

# **Out of the Prison of Memory. Nations and Future**

Edited by

VLADIMER LUARSABISHVILI

NEW VISION UNIVERSITY PRESS

This book demonstrates the main peculiarities of nations related to *memory* and *future*: the notion of *historical truth* and its relations to *memory* and *literature*, on the one hand, and the importance of the future for the survival of the nation, on the other hand. The monograph offers the questions of individual experience, such as feminism and migration in this respect; and finally, the possibilities of historical reconstruction based on the documentary and non-documentary sources are overviewed in the publication.

New Vision University Press  
1a Evgeni Mikeladze Str, 0159, Tbilisi, Georgia  
[www.newvision.ge](http://www.newvision.ge)

Information on this title: <http://newvision.ge/en/publications>

First published 2020

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ISBN 978-9941-9619-9-1

# Contents

<i>Contributors</i>	IV
<i>Introduction: Out of the Prison of Memory - Nations and Future</i> VLADIMER LUARSABISHVILI	1
<b>Part I: Nations and Future: Historical Truth, Memory and Literature</b>	
Historical Truth Contrasted with Individual Memory and Communication Memory KRZYSZTOF POLIT	3
Nations and Memory: The Importance of the Future and Acting as if What Really Happened Had Not Happened GERARDO LÓPEZ SASTRE	30
Writing Memory in Conflict and Post-Conflict: Hernán Valdés' <i>Tejas Verdes</i> TOMÁS ALBALADEJO	53
<b>Part II: Individual experiences: Feminism and Migration</b>	
Feminism during the Period of the Spanish Transition to Democracy: Lidia Falcón O'Neill MARTA NOGUEROLÉS JOVÉ	68
Edward W. Said (1935 – 2003) or the Critic towards the Orient: The Art of Refurbishing the Conflict through Cultural Rhetoric EUGENIO-ENRIQUE CORTÉS-RAMÍREZ, JUAN CARLOS GÓMEZ ALONSO	82
American Dream or American Experience: Being a Foreigner in Praxis and in Literary Theory PETER STEINER	123
<b>Part III: Reconstructing History: Documentary, and Non-Documentary Sources</b>	
The Theory and Practice of the Literature of Memory JAVIER SÁNCHEZ ZAPATERO	137
Reconstructing History: Documentary and Non-Documentary Sources VLADIMER LUARSABISHVILI	150

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*Introduction: Out of the Prison of Memory –  
Nations and Future*

VLADIMER LUARSABISHVILI

*Out of the prison of memory. Nations and futures* is a result of the seminar “Cultural Memory and Formation of Public Opinion in the Second Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe” organized by me and my colleagues from the School of Politics and Diplomacy at New Vision University (Tbilisi, Georgia). The papers presented by investigators from Spain and Poland are published here together with the essays of other colleagues which did not participate in the seminar but kindly accepted our invitation to make their contribution to the monograph thus enriching it with the different and original focus of their studies. In its actual form the book expands the range of opinions and conclusions represented.

Our intention was to demonstrate the polifacetic nature of *memory*, on the one hand, and of *future*, on the other. The wide array of approaches featured in this collection is conditioned to demonstrate the close relation between the above-mentioned notions. The essays presented in this monograph are divided into three parts, being less chronological and more thematic.

Part I offers three chapters on Historical truth, Memory and Literature. Professor Krzysztof Polit from Maria Curie Skłodowska University (Poland) analyses the three types of memory employed in historical analysis: individual historical memory, communication memory and cultural memory, concluding that “[...] individual historical memory can be trusted regarding the general course of the relevant events, while the details very often become blurred or completely distorted. It is applicable even more so, naturally, to the communication memory.” Professor Gerardo López Sastre from the University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain) discusses “the philosophical meaning of Europe”, or the kind of “ideal European political system we should try to build”, summarizing that “The problem with the past is that memory can act as a prison that does not allow us to create a better future.” Professor Tomás Albaladejo from the Autonomous University of Madrid investigates Hernán Valdés’ *Tejas Verdes* “from the point of view of Cultural Rhetoric as to its discursive



constitution taking into account the goals of persuading and convincing” concluding that “A cultural-rhetorical network is established in post-conflict discourses set up by the recollection achieved by authors and also by readers, and a cultural-rhetorical communicative code is activated to support the connection between them.”

Part II includes three chapters on *Individual experience*: Professor Marta Nogueroles Jové from the Autonomous University of Madrid describes the Feminism during the period of transition to democracy in Spain on the example of the figure of Lidia Falcón O’Neill; Professors Eugenio–Enrique Cortés–Ramírez (University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain) and Juan Carlos Gómez Alonso (Autonomous University of Madrid, Spain) based on the factors of textuality and intertextuality discuss the art of refurbishing the Orient through the Cultural Rhetoric of the Conflict from Edward W. Said’s point of view; finally, Professor Peter Steiner from the University of Pennsylvania investigates the question of emigration to the US based on his own personal experience arguing that “curiosity was the major motivation of my decision to cross the Atlantic as a refugee. The visit turned into a permanent stay after I was able to join – as an instructor in Slavic studies – the local “experience industry”, turning into a broker of the East European experience for American youth.”

Part III contains two chapters on *Historical reconstruction*: one is authored by Professor Javier Sánchez Zapatero from the University of Salamanca and describes the theory and practice of the literature of memory, and the other is authored by me, editor of this monograph, which studies the role of documentary and non-documentary sources in the reconstruction of history.

As an editor, I would like to thank all authors for their kind participation – I indicate here my sincere debt to them for their encouragement with this project.

I am also greatly indebted to Ms. Nana Grigalashvili for translating some of the essays in English.

## **Part I**

### **Nations and Future: Historical Truth, Memory and Literature**

# Historical Truth Contrasted with Individual Memory and Communication Memory

KRZYSZTOF POLIT

**Abstract.** The first part of the article contains general reflections regarding the place of the time phenomenon, the past and the nature of history in philosophy. The second part of the article analyses the three types of memory employed in historical analysis: individual historical memory, communication memory and cultural memory. In the third part the author attempts to substantiate the thesis that reaching the historical truth regarded as reconstruction of what really took place in the past – only two types of memory of the given three are of importance – individual memory and communication memory. Cultural memory, in contrast, is governed by completely different objectives than those of accurate reconstruction of historical facts.

**Keywords:** historical memory, extermination of Jews, Poland.

## 1. The past in the philosophical reflection

Time is one of the most fascinating philosophical categories, nature of which, natural sciences attempt to clarify, yet, it does not imply that they are able to formulate and explain this phenomenon in all its aspects. However, as in the case of mathematical and natural sciences, they remain helpless the moment they are confronted with the phenomenon of a human and his life. Therefore, little we will learn about the “human dimension of time” from physicists’ research, perhaps a little more through psychologists’ research, presumably because the latter is indisputably strictly related to the phenomenon of the human. Still, philosophical presentation of the time phenomenon only slightly reminds the one which is characteristic for psychology – not interested in time itself but rather in the functioning of memory. It focuses on functioning or operating of memory, but it does not focus on its essence, which, since the times of Plato’s *Theaetetus*, invariably stays the domain of the philosophical considerations.

In that dialogue Socrates asks the question which marks the beginning of the history of the philosophy – the history which should be clearly separated from the philosophy of history, the discipline originated by St. Augustine. That question can be found in the section 163d: “(...) for a man who has once come to know something and still preserves a memory of it, not to know just that thing that he remembers at the moment when he remembers it ? This is, perhaps, rather a long-winded way of putting the question. I mean : Can a man who has become acquainted with something and remembers it, not know it?” (Plato, 2002 : 163d).

In other words, can we talk about something what was present but does not exist any longer? At that point, it is the very moment where memory begins - this paradoxically, aporetic character of memory was pointed out by Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 2000: 17-20) – namely, which concerns something what does not exist. It is hardly probable not to admit that if one of the most difficult and the most vital philosophical issues, would be the question on the ontic character of the present reality – question, with which also quantum physics struggles, then how much more complex would be the issue concerned with the existence status of the past reality – the reality which, from the point of view of non-human world in which everything continues to exist or grows in a continuous manner, seems to be an absurdity. In this case, the absurdity is a result of colliding of the two diametrically different realities – one of the human world and of the non-human one.

The latter, luckily, is gradable and if we assume that human existence is the point of reference here, then except for being of a human, there are other beings more or less similar to the human one. That phenomenon will facilitate to reduce the feeling of absurdity occurring when attempting to solve ontological questions on what is considered to be existing. The existence of an inanimate world is here one of the closest to the Eleatic concept of being, which, to simplify, can be described as a constant being. The wonder of life, hence the wonder of rebirth introduces to such understood being some confusion; as it is entangled in the category of time the more the category of changeability begins to play an ever greater role. The continual being

becomes here cyclicity and therefore Hannah Arendt is right when she turns from Plato and Eleatics towards Aristotle, as the concept of species explains a lot here, since procreation assures its perpetual existence (Aristotle, 1988: 83; 1981: 59-60; 1964: 170 ). Even though the issue here concerns living organisms, from the ontological point of view, and from the point of view of the analysis herein, it is better to define their presence as “existing in time”. Changeability here is confined to its minimum as the existing of the genus means mutual renewal of its particular, non-individualised representatives, to which should be added the evolutionary changes of the genera in question. However, it is still far from the history since plants and even animals exist as members of the genus not as individual creatures. Here again, it should be acknowledged that Arendt is right, when she points out that the sources of recognizable history should be sought in the moment when from the biological life (ζωή) emerges the individual life (βίος). That is the diametrical change which is sought-after, where this circular movement, characteristic for inanimate world where when something was moving, was moving only in a circle, and the cyclicity characteristic for animate non-human reality are interrupted. “This individual life is distinguished from all other things by the rectilinear course of its movement, which, so to speak, cuts through the circular movements of biological life” (Arendt, 1994: 51).

On the ontological level, existing and repeatability ends here, and what begins only seemingly proceeds from the past, through the present towards the future but in essence begins and lasts for a moment in the now whose past and future are just modified. Reality described as such is no longer entangled in timeliness but it is immersed in it, and the time itself of no accidental character but becomes immanent with such reality. St. Augustine expresses it as follows: “Certainly there is no one who is not nearer it this year than last year, and to-morrow than to-day, and to-day than yesterday, and a short while hence than now, and now than a short while ago. For whatever time we live is deducted from our whole term of life, and that which remains is daily becoming less and less (...)” (St. Augustine, 1988: 483).

The history *sensu stricto* are therefore past events or rather

things done - *res gestae* and that's how it will be understood in this article. Such an interpretation of history is inseparable from the man who is its object as it describes man's life as well as his subject – a driving force of the events evoked and reminisced later. However, there is a problem occurring here, once pointed out by José Ortega y Gasset: since history tells human life, which is diametrically different from natural history, the traditional mind, “physical” as described by Ortega proves helpless towards the phenomenon which does not have constant, invariable nature but is the changeability in itself. Thus, the methods developed by natural science, so effective in examining natural phenomena, are inadequate in encompassing and examining the phenomenon of human life and in order to understand the latter, different approach and method is required. Ortega's thesis that human history is a system where the past is not only linked to the present but also contained in it, are of less importance here, while his belief that human existence should not be seen in terms of “being” but rather in terms of “living” and as such, has its history, not nature (Ortega y Gasset, 1964) is completely in concord with the approach towards the history presented in this text. The source of such presented history should be ascribed to a changeable and fleeting character of human nature and his deeds on the one part, and the tendency to remain within the being on the other – the tendency of any impermanent entity - as presented by Spinoza in his theorems 3-9 of the third part of his *Ethics* (Spinoza, 2000: 544-545). Let us point out, that those two aspects are in opposition and this phenomenon, easily understood in the temporal world where, in the first place, the state succeeding must differ from the state preceding and in the second place – there must be some “forces” which cause that transition or at least allow it. All that suggests that Hegel's intuition basing the source of the forces in question in the clashing of thesis and antithesis seem not to be out-dated and the higher we are in the hierarchy of beings the more often we encounter contradictory driving forces or even mutually excluding. Since human life is one of the most dynamic of the known patterns, no wonder that contradictions met here are quite numerous. The tensions between them cause that life becomes an absurdity - the fact which terrified

existentialists so much, makes that due to the illogical character of our internal, life-related contradictions, the change is possible, and finally, the history is possible. However, the major concern here is the longing for immortality by a mortal being which may take any form, but interpreted in accordance to this text is what Herodotus describes as: “preserving what owes its existence to people, so that it withstands the pressure of time” (Herodotus, 2002: 42).

All in all, volitional sources of history are similar to those which created arts and may be interpreted as a result of human need to preserve what is precious and elusive at the same time. Often, this relation tends to be reciprocal – the awareness of elusiveness makes that we value something more. People’s attitude towards youth and its worth would be diametrically different if it wasn’t threatened by ageing. No wonder then, as pointed out by Arendt, that historian’s interests have always concentrated on what is individual, single, individual and unique: “These single instances, deeds or events, interrupt the circular movement of daily life, in the same sense that the rectilinear βίον of the mortals interrupts the circular movement of biological life. The subject matter of history is these interruptions the extraordinary, in other words” (Arendt, 1994: 57-58).

To clarify our explanation – explanation as I do not favour introducing of definitions in the humanities, one needs to answer the question what makes that this history is understood in that manner? It is a purely rhetoric question, since if the history here is confined to human matters, then the answer is: words, memory and written text. These three factors set the importance and certain permanence to human matters and deeds and change their existential character by transferring them from the sphere of what is happening into the sphere of what lasts, even though the lasting is imperfect, specific for the objects only, not for autonomous beings.

Certain further explanations are here necessary. As assumed earlier, human matters and deeds prove elusive when exposed towards the categories of the intellect. Spontaneous, accidental and unpredictable character of life makes, that life can only be learned in the process of feeling and experiencing it. However, if the learning

process is to be made plausible it cannot just consist of unrelated moments or be confined to an instinctive memory typical for animals. Once again, Ortega's thought – even without determining its legitimacy – may come in handy.

In one of his essays, deriving the human being from the animal being, Ortega writes that “human is an animal where broken beam of light shines, a beast whose half-gloomy interior is now and then illuminated by the light of understanding” (Ortega y Gasset, 1964: 456). Even though the Spanish philosopher mentions “understanding” as an intellectual capacity (*intellección*), the context clearly implies that it is not understanding related to the category of *ratio* but more related to the category of memory which is more capacious and efficient than in other animals. It is this memory, combined with imagination – let us notice how skilfully Ortega links the becoming of humanity with its suspense between the past and the future – that finally made that human crossed the barrier of the animal world. This memory and imagination replaced declining instincts in human and woken the inner life. “He stored in himself more experiences and impressions, and these enabled him to create certain imaginary combinations which formed something what can be labelled an *inner life*: it was the first feature which decisively distinguished him from animal” (Ibid. 473).

Regardless of whether it is memory that finally caused the separation of the human being from the animal being, Ortega's concept is interesting in so far, as what really takes place in human life or whatever happens between mortal beings is somehow corrupted by its fading character and would not survive if these beings were devoid of capability of remembering it. After all, it appears that we are nearing classical – that is related to rationalistic tradition, concept of the human, even though to which Ortega y Gasset strongly objected. Memory – similarly to words, exists only through words. Regardless of whether we embark from the Cartesian or Ortegian tradition, it appears that demarcation line separating the two worlds – the one of human and the world of animals is made of words. Animal, just like human, perceives the surrounding world, however it perceives things and events directly, while human perceives everything through the meanings. As expressed



by another Spanish thinker, “owing to that line separating the invisible from the visible, people always notice in an undeviating manner not things, but words – the linguistic content, which through their divine power enable us to capture the realities thus far non-existent” (Sánchez Cuesta, 2016: 33) Realities non-existent or no longer existent, as presented here – memory and imagination often interweave each other in the concepts by Spanish philosophers since both of them allow human to overcome the basic contradiction underlying his existence; its elusiveness on the one side and longing to eternalize it or of immortality on the other. In this article concerning the past, we will inevitably focus on the historical dimension – the memory.

## 2. Types of memory and the category of truth

Close relation between memory and imagination causes a serious problem when the question of historical truth is asked – the question underlying this analysis. No wonder then, that one of the most important works related to memory – Paul Ricoeur’s *Memory, History, Forgetting* begins with distinguishing between memory and imagination. Ricoeur points out that common way of thinking as well as the philosophical tradition whose classical illustration is presented in the second part of Spinoza’s *Ethics* (Spinoza, *ibid*, 514) treats the past as the presence of images and sounds in human mind and having status of memories relating to something which is not there. Ricoeur himself attempts, in his detailed analysis, to distinguish the domain of imagination directed towards the mythical and imaginary and the domain of the memory concentrated on the bygone reality. Still, it does not change the fact that – as he puts it – “Imagination, considered in itself, is located at the lowest rung of the ladder of knowledge” (Ricoeur, 2006 :16). It means that to the basis of our analysis – the wavering and uncertain ontological condition of the past should be added equally uncertain ways of recognizing and formulating it, which as it shows, take different forms and occur on the several levels.

However, we cannot fail to remark paradoxical nature of our human condition. We share the conviction that our life runs in the now

and only in the now but still, the present is only the moment imagined as turning of the hands of the clock – it is just a conventional image, which in a specific, sensory form tries to capture what is sensorily elusive, just like real objects facilitating the grasping by children of the numbers and relations between them. So, we are living in the now but we are the past because the unconscious substance of our memory has quantitative advantage over what can be experienced here and now, although only the latter is authentic and is really happening. Moreover, being of the self is conditioned by and related to the past, so by presence of the memory, since it binds into entirety all what we experience, we have the awareness that the events taking place, are happening to us. “Where is *I*, there is history. *I* constitutes and manifests itself as history and history is related to memory. Our mind is skilled to store the information on us and our natural and social environment, transforms the information and operates in order to solve life-related problems” (García, 2017: 141). This conclusion is unanimous with the subject matter of now classical text of Aleida Assman *The Spaces of Memory. Forms and transformations of cultural memory* where the author directly says that “consciousness is formed, broadly speaking, under the banner of the past” (Assman, 2009: 101). So, we are continually back at the statement by Ortega y Gasset that human does not have nature but history, nevertheless, our concern here are the ways of reaching that history, and if we are collection of memories – the collection of what was but no longer is, then how much these memories are adequate to what really existed from the point of view of classical correspondence definition of truth.

The simplest way (related to an automatic registration of the events in our life) to get acquainted with what was, is through memory labelled by Maciej Czerwiński as “individual memory” (Czerwiński, 2014: 38). It is the memory based on our experience, on what we lived through personally. Since that type of memory rely on personal contact with the past reality, we can assume that individual memory is the most adequate reflection of the past reality. And, as a matter of fact, that’s how it is, but even here there are some objections – originating from historical, classical questions on reaching the reality through the

sensory information.

Analogically, as with every single capture of the ambient world happening in the now, historical individual memory is selective and conditioned by various bio-psychological and sociological factors – our sensitivity, interests, perceptiveness, upbringing, education or even our cultural background. “As informal experience shows – writes Polish researcher of the subject matter Marcin Kula – there are events more apparent in our memory and those which escape it easily. As it is known, everybody remembers different details and in a different way, even when they concern the same episode; everyone had been experiencing it differently and his or her attitude could have been shaped by earlier experiences” (Kula, 2004: 77-78).

This is rather an unarguable statement whose validity is easily verified when talking with other witnesses about a shared experience upon a certain event. It quickly turns out that not only the intensity of the recollected event is different but it also varies in certain, mostly less important details, even though the overall, most crucial essence of the recollection in question is agreed upon. Quite naturally, as pointed out by Marcin Kula, we remember the unusual events, those, which disturb our daily routine, while everything what is banal and common escapes our memory or merges with other, similar, everyday commonplace matters. Therefore individual historical memory is “filled with saints and villains, hell and heaven, not the ordinary. Hence the selectivity of memoirs and, incidentally, of diaries. It cannot be otherwise. It is hard to remember, let alone to write down, that we brushed our teeth or that we washed our socks in the evening” (Ibidem, 80).

The passage of time distorts what stays in the individual historical memory not only by effacing the events or certain aspects of these events that the author considers less significant but also by transforming them, usually caused by psychological mechanism of repression of the things which interfere with our natural, positive image of the *self*. This mechanism is easily noticed with elderly people we know for many years. During the conversation we often observe that over the course of those years the negative role they played in a certain event as we can also recall it turns neutral and further, at times, becomes

completely reversed and is presented as positive. So, as early as the beginning stage of remembering we are confronted with two contrary tendencies – of remembering and forgetting, tendencies which professionals distinguish only at the stage of memory – labelled as “cultural” (Ricoeur, 2000: 660; Czerwiński, 2014: 35).

The third, no less important factor influencing the character and therefore adequacy of individual historical memory towards the past events is that it involves concepts – just like two others types of memory that will be discussed later.

As written by Reinhardt Kosseleck: “To be able to undergo or to collect experiences and include them into our life we need concepts. We need them to retain the past in our language. The concepts are necessary to integrate past experiences with our language as well as with our behaviour” (Kosseleck, 2009: 65) . Here, we enter an extremely rich field of the philosophy of language, however not analysed here since it exceeds the framework of our analysis. Still, what is of interest – is the adequacy of the sign and the meaning in the individual historical memory, and all the known analyses investigating that problem pertain to verbal modification of the cultural memory if at all and rather do not investigate the relation between the concepts and individual memory. Sánchez Cuesta associates the ability to use concepts with the likelihood of determining self-identity which would otherwise (without this ability) remain just a row of non-related, momentary events (Sánchez Cuesta, 2016: 42). Indeed, the concepts related to the past seem to be ontologically closer to it, than to the reality continually becoming and therefore changeable *present* – this discrepancy between the conceptual knowledge and the happening reality troubled Plato long before now. The problem results from the paradoxical character of the past, which on the one hand is what does not exist and on the other hand, by means of converting it into conceptual knowledge, becomes more stable ontologically – more than the reality it originates from and which is supposed to reflect. Before we attempt to answer the question on the fidelity of such reflecting, we are to analyse other than individual types of historical memory and justify why only two of them are of interest from the point of view of

historical truth.

Memory, as presented in this analysis, is of retrospective character what means that it “proceeds to the action only when the experience it refers to is a closed chapter” (Assmann, 2009: 102). The present changes its ontological character when it becomes the past. It literally “freezes” and from being a process, it becomes a state and therefore can be grasped in concepts which (just like this “frozen” state) are of constant character. Historical fact does not change, however it does not imply that its perception is also invariable. On the contrary, the more it drifts away in time and the more it is covered by nearer events, it undergoes deformation, which as presented a while ago, happens even in case of individual historical memory, namely – the one which is not based on the relation of others but rooted in the fact itself.

Two German researchers, Aleida Assmann and Harald Welzer (Welzer, Moller, Tschuggnall, 2000: 351-411) use in their texts an interesting (regarding the context of this analysis) concept of “communication memory”. This concept is strictly related to the retrospective character of memory regarding the context of its fading among particular generations. Communication memory is the memory that “connects, as a rule, three generations, it is the memory of verbally transmitted memories” (Assman, 2000: 104). The difference between the communication memory and individual memory is clearly noticeable, since the aspect of a direct experience is in this case replaced by trust in the one who saw or took part in the events himself and is now relating his impressions. The element of uncertainty grows here since the listener is not like Odysseus entertained on the court of the Phaeacians when he listens about his own actions (Homer, *Odyssey*, book VIII). Of course the narrator can be trusted because of his authority, but as a matter of fact, no one knows where the memories end and where the imagination begins in a sense by Ricoeur (Ibid.). What *was*, or in other words, what “became transfixed” is not an event *just happening* but the event *done*, and nobody can influence it, it is done reality, and understood as such may resemble Plato’s dream about changeless ideas, however, the further we are in time the less we know what really took place, as the individual memory (being the basis of the

story) is selective in itself; additionally, this underlying selectivity is doubled by the selectivity of the act of listening.

Nevertheless, in their intention – both types of memory become embedded in the truth according to its correspondent meaning. The one who tells the story, even if confabulates, does not lie and if departs from the truth, is completely unaware of that and his deep conviction about the true character of his story automatically amplifies the faith of the listener.

Regarding the analogous point of view, cultural memory is of a different character. That type of memory is variously referred to by the experts – from “cultural memory”, through “social memory” to “collective memory” (Szpociński, 2014: 17). Leaving aside the terminological disputes we will use the term “cultural memory”, although the precursor of the research on the subject – Pierre Nora his first article devoted to the subject matter titled *Mémoire collective*. Even later the same term was employed, for example in the introduction to the third volume of *Les lieux de mémoire* we read: “The general idea we depart from is based – unlike the usual approach to history – on selective and according to scientific methods researching the crystallisation points of our collective heritage, on isolating elementary “places” according to all the possible meanings of the word, in which our national memory is rooted (s’*était* ancrée)” (Nora, 1992: 11). Still, the concepts of Nora, constituted by other scholars, had been modified and developed further and their entanglement in history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, linguistics and political studies makes that it is substantiated to refer to the aforementioned memory as “cultural memory” rather than to as “collective memory”. The basic idea of Nora has not been changed and proposes departure from traditionally practised history based on positivistic collecting of facts. In this “second degree history” the historical events are not reconstructed (the main task of the “first degree history”), but rather investigated how a certain historical phenomenon functions in collective memory. “Formulated in such a way memory (cultural memory) represents a cognitive and interpretational category, that facilitates a new interpretation of cultural texts in its wider meaning” (Saryusz-Wolska, 2009: 101).

It is hard not to appreciate the role of the concept of cultural memory, as its impact on the development of historical and social sciences but also in philosophy and linguistics have proven extremely inspiring. However, in the context of historical truth it is less valuable. When we move from history to the “second degree history” (or rather “metahistory”) – the aims we achieve undergo changes (as it was originally intended by its originators).

In the first place, the researcher abhors the classical correspondence definition of truth and the point of his interest is in concordance to truth’s pragmatic or social aspect, seen as supporting of the concept of truth on the general consensus. The truth here is not related to the humanity or a human as such but it is rooted in a defined social group, for instance the one which can be labelled as “nation”, it also serves as a distinguishing factor or maintains the identity. It is related then and dependent on the existence of that group and its structures, including the political ones. This relating to the past is of secondary importance; the main objective here is uniting and integrating the aforementioned structures. The cultural memory is at the basis of achieving a certain canonical concept of history which ironically, is not only the art of remembering but also forgetting due to purely pragmatic and political reasons, in order not to endlessly investigate the harm suffered. “The society cannot be continually mad at itself” (Ricoeur, 2000: 660). Being at the basis of the canonical version of the history, cultural memory has the greatest impact on the social consciousness – it decides on the form of the history contained in the school textbooks and on maintaining (or not) certain intentional historical carriers, namely “objects and actions made with the clear intention to memorialise” (Szpociński, 2014: 19). Such carriers are: monuments, museums, street names, commemorative plaques.

We cannot emphasise enough the importance of cultural memory in the life and functioning of social groups. It forms a certain axiological order which often facilitates the survival of these groups or even of the whole nation in the most dramatic circumstances. The main component of it is the “culture of memory” – the collection of rules and truths which cannot be forgotten as far as the particular group is to

survive. Jan Assmann mentions the state of Israel as a clear example of the continuation of the culture of memory, which “as a populace (Volk) continued and reproduced itself in accordance to imperative “retain and mention”. In this manner it became a completely different populace in an empathic sense, a prototype of modern nation” (Assmann, 2009: 60). As clearly presented – cultural memory has little to do with the historical truth, and often the latter, no matter to what degree it is substantiated, becomes inconvenient. Not without reason, the vision of history presented by cultural memory strengthens itself the more the intergenerational communication memory vanishes. Since there are no real or intermediate eyewitnesses, documents not compliant with the needs of the times can be destroyed or concealed and the monuments pulled down. Regarding the Polish subject matter literature I am familiar with, many researchers, quite rightly, accentuate the aforementioned feature of cultural memory. “Cultural memory – writes Maciej Czerwiński – does not mirror the truth, perhaps certain dimension of it; it rather serves particular needs of social groups. Moreover, it is not the equivalent of history though it cannot exist without history” (Czerwiński, 2014: 32–33). Other researchers accentuate more emotional than rational and critical character of cultural memory and its subordination to currently ruling propaganda. Therefore there are unambiguous conclusions and heroes sought. Deeds are good or bad and the heroes are saints or scoundrels (Kosowska Ewa, 2012: 47-60) and everything is related to “tailoring the images of the memory to the leading social demand” (Kajfosz, 2012: 28).

### 3. Is the historical truth possible at all?

The analysis above clearly shows that if our objective is to answer the question on the historical truth we should not or cannot refer to any structures or institutions based on cultural memory. We are left with individual memory and communicative memory and all the carriers related to them – diaries, memoirs, correspondence and archives. We cannot ignore certain works of literary character usually originally not intended to be a chronicle, but that’s why often having been able to capture more accurate reflection of the reality – often more factual than



in officially projected visions written by professional historians to satisfy any social demand.

In an attempt to address the question of this subchapter I will try to reconstruct a certain, individual historical event which is just a fragment of the array of analogical happenings which in the philosophy of history are referred to as “the Holocaust”. The Holocaust in the history of the mankind is of such an extraordinary nature that although we will focus on certain, isolated event we will relate to it as a certain historical entirety. “Holocaust – writes Jörn Rüsen – is the most radical experience of crisis in the modern history (at least from the point of view of those who are directly or indirectly involved in it as existing witnesses or historical heirs). Genocidal character and radical negation and destruction of the fundamental values of modern civilisation make the Holocaust an absolute exceptionality. It even destroys the rules of historical interpretation. The Holocaust had often been referred to as a “black hole” of sense and meaning which invalidates every conception of historical interpretation. It does not allow the possibility of sense-creating narrative connection with the time before and after it. The Holocaust represents borderline experience impossible to include into coherent narration. Every attempt to explain this event against the comprehensive view on the historical process is bound to fail” (Jörn Rüsen, 2009: 411-412).

I allowed myself this large quotation from the text of Rüsen as in this case the part represents the entirety and the event to be analysed (even though being the a small part of the Holocaust phenomenon) escapes (regarding its significance and the course) any probable interpretation and is, just like the Holocaust itself, a challenge to the civilisation of reason. That fact is of a secondary importance since not the judgement or historical interpretation of the events in question is to be analysed here but its course retained in an individual memory and communication memory as well as the attempt to answer the question – to what degree the two said types of memory may be of service to the historical truth?

The event referred to, was the extermination of the Ukrainian and Jewish population in the village of Wereszczyn, in the province of

Lublin, eastern Poland. The execution was carried by German soldiers and Ukrainian soldiers who were collaborating with them, the massacre took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1942. The events of that day are the subject of individual memory, as the eyewitnesses, at that time children, are still alive. The events are also the subject of communication memory since its extraordinary dramatic character made, that they were transferred further to the next generation of children and grandchildren. The author of this article has heard of these events repeatedly from the members of the family and people not related to the family. The tragedy was described in the poem of author's mother's sister and was written shortly after the pacification of the village, as claimed by the author of the poem, a twelve-year-old girl then, and 89 now. There are some doubts regarding the date the poem was written, since its text, which is in my possession and unquestionably written by my aunt herself and carrying her signature is dated 1945. The events in the village Wereszczyn took place on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May 1942 and, too, were described at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century by the enthusiast of the local history – Adam Panasiuk in his, published in 2011 book dedicated to the history of that, quite substantial for the whole region village. Finally, the event did not become, as in the case of the Holocaust presented as a whole, the subject of cultural memory what means that nobody has recognized it to achieve any particular (lying beyond history) objectives.

So, here we have a certain historical episode that could be synthesised and examined from the several viewpoints: a) as the narration by the direct witnesses presented in the book in the forms of quotations – gathered by the enthusiast of the local history a few dozen years after the events, b) as an attempt to reconstruct the events on the basis of gathered interviews, c) a collection of many heard and remembered stories, d) a poem, of admittedly universal character and composed by 12-year-old child but written immediately or shortly after the events had happened. It should be pointed out that the author of a poem was not a direct eyewitness of the extermination since her home was located outside the area of the village and the author only saw its consequences and heard the stories from the affected ones.

