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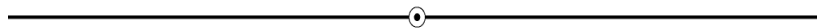
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THEORY, HISTORY AND LITERARY CRITICISM

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Challenging the Colonial Stereotypes or Conforming to Them: Investigating Achebe's Intent in *Things Fall Apart*

A. B. M. Shafiqul Islam*
Israt Jahan Shuchi**

Abstract:

Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* attempts to depict the pre-colonial Igbo life, culture and traditions along with the systematic description of a fully functioning administration, religion, justice system, social and family rituals of the Igbo society. Through providing a detailed account of the pre-colonial Igbo society, Achebe basically tries to counter-argue all the misrepresentations and distorted images of Africa portrayed in the western narratives. This paper outlines how and why the Igbo society and all its functional apparatus start disintegrating after the catastrophic entry of the Europeans to that society in the guise of missionaries, educators, administrators, judges and sometimes tradesmen. It highlights the areas through which Achebe tries to give an authentic portrayal of the Igbo society and also finds out the reasons why the native Igbo people fail to withstand the colonial force. This study finally affords to analyze how far and to what extent Achebe is successful in challenging these distortions and misrepresentations; and while challenging, how he knowingly or unknowingly accepts some of the stereotypes and surrenders to those to maintain the objectivity of the narrative.

Keywords: Things Fall Apart (TFA); Stereotypes; Igbo Society; Colonialism; Okonkwo

Introduction

In most of his writings, Chinua Achebe endeavors to present the black beauty of so called black Africa and through his presentation, he targets not only the colonial whites but also those black people who consider themselves inferior and desperately try to become whites or whites-like. In *The Novelist as Teacher*, Achebe clearly states his goal as to help his society 'regain belief in itself and put away the complexes

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of the years of denigration and self-abasement' (Achebe, 1965: 44). His writings also attempt to question all the misrepresentations and reductionist portrayal of Africa in the western discourses in which Africa is depicted as a dark continent without its own heritage, history, culture and civilization and also presented as mere mysterious, primitive, impenetrable, animalistic, and exotic others. Fakrul Alam echoes that view and states that "one of Chinua Achebe's goals in writing *Things Fall Apart* was to correct a whole history of misrepresentations of his people and country in occidental discourse" (Alam, 2012: 40). Western people always have a euro-centric view of the world, firmly believing their culture to be superior. Driven by that view, the Europeans invaded Africa with an apparent humanitarian aim to civilize the so called inferior, uncivilized African minds and most of the Africans accepted that labeling of their being uncivilized without much disagreement as a pre-ordained destiny. Frantz Fanon (1967) in his *Black Skin, White Masks* criticizes this type of mindset of those black people from the French-colonized islands in the Caribbean living in France who frantically try to speak French in order to make an entry into the French culture. But when they are in desperate effort to speak French ignoring their native language, they are constantly reminded that they can never be fully French.

Achebe's groundbreaking novel, *Things Fall Apart* specifically outlines how the British colonial power takes control of Igbo society of Nigeria in the names of providing good governance, stable administration, enlightening education, religious equity, and flourishing trade and commerce. He further illustrates how all these so called noble grounds prove otherwise in the end and cause irreparable disasters on the African psyche thus creating divides among the natives and inducing them to indulge in hatred, doubts and confusions against each other. *Things Fall Apart* also opposes the kind of occidental knowledge that attempts to portray the Africans as having nothing to take pride in and criticizes the mindset of those Africans who hold the same view about themselves. Besides that, it gives an authentic depiction of the rich and varied customs and traditions of Igbo society through an Igbo individual-Okonkwo who, like the society itself becomes a victim of the cross cultural encounter and the colonial invasion. This novel also celebrates Okonkwo's hatred and resistance against the British colonialism to maintain the natives' innate impulse of struggle against oppression, and at the same time, raises serious questions about his much obsession with "masculine" values sprouted from his 'fear of failure and of weakness' (Achebe, 1958: 13) eventually causing intolerance and instability in the society. Some other cross-currents that enrich the novel include the emergence of neo-colonialism (portrayed

through Kiaga and the *kotmas*), the sufferings of being in exile, the desperate urge of diasporic looking back into one's root, the psychological tensions of being a witness to everything of one's own society falling apart and, most importantly, the trauma of one's being misunderstood by one's own clan and family.

This novel is a significant response to and a graphic record of the painful aftermaths of the disturbing effects inflicted by the white colonizers on people, traditions, culture and establishments of Igbo society. In his narrative, Achebe does not seem to blame his Igbo people for colonialism on the one hand, nor does he overstate to glorify the traditional customs of the villagers on the other. But he presents the originality of Igbo society through traditional story-telling, description of traditional rituals and the frequent use of Igbo words and phrases so that both the whites and the native Igbo people who tend to deny or ignore the African culture can get the true picture of that society. Achebe always looks for such a narrative what Edward Said calls "an opposing point of view, perspective, consciousness" pitted against "the unitary web of vision" (Said, 1979: 240; quoted by Gikandi, 1991: 31) which can indeed offer an alternative world containing the realities of the natives' true identity and solid representation that have been imprisoned in the abyss of colonial and pre-colonial struggle of power relations. This book is also part of Achebe's efforts not only to present the African experience through a different order of discourse, but also to transform and re-invent the African world. Achebe views the novel as an exercise in self-discovery of such a society that according to Homi Bhabha suffers the sentence of subjugation, domination, diaspora, and displacement (Bhabha, 1994: 171). *Things Fall Apart* is reflective and self-defining in nature since it strives to outline how the traditional values, native ways of life and local customs, modes and habits erode owing to their much exposure to the overwhelming European culture. It thus formulates a counter-hegemonic discourse which not only attempts to counter-argue all the long-standing western narratives about Africa but also tries to constitute a separate modern African identity what Iyay Kimoni terms as "the evolution of African culture towards a new form" (quoted by Ngate, 1988: 5). Though Achebe in this novel tries to frame a new cultural form of Africa, he constantly refers to the European culture with an aim to presenting these two cultures in 'both complementary and contesting ways' (Gikandi, 1991: 29).

This paper mainly addresses the areas where Achebe successfully challenges the colonial stereotypes and beliefs regarding Africa. It also attempts to unearth the extents where Achebe in the name of maintaining the objectivity of the narrative of the novel, intentionally or unintentionally surrenders himself to these reductionist stereotypes of Africa portrayed in western discourses. But Achebe takes recourse to the

colonizers' language (English) to counter-argue all the distortions thus sacrificing their own language and identity. Even after sacrificing their ancestors' religion, language, and culture, they come to make a shocking discovery of self-realization that they have not been the complete whites yet. Being disconnected from their roots, the natives feel disillusioned and badly try to return to their own culture and traditions only to assert their own legacy and history. And Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Frantz Fanon and many others' writings echo the same urge and desperation. Ojaide can rightly be quoted here who views that "African peoples did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans; ... their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty... they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity" (Ojaide, 2013: 150).

I

At countless other points in the novel, Achebe introduces some key tools the colonizers used to consolidate their rule in Africa and thus refers that "the white man had not only brought a religion but a government" (Achebe, 1958: 164). Whatever the British colonizers introduce to Igbo society in the name of disseminating the imagined process of civilization, ultimately leads to the disintegration and breakdown of that society. That is why it sounds comical when the whites say "we have brought a peaceful administration to you and your people so that you may be happy" (Achebe, 1958: 184). But the Igbo community has a long performing self-government, solid administration and judicial system which are fairly democratic as well. Though the white people unfairly criticize these systems as merely based on oracles, Igbo administration treats everybody equally irrespective of being powerful or powerless which is virtually impossible in today's bourgeoisie state. And Achebe is very successful in showing that the pre-colonial Igbo society and its people had everything to rule themselves. He also gives a detailed description of the trial of Uzowulu versus his wife's family to show the community judicial system where both sides produce their cases before the ruling members of society, the 'egwugwu'. Needless to mention that it is a village public trial and the public irrespective of men and women, is allowed to watch the proceedings of the trial. When Okonkwo kills a person, the oracles (made up of 'egwugwu') act as judges and their verdict is very swift and prudent. Though Okonkwo possesses a great influence on Igbo society, he surrenders himself to the verdict and accepts a seven-year exile. Achebe painstakingly demonstrates not only the diversities of judgment declared by the Oracle (Okonkwo's exile) and by the general citizenry (rebukes about violating the Week of Peace and about women for not helping them in the recovery of a stray cow), but also shows the

procedures followed and the types of justice handed down by the formal court. Moreover, if conflicts arise, they have their own functional problem-solving ways. In Umuofia, good governance and conflict-resolution methods work in cahoots. The story of Ikemefuna reveals this feature of Igbo society and his presence in Okonkwo's household is seen as a gesture of peace. Through the story of Ikemefuna, Achebe basically refutes the racist falsities of the whites used to show that pre-colonial African societies are bunches of disordered tribes and civilization is purely and exclusively a western feature. *Things Fall Apart* is both a refutation of, and a counterblast to the colonial stereotype of pre-colonial Africa as a land without God or government. Besides this social judicial system, Igbo people have another parallel system within the family which is very functional and works alongside the social structure. Most of the daily affairs in Igbo society are governed by oracles and Igbo people mostly rely on nature. But in the whole novel, we never find any information why Igbo people take recourse to oracles instead of making use of their own intellect.

II

Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* also brings forth some other key issues- women and sexuality. In western society, women enjoy a dignified status and men-women relationship is based on mutual respect. Even the whites take pride in the great sovereign Queen Victoria, "the most powerful ruler in the world" (Achebe, 1958: 184) and use her name and fame to justify and legalize their illegal actions in Umuofia. But the status of women in Igbo society is absolutely different from the western world. Though the westerners categorically identify Igbo (African) women as oppressed and shackled, Achebe's depiction doesn't fully correspond to that oversimplified version of western portrayal. Nonetheless, he portrays Igbo society as extremely patriarchal where a man is recognized with the amount of aggression and prowess he can show and the number of titles he can earn. But women also live here with their own identity. In the family, mothers play a very key role. Mothers are seen showing their determination and care in rearing children. Even when the masculine Okonkwo finds shelter in his mother's clan during the period of exile, and accepts the maternal protection, it then becomes clear that women have something to say in Igbo society. When he is welcomed in his mother's village with a touching speech by his maternal uncle, we see the reference of Okonkwo's mother's contribution to his life. So the roles played by women like preparing foods, decorating walls and huts for special occasions and making the household run smoothly are really very significant. Igbo society is purely agricultural and because of that, everything revolves around the harvest. Undoubtedly, the man folk

largely dominate the production system of crops due to the patriarchal nature of that society though women also contribute a lot to the production of crops. In Igbo domestic life, women's authority is not at all absent since they play the role of teachers and educate their children through story-telling. Though fathers' responsibility is to concentrate on crop production system and other manly activities, mothers silently play the part of teaching their children and inculcate all the good qualities in them. So mothers' role in Igbo society can never be underestimated. Sometimes, they can hold the positions of leadership in the village and even can represent God. This representation of God- another important aspect of women in Igbo society is displayed through Chielo, who speaks on behalf of the God 'Agbala' and calls Ezinma as her "daughter (Achebe, 1958: 46)", which indicates that she might substitute Chielo's position as priestess.

Regarding marriage, a woman enjoys every right either to reject or accept a man's proposal. The way Okonkwo's second wife, Ekwefi "ran away from her husband and came to live with Okonkwo" (Achebe, 1958: 38) in order to fulfil her dream of getting Okonkwo as husband and manages her love for him to be socially recognized, is really worth mentioning. Women are not solely blamed for any extra marital physical relationship. When a husband accuses his wife of having sexual relationship with her ex-lover that causes miscarriage, the judges do not accuse that girl of that relationship; instead they ridicule the lover who irresponsibly "sleeps with a pregnant woman" (Achebe, 1958: 87). Achebe also hints at indiscriminate sexual activity which looms large in the courtship and marriage rituals of the society. The hymn at the end of the celebration, "when I hold her waist beads / she pretends not to know", (Achebe, 1958: 112) indicates the sexual interactions and expectations among women and men. Even Okonkwo's presence by the cave reminds Ekwefi of doting reminiscences of her first bridal night, when he "carried her into his bed and . . . began to feel around her waist for the loose end of her cloth" (Achebe, 1958: 103). Achebe's choice of words also carries sexual connotations. He shows the natives as naked with no clothes and shoes. That is why they are amazed at the ash-coloured shorts of the whites and term as 'Ashy-Buttocks' (Achebe, 1958: 165). When Ekwefi runs "holding her breasts with her hands to stop them flapping noisily against her body" (Achebe, 1958: 98) or when she hits her foot against an outcropped root, we can reach the conclusion that Ekwefi probably does not put on any clothes or shoes.

The broad classification of actions, responsibilities and even crops into masculine and feminine attributes largely speaks of men-women differences among Igbo people and respect and success in Umuofia are mostly determined by masculine attributes. There are certain activities that are specifically meant for men. Women should not carry the chair to

their kinsmen meeting since it is a man's activity. Okonkwo is very angry with the manly posture Ezinma takes and scolds her for not sitting like a woman since there are certain postures meant for women. Even crimes and crops are divided into male and female types. Okonkwo's accidental killing of Ezeudu's son is considered manslaughter and therefore a female crime. Coco-yams, beans, and cassava are considered women's crops while the yam is branded as the 'king of crops' (Achebe, 1958: 22) – a man's crop. But Igbo laws never entertain beating and harassment of women as men's monopoly. Igbo's rule of law never shows any bias to men or women, powerful or powerless. Achebe thus clarifies that Africa is not a land of lawlessness but at the same, projects the natives as naked and portrays them partly uncivilized thus accepting some of the western typical narratives about the Africans.

III

While reading *Things Fall Apart*, we notice that Achebe in order to unearth the great past of the Africans, never attempts to give the idealized or romanticized version of Igbo life; rather gives a detailed description of their beliefs, politics, and traditions some of which he thinks, consequently contribute to the disintegration of that society. In narrating the story, he is quite unemotional thus showing his narrative maturity and at the same time, maintains some inclinations towards the native culture through attributing some traits typically identifiable with the Igbo society with an aim to constructing the African identity and history and refuting western propaganda. That is why his narrative uses the art of traditional storytelling with frequent references to legends and sayings of the time to illustrate what Igbo people believe and respect. The narrative is built on a growing structure of inter-cultural and intra-cultural conflicts which towards the end of the novel, ends up in unfolding the complete falling apart of everything. The narrative of *Things Fall Apart* celebrates the culture of the natives, and at the same time portrays it as it is without trying to hide the flaws inherent in their culture. That is why some of the behavioural patterns of the natives like believing in superstitions (not whistling at night for fear of evil spirits or not calling a snake by its name) and bad omens (the twitching of eye-lid and the birth of twins) seem irrational to us. Achebe tries to introduce an African flavour to the narrative with a view to bringing about the pastness of the present and the presentness of the past in the African history. Putting these superstitions aside, the narrative also reveals the qualities of compassion, kindness, or accommodation along with great respect for blood relation. The narrative is full of humor and frequent use of figurative linguistic expressions through which Achebe highlights their traditions of celebrations including harvesting, feast, wrestling matches, moon-sighting events etc. These celebrations at different times of the year underline the togetherness and social nature of the pre-

colonial Igbo society. The main reason behind this society being more social is the abundance of land. Since land is the source of all prosperity in Igbo society, and it is available in abundance, the society does not erupt in chaos for land. Due to this abundance, they have the luxury to donate “a portion of the Evil Forest” (Achebe, 1958: 140) to the missionaries. It is such a society which really knows how to celebrate togetherness without bartering away its individuality though it never indulges in intemperate enjoyment of life. A society that views life from such a philosophical perspective, and has such a minute sense of enjoyment of life, can never be termed uncivilized and Achebe really questions the sense of civilization of those who label Igbo people uncivilized. At the same time, Achebe cannot evade criticism for making some native traditions public for which the whites can term the native culture uncivilized and obsolete.

IV

Achebe in *Things Fall Apart*, not only gives a colourful description of the spontaneity of Igbo culture, but also shows how their education and language systems work and why these are prerequisites to know the life style and culture of Africa. Though Igbo people don't have any formal education system, they have the great knack of using their own language artistically. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is written in English with frequent references to a lot of native folktales and untranslated Igbo words and phrases as part of his plan to Africanize the English language in articulating an African story. Achebe's choice of the language is political since he wants to revitalize the native culture through English and capture, convey and disseminate the rhythms, structures and splendour of the Igbo language to the rest of the world in general and to his fellow Africans in particular. His leaving of some Igbo words without translation is partly to show that the Igbo language is not so easy for direct translation into English and mostly to establish that Igbo culture and values cannot be perceived within the matrix of the colonialist values. Achebe provides a comical illustration of the difficulties of translating the Igbo language when the missionary's translator, being an Igbo, speaks a dialect that pronounces the word 'myself' but comes out as 'my buttocks' (Achebe, 1958: 136) thus resulting in some humorous translations of the white man's message. Igbo people are very devoted to their language for which they even do not allow their children to receive the colonizer's language and education. To present the native culture animated and alive, Achebe seeks help of the Igbo language and shows how people react and ridicule at anything different from the native language.

Achebe's use of proverbs, another dominant linguistic feature of *Things Fall Apart* helps the readers understand the nature of Igbo life

first hand though sometimes, it seems that he overuses them. Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his *Decolonizing the Mind*, points out that in African English, many local words, phrases and idioms are used for the authentic presentation of African life in such a way that they become part of a different narrative style. The use of proverbs is also significantly perceived in the language of people living in togetherness in the villages rather than those living in isolation in the cities. So, we are not taken aback by Igbo people's use of proverbs since they live very close to nature in villages. And proverbs are deeply rooted in the Igbo language and culture and sharply reflect their lifestyle and thinking. The use of proverbs can also be seen as an art of conversation and people having this art are regarded very highly in Igbo society. In this regard, we can recall the role played by the story-tellers in that society where story-telling and listening to stories are quite common regular experiences. Moreover, since the Igbo language does not have any printed version and passes down from generations to generations orally, it enriches itself with a lot of phrases, proverbs and folktales thus connecting people more closely and strengthening social integrity. This is probably the reason for which Achebe never refers to any writers or poets in Igbo society. In Igbo society, language is an instrument for collective use and it should not be confined to serving the mere individual purpose. But Achebe's linguistic choice has given birth to a lot of debate. On the one hand, he keenly advocates for his native Igbo language, but prefers to write *Things Fall Apart* in English, the hegemonic language, on the other. From an African English writer's perspectives, using the English language creates many opportunities though it is very unfortunate for the local African languages since the local dialects/languages are not only deprived from the nurturing of good writers but also at the same time, become linguistically plundered and turn into an asset of the influential English Language. Though none can be solely blamed for this and it is part of the natural process of language adoption, it ultimately linguistically enriches the rich (English) and impoverishes the poor (Africans). And Achebe's use of language in *Things Fall Apart*, knowingly or unknowingly happens to serve that purpose.

V

“If a child washed his hands, he could eat with Kings” (Achebe, 1958: 8) – this proverb speaks volume of the simple social structure of Igbo society where people like to live in togetherness and harmony and where class discrimination prevails to a minimal extent. But with the sudden appearance of colonial administration and the start of trade with the west, possibilities of further conflicts open up in Igbo society. From the palm-oil and palm kernels business, only a selected few Umuofians who get benefited welcome the new trading opportunities. But these

trading activities significantly undermine the clan and its long tradition of self-sufficiency thus creating a new elite class and eventual divides among them. This outer interference not only divides the society but also families into two opposing parties- one favouring the change and the other disfavoured. If Okonkwo vehemently opposes the change, his son Nowoye gives nod to that change more promptly. This division badly affects the social stability of the clan. But this trade does not introduce Igbo people with the western world for the first time. The reference to guns indicates that Igbo people use western technology even before the westerners come to Umuofia implying that Umuofia is not completely an isolated community. This new system instead creates two classes of people- the privileged one depending on trades and the unprivileged majority one depending on land. But Igbo society develops a collective and central management system of food production which bears some additional responsibilities in helping people grow crops in Igbo land. It has been clear that hard labour is the key to success in Igbo society and the society provides people with all the courage, inspiration and mental strength. Through showing the wide-acceptance of the newly introduced trading system by some of the natives, Achebe actually hints at the changes in economic activities and money making concepts and also at the shortcomings of the native production system which eventually echoes the western narrative about the broken Igbo economy.

VI

Besides trade, the white missionaries introduce a new religion. As a result, Igbo's cultural beliefs and their social and religious values get into direct conflict with those of the white men. The situation worsens when they ignore the native religion and build a church next to the village with a view to converting people to Christianity. They also enforce a new arrangement of days and weeks and introduce a new weekly calendar of seven days a week instead of the Igbo four-day week since they expect the new Christians in the community to "come [to church] every seventh day". (Achebe, 1958: 142) Moreover, these new Christians at the cost of weakening the clan bolster the church and cause greater tension among the non-Christians as well as between the Christians and the non-Christians. Uchegbue thus claims that with the advent of Christianity and western culture, many of the Igbo traditions are "either lost, given up, forgotten or being increasingly neglected while some are being reinterpreted, partially preserved, and absorbed in or interpolated with Christianity" (Uchegbue, 2010: 164).

Achebe in his *An Image of Africa* rightly mentions that "tragedy begins when things leave their accustomed place" (Achebe, 1978: 5) and the tragedy of Igbo people starts when their familiar culture and traditions leave their adapted place after the introduction of different

ideologies and philosophies about religion and human relations. So, Nwoye's prompt response to Christian missionaries is partly due to his very delicate and fragile situation caused from the deep concerns about certain native customs and mostly due to the new, more humane-appearing doctrine of Christianity. The missionaries' compassion for the new converts with low status in Mbanta and the 'gay and rollicking tunes' (Achebe, 1958: 138) of the rhythmic and evangelistic Christian hymns touch the "silent and dusty chords in the heart of an Ibo man" (Achebe, 1958: 138). He finds a solution and a sense of relief within as the chant of the church pours into 'his parched soul' (Achebe, 1958: 139). Moreover, he mostly gets troubled with what happens to Ikemefuna. The Ikemefuna incident finally drives him upset and later he loses faith in Igbo traditions, the driving force of that society. He has been in search of an alternative and when he gets that, he wholeheartedly surrenders to it. A careful insight into Nwoye's psychic tersely exposes that the new religion does seem to provide a reasonable solution to some vague and nagging questions existing in Igbo culture – the questions of abandonment of twins in the bush and the killing of Ikemefuna – that have been troubling his tender soul. He also silently revolts against the undercurrent social hierarchy system prevalent among the natives. Situated at the bottom of the hierarchy are the 'osu' people; people who are 'outcasts' (Achebe, 1958: 147) living in a special area of the village (Achebe, 1958: 148). Even in Igbo religion, Chukwu is at the top and called 'Master' and 'supreme' (Achebe, 1958: 170). After him comes his small gods, to whom the natives offer prayers and sacrifices. This is where Achebe describes the flaws of the social and religious systems of the Igbos and partly holds them responsible for the falling apart of the society but does not seem to properly defend them. This is why he simultaneously describes two incidents- Okonkwo's revolt and Nwoye's leaving his own religion and tends to generalize the reasons why some (e.g. Nwoye) are in favor of the colonial power and why some (e.g. Okonkwo) are dead against them. Questions arise whether there is any demand for change in the social structure of the society or that change is really inevitable. When changes come from within and when people are tired of the old traditions, they desperately look for an alternative and in that case, changes are inevitable. But in Umofia, nothing like this happens. Even we don't see much of internal conflicts in this stable and static Igbo society. In western anthropology, the non-western societies are described as immobile and dead. Achebe by describing Umofia as static and motionless, intentionally or unintentionally accepts those stereotypical descriptions. We can of course, blame a society only when its being static causes chaos and anarchy, and refuses to welcome any such changes which can bring about development to common people. For

Igbo people, nobody even Achebe does not fully stand in favor of the stance taken by the common Igbo men who actually do not want that forced change. Through describing Igbo society static and lifeless, Achebe indirectly welcomes that change that the colonial rule wants to bring about in Africa. In the later part of *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe voices out for the oppressed natives, and identifies the colonial power as the oppressor. But in three fourths of the novel, he describes Igbo society as motionless and only in the last part he refers to the spontaneity and liveliness of Igbo people to negate the colonial propaganda. By this time readers have envisaged a static image of Igbo society and its people that largely corresponds to the image the colonizers usually portray for legalizing their invasion to Africa. And Achebe cannot shred off his negligence for creating this confusion among the readers.

The colonizers use almost similar tools and techniques across different continents to establish their authority. The missionaries are actually the auxiliary forces of the colonizers. It is our failure to look at the colonization process as a whole. Considering this, Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is a great work where he describes how the colonization process manifests itself through different forms. He very meticulously refers to the roles played by the missionaries in Umiofia. He also shows how they enter quietly with religion and win many of his own Igbo brothers and for them how his "clan can no longer act like one" (Achebe, 1958: 166). Because of their interference, chaos and conflicts erupt that eventually lead to the killing one of the missionaries. The reference to that killing incident does not bear much importance with respect to the overall theme of the novel. But this reference undoubtedly serves two purposes in the novel: 1) that killing incident occurs because Igbo people hold a different view and understanding about life and world and Achebe hints at the limitations of their viewpoints and 2) Achebe also plays the part of a non-conformist to the western propaganda and he protests the much narrated western portrayal of the Africans as cannibals and presents a parallel yet completely different image of African people. At the beginning, they get shelter in the unused evil forest of Igbo society, but later they conquer many uncared and unwanted men of that society. Achebe's depiction of the 'evil forest' represents, to a larger extent, the darker side of African culture that in fact opens the door for the West to enter the African world. He thus does not fully blame the colonizers for their permanent settlement in Igbo society; rather unearths some of the loopholes of the society itself and indirectly accuse those cracks for which conflicts also start residing there permanently.

VII

The strong point of *Things Fall Apart* is that Achebe views the colonization process as a whole instead of looking at it partially. He mostly remains unemotional and never tries to depict the conflict as a conflict between the colonizer and the colonized or between the good and the evil. While identifying the reasons of Nwoye's conversion to Christianity, Achebe mentions his bitter personal experience on the one hand, and the role of the priest's melodious tone at the time delivering speech on the other. While describing the missionaries, Achebe is very casual and never idolizes them. He simultaneously portrays the ill-tempered and intolerant whites and men with good behaviour and great compassion. Likewise, Achebe never romanticizes the image of Igbo people. He never compartmentalizes all the good with the native Igbo people and all the bad with the white missionaries. One interesting point in *Things Fall Apart* is that the ill-tempered priest who always shows hatred and spreads antipathy towards Igbo religion and enjoys antagonism between the two belief systems, ultimately works for the interest of the colonizers and the one who is very compassionate towards Igbo people, and wants to learn that local language, and mix with the locals, also works in favour of the colonizers.

The novel ends with the news of the white Commissioner writing a book titled *The Pacification of the Primitive Tribes of the Lower Niger* where Okonkwo's story in other words, the story of Umuofia might at best contain a paragraph. His plan to treat Okonkwo's story briefly shows the limitations of the colonialist perspective which tends to simplify and generalize the African culture. It also reveals a cruel reality of the colonization process of how the colonial experiences help the white people open up their minds in order to exercise intellectual faculties. Like many other colonizers, it is the limitations of the Commissioner who views the Igbo natives from a European technological perspective and still treats them as primitive since he envisions himself to be a "student of primitive customs" (Achebe, 1958: 196). That Commissioner also embodies the historical inability of many other western scholars who fail to liberate themselves from their jaundiced views about Africa. But the irony is that the methods the colonialists adopt to pacify the so called primitives are through suppression and violence – themselves essentially primitive means for achieving their nationalistic objectives.

Because of these attitudes towards the Africans, many African writers later start writing as a protest which ultimately enriches the African literature. And the success of *Things Fall Apart* lies in Achebe's detailed presentation of religion, administration, judicial system, economy, language system and education of Igbo society and how these

institutions are targeted by the whites to establish their authority. *Things Fall Apart* thus combines both the views – the colonizers’ justification of their invasion and descriptions of the resultant reactions and apparent irrational behaviors of the colonized. Achebe shows the triumphant colonial power on the one hand and underlines the decay and fall of once rock solid Umuofia on the other. When Okonkwo returns home after seven-year exile, he does not find that resilience and integrity in the society and notice that the Umuofians are becoming more and more ‘soft like women’ (Achebe, 1958: 173). By this time many people have “joined the ranks of the stranger” (Achebe, 1958: 165) and have converted to Christianity to avail the facilities of education, healthcare and jobs provided by the whites. Okonkwo is helpless and speechless of how a society can change so rapidly. He wonders how the society which once had the courage to think about the white men as lepers can become so fragile. Achebe does not answer all these questions so explicitly but hints at some reasons for everything falling apart and their non-resistance. *Things Fall Apart* celebrates the oneness of The Igbo society and shows how Igbo people remain united in their thoughts, words and actions until the arrival of the colonizers as Obierika says that the white man “has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart” (Achebe, 1958: 166). Achebe probably does not agree with that opinion since he thinks that they are the only influential foreigners who simply redirect the opposing forces already looming large in the society. Obierika’s statements greatly validate the presence of such internal forces when he says that ‘our own men and our sons have joined the ranks of the stranger. They have joined his religion and they help to uphold his government... How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us’ (Achebe, 1958: 165–166)?

There has always been a misreading that the appearance of the white men constitutes the ‘knife’ on the native traditions and the clan is always ‘held together’ by its cultural homogeneity and unconditional unanimity on any decision without much disagreement until the catastrophic entry of the whites. But it is not the white men alone rather it is the corporation between some of the Igbo men and the white men which ultimately constitutes the ‘knife’. The Igbo society always being ‘held together’ with undivided opinions also seems to be a mere myth since we see a repressed disagreement in the abandonment of the twins and in the tradition of banishment for accidental killings. There have also been some initial disagreements over giving ‘a piece of land to build their [missionaries] shrine’ (Achebe, 1958: 140). We notice other disagreements when some Igbo people raise questions regarding the egwugwu. Enoch even goes to the extent of unmasking the egwugwu just to reveal the non-divine nature of it and to show that it is just a man beneath a mask. And the inexperienced Nwoye’s as well as the eminent

Ogbuefi Ugonna's eventual alliance with the white people ultimately exposes that the society is not always held together; rather it contains some internal cracks. So, the colonial force manifested through forms of religion, administration and trade is therefore, merely the external stimulus to these internal cracks already existed in the society. Okonkwo's much obsession with mere physical display of manliness which sometimes ends up in committing a series of crimes by violating the rules and conducts laid down by society also widens those cracks. This stubborn adherence to manliness ultimately frightens some people (i.e. his wives) and alienates many others (i.e. Nwoye) thus loosening the familial and social bond.

While giving an account of the internal cracks of the society, Achebe also depicts how the whites develop different institutions in order to ideologically and emotionally disintegrate the natives. Mr. Brown builds a school and a much-needed small hospital in Umuofia which produce immediate and impressive results. Thus the ideological and repressive state apparatus go hand in hand to complete the total disintegration. Most importantly, things do not fall apart in the totally anarchic sense; rather they merely fall into a different pattern, a new pattern with which, unfortunately, some who are too orthodox and unyielding to change (represented by Okonkwo), cannot reconcile, and therefore become victims. This ultimately leads to the essential conflict between the inflexible forces of tradition (epitomized through Okonkwo) and the robust hostile forces of change (represented through the white colonizers and their native accomplices). So it is clear that the arrival of the white is not what solely pollutes and disintegrates the cultural purity of Africa; rather they merely accumulate the already prevailing forces in the society and redirect them in order to expedite the continuing process of an unavoidable change. Moreover the use of superior ideas and technologies in production system, administration, and even in religion and the innate and universal expectations of human beings for a better lifestyle and enjoyment also contribute a lot to the falling apart of that society. The Igbo people now start realizing that they must either acclimatize with the new trend and accept the colonizers or run the risk of becoming completely annihilated like the Abame people.

Is Okonkwo's Tragic Suicide Insignificant?

Okonkwo is a symbol of resistance and traditional order and his death thus apparently denotes the death of Umuofia. His death is the culmination of a self-destructive pride and an inevitable outcome of the crushing effects of the new order thus resulting in the unending struggles between the two civilizations and cultures. But to some extent, it is also insignificant. If we consider his fight (mostly for his personal

name and fame) against all his repeated ill-fortunes and read this novel as Okonkwo's personal life story, he can very much be compared with the Greek tragic heroes. But if we read the novel from its thematic perspective – familial and social integrity, his death becomes merely an individual issue since all his concerns and anxieties are mostly driven and motivated by his personal ego. When Okonkwo returns from his exile and intends to respond aggressively, he is not driven by his love for the native culture but for his personal ego. He views it as an opportunity to once more show his courage and to recapture his former glory. His promptness to burst into violence at slight incitements is also responsible for his downfall. Most of the time, Okonkwo not only outwardly disregards his clan members and their traditions, but also disrespects his inner feelings of love and protectiveness. This deep chasm in Okonkwo's divided 'self' accounts for the beginning of his decline. His endeavor to reinforce his personal ego ultimately leads him to the killing of a white man and his committing suicide. His suicide is the ultimate aftermath of his inner sufferings sprouted from his fear of failure. His death would have been representational if many more people from the Igbo society would fight and embrace death with him. He dies a lonely death and his mode of protest is so self-centered that even after death, he is deprived of the right of receiving funeral from his own society. This clearly indicates that his death does not represent the collective demise of the Igbo society and therefore, does not reflect anything other than a tragic incident of an individual. So, by not glorifying his death, Achebe probably disregards that popular view which holds that Okonkwo's death represents the death of Umuofia. Here Achebe's role seems to be dubious who shows Okonkwo's death as merely individual and at the same time justifies his tragic end while defending the struggle of Igbo society against the entire setback and disintegration, the colonial regime has brought about in that society. Even if we consider the colonizers as superior and developed, they cannot invade other countries. Invasion always comes with a bunch of oppressing apparatus. Their being the emissaries of light and civilization does not mean that they are all very civilized. Towards the last part of the novel, we see how Igbo people have to carry the scars of oppression, suppression and subjugation for long. So, we can, in no way, consider the occupying force as enlightening; rather we can shockingly discover how a stable organized society starts falling apart due to their oppression and suppression. The death of Okonkwo – the insignificant death of such a significant figure actually embodies the immeasurable damage inflicted on Igbo society by the imperial power. But Achebe does not seem to raise all these legal issues.

Conclusion

In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe portrays the negative as well as positive features of Igbo culture, and he sometimes equally criticizes the natives as well as the colonizers. Unlike many other western writers like Joseph Conrad, George Orwell, and Herman Melville who tend to romanticize the African culture as primitive and animalistic, yet uncorrupted and innocent, Achebe never portrays Igbo culture as faultless and idyllic. But while criticizing the natives, he sometimes surrenders himself to the western stereotypes though he tries to maintain a wholly African standpoint. He shows that Igbo people have functioning judicial, religious, social and cultural principles even before the arrival of the whites to Umuofia and the entry of the Europeans with a new religion, administration, trade, and justice system merely serves to initiate chaos and conflicts among the natives. He illustrates how the once united Igbo society starts falling apart with the onslaught of British imperialism. Achebe successfully captures these concerns of countless African readers through the struggle of Okonkwo to maintain the integrity of his people against the overwhelming power of colonial rule. Achebe views the spread of Christianity and the death of Igbo culture as happening simultaneously in Umuofia though he also frequently mentions some internal weaknesses of Igbo society itself. *Things Fall Apart* also reveals how the missionaries employ 'divide and conquer' policy as part of their comprehensive strategy of colonization, in which the church functions as the basis for political and economic imperialism. But why Igbo people fail to withstand the colonization process is because of some internal flaws in the native structure and the divided nature of the society. And this imperialism leaves behind permanent psychological, political, cultural and ethnic damage which lasts long even after independence has been achieved and Okonkwo embodies that damage. Achebe celebrates the unity, oneness, their myths, legends, beliefs, customs, religions, proverbs, taboos, rites, and fables of Igbo society and shows how all these aspects that make the clan stable, are losing their values gradually because of the colonial invasion and the internal flaws of the natives. But Achebe's role in making modern African literature a part of world literature cannot be understated.

