at least according to the journalist of the newspaper *Bácska* published in Sombor (Zombor) (Káich 1979, 70). At the start of the short-lived journal *Renaissance* in Zrenjanin (Nagybecskerek) (Németh 2018, 134–135) at the beginning of 1920, the editors did not see their long-term operation as promising. They write: “And whoever is bound here by fate has to ‘want it a hundred times more!’ because nothing has been done to fight out for something in this city yet. It’s like everything has just happened here. [. . .] No other pursuits have been successful here; they have just earned either deadly indifference or an elegant gesture of pity!” (editorial of *Renaissance* [1920/1] qtd. in Bori 2007, 70). Although becoming a minority has rearranged the framework of life, and we would probably be wrong if we tried to understand the relationship of the authors to their homeland or their narrower environment from these substantial statements; however, according to József J. Fekete, a writer and critic from Vojvodina, the words of the editors of the *Renaissance* are still valid today. He raises the question of whether “[the] time really casts such fine sand on the past that former lives become grey and monotonous, boring and uninteresting deserts in the course of the endlessly spinning minutes?” (2019, 119).

Vojvodina writers, like the authors of the other annexed parts of the country, are not able to connect to the Budapest-centred Hungarian literary life as a community, but only as individuals. In the words of the local and cultural historian of the city Sombor (Zombor), János Herceg: “Unfortunately, we cannot boast that we have created a home for ourselves in the unified Hungarian literature” (qtd. in Fekete 2015, 97). This fact should not lead to an averseness from one’s own literary past in Vojvodina or from literary aspirations seeking regional characteristics in living conditions in Bačka (Bácska), as long as the regional perspective does not lead to provincialism. Blowing away the sand that makes everything grey, it is worth re-examining the former lives in Bačka (Bácska) putting them in close perspective, whether they are real literary ancestors or a series of real-life situations mediated by fictional characters. Ottó Fenyvesi, who comes from Vojvodina but lives in Veszprém now and is the author of the book “*Reading Dead Vojvodinians*” (“*Halott vajdaságiakat olvasva*”), has taken the previous path. Róbert Hász, who also comes from Vojvodina and lives in Szeged now, has taken the latter path through the character of the detective Marcell Fábián, who used to work at the turn of the century in Sombor (Zombor). As the detective gets to places in the city and the neighborhood, where no one else can, this makes him a suitable tool for presenting the hard-to-perceive details of contemporary Sombor (Zombor) and the farming region surrounding the town.

### *Some Peculiarities of the Reception*

Róbert Hász, an acclaimed multi-volume fiction writer and editor-in-chief of the prestigious journal *Tiszatáj*, has surprised critics in recent years with a series of detective novels that have expanded into a now-closed trilogy. It was the readers’ expectations, rather than any preconceived plans, that prompted him to continue writing the story after the first volume. The volume “*The Thirteen Days of Pandour-Detective Fábián Marcell*” (“*Fábián Marcell pandúrdetektív tizenhárom napja*”) was published in 2018. The investigation takes place in Sombor (Zombor) and the farming region around the town. The following year, “*Marcell Fábián and the Dancing Death*” (“*Fábián Marcell és a táncoló halál*”) came out as a sequel. The threads of the investigation into the international criminal organization lead to Rijeka (Fiume), and also the American Pinkerton Detective Agency gets involved in the case in the person of John Halasz whose father served as Kossuth’s lieutenant in the unsuccessful war of independence. The book series was closed by the volume entitled “*Marcell Fábián and the Seven Sisters*” (“*Fábián Marcell és a*

*Hét nővér*”), published in 2022. The secret investigation then takes place in and around the Karátsonyi Castle in Novo Miloševo (Beodra) in Torontál County, which area is already under the jurisdiction of the Zrenjanin (Nagybecskerek) police. Solving the crime does not bode well for Fábíán. Since the head of the city police gets involved in the criminal case, the board is dissolved. Fábíán’s life is shattered, and his career prospects are ruined. He and his family emigrate to America, where, thanks to John Halasz, he becomes a Pinkerton detective. At the end of the volume, Marcell Fábíán bids goodbye to the reader, writing a letter of farewell from America in August 1904.

Hász reveals that he did not originally set out to write a detective story, but started working on a turn-of-the-century novel, whose storyline was supposed to be a family secret. Nevertheless, in the process, the character of Marcell Fábíán took shape, and the planned novel became a crime story (Rácz 2020). The text that has been created can arouse the interest of readers from neighboring nations or even more distant nations when translated into Central European languages. It would be a misunderstanding to consider the story’s connection to the West Bačka (Bácska) countryside as provincialism.

The detective story, crime fiction as a genre is subject to strict rules. However, it is clear from the first moment that it is not a genre novel. With this, Hász teaches his critics a lesson, since they have to find the right terminology to identify the work. The attempts of the critics aim at the question of where the work can be placed on a scale whose endpoints are the genre novel traditionally underestimated in Hungarian literature and the fine literary work born along aesthetic ambitions, respectively. The turn-of-the-century Sombor (Zombor) and its surroundings in Bačka (Bácska) serve not only as a backdrop for the plot (Nagygéci Kovács 2022); they are almost constantly present in palpable proximity. Since the events take place in them, they also shape the events. Moreover, this is a literary achievement, which is not limited to the application of the rules of the genre masterful as it may be. According to one of his critics, Éva Bánki, Hász “included the town of Sombor in Vojvodina in the Hungarian literature at the turn of the 19th–20th century” (Bánki 2020). However, the audience’s success raises the suspicion that the text should be approached from the perspective of crime fiction; at least this is what its categorization as a historical detective story (Gökhan 2019) suggests. This is supported by the fact that it reads well, but this feature is not only related to the investigation of the series of crimes that constitute a crime thread. The book actually makes you read thanks to the mood and atmosphere of the text (Farkas 2020, 99). A novel

is created that avoids the scope of the juxtaposition of low (popular) and high culture (Patyrek 2018, 15). The fact that we can read Hász's Marcell Fábián stories both as crime novels and as works of fiction, raises his texts from the tradition of crime literature as an exclusive interpretive framework. Although the volumes go beyond the horizon of expectations for a crime novel, Ferenc Zsidó believes that the publication of the second volume can push the work toward popular culture, since popular culture is characterized by serial thinking. His approach takes the temporal process of interpretation into account and leaves the question open, in which direction the group of volumes will gravitate because of the later reception (Zsidó 2020, 175).

### *The Shaping of the Character of the Detective*

Marcell Fábián's personality does not appear in an intrusive manner in the course of the plot although he is the main character in the stories. He was born in the year of the Compromise (1867), he is still a young man in his thirties, married, but childless for the time being. His defining characteristic is the absence of character. In a kind of annoying way, he is neither fish nor fowl in the eyes of his colleagues. At one point in the story, he tries to do something about it, namely like the characteristic deputy chief of police also he buys a walking stick. However, he does not see the silver-tipped cane as a practical tool to make walking easier but as a permanent accessory that shapes the personality and lends character. Sometimes he responds to vexation by cursing and in this case, instead of his usual tact and good manners, his temper makes his behavior more colorful, which makes it easier to relate to him as to a real person.

The lack of character may be a projection of an inherent inner insecurity, which is related to Fábián's lack of origin. He does not know anything about his parents. After being abandoned by his mother on the steps of St. Stephen's Cathedral as a few months old baby, he was entrusted to the care of the church, and the Carmelite sisters, the chief elder, and Father László raised him. He has an intimate relationship with the Catholic faith, growing up in a Catholic environment; he is intended to be a priest, but he devotes himself to the worldly service of truth. With a city scholarship, he studies law in Pest and then returns home to become a drafter at the public prosecutor's office in the Town Hall. From there, he transfers to the city police, which was formed a few years earlier than the time of the story in 1902; this body is in a competence dispute with the gendarmerie, which has had its own history and stable reputation already. Following the change of profession,

Fábián's headquarters are moved from the ground floor of the Town Hall to the department that opens from the second-floor corridor.

He does not experience the lack of origin as freedom from inherited bonds, as freedom from the constraint of a map drawn by the hands of others that delimits the possibilities of life, i.e., as freedom of self-determination, but as a heavy existential burden. This spurs him into a manic action, which fills his wife with understandable concern, who allows him strictly on Monday evenings only to retreat to the small room of the family nest to research his own origins. If at some point in our lives, we become our father's character, as Mr. Winter, his police colleague, claims, then Fábián is looking for the original of the model he embodies. However, he is also uncertain about the pattern of his behavior. He asks his wife to compile a list of his personality traits, from which he creates the profile to which he can later assign the identity of the as-yet-unknown father. Fábián describes the gnawing lack of origin as a void, a dark pit in his soul. It is as if some vital organ were missing. The part of the soul where other people keep the memory of their parents is just the mouth of a bottomless well.

The listing reflects the duo of Doctor Watson and Sherlock Holmes, as in the episode published in Hungarian under the titles "*Brixton Mystery*" and "*A Study in Scarlet*," Watson (Conan Doyle 1919, 7–8) presents Holmes's personality to the reader in a similar way. It also evokes the archetypal investigation of Western culture towards ourselves from the time of antiquity, the story of Oedipus. Krisztián Benyovszky examines all the elements that make Fábián's fulfilling destiny similar to the story of Oedipus in terms of the investigation into his own past (Benyovszky 2018, 67–68). The major similarities are: One of the parents leaves the nameless, few months old baby to his fate on the steps of the church, although the mother does not want to lose him. A personalized prophecy is made two times under unusual circumstances, however, the secret will not be revealed for Fábián in time. At the end of the first volume, as part of the big showdown, he kills his father in self-defense, the person he has been looking for all along, without knowing whose life he is taking.

### *A Pandour-Detective Practicing His Profession*

In the years after the turn of the century, the police in Sombor (Zombor), as opposed to the gendarmerie, was still a new and less familiar institution. The mutual distrust between the two bodies can be seen in action, which manifests itself in jurisdictional disputes and excesses of authority, as well

as in the scheming behavior of the gendarmerie chief. Administrative subordination and the resulting degradation were also initially rooted in case management practice, because the gendarmerie assigned to the police, in addition to the unsolved cases, all the other cases that for some reason the gendarmerie did not want to deal with.

The urban citizens also distrust the police, since the detectives are invisible and cannot be distinguished from other citizens. They do not wear uniforms; they wear their identification badges under their coat lapels. Compared to them, the gendarmes are easily identifiable; as they wear uniforms and cock-feather headdresses, ride horses, and they march through the city center in the morning with a ritual that is typical of them. They demand the respect that they are beautiful and elegant. Police work, however, is not straightforward and courteous. Another source of distrust is the manifold composition of the urban police force. The chief of police, who does not show up for work, is an Imperial Austrian; the deputy chief of police is the son of a Serbian merchant in Vienna. The Orthodox Veszelinovics Milorád has two subordinates who are the Swabian reformed Mr. Winter, the former boxer and gendarme who became a policeman, and the Hungarian Catholic Marcell Fábíán, the former drafter at the prosecutor's office. The father-in-law distrusts Fábíán's profession because, in his opinion, it is impossible to know whether the institutional status of the detective will become viable in the "moss-clad" Hungarian world. In the father-in-law's specific language, "moss-clad" is by no means a negative attribute; it means a pillar of reliability, predictability, and a predictable future, and in that respect, it is questionable to what extent Fábíán as a detective can provide the rightfully expected financial background for the relative well-being of his family.

Thanks largely to Fábíán's commitment to dactyloscopy, the investigative methods of the police try to keep up with the modern age. Despite this, in the course of the investigation, acts are nevertheless committed, which seriously contravene the Staff Regulations, either with a view to restoring honor or as a result of custom or they use unauthorized means that the locals understand. The latter include verbal threats, causing unpredictable shock and intimidation, and the use of physical force, courtesy of Mr. Winter. The latter is an intellectually simple but understandable form of restoring order. One of the examples of how honor can be recovered is that murder should not go unpunished. Taking revenge that is incumbent on the family or relatives of the victim cannot be avoided even if you are a deputy police chief. In this case, the radical excess of authority is an expected duty. Sombor (Zombor) police have no business in Bačko Novo Selo (Bácsújlak) in the southern part of the region,

on the banks of the Danube, at the place of service of Milorád's uncle who is the orthodox priest in the settlement. During the investigation, Milorád shoots the murderers with his service weapon. Then they falsify a report and pretend to have prevented an escape attempt, of which Fábíán is part.

The police work in cooperation with the prosecutor's office, and they have an obligation to provide information to it; the prosecutor Elek Gozdsu sets expectations regarding the course of the investigation, and then, at the end of the investigation, the police will hand over the case to the prosecuting attorney's office. The joint work covers aspects that serve to protect public peace, which turns the representation of truth based on facts into case management. In addition to his work as a prosecutor, Elek Gozdsu, who also works as a fiction writer, tries to make Fábíán, who has a troubled conscience, understand the necessity of handling cases in this way with a creativity-psychological parallel: "I don't always write what I want to write, but what I can. Sometimes the subject, the idea, is beyond my capabilities. In such cases, I let the text carve out a path for itself that I can follow. Moreover, I try to make the most of what is left. [. . .] We produce stories and try to make them believable" (Hász 2018, 309). The deliberate deviation from the Staff Regulations is not motivated by immorality, but rather it protects trust in the existing social order. Milorád, who feels both the distrust of the Hungarian and the Serbian population, explains that he serves the order maintained by Vienna, whether against Hungarian or Serbian national aspirations. In his opinion, only Vienna can guarantee the framework of coexistence, setting limits for the nations of the Monarchy.

Although distrust towards the institution of the police has sometimes a moral tinge, the detective persona is considered an accessory of the modern world in Sombor (Zombor) and can be interpreted in the moral dimension as well. That is when the detective becomes a romantic hero. In the modern world, the detective fights to maintain the moral order like the knights in the Middle Ages. However, it is often not easy to reconcile the results of the legal proceedings of the judiciary system with the moral order in the soul. This is the source of arbitrary behavior. At one point in the novel, the priest's and the policeman's professions are paralleled on the grounds that both are opposed to crime. Nevertheless, as long as the father confessor is able to offer spiritual absolution for the sin committed, the policeman cannot act similarly. The arbitrary authentication of the story, separating the real and the official versions, is for letting the police give someone a free pass, who although legally not liable, on the other hand, would be morally responsible for the consequences of his actions and public opinion would

drag that person's name through the mire. In such cases, the police ensures anonymity. This is the case of Chief Prosecutor Elek Gozsdu, whose series of love letters to a young girl will trigger tragic events, but his role in the case is not mentioned in the case file. Fábíán, however, after handing the recovered letters to Gozsdu in private, makes it clear that they see the significance of what Gozsdu did, thus also his responsibility in the process leading to the tragedy. However, Fábíán cannot relieve the morally sensitive Attorney General from this burden, who is relieved to note the discretion of the police.

The secret life and irresponsible behavior of the gendarmerie commander Dezsó Bánáti also violate the moral order. His lifestyle is contrary to public morality, namely, as a member of a group of drunken friends shooting irresponsibly, they unintentionally take the life of a young man transporting goods with a horse-drawn carriage. They do not even know whose bullet has killed the victim. Years later, someone sets out to do justice to this case exacting the rightful revenge. The police have initially investigated individual murder cases, however, they start looking for a serial killer later on. Before it would be Bánáti's turn, the gendarmerie captain commits suicide. Although Bánáti is guilty, he is not immoral. He fully perceives the weight of his old deed when he says: "Nothing can go wrong here! The trouble happened a long time ago, now the order of the world will be restored!" (Hász 2018, 228). Since sin appears within the framework of a perceptible moral order, the possibility of doing justice is given, which may involve a lawful process of investigation and justice, the arbitrary behavior of the police, which is difficult to prove, or someone's legitimate, although not legal, revenge.

### *The Town and Its Surroundings*

In the early years of the 20th century when Hász's detective stories unfold, the small town in today's Serbia is in its prime. Sombor (Zombor) in western Bačka (Bácska) is the seat of Bács-Bodrog County within the Kingdom of Hungary. Due to the large number of county officials and the milieu created by them, it is also called a genteel town. This does not change the fact that Sombor (Zombor), far from the imperial centers of Vienna and Budapest, is a godforsaken place, which is surrounded by the flat countryside of Bačka (Bácska) and the farms scattered in it. Viewing it from Pest, the dusty and muddy world of Bačka (Bácska) is "a blank spot on the map, a kind of terra incognita, like Africa used to be for the Europeans" (Hász 2019, 11). The population is ethnically diverse. Due to the Hungarian public administration that existed until the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the

defining element was the Hungarian ethnicity, although Serbs are in a slight majority in Sombor (Zombor). However, behind the existing order of happy times of peace, there is a lack of trust between the ethnic groups; thus, the question of ethnicity becomes important for each person.

However, you can love Sombor (Zombor) and the Bačka (Bácska) landscape, which cannot be said to be diverse in its natural features, but it is able to awaken homesickness in those who are away. This is what Marcell Fábíán also experiences during his trip to Rijeka (Fiume): “For him, summer and heat meant Elisabeth Park and the foamy draft beer on the terrace of the *White Ship*’s. A sort of melancholic sadness came over him whenever he thought of Milorád and Mr. Winter; he imagined them with beer mugs in their hands, with the leaves of the old sycamore trees rustling above their heads [. . .]” (Hász 2019, 14). The landscape can also reveal its secrets to the eyes of strangers since what is taken for granted by the natives is by no means the same for a stranger. Elek Gozsdu, the transferred chief prosecutor and good observer, makes an important statement about the relationship between the Bačka (Bácska) landscape and the people who live here: “[There is] something in Bačka’s world that you cannot find anywhere else. I used to live among mountains. The mountains are majestic. It’s like connecting the sky with the earth. On the other hand, they are too boastful, they attract, and they capture the attention of the observer. However, here, where there are no mountain ridges to raise the gaze, only endless arables [. . .]; here, the people of the countryside come to the fore, they add flavor, texture, and character to the landscape, not the other way around” (Hász 2019, 53). There is, therefore, the Bačka (Bácska) man as a type, who makes the landscape distinctive through his own character. However, this type of person is not bound by ethnicity. Ethnicity only further differentiates and embellishes this character. Fábíán understands Gozsdu’s attachment to the lowlands; although for him, it is the self-evident natural medium of life. He is experimenting with a vision test to experience how the eyes of the person who sees it for the first time perceive the Bačka (Bácska) landscape. These eyes “[also] are dismayed when they realize how exposed they are to the gaze of God, that there is nothing to hide, nothing to hide behind. The concave lens of the sky weighs down on him, like that of a telescope, behind which the attention of the all-seeing eye never wanes” (Hász 2019, 59). Fábíán’s Catholic upbringing and his resulting sensibility and imagination basically shape the interpretation of perception. It sums up the spectacle of the sparkling summer sky. The world is permeated by a moral order based on transcendence, and this is what unfolds before his eyes. In this case, the relationship between landscape and

people is reversed. According to Fabián's perception, it is rather the specific natural environment that shapes the people of Bačka (Bácska). In any case, both viewpoints establish a natural relationship between man and landscape or between landscape and man.

The Bačka (Bácska) landscape bathed in sunlight forms a translucent optical medium, however, from the late autumn days, the meteorological conditions, as well as from the early evening hours, the technical equipment in the public space create different states of visibility and concealment, of light and shadow. From the summer sun to November, it will be just a pale disk, a colorless silver coin just looming through the clouds. When the fog descends, a dense wall moving with the observer changing position blocks the view. Electric lighting will be introduced soon, but at the time of the stories, the apartments are lit with kerosene lamps. Moreover, outside, gas lamps illuminate the streets and squares of the city. However, there have already been experiences with electric lighting. It is known that in closed spaces, light coming from a new direction, i.e., from above, changes the character of faces. It sets them in a bright light, but it creates a deceptive, false appearance compared with the familiar features that are outlined in the dim light of a kerosene lamp. Outside in the evening hours, pedestrians moving between the light balls of the gas lamps, sometimes disappear and sometimes appear, or avoid the light balls in the dark. In addition, the degree of visibility of things is an uncertain shadow. It is therefore possible to hide and make an unexpected raid, and you do not have to bear the burden of the gaze of the all-seeing heavenly eye.

### *Conclusion*

The question is what kind of knowledge is revealed when the author Róbert Hász depicts the naturalness of the duty of revenge. Is he writing about one of the surviving habits of Bačka's (Bácska) archaic relationships at the turn of the century, or do patches of memories of the Balkan war of the end of the century come to life in it? In fact, Hász fled from Bačka (Bácska), which is now Serbia, to Hungary in 1991 to escape the war. Whether the later war experience be projected onto the peaceful, but in the background restless, ethnically complex Hungarian world depicted in the novels? Whether it is so or not, this dilemma points out that detective stories cannot be considered a source of local history knowledge that renders source criticism redundant. Hász deliberately confuses the reader, who sometimes tries to navigate through old maps, because, in addition to the many precise descriptions, it

guides the reader to places that have never existed or ignores the topography of the city, indicating all along that this is fiction. However, this fiction sounds similar to the original, of which we have no personal memories.

### References

- Bánki, Éva. 2020. "Téboly Zomborban?" *ÚjNautilus*. <http://ujnautilus.info/teboly-zomborban-hasz-robert-fabian-marcell-es-a-tancolo-halal>.
- Benyovszky, Krisztián. 2018. "Oidipusz Zomborban." *Opus* 10 (6): 66–69.
- Bori, Imre. 2007. *A jugoszláviai magyar irodalom története*. Újvidék: Fórum Könyvkiadó.
- Conan Doyle, Arthur. 1919. *A brixtoni rejtély*. Budapest: Érdekes Ujság.
- Farkas, Anita. 2020. "Ördög a részletekben." *Magyar Krónika* 7 (5): 99.
- Fekete, József J. 2015. "Jellegtelenségükben jellegzetes zombori figurák: Herceg János szülővárosáról." *Forrás* 47 (12): 90–101.
- . 2019. Review of *Halott vajdaságiakat olvasva I-II.*, written by Ottó Fenyvesi. *Forrás* 52 (1): 119–122.
- Gökhan, Ayhan. 2019. "A történelmi krimi reneszánsza." *Kultúra.hu*. <https://kultura.hu/tortenelmi-krimi/>.
- Hász, Róbert. 2018. *Fábián Marcell pandúrdetektív tizenhárom napja*. Budapest: Kortárs.
- . 2019. *Fábián Marcell és a táncoló halál*. Budapest: Kortárs.
- . 2022. *Fábián Marcell és a Hét nővér*. Budapest: Kortárs.
- Káich, Katalin. 1979. *Szabad líceumok Bácskában és Bánátban*. Újvidék: Magyar Nyelv, Irodalom és Hungarológiai Kutatások Intézete.
- Nagygéci Kovács, József. 2022. "Egy békétlen kisváros a boldog békeidőkben." *Bárka*. <http://barkaonline.hu/kritika/8248-egy-beketlen-kisvarosa-boldog-bekeid-kben---hasz-robert-regenyeir-l>.
- Németh, Ferenc. 2018. "1919: A kisebbségi irodalmi öneszmélés éve Nagybecskerekén: Adalék a vajdasági magyar irodalom kezdeteihez." *Hungarológiai Közlemények* 19 (3): 128–138.
- Patyerek, Réka. 2018. "Hász Róbert: Fábián Marcell pandúrdetektív tizenhárom napja." *Vajdasági Előretolt helyőrség* 1(2): 15.
- Rác, Péter I. 2020. "Monarchiabeli krimik – Hász Róbert Fábián Marcell pandúrdetektívről." *Népszava*. [https://nepszava.hu/3076290\\_monarchiabeli-krimik--hasz-robert-fabian-marcell-pandurdetektivrol](https://nepszava.hu/3076290_monarchiabeli-krimik--hasz-robert-fabian-marcell-pandurdetektivrol).
- Szenteleky, Kornél. 1993. "Bácskai éjjel." *Híd* 57 (7–8): 464–465.
- . 1993. "Az életem." *Híd* 57 (7–8): 487–488.
- Zsidó, Ferenc. 2020. "Bűnös (?) olvasói élvezet." *Székelőföld* 24 (4): 170–175.