Central to the analysis is the text of Adam Panasiuk as it is the

widest report of the event. The author of *Wereszczyn. Ślady zapomnianej historii* (*Wereszczyn. Traces of the forgotten history*) is not a professional historian what is of great importance since the reconstruction is not completely coherent; it contains certain unclear fragments and even conflicting ones. Professional historian, subordinated to academic discourse would try to eliminate the inconsistencies and clarify everything what is ambiguous and by doing so the text would be more coherent indeed, however less authentic and so it would be difficult to judge what belongs to the gathered narrations and what is of author's contribution. Since Adam Panasiuk have not applied to these rules, it can (in all likelihood) be assumed that he cites stories told by the eyewitnesses – the ones who are the carriers of individual historical memory, in the form in which the stories were gathered. First, I will summarise the narration by Adam Panasiuk, *Wereszczyn. Traces of the forgotten history* (2011: 146-157), then I will compare them with my own memories and the poem of my mother's sister. In the conclusion, all the aspects of the aforesaid events will be gathered, both - those whose course is not dubious regarding all the viewpoints, and those which are questionable and contradictory. It will facilitate to find the answer on the question to what degree individual historical memory and communication memory allow the reconstruct the past according to the correspondence definition of truth.

After the aggression of Germany on Russia in June 1941 German governors on the territory of Poland directed the actions against the Jewish and Ukrainian population. The actions carried by German intelligence, disguised as Russian war deserters, consisted of approaching local people for help and food. The action was related to the fact that on the territory of eastern Poland there were many authentic Russian deserters appearing in those times. The aim of the German intelligence was to fraction the structures of the organisations driving towards the independence of the Ukraine and to identify the residents helping the real Russian deserters.

The action was carried in the territory of Wereszczyn and the surrounding villages; however a great number of the population distrusted the German agents: "Tiny details gave them away. Often,

under the old rags, shaved and having a nice haircut, they wore clean shirts. "Some of them had golden teeth, sometimes a uniform stuck out" recalls Tadeusz Garach from the village Zastawie. They were these "deserters" looking much better than those who had been appearing before, those were flea-infested, emaciated and dirty". Yet, some of the Ukrainian people were getting into closer contact with the agents, they organised bashes (during which they were raising anti-Polish and anti-German slogans) and even invited them to family gatherings.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, children grazing the cows on the nearby meadows noticed German soldiers approaching and surrounding Wereszczyn from the direction of neighbouring villages. At the same moment, about 10 o'clock before noon, another group of German soldiers arrived at the village mayor's house and ordered him to inform the villagers to gather outside the local church. The reason of the gathering was the supposed exchange of the identity cards. The whole action was supervised by collaborating with Germans Ukrainian police-officers. "They were even worse, they went from house to house, left children, but all other inhabitants they hurried toward the rectory – recollects Stanisława Sidorowska. [...]. After the villagers came and gathered at the church, they had to line up in rows four by four, older children and women were set aside. Only priests, parish priest and curate stood beside them". The gatherers were selected several times, first, they chose about ten men, after the second and the third selection there were only a dozen of people left. Both, those who selected and the selected ones were disoriented. The first ones probably had no clear instructions regarding who should be selected; the other ones did not know why they had to step out and why they were separated from the rest.

"At that time a German soldier came on a motorcycle and handed over the orders. Having handed over the document all the men were hurried back towards the parish's fence [...], they read 13 surnames, among them all the Ukrainians and one Pole, Stefan Niewiadomski". The Pole was soon excluded from the group as it turned out that on the list there was one man named Niewiadomski but of the Ukrainian nationality and of a different name." The fourteenth

person joined to the group was a young man named Trupacz, son of Antoni and he did not have his identity card with him. The boy used to graze cows and on the requests of the villagers he would have been released but among the chosen thirteen men was his father. "Turpacz said that he is the boy's father. Perhaps he thought their names were called out as a reward" - recalls Henryk Zabłuda. The confession did not help as he was selected to the group to be executed. There was also a second group selected, a group of 30 people".

The citizens were then informed about the reason of the execution. The selected ones were to be executed by firing squad for helping Russian deserters and for "robberies in the local dairy. Among German soldiers the Ukrainian police-officers many citizens recognized those who wandered and begged for food and shelter before". One of the soldiers said, that if during the execution anyone cried or screamed all the villagers would be shot. The aggressors also announced that if anyone helped Russian outlaws and crooks the whole village would be burnt. "In the meantime, from the group of fourteen the German chose Stefan Niewiadomski and the Ukrainian Jan Łuc, and from the others Edward Drzazgowski. The three men were led to the nearby barn of the Jung family and, inside, they ordered Drzazgowski to beat the two with a cherry-wood club. Drzazgowski clubbed them lightly, taking care not to hurt his neighbours, but observing it all, soon the German soldier "snatched the cudgel and started to beat them himself. Almost dead on their feet, then escorted from the barn, both could hardly manage to walk" – says Stanisława Sidorowska.

That part of the pacification in the village of Wereszczyn ended, German soldiers ordered those to be executed to escape. As soon as they started to run they were fired at from the three machine-guns erected on one of the villager's wagon. Runaways could hardly escape, only the youngest of the convicted managed to run away a few hundred metres. "Next, thirty citizens were ordered to dig a hole and throw the killed there. Young people, detainees from the nearby Zastawie and Andrzejów village helped them. Young Turpacz was still alive but a few SS members were finishing off everybody lying there, just in case."

The extermination of the people of Ukrainians descend took

place in parallel with the extermination of the people of Jewish descent who were also ordered to gather in the centre of the village, at the crossing. They were gathered under false pretences to check their work permits. The old and the sick were killed in their houses. The group gathered in the centre was chased towards the church premises and then they were locked in one of the barns located near the old estate's well. The well had not been used for several years, however a couple of days earlier a German had ordered the same Jews to uncover it. "The Jews were escorted from the barn, naked, two by two, and next to the well were fired at. Corpses or even still alive ones were thrown into the well. They did not shoot the children, the children were thrown alive". Those gathered not far from that place – as all of the described events took place nearby the church and the cemetery which is located by the premises of the church in Wereszczyn – could only hear the sound of single shots and the explosions of the grenades. Two young Poles however observed the execution directly. One – from the church's steeple, the other from the attic of the residential premises of the estate's servants neighbouring the place of the crime. The citizens learned from the two Poles about the exact course of events; that Germans when heard the moaning coming out of the place of the dead or injured, threw grenades there now and then, and that the escorted Jews first cried, then they were dying in silence as if accepting their inevitability of what happens. One of the boys who endured the events, saw that one the Germans brought a small boy from the village, overlooked in the search, and threw him alive in the hole.

"When the Germans left Wereszczyn, some of the citizens went to find out what happened to their neighbours. There were so many killed ones that the well and the hole could not contain them all. After the execution, the Germans took the Ukrainian and Polish people from the neighbouring village of Andrzejow (just before the departure) and asked them to cover the bodies with earth. A mound was full of corpses but also half-alive Jews "When we came running the earth was still moving but scared and stiffened with fear, no one dared to come near" – recalls Kazimiera Wakula.

#### 4. Final remarks, conclusions

The events and the extermination in Wereszczyn have many more subplots. One of them is the story of Miriam Raz Zunszajn who at the time of the tragedy was 5 and was the only one who survived the mass extermination of the other Jews who made 20% of the village's population before the war. At the moment of writing this article – she is still alive and lives in Israel. However, to answer the question if, and if yes, to what degree is it possible to reconstruct the past events (that is of something which is not, does not exist), by making use of the types of memory we defined as individual and communication historical memory, suffice it to analyse that single episode which is crucial for the whole event. Let us examine the facts which can be established by applying the aforesaid types of memory.

First of all, there is no doubt that the extermination took place. That statement is so obvious that it could be omitted, however one should not forget the history is written by the winner (the fact already clear for Machiavelli). It is impossible to wrap or distort individual and communication memory; however, as it will be demonstrated, even they have limited reach. Supposing the history of Europe ran differently and the victory fell to Germany of the Nazis than it is quite probable that the mentioned event, just like the Holocaust itself, would have been shaped quite differently over the time the individual and communication memory were fading away. Being aware of the memory operating principles, we can, in all likelihood, assume that victims' guilt would be considered more and more obvious, at the later stage, act of extermination would become an act of administering the justice or the act of defence, or else it would be completely forgotten and ignored as a historical fact.

It is highly probable and bordering with certainty, so we can assume that the extermination was preceded by the Nazi's intelligence action as before the execution their agents, disguised as Russian captives, were sent to the village of Wereszczyn. The eyewitnesses' reports are absolutely consistent and undeniable. It is true that all the witnesses were children or in their adolescence, still, the author of the article remembers stories told in his childhood absolutely supporting

the aforesaid fact. One of the witnesses I can identify by his name and surname even at this moment and I remember him saying that agent's brushed, shiny boots raised his suspicion. That person is long dead and at the moment of pacification was in his twenties or even thirties.

In broad outline, with similar probability we can reconstruct the course of events; notifying the citizens about the gathering and the place of the gathering – different for those of Polish and Ukrainian decent and different for the Jews. It is beyond any doubt that the Ukrainians were separated from the Polish and of the uncertainty of the first ones about the purpose of the action itself. The latter is triggered by the fact that I can recollect the information that the Ukrainians were quite convicted that the extermination would concern only Polish population; however at that moment I am not able to identify the informer. Moreover, that fact is supported by the episode described in the book of Adam Panasiuk in which the Ukrainian man named Trupacz confirms the identity of his son as if “he must have assumed that their name was read in reward” (Panasiuk, 2011 : 150). Logical associating of the results and after-effects should not be aborted if we are to find the historical truth – it is of a great help here even though it seems to be contrary when subordinated to different purposes. In this case confusion or even belief of the Ukrainian population that they are not in danger was caused by the fact that among the executioners there were many of their country-fellows – the fact unanimously supported by all the witnesses and moreover accentuated in the poem written by my aunt.

It is certain, or almost certain that not all of the Jews were killed the moment they were covered with earth. The macabre sight of moving earth shocked the citizens of the village so much that it is reported and mentioned in every single story concerning those events I heard as a child. That fact is utterly confirmed in the reconstruction of events presented in the book of Adam Panasiuk (Panasiuk, 2011: 151). Rescuing of five-year-old Miriam Raz Zunszajn is also certain as she founded the monument commemorating the extermination in the early 90-ies of the twentieth century. The inscription on the monument emphasises that she was the only survivor of Jewish descent who escaped the death in the village of Wereszczyn. Stories I heard and



which are confirmed in the Adam Panasiuk's book mention a few other Jews who survived the massacre and were hiding in the nearby woods yet all were killed shortly after or starved to death.

Some of the minor stories can also be reconstructed with as close probability. However, there is no need to mention them all. As an exemplary fact – setting the village on fire started from burning of the mayor's house. It is clearly presented in the poem of my aunt and supported in the reconstruction of the events done by Adam Panasiuk (Panasiuk, 2011: 155). Accordingly, there are two independent sources providing the same information.

The questions which can be answered with less certainty usually concern the issues of lesser importance. So, it is not clear why the mayor called the inhabitants to gather. Adam Panasiuk points out the necessity of exchanging their identity documents (Panasiuk, 2011: 149), however my mother, aged 83 at the moment of writing the article, and her sister, 89 now, do not confirm this information. We can assume that, in the first place my six-year-old mother then, or her sister (12 years old then) did not need to be informed about the reason, or that the mayor did not give the exact information and did not give the reasons concerning the gathering.

It is quite unclear what happened to Stefan Niewiadomski – the Pole who mistakenly stepped forward in the place of the Ukrainian of the same surname. Panasiuk first writes that he was “picked out of the line-up” (Panasiuk, 2011: 149) but later says that the man was ordered to go to the barn with the Ukrainian named Łuca and the Pole called Drzazgowski where he was forced the abuse his Ukrainian neighbours (Panasiuk, 2011: 150). On the following page (Panasiuk, 2011: 160) mentions the death of Stefan, yet indicating that “selection” from the line-up involved the group of Polish, not the group of the Ukrainians destined to be executed. Uncertainty here is caused by inaccuracy of the reconstruction.

It is quite unclear what happened in the barn, where two Ukrainians and a Pole followed by the German went to. Panasiuk says that the Pole was ordered to beat the Ukrainians with “a cherry-wood club” and when he was doing it too gently the German “snatched the

cudgel and started to beat them himself” (Panasiuk, 2011: 150). Panasiuk never reached Edward Drzazgowski who might have already been dead at the time the interviews were taken as the relation about what happened in the barn could only have been told by him. So, we cannot know if the two Ukrainians who were escorted from the barn “almost dead on their feet” (Panasiuk, 2011: 150) were in fact flogged by the German soldier, or perhaps by Edward Drzazgowski, albeit my mother who knew the man personally, remembers him as “gentle and honest man”.

The burial place of the Ukrainian victims is also not known. Following the reconstruction of the event written by Adam Panasiuk we only know that the corpses were thrown into the hole dug out by the citizens of Wereszczyn, however helped by the young from the neighbouring villages of Andrzejów and Zastawie. We do not learn where exactly the hole was. The poem written by my aunt mentions a field of wheat as a burial place, the field which belonged to the Roman Catholic parish in Wereszczyn. Even though we are dealing with the text of a twelve-year-old child, my aunt supports the words written 77 years ago as a small girl and precisely describes the place where the field was and what she says is completely in concord with topographic description of Adam Panasiuk. While writing this article she told me about the later authorisation to exhume the bodies of the people of Ukrainian descend and who were later buried at the nearby Orthodox cemetery. It explains why there is no sign or no visible evidence that would commemorate the massacre at the execution place.

The two following examples illustrate the situations when individual memory and communication memory fail – the subsequent examples will prove historically unimportant and insignificant. I recall them here to validate the thesis that individual historical memory can be trusted regarding the general course of the relevant events, while the details very often become blurred or completely distorted. It is applicable even more so, naturally, to the communication memory. Regarding the discussed case, the first detail concerns the means of transport used by the mayor when informing about the gathering at the churchyard. My mother claims it was a peasant’s cart and adds that the

mayor was not alone, while my aunt, having every confidence, maintains that the mayor rode a bike. Another detail, as unimportant in itself, however quite informative regarding the operating of the communication memory, concerns my grandmother who told me many times about that particular and tragic day. Before writing this article I was absolutely convinced that having been notified by the mayor about the gathering she went to the village with my mother – my family, as mentioned before, lived outside the village. By that moment the village had already been surrounded by the German army and one of the soldiers, having noticed a woman leading a small child by the hand, started the yell something and wave the rifle. Although my grandmother did not understand the words, she understood the gestures and immediately turned back. This is the version I memorised or rather, as it turned out, constructed as my mother and my aunt clarified later the way the events happened. Having been informed, my grandmother went to the village and stayed at the acquaintance's place that lived near the place of the massacre. Both women looked through the window where some German soldier noticed them. Suspecting them or my grandmother only of Jewish lineage, he entered the house to clarify the case. Fortunately, the other woman spoke just enough German to be able to explain he was wrong. Driven by some unexplainable now impulses, the soldier ordered my grandmother to immediately go back home. My grandmother was exceptionally in luck that day as the other German soldier, one of those who surrounded the village, let her go and allowed her to return. As the reports of my aunt and my mother are completely in concord, and while listening to these stories I recalled another details told by my grandmother, I have no doubts that my memories related to that episode have become a classic confabulation whose origin I am unable to explain rationally. However, that example does not belittle the importance of communication memory and even more, the individual historical memory in investigating the reconstructed version of the events that took place; nevertheless it belongs to the past and human memories.

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# Nations and Memory: The Importance of the Future and Acting as if What Really Happened Had Not Happened<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** Do real nations need a past? The problem with the past is that memory can act as a prison that does not allow us to create a better future. Sometimes it is wiser to act as if what really happened had not happened or to recognize that there is significant room for interpreting what happened in different ways. This is part of democracy.

**Keywords:** Nation, Nationalism, Europe, Memory.

This paper talks about philosophy and nationalism, specifically what philosophy (let's call it critical reason) can tell us about nationalism. Someone once said: "I knew exactly what a nation was until I was asked about it." We must recognize that the idea of nation is not clear. To give an example from Spain, some politicians say Spain is a nation; others say Spain is a nation of nations (a nation including several nations within it). But they fail to say how many nations we should consider. Some politicians will say that Madrid is a nation if they think this will earn them more votes. This gives the impression that being a nation is a problem of self-definition. All any human group has to do is to declare itself a nation to become one. This might be the case, but then we must try to be clear about how we should consider some human groups, which we could call societies.

While attempting to clarify this subject, I want to discuss what I will call the philosophical meaning of Europe; or, in other words, the kind of ideal European political system we should try to build. And we

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is part of my contribution to a research project entitled "El desván de la razón: cultivo de las pasiones, identidades éticas y sociedades digitales" (FFI2017.82272-P: PAIDESOC), financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities. It was originally presented at the Seminar "Cultural Memory and Formation of Public Opinion in the Second Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century in Europe" organized on February 16, 2019, by Professor Vladimer Luarsabishvili at New Vision University, Tbilisi, Georgia. I am very grateful to all the participants, whose questions and opinions contributed to improving this paper. Any errors or possible contradictions are obviously my responsibility.

will see that the presence of time (future and past, aspirations and memory) is quite important amid these subjects.

As I have just said, since we can assume that nations are societies, we first have to analyze what a society is, how we should consider societies and our relationship with them. And for this purpose, I will use the ideas of an eighteenth-century philosopher, David Hume, one of the fathers of liberal thought.<sup>2</sup>

Hume's analysis of society depends on his view of human nature and of two circumstances of external (natural or artificial) objects:

1. First, we have to take into account that "each person loves himself better than any other single person, and in his love to others bears the greatest affection to his relations and acquaintance".<sup>3</sup> The consequence of this idea is quite clear in one of his essays, "Of the Independency of Parliament":

POLITICAL writers have established it as a maxim, that, in contriving any system of government, and fixing the several checks and controls of the constitution, every man ought to be supposed a *knave*, and to have no other end, in all his actions, than private interest. By this interest we must govern him, and, by means of it, make him, notwithstanding his insatiable avarice and ambition, cooperate to public good.<sup>4</sup>

2. We must combine this characteristic of human nature with two characteristics of external objects:

2.1. Scarcity: "There is not a sufficient quantity of them to supply every one's desires and necessities".<sup>5</sup>

2.2. External objects can change hands without suffering any loss or alteration. What I find useful, another can find useful, and what I immediately like, another can like.

This tendency of the human mind together with these two circumstances of external objects creates the certain risk of us being deprived of these objects – objects acquired by luck or through work –

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<sup>2</sup> See López Sastre, 2018: 205–229 for an explanation with more details.

<sup>3</sup> Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section II, 487.

<sup>4</sup> Hume, 1985:42.

<sup>5</sup> Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section II, 488.

by violent attacks. For Hume this is the most important obstacle to the constitution and preservation of any society. Consequently, it is due to our eagerness to acquire goods and possessions for ourselves and our nearest friends – and Hume believes that this eagerness is insatiable, perpetual and universal – that there will be continuous conflicts and fights among people. We are not far from Hobbes.

The extent of humankind's greed seems, therefore, to incapacitate us for social life; but society is necessary to satisfy human passions, because there is a major discrepancy in people, considered as mere individuals, between their many needs and desires and the limited power of the natural gifts they have to satisfy them. And it is society that is called on to remedy this discrepancy. According to Hume, we obtain three extremely important advantages from our social life:

1. Society increases our *power* by allowing individuals' strength to come together to perform the same project.

2. Society increases our *ability*, because the division of labor makes it possible for each person to specialize in a given task.

3. Finally, we must consider the *mutual help* that can be provided once we live within a society. It gives us security against the ups and downs of fortune and accidents of life.<sup>6</sup>

At this level, we should not doubt that Hume is right as to the advantages of social life. Only cooperation with people allows us to build bridges and ships, drain marshes, and so on. And it is only because I live in society that I can expect to change the products of my work with those created by others. This allows me to specialize in a specific field and increase my skill in it extraordinarily. As others also increase their skill at what they do, the overall result is growth in general productivity, something we all benefit from. And if I can expect the help of other people, it is because cooperation and exchange has accustomed them to deal with me.

Given these advantages, humankind's situation is quite paradoxical. If, on the one hand, we need society to satisfy our desires, it is no less true that the natural impetus of our passions makes this impossible. Fortunately, Hume contends that nature provides a remedy

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<sup>6</sup> See Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section II, 485.



for this situation in the faculties of judgment and understanding. When we observe that the main disturbance of social life arises from the ease with which external goods can pass from one person to another without losing any of their qualities, we seek a remedy for this situation by placing these goods at the same level as the advantages of mind and body as far as possible (in normal circumstances we are not afraid of being dispossessed of our mental or bodily qualities, because they are not qualities that can be snatched from us, nor is it likely that those who deprive us of the use of these qualities can gain any benefit from doing so).

In any case, external objects can only be placed at the same level as mental or physical characteristics through a convention all members of society enter, thus deciding to give stability to the possession of external goods. As Hume writes:

I observe, that it will be for my interest to leave another in the possession of his goods, *provided* he will act in the same manner with regard to me. He is sensible of a like interest in the regulation of his conduct. When this common sense of interest is mutually express'd, and is known to both, it produces a suitable resolution and behaviour. And this may properly enough be call'd a convention or agreement betwixt us, tho' without the interposition of a promise; since the actions of each of us have a reference to those of the other, and are perform'd upon the supposition, that something is to be perform'd on the other part. Two men, who pull the oars of a boat, do it by an agreement or convention, tho' they have never given promises to each other. Nor is the rule concerning the stability of possession the less deriv'd from human conventions, that it arises gradually, and acquires force by a slow progression, and by our repeated experience of the inconveniences of transgressing it.<sup>7</sup>

By abstaining from others' possessions we do not really act against our passions; on the contrary, it is through this convention that we implicitly establish social life and it is thanks to social life that we achieve our well-being. In this respect, it is evident that the passion or desire for gain is self-controlled so it can be better satisfied in the long run. One

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<sup>7</sup> Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section II, 490.

thinks of the close analogy of this analysis with what Sigmund Freud says about how the principle of reality, which represents the outside world to us, protects – rather than destroys – the principle of pleasure. This principle of pleasure, blindly striving for immediate satisfaction, without regard for the power of external forces, would lead to disaster in our lives. But, by delaying or deviating the gratification of our impulses, by teaching us to value security, by making us realize that joy and play often require fatigue and work as a precondition, we succeed in surviving and prospering.

Coming back to Hume, what does putting the role of property allocation at the core of society mean? Let's make it clear, for Hume a society is not a large family, it is not an environment where we meet our most intimate emotional needs. It is not what we would today call a community. It is an association of owners that try to maximize their own interests.

The introduction of private property allows people to tolerate one another. They decide not to interfere with the results of others' work or to take away the things they enjoy. But although this is very important, it is only a first step.

A second step is to create a way by which the contact between us can be mutually advantageous. This is the invention of the rule that establishes trade, the law of the transfer of property by consent. According to this law we accept the idea of maintaining the stability of possessions "except when the proprietor agrees to bestow them on some other person."<sup>8</sup> We need three basic facts as our point of departure:

1. Different parts of the Earth produce different goods.
2. Different people are adapted by nature (or prepared by education) to perform different activities.
3. Some people possess more of an asset than they can use to their advantage, while lacking other things at the same time.

When we ponder these facts, the advantages we can attain through trade become obvious. If we said above that a society is an

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<sup>8</sup> Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section IV, 514.

association of owners, we are now seeing that for Hume society is also a market.<sup>9</sup>

There is still another law or principle that can make contact between people even more advantageous. After all, the transfer of things by consent only affects specific goods that are available to us at the time of the exchange. How can we, then, exchange services or reach agreements that involve the delivery of goods in the future? Hume describes a typical situation of non-cooperation:

Your corn is ripe today; mine will be so to-morrow. Tis profitable for us both, that I shou'd labour with you to-day, and that you shou'd aid me to-morrow. I have no kindness for you, and know you have as little for me. I will not, therefore, take any pains upon your account; and shou'd I labour with you upon my own account, in expectation of a return, I know I shou'd be disappointed, and that I shou'd in vain depend upon your gratitude. Here then I leave you to labour alone: You treat me in the same manner. The seasons change; and both of us lose our harvests for want of mutual confidence and security.<sup>10</sup>

Is there any way to avoid this loss for both sides? Is there a way to make cooperation (with its multiple benefits) possible? The solution to this kind of problem is the invention of a "*certain form of words*", or to be more precise, of promises. As Hume writes: "When a man says *he promises anything*, he in effect expresses a *resolution* of performing it; and along with that, by making use of this *form of words*, subjects himself to the penalty of never being trusted again in case of failure."<sup>11</sup> The obligation of promises is created, consequently, not by some kind of internal commitment, but entirely by the public action of giving our word. Our mental attitude has nothing to do with this subject. Secret reservations do not make the obligation disappear. Once you give your word, you have to keep it.

The peace and security of society (which is like saying its subsistence) depend entirely on these three rules or, as Hume also calls

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<sup>9</sup> For this idea of societies as an association of owners and as markets see Stewart, 1963:118.

<sup>10</sup> Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section V, 520–521.

<sup>11</sup> Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section V, 522.

them, laws of justice. To summarize, a developed social life is only possible thanks to:

1. The institution of private property.
2. Exchange by mutual agreement.
3. Promises or contracts.

The origin of these three institutions lies in people's intelligent egoism, because, as previously mentioned, we do not feel an important affection for each other (at least for people we do not know, which is the case of most people we interact with in our lives); but Hume emphasizes that these institutions generate a system that, including each individual's interest, is also advantageous to the public, even though this was not its inventors' aim. This passage, so similar to Adam Smith's famous one on the invisible hand, demonstrates Hume's liberalism. As we have seen, this liberalism is based on a careful consideration of humankind's passions. Society has been created and is maintained because our intelligence teaches those passions (our own interests) how they can be better satisfied. We have seen that the urge to acquire goods and possessions is insatiable, perpetual and universal. Benevolence toward strangers is too weak to counterbalance its strength (this means we cannot rely on morality to cement social life), and other passions are more likely to inflame this greed, for we have observed that the more possessions we own, the higher our capacity to gratify all our appetites.<sup>12</sup> The eagerness to possess, therefore, acts in all of us, and everyone has reason to fear their uncontrolled actions, because this would lead to a violence that would make us prefer a solitary condition. If this does not happen, it is thanks to our sagacity, to a reason that tells us that by maintaining social life we are more likely to acquire those possessions that we so much desire and to enjoy them safely. But even if reason tells us this conclusion, we may feel tempted by the interests of the moment. As he writes in a passage that must be quoted in full:

every thing, that is contiguous to us, either in space or time ... commonly operates with more force than any object, that lies in a more distant and obscure light. Tho' we may be fully convinc'd, that

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<sup>12</sup> See Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section II, 492.

the latter object excels the former, we are not able to regulate our actions by this judgment; but yield to the solicitations of our passions, which always plead in favor of whatever is near and contiguous. This is the reason why men so often act in contradiction to their known interest; and in particular why they prefer any trivial advantage, that is present, to the maintenance of order in society, which so much depends on the observance of justice. The consequences of every breach of equity seem to lie very remote, and are not able to counterbalance any immediate advantage that may be reap'd from it. They are, however, never the less real for being remote; and as all men are, in some degree, subject to the same weakness, it necessarily happens, that the violations of equity must become very frequent in society, and the commerce of men, by that means, be render'd very dangerous and uncertain. You have the same propension, that I have, in favor of what is contiguous above what is remote. You are, therefore, naturally carried to commit acts of injustice as well as me. Your example both pushes me forward in this way by imitation, and also affords me a new reason for any breach of equity, by shewing me, that I should be the cully of my integrity, if I alone shou'd impose on myself a severe restraint amidst the licentiousness of others. This quality, therefore, of human nature, not only is very dangerous to society, but also seems, on a cursory view, to be incapable of any remedy. The remedy can only come from the consent of men; and if men be incapable of themselves to prefer remote to contiguous, they will never consent to any thing which wou'd oblige them to such a choice, and contradict, in so sensible a manner, their natural principles and propensities. Whoever chuses the means, chuses also the end; and if it be impossible for us to prefer what is remote, 'tis equally impossible for us to submit to any necessity, which wou'd oblige us to such a method of acting.<sup>13</sup>

In fact, we have two problems:

1. We often fail to perceive the strong interest that binds us to the observance of justice and equity. In other words, we do not perceive that it is in our own interest in the long run to respect other people's

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<sup>13</sup> Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section VII, 535-536.

properties, not to cheat in the market, and to keep promises. As Hume writes, this is a problem of lack of “*sagacity*”

2. We often do not have enough mental vigor to persevere in a firm adherence to a general and distant interest, as opposed to the charms of the advantages and pleasures of the moment. We are tempted by the interest of the moment, even if it is less important than an interest that happens to be quite distant. This is the problem of the lack of “*strength of mind*”.<sup>14</sup>

How can we solve these problems? Hume’s answer is “to change our circumstances and situation, and to render the observance of the laws of justice our nearest interest, and their violation our most remote.”<sup>15</sup> What brings about this change? The invention of government, because a government’s action saves me from myself. If I break a rule of justice, prison awaits me. All the above is the foundation of any nation.<sup>16</sup> It is a rational interest: To protect individuals in the enjoyment of the objects they possess, to allow them to trade them in such a way that they benefit from the exchange, and to make or receive promises that they know will be fulfilled.

Is there more to society than this? What about patriotism? What about the sense of belonging to something bigger? What about the feeling of participating in a common history? What about traditions we are proud of? It is time to descend from rational analysis to the real world. And in the real world (as Heidegger would say) we have time, history.<sup>17</sup>

My point of departure is two quotations. The first is taken from Samuel Johnson, who said that “patriotism is the last refuge of a

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<sup>14</sup> We have another third problem, which Hume calls the “sensible knave”, the person who has enough sagacity to understand the importance for all of us of abiding by the rules of justice, and has the strength of mind to follow them, but decides that it is in their own interest to secretly break them. That is, they decide to become a free-rider, benefitting from the fact that others respect the rules, but they do not play their part. See Hume, 1998:9, 155.

<sup>15</sup> Hume, 1978: Book III, Part II, Section VII, 537.

<sup>16</sup> I would like to insist again on a previously mentioned point: Hume is proposing an analysis. This is quite different from a historical enquiry about the origin of nations or governments.

<sup>17</sup> On the following pages I will follow López Sastre, 1993:71–94.

scoundrel”.<sup>18</sup> We could wonder why he said that. The second quotation is taken from a well-known book on political theory, *Western Political Theory in the Face of the Future*. The chapter on nationalism begins with these words:

Nationalism is the starkest political shame of the twentieth century, the deepest, most intractable and yet most unanticipated blot on the political history of the world since the year 1900. But it is also the very tissue of modern political sentiment, the most widespread, the most unthinking and the most immediate political disposition of all at least among the literate populations of the modern world. The degree to which its prevalence is still felt as a scandal is itself a mark of the unexpectedness of this predominance, of the sharpness of the check which it has administered to Europe’s admiring Enlightenment vision of the Cunning of Reason.<sup>19</sup>

I believe both are right to a certain extent. And to convince my readers of this idea I will study the definition of nationalism provided by John Breuilly in his book *Nationalism and the State*. According to this definition, nationalist theories are built on three basic assertions:

- (a) There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.
- (b) The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.
- (c) The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires at least the attainment of political sovereignty.<sup>20</sup>

The first of the above statements is not usually correct. Nations are the products of history. It is, therefore, untrue that nations exist first in a natural way, and that States are then created to correspond to or align with the limits, with this nation’s outline. Instead it is the other way around. Creating a state paves the way for the mechanisms of cultural

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<sup>18</sup> This statement was made on April 7, 1775. Surely, we must not take it as a condemnation of patriotism in general, but of this kind of use of patriotism that is a cloak for self-interest, as when we say today that some politicians “wrap themselves in the flag”.

<sup>19</sup> Dunn, 1993:57.

<sup>20</sup> Breuilly, 1994:2.

homogeneity, the beginning of a unified system of education, the diffusion of a common language, a bureaucracy, the building of roads and a unified transport system. As time goes by, these elements lead to the idea that nations are natural. But it takes a long time. That is why I believe it is quite easy to understand what we could term the artificial nature of the United States of America, or of other contemporary nations that were former colonies of European countries. We only have to look at its completely straight borders. We can clearly see they are artificial nations because they only have a modern, recent history. But we (Europeans) have a propensity to believe that our nations are natural, not the product of States' historical contingencies and of their actions. In Europe it is said that geography determines nations' limits; but what does geography have to do with the limits between Spain and Portugal? Another often reiterated notion is that sharing a common language results in a nation. But what about Switzerland? Are we supposed to divide it between France, Italy and Germany?

