LITERATURE AS THE THIRD ELEMENT

IN SEARCH OF THE SELF AND THE OTHER

by

CORINA-MIHAELA BELEAUA

(Under the Direction of MIHAI SPĂRIOSU)

ABSTRACT

Because of the current vulnerable state of literary studies, there is a pressing need to open up the discussion of the role of literature in education. The present study intends to convey the relevance of literature in the current educational process. Regardless of the level of studies, literature provides students with the necessary skills to face real-life situations. For centuries, philosophers, writers, critics, and pedagogues have been underscoring the advantages of a curriculum that includes literature, pointing out the benefits of the humanities for the mental and ethical development of students. The present study intends to defend the relevance of the three ancient values: goodness, beauty, and truth. I argue that literature represents one major tool that endorses the three transcendentals and actualizes their positive potentials. Ultimately, the following pages will provide arguments in support of the intensification and reconfiguration of literary studies for students independently of their age or interests. The humanistic/moral values conveyed through reading represent a *sine qua non* for any social interaction. I will argue that literature represents a symbolic manifestation of moral values that follow readers in their encounters with others.

INDEX WORDS: philosophies of education, moral development, aesthetic freedom, self-discovery, play, global intelligence

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TO MY SISTER

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It is often said, “It takes a village to raise a child”. In my case, it has taken a village to write this dissertation.

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CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE THE THIRD ELEMENT

What do you want to know? Only two things: Yourself and myself [1]

Given the ever-broadening evidence for the relevance of literature for shaping one's mind, discourse, future, and persona, engaging in research that targets the ancient classical values in literature feels like an unnecessary attempt at reinventing the wheel. I must clarify from the beginning that I will explore literature using pedagogical lenses. The following pages will be a modest attempt to re-conceptualize reading and literature on the basis of their fundamental role in assisting one's search for meaning and connecting it to others' searches for meaning. I am thus stating that **literature has a dialogical role in connecting people** in raising awareness and in creating new alternatives of thought through the staging of various potentialities of action.

The following research does not intend to reiterate what has already been said[2] but to focus on presenting a new dimension of the role of literature in the student's process of self-discovery and interactions with the other—his friend, neighbor, or a stranger—in the name of *global awareness*[3] and a *peaceful mentality*[4]. The present study will demonstrate that the three classical virtues discretely emerge through fictional texts from different centuries, authors, styles, and genres. Also, the study will show that such texts disseminate these core perennial principles

[1] St. Augustine. *Soliloquies*. Rose Elizabeth Cleveland (trans.). (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company. 1910)
[2] Here, I refer to some of the main theorists in World Literature and Comparative Literature, and also to the writers whose testimonials support the undeniable contribution of fictional texts in leading past generations and offering alternative perspectives.
[3] Global attentiveness represents an escape from the mentalities of power toward a comprehensive understanding of the other.
[4] By peaceful mentalities, or irenic mentalities, I refer to Spăriosu's distinction between irenic mentalities and mentalities of power, understood as behaviors and thought patterns based on the principle of force. See Mihai Spăriosu. *The Wreath of Wild Olive Play: Liminality and the Study of Literature*. (New York: State University of New York Press. 1997)

and that, once acknowledged, goodness, beauty, truth[5] unlock humility, selflessness, and love. Regarded either as a sum of separate components or as a unity, the ancient triad is omnipresent in literary texts. Hence, literature becomes the third element[6] in any dialogue, like an echo or a source of goodness, beauty, and truth.

In defending literature, I use a methodological apparatus based on two major ideas. 1.) I argue for the moral weight of literature as a provider of values through the playful staging of life and the generous display of examples of good practices. 2.) I give arguments for the actualization of these potentialities in the lives of readers. Here, I refer to the effectiveness of literary texts to infect readers, but also to how that contagion reflects itself in the encounter of the self (of the reader) and the other (his/her friend, neighbor, acquaintance). Thus, I look at literature as a third element, indispensable for the becoming[7] of the self, through the interaction with the other. Literature is dialogical because it mediates any encounter and allows participants in a dialogue to understand each other, learn from each other, and eventually reach unity and equilibrium. The concept of 'third element' is not a separate justification (from the main argument based on

[5] I consider them not only classical virtues but also moral values in the sense that they represent standards that guide people's choices. Despite the authoritarian regimes that tried to minimize their importance, we find them spring out since the beginning of human history. For a separate definition of the three terms, see glossary (infra. 225). When I mention them in a block, goodness, beauty, and truth, I refer to the three transcendentals, and I embrace C.S. Lewis and Peter Kreeft's perspective, "There are three things that will never die: truth, goodness, and beauty. These are the three things we all need, and need absolutely, and know we need, and know we need absolutely. Our minds want not only some truth and some falsehood, but all truth, without limit. Our wills want not only some good and some evil but all good, without limit. Our desires, imaginations, feelings or hearts want not just some beauty and some ugliness, but all beauty, without limit" See Peter Kreeft. "Lewis' Philosophy of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty". in David Baggett. Garry, R., Habermas. Jerry, L., Walls. *C.S. Lewis. As Philosopher: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.* (Illinois: InterVarsity Press. 2009) p. 23; and also, Howard Gardner's actualization of the three terms in Howard Gardner. *Truth, Beauty, and Goodness Reframed: Educating for the Virtues in the Age of Truthiness and Twitter*. (New York: Basic Books. 2011)

[6] I adopt this concept so as to clearly emphasize the central role of literature, by seizing one basic Euclidian principle according to which three points uniquely define a circle. I look at the self and the other as two of the three points, and choose to single literature as the 'third element' that grants unity, totality, and equilibrium.

[7] Here, I echo Deleuze's terminology from *A Thousand Plateaus*, where he defines becoming as a continuous process of transforming, changing, or in Christian terms, experiencing *metanoia.* 'Becoming other' refers to the process of knowing thyself, or *Nosce te ipsum*.

goodness, beauty, and truth) for why one should read literature, but a materialization of the three transcendentals in the (individual/social) life of readers.

The premise of the present study will follow the historical direction initiated by philosophers (Plato, Ricoeur, Levinas, Certeau, Gadamer), pedagogues (Fichte, Kant, Pestalozzi, Schiller, Ruskin, Newman, Dewey), authors (Goethe, Exupéry, Tolstoy, Lewis, Mishima, Endo), theologians (Saint Augustine, Merton, Bonhoeffer, Mother Teresa), and critics (Arnold, Călinescu, Nussbaum, Spăriosu, Nemoianu, Figueira) who promote alternative life views, aiming at a peaceful mentality. I will frequently refer to parts of their works throughout the present study because their theories are constructive arguments that support my thesis and confirm the transformational role of literature.

My intention is to show that dialogue has the potential to help readers reach unity within[8], in as much as the participants gain **awareness of a third element in the discussion**. As a mediator, the third element is represented by literature, language, or any type of cultural, moral, ethnical, local, global, temporal or social construct. Implicitly, one will be able to approach the other paying attention to their common humanity, thus reaching unity within.

The limitations of the study consist in the impossibility of assembling a full holistic representation of the literary canon. I made a selection based on the pedagogical tendencies of writers. In most cases, the selected writers undertake the role of guides for their readers. I will bring together texts that have the indirect mission of highlighting the efficiency of a life led by the *three transcendentals*[9], in relation to the self and the other.

[8] Here, I refer to one of my major arguments based on Euclidian geometry.
[9] See David Baggett, Gary R. Habermas, Jerry L. Walls. *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.* IVP Academic. (Illinois: InterVarsity Press. 2008). p. 23.

After a historical overview (chapter I), the thematic analysis will be divided into four parts (chapters II, III, IV), each of the first three corresponding to one of the moral targets previously mentioned, while the fifth section (chapter V) will discuss their opposites: evil, ugliness, hypocrisy, revolt, and suffering. The last chapter will move from theory to practice, in an attempt to frame new means of teaching literature, as a third element, for an empathetic dialogue. The current project will frame a pertinent argument in favor of literature as a moral incentive with an essential role not only in the educational process but also in any human interaction.

The fundamental problem of the self's relation to the other—a problem that literature is uniquely poised to solve—is an age-old one, appearing in various forms as the master-slave dialectic and the Marxist construct of the exploiter vs. exploited. These constructs point out that one's world's view is ingrained in one's mind at an early age, and that every time one starts a dialogue, all these frames of reference involuntarily build expectations, prejudice or fear[10]. How many of us can state that they look at the other and truly ascertain his/her essence? The answer is simple; No one is able to engage others while entirely ignoring differences or social and cultural specificities. As a result, dialogue has the potential to be charged with superficiality, pseudo-expectations, and mistrust. In seeking solutions to this problem of miscommunication ancient Greeks noted that one could analyze a dialogue through the lens of power, revealing a display of authority between a master (the one entitled to give opinions) and the slave (the one who must unconditionally obey).

The allegory of the cave from Plato's *Republic* represents the narrow self-centered perspective that one usually adopts when entering a dialogue. Socrates and Plato have tried to

[10] See Henry William Elson. *History of the United States of America*. Vol. 1. (London: Macmillan. 1905). p. 27.

change this paradigm and reshape the idea of communication. Through his *paideic* techniques, Socrates engages his disciples in dialogues based in *Logos,* i.e. opinion, discussion, and speech. He reevaluates the importance of communication, emphasizing that people need to be open-minded and receive others' opinions and thoughts. The Socratic *Logos* refers to a higher level of understanding for both participants by bringing together two contrasting arguments and allowing one to learn from the other's perspective. The discussion thus loses its power to convince others through an authoritative stance, specific for mentalities of power, and instead promotes learning together and embracing divergent points of view. Through rhetoric and dialectics, Socrates redesigns communication and opens the way toward an unmediated contact with the essence of the other. Socrates teaches his disciples and his readers that they need to leave their chains (represented today by racism, discrimination, social status, xenophobia, or misanthropy) and receive the other and what the other has to say. If each individual were to start a selfless adventure toward the genuine encounter of the other, the dialogue would achieve its aim by people not only hearing, but also listening to and understanding each other.

However, in spite of Plato's call for readjustment of one's positionality in the perpetual power-game, the master-slave mentality continues to influence many social encounters. The contrast between the rich and the poor, the center and the margins, and the discriminated against and the privileged continues to encourage victimization. Victimization becomes a social technique, a *sine qua non* attitude in almost any interaction. Those feeling discriminated against or marginalized are encouraged to fight for their rights, but unfortunately, the fight creates collateral victims. In some cases, the oppressors, the racists, the rich, or the majority start losing their deserved rights. Dialogue is corrupted and the connection between people is compromised only because people are taught to look at the world from a narrow mindset—their own.

Today, the appeal to pseudo-values of freedom and limitless tolerance are the ones that seem to have answered the call for peace. However, conflicts, discrimination, and xenophobia continue to surface in our societies. Obviously, today's societies focus on affirming the rights of people. But what are the positive effects of such an ideology? Do the rights of minorities overlap those of majorities? Are all rights appropriate and do all rights aim at happiness? Is freedom always right and advantageous for the individual reclaiming it and for those surrounding him/her?

Philosophers, critics, writers, theologians, and pedagogues offer a common answer to these questions. They tend to contradict today's popular political and cultural movement and seem to transmit a more complex, multifaceted message. Their message has a moral referent and is an echo of ancient classical values. The perennial values of goodness, beauty, and truth represent the moral infrastructure of some of the most renowned literary works. As leitmotivs based on self-discovery and openness toward the other that writers have been exploring for centuries. The basic values find their place in poems, novels, short stories, plays, and journals and invite the reader to *sapere aude!*

Literature becomes a mirror or a platform of reference for the self. Literature can play the role of an essential third element in a dialogue, so as for each participant to approach the other by first paying attention to the new aura of knowledge and self-knowledge. Through literature, one has to boost one's awareness of our shared humanity so as to eventually renounce racism, xenophobia, discrimination, arrogance, sense of superiority, exclusivism, self-indulgence, self-centeredness, or pride. The result of a selfless humbling effort, in clearly looking at the other in search of one's human essence, rather than observing the other's superficial characteristics, is unconditional love. Giving up the yoke of pride and trying to listen to the other, for he/she might

teach one something new, is enabling a healthy collaboration and a smooth dialogue. The self becomes whole through genuine interaction with the other.

Similar to a circle that can only be created starting with at least three points, dialogue can reach its roundness only through the acknowledgment of the third point: self+ other+ literature. Reading, as a transformational process, releases the self from self-centeredness and determines engagement for what the other has to say or offer. Literature represents an efficient mediator because it nurtures attentiveness and proves that only through perceiving the many variables (both personal and exterior that could influence an interaction) can one understand oneself and approach the other with openness. In Euclidian geometry[11], given three points it is possible to draw a circle that passes through all three. Two points are not enough to build a circle, but the minimum of three verifies the exigency of a triadic understanding of the encounter of the self with the other. Portraying the self not as a point but as a particle opens one to an infinite number of corresponding particles, allowing access to a new realm of possibilities. The symbolism of the circle classically encompasses the notions of wholeness, totality, infinity, and perfection. Contextualized to the present argument, it shows that even mathematically the encounter of two persons implies a third point or dimension.

[11] See Mircea Craioveanu, Ion Doru Albu. *Geometrie Afină și Euclidiană.* (București: Editura Facla. 1982). The figure that describes literature as the third element is included in an article published in a Romanian academic journal. See Corina-Mihaela Beleaua. "Literature as the Third Element". in *East-West Cultural Passage*. (December 2017. Vol. 17. Issue 2). pp. 7-28.

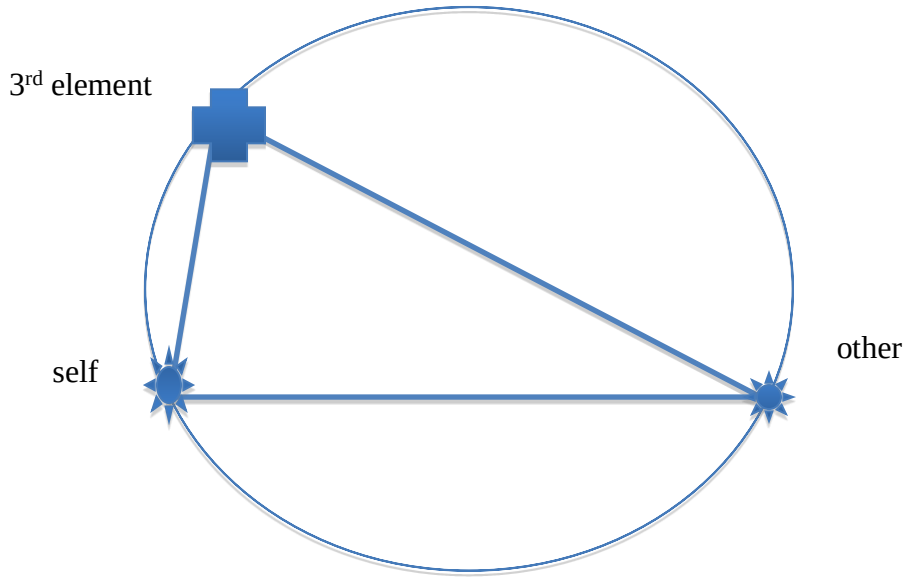

Figure 1. *The Third Element* describes the third element as a necessary participant in the encounter of the self and the other. For a dialogue to be whole (given the symbolism of the circle) and to reach its highest potential, one needs to be aware of a third element, viewed as: literature, humanism, trace of the other/Other, in-betweenness, God, place, hospitality, tradition, culture, peace, acceptance, respect… etc.

By postulating the relevance of literature in the moral education of youth, one needs to offer empirical evidence. Through the present interdisciplinary study, I will analyze the perspectives of several critics, pedagogues, theologians, and writers who advocate for the necessity of reading in the formation of future citizens. Any act of teaching or learning should continue with a self-imposed reading program that will allow students not only to acquire new frames of reference but also to actualize useful information through ethical incentives offered by literary texts.

Envisioned as a way of life, incorporated into a daily or weekly schedule from a young age, literature challenges us to adhere to a continuous self-improving learning program through

our lives. Literature through its "potentiality of transfer"[12] allows readers to anticipate experiences and prepare for facing challenging situations. A certain sense of control arises when the reader incorporates, filters and acknowledges the lessons and experiences fictional characters face in a specific narrative frame. Through the transference of knowledge, readers can adopt positive experiences and appropriate reactions toward difficult situations. Fictional texts comfort the searching self and offer him/her freedom of thought. Literature, through its fictional dimension, creates a playground for active thinking and for a reconceptualization of one's path in life and one's approach to the other.

A couple of initial questions arise: Do writers aim at the three ancient values when they write? Do they unanimously want to share those values? Is there anything positive in a text about crime, murder, rape? Are texts symbolic bridges between a self and another? Should literature teachers guide their students' reading so as to transform the liminal experience into a life lesson?

By contrasting several pedagogical approaches on both sides of the Atlantic, I hope to emphasize their common aspects while identifying key (moral)[13] elements that may be incorporated in today's educational systems. On the basis of these examples, I will argue for a reconfiguration of the teaching methods in the study of literature, by also offering arguments that promote goodness, beauty, and truth, as key elements for the constitution of the free man, for a good society[14]. Students need contact with the text, but they also need to know how to look at

[12] George Steiner's expression, in *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation.* 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press. 1998)

[13] "moral" is a culturally loaded term and throughout the present work, I will use it as Western lenses for approaching perennial values.

[14] I borrow Michael Walzer's formulation of "good society", echoing Plato's *Republic*, as "a lively debating society, may be one kind of good society, but not the only kind… [where p]eople won't just argue about different versions of goodness, they will try to act them out" See Michael Walzer. "What is 'The Good Society?'" in *Dissent.* (University of Pennsylvania Press. Vol. 56. No. 1. Winter 2009). pp. 74-78.

texts and where to search for supplementary information that will help them in reaching a broader understanding of an author's work.

The present work offers an alternative to the dis-ease and clumsiness one often finds today in the interaction between individuals. The global ills of xenophobia, discrimination, racism, isolation, and social exclusion can be dealt with in an irenic fashion. By reconsidering the approach to dialogue as an encounter among three elements (the self+ the other+ fictional texts/poetry), one can perhaps mediate exchange and thus facilitate mutual understanding. If the self looks at the other through fictional lenses, he/she has greater chances of understanding him/her because of familiarity. Facing goodness, beauty, and truth, through readings that build the self, one has the practice of acknowledging these characteristics in real life situations. The project is structured in six parts, each presenting literature from a different angle, as a provider of perennial values.

Chapter I offers the necessary historical background for the study through details about writers who defended literature and emphasized its central role in the educational process. The first section looks at the three core terms of the current project, goodness, beauty, and truth, situating them in a chronological, and global context. The purpose is to identify the semantic and geographic changes that intervened in the employment of the three transcendentals. The chapter ends with an overview of the various functions of the word 'dialogue,' connecting it to literature's major pursuit, that of bringing people together.

Chapter II[15] supports the unifying role of the third element, reframing dialogue and encounter on the basis of a mathematical proof, aiming at unity within and goodness. It also provides a synopsis of the solid celebrated pedagogical heritage from both Europe and America.

[15] "Come now, let us reason together" (Isaiah 1:18)

By highlighting the names and methods of pedagogues who valued literature, I will revitalize the ancient tradition of *paideia*, by showing the ideals it aimed at. I will also discuss the search for the identity of the self and the century-old struggle for self-fulfillment, the *Know Thyself* incentive being relevant in this regard. I will frame the presentation by taking into consideration the pedagogical examples pertaining to the core values previously mentioned, thus bringing together individualism and humanism. I will emphasize how these theories and perspectives apply in today's educational context. I intend to prove that hermeneutics, as the science of interpretation of texts, certifies the contribution of literature toward urging goodness in any *dialogue*[16], through the reconfiguration of the two participants' (self) awareness, in the presence of a third element.

Chapter III represents a tribute to literature as a moral incentive for an irenic mentality. Through ludic liminality (play) and beauty, literature creates a model, a moral footprint for every generation. I present texts that pay tribute to beauty as the ultimate ideal. Through a close reading of some fictional texts, I show how they reaffirm the need for readers to pay attention to what is beautiful, to identify beauty, and to acknowledge its inherent potential, as Jauss shows with his aesthetic of reception[17] that underlines the centrality of the reader's "horizon of expectation". One needs to awaken the thirst for beauty in order for readers to identify beautiful exhibits in the act of reading and in their daily life because "[i]n order to live beautifully, one needs to think beautifully"[18].

[16] "Kierkegaard makes the distinction between the word "dialogue" and discourse/speech (Tale), conversation (Samtale), and the expression "to become involved with you" (at indlade sig med Dig), or chatter (Passiar)." See Dr. William McDonald, Dr. Steven M. Emmanuel, Dr. John Stewart (eds.) *Volume 15, Tome II: Kierkegaard's Concepts: Classicism to Enthusiasm.* (England: Ashgate Publishing Ltg. 2014). p. 171.
[17] Hans Robert Jauss. *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*. Timothy Bahti. (trans.). (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1981)
[18] Î.P.S. Andrei Andreicuț. *Mai Putem Trăi Frumos?* (Alba Iulia: Editura Reîntregirea. 2001). pp. 8-9.

Ludic liminality (*play*) is a generous invitation that each literary text offers to its readers. Once one begins a reading experience, one emerges into a liminal space where everything is possible. The voluntary act of reading can be easily associated with *play* because of the openness and desire to reach a different level of reality. This chapter will engage readers in a variety of literary/critical texts that nurture a ludic-irenic approach.

Chapter IV confirms that literature represents a source of truth, as long as the reader's desire is to actively engage in the hermeneutical process. I also address the relation of literature to the truth from several perspectives. I start with a reflective approach, and in this case, I bring together similarities between the philosophies of Augustine, Merton, Huxley, and Bonhoeffer. In the final section of the chapter, I frame a perennial approach, arguing that literature offers the appropriate platform for sharing values, by guiding readers towards the truth that goes beyond countries, religions, or nationalities. Literature is the liminal space for encounter *par excellence* because it creates the background for the play of ideas to develop, mix, multiply, unify, bifurcate, and eventually reach the truth.

Confessional literature with its search for truth represents another branch of the present argumentation, aiming to solidify the reasons for proclaiming literature as the appropriate medium for self-discovery. By using the perspective of several theologians and authors who engage in inter-confessional, interreligious and interdisciplinary dialogue with people around the world, I emphasize the potential of literature for creating a reconciliatory platform where acceptance, tolerance, and understanding prevail, while persuading readers to start their own search for (spiritual) meaning in life. This chapter confirms Eliade's thesis claiming that the essential element of the human condition is the sense of the sacred[19].

[19] See Mircea Eliade. *The Sacred and the Profane. The Nature of Religion*. (New York: Harcourt Inc. [1957] 1987). The concept of *homo religiosus* or the religious man proclaims human existence as inherently religious.

Chapter V examines texts dealing with the problems of evil, ugliness, and lies, seen as the opposites to the ideals of goodness, beauty, and truth. Here, I use a thematic approach, focusing on the irenic potential of fictional texts. While depicting negative examples, some authors teach through warnings, and readers are exposed to the effects of characters' bad choices. My examples depict the harmful effect of fanaticism, pride, and individualism (seen as the tendency of making choices for attaining positive personal outcomes, independently of their consequence on others).

The second part of this chapter offers an answer to human excesses. As a means to react to ideologies, power mentality, obsessions, lies, miscommunication, sin, or generically against the lack of values, authors use peaceful revolt. I emphasize how various authors relate to suffering as a redemptive force against evil. I thus present literature as a source of spiritual questioning. Through literary texts portraying core human problems, readers will receive the redemptive opportunity to start a spiritual metamorphosis.

Chapter VI outlines examples of current approaches to teaching literature in Europe and America. By contrasting various techniques, I frame a new path for current pedagogical methods, by positioning literature in the center of the educational process. I investigate the relevance of teaching literature for the formation of the future free citizen to know himself/herself better and carry forward the means for better interacting with the other. Through a couple of practical examples, I examine the importance of literature at the level of basic communication. Literature mediates any encounter and offers the ground for understanding, accepting, and properly responding to the other because it is the element that invites hospitality, generosity, awareness, and global understanding through the exposure to difference. Once perceived as a third necessary

element in any type of interaction, literature can activate awareness, thus avoiding conflict and offering the appropriate context for peaceful interaction.

1.1 Goodness, beauty, and truth - Historical Overview

***Goodness needeth not to enter in the soul, for it is there already, only it is unperceived Theologia Germanica* (Huxley, 2007, 21)**

This section is meant to clarify the context and to situate historically the argument(s) of the present research. I offer a historical overview of those who defended literature in the West and viewed it as a valuable tool in the educational process because of its privileged mission of pleasing and instructing at the same time. This project will not only offer significant examples of writers who undertook the task of actualizing the potentialities of literature but will also emphasize the moral charge of the liminal universe of literary texts. In this respect, I offer details regarding various views on dialogue, from Plato to Bakhtin, and conclude with my own reconceptualization of the term, integrating it into my defense of literature and its dialogical dimension[20].

Currently relativized, the moral trio has been looked at through various lenses. Classic Greek philosophers defined goodness as perfect and saw it as the basis for the equilibrium with nature and the divine. For a Western society/culture, these terms hold a pre-rational meaning until the advent of Christianity when the *law of talion*[21] is substituted with the *law of love*[22]. World religions (a) describe goodness beauty, and truth through various practices. Also, authors

[20] In the Indo-Arian and Hindu *Rig Veda* hymns (ca. 1700-1000 BC), *Veda*- book of knowledge that Hindus regard as revelation (*shruti*), good and evil are mentioned with reference to heaven (*Svarga*) and hell (*Naraka*). See Sita Anantha Raman. *Women in India: A Social and Cultural History.* Vol. 1. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC. 2009). p. 24.

[21] *Lex talionis* or *eye-for-an-eye* represents a concept of punishment developed in Babylonian law that punishment of criminals should be the same with the crime.

[22] Jesus' *law of love* is the guiding principle of Christians' behavior. "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:35-40)

(b) from the Middle Ages, Renaissance, modernity, and the current 'postmodern era' have tried to find the source of goodness, identify beauty, and conceptualize truth.

a.) In **Hinduism**[23] (the oldest extant major religion in the world), the goal is to acknowledge one's identity, in communion with all beings and with Brahman, through the *karma-marga* (*samsara*-reincarnation cycle), yoga, and love for a personal God. One needs to find the equilibrium between the three innate qualities (*gunas*[24]): *rajas* (passion), *sattva* (goodness) and *Tamas* (disorder, violence), through a continuous struggle between order and chaos. According to the *Upanishads* (ancient Sanskrit texts), goodness is a moral force, "As the scent is wafted afar from a tree laden with flowers, so also is wafted afar the scent of a good deed"[25]. Similarly, the hymns of the *Rig Veda* teach that good deeds ensure one's closeness to the gods, while evil deeds represent the path toward the abyss (Deussen 319). The *Vedas* also ask for a complete transformation of the soul. Good acts become irrelevant, in the absence of the real transformation through the rejection of ignorance, or through the recognition of one's self as a divine self or "metaphysical I" (knowledge of the *âtman*) (Deussen 50). Later echoed by the Christian process of *metanoia*, the Hindu *emancipation* allows the soul to think of earthly life as an illusion (*mâyâ*), thus excluding the need for material possessions[26], and overcoming suffering[27]. In both Hindu and Christianity, goodness is associated with God-without-form[28].

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[23] Branches—Vishnuism (polimorhic momotheism-Krishna, Naraiana, Rama…), Shaivism (Shiva-the supreme Being), Shaktism (Devi- supreme goddess (ex. Parvati, Sita, Kali, Lakshmi) who is dedicated the tantric poem Soundarya Lahari, "Flood of Beauty"), Smartism (deities: Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, Devi, Ganesha). See Clooney, S.J. Francis, X. "Encountering The (Divine) Mother in Hindu And Christian Hymns". in *Religion & the Arts.* (Vol. 12. Issue 1. 1 Mar 2008). pp. 230-243.

[24] Alban Widgery. "The Principles of Hindu Ethics". in *International Journal of Ethics*. Vol. 40. No. 2. (1930). pp. 234-237.

[25] Mahanar 9, in the Atharva Recension 8.2 quoted in Paul Deussen. *The Philosophy of the Upanishads.* Rev. A.S. Geden (trans.). (New York: Dover Publications. 1906). p. 365.

[26] "free from good and evil, imperishable… (wisdom of the emancipated soul, Kaivalya 23)

[27] "He who knows the atman overcomes sorrow" (Chand.7.1.3)

[28] "Without hands or feet am I, yet infinitely powerful" (Kaivalya, 22)/ God in Christianity is unseen, but He dwells in each living being.

The Buddhist tradition focuses on what goes beyond good and evil and targets enlightenment. In **Buddhism**, evil takes the shape of selfishness—desire, delusion, and hate—that prevent people from being happy. The Buddha (Gautama Siddhartha) asks for moral discipline and selflessness in order to avoid evil: "What is evil? Killing is evil, lying is evil, slandering is evil, abuse is evil, gossip is evil: envy is evil, hatred is evil, to cling to false doctrine is evil; all these things are evil. And what is the root of evil? Desire is the root of evil, illusion is the root of evil"[29]. Through controlling their karma (actions), Buddhists aim at the right conduct and moral discipline[30]. Buddhists target the liberating knowledge (*Nibbana*) and eventually reach *samsara* (the end of rebirths). Nibbana also refers to the realization of one's essence, or "non-self (*anatman*)". Right actions are necessary for liberation. In *The Good Heart, A Buddhist Perspective on the Teachings of Jesus* (1996), his Holiness the Dalai Lama argues that the doctrines of Buddhism and Christianity marry beautifully. Even if goodness, beauty[31], and truth might not be similarly conceptualized by the representatives of the two worldviews, they are moral incentives that guide one on the path to salvation or enlightenment, respectively.

Taoism (Chinese philosophical tradition) requires living in harmony with the Tao, by detaching oneself from desires and by attaining the natural way of behaving (*wu wei*). Instead of a contrasting duality, Taoism embraces good and evil, as interdependent principles[32]. Similar to Yin and Yang, the two halves that together constitute a wholeness, good and evil depend on each

[29] Alan Bryson. *Seeing the Light of World Faith*: Passages from the Scriptures of Hinduism. (Sterling Publishers. Pvt. Ltd. 2000). p. 66.
[30] Similarly, The Christian Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-10) are similar to the principle of causation in that both confirm that good deeds lead to good outcomes. Here again, goodness is its own reward.
[31] In Buddhism, the lotus flower is the symbol for transition from ignorance to nirvana. "The lotus will grow even in rubbish thrown away. It will delight the heart with its sweet smell and beauty" (Dhammapada, verse 58)/ In Christianity, Psalm 139:14 associates material beauty with the Creator, thus beauty becomes a reason for worshiping its source: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well".
[32] When beauty is abstracted/ Then ugliness has been implied;/ When good is abstracted/ Then evil has been implied. (Tao-te Ching 2)

other. The most important principle to follow is preserving the balance between the two poles. Truth, on the other hand, is not associated with the ultimate figure[33] but remains indefinable, and can be "known solely by intuition"[34].

The *Avesta*, the scripture of **Zoroastrianism** describes it as the "true/ good religion" (*Yasna*, 44.11, 28.4). At the center of this Iranian monotheistic faith, there is Zarathustra who receives illumination from *Ahura Mazda* (Wise Lord)[35] and preaches the cardinal principles. If good and evil deeds balance, the soul reaches *hamēstagān* (roughly the equivalent of Catholic Purgatory) (Nigosian 92) and dwells there until the final judgment. This dualistic perspective separates good and evil as primordial forces from which people have to choose. In order to reach truth (*Ahura Mazda*), one needs to crush evil (*Ahriman*).

The *Lunyu* (Analects)[36] brings together the teachings of **Confucianism**. It is believed that a figure denoted as Confucius wanted to revitalize tradition and improve people's lives through observing rituals. His mission was, "To bring comfort to the old, to have trust in friends, and to cherish the young" (5:25). *Ren* is the virtue of altruism, of doing good to others. In terms of virtue, Confucius associated moral and aesthetic values. Besides talking about the importance of music with its harmony in shaping people's characters, when referring to virtues, he uses the word *mei*[37], which also means "beauty". In other words, he considers virtues as signs of beauty. Truth, on the other hand, is not a given, but it has to be realized because it is "an intended consequence", since truth is described as "the ultimate value of human experience [that] lies in

[33] In the Christian doctrine, God is "true", "living", and "everlasting" (Jer. 10:10)
[34] Hume Robert Earnest. *The World's Living Religions*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1950)
[35] Solomon Alexander Nigosian. *The Zoroastrian Faith: Tradition and Modern Research.* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press. 1993). p. 12.
[36] Fan Lizhu, Chen Na. *Revival of Confucianism and Reconstruction of Chinese Identity*. Paper presented at: The Presence and Future of Humanity in the Cosmos, ICU, Tokyo, 18–23 March 2015.
[37] See Richard Shusterman. "Pragmatist Aesthetics and Confucianism". in *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*. vol. 43. No. 1. (spring 2009). pp. 18-29.

becoming a quality person through education and cultivation"[38]. The Confucian approach leads our inquiry to current views on goodness, beauty, and truth. From this summary, we see how the three concepts constitute the core moral pillars of the world religions. Peter Kreeft identifies the tendency of all cultures to seek these three transcendentals, "for man makes culture before culture makes man…"[39]

In **Judeo-Christian** philosophy, the dichotomy of good and evil takes a different connotation. Since they are seen as antagonistic, the purpose of any Christian is to surpass evil and do good so as to reach salvation. Evil represents immorality and leads to suffering. For Christians, evil is associated with sin, rather than the Hindu focus on ignorance. Besides the Bible (Old and New Testament) that offers a clear depiction of the will of God, there are various theologians who define good and evil. For Thomas Aquinas, evil is the absence of good[40] and beauty is "that which, being seen, pleases" (Baggett 25). Saint Augustine conceived evil and sin as "a word, deed, or desire in opposition to the eternal law of God", or the "loss of good"[41]. "For if man despises the will of God, he can only destroy himself; and so, he learns the difference between consecrating himself to the common good and reveling in his own" (Augustine 546). Augustine's main thesis is that God is supremely good and that evil comes from human sin. Sin is forced "to conform to the beauty of the universe as a whole" because "the ugliness of sin is remedied by the punishment of sin"[42] (Augustine quoted in Baggett 197).

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[38] See Alok Tandon. "The Confucian and Taoist Approaches to Truth and their Contemporary Implications". in *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*. (XXVII. No. 1.2. January-April. 2000)

[39] In the orient, India has specialized in the love for truth…; China has specialized in the love for the good, the practical human good, whether Confucian or Taoist…; and Japan has specialized in the love of beauty, especially the beauty of the arts. In the modern West, German culture…has specialized in truth, especially philosophical and scientific truth; American culture in the practical human good; and English culture in beauty (Baggett 23).

[40] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Fathers of the English Dominican Province (trans.) (New York: Benziger Brothers. 1947). Volume 3, q. 72. a. 1. p. 902.

[41] See Saint Augustine. *The City of God*. Vol. 1. Marcus Dodds (ed.). (Project Gutenberg. 2014)

[42] See Augustine of Hippo. "On Free Will". in *Augustine: Earlier Writings*. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press. 1953). p. 186.

Lastly, the God of **Islam**[43] is the God of Abraham in both Judaism and Christianity, which accounts for why all three are associated with goodness and truth. The teachings of Muhammad ask for submission to the laws of Allah. Muslims know they need to "do good" (Koran, II, 195) because "[w]hoso interveneth in a good cause will have the reward thereof, and whoso interveneth in an evil cause will bear the consequences thereof. Allah overseeth all things" (Koran, IV, 85). Besides worshiping Allah, Muslims need to "Be modest in th[eir] bearing and subdue th[eir] voice" (Koran, XXXI, 19) since Allah is all knowledgeable and punishes the ones who do not respect his commandments. Allah is the source of goodness, "Who made all things good which He created…" (Koran, XXXII, 7) and he "is absolute truth… So glorify the name of thy Tremendous Lord" (Koran, LIXX, 59). The core moral values are grounded in the image of Allah thus, every Muslim tries to be loyal to the requests of his/her faith because salvation is attainable only through worshipping Allah, which is similar to Christian theology regarding salvation through acceptance of Christ.

b.) From a modern perspective, **C. S. Lewis** also writes about the three transcendentals. He "sees the truth of both goodness and beauty as having their foundation in God" (Baggett 149). I will discuss Lewis' perspective at the end of the third chapter where I argue that literature is a source of hospitable imagination. As a devoted Christian, Lewis roots them in God's nature and considers that Jesus is "the divine standard of human goodness, love, justice, hope, and faith" (Baggett 156). In terms of evil, Lewis connects it to the idea of hell, and acknowledges the fact that in "the place of eternal torment" (Baggett 161), God is not the tormentor, but one's

[43] See *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*. Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall (trans.). (New York: The New American Library. 1953)

mistakes and sins are the cause for one's troubles, because hell "is a state of mind within the dungeon of its own mind… whereas heaven is infinitely beautiful"[44].

Lewis argues that one can reach goodness only through the other, and the rejection of communion is the "chief mark of the lost soul" because "taste for the other… is… the very capacity of enjoying good" (Baggett 174). For Lewis, moral standards are not culturally embedded, but they have a logical source. "We must, then, grant logic to the reality; we must if we are to have any moral standards, grant it to moral standards too. And there is really no reason why we should not do the same about standards of beauty"[45] (Lewis 96).

Similar to Lewis' dogmatically embedded perspective on goodness, beauty, and truth, **Howard Gardner** offers a rather material perspective on the three transcendentals. In his book, *Truth, Beauty, and Goodness Reframed* (2011), Gardner uses contemporary lenses in order to describe the three concepts and adapt them to the contemporary mind. He defines truth as "the property of statement", while beauty is "the property of experiences" (xi). He suggests that goodness "describes the relations among human beings" (xiii). Gardner asks a relevant question for our current study as well. He wants to find out "how do we help students, peers, or ourselves, assess the truth of statements?" His answer supports the thesis of the present work since he considers it necessary for one to understand "*the methods* that the issuers of propositions use to support their statements" (xi). The role of literature[46] is precisely to offer alternatives of thought and explanations about the thinking process of others.

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[44] See C.S. Lewis. *A Preface to Paradise Lost.* (London: Oxford University Press. 1942). p. 100.

[45] Phillip Talon writes an essay about Lewis, *Evil and the Cosmic Eye: C.S. Lewis and Beauty's Place in Theodicy*, (Baggett 195), where he proves that Lewis uses "creation's beauty to point to God's goodness" (Baggett 200). Material beauty becomes formative, or a means for reaching God, or the Ultimate Beauty. Pain is another path through which one can get closer to God. "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (Baggett 204).

[46] For instance, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, two major Russian writers use a diverse set of literary techniques in order to explain to the reader the truth of a character's thinking. George Steiner (1984) compares the two writers emphasizing how both of them explain *the methods* that two centuries later Gardner evokes. Steiner states that,

Gardner offers a historical overview of their conceptualizations, characterized by a "continuum of truth-seeking" (33), and explains the three terms through the lenses of evolution, stating that he disagrees with the biological argument, according to which "evolution determines the nature and limits of our judgments of truth, our aesthetic preferences, our moral and ethical codes" (15). He argues that "what is distinctly human is our capacity to change, or to transcend, whatever trails and inclinations we may have as initial endowment, courtesy of evolution" (15). His comprehensive view gives credit to the human agency and facts, to unexplored potentialities, rather than to the many scientific, or cultural understandings that one might give to these terms. "What human beings come to value as beautiful owes far more to the vagaries of history, cultural, and—indeed—pure chance than to the tastes that evolved tens of thousands of years ago" (17). Gardner does not accept the notion of a single truth and he does not regard art as true or false, but as "capturing some aspects of life"[47] (35). His view on beauty gives credit to postmodern art that classical cannons would reject. However, he values the personal encounter with beauty and echoing the old saying that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, he is open to changing his aesthetic judgment if the work of art inspires re-visitation[48].

"only Dostoevsky had told the full truth about the people. But it is a truth with which one cannot live" (133). He obviously refers to the undeniable suffering as unavoidable truth of life. Steiner's brilliant comparison portrays Dostoevsky as the "great lover of paradox", while he associates Tolstoy with "reason and fact" (135). The approaches of both writers can lead readers to the understanding of the truth of their own life, both in terms of methods of the thinking process of others, and also in terms of spiritual truth, or self-understanding.

[47] "We all know that art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand. The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of the truthfulness of his lies" (Pablo Picasso quoted in Gardner 34).

[48] I find similarities between Gardner's view and Schiller's perspective about the importance of the cognitive process in the interaction with beauty. Schiller considers that taste has to be educated. Correspondingly, Gardner asks for openness in approaching aesthetically pleasing objects. If for Schiller, the feeling of beauty is the effect of an exterior stimulus—the educational process—for Gardner, awareness should come from the inside since, "beauty serves as the culmination of a set of antecedent experiences, and is increasingly likely to arise at unexpected times in unanticipated venues" (61). In his discussion of goodness, he emphasizes the ever-changing dimension if what being good means nowadays, in the context of globalization and digitization of the interaction among people.

Gardner discusses the role of the three transcendentals in the educational process. He demands for openness and reconfiguration of social values[49]. He praises education for transmitting "truths, … moral laws, … and human creations—narratives …whose forms and messages are most valued by the culture" (124). He acknowledges the current lack of morality from the curriculum. If in the past, students studied sacred texts, the current educational system chooses to ignore them. I agree with Gardner's incentive for the return to the study of arts and literature and implicitly of goodness, beauty, and truth because students need, "impressive and convincing 'live' role models of desirable behaviors and reasons; exposure to literature and other media that highlight moral and immoral examples, while dramatizing the consequences for those who honor the codes and those who transgress" (142).

In the following chapters, I will provide a series of example to complement Gardner's thesis. For now, I will reaffirm Gardner's relevant conclusion, that "[t]he postmodern and digital challenges weight differently on each of the three virtues—the dangers and opportunities they pose vary from realm to realm, and our responses to these challenges should vary accordingly" (190). As a consequence, goodness, beauty, and truth, "will continue to be important… they will have to assimilate newly emerging entities like postmodernism and digital media" (197). However, "lifelong learning cannot afford to skirt these vital dimensions" (165). Over time, writers have endeavored to frame a stable and indisputable representation of literature in its interaction with other fields of knowledge.

1.2 Defenses of Literature - Diachronic Perspective

I love the old questions [with fervor]. Ah the old questions, the old questions, there's nothing like them! **(Beckett, 1957, 46)**

[49] "we cannot rely on neighborly morality as we attempt to navigate the shoals of work and citizenship in a highly complex and interconnected world…We need to evolve models of work that transcend national boundaries" (106).

In order to discuss the importance of literature, one needs to explore the great history of literary testimonials that support the formative function of poetry and fiction and offer a bouquet of reasons for the study of literature. My intention is to complement these perennial considerations with the triadic approach. The current global context grants one an open invitation to partake in a new search for values.

Literature (understood as both poetry and prose) has a privileged army of defenders confronting those who attempt to minimize its fundamental role in the upbringing of new generations. The historical setting I provide aims at emphasizing that the history of literature is rife with guardians of good taste, unity, beauty, and truth, who acknowledge the moral weight of the written word. The key ancient figures I discuss establish key requirements for poetry, some limiting it to *mimesis* as an imitation of reality for the sake of *catharsis*, others allowing it to reach its potential of innovation, surpassing real-life situations by staging better realities, thus elevating the soul.

The first outspoken defense of literature comes from the 16th-century poet Philip Sidney, who wrote *Defense of Poesie*. As John Dryden[50] will do later on in the 17th century, Sidney considers poets to be mediators between philosophers and historians. Sidney and Dryden[51] argue that poetry has the potential to transform men into heroes. In the case of the 18th-century critics[52]

[50] John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy". in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (first edition), ed. by V. Leitch, W. Cain, L. Finke & B. Johnson (London: W. W. Norton & Company. 2001)

[51] In his *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668), Dryden rejects the classical didactic manner of writing drama and imposes "the new way". See David Nichol Smith. *John Dryden.* (Archon Books. Cambridge University Press. 1966). p. 15.

[52] Samuel Taylor Coleridge is another name that has to be mentioned in relation to 19th century criticism. See: Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*. Text and Meaning. Frederick Burwick (ed.) (Columbus: Ohio State University Press. 1989). The following references from the present footnote are from Burwick's volume. Coleride's *Biographia Literaria* ([1817] 1989) introduces a two-layered approach for imagination, as primary and secondary or esemplastic imagination that is meant to shape 'into one' both the writer and the reader because of the sketch of the subjective which is: "Self-construction, barely enough to let a thinking mind see what it is like" (27). Vogler analyzes Coleridge's works and emphasizes that for both Coleridge and Wordsworth (Coleridge's philosophical friend, representative of romanticism. Wordsworth stresses the urgency for the sensuous perception of objects), "poetry is

Kant and Schiller, there is a clear discussion about the affinity between beauty and morality. For the 19th-century key figures, I will discuss Shelley and Peacock and for the 20th-century, I will look at Matthew Arnold's, John Ruskin's and Oscar Wilde's works. They describe art as a playful activity. I will discuss the nonconventional 20th century defense of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, who echoing Aristotle, reframe the problem of *becoming* through literature. Last, I will describe C. S. Lewis's, Christopher Tolkien's methods of defending literature, and Mircea Cărtărescu's, and Mihai Spăriosu's[53] current techniques.

In the *Republic*, **Plato** ironically attacks poetry. He does not exclude its good and ethical dimension since it can foster harmony in the soul. In the Platonic conceptualization, the word *poetry* encompasses lyric, epic, and dramatic texts. On the basis of several theories, Plato conveys his love-hate relation with poetry. He appreciates, but at the same time, criticizes art. Through his ironical invitation to a defense of poetry, he shows his openness in approaching art as sincerely as possible, "It is fair that before returning from exile, poetry should publish her defense… I suppose we should allow her champions who love poetry but are not poets to plead for her in prose, that she is no mere source of pleasure but a benefit to society and to human life" (340).

Through the *Theory of Forms*[54], thoroughly described in *Phaedo*, Plato seems to imply that poetry is an imitation of objects and events, which are in their turn an imitation of ideal

to be read as an expression of the full inwardness of an author's individual human experience" (38). In an *Essay* published in 1815, Wordsworth states that the task of every original author is that of "creating the taste" (46). While Wordsworth undermines the priority of the mind, limiting perception to senses and observation, Coleridge recognizes that the mind can offer a renewed vision of reality through divine interference (60).

[53] Spăriosu's approach complements the formative role of literature by adding the ludic irenic aura.

[54] "Remember how in that communion only, beholding beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enable to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of a reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and be immortal, if mortal man may" (Symposium, 212). In *Phaedo*, Plato's dialogue about Socrates' death, Socrates uses the theory of forms and the theory of recollection as evidence for his belief that the human soul is immortal. The theory of forms states that the world is based on recognition of objects and ideas already instilled in one's brain, since birth. One perceives definite objects and

forms. Plato's theory of *mimesis*[55] argues that all art imitates life. His theory of divine inspiration[56] suggests that poets are imitators who receive their genius from the muses. Despite their divine call[57], poets are ignorant and cannot be legislators. In Book X of the *Republic*, in describing the so-called, "Quarrel between Philosophy and Poetry", Plato states that poetry confuses the intellect by stimulation of the emotions. Plato's criticism is against the (ab)use of art and against immoral poetry that might injure those who do not understand its real nature. Plato confirms that poetry might contain truths but only as a possibility because the beauty of language can limit thought. Also, in *Gorgias*, he "locates dramatic poetry in the *no man's land* between essence and appearance, or between truth and illusion"[58]. Plato criticizes the superficiality of Greeks in enjoying beauty without questioning the meaning behind poetry[59]. The ethical uses[60] of poetry are unquestionable, as long as poetry is subordinate to reason.

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definite events, but the idea of their existence comes from past lives. Life and death constitute perpetual cycles, and death is never the end because what follows is the ideal world where perfect beauty, perfect goodness, perfect truth, and perfect virtues reside. Once someone dies their soul is preserved and continues to wonder through and beyond the world gathering experiences and knowledge. The theory of forms is meant to portray that objects can be described through their physical qualities, not only in reference to one another, but also in connection to the perfect forms that are in the other world. Here, one has access only to reflections of the ideal forms of truth, beauty, and courage. One does not encounter absolute forms on earth because they are all beyond. People are born with the knowledge of perfect forms and every time one gets into contact with someone beautiful, courageous or virtuous, one accesses the idea, the echo of perfection, but never reaches perfection itself. See Plato. *Phaedo*. David Gallop (trans.). (New York: Oxford University Press. [1993] 2009)

[55] "the poet according to the tradition which has ever prevailed among us, and is accepted of all men, when he sits down on the tripod of the muse, is not in his right mind; like a fountain, he allows the flow out freely whatever comes in, and his art being imitative, he is often compelled to represent men of opposite dispositions, and thus to contradict himself; neither can he tell whether there is more truth in one thing that he has said than in another" (Laws IV, 719). For Havelock, *mimesis* is "truly a protean word", See Eric. A. Havelock, *Preface to Plato.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1963). p. 30.

[56] The word music derives from the Greek word *Muse*, demigods who inspire artists. The word genius equivalent for *daimon*, refers to an inspiring spirit (everything daemonic is between divine and mortal, Diotima in *Symposium*, talking about love, 202 d-e)

[57] *Ion*, the unlearned rhapsode claims to be knowledgeable. However, he is not able to recite anything else but Homer. Plato criticizes Ion's impossibility of applying his skill of reciting poetry to other poets.

[58] See Mihai I. Spăriosu *The Wreath of Wild Olive Play: Liminality and the Study of Literature*. (New York: State University of New York Press. 1997). p. 41.

[59] As beautifully expressed by Morris Henry Partee, in *Plato's Banishment of Poetry*, "literature in the Republic must never sacrifice truth on the altar of pleasure and emotional appeal" (Partee 220).

[60] A. E. Taylor, in his book *Plato: The Man and His Work* (Dover Books on Western Philosophy. 2011), states that Plato "is seriously proposing to censure just what we consider the imperishable contributions of Athens to the art

Plato's acceptance of poetry implies the search for truth and knowledge. "The painting might incidentally be beautiful. But a man must have virtue and knowledge first; otherwise, he receives not happiness but pleasure from beauty"[61]. The role of the poet, under the guidance of the philosopher, is to offer alternatives of thought aiming at portraying ideal scenarios that might inspire since, "[t]he philosopher's role is to create a humanity true to its highest possibilities… He is a lover of truth and reality"[62].

For **Aristotle**, the poet is a "maker" whose function is not to "imitate what has happened, but what may happen—what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity… Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular"[63] (Aristotle 35). As Spăriosu mentions in *The Wreath of Wild Olive* (1997), *Mimesis*[64], in Aristotelian and Platonic understanding, is simulation opening toward liminal worlds, instead of imitation that limits discourse to graspable material understandings since, "[p]oetry is a form of play that stimulates other kinds of discourse for pleasurable purposes…" (41) Even if Aristotle uses the term *imitation*, he refers to it as an attempt at portraying better realities. One is entitled to think that despite the lack of conceptualization, literature is seen as simulation or as a "supportive-corrective marginality" (42). The instinct for harmony and rhythm determines readers' interest in poetry because of the pleasure felt in imitation. "The poet being an imitator, like a painter or any other artist, must of necessity imitate one of three objects, -things as they were or are, things as said or thought to be,

and literature of the world, because he holds that they have tendencies which are unfavorable to the highest development of moral personality" (Taylor 279).

[61] See Morris Henry Partee. "Plato's Banishment of Poetry". in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism.* (Vol. 29. No. 2. 1970). p. 207.

[62] Ibidem. p. 212.

[63] See *The Poetics of Aristotle*. Samuel Henry Butcher (ed.). (Macmillan. 1902)

[64] See Spăriosu, *God of Many Names*: Play, *Poetry and Power in Hellenic Thought from Homer to Aristotle*. (Durham: Duke University Press. 1991). pp. 140-160; 197-210.

or things as they ought to be (Aristotle 97), for the ideal type [of poetry] must surpass the reality" (Aristotle 107).

Aristotle invites poets and readers to embrace the ideal of excellence instead of immoral, repulsive caricatures (Aristotle 11). He compares poetry to painting and offers the examples of three painters: Polygnotus, who depicts men as better than they really are; Dionysius, whose depiction of men is true to their real natures; and Pauson, who presents them as less beautiful than they are. One can easily echo similar distinctions in literature as well. In his *Poetics* (1902), Aristotle suggests that the role of literature is to represent a better version of life and people, "[s]ince the objects of imitation are men in action, and these men must be either of a higher or a lower type (for moral character mainly answers to these divisions, goodness and badness being the distinguishing marks of moral differences), it follows that we must represent men either as better than in real life, or as worse, or as they are" (Aristotle 11).

Similarly, in his book *On Rhetoric,* Aristotle discusses the state of mind of those who feel pity. He argues that one needs to consider someone good for the feeling of pity to manifest itself toward a certain individual. "And [people feel pity] if they think certain individuals are among the good people of the world; for one who thinks no good person exists will think all worthy of suffering. And on the whole, [a person feels pity] when his state of mind is such that he remembers things like this happening to himself or his own or expects them to happen to himself or his own" (1386a). Ethos[65], Pathos[66], and Logos[67] or *pisteis*—as means of persuasion—are at the core of Aristotle's rhetoric because he prioritizes the effect of texts upon readers, together with the implicit interpretative process. Unlike Plato, who considers literature as a provider of

[65] Projection of the character of the speaker as trustworthy
[66] Consideration of the emotions of people in the audience
[67] Inductive and deductive logical argument. See Aristotle. *On Rhetoric:* A Theory of Civic Discourse. George A. Kennedy (trans.). (New York: Oxford University Press. 2007). p. 15.

ethical patterns of conduct, Aristotle argues that the only effect of art is "a brief psychological catharsis of pity and fear" (18).

Horace's *Ars Poetica (Art of Poetry)*[68] (19BC, 1942) is an entertaining ancient epistle that offers advice for poets and writers. Horace writes a letter to Lucius Calpurnius Piso, the Roman senator and Consul, and to his sons. He imparts his passion for poetry, portraying its essential role and its sweet effect for future generations. Throughout the text, one identifies Horace's insistence on the unity, utility, and quality of poetry. Even if Horace approaches poetry from a practical standpoint as *ars,* technique, art, skill, or craftsmanship, he does not forget to underline the less pragmatic gains of reading drama or poems.

He argues that poetry must have unity, it calls for special care, and it must be *dulce et utile*[69], sweet and useful, or pleasant and profitable (443). The Latin word *dulce,* translated as "sweet or pleasant", refers to the beauty of poetry that sparks joy and pleasure in the reader. Horace does not consider it enough since "[n]ot enough it is for poems to have beauty: they must have charm and lead the hearer's soul where they will" (459). The Latin word *utile,* translated as "useful, beneficial, or practical", refers to the instructional characteristics of poetry. Horace's *Ars Poetica* is a foundation stone for the literary world. His discussion about the use of appropriate vocabulary and his suggestion about the practical and pleasing part of poetry (drama, verse, prose), establish a frame of reference that is valid for centuries to come. The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism highlights Horace's text as follows,

> It would be impossible to overestimate the importance of Horace's *Ars Poetica (Art of Poetry)* for the subsequent history of literary criticism. Since its composition in the first

[68] Horace. *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica.* H. Rushton Fairclough (trans.). (London: William Heinemann LTD; Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press. [1926] 1942) or Epistle to the Pisos (elder son of the Piso family)

[69] "poetry aims at both instruction and pleasure" (Horace 447)

century BCE, this epigrammatic and sometimes enigmatic critical poem has exerted an almost continual influence over poets and literary critics alike - perhaps because its dicta, phrased in verse form, are so eminently quotable. Horace's injunction that poetry should both "instruct and delight" has been repeated so often that it has come to be known as the Horatian platitude[70].

A century later, **Longinus**, tutor and political adviser, considered the author of the treatise *On the Sublime*[71], a treatise of the first century that discusses excellence in language as the result of "a just judgment of style [that] is the final fruit of long experience" (xxi). Longinus starts a literary endeavor in "the pursuit of novelty of thought" (xxii). He questions, "whether there is any art which can teach sublimity or loftiness in writing" (3) and expects writers to be moral and eloquent.

From the introduction, the author provides readers with a clear philosophy of the sublime that aims at goodness since "to entertain for a moment delicate and curious minds is to do little good" (xxiii). One method of acquiring goodness is through the choice of "[b]eautiful words [that] are the very light of thought" (57). Like Plato, Longinus agrees that literature has the potential to create superior realities, "[w]hereas, then, in statuary, we look for close resemblance to humanity, in literature, we require something which transcends humanity" (70). The role of the sublime in literature is to lift the author and the reader "to the great spirit of the Deity" (69).

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[70] *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism.* Vincent B. Leitch et al. (eds.). (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 2001) p. 121.

[71] During the 18th century, Edmund Burke, inspired by Longinus, writes *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), a treatise that portrays the difference between what is "beautiful" and what is "sublime". According to Burke, the sublime has the power to destroy us, whereas the beautiful is what is aesthetically pleasing ("By beauty, I mean that quality, or those qualities in bodies, by which they cause love, or some passion similar to it". (Burke 165) Despite Kant's critique, the treatise is the first philosophical attempt that separates the two terms. (See Edmund Burke. *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*. Vol 1. The Project Gutenberg EBook, 2005). In the 5th chapter of the present study, I will discuss the sublime from Burke's perspective, through Mishima's novel: *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (1959). See also Longinus. *On the Sublime*. H. L. Havell. BA. (London: Macmillan and Co. 1890)

Longinus offers several suggestions for writers to reach sublimity in writing. First, he wants them to avoid false elevation and bombastic language. Excellence in expression can be acquired through eloquence, but also the "emulous imitation of great poets and prose-writers of the past" (29). Longinus acknowledges divine inspiration as the source of poetry, as "display of genuine passion, which bursts out with a kind of 'fine madness' and divine inspiration, and falls on our ears like the voice of a god" (15). Further on, he asks poets for "dignity, grandeur, and energy of a style [through] a proper employment of images" (32).

For Longinus, mastery in the use of words has great power upon readers, "passion and grandeur of language, lying nearer to our souls by reason both of a certain natural affinity and of their radiance, always strike our mental eye before we become conscious of the figure" (41). After a detailed lesson of style, he addresses the problem of ugliness in literature and suggests one should avoid vulgar or inappropriate words. "We should take a lesson from nature, who when she planned the human frame did not set our grosser parts, or the ducts for purging the body, in our face, but as far as she could, concealed them, 'diverting' as Xenophon says, 'those canals as far as possible from our senses', and thus shunning in any part to mar the beauty of the whole creature" (81-2).

