RO-BRIT
STUDENT JOURNAL

English Annual Review
of the Romanian Students from
"Vasile Alecsandri" University Bacău

**ALMA MATER
BACAU**

CONTENTS

EDITORS

Editor-in-chief:

*PhD Lecturer Raluca
Galița*

Editorial Board:

PhD Professor Elena Bonta

*PhD Associate Professor
Mihaela Culea*

*PhD Lecturer
Gabriela Andrioai*

*PhD Lecturer Cătălina
Bălinișteanu-Furdu*

*PhD Associate Professor
Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu*

Editor, Supplement:

*PhD Associate Professor
Elena Ciobanu*

Technical Editor:

*Raluca-Andreea Donici
(Nechifor), PhD candidate*

EDITORIAL

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

This journal intends to encourage students to take more initiative in engaging in the English studies, providing at the same time the opportunity for them to have their research and creative writing published. Thus, RO-BRIT STUDENT JOURNAL invites English-speaking students to contribute to the journal through submitting original articles. The journal welcomes submissions on English language, literature and culture, its purpose being to provide a channel for the publication of original work by Romanian students who love the English language. This is an excellent opportunity for students to allow their research to be seen by their colleagues and to participate in a promising endeavour.

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

"My sister Emily loved the moors. Flowers brighter than the rose bloomed in the blackest of the heath for her; out of a sullen hollow in a livid hill-side her mind could make an Eden. She found in the bleak solitude many and dear delights; and not the least and best loved was — liberty. Liberty was the breath of Emily's nostrils; without it, she perished." (Charlotte Brontë)

"And if I pray, the only prayer/That moves my lips for me
Is, "Leave the heart that now I bear, /And give me liberty!"
(The Old Stoic, Emily Brontë – Ellis Bell, 2734)

A Structuralist Approach to *Wuthering Heights'* Narrative

Daniela Anisiei, III, EF
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Cătălina Bălinișteanu-Furdu

1. Story and discourse

It is ultimately the author's choice, to arrange the plot timeline, but this can have dramatic influence over the way the reader perceives the entire story. The order in which the readers finds out the details of the plot, for instance, can make a big difference in terms of their perception of the entire story. It goes without saying that her ingenious narrative technique is what differentiates Emily Brontë from other Victorian novelists, as well as the choice of describing a dysfunctional family, the use of story within a story, or the lack of chronological time – hence its fluidity, the multitude of narrators and the secretive reason behind this choice, the depiction of child abuse, neglect, alcoholism. These dark sides of a family saga were indeed themes successfully depicted by fiction writers, only much later in the XXth century. Victorian paradigms such as the woman like 'the angel in the house', or the cultured Thrushcross Grange type of home, "were subtly perceived and fostered by Emily Brontë in her novel, hence the postmodern readings of the symmetry between the two Catherines, or of the metamorphoses undergone by Wuthering Heights from one master to another" (Bălinișteanu-Furdu, 51-52). Authors often are aware of these literary techniques, and some of them put them at work brilliantly, over a hundred years ahead their times, such as Emily Brontë, successfully managed.

In order to be able to place Emily Brontë's narrative into the correct category of story and discourse, we must first and foremost, understand the opposition - clearly observed by Gerard Genette (9) - between "the objectivity of narrative and the subjectivity of discourse". In Wuthering Heights, the story (what is told?) and the discourse (how is told?) are unusually intertwined, but at the same time very originally organised. In terms of the story, the events in the novel do not respect any chronological order and the characters are often identified and differentiated with difficulty, mostly due to the repetition of their names. The settings, however, are very well defined, in symmetric antithesis one from another: the cultured space of Thrushcross Grange, opposing the profanely natural one of Wuthering Heights.

With regards to the discourse, we have a very confusing plot, what starts as a diary entrance of a "city man", Mr Lockwood, whose narrative role is very similar to the one of a 'recording machine'. This specific choice of how the plot unravels to the readers, has sparked numerous interpretations, no agreement amongst critics has yet been reached, when it comes to the reason behind the author's unusual choice of literary techniques. The narrative voices are sometimes the same with the focalization - when we speak about the main narrator, Nelly Dean, that acts like a "minute interpreter" (Mathison, 107) - since she is the one that sees the story unfolding and also narrates it.

Emily Brontë was born in 1818, in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, that transformed deeply the British society. This faithfully reflects in her innovative writing style, while expressing quite obvious preferences for the rural/ natural landscape, as opposed to the urban and industrial one that was flourishing in her times. Lockwood, the outcast and the outsider, originated from the urban environment, and nothing was great in that; on the contrary, this deepened his sense of alienation perceived by the other characters. Emily Brontë herself, used to be an outcast, because of her life experience. Therefore, most of the novel mirrors, the difficulties she came across in the Victorian era: "so much of Emily Bronte's later life has been represented as being wrapped in a kind of despair, an impression which her solitary novel and a great deal of her mature poetry tends to reinforce. At worst, she has been seen as driven by some necrophilic neurosis that hastened her to her untimely end" (Prentis, 20).

2. Narrative levels

Narrative levels differ from traditional concepts of embedding and framing because they use a significantly new terminology. Based on the theoretical approach of the same structuralist theoretician, Gerard Genette, we can initially speak of an 'extra-diegetic' narrator, Mr. Lockwood, confined by an 'intra-diegetic' one, Nelly Dean. The genius of Emily Brontë lies in the subtle introduction of a third category, identified by Genette as the 'metadiegetic' one, which is "essentially a story within a story within a story. A metadiegetic narrator is one who exists within a story world depicted by one of the characters of the primary narrative and who shares, with his or her fellow character(s), a narrative of his or her own" (Genette, 10).

The plotlines spin around the presentation of two generations of this family, with a very interesting unity of space - most plots and sub-plots happen within the walls of either of the two antagonist properties, or a lot of it, in between, in the moors. It can also be identified as a closed structure plot, due to Heathcliff's unexpected death, which brings the story to a "satisfactory ending" (Bălinișteanu-Furdu).

3. Medias res

The action starts in "medias res", the Latin term for 'in the middle of things', when Mr. Lockwood rents Thrushcross Grange from Heathcliff, after most of the story which is about to be disclosed, had already happened. We can make some assumptions on the temporal order of the events taking place almost eighteen years after the wedding of Catherine Earnshaw and Edgar Linton, during which Nelly says she had worked at the Grange. The inaccurate comments and assumptions of the new tenant are strategically used by the author to produce a reason, to justify Nelly's decision to fill in the gaps for the newly arrived, Mr. Lockwood.

The order of the unfolded event is not chronological, and confuses the reader. In the first three chapters and at the beginning of the fourth, the narration is in the 1st person, in the form of diary entries belonging to Mr Lockwood. In the fourth chapter, Nelly Dean commences filling in the gaps for the guest, so shaken up because of the apparition of old Cathy's ghost and trying to understand the strange family relations from that household. The discussion starts however, by his own initiative: "I'll turn the talk on my landlord family" (Brontë, 23). What initially resembles an interrogation, soon becomes a story told at the fireplace, while Nelly, the narrator, was doing some sewing. The narration continues with the 1st person narrator, however, the exchange between narrators had already occurred, in the shape   of a story within a story (an embedded narrative), "the narrative of a narrative" or "récit de récits" (Todorov, 29).

4. Narrative time

There is an obvious distinction in the novel when it comes to time: the discourse time is different from the time of the story itself, because all the actions are presented to us in the form of memories, events that happened a lot of years prior to them being told. Some of the characters were only brought to the attention of the diarist, long after their death: old Catherine, Edgar Linton, Isabella or old Catherine's parents and brother.

Nelly takes us and the tenant back in time, at the moment the gipsy boy Heathcliff, an orphan found on the streets of Liverpool, was adopted by the Earnshaws. Nelly's story moves across the time, in this time span of approximately eighteen years, and she lapses from the very beginning of the story up to a recent event of the declared present, the marriage between young Cathy and Linton. From here, Mr. Lockwood's diary takes over the narrative again, moving forward, up to the moment he returns to the Grange and finds out about the actual climax, or more of an "anti-climax" (Cox): the death of the main protagonist, Mr. Heathcliff.

Moving on to another use of the narrative - the distance from narrated events - concept belonging to

the same theorist, Gerard Genette, Wuthering Heights is the perfect example to observe this shift between the moment the actions occurred and the moment when they are being presented to the reader. Genette identifies four instances: posteriority, anteriority, simultaneity or intercalation. He believes that the value of a narrator can exist with reference to the relation he has with the different narrative levels that exist in the text: either primary or 'extradiegetic', 'intradiegetic' levels (which are presented in the narrative) or 'metadiegetic' (when we talk about multiple narrators and embedded narrative). Berendsen (149) gives yet again Mr. Lockwood's example, who is external to Nelly's narrative, while Mrs. Dean herself, acts intradiegetic.

5. Narrative voice(s): multiple and often unreliable narrators

The structure in itself is very unusual and since we are dealing with two central narrative voices, we can talk about a dual, even parallel narrative. The narrative voices identified are homodiegetic, with the sole reservation of Lockwood not being present in the whole story, but on the entire part of the plot (he is the cause that connects all the stories in his assumed role of a diarist).

Mr Lockwood is the outsider, considered by some critics the voice of the city, the industrialized world, showing the traits of an "interloper" (Cox). Opposing Mr Lockwood, Nelly Dean acts as the insider, the governess whose credibility needs to be questioned (Booth, 369), although she has indeed witnessed most of the events that she has yet to narrate to the outsider. Some interesting realistic features are seen in the misinterpretations of Mr. Lockwood, who always seem to get it wrong, rightfully assuming that all the people in the house were related, which they were, but in a different way that he thought they did. On the other hand, there is Nelly Dean who, "up the scale of intended reliability" becomes "the newly discovered 'villainess' of Wuthering Heights" (Booth, 369). Maybe the author intended to give the readers some sort of reasons to move things

forward in the way she indented, therefore creating confusion, which needed to be addressed in the form of unravelling the plot in the way that it did. Both narrators are considered to be subjective when narrating the story in that particular manner to suit their personal interests. Booth (159) argues that the unreliable narrator, is certainly mistaken "or he believes himself to have qualities which the author denies him".

6. Anachrony: analepsis and prolepsis

The way Emily Brontë wrote this novel, gives us the feeling that she played games with the narrative time. The very advanced use of modern and post-modern narrative devices has baffled critics. The effects, though, constitute a subject that the critics have not yet agreed upon.

The author is making great use of another technique, called "anachrony" which according to the Oxford dictionary of literary terms (Baldick, 9) is "a term used in modern narratology to denote a discrepancy in the order in which the events occur and are presented to us in the plot, and take two basic forms: analepsis (flashback), prolepsis (flash-forward)". Some characters we only meet through analepsis. Such is the main female protagonist, old Catherine, which is deceased at the time the initial story is narrated to Lockwood.

The anachronic literary technique dominates the narrative style and it is used predominantly throughout the novel, but through the ingenious use of the intermittent interruption, which creates some kind of either confusion, or challenge, that is very appealing to the modern reader (Peep, 14). In other words, the insider, Nelly Dean, tells a very complicated love story, which the outsider, Mr Lockwood, writes it in a journal, the content of which eventually reaches the reader. Critics have considered the narrative thread as being "a conceit" (Cox) having two present times in the novel, confusing and disorientating the reader, which nearly forgets about it. The names of some characters, which repeat themselves subsequently, do not help either.

to the other characters, and moving forward to dreams or opinions "that discursive comment, and comment on events and private ideas of an external primary narrator focalizor are only accessible to the primary hypothetical spectator-listener (...) when an embedding narrator has an embedded agent present its own narrative the result will be an embedded story, so shifts in narrator entail shifts in stories, with the exception, however, of dialogues quoted by the primary narrator. The various actors featured in the various story levels will always have other actors as addressees" (Berendsen, 153).

8. Emily Brontë's genius and contribution to the universal literature

Initially published under a male name, the reviews harshened when re-published under the real name of the female author. What initially was hoping to be a sweetening of the critics' reaction to the novel, has proven to be even worse; the slight positive reviews it has initially received, disappeared, later on, while her sister, Charlotte, argues that they may have been a proof of comradely devotion and sympathy, towards a male novelist's first attempt to write (Xu, 16). – I could take this out if necessary.

Critics have compared the intricate narrative of Emily Brontë, with a set of Chinese boxes, set aside each other. Especially recent critics have praised Emily Brontë's disciplined and complexly organised work (Foreman; Romero-Pérez, 4). However, her only novel has raised a lot of controversy over time. The modernism of the novel has been noticed and often discussed through the decades. Somehow the initial bad reviews have kept the novel in the attention of the critics, as well as the readers. Bad publicity was somehow good publicity for this novel.

Bibliography:
Bal, Mieke, and Jane E. Lewin. "The Narrating and the Focalizing: A Theory of the Agents in Narrative." *Style*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1983, pp. 234–69. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42945469 Accessed 1 Apr. 2023.
Baldick, Chris, T*he Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001, pp 9-10, 205.
Bălinişteanu-Furdu Cătălina D. *A Topography Plagued by Marginality in Victorian Novels.* Konstanz: Hartung-Gorre Verlag, 2022, pp 23-52.
Berendsen, Marjet. "The Teller and the Observer: Narration and Focalization in Narrative Texts." *Style*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1984, pp. 140–58. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42945492 accessed 1 Apr. 2023.
Booth, Wayne, C. The Rhetoric of Fiction - II edition, The University of Chicago Press, USA 1983, p.369.
Brontë. Anne, Brontë. Emily, Brontë Charlotte, *The Complete Works of the Brontë's Sisters,* Delphi Classics, 1992, pp. 2711-2776.
Cox, Octavia, *Structure & Narrative Technique. Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights novel analysis.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg5_BPjJTFY accessed on 29.03.2023.
Foreman, Violeta. "From Status to Contract: Domesticating Modernity in Wuthering Heights, The Mill on the Floss and Dracula", https://dukespace.lib.duke.edu/dspace/handle/10161/3393.
Genette, Gérard, and Ann Levonas. "Boundaries of Narrative." *New Literary History,* vol. 8, no. 1, 1976, pp. 1–13. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/468611 Accessed 1 Apr. 2023.
Mathison, John K. "Nelly Dean and the Power of Wuthering Heights" *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1956, pp. 106–29. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/3044112 Accessed 15 Oct. 2023.
Peet, Laura. "He Shall Never Know How I Love Him: An Analysis of the Problem of Perception in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights. A thesis", the Department of English California State University, Bakersfield, USA, 2008.
Prentis, Barbara, *The Brontë Sisters and George Eliot. A Unity of Difference*, The MacMillan Press, London, 1988.
Todorov, Tzvetan, Weinstein, Arnold. "Structural Analysis of Narrative." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction,* vol. 3, no. 1, 1969, pp. 70–76. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/1345003. Accessed 15.03.2023.
Xu, D. P. "On the Modernity of Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights. A thesis", China, 2009, https://www.globethesis.com/?t=2155360245951441.
"Age in Narrative." *Style*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1983, pp. 234–69. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/42945469 Accessed 1 Apr. 2023.
Images
https://ro.pinterest.com/, accessed on February 15th, 2024.

International or Intracultural English? The Analysis of an *International English* Textbook

Antonio Moreno Jurado
University of Lleida, Spain
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Anca Daniela Frumuselu

Abstract

Since the acknowledgment of English as an International Language (EIL), there has been no direct link to ELT or even to EFL in classroom environments. By this same token, it can be affirmed that the idea of 'nativeness' fluency is the main drawn picture in these EFL textbooks (Llurda, 2004). Textbooks mainly represent the idea of a 'native' speaker with a British accent [or pronunciation], spelling, and even grammatical or idiomatic expressions. This issue is increasingly integrated in a subconscious way into EFL students. These tend to integrate, or even become more naturally linked, to British English, in comparison to other types of English varieties. This questions the idea of the proficient usage of EIL in nowadays 'global village' (Modiano, 1999).

This investigation aims to analyze how the EIL is approached in a B2 EIL textbook aimed at Spanish International speakers. The textbook analysis will be done from a linguistic and cultural point of view, looking at the degree of British, standard, or international English used in the book. In order to accomplish this, the textbook will be analyzed phonologically (by analyzing the audio recordings available in the textbook), and by considering the spelling and the orthographic characteristics, together with the salient lexical elements present in a certain English variety. This study will, moreover, analyze the proportion of cultural elements present in the book and the category they belong to.

Thus, the paper aims to contribute to the scope of ELT in applied linguistics, by analyzing an EIL textbook. By delving into the cultural and linguistic elements belonging to a certain English variety, the degree of international English will be established. This will, thereby, aim to establish the extent to which the sample B2 EIL textbook represents the internationalization of the language, or, on the contrary, manifests the intraculturality of a concrete English variety (i.e., the British variety).

Keywords: English as an International Language (EIL), English Language Teaching (ELT), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Discourse analysis, nativeness.

1.Introduction

Within the scope of English Language Teaching (ELT), the choice of teaching materials plays a pivotal role in shaping the linguistic and cultural competencies of learners. The globalization of English has brought to the forefront the concept of English as an International Language (EIL), emphasizing the importance of linguistic neutrality and cultural inclusivity in English teaching materials. This study delves into a critical examination of the extent to which Burlington International English B2 adheres to the EIL paradigm, with a specific focus on its representation of linguistic varieties, cultural aspects, and EIL principles.

The usage of textbooks in ELT represents the primary knowledge source through which students formulate their English idiolects. As such, the content and approach taken in these materials have far-reaching implications for learners' language development and their ability to function effectively in diverse global contexts. Therefore, it is imperative to scrutinize the alignment of ELT materials with the evolving needs of English learners in a globalized world.

The investigation includes a focus on two crucial aspects of English as an International Language. First, the representation of different English varieties is analyzed throughout the textbook, concluding the extent to which the textbook promotes the different spelling and linguistic conventions of the English language. Second, the variety of cultural representations is depicted through the texts' topics, the different elements represented, and the images. This second aspect is key when referring to the internationality, hence, interculturality of the English language. These issues have been analyzed following the principles of EIL.

This investigation offers educators and curriculum developers valuable insights into the development and selection of teaching materials that better align with the principles of English as an International Language. By providing a comprehensive analysis of Burlington International English B2 in light of the EIL paradigm, it aims to offer valuable insights into the development and selection of teaching materials that better align with the principles of English as an International Language. In doing so, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue within the ELT community regarding the cultivation of linguistic and

cultural competencies in learners to prepare them for the demands of an interconnected and multicultural world.

2.Theoretical background

2.1.Globalization of the English language

Internationalization among different people and communities is an indisputable fact in today's contemporary technological society. This issue has reinforced the usage of the English language for international and intercultural communicative purposes. According to Pennycook (2010), English has been widely spread around the globe not only in terms of usage but also due to societal 'globalization' (p. 113). Despite the fact that English was first born within a small community next to the Atlantic Ocean, British imperialism represented an immeasurable expansion of the English language all around the globe. Therefore, "today English is being widely used as an international language by non-native speakers to satisfy various communicative needs" (Khodadady & Shayesteh, 2016, p. 604).

Many authors highlighted the fact that English served as a vehicle of cultural and linguistic domination (Phillipson, 1992; Phillipson, 2009). This 'linguistic hierarchization', which is governed by the English language (Khodadady & Shayesteh, 2016), has caused many linguists, among other experts, to focus on learning the culture of English-speaking countries along with the language itself (Shin, Eslami, & Chen, 2011). The linguistic dominance, due to various multifaceted causes, has provoked English to be the dominant foreign language in institutional curricula and foreign teaching and learning systems (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020; Chang, 2006).

2.2.EFL classrooms and the idea of 'nativeness'

It shall be noted that "it was the expansion of British colonialism, […] that led to its first wave of expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries […] (that) played a major role in this current dominance of English" (Pennycook, 2010, p. 115).

Even though it was "a commonly held belief that English was the exclusive property of native speakers" (Khodadady & Shayesteh, 2016, p. 604), many authors (e.g., Holliday, 2005) have reconceptualized this belief of 'native speakerism' as the norm for English Language Teaching (ELT) environments. This dominion of the language has been highly castigated due to the diversity of English and the fragmentation of English into mutually unintelligible variants, used for a great deal of activities in different settings around the globe (Widdowson, 1994).

Through EFL environments, this latent idea of representing 'nativeness' as the learning turning point in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has been profoundly criticized in EFL textbooks. This "linguistic imperialism" (Phillipson, 1992) includes not only the representation of issues attached to English-speaking countries but also the choice of content, as well as the phonological hierarchization among English speakers (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Llurda, 2004; Phillipson, 2009; Naji & Pishghadam, 2013).

