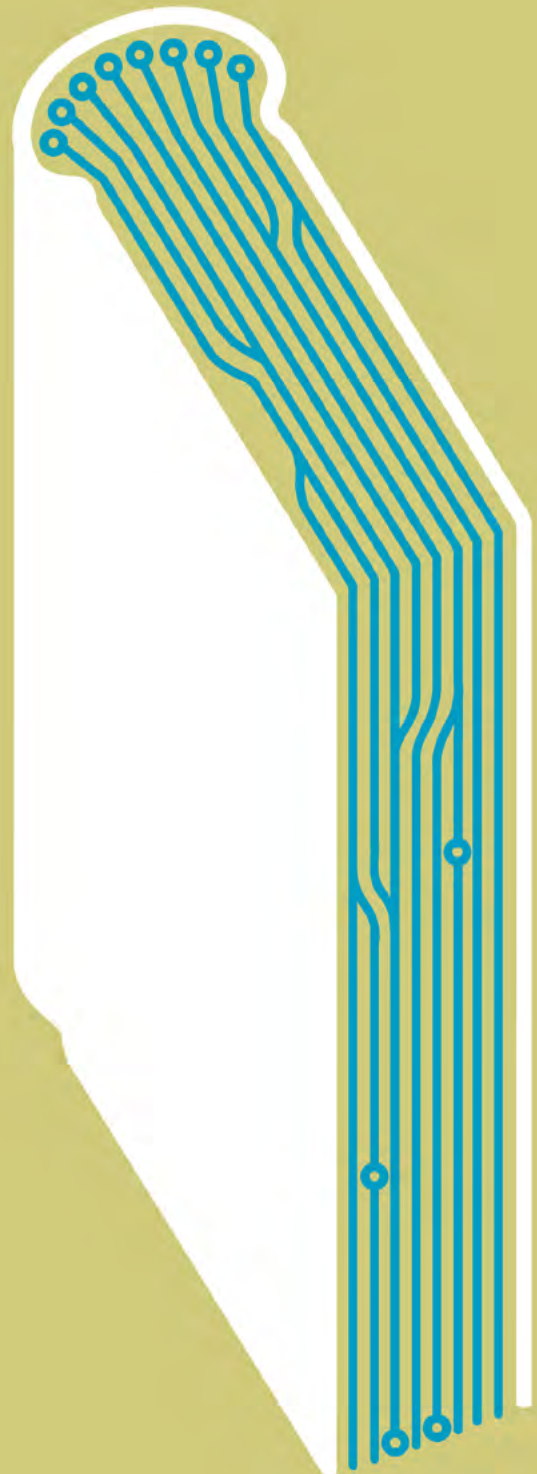


Circuits in Motion

Polysystem Theory and the Analysis of Culture

Edited by
David Souto
Aiora Sampedro
Jon Kortazar



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Introductions

Circuits in Motion: Mapping Heterogeneity in Culture

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For all its members' many and often quite noisy pretensions of being on the vanguard of social thought, the academy is actually quite conservative in its day-to-day, and year-to-year, comportments. This aversion to change is, at least on one level, readily understandable. After all, the contemporary university was founded during the 19th century to serve, as much as anything else, as a repository of the central semiotic treasures of the nation-states of Europe and the Americas, and to spread this supposed symbolic koine among the often quite heterodox populations under their nominal political authority. In other words, the rigorous replication of ideas and attitudes among the upper socio-economic strata of the national community is —especially in the humanities— what the contemporary university has often been largely about.

While this is not, in and of itself a bad thing (indeed Even-Zohar suggests it is a flat-out inevitable thing), it nonetheless engenders no small amount of collateral damage in the realm of analytical practices. If a prime goal of the institution in question is the establishment and perpetuation of the national faith and the reproduction of canons, what incentives do its members have to adopt critical paradigms that might more accurately illuminate the ever-changing and often bumptiously untidy reality of the national community?

In short, they have almost none.

And it is for this reason that so many of the recent calls for greater inter-disciplinarity in the humanities have ended in disappointment, if not outright failure. By the time an academic is installed in a paid position, he or she has been thoroughly acculturated to, and shaped by, the central presumptions of his or her of often statist-inflected discipline. Moreover, their future advancement in the academy will be governed by people who have been similarly shaped by the often claustrophobic parameters of the same “field”. Is it thus any wonder that such people who, like most of us, desire stability and security, fail miserably when asked to think, teach and write in interdisciplinary terms?

It would be tempting to characterize Itamar Even-Zohar’s extraordinary body of work as a rare triumph of interdisciplinarity. But to do so, would be to miss the core audaciousness of his intellectual project. Though it obviously partakes of knowledge produced by myriad academic fields, it is not conceptually bound by any of them. While Even-Zohar is fully cognizant of the ability of these existing paradigms to generate useful artefacts of knowledge, he is deeply suspicious of their often impressionistic and self-referential frames of analysis.

His solution?

To essentially “leap over” them when generating his own framework for the analysis of heterodoxy in culture. In this sense, we see the term “supra-disciplinary” as perhaps the best way of describing the nature of his work.

But how does one “leap over” existing disciplines without falling into the abyss of meaninglessness, or academic bubblingbabbling? His answer is to go back to the most basic form of analysis, and the one that, at least in theory, still predominates in the so-called “hard-sciences”: empirical observation of the functional properties of a given cultural artifact or set of cultural artifacts in time. And please keep in mind this “in time”.

Key to this approach is a recognition of a number of things that are often overlooked or obscured by more traditional practitioners of textual (understood here in its broadest possible sense) analysis.

The first is that no cultural artifact is ever imbued with a stable or constant cultural value. Rather all such semiotic elements derive their value, as Saussure showed us in the more limited realm of phonemic analysis, from the set of relations they maintain with other similar elements in their proximity in a given moment in time. (And, again, the idea of this “set of relations” is a key one).

The second postulate, which flows logically from the first, is that the passage of time inevitably affects the nature of the relationships between such elements within the synchronic “snapshot” alluded to above.

The third is that, however much cultural institutions of a national or tribal cast seek to obviate it, no cultural system or field is, or can ever be, fully isolated from other internally cohesive repertoires of culture. They are, in fact constantly interfering with each other, and in this way, perpetually facilitating change through the transfer, of ideas, images and models between them. And, thus, change.

A fourth premise is that those who used to be called “lettered elites”, and whom Even-Zohar has termed “socio-semiotic entrepreneurs” at various moments of his work,

play an outsized role in both generating repertoires of culture (and from there, notions of what constitutes “reality” in society) as well as the traffic of cultural artifacts and cultural models between both discrete internal repertoires of a social entity, and other recognizable national systems of culture.

As Thomas Harrington mentions in his contribution to this volume, “To begin to think in this way is, in a sense, to embark on a program of observational detoxification”. Rather than starting from the premises that the often nationalistically-oriented and power-diffident gatekeepers of the academy have suggested are the driving forces of cultural production (e.g. individual genius, a desire to harness the voice of the people, vague notions of intertextuality, the pure pursuit of beauty), Polysystems Theory invites us to ask questions like the following:

- How did this particular artifact or repertoire of artifacts come into being?
- Who can be said to have “invented” them?
- Who launched it, or them, into circulation?
- Why, and why here, and at this moment?
- Was their appearance in the system where it now resides facilitated by the importation of texts (again understood in the broadest possible sense) and/or textual models imported from other repertoires and systems?
- If so, who exactly were the importers, and what were their strategic goals in initiating the transaction or transactions that made this happen?
- Why, did they do so at this particular moment of history?
- What actor or set of actors is currently managing the invented or imported repertoire’s survival and maintenance in its current site of “residence”?
- How proximate or distant are these discourse managers —and hence the semiotic products under their effective control or influence— to the centers of social power in this particular place?

We view this last point as particularly important, and see it as a key reason for believing that Polysystem Theory is probably still much closer to the beginning of its arc of prominence than to its effective end. Although Even-Zohar himself has not made any clear or consistent claims in this direction, we believe that this emphasis on dissecting how “idea-makers” interact with society’s prime centers of power suggests that perhaps the greatest benefits of his theories lie in their ability to help citizens gain a much clearer understanding of the political conditions in which they live and work.

As Even-Zohar points out in his masterful “Culture-Planning, cohesion and the making and maintenance of entities”, power elites first employed cultural goods, then a relatively scarce resource, to induce a sense of awe in the population under their nominal control. And this practice of flashing “cultural bling” still exists in many social and economical circles today. However, it is, in our view, being rapidly supplanted by a model of culture-planning rooted not in the logic of scarcity, but rather the logic of abundance. Again a bling?

Idea makers allied to centers of power today are able to flood the citizenry with a Nile-sized flow of images each and every day, a current so large and seemingly untamed that it robs many otherwise perspicacious people of their ability to remember a key, and we believe, unassailable postulate of Even-Zohar’s critical outlook: that there is no cohesion,

and therefore no recognizable schemas of meaning in culture without the “curating” of extant cultural inventories. In short, Even-Zohar teaches us that, however invisible their presence might seem to be in a given moment, there are always relatively small groups of people working in concert with key power holders to generate and maintain elite-friendly concepts of “reality” for the rest of us, and that with a little bit of searching, we can actually locate and expose to others exactly who they are, and how they work their semiotic magic on the majority.

In a time, especially in the humanities, when the word empowerment has been rendered banal by overuse and the promulgation of haphazard critical approaches produced in its name, Even-Zohar’s body of theory texts provides us with real tools for fighting back against the many induced distortions and slumbers of our time.

Pensamiento Fuerte: Polisistemas y Filología

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El objetivo de este artículo es contraponer en el ámbito de los estudios literarios el pensamiento fuerte, representado por la teoría de los polisistemas y otras orientaciones similares de inspiración sociológica y fundamento fenomenológico, frente al pensamiento débil que, a causa del triunfo de la deconstrucción sobre todo en los Estados Unidos, ha dado paso a la sustitución de la Filología y de la *Literaturwissenschaft* por los llamados Estudios culturales.

Como es bien sabido, desde la década de los años ochenta del pasado siglo *pensiero debole* es un concepto característico de la Posmodernidad, que fue promovido por el filósofo italiano Gianni Vattimo. Según él, frente a una lógica consistente y unívoca representada por el Racionalismo, el pensamiento débil reivindica la necesidad de dar libre curso a la interpretación.

Su relativismo abre paso al triunfo de la multiculturalidad frente al canon occidental, y se alinea con la deconstrucción de Jacques Derrida por compartir con ella el principio exacerbado de la libertad de la interpretación no sujeta a una lógica, en la línea de una auténtica «hermenéutica negativa».

El Pensamiento débil es un pensamiento antimetafísico, entendiendo por metafísica la idea de que existe un orden objetivo del ser. El pensamiento metafísico resultaría ser, así, el pensamiento de los vencedores, interesados en mantener vigente el orden dado. El pensamiento débil, por el contrario, es el de los desfavorecidos, no el de las clases dominantes, que siempre han actuado para mantener y no poner en cuestión el orden establecido del mundo.

La quiebra de la racionalidad que estos planteamientos promueven da lugar también a la denominada «Modernidad líquida» de Zygmunt Bauman y se ve favorecida

por el creciente interés hacia la «inteligencia emocional» estudiada por el psicólogo norteamericano Daniel Goleman.

Como resultado de este espíritu de época, y por su triunfo en numerosos e influyentes campus universitarios, podemos hablar también del predominio de un «pensamiento débil» en el estudio de la Literatura e incluso en su consideración académica y social.

Es cierto que, desde que Nietzsche proclamase la muerte de Dios, menudean las propuestas necrológicas. Damian Thomson anunció el fin del tiempo; J. H. Plum, la muerte del pasado; Francis Fukuyama, el cierre de la Historia. Y en lo que a nosotros concierne, Barthes sentenció el deceso del autor, George Steiner, el sepelio de la tragedia, Alvin Kernan «the death of Literature», y al alimón Susan Bassnett y Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak la «muerte de una disciplina» que no es otra que la Literatura comparada. Pero yo recito al escritor español Zorilla: *Los muertos que vos matáis / gozan de buena salud*. Las razones de tal optimismo las doy en el libro que escribimos a seis manos Haun Saussy, César Domínguez y yo, *Introducing Comparative Literature: New Trends and Applications* (Routledge, Londres, 2016), ya traducido al español y al árabe, y en proceso de publicarse en farsi.

Partamos de un supuesto absurdo: a partir de mañana ya no se escribe ni un poema, ensayo, novela o drama más. La literatura, sin embargo, no desaparecería: tenemos un fondo de armario inagotable, y como recordaba Eliot, todos los escritores que en el mundo han sido son nuestros contemporáneos. Pues bien, aunque, por seguir en la línea del absurdo, las humanidades desaparecieran de los sílabos educativos (cosa que a veces no me parece totalmente imposible), la mera existencia de los textos ya escritos suscitaría su lectura, y la lectura, la crítica, y la crítica da paso a la teoría cuando se repara en ciertas constantes que se dan entre los propios textos... Por cierto, así fue entre los griegos: primero escritos, luego «crisis poiematon» (esto es, la crítica), inmediatamente después poética o teoría de la literatura...

Si este pensamiento literario débil sigue existiendo, y no albergo muchas dudas al respecto, la responsabilidad no es de los estudiantes, sino de los profesores, en muchos casos seducidos por teóricos malabaristas. En definitiva, es más fácil deconstruir que construir.

Con todo el respeto intelectual que me merecen algunos de los seguidores anglosajones de Derrida, yo sigo teniendo para mí que el triunfo de la Deconstrucción fue nefasto para la valoración de la Literatura en el conjunto de los currículos académicos de muchas universidades, las cuales, en su modelo de educación liberal, utilizaban la letras como un instrumento imprescindible para la formación integrada de las personas en varios ámbitos: el ético, el expresivo y comunicativo, el estético o el enciclopédico. Se consideraba, por lo tanto, que la Literatura significaba algo, que poseía un valor canónico en términos de valoración artística y que proporcionaba un cúmulo de informaciones sobre asuntos importantes, que eran pertinentes. *Incumbentes*, diría Northrop Frye.

De un tiempo a esta parte corren vientos apocalípticos entre los zahoríes más lúcidos que se interesan por el fenómeno o sistema literario. Semejante percepción terminal cobra especial virulencia donde la Deconstrucción acabó deteriorando considerablemente el estatuto académico de la Literatura, después de propalar la idea de que la creación literaria, lejos de ser una escritura «eminente» (Gadamer), llena de «presencias reales» (Steiner), de sentidos con incumbencia operativa (Frye) para nuestra sociedad y civilización, se

encontraba fragmentada en puros ecos descoyuntados. Junto a Edward Said, Harold Bloom o George Steiner participan de este pesimismo, como también el propio Northrop Frye, que perteneció por largos años a la comisión supervisora de la radio y la televisión canadienses. En este foro expresó reiteradamente una misma preocupación: si el enorme poder de los medios electrónicos podría acabar tergiversando los procesos educativos al proporcionar un torrente de informaciones y experiencias con remotas posibilidades, sin embargo, de facilitar un conocimiento genuino de aquello que a todos incumbe. Es decir, los mitos propios de la condición humana, que nos hablan de nuestras preocupaciones tanto primarias —los intereses primordiales que van del alimento y el sexo hasta la libertad— como secundarias o ideológicas.

Cierto es que la Deconstrucción viene a sugerir, por el contrario, que la Literatura puede carecer de sentido, que es como una especie de algarabía de ecos en la que no hay voces genuinas, hasta el extremo de que el sentido se desdibuje o difumine por completo. Esto equivale a una manifestación radical en contra de una «hermenéutica positiva» como la representada por Schleiermacher, para la que, hiperbólicamente, el sentido de un texto es exactamente el que el autor quiso darle. Semejante postura resulta también equivocada. El libro significa, de cierto, lo que el lector quiere que signifique, pero desde este relativismo hermenéutico, que la Fenomenología explica por la evidencia de que la obra literaria es un esquema que debe ser «rellenado» por el lector en sus lagunas, en sus «lugares de indeterminación», todavía queda mucha distancia para llegar a una «hermenéutica negativa», que niega a la Literatura la capacidad retransmitir sentido.

Muy al contrario, muy en la línea de un siempre vigente Aristóteles, para quien la empatía era el fundamento de la catarsis, por ejemplo Nicolas Bourriaud, en su *Estética relacional*, define a la luz del concepto que su título proclama que una obra de arte, y las literarias lo son, puede definirse como un objeto relacional, como el espacio de una negociación entre sus remitentes y sus destinatarios. Así por ejemplo, en el teatro se crea una comunidad a partir del conjunto de relaciones que se establecen entre artistas y espectadores, y entre los espectadores entre ellos, a partir de la mediación de la obra de arte.

Desafortunadamente, otro muy distinto es el poso que la Deconstrucción fue dejando, y esto, en mi criterio, tuvo una consecuencia inmediata en el régimen interno de las Universidades. A la hora de distribuir y rentabilizar presupuestos, algo que conozco desde dentro después de mis ocho años como rector, no es de extrañar que los gestores decidan minimizar la presencia de la Literatura en el sistema educativo cuando los propios estudiosos han postulado que no significa nada o lo significa todo, que el texto no tiene ninguna consistencia de sentido. Hay en ello un momento terrible en que nuestros departamentos llegan a hacerse el *harakiri* abrazando, de un modo tan entusiasta como poco reflexivo, la teoría de la Deconstrucción. Y como consecuencia, se produce un vacío, aparece una suerte de campo calcinado en el que hay que sembrar algo muy distinto. Por ejemplo, los «Cultural Studies». En el trayecto se pierde la memoria literaria y junto a ella la tradición académico-filológica.

Alguna vez me han preguntado si hay algo que me guste de la Deconstrucción. Y suelo responder que la brillantez de sus fuegos de artificio en los momentos mejores de la fiesta, y el remoto fundamento del pensamiento de Derrida en la Fenomenología de Edmund Husserl, sobre el que el francés escribió su tesis doctoral. Veo, así, a Jacques Derrida como el presidente de la comisión de fiestas de un pueblo que contrata un año un castillo de

fuegos artificiales muy brillante. Y efímero. Como reza el famoso verso de Cervantes: *Fuese, y no hubo nada.*

No quiero abrumar a mi auditorio con citas de muchos autores. Pero debo reforzar mis argumentos con la autoridad de algunos de los mejores maestros de nuestras disciplinas. Así Claudio Guillén publicó poco antes de su muerte, en 2005, unas páginas memorables sobre «La Literatura comparada y la crisis de las humanidades». Destaca allí la politización de las Humanidades en términos hasta hacía poco desconocidos. Se fija, por caso, en la hegemonía que habían ido adquiriendo los «Cultural Studies» en detrimento de los estudios literarios. Les achacaba un vicio de raíz: borrar la distinción entre lo popular y lo culto, o entre las manifestaciones eminentes de la creatividad humana y otras expresiones menos granadas en una escala de valor estético decantada después de milenios de cultura.

Considera, sin embargo, mucho más rica y fértil la orientación de los Estudios postcoloniales, en relación a la cual destaca con encendidos argumentos precisamente el papel de Edward W. Said, teórico y comparatista nacido en Jerusalén, educado en Líbano y El Cairo, y universitariamente formado en los Estados Unidos. Según Guillén, sus aportes están regidos por una suerte de «contrapuntal thinking» que hace justicia a las literaturas periféricas o preteridas al mismo tiempo que se considera preocupado por una concepción universalista de todas las literaturas del mundo.