Longinus suggests that writers should take care of their souls if they expect people to read them and appreciate them. Only writers with good morals and souls might be persuasive. "[T]his should awaken a fear in every writer that he will not be intelligible to his contemporaries [if]… the conceptions of his mind will be crude, maimed and abortive, and lacking the ripe perfection which alone can win the applause of ages to come" (31). Andrew Lang's introduction of the Macmillan 1890 edition portrays Longinus' moral greatness and his desire to invite all writers to target such greatness. "To us, he is as much a moral as a literary teacher" (xxxi).

Longinus' treatise emphasizes the potential of literature in creating moral mechanisms for preparing people for life. The exposure to alternative realities –that are better than real life— inspires, nurture, and educate. Thus, Longinus' treaty is an emblematic work that entices readers with goodness, beauty, and truth, transforming art into life and life into art,

> In real life, we often see a man under the influence of rage, or fear, or indignation, or beside himself with jealousy, or with some other out of the interminable list of human passions… Now the figure hyperbaton is the means, which is employed by the best writers to imitate these signs of natural emotion. For art is then perfect when it seems to be nature, and nature, again, is most effective when pervaded by the unseen presence of art (46).

Another Neo-Platonist writer is Sir Philip **Sidney**, who, in his *Defense of Poesie* ([1583] 1962), argues for the educational role of art/poetry to "move men to virtuous action" since it is a "better teacher than moral philosophy or history"[72]. As Spăriosu notices in *The Wreath of Wild Olive*, according to Sidney, the poet is a moderator who "can disseminate the community's ideals of education" (43). Sidney argues for the potential poetic texts have in connecting people to the ideals of goodness and beauty, "all endeavor to take naughtiness away and plant goodness even in the secretest cabinet of our souls" (419-420). In contrast with scientists who claim possessing truth, the poet would argue that "nothing affirms and therefore never lieth" (439). Spăriosu notices that for Sydney poetry is a "liminal ground between truth and falsehood" (44). Sidney values the potential of beauty[73] and is aware that the staging of a better reality (more beautiful

[72] See Walter Jackson Bate. (ed.). *Sir Philip Sidney: An Apology for Poetry* in *Criticism: The Major Texts*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. 1952)

[73] "Sidney stresses the virtue of beauty, Plato the beauty of virtue". See Partee, Morris Henry. "Plato's Banishment of Poetry". in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism.* (Vol. 29. No. 2. 1970). p. 217.

and filled with positive examples) increases chances for people to better themselves because of the exposure to goodness.

John **Dryden**'s *Essay of Dramatick Poesie* (1668) continues Sidney's mission. For Dryden, drama has a central place, because he justifies it as a legitimate form of poetry. The treatise defends English drama (such as Ben Johson's) against that of the ancients. One of the most relevant ideas of Dryden that hints at the purpose of the present study as well is that of evolution and adaptation. He breaks down oppositions of ancient and modern and tries to frame general principles of drama. "The Genius of every age is different. There must be change. To honor the tradition is one thing, and to be content to follow in beaten tracks is another"[74].

In addition to both his respect for tradition and his openness to change and innovation, Dryden discusses the merits of a good literary work. He reiterates the ancient ideal of the superiority of art and as a dramatist/ poet, he assumes the liberty "of drawing all things as far above the ordinary proportion of the stage as that is beyond the common words and actions of human life" (Smith, 28). His devotion to art and his conviction that beauty is inspiring are obvious throughout his writings. For instance, *Cymon and Iphigenia*, one of Dryden's very last poems, inspired by Boccacio's *Decameron*, and source of inspiration for Frederic Lord Leighton's painting (1884), begins with a tribute to beauty, "Old as I am, for ladies love unfit/ The power of beauty I remember yet, / Which once inflamed my soul, and still inspires/ my wit"[75] (Dryden, 454). Not only did he appreciate beauty, but he also set the bar for literary standards during the Restoration period[76]. His comedies of manners emphasize his interest in the preservation of perennial values through literary incentives.

[74] Smith, David Nichol. *John Dryden*. (Archon Books. Cambridge University Press. [1950] 1966). p. 17.
[75] John Dryden. *The Works of John Dryden.* Vol. XI. (London: Printed for William Miller, Albemarle Street, by James Ballantyne and Co. Edinburg. 1808)
[76] The Restoration of the English monarchy under Charles II (1660-1785)

Goodness, beauty, and truth are the keywords for the German 18th-century aesthetic movement, starting with Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's *Meditations on Poetry,* where he discusses *epistêmê aisthetikê*[77]. "The Greek philosophers and the Church fathers have always carefully distinguished between the *aistheta* and the *noeta*", that is, between objects of sense and objects of thought, and while the latter is "what can be cognized through the higher faculty" of mind, as "the object of logic", the *aistheta* [represents] the subject of the episteme *aisthetikê* or aesthetics", as the science of perception (*Meditations* §CXVI 86).

The 18th-century aesthetic movement offered a continuation of Plato's ode to beauty. In France, Jean-Baptiste Dubos[78] focuses on the emotional component of the aesthetical experience. In Britain, Joseph Addison[79] emphasizes the free play of one's mental powers. In Germany, Immanuel **Kant,** in his *Critique of (Aesthetic) Judgment*[80], promotes the importance of beauty because of its potential to activate the free-play of mind. For Kant, a work of art succeeds when it presents an "aesthetic idea" and "stimulates so much thinking". According to Kant, poetry fortifies the mind because it encourages its spontaneity and freedom, by playing with illusion. He argues that "[a]mong all the arts poetry holds the highest rank. It owes its origins almost entirely to genius and is least open to guidance by precept or examples. It expands the mind: for it sets the imagination free… and rises aesthetically to ideas" (196-7).

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[77] Science of what is sensed, imagined, and separate from reason. This perspective offers beauty a transcendental, liminal dimension and supports the idea that it facilitates the soul's path toward virtue. In his 1750 *Aesthetica*, he defines aesthetics as the art of "beautiful thinking". See Jeff Malpas, Hans-Helmuth Gander. (eds.). *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics*. (Routledge. 2014)

[78] See Jean-Baptiste Dubos. *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting, and Music:* With an inquiry into the rise and progress of the theatrical entertainments of the ancients. Thomas Nugent (trans.). Vol. II. (London: Printed for John Nourse. 1748)

[79] See Joseph Addison et al. *The Spectator, Essays on the Pleasure of Imagination*. Gregory Smith (ed.). (London: Everyman's Library. [1712] 1945)

[80] *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* is the first part of one of Kant's representative works, *Critique of Judgment*, first published in Prussia, in 1790. See Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Judgment*. Werner S. Pluhar (trans.). (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company. [1790] 1987)

Friedrich **Schiller**'s[81] *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794) respond to Kant's subjectivist conception of beauty[82], arguing that it is complete within itself since, "[a] form is beautiful, one might say, if it *demands no explanation*, or if it *explains itself without a concept*" (155). Schiller's main thesis is that taste needs to be educated by making the distinction between freedom and necessity. He describes grace (freedom of intentional movements) and dignity[83] (mastery of instinctive ones) as the two pillars of the aesthetic phenomena, "which mediates between the realm of necessity (matter) and the realm of freedom (spirit)" (Spăriosu, 1997, 44). As a consequence, art, through its aesthetic freedom, has the potential to morally elevate men and guide him/her toward the path of goodness.

In *A Defence of Poetry* (1921)[84], Percy Bysshe **Shelley** acknowledges the moral charge of poetry and restates Schiller's perspective on the aesthetic function of art. He writes the defense, as an answer to Peacock's ironic attacks against literature. Peacock divides the history of poetry into four ages: iron age (with tribal heroes), Homeric golden age (characterized by perfection), silver age of verse (unheroic), and age of brass (attempt to return to barbarism) (viii). The attack on the contemporary poets of the time receives a well-argued answer from Shelley who describes them as, "the unacknowledged legislators of the world" (59). His friendship with Peacock and their correspondence allow Shelley to write his defense following the arguments in Peacock's *Four Ages of Poetry*[85].

[81] I will thoroughly discuss Schiller's thesis, in the second chapter of the present study, by sharing his perspective on beauty and its potential to generate understanding.
[82] Both Kant and Schiller develop Moritz' idea according to which beauty is "complete in itself" and causes pleasure without utility. See Mark Boulby. *Karl Philipp Moritz: At the Fringe of Genius.* (University of Toronto Press. 2016)
[83] See Friedrich Schiller. *On Grace and Dignity.* George Gregory (trans.). (Schiller institute Inc. [1793] 1992). p. 374.
[84] The defense first appeared in 1840, in the *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments.*
[85] One can easily observe the almost dialogical weaving between the two essays: "Poets are as yet the only historians and chroniclers of their time, and the sole depositories of all the knowledge of their age" (5). "Their familiarity with the secret history of gods and genii obtains for them without much difficulty, the reputation of inspiration; thus, they

Shelley defines poetry as "expression of the imagination" (23). His thesis is that poetry offers readers wings to fly towards divine realms by exposing them to beauty and by enhancing their imaginative faculties. "Poetry strengthens the faculty which is the organ of the moral nature of man, in the same manner as exercise strengthens a limb" (33). In Shelley's thinking, poetry is "connected with good and evil in conduct or habit" (36). Poetry does not stop to the material grasp of reality, through reason, but goes a step further, approaching the divine.

"Reason respects the differences, and imagination the similitudes of things… Poetry enlarges the circumference of the imagination by replenishing it with thoughts of ever new delight" (23-33). Shelley actualizes the positive effects poetry has on imagination, by discussing ancient poetry and drama. He refers to Petrarch's verses by underlining their 'contagious' potential. "It is impossible to feel them [Petrarch's verses] without becoming a portion of that beauty which we contemplate" (45). The effect of reading ancient texts is the elevation of mind, self-knowledge, and respect,

> The tragedies of Athenian poets are as mirrors in which the spectator beholds himself, under a thin disguise of circumstance, stript of all but that ideal perfection and energy which everyone feels to be the internal type of all that he loves, admires and would become. The imagination is enlarged by sympathy with pains and passions… the good affections are strengthened by pity, indignation, terror, and sorrow… In the drama of the

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are not only historians but theologians, moralists and legislators: delivering their oracles *ex cathedra,* and being…themselves… regarded as…emanations of divinity…" (5)

"But poets, or those who imagine and express this indestructible order, are not only the authors of language and of music, of the dance, and architecture, and statuary, and painting; they are the institutors of laws and the founders of civil society, and the inventors of the arts of life, and the teachers, who draw into a certain propinquity with the beautiful and the true, that partial apprehension of the agencies of the invisible world which is called religion… A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the one…" (26-7)

highest order, there is little food for censure or hatred; it teaches rather self-knowledge and self-respect (37).

Shelley takes into consideration Peacock's categorization of the four stages of poetry and makes a clear distinction between the ancient world and contemporary prose. On the one hand, he idealizes Homer and acknowledges that "those who read his verses were awakened to an ambition of becoming like to Achilles, Hector, and Ulysses [driven by] the truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism, and persevering devotion" (32).

Shelley renounces Aristotle's generic term of poetry as comprising both poems and stories that lead to catharsis. Aware of the lowered quality standards of contemporary writers, he chooses to praise and defend only poems because through their rich stylistic devices, and the genius of poets, they conceptualize divine messages and mirror the mind of the Creator. "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth" (29-30). Shelley compares stories and poems and underlines the superiority of the latter. While stories portray detached facts, poems depict the perennial, unchangeable human nature. Stories distort the beautiful, while poetry "is a mirror which makes beautiful that which is distorted" (29-30).

According to Shelley, poetry has the potential to embellish people's existence and implicitly to get them closer to the divine, since beauty is of divine nature, echoing Plato's perfect Forms. "Poetry… awakens and enlarges the mind itself by rendering it the receptacle of a thousand non-apprehended combinations of thought. Poetry lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar…[emphasizing] the eternal proportions of their beauty" (32-3). Shelley discusses the utility of poems, but not in a material, restrictive manner. Utility for him represents the resourcefulness of a poem to engage readers and expand their imagination. He states that "whatever strengthens and purifies the

affections, enlarges the imagination, and adds spirit to sense, is useful… A great poem is a fountain forever overflowing with the waters of wisdom and delight" (48-9). Pleasure represents proof of the poem's utility.

Far from flirting with empiricist tendencies, Shelley is rather aware of the transcendental value of poetry. Robert Browning writes an essay on Shelley's approach to poetry and beautifully acknowledges that "[n]ot what man sees, but what God sees –the Ideas of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand –it is toward these that he struggles (Browning 65). Shelley's defense of poetry raises the status of literature by portraying its perennial potential of actualizing values that constitute the right measure in life,

> Poetry[86] is indeed something divine… it creates new materials of knowledge, and power, and pleasure; it engenders in the mind a desire to reproduce and arrange them according to… the beautiful and the good… Poetry…makes immortal all that is best and most beautiful in the world…poetry redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man…Poetry turns all things to loveliness (52-6).

Following the train of thought of the Neo-Platonists Sidney and Shelley, John **Ruskin**[87], the leading critic of the Victorian age dedicates his life to the defense and dissemination of beauty in architecture, education, and literature. He writes numerous poems, letters, and books of criticism portraying the instructional role of art. In *Stones of Venice* ([1853] 1907), Ruskin transmits the need for unity of knowledge because he wants to reform people's hearts through literature, "Think what an amazing business that would be… to support literature instead of war"

[86] Poetry exalts the beauty of that which is most beautiful, and it adds beauty to that which is most deformed; it marries exultation and horror, grief and pleasure, eternity and change; it subdues to union, under its light yoke, all irreconcilable things…it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its form" (52-6).

[87] I will detail Ruskin's influence in education in the second chapter of the present work. Here, I will introduce a few of his major themes.

(55). Art for him is inherently moral. However, he makes the distinction between "books of the hour, and the books of all times" (14). He encourages readers to analyze words, to try to understand meanings, and be accurate, "to use books rightly is to be led by them into wider sight" (65). He offers pertinent reasons that encourage the contact with good quality literature, as he states, "I wish you to see that both well-directed moral training and well-chosen reading lead to the possession of a power over the ill-guided and illiterate, which is according to the measure of it, in the truest sense, kingly" (69).

One of the striking ideas that Ruskin is known for brings together literature and architecture. In *Stones of Venice*, he suggests that one could learn as much from words as from stones of ancient buildings. "The idea of reading a building as we would read… Dante, and getting the same kind of delight out of the stones as out of the stanzas, never enters our minds for a moment" (II, 174).

Ruskin acknowledges the positive outcome of novels in inspiring readers in their search for truth, at the same time with instilling goodness. "So, also, there might be a serviceable power in novels to bring before us, in vividness, a human truth which we had before dimly conceived… whether novels, or poetry, or history be read, they should be chosen, not for their freedom from evil, but for their possession of good" (90). Obviously, Ruskin is not against the use of ugliness and evil in literature, as long as the final end is virtuous.

Like Spăriosu, Ruskin believes in the "rejuvenating role that art and play can have in modern culture" (Spăriosu, 1997, 275). In *the Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), Ruskin militates for a change of mentality and for the transformation of life into a joyful experience reigned by generosity since, "there is no true potency… but that of help; no true ambition, but ambition to

save" (155). Ruskin's incentives of goodness and beauty are obvious throughout his writings. He places literature, or the right kind of literature, at the core of a peaceful mentality,

> Free-heartedness, and graciousness, and undisturbed trust, and requited love, and the sight of the peace of others, and the ministry of their pain; —these, and the blue sky above you, and the sweet waters and flowers of the earth beneath; and mysteries and presences, innumerable, of living things, —these may yet be your riches; untormenting and divine: serviceable for the life that now is; nor, it may be, without promise of that which is to come (26).

Matthew **Arnold**'s[88] role in the defense of literature is undeniable. One of the most popular phrases that Arnold is known for is "the free play of mind"[89] that should be a solid objective for any individual. In his *Essays in Criticism* ([1865] 1918), similar to Ruskin and to his predecessors, Arnold acknowledges that cultural values and pleasures of the mind result from reading "that man, after he has made himself perfectly comfortable and has now to determine what to do with himself next, may begin to remember that he has a mind and that the mind may be made the source for great pleasures" (20). Even if he is a fervent defender of literature, he identifies differences in the quality of texts, thus making the difference between epochs of expansion (of new literary works) and epochs of concentration (of literary criticism) (18). Arnold urges the comparison between different types of literature, different ages and writers, because (through literary criticism) he wants to promote "the best that is known and thought in the world" (xiv).

[88] In the second chapter of the present work, I will detail Arnold's contributions to the field of education and aestheticism. Here, I intend to offer a general description of his view on the function of literature and criticism.
[89] Phrase borrowed from Matthew Arnold. See Matthew Arnold. *Culture and Anarchy and Other Writings.* Stefan Collini (ed.). (New York: Cambridge University Press. 1993). p. 37.

Arnold considers criticism a ludic activity because it articulates various choices and can propose models or alternatives of thought. In *Culture and Anarchy* (1932), he states that the literary function is to promote cohesion in society, but also to define individuality and nurture morality through beauty (seen as the one aim of art), (182), all in the name of culture, seen as "endeavor to come at reason and the will of God by means of reading, observing and thinking" (23). Truth represents another central theme in Arnold's defense of literature (189). Arnold's interest in framing appropriate reasons for supporting the role of literature in education is evident. He establishes literature, criticism, and religion as leading forces for engaging people in society and for guiding them to excellence. Culture, as a "free play of mind", should be based on reading and thinking.

In turn, Oscar **Wilde**[90], in *The Soul of Man under Socialism* (1891), discusses art's redemptive role. One striking definition of art equates it with individualism, in the sense that people should limit their utilitarian activities and focus more on nurturing their inner selves (47). Solitude brings men the highest potential of actualizing inner potentialities. Individualism offers playful freedom for self-discovery and inquiry. Artistic creation is the one that elevates the soul and allows it freedom for discovery, since, "the temperament to which art appeals is receptivity" (150). Art is a "supreme end" because it opens doors toward self- development. In contrast with Ruskin, who endorses the moral purpose of art, Wilde considers that art should be appreciated for its own sake, however, he recognizes its developmental powers. In *De Profundis* (1949), Wilde describes his spiritual journey of redemption in prison, while reading Augustine, Newman, and Dante, among others. His account is centered around the theme of self-realization through reading.

[90] I will offer more details about Wilde's correspondence to Douglas/Bosie, in the third chapter of the present study, where I discuss beauty in literature.

In contrast with Wilde, **T. S. Eliot's** intention is to surpass beauty and ugliness, in order to see the glory beneath them[91]. Eliot has strong roots in the classical tradition, thus he provides good arguments in the defense of the role of literature. He reshapes the theme of tradition developed by Dryden. In his essay, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*[92] (1921), he redefines tradition as "simultaneous order" or historical timelessness. "But the difference between the present and the past is that the conscious present is an awareness of the past in a way and to an extent which the past's awareness of itself cannot show" (I, 6). Eliot defines poetry an 'escape from emotion' because echoing Plato's view that poetry surpasses the real, he argues that poets do not describe emotions, but the result of their literary effort is a feeling that surpasses experienced emotions. Eliot argues that "[t]he effect of a work of art upon the person who enjoys it is an experience different in kind from any experience not of art" (II, 13). He offers exclusivity to poetry, as a unique provider of feelings that are beyond any imaginable experience.

Besides his obvious intention to transmit the joy of reading and its positive effects, Eliot strives for beauty. In some of his poems, he creates a world devoid of beauty, but his skillfulness transforms the literary display of ugliness into a platform where the ugly resuscitates the beautiful[93]. His *Waste Land*, published in 1922, represents an impulse towards beauty. The modern audience influenced by postwar cynicism does not perceive beauty beyond ugliness. Eliot's intention is to educate receptivity and awareness. Echoing Dante, Eliot writes,

[91] See Harold Boom. *Bloom's Bio Critiques: T.S. Eliot*. (Broomall: Chelsea House Publishers. 2003). p. 99.
[92] See Thomas Stearns Eliot. *The Sacred Wood.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf. [1921] 1996)
[93] Roger Scruton, in his work on *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction* (2011), explains Eliot's technique, by stating that, "what is seedy and sordid in words so resonant of the opposite, so replete with the capacity to feel, to sympathize and to understand, that life in its lowest forms is vindicated by our response to it.... And this is the paradox of fin-de siècle culture: that it continued to believe in beauty, while focusing on all the reasons for doubting that beauty is obtainable outside the realm of art". See Roger Scruton. *Beauty*: A Very Short Introduction. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2011). p. 140.

> You cannot understand the Inferno without the *Purgatorio* and the *Paradiso*. 'Dante' says Landor's Petrarch, 'is the great master of the disgusting'… But a disgust like Dante's is not hypertrophy of a single reaction: it is completed and explained only by the last canto of the *Paradiso*…The contemplation of the horrid or sordid or disgusting, by an artist, is the necessary and negative aspect of the impulse toward the pursuit of beauty[94].

Eliot's search for beauty[95] is a reference point for poets and writers of the following generations. Gilles **Deleuze** and Felix **Guattari** playfully engage in a critical interdisciplinary endeavor that brings a diachronic multifaceted perspective on philosophy, linguistics, literature, music, and sciences. Their fragments on literature, the art of writing and interpretation need contextualization in order to be understood, but they can legitimately be included in the category of defenders of literature. In *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), Deleuze and Guattari define literature as "becoming, always incomplete, always in the midst of being formed" (4). Probably the most renowned and complex book that Deleuze and Guattari wrote together is *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987). The book is a "smooth space of thought" (xiii) where they define literature as an assemblage (4). They deny the ancient belief in art as *mimesis* or imitation, "No art is imitative, no art can be imitative or figurative" (304), instead, they refer to it as a *becoming*, perceived not as evolution, but rather as filiation, (238). They share Paul Alphandery's[96] view on literature that, in certain cases, it "could revitalize history" and impose upon it "genuine research directions"

[94] See Joseph Pearce. *Catholic Literary Giants:* A Field Guide to the Catholic Literary Landscape. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press. 2005)
[95] I will further develop this perspective in the fifth chapter of the present study, where I discuss the problem of ugliness in literature.
[96] Specialist in Medieval Christianity. See Paul Alphandery. *La Chrétienté et l'idée de croisade*, vol. 2. (Paris: Albin Michel. 1959) p. 116.

(520). These new directions and movements of the self toward the other are at the core of literary texts. “The various forms of education or ‘normalization’ imposed upon an individual consist in making him or her change points of subjectification” thus becoming other (129).

Another important aspect of Deleuze and Guattari’s work that is relevant for the present study is related to terminology. They define books as an assemblage, a multiplicity, and writing as the measure of something else (4). They ironically conceptualize “root books”, based on the law of reflection, “the book imitates the world, as art imitates nature”, but they contradict this paradigm by emphasizing the need of roots only in the context of awareness of the past but not in terms of immobility. On the contrary, they want books to be living platforms where several multiplicities meet and the self is in a continuous *becoming* (5). A rhizome is the “unique from the multiplicity… that ceaselessly establishes connections” (6-7). The “book is not an image of the world, it forms a rhizome with the world… [and] assures the deterritorialization of the world” (11).

The arborescent form of books implies a “system [that] preexists the individual, who is integrated into it at an allotted place” (16). Since several plateaus constitute the rhizome and a plateau represents any multiplicity connected to other multiplicities (22), a rhizome-book establishes connections. For instance, “the cultural book is necessarily a tracing of itself, a tracing… of other books however different they may be…a tracing of the world present, past, and future” (24). They define rhizomes, as between things, interbeing, intermezzo, alliance…where things pick up speed,” becoming other. Their advice offers a clear picture of their awareness of the never-ending potential of books, “Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant!... be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point!” (24)

According to Deleuze, the purpose of literature is to create new ways of thinking, perceiving and feeling. In *Essays Critical and Clinical* (1993), Deleuze states that "literature is an enterprise of health[97]… as health consists of inventing a people to come" (4). When describing the role of writers, he considers, "the writer is a physician of himself and of the world. The world is the set of symptoms whose illness merges with man. Illness is the stopping of the processes of the passages of life" (126). Besides healing, literature brings new possibilities for life because it traces lines of flight (lines of creation)[98] that allow readers to experience life at a different level. The lines of flight are directions toward others. They encourage encounters (of multiplicities) and result in transformations of the self. Each encounter (with another/with the text), is a becoming other; thus, literature heals people of self-centeredness enchanting them with the richness of receptivity. Deleuze also manifests his desire to fashion a "people to come"[99].

Deleuze and Guattari invite readers to a liminal experience and an exercise in comparative literature[100]. Openness, dynamism, mobility, awareness, and connectivity are some

[97] In *Deleuze's Way* (2007), Bogue notices that for Deleuze, "Literature is a mode of non-organic life that promotes a kind of incorporeal health, he argues, and it has four basic components: becomings, stutterings, the invention of people, and the creation of visions and auditions" (108).

[98] For a thorough introduction into the Deleuzian perspective on literature, see Ronald Bogue. *Deleuze on Literature.* (New York and London: Routledge. 2003)

[99] "The object of art is to fashion a people to come, and to do so artists engage in what Deleuze calls "fabulation", an activation of the "powers of the false" that dissolves conventional social categories and codes and invents new possibilities for life" (Bogue, 2007, 14). Bogue defines fabulation in *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of Histor*y (Edinburg University Press. 2010): "The term 'fabulation'…allows one to conceive of storytelling simultaneously as a way of engaging and articulating real and material problems- and hence a way of getting at truths of a certain sort, of countering lies and insisting on historical facts that have been denied, buried or distorted- *and* as a means of inventing new possibilities for construing the world and its future development" (Bogue 13).

[100] Analyzing literature in the absence of the Deleuzian approach would impoverish any defense. I am thus looking at Deleuze and Guattari as key leading figures in the endeavor of the present study. I will use their approach in the course of my first chapter where I discuss literature as a playful path toward the other. In Deleuzian terminology, I will underline several lines of flight that the reader indulges in through and after the process of reading. Following Deleuze's way, I will make transverse connections between literature, linguistics, philosophy, religion, and (philosophy of) education, in order to create a stable settlement of the position of literature in any dialogue. "Deleuze's way is the transverse way, the dialogical path connecting incommunicable ways, a trajectory that intensifies the distances between locations. His way is also a way of doing - a practice of making transverse connections, of assembling multiplicities that affirm their differences through their connections" (see Ronald Bogue. *Deleuze's Way:* Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics. (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company. 2007). p. 2.

of the words that can define their approach to books, art, and literature. Their philosophical and nonconventional conceptualizations provide literature with several new dimensions of inquiry and analysis. The Deleuzian incentive of becoming other (through reading/through any encounter) represents the core resource of literary texts. Through the staging of new alternatives of existence, texts place readers at the intersection of several multiplicities and plateaus. Also, the liminal experience teaches flexibility of mind and endows the reader with the dexterity of deterritorializing themselves, by continuously becoming other[101].

In *Negotiations* (1995), Deleuze suggests writers and readers renounce the notion of utopia and "take up Bergson's notion of fabulation and give it a political meaning"[102] (174). Writers should approach their texts with openness toward limitless alternatives of becoming. They should be continuously aware of the potentialities of thought that their texts might create in the new generations or "people to come," thus allowing the play of mind to act[103].

J. R. R. **Tolkien**'s *The Lord of the Rings* (1954) and C. S. **Lewis**' *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950) are among the most appreciated works of fiction of the 20th century. They both consider the development of imagination as central to the literary endeavor. For Lewis, works of fantasy offer readers, "sensations [they] never had before, and [they] enlarge [readers'] conception of the

[101] I subscribe to Ronald Bogue's definition of the phrase 'becoming other' as a "passage between categories, modes of existence and discrete entities such that stable elements are set in metamorphic disequilibrium" (Bogue 9).
[102] Bogue explains Deleuze's fabulation as an opportunity of looking at literature from a different angle: "For Deleuze, then, to write is not to propose models of an ideal world but to hint at possibilities, to open a way forward through an experimentation of the real, an unsettling of the powers that be- their institutions, practices, categories and concepts – a process of becoming other that engages the generative forces of metamorphosis immanent within the world…Hence, any experimentation on the real must entail some engagement with history and its power in the present… Besides becoming-other amidst a complex of historical forces, fabulation also involves what Deleuze elusively refers to as' legending *in flagrante delicto*', fashioning giants and projecting images into the real that take on a life of their own" (Bogue, 2010, 223, 226).
[103] Tolkien, Lewis, and Cărtărescu consciously or subconsciously respect this prerequisite. Mihai Spăriosu, on the other hand, brings together art with play. He develops the ludic-irenic approach to literature, emphasizing its encouraging orientation toward goodness, beauty, and truth. The four last defenders of literature that I mention in this broad introduction encourage readers to appreciate fictional texts through various techniques.

range of possible experience"[104]. For Tolkien, fiction and fantasy can reveal new possibilities of thought and they can intermediate or "hold communion with other living things"[105]. He wants to resuscitate people's ability to see beauty in simplicity, as a "restoration of our Wordsworthian ability to see ordinary things… with fresh childlike wonder"[106] (Basham in Baggett 247). Tolkien's elves from the *Lord of the Rings* have an endless appetite for beauty, in contrast with people who easily get bored. In his *Letters* (1981), Tolkien confesses that one of his targets, as a writer, is to attain, "the elucidation of truth, and the encouragement of good morals"[107].

C. S. Lewis' commitment to proving the moral aim of literature is obvious not only through his fiction but also through his other books and essays. As one of his critics observes, his stories "serve to enhance moral education, to build character. They teach, albeit indirectly, and provide us with exemplars from whom we learn proper emotional responses"[108]. As Davis notices in his essay on education, published in 2005, Lewis' moral pillar requires instruction, role models and the "development of good habits and virtues" (109-110). In the absence of books that transmit this precious inheritance, people withdraw into their inflicted solitude and become "men without chests"[109]. Both Lewis and Tolkien are defenders of literature. They emphasize its

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[104] See C. S. Lewis. "On Science Fiction". in *Of Other Worlds*: Essays and Stories. Walter Hooper (ed.). (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1966). p. 70.
[105] See J. R. Tolkien. "On Fairy-Stories". reprinted in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine Books. 1966). p. 15.
[106] Bassham quoted in Baggett David et al. *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness and Beauty.* IVP Academic. (Illinois: InterVarsity Press. 2008). p. 250.
[107] Ralph Wook, professor who teaches classes on *The Lord of the Rings*, writes a book about his favorite author in which he includes confessions of his students who report that, "they feel clean after reading The Lord of the Rings". He argues that the book has a, "bracing moral power: its power to lift them out of the small-minded obsessions of the moment and into the perennial concerns of ethical and spiritual life". See: Ralph C. Wood. *The Gospel According to Tolkien*: Visions of the Kingdom in Middle-Earth. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press. 2003). p. 194.
[108]Meilaender Gilbert C. *The Taste for the Other:* The Social and Ethical Thought of C. S. Lewis. (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing. 1978). p. 213.
[109] Formulation that C. S. Lewis advances in *The Abolition of Man* ([1944] 2001), when he refers to the fact that chests are the intermediate path between the brain (reason's seat) and the belly: "The head rules the belly through the chest- the seat, as Aslanus tells us, of Magnimity, of emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments" (24).

moral role that is based on the three pillars of beauty, goodness, and truth. Educating people through enjoyable reading proves to be a playful activity with long-term positive outcomes.

Following their steps, Mihai **Spăriosu**[110] investigates the outcomes of play in the Western World and transforms the discussion about literature into a multidisciplinary stimulating platform. In *Dionysus Reborn* (1989), he outlines a historical approach, framing a "theoretical model for a much-needed interdisciplinary survey of the field" (ix). After an incursion into the pre-rational and rational mentalities characterized by different approaches to literature and play, Spăriosu associates play with aestheticism because "a history of the modern concept of play will have to run parallel to a history of modern aestheticism" (x). The unavoidable power principle that one can associate with play is thoroughly distilled by Spăriosu whose solution is the free turn toward an irenic mentality. In order to embrace it, one needs to leave his/her thirst for power, free himself/herself of the pre-rational mentality where *agon* means only competition, and embrace a nonviolent attitude transforming competition into motivational *paidia,* viewed as, "philosophical term for nonviolent cultural play in general" (6).

Reading literature allows one to transform *agon* into play and enjoy the productive side of rational contests where the fight is within. Spăriosu mentions Plato's contribution to transforming *mimesis*-play (violent play of physical Becoming) into mimesis-imitation (re-presents itself as Being, Reason, and immutable Order) (19). Play as a mode of being (simulacrum) and play as freedom introduce other enriching perspectives that Spăriosu describes. Bringing together the various interpretative angles from which one might discuss play, Spăriosu connects it to literature, by stating, "I regard literature, therefore, both as a major form of play and as a mediated form of power" (26).

[110] In the third chapter of the present work, I will apply Spăriosu's model that connects literature to play and provide several examples that support his ludic-irenic perspective.

He advocates for the crucial role of literature that "has often stepped in and filled the power vacuum during periods of so-called cognitive nihilism or axiological relativism in our culture" (26). He does not allow literature to be co-opted by power-oriented paradigms, such as aestheticism (that regards literature as independent from other cultural phenomena), but he provides it with a limitless potentiality since, "literature is neither illusion nor higher truth but a linguistic construct like any other, participating in the creation, perpetuation, and destruction of a certain discursive power configuration" (26). Spăriosu's approach represents an encouraging starting point for any literary research one might develop[111]. Like **Cărtărescu**, he defends literature by offering it an enhanced aura with immeasurable potential in framing a ludic-irenic mentality where goodness, beauty, and truth reign.

Mircea Cărtărescu's *Levant* (1990) is another text with a ludic-irenic aura. The *Levant* is an epic poem that describes popular episodes from Romanian and universal literature. The purpose of the poem is to rejuvenate Romanian literature with a text that not only actualizes national poets but also depicts current states of affairs based on historical facts. Similar to Lewis and Tolkien, Cărtărescu manages to bring a novel breath to national literature that seemed to have reached a dead end. The meta-textual aspects are the most valuable attributes of this epic in verse. Through delightful intertextuality, Cărtărescu reaches different literary destinations and cultural incursions. Ignoring time frames, he layers his text in an innovative manner breaking boundaries between fiction and reality, between readers and the author himself.

[111] Here, I will focus on Spăriosu's *Wreath of Wild Olive*, a book that stimulates thoughts about an alternative human mentality, literature being a direct provider of alternatives. I will also advance Spăriosu's interest for the educational potential of literature. I will build on Spăriosu's theoretical framework in chapter two, where I discuss literature as a playful path toward the self and the other. and in chapter three, where I argue that literature leads to the solidification of a hospitable imagination. I will come back to Spăriosu's approach on literature, in the sixth chapter where I will frame a pedagogical methodology for today's global world. (More precisely by looking at Spăriosu's *Global Intelligence and Human Development* (2004) and *Remapping Knowledge* (2006))

The author intrudes into the story and confesses having written it all in a moment of crisis for the destiny of Romanian poetry. He even invites the reader to add his/her face and presence into the story, in a friendly encounter with the author and with Manoil (the character whose romanticized ideal is to kill the leader of Walachia and set the people free) in the author's kitchen, in Bucharest. The end of the story is open and allows the becoming of the reader to take shape anew every time one reopens the book. After a revealing encounter with seven national poets (among which one is the author himself), Manoil is left in a timeless process of reading the story of his own voyage, ending in the central library in Bucharest, where he finds the Levant and starts reading it.

The deconstructivist story is inciting and tremendously engaging. Cărtărescu's defense of literature directly engages the reader who finds himself/herself before a text whose beauty is undeniable, whose richness is incommensurable, and whose charm is unavoidable. Cărtărescu's defense echoed in the minds of all readers in 1990 when the book was published, and it echoes today as well. Even if the audience might be slightly different, the text answers Deleuze's request for fabulation and incorporates Spăriosu's ludic-irenic characteristic, thus nurturing readers' receptivity, awareness and enhancing the role of literature by allowing it to acquire its central role in any encounter.

By continuing the effort of the aforementioned critics and writers, I will provide arguments and examples that support the thesis according to which literature has a moral role and it is indispensable for a well-rounded, receptive dialogue, adapted for today's global culture. Not only does literature result in catharsis (according to Aristotle), but it also has a dialogical role that allows the emergence of moral values at the level of a triadic communion. By dialogical role, I do not refer to Bakhtin's inter-textual dialogism that connects fictional works to one

another, nor to Hegel's distinction between dialogic (various approaches coexist) and dialectic (choice among paradigms), not even to F.R. Leavis' "third realm"[112], as the method of existence of literature, but to the incentive of looking at literature as a third element in any dialogue. Therefore, it is essential to analyze how the term 'dialogue' evolved and what are its various connotations.

1.3 'Dialogue' -- Evolution of the Term

Dialogue cannot exist without humility **(Paulo Freire)[113]**

Etymologically speaking, *dialogue* is a flow of meaning (*dia*= through; *logos*= word, meaning). A discussion is not a dialogue unless both participants are willing to listen to each other and share ideas. In order for dialogue to be possible, one needs to look at the interlocutor as a subject. In accordance with I-Thou philosophy, if one objectifies his/her interlocutor, trying to impose his/her ideas, without listening to the other, he/she objectifies the other, transforming him/her into a recipient of preconceived ideas. Dialogue implies openness and flexibility, respect and humility.

In 2011, J. R. Starratt coins the term "absolute regard" when discussing the ethical school, but the phrase is appropriate for explaining what dialogue should look like. If the two interlocutors have a mutual absolute regard for the other's thoughts, then they both renounce at a part of their egos, so as to embrace novelty; thus, dialogue reaches the space of truth, in communion. It is precisely the type of dialogue that literature mediates because of its staging of life experiences, descriptions of psychological torments, and examples of encounters among various characters.

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[112] See Edward Greenwood. *F. R. Leavis*. (London: Longman Group. 1978). p. 11.
[113] See Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* 30th anniversary edition. (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing. 2014). p. 90.

For **Plato**, dialogue is a method of sharing meaning. *Logos*, in a Platonic understanding, means a platform that allows the interaction of diverse ideas, so as for participants to reach a better holistic common understanding of a certain topic. The purpose of it is not imposing one's paradigm upon the other's but rather enlarging one's views with different perspectives. Dialogue is not meant to convince or manipulate, but to enrich meaning. Socratic dialogue[114] is a genre of literary prose describing the encounter between two or more characters. Plato's dialogues are meant to reach ***Logos* or the space of truth** because the self and the other involved in the dialogue go beyond their subjectivity in order to enter the space of politeness where one listens to the other.

In each case, the argument goes beyond one's person so as to embrace the other's point of view. By exceeding the individual/initial opinion (through *doxa* –a tool that uses common opinions so as to form the argument), the self reaches a state that contains the other as well, a space beyond egos, where the encounter with *Logos*/truth is possible. One has the chance to reach truth willingly, as long as he/she opens up to new avenues of thought, by embracing and celebrating the difference in opinion. The quality of dialogue resides in the ability to listen and respect one's interlocutor. Evidently, Plato did not actually frame a clear perspective on dialogue that one might include in a historical analysis. On the contrary, Plato's characters share an interaction that does not reach a well-established truth or common perspective, but their encounter paves the ground for further contribution and invites the reader to situate himself/herself in relation to the topics discussed.

[114] Bohm quoted in Isaacs, offers a brilliant definition of generative dialogue that leads one to new ideas and perspectives: "A new kind of mind thus begins to come into being which is based on the development of a common meaning that is constantly transforming in the process…People are no longer primarily in opposition…rather they are participating in this pool of common meaning which is capable of constant development and change". See William Isaacs. *Dialogue*: *The Art of Thinking Together:* A Pioneering Approach to Communicating in Business and in Life. (New York: Crown Publishing Group. 2008). p. 40.

Each reader can choose what character to trust or what perspective to embrace, and likewise, characters do not seem to succumb to a unilateral viewpoint. However, Plato's playful exchange of ideas among characters does not discredit the basis for *Logos*. Even if Plato's dialogues seem to lack stable conclusions, they imply empathy and attention to the other's viewpoint. His examples offer an indirect confirmation of the idea that dialogue is grounded in truth. Given the fact that each individual has his or her truth, Plato's dialogues frame a trustful landscape where biased opinions converge and reach unity by enriching each other.

In the **Gospel of John**, *Logos*[115] is The Word/God/the breath of life: "At the beginning was the Word" (John, 1:1). One can look at the word dialogue through spiritual lenses, as the common encounter with God: *dia-* (two= the self and the other) + *Logos* (God). In order for two people to engage in a dialogue, they need communication (The Word). Without communication, dialogue would not be possible. Similarly, instead of looking at *Logos* simply as Word or Language, one could choose the Biblical symbolism behind it, thus following the Gospels' path and eventually finding God in every encounter, through communion. When two people meet, there is God in-between because what brings them together is the image of God[116] that is common for/in both of them. Such an interpretation transmits responsibility and care if one acknowledges that stepping into a dialogue with another person involves an intimate encounter with God, as well. Martin Buber's *I-Thou* formula is based on the same logic. **Buber** encourages people to create *I-Thou* relationships, and avoid *I-It* interactions that objectify the other and limit the potential of any dialogue. Instead of getting to know each other, two people might reach a

[115] I will avoid the restrictive version of *Verbum*, the Latin translation of *Logos* appropriated by Neo-Marxists, such as Benjamin. He preferred *Verbum* because his intention was to show the potential of symbolically describing the world, without the need of an ultimate common reference. For Benjamin, *Verbum* becomes a powerful instrument that gives language the potential of disrupting/relativizing truth.

[116] The greeting formula *Namaste* offers enough support to this interpretation since it means: God in myself says hi to God in you.

conflictive interaction only because they are too self-centered and reject looking at the other as a subject (having God within). Proper relationships happen between two subjects and if one chooses to relate to the other in a material, selfish way, he/she risks to miss the discrete bounds that connect individuals. Thinking positively about people in general leads one to building healthy relationships that should be at the core of one's existence. Such an approach asks for responsibility, humility, and generosity. The *Ich und Du* (Buber, 10) invites one to properly engage in meaningful relationships.

Dialogue opens new possibilities of thought through the communion and sharing of life experiences and ideas[117]. William **Isaacs**[118], in his book on *Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together* (2008), depicts the history of the concept and mentions that "dialogue provides a means by which we can learn to maintain our equilibrium". I would argue that it is not about maintaining, but about attaining it. It is only through the communion of dialogue that we can evolve and reach equilibrium. Given human social nature, balance is not possible in mental isolation[119]. In the case of monks, dialogue is still present, but the second person is the divine that is reached through prayer[120].

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[117] In this respect, one might refer to Goethe who defined dialogue "the most sublime of experiences" (Goethe quoted in Isaacs, 2008, xx).

[118] Founder and President of *Dialogos*, a consulting firm based in Cambridge, MA.

[119] It is not only physical isolation that might be damaging for some. If people choose a spiritual path of isolation and dedication of one's life to God, through continuous prayer and seclusion, they can easily reach equilibrium through communion with the ultimate figure. In the case of those who go beyond physical isolation and reject the game of back and forth interaction in/with one's mind, assuming the position of someone else, and have inner debates, dialogue is thus cancelled, and isolation becomes a curse, leading to depression, anxiety, and mental illness. See Cacioppo John T., Hughes Mary Elizabeth, Waite Linda J., Hawkley Louise C., Thisted Ronald A. "Loneliness as a Specific Risk Factor for Depressive Symptoms: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Analyses." Psychology and Aging 21: 140–51; (2006). Erin York Cornwell & Linda J. Waite. "Social Disconnectedness, perceived Isolation, and Health among Older Adults." in *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. Vol. 50 March: 31-48. (2009)

[120] Prayer is a dialogue with the divine and a means of reaching spiritual equilibrium. When it comes to people living in communities, the communion with others is essential for each individual's wellbeing. Disequilibrium intervenes when people decide to isolate themselves and reject others because of pride and self-sufficiency. Dostoevsky describes this tendency in his novel, *Notes from Underground* (1864), where he portrays the hell one might choose to live in because of separating himself/herself from human kind's inherent social nature. In contrast, when one accepts encounters with others, he/she steps into the common ground of dialogue where communion and mutual understanding are possible.

For Mikhail **Bakhtin,** dialogue implies renunciation of one's limited perspective and changes of the angle (through polyphony or multivoicedness) that one analyzes since, "[i]t is immensely important for the person who understands to be located outside the object of his/her creative understanding –in time, in space, in culture" (7). In *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986), he associates living with the need for dialogue. "Life by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree" (293). Also, he urges at *outsidedness*[121].

In Bakhtin's view, it is necessary for people to get out of their limited selves, or to renounce at a part of the self, for the encounter with the other (self), thus for dialogue[122] to be possible, because "[i]n the realm of culture, *outsidedness* is a most important factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly… they engage in a kind of dialogue, which surmounts the closedness and one-sidedness of these particular meanings, these cultures" (7). In accordance with Freire's need for engaging in systems, so as for dialogue to occur, Bakhtin focuses on the crucial role of comm(unity) and relation. He rejects isolation, both at the level of the discourse and at a social

See for instance the prayers and petitions to God that Saint Catherine gathered in her book: Saint Catherine of Siena. *Dialogue.* Suzzane Noffke (trans.). (New York: Paulist Press. 1980)

[121] "exit from the self" or "finding oneself outside". See Todorov Tzvetan. *Mikhail Bakhtin. The Dialogical Principle. Theory and History of Literature.* vol. 13. Wlad Godzich (trans.). (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1984). p. 99.

[122] "It is only in another human being that I find an aesthetically (and ethically) convincing experience of human finitude, of a market-off empirical objectivity…Only another human being can give me the appearance of being consubstantial with the external world…For only the other can be embraced, totally surrounded, and explored lovingly in all of her limits" (Todorov 96).

level. He considers that every utterance is dialogic since no discourse stands in isolation[123]. Also, he acknowledges that consciousness is essentially dialogic[124].

It is essential to note, however, that one of the key features of Bakhtin's theoretical framework is *dialogism*[125]. Tzvetan Todorov explains the concept in *Bakhtin: The Dialogic Principle* (1984), by stating that, "the intertextual dimension of utterances… all discourse is in dialogue with prior discourses on the same subject, as well as with discourses yet to come… The genre that most favors this polyphony is the novel" (x). Todorov observes that Bakhtin associates dialogue with understanding, "All understanding is dialogue… Understanding is in search of a counter-discourse to the discourse of the utterer… True understanding in literature and in literary studies is always historical and personal" (22-3). Dialogism confirms that meaning occurs as a relation.

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[123] "Individualistic subjectivism is wrong in that it ignores and does not understand the social nature of the utterance, and in that it attempts to deduce it from the internal world of the speaker as the expression of the internal world. The structure of the utterance, just like that of expressible experience, is a social structure… Verbal communication will never be understood or explained outside of this link to the concrete situation" See Voloshinov. V.N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language.* Matejka L., Titunik I.R. (trans.). (New York: Seminar Press. 1973). p. 111.

[124] "To live means to engage in dialogue, to question, to listen, to answer, to agree, etc" See Bakhtin. "Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book". in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. appendix II. Caryl Emerson (ed.) (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press. 1984). p. 318. Bakhtin's theory embraces Vygothsky's central theoretical construct of "Zone of Proximal Development" ZPD that represents the distance between actual development and potential development of an individual. Development depends on the interaction with peers. Vygotsky confirms Bakhtin's demand for communion and dialogue. See Vygotsky L. "Interaction between learning and Development". in *Mind and Society*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1978). pp. 79-91. In *Development of the True Self*, Carl Auerbach supports this approach as well, by stating that the "true self develops in dialogue, [thus] the failure of the true self to develop is a failure of dialogue" See Auerbach Carl. "Development of the True Self: A Semiotic Analysis". in *Psychoanalysis and Contemporary Thought.* 1991). p. 133.

[125] Bakhtin defines the opposite term for dialogism, looking at *monologism* as the individualistic self-centered approach that denies or objectifies the other. "Ultimately, *monologism* denies that there exists outside of it another consciousness, with the same rights, and capable of responding on an equal footing, another and equal I (*thou*). For a monologic outlook (in its extreme or pure form) the *other* remains entirely and only an *object* of consciousness, and cannot constitute another consciousness. No response capable of altering everything in the world of my consciousness, is expected of this other. The monologue is accomplished and deaf to the other's response; it does not await it and does not grant it any *decisive* force. Monologue makes do without the other; that is why to some extent it objectivizes all reality. Monologue pretends to be the *last word*. See Mikhail Bakhtin. "Toward a Reworking of the Dostoevsky Book". in *Problems of Doestoevsky's Poetics*, appendix II. Caryl Emerson (ed. & trans.). (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn. Press. 1984)

Bakhtin considers that "all verbal communication, all verbal interaction takes place in the form of an exchange of utterances, that is, in the form of a dialogue" (44). Also, he makes the distinction between understanding and empathy, underlining that understanding implies enriching one's view with the one of the other: "Understanding cannot be understood as empathy [vshustvovanie] and setting of the self in another place (loss of one's place)… Understanding cannot be understood as the translation of a foreign language into one's tongue… Understanding [is] the transformation of the other into a 'self-other'… [reaching] *exotopy* [or] the most powerful level of understanding" (109).

Exotopy means reaching truth, or in Deleuzian terms, it refers to becoming other. The self renounces a part of his/her ego and allows the intersection with the self of the other, thus transforming at least at the level of ideas, into another self. The self, the other, and their dialogue are in a continuous metamorphosis because,

> the "great dialogue"… takes place not in the past, but right now, that is, in the real present of the creative process. This is no stenographer's report of a *finished* dialogue, from which the author has already withdrawn… that would have turned an authentic and unfinished dialogue into an objectivized and finalized image of a dialogue… The great dialogue… is organized as an unclosed whole of life… posed *on the threshold* (63).

Essential for the present research is that Bakhtin mentions the existence of a *third person*[126] in the dialogue, which I call the third element. "Every dialogue takes place then, in a way, against the backdrop of the responsive understanding of a present but invisible third entity, hovering above all the participants in the dialogue (the partners)… The third in question is

[126] It proceeds from the nature of discourse, that always wants to be heard, that always is in understanding but makes its way further and further away (without limits). For discourse (and therefore, for man) nothing is more frightening than the *absence of answer*". See Tzvetan Todorov. *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogical Principle*. Vol. 13. Wlad Godzich (trans.). (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1984). p. 111.

nowise a mystical or metaphysical entity (even if, in some conceptions of the world, it does receive such status); it is a constitutive moment of the whole utterance, that a penetrating analysis can bring to light" (111).

Bakhtin's third element can be the echo of the well-known phrase: At the beginning was the Word and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Evidently, the Word/Logos reigns among us and manifests Himself every time there is the revelatory awareness of His presence, as the third person. If for Bakhtin, the third person appears in the "constitutive moment" of the dialogue, I argue that the third element (that can easily refer to the third person as well), in other words, literature can intervene *ante-factum*[127]. Literature prepares the floor for any dialogue and its echo or trace becomes the third presence in the dialogue. Literature raises awareness of similarities and gives the self and the other enough reasons to listen and learn, but also to be humble and embrace difference.

In *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* ([1968] 2014), the Brazilian educator Paulo **Freire** asks for *conscientization*[128], that is, the awareness of the great potential of any encounter. Each dialogue with another should be carefully addressed because it implies a mystery. It is not easy to choose the right words and to carefully listen to what the other has to say. Usually, we forget about the other and please ourselves with the sound of our own voices. Unfortunately, such a

[127] Here, I refer to Ann Jefferson's essay, *Bodymatters: Self and Other* in Bakhtin, Sartre and Barthes, published in 1989. The author ends her essay by stating that, "[l]iterature may provide the arena for a solution for self-Other relations, but it is one which is unable to determine how it in turn may be determined. Literature cannot provide the means for a solution unless it is empowered by the Other to do so". See Ken Hirschkop and David Shepherd (eds.). Bakhtin and Cultural Theory. (New York: Manchester University Press. 1989). p. 175.

[128] *Conscientization* implies being present, or listening with humility and it also involves genuine love for others: "Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of a profound love for the world and for people" (89). "Without the faith in people, dialogue is a farce which inevitably degenerates into paternalistic manipulation" (91). For a discussion on ethical education and the importance of care. See also Nel Noddings. "The Ethics of Care and Education". in *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education* (2005)

fake interaction does not nurture us and lacks the essence of communion. It prevents us from reaching the truth. Truth can be attained through dialogue if one renounces one's well-defined comfort zone and accepts to be challenged by the other's contradictory intervention. "How can I dialogue if I am afraid of being displaced, the mere possibility causing me torment and weakness? Self-sufficiency is incompatible with dialogue" (90).

Freire's *banking model* of education portrays students as containers for educators to drop knowledge into their heads. Words lose their concreteness and teachers narration is far from students' experiences. Thus, education is an act of depositing. However, Freire manages to offer solutions that might free both teachers and students from the oppressive pedagogy. He considers that the creations of systems through dialogical relations might restore the lost equilibrium. Dialogue is no longer in the hands of the self, but it is rather the result of engaging in a systemic process of growth for all participants.

It is only through real dialogue that one can evolve and know himself/herself, "[i]f it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings. Dialogue is thus an existential necessity" (88). Literature prepares the self of the reader for the encounter with the other and transforms the self into a "dialogical man [who] believes in others even before he meets them face to face" (90).

Literature is the third element in any dialogue because it invites both participants at (self/mutual) understanding, empathy, care, and respect. Given the Euclidian theorem about the possibility of three points to constitute a circle, one can easily argue that literature is the third point in any dialogue[129]. It is the mirror in which one can reflect him/herself and find a smooth

[129] "Dialogue is a conversation with a center, not sides" (Isaacs 19).

path toward the encounter with the other. Literature, through its dialogical potential, allows the self and the other to acknowledge their common humanity, their similarities, their shared perspectives and ideas.

Through literature, differences become advantages and sources of learning and improving one's views. If and only if one gains awareness of the third element, one can reach wholeness, or create the circle. In other words, one is able to reach unity within and with the other person participating in the dialogue. The two become one by sharing the common platform, thus reaching the truth. Literature gives readers numerous alternatives of thought, limitless scenarios, and examples of inner struggles and behaviors, so as for readers to easily recognize them in the other they interact with.

The following chapters will bring together several examples that confirm the dialogical role literature has, as the third element in any encounter. Let this work be an invitation to reading literature, in order to access goodness, beauty, and truth. I will argue for the relocation of literature at the center of any (intimate) dialogue since literature is a playful path toward the other, a source of hospitable imagination, a leading guide toward truth, and a friendly companion in the search for the self. It is only through a continuous acknowledgment of the third element that one might correctly relate to the other. It is not the physical presence of a book or the conscious reminder of the presence of literature that ameliorates dialogue. It is rather the process of reading fiction, the one that trains the involuntary actualization of receptive behaviors and attitudes that make dialogue empathetic and literature essential.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE AS A SOURCE OF GOODNESS

The very relationship with the other is the relationship with the future **(Emmanuel Levinas)**

The present chapter is a tribute to the role of literature and its potentiality of shaping the self and the other by mediating their encounter. The first part of the chapter will portray the conceptual frame that will guide the entire project. I begin my discussion by differentiating Comparative Literature from World literature[130] because Comparative Literature is the discipline that gets the closest to Goethe's unifying ideal of *Weltliteratur,* by motivating a renewal of the self. Also, I will describe what I understand by the third element and its role in the encounter of the self with the other.

I will focus primarily on the relational side of any encounter, preparing the self and the other for a successful dialogue, the second part of the chapter will aim at portraying the development of the self, emphasizing philosophies of education that encourage reading as a means to understanding the world in which one lives. The last part will portray current philosophies that support the use of literature as a source of understanding of the self and the other in the search of goodness, beauty, and truth.

"It is not a matter of nations being obliged to think in unison; rather, they should become aware of and understand each other, and, if love proves impossible, they should at least learn to tolerate one another"[131]. Goethe's incentive is valid for both the beginning of the 19th century and today's context. As an initiator of the idea of World Literature, Goethe sought to bring

[130] See David Damrosch. *What is World Literature*: *(Translation/ Transnation)*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press. Emily Apter, Series Editor. 2003)
[131] Fragment from Goethe's journal, *Propyläen* quoted in Fritz Strich. *Goethe and World Literature*. C. A. M. Sym. (trans.). (London: Routledge.1949). p. 34.

people together through reinforcing the role of harmony and acceptance in their interaction. He emphasized the need for an international community of writers who would display a balance between the national and the cosmopolitan: "It is to be hoped that people will soon be convinced that there is no such thing as patriotic art or patriotic science. Both belong, like all good things, to the whole world, and can be fostered only by untrammeled intercourse among all contemporaries, continually bearing in mind what we have inherited from the past"[132]. Goethe's wise suggestion preaches friendship, cosmopolitanism, respect, and tolerance.

In literary studies today, instead of focusing on Goethe's desideratum, there is a shift of the "literary paradigm… from the aesthetic to the… political"[133]. This shift requires schools to develop new disciplines such as multiculturalism[134], post-colonialism[135], Queer Studies[136], and World Literature[137] as pedagogies of recognition[138], or new forms of interpreting the relationship between peoples and people. By current World Literature, I understand Damrosch's project of global literature that promotes literary texts belonging to works of literature of the world, in the name of recognition and tolerance. Through World Literature, one is introduced to non-Western literature in English translation. Even in the case of Damrosch's approach, World Literature is a

[132] Idem. p. 35. Goethe conceptualizes world literature including a recommendation that prompts "global awareness", term that I will be referring to throughout the present work.
[133] See Figueira, M., Dorothy. *Otherwise Occupied.* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press. 2008). p. 55.
[134] Multiculturalism represents a pedagogical praxis; specific for a mentality of power that privileges political manifestations. Its role is to militate for ethnic diversity and tolerance for minorities.
[135] Post-colonialism is similar to multiculturalism because they are both the result of mentalities of power. The latter speaks about external control and its effects on people. In this case, the location of the theorist is essential for the understanding of the inherent power game.
[136] Queer Studies fall under the umbrella of the power mentality, together with studies of minority groups.
[137] David Damrosch. *What is World Literature*: *(Translation/ Transnation).* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. Emily Apter, Series Editor. 2003)
[138] Pedagogies of recognition refer to programs of study aiming at the identification and integration of minorities in the hosting culture and community. The North American educational system has been actively engaged in diversity programs aiming at multicultural literacy. In *Otherwise Occupied*, Figueira emphasizes that the reference frame of multiculturalism, post-colonialism and of any other type of minority studies, is based on a pseudo claim at engaging the other. In contrast, the recognition of victimization as a common ground for the aforementioned 'pedagogies' "offers the illusion of victory over racism" (24).

captive of the Western perspective because texts are read in English translation, and similarly, with multiculturalism and post-colonial studies, World Literature "allows [readers] students to taste other cultures without digesting them" (Figueira 104). World Literature (as a biased and superficial celebration of otherness) with its monolingual approach and the lack of in-depth knowledge of other cultures (except European and American) tends to accommodate minor works of literature in the name of inclusiveness, many times ignoring quality standards.