2.3.The paradigm of EIL

Having stated the prior, the English language may be regarded as neutral, assuming that it has been detached from its original cultural contexts (mainly England and the USA). However, it is not a neutral and transparent medium of communication (Pennycook, 2017, p. 9). The English textbooks seldom represent multilingual English people, even if multiculturalism is sometimes mentioned (Cook, 2008, as cited in Naji & Pishghadam, 2013). This primarily highlights the paradigm of English as an International Language (EIL). In other terms, EIL conveys the neutral, hence, international usage of the English language in a way that represents the various cultures that use the language for intercultural communications.

First and foremost, EIL portrays the status of English as the world's most common language utilized in numerous contexts (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020). This term, therefore, is considered a way of using the language as well as a type of English itself (McKay, 2018). This has "severely confronted the conventional hegemony of North American and British native speakers' norms in the field of English language teaching" (Modiano, 2001, as cited in Khodadady & Shayesteh, 2016).

This concept is detached from the lone norms of the English language, allowing the existence of multiple rules in different varieties of World Englishes around the world (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Matsuda, 2019). The EIL paradigm, therefore, entails a search for interculturalism and deterritorialization (Canagarajah, 2005). Taking into account that "English textbooks can exert a profound effect on learners'

understanding of English varieties and cultures" (Tajeddin & Pakzadian, 2020), it is essential to provide a wide range of cultures from all around the globe, as well as the multiple varieties by which English can be spoken. This may include non-native speakers, who may represent nowadays the highest number of English speakers (Crystal, 2003). For this reason, when it comes to phonological traits, one of the main principles of EIL is the "acceptance of different varieties" (Naji & Pishghadam, 2013, p. 87).

3. Objectives

After looking at the theoretical background on the topic, this study aims to make a critical investigation of the EIL representation within Burlington International English B2 (author, 2016). The examination will be divided into two different sections that will facilitate the analysis of the textbook in terms of EIL. On the one hand, the linguistic pattern will be analyzed by looking into the phonological traits and accents present in the audio recordings in order to evaluate the varied representation of 'international' speakers. On the other hand, the cultural dimensions within three different levels: micro-level, macro-level, and international level will be analyzed. (Risager, 1991).

4. Research Questions

Since the first appearance of the EIL paradigm, researchers established various principles on which this concept is based. Hence, this study aims to explore (1) to what extent the English language in the textbook represents the internationalization of the language, (2) to what extent the different cultures are equally represented, and (3) which are the accents and phonological traits conveyed in the textbook. To this end, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. Taking into account the EIL approach to the English language, which accents and phonological traits are conveyed within the textbook?
2. To what extent are the different cultures represented equally?
3. To what extent is the English in the textbook a representation of the internationalization of the language?

5. Methodology

5.1. Material & Procedure

This investigation aimed to analyze the extent to which an EFL textbook represented the principles of English as an International Language (EIL). The textbook Burlington International English B2 (Swanson and Thomas, 2004) has been under detailed scrutiny when referring to the linguistic and cultural values conveyed within the textbook. Thus, the data was extracted and then, the analysis was done manually looking at the various elements in each unit. Each unit was analyzed independently along with the extra worksheets at the end of the textbook (Read on section and Exam review section), and thus, the mean for each of the measures was calculated.

5.2. Measures

As aforementioned, the examination is based on a double-perspective analysis that takes into account not only the linguistic, hence, the audiovisual sources represented but also the various cultures and elements in each unit. This double analysis facilitated the data collection, and, at the same time, ensured that the principles of the paradigm of EIL were appropriately considered. According to Risager (1991), this division clarifies the different cultures represented within the same textbook, analyzing not only the different English accents in each audio track but also the elements and the topics of each text, and the extent to which they have a concrete relation with a particular country or culture. Considering the length limitations, the investigation did not allow a detailed and deep analysis of the English spelling, although some data was extracted in order to compare it with the obtained results.

5.2.1. Linguistic analysis

In order to analyze how each English variety is portrayed within the textbook, a comprehensive examination of each audiovisual resource was carried out, leading to the categorization of content into distinct groups: 'American English,' 'British English,' 'Australian English,' 'Canadian English,' 'Other native English,' and 'New speakers' accent.' This categorization served as a means to assess the equitable representation of each English variant throughout the textbook. Within the framework of English as an International Language

(EIL), it becomes imperative not only to provide parity among all World Englishes but also to inclusively represent the accents of new speakers (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Matsuda, 2019). This approach aligns with the objective of promoting linguistic neutrality concerning accent, phonological characteristics, phonetics, as well as word and sentence stress. Assuming the message is effectively communicated, EIL advocates for the acceptance of diverse pronunciation patterns, whether influenced by the speaker's native language or not (Pennycook, 2017).

5.2.2.Cultural analysis

Conversely, the focal point of this study was on the cultural analysis. Its primary objective was to delve into the extent to which various cultures received equitable representation, aligning with the principles of the EIL paradigm. This examination entailed the initial identification of the central theme within each instructional unit. Subsequently, it involved the categorization of diverse themes, elements, and visual portrayals within the context of distinct cultural dimensions, as advocated by Risager (1991). This categorization encompassed the 'Micro Level,' 'Macro Level,' and 'International and Intercultural Issues.' Furthermore, when a particular topic would wield international influence, the various countries or cultures underpinning it were systematically classified within the same framework. This systematic approach was vital in facilitating a concrete assessment of the proportional representation of each nationality.

6. Results

6.1.Linguistic analysis

In the pursuit of examining the linguistic traits within the textbook, this part of the analysis focused on audiovisual materials, employing a systematic approach to categorize and quantify the representation of various English varieties. After having analyzed the various audiovisuals within each unit of the textbook, the following data has been extracted:

As it can be observed in the figure above (Figure 1), the results demonstrate that 76% of the audiovisuals are in British English. This validates the initial hypothesis by which the EIL

textbook represents mainly the British accent. 14% of the audiovisuals pertained to American English, while an additional 2% encompassed 'Other native' English varieties (including but not limited to Canadian and Indian English). Finally, a total of 8% was devoted to the representation of New Speakers' accents.

Furthermore, the new speakers' accents were mainly conveyed within the speaking practices. In other terms, whilst the 'native' English was used all throughout the textbook for the various listening activities, among others, the new speakers' accents were used in the speaking parts, by stating that students should observe and analyze the flaws or assets of some candidates in the B2 speaking exam.

6.1.1.Spelling analysis

While the spelling was not a direct part of the study within this investigation, some analysis was conducted in order to reinforce the obtained results. Among the 10 units, therefore, it can be seen that the spelling used is, at all times, the British one, without making any reference to the American English spelling. Even in texts whose topic was primarily North American, the spelling was adapted to the British one (e.g., favourite), as in the case of the 'Read on' of unit 9.

Throughout the textbook, the spelling used throughout the EIL textbook followed the British English conventions (e.g., 'apologised', 'analysed', 'recognise', 'criticise', 'dramatise'). Not only was the spelling the main criterion within this little analysis but it can also be observed within the lexis and idiomatic language.
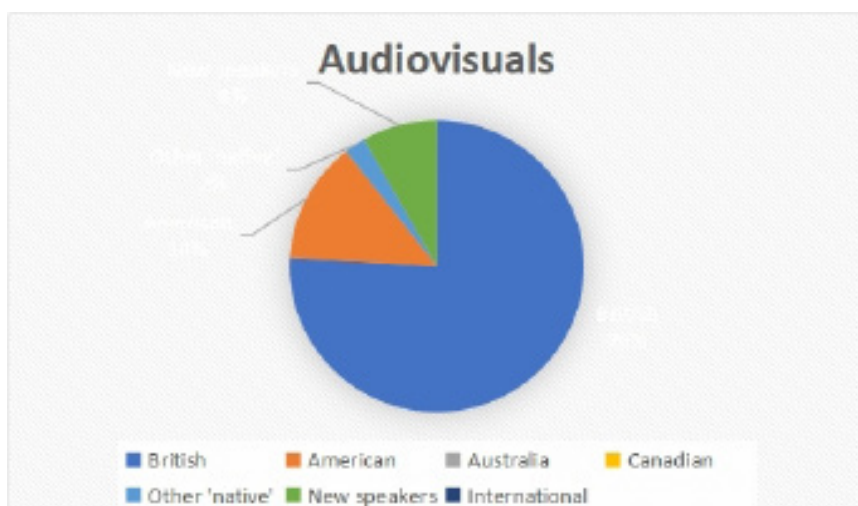
The terms conveyed are mostly British ones (e.g., football, film) without making any reference to the other

6.2. Cultural analysis

While examining the different elements within the cultural value of the textbook, each element was organized according to Risager (1991). They were, moreover, divided according to the importance placed in the unit, taking into account if the cultural element conveyed was the main topic of a text, an appearing element (e.g., examples posed, celebrities named, etc.), or images. After having analyzed the various elements within each unit of the textbook, the following data has been extracted:

Cultural values	English-speaking countries	Non-English-speaking countries
Texts (main topic)	77%	23%
Elements (examples, celebrities…)	76%	24%
Images	57%	43%
Total	71%	29%

Table 1. *Analysis on the cultural elements within 'Burlington International English' (Swanson and Thomas, 2016).*

The 'international' section includes references to non-English-speaking countries as well as intercultural situations. This issue has a 29% representation in the book in comparison to the 71% of elements making reference to English-speaking countries. If we analyze in depth the various elements, it can be observed that this internationality is mainly present in the textbook images since 43% of these represent non-English-speaking countries or non-native people. The main topics of the texts are, nevertheless, mostly British since 48% of those are based on the British culture. When it comes to the other elements conveyed

within each unit, it should be mentioned that 77% of these elements, including given instances or celebrities, among many others, are based on a variety of English-speaking cultures (i.e., the UK, the USA, Canada, and Australia). igure 2 above details the extent to which the textbook represents a variety of cultural elements. In other terms, the graph demonstrates that only 29% of the elements in the textbook make reference to various cultures at the same time. While 35% of the elements refer to the British culture or locations from the United Kingdom, 29% of them are based on the North American culture or locations from the United States of America.
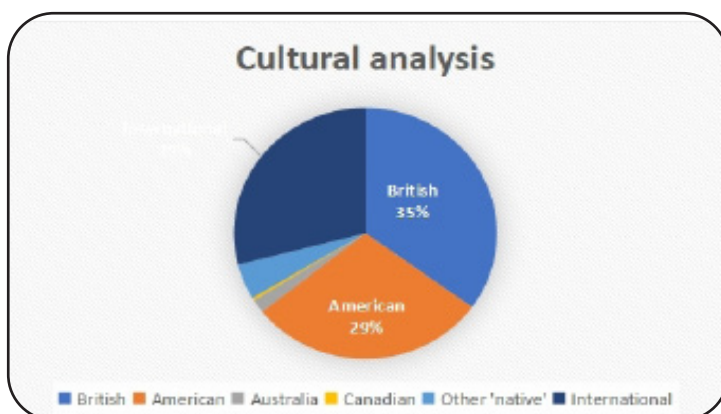
In sum, the analysis derives from systematic examination and data collection and aims to uncover the trends present in the textbook. Notably, it reveals a strong proclivity towards British English, both in terms of linguistic features and cultural content. British accents dominate the audiovisual components, challenging the textbook's claim to neutrality. Furthermore, our investigation identifies a pronounced focus on British culture, with American culture occupying a secondary position. Intercultural scenarios, while present, constitute a relatively smaller portion of the content.

As we scrutinize the interplay between linguistic and cultural aspects, it becomes apparent that the textbook leans toward intracultural English rather than the ideals of international English. Despite occasional nods to other English-speaking countries, British culture and values remain conspicuously central throughout the textbook.

7. Discussion & Conclusions

After the analysis and interpretation of, the data from the point of view of the EIL paradigm, it was revealed the predominant presence of British English throughout the different elements of the textbook. Thus, the research questions will be accordingly answered below.

7.1. Audiovisual analysis (RQ1)

The audiovisual analysis aimed to discover whether the English represented within the textbook was neutral and international, according to the EIL paradigm. The results showed that only 8% of the accents belonged to new speakers, while 76% belonged to British accents. Thus, the third research question could be answered and the results revealed that the English language of the textbook is highly linked to British English.

While several American accents were also represented, the main focus was on UK accents. Moreover, the new speakers were used as a kind of practice critique. In other words, the different listening activities or tests employed British or, conversely, native-English accents. In the speaking part of the unit, the new speaker's English was utilized in order for students to analyze and discuss the extent to which the 'candidates' had accomplished the task, introduced linguistic expressions, and been accurate in terms of pronunciation.

7.2. Cultural representation (RQ2)

In the textbook analyzed (Swanson and Thomas, 2016), it has been demonstrated that the predominant represented culture is the British one. This fact is supported by the results obtained from the cultural analysis, which goes in line with Risager's criteria (1991). 35% of the elements, topics, and images belong to the British culture, while 29% belong to the American one.

The intercultural scenarios, nevertheless, constituted a comparatively smaller fraction, amounting to 29% of the elements within the textbook. The deeper examination of these elements revealed that internationality was predominantly depicted through textbook images, with 43% of these visuals representing non-English-speaking countries or non-native individuals. The main idea of internationality was conveyed through secondary sources, while the primary sources remained highly linked to English-speaking countries.

As for the various non-English-speaking locations, they were named throughout the textbook but as an incidental element. In other terms, the texts primarily depicted voyages or projects that involved an English-speaking departure place towards a non-English-speaking arrival place. The British culture was, as aforementioned, the chief society represented directly or indirectly in the textbook.

If unit 3 was taken as an example, different topics and themes were based in the UK. On the one hand, other locations outside the United Kingdom were presented as vacations or projects to enroll in abroad. On the other hand, the movie industry (the main topic of the unit) could be considered an international topic, but the message is conveyed in an intracultural manner. There were few places when talking about the various movies. However, when someplace was mentioned, the tendency was to be mainly London-located. It can be observed that only British terms were used (i.e., film), confirming the first hypothesis that this textbook, while it is said to be international, employs principally the British English variety.

If the several cultural results were taken as a whole, it can be concluded that the textbook does not represent cultures equally, negatively answering the second research question, and nullifying the main criterion of English as an International Language.

7.3. EIL representation (RQ3)

The first research question was answered through the various data collected and analyzed as part of this investigation. The cultural analysis aimed to discover whether the cultures in the textbook were represented in an international manner. The linguistic analysis, furthermore, intended to acknowledge the variety of English conveyed in the audiovisual materials. By combining both results, it can be stated the extent to which the textbook sustains the idea of English as an International Language (Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Matsuda, 2019).

Both data concluded that the British representation was outstandingly high in comparison with the other cultures present in the textbook. Primarily, the phonetic features belonged to British English (76%), but this fact was also reinforced by the spelling analysis, which depicted only the British spelling of words and terminology. At the end of the textbook, moreover, there is a pronunciation appendix, which directly contravenes the standard of neutrality, hence, with the paradigm of international English (Pennycook, 2017, p. 9).

The cultural analysis also concluded that the various elements were highly British-linked (35%). At the same time, there were some stereotypical elements that supported this fact: "Americans are often called couch potatoes" (Swanson & Thomas, 2016, p. 29). This extract from unit 3 reaffirms the fact that the British society is the leading one in the textbook, while international issues or elements were present only in 29% of the instances in the textbook.

All in all, the analysis demonstrated that the textbook is oriented toward intracultural English rather than international English since the British culture and values were the most represented in each unit. While the

textbook aims to include as many locations outside the United Kingdom as possible, as a whole, only 17% of the elements (audiovisual and cultural) are in line with the paradigm of English as an International Language.

Bibliography

Arbor, A., "English as a World Language" (B. W. Richard, & G. Manfred, Eds.), in *RELC journal,* 17(1), 91-96, 1986.

Canagarajah, S., *Reclaiming the local in language policy and practice*, Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005.

Chang, J. ,"Globalization and English in Chinese higher education", in *World Englishes,* 25(3-4), 513-525, 2006.

Cook, V., *Second language learning and language teaching*, Hodder Education, London, 2008.

Crystal, D., *English as a Global Language,* Cambridge University Press, doi:10.1017/ CBO9780511486999, 2003.

D. Hilliard, A., "A Critical Examination of Representation and Cultura in Four English Language Textbooks", in *Language Education in Asia*, 5(2), 238-252, 2014.

Gray , J., "The global coursebook in English language teaching", in D. Block, & D. Cameron (Eds.), G*lobalization and language teaching* (pp. 151-167), Routledge, 2002.

Gray, J. , "The construction of English: Culture, consumerism and promotion", in the *ELT global coursebook*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Holliday, A., *The struggle to teach English as an international language,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2005.

Khodadady, E., & Shayesteh, S., "Cultural and linguistic imperialism and the EIL movement: evidence from a textbook analysis", in I*ssues in Educational Research,* 26(4), pp. 604-622, 2016. Retrieved from http://www.iier.org.au/iier26/khodaday.pdf.

Llurda, E., "Non-native-speaker teacher and English as an International Language", in *International journal of applied linguistics*, 14(3), 314-323, 2004.

Matsuda, A., "World Englishes in English language teaching: Kachru's six fallacies and the TEIL paradigm", in *World Englishes*, 38(1-2), 144-154, 2009.

McKay, S. L., "English as an international language: What it is and what it means for pedagogy", in *RELC Journal*, 49(1), 9-23, 2018.

Modiano., M., *Modiano's Centripetal Circles of International English Model,* 1999.

Modiano, M., "International English in the global village", in *English Today*, 15(2), 22-28. doi:10.1017/ s026607840001083x, 1999.

Modiano, M., "Linguistic imperialism, cultural integrity, and EIL", in *ELT Journal*, 55(4), 339-347. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/57.1.66, 2001.

Naji , E., & Pishghadam, R., "Analysis of English language textbooks in the light of English as an International Language (EIL): A comparative study," in the *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning,* 2(2), 83-96. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.5861/ijrsll.2012.163, 2013.

Pennycook, A., "English and globalization", In J. Maybin, & J. Swann (Eds.), *The Routledge Companion to English Language Studies* (pp. 113-121). Routledge, London, 2009.

Pennycook, A., *The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language*, Routledge, London, 2010.

Phillipson, R., *Linguistic imperialism,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992.

Phillipson, R., *Linguistic imperialism continued*, Routledge, London, 2009.

Richards, J. C., & Schmidt, R., *Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*, Pearson Education, London, 2002.

Risager, K., "Cultural references in foreign language textbooks: An evaluation of recent tendencies", in D. Butties, & M. Bryam (Eds.), *Mediating languages and cultures: Towards an intercultural theory of foreign language education* (pp. 181-192), Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, Philadelphia,1991.

Schnitzer, E., "English as an international language: Implications for interculturalists and language educators", in *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 19(2), 227-236, 1995.

Sercu, L., "Assessing intercultural competence: More questions than answers", in A. Paran, & L. Sercu (Eds.), *Testing the untestable in language education* (pp. 17-34), Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, Philadelphia, 2010.

Shin, J., Eslami, Z. R., & Chen, W. C., "Presentation of local and international culture in current international English-language teaching textbooks", in *Language, Culture and Curriculum,* 24(3), 253-268. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2011.614694, 2011.

Swanson, J., & Thomas, D., *Burlington International English B2*, Burlington Books, Bridlidgeton, 2016.

Tajeddin, Z., & Pakzadian, M., "Representation of inner, outer and expanding circle varieties and cultures in global ELT textbooks", in A*sian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education,* 5(10), 1-15. doi:https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-020-00089-9, 2011.

Widdowson, H. G., "The Ownership of English", in *TESOL Quarterly,* 28(2), 377-389. doi:https://doi.

The Deterioration in *The Fall of the House of Usher*

Biljana Popović, II, MA studies, English Language and Literature

University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philology, Nikšić

Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Saša Simović

1. Introduction

Elements that define the Gothic genre in literature such as gloominess, mystery, dismay, customarily aimed to convey the darkness within the human mind as it descended into madness or despair. Such representation of the psychological problems which were triggered by some external (isolation, loneliness) or internal (mental or physical illness) factors that led to anguish and imminent death would induce the feelings of unease and terror to the readers: "In Gothic the terror of what might happen, or might be happening, is largely foregrounded over the visceral horror of the event" (Lloyd-Smith, 2004, 8). As the characters portrayed in the works of the Gothic genre would fall into deeper despair, horror elements would be depicted profoundly and usually alter to supernatural when the characters would encounter apparitions and other supernatural beings. Writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Mary Shelley, Oscar Wilde, Bram Stoker, and others constructed the Gothic genre and created pieces of fiction that are being read and interpreted centuries after their first publications. Poe is considered one of the most prominent authors of the Gothic genre, given his ability to use horror elements and implement them into his work, as well as to convey the intense emotions of fear and terror and to reflect them upon the readers. The theme of deterioration which indicates disintegration and decomposition of objects or weakening of a person"s health frequently appears in Poe"s work and is one of the central themes in his short story "The Fall of the House of Usher". This paper aims to analyze the theme of deterioration in Edgar Allan Poe"s short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" which is permeated throughout the whole narrative and salient in the health of the characters and the overall state of the environment.