Por otra parte, en su último libro Said tampoco tuvo empacho en admitir, con la credibilidad que le daba su posición privilegiada de *scholar* reconocido, que el poscolonialismo, los estudios culturales y otras disciplinas similares acabaron por desviar las humanidades de su propósito más genuino, la investigación crítica de los valores, la Historia y la libertad, para enzarzarse en disquisiciones pseudoideológicas casi siempre basadas en los supuestos problemas de la identidad. Por otra parte, se mostraba convencido de que todas las variedades de las lecturas derridadeanas conducían a la melancolía. Y proponía algo, casi como su testamento intelectual pues la muerte le llegaría prematuramente, con lo que me identifico totalmente: el regreso al modelo interpretativo de raigambre filológica. Para el logro de tal objetivo sigue siendo fundamental la lectura, cuyo ejercicio se puede enseñar y aprender. Lectura, por supuesto, «para buscar sentido» —«reading for meaning»—; lectura de textos no sólo próximos, lingüística y filosóficamente, sino también los aparentemente más alejados, para lo que resulta imprescindible la traducción como práctica cultural.

Muy al contrario, los Estudios Culturales se beneficiaron de la tierra quemada que dejó la Deconstrucción. Ni más ni menos que Joseph Hillis Miller, cuando en 1999 llega a anunciar, literalmente, que «el tiempo de los estudios literarios se ha acabado», fundamenta su apocalíptica afirmación en el hecho de que la *Literatura* es una categoría que le parece haber perdido progresivamente su especificidad en el campo indiferenciado del «discurso» cultural, de la «textualidad», de la «información» o de otras tipologías. Y su dictamen, no por más cruel resulta menos ajustado a la realidad de las cosas, cuando argumenta que la literatura está privada del poder que tendría si se diera por sentado que es una parte íntima de una única cultura homogénea dentro de la que los ciudadanos de una nación dada viven. Este destacado crítico de Yale, no oculta la responsabilidad que determinadas escuelas críticas tuvieron en esta debacle, en consonancia también con el diagnóstico, atinado pero un tanto hiperbólico, que George Steiner (7) hace de nuestra cultura académica en la que se registra el predominio escandalizante «of the secondary and the parasitic». La sombra de los Estudios Culturales resulta, en este orden, deletérea.

Quienes no hemos sucumbido ante estos cantos de sirena, y no pensamos ni por asomo hacerlo ya, tenemos la suerte de poder inspirarnos en un «pensamiento fuerte» como el que representa la Teoría de los Polisistemas. Aprovechando la rigurosa fundamentación proporcionada por la Fenomenología de Edmund Husserl —muy pronto aplicada al campo literario, entre otros, por el polaco Roman Ingarden y varios de los Formalistas rusos y checos de entreguerras—, consideramos la Literatura no solo como un hecho puramente discursivo o textual, sino como un sistema complejo, de índole comunicativa, en el que el texto creado por el escritor precisa para su constitución ontológica plena de la tarea cooperativa y hermenéutica de los lectores, todo ello en el marco de determinadas convenciones y mediaciones que la sociedad impone al proceso, y que son mudables a lo largo de la Historia.

En este sentido, es de justicia mencionar, aunque hoy pueda parecer políticamente incorrecto, la huella de un pensamiento fuerte donde los haya: el marxismo. No olvidemos el *Manifiesto comunista* de 1846, que no es un texto muy extenso, donde Marx y Engels se refieren expresamente a la emergencia de una «literatura mundial» como superestructura resultante de la nueva infraestructura representada por el también emergente mercado mundial. Con tan conspicuo antecedente, no es de extrañar que el marxismo haya servido como base doctrinal y metodológica para una sociología literaria que bien podríamos calificar precisamente de «fuerte», cuya impronta ha seguido vigente, por caso, hasta la «Empirische Literaturwissenschaft».

Supuestos como los mencionados son compartidos básicamente por varias escuelas y, en general, por la orientación pragmática de la Semiótica contemporánea. De mi formación como filólogo, iniciada en el curso académico del mayo francés, sigue vivo, como uno de los pilares de mi investigación, un interés mantenido por la textualidad, que es herencia del formalismo y el estructuralismo dominantes en el paradigma de nuestros estudios desde los años treinta hasta finales de los sesenta. Pero, igualmente, postulo que el principio fenomenológico de la experiencia en que se basa todo conocimiento viene a justificar incontestablemente que la realidad de la literatura se fundamenta en nuestra aproximación a ella como lectores. De esta interacción entre textualidad y recepción, entre inmanencia y pragmática, he querido hacer, además, un principio válido no solo para la investigación, sino también para la docencia universitaria.

Recuerdo también de los años ochenta un artículo de George Steiner publicado en el *Times Literary Supplement* en el que el humanista, preocupado por aquel teoreticismo deconstruccionista al que antes nos referíamos, concluye con una propuesta tan simple como la siguiente. No nos conviene ya más teorías, métodos o nuevas propuestas: «Lo que necesitamos son lugares: por ejemplo, una mesa con unas sillas alrededor donde podamos volver a aprender a leer, a leer juntos». En efecto, quizás el método inmediato y urgente que debe ser rescatado para nuestra labor docente sea el de la lectura: aprender a leer literariamente otra vez. Porque paradójicamente esa competencia puede que se esté perdiendo, y existe la contradicción de que, en nuestras sociedades, si profundizamos un poco bajo el oropel de la epidermis nos encontramos con que la capacidad de comprensión de los textos complejos por parte de los ciudadanos que salen del sistema educativo es cada vez menor. Y la literatura dejará de existir, al menos con la plenitud que le es consustancial, en el momento en que no contemos con individuos capaces de saber leerla desde esa complejidad de los dos códigos que la obra literaria incorpora: el código lingüístico y, sobre él, el código especial de convenciones propiamente literarias.

Paul de Man, uno de los deconstructivistas de Yale, publicaba por aquel entonces otro artículo memorable también en *TLS* en el que recordaba su experiencia del *close reading* aplicado por el profesor Brower en Harvard durante los años cincuenta. El «mero acto de leer» —escribía De Man— era capaz de transformar la actitud y competencia de los estudiantes en términos indeseables por quienes veían en la enseñanza de la literatura «un sustituto de la enseñanza de la teología, la ética, la psicología o la historia intelectual», de lo que deduce que aquella experiencia docente —y la posterior consolidación de la teoría literaria en los currículos académicos pese a las resistencias que él mismo denunció— eran procesos debidos a una raíz común: «una vuelta a la filología, a un examen de la estructura del lenguaje previa a la del significado que produce». Ideas como éstas nos hacen recordar el prólogo de Friedrich Nietzsche a sus reflexiones sobre los prejuicios morales tituladas *Aurora*. Allí incluye asimismo el filósofo alemán con un canto a la Filología, que comparte nuestro Alfonso Reyes (1942): «Filólogo quiere decir maestro en la lectura atenta».

Ya han pasado más de tres decenios desde D. W. Fokkema, en su artículo programático coetáneo de los de Pierre Swiggers no dudaba en vincular el «nuevo paradigma» de la Literatura comparada con ciertas concepciones teóricas y con investigadores concretos que las habían desarrollado o estaban haciéndolo por aquel entonces.

Entre las primeras se encuentran las siguientes. Ante todo, el abandono de la perspectiva del texto literario singular como eje de la Literatura. En su puesto debe situarse el sistema de la comunicación literaria, que integra junto al texto propiamente dicho las situaciones y determinaciones de su producción, recepción y posprocesado, con los diferentes códigos actuantes a lo largo de todo el proceso. Los aspectos supranacionales de este «Sistema literario» serían, pues, el objeto de la Literatura comparada. Para ello es preciso, según Fokkema, recurrir a métodos de análisis complementarios de los tradicionales, sobre todo en una dirección psicológica y sociológica, es decir, experimental. Hay que reconstruir las diferentes situaciones de comunicación literaria a lo largo de la Historia, y para ello es imprescindible el conocimiento de las reacciones de los lectores ante los textos, de las que se deducirán los códigos que indujeron a determinados públicos a considerar a ciertos textos como literarios y a otros no. Para ello, tales códigos deben ser, por supuesto, confrontados con códigos de otra índole. De lo que se trata es, en definitiva, de comparar sistemas literarios desde la perspectiva de los efectos que han producido y producen en sus lectores, de analizar las condiciones de la producción y la recepción de la literatura en el marco más amplio de una semiótica fundamentalmente pragmática y la Teoría de la comunicación.

Es clara la estirpe de quienes, desde hace ya noventa años, vienen contribuyendo desde la Teoría a la Literatura comparada de nuevo cuño: Jan Mukařovský, Felix Vodicka, Hans Robert Jauss, Juri Lotman, Norbert Groeben y, muy especialmente, Itamar Even-Zohar y José Lambert. Es decir, amén de los checos del Círculo de Praga, que tan bien supieron armonizar el formalismo con la consideración histórica y social de la Literatura, representantes conspicuos de escuelas como la de la «Rezeptionsästhetik» de Konstanz, la «Polysystem Theory» de Tel-Aviv, la llamada «Fenomenología crítica» de Bologna, la «Empirische Literaturwissenschaft» de Bielefeld y Siegen y, en general, como ya hemos adelantado, por la orientación pragmática de la Semiótica, atenta sobre todo a cómo los signos se relacionan con sus usuarios, lo que en Literatura es tanto como decir los autores y los lectores constituidos como tales en el ámbito de una actuación social.

En Alemania fácilmente se tendió un puente desde la Teoría de la recepción hasta la allí denominada «empirische Literaturwissenschaft», o «Teoría empírica de la Literatura» desarrollada desde principios de los años setenta del pasado siglo por el grupo NIKOL y, en especial, por Siegfried J. Schmidt. Para ellos, antes que de Literatura hay que hablar de un «LiteraturSYSTEM» [*sic*], pues la pura textualidad no es sino un aspecto limitado de lo que en realidad implica un complejo sistema social de acciones cuya estructura resulta identificable y desempeña unas funciones institucionales determinadas, entre ellas, el otorgamiento a los textos de su condición de literarios. Para Schmidt, tal y como desarrolla en su obra ya citada, la estructura del «sistema LITERATURA» comprende cuatro esferas fundamentales, la producción de los textos, la mediación a que se someten para ser difundidos, su recepción y, finalmente, su posprocesado o transformación en otros productos no literarios. Desde esta construcción teórica y desde cada una de sus esferas es evidente que se puede desarrollar una comparación que ya no sería entre literaturas sino, como Schmidt prefiere, entre «Sistemas literarios», constitutivos como partes de un todo, del Sistema universal al que nos hemos estado refiriendo desde el comienzo de nuestro capítulo.

Eso es lo que Itamar Even-Zohar ([1979] 1990) ha venido realizando explícitamente desde una visión comparatista con su «Teoría del polisistema», tarea en la que le ha secundado eficazmente desde Bélgica José Lambert ([1984] 1986). Su perspectiva es, como en Schmidt, la de la Literatura como un sistema semiótico abierto, dinámico, funcional y estratificado, que posee un destacado papel institucional. No hay mucha diferencia entre su descripción y la que hemos reseñado brevemente a partir de la «Empirische Literaturwissenschaft», aunque Even-Zohar prefiera adaptar el marco de su teoría al esquema jakobsoniano de las funciones del lenguaje. Los factores que se interrelacionan en su sistema son el productor de los textos, el consumidor, el «mercado», el «repertorio» o código, y la «institución» que viene a representar lo que el contexto en Jakobson, aunque con una significación más amplia e integradora.

La teoría de Even-Zohar permite establecer una compleja red de relaciones entre estos factores, que dependen los unos de los otros a modo de estructura, y trabaja con la ayuda de un cuadro de construcciones heurísticas tales como «textos canonizados y no canonizados», «modelos dominantes y dominados», «repertorio», «sistemas primarios y secundarios», «centro y periferia», «intra e interrelaciones», «producción, tradición e importación» y «estabilidad e inestabilidad» del sistema. De esta sucinta enumeración cabe colegir la aplicabilidad de esta teoría al estudio de la interferencia o dependencia entre polisistemas literarios, en lo que no deja de influir la ubicación de los dos investigaciones mencionados y sus equipos en ámbitos histórico-políticos —el de Israel y el de Bélgica, respectivamente— multilingüísticos y multiculturales, pues en esta última comunidad existen dos literaturas, la neerlandesa y la francesa, y el polisistema hebreo es realmente complejo, con la interferencia de varias lenguas además de la genuinamente hebrea, entre ellas el sefardí o ladino y esa creación híbrida del pueblo judío que es el yiddish. Pero también atienden, desde los mismos supuestos, a las relaciones entre sistemas literarios o artísticos y otros sistemas simbólicos, que forman parte de un macro-sistema integrador, muy próximo a formulaciones similares de la Escuela de Tartu. En especial, es de destacar la lógica atención que esta teoría presta al complejo tema de la traducción, cuya presencia entre los objetivos de la Literatura comparada es creciente de un tiempo a esta parte.

Un «sistema literario» se define, pues, como un conjunto de autores, obras y lectores relacionados por una serie de normas y modelos comunes que no coinciden directamente con los de otros sistemas. Las literaturas dejan de ofrecer así rígidos perfiles nacionales, pues sus fronteras son lábiles a causa de la mayor o menor estabilidad de los propios sistemas. En todo caso, ninguno de ellos existe aislado, pero las conexiones a través del espacio y el tiempo son, en este sentido, muy variables, y proporcionan un campo prácticamente inagotable para una investigación comparatística verdaderamente sistemática. Pero no cabe duda, como afirma Lambert, de que la existencia de literaturas estrictamente delimitadas viene a ser una quimera, puesto que la interpenetración entre ellas, lejos de ser algo excepcional, resulta simplemente inevitable.

El caso de la península ibérica es paradigmático a este respecto, con la coexistencia de cinco sistemas literarios: el portugués, el gallego, el castellano, el catalán y el euskérico. Y a raíz de los contactos establecidos entre nuestro grupo de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela a los que luego me referiré, en lengua gallega se publicaron en 2004 unas bases metodológicas para una historia comparada de las literaturas de la Península Ibérica, que dieron lugar posteriormente a dos extensos volúmenes colectivos publicados ahora en inglés, en 2010 y 2016, sobre dicha historia comparada.

A este respecto, fue sin duda fundamental la aportación teórica de Itamar Even-Zohar en el sentido de proponer, como hipótesis de trabajo, ciertas leyes para la interferencia y las relaciones literarias: que las literaturas nunca están en posición de no-contacto, que la interferencia literaria es casi siempre unilateral y que no va unida necesariamente a interferencias concomitantes de otro orden entre comunidades. La literatura-fuente lo es por razones de prestigio y dominio, y la literatura receptora acude a aquélla en busca de elementos inexistentes en su propio seno. Los contactos de los que se trata pueden establecerse entre un solo sector de ambos sistemas, y luego extenderse, o no, a otros; el repertorio de elementos importados no necesariamente mantendrá las mismas funciones que en la literatura fuente, y en general la apropiación de los mismos suele llevar emparejada su simplificación, regularización y esquematización.

Even-Zohar encuentra en la literatura hebrea un campo excelente para contrastar la aplicabilidad de estas leyes, pues a lo largo de la Historia sus relaciones de dependencia y simbiosis han apuntado hacia polos distintos; por ejemplo, en los Siglos XVIII y XIX, de Italia y Holanda pasó a Austria y Alemania y luego a Rusia. La Literatura yiddish funcionó, hasta épocas bien recientes, como «the noncanonised system of Hebrew literature». En este sentido, como Gerad Gillespie ha ponderado, en nuestro nuevo siglo la teoría de los polisistemas contribuirá a un planteamiento no maniqueo de las relaciones literarias internacionales y a la superación del anti-eurocentrismo —el «ritual of condemnation of the European contribution to human affairs»— que los multiculturalistas han venido propugnando en los últimos tiempos.

En Teoría de la Ciencia está perfectamente delimitado lo poliédrico de un objeto material de estudio según la perspectiva que se adopte en relación a él. Cuando de ese objeto material se extraen determinadas constantes o invariantes, con ellas se constituye un «objeto teórico» que es, en lo que a nosotros afecta, el eje vertebrador de la Teoría de la Literatura. Mientras tanto, el objeto material, en base a los datos empíricos que en él son perceptibles, da lugar a otras actividades especulativas, según la metodología aplicada. Concretamente, el «objeto empírico» llamado Literatura y constituido por el

conjunto de textos considerados literarios en un determinado momento, da lugar a la Crítica literaria cuando es enfocado de modo sincrónico y analítico, mientras que si es abordado diacrónicamente nos sitúa en el ámbito de la Historia literaria, y si es considerado comparativamente produce la Literatura comparada.

En nuestra concepción, la Literatura comparada es absolutamente indesligable de este panorama de la «Ciencia literaria», así denominada desde la acuñación hace ya casi un siglo de la «Literaturwissenschaft» alemana. Su marco está en esa estructura cuatripartita que tiene como objeto central la Literatura, para proyectar sobre ella cuatro impulsos diferentes que han seguido, como ya apuntamos, un claro orden de prelación cronológica: una vez que los textos están ahí, lo primero es analizarlos y valorarlos, tarea que emprende la Crítica literaria presocrática. Cumplida esta operación escudriñadora y de escrutinio sobre un corpus suficientemente amplio, se percibirán concomitancias no superficiales sino en profundidad entre varios de ellos, y entonces surgirá la chispa de la generalización y el esbozo de ciertas leyes; es decir, se produce el salto teórico. Luego, cuando se inyecta en una cultura determinada un cierto sentido histórico y, también, se empiezan a construir las unidades políticas a que denominamos nación, la Historia literaria irrumpe con fuerza en el mapa. Y por último, pero no la última en importancia, surge la Literatura comparada.

Decía Eugenio Coseriu que un buen lingüista debe ser a la vez botánico y jardinero, teórico y práctico, rastreador de datos concretos, pero atento a las invariantes que subyacen a ellos. Esto mismo ocurre con el estudio de la Literatura: tenemos que atender al poema individualizadamente, desmenuzarlo en cuanto lectores especiales que somos de ellos, pero conviene también que sepamos trascender lo que el poema es en sí, individualmente, para alcanzar una visión de conjunto que enriquecerá, en todo caso, lo que el poema significa. Pero ni la Crítica ni la Teoría se pueden desligar de la Historia literaria y de la Literatura comparada. ¿Cómo renunciar a una equilibrada, armónica y fecunda colaboración entre estos cuatro modos distintos de abordar un mismo objeto, que es la Literatura, cuando no es pertinente, sino todo lo contrario, establecer ninguna exclusión desde uno de ellos hacia los demás? Una Teoría literaria que no se base en una Crítica analítica suficientemente desarrollada será una teoría endeble; igualmente lo será si no ha abarcado con suficiente amplitud el panorama histórico. Pero la Literatura comparada, en este sentido, lo que aporta es una prueba de contraste imprescindible, al multiplicar la secuencia de la Historia en distintos ámbitos lingüísticos, que quedan así simultaneizados. Lo que la Literatura comparada en último término viene a aportar es la ratificación de las conclusiones que las otras tres ramas de la Ciencia literaria nos proporcionan. La Teoría literaria se consolida cuando sus propuestas de invariantes o leyes generales se objetivan en literaturas de varias lenguas y de diferentes culturas o tradiciones. La Historia literaria de un determinado país, de una determinada nación o de una determinada lengua, cobra su auténtico perfil de resonancia cuando la ponemos en relación con otras literaturas de lenguas distintas, y lo mismo ocurre con la Crítica literaria, que no puede afinar sus instrumentos de análisis si no cuenta el crítico con un panorama de amplitud que solo la Literatura comparada le puede servir.