The problem with the second nationalist theory statement (that the interests of nations must have priority over all other values and interests) is not that it is untrue, but that it is immoral. I believe this is the moral scandal John Dunn refers to.

For example, two months before his death Machiavelli wrote in a letter to Francesco Vettori: "I love my native country more than my own soul". The unpleasant aspect of this idea is that it makes it clear that someone would be willing for their soul to be condemned (eternal damnation) doing something they know is completely wrong just because with it they believe they are defending their country's interests.<sup>21</sup> History has taught us that nationalism has justified all kinds of crimes in this way.

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<sup>21</sup> This clearly contrasts with what Christ asks: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8.36–37; and see also Luke 9.25. As an interpreter comments after making this comparison: "Machiavelli's answer is a Ciceronian choice and a pagan exchange. Machiavelli is willing to lose his soul in order to save his country ... the safety of the city, and not of the soul, is made into the moral and ethical standard: 'when it is absolutely a question of the safety of one's country [*patria*], there must be no consideration of just or unjust, of merciful or cruel, of praiseworthy or disgraceful;



At this stage in my argument many readers might agree with this opinion, although they could remark that the definition of nationalism I am using fails to address the fact that many people who vote for nationalist parties would never dream of harming anyone. We cannot say that all nationalist people are immoral. Besides, to a certain extent all of us are nationalists, because we are normally more concerned or more interested in our own country's problems than in the problems of other nations or any vague ideal.

I would now like to distinguish between two different concepts of what a nation is; or, in other words, to enquire whether there is a kind of moral kernel, a moral core, in the idea of a nation. Using a well-known distinction between the political and cultural ideas of nation is very convenient here. As Alfred Cobban wrote in his now classic book *National Self-determination*:

The nation as a political unit, or state, is a utilitarian organization, framed by political ingenuity for the achievement of political, with which may be included economic, ends. Politics is the realm of expediency, and the measure of its success is the degree to which the material bases of the good life – law and order, peace, and economic welfare – are realized. The nation as a cultural conception, on the contrary, is normally regarded as a good thing in itself, a basic fact, an inescapable datum of human life. It belongs to the realm of the activity of the human spirit, its achievements are in the fields of art and literature, philosophy and religion.<sup>22</sup>

When a nation is considered as a datum, as something that it is given and that we are not supposed to try to change, I think we are in the presence of a characteristic case of alienation. In alienation cases people are subjected to something they have created, although they do not recognize it as such. The philosophy we have to remember here is Feuerbach's. He was interested in what we would today call the philosophy of religion, and his most famous thesis was that God was a

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instead, setting aside every scruple, one must follow to the utmost any plan that will save her life and keep her liberty' (*Disc*, 3.41)". Fontana, 1999: 657.

<sup>22</sup> Cobban, 1954: 60.

creation of the human mind. God was the idea of the kind of things that humans would like to achieve. God's life is the kind of life humankind would like to have: Never-ending, eternal, omnipotent or all-powerful. But according to Feuerbach we fail to recognize we are talking about a mental creation, and instead see the opposite: We think we have been created by God. To put it in philosophical terms, the subject (humankind) is converted into predicate, and the predicate (God) is converted into the subject. We fail to recognize our own creation and, on the contrary, we believe we have been created by it. This is alienation.

I would say that this way of thinking can be applied to nations. If the political use of the cultural idea of nation is a way of alienation (for example, when a government asserts that languages have rights: Departing from the fact that people have languages, it proclaims that languages have the right to have people, who can be coerced to be educated in it), the political idea is the liberation from it. Nations must be understood as productions of people's activities and wishes over the course of history; and I see no reason why we would have to accept a given situation and not submit it to the judgment of our reason or our will to change it. From a political point of view, we have to be aware that we build nations for the advantage of human interests, and that we have to evaluate nations according to the measure or level they satisfy human needs. Once we consider nations in this way, the first consequence is that we must understand nations as the manifestation of the will of a set of citizens. Consequently, we should agree with Renan when he says that a nation is a daily plebiscite. Or to put it in other way: We must see nations as supported by the kind of contract that Hume defended.

Alexis de Tocqueville says something similar in his *Democracy in America* when he writes that there is an instinctive patriotism, a feeling that ties a man's heart to his birthplace, a feeling that is united with a taste for old customs and memories of the past. Those "who cherish it love their country as they love the mansions of their fathers". This patriotism is a kind of religion; rather than reasoning, it feels, believes, and acts; and, therefore, it is characteristic of obedience to an

ancient order of things, of situations whose legitimacy is not contested. We could say it is characteristic of simple people. But Tocqueville says there is another kind of patriotism that is more rational than the one he has been describing; while perhaps less generous, it is more fruitful. Produced by enlightenment, it grows with the exercise of political rights. As he writes: “A man comprehends the influence which the prosperity of his country has upon his own welfare; he is aware that the laws authorize him to contribute his assistance to that prosperity, and he labors to promote it as a portion of his interest in the first place, and as a portion of his right in the second.”<sup>23</sup> This quotation tells us that a kind of nationalism (political nationalism) results from enlightenment. It stems from the exercise of political rights, and assumed to take note of personal interests. Thus, we are talking about a nation of citizens who exercise their democratic rights.

Given we now understand how we should consider nations, it is time to ask this question: What kind of relationship should this political unit (the nation) have with other nations? Some lines written by Edmund Burke in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* can give us an answer. Burke says that “to love the little platoon we belong to in society is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link in the series by which we proceed toward a love to our country and to mankind.”<sup>24</sup> These words tell us an important characteristic of our concerns and human solidarity: Both take the form of an expanding circle. We go from the little groups we participate in to our country and from there to humankind. As a result, we must think

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<sup>23</sup> Tocqueville: 269.

<sup>24</sup> Burke, 1987: 135. I am afraid that Burke would not support my defense of political nations, however. He wrote that the state is not “a partnership in things subservient only to the gross animal existence of a temporary and perishable nature. It is a partnership in all science; a partnership in every virtue, and in all perfection. As the ends of such a partnership cannot be obtained in many generations, it becomes a partnership not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are to be born.” Burke, 1987:194–195. This idea of a contract creating obligations with the dead could hinder the idea I will put forward of memory not being a prison, and that the future is more important than the past in building nations.

about human solidarity as framed by the varying links (of different sizes) in a chain. Montesquieu wrote this about the matter:

If I knew something useful to me, and harmful to my family, I would reject it from my mind. If I knew something useful to my family, and not to my country, I would try to forget it. If I knew of something useful to my country, and harmful to Europe, or useful to Europe and harmful to Mankind, I would look upon it as a crime.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, nations must be considered as only one link in a big chain. The space we give ourselves with the idea of promoting some of our interests, but that cannot enter in opposition to the whole chain; that is, humankind. We must insist on this issue: From the point of view of reason, nations have only one kind of legitimacy. The fact that we have to solve our problems in the easiest way under the constraints of time, of the command of one or several languages, with only a small amount of information, and so on. And nations are the mechanisms we devise (considering these issues) to solve our problems.

What does all this have to do with the European Union? We have just seen that nations act as mechanisms to solve people's problems. If our problems and circumstances change, changing the kind of nation we participate in is quite rational. We now have problems that no nation can solve by itself. We only have to think about ecological problems. We really live in a global society where everyone's actions affect an increasing number of people. The development of the Internet has provided us with an incredible amount of information. In this new situation, why not change our nation? Or rather, why not expand our nation to solve our old and new problems? I believe this could be the philosophical meaning of the European Community, founded on the idea that we can become enlightened citizens.

With all these ideas in mind (ideas that talk about aspirations, desires to be satisfied, the future) it is time to talk about the past, about memory.

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<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Pagden, 2013:247; and for this idea, see all of chapter 7, "The Great Society of Mankind".

As Ortega y Gasset would say, it is true that a nation is a circumstance, namely the circumstance of people who have been educated and live in a particular place. Humans are born in a society and immersed in a particular tradition. These offer them their resources and make them view the world in a specific way. It is as a result of this circumstance (society and traditions) that people are rooted in the world. This circumstance is something that is at first imposed, something we are immersed in, whether we want it or not. We do not have a choice. It is a contingent identity, which normally appears in our passports, and this identity determines our life up to a certain point. This is a way of recognizing that the societies we are brought up in have a past that is conveyed to us for good or evil. But our socialization process can be – or rather should be, as this is our proposal – of assimilation or of rejection. A society will be more perfect, more advanced, the more possibilities it offers its individuals to choose their own lifestyles, or simply to abandon the contingent identity that their birth provided them and choose another. And, conversely, the more facilities it offers those who voluntarily, for pleasure or interest, want to integrate themselves into it. I do not think we have reflected enough on people's ability to move, and that not taking advantage of this fact (which technological developments make increasingly important) to expand our margins of freedom would be quite unreasonable. And this is significant because besides this contingent or accidental identity we have our post-conventional identity as world citizens, reflective beings of reason that accept or criticize the traditions where they live based on criteria concerning our interests and considerations that, from a moral point of view, are supposed to be universal.<sup>26</sup> This shows that we are not fully absorbed by our community and that we can distance ourselves from its values. This should be openly rejoiced, because I do not think we should

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<sup>26</sup> Consequently, De Maistre was wrong when he wrote: "I have seen, in my time, Frenchmen, Italians, and Russians. I even know, thanks to Montesquieu, that one may be a Persian; but as for Man, I declare I have never met him in my life; if he exists, it is without my knowledge." Quoted in Tamir, 1993:13. I would say that with a bit of abstraction and imagination we can see individuals behind all these people from different nationalities, as some revolutionaries could see them behind the black skin of the slaves and perceive their situation as completely unjust.

insist much on which of these two identities – the contingent, or the post-conventional or post-traditional – should have preference. The priority should be to achieve a specific self-awareness as members of a global society where our actions end up affecting all other human beings. And this cosmopolitanism is part of European identity. I think Ortega was right when he insisted that we used to talk about being Europeans without defining what Europe was. He avoided this by insisting on an idea we agree with, that Europe was equal to Science, Freedom, and Individualism.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, in a lecture delivered in 1953 and entitled “Is there a European cultural awareness today?” Ortega said:

Part of European culture, perhaps even its most characteristic feature, is to suffer crises periodically. This means that, unlike others, it is not a closed culture, crystallized once and for all. Consequently, it would be a mistake to try to define European culture by considering its contents or subject-matter. The glory and the strength of European culture is that it is always willing to go *beyond* what it was, beyond itself. European culture is a perpetual creation. It is not an inn, but a path that always compels us to walk. Now, Cervantes, who had lived a lot, told us when he was quite old, that the road is better than the inn.<sup>28</sup>

If European culture cannot be defined by its contents (although we will have to make an important clarification about this below), it will have to be defined by how it proceeds. And this way of proceeding is rational criticism, which is what allows creation and the idea to always go beyond. To speak of Europe is, therefore, to speak of enlightenment, of the desire to subject everything to the criticism of a discursive reason that publicly debates; and, precisely for that reason, to be willing to dispense with the roots, with what tradition has bequeathed us, be that customs, traditions, a religion, or a specific national identity. To be

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<sup>27</sup> Ortega wrote in *The Revolt of the Masses* that European people form “the human type that has thrown all the efforts and fervors of their history into the scale of individualism”. Ortega, 1998:283.

<sup>28</sup> Ortega, 1985: 28.

European is to accept this freedom; and that supposes admitting that political concept of nationality we have outlined before. The concept that in the political ordering by means of nations sees a way for the flourishing of freedom and global humankind.

It is true that Europe has been the cradle of imperialism. The European expansion was the extension of exploitation. In its bosom there was racism and contempt toward other cultures. This is evident. But the only answer that can be given to this fact (understood as an objection) is that the European culture can save its essence by universalizing it in a consistent way. In fact, what national liberation movements usually did was to turn the “European” ideologies of enlightenment and socialism against European imperialism. According to this, European culture is no longer anyone’s heritage, or rather it is the heritage of the entire human race. A Europe that would withdraw into itself would not be true to the best of itself, would be betraying the best of its cultural legacy, the legacy that insisted that nothing human could be alien to us. Here we could do well to remember John Donne’s words, which Hemingway put at the beginning of his novel about the Spanish civil war, and which give it its title:

No man is an Island, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a Promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.

This we can accept, although it leads us to ask the following question: Why not consider that besides our loyalty to some universal or very general moral values, we prefer to have a particular way of life, a distinct history that is our own, and not that of all humankind? Something we could feel especially proud about. But we have a choice about these matters (it could be a religion, a sexual identity, our identity as members of the Republic of Letters in the case of intellectuals, etc.), a chosen identity, *but inside our nation*. Because nations are plural and this plurality must be respected. Freedom can be useful to ensure that diversity, often the result of an accident (the place where we were born

and the culture we were educated in), becomes a freely chosen diversity, a product of individuals' choices. In the end, if it is true that any society normally prefers its own customs to those of other societies, it does not have to follow that an individual has to prefer those of the society where they were born to those of any other. More importantly, it is not multiplicity that creates conflict between cultural identities. The problems arise when cultural identities are opposed to the concepts of freedom, equality, democracy, human rights, and so on. And this is where we need the clarification we mentioned earlier: European culture does have specific contents. But they are contents of a very special kind. I propose we call them *meta-values* to indicate that these values are such that they have the specificity of containing diverse and opposing values within them. This is how the meta-value of respect and tolerance creates the framework where multiple religious beliefs can develop. Or, in the face of diverse political ideologies, democracy appears not as another ideology, but as the meta-value that creates the playing field for the free expression of different alternatives. I believe this is the specificity of European culture: Rather than focusing on certain values, it has admitted the inescapable variety and plurality of manifestations of human life, and has been concerned with the characteristics that a society should have so that people with different lifestyles and beliefs could live together.

And what about memory? To be a real nation, does it not need a past?<sup>29</sup> The problem with the past is that memory can act as a prison that does not allow us to create a better future. Loyalty to the heroes of the past (the ones that died for us), to the path created by our ancestors,

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<sup>29</sup> If there is no such past, we can be certain that someone will invent it (or “rediscover” it. As no one says that he or she is inventing the past). If we want to express this concern more positively, we could ask: Do we not need a common civil memory to help us build a strong democratic culture? My answer is negative. Or, to be more precise, I admit that this can sometimes be the case, but in other circumstances democratic culture and progress require what is part of the title of my essay: Acting as if what really happened had not happened. In more concrete terms: amnesia is a psychological impossibility, but amnesty can sometimes be a good choice. For the complexities of our relationship with the past see Sánchez Durá, 2010, 209–224.



can have terrible consequences. The idea that we have a duty to these dead heroes and that destroying their memorials would be high treason is real. I would say that the best course of action in these cases is a dialectic (which could be viewed as slightly contradictory) of remembering and acting as if we had forgotten. We obviously need to remember things. Or rather, there is no other alternative, because forgetting voluntarily is not a real possibility. Just as when we try hard to fall asleep and only manage to stay awake, the more we strive to erase a current memory, the more it will be come to mind. We could say that the action of forgetting cannot be direct since it is the result of occupying our minds with other endeavors, the prospect of building a better future, for example. We can also act as if what really happened had not happened and recognize that there is significant room for interpreting what happened in different ways. People's memories differ. And they have the right to their memory. This is part of democracy. We agree that we have the right to disagree.

Concerning this recognition of the right to act as if some things had not taken place (and that a better future can only be built from this perspective) we have to remember that in Western Europe, the French and the Germans decided "to forget" (that is, to act as if they had forgotten) their historical fight in the Second World War and start the European Union. Both had the courage to break with a past that we wished had not happened.

This proposal is not new. It was invented by the same people who invented politics as we understand the concept today: the ancient Greeks. I would like to finish with this story as told by Nicole Loraux:

It all began with Cleocritus's speech in Xenophon's *Hellenica*. The Athenian democrats had just overcome the army of the Thirty. Some of the most important oligarchs – including Critias and Charmides, Socrates's erstwhile listeners whose names would later appear in Plato's dialogues – were among the dead ... In the exultation of victory, the time was ripe for revenge, especially for those democrats who just before the battle had been reminded by Thrasybulus of the 'war' that the Thirty had waged against them and of the abuses suffered at their hands. Yet at that moment, an Athenian Citizen ...

stepped before the democrats' lines to ask his hostile countrymen: 'You who share the city with us, why do you kill us?' The question itself was incongruous ... it was a democrat's question, to be sure, because an oligarch would already know the answer: one's opponent is the *enemy*. But it was no more incongruous than the amnesty it announced, through which the victors would bind themselves to their former opponents, swearing the most solemn oath 'not to recall misfortunes of the past'.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Loraux, 2002:9. And here we have to remember what Plato writes in *The Seventh Letter*: "it was not surprising that in a period of revolution excessive penalties were inflicted by some persons on political opponents, though those who had returned from exile at that time showed very considerable forbearance." And also in the same letter: "every man to whom Providence has given even a moderate share of right intelligence ought to know that in times of civil strife there is no respite from trouble till the victors make an end of feeding their grudge by combats and banishments and executions, and of wreaking their vengeance on their enemies. They should master themselves and, enacting impartial laws, framed not to gratify themselves more than the conquered party, should compel men to obey these by two restraining forces, respect and fear; fear, because they are the masters and can display superior force; respect, because they rise superior to pleasures and are willing and able to be servants to the laws. There is no other way save this for terminating the troubles of a city that is in a state of civil strife; but a constant continuance of internal disorders, struggles, hatred and mutual distrust is the common lot of cities which are in that plight."

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# Writing memory in conflict and post-conflict: Hernán Valdés' *Tejas Verdes*\*

TOMÁS ALBALADEJO

**Abstract:** This article deals with writing and literature as results of the activation of memory by the subject who has experienced imprisonment and sufferance as a consequence of dictatorial regimes. Hernán Valdés' *Tejas Verdes* is analysed from the point of view of Cultural Rhetoric as to its discursive constitution taking into account the goals of persuading and convincing. The role of memory and writing of sufferance in conflict and post-conflict situations is examined as a core foundation for an enduring witness that is able to exert a strong perlocutionary influence in favour of the values of peace, liberty and justice so that this writing can be considered as a part of the heritage of Humanity.

**Keywords:** Writing of sufferance. Memory. Cultural Rhetoric. Conflict. Post-conflict.

## I

Autobiography, memoirs and diaries (Pozuelo Yvancos, 2006) written by witnesses and victims of injustice and imprisonment offer a necessary written memory of sufferance and an enduring testimony for Humanity and strongly cooperate with justice and freedom as well as help to prevent similar situations in the future.

*From the heart of Hell* is a diary secretly written in Yiddish by Zalmen Gradowski (2008) during his imprisonment in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, where he was murdered in 1944.

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\* This paper is the result of research carried out in the research project of reference PGC2018-093852-B-I00, funded by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities of Spain. A first version of it was delivered at the International Colloquium "Post-conflict transitions. Latin American democracies there and then, here and now" organised by the Centre for the Study of Post-Conflict Societies of the University of Nottingham and held in May of 2018. I thank Bernard McGuirk, Jeremy Lawrance, Stephen Roberts and Rui Gonçalves Miranda for their comments and suggestions.

Gradowski's two manuscripts were found in Birkenau near a crematorium after the liberation of the camp in January of 1945. The circumstances of the writing and, of course, the intrinsic value of the diary give it an extraordinary value as a testimony of human sufferance because of a systematic and continuous injustice. Memoirs about life in prison because of political oppression are found in different cultures, languages and literatures. Those memoirs written after the liberation of the authors as well as those written in prison or in a prisoner camp provide enduring testimonies. *Se questo è un uomo (If this is a man)*, written by Primo Levi (2012) after his release from Auschwitz, is one of the masterpieces of what can be called *memoirs of sufferance* or, more broadly, *writing of sufferance*. The author's long travel from Poland to his city, Turin, also was narrated (Levi, 2015). The Spanish writer Jorge Semprún wrote *L'écriture ou la vie (Writing or life)* (Semprún, 1994), which is a memoir about his stay as a prisoner in Buchenwald concentration camp during the World War II and about life after his release. Many books from different countries and ideologies have been written as memoirs of sufferance: *Beyond the Bluegate. Recollections of a political prisoner* is a memoir by the lawyer Teo Soh Lung about her detention and imprisonment by the Internal Security Department of Singapore in 1987 on the accusation of participating in a Marxist conspiracy (Teo, 2011). Loung Ung's *First they killed my father: A daughter of Cambodia remembers* is written from the recollection of her life experience under the Khmer Rouge's terror in Cambodia (Ung, 2000). Realistic fictional literature also contains characters and stories provided by the experience of writers and consequently by their activity of remembering. Autobiographical contents offered by the memory of authors become part of the referent of fictional works (Alberca, 2007; Amezcua, 2017). It is the case of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One day in the life of Ivan Denisovich*, a novel where this Russian author uses his own experience in the Gulag (Solzhenitsyn, 1991) for the construction of the referent. The novel *Fatelessness* by Imre Kertész contains memories of his deportation from Hungary to several Nazi concentration camps (Kertész, 2004). *Campo francés (French field)* of Max Aub (1979), that is the fourth of

the works of his hexalogy *El laberinto mágico* (*The magic labyrinth*), is due to his life experience in the concentration camp of Le Vernet in the Department of Ariège, where the French government locked up Spanish republicans who have entered France at the end of the Spanish Civil War, as well as other foreigners. It is also the case of Max Aub's "Manuscrito cuervo. Historia de Jacobo" ("Crow manuscript. The story of Jacobo") (Aub, 1980a) or of "El limpiabotas del Padre Eterno" ("The bootblack of the Eternal Father") (Aub, 1980b).

The role of memory is key for all literature, not only for the writing of memoirs, diaries and autobiographies. Literature is a dynamic sediment and an active deposit of memory.

The writing of sufferance is strongly supported by cultural elements rhetorically organised whose goal is to reach readers in a perlocutionary way, according to the communicative arrangement of speech acts (Searle, 1969). Hence, Cultural Rhetoric (Albaladejo, 2013a; 2016; Chico Rico, 2015; Jiménez, 2015; Gómez Alonso, 2017; Martín Cerezo, 2017; Fernández Rodríguez, 2019) is able to deal with the rhetorical constitution and function of cultural elements involved and activated in the process of writing with the purpose of convincing and persuading, as well as of incorporating readers to the fight against oppression and injustice, which are reported, revealed and condemned in the writing of sufferance. Cultural Rhetoric is one of the studies included within the studies that I call "Studies in Culture", which are broader than Cultural Studies. Studies in Culture consist of Anthropological and Ethnographic Studies of Culture, Philosophy of Culture, Semiotics of Culture of the Tartu School, Analysis and Critique of Culture, Cultural Rhetoric and, of course, Cultural Studies. Cultural Rhetoric deals with the position and role of Rhetoric in culture as well as with the function of culture in Rhetoric, in rhetorical discourses and in non-strictly rhetorical discourses since they all have rhetoricalness. Although rhetoricalness can be mainly observed and explained as a property of speeches and other rhetorical discourses, it is also a property of all discourses and, of course, of human language (Ramírez Vidal, 2004; López Eire, 2005; Albaladejo, 2005), because rhetorical features are and can be found in all discourses and linguistic

utterances. Cultural-rhetorical elements play an important role in writing and memoirs of sufferance with a solid connection to the perlocutionary dimension of its pragmatic and textual organisation.

The knowledge about concentration camps and prisons in dictatorship situations has created a cultural background fed by the terrific historical events of the 20th and 21th centuries. This cultural background is indissolubly connected to the memory of victims and the memory of societies.

## II

Hernán Valdés' *Tejas Verdes. Diario de un campo de concentración en Chile* (*Tejas Verdes. A diary of a concentration camp in Chile*) was published in 1974. This diary covers a period of time since the 12th of February of 1974, the date of the arrest of the author, until the 15th of March of 1974, the date of his release<sup>1</sup>. This time is not long, but it is very intensive. Hernán Valdés was tortured in the concentration camp<sup>2</sup>. Ricardo Cuadros has written: "En 1974 Hernán Valdés había

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<sup>1</sup> The "Nota preliminar", signed by the author in Barcelona in May of 1974, begins with this paragraph: "*El lector tiene ante sí el diario de un prisionero en uno de los sectores del campo de concentración militar de Tejas Verdes, situado a pocos kilómetros del puerto de San Antonio, en la provincia de Santiago. Evidentemente, se trata de un diario reconstituido (nadie puede concebir licencias como las de redactar y guardar ningún tipo de texto en esas condiciones), pero en este proceso de reconstitución he hecho todo lo posible para conservar la más fidedigna cronología de la cotidianidad, lo que resulta harto difícil si se tiene en cuenta la total ausencia de referencias y plazos temporales que caracteriza a estos lugares.*" (Valdés, 1974: 5). Italics in the original text.

<sup>2</sup> In the introduction "Tejas Verdes y nuestra memoria colectiva" to the Chilean edition of *Tejas Verdes*, signed in September of 1996, Manuel Antonio Garretón writes: "Tejas Verdes fue uno de los primeros campos de concentración y puede ser definido como un campo de detención, pero más precisamente como campo de tortura. La tortura, ya se ha dicho, no es un exceso, es una política explícitamente definida que tiene uno o varios fines: se trata de infligir sistemáticamente un daño físico o psíquico o ambos a la víctima, ya sea para obtener alguna información o simplemente para castigarla, destruyendo así su dignidad, su psiquis, su integridad física, es decir para anularla como persona." (Garretón, 2012: 11).



publicado *Tejas Verdes*, el mejor relato que existe sobre el dolor de un sujeto sometido al vejamen militar en los primeros meses de la dictadura” (Cuadros, 2005). Valdés was a supporter of Salvador Allende’s Unidad Popular, but he was not a member of a political party of this Chilean left-wing political alliance. As Cuadros has explained, *Tejas Verdes* was due to his personal critical engagement and not to his party membership (Cuadros, 2005). This work shows an intensive first-person narrative marked by the consciousness of the ignorance and the lack of certainties of the author during his imprisonment about his future as well as about the external world and even about the place where he and the other prisoners are. All of them are blindfolded:

Pero el camión vuelve a partir. Sólo después de unos 15 minutos más de viaje llegamos a lo que parece ser nuestro destino final.

Nos hacen saltar a tierra y caemos unos sobre otros. Nos ponen en orden y nos hacen avanzar, al parecer en fila. Nos hacen entrar en algo, hay un peldaño que cruje. Es una construcción muy inestable, de madera, que al comienzo tomo por una vieja embarcación. Pasan lista, por primera vez escucho nuestras voces. Han cerrado la puerta, pero ignoramos si estamos solos o no. Desconfiados, tanteando, nos echamos en el piso de tablas. Tratamos de acomodarnos, midiendo con las manos atadas el espacio. Casi simultáneamente nos descubrimos haciendo lo mismo: levantando nuestros antifaces, mirándonos (Valdés, 1974: 45).

The author introduces the reader in the atmosphere of a concentration camp and activates his/her cultural knowledge of these camps provided by films, literature, reports, interviews, memoirs, historical texts and other writings. The activation of this knowledge is a cultural-rhetorical process, and it quickly generates the cultural-rhetorical communicative code that connects author and readers and allows the perlocutionary impact on the recipients of the text. The relevance of the perlocutionary speech act in the memoirs of sufferance is evident, but other speech acts are enclosed in these texts and their communicative processes and they support the strength of the perlocutionary communication. A locutionary speech act is present in the meaning and the reference that are communicated by the author to the reader, and an illocutionary

speech act is working in the communicative action of the writer as the producer of a text with the purpose of taking effect on the reader as the receiver and interpreter of the text. By means of his illocutionary speech act, Hernán Valdés has the intention of telling the truth and of announcing that he is writing about true events as well as of influencing on the receivers as addressees of his work. The communicative axis of the memoirs of sufferance and other writings of sufferance is supported by the cohesion of the illocutionary speech act, the locutionary speech act and the perlocutionary speech act.

As Hernán Valdés demonstrates, to prevent the prisoners from knowing their own situation and from the possibility of orientation is one of the techniques of degradation of human beings and of destruction of their dignity used in concentration camps. He writes: “Lo cierto es que han conseguido degradar a la mayoría de nosotros.” (Valdés, 1974: 125). The human suffering in the concentration camp is generated not only by depriving people from their freedom, but also by adding actions such as the deprivation of knowledge of time and space. The consequence of it is the loss of coenesthesia as a psychological support of mind and body and the awareness of the difficulty and even the impossibility of connecting the new experiences to the own background. Coenesthesia acquires a communicative function as social coenesthesia (Albaladejo, 2009) and its loss is the deletion of social handles and bearings. The fact that Hernán Valdés and his companions are measuring space with their tied hands and they simultaneously raise their masks and look at each other is a proof of the human need for knowledge, psychological coenesthesia and social coenesthesia.

The author of *Tejas Verdes* discovers himself as a result of the otherness created by the concentration camp. He is the same as before, but he feels that he is speaking in a different way and saying words that he had given up using some years ago. He reflects on his own use of the word “señor” when he addresses one of the men who has arrested him:

- Señor, quisiera tomar agua, también.  
Escucho mi propia voz con extrañamiento y vergüenza. Este “señor”, que no había pronunciado en más de tres años, que había desaparecido

de nuestras relaciones sociales. Y luego, sin buscarlo, el tono quejumbroso, casi implorante, que he dado a la frase (Valdés, 21).

The “extrañamiento” or defamiliarisation implies a feeling of distance and remoteness of the subject in relation to his voice. The author does not recognize himself as the source of his own voice. The sufferance inside the concentration camp alongside a set of measures whose goal is to cancel the consciousness of the own identity produces this defamiliarisation and the loss of personality and dignity. It enhances the cultural-rhetorical communicative code and consequently the perlocutionary strength of the text before the reader.

As reported in Hernán Valdés’ diary, one of the psychological weapons used against prisoners is to confuse them in order that they lose their bearings. Temporal and spatial coordinates are important supports for them, but also to know the accusations of those who have detained them is a strong support. In Tejas Verdes concentration camp prisoners are not able to foresee the key issues in the set of questions of their interrogations and they become confused. Valdés refers to it as follows:

No sé si el procedimiento de los interrogatorios es extremadamente hábil o absolutamente caótico. Todas las preguntas imbéciles podrían formar parte de un *modus operandi* que desconcierta al interrogado y que lo hace descuidar la defensa de aquellos temas para los cuales se había preparado. De hecho, éste es un buen sistema de humillación, incertidumbre, desconcierto. Se trata, en realidad, de mellar todas las defensas (Valdés, 1974: 164).

The concentration camp is the realm of arbitrariness. Time and space are dominated by arbitrary decisions. Inside the camp, the conditions of life and life itself depend on arbitrariness. The injustice of the imprisonment is increased with a lot of orders and decisions that destroy human dignity and delete all psychological support of prisoners. Their dependence on the guards of the camp is absolute:

Estamos perdidos y dependemos sólo de ellos [the guards]. Sólo a través de ellos nuestros nombres, nuestras personalidades, pueden

reencarnarse, y sólo aceptando nuestra culpabilidad tenemos la esperanza de salir con vida. Hay aquí casos que demuestran que los propios interrogadores no sabían de qué acusar al tipo que tenían delante, temblando de terror (Valdés, 1974: 164).

Hernán Valdés establishes a cultural- rhetorical network throughout the entire text by stressing the issues that characterise the reality of life inside the camp and the cultural and social image of concentration camps as well as their terrific conditions for those human beings that have been locked up there.

Rhetorical comparison, i.e. simile, plays a key role in the connection between author and readers through the text. Valdés uses comparison as a tool to achieve their approach to the text and their better understanding of his text, like in the following example, where shots are compared with lashes: “Un par de disparos, como dos latigazos cerca del oído, me detuvieron. Detrás mío no había sino dos o tres compañeros. El resto estaba dentro del patio, junto con el soldado que me apuntaba amenazantemente con el fusil.” (Valdés, 1974: 77). Comparisons lay across the text and contribute to its cohesion and to its cultural-rhetorical configuration. They function as images and provide evidence of the reality of the imprisonment in such a way that they support the interpretation carried out by readers. The narration of the torture suffered by the author is enlightened by the strength of comparison when he is being led to the place of torture: “Camino como un chivo tirado de las barbas.” (Valdés, 1974: 133). When telling his torture with electricity, the author compares his ribs with a grille:

Alguien me fricciona violentamente sobre el corazón. Pero yo, como había oído decir, lo siento en la boca, escapándoseme. Comienzo a respirar con la boca, a una velocidad endiablada. No encuentro el aire. El pecho me salta, las costillas son como una reja que me oprime. No queda nada de mí sino esta avidez histérica de mi pecho por tragar aire (Valdés, 1974: 134).