2. Analysis

2.1. The ubiquitous theme of deterioration

The unsettling portrayal of gradual rotting of once sublime houses and mansions evoke the sense of eeriness since it suggests the transience of everything that exists. In the same sense, reading about aggravation of physical and mental health induces the feelings of discomfort and uneasiness. Poe usually implemented such pictures in his stories. The short story "The Fall of the House of Usher", which is the subject of our research, is brimming with the imagery of lifeless nature and the disintegration of the House of Usher as "the remodelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows" (Poe 1998, 104) exude negative energy and uneasiness to the narrator as well as the readers. The author implements Gothic elements from the very beginning of the story and as the narrator approaches the mansion the decay and rot become more perceptible. As the narrator observes the dying nature and the decaying mansion, the readers begin to share the narrator"s feelings of discomfort which demonstrates how Poe succeeds to closely connect the readers to the story. That connection allows the reader to feel the same eeriness and fear that the narrator feels which intensifies the horror elements in the Gothic story and brings them to life. Lloyd-Smith notes: "Landscapes in the Gothic similarly dwelt on the exposed, inhuman and pitiless nature of mountains, crags, and wastelands" (2004, 7). Epithets such as "gray","ghastly", "vacant" are used to refer to the environment and symbolize the decaying and dying nature of the wastelands that surround the House of Usher. The deterioration of the nature worsens as the author brings the readers closer to the mansion which seems to absorb the life of everything that exists close to it. The theme of deterioration becomes evident as the narrator takes in the sight

of the tenement mansion in front of him: "The discoloration of ages had been great. Minute fungi overspread the whole exterior, hanging in a fine tangled web- work from the eaves" (Poe 1998, 105). Apart from the deteriorating environment, the worsening conditions of the Ushers, Roderick and Madeline, represent the terrifying deterioration of human health, both mental and physical, which triggers the greater sense of fear to the readers since it portrays the suffering of human beings.

2.2.The deteriorating health conditions of Roderick and Madeline Usher

As the narrator entered the decaying mansion, he was greeted by his childhood friend, Roderick Usher, who had sent him a letter where he had expressed a desire to see him. Being led by the valet, the narrator found himself in a room where Roderick was resting. The reunion of the two old friends appeared to have soothed the eerie feelings in the readers, but it was ephemeral, for soon after their encounter, the narrator noticed the change in Roderick"s physical appearance: "Surely, man had never before so terribly altered, in so brief a period, as had Roderick Usher" (Poe 1998, 106)! Roderick"s appearance exuded his deteriorating health condition causing the feelings of uneasiness. The narrator expressed bewilderment while analyzing Roderick"s features which had evidently changed for the worse. The disease which affected his senses made Roderick sensitive to many types of food and garments and he couldn"t withstand light. The description of his illness made him appear almost zombie-like. His mental condition reflected many elements of terror as it became evident how one"s mental state could deteriorate and affect one"s life in a negative way. Roderick then redirected the course of the conversation from his illness to his sister"s disease. The disease

of lady Madeline was intertwined with the theme of deterioration since her illness was gradually consuming her: "The disease of the lady Madeline had long baffled the skill of her physicians. A settled apathy, a gradual wasting away of the person, and frequent although transient affections of a partially cataleptical character, were the unusual diagnosis" (Poe 1998, 108). In the story, the narrator did not interact with lady Madeline. Shortly after his arrival, the mysterious figure of lady Madeline was seen wandering around the house, apparently not fathoming the narrator"s presence in the room at all. Timmerman explains: "When the narrator first sees her passing in the distance, he is filled with unaccountable dread, so otherworldly she appears" (2009, 168). Her health condition was so severe that several days after the encounter, lady Madeline died. From the moment Roderick Usher announced lady Madeline"s death, his mental condition seemed to worsen considerably: "He roamed from chamber to chamber with hurried, unequal, and objectless step" (Poe 1998, 112). Roderick, having behaved that way, frightened the narrator who claimed to have felt infected with Roderick"s condition and the narrator"s sense of terror and fear was transmitted directly to the readers. As Roderick"s mental health worsened, so did the narrator"s uneasiness. Poe then introduced new horror elements in the form of severe storm with heavy rain and thunder. Timmerman suggests the storm"s connotation: "Meanwhile, a storm descends upon and envelops the mansion, mirroring the swirling collapse of Usher"s rationality" (2009, 165).

Roderick"s condition completely deteriorated to the point where he was just rocking and trembling in his chair. The narrator, having been affected by Roderick"s condition and behavior, started hearing distinct sounds as well. Dreadfully, Roderick confessed to hearing distinct sounds ever since they had buried lady Madeline, expressing his utter dread that Madeline had been buried alive: "We have put her living in the tomb" (Poe 1998, 116)! Horror elements included in the last part of the story such as thunder, old mansion, distant screams, death and others further intensified the deterioration of Roderick Usher"s mental health which finally completely shattered upon seeing lady Madeline at the doorway days after he had buried her. Lady Madeline "then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother, and in her violent and now final death-agonies, bore him to the floor a corpse, and a victim to the terrors he had anticipated" (Poe 1998, 116). The theme of death which in the story resulted from the deteriorating health conditions of the Ushers is one of the main themes of the Gothic genre that Poe frequently employed in his work.

2.3.The deterioration of the House of Usher

As the narrator glanced from afar at the mansion of his friend Roderick Usher, he managed to notice some signs of decay, a gloomy atmosphere with the predominant gray colors and lifeless grass. Even though the narrator noticed the strange, ghastly details that enshrouded the once glorious mansion that was the House of Usher, he stated: "Yet all this was apart from an extraordinary dilapidation" (Poe 1998, 105). The interior of the house consisted of many elements that were common in the Gothic literature, basements, metal door, black color appeared frequently which symbolized the somber state of the residents of the house and the house itself, and exuded the same gloomy air as the surrounding environment. Scott Peeples states: "Then there is the house, which is „doubled" or reflected in the tarn, but also reflected in the double-meaning of „house," referring to the family as well as their dwelling, and more specifically reflected in Roderick" (2004, 180). The reflection of the house in Roderick Usher was evident since the house itself exuded the gloominess which Roderick felt, and later, as Roderick"s health deteriorated, so did the house. Timmerman notices the connection of the mansion with the Usher family and says: "Roderick himself tells the narrator that over the centuries the mansion and the family had been so bonded as to become identified as one" (2009, 163). When Roderick Usher died and the narrator fled from the mansion, the House of Usher deteriorated along with its owners, ending the line of the Usher family.

3. Conclusion

Edgar Allan Poe implemented many Gothic elements such as death, fear and terror in his work. "The Fall of the House of Usher" is imbued with the theme of deterioration. In the story, Poe portrays the decay of the mental and physical health conditions of the Ushers. After the narrator of the story had been invited to the mansion of the Usher family because his childhood friend, Roderick Usher, was ill, he found himself in a horrifying situation which affected his own mental health. After his arrival, the narrator observed the deteriorating health of the siblings from which they could not recover. The narrator realized that both Usher siblings had been living like the living dead, in a dark and enclosed space of the old mansion. The depressing conditions of the Usher siblings intensified the sense of unease, since

Roderick could not withstand the light nor the music and Madeline was gradually being killed by a mysterious disease. It could be considered that lady Madeline"s health condition was even worse than Roderick"s since his problems were mostly connected to the mental health whereas Madeline"s condition had been notably affecting her body; however, the deterioration of one"s mental health could be more dreadful than any physical pain. After she had died, the author intensified the eeriness by adding supernatural elements. The once respectable Usher family eventually dwindled to Roderick and Madeline who never married nor had any children, so their deaths represented the end of the whole family line. The story thus portrayed the transience of everything, even such a wealthy family line. Their once grand house slowly decayed as did Roderick"s health and completely crumbled when he died which symbolized the connection between the house and the family. The ubiquitous theme of deterioration was noticeable in every aspect of the story and had always been lurking in the background of the main plot, until it finally affected the whole story.

Bibliography:

Lloyd-Smith, Allan, *American Gothic Fiction: An Introduction*, Continuum, New York, 2004.

Peeples, Scott, "Poe"s "constructiveness" and "The Fall of the House of Usher", " In *The Cambridge Companion to Edgar Allan Poe*, edited by Kevin J. Hayes, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2004, 178–190.

Poe, Edgar Allan, "The Fall of the House of Usher," In T*he Literature of the American South: a Norton Anthology,* edited by William L. Andrews, W.W. Norton, New York, 1998, 103–116.

Timmerman, John H., "House of Mirrors: Edgar Allan Poe"s "The Fall of the House of Usher"," In *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: "The Tell-Tale Heart" and Other Stories*, New Edition, edited by Harold Bloom, Bloom"s Literary Criticism, New York, 2009, 159–172.

Images

https://ro.pinterest.com/, accessed on February 15th, 2024.

Creating Literature through Taxidermy.
A Victorian Way of Making Context with Physical Bodies

Raluca-Andreea Donici (Nechifor), PhD candidate
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Cătălina Bălinișteanu-Furdu

1. The Culture of Curiosity

The topic of our discussion is, as you may see, taxidermy, a whimsical, magical and for some, a grotesque manner of re-purposing remains from beyond the grave in order to create life and movement. It may sound a little bit gore to us but not to Victorians, who displayed an eccentric obsession with this dark and mystical realm during their life and also, after their death.

In order to understand what taxidermy really meant, we need to search and find its definition. Thus, according to the Cambridge Online Dictionary, the term taxidermy is a common noun that makes reference to "the activity of cleaning, preserving, and filling the skins of dead animals with special material to make them look as if they are still alive".[1]

In this respect, this process can be also understood as a general means of creating life and movement out of remains and carcasses, of what is left after people decided to end the life of an animal, for various reasons (skin, meat, noise, violence, fur, ivory, trophies and so on).

In this respect, we shall continue our research with the origins of such a practice, that is quite frequently confused with other techniques and has the ability to distort reality and to mask the real meaning behind different elements, activities, phenomena.

1.1. Origins

Not much is known about the real point of origin of such practices, though a large group of scientists associate the technique of mummification with the earliest form of taxidermy. This is a stretched case, as the term "taxidermy" has its origins later, in the classical Antiquity, in Greece. The difference between taxidermy and mummification is that the animal body is mounted and stuffed in the first case, whereas for the second, the body is emptied of its visceral contents in order to be dried, embalmed and prepared for the afterlife.

Thus, even though taxidermy has other, previous forms and associated practices, the term officially entered the English language (as well as the majority of other European languages) at the beginning of the 19th century, more specifically, around the year 1820, before the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901), thus, before the Victorian Era officially started. In this respect, the term is composed of two distinct words form the Greek language, that are taxis and derma, as the Online Etymology Dictionary mentions: "1820, from Greek taxis "arrangement, an arranging, the order or disposition of an army, battle array; order, regularity" (see tactics) + derma "skin" (from PIE root *der- "to split, flay, peel," with derivatives referring to skin and leather). Related: Taxidermist (1827)".[2] It is clear to see that these practices entered the language before the Victorian period started and thus, their popularity sky-rocketed during the Victorian period itself.

1.2. The beginnings of its popularity

As we have already mentioned, the popularity of taxidermy flourished as never before, as Youdelman mentions: "The 1891 London census listed 369 taxidermists (including 122 women), and rural villages and towns similarly listed multiple members of the trade. For professionals ("naturalists") and amateurs ("stuffers") alike, taxidermy was a facet of the popular mania for collecting natural objects and animal specimens…" (Youdelman, 2017, p. 38). Thus, Victorian people understood part of their mistakes, as they were used to hunt different species of animals just because they had the power to. In this respect, we can mention the fact that hunting wild animals was an ordinary, day-to-day sport, and this is why today, Great Britain's forests are not populated with animals such as wolves and bears, as they were long gone, due to excessive hunting.

In addition, they did not settle for any less as they begin to chase and hunt exotic animals, while many Victorian homes still have taxidermised tigers, lions, and rare, exotic birds. This is why the Dodo bird became extinct and many rare illnesses would spread rather quicklier than before, as the wealthy Victorians would have monkeys, as well as different sorts of apes as pets, with a great interest manifested especially

1 https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/taxidermy, accessed on October 29th, 2023.
2 https://www.etymonline.com/word/taxidermy, accessed on October 29th, 2023.

for Capuchin monkeys. As for the motivation behind this process, Victorians and historians transformed taxidermy into a justification for their need of nature, instead of their love for the natural world, as they were the ones responsible for the extinction of different species of wild animals that could have been found within the walls of London. Once the Industrial Revolution steamed the life of Victorians, the species populating the city migrated towards the countryside, leaving behind only the ones who were capable of adapting themselves and surviving within the new circumstances, the highly polluted environment.

These being said, we shall pass onto the next topic, which is the quality of the animal body as a medium for the Victorian society.

2. The animal body as a medium

The Victorian people searched different methods of coping with death and creating life out of rotten corpses, thus, they used taxidermy as a tool of reconstructing and remodelling the reality according to their own principles, vision, thus, their subjectivity. They enhanced the mourning etiquette, as they preserved not only the bodily remains of their loved ones into jewellery, but also their beloved pets into eternal companions, by mounting their skin and stuffing it.

Thus, the animal body becomes a medium for people, one that connects different worlds and realms, from material to physical world, from life to death, an element which combines the two sides of the same coin: at the same time alive (its taxidermised form, available and very much alive for people) and dead, simultaneously (the official status of the same animal).

By connecting the two realms, a taxidermised carcass becomes the dead in the world of the living and the living in the world of the dead.

3. Taxidermy as instrument of colonisation

Each topic of the 19th century is envisioned and mounted within glass cases, as we shall see from the work of Walter Potter, the most famous taxidermist from the 19th century. He is the one to introduce anthropomorphic taxidermy into the Victorian social and cultural context in order to create and to shape different social situations and activities from the 19th century.

Each taxidermised subject denoted or prepared the context for a serious search of meaning, as it could have been analysed from the following perspectives:

- *Colour*- an element which stands for the race or for the gender;
- *Position*- social status, intention and depiction of different activities and professions;
- *Size*- element which offers data about the gender, the age and also, the subject's position within the social hierarchy;
- *Choice of animal* (with fur, without fur, mammals, reptiles, amphibians etc.) in order to satirise or to represent a certain social group, professions etc.

3.1. Anthropomorphic taxidermy

As for anthropomorphic taxidermy, we may understand it as the art of creating different tableaux which convey data about human activities, experiences, and life, in general. Thus, Ploquet mentions that "These animals are not being 'borrowed' to explain people, nothing is being unmasked; on the contrary.

- *Colour and size*- male squirrels, thus this is a depiction of a masculine environment. It is important to the choice of light-coloured squirrels instead of dark ones, in order to convey the relationship between social status and skin colour.
- *Body position*- they are currently staying at different tables; thus, it is a social gathering.
- *The choice of animal*- first of all, the squirrel is a resourceful animal, thus we may understand that these squirrels are a metaphor for noble, wealthy men, that are also virile, as these animals signify potency and fertility. In addition, they usually live in trees, which enhances the idea of a superiority.
- *Activity*- drinking, playing cards, smoking cigar, which are activities performed by wealthy men, hence the tails and the size of their bodies.

    Colour and size- light-coloured kittens, thus we have high-society people, that are British or Scottish, due to the coral and ginger hues in their fur.
- *Body position*- they are currently staying at a large table; thus it is a social gathering, an enclosed celebration, maybe a familial party- that would explain the similarities in their fur colour and size.
- *The choice of animal*- kittens are very active animals, not only due to their class of species, but also due to their age. They are a metaphor for high society faces, that never get dirty, do not properly work (physically) and enjoy the beauty of life.
- *Activity*- they are drinking tea and eating pancakes, biscuits and other sweets, usually served during teatime, a true British tradition. In this respect, kittens stand for high-class society British people.
- *Other elements*- ribbons, each kitten has a ribbon, which resembles the scarf worn by man and the jewellery of women form the high-society, as ordinary people and middle-class representatives could not afford such aesthetic luxury.
- *Time of the day*- it is within the middle of the day, as this social celebration was held between 3 and 5 in the afternoon.

- Colour and size- dark-coloured toads, that can be interpreted as the slaves, due to the dichotomy between the colour of kittens and the dark hues within the skin of these amphibians.

- *Body position*- they are placed in different positions that indicate movement and intense work, a typical position for each slave at the time.
- *The choice of animal*- toads are regarded as repulsive creatures, which are rejected by others, a metaphor for the slaves, as they were punished for their bodily differences by the British society. Also, toads are included in the class of amphibians, a group which is considered inferior to mammals such as squirrels and kitten.
- *Activity*- they are working, even though there are different sizes. This is related to the fact that even children had to work in order to sustain their families and to gain their existence.
- *Other elements*- the scenery depicts fields within the countryside, as it the case of plantations. This element is used to create the reference for the process of colonization.

4. Taxidermy: the signified in the context of Victorian times

All these being said, we may mention that the language created by this context - mounted animal silhouettes- it is an entire system created after the laws postulated by Ferdinand de Saussure, as he affirmed the fact that each sign has a dual identity, the signifier and the signified, otherwise said, the material form of the sign and the mental concept associated with the sign.

Thus, each taxidermy is a code created by the body/skin of the animal and the other physical materials used in its structure, and the other part, the meaning by which these remains exist after the animal's body received 'a second chance'. In this respect, anthropomorphism is an interesting process of creating meaning without words, by means of symbols, images and references, as Henning mentions: "In other words, anthropomorphism became a means for nineteenth century popular displays to negotiate the problematic relationship between people and animals for a thrill-seeking audience" (Henning, 2007, 673).

Thus, the physical expression for language, ideas and context within the Victorian era remains taxidermy, especially the branch exploited by the famous Walter Potter, anthropomorphic taxidermy.

5. Its final metamorphosis: literary taxidermy

As Victorians continued with their obsession for grotesque art, times change, and trends come and go. Thus, we arrive nowadays, in the 21st century, as the trend of loving and obsessing over pieces of taxidermy gains power, while people are dealing with the sentiment of nostalgia. The way Victorian taxidermy is reinvented is literary taxidermy, the great-grandson of Dickens' work, as he used taxidermy in creating the literary references for Mr. Venus' shop.

In this respect, critics define the new concept of literary taxidermy as "an experimental writing process, which involves taking the first and last lines of a piece of literature (often a novel, but sometimes a short story) and then using those lines as the beginning and ending of a new, original story or poem. The process is not just to slap someone else's words onto the start and finish of your work, but to take full ownership of the borrowed lines, interpreting (or re-interpreting) them in order to find your own narrative within their boundaries. The idea originated in a book of short stories called The Gymnasium by Mark Malamud"[1].

6. Conclusions

All in all, taxidermy is a key concept that manages to travel time and space, and still fascinates people, all around the world, but most of them are not even half as interested as Victorians were, during the Golden Age of the British Empire.

Bibliography
Dictionaries
Cambridge Online Dictionary, available at https://dictionary.cambridge.org/, accessed on October 29th, 2023.
Online Etymology Dictionary, available at https://www.etymonline.com/, accessed on October 29th, 2023.

---

3 https://regulus.press/littax.html#:~:text=Literary%20taxidermy%20is%20an%20experimental,new%2C%20original%20story%20or%20poem., accessed on October 29th, 2023.

Books

Aloi, Giovanni, *Speculative Taxidermy,* Columbia, Columbia University Press, 2018.

Browne, Montagu, *Practical Taxidermy*, London, Upcott Gill Publishing House, 2008.

Rowley, John, *The Art of Taxidermy,* New York, Appleton & Company, 1998.

Fiction books

Dickens, Charles, *Our Mutual Friend*, New York, Vintage Publishing, 2011.

Articles

Gates, Barbara, "Introduction: Why Victorian Natural History?" in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, no. 35, pp. 539-49.

Henning, Michelle, "Anthropomorphic Taxidermy and the Death of Nature" in V*ictorian Literature and Culture,* no. 35, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 663-678.

Péquignot, Amandine, "The History of Taxidermy: Clues for Preservation" in *Collections: A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals*, Vol 2, No 3, February 2006, pp. 245–255.

Topham, Jonathan, "Science and Popular Education in the 1830s: The Role of the 'Bridgewater Treatises'" in *The British Journal for the History of Science*, no. 24, pp. 397-430.

Youdelman, Robert, "Iconic Eccentricity: The Meaning of Victorian Novelty Taxidermy" in *PsyArt* 21, 2017.

URL/Webography

https://dictionary.cambridge.org/, accessed on October 29th, 2023.

https://www.etymonline.com/word/taxidermy, accessed on October 29th, 2023.

https://regulus.press/littax.html#:~:text=Literary%20taxidermy%20is%20an%20
experimental,new%2C%20original%20story%20or%20poem., accessed on October 29th, 2023.