The reader might not have a fair grasp of the rich meaning of certain narrative discourses if he/she does not engage with the text in a more inclusive manner rather than choosing a superficial, decontextualized, or geographically biased analysis. In contrast, Comparative Literature allows the reader to access original texts, through a direct encounter with the source language. One is encouraged to learn new languages, so as to have access to foreign texts. Obviously, there is a limitation of the many languages an individual might learn. Without the mediating role of translation, that often loses valuable cultural content, a multilingual reader, who can read original texts, has more chances to understand characters and empathize with them. From a comparatist perspective, fictional texts facilitate the transformation of the unknown other into the familiar same, thus encouraging the reader to compare his/her own views with those of another, eventually accepting and embracing diversity.

Literature has a dialogical potential in creating a support system for the encounter of the self with the other, by moving beyond mentalities of power[139], and hence fulfilling Goethe's integrative ideal of *Weltliteratur*. I include the current World Literature in the category of disciplines subjected to the mentality of power because of its one-sided perspective. In contrast, I promote Comparative Literature and intercultural studies, as free from the yoke of such a

[139] By mentalities of power, I understand a behavior and thought pattern based on the principle of force. (Spăriosu, 1997, 303)

mentality because of their multi-perspectivism. By Comparative Literature, I mean the study of literatures (in their original languages) across linguistic, cultural, and geographical boundaries, involving extensive knowledge and "awareness of cultural differences." Goethe's concept reiterates the Hellenic principle of *Humanitas*, seen as a process of educating man into his true form, the real and genuine human nature"[140]. This intellectual principle encourages humanism rather than individualism because it confirms that the essence of education is to make "each individual in the image of the community" (xxiv).

Literature opens a third path between humanism and individualism[141]. Looked at separately, both principles have advantages and downfalls. On the one hand (in the absence of the third element), individualism[142] leads to selfishness, but at the same time, it has an inherent potential for self-awareness and self-discovery. Literature grants individualism the needed awareness of otherness. On the other hand (in the absence of the third element –contextually seen as an emphasis on the self as a part of the whole), humanism can lead to uniformity and collective limitation, but also to empathy and care for others. I would thus opt for the golden path between humanism and individualism. Literature provides people with the confirmation of their belonging to a community by increasing the sense of awareness of the self, of the other and by

[140] Jaeger, Werner. *Paideia, The Ideas of Greek Culture: Archaic Greece, The Mind of Athens*. vol. I, II, III. Gilbert Highet (trans.). (New York: Oxford University Press. [1939] 1986). p. xxiii.

[141] In his book on education, the educator Parker Palmer brings about arguments in support of " a world warmed and transformed by the power of love, a vision of community beyond the mind's capacity to see" (xxiii). "For over a century, atomism, individualism and competition have been institutionalized in our society and in our schools…. Modern America has fashioned itself around a cosmology of fragmentation" (xiv). He describes the connection between individualism and humanism by emphasizing the need for "an organic body of personal relations and responses, a living and evolving community of creativity and compassion…[where each individual is]…being drawn into personal responsiveness and accountability to each other and the world of which we are a part" (14-15). See Parker J. Palmer. *To Know as We are Known*: Education as a Spiritual Journey. (New York: HarperOne. 1993)

[142] "This indeterminate or open-ended future and the lack of a binding past mean that the souls of young people are in a condition like that of the first men in the state of nature—spiritually unclad, unconnected, isolated, with no inherited or unconditional connection with anything or anyone. They can be anything they want to be, but they have no particular reason to want to be anything in particular". See Allan Bloom. *The Closing of the American Mind*. How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks. [1987] 2012). p. 87.

evoking the need for social responsibility. At the same time, literature hooks readers and nurtures critical thinking[143], thus encouraging personal freedom. Humanism and individualism can beautifully work together in order to shape a well-educated person who is aware of his/her own individuality and freedom of choice, at the same time acknowledging the presence of the other who needs openness, care, love, respect, and tolerance. Literature intervenes at the micro level of the transaction of ideas in dialogue and determines in both participants a deeper sense of attention and understanding. Thus, readers may acknowledge that Buber's *I-Thou* relation and Ricoeur's *ipse/idem* identity can reshape their understanding of the self and the other.

2.1 Literature as 'dialogue' between the self and the other

***The ethical–educational dialogue is not a product of the quest for dialogue but rather of the depth of responsibility toward alterity assumed by the individual* (Ben-Pazi)[144]**

When discussing literature, one needs to take into consideration various theories of translation and hermeneutics in interpreting a text. Hermeneutics, or the science of interpretation, "develops from the old art of divination and becomes the most important *critical* instrument of producing texts"[145]. Using several hermeneutic lenses, I would like to show that literature creates an appropriate context for a reconceptualization of the word *dialogue*. The etymology of the word hints at a triadic constitution [di- (through/two)+ (Logos/word)]. Literature mediates the reconfiguration of the word *dialogue* into a triad, comprising two persons (self+ other or I+ you) and a third constituent. How can one conceptualize this third element? Why is it relevant for the

[143] See Chi-An Tung, Shu-Ying Chang. "Developing Critical Thinking through literature Reading". In *Feng Chia Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences.* (No. 19. Dec. 2009). pp. 287-317.
[144] See Ben-Pazi H. "Establishing the Future: Educational Meanings of Revelation and the Messianic Idea according to Levinas". in *Hagut – Jewish Educational Thought*, 5–6, pp. 89–114. (2004). Also, Ben-Pazi H. "Messiansim as an Ethical-Philosophical Concept". in *Daat*, 54, (2004). pp. 97–123. A part of this subchapter is included in an article published in a Romanian academic journal. See Corina-Mihaela Beleaua. "Literature as the Third Element" in *East-West Cultural Passage*. (Vol. 17. Issue 2. Dec. 2017). pp. 7-28.
[145] See Mihai Spăriosu. *Dionysus Reborn: Play and the Aesthetic Dimension in Modern Philosophical and Scientific Discourse.* (London: Cornell University Press. 1989). p. 9.

interaction between individuals? How does literature contribute to raising awareness of the presence of a third participant in a dialogue?

The third element brings together the first two participants through "global attentiveness" (understood as a conceptual tool replacing criticism[146]) (Spăriosu, 2006, 44). *Global attentiveness* represents an escape from the mentalities of power toward a comprehensive understanding of the other. In the context of an international network of data exchange and almost instant mobility, global attentiveness can be viewed as an intercultural bridge that connects people through a voluntary mutual effort to listen to each other. Global attentiveness is the most appropriate channel for engaging the other by means of receptivity, openness, hospitality, empathy, tolerance, respect, and patience, leading to a peaceful interaction. This nearly mysterious tool is not gratuitous because it requires intentionality and awareness on the part of the participants in a dialogue. Through education and exposure to examples of good practices, one can learn about its usefulness, but implementing it in one's behavior represents a challenge. Literature provides limitless examples of good practices. For centuries, writers, poets, philosophers, pedagogues, and critics have been molding templates of receptive and respectful behavior. Reading their books and trying to apply their models and advice to one's own life will almost certainly prove beneficial. In order to properly appropriate teachings, one finds in a literary text, one needs to leave aside prejudices and try to unpack meanings beyond mentalities of power[147]. The key element might be a hermeneutic mechanism that could overlook preconceptions, thus stimulating "global awareness" and receptivity. Once activated through

[146] By criticism, I mean a methodology of Western thought based on the mentality of power because of its tendencies of rejecting one paradigm for the purpose of imposing another. The role of criticism is divisive. In contrast, the effect of literature is unifying because it does not put aside paradigms, but raises awareness about various alternatives.

[147] In her book on the *Hermeneutics of Suspicion* (2015), Figueira suggests that "a text can be both a success of the hermeneutical process (in the form of some fusions of horizons) and a product and object of ideological discourse to solidify the imposition of power between the self and the other" (12).

reading, global awareness as a worldview can easily mediate the encounter between two individuals.

Emmanuel Levinas, Michel de Certeau, Hans-Georg Gadamer, and Paul Ricoeur talk about this third element without naming it. In their conceptualizations of the self and the other (as two of the partakers in a dialogue) they use several concepts that sustain global attentiveness. They reveal how literature can mediate contemporary miscommunication and intercultural dialogue, thus offering a hospitable dialogical experience in the name of unity in diversity. The encounter with the other constitutes a challenge of reconsidering, rethinking and reevaluating the self. They emphasize the relevance of literature in shaping one's perception and enlarging the reader's frames of reference in addressing the other. Their texts are valuable demonstrations that literature creates the context for a reconceptualization of the word dialogue, not as a dual experience, but as a trilogy di- (self +other) + *Logos*, through the reconfiguration of the identity of the two participants, in the presence of a third dimension. Literature, as the third element, is a suitable provider of the need for a reconceptualization of any encounter. Through their liminal life representations, fictional texts empower readers with receptivity and awareness of this essential component that leads to the success of any encounter.

2.1.1 Levinas'[148] 3rd element: entre-les-deux, trace (of God), hospitality, exile

(1) dialogue= self+ other+ in-betweenness

Moving from "Appropriation of the Other" to the "Other as alter ego"[149], theories of interpretation shift toward a return to the self and focus on the centrality of encounters.

[148] Emmanuel Levinas served as director of the Ecole Normale Israelite Orientale, a teacher training school in Paris, for 40 years. He taught philosophy and Talmudic classes. (See: Ann Chinnery. "Encountering the Philosopher as Teacher: The Pedagogical Postures of Emmanuel Levinas". in *Teaching and Teacher Education*. Vol. 26. Issue 8. November 2010). See also Denise Egéa-Kuehne. *Levinas and Education: at the Intersection of Faith and Reason* (New York: Routledge. 2008)

[149] See Figueira, M., Dorothy. *The "Problem" of Religion and the Need for an Ethical Component in Reading the Other*. (Portugal: University of Porto. May 2016). p. 11.

Emmanuel Levinas describes the self in relation to the world, to the exterior, and to the other, as neighbor, friend, acquaintance, and divinity. He argues that exposure creates familiarity, and familiarity removes thoughts of fear, insecurity, and monstrosity, replacing them with natural feelings of comfort, identification, and predictability. Levinas provides transcendental lenses of interpreting literature.

In *Noms Propres* (1976), when talking about the "ontology of the interval", Levinas uses Buber's term, *Zwischen* in order to describe the in-betweenness of any encounter. The "entre-les-deux" does not happen in the subject but in the "Being"[150]. The place and value of the self in relation to the other change and Buber's *I-It* relation transforms into an *I-Thou*[151] relation. Similar to Buber's *I-Thou* relationship, Levinas' approach asks for responsibility, humility, and generosity. In his essay about *The Trace of the Other* (1986), Levinas emphasizes that alterity approaches the self and exceeds his/her capacity of understanding because of its uniqueness and diversity. "The relationship with another puts me into question, empties me of myself" (350). Thus, he shows the interdependence between the self and the other[152].

(2) dialogue= self+ other+ trace (of the divine)

The relationship/dialogue requires that the two participants acknowledge the third one, which is neither visible nor graspable. It is a "trace" of the Divine. Levinas states that "beyond being is a third person" (356) because the subject (*le sujet*) is different from Being (*l'être*) and encompasses an irreducible dimension of existence. He acknowledges God and His trace, since

[150] My translation for: "Le rencontre Je-Tu n'est pas dans le sujet, elle est dans l'être… c'est dans l'homme que se joue ce jeu" (Levinas 30-31)
[151] See Martin Buber. *I and Thou*. (Connecticut: Martino Publishing. 2010). p. 10.
[152] A good literary example that supports Levinas' thesis could be Endo's *Silence*. I discuss the book in the fifth chapter of the present work. If the monk who traveled to Japan had not looked at the shrinking number of Christians in the light of God, he would have failed his mission. It was only because of a stubborn search for God that the main character managed to eventually sense His trace and implicitly approached others with compassion.

the only way toward Him "is to find oneself in his trace… to go toward the others who stand in the trace of *illeity*" (the position in a trace) (359). Levinas defends the irreducible human dimension by re-conceptualizing its transcendent subjectivity. He talks about the Other in relation to God, or as God, the indispensable dimension of any encounter: "To be in the image of God does not mean to be an icon of God… He shows Himself only through his trace" (355).

In *Totalité et Infini: Essai sur l'extériorité (Totality and Infinity)*(1965), Levinas suggests that the trace of the Other is the shadow of God because no one can know God but through others. To meet the other is to have "the idea of infinity" (51). To start a conversation with another implies compromising one's comfort zone, through the humble recognition of one's limitations, thus cultivating receptivity and hospitality. Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilych* (1981), offers a strong literary example in support of Levinas' idea of a trace. About to die, Ivan understood that God came to Him and helped him surpass his pain and his fear of the unknown, preparing him for an enlightened afterlife, "He searched for his accustomed fear of death and could not find it. Where was death? What death? There was no fear because there was no death. Instead of death, there was light" (113).

(3) dialogue= self+ other+ hospitality[153], generosity

In *Humanisme de l'autre homme* (1987), Levinas preaches hospitality for the other in the same manner as he does in *Totalité et Infini* (1965), stating that, "The relation with the other is accomplished only through a third party that I find in me"[154]. On the basis of the third element understood as humanity or divinity, the self can respond with generosity. The encounter is

[153] 'hospitality' for Levinas operates in two realms: ethical and political. In the first case, the self is compelled to have a receiving attitude toward the other. In the political realm, the self receives the whole humanity. Levinas insists in the need for an ethical transformation of the public home. See David Gauthier. "Levinas and the Politics of Hospitality". in *History of Political Thought*. Vol. 28. Number 1 (2007). pp. 158-180.

[154] My translation for: "La relation avec l'Autre ne s'y accomplit qu'à travers un troisième terme que je trouve en moi" (14). The mystery that Levinas hints at is God.

cemented in divine unity and social connectivity. The self needs others and their cultural becoming for communion, dialogue, interaction, and self-improvement. Levinas stimulates receptivity and generosity toward the other because what the self can receive from the other goes beyond the capacity of the self. The reward of properly accepting an encounter (acknowledging the third dimension of it) implies the transformation of the self.

In *L'Humanisme de l'autre Homme*, Levinas discusses the significance of helping others without expecting anything in return. Central to his philosophy is the ethics of responsibility. Generosity does not require gratitude but gives the self and the other the freedom to choose whether they want to properly meet, since "A work conceived radically is a movement of the Same toward the Other who never returns to the Same... it is as an absolute orientation of the Same to the Other"[155]. The freedom of choice, in either receiving the other or not, can be associated with the freedom a reader has in front of (narrative) texts to either receive the conveyed message or reject it. Once welcomed, the other (as an individual or a narrative text) has the potential to restructure the self (of the reader) and help him/her to frame a sense of identity[156].

While Levinas' books present the self as welcoming the other, like hospitality, he (as a member of the interaction between the writer- the reader- and the text) does not expect anything

[155] My translation for: L'oeuvre pensée radicalement est un movement du Même vers l'Autre qui ne retourne jamais au Même… L'Oeuvre [est] orientation absolue du Même vers l'Autre" (Levinas 44).

[156] Saint Augustine, who during the first century A.C. lays the groundwork of the literature of the self, offers a relevant example in this respect. He transforms his *Confessions* (2001) into a metamorphosis of the self. His inner *metanoia* justifies the self only in relation to God, the Other: "For without you what am I to myself, except my own guide over the precipice?" (65). Augustine is aware of his responsibility when writing his *Confessions* and anticipates the contagious effect they might have upon his readers: "This is the profit I have of my confessions: that I should confess not what I was, but what I am, and confess it not only before you with secret exultation and trembling…but also in the ears of those children of men who believe" (218). "And who among man will grant a man to understand this?" (356). Writing is an act of giving because the author renounces the authority over his words, in order to generously grant the reader with their potentiality. Writing is a transformative process for the writer, but it might spark challenging thoughts in the reader's mind as well.

back from his reader. His giving act is gratuitous because he is humble enough so as to be aware that his capacity of giving is given to him. Levinas offers his readers the freedom of choosing how to receive the gift of his text. The text becomes a liminal space of encounter where words acquire an unquestionable power. Levinas writes in order to encourage the reader to start his/her own search. His lesson of giving implies humility, responsibility, and responsiveness[157].

(4) dialogue= self+ other+ exile (faciality)

In *Time and the Other* (1987), Levinas explains the idea of "good beyond being" that represents free responsibility for others because the birth of the Self can happen only in obedient willingness, *volonté obéissante* (86-89). By reaching obedient willingness, one goes beyond the self or outside the self. In Deleuzian terms, as presented in *Thousand Plateaus*: *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2011), it is the transformation of the self through "deterritorialization"[158] and the "territorialization" of the other, at the same time with the other territorializing the self (9). Without the will for moving out of one's comfort zone in order to get closer to the other, the encounter cannot properly happen. According to Levinas, through receptivity, the self starts an exile of self-discovery and approaches the other, since "All human(ism) is outside"[159].

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[157] Through his short stories, William Carlos Williams approaches Levinas' theory and he shows that one should live for others, "that we are not alone in the world and we cannot live alone" (11). One of his characters in the short story *Mind and Body* (1984), states that, "goodness is its own reward. Don't expect to get paid for it... I do not expect people to thank me if I do what I please" (3). Susan Onthank Mates, a practicing physician from Rhode Island wrote the short story *The Good Doctor* (2002), and similar to Williams, she portrayed a selfless doctor who was suggesting to her students to, "do any good" (49). Such fictional examples nurture hospitality and allow readers to hope that "there may be more friendliness about us". See Robert Coles et al. (eds.). *A Life in Medicine: A Literary Anthology*. (New York: The New Press. 2003). p. 314.

[158] Ronald Bogue thoroughly analyzes the role of the encounter with the other, in Deleuze's view, on the basis of a 1985 interview about the role of 'intercessors': "Intercessors are essential. Creation is all about intercessors. Without them, there is no creative work". See Gilles Deleuze. *Pourparlers.* (Paris: Minuit. 1990). Martin Joughin (trans.). *Negotiations.* (New York: Columbia University Press. 1995. p. 125, 171). In his book from 2007, Bogue remarks that, "[t]he duty to the other (if one must speak of duty) is to affect and to be affected, to suspend, as much as one can, the categorization and comprehension of the other, and then open oneself to the undetermined, hidden possible worlds that are expressed in the affective signs of the other… To intercede, for Deleuze, is not simply to advocate for the other, but also to "go between" (Latin: *inter-cedere*), to assist the other by intervening in the other's world and producing creative interference" (13).

[159] My translation for: "tout humain est déhors" (103)

A free man should lean toward one's neighbor, "au prochain" because no one can be rounded, defined, accomplished, or saved without the Other. From most African folk tales to any travelogue or *bildungsroman*[160], the literary canon is filled with texts that offer examples of metamorphosis through the exploration of new lands and the encounter of new people, thus nurturing a welcoming attitude of the reader.

Levinas provides the reader with a set of inter/intra-personal resources for embracing the other. Levinas teaches a lesson of acceptance of the mystery of any encounter. He suggests one should not wear confining masks, but rather leave his/her comfort zone, and explore an unknown area leading to the other. For Levinas, the third element in the encounter of the self with the other is God, and once His presence is acknowledged, the behavior of both participants in the encounter transforms. They become open, peaceful, receiving, forgiving and generous, but if and only if they attest the third presence as an essential part of their dialogue.

2.1.2 Gadamer's[161] 3rd element: horizon (tradition, culture, prejudice, education) dialogue= the self+ the other+ horizon

For Gadamer, any encounter is mediated by tradition, since "the element of effective history affects all understanding of tradition" (xxx). In *Truth and Method* (2004), he defines dialogue as play, a "to and fro movement"[162] between two participants who openly interact with each other. One enters a dialogue with a certain level of education, cultural heritage, indoctrination, prejudice and preconceived expectations about the interlocutor. Ignoring this third essential indirect participant in the dialogue results in miscommunication and conflict. For

[160] The story of the *Little Prince* would be a good example of a text that invites the reader to leave his/her comfort zone and explore new dimensions of the self.
[161] Hans-Georg Gadamer was professor at Leipzig University. See Hans-Georg-Gadamer. "Education is Self-Education". in *Journal of Philosophy of Education*. (vol. 35. No 4. 2001) Address presented at the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Gymnasium, Eppelheim, on 19 May 1999.
[162] Gadamer, cited in Caroline M. Shields. Mark M. Edwards. *Dialogue is not just Talk*: A New Ground in Educational Leadership. (University of Michigan. P. Lang. 2008). p. 15.

Gadamer, the solution lies in the concept of horizon[163]. He highlights the indispensable act of acknowledging that one's horizon might be different from the interlocutor's, "The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point" (301). The interaction or fusion of horizons leads to knowledge, and "all reading involves application so that a person reading a text is himself part of the meaning he apprehends" (335). The horizon is precisely the third element of the dialogue. If the two participants enter a dialogue with enough humility and openness as to accept their personal prejudices, together with the other's viewpoints, they might reach a common ground and build a harmonious conversation: "In the process of understanding, a real fusion of horizons occurs" (306).

2.1.3 Certeau[164]'s 3rd element: history, heterology, place, literature

(1) dialogue= self+ other+ history

Certeau adopts several interpretative operations in order to describe the connection between the self and the other. In *L'Ecriture de l'Histoire* (1975), he describes four types of relationship, "relation d'exclusion, fascination, domination et communication avec l'autre" (59). His multilayered perspective about the encounter between two individuals is submitted to the mentality of power. Exclusion, fascination, and domination are traits of inequitable encounters because one of the individuals will manifest superiority over the other, through rejection or domination. Fascination also results in imbalance because the one projecting it upon the other underestimates his/her own contribution to the communion. It is only communication that allows a proper dialogue to happen because both individuals will have equal chances to manifest their

[163] Gadamer manages to explain the effect of literature upon readers, by emphasizing that there is always a new frame of mind being created through the encounter with the text: "However thoroughly one may adopt a foreign frame of mind, one still does not forget one's worldview and language-view. Rather, the other world we encounter is not only foreign but is also related to us. It has not only its own truth in itself but also its own truth for us" (439)
[164] Michel de Certeau taught at universities in Paris, San Diego and Geneva. Baptiste Jacomino, "Le Pédagogue et la Mort: Penser l'Education avec Michel de Certeau". in *Le Philosophoire*. (No 45. 2016). pp. 105-119.

own individualities, thus evolving through the encounter. Taking a communicative standpoint vis-à-vis Certeau's approach to history, one can observe his welcoming tendencies.

He considers syncretism as one of the major characteristics of historical discourse, resulting in the constitution of the other (his-story). Certeau's dialogue happens among today's historian, reader; the other (as the historical figure); and history itself (the narration that lays the ground for polemical interpretations and unravels historical truth). The truth of history or the true self of the other (portrayed in historical discourse) would be in-between all the possible narratives written about it, "The truth of history is always in-between"[165]. History is never sure because it combines ideas about the past with "altered documents", so as to offer the reader all responsibility and freedom of interpretation.

Certeau amplifies his analysis when discussing demonological literature[166]. The falsehood of interpretation is the only path in the case of the possessed speech, in *La Possession de Loudun* (1970). The multiple names of Jeanne des Anges compromise the reliability of her demonized discourse and give free play to interpretations. The game of meanings and alterations shows that the I (of Jeanne des Anges) is another (Asmodeus, Zabulon, Isacaaron, Astaroth, Gresil, Amand, Leviatom, Behemoth), *Je est un Autre*[167]. After bewildering the reader with the language of illusion of the possessed, and with proofs of unreliability of the historical discourse,

[165] "La vérité de l'histoire est dans ce 'entre-deux'" (51).
[166] Certeau questions historical discourse and traditional hermeneutics and shows their potential of falsehood in fostering identities. "Through this enunciation traditional hermeneutics is inverted. It presupposed an unchanging locus and a stable interlocutor, God, who spoke a language whose secrets were still unknown and had to be deciphered…texts of possession bear the mark of this ravishing of the subject" (264). For this quote, I used the English edition of Michel Certeau's: *The Writing of History*. Tom Conley (trans.). (New York: Columbia University Press. 1988). The previous quotations are from the French edition of the same book, published in 1975.
[167] Certeau uses Rimbaud's well-known formula: *Je est un autre* (I am someone else). In a letter to his friend and former teacher Georges Izambard (Charleville, 1871), Rimbaud wrote: "I'm working to turn myself into a seer: … It has to do with making your way toward the unknown by a derangement of all the senses" and "It's wrong to say I think: one should say I am thought" and "I is someone else". (in *Rimbaud, J. N. Arthur. Complete Works, Selected Letters*. A Bilingual Edition. Wallace Fowlie (ed.). (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. [1966] 2005)

Certeau writes the *Practice of Everyday Life* (1988) and *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other* (2000) in order to claim on one hand, the function of stories and on the other hand to position himself in relation to the other.

(2) dialogue= self+ other+ heterology[168], institution

Certeau defines heterology as a science of the other or any discipline in which one defines himself/herself in relation to otherness. He describes the other as an institution. "The institution is the other… institutional intimacy is the only thing that makes it possible to qualify for engaging publicly in the discourse of and on the Other" (46). The other can only be known through the institution because the institution raises awareness of the other. Certeau's suggestion for the reader is to rebuild one's identity within this paradigm and "become the institution" (45). One can give various connotations to the word institution, possibly understood as language, or Logos, because it is a relevant connector between the self and the other. Another possible translation of the same concept is divinity, God, or the ultimate figure[169].

(3) dialogue= self+ other+ place

Certeau's fascination with modern psychoanalysis and his rejection of any body of doctrines lead him to a relative detachment from the divine sense of the Other in the last part of his life. In *The Practice of Everyday Life,* Certeau manifests his desire for a perpetual mutation. "To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper"[170] (106). He describes the connection with the other in spatial, geographical terms. "To practice space is thus to repeat the joyful and silent experience of childhood; it is, in a place, to

[168] I am using the term "heterology" not in its medical understanding, as lack of correspondence between bodily parts, but as Certeau pictures it. He refers to it as "science of the other".
[169] If by institution, one understands God's Word, the ethical demands entailed in any encounter are unavoidable because of the implicit doctrinal teaching: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31).
[170] Certeau calls "proper" a spatial or institutional localization, a victory of space over time (xix).

be other and to move toward the other" (110). Once this encounter happens, "in a place", "habitability makes room for a void [and] authorizes free play" (106). Certeau chooses not to settle, but he engages in a perpetual move toward new inviting targets, in the name of the "pleasure of seeing the whole" (92). He continues his fascination with dynamism by transforming walking into a space of enunciation.

(4) dialogue= self+ other+ literature

Playing with the etymology of the word *metaphorai*=vehicle, Certeau looks at stories and books as means of mass transportation. He uses one of Pierre Janet's ideas stating that "narration creates humanity" (115), in order to predicate the role of stories in actualizing (relational) potentialities of readers. Stories are spatial practices that encourage the encounter of the reader with the Other[171] through staging new scenarios and through "producing geographies of action" (116). When emerged in the liminal space of a story, the reader finds his way toward a specific place, through interpretation, or translation of meanings, by "creating a theater of action" (123). Reading a story means to set in a place and establish a foundation through "transforming the void into a plenitude" (127). Stories create "a field that authorizes dangerous and contingent social actions" (125). Certeau offers an almost material vision of any encounter while effacing any type of boundaries.

He encourages openness and receptivity for a dynamic perpetual search for a non-place, a *no man's land*[172] where the encounter with the Other is possible. Any writer is an architect who builds this great edifice of popular understanding that the reader can access and use in order to

[171] The Other in this context refers to (1) the writer-during the reading process, in fictional encounters, (2) another individual- in real life encounters.

[172] "A middle place, composed of interactions and inter-views, the frontier is a sort of void, a narrative sym-bol of exchanges and encounters… Passing by, an architect suddenly appropriates this 'in-between space' and builds a great edifice on it, by the transformation of the void into a plenitude" (127) "The credibility of a discourse… produces practitioners. To make people believe is to make them act" (148).

comprehend the self and the other. It is only through openness, respect and peaceful approach that one can reach effectiveness in the encounter with others. Stories provide readers with the practice of encounters thus preparing them for establishing stable foundations of thought out of the countless shifting possibilities. The thirst for the encounter with the Other is unquestionable in Certeau's philosophy, and his nomadic spirit contaminates and inspires the reader to continue his/her voyage toward future horizons[173] of thought and action.

2.1.4 Ricoeur's 3rd element: (goodness, reciprocity), (love, justice), (narrative, hospitality), (God, forgiveness, language)[174]

Ricoeur's philosophy is centered on the other. He builds his philosophical anthropology on the idea of the 'capable human being' who is not fully master of himself but reaches self-knowledge through the understanding of the world and the other. In the series of Gifford Lectures, published in *Oneself as Another* (1992), Ricoeur emphasizes the centrality of the other in the process of self-discovery, through the ideal of reciprocity, as well as the ethical intention of "aiming at a good life lived with and for others in just institutions" (172). He proposes the hermeneutics of selfhood, offering identity a more extended conceptualization.

(1) dialogue= self (idem identity+ ipse identity) + the other

Ricoeur considers that hermeneutics of the self leads to an "attestation of truth" (22) through the reconceptualization of identity. He asks the crucial question: "Who am I?" (7), that becomes a precondition for the analysis of the self. He offers a twofold answer, conceptualizing

[173] Michel Tournier's *Journal Extime* (2002) is the good example of a text that encompasses such characteristics. Built as a journal, but paradoxically depicting outside events, Tournier's confession seems to be a vehicle that leads the reader toward new encounters. The writer offers a fragmentary description of a couple of days at Choisel and describes encounters with people and nature that leave a deep impression upon him. At the end of the day, the confessor pretends to be talking about the outside, but implicitly, he narrates his inner voyages of self-discovery, and implicitly, stimulates readers' imagination and confirms the guiding role of literary texts.

[174] Paul Ricoeur taught at the University of Strasbourg, Sorbonne, Nanterre, University of Louvin, Belgium, and also at the University of Chicago.

identity as sameness (idem identity[175], uninterrupted continuity, numerical identity) and selfhood (ipse –identity[176], a qualitative identity that gives the capacity for agency). It is precisely the ipse-identity that offers an active grasp of the self as a concrete subject. Through the acknowledging of the ipse-identity, the 'I' attests himself/herself by acting, by choosing, by using the inherent freedom in order to receive the other.

Taking actions for granted might inhibit the ipse- part of identity, and transform the self into a passive object[177]. The self needs to acknowledge his/her presence, and freedom, so as to eventually be able to relate to the other. The self as an agent has the capacity to initiate novel actions and to actively engage the other. The understanding of this multi-layered identity creates awareness of how much more one can do, independently of institutions, social expectations or cultural restrictions. The ipse-identity stabilizes the self and allows it to acquire gratuitous hospitality. Deliberate actions give confirmations of one's freedom because it is only by doing or by acting that the self can properly relate to the other.

(2) dialogue= self+ other+ goodness, reciprocity

In *Amour et Justice* (2008), a collection of three essays from the same series of lectures, Ricoeur establishes goodness[178] as a *sine qua non* of any encounter. In order to better forward his advice and persuade[179] the reader in acknowledging the significance of goodness as a third

[175] Term associated with a particular modality of "permanence in time" or uninterrupted continuity in the development of an individual (117).
[176] Ipse-identity implies the freedom of the individual. Ipse-identity is "constancy of the self", manifested in keeping one's word, and based on ethical considerations (124). Ipse-identity entitles the self with the freedom to act and become the responsible subject of his/her actions. Ipse-identity is the one opening up to difference and the one embracing the other.
[177] What Ricoeur asks for is similar to Buber's call of transforming the other perceived as object, or *it* into a subject, *Thou*, but in Ricoeur's case, the transformation requires a change of the self, not of the perception of the other. See Martin Buber. *I and Thou*. (Connecticut: Martino Publishing. 2010)
[178] He does not advance this ideal as just one of the three Greek classical values encompassed in the term *arete*, but rather as an unconditional potentiality of giving oneself to the other, without expecting anything in return. He transforms the golden rule of giving: "I give so that you will give", into "Give because it has been given to you!"
[179] Ricoeur's aim is to relink the text to action, "relier le texte à l'action" and implicitly to offer the reader a better understanding of his/her potentialities for reaching goodness (16).

element of an encounter between two individuals, Ricoeur offers direct suggestions: "Love your neighbors, do good and give[180] without expecting anything in return"[181], hoping his reader, might apply the recommendation in his/her own encounter with another. For Ricoeur, giving represents a generous act which does not require any gratitude. He describes the economy of the gift, *économie du don*[182], as an essential and inherent condition in approaching the other. His text allows the reader to observe new connections between love and justice.

(3) dialogue= self+ other+ love, justice

Ricoeur's text advances social awareness. He portrays the path of love and justice as mediators or third elements in any dialogue. He defines justice as the "necessary medium for love" (41). In terms of love, he underlines people's dependency on each other and the inner call for loving one's neighbor. In relation to a distant other, the most appropriate avenue an individual could take is justice that asks for respect and the mediation of institutions. Justice aims at rendering each person what he/she deserves, "rendre à chacun son dû" (31). Beyond all institutions, there is love with its transformative possibilities, as an ultimate "normative model" (16). Love represents a positive act through the exaltation of moral values and unconditional tendencies of giving. Through the parallel between love and justice, Ricoeur challenges the reader to sign a moral contract for any encounter that should be governed love and mutual indebtedness. The practice of giving activates energies that surpass the specific context of the gift. It is a release of solidarity for the other, based on the feeling of dependence, "Give because it has been given to you" (36).

[180] Levinas' philosophy aiming at generosity sparks in Ricoeur's text as well.
[181] My translation for: "Aimez vos enemies, faites du bien et prêtez sans rien attendre en retour" (36).
[182] Tolstoy's last novel, *Resurrection* ([1899] 1963) is a text about love and justice depicting Dmitri Neklyodov who seeks redemption for his sin. In an attempt to recondition the soul of the main character, Tolstoy describes Dmitri's moral struggle and his effort to be a good person. I will thoroughly describe Tolstoy's novel in the fourth chapter, by emphasizing the ability of the narrator in 'infecting' readers with goodness, and truth.

(4) dialogue= self+ other+ narrative, hospitality

In *Oneself as Another* (1992), Ricoeur confirms the transformational role of literature in challenging the self to become answering-self, "soi-répondant", "Stories imply re-figuration which is the effect of discovery and transformation exercised by a discourse on the listener or the reader in the process of reception of the text" (49). Literature offers alternatives of thought, transformational models[183] in order to allow the "free play of mind"[184] of the reader. Through the revival of *Weltliteratur* in the current pedagogies, as a provider of what Spăriosu calls "responsive understanding"[185], one could embrace Ricoeur's hospitable approach[186].

(5) dialogue= self+ other+ God, forgiveness, truth, consciousness

[183] In terms of narrative identity, Ricoeur confirms its constructive and transformational potential. "Narrative is part of life before being exited from life in writing: it returns to life along the multiple paths of appropriation" (163). In the extreme situation of lack of selfhood, as in the case of Musil's *Man Without Qualities* (1965), Ricoeur notices that the response to his initial question aiming at the identity foundation, "Who am I?", is empty. However, he proposes a solution and states that the character can "assert himself" as "subject of imputation" (167) and say: "Here I am! I can act, you can rely on me!" (168) Trust is in the power to say, to do. Thus, to recognize oneself as a character in a narrative is an important step for acknowledging one's freedom. Stories unite, bring together through the "social imaginary" that can be either ideological (confirmation of the past) or utopian (openness toward the future) (Duffy 73). Ricoeur shows the importance of metaphorical discourses and stories in interpreting reality and in shaping the perception of the reader about the other, thus positively influencing his/her encounter with the other.

[184]"The free play of mind" on all subjects, together with the study of 'the best that is known and thought in the world' would be the solutions that Matthew Arnold found for the "rawness and provinciality of his countrymen." See Matthew Arnold. *Culture and Anarchy*. J. Dover Wilson. (ed.). (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1932) p. xviii.

[185] See Mihai Spăriosu. *The Wreath of Wild Olive Play: Liminality and the Study of Literature*. (New York: State University of New York Press. 1997). p. 302.

[186] By problematizing the answering self, Ricoeur manages to demonstrate that the self better understands itself through one's contemplation in the mirror offered by a book. For instance, Ricoeur uses the Latin words *Liber and speculum* (53), where *Liber* means book, but it also relates to the etymology of the Romanian, French, Italian word *liber, libre, libero*, which means free. Books can thus be looked at as paths toward freedom. *Speculum* is the Latin word for mirror, portraying the reflection that a book can offer a reader or the mirroring that the reader can feel through the reading process. The12th-century poem of Alan of Lille is relevant in this regard. "Every creature of the world/ Is like a book and a picture/ To us, and a mirror". "Omnis mundi creatura/ Quasi liber et picture/ Nobis est et speculum." Allan of Lille evokes the belief that every part of creation has an essential role in God's design and humans can get closer to truth by reading the signs of nature. Having an open attitude toward others leads one to spiritual enlightenment. The Middle Ages belief can be easily applied to today's reality as well. See Jacques-Paul Migne. *Patrologia Latina*. 210:579 (Paris. 1878)

Ricoeur analyzes the self in the mirror of the Scriptures[187] and argues that the self is instructed by the religious tradition, on the basis of Jesus' model of love and forgiveness[188]. However, despite this illustrative example, the self can choose to receive and internalize the information he/she is exposed to. The answering self is the self in relation (with another) and not a self-sufficient self. The relation with the other of the text implies acceptance and contribution, thus the process of reading becomes an illumination, a translation, defined as a "teaching relationship constitutive of the relationship between master and disciple" (61).

Ricoeur considers that "inner truth is not taught by words, not learned from the outside. It is known by contemplation" (68). He defines conscience as the most intimate fulfilling expression of the answering-self[189]. It is the man inside who discovers the inherent truth because no one learns from the outside. Once one gains the awareness of the meaning of ipse-identity, Ricoeur's odyssey from self to the other will provide mutual unconditional acceptance, since the self is "oneself as much as being other" (3).

(6) dialogue= self+ other+ language

[187] Ricoeur utilizes the gospel parables in order to offer the reader a moral model. He looks at the "biblical *poesis* as a stimulus for new ways of being and acting" See Maria Duffy. *Paul Ricoeur's Pedagogy of Pardon: A Narrative Theory of Memory and Forgetting*. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group. 2012). p. 74.

[188] Maria Duffy explains Ricoeur's ethical quest: "the self seeks that which is good for me and leads to a good life… in this way the good for me enlarges into the good for us" (90). She underlines Ricoeur's philosophy of hope and his understanding of the relevance of stories and literature as reconciliatory platforms that reunite groups of different cultures through the "translation of each other's histories and collective experiences… both parties making an imaginative leap into the world of the other" (75). Ricoeur's ethic stimulus goes in several directions and deserves one's attention because it aims at creating "a genuinely peaceful society [that]… would enter the light of true fraternity" (69).

[189] "The experiential evidence is this new figure in which attestation appears, when the certainty of being the author of one's own discourse and of one's own acts becomes the conviction of judging well and acting well" (180). Attestation becomes a central word in Ricoeur's hermeneutics of the self because it gives the self the appropriation of his/her most hidden freedoms. "The meaning of attestation is now sealed: "calling forth and summoning us to Being-guilty [being in debt]"" (350). This moral duty is at the core of any encounter. Once incorporated into the understanding of what the self is, giving, hospitality, responsibility, and love for the other will spring from the inside. There will be no need for any institutions to tell one how to relate to his/her neighbor. Giving will rather be a gratuitous act of pure generosity and love. "The autonomy of the self will… be tightly bound up with solicitude for one's neighbor and with justice for each individual" (18).

If the third dimension of the encounter is **God/Logos**, there are also two directions for decoding him. God can be unraveled as Jesus, the Son of God, and the moral model in the parables that provides wisdom and forgiveness for believers. God can be looked at as the Word/Logos[190], the institution of language, or the linguistic connector without whom dialogue would not be possible. The use of certain greeting words in different cultures shows that people recognize the presence of the ipse-identity or the divine figure within. For instance, the Hindi greeting *Namaste* means "I bow to the God within you" or "God in me sees God in you". The word *Namaste* confirms the sense of communion and belonging. In the Muslim communities, there is the greeting *Aleiconsalam/ salamaleicon* that means: "Peace be upon you!" The word peace represents God who transpires in the goodbye formulation *Khuda hafiz* which means "(My) God keep you safe!" In Russian, the word *SpasiBo* originates from *Spasi Bog*, literally meaning "God Save (you)", it is used to express gratitude. The Latin word *Deus*, is the term that labels goodbye greetings in all romance languages: *Adio*-Italian, *Adios*-Spanish, *Adieu*-French, *Adio*- Romanian, *Adeus*-Portuguese. It literally means "To God," or "We will meet in God". South Africans use the word *Ubuntu* that designates "humanity toward others/ humanness" and confirms again this interpersonal bound.

Aldous Huxley, in his *Perennial Philosophy* ([1945] 2009), comes close to both Ricoeur's perspective and all these linguistic agreements, in stating that: "Man's final end, the purpose of his existence, is to love, know and be united with the immanent and transcendent Godhead. And this identification of self with spiritual non-self can be achieved only by 'dying to' selfness and living to spirit" (38). He considers Spirit as the Ground of all being or the third

[190] Reference to John the Evangelist 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God". I will use the term *Word* as *Logos* (Rationality/word) not as the restrictive *Verbum* (Latina vulgata), which Benjamin and the other Neo-Marxists preferred.

element in the encounter of the self with the other. Huxley quotes Berulle and parallels Ricoeur's interpretation of the ipse-identity: "What is man? An angel, a void, a world, a nothing surrounded by God, indigent of God, capable of God, Filled with God, if it so desires" (39). The self is free to either receive the "unitive knowledge of God", by acknowledging his/her ipse-identity, thus receiving the other, or deny that presence, and replace it with empty words, space, or any other material objects one might think of. The encounter of the self with the other is not only a dual experience but rather a Trinitarian unity. Ricoeur's proposal of the dual self (encompassing the two types of identities) is the only path toward properly receiving the other. The third element is the in-betweenness, the common platform of thought, the ultimate figure, God, language, or any other liminal space that can allow the unfolding of potentialities of the self in community.

2.1.5 Acknowledgment of the triadic dialogue

The important lesson to learn from these philosophers and interpreters of the mystery of relation of the self with the other is that there is unmistakably a third element that leaves its trace in the encounter. Obviously, any encounter or dialogue necessitates the awareness of a third presence that can stimulate, bring together, uphold and unify any interaction. Levinas describes it as the *entre-les-deux*, the in-betweenness, or the trace of God who reminds both the self and the other that they are humans, neighbors, brothers, and that by acknowledging the common ground between them they have better chances to forgive, respect and receive each other into the transformative mystery of their togetherness. Certeau highlights the essential role of history in the communion of the self with the other. His Rimbaudian formula *Je est un autre* reaches a level of commitment and superposition of the self with the other. The transformation of the liminal space into a place represents Certeau's recognition of the need for this third dimension of the

dialogue. He states the importance of narrative texts in shaping collective mentalities and mediating encounters. According to Duffy, for Ricoeur, the "genuine societal relationship" that he aims at also needs the "mediation by a third person" (81). The third member of the relationship can be goodness, reciprocity, love, justice, narrative texts and God as a model of forgiveness and love. When describing the role of communities and of institutions in reconciling the self with the other, Ricoeur is careful enough as to underline the freedom the self has in identifying his/her own contribution, through acknowledging his/her ipse-identity. Ricoeur's interpretation confirms that the self is not a passive receiver of social, dogmatic commands, but an active contributor to a relationship that aims at a fraternity.

Either one looks at the other as being a suspicious monster who is an island farther, as in Columbus' case, or considers the encounter a projection of his own self on the other. In both cases, there is the need and desire to properly see, thoroughly experience, and make the autopsy of a certain situation, through the contact/union with the other. One can strengthen one's acceptance of the other through literature, as a liminal space that offers a limitless number of encounters. Literature increases awareness through unraveling the other as a potential rather than a limitation, as a source of/for love rather than an outsider. Levinas perceives literary texts as actions or movements of the self toward the other. Gadamer acknowledges the role of culture, education, and implicitly literature, in shaping the two main actors of an encounter. Certeau shows the relevant foundation that imaginative literature establishes through the transformation of the void into a plenitude of meanings and peaceful scenarios. Ricoeur discusses the narrative identity and its role in remodeling the reader's individuality.

Eventually, the encounter of the self with the other is central to any hermeneutical endeavor. The trinitarian understanding of the dialogue between two individuals represents the

most needed key in unraveling its mystery. Literature provides readers with such a key because of its peaceful staging of life and because of its generous exhibition of alternatives of thought in relation to the self and the other. It is the reader's free choice to either deny its reconciliatory potential or use the key for opening up new doors of perception, thus reaching the other. Receiving the key grants the self and the other the greatest chances for peacefully engaging in a fruitful dialogue. Through the connection with the other, one reaches self-understanding as well.

The other, the mysterious outsider who is the provider of joy or sorrow, has a central role in the fictional literary world. In a continuous search for meaning, the self engages the other hoping for understanding and collaboration. Many times, the interaction between the two results in conflict and rejection. The liminal space literature invites the reader into provides the self with the appropriate mechanisms for a peaceful encounter. Emerged into a new world with limitless opportunities and alternatives, the self of the reader practices the encounter with the other (of the writer).

Once the reading contract is signed, and the reader engages in an encounter with the fictional other, the self of the reader starts a voyage of understanding and a search for truth. The reader receives examples of good practice or, on the contrary, examples of wrongdoing on the part of the characters. The effect of model or anti-model behaviors instills flexibility in the reader. He/she learns what one should or should not do, given certain consequences. The reader also meets the fictional other and engages with him/her, unconditionally accepting their exoticism. Implicitly, the tolerance, the openness and the receptivity of the reader are strengthened. When facing similar encounters in real life situations, readers will already master coping techniques, thus the encounter with the other will reach its highest potential. Ultimately, literature has a mediating role because it offers sufficient tools and values, for any encounter to

be successful. Engaging in a dialogue is a necessary, responsible act that involves self-awareness and receptivity.

There are numerous pedagogues who portray the positive outcomes of literature upon guiding readers' encounters. 19th-century European pedagogues manifest their trust in the formative role of literature. The second part of this chapter describes the pedagogical and philosophical principles of educators who use literature as a means of discovering the world, the other and the self. The three moral pillars that our argumentation is based on will echo throughout the following pages, as moral development (goodness), aesthetic freedom/ play (beauty) (regarded as a deliberate activity) and self-discovery through reading (truth).

2.2 Literature as 'self-understanding' (Paideia)[191]

A teacher must be a stranger to love of power, untouched by vainglory, far from pride, not deluded by flattery, not blinded by gifts, not enslaved to the belly, not held in thrall by anger, but longsuffering, forbearing, and above all humble. He should be discerning and patient, exercising the care of a guardian and loving the souls of his pupils[192] **(S. Ramfos)**

Educational systems around the world are in continuous reform. Even if there are local differences among them, it is undeniable that they share common values that lay the foundation of the upbringing process of each individual. This section aims at portraying some of the prevailing values that pedagogues in America and Europe have been focusing on, together with the ones needed today. The following examples will militate for a renewal in the conceptualization of the importance of literature, showing the urgency for adopting an

[191] For a generous history of Paideia, see Nathan D. Carr. *Classical and Christian Paideia according to Saint Chrysostom, Saint Basil and Saint Augustine.* (University of Central Oklahoma. 2003). A part of this subchapter is included in an article published in an academic journal. See Corina-Mihaela Beleaua. "Transatlantic Pedagogical Dialogue. Philosophies of Education". in *East-West Cultural Passage*. (July 2017. Vol. 17. Issue 1). pp. 7-29.
[192] Stelios Ramfos is a contemporary Greek thinker whose writings echo Plato's philosophy and focus on the Greek self. See Stelios Ramfos *Like a Pelican in the Wilderness.* (Brookline: Holy Cross Orthodox Press. 2000). p. 210.

educational system based on "cultivating humanity" through books, and "global intelligence" through openness.

By using the expression "cultivating humanity", I echo Martha Nussbaum's incentive, but I also lay the ground for the triadic approach. One can reach completeness or unity of the self within the symbolic circular dimension, if and only if one gets to the understanding of his/her own self. One can respect the other if one acknowledges the other's role in his/her becoming. Educators from both sides of the Atlantic marked the valuable contribution of literary texts in the becoming of the free self.

I begin by presenting philosophies of the main German educators of the 18th- 19th-century, by focusing on the three main targets they unanimously discuss **moral development**, **aesthetic freedom/ play** (regarded as a deliberate activity), and **self-discovery through reading**. The second part will build a frame of some of the English and North American philosophies of education of the 19th-century. I will emphasize the German endowment, together with new institutional ideals, such as the ideal of unity found in Newman's, Ruskin's, Arnold's and Dewey's reforms. Lastly, I intend to highlight the contemporary educational tendencies focusing on the return to the individualistic ideal, through play and self-discovery, through aestheticism and freethinking.

2.2.1 German philosophy of education for an autonomous individual

The 18th and 19th-century German pedagogues try to instill in children a set of values aiming at harmony and self-fulfillment. Their major aims are moral development (1), aesthetic freedom (2), and self-discovery (3). In contrast with these ideals, there are also several divisive perspectives, regarding, for instance, the process of **reading** and its moral role. On the one hand, there are pedagogues (such as Rousseau) who reject the Renaissance book knowledge because of

the reproductive methods in copying or repeating words without understanding them. On the other hand, there are those who embrace reading and provide students with a different approach, combining texts with real practice, and abstract experiences with concrete ones. Fichte, Pestalozzi, and Fröbel follow Rousseau's shift from books to nature, from theory to practice and decentralize the role of books, by connecting them to material practices.

The key concept in the German system of education is *Bildung*. A term associated with *Erziehung* (education), it represents the process of personality formation, as a response to education and it implies knowledge, value orientation and the responsibility for the human community[193]. The word *Bildung* can easily refer to the 13th-century German mystics' understanding, as the image of Jesus[194]. In the 18th and 19th-century, Goethe, Schiller (aesthetic *Bildung*), and Humboldt approach it differently. As minister of education, Humboldt designs a new theory of *Bildung*. Danner defines Humboldt's theory as "harmonic growth and development of all inner forces and potentials of the human being" (8). The inner growth is based on freedom, energy (*Kraft*), love, and friendship.

(1) Moral Development

The beginning of the 19th-century offers the context for the establishment of an educational system based on national values. In such a context, a teaching system that provides students with social values is a necessity. In his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1922), Johann Gottlieb Fichte promotes the role of the state in attaining **moral progress**,

> The aim of the State is positive law, internal peace, and a condition of affairs in which everyone may by diligence earn his daily bread and satisfy the needs of his material

[193] See Helmut Danner. "'Bildung' A Basic Term of German Education". in *Educational Sciences*. Cairo. (9/ 1994)
[194] According to Dr. Helmut Danner, mystics suggested people should internalize the image of Jesus, so as to get closer to God. This process was called Bild-ung (Bild= picture/ image).

> existence…All this is only a means, a condition and a framework for what love of fatherland really wants, viz., that the eternal and the divine may blossom in the world and never cease to become more pure, perfect, and excellent. That is why this love of fatherland must itself govern the State and be its supreme, final, and absolute authority (138).

He considers that the role of the community (Fatherland) is crucial in the development of future generations and the state is indispensable in the "regeneration of the whole human race" (187). If in centuries before, theology offered the path "for salvation in heaven", the beginning of the 19th century gives education this redemptive role, but "for life on earth" thus increasing the power of the state (190). In his third Address, written in 1808, Fichte underlines that "education is the art of training the pupil to pure morality" (38). The new system of German national education would be the remedy for the mistakes of the old system. Fichte's idea of education aims at "producing a stable, settled and steadfast character" (20).

In his work *On Education* ([1803] 1899), Kant sets forth his commitment to future world ethics by nurture, discipline (*Zucht*), culture (instruction), discretion (faculty of using one's abilities properly), and moral training. He considers that the establishment of a viable system of education is a "glorious ideal" (8), which leads to "cultivation of the mind that aims at nature, [while] moral training at freedom" (67). He wants to instruct children "in the order and beauty of the works of Nature" (110). Moral training should be based upon maxims, not discipline (83) because morality is a "matter of character" (96). The good character determines children to be dutiful toward themselves, toward others and to even show benevolence in helping others. Thus, the purpose of education would be to encourage the development of attributes for good, so as for the child to "better himself" (33). Through the spirit of duty and obedience, one can reach "moral

rectitude or truthfulness" (90). Fichte and Kant provide the 19th-century philosophy of education with the incentive for the moral training of students. A century later, their ideal becomes a source of inspiration for English pedagogues, and one can unmistakably say that moral training is or should be at the core of any educational training even more so today.

(2) Aesthetic Freedom (beauty)

Truthfulness can be attained through love, beauty, play and freedom that transform aesthetics into an imperative allowing it to be called the *Germanic science*. Kant, Schiller, and Goethe highlight its inherent value. **Love** is a central aspect of Kant's reform and is understood as love for fatherland and love of knowledge, as a prerequisite for learning. Fichte considers love manifests itself when "the pupil learns willingly and with pleasure… purely for the sake of learning" (25). Love has an essential place in Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's philosophy as well. In his case, "love of mankind must be preceded by a more primitive and intimate love- that of the mother" (239).

As Fichte himself acknowledges, for Pestalozzi, the intensity of this personal experience is different and it targets the community and not the state. "The pupil's faculty of knowledge must never be stimulated without love… because man can will only what he loves" (171). Love is the "specific quality of the moral will, but… no one can ever know whether obedience results from the love of order or fear of punishment" (31). The transformation of knowledge acquisition into a pleasing experience is hard to reach since its main condition is pupil's freedom. Fichte states the importance of this process and he makes sure to subordinate the personal self to the law and to the community. In contrast with Pestalozzi who encourages homeschooling, Fichte's suggestion is to separate children from their parents because "consciousness could be fostered only in the community", the right place for acquiring clear knowledge (33).

Pestalozzi wants to simplify the mechanism of teaching and learning because he is unsatisfied with the educational system of his time. He tries to make knowledge popular, because it is "not work, but play" (38). Both he and Fröbel believe in the method of "self-activity" because "instruction must be connected with a certain need and want of the pupil", who has to listen to his instincts and inclinations toward certain activities, such as drawing (Hayward 53). Pestalozzi's "faith in the possibility of improving the human race" (61) has in view the process of intensely raising the capacity of the mind, through spontaneous effort, "analogy and subjective observation" (236).

Pestalozzi establishes an institution for training teachers and stresses the importance of methodology in the educational process. Even if his primary target is the education of the heart, he wants to reach equilibrium in the formation of the student. Thus, his head-hand-heart method aims at the harmonious development of three fundamental powers: intellectual, physical, and moral. He wants to free the spirit from the yoke of tradition and allow adequate development of the inner forces. Pestalozzi tries to create a system that grants access to knowledge and care for poor children. His father died when he was 6 and his mother raised him alone. Pestalozzi knows from experience the struggles of orphans. In his book *How Gertrude Teaches her Children* (1894), he makes an attempt to teach mothers how to educate their own children at home. His method consists of faith in the combination of working and learning, together with the joy of the heart provided by the free activity of playing. Kant, who also values the role of free activities in education, considers that "by games, a child learns endurance, maintains his natural cheerfulness and gains in candor" (62).

Most probably one of the greatest philosophers who emphasize both the importance of **play** and **beauty** is Kant's friend, the poet Friedrich Schiller. In his letters *On the Aesthetic*

Education on Man ([1794] 1954), he argues in favor of "the aesthetic creative impulse [that] cannot develop until the play impulse is in easy and habitual action" (8). He considers art the "awakener of human culture, through the liberation of man from desire" (11). Furthermore, he believes that "[m]an must pass through the aesthetic condition, from the merely physical, in order to reach the rational or moral" (12). His aesthetic play is an ideal of humanity. He infers that art should be at the core of the teaching experience because of its potential in creating alternatives of thought, by raising individuals to higher moral standards,

> The aim of imaginative education… is to give the individual a concrete sensuous awareness of the harmony and rhythm which enters into the constitution of all living bodies and plants, which is the basis of all works of art, to the end that the child, in its life and activities, shall partake of the same organic grace and beauty… By means of such education, we instill into the child that instinct of relationship which enables it to distinguish the beautiful from the ugly, the good from the evil… the noble person from the ignoble (18).

(3) Self-Discovery through reading (truth)

Kant's ideas about the role of novel reading are under the negative spell of his age. He considers that reading prevents the mind from properly engaging in useful activities. His interest is rather in the exposure to real experiences that have a higher potential to teach than texts might. "Novel reading is the worst thing for children since they can make no further use of it and it merely affords them entertainment for the moment… Novel reading weakens the memory… because there is no exercise of thought… The best way to understand is to do" (73, 80).

In response, Fichte criticizes the Renaissance "bookishness" of schools and the "overestimation of reading and writing… the settling up of these as almost the aim and climax

of popular education" (161). Pestalozzi also criticizes the "mania for words and books [that] has pervaded the whole system of popular education… an empty chattering, fatal alike to real faith and real knowledge, an instruction of more words and outward show, unsubstantial as a dream" (233).

Pestalozzi tries to apply the ideas of his mentor, the French writer and pedagogue, Jean Jacques Rousseau. In his book, *Emile, or On Education* ([1762] 2009), Rousseau develops his philosophy of naturalism, arguing that children should learn by experience, free choice, and contact with nature, rather than through reading books. In his industrial school at Neuhof, Pestalozzi supports the same ideals, "All is artificial. We must return to nature. Man is bad by institutions, not by nature" (xiv).

In contrast with Fichte who considers that the state can offer children an ideal system for their development so as to dissociate the good from the bad, Pestalozzi prioritizes the "observing powers" (xl) of the individual and his potential for reflection and for doing good. His ***Anschauung***, or the power of **seeing**, aims at "directing the senses to outward objects [including sounds], and exciting consciousness of the impressions produced on them by these objects" (xxxi) Similarly to Ruskin, Pestalozzi "trusts the power of the eyes, and combines seeing with sounds" (xxxi). He seeks the "pulse of Art" (14). The "art of sense-impression", or observation, is at the basis of theoretical knowledge that together with practical skills allow "[n]ature to develop in her own way… [reaching] harmony between the impressions received by the child and the exact degree of his developed powers" (26).

Following Kant's approach based on concepts as intermediaries between the child and the world[195], Pestalozzi views words as the foundation of knowledge, moving from the idea of

[195] See Pradeep A. Dhillon. "A Kantian Conception of Human Rights Education". in Klas Roth& Ilan Gur-Ze'ev. (eds.). *Education in the Era of Globalization.* (Springer. 2007). pp. 51-65.