## The Romanian Greek Catholic Church A Bridge between East and West

Romania is the only “Latin Orthodox” country. Orthodox histories accentuate Romanian exceptionalism and self-sufficiency; the Romanian nation’s history, as constructed by the Romanian Orthodox Church, emphasizes Romanians’ ancient Christian origins and their uniqueness from the rest of the people in East-Central-Europe, as the only Latin Orthodox nation. Although the Orthodox view of history forms now the dominant discourse in Romania, there is one contending discourse, namely, the view of history by the Greek Catholic Church, which has been again contesting the dominant discourse of the Romanian Orthodox Church since 1989 by emphasizing Transylvania’s spiritual similarity with and the share in the historic heritage of Catholic Western Europe.

The points of contention between the two rival Romanian histories reveal the two constructions of Romanian nationhood: (1) the Transylvanian awakening movements initiated by the Romanian Greek Catholic clergy that created a civil society, and (2) the bureaucratic, pragmatic nationalism of Old Romania that was extended to Transylvania after 1920.

Both the Orthodox and the Greek Catholic churches claim to represent Romanian nationhood. Starting from the common point of the “continuous existence” of the Romanian people north of the Danube after the decline of the Roman Empire, the two histories diverge on almost every other point. While the Romanian Orthodox Church sees the Latin language and Catholic missionary expansion as the significant enemy “other” for the construction of Romanian nationhood, the Greek Catholic Church constructs Latinity and connection to Rome as the essence of Romanian nationhood, a nation strongly connected to Europe.

The rivalry between these two histories of Transylvanian Romanians offers two important insights into the relationship between Church, State, and Nation: first, the image of the “Orthodox Nation” based on singularity, isolationism, and independence is rivaled by the image of the “Catholic Nation,” emphasizing European values and traditional Catholic

trans-nationalism; second, throughout centuries of interaction between churches, political powers, and societies, two critical junctures of illustrative imagological argument are identified as follows:

1. The first juncture took place in 1698 through the creation of the Greek Catholic Church in Transylvania, which is portrayed by Orthodox history as a “tragic” occurrence, through which Romanian Orthodox people were “forced” to convert to Catholicism, Orthodox doctrinal unity was then shattered. However, the acceptance of a combination of Catholicism and Orthodoxy shows that the Romanian Orthodox Church was not a unitary actor, and its political strategy was influenced by the local, Transylvanian context.
2. The second juncture is the instauration of the communist dictatorship in Romania after the Second World War. According to Byzantine Orthodox tradition, the Romanian Orthodox Church should have resisted the totalitarian invitations for collaboration; nevertheless, a significant part of the Romanian Orthodox Church clergy showed eagerness to collaborate with the regime, as demonstrated by Sabrina Ramet (2004) and Dennis Deletant (1995). Ultimately, it was the unique nationalist nature of Romanian communism that led to maintaining the privileged status of the Romanian Orthodox Church during the atheist dictatorship, says Ramet (281). Consequently, when, after the collapse of communism, successive Romanian governments preserved the privileged status of the Orthodox Church, they attracted criticism from the part of the Greek Catholic Church that accused them of continuing communist-type policies.

In 1688, Transylvania officially recognized the patronage of the Catholic Habsburg family. At that time, there were five Christian denominations in Transylvania: Calvinist-Reformed, Lutheran, Unitarian, Catholic, and Orthodox. The first three religions had a privileged status, while the latter two were tolerated. After the official incorporation of Transylvania into the Habsburg Empire, Catholicism again became a privileged denomination: the Romanian Greek Catholic Church arose in that context, the major reason behind the Transylvanian Orthodox Church accepting the union with Rome was obtaining political and social advantages, however, the unification was framed in terms of a “natural return” to the Mother Church of Rome.

The Romanians of Transylvania, as a non-dominant ethnic group of the Habsburg Monarchy, went through three stages of national movement

development, which—even though they are overlapping in time—are still distinguishable. The following, partly overlapping periods can be considered as starting points:

1. the foundation of the Daco-Romanian theory (from the early 18th century until 1848);
2. the period of “awakening” (between 1792 and 1867);
3. the pluralization of the Romanian national movement (between 1848/49 and 1918).

The first phase giving birth to the origin myth—the thesis of the Roman origin of Romanians—began with the establishment of the Greek Catholic Church in Transylvania. The Transylvanian School (in Romanian: *Școala Ardeleană*) developed this into a real theoretical program (Macintyre et al. 2011, 352). The famous members of the School, Samuil Micu-Klein, Gheorghe Șincai, and Petru Maior published most of their works between 1780 and 1825. These historical and linguistic writings claimed the Roman origin of Romanians; in addition, they prepared the modern grammar of the Romanian language.

The second phase, the period of “awakening” and agitation, was characterized by the appearance of the representatives of the evolving Romanian civil society alongside the Transylvanian Greek Catholic elite. At that time, the first Romanian-language papers were published in Transylvania, which helped to spread the idea of Roman origin. In 1779, the first religious book printed in Latin characters was published in Vienna (Hitchins 1964, 660–675). As a result, the Transylvanian Greek Catholic Church was the first to introduce the new Romanian writing system, by replacing the Cyrillic alphabet with Latin characters.

The third phase, the pluralization of the Romanian national movement at the level of political institutionalization, began with the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867. Due to the legal framework provided by the political compromise, Hungarian politics clearly adopted the French nation-state model, thus opposing the “communitarian” modernization efforts of Transylvanian Romanians, who had established their own model of “equal nations,” using the framework of Transylvanian estates as a basis. Another aspect of pluralization was the transformation of the national ideology and the modification of the origin myth. This was an important turning point because the ideological connection between the Transylvanian and Moldavian-Wallachian (Old Romanian) national movements—of course, only at the level of the elites—was established. This affected the

transformation of the Latinist paradigm (the idea of a pure Roman origin), which began around 1850.

On 1 December 1948, by Law No 358/1948 on the establishment of the legal situation of the former Greek Catholic cult, the denomination was considered dissolved and its possessions were transferred to the state, except the properties of the Romanian Greek Catholic parishes, which were transferred into the patrimony of the Romanian Orthodox Church. The promulgation of this Law marked the 250th anniversary of the Transylvanian “Romanian Church’s” union with the Roman Catholic Church. By that law, the communist regime arranged for the “voluntary” and “spontaneous” transfer of all members of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church to the Romanian Orthodox Church; church property was thereupon divided between the Orthodox Church and the State.

At that date, the Greek Catholic Church in Transylvania was composed of approximately 1,5 or 2 million members, five bishops, an auxiliary bishop, and 1,834 priests. The denominations had five cathedrals, three theological academies, over 1,900 parishes, and more than 2,600 places of worship. Its nine orders had 28 monasteries, with 424 monks and nuns. Greek Catholics operated 20 high schools for boys and 14 high schools for girls. According to the first population census in modern Romania, 12% of Romanians were Greek Catholic in 1930 (Bota and Tertulian 1993, 32). According to the 2011 Romanian census, the number of its followers in Romania was as low as 150,593, of which 124,563 were ethnic Romanians (Rațiu 1996, 32). The Greek Catholic Church has contested every census since 1989, as they estimate their numbers at 488,000.

Until Dictator Ceaușescu’s spectacular fall in December 1989, Romania’s surviving Greek Catholics rarely revealed their faith. Their last known bishops, jailed as “class enemies,” died in prison or under house arrest. Due to international pressure, in 2003, the Romanian state started to enforce the law on the restitution of property to the Greek Catholic Church, and consequently, the latter now has access to about ten percent of its former places of worship. Father Nicolae Anusca, the delegate by the Greek Catholic Church to a Transylvanian consultation on church property issues of minority churches in Romania, stated:

The artificial dissension created between the two Romanian churches appeared chiefly because of the elusiveness manifested by the state throughout the past years. The solution to this problem remains the duty of the state, which confiscated our properties, and does not constitute the subject of a dialogue between the two

churches (i.e., Orthodox and Greek Catholic), a dialogue, which in the past years has proven to be *sterile* and inefficient. (n.d.)

In 2022, 33 years after the fall of the communist dictatorship, the Greek Catholic Church has not been restituted over 90% of its former property that was confiscated by the totalitarian regime in 1948.

### References

- Anusca, Nicolae. n.d. Archives of the Királyhágómellék Reformed Church District. Manuscript.
- Bota, Ioan, and Langa Tertulian. 1993. *Scurta informare cu privire la ființa și rolul Bisericii Române Unite, "Greco-catolica"* [Background to the Establishment and Mission of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church]. Cluj-Napoca: Viata Crestina.
- Deletant, Dennis. 1995. *Ceaușescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965–1989*. London: M.E. Sharpe.
- Hitchins, Keith. 2014. *A Concise History of Romania*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Macintyre, Stuart, Daniel Woolf, Andrew Feldherr, Juan Maiguashca, Grant Hardy, Pók Attila, Ian Hesketh, eds, 2011. *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*. Vol. 4. Oxford: Oxford University Publishing,
- Ramet, Sabrina, 2004. "Church and State in Romania before and after 1989." In *Romania Since 1989: Politics, Economics, and Society*, edited by Henry F. Carey, 275–295. Washington: Lexington Books.
- Rațiu, Alexandru. 1996. *Persecuția Bisericii Române Unite* [The Persecution of the Romanian Greek Catholic Church]. Oradea: Editura Imprimeriei de Vest.



## The Folklore of Children in Transylvanian Regions

Folklorists have always been the most motivated in collecting materials on the verge of disappearing, materials in which the creations of children have always been integrated, knowing that even if they do not disappear, they change very quickly and radically over time, risking that the once “outdated” productions may not be recoverable. In the research of children’s folklore, the first book exclusively dedicated to the field appeared in the United States, authored by William W. Newell. His work, *The Games and Songs of American Children*, published in 1883, is the only research published by the American folklorist. In his desire not to let children’s folklore creations and games be forgotten, Newell collected them in his book, seeing in them “reminiscences of a more distant history” (Opie and Opie 1963, 10). In this way, the research of children’s folklore becomes a means of researching and reconstructing the beginnings of human history. Counting games were seen as echoes over time of the ancient practices of choosing a victim for sacrifice; in the verses of choosing a partner, remnants of bride abduction customs can be recognized; in some games, one can see the old rituals of sacrificing a human being at the foundation of any long-lasting structure. Similarly, the ancient offerings made to the gods, with their own rituals, can be seen in children’s folklore games and texts; the numerous games of confrontation between two groups of children speak of the eternal conflict between good and evil, always ending in popular belief with the victory of good; in a similar fashion, in children’s games, one can discern the remnants of numerous rites and religious ceremonies of primitive people. In this direction, the research work of James Frazer provides numerous examples.

In the subsequent stages of researching children’s folklore, even though researchers have abandoned the idea of discovering remnants of the past and explaining or speculating about them, they have retained their interest in this aspect of folk creativity, now seeking to emphasize its literary, educational, or social values. However, the habit of discussing children’s games in accordance with their probable origin has persisted in contemporary concerns, even

becoming a working method. Among the new research efforts at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the painstaking work of Alicia B. Gomme stands out, resulting in the publication of two extensive volumes titled *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. Gomme was convinced that children's games and, in general, their folk expressions, originated from adult folklore. Children usually adopt these games when they lose their significance for adults and preserve them intact over the centuries due to their remarkable ability to be conservators.

Regarding the emergence of children's folklore, the British researcher provides arguments related to "children taking over the popular creations of adults and adapting them to their own needs" (Gomme 1964, 76)—an idea that will later be adopted and further developed by Roger Caillois. He demonstrates in his work that "we cannot be sure that in prehistory, children did not play with bows, clubs, or arrows – just for the sake of play, while their parents used them for real (to use a phrase from children's jargon) [. . .] Monopoly does not entirely follow but reproduces essential traits of capitalism" (Caillois 1961, 61–62). Therefore, from the oldest to the most recent children's games, there are enough clues not to see in them merely a degradation of adults' practices but, rather, two different levels of perception and appropriation of reality in play and everyday life. In India, for example, a child plays on a swing while nearby, a monk conducting a religious ceremony swings with devotion the statue of Kama or Krishna. To this day, children, especially boys, play "soldiers" without the army as a well-defined entity of each state. Many other examples could be cited that, to this day, provide new arguments for Caillois' idea that the structure of play and reality are often identical, but the activities each involves are not reducible to one another in time or space. They always unfold in spaces of reality that are incompatible.

In recent research, the Opie spouses suggest that the two different opinions about the origin of children's folklore can be reconciled. Taking as an example the counting rhymes and the games that accompany them, it is noted that modernization has affected their content, but their form has remained virtually the same. For this reason, the study of the origins of games remains interesting, not with the aim of reconstructing history but with the intention of illustrating the continuity of human nature in its cultural development.

The concept of play, as defined by psychologists, is an activity that is voluntary and has no other purpose than itself. There are four aspects worth considering in defining play. Firstly, psychologists distinguish the attitudes and dispositions of the child. The child exhibits intrinsic motivation, meaning

they engage in playing a game because the activity itself is pleasurable and reinforcing, rather than for the attainment of a specific outcome. No adult can command a child to play; no one needs to teach a child to play—it occurs naturally. Secondly, children are generally more interested in doing things than in producing something. This is where the distinction between work and play lies. Work may involve the same activities as play, but it aims at results, which can be gained as a result of the activity. Adults often become confused about the difference between work and play, because many enjoyable activities can lead to outcomes other than pleasure, and many seemingly purposeless activities can be unpleasant. However, no child will ever find it difficult to distinguish between play and work. Thirdly, a game resembles the activities of everyday life but also differs from them in that it is not necessarily tied to reality. However, it is not impossible for a child to become so engrossed in play that they momentarily forget they are not in the real world. Finally, games seem to be governed by implicit rules that can easily be discerned by observing children's activities. These rules, of course, only exist within the context of the specific game-activity.

In the field of psychology, there are three major approaches to understanding play: the psychoanalytic approach, the theory of learning, and cognitive theory. Each of these approaches offers unique insights into the nature and significance of playing games in a child's development. The psychoanalytic theory emphasizes the social and emotional significance of play in early childhood. Firstly, play provides the child with the opportunity to “master problems by rearranging objects and social situations in different ways” (Erikson 1965, 178), allowing them to imagine that they have control over everything. Play also allows the child to satisfy desires that cannot be fulfilled in reality, through fantasy. It provides the child with a framework in which they gain increased power over their environment by acting upon it to fit their needs and abilities. In play, the child attempts various tasks or activities that they cannot carry out in reality. The psychoanalytic theory focuses more on the importance of fantasy and inner experiences within play and somewhat neglects the potential changes that can result. Behaviorists view play as an activity in which a child can safely try out new behaviors and social roles. In play, “the child progressively learns the social skills necessary for the future adult” (Bonchiş 2000, 292), both through the successive reinforcement of behaviors that increasingly resemble those of adults and through imitation or model-based learning. Behaviorist or learning theory generally describes the processes through which play influences development. However, the limitation of this theory is that it

focuses too much on the external, observable aspects and less on the internal ones. Cognitivists have identified three major types of play that, they argue, develop sequentially, parallel to cognitive development (Piaget 1980, 246). A child's play capabilities depend on their ability to think and problem-solve. Thus, in the sensorimotor stage of development, we talk about functional play, in the preoperational stage about constructive play and dramatic play, and in the operational stage about role-playing games.

Play fulfills many needs in a child's life, including the need for stimulation and entertainment, the need to express exuberance, to experience change for the sake of change, to satisfy curiosity, and the need for exploration and experimentation with the environment. Researchers in the field of developmental psychology approach play from various perspectives, focusing on the most important categories of play and their role in physical, intellectual, and social development. In this perspective, we will address, in order, some general considerations about play (as a free activity), games (as organized activities), and the methodology for researching these anthropo-folkloric aspects.

While organized games have become a common subject within the folklore of children, free play is not considered the same way. Generally, free play has been more of a concern for psychologists and less so for anthropologists and biologists, as evidenced by a series of general studies. It is important to understand that despite historical or anthropological records indicating that play has often been considered a useless or even diabolical occupation, the cultural attitude toward play (as a free activity) has been predominantly positive, even idealized.

The preference for a romantic view of play as voluntary, intrinsically motivated, and enjoyable, as opposed to the view that presents play as rebellious, hierarchical, and passionate, highlights the general distinction between the psychological and folkloric views of play. Currently, there can be no unilateral acceptance of a specific definition of play, so we are encouraged to pay attention to the multiple meanings that this phenomenon has generated throughout its history.

Any adequate definition should take into account the following dimensions. The fact that play (as a free activity) is often associated with irrational, impulsive, and random behaviors is easy to observe from people's dependence on gambling and betting or from some activities of children that involve taking risks. More money is spent on gambling or betting than on any other form of play. Many contemporary theorists of play have tried to address this anomaly by rejecting the idea that gambling is a form of play.

They may accept that play involves risks, even physical risks and defeats, but not material losses (see Salter 1978). Others will agree with Caillois that luck is a fundamental form of play that should not be ignored when defining play (Caillois 1961, 127). If this premise is taken into account, luck becomes a form of play, unlike other forms where players do not control their own fate, and where income can have material importance for their well-being. Almost the same can be said about professional sports, where the athlete's skill still plays a crucial role.

The types of games culturally, from the time of the Greeks to the modern Olympics, have represented a form of physical and intellectual competition. Luck and competition are, thus, the two major obsessions of humanity regarding play. Any theory of play that does not start with these empirical giants probably addresses an exclusive group (e.g., children) or has an exclusive connotation (e.g., the notion of optimal experience encountered in the 20th century).

Western epistemologies, dominant since Plato, have considered philosophy, logic, and science as sources of knowledge and have discredited the importance of the arts, literature, and play as possible sources of knowledge. Consequently, play has a two-thousand-year history in Western societies during which it has been considered trivial or useless, accepted only when it imitates the most substantial forms of knowledge. In many cultures, on the other hand, play is often seen as sacred and not profane or insignificant.

Certain forms of play are associated with pranks or deception, such as in strategy games and various types of riddles, and other similar games. Such forms of "deception," as well as the flexibility of imagination, are very important for many types of games. What is lacking in modern theorizing of play is the highly repetitive, ritualistic, and constraining nature visible in most games. This is true for both human and animal play. The emphasis on free choice in modern theorizing seems to have more to do with the initial decision to start playing in certain leisure situations than with what happens afterward. Most tribal games are obligatory, not voluntary. All members of a certain age, sex, and skill level are required to participate in these significant events. Even in modern play, it can be argued that individuals are bound by certain important internal constraints. What is ultimately important is not so much the choice of play but the motives that led to that choice. The act of voluntary choice does not tell us more about play; rather, it is the constraints and pleasures that generate the choice of play. The modern view of play as a voluntary, free, intrinsic, and imaginative activity borrows its major

implications from the Romantic Movement of the 19th century. During this period, the role of imagination as an essential human function was recognized, mediating between rational thought and sensory experience. It was argued that imaginative play was particularly important for human freedom, liberating humanity from the constraints of logic and experience. Modern psychology, which sees freedom as the result of choice, plays a significant role in this rhetoric.

The most famous expression of this idealized view of play is presented by Huizinga in his work *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*, a work on play that has probably influenced interdisciplinary learning more than any other work in this century. Huizinga stated that it is “essential” for play to be a free activity, almost consciously placed outside of “ordinary” life but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and fully (Huizinga 2014, 4). It must be an activity not linked to any material interest and from which no such profit is obtained. It must take place within its own boundaries of time and space, according to fixed rules, and in an orderly manner. It must promote the formation of social groups that tend to surround themselves with discretion, and the players must emphasize their differences from the ordinary world through disguise or other means.

Evolutionary theory has also contributed an argument, namely that play and growth are intrinsically linked, showing that during play, a child develops certain skills (see Sandholm 2009). Unfortunately, biologists have not agreed on the functional values that play serves in the case of animals, even though the large number of those who play and the relative foolishness of those who cannot play have led to the conclusion that there must be a functional connection between play and growth (see McNamara and Leimar 2020). The idea that such growth exists is more a matter of rhetoric than science. As mentioned, Western cultures have often opted for a view in which play is more useless than useful. Modern psychology has added the idea of a link between play and what is new, between play and creativity (see Russ 2019).

It has been proposed that all these elements related to the history of the concept of play (play as irrational activity, useless, deceptive, free, involving growth, as novelty) should be related to a theory that sees play as a form of communication (see Vasil et al. 2020) used by both animals and humans. Play should not be seen as either good or bad, but as something that primarily appears as a primitive and paradoxical form of relational expression and communication in which both primary and secondary processes are united in such a way that it is relatively harmless to participants and binds them in a social community. Not surprisingly, many of the less positive aspects

associated with humans (irrationality, risk, pleasure, aggression, deception, competition, antithesis in general) find acceptable forms of expression in play. Also not surprisingly, these forms of expression are often unacceptable to certain cultures and may need to be masked or hidden in order to exist. When these forms of expression are achieved, a certain degree of permissiveness or new and risky combinations of behavior and reasoning can occur. It is also important to note the continued increase in what we call the isolation of children from affluent families over the past fifty years. If one analyzes play through the relatively long time children spend alone with toys or in front of a computer, through the time they spend in their bedrooms if they are single children or in front of the television (and therefore not outside the house), one may conclude that children's play in this century, compared to the previous one, is characterized by isolation.

In anthropology, Helen Schwartzman's (2008) book *Transformation: The Anthropology of Children's Play* is already a classic work. In biology, Robert Fagen's (1981) *Animal Play Behavior* is considered a classic. In the field of folklore, the only educational works about play are generally related to speech during play, as seen in the mentioned works of the Opies and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's *Speech Play*. In recent years, probably as an indirect result of the feminist revolution's interest in family history, a number of volumes about the history of children's play have emerged. Probably the best sources of information about play in recent years have been provided by the publications of the Association for the Anthropological Study of Play, whose annual volumes since 1974 and their more recent journal edition of *Play and Culture* (1989) and *Play Theory and Research* (1993) have been the most comprehensive sources for researchers studying play. In recent years, books studying play published by the University of New York Press have also been an important source of information.

### *Play in the Transylvanian Region*

The folklore of children in the Transylvanian region is not differentiated in terms of repertoire compared to that of children in other areas of the country. Moreover, we cannot speak of an actual element that belongs to a specific original space. The inter-zonal contact among urban children has standardized this repertoire. The "game with elastic," called that way in Bihor, could be seen both in Caras and in Suceava or Techirghiol. Children have loved this game very much, which, although known since the 19th century, re-entered the repertoire of children's games only in the 1970s. Present

among Romanian, Slovak, and Hungarian children, especially in urban centers, it easily crossed rural boundaries. Recent research has revealed a rapid penetration of urban repertoire novelties into rural areas. Children's camps, excursions that facilitate contact between children, and vacations at grandparents' houses promote these exchanges, especially in the category of collective games, games in groups of boys and girls, clapping games, etc. Children's folklore is receptive to any novelty, any borrowing. The first Romanian researcher in Transylvania to draw attention to this phenomenon was Alexandru Bogdan, who was awarded by the Transylvanian Association for the Culture and Literature of the Romanian People for his work on children's songs and games in 1905. This phenomenon was also recognized at the beginning of the last century by the Saxon folklorist Adolf Schullerus (1926), who, starting from the observation of a common heritage of stories among Romanians, Saxons, and Hungarians, proposed that researchers investigate the interferences between Saxon, Romanian, and Hungarian folklore in Transylvania.