Images

https://ro.pinterest.com/, accessed on October 31st, 2023.

https://images.google.com/, accessed on October 31st, 2023.

The Colours of Feminine Letter and Imposed Ideals in *Little Women*

Lela Stanković, V, Master Studies
Translation - English Language
University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philology, Nikšić
Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Saša Simović
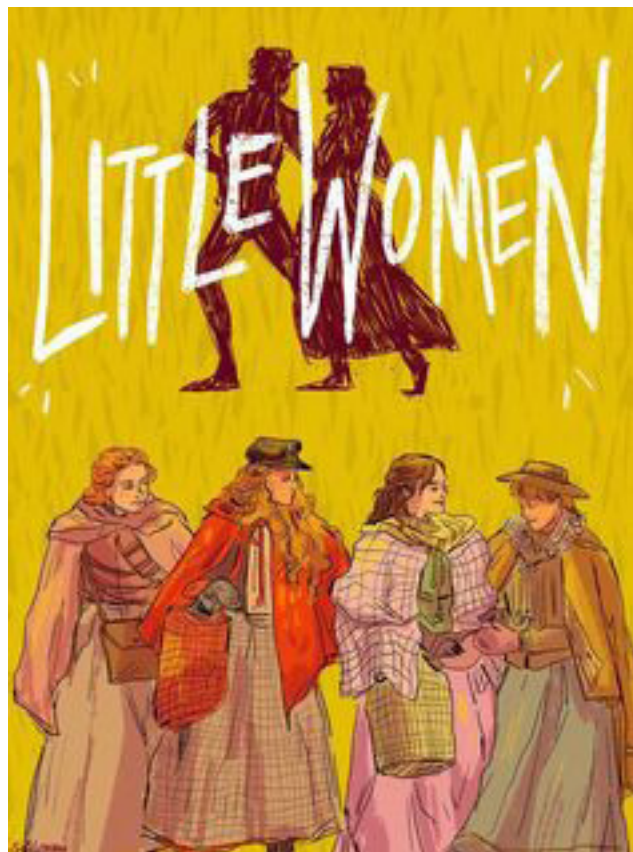
1. Introduction

Cultural circumstances dictate one's attitude towards the outer world, including the potential desire to connect to others, earning their respect and acceptance without prejudice. Being an artist is a burden on its own, but having to prove yourself to others is another difficulty to tackle when it comes down to making your way in the world as a respected artist with a clear message.

Gender roles and misogyny are contemporary topics of crucial importance, even today. Therefore, it is imperative to address these issues and approach the analysis of the feminine letter in Little Women (1868).

2. Background

Louisa May Alcott (1882-1888) was profoundly influenced by Transcendentalism through her indirect contact with Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Thoreau. From a very young age, she realized that she was the one to care for her family and provide for them the best she could since they all depended on her (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica 2019). She tried to earn a living doing different jobs, and it was during those challenging times that she started committing herself to writing. From her first poem "Sunlight" through Hospital Sketches to her most prominent novel, Little Women, she had the opportunity to reflect on her present state of mind, the traumas of the Civil War, the trials and tribulations of her everyday life, and on childhood memories (Norwood 2017).

Later on, she was asked to write a book for young women, and that is how she came about writing Little Women. Her uniquely developed style of writing is to be analyzed in the chapters to come, as we realize that after publishing Little Men, Alcott eagerly fought for women's rights: "Throughout her life, she would contribute to several publications that promoted women's rights. She was also the first woman to register to vote in Concord, Connecticut" (Norwood 2017). This writer of transcendentalist roots dared to show and pinpoint things as they are, such as the social construct, implied and instilled hierarchy, selective opportunities, and egoist barriers to a happier society, while also making sure her message and stance on the current state of affairs are perfectly camouflaged in the covers of the book that were suitable for the society of that time. Richard H. Brodhead in Cultures of Letters (1993) perfectly comments on the author's circumstances at the later stage in her life: "Louisa May Alcott came to her career at a time when a profound reinstitutionalization of the literary field was changing the terms on which this career itself could be imagined; and at this moment, she shows, later separate career forms took the form of simultaneous alternatives" (p. 86). Radojka Vulčević (2018) in Istorija američke književnosti (The History of American Literature) mentions that Alcott was indeed a fruitful writer with over 300 titles in her career (317). She also used to write under pseudonyms, and she wrote a few pieces to primarily support

However, Sanja Runtić in Vrijeme buđenja (The Time of Awakening, 2019) notes that thanks to the breakthrough of Women's Studies many traditionalist values were challenged. Acknowledging the predominantly male voice in literature, Runtić (2019) points out that the feministic authors were influenced by Marxist approaches and poststructuralism (9). Referring to Jacques Lacan, Runtić mentions the term jouissance, which pertains to the intention of female writers to return to the "pre-symbolic, pre-oedipal, pre-linguistic consciousness and thus free anything that was suppressed in women" (2019, 10). Moreover, Runtić touches upon the concept of binary oppositions, which served male voices to assert the main position in literary discourse while the female voice was downgraded to mere "chattering" (2019, 11). In line with this rhetoric, male and female voices stood in stark contrast, which fueled the desire for necessary changes in society. With reference to Mikhail Bakhtin, the intention is shifted from the linguistic to the societal context. Specifically, Bakhtin, aware of the authority of the text, indicates that the characters in literary texts play a crucial role in shaping literary reality. They could be in line with or in opposition to the outer expectations and do not necessarily represent the author's values or point of view (2019, 14). Following the Civil War, Runtić notes that economic growth, agricultural development, and industrialization occurred, impacting society, culture, and class in a completely new way.

What is relevant in this paper is how those changes made a difference in women's position in society. As the roles in a traditional family were not erased but rather "redefined" (2019, 24), women were not the only family members expected to bring up the children but other cousins as well. Due to drastic changes in the economy and family redefinition, elementary education imposed itself as obligatory for children, therefore allowing women to have a life outside their houses and seek job opportunities. Therefore, Runtić clarifies that these changes were not eagerly welcomed into American society as women applied for jobs only if deemed necessary and that the idea of working women was frowned upon (2019, 26). Bearing in mind that most of the mass literature until the Civil War was written by women, they stuck to traditional views and did not step outside of their comfort zone, as writing was simply something they did (2019, 29). About the aforementioned, Runtić introduces the terms "ideology of separate spheres" and "ideology of domesticity" (2019, 30). She further explains: "It is the ultimate origin of the dualism of mind and body, the fundamental tenets of patriarchal ideology, the division of work on production as male and reproduction as female work" (2019, 30). What is truly appalling is that women were later glorified, but simply due to their peaceful and pure presence, which was connected to the Virgin Mary even in medieval times (2019, 34).

As a result of different conflicts within a woman author and within society itself, Runtić draws attention to new literary genres, including "sentimental domestic fiction", "romance", "quest romance", and "genteel novel" that competed for their place in a differently construed society, facing many critical challenges. Having said all that, it was clear that the female voice broke the centuries-long silence and that women were finally prepared to fight for what belonged to them, or as Radojka Vukčević says: "Still, women started to get interested in gaining and distributing power. For many women, writing was also a way of earning a living" (2018, 317).

4. "Castles in the Air" in *Little Women*

Little Women (1868) is a novel that describes the life of the March family, specifically the March sisters Jo, Meg, Beth, and Amy, and their dreams, goals, values, and life expectations. Alcott tries to describe their respective journeys, trials and tribulations, and inner conflict while molding their lives in a traditional, patriarchal, and narrow-minded society.

Different aspects of Alcott's letter are described in the following tables:

JO	
"I hate to think I've got to grow up, and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look as prim as a China Aster! It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boy's games and work and manners! I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy. And it's worse than ever now, for I'm dying to go and fight with Papa. And I can only stay home and knit, like a poky old woman!" (p.4, Chapter 1 – Playing the Pilgrims)	❖ Conflicted heart and a soul of an artist ❖ Feeling suffocated in patriarchal mold of the society ❖ Rebellious and offensive response to her sisters' assumptions ❖ Marriage as a threat to fulfilled life ❖ More than a wife attending her husband ❖ Questioning the imposed gender roles ❖ Patience will catch up with the stubbornness ❖ Cold exterior overshadowing insecurities ❖ Love is neither needed nor undesirable

Table 1.

MEG	
I dare say, but nothing pleasant ever does happen in this family," said Meg, who was out of sorts. "We go grubbing along day after day, without a bit of change, and very	❖ Pressure to be a lady (whatever that term may entail) ❖ Beauty above everything ❖ Courtship and flattery as types of escapism
little fun. We might as well be in a treadmill." (…) "People don't have fortunes left them in that style nowadays, men have to work and women marry for money. It's a dreadfully unjust world," said Meg bitterly. (p. 180, Chapter 15 – Telegram)	❖ Denial of unfortunate circumstances ❖ Awareness of gender roles inequality yet the acceptance is inevitable ❖ Fear of irrelevance masked by the necessity to be similar to those of the upper class ❖ Boredom and conformism in a paradoxical unity ❖ Unfairness present, one must obey to the imposed tradition

Table 2.

BETH	
"I used to be so frightened when it was my turn to sit in the chair with the crown on, and see you all come marching round to give the presents, with a kiss. I liked the things and the kisses, but it was dreadful to have you sit looking at me while I opened the bundles," said Beth, who was toasting her face and the bread for tea at the same time. (p. 7, Chapter 1 – Playing Pilgrims)	❖ Insecurities stemming from overprotection ❖ No dreams = no disappointments ❖ Personal desires at the last place ❖ Free spirit in the shy armor ❖ Too pure and innocent for the world ❖ Her talents are obvious, yet she is fine without drawing attention to them ❖ Devoted, dedicated, altruistic ❖ Brave, grateful, angel on Earth

Table 3.

AMY	
Now if there is anything mortifying to our feelings when we are young, it is to be told that, and to be bidden to "run away, dear" is still more trying to us. Amy bridled up at this insult, and determined to find out the secret, if she teased for an hour. Turning to Meg, who never refused her anything very long, she said coaxingly, "Do tell me! I should think you might let me go, too, for Beth is fussing over her piano, and I haven't got anything to do, and am so lonely." (p. 77, Chapter 8 - Jo meets Appolyon	❖ Self-imposed pressure to be perfect ❖ High expectation of the outside world ❖ Happiness outside, not within oneself ❖ Acquiring a talent is a way to guaranteed admiration ❖ Painting as a type of escapism ❖ Attention-seeking tendencies in order to feel like a proper adult ❖ Sister rivalry – Amy vs. Jo ❖ World traveler ❖ Willing to expand her horizons ❖ Stays in the safe zone between the traditionalism and progressive views

Table 4.

LAURIE	
"Laurie colored up, but answered frankly, "Why, you see I often hear you calling to one another, and when I'm alone up here, I can't help looking over at your house, you always seem to be having such good times. I beg your pardon for being so rude, but sometimes you forget to put down the curtain at the window where the flowers are. And when the lamps are lighted, it's like looking at a picture to see the fire, and you all around the table with your mother. Her face is right opposite, and it looks so sweet behind the flowers, I can't help watching it. I haven't got any mother, you know." And Laurie poked the fire to hide a little twitching of the lips that he could not control." (p.52, Chapter 5 – Being Neighbourly)	❖ Loneliness as a contagious condition ❖ Traumas luring in and their manifestation as insecurities ❖ Familiarity as a false sense of conformity ❖ Emotions forced – relationships lost ❖ Keen observations come naturally with isolation ❖ Pride excludes emotional vulnerability ❖ Almost spoiled ❖ Easily influenced by the Marchs ❖ Unrequited love leads to self-destruction ❖ His points of view may be aristocratic, but his heart is in good place ❖ Prone to accepting the traditional roles and imposing the same on others

Table 5.

The chosen paragraphs are all from Part 1, as it is part of the novel in which Alcott introduces characters through dialogues. As the story progresses, we get to see and appreciate all the nuances of Alcott's main characters, and we can analyze their complex psychological portrait. Louisa May Alcott is rather careful in not stating her mind clearly. Therefore, her fictional world does not go beyond the margins of the traditional world. She does introduce some "rebellious" views and personifies them as one of the characters.

5. Implied and imposed paradoxes

Louis May Alcott described a rather subtle yet unmistakably sharp contrast between male and female voices in the 19th century and even hinted at a new perception of womanhood as otherness, which Runtić refers to in Vrijeme buđenja (2019).

MATERIALISTIC ASPECTS	NON-MATERIALISTIC ASPECTS
o **March household is centered around the personal belief of unity and duties** o **Laurie's house as a stark contrast of materialism** o **All that glitters IS gold** o **Words and colors as a physical manifestation of one's soul** o **"Eye for an eye" – burnt pages almost for one life**	o **Perfectionism chased, not reached** o **Self-deception as a defense mechanism** o **Realism as a slap across the face or a wakeup call** o **Mistakes bought, wisdom earned** o **Love idealized, forced, accepted**

Table 6.

5.1. Omnipresent dichotomies

Key dichotomies, besides the aforementioned dichotomy of male-female voice, we can turn our attention toward the dichotomy of materialistic-nonmaterialistic aspects as presented below:

5.2. Main symbolism of the March sisters and accepted versions of reality

Each sister had to go through personal ups and downs, except for Beth, who left the world too soon to learn anything about life. Nonetheless, one could argue that she was mature for her age and even wiser than her older sisters. The main focus of the symbolism is on the March sisters, not because other characters are not vital for the story but because the sisters carry the loud female voice throughout the story in their own

It is interesting to note how in Part 2 of the novel, our heroines are forced into the world of young adults while they are trying to find their own place in the world and make an impact, be they "just" wives and mothers, painters, writers, or pianists. It is indeed crucial to acknowledge what Elizabeth Karpen says: "March sisters' growth centers on removing these flaws and turning the young girls into model wives for the future; the ambitions and desires that drive them toward careers and self-sufficiency are taught to be pushed down and ignored" (2). The symbolism is presented in the following table: It is worth mentioning that the table serves simply as a guide to the heroines' path as human beings. The perfect personification of open-minded traditionalism is indeed Mrs. March. On the one hand, she is trying her best to teach Meg how to be an abiding wife who suits her husband's needs, and on the other hand, she supports Jo's unique path as a self-sufficient woman and levels with her. The influence she has on her daughter is best described by

JO	Nurturing the genius within herself
MEG	Materialism first, values second
BETH	Good heart and selflessness prevail
AMY	Imagination over practicality
MRS. MARCH	Open-minded traditionalism

Richard H. Brodhead (1993): "The little women of Alcott's first famous novel live, as the domestic manuals of the previous generation would prescribe, within a loving parental presence, in an enclosed family space warmed by maternal affection and so oriented toward the mother's beliefs" (71).

6. Conclusion

We can conclude that Little Women, a novel primarily written to amuse young women, had many layers of unexplored depth and symbolism. Moreover, it was way ahead of its time. It reached an appreciative audience and impacted different aspects of social acceptance and feminism breakthrough. These issues of crucial importance are still valid and questioned even today. We should be aware that this only proves the great genius of Alcott's ability to touch our hearts and tackle our minds centuries later.

Bibliography
Alcott, Louisa May, *Little Women*, Global Grey ebooks, 1868.
Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Louisa May Alcott". Encyclopedia Britannica, 2 Mar. 2023, https://www.britannica.com/biography/Louisa-May-Alcott. Accessed 26 April 2023.
Brodhead, Richard H., C*ultures of Letters : Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth- Century America*, University Of Chicago Press, Chicago1994.
Islam, Munia, *An Analysis of Louisa May Alcott's Little Women Through a Feminist Lens,* 2021.
Karpen, E. "Fallen Castles in the Air: Marriage, Labor, and Suppression in Louisa May Alcott's 'Little Women'", in *Meliora*, vol. 2, no. 1, May 2022, doi:10.52214/meliora.v2i1.9234.
Norwood, Arlisha. "Louisa Alcott." National Women's History Museum, National Women's History Museum, 2017. Date accessed.
Runtić, Sanja, *Vrijeme buđenja,* Osijek, 2019 .
Vukčević, Radojka, *Istorija američke književnosti,* Akademska knjiga, Novi Sad, 2018.
Images
https://ro.pinterest.com/, accessed on February 15th, 2024.

Perfect imperfections in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Birthmark*

Mirjana Peković, II, MA studies
English Language and Literature
University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philology, Nikšić
Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Saša Simović

1. Introduction

Nathaniel Hawthorne was a prominent figure in the American literature of the 19th century. At the time when he was writing his best stories, American transcendentalism was flourishing. Transcendentalism, as an American literary, religious, political and philosophical movement, among other things, sought to create a completely new approach to literature. Transcendental vision was that everything in Nature is related to God, they searched for eternal beauty in Nature and its connection with the humans. The movement was formed in mid-19th century and some of the most famous writers from that period belonged to it, and among them were: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller. It was, in a way, a reaction to the emergence of technology and science and their impact on society. According to transcendentalists, everything has its beauty in a way that is created by Nature. Even though Hawthorne wrote about sin, the bad side of human nature, and used gothic elements in his works, he also shared some transcendental viewpoints. In his preface to his best-known work, The Scarlet Letter, describing his writing room, Hawthorne wrote: "The floor of our familiar room has become a neutral territory, somewhere between the real world and fairy-land, where the Actual and the Imaginary may meet, and each imbue itself with the nature of the other" (Hawthorne 1983: 149). This is one of the key places for defining and understanding Hawthorne's psychological romances. The distinction between the "real" and "imaginary" world is exactly what he dedicates his short story "The birthmark" to.

2. Analysis

2.1. Symbolism of the birthmark

The story is about a married couple, Georgiana and Aylmer. In their marriage, everything was perfect until one moment. Georgiana has a crimson birthmark on her face in the shape of a "crimson hand". Aylmer was beyond happiness in his marriage, and showed great love towards his wife. One day, he noticed a birthmark on his wife's cheek. From that point, everything changed. He began to avoid his wife because his eyes were bothered by the stain that disturbed her beauty.
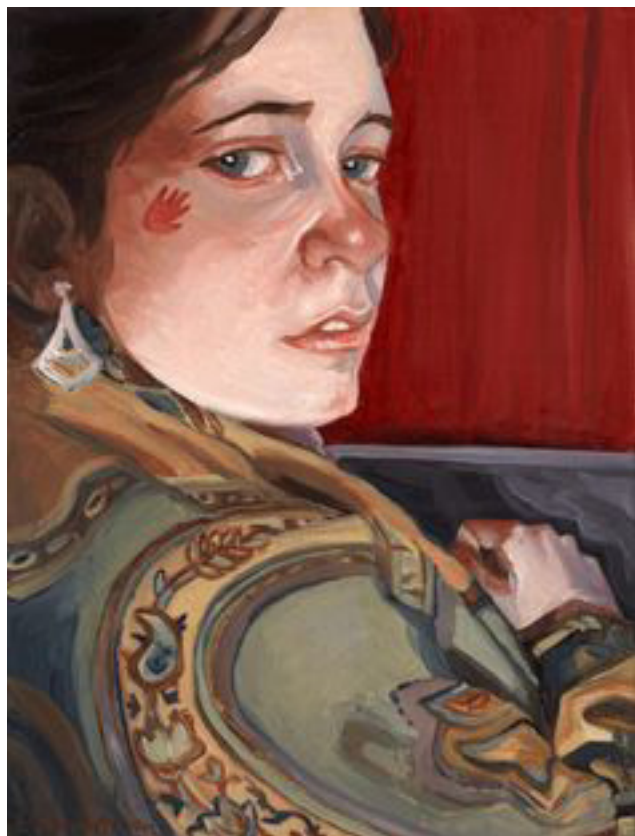
Each time he looks at her face seeing it as a "defect", he turns away his look which "shocks" him, and is terrified of even the slightest notion that he will see her with that spot for the rest of his life. What he tries to do is to persuade her to leave the matter to him. Being an excellent scientist in his field, he self-confidently managed to persevere in his decision.

During the past times, the birthmarks were considered to be a sign of guilt and were usually connected with witches. That little imperfection on a skin can also signify a past life, reminding you of a struggle from the previous life. In this short story, Hawthorne wanted to show that no human being can be ideal regarding physical appearance, but that the true ideal beauty lies in the eye of the observer. In the story, it is mentioned that Georgiana's lovers had a positive attitude towards her mark and found uniqueness in it. On the other side, Aylmer has a completely different perspective: the mark is what deals Georgiana with the idealized perfection that Aylmer strives for. Mortal beings are made to be shortly on

We live the way we are born and as soon as that changes, our life is near the end. The same goes with Georgiana; the moment her mark is removed, there is no place for her in this world of slight imperfections.