Comparisons work in *Tejas Verdes* as a cultural-rhetorical device. They are activated and supported relying on the cultural knowledge of reality and are projected onto readers by the author in a perlocutionary speech

act. Readers know what are the meanings of “chivo” (“billy goat”), “latigazos” (“lashes”) or “grille” (“reja”) and the fact that these expressions are the goal members of a two-members comparison intensifies their understanding of the source members of that comparison and reinforce the cultural-rhetorical network of the text, the cultural-rhetorical communicative code and the connection between author and readers.

It is difficult to establish a binary structure inside/outside as an opposition between life inside the concentration camp and life outside it, since the imprisonment of Hernán Valdés occurred during Pinochet’s dictatorship and there was not freedom neither inside the camp nor outside, although the conditions of life were worst inside the camp. Therefore, when Valdés is released, he continues to be confused, as he writes in the final lines of *Tejas Verdes*:

A la entrada de Santiago el camión se detiene. Un soldado baja y va hasta la cabina. Hace descender a un par de prisioneros. Luego cierran de nuevo y el viaje prosigue. Nos parece que los han soltado. ¿Será posible? Estamos en un estado de ansiedad insoportable.

Echo a andar, sin mirar por dónde ha ido el español, sin volverme para observar el camión, que ha partido en seguida, ando cada vez más rápidamente, sin mirar hacia atrás, sin ver a nadie, mareado por este espacio que hay hacia adelante – es una calle desconocida –, a toda prisa, reteniéndome para no correr y a la vez para no volver la cabeza hacia atrás. (Valdés, 1974: 174).

The effect of his imprisonment does not disappear with his release. It lasts because the arbitrariness and the lack of certainties have become rooted in the mind of the prisoners during their imprisonment in the concentration camp. Even their release has been planned by dictatorship as a way of psychological torture: they are on a lorry without knowing the destination of this transport.

After his release, Valdés asked for political *asylum* in the Embassy of Sweden in Santiago de Chile and travelled to Spain, where

he wrote and published *Tejas Verdes* in 1974. This work was published in Chile many years later, in 1996<sup>3</sup>.

The Portuguese writer José de Almada Negreiros has written: “Os olhos da nossa memória vêem melhor do que os nossos” (Negreiros, 2014: 99). He praises memory by stressing the special sight of memory, whose eyes see better than our eyes. Memory and its eyes have an advantage provided by time, distance and overview that is not at the disposal of our eyes. Memory is necessary for writing and it is one of the foundations of literature and not only of memoirs. The explanation of the poetic creation given by the Romantic poet William Wordsworth in his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* can be applied to all literary writing:

I have said that Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. (Wordsworth, 1990: 886).

Emotion and recollection are activated in writing, in such a way that emotion is seen by the eyes of memory, and consequently is interpreted through memory, which offers recollections to become part of writing. Although Wordsworth refers to poetry, his ideas about emotion and recollection are also valid for other literary genres, like narrative and,

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<sup>3</sup> In the “Prólogo” to the Chilean edition of 2012 of *Tejas Verdes*, signed by Hernán Valdés in Kassel in January of 2012, he writes: “Este libro fue escrito hace casi cuatro décadas, en Barcelona, donde aterricé gracias a una misteriosa invitación obtenida por mi amigo Manuel A. Garretón tras salir yo del campo de concentración de Tejas Verdes, en un cuarto sin ventanas, en un piso de conspiradores antifranquistas próximo a la catedral y, como decía en el prólogo original, al ‘calor de la memoria’, me senté frente a la máquina y me largué a escribir. Sin pensar en cualquier tipo de elaboración literaria y sin otra pretensión que mostrar a la opinión pública la cara oculta, la intimidad, por así decir, de la brutalidad militar chilena, que meses después del golpe de Estado, pese a la abundante información periodística, era casi completamente ignorada en lo concerniente a la rutina de la tortura de los campos de concentración. Así, mientras los ruidos de la ciudad vibraban tras los muros, me sometí a revivir la experiencia pasada, hora por hora, día por día, con horror y placer, el placer de decidir yo mismo el momento de mi liberación del horror y entonces de bajar a tomar un buen café en Las Ramblas.” (Valdés, 2012: 7).

of course, memoirs and all autobiographical writings. The author of *Lyrical Ballads* offers a general view of creation that fits the writing of sufferance which memoirs of sufferance are.

*Tejas Verdes* is writing of sufferance, it is a work created in conflict time and about life in conflict, and it constitutes an everlasting testimony of endurance and opposition to dictatorship. As a memoir of sufferance, *Tejas Verdes* is a priceless contribution to human awareness of freedom and of the loss of freedom, as well as a warning in conflict and post-conflict about sufferance because of dictatorship. The writing of sufferance holds an extraordinary communicative strength based on its cultural-rhetorical construction and shape, which connects the author's memory of life and the reader's memory of knowledge within the collective memory (Garretón, 2012). The cultural-rhetorical foundations of the connection between authors and readers are linked to the experience of life and to the knowledge acquired from memoirs and all kinds of literature and discourse. Films, news, audiovisual reports, interviews, etc. play a decisive role in that knowledge. We are within *a galaxy of discourses we live by*. All discourses (written discourses, audiovisual discourses, digital discourses, literature, film, news, etc.) are dynamically included in that galaxy. Our production and our interpretation of discourses allow that all of them remain with more or less strength in our memory, and they can be completely or partially recollected and activated in new processes of production and interpretation of discourses. This can be considered one of the key issues of our life in society, where memory has an indispensable function.

### III

Taking into account Bakhtin's concept of chronotope (Bakhtine, 1978: 235) and consequently considering time and space as important criteria for conflict and post-conflict, *Tejas Verdes* offers an interesting position: when the author wrote this work, he was outside the concentration camp but not far from it, because the experience of his imprisonment was within his mind thanks to memory and travelled with him everywhere. Conflict and post-conflict were melted like metals of

an alloy. When Hernán Valdés was away from Chile, he was objectively in a space out of the conflict, but he subjectively was no doubt in a situation of conflict where memory and the consequent recollection prevented him from oblivion, either in conflict or in post-conflict.

Post-conflict is a special situation marked by time in relation to conflict. However, time is not the only characteristic of post-conflict; other features are taken into account in the explanation of post-conflict: the extension of the conflict in the post-conflict, the memory and the reconstruction. Bernard McGuirk has written an enlightening book on post-conflict and its manifestation in all kinds of discourses dealing with the Falklands-Malvinas war: literature, film, media (McGuirk, 2007). Memory plays a necessary role in post-conflict discourses expressing conflict and post-conflict itself (Demaria, 2006; Demaria, Wright, eds, 2006; Goh, McGuirk, eds., 2007; Albaladejo, 2013b). A cultural-rhetorical network is established in post-conflict discourses set up by the recollection achieved by authors and also by readers, and a cultural-rhetorical communicative code is activated to support the connection between them. Post-conflict discourses and memoirs of sufferance as well as other types of writing of sufferance merge into the construction of an enduring representation of individual and social life and all its circumstances. The importance of this representation in discourse is stressed by the fact that it is vital and essential for contemporary and future generations of human beings who will learn to recognise and appreciate the values of peace, liberty and justice. This is the reason why writing of suffering is part of the heritage of Humanity.



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**Part II**  
**Individual Experiences: Feminism and Migration**

Feminism during the Period of the Spanish Transition to Democracy:  
Lidia Falcón O'Neill

MARTA NOGUEROLÉS JOVÉ

**Abstract.** This article offers an analysis of the amendments to the women's right law in the Second Spanish Republic (1931), and both during the Francoist dictatorship (1939 – 1975) and the Spanish transition to democracy. Special attention is paid to the progress achieved by a famous feminist intellectual Lidia Falcón O'Neill in the latter period.

**Keywords:** women, feminism, democracy, Lidia Falcón, Spain.

## 1. The short life of the Second Republic

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century many feminists fought to gain women's rights and to suppress their oppression by men. Concepcion Arenal, Emilia Pardo Bazan, Clara Campoamor, Margarita Nelken, Carmen de Burgos, as well as many writers, artists and politicians dedicated their works to feminist issues. The process gave its result in 1931 when the Second Republic was proclaimed. During this very short period of time, significant achievements were accomplished in favor of protecting women's rights.

During that ephemeral era, which comprised five years of public and political changes, great attention was paid to women's rights. In fact, it was a new era when both women and men had equal status in public. Feminist leaders and some political parties enthusiastically began to create a new country where the interests of female population would be considered. (Falcón O'Neill, 2012: 36).<sup>1</sup>

Prior to proclaiming the Second Republic, women were in critical condition in Spain: The 1889 Civil Code was in force whereby females

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<sup>1</sup> Falcón O'Neill, L. (2012), *La pasión feminista de mi vida. Cincuenta años de feminismo en España*, Barcelona: El viejo topo.

were deprived of a number of rights legally. On the other hand, there were no gender differences toward issues of punishment in the Criminal Code. It should be noted, however, that in the 1930s, due to the influence of Hollywood films, there was widespread speculation that women were passive and depressed. The intellectuals of that period, including José Ortega y Gasset and Doctor Marañón, shared views that women were just physical creatures and, therefore, must stay away from the world of reason. The intellectuals considered that women had one function – to maintain species. Clara Campoamor, Victoria Kent and Margarita Nelken, together with their accomplices, opposed this retrograde ideas. Their goal was to create a new republic of Spain. For this reason, it was unacceptable to them to proscribe 52 percent of the population from society.

It is beyond doubt that Clara Campoamor was the leading character of the Second Republic. She was a member of the Constitutional Commission in charge of the preparation of the draft of the Constitution of the new republic. Although the Left, as well as many activists of her party (the Republican Radical Party) opposed her, she managed to achieve the women's right to vote in Spain in 1931. Her book *El voto femenino y yo. Mi pecado mortal* offers a comprehensive analysis of the challenges the author had to overcome in order to gain women's rights.

There was no place or second of complete calm: There were aggressive and senseless discussions everywhere – in the corridors of the parliament, in the halls, at the meetings of the minorities, at the party gatherings, at the assemblies, in the streets and at public or personal meetings. Men and, surprisingly women obliged to emphasize their antagonistic positions. They casually pointed out my disgraceful position that denounced the ideas of the Second Republic. Sometimes I was too exhausted to attend the meetings of the parliament. (Campoamor, 2018: 24).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Campoamor, C. (2018), *El voto femenino y yo. Mi pecado mortal*, Sevilla: Editorial Renacimiento.

Following a painstaking fight, on October 1, 1931, in the absence of 40 percent of the members of the parliament, Clara Campoamor's constituent initiative, which enabled women's suffrage, was achieved with 161 votes in favor, 121 against. In addition, her effort was resulted in obtaining permission to legal abortion, divorce, prostitution, the spread of literacy among women and the right to work. Eventually, women became full-fledged members of society. She successfully advocated for improvement children's right law and death penalty abolition. Noteworthy is that this success was dearly bought, and gradually she was banished from Spain's political arena. In 1934, Clara Campoamor left the Radical Party. In that same year, she tried to join the Republican Left, but her admission was denied. So she became non-party republican. Following the Spanish Civil War, she had to flee the country and made her way to Argentina. Later, she moved to Switzerland, where he died.

## 2. From the Francoist Dictatorship to the Spanish transition to democracy

On July 18, 1936 a military coup led by General Francisco Franco took place against the government of the Second Republic. On April 1, 1939 Franco's forces gained victory that brought about the beginning of dictatorship in Spain, which lasted until Franco's death on November 20, 1975. The Francoist Dictatorship triggered not only the overthrow of the Republic, but also brought the Spanish women back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Women lost all the newly-gained rights, and based on the national and catholic ideologies, their function was being a laborious wife, multiparous mother and a kind Christian.

Women were made silent and invisible in all areas of public life. One could see a woman's photography in special publications, such as: journals of fashion or culinary and journals designed for housekeepers or men" (Falcón O'Neill, 2012: 38).

The fact that during the dictatorship women continued underground activities to gain their rights is also noteworthy. In 1953 the Association of Spanish Women was established. It was democratic and anti-Franco.

Later, in 1964 the first political and feminist organization called *Women's Democratic Movement* was created. Its leaders were both the communist and non-political women. The main goal of the movement was to fight for freedom and democracy. Since 1971, other organizations have been established. *The Association of Divorced Spanish Women* and *the Association of Women Lawyers* were among them. The latter was tasked with reforming family law.

Since 1976, the feminist movement has gained momentum and achieved great success in the public arena in Spain. In 1981 a new Spanish Divorce Law was adopted, which was intensely confronted by conservative circles. In 1985 induced abortion was legalized in three cases: rape, malformations or defects, physical or mental, in the fetus, and serious risk to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman. In 2010 the decriminalization of the practice of abortion during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy was specified in the law.

### 3. Lidia Falcón O'Neill: Spanish feminism icon of the transition period. A short biography. Lidia Falcón's feminist thinking

Lidia Falcón O'Neill is a well-known feminist leader and the most outstanding Spanish feminist in the history of Spain, including both the period of anti-Franco and the transition period. She was born on December 13, 1935, in Madrid. She studied law, dramatics and journalism, and submitted her PhD thesis to the Autonomous University of Madrid. She did her doctoral thesis called "Women and Political Power" under the supervision of Carlos París, the head of the Philosophy Department.

Lidia comes from a family of activists and intellectuals who inspired her with love of culture and taught her how to defend social justice:

My family is both the trunk and the roots of my tree. It composes of progressive and left-wing ancestors. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century my grandmothers and grandfathers united both physically and financially in support of liberals' uprising. They suffered persecutions and exile on a charge of supporting the revolution (Falcón O'Neill, 2003: 9).



Her father, César Falcón, was a Peruvian communist, military officer, journalist, politician and writer. Her mother, Enriqueta O'Neill (alias Regina Flavio) was a writer and feminist. Lidia's grandmother, Regina de Lamo (alias Nora Avante) was an anarchist, syndicalist and feminist. She was an activist of the Labor Movement. Lidia's aunt, Carlota O'Neill, as an émigré in Mexico, published articles regarding those people who were deprived of their inheritance and were tortured. Lidia's great grand-mother, Rosario de Acuña, was a writer. Lidia recalls her family, saying:

Would it be boastful of me to say that I learnt the thing, which I have always defended in the family? My grandmother - Regina de Lamo, my aunt - Carlota O'Neill and my mother - Enriqueta O'Neill were left-wing feminists, which cost them much: they were persecuted and imprisoned. They lost the dearest people and had to lead illegal life in poverty and grief. They have never turned their back on their beliefs or betrayed people's trust, however. In addition, they have never tried to gain personal benefits in exchange of their own views. I learned from them how to maintain and defend my own dignity, and how to fight for justice. In spite of the fact that I had to face so many troubles, including imprisonment and torture, I don't regret the things I fought for. Therefore, I live a feminist life (Falcón O'Neill, 2012: 22).

She derived inspiration to fight for the restoration of social justice, and particularly in respect of women's right from the above-mentioned family situation. Lidia recalls:

I have been deeply concerned about injustice that happened all over the world since childhood. Injustice against women was among them. In my childhood and youth, being a woman in Spain meant belonging to the social class, which was in disgrace and disregarded. It was a shortcoming of a family if there was born a girl, and especially if a boy was not born there earlier (Falcón O'Neill, 2012: 37).

Lidia has been married three times. Her first husband was Alfredo Bora. They have two children - Regina and Carlos Enrique. They lived together for three years. In 1959 Lidia got married to a journalist Eliseo Baio. The couple separated in a few years. Finally, she got married to

the Chief of the Department of Philosophy, Carlos Paris, who became the greatest love of her life, and endless source of intellectual affinity.

Lidia Falcón is characterized by her active lifestyle, bravery and enthusiasm for fighting against social injustice that is unusual today. Lidia loves to quote Gramsci: "Telling the truth is always revolutionary".

Lidia strongly believes in the need for human dignity, as well as democratic values and feminist ideas that became a great hindrance to her life. She was imprisoned, tortured and forced into exile under the Franco's regime. In addition, Lidia often had confrontations with different feminist groups in Spain. She arguably won more renown abroad than in Spain. This fact has never hindered her in fighting against patriarchy and machismo violence, however.

Feminist leaders all over the world were Lidia's source of inspiration. She has an amazing library stock collection that comprises about seven thousand books. Now it is preserved in the National Archives of Catalonia. Lidia's thought base is Marxism that allows her to analyze cases of the exploitation of women as a social class. Let me come back to this point later. Now I'd like to observe upon this matter that Lidia was impressed by a socialist writer and feminist Flora Tristan. She was a precursor of the syndicalist movement. Lidia shares her ideology about the defense of both women's and workers' rights. Flora Tristan's hard life was full of episodes of violence, marginalization and enmity perpetrated by males. Flora Tristan's personality is still unknown to the wider society, including those who consider themselves a Marxist and an excellent authority on "Capital". Only a small group of philosophers know that Saint-Simon was Flora Tristan's disciple and that she was his source of inspiration. Her works were examined by Marx and Engels who quoted her: "Proletarians of all countries, unite!" The author of the "Workers' Union" referred a woman as a "proletarian of the proletariat". Engels developed this idea in his work "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State". Being influenced by Flora's thoughts, Lidia Falcón defines woman as a social class in exploitation. Later, she developed this idea in her feminist philosophy. Another author who made a great contribution to the formulation of Lidia's

world view was a Russian Marxist Alexandra Kollontai. She wrote about love, sexuality, and relations between women and men. She was sure that the only class that could defeat a corrupt bourgeois class was a proletariat that was tasked with disseminating emancipated women's messages. She was known for her advocacy of free love and those women who wanted to be acquitted from bourgeois moral prejudices. She established the first guard service, enacted provisions of law that granted privileges to mothers. She took measures to prevent prostitution, as well as sexually transmitted diseases.

Lidia Falcón considers feminism a social movement, philosophical ideology and political program. Feminism is a new vision of the universe to her, which exceeds anarchism, socialism and communism. Feminism is an analogue of the wretched society and its heads are sunk into the desperate being of millions of people. They provoke to begin destructive wars and devastate the planet's resources. He shares Carlo Paris's opinion that feminism is not a biological but an ideological phenomenon, and it can be apprehended by every person regardless of his/her gender identity.

Her work is multifaceted and comprises of essay, romance, dramaturgy, poetry and journalistic publications that are translated into many languages. She has established the journals *Vindicación Feminista* (*Feminist Vindication*) and *Poder y Libertad* (*Power and Freedom*). She is both the founder and the president of the club *Vindicación Feminista* and Feminist Party of Spain (1979).

Lidia Falcón's most important work that presents landmarks in her feminist philosophy is *Feminist Theory*. In 1981 the work was published by the publishing house *Fontanella* in Barcelona. This is a comprehensive work based on the Marxist methodology that reflects the material causes of women's exploitation at different times and within different societies. To Lidia, woman is a victim of a type, who has not completed the history of her development yet. She is considered not a person but a continuation of the type, and a mean of sexual satisfaction of the male. The most obvious example of the female's "natural-brutal condition" is a polemic about abortion. According to it, female has to serve to the continuation of the type with her own body.

Religion, as well as politics, philosophy, education and science in general use the concept of “natural” to justify the fact of male domination in order to convince women that there is no other alternative for them but to conception, giving birth and growing up. While men strive for the development of social history, women’s duty is depend on the physical abilities based on their physiological functions. In conclusion, women represent depressed social class that does not take into account the fact that by creating a new life it creates a useful product, which is essential and usable, for it creates a “workforce” in society. Housekeeping is women’s additional function together with pregnancy and childbirth. The “workforce” is the most valuable product in society. Neither housekeeping nor reproductive functions are considered work, however. Thus, woman doesn’t create connection between productivity and capitalism. It is her husband who does. On the other hand, female alienation is much deeper than what a worker feels because woman transforms not the nature, but only the self. Her genital system is a man’s own device, and the outcome or a child belongs to a husband (That’s why a child has father’s last name). This alienation makes the woman feel that over the years she has been used as a reproductive device in society, which is created by the man for his own well-being. At the same time, it is obvious that changes in the woman’s body during pregnancy don’t indicate her future health.

The man does not only own the woman’s reproductive activity, but also he is a disposer of her body. The possibility to satisfy his sexual desires is at his disposal. In primitive society where was no free choice of husbands, the woman knew about her fate since childhood. She belonged to a specific man since childhood by the decision of her own father who received material benefits from marriage. Adolescents were transferred to the ownership of their husbands to meet their sexual needs, paying special taxes in exchange. There is a similar intercourse in case of prostitution. The woman who wants to get free from a procurer must pay a certain amount of money to him. In the case of a family, the woman must compensate a marriage portion to her husband if she decides to leave him.

In capitalist countries where the woman is allowed to choose her husband, she is often deceived by a romantic bourgeois discourse and believes that she will get what she gives.

On the other hand, both in primitive and capitalist societies, the woman incapable of child-bearing or meeting sexual needs of her husband is condemned to divorce. It is out of the question in the case of men. In addition, the woman is not allowed to have several husbands. Polygamy is admitted in a number of societies, and is considered a very profitable initiative, however. As for the man, he is allowed to have several assistants and to receive sexual pleasure from several women, who will be outcasts as soon as they lose their attraction.

One of the harshest reflections of male domination over female body is mutilation of genital organs, which is present in both Christian and Muslim societies, and it is very difficult to bring to an end. There are many examples of this, including: cutting down a clitoris with razor, placing different things in the vagina and sewing labia that is ripped by the husband during the first night. The above-mentioned actions are aimed at gaining mastery over the woman. The facts of damaging to the body are analyzed by Freud, who argued that a woman who could not achieve a vaginal orgasm needed special treatment. Thus, the purpose of the most important female organ for getting pleasure was brought into question.

Other examples of male domination over female includes the physical insulting, immobilizing, cutting of nose and ears, or forcing to be burnt down alive with a deceased husband. In primitive societies violence was a kind of punishment for looking into the face of a man, and touching or looking at the holy things.

Lidia created a comprehensive review regarding men's violence against women in all its dimensions and in different cultures over the human history.

#### 4. The journals *Vindicación Feminista* and *Poder y Libertad*.

In 1976, Lidia Falcón and Carmen Alcalde established the feminist journal *Vindicación Feminista*. The journal has been published for three years, and then it was closed due to lack of financing. This was a very

critical and oppositional journal that protested against women's traditional role as housekeeper, which was established under the Franco regime. In July of 1979, she established the journal *Poder y Libertad*. 35 issues of the publication has been published until it stopped existence in 2004. When presenting the first edition, Lidia Falcón, as an editor-in-chief, noted that while other left-wing journals<sup>3</sup> of that period, including *Zona Abierta*, *El Viejo topo*, *Materiales*, *Realidades*, *Taula de canvi* and others featured feminist issues, none of them offered a comprehensive description of the Feminist Party's achievements, and avoided featuring the most significant principle that "Women belonged to a social class that was oppressed by men".

The journal *Poder y Libertad* was supervised by Elvira Siurana and Margarita Junoy, the editorial secretary of the journal. The editorial board members were: Carmen Sarmiento, the journalist and María Tero, the lawyer and the Honorable Doctor at the Madrid Autonomous University. The editorial board members were also men, including Carlos Paris, Josep Ricou and Joan Gavín. Years later, Javier Sádaba and Tomás Pollán joined them. Many famous feminist activists of that time cooperated with the journal. These were: Carlota Bustelo, Cristina Almeida, Lourdes Ortiz, Celia Amorós, Cristina Alberdi, José Luis Sampedro,<sup>4</sup> Agustín García Calvo, writer Elena Poniatowska and others. Special monographs were dedicated to the issues, such as: "Woman and Power", "Woman and Islam", "Sexual Violence", "Prostitution" and "Pornography".

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<sup>3</sup> Following the death of the dictator, a series of new political journals were published. Their main goal was to support establishing democratic values in Spain. For this reason, the articles that were published in these journals featured not only political issues, but also issues regarding feminism, homosexuality, environmentalism and control over social movements (prisons and compulsory psychiatric treatment).

<sup>4</sup> In 2013 Lidia Falcón dedicated an article to his death in the newspaper *El País* (*The Country*). This is an extract from the article: "He was not only a kind, handsome and friendly person, but also he was a clever critical analyst of modern political events, a good writer and better feminist. He was a good feminist not because for him men's and women's rights were equal in respect of sexual relationships, as well as birth and abortion, and he rejected men's domination over women, but because he was able to apprehend and feel female sensitiveness, women's desires, their feelings of frustration, pain and suppression, and he could emphasize with them."

## 5.Lidia Falcón's political activity: Feminist Party of Spain

Lidia Falcón was actively involved both in the creative and political arenas. She was in opposition to the Franco regime. At first she joined the Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia, and later she became a member of the Communist Party that was led by Enrique Lister. After some time, due to different ideological views, she left both political parties. She didn't stop her political fighting against the dictatorship, however. For this reason, the police persecuted, tortured and imprisoned her twice.<sup>5</sup>

Following the death of the dictator in 1975, an amnesty was announced, and Lidia was released from imprisonment. She continued her political career with *La Unió de Republicans Cataluña (The Democratic Union of Catalonia)*, which was coordinated by the Republican Assembly of Madrid. She was the only woman in the union, because at that time the political arena was only for men. Later, the union stopped its political existence. Next year Lidia, as a member of the Spanish delegation, participated in the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women, which took place in March of 1976 in Brussels. When she came back from Brussels she, with different political parties, participated in *Jornadas Catalanas de la Dona*, which took place in May of 1976 in the hall of the University of Barcelona.

In cooperation with her feminist colleagues, Lidia worked much on the amendment to the divorce law, which was annulled during the Francoist dictatorship and readopted in July of 1981. Lidia noted that the heads of the People's Party were against the legalization of divorce. Their position was agreed with the church (Falcón O'Neil, 2012: 229). In 1980, when the democracy was practically established in Spain Lidia was physically abused by police officers because she organized unauthorized meeting demanding legalization of divorce.

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<sup>5</sup> The Franco regime accused her of being in connection with the attack that was conducted by terrorist group called ETA in the Correo Street in 1974. Lidia admitted recently that when she was detained she was tortured by Billy el Niño and Roberto Conesa, the secret police officers. The first police officer, who was distinguished with special viciousness has received various awards, including *Medalla de Plata* in 1977. Today, the Society for the Restoration of Historical Memory tries to deprive him of the award.

The other goal Lidia fought for was the legalization of abortion. Following a series of detentions and releases, in which men were also involved, her effort gave its result and in 1983 the Socialist Party of Spain, which ruled the country over one year adopted an amendment to the Criminal Code, wherein abortion was legalized in three cases: rape, serious risk to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman and malformations. Noteworthy is that Abortion Laws, which were adopted in all developed countries of Europe, were more liberal. For this reason, Lidia sent letters to the ministers of the socialist countries. Besides, she published a long article in the newspaper *Diario 16*, emphasizing that the amendments to the Abortion Law were retrograde. She did not receive any response. Later, in 2010 the fight of female members of the Socialist Party gave its result and Law on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy was adopted in Spain.

Lidia also participated in the assemblies and demonstrations against NATO. The civilian movement was created based on the anti-NATO platform. Later, the movement was called *Izquierda Unida (United Left)*. It was tasked with bringing left-wing political organizations back to the political arena. Lidia was one of the founders of this coalition. However, later, she separated from it because she realized that her colleagues didn't share her feminist views. Lidia created *Colectivo Feminista (The Feminist Collective)*. It was a general collective body without a status, governing body and regulations. Its members were Lidia, her daughter Regina and several associates. Their experience turned out to be very gratifying in that period when Spain was beginning to awaken from a forty-year dictatorship: "This was the first time that women had met, talked and discussed the difficulties of the current situation in Spain (Falcón O'Neil, 2012: 157).

*Colectivo Feminista* was dissolved due to its chaotic structure and some of its members' activities. Later, better structured, hierarchical and more effective group was created on its base. The group was called the Revolutionary Feminist Organization. In 1979, it was converted to the Feminist Party of Spain, which didn't manage to get a legal status until 1981. In 2015, the Party joined United Left. The Feminist Party of Spain aims at eliminating violence conducted by the



patriarchal society that brings about death for almost hundred women in Spain every year. Through elimination of violence against women it will be possible to create a fair and egalitarian society. The other goal of the Party is to create the Third Republic, for only through this way it is possible to establish such political, social and economic democracy that includes all social classes, and particularly women. The Feminist Party of Spain intends to eradicate all commercial activities that are connected with a body. This goal can be achieved only through the abolition of prostitution, as well as the prohibition of surrogacy.

In 2016, the Feminist Party of Spain laid the foundation of the Feminist Struggle Front, which united different associations, as well as individuals who aimed at uniting feminist power in order to eliminate male violence in our society. Therefore, it did its best to make amendments to the Law on Gender Based Violence, which was adopted on December 28, 2004.

Lidia Falcón is still spirited to eliminate male violence against women that is one of the characteristics of the capitalist and patriarchal society. She is sure that the feminist movement should not be beyond the political arena. She is greatly concerned about the fact that feminism acquires non-political functions that affects other social movements:

Protecting victims of male violence and opposing the patriarchal society, as well as eliminating the wars of imperialist aggression, distributing wealth equally and changing the form of state are the main goals that can be achieved only through political arena. Underestimation of political power is as much as not to estimate it properly. However, this indifferent attitude is established and orchestrated by the same authority. (Falcón O'Neill, 2019).

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Edward W. Said (1935 – 2003) or the Critic towards the Orient: The  
Art of Refurbishing the Conflict through Cultural Rhetoric

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**Abstract.** Edward W. Said established that “Orientalism is, and does not simply represent, a considerable dimension of modern political-intellectual culture, and as such has less to do with the Orient than it does with «our» world”. Because Orientalism is in principle a political and cultural fact, so it can be that there is a wide bibliographic gap around it. In fact, Orientalism is not a considerable dimension of a modern culture in its political and cultural aspect, and in this sense it would have less to do with the East than with the West. But despite being a fact of both political and cultural nature, it is the result as a Critic foresees a Conflict through Cultural Rhetoric, considering that the East follows certain recognition paradigms that grant it the degree of intellectual category and academic discipline. Hence we could talk about factors of textuality and intertextuality. Therefore, it is about the distribution of a geopolitical aspect in Aesthetics, Cultural Rhetoric and in its texts, both philological, historical, sociological and economic. It is not a mere political issue contemplated in a passive way in the culture, the academic world or its institutions. Nor is it a wide-ranging and scattered collection of articles and texts about the East, Power, Politics, Culture and Critics. This is the art of refurbishing the Orient through the Cultural Rhetoric of the Conflict.