Naturally, the question arises: when do these borrowings or influences begin? We are not yet able to answer this question, as research in this field is lacking in our region. However, we have interesting approaches related to the repertoire for young children or lullabies, we have collections of musical notations of songs and collections of children's verses and games, but we still lack substantial investigations into the games themselves. Following field investigations in the villages along the upper course of the Barcău River, we have found that imitation is the most important rule in games adopted by other children. For the middle age group (3–7 years old), it should be emphasized that there is a rapid enrichment of the game repertoire, both for an individual child and for a group. At this age, Romanian children in the area have coexisted and continue to coexist with Slovak and Hungarian children, during kindergarten or at home, despite the fact that this phenomenon has diminished due to the considerable emigration of Slovaks and Transylvanian Hungarians. To illustrate this phenomenon, we will focus on a specific element of the Intra-Carpathian space, namely the existence of a common game among Romanian, Hungarian, and Slovak children in the Barcău Valley, belonging to the same age group. It can be observed that spontaneous borrowing among children occurs between closely related age groups, with receptivity transitioning from the younger to the older children, depending on the playing preferences of the younger child. In Marghita, for example, I observed the following: Hungarian children around the age of four played "Coroana e rotundă" (The Crown is Round) in the Romanian language with

each other, even though there are versions of the game in Hungarian as well. However, they pronounced only stressed syllables or often, vowels supported by the melodic structure. At this age, since communication does not serve a necessary function, rhythm and the act of imitation can replace the authentic text. In our case, this may constitute an initial form of borrowing.

The next age group is more receptive to borrowings from the repertoire of foreign children. As interdependence in movement and the need for social interaction grow, a preschool child of any nationality will receive formulas, verses, and games from a foreign group, either as a simple observer or as a direct participant in the game. In places where Romanian, Hungarian, and Slovak children came into constant contact through play (in locations such as Marghita, Popești, Suplacu de Barcău, and Borumblaca), one can even speak of a mixed repertoire. The various categories of texts inventoried in the Folklore Archive in Cluj-Napoca or still present in children's repertoires attest to the presence of Romanian formulas, especially within nature-related song formulas, Hungarian, or Slovak ones.

As keen observers of small creatures, children are impressed by insects, snails, worms, and frogs, whether individually—in the case of city children—or through rhythmic formulas spoken or sung by rural children. All around the world, children feel like the masters of their small universe. It might be interesting to mention that researcher Dora Aebi (1932) identified 377 invocatory formulas for the beloved ladybug, formulas originating from France, Wallonia, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, Sweden, and England. In many cases, children ask the ladybug for wealth, specifically gold, which led Roger Pinon (1949) to support the hypothesis of belief in the supernatural powers that this insect might possess. We discover that it is considered a sin not only here but also in Wallonia to step on such an insect. Wherever several ladybugs are found, it is believed that they manifest a divinity (usually that of rain). Invoking the rain, Slovak children in the village of Foglas also recite Romanian formulas: “Crow, crow, / From the mill / Don’t eat / Flour in your lap” (the text continues in Slovak). Researcher Emilia Comișel admitted in her book that “only we and the Aromanians ask the ladybug for its teeth, while other people invoke the mouse” (Comișel 1982). On this occasion, she also mentioned a Romanian attestation near Alba Iulia, where the invocation was addressed to the mouse, hinting at an influence from Transylvanian Saxons. This is possible because Saxon formulas, like Hungarian ones, do indeed invoke the mouse. Here, for example, is the translation of such a text spoken in Hungarian by the children from Ip: “Mouse, mouse, / Give me an iron tooth. / I’ll give you one made of bone.”

Regarding these verses, we can also discuss the magical-primitive behavior of children in their relationship with nature: children invoke the insect or animal to subdue it, and then command it to do something specific. The command is accompanied by two extreme possibilities—fulfilling the wish will be rewarded, and the child promises fair compensation: “I want to tear you pieces of bread / I will pour you milk / I will put you in a golden box” (translated from Hungarian) or the reverse situation when failing to fulfill the wish results in punishment, also expressed very concretely: “Snail, snail, / Take out your four horns, / Otherwise, I will break your house” (translated from Hungarian).

The most beloved category in the folklore repertoire of preschool and school-age children is that of counting-out rhymes. These anticipatory formulas are used to designate the child and their precise role during the game, such as the one who puts their head, the one who catches, the one who guesses, etc. The essential characteristic of this category is the frequent use of numbers and syllables, devoid of any meaningful content, surprisingly rich in lexical terms. While maintaining traditional structural methods, Romanian, Hungarian, and Slovak children, and children from other European countries (which have been better studied in this regard than Asian countries) continuously enrich the linguistic form, initially acquired with new images and themes borrowed either from adult folklore (songs, fairy tales, customs, hollers) or from school subjects (history, geography), or from the surrounding reality.

Counting-out rhymes move from one local repertoire to another or, in our case, from one language repertoire to another. The well-known counting-out rhymes that begin with the formula “an, tan, tina” or “an, tan, tenu,” which are common among children throughout Romania, are equally prevalent among Hungarian and Slovak children. Group games are no exception to borrowing. In Suplacu de Barcău, Slovak children know and practice the guessing game: “Listen carefully now, let’s see if you guess or not,” alongside Slovak or Hungarian versions.

Apart from traditional games, there are also games acquired from adults or through their influence. In addition to the so-called “celebration” games described by George Pitis (see Muşlea 1968), which originate from the repertoire of adults and are still practiced in Transylvania to this day, there is a complemented image of old games from Transylvania played by children of all nationalities living in this part of the country. Examples of games from the early decades of the last century have survived to the present day. Among these are well-known group games that resemble bridal customs.

Romanians have a widespread practice of the singing game “Venea un print călare” (“A prince on horseback came”) (with variations like “Sosește-un domn din București” or “Două doamne din București, adio, dio, da” [“A gentleman arrives from Bucharest” or “Two ladies from Bucharest, farewell, well, ell”]). This game is equally beloved by Hungarian and Slovak children, known in their versions as “Două doamne din Indive” or “Venit-am noi din Ninive, Ninive, Ninive” (“Two ladies from Indive” or “We have come from Nineveh, Nineveh, Nineveh”). The resemblance between the Romanian and Slovak versions of the dialogue is striking, and the game is popular among children in both Romania and Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Similar texts to those collected by Emilia Comișel (1982) can be found throughout the Barcău Valley in various languages: “Venit-am doamne-n București / N București, -n București, / Adio, dio, da! / - Si anume ce doresti, / Ce doresti, ce doresti? / Doresc o domnisoara” (“We came, ladies, to Bucharest / To Bucharest, - to Bucharest, / Farewell, well, ell! / - And what is it that you desire, / What do you desire, what do you desire? / I desire a young lady.”) (translated from Romanian).

### *Conclusion*

We do not have a suitable definition of play despite our need for scientific precision. Play is an unclear concept that, in turn, involves a changing family of notions, including dreams, daydreaming, fantasy, imagination, individual play, collective games, sports, festivals, carnivals, television, video games, virtual reality, and so on. These notions change as we move from one culture to another, as demonstrated by the examples provided. Play is much like art, summarizing a complex range of human activities. In evolution, play presupposes a language older than speech, but like speech, it is neutral in terms of content and, like speech, can have a communicative function or activate a child’s thinking. We can be sure of one thing: play suddenly catapults the survival of species from reflexive behavior to contemplation that generates activity.

Since the middle of the last century, researchers have pointed out that in bilingual or trilingual regions like Transylvania or Banat, the interaction between nationalities in the folklore of children often takes the form of humorous exchanges in paired words in both languages. These observations and findings also highlight the particular nature of children’s folklore in the Barcău Valley and the Transylvanian region in general. It reflects a bipolar relationship, manifesting both in the form and alterity, through

the acceptance, and sometimes complete adoption, of elements from the play repertoire belonging to one or another nationality.

### References

- Aebi, Dora. 1932. *Der Marienkäfer, seine französische Namen und seine Bedeutung im Volksglauben und Kinderspruch*. Aarau: Graphische Werkstätten H. R. Sauerländer & Co.
- Bonchiș, Elena. 2000. *Dezvoltarea umană*. Oradea: Editura Imprimerie de Vest.
- Caillois, Roger. 1961. *Man, Play and Games*. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe Inc.
- Cavallo, Dominic. 1981. *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Cioban, Florin. 2006. *Folclorul copiilor*. Cluj Napoca: Editura Napoca.
- . 2010. *Folclorul copiilor din zonele multietnice*. Oradea: Editura Universității din Oradea.
- Comișel, Emilia. 1982. *Folclorul copiilor: Studiu și antologie*. București: Editura Muzicală.
- Erikson, Erik. 1965. *Childhood and Society*. Middlesex: Penguin Books.
- Fagen, Robert. 1981. *Animal Play Behavior*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Goodman, Gary. 1979. *Choosing Sides: Playground and Street Life on the Lower East Side*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Gomme, Alicia B. 1964. *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. Reprinted with an introduction by Dorothy Howard. New York: Dover Publications.
- Hellendorn, Joop. 1994. *Play and Intervention*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Herron, Robert. 1971. *Child's Play: Collected Readings on the Biology, Ecology, Psychology, and Sociology of Play*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Huizinga, Johan. 2014. *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture*. Eastford, CT: Martino Publishing.
- Jolly, Allison, and Katy Sylvan. 1976. *Play*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. 1976. *Speech Play*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- McNamara, John M., and Olof Leimar. 2020. *Game Theory in Biology: Concepts and Frontiers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mergen, Bernard. 1982. *Play and Playthings: A Reference Guide*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.
- Muşlea, Ion. 1968. *George Pitiş: folclorist și etnograf*. București: Editura Pentru Literatură.
- Nasaw, David. 1985. *Children of the City: At Work and Play*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Newell, William. 1883. *The Games and Songs of American Children*. New York: Harper and Brothers.
- Opie, Peter, and Iona Opie. 1963. "Tentacles of Tradition." *Advancement of Science* XX: 1–10.
- Pellegrini, Anthony. 1987. "Children on the Playground." *Children's Environments Quarterly* 4 (July): 1–7.
- Piaget, Jean. 1980. *Judecata morala la copil*. București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică.
- Pinon, Roger. 1949. "Le folklore de la coccinelle dans la province de Liège." *Le Vieux-Liège* 82 (mars-avril): 359–365.
- Russ, Sandra W., and Ellen A. Doernberg. 2019. "Play and Creativity." In *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity*, edited by James C. Kaufman and Robert J. Sternberg, 607–622. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Salter, Michael, ed. 1978. *Play: Anthropological Perspectives*. West Point, NY: Leisure Press.
- Sandholm, W. H. 2009. "Evolutionary Game Theory." In *Encyclopedia of Complexity and Systems Science*, edited by Robert A. Meyers, 3176–3205. New York: Springer.
- Schullerus, Adolf. 1926. *Siebenbürgisch-sächsische Volkskunde im Umriss*. Augsburg: Bechtermünz.
- Schwartzman, Helen. 2008. *Transformation: The Anthropology of Children's Play*. New York: Plenum.
- Sutton-Smith, Brian. 1976. *A Children's Games Anthology: Studies in Folklore and Anthropology*. New York: Arno Press.
- . 1985. *Children's Play, Past, Present, and Future: The History*. Philadelphia: Please Touch Museum Edition.
- Vasil, Jared, Paul B. Badcock, Axel Constant, Karl Friston, and Maxwell J. D. Ramstead. 2020. "A World unto Itself: Human Communication as Active Inference." *Frontiers in Psychology* 11: 1–26.



## Unexpected Heritage

### The Relationship between Prince Louis Ferdinand von Preußen and the National Socialists

The imposing castle in Hechingen on top of the Hohenzollern Hill is still owned by the Hohenzollern family. The first source referring to the family comes from 1061, and the castle was first mentioned in 1267. Although the building has been destroyed many times over the centuries, its careful owners have rebuilt it over and over again to meet the needs of the times. Over the centuries, the dynasty became one of the most decisive shapers of Prussian and German history through whimsical turns, advantageous marriages, and, not least, smart decisions. However, in the fall of 1918, the emperor, William II was forced to abdicate, as Germany became a republic, and from then on the Hohenzollerns were forced out of the running of the country's affairs.

The role of the family that gave birth to prince-electors, kings, and emperors is a favorite subject of historical research. However, as of 2019, certain chapters of the family history have been the subject of intense, and in some cases acute, controversy among historians, lawyers, and politicians, as well as the attention of the public. The leaking of the secret negotiations between the then senior leader of the family, William II's great-grandson, Prince Georg Friedrich, and the German state as well as the provinces of Berlin and Brandenburg served as an opportunity. The topic of the discussions was compensation for the family.

At the end of World War II, the Allied Powers divided Germany into four zones. The majority of the Hohenzollern estates and assets ended up in the Soviet occupation zone, and from 1949 onwards, they fell into the territory of the GDR. The communist government nationalized all the Hohenzollern family's movable and immovable property, so until 1990, it was out of the question to reclaim them. After the unification of Germany, in 1994 the German parliament created the legal possibility of reclaiming property confiscated between 1945 and 1949 or of compensating the owners or their descendants (AusglLeistG). Section 3 of the Act excludes the possibility of returning the immovable property, instead, the owners are entitled to compensation. Whereas the ownership of movable property determined

pursuant to Article 5 shall revert to the owner after twenty years, in so far as it is in public collections for public viewing at the time of the entry into force of the Act. However, Article 1 (4) of the Act excludes from compensation those whose predecessors played a significant role in the coming to power or the strengthening of the National Socialist or Communist dictatorship. The question now arises as to whether Article 1 (4) applies to the predecessors of Georg Friedrich. It is important to examine the role of the ancestors, who were the senior head of the family from the mid-1920s, managed the property, or as the intended recipient of the title, made important decisions concerning the family. William II was the leader of the dynasty until his death, he was followed by William's ex-heir to the throne (Georg Friedrich's great-grandfather) between 1941 and 1951 and then Prince Louis Ferdinand (Georg Friedrich's grandfather) until 1994. The current controversy focuses on the activities of the son of the last German Emperor, Crown Prince William because he was the head of the family at the time of the expropriation. The authorities and the experts invited by the family found that the heir to the throne had been in contact with the leaders of the National Socialist Party since the mid-1920s. However, there is considerable disagreement as to whether the Prince's activities contributed significantly to the rise to power of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) and the establishment of the dictatorship. The huge number of historical works analyzing the rise and consolidation of the National Socialist regime and the trajectory of Adolf Hitler, which had been published until the outbreak of the controversy, mentioned the members of the Hohenzollern family only tangentially or not at all. This paper examines the activities of the son of the heir to the throne, Prince Louis Ferdinand, using his autobiographical writing for this purpose.

Many members of the Hohenzollern family were associated with the NSDAP in various ways and to varying degrees during the period of the Weimar Republic and after 1933. Although the relationship between the members of the family was always fraught with tension, the restoration of the monarchy remained an important goal for each of them. Trusting in the support of the National Socialists, some of them joined the NSDAP and other National Socialist organizations, while others helped the party without a formal membership, to achieve this goal. This support could be realized within and outside Germany. Prince Louis Ferdinand was among those who were not listed as supporters of the National Socialist regime and were even associated with the resistance. Otto John, a friend of Louis Ferdinand, confirmed the prince's close relationship with the planners and executors

of the failed assassination attempt on Hitler on July 20, 1944 (John 1984, 150). John participated in the preparation of the operation and managed to escape from Germany after the failure. He returned after the war and in 1951 was appointed President of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz) of the Federal Republic of Germany. Leaving this important post, in the summer of 1954 he left completely unexpectedly for East Berlin, then in December of the following year, he escaped back to West Berlin with the help of Louis Ferdinand and a Danish journalist (Delmer 1962, 718–719). For over a year, he frequently and severely criticized the Federal Republic of Germany at press conferences and other appearances. Upon his return, the Federal Supreme Court (Bundesgerichtshof) sentenced him to prison for treason, but the exact circumstances of the case have remained unclear till now. Some strongly believe in the possibility of his liability (Stöver 1999, 119), while others see him as a victim (Delmer 1962, 697–698 and 738; Louis Ferdinand 1993, 339). Released by presidential pardon in 1958, he moved to a villa near Innsbruck, which he renovated with the financial support of Louis Ferdinand. John can be considered a problematic witness, because in his reminiscences he was repeatedly involved in contradictions (Urban 2019, 74), and there are many moments of his political activity that still need to be clarified.

Louis Ferdinand, Lulu, as the family called him, the second son of William, the heir to the throne, did not count on becoming the head of the Hohenzollern family until he was 26. He advanced in the ranks after his older brother, William, who was only a year older than he was, had entered a low-ranking marriage in 1933. The emperor's favorite grandson (Ilsemann 1968, 121), who as the only grandson could stand by his grandfather's deathbed in 1941 (Pekelder, Schenk, and Bas 2021, 93), was able to pursue his scientific interests and traveled a lot before his brother's disinheritance. After graduation from secondary school, in the spring of 1925, he spent a longer time in Spain as a guest of his godfather, King Alfonso XIII of Spain. Lulu was sympathetic to the activities of General Primo de Rivera, who was highly regarded by the king. The dictatorial government system introduced by the general made the country's modernization and economic recovery possible, the king argued, so Lulu turned a blind eye to the deprivation of freedoms of the citizens. The prince met the general at social events, whom he described as a jovial personality, whose friendly blue eyes bore witness to his sense of humor and whose humanity radiated. The prince considered it unworthy to call the general a dictator because according to the king's statement, Rivera did not abuse his power (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 92). His youth and

inexperience might have been an excuse for the prince; however, he wrote his recollections much later, so it was not a matter of innocent credulity.

After graduating from secondary school, Louis Ferdinand studied economics and philosophy in Berlin and Bonn and earned a doctorate. The emperor was very proud of his grandson and was happy to support Lulu's first and subsequent trips to America planned for 1929. The imperial assistance did not only mean a contribution to travel expenses. William brought his grandson to the attention of his childhood friend, Poultney Bigelow, and asked him to support the prince during his trip to America (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 118). Bigelow's father served as Abraham Lincoln's ambassador accredited to Paris and settled in Berlin after his term of office had expired. In Potsdam, Poultney became a schoolmate of the later William II, and their friendship, even though it experienced one or two low points, lasted until the emperor's death. The young Bigelow received a law degree from Yale, later worked as a journalist, wrote several books, and often traveled extensively. In his home country, he had deep connections to the highest circles of political and economic life. An important element of Poultney Bigelow and William II's ideological community after 1918 was their antipathy towards the Jews, Bolshevism, and the black race. Bigelow was a staunch anti-Semite, who raised his children in the same spirit (Urban 2019, 69). According to some, also William II went from prejudice expressed in words, i.e., from "salon anti-Semitism" to the idea of exterminating the Jews: in the letters he wrote at the end of his life, he called England Juda-England, the country of Satan, welcomed Hitler's military successes, the increasing persecution of the Jews, and rejoiced at the suppression of Jewish influence in Europe (Röhl 2007, 220–221). This picture is somewhat shaded by the entry we know from his adjutant's diary. The horrors of Kristallnacht on the night of 9 to 10 November 1938 deeply affected the emperor in his exile in the Netherlands. He called the atrocities committed against the Jews a shame and hoped that the Germans would condemn the Nazis' action (Ilseman 1968, 313). It is also a fact that Israel is the only country in the world where an obelisk was erected in honor of William II. Louis Ferdinand was also invited to the inauguration ceremony held in 1982. In his speech, the mayor of Haifa paid tribute to William II and the German Empire ruled by him (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 370–371).

Poultney Bigelow took the young prince under his wing and soon introduced Lulu to Henry Ford and Franklin D. Roosevelt. The prince hoped that the contact would change the American opinion of the Hohenzollern in a positive direction. He was not to be disappointed, for the charming Louis

Ferdinand was the subject of many sympathetic articles in the press, thanks to Bigelow. In his letter to Ford requesting a meeting, Bigelow portrayed the Hohenzollern family—not by chance—as victims of defamatory stories persistently retailed by Jewish journalists in Germany (Urbach 2019, 74).

Henry Ford was one of the richest. Due to continuous technological innovation, the mass production ensured by the assembly line, and the affordable price of cars, in the mid-1920s nearly half of the vehicles on American roads came out of his factories. For years, Ford was a contributor to the *Dearborn Independent*, a weekly newspaper that regularly published articles on the Jewish problem. For example, the *Minutes of the Wise Men of Zion* appeared in one of its issues, but Ford himself wrote a 91-part series of articles in the paper entitled *The International Jew: The World's Greatest Problem*. The newspaper, which was published in hundreds of thousands of copies, was also distributed among the workers of the Ford factories. At the time of Louis Ferdinand's visit, the newspaper no longer existed, but he was aware of the contents of the articles because Ford's writings had been published in book form in Germany and were a resounding success. In one of his letters to Bigelow, the prince mentioned Ford's writings, praising them with great respect, and called Ford's thoughts great ideas (Urbach 2019, 78). In the prince's reminiscences, however, he barely touched on the anti-Semitic writings, almost labeling them a misunderstanding and sharing the opinion of Ford's closest colleagues that Ford had no objection to Jews since he employed thousands of Jews in his factories (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 127). For Louis Ferdinand, Ford's earlier writings and Bigelow's anti-Semitism were not a problem then or later, at least he did not consider it important to reflect on them in his autobiography.

Ford's most important advisor Ernest G. Liebold, who was William J. Cameron's omnipotent German-born secretary, and Ben Donaldson, who ran the company's marketing operations, introduced the prince to the company's operations step by step, while Lulu became a well-paid employee of the company. Beyond all this, Ford generously supported the prince: wherever Lulu went, in America or Europe, he always had a Ford car at his disposal. In his reminiscences, the prince talked almost exclusively about hardworking workers, clean factory halls, logical work organization, the humane and positive attitude of the leaders towards social improvement, and how Ford, whom he compared to his grandfather, became his true friend (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 134–139). Liebold's correspondence with the prince also revealed that the Secretary had been following events in Germany, deeply sympathizing with the National Socialist leaders and welcoming the party's

continued strengthening (Urbach 2019, 77). However, Lulu's autobiography kept silence about his intense correspondence with Liebold and their close friendship.

In 1925, Ford established his first German subsidiary in Berlin. Although it had serious competitors in Germany, the joint-stock company was also successful in the German market. At the end of 1929, the decision was made to build another factory in Cologne, which became the company's German headquarters, and production started in 1931. It is quite certain that Ford also initiated Louis Ferdinand into the details of the project, even though the prince did not mention this in his memoirs. In only one place did he note that Ford had warned him to be careful about his hobby flights, and revealed to the prince that he wanted to put him in charge of the Cologne plant (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 185). Ford's assessment in Germany was exceptionally good. In addition to his series of articles on the Jewish problem, his autobiographical work *My Life and Work* was published in 1923. The book hardly contains any classical biographical data and lacks an intellectual tone. The figure of the self-made man with the fanatical belief that he has to fight his way up from nothing emerges from it. The book criticizes American social, political, and economic conditions in many places. He emphasizes in his book that the spirit of the United States is Christian and that prejudice and hatred against individuals are neither Christian nor American. However, the false ideas spread by the Jews undermine the moral standing of the people, and action has to be taken against this, the best form of which is enlightening them (Ford 1923, 293–294). Only work increases productivity, not money, Ford continues, therefore he condemns the activities of bankers, mostly Jewish, who accumulate wealth by lending money (Ford 1923, 109, 184). In his opinion, a business should not be seen as a charitable organization but should pay its workers fairly, thus strengthening their self-esteem and their desire to work efficiently (Ford 1923, 244).