"words to things", to that of "things to words" (viii). He ascribes a magical power to words and wants to offer children a comprehensive understanding of language, proclaiming the dictionary "the first reading book for the child" (207).

In regard to reading, Pestalozzi asserts the role of literature in developing the inner-self, and in contrast with the tendencies of his age, he portrays a new, enriching aspect of reading, connecting thoughts to words, thus inviting students to active reading. "[I]deas from a passage… [represent] possible objects of an internal or subjective observation… knowledge gained by sense-impression teaches me the properties of things that have not been brought before my senses by the likeness with other objects" (211). These ideas are sources for developing modes of observation and intuition. His Socratic method aims at bringing minds together through mutual instruction.

Personal thought is at the core of Pestalozzi's philosophy because he considers that "the development of the individual follows that of the race" (xi). He is "opposed to the idea that the parrot-like learning by heart… can be the only method of teaching, by which the Savior of the world ought to raise the human race to reverence God and to worship Him *in Spirit and in Truth*" (50). His suggestion is to provide students with leading ideas and let them find their potentialities in the child's imagination. "We must never drive the children, but only lead them by this method" (53).

Friedrich Schiller embraces a similar ideal of freedom and shows its connection with art, by stating that "poetry can be to Man what love is to the hero… [beauty] can educate him to be a hero. She can summon him to action and furnish him with strength… it is through beauty that we arrive at Freedom" (11, 27). In his Fifth Letter, Schiller presents his belief that poetry can offer a path beyond actuality, so as for the reader to get closer to the truth. It is only through this

openness toward the liminal world of poetry and art that one can reach a more holistic understanding and consequently, "those who do not venture out beyond actuality will never capture truth" (60). His visionary stance anticipates the central role that poetry and literature would play in the centuries to come. "Poetry has not yet become the adversary of wit… [because] Before truth causes her triumphant light to penetrate into the depth of the heart, poetry intercepts her ray…" (76)

According to Schiller, one can reach truth through the interaction with a text and by manifesting inner receptivity so as for truth to reveal itself within. Truth "is not something that can be received from outside" (109). It relies on freedom and spontaneity before a work of art. "Contemplation (reflection) is Man's first free relation to the universe which surrounds him" (120) and beauty is the result of this free and pleasant endeavor. Imagination "finally makes, in its attempt at a free form, the leap to aesthetic play" (135). Aesthetic play is the liminal space that receives the reader, allowing his imagination to freely construct the beauty inculcated in the text. The aesthetic impulse can confer man a "social character", establishing harmony in the individual since "only the communication of the Beautiful unites society because it relates to what is common to them all" (138).

The 19th-century ideals constitute an imperative need for the current society as well. Postmodernity's search for meaning goes beyond pedagogies of recognition or ideologies that frame reality in narrow boxes and aims at reaching a common language. In the absence of moral pillars and of the reconfiguration of classical values, the searching process results in fractured identities[196]. Moral ambivalence is so acute that any substantial endeavor at pursuing self-

[196] Phrase borrowed from Donna Haraway. "Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century". in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge. 1991). pp. 149-181.

knowledge results in the commodification of the other, the fetishization of technology, and the tokenization of information. We no longer make the distinction between truth and lie because of the sustained erosion of identity in modern society. Freeing one's mind from the fear engendered by this vision of chaos is possible through literature because it entertains alternative ways of looking at the world, not merely through the optic of domination, but also through the playful narration of the self.

The liberating potential of the aesthetic function represents an ideal that Goethe tries to instill in the hearts and minds of youth. In *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* ([1795] 1995), he offers his readers a non-conventional method of self-improvement. If other philosophers of his time theorize methods of self-achievement, Goethe educates through literature. Together with his good friend Friedrich Schiller, Goethe establishes Weimar Classicism (1788-1905), a cultural movement seen as a new humanism, as a synthesis of three doctrines: Classicism, Romanticism, and Enlightenment. During his time in Weimar, Goethe writes Wilhelm's story of becoming, as *Bildungsroman* that represents a perennial invitation to a profitable lesson of self-realization through reading and voyage. The main character manages to escape the empty bourgeois life and his dreams of a job in the theater after a series of incidents that teach him about his role in society. He commits himself to a search for meaning, self-cultivation, God, while also helping others. By following Wilhelm on his path to maturity, the reader distinguishes a plethora of arguments that sustain the value of literature, "All I desire is to raise their minds" (154).

Raising people's minds is not easy and needs entertainment through exposure to beauty and value in art. Through his character Serlo, an actor-manager, Goethe confesses his educational ideals "One should listen to a little song, read a good poem, or look at a fine painting every single day, and if possible say something sensible about it" (170). It is by doing so that

beauty can nurture people's aesthetic needs. Wilhelm gives voice to general human concerns about the lack of communion and lack of care for the other. Goethe's character is "overcome by a profound sense of how insensitive and neglectful we are toward our friends and acquaintances while they are still with us, and only when our happy relationship with them is terminated, at least for a time do we regret what we have failed to do" (170). The book effectively conveys nurturing lessons about friendship, work ethics, as the reader follows the hero's path toward self-understanding, attentiveness, and receptivity.

> Wilhelm suddenly found himself a free man, without as yet having achieved harmony within himself… but he had often realized that he lacked experience, placed too much trust in the experience of others and attached too much value to what other people derived from their own convictions… Thus Wilhelm, in striving to achieve unity within himself, was in fact steadily depriving himself of the possibility of any such regenerative achievement (171).

According to Goethe, books can assist one in the active process of achieving unity because they are providers of aesthetic models, examples of good practices and life-lessons "that would help us toward true enlightenment and the achievement of proper perspective, either by providing us with the right materials or by giving us a sense of the unity of our mental powers" (248). He also underlines the moral importance of art. "Good art… is like good society: it obliges us, in the most pleasing way, to recognize form and limitations like those which govern our being" (316).

The effect of art is redemptive and one has to know how to embrace its eye-opening outcome, since "many are reminded of their own wretched deficiencies when they are in the presence of great works of art" (352). Poetry has an essential social role as well. "The poet-like a

god-is a teacher, prophet, friend of gods and men" (45). The effect of reading a poem, a story, or a play is that of self-analysis and personal inquiry, together with a state of "jubilant self-satisfaction and radiant future prospects" (88). Theater and reading are educative forces that can assist one in his/her search for meaning in life. While theater entertains, enlightens and elevates (3), books "provide us with names for our mistakes" (181), thus the exposure to both forms of art is essential for one's moral enhancement. The difficulty of embracing life was prevalent in the 19th century, as it is nowadays. Goethe's work helps one find dignity and worth in a society shaped by aristocrats or wealthy people. Accepting one's role in life is not easy and Goethe's writings offer examples of good practices.

Education, as a dominant theme of Goethe's writing, is meant to provide individuals with appropriate means of reaching higher moral grounds. Freedom of choice, natural rhythm, and self-cultivation need to be added to the individual process of self-discovery, so as for the outside to loyally project the inside and create a space of receptivity for others. Goethe promotes non-institutionalized education, based on awakening curiosity in young people. "So much is talked and written about education; and yet I see very few people who understand what that simple, noble, all-embracing concept means, and who can translate it into action" (68). Wilhelm's transformation, from a disoriented young man hoping to find purpose by working in a theater, to the mature adult who manages to discover his right path in life, encourages readers to embark on a similar path. Wilhelm's methods entail listening to one's natural rhythm and acknowledging the almost mute craving for self-cultivation. They can lead readers to start their own process of self-discovery. Goethe's ideal of unity within implies awareness to connect the physical, the intellectual, and the moral, allowing the outside of the individual to loyally project the inside.

Art is the golden path for reaching this ideal, and Goethe, similar to Schiller argues that education needs to be built on wisdom, inclination, and predisposition. The educational system involves knowledge of particularities of students for the configuration of the future adult, since "In every predisposition, and only there, lies the power to perfect itself. Very few people who want to teach and affect others, understand that… let us perceive quite clearly what we are and how we can develop ourselves and be just toward others, for we only deserve respect if we respect others" (339).

As a master of words, a brilliant teacher and a moral beacon, Goethe manages to elevate the spirit of his contemporaries and successors. His philosophical ideals, together with those developed by Kant, Pestalozzi, Schiller, Fichte, Fröbel, and Humboldt, echo throughout the following centuries, not only locally, but globally, because pedagogues from America and England rely on their wisdom when building their own professional avenues. Like Wilhelm, they try to stake out their own path (174).

2.2.2 English and North American pedagogues and their pursuit of unity

The 19th century brings together a sustained effort of several pedagogues, critics, and writers who militate for a system of education that could offer students appropriate conditions of development. The focus is on the university system that lacks clear methodologies and cannot anticipate educational outcomes. Several English pedagogues use the European *epistêmê* and *technê* in order to frame and conceptualize the aspirations of higher studies institutions. Following the German tradition of Humboldt, whose desire of research and teaching prevails in many universities around the world, John Henry Newman, John Ruskin, Matthew Arnold, and John Dewey reshape the understanding of education in England and America.

(1) Moral development (goodness)

The 19th-century brings many changes in the educational system in England. John Henry Newman lectures in Dublin about "The Idea of a University"[197] advocating liberal views of universities. As a former Anglican and convert to Catholicism, he can no longer teach at national universities because of his new spiritual view that is in conflict with the Anglican dogma of all English institutions. Newman manages the unthinkable and proves that one can be both English and Catholic. After his conversion, he inaugurates a Catholic university, preaching that the purpose of any university is "intellectual and pedagogical, not moral or religious". He blames John Locke for his utilitarian idea of a university and consequently he wants to recover the lost unifying view of higher education institutions. For him, the university represents a "place of *teaching* universal *knowledge*" (ix).

In his second discourse, he indicates that "certainly the very name of University is inconsistent with restrictions of any kind" (20). Newman rejects the idea of transforming morality into a discipline of study because education cannot replace religion in the formation of public morality. As Spăriosu comments, in his work from 2004, Newman indicated that the target of universities is the cultivation of the intellect since one "should pursue knowledge and intellectual excellence for their own sake" (173). The only possible understanding of the idea of a university comes from the unity of disciplines and areas of study. Newman portrays education as a form of asceticism and self-control. The practical end of the university is to train "good members of society [because] its art is the art of social life and its end is fitness for the world" (177).

Many of Newman's ideas would improve current systems of education around the world. Even if he does not focus much on aestheticism, he considers universities as the right places for

[197] See John Henry Cardinal Newman, *The Idea of a University*. Defined and Illustrated. 6th ed. (London: Longmans, Green, and CO. [1852] 1907)

purifying one's taste. Education "gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them and the eloquence in expressing them" (178). Even if he separates moral laws from education and leaves them on the shoulders of religion, he mentions that the church is necessary for the teaching of universal knowledge. He also draws a relevant distinction between education and instruction, focusing on the philosophical end of education, rather than on the material or mechanical end of instruction, as Spăriosu notes (175). Newman enriches the sphere of higher education, opening it up to art, thus trying to rescue it from the selfish hands of superficiality and materialism.

In his *Essays in Criticism* (1918), Matthew Arnold questions the function of art and literature, emphasizing their unique potential to directly communicate to the mind the sense of fundamental values, "[a]nd yet, what is really precious and inspiring, in all that we get from literature, except this sense of an immediate contact with genius itself and the stimulus toward what is true and excellent which we derive from it?" (162) He emphasizes the moralizing function of poetry, that "is interpretative both by having natural magic in it and by having moral profundity" (85). He also recognizes the role of religion and its edifying capacity, "The paramount virtue of religion is that it has lighted up morality" (220). Light that brings together the spiritual search and poetry correlates with Arnold's idea of culture. With a phrase borrowed from Swift, he connects culture to sweetness and light, where light represents active intelligence. Thus, culture conjoins the "endeavor to come at reason and the will of God by means of reading, observing and thinking" (23).

Arnold suggests that good taste and pleasure for truth and the beautiful can be transmitted through literature. "To accustom mankind to pleasure which depends neither upon the bodily appetites nor upon money, by giving them a taste for the things of the mind, seems to me, in fact,

the one proper fruit which nature has meant our literary productions to have" (183). The moral development that he dreams of aims at truth, at the perfect balance of one's nature, but also at bringing together classes and peoples through the promotion of social cohesion, "He wanted to correct the English opinion by bringing it into contact with European thought" (20).

John Dewey's pragmatic philosophy continues the pedagogical dialogue that Humboldt, Arnold and the other English educators started. His pedagogical progress enlivens the American educational system of the 20th century. For Dewey, education is life itself. Inspired by Rousseau's educational philosophy (naturalism and individualism), Humboldt's (freedom of choice), Pestalozzi's (sympathy for children) and Fröbel's (learning by doing), Dewey lays the foundation of contemporary American education. He gives scientific authority to the methods he adopts from his predecessors, by combining them with the new psychology of learning. Student-centered education should reach the realization of one's full potential through reflection and experience. In his *Pedagogic Creed* (1897), he manifests his belief in a 'universal consciousness' by stating that "all education precedes by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race" (19).

School for Dewey is a form of community life, or a "mode of social life centered on moral education [through] the unity of work and thought" (22). Care and goodness represent the basis for the mode of social life that Dewey aims at. The student learns that he cannot live in isolation, but needs to engage, receive, tolerate, and care for others. The child's own social activities are at the core of his pedagogy because one can learn and evolve in a community through doing, and through interacting with others.

(2) Aesthetic Freedom (beauty)

For Dewey, "image is the great instrument of instruction" (29). Ruskin's inheritance centered on seeing is also one of Dewey's instructive methods. He believes that the essential in preparing children for life is to "secure right habits of action and thought with reference to the good, the true, the beautiful" (30). His pragmatic approach does not refrain him from acknowledging the effect of art on the student. Dewey's system of education contemplates 'supreme art', which constitutes "the most perfect and intimate union of science and art conceivable in human experience… [It] gives shape to human powers adapting them to social service" (31). Targeting similar aesthetic ideals, John Ruskin[198], dedicates his life to teaching others to see the beauty of nature and art. In his *Essays and Letters*, published in 1894, Ruskin states that, "[t]he end of [his] whole professorship would be accomplished- if only the English nation could be made to understand that the beauty which is to be a joy forever, must be a joy for all" (vi). Ruskin identifies the main objective of moral education in fostering in the minds of students the ability to see beauty in nature, in the work of God, and in goodness. The recognition of beauty brings him joy and Ruskin's desire is to impart it to all humans.

Matthew Arnold pays homage to beauty as well. He considers aesthetics indispensable in fiction for its attempt to embody beauty in a work of art: "Fiction has no reason to exist unless it is more beautiful than reality" (182). He employs Keats' final verses from *Ode on a Grecian Urn,* in order to envelop "beauty in truth and truth in beauty". Arnold relies on the belief that truth surpasses reason and rather than looking for existential answers in reason, one should focus on the metaphysical aspects of life that engage and comfort, "Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty/ that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know" (182). Arnold states that the one aim of art is to convey beauty, and appreciates its aesthetically pleasing function. However, he is not an apostle

[198] Professor at Oxford and art critic.

of "Art for Art's sake", but wants to rather cherish its moral role. Arnold trusts the potential of art and literature to provide individuals with beauty (which is essential), but implicitly with truth, both contributing to moral enhancement. For Arnold, literature is a criticism of life that aims at facilitating the improvement of individuals through promoting goodness, beauty, and truth.

(3) Self-discovery through reading (truth)

Newman's opinion about literature is congruous with Arnold's. His conversion to Catholicism does not determine him to impose Christian literature on students as he wants to allow them access to a greater sphere of spiritual and practical understanding. He dissociates his individual belief from his pedagogical aims.

Newman considers that "[i]n the cultivation of literature is found that common link, which among the higher and middling departments of life, unites the jarring sects and subdivisions into one interest, which supplies common topics and kindles common feelings" (169). His main concern is to instill in his students the understanding of the necessity of a multidimensional perspective. He wants them informed about world religions and universal knowledge. He does not rely on one or two fields, or disciplines, but preaches the power of their unity. Connecting history, poetry, and philosophy, he helps students learn through association, critical thinking and individual inquiry, thus he facilitates the evolution of the "intellectual tone of society" (177).

> One thing is unquestionable, that the elements of general reason are not to be found fully and truly expressed in any one kind of study; and that he who would wish to know her idiom, must read it in many books… (176) University education implies an extended range of reading, which has to deal with standard works of genius, or what are called the classics of a language… if Literature is to be made a study of human nature, you cannot

have a Christian Literature. It is a contradiction in terms to attempt a sinless Literature of sinful man (229).

The tendency of valuing unified knowledge is also at the core of John Ruskin's philosophy. As a polymath, Ruskin founds his pedagogical philosophy on the transformational role of literature that he continuously connects to morality. In his *Essays and Letters* from 1894, Ruskin suggests students should "read less and remember more" (489). Reading needs to provide the reader with moral foundations, thus the choice of the right authors and books is essential. He draws upon the Greek ancient wisdom in order to promote reading as building material for the moral basis of each individual: "Children should be taught what to admire, what to hope for and what to love" (255).

He is aware of the powerful transformative effect of literature, thus he dismisses texts that do not bring pleasure to the soul "All literature, art, and science are vain, and worse if they do not enable you to be glad, and glad justly" (442). As a source of elevation of one's spirit, literature exposes readers to the wisest minds and the most brilliant ideas,

> Literature does its duty not in wasting our hours in political discourse, or in idle fiction, but in raising our fancy to the heights of what may be noble, honest and felicitous in actual life, in giving us the companionship of the wisest fellow spirits of every age and country, in aiding the communication of clear thoughts and faithful purposes among distant nations (443).

In a lecture entitled *Sesame and Lilies* and included in his magnum opus, *Stones of Venice* (1890), Ruskin specifically deals with suggestions on reading. He is aware that the intellect "becomes noble and ignoble according to the food we give it, and the kind of subjects with which it is conversant" (3). He suggests one should read the "good books for all time" (14)

[because]… both well-directed moral-training and well-chosen reading lead to the possession of power over the ill-guided and illiterate" (69). He wants to lead people to acknowledge their better selves. He also wants to cultivate in people the continuous desire for progress because the "training which makes men happiest in themselves, also makes them most serviceable to others" (220).

Newman's thoughts echoed throughout Ruskin's writing, but the influence went in both directions. These two great philosophers, together with Matthew Arnold, shared a common view on education and tried to implement in the English youth the openness toward the rich diversity of other nations. By far one of the most resounding voices of the 19th century, Matthew Arnold sees the priority of education for citizens in England and encourages reforms that are meant to define "individuality within a larger society" (xvi).

He offers solutions for the "rawness and provinciality of his countrymen" by imposing state control on higher education institutions and by introducing the study of 'the best that is known and thought in the world' and a free play of the mind on all subjects" (xviii). His method allows students to acquire knowledge by analogies and individual research. Arnold considers that self-discovery is possible through religion as an essential part of education, by combining the two traditional forces of Hebraism (strict obedience to conscience) and Hellenism (clear thinking and spontaneity to consciousness). Arnold dedicates his writing to children and their instruction because he is aware that change may occur through both literary and cultural education.

On the other hand, Dewey's system of pragmatic education incorporates the study of literature because of its "continuing reconstruction of experience". In Dewey's opinion, literature should not anticipate, but complement experience, because it is "the reflex expression and interpretation of social experiences that… must follow upon and not precede such experience…

If, therefore, cannot be made the basis, although it may be made the summary of unification… I believe, therefore in the so-called expressive or constructive activities as the center of correlation" (26).

Literature preserves its central role in cultivating people. At different times in history, pedagogues, philosophers, and writers tried to determine students' interest in reading. However, the fundamental role of literature has often been misunderstood. Moving from the Renaissance bookishness to today's reluctance for reading, one can easily observe that literature has a collateral role in education. Ruskin, Newman, Arnold, and Dewey are just a few of the spokesmen of the efficiency of reading. They provide pertinent examples that confirm the perspective for goodness, beauty, and truth, thus encouraging future teachers to implement reading as a means to success for any student. The 20th and the beginning of the 21st-century witness new voices stating the relevance of reading for the human self-development, in light of a system of education aiming at cultivating humanity and global intelligence.

2.3 Literature as a source of responsiveness and goodness

Literary criticism should arise out of a debt of love **(Steiner, 1996, 3)**

This section will highlight the contemporary educational tendencies focusing on the return to the individualistic ideal, through play and self-discovery, through aestheticism, and freethinking. Such a system would situate the student at the center of the pedagogical act, by directing him toward the truth translated in harmony, self-discovery and proper dialogue. Borrowing from the theoretical framework inspired by Martha Nussbaum and Mihai Spăriosu, I hope to restate the need for educational reform and global education.

Contemporary philosophers and pedagogues are left with a rich inheritance and an overwhelming responsibility. Martha Nussbaum predicates the need for liberal education to

cultivate humanity. She reiterates the pertinence of Socratic methods for cultivating empathy. In her book *Cultivating Humanity* (1997), Nussbaum states the importance of reading for developing critical self-examination (moral development), the capacity to see oneself as a human being bound to all humans (aesthetic freedom, play) and narrative imagination that propagates empathy (self-discovery). Her powerful argument for the defense of a multicultural curriculum represents an answer to insularity, discrimination, racism, intolerance, and moral relativism. She promotes civic friendship, cultural hospitality, and independence of the mind, through a system of education that restores the contact with the classical thought of the greatest minds in history,

> Like Seneca, we live in a culture divided between two conceptions of a liberal education. The older one dominant in Seneca's Rome, is the idea of an education that is *liberalis*, "fitted for freedom"… of freeborn gentlemen… The "new" idea interprets the word *liberalis* differently. Education is truly "fitted for freedom" only if it is such as to *produce* free citizens who are free not because of wealth or birth, but because they can call their minds their own (293).

Mihai Spăriosu evades the current institutional paradigms and advances a plan for the university of the future. In his book on *Global Intelligence and Human Development* (2004), Spăriosu underlines that the contemporary divisive discourse - that encourages students to endorse science-based career pursuits (STEM-Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, in the US, or elite higher education establishments in France: Ecole Normale Supérieure/ Ecole Politechnique),minimizing, at the same time, the contribution of humanities - is based on the secular "conflict between aristocratic and middle class values in academia" (172).

On the basis of Foucault's conceptualization, Spăriosu describes today's university as a "disciplinary institution" belonging to a "society of control" that manipulates individuals through

discrete, internal mechanisms of control (new media), imposing on them almost unavoidable postmodern critical trends, such as: post-colonialism, Marxism, de-constructivism, gender studies, etc. (183). His suggestion is enlightening because he wants to renounce disciplinary barriers and give higher education a liminal dimension, based on openness, cooperation, receptivity, and mutual understanding, thus addressing the "needs of the community"

> The role of the university, then, would be not only to generate new knowledge, to debate and to exchange ideas but also to facilitate their free flow both inside and outside the academic communities throughout the world (188)… its main purpose should be to pursue cooperative learning and research in the service of human self-development (195).

Spăriosu uses Newman's unifying ideal in order to pioneer a "liminal institutional model" that would eliminate spatial and cultural walls between universities and people, thus aiming at creating a "mindset conducive to alternative ways of relating to each other" (197). He invariably states the importance of all disciplines and their interconnectedness. The interdisciplinary dialogue creates "feedback loops" that nurture each other and reach a higher level of understanding resulting, thus, in potentialities of thought, otherwise ungraspable in isolation. His unifying recommendation that echoes the Greek *Paideia* aims at the Aristotelian liberal ideal of "forming a habit of mind that would last through life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation and wisdom" (90).

All these ideals are implicitly bringing together **(1) moral development, (2) aesthetic freedom and (3) self-discovery**. The aforementioned crucial targets have been discussed at different levels, starting from antiquity. The Socratic incentive that thinking leads to virtue has echoed until the present, resulting in several educational directions, previously described. Thinking has to be stimulated and education plays a catalyst role in expanding mindsets to a

global dimension. Spăriosu's conceptual framework may enhance higher education, without excluding its connections with the other layers of schooling. His perspective bridges the institutional, cultural, and geographical gap between universities and aims at creating a platform that challenges brilliant minds and engages them in a common effort of (mutual) understanding and respect. Spăriosu's university of the future, similar to Jaeger's *Paideia* (1966), represents a project framed in the service of an ideal.

Changes need to be implemented in our educational systems independently of cultural or geographical variables. First, they should incorporate the classical ideals of unity of disciplines and values (goodness, beauty, and truth) and secondly, they need to inspire in individuals the thirst for knowledge, but also the "free play of mind" that aims at moral development and identification of one's path in life. It is necessary to free current educational systems from the heavy burdens of self-centered mentalities of power that tend to manipulate and suppress individual potentialities.

The aesthetic drive needs to be nurtured through early exposure to beauty and art, in all its manifestations, with some instruction in the elements comprising the classical standards of evaluation. Literature, as a moral and aesthetic path, offers students a liminal space of encounter, thus fostering acceptance, a peaceful disposition, and independence of mind. Regardless of the actual pragmatic tendencies in the current educational systems, literature offers scenarios with "potentialities of transfer"[199] that can remodel mentalities and offer alternative modes of thought.

Literature and practical activities that pursue self-discovery should be reinforced as the main targets of any pedagogy centered on the student. Education plays an essential role in

[199] See George Steiner. *After Babel*: *Aspects of Language and Translation*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press. 1998). p. 318.

molding characters, and a retrospective analysis of different pedagogies refreshes the current educational paradigm and actualizes dormant ideals. Once revitalized, the free citizen of the world will find in himself/herself the keys to unlock humanistic potentials, and as a consequence, he/she will understand that it is only through perpetual inner enhancement, receptivity for the other's diversity, and peaceful approach that he/she will reach truth and happiness.

Eventually, reverberating Huxley's warning, *Karuna, Karuna* (Compassion) (384), I advocate the urgency for a change of mindset concerning the actual disciplinary classification in education. Advancing the study of literature and arts will actualize compassion, universal friendship, peace, and cooperation, thus producing the free person. I shall now attempt to prove this point by analyzing a specific literary text that is inspiring for properly understanding the self by relating to the other.

Chekhov's *Little Trilogy* (1898), more precisely, the short story *A Man in a Case* can be seen to mediate the relationship between students and teachers. Through the story of an isolated professor who does not actively engage his students into discussions but delivers information without carrying about the effect of it on students, Chekhov encourages his readers to connect with others because it is only through connection that one can accomplish his/her (social) role, thus fulfilling their life mission, by implicitly reaching goodness, beauty, and truth.

A Man in a Case represents a literary text that warns against the lack of empathy, care, and goodness toward others. Anton Chekhov describes the story of a pedantic teacher of Greek who lives his life in a shell, being terrified of change and passion. Included in the *Little Trilogy*, Chekhov's story provides a detailed example of how people might forget they have a sacred role in teaching others. Belikov, the main character is a disciplinarian, narrow-minded teacher who always does things his own way, ignoring what others might need, think or ask for. He is a slave

of his routine and does not accept any types of changes in his life. His work at school is frustrating him. He does not care about his students and does not try to really look at them, or know them. He teaches his lesson in a ritualistic manner and then he goes home, isolating himself from the world. He does not have friends, or interactions with his colleagues because he is leading his life following the Sartrian model of *L'enfer c'est les autres* (Hell is other people). He is the mere example of people who "try to retreat into a shell like a hermit, crab or snail", avoiding interacting with others.

Chekhov uses the technique of *enchassement* (story within a story) in order to offer details about Belikov's life. The reader accessed Belikov's situation through a discussion two characters have about him, while enjoying a walk in the countryside. Burkin and his friend realize that their life in town is similar to being in a case. They acknowledge the urban emptiness by thinking about Belikov's life story. The scene of the two friends discussing their colleague's situation represents the proof that literature has the potential to influence readers.

Similar to the two characters in Chekhov's story, one can start paying more attention to his/her own situation. Professors and students in general would certainly be able to start a self-reflexive exercise after emerging into the Russian reading because its focus is the empty life of a solitary teacher. Byelikov does not have friends; he does not care about his students and lives a reclusive life. Through his character, Chekhov creates a microscopic depiction of people's shells, limitations of the ability to love and to be open to others. Byelikov is a hyperbolic example of people not opening up. "By forever praising the past, he was justifying his horror of reality"[200].

Similar to Kafka's character, Gregor Samsa, who becomes an insect because of his incapacity of relating to others, Chekhov's character refuses to get married and eventually he

[200] See Anton Chekhov. *About Love and Other Stories.* Rosamund Bartlett (trans.). 1st edition. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. [1898] 2008)

dies, alone and disappointed. These stories are a good depiction of one's own struggles and problems in relating to others. For today's teachers, these texts would certainly create the context of an attentive analysis and hopefully change. This change would not only affect them at a personal level, but it would also definitely help students. Students not only need both professors who are role models, but also professors who can lead them into reading stories and novels that might help them frame their future and relate to others, independently of race, gender, spiritual view or age.

The exposure to stories that show the difficulty in connecting to others because of differences, because of fake expectations or prejudgments, increase chances for readers- students or not- to be aware of the beauty of accepting the other. Mark Edmundson, in *Why Teach?* (2013) argues that reading is an essential power (194). Reading is effective because it encourages understanding, and empathy, thus facilitating dialogue.

There are limitless reasons to consider literature and humanities necessary in the educational process because they do not prepare students to approach life in a rigid way. Fictional texts lead the way for acknowledging differences, avoiding stereotypes and understanding how people function together. In order for societies to be represented by thoughtful and empathizing people, instead of machines submitted to a system, reading is necessary. The next chapter will analyze the manner in which literature accomplishes these desiderata by promoting an irenic mentality and the thirst for beauty.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE AS A SOURCE OF BEAUTY

***Beauty is a form of Genius--is higher, indeed, than Genius, as it needs no explanation. It is one of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or springtime, or the reflection in the dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has divine right of sovereignty* (Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Grey*)**

Beauty[201] is an ideal, and together with goodness and truth, it constitutes a part of the *ancient trivium* pertaining to happiness. Literature praises beauty and playfully displays it in an unlimited variety of manners. The first half of the present chapter will discuss several approaches to beauty as a provider of moral incentive, arguing for the positive outcomes of beauty in one's life. The second part of the chapter will emphasize the role of play and the need for directing readers toward a ludic-irenic mentality. Looking at Schiller, Huizinga, and Spăriosu as theoreticians of play, I will apply their approaches to the fictional works of Molière, Exupéry, Huxley, and Lewis, whose texts lead to a hospitable imagination[202].

Plato, Schiller, Ruskin, Tolstoy, Wilde, among others, discuss beauty as a central component of art/literature that has positive outcomes in the establishment of an appropriate education. Beauty is at the core of human existence. The history of ideas has shown that throughout the centuries one of the main human interests has been the search for beauty[203]. An

[201] As stated by Nemoianu, "beauty is… the chief channel… of communication between transcendence and immanence, or between God and humankind." See Virgil Nemoianu. "The Dialectic of Literature and Religion". in *Imperfection and Defeat. The Role of Aesthetic Imagination in Human Society.* (Budapest: Central European University Press. 2006)

[202] Alternative worlds create the space for hospitable imagination to spring. As Nemoianu notices, "Baumgarten alluded to the creative efforts of authors to constitute heterocosmic or alternative worlds as an essential way of completing the desiccated and impoverished systems of rational logic… Logic was the elder sister of aesthetics (*soror natu maior*)" (10-11).

[203] See Roger Scruton. *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*. (Oxford University Press. 2011). p. 2.

aesthetically pleasing object offers joy and people crave for instances of beauty that would bring these momentary satisfaction. This search goes far beyond a superficial grasp of materially pleasing characteristics because, in the case of philosophers such as Plato, it becomes a promise of happiness. In the *Symposium* (2009), he states that "whenever [one] draws near to beauty [one] becomes glad" (269).

In several of his dialogues, Plato discusses the role of beauty, as the ultimate purpose in life. Beauty seems to be inherently connected to divinity, hence it is perceived as a path to salvation. In *Phaedo* (2009), Plato's dialogue about Socrates' death, Socrates uses the theory of forms and the theory from recollection[204] as evidence for the soul's immortality. One is born with the knowledge of perfect forms and every time one gets into contact with something or someone beautiful, courageous or virtuous, one subconsciously experiences the echo of perfection, which offers pleasure. However, the inner voice calling up for an immediate reaction before beauty is sometimes either mislead by *Kitsch* or indifferent to beauty. That is why Schiller and Ruskin, among others, portray the necessity for educating taste.

John Ruskin develops his conception of beauty as united with morality (goodness) and religion (truth)[205]. If for Plato, earthly beauty is recollected from the perfect idea or the essence of beauty, for Ruskin, beauty is a *speculum dei*, or the image of God, since "the totality of creation is divine iconography"[206]. Following Edmund Burke's view that utility is not the cause

[204] The theory from recollection asserts that learning is essentially an act of recollecting information already acquired in a previous life. True knowledge is knowledge of the internal and unchanging forms that represent the source for understanding reality. The transmigration of souls precedes birth and persists after death. With the death of the body, the soul is liberated, setting it free to recover and gather pure knowledge and pure beauty. Achieving wisdom, knowledge, and virtues is the ultimate goal in life, because they prepare the soul for continuing its voyage after the death of the body.

[205] For a detailed analysis of Ruskin's theory of beauty, see George P. Landow. *Aesthetic and Critical Theory of John Ruskin.* (Princeton University Press. 1971). pp. 89-110.

[206] See David K. Naugle. *Worldview: The History of a Concept.* (Cambridge: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. 2002). p. 293.

of beauty, Ruskin rejects the association and considers beauty is contemplated for its own sake, out of spiritual thirst. Similarly, Friedrich Schiller, in his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man/ Kallias Letters*[207] (1794) offers a similar incentive. He suggests that educating emotions is the best technique for people to develop their *Agape* or love for others. In contrast with Kant, whose solution was the rejection of man's negative impulses, Schiller considers that only a person with a beautiful soul (echoing the ancient ideal of *Paideia*) can be free. He aims at instilling in others an aesthetical state of mind, as the only salvation, from a mentality of power.

Through his dual theory of beauty, as Typical (related to the nature of God) and Vital (related to moral order; God's commandments), Ruskin establishes some clear characteristics of aesthetics and argues for the need of emotional education for next generations, since he is convinced that it is only through art and education that people will reach the ideal of freedom. Together with Schiller, Plato, and Tolstoy, Ruskin perceives literature as a moral incentive. They all harmonize in considering that, "[t]he task of art is enormous. Through the influence of real art, aided by science guided by religion, that peaceful cooperation of man which is now obtained by external means—by our law-courts, police, charitable institutions, factory inspection –should be obtained by man's free and joyous activity. Art should cause violence to be set aside"[208].

In an essay published in 2015, Marinela Rusu[209] offers a generous perspective on beauty. Her thesis is that beauty "leads to a reconciliation of the self with the world" and answers the

[207] In an essay published immediately after Schiller's death, titled *On Schiller and the Course of His Spiritual Development*, Humboldt emphasized their unequaled value: "I doubt if these works, *On Grace and Dignity* and the *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* filled with substantial ideas and expressed in a uniquely beautiful way, are still frequently read, which is regrettable in a number of respects… But, concerning the concept of beauty, concerning the aesthetic in creation and action, and thus the foundations of art, as well as art itself, these works contain everything essential in a manner which can never possibly be excelled" (See Wilhelm von Humboldt. "On Schiller and the Course of His Spiritual Development," John Cambles (trans.) in *Friedrich Schiller Poet of Freedom*. (Washington DC. Schiller Institute. Vol II. 1988). p. 537.

[208]Leo Tolstoy. *What Is Art?* Aylmer Maude (trans.). (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co. 1904). p. 210.

[209] See Marinela Rusu. "O Perspectivă Psihanalitică asupra Conceptului de Frumos". in *Studii şi Cercetări în Domeniul Ştiinţelor Socio- Umane.* (Cluj-Napoca: Limes & Argonaut. Vol. 28. 2015). pp. 412-421; see also

transcendental need for the ideal (412). She uses Wheelis'[210] idea that beauty lies in interaction, mentioning that beauty represents an expression of the human search for perfection. Literature gives access to mere examples of beauty and encourages the self of the reader to identify beauty in the other. On the basis of Wheelis' description of beauty, Rusu acknowledges that one can free himself/herself from the prison of selfhood through a "transcendental fusion with beauty" (416). The encounter with beauty elevates the self and gives an answer to one's desire for perfection and transcendence, thus shaping an irenic mentality.

3.1 Literature as a moral incentive for an irenic mentality

The proper duty of Art [is]… to unite character with beauty, purity, and fullness, unity with universality **(Schiller& Goethe, 1845, 388)**

The moral incentive that literature displays represents the basis for a change in mentality. Once one acknowledges values and virtues because of the exposure to examples one can find in books, there are chances for the integration of this body of knowledge into real-life situations. The exposure to goodness, beauty, and truth gives readers lenses through which to look at others and adopt examples of good practices. Through a "contagious" transmission of the "virus"[211] of beauty, readers might incorporate the aesthetic ideal into their own daily experiences. Implicitly, this exposure determines a change of mentality. The agonistic characteristics of the mentality of power are replaced with positive and welcoming behaviors specific to an irenic mentality.

Marinela Rusu. "Binomul Etic şi Estetic în Creaţia Artistică". in *Ethics and Aesthetics, Contrasts and Controversy*, vol. I. (2015). p. 98. Following Beyrs Gaut's terminology, Rusu presents the connection between ethics and aesthetics by defining the three possible orientations: *moralism* (theory about the ethical intrinsic value of artworks, based on their aesthetical content); *autonomous* (separates artwork from the ethical ground, looking rather at the shape of artwork, thus ignoring its content); *imoralism* (the supporters of this approach advocate that ethical dysfunctions of artwork can contribute to its aesthetical value. Art is good as long as it portrays defaults) (102-3). See also Gaut Berys. *Art, Emotion and Ethics*. (Oxford University Press. 2007)

[210] Alan Wheelis is a contemporary psychoanalyst whose book, *The Listener: A Psychoanalyst Examines His Life*. (New York: Norton. 1999), describes his childhood traumas and obsessions in order to help those with neurotic personalities.

[211] See Leo Tolstoy. *What Is Art.* Aylmer Maude (trans.). (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company. 1904)

By irenic mentality[212], I understand a worldview based on love, acceptance, forgiveness, attentiveness, and awareness of the positive aspects of difference between the self and the other. Through such exposure, literature instills in readers a receptive type of mentality. In *What is Art* (1904), Tolstoy puts it best when saying that,

> If by art it has been inculcated how people should treat religious objects, their parents, their children, their wives, their relations, strangers, foreigners; how to conduct themselves to their elders, their superiors, to those who suffer, to their enemies, and to animals… then other customs… may be evoked… [such as] reverence for images, for the Eucharist, and for the king's person; of shame at betraying a comrade… then the same art can also evoke reverence for the dignity of every man and for the life of every animal; can make men ashamed of luxury, of violence, of revenge; [art] can compel people freely, gladly, and without noticing it, to sacrifice themselves in the service of man (211).

3.1.1 Tolstoy acknowledges the problems depicted by his literary predecessors and frames his own approach to literature, establishing beauty, as the core value that has the potential

[212] In terms of irenic mentality, one could draw examples from three world religions that aim at peace and that also change people's perspectives on life and encourage the manifestation of peaceful behaviors. Several religious texts can be read as literature rather than as spiritual doctrines because each of them provides inspirational narratives. The first example is The New Testament and the Gospels describing Jesus' mission. He was the first person who replaced the law of retaliation with love (through atonement-reconciliation of man to God). His life is a perennial example of a peaceful mentality and a moral incentive for any reader of the Bible, as a Christian or non-Christian. The popular injunction "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Marc 12:31) is a quasi-universal guideline. Read as mere literature, the Scriptures offer limitless examples of the irenic mentality implemented by Jesus. The second example is the doctrine of karma from Buddhism. The Buddhist scriptures (Tripitaka or Pali Canon) teach that war and violence are never appropriate solutions. For instance, in Dhammapada 183, Gautama Buddha states: "The non-doing of any evil, the performance of what's skillful, the cleansing of one's own mind: this is the teaching of the Awakened." The third example is the Bhagavad Gita, sacred text in Hinduism, describing the teachings of Krishna, who preaches peace through Dharma (duty): "Peace, wisdom, Brahman, Nirvana… Gita are all synonym terms. The Gita is a boundless ocean of nectar… There is no knowledge of the Self to the unsteady, and to the unsteady no meditation is possible; and to the un-meditative there can be no peace; and to the man who has no peace, how can there be happiness?" (verse 66). The major world religions preach peace, and writers throughout the centuries have used the main spiritual teachings to militate for values as well. Aldous Huxley and Thomas Merton aim at peace and love beyond any doctrinal framing. Their inter-religious dialogue targets the constitution of an irenic mentality supported by the moral pillars of goodness, humility, truth, wisdom etc. They play with words, in order to portray the significance of the Word, *Logos*.

to change people's mentalities and unite them. He investigates the role of literature as provider of beauty. He parallels Ruskin's view on the lack of personal advantage in art: "Beauty is a kind of pleasure received by us, not having personal advantage for its object" (x), but also with Schiller's rejection of the practical idea of beauty[213]. Tolstoy's views on art develop during the process of writing about it. He spends fifteen years to bring together ideas and clarify points of view. His effort is rewarded, because he reaches a wise understanding of the mediating role of art in bringing people together through goodness, beauty, and truth: "the highest well-being attainable by men is to be reached by their union with one another" (xxi).

For him, the function of literary texts consists in nurturing the aesthetic thirst of readers and implicitly allowing them access to a platform that teaches goodness through beauty: "all questions about art may be simply and clearly solved by acknowledging beauty to be the subject matter of art" (14). He defines "*krasota* (beauty)… [as] that which pleases the sight" (15). Tolstoy agrees with Plato's perspective about perennial values and understands beauty as a reflection of the divine. He uses Véron's *L'Esthétique* (1878), in order to universalize beauty,

> There is no science which more than aesthetics has been handed over to the reveries of the metaphysicians. From Plato to the received doctrines of our day, people have made of art a strange amalgam of quintessential fancies and transcendental mysteries, which find their supreme expression in the conception of an absolute ideal Beauty, immutable and divine prototype of actual things[214] (5).

[213] "The aim of art is beauty, the source of which is pleasure without practical advantage" (25). In addition to their view on the effect of beauty, Ruskin and Tolstoy –similar to Pestalozzi, and Dewey—emphasize the role of seeing. Talking about the effect of his book on himself, Tolstoy states: "Of the effect that this book has had on me personally, I can only say that 'whereas I was blind, now I see'" (x).

[214] "Il n'y a pas de science, qui ait été plus que l'esthétique livrée aux rêveries des métaphysiciens. Depuis Platon jusqu'au doctrines officielles de nos jours, on a fait de l'art je ne sais quell' amalgame de fantaisies quintessenciées, et de mystères transcendantaux qui trouvent leur expression suprème dans la conception absolue du Beau idéal, prototype immutable et divin des choses réeles. See Eugène Véron. *L'Esthétique*. (Paris: C. Reinwald. 1890)

His historical account brings together various views on beauty. Tolstoy does not agree with all of them, thus he distances himself from hedonistic approaches on beauty[215]. In contrast, echoing the ancients, he considers that beauty implies goodness[216] and truth[217],

> Sulzer, Mendelssohn, and Moritz… recognize as the aim of art, not beauty, but goodness… beauty is that which evokes and educates [moral] feelings… So that the three aestheticians completely wipe out Baumgarten's division of the perfect (The Absolute), into the three forms of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty; and Beauty is again united with the Good and the True (21).

Tolstoy reaches the conclusion that, "There is no objective definition of beauty" (40), but he hints at its potential to change mentalities, as long as it is dealt with as source of goodness and truth, because, "Art is a means of union among men" (50). For such an approach to be possible, Tolstoy underlines the need for religious perception, "Universal art has a definite and indubitable internal criterion- religious perception[218]" (120). Art[219], as a means for manifesting one's feelings, should not be put in the service of beauty alone, unless beauty is accompanied by a more holistic understanding of life, through the humbling[220] belief in a superior ultimate figure.

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[215] "The aim of beauty [for Baumgarten] is to please and excite a desire" (20); "Winckelmann [states that] the law and aim of all art is beauty only" (21).
"The French writers, like the English, consider that it is taste that decides what is beautiful" (ex: Alembert/Voltaire) (24).

[216] For Pagano, "goodness is inner beauty" (24).

[217] "And only two kinds of feeling do unite all men: first, feelings falling from our perception of our sonship to God and of the brotherhood of man… a feeling of sureness in truth; and next, the simple feeling of common life, accessible to everyone without exception—such as the feeling of merriment, of pity, of cheerfulness, of tranquility, etc. Only these two kinds of feelings can now supply material for art good in its subject-matter" (164); "Truth and beauty are one and the same thing" (28).

[218] "In every period in history, and in every human society, there exists and understanding of the meaning of life which represents the highest level to which men of that society have attained. And this understanding is the religious perception of the given time and society. And it is by the standard of this religious perception that the feelings transmitted by art have always been estimated" (157).

[219] "art [is] a human activity by means of which some people transmit their feelings to others (and not a service of Beauty, nor a manifestation of the Idea, and so forth)" (147).

[220] "true art is modest" (151).

Only good art manages to encompass the triadic classical values of goodness, beauty, and truth; and has the potential to reach the high purpose of uniting men, by leading them towards perfection[221]. If the artist's main desire is to express a true feeling, then he might succeed in creating true art, but if the ultimate goal of the artist is fame, power, or money, the result of his work will lack perennial value(s) and his art will not be good art: "The cause of the production of real art is the artist's inner need to express a feeling that has accumulated, just as for a mother the cause of sexual conception is love. The cause of counterfeit art, as of prostitution, is gain… The art of our time and of our circle has become a prostitute" (190).

Prostitution in art[222] happens because of the loss of unity and universality. Tolstoy underlines the danger of treating art with superficiality, by ignoring that it brings people together, since "people grow up, are educated, and live, lacking the fertilizing, improving influence of art, and therefore, not only do not advance towards perfection, do not become kinder, but on the contrary… they yet tend to become continually more savage, more coarse, and more cruel" (176). In the absence of art, "[t]hese people not only grow physically and mentally deformed, but… become incapable of doing anything really needed by man" (177). Tolstoy acknowledges the presence of those who "consider themselves most refined, and who say that they do not understand the poetry of love to one's neighbor, self-sacrifice, and chastity" (103). It is in the name of these people that Tolstoy preaches the indispensable role of art in transmitting feelings, thus uniting people, since, "feelings less kind and less needful for the well-being of mankind are replaced by others kinder and more needful for that end. That is the purpose of art" (156).

[221] "Art like speech, is a means of communication, and therefore of progress, of the movement of humanity forward towards perfection" (156).
[222] "The over –man (*Uebermensch*), in the Nietzschean philosophy, is a superior type of man whom the struggle for existence is to evolve, and who will seek only his own power and pleasure, will know nothing of pity, and will have the right, because he will possess the power, to make ordinary people serve him" (182).

Selfishness, self-centeredness, intolerance, lack of love, and isolation are the results of the rejection of art. Tolstoy's solution for preventing the mentality of power and materiality to rein people's lives is inspiring. He separates art into religious[223] and universal, showing that both types have the same goal which is that of uniting people: "the effect— of a loving union of man with man—is produced both by religious art which transmits feelings of love to God and one's neighbor, and by universal art transmitting the very simplest feelings common to all men" (165).

Tolstoy is convinced that progress is possible only through humility, characteristic of those who acknowledge their human limitations, and accept the existence of a superior divine power: "All history shows that the progress of humanity is accomplished not otherwise than under the guidance of religion" (159). After a harsh revelation, and his sincere *metanoia,* Tolstoy looks at religion not in a fanatical manner, but rather practical one, thus he accepts that the art or religious art might cure hostility and intermediate communication among people through the expression of universal feelings: "The religious perception of our time, in its widest and most practical application, is the consciousness that our wellbeing, both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among all men- in their loving harmony with one another" (159).

Tolstoy distinguishes between the joy of receiving and empathizing with someone else's feelings as if they were one's own and mere enjoyment, resulting from bad art that does not attain the universal,

[223] Tolstoy carefully uses the word religious. He does not suggest the denominational dimension of it, but its perennial value: "People who do not acknowledge Christianity in its true meaning because it undermines all their social privileged, and who, therefore, invent all kinds of philosophic and aesthetic theories to hide from themselves the meaninglessness and wrongness of their life… These people intentionally, or sometimes unintentionally, confusing the conception of a religious cult with the conception of religious perception, think that by denying the cult they get rid of religious perception" (158).

> The religious perception of our time—which consists in acknowledging that the aim of life (both collective and individual) is the union of mankind—is already so sufficiently distinct that people have now only to reject the false theory of beauty, according to which enjoyment is considered to be the purpose of art, and religious perception will naturally take its place as the guide of the art of our time (189).

He discusses past and contemporary art, but offers hints for the future. In the case of future art, "the demand will be for clearness, simplicity, and brevity—conditions mastered not by mechanical exercises, but by the education of taste" (193). The subject matter of the art of the future will consist "not in the expression of exclusive feelings: pride, spleen, satiety… but in the expression of feelings experienced by a man living the life natural to all men, and flowing from the religious perception of our times, or of such feelings that are open to all men without exception" (196). Tolstoy emphasizes simplicity[224], unity[225], and universality[226].

3.1.2 In contrast with Schiller, Ruskin and Tolstoy's approaches, **Oscar Wilde** considers literature as a provider of beauty that has no moral outcomes. The letters he writes from prison to his beloved Bossy in *De Profundis*[227] ([1905] 1912), together with *The Soul of Man under Socialism* (1891), discuss the separation of art from morality. The perspective, that art exists for its own sake, turns the direction of the message conveyed towards the writer himself. The artist creates for the sake of his own comfort and desire of expression, without thinking of any outcomes of his endeavor.

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[224] "To write a rhymed poem… is far easier than to tell a simple story without any unnecessary details, yet so that it should transmit the feelings of the narrator, or to draw a pencil-sketch which should touch or amuse the beholder…" (198)

[225] "Science and art are as closely bound together as the lungs and the heart, so that if one organ is vitiated the other cannot act rightly… Art transmits these truths [those portrayed by science] from the region of perception to the region of emotion" (201).

[226] "The ideal of excellence in the future will not be the exclusiveness of feeling, accessible only to some, but, on the contrary, its universality" (199).

[227] Oscar Wilde. *De Profundis*. (London: Methuen. 1912)

In *The Soul of Man under Socialism* (1891), Wilde discusses art's developmental powers: "Art is individualism, and Individualism is a disturbing and disintegrating force. Therein lies its immense value. For what it seeks to disturb is monotony of type, slavery of custom, tyranny of habit, and the reduction of man to the level of machine[228]" (47). Wilde rejects utilitarianism, and embraces socialism that he considers to be the source of individualism, which is self-discovery[229] because it relies on free thinking and openness toward others. By rejecting the mentality of power, he invites people of his day, but also current readers to a process of becoming that involves empathy, respect, and togetherness.

Individualism[230] does not mean complete solitude, but it refers to independence, self-awareness through the cultivation of receptivity of the new, and freedom of association. Novelty that people usually reject because of the impossibility of controlling it, should be received as the greatest gift, together with redemptive beauty[231], "The work of art is to dominate the spectator… The spectator is to be receptive. He is to be the violin on which the master is to play"[232] (65). He eventually reaches the conclusion that "[w]hen we reach the true culture that is our aim, we attain to that perfection of which the saints have dreamed the perfection of those to whom sin is impossible, not because they make the renunciations of the ascetic, but because they can do everything they wish without hurt to the soul, and can wish for nothing that can do the soul harm"[233] (222).

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[228] In terms of individualism, he notes that "the individual is to make what is beautiful (36).
[229] "It is within you, and not outside of you, that you will find what you really are, and what you really want" (296).
[230] Spăriosu defines the term as "awareness of the irenic unity of all beings" (295).
[231] "Beauty is a joy" (87).
[232] In a book published in 1997, Spăriosu comments on Wilde's idea of art, suggesting that art can teach "not only an alternative ethos, but also an alternative pathos" (298). He also acknowledges Wilde's desideratum to "steer humans gently toward an alternative mentality" (300) and offers the alternative of "[t]he irenic mentality [that] is based on… a consistent aesthetic approach to human life [that] will lead to new forms of morality, not based on compulsion, deprivation, or suffering, but on limitless, cosmopolitan free expression" (295).
[233] See Oscar Wilde. "The Critic as Artist". in *Intentions and the Soul of Man*. (London: Methuen and Co. 1908)

In *De Profundis,* Wilde reiterates the suggestion to start searching for the inner soul and uses Christ's message— Be thyself—to invite his reader to becoming individualist (or pacifist, as Christ Himself). He displays his spiritual journey of redemption. He confesses reading Augustine, Newman, Dante and acknowledges the influence those readings had upon his spiritual resurrection. He sees Christ as a romantic figure and "the continual assertion of the imagination as the basis of all spiritual and material life" (41). He confesses the contagious charm of Greek texts, and the Gospels, and invites all people to let themselves be driven by the beauty of the *Logos* (understood both in a Platonic sense, and according to the Apostle John 1:1).

> At Christmas, I managed to get hold of a Greek Testament, and every morning… I read a little of the Gospels… It is a delightful way of opening the day… Endless repetition, in and out of season, has spoiled for us the freshness, the naïveté, the simple romantic charm of the Gospels… When one returns to the Greek; it is like going into a garden of lilies out of some, narrow and dark house" (49).

Wilde offers his own example as a proof of the positive influence of reading The Gospels and romantic literature because, "wherever there is a romantic movement in art there somehow, and under some form, is Christ, or the soul of Christ" (51). After learning the lesson of humility from Christ, Wilde applies it to his own situation and tries to look at his life through Christian lenses: "So perhaps whatever beauty of life still remains to me is contained in some moment of surrender, abasement, and humiliation" (54). The harsh lesson he learns in prison transforms him into a devoted Christian, in search for salvation. Admirer of beauty, Wilde connects it to divinity, and considers it a proof of God's materialization. Eventually, Wilde offers his readers a lesson in humility, and he emphasizes the narrow road toward spiritual enlightenment through prioritizing beauty and love. His search becomes the readers' search,

> There is not a single color hidden away in the chalice of a flower, or the curve of a shell, to which, by some subtle sympathy with the very soul of things, my nature does not answer… I am conscious now that behind all this beauty… there is some spirit hidden of which the painted forms and shapes are but modes of manifestation, and it is with this spirit that I desire to become in harmony… The Mystical in Art, the Mystical in Life, the Mystical in Nature this is what I am looking for. (last letter)

Texts such as Tolstoy's, Wilde's, or *The Philokalia*[234] are sources of artistic beauty and at the same time of spiritual enlightenment. They engage the reader into a game of imagination that

[234] The *Philokalia*/ Filocalia (translated as 'Love of Beauty', *Philos*=love; *Kalos*= beauty/virtue), a collection of texts written by Christian masters in the 4th -15th century and compiled by Saint Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, Saint Makarios of Corinth, and Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae, represents a pertinent example of the effect of beauty on people's (moral) choices. It is a text that promotes examples of good spiritual practices, humility, care, and love for one's neighbor. According to Bingaman, *Philokalia* promotes "the way of beauty, prayer, and silence" (275). Pavel Florensky, the Russian theologian and polymath confirms the role of spiritual fathers, as examples of equilibrium and beauty in life: "What is the criterion of the rightness of this life? Beauty. Yes, there is a special beauty of the spirit, and, ungraspable by logical formulas… The connoisseurs of this beauty are the spiritual elders, the startsy, the masters of the "arts of arts," as the holy fathers call asceticism" (8-9). According to him, the *Philokalia* "provided modern Orthodox Christians with a collection of ancient Orthodox wisdom regarding prayer, contemplative knowledge, and a sense of love of beauty that led to a life in communion with God" (72). Florensky acknowledges the role of the beautiful in general and the role of the *Philokalia* in particular, for any readers interested in finding equilibrium in life. In his book, *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth* (1997), Pavel Florensky, the great Russian theologian, defends Russian Orthodoxy and underlines the centrality of love (both *philia*—friendship—, and *agape*—universal love), by underlining the need for the other in one's life. Communion with one's neighbor, brother, friend is essential for one's becoming and salvation. Florensky offers an etymological argument for nurturing one's love for the neighbor: "the very word for 'kiss' in Russian (*potseluy*) is close to the Russian word for 'whole' (*tsely),* and the Russian verb for 'to kiss' *(tselovat'sya*) signifies that friends are brought to a state of wholeness (*tsel'nost'*) or unity. A kiss is a spiritual unification of the persons kissing" (316). By reading the *Philokalia*, similar to reading Florensky's twelve letters, the reader receives strong arguments for reshaping his/her understanding of the other. The exposure to such texts nurture reader's desire for perfection and offer a guiding path toward goodness, beauty, and truth. Brock Bingaman and Bradmey Nassif are the two editors who brought *Philokalia* to the American public, by compiling a series of texts exploring its history, and spiritual practices. They put together texts that emphasize beauty and goodness, aesthetics and ethics: "The search for immortal beauty is not separate from the pursuit of goodness, which is why theological aesthetics depends upon an ethics of moderation… And where God abides, there is also sublime beauty and infinite goodness" (66). These core values are displayed as essential features of the five volumes of the *Philokalia*, "Perseverance in the cultivation of virtue, however, leads toward a superior knowledge of the invisible world" (67). According to fathers of the *Philokalia*, superior knowledge implies faith and love through which God is revealed: "only in faith the personhood of the Other is revealed" (67, note 27). In relation to the other (understood as God or neighbor), the fathers use the word *apatheia* to symbolize, "an overflowing of love […] ascending to the Creator through the beauty of his creatures" (229 note 123). The *Philokalia* invites readers to spiritual freedom that can be attained in communion, by paying attention to one's neighbor, by respecting and loving him/her: "Entertaining kindly feelings about all men and always thinking good of all, you will look on all as pure and holy" (229, note 123). It is only through the exposure to beauty, to purity, to goodness, that one can activate those inner potentials as well. What the *Philokalia* does, is to offer readers

leads one to perfectibility. Reading such texts is not easy only because of how demanding they are. The reader cannot passively receive them because he/she is challenged to think deeply about his/her own moral stand. It is thus very probable for the reader to transform throughout the reading and start applying the values described to his/her own life. The becoming of the reader happens involuntarily because of the contagious power of texts. The reader is not only mesmerized by beauty[235], but also, he/she might be charmed by the playful liminal experience that he/she engages in, in the act of reading. The role of play in the reading process, together with its connection with beauty become important because, "We shall not go far wrong when trying to discover a man's ideal of beauty if we inquire how he satisfies his play-drive"[236] (107).