**Keywords:** Said (Edward W.), the Critic, the Orient, the Conflict, Cultural Rhetoric.

1. Introduction: The South/East Conflict of Edward W. Said

The Eastern Question was conceived as the geopolitical consequence of the Southern Question. Its birth was perceived due to the intellectual and popular disappointment that had been aroused among the ruling classes, both as in the *Depressed South* and to the *Occupied East*. In those terms, the hegemonic question was not anything else than

repression, indiscriminate and high taxes, and enshrined, brutal and repressive public leaders. These feelings were shared by all intellectuals in unison. It did not matter whether these sentiments were conservative or progressive. According to the leading class, the Southern issue was linked to the colonial question that was based on the concept of political occupation (Mayo, 2007: 2). Therefore, the Eastern or Southern issue emerged as a shift of the national question, where the concepts of South or East did not need to be only clarified by well-intentioned politicians, but quite the opposite. They needed a good conception of the Oriental question: The emancipation of the East requires the democratic emancipation of all these people (Cortés-Ramírez, 2012: 67). On the one hand, the East was created as a study object by means of the discoveries of the ancient texts, literature, culture, philosophy and anthropology that intentionally highlighted its difference and its distinction. On the other, those studied societies became dehumanised by this idea. Before the publication of the Edward W. Said's seminal study in 1978, *Orientalism* was never a disinterested science. On the contrary, they operated under the premise of unequal relations with the intention of determining how could deal with and manage different countries. The underlying tenets persisted in the idea that the East was an aberrant place, underdeveloped, inferior and unable to define itself. These categories, according to Said, are morally corrupt and essentially destructive. In his book *Orientalism*, Said uses two comments. The first is taken from the novel *Tancred*, written by Benjamin Disraeli in 1847, where the East is introduced as a means where British officials could develop a political career. Louis Bloomfield quotes historian Alan John Percival Taylor's remark that Disraeli enlarged some difficulties such as *The Great Asian Mystery* for the pleasure of surmounting them, and that there was no mystery in the Eastern Question (Bloomfield, 1965). Moreover, in *Orientalism*, Edward W. Said recognised the Western Mind preference to mould mystery when glimpsing in that line (Pope, 2003: 58). The second is a description that Karl Marx makes on the common peasant in his work *Der Achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*, stating that he may not represent himself, but that he must be represented. Here Said ironically alters the project of Metropolitan

hegemony in the invention of imperial history. Thus, Said offers a critique of the whole practice of representation which can never be true or definitive. In other words, this criticism of Said gives *Orientalism* the ability to reinvent structures. Antonio Gramsci's discussion of the Southern Question undoubtedly contributed to build Edward Said's consciousness. This new speech has been developed through a new consideration of Culture that has been designed under a new shape of Cultural Rhetoric, this being that of the Critic towards *the Orient*. For this reason, to Carmel Borg and Peter Mayo:

In many countries of Southern Europe, these are confronted by a Euro-centric cultural heritage that reflects a colonial past, especially in former cores of colonial power such as Spain and Portugal, and a past marked by crusades against the Ottoman Empire in East Mediterranean. A critical approach to this Cultural hegemony in the Southern European regions would enable its participants to engage critically with the region's or country's much acclaimed *Cultural Heritage*, where *Culture* is not being used in the anthropological sense, and its politics of representation. Exotic and often demonic (mis) representations of 'Alterity' abound throughout this cultural heritage, 'alterity' historically having been ascribed, in these areas, to a variety of people, including the 'Saracen' who is regarded as the 'Other' in the context of 'Christian Europe' (Borg & Mayo, 2007: 148).

Through Cultural Rhetoric, the *Other* becomes the subject of a particular kind of construction, a form of *Orientalism* according to Edward Said (Albaladejo, 2019a: 7; Borg & Mayo, 2007: 175). The construction of this new speech denotes a sense of *positional superiority*, on the part of those who promote this particular conception of the *Other*. To Frantz Fanon and later, to Peter Mayo, this would be a reminiscence of the French colonial demonization that has been "taught in the universities for over twenty years" and based on so-called *scientific proof* (Mayo, 2007: 4; Hall, 2000: 39; Fanon, 1963: 76), of the colonised in Algeria, and North Africa in general. Moreover, Tomás Albaladejo stated that this meant a new position in the speech: that of *Ectopic*:

Ectopic literature can be defined as the literature written outside an author's place of origin (source place or space) by authors who have moved to another place (their target place or space), where they are living and writing (Albaladejo, 2011; Hellín Nistal, 2015a; 2015b; Luarsabishvili, 2013). These writers can be called ectopic authors, and their works known as ectopic works (Albaladejo, 2019b: 9).

This construction of a new Postcolonial Vision of the colonised, has been based on the ectopic culture situations, and implemented through Cultural Rhetoric (Moore – Gilbert et al., 1997). Frantz Fanon forcefully exposed this thesis in his classic anti-colonial volume, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon valued Gramsci's contribution by means of his interrupted essay *Some Themes Regarding the Southern Question*<sup>1</sup> (Lazarus, 1993: 90; Fanon, 1963: 43). Probably Said discovered Gramsci through Fanon when Said was introduced into the works of other authors that influenced Gramsci's writings in a positive way. By these are meant, among others, Gaetano Salvemini. His thought, collected in his work *La Questione Meridionale* (1898), was one of the bases on which Said, via Gramsci, would build his theory of *Orientalism*. Salvemini proposed Federalism, Universal Suffrage and the end of Protectionism as immediate solutions to define the Southern issue (Lucchese, 2004). These proposals caused a schism in the ranks of the Italian Socialist Party, whose leaders will remain static and indifferent against cultural and political demands on the *Barbarian* South. In the same way as Edward W. Said had proceeded with regard to the Palestine Liberation Organisation Organization in 1995, years before Salvemini had abandoned the Socialist party due to its structural 'oligarchy' and their 'corporate egoism', closely linked with the dominant ideology of the North, of imperialist and colonialist cut (Adamson, 1983: 22–23). The battle that was established in Italy about the interpretation of the Southern Question reflected the tension between idealism and positivism that encouraged the Italian culture in the early decades of the 20th Century (Urbinati, 1998: 370–391).

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<sup>1</sup> Alcuni Temi sulla Questione Meridionale.

During these decades three intellectuals who also exerted considerable influence on Said were forged on this debate, these being Benedetto Croce, Eugenio Garin and Norberto Bobbio (Bellamy, 2013: 4). Just as in Gramsci, Idealism and Positivism grew in Said's work as opposing views of life and inspired divergent political attitudes. Gramsci wrote in 1918 that, for the positivists, the company was a 'natural body' governed by immutable and fixed laws where the individual does not play an active role in political transformation. By contrast, for idealists, being and knowledge were unified. The social emancipation was a human project to be led by a tenacious will sound under the conscious control of a sordid necessity.

It was within this atmosphere of ideological tension when Gramsci developed his thinking and position on the Southern Question. This Sardinian Gramsci acquired for the same issue of the national question as a result of a struggle against cultural and political hegemony of the North (Bates, 1975: 360). Their solution required the construction of a new relationship between the intellectual and the *Nation People*, between consciousness and being. The idealistic notion of unity between consciousness and being has different implications. These depend on whether they are used as normative argument for social criticism, or if on the contrary, it is a mandatory standard for social construction (Mandoki, 2007: 113). Since then the North–South pairing ceased to be an exclusively geopolitical binary to become a political, economic and cultural triad, where the carrier status of the values of the North was preparing to justify its intervention in everyday life in extraordinary session on Southern development (Gramsci, 1965: 53). Within the political– economic tradition, the basic reason for this intervention is based on the South's recent colonial past.

According to the theories of Gramsci, shared by Said, intellectuals will arise from the union of the Southern peasants and the workers from the North. These intellectuals, gifted with an organic supplement, will lead the revolt against the colonial oppressor. For the idealist philosopher, constructive and critical moments are related in a logical way, and the work of emancipation does not end with social criticism. Instead, Gramsci's reflections on the Southern question

confirm the diversity of his political thought, widening the gap between social criticism and constructivist ambitions. According to Gramsci, the South was the urgent need of a home or a country, in contrast to the idealistic notion of cultural and moral emancipation, shown by powerful critical implications. Gramsci's own consciousness about the Southern Question served as a link with the unitary nature of the hegemonic ideal: The Southern question was identified with the National Question. There was a communication problem between social classes in the South and in particular, between North and South. Therefore, the Southern Question was a cultural problem whose main solution would be the conquest of individual moral autonomy by Southerners and Northern citizens alike. It also was a political question whose solution laid in the transformation of both society and the state. Said perceived in this Gramscian conception of Hegemony that such transformation must begin by means of controlling the imperial culture (Said, 1993: 44). This analysis can be traced through three of his masterworks, these being *Orientalism* (1978), *The World, The Text and The Critic* (1983) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993).

Said's words make understand what leads Western society from his message that sometimes overwhelms: direct contact with reality, emotion or feeling strong and simple, old and ever new, even hard and sweet. His praiseworthy Palestinian land was magnificently spotless of literary abilities. Not even his land was moved by the affectations of some of his poets. He claimed that his original place, despite of being a land from whose cultural imaginary has inspired politics, cultures, and arts for ages (Mackenzie, 1995), has not been felt like a privileged home of the arts, as Italy or Spain, but he kept insisting that life lies there *like blood in an artery*. Said also commented that few regions have been that they were so devastated like this for the fierce wars of religion, race and class:

If you endure the memory of so many unforgivable furies is because they appear here more naked, more spontaneous and less hypocritical than elsewhere, almost innocent in a man's recognition who takes pleasure when he is hurting another man. There is no more dominated place by powerful religions that often encourage prudery and



intolerance, under the devotions brocade or under the stone of dogma. There is no more subdued place than this, but either freer with that rudimentary and supreme freedom that has been released from poverty, indifference, love for life and contempt to death. (Said, 1993: 184).

This consciousness has been transmitted to the Western thought through the literary conventions that are contained in Said's literary production. His thought would assume those critical methods that are associated with certain types of *High Theory* of French style, those which had had a deeply influence on the English-speaking academic world during the seventies decade in the last century. His *Orientalism* was able to adapt elements of this new theory to the study of the connections between Western culture and imperialism, to argue that all Western cultural description systems are deeply conditioned by what Said has described as "politics, considerations, positions and strategies of power" (Cortés-Ramírez, 2012: 70). Somewhat Said had strengthened the old Marxist tradition when at the same time he was challenging it. He reinforced it because he knew how to take the Marxist theory out of its ideological lethargy that had been imposed by the orthodox ideologues, those who had created a dominant version that was called *Real Socialism*. Said challenged it because he knew how to get rid of its obsolescence from its own term that has been coined by that false orthodoxy. This challenge was his great contribution: to revive the immanent dialectical quality of Marxist theory to end the paralysis that had been imposed by the guardians of its alleged orthodoxy, and once so, to recover its critical spirit (Sing & Younes, 2013: 152).

## 2. The Conflict Through Cultural Rhetoric: The Foucault-Said Controversy

Also in the literary, Edward W. Said has been inspired from two fairly clear sources, these being the work of Antonio Gramsci and that of Michel Foucault. Foucault had had a very significant influence on Said's work. The original Said's *Orientalism* has followed Foucault in two paths. First, Said followed Foucault's conception of power as both an entity and as an implementation. Foucault rejected the conception of

power as a force that is based on the simplest repression or on a judicial sentence in post-Enlightenment societies (Olssen et Alii, 2004: 29). In his *The History of Sexuality* (1976) Foucault described the *regressive hypothesis* when power is conceived as an *impersonal* force that is waiting through a multiplicity of places and means to build what he called a *Pastoral Regime*. Through this scheme Foucault sought to control his subjects through a restructuring and making them stand in the social system as objects of power. Foucault has shown this proposition in relation to the psycho-sexual control, the regime of punishment and its discourses about madness and reason. Knowledge is the key to access to the instruments of power, while the subjects of power are primarily identified with their possible mechanisms of *deterrence*. Thus, Foucault developed a powerful discourse that linked all forms to the *Will to Knowledge* and all possible modes of the *Other's* cultural representation to run power (Bernal et alii, 2016).

Second, Said adapted from Foucault the speech that was based on the discourse as an element of instrumental power, and through which power is exercised to build their knowledge objects. As Foucault stated in its *Discipline and Punish* (1975) discourse 'produces reality'. Also, discourse produces domains of subjects and rituals of truth. In Said's work, the disciplinary power regime transforms this *Real East* in the *Discursive East*, both being complementary to each other. Moreover, there is one important difference between Foucault and Said, in regard to the intention issues and to the possibilities and forms of resistance posed by each author towards the dominant. Said opened what could be named as a cathartic reading of Western methodological sources. These sources are one of the reliable features of postcolonial theory. Regarding Foucault, meanwhile, power is in this sense an anonymous network of strategic relationships that tend to be maximized by all possible means. So governments, for example, are just power agents and not power authors (Dews, 1984: 81). According to Foucault, an author as an individual has been conceived as his role within the system from which he operates. In this case, Foucault disagreed from traditional Humanism, saying that the author has never been conceived as a sovereign agent, because he has always been determined and

manipulated by the system. On the contrary, to Said, not only has Western domination of the Eastern world imposed an arbitrary phenomenon, even conscious. Furthermore, it is an intentional process that has been governed by both the individuals' will and intention, such as institutional imperatives. Nevertheless, by means of developing his theory of *Orientalism*, Said argued his personal conception of individual ability that has been provided to avoid the pitfalls of both the dominant power and the aesthetic order of its cultural representations (Dupont and Pearce, 2001).

In fact, *Orientalism* could not have been a reality without Michel Foucault's working presence and his idea of *Discourse*:

A text purporting to contain knowledge about something actual, and arising out of circumstances similar to the ones I have just described, is not easily dismissed. Expertise is attributed to it. The authority of academics, institutions, and governments can accrue to it, surrounding it with still greater prestige than its practical successes warrant. Most important, such texts can *create* not only knowledge but also the very reality they appear to describe. In time such knowledge and reality produce a tradition, or what Michel Foucault calls a discourse, whose material presence or weight, not the originality of a given author, is really responsible for the texts produced out of it. This kind of text is composed out of those preexisting units of information deposited by Flaubert in the catalogue of *idées reçues*. (Said, 1978: 94).

The result of this discourse exercise would be its impact on both Literary Criticism and Social Sciences. Since its first publication in 1978, Said's discourse on *Orientalism* has made reconsider different concepts, literary texts representations, travel books, memoirs, stories, academic essays and their relationship with imperial power. In other words, *Orientalism* emphasized the cultural field of colonialism, as a domain that is relatively differentiated from the economic field. Despite its success, criticisms started very swift, and most of these were right, and also malicious and worthless (Rodríguez-Freire, 2011: 44). Among them, that of the anthropologist James Clifford's, who would discuss, among other subjects, the use of Foucault's methodology, establishing that:

Said's humanist perspectives do not harmonize with his use of methods derived from Foucault, who is of course a radical critic of Humanism. But however wary and inconsistent its appeals, *Orientalism* is a pioneering attempt to use Foucault systematically in an extended cultural analysis. Its difficulties and successes should thus be of interest to historians, critics, and anthropologists. (Clifford, 1988: 264).

Most of Michel Foucault's Discourse methodology on Said's *Orientalism* is based on Antonio Gramsci's notions of rhetorical criticism. These could be applied to *Orientalism* as a method in order to allow critical self-reflection and praxis, through opportunities and perspectives that lead us to conceptualize this basic communication in the East-West dialogue. Benedetto Croce stated that the interpretation of the Southern question, or in this case, the Oriental, reflected the tension between Idealism and Positivism. This tension encouraged Italian culture during the first decades of the 20th Century (Croce, 1929: 238–239; Garin, 1955: 20–30; Bobbio, 1990: 27–38). Idealism and Positivism grew in opposite life conceptions and inspired divergent political attitudes. According to Said, and as Gramsci wrote in 1918, for Positivists, society was a *natural body* that is governed by immutable laws, where the citizen remains outside of its possible participation in the political transformation of society (Daldal, 2014: 158). On the contrary, for the idealistic Marxist, being and knowledge were *unified* because social emancipation was a human project to be developed by a tenacious rational will within its tough need of conscious control. As Gramsci had done, it was within this situation of ideological tension where Said developed his political thought, his understanding of the Eastern Question, and its project on the birth of *Orientalism* (Maldonado, 2016).

The Southern Question was a national issue to both the Sardinian Gramsci and the Palestinian Said, as a political topic and as a question of hegemony (Mayo, 2007; Brennan, 1988). It must be insisted that their solution required the construction of a new relationship

between the Public Intellectual and people as a nation, between consciousness and being. This idealistic notion of unity between consciousness and being has two different consequences. Years earlier, Gramsci developed his theoretical perspective when he was aligned with some idealistic intellectuals such as Gaetano Salvemini and Guido Dorso against the Positivists, and even more, against the Socialists (Germino, 1990). Gramsci himself maintained consistently his idealistic position throughout time and history in two senses: the former as a normative reason for social criticism; and the latter, in terms of his use as an imperative normative policy for social construction (Garin, 1955: 302–309). The concept as a normative reason had undoubtedly had a strong emancipatory effect. This was because since then, it has let criticize human subordination under an external authority. This review has been supported on a political and social order complaint that was based on the principle of coercion that should be replaced by the principle of free consent. Gramsci 's appeal for individual autonomy and the recognition of a moral and equal dignity for all human beings, was based on this premise. Furthermore, through Orientalism, Said replaced Gramsci with this legitimate appeal in favour of consensus (Merrington, 1968). The second notion of unity as a normative imperative principle establishes a model of society to resolve the conflict between coercion and consensus. This model favors a harmonic order where individual thought adheres to the collective thinking of a perfect and complete approach. Gramsci wrote in his *Quaderni dal Carcere*, that in the future society, the individual will be able to self-govern. Without this ability, society would enter in conflict with political society, but this could become its consequent prolongation, its organic complement' (Gramsci, 1978: 446). For the idealist philosopher, however, critical and constructive moments are logically related, and the emancipation work does not end with social criticism. Moreover, it is hard to describe a totalitarian model where political society and civil society remain separate and where civil society is an entity "complex and well structured". For this reason, and for a democratic, pluralistic interpretation of the hegemonic project of Gramsci and Said's vision of it, it would be desirable examine the work

of Chantal Mouffe and Norberto Bobbio.

As happens to Said, the reflections from the writings of Gramsci on the Southern question confirm the versatility of his political thought widening the gap between social criticism and constructive ambitions. To Gramsci, the South as *the Home* was founded by a deterministic and stubborn society against it, and the idealistic notion of moral and cultural emancipation reviews showed all its implications about power. The Southern view of Gramsci works as a corrective to the unitary character and understanding of its hegemonic ideal. It should not be forgotten that both the Southern question for Gramsci, like the Eastern question to Said were a national issue. There was a serious problem against that Gramsci and Said fought with regard to the lack of communication between North and South, East and West. The origin of this problem was the disunity among the different social classes in both South and East. Therefore, the South Eastern question was, on the one hand, a cultural problem. Its solution then would be the conquest of individual moral autonomy by both Southern farmers as part of the citizens of the North. But, it was equally a political issue that would be given by both the democratic transformation of society and the state (Holub, 1992).

*Orientalism* arose as a link between the Southern Question and the Eastern Question. There have been varied visions about Gramsci's South conception and many strategies have been adopted throughout his work, composed in those tumultuous decades preceding and subsequent to the Great War (1914–1918). His first *Mezzogiorno* where stake their desire for autonomy, arose during the 1913 elections. It was when Gramsci discovered the writings of Benedetto Croce, Antonio De Viti De Marco (1858 – 1943) and Gaetano Salvemini, who made him a regular reader of both *Voce* and the *Grido del Popolo* or *Avanti* (Cattaneo, 1993). Thus, Gramsci never abandoned this position. He tried to express it in the newborn newspaper called *L' Unità* in 1923, where he recognized that the Southern question was considered as a national question. This fact did not imply the need to think in terms of centralization. As a member of the second generation of *Meridionalisti*, Gramsci was in favor of the implementation of a radical opposition

policy to the dominant block that was composed of northern industry and southern landowner. This block had taken part in the process of implementing protectionist law that had characterized the Italy of the early 20th century. A free market strategy according to Gramsci could strengthen the political alliance between both the peasant South and the proletarian North, because they both had the same enemy. The real trend of the farmer had always been to include in their manifestos a discourse committed to local autonomy and decentralization. The campaign against protectionism is the first example of southern inspiration where localism would be part of a model of national integration. In the same way that *Orientalism* arose during the World War II, the Southern Question took its final form during the period of the Great War (1914–1918) (Poggioli – Kaftan, 2016). At this time, and a few years later, Gramsci began to realize about the importance of creating an organization for political action. Like many of his generation members, Gramsci believed that the war would produce more impact on society than that of rural economy could do. He referred to the creation of a collective psychology and a sense of belonging both to a particular social class as to a particular nation. This development process is linked to the dialectical relationship that have been established between Cultural Rhetoric and the people. To Tomás Albaladejo and Juan Carlos Gómez Alonso, Cultural Rhetoric was born to deal with the relations between Rhetoric and Culture, that have been manifested both in the performance of a cultural function by Rhetoric and in the presence of a cultural component in Rhetoric (Gómez Alonso, 2017; Albaladejo, 2013; 2009b). According to Professor Tomás Albaladejo, Cultural Rhetoric could be defined as follows<sup>2</sup>:

La Retórica es parte de la Cultura y no se concibe una reflexión sobre

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<sup>2</sup> “Rhetoric is part of the culture and a reflection on culture that does not pay attention to discursive communication and its study is not conceived; but, in addition, culture is necessary for the functioning and effectiveness of human communication, to the extent that it is carried out by producers and recipients, who must be united by a communicative code and must be aware of the context and the need for adaptation to it. Rhetoric and culture are united and cannot be understood without the other” (Authors’ Translation).

la cultura que no preste atención a la comunicación discursiva y a su estudio; pero, además, la Cultura es necesaria para el funcionamiento y la eficacia de la comunicación humana, en la medida en que ésta es llevada a cabo por productores y por receptores, que han de estar unidos por un código comunicativo y han de ser conscientes del contexto y de la necesidad de la adecuación al mismo. Retórica y Cultura están unidas y no puede entenderse una sin la otra (Albaladejo, 2013).

In fact, two cultural phenomena happened during the war. First, the intellectual middle class discovered the existence of a very different nation from its rhetorical construction, poor and illiterate nation without any consciousness belonging to the Italian State. Second, both the fear and the suffering in the trenches the soldiers matched from different classes by imposing huge sacrifices and discipline. So, in 1918, at the end of the Great War, Gramsci said that thanks to the war, a mass of *disorganized individuals* were far from engaging in any type of common activity. So, both the Bolshevik Revolution, and other landmarks such as the Great War and much later, the Palestinian question seemed to confirm this analysis. The Great War generated a revolutionary potential transforming peasant class into soldiers. Soon, however, the rise of fascism, the penetration of the Popular Party in the South and the problems of the Bolshevik Revolution in the rural domain injured this optimism. Now the field was a terrible threat to the city, its culture of modernity, industrialization and its ample opportunities to serve as a stage for both a socialist revolution as a revolt against the invader (Martin, 2002: 144). Based on those texts that were written by Gramsci in 1920, Said established that both the farmer and the citizen of East warned and felt their impotence, their desperate condition, and became terrorists, not revolutionary. They became slayers but not strongholds of creating a better society, even in symbols of emancipation of a subjugated state. In other words, the party ideology, the Italian Communist Party in the case of Gramsci and the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine at Said's political moment, some political alliances and a few years of permanent and abominable war were still not enough to create a class consciousness for both the



farmer of the South and from the East. But something important happened then. At the top of those crucial events both Gramsci and Said (each in their times) envisioned the imperative change in strategy by the dominant revolutionary parties, both by the PCI as part of the PLO. Thus, either party should replace the strategy of force by that of *consensus* to achieve their survival within its people. This change of strategy involved, even within the peasantry and the Eastern city, a position change in the role that were played by intellectuals. Unfortunately, both the Piedmont Communists as the members of the PLO, would have underestimated the problems of the South and East as the Socialists had done before the Third International, when the peasantry was treated as a subordinate element to working class (Merli, 2012: 401).

However, Gramsci believed in 1923 that the premise of *Government of Workers and Peasants* in Italy should be replaced by *Federal Republic of Workers and Peasants*, a criterion that was later assumed by Edward W. Said and Al Fatah in 1964. It seems obvious, therefore, that both the rise of fascism in Italy and the creation of the Zionist state in the Middle East further confirmed the existence of a gulf between the rhetoric of national unity and the moral and intellectual condition of the nation. Even more, Gramsci in his *Alcuni temi sulla questione Meridionale* (1926), ends with a panoramic painting of the *great social disintegration* of the South and with a magnificent portrait of Piero Gobetti and Guido Dorso, two examples of the new Italian intellectual class. The great task, Gramsci concluded, was to encourage the growth of a class of intellectuals such as Piero Gobetti (1901–1926) and Guido Dorso (1892–1947), able to learn from the mistakes of an increasingly critical situation and to promote a new balance of social forces. It would be a great project, composed of small molecular transformations rather than opposite changes. Gramsci contrasted strategies of force and consent that are linked to different political ends: the construction of a new state and the transformation of the existing state.

The comparison that was established between Machiavelli and Bodin, complied the rationale for their hegemonic project of

transformation. Unlike Machiavelli, Bodin never tried to build the territorial state, but balance the conflicting social forces within the state. And as Machiavelli emphasized the *moment of force*, Bodin focused on *the moment of consensus*. Gramsci would consider their differences as an analogy for the disparity that was established between the leaders of the Risorgimento and their own vision. Gramsci's oratory combines the action of the popular tribune with an intimate and confidential language. As if each word was addressed to each of its listeners personally. It is about the union between the highest of Rhetoric and the most penetrating and intimate of Poetry. His word seeks to find the secret direction of consciences and hearts. To Tomás Albaladejo, we could be talking about the concept of *Polyacroasis*. This concept can be applied beyond Rhetoric, in the way in which different kinds of speeches come to share those communicative features that allow an exchange of explanatory concepts, as they have been defended since approaches to pure discursive analysis (Gómez Alonso, 2017; Albaladejo, 2009b; 2005 and 2007). The original charm of these speeches, loaded with information that is full of details about their customs, sealed a trust and mutual complicity between the speaker and his people. His speeches are marked by twists of imagination, elegance that ennobles and enhances everything. They can only be understood through examples and, especially, through metaphor. According to Tomás Albaladejo:<sup>3</sup>

La metáfora tiene unas vinculaciones culturales que la sitúan como componente de la Retórica Cultural (Albaladejo, 2009a: 16-17; 2013; 2016; Chico Rico, 2015; Jiménez, 2015; Gómez Alonso, 2017; Amezcua, 2016; Martín Cerezo, 2017; Fernández Rodríguez, Navarro Romero, 2018), la cual está vinculada a la Retórica General Textual propuesta por Antonio García Berrio (1984) y los Estudios de la Cultura (*Studies in Culture*). De éstos forman parte la Semiótica de la

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<sup>3</sup> “The metaphor has cultural links that place it as a component of Cultural Rhetoric (Albaladejo, 2009: 16–17; 2013; 2016; Chico Rico, 2015; Jiménez, 2015; Gómez Alonso, 2017; Amezcua, 2016; Martín Cerezo, 2017; Fernández Rodríguez, Navarro Romero, 2018), which is linked to the General Textual Rhetoric proposed by Antonio García Berrio (1984) and the Studies of Culture (*Studies in Culture*). These are part of the Semiotics of Culture, Cultural Studies (Cultural Studies), the Philosophy of Culture, Cultural Anthropology and other methodological currents of cultural study, such as Cultural Rhetoric itself” (Authors' Translation).

Cultura, los Estudios Culturales (*Cultural Studies*), la Filosofía de la Cultura, la Antropología Cultural y otras corrientes metodológicas de estudio de la cultura, como la propia Retórica Cultural (Albaladejo, 2019a: 16-17).

No speaker has better fulfilled that ministry of the word that Rhetoric had raised. His vision of Hegemony, which arouses this new discourse, endowed an affective charge to Cultural Rhetoric that distinguishes between a period of domination and another of direction. The address is reached through speech. And the discourse is used as a pedagogical method (Albaladejo, 2016; Jaeger, 1985: 111–112).

### 3. Cultural Rhetoric As Poetics of Sentiments

At the time, *Orientalism* could be considered as a sort of *New Risorgimento*. For this reason, Gramsci argued that the hegemonic Risorgimento will arise when the intellectual would be able to transform the domain of force into political and cultural consensus. Both winners and losers in this attempt failed. Democrats failed because of their inordinate Jacobinism, their lack of pragmatism and sentimental humanitarianism. Like Machiavelli, Carlo Cattaneo conceived that social unity could be easily achieved through the mobilization of a national army unit. Former Palestinian President and Leader Yasser Arafat (1927 – 2004), as Giuseppe Mazzini did in Italy in 1870, he realized that would be a great mistake to confuse cultural unit with territorial and political unity. This involved a reduction of the ideological task to nothing more than some *aphorisms*, and therefore, an empty talk. Thus, both leaders in their time tried to raise the moral and intellectual unity of the country. They understood that a transformation was required in both its popular form and in its theoretical form, and not achieved through a vague moral speech. Otherwise, the role of the intellectual would be confusing intellectual. Through Cultural Rhetoric, Cultural Hegemony would completely fulfil its task completely. Gramsci's ideas that were developed in the context of his position as one of the most prominent leaders of the Italian movement of the working class and the South, led to a reconsideration of cultural, artistic and literary forces. This mediation causes the term

*Hegemony* to be assumed with a more dialectical meaning in a proper sense. Professor Juan Carlos Gómez Alonso stated that it is an interdiscursive analysis that transcends intertextuality when it includes both microstructural and macrostructural relationships (Gómez Alonso, 2017: 111) from which Cultural Rhetoric achieves consensus in its purest sense. Professor Gómez Alonso remarked that despite all, this consensus that was proposed by both Antonio Gramsci and Edward W. Said was not accepted by all elites and ruling classes. This rejection involved the adoption of a state of ignorance about how to win the consensus of the masses. Both liberal moderate leaders of the Risorgimento and those of the PLO, who had at least a cultural strategy, their hegemonic project failed because they distrusted the masses. Accustomed to hierarchical relationships both the Palestinian and the Italian people had always tried in the same way that the general in Napoleon's army or the British protectorate treated their soldiers. Since the army is also an instrument for a particular purpose, even if composed of personal names and not automatons that can be manipulated to the limits of mechanical and physical cohesion. The Piedmont liberals who led the first Risorgimento shared responsibility to the collapse of the liberal hegemony. Because they both proclaimed while both intellectual and political. They said their goal was to create a modern state in Italy, and indeed created a monster. Sought extensive training and energy establishment, but did not. They sought the integration of people within the framework of the new state, but neither succeeded (Albaladejo, 2019b).

As leaders of an earlier generation of *Meridionalisti*, both Gramsci and Said understood that, in order to constitute a liberal government, the need for the formation of public opinion. Once this process was failed, the ruling class was left in power without instruments, but with more force and bureaucracy to impose a political order in the South, as occur years later with the Palestinian Authority in 1993. The vacuum that had been left by the absence of a conservative party was filled by a demagogic nationalism that worsened social disintegration and encouraged the roots of fascism (Urbinati, 1998). Gramsci's project began where the liberal hegemony came. In order to

incorporate the South into the nation state, Gramsci's interpretation of the Risorgimento as a *failed revolution* and as a *failed land reform* was one of the main questions that were enquired among historians in the sixties and in the seventieth such as, among others, Rosario Romeo and Federico Chabod (Adamson, 1983).

According to Tomas Albaladejo and Juan Carlos Gómez Alonso, *The South* of Gramsci should be considered as a category that represents an entire nation, as the Italian people did not exist as a concrete ideal, but as an active organization. This consideration took place because Gramsci did not consider that the Southern question was a local problem. In turn, that nation was simply as a figure of speech used by the rulers to manipulate popular sentiment and justify their oppressive policies (Albaladejo, 2019b; Gómez Alonso, 2017). So, the Southern Italian society as a whole was incorporated to a new country as a mass of individuals who were disorganised in every way. Gramsci's interpretation of the Southern question as a matter of national unity was influenced by the study of Karl Marx on the Jewish question. This conception had its influence on Edward W. Said, who raised the idea of evolving identity, but never that of an altered processes that was deeply influenced by historical, social, intellectual and political struggles (Hall, 1992: 294). While the nation state has been identified as concentrated in the North – West binomial, in other words, the industrial – agrarian block, the South-East binomial was considered as a synonymous of *the great social disintegration*. Both pairs were incapable alike. The one, being unable to grant emancipation. The other, by failing to have the necessary means to proclaim it (Albaladejo, 2019b). In fact, in the same way that the Italian state had adopted the same attitude as the northern states regarding the South, the West allowed the Oriental culture to be isolated within the whole Western culture, having kept it away from their own interests and feelings that were derived from its own idiosyncrasies. The emancipation of East meant the emancipation of West. This result implied the emancipation of the whole continent. Edward W. Said, as Antonio Gramsci in 1918, contemplated that the only possibility for East. This had become a unified culture that laid in the people education and, if further

applicable, Said considered its application to the Palestinian people to educate them as responsible citizens with a clear sense of their rights and their obligations (Giroux, 1994: 126). The ethical model defined by Said's methodology was based on the parallel contrast that was established by Giuseppe Mazzini established, between those individuals who are oriented under the guide of a Benthanian model and that of those individuals who are oriented under an associative sense. Gramsci was skeptical when establishing the dichotomy between *individual capitalist* and a *member of an individual association or individual associations*.