German engineers wrote enthusiastically about the book, highlighting its pedagogical value, and it encouraged many to travel to America to study Ford's system (Eifert 2009, 221). He was even praised in some of the culture magazines. In one place, he was called a man of action, in another he was apostrophized as someone understanding the words of the times (223). A whole series of trade union functionaries and communist and social democratic politicians welcomed the introduction of the eight-hour working day in addition to their scathing comments, i.e., productivity is not yet true socialism. They highlighted Ford's organizational talent, which was directly compared to that of Napoleon (Eifert 2009, 225). The union leaders did

not bother about Ford's view of the superfluity of unions (Ford 1923, 307). Only a few economists expressed sharp criticism, calling Ford's principles inapplicable to German conditions, one of them, for example, referring to it as a collection of aphorisms (Eifert 2009, 223). It should be noted that the opponents did not react to Ford's statements criticizing the Jews at all, which did not provoke a social debate either. The reason for the extraordinary popularity of Ford's book—in 1930 it was already in its 32nd edition—was that his economic ethics acted as a reincarnation of the old Prussian virtues.

Until the last third of the 1920s, the financial supporters of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) were primarily party members and private individuals sympathetic to the party. The party's meager income came from membership fees, tickets sold at their events, the sale of newspapers, and private donations. A significant part of the private donations came from Germans living abroad and from foreigners who were attracted to the National Socialist movement for ideological reasons, political calculations, or economic considerations; or they found the relationship advantageous for the future. Ford was one of the supporters of the NSDAP, and he had supported the National Socialists with relatively significant sums of money long before the party became a mass party (Kolb-Schumann 2022, 129). Ford and Hitler never met in person, but the manufacturer's activities inspired the dictator. On Ford's 75th birthday, the German Ambassador personally presented him with his country's highest award to a foreign national (the Grand Cross of the German Eagle) and read out Hitler's greeting message (Sager 2008).

The American continent played a marginal role in the foreign policy plans of the National Socialists during the period of the Weimar Republic. The continent-wide United States, on the other hand, served Hitler as a model for the creation of a future Great German Empire. Hitler, however, wanted to make Germany a world power primarily by expanding its living space, rather than by modernizing society. The NSDAP leader's image of the USA was nevertheless rather ambivalent because he classified the American population as the northern race, but at the same time, claimed that the Jews had already gained too much influence in the USA (Gassert 1997, 88, 98).

Louis Ferdinand and Roosevelt first met in 1929, when Roosevelt was governor of New York State. Bigelow and the governor's family were neighbors, and Lulu's patron was especially close to Roosevelt's mother. As a young man, the future president, who spoke fluent German, regularly took extended trips to Germany with his family. His experiences in Germany were the starting point for the Governor and Lulu's conversations. Even for the first time, the host charmed the young prince with his inquisitive and

friendly demeanor. Roosevelt and Lulu met at least ten times, not only at Roosevelt's home but also in his work office. The prince's recollection of the conversations is laconic, barely extending beyond the praise of Roosevelt's talents as a statesman (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 124–125). The descriptions did not reveal why Roosevelt showed interest in Louis Ferdinand. It is likely that Roosevelt tried to take advantage of the prince's positive press to win over citizens of German origin, and that he also wanted to get a line on German conditions through him. Roosevelt also "collected" Bigelow's experiences in Germany, because Bigelow regularly reported on his trips to Germany to his neighbor (Urbach 2019, 83).

Louis Ferdinand was indeed in contact with several National Socialist politicians who had earned Roosevelt's attention. In the early spring of 1933, Lulu was a guest of Joachim von Ribbentrop, whom he considered an educated person and an excellent musician. According to Lulu's recollection, his host attempted to win him over to the support of the National Socialists. The future foreign minister argued that Germany should be oriented towards the West, and the prince could help his country through his good American connections, and he held out hopes of a party career for Lulu. In a letter, Lulu informed Ribbentrop that he did not consider himself suitable for the task (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 195–196). The bohemian Ernst Hanfstaengl was also a friend of Louis Ferdinand, who was a frequent guest at the Cecilienhof, the residence of Lulu's family in Potsdam (196). Hanfstaengl, known to many as Putzi, was the son of a distinguished and wealthy Munich family and Roosevelt's fellow university student at Harvard. After graduating, he ran his family's art salon in New York City, where, among others, Henry Ford, Charlie Chaplin, and Arturo Toscanini were among his guests. Although his mother was American, the family's property was confiscated after the First World War, so Putzi returned to Germany in 1919, where he met Hitler, and from then until the mid-1930s, when they broke up, he became the Nazi leader's closest confidant and one of his most important supporters. He financed the publication of the *Völkischer Beobachter* and spent considerable sums of money on the party's election campaigns. In addition to the financial assistance, he was a strong advocate for the acceptance of Nazi leaders in the United States as the head of the office responsible for the foreign press of the NSDAP, and, incidentally, played a key role in the search for American supporters of the party. It was Putzi's initiative to adapt the American electoral campaigns to Germany. Even before 1933, journalists had accompanied Hitler on his campaigns, and the choreography of rallies was also inspired by American practice (Delmer 1962, 141). In the summer of

1933, just before Louis Ferdinand's second trip to America, Putzi organized a meeting for the prince with Hitler. In his reminiscence, Lulu kept silent about who the initiator had been and why this discussion had taken place. The description of the meeting was confined to the description of the study room and Hitler's clothing, as well as in a few-sentence summary of the chancellor's nearly forty-minute monologue interspersed with loud outbursts. From the latter, it turned out that Henry Ford was discussed between them, and the chancellor expressed his admiration for Ford and said that he considered it his task to spread the manufacturer's ideas about motorization in Germany. Lulu acknowledged that Hitler's actions had a positive effect on him at that moment, but he was quick to add that it was short-lived (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 213–214). Lulu did not know at that time that Hitler had already voted for the Mercedes, which he considered an excellent and reliable car, and which had already saved his life several times (Delmer 1962, 146). Lulu's letter to Roosevelt reveals a more reliable picture of the atmosphere of the meeting and the prince's true opinion. It turned out that Hitler directly captivated Lulu, and the prince regarded the political turn unfolding in his country as the German New Deal (Urbach 2019, 79). The American press also found out about the prince's relationship with the National Socialists. The articles analyzing the relationship concluded that the prince and Hjalmar Schacht, who was on good terms with him, had successfully lobbied for the NSDAP to receive serious support from America (80). The writings did not mention Ernst Hanfstaengl.

Louis Ferdinand also visited a few car factories before returning to America in the summer of 1933. From his autobiography, we learn that he visited the Horch in Chemnitz, the BMW in Munich, the Mercedes in Stuttgart, the Adler in Frankfurt, and the Opel in Rüsselsheim. Beyond the friendly welcome, however, he did not actually report on anything significant, he was only regretting the outdated production methods he saw in the factories (Louis Ferdinand 1993, 215). We do not know what kind of assignments or offers he made to the companies as a Ford employee. After 1933, the expansion of the American car factory in Germany slowed down, and Louis Ferdinand left the company. In the second half of the 1930s, Lufthansa was already his employer. However, his relationship with Ford was far from over; for example, in 1938 he and his wife stayed with him for a longer period in America.

An autobiographical writing inevitably contains subjective elements, but it has the advantage that the passing of time can reveal connections that are not perceived in real time by the person experiencing the events. However,

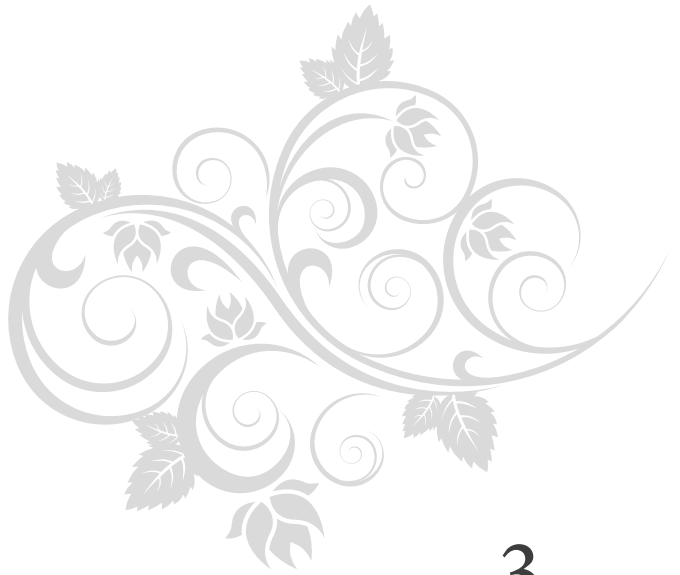
another aspect guided Louis Ferdinand when writing his autobiography: to silence, conceal, or obscure his role and responsibility by telling stories that are interesting, and colorful but less relevant. It is an undoubted fact that from the mid-1920s the prince spent longer periods away from Germany on several occasions, and until 1933 the family assigned him an important, but not decisive, role in their plans for the future. Neither before nor after 1933 did Louis Ferdinand belong to the shapers of German domestic politics. However, through his family connections, since he was related to almost all European ruling dynasties, he was able to provide such assistance to the NSDAP, for which the formal channels of contact did not provide an opportunity, and thus he influenced international and German public opinion as a member of an invisible legion. In his last long interview in 1986, he tried to justify his apolitical attitude; however, he did not deny that he had never given up hope of occupying the throne one day: “If the Germans call me, I am ready,” he said (Müller 1986).

### References

- Ausgleichsleistungsgesetz (AusglLeistG) – Gesetz über staatliche Ausgleichsleistungen für Enteignungen auf besatzungsrechtlicher oder besatzungshoheitlicher Grundlage, die nicht mehr rückgängig gemacht werden können. <http://gesetze-im-internet.de>.
- Delmer, Sefton. 1962. *Die Deutschen und ich*. Hamburg: Nannen-Verlag.
- Eifert, Christiane. 2009. “Antisemit und Autokönig: Henry Fords Autobiographie und ihre deutsche Rezeption in den 1920er-Jahren.” *Zeithistorische Forschungen / Studies in Contemporary History* 6 (2): 209–229. <https://zeithistorische-forschungen.de/2-2009/4457>.
- Ford, Henry. 1923. *Mein Leben und Werk*. 18. Auflage. Leipzig: Paul List Verlag.
- Gassert, Philipp. 1997. *Amerika im Dritten Reich: Ideologie, Propaganda und Volksmeinung 1933–1945*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Ilsemann, von Sigurd. 1968. *Der Kaiser in Holland: Aufzeichnungen des letzten Flügeladjutanten Kaiser Wilhelms II*. Band 2. München: Biederstein.
- John, Otto. 1984. *Falsch und zu spät: Der 20. Juli 1944*. München-Berlin: Herbig Verlagsbuchhandlung.
- Kolb, Eberhard, and Dirk Schumann. 2022. *Die Weimarer Republik*. Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.

- Louis Ferdinand, Prinz von Preussen. 1993. *Im Strom der Geschichte: Die Heimkehr nach Potsdam*. München: Langen Müller.
- Müller, Friedrich. 1986. *Kaiser auf Abruf: Prinz Louis Ferdinand von Preußen im Gespräch mit Friedrich Müller*. ZDF. TV-Interview in *Zeugen des Jahrhunderts*.
- Pekelder, Jacco, Joep Schenk, and Cornelis van der Bas. 2021. *Der Kaiser und das „Dritte Reich“: Die Hohenzollern zwischen Restauration und Nationalsozialismus*. Göttingen: Wallstein.
- Röhl, C. G. John. 2007. *Kaiser, Hof und Staat: Wilhelm II. und die deutsche Politik*. Nördlingen: C.H.Beck.
- Sager, Gesche. 2008. Henry Ford und die Nazis: Der Diktator von Detroit. July 29. 2008. *Der Spiegel*. <https://www.spiegel.de/geschichte/henry-ford-und-die-nazis-a-947358.html>.
- Stöver, Bernd. 1999. “Der Fall Otto John: Neue Dokumente zu den Aussagen des deutschen Geheimdienstchefs gegenüber MfS und KGB.” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 47 (1): 103–136.
- Urban, Karina. 2019. “Nützliche Idioten: Die Hohenzollern und Hitler.” In *Preußendämmerung: Die Abdankung der Hohenzollern und das Ende Preußens*, edited by Thomas Biskup, Truc Vu Mihn und Jürgen Luh, 65–93. Heidelberg: arthistoricum.net. <https://doi.org/10.11588/arthistoricum.544>.





### 3. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND LANGUAGE USE



## The Prepositions *out of, from, to, by, for* and *of* in English Expressions of Happiness

### *Introduction*

Happiness, one of the basic universal emotions (Ekman et al. 1972; Ekman 1999), has a great number of linguistic expressions in English. A part of the expressions is literal, e.g., *I'm glad to meet you*, another part has metaphoric or metonymic meanings: *I'm in seventh heaven*, *He made my heart feel warm*, respectively, and a third part of the expressions names the cause of one's happiness: *Jill is happy with John*, *He's delighted with his results*, etc. Such expressions describe a variety of details of the emotion, behavioral and physiological reactions, facial expressions, and rather subjective (inner) experiences of the emotional self. Investigating the language of happiness, cognitive linguists have given detailed analyses of the concept of happiness (Kövecses 1991, 2000, 2008; Levontina and Zalizniak 2001; Wierzbicka 1996, 1999) consisting of metaphors and metonymies, related concepts and prototypical models of the emotion (Kövecses 1990).

My focus in the present paper is on the causes that trigger happiness. I investigate what kinds of events usually cause one's happiness, on the one hand, and the way the causes are referred to linguistically in English, on the other. My preliminary studies show that causes of happiness are often referred to by prepositional phrases: *I'm happy in my new position*, *Peter is happy with his life*, *Mary is happy about her exam results*, and my aim is to find correlations between the kinds of causes and the preposition used in English happiness expressions.

### *Happiness in Psychology and Cognitive Linguistics*

In psychology, happiness is often referred to as joy or enjoyment and is defined as an emotion that we feel when we get love from and/or give love to other people. Happiness is often combined with satisfaction mostly in situations when we manage to carry out our plans and achieve our aims, feel competent, have a good job, nice family and friends, hobbies, do sports, etc.,

and are healthy (Andrek 2013, 454–455). Good mental and physical health is a special component of happiness; it is a cause and a result of being happy. Sarah D. Pressman and Sheldon Cohen's (2005) study proves that those who live a happy life usually die at an old age and those who have some health problems or some kind of pain are able to forget about their problems and pains in situations when they feel happy and experience positive emotions in general.

Charles Darwin gives a detailed description of facial expressions and behavioral reactions of happy people. He also states that intense joy is often accompanied by “various purposeless movements” such as dancing, clapping, or even loud laughter, which “seems primarily to be the expression of mere joy or happiness” (Darwin [1872] 1999, 198).

Paul Ekman et al. (1972) and Ekman (1999) claim that happiness has the same facial expressions all around the world independent of cultures or languages. When we are happy we smile and pull our lips back so that they do not cover our teeth. We usually raise our cheeks, narrow our eyes, and have special wrinkles called crow's feet around our eyes. (Crow's feet are an important detail because they distinguish a genuine smile from a smile that “only” disguises another emotion, embarrassment, for example.) Ekman claims that besides characteristic facial expressions, we may also produce certain vocal expressions like a sigh or exclamation. Being happy, we usually feel light and energetic, stand or sit in an upright position, and are relaxed (Ekman 2022). In addition to facial and vocal expressions and behavioral reactions, Ekman (2022) states that happiness arises “from connection or sensory pleasure” and lists the following causes that trigger the emotion: human goodness, relieving suffering, enjoyment derived through one of the five senses, humor, personal achievement and feeling connected. It is important to note that this list of happiness triggers shows a large variety but one thing is common about them: all of them have a positive effect on the experiencer.

Kövecses describes the conceptual structure of prototypical emotions as a combination of a set of conceptual metaphors, conceptual metonymies, related concepts, and cognitive models (1990, 39–41). Kövecses (1991, 2008a and 2008b) identifies the metaphors and metonymies instantiating happiness along with its related concepts and cognitive models. Kövecses (2008a) divides metaphors of happiness into three groups: (a) general emotion metaphors, (b) metaphors providing evaluation of happiness, and (c) metaphors providing the phenomenological character of happiness.

General emotion metaphors are metaphors that conceptualize all (or most) of our emotions like EMOTION IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER, EMOTION IS HEAT/FIRE, EMOTION IS A NATURAL FORCE, EMOTION IS A PHYSICAL FORCE, EMOTION IS A SOCIAL SUPERIOR, EMOTION IS AN OPPONENT, EMOTION IS A CAPTIVE ANIMAL. Kövecses shows that happiness has its own specific-level versions of the metaphors listed above (2008a, 132–133, 135). For example, *She was bursting with joy* instantiates HAPPINESS IS A FLUID IN A CONTAINER; *Fires of joy were kindled by the birth of her son*: HAPPINESS IS HEAT/FIRE; *I was overwhelmed by joy*: HAPPINESS IS A NATURAL FORCE; *He was hit by happiness*: HAPPINESS IS A PHYSICAL FORCE; *They live a life ruled by happiness*: HAPPINESS IS A SOCIAL SUPERIOR; *She was seized by joy*: HAPPINESS IS AN OPPONENT; *All joy broke loose as the kids opened their presents*: HAPPINESS IS A CAPTIVE ANIMAL; and *He was beside himself with joy*: HAPPINESS IS A FORCE DISLOCATING THE SELF, respectively.

The next group of metaphors conceptualizes how we evaluate happiness. As a tendency, we associate positive values with happiness. For example, *He was beaming with joy* instantiates the metaphor HAPPINESS IS LIGHT; *I was floating*: HAPPINESS IS FEELING LIGHT (NOT HEAVY); *I'm feeling up today*: HAPPINESS IS UP; and *I was in seventh heaven*: HAPPINESS IS BEING IN HEAVEN (Kövecses 2008a, 136). Kövecses also notes that the opposites of the values listed above are DARK, BEING WEIGHED DOWN, and BEING DOWN are seen as negative and associated with sadness and depression, which are the opposite of happiness, however, “being in hell” is not associated with the concept of sadness (Tissari qtd. in Kövecses 2008a, 136).

The third group of metaphors conceptualizes the phenomenological character of happiness in terms of various pleasurable experiences. For example, *I was purring with delight* exemplifies the metaphor HAPPINESS IS AN ANIMAL THAT LIVES WELL; *I was tickled pink*: HAPPINESS IS A PLEASURABLE PHYSICAL SENSATION; *It was an intoxicating experience*: HAPPINESS IS BEING DRUNK; *He was full of pep*: HAPPINESS IS VITALITY and *What he said made me feel warm all over*: HAPPINESS IS WARMTH (Kövecses 2008a, 136).

Metonymies of happiness conceptualize bodily reactions, facial expressions, and behavioral responses that accompany happiness. Bodily (or physiological) reactions are captured in the metonymies FLUSHING FOR HAPPINESS, INCREASED HEART RATE FOR HAPPINESS, BODY WARMTH FOR HAPPINESS, and AGITATION/EXCITEMENT FOR

HAPPINESS (Kövecses 2008a, 137). Facial reactions are captured in BRIGHT EYES FOR HAPPINESS and SMILING FOR HAPPINESS (137), while behavioral responses in JUMPING UP AND DOWN FOR HAPPINESS and DANCING/SINGING FOR HAPPINESS (136). If we compare Darwin's ([1872] 1999) and Ekman's (1999) descriptions of happiness to Kövecses's linguistic expressions, we can observe that a number of bodily and behavioral reactions have metonymical representations in the language of happiness.

In the concept of happiness, there is a set of related concepts representing feelings, ideas, and thoughts that are in close relation to the emotion happiness: "(FEELING OF) SATISFACTION, (FEELING OF) PLEASURE and (FEELING OF) HARMONY" (Kövecses 2008a, 137). Kövecses's findings correspond to our everyday experience that being happy means being satisfied with and/or feeling pleasant about or in harmony with a situation or events that cause our positive emotion.

Kövecses (1990, 45) claims that conceptual metaphors, conceptual metonymies, and related concepts converge on cognitive models. Kövecses (1991, 2008a, 2008b) identifies three prototypical cognitive models of happiness: (a) happiness as an immediate response, (b) happiness as a value, and (c) happiness as being glad, which correspond to the three most salient meanings of the term *happiness* (Kövecses 2008a, 138). Cognitive models present the temporal and causal structure of our emotional experiences, in other words, they show how our emotions come about, exist for a period of time, and cease to exist. Kövecses summarizes this sequence in "cause of emotion → emotion → (controlling emotion →) response" (2008a, 134). The three prototypes of happiness differ in their causes, the way they exist, and especially in relation to control, that is, whether or not they have an attempt at and loss of control component followed by certain actions.

Kövecses shows that happiness as an immediate response is usually caused by an achievement of the experiencer, after which he/she feels satisfied and displays certain physiological, behavioral, and expressive behavior (2008a, 138–141). Depending on the cause and the situation, the experiencer may need to control his/her behavior, for example, in formal situations like meetings; at work it is acceptable to smile and bow but loud cheering, jumping, or dancing around are usually discouraged, however, the latter behavior may be very welcome in football matches or various other social events.

Happiness as a value is usually caused by qualities in non-specific situations like "freedom, health and love" (Kövecses 2008a, 139–140). It is a quiet, long-lasting, and pleasurable state for the experiencer, in which he/she

feels harmony with and has a positive outlook on the world. In such a case there are no significant changes in one's emotions or noticeable reactions therefore the control aspect is not relevant in the scenario of happiness as a value. Likewise, the control aspect is not relevant in relation to happiness as being glad because we do not produce any reactions or responses of high intensity when we are glad (e.g., *I'm glad to hear it/you could come*). Kövecses identifies this prototype as "a mild positive response to a state of affairs that is either not very important to someone or whose positive outcome can be taken to be a matter of course" (2008a, 140). A positive mild response may be a smile, brightness of the eyes, and a feeling of harmony in general.

In sum, instantiations of conceptual metaphors and metonymies give linguistic representations of our physiological reactions, facial expressions, and behavioral responses accompanying happiness. Using a lexical approach (Kövecses 2015), cognitive linguistic investigations focus on identifying the details of the concept of happiness including related concepts and cognitive models of the emotion. However, the study of causes of happiness and their linguistic representations seems to be outside the scope of research into the language of happiness (cf. Kövecses 1991, 2000, 2008a, 2008b), although the three prototypical cognitive models of happiness refer in general to prospective triggers of happiness.

### *My Research*

In the present study, I use *happiness* as a cover term for emotions that are referred to by the adjectives *cheerful, delighted, glad, happy, joyful, and pleased*. I have made a corpus of example sentences composed with the adjectives *delighted, glad, happy, and pleased* and the nouns *delight, happiness, joy, and pleasure* (My sources are monolingual and bilingual dictionaries: Hornby 1989, McIntosh et al. 2009, and Ország and Magay 2003).

My corpus shows that a large number of my example sentences contain one of the above adjectives or nouns in combination with prepositional phrases, which describe events or situations that serve as causes of happiness. The prepositions used in the example sentences are *at, about, by, for, from, in, of, out of, to, and with*.

In the first part of my investigation, I studied the examples containing the prepositions *in, at, about, and with* and found that the prepositions are not used in their literal (spatial or functional) meanings but in certain metaphorical meanings. *In* is used in phrases like *be happy in one's work, take delight in doing sth*, where the prepositional phrases denote states, conditions

or actions seen as abstract/metaphorical locations. *At* is used in expressions like *be delighted/pleased at sb's success*, *express joy at sb's decision* and refers to something viewed as a metaphorical sight or an abstract location that is in the experiencer's focus of attention. *About* is used in phrases like *be glad/happy about sb's passing the test*, *be pleased about one's friend's promotion*, where the prepositional phrases usually refer to the success of another person (not the subject of the sentence) whose success/achievement is a metaphorical topic for the emotional self. The preposition *with* is combined with adjectives as in *be happy/pleased with sb/sth*, *be delighted with one's birthday present* where the prepositional phrase denotes the cause of the emotion, a person or a thing that satisfies the emotional self. The preposition *with* refers to the abstract or physical proximity of the emotional self and the person or thing triggering the emotion (for the details, see Csillag 2023, 113–125).