Mi conferencia inaugural de este seminario bilbaíno de la International Society for Polysystem Studies se basa en los trabajos desarrollados en la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela por el equipo surgido a raíz de la constitución, en 1985, de la cátedra de Teoría de la Literatura y Literatura comparada perteneciente al Departamento de Filología Española, Teoría de la Literatura y Lingüística General adscrito a la Facultad de Filología.

En este contexto, fue fundamental el simposio titulado «La Europa de la(s) literatura(s)» que en mayo de 1993 codirigimos Claudio Guillén, a la sazón profesor visitante con nosotros, y yo mismo. Aquel encuentro contó, entre otras destacadas presencias, con las aportaciones de los profesores Hans Robert Jauss, de la Universidad de Konstanz, e Itamar Even-Zohar, de la Universidad de Tel-Aviv. Ello fortaleció sobremanera la identificación del grupo compostelano con la poderosa línea de desarrollo en el ámbito de la Ciencia de la Literatura contemporánea a la que nos venimos refiriendo.

Al año siguiente, compilé un libro colectivo que tuvo gran repercusión en España. Se titulaba *Avances en Teoría de la Literatura (Estética de la recepción, Pragmática, Teoría Empírica y Teoría de los Polisistemas)* en el que, junto a cuatro jóvenes investigadores compostelanos, y mi propia contribución, contamos con el lujo de la participación precisamente de Hans Robert Jauss e Itamar Even-Zohar. Este último empezó a colaborar entonces de manera continuada no solo con nuestro grupo, sino también con otros como el de Filología gallega de nuestra Universidad, y su magisterio puedo decir en justicia que marcó escuela en todos nosotros.

Como índice del arraigo de su pensamiento en España déjenme, para concluir, que ponga un último ejemplo.

El número 871/2 correspondiente a los meses de julio y agosto de este año de *Insula*, la más longeva (tiene ya 74 años de continuidad ininterrumpida) e influyente revista literaria española, dedica sus páginas monográficas al siguiente planteamiento: CATALUÑA: DOS SISTEMAS LITERARIOS, UNA CULTURA PLURAL. Se abre con un artículo del coordinador del número, el escritor y filólogo Jordi Amat, titulado «La complejidad del polisistema» y se cierra con una no menos interesante «Propuesta metodológica para un ecosistema literario desigual» a cargo de Jordi Gracia.

Jordi Amat parte de una obligada referencia a «los términos de Itamar Even-Zohar», para que sobre tales supuestos se aborden en los trabajos posteriores los desarrollos, confluencias y contradicciones «de dos sistemas literarios, uno en catalán y otro en castellano, que comparten espacio físico pero que son menos porosos de lo que podría parecer». Así, por ejemplo, Olívia Gassol Bellet escribe un interesante trabajo titulado «Entre la fractura y la continuidad. El sistema literario catalán durante el primer franquismo», noticioso análisis que maneja una amplia información interpretada a la luz de la teoría del polisistema. Otro de los colaboradores de este importante número monográfico, Jaume Subirana, que escribe sobre «La fiebre centenaria. Conmemoraciones literarias e institucionalización cultural en Cataluña», se inspira en el texto de Itamar Even-Zohar «La función de la literatura en la creación de las naciones de Europa» que nosotros incluimos en 1994 en el volumen ya citado de *Avances en Teoría de la Literatura*.

Por otra parte, con anterioridad a *Avances* ya había tenido yo la posibilidad de introducir en España los fundamentos de la teoría de Siegfried J. Schmidt haciendo traducir en 1991 para una importante colección especializada en Teoría Literaria que a la sazón dirigía en la Editorial Taurus de Madrid el *Grundriss der Empirische Literaturwissenschaft*.

En resumen, nuestro grupo de Santiago de Compostela se ha nutrido de todas las aportaciones mencionadas y conserva, como uno de los pilares de su investigación, un interés mantenido por la textualidad, que es herencia del formalismo y el estructuralismo dominantes en el paradigma de nuestros estudios desde los años treinta hasta finales

de los sesenta. Pero, igualmente, no dejaré de repetir que postulamos que el principio fenomenológico de la experiencia en que se basa todo conocimiento viene a justificar incontestablemente que la realidad de la literatura se fundamenta en nuestra aproximación a ella como lectores en el seno de nuestra sociedad actual. De esta interacción entre textualidad y recepción, entre inmanencia y pragmática, entre Ciencia literaria, Lingüística y Sociología, hemos querido hacer, además, un principio válido no solo para la investigación, sino también para la docencia universitaria.

Creemos participar, así, de un pensamiento fuerte en cuya sólida base van de la mano Polisistemas y Filología.

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**Polysystem Theory and
the Analysis of Institutional
and of the Political Dimensions
of Power**

Who Profit from Heritage (And Who Loose)?¹

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If we conceive of heritage, as suggested by standard definitions, as a repertoire of traits transmitted from one generation to the next, we inevitably fall into the trap of a circular conceptualization, because ‘heritage’ then simply becomes a synonym of ‘culture’ at large and thus loses its particular meaning. I therefore suggest to prefer the alternative explanation of ‘heritage,’ namely the one that conceives of it as a *selected set of traits* in a culture, ones that are explicitly ‘branded’ (or otherwise ‘marked’) as valuable and indispensable for the subsistence of a given group. In short, culture transmission as such does not become heritage unless the transmitted traits are branded to acquire symbolic values.

Branding culture traits to make them valuable assets for those who possess them has been a known practice since the dawn of history, and plausibly also a long time before that. There is a magnificent evidence to such a possible marking in pre-historical times from the archaeological site of Göbekli Tepe in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of modern-day Turkey, a Neolithic site that was in continued use between 10,000 and 8,000 BC. Although we cannot be sure about its uses, Klaus Schmidt, who discovered the site in 1996 and carried out excavations there until 2014, believed that it was used as a holy site (Schmidt, Dietrich *et al.*), and that “[d]ie Steinpfeiler stellen womöglich Ahnen, Totengeister oder Dämonen dar” (Schmidt “Als” 14)². Its continuous use, elaborate symbolism, and the lack of any relics of dwellings certainly suggests its status as inter-generational heritage site. Whether such an interpretation is solidly supported by the material findings is still a matter

1 Based on a paper delivered at the first ProPeace meeting, University of Wageningen, Wageningen (The Netherlands), January 16-20, 2017, integrating stuff from Even-Zohar 2017.

2 “The stone pillars probably represent ancestors, spirits of the dead, or demons”.

of controversy, but the idea of perpetuated heritage practices in prehistory is no longer something that is inconceivable.

By contrast, there is abundant evidence of the prominent use of heritage in historical times since the deepest antiquity in the fourth millennium BC, with the foundation of Egypt, the world's first state. It is surprising to find that prominent scholars ignore the evidence and present heritage as a novelty³. Contrary to these views, it is quite striking to find in these periods of early antiquity all of the components of heritage uses and manipulations that allegedly characterize primarily our own times. First in Egypt, but soon throughout the entire Levant, a large repertoire of traits —both material and immaterial— has been created and utilized to serve as branded features. Naturally, this repertoire included monumental buildings like pyramids and *ziggurats*, gold and precious stones, statues and stelae, furniture, chariots and horses, hanging gardens and other marvels. They all clearly served to symbolize power and gain prestige by means of assigning values that make them sought-after and indispensable goods for assuming not only a prominent position in the world system, but also actually any position at all. Since those times immemorial until our own, a set of such possessions has become a standard for being recognized as an entity in the world system. Those who have accumulated such goods naturally have better options for branding and converting them into assets. Newcomers, on the other hand, like new nations and states, must either adopt them from prior groups or invent them. New circumstances may of course make it possible to add new components to the already established set, and thus get better options for attaining such assets. Just a random example: Old Icelandic manuscripts that were scattered for centuries in various homes in Iceland without any sense of importance attached to them all of a sudden became hot goods towards the end of the eighteenth century under the vogue of European Romanticism that generated a competition for proving ancientness.

However, the material set of components has been only one way of using heritage since antiquity. The other way, and perhaps the more powerful one, has been the ideational, or immaterial, traits that are branded as valuable and become in their turn assets by which to gain prestige. Such is the self-image that rulers have been projecting as benefactors of their ruled population. This kind of projected image, diffused through verbal and visual propaganda, has been perpetuated for centuries. At least from the third millennium BC for some two thousand years onwards, this is how even the cruelest rulers often preferred to present themselves to their subjects. This rhetoric was carried out often in combination with proclaiming a strong attachment to some past, even —and perhaps mainly— when reforms were introduced rather than an actual preservation of some past traditions.

The examples for such practices are abundant, but among the highlights I would like to mention the Sumerian king Ur-Nammu (2047-2030 BC) and the Babylonian king Hammurabi (c. 1810-1750 BC), both of whom managed, each in his term, to create and maintain a large empire in Mesopotamia. In order to pacify the heterogeneous population

3 For example, Bugge believes that “the idea that such objects have a value beyond their utility and constitute a ‘heritage’ is in itself relatively new” (Bugge 62). Similarly, in Rodney Harrison’s view, “[h]eritage, and the formally staged experience of encountering the physical traces of the past in the present, has become an all-pervasive aspect of contemporary life” (Harrison 1).

whose territories they conquered, they demonstrated loyalty to local past traditions not only through verbal declarations, but more efficiently by initiating large building projects dedicated to the local gods and by maintaining practical traditions of economic measures, such as keeping up and developing the vast network of irrigation canals. The procedures taken by Hammurabi show an almost one-to-one resemblance to his predecessors. A conspicuous initiative taken by him, one that has made him famous in world history is his new Code of Law. However, with Ur-Nammu, who initiated the first known such code, the very making of a code of law has become an indispensable trait, part of the repertoire that must be followed and implemented by any ruler or group. Moreover, the act itself had to be branded as valuable in order to guarantee that it serve for gaining prestige. No ruler with some aspirations has later been able to evade the creation or adaptation of a code of law⁴. Another trait introduced by Ur-Nammu was a royal hymn. It was perhaps unprecedented but became highly popular with all of his successors and was established ever since in all repertoires of heritage (Heinz 713; see also Tinney). According to Hallo, “[...] the extent of our genre can be said to cover close to five hundred years and as many as seven different dynasties. At no time is there a certain gap of even so much as a generation between the rulers or dynasties commemorated in the genre” (Hallo “The World’s” 185).

Showing respect for the past through verbalism and impressive construction projects certainly has been instrumental for such rulers as the Egyptian pharaohs or the Mesopotamian kings for inculcating some degree of socio-cultural cohesion into the populations under their domination. As the Ur-Nammu and Hammurabi cases demonstrate, and so many similar cases in the course of the history of the Levant, persuasion became a preferred manner of interaction with a population rather than the exercise of sheer force. Ultimately, to achieve deference not by creating *fear* but by gaining *respect* has turned out to be much more profitable, not the least in terms of expenditure. It makes a lot of difference between acknowledging someone else’s superior status out of fear or out of respect. This is simply so, because respect means acting voluntarily with no coercion. The same sort of procedures served also outwardly, that is as assets that can create prestige vis-à-vis others. When in competition, each participant tries to be at least equal with the others, and possibly more respected. This kind of respect is generally referred to as “prestige”.

This sought-after prestige makes others wish to follow one’s example in adopting the same kind of traits that have given one a better status in a contemporary world system. Thus, traits that are established in one period by successful groups, like Egypt, Sumer and Babylonia are accepted as branded heritage for many ages to come. Indeed, most of the traits invented and diffused already in the Bronze and Iron Ages in the Levant are still with us (See Hallo “Origins”). Evidently, those who managed to possess those traits and control them did it for profit. Rulers and their elites were those who profited most, but one could say with due caution that in cases of true prosperity, which also meant freedom of

4 Among the most famous lawgivers, many centuries later, one can name the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, known in his own country as “The Law-Giver” (Kanunî Sultan). As much as his codex is considered a bold act in view of the sanctity of the Islamic Sharia, it should not be forgotten that Suleiman could not possibly allow himself not to follow both his father Selim I, and his great-grandfather Mehmet II, both of whom had created innovative codes.

movement and safety conveyed by law and order, larger circles also acquired some share in that profit. Nevertheless, evidence tends to indicate that those in control, that is, rulers and governance bodies in general, are more interested than the population at large in those assets that are supposed to create prestige. It seems that in both antiquity and today, the efficiency of the group's proclaimed symbolic goods may grow under conditions of clashes and conflicts, whether violent or otherwise, rather than in times of peacefulness. Contests for symbolic assets may incite normally indifferent people to take sides in a feud. A few examples may illustrate the case.

A strong commotion arose between Armenians and Turks following the Göbekli Tepe site discovery in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. Each party claimed historical possession of the discovered culture, which evidently had nothing to do with any of them. Graham Hancock reports that "many Armenians are outraged that Turkey claims this uniquely important site as its own heritage as though the ancient Armenian connection did not even exist". In a comment to a YouTube video, cited by Hancock (*ibid.*), one Armenian wrote: "Those people who built Portasar (the Armenian name of Göbekli Tepe) are here among the Armenians. Their spirits have transcended into the Armenian people of today".

A more notorious example is the case of the so-called Temple Mount in Jerusalem, which displays various strategies of utilizing heritage used by groups for gaining advantage over their opponents. These go from complete annihilation and elimination of the other's heritage to its negation by adoption, direct usurpation, or appropriation. Annihilation and elimination means that one group destroys another's heritage, both physically, politically and mentally. The ancient Assyrian and Babylonian methods of destroying conquered cities, the Roman devastation of Carthage and Jerusalem, or the Taliban's destruction of Buddha statues are just emblematic examples of collective consciousness. Similarly, Stalin's decision to flood the alleged territory of Sarkel—the medieval city of the Khazar Empire—with a new dam construction near Astrakhan was attributed to his desire to erase the memory of the Khazars, a subject sensitive to the Soviet era.

Negation, usurpation and appropriation may appear as more subtle means of elimination, but in fact they are no less radical, and perhaps even more so for the affected party. These measures are not only aimed at eliminating the heritage of the other both physically and in memory, materially and immaterially: they aspire to assume possession in place of the other. The victorious group does not destroy or erase the heritage in memory, but on the contrary adopts it by reclaiming it, while at the same time denying the rights of the previous owner. Examples: pagan heritage monuments (such as temples and other places of worship) are transformed into churches, churches are converted into mosques (such as the basilica of Jerusalem or the Hagia Sophia in Constantinople, which became a museum and recently a mosque again). Synagogues as well as mosques have been converted into churches in all parts of Spain after the expulsion of Muslims and Jews in 1492. This extends to other types of possessions, such as various instances of intellectual property. The Hebrew Bible became the property of Christian peoples, not to mention the Hebrew protagonists, such as patriarchs and prophets, who have been adopted or confiscated by various other cultures.

The sacred hill of Jerusalem, whose buildings were destroyed by the Babylonians and Romans, was partially rebuilt with a Byzantine church, which was later destroyed

but finally rebuilt in 705 AD by the Caliph al-Walid in its form of basilica to function as a mosque. It became a church with the crusades after 1099, and then rehabilitated as a mosque under Sallah ad-Din (Saladin) in 1187. Popular traditions introduced the hill as the place where the patriarch Abraham took his son Isaac to be sacrificed to his god. Islam has erased Isaac from memory and replaced him with Ishmael. A holiday has been instituted to mark the event in the collective memory, namely the Feast of the Sacrifice (īd al-adhā; عيد الأضحى). It should be noted that this is not an indigenous pre-Islamic Arab tradition, because even the format of the name shows its Greek origin rather than Arabic or even Hebrew. It was certainly meant to claim possession and consequently the symbolic value of the mount, expropriating it from the other parties involved.

In this war of possession, the double game of appropriation and substitution played its role in the treatment of names. For a long time, the hill received in Arabic the name of *Bayt al-Maqdis* ("The House of the Temple"), literal translation of the Hebrew *Bet ha-Miqdash* (בית המקדש), even giving its name to the entire city. This was later abbreviated to *Al-Quds* ("Holiness"), but recent conflicts have led Arab activists to take once more the name *Bayt al-Maqdis* to name organizations and institutions, such as The Jerusalem Center for Documentary Studies⁵. On the other hand, the current name of the mount in Arabic, i.e., "Noble Sanctuary" (*Al-Haram ash-Sharif*, الحرم الشريف), cuts all links with the original name.

This process of patrimonial usurpation and re-appropriation is still active thanks to the power of Internet diffusion used by journalists, semi-scientists and even Islamic religious authorities, who go so far as to even deny the historical existence of Judaic temples on the mount⁶.

Obviously, heritage is mobilized and exploited in the above-mentioned cases to win a symbolic but important geopolitical battle. Heritage itself is certainly neither the source nor the cause of most such conflicts.

However, when a conflict is already taking place, even in situations where the arsenal of physical measures is effective in the hands of some party, stirring emotions by the excitement of heritage always helps raising the level of commitment of the members of the groups involved. It seems that the need is even stronger and perhaps more effective when the group concerned is the weakest participant in the conflict and that symbolism can then become the last resort in the absence of other means. In such situations, even if there were no heritage resources available for such use, groups have no trouble inventing patrimonial repertoires on the spot and claiming they are old.

This use of heritage in conflict situations paradoxically helps heritage (and of course its adherents) retain its real potential or power at a time when it seems to have lost it. At least in Western countries, until recently, namely before new waves of immigration and terrorist threats, it seemed that people had become quite indifferent to heritage. It is widely

5 مركز بيت المقدس للدراسات التوثيقية (<http://www.aqsaonline.org>).

6 The arguments in this regard are very varied and typically contradictory: some deny the existence of a Judaic temple ("there is lack of material evidence"), others deny that there is a link between "the Jews of today" and "The sons of Jacob, the Israelites of old". Another argument is promoting the idea that Moses, "the founder of Judaism," had nothing to do with Jerusalem, "since he was born and died in Egypt" (according to Islamic tradition). Another argument is that even though it is true that there were Judaic temples on the mount, the Arabs of Palestine are still "older than the Jews," being "of Canaanite origins".

recognized that it is becoming less and less a tool for socio-cultural organization and increasingly a revenue-generating commodity, especially by attracting exogenous people to the group to consume it in various ways, which in the most cases are simply expressed by tourism. In short, the use of heritage to encourage conflictual behavior obviously causes damage to the groups involved, but at the same time also prevents heritage from completely losing its power to generate or maintain cohesion.

Similar kind of unexpected care and interest for goods kept in some storehouse, like art canons or museums surprisingly erupt when someone makes an attempt to change their status in that storehouse. In a recent article, my colleagues Elias Torres, Antonio Monegal and I (Even-Zohar, Torres Feijó and Monegal) dealt with attempts made in Italy, Portugal, and Brazil to remove certain canonical texts from the school curriculum. Although few people still ever read these texts nowadays, and schoolchildren do not particularly cherish them, when the mentioned measures were announced, or even hinted at, a large outcry, both learned and popular, erupted all of a sudden in those countries demanding withdrawal of the decisions. We commented that although the texts were for most people boring and hard to read, it was evidently unacceptable for them to think that they could be eliminated from the world's literary canon, where they were recognized as part and parcel of the prestigious world canon.