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Ulysses as Modern Prototype of *Homo Viator*

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Abstract:

This paper emphasises, through the notion of generic intertextuality, the Homeric inheritance in the literary modernity. Specific techniques of transtextual communication are employed to analyse how the myth of Odysseus was valued in modern literature, i.e. the novels of two emblematic writers, Joyce and Faulkner. In *Ulysses*, desacralisation is visible at all levels, but it does not eliminate the identity of the protagonists who are saved by their humanity. *Soldiers' Pay*, a rewriting based on allusions to the myth of Odysseus, denies the perspective of recovery. Ulysses' counterpart is an alienated being suffocated by the superficial world he lives in, an example of de-heroisation that modernity uses without restraint.

Keywords: rewriting, modernity, desacralisation, de-heroisation, identity

1. Introduction

Characterised by the repudiation of the past, modern literature is nonconformist and innovative, marking the rupture with tradition and therefore with the mythological universe. This should not be construed as a cancellation of the myth, but a resignification of its values done most often through the means of parody. The myth of Odysseus cannot be absent from the modern author's imagery. It is the basis of Joyce's and Faulkner's rewritings that highlight the peculiarities of perceiving this myth at the beginning of the twentieth century. The analysis of *Ulysses* and *Soldiers' Pay* reveals how the myth was perceived in modernity, as well as the role of the author's intention in rewriting Homer's hypotext.

Theorist Gérard Genette laid the foundations of one of the best-known delineations of transtextual practices. Transtextuality is "all that sets the text in relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts" (Genette, 1992: 83–84) or, more precisely, it includes the various interactions between texts occurring either with the author's obvious and explicit intention or in an apparently unexpected manner. Of the five categories of relationships between texts (intertextuality, metatextuality, paratextuality, architextuality and hypertextuality), Genette pays special attention to hypertextuality, which is "any relationship uniting a text B

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(which I shall call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course, call it the *hypotext*) upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary” (Genette, 1997: 5). The methods of hypertextuality and the other transtextual categories will be identified in the above-mentioned novels, while insisting on their mechanisms in the narrative materials of the proposed hypertexts. Both of the above-mentioned novels are “serious transformations” (Genette, 1997: 212), fundamental reconfigurations of the hypotext, consistent with the auctorial intention and the cultural background. The metamorphosis of the source text includes the entire diegesis, the story, the characters’ identity or nationality.

2. Self-proclaimed rewriting – from the prototype of the ancient hero to that of modern man

When dealing with rewriting in literary modernism, the novel *Ulysses* by James Joyce is the major point of reference, and the analysis of its mechanisms becomes imperative. The hypotext, the *Odyssey*, is obvious from the title that is a direct reference to the Homeric hero. However, before identifying the correspondences on which the rewriting is based in the text of the novel, one should recall the author’s confessions about Homer’s epic and what the character Ulysses means to him. These confessions, made to his friend Frank Bugden, constitute the rationale behind the rewriting:

“As far as I understand, you believe Ulysses is the only complete person in literature.” ”Yes. [...] Ulysses is son to Laertes, but he is father to Telemachus, husband to Penelope, lover of Calypso, a companion in arms of the Greek warriors around Troy and King of Ithaca” (Bugden, 1972: 16).

Consequently, Ulysses is not the character, but the complete individual with multiple sides, with qualities and flaws, like the modern man who has more than one status both in the society and at home. This is the prototype that fascinates Joyce. His appetite for the *Odyssey* borders on obsession, dominating even his private conversations with friends: “The most beautiful, all-embracing theme is that of Odyssey. [...] The most beautiful, most human traits are contained in the *Odyssey*” (Seidel, 2002: 100). Therefore, the reasons for rewriting Homer’s *Odyssey* are already given by the author, who is attracted not by Ulysses’ heroism, but his humanity. Ulysses is the man in every sense of the word and the Irish writer’s novel relies on this interpretation of the *Odyssey*. That is why, based on the image of the complete individual, *Ulysses* takes the form of a complete narrative, a human living organism, each chapter being associated with a vital organ that provides it with body and spirit, therefore with life: “Intended to be the embodiment of the writer’s idea of the «complete», the «perfect» work,

Ulysses was also meant as a secular substitute of the Book of Books, a «Bible» dedicated to the earthly man” (Brezianu, 1977: 167–168).

Leopold Bloom corresponds to Ulysses, Stephen Dedalus corresponds to Telemachus, and Molly, Bloom’s wife, corresponds not only to Penelope, but also in Calypso. All the narrated events take place on June 16 1904, in Dublin, a city symbolising the Ithaca of an author who is often far from his homeland. The temporal and spatial change occurring in relation to the hypotext places Joyce’s novel in the category of *theme transpositions of the diegetic type*. The implications are defined by Genette as follows: “the action can be transposed from one period to another, or from one location to another, or both” (Genette, 1997: 296). *Ulysses* obviously belongs to the third variant suggested by the French theorist: not only time and space change, but also the elements that are related to the action in the hypertext, as “the reader is confronted not by mythical heroes, but petty individuals moving within gloomy interiors and grey streets” (Brezianu, 1977: 154).

The chapters of the novel contain unquestionable references to the *Odyssey*, to key characters like Telemachus, Calypso or Nausicaa, to mythical places such as Hades or Ithaca, to ancient gods or monsters like Proteus, the Cyclops or the Oxen of the Sun. The connection of the novel with its paratext is easy to notice; all the paratextual elements, from the title to the subtitles, reveal the hypertext-hypotext relationship and guide the reader’s horizon of expectation. Paratextuality, Genette’s second transtextual category, plays a crucial role in interpreting the novel, as the connections established with the hypotext are those that make *Ulysses* “the very type of the self-proclaimed hypertext” (Genette, 1997: 309). Not only the structuring of the narrative material, but the whole text is based on the Homeric epic; it abounds in symbols, motifs and allegories that are specific to the *Odyssey* and are hidden under daily banalities. This entitles Andrei Brezianu to state that Joyce’s novel is not a parody in the strict sense of the concept, but “the geometric locus of the prestigious transcendence of parody in allegorical mimesis” (Brezianu, 1977: 154), the mythical elements being disguised and transposed in the writer’s contemporaneity. Rewriting the *Odyssey* involves the desacralisation of the epic events by transferring them on the streets of the Irish capital. In the same way, the sacred is profaned in the *Oxen of the Sun* episode, when the theme of life and fertility represented by the birth of Mrs. Purefoy’s son mingles with the conversations of the medical students who have no respect for the miracle of creation. The young students correspond to Ulysses’ companions who disregard the sacred by killing the oxen of Helios, the Sun god. Like Ulysses, who does not take part in this sacrilege, Bloom declines the students’ invitation to join them for a drink, so he is not guilty of impiety. Therefore, Joyce keeps the theme of the *Odyssey*, but

subjects it to transformations, his hypertext being classified by Genette as a *serious transformation* that reconfigures the source text creatively, through a radical modification imposed by the auctorial intention. In this regard, Mircea Mihăieș notices that the rewriting of the Homeric epic is not based on the imitation principle, modernism providing the text with the chance to reinvent itself: “the *Odyssey* is reflected in *Ulysses* through analogies and permutations; it is not neither direct reflection nor literal imitation” (Mihăieș, 2016: 21).

The correspondences between the hypertext and the hypotext are apparent. For this reason, their detailed analysis does not concern this paper. What is interesting to emphasize is the mechanism of the rewriting, as the poetics of *Ulysses* is not only complex, but also elaborate and suggests a network of allegories, a mosaic of typical modernist forms of expression and a discontinuous narrative structure. Joyce rewrites the *Odyssey* using the multiple perspectives technique. As a result, an innovative, antitraditionalist work takes form as Joyce removes the Homeric omniscient perspective of the events. It is obvious that in the *Odyssey* Homer is the only source of information and the reader/audience sees the events only from the viewpoint of the narrator, who undertakes an omniscient role. Joyce deconstructs this manner of narrating by employing multiple perspectives. In this case, the reader’s role is to solve the puzzle and provide a new interpretation of the events, judging the characters and their deeds from their own angle. Thus, the reader becomes familiar with the plot details, just as Bloom-Ulysses travels through Dublin – doubtful, frustrated and confused: “The only one who travels through the whole Odysseic universe of the book and copes with all the difficulties, advancing slowly and stopping more than once in a confused state of mind, is the reader” (Grigorescu, 1984: 311). The readers’ road is the longest and their mission is definitely the most demanding, because the narrative text abounds in allusions, symbols and interconnections whose clarification depends on their competence, their familiarity with the hypotext and their assiduous exploration of Joyce’s rewriting. Consequently, in the case of modern rewriting, the readers’ status changes dramatically, as they are the ones who have the final say, their interpretation relying on the overall view. Nevertheless, the difficulty of the mission does not exclude the joy of “travelling” through the text. Wayne C. Booth underlined *the pleasure of deciphering* and *the pleasure of collaboration* within the complicity between the reader and an author as demanding as Joyce (Booth, 1976: 301–308).

It is certain that the change in the reader’s status occurs as a consequence of the change in the auctorial perspective. Joyce not only cancels the single viewpoint of the *Odyssey*, but also proposes a sequence of narrators, each episode of the novel having one or several different voices, thus also diversifying the narrative styles. The author’s

modern vision brings several variants of the same story to light and the characters' voices, silent in Homer's epic, are now heard. Relevant to this is the version of Molly, Penelope's correspondent who, unlike her Homeric counterpart, has the opportunity to voice her frustrations caused by her husband's aloofness in the past ten years, as in Penelope's case. A narrator of her own thoughts, the image Molly creates of herself is that of a mediocre, unfaithful woman, "an Emma exasperated by the lack of perspective of a Charles Bovary whom she understands too little and who neglects her" (Grigorescu, 1984: 385). The modern author's portrait of the female character, created by bringing disparate images together, mocks the celebrated faithfulness of the Homeric character.

Dublin, a city the author knows too well, is perceived subjectively, as a labyrinth that suffocates the characters who are in search of their own identity. Created with a touch of irony, the characters desacralise the heroic image of their Homeric counterparts. Bloom's wandering through Dublin is doubled by his wandering in the labyrinth of his own thoughts and feelings. This *homo viator*, entrapped in his day-to-day existence, is the image of the common man who lacks heroic virtues and knocks Ulysses off his Homeric pedestal, making him human. Nevertheless, the suppression of the divine attributes and the virtues specific to a legendary hero does not involve the shift from a hero to an antihero. Bloom attracts the reader emphatically, promoting values that do not define an exceptional character, but make him different from the dehumanised world he lives in. As a result, in Joyce's case, the parodic register of modern rewriting functions in an original manner, since the desacralisation of Ulysses does not equate with his elimination, but with highlighting the quality that helps modern man survive, giving his insignificant life a meaning: "Through its parodic element – a rewriting of the *Odyssey* in a minor register and with changed signs – it reveals itself to be creative despite its destroying appearance [...] and releases energy that generates the beautiful at the edge of chaos" (Mihăieș, 2016: 19).

A representative of values such as compassion, concern for the others and empathy, Bloom is different from the other members of the gloomy and chaotic universe to which he belongs. When the Cyclops asks Homer's hero who he is, the latter answers – not accidentally – that his name is "Nobody". The reply symbolises the lack of an identity due to the absence of the essential elements that define it: the homeland and the family. At the end of his adventures, having recovered his homeland and his family, Ulysses finds himself again. Similarly, Leopold Bloom rebuilds his lost identity: his virtues, such as his caring nature and his concern for Stephan Dedalus, help him reactivate his paternal instinct. Bloom returns home and the victory of his return lies in the father-son close relationship strengthened late at night, over a cup of cocoa. By



rebuilding the paternal image he longed for, Stephen reaffirms his own identity. Moreover, the differences between the two protagonists, Ulysses and Bloom, are revealed in the episode in which the suitors are killed. Unlike Ulysses, who proves his force and courage by murdering Penelope's suitors, Bloom kills Molly's lover symbolically, by apparently ignoring him. At the end of the day, Bloom's attempt to become detached before falling asleep, his humanity and concern turn him into a winner: "In Joyce's work the soul – a word which he never renounced – carries off the victory" (Ellmann, 1959: 390).

The assertion of human communion and empathy is the heroic side of this modern Ulysses, through which Joyce manages to transform the essence of the Homeric myth: "Joyce has managed, by invoking an ancient myth, to conjure up a modern one" (Levin, 1969: 10). Thus the modern rewriting of the *Odyssey* requires not only the annihilation of the myth lying at its foundation, but also its reconstruction in harmony with the Irish writer's innovative vision and the aesthetic values that prevailed in the first decades of the twentieth century.

3. Concealed rewriting – Ulysses, killed at the end of the modernist journey

An American writer included among the representatives of modernist literature, William Faulkner is known for his works set in the famous fictional Yoknapatawpha County. His writings are a true epic with hundreds of characters whose destinies mingle to highlight the main literary themes or principles in the writer's time. The stories and novels set in the southern Yoknapatawpha County are the centre of Faulkner's work. Everything he wrote before was experimental or merely preceded his well-known novels. His works outside Yoknapatawpha are not deprived of significance, although critics focused mostly on the above-mentioned cycle. The modernist essence is unquestionable and the characters embody profound ontological concepts. A good example is the writer's debut novel, *Soldiers' Pay*, published in 1926, a rewriting of the myth of Odysseus in a modernist manner, using analogies and interpretation adapted to contemporaneity.

Unlike Joyce, Faulkner does not make direct reference to the hypotext. Instead, he appeals to the reader's ability to identify the mythological allusions throughout the whole narrative. Faulkner's technique of using mythological symbols, deconstructing ancient myths and assigning new meanings to them in a specific modernist manner is a true challenge for the reader: "Faulkner's techniques may sometimes exasperate, but they are effective in compelling the reader to join the writer's search for truth" (Volpe, 1964: 32). The success of such kind of reading depends on the reader's cooperation, as well as his erudition. Only an experienced reader who has read Homer's *Odyssey* before can

identify the mythical substrate of Faulkner's text and establish the necessary correspondences. The paratextual elements that, in Joyce's case, support the interpretation in a mythical register, do not contain allusions useful for deciphering in Faulkner's case. Nevertheless, the novel's plot thread, reduced to the main idea, approaches the Homeric theme of returning home at the end of the Trojan War: Donald Mahon comes back to Charlestown when the First World War has ended. His homeward journey is, undoubtedly, not without obstacles. While Ulysses was helped by goddess Athena especially, soldier Donald Mahon will arrive home aided by two travellers he meets on the train: Joe Gilligan and Margaret Powers. The help Donald Mahon receives is crucial to his return, as he is wounded and partly amnesiac. Ulysses returns from war a healthy man, but his adventures on the way back to Ithaca send him to the island of the Lotus-eaters. The lotus plant causes amnesia and he escapes from that island only with difficulty, after tying his three comrades that have tasted the plant. Throughout his journey, Ulysses is at the border between amnesia and clinging to reality: he has to be lashed to the mast against the Sirens' alluring song and is detained on Ogygia Island, a prisoner of goddess Calypso's spells, for seven years. Maimed by the cruel war, Mahon's close ones do not recognise him when he first returns home. His involuntary disguise is useful for exposing shallow characters who are attracted only by what they see on the outside. Such is his fiancée Cecily, who cheats on him and eventually leaves him because she cannot stand her lover's hideous face. The author reveals the lack of moral values in the society of those times and mocks the patient and faithful woman's traditional role. The role of the physical mask was first experimented by Ulysses, this time voluntarily. When he has arrived on the shore of his native island, he disguises himself as a beggar so that he may not be recognised and have the chance to analyse the situation as it is. Cecily's ancient counterpart, Penelope, proves to be faithful and honest.

Penelope is obviously demythicised by the creation of Cecily, as Faulkner discards precisely the Homeric heroine's fundamental features. While Penelope finds in weaving the web a way to keep her suitors at bay and avoid marrying one of them, Cecily embodies the reversed myth of faithfulness; she is a frivolous, fickle and selfish woman who flirts with several men both before her fiancé's return and after that. Moreover, Mahon's ugly, repulsive face sends her in the arms of other men. She is the proof that society does not live by moral standards, but chooses to be frivolous, like herself: "Cecily is an excellent rendition of the much-described flapper of the period. Into her portrait, Faulkner pours all his venom for the superficiality and shallowness that he sees in society" (Volpe, 1964: 53). Femininity and motherhood mean nothing to this character who does not want to have a baby that could deform her

body. Shape becomes valuable in a world in which essence is no longer of interest. Women's decadence is shown not only in Cecily, but also in Emmy, who becomes estranged from Mahon and is attracted only to his image before the war. For her, the thought that Donald will die is a disillusion, once again proving the shallow feminine nature. Mircea Mihăieș sees in Cecily and Emmy modern versions of Penelope and identifies correspondences that are specific to rewriting, related to the Homeric character's occupation:

[...] in Chapter VI, Cecily tells George Farr, her ardent suitor to whom she will eventually surrender, unlike Odysseus' wife: "Oh, no, I can't come back this afternoon. I have some sewing to do." As we learn from Chapter III, Penelope's other version, Emmy, "got a job sewing for a dressmaker" (Mihăieș, 2009).

The modern author's irony is visible in the creation of these two female characters who confirm the disappointment of a man in disagreement with his time. As simple parodic portraits of Penelope, Cecily and Emmy desacralise the myth of the faithful woman and the old ideal of femininity. Their opposite may be Mrs Powers, who is kind-hearted and capable of sacrifice when she decides to help Donald arrive home and then takes care of him until he dies. Although she marries him before his death, she cannot be Penelope's counterpart, because their marriage is not based on love, but on her compassion for her dying husband. As she is always there for him, she could be Faulkner's version of the goddess Athena, who was always there for Ulysses when he needed her. Her name suggests her role as a beneficent guide endowed with the power to cure the soldier's spiritual wounds (Harrington, 1990: 13). In a manner typical of the modernist demythisation, this correspondence is rather ironical, since Mrs. Powers, for all her kindness, is herself a victim of the war that stole her husband and she is unable to cure the protagonist's alienation.

The war and the shallow nature of society in the first half of the twentieth century amplify the individual dramas, the human being caught up in an irreversible process of alienation and seclusion. Although he returns in his native town, Donald Mahon is unable to recover his identity, feeling a stranger in his own house. The problematic struggle for self-recovery is modernist in nature and combines with the theme of uprooting and the absurd human destiny in a society without principles and moral standards: "[...] twentieth-century society is seen as the enemy, encroaching upon the individual's integrity and strangling humanistic values" (Volpe, 1964: 21). Consequently, Donald Mahon is an uprooted Ulysses whose identity issue remains unresolved after he has arrived home. On the contrary, it grows even more complex. He keeps being an absence, never taken into consideration by his dear ones. While Ulysses confirms his identity

when he has recovered his family and homeland, his demythicized modern version, Donald Mahon, remains alienated until his death. Thus, the modern rewriting of the *Odyssey* proposes a reversed myth of the hero who, once home, kills his wife's suitors and reconfirms his status, as in Faulkner's novel the protagonist dies and Penelope (Cecily or Emmy) chooses one of the suitors. It is the drama of the modern man who is constantly searching for a meaning, but dies without resolving his existential issue.

The mythical level of Faulkner's novel is undeniable, as is the presence of the Homeric myth at its foundations. The concealed rewriting of the *Odyssey* is the central pillar of the novel and the arguments are supported by a number of correspondences and allusions that parody the ancient hypotext. On analysing the Homeric myth in Joyce's and Faulkner's novels, Gary Harrington comes to the conclusion that Faulkner's rewriting is obviously deliberate and continues Joyce's rewriting right from where the Irish author left it, i.e. the moment the protagonist has arrived home (Harrington, 1990: 12). In addition, the first allusion that catches the reader's attention is the character's returning home from war, only to find his wife surrounded by suitors. From this moment, the character continues his journey symbolically, because in the modern society the recovery of one's family does not automatically involve self-recovery. The author weaves the net of correspondences and makes use of ontological themes specific to literary modernism, employing mythology and parody techniques.

4. Conclusions

Having analysed how the myth of Odysseus is perceived, one can draw the conclusion that the exclusion of the heroic nature is the modernist approach of dealing with rewriting – approach that involves an ample process of desacralisation. Ulysses, the prototype of *homo viator*, is metamorphosed in the analysed novels, his heroic essence being the subject of the authors' irony. Therefore, the rewriting of canonical works – such as Homer's epic – by modernist authors involves distancing and even the deconstructing of the old system of significations.

The repudiation of the past is followed by the reconstruction based on new aesthetic values. The myth, the embryo of the Homeric epic, is desacralised, because modern society no longer believes in stories with gods and heroes and entraps the narrative thread in the ordinary day-to-day existence, in the individuals' fight with their inner phantasms.

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Crimes Against Nature: Ecocritical Analysis of Ojaide's *The Activist* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*

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Abstract:

Human being's interaction with nature is generally verbalized in various forms, and literature is definitely one of these forms. As one of the recurrent themes in writing, nature has managed to attract the attention of numerous writers especially the novelists. The literary interest in nature and environment has resulted in the emergence of ecocriticism which studies the relationship between literature and environment. This new method of ecocriticism has proven itself to be useful in highlighting the spreading environmental issues in today's globalized world. For this reason, this theory, a holistic approach to literature seeking to examine the relationship between man and his environment, has been employed to determine the depth and extent of damage that human beings inflicted on their natural environment. Therefore, the paper attempts to explore and analyze human beings' tireless efforts to damage or destroy their environment towards the satisfaction of their insatiable desires in the light of two invaluable pieces of literature: Tanure Ojaide's *The Activist* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born*.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, environment, human beings, destroy, Ojaide, Armah

Introduction

Ecocriticism is the study of literature from the purview of nature and environment. The need to study literature from the premise of environment and nature is important in today's world and reality because of the ongoing environmental crisis across the globe. Literature in its very nature serves as a tool for intervention and therefore the engagement of literature in discourses within the premises of environmental studies is very important because of its ability to give reorientation and stimulate positive changes. Ecological studies have shown that the human environment in the world today has been compromised and this accounts for re-occurring natural disasters and

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environmental havoc which is always happening around the globe. The need to address the factors paving ways for environmental degradation and collapse is very imperative. Ecocriticism is relatively a recent development in literary appreciation/criticism. The popularity of this field of literary studies became massive in 1990's. According to Gitanjali Gogoi, "... From the very inception, ecocriticism has been based on the assumption that human world and the physical environment are closely interlinked and that one is shaped by the other and therefore the study of the representation of human-nature relationship in literature is of utmost important to understand the environmental predicament of today's world" (2014: 1). The reception of this sphere of literary appreciation is further boosted by the fact that the environment is part and parcel of human existence and that human beings in so far as they are in existence continually do interact with the environment. Sometimes these interactions and explorations of the environment could either be positive or negative. The fact that literary scholars focus attention to environment and nature as represented in literary text further emphasizes the functionality and importance of literature to humanity. Tiiu Speek also explains that:

Ecocriticism is an ecological outgrowth of post-structural criticism that studies human representations of nature. Just as feminist criticism examines traditional genres from gender-conscious perspectives and discovers new women authors to add to literary canon, eco-critics reread canonical texts from earth-centered approaches and promote teaching and research of environmental non-fiction. Eco-critics are interested in how discursive conventions enable and constrain our contact with environment and place, how much does place inform representations, and how do the means of representations inform our sense of place. They examine significant tropes and myths that shape our environmental imagination and action (2000: 162).

From its origin in the USA, ecocriticism gears towards making a connection or creating a nexus between environmental and non-fiction. Romantic poets like John Donne explored environment and nature a whole lot in their poetic creation. Tiiu further explains that "Ecocriticism originated in the USA, largely from the need to study environmental non-fiction called nature writing which is produced mostly in Western states of the USA. The nature and landscapes of the places from which this kind of writing arises is grand and ancient" (162). Going by the origin of ecocriticism as a field of study it could be understood that it evaluates the rapport between animate (humans) and inanimate (non-human) elements represented in a literary text. Literature in its very nature is a representation of social reality. Man and his environment are the major components that make up the society. Ecocriticism as a genre of literary studies therefore brings man in the

mix based on how the physical world which the ecosystem is part of and the human culture are connected. This connection between man and the environment brings about interactions between man and the environment. The way nature is portrayed in a body of text and the examination of their importance with environmental crisis is what ecocritical studies often times try to achieve. African literatures apparently to a great extent contain themes bordering on the relation of human being with the environment. Ecocriticism as a literary trend is very dominant within the premises of African Literary studies. This is so because Africans arguably are suffering from various environmental challenges. These environmental crises in African societies are well represented in African literature. No wonder Stella Okoye-Ugwu thinks that:

Part of the reason Achebe wrote *Things Fall Apart* was to portray the African ideal of a harmonious relationship between humans and the natural environment. He set out to capture a serene and tranquil traditional society full of love for one another and showcasing people living peacefully with natural elements. This is seen as what encapsulates the overall effect of Achebe's perspective on the African's links with the land, so as to make his African readers realize what it was to dwell in a harmonious relationship with the physical environment (2013: 156).

This article explores an ecocritical evaluation of the literary texts under study with the sole aim of showing how human factors that contribute to the collapse of the ecosystem and thus enhance environmental degradation and also to pin point possible approaches to address the human factors affecting the environment as represented in the selected texts.

Tanure Ojaide's *The Activist* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not Yet Born* are two significant works of African literature that vividly depict some of the pertinent environmental challenges bedeviling the African society in this postcolonial period. Man has been widely linked to be the major cause of environmental degradation and ecosystem collapse. Many of the slums and filthy environment inherent in the African society and also represented by Ojaide and Armah in their works are in many instances if not in all occasions, are created and sustained by man and his activities. The havoc that comes with the destruction of the environment in Africa is so horrible yet Africans still indulge in activities that endanger their environments. Wale Okediran in his novel *After the Flood* shows some examples of some of the painful experiences human beings pass through as a result of environmental degradation. The loss of lives and property, infliction of deadly diseases are some of the havocs that come with the destruction of the environment. In conducting this research, two

research questions that have been identified will serve as a guide: What are the impacts and implication of slums and having slums dwellers as reflected in the works of literature under study? What are the reasons why human beings engage in activities that can lead to environmental degradation as represented in *The Activist* and *The Beautiful Ones are not Yet Born*?

The aim of this study is to conduct an ecocritical analysis of Ojaide's *The Activist* and Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are not Yet Born* and explore the environmental issues in Africa and also address the causes of environmental degradation. This article will be hinged on the theory of Ecocriticism proposed by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm in their work *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* and defined the concept of ecocriticism as "the study of relation between literature and physical environment" (1996: 9).

The critical analytical and qualitative research methodology was adopted for this study in order to critically and contextually analyze the texts under study. The adopted research approach is expected to aid the researcher in critically analyzing and applying ecocriticism theory for the study. Where necessary, excerpts are drawn, described and interpreted from the primary texts to show the relevance of ecocriticism to this research. The primary materials for this research are Tanure Ojaide's *The Activist* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *The Beautiful One Are Not Yet Born*. Therefore, the analysis will be traditional content analysis and interpretive analysis. Traditional content analysis will involve presentation and analysis of ecocritical components and elements contained in the primary data. Content analysis will be used to make replicable and valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual material and by systematically evaluating texts. The secondary data for this research includes journal articles, textbooks and other library materials. The essence of thesis study cannot be overstated given the socio economic and environmental damages posed by the increasing effects of unhealthy environmental practices by humans. In addition, the inadequacy of relevant literatures on issues of environmental concerns in Nigeria necessitated this study. Therefore, the study complemented available literature on the environment.

The exploration of ecocriticism focuses majorly on African environmental literary criticism. The rationale behind this is because the scope of this study is within the premise of African environment as represented in the works of literature under study. The mid-eighties is known for the opening of new vista of knowledge and research. Scholars during this period became more open to collaborative research project which also included the environmental literary studies. Before the 1980s, the study of nature and culture from the purview of literature has been ongoing especially in the 1960s. According to Kate Rigby:

Although a growing consciousness of nature and environmental issues started in 1960's and 1970's, but Eco-criticism was not organised as Marxism and Feminism. A number of important resources related to Eco-criticism are mainly found in books of Leo Marx and Raymond Williams. However the birth of the word Eco-criticism has been dated to William Rueckart's publication of the essay: "Literature and Ecology; An Experiment in Eco-criticism" in 1978 (2002: 1).

The study of literature in connection to the environment continued to develop and gather more momentum as a field of study and hit its peak in the 1990's as it became a major critical theory in the literary studies.

The major trend in the study of literature in relation to environment is that its development and acceptability as a theory grew over time with the publication of works like essays and books by various scholars on the concept of ecocriticism. Rigby also notes that:

Another major text of Eco-criticism is Lawrence Buell's *Environmental Imagination* which offers four criteria to determine whether a text is environmental. First, "the non-human environment is present not merely as a framing device". Second, "the human interest is not the only legitimate interest", third "human accountability to environment is part of the text's ethical orientation" and fourth "there is one sense of the environment as a process". Buell also wrote "Writing for an Endangered World" where he expresses his concern about the threats to the environment (2002: 2-3).

Ecological studies are very imperative in today's world. There are lots of environmental havoc happening in various parts of the world and Africa inclusive occasioned by man's interaction with the environment. The consciousness about ozone depletion is saturated in the public domain and the most common explanation for this depletion is associated with industrial activities perpetuated by man all over the world. Shoba and Nagaraj explain that:

When people slowly started understanding what is happening to the ecosystem where they live, they started relating the ecological study – which considered the ecological problems like pollution, global warming, etc. – to literature. There emerged a new field of study over the last three decades. It was not until the end of the twentieth century that the study of literature and the environment was recognized as a subject to rise. The literary people named it "Ecocriticism" or "Environmental Literary Criticism" (85).

From the foregoing, it is rather clear that the idea of ecocriticism which is the study of literature in relation to literature is a modernist/postmodernist theory in the literary criticism that has evolved during this century.

Stella Okoye-Ugwu is of the opinion that "ecocriticism and environmental literature are recent developments in literary history.

Literature of all kinds, whether preliterate oral or postcolonial pastoral, nature, landscapes and praise poems about homelands are abundant in Africa as well as all among the Diasporic Africans” (2013: 155). This standpoint can be exemplified by some of the foremost African written literature like Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and other works create a nexus between literature and nature and, therefore, should be studied in contemporary times from the purview of ecocriticism. According to Chengyi Coral Wu:

Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958), a classic of African literature, for example, has been read and studied as an African postcolonial novel that aims to reconstruct pre-colonial African cultural identity in general and traditional Igbo cultural identity in particular. However, this novel can also be read as an environmental novel (2012:1).

A reading of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* depicts a scenario of the African environment which has rich vegetation with beautiful mountains and forests. The fertile landscape that produces bountiful harvest to solve the food need of the people is the environmental scenario created in *Things Fall Apart*. Wu explains that “Achebe integrates into his writing, such as the imageries of the African forest, especially the forest’s influence on the sustainability of the Igbo community as well as its correlation with Igbo customs” (2012: 1).

African literature has already been propagating works that address themes of environmental issues. Besides Chinua Achebe, other African writers like Ngugi Wa Thiong’o presents literature works that shows a clear relationship between culture, literature and nature. In an essay “A Shot in the Arm for African Eco-Criticism,” Evan Mwangi explains that:

The clarity of symbolism around which the main conflict is built in Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *The River Between*, another African classic, resides in the way the author opens the narrative with a meticulous observation of the topography as he painstakingly describes Makuyu and Kameno ridges and valleys (2004: n. p).

Mwangi pointed out some postcolonial ecocritical aesthetics in the works of some African writers. He noted that Ngugi in his work describes vividly the topographies and the environment of the Mukuyu and Kameno ridges in *The River Between*. Mwangi also expressed the relationship between other African postcolonial literatures. He also pointed out ecological themes from Christina Rungano, the Zimbabwean poet. He noted that Rungano created a connection between literature and nature by presenting in her poem powers of nature to relate with the resilience of African woman to widen her human abilities. He acknowledges the poem emphasizes that there are powers of nature to give life. The idea of ecocriticism apparently has been a movement spreading in Africa and there is even a need to consolidate on its

popularity on the pages of text of African literature to widen its horizon. William Slaymaker emphasizes that:

The 1990's was the decade of rapid and global environmentalist literary growth, and anthologies, literary histories, and their likes are notoriously behind the times. Bibliographies of black African literature that appear in the first decade of the twenty-first century will likely reflect a significant growth of interest in ecocriticism and environmental literature. The low visibility of eco-lit and eco-crit in recent black African writing is temporary. The green revolution will spread to and through communities of readers and writers of African literature, 'ecoing' the booming interest in other parts of the literary world (2001: 139).

Ecocritical Analysis of Ojaide's *The Activist*

Ecocritical evaluation of text is targeted towards raising awareness to the reading audience of works of literature especially prose about the commitment of literature to nature and environment. The discourse in *The Activist* will focus squarely on the negative impacts of oil activities on the Niger Delta environment. The situation in the Niger Delta as depicted in the novel is so bad to the extent that there is completely ecological breakdown and failure. The oil spillage which has destroyed their farmlands and rivers to a pitiable point, such that there is no land to farm on and no river to fish on, their culture and way of life is completely being jeopardized by the oil spillage on their environment.

In the novel, Ojaide portrays the disillusionment of the marginalized and dehumanized people of Niger Delta due to environmental decay caused by oil spillage and carbon emission into the atmosphere caused by the mining of oil. The bitterness, suffering and consequently agitation for emancipation are caused by the cauldron of contraction that graces the activities of government and other companies digging oil on their land. The Activist, who is the major protagonist in the novel on his return from the United States of America puts on the shoes of activism and began to lead an emancipation struggle for the liberation of his people from environmental degradation and havoc that have ruined their lives and left them in abject poverty and penury. According to The Activist, "all I care for is the Niger Delta state. I want us to have our soil, water and air as healthy as it used to be. We have to douse the fire that is threatening our existence" (*The Activist*¹, 341). The major pre-occupation of The Activist is how to help restore the environment of his community and at the same time restore life to normalcy to his people. He is willing to sacrifice his life for the actualization of the liberation of his people. He is inspired by the anguish, the pains and unjust indignations thousands of his people are daily made to endure due to this environmental havoc and the refusal of

¹ For convenience, the novel, *The Activist* will be referred to as TA from now onwards.

the perpetrators of this acts to show a human face and help restore the environment and lives of the people of Niger Delta to what it used to be. Ojaide through the major character in the novel explains that “many people are convicted for crimes they do not commit... too many hungry people going to bed at night...even as rich childless couples live in ten-room mansion...many helpless women killed by psychotic men... so many despots hold down large populations by rulers of aimed coercion” (TA, 58).

In his emancipation struggle and activism, The Activist, as presented in Ojaide’s novel, is resolute to challenge the government and oil companies operating in the Niger Delta region. He starts by gathering evidences. The narrator of the story states that the Activist “kept a file with newspaper cuttings of various forms of pollution, clouds of smoke enveloping human beings in their homes, women fetching water from a greenish stream where the multinational companies worked in Africa and Latin America, and many more”(TA, 24). He is troubled because the wealth that enriches this nation is daily pumped out of their veins yet his people are suffering because everything they have, have been taken from them. Their farmland cannot be used for agriculture anymore because of the oil spillage, there are no more fishes alive in the river for them to eat, no water to drink, no access roads, no electricity, no school, no cares and no loves from the government, and the oil companies that have ruined their environment have left them to suffer. So he became poised with ambition to save his people and create a new lease of life for the generations to come hence the idea of eco-resistance in Tanure Ojaide’s *The Activist*.

In his resistance mission, the Activist is very much aware that he cannot accompany this mission alone. He gets deeply involved with the natives and thus creates a kind of bond and friendship with people who understand his worries, people who also agree with him that the Niger Delta environment is due for emancipation and if this emancipation must happen, it must come in form of a revolution. He therefore engages these natives in very provocative discourses on the harms done to them and their environment and therefore the need for emancipation is imperative. For instance in the novel, the Activist meets with Pere Ighogboja who represents the area boys in the region. His meeting with Tobi Ishaka tackles the issue of oil companies and their manner of compensation to the natives. In his meeting with Omagbemi Mukoro, Ojaide confronts the problems of blowouts due to gas flares and oil spillage which is a reoccurring decimal in the Niger Delta region. Since his arrival back home from the United States of America, he observes the activities and actions of the Area Boys who are also referred to as the Egba Boys. Their violent approaches in confronting the oil companies always draw the attention of both local and international

communities to the plight of the people of Niger Delta. Ojaide in the *Activist* summarizes the actions of the area boys thus in his narration:

The poor economic situation promoted armed robbery. The area boys were not mindless robbers but hardened locals who felt they had to share in whatever they could from the economic life of their communities. They were jobless urchins, capable of robbing, killing, and doing any type of dastardly act for pay to survive the hard times. Their morality and ethics were convoluted by the socio-economic dictates of the time but they knew very well the experience of survival. Call it hustling, harassment, blackmail, or extortion; they were ready to take on the outsider to make out a living (*TA*, 59).