In the remainder of the present paper, I will investigate the meaning and use of the rest of the prepositions used in English happiness expressions by answering the questions below:

- (1) *What are the meanings of the prepositions out of, from, to, by, for, and of in happiness expressions?*
- (2) *Are there any correlations between the prepositions and the causes they are combined with?*
- (3) *Which prototypes of happiness do the phrases containing different prepositions exemplify?*

Applying the lexical approach (Kövecses 2015) in the discussion of conventional expressions of happiness in my corpus, I aim to make generalizations concerning the choice of various prepositions for linguistic expressions of different happiness triggers.

#### *The Prepositions out of, from, to, by, for, and of in Expressions of Happiness*

Below I give a brief outline of the basic meanings of the prepositions *out of*, *from*, *to*, *by*, *for*, and *of*, then discuss how they are used in happiness expressions.

Sentences (1–3) contain the prepositions *out of* and *from*:

- (1) *She got no joy out of working.*
- (2) *My grandmother got immense pleasure out of life until the end.*
- (3) *[. . .] he's been at the job so long that he can no longer derive pleasure from food.*

The basic meaning of *out (of)* is movement from the inside of a thing as in *Jill went out of the house*, that is, the trajector moves from the inside of the landmark (for trajector and landmark, see Langacker 1987). Lindstromberg claims that *out of* has metaphorical usages to describe non-physical experiences (2010, 38–39). He explains that certain non-physical/nonspatial entities are seen metaphorically as spaces out of which actions emerge or people can be helped out of. For example, the sentence *She did it out of love* “speaks of an action as if it can emerge from love rather like bread can come out of an oven.” In the sentence *Can any of your readers kindly help me out of a difficulty?*, difficulty is viewed as a hole “that one can be pulled out of,” while in the sentence *I managed to talk Liz out of doing more housework*, the action of doing more housework is seen “as a space or place that can be entered or exited.” The last sentence implies that Liz “was in the decision space where she was going to do more housework but then the speaker helped her ‘out of’ it.” Lindstromberg concludes that all these and similar usages of *out of* involve reification.

In sentences (1) and (2), the phrases after *out of* denote long-lasting phenomena, like work and life as sources of happiness, which are seen as spaces where joy and pleasure may come from. Sentence (3) shows a much more concrete entity, food as a source of pleasure. The basic meaning of *from* is the opposite of *to* and it is used to refer to “a path in terms of its origin” (Lindstromberg 2010, 43) as in *I came from Peter’s house to yours*. It is important to note that the basic meaning of *out of* is that it describes a path that has its starting point inside an object, area, or space and an endpoint that is always outside that object, area, or space and never the surface or edge of that object. *From* does not have such a clear meaning, that is, the origin of the path may be either the surface or the inside of a thing in question. No matter of its vague meaning, *from* clearly refers to the separation of one thing from another, which serves as the basis for its metaphorical usages (Lindstromberg 2010, 45–47). Sentences like *Wine is made from grapes* reflect that there is a significant change that the grapes take until they become wine. Lindstromberg (2010, 46) suggests that similar changes are “expressed as movement through space.” By analogy, it can be argued that food or the experience of consuming food as a source of pleasure may only be understood if it undergoes a significant change, or metaphorically speaking, if it moves through space and takes a long distance.

The common thing about examples (1–3) is that they all present the causes of happiness as the sources out of which the emotion emerges. On the other hand, they all show relatively long-lasting situations, in which the subjects experience happiness as a value.

The following sentences are composed with the preposition *to*:

- (4) *Her books have brought great joy to millions of people.*
- (5) *It is a work of art that has given pleasure to millions of people.*
- (6) *The news was very pleasing to us.*

The preposition *to* refers to the endpoint of a path in its basic (spatial) meaning (Lindstromberg 2010, 30) as in *Paul went to the door/to Peter*. The expressions *to the door* and *to Peter* denote Paul's destination, the end of the path that he took (for the PATH schema, see Johnson 1987, 113–117, 123). Both landmarks after the preposition *to* refer to locations, where the trajector (Paul) moved in the physical world. The preposition *to* is also used in sentences referring to an act of giving or sending something (trajector) to someone (landmark), that is, *to* + landmark denotes the end of the path the trajector takes. In sentences like *Paul gave/sent a small present to Peter* the landmark Peter is understood as a recipient rather than as a location, however, the trajector (a small present) takes the path from Paul to Peter, the recipient. Lindstromberg (2010, 233) points out that (a) *to* is also used with verbs like *transmit*, *forward*, *transfer*, etc. as well as *allot* and *assign*, all related to the idea of actual, intended, or potential giving/sending and (b) “what is given or sent may range from the tangible (e.g., a Christmas present) to the intangible (e.g., an idea)” as in “*Transmit [ . . . ] this message to all our branches*” and “*These places have been allotted [ . . . ] to new students.*” In addition, Lindstromberg (2010, 209) notes that the preposition *to* “may contribute a nuance of dynamism [ . . . ] even in non-spatial contexts.” He argues that “saying that you are a friend *to*, rather than *of* someone is a way of saying that your friend benefits from attention that you actively devote to her or to him.”

Sentences (4–5) describe scenes where the act of giving and bringing may only be understood metaphorically, where joy and pleasure are seen as valuable commodities that are metaphorically given to the recipients denoted by the landmark (millions of people). Sentence (6) does not refer to an act of giving, however, it implies that the landmark in the phrase *to us* “benefits” from what the news is about, that is, *to* refers to the metaphorical recipient of the news, in other words, the beneficiary of the situation. Sentences (4–6) refer to situations in which the subjects experience pleasure, a feeling of benefit, and/or satisfaction (and probably produce only mild emotional reactions) instantiating the prototype happiness as being glad.

In my corpus, there is a small number of sentences containing the preposition *by*:

- (7) *You must be pleased by their confidence in you.*
- (8) *She was delighted by the news of the wedding.*

Being a polysemous preposition, *by* has a number of different meanings. In its spatial meaning, it describes the location of a thing close to or near another in the horizontal plane as in *live by the sea* (O’Keefe 1996, 299 quoted in Lindstromberg 2010, 144). *By* and its landmark may refer to a means as in *go by car/air*, or the manner of an action as in *escape by climbing down a rope*. It may denote the agent in a passive construction as in *written by a young poet*, or the cause of an emotion as in *be delighted/surprised by the news* (For more meanings and usages of *by*, see Lindstromberg 2010). Lindstromberg (2010, 182) points out that phrases like *delighted by* and *surprised by* may refer to “fleeting or long-lasting emotional reactions” because they do not suggest “any particular perspective.”

I assume that sentence (7) describes a relatively stable/quiet/long-lasting situation not triggering very intense reactions in the experiencer, while sentence (8) may refer to a more dynamic situation involving a more noticeable change of emotional reactions such as smiling, reacting by saying a couple of kind words, congratulating or asking about the details of the wedding. Depending on the cause denoted in the *by* phrase, similar sentences are examples of happiness as a value or happiness as being glad.

The preposition *for* is combined with *happy*, *glad*, and *pleased* in my corpus:

- (9) *So you’re getting married, I hear. I’m really happy for you.*
- (10) *We’re glad for you both.*
- (11) *I’m very pleased for you both.*

The preposition *for* is etymologically linked to the Old Teutonic word *fora* meaning “before” and “in front of” (Lindstromberg 2010, 225). *For* and its landmark today denote intended recipients in phrases like *I have this bar of chocolate for you/Linda*. When saying such a sentence, we usually place the bar of chocolate in front of the person we mean to give it to. In such a situation the phrase *for* + landmark refers to an element of intention, that is, to the fact that the act of giving has not yet taken place in contrast to a situation described as *I have given a bar of chocolate to Linda*, where the trajector

(a bar of chocolate) has taken the path to the recipient (Linda). Lindstromberg claims that *for* is used to earmark the trajector “as something offered, or reserved for, immediate or eventual use, consumption, or possession by the landmark” (2010, 226).

I find that in sentences (9–11) *for* does not have a spatial meaning. The phrases *for* + landmark in examples (9–11) name the people whose happiness/achievement/success triggers the happiness of the subject of the sentence. In similar cases, the people are among the subject’s/experiencer’s loved ones. The landmark’s happiness/achievement is apparent in sentence (9) (referred to by *you’re getting married*) and only implied in sentences (10–11). The metaphorical meaning of *for* in the phrases *for you* and *for you both* is that achievements of the people denoted by *you* and *you both* are the indirect causes of the experiencer’s feeling of happiness, where “indirect” means “the experiencer himself/herself has not worked for the achievement.” Sentences (9–11) are said in situations in which the subject has a pleasant feeling without any intense emotional reactions, therefore I find that they instantiate happiness as being glad.

The preposition *of* is used in the following examples:

- (12) *She was secretly glad of his company.*
- (13) *I’d be glad of your help/a cup of tea.*
- (14) *May I have the pleasure of this dance?*

The preposition *of* used to have a spatial meaning in Old English. It meant “away from,” “out of,” “from,” and “off” (Lindstromberg 2010, 205). These separative meanings gradually faded away through time. Today the preposition *of* is used to refer to the idea of possession, a special relationship between a thing and its possessor (trajector + *of* + landmark), where the trajector and the landmark are usually integrated in one way or another. Langacker explains the present-day integrative meaning of the preposition *of* by claiming “The preposition *of* indicates that the relationship between its trajector and landmark is somehow intrinsic rather than contingent” (qtd. in Lindstromberg 2010, 206) (e.g., *The roof of the house is red*). Lindstromberg lists “a wide range of types of integration” including, for example, (a) intrinsic: *the life of x*, (b) nearly intrinsic: *a copy of x*, (c) part-whole: *the gist of the problem*, (d) action-agent: *an act of a fool*, (e) action-patient: *the delivery of goods*, (f) example-type: *a sample of tissue*, (g) amount/unit-stuff/emotion/action: *a kilo of rice*, *a bit of patience*, etc. (2010, 208). Lindstromberg explicates the use of *of* for possession by claiming that our discourse about

possession “recognizes that a thing possessed is integrated into its possessor’s sphere of influence” (Lindstromberg 2010, 208).

Examples (12–14) do not seem to apply the integrative function of the preposition *of*. However, they are more likely to be understood by some metaphorical meaning of the ancient separative (spatial) meaning of *of*. Lindstromberg (2010, 209) demonstrates the separative meaning by the example *I found a piece of a statue on a Greek beach*, where it is obvious that the piece was not connected to the statue. A more abstract understanding of separation is captured in phrases like *It was kind/silly/stupid/generous of you to do that*, where the person referred to by *you* is seen as the source of a kind, silly, stupid, or generous action. In Lindstromberg’s argumentation, the use of *of* in the expressions *be tired/ashamed/frightened of something* can be explained by the metaphorical conception “that a feeling is an emanation from whatever engenders that feeling” (Lindstromberg 2010, 209). Using the same analogy, the landmarks after *of* in examples (12–14) present the causes triggering happiness, gladness, and pleasure which can be seen as emanations from their causes. The causes are typically some sort of help, food, or drink that the experiencer may benefit from/make good use of or else a company or an activity that the experiencer may enjoy. Sentences like (13) are usually used as polite requests for favor or help, while sentences like (14) as very polite (and formal or jocular or old-fashioned) invitations to dance. If the actions and requests referred to in (12–14) are fulfilled there is usually an element of satisfaction on behalf of the experiencer, therefore I find that all three sentences exemplify happiness as being glad.

### *Conclusion*

After giving a brief outline of the psychological and cognitive linguistic background to the study of happiness, I investigated the use of the prepositions *out of, from, to, by, for, and of* in English happiness expressions and found that the phrases containing the prepositions mostly refer to the causes of happiness and the prepositions are not used in their spatial or functional meanings but figuratively, in various metaphorical meanings.

The preposition *out of* is usually combined with nouns denoting long-lasting situations or circumstances as in *get joy out of work* and the prepositional phrase refers to the cause of happiness seen as metaphorical space (or source) where the emotion may come from. The preposition *from* in *derive pleasure from food* has a tangible object as its landmark and the prepositional phrase refers to the cause of happiness viewed metaphorically as a thing going through

a significant change in which the physical thing turns into an abstract thing, that is, a commodity (food) metaphorically turns into a pleasant emotion.

The preposition *to* is used in expressions like *x brings joy/pleasure to sb, x is pleasing to sb*. In such expressions, the prepositional phrase metaphorically refers to the end of the path that happiness/joy/pleasure takes to the person experiencing the emotion, who is seen as the metaphorical destination of the emotion. It is important to note that unlike the phrases with *out of, from, by, for, and of*, the prepositional phrases with *to* do not denote the cause of happiness but the beneficiary of the situation, who is the experiencer of the emotion. The cause, however, is referred to by the subjects (*x*) of the expressions (see sentences 4–6 above).

The preposition *by* is used in *be delighted/pleased by* and is followed by expressions referring to the cause triggering happiness. From a grammatical point of view *delighted* and *pleased* are past participles and are used in the passive construction, where the phrase with *by* typically denotes the doer of the action, which is metaphorically understood here as the cause of the emotion.

The preposition *for* is used in *be happy/glad/pleased for sb*, where the nominal phrase after the preposition denotes a person/people who is/are usually important for the subject of the sentence and whose success, achievement, or joy makes the subject happy. In other words, the cause of happiness is not the experiencer's own success but another person's/other people's. In such a situation, the emotional self is happy because someone else is happy or successful.

The preposition *of* is used in expressions like *be glad of one's help/company* and *May I have the pleasure of this dance?* The former expressions may be understood as reflection or positive feedback to someone who has given help to or provided company for the subject of the expression/sentence, while the question is normally used as a request or invitation to dance. In both cases, the subject experiences satisfaction and/or benefits in one way or another from what the other person provides, which triggers his/her emotion. Through the separative meaning of *of*, the emotion is metaphorically understood as an emanation from the cause expressed in the prepositional phrase.

In sum, the causes of happiness are of various kinds and are referred to with various prepositions as follows: static, long-lasting situations are seen as sources *out of* which you get happiness; food and drink are seen as things going through significant change *from* which you derive joy; good news and works of art may bring pleasure *to* you; you may be delighted *by* positively evaluated abstract ideas; you may feel happy *for* other people or their success,

achievement, or happiness; and you may be glad *of* the help or company that other people provide you with. Happiness experiences triggered by such causes instantiate two prototypes: happiness as a value and happiness as being glad accompanied by mild emotional responses.

### References

- Andrek, Andrea. 2013. "Társas érzelmek." In *Affektív pszichológia: az emberi késztetések és érzelmek világa*, edited by Éva Bányai and Katalin Varga, 435–462. Budapest: Medicina Könyvkiadó Zrt.
- Argyle, Michael. 1994. *The Psychology of Happiness*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Csillag, Andrea. 2023. "What do Some Prepositional Phrases Reveal about Causes of Happiness?" In *Cultural Dialogues*, edited by Emilia Parpală and Carmen Popescu, 113–125. Craiova: Editura Universitaria.
- Darwin, Charles. (1872) 1999. *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*. 3rd Ed. London: Fontana Press.
- Ekman, Paul. 1999. "Basic Emotions." In *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*, edited by Tim Dalgleish and Michael Power, 38–60. New York: John Wiley and Sons Ltd.
- Ekman, Paul, Wallace V. Friesen, and Phoebe Ellsworth. 1972. *Emotion in the Human Face: Guidelines for Research and an Integration of Findings*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Ekman, Paul. 2022. "Enjoyment." Paul Ekman Group LLC. Accessed 18 September, 2022. <https://www.paulekman.com/universal-emotions/what-is-enjoyment/>.
- Hornby, Albert Sydney. 1989. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Johnson, Mark. 1987. *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kövecses, Zoltán. 2015. "Surprise as a Conceptual Category." *Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 13 (2): 270–290.
- . 2008a. "The Conceptual Structure of Happiness." In *Happiness: Cognition, Experience, Language Studies across Disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, edited by Heli Tissari, Anne Birgitta Pessi, and Mikko Salmela, 131–143. Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies.
- . 2008b. "The Conceptual Structure of Happiness and Pain." In *Reconstructing Pain and Joy: Linguistic, Literary, and Cultural Perspectives*,

- edited by Chryssoula Lascaratou, Anna Despotopoulou, and Elly Ifantidou, 17–34. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- . 1991. “Happiness: A Definitive Effort.” *Metaphor and Symbolic Activity* 6: 29–46.
- . 1990. *Emotion Concepts*. New York: Springer-Verlag.
- Langacker, Ronald W. 1987. *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*. Vol. 1. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
- . 2008. “The Relevance of Cognitive Grammar for Language Pedagogy.” In *Cognitive Approaches to Pedagogical Grammar [Applications of Cognitive Linguistics 9]*, edited by Sabine De Knop and Teun De Rycker, 7–35. Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Levontina, Irina B., and Andrey A. Zalizniak. 2001. “Human Emotions Viewed through the Russian Language.” In *Emotions in Crosslinguistic Perspective*, edited by Jean Harkins and Anna Wierzbicka, 291–336. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Lindstromberg, Seth. 2010. *English Prepositions Explained*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- McIntosh, Colin, Francis, Ben, and Richard Poole, eds. 2009. *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Országh, László, and Tamás Magay, eds. 2003. *Angol-magyar nagyszótár*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- Pressman, Sarah D., and Sheldon Cohen. 2005. “Does Positive Affect Influence Health?” *Psychological Bulletin* 131 (6): 925–971.
- Wierzbicka, Anna. 1999. *Emotions across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 1996. *Semantics: Primes and Universals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

## The Challenges of Teaching Consecutive Interpreting Methods, Pedagogical Skills, and Effective Learning Strategies

### *Introduction*

A critical competency in multilingual communication, consecutive interpreting helps to effectively span cultural divides and overcome language hurdles. The need for proficient sequential interpreters has increased as globalization continues to connect many linguistic communities. Consecutive interpreting entails the consecutive translation of spoken content from one language into another, necessitating the mastery of memory retention and quick cognitive processing in addition to outstanding linguistic proficiency in interpreters. This procedure is frequently used in diplomatic discussions, court cases, medical consultations, economic dealings, and other situations when correct information transmission is crucial.

Interpreting is regarded by many critics as a “special translational activity, as a special form of ‘Translation’” (Pöchhacker 2004, 9), a practice that still lacks extensive academic interest. As Andrew Gillies argues, interpreting, “despite the fact that is often taught at universities, is not an academic subject, it is far more akin to a craft or a sport. [...] Interpreting is a skill or to be more exact, a combination of skills that one can explain and understand quite quickly, but which take far longer to master in practice” (2013, 3).

Teachers of consecutive interpreting face a wide range of difficulties because it is such a complex skill. First, interpreting involves significant cognitive demands. While keeping the coherence and nuance of the original discourse, interpreters must process the message in the source language, retain its salient features, and then successfully render it in the target language. Interpreters must manage their cognitive load as they navigate the complex interactions between language understanding and memory recall. Furthermore, mastery of the language is a fundamental requirement. Interpreters need to be proficient in both languages as well as have a deep awareness of cultural references and idioms. Inaccurate cultural allusions or idiom interpretation might result in misunderstandings and poor communication.

Another serious challenge in consecutive interpreting is memory and recall. The process of memorization necessitates refined strategies to ensure accurate and comprehensive recall during interpretation. Additionally, a sequential interpreter's job frequently requires them to speak in front of large audiences. Three crucial areas that teachers must address in their pedagogical approach are overcoming stage fright, managing nervousness, and projecting confidence.

In response to these challenges, teachers should use a variety of cutting-edge pedagogical strategies to facilitate efficient learning. The integration of experiential learning, for example, allows students to build practical skills while immersing them in real-world interpreting scenarios. Employing error analysis and providing constructive feedback enables students to identify weaknesses and refine their techniques. It is crucial to develop cultural and contextual understanding since it not only improves the accuracy of interpretation but also fosters awareness of the socio-cultural dynamics woven within the languages.

Debra Russel advocates a blended approach, that is, “the ability to bridge consecutive interpreting research with effective practices” (2010, 111), and claims that a strong foundation in consecutive interpreting will help interpreters to gain a better skill-set in combining consecutive and simultaneous modes (111). Russel also suggests that “programs that structure the teaching of consecutive interpreting from a holistic integrated approach across their curricula and throughout the entire program contribute to shifting practices in our profession toward incorporating research and best practices” (118).

This essay explores the challenges in teaching consecutive interpreting, examines the pedagogical approaches and methodologies used by teachers to address them, and looks at effective learning strategies that equip students to successfully negotiate the complex world of consecutive interpreting. By exploring these facets, I shall be able to develop a thorough grasp of the varied parts of consecutive interpreting education and shed light on the various good practices that prepare interpreters for success in a world that is becoming more interconnected. In light of the specialized literature and empirical research, I will also share some of the exercises and good practices used during my online/offline interpreting classes at Partium Christian University.

### *1. Processing/Retaining Information and Managing Cognitive Load*

The dual process of absorbing and retaining information is the core cognitive challenge in consecutive interpretation. Interpreters must pay close attention to the message being spoken in the source language so that they will be able to recreate its counterpart in the target language. This requires the interpreter to analyze and segment the incoming speech, which frequently involves intricate syntactic structures and specialized terminology, in a split-second mental juggling act. In the words of Halyna Onyshchak et al., “in the individual’s mind, social environment, everyday and spiritual life of community, and standards of human conduct are reflected in certain cognitive structures, realized in linguistic forms [and] the integration of the semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic (and cultural) aspects does not operate in the void but is geared towards exploring the cognitive demands and processes of interpreting” (2021, 226–227). As interpreters identify subtleties, cultural allusions, and idiomatic expressions contained in the conversation, this cognitive process combines both verbal comprehension and semantic analysis.

Effective teaching of processing and retention involves imparting techniques that enhance cognitive efficiency. Teachers encourage students to use active listening, where they concentrate on picking out the most important details and extracting information while the speaker is talking. Taking notes becomes a crucial ally in this process because it helps the memory by the jotting down of important details. Fostering critical thinking abilities also makes it possible for interpreters to recognize the hierarchy of ideas, which aids in the organizing and subsequent reproduction of the discourse.

Consecutive interpreting requires careful cognitive load management since even the most experienced interpreters can get mentally exhausted from processing and memory retention. Working memory is limited and needs to be used as efficiently as possible, according to John Sweller’s cognitive load hypothesis (2011, 42, 219–233). The difficulty of providing students with tools to control cognitive load successfully must be overcome by teachers.

Consecutive interpreting has its advantages and disadvantages, because you have to train your short-term memory, and sometimes this is a difficult task. Also, you have to learn proper note-taking techniques, as well. For simultaneous interpreting, there is no note-taking, and some interpreters feel it is an easier mode of interpreting, yet it requires stronger and longer concentration. Thus, based on my observations, students in the early phases

of simultaneous practices cannot concentrate longer than five minutes without major errors, but gradually this time interval can be expanded.

Using chunking and segmentation as a teaching tool is one educational strategy. Interpreters acquire the skill of segmenting the discourse into digestible chunks and mentally organizing material to speed up processing and memory. By mastering this method, interpreters reduce cognitive load and can provide interpretations that flow more naturally and coherently.

Developing metacognitive awareness also gives interpreters the ability to control their cognitive resources. Through reflective practice, students can spot signs of cognitive overload and implement self-regulatory strategies, such as slowing down speech delivery or employing visualization techniques. By stating that interpreters with “metacognitive awareness not only are more aware of their filters and biases but also how they process information and their own cognitive processes” (2012, 10), Macnamara underlines the importance of metacognition in interpreting as a means of performance monitoring and regulation.