Ancient rulers and modern national movements have tried to persuade populations at large that branded traits can be profitable, as well as mold their collective sentiments with it. This has been at least partly successful. Nevertheless, there are strong indications that in our actual world, such symbolic capitals are losing their power in either creating in-group consensus or generating prestige that is convertible to tangible profits for an inter-group competition. Many efforts and financial resources are invested by modern nations, or larger entities like the European Union, in preserving and propagating both material and ideational traits, branding them as valuable and making them part of local and global identities to be emulated by groups and individuals. In spite of all that, when it comes to stable and established societies, what seems to take place was diagnosed more than twenty years ago by Gísli Sigurðsson in his masterpiece "Icelandic national identity: From nationalism to tourism" (1996). His study indicates that while Icelanders have become relatively indifferent to their heralded heritage, which includes volcanos, glaciers and geysers, Iceland is now flooded by tourists who deliberately come to see all those riches. Thus, as I suggested back in 2010,

[...] in established countries of the European Union, those which no longer have to legitimize their existence or justify the value of their legacies, legacy work is already often detached from identity work, serving the purpose of reinforcing the value of the assets on display for sale. When there is an abundance of objects and images, the state institutions involved with the promotion of legacies often mostly only work to facilitate the physical access to such assets (like places and monuments, books and manuscripts) or duly promote them via publications, visiting deals, or the Internet (Sigurðsson, 1996). On the other hand, for little known areas, or which need some economic injection, legacy objects and images may be dug from some imaginary or covert sources. In short, it would be justified to contend that heritage has become mostly a matter of competition about 'who has got the better goods for sale,' while for the majority of people in everyday life they carry very little meaning. [...] (Even-Zohar 36)

It would be proper to ask once more: “So who profit from heritage now?” The answer must be roughly the same: it is the ruling bodies and their elites that get the profit first in being able to negotiate status and position and gain prestige by attracting more tourism, and then by earning revenues from that industry. It cannot be contested that parts of the population at large also benefit, but other parts may begin to suffer from the touristic surplus, which have converted many sites to souvenir shops and drained normal life for the local residents. Entities like states or the European Union have learnt how to embellish this heritage commodification with a sophisticated jargon, provided by members of the educated classes, to actually initiate a new level of competition about desired assets by branding even banal tourism as motivated by high values of time-honored heritage. This is a clever strategy or a smoke screen if you wish.

In addition, *intragroup* conflicts must also be mentioned as a case where heritage generates both profits and losses. I am referring to situations where ordinary people’s ways of life are threatened not by an outside adversary but by their often democratically elected governing bodies. One of these cases is the harm done to the inhabitants of many urban neighborhoods by the authorities who decide to evacuate residents in order to perform what some researchers call “heritage-making” (heritageization, Hammami, Harvey, Smith) namely, the use of available or fabricated assets to generate financial profit conditions to the detriment of local populations. According to Hammami and Uzer,

[...] authorities select specific places and objects, and place value on them through processes of “heritageisation” [...]. Such processes often provide authorities with legitimate and moral reason to intervene in people’s daily lives [...], and construct the historic and cultural values of places and objects. This may develop into enforced urban change and result in “displacement” (Lees, Bang Shin, and López-Morales 2015), “gentrification” (Non 2016), “exclusion” (Ingram 2016), “marginalisation” (Wacquant 2007), “spatial cleansing” (Herzfeld 2006), or “alienation” of both built environment and community (Timothy and Guelke 2008). (Hammami and Uzer 1)

In this type of clash between the heritage imposed from above and the emotions of local heritage “from below”, we get evidence not only for how heritage causes damage to modern city dwellers, but also how it was executed in the past, even the most remote one, such as when building the pyramids subjected people to painful living conditions. In these cases, what is being carried out is setting one heritage against another, namely the official heritage, often fabricated or fake, against the heritage of people’s daily lives.

Conclusion

Heritage agencies always tend to present it as an indispensable component of any culture, which performs useful and positive functions to improve the quality of life of any group vis-à-vis all the others through the acquisition of prestige, which is intended to produce benefits. The fact that the insistence on the necessity of heritage inevitably leads to the creation and amplification of rivalries is often ignored, as well as the fact that these rivalries generate conflicts with detrimental results for all parties involved. It is time for heritage research to take a critical look at this complex, to admit its dangerous consequences and raise universal awareness of them.

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Polysystem Theory: A Versatile, Supra-Disciplinary Framework for the Analysis of Culture and Politics

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I came to Polysystem theory in a rather sudden and dramatic fashion. A little more than 27 years I was living and working in Santiago de Compostela, in the Galician autonomous region of Spain, when my life crossed with that of Itamar Even-Zohar and Polysystem Theory.

The official reason for my residence in that far off corner of Europe, regularly described and viewed as the end of the world —*finisterre*— during the Middle Ages, was to serve as a lecturer in English at that city’s historic university. The real reason, however, was to finish the doctoral thesis I was writing on the interplay between literature, religion and the creation of contemporary Iberian national identities in the in the most expeditious way, so as to be able jump back into the American academic job market. With a one year old child and a wife who had expressed a strong desire to, as they say in the US, “be a full-time Mom”, I was feeling a great deal of pressure. And I was full of doubts about the academic work I was doing.

I had come to Santiago from the Department of Hispanic Studies at Brown University, rated at the time as the best in the US in our field. And as is so often the case at the so-called “top” academic programs, the department was deeply enamored of itself and its traditional ways of doing business. When I proposed writing my thesis on what I was calling “catechetical” essays of national identity, produced by writers acting not so much in consonance with the desire to achieve canonical literary greatness, but rather to influence the social and political realities of their time, all hell broke loose in

the Sanhedrin of the department. The only thing that prevented my academic career from ending before it started was my thesis director, Geoffrey Ribbans' vigorous defense of my choice of subject, and perhaps as more importantly, the transdisciplinary —or perhaps more accurately— “supra”-disciplinary methods I was proposing to employ in the study. With the less than ringing endorsement of the department's seniors in my pocket, I shipped off to Santiago via a lectureship agreement we had with the Galician university, with at least certain members of that same Sanhedrin hoping and believing they had seen the last of me.

In Santiago, while daily life was good, the academic environment was, if anything, more narrowly stifling than in the US. When I would tell departmental colleagues there about my project, they would look at me quizzically and then suggest in that ever so understated but subtly authoritarian Galician way, that I seemed to be working out of the wrong department. What I was doing, they would make quite clear, was either history or politics. What it definitively was not was anything related to their beloved institution of philology.

With these doubts and others in the back of my mind I soldiered grimly on until, on a very rainy May night in 1993, I went to a talk by an apparently esteemed scholar named Itamar Even-Zohar —I had never heard of the man— who was speaking on the subject of “The Role of Literature in the Making of the Nations of Europe”. I was so enthused by what I heard, and how it gave voice to the theoretical issues I was wrestling with in my work and that few of my official mentors seemed to be interested in, that I dispensed with my usual caution in such matters and introduced myself to him. He responded to my quavering self-presentation with more with more generosity than I could have ever imagined.

Over the next few days and weeks we talked a great deal. And I can say that for the first time in my doctoral studies began to sense maybe just maybe my intuitive rejection of a reality where people unthinkingly accepted the division of the cultural world into mutually exclusive and mutually disdainful disciplinary cantons and where matters of political, social and institutional power were only obliquely discussed, if at all, was not, as I had so often feared, proof of my deep and possibly incurable intellectual alienation, but rather the starting point for a much more vigorous and deeply satisfying way of studying the marvelous manifestations of human creation all around me.

What Itamar and Polysystem gave me, and I believe everyone who takes the time to read his work, is a remarkably sturdy and enveloping, yet simultaneously supple and adaptable, frame for analyzing a very wide range of cultural manifestations. Its extraordinary versatility and usefulness are derived from a number of disarmingly simple premises. The first is its emphasis of the constructed nature of all cultural objects, including even the most supposedly granitic ones such as the nation, a presumption which, in turn, forces us to analyze in detail a wide set of elaborative processes, and from there, the people and institutions —including academics like us— that carry them out. The second is its presumption of the inherent internal dynamism of each and every —in Bourdieu's term— “cultural field”, configurations that he, ever keen to develop terms that encourage us to heighten our levels of both analytical precision and flexibility, refers to in terms of repertoires, systems, and ultimately a “system of systems”, that is, a Polysystem. The third premise, no doubt fruit of his foundational engagement with Translation Studies,

is the presumption of constant inter-repertorial and inter-systemic transfer on both the synchronic and diachronic axes of the Polysystem, a phenomenon I have come to refer to in my own work as “cultural commerce”.

In short, Itamar’s theories suggest that the task of truly understanding of any and all cultural objects—and I would add as a key component of that category, ideological movements—is, at its core, essentially relational in nature, that is, it necessarily proceeds from an analysis the often unacknowledged—but if you are actually looking for them, often surprisingly uncamouflaged—interplay between politically motivated agents of power and cultural producers within a given repertoire or system, as well as the transactions these same elites maintain with their counterparts in other provinces of the “system of systems”.

To begin to think in this way is, in a sense, to embark on a program of observational detoxification. Left to their own devices, young people have a remarkable ability to theorize—often quite accurately—about the way cultural artifacts come into being, and are circulated within society. However, after being subjected to society’s elaborate system of culture-planning rituals, especially those having to do with the allegedly transcendent realms of family, religion and nation, they begin to distrust these natural intuitions. Indeed, that is precisely the point of such regimes of power, to generate, as Itamar himself calls it, a state of proneness, which is to say a near exclusive beholdenness to narrow institutionally-generated explanations of reality among most members of the society.

Just as someone who has never observed or contemplated the workings of agriculture and animal husbandry begins to think of food as something that comes into being clean, sliced and enveloped in plastic, the student of literature trained within the stuffy walls of Europe’s statist philologies and the different but only slightly less claustrophobia-inducing derivatives that still hold sway in many parts of the US, often truly believe that textual production is overwhelmingly a matter of personal authorial inspiration, far removed for the unseemly jostling of power and politics.

The same can be said, except in still greater doses of institutionalized innocence and indolence among the general population if that is possible, when it comes to understanding the political master narratives that so heavily inform our daily lives and that, whether we like it or not, will have a great deal to do with the vital fates of our children and our grandchildren.

I will return to this in a moment.

But before I do I’d like to take yet another brief digression back to the nineties, one that I think will provide much needed context for understanding our present predicament in regard to deciphering the political discourses around us.

Earlier on, I made reference to the stubborn persistence during the first part of that decade to rigid and antiquated approaches to literary analysis in both the US and Spain. What I did not mention was that there were many other young people at places like Brown who had also begun to sense the decadence of Literary Studies as it was the still being practiced. Like me, they saw how limited its critical purview had become and had a clear sense of how rigid institutional policing of the canon worked in the service of inducing cultural and political conformity.

What separated me from the overwhelming majority of these young colleagues, however, was my absolute inability to embrace most of the solutions they were proposing, a set of tactics that I have come to group under the rubric of “symbolic assassination”. Having awoken abruptly from the long-standing idyll of literary apoliticism, where texts talked to each other through the mysterious and never defined process they and their professors liked to call intertextuality, only to discover, *mon dieu*, that there were people, usually men, who all along had been using social privilege to manage concepts of literary quality, they reacted with the tried and true subtlety of a rebellious fourteen year old by placing such people and the author’s they promoted on a social and literary blacklist.

To actually research and document the nature of the broad and necessarily interdisciplinary set of systemic relations that had given rise to these diabolical discourse managers in the past so as to better understand how their contemporary counterparts (perhaps people very much like themselves) might be operating today was, I guess, just too much work. So they did not do it. Adding insult to injury was the fact that many of the leading literary assassins of that time were not exactly humble when assessing the social transcendence of their work, alleging that their symbolic actions would, if they had not already, bring about all manner of liberatory outcomes in the day-to-day life of the population. Listening to some of their professional self-descriptions you’d be forgiven if you came to view their work as essentially indistinguishable from that of the people who tracked down and killed Nicolai and Elena Ceausescu on Christmas day 1989.

Having, at least in their minds, slain the very essence of literary evil and set us on the path, to a future that would free, as they often suggested, from confining master narratives, they now turned to the important matter of canonical substitution. Here again, the vein of adolescent reasoning was crystal clear. If the discourse managers who had, for so long, pulled the wool over our eyes by promoting their privileged and questionably talented cronies were for the most part white and male, then the key lay in finding people with non-white and non-male faces to take their place. Were they able to fill the new canon with enough people that looked like the historically downtrodden of the world, the reasoning went, people would eventually begin to think differently about the political realities that surrounded them.

What this second substitutional stage of the would-be revolution had in common with the first assassinational one outlined above was an extraordinary and I’ll say it again, infantile disdain for the relational dynamics which generate symbolic value in culture. If one wants to dramatically lessen the hegemony of, for lack of a better term “white” values upon our culture—a goal by the way, which I heartily embrace—then it is incumbent on that person to explore, understand and explain the full set of institutional webs that promote and sustain that particular view of the world. Only then can one accede to more or less realistic approximations of that cultural phenomenon. Similarly, having a black or brown face is not a guarantee *per se* of anything, never mind the possession of beliefs that challenge traditional regimes of social and political value. If one is serious about understanding the actual or potential transformational value of a given figure or, indeed, a given piece of textual production in culture then one must seek to understand the set of personal and institutional relationships that have proportioned their emergence.

While humanities faculties have, thankfully witnessed a certain retreat this wave of flimsy thinking during the last decade, the seeds planted by the academic identity warriors

in the late 80s and 90s are, unfortunately, now in riotous and profligate bloom within our mainstream organs of cultural analysis, which is to say, in the media that generate the frames through which 9 out of 10 people within the general population gain an understanding of how culture, and with it, public policy, operates.

For most people on the left, at least in the US, it is now a given that certain ethnic, racial, gender and sexual identities carry with them recognizable and predictable attitudes in regard to deployment of social power in their culture. They breezily assume, often in the wholesale absence of evidence, or worse yet, in the face of readily available contradictory proof, that the transitive theory of ethnic identity is as solid and unassailable as a building forged from reinforced concrete.

The widespread implantation of this way of thinking, with its disdain for the past and the relational networks which have always fomented cultural production has not been lost on the prime centers of power within our cultures. Indeed, every once in a while key members of the political and social elites let down their guard and publicly express their giddiness, for example the way Obama's chief of staff Rahm Emanuel did in late 2010, "They like the president, and that's all that counts". (cited in Wallsten s.d.) at being able operate in a social and political environment where facts and policies do not really matter any more and are never really scrutinized and where most everything redounds, in the end, to the matter of branding, that is, what set of associations, however fictitious and unattached to actual policies and ideas, a political figure's image-makers have been able to glue to his or her being.

Further exacerbating this dynamic is, of course, the unprecedented explosion in the amount of information available to each and every individual through the internet. As Itamar's work makes clear, elites have long sought to establish and control the parameters the crystallizing repertoires, or to put it in a slightly different way, master narratives of large socio-cultural entities such as nations. For much of human history the key to doing so lay in *restricting* the flow of information to the general populations of these entities. With the arrival of the internet and its endless flow of all manner of information, this millennial logic has been turned on its head. And again, the society's power holders have been quick, much quicker than most people, even most people who view themselves as seasoned and rigorous cultural and political analysts, have realized.

What am I talking about?

Just as the would-be academic warriors of the late 80s and 90s believed—as I have suggested—that condemning and blacklisting past literary figures—as opposed to trying to understand relational systems that led to their rise—would soon free us from the many less than appealing social elements inherent in their work, many people today innocently presume the present superabundance of information has forever curtailed elites ability to generate and impose master narratives upon the general population. What these people fail to take into account, and the power elites have been quite keen to grasp, is the enormous disorienting, and from there de-historicizing, power these daily tidal waves of information have upon most members of a culture, even among those who, in a previous generation, received top-notch training in socio-cultural analysis.

The elites realize that under conditions of widespread disorientation such as these, all one needs to do to carry the ideological day, as it were, is to create level of marginal

discursive concentration, generally through simplistic repetition of tropes in corporate media, that rises ever so slightly above the otherwise chaotic and disordered information environment in which most people live and breathe. To put it in slightly different terms, in an almost wholly liquid information environment, a little bit of repetitive “solidity” goes a very, very long way.

The contours of this strategy were laid bare for all to see in journalist Ron Suskind’s 2004 interview with a top-level Bush administration aide almost universally believed to be Karl Rove, often colloquially referred to as “Bush’s Brain”. Writes Suskind.

The aide said that guys like me were “in what we call the reality-based community,” which he defined as people who “believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality”. I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. “That’s not the way the world really works anymore,” he continued. “We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality —judiciously, as you will— we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do. (Suskind, s.n.)

The words are enlightening for a number of reasons, not the least of which is their sneering contempt for journalists, and more specifically still, the ability (or lack thereof) of those same journalists to lift their heads above the flood of informational fluff in their daily lives and identify the true institutional drivers of policy creation. It pains me to say so, but Rove’s haughty contempt for such people was, and is, completely justified.

At this point, with Rove as my backdrop, I could go on a long exposition of how, thanks to my formation in Polysystem theory and its emphasis on relational dynamics—and the consequent ability it engenders in those who adopt as a daily praxis to look beyond, or if you prefer, underneath so much of what passes for analysis of current affairs in our present circumstances— and relate how during the build-up to the Iraq war and without possessing any insider information, I was quite confidently telling anyone that would listen that no weapons of mass destruction would be found in that country and no establishment of a peaceful democracy was remotely in anyone’s plans or desires. I’ll give you a hint, rather than listening to the public speeches Bush, Powell and Condoleezza Rice were giving, I spent a lot of time reading readily available Neo-Con policy-planning documents on the web and then plotting out where the prime advocates of this policy persuasion were located within in the hierarchies of the US departments of Defense and State.

But picking on Bush is easy. Right? After all, as most intelligent Europeans seem to have understood from the beginning, Bush was simpleton being manipulated by the darkest elements of the American Deep State.

Which brings us to his smooth, polished and ostensibly intelligent African-American successor. In the lead up to the 2008 election, I was asked again and again by my European friends what I thought about the man and what I thought he would bring to my country and the world. My response was invariably the same, his presidency would, at best, transform little about the way the US goes about its business in the world and, at worst, reify and institutionalize all of the dramatic changes in the matter of perpetual war-making and drastic cutbacks in basic civil liberties implemented by Bush. I often suggested,

moreover, that if you were looking for a general template of what his time in office would look like, you should glance at the experience José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero in Spain, that is, a period of governance marked by a few largely meaningless symbolic nods to the progressive left followed by slavish fealty to the dictates of the most deeply conservative elements of the establishment.

How could I be so sure? Because rather than fixate on his blackness, and its putative guarantee of progressive instincts, or his well-crafted speeches, I looked into his past, and more specifically, who had backed his absurdly meteoric rise from Illinois state senator to presidential candidate.

It was there for all to see. As sociologist James Petras showed barely a month after his election Obama was, in effect, creation of web of very powerful financiers in centering around the figure of Chicago political boss Abner Mikvah, a group who wanted very little if anything to do with systemic transformations in the US or the world. Cosmetic change was fine, but even minimal systemic change was, owing to their exalted position in the US oligarchy, out of the question.

From the outset of his quest for the presidency Obama gave numerous and quite naked professions of his absolute allegiance and beholdenness to established centers of power. Unfortunately, a combination of people's fervent need to believe after the nightmare of the Bush years, and the press's resolute refusal to speak in terms of the structural drivers of the US political system meant that most of them went completely unnoticed, even in the country's most allegedly sophisticated circles of political analysis. But if you were watching and listening with a relationally attuned sensibility they told you all you needed to know about what was to come.

The list of these anagnoretic incidents is rather long. For the sake of simplicity, I will mention only three that occurred quite early on in his presidency and should have set people's suspicions on fire, but did not.