Said's method was completely based on that of Gramsci's, this he had established through Cultural Hegemony when he was working while in prison (Said, 2000: 182). In a letter that Gramsci had written to Tatiana, her sister-in-law, in 1927, he was focused on the formation of the critical spirit in Italy through three themes, these being *The Southern Question*, *The Philosophy of Benedetto Croce*, and *The evolution of the Popular Literary Aesthetics*. Edward W. Said, Gramsci's intellectual heir, collected these three subjects in his method on the study of *Orientalism*. Those three topics are the people who are disintegrated, the commitment of first row intellectuals and that of middle class respectively. In other words, folklore, philosophy and common sense. From an economic point of view, common sense played the most important role because, as Gramsci wrote about the Great War (1914–1918), the effectiveness of an army is based on the ability to facilitate general communication between *Officiali* (mind) and *Soldati* (body). Thus, the new intellectuals were asked to develop a modern Humanism as a way to be able to reach directly to the simpler and less educated classes (Forgacs, 2000). This was the same kind of effect that the Reform in England triumphed when the aspirations of a few became the common sense of many, becoming a religious political event. Thanks to the popularity of his teachings, the Reform had the strength to resist the armies and train the English people (Hill, 2002). Following the same philosophy, liberal democracy triumphed when the principles of the Enlightenment were no longer the cultural property of an intellectual aristocracy that had been restricted into common beliefs.

The new reformers that were contemplated by Gramsci would have to follow the same path, doing precisely what Italian intellectuals had never done: *Go to the people* to undertake the formation and consolidation of popular beliefs and give them new principle, or, by which is meant, *the solidarity of popular prejudice*.

#### 4. Conclusion: Orientalism and Eurocentrism

The increasing complexity of Gramsci's conception of South has been compared to the increasing complexity of his conception of culture, only comparable a few years later to the Said notion of *Orientalism*. In his Prison Notebooks, no one has considered a homogeneous immense *Latifundia* (The South) against a homogeneous *Great City* (The North). The North did not mean simply modernity and progress. Nor was he free from provincialism and superstition. The city was not necessarily more progressive than the field. In Italy. In fact, industrialization and urbanization did not evolve in the same way. Gramsci's idea about Culture was not without some complexity. Culture cannot be simply reduced to a tension that has emerged between modernity and reaction, or even an adaptation of the popular culture of the intellectual ideology. Cultures were, according to Gramsci, living always fastened to internal changes, and are never born to be worshipped institutions. Even homogeneous bodies were shared by all meanings in the same direction. Gramsci's interest, popular culture and folklore was purely a political issue. Was not even the curiosity of the scholar, nor nostalgia discovery of a virgin universe that has been besieged by Modernity (Almeida-Rodríguez, 2014: 131).

Understanding popular culture meant to deepen their abysmal diversity and the continuous transformations that were born from their relationship with the culture of various intellectuals, both past and present, through Cultural Rhetoric. Along with the idea of gradual transformation, this sudden vision of a generational change appeared to Gramsci as an *illusion*, as a sign of *lack of critical sense*. Old and new have been united to produce those complex combinations that constitute the concept of national culture. As the contemporary vision of Freud

about the identity of being, the idea of a national culture Gramsci could be compared metaphorically to the city of Rome. Any traveler, who could be a basic culture holder, would be able to recognize the different stages that are referred to in the accounts of the Eternal City from the Etruscan era. To this voyager, relics could contemplate them as pure stones, and nothing else. Conservation, transformation, sedimentation and evolution is gradual and compact. They are the result of an unfinished process of mutual accommodation and this comes to terms with the past. The ancient is not suddenly disappearing, but is persisting in new ways. Both folklore and popular culture are living anachronisms, relics from the past and have learned to survive entirely within a kind of Cultural Rhetoric that has taught them how to live in the present, as the multi-lying city of Rome, within The Great Beauty (Albaladejo, 2019b).

Emphasizing spoken language in contrast to writing, folklore is unstable and fluctuating. Far from being a *Pre-History*, by contrast, this would be a natural version of a high existing culture and a current synthesis of old combinations between popular and intellectual culture. Far from having been passively absorbed, folklore has been created and remodeled by its own active idiosyncrasies. Furthermore, it is formed by elements from other cultural substrates, including other time. As Gramsci had suggested, the concept of *Public Spirit* was the popular *Creative Spirit* that he had studied while in prison, through its various phases and stages of development (Hoare, 1971: 435).

This interpretation of culture affected both his notion of hegemony as its interpretation of the relationship between the city and the countryside, between North and South. His interpretation was permitted by historicism, such as the intellectuals and people, urbanism and rurality categories (Gómez Alonso, 2017). In the case of Italy, as Gramsci had commented in his *Prison Notebooks*, the formation of the Industrial Revolution and, consequently, the process of urbanization was not necessary as an industrial phenomenon, because it could not be identified with Modernity. The paradox of rural rate should be more progressive than the urban rate that it had been given. Naples, the *Silent City* was a mosaic of urban islands dipped, pressured, under for rural



areas. This durable conflict fostered feelings of hatred and resentment, feelings that separated those intellectuals of the peasants, the middle class and the poor.

From the Sardinian Gramsci to the Neapolitan Vincenzo Cuoco (1770–1823), the Enlightenment and its intellectuals shared primary responsibility at the fall of the Neapolitan Republic of 1799 that underlined the fall of the democratic process in the South. Field devastated the city with Cardinal Ruffo's hordes because the city had completely renounced field. The major responsibility of the Southern problem remained attached to the city and intellectuals, due to separation with popular culture and his misunderstanding of the cultural phenomenon. If the culture of democracy did not prevail in Italy, not only is its failure due to the anti – progressive forces, and Catholic Counter-Reformation, but also the shortcomings of the culture of modernity (Hoare, 1971: 322). Gramsci identified two evils, these being *separation and misunderstanding*, as the result of his analysis to his critique of the Enlightenment. The *error of the Enlightenment* consisted in attributing the same method of mental assimilation and cultural development to all social classes. This *error* grew along with the imperialist vice of intellectuals, corseted within a Cartesian prism virtue. From this perspective the intellectual has always been considered as the pursuer of the rule of truth, through the elimination of error in all its forms, particularly folk beliefs, religions, prejudices. Since intellectual processes are more complex, the premises of an organic spread that had been generated from a homogeneous center of thought and action are not enough (Said, 2000). Just as most of the general principles that could stand on a relationship of mutual influence on local knowledge, Cultural Rhetoric should not be either a forced imposition of new principles (Deductivism and Rationalism) or not a passive acceptance of things as they are (Empiricism) (Albaladejo, 2019b; Gómez-Alonso, 2017).

The Orient is in principle a political and cultural fact, so it can be that there is a wide bibliographic gap around it. In fact, if it meets this triple dimension, this is not a considerable dimension of a modern culture in its political and cultural aspect, and in this sense it would have

less to do with the East than with the West. But despite being a fact of both political and cultural nature, it does not contain any academic or institutional void, taking into account that the East follows certain recognition paradigms that grant it the degree of intellectual category and academic discipline. Hence we could talk about factors of textuality and intertextuality (Gómez–Alonso, 2017). Therefore, it is about the distribution of a geopolitical aspect in Aesthetics and in its texts, both philological, historical, sociological and economic. It is not a mere political issue contemplated in a passive way in the culture, the academic world or its institutions. Nor is it a wide-ranging and scattered collection of articles and texts about the East. And a lot less is an imperialist plot of the West to invade the *Eastern world*. It is, above all, a discourse that is directly related to power, but in order for it to be effective it needs to be directly linked to other “cognitive” disciplines: with Law, Literature, Music, Architecture, and other scientific disciplines (such as Anthropology, Archeology, and History), that would be constituted as vital witnesses of this manifestation. A large group of scholars agrees with this textual notion: the text exists in context. There is the element of intertextuality, to which the pressures of conventions, precedents and rhetorical styles limit. What George Santayana defines as the overstatement of the creative subject in the name of the principle of creativity, under which the poet follows his own intuition and intellectual supervision that will shape his final work (Santayana, 2002).

The fact of linking the West with Christianity and the East with Islam is today a belief mostly shared by the Western powers and peoples. Finding a Muslim population on European soil (both in the former Yugoslavia and in Turkey) is considered in the West as a focus of conflict. At the same time, finding a Christian population in the East has implied the same treatment given by Muslim authorities in Arab countries. Such was the case of the Christian–Palestinian population expelled from Kuwait in 1990 during the Iraqi occupation. At the time, the so-called Palestinian National Authority, the former Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), decided to include in its scorecard personalities of the Christian religion such as Professors Hannan

Asrawi and Edward W. Said, who have always linked their Academic work with the Palestinian question. However, Said's disagreement with the Oslo Accords caused his resignation as a member of the Palestinian National Council and, consequently, his departure from the Yasser Arafat regime.

Sartre explains in his work *What is Literature and Other Essays* how History has been created by Humanity at the same time that Humanity has been created by History. Sartre considered that orthodox Historical Materialism opted for the simplest solution. This solution has consisted in the elimination of man in favor of history. Humanity was converted by History into a passive element, dominated by economic circumstances. Under no circumstances, Sartre agreed with Merleau-Ponty to disadvantage history in favor of man. Sartre argued that being a man is not incompatible with being history, and vice versa. This may be possible through the inherent movement of praxis. Through Praxis, intentional actions could produce material effects. In this way, these material circumstances that had been created by previous Praxis, have configured the conditions to create a new Praxis (Sartre, 1950).

Praxis solves the problem of how man creates history at the same time that history creates man. But it does not answer the question of how a series of multiple productions of individual acts, or totalizations, can be integrated into the entire totalization process that has been required by the dialectical rationality of logic. At the end of his life, Said shared the thesis defended by Sartre in this regard. To Said, as to Sartre, History, on a continuous basis, performs totalizations that start from other totalizations. This response from Sartre did not answer the question posed by certain authors such as Ronald Aronson. Aronson reformulated the question of Sartre. On the one hand, he questioned how separate and even antagonistic actions could succumb to History. On the other, how individual totalizations lead to general totalization, without of course forgetting for a moment, if they can change the course of history, its truth and its meaning. All these arguments were based on Sartre's theory about the dialectic of History as an intellectual's instrument to contract its commitment (Aronson, 2004). To Sartre, the dialectic of History is not a metaphysical law. It is not a unitary and

powerful force that has been revealed behind History as if it were Divine will. Its continuous effect has been produced by individual conflicts within power. Because each individual action is part of a whole that includes a totalization in continuous process of expansion and development.

What Sartre showed is that the law that regulates the dialectical forces of History from the individual produces something as vital as the meaning of History. Said affirms that the meaning of history creates the unity of integration and cultural proliferation inherent in a system of discourses. In this integration there are plenty of individual actions that generate countless speeches that are inexorably integrated into the generating discourse of a totalizing system, and never totalitarian. Therefore, all discourse must have the vocation of integrating the multiple discourses that compose it to generate a global communication system. Said confirms that Sartre has never tried to generate answers to these questions. It has only generated positions. These discursive positions were based on the fact that *l'histoire se fait sans connaitre*. Because History constitutes, according to Fredric Jameson, an act of political unconsciousness (Jameson 2008). Both Sartre and Said, following Lukács, affirm that Marxism is the self-conscious History. For Lukács, History becomes aware of itself when Humanity understands its meaning (Lukács, 1972). Thus, Sartre and Said denounced the danger that exists when there is a divorce between theory and praxis. When this divorce is a reality, Humanity will suffer totalitarian regimes such as the Stalinist (McCarthy, 2013: 90).

At times, both Sartre and Said have been accused by some of their detractors who want to hide the truth, when they refer to History as a process of totalization without a totalizer. The term totalizer has been contemplated by these critics as a synonym for dictator or totalitarian. The truth is that neither Sartre nor Said speak of the totalizer as the figure that governs the destinies of a nation, but quite the opposite. When you talk about totalizer, you are referring to the totalizing sense, as a whole that encompasses parts, of History itself. Gramsci, Sartre and Said confirm that the totalizing sense is an enemy of the totalitarian system. The totalizing sense encompasses the

plurality of meanings arising from the will of speech of each individual. These meanings make up the purpose of History that must be captured and transmitted by the intellectual to the ruling class. This meaning is, according to Sartre, the truth of the Humanism is the truth of Humanity because it is universal. When the ruling class ignores the meaning of history, of this truth of Humanity, the totalitarian phenomenon occurs. Therefore, the totalitarian system is the enemy of History. It is its enemy, because it also goes against the logic of History. The totalizing truth of mankind endows History with Logic. The Logic of History makes totalitarianism succumb to all its faces, including that of imperialism.

Therefore, the intellectual must be the guarantor of History's commitment to the truth of Humanity. This guarantee has been manifested in various forms of expression, which has led critics of the last seventy years to consider what would be the domain of action of a writer and that of an intellectual. Until the last half of the 20th century, the distinction between writer and intellectual was always present. If we use more everyday language, a writer is that one who produces literature. In other words, a writer is a producer or manufacturer of dramas, poetry or narrative. All these *producers* have something in common, that has also been accepted by both dilettantes and cultural professionals, by that is meant *creative ability*. This creative aura has been sanctified by some and detracted by others based on a supposedly inherent factor. This factor has always been originality, although often prophetic in dominance and quality. Originality has been attributed to the writer as a *sine qua non* condition of the writer and not necessarily of the intellectual.

The writer and the intellectual have been incorporating in their domain attributes that, to date, had been granted to the writer, such as creative ability and the originality factor. Also the writer has incorporated to his credit attributes that had also been recognized as intellectual property. These attributes have been the ability to tell the truth to power, to bear witness to persecutions and humiliations, and to provide a dissenting voice in their eternal conflicts with authority. The symbolic role of the writer as an intellectual witness of an experience

in a continent, in a country or in a given region is a real fact. During the twentieth century, apart from the cases of Jean–Paul Sartre, Albert Camus (1913–1960) or Edward Said, a clear example has been the commitment made by Sir Bertrand Russell (1872–1970). He denounced, among other causes, intolerance, racism, the Algerian war, Apartheid in South Africa, nuclear proliferation, the arms race and, at the end of his life, the Vietnam War. He also defended pacifism, dialogue of cultures, freedom of expression, truth and reconciliation. Nor should authors be forgotten such as Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922–1975), Elsa Morante (1912–1985), Octavio Paz (1914–1998), Nazim Hikmet (1902–1963), Federico García Lorca (1898–1936), Langston Hughes (1902–1967), Vladimir Holan (1905–1980), Elie Wiesel (1928), Susan Sontag (1933–2004), Sean O'Casey (1880–1964), Aimé Césaire (1913), Cyril Lionel Robert James (1901–1989), James Baldwin (1924–1987), Luis Cernuda (1902–1963), Nikos Kazantzakis (1883–1957), Marguerite Yourcenar (1903–1987), Franz Fanon (1925–1961), Raymond Williams (1921–1988), Naguib Mafouz (1911–2006), Friedrich Jameson (1934), Kostas Axelos (1924), Julia Kristeva (1941) among others.

Professor Pascale Casanova (1959–2018) demonstrated in her book *The World Republic of Letters* the existence of a global literature system. This system has its own order of literariness, tempo, canon and value. The efficiency of this system consists in having generated various types of writers belonging to different categories. The idea of his argument is none other than to demonstrate that this persuasive and powerful system is even capable of stimulating the creation of a type of writer independent of this system. Such was the case of James Joyce (1882–1941), Brendan Francis Behan (1923–1964) and Emile Cioran (1915–1995). Both the language and the spelling of these writers had never been subjected to any kind of norm, style, movement or even system. But this argument is not, at all, contradictory to the idea of literature as a global system of discourse. The global literature system has a kind of integral autonomy that places it beyond the reality imposed by political institutions and discourse. A notion endowed with a great theoretical plausibility when it is converted into the form of *an*

*espace littéraire international*. This space is at the same time the holder of its own laws of interpretation, of its own dialectic of individual and joint work, and of its own problematic about nationalism and national languages.

Said states that the thought of Pascale Casanova it does not reach dimensions as wide as that of Theodor Adorno (Dallmayr, 1997: 42). To Adorno, one of the distinctive features of Modernity is that the aesthetic and the social need to remain in a state of irreconcilable tension in order to survive. Thus, the writer or, in this case, the aesthetic, has always been involved, and even mobilized, by the great literary challenges that have been generated by various political configurations in the international scene. (Adorno, 2006: 193). From this perspective, it should be noted as an anecdote the debate that in its day sparked the figure and the work of the Pakistani writer based in London Salman Rushdie. All this debate has arisen around a work, *The Satanic Verses*. The truth is that the literary quality of this work has never been raised. The debate raises in point to how the literary treatment of a religious subject has raised exacerbated, even extreme religious passions. When this work was published in 1988, Mullah Ruhollah Homeini preached a *fatwa* against the writer. This work was described as blasphemous, irreverent and offensive towards the religious principles of Islam. In addition to the international literary community had to mobilize asking for clemency for Rushdie, who had been sentenced to death by the Mullah. Therefore, it can be stated that *Orientalism* as a concept, as the first awareness of its existence as such, was born in the 18th century. At present, when attempts have been made to define the term *Orientalism* as a discipline, some critics such as James Clifford, Aijaz Ahmad, Homi Bhabha or Peter Childs and Patrick Williams have entered into litigation with Edward W. Said. They criticize that Said does not formulate in his work *Orientalism* a unique and universal definition of *Orientalism*, but qualifies it from diverse and not always reconcilable perspectives (Childs & Williams, 2014). According to Clifford, Said establishes three different types of *Orientalism* or three definitions of *Orientalism* somewhat contradictory (Clifford, 1988: 255 - 276).

To conclude, the concept of *expressiveness* is the key to understand the conflict through Cultural Rhetoric in the *Orient* of Edward W. Said. This is based both on Robin G. Collingwood's admiration for Croce's aesthetics, and on his own awareness of the defects to which the expressiveness of everyday life is prone. In his work *The Principles of Art* (1923), Collingwood denies most of the characteristics that have been attributed to a daily version of expressiveness. Art, in his opinion, does not refer to the awakening of emotion in each and every one of us. In fact, Collingwood distinguishes two types of art. On the one hand, art as its own universe, or art as fun. Its purpose is none other than to arouse emotion to enjoy. On the other, art as a magical universe. The magical universe of art arouses emotions to concentrate on awareness of the concerns that arise in everyday life. Its purpose is none other than to raise awareness to try to change the world. Moreover, Collingwood thinks that these two types can never be classified as pure art. The reason is that both have been used by the medium (either painting, poetry or whatever the subject of expression), in order to pursue an end. Its purpose has placed them in the field of technology or in the field of arts and crafts. Through these terms, Collingwood wishes to distinguish from pure or formal art. Collingwood uses the word *magic* in a rare way. For Collingwood it means the awakening of emotion for pragmatic purposes. Using an example, Collingwood suggests that some Ruyard Kipling poems serve as a model of art as magic. They serve as a model because their ultimate goal is none other than to arouse political emotions as a means of capturing possible adherents to an ideology, or to an established political regime.

For this reason, Said states that historiography adopts the method of integration between concept and history through literature. To this end, literature requires "a concrete and synthetic universal" as a means of access to concrete and thought knowledge. As part of the Aesthetics, Literature seeks an expressive concept rather than representative of History, immediate to life. This expressive character generates the idea of concept as a moment, as a component, as a product of history. Only in this way could the integrated unity between concept



and history be achieved. And the concept, in the words of both Gramsci and Said, could be linked to the historical individual. Both are referring to their identity, to their difference with respect to other societies and eras, to their determined and epistemic totality.

This notion of Episteme derived from Foucault's idea of Rhetoric. After Plato and Aristotle, since Sir Thomas More and later Sir Francis Bacon, many intellectuals have discussed the relationship that had been established Rhetoric and Knowledge (Simpson, 2009: 130; Briggs, 1988: 202). Furthermore, since 1967, some scholars have newly arisen this debate on the epistemic nature of Rhetoric such as, among others, Yuri M. Lotman (Talvet, 2005). Some other key thinkers like Douglas Ehninger, Susanne Katharina Langer, Kenneth Burke, Chaim Perelman, Henry W. Johnstone Jr., Sonja K. Foss and, of course, Edward W. Said, have foreseen Rhetoric as epistemic (Foss, 1987: 395). This position implied a new departure from modern tradition of Rhetoric. On his own, Michel Foucault has a deeply influence on Edward W. Said though his concept of Discourse and his theory of Power – Knowledge. Foucault is well known to identify Discourse to this New Rhetoric. Yuri Lotman, at the time, and nowadays Tomás Albaladejo have considered Cultural Rhetoric as the result of the link between Rhetoric and Knowledge (Albaladejo, 2016; Lotman, 2000). In this way, notwithstanding Said's *Orientalism*, Rubén Chuaqui has remarked that “several Foucauldian concepts have been invoked: archaeology, genealogy, archive and, foremost, *discourse*.” (Aidi & Yechouti, 2017: 1061; Chuaqui, 2007: 98 – 99). In fact, it could be realized that Foucault's notion of Discourse has evolved from the traditional idea of Discourse as a linguistic conception to a method to define, to analyse and to create not only Culture but also cultural products. According to Juan Carlos Gómez Alonso, not only is this the key, but also is the main target of Cultural Rhetoric. Thus, in this sense, in his work *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Michel Foucault established the main traits to define his theory of Discourse:

Discourse in this sense is not an ideal timeless form (...) It is, from the beginning to end, historical – a fragment of history (...) posing its

own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality. (Foucault, 1972: 117).

In his theory of Discourse, Foucault founded several assertions that have been assumed by Edward W. Said. The first one is referring to what own Foucault called the *same discursive formation*. This is the unity of several elements of a concrete discourse (Aidi & Yechouti, 2017: 1061). Besides, there is a second assertion. Following to Foucault, Said stated that Discourse set a group of rules as preconditions for proclaims so that it could be validated as significant and recognized. Moreover, a third one would also be pursued by Said from Foucault, this being that Discourse is a body mainly structured, coherent and self – determined, subjected to rules. And therefore, there could be a fourth trait reckoned by Said: Discourse's nature is not a translator that convert reality into language. On the contrary, Discourse is a method that organizes strategically the path, the mood and the form from where reality is being received. From this, Said appreciates when reality is being assumed through Discourse, reality obtains meaning by Discourse. This is the creation of Culture. This is the use of Cultural Rhetoric. To Said, this is the key to understand the relations between Power and Knowledge. So, Said defines *Orientalism* as a specific Discourse in order to talk and to represent the Orient, reflecting a common sense. According to Said, "every writer on the Orient (and this true even of Homer) assumes some Oriental precedent, some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies." (Said, 1978: 20). For this reason, Said attacks Orientalism due to the creation of a fake image of the Orient, as if the Orient was calm and static. In this sense, Said insisted that owing to *Orientalism*, "The Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought and action" (Said, 1978: 40). In other words, as a result of Orientalism, no one could contemplate the Orient without restraint. The Orientalist is not the generator of knowledge, but the holder of that knowledge that *Orientalism* through Discourse is producing.

As Michel Foucault, Edward W. Said stated that *Orientalism* as a Discourse established several patterns and practices, and even restrictions to knowledge on the Orient to be approved as accurate, valid

and significant. For sure, Said followed a similar line in his work *Beginnings: Intention and Method*, where he claimed for *Orientalism* as a “... new habit of thought, a set of rules to dominate truth, to make truth as an issue secondary to the successful ordering and wielding the masses of actual present knowledge” (Said, 1975: 291). In consequence, if a text on the Orient wishes to be part of the Orientalist *discursive formation*, this text must obey the rules of *Orientalism* completely. Inspired on Sir Francis Bacon’s Theory of Idols, part of these rules are what Said called the *Four Dogmas of Orientalism*, these being first, the absolute and systematic difference between the West and the Orient; second, abstractions on the Orient are preferable to modern Oriental realities; third, the Orient is eternal, uniform and unable to define itself; and four, the Orient is a concept either to be feared or to be controlled (Said, 1978: 300 – 301). Therefore, *Orientalism* is a product of Cultural Rhetoric.

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# American Dream or American Experience: Being a Foreigner in Praxis and in Literary Theory

PETER STEINER

**Abstract.** The paper addresses the topic of emigration to the US based on my own personal experience. It juxtaposes the notion of “American dream” to that of “American experience” and argues that curiosity was the major motivation of my decision to cross the Atlantic as a refugee. The visit turned into a permanent stay after I was able to join – as an instructor in Slavic studies – the local “experience industry”, turning into a broker of the East European experience for American youth.

**Keywords:** American dream, American experience, personal experience, emigration, Slavic studies.

Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.  
Oscar Wilde, *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

Emigration reminds me a bit of personal hygiene. All of us cope with it in our own idiosyncratic way. For some (say, Arkady Ivanovich Svidrigailov of Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*) emigration is a synonym of suicide. For others, something quite ordinary. In my closest family, not to equivocate, everybody emigrated once – save my uncle, who did so twice. But of the entire *mishpokhe*, it was only I who made it to the U.S. The uncle ended up in Canada.

Why then do people emigrate to the U.S.? Are they enticed by the fabulous American Dream – a land holding the promise of “a better, richer, and happier life for all [its] citizens of every rank”, as James Truslow Adams, the author of this catchy phrase, understood it? *The American Dream* was to be the title of his popularizing one-volume history of the United States. And although this collocation popped up in the text at least thirty times, the Boston publisher, for whatever reason, thought it unsuitable and the book came out in 1931 as *The Epic of America*.

The advantage (as well as the disadvantage) of the American Dream is that it can refer to virtually anything: the “New Jerusalem” of the Massachusetts Puritans, the alluring world of Hollywood, or the idea of a land of infinite possibilities and personal freedom. This semantic vagueness makes the phrase certainly more suitable for mooring a national myth than for

explaining why so many Europeans were willing to leave their homes and settle down on the other side of the Atlantic. Surveys trying to pin down what “the American dream” means to Americans themselves suggest that sometimes a dream is just a dream, a never fulfilled longing for spiritual happiness.

**Defining the American Dream.** *Question:* For you and your family, do you consider the American Dream to be mainly about achieving material goods or is it more about finding spiritual happiness?

	Material goods	Spiritual happiness	Not sure	
	(%)	(%)	(%)	N
5/11-7/7/1998	21	56	23	1,583
2/10-3/8/1999	21	57	22	1,690
6/6-7/27/2001	32	51	17	3,019

Sandra L. Hanson and John Zogby, “The Polls-Trends: Attitudes about the American Dream”, *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74, Issue 3, Fall 2010  
<https://academic.oup.com/poq/article/74/3/570/1913303>

But for the Americans-to-be, the transoceanic trek has often been more than blissful sleepwalking - the real run for life - whether in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century during the Great Irish famine, or after Hitler’s successful power grab in the 1930s.

Aside from such obvious calamities, the American Dream’s material underpinnings should not be overlooked. “The home of the brave” promised its immigrants not only the imaginary pursuit of happiness but provided them a better living than the one they had back home. Land ownership, whether entirely free of charge or rather cheap, was an irresistible magnet for the impoverished peasants from semi-feudal Central Europe, toiling in fields belonging to somebody else. And the overwhelming success of the industrial revolution demanded a plentiful labor force, which the influx of Europeans in search of jobs (between 1836 and 1914, an average of nearly 400,000 per year) supplied.

Unlike their European counterparts, American capitalists were willing to lower their profit margins to offer employees a bigger paycheck. This was not, some experts tell us, an act of charity on their part. They apparently did

not have much choice. It was the greenback and the greenback alone that could motivate most effectively laborers from diverse cultural backgrounds, alien to the idea of the Protestant work ethic, to work ever harder. This wage differential between the two continents incentivized Europeans, dissatisfied with their incomes, to emigrate: those less enterprising to save money for their old age; those more enterprising to turn their savings into working capital.

Higher salaries brought about yet another economic change that boosted U.S. appeal in the eyes of many Europeans. Let me explain: When Henry Ford decided in 1914 to raise his workers' wages to the unimaginable 5 dollars per day (approximately double of what he was paying them until then), he did so not only to thwart undesirable workforce fluctuation or to accelerate the speed of production. Indirectly, he was boosting the sales of Ford cars – now affordable to his better-paid employees – increasing his own profits. This was one of the first steps towards a consumer society most of whose GDP is generated by personal consumption. For nearly 100 years, the U.S. has been the world leader in consumer driven economics. From the vantage point of Europe devastated by WWII, the locus of my early youth, America with the quantity, quality, and variety of its consumer goods, looked like an inexhaustible cornucopia always ready to meet anybody's material needs.

After this short warm up, let me ask the sixty-four-dollar question: Why did I myself emigrate to the U.S.? But to answer it, I must tell you a bit about my personal situation in August 1968. From the beginning of that month (as a senior at Charles University) I was spending my summer vacations in Austria, working at steelworks in Linz (a.k.a. Hermann Göring Werke). Immediately after the Soviet-led invasion, I registered at the local university, found an accommodation in a dormitory and as of the coming Spring semester secured a regular fellowship. Leaving Europe for the U.S., where I did not know anybody, certainly could not improve my immediate material situation not in the least because my German was much better than my English and my modest savings from the summer job could not provide, due to the Austrian schilling's low exchange rate, for more than a couple of weeks of a paltry existence. What then prompted me on February 4, 1969 to fly for \$180 kindly advanced for this purpose by the International Rescue Committee from Vienna to New York as a stateless refugee "under docket control," not allowed to leave the country for the next two years without losing my immigration status? Picking my pre-Alzheimer brain for some plausible reason I cannot come up with anything better than a sheer curiosity. In other words, what I was seeking was not "the American dream" but "the American experience."

A small semantic detour is called for at this point. The English word “experience”, strangely enough, does not have a direct counterpart in my native tongue. Czech, usually poorer in synonyms in respect to English, is richer in this particular instance. “Experience” has two Czech equivalents with significantly different meanings: “prožitek/zážitek” on the one hand and “zkušnost” on the other. While the former couplet refers to a strong immediate experience (whether related to inner life or to external events) “zkušnost” is always mediated. It is a result of a sustained process of reflection during which the immediate experience is mentally scrutinized and, if passing muster, preserved in memory as a rudimentary story.

Obviously, my emigration to the U.S. had both of these dimensions. Landing in an unknown country, with only a few bucks in my pocket, an insufficient command of English, and burning, so to speak, the European bridges behind me was as “scareciting” as a first bungee jump. On the other hand, I had accumulated sufficient secondhand knowledge of the U.S. for a long-term stay to give me a welcome opportunity to turn a detached mental construct into a genuine *zkušnost*.

For children growing up in the Communist Czechoslovakia of the 1950s (I myself was born in 1946), the U.S. had always been an “ominous enigma”, something dangerous but, because of the mystery attached to it, also the utmost intriguing. Since practically everything coming from the West was off limits and, therefore, very hard to get, even the most trivial objects “Made in USA” were exceedingly desirable: whether chewing gum, tinned pineapple from UNRRA parcels, or denim jeans (then called locally “Texas trousers”). The pinnacle of this illusory ladder of forbidden fruit belonged to rock and roll, banned by the state radio, but accessible to youth sadly afflicted by “a rockin' pneumonia and a boogie woogie flu” on the waves of Radio Luxembourg. In my fast fading memory, this by-gone era figures as an eerie image of a two-sided statue: with Joseph Stalin in front and Elvis Presley in back.

The gradual liberalization of Czechoslovakia in the 1960s changed, among many other things, the perception of the U.S. With the Iron Curtain partially lifted, the flow of information about that country increased considerably and chewing gum, or even “Texas trousers” (which, incomprehensibly to me, were now called “jeans”) could suddenly be purchased from the network of hard currency shops (Tuzex), where their availability was just a mundane matter of money. As a part of this overall trend, the hitherto tabooed American culture was reaching “the coast of Bohemia” - jazz, paintings, literature - charming the natives by their novelty.

And soon even some of its representatives started to pop up in Prague now and then: the legendary Satchmo, or the less known but for my generation probably more important Allen Ginsberg. The signal value of Ginsberg's visit ("cut short" by the authorities) did not rest as much in his poetics as in his appearance, behavior, and attitudes that epitomized a new and unusual life style lacking any close European equivalent.