3.2 Literature as *ludic liminality*[237]

positive examples that lead one's path to revelation: "The revelation of our neighbor's personhood avoids reducing human otherness to an ontic and anonymous reality" (67, note 28). The book written by the Orthodox fathers represents an invitation to communion with the other. The Romanian edition of the *Philokalia* presents "authentic encounter of God," thus dissolving "all utopian desires to build a paradise on earth" (67). The Oxford edition of the *Philokalia*, edited by Bingaman, and published in 2012, includes an article by Mihail Neamțu. *Conversing with the World by Commenting on the Fathers: Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae and the Romanian Edition of the Philokalia.* (Oxford University Press. 2012). pp. 61-69. Mihail Neamțu describes the importance of practicing virtues: "The search for immortal beauty is not separated from the pursuit of goodness, which is why theological aesthetics depends upon an ethics of moderation" (66). He also emphasizes one of the major incentives of the *Philokalia*, that is humility that fights against self-delusion ("one's own lustful or greedy fantasies") and reminds readers that "no human being can bring about more than a very limited amount of good into the world" (68). All the materializations of virtues in the lives of spiritual fathers allow the reader to observe the great potential of living a life whose goal is perfection. The exposure to examples of goodness/beauty/truth gives the reader the drive for starting a personal search. After reading *the Philokalia*, one is inspired by the humble life examples of the spiritual fathers and has great chances to apply a part of the teachings in one's own interaction with others. It is undeniable that the fathers of the *Philokalia* are aware of Tolstoy's book on art, where he mentions that "The task for Christian art is to establish brotherly union among men" (212). Tolstoy depicts the effect of such powerful and influential texts, when saying that: "By evoking under imaginary conditions, the feeling of brotherhood and love, religious art will train man to experience those same feelings under similar circumstances in actual life… And universal art, by uniting the most different people in one common feeling, by destroying separation, will educate people to union, will show them, not by reason but by life itself, the joy of universal union reaching beyond the bounds set by life" (211). Despite being written more than five centuries ago, the texts of the *Philokalia* are actual and relevant for today's society because it confirms that, "The destiny of art in our time is to transmit from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together and to set up, in place of the existing reign of force, that kingdom of God, *i.e.* of love, which we all recognize to be the highest aim of human life" (211-212).

[235] "By nature, men desire the beautiful." See St. Basil the Great. *On the Human Condition.* (Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press "Popular Patristics Series". 2005).

[236] See Friedrich Schiller. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man, in a Series of Letters*. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson & L.A. Willoughby (eds.). (University of California: Clarendon Press. [1794] 1967)

[237] *Ludus est necessarius ad conversationem humanae vitae.* (Play is necessary to human life. My translation). See Thomas Aquinas. *Suma Teológica* (New York: Cambridge. 2006). II. p. 168.

***L'art est un jeu. Tant pis pour celui qui s'en fait un devoir*[238]**

There are writers who transform their texts into an enjoyable game that the reader accepts to play, or writers who involuntarily create a ludic aura through their text. Through allegory, confession, utopia or simple narration of a story, writers manage to create a virtual ludic space, the space and time of the text, where potent and numerous alternatives of existence are possible. This section will emphasize the didactic characteristics that both play and literature share. The central interpretative mechanisms are Huizinga's structural characteristics of play and Mihai Spăriosu's ludic approach.

Play is not only a theme in some of the chosen texts, but it is also a writing method some authors are using in order to transform their text in a challenging game for the reader. Plato's dialogues constitute a playful dialectical method of persuasion. Socrates discusses with his disciples and plays with words, questions and answers, in order to encourage the interlocutor to enrich his understanding. In the *Republic*, play is described as a means of learning, in contrast with the Pre-Socratic mentality that would relate play to *agon*, as competition, involving physical force and violence. Plato is aware of the fact that the process of learning implies access to the understanding of what violence is, thus he partially separates violence from play. The game that Plato invites the reader to has an ultimate goal, which is wisdom and beauty. In the *Laws*, he emphasizes that "man is created, as we said above, to be a plaything of God, and the best part of him is surely just that; and thus I say that every man and woman ought to pass through life in accordance with this character, playing at the noblest of pastimes, being otherwise minded than they now are" (*Laws*, VII, 803). Virtues are being professed, under the umbrella of *Logos*. In the Socratic understanding, Logos does not only mean word, but at the level of dialogue it refers to a

[238] Max Jacob. *Conseils à un Jeune Poète*. (Paris: Gallimard. 1972). p. 4.

superior level of understanding of both interlocutors taking part in a debate. Because of its potentialities, Logos becomes a playful liminal space where the intersection of ideas is possible and enriching. The effect of such an encounter is always positive because the purpose of exchanging ideas, often contradictory, is the advantage of looking at a problem from various angles. There is no interest in having a competition and a winner, but what is relevant and useful is the creation of a common ground of discussion where the exchange of ideas is nurturing each participant in the dialogue.

Mihai Spăriosu discusses play in a Platonic perspective and makes a thorough description of the Western thought and its implicit mentality of power. In his book *The Wreath of Wild Olive* (1997), Spăriosu applies the *ludic-irenic* theory to literature and culture. In the case of *Dionysus Reborn (1989),* Spăriosu discusses play in modern philosophical and scientific discourse. I will be using his ludic-irenic stance and apply it to a different group of texts, looked at through pedagogical lenses, thus analyzing the learning potential they have in creating alternatives and engaging readers in a process of self-discovery.

Spăriosu emphasizes the positive outcomes of play, showing that the *ludic* has the potential to replace violence with positive action; Spăriosu's book on play, *Dionysus Reborn* (1989) offers various perspectives on play and its connection with aestheticism. By gathering theoretical and historical considerations, Spăriosu gives arguments in support of the tight connection between play and literature. Borrowing from Spăriosu's approach, we can state that literature shares the irenic characteristics of play. It is again Spăriosu who in the *Wreath of Wild Olive,* makes the distinction between a mentality of power and an irenic mentality. He states that power is a "self-generated historical principle that organizes human existence and relations in terms of force, exerted by individuals and communities upon each other and upon their

environment" (296). Irenic mentality "is a mode of thought, behavior and pathos grounded in the principle of peace" (296). The role of literature within a mentality of power is to change the understanding of the idea of power itself and offer readers alternatives, potentialities, options, and the freedom of choice. Thus, power should be regarded as "wise and benevolent" (154).

The body of values and beliefs of a certain community contributes to the self-awareness of each individual and by using literature in the noble endeavor of shaping an irenic mentality, we implicitly contribute to shaping individual thought patterns. Play has an essential role because of its potential to teach communities and individuals a "temperament of receptivity" (297). Spăriosu uses Wilde's idea, confirming that the reader has to embrace the newness of the text, rather than authoritatively reject it. Similarly, Herbert Read, in *Education through Art*[239] (1943) underlines the idea that "through education we instill into the child that 'instinct of relationship' which… enables him to distinguish the beautiful from the ugly, the good from the evil, the right pattern of behavior from the wrong pattern, the noble person from the ignoble" (70). Many authors write because of an active humanitarian involvement in the community, in order to instill a change and determine readers to freely manifest benevolent openness toward the message of literary texts, thus receiving alternative potentialities that might provide them with a broader range of choices aiming at goodness, beauty, and truth.

Such views seem to echo in Schiller's fifteenth letter in the *Aesthetic Education of Man*, emphasizing the human necessity for play: "Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word man, and he is only wholly man when he plays" (80). Similarly, Johan Huizinga, the theoretician of play, thoroughly describes this concept in his book *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (1938). Even if he is not the first one to use the category of play in order

[239] See Read Herbert. *Education through Art*. (London: Faber and Faber. 1943)

to talk about human behavior, he defines play on the basis of both Plato's and Schiller's perspective. He frames a five-layered structure of play that echoes any fictional text.

The first characteristic is that play is a free activity. Similarly, literature is a free activity as well because individuals willingly engage in the act of reading. Curiosity, drive for knowledge, or simple pleasure determine people to open a book. Any reader can easily make the distinction between the real world and the fictional one, the time of reading and the time of the narrative. The second trait describes the move from the real world into a new ludic environment. All readers enter a virtual space when the mind starts exploring a virtual reality. The reader willingly emerges into the fictional world through the game of imagination. A playful activity has a beginning and an end. Before a fictional text, the reader is consciously engaged in a liminal process of self-induced mental exile with a beginning and an end.

A game creates order because of the rules that one needs to respect. Similarly, a book could impose intellectual order, through a virtual contract that the reader and the writer tacitly sign. For the reading to be enjoyable, the reader has to believe in the ephemeral existence of fictional characters and places. The last characteristic of play is its secrecy since only the ones initiated can understand and apply specific rules. In the case of literature, there are hermetic texts that cannot be understood, unless accompanied by supplementary reading and research. These five common characteristics of play reflect the ludic component of literary texts. Huizinga's adherence to the Tachtigers movement[240] confirms the contribution of literature to guide one's

[240] Dutch literary movement that "rated literature far higher than science, which sought the meaning of life within ourselves and completely ignored politics and allied topics" See Johan Huizinga. "My Path to History". in *Dutch Civilization in the Seventeenth Century and Other Essays.* A. J. Pomerans (trans.). (London, 1968). p. 252.

process of self-discovery. The formative role of literature for individuals and communities is undeniable as we see in the following analyses of several representative works.

3.2.1 The Game of *The Little Prince*

Self-discovery is unquestionably at the core of Antoine de Saint Exupéry's *Le Petit Prince* (1943). The text manages to stage life in a playful manner. The main character engages the reader into an incursion into childhood as the entire action of the text is described through the eyes of a six-year-old child. The voyage of the Little Prince provides the context for several important encounters, each teaching an essential lesson. The reader cannot escape the playful path to which the prince directs him[241].

Play is at the core of Exupéry's novel. Not only does its structure rely on a playful story told by a child, but also at the level of themes, the return to innocence proves to unravel the mystery of a good life. The child narrator starts his account by describing a drawing he found in a book entitled *Experienced Stories*. The sketch delineates a Boa snake eating a big animal. The child draws his own version of the snake eating a massive prey. He then shows adults his drawing, but no one can fathom it. "It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye" (xxi). The author acknowledges adults' inability to see beyond appearance since they only use their eyes, "Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them" (i). Such revelation might incite reader's interest and imagination. The novel thus becomes a game that invites at a playful staging of life.

[241] Exupéry writes the epigraph for Léon Werth, a lonely hungry man and he dedicates the book to adults, or rather to the childhood self of his friend and of his reader. The author's testimony is that he has written a children's book for adults.

This double-layered game goes in two directions. The interior one embroiders a story of discovery of the self through the picaresque experience of the Little Prince, while the exterior layer engages the reader in the same game, determining "the play of the self" or "self as performer… as a ceaseless crisscross of conflictive forces… [that opens] the way for positing a different kind of consciousness"[242] (x, xv).

Further on, the prince leaves his asteroid and moves through a series of revelatory encounters. He explores friendship, innocence, inner world, beauty, work addiction, and selfishness through the playful aura of childhood. The tone and the simplicity of details, together with imagery and allegory transform the story into a playful and enjoyable process of self-discovery.

The inner eye of the Little Prince perceives adults' superficiality and loss of innocence since they never wonder about essential qualities such as beauty and love. "It is truly useful only if it is beautiful" (xx). Adults are obsessed with numbers that give a fake sense of beauty, "I saw a house that costs 100.000 francs. They will say it is so beautiful" (iv). The harsh lesson is that people are unhappy independently of how much money they might have. Children on the other hand, live happily because they can trace real beauty and they offer unconditional love and acceptance, thus they are living examples of a ludic-irenic mentality.

The end of the textual game offers a relevant lesson about the mystery of a happy life. All it takes is to "walk slowly toward a cold fountain" (xxiii), and to be grateful for the beauty of the world around. The loss of innocence along with gaining seriousness, money, social recognition, and success poisons the adult's soul. Exupéry's explanation of the adult's disenchantment comes from the fact that "We feel less human" because we "have lost our mysterious prerogatives",

[242] See Ronald Bogue, Mihai Spăriosu (eds.). *The Play of the Self*. (State University of New York Press. 1994)

thus he suggests that we should come back to our childhood innocence and approach others with benevolence and with our heart and eyes open. Returning to childhood for recovering kindness, unconditional love, and acceptance represents a process of self-discovery, of regaining one's roots, thus finding the cold fountain in the desert. The reader can thus engage in such a game even after ending the reading, by moving from fiction to reality through materializing Little Prince' s genuine example.

3.2.2 The Game of *The Imaginary Invalid*

In *Le Malade Imaginaire*[243] ([1673] 2004), Molière[244] makes fun of himself as a hypochondriac, and of doctors, family members, and society in general. In order to criticize the 17th-century society, Molière chooses satire[245] since laughter corrects morals[246]. His comedy is a fictional text that might correct people by amusing them. The playful technique can be stratified in several categories. First, the dramatic genre of play/comedy involves the staging of life for the purpose of criticizing doctors while entertaining the audience. Beralde, Argan's brother suggests him to become a physician himself since, in order to become a doctor, one has "to speak with a gown and a cap, and any gibberish becomes learned, and all nonsense becomes sense" (74).

Secondly, the main character Argan plays his own game of simulacra, persuading his family and servants to carefully treat him, "Speak low… you shake my brain, and you forget that invalids should not be spoken to so loudly" (33) Toinette, the brave female servant uses a cheerful language and engages in a power game in Argan's household. She suggests Cléante not

[243] *The Imaginary Invalid.* All the quotations are from the English version of the play, published in 2004.
[244] In *What is Art,* Tolstoy describes Molière as, "perhaps the most universal and therefore the most excellent, artist of modern times" (168).
[245] Satire is a genre of play manifested through the use of irony, and sarcasm. It exposes vice and shortcomings of people and societies and most of the times it has a moral purpose. Starting with the Ancient world until today, satire has been omnipresent in theater and literary canon because it offers sharp social criticism and generates improvement. See John Dryden. *A Discourse Concerning the Original and Progress of Satire.* (Cassell & Company edition by David Price. 1888. transcribed by Henry Morley (ed.). 2014.)
[246] Roman philosophy of *Ridendo castigat mores!*

to “speak so loud, for fear of shaking master’s brain… Master is always ill” (33). She has authority and knows how to please others, while delicately and constantly pricking them. One time, she rudely puts a pillow on Argan’s head, “to keep the night dew away from [him]” (20).

Thirdly, the play within a play, at the end of the comedy is another ludic literary technique that has purifying effects on both Argan and the reader. Toinette, disguised as a physician convinces Argan to renounce useless cures that his previous doctors had suggested and start a healthy diet: “You must drink your wine pure, and, to thicken your blood, which is too thin, you must eat good solid beef, good solid pork, good Dutch cheese; groats and rice, and chestnuts and thin cakes” (68). She takes him out from a distorted reality and convinces him to adopt a healthy lifestyle, without trying to come up with inexistent problems.

Fourthly, Molière uses language in a playful manner so as to engage the audience and spark laughter. Beside the names of characters, Molière uses Latin quotes and verses in order to make fun of doctors who use medical terms that patients do not understand, “Your highest knowledge is but pure chimera, / Vain and not very learned doctors; You cannot cure, by your grand Latin words, / The grief that causes my despair” (6). In contrast, at the end of the play, he pretends to praise doctors’ ability to speak, “Novus doctor, qui tam bene parlat!” (82).

The ultimate outcome of this satire is to mock humans and their flaws, such as fear of death, selfishness, greed, and submission to authority. Molière provides the reader with a clear picture of vice that paradoxically spreads virtue and pleasure through its incisive satire. The restoration of normality gives the reader hope and transforming resources for harmoniously handling real-life situations. Besides satire, play gets actualized in utopianism and offers readers new liminal spaces to explore and new life lessons to learn.

3.2.3 Aldous Huxley’s *Island*

Aldous Huxley's last novel, *Island* ([1962] 2009), presents an imagined society –at the intersection of East and West—where people have an ideal lifestyle, and mostly focus on their contemplative existence while embracing modernization, technology, and industrialization with moderation. In such a context, people have time for meditation and self-discovery. By describing this utopic society, Huxley plays with the mind of the reader, offering him/her an orientation for the future. Huxley knows that post World War II society needs changes and clear moral foundations. In *Brave New World* ([1932] 2009), he emphasizes his trust in the great influence of books. For instance, he gives Mustapha Mond (the Controller, one of those who run the World State) the opportunity to play with people's freedom and "happiness". Mustafa is the one who rejects books that are too daring and have the potential to change mentalities and might raise awareness of the manipulation in which people live.

While analyzing, "A New Theory of Biology", the Controller acknowledges the subversive power of the article. "It was the sort of idea that might easily decondition the more unsettled minds among the higher castes—make then lose their faith in happiness as the Sovereign Good and take to believing, instead, that the goal was something beyond, somewhere outside the present human sphere; that the purpose of life was not in the maintenance of well-being, but some intensification and refining of consciousness, some enlargement of knowledge" (177). Huxley knows that one cannot imagine change without an orientation, or an idea, thus he creates utopian worlds that bring back the secular moral foundations of both Eastern and Western civilizations.

If in his *Perennial Philosophy* ([1944] 2009) Huxley stresses the truth as the transcendental aim of human existence, in the *Island*, he raises awareness about the need for holistic education. "What we give the children is simultaneously a training in perceiving and

imagining, a training in applied physiology and psychology, a training in practical ethics and practical religion, a training in the proper use of language, and a training in self-knowledge. In a word, a training in the whole mind-body in all its aspects" (256). He describes an ideal system of education based on self-awareness and self-control. Susila MacPhail gives examples of some pretending games that are meant to "get people to understand that we're not completely at the mercy of our memory and our phantasies" (277), but we have the ability to search for awareness of the present moment. Man's playful nature facilitates knowledge acquisition. The appropriate educational system should be based on games of all sorts, from intellectual ones to physical ones because they allow people to actualize their dormant playful potential.

Not only does Huxley underline the role of games for both children and adults, but he also playfully emphasizes the shortcomings of current educational systems in the world. His lesson was as valid fifty years ago as it is today. His system leads to the formation of the whole man, developed physically, mentally, and emotionally. One of the main methods is play, since "one can use games to implant an understanding of basic principles" (258), in order to reach, "the road that leads towards happiness from the inside out, through health, through awareness, through a change in one's attitude towards the world; not towards the mirage of happiness from the outside in, through toys and pills (such as the truth-and-beauty pill) and nonstop distractions" (259).

One of the major principles that are being implemented on Pala is the centrality of relationships. "Never give children a chance of imagining that anything exists in isolation" (260). For the reader, Huxley's text becomes the third element in his/her interaction with his/her neighbor, or friend. Huxley's playful attitude engages the reader in a search for the self and the other through the awareness of the common humanity, and individual potentialities never

acknowledged before. “We’re all demented sinners in the same cosmic boat—and the boat is perpetually sinking” (76).

Through the mynah bird, Huxley playfully activates reader’s self-awareness. On one hand, the bird can be interpreted as a symbol of Christ who also tried to make people spiritually assertive, and aware of their mistakes and of their potential to improve their lives, for reaching salvation. “In the distance, a mynah bird was calling monotonously for attention. Attention to avarice, attention to hypocrisy, attention to vulgar cynicism” (70) The repetition of the bird’s signal, *Karuna, Karuna*[247] transmits readers the urge for a peaceful mentality. Huxley playfully awakens the readers’ awareness of seizing the moment.

3.2.4 The impossibility of play- *Matthew’s Enigma*

One cannot end the discussion about play without taking into consideration the impossibility of such a natural function. Matei Călinescu writes the story of his autistic son, so as

[247] *Karuna, Karuna* means “Attention to attention”, or (attention to) compassion (19). Framing suggestions for acquiring a life of compassion and peace is another goal of Huxley’s endeavor. Peace should manifest itself both at an individual and collective level. Collectively, peace is achievable through humility, care, and respect for others. “Conflicts and frustrations—the theme of all history and almost all biography. ‘I show you sorrow’, said the Buddha realistically. But he also showed the ending of sorrow—self-knowledge, total acceptance, the blessed experience of Not-Two” (41). Non-dualism is a religious strand, which teaches that, “the multiplicity of the universe is reducible to one essential reality”. (Espin 963). For a detailed overview of the Hindu doctrine of Not-Two, see Espín, Orlando O. Nickoloff, James B. *An Introductory Dictionary of Theology and Religious Studies.* (Liturgical Press. 2007). From a personal perspective, one can reach peace through meditation and prayer, since “[p]erfect faith is defined as something that produces perfect state of mind” (137), communion with others, communion with nature, and eventually identification with the ultimate figure, Life flowing silently and irresistibly into ever fuller life, into a living peace all the more profound, all the richer and stronger and more complete because it knows all your pain and unhappiness, knows them and takes them into itself and makes them one with its own substance. And it’s into that peace that you’re floating now … Effortlessly floating! … into living peace… Along the sleeping river, irresistibly into the wholeness of reconciliation (34-5). The island Pala is “an oasis of freedom and happiness” that displays the “enormous joke of existence” (15) because the inhabitants prove to be the opposite of real people. In contrast with ordinary people, Palanians acknowledge the present moment, they meditate and pray in order to climb the spiritual ladder, and they reach equilibrium through nurturing all aspects of their life. Huxley’s utopia is an invitation to “truthfulness, humility, selflessness… Purity” (62), and his main goal is to transmit the need for self-discovery. “Concentration, abstract thinking, spiritual exercises—systematic exclusions in the realm of thought. Asceticism and hedonism—systematic exclusion in the realms of sensation, feeling and action. But Good Being is in the knowledge of who in fact one is in relation to all experiences. So be aware—aware in every context, at all times and whatever, creditable or discreditable, pleasant or unpleasant, you may be doing or suffering… The more a man knows about individual objects, the more he knows about God [truth]” (42-3).

to show that often dialogue, communion, and play[248] become problematic and should not be taken for granted. In *Matthew's Enigma: A Father's Portrait of His Autistic Son* (2009), Călinescu offers a lesson of love, respect for the other, and a harsh lesson of self-awareness. The journal of a father who is a master in playing with words, but incapable of communicating with his autistic son, portrays the tragedy of parents who cannot understand their children and the tragedy of autistic children who cannot play. Written the first forty days after the death of his son, Călinescu's book depicts the impossibility of an autistic child to empathize with others and his inability to use language symbolically, with its various semantic layers. As Figueira notices, this memoir can be read "as a testament to a father's love for his son, as a public service acquainting the general public regarding the problems of raising a child with autism, as an inquiry into the nature of the disease, and, finally, as an investigation of the interrelation between autism and topic pertinent to the author's profession, reading"[249]. For Matthew, relating to others' feelings is impossible thus, dialogue cannot reach its wholeness. Without play, life loses its potential because people only answer external stimuli, without creating and recreating themselves in accordance with their environment. Life without play is robotically led and not participatory.

Călinescu writes the book from the perspective of both the father and the literature professor. He analyzes his son's reactions and manages to describe Matthew's relational problems. "In 1988, I was especially struck by the almost total absence of imaginative play in children with autism of which many researchers speak. Hence my keen interest in theories of

[248] See Armitage, M. "Hide and Seek: Where Do Children Spend their Time after School?" (A paper for the Child in the City Conference, London). in Lester, S. and Russell, W. (eds.). *Play for a Change: Play, Policy and Practice: A Review of Contemporary Perspectives*. (London: Play England. 2008)

[249] For a thorough analysis of Călinescu's *Rereading* and *Matthew's Enigma,* see Dorothy Figueira. "Autistic Solitude and the Act of Reading". in *Symploke*. Vol. 17. No. 1-2. (University of Nebraska Press. 2009). pp. 281-286.

play and, closer to my job of teaching literature, in the relation of play to reading. I was always aware that these three dysfunctions characteristic of autism (linguistic, imaginative, social) were connected[250]" (vi).

Readers will definitely learn harsh life lessons and will acknowledge that acceptance and care for others will always increase chances for appropriate interaction. They will also acknowledge the centrality of play for one's mental health. Similar to Exupéry who invites readers to look at the world through the innocent gaze of children, Călinescu reminds readers that games have not only an aesthetic function but also a formative role[251]. He considers Matthew's problem "angelical" because it was autism that made him and his wife love their son with "ever-growing compassion, it made [them] protect him, and admire him, while learning patience, acceptance of suffering, and a certain melancholic serenity" (v). Călinescu analyzes the creation of meaning in language, to the inability of one's interlocutor to make himself/herself understood, and to the emotional and social interaction between individuals. His son did not master, "the perception of behavioral signs of tacit recognition of body language, gestures, eyes, that make social communication possible (similar with verbal-linguistic signs: usually perceived as simple polite formulas, taken seriously, figuratively, or as jokes)" (v). All these social codes can sometimes be a mystery. Călinescu offers an impressive and well-documented analysis of autistic people who teach others how to better engage, how to wisely choose one's words, and how to pay more attention to people around.

[250] Călinescu first wrote the Romanian version of the book in 2003 and was later on translated into English: "În 1988, mă izbise mai ales noţiunea absenţei sau cvasi-absenţei jocului imaginativ la copiii cu autism. De unde interesul meu pentru teoriile jocului şi relaţia lor cu lectura. Cele trei domenii psihologice în care se manifestă autismul sunt conectate: limbajul, imaginaţia şi socializarea" (ch. VI).
[251] See Matei Călinescu. *Rereading*. (New Haven: Yale University Press. 1993)

In his book, on *Rereading* (1993), Călinescu associates the process of reading with play. He notes that "It is precisely as a form of play, as a ludic activity, that a poetics of (re) reading should approach its object. Such a poetics would be historical and cultural and fundamentally intertextual. Its theoretical starting point could be, as Michel Picard has suggested in his *La lecture comme jeu*, the 'assimilation of language [*langue*] to a gigantic game [*jeu*] within which certain speech sequences [*paroles*] would constitute particular 'games' [*parties*], a model that would be applicable to well-organized 'cultural-ensembles" (131). Călinescu has three perspectives on reading and play: creativity, psychology, and games with rules, "My discussion of (re)reading and play starts by focusing on the intellectual end-results of such playful behavior in the creative human adult" (134). Călinescu suggests that reading can "be described as a way of playing games of make-believe that may lead to deep involvement and even a sort of hypnosis or trance" (275). Understanding oneself becomes an ethical process of first understanding the other (through reading). If reading is "an act of playing imaginative games" (275), autism is precisely the inability to play that leads to "difficulties in constructing inferential bridges between the gaps" (85). Daily interactions sometimes lack the "ludic component of life" and prevent people from reading and understanding each other.

There are people who do not suffer from autism and still cannot always unravel messages hidden under behavioral codes because of cultural or emotional shortcomings. Călinescu's relationship with his son teaches readers that despite the impossibility of understanding others correctly, one has chances of engaging as long as one is patient and focuses on the other's humanity. The critic, author, and father, analyzes play and reading, and as Figueira notices, he "puts us on the path to a greater understanding of the solitude of autism within each of us…[He provides us] with a map of negotiating our way in the world of signs [through reading]".

Evidently, he confirms that literature becomes a source of understanding, a spring of patience, and the third element in readers' future dialogues. He suggests that literature is there to mediate the gap in the interaction between those of us "whose imagination easily takes flight and those who, like the gospel vision, are 'poor in spirit'"[252].

3.3 Literature as a source of hospitable imagination[253]

Imagination is more important than knowledge/ Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world **(Albert Einstein)**

Călinescu seems to reiterate what both Plato and Kant aim at when they invite readers to use their imagination in order to reach higher moral standards. Ricoeur, on the other hand, relies on imagination because it has the potential to lead one to understanding and transformation. C. S. Lewis creates a magical fictional world that would nurture his readers' imagination and stimulate their transcendental search. If for Plato, the theory of forms hints at perfection only at the level of ideas, material forms being reflections of ideal forms, Kant looks at beauty as a symbol of morality[254], in the sense that it invites one to reflect at something higher, that goes beyond intuition. Thus, beauty plays a central role in allowing imagination to surpass one's material understanding and reach the 'free play' of the cognitive faculties or harmony between reason and judgment.

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[252] See Dorothy Figueira. "Autistic Solitude and the Act of Reading". in *Symploke*. Vol. 17. No. 1-2. (University of Nebraska Press. 2009). p. 285.

[253] "When you come to a good book, you must ask yourself, 'Am I inclined to work as an Australian miner would? Are my pickaxes and shovels in good order, and am I in good trim myself, my sleeves well up the elbow, and my breath good, and my temper?' And, keeping the figure a little longer… the metal you are in search of being the author's mind and meaning, his words are as the rock you have to crush and smelt in order to get at it. And your pickaxes are your own care, wit, and learning; your smelting furnace is your own thoughtful soul. Do not hope to get at any good author's meaning without those tools and that fire." See Ruskin, John. *Sesame and Lilies*. Vol. 18 of the Library Edition. (London: George Allen. 1905). p. 64.

[254] Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Judgment.* Werner S. Pluhar (trans.). (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company. [1790] 1987). p. 61.

Hospitable imagination is a capacity that elevates and takes one beyond appearance, closer to a mental discipline that unites internal freedom with external nature. Imagination can guide one into acknowledging that we are all reflections of the Same and that one's beauty is a mere reflection of the ultimate Beauty. Each sign of beauty should enter in communion with other traces of beauty[255] because only together they can awaken and nurture each other. "Without a certain fullness in the realization of truth and beauty, the insightfulness and spontaneity that should grace moral action are lacking"[256].

[255] For instance, Calvino's *Invisible Cities* go beyond Plato's *Myth of the Cave* with the graphical understanding of reality. Through Polo's stories, readers practice receptivity and awareness. Once 'awakened,' the reader will find in himself/herself the keys to unlock humanistic potentials, and as a consequence he/she will understand that it is only through perpetual inner enhancement, receptivity for the other's diversity, and peaceful approach that he/she will reach truth and happiness. One of the most important lessons readers have access to is the suggestion to "examining the traces of happiness still to be glimpsed" (59). For Calvino, it is essential to "seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of the inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space" (165). Attentiveness represents both awareness of the various constructions of reality, and the apprehension of beauty. Acknowledging global and perennial values or the search for goodness, beauty, and truth allows the reader to "grow in lightness" (75). According to Calvino, one needs to learn to make use of his/her imagination and critical thinking skills when approaching a new space. At the end of an imaginary exploration of Calvino's liminal spaces, readers might think that "[e]verything [they] see and do assumes meaning in a mental space where the same calm reigns as here the same penumbra, the same silence by the rustling of leaves" (103). By paying attention to Calvino's aspiration to (self)-transcendence, by reframing one's understanding of space, by surpassing one's limitations, and by allowing imagination to expand through the encounter of beauty gives readers high chances to relate to others and the world around in a constructive way. Advancing the reading of texts such as Calvino's will actualize readers' attentiveness, compassion, universal friendship, peace and cooperation, thus producing the global citizen. Calvino's *Invisible Cities* teach us that "[i]n order to live beautifully, one needs to think beautifully". See Î.P.S. Andrei Andreicuț. *Mai Putem Trăi Frumos?* (Alba Iulia: Editura Reîntregirea. 2001). Also, Italo Calvino. *Invisible Cities.* William Weaver (trans.) (New York: Harcourt, Inc. 1974)

[256] See Wattles, Jeffrey. *The Golden Rule.* (New York: Oxford University Press. 1996). p. 8. From the excellence of character specific for the Confucian path, people started framing rules and behaviors that might make their collective living bearable. "Confucian tradition has honored the beauty in genuine goodness, where the shadow of self-conscious hesitation is gone and nobility of character expresses itself spontaneously" (Wattles 15). The Golden rule has surfaced throughout history in every culture, aiming at communion and hospitality. When Tzu-Kung asked Confucius, "Is there single word which can serve as the guiding principle for conduct throughout one's life?" he answered, "It is the word "consideration" [*shu*]"(Most times the word consideration is linked to its "companion virtue", loyalty [*chung*]. (Analects 4.15)). Do not impose on others what you do not desire others to impose upon you" (Analects). For Buddhists, the same rule is expressed as follows, "Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful" (Udana-Varga, 5.18). Confucius suggests that it is through comparison that one reaches the golden rule, becoming a 'man of humanity', "A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes the character of others, and wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent" (Analects 6.28). In order for the comparison to be possible, one needs to imagine him/herself in the situation of the other, or to "treat… common people as one's own children". Ancient Greece, on the other hand, faced times when rivalry was more valued than compassion. Among the first who changed the paradigm toward a rational mentality was Isocrates, a contemporary of Plato, who in one of his letters (374 B.C), noted, "Conduct yourself toward your parents as you would have your children conduct themselves toward you". See Wattles, Jeffrey. *The Golden Rule.* (New York: Oxford University Press. 1996). p. 31. Plato's dialogues do not encourage the law of retaliation, and

3.3.1 In addition to aspects already discussed in **Paul Ricoeur's** writing, I will now focus on his idea of hospitality and imagination. Ricoeur builds his philosophical anthropology on the idea of "capable human being" who is not a supreme master of himself/herself but reaches self-knowledge through the understanding of the world and the other. He proposes the term "linguistic hospitality"[257], in order to describe the ideal of reconciliation among people. This reconciliation can further give birth to a higher search for truth and becoming. Ricoeur is aware of the universal network of irenic truths and he actualizes them in his writings, stressing receptivity, responsibility, hospitability, and love. It is through these core values that one can build a healthy peaceful mentality that will manifest itself individually and collectively.

Through his tripartite schema of *mimesis*, Ricoeur[258] confirms the power of literature to stimulate change in individuals. His aim is to reconnect the text to action, "relier le texte à

instead they focus on insights into the eternal, perfect, the beautiful (*Symposium*) or the good (*Republic*). The Jewish *Torah* encompasses the golden rule of receptivity and hospitality as follows, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor" (Shabbath 31a). Ben Sira's second century texts invites forgiveness, "Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then your sons will be pardoned when you pray… If one has no mercy toward another like himself, can he then seek pardon for his own sins?" (Ben Sira—Ecclesiasticus— 28: 1-4). Later on, the *New Testament* offers the rule of love, offering an alternative to the mentality of power. Jesus' example of acceptance, patience, and unconditional love for all people is revelatory and constitutes a valuable inspiration for all of us. Acceptance of suffering, and rejection of doing evil for evil while offering love instead constitute lessons that cannot be easily understood. As Wattles notices in *The Golden Rule* (1996), loving one's enemy does not come naturally, but it is through an example such as Jesus' that people acknowledge such possibility and allow their imagination to frame possible similar sacrificial scenarios that might be applied to their lives as well, "In context, then, Jesus' golden rule re-motivates the normal practice of exchanging favors, and it excludes retaliation, [instead, he offers] the Golden Rule of Prudence… of Neighborly Love… of Fatherly Love" (67). The golden rule and the incentive for a hospitable imagination are not provided only by religious minds, but they also come from secular sources. Representatives of the Enlightenment criticized the golden rule and reinterpreted it. Kant considers that, "[w]e should treat others as we are grateful to have been treated" (86). For Jean Piaget morality implies conformity to rules and the exchange of roles in "rule governed situations promotes moral growth" (108).
Contemporary philosophies provide rich interpretations of the golden rule of empathy, and give suggestions for people to identify and activate this perennial value or natural law. Edmund Husserl discusses empathy and hospitality in terms of 'apperception', instead of intuition. Husserl's assistant, Edith Stein published Husserl's thoughts on empathy, describing it as recognition of other consciousness. See Edith Stein. *On the Problem of Empathy*. Waltraut Stein (trans.). (The Hague: Martinus Nyjhoff. 1964). Wattles describes Stein's contribution to the multidisciplinary discussion on empathy, pointing out that, "her explication of an emphatic comprehension prior to the imaginative role reversal, showing, by contrast, how the latter can be regarded as derivative" (142).

[257] *hospitalité langagière*

[258] In the series of Gifford Lectures, published under the title of *Oneself as Another* (1992), Ricoeur emphasizes the importance of the Other/God, in the process of self-discovery, through the ideal of reciprocity, as well as the ethical intention of: "aiming at a good life lived with and for others in just institutions" (172).

l'action"[259] and implicitly to offer the reader a better understanding of his/her potentialities for reaching goodness (16). He analyzes the insights into the narrative process and their effects upon the reader. He argues that the reading process implies prefiguration (narrative competence based on previous experiences and expectations), followed by configuration (narrative emplotment[260] or mediation), and refiguration (as last hermeneutic step that provides readers with understanding and transformation). Any reading process has the potential to "restore ideas to the real world, that of action"[261]. His interpretative method is similar to Gadamer's fusion of horizons.

As an essential literary tool, language builds metaphors that can accurately approach a higher level of conceptualization of the ultimate truth. In the *Rule of Metaphor* ([1986] 2003), Ricoeur develops a theory concerning the creation of meaning by showing that language can extend its conceptualizations and semantics through the discovery of new meanings within fresh combinations of words. In *Oneself as Another* (1992), Ricoeur manages to emphasize the common ground between people, their humanity and their need for mutual recognition. It is through narratives, personal stories, family histories, tradition, customs, and rituals that people manage to further transmit their commonalities, so as to frame their own selves settled in a hospitable mentality. The self involves, "a dialectic of ownership and of dispossession, of care and of carefreeness, or self-affirmation and of self-effacement" (168):

[259] Ricoeur's text raises social awareness for the other, the neighbor, or the distant other. In *Amour et Justice* (2008), a collection of three essays, from the same series of lectures, Ricoeur establishes goodness as a *sine qua non* in the encounter of the self with the other. In order to better forward his advice and persuade the reader in acknowledging the significance of goodness, Ricoeur offers direct suggestions: "Love your neighbors, do good and give without expecting anything in return", hoping his reader, might apply the recommendation in his/her own encounter with another.

[260] The "kingdom of the *as if*" offers an imaginative order to events.

[261] In *Amour et Justice*, Ricoeur discusses the theory that he develops in *Time and Narrative*, and he defines refiguration, as the effect of discovery and transformation, as a result of the reading process… "[L]e récit- [que] j'appelle *refiguration* [ou] l'effet de découverte et de transformation exercé par le discours sur son auditeur ou son lecteur dans le processus de reception du texte" (50).

> In true sympathy, the self, whose power of acting is at the start greater than that of its other, finds itself affected by all that the suffering other offers to it in return. Far from the suffering other, there comes a giving that is no longer drawn from the power of acting and existing but precisely from weakness itself… A self-reminded of the condition of mortality can receive from the friend's weakness more than he or she can give in return by drawing from his or her own reserves of strength (190).

Ricoeur underlines moral duty as central for any human interaction. Once incorporated into the understanding of what the self is, hospitality, generosity, responsibility, and love for the other will spring from the inside. He surpasses the boundaries of disciplines and transmits his incentive for goodness and forgiveness (based on the model of Jesus). Ricoeur utilizes the gospel parables in order to offer the reader a moral model of goodness and forgiveness[262]. For him, the "biblical *poesis* [i]s a stimulus for new ways of being and acting" (74). He thus creates an interdisciplinary dialogue, allowing the reader to absorb its moral teachings. Ricoeur's texts confirm that literature nurtures hospitable imagination and they provide a "restorative hermeneutic"[263] that one can find in C. S. Lewis' texts as well.

3.3.2 For **C.S. Lewis,** literature is a source of hospitable imagination. "His purpose in writing stories… was 'to make it easier for children to accept Christianity when they met it later in life…' I am aiming at a sort of pre-baptism of the imagination"[264]. "Both realist literature and works of fantasy are able to excite our imaginations. But in giving us "sensations we never had

[262] In a book dedicated to *Ricoeur's Pedagogy of Pardon* (2012), Maria Duffy explains Ricouer's ethical quest: "the self seeks that which is good for me and leads to a good life […] in this way the good for me enlarges into the good for us" (90). Duffy underlines Ricoeur's understanding of the relevance of stories and literature as reconciliatory platforms that reunite groups of different cultures through the "translation of each other's histories and collective experiences…both parties making an imaginative leap into the world of the other" (75). Ricoeur's ethic stimulus aims at creating "a genuinely peaceful society [that]… would enter the light of true fraternity" (69).
[263] See Loretta Dornisch. "Ricoeur's Theory of Mimesis: Implications for Literature and Theology". in *Journal of Literature & Theology*. (Vol. 3. No. 3. November 1989). p. 318.
[264] See Sayer George Jack. *A Life of C.S. Lewis* (Wheaton: Crossway Books. 1994). p. 318.

before' and enlarging' our range of possible experience, fantasy is indisputably superior to realist literature" (247). Similar to Ricoeur's first *mimesis*, or prefiguration, that relies on expectations and experiences, and similar to Gadamer's anticipatory structures and fusion of horizons, Lewis uses stories for their potential to help one understand and appropriate the world of the text, thus becoming other. "The same is true of the telling of a gospel. To follow the telling of the gospel is to follow the process of becoming a disciple. It is the process of conversion"[265].

In his fantasy[266] novel titled *Chronicles of Narnia* (1950), Lewis illustrates a fictional realm where the classical dichotomy of good and evil (materialized in mythical beasts or talking animals) becomes a source of life lessons for a couple of children who are magically transported to Narnia. Their adventures in the fantastic world of Narnia invite both children and adults to a liminal experience where play, beauty, and magic stimulate the search for values. Lewis transforms his writing into a source of Christian ideas. The Great Lion Aslan is the symbol of Jesus Christ because he is compassionate, wise, benevolent, and he is the one saving Narnia from evil forces. Lewis depicts adults as buffoons and he celebrates childhood and innocence.

Readers can easily relate to the main characters because they are real children taken from the current society into a series of adventures that expose them to important examples of receptivity, care, goodness, and beauty. Lewis communicates the Biblical truth through allegories and parables that parallel those in the gospels. For instance, the book, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* represents a good lesson of love[267]. *Prince Caspian* teaches readers to

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[265] See Loretta Dornisch. "Ricoeur's Theory of Mimesis: Implications for Literature and Theology". in *Journal of Literature & Theology*. (Vol. 3. No. 3. November 1989). p. 317.

[266] "Lewis and Tolkien suggest six ways in which fantasy can excite and expand the imagination" See Baggett et al. *C. S. Lewis as Philosopher: Truth, Goodness and Beauty*. IVP Academic. (Illinois: InterVarsity Press. 2008). p. 246. "Fantasy broadens our perspective and enlarges our sense of what is possible" (246); "Fantasy can reenchant the ordinary world" (247); "Fantasy can activate our moral imaginations" (248); "Fantasy can baptize our imaginations" (254); "Fantasy satisfies primordial human desires" (256); "Fantasy offers healthy forms of escape" (257).

[267] "the legacy of C. S. Lewis—that friends can dialogue and everyone does not have to agree as a precondition for mutual appreciation" (46).

remain faithful during difficult times and *The Last Battle* anticipates the ultimate judgment and the end of days. In an article published in 2005, Bill Davis[268] illustrates the unquestionable value of Lewis' writing, by mentioning that, "Beyond the rollicking adventures, beyond the religious symbolism, the Chronicles of Narnia is a 'book of virtues' that seeks to fulfill this classic educational function in a world that, Lewis believed, was increasingly morally and imaginatively impoverished" (110).

Apart from the *Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis' books invite readers to take a responsible look at educational systems. In *The Abolition of Man* ([1943] 2001), he refers to teaching methods that subvert values and leave students incapable of discerning between good and evil, thus becoming "men without chests"[269]. He makes the distinction between the old and the new educational system and he acknowledges the flaws of current pedagogies. "It is not a theory they put into his [the student's] mind, but an assumption (5) … In a word, the old was a kind of propagation—men transmitting manhood to men; the new is merely propaganda" (23). As portrayed by Baggett et al. (2008), similar to the ideals of German education, Lewis' book asks for a return to classical values and virtues discussed by Plato[270], Aristotle, and St. Augustine[271], among others. Evidently, Lewis criticizes current attempts that relativize[272] values. He is aware that children "will not at first have the right responses" (16), but they need to be exposed to

[268] See Bill Davis. "Extreme Makeover: Moral Education and the Encounter with Aslan". in the *Chronicles of Narnia and Philosophy: The Lion, The Witch and the Worldview*. Gregory Bassham & Jerry L. Walls. (eds.). (Chicago: Open Court. 2005). pp. 106-118.
[269] Lewis offers a clarifying explanation for the expression 'men without chest' by symbolically situating values in the trunk that unites intellectual man with visceral man. "The head rules the belly through the chest… Without the aid of trained emotions, the intellect is powerless against the animal organism" (24).
[270] "He writes that created beauty is not only desirable and beneficial, but also formative" (207).
[271] "Lewis, in the tradition of Augustine, uses artistic analogies to help us see creation as beautiful" (207).
[272] "They claim to be cutting away the parasitic growth of emotion, religious sanction, and inherited taboos, in order that 'real' or 'basic' values may emerge" (29). However, "It is the well-nurtured man, the *cuor gentil*, and he alone, who can recognize Reason when it comes… I am simply arguing that if we are to have values at all we must accept the ultimate platitudes of Practical Reason as having absolute validity: that any attempt, having become skeptical about these, to reintroduce value lower down on some supposedly more "realistic" basis, is doomed… This is the rejection of the concept of value altogether" (49, 51).

examples of good practices so as for them to learn how to discern good from evil and freely choose their path in life[273].

Lewis warns readers that deprived of the ability to choose, people live in the illusion of meaning, becoming victims of their own irrationality. That is why "[j]udgments of value are to be produced in the pupil as part of the conditioning (61) [since] those who stand outside all judgments of value cannot have any ground for preferring one of their own impulses to another except the emotional strength of that impulse" (66). History offers examples of leaders who rejected traditional morality in the name of their thirst for power and their choice also meant their doom. It is in this light that Lewis invites at self-discipline and practice of virtue[274], as solutions for wise men. He urges people not to forget their humanity, and not to forget their souls, but to transmit virtues through education. He is convinced that, "A lesson which had laid such literature beside the advertisement and really discriminated the good from the bad would have been a lesson worth teaching" (7).

Lewis manages to put into practice his valuable advice and he writes novels that could motivate readers into becoming more self-aware and inquire with more attention about their daily choices, by starting a personal search for goodness, beauty, and truth. If in *The Abolition of Man*, Lewis describes his philosophy, in the *Chronicles of Narnia* he transforms it into a valuable ethical stand. Lewis is aware of the power of the written word, and he also knows that people might better react to stories[275] than to raw suggestions. Let us thus acknowledge Lewis'

[273] Otherwise, according to Baggett (2008), having "read none of the right books"… and totally lacking the "emotions organized by trained habit into stable sentiments" that are essential to good moral character, [people might face the same fate as] Eustace [Eustace Clarence Scrubb, fictional character in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, *The Last Battle*, *The Silver Chair*] [who] becomes a record stinker…stuck-up, lazy, insensitive, resentful and totally self-absorbed" (250).

[274] "Lewis sought truth, was enchanted by beauty, and aspired to goodness, but he struggled to find a way to hold these goals together" (17).

[275] Confronted with the image of elves, readers can face their own limitations and better work on improving themselves. "Unlike humans, who have, as Tolkien says, a 'quick satiety with good', the elves have an almost

view on fantasy, as "innocent recreation"[276] that takes one out of ordinary time and gives one access to a liminal, playful realm of art and imagination. Lewis' texts are unquestionable sources of traditional values because they inspire receptivity, hospitability, and attention for others.

In the process of imagining described worlds, readers are entangled in writers' games and they are more or less willingly exposed to beauty and influenced by hidden meanings and values. Tolstoy and Wilde emphasize the moral incentive of literature and its potential to nurture an irenic mentality. Exupéry, Molière, and Huxley portray literature as ludic liminality, leading to the reader's understanding and transformation. C. S. Lewis, Călinescu, Ricoeur, and Spăriosu offer insights into the narrative process and suggest that we could collectively make sense of challenges that play and beauty entail. As generators of hospitable imagination, play and beauty engage readers in a process of understanding based on appropriation and fusion of horizons that lead to (self)awareness. Through the reading process, one's attention increases. Similar to a muscle that is frequently used, imagination gains flexibility and starts offering readers a richer grasp of reality. Almost as a hands-on experience, the encounter with a text frees the reader from his/her limited stance or prejudice and allows him/her to overlook meanings, mysteries, and intricate situations, thus equipping him/her with awareness, attentiveness, understanding, and openness. An experienced reader is seldom taken by surprise, or overwhelmed by daily events. Through the playful exposure to beauty, readers will have acquired appropriate means of facing life-challenges.

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endless appetite for poetry, songs, gazing at the stars and walking in sunlit forests…the elves see…with ever-fresh wonder and delight" (247).
"Fantasy, Lewis and Tolkien believed, has a kind of imaginative *potency* that few other literary genres possess… thus children can learn, quickly and memorably, important moral and psychological lessons" (252).
[276] "fantasy is an excellent source of 'innocent recreation'" (259) quoted from Letters of C.S. Lewis.

CHAPTER IV

LITERATURE AS A SOURCE OF TRUTH[277]

Unless you believe, you will not understand[278]

This chapter intends to provide arguments for validating the integrative role of literature in relation to alternative ways people choose to acquire ontological awareness. One can juxtapose diverse fields of knowledge by looking at them in conflict, or as independent, in dialogue, or as integrated. Dialogue is the most productive vehicle that connects religion, literature and other forms of culture[279], by providing specific examples of their interdisciplinary

[277] "Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person, it is born between people… in that process of their dialogic interaction". See Mikhail Bakhtin *Problems of Doestoevsky's Poetics.* Caryl Emerson (ed. & trans.). (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 1984). p. 110.

[278] Augustine quoting from Isaiah 7:9 *Nisi credideritis, non intelligitis.* See Saint Augustine. *On Free Choice of the Will.* Thomas Williams (trans.). (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company. 1993). p. 32.

[279] In his book entitled *Religion and Science* (1997), Jan Barbour frames four different aspects in which religion and science relate. As a path of knowledge based on reason, science rejects unprocessed ideas by formulating empirical assumptions about the meaning of life. Barbour offers the views of several scientists and philosophers who voiced this concern during the 18th and 19th century. In Medieval theology, scholastic thought was based on both "reason and revelation" (7). According to Aquinas, the most important theological truths are not accessible to reason, thus "revelation is necessary through the church, as a channel of divine grace" (7). Furthermore, Luther and Calvin find "the locus of authority not in the verbal text itself but the person of Christ…" (13) Galileo brings together science and religion by stating that God is the "First Cause." Various philosophers "tried to reconcile the picture of a mechanical world with belief in God" (16). During the 17th century, Cambridge Platonists, such as Robert Boyle and Newton assert that, "reason and revelation are not incompatible" (20). Drawing from Platonic idealism, they urge "religious universality and toleration rather than dogmatism" (20). In the 18th century, the age of reason, Kant defends the sphere of religion and morality. The Enlightenment movement spreads in the name of the expectation of human progress. Science gains a primary role because the new social achievement targets "heaven on earth." For romantics, such as Coleridge, religious faith is "fidelity, commitment, and decision" (40). Schleiermacher defines religion as "a unique form of experience unsubordinated to morality, a matter of living experience, not of formal beliefs" (69). Based on a well-researched historical foundation, Barbour describes the four ways of relating science and religion: conflict- as portrayed by Hume's materialism; independence- emphasized through the distinction between reason and revelation; dialogue- pertaining to unity; and integration- for the sake of a metaphysical understanding. David Hume's scientific materialism proclaims science as the path to knowledge. This perspective is defeated by the idea that "the soul is inaccessible to scientific investigation" (82). (2) One way to avoid conflicts between the two fields would be to view the two as autonomous; thus, science is based on reason, while religion is based on "divine revelation" (85). (3) Personal responses to the sacred are "more universal and less divisive" (97). The path of dialogue brings together theological doctrines with scientific traditions. (4) The integration of the two fields consists of their common contribution to the philosophy of wholeness, or "the development of an inclusive metaphysics" (98). The mystical experience that religion explains and proliferates is inherently bound to the Other, as divinity, ultimate figure, immanent to the world.

interactions[280], Religion and literature can become the bridge that enables a global dialogue[281] to spring forth.

The purpose of this chapter is to also illustrate the implications of confessional literature and its potential for offering examples of self-discovery. Looking at texts written by several religious leaders, such as Saint Augustine, Leo Tolstoy, Thomas Merton, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, I will emphasize that literature is a mirror and a window, both from the perspective of the writer and that of the reader. As a mirror, literature offers a unique reflection of the writer's self and his symbolic depiction of the world, thus becoming a window. It is a mirror also from the readers' perspective who can identify themselves with the writer through the spiritual reflections that connect the two. Similar to René Magritte's *Dominion of Light (L'Empire des lumières*), literature becomes a window through which the reader looks at the world in general and the personal universe of the writer, particularly the connection of literature with religion and philosophy.

4.1 Literature as *theologia ludens*

***Through the study of books, one seeks God; by meditation, one finds him*[282]**

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[280] In *What is Art?* (1904), Tolstoy discusses science, by stating, "We need only look around us to perceive that the activity proper to real science is not the study of whatever happens to interest us, but the study of how man's life should be established—the study of those questions of religion, morality, and social life, without the solution of which all our knowledge of nature will be harmful or insignificant" (204). His definition of science is personalized because it relies on an individual answer to life's challenges and refers to knowledge or wisdom of living: "real science lies in knowing what we should and what we should not believe, in knowing how the associate life of man should or should not be constituted; how to treat sexual relations, how to educate children, how to use the land, how to cultivate it oneself without oppressing other people, how to treat foreigners, how to treat animals, and much more that is important for the life of man" (205). Where might one find solutions to such imperatives? The answer is in art, science, and religion, understood not as separate fields of knowledge, but as a unifying body of wisdom, indispensable for a righteous and practical life.

[281] My understanding of "global dialogue" refers to an attitude of openness and receptivity toward the other. Such a dialogue is not under the yoke of any mentalities of power. By mentality of power, I understand a behavior and thought pattern based on the principle of force and I include in this category any ideology, institution, or set of dogmatic rules. Global dialogue aims at actualizing people's ability to connect with others.

[282] Saint Pio of Pietrelcina quoted in Liz Kelly. *The Rosary: A Path into Prayer*. (Chicago: Loyola Press. 2004). p. 79.

In the name of dialogue and integration, one can easily associate religion and literature, as two fields of knowledge that intertwine and nurture each other. Their feedback loop is based on their mutual influence and continuous dialogue. Literature, through its narrative apparatus, consolidates the biblical parables, offering religion exemplary means of expression. Religion, through *Logos/Verbum* and ethical teachings, enriches any literary manifestation. It is essential to highlight the moral charge of the religious discourse that lays the foundation of literature through the proliferation of the triad of goodness, beauty, and truth. The dialogical and integrative approach to other forms of culture can enrich and mediate the experience of the relationship between humankind and God. At the same time, religion can be looked at an ethical resource. Literature would be one of the fields in which the ethical trace of religion manifests its potentiality.

Religion is defined as the belief and worship of a superior controlling power. Religion has been regarded for centuries as a form of culture, a spiritual path toward the truth and a provider of meaning in life[283]. Independently of the types of religions to which one might relate, each faith system has a common historical purpose, which is the preparation for the afterlife. Whether regarded as a playful metaphor, or a serious endeavor concerned with truth, religion aims at the wholeness of life. The inherent need for some metaphysical search determines people to frame their timeless questioning into a belief system that can answer their existential call. When defining religion as a form of culture that leads to self-discovery, one can divide it into *Welteinstellung/ Weltanschauung* (an ideology, philosophy of life, world view) and *Lebensstil* (a

[283] According to Spăriosu (1989), in a pre-rational mentality, religion is "as a rule animistic… with centralized… societies of gods, conceived as extensions of human societies" (8). In a rational mentality, "religion turns increasingly rational and the gods increasingly moral and nonviolent" (8). Spăriosu depicts the relationship between divinity and man through a game metaphor, "as one between a player and a plaything" (29).

way of life, a style of living). The nature of religion[284] is an engaging challenge for various philosophers[285].

4.1.1 In the essay titled *Literary Play and Religious Referentiality* (1992), **Virgil Nemoianu**[286] states that "if opening to transcendence is a central trait of humanness, then indeed aesthetic activity is the zone most closely neighboring the religious one"[287]. I will be using his essay as a starting point for arguing that religion does not only interact with literature but also constitutes its ethical endeavor. Play, on the other hand, can be seen as a communication channel between the two fields, but also as the tool that gives religion more accessibility. It is through play and literature that religious texts might reach the non-religious public. Nemoianu considers that "the literary-religious inter-textuality provides us with an important avenue toward a more

[284] Religion is also a commitment to faith through belief, trust, and loyalty. Its purpose is to respond with obedience to the revelation people have received from God. The rational demand for an explanation of the world cannot conceptualize a complete understanding of religious teachings. Philosophy, on the other hand is a process of critical thinking, which goes beyond any dogmatic authority and establishes a critical inquiry that aims at attaining theoretical truth and wisdom. The hybrid discipline of philosophy of religion aims at discovering the truth about religion.

[285] In her essay, *Liminal Agencies: Literature as Moral Philosophy* (2006), Mary C. Rawlinson develops the idea that literature, instead of complementing moral philosophy, it calls it into question: "If we are to pay attention to the 'truth of what is really going on,' we cannot escape engagement with these figures of liminal agency. Unlike rules and principles, these figures operate less by prescribing action and more by disturbing intention. They make us hesitant in our moral confidence, ambivalent in moral judgment, and skeptical of programs of redemption and salvation. Yet, they insist on the necessity of action in spite of this moral uncertainty. They require us to take on the obligations of moral agents with none of the reassurances that moral philosophy gives. Far from inscribing a horizon of moral purity, they remind us constantly of the necessity to make choices that inevitably involve moral harm. They refocus our attention away from the purity of our moral intentions or the regulative ideal of fraternal justice, toward the specificity of the other's agency and the task of restoring and promoting it. They enjoy me as a moral agent to become a force that promotes agency against the subjections and exclusions of the corrupt justice of the fraternal order… Singular, yet universal as accessible to all, the figures of literature offer a moral challenge to philosophy's notion of the univocity of truth". See David Rudrum (ed.). *Literature and Philosophy: A Guide to Contemporary Debates*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2006). p. 140.

[286] In his book on *Imperfection and Defeat*. The Role of Aesthetic Imagination in Human Society (2006), Nemoianu defines literature as "the secondary in society and history… a preservation of defeat, and thus a force of renewal" (20). He states that "literature-religion relation is a legitimate and important object of study" (51). What brings them together would be, among others, narration and the multilayered interpretative process. While literary criticism is based on the rich plethora of understandings of Scriptures, "literature itself strengthens our definition of the aesthetic imagination as one inclined toward, and dedicated to, the presentation and study of defeat" (58).

[287] See Virgil Nemoianu. "Literary Play and Religious Referentiality". in *Play, Literature, Religion: Essays in Cultural Intertextuality*, Virgil Nemoianu, Robert Royal (eds.). (Albany: State University of New York Press. 1992). p. 9.

global outlook"[288]. His main thesis is that play can be a mediating structure for cultural inter-textuality,

> One way of looking at literature is to regard it as 'theologia ludens'-God-science at play-the sweetly palatable mode of dealing with ultimate existential interrogations… Another one can well be that, like everything else, the realm of the religious is a product of our restless and interminable impulse of imaginative play, ever again inventing possible and alternative universes[289].