The area boys though presented as hoodlums in the story are fighting to reclaim what have been forcefully taken away from them and also create new lives for themselves and for the entire people of the region. The narrator states that “they were fighters attempting not only to reclaim what had been robbed from them but also holding firmly to what was theirs that others were attempting to snatch away” (*TA*, 56). The boys are angered because they have watched their homelands boom in oil, oil that have continued to enrich and better the lives of other people living in other states in Nigeria and also wealth that enriches massively the pockets of expatriates and oil workers operating in the region. In their very eyes they watched the wealth and riches of their lands being taken away to improve the lots and lives of others while they throb with the havoc of environmental degradation and ecosystem failure. This ecological failure of their environment broods nothing but pains and poverty. Therefore if these area boys result to kidnapping of expatriates and oil workers and demand a huge sum of money as ransom for their release, they do so because presently at this moment they are those who while their lands creates wealth and riches others, they are left with environmental havoc to contend with, they do so because they are the eaters of leftovers, they are nauseating residue of a consumptive society, they do so because everything they have, have been taken from them and even that which they do not have, it has also been taken from. They do so because they are broken hearted men.

It is the nonchalant attitude of the government and the oil companies operating in this region that triggers off some of the seemingly terrorist acts of the area boys. These boys believe that their people deserve fair share of the oil proceeds and thus they adopt this guerrilla approach as a resistance tactics towards the emancipation of their lives and their environment. No wonder Nseabasi Akpan states that:

Kidnapping has, of recent, assume alarming dimension in the States in the Niger Delta region opening up opportunities and avenues for dangerous degeneration. Its occurrence and impacts started to be felt this early 21st century, a phenomenon induced by oil resource exploration. There are many factors that

have contributed to the emergence of kidnapping in the region. Apart from the wider liberation consciousness of the people over the years, social, economic and political reasons have come to play prominent roles for the rise in the industry of recent (2010: 38).



This situation Akpan explains is not farfetched from the scenario Tanure Ojaide depicts in his novel, *The Activist*. Ojaide narrates that the area boys are aware that

Charity in the form of tidbits thrown about to a desperate crowd should not take the place of justice and fairness. They also knew that among them that should fight for them, such as the academics and the chiefs, were interested in lining their individual pockets. They wanted a formal share to develop their area and compensate the people for their occupations destroyed by the oil prospecting activities. They also wanted the oil companies to return a fraction of their profit to restore the environment that had been devastated by various forms of pollution. In their minds, that was not too much to ask for (*TA*, 79).

Naturally, the Activist finds it very easy to connect with Pere the leader of the area boys because what they stand for and fight for are the very throbs of his hearts. He quickly teams up with Pere in establishing a stronger front to combat the injustice meted on the environment of the Niger Delta and consequently the people of Niger Delta. In their partnership, they form a Delta Cartel. The mandate establishing the Delta Cartel is pipeline vandalism business targeted towards milking the Bell Oil company dry and always making sure they record massive losses. The coming together of these forces, the Activist and Pere, apparently generate a formidable eco-resistance team in the novel. Their purpose conforms to each other and they both came to consensus that the people marginalizing the natives of the Niger Delta must stop and that some must rise to the occasion and fight for these people. The narrator captures it thus:

They needed farmlands to cultivate cassava, yams and other subsistent crops to live on. They also had to grow much needed vegetables, and of course, they had to live a healthy life. The air used to be cool because of constant rain and the luxuriant forest, but oil slicks, blowouts, and gas flares had destroyed that life. Even the rain that fell was so soot-black that no more did anybody drink rainwater, which of all waters, used to be described as God-given water. The people have lost their green refuge as well. Their forest used to be deep green and lush foliage, the pride of the tropics, but that had changed, since fire often followed oil and gas accidents (*TA*, 82).

The battle can be perceived to be a fight for resource control and environmental restoration of the Niger Delta. This is true because the main aim that Pere and the Activist is pursuing is to push outsiders who have invaded their lands and natural resources. The people of Niger

Delta deserve to be treated with respect as landlords and owners of the resources that are tapped and enjoy financial benefits in the form of salaries or monetary gifts. The exploration of oil in the Niger Delta region brings nothing to the native people but despondence and disillusionments.

The Activist is strongly committed to the preservation of the environment in the Niger Delta region and he explores every possible option to actualize their liberation from environmental injustice. The Activist gathered the evidences at his disposal and organized people to attend the United Nations Conference in Amsterdam to present their case. Unfortunately, they were stopped from travelling at the airport by the federal government. The government further sent their operatives to come destroy the evidence. Some of the evidences include:

Coloured pictures of lakes and streams with green water, no doubt the chlorine and other chemicals used by the companies. There were also pictures of children sitting beside gas flaring sites and innocently inhaling poisonous gas, and of pregnant women sitting in front of their homes with blowouts less than a hundred yards imperilling not only their lives but the lives of their unborn children. There were pictures of impoverished children in the dugouts paddling towards the ocean to have a catch since there was no fish in the nearby creeks and rivers and the few shoals in the nearby waters were not safe for human consumption (TA, 259).

The Activist finally got involved with politics and was elected in governmental position. In office, he restructures many abandoned projects and made laudable impacts towards improving the lives of the natives of Niger Delta. He did not forget his people and thus continues to pioneer the creation of programs and ministries that will help better the lives of his people and also save the environment from the hands of oil workers and miners.

Ecocritical Analysis of Armah's *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born*

Armah's novel is very striking in the ways and manner in which it provides a unique paradigm in the reading of Sub-Saharan African literature. The novel presents through deep metaphorical aphorisms, the environmental injustice going on in Ghana during the postcolonial period. The setting and virtually every locale Armah represented in the novel is that of a society that its environment is completely filthy; buried in garbage that reveals the cities of Ghana as dumping grounds for dirt. The image of decay in the society and the inability of the government to address the problems of the decaying environment are used to represent despondent nature the inhabitants in the Ghanaian city as portrayed in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. The kind of environment found in the society Ayi Kwei Armah depicts in his novel is one marked with

decay, putrefaction, filth and everything connected with human waste from the body such as odor, vomit, piss, blood and phlegm.

In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, the author presents a postcolonial Ghana African society and environment that is completely decayed. The presentation of a filthy and dirty environment by Armah serves as a metaphor to represent the level of decay, corruption and collapse within the ruling class in the postcolonial African society. Chiara Giobergia also thinks that:

The ambiguity around which *The Beautiful Ones'* symbolism is built does not only involve the semantic field of 'gleam' but also its opposite: indeed, far from being a mere stinking heap of rotting food and rejects, rubbish is intrinsically correlated with social prestige. The behavior of the Ghanaian native ruling class as portrayed in Armah's work displays that, more often than not, "wealth and status are in fact correlated with the capacity of a person (or a society) to discard commodities (2015: 232).

From the opening chapter, the author through the eye of a bus conductor introduces 'The Man', the protagonist whose journey throughout the novel exposes the various level of environmental havoc on the society. The pertinent thing is that all the environmental issues raised in the novel are all caused by man and his interaction with the environment. This in turn hurts man and backfires as well through inflicting various kinds of health problems on man. The narrator starts to observe from the bus that everything in Accra Ghana as represented in the story is in rots. The bus itself the Man observes that it does not look like a bus but a good example of a bundle of rust. Immediately, he alights from the bus, the author continued to open up more by introducing the filthy environment as found in Accra. Ironically, he presents an inscription demanding of the people to keep the environment clean. This signage is totally polluted with heaps of rubbish. This is evident in the following lines:

...The thing has been a gleaming white sign when it was first installed, and that was not so very long ago. Now even the lettering on it was no longer decipherable. It was covered over thickly with the juice of every imaginable kind of waste matter. But once the letters had said in their brief brightness... That was printed in blue... KEEP YOUR COUNTRY CLEAN BY KEEPING YOUR CITY CLEAN (*The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*², 7).

The above citation shows clearly that people living in the city depicted in the novel, contribute chiefly to environmental havoc by refusing to abide by the environmental laws, hence their inability to dump refuse on the trash bins provided, but rather they dumped it

² For convenience, the novel, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* will be referred to as BONYB from now onwards.

around the trash bins littering the whole society. All through the novel, the offensive odor of vomit and excreta torments the reader's sense of smell and imagination, thereby presenting an environment that has been contaminated by man's activities. The most striking feature of the novel that makes the deployment of ecocriticism as a literary theory for the appreciation and criticism is the striking employment of human excreta as to display the bad level human beings in the environment have degenerated to and how they have consequently degraded the environment. The writer from the opening chapter shows how the natives contribute immensely to the decay and environmental degradation in the society. This, the author captures in the behavior of the bus conductor. When the bus arrives at the bus stop, the conductor alighted from the bus, brings out his manhood and began to urinate in public just very closer to where people are selling edible stuffs. After urinating the narrator records that the conductor walks up to the bread seller buys a loaf and returns to the bus eating the loaf. Inside the bus on his way home, the author through the lamentation of the protagonist; the Man exposes the whole failed Ghana environment thus:

The man gets in the bus choosing a seat by a window. On the way via different streets there is a hot smell of caked shit, rubbish, crushed tomatoes and rotten vegetables. The smell makes people spit so much in the bus. Across the aisle on the seat opposite the man, there is an old man sleeping and his mouth is open to the air rushing in the night with many particles (*BONYB*, 40).

This could be viewed also as a metaphor to show the level of moral decay in Ghana and in Africa as a whole and also how some natives within the African continent are yet to fully evolve. The overriding images of filth, waste, refuse, shit and so on are images and symbols Armah uses to reflect the subhuman beings that are in the African society. Commenting on this Charles Miller remarks:

To the clerk, going to the toilet is a nightmare, not only because the public lavatories which he uses happen to violate every rule of hygiene but because they also represent in very physical sense, the moral contamination which surrounds him-sometimes even tempts him in its foul way and against which he must always be on guard. Armah has treated a most indelicate function with remarkable skill and force (1968: 19).

The interactions of the human beings found in the society Armah depicted in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* are the platforms he uses to discuss some of the causes and effects of environmental havoc, hence, the novel as a tool for correction and development in the area of safeguarding the African environment. To emphasize the kind of slum and filthy environment many Ghanaians live in, the author graphically describes the environment of the bathroom 'the man' takes his bath in.

The bathroom is a very dirty and smelling one that any normal human being will not be able to stay inside and take their bath. This shows that one of the major factors leading to human beings degrading their environment and resorting to slum dwelling is the inability of Africans especially to evolve and develop. Environmental degradation and havoc caused by human activities can therefore be viewed as a developmental issue. Gana and Toba explain that:

The rapid increase in activities today in many cities without proper planning and control is the outcome of slums that has penetrated in our physical environment. This is evident particularly in housing sector, transport, water supply, sanitation, power supply and even in employment sector. Those that are presently not employed are equally polluting our environment by engaging themselves in different harmful activities (2015: 2).

The author captures the slums by explaining that the door of the bathroom is rotten at the button and the smelling coming from the dead wood filled his nostrils and caressed the cavity of the mouth. There is a hole in the bathroom that aids the water from going out to the drainage, which is partly blocked with strands of fibers from various people's sponge since it is a public bathroom. This makes the water to go out very slowly. The consequent effect is the offensive smell that the stagnant water produces and the generation of mosquitoes that terrorize the entire neighborhood. The dirty and filthy environment is not just limited to the slum residents of the citizens but also in government and public offices. The Man, who is a railway worker, arrives at his office only to be greeted with the abandoned vomit of traveller that the whole environments smell of. In the office, he also needed to use the toilet so he goes to the junior staff toilet. The latrine is another representation of a decayed and filthy social environment. In the toilet he reads the inscriptions on the wall: "... vagina sweet, money sweet pass all, who born socialism chop make chop contery broke you broken not so? Pray for detention jail chop free" (*BONYB*, 109).

During the military coup, The Man helped his old school friend Koomson to flee the country. In doing this, the author exposed the politicians and leaders to experience the kind of degraded and filthy environment the masses they lead dwell in. During his escape, the Man made Koomson to escape through faces ridden toilet bucket crevice. The humility experience of Koomson escaping through the slum toilet exposes the horrible environmental havoc thousands of slum dwellers which constitute a large number of the Ghana population are daily made to throb with. Yet, the governmental officials like Koomson and his colleagues are busy feeding fat on the wealth that can help emancipate the people from poverty and thus salvage the environment.

The importance of ecocritical analysis of Armah's novel is its ability to bring to the fore the pertinent environmental issues that are the social reality in the African societies and how human beings living in the environment also do contribute hugely to the devastation of the environment. Here, the efficacy of literature in artistically representing the author's truth is portrayed through ecological reality while taking note of the deterioration and degradation of nature. Ecocriticism in this work is used to express the artistically complexities of the natural world. The works survey the implicit postulations that are contained in the works of the authors studied as they aspire to address the environmental issues.

Conclusion

The study has presented the functionality of the ecocritical study and its goals towards being an expressive and a theoretical approach that lends voice through the works of literature to the destruction of the human environment and the cauldron of contractions that characterizes the issues of environmental degradation in the African society – Nigeria and Ghana. In the Niger Delta society, Ojaide presents in the novel and also in actual reality that there is a lot of restiveness, tension, agitations from various sects, kidnapping due to the environmental havoc done to the region. As shown, this is chiefly caused by oil spillage and other mining activities of the Oil Companies operating in the Niger Delta region. There is perceived poverty and lack of basic social amenities in this region. There is no pipe borne water, no electricity, and no access to schools. These factors breed lots of tension hence the agitation for the restoration and clean-up of the Niger Delta region by the natives.

Likewise, Armah's depiction of the society in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* in which the interactions of the human beings establish platforms through which he discusses some of the causes and effects of environmental havoc. Hence, the novel functions as a tool for correction and development in the area of safeguarding the African environment. In view of this, literature's potential in artistic representation of ecological reality manifests itself in the depiction of the deterioration and degradation of nature through the author's vivid and dexterous portrayal. In this study, ecocriticism is used artistically to reveal and to disclose the complexities of the natural world.

With the ability and functionality of ecocriticism in *The Activist* and *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, the environmental injustice done to the human environment by constituted authorities and also even members of the society are major factors paving way for the continuous degradation and environmental havoc especially in Africa. Many parts of Africa especially Nigeria and Ghana do not experience constant occurrences of natural disasters like hurricane and earthquakes yet the irresponsibility of both the government and the governed have

contributed significantly to the constant destruction of the environment and collapse of the ecosystems.

The final deduction that this study makes is that the victims of eco-trauma like the natives of Niger Delta can attain their freedom from environmental degradation by uniting to safeguard their environment. They must continue to voice out against the negligence of oil companies on the environmental regimes that can help to abate oil pollution in the Niger Delta. The citizens in the Ghanaian society must also unite to protect their environment by engaging in communal cleaning service without waiting on the government.

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G. Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* beyond Dystopia

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Abstract:

The article proposes a theoretical foray into Orwell's *1984*, one that offers insight about how complex the fabric of, perhaps, the most well known classic dystopia of the 20th century, really is. Discussing auctorial intention and the inherent structural aspects of a utopia/dystopia, a close analysis of *1984* reflects the lesser known aspects behind creating some of the most familiar contemporary images related to the disappearance of personal freedom and the birth of the surveillance state.

Keywords: dystopia, bibliography, constructivism, literature, language

Nineteen Eighty-Four is one of those rare books which prevailed in preserving its literary status in addition to developing some of the most enduring images of popular culture: the subtle transition from *doublethink* to *doublespeak*, Big Brother, room 101 *etc.* More to the point, the (political, literary, sociological) analysis dedicated to the novel produced tomes of intricate arguments, proving that Orwell's book's legacy is as relevant as the novel itself was at the time of its publishing. While I have elsewhere¹ discussed some of the broader concepts of Orwell's writing, this article aims to highlight some of the complexities to be found throughout the novel.

Power, logic, morality and history in 1984

If one can find a rational justification for the pursuit of power in *Brave New World*, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* breaks away with this pattern by describing a world system that lacks moral justification mainly because it fails to present an argument for the possession of power, or better said because the answer itself lacks moral justification.

The three slogans of the party (or better said two of them in the first part) are explained through two different and divergent

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¹ *Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four. Deconstructing Dystopia* in "Journal of Humanistic and Social Studies", ISSN 2067-6557, UAV Univ. Press, vol.3, No.2 (6)/2012, p. 51-59, and *From Plato to Swift and Orwell, from Utopia to Dystopia* in "Journal of Humanistic and Social Studies", ISSN 2067-6557, UAV Univ. Press, vol.V, No.7 (1)/2016, p. 9-16.

perspectives. In Emmanuel Goldstein's reading *Ignorance is Strength* refers to the structure of society composed of three different classes, the low, the middle and the high, which are engaged in a permanent struggle for power, the lower class being the only one that never changes its position in the structure.

The last surviving political ideology that preached equality, the ideal of the low class, was Socialism but the transformations it went through changed it in a doctrine that "had the conscious aim of perpetuating *unfreedom* and *inequality*" (Orwell, 2001: 211), whereas the outcome of socialism – described accurately in its phases: economic conflict, political and in the last instance an armed conflict - should be one that helps "materialize the idyllic vision of a classless society" (Irwine, 1955: 180).

The crucial moment of instauration for Ingsoc is located in the moment where (due to technical development) a complete equality between individuals is achievable, a moment when all political systems turn towards totalitarianism, actively trying to avoid the realization of equality.

The main weapon for defending the newly created dominant class is orientated in two directions. First, the traditional meaning for a class system disappears because the permanence of the hierarchical system becomes the only important thing for its members. As long as there is no reference point in the past for comparison, the reality of the present must always be satisfying.

Secondly, the most important element for maintaining the ideology is the introduction of *doublethink* which "means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them" (Orwell, 2001: 223).

Goldstein's revelation ends at the crucial point; the main question, the very essence of the reasons that lays behind the whole system, the why, is left unanswered; that is, the answer is given by O'Brien at the moment of Winston's incarceration and it is a totally disruptive one: "the Party seeks power for its own sake" (*Ibidem*: 275), furthermore "power is not a means, it is an end" (*Ibidem*: 276).

On the other hand *War is Peace* is a direct reference to Orwell's position towards the Teheran conference. The world is divided in three zones each controlled by a military superpower virtually without the possibility of reciprocal annihilation. This war serves two purposes: it helps to use up the resources that due to technological development threaten to change the status of the class structure, and more importantly, it preserves class hierarchy. What results is a situation where the forces of the rivals are equally distributed, the permanence of war that does not dispute territorial integrity but only the disputable frontiers; the classical meaning of war is transformed into a concept that

bases its principles only on achieving the domination of the inferior classes, a war fought exclusively within the boundaries of its own geography. So we are not faced with a permanent war but paradoxically with a permanent state of peace, hence “a peace that was truly permanent would be the same as a permanent war” (*Ibidem*: 208).

And since the principles *Ignorance is Strength* and *War is Peace* are explained as dynamic processes by Goldstein, the last principle of *Ingsoc*, *Freedom is Slavery* becomes a matching solution in a manner that fully incorporates the principles of doublethink, of the reverse, hence *Slavery is Freedom*. The principle on which this assertion relies is simple and effective: an individual can escape weakness only by becoming part of something larger, but he also has to abandon his identity for a total and unconditioned integration.

So the two different perspectives are clearly meant to represent not only dissimilar points of view, but to complete each other. The detailed history of political status is necessary to introduce the answer to the *why*. The answers O’Brien produces have a meaning primarily because they represent the opposite in meaning to those provided by Goldstein.

There is no opposition, whatsoever. The brotherhood is an invention of the party, Goldstein and Big Brother themselves are used as symbols and there is no proper evidence to support their actual existence. Resistance in any form is unimaginable, and those who oppose the system are converted only when resistance ceases: “we do not destroy the heretic because he resists us: so long as he resists us we never destroy him” (*Ibidem*: 267). All this gains a meaning when the reader is explained that “we are not content with negative obedience, not even with the most abject submission... We make him one of ourselves before we kill him” (*Ibidem*).

Games of power

Could it be however that Orwell was only playing games with the inner logic of power in *1984*? Daphne Patai (*The Orwell Mystique*) makes an interesting parallel between power relationships in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and games. Her main argument is that games are not means but ends in themselves, in this respect “the game is an activity that is intrinsically valuable and that is pursued for its own sake” (Patai, 1984: 222).

Further she advances into stating that one of the main motives of the book is the pursuit of power for its own sake and in this case it becomes a game, but not a simple kind of game but one in which a worthy and competitive adversary is needed, for power quest and games always presume a relational type of activity.

From this perspective there are three categories identified that maintain the game parallel of the book. First of all the Party is not

functional on his own when exercising power because, as Patai observed, it requires a constant quantity of opponents to be able to exercise power and the quality of the opponents must be elevated in order to appreciate success.

Secondly the permanent wars between Oceania, Eurasia and Eurasia are intended, in Patai's opinion, solely to prolong the game since this enduring war has no palpable outcome.

In the third case, *newspeak*, the very principle that animates Ingsoc and that constitutes the very essence of the Party's ideology, represents, when fulfilled, a ceasing of power since *thoughtcrime* will be impossible to commit.

But the ultimate reason for Patai lies in the elaborated process that transformed Winston in an enemy of the party. The seven year course of the process, the shelter provided, presumably by the party, leads to the logical conclusion that the party is creating opponents exactly because the relations of power in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* function like that of a game. If that is true, then the assumption that "without an ideology of power as an end in its self, there is no reason to cultivate opponents" (Patai, 1984: 227) justifies itself.

The principles of newspeak are applied to the game itself, though the goal of the game remains the same, i.e. wining; when the narrator declares that Winston "he had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother" (*Ibidem*: 311) the opposing forces in the game change: Winston becomes in the same time the looser and the winner at an individual level, though all victories are attributed to Big Brother.

Recreating history between biography and political stance

For some critics constructing the past or recreating history is Orwell's novel's main preoccupation. In *Deconstructing History*, Alan Munslow advances the idea that when history is perceived from a narrative's point of view several issues emerge. His main thesis is that a narrative claims to represent objective realities in all their nuances but the form in which it realizes this (that of a narrative) implies the active participation of the narrator (historian) thus a certain perversion of the objective, historic truth can be expected.

The problem is that the presumed illegitimacy of such an approach lies in the failure to establish a firm correspondence between the factual truth, the narrator's intention to exemplify and the nature of the material on which the story is super-imposed.

If we perceive history as a narrative form then history inevitably becomes literature; the danger embedded is that in this process, literature's own critical apparatus is imported allowing not only for formal but also structural modification (Muslow, 1997: 71).

This is particularly valid for *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. History is not only modified from the perspective of the form it is presented in, but exists exclusively as a means to exercise the will of the narrators. The narrators in this case are inner party members².

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On the other hand, several studies observed that the novel was constructed in accord with a well documented background; for example, Gordon Bowker's biography on Orwell sheds light on a series of such occurrences. References to Burnham are evident in the construction of the three super powers and the relation between them; from Zamyatin's *We* it seems that he borrowed the idea of total surveillance and that of the repressive state. In a letter to his publisher Warburg from 1949, Orwell notes that *We* is "an interesting link in the chain of Utopia books ... it seems to me a good book in the same way as *The Iron Heel*, but better written" (Orwell, 1968: 547).

More importantly, Orwell's reshaping of the vocabulary in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is similar to what Huxley describes in *Words and Behavior*: "Words form the thread on which we string our experiences. Without them we should live spasmodically and intermittently" (Huxley, 1960: 245). Huxley's point is that emotions, as well as all feelings, get their internal power and meaning from the fact that they are conjured by a word that carries within all nuances that define the complex meanings of the reality it defines. In the threats that menace the state of a language he incorporates abstract words. In Huxley's opinion when a word that gained a specific meaning due to various contexts, historical or political or of other nature, is incorporated in a context that preserves its primary meaning but adds other nuances that were not a part of the word in previous contexts, we are faced with the loss of the word's character and the change of its nature. Therefore, the process through which we arrive at an abstract word is a progression that implies "variations in quantity, if sufficiently great, produce variations in quality

² As for Orwell's role in the outcome of the book, George Kateb considers that neither Orwell's growing dissent with the politics of his time, nor his personal problems (loss of his wife and illness) could amount to the perspective upon the future offered in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, therefore the reason must be relocated in other realms. The argumentation Kateb proposes is simple but convincing; Orwell was not a utopian thinker, he did not genuinely believe that mankind can attain a perfect social organization, but he strongly believed that there can be a certain decency governing life (Kateb, 1966: 576). Valerie Sims finds that the answer should be found in Orwell's essays and nowhere else for we have a clear image of the author's perspectives outlined in these works. However she is reluctant to draw a clear line between political views and the illness that marked Orwell's last years. She writes: "It is possible that, but not at all likely, that 1984, because of his illness, departed from these deeply held beliefs. If it did so, the fact is unrecorded in any other writing by Orwell in the period surrounding the writing and publication of the novel. It must remain an unlikely and unproven hypothesis" (Sims, 1974: 302).

[...] if we use abstract words which apply equally well (and equally badly) to other, quite dissimilar situations, it is certain that we shall think incorrectly” (*Ibidem*: 249).

Orwell talks of similar things when he elaborates the linguistic system of *Ingsoc*; the weakness of a language is a consequence, or better said a direct reference to the way reality is defined. However Orwell does not explain what is the direct relation between the decay of language and the decay of the perceived reality; he just makes the connection between the two, leaving the reader to look for the answer. Huxley on the other hand goes a step further; he attributes this phenomenon to an express desire to ignore reality: “We protect our minds by an elaborate system of abstractions, ambiguities, metaphors and similes from the reality we do not wish to know too clearly” (Huxley, 1960: 251).

The principle of Newspeak “arouse out of an awareness of how language was distorted by propagandists and advertisers and how artificial languages, such as Esperanto and Basic English, [...] gave power to those who would manipulate minds through the limitation of thought” (Bowker, 2003: 385). The basic concept of *Room 101* and the methods of torture employed in the novel are taken, as Bowker indicates, from the methods used by Torquemada; “the torture scenes in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* ...have historical roots” and the scene of the caged rats is derived from “a method used by Torquemada” (*ibid.*). The scenes involving the mysterious Room 101 are usually attributed to Orwell’s boarding school days spent at St. Cyprian’s of which the author had less than pleasant memories, and to which he refers as a place which “I loathed ... so deeply [...] have not even enough animosity left to make me hope that ...the story of the school being burnt down was true” (Orwell, 1968: 547). For Bowker it is certain that “Orwell’s novel was informed by his past reading as much as his political experiences”³ (Bowker, 2003: 385).

³ The direct reference that would support such a presumption can be found in Orwell’s article, “Literature vs. Politics”, in which the author makes some appreciation towards the way Swift obtained the unitary vision of Gulliver, noting that “Swift’s disgust, rancour and pessimism would make sense against a background of a ‘next world’ to which this one is a prelude” (Orwell, 1968: 254).

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JESS

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL STUDIES

JESS

Pentru o istorie a P.E.N. Club-ului Român

Dan Horațiu Popescu*

For a History of the Romanian PEN Club

Abstract:

The article aims at retrieving, based on novel documents and on our own individual research, a defining moment in the history of the Romanian PEN Club, i.e. its foundation in the years right after WWI. The episode is integrated within the enlarged historical, political, social and cultural context of the time. The figure of Marcu Beza, the Romanian Anglicist and diplomat in London in the 1920s, draws our attention due to his determination in engaging Romanian writers in the emergent circuit of democratic values specific to western societies.

Keywords: Romanian PEN Club, Marcu Beza, World War I and after

Cromwell Place 4, SW7

„Suntem o organizație pe bază de afiliere care încearcă să construiască o comunitate dinamică pentru artiști, având o solidă reputație pentru calitatea și profesionalismul membrilor săi. Condiția de membru este accesibilă galeriilor de artă din Regatul Unit și din străinătate, curatorilor și dealer-ilor de artă.”

Așa începe anunțul, ca o scrisoare de intenție, al unui grup de întreprinzători ce își va derula activitatea într-o locație a cărei inaugurare este preconizată înspre finele anului 2019. O clădire albă, detașându-se, în imaginile de pe internet, de restul celor care o înconjoară, ca acele luxoase vase de croazieră plutind pe albastrul de sidex din Caraibe sau Mediterana, nave care înflăcărează imaginația pensionarilor în devenire.

Aici li se promite, viitorilor consumatori de artă, o varietate de spații de expunere echilibrate, camere de vizionare, spații de depozitare, suport logistic și tehnologic de ultimă generație, etc, etc, etc. Descrierea oficială a clădirii, care include numerele de la 1 la 4 din Cromwell Place, SW7, aflată în districtul londonez Kensington și Chelsea, adaugă elemente precum terase cu stucaturi, patru nivele, mansardă și demisol, trei ferestre fiecare, cu fronton pentru cea din centru de la primul nivel, balcoane din fier forjat bombate la exterior, amplasate din loc în loc peste porticuri în stil doric, cornișă cu denticule deasupra nivelului trei, parapet și lucarne, balustrade cu sfere și țepușe, totul de o condiție

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ireproșabilă. (cf. <https://historicengland.org.uk>) Dacă e vorba despre aceeași clădire...

Pentru că nu ne-a fost ușor, în pofida puzderiei de informații și imagini de pe web, să identificăm ceea ce pare să fi fost cândva, mai precis la 10 martie 1922, sediul Legației Române din Londra.



Un armân în lumea largă

Era o zi de vineri, acel 10 martie, o zi în care, la Johannesburg, de pildă, în Africa de Sud, era instituită starea de asediu, cu intrarea în vigoare a legii marțiale ca urmare a grevei minerilor; Mahatma Gandhi era arestat în India pentru incitare la nesupunere civilă, iar în Germania erau înlăturate de pe clădirile publice toate însemnele monarhiste.

În *The London Gazette* din 10 martie 1922, regele își exprima satisfacția, conform unor documente promulgate cu două zile înainte, de a fi numit un nou ministru adjunct la Justiție și un nou procuror general; se emisese și noi obligațiuni de trezorerie, cu valori cuprinse între 50 și 5000 de lire sterline, precum și niște acte referitoare la protecția păsărilor sălbatice, în comitatele Suffolk și Devon. (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk>)

Iar într-unul din birourile spațioase din Cromwell Place, un diplomat român deja cu experiență, după cum rezultă din întorsăturile (și chiar scurtăturile) de frază, își redacta astfel una din multele, presupunem, misive cotidiene din acel 10 martie 1922:

„Stimată Doamnă Scott,

Multe mulțumiri pentru scrisoarea domniei voastre. Alături aici și formularul de afiliere. Voi pleca în curând spre România și sper să înființez la București o filială P.E.N. Nu știu când Regina României va veni la Londra, dar de îndată ce sosește, o voi înștiința pe Majestatea Sa despre invitația domniei voastre. Îmi va face de asemenea plăcere să vă țin la curent cu sosirea oricărui scriitor român care călătorește sau intenționează să stea la Londra.

Al dumneavoastră sincer,
Marcu Beza

N.B. Vă voi trimite o carte cu traduceri în limba engleză ale câtorva din operele mele literare.

D-nei C. A. Dawson Scott” (Arhiva PEN Internațional)

Distinsa *andrisantă*, Catherine Amy Dawson Scott – scriitoare, autoare de piese de teatru și poetă –, era, la acea vreme, un adevărat jolly jockey al PEN Clubului, pe care îl înființase cu doar un an înainte, în 1921. Ea dovedise, de altfel, remarcabile aptitudini manageriale, organizând, chiar la începuturile Primului Război Mondial, cu susținerea

Lordului Kitchener, un corp operațional alcătuit exclusiv din femei, cu atribuții precise în economia conflictului.

Iar în 1917, întemeiase așa-numitul To-morrow Club, un club al Scriitorilor de Mâine (To-morrow). Urmând un model american, recte scriitori care se întâlneau ca să ia masa împreună, PEN Clubul se dorea apolitic la temelile sale, cuvântul de ordine fiind *politețea*. Galsworthy fusese convins să accepte funcția și îndatoririle de președinte, fiind preferat lui H. G. Wells, întrucât acționa ca un magnet asupra celorlalți, dar mai ales pentru că nu se știa să aibă vreun dușman (Birkett, web): „E șarmant, încântător, un vorbitor plăcut, de un tact infinit. Și e un gentleman. Nu ca H. G.” (Watts 98, în Birkett).

Într-o astfel de lume, în care li se dădea întâietate scriitorilor diplomați, un diplomat scriitor nu putea fi decât binevenit. Marcu Beza era încă un poliglot aparținând unei comunități etnice care, prin natura circumstanțelor istorice, experimentase pe deplin și timp de secole un multiculturalism *avant la lettre*. Născut în Vlacho-Cljisura, în regiunea Kastoria din nordul Greciei, își împărțise timpul în copilărie între bunicii săi aromâni din Cljisura și părinții aflați la Salonic, unde tatăl avea o afacere, dar era și *dragoman*, adică *interpret*, al Consulatului Român de acolo (Beza, 2013: 90). Absolvent strălucit al liceului din Monastir/Bitola, azi în Macedonia, Marcu Beza petrece un an la Constantinopol, ajungând apoi în București, unde devine unul dintre studenții favoriți ai lui Titu Maiorescu și Nicolae Iorga, la Facultatea de Litere și Filosofie.

Din această postură, de fost învățăcel și deja publicist, recupează memorialistic și afectiv episodul din 1909, în care profesorul său de logică și istorie a filosofiei îi dă câteva sfaturi înainte de plecarea spre Anglia, unde, bucurându-se și de susținerea comunității macedo-române, urma să fie beneficiarul unei burse de studii. Nu era singurul invitat, fiind de față și un alt discipol al întemeietorului Junimii, poetul Panait Cerna¹, care mai „fusese prin străinătăți și putea urmări mai bine pe Maiorescu” (Beza, 1921: 3). Arătându-le niște caiete cu note de călătorie, nepublicate, magistrul le-a atras atenția asupra datoriei pe care o aveau ca români și ca oameni de condei: „Impresii mai ales... Vă duceți unul în Germania, celălalt în Anglia; cât ar fi de binevenite niște

¹ În Istoria literaturii române de la origini..., G. Călinescu îl menționează doar de două ori pe Marcu Beza pe câtă vreme lui Panait Cerna îi dedică o pagină și jumătate, dar îl execută totuși în câteva rânduri: „Azi, Panait Cerna nu ne mai apare decât ca un poet nerealizat, trudnic, în luptă cu limba, conceptual, oratoric, banal și arid în metaforă, deși cu o undă de sublimitate pe alocuri.” (Călinescu 1985: 652) Nefiind anglist, cecitatea marelui critic cu privire la contribuția lui Marcu Beza la promovarea culturii și literaturii române în străinătate, dar și a celei de limbă engleză la noi, este explicabilă și regretabilă în același timp.

însemnări de acolo! Aproape lipsește acest gen în literatura noastră” (*Ibidem*).

O vreme, îndemnul profesorului sunt uitate, iar Marcu Beza este prins în vârtoarea activităților pe linie didactică, la faimosul King’s College, dar mai ales pe linie diplomatică, întrucât lucra și în cadrul legației române din capitala britanică. De abia după Primul Război Mondial va publica *Din Anglia: Însemnările unui literat*, care surprind cu nostalgie și totuși cu limpezime aspecte de tot soiul ale lumii de limbă engleză, lume aflată la finele glorioasei și paradoxalei epoci victoriene. De la „Duminică în Londra” la „John Stuart Mill și Mișcarea Feministă”, trecând pe la „Casa și Mormântul lui Shakespeare”, discutând despre „Teatrul Englez”, oprindu-se prin „Vechiul Edinburgh” dar și la „Poetii Englezi de Astăzi”, amintirile se desfac și se refac treptat, conturând uneori tablouri demne de un Turner sau Whistler:

Se plâng mulți de negură; dar ce-ar fi Londra fără negură? Se înțelege, nu-i vorba de negura ceea deasă, mirosind a funingine, care târăște cu ea noaptea și înecă tot, vietăți și lucruri; e o altă negură, ușoară, subțire ca un vâl, care înmoaie formele, aruncă în lume nelămuritul, face vis din realitate, slăbind razele, dându-le culoare. Îndărătul ei soarele se prevede stins, rotund și roșu ca un talger de aur (Beza, 1921: 6).