As you will recall George Bush began a program of completely illegal and unconstitutional wiretapping of the American populace shortly after the September 11 attacks, bullying the country's major telecommunications companies to turning over all means of private customer data. During his campaign Obama made ending these illegal practices a centerpiece of his rhetoric, promising he would vote against any measure that sought to legalize or grant immunity those who engaged in or, like the telecoms, facilitated these practices. Yet on July 9th, one month, interestingly, *after* having secured the Democratic nomination for President Obama voted for a measure that did exactly this. The press when they talked about it all, spoke about the technicalities of the senate vote, missing, as they usually do, the bigger structural story: that Obama was signaling to a CIA and the country's huge network of less well-known intelligence agencies that had spent the eight years breaking law after law that they would have absolutely nothing to fear in the way of accountability and prosecution with an Obama presidency. And thus it has been.

On November 6th, 2008, just two days after he was elected president, Obama named the aforementioned Rahm Emanuel his chief of staff. Who was he? He was and is the son of a former Irgun guerrilla who, it is has been alleged, was part of the team that assassinated Count Folke Bernadotte, the UN envoy to Palestine in 1948. Emanuel himself served as a Sar-El civil defense volunteer in Israel during the 1991 Gulf War. He entered

politics as a member of Bill Clinton's campaign and consolidated his standing as a rising star in the late 90s and early 2000s by channeling money, hugely disproportionate amount of it from Zionist contributors such as those who made up the Mikvah circle mentioned earlier, into the Democratic party's campaign coffers. To get some idea of what I am talking about, a 2016 article published in the *Jerusalem Post* set the percentage Democratic funding derived from Jewish, and thus presumably Zionist, sources at 50%. (Sharon, s.n.) several years earlier, JJ Goldberg of the Jewish newspaper *The Forward*, basing his remarks figures generated by the Center for Responsive politics, reported that at least 11 of the 14 mega-donors of the Democratic Party, which under our present system is to say the people that truly set the organization's strategic agenda, were Jewish, and presumably, as almost always the case among such donors in the US, fervently and largely unconditionally supportive almost all Israeli government policies. (Goldberg s.n.) Shortly after being named Chief of Staff, Emanuel's father was asked by a journalist at *Maariv* about his son's possible influence on the incoming president's views on the Middle East. He replied (and I quote) and said "It is clear that he will influence the president to be pro-Israel...Why would he not do it? What is he, an Arab? He will not clean the tiles in the White House." (Leibowitz Der and Schneider, s.n.)

And bear in all of the above was happening in a context where the Neo-Cons and their liberal interventionist cousins had already established an iron grip on the country's foreign policy-making apparatus under Bush, a control that Obama not only did absolutely nothing to challenge, but bent over backwards to confirm through the appointments he made in early 2009.

In light of these key bits of relational knowledge, it was hard to know whether to laugh or cry in the face of the expectations raised in the press and in so-called strategic thinking circles around Obama's "New Beginning" speech delivered in Cairo on 4 June 2009. From a structural point of view, the man's hands were completely tied. The speech, like so, so many other he has given that elevate the "feel good" quotient of the gullible, but not in any way intended to engender fundamental change was, and could only be, reasonably viewed as a "dead letter".

As you will recall the world financial system basically collapsed in the fall of 2008 just as Obama was about to accede to the presidency. It was only brought back to life through massive injections of US government money, which another way of saying, that at the outset of his term in office most of the banking institutions of the country and a good many more overseas were under the effective ownership of the citizens of the United States. Seldom in recent history has any leader had more leverage for effecting a fundamental overhaul of the machinery of national and world governance as Obama did at that moment.

On March 27, 2009, Obama called the heads of the thirteen most important banking enterprises in the country to a meeting in the White House. Referring to the occasion afterwards, Ron Suskind, said, "Walking into that meeting, these guys have not been this nervous since they were in nursery school. They're ultimately powerful, sovereign men atop their institutions, but now they know that they really could get whacked" (Kirk *et al.* s.n.).

So what happened?

Well, Obama, following the advice of his recently appointed Treasury Secretary, Tim Geithner—one of the key architects of Bush's economic policies—decided not to demand

any concessions in exchange for the massive aid they had received! According to Suskind (whose remarks are based presumably on his interviews with some of the participants at the meeting) Obama told the assembled bankers: “What we have, gentlemen, is a public relations disaster that’s turning into a political disaster. And I’m here to help”. (Kirk *et al.* s.d.).

As he had done with the CIA nine months before, Obama was not only making crystal clear that he would be no obstacle to the banker’s collective pursuit of business as usual, but that he was willing to run public relations interference for them before the country’s increasingly impoverished and restless masses.

Sadly, I could go, and on and on with similarly revealing relational vignettes about a president that so many people in the US, and seemingly even more in Europe, still want to believe is some sort of well-intentioned progressive martyr done in by dark and evil conservative forces.

But, as strange as it may sound, I really did not set out to talk about Obama. The endemic misunderstanding of his war-mongering and establishment-pleasing presidency is a mere symptom of a much larger and more important issue: our increasing inability as citizens, and more alarmingly still as well-educated ones, to read our socio-semiotic environment in anything remotely approaching a holistic and relationally-defined manner.

Of course, this crisis has numerous causative factors. I have suggested that one of the more important of these was widespread adoption in humanities faculties during the late 80s and 90s of methods that encouraged students conceive of cultural production in a rigidly, indeed childishly, monosemic and deeply ahistorical fashion. Owing to this peculiar training, these people were singularly ill-equipped to understand and interpret the contours of the information revolution that met them as they assumed their role, to borrow from Julien Benda, as society’s *clercs* in the first decades of the 21st century. And the power elites have been quick to exploit the widespread disorientation within what is really the only social group with any realistic chance of holding them to account. If you are looking for additional proof of this, just think for a moment how widely and seamlessly the terms terrorism and terrorist, which are profoundly, indeed hopelessly problematic on the semantic level have been accepted as being of wholly stable and self-evidently integral vessels of communication.

In my conversations with Itamar, I have always sensed —perhaps I am wrong— a certain reticence about going beyond the matters of literature, broadly conceived, and promoting his work as an effective tool for framing and interpreting contemporary political issues and movements. But as a classroom instructor who regularly uses it with the even more historically and semiotically-disoriented children of the already quite disoriented *clercs* alluded to above, I can say nothing else come close to matching it when it comes to effectuating the all-important, and for many of them completely new and alien, task of locating themselves and others in the ongoing rush of historical time. Yes, it helps them understand the genesis of past and present nationalist movements. But even more remarkable is its ability to help understand the workings of the sophisticated propaganda systems in which they, and indeed all of us live and work. In light of this, I think it is incumbent of those of us here today to insure that this extraordinarily powerful and versatile analytical tool is made ever more available to young people across the world in the coming years and decades.

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The Appeal of Environmentalism and Managing Marginalized Identities Between Culture Conservation and Change. Examples from Arab society in Israel¹

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As a complexity theory, Polysystem brings to the fore the transfer and transformation of cultural repertoires across spaces and times. Yet, extending this approach, complexity lies not just ‘out there’ in cultural artifacts, ideas or styles, but in how they are used by individuals and groups to fulfill social functions. In short, it lies in human *identities*. A central vector of cultural complexity is the tension between *culture conservation*—manifested in the making of heritage, or canon formation—and *culture change*—manifested in new and transforming fashions—as two interlinked dynamics of identity construction. I study how group identities are negotiated and transformed through both adhering to, or contesting existing repertoires, and brokering new ones. These interlinked dynamics, contingent on struggles for status and recognition, intensify in situations of ethnic and national tension.

Given the prominence of environmentalism as a global trend today, it provides a quintessential case for studying the diffusion and appropriation of global repertoires by local communities. I ask how adopting or resisting environmental ideas and practices serve identity struggles, and facilitate change, specifically in underprivileged groups. In the present paper, I address the multiple interpretations and uses of environmentalism as a lever of

¹ Based on a paper presented at the ProPeace final meeting, Santiago de Compostela, 11.4.2019.

identity reconstruction and social empowerment, with two brief examples from Israeli-Arab social space: 1. the popular resistance of environmental state-policy and the heritagization of harvesting wild herbs; and 2. the emerging environmental activism among women in Arab villages. The latter part is written with Taghreed Yahia-Younis (based on a joint pilot study; Sela-Sheffy and Yahia-Younis "Identity", "Identity"b). In both cases, the appeal of environmentalism lies not in providing systematic knowledge and morality, but rather in granting symbolic capital to members of the community, either through heritagization of their local tradition or through opening to global modern percepts and practices.

Culture Conservation and Social Identities

In the popular idiom, culture is often understood as, or is reduced to the idea of heritage, in the sense of "the legacy of cultural resources ... inherited from past generations" (Logan), which is attributed utmost significance as the emblem of a collective identity. Accumulation and conservation are thus understood as primary cultural mechanism². In this respect, the notion of heritage, relating to material culture, i.e., crafts, architecture, food, ceremonies, clothing, etc., is parallel to that of 'the canon' in the intellectual and literary spheres, in that both these ideas entail a historical construction of enduring elements, as metonymies of reified identity categories (Brubaker and Cooper), the significance of which become uncontested for a society (Sela-Sheffy "Canon"). Yet, being "a product of selection by society" (Logan), this notion of culture, or of collective identity, obviously conceals the diversity and dynamism, including inter-group conflicts, without which no culture exists, not even in traditional societies. Similar to the canon debate (e.g., Guillory), critical research on heritage (e.g., Harrison "Heritage") aims to problematize this notion and unveil the efforts invested, by both governmental and market forces, in establishing and inculcating consensual images of a culture through the consecration and naturalization of such (tangible and intangible) iconic elements. In quite a similar sense, 'identities' are understood as 'scarce resources' (Harrison "Identity"), the appropriation of which is at stake in inter-ethnic conflicts.

The energy invested in securing consensus and continuity is thus precisely that of unrest and dispute, and of struggles for social change. Studies of heritage industries shed light on grassroots heritagization processes, or the resilience of repressed traditions, in underprivileged settings (Hammami and Uzer), in much the same vein as studies on the canon tend to focus on peripheral, 'small', or emerging literary systems. These studies usually explore the work of dedicated individuals and agencies —the 'heritage sector', or the 'canonizers'— as well as popular trends, who are responsible for legitimization and marketing of iconic cultural images. Less attention is devoted, however, to how such canonical repertoires work for and are upheld by people in their daily lives. Especially in situations of conflicts and change, the question arises, how are persistent traditions useful for empowering the community, namely, how are they interpreted and transformed by individuals so as to provide them with legitimation of daily habits and life trajectories in their unsettled social settings?

2 'Features belonging to the culture of a particular society, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, that were created in the past and still have historical importance' (Cambridge dictionary).

Moreover, while the effect of conservation and longevity, or what Grant McCracken calls the patina system, seems self-evident in securing privileged sectors in hegemonic cultures, the ways it works for marginalized or suppressed groups may be less obvious. On the one hand, adhering to traditional lifestyles (e.g., in religious, linguistic, domestic, work-related, urban or rural, or any other sphere) and their heritagization often entail the negative effect of stagnation and social segregation, inflicting greater constraints on individuals' life opportunities and jeopardizing chances of 'progress'. Yet, such processes often develop in underprivileged social spheres as means of resistance, in reaction to imposed hegemonic cultures. There, heritage provides resources for legitimation and empowerment vis-à-vis the dominant society, where such groups are discriminated or not fully integrated. The notion of 'symbolic ethnicity', which Herbert Gans proposed with reference to immigrants' acculturation, suggests that it is precisely the retention of traditional forms of 'home cultures' (from nutrition and clothing to marital and family arrangements and social ceremonies), through which marginalized groups gain symbolic capital and are granted recognition by the society at large.

Environmentalism and Identity: Conservation vs. Change

This dual effect of culture conservation, or heritage, surfaces in many spheres of life. In recent years, I have been studying it in the context of how communities relate to the environment and to environmentalist agendas. Environmentalism, as a prism of relating to the natural surroundings, as an ideology, or a movement, is particularly relevant today, given the currently prevalent environmental popular discourse, enhanced by scientific knowledge and state regulation. Moreover, the notion of environmentalism in itself comprises the tension between conservatism and 'progress'. While, historically, it has emerged as a modern reformist trend, its values and morality are essentially conservative, in that they counter the over-exploitation of nature that comes with modern-life industrialism and excessive consumption, and advocate returning to traditional lifestyles and economy in the name of ecocentrism and sustainability.

Paradoxically, notwithstanding this global engulfing presence of the environmental repertoire, as a lifestyle or as an organized endeavor towards legal and behavioral change, its impact in everyday life of wide populations worldwide is still scant, with large sectors of society remaining indifferent if not hostile to it. The bulk of research in social psychology and public policy, proceeding from the rational action theory, fail to provide sufficient explanations for environmental nonparticipation (Kollmuss and Agyeman, Sela-Sheffy and Zaradez). In contrast, the cultural approach to social movements and to education, largely building on Bourdieu's conceptualization (Crossley, Haluza-DeLay, Polletta and Jasper 201), suggests that the key to understanding mobilization to action (or abstention thereof) lies not in systematic knowledge and rational reasoning but in the intuitive inclinations and meaning-making work that relate to culture-specific habitus and social distinction.

In this view, actors' dispositions to action and taste judgements are anchored in what Erving Goffman called 'the feel for the game', embedded in actors' self-perception, namely, in their sense of 'who we are' and 'where we socially belong'. This intuitive feeling eventually has a status dimension, in the sense of 'who we *want* to be' (Hall), and 'what is *appropriate* for people like us'. Accordingly, environmental action is seen as

a cultural option, on which actors draw for constructing their desired identities and for taking position in given social milieus as means of distinction *vis-à-vis* others (Horton, Greenbaum). Two aspects are highlighted here: First, committing oneself to environmental action entails an 'ecological habitus' (Haluza-DeLay), in the sense of internalized mental and behavioral dispositions, including the ability to transform one's lifestyle (cf. Crossley, Polletta and Jasper, Swidler). Second, such habitus-dependent cultural choices hinge on the symbolic capital (in the Bourdieusian conceptualization, cf. Wollebaek and Selle) or the dignity (in Goffman's terminology) that they provide to certain agents, granting them recognition and allowing their social ascent. Proceeding from this approach, I ask how the appeal of environmentalism or the rejection thereof, is instrumental in identity struggles in specific social contexts, and how it corresponds with the tension between culture retention and culture change that undelays these struggles.

Environmentalism and Identity in Marginalized Groups

In recent years I have been dealing with the ways environmental attitudes and practices are received as identity resources especially in situations of cultural transition or conflicts (interim summary see Sela-Sheffy and Zaradez)³. I ask how social creativity is incited by the use of environmental repertoire in ways that propel negotiations of heritage, with clashes or convergence between local traditions and global-hegemonic repertoires. This holds especially for multiple-marginalized identities, such as that of women in ethnic underprivileged groups. Studies on economic enterprises of women in rural traditional communities (e.g., Hallum-Montes, Nightingale, Radel) have revealed how these women mobilize their local knowledge, adapting and marketing it in terms of modern environmental concepts, to gain livelihood and become professional economic agents in their communities. I use this lens with regard to various community types in Israel, including traditional religious communities, to whom the modern environment sensibilities are largely alien.

A recent MA thesis I supervised (Daudi) dealt with the predispositions for or against environmentalism of women in Orthodox Jewish communities in an Israeli peripheral town. We found that while environmentalism is not typical of their cultural baggage and is not constitutive of their identity, these Orthodox women are aware of the cultural and moral capital that can be gained by mobilizing it. Although, overall, their perception of environmentalism is limited to popular commonplaces about recycling and clean surroundings, some of these women have recourse to such attitudes and practices, using them as cultural resources to mark their distinction from their peers. However, they express ambivalence regarding ways of justifying and legitimizing their quasi-environmental inclinations, wavering between drawing on traditional codes from religious inscriptions, on the one hand, and invoking a modern 'global habitus' (Illouz and John), on the other.

Along the same line, I have recently been engaged in developing a joint project (Sela-Sheffy and Yahia-Younis "Identity", "Identity"b) dedicated to similar questions, with a focus on identity and nascent environmental action among women in the Arab society in Israel.

3 *The Identity and Environmental Action LAB* (<https://www.tau.ac.il/tarbut/Maabadat-Sebiba/index-e.htm>).

Environmentalism as a Site of Identity Struggles and Heritage Reframing: A Glance at Arab Society in Israel

For many decades now, given the current socio-political situation, the Arab society in Israel has been undergoing a prolonged transition from pre-modern to modern life (Haidar, Kanaaneh and Nusair, Rabinowitz “Oriental”, “Overlooking”, Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker, Sa’ar “Economic”, Schoenfeld, Yahia-Younis). As in other social settings with similar complexities, for this society, environmental action increasingly becomes a sphere of social and political struggle, where the uses of heritage (e.g., adhering to religious and traditional practices) serve both as a tool for social resistance, and a lever for integrating and taking position in the hegemonic society. Historically, this society has evolved mainly from pre-modern rural communities, comprising land peasants (*fellahin*), who became the symbol of contemporary Palestinian society and its longstanding bond to the land. As such, their connection to the natural environment is perceived, from the outside, as profoundly dual. These local *fellahin* are identified with the natural environment, and are attributed the value of authenticity, that of possessing the local knowledge and skills required for sustainable agriculture and household. At the same time, environmental historians tend to point to the *fellahin* communities as responsible for generations-long uncontrolled exploitation of nature in their living environment, with its alleged consequences of severe desertification of the local landscape (Tal “Pollution”). This duality of environmental attitudes is still echoed today in the identity struggles of the Arab citizens.

Currently, mobilization to the modern environmental agenda in the Arab society is overall weak, with excessive unregulated waste disposal, construction and drainage, illegal hunting, uncontrolled fires, etc. To a large extent, the problem lies in state policy, namely in political and economic interests (Fish, Or Commission report, Manor, Razin), which translate into deficient infrastructures, inadequate planning and poor management of public resources, all of which are syndromes of discrimination by national-level systems. Consequently, surveys show low-level environmental literacy (i.e., knowledge and attitudes) among Arab citizens, despite efforts to increase environmental education in this society, especially among children and youth (Alkaher and Tal, Negev and Garb, Tal).

However, without ignoring all of the above reasons, identity also plays a crucial role in this situation. Environmental regulations, along other modern-state rules, are often perceived by the Arab citizens as a hostile imposition by the Israeli state, disrupting their daily life and depriving them from their natural resources, threatening their identity. Hence, refusing to adjust to the new environmental codes often comes as an expression of cultural resistance and identity perseverance.

1 Identity Through Resisting Environmental Laws

This kind of identity struggles has many manifestations, including in the realm of legal proceedings. Environmental legislation was hardly on the agenda of the Israeli legal system upon the foundation of the state (1948) and during its first decades (Tal “Pollution”). It was not before the mid-1960s, with the establishment of the *Israel Nature Authority* (1964; later to become *Israel Nature and Parks Authority*), that the first environmental laws were passed by the Israeli parliament. This legal action was preceded by a decades-long proto-

environmental activism in pre- and early-state period, led by local Jewish scientists, teachers, and settlers in rural frontiers (Sela-Sheffy “Settlers”, “Naturalists”). All these actors propelled a grassroots nature-protection movement, imbued with Hebrew nationalism and inspired by the construction of a modern Hebrew culture, later to be embraced by the state apparatus. At the beginning, Israeli environmental laws (based in part on the pre-state British Mandate regulations) were limited to creating nature reserves and protecting the local flora and fauna from hunting, fishing and picking wildflowers. The implementation of these rules triggered conflicts with the native Arab villagers who live next to the declared reserves, which very often interfere with their own areas of livelihood, namely, with their traditional habits of grazing, hunting, woodcutting and harvesting in the wild. Many of these villagers ignored—and still do—these nature-protecting laws, or violate them knowingly.