## *2. Language Fluency and Cultural References*

Linguistic proficiency extends beyond mere linguistic competence; it includes a thorough awareness of the cultural nuances and contextual subtleties that are unique to both languages. Interpreters, in the words of Angelelli, are visible participants of the communication process, who should not only be present in the linguistic construction of the conversation but are also essential in communicating cultural gaps, affect nuances as well as the content of the message (2004, 11). This subtle understanding is essential because language is a finely woven tapestry that reflects a society’s common ethos and historical past.

The duty of encouraging cultural sensitivity and curiosity falls to teachers. Immersive cultural exposure is one teaching technique that exposes students to authentic materials such as literature, movies, and socio-political dialogue. This exposure does not only improve language skills but also gives interpreters a greater understanding of the sociocultural underpinnings that influence linguistic expression.

Teachers make use of a variety of strategies to develop students’ vocabulary and idiom proficiency. Contextual learning is an active learning method that exposes students to new vocabulary and expressions in real-world communication scenarios. This method makes it easier to comprehend how words are used and when they are suitable given the context. Additionally,

students can learn about the usage patterns and contextual variants of particular words and idioms using technology-enabled resources like corpus linguistics databases.

Moreover, educators recognize the dynamic nature of language. Interpreters must be aware of current linguistic trends because language changes along with societal trends. The incorporation of language-focused projects encourages continual linguistic development and cultural awareness. Examples include examining recent news stories or taking part in language exchange programs.

### *3. Memory and Recall*

The act of interpreting is a “form of human information processing involving the reception, storage, transformation, and transmission of verbal information” (Graver qtd. in Pöchhacker 2004, 55). A crucial part of this process is storage, that is, the use of short-term memory. Interpreting starts with deverbalization, that is, the encoding of the information from the source language discourse. According to Gile’s Effort Model (qtd. in Zhong 2003, 3), the process of interpreting could be re-postulated into:

*Encoding of information from the Source Language + Storing Information + Retrieval of Information + Decoding Information into the Target Language.*

Therefore, as Zhong claims, “in the first step of interpreting, encoding (understanding) information uttered in the SL is the key to memory training” (2003, 3). Moreover, as Andrea Kriston mentions, Gile also believes that Consecutive Interpretation (CI) consists of two phases: a listening and a reformulation phase, and then, a reconstruction phase:  $CI = L + M + N$ , where N is the note-taking process followed by phase two:  $CI = Rem + Read + P$ , where interpreters retrieve messages from their short-term memory and reconstruct the speech (Rem), read the notes (N), and produce the Target Language Speech (P) (2012, 81).

Teachers use a variety of memory-boosting strategies to empower students-interpreters to remember a lot of information. Throughout the training process, interpreters are encouraged to create vivid mental pictures associated with the discourse. Several visualization techniques support the creation of a mnemonic scaffold on which information can be suspended. The visual story not only helps with memory but also provides a temporal sequence for interpreting the discourse coherently.

Another method is chunking, in which interpreters arrange informational chunks into meaningful clusters. By reducing cognitive load and utilizing the cognitive principle of chunking, this strategic segmentation allows interpreters to make the most of their limited working memory resources. Additionally, rhyming mnemonics and acronyms operate as memory aids by turning abstract information into memorable patterns.

Recall accuracy is the linchpin upon which interpretation rests, requiring interpreters to summon information from the depths of memory with fidelity. Teachers emphasize active recall exercises, where students retrieve information without external cues. This practice sharpens memory retrieval pathways, making subsequent recall during interpretation more robust.

Furthermore, the role of metacognition surfaces once again, as interpreters develop self-monitoring strategies to enhance recall accuracy. Self-awareness of memory strengths and weaknesses prompts interpreters to allocate cognitive resources judiciously. The strategic allocation extends to the use of note-taking, where interpreters devise a personalized system of symbols and abbreviations that act as cognitive triggers during recall.

#### *4. Public Speaking Skills for Effective Interpreting*

Beyond reducing anxiety, teachers are aware of the interdependence between effective interpretation and public speaking. Interpreters use vocal modulation, tempo, and nonverbal clues on stage to improve their performances. To accurately reflect the speaker's intonation and emotional complexity, vocal delivery is of crucial significance. Vocal variation and modulation are welcome throughout consecutive interpreting. Andrew Gillies argues that in the act of interpreting one has to pay attention to the following: posture, eye contact, voice, and intonation (2019, 16–26). Interpreters must learn how to vary their voice volume, to be able to speak loudly without shouting. Intonation should be natural and fluent to inspire confidence in the listeners (25).

Stage fright can have physiological and psychological effects that impede cognitive functioning, alter memory recall, and compromise linguistic fluency. Anxiety can have paralyzing effects that make it difficult for students to engage in successful interpreting. Gillies asserts that “it is normal to be nervous when you speak in public [. . .] Usually your nerves will stop playing a role once you get going with the speech, so practice beginnings” (2019, 26).

Pedagogical techniques include practice sessions that imitate real-world situations. Teachers should develop the self-assurance needed

to negotiate a variety of circumstances, from courtroom procedures to medical consultations, by involving interpreters in role-playing exercises. A cornerstone for improving interpreters' public speaking abilities and increasing their interpretative proficiency is constructive criticism from peers and mentors. A very effective pedagogical strategy would be the filming of practice sessions so that both teachers and students can return to the work for further analysis and feedback. According to Debra Russel, "taped scenarios have multiple uses—additional consecutive practice for students, more detailed linguistic and interpreting analysis of their work, later simultaneous interpreting practice, samples of effective or ineffective practice, and inclusion in student portfolios" (2010, 117).

Teachers might employ a variety of strategies to guide interpreters through the maze of stage anxiety. Exercises in breath control and mindfulness give interpreters tools to manage physiological reactions, channeling nervous energy into focused attention. Teachers can desensitize interpreters to performance anxiety by setting up a supportive learning atmosphere that mimics real-world interpreting situations. This could build resilience and adaptive coping skills. In my experience, what proved to be very useful was a safe classroom environment and effective stress management. Split attention and anticipation exercises also helped a great deal in reducing stress and maintaining focused attention.

In controlled interpreting situations we had the following exercises at Partium Christian University: students had to write speeches on given topics and had to prepare a list of words, glossaries for those speeches. They were required to upload/share the glossaries in an online platform (usually Moodle) but not the speeches. So the other students could prepare from the glossaries only, learning the vocabulary in advance, while listening to the speech for the first time in the online/offline classroom. This repository of glossaries and well-prepared speeches proved to be a very useful part of our training sessions, and helped in reducing cognitive load, thus taking a bit of the pressure off.

## *5. Methods and Pedagogical Skills*

### *5.1. Simultaneous vs. Sequential Teaching Approaches*

Two distinct paradigms, simultaneous and sequential teaching methodologies, each have their own advantages and disadvantages. An essential component of conference interpreting, the simultaneous technique fosters quick information processing and instantaneous rendering. This

technique promotes cognitive flexibility and real-time linguistic adaptation by requiring interpreters to articulate the target language while simultaneously decoding the source language. However, the complexity of this method necessitates a sophisticated skill set and superior linguistic proficiency.

The sequential technique, however, provides a scaffolded approach that enables interpreters to concentrate on complete comprehension before moving on to target language expression. This technique, which is frequently used in educational settings, enables students to improve their memory recall, linguistic precision, and note-taking abilities. The sequential approach offers a controlled learning curve that makes it easier for students to progress gradually toward more difficult interpretation assignments.

By simulating the challenges of real-world interpreting settings, the incorporation of simultaneous teaching develops interpreters' aptitude for quick cognitive processing and multitasking. The method gives interpreters the capacity to communicate quickly and coherently, two abilities that are crucial in high-stakes situations. To improve linguistic flexibility and perfect the art of linguistic "shuttling" between languages, simultaneous practice is very effective.

Sequential teaching, on the other hand, serves as the anchor for linguistic depth and precision. Interpreters develop a comprehensive awareness of syntactic patterns, cultural connotations, and semantic nuances by deconstructing source language dialogue and engaging in meticulous analysis. By honing note-taking skills, sequential training gives interpreters a useful tool to aid in memory and precise recall during interpretation.

Russel claims that "simultaneous interpretation skills are taught once students have a solid base in consecutive interpreting. If students are permitted to move to simultaneous interpreting prior to internalizing the consecutive process, we see typical error patterns emerge, including the absence of construal and comprehension due to short processing times resulting in lexical transcoding and absence of meaningful linguistic use" (2010, 114).

In accordance with Russel, I also claim that a pedagogical synthesis should be orchestrated by teachers, who create courses that alternate between simultaneous and sequential learning styles. This balancing act of approaches sharpens the dynamic skill set that interpreters need, making them adaptable language navigators who effortlessly switch between quick rapid cognition and deliberate articulation.

### 5.2. Experiential Learning Methods and Audiovisual/Online Aids

The classroom of consecutive interpreting is not confined to the walls of academia; it extends into the realm of real-life scenarios and immersive experiences. It metamorphoses into a dynamic space, where interpreters encounter authentic discourse from domains such as legal, medical, business, and diplomatic arenas. These in-depth language repositories are fostered by exposing interpreters to specialist terminologies, cultural quirks, and contextual nuances.

Practice sessions, an essential component of experiential learning, are where interpreters refine their skills. Role-playing simulations place interpreters in settings that closely resemble real-world interpreting circumstances.

The digital realm also provides a platform for online experiential learning. Interpreters can interact with various conversation situations and observe expert interpretations through online interactive modules, multimedia resources, and video archives. Such engrossing digital encounters foster adaptation, empowering interpreters to move through digital environments that reflect the changing nature of communication (For more concrete exercises see the Appendix).

In my pedagogical approach, I also use a combination of consecutive and simultaneous interpreting practices. This blended method (which ultimately leads to a simultaneous interpreting practice) goes as follows:

1. First we start with a shadowing exercise. Students listen to the 1–2 minutes of a speech, then they try to shadow it, that is, to repeat it right after the speaker in the same language. This is useful for getting to be acquainted with the style and tone of the speech, and the general vocabulary that is used by the speaker.
2. The second stage is transcribing. This is done by students either individually or in breakout rooms. They listen to a video and try to transcribe it, then they print out the transcript and they can have it in front of them when interpreting. It is a kind of *sight interpreting*.
3. In the third exercise, we practice a kind of half consecutive-half simultaneous interpreting practice. We choose a video, and after the pre-listening exercises, students start interpreting it by pausing the video after 3–4 seconds, quickly interpreting it, and then going on as such throughout the whole video. What we measure in this case is the length of the time lag, and the focus is on the fast speed of the interpretation. So if the original video/speech is around 3 minutes,

the quick consecutive interpreting should not be longer than 4,5–5 minutes.

4. In the last stage we still do a pre-listening exercise but after that students should simultaneously interpret the speech right away.

In each of the stages, students need to use their voice recorder on their smartphones, so that they can listen to their own interpretations again and again. In their homework tasks, they are asked to do as many simultaneous interpreting exercises as they can, first just 1–2 minutes then gradually increasing the minutes of the videos up to a maximum of 5 minutes. They record their own voices and will upload the audio files in Moodle, so that we can measure, again, the evolution of their performance by the end of the semester. Moreover, I usually ask them to upload the transcripts of their own interpretations as well, so that they can have an easier self-assessment by the end of the semester.

### *5.3. Cultural Awareness and Context Analysis*

The mastery of consecutive interpretation extends beyond linguistic proficiency, encapsulating a profound understanding of cultural subtleties and contextual nuances. As Angelelli asserts, an interpreter must have a thorough knowledge of the two cultures involved, as s/he has to “decode and encode the message in such a way that the meaning and form may transfer into the language of the second party to produce the same effect that they would have produced in an audience who shared the first party’s language” (2000, 581). Analyzing the relationship between cultural awareness and the process of interpreting as well as styles of communication, Giovanna Pistillo mentions high- and low-context cultures and argues that an act of consecutive interpreting “implies a shift from a high context mode to a lower one and vice versa. In this shift, the interpreter alone has the responsibility of providing each interlocutor with the amount of context that is most appropriate in his/her culture to reach complete understanding” (2002, 6).

Teachers play a pivotal role in cultivating a heightened awareness of cultural differences, fostering an environment where interpreters develop the acumen to navigate diverse sociocultural landscapes.

Exposure to authentic materials, such as books, movies, and other forms of media, which depict the rich tapestry of various cultures, is a key component of pedagogical strategies for teaching cultural sensitivity. Teachers can promote empathy and close the communication gap between language expression and cultural subtext by immersing interpreters in these

cultural artifacts. Role-playing scenarios in richly cultural environments give interpreters the chance to grapple with ethical dilemmas and communication.

Context analysis is the twin sibling of cultural sensitivity, underpinning interpretation accuracy. Teachers guide students in the art of contextual dissection, unraveling the layers of meaning embedded within discourse. By analyzing the situational context, interpersonal dynamics, and subject matter, interpreters develop a comprehensive understanding that transcends surface-level language.

Cultural sensitivity acts as a compass that directs interpreters in developing interpretations that connect authentically to the contexts of different cultures. Interpreters cross linguistic barriers and create connections that go beyond words as they decipher idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and cultural references.

Teachers advocate for strategies that integrate cultural awareness into the interpretation process. Pre-interpretation research emerges as a cornerstone, encouraging interpreters to delve into the cultural backdrop of the discourse. This proactive approach equips interpreters with the tools to anticipate cultural nuances and make informed linguistic choices.

A good practice would be to incorporate discussions on ethics and cultural dilemmas encountered in interpretation. Engage interpreters in dialogues that explore the ethical implications of cultural adaptation and the fine balance between linguistic fidelity and cultural sensitivity (For more concrete exercises see the Appendix).

## *6. Effective Learning Strategies for Students*

### *6.1. Note-Taking*

The basis for building interpretation accuracy is organized note-taking. Teachers assist students in creating unique systems that translate spoken language into clear, cogent visual cues. Some people think note-taking cannot be taught because each and every interpreter must develop her/his unique symbols, and can use these quite flexibly. But the truth is that some of the professional interpreters who have already developed their system of symbols are against the idea that note-taking is such a personal, random system and they proposed that the basic techniques and principles of note-taking can be learned by anyone using their already established and well working system of symbols. For example, Jean Francois Rozan (2004) and Andrew Gillies (2005), the two masters of conference interpretation opposed the popular misconception that note-taking should be invented by everyone

from scratch, and they published their methods which I have also used during my classes. They documented several techniques for interpreters to take more efficient notes. Among these, we can see verticality, that is, to take notes vertically rather than horizontally, because this is what triggers our capacity for visualization and short-term memory. This helps in shifting, that is, the rendering of information in a hierarchical order so that you will be able to determine which the main ideas are in a speech and which the supporting ideas are.

In the world of taking notes, symbols, and abbreviations serve as linguistic shorthand, condensing complicated concepts into a succinct visual language. Interpreters skilled in this profession use a vocabulary of symbols that represent recurrent verbal components. For instance, a straightforward arrow may signify causation, whereas a star may signify emphasis.

By reducing long phrases to a few letters, abbreviations also simplify taking notes. By strategically using abbreviations, interpreters can quickly understand what is being said, freeing up cognitive resources for analysis and memory. Notably, symbols and abbreviations are imbued with a personal touch, tailored to each interpreter's linguistic repertoire and idiosyncratic note-taking style.

Teachers should encourage students to develop their own “note-taking dictionary” of symbols, abbreviations, and mnemonics as a good practice. This resource becomes a repository of efficient tools that empower interpreters to capture spoken language with precision.

Recent technological advances play an important role in interpreter training and performance improvement. Christopher Mellinger discusses the ways in which “digital pens can aid the interpreter by recording a speaker's voice to enable a simultaneous rendition of the speaker's turn” and “new mobile computing technologies allow interpreters to pair digital pens with tablet computers to further support the interpreting task” (2022, 104). Mellinger, in his article, discusses “how real-time note-taking behavior that is recorded using digital pen technologies can be triangulated with source text utterances and an interpreter's oral renditions to identify cognitive behavior” (2022, 105). For Mellinger, digital tools, such as smart pens and tablets “represent an opportunity to document interpreter cognition by facilitating real-time recording of notetaking behavior simultaneously with source language audio and target language renditions” (2022, 115).

From a methodological perspective digital tools as well as online platforms undoubtedly play an important role in measuring interpreter trainees' performance and professional evolution. A personal pedagogical experience

might support this issue. The participants of my study were those second-year MA students who, because of the Covid-19 situation, had had all their classes online in the first semester of the 2021/22 academic year. Thus, the teaching of consecutive interpreting skills as well as note-taking exercises took place entirely on the aforementioned online platforms. Initially, I was skeptical regarding the effectiveness of such online tools in teaching interpreting skills, yet I proposed to try to use them in a task-based teaching and learning process: students were given a certain freedom in uploading various project works, speeches, vocabularies, as well as interpreting simulations.

I wanted to test whether our online platform, Moodle, helps in measuring the evolution of my students in terms of note-taking at first, and in terms of fluency while doing long consecutive interpreting. So I created Forums in Moodle, where they had to upload their own project work from week to week. This means that they had to create little project works, that is, for each week they uploaded their own consecutive interpretation of a maximum 5-minute YouTube video and the notes they took for that video.

If we compare the first notes and the first interpretations at the beginning of the semester, and the end of the semester we can observe significant changes: note-taking techniques have improved, more and more students have learned the principles of verticality and shifting, and their interpretations became more fluent and confident. I have also asked them to provide feedback regarding these exercises and the use of Moodle. At first, they confessed that they were quite frustrated because learning note-taking was not easy and with each and every symbol they felt they were learning a new language, but they also claimed that these exercises were very helpful and could see that they had huge improvements in their interpreting skills. They also claimed it was very helpful that they could see each other's notes and video interpretations, and could offer feedback to each other.

I conclude that online tools, such as Moodle, highly contributed to the development of interpreting and note-taking skills, as well as to the good quality of my students' performance. With the help of these online tools students were able to track their progress and offer feedback on their own performance.

## *6.2. Chunking and Segmentation*

The ability to break down linguistic complexity into easily absorbed chunks of information is the essence of chunking. To develop the discernment to spot natural breaks in spoken conversation, students should understand first that these breakpoints could be determined by the speaker's pauses, topic

changes, or grammatical constructions. By identifying these intersections, interpreters convert the flow of words into a sequence of meaningful units, each with its own semantic coherence.

The act of breaking down complex information into manageable segments is akin to assembling a jigsaw puzzle. Interpreters piece together the fragments, weaving a coherent narrative that mirrors the source language discourse. This process empowers interpreters to handle complex subject matters, navigate convoluted language, and maintain cognitive clarity.

Chunking develops into a method that creates a fluid interpretation flow; it is more than just a cognitive strategy. Interpreters who have mastered the technique of discourse segmentation can create a symphony of interpretation in which one section flows naturally into the next. Listener comprehension and interpretation coherence are improved by the rhythmic ebb and flow of interpretation, which mimics the natural cadence of speech.

Segmentation also adheres to the information processing principle. Interpreters maximize working memory capacity by breaking up information into manageable bits, which promotes smoother cognition and lowers cognitive load. The simplified cognitive process gives interpreters the mental space they need to concentrate on providing precise and idiomatic interpretations.

As a good practice, teachers should use short audio clips or speeches to motivate students to practice chunking. We can prompt them to identify breakpoints and segment the discourse into meaningful units. After the session, teachers might facilitate a discussion so students can share their approaches and insights.

### *6.3. Memory Training: Visualization and Associations*

Teachers mentor interpreters in the skill of creating mental pictures that capture abstract ideas. Interpreters give the content sensory richness by conjuring these visual metaphors, making it more memorable and palpable.

For instance, interpreters may picture a courtroom scenario with a judge's gavel and a scale of justice when interpreting complicated legal terms. This picture serves as a mnemonic touchstone, anchoring the interpreter's memory and facilitating recall. By creating these cognitive connections, information becomes more concrete and helps with memory retention.

Beyond improving memory, imagery develops into a cognitive anchor that speeds up the recall process. Like a navigator, an interpreter establishes markers within the landscape of interpretation. As interpreters navigate the expanse of discourse, these cognitive anchors act as a point of reference. Mind

maps could be extremely useful in such a practice. According to Andrew Gillies a mind map requires an understanding and analysis of the incoming speech, and the very act of drawing a mind map forces the interpreter to dissect the speech, to see it not just as an uninterrupted stream of words but as a deliberately ordered collection of chunks of information (2017, 21).

The power of association is manifest in the connectivity it fosters. Concepts are no longer isolated islands; instead, they are now a lively network with a web of associations connecting each component to every other. Interpreters set out on a journey of interpretation that is infused with coherence and narrative fluency as they create these cognitive links. The “link method,” as Kriston claims, “boils down to strange associations that you make in your head. The more ridiculous and illogical the associations are, the better your chances to remember the items are. It is essential that you actually see the pictures in your mind’s eye” (2012, 84).

As a good practice, teachers should encourage students to visualize by choosing challenging texts and highlighting important ideas. They are prompted to visualize these ideas clearly in their minds. After practicing visualization, teachers should lead a discussion in which students share their mental images and consider how they help with remembering (For more concrete exercises see the Appendix).

### *Conclusions*

Teachers and trainers manage the complexities of teaching consecutive interpreting with unshakable resolve despite its many difficulties. The complex interplay of memory requirements, linguistic proficiency, public speaking anxiety, and cognitive demands requires expert pedagogical skills as well as a good repository of best practices. The intricacy is further increased by the work of fostering cultural sensitivity, context analysis, and strategic integration. To become proficient, instructors and interpreters must both comprehend these challenges.

Interpreters are more equipped to maneuver the intricacies of memory, context, and culture thanks to the integration of cognitive theory and practical application. Language mediation is elevated into a dynamic interaction between creativity and cognition through sequential interpreting processes, where visualization, association, and note-taking become crucial components.

The evolving nature of teaching practices embraces the ethos of adaptation and innovation. The changing requirements of the interpreting

industry must be included in our teaching strategies. Teachers should work to incorporate new technology, support online learning settings, and design curricula that take into account the ever-evolving requirements of intercultural communication.

### References

- Angelelli, Claudia. 2004. *Medical Interpreting and Cross-Cultural Communication*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2000. “Interpretation as a Communicative Event: A Look through Hymes’ Lenses.” *Meta* 45 (4): 580–592.
- Gillies, Andrew. 2013. *Conference Interpreting: A Student’s Practice Book*. London: Routledge.
- . 2017. *Note-Taking for Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*. London: Routledge.
- . 2019. *Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*. London: Routledge.
- Kriston, Andrea. 2012. “The Importance of Memory Training in Interpretation.” *Professional Communication and Translation Studies* 5 (1–2): 79–86.
- Russell, Deb, Risa Shaw, and Karen Malcolm. 2010. “Effective Strategies for Teaching Consecutive Interpreting.” *The International Journal of Robotics Research* 2: 111–119.
- Macnamara, Brooke. 2012. “Interpreter Cognitive Aptitudes.” *Journal of Interpretation* 19 (1): 9–24.
- Mellinger, Christopher. 2022. “Cognitive behavior during consecutive interpreting: Describing the notetaking process.” *Translation & Interpreting* 14 (2): 103–119.
- Onyshchak, Halyna, Liudmyla Koval, Olena Vazhenina, Ivan Bakhov, Roksolana Povoroznyuk, and Antonina Devitska. 2021. “Cognitive and Neurolinguistic Aspects of Interpreting.” *BRAIN. Broad Research in Artificial Intelligence and Neuroscience* 12: 224–237. <https://www.doi.org/10.18662/brain/12.4/246>.
- Pistillo, Giovanna. 2002. “The Interpreter as Cultural Mediator.” *Intercultural Communication* 6: 1–20.
- Pöchhacker, Franz. 2004. *Introducing Interpreting Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Rozan, Jean-François. 2004. *Note-taking in Consecutive Interpreting*, translated by Andrew Gillies. Cracow: Tertium.
- Russell, Debra. 2010. “Effective Strategies for Teaching Consecutive Interpreting.” *International Journal of Interpreter Education* 2 (1): 111–119.