O impresie, retrospectivă, ce-i drept, ce pare să contrasteze cu aceea resimțită de un alt compatriot care, în 1907, fusese trimis într-o complexă misiune cu caracter militar la Londra. Foarte tânărul locotenent de marină și viitorul membru, la rândul său, al corpului diplomatic român, prințul, dar și estetul, Matila Ghyka avea să exulte, în memoriile sale: „Imaginația nu m-a înșelat; era Londra lui Dickens (...) Un fum acru de cărbune îngreuna atmosfera, apăsată și de sare marină” (Ghyka, 2014: 184), iar ceața impenetrabilă, care uneori determina oprirea circulației, îi amintise de desenele lui Gustave Doré.

Pentru Marcu Beza însă, ceața londoneză este un vestitor al dimineții, pe care privitorul o admiră „cum se rupe în luciri de mătase” (Beza, 1921: 6) Trenurile, care fac podurile să trepideze, și clopotele sunt alte repere matinale ale duminicilor de peste an ale unei lumi extrem de dinamice, dar și puternic ancorate într-o tradiție hermeneutică: „Cartea sfântă se citește; o vezi, frumos legată, în mâinile părinților, fetelor, băieților, cari se îndreaptă în rânduri la biserici – pline toate bisericile” (*Ibidem*: 7).

După-amiaza, în pofida câtorva muzee și galerii deschise, pare rezervată parcurilor, întinse și apărând „dintre clădiri înnegrite” pe neașteptate, dar unde nu peisajul este cel care domină. O notă rustică este dată de turmele de „câprioare și oi – e drept, de culoarea fumului”, e

nevoit să admită autorul, dar care „pasc iarba întodeauna verde” din parcuri (*Ibidem*). Astfel de intruziuni, am suspiciona încă prezente în Bucureștiul secolului XXI, la Londra se pierd, sau nu, în negura veacurilor.

Nu de mult, la sfârșitul lui septembrie a.c., un grup din Breasla sau Asociația Țesătorilor și Negustorilor de Lână a plimbat un ciopor de oi în sus și-n jos pe London Bridge, pentru care acțiune ar avea permis de liberă trecere încă de pe la 1100. Conducătorul și supraveghetorul procesiunii pe parcursul întregii zile este, de regulă, o persoană din înalta societate. Anul acesta cel desemnat este și autor, cu jumătate de normă, de literatură erotică. Ei, cum vă place?

Ceea ce ne readuce la cetățenii londonezi ai lui Marcu Beza de la începutul secolului XX. Nu păsările cu triluri încântătoare, nu „toate florile și plantele pomenite în Shakespeare” cultivate cu maximă atenție „dela buruiana și mărgăritele ce împodobesc fruntea Ofeliei, până la cucuta vrăjitoarelor din *Macbeth*” (Beza, 1921: 8); nimic din toate acestea nu este mai atrăgător decât viermuiala umană a cuvântărilor în aer liber. Probabil în Hyde Park, dar fără menționarea acestuia, deși el exista de pe vremea lui Henric al VIII-lea, care îl confiscase în 1536 pentru a-l folosi ca teren de vânatoare.

Reprezentanți ai diverselor orientări politice, „roșul-socialist, stacojiul-anarhist, vânăutul-ateist”, stârnesc comentariile malițioase ale diplomatului român. Sau liber-cugetătorii, necromanții-sociali și religioșii-apocaliptici, făcând asocieri inedite între Darwin și Schopenhauer. Sau între acesta din urmă și Spencer. Oameni însuflețiți de idei atât de mărețe încât să fie în stare să fondeze până și „Societatea celor ce nu poartă pălării”. Li se adaugă reprezentanții *Armatei Salvării*, ducând „o goană strașnică pentru cucerirea sufletelor”, dar și sufragetele, venite cu „harabaua – o tribună ideală, care lunecă pe roate” (Beza, 1921: 10), distinsele activiste purtându-și peste tot „manifestele verde-alb-liliachii și rochiile elocvente (sic)” O tânără și zveltă vorbitoare îl captivează, nu neapărat prin discurs, ci mai degrabă din cauza ochilor scânteietori, al căror farmec îl amuțește – „și desigur e vina ei, de nu vă pot arăta și pe ceilalți oratori” (*Ibidem*).

Acest exercițiu democratic al exercitării dreptului la liberă exprimare îi oferă prilejul să facă un număr de considerații cu privire la caracterul englezilor, care deși vorbesc cu ușurință, nu par să aibă simțul proporției, amestecând pildele comune cu episoade din viața personală. Remarcă totuși stăpânirea lor de sine, oricât de mult s-ar încinge dezbaterile, care se sting treptat la auzul clopotelor de vecernie. Seara aduce note de mister și sentimentul surprizelor pentru care ești pe jumătate pregătit, precum în fața acelor năzdrăvane păpuși rusești (sau

cutii chinezești). O tușă mai întunecată e dată totuși, printr-un citat din *Poveste despre două orașe*, de Dickens: „fiecare din acele negre case îngrămădite închide taina ei; (...) fiecare odaie în fiecare din ele închide taina ei” (Beza, 1921: 12).

Viața de noapte are o strălucire feerică bizară, cu „vitrine stinse, porticuri de teatru închise, statui și florărese”, din colțuri întunecate făcându-și apariția „cunoscutele sirene ale nopții” (ibid) Se resimte un soi de fascinație, un pic morbidă, pentru mătăsurile și parfumurile care răvășesc perimetrul al cărui nume „are ceva din răsul curtezanei: *Picadilly*” (*Ibidem*). Scriind și el, mult mai târziu, despre aceeași zonă londoneză, ultracentrală, pe care o vizitase întâia oară, așa cum am menționat deja, în 1907, Matila Ghyka o pune alături, în memoriile sale, de „hidoșenia cartierelor muncitorești”, pentru care încercase o atracție cu efect straniu, contrariant, de catharsis (Ghyka, 2014: 187).

Înainte de a închide descrierea nopții de duminică în Londra cu imaginea unui grup dotat cu steaguri și lampioane, Marcu Beza se perindă pe lângă coloana lui Nelson, pe la vestita tavernă *La Capul Mistrețului*, unde Falstaff fusese client fidel, și, odată traversat podul Westminster, are revelația, cu accente sinistre, a monotoniei formelor și ferestrelor de la casele pe care le asemuiește unor „enorme cutii mortuare”. O formulă pe care o reia peste alte câteva fraze, în același paragraf, exasperat de lipsa de varietate a peisajului citadin în nocturnă. Cât despre grupul cu steaguri și lampioane, odată epuizate subiectele ce îi inflamau pe oratori, în tăcerea care se înstăpânește, doar versetele biblice mai au puterea de a răzbi, dar nu lipsite de ecouri funebre – „Omul ca iarba, zilele lui ca floarea câmpului...” (Beza, 1921: 15).

„Londra în timp de războiu”

Este penultimul capitol al amintirilor diplomatului român, capitol care se face ecoul versetelor de la finalul celui dintâi. Într-o altă duminică, „la miezul nopții se dădu vestea războiului” (Beza, 1921: 95). Autorul notează reacțiile amestecate – „era mai mult bucuria unui copil față de de o întâmplare nouă. A doua zi veni spaima” –, evenimentele care prefațaseră momentul anunțului – „trei miniștri demisionați, protestul unor profesori cunoscuți la Oxford” –, lămurirea dar și inducerea unei stări anume de spirit în rândurile populației – „darea în vileag a corespondenței și mai ales cotropirea Belgiei au risipit nedumeririle, au răscolit încă mânia” (*Ibidem*).

Atitudinea englezilor se fundamentează pe una din marile lecții ale propriei istorii. Dincolo de motivele celor care se încolonează la centrele de recrutare – din simțul datoriei, din lipsă de ocupație, din spirit de aventură, „luați de valurile patriotismului sau din rușinea de a

rămâne mai prejos” –, ne rămân cuvintele lui Lloyd George, viitorul prim-ministru, citate de autor pentru că făceau, la acele vremuri de neutralitate ale regatului României, apologia națiunilor mici: „Cea mai mare artă a lumii a fost rodul națiunilor mici. (...) Cea mai înaltă literatură a Angliei s’a produs, când era o națiune de mărimea Belgiei în luptă cu un imperiu mare” (*Ibidem*: 97).

Zvonistica își reclamă partea ei, iar limbajul cu care Marcu Beza surprinde voltele și efectele acesteia, într-un context istoric de un profund dramatism, are inflexiuni din schițele lui Nenea Iancu. Fapt perfect plauzibil, demonstrând că natura umană e aceeași până și în momente de maximă criză, cum genial o surprinsese Caragiale. Astfel, deși armata engleză nu se angajase încă în conflict, cineva îi spune autorului, probabil pe un ton confidențial: „Două mii de morți... Am aflat de la Minister” (Beza, 1921: 98). Iar culmea teleportării, un fenomen categoric foarte puțin discutat atunci, o constituie prezența unui contingent de trupe rusești, care, chipurile, ar fi „debarcat undeva în Scoția. Mulți le-au văzut cu ochii, ba unii au și închinat la masă cu ofițerii lor” (*Ibidem*).

Treptat, viața cotidiană revine la normal, noua realitate a reflectoarelor, a camuflajului și a Zeppelinelor neîmpiedicându-i pe englezi să guste plăcerea cântatului în cor, în cinematografe, al refrenurilor cântecelor patriotice. Sau să frecventeze teatrele în care se jucau piese cu spirit războinic, precum *Henric V* al lui Shakespeare sau *Dinasticii/The Dynasts* de Thomas Hardy. Cea din urmă, a cărei primă parte avea șase acte și treizeci și cinci de scene, se inspira din poveștile auzite de Hardy în tinerețe de la veteranii războaielor napoleoniene, inclusiv de la ruda sa îndepărtată, un alt Thomas Hardy, căpitan de marină care luptase alături de amiralul Nelson la Trafalgar.

Moartea amiralului și felul în care ea fusese povestită în numărul din *The Times* din 7 noiembrie 1805, pe „atunci [doar] o foiță de patru pagini” după cum ne spune Marcu Beza, se transformă într-o lecție de demnitate pe care englezii erau gata să o predea oricui în contextul a ceea ce avea să rămână cunoscut drept Marele Război, în speranța că niciodată nu va mai fi un altul de asemenea proporții: „Anglia așteaptă ca fiecare să-și facă datoria”

În acest sens, diplomatul român remarcă partea așa-zis bună a unui astfel de conflict, respectiv abandonarea disputelor între cei aflați de aceeași parte a baricadei. Dar o afirmație de genul „îndată ce izbucni războiul, certurile foarte înăsprite cu privire la Irlanda încetară” poate că trebuie totuși privită cu rezerve, mai degrabă ca o mostră de diplomatie, dat fiind că, în 1921, anul apariției însemnărilor sale, războiul pentru independență al Irlandei era în plină desfășurare. În fine, feministele ar

avea și ele un comentariu la un alt exemplu de armonizare a contrariilor dat de Marcu Beza, sufragetele fiind „scoase din închisoare și munca lor îndreptată pe atâtea căi osebite, unde cuvântul, darul de mângâiere și îngrijire al femeii nu se pot înlocui” (Beza, 1921: 103).

Presa este urmărită nu doar cu ochiul diplomatului, ci și cu apertura celui deprins a degusta texte filosofice, în încercarea de a detecta ideologiile invocate, vehiculate sau angajate, puse în practică de oameni aflați pe diverse paliere de decizie. Astfel, autorul crede că lui Nietzsche i se face o mare nedreptate prin alăturarea cu un alt Friedrich, von Bernhardy, autorul belicoasei *Deutschland und der Nächste Krieg/Germania și următorul război*, publicată în 1911 și argumentând în favoarea unei politici de agresiune fără scrupule și de nerespectare a niciunui tratat. Remarcă în schimb o notă aproape singulară, aparținând britanicului Arthur Clutton-Brock, care reușește să-și mențină cumpătul într-o lume dezlănțuită – „Vrășmașii nu sunt neumani, orișice ținte rele își vor fi pus contra noastră, ci oameni ca noi înșine în ochii cărora și noi părem niște vrășmași neumani” (Beza, 1921: 104).

Poziția României, de delicată neutralitate, e amenințată de amatorismul unor „corespondenți de gazete și zodieri politici”, iar atunci când au apărut articole precum cel de fond din *The Times* exprimând un posibil îndemn către guvernul român de a-și regândi alianțele, presa noastră oficială a dezmințit prompt. Ca în multe alte cazuri, o poză face cât o mie de cuvinte, autorul însemnărilor menționând o caricatură din *Westminster Gazette* care înfățișa două stânci, Italia respectiv România, ceva mai înaltă, de pe care doi vulturi pândeau, cu aripile desfăcute, gata de zbor (*Ibidem*: 105).

Au fost numărați

Unii dintre ei în luptă. Foarte tineri, dar cu un fundal educațional menit să le asigure ascensiunea în plan social, într-o lume aparent receptivă la înnoirile de tip democratic, dar încă suficient de stratificată pentru a bloca accesul celor considerați neaveniți. Marcu Beza face, în „Poezii Englezi de Astăzi”, ultimul capitol din cartea sa, o schiță de portret a celui pe care Yeats îl descria drept „cel mai chipeș tânăr din Anglia”. Rupert Brooke beneficiase și el de o bursă de studii la King’s College, dar un alt King’s, cel de la Cambridge, unde devenise membru al societății de dezbateri *Apostolii*, ajunsese președintele societății de orientare laburistă *Fabian* și fondase clubul de teatru *Marlowe*.

Ubise bărbați și femei deopotrivă – Virginia Woolf, de pildă, își amintea cum ea și Brooke înnotaseră goi sub clar de lună –, dar Marcu Beza, chiar de ar fi fost la curent cu aceste amănunte – deși vorbește la un moment dat despre cum Brooke „sorbea cu plăcere nesățioasă tot ce

viața-i punea sub ochi” –, își menține probabil rezerva diplomatică. Se concentrează pe poemele acestuia, alcătuite din impresii aleatorii și aglutinate, ceea ce îngreunează sarcina eventualului critic. Iată o mostră de asemenea impresii, dintr-o scrisoare însă, și fără menționarea sursei, în traducerea compatriotului nostru: „Într-o licărire de soare pe un zid gol, de-a lungul trotuarului noroios ori în fumul unei mașini noaptea, e un înțeles neașteptat, o însemnătate și inspirație ce-ți oprește răsuflarea ca un nod în gât de siguranță și fericire” (Beza, 1921: 122).

Ca poet, Brooke și-a câștigat notorietatea în primul an de război, cu câteva sonete publicate la puțin timp după înrolarea sa și participarea la expedițiile de la Anvers și Galipoli, după cum specifică Marcu Beza. În realitate, Brooke a murit pe vasul spital francez ancorat în insula Skyros, în Marea Egee, în drum spre Gallipoli. Ca și ilustrul său înaintaș, Byron, poetul de 27 de ani nu a murit în luptă, ci din cauza unei infecții greu de controlat în circumstanțele agravante ale zonei de conflict. Caracterul profetic al versurilor sale l-a transformat, crede Marcu Beza, în „simbolul jertfirii atâtor tineri deplin conștienți de bogăția și prețul tinereții lor” (Beza 1921: 124). Primele două strofe dintr-un celebru sonet, *The Soldier/Ostașul*, sună astfel în traducerea liberă a diplomatului român:

De-ar fi să mor, gândiți numai la asta de mine: că-i un colț de câmp străin ce-i pentru totdeauna Anglia. Acolo în pământ bogat, o mai bogată țărână va fi ascunsă; O țărână carei Anglia dădu născare, formă, simțire, și-i dădu cândva florile-i să iubească și căile-i să colinde – un trup de-al Angliei, aer englez respirând, udat de apele și binecuvântat de sorii ei²

Undeva, pe unul din zidurile Academiei Regale de Artă din Londra, există o placă în memoria celor 2003 de membri ai lui *Artists Rifles* căzuți în Marele Război. *Artists Rifles* era un regiment format în 1859 pe bază de voluntariat și alcătuit inițial din pictori, muzicieni, arhitecți, actori, în general persoane provenind din medii artistice, profil pe care s-a străduit să îl mențină până în zilele noastre. În 1900 crescuse la douăsprezece companii, iar în 1914 avea trei sub-batalioane, recrutarea făcându-se numai pe baza recomandărilor din partea membrilor activi. Pe lângă cei 2003 căzuți la datorie, alți 3250 au fost răniți, 533 au fost dați dispăruți și 286 au fost luați prizonieri din toți cei

² If I should die, think only this of me:/ That there's some corner of a foreign field/ that is for ever England. There shall be/ In that rich earth a richer dust concealed:/ A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,/ Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam./ A body of England's, breathing English air./ Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home. (de pe site-ul Academy of American Poets, unde se spune că „poetul englez Rupert Brooke a scris într-un stil anti-victorian.”)

care au activat în această unitate, au rămas sau au fost transferați în altele, luptând în Franța în 1917 și 1918.

În 1918, tânărul, de nici douăzeci de ani, Noel Coward era recrutat în *Artist Rifles*, dar aproape nouă luni mai târziu era lăsat la vatră, considerat inapt, din motive de sănătate, pentru serviciul militar activ. În același an, viitorul dramaturg, regizor, compozitor, cântăret, dansator, etc, avea să își vândă primele povestiri, să scrie prima sa piesă și să apară în *Hearts of the World*, filmul mut comandat de guvernul britanic, în scopuri de propagandă, regizorului D. W. Griffith, în ideea de a schimba atitudinea de neutralitate a publicului american față de războiul din Europa. Noel Coward era, cu alte cuvinte, un tânăr artist cu un viitor extrem de promițător în 1918.

La puțin timp după „lăsarea la vatră”, este invitat de o prietenă romancieră să petreacă timpul rămas până la începerea repetițiilor pentru un musical, undeva în Cornwall, în compania altei romanciere și a familiei sale. Telegrama prin care își anunță sosirea pare să-i pecetluiască soarta de la bun început: „SOSESC LA PADSTOW LA 5.30” după care urmează semnalmente spre a putea fi recunoscut, „DUMNEZEIESC DE CHIPEȘ ÎNTR-UN COSTUM DE CULOARE GRI”. (Hoare, 1995: 68) Intuind că are de a face cu un *pansy*, adică cu un bărbat a cărui orientare sexuală nu era tocmai limpede, gazda, nimeni alta decât Catherine Amy Dawson Scott, își face griji serioase pentru băiatul ei de paisprezece ani. Partea amuzantă a situației era că pseudonimul doamnei Dawson Scott, viitoarea *mamă* a PEN-ului Internațional, era *Sapho*.

Tânărul Coward va convinge însă prin argumente de ordin artistic că merita să facă parte dintr-o lume a celor aleși. PEN Clubul încă nu ființa, dar Tomorrow Club, clubul Scriitorilor de Mâine era funcțional, iar la una din întâlnirile „organizate de Sapho, Coward a sosit îmbrăcat din cap până-n picioare în haine de seară” (Hoare, 1998: 68) spre deosebire de toți ceilalți care purtau ceea ce azi s-ar numi *casual*. A făcut o pauză de efect, după care, adresându-se intelighenției de față, le-a spus că își dorește ca nimeni să nu se simtă stânjenit. Printre cei prezenți se numărau Somerset Maugham, care l-a îmbrățișat surprinzător de afectuos, John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells și amanta de atunci a acestuia, și ea o celebritate în devenire, jurnalista și feminista Rebecca West.

Aceasta era lumea pe care Marcu Beza începuse să o cunoască, să o îndrăgească, să îi adopte codurile și principiile, din postura celui care

reprezenta o țară despre care încă se știau puține lucruri, dar care merita deplina racordare la valorile europene. E drept că aceste valori erau filtrate un pic altfel în microuniversul insular, britanicii adoptându-le nu o dată prin ricoșeu, ținând totuși să sublinieze, aproape de fiecare dată, că sunt într-un fel diferiți față de cei de pe continent. Nu de puține ori erau cu câțiva pași înaintea acestora, după cum o ilustrează și opera lui John Stuart Mill, la care Marcu Beza face referire în capitolul pe care i-l dedică filozofului englez și aportului acestuia la cauza feminismului.

Analizând discursul lui Mill rostit în parlamentul englez la 29 Maiu 1867, diplomatul român constată că în el se regăsesc mai toate argumentele invocate de sufragetele contemporane lui, „adesea cu fanaticism, dar nu fără dreptate” (Beza, 1921: 25). Ceea ce îl interesează în primul rând pe Mill este instituția căsătoriei, pe care „statul, prin biserica sa” nu o edifică, ci mai degrabă o subminează la adăpostul „neînfrânteii porunci din moși-strămoși: Femeea să fie supusă bărbatului” (*Ibidem*).

Acolo unde i se pare că Mill exagerează, ca de pildă în critica adusă cochetăriei feminine – reminiscențe ale unui fond scoțiano-prezbiterian/o radicalizare a utilitarianismului? –, Marcu Beza vine cu argumente desprinse din opera lui Darwin: „Și femeea nu face decât ce face și sturzul din Guinea, ce-i poruncește firea și ce știe că ne place și nouă.” (Beza, 1921: 26) Vina este colectivă, iar autorul nostru și-o asumă fără rezerve: „Ce vreți? O dorim dichisită (...) și să cugete cât mai puțin” (*Ibidem*). Cât despre eventuala degradingoladă morală și învinuirile nedrepte aduse femeilor de-a lungul veacurilor, Marcu Beza răspunde invocând exemplele lui Sapho și al Aspasiei, regretând că lumea a avut rareori parte de astfel de modele!

În această ordine de idei, misiva, una din multele, presupunem, pe care o scrie în data de 12 iulie 1922, alături, pe aceeași pagină, numele și statutul a două femei a căror viață și felul în care au ales să o trăiască, a schimbat destinele a milioane de oameni, în lume dar și la capătul dinspre răsărit al Europei:

Stimată Doamnă Scott,

M-am întors din România în urmă cu câteva zile. Am reușit să înființez acolo un centru PEN. Vă voi povesti totul la întâlnirea Comitetului din data de 16. Vine și domnul Galsworthy? Am un răspuns, la scrisoarea dânsului, din partea reginei României.

Al dumneavoastră sincer,
M. Beza
(Arhiva PEN Internațional)

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Textul multimodal în noul curriculum de Limba și literatura română (nivel primar și gimnaziu). Aplicații

Eva Monica Szekely*

**The Multimodal Text in the New Curricula of
Romanian Language and Literature
(for Primary and Secondary School). Applications**

Abstract:

The notion of multimodal literacy has two dimensions which plan the education of a “multimodal literate” pupil/student from primary and the secondary level of school too. The first dimension would be “media literacy” and/ or free acces at RED/ Open Educational Resources , underlining the need for literacy in producing and having access at multimodal information (that combine more semiotic resources, such as verbal language, gesture, images) and the second one dwells on recognizing the fact that the experience in teaching and learning is intrinsic multisemiotic and multimodal. An important consequence of this way of conceiving/representing knowledge is the extension of semantic area of the notion of text(s): oral and written; continuous, discontinuous and multimodal texts. This study will explore de creative and didactic dimensions of such of multimodal texts.

Keywords: multimodal literacy, semiotical resources, multimodal media literacy, multimodal texts, verbal/ nonverbal/ paraverbal language

1. Literația multimodală media – teorie și practică inter- și transdisciplinară

Cum am arătat și în studiul din numărul trecut, literația multimodală media/ LMM și deschiderea sa spre transdisciplinaritate nu reinventează totul, ci reorganizează elementele deja existente ale literației tradiționale într-o nouă perspectivă, citit-scrisul ca instrumente intelectuale de bază având ca imperativ, într-o manieră integratoare, înțelegerea la toate nivelurile (rațional, afectiv-emoțional, senzorial, kinetic, aural).

Reiterăm convingerea noastră că literația multimodală, concept suprapus literației/ alfabetizării funcționale, pe care îl integrează și îl

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dezvoltă prin alfabetizarea media combinând multiple resurse semiotice, nu ne face nici mai buni, nici mai răi, în mod direct; literația multimodală ne face însă mai profunzi, ea ne instrumentalizează vederea, sensibilitatea, capacitatea de a gândi și de a reflecta asupra celor citite.

Ca atare, principiul central de construcție a acestor activități integrate, inter- și transdisciplinare îl constituie observația lui I. Cerghit: „Construcțiile deliberate ale gândirii și imaginației sunt de neconceput fără meditație personală. Fără **reflecție** nu există cunoaștere, elaborare, creație. simpla informație este lăsată în seama memoriei care încă nu este cunoaștere adevărată; ea are nevoie și de reflecția elevului, după posibilitățile vârstei sale” (2006: 190–191).

Intenția noastră explicită este ca, prin activități bazate pe *educarea literației multimodale media/ LMM, în timpul tuturor activităților, nu numai din cadrul disciplinei Limba și literatura română, ci și al celorlalte discipline (istorie, geografie, educație civică, științe etc.)* elevul să își formeze reprezentări clare privind corelațiile parte-întreg, înțelegerea modurilor de expresie și succesiunea tipurilor de expresie privite ca un proces progresiv, de creștere a gradului de dificultate a textului prin introducerea treptată a câte unui nou mod de expresie, conform principiului accesibilității și al abordării progresive.

Argumentam în studiul anterior de ce cunoașterea trebuie adaptată nevoilor societății umane și marile, dar adevăratele probleme ale umanității sunt transversale, transnaționale, multidisciplinare, pentru soluționarea lor fiind necesară implementarea viziunii transdisciplinare, care oferă o perspectivă globală, holistică. Multiplicarea canalelor de comunicare, explozia mijloacelor media și extraordinara diversitate lingvistică și culturală de azi face necesară o nouă manieră de organizare a cunoașterii. Literația multimodală media/ LMM sau multiliterația face posibil acest fapt, crearea unui spațiu comun între discipline/ arii curriculare prin abordarea unei teme prin o diversitate de texte (orale și scrise; continue, discontinue, multimodale).

Cu atât mai mult, domeniul educației nu are cum să nu reflecte această tendință de depășire a frontierelor rigide dintre discipline, motiv pentru care transdisciplinaritatea este spațiul comun vizat și în reformele curriculare. Multiliterația/ literația multimodală media devine un spațiu comun între disciplinele inclusiv ale nivelului primar și gimnazial în care competențele transversale sunt ușor de deciptat, iar transdisciplinaritatea devine fapt didactic posibil, nu doar un miraj, o provocare incredibil de atractivă prin posibilitățile latente de schimbare pe care le promovează.

Limbajul verbal a devenit sărac, comun, neîncăpător în sensul de depășit. Prin deschiderile spre multiple negocieri ale diferențelor

culturale și lingvistice din societatea noastră, prin accesul facil și rapid la informații de actualitate din diverse domenii ale științei, dar și din viața publică și privată a elevilor/ studenților/ indivizilor, elevii/ studenții multimodal literați vor înțelege treptat mizele educației transdisciplinare/ transversale: o cale de acces spre un limbaj integrat, mai nou, mai creativ, mai puternic pe de o parte, respectiv acces la instrumente pentru o mai implicită angajare critică și civică necesară pentru imersia socială a tinerilor, o mai bună angajare pe piața muncii și succesul lor profesional.

2. LMM folosită în cadrul programelor de formare continuă – punte interdisciplinară între învățători și profesori

Folosirea literației multimodale media/ LMM conduce la implicarea a cel puțin patru niveluri socio-cognitive dacă LMM este practică cu succes la cât mai multe activități, nu numai acelea de Limba și literatura română, ci la toate disciplinele din ciclul primar și gimnazial:

- se creează situații de învățare practice prin care se simulează experiența vie, a relațiilor care se vor stabili la locul de muncă, dar și în spațiul public;

- școala realizează astfel dezideratul lui J. Dewey de a reprezenta, în mic, societatea cea mare;

- la nivelul înțelegerii, învățarea devine mai sistematică, mai creativă, mai profundă și, totodată, mai aplicată pe diferite niveluri/ moduri de a construi sens;

- oferă un cadru critic de interpretare a sensului, de corelare și transfer în contexte socio-culturale de la cele mai apropiate până la cele mai îndepărtate de obiectul de studiu/ disciplina primară/ textul de bază;

- în planul filosofiei practice, oferă un spațiu dialogic în care interacționează om și disciplina de studiu, om și instituție, om și om, un spațiu de „academie platoniciană” ca loc de reflecție și acțiune;

- multiplică înțelepciunea prin transferul acesteia în practica (re)construcției de sine prin construcția de sens(uri) și așază sensul transformat să lucreze spre partea formativă, a valorilor și a atitudinilor: empatie, responsabilitate, asumare, credibilitate, disponibilitate colaborativă, promptitudine, rigoare, flexibilitate, cumpătare, reflexivitatea, libertate, creativitate.

În vederea căutării, a selectării, a ordonării și apoi a prelucrării materialelor media/ prin diverse media se fac programe de formare continuă în statele din mediul anglo-saxon (Canada, SUA, Anglia,

Australia, Noua Zeelandă)¹, dar și în diverse alte zone ale extremului Orient precum Singapore și China, de exemplu. Am încercat mai jos să conturăm posibile coordonate de formare continuă în vederea folosirii mijloacelor media/ a prelucrării diverse media, dar și în vederea creării de resurse educaționale deschise/ RED prin diverse media atât pentru învățători/ profesori pentru ciclul primar, cât și pentru cei de la ciclul gimnazial².

Cum promiteam și la sfârșitul primului studiu publicat în paginile anterioare, vom insista pe valoarea practică/ pragmatică a literației multimodale media/ LMM în acest al doilea studiu, prin două aplicații care se pot adapta foarte bine atât la ciclul primar (clasele a III-a – a IV-a), cât și la ciclul gimnazial. Tema / subtema o constituie *valorile* și atitudinile, iar subiectul acestora: „**Textul narativ/ fabula/ texte multimodale: Greierele și furnica**”, respectiv „**România și Uniunea Europeană. O experiență interdisciplinară multimodală (2016). De la manualul de Educație civică - cls. a IV-a la manualul de Limba și literatura română, clasa a VI-a/ 2018**”.

Alegerile și diferențele se vor face în clasă, în funcție de nivelul clasei și de posibilitățile (re)creative ale profesorului/ elevilor, de nivelul de operare cu limbajul abstract/ concret, de alegerea unității de învățare/ a subunității specifice valorilor și atitudinilor, în funcție și de obișnuințele cadrului didactic de a scoate elevii din zona de confort în vederea provocării acestora pentru a atinge nivelul maximei dezvoltări (Vîgotski), precum și în funcție de pretențiile de creativitate și dezvoltare personală ale fiecărui cadru didactic/ elev.

2.1. Textul narativ/ fabula/ texte multimodale: Greierele și furnica

Tabelul intertextual din Anexa 1 pune la dispoziție textele cu ajutorul cărora se vor realiza aceste activități pentru care este nevoie,

¹http://vassarliteracy.pbworks.com/f/Pedagogy+of+Multiliteracies_New+London+Group.pdf, accesat 13.11.2018, h. 20.50

² <https://creatingmultimodaltexts.com>, by Annemarie O'Brien, 2018, accesat 18.11.2018, h. 15.33

v. și 3. *Crearea de texte multimodale. Un exemplu de bune practici*, în SZEKELY E. Monica, studiul Literația multimodală media și competențele transversale. Textul multimodal în noul curriculum de Limba și literatura română pentru gimnaziu publicat în „Journal of Humanistic and Social Studies”, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of “Aurel Vlaicu” University, Arad, Romania, Volume IX, No. 2 (18)/ 2018, Aurel Vlaicu University Press, ISSN 2067-6557, ISSN-L 2247-2371, p. 95–138; <http://www.jhss.ro/downloads/18/Cuprins%20Vol.%209%20no.%202.pdf> http://www.jhss.ro/downloads/18/vol_9_2_2018.pdf

cantitativ, de un spațiu mai larg afectat în mai multe ore, la mai toate disciplinele, în manieră integrată, dar și independentă, tocmai pentru că pornind de la diferite tipuri de texte ca suporturi generatoare de discuții, să se poată crea contexte problematice cât mai largi, în care să poată fi incluse metode conversaționale complexe (brainstorming, problematizarea, discuția rețea, descoperirea, dezbateră etc.), dar și metode mizând pe munca în echipă, prin cooperare, meditație și reflecție.

La ciclul primar se poate porni de la textul epic/ fabula în proză Călin Gruia, *Noi, albinele / completat prin* Texte multimodale (cântec însoțit de desen de animație) <https://www.google.ro/search?q=greierele+si+furnica+cantec&oq=Greierele+%3Bi+furnica&aqs=chrome.5.69i57j0l5.8859j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>) sau https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3prQPJd5ILE_și <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCKZAicbXTg>, până la textul complex din punct de vedere interpretativ al Adei Milea (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pk_twogW8S8), cu care se va insista la clasele a VII-a și a VIII-a.

Treptat, se poate ajunge cu (re)lectura la Alecu Donici și Jean de La Fontaine (în limba franceză) și/ sau un text din spațiul anglo-saxon în limba engleză pentru discuții privind valoarea interculturală a situațiilor de viață prezentate, dar și universalitatea lor. Apropiindu-ne de la contexte mai îndepărtate în timp chiar până astăzi, terminând cu gluma/ poanta/ textul contemporan, textele sunt valoroase tocmai prin forța de a resuscita dezbateră cu privire la lectura destul de „comunistă” a fabulei mergând pe dihotomia lene vs. hărnicie, mai ales astăzi, când:

1. arta, creativitatea unor oameni cu real talent este răsplătită prin câștiguri imense în urma unor concerte naționale și internaționale, CD-uri și DVD-uri din care își pot asigura existența cotidiană și nu numai, chiar mai multe generații;

2. există comunități/ țări unde cei mici/ slabi, precum copiii, săracii sunt exploatați pentru sume derizorii de bani și/ sau alte produse ne semnificative în raport cu drepturile copilului: de a se juca și de a învăța (desigur, aici nu e cazul, și greierele, ca și furnica face parte din categoria insectelor, însă furnica trăiește în mușuroaie, o structură sinarhică, nu ierarhică, la fel ca roiul de albine, luate adesea drept model pentru o societate ideală, cu structuri în rețea, unde spiritul de matcă este cel care face diferența).