One prominent example, among many, is the popular struggle against the prohibition of harvesting and trading wild herbs (Agbaria), mainly Wild Thyme (Za’tar in Arabic), Gundelia (‘Akkoub) and Sage/Salvia (Maramia). These herbs, which grow in the wild all over the country, have traditionally served as elementary components of the local Arab peasants’ nutrition. As such, they (mainly Za’tar and Sage) have later also been adopted by the Jewish population and domesticated as common spice plants. This exchange of culinary taste has growingly been politicized, intensifying a cultural tension through massive heritagization of the herbs by both parties. On the Jewish part, attempts to hebraicize the Arabic Za’tar in particular have been made, by evoking its Hebrew biblical origins (*Ezob* in Hebrew; Hyssop in English from Greek ὑσσώπος). While this trend has promoted the value of Za’tar for the Jewish society—first in the gastronomic market then in the environmental scene—for the native Arab population it has signified an abuse of their own material and cultural resources (cf. Hirsh discussion of similar tensions revolving around the symbolic ownership of Hummus).

This intercultural struggle has meanwhile gained stronger momentum, including through official measures. When the law of protecting wild flowers was passed in 1965, the abovementioned herbs were not on the list of protected plants. Their inclusion in this list occurred only later, during the 1990s, at which point this act was officially justified by Israeli authorities in the spirit of the then growing environmental concern about preserving biological diversity and securing environmental justice (Furst). From the perspective of the Arab citizens, however, the restrictions on their habitual uses of these herbs have been experienced as harassment (Agbaria). Many of them continue harvesting Za’tar and other traditional herbs, for private and commercial purposes, even despite legal sanctions. Incidences of Arab citizens breaking this prohibition, and efforts to enforce the law on them, are frequently reported. All this illustrate how environmental ethics, differently interpreted and evaluated, fuels national-identity conflicts, where delegitimizing traditional agricultural routines and tagging them as criminal records trigger intensified heritagization of these routines.

According to Agbaria and other sources, in recent decade, dozens of law cases were filed against Arab citizens, dealing with harvesting Za’tar and other protected herbs. When these people are taken to court, they claim defense in the name of their traditional lifestyle, in which Za’tar is their bread and butter, “an essential ingredient in any Palestinian cuisine” (Agbaria 503, *my translation*). This, on the grounds that “It symbolizes simplicity and basic

life, and its existence is almost self-evident, even in situations of poverty and deprivation” (ibid.). The heritagization of these herbs as identity resources is growingly endorsed by the intellectual discourse. Za’tar in particular is crowned in contemporary Palestinian poetry and prose as a local gastronomic heritage, symbolizing Palestinian identity. Agbaria cites Edward Said in a conversation with Salman Rushdi (1995) ‘about the Palestinian identity’, recounting an episode with a Palestinian friend:

In the morning we had breakfast, which included yogurt cheese with a special herb, Za’tar. This combination probably exists all over the Arab world, and certainly in Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon. But my friend said: ‘There, you see. It’s a sign of a Palestinian home that has Za’tar in it. (Said, cited in Agbaria 502).

Similar sources use Za’tar as a metonymy of the people’s intimate link to nature, their tenacity, resilience, and durable presence in the land, all of which are encapsulated in the notion of ‘*baladi*’, meaning ‘authentically coming from the land’, pertaining to rural life. So much so, that Za’tar has become a symbol of the Palestinian struggle for national self-determination. An iconic expression of the heritagization of this herb in this sense is coined by Mahmoud Darwish’s poem *Ahmad Al-Za’tar* (1977), written in the aftermath of a massacre by Christina militias in Al- Za’tar, the Palestinian refugee camp, during the Lebanese Civil War, after months-long siege of the camp:

For two hands, of stone and of thyme | I dedicate this song... For Ahmad, forgotten between two butterflies... | And Ahmad | Between two bullets was the exile of the sea | A camp grows and gives birth to fighters and to thyme... | He seeks an identity... | I am Ahmad the Arab, he said | I am the bullets, the oranges and the memory... (translated by Tania Nasir)

Many of the Arab Israeli citizens avoid actively violating the law, but they still share the feeling that these herbs are essential and irreplaceable. They usually grow these herbs in private gardens for private consumption, yet they insist that herbs that grow in gardens are ‘not the same’, never gaining the same flavor and aroma of those that grow in the wild. The fight over the Za’tar thus provides a concrete site, one of many, where the two environment-related national narratives clash and become increasingly politicized. These are: the environmental sentiments and morality, inspired by global trends and associated with Hebrew nationalism, on the one hand, and the heritagization of native Palestinian agricultural and culinary tradition, as an authentic expression of sustainability and intimate relations with the natural surroundings, on the other.

2 Identity Through Emerging Environmental Action

[This part is based on proposals and reports jointly written with Dr. Taghreed Yahia-Younis (“Identity”, “Identity”b), the Unit of Culture Research and the Program of Women & Gender Studies, Tel Aviv University].

At the same time, recognition of environmental agendas and global discourse is also rising in the Arab society, albeit from the margins. This trend is visible especially among women, who experience most intensively the conflicts and transitions between

traditional and modern cultural repertoires which their society undergo (Yahia-Younis “Space”, “Religion”). While the women are still largely subject to patriarchal traditional life arrangements, they are also growingly exposed, by virtue of state regulation, to new possibilities in education and civil rights. Between the two power structures, both as gendered subjects in their local communities and as members of an ethnic minority within the state context, greater opportunities are open for these women to act as agents of change (Abu-Rabia-Queder and Weiner-Levy, Herzog “A space”, Kandiyoti, Sa’ar “Contradictory”, “Economic”, Yahia-Younis “Politics”, “Space”). As Yahia-Younis has shown, the complexity of these women’s expanding roles and opportunities encompass both obtaining more rights and actively participating in public life, and introducing to their communities new life options that translate in real resources (such as occupation, livelihood and welfare).

Within this socio-cultural situation, in recent years, pro-environmental activities have been burgeoning by small groups of women in Arab villages throughout the country. The scope and implications of these activities have yet hardly been studied (in Israel even less than in other Arab societies; see however, Mataney 2015. For discussion of similar processes in other Arab settings see e.g., Abboud, Mangunjaya and McKay, Mostafa, Sowers). Our proposed project (Sela-Sheffy and Yahia-Younis “Identity”, “Identity”b) is thus the first attempt to trace this process in Israel and inquire if and how it works as a vehicle of identity negotiation and a channels of change for these women and their communities.

AN OUTLINE OF A PILOT STUDY

In the traditional conceptions of feminine social roles (Siltanen and Stanworth), women in the local Arab communities are assigned responsibility in the domestic and child-education spheres, as opposed to the public, political-intellectual ones. We therefore assume that their potential to stimulate change lies mainly in their role as coordinators of daily conduct (e.g., in consumption habits, hygiene, nutrition, household routines, waste disposal and recycling, gardening, etc.; cf. Mataney) —all of which is defined as the target of a ‘pro-environmental’ behavioral change. Namely, we assume that embracing the environmental agenda potentially offers the women a channel of empowerment, in twofold ways— by granting them both greater independence and visibility, through growing participation in social networking and activism, and greater agency, through introducing new life options to their immediate communities (in the realm of work, pastime, family planning, etc.).

With this assumption, our study set out to examine the meanings and intensions invested in pro-environmental practices by Arab women in two groups that are engaged in related activities in two Arab large villages: *Kafr Qasim* and *Jatt*. Both villages are located in the area known as ‘The Triangle’, a concentration of Arab villages and towns adjacent to the Green Line in Israel’s central district. Comprising large semi-urban communities (holding over 20,000 and 13,000 inhabitants (in 2018), respectively), predominantly Muslim, these two villages have gained the official status of independent municipalities. Both municipalities are ranked low on Israel’s socio-economic scale (on the third or fourth level, on a scale of 10, respectively).

The women group in *Kafr Qasim*, operating uninterruptedly for over 10 years, is one of the oldest of its kind among the Arab communities in Israel. It holds 30 women, aged

between 30 and 60, most of whom are mothers of children in a local elementary school (*Al-Zahra*), which serves a relatively weak population (including Bedouins and foreigners). This group has been organized with the assistance of a national-level corporate (*Derech Eretz Operator-Highway 6*)⁴, and with the constant support of the school principal, a young, educated and aspiring man. This principal has been investing considerably in school environmental projects as part of his continuous efforts to advance the status of this school and create a ‘progressive educational environment’⁵, which efforts have already been awarded commendation marks and prizes, including the ‘Green School’ label by the Ministry of education. The women get together once a week for joint activities instructed by one of the school teachers. Their meetings are devoted to environmental-related and sustainability practices, defined in the broadest sense, from composting or traditional crafts, to photography and documentation (the focus subject changes every year).

The group in *Jatt* has been operating for about five years (by 2018). Following its activity, similar other women-groups have burgeoned in the village. The initial core group comprises 28 women of diverse backgrounds. It started as a group of welfare recipients organized by *the Green Network*⁶, one of the major environmental NGOs in the country, with the provision of the municipal social work department. This group was later joined by middle-class women, many of whom with education, employment, and income. From the beginning, the group has also been supported by the head of the Environment Division at *Jatt* municipality, who declares enthusiastic commitment to promoting environmental projects in the village, as a way of advancing this village’s image as a modern educated community. The women’s weekly meetings focus on working in an ecological garden they have created, which has been the group’s constitutive and main project to date. The carefully tended garden serves the women a site of social networking and exchanging knowledge, including expanding to other subjects beyond gardening. Apart from working in the garden, the women host there external social activities, especially those related to outdoor kindergarten programs. Occasionally they also develop private entrepreneurial projects, such as catering services.

We have conducted long in-depth personal interviews with a total of 30 women, 15 women in each group. Each interview lasted ca 90 minutes and was carefully transcribed. The language of the interview hinged on the linguistic choice of the interviewees. Without elaborating on the complex linguistic situation of the participants, suffice is to say that most of them were educated or semi-educated women with average-level to good command of Hebrew, which they regularly use in public-sphere interactions

4 *Highways Management Corporation*, the operator of the cross-Israel Highway 6, the first and only toll highway in Israel, which declares commitment to “reducing the environmental consequences and maintaining the principles of sustainable development of the transportation infrastructure out of responsibility, transparency and fairness that form the basis of our activities. We place great emphasis on the environmental and scenic aspects of the road”; <https://derechetz.org.il/en/about-derech-eretz> (my translation).

5 From the school website: “Pedagogical principle: Cultivating intrinsic motivation and taking responsibility will lead to optimal utilization of future abilities and achievements. Expertise: 1. Building learning environments that break boundaries, time, place and content ... 2. Planning and implementing learning processes in which each student is personally responsible for the collective production”; <https://sites.google.com/site/zahraaqasemebtadae/home/klmte-almdyr/hwl-almdrste>; (my translation).

6 A national-level organization, dedicated to “Education for Sustainable Development”; <https://www.reshteyeruka.net/home-en/>

(with service givers, professionals, etc.). Few of the older participants in our study can speak only vernacular Arabic, the spoken language of their communities, and among them several are illiterate. Given the participants' abilities and preferences, over two thirds of the interviews were conducted in vernacular Arabic. This was accomplished by Siham Wakid (a doctoral student at the TAU School of Cultural Studies), a native Arabic speaker, who was also responsible for the transcriptions of these interviews, as well as for their translation into Hebrew. All the other interviews were conducted and transcribed in Hebrew – by Idit Alhasid (a doctoral student at the TAU School of Environmental Studies), and partly by Dr. Yahia-Younis and myself. In addition, we interviewed four functionaries in the relevant communities, who have been personally involved in organizing and promoting these groups, acting as intermediaries between the authorities and the women, mediating to them environmental approaches and action models. These external agents include the school master and a teacher at *Al-Zahra*, who continuously work with the *Kafr Qasim* group, as well as the head of the Environment Division at *Jatt*, and a representative of the *Green Network* who accompany the local group, both enthusiastic proponents of environmental projects in this village.

Let me briefly summarize two main points that emerge from our preliminary analysis of the materials:

(1) Overall, the women in these groups do not possess consistent environmental knowledge and concepts, nor do they abide by or strive to construct a systematic environmental program. In describing their group activities and their motivation to participate, they highlight other personal and social concerns than purely environmental ones. For them, mobilization to this activity is mainly understood as a societal event. "There's nothing else in our village, [so] it is good that the women in the village have found this place [the ecological garden in *Jatt*] to meet"⁷ says Fatma⁸, "I went [to the garden], and I liked it. All the women there are my age, they are quiet". And a women in *Kafr Qasim* says: "... my neighbor participated in the activity a few years earlier. She told me about their activities, how much fun it was and how they would organize ... I connected to the idea and wanted to participate and try it for myself" (interview with Shahira). Above all, Shahira, like Fatma and all the other women, expand on the sense of self-worth and pride they gain from participating in these group, as active citizens contributing to their community, especially in the child-educational context:

We wanted to dedicate something to the [*Al-Zahra*] school as a sign of appreciation on our part, because they taught many generations of children there, our children studied there... [the school arrange ceremonies, and] they come with the mayor, and we see that there is pride in the school, which means that there is great appreciation of the school on the part of the other schools, it is famous for this [environmental activity], and it is our duty to contribute.

Few of the women are more aware of demonstrating familiarity with environmental vocabulary and morality. These, however, seldom exceed the commonsensical concepts that are publicly propagated and are reducible to domestic codes, such as healthy nutrition, cleanliness or recycling (cf. Daudi, Mark *et al.*, Zaradez, Sela-Sheffy and Tal). Consequently,

7 All English translations of the interview segments (from Hebrew transcripts) are mine.

8 All women's name are pseudonyms.

their idea of sustainability is basically interpreted as intimate knowledge of the natural surroundings, and as operating pre-modern agriculture and domestic manufacture based on plants. Not very different from other social sectors in Israel and elsewhere, for most of the women in this study, the conceptual and moral system of environmentalism remains quite obscure. All in all, their accounts imply a passive and partial reception of modern self-empowering discourse, mediated by the external agents on whom they rely as professional instructors, especially with regard to specific environmental tasks (i.e., composting, documenting, etc.; as opposed to the women's own initiatives, such as domestic herb perfume products, catering services, etc.) Amal of *Kafr Qasim* says:

I have loved coming and cooperating with the teachers... We have benefited from it and learned things related to us as mothers. In the first two years, we learned about agriculture. I loved this topic. Today I grow all kinds of trees at home. In the past I knew nothing about agriculture and herbs.

(2) In accordance with the above, the symbolic capital the women potentially gain from their group activities draws on conflicting resources, wavering between aspiring to progressive lifestyle and invoking old local traditions. This duality, where the two processes reinforce each other, intensifies the potential of empowerment offered to the women who engage in such activities.

All in all, the women understand their participation in the group as a channel of change. They often describe their activities as opening new horizons, with the access to a global repertoire expanding their chances of mobility and status (cf. Dolby; also Sela-Sheffy "Settlers"). This holds mainly for the more educated and eloquent women among the interviewees, who assume the position of the groups' leaders and spokespersons, those who feel more at home with the learned vocabulary and social-justice terminology inculcated by the environmental NGOs and the other intermediaries with whom they maintain more direct contacts. These women often use the discourse of emancipation from their domestic restrictions and of women's social roles and social solidarity.

For Basma, as for the others, engaging in environment-related activities means above all fulfilling educational responsibility for future generations. She insists, more than once, on the need to "educate [the kids about] the environment and teach them about things that are in their environment... It is very important to teach the children. The child must know and recognize the plants and their colors", she says. Basma's identification with her educational role and the significance she attributes to it as an identity resource transpires from the emotionality invested in her talk about it:

They have started bringing in here [the environmental garden] kindergarten children and teaching them about agriculture. How can it be?! Look at these kids, some of them can't even tell the difference between a mint root and a tree root! [Am I] right or not?

'Going green' thus simulates for these women a progress in their education and occupational possibilities, entailing a transformation of their personal identity. Amal recounts her own educational progress and personal transformation throughout her ten years of activity. Talking in the name of her colleagues in the group, she switches unintentionally between a "we" and an "I" talk:

At first we would come and make food, for example, we would come and make cakes, ... for the school's guests. Then things developed; the [school] principal discussed the issue with [the abovementioned NGO] ... and then they told us 'come along, you, the mothers... those of you who want to join and volunteer'.... Now, things started as learning; they would teach us; [so that] we no longer just got there to do things for the guests, but rather, we benefited from it. At first, I used to be [a housewife] at home... my children would go to school and I would stay at home, never going out, nothing. [But] after I started visiting here and attending courses here, I felt how my personality got stronger, and I gained a personality that could meet people and see the world and go out. I got to know new friends, new mothers, new teachers.

At the same time, all the women make a point of attributing commonsensical values of environmentalism to their traditional lifestyle, to show that 'environmental mentality' is deeply rooted in their social identity, implying that "this is what we have always done, now it is called 'environmentalism' (Siham citing her mother). Accordingly, they present their willing to participate in the group and their ability to perform the related tasks as inscribed in their local knowledge and traditional lifestyles (Abu-Lughod). Amal, like the others, draws legitimation and credibility precisely from demonstrating command of and commitment to such enduring elements of their community heritage, mobilizing them to advancing new, modern practices:

There are herbs that today [are used for] producing medicines. Today I grow them at home and produce from them anti-cold medicines, [medicines] for ear infections, ... In one of the years [of our activity] we learned how to produce from these plants hair oils, face peeling creams, sun-block facial creams...

Rola's account is very similar in building her progressive identity on reframing environment-related traditional knowledge by modern entrepreneurial concepts:

The goal was [to learn] how to create body-lotion from nature, how to make soap, how to make medicines from natural herbs, and then we developed ideas ... We shared the knowledge we have about the wild plants, about the soap industry, and together we developed new ideas" (interview with Rola, *Jatt*).

By Way of a Conclusion

The response to environmentalism in Arab society in Israel, and specifically among women, is discussed here as an illustration of how trends of culture conservation and change develop and interact at the service of complex identity struggles in a given social space. I proceed from the view that, rather than systematic knowledge and rational attitudes, or well-defined goals, what disposes actors to environmental (or any other) cultural repertoire is an intuitive feeling of how it fits their self-perception and sense of belonging in certain social contexts, under specific status-related constraints. Identity is understood here as an ongoing personal and group process of attributing meaning to available cultural resources, sanctioning and canonizing them, or transforming their function. Given the prevalence of environmentalism today (as a discourse, an ideology and a lifestyle), it serves a powerful example of how global and local cultural repertoires

are negotiated by members of a community, labelled and re-labelled, in the process of identity reconstruction, especially in situations of conflicts and transition. In other words, 'going green', and the values and implications of ecological percepts, all these are identity dependent (Sela-Sheffy and Zaradez).

I used the two vignettes described above to inquire into how environmentalism is received or rejected by Arab citizens in Israel, either as a modern global repertoire or as pertaining to their local traditions, thereby serving as multiple identity resources for specific underprivileged communities. The former vignette, citing former studies, shows how modern environmental state legislation, inspired by a global trend and embraced by the national Hebrew culture, is resisted by local Arab communities as hostile imposition jeopardizing their livelihood and suppressing their identity. This case illustrates how environmentalism works differently for building national narratives, fueling the Hebrew-Arab conflict. Thereby it accelerates the heritagization of wild herbs and the associated harvesting habits as symbols of Palestinian identity and lifestyle, enhancing their consecration as a manifestation of authentic and intimate relatedness to the natural environment.