Sweller, John, Paul Ayres, and Slava Kalyuga. 2011. *Cognitive Load Theory*. New York: Springer.

Zhong, Weihe. 2003. "Memory Training in Interpreting." *Translation Journal* 7 (3): 39–43.

## Appendix

### Consecutive Interpreting Exercises

#### *A. Experiential Learning Strategies*

1. **Role-Playing Scenarios:** Design real-life role-playing scenarios that mirror professional interpreting contexts. Students can take on roles of interpreters, speakers, and participants in settings such as legal depositions, medical consultations, business negotiations, or diplomatic meetings. This exercise immerses students in authentic discourse and challenges them to interpret accurately while adapting to the dynamics of the situation.

*Good Practice:* Provide students with background information about the scenario, including cultural and contextual details. After the role-play, facilitate a debriefing session where students reflect on their performance, discuss challenges encountered, and receive feedback from peers and educators.

2. **Consecutive Interpretation Labs:** Set up interpretation labs where students listen to recorded speeches or presentations in the source language and then consecutively interpret them into the target language. This exercise focuses on memory retention, note-taking techniques, and accurate recall.

*Good Practice:* Gradually increase the complexity of the speeches, incorporating diverse accents, rapid speech, and specialized terminology. Encourage students to compare their interpretations with the original recordings to analyze their accuracy and identify areas for improvement.

3. **Multimedia Interpretation Analysis:** Compile a collection of video recordings showcasing various consecutive interpretation scenarios, ranging from formal presentations to informal conversations. Students watch the videos and then provide consecutive interpretations, focusing on maintaining accuracy and fluency.

*Good Practice:* Include videos with diverse accents, speech rates, and subject matters to expose students to different interpretation challenges.

Encourage students to analyze their interpretations, identify strengths, and suggest improvements based on the observed techniques.

**4. Interactive Dialogues:** Create interactive dialogues or scripts that require students to engage in dynamic conversations involving negotiation, persuasion, or problem-solving. Each student alternates between being the speaker and the interpreter, promoting active engagement and quick thinking.

*Good Practice:* Include elements of ambiguity, humor, or cultural references in the dialogues to challenge students' adaptability and cultural sensitivity. After the exercise, facilitate a group discussion where students reflect on their experiences and share strategies for effective interpretation.

**5. Summarization Challenge:** Provide students with a lengthy source language text, such as a news article or a recorded speech. In this exercise, students must listen to or read the text and then deliver a concise and coherent summary in the target language.

*Good Practice:* Gradually increase the complexity and length of the source texts. Encourage students to focus on identifying key points, main ideas, and supporting details. After the exercise, engage in peer evaluations where students assess the accuracy and comprehensiveness of their classmates' summaries.

### *B. Cultural Awareness and Context Analyzing Exercises*

**1. Cultural Contextualization Practice:** Provide students with recorded speeches or texts that contain cultural references, idiomatic expressions, or cultural nuances. Students listen to or read the text, analyze the cultural elements, and then deliver a consecutive interpretation that accurately conveys both the linguistic and cultural dimensions.

*Good Practice:* Encourage students to research and explain the cultural significance of the references before interpreting. After the exercise, facilitate a discussion where students share their interpretations and insights into the cultural nuances.

**2. Ethical Dilemma Role-Playing:** Design role-playing scenarios that present ethical dilemmas related to cultural sensitivity. For instance, a scenario could involve interpreting a statement that could be offensive in one culture but not in another. Students must navigate these dilemmas while ensuring accurate interpretation.

*Good Practice:* Assign students roles from different cultural backgrounds to encourage a diverse perspective. After the role-play, engage in a debriefing session where students discuss the challenges encountered and reflect on their decision-making process.

**3. Cultural News Analysis:** Select news articles or reports that discuss cultural events, practices, or social issues. Students analyze the cultural context presented in the articles and deliver a consecutive interpretation that not only captures the linguistic content but also conveys the cultural implications.

*Good Practice:* Choose articles that cover a range of cultural topics and viewpoints. Encourage students to discuss the potential impact of cultural differences on interpretation accuracy during group discussions.

**4. Cultural Contextual Captioning:** Select short video clips that encompass cultural nuances, body language, and nonverbal cues. Students watch the videos, analyze the cultural context, and then provide consecutive interpretation while incorporating these nonverbal elements into their renditions.

*Good Practice:* Include videos depicting various cultural interactions, such as greetings, negotiations, or social interactions. Encourage students to reflect on how cultural nonverbal cues impact interpretation accuracy.

**5. Cultural Contextual Jokes and Humor:** Present students with jokes, puns, or humor that are culturally specific and require cultural context for understanding. Students interpret the humor while ensuring the punchline's cultural nuances are conveyed effectively.

*Good Practice:* Include jokes from different cultures that rely on wordplay, cultural references, or idiomatic expressions. After the interpretation, facilitate a lighthearted discussion where students share their interpretations and explain the humor's cultural elements.

### *C. Visualization, Association, and Enhanced Memory Exercises*

**1. Visual Memory Mapping:** Provide students with a short text in the source language. Instruct them to read the text and create a visual mind map that represents key concepts and their interrelationships. Students then use their mind maps as cognitive anchors to deliver a consecutive interpretation.

*Good Practice:* Encourage students to use colors, symbols, and connectors in their mind maps. After the interpretation, facilitate a discussion where students explain how their mind maps aided their memory and interpretation process.

**2. Conceptual Image Pairing:** Select a set of abstract concepts or terms related to a specific field (e.g., legal, medical, business). Students pair each concept with a vivid mental image that encapsulates its meaning. During consecutive interpretation practice, students recall these mental images to enhance memory and recall.

*Good Practice:* Allow students to collaborate and share their concept-image pairings with peers. This fosters a creative exchange of mnemonic strategies and insights.

**3. Sensory Anchoring Practice:** Choose a source language text that evokes sensory experiences (e.g., taste, smell, touch). Instruct students to visualize sensory details as they read the text. During interpretation, students recall these sensory experiences to enhance memory and evoke more vivid interpretations.

*Good Practice:* Encourage students to engage all five senses while visualizing sensory details. After the interpretation, prompt students to describe how sensory visualization enriched their memory recall.

**4. Sequential Image Interpretation:** Prepare a series of sequential images depicting a narrative or process. Students interpret the images consecutively, relying on visualization and association to create a coherent interpretation that captures the sequence's essence.

*Good Practice:* Ensure the images are diverse in content and complexity. After the interpretation, facilitate a discussion where students analyze how visualization and association were employed to bridge the gaps between images.

**5. Picture-Word Association:** Provide students with a set of images and corresponding source language words. Students associate each image with its respective word and then deliver a consecutive interpretation where they incorporate these associations to enhance memory and fluency.

*Good Practice:* Encourage students to create unique associations that resonate with them personally. After the interpretation, engage in peer evaluations where students assess the effectiveness of their associations.

**6. Cultural Memory Walkthrough:** Provide students with a short cultural description or narrative. Students visualize themselves walking through the cultural scenario, engaging with the environment and people described. They then deliver a consecutive interpretation that embodies the cultural experience.

*Good Practice:* Select culturally rich scenarios that highlight social interactions, traditions, or daily life. After the interpretation, prompt students to discuss how the cultural memory walkthrough influenced their interpretation choices.



## Embracing the Dichotomy Prescriptivism, Descriptivism, and the Role of AI-Powered Writing Assistants in Grammar Editing

### *Introduction*

The debate on the usefulness of prescriptivism and descriptivism in linguistics has always been present in academic discussion and linguistic research. While linguists have consistently argued against the rigidity of prescriptive approaches to understanding language, promoting an understanding of its evolution and inherent variability, the development of AI-powered writing assistants has added a fresh perspective to this age-old conflict. In linguistics, the debate has been settled in favor of the descriptive approach; therefore, the prescriptive one has been discarded as the path not to be taken.

In the present paper, we set out on an investigation of the complex interactions between prescriptivism and descriptivism, illuminating their applicability in the field of grammar editing and the more general context of language usage. Our research focuses primarily on the rapidly changing field of AI-powered writing helpers and how they affect users' ability to change their written works.

Prescriptive grammar has a long history of attempting to impose rigid rules and conventions in an effort to standardize communication and protect language integrity. Language, however, is a dynamic phenomenon that properly reflects the dynamic fabric of cultural and societal shifts. Descriptive approaches have thus become an attractive alternative that aims to understand language as it develops naturally without the imposition of artificial limitations.

As users engage in the process of grammar editing, AI-powered writing assistants provide users with real-time ideas and corrections, marking a fundamental turning point in linguistic support tools. Although these cutting-edge AI tools mostly follow the descriptive approach and take into account users' natural language patterns—they do not autocorrect the text—it is important to recognize that they may unintentionally reinforce prescriptive norms. Ultimately writing assistants work based on the prescriptive approach as they detect ungrammatical, erroneous, inappropriate structures—ones

that they deem so. How they present what they spot in the text and the options the interface offers to users make the writing assistants descriptive or prescriptive.

Within this dialectic, a significant question arises: to what extent should users embrace the guidance offered by AI-powered writing assistants, and conversely, to what degree should they wield their linguistic autonomy to deviate from the suggested prompts? We contend that although linguists have aptly distanced themselves from prescriptive approaches within academic contexts, there exist domains where users inevitably encounter circumstances necessitating a deliberate deviation from the recommendations of AI assistants, which, at times, reflect a prescriptive approach rather than a descriptive one. Such instances may arise from adherence to specific language styles, adherence to context-specific linguistic conventions, or the pursuit of creative expression that transcends normative prescriptions.

To reach our aim we will first consider the dichotomy of prescriptive and descriptive approaches in linguistics, focusing on the paradoxical situation the prescriptive approach is in. Dismissed by modern linguistics, in certain areas, the prescriptive approach is still welcome. In areas such as state administration and education, publishing norms and adherence to a standard allows for more effective communication. The present text seeks to shed light on the key functionalities of Grammarly as an AI-powered writing assistant, analyzing its valuable features in assisting writers with grammar editing. However, it is essential to recognize that despite the remarkable capabilities of AI writing tools, instances may arise where the author's discernment becomes paramount, necessitating the exercise of personal judgment over the suggestions provided by the writing assistant.

To exemplify the imperative of exercising critical thinking while utilizing the writing assistant, a selection of random sentences was drawn from Sarah Wootton's work titled *Byronic Heroes in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing and Screen Adaptation*, published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016. Both the author and the publisher are native speakers of English. The examination focused on the following aspects: (1) the language levels addressed by the assistant; (2) any recurrently underlined grammatical structures; and (3) instances where the assistant flagged issues as incorrect or erroneous, despite potential ambiguity in their categorization

*The Debate between Prescriptive and Descriptive Approaches*

The contrasting paradigms of prescriptivism and descriptivism have been central to the study of grammar and language usage. Prescriptive approaches traditionally advocate for the establishment of rigid rules and norms aimed at standardizing language and maintaining linguistic purity. Proponents of this approach contend that adhering to a set of prescribed rules enhances clarity, consistency, and proper communication. However, critics argue that prescriptivism may unduly constrain the natural evolution of language, disregarding its inherent dynamism and organic development. On the other hand, the descriptive approach seeks to analyze language as it is used naturally by speakers and writers, without imposing predetermined rules. Linguists aligned with this approach contend that language is a dynamic phenomenon, shaped by social, cultural, and historical factors, and thus, should be observed objectively rather than prescriptively regulated.

The notion of correct language usage and the concept of prescriptive grammar have been evident in written discourse since as early as 1693 when John Locke is said to have posited that the primary purpose of teaching grammar was to impart the ability to communicate in accordance with standardized rules (Baron 1982, 121). His perspective implies the existence of an idealized form of language, thus, it implies that certain words and structures are correct, while others are not.

Approaching the dichotomy from the perspective of correctness, Michael Newman questions the criteria that define language correctness and the means by which correctness is ascertained. In his assessment, Newman categorizes prescription as “not a science but a myth” and it persists akin to an enduring one as long as prescriptive approaches to language fulfill certain social needs (1996, 32). Prescriptivism, according to Newman, serves a vital purpose in addressing linguistic insecurity by providing guidelines for adjudicating acceptability (33). In essence, if an authoritative figure deems a word or structure as acceptable, users perceive a sense of security in employing it.

Kolln and Funk approach the matter of correctness from a structuralist standpoint, wherein the practitioners of this theory contend that no variety of English holds superiority over another, and, thus, cannot be designated as definitively “correct” or “incorrect” (2012, 8). They propose that any reference to “correct” language use is more appropriately linked to the notion of “linguistic etiquette” (8). Their discussion does not negate the presence of linguistic norms, nor does it adopt a definitive stance in opposition to or in favor of either of the approaches—however, it indirectly admits the application of linguistic norms, thus the use of a prescriptive approach.

The validity of language standards is questioned by linguistic research, with Ralph. W. Fasold asserting that there is no scientific basis to favor certain forms over others, like “She is not ready” over “She ain’t ready”—the second form being considered inappropriate in Standard English variants (2006, 379). The denigration of the latter form is merely a customary practice reinforced by grammar books, dictionaries, and educational institutions (379). The language variants that do not meet the so-called *minimum standard*—norms beyond which something is “good enough”—are considered *nonstandard*—the term *standard*, being highly controversial mainly due to its arbitrary nature (380). His discussion contends that neither variant is better or worse than the other, merely different.

Fasold’s examination of prescriptivism centers on the context of language standardization, which he perceives as a policy response to the inherent variation of language across regions and its evolution over time (Fasold 2006, 378). From a pragmatic standpoint, Fasold contends that standard language forms prove to be invaluable. Notably, education and state administration are two spheres where appropriate language is prescribed, and guidelines for correct language use are established. Similarly, private sector institutions, particularly news agencies, also offer guidelines for text formulation within their publications (378). Primarily, the goal of standardization lies in establishing a uniform language that can be comprehended by speakers of all language varieties. However, Fasold underscores the symbolic significance of the existence of a standard language form (379). Such standardized varieties are considered correct, while all others are not.

Chomsky’s analysis diverges from the conventional dichotomy between prescriptive and descriptive approaches in grammar, focusing instead on the deep and surface structure of sentences in linguistic traditions. He identifies two major traditions in linguistics that thrived during different periods: “universal” grammar in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and descriptive grammar (i.e., “structural”) in the mid-twentieth century (Chomsky 1966, 587). Chomsky advocates for a synthesis of these traditions, which he observes in the contemporary works of his time.

In Noam Chomsky’s perspective, the role of a linguist lies in accurately reporting the grammar of a language, encompassing the mechanisms of sentence construction (1966, 591). Moreover, a linguist’s task extends to establishing the rules of grammar, thereby contributing to an enhanced comprehension of language, a task that inherently bears prescriptivist undertones. Chomsky’s approach to linguistics appears to lean towards the prescriptive side, as he discerns certain structures as normative while

excluding others. His critique of descriptive linguists, whom he perceives as primarily concerned with cataloging and organizing linguistic phenomena and devising appropriate terminologies, contrasts with his view of true linguists who strive to ascertain the rules governing a universal deep structure (593).

Language choices, both in speech and in writing, are influenced by the occasion, the audience, the purpose of the act, and the topic. In favor of descriptivist grammar stand William O’Grady and John Archibald, who refuse the validity of notions such as “good grammar” or “bad grammar,” as, in their view, all grammars are equal (2017, 7). Grammar is written by people and it describes how various words and sentences work and join together to create meaningful utterances. They remark that usage of a non-standard variety of English may have its consequences depending on where the speaker is, either from a geographical or social point of view—success at job interviews, receiving various forms of financing, or acceptance in social circles largely depends on the variety of language one uses (7).

Linguistics becomes intertwined with real-world applications, particularly in contentious domains like language usage, there arises an emerging necessity for heightened awareness and acknowledgment of the role, and in certain instances, the indispensability of prescriptivism (Oaks 2021, par. 3). Several areas that necessitate the incorporation of prescriptivism, including dictionary compilation, the creation of grammar books for languages, and editing (par. 3).

Addressing the dichotomy from the point of view of language teaching, Anne Curzan emphasizes that our pedagogical approach should encompass both the teaching of prescriptive grammatical rules and the cultivation of critical thinking about them, thus empowering students in a simultaneous and harmonious manner (2009, 871). Within this framework, descriptive grammatical rules are viewed as representing the grammatical knowledge that facilitates systematic and meaningful communication. To illustrate this point, Curzan offers the example of the structure “none of them followed by” proceeding “is” (acceptable form), “are” (some usage guides objecting to the use of the plural form of to be), and “am” (a form not found in any variant of English). The latter—the first person singular form of to be—is considered a rudimentary aspect of language knowledge, inappropriate uses of the form are seldom encountered in speech or writing (871).

Conversely, prescriptive grammar pertains to the rules expounded in most grammar or usage books, dictating to users what is deemed acceptable and what is not. Curzan also elaborates that prescriptive grammar focuses

on language etiquette, often emphasizing what should be avoided, such as refraining from splitting infinitives, ending sentences with prepositions, using double negation, or employing “between you and I.” Curzan explains that prescriptive rules encompass both the grammatical structures of Standard English such as expressing negation and stylistic elements for crafting “good, effective English” beyond mere adherence to Standard English, like preposition placement (2009, 872). She further characterizes these prescriptive rules as “points of usage,” acknowledging that some of them “are not really about grammar at all,” but the influenced by personal preferences (872). Moreover, our awareness and perceptions of these prescriptions can manifest considerable variations on an individual level (875). In other words, linguistic norms may be the result of rule makers’ personal preferences and writers are not uniformly knowledgeable about them.

### *Varieties of “Correct”*

The language choices made by users in terms of language variety, dialectal, or register variation are significantly influenced by the context in which the speech act or writing occurs. In the realm of writing, the emergence of computers and word processors has facilitated language check tools that aid users in making appropriate choices and avoiding ungrammatical expressions. Integrated within word-processing software, spelling and grammar check applications play a crucial role in identifying and addressing typos and fundamental grammar issues. Moreover, they automatically rectify misspelled common words, such as “teh” instead of “the,” while also highlighting less common words, like “prescriptivist” in this document. On a morphosyntactic level, the spelling-and-grammar-check feature effectively signals disagreements, typically between subject and verb, or instances where the wrong form of a word is used in a fixed phrase or structure.

Dialectal and register variations influence the choice of language forms. Both sentences in the following examples are grammatical and meaningful ones and they communicate the same content. The choice of the verb form reflects dialectal preferences. In (1) *The dog isn't dangerous* the verb choice *isn't*, the contracted form of third person, singular of *to be*, reflects standard language use. As opposed to this, in (2) “The dog ain't dangerous,” the verb form “ain't”—originally a contracted form of “am not”, at present used especially in informal settings and in various dialectal variants—is considered the marker of low status and education level, and dictionaries and style guides advise against using it unless it is for rhetorical purposes.

As far as register is concerned, on the morphosyntactic level, writers have a critical role when selecting between different possible variants. When faced with the decision of using either (3) “To who(m) did you talk?” or (4) “Who(m) did you talk to?,” the user is presented with two register variants. The ultimate choice hinges on whether to opt for formal or informal language use. In formal speech, the preposition precedes the interrogative pronoun, as seen in (3), whereas in informal settings, the usage demonstrated in (4) is deemed acceptable.

### *A Comprehensive Writing Assistant: Grammarly*

Grammarly represents a pioneering AI-powered writing assistant that has become extremely popular among writers looking to improve the grammatical accuracy of their writing. Its algorithms enable real-time grammar checking and proofreading, making it easy to spot and correct spelling, punctuation, syntax, and style errors. By providing suggestions and detailed explanations, Grammarly helps writers hone their writing skills, in line with the principles of descriptive linguistics.

The writing assistant has a host of invaluable features designed to improve the quality of written content. Its advanced grammar-checking capabilities analyze texts for grammatical inaccuracies, allowing writers to create polished documents that meet their needs. In addition, the tool’s contextual spell checker effectively detects spelling errors in different contexts, ensuring the accuracy of the words used. It also extends support to improve sentence structure, providing insights into sentence clarity, brevity, and consistency. In addition, its tone and style recommendations help writers maintain appropriate form and tone, meeting the specific needs of a variety of audiences and genres.

### *Authorial Judgment and the Limitations of AI Writing Assistants*

The writing assistant proclaims its primary objective as facilitating effective communication, offering standard (free) and premium versions to cater to varying user needs. The standard version adeptly addresses basic grammatical issues, such as spelling mistakes and ungrammatical forms. Identified through the underlining of text, users gain insight into basic writing suggestions encompassing correctness, clarity, and engagement. Users receive real-time feedback, with basic grammatical issues, such as spelling mistakes and ungrammatical forms, being underlined with colored

indicators. Furthermore, a small window displays explanations and suggested corrections, fostering a user-friendly editing experience. Additionally, the standard version incorporates an orange line to signal “additional writing issues,” drawing attention to areas that may necessitate further improvement or refinement. On the other hand, the premium version offers an extensive array of advanced features, including sentence rewrites, tone adjustments, plagiarism detection, formality level assistance, word choice refinement, and fluency enhancement, empowering writers with a comprehensive toolkit to improve their writing.

Language users strike the balance by possessing knowledge of grammar and the ability to decide if the structure suggested fits their purpose or not. They must think critically and decide how to proceed if the assistant detects a given structure as problematic. When it does so, it underlines the phrase, upon clicking on it a box opens which contains a diagnosis of the grammatical or stylistic inappropriateness. Basic, wrong grammatical language usage phenomena—spelling, the usage of articles, subject-verb agreement—are underlined with a red indicator. Five different scenarios are possible: (1) accept the suggestion; (2) reject it; (3) label it as incorrect suggestion; (4) label it as offensive content; and (5) find out more about the phenomenon. Clicking on the latter icon, *Learn more*, enlarges the box and the text expands on the rule underlying the suggestion. The wording varies from polite recommendations to imperious statements. In the sentence “She am here,” the verb is underlined with a red indicator and the box reservedly indicates that “It appears that the subject pronoun ‘She’ and the verb ‘am’ are not in agreement. Consider changing the verb” (“Grammarly” n.d.). In another case, by hitting the *Learn more* button, a description of the behavior of personal pronouns can be read, illustrated by sample sentences. The entry ends with a polite but firm suggestion: “Make sure that the form of the verb agrees with the form of the personal pronoun.” The tone of the suggestion varies, for example, in “Take me to the Eiffel tower,” the last word is underlined and the suggestion reads: “The word *tower* should be capitalized in this context. Always capitalize proper nouns, the first word of a sentence and the pronoun *I*” (“Grammarly” n.d.).

After establishing their goals, users have the option to upload or paste the text they wish to work on, and the assistant provides feedback in four key areas: “correctness,” “clarity,” “engagement,” and “delivery.” “Correctness” pertains to aspects such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation, while “clarity” aims to enhance the comprehensibility of the user’s writing. “Engagement” focuses on strategies to make the text more compelling and

effective, while “delivery” addresses formality levels, confidence conveyed in the writing, and the overall friendliness of the text, all aimed at making the desired impression on the reader. To highlight inaccuracies in these areas, the text is underlined with specific colors: red, blue, turquoise, and purple.

Grammarly provides assistance on both the lexical and morphosyntactic levels. At the lexical level, word choice presents the greatest issue. For instance, expressions like “in what way” are recommended to be replaced by “how.” Additionally, uncommon collocations are underlined and not accepted: “Screen versions and spin-offs of nineteenth-century novels have substantially expanded the horizons of Romantic and Victorian afterlives” (Wootton 2016, 25). In this instance, the less commonly used synonym “screen version,” for “film adaptations,” is flagged as a structure requiring replacement.