2.1. Science versus love

A laboratory is a place where Aylmer identifies himself with God, making whatever comes to his mind. That is the place where he is the ruler own his own world. Having become very influential in a job he is working, he tends to bring every single detail to excellence. His eye became so sharp for details and bothered his sight, so he considered the birthmark "the central point of all". Even though he loved Georgiana, his obsession with science prevailed, making "the love of science to rival the love of woman". The preoccupation with the mark leads to the blindness in which he does not notice the qualities she possesses. What he seeks in others, he himself does not own. Looking around his documents, Georgiana noticed that he did not manage to fulfill everything he had had in his plans. Most of his plans were failures, but his self-confidence was at a very high level. The dream that Aylmer had, shows that constant thinking about something that should not be changed, as it is a part of our nature, distorts the image of one's perception of human beings. He is entwined to the masculine observation of the scar and a desire to see the conventional woman from the nineteenth century as being devoid of mortality and sexuality (Chase Coale, 1998, 63). The matter overwhelmed him to the point that he started subconsciously thinking about the possible solution. In his dream, he thought about removing Georgiana's mark, and "the deeper went the knife, the deeper sank the hand" so it reached even to her heart. Since it extends even to her heart, it is inseparable from her, it is a part of her being and the moment it is removed, she will be removed from this world. Interestingly, in the dream, he decides to cut it even though it will endanger her life. The same as he does in real life. He is sure that the operation will be the remedy for her face, but a threat to her life. Georgiana does everything her husband says and completely trusts him leading him into the "heart of science" (Hawthorne, 1846: 37). She knows that there is little chance to survive, but still, she decides to fulfill the wish of her husband. His disgust at her flaw leads to the fact that even she cannot see herself in the mirror anymore. Now, she wants to remove it for whatever price, saying: "Danger is nothing to me; for life, while this hateful mark makes me the object of your horror and disgust". After having been persuaded that the flaw is a sign of disgust and grotesque, she insists on removing it "or we shall both go mad" (Hawthorne, 1846: 47). It seems that striving for an impossible perfection that can never exist amid human beings causes obsession to an extent that "love and hate reflect one another" (Chase Coale, 1998, 64).

2.2. Flower representing Georgiana

In the laboratory, Aylmer shows Georgiana an experiment with a "perfect and lovely flower". The flower looked so magical that Georgiana did not dare to even touch it, not to ruin its beauty with her human touch. As soon as Georgiana plucked it, "its leaves turning coal-black as if by the agency of fire". There is an enormous number of flowers on the land but not a single one is identical to others, each of them has its mark or crevice that separates it from others and in that way contributes to its beauty. Here, flowers are symbols for human beings. This part of the story in which we notice the flower used for an experiment can be analyzed in a way that the flower was an indicator of what would happen if Aylmer tried to change Georgiana's sign that she is a human being, that she also has her own mark, just like a flower. By opposing Nature and trying to rectify what it has done, it will always be followed by an undesirable outcome. The demise of the flower is a demise for Georgiana. In the story, Hawthorne shows the importance of "distinguishing between the workings of nature and those of art" and reveals the tragic consequences of altering nature (Martin, 1983, 53).

Conclusion

Like in all of his stories, Hawthorne imposes a strong message that challenging nature and counterfeiting it brings an undesirable outcome. Besides this, the story serves as a critique of Aylmer's pride and unwillingness to accept his wife's slight physical imperfection that leads him to lose the most precious thing he had, the love he sacrificed for pursuing the ideal of the eternal beauty of his beloved. Love, which was at the beginning the force that keeps Aylmer and Georgiana united, serves now as a double-edged sword forcing him to transform his wife into a physically ideal woman and making himself satisfied through the interplay between love, science, and the pursuit of perfection. Through this story, Hawthorne challenges readers to consider the morality of altering the natural world to satisfy individual desires and encourages us to consider that true beauty cannot be recognized through physical appearance but through qualities we possess.

Through many layers of hidden symbolism, rather than eliminating blemishes, Hawthorne's work inspires us to accept and cherish our flaws and serve as an eternal reminder of the true satisfaction of being human.

Bibliography

Coale, Samuel Chase, Mesmerism and Hawthorne, The University of Alabama Press, Alabama, 1998.
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, The Scarlet Letter, James R. Osgood and Company, Boston, 1874.
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *"The Birthmark" Mosses From and Old Manse,* 1846, 32-52, Frederick Warne. Internet Archive, London, Web. 17. Aug. 2023.
Martin, Terence, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, G. K. Hall and Company, New York, 1983.
Images
https://ro.pinterest.com/, accessed on February 15th, 2024.

Realistic Writing in *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens

Cojocaru (Mardare) Nicoleta, II, LEPC
Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Elena Ciobanu

The Victorian period was one of the most productive in British literature. Writers of the time tried to present their society and its people in a more realistic, yet dark, manner. Charles Dickens was one of the most remarkable English writers, not only in the Victorian era, but in the entire British literature history, and he conceived his books by observing social manners and then introducing them to many generations of readers, by means of a highly original style of writing.
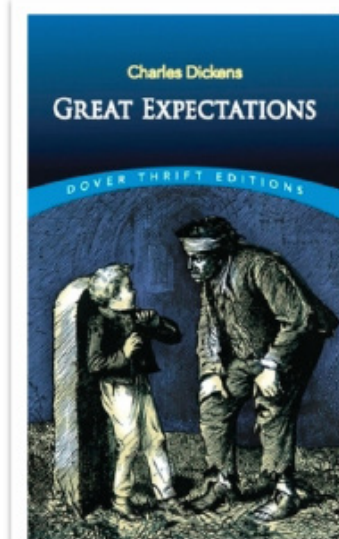
Realism involves an objective presentation of reality by describing facts and contexts as they are with detachment. Numerous characters from all social strata are included in realist writing, together with common circumstances of everyday life.

Realism can be perceived from the very beginning in Charles Dickens' novel entitled Great Expectations. The incipit of the novel is characterized by careful observation, coherent presentation, and use of simple and direct language.

The use of a simple and basic language is easily recognized by the reader in brutal expressions or curses: "Hold your noise! cried a terrible voice, as a man started up from among the graves at the side of the church porch. Keep still, you little devil, or I'll cut your throat!".[1]

The main character, Pip, who is an orphan, is part of the lower-middle class and epitomizes the image of the child born in the Victorian period, who had a life full of difficulties, did hard work in factories, and died prematurely.

The incipit is also marked by the presence of death everywhere, which is another feature of the English realist trend, as death was familiar to the Victorians, due to various causes such as poor hygiene, extreme violence, famine or disease. We notice that Pip's parents are dead and we realise that the fact that being a parentless child was very common in those times: "As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones"[2].

The heavy detailed description of the swampy region in which characters live exemplifies another essential element of realism, as we may notice from the following excerpt: "Our was the marsh country, down by the river, within, as the river wound, twenty miles of the sea"[3].

The description is detailed and offers accurate points of reference. The presentation of Pip's impression of his dead parents, whom he has never seen in real life, but only in pictures, seems to be another realistic element. In fact, he imagines not only the physical and moral appearance of his parents, but also the characteristics of his entire family by observing their graves: "my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones"[4].

Furthermore, the way Pip reveals his real feelings about the fear and terror produced by the violent man who threatens him may be another element of realism. The little boy is just a delicate Victorian child, who has lost almost his entire family and who is trying to cope with his miserable and cruel life. His fragility may be seen as he pleads with the violent man for mercy and attentively obeys every order he is given: "Oh! Don't cut my throat, sir," I pleaded in terror. "Pray don't do it, sir'"[5].

1 Dickens, Charles, *Great Expectations,* 1998, e-book, found at *The Project Gutenberg,* accessed at https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1400/1400-h/1400-h.htm, on January 14th, 2024, p.1.
2 Dickens, Charles, *Great Expectations, loc. cit.*
3 Dickens, Charles, *Great Expectations, loc. cit.*
4 Dickens, Charles, *Great Expectations, loc. cit.*
5 Dickens, Charles, *Great Expectations, op. cit.*, p.2.

Another fact to consider is the simplicity and lack of dramatization of the language used, and the way in which it expresses the real feelings of a boy frightened to death by the wild demands of an escaped prisoner. Thus, we may identify the use of swear words and threats, and of a language full of grammatical and spelling errors: "Tell us your name! "said the man. "Quick!" The escaped prisoner is using "us" instead of "me", even though he is the only one who threatens Pip. "Show us where you live", said the man. "Pint out the place!".

The prisoner again uses "us" instead of "me", and "pint out" instead of "point out", so these mistakes and the tone used manage to convey a realistic portrait of the social type represented by the convict, a man without education and marked by poverty, resorting to violent acts and then being punished with imprisonment.

The text we are discussing also contains elements characteristic of Gothic literature, such as the cemetery and the darkness of the marshes. Other elements include the portraits imagined by the boy as he is looking at the tombstones. Also, in this respect, we may add that the encounter between the boy and the prisoner may be considered a Gothic element, by the sense of terror aroused inside the boy, as well as by the appearance of the prisoner himself.

The incipit of Great Expectations illustrates the complexity of the type of realism cultivated by Charles Dickens in his novels, where the game of subjectivity and objectivity is carefully balanced in the presentation of a world that gives the reader an amazing feeling of authenticity.

Bibliography
Books
Baron, C., Engel, M., *Realism/Anti-Realism in 20th-Century Literature,* Rodopi Publishing House, New York, 2010.
Walder, Dennis, *The Realist Novel (Approaching Literature),* Routledge, London,1995.
Digital books
Dickens, Charles, *Great Expectations,* 1998, e-book, found at *The Project Gutenberg*, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1400/1400-h/1400-h.htm, accessed January 14, 2024.
Articles
Feng, Liu, Ruizhuang, Zhang, "The Typologies of Realism", in *Chinese Journal of International Politics,* Vol. 1, 2006, pp. 109–134, retrieved from https://doi:10.1093/cjip/pol006, accessed January 14, 2024.
Anuradha, V., et al., "Realism in Dickens' Novels", in *International Journal of Special Education (IJSE)*, Vol. 37(3), 2022, pp. 15193-15198.
URL/Webography
https://images.google.com/, accessed January 14th, 2024.
Images
https://ro.pinterest.com/, accessed on February 15th, 2024.

Stephen Dedalus' Inner Conflict in James Joyce's
A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Alina Vasilica Stoica, II, E-F
Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Mihaela Culea

1. Introduction

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the noun "artist" stands for "a person who creates works of art, especially paintings or drawings"[1]. Although this is a perfectly written description of the most concrete meaning this word implies, being an artist brings up a whole lot more purposes and meanings than one can imagine. It is a very versatile figure in our world, we see it in any sector, to some degree. From fine arts to graphic and digital art, musical arts and even on the streets, architects' minds embellish the cities and not only. Rumour has it that the artist's figure is not easy to understand most of the time. The artist's soul and mind wander day and night along the streets of their imagination. Nonetheless, this imagination is nothing more than the fruit of one's life experiences. It is a direct reflection of this individual's inner self, with all the trouble and beauty there is in it. It is not a surprise that, as a result, they tend to have a deeper personality, more thoughtful and thirstier to commit to their beliefs in some form, written, painted etc.

2. The main character

James Joyce proved his talent for characterization through the main character in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916). However, there is a very short and quick answer related to how the performance of one character gets so exposed. Stephen can be considered a fictional autobiography of James Joyce himself. It is not by chance that many critics consider and categorize this novel an autobiography. One of Joyce's talents that proves his mastery in writing is this very technique through which he delivers a piece of himself in one or more characters in his writings. A passionate reader of Joyce's works will notice, without a doubt, that there is a pattern recurring in his stories. Even more, Stephen is a pervasive appearance that shows up in multiple ways and times. Every time, he is a different person and yet the same. What is so spectacular in this character, put into the fictional world by the writer, is that he has a very specific and profound role. Sometimes he carries the whole story on his shoulders, just like in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. While reading this novel, Stephen encounters, engages and recalls many other characters, who, paradoxically, are not explored more. This happens because Joyce has no interest in getting too deep into anyone else who isn't Stephen. This is a story about Stephen, and Stephen's conflicts, the reasons behind them and the choices he makes as a result of his maturing and growing as a citizen, as a man, as an individual and, finally, as an artist.

3. The quest for individuality

One of Stephen's main dilemmas is his never-ending quest for a sense of individuality. The way Joyce writes the other characters does not leave us with any questions, they are fully developed people, with a clear life path in front of them (for example we don't get to dive in too deeply into Stephen parents' personality, from the beginning they are shown as problematic adults unable to control their life choices, that will regardlessly act so, for instance the father's issues with money) contrary to Stephen's situation which requires him to search within himself for answers. Although this makes his life more questionable and him as a person more hesitant and reluctant, it also proves a depth in his consciousness[Parsons, Deborah, Theorists of the Modernist Novel, Abingdon, 4.Stephen's idealism

---

1 https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/artist, accessed on the 20th of October 2023 at 10:35 a.m.

4. Stephen's idealism

Another focal point of this novel is the dramatic persona's idealism. Stephen displays some very strong convictions that could be related on some level to the fundamentals of absolute idealism. One of the pillars of this philosophical movement, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, set a list of principles of this dogma, such as: "The best reflection of the world is not found in physical and mathematical categories but in terms of a self-conscious mind". The main idea of Hegelianism is that anything above one's truths and beliefs induces error in one's life. In a more practical key, this is exactly the main struggle of our main character. If idealism for Hegel means that the limited idea of the world is the direct reflection of one's mind, which by itself becomes one's truth and reality, then Stephen is the perfect example that destroys the imposed set of rules by the church to find his own reality. The church had induced many question marks in him since he could remember. However, this raised just more curiosity, as Stephen's interests in art and beauty were crushed by the religious beliefs he was expected to have and master for the rest of his life.

Another fact to consider is the simplicity and lack of dramatization of the language used, and the way in which it expresses the real feelings of a boy frightened to death by the wild demands of an escaped .

5. The effects of homelessness

Nowadays having a home is common sense, for most of the population. However, the noun "home" has many faces. Starting from a physical and the most concrete way, what defines a "home" such? Most people will say something that connects to the idea of having a physical structure that makes you feel safe. But what if it goes beyond that? A "home" is a feeling at the end of the day. We tend to consider and connect people with a sense of home. A community, our community. Now imagine you come from a dysfunctional family, with both emotional and physical instability. Add to that the fact that you feel a strong sense of adversity to your community for their collective and strong beliefs. Now top all this with the desperate need to question every value of the single path you've always relied on, religion. It is not a surprise that you will feel an extreme sensation of non-belonging to your reality and non-membership of your community.[2] You will be wondering and wandering through confusion and questions that defeat some of your once-known morals and values. This is the state in which Stephen finds himself. He needs salvation, which would make him feel welcome and safe. As we follow him through his journey, we see that his suffering ends thanks to his passion, art, which comes with its costs.

6. An awakening through epiphanies

Stephen experiences along the story multiple events and specific moments that enlighten his mind and soul. More specifically, there are five important moments of revelation that open Stephen's path toward his only salvation, art. However, this is a structured process, in which our protagonist learns from a young age that he has a voice and he must use it to make himself respected by others and, more importantly, by himself. Then he learns more about his own interests, his admiration for beauty and art thanks to literature, more specifically The Count of Montecristo which will spark in him a new world of interests. Moreover, later, in the third chapter, he finds himself conducting an internal fight provoked by the urge of sinning and then repenting for it. Therefore, this brings him to the big question related to the presence of religion in his life. A key point in understanding Stephen's epiphanies is in the last chapter which denotes the culminant moment of maturity and relief for the protagonist. The reason behind this is very simple, Stephen doesn't need any more revelations, he reached the final point of his spiritual journey, he became even more than an individual with a deep sense of his own consciousness, he became an artist.[3]

2 Parsons, Deborah, *Theorists of the Modernist Novel,* Abingdon, Routledge, 2007, p. 55.
3 Attridge, Derek, *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 107.

Conclusions

Many even consider Joyce an adept of nihilism. Although Stephen decided to turn his back on the church, if there is something that can be said with no doubt is that he is an individual with a strong desire to live, to find purpose and a sense of belonging to the earth, to his beloved Irish earth, with a sense of freedom. Stephen reached his moment to shout out a big "Eureka!" to the world and to his soul as he finally reached a full sense of fulfilment on both physical and spiritual levels.with a deep sense of his own consciousness, he became an artist.[6]

Bibliography

Attridge, Derek, *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2004.

Bulson, Eric, *The Cambridge Introduction to James Joyce*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2006.

Ellmann, Maud, T*he Nets of Modernism. Henry James, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, and Sigmund Freud*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.

Fargnoli, A., & Gillespie, M., *Critical Companion to James Joyce: A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*, New York, Facts On File, 2006.

Parsons, Deborah, T*heorists of the Modernist Novel,* Routledge, 2007.

Online sources

Oxford online dictionary, available at https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/artist (accessed on the 20th of October 2023 at 10:35 am)

Hibbs, Thomas, *Portraits of the Artist: Joyce, Nietzsche, and Aquinas,* article available at https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:52885877 (accessed on the 19th of October 2023 at 12:10 am)

Images

https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/James-Joyce/275189, accessed on February 15th, 2024.

https://www.artnet.com/artists/john-behan/stephen-dedalus-in-nighttownH4R0csPR21zm7mMFiHYIA2, accessed on February 15th, 2024.

---

6 Hibbs, Thomas, P*ortraits of the Artist: Joyce, Nietzsche, and Aquinas*, https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:52885877, p. 122.

The Language of Incantations, as an Intricate Part of the Religious Register

Raluca-Andreea Donici (Nechifor), PhD candidate
Nicoleta Cojocaru (Mardare), II, LEPC
Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu

Introduction

I.1. What are incantations?

Campbell Thompson mentions in the incipit of his book[7] that: "MAGIC and sorcery, though they lay outside of religion and were forbidden arts in all the civilised states of antiquity, were yet never regarded as mere imposture"[8], and thus, he quotes Robertson Smith, another personality in the field of studying magic and the power of unholy words, he acknowledges the importance, the force and even the brutality of words, terms and expressions that are considered unnatural and superhuman. After all, all the elements of religious discourse, such as prayers, incantations, sermons and even invocations are clusters of words that convey a religious meaning and great source of power, usually for communicating with God or gods, the superior and maximal power above all human strengths.

For this paper, we chose to analyse the most controversial words included in this list above, incantations, as, generally, the term incantation is strongly tied to the one of magic, either dark or white, that could embrace the form of spells, curses, rites and even ceremonies, depending on the religion or the belief that the practitioners and the participants adopt. First of all, we studied what an incantation is and many dictionaries, including Oxford, Cambridge and Merriam-Webster argue that an incantation is a chanting or a reciting of certain words and expressions, that need to have a sort of magical, even miraculous power. This type of chanting has to be accompanied by specific rhyming spells, which have a persistent rhythm, obtained by using different devices of repetition (usually repeating the formula of address or the desire). This magical tool usually cannot be used without a proper background, which is composed of rhythm, dances, music and even the percussion of many instruments.

1. Incantations. Between Magic And Religion

1.1. A brief history of incantations

According to an article published by Erin Blakemore, in ancient times, to be loves or to revenge were accomplishable actions, only a spell away. This means that it is no surprise that spells, incantations and other types of usage of magic words were daily used for solving any time of issues or to grant any wish.

The beginning of such clusters of words deemed to have magical power could be traced back to the sorry of Genesis (the Bible) or the myths of Creation for different people, such as Egyptians, Igbo, Japanese, Greeks, Aztecs and Inca. No matter who we look at it, the main features are there. All deities, endowed with magical or omnipotent power created the world we live in today by an incantation, a sort of wish, desire or command. As for the physical manifestation of each incantation, we may mention that they are an important part of a magic or spiritual ceremony, which is usually constructed by joining together two important elements, which is the schematic ritual action and the freer lyrical incantation. Such manifestations can be traced back to Antiquity (Egyptians, Mesopotamians), to African tribes (Yoruba) and even to Native American lands (the Navajo).

1.1.1. Ancient Egyptians and the power of words

The world of Ancient Egypt covers a vast and dense legacy, composed of whether physical practices or a spiritual knowledge, that were kept safe for many centuries. Concerning rituals, their agenda extends from before the birth of a child to after the death of a person and so many centuries after the fall of their civilization.

In the work entitled Ancient Egyptian Ceremonies, Rituals, Incantations and Ethics Tchacova, K. (2012), Katarina Tkachova studies, revises and enlarges upon the Egyptian spirituality, based on the central elements of religious practices, incantations, that stays at the bases of other practices, such as rituals

---

7 Campbell Thompson, *Semitic Magic. Its Origins and Development,* Luzac & Co, London, 1980, p. 90.
8 Campbell Thompson, *loc.cit.*

and ceremonies. As for the incantations presented in this collection, there are daily common prayers and incantations that shaped the behaviour and the religious laws obeyed by the Ancient Egyptians such as the 42 principles of Ma'at and the Papyrus of Moral Precepts[9].