In the latter case, a different dynamics is revealed by preliminary analysis of our pilot study. The women in the two villages recognize the symbolic profits associated with modern, global-oriented pro-environmental attitudes and practices, which eventually have infiltrated into their social space. They are able to capitalize on these attitudes and practices as empowering resources, to achieve social goals and improve their position in their own communities. This finding should be further reviewed and fine-tuned through careful analysis that takes into account cultural and demographic differences between the women, relating to their social and personal life (age, religion, marital situation, education, occupation, etc.). Overall, however, it is safe to say that their participation in these groups entails sharing the discourse of emancipation through environmental action. Still, these women's discourse reveals that, while they connect environmentalism with women empowerment and progress, their understanding of their environmental-oriented activities is vague and constrained, showing ambivalence regarding modern global repertoires, and allocating primacy to local heritage as a means of legitimation (Sela-Sheffy and Yahia-Younis "Identity", "Identity"b). It turns out that for the women, the appeal of environmentalism lies in the 'balanced change' it allows, through embracing elements of global modernism, and legitimating them as pertaining to traditional lifestyle and local heritage.

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The Covid-19 Crisis and the Emergence of Digital Ultra-Liberalism. An Approach to Republicanism From Polysystem Theory

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Using a supra-disciplinary approach derived from Polysystem Theory, this article explores the way in which the global management of the coronavirus crisis is completely modifying citizens' relationship to both science and the public sphere of life, two social spaces that are fundamental to the survival of modern democratic republicanism¹. More specifically, I analyze how science and the public sphere have been subjected during the last year to the epistemic authoritarianism of algorithms and mathematical models. This covert epistemic dictatorship aims to naturalize the emergence of a new rationality that, in the name of a digital-algorithmic conception of truth, completely transforms our conceptions of the *res publica*, and gives rise to a new political regime that we can call digital ultra-liberalism.

Inspired by the ideology of trans-humanism and technological singularity, digital ultra-liberalism imposes on us an the idea that the evolution of the digital revolution is not subject to discussion or to republican control, but rather an inevitable destiny for the humanity. Just as capitalism defended the undemocratic idea of the free market as the only human destiny for *homo sapiens* —what differentiated barbarism from civilization—, digital ultra-liberalism paves the way for digital revolution by pretending that technological innovation is not a political phenomenon and is thus not subject to a public scrutiny but

1 For a definition of supra-disciplinary vid. in this same volume Harrington's "Polysystem Theory: A Versatile, Supra-Disciplinary Framework for the Analysis of Culture and Politics".

rather a providential destiny before which we only have two possible options: adapt to it or disappear.

In this new state of affairs a scientist and authoritarian conception of science arises that hides the institutional and political dimension of scientific practice. This new idea of science completely modifies the edifice of knowledge and turns it into a public spectacle in which, in the name of algorithm and mathematical models, exact sciences are considered as a default scientific frame and a paradigm of “the science”, to the detriment of other sciences. In fact, we can observe that during the current coronavirus crisis, an applied science such as medicine is being controlled from epistemic postulates of exact and experimental sciences, such as physics. The objective of this epistemic misrepresentation is to produce a new conception of truth that is opaque to scrutiny and allows to eliminate all discussion from the public sphere by creating the sensation that the measures imposed on the population are unquestionable and are the only existing ones.

In parallel to this epistemic modification, an informational terror regime is imposed that transforms the public sphere into a puritan space organized on the basis of the aforementioned digital-algorithmic conception of truth. All epistemic pluralism is subjected to a hierarchical-authoritarian conception of truth at the service of the great world political and digital powers, as shown by the recent censorship carried out by Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. In this new paradigm of information censorship, the biggest attack on the public sphere is the one carried out through news verification agencies like *Maldita* or *Newtral* that are integrated into the *International Fact-Checking Network*, an information surveillance network directly linked to the great world powers. Thus, the paradoxical situation arises in which, with the excuse of combating the so-called *fake news*, the public sphere is almost completely erased and a totalitarian power of control is given to the global governance and media structures that have always been the main producers of false information.

This transformation of the ideas of science and the public sphere has been brewing for almost two decades in line with a non-democratic conception of the digital revolution. Today this authoritarian agenda is driven by world governance institutions that are committed to the Fourth Industrial Revolution (what I call here “digital ultra-liberalism”) such as the WHO, the World Economic Forum or the OECD. The elimination of dissent in the name of an unquestionable truth that this new digital totalitarianism promotes is, in reality, an inherent necessity of our post-capitalist world. This new political regime does not need to rely on a rhetoric of freedom just as classic, Fordist or neoliberal capitalism did. On the contrary, it needs to devalue the idea of freedom by fostering a providential and unidirectional conception of truth. Freedom is thus substituted by security despite the fact that any conception of freedom is, in reality, based on the existence of material and legal security that ensures the maintenance of the living conditions of citizens.

It should not surprise us, therefore, that the institutions of world governance are carrying out a bewildering change of symbolic repertoires on the basis of which to justify their policies and promote a world government. Instead of using a neo-liberal argument that places a hypothetical freedom of the market and individual freedom above the legitimate interests of the *res publica*, these institutions now defend supposedly progressive and republican principles that they themselves place above the interests of the individual citizens. This step from the liberal defense of the individual as the principle of all human ethics to the attack on the individual as an embodiment of anti-republican and anti-human

principles reveals a whole series of conceptual distortions and systemic tensions in the capitalist anthropological discourse that gives rise to the current period of digital ultra-liberalism.

The pseudo-ethical discourse about social responsibility, with which it is intended that citizens accept arbitrary measures that threaten their life and interests without discussion, is part of this conceptual metamorphosis. Polysystem theory allows us to identify these conceptual transformations, showing that they are in fact not an ethical innovation, but a reworking of the controversial repertoire of moral categories typical of the capitalist-enlightened world. By claiming an ethical and civic category of prudence, belonging to the modern republican sphere prior to the Enlightenment, and revealing how prudence is replaced by pseudo-ethical categories of responsibility and empathy, proper to capitalist-enlightened moral repertoire, this article shows that responsibility and empathy are concepts that are deeply embedded in the historical transformation of modern capitalism. The way the global capitalist regime of digital ultra-liberalism creates a new type of feudal-digital subjectivity is by presenting these two concepts —responsibility and empathy— as proper to human nature, apolitical and inevitable, while disguising their providential and imperial character of a cultural-moral frame necessary to manufacture consent to the mandates of the great structures of world governance. In this new context, anyone who disagrees with the imposed measures is automatically transformed from an exemplary citizen of the republic to an agent tagged as dangerous to the maintenance of the new political order.

1. The COVID-19 Crisis and the Emergence of Post-Liberal Fascism

1.1. The Myth of Covid-Denialism and the Authoritarian Politicization of Science

The expression “Covid denier” obscures two important anti-democratic realities of the Covid-19 crisis. First, that the mainstream media is actively censoring the criticisms and warnings that an important part of the scientific community has been issuing since March 2020 about the ineffectiveness and destructiveness of the draconian policies instituted by the WHO and governments across the world to control and/ or eradicate the virus. Second, that these propaganda strategies that impede scientific and political debate in the public sphere are inherently fascist because they divide society into “Friends of Humanity” (who abide by the measures without discussion), and Enemies of Humanity” (who dare to question them), including among the latter average citizens and world-renowned scientists and intellectuals.

In this current climate of elimination of all dissent, terms such as “Covid denier” or “flat-earther” are being used inversely to their historical meaning to discredit all those who challenge in the name of science, like Galileo in his day, the totalitarianism imposed by the current Covidian technocratic terror. Let us not forget that the authors of most of the ideas attributed to Covid denialism (criticism of the usage of PCR with 40ct., questioning of lockdowns or of the widespread mask mandates, defense of the herd immunity strategy and so on) are three world-renowned epidemiologists who criticize the unscientific and destructive nature of official anti-covid-19 policies promoted by the WHO: Martin Kulldorf (Harvard University), Sunetra Gupta (Oxford University) and Jay Bhattacharya (Stanford

University). After censorship in the media, these epidemiologists decided in October 2020 to sign, together with forty-four world-renowned medical authorities—including Michel Levitt, Nobel laureate in Chemistry in 2013—the so-called Great Barrington Declaration (Kulldorf *et al.*, “Great Barrington Declaration”)

The authors of this statement claim that lockdowns and contact tracing strategy represent the greatest attack on the working class since the times of segregation and the Vietnam War and advocate for a focused protection approach aimed at achieving herd immunity (Kulldorf *et al.*, “Our Covid-19 Plan...”). Although strategies to control covid-19 partially similar to those proposed by this model, such as that of Sweden or Mexico, have achieved better outcome than those used in Spain, experiences such as that of Florida (whose advisor is Martin Kulldorf, one of the promoters of the Great Barrington Declaration) show that the commitment to focused protection that does not harass the healthy population with confinements, curfews or generalized use of masks, is the most successful and the one with the greatest scientific basis. We must not dismiss, therefore, the damage caused by the obsession of Spanish authorities to indiscriminately control the healthy population, leaving the vulnerable population unprotected. According to a study recently published by John Ioannidis in the *British Medical Journal*, Spain had the highest rate of covid-19 infections in nursing homes in the world: that is, Spain applied a strategy of “inverse protection” proving to be the country that has failed the most in what should be its main objective, protect the vulnerable.

But how is it possible that strategies like the one proposed in the Great Barrington Declaration by some of the world’s most renowned epidemiologists are not discussed in the public sphere? How are not subjected to analysis studies such as the one published in January 2021 by Eran Bendavid, Jay Bhattacharya and others in the *European Journal of Clinical Investigation*, which affirms, after examining the case of ten countries—including Spain—that confinements, curfews and restrictions did not lead to a significant decrease in infections or deaths (Bendavid *et al.*)?

One of the factors that explains the spiral of irrationality in which we find ourselves is the fatal abandonment of all scientific and political discussion about the coronavirus crisis. Only in this way can it be understood that a large part of the international community adopted drastic confinement policies in March 2020 in the face of apocalyptic alerts from a controversial study by physicist Neil Ferguson (Imperial College) which was not peer-reviewed nor published. A lack of public control regarding the implementation of the most drastic policies is evidenced by the a-criticism regarding the WHO, sister institution of the IMF and the World Bank. This organization, which has a long history of political corruption, is largely funded, as is known, by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and its president, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, is accused of genocide by *Human Rights Watch*.

The measure that shows best how entangled the relation between science, public discourse and pseudo-ethical categories such as social responsibility has become, is the mask mandate. By making compulsory this extremely controversial measure, and presenting all dissent as immoral, a mechanism was established that allows to redirect the desire of citizens to be ethical to a particularly unethical task: dividing the society between those who obey the rules and thus are righteous and those who don’t and are thus considered morally dysfunctional.

We must remember that in Spain it was deemed illegal to take off a face mask in any public space at any time, including outside and when one is alone, or even when feeling lack of breath. The law forced the citizenry to dismiss the most basic instinct of auto-preservation of any individual, such as listening to the alerts of one's own body, and this coercive law included children six years old and over.

The arbitrariness of the mask mandates is confirmed by the fact that there are no quality (randomized controlled) studies that demonstrate that the masks function as a transmission firewall in the general population (much less in open spaces, where studies such as the one published in *Environmental Research* by Franco Belosi, Marianna Conte and others, show that the probability of outdoor transmission is extremely low (Belosi *et al.*)). As Oxford epidemiologists Tom Jefferson and Carl Heneghan point out, the only randomized controlled study conducted in the population (that is, the only type of scientific study whose design assesses the association between a protective or risk factor and a given effect), rules out that the masks are effective in reducing the transmission of Covid-19 (Heneghan and Jefferson). It should be emphasized that this conclusion does not differ from the consensus that already existed on the transmission of influenza, as shown by the meta-analysis (review that has the highest level of scientific evidence) published by the *American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* in May 2020 (Xiao *et al.*).

1.2. Why Are We Entering the Era of Post-Liberal Fascism

The scientist authoritarianism that we have above us (scientist insofar as it does not open up to a scientific discussion and asks that reason be replaced by faith) is lethal for life in society, and is an exponential evolution of both the fascism of liberal as well as neoliberal roots. We are not dealing with the classical fascism which Polanyi described as a reaction to the destructive policies of liberalism and which was, in fact, an outgrowth of it. Nor is this an example of the “elective dictatorship” that Hayek, the best-known ideologue of neoliberalism, advocated in the case of the Thatcher government as a way to end parliamentary power to unilaterally adopt measures such as the outlawing of trade unions. Although post-liberal fascism resembles the elective dictatorship defended by neoliberalism in the sense that it seeks to implement a certain rationality or truth above the popular will and outside of any scientific discussion—the truth of draconian measures based on mathematical predictions—their logic is quite different. While the neoliberal elective dictatorship politically nullifies dissent without extirpating it from the public sphere, post-liberal fascism aspires to create a total closure of meaning through which it not only imposes its measures, but also eliminates all traces of rational resistance to them from the public space. It thus seeks to achieve what José Luis Villacañas describes as an imperial political theology by cancelling all structures of distancing and discussion from reality, such as the sciences (and with special emphasis, human and social sciences) or public debate (Villacañas). In this way, post-liberal fascism imposes upon us an absolutism of the present in which the decisions of the great structures of world governance (and their state headquarters in the form of governments) are not discussed by the population.

The conversion of the phenomenon of so-called “fake news” into a major geopolitical problem by large information corporations is part of this siege to all discussion of official reality. Paradoxically, the mass media that are now scandalized by “fake news” have

always been those that have promoted and are promoting fake news to legitimize government or counter-government actions that respect their political and financial interests. The supposed problem of fake news has been created to combat any hint of democracy derived from the revolutions of information caused by the internet, as well as to wage a new Cold War between hypercapitalist interests of a neo-liberal (the United States, Great Britain and the European Union) and protectionist nature (Russia and China). Behind the large international verification agencies such as the *International Fact-Checking Network* —on which Facebook verification services such as *Politi-Fact* or *Check Your Fact* depend— are individuals such as Pierre Omidyar, founder of eBay associated with anti-Russian globalist institutions of dubious impartiality linked to NATO such as *The Allegiance for Securing Democracy*. In a similar vein, behind information verification and scoring software services like *NewsGuard* are staunch advocates of illegal spying on citizens like Michael Hayden, former director of the CIA and NSA.

As Emil Marmol and Lee Mager point out, the objective of these agencies is to promote a media literacy that assumes that the control —we should say censorship— of information is a matter of artificial intelligence that must be controlled by algorithms. Not surprisingly, Google created a blacklist in its search engines through an algorithm that was presented as “an effort to fight fake news” and “surface more authoritative content” (Marmol and Mager 234). This “authoritative content” is not equivalent, however, to a content of contrasted information but to an authoritarian propaganda operation aimed at creating an ultra-liberal digital subjectivity that assumes a certain hierarchy of authority as equivalent to a hierarchy of truth.

Following this logic, news verification agencies that emerged as a result of the covid-19 crisis such as *Maldita* delegitimize contrasted information issued by scientific authorities that counters the official WHO line by presenting as scientific consensus selected opinions of scientists who follow the official line, while dismissing systematic reviews of scientific evidence and censoring a debate or refutation based on arguments. However, the most common “verification” procedure of these agencies boils down to the verdict of so-called fact-checkers (in most cases, journalists without specific training in what they accredit / discredit) deciding the degree of certainty of the information issued by experts or informed citizens, by subjecting it to a series of principles of faith issued by the great structures of world governance.

This same logic is followed by the 10,000 search quality raters hired by Google to control the information provided by its search engine, or the 30,000 censors who work for Facebook in order to implement an official truth regime among its users. We are facing an example of how the public sphere is colonized by the behavioral sciences, intimately linked, as Marta Peirano has shown, to the digital control society through the so-called attention economy. In this sense, if Freud’s psychoanalysis won the culture wars, Skinner’s behavioral psychology, which was committed to a control of population behavior by the administration through stimuli or behavior reinforcements, has taken over the post-internet world (Peirano, 72). We should not be surprised that in this world of digital ultra-liberalism that associates power with truth, the news will go in the future, as Klaus Schwab has predicted, to be written 90 percent by algorithms.

This new reality has been announced for years in the name of the digital revolution by institutions such as the World Economic Forum, a private organization chaired continuously

since its foundation in 1971 (first as a European entity) precisely by Klaus Schwab, an economist with a Nazi past (Vedmore) and strong fascist leanings (Winter Oak). Schwab's books *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (2016) and *Covid-19: The Great Reset* (2020), present an immediate future of undemocratic nature in which, in the name of what we could call digital ultra-liberalism, the digital revolution will not be subject to any social or republican control, but will be a natural destiny to adapt to. In this sense, according to the WEF plans partially materialized in the 2030 agenda, the population should surrender to the designs of the main world authorities, who do not hide (think of Bill Gates or Ray Kurzweil) their intention to implement a digital eugenics policy disguised as transhumanism or technological singularity. Using a shock strategy as those described by Naomi Klein, the official management of the coronavirus crisis is a first attempt at post-liberal fascism that seeks to implement in the world of life, as Edmund Husserl called it, an undemocratic digitization that is irreversible.

We cannot continue to treat the coronavirus crisis as if it were not a political crisis. Just as in the 2008 economic crisis we did not surrender without a scientific and political discussion to the IMF's designs, neither should we now submit without resistance or public debate to those of the WHO, its parallel institution. If in 2008 there were disputes between economists who affirmed that economics was an exact science based on algorithms and demanded austerity—the equivalent today, safeguarding distances, of restrictive anti-covid measures—and economists who considered economics as a social science and demanded an approach taking into account the social dimension of spending, now the same thing happens with medicine, with the only difference that this debate, existing and real, is erased from the public sphere.

We are in an international context of urgency and we must react. We should demand that our governments make public the studies on which they base their arbitrary decisions in order to be able to submit these to a public discussion. On the other hand, we deserve that the political parties that are called left-wing stop surrendering blindly to the pseudo-ethicist discourse of the WHO and other organizations of world governance.

2. Your Money or Your Life? No, Your Money and Your Life! A Minimal History of the WHO and its Controversial Global Agenda

In 1944 Karl Polanyi stated that the great transformation that the world had undergone by surrendering to the destructive designs of the free market could only be understood in its irrationality if it was compared “to the most violent outbursts of religious fervor in history” for “[w]ithin a generation, the whole human world was subjected to its undiluted influence”. (31) Paradoxically, that same year, through the Bretton Woods agreements, the United States, Great Britain and the industrialized countries of Western Europe designed an undemocratic structure of world governance. This new political structure was intended to ensure the necessary global monetary order in the aftermath of the Second World War, so that a capitalist economy would survive that would respect the interests of these countries and keep its colonial rule intact. To achieve these ends, it was agreed to create two global institutions—the World Bank (1944) and the IMF (1945)—which were complemented in 1948 with the creation of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The colonial agenda of these three institutions took a furiously neoliberal turn in the 1970s as a consequence of the end of colonialism and the abandonment of the gold standard. This neoliberal period—a far-reaching indirect colonialism—suffered, in turn, a mutation even more dangerous for life in society after the attacks of September 11, 2001. It was from that moment that the massive surveillance made possible by large information technology and artificial intelligence companies became an indispensable ally of the false neoliberal doctrine about freedom and democracy. Twenty years later, the COVID-19 crisis has been presented as a great opportunity for the great financial and technological powers to officially force us into a new phase of neoliberalism: digital ultra-liberalism. In this new period of value extraction and social destruction, the consumer, to whom the ephemeral welfare state had given the promise of becoming a citizen, becomes a user; that is, a dehumanized and deregulated natural resource—a kind of mine of meat and bone—from which the great powers extract data with which to enrich themselves with impunity.