Nemoianu articulates several perspectives on the relationship between religion and literature, by presenting the approach of two thinkers who supported the harmonious interaction between the two fields. First Hans Urs von Balthasar follows the traditional paradigm that regards the Bible as "a divine work of art" and Christianity as an "ultimate aesthetic religion" (5). His dialogic principle "provides a flexible approach and a broadly humanistic horizon for investigating the relationship between transcendent and the immanent, or the numinous and the natural" (6). Secondly, Nemoianu discusses Jean Luc Marion's distinction between idol and icon. If the idol is the "local name or image of divinity" (8), the icon captures the connection between the human and the divine, by incorporating God's absence or distance. It is thus the aesthetic activity that plays the role of connector. In other words, beauty brings together the human and the divine because it answers humans' need for transcendence. Thirdly, Nemoianu notices the potential of biblical texts to enrich textuality and meaning. Studied together in an interdisciplinary fashion, literature and religion could contribute to improving knowledge about the human race because they provide historical details that situate texts in relation to the history of ideas. Understanding a literary text in its complexity implies having background knowledge

[288] Ibidem. p. 18.
[289] Ibidem. p. 14.

about the author's specific life context, culture, and local specificities: "I think that the literary intertextuality provides us with an important avenue towards a more global outlook" (13).

The last and central remark with which Nemoianu ends his paper brings together the two fields conferring literature the privileged place of a mode of transmission of divine wisdom, through playful interrogations. Man's desire to have control over other possible modes of existence results in the imaginative play of thought. The metaphysical becomes a source of inquiry for poets and writers who try to access it through well-chosen ideas, critical or metaphorical discourse, poetry, and narratives. Nemoianu cites Giuseppe Mazzotta when stating that, "poets are… the best heralds and communicators of spirituality, saintliness, and perhaps even theology" (15).

Evidently, Nemoianu praises the great potential of interdisciplinary and intertextuality, since they "reaffirm a certain roundedness and integrity of humanistic values that preserve their traditional worth and flexible durability in the face of multiple attacks from different directions" (16). Literature, viewed as *theologia ludens*[290] or "God-science at play", reinforces possible

[290] In an essay titled *The Literary Value of Hope: Péguy's Porche du Mystère de la deuxième vertu*, and published in Nemoianu's book on *Play, Literature, Religion* (1992), Robert Royal confirms the fact that, "great literary works have appeared that draw authentic inspiration from religious experience, enlivening and enriching our approach of the human as we; as the divine. The literary value of such work seems to depend less on the intertextual acceptance of dogmas than on a recreation of the experience the dogmas, necessary in themselves, conceptualize" (161). In the same essay, Robert Royal acknowledges that "[o]ne of the most deep-seated critical prejudices in the twentieth century is that religion is bad for literature. Commitments in general -religious, political, philosophical- are suspect for various reasons, but in literature such closure is often thought to lead "inauthentic" works, in which a priori concepts control; or substitute for human experience to the detriment of truth and life. Certainly, much bad "religious" literature exists; then again, most literature is bad, religious or not" (160). Royal discusses Péguy's poem that portrays a playful Deity emphasizes the insistent need for a materialization of the Logos into concrete profs of His existence, through words. His poem *Le Porche* "reflects Péguy's long-standing belief that the real and the true are only fully themselves when they have a terrestrial, carnal "insertion", concrete, in this instance, as the work of a field horse". This materialization has to be continuously actualized not based on the so-called "ready-made attitudes of mind, the sclerosis of thought" (167). On the contrary, they are potentialities that need to be actualized. Together with Bergson, and borrowing from Péguy, Royal rejects the "sin of the clever abstractionists", and intends to replace it with beautiful representations of hope, as embodiments of truth: *La foi que j'aime mieux, dit Dieu, c'est l' espérance* (162). In *Ritual: The Divine Play of Time*, the last essay of Nemoianu's book, Louis Dupré pays tribute to theater, as bringing together play and a "deeper reality of life" (209). The theatrical artificial construction unites the sphere of reality (belonging to the audience) with the sphere of one's identity because as Dupré argues, it is "[o]nly in the ex-tasis of becoming what we are not [that] freedom allow[s] us to become what we are… Drama, then, turns

transcendental choices because it offers the playful ground for the development of alternative universes. Nemoianu's thesis about the playful nature of literature and its fruitful interaction with religion that results in a thorough understanding of the human nature, parallels Huxley's contribution to the playful dialogue between religion and literature, since "true playfulness can exist only where, in the strictest theological sense, both God and Man are really at play" (175).

4.1.2 Aldous Huxley confirms the playful quality of literature and tries to create a bridge between different forms of culture, bringing together different religious thinkers, philosophers, scientists, monks, and poets in order to show the similarity of their perspectives in relation to divinity. His *Perennial Philosophy* ([1945] 2009) invites readers to search for a relatively rational[291] meaning in life. He underlines the transcendental aim of human existence. He is worried about man's mental enslavement, under the yoke of doctrines, institutions and social manipulation and invites a global, inter-religious dialogue.

Similar to Camus who rebels against the absurdity of human existence in the absence of moral pillars, Huxley challenges people to think and seek to understand themselves and the world around them. Huxley brings a resourceful contribution to the dialogue between religions. His recommendation is for people to focus more on relating to others through similarities, rather than focusing on differences that separate them. He encourages people to reason and to transform their spiritual experience into a hospitable communion.

What Huxley aims at is making us aware of the spiritual side of our existence. In the case of the *Island*, he uses behavioristic conditioning by repetition of the keyword *Attention*. This

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out to remain one of the major forms of religious ritual, not merely a substitute for it. Yet the modern attitude toward the transcendent, which refuses to name the unnamable, fiercely keeps this religious quality implicit" (209-211). Play and/as ritual endorse the interdisciplinary encounter between literature and religion that become enlightening paths toward the Truth.

[291] By "rational meaning" in life, I understand a material purpose that does not allow the inherent metaphysical call to manifest itself.

awareness is the transformation of the concrete materialism into concrete spirituality. In *Perennial Philosophy*, Huxley underlines the transcendental aim of human existence. He is worried about man's mental enslavement because he is aware of the fact that God does not want us to be stupid. Through his writing, he starts an experiment of expanding consciousness.

Huxley, as a promoter of perennial philosophy, considers that God, the Truth is incarnated in human form and bears a different name in each world religion[292]. Of course, for those devoted to one of the spiritual worldviews, this liminal perspective is hard to accept. He uses the umbrella of the *Logos* to talk about the infinite that became finite. Huxley's purpose is not to criticize but to expand the level of understanding of various spiritual paths. He underlines the need for the imitation of Christ before there can be identification with the Father (55), in perennial view, the imitation of the avatar, to reach communion with Godhead. Huxley finds a solution to the universal existential quest of truth, seen as a transition "from letter to spirit" (133). Truth is revealed because truth can come to us, we cannot go to truth. We can only accept the truth, or ask for revelation. Similar to Huxley, Petre Ţuţea, a Romanian philosopher, stated that "[t]he intellect is given to man not to know the truth but to receive the Truth". The Bible

[292] Bhagavad Gita's poem is thus relevant: "When goodness grows weak/when evil increases/ I make myself a body/ In every age I come back to deliver the holy" (50). In a perennial view, Krishna is an incarnation of Brahman, Gautama Buddha of the Dharmakaya, Moses of Jehova and Christ of God. The word avatar is mostly used in Hinduism and it is not accepted in Christianity. In Hinduism, avatar is the descent of divinity (Vishnu) on earth, taking several names: Shiva, Ganesha, Devi and the other innumerable ones. The goddess Kali, associated with empowerment is another example, belonging to another Hindu denomination. The name Kali comes from *kāla*, which means black, time, death, lord of death. Kāli is the Goddess of Time, Change, Power and Destruction. She is worshiped as the ultimate reality or *Brahman*. Huxley manages to playfully brings together these spiritual views with the Christian warning, "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who pot bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are intelligent in their own eyes and expert in their own sight!" (Isaiah 5:20). Huxley embraced the teachings of Christianity and connected them to the Eastern spiritual teachings. He aligned himself with the Vedanta Society of Southern California and began a meditation practice under the guidance of the guru Swami Prabhavananda. He then became closely aligned with Jiddu Krishnamurti, a contemporary mystic who shared his views of resistance to formalized, institutional religion, but embraced the concept of an individual spiritual path for each person.

witnesses the true nature of God in His three instances: The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit (of truth) (John, 15:26).

God reveals Himself to us through the Word, *Logos*[293] that can be looked at from two perspectives. Firstly, Logos is Christ, the Son of God, in two natures, human and divine and secondly, the Word[294] is the transmitter, the means to God's knowledge and understanding. Without words, our access to the divine would be even more restrictive. The more we acknowledge the Word, the closer we are to God, the Absolute Truth. According to Huxley,

> [T]he metaphysic recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things. the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being — the thing is immemorial and universal. Rudiments of the Perennial Philosophy may be found among the traditional lore of primitive peoples in every region of the world, and in its fully developed forms, it has a place in every one of the higher religions (vii).

In his *Perennial Philosophy*, Huxley describes his perspectives on mysticism, acknowledging that there are experiences and characteristics among mystics from all of the world's religions, which reinforce the validity and importance of the spiritual practice. He

[293] What is the proof of God being the absolute truth? The Gospel of John gives an answer to this question. We are told that "in the beginning was the Word" (*Logos*) which is the eternal Son of God. *Logos* can mean wisdom, action, reason, as well as word. These are all attributes of the Son of God. The past simple of the verb to be, "was" indicates existence without reference to a starting point and emphasizes the Word's eternal existence, without beginning. The fact that God is outside space and time implies that He is timeless. God is, always was, and shall be. The phrase, "The Word was with God", represents a confirmation of the Trinity. The Word, the Son of God is co-eternal with the Father. The Son is God because of the same divinity as the Father. The Word is the co-Creator with the Father and the Holly Spirit. (Gn. 1, Ps 32:6, 9; Heb 1:2). See *The Orthodox Study Bible*. Saint Athanasius Academy of Orthodox Theology. (Thomas Nelson. [1892] 2008). p. 1419.

[294] He states that language is "a main source of the sense of separateness and the blasphemous idea of individual self-sufficiency… the ultimate Ground can only be indicated, never adequately described in verbal symbols" (134-135).

manages to create a ludic liminal space for peaceful dialogue. If in real life situations, the encounter between supporters of different world religions might be power driven, literature transforms such dialogue into an enriching exchange of ideas. Huxley's text offers a mediating structure for bringing together various world views, with the ultimate purpose of approaching truth.

After reading Huxley's anthology, one might wonder: "Is there any ultimate reality, external, conscious and ever-present that can be realized by any such means that may be acceptable to all creeds and religions and suitable to all climes and countries?"[295] In order to offer an answer to this question, one can accept the invitation to an inter-religious dialogue that aims at selflessness, peaceful cohabitation, and truth.

4.2 Literature as contagion

Great works of art pass through us like storm-winds, flinging open the doors of perception, pressing upon the architecture of our beliefs with their transforming powers **(Steiner, 1996, 3)**

Both Saint Augustine and Leo Tolstoy talk about literature as contagion. They use art/literature in order to stir the thirst for truth in their readers. Augustine's *Confessions* (2001) and Tolstoy's novel titled *Resurrection*[296] ([1899] 1963) give proofs that literature is a third element in the encounter of the self and the other. Acknowledging previous comparisons[297]

[295] Malcolm Lowry. *Under the Volcano* (New York: Lippincott Company. 1965). p. 39.
[296] I chose to discuss *Resurrection* instead of Tolstoy's *Confession* because in *What is Art*, he acknowledges his late work as a true work of art that has the potential to infect readers. I will however make references to Tolstoy's *Confession* because that text brings various arguments for supporting my claim about the relevance of literature, as a third element in any dialogue.
[297] "Here's the writerly difference between Augustine and Tolstoy, separated by more than 14 centuries: Augustine exsanguinates his body of sin until he aligns with Christian teaching, over-loathing himself to be overcompensated by God's love. Tolstoy wrestles with Christian discourse and rejects much of it in favor of his own salvational plan". See Thomas Larson. "Leo Tolstoy and the Origins of Spiritual Memoir". in *Los Angeles Review of Books*. January 13th. 2017).

between the two texts, I will not focus my analysis on the spiritual journey, but rather on the idea of contagion. I will base my argument on the fact that both writers frame their texts with the purpose of causing a change in their readers. Their texts are contagious and infect readers with the quest for answers about the meaning of life and one's interaction with others.

4.2.1 Saint Augustine of Hippo is a Christian who continues the dialogue Jesus started with the entire world, surpassing cultures or spiritual views. St. Augustine initiates a perennial dialogue[298] with his reader through a text that stimulates the search for truth. His text is as actual and valuable today as it was in the 4th-century. St. Augustine brings together philosophy, religion, and literature in order to raise readers' awareness. He was given the answer to his questions through the written Word and similarly, he transmits that knowledge through his writing.

The fictional world of *Confessions* portrays the formative process of self-discovery or *Bildung* that leads to a reconceptualization of the self through a deep analysis of will and thought, and their interaction. St. Augustine studies the Scriptures[299] in order to understand divine wisdom and does not refrain from reviving ancient influences such as Plato's. He uses Plato's theory of forms that leads him into stating that heaven is a perfect form and God is truth[300]. St. Augustine reiterates Ambrose[301] whom he considers a good example of a teacher and model who is aware that knowledge and wisdom do not come through memorization of

[298] In *De Magistro*, he uses dialogue as a practice for learning. In the case of *Confessions*, Augustine creates a dialogue in which he both asks questions and confesses to God, "Why, then, do I tell you all these stories of mine?... Rather I raise up towards you my mind and the minds of those who read all this…" (261)
[299] "I retained the healthy effect of Scriptures… [they] later softened me, made my wounds curable by your hands" See Saint Augustine. *Confessions.* Garry Wills (trans.). (New York: Penguin Books. 2008). p. 155-6.
[300] "The books of the Platonists that I had read prompted me to seek an immaterial truth. I looked at 'what you had made in order to understand your invisible nature'" See Saint Augustine. *Confessions.* Garry Wills (trans.). (New York: Penguin Books. 2008). p. 155.
[301] "I heard him, of course, 'accurately expounding the word of truth' in public every Sunday... I frequently heard Ambrose in his sermons to the people say, as if laying down a norm carefully formulated, that 'the letter kills', while the Spirit gives life…[thus] a symbolic reading opened new meanings behind the veil of mystery" (113-4).

information, but through a more complex mental process that uses the intellect in either accepting or rejecting (inner) truth. St. Augustine uses the same method as his mentor, by urging readers to wonder. He does not passively receive the Word of God, but rationalizes his experience, in order to better understand it[302].

Influenced at first by the Manicheans and then by Plato, Plotinus, Ambrose, and mostly St Paul[303], St. Augustine meditates on the fact that although continually studying the scriptures and trying to understand divine wisdom, he still fails to achieve perfection. Looking back into the past, he captures the evolution of his thought and he acknowledges his sins. St. Augustine's autobiography targets the truth, through the purification that the narration of his evil deeds from childhood and youth brings to his soul, once he accepts the healing presence of God. By pointing out his views on the material way of living, St. Augustine gives readers enough reasons to start thinking about their own search for truth. St. Augustine writes his *Confessions* so as to continuously engage, stimulate and influence the reader. He looks at Christ as the foundation of humility, because "He revealed things to the little ones" (Matthew 11:28). Thus, he seems to be calling himself, but also the reader, to a spiritual awakening, so much longed for. "Wake up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead, and Christ will enlighten you" (170- Eph. 5.14).

The episode of transfiguration in a garden in Milan finds St. Augustine astounded. He hears a whisper telling him, "let it be now, pick up and read". The voice has the power of a commandment that persuades him to open the Bible. He randomly opens it and finds the following suggestion, "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think

[302] "As I heard persuasive explanations of the passages in Scripture that had put me off by their apparent nonsense, I more and more ascribed them to an exalted symbolism, and their authority seemed to be more venerable, and it earned more devoted belief, inasmuch as all could read in it an obvious sense, while hidden meanings were reserved in their higher dignity for deeper investigation. The Bible speaks to all in plain words and a humble style, but also tests the concentration of those 'not lightly caring'" (116).
[303] Reference to the story of the conversion of Saul who "submitted to your gentle yoke, [and] all his pride warred down', and became 'an officer of the great king'" (167).

about how to gratify the desires of the flesh" (Romans 13:14). St. Augustine allows words to transform him[304] and he acknowledges his responsibility of spreading the Word, "I should confess not what I was, but what I am, and confess it not only before you with secret exultation and trembling… but also in the ears of those children of men who believe" (218). St. Augustine knows that God is the answer to all his questions (301) and his conversion represents a path toward the truth that any reader could take.

What reactions might change such as that of St. Augustine produce in the mind of a reader today? How is such a message understood by a person living in a consumerist society, where image and trusting oneself is paramount? How can one prove to people that humility and obedience are the best ways toward improving one's state of mind, through the intervention of God's grace? God only comes to souls not conquered by self-centeredness. God is not subject of time either, he is the *Same* (203). What has changed is our notion of the self and its approach to God.

St. Augustine acknowledges how the reader might become contaminated by the reading process. He asks, "And who among man will grant a man to understand this?" (356) This rhetorical question challenges all readers. The exposure to a writer who continually challenges[305] himself by optimize one's access to the Divine leaves the reader in a quest. St. Augustine's *Confessions* reveal a retrospective self that is charged with the responsibility of becoming by

[304] "Direct your words to me, teach me. I have been drawing my belief from your books, from your words' deep mysteries". See Saint Augustine. *Confessions.* Garry Wills (trans.). (New York: Penguin Books. 2008). p. 290.
[305] For instance, book Thirteen is an invitation to the search for God, "Seek the Lord and your soul will live" (Psalm 68:33). Augustine uses his rhetorical skills in order to give the reader a more clarifying interpretation of the Trinity, as Being, Knowing and Willing. He summons the reader to "be reformed in newness of mind", or *metanoia.* "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

shaping the other's becoming as well[306]. St. Augustine translates himself, offering his own example of conversion.

Texts such as St. Augustine's *Confessions* persuade[307]. It is the readers' choice to emerge into the narrative and grasp its important meaning of truth. According to St. Augustine, one needs to accept one's limitations in order to get closer to God's mystery. St. Augustine's *Confessions* represent a good example of a convincing and informative text that can influence[308] the reader by inquiring into his/her own search for truth.

4.2.2 Resurrection –Leo Tolstoy

Similar to St. Augustine, Tolstoy acknowledges the contagious power of literature. In *What is Art?*[309] (1904), he openly uses the word 'infection', to describe the effect of art on people, "that sense of infection with another's feeling, —compelling us to joy in another's gladness, to sorrow at another's grief, and to mingle souls with another—is the very essence of art" (151). He also states that "[a] real work of art destroys, in the consciousness of the receiver,

[306] "Grant them, Lord, the gift of reflecting on what they say, to learn that one cannot claim God did not make anything for so long, when there was no time to be long in… Let them stop talking nonsense and be drawn forward to the prior things, understanding that you are before all times, are of all times the eternal creator…" See Saint Augustine. *Confessions.* Garry Wills (trans.). (New York: Penguin Books. 2008). p. 281.

[307] Michel Volkovitch, one of the best Greek translators in France, stated, *Je suis un traducteur – de langue rare- partant à la chasse aux lecteurs non moins rares.* (I am a translator- of an uncommon language- pursuing readers no less uncommon). See Catherine Simon. "Dans le Mirroir de la Traduction". in *Le Monde*. (Paris. May. 2014). There are many reasons why one could associate his view with Augustine's mission. He is also an uncommon Christian, writing a book that aims at not only praising God, but also helping others find God. Some might argue that spiritual search is too intimate, so as to use a text as intermediary, but as Spivak mentioned in *The Politics of Translation*: "translation is the most intimate act of reading". See Spivak Gayatri Chakrovorty. "The Politics of Translation". in *The Translation Studies Reader*. Lawrence Venuti(ed.) (New York and London: Routledge. 2000). p. 398. The reader will never be the same after Augustine's because he was exposed to the writer's thoughts, prayers, lessons, thus became other. Similar to St. Augustine who redefines himself through the encounter of God, the reader has the opportunity to redefine himself/ herself through a possible transformation, as a result of reading.

[308] In his book, *Conversion Narratives in the Early Modern World* (2013), Shinn states the power of narratives and their effect, "The discursive nature of narratives of religious metamorphosis—whether designed to persuade, to offer proof, or to incite further change in others—as well as their considerable geographical reach, demonstrates the extent to which conversion and its effects permeated early modern culture". See Shinn Mazur. "Conversion Narratives in the Early Modern World". in *Journal of Modern Early History*. (2013). pp. 427-436.

[309] Previously, I have mentioned Tolstoy's work on art. Here, I am referring to his observation about the resourcefulness of literature to 'infect' readers.

the separation between himself and the artist… In this freeing of our personality from its separation and isolation, in this uniting of it with others, lies the chief characteristic and the great attractive force of art" (153).

Through his last novel, *Resurrection*[310], Tolstoy moves from theory to practice and exemplifies how infectious a fictional text might be, since "not only is infection a sure sign of art, but the degree of infectiousness is also the sole measure of excellence in art" (153). His novel depicts the torment of a soul in search of forgiveness and spiritual revival. Through Dmitri Ivanovich Nekhlyudov's story, Tolstoy 'infects' his readers with the desire for a deep questioning about their lifestyle and past mistakes. Echoing Augustine's initiative, the writer invites the reader to a renewal of his/her soul through a purifying and harsh process of self-awareness and sincere search for redemption.

During his youth, Dmitri, a rich nobleman, has an affair with the maid Maslova. Years later he contributes to her being sent to prison in Siberia for murder. He encounters her by chance and finds out that she had his child. As a prostitute, Maslova was leading a miserable life. The sense of guilt is overwhelming and Dmitri decides to help her. However, while visiting Maslova in prison, Dmitri discovers a world of suffering and cruelty. From the conditions in which prisoners were being held to the injustice of their penalty, he discovers that life in prison is much worse than what he envisioned. He decides to dedicate the remainder of his life, time, and money to helping the convicted. Tolstoy describes the psychological transformations Dmitri

[310] "the novel deals with feelings profoundly expressed by the author and reenacted so that they infect readers and cause them to share these feelings with him and with each other… *Resurrection* fulfills Tolstoy's definition of the best art, for it evokes in us feelings of brotherly love and of the common purpose of the life of all humanity—striving to achieve spiritual and moral perfection through service to others" (Ernest Simons' introduction to Tolstoy, 1963, xii).

undergoes when he moves from a luxurious lifestyle, dedicated to material gain, to the condition of a man hunted by sin and remorse, whose main purpose is helping others.

At first, the reader is introduced to Dmitri who is experiencing "that rapturous mood which comes over a youth when he for the first time discovers, not by the indications of others, but from within, all the beauty and significance of life and all the importance of the work which is to be performed in it by each man, when he sees the possibility of endless perfectibility of himself and of the whole universe" (39). In a matter of days, after meeting Maslova, and experiencing a new sphere of human existence, prone to death, misery, disrespect, and cruelty, he renounces blindly listening to what others have to say and starts a personal search for truth,

> All this terrible change had taken place in him only because he had quit trusting himself and had begun to believe others… while trusting himself, every question had to be solved not in favor of his own animal ego in search of frivolous enjoyments, but nearly always against himself; whereas believing others, there was nothing to solve—everything had been solved before and not in favor of the spiritual, but of the animal ego (43).

With a new approach to life and willingness to pay for his mistake, Dmitri acknowledges that he has been using others as mere commodities. He owns land[311] and peasants as serfs. Giving up on his pleasures and luxuries[312], sharing his land with workers, and finding his pseudo relations with his rich friends are not fulfilling, he searches for freedom[313] and a purpose in life. This process is cathartic[314] and its harshness brings him to the verge of despair. However, "the

[311] "he had considered the ownership of land an injustice" (45). See also Tolstoy's short story *How Much Land Does a Man Need? And other Stories* (Penguin Classics. [1886] 1994)
[312] "Look out, or you will lose your pleasure, your happiness… this second voice drowned the first" (54).
[313] "He had said to himself that he wished it in order to see her liberated from her suffering, but in reality, he had wished himself to be freed from the sight of her agony" (89).
[314] "Since then down to this day a long period had passed without any cleansing, and consequently he had never before reached such a pollution and such discord between what his conscience demanded and the life which he was leading, and he was horror-struck when he saw the distance" (92).

free spiritual being, which alone is true[315], and powerful, and eternal, was already beginning to waken in Dmitri. He could not help trusting it" (92).

By invoking[316] God, Dmitri's consciousness awakens and he starts experiencing freedom, sincerity, joy, and goodness. Consequently, he asks Maslova to marry him[317]. Her rejection becomes a source of deeper self-improvement and devotion to goodness. The moral nausea that he experiences when meeting prisoners teaches him valuable lessons of humanity[318] and love. Similar to St. Augustine, Tolstoy's character starts believing in redemption[319]. His search for truth and his prayers lead him into thinking that "[t]here is salvation. Here it is: it is easy and blissful. This salvation is the blood of the only begotten Son of God, who has allowed Himself to be tormented for our sakes" (238). Dmitri trusts his inner self that craves for God. As a consequence, "[n]ot only in words, but in deeds, he made serving people the aim of his young life" (255). Dmitri's life and choices offer a valuable life lesson on transcendence[320],

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[315] "I will tear asunder the lie which is binding me at whatever cost and I will profess the truth and I will tell the truth to everybody at all times and will act truthfully" (92).
[316] "Lord, help me, instruct me, come and take Thy abode within me, and cleanse me of all impurity" (93).
[317] At the same time, Simonson proposes too, "Simonson's proposition destroyed the singularity of his deed and diminished in his own eyes and in those of others the value of the sacrifice which he was offering" (369). Simonson's intention to marry the woman Dmitri intends to make his wife out of pity and sacrifice provides the latter with the understanding that his gesture is self-centered.
[318] "Men are like rivers: the water is the same in all; but every river is either narrow, or swift, or broad, or still, or clean, or cold, or turbid, or warm… Each man carries within him the germs of all human qualities, and manifests now some of these, now others, and frequently becomes unlike himself, and yet remains one and the same" (174).
[319] "the essence of Christianity consisted in a belief in redemption" (227) "Let us only think, dear sisters and brethren, of ourselves, of our lives, of what we are doing, how we are living, how we anger long-suffering God, how we cause Christ to suffer, and we shall see that there is no forgiveness for us, no issue, no salvation—that we are all doomed to perdition. A terrible doom, eternal torments await us" (238).
[320] "In putting the question to himself whether … Orthodoxy… was right, he had already prejudged it. Therefore, in order to elucidate this question, he did not take Voltaire, Schopenhauer, Spencer, Comte, but the philosophical work of Hegel, and the religious books of Vinet and Khomyakov, and he naturally found in them what he wanted: a semblance of acquiescence and justification of that religious teaching in which he had been educated, which his reason had long rejected, but without which all his life filled with annoyances, and by the acceptance of which all these annoyances would at once be removed. He appropriated all those customary sophisms that a separate human mind cannot comprehend truth, that truth is revealed only to the aggregate of mankind, that the only means for knowing it is revelation, that revelation is in the keeping of the Church" (257). Through Toporov's example, Tolstoy warns readers of the danger of denying one's metaphysical call, "Toporov, like all people deprived of a fundamental religious sense and of the consciousness of the equality and brotherhood of men, was firmly convinced that the people were creatures quite different from himself, and that people were in dire need of what he himself could very well do without. In the depth of his soul, he himself believed in nothing, and he found such a condition very

forgiveness[321], goodness[322], freedom[323], care for others[324], unconditional love[325], attentiveness[326], and humility[327]. His life changes once he notices the sorrow of innocent people and then he reads the Sermon on the Mount[328]. "He finds out that everything which subsequently happens to him has assumed an entirely new meaning and he suddenly finds peace and freedom" (403).

Dmitri's example has the potential to resonate in Tolstoy's readers' consciousness and affect their moral values and searches. Following Dmitri's ascending moral path, readers engage in empathy, personal inquiry, and acknowledgment of their own mistakes in life. Dmitri's inner purification may cause readers to carefully analyze their own choices and seek the truth. Thus,

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convenient and agreeable, but he was in fear lest the people come to the same state and considered it his sacred duty, as he said, to save the people from this" (269).

[321] "You have had an argument and come to blows, but Christ, who died for us, has given us another means of settling our disputes… Tell them that … they ought to behave in just the opposite way; if you receive a slap on one cheek, turn the other" (395); "The answer which he had been unable to find, was the same that Christ had given to Peter: it consisted in the injunction to forgive always, everybody, an endless number of times, because there were no people who were guiltless themselves and who therefore could punish or correct" (401).

[322] "feelings which are common to all energetic youth… their requirements of morality were higher than those current among ordinary people. They regarded as obligatory not only moderation and asceticism, truthfulness and unselfishness, but also readiness to sacrifice everything, even their lives, for the common good" (340); "Tell them that Christ pitied and loved them… and died for them. They will be saved if they believe this (The Englishman distributes the Gospels)" (394).

[323] "One of the chief distinctions among people is the degree to which they live according to their own ideas or according to those of others… while in their acts they submit to thoughts of others—to custom, tradition, law" (335); "There are many faiths, but the spirit is one—in you, in me and in him. Consequently, let everybody believe in his spirit, and all will be connected! Let each be for himself, and all will be united!" (380)

[324] "My business is to do that which my conscience demands of me…the sacrifice of my liberty for the expiation of my sin, and my decision to marry her, even though in fictitious marriage" (276).

[325] "He went out, experiencing an entirely new sensation of quiet joy, calm, and love for all men… He loved her not for his own sake, but for hers and God's" (279); "The thing is that people think there are conditions under which one must treat men without love, whereas there are no such conditions" (317); "mutual love between men is the fundamental law of human existence" (317).

[326] "Whatever he now thought or did, his general mood was a feeling of pity and tenderness, not only in respect to her, but to all people… he involuntarily became affable and attentive to all people" (338).

[327] "Thus, the thought became clear to him that the only sure means of saving people from that terrible evil from which they were suffering was for people to acknowledge themselves guilty before God and therefore incapable of punishing or correcting others" (401).

[328] "Having read the Sermon on the Mount, which had always touched him, he for the first time now saw in this sermon not abstract, beautiful thoughts presenting for the most part exaggerated and unrealizable demands, but simple, clear, and practical injunctions, which, in case of their fulfillment (which was quite possible), would establish a wonderful new order of human society in which all the violence which made Nekhlyudov so irritated was not only eliminated, but also the greatest possible human good was obtained—the kingdom of God on earth" (402). His inner transformation happened through a reading process, similar to St. Augustine's revelatory reading of the Bible.

Tolstoy's novel provides inspirational examples of good practices that activate readers' search for meaning and truth.

4.3 Literature as confession

***Veritas non cognoscitur, nisi amatur- Truth is not known unless it is loved*[329]**

The present subchapter discusses two 20th century thinkers whose confessions are central for literary studies. Thomas Merton's *Seven Storey Mountain* ([1948] 1976) and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Letters from Prison* (1972) represent essential confessions that conform the potentiality of literature to change people by connecting them to others and to the truth. One cannot pass by such texts without seriously engaging with complex questions about the meaning of life. While Merton describes his process of self-discovery and gives answers to Camus' criticism of the Catholic Church, Bonhoeffer writes letters which depict him as a committed follower of Christ. The two writers confirm Mircea Eliade's thesis regarding the *homo religious*[330], the individual in a perpetual search for transcendence. Both Merton and Bonhoeffer attest that the process of self-discovery is the driving element of metaphysical inquiries.

Thomas Merton[331] was a Cistercian monk[332], known for his efforts in bringing together the East and the West[333], recognizing their common respect for contemplation and meditation.

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[329] Saint Gregory. Pavel Florensky, 1882-1937, the well-known Russian priest, philosopher and symbolist, enhanced Saint Gregory's thought by adding that knowledge is an essential social act, "Truth is attained in the ascetic's mystical experience of encounter with the 'other world'". See Pavel Florensky. *The Pillar and Ground of the Truth*: An Essay in Orthodox Theodicy. (Princeton University Press. 1997). p. xiv.

[330] For Eliade, the sacred is an element of consciousness, and one's search for the transcendental is universal. See Mircea Eliade. *The Sacred and the Profane.* (San Diego, London: Harcourt. Inc. 1987). p. 165. The term *homo religious* echoes John Calvin's phrase about *sensus divinitatis*, or the innate capacity to know God. See A. Visala. *Naturalism, Theism, and the Cognitive Study of Religion.* (Farnham: Ashgate 2011). p. 186.

[331] Catholic writer and mystic (1915-1968). He is well versed in Gandhi's ideals of Brahmacharia (doctrines of self-control and renunciation).

[332] Merton was a member of a Roman Catholic monastic order (following rules implemented by Saint Benedict. Merton was a lover of beauty and art. His father, an admirer of Cezanne, left Merton a heritage of sensibility for art. At the beginning of his most popular novel, *The Seven-Storey Mountain*, Merton writes, "The integrity of an artist lifts a man above the level of the world without delivering him from it" (3).

[333] His friendship with a Hindu monk confirms the unnoticeable network of wires that link religions around the world. Their friendship surpasses institutional and dogmatic boundaries and looks for universal connections. The

Echoing St. Augustine, Merton narrates the voyage of the self toward God in his autobiographical novel, *The Seven Storey Mountain*. He begins by describing his childhood far away from the church and rhetorically asks, "What is the good of religion without personal spiritual direction? Without Sacraments, without any means of grace except a desultory prayer now and then, at intervals, and an occasional vague sermon?" (53) He comes to discover the relevance of rituals and Sacraments later in life. As an answer to the aforementioned questions, he discovers that "every religion was good: they all led to God, only in different ways, and every man should go according to his own conscience and settle things according to his own private way of looking at things" (58). On the basis of his reconciliatory belief, Merton manages to connect with people beyond their appearance, race, spiritual view, political alliance, or age.

Merton incarnates the image of the universal man. He is an artist, teacher, philosopher, writer, theologian, and monk. He is also a man who is fully aware of the potential of peaceful dialogue. He follows his vocation to teach and helps guide young monks on their path to salvation. He considers teaching a reservoir for "transcultural consciousness" because education should give not only knowledge but also wisdom[334]. While for St. Augustine, learning is collective, for Merton, relatedness to others is central to the teaching process. He thus instills in his students the need for communion as both social encounter and sacrament. He is aware of the power of the written word and summons teachers to instill in the students the desire to read, "a course in composition… should also take a little time to teach people how to read, or at least how to get interested in a book" (274). He brings to the study of the humanities a dimension of

Hindu monk suggests Merton to read St. Augustine's *Confessions*. Paradoxically, a Christian monk starts reading the work of another Christian theologian, by following the advice of a Hindu believer. Later on, Merton confesses that St. Augustine' s writings influenced his theological thinking.

[334] In this respect, he actualizes John Henry Newman's definition of a university as a "place for teaching universal knowledge".

wisdom with roots in contemplation. He sees it as an activity that has the potential to show the meaning of spiritual life.

Merton' s ideal is to "be a teacher, and live the rest of [his] life in the relative peace of a college campus, reading and writing books" (188). When describing the lifestyle of Trappist monks, he underlines the positive outcomes of obedience and imposed poverty, "They were poor and therefore they had everything" (316). His devotion to the monastic ideals of humility, poverty, silence, and contemplation transcend the borders of his Kentucky monastery and bring him close to monks and priests worldwide.

Merton engages in interreligious dialogue. He seeks understanding across the different religions. Merton chooses to give an answer to Camus' search for truth by showing that religious people are open to dialogue and that literature has the mediating power to providing people with a platform for not only sharing concerns, but answering them, and thus uniting individuals. Merton critically examines the Christian faith by answering Camus' challenging questions.

Acknowledging Camus' reticence in approaching religion, Merton starts his literary dialogue[335] by confirming his love for others and his desire to engage with people independently of their belief. Merton does not reject answering the challenge of a non-believer, who asks pertinent existential questions[336]. He does not criticize Camus but pays attention to his prophetic voice even if it challenges the church. The Christian monk accepts Camus' criticism and

[335] Merton acknowledges that Camus' character Jean-Baptiste Clamence choses the golden path of dialogue, between rebellion and resignation. In *La Chute (The Fall)* (1997), the main character, Jean-Baptiste Clamence is a lawyer who confesses himself to a non-talkative interlocutor, while meeting him five times, in Amsterdam. Camus' character seems to be rejecting all reality, life itself. He has no drive for living, no involvement in his own daily existence, no empathy for the troubles of other, no wish for love. He lives an empty life, superficial, indifferent and disconnected. His robotic actions are frivolous because his alienation leads his life to perdition and nonsense, "Rien que des horizontals, aucun éclat, l'espace est incolore, la vie morte". (There is nothing but horizontals, nothing shiny, space is colorless, and the living is dead) (63).

[336] "Pour qui est seul, sans dieu et sans maître, le poids des jours est terrible. Il faut donc se choisir un maître, Dieu n'étant plus à la mode". (For who is alone, without God and without a master, the weight of days is dreadful. We must choose a master since God is no longer fashionable.) (112)

considers it enriching. He sees it as having the potential for fostering new ways of being in the world, in relation to the Church. Instead of approaching Camus' challenge as an attack, Merton looks at it as an opportunity to begin a dialogue.

> I start from where I am, not in the 12th century but in the 20th. It happens that I have just been reading a very interesting essay of Camus, "Le Desert." From a certain viewpoint Camus, in this essay, is totally anti-Christian and absolutely anti-monastic. But strangely enough, his conclusions are very close indeed to monastic conclusions, so close indeed, that I am tempted to write a study of them from a monastic viewpoint (240).

He understands Camus' revolt and he chooses not to consider it a revolt against the Church, but rather against death and the absurd. Paradoxically, Merton looks back to his faith and challenges priests to pay more attention to what is valuable for people outside the Church and to receive their complaints as opportunities for improvement. Merton becomes in his turn a rebel, together with Camus, and he warns his peers about the need to reform their institution.

Merton does not engage Camus from the standpoint of a monk talking to a non-believer. On the contrary, his essay is a friendly answer to Camus' concerns. Merton finds a common ground of discussion and exhibits openness and understanding for his interlocutor[337]. He acknowledges that the post-modern challenge of a society deprived of classical values has to motivate Christian monks and priests to reshape their discourse, so as to reach people outside the fold and guide them in their search for truth. Merton moves beyond religion and relies on

[337] I need to mention that Merton has never met Camus, because the later unfortunately died before they had the chance to meet. Merton's texts about Camus constitute a reply to Camus' rebellious search for a meaning in life.

interpersonal connections, creating a hospitable dialogue that honors his human call to connect with others[338].

Similar to Merton, **Dietrich Bonhoeffer** describes his search for truth, in a series of letters that constitute his confession and pledge to God. In *Letters and Papers from Prison*[339] ([1953] 1972), Bonhoeffer communicates with his parents and his best friend and tries to share his spiritual and mental struggles. As a German pastor and anti-Nazi dissident, he publicly fights against the persecution of Jews. Harassed by the Nazis with restrictions and censorship, and aware of the danger to which he exposes himself, Bonhoeffer continues to write and work with the German resistance. The practice of the *Imitation of Christ*[340] is the basis of his theological creed. In 1943, the Gestapo imprison him and after one year and a half, he is executed by hanging. Throughout the entire period of his seclusion, he reminds himself that God accepts evil for a better good and in one of the letters he states, "I believe that God can and will bring good out of evil, even out of the greatest evil" (11). His belief in the model of Christ makes him put into practice Christ-like values of goodness, love, suffering, and forgiveness.

In one of the poems he writes in prison, Bonhoeffer acknowledges Christ's sacrifice, so as to better accept his own decision to give his life for others, "For Christians, pagans alike he hangs dead, / And both alike forgiving" (349). It is undeniable that his trust in God sustains him during his imprisonment. By thinking about Jesus, as the ultimate example, Bonhoeffer fills his heart with forgiveness for those who have imprisoned him. His letters are meant to support the struggles of those from the outside who also face the imminent danger from the Nazis. He thus

[338] Belcastro, D., Joseph. "Merton and Camus, on Christian Dialogue with a Postmodern World". in *The Merton Annual: Studies in Culture, Spirituality and Social Concerns,* vol. 10. Victor Kramer. (ed.). (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press. 1997). pp. 223-233.
[339] "ideas from this book are in the process of becoming part of the general intellectual equipment of a good many younger observers of the American scene, both those with and those without any interest in what is usually called theology" (William Hamilton about Bonhoeffer's letters, 1972, back cover)
[340] For Christians, it is the practice of following the example of Jesus.

suggests that people should pray so as to find the right support in times of struggle, "Feel in the past God's forgiveness and goodness, / pray him to keep you today and tomorrow" (323).

Bonhoeffer offers the example of an appropriate relationship that one should have with another. The relationship should be based on acceptance, love, and forgiveness because, "[T]he only profitable relationship to others— and especially to our weaker brethren—is one of love, and that means the will to hold fellowship with them. God himself did not despise humanity but became man for man's sake" (10). He suggests that any relationship should be based on forgiveness, because, "[T]he man who despises another will never be able to make anything of him. Nothing that we despise in the other man is entirely absent from ourselves… We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer" (10). Bonhoeffer chooses to dedicate his life to others and suffer for them, as Christ did. He suggests that looking at people as suffering entities might help us better relate to them, rather than focusing on their mistakes and evil character. However, it is not enough to acknowledge the other's suffering, but to act and to expose oneself to possible suffering for the wellbeing of one's community, since "We have to learn that personal suffering is a more effective key, a more rewarding principle for exploring the world in thought and action than personal good fortune" (17).

In a poem[341] he writes at the end of his imprisonment, he rhetorically questions his own identity ("Who am I?"), by emphasizing that there is meaning only in God, "Oh God, I am

[341] Who am I? / Who am I? They often tell me… / Am I then really all that which other men tell of?
Or am I only what I know of myself, / restless and longing and sick, like a bird in a cage,
struggling for breath, as though hands were compressing my/ throat,
yearning for colors, for flowers, for the voice of birds, [for beauty]
thirsting for words of kindness, for neighbourliness…
Who am I? This or the other?
Am I one person today, and tomorrow another? / Am I both at once? A hypocrite before others,
and before myself a contemptibly woebegone weakling?
Or is something within me still like a beaten army,

thine". His metaphor about the bird in a cage is meant to confirm his conviction that in the absence of God one is lost and in senseless wonder, falling victim of their own limitations and materiality.

Paradoxically, Bonhoeffer finds reasons to hope despite his imminent death, "While all the powers of good aid and attend us, / boldly we'll face the future, come what may. / At even and at morn, God will befriend us, / and oh, most surely on each newborn day!" (401) His power, trust, and hope confirm once more that you can be free even in prison, that you can be at peace even in times of war, and that you can love even those who hate you. Bonhoeffer's confession brings readers closer to analyzing one's ability to love and forgive. Readers can definitely benefit from Bonhoeffer's testimonial because his letters present the life of a martyr who reaches a high spiritual understanding. He manages to reconcile the forces of good and evil and witnesses a Christ-like love based on forgiveness and goodness. Both Bonhoeffer's and Merton's confessions constitute challenging texts that test readers and engage them in a difficult process of self-awareness and acceptance[342].

Religion plays an essential role in the encounter with the other because it brings in ethical resources that can be exploited in the name of the ancient ideals of goodness, beauty, and truth[343]. Literature offers an undeniable contribution in creating the platform for encounter and exchange of ideas coming from different fields of inquiry. Philosophy, through its critical stand

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Fleeing in disorder from victory already achieved?
Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine.
Whoever I am, thou knowest, O God, I am thine" (348).

[342] By bringing together theologians, writers, and philosophers, one can observe the interconnectedness of their approaches in building an intercultural dialogue that aims at surpassing geographical, institutional, cultural, and dogmatic borders, thus drawing near to truth. "If anything, a global intercultural dialogue should primarily center on the idea of building a common humanity, based on our interdependent relationships of mutual causality". See Mihai Spăriosu. *Remapping Knowledge*: Intercultural Studies for a Global Age. (New York: Berghahn Books. 2006). p. 71.

[343] "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church". See Tertullian. *The Apology of Tertullian for the Christians.* T.H. Bindley (ed.). (Oxford: Parker and CO., Crown Yard. [1890] 2006)

in the search for truth, manages to balance doctrinal formulations. Taken separately, each field is a source of knowledge and partly contributes to unraveling life's meaning and the mystery of understanding human nature. Together, literature, religion, and philosophy offer unlimited potentialities of thought and pertain to (universal) truth. Will literature manage to still pertain at truth even in the case of texts dealing with evil and its manifestations? The next chapter will offer answers to this challenging question.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN LITERATURE

In order for liberty to be complete, it has to be offered the choice… of being infinitely wrong[344]

The problem of evil in literature is a complex topic that can be analyzed from various angles. This chapter looks at texts dealing with evil and its manifestation in ugliness, hypocrisy, revolt, and suffering, in order to identify possible positive outcomes of reading such texts. As Georges Bataille mentions in his book, *Literature and Evil* ([1957] 1985), "literature is not innocent… A rigorous morality results from complicity in the knowledge of Evil, which is the basis of intense communication" (ix). It is the exposure to the evil that helps one better perceive goodness since "the deliberate creation of Evil… is acceptance and recognition of Good. It pays homage to it and, by calling itself wicked, it admits that it is relative and derivative—that it could not exist without Good" (36).

Evidently, one should be aware of texts that reject high values and portray reality at its worst. The writers of those texts might either lack moral/spiritual equilibrium and write texts that become redemptive confessions[345], or on the contrary, they might play with the idea of evil for a better good. For instance, in the case of Marquis de Sade's *Justine, ou Les malheurs de la vertu (Justine, or The Misfortunes of Virtue)* ([1791] 1950), virtue seems to bring punishment. In her search for a virtuous life, Justine is tortured, raped, and enslaved, while her sister Juliette (less virtuous and submitted to vice) finds a rich husband and lives a comfortable life. The first contact with the text and with details about the biography of Sade (incarcerated in prisons and an insane asylum for most of his life, famous for his libertine sexuality, violence, and blasphemy

[344] Sartre quoted in Georges Bataille. *Literature and Evil*. (New York: Marion Boyars. [1957] 1985). p. 36.
[345] See Emil Cioran. *Pe culmile Disperării* (Bucureşti: Humanitas. [1934] 1993)

against Christianity) allows a narrow hermeneutical path. Sade's thirst for limitless freedom ignores fundamental moral conduct. However, his text can constitute a valuable lesson about perennial values toward which the soul should aspire. Justine offers the example of an uncorrupted soul and hopeful search for truth. Even if her short earthly existence does not offer her the context for doing good, her soul is clean and ready for the afterlife. Justine's experience can be a lesson for any Christian who believes in salvation.

Reading Sade's texts, one has the opportunity to find an intensive care station for one's soul. Sade's texts teach the ephemeral dimension of one's existence and parallel Plato's suggestions concerning the need for nurturing one's soul. Sade himself acknowledges that "true happiness is to be found nowhere but in Virtue's womb… if in keeping with designs it is not for us to fathom, God permits that it be persecuted on Earth, it is so that Virtue may be compensated by Heaven's most dazzling rewards" (150).

5.1 Literature and Evil

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil[346]: I the Lord do all these things **(Isaiah 45:7)**

In this section, I will discuss the problem of evil in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* ([1667] 2016), I. L. Caragiale's *Lost Letter* ([1884] 1970), and J. P. Sartre's *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu* (1951). The texts might develop readers critical thinking and nurture their thirst for goodness. By emphasizing the effects of evil[347] and the specific themes affiliated to it, such as thirst for power, pride, greed, selfishness, ignorance, indifference toward others, or excessive desire to do good

[346] The Hebrew word *rah* means bad, evil, misery, distress, calamity, byproduct of the separation from goodness.
[347] For instance, Baron-Cohen Simon publishes an essay about the science of evil, and he suggests that evil installs itself where there is no empathy. He suggests replacing the idea of evil with "the idea of empathy starvation". See Baron-Cohen Simon. *The Science of Evil*: *Zero Degrees of Empathy*: A New Theory of Human Cruelty. (London: Allen Lane. 2011)

(an attitude based on pride in search for appreciation and social confirmation), I will prove the contribution of these texts to readers' moral search. *Is goodness possible?*[348] will be a recurrent question in this chapter. C. S. Lewis confirms the positive effects of texts offering examples of good deeds that invite readers to practice goodness themselves. "If pain… is God's megaphone to rouse the world, the spiritualized emotions aroused by good works of literary fantasy are his violin, sweetly calling us home"[349] (254).

John Milton's *Paradise Lost* represents one such example that conveys important moral lessons. Milton reiterates the biblical story of the Luciferic fall and the Fall of Man in order to remind his readers about God's central role in human life. Lucifer's rebellion warns us and invites us to practice wisdom and humility. The image of God is that of a creator of both good and evil, of "a Universe of death, which God by curse/ Created evil, for evil only good" (Milton 2: 622-3). In contrast, Satan chooses evil as his ultimate aim, for "Evil, be thou my Good!" (Milton, 4: 110). Man, "[b]y Nature free, not overruled by Fate" can choose either good or evil (Milton, 5:523-7). Starting with the man's "first disobedience", Milton exemplifies the consequences of such an act as the loss of Eden.

In Book IV, line 80, he uses the well-known phrase "Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven", so as to mock the pride of those eager for power. Few lines later, he underlines humans' freedom and invites people to choose what is right, "Awake, arise, or be forever fall'n" (Milton, 4:302). However, he warns that "Long is the way/ And hard, that out of Hell leads up to the Light" (Milton, II, 432). In Book IV, he discusses "the hell within" in contrast with "A heaven on earth" (Milton, IV, 280). When describing heaven, he does notice the shades of evil

[348] My translation for *Le bien est-il possible?* See Jean-Paul Sartre. *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*. (Paris: Gallimard. 1951)
[349] See C. S. Lewis. *The Problem of Evil*. (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco. 2001). p. 91.

from man's soul, "All seemed well pleased, all seemed but were not all" (Milton, V, 617). *Paradise Lost* remains a poem which presents human flaws and mistakes and, at the same time, instructs and warns, challenges and comforts. Milton manages to make numerous references to evil in order to better describe goodness. He invites readers to choose the good, while aware of one's weaknesses and strengths.

Ion Luca Caragiale is a Romanian playwriter whose work uses satire in order to discuss universal human flaws. His name is associated with a burlesque but realistic picture of the 19th-century Romanian bourgeoisie. Following Molière's steps, Caragiale offers the Romanian public the sour taste of their own limitations and mistakes. He does not blame, but he makes fun of people's flaws, and his work has a cathartic effect. Caragiale does not refrain from describing some of the most corrupt and evil deeds of politicians whose quests for power push them into ridiculous circumstances.

The play, *O scrisoare pierdută*[350], describes a scenario that takes place in a small town in Romania, where the establishment is trying to steal the elections. Ştefan Tipătescu, the sheriff of the county, sends a love letter to his mistress, Zoe, the wife of another politician, and their love triangle influences the outcome of the elections. The letter is lost and found by those who want to win the elections, thus it becomes the source of blackmail. A drunken citizen eventually finds the letter and returns it to its owners. The election takes place and the entire town is once again at peace. Caragiale describes people's limitations, their greed, thirst for power, corruption, and frivolity, in order to invite readers to observe the awkwardness and stupidity of their life choices. Implicitly, he suggests that one should refrain from gaining undeserved incomes, lying, and

[350] *A Lost Letter*. See I. L. Caragiale. *O Scrisoare Pierdută* (Bucureşti: Editura Minerva. [1884] 1970)

cheating. Paradoxically, Caragiale's play can still be seen as a realistic description of the current political environment. Unfortunately, people are still struggling with corruption, and Caragiale's satire is a reminder of the universal corrupted human nature. For readers, the play is a realistic portrayal of people's cynicism and selfishness. While depicted in humorous terms, the choice of evil becomes awkward and repulsive.

Jean-Paul Sartre's *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu/ The Devil and the Good Lord* is a dramatic text that discusses the possibility of doing good. Goetz, the illegitimate son of a noble family, reiterates Cain's crime of killing his brother and fleeing town in order to do more harm. After a discussion with the priest Heinrich, he decides to dedicate his life to goodness. "I'll do good: it's still the best way to be alone"[351]. However, everything he does seems to cause negative outcomes. Goetz finds that it is easier to do harm than to do good since the latter might also have evil consequences.

He sets free his mistress Catherine who used to be a prisoner, but after her liberation, she dies of grief. He shares his entire land with peasants, but his generosity leads to war. He also becomes a prophet of love, but all his followers die because they give up their lives in the name of love. He eventually exiles himself to the forest where he concludes that God is dead and man is alone. "Goetz: I'll take the city. / Catherine: But why? / Goetz: Because it's bad. / Catherine: And why do evil? / Goetz: Because good is already done. / Catherine: Who did it? / Goetz: God the Father. I invent"[352]. If in the play *Huis Clos/ No Exit* (1944), Sartre discusses hell as

[351] My translation for "Je ferai le bien: c'est encore la meilleure manière d'être seul"… "Good is love, but the fact is that men do not love each other and what prevents them from doing so? The inequality of conditions, servitude and misery. Thus, one has to renounce them". My translation for "Le bien c'est l'amour, mais le fait est que les hommes ne s'aiment pas et qu'est-ce qui les en empeche? L'inégalité des conditions, la servitude et la misère. Il faut donc les supprimer" (33).

[352] My translation for "Goetz: je prendrai la ville. / Catherine: Mais pourquoi? / Goetz: Parce que c'est mal. / Catherine: Et pourquoi faire le Mal? / Goetz: Parce que le Bien est déjà fait. / Catherine: Qui l'a fait? / Goetz: Dieu le Père. Moi, j'invente" (Act III, sc. 4). (62)

equivalent of the other, "L'enfer c'est les autres", in *Le Diable et le Bon Dieu*, Sartre proclaims the inseparability of good and evil: "Good and Bad are inseparable: I accept to be evil in order to become good" (Act 11, sc. 2).

Sartre's existential turmoil frames a text that leaves readers with a feeling of discomfort because of the harshness imposed by human limitations. By bringing together the dual human nature, the writer challenges readers to question their daily choices. His texts require attention and philosophical examination. Readers can grasp the ultimate aim of this text, that is a better understanding of one's nature. Evil in its complex manifestation complements goodness and ugliness accompanies beauty.

5.2 Literature and Ugliness

***Ugliness is an error or mistake*[353] (Plato)**

In terms of ugliness in literature, **Charles Baudelaire**'s *Les Fleurs du Mal*[354] (1857), and Yukio Mishima's *Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (1959) emphasize the danger of decadence and aesthetic relativity (monstrosity, asymmetry, disharmony, anti-humanism), as well as the destructive potential of beauty in the absence of any moral reference and equilibrium.

Fictional texts provide numerous examples of asymmetry, catastrophe, and the repulsiveness of the human life, soul, and behavior. What is the purpose of such texts? Why do writers engage with the hideousness of human existence? Aristotle, in his *Poetics*, gives an answer to these questions. Through the purgation of emotions, art offers restoration and renewal. Literature does to the mind what a cathartic[355] does to the body. Literature transforms ugliness

[353] See Plato. *Plato's Sophist: Part II of The Being of the Beautiful*. Seth Benardete (trans.). (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1986). p. 95.
[354] In 1985, Bataille notices that, "Les Fleurs du Mal pass for diversion (a work for Art for Art's sake) or for an edifying work intended to instill in the reader a horror for vice" (37).
[355] In medicine, *cathartic* is a substance that accelerates defecation. Aristotle uses the medical term and parallels the medical effect of a cathartic substance with the effect of tragedy (*catharsis*) on the audience.

into beauty, transfiguring the vicious into a transcendental path toward the aesthetic ideal[356]. I will use this assumption in order to emphasize that both Baudelaire and Mishima aimed at the purification of their readers' souls. The acknowledgment of ugliness, in the case of the Baudelerian *Spleen,* is a strong motivator in the search for beauty. In the absence of an ideal, or of a metaphysical reference point (Plato's Forms/ divine inspiration) beauty is ruinous and results in monstrosity, asymmetry, disharmony, and anti-humanism. If Baudelaire identifies beauty in ugliness, Mishima reveals the downfall of a dangerous obsession with material beauty.

My choice of Baudelaire's poems is not random. By looking at the poem *Cain and Abel*, one can observe Baudelaire's belief in the human dual nature and the individual potentiality of nurturing either the dark or the bright side of the self. He joins the Parnassian movement against romanticism and creates beautiful verses filled with imagery that praise ugliness. He finds value in images that are not aesthetically pleasing, but their portrayal offers readers the acknowledgment of the continuous choice between good and evil that one has to make. The artist/poet experiences heavy melancholia however, he tries to extract beauty from it.

His most popular volume of poems, *Fleurs du Mal (Flowers of Evil)* describes the source of moral evil that the poet calls *Spleen* and discusses the duality of the soul. The author creates a close relationship with his reader and calls him/her, "Hypocrite reader, my fellow creature, my brother"[357]. In the poem, *Spleen and Ideal/Spleen et Ideal* Baudelaire emphasizes that through art, the poet is given the opportunity to reach the superior world of beauty (seen as a reflection of

[356] Rodin described how beauty can transform ugliness: "We call 'ugly' that which is formless, unhealthy, which suggests illness, suffering, destruction, which is contrary to regularity- the sign of health. We also call ugly the immoral, the vicious, the criminal and all the abnormality which brings- the soul of parricide, the traitor, the self-seeker... But let a great artist get hold of this ugliness, immediately he transfigures it- with a touch of his magic wand he makes it into beauty". See Hanna Segal. *Dream, Phantasy and Art.* (New York: Routledge. 1991). p. 70. See also Hanna Segal "A Psychoanalytical Approach to Aesthetics". in M. Klein, P. Heimann, R.E. Money-Kyrle (eds.). *New Directions in Psychoanalysis*. (New York: Basic Books. 1957). p. 401.

[357] "Hypocrite lecteur, mon semblable, mon frère" see André Lagarde et Laurent Michard, *XIX siècle Les Grands Auteurs Français du Programme*. (Paris: Bordas. 1967). p. 430.

divinity)[358]. The immortal instinct of beauty offers an impetus to the author who reaches "a part of the splendor"[359]. Novelty, renewal, or resurrection of the soul happen through a purifying creative process. Both ugliness and beauty become the means to a transcendental end.