On the morphosyntactic level, a diverse array of issues arises, and certain grammar-related suggestions necessitate careful consideration, as they may not always be universally applicable. Notably, in almost all cases, the assistant recommends reducing the phrase “in order to” to “to,” thereby simplifying the text. This inclination towards reduction is consistently observed when “in order to” is employed. Another complex matter involves the use of the emphatic determiner “own,” which is often considered superfluous in contexts like the following example: “[. . .] with Colin Firth’s star turn as Darcy casting a long shadow over his *own* career and that of other actors in costume dramas” (Wootton 2016, 25; emphasis added). Of all structures, the use of the passive voice invites a careful examination as evidenced by the underlining of all instances where the passive voice is employed. In academic writing, it is quite common to use the passive voice to construct sentences when the subject is either unknown or deemed unimportant. While style guides generally encourage the use of the active voice due to its capacity to enhance coherence and readability (American Psychological Association 2020, 133) certain utterances lack a specific subject—for instance, “we” in instances such as “we investigated”—therefore, the use of passive is more appropriate.

In longer texts, specific structures may be underlined for revision, a phenomenon that may not be as prevalent when these structures appear in isolated single sentences. In the sentence “Do adaptations augment or improvise a Byronic presence in screen versions of novels by nineteenth-century women writers and, if so, to what end?” (Wootton 2016, 24) “presence” is underlined, if the whole paragraph is being checked. However, if the sentence is checked on its own, the “Byronic presence” does not appear

to be an issue. It must be noted that the orange indicator used to underline the structure implies that it does not fall under the category of ungrammatical expression, but it is a style-related issue.

Also on a morphosyntactic level when handling phrases, the assistant draws attention to unusual constructions. In the following utterance “Moving beyond issues of ‘fidelity’ per se, what remains, if anything, of the involved intertextual relationships” (Wootton 2016, 24) the noun phrase “the involved intertextual relationships” contains two pre-modifiers: “involved” and “intertextual.” Of these two, “involved” is underlined in a pre-modifier position and signaled as a word choice problem.

The attention of the user is drawn upon appositions, comments, and text placed between commas as well. A sentence that has a comment at the end, “Screen versions and spin-offs of nineteenth-century novels have substantially expanded the horizons of Romantic and Victorian afterlives, as I hope to demonstrate in this book” is labeled as unclear due to the comment clause “as I hope to demonstrate in this book” (Wootton 2016, 25). Similarly, the additional indirect question “and in what form” is underlined in “a primary concern of this book is to ascertain whether such a pronounced Byronic presence in screen adaptations of the last 20 years is evident, and in what form, in the novels themselves” (24).

On the level of punctuation, the knowledgeable user in terms of the use of inverted commas, quotation marks, and style guide requirements is most welcome. The assistant signals all instances in which the comma or the full stop is not inside the inverted comma/quotation mark. However, it seems confused by quotations within a quotation—and the relationship between inverted commas and quotation marks to signal quotes—and labels the text as hard to read due to “misuse of semicolons, quotation marks, etc.”

### *Conclusion*

While both versions of Grammarly offer remarkable assistance in writing refinement, it is essential to recognize the significance of authorial judgment. The flexibility of the assistant enables users to make informed decisions, allowing them to select the scenarios that best fit their purposes. By underlining all issues, the assistant activates the know-how of writing and the style guide requirements.

The dialectical relationship between prescriptive and descriptive approaches has challenged the notion of a strict dichotomy, as they tend to intertwine and complement each other in areas such as publishing, education,

and administration. Writing assistants, while predominantly rooted in prescriptivism, also incorporate elements of descriptivism by providing options and suggestions for users. Nevertheless, users should exercise their critical thinking faculties and resist indiscriminately accepting the presented suggestions. For that, a sound grasp of grammar and linguistic principles is essential to write effectively, and not rely blindly on the assistant, but rather engage it as a valuable tool in the writing process.

### References

- “Grammarly.” n.d. Accessed August 1, 2023. <https://app.grammarly.com/ddocs/2131581389>.
- American Psychological Association, ed. 2020. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. Seventh edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Baron, Dennis E. 1982. *Grammar and Good Taste: Reforming the American Language*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1966. “The Current Scene in Linguistics: Present Directions.” *College English* 27 (8): 587–95.
- Curzan, Anne. 2009. “Says Who?: Teaching and Questioning the Rules of Grammar.” *PMLA* 124 (3): 870–79.
- Fasold, Ralph W. 2006. “The Politics of Language.” In *An Introduction to Language and Linguistics*, 373–400. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kolln, Martha, and Robert Funk. 2012. *Understanding English Grammar*. Ninth edition. London: Longman.
- Newman, Michael. 1996. “Correctness and Its Conceptions: The Meanings of Language Form for Basic Writers.” *Journal of Basic Writing* 15 (1): 23–38.
- Oaks, Dallin D. 2021. “Linguistic Encounters in Real World Prescriptivism: Acknowledging Its Place and Role.” *Lingua* 264. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2021.103159>.
- O’Grady, William, and John Archibald, eds. 2017. *Contemporary Linguistic Analysis: An Introduction*. Eighth edition. Toronto: Pearson.
- Wootton, Sarah. 2016. *Byronic Heroes in Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing and Screen Adaptation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.



## Quoting or Not Quoting The Language of Shakespeare as Shared Cultural Capital

Quoting and reproducing phrases and passages from great authors in various communicative contexts is a popular practice in everyday culture. Moreover, if the chosen author is the greatest English writer, Shakespeare, then the one quoting from the bard is often viewed as making an implicit claim of either being erudite or cultured. Many expressions from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets have become part of the common repertoire of English speakers worldwide. Bernard Levin compiled a list of such phrases in his book *Enthusiasms* (1983) and insisted that he quoted Shakespeare. However, most English speakers use these expressions as idioms, set phrases, or, more recently, emojis, without being aware of the Shakespearian origin of all these phrases.

In the following paper, I look at some of these phrases and passages and try to argue, using Pierre Bourdieu's concept of "cultural capital," that the practice of quoting Shakespeare (consciously and unconsciously) in various contexts can be valued as an asset and, at the same time, as an archive of shared cultural references.

When he concluded his speech, at the end of Queen Elizabeth II's funeral, King Charles III quoted from *Hamlet* as his farewell words to his late mother: "May flights of angels sing thee to thy rest" (Andrews 2022). As we cannot deny Charles's vast knowledge of English literature, it is, however, interesting to note that he chose Shakespeare to end his emotional tribute to the Queen. He consciously quoted from Shakespeare.

Many expressions from Shakespeare's work have become common vocabulary for many English speakers worldwide. This happened because Shakespeare's linguistic creativity has contributed to his works being read, studied, and performed throughout the globe. I will look at how quotes from Shakespeare's writings are commonly used and what such quotations may tell us about why people use them. I will also consider the role of context in this, while looking at examples of idioms common in English which can be traced back to Shakespeare's works and consider if their longevity can be linked to creativity.

One reason why one uses common expressions is the common need to reach for ready-formed expressions or chunks of language one hears around. Surprisingly or not, many such expressions used in various domains today originate in the world of and works of Shakespeare.

Bernard Levin compiled a list of Shakespearian idioms and argued that many speakers do not even realize they quote Shakespeare:

If you cannot understand my argument, and declare 'It's Greek to me', you are quoting Shakespeare; if you claim to be more sinned against than sinning, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you recall your salad days, you are quoting Shakespeare; if you act more in sorrow than in anger; if your wish is farther to the thought; if your lost property has vanished into thin air, you are quoting Shakespeare; [. . .] if you think it is early days and clear out bag and baggage, if you think it is high time and that that is the long and short of it, if you believe that the game is up and that truth will out even if it involves your own flesh and blood, if you lie low till the crack of doom because you suspect foul play, if you have your teeth set on edge (at one fell swoop) without rhyme or reason, then—to give the devil his due—if the truth were known (for surely you have a tongue in your head) you are quoting Shakespeare; even if you bid me good riddance and send me packing, if you wish I was dead as a door-nail, if you think I am an eyesore, a laughing stock, the devil incarnate, a stony-hearted villain, bloody-minded or a blinking idiot, then—by Jove! O Lord! Tut tut! For goodness' sake! What the dickens! But me no buts!—it is all one to me, for you are quoting Shakespeare. (Levin 1983, 167–168)

Many of us used some of these phrases and we would not be taken aback if others use them. Familiar as they are, they may stand out in conversational exchanges and, at the same time, add something more than merely conveying the message at hand. Many of them turned into idioms which remained in common language over the centuries, partly because they capture a meaning so well and so succinctly. This is the reason why they are considered idioms rather than quotations. As idioms, they have acquired a life of their own in English, irrespective of Shakespeare.

For instance, the phrase “cold comfort” appears both in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Act V, Scene 1 (Shakespeare 1993c, 263) and in *King John*, Act V, Scene 7 (Shakespeare 1993b, 275), and it is a concise expression for capturing the idea of someone offering slight encouragement or sympathy but that actually gives little or no comfort because a situation is so bad. Here, the combination between the adjective *cold* and the noun *comfort* is a juxtaposition of two words that would not immediately seem to go together. The expression

circulated during Shakespeare's time and the popularity of his plays has helped to maintain it in use. You may find it in various contexts today, such as business or sports reports. Levin's insistence is actually a trick meant to capture the reader's interest in the tacit understanding that the reader will probably not be aware of the Shakespearian origin of all these phrases.

However, quoting Shakespeare has been a popular practice for centuries. Gupta and Hewings claim that there are "over a hundred distinct volumes of Shakespeare quotations on sale" today (Gupta and Hewings qtd. in Yamauchi 2006).

Shakespearian quotations might appear in political scandal reports or in celebrity gossip. Those quoting Shakespeare in this way might seem pretentious or showing off but what is certain is that they are making an implicit claim—that of being educated or cultured. At the same time, this demonstrates that Shakespeare and his writings are held in esteem in such contexts and are expected to be acknowledged and admired as they are part of the English-speaking shared culture. The scholars mentioned above observe that this also means the "acceptance of the value system wherein Shakespeare is revered and a desire to be considered as belonging to the class of people able to quote Shakespeare" (Gupta and Hewings qtd. in Yamauchi 2006).

One may associate this with what the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu coined as "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1986, 241). In this respect, it refers to having demonstrable knowledge of Shakespeare. A lot of cultural capital is associated with Shakespeare's works by educational institutions and dominant social groups and is therefore considered beneficial for individuals.

At the same time, the repository of immediately recognizable phrases and passages that Shakespeare's texts provide can be considered an archive of shared cultural references. Serious questions about life, language, and humanity could be implicit in these. For instance, let us take a look at the most frequent quotation from Shakespeare: "To be or not to be, that is the question" (Hamlet, Act III, Scene I) (Shakespeare 1993a, 880). So popular has become this phrase that an entire scholarly volume has been devoted to unpacking its cultural and literary significance by David Bruster. He reveals that there are "seventy-four books in the British Library catalogue which contain the phrase "To be or not to be" in their titles, among them studies in politics, history, philosophy, economics, psychology, chemistry and veterinary science" (2007, 12). However, it does not appear in Levin's book. This is, I believe, because, "to be or not to be" is not an idiom yet. It cannot be uttered without implicit acknowledgement of the author Shakespeare and the text Hamlet. Even when it appears to be used idiomatically, it is

nevertheless a quotation because generally both speaker and audience know that Shakespeare put that in the mouth of Hamlet. Moreover, as a quotation, it is much more than specific to the English language. It is recognized as a Shakespearean line in any language because Shakespeare's writings are known outside the English-speaking world as well.

To understand the reason why the phrase "to be or not to be" is such a recognizable quotation, we need to look at how Shakespeare crafted this phrase. He uses both creativity and ambiguity. According to OED, the verb *to be* means either "to exist" or "to come into existence, to happen" (2023, 1607). Therefore, the question could be understood as: Should I exist or not? Or should it happen or not? The fact that the phrase is open to interpretation defines Shakespeare's masterful creativity he displays throughout his works.

The ambiguity of sense and aural quality of this sentence poses an interesting challenge to translators into various languages which highlights Shakespeare's qualities as a wordsmith. In some languages such as Chinese or Japanese, specific changes are encountered when translating it. Japanese has no infinitive so translators interpret it. Thus, two translators rendered it as follows: "Fukuda: Sei ka shi ka (Life and death) and Odajima: Konomama de ii no ka ikenai noka (May I leave it as it is or not?)" (Yamauchi 2006).

### *Linguistic Play, Texting, and Emojis*

As Shakespeare's works are regarded as a kind of benchmark for the creative and imaginative use of English, which has left a powerful and lasting impression on the future development of the language, they have recently provided rich material for those exploring the capabilities in different types of communication systems.

Thus, Shakespeare's creativity is highly present in recent communication systems such as texting, rebuses, chatspeak, and emojis. "To be or not to be" has been exposed to many such translations. For instance, the phrase has been rendered as "2BR02B" in text messages common in the early days of the twenty-first century. This practice was present in rebuses (replacing words with letters and numbers that have the same sound when spoken and dropping vowels) (Shakespeare and Carbone 2015, 42).

The play is told through its characters texting with one another, checking in at certain locations, and updating the action. Recently, Jamie Rector summarized Shakespeare's texts into pure emoji versions. She rendered "to be or not to be" as "😁 😘/?" (Rector qtd. in Kaplan 2015).

What do these different modes of quoting Shakespeare get at? Are such quotations and translations into texting language and emojis also making a claim of possessing cultural capital and targeting dominant, educated social groups as phrases and idioms have done? What we can undeniably say is that they are acknowledgments of the cultural value that is attached to Shakespeare. At the same time, they effectively enliven that value system. And they do it with tongue in cheek, which can be rendered like this in texting: (:~J). The acknowledgment of Shakespeare's cultural significance comes with an air of not taking that significance too seriously, engaging with it, creatively, in a spirit of fun. The playfully ironic attitude could be thought of as ingrained in the medium of texting or emojis themselves.

The rebuses, much like quotations, play with punctuation marks and smiley-face pictograms are communications that refer to standard language usage while using other linguistic means; unlike quotations, they inevitably do so by distorting what is referred to (using *2b* or pictograms instead of *to be*), rather than rendering the text exactly as it was said. Texting language is a creative resource that draws on multimodal forms, takes liberties with the conventions of standard language usage, and strikes a somewhat challenging attitude towards standard language usage. However, because it is Shakespeare's words that are being played with, the shared cultural references remain. Gupta and Hewings conclude that "the creator of the rebuses or emojis is appropriating some of the cultural capital associated with Shakespeare" for their new rendition (Gupta and Hewings qtd. in Yamauchi 2006).

To conclude with, we may assert that one of the reasons for consciously or unconsciously quoting Shakespeare is claiming a measure of cultural capital. One may do so either by using idioms once employed or invented by Shakespeare in his works or rendering Shakespeare through texting language, rebuses, or emojis. The latter might prove the enormous playful creativity that builds on Shakespeare's original creations.

### References

- Andrews, Farah. 2022. "What the 'Hamlet' Quote Used by King Charles III in Queen Elizabeth's Social Epitaph Means." *The National*, Sep 20, 2022. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/arts-culture/books/2022/09/20/what-the-hamlet-quote-used-by-king-charles-iii-in-queen-elizabeths-social-epitaph-means/>.
- Bruster, David. 2007. *To Be or Not To Be*. London: Continuum.

- Kaplan, Josh. 2015. "Twee JMU Grad Translates Shakespeare Plays into Emojis." *The Tab*, 20 Sept 2015. <https://thetab.com/2015/08/20/twee-jmu-translates-shakespeare-plays-into-emojis-50810>.
- Levin, Bernard. 1983. *Enthusiasms*. London: Cape.
- Oxford English Dictionary*. 2023. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Accessed Dec 23, 2022. <https://www.oed.com>.
- Shakespeare, William. 1993a. *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*. In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by W.J. Craig, 870–908. London: Parragon.
- . 1993b. *The Life and Death of King John*. In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by W. J. Craig, 355–381. London: Parragon.
- . 1993c. *The Taming of the Shrew*. In *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by W. J. Craig, 243–269. London: Parragon.
- Shakespeare, William, and Courtney Carbone. 2015. *srsly Hamlet*. New York: Random House.
- Yamauchi, Shigekatzu. 2006. "The Impossibility of Translation." In *Japanese in Depth*. Vol. 4., edited by Shigekatzu Yamauchi, 18–21. *International Communication Institute*. <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/173251>.

## List of Contributors

JÁNOS ANTAL, PhD, has been researching particular East-Central European ethical issues and ethnic-cultural conflicts in the context of minority/majority and church/state relations, as well as the damages of communist totalitarianism upon churches and societies behind the Iron Curtain. He obtained his PhD in Church History at J. Selye University in 2021.

IULIANA BORBELY, senior lecturer of English Language and Literature, and Head of the Department for Teacher Training at Partium Christian University, Oradea, Romania, specializes in film adaptation theory, English Grammar, and English Teaching Methodology. Her research interests include translation studies focusing on audio-visual translation based on her experience as a dubbing translator from English to Hungarian.

BORBÁLA BÖKÖS, senior lecturer at the English Department of Partium Christian University of Oradea, teaches American literature, courses on intermediality as well as translation and consecutive interpreting. She has published several articles on these topics in various conference proceedings as well as in national and international journals (*ELLE Proceedings*, *HJEAS*, *Philological Research and Studies English Language and Literature Series*, *University of Bucharest Review: Literary and Cultural Studies Series*, etc.). She is a member of the organizing committee of the ELLE international conference and the Networks conference held (bi) annually at the Partium Christian University.

FLORIN CIOBAN, PhD, dr. habil., is a professor at ELTE University of Budapest, Hungary and PhD coordinator at the University of Oradea, Romania. Doctor of “Babes–Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca, with a thesis in folklore, habilitated doctor in philology at ELTE University in Budapest. Author of 20 books published in Romania and Hungary, in the fields of Romanian language and literature teaching methodology, children’s literature, folklore, and cultural anthropology. Author of over 100 scholarly articles published in journals in Romania or other European countries. Professor of the Faculty of Letters of the University of Oradea, ILR

lecturer in Romanian language, literature, culture, and civilization in Ljubljana and Budapest for the last 15 years.

ANDREA CSILLAG, PhD, is a college associate professor at the Department of Foreign Languages of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Hungary. She earned her PhD in the linguistics program at the University of Debrecen in 2000. Her main academic interests include cognitive semantics, the language of emotions, the role of metaphor and metonymy in human cognition.

ALICE EGED, PhD, is a college associate professor in the Department of Foreign Languages of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Debrecen. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts of Kossuth Lajos University in 1988 and the Faculty of Law of the University of Debrecen in 2013. She received her PhD degree from the University of Debrecen in 2005. Her dissertation analyzed the party structure of the Weimar Republic as well as the role of left-wing liberals in the process of creating the Weimar Constitution. Her field of research covers 20th-century German social history, mainly focusing on the period after 1949. Her socio-historical analyses are embedded in a media historical framework.

ALEXANDRA ERDŐS earned her BA degree from Partium Christian University, in English Language and Literature, and completed her MA degree at Partium Christian University in Multilingualism and Multiculturalism. Currently, she is a PhD candidate at the University of Debrecen, in the Literary and Cultural Studies Doctoral School.

PÉTER GAÁL-SZABÓ, PhD, dr. habil., is a college professor at the Debrecen Reformed Theological University. He received his PhD (2010) and habilitation (2016) in Literary and Cultural Studies from the University of Debrecen (UD), Hungary. His research focuses on African American literature and culture, cultural spaces, religio-cultural identity, and intercultural communication. He has widely published in these fields, including the book *“Ah done been tuh de horizon and back”*: Zora Neale Hurston’s Cultural Spaces in Their Eyes Were Watching God and Jonah’s Gourd Vine (Peter Lang, 2010).

EDIT GÁLLA, PhD, is a senior lecturer at Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, and obtained her PhD in modern

English and American literature at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, in 2018. Her dissertation discusses Plath's late poetry in terms of motifs of oppression and revolt. She also writes poems: her first collection of poetry appeared in 2016.

SÁNDOR IMREH is a college assistant lecturer at the Department of Art and Visual Education of the Debrecen Reformed Theological University, who graduated from the Faculty of Visual Arts at the University of Pécs in 2005 and obtained his DLA title in 2023. His research focuses on contemporary drawings in public spaces. His artwork has been represented at numerous local and international exhibitions, art events, and printed publications.

HANNA IVÁN-GÁL is an independent scholar, who completed her university studies with distinction as a primary school teacher at the Debrecen Reformed Theological University in 2023. She was awarded second place in the National Scientific Students' Associations Conference (OTDK) for her research project in African American literature in 2023. Her main academic interests include African American literature and culture as well as cultural memory and trauma.

SZILÁRD KMECZKÓ, PhD, college associate professor, Department of Natural Sciences, Debrecen Reformed Theological University, Debrecen, graduated from the Faculty of Science of Kossuth Lajos University in 1992 and Arts Faculty of the University of Debrecen in 1996 and received his PhD degree from the University of Debrecen in 2006. His dissertation analyzed questions concerning the process of reception of Michael Polanyi's post-critical thinking in his native country. His field of research focuses on the influence of cultural heritage on scientific thinking. He has published scholarly papers on Polanyi, the cultural background of Hungarian Nobel laureates, and the debates in the philosophy of science concerning Polanyi's concept of scientific knowledge.

MENG LIU is a PhD student at the Doctoral School of History and Ethnology, University of Debrecen. Her research project focuses on multiple aspects of the Chinese Hungarian community related to cultural memory and intercultural studies. As a research project leader, Liu Meng has led an academic research project and received a national academic project grant. She has also participated in several academic research projects and has published two articles

in related ethnographic fields. Her academic interests include, but are not limited to, educational anthropology, cultural memory, migration studies, and cultural trauma.

TITUS POP, PhD, is a senior lecturer at the Partium Christian University of Oradea. He is the author of *Imaginary Everyman's Land: The Plea for a Hybrid Identity in S. Rushdie's Discourse, Cultural and Linguistic Hybridity in Postcolonial Text, Reading and eReading Modern English Literature*, and many articles on cultural theory. He holds a PhD in Philology from the West University of Timisoara. He is the recipient of several teaching and research grants and he is a member of ESSE and RAAS. His research areas are Postcolonial Studies and British Cultural Studies. He teaches British literature, British culture and civilization, Anglo-American popular culture, postcolonial discourse, and discourse analysis.

ANDRÁS TARNÓC, PhD, dr. habil., is a college professor at Eszterházy Károly Catholic University, Eger. He earned his PhD at Debrecen University in 2001 and completed his habilitation at the same institution in 2013. His main research interests include settler-Indian relations in the colonial period, the dynamics of multicultural societies, and the slave narrative. In addition to directing the American Studies disciplinary MA program at the institution, he has taught courses on American history, literature, and ethno-racial relations. His main research theme is the mythopoeic aspects of confinement narratives in American culture with special attention to the Indian captivity narrative, the slave narrative, and the accounts of prisoners of war.

OTTILIA VERES, PhD, senior lecturer, Department of English Language and Literature, Partium Christian University, Nagyvárad/Oradea (Romania), graduated from the Institute of English and American Studies, the University of Debrecen in 2004. She earned her PhD degree from the University of Debrecen in 2017. Her dissertation analyzed the questions of colonial intersubjectivity and mythical subtexts in Nobel-laureate J. M. Coetzee's early fiction. Her field of research focuses on the contemporary English novel, theories of intersubjectivity, and myth criticism. She has published scholarly papers on Coetzee, Beckett, and the Orpheus-myth in Hungary, Romania, Poland, and the UK.