Sugerăm, mai jos, o posibilă variantă de integrare și combinare a disciplinelor/ a competențelor specifice, dar și de derivare a obiectivelor operaționale, desigur, acestea putând fi modificate/ adaptate după nevoi, așa cum am mai precizat și anterior:

Interdisciplinaritate/ abordare integrată	
Ciclul primar/ clasa I	Ciclul gimnazial¹/ clasa a V-a
<p>Competențe generale, sociale și civice: conform cu profilul de formare al absolventului la finalul ciclului primar, construit pe baza descriptivului nivelului elementar de deținere a competențelor cheie (OMEN 337/2013 și programele școlare aprobate prin OMEN nr. 5003/2014; OMEN nr. 5001/2014; OMEN nr. 5004/2014)</p>	<p>Programele școlare pentru clasa a V-a, cuprinse în Anexa 2 a OMEN nr. 3393/28.02.2017 se aplică în sistemul de învățământ începând cu anul școlar 2017-2018.</p> <p>Unitatea de învățare tematică: Eu și universul meu familiar (cls. a V-a)/ Eu și lumea din jurul meu (cls. a VI-a)/ Orizonturile lumii și ale cunoașterii (cls. a VII-a)/ Reflecții asupra lumii (cls. a VIII-a)</p> <p>Subtema obligatorie: Valorile mele (cls. a V-a); Valorile mele, valorile celorlalți (cls. a VI-a); Valori și atitudini în diverse culturi (cls. a VII-a); Simț civic, responsabilitate, etică (cls. a VIII-a)</p> <p>Tema valorilor și în cadrul Elementelor de interculturalitate (Valori promovate în literatura și / sau cultura română/ maternă/ universală)</p>
<p>Comunicare în limba română</p> <p>1.1. Identificarea semnificației dintr-un mesaj scurt pe teme familiare rostit clar și rar</p> <p>2.2. Transmiterea unor informații referitoare la sine și la universul apropiat prin mesaje scurte</p> <p>3.2. Identificarea semnificației unei / unor imagini care prezintă întâmplări, fenomene, evenimente familiare</p> <p>4.1. Recunoașterea unor cuvinte uzuale scrise cu litere mari și</p>	<p>Limba și literatura română²</p> <p>1.1. Identificarea temei, a unor informații esențiale și de detaliu, a intențiilor de comunicare explicite și/sau a comportamentelor care exprimă emoții din texte narative, monologate sau dialogate</p> <p>2.2. Identificarea temei și a ideilor principale și secundare din texte diverse (continue/ discontinue/ multimodale)</p> <p>3.2. Redactarea, individual și/sau în echipă, a unui text simplu, pe o temă familiară, cu integrarea unor imagini, desene, scheme</p> <p>4.1. Utilizarea achizițiilor sintactice și morfologice de bază ale limbii române</p>

¹ v. ANEXA 1, Tabel reprezentând grupaj (posibil) de selecție pentru texte diverse pe tema/ subtema **Valorile mele**

² <http://programe.ise.ro/Portals/1/Curriculum/2017-progr/01-Limba%20si%20literatura%20%20romana%20materna.pdf>

<p>mici de tipar.</p>	<p>standard pentru înțelegerea și exprimarea corectă a intențiilor comunicative</p>
<p>Dezvoltare personală 1. manifestarea interesului pentru autocunoaștere și a atitudinii pozitive față de sine și față de ceilalți 1.1. identificarea unor trăsături personale elementare 2. Exprimarea adecvată a emoțiilor în interacțiunea cu copii și adulți cunoscuți 2.1. Recunoașterea emoțiilor de bază în situații simple, familiare 2.3 Explorarea caracteristicilor și obiectelor preferate și a interacțiunii simple cu acestea.</p>	<p>Educație socială/ cls. a V-a – a VIII-a Gândire critică și drepturile copilului, cls a V-a 2.1. Formularea unor probleme care vizează drepturile copilului, ca punct de plecare în rezolvarea lor 1.3. Raportarea critică la opiniile, explicațiile și argumentele formulate de alte persoane în contextul unor dezbateri privind asigurarea și promovarea drepturilor copilului - observarea unor asemănări și deosebiri între explicațiile și argumentele formulate 3.2. Participarea la decizii de grup privind implicarea în promovarea și apărarea propriilor drepturi compararea unor mesaje cuprinse în texte (orale și scrise), programe de televiziune, pagini web, filme, publicitate, muzică, în care sunt promovate drepturile copilului/în care sunt încălcate unele drepturi</p>
<p>Muzică și mișcare: 2.2. Redarea cântecelor însoțite de mișcarea sugerată de text. 3.4. Mișcarea liberă pe muzica audiată</p>	<p>Istorie, clasa a V-a 1.2. Identificarea diferențelor temporale dintre evenimente și procese istorice 2.3.Stabilirea de asemănări și deosebiri referitoare la evenimente/procese istorice, pe baza unor surse diferite</p>
<p>Arte vizuale și activități practice 2.3. Realizarea de aplicații/compoziții / obiecte / construcții simple, pe baza interesului direct.</p>	<p>Educație interculturală, clas. a VI-a 1.3. Analizarea unor situații în acord/dezacord cu valorile și principiile societății interculturale 2.3. Rezolvarea în perechi/echipă a unor sarcini de lucru referitoare la viața într-o societate interculturală 3.1.Participarea la rezolvarea problemelor comunității, manifestând empatie culturală în relațiile cu persoane aparținând unor culturi diferite</p>

Tabel nr. 1. Abordare integrată: ciclul primar vs. ciclul gimnazial

Obiective operaționale pe care le putem deriva din competențele specifice de mai sus coroborate:

O 1: Să asculte cu atenție cântecul și apoi lectura-model a fablei *Noi, albinele* de Călin Gruia vs. poanta Desene animate/ cântece etc. (v. Anexa 1, Tabel intertextual) , respectiv *Greierele și furnica*, de Alecu Donici și/ sau Jean de La Fontaine vs. Text contemporan/ Gluma/ identificând 1-3 personaje principale din 1-3 texte numindu-le în ordinea cronologică a apariției în desfășurarea acțiunii (trântorul, fluturile, albina bătrână), găsind 1-3 trăsături comune cu personajul greierele din cântecul interpretat de ei, cântec audiat cu 3 mai zile mai devreme direct de pe youtube

<https://www.google.ro/search?q=greierele+si+furnica+cantec&oq=Greierele+%3Bi+furnica&aqs=chrome.5.69i57j0l5.8859j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3prQPJd5ILE>

O 2: să recunoască pe baza imaginilor din banda desenată/ desenele animate 1-4 personaje din *Noi, albinele* de Călin Gruia / vs. *Greierele și furnica*, de La Fontaine vs. Grigore Alexandrescu atribuindu-le 1-3 trăsături completate prin cuvinte, gesturi și mimică din textul-fabulă, asociind personajele necuvântătoare cu diverse alte tipuri umane (omul trândav/ leneșul; bunica înțeleaptă; naturalul/ frumosul din natură/ artistul), pe baza unei conversații de verificare a povestirii, combinată cu cea euristică;

O 3: Să identifice prin 1-3 trăsături opuse atitudinile diferite/ contrare ale personajele principale cu privire la legătura dintre muncă și hrană (acceptare/ conflictualitate), folosind cuvinte cu sensuri identice și sensuri diferite/ opuse în funcție de contexte literare și de viață diferite, comparând fragmente diferite de texte orale de la origine (Jean de La Fontaine) până la varianta modernă, care privește experiența cotidiană a elevilor, corelând-o cu date biografice ale unor artiști preferați de ei, asociind emoticoane elementelor verbale („bunicuța” calmă/ blândă/ înțelegătoare/ răbdătoare vs. supărat/ iritat/ furios) combinate cu cele nonverbale (mimică) și cele paraverbale (intonație, tonul agresiv, ridicat și ritmul agitat/ neliniștit/ alert în vorbire) ajutându-se și de audiția materialului Ada Milea, *Greierele și furnica*, după La Fontaine;

O 4: să continue textul interpretând un joc de 3 roluri din procesul trântorului (apărător/ artistul, acuzator/ viespe, judecător/ albina cea vârstnică) asociind minim 10 replici cu învățăturile prețioase ale textului în corelație și cu 1-3 proverbe (Ce semeni, aceea culegi/ mănânci; ...)/ folosindu-se de cuvinte, gesturi și mimică diferită pentru fiecare rol/ atitudine/ stare/ emoție (tehnica jurnalistului cameleon) și trimițând la **elemente autobiografice** conforme propriului univers afectiv.

Metode: învățarea prin descoperire, discuția-rețea (minidezbaterea), jocul de rol (pregătirea lui) iar Forme de organizare: frontală, individuală, pe echipe.

Materiale și mijloace didactice: tabla, laptop, flipchart, fișe de lucru, imagini, personaje din polistiren, cutia de cuvinte, cartonașe, plicuri cu sarcini de lucru

Strategia didactică mizează pe o didactică a comunicării, prin echilibrarea rolurilor de comunicator și facilitator al comunicării pe care cadrul didactic¹ ar trebui să și le asume în mod echilibrat într-o proiectare interactivă, dinamică și coerentă pentru care propunem o variantă mai jos:

Cadrul didactic comunicator	Cadrul didactic facilitator al comunicării/ Comunică elevii
<p>Activitatea debutează <i>cu o învioreare de 5 minute</i> pe muzică de relaxare, pian și flaut https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YrtkVHUawI . Se vor face <i>exerciții de mișcare:</i></p> <p><i>Cum vă simțiți astăzi?</i></p> <p>Înainte de a începe ora recapitulăm literele învățate prin extragerea din <i>Cufărul cu cuvinte fermecate</i> a cinci cuvinte formate din literele învățate. Astfel, cinci elevi vor extrage și vor citi cuvintele găsite.</p> <p>Le precizez elevilor faptul că vom lucra la CLR, DP, MM, AVAP vom cânta, ne vom mișca, ne vom distra. Sunteți pregătiți să începem?</p> <p>Realizez trecerea la lecția integrată cu disciplina de bază Comunicare în Limba Română –cântec https://www.google.ro/search?q=greierele+si+furnica+cantec&oq=Greierele+%3Bi+furnica&aqs=chrome.5.69i57j0l5.8859j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=</p>	<p>Elevii execută comenzile și realizează corect exercițiile pentru înviorearea de dimineață.</p> <p>-Astăzi ne simțim foarte bine!</p> <p>-Da!</p> <p>- Cred că este indolent</p>

¹ pentru verificarea aplicabilității metodelor/ strategiei am colaborat cu fosta mea studentă, învățătoarea Alexandra Mădălina Marian de la Școala Gimnazială „Nicolae Bălcescu” din Târgu-Mureș

<p><u>3prOPJd5ILE</u> și propun concentrarea atenției asupra găsirii a 1-3 cuvinte care arată cum este personajul principal. După terminarea audiției întreb elevii despre ce cred că este vorba în această poezie – cântec. - Cine este personajul principal despre care am cântat? - Ce face acesta/ aceasta? - Cum este el/ ea? - Ce simțiți pentru el/ ea?</p> <p>E bine să fie așa?</p> <p>Am o surpriză pentru voi! Dragi copii, în cele ce urmează am să vă citesc o poveste foarte interesantă care este în legătură cu poezia - cântec pe care am audiat-o. Doar că trebuie să vă ciuliți urechile, să deschideți ochii și să fiți foarte atenți, să vă mențineți o poziție corectă în bănci, toate acestea vă ajută să vă păstrați atenția concentrată pe ceea ce citesc. Va trebui să identificați 1-4 personaje principale și numele lor în ordinea cronologică a apariției în desfășurarea acțiunii, asociindu-le cu un tip de oameni dându-le nume/ porecle (La sfârșit doresc să văd cine a înțeles cel mai bine povestea și cine îmi răspunde corect la întrebări! Sunteți pregătiți? Pot începe?</p> <p>În timp ce citesc voi introduce în scenă cele patru insecte (construite din polistiren – vezi imaginea) în ordinea în care apar în poveste. Pe parcursul lecturii mă opresc când întâlnim cuvinte necunoscute pentru a le explica în contextul poveștii (v. Anexa 1, Tabel intertextual/ subliniate)</p>	<p>(leneș), iar albina este insolentă (nepăsătoare, cinică), el visător, ea pragmatică/ practică, el îngrijorat, înfometat, neliniștit, neputincios vs. ea liniștită, calmă, fără probleme - dar și el haios, stărnind compasiune vs. ea prea serioasă, gravă, conflictuală</p> <p>Greierele/ Furnica/ Greierele și furnica/ amândoi</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="818 699 1175 919"> <thead> <tr> <th>Da/ Bine</th> <th>Neutru/ Indeciși</th> <th>NU/ Rău</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Milă, compasiune, empatie, toleranță, acceptare</td> <td>indiferență/ nepăsare nu știu</td> <td>Furie/ Supărare /</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Copiii sunt pregătiți pentru poveste.</p> <p>trântorul – Copilul (copilărie) și /sau Leneșul/ Furiosul/ Nervosul/ Încruntatul (maturitate)</p>	Da/ Bine	Neutru/ Indeciși	NU/ Rău	Milă, compasiune, empatie, toleranță, acceptare	indiferență/ nepăsare nu știu	Furie/ Supărare /
Da/ Bine	Neutru/ Indeciși	NU/ Rău					
Milă, compasiune, empatie, toleranță, acceptare	indiferență/ nepăsare nu știu	Furie/ Supărare /					

<p>După terminarea lecturii (vezi anexa 3/ tabel intertextual adresez următoarele întrebări și repovestim textul pe baza imaginilor din manual: -Câte insecte ați reținut ? -Unde a plecat trântorul?</p> <p>v. manualul</p> <p>În cele ce urmează elevii vor avea de rezolvat patru cerințe / probe date de personajele prezente în fața lor. Pe spatele fiecărui personaj – machetă este așezat cât de un plic roșu. În ordinea cronologică a intrării lor în scenă vor fi plasate și plicurile.</p> <p>Cerința 1 a trântorului: Cerința 1 a fluturului: Cerința 1 a albinei vârstnice: Cerința 2 a trântorului: Cerința 2 a fluturului: Cerința 2 a albinei vârstnice:</p> <p>Mai avem o ultimă sarcină... Cea de excelență +++ Cine credeți că este în măsură să o adreseze? De la cine ați vrea să luați lecții? Să învățați ceva important? Cerința a 3 a albinei vârstnice: ea își va introduce prezenta o prietenă/ surată... Imaginează-ți că ești o furnică sau o albină. Povestește colegilor cum îți petreci o zi din timpul verii. Cum vi se pare? Ce vreți să fiți? Toată lumea albina? De ce vă e teamă de furnică? Hai să vă ajut eu să vedem de ce sunt surate/ rude/ înrudite/ de ce seamănă albina și furnica? Interpretez poezia... Recit poezia <i>Gospodina</i>, de Otilia Cazimir.</p>	<p>fluturile – Frumosul/ Naturalul/ Artistul/ Omul liber; viespea – Ocrotitorul/ Luptătorul/ Eroul albina vârstnică / Bătrânică/ Bunicuța/ Înteapta</p> <p>Elevii sunt atenți la explicațiile cuvintelor necunoscute.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="820 714 1166 955"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="820 714 974 745">Fluturile</th> <th data-bbox="974 714 1166 745">Albina vârstnică</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="820 745 974 955">vreau să fiu liber, să mă joc</td> <td data-bbox="974 745 1166 955">să știu cât mai multe, să fiu răbdătoare, politicoasă, înțelegătoare etc.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Furnica.../ Dar și Albina vârstnică/ Înteapta Pentru că se aseamănă/ se adună/ amândouă sunt harnice/ politicoase/ grijulii față de stup/ mușuroi...gospodine</p>	Fluturile	Albina vârstnică	vreau să fiu liber, să mă joc	să știu cât mai multe, să fiu răbdătoare, politicoasă, înțelegătoare etc.
Fluturile	Albina vârstnică				
vreau să fiu liber, să mă joc	să știu cât mai multe, să fiu răbdătoare, politicoasă, înțelegătoare etc.				

<p>Descoperiți cine este....furnica... Ce relație poate fi între ele? Cu cine seamănă ele din viața noastră, de zi cu zi?</p> <p>Apreciez sarcinile corect rezolvate, apreciez răspunsurile fiecăruia, drept urmare, le spun să-și deschidă auxiliarul de Comunicare în Limba Română la pagina 36 și să conceapă un joc de rol/ proces pe 3 roluri (apărătorul/ judecătorul/ trântorul) după audierea unui joc de rol/ a unei dramatizări care integrează toate rolurile în interpretarea actriței Ada Milea, Teatrul Național Tg. Mureș. Se cere celor trei 3 echipe:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. să identifice replici/ mimică/ gesturi ale greierului 2. să identifice replici/ mimică/ gesturi ale albinei 3. să identifice replici/ mimică/ gesturi ale judecătorului/ trântor <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pk_twogW8S8</p> <p>Se asociază trăsăturilor găsite și elemente:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - paraverbale (intonajie gravă- neutră - ironică, ritm și flux al vorbirii: alert, rapid vs. lent, calm) - nonverbale (privire –ochii - mimica- expresia feței) <p>După aceste modele, se solicită pregătirea unui joc de rol în echipe de 4 elevi pentru săptămâna viitoare (un rol de scenarist/ regizor în plus față de acestea 3).</p>	<p>una poate fi Mama mai tânără/ furnica/ iar Albina vârstnică - bunica</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="813 327 959 512">Greierile</th> <th data-bbox="959 327 1112 512">Judecătorul/ muzicianul interpret/ trântor/ elevul</th> <th data-bbox="1112 327 1232 512">Albina</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 512 959 730">amabil/ spășit/ reținut „surioară...”, „am...”</td> <td data-bbox="959 512 1112 730">afabil/ condescent/ înțelegător „Aăă...” schimbarea tonalității, a mimicii feței mai caldă</td> <td data-bbox="1112 512 1232 730">rece, agresivă „n-am”, „n-am”, „n-am”</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 730 959 949">neputincios , rugător „am...”, „am ...” „Dă-mi și mie...” „Pân la primăvară”</td> <td data-bbox="959 730 1112 949">înțelept / știe/ înțelege că toți am trecut cel puțin o dată/ un an prin asemenea situație</td> <td data-bbox="1112 730 1232 949">nepăsătoare „N-am...”, „Toată lumea știe...”</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 949 959 1226">enervat, nervos „Nu mă evervă”, „Nu mă enerva... că sunt nervos” „Am cântat”</td> <td data-bbox="959 949 1112 1226"></td> <td data-bbox="1112 949 1232 1226">furioasă: „Astă vară ce-ai făcut” repetat de 3 ori „Acuma joacă...”</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 1226 959 1394">recalcitrant / pune condiții „Îmi dai ori...”</td> <td data-bbox="959 1226 1112 1394"></td> <td data-bbox="1112 1226 1232 1394">nepăsătoare „Aăăă...” (limbaj nonverbal expresiv)</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 1394 959 1537">obosit, resemnat „Agățând vioara-n grindă”</td> <td data-bbox="959 1394 1112 1537"></td> <td data-bbox="1112 1394 1232 1537">cinică, indiferentă</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="813 1537 959 1606">agresiv, răzbună-tor „Înșfăcă</td> <td data-bbox="959 1537 1112 1606">„Tăcere... Amândoi stăteau ca</td> <td data-bbox="1112 1537 1232 1606">redușă la tăcere, agresată,</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Greierile	Judecătorul/ muzicianul interpret/ trântor/ elevul	Albina	amabil/ spășit/ reținut „surioară...”, „am...”	afabil/ condescent/ înțelegător „Aăă...” schimbarea tonalității, a mimicii feței mai caldă	rece, agresivă „n-am”, „n-am”, „n-am”	neputincios , rugător „am...”, „am ...” „Dă-mi și mie...” „Pân la primăvară”	înțelept / știe/ înțelege că toți am trecut cel puțin o dată/ un an prin asemenea situație	nepăsătoare „N-am...”, „Toată lumea știe...”	enervat, nervos „Nu mă evervă”, „Nu mă enerva... că sunt nervos” „Am cântat”		furioasă: „Astă vară ce-ai făcut” repetat de 3 ori „Acuma joacă...”	recalcitrant / pune condiții „Îmi dai ori...”		nepăsătoare „Aăăă...” (limbaj nonverbal expresiv)	obosit, resemnat „Agățând vioara-n grindă”		cinică, indiferentă	agresiv, răzbună-tor „Înșfăcă	„Tăcere... Amândoi stăteau ca	redușă la tăcere, agresată,
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agresiv, răzbună-tor „Înșfăcă	„Tăcere... Amândoi stăteau ca	redușă la tăcere, agresată,																				

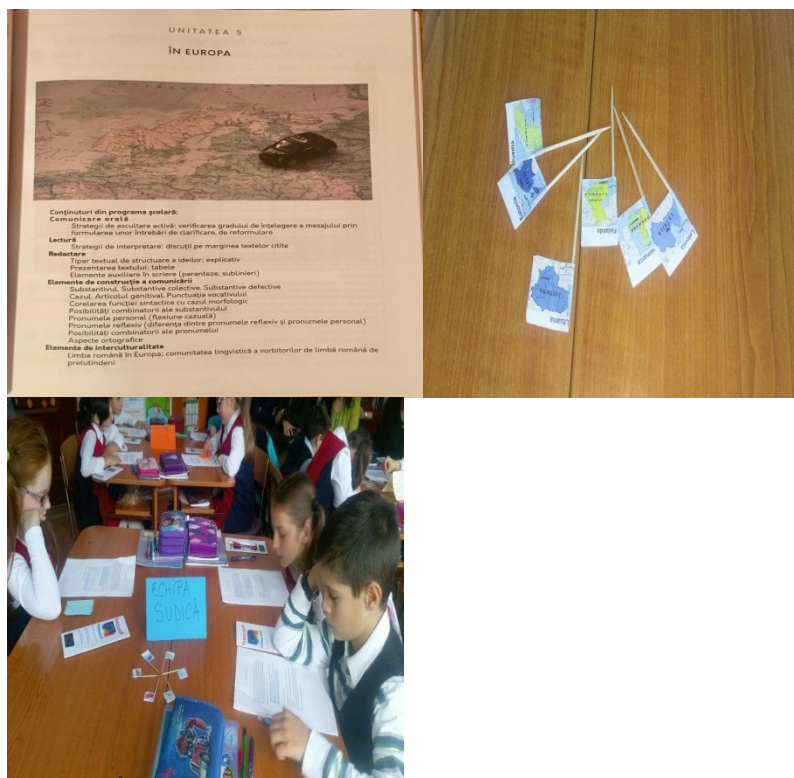
	furnica”	muți...”	bătută
	bunăvo- ință agresivă „Ei, acuma mă-m- prumuți?... ”		înțelegătoa- re, calm/ amabi- litate forțată „Cu plăcere...”

2.2. „România și Uniunea Europeană. O experiență interdisciplinară multimodală (2016). De la manualul de Educație civică - cls. a IV-a la manualul de Limba și literatura română, clasa a VI-a/ 2018”.



Oricât ar fi de fastidios și redundant, este însă necesar să afirmăm că în diversele noastre ipostaze, prin diversele noastre roluri și funcții, pe diverse niveluri și în diverse proporții, fiecare dintre noi suntem implicați în problematica de mai sus, avem opinii, dezbatem, ne informăm și asistăm mai mult sau mai puțin la „Brexit” ori alte dezbateri. Fie că am fi dascăli și/ sau psihologi, funcționari publici sau reprezentanți ai mass-media, fie că am fi asistenți sociali ori medici, globalizarea întâmpină mereu un crez personal, construit pe valori perene precum cultul strămoșilor și respectul proprietății. Totuși, de-a lungul demersului nostru, vom argumenta convingerea că „singurele bunuri de care nu putem fi deposedați sunt cele interioare”, completat de un altul: „A deține sau nu astfel de *bunuri interioare* e o chestiune mai curând de pedagogie decât de politică.”

Pentru pregătirea activității de două ore (100 de minute) s-au folosit pe lângă manuale:

- texte multimodale - nonliterare și literare, iconi și simboluri/
https://europa.eu/kids-corner/index_ro.htm
- hărți interactive, jocuri educative, steaguri confecționate, după modelul celor de mai jos;
https://europa.eu/kids-corner/memorygame/index_ro.htm#/choose_level.



Proiectul didactic descrie detaliat integrarea acestora în activitatea clasei a IV-a de la Școala Gimnazială „Serafim Duicu”, activitate desfășurată în data de 10 noiembrie 2016 în cadrul unei activități de formare continuă sub forma unui cerc pedagogic al învățătoarelor din Târgu-Mureș.

 <p>Austria</p> <p>Stat membru UE de la: 1 ianuarie 1995/ Capitala: Viena/ Suprafața: 83 879 km²/ Populația: 8 576 261 (2015)/ Moneda: Euro. Stat membru al zonei euro de la 1 ianuarie 1999</p>	 <p>Germania</p> <p>Stat membru UE de la: 1 ianuarie 1958/ Capitala: Berlin/ Suprafața: 357 376 km²/ Populația: 81 197 537 (2015) / Moneda: Euro. Stat membru al zonei euro de la 1 ianuarie 1999</p>
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Au fost selectate/ citite/ înțelese texte nonliterare din tabelul de mai jos (Anexa 1 și Anexa 2):

<p>U.E.: despre ce este vorba?</p> <p>U.E. a avut un drum lung de parcurs. În Uniunea Europeană sunt acum 28 de state membre. Din anumite puncte de vedere, U.E. seamănă cu o clasă din școala ta. Ca în orice comunitate unită, cei puternici îi ajută pe cei slabi. Și, așa cum într-o clasă unor copii le place matematica, iar altora muzica, țările U.E. pot avea interese diferite unele față de celelalte. Pentru a trăi împreună în pace, trebuie să îi acceptăm pe ceilalți așa cum sunt. Fiecare țară se conduce după propriile sale tradiții, propria limbă și cultură. Această abordare este foarte frumos redată în motto-ul U.E.: UNIȚI ÎN DIVERSITATE. În ciuda diversității, țările din U.E. au scopuri comune și doresc:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ca toate țările U.E. să prospere și să aibă condiții mai bune de viață, U.E. dispune deja de cel mai mare spațiu economic din lume; - pace și securitate în Europa și în lume; în loc să intre în conflicte armate, mai degrabă se așează la o masă rotundă și rezolvă problemele discutând; - ca toți cetățenii U.E. să se bucure de aceleași drepturi și libertăți fundamentale, să trăiască fără discriminare și să se bucure de șanse egale. <p><i>Cinci lucruri interesante de reținut</i></p>	<p>De ce nu sunt toate țările europene în U.E.?</p> <p>Să luăm pe rând statele de pe continentul european care nu au aderat (încă) la Uniune:</p> <p>Elveția. Are prea mulți bani ca să fie în UE; sistemul lor bancar se bazează pe păstrarea confidențialității clienților, astfel că foarte mulți europeni cu afaceri mai puțin curate își țin banii acolo. Dacă ar adera la UE, ar fi forțată să adopte regulamentele comune pentru bănci, pierzând astfel multe conturi. Fiind membră în spațiul economic european, are multe din avantajele statelor membre UE; doar o situație economică foarte proastă (greu de imaginat) și presiuni mari ale Bruxelles-ului pe latura financiară ar putea determina aderarea.</p> <p>Norvegia. Are prea mult petrol ca să fie în UE; preferă să beneficieze singură de avantajele, având un surplus bugetar și rezerve enorme. În plus, nu-i convine politica comună a UE în privința pescuitului. Poate după terminarea petrolului va fi mai ușor de convins, deocamdată se bucură ca și Elveția de toate avantajele spațiului comun european.</p> <p>Islanda. Tara era mai apropiată de Statele Unite decât de Uniunea Europeană, având relații bune de afaceri cu americanii. După ce i-a lovit criza financiară au cerut de urgență ajutor de la Bruxelles, după care au făcut cerere de aderare. Probabil vor fi primiți în scurt timp, având în vedere populația mică și nivelul mare de dezvoltare și apropierea de standardele europene.</p> <p>Turcia. Un stat dificil care dorește de câteva decenii să intre în UE; după terminarea perioadei loviturilor de stat succesive, are acum o oarecare stabilitate politică și economică, dar are mari probleme cu comunitatea kurdă, cu respectarea drepturilor fundamentale ale omului și cu interferența islamismului în politica statului.</p>
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<p>- În Uniunea Europeană există 28 de state membre, din care 19 folosesc euro ca monedă națională.</p> <p>- Monedele euro au o față comună, iar cealaltă poartă o emblemă națională a țării care a emis moneda.</p> <p>- UE își sărbătorește ziua de naștere la 9 mai. La data respectivă, în 1950, ministrul francez de externe, Robert Schuman, a propus ideile care fac din UE ceea ce e astăzi.</p> <p>- Piața unică înseamnă că oamenii, produsele și serviciile pot circula liber între țările UE.</p> <p>- Uniunea are o Cartă a drepturilor fundamentale.</p> <p>Sursa: http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index_ro.html</p>	<p>Deși este candidat oficial, vor mai trece 10-20 de ani până la aderare.</p> <p>Croatia. Candidat premiant la aderare, va fi probabil prima țară primită în viitorul apropiat. A reușit să adopte toată legislația necesară și și-a reglementat situația granițelor cu vecinii.</p> <p>Monaco, San Marino, Lichenstein, Andorra, Vatican. State prea mici pentru a fi membre în UE; sunt “de facto” în uniune, dar nu au o reprezentare politică în structurile sale.</p> <p>Israel. Având toți vecinii Orientul mijlociu împotriva sa, Israelul se simte mai apropiat de Europa decât de Asia. Având însă relații speciale cu americanii și conflicte cu statele arabe, este greu de crezut că va fi primit prea curând în clubul european.</p> <p>Sursa: http://www.avarvarei.ro/de-ce-nu-sunt-toate-tarile-europene-in-ue</p>
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La aceste texte nonliterare (hărți online, steaguri, simboluri etc.) li se adaugă textul literar/ de graniță/ autobiografic al lui Ioan Slavici, *Lumea prin care am trecut*:

Ioan SLAVICI, *Lumea prin care am trecut* (Anexa 3):

Cap. Copilărint laolaltă cu ceilalți

Așa au venit lucrurile că eu mă simțeam pe o mare întindere pretutindeni acasă./.../ Pretutindeni pe unde mă duceam, oamenii mă îmbrățișau cu dragoste, încât minune nu-i dacă m-am pătruns în curând de gândul că lumea e alcătuită din oameni care mă iubesc și pe care am deci să-i iubesc și eu. Abia acum, la zile de bătrânețe, îmi dau seama că această dragoste obștească se mărginea la români. Nu trăiau românii împreună, ci alături cu ceilalți, ce-i drept în bună pace, dar nu împreună. Nu tot așa și eu, deși mama stăruia cu multă hotărâre în gândul: cu străinii din același blid să nu mănânci. /.../

După ce soseam însă acasă, ceilalți își căutau de drum și se duceau mai departe, iară eu rămâneam singur în mijlocul acelor care-mi petrecusem mai nainte luminoasele zile.

Cap. Pace și bună înțelegere

“Când întâlnești în calea ta un român - îmi zicea mama - să-i zici: <Bună ziua!>, dar maghiarului să-i zici: <Io napot!>, iar neamțului: <Guten

Tag!>, și treaba fiecăruia dintre dânșii e cum îți dă răspuns. Tu datorია să ți-o faci și față cu cei ce nu și-o fac pe a lor față cu tine.“

Ea mă muștra deci cu multă asprime când afla că strig și eu “Ungur bungur!” și “Neamț cotofleant!”. “Săracii de ei - îmi zicea - nu sunt vinovați că n-au avut parte să fie români!”

În gândul lumii, din care dânsa făcea parte, vinovat, chiar greu vinovat era cel ce prin purtările sale /.../ îi făcea pe ai săi fie de rușine, fie mai ales urgisiți.

Acestea și multe altele de felul acestora mama nici nu le-a născocit din capul ei, nici de prin cărți nu le-a scos, ci le-a-nvățat de la lumea în mijlocul căreia a crescut și-și petrecea viața. Așa gândeau și simțeau șirienii și fără îndoială tot ca dânșii toți românii cu mintea limpede.”

Sursa: <http://books.corect.com/ro/books/preview/361/pdf>

Proiect didactic (1)

Arie curriculară/ Modul integrat: / Limbă și comunicare/ Istorie/ Om și societate/ Geografie

Clasa a IV-a A (nivel foarte bun) – clasa a VI-a

Disciplina/ -ele: Educație civică/ Limba și literatura română/ Istorie/ Geografie/

Subiectul: Uniunea Europeană. România printre stelele Uniunii

Europene/ Călătorie printre simbolurile Uniunii Europene

Texte nonliterare / suport principal: UE: despre ce este vorba. Cinci

lucruri interesante de reținut (http://europa.eu/kids-corner/index_ro.htm)

De ce nu sunt toate țările europene în

UE (sursa: <http://www.avarvarei.ro/de-ce-nu-sunt-toate-tarile-europene-in-ue/>)

Țara care nu va intra niciodată în UE (<http://www.capital.ro/tara-care-nu-va-intra-niciodata-in-uniunea-europeana-salariul-mediul-este-de-5000-de-euro-iar.html>)

Texte literare (suporturi auxiliare): Ioan Slavici, *Lumea prin care am trecut* (*Copilărinte laolaltă cu ceilalți; Pace și bună înțelegere:*)

Tipul LECȚIEI: predare-învățare-evaluare de cunoștințe/ sistematizarea cunoștințelor

Competențe generale, sociale și civice: conform cu profilul de formare al absolventului la finalul ciclului primar, construit pe baza descriptivului nivelului elementar de deținere a competențelor cheie (OMEN 337/2013 și programele școlare aprobate prin OMEN nr. 5003/2014; OMEN nr. 5001/2014; OMEN nr. 5004/2014)

Competențe cheie/ transversale (http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/strategic-framework/skills-development_ro) cf. Tratatul de la Bologna) Competențe sociale și civice/ Comunicare în limba maternă / Comunicare în limbi străine / Competențe matematice (A) și competențe de bază în științe și tehnologii (B) / Competență digitală / A învăța să înveți / Spirit de inițiativă și antreprenoriat / Sensibilizare și exprimare culturală			
Clasa a IV-a – Modulul „România și U.E.”			
Limba și literatura română	Educație civică	Geografie	Istorie
3.1. Formularea de concluzii simple pe baza lecturii textelor informative sau literare 2.4. Inițierea și menținerea unei interacțiuni în vederea rezolvării de probleme individuale sau de grup 3.3. Extragerea dintr-un text a unor elemente semnificative pentru a susține o opinie referitoare la mesajul citit 4.4. Povestirea pe scurt a unei secvențe dintr-o poveste/ dintr-un film/ desen animat / a unei activități/ a unei întâmplări imaginate/trăite	1.2. Identificarea unor elemente relevante pentru apartenența la diferite comunități (locală, națională, europeană) 2.2. Recunoașterea unor comportamente moral-civice din viața cotidiană 3.1. Relaționarea pozitivă cu ceilalți, în rezolvarea unor sarcini simple de lucru	2.2. Aplicarea unor elemente și cunoștințe dobândite la alte discipline (științe ale naturii, istorie, științe sociale) în descrierea și explicarea realității înconjurătoare 3.3. Raportarea corectă a poziției unor elemente pe reprezentările cartografice	1.1. Ordonarea cronologică a unor evenimente din viața familiei, a faptelor prezentate într-o situație de învățare (geneza și evoluția UE) 2.1. Identificarea de surse istorice utilizând o varietate de instrumente, inclusiv tehnologiile de informare și comunicare 2.3. Identificarea, pe baza surselor, a cauzelor, a consecințelor și a elementelor care s-au schimbat sau nu într-o anumită perioadă de timp 4.1. Determinarea semnificației unor evenimente din trecut și din prezent 4.3. Manifestarea unei atitudini deschise în cazul unor situații care presupun comunicarea

Cele șase **obiective operaționale** derivate în urma integrării temei în viziune transdisciplinară:

- Să identifice **1/ 2/ 3 elemente relevante pentru apartenența la diferite comunități** (locală – etnie; națională – cetățenie; europeană / globală – membru al UE/ cetățean al lumii) prin elemente de transfer inter- și transdisciplinar: a da exemple **de simboluri naționale (steag/ imn național), valori, tradiții** folosind harta Europei vs. harta UE, cartonașe și steaguri integrate într-o machetă a UE care mărește harta din manual/ site-ul kids de aprox. 5 ori (raportul manual: machetă este aprox. / simbol matematic 1: 5);

- Să asocieze **valori morale și norme morale** prezente în **comportamente prosociale / pozitive vs. antisociale/** negative pornind de la date ordonate cronologic ce țin de istoria UE/ țării-României/ comunității locale – târgumureșean. -că / familiei- arborele genealogic, originea numelui etc./ istoria personală;

- să desprindă **1/ 2/ 3 avantaje vs. dezavantaje** care să susțină o posibilă **minidezbatere privind tema/ moțiunea/ problema** dacă: „**E mai bine să fii vs/ să nu fii membru într-o echipă** (de lucru/ dans/ sport etc.)/ **comunități locale/ regionale/ UE/ NATO**” folosind acte de vorbire/ limbaj adecvate sarcinii de lucru (fosirea **de sinonime vs/ antonime** pentru a pune în evidență **opoziția avantaje vs/ dezavantaje**, dar și **complementaritatea** lor, integrarea / întrețeserea acestora prin încrucișare într-un întreg, fapt care **să se reflecte în limbajul utilizat** pentru susținerea simplă a unei păreri: **eu cred/ consider/ opinia mea este/ pe de o parte.../ pe de altă parte.../ nu numai..., ci și**);

- să extragă dintr-un text **1/2/3 elemente semnificative pentru a susține o opinie** referitoare la mesajul citit din textul literar al lui Ioan Slavici, *Copilărintă laolaltă cu ceilalți / Pace și bună înțelegere* din volumul *Lumea prin care am trecut*, punând în evidență minim **2 legături între textul literar și textele nonliterare** (tema lecției/ lecțiilor – UE/ „locuri unde mă simt acasă”, **valori morale, norme morale, raporturi cu ceilalți etc.**);

- să formuleze o opinie referitoare la **mesajul povestirii / fragmentului autobiografic** conform propriului univers afectiv, raportându-l la propria experiență de viață în Târgu-Mureș/ județul Mureș cu **caracter multi-/ intercultural**, prin analogie cu viața personajului din text și / sau a altor personaje literare (Iisus/ exilat/ BIBLIA/ N.T./ Parabola fiului rătăcitor/ Parabola semănătorului/ a Bunului Samaritan) precum și din viața reală;

- să construiască o pagină de jurnal de lectură (din alte memorii/ autobiografii ca de ex. Mihai Eminescu, Constantin Brâncuși, Mircea

Eliade etc.) sau autobiografie (reală/ imaginară) de 50-70-90 de cuvinte (scrise în clasă) ca suport pentru tema dezvoltată apoi în 100-150-200 de cuvinte, fără și /sau cu ajutorul unor întrebări, exprimându-și opinia prin sublinierea propriilor gânduri, sentimente și impresii ca suport pentru construirea portofoliului (proiect/ pliant/ ghid) cu tema: „În ce țară europeană aș vrea/ ar fi mai bine să învăț/ să muncesc/ să trăiesc” (care va fi evaluat peste 2 săptămâni, după schema orientativă din tabelul / bibliografia/ linkurile de mai jos) și cu trimiteri la antiexemple (țări din Africa, de exemplu, unde drepturile copiilor nu sunt respectate și aceștia sunt exploatați prematur – vezi Aurul negru din Congo sau cum este susținută industria electronică prin conflicte sângeroase și exploatarea copiilor din Congo/ Africa: <https://www.totb.ro/foto-pretul-lucrurilor-pretioase-de-unde-vin-mineralele-folosite-pentru-electronicele-noastre/>):

**ÎN CE ȚARĂ EUROPEANĂ AȘ VREA SĂ ÎNVĂȚ/ SĂ
MUNCESC / SĂ TRĂIESC**

**METODA MOZAIC: ASPECTE / CRITERII DE SELECȚIE/
Bibliografie**

Grupuri mamă, apoi 5 echipe de lucru, în funcție de criteriile de selecție - nu grupuri simple, ci echipe, coordonate de un lider, fiecare având un secretar / jurnal de activitate și membri având un rol pe care și-l duce cu responsabilitate până la capăt

NR. crt.	Exploratori / descoperiri	Muzicieni/ melodii/ hituri/ videoclipuri	Invenții/ inventatori	Sportivi
	http://www.ziarulevenimentul.ro/stiri/stiinta-si-tehnica/cei-mai-mari-10-exploratori-ai-lumii--15591.html	http://www.mediafax.ro/life-inedit/topul-celor-mai-vizionate-clipuri-pe-youtube-romania-in-2015-video-14913979	http://www.livescience.com/33749-top-10-inventions-changed-world.html	http://ivan.smith.co.uk/?page_id=475
		http://stirileprotv.ro/ilikeit/smart-things/decizie-radicala-luata-de-unul-dintre-cei-mai-		http://ivan.smith.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/201

		mari-muzicienii-ai-lumii-si-a-sters-conturile-de-facebook-twitter-si-youtube.html		1/06/Greatest49.jpg
		http://www.therichest.com/top-lists/top-100-richest-musicians/		

Nr. crt.	ACTORI/ REGIZORI/ MOUVIES	TURISM/ IMAGES/ Best Hollidays	Well-helled jobs	Universit ăți / sau la alegere altceva

Concluzii

Aceste **idei oferite ca schimbări ale practicii** pe care programele de formare a cadrelor didactice/ a elevilor le pot lua în considerare în pregătirea cadrelor didactice pentru a integra instrumentele literației multimodale care extind învățarea cursurilor TIC din trecut și **pot demonstra puterea transformatoare a noii literații media în învățare**. Fiind o practică semnificativă cu tehnologiile digitale pe parcursul tuturor programelor de studiu, programele de formare a cadrelor didactice ar fi bine să ofere o modelare autentică a integrării alfabetizării multimodale în cadrul curriculum-ului. Profesorii pot fi împuterniciți să exploreze și să-și modeleze propriile căi de înțelegere între contexte și experiențe conexe. Oferite ca standarde de practică, aceste metodologii infuzate au potențialul de a extinde și de a spori învățarea cadrelor didactice și, de asemenea, a elevilor; de asemenea, pot servi drept cadru pentru instruirea în sălile de clasă ale viitorului.