Egyptian incantations	Christian Commandments[3]
1. *I have not committed sin.*	1. related to all commandments.
2. *I have not committed robbery with violence.*	2. the 8th commandment: *You shall not steal.*
3. *I have not stolen.*	3. the 8th commandment: *You shall not steal.*
4. *I have not slain men and women.*	4. the 6th commandment: *You shall not murder.*
5. *I have not brought forward my name for exaltation to honours.*[4]	5. related to the 2nd and the 3rd commandments: *You shall not make idols* and *You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.*

Table 1. *The similarities between the 42 Principles of Ma'at and the Christian Commandments[10]*

 In the first text, we identified seven different parts, in which there are used incantations, as it follows:
1.It starts with the word Homage, in order to please the goddess and to draw her attention.
2.It is followed by the titles or the metaphorical language that describes the good deeds and the qualities of the goddess, in order to be sympathetic and to establishes a connection with her, as it is an element specific to worshipping.

3.Follows the reason why that specific person came to ask her for forgiveness.

4.Then, the person shows the goddess that he knows the laws of Ma'at and mentions that he offered his full obedience to this law.

5. In order to flatter her, he mentions the principles of Ma'at and in a personal manner, using the pronoun I, as they try to show they worth of her forgiveness and purification.

6.Then, the person repeats a phrase, I am Pure, three times, as a spell, words endowed with miraculous powers in order to obtain the gift they intended to receive.

7.Lastly, they finish with another incantation, in order to be further protected by the deities.

Simultaneously, another civilization flourished the period of Antiquity, as they thrived in medicinal innovation and spiritual knowledge, that is the one of Mesopotamians, which will be analysed in the following subchapter.

1.1.2. The Magical Mesopotamian medicine

 As we have already mentioned, the Mesopotamian people were known for their frequent use of incantations in almost every field, but mainly for the medical and the spiritual one. In a similar manner to the Egyptian incantations, the Mesopotamian ones were part of different rituals, but could have been also used individually, if they did not have the time or the tools necessary for performing either a ritual or a ceremony. Magical texts belong to the later period of the Babylonian empire, as they were included in the written form of religious practices, even though, at first, they were transmitted in an oral form, as they had to be known by their magicians by heart and to be perfectly uttered whenever needed.

 As the texts did not have any title, in comparison to the Egyptian ones, the researchers numbered them

9 Katarina Tchacova, *Ancient Egyptian Ancient Egyptian Ceremonies, Rituals, Incantations Incantations and Ethics,* CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012.
10 https://droitromain.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/Anglica/CJ1_Scott.htm, accessed on January 15th ,2024.

in order to organise and to study them without confusing ones for the others. Thus, the text no. 64[11] contains an incantation, but from the large number of characters that remained intact, researchers managed to identify and to translate the lines from 18 to 20[12]:

Original text	Translation into English
iti-l u₄-10 ese ᵈsama-ga-mil e-ᵈsamas-ga-mil mu-l-kam e-ᵈnin-a-zu sa-e-gid-da⁵	one month, ten days six **iku*** Samas-gamil, the house of Samas-gamil Of one year, Temple of Ninazu, in the Egida.⁶ ***izu- measure of land**

Table 2. *Lines 18-20, presenting an incantation from text no.64.*

In conclusion, all these incantations serve for different purposes and they are different in length, rhythm, manner of expression from the ones presented in the previous pages, that were the one of Egyptians.

1.1.3. The enchanted lives of Yoruba people

As for the African tribes, the most prominent one in terms of incantations and proliferation of oral literature is the Yoruba tribe, from the lands of Nigeria. It is mentioned that the oral literature of Yoruba has three threads of manifestation: chant, song and recitation, all of them forming a bigger channel of communication, whether outside or within the civilization. For these people, incantations are a vital element from transmitting messages, as they are a well-built construction of speeches or word, that are carefully placed in a highly poetic form, and it is used to make miracles or wonders come true.Thus, it is important to understand that even though Mesopotamians used incantation of as form of addressing to gods, the Yoruba use incantations of a means of communication inside or outside the tribe, telling stories of recounting the great deeds of gods and ancient warriors, such as Oje Larinnaka, an incantation used to free a chained son, named Ojelade, to transmit him from the cursed for of a python, back the its original human appearance. The manner in which African tribes such as the Yoruba people use incantation is different than the other populations' customs, as they offered a new dimension and a new, rich form, of these magic expressions.

1.1.4. The Navajo chants

The Navajo people are another civilization that offered a new dimensions ot the word and the concept incantation, as they have one of the most complex systems of ceremonials, sermons and events that are delicately constructed around the concept of incantations, even though researchers found that they even use rites and chants, in which, singing is usually accompanied by rattle.

In conclusion, all these incantations serve for different purposes and they are different in length, rhythm, manner of expression from the ones presented in the previous pages, that were the one of Egyptians.

1.2. Incantations nowadays

Even today, incantations are used with the purpose of healing people from different disease, as they accompany traditional, organic cures in different parts of Eastern European regions, whereas other regions from some continents offer magic solutions to love, hate and so much more.

1.2.1. The social power of healers from Võnnu, Estonia

The use of incantations in the traditional, folk medicine is used even today, in various parts of Estonia, as many researchers acknowledge the tendency of people to ask the help of a folk[13] doctor instead of a conventional, official physiologist[14]. The difference between the two types of medical practices begins with the language used, as the one involved in folk medicine practices involves terms that would suit the magical

11 Tzvi Abush, M*esopotamia Witchcraft Toward a History an Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*, Brill&Styx, Boston, 2002.
12 Tzvi Abush, *loc. cit.*
13 Mare Kõiva, "From Incantations to Rites", in *Folk Belief Today*, Tartu, 1995, ISBN 9985-851-11-0, Tartu, 1995, p. 217
14 Mare Kõiva, *loc.cit.*

Folk medicine	Official medicine
folk medicine	*biomedicine*
illness	*disease*
unofficial	*official*
divination	*diagnosis*
supernatural powers	*scientific laws*
prayer	*medication*
incantation	*surgery*
heal	*cure*
miracle[7]	*rehabilitation*[8]

Table 3. *The differences in vocabulary between folk medicine and official medicine, according to Stein Mathiesen*

We may understand the importance of such incantations, regardless of the purpose for which they are used, as they are present not only in cultures outside Christianism, but also inside it, as many religions today, Jewish, Orthodox, Protestant, all of them seem to use incantations, either within prayers or separately.

1.3. Neither a prayer, nor a curse?

Due to their dual nature, invocations are either accepted or heavily avoided by people, whether we acknowledge it or not. They represent both good and evil, and, many times, we have to pay attention before categorising them, as they could belong to either magic or evil; practices, or to prayers and holy rituals. In this respect, Yamauchi mentions that "though magic and religion are not mutually exclusive categories, 20 they have generally been understood to represent two different attitudes. Put simply, in religion one prays to the gods; in magic one commands the gods. In this sense Egyptian religion was, as often as not, magical"[9]. We, as Christians, are inclined to consider incantations a curse, even thought we daily use them in order to complete prayers and to participate to spiritual and religious acts, rituals or ceremonies.

2.The Religious Register in Celtic Religious Incantations

2.1. The components of incantation

2.1.1. The cultural characteristics

As for the cultural context, we may mention the fact that it is within the Celtic Christian Church, which is considered to be the earliest Christian church in the United Kingdom, with a history that starters approximately in the 3rd century. It is well-known for its high ascetic profile, and it is a recognised symbol for the conversion of Anglos-Saxons, around the 7th century, even though it is strongly connected to Rome, in terms of customs, traditions and other religious structures of organisation.

Once the cultural context is established, we may move onto the next important elements of context, either situational and linguistic.

2.1.2. The situational context

This speech is produced both in written text, as well as in a oral form, the one that of a holy song, a hymn for the Celtic Church[1], and it requires a face-to-face interaction, as people may gather to church to sing it at a collective level, as well as an individual, more private level, as anyone who feels the need or the call to utters or to sing this collection of incantations, may do it in a more intimate environment, at home, by themselves, with family, close friends and so on. The Addressor: there may be a large group (at church), a smaller one and even just one, a single individual, thus the addressor can be either institutional (inside the church) or unidentified (in private, at home).

In addition, the social characteristics are not highly relevant, as any individual may be interested in uttering or chanting this hymn. More specifically, we may identify the addressor as member of the Celtic

9 Mare Kõiva, *op.cit.*, pp.174-175.

10 *https://hymnary.org/text/i_bind_unto_myself_today*, accessed on January 15th, 2024.

11 Nadia-Nicoleta Morărașu, *Registers and Styles of English Language,* Alma Mater, Bacau, 2014, pp. 19-24.

Church, mostly between the age of 35 and 80, as children and teenagers may not exhibit the same interest towards church, religion or faith, and usually, the pallet of professions is wide and very diverse, from layers, to workers, to accountants, to housewives etc. As for addresses: usually, it may be singular (either God, Jesus Christ or Saint Patrick) or plural (the Holy Trinity), whilst the text may suffer alteration, and the receiver may become un-identified (fact that is highly improbable as in a religious incantation, the receiver must be clear and known, in order to request, to thank or to praise- the roles of a religious incantation). It is not directed towards the self, by to the other, to the divine power from Heavens. The onlookers may vary from time to time, if the priest and the choir are the ones to chant this hymn, the people that gathered there, the believers and adepts may take the role of on-lookers. It may also happen the other way around, as the priests or pastors may be onlookers if the other people chant together with the choir.

2.2. The metafunctions of incantations

According to Halliday, we may stress upon topics such as tenor, mode and field.

Concerning religious incantations, the field in constructed around the idea of mapping the reality and the cosmic, divine entities around us, as well as acknowledging their power, love and overall, existence.

Here we may stress upon the interpersonal relations between the two participants in this interactions, as they are always asymmetric, the divine entity, God, being in the superior corner of our schematic representations, whereas humans being the ones on the ground, on the inferior scale.

Lastly, the mode stresses upon the effective organisation of the clause, analysis extended within the previous subchapter, inside the linguistic context structure.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is important to make a distinction between the two forces that govern above the notion and the definition of incantations, as many people consider them to be associated with black magic, spells and curses, when, in reality they are a tool of constructing religious identity, regardless of the type of confession or religion.

Thus, each and every confession or religious group has its own particularities, some elements that makes them unique or different, more or less, than the other ones. This is why we chose to talk about some major incantations, in these chapters, as we wanted to provide different cultural and situational context for European people (Romanian, Estonian), African tribes (Yoruba) and civilizations (Egyptians), American ancient populations (Native American, Navajo people), Asian territories (Jews and Mesopotamians) and so on.

As for the analysed text, we may mention the fact that it is indeed a collection of incantations, used to address and to please the Christian higher power, God and the Holy Trinity.

Bibliography
Books:
Abushc, Tzvi, *Mesopotamia Witchcraft Toward a History an Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*, Brill&Styx, Boston, 2002.
Albanese, Catherine, A*merica: Religions and Religion,* Wadsworth Publishing, California, 2006.
Carmichael, Alexander, *Celtic Prayers and Incantations*, Dover Publications, Edinburgh, 2007.
Durkeim, Emile, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2008.
Frazer, James, *The Golden Bough,* Dover Publications, Dover, 2002.
Morarasu, Nadia-Nicoleta, *Registers and Styles of English Language*, Alma Mater, Bacau, 2014
Nagel, Carl, *Pyramid Incantations of the Ancient Egyptians*, Finbarr International, London, 1987.
Pazig, Christianus, *A Treatise of Magic Incantations,* Edmund Goldsmith, Edinburgh, 1886.
Tchacova, Katarina, *Ancient Egyptian Ancient Egyptian Ceremonies, Rituals, Incantations Incantations and Ethics*, CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012.

Thompson, Campbell, *Semitic Magic. Its Origins and Development,* Luzac & Co, London, 1980.

Tylor, Edward, *Primitive Cultur*e, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010.

Articles

Kõiva, Mare, "From Incantations to Rites", in *Folk Belief Today*, Tartu, ISBN 9985-851-11-0, Tartu, 1995.

Florey, Margaret, Wolff, Xenia, "Incantations and herbal Medicines: Alune Ethnomedical Knowledge in a Context of Change", in *Journal of Ethnobiology* 18(1):39-67, Victoria, 1998.

Han, Ligang, "A Review of the Major Varieties of English Language", in *International Education Studies;* Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 93-99, Baoding City, Hebei Province, 2019.

Kulmar, Tarmo., "On the Role of Creation and Origin Myths in the Development of Inca State and Religion", in *FEJF,* pp. 7-8, 1999.

Scientific Theses/ Dissertations

Patel, Shaily, *Magical Practices and Discourses of Magic in Early Christian Traditions: Jesus, Peter, and Paul,* University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2017.

Webography/URL

https://uk.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-assets/113953_book_item_113953.pdf, accessed January 15th, 2024.

https://biblehub.com/genesis/1-3.htm, accessed January 15th, 2024.

Images

https://ro.pinterest.com/, accessed on January 15th, 2024.

https://images.google.com/, accessed on January 15th, 2024.

The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism: How the EU curbs criticism of Israel

Lorenzo Bianchi, III
University of Rome Tor Vergata
Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Elisabetta Marino

Abstract

In 2016 the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) adopted a so-called 'non-legally binding working definition of antisemitism' (WDA), which was in turn officially adopted or endorsed by 39 UN member states and international institutions including the EU. The definition received criticism from, among others, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism and several Israeli and Jewish scholars for being ineffective in fighting antisemitism and for curtailing substantial criticism of the State of Israel. The aim of this paper is to analyze the merit of these critiques by taking into exam the 'Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism' released by the EU Commission in 2021. The article concludes that the IHRA WDA, by including pro-Israel talking points, frames evidence-based criticism as antisemitic and poses therefore a threat to academic freedom and freedom of speech in general. This institutional censorship has a material effect in shaping EU policies in a direction beneficial to the State of Israel.

Keywords

free speech, academic freedom, censorship, hasbara, hate speech, IHRA, Working Definition of Antisemitism, European Union, foreign policy, Israel/Palestine.

1. Introduction

In January 2021 the European Commission released the Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, an official document aimed at instructing EU member states on how to combat antisemitism on an institutional level. As the name suggests, the EU Commission's handbook is based on the Working Definition of Antisemitism (WDA) adopted in 2016 by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), an intergovernmental organization whose alleged mission is to combat antisemitism and holocaust denial through research, education and international cooperation.[1]

According its main drafter, the WDA was in theory conceived as a tool to help member states in their effort to collect and share data on antisemitic hate crimes and monitor the situation of antisemitism within and across state borders.[2] In practice, according to its critics, the definition has been extensively used to restrict criticism of Israel, both in academic and political discourse. By examining the handbook released by the European Commission as a case study, this article will illustrate in detail: (1) the circumstances in which the IHRA WDA was drafted and adopted; (2) how the definition frames as antisemitic evidence-based scholarly accepted opinions; (3) how the definition has been used in practice to marginalize or outright censor critics of the State of Israel; (4) which are the material consequences of such censorship on international politics and on the human rights of those living under Israeli occupation.

2. How The IHRA WDA came to be

In January 2005 the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) published on its website a Working Definition of Antisemitism (WDA). Previously the EUMC had publicly stated that a widely held, standard WDA was needed in order to guide its work, and that this definition should have included anti-Zionism.[3] The main drafters of this Working Definition were Andrew Baker and Kenneth Stern, two American Jewish Committee (AJC) officials.[4] It is worth mentioning that the AJC is a hawkish Zionist

1 https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/about-us, accessed 17th August 2023.

2 Stern, Kenneth, I drafted the definition of antisemitism. Rightwing Jews are weaponizing it, The Guardian, 13 dec 2019. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/13/antisemitism-executive-order- trump-chilling-effect, accessed August 15th 2023.

3 Marcus, Kenneth L., The Legally Binding Character of The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Anti-Semitism, Lewis & Clark Law Review, Vol. 27, No. 4, Forthcoming, 2023. pp.4-5.

4 Stern-Weiner, Jamie, The politics of a definition. How the IHRA working definition of antisemitism is being misrepresented, Free Speech on Israel, 2021. p. 12. https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20689366-stern-weiner-j-fsoi-the-politics-of-a-

organization which supported the Israeli government's official position in any major controversy involving Israel's violation of international law.[5] Unsurprisingly, considering the circumstances behind its inception, the EUMC WDA raised numerous controversies for its misuse in smearing critics of Israel, and was abandoned in 2013, when both the EU and the EUMC made clear that the definition had no official status.[6]

In the following years official statements by the Israeli government and by the Fifth Global Forum for Combating Antisemitism (event organized by the Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs) stressed once again the need of an international recognized definition of antisemitism inclusive of attacks against the State of Israel and its legitimacy. To this aim it was suggested to lobby for the adoption of the already controversial EUMC Working Definition among international institutions including the UN, OSCE and the IHRA.[7]

These efforts were rewarded in 2016, when the IHRA adopted its own working definition of antisemitism almost identical to the EUMC WDA. The adoption was not without controversies. As discussed extensively in the next section, the IHRA WDA consists of a two sentence long definition proper and eleven 'illustrative examples' of what may constitute antisemitism. Seven of these examples relate to the State of Israel and according to Mark Weitzman, pro-Israel advocate and one of the main drafter of the document, they are the essence of the definition; without them the WDA would lose its usefulness.[8] And due to the divisive nature of the 'illustrative examples' it was impossible to reach a consensus within the IHRA plenary which included them in the definition. As shown by documentary record, the examples are not part of the officially adopted WDA.[9] This is no marginal detail considering that (as shown in the next paragraphs) the examples are instrumental in curbing or outright censoring substantial criticism of the Israeli state.

Since its adoption the IHRA WDA was outright rejected by numerous scholars (even within Jewish Israeli academia)[10], human and civil rights organizations[11], Jewish groups[12] and the UN special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism.[13] Despite this criticism the definition has been so far officially adopted by 42 countries and several other political entities, including the EU. The European Parliament officially adopted it in 2017, and in 2018 the Council of the European Union called on the EU Member States to endorse the IHRA WDA.[14] In January 2021 the European commission released the Handbook for the Practical Use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, which is the main focus of this article.

In light of the information provided in this section, one can already identify three major flaws in the IHRA WDA: (1) its controversial nature and lack of consensus among experts; (2) the disproportionate influence of pro-Israel advocacy groups in its draft; (3) its focus on defending the legitimacy of the Israeli State.

3. From Theory to Practice: The EU Commission's Handbook

The Handbook for the Practical Use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is a 48- page document released by the European Commission in 2021. As the name suggests, the main purpose of the

definition, accessed 14th September 2023.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 19.

7 Ibid, 20.

8 Weitzman, Mark. "The IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism". Volume 1 Comprehending and Confronting Antisemitism: A Multi-Faceted Approach, edited by Armin Lange, Kerstin Mayerhofer, Dina Porat and Lawrence H. Schiffman, Berlin, 8Boston: De Gruyter, 2020, pp. 463-474. p. 469.

9 Stern-Weiner, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

10 A sizable number of these scholars went as far as to propose an alternative to the IHRA WDA in the form of the Jerusalem Declaration of Antisemitism: https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/, accessed September 8th 2023.

11 Rights groups urge UN not to adopt IHRA anti-Semitism definition, Al Jazeera, 4th April 2023. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/4/4/rights-groups-urge-un-not-to-adopt-ihra- anti-semitism-definition, accessed 8th September 2023.

12 First-ever: 40+ Jewish groups worldwide oppose equating antisemitism with criticism of Israel, Jewish Voice for Peace. https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/2018/07/first-ever- 40-jewish-groups-worldwide-oppose-equating-antisemitism-with-criticism-of-israel/ #english, accessed 8th September 2023

13 13Report of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume, to the UN General Assembly, Combating Glorification of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, UN Doc. A/77/512, 2022. p. 14. https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2F77%2F512&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False, accessed 8th September 2023.

14 European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Steinitz, B., Stoller, K., Poensgen, D. et al., Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, Publications Office, 2021. p. 6.

document is to provide guidelines for the material implementation of the IHRA WDA on an institutional level. According to the handbook, these guidelines could be used: (1) in training programs of law enforcement agencies and the judiciary; (2) to influence the foreign policy of EU Member States; (3) to decide which Human Rights Organizations should receive government funding; (4) to write the curricula and codes of conduct of educational institutions in compliance with IHRA WDA.[15] The scope of these guidelines should already give an idea of the large scale implications that could arise by misusing the WDA to marginalize those who are critical of Israel.