Similar to Baudelaire, **Yukio Mishima** describes beauty by portraying its destructive effect in the absence of stable moral grounds[360]. Mishima writes the story of a reliquary[361] set on fire by Mizoguchi because of mental struggles. His childhood obsessions drive Mizoguchi into the doom of nihilism. He rejects all values because he realizes he cannot master the one he cares for the most, beauty[362]. He hopes salvation will come from destroying the temple that he perceives as the symbol of absolute beauty. His fixation[363] with the ideal temple that contrasts with reality leads him to a revengeful fantasy, "it was essential that the Golden Temple be beautiful. I therefore staked everything not so much on the objective beauty of the temple itself as on my own power to imagine its beauty" (19).

Mishima wants to reach the ideal beauty and wants to control it. He wants to end with the temple's impressive history. He is aware of the ephemeral human life and rejects the temple's

[358] "joies divines et énivrantes" See E. A. Poe. *Du Principe Poétique*. F. Rabbe (trad.). (1844). *The Albatross* (1841) symbolizes the poet himself. He craves for infinity even if he/she is bound to earth. Similar to the bird, "His giant wings prevent him from walking", the poet is a misfit in the material world. His metaphysical standard leads him into frustration by facing the impossibility of exceeding his mortal status. However, art with its beauty energizes him with hope. Similar to Pascal who describes "the misery of a world without God", Baudelaire portrays the hell of those enslaved by materialism. He accepts ugliness in order to underline the elevating power of beauty. In the poem *Le Voyage* (1861), Baudelaire insists upon the role of an active search. "To plunge in the void's depth, Hell or Heaven, who cares? / Into the unknown's depth, to find the new". My translation for "Plonger au fond du gouffre, Enfer ou Ciel, qu'importe? / Au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau" (453).
[359] The poem *Elevation* (433).
[360] Rilke supports this perspective when he mentions that, "Beauty is nothing else but the beginning of terror that we cannot handle…" My translation for: "Întrucât Frumosul nu este nimic altceva decât începutul terorii pe care încă nu o putem suporta, şi motivul pentru care îl adorăm este că, el, cu seninătate, detestă să ne distrugă" (Segal 403).
[361] Kinkaku-ji, The Temple of the Golden Pavilion, is situated in Kyoto, Japan. In the 15th century, the temple was burnt down by a novice monk. This real story inspires Mishima for writing a novel.
[362] The moment of confrontation with the limits of the material beauty results in disappointment. "Not only did the building fail to strike me as beautiful, but I even had a sense of disharmony and restlessness…Could beauty, I wondered, be as unbeautiful a thing as this?" (25)
[363] See Albert Borowitz's *Terrorism for Self-Glorification: The Herostratos Syndrome*. (The Kent State University Press. 2005)

solidity and endurance "the fact of beauty's eternity can really block our lives and poison our existence" (126). His chaotic pyromaniac choice leads him to a premeditated act of vandalism. "I felt as though somewhere in this world a mission awaited me of which I myself still knew nothing" (6). He uses his youthful frustration based on solitude as a source of revenge on humanity. He finds 'good' reasons to destroy something that is less beautiful than what he understands by absolute beauty. His neurotic personality[364] is contradictory and leads him into a desperate state of incertitude where destruction is the only escape: "It seemed that hell could appear day or night, at any time, at any place, simply in response to one's thoughts or wishes" (118).

In order for Mizoguchi to live peacefully, he needs to first do evil[365] because of the destructive potentiality that beauty sprang in him, "It was certainly in order that I might live that I was planning to set fire to the Golden Temple, but that I was now doing was more like a preparation for death" (220). His already distorted vision and understanding of life shapes a distorted reality. Morals are upside down. Hope bothers him. Instead, he chooses hell and fire, in order to paradoxically educate future generations. "If I burn down the Golden Temple, I told

[364] Solitude, one of the themes of the book, hides self-centeredness and the lack of engagement, "This sense of individuality robbed my life of its symbolism, that is to say, of its power to serve, like Tsurukawa's, as a metaphor for something outside itself; accordingly, it deprived me of the feelings of life's extensity and solitarity, and it became the source of that sense of solitude which pursued me indefinitely" (130). In the context of an isolated, unstable self, the disequilibrium in establishing values is unavoidable. Once Mizoguchi considers his salvation might come from the destruction of a symbol of the dreamed beauty, the self is annihilated because "the Golden Temple… had enveloped me. Did I possess the temple, or was I possessed by it?" (131). The source of his mixed ideas comes not only from his sensitive nature, but also from the books he has been exposed to. Similar to making wrong life choices, Mizoguchi does not separate goodness from evil when reading, "I did not read books on Zen, but such translations of novels and philosophical works as happened to be on hand… I am aware of the influence that they had on me and also of the fact that it was they who inspired me to the deed that I committed" (135). He is aware that "beauty… could serve as an impulse for further dreams" (29), but his dreams are dreams of annihilation and destruction, all in the name of nothingness.

[365] He feels that he does not follow the right path and his obsession intoxicates him and becomes a source of evil, "The intoxication that I derived from the Golden Temple served to make part of my personality" (135). Mizoguchi moves from one extreme to the other, in search for the right justification, "I must make sure that the terrifying concept of beauty, which makes people powerless to act, would not now intervene between me and my intention" (224). The consequence for his disequilibrium in approaching beauty is chaos and nothingness that "was the very structure of this beauty" (255).

myself, I shall be doing something that will have great educational value. For it will teach people that it is meaningless to infer indestructibility by analogy" (195).

Mizoguchi's ultimate decision is to set the temple on fire and together with it he hopes to find peace of mind. The novel has an open end, for the reader to figure out whether the unstable pyromaniac received what he aimed at or not. Mizoguchi does not die in the fire because as Schjedahl mentions, "The self, that is abandoned to beauty, is not lost. He will come back refreshed"[366]. Mishima's novel offers an explanation of the depth of transcendental beauty. It is also an invitation to crave for values that go beyond the earthly existence and offer solace to one's soul. Similar to Exupéry's incentive that one sees better with the heart than with the eyes, Mishima allows readers to relate to beauty at a deeper level by presenting its obsessive effects upon weak disoriented minds. An aesthetic reconceptualization is possible only in the presence of moral pillars and the belief in a transcendental world. If one stops one's inquiry at a material level, one risks experiencing Mizoguchi's drama.

Ultimately, both Baudelaire and Mishima show that ugliness and beauty need a re-figuration by allowing their immaterial potential to shine. Ugliness and beauty are cathartic as long as one avoids limiting them to physicality. Truth and hypocrisy represent another set of opposites that similar to beauty and ugliness should not limit the reader through a dualistic understanding. On the contrary, the reader should master alternative fictional scenarios and transform them into sources of goodness, beauty, and truth.

5.3 Literature and Hypocrisy

[366] See Schjedahl, P. "Notes on Beauty". in B. Beckley, D. Shapiro (eds.). *Uncontrollable Beauty: Towards a New Aesthetics*. New York: Allworth Press. 1999). p. 58.

***Hypocrites are like actors, pretending to be what they are not, saying things they do not mean*[367]**

The counterpart of truth in literature[368] is obviously falseness and the use of lies in fictional texts. In his essay about bad faith, *mauvaise foi*, Jean-Paul Sartre[369] makes the distinction between falsehood and bad faith, the latter referring to deception or lying to oneself (148). The present analysis will focus on characters that are either pathological liars or the ones who hide the truth for personal purposes[370]. Molière's *Tartuffe* ([1664] 1967), provides readers with useful lessons about the consequences of hypocrisy and lust. George Orwell's *1984* ([1949] 1977), through the Ministry of Truth, identifies the major societal problem of fakeness, injustice, and manipulation of truth by forces that require submissive citizens. Propaganda, falsification of reality and historical events, and the creation of the *Newspeak*, a language designed to transmit only fabricated realities, are Orwell's fictional tools in his fight against totalitarian ideologies and power mentalities.

Molière's *Tartuffe/The Hypocrite* is a comedy that mocks liars, religious hypocrites, naïve people, and those who pretend to be virtuous. Tartuffe, the main character, likes Orgon's wife, Mariane, but he agrees to marry her daughter, and confident in his ability to lie, he asks

[367] See Béla Szabados, Eldon Soifer. *Hypocrisy: Ethical Investigations.* (New York: Broadview Press. 2004). p. 19.
[368] Here, I am not referring to the distinction between fiction and reality, or to literary techniques of *mise-en-abyme*, but simply to characters that lie and eventually get punished.
[369] Jean-Paul Sartre, philosopher, writer and existentialist, was Camus' friend. They ended their friendship because Sartre chose violence, as solution for change (in post-war France), while Camus disagreed. Sartre contrasts the two dimensions of the self, as being in-itself and for-itself. He argues that bad-faith offers a complete actualization one's being since, "In order for me to have an intention of sincerity, I must at the outset simultaneously be and not be what I am" (178). In other words, "Good faith seeks to flee the inner disintegration of my being in the direction of the in-itself which it should be and is not. Bad faith seeks to flee the in-itself by means of the inner disintegration of my being" (185). See Jean-Paul Sartre, "Bad Faith". in *Jean-Paul Sartre: Essays in Existentialism*. W. Baskin. (ed.). (New Jersey: Carol Publishing Group. [1965] 1979). pp. 147-186.
[370] In the case of Darcy's lies, in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), or Toinette's white lies in *Malade Imaginaire* (1673), one could detect innocence behind the choice of hiding the truth, in the name of humility-Darcy hides his financial support for Jane's family since he wanted to offer unconditional support, with no need for social recognition-, or for curing someone of their damaging obsessions- Toinette tries to help Argan to overcome hypochondria.

Orgon[371], "Do you really think you know me through and through? / Brother, how can you trust my semblance so, / And think me better for my outward show?... But in truth I am utterly abject" (281). Elmire asks her husband Orgon to listen to a conversation she has with Tartuffe[372] to see what he really intends[373]. Cléante suggests no one should blame Tartuffe, but rather, "hope his heart… may happily return to virtue's way, / That he'll correct his life, detest his crime" (312).

Tartuffe is thus a play that stimulates readers into analyzing their own moral stand. The hypocrite's example confirms that an evil deed will be punished. Virtues matter and people should be honest and target truth. Molière's play is meant to nurture one's desire for goodness. Similarly, Orwell's *1984* encourages people to cultivate goodness and truth.

George Orwell's book, *1984,* is a dystopia that is as valid for today's society as it was for Orwell's time. The writer manages to create a futuristic world where all values are rejected, and evil is debunked. For the purpose of the present study, I will only focus on Orwell's Ministry of Truth that together with the Ministry of Love, Peace, and Plenty, constitute the administrative institutions of Oceania. BigBrother is the ultimate figure who has complete control over the lives of all citizens. Institutions are meant to manipulate and mislead people believing in a new reality with no traditional roots, no values, and no humanity. Everyone needs to accomplish robotically daily duties without inquiring into their complexity. All ministries are brainwashing citizens, and their mission is to construct,

[371] Orgon falls victim of Tartuffe's manipulation and rejects his son Damis who tries to warn him about the real character of the liar.
[372] Tartuffe, envious on Orgon's wealth, tries to get his money by marrying his daughter, and his happiness by flirting with Orgon's wife. He manipulates Orgon who offers him his entire fortune. However, Orgon learns his lesson the hard way when Tartuffe expels him from his own house. Orgon's mother was right when saying that "appearances can be deceiving/ And seeing mustn't always be believing… Good can seem evil under some conditions" (303).
[373] During their discussion, the hypocrite is ready for any type of compromise in order to have her, "It's true there are some pleasures Heaven denies;/ But there are ways to reach a compromise" (294). Orgon finally understands that "he is an evil man" (296). In the last act, Orgon's mother reminds her son that, "Virtue is always harassed here below; / The envious will die, but envy, no" (302).

> [T]he Ministry of Truth, which concerned itself with news [lies], entertainment, education, and the fine arts; the Ministry of peace… concerned itself with [perpetual] war; the ministry of Love… maintained law and order [by inducing loyalty through torture]; and the ministry of Plenty… was responsible for economic affairs [paradoxically leading to starvation] (4).

The Ministry of Truth serves falsification and erasure of memory and tradition. History is not important, and all historical events need to be falsified in order to serve new realities. The Records Department of the Ministry of Truth, has the responsibility, "not to reconstruct the past but to supply the citizens of Oceania with newspapers, films, textbooks, telescreen programs, plays, novels" (43). All materials are meant to erase memory and create doubt and unreliability. The ministry creates *Newspeak*, the new language of all citizens, in "the shape it's going to have when nobody speaks anything else. Old language or Standard English is no longer accepted; words are being destroyed and vocabulary gets smaller. "Countless words such as honor, justice, morality, internationalism, democracy, science, and religion had simply ceased to exist" (305). In the absence of words designating important moral pillars, reality changes. Without a clearly defined referent, the reality behind it becomes inexistent.

Winston, the main character, who is the only one understanding the destructive process of civilization that all the others seem to embrace, starts writing a journal, in order to renew important facts. He acknowledges his loneliness but rejects change. For most people, "The past was dead, the future was unimaginable" (26), but for him, it was worth holding onto classical values and truth. He rejects the manufactured truth and the misleading slogan of the ministry: "War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength" (16). He thinks back to the role of literature and praises tragedy that "belonged to the ancient time, to a time when there were still

privacy, love, and friendship, and when the members of a family stood by one another without needing to know the reason" (30). The new so-called freedom is fake. Similarly, mathematical laws are relativized, "two and two make five" (277). Winston understands that new truth is anything the party might suggest. Reality is no longer external but depends on what Big Brother allows one to see or have access to.

Orwell coins the word 'doublethink' which means "the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously and accepting both of them" (322). Given the current global context and the characteristics of the human race, one might agree with Orwell's picture of the modern world lead by consumerism and materialism. Orwell warns readers about ideologies that can manipulate one's view on reality and determine a narrow perspective that has no basis other than the system's support. Today's political correctness and the tendency to relativize truth on the basis of feelings (that are most of the times unexplored by the one experiencing them) are dangerous and debilitating. Orwell's book stands as a warning and invites us to think and re-actualize traditional perennial values that are essential for one's wellbeing. His book stands as a revolt against the lack of truth and provides arguments in support of the instructional role of literature in society.

5.4 Literature and Revolt

The novel is primarily an exercise of the intelligence in the service of nostalgic or rebellious sensibilities **(Albert Camus,** ***The Rebel,*** **264)**

Writers, such as Orwell, are rebels and activists, but also guides on the path toward goodness, beauty, and truth because they revolt against behaviors and attitudes that lack moral grounds. Within the scope of this discussion, the word "revolt" has positive connotations that

aim at the revival of classical values. Writers such as André Malraux[374], **Albert Camus**, or Richard Wright[375] use strategies aimed at positively positioning revolt. The etymology of the word goes back to *revolvere*, the Latin word which means to roll back. The softer connotation of this word emphasizes the positive outcomes of revolts. Revolt does not refer to substituting one paradigm with a better one, but it encourages us to pay attention to the negative consequences of the lack of values. Literature presents inconsistencies, staging them in a narrative context that becomes instructional because of the surrogate schemes it offers. All these alternatives are defiant because they challenge and disobey, but their ultimate goal is a better good.

What better way of approaching the concept of revolt than through Albert Camus? His concept of rebellion aims at recovering lost values. This French existentialist challenges the literary canon with his unconventional writing. In his literary universe, rebellion targets the chasm of the post-modern man. Camus' work presents a reaction to the mentality of power based on selfishness, nihilism, materialism, and the denial of moral values.

In *L'Homme Révolté (The Rebel)* ([1951] 1991), Camus starts a dialogue with his reader, inviting him to look at life in isolation from any spiritual teachings. His purpose is to challenge readers and awaken their active acknowledgment of their metaphysical need. The rebel inquires whether there are independent moral values, or whether they are unquestionably linked to the spiritual world, "Unless we choose to ignore reality, we must find our values in it. Is it possible to find a rule of conduct outside the realm of religion and its absolute values? That is the question raised by rebellion" (14). Camus' rebel is the victim of power dynamics. He is the 20th-century man who replaces religion, God, and morals with a void. Camus acknowledges that there

[374] Malraux uses revolt so as to make man's life meaningful. He revolts against nothingness. See André Malraux. "La Condition Humaine". in *Romans.* (Paris: Pléiade. 1947)
[375] Wright's characters use physical rebellion in order to gain freedom and identity. See Richard Wright. *Native Son*. (New York: Harper and Row. 1940)

are several forms of culture and that they are distinct and inseparable. By trying to renounce one of them, Camus' rebel attains disequilibrium.

Reason based on pseudo-freedom represents a self-mutilating mechanism as long as other forms of understanding do not complement it. Camus is receptive to the chasm caused by rejecting tradition, and moral values. When faced with nihilism, his rebel is disarmed. Camus rebels against this uncontrollable type of rebellion and astutely describes his character's existential chasm. This novel (as well as others) depicts the absurdity of an infernal lifestyle with no boundaries, no moral pillars, no order, and no laws, but with a free rational self. Camus' fiction is a response to an existentialist crisis, and implicitly his revolt is against the loss of goodness, beauty[376], and truth.

Materialism and its insufficient contribution to one's fulfillment represent reasons for alienation. For Jean-Baptiste Clamence, Camus' character in *La Chute (The Fall)* ([1956] 1997)[377], "[b]asically, nothing mattered. War, suicide, love, misery, of course, I paid attention to all of them, when circumstances forced me, but in a courteous and superficial manner"[378]. The individual's reasoning is at the core of each uncertain free choice. "From the moment that eternal principles are put in doubt simultaneously with formal virtue, and when every value is discredited, reason will start to act without reference to anything but its own success" (67). Nihilism is the effect of such reasoning, and it only brings alienation, solitude, and isolation:

[376] History and truth gain a second place in Camus' view, because beauty is the redemptive and primary aim of art. "History may perhaps have an end; but our task is not to terminate it, but to create it, in the image of what we henceforth know to be true… One can reject all history and yet accept the world of the sea and the stars" (138).
[377] There are similarities between *The Rebel* and *The Fall*. Camus acknowledges the same immoral excesses that misunderstood freedom causes in people. He addresses alienation or the absurdity of human existence because of materialism and violence, by reacting to the lack of communion, and to selfishness. Camus indirectly invites the reader to focus on the beauty of life. Instead of following Clamence's rejection of any purpose in life, the reader is given the chance to seize the gift of life.
[378] "Au fond rien ne comptait. Guerre, suicide, amour, misère, j'y pretais attention bien sur, quand les circonstances m'y forçaient mais d'une manière courtoise et superficielle" (45).

"The revolution of the 20th-century kills what remains of God in the principles themselves and consecrates historical nihilism" (122). Camus revolts against it by pointing out the effects of the absence of communion and care for others.

Camus also revolts against the very idea of necessity and against the alienation toward the other. Camus' rebellion repudiates playfully the human tendency to be served[379]. Selfishness, detachment and the rejection of communion are characteristics of the (post)-modern man: "I never remembered anyone else, other than myself… I keep on loving myself and taking advantage of others" [380]. Others are mere objects and means to an end for the selfish alienated, morose and self-centered, yet "free" modern man.

There are several limitations and fears of which Camus' character is also aware. Death is one of them: "A ridiculous fear pursued me: one could die without having confessed his lies... if there was only one hidden lie in life, death would make it ultimate"[381]. In such context, the rebel finds meaning in religion, but not in its redemptive role: "The only utility for God would be to ensure innocence and I would rather look at religion as a great whitening company"[382]. Religion is objectified and becomes a tool for cleansing one's consciousness. Camus rejects religion and morality. Both through his rebel and Clamence, he tries to identify values that can fill the void left by the absence of religion. His "metaphysical rebellion" (124) goes against the conditions of life, against evil and death, but also against Lucifer's desire, adopted by humanity, of becoming God and "recognizing that everything is permitted and refusing any other law but one's own"

[379] Through Clamence, Camus underlines the undeniable lack of love and care for the other: "That's how man is: he cannot love unless he loves himself… I know we can do without dominating or being served. Every man needs slaves as clean air". My translation for "L'homme est ainsi: il ne peut pas aimer sans s'aimer… Je sais bien qu'on ne peut se passer de dominer ou d'être servi. Chaque homme a besoin d'esclaves comme d'air pur" (32, 41).
[380] "Je ne me suis jamais souvenu que de moi même… Je continue de m'aimer et de me servir des autres" (46, 119).
[381] "Une crainte ridicule me poursuivait: on ne pouvait mourir sans avoir avoué tous ses mensonges… Autrement, et n'y eut-il qu'un seul mensonge de cacher dans la vie, la mort le reduit définitif" (77).
[382] "Alors, la seule utilité de Dieu serait de garantir l'innocence et je verrais plutôt la religion comme une grande entreprise de blanchissage" (94).

(31). Not only does the rebel react against selfishness, materialism, and indifference toward others, but also against the lack of beauty. "Nothing but horizontals, nothing shiny, space is colorless, and the living is dead"[383].

Clamence[384] embodies the loyal portrait of a man of our times who is lazy about starting his search for meaning. He rhetorically asks himself, "What duty?"[385] Camus' character rejects all reality; he rejects life itself. He has no motivation to live, no involvement in his own daily existence, no empathy for the troubles of others, no wish for love. He lives an empty life; he is superficial, indifferent, and disconnected. His robotic actions are frivolous because he is motivated only by his alienation. He focuses on "the sorrowful taste of mortal condition"[386], thus rejecting any type of spiritual authority, "For who is alone, without God and without a master, the weight of days is dreadful. We must choose a master, God [is] no longer fashionable… Where there's no father, there's no rule"[387]. Camus acknowledges people's struggle in the absence of truth or any divine authority[388].

The lack of rules and the rejection of God leave people in a chaotic state of blindness: "truth, the same as light, blinds"[389]. Freedom is the only reward for such a blurry and proud choice. The writer underlines the dangerous pride-driven path a free man might take, and he

[383] "Rien que des horizontals, aucun éclat, l'espace est incolore, la vie morte" (63).
[384] Clamence is a lawyer who confesses himself to a non-talkative interlocutor, while meeting him five times, in Amsterdam.
[385] "Quelle tache?" (77) His only answer is doubtful and leads to indetermination, "I am telling you, one cannot trust anything"/"On n'est sur de rien, je vous l'ai dit" (108). He is bound to passively complain about his mortal condition, while transforming chance into the only mobilizing force in the absence of any other existential pillar, "The only rational divinity… [is] chance"/ "La seule divinité raisonable… le hazard" (68).
[386] "le goût amer de la condition mortelle" (87).
[387] "Pour qui est seul, sans dieu et sans maître, le poids des jours est terrible. Il faut donc se choisir un maître, Dieu n'étant plus à la mode" Mais justement, il n'y a plus de père, plus de règle!" (112-3)
[388] Camus's rebel replaces God with insufficient surrogates, such as freedom, nihilism, and even revolt, which become an end in themselves: "He drove God from His heaven, but now that the spirit of metaphysical rebellion openly joins forces with revolutionary movements, the irrational claim for freedom paradoxically adopts reason as a weapon, and as the only means of conquest, which appears entirely human… Nihilism, which, in the very midst of rebellion, smothers the force of creation, only adds that one is justified in using every means at one's disposal" (54).
[389] "La verité, comme la lumière, aveugle" (102).

describes its destructive consequences: "Absolute freedom is the right of the strongest to dominate… it is the destruction of all value. If there is a single and universal truth, freedom has no reason for existing" (143). This surrogate form of transcendence that rejects and replaces religion is based on reason and individual authority. The need for freedom ignores the role of morality, tradition, spirituality, and gives birth to the rationalistic self-sufficient approach.

Camus acknowledges *the redemptive role of art* and frames a line of thought that is the basis of this present study as well. He predicates the connection between literature and the activism of revolt[390]. Camus considers that "the aim of great literature seems to be to create a closed universe or a perfect type" (129). Camus's view can be easily challenged by those who say that the literary liminal universe is an open space that allows not perfect, but better potentialities of thought and projections of a better reality. For Camus, "better does not mean different, it means unified… The world of the novel is only a rectification of the world we live in, in pursuance of man's deepest wishes" (131). The rectification lies in the continuity and unity[391] offered by the fictional world. Works of art playfully transform the mentality of power because the exposure to beauty and truth changes priorities, thus denying competition and self-centeredness,

> Every act of creation by its mere existence denies the world of master and slave. The appalling society of tyrants and slaves in which we survive will find its death and

[390] I would argue that the literature of consent, specifically for ancient history and the classical period, is also a revolt. Ancient and medieval poetry revolts against the lack of beauty (Plato), against the lack of goodness and humility (Saint Augustine), or against the lack of truth (Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Rabelais, Montaigne, Rousseau).

[391] A story is never really moving and successful without the imperturbable continuity which is never part of real life, but which is to be found on the borderland between reality and reverie, an imaginary world which is created by the rectification of the actual world…Far from being moral or even purely formal, this alteration aims, primarily, at unity and thereby expresses a metaphysical need (132). Rebellious sensibilities belong to activists, writers and poets who revolt against the lack of beauty. "But rebellion, which is the source of the art of fiction, can find satisfaction only in constructing unity on the basis of affirming this interior reality and not of denying it… this art is allied to the beauty of the world…against the power of death and oblivion" (132).

transfiguration only on the level of creation… Rebellious art also ends by revealing the "We are" and with it the way to a burning humility (137).

Camus emphasizes the role of literature through its potential for staging better realities. He considers values as the prerequisites of a better life. Literary examples of brotherhood, awareness and care, humility and love, charge post-modern men with responsibility and sense of communion. Through the act of writing, Camus encourages a transformation in his readers' minds. His criticism of blind freedom devoid of moral basis prevents readers from facing disappointment and suffering.

5.5 Literature and Suffering[392]

[T]he withdrawal of the gods is the most radical mode of divine presence, and the best kind of proximity is distance and abandonment **(Nemoianu, 1992, 9)**

The literary canon is filled with examples of novels and poems that explore human suffering at different levels. In fact, suffering is the main source of inspiration for literary masterpieces. Various literary and religious texts have dealt with this unavoidable part of one's life. For readers, texts about suffering are gratifying because they offer cathartic moments of moral purification and allow imagination to reach unexplored depths. Endo's *Silence* and Mother Teresa's *Letters* invite readers to start their personal quest for meaning in life, confirming that literature represents a source of spiritual questioning through sacrifice, patience, and self-awareness.

[392] Suffering is the only path to God, because Christ Himself, Truth itself, has suffered in this world. True joy in the Lord is never shaky, but on the contrary: the darker the surrounding, the stronger the stars. My translation for "Apropierea de Dumnezeu poate fi simţită numai în suferinţe, fiindcă Hristos Însuşi, Adevărul Însuşi, a suferit în această lume. Adevărata bucurie în Domnul este niciodată clintită, ci dimpotrivă: cu cât este mai întuneric împrejur, cu atât mai puternic strălucesc stelele". See Protoiereul Dimitrie Smirnov. *Cum să Biruim Iubirea de Arginți.* (București: Sophia. 2013). p. 27.

Shusaku Endo's *Silence*[393] (2007) captures a glimpse of God's mystery. The story of Sebastian Rodriguez, a Portuguese Jesuit priest on a mission in Japan, confirms God's presence and mystery in the darkest moments of the human existence. The novel describes events from the 17th-century, after Father Christóvão Ferreira, the leader of the Jesuit mission in Japan, seemed to abandon his Christian faith. Father Garrpe and Father Rodriguez are the last two missionaries who try to bring the Catholic faith to the Japanese culture.

Rodriguez's tremendous suffering and his effort in trying to support Christian communities hiding their faith from authorities, allow him to think deeply about God's absence or presence in his life. In contrast with Father Garrpe who becomes a Christian martyr, Father Rodriguez has a different mission. He apostatizes and continues to live in a Christian prison, in Japan. His moral struggles and doubts are beautifully displayed under an unbearable divine silence. In his first letter as a missionary, Rodriguez describes the actual situation of Christians in Japan and the imminent danger caused by the new administration, led by Inoue[394]. Despite harsh living conditions, Rodriguez has a strong faith that allows him to be patient and rely on divine wisdom, "Yet God bestows upon man a better fate than human knowledge could possibly think of or devise"[395] (43). His determination surpasses hunger, cold, fear, and suffering since his

[393] "Sebastian Rodriguez represents what you might call the "best and the brightest" of the Catholic faith… *Silence* is the story of a man who learns—so painfully—that God's love is more mysterious than he knows, that He leaves much more to the ways of men than we realize, and that He is always present… even in His silence… I picked up this novel for the first time almost twenty years ago. I've reread it countless times since… It has given me a kind of sustenance that I have found in only a very few works of art" (Foreword by Martin Scorsese). What could readers gain from such a story? What are the lessons one might learn? Readers receive lessons of patience, sacrifice, humility, selflessness, peace, unconditional love for others, and appreciation of God's presence and beauty manifested in the most difficult situations.

[394] "The greater part of the Chinese show no interest in our teaching. On this point Japan is undoubtedly, as Saint Francis Xavier said, 'the country in the orient most suited to Christianity'" (37). "The whole place was shrouded in ashen grey, while the Chinese, huddled in little houses that looked like dog-kennels, left the dirty streets so deserted that there was not a shadow of life in them. As I look at such streets I think… of the mystery of human life—and then I grow sad… These Japanese Christians are like a ship lost in a storm without a chart" (60).

[395] "What did the face of Christ look like?" (46). "But everything that God does is for the best" (48).

ultimate goal is to help others and to sacrifice himself by comforting others[396], "I am determined, come what may, to seek out and find the lonely and abandoned flock" (59). He knows that his presence in the unwelcoming land might bring some 'human warmth' to the few Christians remaining. It is for them that it is worth sacrificing his comfort and security. "I am a priest born to devote my life to the service of man"[397] (72). Rodriguez shares with readers the lesson of patience. "Here night and solitude are identical" (66). He does not judge the Japanese for their cold faces because he goes deeper into their struggle and acknowledges the reasons why some of them seemed disfigured. "The long years of secrecy have made the faces of these Christians like masks" (64). However, Rodriguez recalls Jesus whose love was unconditional, "Christ did not die for the good and beautiful. It is easy enough to die for the good and beautiful; the hard thing is to die for the miserable and corrupt—this is the realization that came home to me acutely at that time" (71). His patience and obedience lead him to wisdom[398].

God grants Rodriguez awareness of beauty around him[399]. He learns how to rejoice in even the colorful shells or farmhouse flowers [400]. While in prison, Rodriguez listened to the other prisoners' confessions and as a priest, he recited psalms that gain new meaning for him: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord… The Lord will not be silent forever" (173). The realization of God's presence happens gradually. Moments of despair and solitude are followed by joyful

[396] "I tell you the truth—for a long, long time these farmers have worked like horses and cattle; and like horses and cattle they have died. The reason our religion has penetrated this territory like water flowing into dry earth is that it has given to this group of people a human warmth they never previously knew" (61).
[397] "Yes, to be useful to others, to help others, this was the one wish and the only dream of one who had dedicated himself to the priesthood" (232).
[398] "I know that the day will come when we understand why this persecution with all its suffering has been bestowed upon us—for everything that Our Lord does is for our good" (96).
[399] While imprisoned, he is surprised to find a woman whose name is Monica. Her "Christian name was the only ornament she possessed in the whole world. What missionary had given the name of Augustine's mother to this woman whose body was reeking with the stench of fish?" (137).
[400] "When they passed a village called Suzuda, he noticed a farmhouse filled with flowers" (162)… "the peach-colored shells… were the only beautiful things he had seen in this long, long day" (155).

sparkles of beauty[401]. In spite of the dehumanizing living conditions that he embraces, Rodriguez finds the strength to think about God and recognize his protection[402]. He reaches a state of peace[403] and happiness when observing the joy of Christians who are able to worship because of his presence. "Feelings of joy and happiness suddenly filled my breast: the feeling that my life was of value and that it was accomplishing something. I am of some use to the people of this country at the ends of the earth" (82). While people around him question[404] God's choice for their destiny but willingly give their life for their faith[405], Rodriguez starts a dialogue with God, asking Him for a clear answer, "Yet you never break the silence[406]… You should not be silent forever" (172). As he helps Christians with his presence and prayers, some of the prisoners find ways to comfort him and implicitly break the hurtful silence, "The prison has been silent; but now quite suddenly someone began to sing… We're on our way… to the temple of Paradise" (182).

Facing silence is not easy and Rodriguez almost despairs. However, his faith is strong and true, thus he reconsiders his mission and decides to continue the struggle. "I knew well, of course, that the greatest sin against God was despair; but the silence of God was something I

[401] "But the conviction grows deeper and deeper in my heart that all is well and that God will protect us" (68). "Even in its moments of terrible torture this face (of Christ) had never lost its beauty" (170).
[402] "In our little hut, I have a feeling of eternal safety" (67).
[403] "In spite of everything his prison life was filled with a strange tranquility and peace" (169).
[404] "Father, what evil have we done? (Kichijiro)" (96); Their questions echo in Rodriguez' mind and make his dialogue with God even more insistent, "Why have you abandoned us so completely?... Have you just remained silent like the darkness that surrounds me? We are not strong men like Job who was afflicted with leprosy as a trial. There is a limit to our endurance. Give us no more suffering. So he prayed. But the sea remained cold, and the darkness maintained its stubborn silence" (159).
[405] Mokichi before dying sings, "We're on our way…to the temple of Paradise" (102); "He had come to this country to lay down his life for other men, but instead of that the Japanese were laying down their lives one by one for him" (215).
[406] "Behind the depressing silence of the sea, the silence of God…the feeling that while men raise their voices in anguish God remains with folded arms, silent" (105). "Lord, why are you silent? Why are you always silent?" (153); Kichijiro was trying to express something different, something even more sickening. The silence of God. Already twenty years have passed since the persecution broke out; … and in the face of this terrible and merciless sacrifice offered up to Him, God has remained silent" (96); "And like the sea, God was silent. His silence continued. If God does not exist, how can man endure the monotony of the sea and its cruel lack of emotion?" (117)

could not fathom" (117). After a harsh time of search, wonder, and dehumanization, in prison, he reaches the point of truly understanding his mission, because God asks for real courage[407] and true love[408]. He understands that Japanese Christians would benefit from him staying alive under the mask of a Buddhist, rather than sacrificing his life as a martyr, "Yet one priest remaining in this country has the same significance as a single candle burning in the catacombs" (106), because, "[i]n this desert from which missionaries and priests had been expelled the only one who could give the water of life to this island tonight was [himself]" (121).

After the martyrdom of his friend, Garrpe[409], Rodriguez decides to apostatize[410] while living undercover, as a Christian, in order to offer a material approach to God to the persecuted Christians in the region. Rodriguez renounces his own faith in order to save that of others. He finds similarities between himself and Jesus[411]. Rodriguez understands that his choice means the ultimate sacrifice. He learns the lesson of humility, selflessness, and unconditional love, as "that man's face [Jesus] pursued him like a living, vivid image. The suffering Christ! The patient Christ!" (253) Rodriguez's prayer and strong faith help him go beyond God's silence and actually hear His voice comforting him, 'When you suffer, I suffer with you. To the end, I am

[407] "Father sometimes courage only causes trouble for other people. We call that blind courage. And many of these priests, fanatically filled with this blind courage, forget that they are only causing trouble to the Japanese" (146); "a priest does not exist in order to become a martyr; he must preserve his life in order that the flame of faith may not utterly die when the church is persecuted" (124).

[408] "those whom Christ had searched after in love were… people with no attraction, no beauty… True love was to accept humanity when wasted like rags and tatters" (189).

[409] Garrpe, his friend and only priest in the land, calls for God's mercy few minutes before his martyrdom, "Lord, hear our prayer!" (217) Rodriguez faces his friend's struggle and is overwhelmed by God's 'deathly silence,' "You are silent. Even in this moment are you silent? (216); "God simply maintained his unrelenting silence. "Eloi, Eloi, Lama sabacthani!"... The priest had always thought that these words were that man's prayer, not that they issued from terror at the silence of God" (222).

[410] "For love Christ would apostatize…Now you are going to perform the most painful act of love that has ever been performed… The *fumie* is now at his feet" (270).

[411] "And it was that man [Jesus] who had taught him that the most noble expression on the face of man is the glad acceptance of injury and insult" (249). "He had been sold by Kichijiro as Christ had been sold by Judas; and like Christ he was now being judged by the powerful ones of this world" (203). "Yes, his fate and that of Christ were quite alike; and at this thought on that rainy night a tingling sensation of joy welled up within his breast. This was the joy of the Christian who relishes the truth that he is united to the Son of God" (203).

close to you'" (256). After trampling on the *fumie*[412], he is aware that people might judge him, but what matters is the fact that God knew[413] that his gesture was only a compromise, an ultimate proof of love for all the other Christians. The face of Christ would rise up in his heart despite his trampling[414] and would continue to support him, "I was not silent. I suffered beside you" (297).

Eventually, Rodriguez understands that "Everything that had taken place until now had been necessary to bring him to his love… Our Lord was not silent… Even if he had been silent, [his] life until this day would have spoken of him" (298). It is precisely Rodriguez' experience that gives proof of God's love for all people. God's silence is not real because it is only people's inability to perceive His call for love that gives this false impression. As Rodriguez emphasizes, God is in permanent communion with each person, through suffering and joy. Endo's book thus offers readers a clear moral vision. Its austere power invites readers to start listening better, and to be patient, humble, loving, giving, and mostly attentive[415].

Similar to Rodriguez who as fictional character questions God's presence, **Mother Teresa**, as a real person, struggles to improve her faith and accept God's will. Mother Teresa was also overwhelmed by God's silence and questioned her own faith. The unending search for meaning led her also to a joyful sense of communion with God. Mother Teresa's private writings reveal the redeeming power of suffering. Totally dedicated to God, this Sister of Church who served the poor in Calcutta, was the author of a series of controversial letters. In *Come be my Light, The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta* (2007), Brian Kolodiejchuk comments on Mother Teresa's life and on the letters that she sent to her confessors. Her written dialogue

[412] Holy image of Jesus or Saint Mary.
[413] "It is not they who judge my heart but only Our Lord" (274). "But, Lord, you alone know that I did not renounce my faith" (275).
[414] "He had lowered his foot on to the plaque, stickily with dirt and blood. His five toes had pressed upon the face of one he loved. Yet he could not understand the tremendous onrush of joy that came over him at that moment" (297).
[415] "Not only are we moved, we are convinced, and being convinced, humbled." See the Wall Street Journal reaction to Endo's novel (4th cover).

highlights her sacrificial suffering and her loyalty to God. The reader of her confessions will find that Mother Teresa's experienced great suffering and darkness, "If I ever become a Saint—I will surely be one of 'darkness'"[416]. The reason why she identifies herself with darkness is that she acknowledges that despite her exterior sacrifice for the poor, despite giving up the comfort of the monastery for serving the poor in the slums, she experiences an inner hell of hopelessness and indifference.

Similar to Endo's *Silence*, Mother Teresa faces a continuous spiritual challenge. She calls for God in her prayers, but she does not hear back from Him. Silence tortures her and her missionary experience seems to lose meaning[417]. Her confession to Father Neuner S. J., in 1961 reveals how deeply she struggled in her search for God. In the absence of His presence, she felt disoriented and felt her life transformed into a hopeless hell. Mother Teresa was aware that her purpose is to serve others and obey God: "I am only His instrument—why so much about me—when the work is all His" (6). Despite her hard mission, she continued to pray and eventually learned the lesson of patience.

One of the most revealing episodes is the moment when she understands that her purpose is to follow Christ's example, "her work had its root in the mystery of Jesus's mission, in union with him who dying on the cross felt abandoned by his Father" (9). Following Jesus' example, she is supposed to bring love to the ones rejected, "her mission [was that] of [lightning] the light of those in darkness" (12). In a letter to the loved ones at home, Mother Teresa asks them to "Pray for your missionary, that Jesus may help her to save as many immortal souls as possible

[416] "Interior darkness is nothing new in the tradition of Catholic mysticism" (22). "[T]he darkness was an essential element of her vocation" (9).
[417] "the place of God in my soul is blank—There is no God in me—when the pain of longing is so great—I just long& long for God—and then it is that I feel—He does not want me—He is not there— … God does not want me—Sometime—I just hear my own heart cry out— 'My God' and nothing else comes—The torture and pain I can't explain" (2).

from the darkness of unbelief" (25). She acknowledges that despite difficulties, she is a pencil in the hands of God, and she has to humbly obey. She does not live for herself, but she acknowledges her philanthropic mission. "When it is hardest, I console myself with the thought that souls are saved in this way and that dear Jesus has suffered much more for them" (18). Mother Teresa's example confirms that both suffering and joy come from God. She thus finds a way to "suffer joyfully" and to transform darkness into light, hopelessness into trust, and suffering into joy. "The Spanish Carmelite mystic St. John of the Cross termed the 'dark night'… to designate the painful purification one undergoes before reaching union with God… [through] 'the night of the senses' and the 'night of the spirit'"[418] (22). It is precisely this suffering that has purifying properties and can transform people's souls by making them reevaluate the meaning of life and the joy of metanoia, of inner transformation, by eventually reaching sainthood.

Mother Teresa's *Letters* reveal the mystery of acknowledging God's presence in one's life through His daily blessing, but mostly through His non-absence and silence. Mother Teresa understood that it would take time for people to acknowledge God's mystery and communion with each and every human being. However, she shares her experience in order to encourage others' search for God. "Choosing to share the lot of her Beloved, she welcomed the crosses that accompanied her constant self-giving" (25). Mother Teresa's letters become guides for those in search of a purpose in life. Readers can easily relate to her struggles because others face God's silence also and doubt that He might not love them. The letters offer testimony that the search for

[418] Mother Teresa echoes St. John's 'dark night' and describes it as follows, "Having passed through the first night… one is freed from attachment to sensory satisfactions and drawn into the prayer of contemplation, one may then be led by God into the "night of the spirit," to be purged from the deepest roots of one's imperfections. A state of extreme aridity accompanies this purification, and one feels rejected and abandoned by God. The experience can become so intense that one feels as if heading toward eternal perdition" (23).

Truth/ God leads to inner peace and joy as well as to the realization of the mystery of life. Might one try to follow her example? Each reader will make his/her own decision. It is comforting however to have the alternative of being guided by the one who loyally followed Christ. There are various other (literary) examples[419] of people who faced suffering and God's silence but humbly and patiently manifested their love for God and others. As already noticed, literature offers valuable examples of characters whose lives transform evil, ugliness, lies, and suffering into enriching sources of self-discovery. It is the readers' responsibility to acknowledge such moral lessons and apply them to real-life situations.

[419] Max Jacob, Christian martyr and Jew by birth, is a 20th century French poet who similar to Mother Teresa, Bonhoeffer, and Endo re-dimension the understanding of suffering and silence. He commits himself to a monastic life, after mystic experiences that bring him closer to God. His writings are a vocal proof of his devotion that invites Christians to reach joy and peace, as goals of a devout life. In his last poems, *Derniers Poèmes* (1972), Jacob meditates on sin and death through a complex examination of his consciousness. In his *Vers sans art*, he describes a dialogue with God who reveals himself as love. Since the moment of revelation, the self of the poet can hear Him in Silence. God is present and comforts the sinner in the deepest afflictions. God is Love! the safe conduct!" A voice answered: "Love!" "the safe conduct"/ Since then! Every time God whispers in my ear:/ Silence is everywhere except in my eyes. / Intoxicate yourself with me! Seek me more. / Think, think about Me! I don't promise you anything. / Thin; with respect: in you is My image, / Your secret happiness in the middle of sorrow. / It is through my eyes that you should see nature, / it is through my heart that you should cry with love. My translation for "Une voix répodit: "Amour!" "le sauf-conduit"/ Depuis! Combien de fois Dieu me parle à l'oreille: le silence est partout excepté dans mes yeux. / Enivrez- vous de moi/Cherchez-moi davantage. /Songez, songez à moi! Je ne vous promets rien. / Pensez avec respect: en vous est mon image, / votre secret bonheur au milieu des chagrins. / C'est à travers mes yeux qu'iI faut voir la nature, / C'est à travers mon coeur qu'iI faut pleurer d'amour." See Max Jacob. *Derniers Poèmes en Prose et en Vers.* (Paris: Gallimard. 1961)
Through silence or suffering, one can purify his/her own approach to life and start offering love, care, acceptance, attention, thus reaching Truth/ God. "[Reception of texts about suffering] depends largely on whether fantasy fans are escaping 'into the wrong things'. And this in turn depends heavily on one's metaphysical and theological worldview" (Baggett 260).
In the Italian folklore, there is a short story about God's presence: "I dreamed that I was walking by the sea with the Lord and I was looking at all the days of my past life on the screen of the sky, and for each day there were two footprints on the sand: mine and that of the Lord. But in some days, I saw one footprint, just in the most difficult days of my life. Then I said, "Lord I chose to live with you and you promised me that you would always be with me. Why did you leave me precisely in the toughest moments?" And He answered, "Son, you know that I love you and I never left you, the days when there is only one footprint on the sand, those are the days when I carried you" My translation for: "Ho sognato che camminavo in riva al mare con il Signore e rivedevo sullo schermo del cielo tutti I giorni della mia vita passata e per ogni giorno trascorso apparivano sulla sabbia due orme: le mie e quelle del Signore. Ma in alcuni tratti ho visto una sola orma. Proprio nei giorni più difficili della mia vita. Allora ho detto: "Signore io ho scelto di vivere con te e tu mi avevi promesso che saresti stato sempre con me. Perché mi hai lasciato solo proprio nei momenti più difficili? E Lui mi ha risposto: "Figlio, tu lo sai che io to amo e non ti ho abandonato mai, I giorni nei quali c'è soltanto un'orma sulla sabbia sono proprio quelli in cui ti ho portato in braccio".

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATION FOR THE SELF AND THE OTHER

You can't really change the heart without telling a story **(Martha C. Nussbaum)**

In the last chapter, I discuss the role of teachers as mentors in guiding students toward deciphering meanings of hermetic texts, under the umbrella of perennial values. If in the first 2 chapters, I used a theoretical approach in order to prove the importance of literature, this chapter offers examples of good practices[420] for literature professors around the world. By framing an intercultural and interdisciplinary approach, I will emphasize the pedagogical potential of literature in mediating encounters and in inviting the self and the other to engage generosity and peaceful cooperation. Can one teach Alterity? Can literature professors open doors of perception in relation to the understanding of the self and the other? Can one teach tolerance, acceptance, awareness, empathy? I am challenging literature teachers to reconsider their teaching techniques since, "[e]ducators agree that the overarching goal of education is to develop informed, thinking citizens capable of participating in both domestic and world affairs. The development of such citizens depends not only upon education for citizenship but also upon other essentials of education shared by all subjects" (11).

After having examined the views of numerous pedagogues, philosophers, writers, and critics who put literature at the core of the transformative process of knowing the self and the other, I will offer some examples of good practices in order to portray how the aforementioned suggestions might modify one's teaching. I will start with a theoretical framework about teaching

[420] "Not to put the word into practice, not to make it reality, is to build on sand, to remain in the realm of pure ideas and to end up in a lifeless and unfruitful self-centeredness and Gnosticism". (See The Holy Father Francis. *Apostolic Exhortation. Evangelii Gaudium.* Vatican Press. 2013). p. 176.

and continue with a transatlantic comparison of philosophies of education in relation to teaching literature, more precisely fictional texts. I will end this chapter by drawing a tentative philosophical method of teaching literature. I will implicitly recapitulate the reasons for considering literature the third element, in the search of the self and the other.

I look at teaching not in terms of theorizing, explaining and conceptualizing alterity, but rather in terms of facilitating the encounter with alterity. Alterity can be taught as a movement or process toward others. Teaching alterity is not a stagnant theoretical process, but rather a dynamic recognition of the other through a direct encounter. The teaching of literature would be incomplete if:

- we were to limit activities to a critical interpretation of texts through a decontextualized close reading;

- if literature courses focused only to the Aristotelian distinction between types of texts (lyrical, narrative, and dramatic) without connecting the various means of expression to universal feelings, placed in the readers' particular contexts;

- if it were limited to the most popular interpretation that critics give to a certain text[421], without allowing an unbiased encounter between the reader and the text;

- if it were limited to a single perspective, isolated from a dialogical approach;

- if it did not mainly pertain to smoothing the way of the reader toward the encounter of

[421] For instance, it would be dangerous to look at Albert Camus' *The Stranger* (1942), only through the general view of the French scholars who include the text in the category of literature of the absurd. In Yves Ansel's book on Camus, one would be surprised to identify an enriching view that contradicts the general French categorization. Ansel denies the *vox populi* and works with Camus' text at a different level, by comparing the general edition with the manuscript that Camus' daughter Catherine provided for Professor Ansel. After filling in the black spots of the book with Camus' self-censored paragraphs, Ansel reaches an unexpected result: Mersault's crime is not absurdly motivated by the effects of a powerful sun, but well premeditated. Professor Ansel's text proves that one needs guidance in his/her reading because missing such details might lead to nonsensical interpretations of texts. See Yves Ansel. *Albert Camus, Totem et Tabou. Politique de la Postérité*. (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, coll. 'Interférences'. 2012). p. 202.

the other in the text and the subsequent encounter with the real other;

- if it only followed pedagogical restrictions of a national curriculum, without aiming at a more open understanding;

- if teachers did not completely understand their role as mediators and translators of the other in a language understood by the students.

Ideally, teachers acknowledge that their role surpasses theories and methods of teaching (such as Dale's learning cones[422], Kolb's cycle of learning styles[423], Bloom's taxonomy[424]), course design, grading, leading discussions, and evaluating, because their ultimate purpose is to foster empathic, free citizens who can think by themselves and who are ready to engage in peaceful encounters.

Figure 2. Bloom's Taxonomy

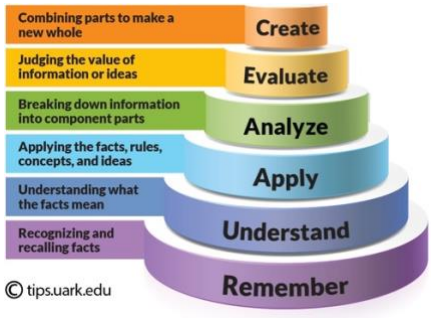
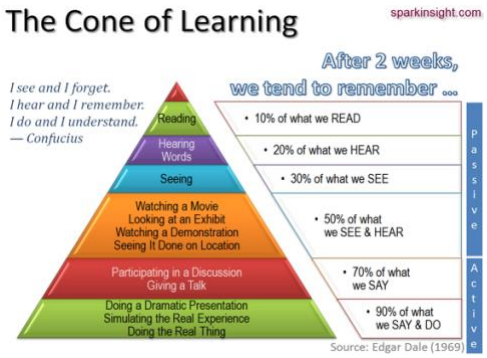


Figure 3. Dale's Cone of Learning



[422] See Edgar Dale. *Audio-Visual Methods in Teaching*. (The University of Michigan: Dryden Press. 1946)
[423] See D. A. Kolb. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (Vol. 1). (NJ: Prentice-Hall. Englewood Cliffs. 1984)
[424] See Benjamin S. Bloom. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon. 1956)

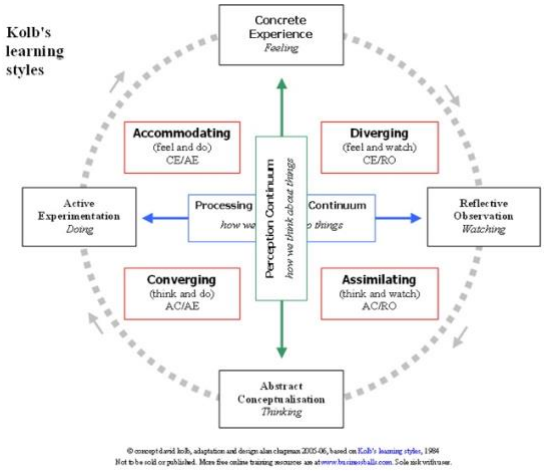


Figure 4. Kolb's Learning Styles

One can teach alterity, as long as one utilizes the appropriate means and if by alterity one understands the encounter with the other, through compassion, care, and empathy. Otherwise, one might easily fall into the trap of pedagogies of recognition. In other words, teachers need to avoid defining the other because narrow definitions lead to discrimination and racism[425]. Teachers should not define alterity by using conventional boxes and generalizations, but rather refine the path toward alterity by teaching compassion and tolerance. The safest path in teaching tolerance and empathy is available through fictional texts. Criticism and theoretical texts risk transforming the other into an object of study, instead of a subject that one discovers through a dialogical process.

The comparison that I draw between the American and European educational systems (here, I refer strictly to the teaching of literature) emphasizes the potential of literature to raise awareness of alterity and the potential of literature professors to facilitate encounters with alterity. When teaching literature, one needs to be aware of the deontology[426] of the discipline

[425] A good example would be Levinas' idea about the 'irreducible other'. The other is not reduced to the same because of its faciality: "…the face is present in its refuse to be contained" (Totality and Infinity, 194).
[426] According to André Labande, the term was first coined in 1825 by Jeremy Bentham from the Greek words *deon* (duty) and *logos* (science/word). It was made public in 1834, in "Deontology or the Science of Morality". Deontology represents a set of professional duties, or the science of what one needs to do at work. See Cucoș C.

and respect its values[427]. Independently of the type of literature course, there are a couple of core perennial values that should frame teachers' planning. They should nurture students' awareness of the present moment, in relation to past and future. They need to explain the difference between fiction and reality, by emphasizing the "here and now" that goes beyond a limited hedonistic approach and means awareness of the present. By focusing too much on the future or on the past, people have the tendency to ignore the present, and literature raises awareness about the danger of sinking into absent-mindedness.

Another essential lesson that students need to learn is related to the construction of reality. Literature professors should make sure to discuss with their students what reality is in order for students to open their doors of perception and receive information from various angles. Plato's *Myth of the Cave* represents an essential text that offers a graphical understanding of reality. Also, students should gain knowledge about the limitless conceptualizations of reality, thus learning that divergent opinions should not be the seeds of conflict, but they can enrich one's perspective. Myths, stories, histories are intellectually nourishing because they reduce one's fear of the unknown through the confrontation with alterity. The real other is viewed by analogy with the fictional other, thus familiarity arises. Consequently, familiarity dilutes the master-slave relation as depicted by Hegel[428] and approaches the self to the other. The other destroys the order of the ego, but literature prepares gives us the means to face the challenge by

"Schiță pentru o Deontologie a Cadrelor Didactice". in *Pedagogie*. Second edition, revised. (București: Polirom. 2002); Pirău T. Maria. *Introducere în Pedagogie*. Second edition. Revised. (Cluj-Napoca: Risoprint. 2008)

[427] In her *Introduction to Pedagogy* (2008), Maria Pirău mentions that one should nurture those values and attitudes that bring people together, by recognizing one's right to difference. (Art 8.1.)

[428] "On approaching the other it has lost its own self, since it finds itself as another being; secondly, it has thereby sublated that other, for this primitive consciousness does not regard the other as essentially real but sees its own self in the other". See G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. A.V. Miller (trans.). (Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1977). p. 111.

acknowledging both shared similarities and differences.

Literature professors should also take into account the need for reshaping the way students look at others. Instead of transforming the other into an alien, or even a monster, fictional texts give students the opportunity to learn hospitality in relation to others. Abstaining from premature evaluations of the other and making the decision of first listening to him/her leads to acceptance and care. Students need professors who are role models and who can lead them into reading stories and novels that might help them frame their future and relate to others, irrespective of race, gender, spiritual view, or age. The exposure to stories that show the difficulty in connecting with others because of differences, because of fake expectations or prejudices increase chances for readers or students to be aware of the beauty of accepting the other. In *Why Teach?*[429], Mark Edmundson argues that reading is an essential power (194). Reading is powerful indeed because it determines (self)-understanding, attentiveness, and empathy. In today's society, we have access to various means of communication, but unfortunately, we minimize the role of literature as a form of communication that builds identity.

Evidently, formal training is necessary because it guides students into identifying moral values and examples of good practices. Educating "through and for values"[430] (56) should be the purpose of all literature teachers who should pay attention to both the selective canon (bibliography) and the hermeneutic canon (practices and interpretative methods meant to expose

[429] See Mark Edmundson. *Why Teach? In Defense of a Real Education*, II edition. (New York: Bloomsbury. [2013] 2014)
[430] "educaţia prin şi pentru valori" See Sorin Cristea. "Educaţie prin şi pentru Valori". in *Didactica Pro. Revistă de Teorie şi Practică Educaţională.* (no. 1(35). 2006)

students to educational values)[431]. They should combine the linguistic competence[432], with persuasive competence[433], so as to offer students a broad perspective and a corollary of alternatives and understandings, and to eventually reach the desired educational ideal.

Both Mircea Breaz and George F. Kneller consider that the main purpose of literature professors is to "develop a program of cultivating the moral and aesthetic values of the pupils, namely, the development of their appreciation of life and literature through the study of a great number of literary works"[434]. Similar to Goethe, they connect the reading of great novels with personal transformation and becoming. As Breaz notices, "The great books of formation involve fundamental paths of existential becoming, becoming great epic themes, through the artistic transfiguration of reality"[435]. By looking at different approaches in teaching fictional texts, one can establish correspondences and stimulate a professional dialogue for the future.

6.1 Teaching literature in Europe

[431] Educational, pedagogical or didactic values and cognitive component (informative, referential); affective component (subjective, personal); axiological component (education and cultivation of values); moral component (behavioral, ethical); aesthetic component (creative, artistic for beauty recognition and cultivation); initiatory component (formative, initiatory); identity component (intrapersonal and interpersonal component of the self); prophylactic or therapeutic component (securing, relational, integrative); the playful component (recreational, fun, fulfilling pleasure for pleasure's sake). (my translation for: "Valori formative, pedagogice sau didactice şi componenta cognitivă (informativă, referenţială); componenta afectivă (subiectivă, personală); componenta axiologică (educarea şi cultivarea valorilor); componenta morală (comportamentală, etică); componenta estetică (creativă, artistică şi de recunoaştere şi cultivare a frumosului); componenta iniţiatică (formativă, iniţiatică); componenta identitară (componenta intrapersonală şi interpersonală a sinelui); componenta profilactică sau terapeutică (de securizare, relaţională, integrativă); componenta ludică (recreativă, distractivă, de împlinire a plăcerii gratuite). See Mircea Breaz. "Valori Educative în Literatura pentru Copii. Cărţi ale Formării din Genul 'Kinderbildungsroman'". in *Studii şi Cercetări din Domeniul Ştiinţelor Socio-Umane.* (Cluj-Napoca: Limes & Argonaut. 2015). p. 229.

[432] The understanding of the explicit of a text

[433] The understanding of the implicit of a text

[434] My translation for: "antrenarea unui program de cultivare a valorilor morale şi estetice ale elevilor, respectiv 'dezvoltarea aprecierilor lui asupra vieţii şi a literaturii prin studiul unui mare număr de opere literare'" See G. F. Kneller. *Logica şi Limbajul Educaţiei.* (Bucureşti: Editura Didactică şi Pedagogică. 1973). p. 87.