Cum am sugerat, poate fi util să **proiectați spații colaborative de învățare**, deoarece schimbarea designului spațiului de învățare poate acționa ca un catalizator. Reexaminând peisajul clasei și metodele de instruire, programele de educare a cadrelor didactice pot promova angajamentul și pot oferi oportunități de colaborare în rețea/parteneriate, rolul profesorului deplasându-se de la un lector îndepărtat la un facilitator al învățării: schimbarea rolurilor profesorilor și ale elevilor/ studenților poate permite fiecăruia să facă parte din schimbul de idei și schimbul de cunoștințe să se producă realmente, îmbogățirea având loc reciproc.

Schimbarea focalizării de la „substantivele” educației mereu în schimbare la „verbele” de descoperire îndemnând continuu elevii: să se angajeze și să creeze și să se conecteze și să exploreze în timp real, alegând materialele și metodologiile cu ajutorului telefonului mobil folosit ca PC/ sursă de căutare. Proiectele de interes care prioritizează vocea elevilor/ a studenților, creativitatea și alegerea prezentării – comunicării lor pot să le permită profesorilor să lege teoria de practică în moduri puternice și personalizate.

Este de preferat să încurajați ancheta și investigația lumii solicitându-le elevilor să caute soluții la probleme de importanță globală. Subiecte sensibile cu baze profund disciplinare și interdisciplinare pot oferi elevilor/ studenților posibilitatea de a gândi critic, iar profesorii pot folosi textele multimodale pentru a examina problemele, pentru a aduna informații și pentru a comunica decizii. Prin acest proces de cercetare, elevii/ studenții și cadrele didactice pot folosi tehnologii digitale și se pot deplasa în timp și spațiu, de-a lungul unei continuități a integrării tehnologice, de la trecut la viitor, prin prezentul continuu.

Un alt aspect important considerăm că este să sprijiniți auto-eficacitatea prin reflecție prin dedicarea de timp pentru discuții/ dezbateri poate pune accentul pe gândirea și reflecția metacognitivă. Programele de educare a cadrelor didactice pot promova auto-eficacitatea profesorilor prin încurajarea inovației, inspirând curiozitatea și oferind oportunități sigure de a-și asuma riscuri prin explorarea ideilor. Înțelegând puterile predictive de auto-eficacitate și atitudini pozitive față de tehnologie, programele creează în mod obișnuit cursuri de integrare tehnologică care modelează utilizarea formatelor multimodale și a experiențelor autentice, practice de învățare.

Programele de formare care integrează literația multimodală media pot lucra pentru a reduce decalajul dintre cunoștințe și instruire în domeniul educației multimodale și al integrării tehnologiilor digitale. Prin infuzarea practicilor inovatoare care acordă prioritate explorării unei lumi din ce în ce mai intertextuale în toate domeniile cursurilor, programele de formare a cadrelor didactice pot pregăti profesorii de gimnaziu pentru a inspira investigații/ cercetări și pentru a transforma învățarea în sălile de cursuri viitoare.

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Arad and the 5 Stars Cities

Marian Gheorghe*

Abstract:

In 2000, Arad city was included in the *5 Stars Cities* project, initiated by the US Embassy in Bucharest through USAID and IRIS, in partnership with the Romanian Government, a project of good administrative practices addressed to SMEs aimed at reducing bureaucracy, reducing the authorization procedures and terms for SME operation, streamlining the endorsement process, and building a base for business-to-business assets. A five-step process that once went to the first local government to complete its 5 Stars City title.

Keywords: Arad, cities, stars, good practices, USAID

The management of urban conglomerates necessarily involves addressing a type of management that makes full use of the Pareto analysis, which means that the administration must obtain a maximum efficiency (80 %) at a low cost (20 %). Starting from this assumption, in May 2000, the US Embassy in Bucharest through two United States agencies, USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and IRIS (The Center for Institutional Reform and the Informal Sector), in partnership with the Romanian Government, elaborate a study (“Regulations and Bureaucracy in Romania”), which reveals that in Romania, SMEs have had to observe a multitude of bureaucratic procedures and carry out their work in a confusing and overwhelming legal environment¹.

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¹Here is one of the most important goal of USAID in action in Europe: „The overarching objective of USAID’s private enterprise developments strategy was to help rapidly grow a business sector that would reduce increasing unemployment resulting from privatization and disintegration of integrated state-owned enterprises. The population’s income dropped commensurate with the sharp drop in GDP. The strategy was also predicated on the belief that with greater economic freedom, the political trends that led to the collapse of the communist system could not be reversed. Helping to jump start growth in private sector activity would result in good jobs, promote economic prosperity and reduce growing poverty in the region, thus stifling any desire of the population and politicians to slip back into the past and return to the supposed “good old days of Communism.” Growing economic instability and high inflation throughout the region were viewed as serious threats to the nascent democracies. Consequently, the approach to reform was urgent, aggressive, and donor-directed. Later, when political risk

It should be said that, even though 10 years have passed since the December Revolution, correlative legislation on the activity of enterprises (small, medium or large) was still underdeveloped, not harmonized with international practice and not oriented towards supporting entrepreneurs. Let us not forget that Romania appeared at the beginning of the 2000s as a society emerging from a type of statist economy, in which the private initiative was almost completely absent, while the state controlled all the economic levers. In this context, it is not surprising that the procedures for transferring the means of production from the state into private property were cumbersome, insufficiently developed, and limited the managerial experience.

It is important not to forget that in our country the privatization process started with the appearance of Law no. 15/1990, a normative act that regulated the way in which the former state enterprises were to be transformed into autonomous administrations or trading companies. Indeed, the privatization process began with the entry into force of Law no. 58/1991 stating that the whole procedure was carried out by a newly created specialized body, the State Property Fund(FPS), and according to the legal provisions privatization had to be completed until 1998. Things did not take place at all and the deadlines were overcome.

In Romania, the privatization took several forms:

- Joint societies were set up, in which the capital was owned by the state and private investors. At 1993, meaning two years after the privatization procedures were launched, there were 209 companies with foreign investors and 512 with inland investors;
- Privatization through the MEBO method, consisting in the sale of state-owned assets to their employees. By this method, 837 companies were privatized at the level of 1996, which represents about 28, 8 % of the total privatized state-owned companies;
- Coupon privatization, now known as the “coupon”, a method applied from 1995 – 1996, whereby the state distributed to the population a number of privatized coupons with nominative value.

On this background, USAID entered in Romania through the US Embassy from Bucharest, a body created in the United States by

receded, programs became more “demand-driven” and emphasized local buy-in and local implementation. USAID sought two major intermediate outcomes. One focused on assisting governments to put in place the commercial law to legalize private sector activity and, once in place, improve the business environment primarily by streamlining the commercial regulatory environment. The other focused on supporting enterprises to deliver goods and services efficiently”, în 20 Years of USAID economic Growth Assistance in Europe and Eurasia, under direction of USAID, by SEGURA Partners LLC, july 2013, p. 59.

President John K. Kennedy in 1961, and which was intended to be a continuation of the *Marshall Plan* for the countries hit by the destruction of the Second World War. But while the *Marshall Plan* only touched Western countries in Europe, USAID was looking to expand its economic benefits to the other economies in the area, which were underdeveloped and were on the way to capitalism after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

The study conducted by the U.S. Agency in Bucharest was carried out by observing all the standards in terms of performance management in relation to public authorities, local administrations and the efficiency of private companies in the context of interaction with the state and legal regulations.

In this context, SMEs have suffered from harsh legislation, over-bureaucratization, and a scourge of corruption that only hindered community development.

The costs measured over time and in money to comply with these procedures were extremely burdensome for SMEs. For example, at the level of the year 1999, a “typical” company in Romania had to obtain between 23 and 29 approvals, authorizations, licenses and permits from various ministries and local agencies. To complete the forms required to obtain these approvals, it took between 49 and 102 working days. To obtain the approvals, another 49 to 102 business days would have to be expected².

Starting with this study, the US Embassy in Bucharest, through USAID and IRIS, launched the “5 Star City” program, which consists of five important steps towards a flexible, close to taxpayer administration:

The five steps were:

1. First Star: Elimination of operating authorization for SMEs;

2. Second Star: Reduce the length of time to obtain local permits;

3. Third Star: Increasing transparency in the process of obtaining local approvals;

4. Fourth Star: Reducing the length of the process for obtaining the construction permit;

5. Fifth star: Creating a set of available buildings and land owned and managed by cities for business opportunities; Creating an inventory of land and buildings on sale; At least one public hearing to publicize the content of the inventory.

Faithful to the political program brought to the leadership of the City Hall of the municipality of Arad, the then local government team, headed by the Mayor Mr. Dorel Popa, a close friend of the American

² See also [/www.primariatm.ro/index.php?menuId=2&viewCat=84&viewItem=62](http://www.primariatm.ro/index.php?menuId=2&viewCat=84&viewItem=62), accessed at 21.29 hours, on the date of 14.10.2018

ruling principles, decided to acquire the ideas of the US Embassy project, entering into partnership with Chamber of Trade and Industry of the County of Arad (C.C.I.A.), joining to the other major cities in the country that have accepted the challenge of flexible management made available to the citizen. Thus, Arad woke up in the competition with Iași, Craiova, Timișoara for the title of “5 Stars Cities”.

The challenge was even greater, as it implied the establishment of a partnership between local institutions (for example C.C.I.A., City Hall, various advisors), but also a correlation of legislation.

It has to be said that the approach was not easy, considering the political context, the non-integration of Romania into the Euro-Atlantic structures and the volatility of the legislative framework. But because, ultimately, the purpose of public authority remains to serve the interests of the community, the local government is on its way. The “5 Star City” project was a counter-clock, the local authority who managed to make the first five steps during the allotted time was given the title very coveted.

It should be noted that in the given legislative and political context, the approach was not an easy one, because, in addition to the political will, a change of mentality was required, which meant that you would look at the trader as an honest partner and contributor to urban development.

Each “star” obtained implied pursuit and realization of concrete steps to go through each stage:

- reducing the number of documents required to obtain the permits underlying the obtaining of the operating authorization;
- reduction of waiting times after the endorsements submitted to local wastewater, water, heat, sanitation;
- increasing the transparency of local council meetings;
- conducting hearings and public meetings;
- reducing the duration and stages in the process of obtaining the construction permit to a maximum of 30 days;
- depositing the documents for obtaining the construction authorization at one counter, etc.

The City Hall of the municipality of Arad has gone on this adventure with the conviction that all these “stars” are nothing more than a normal approach in a society that really wants to be modern.

The program ran for five months: from August 2000 to January 2001, and as local governments met the criteria of a “star”, reported their achievements to IRIS and, following monitoring, obtained the star/stars.

It was the first time in the local post-Revolutionary administration of the Arad administration that implemented the concept of the “Citizen Information Office”, which led to the crystallization of the idea of “Citizen Information Center”, a kind of counter where any kind of problem, request or petition could be clarified.

In this way was made the first step in achieving the concept of a Single Agreement, which is to include a single structure of all advisers in order to facilitate the way of submitting the documentation to obtain the permits necessary for the obtaining of the building permit and to shorten the time needed for the issue of these approvals

We believe that the implementation of this type of agreement was a step forward in the administrative management, one that was clearly in the face of the citizen’s problems and solving them. Following the implementation of this step in the program, the City Hall of the municipality of Arad reached that period to issue the building permits and within 10 days of the complete submission of the documentation.

However, it has to be said that this “miracle” did not last much, for only three months after implementation, when the legislative changes again blocked the procedures for the issuance of agreements, approvals and authorizations at the level of the local public authorities.

In fact, I think it was every time in Romania after 1989 that complicated relationship here between decentralization and centralization. The native political class failed to go through the entire code of good practice in the administration to understand that, ultimately, the role and purpose of a local or central government is even to be a trusted partner and one that helps, sustains and develops the local community, and implicitly the business community.

It is true that the modifications of the administrative landscape in Romania have made the stages of the “5 STARS CITIES” project obsolete in the 2016 grace year. Today, the procedure of the single agreement is no longer in place, the companies do not go through the authorization procedure for operation at the Trade Register, but through the new legislation, they go to the City Hall, often being bushy and cumbersome and even burdensome for economic agents.

For example, it should be pointed out that an economic agent, meaning a newly established company, must undertake the following steps in order to be able to effectively take up the business for which it was registered:

1. Registration with the Trade Registry Office in the county where the company has established its headquarters through its constitutive act. The procedure involves the submission of a multi-part file and from the date of filing, if there are no inconsistencies or other issues that prevent

the taking of a decision until the date of issue of the registration certificate passes 3 days.

2. After obtaining the Registration Certificate, the company has at the disposal of the Municipality of Arad, by the decision of the Local Council, a period of 90 days until it has to obtain the operating permit and the notice for the working hours, and depending on the activity code and the public food authorization.

Often, the procedure for drawing up the file for operating authorization is complicated by demands that are abusive, at least at the level of the City Hall of the municipality of Arad. Thus, with regard to PSI issues, all economic agents are required to submit a dossier to the “Vasile Goldiș” Emergency Situations Inspectorate in Arad to obtain a document stating that the space for the company’s activity is not necessarily obtaining the Fire Safety Authorization, in the context in which the primary legislation in Romania indicates which are the buildings and the areas for which such authorization is to be obtained.

In order to cover up the papers, the local government decided to bureaucrat even more bureaucracy process of obtaining opinions, making entrepreneurs spend time, energy and resources, including materials, when it would be much simpler and easier to apply the provisions law enforcement in the field, as other public authorities have understood. As an example of good practice, it should be remembered that this procedure is not necessary at the City Hall of the municipality of Timisoara. In the file submitted in order to obtain the operating authorization, a fire safety permit is issued only if the law clearly stipulates that it is obtained for the production area or for the activity of the enterprise.

Moreover, in some cases, the legal situation of the company’s business is not clarified, so that for almost all activities the City Hall of the Municipality of Arad requires the submission of a Land Book Extract attesting that the space in which the commercial activity is taking place is with a different destination than the home. As long as the activity of the commercial agent is not such as to bring disturbance to neighborhoods, perhaps a regulation to allow neighboring agreement or self-declaration would be more useful to companies. There have been and there are cases where the City Hall of the Municipality of Arad requests the consent of all owners to carry out an activity although space is located on the ground floor of condominium units (blocks), and their destination in the construction itself was commercially available. Such excesses do nothing but stop the development of a business community, knowing that it is indeed for a businessman “time is money”.

So, the US Government's program aimed at improving the business environment, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, so that these companies can register and be able to function quickly in the Romanian urban landscape.

Unfortunately, as we have seen, the changes that have taken place in the *5 Stars City* project have not resisted the test of time. Yet they have shown that they can. They have shown that the determination to do things for the benefit of the community can lead to spectacular results and to the benefit of all. Because, as shown at the beginning of the article, the Pareto analysis of administrative management requires an 80 % efficiency with 20 % effort³.

After Juran, these 80-20 components remain constant regardless of the development of society. Therefore, efficient management of human conglomerates must constantly pursue the assurance of process quality at those major points, as shown, few in number, but which have a major effect on administrative management that affects the local business community.

We appreciate that the involvement of bodies such as USAID and IRIS in the development of local communities in Romania has been an important step in targeting local public authorities towards management that is truly targeted towards beneficiaries.

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Utiliser les plateformes interactives en classe de FOS. Le cas de la plateforme Edmodo et les possibilités d'interaction dans le processus d'(auto)évaluation

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Using interactive platforms when teaching FSP. The case of Edmodo and its interactive possibilities for (self)evaluation

Abstract:

One of the constant preoccupations of teachers is to look for new ways to teach and new ways to render the students' activity more effective, to reduce routine and to stimulate the students' involvement in the class activities. Therefore, the teacher uses ICT tools. Lately we find online a lot of educational instruments and platforms and sometimes it is difficult to choose from all these, as their purpose is to complete the classroom activities and not to replace them. By using the interactive platform Edmodo, the teacher can take several advantages: a permanent communication with the students by means of posts or polls, sharing teaching materials for the course or seminar (documents, texts, PowerPoints, audio-video materials, web links etc.) or assignments with a deadline which can be graded and feed-backed online. What we found the most interesting in the case of this platform is the fact that we can do an evaluation (and also a self-evaluation at the same time) of the acquired knowledge after each course or after a series of courses by means of quizzes (multiple choice, true-false, short answer, fill in the blanks, matching), which can be automatically corrected on the platform itself.

Keywords: Edmodo, (self)evaluation, French for Specific Purposes, interactive exercises, collaborative work

Introduction

Ces dernières années on utilise de plus en plus souvent en classe de FLE ou de FOS des plateformes interactives dans le cadre de ce qu'on appelle « blended learning », où « blended » signifie « mélangé » et « learning », « apprentissage ». Il s'agit de réunir et d'associer plusieurs méthodes et outils pédagogiques et des moyens technologiques

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pour les rendre plus efficaces. En plus, cette formation allie l'enseignement classique, les explications et les activités en classe et les activités déroulées à distance utilisant Internet. Ce type d'apprentissage est particulièrement utile en classe de langue étrangère puisque les explications et les exemples sont fournis en classe, ainsi que quelques exercices, et les notions peuvent être approfondies plus tard et reprises plusieurs fois à travers des exercices pour se corriger et fixer les règles ou les situations d'emploi. Il faut dans ce sens tirer profit de la passion de la jeune génération pour la socialisation virtuelle et utiliser en classe de FLE/FOS les instruments technologiques pour l'apprentissage. En outre, l'échange réciproque d'informations (professeur-étudiants, étudiants-professeur, étudiants-étudiants) est plus dynamique et permet l'implication de tous les étudiants (même les plus timides, timorés ou honteux de la classe).

Selon Carmenne Kalyaniwala, « Edmodo se définit comme un site de réseautage conçu à des fins éducatives [...] [qui] relève de la collaboration sociale entre l'enseignant et l'apprenant » (Kalyaniwala, 2018). En plus, « [l]'avantage de s'inscrire à un compte d'enseignant est double. D'une part, l'enseignant peut gérer le travail de ses cours en ligne. D'autre part, il peut participer au développement professionnel en s'intégrant à une communauté croissante d'autres enseignants ou formateurs inscrits au réseau » (Kalyaniwala, 2018).

Présentation de la plateforme interactive Edmodo : langues d'interface, types de comptes, difficultés d'accès

La plateforme Edmodo est donc utilisée par les professeurs dans le monde entier pour collaborer avec les élèves/étudiants et pour garder le contact ou entrer en contact avec d'autres professeurs. Il est également possible d'impliquer les parents (ce n'est pas le cas pour l'enseignement universitaire). Cette plateforme en ligne propose un accès sécurisé (seulement les membres du groupe ont accès aux publications et aux documents), une communication de type synchrone (messagerie instantanée) ou asynchrone (des publications diverses, des commentaires), des espaces de stockage et la gestion des comptes des membres de la classe par l'enseignant. Elle permet à l'enseignant et aux étudiants de partager des liens, des documents, des fichiers multimédias, des devoirs, d'échanger des messages, de parcourir des évaluations ou des questionnaires, d'accorder, respectivement recevoir des récompenses, etc., bref, d'interagir et de communiquer en vue du processus d'apprentissage. Dès qu'on accède à l'adresse web www.edmodo.com, on nous invite à créer un compte gratuit ; nous avons trois possibilités : enseignant, élève (ou bien étudiant) ou parent.

La plateforme est également disponible pour les smartphones et/ou les tablettes, mais l'application Edmodo possède moins de fonctions ; c'est pourquoi nous allons détailler les possibilités d'exploitation pédagogique d'Edmodo en utilisant un ordinateur. Le smartphone est pourtant très utile lorsqu'on veut vérifier certains détails ou envoyer des messages.

Pour un compte de professeur on a besoin de son courrier électronique et d'un mot de passe ; pour les étudiants le mail n'est pas obligatoire mais on sollicite un code de groupe. Ce dernier sera fourni par le professeur et l'étudiant pourra ainsi joindre ses collègues. La plateforme offre à ses utilisateurs une interface en 22 langues étrangères dont anglais britannique et américain, français, allemand, italien, espagnol, portugais, turc, hongrois, mais aussi des langues slaves et asiatiques. Cette possibilité de choisir le français comme langue d'interface dans le contexte d'apprentissage du français scientifique et technique constitue une « immersion linguistique en ligne » (Kalyaniwala, 2018). L'enseignant et les étudiants peuvent construire à l'aise leur profil et le mettre à jour chaque fois qu'ils le désirent (y inclus une photo de profil). Dès qu'il a un profil, le professeur peut « créer » des groupes-classes dont il sera automatiquement membre. Nous avons choisi de former un groupe pour les étudiants de chaque spécialisation où nous enseignons le français spécialisé (génie mécanique, véhicules routiers, génie informatique, génie civil, architecture, etc., I^{ère} et/ou II^e année, selon le cas) ; chaque groupe sera géré séparément, ainsi peut-on vérifier plus facilement les tâches, et la communication professeur-étudiants sera plus efficace. L'enseignant crée alors une classe, lui donne un nom, éventuellement une description, choisit le niveau d'éducation et la matière. Toutes ces informations pourront être modifiées au besoin (lorsque les étudiants seront en II^e année d'études, par exemple)¹. Il offre ensuite le code à 6 caractères (généralisé automatiquement) aux étudiants ou bien il peut inviter (en partageant le code de la classe par courrier électronique) des personnes à rejoindre le groupe. Ce code – au besoin on peut le réinitialiser – permet de travailler avec les étudiants dans un système sécurisé, avec des groupes-classes fermés.

Un apprenant inscrit sur Edmodo a accès à une page d'accueil limitée et dépourvue des fonctionnalités avancées de son enseignant. Il a la possibilité d'être inscrit à plusieurs cours en même temps [...], peut personnaliser sa page en rajoutant sa photo de profil et en changeant de langue de préférence en bas de page. [...] C'est également sur sa page d'accueil qu'il lira les dernières publications de son enseignant et d'autres membres de son groupe. À son tour, il

¹ L'enseignant pourra également copier, archiver ou supprimer le groupe-classe.

peut publier un message destiné à son enseignant ou au groupe auquel il est inscrit, y joindre des fichiers, partager un lien ou choisir d'intégrer un document depuis son compte de Google Drive. (Kalyaniwala, 2018)

Au moment où les étudiants adhèrent au groupe, ils seront automatiquement acceptés pendant les deux premières semaines de la création de la classe ; plus tard ils devront être acceptés par l'enseignant, car le groupe-classe sera verrouillé. Le plus fréquent problème que nous avons rencontré est lié au fait que les étudiants oublient souvent leur identifiant ou leur mot de passe ; c'est pourquoi on leur suggère de choisir un identifiant formé de leurs noms et prénoms et un mot de passe de type « français », « cours de français », etc. qui est simple à retenir. En plus, nous pouvons leur demander de noter ces informations lors de leur inscription. Si de toute façon un étudiant oublie son mot de passe, le professeur peut toujours retrouver son identifiant et modifier son mot de passe. Malgré le contact permanent des jeunes à la technologie et aux gadgets de type smartphone, il faut préciser qu'une partie importante d'entre eux ne maîtrisent pourtant pas les outils des nouvelles technologies ; c'est pourquoi le travail avec cette plateforme permet non seulement d'approfondir leurs connaissances de langue française mais aussi d'acquérir des compétences utiles dans le domaine de la communication et dans l'utilisation de la technologie.

Edmodo en classe de français sur objectifs spécifiques : buts communicatifs (publications, messages, commentaires, notifications, section « Bibliothèque »)

L'interface Edmodo rappelle celle de Facebook, ce qui la rend plus attrayante pour les jeunes étudiants qui la trouvent utile mais aussi amusante. Edmodo s'avère avant tout un très utile outil de communication : l'enseignant peut envoyer des messages à l'ensemble du groupe, à des sous-groupes ou à des étudiants en particulier. Il sera notifié de toutes les activités de ses groupes (par mail aussi, s'il opte pour ce type de notification), il peut envoyer des informations, des rappels, des articles à lire, des exercices supplémentaires, etc. L'enseignant peut non seulement verrouiller le groupe mais aussi restreindre l'accès des apprenants au groupe (en les transformant de contributeurs en lecteurs)² ; tout cela pour sauvegarder la pérennité des données, car les apprenants peuvent modifier ou effacer leurs publications. En plus, le professeur peut consulter à tout moment la liste des membres du groupe-classe et vérifier leur progrès, supprimer leur

² Nous n'avons pourtant jamais utilisé cette fonction.



image de profil (si elle ne correspond pas aux exigences académiques, par exemple), voire supprimer un membre du groupe.

Des alertes sont envoyées aux étudiants aussi, par plusieurs canaux (mail, notification sur smartphone, etc.). Tous les « actants » sont donc rapidement au courant des nouveaux messages postés, des commentaires, ainsi que des « likes », ils peuvent rester en contact en dehors de la classe, contact facilité par une interface et des fonctionnalités ressemblant à Facebook. D'ailleurs, un service de messagerie qui permet un échange direct de messages facilite la communication et crée un climat plus conforme pour les étudiants, car être « connecté » à son professeur signifie être plus impliqué, ne rater ni la date limite pour les projets/devoirs, ni les informations essentielles concernant les examens. Cependant, il n'est pas possible pour les étudiants de communiquer entre eux par des messages (seulement poster ou commenter sur le mur), ce qui assure pour l'enseignant une visibilité totale du contenu publié par les étudiants (s'il le souhaite, il peut même choisir de modérer tous les messages avant leur publication). De toute façon, pour les adultes comme nos étudiants, nous considérons que ce serait souhaitable qu'ils puissent communiquer en privé. Les étudiants peuvent pourtant communiquer avec leurs camarades à l'aide des publications ou des « commentaires » aux publications du professeur ou de leurs collègues. L'enseignant a également la possibilité de créer des sous-groupes et de les entraîner dans des démarches actives dont le but principal est le travail en équipe, de plus en plus important dans la société actuelle et dans la vie professionnelle des futurs ingénieurs ou architectes :

[...] si l'on veut faire travailler des étudiants par équipes et leur accorder des espaces de travail et de collaboration, on peut également créer des « sous-groupes ». [...] Ces espaces de travail sont propres aux groupes restreints, et seuls les apprenants choisis par l'enseignant peuvent y avoir accès. L'enseignant est automatiquement inscrit à ces petits groupes, ce qui lui permet de surveiller et de gérer l'activité comme il le souhaite. (Kalyaniwala, 2018)

Quant à lui, l'enseignant a plusieurs possibilités de rester lui aussi en contact avec ses étudiants. Tout d'abord, il y a plusieurs types de publications (« posts ») adressées au groupe-classe ; il peut ainsi communiquer publiquement (c'est-à-dire pour tous les étudiants de ce groupe-là) des informations qui les concernent tous. Pour une meilleure organisation, l'enseignant peut créer, dans la section « Bibliothèque », des dossiers et y introduire des documents (par exemple, des cours ou des fiches d'exercices pour les étudiants, des matériaux audio-vidéo, etc.,

pendant tout le semestre)³. Edmodo permet aussi à l'enseignant de noter ses événements (devoirs, questionnaires, etc.) dans un calendrier dont l'affichage se modifie en fonction de l'utilisateur ; chaque étudiant verra donc seulement les événements le concernant.

Cette catégorie qui comprend quelques modalités d'interaction en ligne sert plutôt à la communication concernant certains aspects pratiques du séminaire/cours de langue française. L'enseignant peut communiquer un message ou une information importante par une « remarque » : il peut écrire un message et y attacher des photos, des vidéos ou autre type de document. Les étudiants (ou l'enseignant lui-même) peuvent ensuite répondre à cette « remarque » par un commentaire ou bien ils peuvent « liker » la publication. Comme avec la plupart des réseaux sociaux, avec Edmodo le professeur peut « épingler » une publication/une remarque pour la garder en haut de la page d'accueil, il peut la modifier, la supprimer, etc. Il peut utiliser également le sondage (« poll » en anglais) pour choisir, par exemple, la date de l'évaluation. C'est une modalité efficace pour ne pas perdre du temps pendant le cours ; en plus, tous les étudiants peuvent voter, pendant qu'au cours il y a la possibilité d'avoir des personnes absentes. Le professeur note la question et deux ou plusieurs possibilités de réponse, et les étudiants choisiront. Puisque c'est un sondage, on ne sait pas qui choisit quoi, donc les étudiants seront encouragés de choisir la variante qui leur convient. Nous avons également utilisé le sondage pour recueillir l'avis des étudiants à propos de la pertinence et de la difficulté du séminaire/cours de langue française spécialisée.

Exploitation pédagogique d'Edmodo en vue de l'(auto)évaluation en classe de FOS : devoirs, questionnaires, récompenses

Pour une meilleure utilisation de la plateforme et pour dynamiser le cours de FOS, nous avons plusieurs possibilités. Il faut préciser dès le début que le processus d'évaluation est complexe et qu'il ne suppose évidemment pas seulement une vérification en ligne. Pour une langue étrangère, l'évaluation suppose, dans le cadre de l'Université Technique de Cluj-Napoca, une évaluation écrite et une évaluation orale. Ces deux évaluations finales sont toujours complétées par les évaluations à travers des exercices et des activités qui ont lieu pendant le semestre. À toutes

³ Selon Carmenne Kalyaniwala, 2018 : « Plusieurs formats de documents (pdf, jpg, mp3, aiff, wav, mov, mp4, m4v, key, pages, numbers, docx, pptx, xlsx, txt, rtf.) sont autorisés par Edmodo ».

ces activités nous avons décidé d'ajouter pour les étudiants en génie informatique, II^e année, des activités sur la plateforme Edmodo pour les impliquer plus, gagner leur intérêt en apportant à leur attention des activités et des exemples plus proches de leurs préoccupations, d'autant plus que grâce à Edmodo l'enseignant peut corriger, évaluer en ligne et donner du feed-back. En plus, puisque pour la II^e année il s'agit d'un cours de langue française sur objectifs spécifiques (la rédaction des documents techniques), on se confronte souvent à des limitations en ce qui concerne l'interaction, et vu le fait que la présence au cours n'est pas obligatoire dans les règlements de l'université, un autre problème qui puisse apparaître, c'est l'absentéisme. Dans ce contexte, la composante numérique permet de prolonger l'espace d'étude en dehors de la classe, stimule l'implication, la collaboration et l'interaction grâce à l'utilisation de la technologie et de l'Internet, ainsi que l'apprentissage autonome, adapté au rythme de chaque étudiant. L'enseignant est moins soumis aux pressions, car il peut réaliser des évaluations pendant le semestre, dont le feed-back est immédiat et les résultats sont calculés automatiquement ; par conséquent, il aura plus de temps pour chercher des matériaux et concevoir des exercices ou des fiches, discuter les résultats et avoir donc une image très claire à propos des connaissances de chaque étudiant, réaliser une statistique concernant les questions/les exercices plus difficiles et mieux les expliquer, etc. Tout cela a comme but de stimuler l'apprentissage profond et durable sans « sauter » aucune étape, car le travail des étudiants est toujours guidé par l'enseignant.