A strong indication of the tangibility of this risk comes from the fact that three out of nine contributors to the handbook (Michael Whine, Andrew Baker and the already mentioned Mark Weitzman) are affiliated with pro-Israel advocacy groups (World Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee and Simon Wiesenthal Center respectively). These organizations routinely equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism and have used specious accusations of antisemitism to smear international institutions (including the EU) who were holding Israel accountable for its violations of international law.[16] And while political affiliation of some drafters may not necessarily result in a biased document, the evidence examined in the following paragraphs suggests otherwise.

The handbook consists of two main sections, one dedicated to illustrate in detail the IHRA WDA and its 'illustrative examples', and the other one which provides guidelines to policymakers and institution. Combined they constitute an effective mechanism to further pro-Israel advocacy within the institutions of EU Member States. The 'illustrative examples' are used to frame legitimate criticism of Israel as antisemitic and provide the justification to implement the policies recommended by the handbook, which in turn are aimed at discouraging such criticism on a practical level.

The following paragraphs will examine Example 7 as presented in the EU Commission's handbook and use it as a case study to illustrate in detail how this process takes place and the dire consequences it has on human rights and freedom of speech.

4. Example 7: is calling Israel a 'racist endeavor' antisemitic?

4.1. A threat to self-determination?

The seventh illustrative example of contemporary forms of antisemitism provided by the IHRA reads: "Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.".[17] As for any other of the illustrative examples, the EU Commission's handbook provides additional commentary, which states that: "Denying the Jewish people the right to self-determination and a national homeland is antisemitic because it denies the religious and historic ties of Jews to the land of Israel. It evades the fact that the State of Israel was founded in 1948 based on Resolution 181 (II) of the United Nations General Assembly. Moreover, asserting that a country is a racist endeavour, by portraying ambivalent aspects of modern statehood in a demonizing manner exclusive to the State of Israel, is an attempt to undermine the international legitimacy of a country."[18]

None of these arguments hold up to scrutiny. The first logical fallacy of this statement is to imply that the State of Israel is the only possible form in which the right to self-determination of the Jewish people can be fulfilled, while in actuality this fundamental right does not have to be realized through ethnic statehood. Minorities within multinational states can still achieve self-determination through a legal framework that grants them some degree of territorial autonomy and the safeguard of their cultural heritage.[19]

For example a possible way in which the Jewish people's right to self-determination may be expressed is in the form of a single binational democratic state in Palestine, in which both Jews and Arabs enjoy the same rights. This solution was repeatedly proposed as an alternative to the UN Partition Plan of 1947, which recommended the formation of two separate states.[20] In addition to this, one may argue that the right to self-determination should not be enjoyed by denying the same right to another people. There is substantial scholarly consensus in support of the notion that Israel's very essence is built on the dispossession of the

---

15 Ibid. pp. 38-39.

16 Stern-Weiner, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

17 European Commission, p. 14.

18 Ibid.

19 Tilley, Virginia, *Beyond Occupation: Apartheid, Colonialism and International Law in the Occupied Palestinian Territories,* Pluto Press, 2012. pp. 44-46.

20 Ibid., 66.

indigenous Arab population and therefore incompatible with its right to self-determination.[21] Few would argue that denouncing apartheid South Africa was akin to denying the white population's right to a national homeland. And even if, as pointed out in the EU Commission's handbook, the Jewish people (unlike the South African white settlers) have religious and historic ties to the land of Israel, the idea that these ties would entitle settlers from the Jewish diaspora to the exclusive use of the land at the expense of the indigenous Arab population (whose religious and historical ties to the same land are also worthy of consideration) is highly disputable.

4.2. Is UN Resolution 181 beyond dispute?

The document makes another flimsy attempt to put Israel's legitimacy beyond criticism when it invokes United Nation General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) of 1947 as some sort of silver bullet, while there is solid ground to denounce the UN Partition as an abuse of power towards the Palestinian people.

It has been argued that the resolution was in contrast with the UN Charter, as it imposed a form of government against the wishes of the majority of its inhabitants. Furthermore, it is reasonable to denounce as unfair a partition which granted 55% of the total area of Palestine (including the most economically profitable territories) to a Jewish minority at the time in control of only 7% of the land. Moreover, the UN in 1947 counted only 58 member states (many former colonies had yet to join the organization) and was therefore hardly representative of a global consensus. If that wasn't enough, intrigue, economic blackmail and outright corruption played a significant role in building support for the resolution.[22]

But the main reason why Israel's advocates cannot invoke the UN Partition Resolution as justification for the existence of the Israeli state is the fact the Zionist leaders never respected (nor have ever had the intention to) the borders proposed by the Partition Plan, nor its provision for the establishment of a Palestinian Arab state.[23] One cannot cite a document as an authoritative, indisputable source while cherry picking its content.

4.3. Israel as a racial endeavor: what the evidence says

as antisemitic the notion that Israel is a racist endeavor. This attempt is particularly regrettable considering the overwhelming evidence in support of the accusation.
Firstly, the historical record shows that the state of Israel was established through a premeditated operation of ethnic cleansing.[24]

Secondly, the notion that Israel is a settler colonial state is widely accepted in Academia.[25] But the main reason why the EU Commission Handbook frames as antisemitic the belief that Israel is a racial endeavor, is the growing consensus behind the idea that the Israeli state practices apartheid against the Palestinians. This accusation is supported by scholars, human right organizations, journalists, and even former Jewish Israeli public officials.[26] The most problematic portion of the 7th illustrative Example of Contemporary Forms of Antisemitism (as presented in the EU Commission Handbook) though, is the attempt to frame as antisemitic the notion that Israel is a racist endeavor. This attempt is particularly regrettable considering the overwhelming evidence in support of the accusation.

 And since ethnic cleansing, settler colonialism and apartheid are arguably racial endeavors, all those who associate these concepts with Israel are, according to the EU Commission's handbook, anti-Semites. Following this logic one may claim that Israel's founding father and first prime minister David Ben-Gurion was a rabid anti-Semite, considering that he believed that ethnic cleansing was a necessary step

21 Schechla, Joseph, Ideological Roots of Population Transfer, Third World Quarterly, vol. 14, no. 2, 1993, pp. 239–75. p. 256.; Zreik, Raef. Notes on the Value of Theory: Readings in the Law of Return-A Polemic, Law & Ethics of Human Rights, vol. 2, no. 1, 2008, pp. 1-44. p. 354.; Gordon, Neve, Democracy and Colonialism . Theory and Event, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2010. p. 2.
22 Finkelstein, Norman G., Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History, University of California Press, 2008. pp. 328-329.
23 Ben-Ami, Schlomo, Scars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy, Oxford University Press, 2007. p. 34; Finkelstein, 2008. p. 330.
24 Morris, Benny, Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001, New York, Vintage Books, 2001. pp. 139-140; Ben-Ami, op. cit., pp. 25-26; Schechla, op. cit., pp. 257-258.
25 De Jong, Anne, Zionist hegemony, the settler colonial conquest of Palestine and the problem with conflict: a critical genealogy of the notion of binary conflict, Settler Colonial Studies, 8:3, 364-383, 2018. p. 365
26 Finkelstein, Norman G., Gaza, an Inquest into its Martyrdom, University of California Press, 2021. pp. 394-395; Gordon, Neve, Between Human Rights and Civil Society: The Case of Israel's Apartheid Enablers, Law & Social Inquiry, 2023, 1–27. pp. 5-7.

for the establishment of a Jewish state (and acted accordingly)[27], while framing Zionism as a settler colonial enterprise.[28]

To assert that a rhetorical attack against Israel (as a system of power) is an attack against the Jewish community as a whole, one must conflate the world Jewry with the state of Israel which, according to Example 11 of the IHRA WDA, is in turn antisemitic.[29]

This lack of concern for internal consistency is another indication that the priority of the EU Commission's handbook is to remove evidence based, scholarly accepted criticism from the public debate by stretching the definition of anti-Semitism beyond its reasonable boundaries. The next paragraph will illustrate how this process takes place and its material consequences on freedom of speech, academic freedom and human rights.

5. The practical consequences of the Handbook

5.1. Non legally binding (but...)

After having established that the rationale behind Example 7 is devoid of substance, it is fitting to illustrate how its theoretical framework is successfully used to curb substantial criticism of Israel. On a fundamental level this is how this process unfolds: the IHRA definition is adopted by a public or private institution, referenced as an authoritative, indisputable source and applied without regard for nuance and context (against the recommendations of the same IHRA).[30]

And while the definition is formally non legally binding, this is de facto not completely true. According to attorney, academic and Israel's advocate Kenneth L. Marcus, the IHRA WDA "[...]is legally binding to the extent that it has been made binding by appropriate legal authorities."[31]

If, as recommended by the EU Commission's handbook, law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and judges were to be instructed to use the WDA as a reference for what anti- Semitism is, it is not difficult to imagine the possible legal consequences for those who denounce Israel. A good example in this regard is a report released jointly by the ministries of the interior of the sixteen German states. The document (whose alleged goal is to instruct law enforcement agencies on how to deal with antisemitism) explicitly references the IHRA WDA, frames hostility towards Israel as inherently antisemitic[32] and goes as far as using Amnesty International's "Israel's Apartheid against Palestinians" report as textbook example of antisemitic publication.[33] This, combined with the overzealous attitude of German police and judiciary towards pro-Palestine activists and organizations, should raise concern for the freedom of expression and assembly of those who oppose Israel.[34]

5.2. A threat to academic freedom

But even when the IHRA WDA enforcement does not take the form of state repression, the undetermined legal status of the definition makes it prone to abuse. In the words of academic Rebecca Ruth Gould: " When a new legal form is introduced without having acquired legal legitimacy, the rule of law is compromised. Uncertain of their legal obligations, institutions overcompensate for the law's ambiguity through preemptive censorship."[35]

This is particularly evident when it comes to academic freedom. The mechanism of financial

27 Petersen-Overton, K.J., Schmidt, J.D., Hersh, J., "Retooling Peace Philosophy: A Critical Look at Israel's Separation Strategy.", in Carter, C.C., Kumar, R. (eds) *Peace Philosophy in Action,* Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2010. p. 48.

28 Schechla, p. 258.

29 European Commission, p. 14.

30 Ibid. p. 9.

31 Marcus, p. 4.

32 *Innenministärkonferenz, Abschlussbericht der Bund-LänderArbeitsgruppe zur Thematik „Handlungsbedarf aufgrund zunehmender antisemitischer und antiisraelischer Hetze vor dem Hintergrund des Nahost-Konflikts*, 2022. pp. 7. https://www.innenministerkonferenz.de/IMK/DE/termine/to-beschluesse/2022-12-02/ anlage-zu-top-41.pdf? blob=publicationFile&v=2, accessed 12th September 2023.

33 Ibid, p. 12

34 Shakir, Omar, Berlin Bans Nakba Demonstrations, Human Rights Watch, 22nd May 2022. https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/20/berlin-bans-nakba-day-demonstrations, accessed 12th September 2023; Hebh Jamal, Palestinians in Germany fear new level of repression after Nakba Day crackdown, +972 Magazine, 21st May 2022. https://www.972mag.com/berlin-palestinians-nakba-protest-police/, accessed 12th September 2022.

35 Gould, Rebecca Ruth, L*egal Form and Legal Legitimacy: The IHRA Definition of Antisemitism As a Case Study in Censored Speech,* Law Culture and the Humanities, Forthcoming, 2018. p. 20.

blackmail has been particularly effective in forcing educational institution to adopt the WDA and implement it indiscriminately.[36] The numerous acts of censorship and deplatforming which already took place in European universities are a sign that this strategy is bearing fruit.[37] In this atmosphere of suspicion and intimidation, educational institutions intentioned to hire researchers, host events or include curricula sympathetic towards the Palestinian cause would do that knowing that their public image and financial security would be at stake.

But not content to make Academia adhere to the dominant pro-Israel narrative, the handbook goes so far as to have educational material evaluated against the WDA.[38] If this provision were to be fully implemented, every textbook which does not whitewash the Israeli reality could be rewritten or outright removed from the curricula, thus preventing students from learning the Palestinian perspective. The disturbing case of the German-Israeli Textbook Commission is illustrative in this regard.[39]

5.3. A threat to freedom of speech

The dire consequences of implementing the IHRA WDA are not limited to the academic environment. The Working Definition of Antisemitism has already been used to target journalists in mainstream media. In 2022, German news network Deutsche Welle fired six Arab employees on the basis of the IHRA WDA. Even if the action was found illegitimate by a labor court, the prospect of being fired and having to restore their reputation through costly and time consuming lawsuits could be enough to discourage most journalists from openly supporting the Palestinian cause.[40]

Even more pernicious is the attempt to use the WDA to remove criticism of Israel from social media. While the EU Commission's handbook does not explicitly call for censorship, it claims that civil society organizations can use the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism to "provide a framework for monitoring online antisemitism and engaging with social media companies".[41] While this phrasing may sound relatively harmless, it is difficult not to interpret it as a reference to the effort made by Israel's advocates to have social media companies adopt the definition.[42] The Israeli government is notorious for using troll farms to boost its public image online and employs even high school students for this task.[43] Were social media companies to comply with Israel's supporters demands, it would be easier for the Israeli state to control the narrative by having all inconvenient content removed from the major online platforms (no matter how authoritative the source of that content may be).[44]

5.4. A threat to human rights

And since human rights organizations are perceived as the main threat against the 'legitimacy' of the Israeli state,[45] they are also targeted by the EU Commission's handbook. In this regard the document recommends a "Control mechanism to avoid funding for projects". And while it may at first glance seem fitting (no one should fund Jew-hating groups), this recommendation may very easily be used (on the basis of Example 7) to target organizations, civil society initiatives or humanitarian projects which openly denounce Israel's occupation and apartheid.

Particularly vulnerable to this initiative would be the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS)

36 Marcus, *op. cit.*, p. 19; Deckers J & Coulter J., "What Is Wrong with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Definition of Antisemitism?", in *Res Publica*, 28(4):733- 752, 2022. p. 735.

37 European Legal Support Center, S*uppressing Palestinian Rights Advocacy through the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism*, 6th June 2023. pp. 26-36. https://elsc.support/news/breaking-new-report-reveals-human-rights-violations-resulting-antisemitic groups and from-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism, accessed 12th September 2023.

38 European Commission, p. 39.

39 Hebh, Jamal, "How Palestine became a 'forbidden word' in German high schools", *+972 Magazine,* 5th December 2022. https://www.972mag.com/germany-education-israel- narrative-palestinians/ accessed 12th September 2023.

40 Alsaafin, Linah, "German court rules Palestinian ex-DW journalist sacking unlawful", *Al Jazeera*, 5th September 2022. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/9/5/german-court- rules-palestinian-ex-dw-journalist-sacking-unlawful, accessed 12th September 2023.

41 European Commission, p.33.

42 Deckers & Coulter, p. 744.

43 Buxbaum, Jessica, "Israel's latest hasbara scheme enlist high school students as trolls against Palestine", *MintPress News*, 11th May 2023, https://www.mintpressnews.com/israels-teen-troll-army-hasbara-scheme/284626/, accessed 12th September 2023.

44 Gordon, Neve, "Redefining anti-Semitism on Facebook", *Al Jazeera*, 22nd September 2020, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/9/22/redefining-anti-semitism-on-facebook, accessed 12th September 2023.

45 Gordon, Neve, "Human Rights as a Security Threat", in *Law & Soc'y Rev*, 48: 311-344, 2014. p. 322.

movement, whose stated goal is to apply non violent means to pressure Israel into compliance with international law.[46]

Rather than being a single entity, BDS is a network of civil society associations aimed at promoting human rights, similarly to the South African anti-Apartheid movement.[47] Its growing popularity has urged the Israeli government (which perceives it as an existential threat) and its advocates to promote legislation banning support to the movement.[48] While these efforts have not yet been successful in the EU, an anti-BDS resolution (based on the IHRA WDA) was passed by the German Parliament in 2019. The resolution (even if not legally binding) openly calls for defunding and banning from public spaces any organization which shares the objectives of the BDS campaign[49] and has been successfully implemented since.[50] Considering that the BDS movement is aimed at building wide support across the civil society (including individuals and organizations not directly involved with the Palestinian struggle) the reputational and financial risks involved are likely to discourage many from endorsing the campaign.

The most prominent human rights NGOs are not immune from this kind of attacks. While answering to a question submitted by members of the European Parliament, the EU Commission framed as antisemitic the 2022 Amnesty International's report denouncing Israel's Apartheid. The only argument provided to dismiss the 280 pages evidence based report was the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism.[51] And while Human Rights Organizations are routinely denounced as antisemitic by Israel and its advocates,[52] seeing the same accusation being endorsed by the highest EU institution is a sign that the efforts to silence Israel's critics take place at every level.

5.5. Implication for foreign policy

Arguably the most dangerous consequences of the EU Commission Handbook are those related to foreign policy. Thanks to the support of the Western world (including the EU) Israel has always enjoyed a privileged position on the global stage. Whereas advocates spread the narrative that Israel is routinely singled out and vilified by international institutions, the opposite is true.[53] Even if the EU acknowledges that Israel's occupation and settlements policies are illegal under international law,[54] it has also opposed any could pressure the Israeli state into compliance.[55] Nevertheless in 2014 it took the EU just a few months to impose substantial retaliatory measures against the Russian Federation due to its illegal annexation of Crimea.[56] Moreover, the EU justifies the imposition of draconian sanctions[57] against North Korea's nuclear program with the upholding of the "non- proliferation and disarmament regime"[58] but at the same time has never addressed Israel's clandestine nuclear arsenal which counts up to 200 warheads.[59]

Not content with the current support enjoyed by Israel from the EU, the EU Commission's handbook appears resolved to increase it significantly. There are three main ways in which this can take place. Firstly, all the aforementioned measures aimed at cutting off the inconvenient depictions of Israel from the public debate may arguably boost the public image of the Israeli state. And with an Israel-friendly electorate,

46 McMahon, S. F., "The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign: contradictions and challenges", in *Race & Class,* 55(4), 65–81, 2014. p. 68.

47 Ibid., p. 66.

48 Gordon, 2023. p. 14.

49 Deutscher Bundestag, Drucksache 19/10191, 15th May 2019, https://dserver.bundestag.de/btd/19/101/1910191.pdf, accessed 13th September 2023.

50 European Legal Support Center, 2023. p.22

51 Geddie, Eve, "EU needs to acknowledge the reality of Israeli apartheid", in *Amnesty International,* 20th March 2023, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/03/eu-needs- to-acknowledge-the-reality-of-israeli-apartheid/, accessed 13th September 2023.

52 Gordon, 2023. p. 7.

53 Finkelstein, 2008. p. 64.

54 https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/israelpalestine-statement-spokesperson-settlement- expansion-and-situation-east-jerusalem_en, accessed 13th September 2023.

55 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-8-2016-005122-ASW_EN.html, accessed 13th September 2023.

56 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia- over-ukraine/, accessed 13th September 2023.

57 Smith, Hazel, "The ethics of United Nations sanctions on North Korea: effectiveness, necessity and proportionality", in *Critical Asian Studies,* 52:2, 182-203, 2020. p. 14.

58 https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/history-north-korea/, accessed 13th September 2023.

59 Walt, Stephen M. & Mearsheimer, John, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007. pp. 34-35.

politicians are more likely to support policies favorable to Israel without losing popularity.

Secondly, the handbook suggests to use the IHRA WDA as "guiding reference at the Foreign Ministry" and for the "condemnation of antisemitic incidents related foreign policy".[60] Considering facts illustrated in the previous paragraphs, it is clear that these words may result in the condemnation of every statement, decision or action regarding Israel's occupation or apartheid. It is easy to imagine that on the basis of the WDA, EU Member states would be compelled to reject any UN resolution or human rights report unwelcome to the Israeli government. A possible example of this trend is the United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/77/400 of November 14th 2022, which demanded accountability for the Israeli illegal practices in the occupied territories. Of the 25 EU Member States which adopted the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, only 5 supported the resolution.[61]

Lastly, the Handbook states that the implementation of the WDA has occurred through "public acceptance by major political parties".[62] The adoption by a major political party implies that the definition can be used to marginalize or outright expel from the party those who openly embrace the Palestinian cause. This ensures that every position of power within the party will be held by individuals who are more likely to support policies beneficial to the state of Israel (and detrimental to the Palestinians). The case of the British Labour Party is extremely indicative in this regard.[63]

5.6. A threat to the peace process

While the European Union denounces Israeli settlements as illegal and an obstacle to the two- state solution, this has not deterred Israel from persisting in its colonization efforts. The construction of settlements is aimed at establishing a permanent presence in the occupied territories and preventing Palestinian efforts to reclaim them in the future.[64]

With the implementation of the EU Commission's handbook, Israel would have even less incentives to relinquish the illegally occupied territories and pursue a viable two-state solution endorsed by the majority of the international community.