[435] My translation for: "Marile cărţi ale formării implică parcursuri fundamentale ale devenirii existenţiale, devenite mari teme epice, prin transfigurarea artistică a realităţii" (230).

***The separation of philosophy from literary studies has not worked to the benefit of either*[436] (David Rudrum)**

For centuries, literature has been an important area of study for all educational systems in Europe. Regarded both as a source of entertainment and educational pillar, the discipline of literature has been included in most curricula, intending to instill in students a sense of beauty. From Plato to Goethe and Matthew Arnold, poetry and fictional texts were at the core of the instruction of any student. Teaching literature presupposes extensive reading experience and philological studies. Many European professors hold on to the traditional ways of teaching by lecturing. They do sustain the transmission of core values, but their teaching methods no longer seem to attract students. In the current technological context, speed and effectiveness defeat natural rhythms of study.

There are European professors who have a rather quantitative approach when choosing texts for their syllabi. Students, on the other hand, lack patience for long lectures and distance themselves from the realm of fictional texts, because they consider them no longer relevant. Students are not taught how to connect texts to their daily experience. This factor, combined with the low salaries offered in the humanities determine why many of them do not further their studies in the field. What should literature professors do in order to revitalize the students' interest in reading? How should they change their teaching methods so as to satisfy current educational needs?

There are a couple of teaching methods that would enhance the study of literature, furthering it from dry lectures and bringing it closer to the practice of everyday life. One method could be the transition from theory to practice through the introduction of dialogue-based classes.

[436] See David Rudrum. "Literature and Philosophy: The Contemporary Interface". in *Literature and Philosophy: A Guide to Contemporary Debates*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2006)

Here, I am not referring to seminars or directed reading courses, because, even in those cases, the tendency of imposing an authoritative stand on the part of the teacher is the trend. I am rather suggesting Socratic dialogue as a method of teaching literature. Few European institutions have adopted it even if it proved its worth in the American educational system. Dialogue about texts would make students engage with texts and explore them from a more personal perspective. Also allowing space for the encounter between students belonging to the same group age or specialization would increase chances for them to learn from each other and together reach the desired Socratic goal[437].

It is essential to offer students the opportunity to get involved in activities that raise awareness and cultivate empathy. Also, professors should acknowledge their need for interaction and for sharing their own views about reading. Listening to the unprocessed ideas that professors might share with students blocks the thinking process and narrows down new interpretative paths. There are few chances for students to go beyond the frame already established by the professor since he/she is the authority. Students need to be allowed to have a voice and to share their ideas. Reproduction of information is not enough. On the contrary, it is damaging to students' creativity and imagination. As mentors, professors should make sure to determine students' engagement with texts, by also focusing on boosting their empathy.

The French inaugurated this teaching philosophy through *dissertations*[438] that are part of the writing component of any literature and philosophy class. This type of assignment needs problematizing on the part of the students, rather than the reproduction of information. By

[437] For Socrates, *Logos* is a space of encounter that contains all participants. It allows the intersection of ideas and goes beyond their egos in order for each of them to learn something new. In Plato's *Gorgias*, dialogue is presented as a manner through which two human beings could go beyond their subjectivity in order to enter the space of truth. By exceeding the initial opinion (*doxa*- tool for the formation of argument), participants reach a space of politeness where there is reciprocal attention and listening. By accepting the other person's argument, one reaches self-improvement. Literature classes should be a space of dialogue that can lead to *Logos*.

[438] The French *dissertation* is a five-paragraph essay that needs to include a thesis, antithesis, and a synthesis.

writing a *dissertation*, students learn how to thoroughly challenge their own point of view and how to develop strong arguments. This is an essential teaching technique that should be adopted by all educational systems.

6.2 Interdisciplinary learning

Every educational system has a moral goal that it tries to attain and that informs its curriculum[439] **(Allan Bloom)**

An effective tool that could be implemented in Europe is an interdisciplinary approach, such as a class of *Literature and Medicine* for (pre-)med students. This class would bring together two different fields, allowing future doctors in Europe to benefit from an interdisciplinary approach to medicine. In Europe, there are currently no medical schools offering such classes. "Literature and medicine" represents a branch of humanities that is well known in the United States. First taught at Pennsylvania State University College, Hershey, in 1972, this class has changed the way medical students look at their future career. The medical curricula, based on the neutral transmission of certified facts, reached an interdisciplinary dimension, encompassing the study of humanities through literature. This method has become more and more popular in the last decades; however, it is not well known in Europe.

European medical schools do not use this interdisciplinary method in framing the careers of future doctors. Most schools are focusing on bioethics, psychology, sociology, history of medicine, ignoring the enriching possibilities for discussions and acquisition of examples of good practice that some literary texts could offer.

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[439] Allan Bloom. *The Closing of the American Mind*. How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks. [1987] 2012). p. 26. A part of this subchapter is included in an article published in an academic journal. See Corina-Mihaela Beleaua. "The Importance of Literature in the Educational Process". in *East-West Cultural Passage*. (Dec. 2016. Vol. 16 Issue 2). pp. 169-185.

Literature classes have the potential to enhance teaching in undergraduate courses because fictional texts put students in front of delicate situations. In an interdisciplinary class in literature and medicine, texts provide solutions and give valuable lessons about doctor-patient interaction. Other texts offer an open platform, for students to start finding efficient methods in dealing with challenging situations. In the context of a dialogue-based class, and by using the Socratic method, professors could allow students to share their ideas, and listen to what others would do or say in specific situations. Such dialogue, based on close reading of specific fragments of texts would enhance students' imagination and ability to react in difficult situations[440].

A good example of a text that can develop readers' empathy is Robert Coles' anthology, *A Life in Medicine* (2003). The selection gathers several short stories, essays, and poems that are meant to teach medical students how to relate to their future patients. As Coles himself states, "Compassion, empathy, respect for the uniqueness of others are behaviors and values that have always been regarded as the very qualities that lead young men and women to enter the field of medicine" (24). This literary anthology is compiled of experiences and stories of medical professionals, writers, and patients and they are meant to help readers better understand the complexity of the human condition, as well as the holistic role of the physician.

Human suffering cannot be alleviated in the absence of understanding, compassion, and skill. The ability to listen to what patients say, how they say it, together with the doctor's

[440] There are several articles that prove the positive effect of reading fictional texts, and that show the benefits of including literature in medical education. In an article published in 1995, Rita Charon et al. emphasize the central role literature could play for future doctors' professional trajectory. They argue that, 1) literature accounts of illness can help teach physicians 2) works of fiction can help teach doctors the implications of what they do 3) narratives can help doctors learn more about the lives of the patient 4) literary medicine helps physicians with ethics and 5) new theories can give doctors new perspectives 6) narrative medicine can change doctors' education (11).

reaction constitute an essential part of the medical investigation, and it cannot be acquired in the absence of care and empathy. I share Coles' view that "Teaching compassion is a part of teaching medicine, it should be the responsibility of all those who teach clinical medicine" (27). In order to help the field of medicine return to its original values, students should read fictional texts because this pleasurable activity is the one that can help them develop both emotionally and socially. The area of medical analysis unites medicine with the understanding of human thinking, imagination, emotions, and culture, and as Bourdieu suggests, "The humanities provide an entry to caring more for the individual patient"[441] (335). This trend has been used for decades in Ethics curricula, where we have "Ethics for the Language", Ethics for Business", or Ethics for Doctors". However, by using fictional texts, students gain more skills through the exposure to situations that they might experience in the future as well.

Another example that shows the importance of literature in the life of future doctors is William Carlos Williams' *Doctor's Stories* (1984). This is also an anthology of short stories that portrays several delicate situations of doctors facing challenging cases of poor patients, illiterate patients, children with different health problems, and their answers and reactions to all of them. This representation of real-life situations is meant to offer students a leading idea of how they might need to react when facing similar situations. The author invites readers to do good and describes goodness as a central human value that is at the core of the medical field: "What does that mean? It means that goodness is its own reward. Don't expect to get paid for it" (3). The suggestion of helping without an immediate reward is indeed beneficial for students who might consider it a good lesson and take it as an example for their future careers. These stories are a valuable depiction of our own struggles and problems in relating to others. For teachers today,

[441] See Pierre Bourdieu. *Regulile Artei. Geneza şi Structura Câmpului Literar*. Laura Albulescu. Bogdan Ghiu (trans.). (Bucureşti: Editura. Art. 2007)

these texts would certainly create the context of an attentive analysis and a potential for professional and social improvement of students.

Inviting students to step into the fictional world of literature gives them the chance to nurture their empathy[442]. They will be more aware of the needs of those with whom they interact and they will try to better engage in an open dialogue, without necessarily imposing their own thoughts, but rather listening to the others' views, for a more enriching outcome. Preparing students for becoming doctors is a responsibility that needs a global approach. Beside in-depth knowledge about the human body, history of medicine, technology in the medical field, interdisciplinary approaches, pills, pharmacies, etc., there is the necessity for a holistic approach of learning.

Medical students need to be aware that they are not only treating the body of their patient but a person with soul and intellect. In order to activate their desire to properly interact with their future patients, students need to read texts that will develop their empathy and awareness of the other's needs. The Cartesian dichotomy of body and soul, mortality, afterlife, communication, doctor-patient interaction, care, sympathy, empathy cannot be taught through lectures, but through sharing stories. Literature is the basis for such a creative context. By being immersed in

[442] For instance, in the context of a literature and medicine class that prepares pre-med students for their encounter with future patients, there are a couple of texts that one could read in order to help students understand how disease affects the lives of those suffering, facing examples of psychological repercussions of the disease, by reading texts such as Chekhov's *Ward 6* (1892). Disease and the way it is experienced can be theoretically explored through Bauby's, Călinescu's, Edson's or Sontag's texts: Bauby's *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (1998), Matei Călinescu's *Matthew's Enigma: A Father's Portrait of His Autistic Son* (2009), Margaret Edson's *Wit* (1999), Susan Sontag's *Illness as Metaphor* (2001). By reading authors who discuss Limits of the medical investigation, students will acquire practical skills for coping with such life contexts. Molière with his *Imaginary Invalid* (1673), Lev Tolstoy with *The Death of Ivan Ilych* (1886) and Chekhov with his *Collection of Medical Tales* (2003) are readings that can be used in order to offer a rich understanding of the problem of death. There are many other appealing themes and topics one could include in a *Literature and Medicine* class. Improving doctor-patient relationship, or at least raising students' awareness about the importance of that approach would be one of the main targets of such a class. Bulgakov's stories about a *A Country Doctor's Notebook*. ([1963], 2010); Richard Selzer's article entitled *What [He] Saw at the Abortion* (1976) and Plato's *Phaedo* (On the Soul) are texts that challenge students to put themselves in the shoes of characters and find solutions to delicate situations.

fictional worlds, students will start empathizing with characters; thus, practicing their awareness and attention toward the other, because, as Kafka used to say, "Getting along with people is a difficult task[443].

Also, through reading, they will face death, lack of trust, lack of hope, illness, pain, shame, and hopelessness through the characters depicted in different stories. Students will be more aware of how much care they need to put in relating to their future patients. Literature sharpens critical thinking and communication skills and helps future doctors engage in the patients' stories. Patient-centered care is essential for today's medicine and literature is paving the way for students to access it.

Teaching future doctors[444] how to connect with patients and build relationships based on trust represents an essential part of medicine. In an article published in *The New York Times*, titled *Stories in the Service of Making a Better Doctor* (2008), doctor Chen notices, "We're teaching the humanities to our residents, and it's making them better doctors" (1). According to Charon, "[d]isciplined attention to texts of medicine has the power to unearth complex

[443] "C'est un travail difficile que de s'entendre avec les gens" (23).

[444] At the end of a Literature and Medicine class, students are able to answer many challenging questions, such as: How should I react in the case of a conflict with a) another doctor; b) a patient; c) the head of the hospital; d) a member of a patient's family; e) a nurse?; What is the difference between disease, sickness, and illness?; How should I treat a patient with hypochondria?; How should I talk to a patient who does not speak my language/ who does not get my explanations?; What is the role of the family in treating a patient? Should I always tell the truth to a patient?; How much involvement should one put into helping a patient?; What are the advantages, disadvantages, satisfactions, or dissapointments of a physician?; How should I give the bad news to a patient who is about to die? What about his/her family?; What do patients want? What are their expectations (depending on culture/ social background)?; How do I individualize each case and respect the P4 medicine principles (predictive, preventive, personalized, participatory)?; How do I incorporate technology, but also keep a close relation to the patient?; What is the role of team work in the case of doctors (patient, nurses, head of the ward, patient's family etc.)?; How do I find the equilibrium between personal and professional life?; How do I handle the gap between the effort I put into becoming a doctor and my income? What are the highlights of poverty medicine? See Joseph E. Baños. "El Valor de la Literatura en la Formacion de los Estudiantes en Medicina". in *Medicina y Traduccion*. (Panacea Boletinde. no. 12. 2003)

understandings about medicine unavailable through other means" (24). Roberts and Porter, in their anthology about *Literature and Medicine during the Eighteen Century* (1993), notice that "Eighteenth-century clinical notions of sympathy and literary notions of sentiment converged in the belief that the patient's suffering mobilized in the physician an energizing sympathy that compelled or inspired the physician to do something about the patient's suffering, much as the purpose of a literary work was to arouse sympathy in the reader or spectator" (32).

In an essay published in 2003 and titled, *El valor de la literature en la formación de los estudiantes de medicina*, Joseph E. Baños outlines that, "literature is a remarkable teaching resource for teaching medical students important aspects of their future profession, aspects that are systematically ignored in the traditional curricula of most universities"[445] (98). Undoubtedly, as Kidd and Castano mention in one of their articles, "fiction is not just a simulator of a social experience, it is a social experience" (5). The American model would be successful in a European context, since, according to Alda, "[m]irroring is the matching of patterns; verbal and non-verbal, with the intention of helping you enter the customer's world. It's positioning yourself to match the person talking. It subconsciously raises his/her level of trust by building a bridge of similarity" (127).

6.3 Teaching literature in the USA

At present, there is grievous need for such return [great traditions, lines of spiritual descent]. All about us flourishes the new illiteracy, the illiteracy of those who can read short

[445] My translation for: "La literature constituye un recurso docente notabilísimo para ensenar algunos aspectos de su future profesión a los estudiantes de medicina, que son sistemáticamente ignorados en los curricula tradicionales de muchas facultades" (94).

***words or words of hatred and tawdriness but cannot grasp the meaning of language when it is in the condition of beauty or of truth*[446] (Steiner, 1996, 4)**

As a Romanian educated in the European system, and eventually as a language teacher in Europe and literature teacher in America, I came into contact with various practices in terms of teaching literature. This third part of the chapter focusses on the positive aspects of the American teaching philosophies and offers some suggestions meant to improve the teaching outcomes.

One of the core values of the American literature classes is their grounding in the real. Students are taught to look at texts through their own lenses and discuss what the text tells them. Dialogue-based classes are valuable for students' awareness of their colleagues' points of view. Students learn respect, tolerance, and acceptance of people's opinion. Most literature classes are meant to facilitate the encounter of the student with the text through close reading exercises, followed by group discussions. Students learn to share ideas and build their own argument by positioning themselves in relation to what the text transmits. It is the teacher's freedom to organize discussions on a variety of activities, so as to offer students an enjoyable reading experience. Is it enough?

New Criticism[447], the formalist literary movement of the 20th century, limits the analysis of literary texts, mostly poetry, to their immediate content. Students are encouraged to read the text as it is, without letting themselves be led by symbolical/metaphorical tangents. The classical layering of the text is limited to a superficial understanding. The text says what it says and the reader tends to ignore supplementary connotations. This method isolates the text from its

[446] "I should like to believe that there is clear proof of the need, in our particular society a greater need than ever before, for both scholar and critic [and teacher, I may add] to do a particular job of work: the job of putting the audience into a responsive relation with the work of art: to do the job of intermediary" See R.P. Blackmur. *The Lion and the Honeycomb*. (New York. 1955)

[447] See T.S. Eliot. "Tradition and the Individual Talent". in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1964)

intertextuality and the historical background or canon preceding the text. Still very popular in the US, the method seems to be at the core of most literature classes in English departments. Most texts are read in translation because there are few speakers of foreign languages, and many times professors tend to ignore the importance of the context in which the novels were written, and focus on choosing key or even random fragments that they read and analyze with their students in class. What is the knowledge conveyed to students? What do they really acquire through this exercise? Does their expertise remain superficial? Does the responsive relationship with the work of art count? I would argue that by exclusively following the method of close reading, students will not be able to acquire a well-rounded understanding of the message conveyed, and they will be left with a fragmentary, superficial, and approximate knowledge. In order for the encounter with the text to be genuine and productive (by echoing the values transmitted in the mind and subsequent behavior of the reader), readers should be offered a stable structure of how to approach literary texts, and should be taught to look for background information that would help them unravel hidden meanings and subtle hints.

In his book about Tolstoy and Dostoevsky (1996), George Steiner[448] describes old criticism as the right approach/love of any work of art,

> "[T]hrough the critic's constant and anguished recognition of the distance which separates his craft from that of the poet… It is a love made lucid through bitterness: it looks on miracles of creative genius, discerns their principles of being, exhibits these to

[448] Steiner defines novels as the "most coherent and inclusive… renditions of experience that literature attempts" (20). Similar to Matthew Arnold, Steiner looks at literature as a matter of "high seriousness" and perceives it as religious art. He views literature as metaphysical, ethical, but also political.

the public, yet knows it has no part, or merely the slightest, in their actual creation… The old criticism is engendered by admiration"[449].

He urges for the return to old criticism that is the only path toward the transcendent character of literature. New Criticism, in his view, does not confer a holistic approach. Combining close reading with an in-depth analysis of the horizons of the texts would increase chances for students to reach a higher degree of understanding. One might grasp a narrow line of thought from texts that are not presented in conjunction with the biography of the author, historical context, details about the type of text, examples of means of expression, symbolism, themes, motives, and reading competencies. Paul Cornea cites Tanja Janssen[450], in *Introduction of the Theory of Reading/ Introducere în Teoria Lecturii* (1998)[451], where the Danish writer divides reading competences in four phases, from rebus[452] reading to a linear and selective reading starting with the 16th year of age (139). Cornea offers a detailed description of approaching texts through differentiating types of reading and by inviting teachers to carefully choose the method they intend to utilize in class, depending on the reading competencies they aim at. Cornea's approach would be necessary for any literature professors in order for them to acknowledge the power of

[449] "It sometimes steps back from the text to look upon moral purpose. It thinks of literature as existing not in isolation but as central to the play of historical and political energies… It proceeds with most general application, on a belief particularized by Jean-Paul Sartre in an essay on Faulkner: 'the technique of a novel always refers us back to the metaphysic of the novelist' [à la métaphysique du romancier]" (6). In a letter to Ernest Collings, from February 1913, D. H. Lawrence states, "One has to be terribly religious, to be an artist". See Aldous Huxley. (ed.). *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence.* (New York: William Heinemann. Ltd. 1932)

[450] See Janssen Tanja, Gert Rijlaasrdam. "Literary Competence and the Literature Curriculum". Paper presented at the *International Colloquium Mother Tongue Education in a Multicultural World*: Case Studies and Networking for Change. (Sinaia. Romania. June 22-25. 2006)

[451] Cornea's book provides a good orientation material for making the distinction between types of reading: linear reading (accent on the process of reading, rather than the content), receptive reading (working with the text through associations, comparisons), literary reading (analysis of the text depending on the literary theory that puts it into a certain category, as a novel/short story/ play), informative-global reading (offers general information about the message of the text), exploratory reading (analysis of symbols), research reading (documentation on certain aspects from the text), and fast reading (practice of reading competences and text understanding) (140-141).

[452] Puzzle device that asks for individual letters to be combined so as to form words on the basis of synonyms, pictures, or definitions.

texts and guide students on a more comprehensive path. Reading poetry calls for a set of strategies[453] different from the ones necessary for a recipe book and students need to acquire the skills for working with a fictional text.

According to the educator C.R. Adler, the recognized set of reading strategies consists of: monitoring comprehension, metacognition, graphic and semantic organizers, answering questions (QAR question-answer relationship strategy), generating questions, recognizing story structure, and summarizing (49-54). Among these strategies, there are not enough explicit techniques that go beyond the immediate understanding of the text. Many times, teachers are satisfied with following the several strategies, without going further into the results of such activities. In *Becoming Readers in a Complex Society* (1984)[454], Alan Purves, Professor Emeritus of Education, presents the opinion of the representatives of the National Society of the Study of Education, who notice that, "while students learn to read a wide range of material, they develop very few skills for examining the nature of the ideas that they take away from their reading. Though most have learned to make simple inferences about such things as a character's behavior and motivation… and can express their own judgments of a work as 'good' or 'bad', they cannot return to the passage to explain the interpretations they have made" (2).

I suggest that literature teachers should explore such reading strategies in order to achieve pre-established outcomes of their approach. These outcomes should be well aligned with the general and specific objectives of a literature class. The teacher's purpose should not stop at the passive transmission of information, but it should go deeper into observing and guiding the

[453] See Adler, C.R. (ed.). *Put Reading First: The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read*. (National Institute for Literacy. 2001)
[454] See Alan C. Purves, Olive Niles (eds.). *Becoming Readers in a Complex Society.* (Illinois: University of Chicago Press. 1984)

encounter of the student with the (other in the) text. Teachers can direct students toward responsible and appropriate encounters, thus avoiding Freire's *banking model* (infra. 58).

Some might argue that a mediated encounter might lead to a biased understanding of the other. In other words, if teachers translate the other to the students, the other might be misunderstood and put in a predefined box. In order to avoid such limitations, teachers need to moderate their intervention so as to provide students with essential lenses for searching for beauty, goodness, and truth in texts. Guidance from the teacher does not mean theorizing understanding, but rather selecting from texts those parts that might offer moral support for students.

Teachers should look for beauty and universal truths in texts they are teaching. They should teach students to first perceive the perennial values and feelings that bring people together, but also the common humanity that unites us, and then they should focus on presenting differences in a positive light, as sources of expanding one's understanding of the rich world in which we all live. If difference is examined only to uncover victimization in a certain social context, or in order to fulfill curricular requirements, students might only focus on the oppressor's situation and ignore other variables. At that point, teachers run the risk of trapping students in an endless loop of power differentials[455]. Is this the ultimate goal of teaching today?

Literature classes should avoid the danger of pedagogies of recognition, such as multiculturalism, Queer Studies, post-colonialism, and World literatures. I have already described these views in the second chapter of the present study where I mentioned the need for

[455] "With the mind's eye, we see a world of fact and reason. It is a cold and mechanical place, but we have built our lives there because it seemed predictable and safe. Today, in the age of nuclear science, our mind-made world has been found flawed and dangerous, even lethal. So we open the eyes of the heart and see another sight: a world warmed and transformed by the power of love, a vision of community beyond the mind's capacity to see". See Parker J. Palmer. *To Know as We Are Known*: Education as a Spiritual Journey. (New York: Harper One. 2003). p. xxiii.

the return to Goethe's *Weltliteratur* ideal, as a golden mean for the reception of literary texts. I was then arguing that Comparative literature, as a discipline offers the closest approach to what Goethe was aiming at two centuries ago. Limiting the analysis to the pedagogical purposes of the present chapter, I would add that even in the case of a clean circulation and reception of literary works, in a comparatist context, teaching might bring about several challenges. Unfortunately, many times professors arguing for the central role of literature in encouraging empathetic behaviors, mislead or minimize their role as pedagogues in nurturing students' awareness and flexibility. They leave to the texts the mission to instill in readers openness and receptivity for the other. Thus, teachers should have in mind all the possible reading techniques, methods, and activities that can lead students to identify beauty, goodness, and truth in fiction. The teacher should present the literary text to his/her students without cultural motives. There are two possible options: one can either offer a limitless area of interpretation to students, showing them unmediated access to texts, by considering the need for a direct encounter of the self of the student with the other in the text, or one can actualize some core values in order to guide student's interaction with the text.

In the case of the first approach, the Indian comparatist Ipshita Chanda considers that "the role of the teacher is to communicate possible ways of searching for answers to questions not only of literature but of life itself, in particular contexts of the present" (14)[456]. In order to better understand this perspective, I referred to Chanda's 2012 article, *The Comparatist as Teacher: Teaching Indian Literature through a Comparative Methodology*, where she offers a

[456] I could not agree more with this assignment. However, five years later, at a conference on "Multicultural and Migrant Fictions, at the University of Georgia, the same scholar contradicted herself by claiming that "[o]ne cannot teach alterity". Proceedings of the Migrant Fictions Conference, April 27, 2017, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA. Round table discussion with graduate students, Joe Brown Hall, Comparative Literature Department, room 220, Skype conference, 10am-12pm.

list of pedagogical practices "that provide the horizon for understanding the cultural dynamics that produce texts" (14). Chanda describes Comparative Literature as both discipline and methodology, mentioning that the task of a comparative methodology is to clarify "the critical processes of texts rather than focusing on our own critical positions"[457] (19). She also describes the conceptual/disciplinary tools of comparison (such as tracing relations between locations, the emergent element that "activates the residual into concrete expression", the structure of feeling, reception—re-production, re-textualization, re-presentation, rejection—, the horizon[458] of expectation that "brings the text into being… theme and form across time, space, and culture") (20-22). She concludes that "the focus is from beginning to end on literature itself: we are 'reading' a text, tracing the lines of its production and reception: what is produced and received is literature" (26).

Despite the methodological framework, Chanda fears that students might still not experience any effect of the text on their worldviews. Even though "Comparative methodology enables us thus, to hear and see the text while it is being produced, and while it is being read" (26), it serves no purpose if not the transmission of values. Teachers should utterly be aware of this ultimate goal. They should not lose sight of the forest for the trees of blind unprocessed methodology. The reference to text horizons is essential for any understanding. However, if we ignore putting the moral horizon among the many hermeneutical layers in approaching a literary

[457] See Pollock Sheldon. *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia, "Introduction".* (Berkeley: University of California Press. 2003). p. 12. Professor Chanda refers to the literary study, as a tool used by any comparatist "that will enable her to trace the movement of both theme and form across time, space and culture". See Raj, Rizio Yohannan. (ed.). *Quest of a Discipline: New Academic Directions for Comparative Literature.* (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press India. 2012). p. 19. See also Dev, A. "Literary History from Below". in S. K. Das & A. Dev (eds.). *Comparative Literature: Theory and Practice.* (Delhi & Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Studies & Allied Publishers. 1989)

[458] See Jauss, H. G. "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory". in Wlad Godzich (ed.). *The Aesthetics of Reception*. (Harvester: London. 1982)

text, we miss seeing those examples of good practices that have the potential to change mentalities.

As teachers, we cannot take for granted students' intuition in searching for values in literary texts[459]. Examples of goodness, beauty, and truth are always there, between the lines, and teachers need to teach their students the necessary skill in finding them. Chanda acknowledges the responsibility of teachers to help students hear the message of the text, "[t]o indicate that way[460] is the task of the teacher of Comparative Literature in India". However, she considers one should do guide students through the comparatist methodology,

> The comparatist's reading is dictated by what she "hears" in the text… The task of Comparative Literature pedagogy in India is to prepare the student to 'hear' the text before a reading is formed… No theory[461] is at stake for Comparative Literature to defend, since it proposes a method and not an overarching theory. And, that is its ideological position as well (27).

Acknowledging the fact that the repertoire of conceptual tools might only provide students with a formal understanding of texts, teachers have the second option, that of guiding

[459] It is not enough for teachers to be aware of values if they ignore sharing them with students. Professor Chanda acknowledges the importance of the horizon of expectation, but fails to underline the teachers' responsibility to transmit it to their students as well, "Even while the comparatist herself is reading it, she tries to understand through the use of her tools the structure of feeling which produced it, and the horizon of expectation that enabled it to be received or rejected, in its own time and in later times" (26-7).

[460] "the ability to hear and coexist with what we very casually call "difference," is the way towards survival. This is possible only if we appreciate that texts are not fixed entities, neither are they totally objective nor completely subjectively crafted. They are neither cut off from a literary tradition, structure of feeling or conjuncture, nor completely determined by these. In short, the dynamics of textual production and reception will help us to find a way of understanding the realities within and outside the textual world, realities that are always interacting to produce 'readings'. If we are able to 'read' the differences and the similarities in their dynamic and contextualized forms, we shall have found a way to 'hear' the realities of lived and living difference" (27). Can teachers take for granted that students with no experience in comparative literature methodology might find their way through the reading?

[461] "And that is where Comparative Literature differs in practice and/or theory from Cultural Studies: there is no theory that Comparative Literature proposes, but a method predicated on a particular understanding of 'text' and 'culture' and their interactive presence in a cultural product. A repertoire of conceptual tools rather than critical theory is deployed in the 'reading' of the text. The reader brings no fixed assumptions to demonstrate: some assumptions may be formed and some revised in the process of reading" (27)

students' steps toward the core values to be gained through reading. The method that Chanda refers to might not offer enough support for students to pay attention to moral lessons in fictional texts since too much time is given to "the critical processes of texts". Moving a step further and connecting texts with perennial values that can awaken students' awareness should be the major goal of any literature teacher. Thus, one becomes a mentor, leading students toward a deeper understanding of life's mystery. A theory of reading and the teacher's role in instilling the core values of goodness, beauty, truth, tolerance, and empathy stand in a relationship of interdependence. The teacher's role as a door opener can help the student avoid those theoretical frames that describe the other in the text. By teaching the use of comparative methodological tools and any other reading facilitators, students aspire to a different end, namely their training in becoming "free citizens"[462].

Knowing details about 18th-century history, the biography of a certain author and the style and motives in a given work leads to nothing, unless such ideas are put into practice unless the word becomes flesh and the lessons that one finds in books can be redesigned and applied in real life situations. In my view, this should be the goal of any literature professor, to lead students to a better understanding of themselves and of others. Literature provides the necessary tools for such a metamorphosis to happen, but readers need to learn how to grasp those meanings and eventually how to apply them in real scenarios.

Starting with antiquity, philosophers used dialogue for transmitting valuable lessons to their disciples. Plato's dialogues confirm the need for interaction between mentor(s) and

[462] "The teacher, particularly the teacher dedicated to liberal education, must constantly try to look toward the goal of human completeness and back at the natures of his students here and now…" See Allan Bloom. *The Closing of the American Mind*. How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students. (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks. [1987] 2012). p. 19.

disciple(s) in order for all of them to enrich their understanding. Literary texts are essential keys in understanding oneself and the other, and teachers' role is to wisely use these texts, so as to extract the moral vim for readers/students to benefit. Instead of complaining about the shrinking number of students who scarcely read, literature teachers should cultivate their own professional garden[463] and identify new methods in leading discussions about texts, so as to generate a fresh interest for reading[464] through clear dissemination of values.

Today's teachers need to acknowledge the necessity of teaching alterity as a movement toward values. By denying this responsibility, and by leaving the student clueless before a text, might lead to misunderstandings. They might miss relevant information or ignore key facts that nurture gentility and attentiveness. The teaching process would remain an empty, theoretical, and abstract construct that has nothing to do with the world around. It is the teacher's responsibility to lead students through the text so they do not miss relevant information or ignore key facts that would impede their engagement with the other. The teaching process must not become an empty, theoretical, and abstract construct that has nothing to do with the world around us.

Consequently, literature classes should be based on theories of encounter and their applicability in real life situations, through encouraging students to actively work with texts and generate new stories, role-play activities, or roundtable discussions. It is essential for literature

[463] *Il faut cultiver son jardin.* See Voltaire. *Candide, or Optimism*. The Robert M. Adams Trans., 3rd ed., Nicholas Cronk (ed.). (New York: W.W. Norton and Company. [1759] 2016)

[464] If teachers show students the limitless possibilities of thought that a reading liminal experience might provide them with, and if they go back to the ancient educational ideal of *paidea* (understood as the process of building up the free citizen), they will have greater chances to transform their literature classes into tempting invitations to a continuous new becoming. Literary studies cannot be replaced by Performative Studies because, as Damrosch notices, "[e]ven as we open out our studies toward the full diversity of verbal, visual, and musical representation today, older narrative modes will surely continue to have an important place in our studies. Virgil, Kalidasa, and Proust give us unique pleasures" (289). Thus, let us restate the major responsibility of teachers to transmit moral values to their students, by guiding their reading so as for them to be able to touch upon core values, assimilate knowledge, and apply it for improving their own approach to life.

teachers to be familiar with the theories of encounter belonging to Levinas[465], Gadamer, Certeau, Ricoeur, Buber (I-thou relationship), Nussbaum's suggestion for cultivating humanity, Figueira's view on pedagogies of recognition, or Spăriosu's ideas about a ludic-irenic mentality that one can attain by reading. Their approach is meant to strengthen the philosophy of education that is at the core of any literature classes. Questions such as: Why do we teach what we teach? What are the expected effects of our teaching? should receive answers that rely on the core values that one should focus on when initiating the teaching process. We do not teach because we need to fulfill a university requirement, but because we want to form future generations, free men and women for an open-minded society.

People complain all the time about the evil of racism, discrimination, and xenophobia. How many of us have sincerely looked at the connection between what/how we teach and all these divisive social phenomena? One might argue that literature proved inefficient in solving the aforementioned problems. I argue that despite a rich plethora of literary texts, the voices of those defending it were not heard, or were ignored. That is why I advocate for a new defense of literature, a fresh, well argued, and strong consideration of the positive outcomes of reading. By allowing literature to gain its well-deserved place at the level of any dialogue, and by teaching with the clear purpose of opening readers' minds toward an irenic mentality, the student will acknowledge the need for restructuring his relationship with the other.

Further studies will add to this research, trying to give answers to several other questions: How can we ask students of such widely varying ability, commitment, motivation, and interest to read 'difficult', 'challenging', and abstract pieces of work? How are we to successfully inculcate not only a 'culture of reading' in the age of universal higher education but also a culture of

[465] Levinas looks at literature or the third element as in-betweenness, trace of God, hospitality, exile.

challenging reading? How are we to successfully mandate that all students, not just the shrinking numbers of those in the humanities, read the kinds of texts that are a part of their undergraduate education? How do we select which texts to use? How does a university go about the creation and management of an effective training system? How would the European or American academic systems receive the idea of implementing new classes in their current educational system? Literature classes from around the world should and can fashion an empathetic dialogue. The American and European systems of education should learn from each other and adopt literature at the core of the curricula, as a provider of empathetic behaviors and ultimately as valuable assets in shaping an irenic mentality where the other is a subject identifiable with the self.

6.4 Toward an Empathetic Dialogue

To reach the limits of ourselves, to reach beyond ourselves, / To let go the means, to wake **(Muriel Rukeyser,** ***Poem*****)**

The last part of this chapter frames a conclusion for the present study and at the same time an invitation to dialogue. As mentioned from the beginning, I state the need for a reconceptualization of the word dialogue, as the place of encounter of three elements –the self, the other, and literature. Not only does literature bring together the two participants in a discussion, but it is also a facilitator between ideas and reality. If all the conceptual elaborations described in the first four chapters remained at a discursive level, they would seem intangible and exotic. My intention was to provide tangible proof of the potential literature has in becoming the missing element in the encounter of the self and the other. Dialogue should no longer be taken for granted, but one should prepare oneself and others (students) for revitalizing one's empathy and love during any encounter, so as to reach new horizons for thought in a serene

exchange, specific for irenic mentalities. Literature (fiction) does not theorize the other, but it encourages the reader to put aside suspicion and to see the greater good of receiving the other as a condition for one's fulfillment. The ultimate goal of any literature teacher should be to design a culture of empathy through literature and teaching literature for building an irenic mentality. All literature teachers should be aware of their duty to encourage students to look for values in the texts. They will thus cultivate empathy through reading. I state the need for a shared vision and methodology in both sides of the Atlantic for cultivating empathy.

Bringing values as the core targets of American literature teaching and classroom discussions or practical activities with texts in Europe, teachers will determine great changes in their students. Empathy is effective at the level of interactions, of dialogue[466]. All literature teachers should have empathy development as a core objective of their teaching activity. Without empathy, people would fall into a moral void because we are all "hardwired for compassion"[467]. Through literature, readers imaginatively step into other worlds and other's world. However, there is the need to educate "benevolent emotions" in terms of the reception of texts through the underlining of core values that texts deal with. Reading represents a good practice for seeing other horizons and knowing places that other people come from. Familiarity confers comfort and re-actualizing one's sorrows can activate empathy toward others. Eventually, fictional texts make people treat each other better because the ego is set aside because of empathy. Reading fictional texts offers new brain capacities and mediates the encounter between the self and the other.

The metaphor of the circle that I used to symbolize totality as a result of a healthy encounter has the potential to lead one to social harmony[468] and a global understanding of the

[466] See Cummings, Lindsey B. *Empathy as Dialogue in Theater and Performance* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan. 2016)
[467] See Armstrong, Karen. *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life.* (Toronto: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. 2010)
[468] "Social harmony stems from the instinctive and genuine sense of caring, respect, and responsibility that lies deep

self/the other and the world. If at a local level, one gains awareness of the other two elements that give him/her completeness, at a global level, the self will enrich and keep one's individuality, by easily connecting to others, thus reaching global awareness. The figure that might best describe the role of literature at a global level is the polyhedron, which symbolizes convergence of points and part, but each preserving its uniqueness.

Figure 5. Polyhedron

Literature facilitates the encounter with the other through the cultivation of empathy, care, love, goodness, beauty, and truth. The present study aimed at bringing together not only the self and the other, but also ideas and reality. I want the present study to be a call to action, as an incentive for teachers to raise students' awareness of the applicable values of literary texts, and as an invitation for readers to practice empathetic dialogue through the embracing lenses that literature provides one with. The study should also create a feedback loop between the world of ideas (fictional texts, theories, pedagogical methods) and the real world, as a symbolic incarnation of the Word/ Logos: "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (John 4:2).

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in the dignity, courage and unselfishness of the spirit of humanity… This purpose begins in the forming, nurturing, and flourishing of harmonious and mutually respectful relationships between individuals, and between individuals and institutions at all levels—be they families, communities, nations, or the planet. In this Place, freedoms are tempered by responsibility to the other, the universe, and to Nature". See Barbara Sundberh Baudot (ed.). *Candles in the Dark.* A New Spirit for a Plural World. (Manchester, New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College; in association with University of Washington Press. Seattle. 2002). p. 372.

GLOSSARY

1. Awareness- a term that relates to openness in understanding and accepting differences in relation to others, and change in relation to the self. It is also a continuous process of presence, of seizing the moment, of acknowledging the here and now.

2. Attentiveness- in close connection with awareness, attentiveness refers to an acknowledged volition to focus one's energy toward a certain goal, person, idea, action. I will be using it also in connection with Huxley's *Karuna*[469] (attention, compassion!);

3. *Acceptance*- a term that refers to the relation between the self and the other. Through acceptance, the self receives the other with his/her exoticism[470]

4. ***Beauty***- represents one of the three classical values. According to Aquinas, beauty is "that which, being seen, pleases"[471]. Beauty is cultivated by art and refers to the Socratic promise of happiness. "Beauty is the splendor of truth," (*Veritatis splendor*) announces Plato. I will develop several perspectives on beauty, by following the path of Plato, Schiller, Tolstoy, Spăriosu, and Sir Roger Scruton.

5. Becoming- I employ Parmenides' term in a Deleuzian[472] perspective, as a process of transformation, in contact with new ideas, places, or people. I state that literature helps to create empathy in which one person recognizes the other as oneself. Accepting the other means

[469] Aldous Huxley. *Island.* (New York: Harper Perennial, Modern Classics. [1962] 2009)
[470] I understand exoticism in the light of Figueira, M., Dorothy. *The Exotic, A Decadent Quest*. (Albany: State University of New York Press. 1994)
[471] Peter Kreeft. *Lewis's Philosophy of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty*. (IVP Academic. Print on Demand Edition. June 15. 2008)
[472] Gilles Deleuze. Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus*: *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Brian Massumi (trans.). (London: University of Minnesota Press. [1987] 2011)

becoming other, or charging oneself with the information the other provides. The two selves become one in a melting process generated by a reciprocal mirroring.

6. Care- responsibility for the self and the other that intervenes the moment awareness is internalized and understood. One realizes one cannot reach accomplishment but through the other. The self needs an appropriate communion with the other for reaching the highest level of (self)understanding.

7. Circle- Euclidian theorem states that the basic condition for a circle to exist is the connection of three different points. In the context of the present work, the three points are symbolized by the self, the other, and literature. One needs to be aware of the existence of the three elements so as to form a circle, or reach roundness. The symbolism of a round shape is totality, entirety, completeness, and accomplishment. The self has the potential to establish a non-compromised connection with the other and implicitly to reach a higher understanding, as long as he/she acknowledges the third element.

8. Confession- Starting with Saint Augustine, confessional literature continues to make an impact upon countless readers because of the empathetic invitation in which one acknowledges the writer's struggle as the reader's search for meaning. Thomas Merton's, Mother Theresa's, Tolstoy's, Detrick Bonhoeffer's and Michel Tournier's texts and letters will be at the center of the present analysis.

9. Creativity- One of the claims of the present study will support literature as a provider of ideas and contexts for one's imagination to develop. Through reading, creativity is encouraged and freethinking developed.

10. Critical thinking[473]- excellence in thought that needs to be cultivated; Reading represents a useful technique in adapting the mind for making challenging choices and objectively analyzing various situations. John Dewey described critical thinking as Reflective Inquiry, defining it as follows: "the thinker turns a subject over in the mind, giving it serious and consecutive consideration".

11. Dialogue- a form of communication between at least 2 people; Etymologically, the word refers to dia (through) +Logos (word). It is the connection, the whole between two people and their humanity (word, culture, background, social characteristics, ethical sensitivities). I will be looking at three types of dialogue and the effects they have on the self. Playing with dialectics, one acquires mental flexibility and moves through a cognitive resetting, thus reaching the understanding of the self and the other.

a) Triadic dialogue- I claim that dialogue is not dual but a triadic construction that has the potential to reach communion of the self with the other, as long as there is the awareness of the third element.

[473] Kompf & Bond. "Critical Reflection in Adult Education". in T. Barer- Stein, & M. Kompf (eds.). *The Craft of Teaching Adults.* (Toronto: ON Irwin. 2001). pp. 21-38; Richard Paul. "The State of Critical Thinking Today". in *New Directions for Community Colleges.* (No. 130. 2005); Richard Paul, Linda Elder. "The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking, Concepts and Tools". in *27th Conference on Critical Thinking*. (University of California at Berkley. 2007); Richard Paul, Linda Elder, Ted Bartell. "California Teacher Preparation for Instruction". in *Critical Thinking: Research Findings and Policy Recommendations*. (State of California, California Commission on Teacher Credentials, Sacramento, CA. 1997); Mulnix Jennifer. "Thinking Critically about Critical Thinking". in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*. (Vol. 44. Issue 5. July 2012). pp. 464-479; Edward M. Glaser, *An Experiment in the Development of Critical Thinking.* (Columbia University: Teacher's College. 1941); Bloom Benjamin S. "Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals". Handbook 1: *Cognitive Domain*. (New York: McKay. 1956); Dewey John. *The Child and the Curriculum, and The School and Society*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. [1956] 2006)

b) Interreligious dialogue- I will be discussing inter-confessional dialogue in chapter four. I will refer to it as the solution for any interreligious conflicts. Based on perennial spiritual values, it will enrich the views of activists providing a moral bridge based on common beliefs, rather than local differences. Through an appropriate acknowledgment of limitations and through sharing diverse methods of relating to the Ultimate Figure, one will gain more understanding of their own spiritual approach. Diversity is enriching and differences have to be celebrated, instead of concealed under a blurry, colorless *mélange.*

c) Socratic dialogue- Logos – following the Socratic heritage, one could interpret dialogue as an exchange of ideas with the purpose of better understanding the self and more appropriately approach the other. While engaged in a Socratic dialogue one does not have the purpose of convincing their interlocutor, but rather to attentively listen to other opinions, so as to better understand one's own.

12. Discovery- I employ Aristotle's term from *Anagnorisis* to refer to the process of reaching knowledge through literature, since by reading, one will have access to new levels of reality, thus detecting the rich aura of alternatives. It is the exposure to novelty the one that offers readers the satisfaction of great encounters and deeper awareness.

13. Emotional complicity – It has been proven that reading literature increases empathy and gives the reader the ability to easily relate to others' suffering or happiness. Through the exposure to different levels of experiencing reality, readers tend to identify themselves with certain characters in the novels or plays that they might be reading. Several studies show the effect of fictional texts on the reader's social behavior:

Kidd and Castano[474] (2013), Bal P. M. Veltkamp M[475] (2013), D'Argembeau A. Cassol H. Phillips C. Balteau E. Salmon E. Van der Linden M[476] (2014), Djikic M. Oatley K. Moldoveanu M. C[477] (2013), Fong K. Mullin J. B. Mar R. A[478] (2013), Katz J[479] (2006), Lukacs G[480] (1920), Mar R. A[481] (2004), Mar R. A. Oatley K. Hirsh J. dela Paz J. Peterson J. B[482] (2006), Mar R. A. Oatley K. Peterson J. B[483] (2009), Mason R. A. Just M. A[484] (2009), Ong W[485] (1982), Peskin J. Astington J. W[486] (2004), Speer N. K. Reynolds J. R. Swallow K. M. Zacks J. M[487] (2009), Spreng R. N. Mar R. A. Kim A. S. N[488](2009), Zunshine L[489] (2006), Tamir D.I., et al.[490] (2015).

[474] David Comer Kidd, Emanuele Castano. "Reading Literary Fiction Improves Theory of Mind". in *Science*. (Vol. 342, Issue 6156. Oct 2013). pp. 377-380.
[475] Bal P. M., Veltkamp M. "How Does Fiction-Reading Influence Empathy? An experimental investigation on the role of emotional transportation". in *PLoS One*, (8 (1), e55341. 2013)
[476] D'Argembeau A., Cassol H., Phillips C., Balteau E., Salmon E., Van der Linden M. "Brains Creating Stories of Selves: The Neural Basis of Autobiographical Reasoning". in *Social cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*. (9 (5). 2014). pp. 646–652.
[477] Djikic M., Oatley K., Moldoveanu M. C. "Reading Other Minds: Effects of Literature on Empathy". in *Scientific Study of Literature*. (3 (1). 2013). pp. 28–47.
[478] Fong K., Mullin J. B., Mar R. A. "What You Read Matters: The Role of Fiction Genre in Predicting Interpersonal Sensitivity". in *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, (7 (4). 2013). p. 370.
[479] Katz J. *Arts and Civic Engagement: Involved in Arts, Involved in Life*. (Washington DC: National Endowment for the Arts. 2006)
[480] Lukacs G. *The Theory of the Novel*. (Cambridge: MIT Press. 1920)
[481] Mar R. A. "The Neuropsychology of Narrative: Story Comprehension, Story Production and their Interrelation". in *Neuropsychologia*. (42 (10). 2004). pp. 1414 – 1434.
[482] Mar R. A., Oatley K., Hirsh J., dela Paz J., Peterson J. B. "Bookworms versus Nerds: Exposure to Fiction versus Non-Fiction, Divergent Associations with Social Ability, and the Simulation of Fictional Social Worlds". in *Journal of Research in Personality*. (40 (5). 2006). pp. 694 – 712.
[483] Mar R. A., Oatley K., Peterson J. B. "Exploring the Link between Reading Fiction and Empathy: Ruling out Individual Differences and Examining Outcomes". in *Communications*. (34 (4). 2009). pp. 407 – 428.
[484] Mason R. A. Just M. A. "The Role of the Theory-of-Mind Cortical Network in the Comprehension of Narratives". in *Language and Linguistics Compass*. (3 (1). 2009). pp. 157 – 174.
[485] Ong W. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. (New York: Methuen & Co. 1982)
[486] Peskin J. Astington J. W. "The Effects of Adding Metacognitive Language to Story Texts". in *Cognitive Development*. (19 (2). 2004). pp. 253 – 273.
[487] Speer N. K., Reynolds J. R., Swallow K. M., Zacks J. M. "Reading Stories Activates Neural Representations of Visual and Motor Experiences". in *Psychological Science*. (20 (8). 2009). p. 989.
[488] Spreng R. N., Mar R. A., Kim A. S. N. "The Common Neural Basis of Autobiographical Memory, Prospection, Navigation, Theory of Mind, and the Default Mode: A Quantitative Meta-Analysis". in *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*. (21 (3). 2009). pp. 489 – 510.
[489] Zunshine L. *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*. (Columbus: Ohio State University Press. 2006)
[490] Diana I. Tamir, Andrew B. Bricker, David Dodell-Feder, Jason P. Mitchell. "Reading Fiction and Reading Minds: The Role of Simulation in the Default Network". in *Social Cognitive and Affect Neuroscience*. (11 (2). 2015). pp. 212 – 224.

14. Equilibrium- represents the result of a proper encounter with the other/Other. There is no fulfillment in isolation because humans are meant to evolve through interaction with others. Equilibrium can be attained in the process of becoming other. In the case of monks, despite their obvious isolation, equilibrium is attained through prayer, meditation, and the encounter with the ultimate Other.

15. Freedom- a term that refers to the openness of choice and thought; Literature offers unlimited numbers of encounters that allow the reader to perceive similar opportunities in real life situations. The comfort of seeing more than one alternative offers the freedom of choice and wisdom for comparing and contrasting.

16. ***Goodness***[491]- we all live with the nostalgia of goodness. Moral value that has been aimed at universally, goodness implies a continuous effort of improving the self, treating the other with kindness, care, and love. Goodness implies the search for the other and the sacrifice of one's pride, in the name of a better good. Goodness is selflessness and *metanoia*, or transformation in the name of a moral ideal.

17. Hospitality- I look at hospitality in terms of openness toward others/others' views, as echoing Ricoeur's linguistic hospitality. Ipshita Chanda's definition, as identities influencing each other, implies an involuntary process. In contrast, I see hospitality as a desired openness and receptivity in relation to the other. In Chandra Mohanty's essay titled *Under Western Eyes* (1984)

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[491] David Kelsey offers a Christian definition of goodness as the Good itself. "The Good is not only the underlying essence of the moral and intellectual virtues; it is the highest principle of the universe. It is the divine. Plato came to be understood as the founder of a religion, and *paideia* was understood to be an education whose goal was in some way religious as well as moral". See David H. Kelsey. *Between Athens and Berlin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1993). p. 9.

hospitality implies respect, equality and the framing of an ethical context. Similarly, Ricoeur hints at equality and acceptance.

18. Humanities- the term refers to a collective consciousness (in Jung's perspective), a common ground that all people share independently of age, gender, color, or spiritual views. One becomes human by acknowledging humanity in others, through contact with others, the universe, faith, meditation, or a higher level of experiencing life and consciousness. Through literature, people are open to encounters that humanize them and bring them all together, in the name of an intangible common ground. The thesis of the present research states the necessity for acknowledging the humanism we are all sharing. By rather focusing on people's essence and similarities, one fights against discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and fear of people. Humanism needs to be taught because exposure to variety allows the self to expand and embrace the potential of positive metamorphosis and development through others. Becoming other entails the awareness of a common platform of all humans, or a plane of consistency, in Deleuzian terminology.

19. Intellectual autonomy- The expression refers to the outcome of any reading process. Reading develops critical thinking and offers readers the autonomy of making choices among the various alternatives of thought they are exposed to.

20. Literature – I use the term as a symbolic gate toward (reaching) others; the third essential element in any type of dialogue; source of awareness, attentiveness, empathy, and understanding. "Site for cultural mediation and equality" (61). Literature can "serve as fertile ground for negotiating issues of linguistic and cultural pluralism" (56).

21. Mentality- perspective on life, worldview; set of values and principles that guide an individual.

a) Ludic Irenic mentality- In contrast with power mentality, ludic irenic mentality, as defined by Mihai Spăriosu[492], refers to a peaceful approach "that transcends all violent conflict, including social, national and ethnic difference", based on principles of "nonviolence and unconditional love". Spăriosu defines irenic mentality as "a mode of thought, behavior, and pathos grounded in the principle of peace"[493].

b) Master-slave mentality- Nietzsche's dichotomy[494] refers to the Western mentality of the ruling classes, where the leading individual would exploit his inferior, by carelessly objectifying him. The mentality of the master refers to the power mentality, while the slave mentality can be easily connected to an irenic worldview[495]. In today's societies, master-slave mentality changed its conceptualization, and through Marxism and neo-Marxism, it is centered around the victim, the outsider, the discriminated one, the vulnerable one. All social movements centered on social, political, cultural, gender differences, such as feminism, queer theory (resuscitation of marginality for a cultural analysis of the center), post-colonialism (the hybrid subject, seen as an intersection of discourses), the discourse of minorities (the problem of alterity and difference) represent the buds of the power mentality or master-slave mentality.

c) Power mentality- I will be using this term in the light of Spăriosu's definition: "self-generated historical principle that organizes human existence and relations in terms of force, exerted by individuals and communities upon each other and upon their environment"[496]. Oppressor-Oppressed mentality represents a reconceptualization of power mentality, in the sense that by objectifying the other, the self-gains power and control upon him/her. By looking at Buber's

[492] Mihai I. Spăriosu. *The Wreath of Wild Olive Play: Liminality and the Study of Literature*. (New York: State University of New York Press. 1997). p. 170.
[493] Ibidem. p. 303.
[494] Friedrich Nietzsche. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. (New York: Vintage Books. 1967)
[495] Ibidem. p. 6-9.
[496] Mihai I. Spăriosu. *The Wreath of Wild Olive Play: Liminality and the Study of Literature*. (New York: State University of New York Press. 1997). p. 303.

suggestion, of transforming the I-it relation in an I-Thou relation, one would free himself/herself from the yoke of power in order to establish healthy connections.

22. Modernism /postmodernism- Matei Călinescu, in *Five Faces of Modernity*[497], argues for a personal definition of the two concepts. I will operate with the two concepts avoiding temporal references, and I will focus on their main tendency of breaking with traditional ways. In contrast with modernism, viewed as a moderate, innovative tendency, postmodernism has a more aggressive way of imposing its paradigm, by refusing any reference with established rules, thus encouraging disharmony, monstrosity, and asymmetry.

23. Moral values- set of principles referring to the distinction between goodness and evil, or right and wrong. I will be arguing that moral values together with the three ancient values need to be taught. A well-structured education system should focus on the explanation and implementation of moral values[498].

24. Perennial philosophy- the all-embracing branch of philosophy that tries to bridge the gap between cultures, religions, ethnicities, and people, by promoting everlasting values.

25. Play- a concept that refers to one of the central human activities. Similar to literature, play gives access to new levels of perceiving reality, creating fictional scenarios that engage participants, at the same time with allowing them an escape from their immediate reality. I will operate with this concept in an interdisciplinary manner, showing that it brings together different fields, such as religion, literature, philosophy, language, etc.

26. Potentiality - used as an Aristotelian echo. It is the contrasting concept of actuality and refers to a limitless number of possibilities, out of which few become an actuality.

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[497] Matei Călinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism*. (Duke University Press. 1987). p. 73.

[498] Pam Belluck. "For Better Social Skills, Scientists Recommend a Little Chekhov". in *The New York Times*. (October 2013)

37. Reading- the process of acquiring new frames of reference, but also new potentialities of thought that offer readers the means/tools for facing reality. Călinescu's *Rereading* (1993), implies second (critical) thoughts about texts that one revisits.

28. Reality- unlimited number of portrayals of that which is real. Each individual approaches the real from a different standpoint, in a subjective process of acknowledging information about the world. Through dialogue, reading, and encounters, one can enrich his/her frame of reference, broadening the aura of expertise, thus grasping the multi-layered dimension of reality.

29. Receptivity- the ability to accept or embrace someone else's views on reality. Literature allows the practice of receptivity through the exposure to the monstrous other who becomes familiar and implicitly accepted.

30. Respect- the *sine qua non* value that has to dominate any human interaction. One tends to respect what/whom one is familiar with. Reading literature gives access to difference/diversity and implicitly teaches respect.

31. Revolt- the term will gain a positive connotation because I will be using it in the context of rebellion against the lack of meaning of life. I will associate revolt with Albert Camus' approach, since he revolted against nihilism, against the lack of love, friendship, and care for others. Camus builds a defense for lost values and pleads for change.

32. Self- the many synonyms one can attach to the concept of self– psyche, soul, spirit, personality, identity- show its essential role in the preoccupation of writers and philosophers. The present study is focusing on describing the values that constitute the basis for knowing the individual self through the communion with the other. There is no veritable understanding of the self unless it is mediated by (an)other.

33. Tolerance- value that is gained through changing one's point of reference. If one relates to the world and others through the self, as *Ipse identity* (individualistic, self-centered perspective), his/her perception might be biased by local prejudice, thus tolerance might be inhibited. If on the contrary, one relates to the world/to others through the self as *Idem-identity* (collective humanism and consciousness), one has more chances to be accepting, embracing, tolerant, respectful and caring.

34. Tradition- I will use the concept, in accordance with Ştefan Câlţia, the renowned Romanian artist, who states: "Tradition does not mean return. It means assimilation, it means knowledge, it means knowing where you come from and who you are"[499].

35. Translation- I will use the term referring to the process of decrypting messages of another and adapting them to one's views. In the context of any dialogue, translation intervenes at the level of understanding the other's message. Translating the self, in the context of writers of confessional literature, represents the act of putting into words the personal experience that becomes relevant for the reader and challenges him/her at starting a self-inquiry process.

36. Understanding- In contrast with the term "discovery" that implies a process of search, understanding entails acknowledging new dimensions of reality, by embracing someone else's views. Self-understanding is tied back to the ancient *Nosce Te Ipsum! Know thyself*, that is possible in communion with the other/Other, through compassion and empathy. According to the symbolic wholeness of the figure of a circle, and since a circle needs at least three points in order to become a circle, I argue that self-understanding is possible once the essential role of the other is acknowledged.

37. **Truth-** the third central ancient value, together with goodness, and beauty. Truth can overlap

[499] Ştefan Câlţia, interview: "Tradiția nu înseamnă întoarcere. Înseamnă asimilare, înseamnă cunoaștere, să știi de unde vii și cine ești".

with the other two moral values because they all constitute "eternal verities". "The three transcendentals" correspond to the three persons of the Trinity. "We are head, hands, and heart. We respond to truth, goodness, and beauty. We are this because we are images of God. Each of us is one person with three distinct powers"[500]. According to Keats, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty", – that is all/ Ye know on earth and all ye need to know (*Ode to a Grecian Urn*).

[500] Peter Kreeft. *Lewis's Philosophy of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty*. (IVP Academic. Print on Demand Edition. June 15. 2008)

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