Nous avons utilisé deux modalités d'évaluation à l'aide d'Edmodo. La première, intitulée « Devoir » (« Assignment » en anglais), suppose de charger un devoir préalablement conçu par l'enseignant, lui donner un titre et, éventuellement, le décrire. On accorde aux étudiants un ou plusieurs jours (ou heures) pour rendre le devoir qui peut être créé (sous forme de réponse directe ou de fichier Word, PowerPoint, Excel) ou transféré comme pièce jointe de l'ordinateur (document, hyperlien, photo, etc.) et qu'on pourra ensuite renvoyer aux étudiants avec une correction personnalisée. La date butoir est très précise (jour, heure) et il y a la possibilité de verrouiller le devoir après son échéance. Lorsque l'étudiant rend son devoir, le fichier n'est accessible que par le professeur, et Edmodo offre la possibilité à l'enseignant de le noter, de le commenter, l'annoter, le télécharger ou bien de féliciter l'étudiant, éventuellement lui attribuer des récompenses. De cette manière, l'apprenant va saisir ses erreurs, ainsi que ses points forts/faibles, il saura ce qu'il devra encore travailler ou approfondir et pourquoi. L'enseignant peut rédiger et préparer le devoir par avance et l'envoyer plus tard (il peut choisir le jour et l'heure). Les étudiants

seront avertis (par e-mail ou par l'application) à propos de la date limite, ce qui est agréable, car « on n'oublie plus » de rendre le devoir. Ce n'est donc pas très différent d'un devoir « traditionnel », la différence consiste dans le fait que le devoir est « présenté » en ligne, ce qui lui rend un air plus actuel, car lié aux moyens technologiques.

La deuxième modalité d'évaluation à l'aide de la plateforme Edmodo est probablement la plus utile. Il s'agit d'un « Questionnaire » (ou « Quiz ») que l'enseignant doit créer sur place ou charger puisque préalablement créé. La plateforme offre plusieurs possibilités de construire le questionnaire :

- questions à choix multiple (QCM) – l'enseignant va choisir et enregistrer la réponse correcte, ainsi que le numéro de possibilités de réponse (nous avons utilisé des questions avec trois possibilités de réponse) ;
- questions du type vrai/faux – l'enseignant va choisir et enregistrer la réponse correcte (vraie ou fausse, selon le cas) ;
- réponses courtes, où l'étudiant doit écrire lui-même la réponse ;
- texte à trous (remplir les blancs) – l'étudiant doit compléter le texte avec des mots fournis par le professeur ou avec les mots corrects qu'il doit trouver lui-même. En plus, les participants au questionnaire doivent répondre dans l'ordre exact pour que la question soit marquée comme correcte. C'est pourquoi ce n'est pas recommandé d'avoir à compléter dans le texte des énumérations, par exemple. L'apprenant doit également faire attention aux accents, car un accent manqué ou erroné entraîne la perte du (des) point(s) accordé(s) pour cette réponse-là.
- appariements (associer les deux colonnes) – les réponses seront mélangés lorsque les étudiants les verront et ils devront les associer correctement. On peut introduire ici des exercices divers : continuez les énoncés, associez le mot à son dérivé lexical, associez l'infinitif à la forme de participe passé, associez le mot à son synonyme ou antonyme, etc.

Pour tous les questionnaires on pourra opter pour l'affichage des questions dans un ordre aléatoire, ce qui rend plus difficile la collaboration au cas où le but sera une vérification individuelle des connaissances. On peut également choisir d'afficher à la fin les résultats corrects et les points obtenus ; de cette manière les étudiants pourront voir leur propre progrès. Le professeur peut compléter autant de questions qu'il le veut. En plus, il peut limiter le temps de travail : c'est-à-dire une fois que l'étudiant accède le questionnaire celui-là va se verrouiller en 10, 20, 35, 60, etc. minutes, c'est à l'enseignant de choisir (pendant le test, l'étudiant voit à tout moment combien de temps

il lui reste encore). Sauf pour la « réponse courte » où le professeur doit marquer pour chaque étudiant, chaque réponse comme correcte ou incorrecte (il pourra attribuer partiellement les points, en fonction de la réponse produite et/ou ajouter un commentaire, une observation), les autres questionnaires seront enregistrés et corrigés automatiquement par la plateforme (puisque l'enseignant complétera/marquera les réponses correctes lors de la conception de l'exercice). Le professeur peut utiliser un seul type de questions ou bien il peut constituer un questionnaire qui associe les QCM, les réponses vrai/faux, la réponse courte, etc. Cependant, toute erreur qui puisse apparaître lors du questionnaire peut être corrigée manuellement par l'enseignant. Le seul inconvénient est le temps, car revoir tout prend beaucoup de temps et d'énergie de la part de l'enseignant. À la fin de chaque « Quiz », la plateforme génère automatiquement les pourcentages pour les réponses correctes/incorrectes pour chaque question – on pourra donc voir quelles ont été les questions les plus difficiles – individuellement et pour le groupe-classe. L'enseignant pourra donc réaliser une statistique à propos des résultats de ses étudiants. Il y a un code couleur très clair pour la statistique : vert pour le pourcentage de réponses correctes, rouge pour le pourcentage de réponses incorrectes (ou questions omises ; lorsqu'il y a une question sans réponse, l'étudiant sera pourtant attentionné ; néanmoins, s'il le veut, il pourra soumettre le quiz sans répondre à toutes les questions) et gris pour les réponses aux questions courtes jusqu'au moment où l'enseignant note la réponse comme correcte ou incorrecte (elle deviendra par la suite verte ou rouge). Lorsqu'un étudiant répond à un tel questionnaire, seul l'enseignant accède à ses productions. L'enseignant peut récompenser l'assiduité des étudiants par des insignes (« badges » en anglais⁴) soit pour tout le groupe, soit pour un certain étudiant. Il pourra utiliser les insignes Edmodo (« bon travail », « bonne question », « étudiant du mois », etc.) ou créer des insignes personnalisés.

L'enseignant peut aussi vérifier le progrès de chacun des apprenants, non seulement en fonction des notes reçues, mais aussi en fonction du nombre de publications de l'apprenant et des badges accordés par l'enseignant. La possibilité d'être récompensé au moyen de badges (ou points) [...] rajoute une dimension socioaffective à l'apprentissage et permet d'encourager l'apprenant à des moments propices de son apprentissage. (Kalyaniwala, 2018)

⁴ Tous les insignes proposés par Edmodo communiquent des messages positifs et sont en anglais.

L'enseignant peut aussi compléter manuellement les résultats de l'évaluation de fin de semestre. Chaque étudiant pourra voir seulement sa note, ce qui respecte aussi la protection des données à caractère personnel. Grâce à un tableau indiquant la note pour chaque devoir rendu, le professeur peut suivre le progrès de chaque étudiant (sorte de « catalogue virtuel ») ; de son côté, l'étudiant est averti de la note accordée et peut lui aussi consulter les détails de son parcours.

À la fin du semestre ou de l'année universitaire, l'enseignant peut archiver les groupes. À la suite de l'archivage, les murs seront toujours lisibles, mais les membres ne peuvent plus ajouter des commentaires, publications ou liker. Les étudiants seront toujours présents sur Edmodo et pourront s'inscrire dans un nouveau groupe.

En guise de conclusion : avantages et inconvénients de l'utilisation d'Edmodo en classe de FOS

En plus de l'expérience avec ses propres étudiants, l'enseignant peut entrer en relation avec d'autres enseignants et partager leurs expériences de travail. En plus, l'enseignant peut, à travers « Spotlight », partager, mais aussi collecter des matériaux utiles mises à la disposition du public/des utilisateurs par les autres enseignants dans des domaines des plus divers, parmi lesquels les langues étrangères, le français en l'occurrence. Ces matériaux très divers (questionnaires, cours en ligne, devoirs, manuels, présentations PowerPoint, plans de leçons, jeux, autre types d'activités) s'adressent à des niveaux différents (élémentaire, moyen, avancé) et sont pour la plupart gratuits.

En cliquant sur l'icône, l'enseignant est transporté dans un nouvel espace, qui lui permet de trouver des ressources pédagogiques pour mieux développer les cours et améliorer sa pratique. [...] cette recherche documentaire peut être effectuée en naviguant [...] par pays, par niveau (ou classe), par sujet et par langue. Alimenté par le réseau des enseignants inscrits à Edmodo, « Spotlight » propose le partage [...] des artefacts, des outils, des actions, des discours, des concepts, etc. En matière de pédagogie, on fera référence aux fiches pédagogiques, aux ressources audiovisuelles ou multimodales et aux moyens créatifs pour enseigner une matière. (Kalyaniwala, 2018)

Enfin, Edmodo offre aux enseignants plusieurs possibilités de développement professionnel. L'enseignant peut s'abonner et participer aux « sujets » (« topics ») situés sur la barre à gauche de la page d'accueil de son compte :

Il arrive ainsi à mieux cibler et organiser ses attentes et/ou ses besoins. En s'abonnant à un sujet, l'enseignant est en mesure de partager du contenu dans l'espace du sujet abonné, poser des questions aux autres enseignants abonnés et réagir au contenu publié. Il peut également envoyer des invitations aux

enseignants du réseau afin de les « ajouter comme relation[s] » pour créer progressivement son réseau professionnel. (Kalyaniwala, 2018)

Nous pouvons affirmer avec Grégory Michnik, qu'il y a des avantages et des désavantages de l'utilisation de la plateforme Edmodo. Parmi les plus importants avantages on peut énumérer surtout ceux importants de point de vue didactique : l'ergonomie motivante qui rappelle Facebook, la communication et les relations sociales plus efficaces au sein de la classe, l'accès sécurisé, l'utilisation du langage adapté à un contexte de travail collaboratif, la maîtrise complète de l'environnement numérique par le professeur – les distractions sont évitées et le suivi du progrès des étudiants est facile (Michnik, 2016 : 5). Pourtant, même si en général le travail sur Edmodo est assez profitable et amusant pour les étudiants, il s'avère un peu trop chronophage pour l'enseignant qui doit travailler beaucoup chez soi pour concevoir des exercices, des devoirs ou des tests/des questionnaires en ligne, répondre aux questions/aux messages des étudiants, etc. Parmi les autres inconvénients que nous avons constatés, nous précisons l'impossibilité pour l'étudiant de vérifier sur son smartphone les notes complétées manuellement par le professeur (la note finale, par exemple) et la connexion faible ou l'interruption de la connexion Internet pendant un questionnaire. En guise de conclusion, nous pouvons remarquer qu'Edmodo est un espace en ligne sécurisé, destiné aux apprenants, qui permet à l'enseignant de rester aux commandes de ses cours en ligne et où il est possible de réaliser une (auto)évaluation pour noter le progrès des étudiants pendant tout le semestre.

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Comparative Insight on the Matrimonial Regimes, in the Romanian Contemporary Law System

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Abstract:

The regulation of the plurality of matrimonial regimes is considered by a number of law theorists and practitioners as one of the first important innovations implemented with the entry into force of Law 287/2009 on the Civil Code.

In order to protect the interests of the family, the Romanian legislator laid down a body of fundamental, imperative rules governing the rights and obligations of the spouses, which do not constitute a separate matrimonial regime, but represent the common law applicable irrespective of the matrimonial regime to be chosen later.

By establishing the plurality of matrimonial regimes, in particular the matrimonial regime of the legal community along with conventional¹ matrimonial regimes, the legislator confers to spouses or future spouses the freedom to choose how to exercise the rights and obligations arising from marriage.

Along with the entry into force of the Civil Code, the patrimonial freedom of spouses / future spouses, established as cardinal principle, empowered their adherence, either to the regime of separation of goods or to that of the conventional community, on the basis of a matrimonial convention. In the absence of the matrimonial convention, by virtue of the law, the spouses will be subject to the legal provisions applicable to the regime of the legal community.

Keywords: spouses / future spouses, matrimonial regime of the legal community, imperative primary matrimonial regime, matrimonial regime of the separation of goods, matrimonial regime of the conventional community, matrimonial convention

Considered in historical evolution, the legal regulation of patrimonial rights and obligations arising from family relationships has undergone a number of substantial changes, if we take into account, as a

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¹Regime of Separation of Goods and Conventional Community Regime

starting point, the Roman Law, the Law of the XII Table (451 AD) (1817), the Romanian Civil Code (1864), the Family Code (1954) in order to complete the legislative *periplus*, with the entry into force on October 1st, 2011 of Law 287/2009 on the Civil Code.

This analysis considers the main elements of legislative novelty, reflecting the dynamics of current social and legal needs, by comparison and by reference to the Family Code, which was abated since the entry into force of Law 287/2009 on the Civil Code.

The matrimonial regime of the spouses, as regulated by the Family Code, was a regime of the exclusive, legal, unique, compulsory and immutable property community, those who married were not entitled to determine, on the basis of their convention, the patrimonial relations, any convention contrary to legal regime being null. As a consequence, both the general mandate granted to the other spouse and the agreement by which one of the spouses gave up the right to dispose of common assets were considered against law provisions. The sanction enforceable to this kind of private agreements was absolute nullity.

The Family Code regulation restrictedly provided six categories of personal assets of each spouse and four categories of common debts, thus establishing an asymmetric proportion of goods and liabilities. Thus, common goods represented the rule, and personal assets the exception, while common debts were the exception, and the personal debts the rule.

Since the Romanian legislator has not explicitly defined the matrimonial regime, theoreticians and practitioners of law² have concluded a *lato sensu* definition, which refers to *all the rules governing the relations between spouses, regarding their assets as well as those that are formed in their relationships with third parties*.

In principle, with the entry into force of the Civil Code, the patrimonial freedom of the spouses excludes, as a consequence, the obligatory nature of the single legal matrimonial regime, which characterizes the previous regulation. It also gives the spouses the prerogative to decide regarding the assets and debts which are the subject of their patrimonial relations. To emphasize the eclectic character of the new regulation, we should mention that the Romanian law giver included provisions of French origin, dating back to 1804³, as

² E.g. C. Hamangiu, I. Rosetti-Bălănescu, Al. Băicoianu, *Romanian Civil Law Treaty*, vol. I, 2nd edition, Ed All, Bucharest; I. Albu, *Family Law*, Didactic and Pedagogical Edition, Bucharest, 1975.

³ E.g.: the mandatory primary regime on which the marriage regime chosen by spouses will be graded, the preciput clause.

well as contemporary provisions of Quebec Province Code origin⁴, all placed in Book Second, *About the Family*.

The analysis of the legal text reveals, from the outset, one of the utmost innovative elements: family law provides a body of fundamental, imperative rules governing the rights and obligations of the spouses⁵, namely, a set of common rules to which the doctrine assigned the name of primary imperative matrimonial regime (Vasilescu, 2003). It should be emphasized that, these provisions do not represent a separate matrimonial regime, but govern the common law provisions applicable irrespective of the matrimonial legal regime to be subsequently elected.

In addition to the mandatory rules governing any matrimonial regime, the legislator establishes, under the provisions of art. 329, the regime of the legal community as a common law regime, from which the parties may derogate, by concluding a matrimonial convention. From *per a contrario* interpretation of art. 329 Civil Code provisions, the presumed intention of the spouses to fall under the exclusive scope of the legal community regime, if they did not conclude a matrimonial convention. It should be noted that, at one time, there is only a single marriage regime to rule the patrimonial regime of spouses, the coexistence and mixing of regimes being practically inadmissible and void of law.

The following legal provisions concern the choice of the matrimonial regime (article 329–338 of the Civil Code), the conditions under which the matrimonial convention may be concluded, which are its forms of advertising, after which the legal text analyses, in part, each of the three matrimonial regimes governed by the provisions of the Civil Code: the regime of the legal community (article 339–359 of the Civil Code), the regime of assets separation (articles 360–365 of the Civil Code) and the regime of the conventional community (article 366–368 Civil Code). In the next section of the same chapter, the legislator stipulates that spouses can choose two ways to modify the matrimonial regime, by conventional means (article 369), respectively, by judicial process (articles 370–372).

Being in the presence of a legislative void, with respect to the newly introduced juridical institution of the matrimonial convention, the Romanian doctrine (Vasilescu, 2003) seems compelled to define and establish its juristic characters.

⁴ E.g: The Principle of Freedom of Matrimonial Conventions.

⁵ Common Provisions: *About the General Matrimonial Regime* (Article 312–320 Civil Code), Family Lodging (Articles 321–324 of the Civil Code), Marriage Outgoings (Art. 329–338 Civil Code).

As a consequence, the matrimonial convention was defined as a solemn, public legal act of a conventional nature whereby the future spouses regulate, prior to the marriage, the essential patrimonial relations that will exist between them during the marriage or that convention concluded during marriage, through which spouses decide the current marital status or another type of matrimonial regime recognized by law.

In summary, the matrimonial convention is that solemn legal act having as qualifying parties – future spouses who, by mutual consent, decide to submit their patrimonial relations to the regime of the conventional community or to the separation of goods, in terms of rights and obligations, in order to derogate from the legal community regime. Thus, lining up to one of the conventional matrimonial regimes can be achieved by concluding a matrimonial convention either before marriage⁶ or at the least one year after the valid marriage conclusion.

As a consequence, the Romanian legislator establishes that the legal matrimonial regime operates, *de jure*, simultaneous with marriage conclusion, in all cases where the spouses do not conclude a matrimonial convention. This is the necessary condition in order to line up to another matrimonial regime. Thus, the choice of legal community matrimonial regime becomes effective without any formality, presuming the spouses' intention, to place their patrimonial relations strictly and exclusively under the law provisions.

Although the legislator expressly does not attribute the character of the legal regime to this matrimonial regime, this unequivocally appears from its marginal name, as it is mentioned, for example, in art. 313, the final thesis. The same conclusion arises and from the interpretation of the various articles that regulate it⁷. This regime broadly corresponds to the single marriage regime established by the provisions of the Family Code, abated with the entry into force of the Civil Code. It is worth mentioning that the unique, exclusive property, in condominium, regulated by the Family Code continues to apply, in the form of the legal goods community, in the regulation of the current Civil Code, in a more complex and elaborate form.

⁶ Hence the matrimonial character of the matrimonial convention to the marriage contract, so that it has its effects only from the date of valid marriage.

⁷ For example, art. 329 Civil Code provides that *the choice of a different matrimonial regime than that of the legal community is made by concluding a matrimonial convention*, and art. 313 par. 3 Civil Code states *that failure to comply with the advertising formalities causes the spouses to be considered married under the matrimonial regime of the legal community, in relation to third parties in good faith*.

Thus, art. 339 Civil Code provisions establish that the goods acquired by any spouse, during the legal community regime are, from the date of their acquisition, common property of spouses, while the own assets of each of spouse are specified by art. 340 provisions. The latter category of own assets is subsidiary to the first category, of common goods.

The common property of the spouses is composed by all those goods acquired during the regime of the legal community, except those listed by art. 340 Civil Code provisions. With regard to common assets, the Civil Code establishes two assumptions, as follows.

First of all, it is the assumption that all these goods are common and that the character of common assets should not be proved, as ruled by art. 343 par. 1 Civil Code provisions.

On the second hand, art. 357 paragraph 2 Civil Code establishes the presumption of equal contribution to the acquisition of common goods, as a relative presumption, which remains until the contrary is proven.

When the common property is acquired, all the spouses' income will be taken into account, and the household work of any spouse will also be considered a contribution to marriage expenses⁸.

In order to establish the character of common asset, it is not necessary to prove the participation of both spouses in acquiring it. Also, it is not necessary for both spouses to be present at the conclusion of acquisition act, as 345 par. 2 Civil Code stipulates. i.e. *each spouse can conclude on its own (...) acts of acquiring common goods.*

Another aspect of novelty that the Civil Code brings, with regard to the previous regulation, is that the definition of common assets also clearly establishes the type of property corresponding them, namely the common property in condominium. This institution shall be regulated, expressly and distinctly from the provisions of art. 667–668 Civil Code, as that form of property in which the ownership of property belongs simultaneously to several persons, without any of them being the owner of a determined share of ownership.

The spouses' common property in condominium has its origin in the law, consequently, those who consider their patrimonial relations to be otherwise protected will come out of the matrimonial regime of the

⁸ Housework, according to art. 326 Civil Code, does not resume the previous judicial practice, according to which wife's household was considered a contribution to the acquisition of common goods. The new civil regulation absolves the spouse who does not have own income, with whom to participate in the family expenses. That spouse is relieved of this task by performing the necessary work for conjugal cohabitation.

legal community, becoming subjects to a conventional marriage regime, in which the type of property may be one per share.

The character of common asset being presumed by law, it gives the right of any spouse to mention about the belonging of a good to the community, in any register of publicity (article 344 Civil Code), whether or not one spouse has contributed to its acquisition, whether or not, one spouse has participated or not at the conclusion of the legal act of acquisition.

A category of goods whose legal regime has been highly controversial under previous legislation is represented by labor income and others assimilated to it, which, in the current Civil Code, find clear regulation, by art. 341 Civil Code provisions. Therefore, the law provisions stipulate that all such incomes are common goods, regardless of the date of their acquisition, under only one condition: the outstanding debt falls during the community. Therefore, the quality of the common asset relative to labor income and of those assimilated to it, is certain, but conditional upon claim's maturity, the law provisions requiring claim's due to be place in the course of the existence of the legal community regime.

In relation to common goods, the spouses have equal rights, the management of their patrimony being a common one. If there is a distinction when comes to patrimony's management, it rests upon the type of act that shall be concluded: conservation, administration or alienation act.

Thus, each spouse can use the common good, whether movable or immovable, without the express consent of the other spouse (article 345 paragraph Civil Code). As a consequence, since acts of preservation and administration of common goods are acts that benefit both spouses, due to their purpose, they can also be concluded by any of the spouses without the consent of the other (article 345 paragraph 2 Civil Code).

The legislator, using the same reasoning and connecting the juridical acts of acquiring the common assets by the action of common patrimony administration, (art. 345 par. 2 of the Civil Code), allows spouses to conclude acts of acquiring common goods, whether movable or immovable.

Being edited both for the purpose of facilitating the civil legal circuit and the protection of personal interests, the rules we have mentioned above state that a penalty for the prejudice caused to one of the spouses who did not participate in the act's conclusion, consists only in recovery of damages of the person who concluded the act, without any prejudice to the rights acquired by third parties in good faith – as regulated in para. 4 of art. 345 Civil Code.

Instead, the rule applied to alienation acts is that of mutual consent of spouses. The act of changing a common good's purpose is assimilated to the act of alienation, as a consequence, therefore it can only be done with the consent of both spouses (article 345 paragraph 1 Civil Code).

Article 346 Civil Code regulates the common law in the above matter. It unequivocally regulates that acts of alienation or establishing real rights, relating to common goods can be concluded only with mutual consent of both spouses. It implies both spouses' participation in the conclusion of the respective legal act, either personally or through a legal or conventional representative.

Like any rule that 'stands on', this one has several exceptions.

The first exception is provided by par. 2 of art. 346 Civil Code. It refers to those documents of a pecuniary nature relating to common movable assets the alienation of which, according to the law, is not subject to certain publicity formalities. Therefore it may be concluded only by one of the spouses, under the presumption of a mutually tacit mandate, a provision which is of an exceptional nature and of limited character, from two points of view. The first one is related to the nature of the goods covered by the act (only those assets which do not require the admission to perform certain publicity formalities). The second one is related to the type of act which is concluded - only acts of alienation by onerous title, those of voluntary settlement being under the general legal regime.

The second exception to the rule of common agreement for alienation act conclusion dealing with common goods is provided by art. 317 paragraph (2) and (3) Civil Code provisions. It refers to the possibility for any of the spouses to open, without the consent of the other, bank deposits, and, also, to freely dispose of the existing amounts in those accounts.

The third exception is set forth in paragraph (3) of article 346 Civil Code and refers to ordinary gifts, a notion which, we appreciate, will give rise to different solutions, in practice, since the nature and content of what is common is one of relative nature. Thus, we believe that it will have to be treated according to the economic and social situation, the habits, the status of the spouses, the recipient of the gifts, etc., for each case, in part.

The fourth exception is in the matter of contributions of common goods to the capital of a company. By laying down the regime of contributions in the category of alienation acts, the Civil Code establishes the same rule, i.e. the need for both spouses to agree on the supply of common goods to the capital of a company. There is no distinction between categories of goods, whether movable or immobile,

as no special regime is granted, or contributions in amounts of money, which means that all these will be analysed by common law provisions.

Therefore, in the matter of immovable goods we will apply both the rule of necessity to conclude the act in authentic form and its registering in the cadastral register. When comes to the movable assets, the spouses will act according to the rules of art. 346 Civil Code, distinguishing between goods for which publicity is required – in which case the consent of both spouses will be required – and goods for whose alienation there is no need for publicity – case, in which, mutual tacit mandate assumption will apply.

In the case of contributions consisting of amounts of money, it will operate the same tacit mandate. The provision of the final sentence of par. 1 of art. 349 Civil Code, which establishes the rule relating to the spouse who has not given his/her written consent to the use of common goods, imposes the idea of written form, both *ad probationem*, and *ad validitatem*, in all situations where the express consent of both spouses is required.

The sanction of inobservance of the general rule of the consent, regarding both spouses, when comes to common assets alienation acts of is the relative nullity, expressly disposed by the provisions of art. 347 Civil Code. The act is susceptible of confirmation, under the conditions of art. 1262–1263 Civil Code. For reasons related to the security of the civil legal circuit, the law protects third-party in good faith, defending them from the negative effects of the annulment of the act. The spouse injured by his partner's actions has an action on recovery of damages, against the other spouse.

Regarding the own assets of each spouse, it should be pointed out, that the legal enumeration of art. 340 Civil Code lacks to mention the assets acquired by any of the spouses by onerous acts, before marriage, goods referred to, in art. 31 of the Family Code. Despite this omission, the legal status of these goods will remain the same, the common law provisions being applicable to the conventions by which those goods have been acquired.

The only exception is related to parties' manifestation of the will, when the spouses apply for a conventional matrimonial regime and establish to extend the community of assets to certain property acquired, through onerous acts, before marriage,

With respect to movable assets, whose possession is presumed to value property, in order to avoid ambiguities regarding the form of property applicable to those assets, acquired before the marriage conclusion, 343 paragraph 3 of the Civil Code establishes the obligation of the spouses to draw up a stock list, in written form, authentic or under

private signature, before the marriage is concluded. The stock-list's role is to prove the character of own asset contained therein, the lack of such a document leading to the application of the relative legal presumption, that those assets are common.

The stock list rule does not apply to immovable assets, acquired before marriage conclusion, by means of onerous acts, because this kind of acts must respect legal special formalities, including those of publicity, in order to make effective the transfer of real rights.

All goods acquired by spouses by legal or testamentary inheritance, as well as by donation, regardless of whether the time of acquisition is located during or before marriage, will also be included in own assets category. The exception to this rule applies when the possessor, the granter or the testator disposed that the goods become common, by his will action.

The donation agreement signed only by one of the spouses (the grantee), we consider it to be valid, both spouses acquiring the good, if the granter decides so, without the consent of the other spouse. The provisions of article 345 (2) Civil Code allows any spouse to conclude acts of acquiring common goods. The legislator does not distinguish between the onerous or gratuitous type of act. We appreciate that the same legal status applies to assets acquired from a donation with liabilities, establishing the character of the obligation as a personal one of the grantee spouse, who concluded the contract, while the acquired good becomes common.

The same conclusion could arise if the act is to be regarded as having the character of a stipulation for another, the spouse of the grantee having the title of a third party, so his/her presence at the contract conclusion is not compulsory.

Also, there are personal assets those used for personal purpose, as well as those used for the exercise of the profession of any of the spouses (if they are not part of a stock-in-trade), as well as the fruits of own assets, or any assets replacing a personal asset.

Apart from the limited list of own assets, the legislator establishes rules on the rights each spouse has regarding his own goods.

Regarding to goods' management, the basic principle is that of owelty, i.e. each spouse can fully manage his/her possessions without the consent or authorization of the other spouse. The only exception is related to the family home, together with the all assets that furnish and decorate it.

In order to protect the family's interests when family dwelling belongs only to one of the spouses, the legislator established a genuine limitation to the right of property. Thus, according to art. 322 Civil

Code, the exclusive owner will not be able to conclude any act of alienation, concerning the family dwelling and will be forbidden to affect the use of it, except with the written consent of the other spouse. The consent of the non-owner spouse will also be necessary to alienate or to move from the family home those movable assets that decorate and furnish it, even if they are the exclusive property of one spouse.

As regards matrimonial regime of the legal community for its modification to take place, it is not enough spouses concurrent manifestation of the will. The legislator agists the cumulative condition of term fulfillment, i.e. at least one year from the date of marriage conclusion (article 369, paragraph 1 Civil Code). Only after this time limit, spouses are allowed, whenever they intend to change the legal matrimonial regime, by replacing it with another regime, in compliance with the legal provisions on matrimonial conventions.

From a procedural point of view, in order to modify the regime of the legal community, the spouses will conclude an act of liquidation, followed by the conclusion of a matrimonial convention⁹ reflecting mutually agreed rules, relative to their patrimonial relations.

Modification of the matrimonial regime of the legal community may operate during marriage when spouses, without wanting to replace it, decide only to change or add certain aspects whose existence or content is left to the discretion of the parties. In this case, the spouses will conclude a matrimonial convention, without the need for a previous act of liquidation of the matrimonial regime, the matrimonial convention which, in order to be validly concluded, must comply with the conditions of authentic form and publicity formalities, required by law.

As regards legal matrimonial regime cessation, it is governed by the general rules contained in art. 319–320, art. 369 Civil Code, which are complemented by the special rules, provided by art. 355–357 provisions.

The legislator establishes two ways to modify the legal matrimonial regime: a conventional one¹⁰, born during marriage, as a

⁹ *Per a contrario*, when spouses are subjects of the matrimonial separation or goods regime, or of the conventional community regime, to cease the effects of any of them, only the act of liquidation of the conventional matrimonial regime will be concluded, at that time, without the conclusion of another formality, spouses entering automatically under the regime of the legal community.

¹⁰ In fact, any hypothesis to change the matrimonial regime requires the cessation of its effects either as a result of the spouse's will or as a result of a judicial procedure. We note the lack of accuracy and terminological coherence of legal provision regarding situations where spouses agree to replace / modify the legal matrimonial regime with another. Procedurally speaking, first the dissolution of legal matrimonial regime existing at that time, must take place. *Cessation* refers to legal situations involving the reversal,

result of the spouses' express will to change their matrimonial regime, respectively, a judicial one.

When comes to procedural rules, no other matrimonial regime will be able to start before the matrimonial regime of the legal community has ceased, by virtue of dissolution act, issued either in authentic, notarial (The dissolution act, concluded in the authentic notary form, is subject to the publicity formalities provided by art. 334–335 Civil Code.) or judicial form (article 320, corroborated with article 355 paragraph 1 of the Civil Code). Once the dissolution has been completed, the matrimonial regime of the legal community ceases, even if the act of partition deed has not been concluded. The main legal effects of the dissolution act is the cessation of the matrimonial regime, during marriage time, with the consequence of sharing the spouses' common assets and of regularizing their debts. Also, through the act of dissolution of the matrimonial regime, spouses are credited with their own assets, as exclusive property or share property.

In order to complete legal matrimonial regime modification, there is necessary to conclude a matrimonial convention, on the newly chosen marital status¹².

The modification of the legal matrimonial regime that takes place during marriage, either as a result of concurrent will of spouse¹³, or as a manifestation of the will of one of spouse, for legitimate reasons¹⁴, is fundamentally distinct from legal matrimonial regime cessation, by the effect of the law, as a result of annulment, declaration of nullity, dissolution or termination of the marriage.

Fundamentally different from the situation of legal matrimonial regime modification, its cessation as a result of annulment, declaration of nullity, dissolution of marriage, entails two distinct cases, when the notions of matrimonial regime cessation and matrimonial regime liquidation no longer coincided regarding to its content. Therefore, the

the dissolution of the matrimonial regime, while the *liquidation* involves the act, the legal process, the form in which the matrimonial regime ceases, virtually equivalent to the act itself.

¹² Notary practice claims that the two acts must be concluded on the same day, successively with each other, of course the first being the act of liquidation, since according to the law, whenever the spouses do not conclude a matrimonial convention, they are presumed to be under the regime of the legal community of goods, which would mean that for any period elapsed between the liquidation act and the conclusion of the matrimonial convention, it would be necessary to conclude a new act for the liquidation of the matrimonial regime.

¹³ Conventional modification.

¹⁴ Judicial change.

moment of cessation of the matrimonial regime is the one stipulated by the law, depending on the concrete situation, whereas in all cases the liquidation has no relevance and does not represent a condition of cessation.

The separation of goods matrimonial regime is another innovation set by Civil Code provisions, in field of property rights between spouses / future spouses. Its essential feature is the existence of two distinct and independent patrimonies, one belonging to the husband, and the other to wife. It gives each of them full and exclusive ownership, with all its patrimonial attributes. Under this matrimonial regime, each spouse is the only owner of the property acquired before the marriage conclusion, as well as of the property acquired during marriage.

Separation of assets refers to both assets and the liabilities, being set either by way of convention or by judicial way. Spouses can establish this aspect from the beginning or later, through a matrimonial convention, or by court order. The latter mean of determining the separation of goods, always takes place, after the marriage has been concluded, at the request of one of the spouses, as a sanction against the other spouse, if the court finds that one of the spouses concludes legal acts that seriously endanger the patrimonial interests of the family.

The matrimonial convention is an expression of the free will of spouses / future spouses, being accessory to the legal act of marriage. Its main legal characters are: bilateral act, causal act, *intuitu personae* act, solemn act, public act, unaffected of condition act.

As to the specific substantial conditions to be met by the matrimonial convention, in order to be valid, the quality of the parties is circumscribed only to that of spouses or future spouses¹⁵.

The capacity of spouses / future spouses to enter into a matrimonial convention generally takes into account the age at which a person acquires full exercise capacity, which is the same as matrimonial age: 18 years.

For well-founded reasons, the minor who has reached the age of 16 may be married on the basis of a medical letter of advice, with the consent of his/her parents or, as the case may be, of the his/her tutore and with the authorization of the court-appointing tutore, in whose

¹⁵ The phrase “the participation of all parties, used by the legislator, generates a note of ambiguity that the status of parties in the context of the matrimonial convention is given only by future spouses or spouses who can opt for the choice of the matrimonial regime; parents, other legal protectors, donors in favor of spouses or one of them, being inappropriately called parties, these individuals being unable to circumscribe their capacity as parties, but rather the quality of persons to whom the convention is opposed at the very moment of its conclusion”.

jurisdiction the minor is domiciled. At the same time, the minor who has reached matrimonial age may conclude or modify a matrimonial convention, only with the consent of his legal tutor and the authorization of the court-appointing tutore.

Per a contrario, a minor, under the age of 16, can not be part of the matrimonial convention, the same situation as for those people under the legal restraint.

The cause of the matrimonial convention represents the choice, modification or replacement of the matrimonial regime (article 312, article 329, article 369 Civil Code), which must be licit and moral, the lack of cause making voidable the act, except those cases when the act was wrongly qualified, and it may produce other legal effects¹⁶.

Regarding the formal conditions, under the sanction of absolute nullity, it is necessary to conclude the matrimonial convention in the form of an authentic document, legalized exclusively by the public notary.

In terms of legal content, the matrimonial convention establishes only a set of rules under which spouses / future spouses will acquire goods, incur costs, will bear their own or common debts etc.

The matrimonial convention does not transfer rights related to goods that will be acquired in the future by spouses during marriage. Also, it is not a contract for acquiring future goods or certain debts. But it represents a set of rules after which the rights and obligations of spouses/future spouses will respect related to their future patrimonial actions.

In case of divorce, depending on these rules, the partition deed will be done. Also, if the spouses do not agree, the courts will settle the divorce, according to these rules on the matrimonial convention, along with the provisions of Civil Code, established for each chosen matrimonial regime,

The matrimonial convention may contain only “modalities for the liquidation of the conventional community”, so it is not an anticipated partition deed.

The matrimonial convention governed by the Civil Code does not allow spouses or future spouses to agree unconditionally as to their matrimonial regime

Concluding, the effects of the matrimonial convention, from a substantial point of view, will result in a community or separation

¹⁶ The act is also valid when the case is not expressly mentioned, the existence of a valid cause being presumed until the contrary is proved.

patrimonial status or combined elements thereof. In addition to the essential, specific effects, the convention also produces evidence effects.

The cessation of this matrimonial regime may be done *de jure*, through the dissolution of marriage (by divorce), the death of one of the spouses or the will of the spouses, by partition of the common property, acquired under the rules of the legal community without involving the goods acquired before the marriage conclusion, or after marriage conclusion, by one and in the name of one of the spouses, only the goods acquired *expresbis verbis* on shares.