Another way in which the large scale adoption of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism hinders the peace process is by preventing alternative solutions to the conflict from being taken into consideration. According to political scientist Virginia Tilley, the main reason why peace negotiations have so far proved unproductive is the fact the they failed to address the root causes of the conflict, namely colonialism and apartheid. If Tilley's theory were to be true (and the historical record shows that it may be the case)[65], by framing any talk about Israel's apartheid and colonial practices as hate speech, the EU Commission Handbook may contribute to the continuation of the conflict. Without seriously considering alternative solutions, EU Member States will persist in a diplomatic approach that so far has failed to bring a just and lasting peace in the region.

Conclusion

The smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion, but allow very lively debate within that spectrum – even encourage the more critical and dissident views. That gives people the sense that there's free thinking going on, while all the time the presuppositions of the system are being reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate. (Noam Chomsky, The Common Good, 1998)

As a thought experiment, it is possible to imagine that one day the EU Commission could publish a handbook with policy recommendations on how to combat Sinophobia (a prejudice in many ways akin to antisemitism)[66] on an institutional level. Even if anti-Chinese sentiment is objectively on the rise,[67] how likely

---

60 European Commission, p. 39.

61 https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/A.77.400_141122.pdf, accessed 14th September 2023.

62 Ibid. p. 7.

63 Philo, Greg & Broder, David, "How Labour Became "Antisemitic"", *Jacobin*, 10th October 2019. https://jacobin.com/2019/10/labour-party-antisemitism-claims-jeremy-corbyn, accessed 14th September 2023.

64 Gordon, Neve, I*srael's Occupation*, University of California Press, 2008. p. 216; Petersen- Overton, op. cit., p. 8; Tilley, op. cit., p. 297.

65 Finkelstein, 2008. pp. 338-341.

66 Smith, Blake, "Indonesians Hate the Chinese, Because They are Jewish", *Tablet*, 17th April 2018. https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/arts-letters/articles/indonesians-hate-the- chinese-because-they-are-jewish, accessed 14th September 2023.

67 Zhang, Y., Lin, H., Wang, Y. et al., "Sinophobia was popular in Chinese language communities on Twitter during the early

would it be for staunch supporters of the Chinese Communist Party to play a role in drafting the document? How likely would it be for EU institutions to dismiss as sinophobic any substantial criticism of Beijing's practices towards minorities in Xinjiang (on the basis that such criticism 'demonizes' the Chinese state)? Even if harsh political criticism is connected to the rise of sinophobia,[68] no EU leader would deem it reason enough to curtail the freedom of speech of its citizens. For some reasons the EU institutions have no issues with this when it comes to Israel.

As the evidence examined it this article shows, the Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism is an extremely flawed document, drafted with the clear goal of shielding the State of Israel from evidence based criticism and accountability on the international stage.

By uncritically accepting and actively reinforcing Israeli government talking points, the EU Commission has proved itself an invaluable tool for the hasbara, Israel's information warfare campaign waged at its critics. According to Chas W. Freeman, former president of the Middle East Policy Council, hasbara aims to "determine the way issues are defined by the media, the intelligentsia, and social networks; establish the parameters of politically correct discourse; delegitimize both critics and their arguments; and shape the common understanding and interpretation of the results of international negotiations.".[69] Every single one of these things perfectly applies to broad adoption of the IHRA WDA promoted by the EU Commission's handbook.

By deciding to enforce this controversial, highly inadequate definition of antisemitism, the EU has hijacked a righteous cause for its own political gain. According to many experts, antisemitism should be contrasted by using a universal, human rights based approach rather than by focusing on a single (flawed) definition.[70]

As shown in this article, the content of the Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA Working definition of Antisemitism does not only affect the individual freedoms of EU citizens; it has the potential of significantly worsen the existence of those who suffer Israel's disregard for international law and jeopardize the efforts for a just peace in Palestine. For these reasons it should be utterly rejected.

Bibliography

Ben-Ami, Schlomo, S*cars of War, Wounds of Peace: The Israeli-Arab Tragedy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007.

Deckers J. & Coulter J., "What Is Wrong with the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's Definition of Antisemitism?", in *Res Publica*, 28(4):733-752, 2022.

De Jong, Anne, "Zionist hegemony, the settler colonial conquest of Palestine and the problem with conflict: a critical genealogy of the notion of binary conflict", in *Settler Colonial Studies*, 8:3, 364-383, 2018.

European Commission, *Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers,* Steinitz, B., Stoller, K., Poensgen, D. et al., *Handbook for the practical use of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism,* Publications Office, 2021.

European Legal Support Center, "Suppressing Palestinian Rights Advocacy through the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism", 6th June 2023. https://elsc.support/news/breaking-new-report-reveals-human-rights-violations-resulting-from-ihra-definition-of-antisemitism, accessed 12th September 2023.

Finkelstein, Norman G., Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History, University of California Press, 2008.

Finkelstein, Norman G., *Gaza, an Inquest into its Martyrdom*, University of California Press, California, 2021.

Gordon, Neve, *Israel's Occupation, U*niversity of California Press, California, 2008.

COVID-19 pandemic", in *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 488, 2023. p. 2

68 Nguyen, Viet Than & Wong, Janelle, "Bipartisan political rhetoric about Asia leads to anti- Asian violence here", *Washington Post,* 19th March 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/atlanta-shooting-political-rhetoric-violence/ 2021/03/19/f882f8e8-88b9-11eb-8a8b-5cf82c3dffe4_story.html, accessed 14th September 2023.

69 https://mepc.org/speeches/hasbara-and-control-narrative-element-strategy, accessed 14th September 2023.

70 Gould, Ruth, "The IHRA definition of antisemitism: Defining antisemitism by erasing Palestinians", in *The Political Quarterly,* 91(4), 825–831, 2020. p. 830; 128 scholars warn: 'Don't trap the United Nations in a vague and weaponized definition of antisemitism', EUObserver, 3rd November 2022, https://media.euobserver.com/9e86df02ddf67c6046d190b65e4380df.pdf, accessed 14th September 2023.

Gordon, Neve, "Democracy and Colonialism", in *Theory and Event*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2010.

Gordon, Neve, "Human Rights as a Security Threat", in *Law & Soc'y Rev*, 48: 311-344, 2014.

Gordon, Neve, "Between Human Rights and Civil Society: The Case of Israel's Apartheid Enablers", in *Law & Social Inquiry*, 1–27, 2023.

Gould, Rebecca Ruth, *Legal Form and Legal Legitimacy: The IHRA Definition of Antisemitism As a Case Study in Censored Speech, Law Culture and the Humanities,* Forthcoming, 2018.

Gould, Ruth, "The IHRA definition of antisemitism: Defining antisemitism by erasing Palestinians", in *The Political Quarterly*, 91(4), 825–831, 2020.

Marcus, Kenneth L., "The Legally Binding Character of The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Anti-Semitism", in *Lewis & Clark Law Review,* Vol. 27, No. 4, Forthcoming, 2023.

McMahon, S. F., "The Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign: contradictions and challenges", in *Race & Class*, 55(4), 65–81, 2014.

Morris, Benny, *Righteous Victims: A History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-2001,* Vintage Books, New York, 2001.

Petersen-Overton, K.J., Schmidt, J.D., Hersh, J., "Retooling Peace Philosophy: A Critical Look at Israel's Separation Strategy", in: Carter, C.C., Kumar, R. (eds) P*eace Philosophy in Action*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2010.

Report of the Special Rapporteur on Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, E. Tendayi Achiume, to the UN General Assembly, *Combating Glorification of Nazism, Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance,* UN Doc. A/77/512, 2022. https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A %2F77%2F512&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False, accessed 14th September 2023.

Living the British Dream

Francisca Duma, III, Business Administration
Coordinator: PhD Associate Professor Mihaela Culea

My name is Francisca and currently I'm a student at "Vasile Alecsandri" University of Bacău, Faculty of Economic Sciences.

Previously I lived in England for 6 years and I want to share that experience with everyone that wants to make "the move".

I had the opportunity to live in Cambridge and to feel that student vibe (even though I wasn't a student), as Cambridge is known for its prestigious universities and historic charm and is a dream destination for many students from all over the world. When I moved there, I had time to explore so I started asking around about the documents necessary to become a student. Every university has a counsellor which helps you with whatever you need, answer questions and also guide you, if you're interested to start.

As a diverse and multicultural city there's plenty to explore, in your free time, from its museums and galleries (which by the way, are free) to its street music and nightlife. With so much to see and do, it is hard to pick out favourites, so here's a list of highlights:

-Walking around the historical site (or cycling as everyone does);

-Punting on the River Cam;

-Relaxing in the open spaces such as Midsummer Common and Parker's Piece, also the Botanic Gardens;

-Going up Great St. Mary's Church Tower to see Cambridge from above;

-Discovering the Fitzwilliam Museum and other museums;

-Visiting the King's College Chapel (the most visited attraction by tourists);

-Visiting the Corpus Clock known as the Grasshopper Clock (a large sculptural clock at street level).

If you like shopping, there are two big shopping centres, the Grand Arcade and the Grafton Centre in the middle of the city with lots of designers and high street retailers.

Cambridge is also home to a vast number of independent shops. You'll find all sorts of gems in the city's passageways and squares. The Mill Road area is known for being a hub of indie stores and community events, and King Street tucked away behind the Grand Arcade is well worth a look, too.

One of the key aspects that make Cambridge an excellent place to live and work is the diverse range of industries present here. From cutting-edge technology and world-class research to arts and culture, gastronomy, education, there is something for everyone. The city thrives on innovation, and being a part of this environment has been truly inspiring.

Let's talk about finding a job. The job market here is dynamic and offers opportunities for various skill sets. Once settled, if you have a visa, especially a student visa, it's easy to find a job, I repeat, only if you have papers. I have friends who told me that with Brexit it's a little bit harder to apply for papers, but it's not impossible. I finished a pedagogical college and I used UK ENIC (https://www.enic.org.uk/) to compare qualifications to the UK education system which gave me a start with my qualifications. All this time, I worked in a Montessori Nursery with a Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Educator (in Romania it was a level 4 degree). I loved every moment of it, as people were always nice and welcoming.

Cambridge is indeed an expensive city but it's definitely worth it. I lived in a 2-bedroom household with 3 other family members, 5 km away from the city centre, so rent (around £2000), bills included, wasn't expensive for us, as we all worked and everyone contributed. Foodwise, we used to make meal plans for a week, shopping for everything at local markets and supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, and Morrisons) but we used to have cheat days and had takeaway delivered as well, because we had a variety of international cuisines to choose from and it was hard not to have any. Owning a car isn't a must in Cambridge because public transport is much more efficient than driving to work or anywhere else, also cycling was a delight for me (not when raining, that's when I used the car). Driving on the right side wasn't tricky, it was easy to adapt.

Whenever we missed home or especially the food, we used to go to Market Square, an outdoor market with food from different countries like Venezuela, Albany, Hungary, Romania and many more.

You can never get bored in a city like Cambridge because there is always an event or a different fair to have fun at, or even just a walk around because there's always something new to see.

Personally, I can say that I enjoyed living in Cambridge and I would always move back.

The Erasmus Experience

Ştefan Strat, II, LEPC
Coordinator: PhD Lecturer Raluca Galița

STUDYING
WORKING
TRAVELLING ABROAD

I. CHIARA - ITALY

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and the university you are currently attending as part of your Erasmus exchange?

Hi, my name is Chiara. I'm a 21-year-old student from Italy, and I'm studying law. Currently I am attending Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, as part of my Erasmus exchange. In my opinion this is a prestigious institution which is known for its strong academic programs and vibrant international community.

What motivated you to participate in the Erasmus exchange program?

Chiara: I've always had a passion for exploring new cultures and gaining international experiences. The Erasmus program offered me the perfect opportunity to combine my love for travel with my academic pursuits. I wanted to immerse myself in a different educational system, meet new people, and broaden my horizons.

How has the experience of studying abroad impacted your academic journey and personal growth?

Chiara: Studying abroad has been a transformative experience for me both academically and personally. It has exposed me to diverse perspectives and approaches, allowing me to gain a deeper understanding of systems beyond my own country. This experience has also challenged me to become more independent, adaptable, and open-minded, as I navigate a new environment and interact with people from various cultural backgrounds.

What were your expectations before coming to Slovakia, and how did they match up with the reality?

Chiara: Before coming to Slovakia, I had high expectations about the rich history, beautiful architecture, and vibrant student life in Bratislava. I was also excited to meet fellow Erasmus students and engage in cultural exchanges. Thankfully, the reality has exceeded my expectations. Bratislava has a fascinating mix of old-world charm and modern energy, and the university has provided ample opportunities for academic growth and intercultural interactions.

Can you share some memorable moments or experiences from your time as an Erasmus student?

Chiara: There have been so many memorable moments during this time. One highlight was attending the Slovakian Law Students Conference, where I had the chance to discuss legal topics with students from different countries. It was enlightening to gain insights into the Slovak legal system and compare it with my knowledge of Italian law. Additionally, exploring the city with my newfound friends, trying traditional Slovak cuisine, and participating in cultural festivals have all created unforgettable memories.

II. ANDREEA - ROMANIA

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and the university you are currently attending as part of your Erasmus exchange?

Andreea: Hi, I'm Andreea, a 22-year-old student from Romania and a student in Political Sciences. I'm currently attending Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, as part of my Erasmus exchange. I can say that Comenius University has excellent programs in social sciences, including political sciences. It offers a dynamic academic environment and provides various opportunities for international students like me to engage in research, seminars, and extracurricular activities.

How have you been able to adapt to a new academic and cultural environment?

Andreea: Adapting to a new academic and cultural environment has been both exciting and challenging. Initially, I familiarized myself with the university's facilities, resources, and academic requirements. I actively

participated in orientation programs and sought guidance from professors and local students. Culturally, I embraced the Slovakian way of life by attending local events, exploring the city, and interacting with Slovakian friends. Being open-minded and willing to step out of my comfort zone has been crucial in adapting to this new environment.

What challenges did you face during your Erasmus exchange, and how did you overcome them?

Andreea: One of the challenges I faced was the language barrier. While many people in Slovakia speak English, I encountered situations where communication was a bit challenging. To overcome this, I enrolled in language classes and made an effort to learn basic Slovak phrases. I also joined language exchange programs where I could practice speaking Slovak with native speakers. Additionally, being away from home and adjusting to a new routine posed some emotional challenges. Regular communication with family and friends, engaging in social activities, and building a support network of fellow Erasmus students helped me navigate these challenges.

Have there been any specific courses, professors, or academic opportunities that have significantly influenced your learning experience?

Andreea: Yes, there have been a few courses and professors that have greatly influenced that. One particular course on Comparative Politics offered valuable insights into different political systems and governance structures across Europe. The professor's expertise and interactive teaching style made the subject come alive. Additionally, participating in research projects and attending guest lectures by renowned scholars has provided me with a deeper understanding of political sciences and allowed me to engage in academic discussions with peers from diverse backgrounds.

In what ways has the Erasmus exchange program broadened your perspectives and understanding of different cultures?

Andreea: This exchange program has been a transformative experience in terms of broadening my perspectives and understanding of different cultures. Interacting with students from various countries has exposed me to diverse viewpoints, cultural practices, and political contexts. Engaging in intercultural activities, such as international dinners and cultural festivals, has deepened my appreciation for the richness and diversity of European cultures. This experience has not only expanded my knowledge but has also made me more culturally sensitive, empathetic, and adaptable.

III. SALMAN - PAKISTAN

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and the university you are currently attending as part of your Erasmus exchange?

Salman: Hello, I'm Salman, a 24-year-old student from Pakistan. I'm currently attending Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia, as part of my Erasmus exchange and as a part of continuing my studies in Philology. Comenius University has a distinguished Faculty of Arts known for its comprehensive literature programs. This university provides a stimulating academic environment, with renowned professors and diverse cultural opportunities for students to explore.

What skills or qualities do you believe you have developed or enhanced through your Erasmus exchange?

Salman: The Erasmus exchange has helped me develop and enhance various skills and qualities. Firstly, my language proficiency has significantly improved as I've had the opportunity to communicate in English and interact with students from different countries. Additionally, my intercultural competence has grown, allowing me to appreciate different perspectives and engage in meaningful discussions. The experience has also fostered my adaptability, independence, and problem-solving skills, as I navigate a new academic system and cultural environment.

Do you have any advice or recommendations for students who are considering participating in the Erasmus program in the future?

Salman: Absolutely! My advice for students considering the Erasmus program is to embrace the experience wholeheartedly. Be open to new cultures, ideas, and ways of learning. Step out of your comfort zone, engage with the local community, and make an effort to build connections with fellow students. Take advantage of the academic and extracurricular opportunities offered by the host university. Finally, remember to balance your academic commitments with exploring the host country and creating lifelong memories.

How do you think this experience will impact your future academic or professional endeavors?

Salman: I believe this Erasmus experience will have a significant impact on my future academic and professional endeavors. Studying literature in an international setting has exposed me to diverse literary traditions, theories, and critical perspectives. This exposure will undoubtedly enrich my understanding of literature and enhance my analytical skills, which will be valuable in my future academic pursuits. Furthermore, the intercultural competencies I've developed will be invaluable in a globalized professional world, as they promote effective communication, collaboration, and understanding across cultural boundaries.

Is there anything else you would like to share about your Erasmus exchange experience?

Salman: I would like to emphasize the importance of seizing every opportunity that comes your way during the Erasmus exchange. Whether it's attending conferences, participating in workshops, or joining student organizations, make the most of your time abroad. Immerse yourself in the local culture, visit historical landmarks, and try traditional cuisine. Engage in intellectual and cultural exchanges with both local and international students. This experience offers a unique chance for personal growth, academic enrichment, and creating lasting friendships.

IV. PROFESSOR LINDA STEYNE - COMENIUS UNIVERSITY BRATISLAVA SLOVAKIA

How has teaching international students, such as Erasmus students, enriched your experience as an educator?

Linda Steyne: International students bring more perspectives to my courses which not only broadens the horizons of our university students – which is one of my objectives as an educator – but also helps me grow, personally and professionally. It may be a bit of cultural knowledge that I didn't realize or know previously, but, as a teacher of future teachers, interacting with groups of students from various countries, cultures, and language groups is so enjoyable for me – and something I want my students to be comfortable with.

In your opinion, what are the main benefits that Erasmus students bring to the classroom and the university community as a whole?

Linda Steyne: They bring themselves, with everything that comprises: culture, language, perspective, knowledge, understanding, personality, talents... All students bring those things to the university they attend, but Erasmus students are an unknown element, often a catalyst to stir up discussions and raise awareness of ideas and perspectives which the home university students wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to learn from.

It is also difficult for someone from one culture to think of others from another culture only in stereotypes after having interacted with and got to know an individual from that culture in their classes. Such international/intercultural activities encourage mutual understanding.

Can you share some memorable experiences or success stories of Erasmus students you have taught in the past?

Linda Steyne: One young man I taught went on Erasmus twice, once during BA studies and again during MA studies. Both times, he chose universities where he could take courses that our programmes weren't strong in. It meant that it took longer for him to finish his studies, but today, he's a full-time Learning

Mentor working with learners with special educational needs at a school in the UK, a position his Erasmus stints helped him get.

What advice or tips do you have for Erasmus students to make the most out of their academic experience and effectively engage with the local culture?

Linda Steyne: Don't always sit with other Erasmus students from your own country. Since you're most likely going to be using English during your stay, don't always fall back on your L1 when you're with colleagues from your home country. Use English. Make an effort to greet and talk to other Erasmus students and the home students. This is difficult, I know, because various cultures interact with newcomers differently. The Slovak culture requires the new person to "push their way" into the group. That's very different from the US culture, which reaches out to newcomers (usually) and invites them in. I'd like to see more of our home students reach out, but I don't see that happening.

How do you see the Erasmus program impacting the overall academic and personal growth of students who participate in it?

Linda Steyne: I'm not sure it's about "overall academic growth" at all (except if it's like the case of the student I mentioned earlier who added to his academic profile through Erasmus stays). But international activities like Erasmus make a person grow both in depth and reaching forward. Meeting and working with others from outside your own culture as you live somewhere you're not familiar with helps you grow in confidence, independence, even time management. It motivates you to be self-motivated, to be proactive and take the initiative. You learn to be more flexible and creative as you seek to solve problems that arise and cooperate with others who do not come from the same culture. Those personality and character traits that are developed via Erasmus and other international/intercultural activities, not only benefit you when you return to your home university, they also make you much attractive to employers after graduation.

Programmes and activities like Erasmus are a win-win situation for both the sending and receiving universities but ultimately, there's an extra "win" for the student who will benefit throughout their entire life because they were fortunate enough to have such an incredible learning opportunity.