The 1960s in Czechoslovakia, I must add, were not only an era of a gradual erosion of a one-party system but also of a fast-growing self-awareness for the War and the post-War generations. Thanks to our D.O.B., we did not get implicated in the bizarre practices of Stalinism, which gave us a leg up on our less lucky parents. What, in short, were this generation's main distinctive features vis-a-vis their progenitors? First, was a visceral mistrust of any ideology. Next, a robust aversion towards the authoritarian political regime and the concomitant rigid social norms, straitjacketing the life of each and every citizen of socialist Czechoslovakia from cradle to grave. Finally, the rejection of the "puritanism" of the 1950s, with its cult of manual work as the only source of all value. In this generational conflict, the American counter-culture of beatniks and hippies was one of the important inspirational sources for young people searching for suitable forms to express their emancipation. What I myself admired about it was its radicalism: the wholesale subversion of all established hierarchies and a playful search for alternative modes of self-realization.

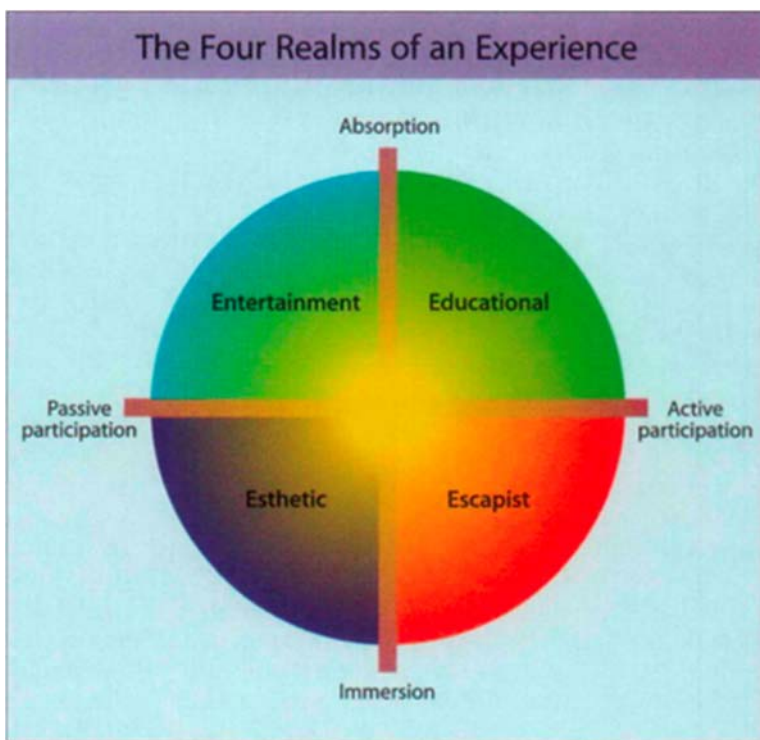
At this point, however, an attentive reader could, perhaps, point out what seems a contradiction in my argument. And, rightly so. Did I not claim earlier that emigration has its material basis and am I not now treating my own solely as a matter of experience? To account for this specious discrepancy, I should point out the clear difference between a visit and an emigration. True, what brought me to the U.S. was sheer curiosity and my experience was worth every penny of the borrowed \$180 that, by the way, I duly repaid. But I remained because I somehow finagled to turn the experience into capital. From its recipient I became its monger. In other words, as an instructor in Slavistics at several American universities, I became a cog in the wheel of the "experience economy." But since I am using this term in a rather specialized sense, let me explain what I mean:



Economic Distinctions				
Economic Offering	Commodities	Goods	Services	Experiences
Economy	Agrarian	Industrial	Service	Experience
Economic Function	Extract	Make	Deliver	Stage
Nature of Offering	Fungible	Tangible	Intangible	Memorable
Key Attribute	Natural	Standardized	Customized	Personal
Method of Supply	Stored in bulk	Inventoried after production	Delivered on demand	Revealed over a duration
Seller	Trader	Manufacturer	Provider	Stager
Buyer	Market	User	Client	Guest
Factors of Demand	Characteristics	Features	Benefits	Sensations

Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, “Welcome to the Experience Economy,” *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 1998, p. 98.

Although it is indisputable that experience has been commodified at least since the days of ancient Rome, Walt Disney is usually considered the father of the experience industry. His first theme park – Disneyland – opened in California in 1955, was designed not only to entertain its visitors but also to engage them actively in an unfolding story. But, a discerning reader might ask, what the heck does Disneyland have in common with tertiary education? The answer: more than meets the eye! Undoubtedly, you have come many times across the neologism “edutainment” or must have heard the punchline to the joke “Who are university professors?” – “The worst paid segment of the entertainment industry.” Dark humor aside, let me provide an academically respectful graphic representation of how the experience economy operates at its best.



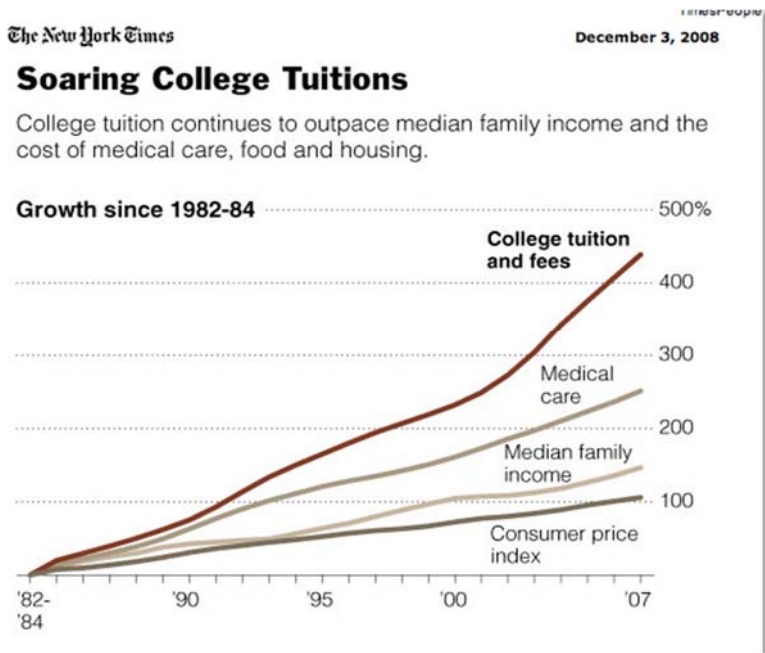
Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, “Welcome to the Experience Economy,” *ibid.*, p. 102.

Gilmore and Pine cut the pie of experience with two axes separating, on the one hand, the opposite types of participants’ orientation and, on the other hand, the opposite types of their attitudes, thus forming four distinct realms. What these authors find most valuable for the experience economy is the center of the circle, “its sweet spot”, where the spectra merge and the realms lose their otherwise distinct nature. Such an amalgamation, the two authors believe, intensifies the experience leading to a deeper and a more permanent memory – the experience economy’s most precious currency. The case of Disneyland supports this hypothesis. The financial success of this project boils down to the “discovery” that entertainment can be interactive with a participating audience. As Disney himself expressed this in his business plan for potential investors: “The idea of Disneyland is simple. It will be a place for people to find happiness and knowledge.”

The brightest among university administrators have not missed Disney’s lesson. If tertiary education is to rake in more profits, this branch of the experience industry must be pushed towards the magic center of the pie,

where the different modalities of perception merge, enhancing, in this way, its market value. Let us take my last employer, the University of Pennsylvania, a member of the Ivy League – the octet of the oldest and the richest American universities – as an example. Its former President, Judith Rodin, advanced the plan for reforming higher education in her inaugural address of 1994 as follows: “We will design a new Penn undergraduate experience. It will involve not only curriculum, but new types of housing, student services, and mentoring, to create a seamless experience between the classroom and the residence, from the playing field to the laboratory.... the Class of 2001 – will be our first class to have an entirely new experience – the Penn education of the Twenty-First Century.”

No doubt, this transformation of university education seems highly profitable and the American public ready to pay for it more and more every year. How much more becomes clear if we compare the growth of university tuitions with the increase in real estate prices, and the general consumer price index.



Talking money, the costs of a Penn B.A. was estimated last year to be around \$287,000 of which roughly 75% represents just tuition. And, low and behold, a sizable increase is just in the offing.

What is then the role of a professor of Slavic studies in this newly conceived undergraduate education and what comparative advantage does my life experience provide over my U.S. born colleagues? It is, above all, my intimate knowledge of Slavic languages and of the cultural milieu, ostensibly my students' subjects of interest. More about this later.

At this point, I should not fail to mention that the very same experiential capital was instrumental for me receiving, relatively soon after I planted my feet on the hospitable soil of "the New World", a university fellowship, giving me the chance to further satisfy my curiosity drive. And despite my frequent disagreements with him, I am eternally grateful to Uncle Sam for his generous support during those leisurely six years (I am a slow learner) that it took me to secure the trade union ticket – a PhD degree which is a must for anybody wishing to impart experience to local youth at a reasonable salary. The appanage came from the post-Sputnik National Defense Education Act Title IV, authorized by Congress "to insure trained manpower of sufficient quality and quantity to meet the national defense needs of the United States." Needless to say, so-called "strategic languages" (especially those spoken in the countries of the former Warsaw Pact), were high on the totem pole during the good old Cold War.

This was only one dimension of my life experience that helped me to find a job in my field. Apart from the linguistic and cultural ballast, I brought with me to the U.S. another type of experiential capital, which, for the lack of any better label, I will call theoretical. Let me explain. In addition to all of the changes I have already mentioned, the turbulent Czechoslovak sixties also altered the way literature was studied in Prague. Lenin's theory of reflection, so in vogue during the previous decade, unfathomably lost all its homely charm and, the intellectual *horror vacui* that ensued prompted the critics to look for a new epistemic framework. Phenomenology, primarily because of philosopher Jan Patočka's reputation, seemed to be one of the possible substitutes. This is why the appearance of a translation of Roman Ingarden's *The Cognition of the Literary Work* in 1967 was such a hit in Prague. For Antonín Sychra, on the other hand, in his seminars on experimental aesthetics at Charles University, which I attended whenever I managed to leave the pub "On the Fruit Market" in a timely fashion, the new Gospel was the general theory of information, with Max Bense and Abraham Moles its apostles for students of the arts. Curiously enough, this approach appealed, due to its strong footing in exact sciences, to positivistic types, and simultaneously to culture-vultures who cherished its affinity with a specific strain within the

avant-garde art of that time – the movement straddling the textual and the visual under a rather vague name of “concrete poetry.”

Decisive for my destiny, however, was the acquaintance with a third theoretical matrix, that after many years of official censure was, in the early 1960s, slowly regaining its lost prestige. As you have probably correctly guessed, I have in mind one of a very few domestic contributions to the world’s intellectual panoply – Structuralism. This “noetic stance”, in Jan Mukařovský’s parlance, fell, after the Communist takeover of 1948, into disgrace and for over a decade was but a convenient whipping boy for orthodox Marxist critics. Yet, with the gradual ideological thaw, and despite the Party apparatchiks’ valiant efforts at quarantining this “subjective-idealistic conception of art” by any means at their disposal, more and more scholars were ready to jump the ship of historical materialism embracing instead this functionalist semiotic method for studying aesthetic phenomena. One of those who played an important role in the resurrection of Structuralism was a member of Czech Literature Department at Charles U., Felix Vodička, whose lectures on the 18<sup>th</sup> century literature I frequented. In the Department of Aesthetics, where I majored, the fountainhead of information about Structuralism was the aforementioned Sychra, Mukařovský’s pupil as well as a son-in-law.

In the mid-1960’s, however, it was no longer just the cloistered university lecture halls where one could learn about the Prague Linguistics Circle’s legacy. The books offering this opportunity were now available in bookstores as well: Mukařovský’s *Studies in Aesthetics*, or the collective volume, *Structure and Meaning of the Literary Work of Art*, published on the occasion of his 75th birthday. The stock of Structuralism further rose when this episteme became *le dernier cri* west of the Czech borders, in *la cité de la lumière* upon Seine. Now its indigenous conception could be critically compared with how the French Structuralists understood it.

My experience with literary theory acquired in Prague proved to be veritable intellectual capital in 1970 after I enrolled as a graduate student of Russian literature at Yale. Paradoxically, American criticism was passing through a turbulence not unlike the one that I had witnessed in Prague. It was not Marxism-Leninism that was under attack, though, but the domestic approaches to literature – the Anglo-American New Criticism, the archetypal method, or the rhetorical approach of the Chicago School. Although these literary-theoretical trends were quite different from one another, there was still something they had in common: the conviction that the subject matter of criticism, literature, was a category if not entirely self-evident, then at least

not in need of questioning. From the standpoint of the new critical sensibility just emerging on the American intellectual scene, this premise was untenable. And the Prague School, which I knew the best, challenged this axiom in more than one way through, for instance, its hypothesis of the human endeavor's fundamental polyfunctionality, i.e. the idea that each and every cultural product is a hierarchy of many functions with the dominant one determining how the given collectivity categorizes the artifact. Concerning their respective linguistic structures an advertisement and, say, a poem resemble each other a lot and only their specific purposes sets them apart. Thus, their identity does not stem from some inherent essences but from a historically alternating ordering of functions constituting their structure. Likewise, the Structuralist axiology stripped esthetic value of any a priori eidos, conceiving of it merely as a dynamic configuration of extra-aesthetic values relative to its historical context. The list could go on.

What I found most perplexing about the situation in U.S. criticism of the 1970s was the *doxa* about Structuralism as an entirely Gallic invention. The Prague School, if mentioned at all, was regarded solely as a mature stage of Russian Formalism. And this despite the fact that two members of the Circle, René Wellek and Roman Jakobson, had been, by that time, teaching at rather well-known American universities for some thirty years. The former, however, was regarded primarily as a New Critic and the latter as a linguist, with the readership of his works on literature limited to Slavic specialists. Given my Prague experience, I seized the proverbial bull by its horns and taking advantage of this intellectual lacuna, I decided to center my scholarly interest on the theory of literature – not a standard career choice among my cohorts in Slavic studies.

To familiarize the American reading public with the insights of the Prague Structuralists into aesthetics and literary studies, I had to undertake, first of all, an arduous and unappreciated translating job. Between 1977 and 1982, with the ineluctable help from John Burbank and other friends, I brought out two volumes of Jan Mukařovský's selected works, a broadly conceived Prague School reader, and translated as well several of Roman Jakobson's texts for his *Selected Writings*.

For my doctoral dissertation, eventually defended in 1976, I chose a rather ambitious topic given the quantity of material to be regurgitated: a comparative analysis of Russian Formalism and Prague Structuralism. What I learned from this somewhat inept exercise of mine was the striking difference between how these two schools went about their business of theorizing. Formalism, I realized, exhibited some striking symptoms of an inter-

paradigmatic state of scholarship, e.g., a disagreement about the discipline's fundamentals fueling perpetual strife among many mutually incompatible critical models, whether metaphors conceiving of literary work as mechanism, organism, and system, or a synecdoche reducing verbal art to its material, poetic language. The Prague School's frame of reference, on the other hand, consisting of the conceptual triad "structure-sign-function", proved to be not only more internally coherent but also more productive capable of sustaining a new research paradigm – structuralism – which in its various transmogrifications came to outlive the Circle itself by many years.

"Grey is all [history], but green is the tree of life", tweaking Goethe's famous quote a bit, to make it conform to my context. The current state of affairs in literary studies is entirely different from what it was in the 1970s and 1980s. The new high-tech gadgets, whether fMRI or scanners fitted with OCR apps, provide present-day philologists, yearning to inform their discipline as an exact science, with hitherto unprecedented possibilities. And, those prone to study literature as an active social force have at their disposal a seemingly inexhaustible reservoir of up-to-date ideological models – postcolonialism, ecocriticism, or gender studies – to mention just some of the most prominent among them. Structuralism remains but a quaint plaything belonging to "auld lang syne."

The geopolitical situation changed as well. On the wings of Sputnik, American Slavistics soared high. Along with the Berlin Wall, it came tumbling down. The discipline is now just one among many regional studies, and its coveted status is being claimed by others: the Arabic or Chinese departments. Even the current Putinomania, however febrile it might be, would have to be spun much harder to bring back to Slavistics the Cold-War glory of yesteryear. The Ph.D. program has become a luxury, and the underground curriculum occupies center stage. Because there are less and less students willing to learn such "difficult" languages with minimal employability, more and more time must be devoted to attracting them. In practice, this boils down to continuously organizing newer and newer entertainments (film viewings, social events, etc.), to provide potential takers with a genuinely East-European experience in an undemanding manner, so that the classrooms would not stay empty. In this situation, though, a pedagogue's foreign identity is an obvious asset. My strong non-English accent guarantees the clients that they are interfacing with a bonafide member of the Slavic tribe, rather than some dubious wannabe who gained his/her inauthentic experience only through reading boring books.

All said, permit me to finish with a question. Can a meaningful general conclusion be derived from my presentation? Put *ad hominem*: was my émigré story typical in some way, or not? It's hard to say but I doubt it. Deep in my heart I suspect that the great majority of my peers rushed to the U.S. spellbound by the timeless luster of the American dream and, by a stroke of luck, they eventually found exactly what they were looking for.

May those of us who came to the U.S. just out of sheer curiosity and to whom, on account of this, Columbia turned her back, console ourselves by fancying that in our blind search for the unfamiliar, we lived through something that we will be able to unload, in a weak and faltering voice, on anybody willing to give us an ear be it the grandchildren, roommates in nursing homes, or an audience at a conference related to this topic – “**a great American experience.**”



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**Part III**  
**Reconstructing History: Documentary and**  
**Non-documentary sources**

# The Theory and Practice of the Literature of Memory

JAVIER SÁNCHEZ ZAPATERO

**Abstract.** This paper supposes an approximation to the universal phenomenon of the literature of memory. The paper is structured methodologically on two ways: on the one hand, the analysis of theoretical references; on the other, the study of testimony and literature texts written by victims of historical events such as the Soviet Gulag and Nazist concentration camps, with the aim of describing the common formal, thematic and pragmatic traits in this type of texts, as example of literature of memory.

**Keywords:** Memory, Testimony, Literature, Collective Memory, Comparative Literature, Concentrationary Literature.

## 1. The Era of Memory

In the wake of the development of “Memory Studies”, the study of existing connections between literature and memory has become especially active over the past decades. Study findings obtained both in humanitarian and social sciences, including history, philosophy, aesthetics, pedagogy, anthropology and sociology contributed much to this. Studies conducted in this respect have a distinct international character because analytical grounds, which is their main study subject was created by the scientists from different countries, including America, France and Germany. Tzvetan Todorov, Hayden White, Paul Ricoeur, Pierre Nora, Marc Augé, Roger Chartier, Omar Ette, Sebastian Faber, Hans Lauge Hansen and Marianne Hirsch are among them. They used trauma theory and cultural history, as well as methods of formal and pragmatic analysis of autobiographical and fictitious texts in their own analysis.

In order to find out what genre these texts belong to and to learn their origin, it is essential to determine their place in the disciplines of literary theory and comparative literature studies. In the respect of a long perspective, it is important to determine their necessity taking all challenges of the modern world into account. This brought about

derivation of the recent terms like “historical memory” and “collective memory”, when speaking about deliberate ignorance or restoration of forgotten past events. Some modern western societies are obsessed by the “cult of memory”, which is testified by creating museums, archives and documentary centers, as well as by disseminating testimonial texts and celebrating religious holidays. Both these terms (there are many problems in the respect of their scientific use) and their expressive material forms indicate the ability of memory that transcends the individual scope and acquires collective form. The idea, according to which different societies like different individuals have similar characteristics and shortcomings, is derived from Emile Durkheim’s theories. Based on the idea, her disciple and follower Maurice Halbwachs developed the theory of collective memory (*La mémoire collective*, 1950). He focused not on the individual nature of memory, which is derived from an individual’s subjective perception, but on the fact that memory is always a collective act, for it is depend on a social aspect that is premise for him. Colmeiro noted that “We can speak about the existence of collective memory only at the symbolic level, as the set of traditions, beliefs, rituals and myths, which belong to a concrete social group” (2005:15). This conception of memory indicates that memory is always individual but it acquires meaning only when it get connected with conceptual structures, which are created by members of a community within the general conglomerate of the culture, art, politics, communication means and, of course, literature.

The history knows many examples confirming that the social filters of memory are made based on the indirect perception of reality. Historical story of the discovery of America is a clear example. The perception of the voyages of Christopher Columbus, as well as referential schemes of Amerigo Vespucci and other explorers contributed much to the formation of collective memory of European societies in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which gave its result constructing historical knowledge, as it was analyzed by Todorov in his work called *La Conquête de l'Amérique: la question de l'autre* (1982). Spread and dominance of Western culture over the American continent affected on the history. In result, regulated and systemized scientific approach was

established regarding the issue that was demonstrated by the term “discovery”. This could be possible only through European worldview. In the course of assessment of the past, not only the importance of the narrator is demonstrated, but also it shows how social and cultural schemes impact both on individual perception and the formation of collective memory, which in turn, defines historical representativeness. This was studied by Edward W. Said who was a founder of the academic field of postcolonial studies, and a defender of a new approach to knowledge creation.

The totalitarian systems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have shown that memory of society is a very changeable and easily manipulated substance. According to Todorov’s work called *Mémoire de mal, tentation du bien* (2000), these regimes revealed the danger that had been unknown before: complete control over memory. Totalitarian systems defined cultural and social values in favor of their interests, and according to these values, individuals formed the views regarding the world and themselves. Educational and cultural politics, as well as control over communication means, censorship of the art and the use of national symbols were in the list of means that were used for maintaining the power. The main goal was to carry out revisionist function and to distort those social values, which were used by individuals in the course of forming their views and memories. According to Ricoeur (2003), this would create a structure wherein “distorted memory”, which was formed by authority, would oppress any different perception of the past, would deform the past and ideological reinterpretation would be subordinate to it or would simply ignore it. Cuesta also emphasized this. According to him, “Societies or political regimes lead to the formation of forgetting that makes it difficult or excludes placing certain memories in the social space. Moreover, it condemns and brings to naught” (2008:81). Dupláa noted in this respect that the power without alternative that is devoid of dissidentism and criticism “enables to write history based on the needs, which will form collective memory differently and change it” (2000:42). Reviewing the three most important totalitarian regimes in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we recall the Nazi communication and

propaganda policy that denounced ethnic coexistence, and at the same time tried to explain occupational, discriminatory and fanatic action in the historical past of the German nation. The manipulation carried out by the Soviet regime was similar to the above mentioned. It dissolved everything that had even a slight trace of dissident or opposition approach. The third one is the Francoist dictatorship that aimed at eliminating the achievements of the Second Republic and constructing an image of Francoism in order to express mythological nature of its leader, which should be eternal.

## 2. The literature of memory

Literature with the “official memory”, and particularly personal participation in the events can become a part of subversive and sustainable culture, which can transmit the things that are desirable to be concealed or manipulated. As explained by Milan Kundera (*Kniha smíchu a zapomnění*, 1979),<sup>1</sup> in certain circumstances the struggle of man against power can be compared with the struggle of memory against forgetting. It shows how all the things that fight against eliminating dissident signs from collective memory try to get established. This shows that there are more versions of history, than it is offered by its controlling bodies. In addition, there are different interpretations of facts that deserve to be heard and storage of civic memory into the social filters.

Considering that the script is the most common form of transmitting materialization and memory, and that collective memory is created based on different individual interpretations of the past, it seems logically that creation of autobiographical literature and fiction using one's own experience can sometimes serve as an instrument of forgetting. In addition, they can be used as a means of acquiring knowledge in order to reveal the situation or experience that are not visible and can be transmitted only through individual proofs. They can become a source of information and a certain action contrary to the fact

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<sup>1</sup> Although the book was written in Czech, it was first published in French under the title: *Le livre du rire et de L'oubli*.

because in some historical circumstances “language is considered the most valid instrument serving social action” (Ugarte, 1999: 20). Therefore, sometimes thinking about experiences can become an obligatory reason and obligation of the possibility for society. Besides, it can become compromising towards the truth that is tried to be concealed. For this reason, Rupprecht (2002) notes that autobiography can become an important element for the change of the culture, politics and memory of society. This explains that in some circumstances being a victim, survivor or witness is enough to raise one’s voice and tell what happened.

The concept of “the literature of memory” should be comprehended considering these preconditions. Belonging to the past or connection with an author’s individual experience and his awareness of certain events is not important,<sup>2</sup> but rather the author’s eagerness to transmit the things that are condemned to be forgotten or concealed. Aguado noted in this respect that “the literature of memory wants to describe things that have been lost deliberately, voices that have been condemned to be lost eternally, feelings that have not been revealed” (2010:128). According to Dupláa, “memory enriches personal experience within the collective memory of society” (2000: 39). Filer claimed that the reality revived through the stories becomes “a privileged space to construct the past, which enriches, creates and opposes the historiographical truth” (1998:15). Similarly, Tyras and Vila think that the literature of memory tries to “create a new story based on the experiences of the defeated involving victims’ voice in the historical narrative and collective memory” (2012: 16), proving that his definition contains not stylistic and formal but pragmatic criteria.

When referring to this type of literature, which is closely connected both with survived victims and historical characters of their

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<sup>2</sup> Noteworthy is that due to a progressive reduction of the number of witnesses of certain situations, a source of their memoirs is often texts published by others. This is how the concept of “postmemory” is derived (Hirsch, 2008), which refers to memories regarding traumatic experiences transmitted by the ancestors, and the narrators didn’t experience the events. The other term is “affiliation memory” (Faber, 2011), which is based on moral imperative, and maintains religious or ideological connections with people who were victims of violence in the past and were condemned to be forgotten.

authors, the following factor should be considered: An image of the past can't be complete until we learn the versions of those people who have been banished from society, and until the structure of forms of expression of personal experience, as well as issues regarding perception are not clarified, which are within the scope of Literary Theory. For example, it is interesting how multilateral reality must be created using as limited and incomplete instrument as is the language; the connection between primary or spontaneous memories and their reconfiguration that is associated with the social characteristics of the individual; and how narrators can connect unrelated and chaotic memories with one another. It is also important to establish a connection between experience and fiction. It is interesting if it is possible to enrich individual text with cognitive function within traditional discourse that would enhance our knowledge of the past. With the help of Narratology and Reception Theory, the forms of transmitting experienced stories must be studied, and banished the idea that only official texts can describe experienced stories. The researches, which have been conducted so far are tend to survey a concept of autobiographical writing. It is not necessary to equate this with the traditional methods of the discourse that has its author, narrator and characters, and the criterion of truth is defined. This research approach is developed by the authors: Nora Catelli, the author of the term "autobiographical space" (1991) and Manuel Alberca, the author of the definition "ambiguous pact" (2007). Sincerity and mood are very important factors when one writes about own experience in order not to deceive the reader. Autobiography does not depend on the morphology and formal elements of the text, but rather on the author's attempt to establish communication between the author and the reader. This goal can be achieved in fiction texts too.

Considering all the above-mentioned, it seems that, in some contexts, the literature emerged from one's own experiences, which are presented under autobiographical or autofictional prisms, turns into the authentic literature of memory. It can transmit unknown events, offering unknown perspectives and finally, contributing to the pluralism of society and to the establishment of collective imagination



of societies. Noteworthy is that “literature” is called the texts wherein poetic function and formal aspect seem to take second place, giving the first place to the pragmatic dimension, because the coverage of the critical dissident discourse and unknown events of the history are related to aesthetic aspect of expression that can occur in the texts.

This cognitive<sup>3</sup> and ethical aspects of literature lay the foundation for the literary criticism. This was emphasized by Todorov (2000) during the study of moral side of works, especially in case of texts based on traumatic content, which would be important both for the development of personal and conflicting action and establishing collective memory during such historical events as war, exile and captivity in concentration camp. In his opinion, works like this must be assessed not only according to their aesthetical side, but also in terms of their ethical and human characteristics. F. R. Leavis (1943) who is a representative of the so-called “moral formalism” speaks about ethical and ideological characteristics of the texts, which must be taken into account for their correct analysis. According to him, literary texts must be assessed not only according to their aesthetic values but also according to their human values, which finally lead them to social and cultural paradigm.

The autobiographical genre is an action because transmitting the own experience can be conducive to create open and plural collective memory that allows us to make different interpretation of reality. The restoration of facts, which have been forgotten by virtue of the powerful people is a voice of those who were proscribed. At the same time,

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<sup>3</sup> Noteworthy is that the cognitive value of the text has become important since the literature was originated. It is correct to consider that the literary discourse has didactic function that is precondition for proper development of society. In contrast with the doctrine of immanence that defends the autonomy of art, beauty can be related to benefit, which is precondition of “narrative knowledge” (Aguilar e Silva, 1967). Myths and legends that exist since the history of the literature was created can transmit information to the reader. Through them, institutions gain stability, create social models and examples, and new members are integrated in society. The structure of these texts reveal their function of being an instrument of gaining knowledge, which will contribute to social coexistence. Its prosody and structure facilitate to gain, repeat and enhance knowledge. Its motto is not to forget but to keep the story alive so that the latter can manage to fulfill the cognitive function and share information to all the members of society, including future generations.

citizens are provided with another version of the past that will be different from the official one. For this reason, the protection of memory is vital that is directed against forgetting and revisionist deformation, and based on experience creates a group identity. The authors perform pedagogical and warning functions by converting non-existent things into existed ones by means of the script. It will be more advantageous for society than pure aesthetic function. The literature of memory restores specific experiences of the past, which can be adapted to modern difficulties that makes it universal and exemplary. Considering the experience that is narrated in other person's text, personal identity can be reconstructed through reading. According to Joan-Carles Mélich, "Reading of a text transforms the subjectivity that is constructed on principles of freedom and autonomy. It transforms the subjectivity from the ethical point of view, which affects the sense of responsibility and heteronomy because these signs are responsible for the construction of the subjectivity and caring for others" (2001:17). This is how "Resemantization process of the past occurs (...) and signs become parts of different meanings (Colmeiro, 2005:17). Through this way the thing that was ignored and concealed once, can be transformed into an alternative form of knowledge and become a part of the public space and collective memory.

## 2.1.Type of the Literature of Memory: Literature of Concentration Camps

Different events of modern history can become a research subject within the framework of the literature of memory. This statement can be exemplified by stories of the victims of war, the exiles, the refugees and the survivors of the concentration camps. In this last case, we deal with a text corpus that has an intercultural structure. In this respect, noteworthy are the people who became victims of Nazi and Soviet concentration camps. These are: Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, Elie Wiesel, Jorge Semprún, Primo Levi, Gustaw Herling, Tadeusz Borowski, Chil Racjhamnn, Boris Pahor, David Rousset, Robert Antelme, Margarete Buber-Neumann, Jean Améry, Joaquim Amat-Piniella, Charlotte Delbo... Their texts have cognitive and ethical values because they

provide the reader with the information regarding the terrible reality of the concentration camp system.<sup>4</sup> Things that didn't exist for the leaders of the totalitarian regimes or were hidden beyond euphemistical and perverted formulas are described comprehensively in the narratives of those who "lived to tell" the experiences of the concentration camps. For this reason, the texts of survived prisoners that is affirmation of what they experienced can be considered examples of the literature of memory because they tell about the fierce experience of the past. Literature in this respect can be reviewed as "the place of memory" as it is called by Pierre Nora in his important text *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1984-1992) when speaking about physical and symbolic elements, and collective identity that are connected with the political, social and cultural context. For this reason, they represent "the place of memory" where space restores time and reveals concrete historical event.

Of course the survivors were aware of the fact that memory acquired double value in their texts. They wrote not only to transmit their personal traumatic historical experience but also to "create memory" that would prevent future generations from forgetting past experiences. In this respect, their texts are particularly important for two reasons. Firstly, these texts contain cognitive experience that reveals the things that have been kept secret. Therefore, they become counter-discourses that oppose official views regarding the occurred event. Primo Levi noted that "The most important source for reconstruction of the truth regarding the concentration camps is a factor of survived victims" (2005: 477). Indeed, the entire literature on the concentration camps is characterized by descriptive phenomenon, including physical description that comprise living environment of the prisoners, and their poor conditions such as: cold, hunger, abuse and coexistence with death, and human violence as a form of relationship, inversion of social norms and cruelty committed against the victims. These texts, along with the abovementioned aspects of the narrative, warn future

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<sup>4</sup> Without a separate review of each case, different but similar historical reality can be described as follows: "concentration, separation, deprivation of the fundamental human rights, lack of vital conditions, which were due to deliberate destruction" (Naharro-Calderón, 2017:80).

generations about what people can do. In this respect Levi said: “The history of concentration camps should be considered as part of the threat” (2005: 27). The prisoners’ narratives aim at making their texts examples of memory that, through describing experienced torture, will impact on the members of society. Their goal is to make personal tragedy a subject of thinking that will give the texts universal dimensions, making him transcend the coordinates and becomes a paradigm that is relevant to all similar historical events, which may occur in the future.