The liquidation of this regime implies the delimitation of own property where there is doubt about their belonging, the division of the property acquired in the joint ownership, transforming that joint ownership into a full and exclusive right of each of the spouses, the payment of common creditors for the debts contracted to fulfill marriages, making of mutual payments between spouses, compensation for the use of a spouse's property by a spouse, etc.

Except for the right of retention, all other rules related to the liquidation of legal matrimonial regime belong to the common law¹⁷.

The third matrimonial regime governed by the Romanian legislator, the regime of the conventional community can restrict or broaden, within certain limits, the regime of the legal community. The Civil Code specifies, limitatively, by art. 367 provisions, aspects that can be modified from the legal community regime by concluding the matrimonial convention.

Thus, according to the provisions of art. 366 Civil Code, the regime of the conventional community is defined as a derogatory rule from the legal community regime, according to the agreement between the parties, the object of the matrimonial convention may include one or more of the following aspects, provided by the text of article 367 Civil Code:

(a) the inclusion into the community of personal goods, acquired before or after the marriage, except those of personal use and assets used for the exercise of the profession of one of the spouses;

b) the restriction of community to those assets specified in the matrimonial convention, whether acquired before or during marriage;

c) the obligation of both spouses to conclude certain acts of administration; in this case, if one of the spouses is unable to express his/her will or abusively opposes, the other spouse, alone, may conclude the act, but only with the prior consent of the tutore appointing court;

¹⁷ It is the matter of partition deed, business management, unjust enrichment etc.

d) inclusion of the preciput clause; execution of the preciput clause done in nature or, if this is not possible, by the equivalent, according to the net asset value of the community;

e) ways of conventional community liquidation

Thus, according to art. 368 Civil Code, the conventional community regime is supplemented by provisions on the legal community regime, unless otherwise provided by convention.

Just as in the case of the legal community, three distinct patrimonial masses are constituted, the difference of which consists only in the extent of the masses of common goods, that future spouses affects their marriage through the matrimonial convention.

As with the legal community regime, its cessation can take place in two different ways. The first, matrimonial regime of the conventional community cessation, takes place during marriage, exclusively, by will of the parties (in fact, a change in the matrimonial regime of the conventional community). Secondly, the matrimonial regime cessation comes as a result of annulment, declaration of nullity, dissolution or termination of the marriage, produced *ope legis*, with the consequence of definitive cessation of patrimonial relations between spouses.

In the case of matrimonial regime cessation, as a result of annulment, declaration of nullity, dissolution or termination of the marriage, the notions of matrimonial regime cessation and matrimonial regime liquidation are no longer the same, from content's point of view. Also, the moment of matrimonial regime cessation will be the one stipulated by law provisions, depending on the concrete situation, while its liquidation has no relevance and no representation of a cessation condition.

Even though the regulation of matrimonial regimes is far from being complete and unambiguous, we consider it responds to the increasingly complex and varied needs of private law subjects, needs that are in continuous dynamics.

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The Apostleship of Laymen, a Current Missionary Challenge

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Abstract:

Laity – men and women – are an essential constituent element of the church, without which church life can not be conceived. If it is true that where the bishop is, there is the church, so true is that the unbelieving bishop is not the church. Therefore, the hierarchs, the clergy and the people (laymen) form the whole church, whose elements cannot be conceived separately, so that the church body can exist and function normally.

Keywords: mission, preaching, apostleship, confession, layman

I. The participation of laymen in the integral mission of the Church

The laymen have not only the right but also the duty to participate in the entire mission of the church. One must not confuse the priesthood, which has a special apostolic mission in the Church, with the mission of the Church itself, excluding the laity from the right and the duty to confess the faith at any time and place. The entire “people of God” is called and consecrated to participate in the mission of Christ as “companions” with the Apostles in the building of the Church: “we work together (in synergy) with God; you are the field of God, the building of God. Everyone must be careful how they build; that another foundation cannot bring forth what is set forth, which is Christ” (1 Corinthians 3, 9, 10, 11). Embodied into Christ by Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist and constituted as “the people of God”, the laymen participate in their own way in Christ's prophetic, priestly and royal ministry, exerting their share of the mission entrusted to the whole Christian people of the Church, and in the world. The specific call of the laymen is to seek the kingdom of God (Matthew 6: 33) and to deal with the temporal order to order them according to His will. They are those who have a particular duty to illuminate and order all the temporal realities in which they are heavily involved, so that they are continually realized in the spirit of the gospel of Christ. The initiative of secular Christians is particularly necessary in discovering and inventing the

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means to impregnate social, political and economic realities with the demands of Christian learning and life. But for this they must have a clearer conscience not only belonging to the Church, but that they are the Church, and that, under the guidance of Christ, the Head of the Church and the guidance of the bishops and priests, the visible entities of Christ, must fulfill an apostolate in Church and the world.

Being entrusted by God with the apostolate in virtue of the sacraments of Initiation, all believers enjoy the right and obligation to act individually or group in societies so that the message of salvation in Christ be known and received by all men on earth. This obligation becomes even more pressing when only through them people can hear the gospel and know Christ. In parish communities, their action is so necessary that without it, the apostolate of sacramental priesthood cannot have full effect.

II. The participation of laymen in the prophetic service of Christ

The participation of the laymen in the prophetic ministry of Christ is through the preaching of the Gospel, the preservation and the missionary transmission of the apostolic Tradition and the Christian testimony in the midst of the world. Christ fulfills his prophetic mission not only through the Apostles and their descendants, the bishops and priests, but also through the lay faithful who call them to confess the faith by giving them the grace of the word. To teach someone to bring it to faith is the task not only of every ordained preacher but also of every believer. “My brethren, if any of you will be wandering away from the truth, and someone will turn him to know that he who has turned the sinner out of the wandering of his way will save his soul from death, and a multitude of sins will cover him”. 5, 19–20).

The testimony of the word of God is an internal requirement of faith: “Believe, I have spoken; and we believe, and therefore we speak” (2 Corinthians 4: 13). To confess God is to confess our divine lineage. It means to confess that we are created by God and that we live and exist in this divine order. It means recognizing that we are not autonomous, but dependent on God, both in the beginning, in our whole life and in our end. By confessing and transmitting faith we show our dependence on God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ whom we receive as the Savior who perfects and sanctifies our lives through the Holy Spirit and leads us to the Kingdom of God (Plămădeală, 1989: 197).

The laymen receive many opportunities to practice the apostolate of evangelization and sanctification. The very testimony of Christian life and the good works of “working faith through love” (Gal. 5: 6) have the

power to draw people to God (Mt. 5: 16). However, such an apostolate is not only the testimony of life. The true apostle seeks opportunities to declare Christ by word, or to the unbelievers, to bring them to faith, or to the faithful, to instruct, strengthen and exhort them to a true Christian life “for the love of Christ rules us” Cor. 5: 14). In the heart of all the words of the Apostle must resound: “Thou shall save me if I do not rejoice” (1 Corinthians 9: 16).

The evangelization and the missionary transmission of the Christian tradition by the laity is of paramount importance within the family (Bria, 1999: 162).

Ever since its inception, the Christian Church has been modeled on the family as a community of love: “Do not defy the old man, but urge him as a parent: the youngest, as the brethren; old women like mothers; the young ones, as sisters, in all purity. The widows honor them, the truly widowed. And if a widow has children or grandchildren, they first learn to prove their piety to their own family and reward their parents, for it is good and received before God” (1 Tim. 3–4).

The Apostle Paul compares the connection between man and woman with that between Christ and the Church (Eph. 5: 20–33). “This great mystery is; and I say in Christ and in the Church” (Ephesians 5: 32).

The family is founded not only on God's inner necessity of living in the human being, but also on the communion that exists between God and the humanity he loves. Since the Creator placed the communion between man and woman at the foundation of human society (Genesis 1: 27, 2, 18–25), and by His grace He has made the Mystery in Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5 : 32), the Apostles' of families has a special importance for the mission of the Church and for society.

Christian spouses are collaborators of grace and faithful witnesses to one another and to their children and other family members. The family is the evangelical environment in which new generations of Church members are preparing. Christian education and training within the family are crucial for children and young people. Parents are the first messengers of the faith and educators for their children. By word and example, they educate them in Christian and apostolic life. This education is done either directly or indirectly through the experience of common prayers, fasting, by preparing the children for receiving the sacred Sacraments, and especially by personal relationships between parents and children, not only at home but also outside. Spiritual guidance and direct example of parents are of decisive importance in transmitting the faith and Christian tradition.

Christian parents are the most important mediators between the Church and the world. Through them, the children and young people are

helped, and through them they are sent into the world as disciples of Christ as witnesses and prophets of Him. It is a prolongation of the Church in the world and a bringing of the world into the Church. The fulfillment of the apostolic duty towards the children and the young generation also maintains the faith of the parents. Many Christian parents have lost their rightful faith and authentic Christian life because they no longer care about the Christian education of their children.

In the Old Testament, the teaching of the law, in the collective, and its transmission was a family obligation: “These words which I say to you today, have them in your heart and in your soul; that thou shall plant them in thy sons, and speak unto them when thou sit in thy house, when thou go on a path, when thou sleep, and get up” (Deut 6: 6, 7). The Christian family fulfills their mission if through the love and respect of their members to each other, by confessing faith and by praying elevated to God in common, it will appear as the household cell of the Church, and if the whole family will fit into the liturgical cult of the Church and promote Christian virtues in society. “It must be stressed that, to the greatest extent, within the family cell, the life of the Christian becomes reality, and thus the health of all problems is renewed. In the face of contemporary threats to the existence of the family itself, it must be remembered that precisely within its structures, day by day, the spiritual cult and the preaching of the Word of God take place, in which the priesthood of the parents, who offer their children to the divine light and who are the representatives the provisional and mirror of parental care and divine mercy” (Bria et alli, 2003: 37–39).

Always and everywhere, but especially in areas where the gospel of Christ has not yet become a concrete human reality, or where the Church is in great difficulty, Christian families, adhering to the gospel with all their lives, give a great testimony to the world precious about Christ. All Christians are indebted to confess Christ to men (Mt. 10: 32), that is to each other, in public not only privately, that is, not only as a statement of personal faith, made in the face of one’s own conscience, but as a confession of public faith by word and deed. This demand is so categorical that the Savior Jesus Christ is not content to say only affirmatively: “He who confesses to men..” but always returns, as always in biblical language, repeating the idea and the negative one, to strengthen it, saying: “but to him who will deny me before men, I will also deny myself to my Father who is in heavens” (Mt. 10: 33).

Even during the Savior's public activities, there were many laymen who testified and spread the word of the Gospel, which Jesus did not stop; some even sent them to proclaim Him. Thus, when the Apostle John informed Him that someone was casting demons in His name (Mk.

9: 38), “Jesus said, Do not stop it, there is no one to do a miracle in My name, and then to He can hurry to speak to Me of evil. For he who is not against us is for us” (Mk 9: 39-40). After he had healed him, he sent him home, asking him to declare among his own people the faith in Him: “Go to your house, to yours, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you and how he has loved you. And he departed, and began to declare in the Decapolis what Jesus did for him; and they all marveled” (Mk. 5: 19–20).

The apostles were specifically sent (Mt. 28: 18–19, Mk. 16: 15–16, FA 1, 8, 2, 41) to fulfill the “ministry of the word” (FA 6: 4), but they were helped in this ministry of deacons (FA 6, 7–9; 7, 11–59; 8, 5, 40) and faithful men and women. For the Savior’s request to confess Him to men does not refer only to the Apostles, but to all Christians, this being the general ground for preaching the word by the laymen as well.

The New Testament and the history of the Church show us that many believers have followed this existence of mission, and every Christian was a living agent in the propagation of the Good News. Everyone in his circle worked among the Gentiles for their conversion. Christians felt compelled to preach in wider circles, hoping to gain as many as possible for Christ. Each Christian community was a center for spreading the gospel. Missionary activity was continually carried out by personal contact, by kinship and friendship, and by attending Christian meetings for teaching. Craftsmen, soldiers, merchants, slaves, men and women all were engaged in this missionary activity.

After the persecution of the Christians in Jerusalem, they spread throughout Palestine and the surrounding. “But those that were scattered went from one place to another by the word” (Acts 8: 4). And “those who had scattered after the trouble that happened in Stephen's time went to Phenicia, and to Cyprus, and to Antioch. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and the great number of those who believed and returned to the Lord” (Acts 11: 19, 21). They founded the Church in Antioch, where Christians were first called Christians (Acts 11, 26). According to the New Testament clues and tradition, the Church of Rome was also founded by simple believers. Here, the spouses Aquila and Priscila, who were secular believers, preached here. Then, together with the Apostle Paul, they also preached other secular disciples like Epafras, Tihic, Aristarchus, etc., as Apostle Paul writes when he writes to the Philippians that “most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord through my chains, dare to speak without fear the word of God without fear” (Philippians 1: 14). Of many unnamed preachers in the Church of Thessalonica, all Apostle Paul tells us that they have been parable of all who believe in Macedonia and Achaia, for from them “the Lord’s word

was spoken not only in Macedonia and Achaia, our faith in God has entered our whole place” (1 Thess. 1, 8).

The sermon of missionaries and evangelists consists of a simple exposition of the teaching of faith and an account of the history of salvation in Christ. A more in-depth explanation of the teaching of faith and its deepening was made by the instructions in the first Christian ages, and then by catechists (second-fourth century) by catechists. They therefore acted within the Church’s internal mission and were most often laymen, well trained in the mysteries of the Christian faith (Călugăr, 2005: 41). Our times do not claim less commitment from the laymen. On the contrary, the present conditions require them to develop a more intense and wider apostolate. The progress of science and technology, the complex relationships among men, not only extended the sphere of apostolate to the endless, but raised new problems, whose solving in the Christian spirit demands a special concern, effort and commitment of the laymen.

The apostolate of the laymen has become all the more necessary, as the autonomy of many sectors of human life, which also involves a certain alienation from the religious and moral life, has greatly increased, thereby endangering the Christian life itself. There are few who, by trusting too much in the progress of natural sciences and techniques, fall into some sort of idolatry of temporal things, becoming more slaves than their masters.

Being the status of secular believers to lead their lives in the midst of the world and worldly affairs, they are called by God, inspired by the Christian spirit to exert their apostleship in the midst of the world, activating for the evangelization and sanctification of men, and striving to penetrate the social order with the spirit of the gospel, so that their work will give a clear witness of Christ and serve the salvation of men. Each, according to his gifts and competence, is called upon to actively participate in the deepening and defense of Christian principles as well as in their correct application to the problems of the contemporary world. The apostolate in the social environment, meaning the preoccupation to penetrate the Christian spirit, the mentality and morals, the laws and structures of the community in which each one lives, is the mission and duty of secular Christians to such an extent that it can never be fulfilled as words to someone else. At home, job, or profession, study, or leisure time, they are best placed to help their brothers and sisters. This apostolate must encompass all people living in the environment and include any good spiritual or material that they can do. By doing so, they contribute to the evangelization and knowledge of Christ by those with whom they come into contact and in the formation

of Christian knowledge, so that they, in turn, penetrate the spirits of the gospel through the various environments and human communities.

The laymen faithful who have the proper gift and training are called upon to give their contribution to catechism, religious-moral education, and the defense of Orthodox Christian faith in parish communities, in schools, and through the means of social communication. The bishop is invested with a “fulness of truth” (St. Irineu, *Adv. haer.* 2. 26. 2) He is introduced by ordination in the succession with the bishops established by the Apostles and today’s missions to “teach the word of the Truth”. Not only priests, but also teachers of theology and religion, educated catechists and laity must be engaged in this didactic and pedagogical mission (Călugăr, 2005: 41).

An important contribution is made by the laymen to dialogue, which is so necessary today, between theology and science, so that science, while preserving its necessary autonomy to be promoted in the Christian spirit, and faith supported with a scientific foundation for that Christians always be ready to answer to anyone who asks for their hope (cf 1 Pt. 3: 15).

III. The participation of laymen in the priestly ministry of Christ

The participation of the laymen in the priestly ministry of Christ is accomplished by actively participating in the public worship of the Church through private prayer and by giving them the service of communion in the mysterious Body of Christ as anticipation of the future Kingdom of God. The Divine Liturgy, the center of Orthodox Christian life and spirituality, is the structure of communion through excellence. Orthodox liturgical spirituality is based on the holy ministry of “Whoever brings and is brought, who receives and divides”. The Eucharistic sacrifice is nothing more than a mystical update of the sacrifice of Christ as an extension of His surrender as a man of God, a surrender that, when in a body capable of death, led to the end, accepting the bloody death, and after the resurrection it maintains it as a total surrender of His humanity to God. The Risen and Ascended Christ is in a state of continuous dedication to God, the Holy Trinity and to men (Stăniloae, III, 1978: 105). That is why the Epistle to the Hebrews presents Him as the everlasting giver, constantly interfering for us (7: 24–27), and the Revelation as “a lamb, sitting stabbed in the throne” of God (5: 6).

Mass is brought by Christ together with His Church, with all, and for all its members. In the Liturgy, the whole community is in a state of celebration and education, being together-sacrificing and sacrificing

together in and with Christ through the liturgical priest who moves this worship action. It can be said that in a very profound sense, the nature of the community of the Church is achieved and maintained through priestly ministry, which is why where the institution of priesthood disappears its ecclesial profile is erased. The Church cannot therefore be defined as a community gathered in the name of Christ simply. Its ecclesial meaning is perfected by its liturgical, Eucharistic character of consecration (Bria, 1982: 484).

Mass is not only the guarantee and expression of unity of faith, prayer and love that exists in the body of the seen Church, but also the joy of being joyful with Christ in His next Kingdom: “For whenever you eat this bread and you drink it drink the Lord’s death, proclaim it until it comes” (1 Cor 9: 26). The church is sacramental to the Kingdom of God, but it begs and anticipates the future kingdom as it organizes itself and presents itself as the Eucharist. The purpose of the Liturgy is identical to the purpose of the Church, that of transforming everything into the Eucharist, for only prepared and ordained as “the Eucharist”, as a sacrifice offered to God, humanity can be introduced through the Holy Spirit into the communion of the risen and exalted One (Bria, 1982: 484).

In the Mass, is preached not only the word of God, and believers share the body and blood of His Son, but also draw an icon of Christian life in its spiritual and social aspect. The mass indicates a way of reorganizing mankind into a new order of grace, which is symbolically represented on the disk. Its purpose is to set in motion this Eucharistic order or the liturgical organization of the world in Christ, in the spirit of which everything, human life and creation must be prepared and offered as a gift to God. The Orthodox Church promotes through its Eucharistic cult a model of liturgical spirituality. This is noticed not only in the common liturgical celebration as an act of paschal joy but also in the coherent organization of the spiritual and social life according to the Eucharistic model, which is the model of consecration and of love until the sacrifice. The Church claims the Gospel project and proposes to the world the Eucharistic Perspective, the perspective of the coming of the Holy Spirit to prepare the world from here for and in the face of the future world (Evdokimov, 1977: 40–44; Khodze, 1976: 6–12; ***, 1975: 417–421).

Through mass, the orthodoxy has maintained a balance and unity not only between word and mystery, between mission and cult, between history and the Kingdom of God, but also between dogma and ethics, between prayer and ministry. The re-affirmation of the liturgical status of the Church is decisive for our time when looking for a new type of

consistency between theology, spirituality and social ethics. Communion of the Church, according to the Eucharistic model, is also essential for the unity of the human community. This “communion of the saints” is manifested both in prayer and intercession, as well as in social solidarity and common ministry (Bria, 1982: 491).

But not only has the liturgy had this Eucharistic character. All the sacraments are related to the sacrifice and resurrection of Christ. For in all Christ is given for us, and gives Himself to God, but it is also given to us. In Baptism He gives us a new life capable of giving to Him in Him through Chrismation the power of advancing into virtues is given to us, which are forms of self-sacrifice. Repentance is the grace of forgiveness that meets our renunciation of selfish pleasures. The priesthood is the consecration of the ordained God to lead a life dedicated to Him and the Church. Marriage is a gift of true love and gifting, combined with a defeat of selfishness. Each individual man is destined to die and resurrect with Christ, to reconstitute, in a liturgical way, the history of universal salvation in his own person (Stăniloae, 1978: 105).

Falling in this liturgical, Eucharistic order, all Christians, by public worship and by assuming the burdens of life in the spirit of Christ, become like Him: “always bearing in the flesh the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus they appear in our body” (1 Corinthians 4: 10, Col. 1: 24). All activities: apostolic prayers and initiatives, family life, daily work, joys and trials of life, if they are lived in the spirit of Christ, become “spiritual sacrifices, pleasing to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2): in the celebration of the Eucharist, are offered with deep godliness to God together with the offering of the Body and Blood of the Lord. At the Divine Liturgy, Christians also offer themselves to God with Christ: “Receive our God, our prayer; make us worthy to bring prayers, requests and sacrifices without blood to all your people” (From *The First Prayer for the Believers*, Missal). Thus, secular laymen, acting all over with holiness as worshipers, consecrate to God the world itself, following the exhortation of the ecstasy: “Let ourselves and one another, and all our life of Christ God, give it” (from *Liturghier*, ed. 2012).

The laymen believers participate in the priesthood of Christ and through all actions by which they enhance the reconciliation of men with God and the whole: “I urge you to make requests, prayers, intercessions, thanks to all men, that this is a good thing and received before God our Savior” (1 Tim., 2, 1, 3). For God “reconciled us with Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5: 18).

IV. The participation of laymen in the royal service of Christ

The laymen or faithful believers participate in the royal service of Christ by their victory over temptations and sins, by organizing Christian communion and by Christian deacon in secular society. The gospel of Christ calls men out of the bondage of sin and death and by birth to life in Christ (Romans 6: 3–6, Gal 3: 27) sets them on the path of justice, freedom and communion of eternal life. “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14: 6). “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of Life” (Hebrews 8: 12). But because this path of the Christian is not yet the ultimate goal, it passes through temptations, disputes, and sufferings, and therefore asks for the spiritual struggle: “And every fighter, from all things, endures. But to take a wretched crown; but we, an unselfish one” (1 Corinthians 9: 25). The target of the road shines only in its course. Salvation is gained in the struggle with the temptations and contestations of this world: the victory of life in the struggle against sin and death.

Through His gift to God, which culminated in the victory of sin and death through the cross and resurrection, Jesus Christ shared with His disciples the gift of liberty and power that by self-denial and holy life they could overcome the temptations and the dominion of sin themselves, “For the One Who is in us is greater than the one who is the world” (1 John 4: 4). The Apostle Paul expresses this power of the Christian, coming from the power of Christ, to overcome temptations and sins through the exhortations of “to walk in the renewing of life”.

“So do you, think that you are dead to sin, but come to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, let not sin reign in your mortal body, that you may obey your lusts; neither let your members be put to serve sin as weapons of injustice, but present to God that you are alive from the dead, and your members as weapons of righteousness in the service of God. For sin will not take hold of you, since you are not under the law, but under grace” (Romans 6: 11–14). “He who subdues his body and governs his soul without being overwhelmed by passions is his own master: he can be called emperor because he is able to lead his own being; is free and independent, and does not fall prey to a guilty servant”. For “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against wicked spirits” (Eph 6: 12), victory over sin must also manifest itself in the social sphere. It also improves living conditions in the world, its institutions and structures, so as not to generate social sins, but to provide the optimal conditions for the perfection of man (Bel, 2001: 43–77).

V. Conclusions

It would be preferable for all Christians to have the consciousness of their spiritual, spiritual nobility, and the consciousness of their mission. Through their moral life, they master their passions, which always try to unleash and disorganize the personal life of man and society. They are the ones who offer liturgical sacrifices, participating in the Divine Liturgy. They are teachers because they are meant to carry on what they have learned in the Liturgy or from a multitude of other sources.

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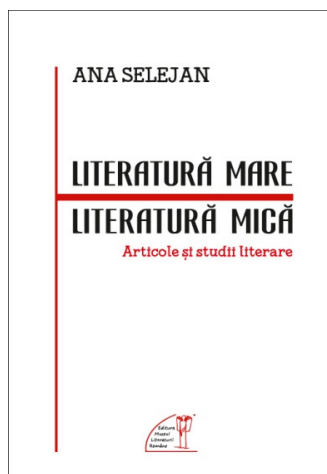
REVIEW ARTICLES

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Despre morală și estetică în literatură:
Ana Selejan, *Literatură mare, literatură mică.*
Articole și studii literare

Florica Bodiștean*

About Moral and Aesthetics in Literature: Ana Selejan,
High Literature, Low Literature. Literary Articles and Studies



Numele Anei Selejan se leagă automat de cercetarea amplă a celei mai discutabile și mai nefaste perioade din istoria literaturii noastre, cea a realismului socialist. Contribuția ei la cunoașterea, lămurirea și dreapta judecată a totalitarismului literar postbelic are nu numai valoarea pionieratului, căci cele dintâi cărți consacrate acestei perioade apar îndată după Revoluția din '89, în 1992 și 1993, ci și pe aceea a unei cuprinderi ce tentează exhaustivitatea prezentării acestui climat literar și cultural. Este vorba despre nu mai puțin de unsprezece volume care se așază într-un vast și articulat panopticum ce adăpostește „muzeul cu figuri de ceară” al literaturii noastre sub comunism. În miezul cercetării, ciclul *Literatura în totalitarism*, alcătuit din șase volume publicate între

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anii 1994 și 2000, radiografiază pe segmente temporale semnificative cele peste două decenii de literatură realist-socialistă (anii 1949–1960). El este prefațat de tripticul perioadei pretotalitare, când înghețul ideologic era doar presimțit – *Trădarea intelectualilor* (1992), volum dedicat demascărilor și epurărilor din cultură din anii imediat următori războiului, *Reeducare și prigoană* (1993), consacrat diatribelor împotriva literaturii „burgheze” și acțiunilor de ideologizare a scriitorilor, și *Poezia românească în tranziție* (1944–1948) publicată în 2007. Dar este și completat de o carte ce invită la verdicte prin confruntarea opiniilor obiective și subiective, cele ale istoriei literare documentate „din afară” și cele declarate în literatura mărturisirilor scrise de „actorii” perioadei în cauză. *Adevăr și mistificare în jurnale și memorii apărute după 1989* (2011) este o carte „speculară” în care Ana Selejan interoghează valoarea de adevăr a literaturii ce se pretinde a fi adevărată, literatura jurnalelor, a memoriilor, a interviurilor postdecembriste, în încercarea de a devoala modul și măsura în care scriitori și critici din eșalonul întâi al realismului socialist sau din cel al literatorilor de rând își asumă sau nu culpa morală. În fine, *Glasul patriei: un cimitir al elefanților în comunism* (2012) investighează fenomenul cameleonizării scriitorilor indexați, afirmați deja în interbelic și formele înregimentării lor propagandistice în revista „Glasul patriei”, organ al Comitetului Român pentru Repatriere. Toate sunt cărți-cronică, scrise „cu documentele pe masă”, cum autoarea însăși spune și cum se constată de altfel, și în respectul desăvârșit al istorismului care devine principiu structurant, capabil să releve dialectica mecanismului socio-politic și progresiva sa intruziune în spațiul culturii și al conștiințelor.

Ultima carte semnată de Ana Selejan, *Literatură mare – literatură mică. Articole și studii literare*, apărută în 2017 la Editura Muzeul Literaturii Române, oferă studii de sinteză istorico-literară postbelică reprezentând în același timp și o *addenda* la opera restitutorie asupra totalitarismului literar românesc despre care autoarea simte că mai sunt lucruri noi de dezvăluit sau teoretizări și concluzii de formulat. Dar este și o incursiune pe alte teritorii literare, făcute cunoscute doar studenților săi de la Facultatea de Litere a Universității sibiene sau comunității științifice cu prilejul diferitelor manifestări. Căci volumul adună studii scrise între 1991 și 2016, unele edite și revizitate, altele inedite, „majoritatea publicate în reviste, culegeri de studii ori conferințe sau fragmentar în cărți și sinteze universitare. Puține sunt inedite (bunăoară despre *Seringa* lui T. Arghezi sau despre publicațiile lui G. Călinescu ș.a.)”, cum se precizează în *Notă*.

Ce înseamnă pentru autoare literatură mare și literatură mică se configurează investigând numitorul comun, explicitat sau subînțeles, al

acestor cercetări, respectiv raportul dintre literar și extraliterar sau dintre autonomia esteticului și condiționările sociale ale creației. Primul studiu al volumului, intitulat *Literatura mare*, traversează marile curente literare pentru a schița raportul literaturii cu etica societală considerată drept „cod de valori și conduite referitoare la identitatea umană, interumană și națională, specifică unei epoci la un moment dat” (p. 7). Trei curente ale secolului XX ignoră, fie dintr-o parte, fie din cealaltă, raportul estetic – etic. Modernismul interbelic, mai cu seamă prin avangardele sale, se poziționează într-o indiferență clară față de social, contrabalansată de angajarea pe linia etnico-religioasă a tradiționaliștilor. Pentru postmodernismul întors spre text și spre autosuficiența scriiturii, ideologia operei e cel mult subiect de caricatură și deriziune, în vreme ce realismul socialist păcătuiește prin monopolizarea esteticului de către politic și prin aceea că oferă o versiune mistificată și dogmatică asupra singurei versiuni sociale acceptate. Cred că este pusă între aceste repere diferența dintre anti-arta avangardei sau arta subversivității postmoderne și non-arta literaturii totalitarismului, „o literatură cu «estetică» fără estetică” cum o numește autoarea. Pe această linie, nu literatura pașoptiștilor este o literatură mică pentru că ei „credeau în scrisul lor”, în vocația ameliorativă la nivel social și în rolul recuperator sub aspect cultural și literar, acela de a realiza un inventar complet de instituții, producții genuriale și forme de evaluare critică după model occidental. Literatura mică e literatura instrumentalizată, devenită „armă de luptă și curea de transmisie a ideologiei comuniste”, care, neavând niciun fundament estetic, nu rezistă probei timpului, evaporându-se odată cu condițiile social-istorice ce au determinat-o.

Sub auspiciile conceptuale ale binomului *literatură mare/literatură mică* volumul înglobează studii despre *Școala epică de la Iași* (Mihail Kogălniceanu, Constantin Negruzzi, Vasile Alecsandri, Alecu Russo), veritabilă „școală” de vreme ce adună scriitori înrudiți în mod deliberat de un program literar, acela al prozei ironice, de moravuri – un exemplu estetic din „dimineața” scriitorilor noștri, angajați prin faptă, și prin cuvânt, pe toate „șantierele” posibile ale prezentului. Grupaje de studii sunt alocate lui Cioran, privit în „tabloul de generație” sau în relația sa nelipsită de contradicții cu sacrul, lui Blaga, prezent prin comentariul poeziilor sale neincluse în edițiile antume și postume și prin „realismul metafizic” al reprezentărilor despre Marele Anonim din *Diferențialele divine* sau lui Radu Gyr, reduplicat în oglindă prin creația interbelică vs. discursul postbelic antilegionar sau encomiastic la adresa realizărilor prezentului. Lui G. Călinescu îi sunt consacrate cercetări care sistematizează activitatea sa de director de publicații și autor de

strategii redacționale – la „Tribuna poporului”, „Lumea”, „Națiunea” și „Jurnalul literar”, între anii 1944 și 1948 –, dar și de publicist și critic literar în rubrica *Cronica optimistului* din „Contemporanul” anilor 1959–1960. Ana Selejan îi urmărește parcursul complicității cu sistemul de-a lungul acestor perioade, de la dificultatea de a rezolva programatic, în formula, benignă, a „poetului-cetății”, concilierea artei sau a „literaturii turnului de fildeș” cu cerințele momentului istoric dat, așa-zisa „literatură nouă” ce începea să-și facă simțită ofensiva în anii de dinainte de 1949, până la asumarea răspicată a noii paradigme ideologice în publicistică și romanul *Scrinul negru* apărut în 1960, prețul plătit pentru consacrarea sa oficială în noul regim. Importante distincții va afla cititorul în paginile studiului *Modernitatea romanelor lui G. Călinescu*, cum ar fi aceea că romanele călinesciene nu sunt autentice balzaciene, cum se afirmă îndeobște, ci de un „realism reformat”, obținut ca formulă proprie – în perfect acord cu principiile exprimate în *Sensul clasicismului* – prin infuzia de elemente clasice: situațiile epice cu înalt grad de generalitate, ilustrate prin tehnica contrapunctului și tipurile morale fundamentale, lipsite deliberat de complexitate pentru a capta în schimb forța simbolizării. În această perspectivă, personajul Otiliei, în care G. Călinescu recunoștea că și-a proiectat „fondul liric”, capătă și o coerență programatic-estetică: „Otilia este feminitatea pură, matură și infantilă în același timp, sentimentală și cerebrală, care, ca orice eroină clasică, preferă rațiunea în locul sentimentului, tocmai pentru confortul ei spiritual de moment” (p. 134).

Să mai reținem studiile *Centrul și marginea Europei în romanele lui Vintilă Horea*, *Receptarea critică a Revistei Cercului Literar* sau prezentarea „cazurilor” Arghezi și Petru Dumitriu, alternative de poziționare etică în contextul totalitar comunist: scriitorul convertit și scriitorul oficios, cedarea estetică și zelul propagandistic.

În cuprinsul volumului, de cea mai mare atenție se bucură însă tema predilectă a Anei Selejan, cea a literaturii române în totalitarism, sistematizată în patru studii de sinteză pentru care reproducerea câtorva titluri și subtitluri este ilustrativă: *Proletcultismul și realismul socialist*, *abordări teoretice*, *Frontul poeziei*, *Prozatori frunțași*, *Criticii literari marxști*, *Totalitarismul românesc în sintagme specifice*, *Omul nou ca personaj literar postbelic*. După panorama istorico-literară serializată în cărțile sale anterioare, cu informații strict date și cu dezvoltări incomode, aceste studii care abordează global cele peste două decenii de realism socialist vin să repartizeze accentele teoretice și să decanteze modelul ideologic și tematico-retoric al paradigmei literare în cauză practică la proporții industriale prin simpla aplicare a „metodei metodelor” (de altfel, unul dintre conceptele curente ale epocii era acela

de „producție literară”!). Ana Selejan îi inventariază și discută izvoarele doctrinare, principiile (între care, „spiritul de partid” ia locul principiului estetic), mediile obligatorii, cronotopii, modelele narative și epico-lirice, personajele exemplare (Mitreă Cocor al lui Sadoveanu și Ilie Barbu din nuvela *Desfășurarea* a lui Marin Preda fiind singurele care întrunesc adeziunea unanimă a criticii), inventarul limbajului de lemn. Merită redat aici, măcar pentru cititorii mai tineri, patternul narațiunii ideale pe care autoarea îl reconstituie în capitolul sugestiv intitulat *Cele unsprezece porunci ale ficțiunii dirijate: munca în calitate de temă generică, lupta de clasă ca motor al acțiunii, antiteza tipologică* (om nou/om vechi, pozitiv/negativ), *sabotajul economic, demascarea vechiului de către elementele progresiste, triumful omului nou, happy-endul* urmat de *transformarea generală*, căci eroul, ca veritabil titan, schimbă fața lumii, devine *model uman*, provoacă *catharsis-ul* și câștigă *adepti*. Șablonul le poate aminti filologilor de celebrele funcții ale lui V. I. Propp depistate în structura narativă a basmului și nici nu suntem departe de adevăr dacă ne gândim că și proza realist-socialistă propunea un fel de basm contemporan, obligatoriu maniheist și revanșator, ceea ce reprezintă în cele din urmă și un indiciu asupra gradului de ficționalitate și de arbitrar al acestei literaturi inspirate, paradoxal, din imediata realitate.

Discursul cărții este sobru și onest, așa cum autoarea și-a obișnuit publicul cititor; el lasă să vorbească în primul rând documentul și abia apoi cercetătorul, curajos și ferm în opiniile sale deja susținute de textul primar. Structura argumentativă riguroasă și claritatea expunerii facilitează accesul la o informație vastă, dar niciodată copleșitoare, ce acoperă numeroase spații albe de pe teritoriul literaturii noastre.

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