However, during the analysis of the description of living conditions in the concentration camps, the context of their creation, as well as publication must be taken into account. Paula Simón said in this respect: “Texts should be analyzed based on their political and social contexts, and how the contexts impacted on the texts when they were created should be taken into account” (2012: 21). We want to say that the texts describing the German concentration camps of the late 1940s and early 1950s, when there was little known about them, can’t be compared with those texts created in the 21th century when there is much information about them in collective imagination, even by means of mass media, including television and cinematography.

Secondly, the survivors’ story present those people who are no longer with us. This refers both to the authors of the texts who speak to us under the anonymous name of the prisoners and to those people who died in the concentration camps. For this reason, López de la Vieja noted that “literature of concentration camps gives voice to those who didn’t have” (2003: 135). According to Esther Cohen, “This kind of literature allows others to live a new life” (2006: 46). Those who survived were ready to raise the voice of the dead and express their experiences in their own texts, as it was done by Boris Pahor and Joaquim Amat-Piniella who dedicated their discourses “To all those people who didn’t return” (2010: 21) and “To fallen friends”. They wished to “celebrate the Memorial Day for them and dedicate warm memoirs to them” (2014: 9). When Jorge Semprún was telling about the death of one of the prisoners, he noted that “he would try to save him to keep his memory” (2002: 226). The notion of “not forgetting” is

thus made explicit in many texts, which aim at preserving and reviving victims in the past stories that is moral imperative and converts the concept of the memory into “ethical obligation”, according to which forgetting is equivalent to submitting and obeying.

### 3. A new epistemological framework

This review does not aim at drawing concrete conclusions, but rather it tries to present theoretical and practical views regarding the literature of memory. From the theoretical point of view, it is obvious that the concept of the literature of memory is more pragmatic than contextual and stylistic, and expresses author’s will and interests. A clear example of this is the general line of “not forgetting” that runs the corpus of the text reflecting desire not to lose traumatic experience. Therefore, this kind of literature requires from the researchers to create new perspectives of study, which will be closely connected with other humanitarian disciplines and won’t be limited with analysis of linguistic structures of the texts.

In respect of practical side of this issue, literature of concentration camps shows that in some cases, including creation of the texts that reflect violence and wrong historical event, it is appropriate to use epistemological framework of the literature of memory. In this case, the reader reads the text not to enjoy it but to learn and revive others’ feelings. This cognitive ability changes the approach of “what” with “how” in analyzing the text that allows literature to contribute to the perception of the societies’ past.

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# Reconstructing History: Documentary and Non-Documentary Sources<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with the possible ways of understanding the relation between the historical past (archives and postmemory) and literary fiction (ectopic literature). The accumulation of historical records – archives – and the transmission of memory across generations – postmemory, – facilitate the formation of historical discourse, which is inevitably accompanied by modern interpretation. As interpretation is understanding reality in a subjective manner, literary fiction takes its place in the reconstruction of historical events. And *ectopic literature* is one of the main narratives, which helps to understand the relation between facts and fantasy.

**Keywords:** history, postmemory, narrative, ectopic literature.

## 1. Introduction. What Is The Historical Past?

The above question is not an easy one. Furthermore, from a certain point of view, it may seem quite strange to connect such different terms as *history* and *past* in order to form the expression *historical past*. As Keith Jenkins notes, while the past has come and gone, history is the product of the work of historians (Jenkins, 2003). Reading past events, historians transform a chronology into a story and thus form historical discourse. The newly formed discourse becomes part of discipline – History – which is a manifestation of both subjective and indirect narration, of a fragmentary and interpreted nature.

Although the *historical past* is formed by historians, – in professional publications, such as books or scholarly articles, this does not facilitate its understanding (White, 2014: 9). For a better

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a result of the research carried out within the RDI project “Analogy, equivalence, polyvalence and transferability as cultural-rhetoric and interdiscursive foundations of the art of language: literature, rhetoric and discourse” (Acronym: TRANSLATIO. Reference: PGC2018-093852-B-I00), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities.



characterization and understanding of the notion, a difference must be established between the *historical* and the *practical* past. The latter is the part of our personal, – everyday life, as was shown by the political philosopher, – Michael Oakeshott, – and the historian in the tradition of literary criticism, Hayden White.

With regard to *History* in a wider sense and not just the articulation of the concept of *History* as a discipline, one may observe a close relation between the evolution of human mind (related to the understanding of history) and the attempt to understand the notion of *immortality*. Karl Jaspers noted that since the earliest times man has been subjected to the attempt to picture the whole of himself (Jaspers, 1965: xiii). Both Thucydides (describing the Peloponnesian War) and Herodotus (willing “to say what is”) aimed to conserve historical facts to form the memory (Arendt, 1968: 48). Turning *history* into a *text*, Roland Barthes noted that “[...] the historical method is a philological method based on the book of life” (Barthes, 405). According to Barthes, historical discourse contains two types of shifters – the *shifter of listening* and the *shifter of organization* (*Ibid.* 128-129). As historicism is based on the analysis of the facts that constitute historical past, and as “fact never has any but a linguistic existence” (Barthes, 138), the relation between historicism and linguistics is obvious.

The formation of historical discourse is different from the formation of other text types, linguistic, literary, philosophical, etc. What makes historical discourse unique is the peculiarity that it is formed not only from the “true story” (of what indeed happened) but also based on the relation between a story (or the past) and a public present, as was noted by Hegel (1970: 83). Indeed, within the historical framework, time is filled with now-time, as ancient Rome was for Robespierre (Benjamin, 1966: 395). On its road to formation historical discourse is filled with imaginary structures: at first, the referent (content of discourse) is exterior to discourse and only in the second stage does it (the referent) enter into a relation with the signifier, allowing not only to tell the *story* that happened but also adding some imaginary structures to the discourse (Barthes, 138:139). Thus, the

question of the subjectivity of the historian or of a certain mistrust of historical facts arises.

What is subjectivity, and how is it related to the phenomenon of the mistrust of historical facts? Is the question of narrative influential in contemporary historical theory, –? How are ideology and politics linked to the reconstruction of the historical past? The answers may be decisive for understanding the main chain of the evolution of human mind regarding the acceptance and recognition of national and universal history.

Traditionally, objectivity meant the professional abstention of the “story teller” or historian, who adhered strictly to the content of their documents. The question of subjectivity or the evolution of the notion of impartiality may be presented historically in three phases: the ancient period, in which the main task of the historian was to observe and catalogue the facts, eliminating the historian’s point of view; the modern age, in which the main characteristics of life drifted away from Homeric impartiality and Thucydidean objectivity, as the understanding of greatness changed in the Christian era, where immortality became the destiny of a single living individual (Arendt, 1968: 48-52); and a third phase may be distinguished from the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the historian’s *explanation* was added to the *story*. This is the so-called *dissertative mode* of address, that is, the professional interpretation of facts by the researcher (Gay, 1974; White, 1984). In Hayden White’s words, one of the possibilities for *History* to be transformed into Science (in the early nineteenth century) “was by detaching *historiography* from its millennial association with rhetoric” (White, 2014: 8). This is where the main reason for mistrust appears: – “an imaginary elaboration” of historical discourse (Barthes, 1989: 138) results in doubts regarding the correctness of the historical facts.

Much has been written over the issue of ideology (Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Slavoj Žižek, Terry Eagleton, Michael Billig and Jorge Larraín, among others) but here we shall highlight the links between ideology and discourse (Teun A. van Dijk), as the main focus of our investigation is historical discourse. In this approach, ideology is linked to politics, or institutions of power, which form truth based on

past stories, which are interpreted in accordance with the current values of society.

Professor van Dijk defines ideology as “[...] the foundation of the social representations shared by a social group” (van Dijk, 2006: 729). As political groups need to be able to compete, they are inevitably ideologically organized. Hence arises the need for a political field to be ideologically conscious. Once ideology becomes part of politics, it expresses itself widely in political discourse. In van Dijk’s words, “[...] discourses make ideologies observable in the sense that it is only in discourse that they may be explicitly expressed and formulated” (van Dijk, 2006: 732). Thus, according to the initial understanding of the ideology coined by Destutt de Tracy, it was the discipline that studied ideas. Later, this understanding changed, - and ideology came to be seen as part of the political sphere.

## 2. Archives: Where The Past Is Stored. Direct Documentary Sources

Archival studies are a discipline of the modern social sciences and thus encompass culture, history and philosophy. They are, on the one hand, based on classical academic works (such as those of Hannah Arendt) and on post-modern scientific studies (such as those of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault). Modern historical research is often conducted within the framework of cultural research.<sup>2</sup> In particular, studies devoted to archives and memory emphasize two types of cultural memory: *active* and *passive*. The institutions of active memory preserve the past as present, while the institutions of passive memory preserve the past as past.<sup>3</sup> History (along with religion and art) is one of the core areas of active cultural memory, which can be recovered in two ways: through the presentation of sacred texts, artistic masterpieces, or key historic events; and thanks to the storing of documents and artifacts from the past. The first of these is implemented in history textbooks, which Charles Ingrao appropriately termed “weapons of mass

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<sup>2</sup> Assmann, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 97.

instruction”;<sup>4</sup> the second is through institutions such as archives. Accordingly, archival publications are an important instrument for historical research in the scope of society, as archival studies combine the two aforementioned approaches. On the one hand, publishing archival materials makes them accessible, and, on the other, these archival materials themselves may comprise an important part of history textbooks.

Historians and researchers work on archival documents, which – once they are published – lose their archival status and acquire the status of historical documents. Therefore, they participate in the process of creating national memory. For this reason, it is not surprising that archives have always belonged to institutions of power: the state, the police, the law and the church. Time, however, quickly overwhelms these archives. The archival documents become part of history and only historians and researchers are interested in archival depositories. We must therefore distinguish between *political archives* and *historical archives*.

It is particularly important to study those historical archives which preserve documents related to the activities of various state and law enforcement structures (political parties, the police and security structures). The documents classified “Secret” and “Top Secret”, based on the legislation of a specific country, may be preserved in archives for a long period of time.<sup>5</sup> After a given period of time, the documents

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<sup>4</sup> Noteworthy is his work “Weapons of Mass Instruction: Schoolbooks and Democratization in Central Europe”, *Contexts: the Journal of Educational Media, Memory and Society* (New York & Oxford: Berghahn 2008), 199-209; “Democracy and Dissolution: Macedonia and the Fate of Yugoslavia”, in D. Jovanović, eds., *Makedonija i Sosedite* (Skopje: Cyril and Methodius University Press, 2009); “Western Intervention in Bosnia: Operation Deliberate Force”, in Bruce Elleman, ed., *Naval Coalition Warfare: From the Napoleonic Wars to Operation Iraqi Freedom* (London, 2010), 169-82.

<sup>5</sup> For example, the operative correspondence of the Soviet state security organs was packed based on a special regulation. Namely, special terms were used. These were: series „K“ – Top Secret/Extremely Urgent, letter „A“ – Secret/Urgent/, letter „B“ – Non-secret/Urgent/ and letter „B“ – Secret/Not-urgent/. All these terms, except the letter „B“ were to be placed at the top right hand corner and a special signature confirmed with the seal of coat of arms appeared beneath. Besides, these parcels were to be sewed up in the middle and sealed up. If it was impossible to sew up a parcel, it

may be declassified and thus become accessible to the public. Archives created under totalitarian regimes are extremely significant, both historically and politically. As a rule, such non-democratic regimes keep most of their documents classified. Only after the death of a dictator or a change in the state regime for other reasons are archives declassified and preserved documents become accessible for consultation.<sup>6</sup> History can then be reviewed and studied again using archival materials. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century historians and social scientists took an interest in the issue of how the public perceives criminal acts committed by governments as a whole, as well as by individual state functionaries and officials.<sup>7</sup> A nation's readiness to reflect on its past objectively is a significant component in the formation of a democratic and civic society. In this sense, publishing archival materials is particularly important. This is the task of archival employees who are neither scientists nor researchers. Although archival publications lacking expert commentary do not reflect a scientific attitude towards history, the publication of unabridged documents preserved in archives (with only brief descriptions, glossaries and annotations needed to decode abbreviations) is a significant tool to evaluate the past objectively.

The historian's work in archives is based on the goals that s/he has set. The historian may be just a simple observer, a professional who is studying history with no specific objective, or, the historian may seek to reevaluate and rework history.

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was sealed up in five places: One seal was put in the middle and the other four in the corners.

<sup>6</sup> Under nondemocratic regimes governments periodically destroy materials that are preserved in their archives, often in order to conceal evidence of state crimes. For example, in 1948 the then Minister of Security of Georgia, Nikoloz Rukhadze, destroyed archival-investigation cases against former employees of the Ministry of Security in the Security Archive. Officially these documents were declared to be non-operational and hence unimportant (MIA Archive, f. 6, c. 5519, v. 2, p. 231). In addition, between 1956 and 1988, based on orders passed by the regime, around 2 million operative documents were destroyed in the Security Archive of Poland. Later, in 1989, several further orders were issued on the destruction of operational cases, which caused the reorganization of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

<sup>7</sup> Langenohl, 2010.

Documents found in the archives can be both primary and secondary. In both cases, the aim of the historian is “historization”, or to help the documents regain their lost relevance. Documents lose relevance when they abandon *political archives* and enter into the new context of *historical archives*.<sup>8</sup> The relevance of archival documents affects not only the importance of the scientific and educational value of the institution, but serves as an effective tool for the reevaluation of the past and for creating new historical approaches to the development of national memory as well.

Both employees and historians working in archives conduct difficult systematic research in order to analyze history. Very often the materials preserved in archives shed light on the history not only of the particular country in which they are held but on that of other countries as well. Moreover, the history of one country is often restored based on the archival materials preserved in the archives of other countries. It is especially important to examine totalitarian regions when the central administration (as in the case of Soviet Georgia, for example) sends circulars and orders to the different republics which constitute the state. Aside from the Soviet regime, the Fascist and Nazi state systems also exerted influence over conquered lands. Unlike ancient and medieval history, the study of a country’s contemporary history is important not only for the creation and restoration of national memory, but also for the consolidation of the political and social system of the country.

### 3. Postmemory: How The Past Is Handed Down. Another Type Of Direct Documentary Sources

*History* is the cultural and chronological product of *bios politikos*. Hence, it may be transmitted and transmuted. The *transmission of facts into history* aims to preserve facts for future generations. It is an intentional action –: ancient Greeks cultivated historical knowledge in order not to forget it. The notion of *authority* was developed in Rome, and later adopted by the Christian church to create its dogmatic truth. But the *transmutation of facts into history* can be an intentional action

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<sup>8</sup> Kingman, 2012.

because the experience that is transmuted precedes the birth of the generations, which become the part of it. This type of historical experience is often traumatic in nature. Based on the “inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience”, Professor Marianne Hirsch from Columbia University developed the term *Postmemory* (Hirsch, 2008: 106).

Reading written works of second generation writers and visual artists, Hirsch emphasizes the importance of historical events which change the lives of witnesses of cultural and collective trauma (mainly in the 20<sup>th</sup> century), and form the memory of the following generations “by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up” (Hirsch, 2008: 106). Hence, this is memory built on imagination and fantasy when a person feels that the effects of past continue in the present. Inspired by Art Spiegelman’s photographs, the phenomenology of photography became crucial in Hirsch’s understanding of the concept of postmemory, as well as its relation to Holocaust studies. In the footnote of her article, Hirsch made reference to the work of art historian Andrea Liss, who also used the term “postmemories” to refer to Holocaust photographs (Hirsch, 2008: 107). However, the Holocaust is not the only historical trauma, in which the notion of generation is an important standpoint. Intergenerational transmission is, as Hirsch observes, equally important in the studies of: American slavery, the Vietnam War, the Dirty War in Argentina, South African apartheid, Soviet and East European communist terror, and the Armenian and Cambodian genocides (Hirsch, 2008: 104).

Hirsch’s work has been widely received. Her monographs: *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*; *Ghosts of Home: The Afterlife of Czernowitz in Jewish Memory* (with Leo Spitzer); *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory*; *Teaching the Representation of the Holocaust* (with Irene Kacandes), *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory* (with Nancy Miller), among others – are widely cited in the academic world.

#### 4. Narrative And Ectopic Literature: The Place Of Fiction In Historical Discourse

With regard to the formation of the historical past as presented in history textbooks, the role of narrative (the methods of formation of historical discourse by historians) is both evident and complex. The tools, used by researchers to compose the relevant and acceptable story for the present generation, may vary according to the time when this view of history was written. Raw documentary materials, mostly found in archives and other depository sources, need to be transformed into a vital historical discourse acceptable both to the present institutions of power and to the audience at large. In short, this is a method of reconstructing history – and creating national and universal memory – based on the theoretical areas of epistemology, methodology and ideology (Jenkins, 2003: 12).

The three above-mentioned areas are closely linked and interconnected. On the one hand, the epistemological approach makes history part of philosophy, the latter being the intellectual archive for the creation of the historical past.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, the chosen methodology defines the approach for the reconstruction of the concrete historical event. And, finally, the epistemological and methodological perspectives are dictated by ideology, as the completed and manufactured story needs to be in accordance with the present political

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<sup>9</sup> Here we can recall the note about the problematic historical relation between knowledge (as the term ‘epistemology’ is derived from the Greek “episteme”, meaning ‘knowledge’) and ideology noted by Teun A. van Dijk: “[...] general, sociocultural knowledge, shared by an epistemic community, forms the common ground for all social representations of all (ideological) groups in the community. However, each group may develop specific group knowledge (e.g., professional, religious, or political knowledge) based on the ideology of the group. This knowledge is called ‘knowledge’ within the group because it is generally shared, certified, and presupposed to be true. For other groups, such knowledge may of course be called mere belief, superstition, or religion. In other words, beliefs that are taken for granted, commonsense, undisputed, etc. **within** a community, and shared by different ideological groups, is are by definition non-ideological **within that community** (van Dijk, 2006: 729).



program because “History is never for itself; it is always for someone” (Jenkins, 2004: 21).

But the professional (historical) narration is not the only way in which historical discourse is formed. Different genres of literature play a crucial role in the understanding of historical fact. From this point of view, the cases of literary evidence conditioned by political reasons are of major interest. And one such literary paradigm is ectopic literature.

Edward Said’s memoirs *Out of Place* may be considered to be a pattern for Ectopic literature. The term was coined by Professor Tomás Albaladejo Mayordomo from the Autonomous University of Madrid (Albaladejo, 2011). Making reference to writers who have moved from their place of birth to another place, Albaladejo distinguishes at least four possibilities of ectopic literature. These are: 1. works written by ectopic writers who maintain their original language in a land whose language is different from theirs: e. g. Richard Zimler’s *Guardian of the Dawn*; 2. works written by ectopic writers in the target land’s language: e. g. Joseph Conrad’s *Under the Western Eyes*; 3. works written by ectopic writers in a third language different both from their original language and from the target land’s: e. g. Jonathan Littell’s *Les Bienveillantes*; 4. works written by ectopic writers in their own language in a land whose language is the same: e. g. Juan Ramón Jiménez’s poetry written in Puerto Rico (Albaladejo, 2011: 144).

Albaladejo’s notion of Ectopic literature was widely received. As the type of literature written outside of its original space, ectopic literature was distinguished from the literature of exile, taking into consideration such characteristics as the change of topic, different from those chosen by an exiled author, the types of exile (exterior and interior), the possible loss of one’s maternal language during exile and the origin of the new literary genres during exile (such as the novel of exile and the novel of concentration camps). The main distinguishing standpoint is that ectopic literature is based on the role of *topos*, which may be not only geographic, but also cultural. The formation of an “ectopic writer” need not be compulsory phenomenon, as the author can choose whether or not to transform his/her cultural micro- and macro-cosmos (Luarsabishvili, 2013).

David Amezcua Gómez from the CEU San Pablo University (Madrid, Spain) has reflected on Eva Hoffman's book *Lost in Translation. A Life in a New Language* that is a clear example of ectopic literature, or more precisely, of ectopic autobiography. At the same time, Amezcua considers translation as the key point for the in-depth study of the notion of ectopic literature (Amezcua, 2014).

Lucía Hellín Nistal of Madrid's Autonomous University (Spain) studies *Party im Blitz* by Elias Canetti in the framework of ectopic literature. Noteworthy is that writing in different and diverse ectopic conditions may facilitate the formation of rich, diverse and complex literary narratives (Hellín Nistal, 2015).

Juan A. Rodríguez García of the National University of Distance Education (UNED) considered the literary work of Rafa Yáñez as an example of ectopic literature. Yáñez was a writer who never rejected his Galician origin and at the same time was deeply integrated in the new *topos*, where he actually found himself (Rodríguez García, 2016).

## 5. Conclusions

The reconstruction of history is a complex process which involves the formation of national memory and national/universal history. Discovering the exact location of a concrete nation on a political-cultural map may be the main creative goal of every historical narrative.

The construction of historical discourse is a subjective task. Several factors, such as the historian's system of values and beliefs, together with the concept of truth as an ideological instrument of the state, are the main points in this process. A rough sketch of the chronological materials present in annals and archival depositories are selected for a reconstruction based on the historian's concrete vision. The past, or what happened, is a desirable phenomena, resulting in the existence of as many pasts as are necessary for the projected goals. Despite the fact that a historical event is fixed in time and described in detail, the interpretation of these same circumstances is quite personal.

Hence, truth may be defined as the sum of beliefs acceptable for a concrete institution of power. Truth, due to its very nature, may vary

from generation to generation, resulting in the creation of national memory. It is extremely uncommon to note a dualistic relation between truth and politics: on the one hand, truth is created for political purposes, while, on the other, truth in its primordial form is totally unacceptable to institutions of power. Thus, truth is fiction, a revelation made in a certain period of time, created to please someone (e.g. the government) or transmit personal experience, usually traumatic in origin. From this moment on, there has been a place for narrative (both documentary and literary) in historical discourse.

Acting as the desirable agent for reconstructing past, 'historical truth' creates the present. The political program proclaims that the nation that has suffered millennial difficulties and survived has a future. Thus, the past is necessary for the present not because of objectivity, or to remember what and how something happened, but the sole purpose of revitalizing heroes buried under the dust of archives is to create modern ideologies.

As ideology is a social product, the transformation and diffusion of the reconstructed past is a key point to understanding the proper place and historical mission of a nation. Fortified by traditions and beliefs, ideology needs to be accepted in the citizen's long-term memory, related with dogmatic religious truth. The personification of power in one individual is a clear example of political ideology that is observed in totalitarian states. The mutual accord between state and church has a rich tradition of governing nations. However, this was in gross violation of basic human rights.

Subjectivity is not the only obstacle which hinders the process of creating historical truth. One of the technical obstacles is that the historian selects a fragment from a chronological continuum and interprets it. Taken out of context, one concrete event does not give the whole picture, necessary for a detailed description of the story. In the process of filling the gaps with fiction and imagination, a historian becomes a professional writer with the clear goal of representing their perception of what really occurred.

Bias makes sense when reconstructing history. Without it, the professional motivation of the historian would be lost. A historian may

select a concrete period for investigation in order to nourish his faith and beliefs. In the case of small nations, studying dissident movements may become necessary to national dignity. Literature of exile reveals the ability to resist dictatorships. The past constructs the present, filling it with meaning.

A historian creates discourse based on two types of information: direct and indirect. The former may be represented by different sources of documentary depositories (such as historical archives, institutions which house manuscripts, museum collections, etc.). The latter, the transition between inter- and trans-generational experience (postmemory), is of literary character (ectopic literature).

Documentary depositories are the first and original source of information. Nevertheless, not all documents contain historical truth. As in the times of monarchies when the chronicler tried to please the monarch by editing the text (concerning such details as the scale of military operations or the number of prisoners taken in battle), in totalitarian states the interrogation files were altered in order to reflect the desired testimonies. Since then, That is why there has been a usual risk of spreading false or exaggerated ‘facts’ taken from historical chronicles.

In this regard, we suppose that *postmemory* is a type of source which may contain historical truth. Indeed, witnesses of different types of collective trauma have formed part of the historical past, and lack ideological motivation to falsify the truth. But here time itself plays a negative role in detailing the narrative. When describing tragedy, trauma or repressions, victims may forget or hyperbolize what happened. They picture themselves in the very center of the events and thus isolate and fragment the dynamics of historical discourse. When a father transmits his memories to a child, the reception of the story may sharpen the impression of what happened. From another point of view, the second generation, which has no personal traumatic experience, may understand the dramatic features of tragedy very superficially. Hence, *postmemory* is an important tool for reconstructing history, though it still lacks certain possibilities in order to document the historical past.

As has already been mentioned, history was traditionally linked to rhetoric. The formation of History as a science became possible only after its detachment from rhetoric. Nevertheless, literary aspects were not excluded from historical discourse, and the work of philosophers in History (beginning with Hegel) is an attempt to widen or systemize the work done and the conclusions reached by historian-scientists. From this perspective, literary imagination represents an indivisible part of historical discourse, as it aims to fill documentary gaps.

The role of the imagination in historical discourse became so important that the literary genre – the Realist novel – has been converted into a strong parallel of historical documentary sources. Whilst professional historiography serves the state and is dictated by ideological demands, the literary narrative of historical events (memoirs, autobiographies, diaries of exile, etc.) has no concrete aim to exaggerate or diminish the role of circumstances in the long chain of historical events. Hence, fact and fiction are two opposing modes of transmitting the historical past.

Ectopic literature is a type of narrative which facilitates the understanding of the possible reasons for the creation of historical truth in the works of writers, exiled or not, who decided to create their text in unusual, complex reality. Frequent change of place of residence, as well as of themes, determines the formation of a new type of narrative –Ectopic Literature.

Thus, in coming to a series of conclusions concerning the reconstruction of history, let me offer four illustrations of why understanding the historical past is a complex reality:

1. The gist of my argument is that the historical past is constructed based on fragments of the whole: according to Oakeshott, we are interpreting the whole based on the interpretation of the separate parts. Hence, imaginary structures complete the past experience of the world. As we are not able to understand the past, which does not form part of our personal experience, we need to explain the historical facts, elaborating the raw documental materials mentally. Why do we need to do this? For two clear reasons. First, to give meaning to the past, and create the background for future – political and religious – recognition

of the present. The past plays the role we have already prepared for it: to determine the present and indicate the possible paths for future development. Secondly, for contemporary politics. The historian can characterize the past in the framework of the present political situation, with the goal of creating continuation to the present. Politics is important for us as it defines not only our practical past but also the present. Using ideology as a tool to create truth, politics aims to define the goal of our existence. Strongly revealed in the totalitarian states of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, politics became the main mode of human behavior. There was no life without it, or without the everyday participation of every citizen in building the state. The Romanian authority thus reached its most extreme revelation, dispraising individualism and facilitating the formation of an atomized society. Based on 'historical truth', cinematography was a vivid means for self-expression of the despotic mentality. Handbooks of history were written and adapted in accordance with changes in political doctrine. Stalin's biography, commissioned by Lavrenti Beria, is a concrete illustration of this. The role of the old Bolsheviks was muted, while Stalin was considered the sole origin of the communist thinking. Even Leon Trotsky, a core figure in the formation of proletarian dictatorship, was not only deleted from Soviet history but also declared a renegade. Once Trotsky had fallen into disgrace, official history changed with him and he lost his place in the memory of later Soviet generations.

2. In *Democracy and Education* John Dewey developed the theme of play and work inside and outside school. He indicated that in the case of work more attention is paid to the results. Work in archives is like Dewey's theory of play and work. It resembles play because it is associated with the idea of finding what is hidden and work, as there is a kind of obligation to work in order to discover desirable truth and reconstruct the desired past. The historian is playing with facts stored in archives – first, choosing the preferred period; second, transforming the documentary into story; and, the last: interpreting what he has read. Thus, two different historians may compose two distinct realities based on the same facts. The dominant politics will select one and the intellectual game will be continued in ideological narrative, converting

historical discourse into contemporary doctrine. After declassification of archival documents, a blind selection of the historical period to be studied may result in a fragmentary reconstruction of the dynamical context. Fragmentarism is the result of inspiration in romantic poetry but it is totally unproductive in the realm of historical science. Thus the accessibility of archival materials is not a condition *sine qua non* for discovering historical truth. National memory is not the product of liberalism and mature democratic institutions; it is formed in accordance with contemporary challenges and the dominant political discourse. I draw the conclusion that archives are the important source for reconstructing the historical past with the way of understanding the historical truth.

3. “For the post-generation as a whole, the Second World War is the great event of that relevant past, the central point of reference, the referent, indeed, for the very idea of “history”. The Holocaust is the most harrowing and philosophically pivotal heart of that cataclysm, the part of our larger past with which we have to struggle if we are to grasp something about our twentieth-century legacy, whoever we are” – noted Eva Hoffmann in her monumental *After such knowledge* (Hoffman, 2004: 155). Facts deeply rooted in history across generations are mostly of traumatic origin. Genocide is the type of collective trauma which is converted from history into culture. Time passes and new generations receive historical events as form of cultural heritage. Documents from concentration camps, e.g. archives, journals or diaries, may be lost or destroyed; witnesses may survive and pass their memories to the next generation, but after one generation this type of direct sourcing will no longer be possible. And grandchildren receive the Holocaust, for example, as a chapter in a history textbook or at a exhibition. Hence, trauma becomes memory, forming part of culture. The continuous education of new generations is an important step in reconstructing history. Nevertheless, once the impression has lost its sharpness, it cannot build the foreground of narrative. And different interpretations of historical truth may appear. In contemporary Russia we can still read about the Joseph Stalin who won the Second World War and eradicated parasitism from Soviet society. But there are no living witnesses of the

Great Terror who can recount in detail the violence against the nation organized and directed by Stalin. Hence, the revitalization of Stalin is important in an ideological framework, omitting the concrete details of Soviet terror. The ideas, illustrated by Antonio Gramsci in his prison notebooks, concerning the transformation of revolutionary impulse by Stalin into an idolization of the totalitarian state, lost their actuality in dominant political discourse.<sup>10</sup> Time changes historical content, creating a new and desirable context for ideological ‘truth’.

4. Literature can make a valid contribution to history. Narrative represents the interaction of human beings with their physical, historical and social world as it (narrative) responds to the necessity of representation of “concepts, acts and world status” (Aguiar e Silva, 1975: 607). Different types of historical narrative (epic poetry, novel, novella or short story) compose the story based on the real facts filled with imagination. The Spanish philosopher Maria Zambrano, in her essay *Poesía y Revolución (Poetry and Revolution)*, describes the historical links between politics and literature, in particular the case of three revolutionary activities reflected in French literature (Zambrano, 1998: 201). Printing or the orally disseminated word (newspapers, bulletins, speeches pronounced on demonstrations) are useful tools for the diffusion of political ideas. Different human values are spread in society during social cataclysms and political instability. Revolutionary rhetoric is accumulated in memory via literary texts and archival documents. Such historical narrative is exaggerated by nature and the degree reaches its peak during historical reconstruction.

Exiled or ectopic writers compose literature written in a different, extreme mode of composing. Historical facts are interpreted in quite a subjective manner, depending on the concrete context and the knowledge available. Autobiography becomes a fertile ground for giving birth to new ideas, supplied by personal childhood memories. Continuous change of place and work, difficulties with the new cultural ambience and the need to be a part of a forced reality condition the

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<sup>10</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Letters from prison*, New York; Columbia University Press, 1994 and Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings, 1910-1920*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977.



formation of new literary narrative, with different accents and spheres of interests. Here literary discourse interacts with the historical, blurring borders that distinguish one type of discourse from another. A new, hybrid narrative is formed, containing peculiarities of distinct text types and painting reality with bright historical, literary and psychological inks.

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