The ground seems to be fertile already, as shown by biometric identification projects associated with the expansion of mass vaccination such as the New ID2020, promoted, among others, by GAVI with the participation of the WHO, Microsoft, the World Bank and large pharmaceutical companies. It is no coincidence that NewID2020 is precisely the platform in charge, by its own initiative and worldwide consensus, of coordinating the realization of a global vaccination passport that receives the eugenic name of “Good Health Pass”, associating good health—not being or not infected—with human and citizenship rights that allow freedom of movement.

Consequently, we must be more alert than ever so as not to fall back into a religious fervor such as that described by Polanyi that makes us irrationally accept the authoritarian mandate of technocrats in exchange for a deceptive security. The concepts of security and risk have always been the Trojan horse with which capitalism has made us fall into legalized servitude. It was to guarantee economic security that a financial structure of citizen plunder was created, such as compound interest, which passes all risk to the consumer. In the same way, when the WHO adopts health policies (apart from a real scientific discussion) that transfer health and economic risk to citizens, leaving the most vulnerable unprotected and making the entire population vulnerable, it also does so in the name of security. Let’s not fool ourselves: this has been the operational logic that the WHO has followed since its founding in 1948.

Scholars such as Randall M. Packard or Mark Harrison show us that attempts at global health regulation have always obeyed prevailing economic interests and have resulted in serious health crises. In this sense, the history of the WHO has never ceased to be linked to the agendas of the foundations that have directly or indirectly financed it: if today it is the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation that holds the helm of command, in the years 1950-1960 it were the Ford Foundation and the Population Council (founded by John D. Rockefeller III) who guided the action of the WHO to family planning policies. The great problem with this philanthropic collaboration is that it has always imposed vertical intervention policies on WHO that, instead of promoting medical autonomy in the countries most in need, have plunged them into a logic of massive aid in times of crisis, benefitting the speculative interests of the great powers. Between 1973 and 1980, and under the presidency of Halfdan Mahler, the WHO tried to change course by universalizing the primary care medical system by promoting the “Declaration of Alma-Ata” whose

objective was the achievement of “Health for All in 2000”. This purpose failed, however, under pressure from large donors, and was replaced by “Selective Primary Health Care”.

WHO’s relationship with third world countries has always been controversial. In the debt crisis experienced by these countries in the 1980s and 1990s as a consequence of the wild go-go banking of the 1970s, the WHO ominously bowed to the interests of the financial powers. Third world countries were forced by the IMF—and with the approval of the WHO—to abandon free healthcare and investment in social spending as an essential condition for refinancing their debt. Among the most controversial episodes of this institution is the agreement signed with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by which the WHO agrees not to interfere in the interests of the former, renouncing, for example, to conduct studies in areas affected by atomic energy, if necessary.

However, the great danger that the WHO represents today to our freedoms is a phenomenon that dates back to the SARS crisis of 2003, when this institution was transformed into an undemocratic world authority that *de facto* violates, in the name of global health, the powers of national sovereignties. According to Marcos Cueto, Theodore Brown and Elizabeth Fee in *The World Health Organization. A History*, SARS spread in 2003 from Vietnam to more than thirty countries and caused a crisis due, in large part, to the collapse of health systems that resulted from neoliberal economic reforms (Cueto *et al.*). The WHO appointed itself as a supra-national authority, declared national and international emergency levels, issued sanitary protocols for action and violated Canada’s competences, recommending not to travel to Toronto (then a focus of the crisis). As a result, at the 61st Health Assembly held in 2005, the WHO approved a reform of the *International Health Regulations* (IHR) that confirmed its supra-national powers. According to the new regulation, the director general of the WHO has the power to declare international health emergencies and to denounce countries suspected of hiding or falsifying data related to a possible pandemic. But what is presented to us as a reasonable global policy is, in reality, a serious attack on the health sovereignty of countries and their citizens to the interests of the big financial, digital and pharmaceutical emporiums.

The scandal exploded during the 2009 swine flu (H1N1) crisis. The WHO was accused of taking advantage of its new supranational legitimacy to exaggerate this crisis and provide millionaire profits to related pharmaceutical companies. Specifically, the WHO raised the level of global health alarm several times without there being an apparent real danger and asked governments to acquire large reserves of Tamiflu, an antiviral that was patented. As soon as it became clear that the swine flu (H1N1) was a simple health crisis and not a pandemic, there was a wave of outrage when it was discovered that governments had made useless multi-million dollar investments. When the WHO was publicly accused of corruption and conflict of interest with the pharmaceutical companies, its then president, Margaret Chan, flatly denied the accusations and used the same argument that Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has been using since March 2020 to avoid all responsibility: she had simply followed the advice of the experts.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the current president of the WHO, seems to be in the line of some of the most scandalous leaders of this institution, in the style of the famous Hiroshi Nakajima, accused, among other things, of buying votes or smuggling valuable Russian icons. The accusations of human rights violations that weigh on him are numerous and range from the intentional negligence (the cause of thousands of deaths) that Human

Rights Watch attributes to him as Ethiopia's Minister of Health in the cholera epidemics of 2006, 2009 and 2011, to the complicity with the brutal repression of the Ethiopian government of which he was a part when he held the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs. Among the most notorious controversies of his mandate, highlights the concession (revoked by public pressure) of the title of Ambassador of Goodwill of the WHO to the dictator Robert Mugabe. However, the aspect of his mandate that should alert us the most is the promotion of a universal health-care system with strong private participation that is detrimental to the public and universal health systems.

This desire to implement a universal health-care system is related to plans such as providing a universal basic income to citizens, defended by the World Economic Forum as a way of citizen survival/submission in the hyper-digitized world of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is one more example of how the world elites have been assuming within their reactionary and anti-social politics the great claims of the left and democratic republicanism, emptying them of content and turning them into social poison. It is something that in its day liberalism already did in its process of expropriation and monopoly of the republican-democratic idea of freedom.

3. The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Disappearance of the Public Sphere at the Hands of Digital Ultra-Liberalism

The counter-democratic nature of the authoritarian model promoted by current world governance structures is clearly reflected in the figure of Klaus Schwab, president since 1971 of the World Economic Forum². The plutocratic-cesarean authority that he represents makes us normalize without any republican control the supra-national political and economic power (greater than that of the nation-states) exercised without dissimulation, both by tycoons like Bill Gates or George Soros and by the financial interests of centuries-old sagas like the Rothschilds, the Rockefellers, the Baruchs or the Grosvenors. It is precisely these plutocrats and these family sagas who, displaying their anti-democratic nature, publicly promote presumably republican agendas that, in the name of a final stage of capitalism, destroy any possibility of republican politics.

Klaus Schwab is an expert in promoting overtly authoritarian and society-destroying policies in the public interest at his Davos forum. In May 2020, together with Prince Charles of England, he presented his book *Covid-19: The Great Reset*, in which he calls for a great reset of capitalism, since according to him "the pandemic represents a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reflect, reimagine, and reset our world to create a healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous future". This great reset of capitalism seeks to conform to the UN 2030 agenda that Schwab himself defended in ultra-liberal terms as an inevitable destiny in *The Fourth Industrial Revolution* (2016). In this dystopian-technocratic treatise, Schwab presents as irremediable the capitalist-digital ideals of transhumanism and the technological singularity defended by theorists and computer engineers such as Ray Kurzweil, Michael Anissimov or Kevin Warwick. According to Schwab, the Fourth

2 Specifically, he was president since 1971 of the European Management Forum, which in 1987 became the *World Economic Forum*.

Industrial Revolution that he encourages to implement in an accelerated manner during the current covid-19 crisis will be “unlike anything humankind has experienced before”. Democracy or democratic republicanism will have no place in this world because, as Klaus Schwab himself bluntly warns:

We are at the threshold of a radical systemic change that requires human beings to adapt continuously. As a result, we may witness an increasing degree of polarization in the world, marked by those who embrace change versus those who resist it.

This gives rise to an inequality that goes beyond the societal one described earlier. This ontological inequality will separate those who adapt from those who resist—the material winners and losers in all senses of the words.

The winners may even benefit from some form of radical human improvement generated by certain segments of the fourth industrial revolution (such as genetic engineering) from which the losers will be deprived. This risks creating class conflicts and other clashes unlike anything we have seen before. (92)

In this fragment, social Darwinism proper to capitalism is transformed into political Darwinism whereby only those who obey (no longer those who fulfill the illusion of being the fittest according to the current economic system) are the ones who will survive. In this sense, Schwab clearly warns that only those who obey will be able to possibly benefit (not with absolute certainty) from advances of the Fourth Industrial Revolution such as genetic engineering. The authoritarian and eugenic agenda that animates this last phase of capitalism destroys any notion of freedom and human agency and assumes that the Fourth Industrial Revolution or digital ultra-liberalism is a providential destiny that the population cannot discuss (it can only decide, as in a divine command subject to reward or punishment, whether to fulfill it or not). This future is announced in a trans-humanist tone by Schwab when he states that

my concern, however, is that decision makers are too often caught in traditional, linear (and non disruptive) thinking or too absorbed by immediate concerns to think strategically about the forces of disruption and innovation shaping our future (2-3).

These forces of disruption and innovation shaping our future are announced as an irremediable imposition by computer engineers and theorists of transhumanism and technological singularity such as Ray Kurzweil. For example, in *The Singularity is Near* (2005), Kurzweil makes a fiery defense of a logic of exponential technological evolution that escapes traditional and linear thinking. This exponential evolution with the character of a presumed natural law is called by Kurzweil through clearly capitalist language as “law of accelerated returns”. According to this law, the world we know is destined to become extinct and to be replaced by a trans-human universe in which the human species will become obsolete and the evolutionary torch will pass to a combination of man-machine in which the most preponderant and intelligent part will be robotics. One of the conquests promised by this trans-humanist and eugenic ideology is the quasi-infinite delay of death. We are facing a dystopian ideology that carries out a *deificatio* of the human-machine and that places it above any transcendent force, including the universe. Kurzweil, who considers human nature to be one of our great impediments, affirms that when the moment of technological singularity arrives, the universe will find its destiny in us:

Ultimately, the entire universe will become saturated with our intelligence. This is the destiny of the universe. We will determine our own fate, rather than have it determined by the current ‘dumb’, simple, machinelike forces that rule celestial mechanics (117).

According to Kurzweil, the technological singularity is scheduled for the year 2045. At that time our species will enter, according to the transhumanist agenda, a period of no return by merging with machines smarter than us. The decision to name this hypothetical future as technological singularity is not innocent. Singularity is a term from astrophysics that defines a phenomenon—for example, a black hole—that escapes natural law in all its known aspects such as space and time. In itself singularity is a radical exception to everything previously known that, given its radical novelty, cannot be predicted in its results. In reality the singularity defended by Kurzweil takes the form of a perpetual *coup d’etat* that is intended to be presented as a new natural law that, as such, has to be irretrievably obeyed.

The most sinister aspect of this formulation is found in the way in which Kurzweil establishes a strange equivalence whereby the history of capitalism equals the history of innovation, while the latter equals the history of mankind. In this way, the history of capitalism and the history of humanity appear as two identical phenomena, among which capitalism is the one that is most important, as it presents itself as an irrevocable destiny of the universe that will end up rendering humanity obsolete. It is not innocent, in this sense, that the law of exponential growth of technological innovation proposed by Kurzweil is called “law of accelerated returns”, unequivocally associating extreme surplus value —“accelerated returns”— with innovation and progress.

Whether or not we agree with the viability of the transhumanist agenda, there is an element that we cannot dismiss. The digitization of the world implies a radical change in all the structures of reality that we need to take into account, as I myself have explained in another article in which I highlighted the difference between the world of printing and the digital world (Souto, “Anonymous Sovereignty...”). Paradoxically, popularizers of scientific, technological and philosophical thought such as Yuval Noah Harari, Byung-Chul Han or Marta Peirano have been warning us for years of the point of no return in the destruction of democracy that we are reaching from the hand of the digital revolution. However, experts in information and power theories such as the renowned sociologist from the University of Berkeley, Manuel Castells, insist on presenting the digital revolution as a phenomenon that entails an exponential increase in citizen freedom. In monographs such as *The Age of Information* or *Communication Power*, Castells affirms that the digital revolution is a revolution of freedom that, for the first time in history, gives citizens control of communication and the possibility of countering the great powers. In fact, in the last of these books Castells, contrary to McLuhan’s thesis, assures that in the world of the internet—what he calls “network society”— the medium is not the message:

(...) it would be logical to conclude that power resides in the communication networks and in their corporate owners.

This conclusion may be logical, but it is empirically wrong. Because while communication networks are certainly the messengers, they are not the message. The medium is not the message, although it conditions the format and distribution of the

message. The message is the message, and the sender of the message is at the source of the construction of meaning. In fact, it is one of the terms of this construction. The other is the receiving mind, both individual and collective. By collective mind, I mean the cultural context in which the message is received. (502)

Castells' utopian-liberal theses about the digital world are part of an ideology that we could call digital ordoliberalism. Despite the fact that Castells hypothetically recognizes that we could experience a commodification of freedom if the big digital monopolies were to impose their interests on that of users, it is he himself who assures that this will not happen. His digital ordoliberalism makes him believe that the big digital monopolies will always accept a regulation limit for a matter of mere survival. Against all the evidence that a power theorist like him should have, Castells affirms that citizens will use the internet only if it works freely, so that the internet is for him a collective institution that regulates itself without the need for an external republican control. This ordoliberal utopianism leads Castells to affirm that

the network power exercised by digital networks assumes a new form: the removal of control over message distribution. This is in contrast with the traditional network power of the mass media which reforms the message to be suitable for the audience in accordance with corporate strategy. (418)

It is obvious that these 2008 statements collide with the censoring reality of platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, as well as with the phenomenon of news verification agencies. However, the greatest proof of Castells' ordoliberal digital ideology (very close to the digital ultra-liberalism of Schawb, Gates or Kurzweil) is found in his acceptance of the capitalist economic model as a viable framework for the digital revolution. The key to economic growth in a capitalist economy is, as Castells acknowledges, productivity. But productivity in the network society of the digital world is, according to this renowned sociologist, innovation. The definition that Manuel Castells offers of innovation is not misleading, as it is mainly aimed at reducing production costs:

The key factor for productivity growth in this knowledge-intensive, networked economy is innovation or the capacity to recombine factors of production in a more efficient way, and for produce higher value added in process or in product. (33)

The incompatibility of digital-democratic discourses, such as the one defended by Castells, with the authoritarian reality of our digital present shows us that we are facing the definitive crisis of the enlightened worldview and its blind trust in a notion of progress directly associated with production and technological innovation. However, the role that Castells has today as a public and political intellectual is also symptomatic of the regime of citizen alienation in which we are beginning to live. The fact that Manuel Castells is popularly known as Sillycon Valey's sociologist (i.e., someone who often uncritically advocates the digital revolution in its unregulated and seemingly natural version) has not prevented him from being appointed as Minister of the Government of Spain for the left-wing party *Unidas Podemos*, nor that his ordoliberal measures in favor of public-private collaboration in the university are considered part of a supposedly progressive agenda.

It makes no sense to affirm, as Castells does, that in the network society the medium does not determine the message. The power relations that occur in the digital world are radically new, so it is not just a matter of the medium determining the message but a phenomenon much more alienating. As Douglas Rushkoff indicates, in the digital world the medium determines a propaganda context that through algorithms adjusts to each of the Internet users, creating a reality that, presenting itself as common, is individual, not contradictory and, ultimately, authoritarian:

[there was an] era when propaganda was a form of media content –something we could deconstruct in order to neutralize. But what about when propaganda is no longer relegated to the content of media, but becomes the context itself? (Hobbs *et al.* 4).

If I refer in these pages to Castells' ordoliberal digital ideology, it is to reveal its links with anachronistic projects of recovering the enlightened legacy, such as the notion of public sphere defended by Habermas in his theory of communicative action. Although Habermas's work is embedded in its context of emergency (the Cold War, together with cultural revolutions), it is necessary to highlight the enlightened naivety of his defense of an independence of the world of life with respect to the system formed by the structures of global economic and technological governance. Habermas himself warned of a possible colonization of the world of life at the hands of the latter that occurred with the irruption of neoliberalism and the creation of a neo-liberal subjectivity that ended up integrating the system into the world of life and subjecting it to an intense technification (Villacañas). Furthermore, the period of digital ultra-liberalism that we are entering poses the threat of a total colonization of the world of life by the structuring forces of the global economic and technological system.

We must insist that, contrary to what it might seem, the Fourth Industrial Revolution or digital ultraliberalism is one more phase of the enlightened conception of the world. In its commitment to a unidirectional version of progress, Enlightenment was a reactionary movement in the service of the early-modern aristocratic elites who, from the 18th century onwards, propelled the industrial revolution in a counter-republican sense. As Rushkoff states, "what we now call industrialization was actually an extension of the aristocracy's effort to usurp the growth it witnessed in the peasants' marketplace and to imitate it by other means" (18).

For this reason, we should not forget that the conceptions of democracy in force today are the same as those defended by members of the official/orthodox illustration such as Rousseau, as shown, for example, by Richard Tuck in his recent *The Sleeping Sovereign* (2016). This conception of democracy, derived from defenders of absolutism such as Jean Bodin and fully operative during modernity, supposes a democratization of sovereignty—that is, the power to choose the sovereign—but not of the government.

That is why it is necessary to recover pre-illustrated or illustrated baroque civic-republican notions (i.e., Vico) such as those defended by Jonathan Israel or Michel Onfray that allow us to see beyond the prisons of an enlightened sense that we assume as the only modern way of thinking about the *res publica*. Our conceptions about freedom need a reset that orients them to the coordinates of democratic republicanism in these times of digital authoritarianism.

4. The Creation of Consent (or Why We Officially Remain in Submission). Against Empathy - Liberal Morality - and in Favor of Prudence

Theorists such as David Harvey, Laval and Dardot or Silvia Federici have analyzed how neo-liberalism ideologically manipulated the nature of the idea of freedom to launch an unprecedented attack on the common sense of the population and make it accept liberal policy without resistance through the conformation of a “neo-liberal rationality”. This manipulation of the historical sense of freedom, the result of the ideological coup d’état of liberalism upon republicanism in the 19th century, floods our public sphere in the form of a-historical and a-critical apologies of liberal societies as the more prosperous, just and tolerant ones and as the most respectful of human rights. These apologies, carried out by public intellectuals such as Mario Vargas Llosa, ignore the millions of deaths caused by liberalism through the so-called Victorian holocausts, the dirty war of the 70s, the genocidal debt crisis induced in the 80s and 90s in third world countries, or the simple fact that liberalism has the sole purpose of restoring the society of the Old Regime. The proof of this attempt to build a neo-Feudal society is found in studies on the history of inequality such as those by David Harvey, Thomas Piketty or Michael Hudson, who have shown that the period of greatest wealth, equality and development in Western countries (1930-1980) was the one in which liberalism was stopped with taxation instruments typical of a republican economy, while the stage of greatest inequality, similar to the Old Regime, is the neoliberal period in which we find ourselves.

The liberal conception of freedom is a Manichean moral intimidation that requires the individual—and the society as a whole—to renounce in a suicidal way their own freedom and their right to self-preservation in the name of the dogmas of the free market. This false conception of freedom does not even presuppose a democratization of sovereignty, since it does not allow citizens to freely decide, through the exercise of universal suffrage, what type of economic system they want to have: let us note, for example, that the rule number one of the free market is that no one can interfere in its operation, which is why the IMF voting system—which is de facto superimposed on national electoral systems—is a system typical of a estate society. It is precisely this liberal pseudo-ethics that demands the renunciation of oneself for the sake of a transcendental good that is always to come, and that benefits the large financial emporiums, which explains the apparent docility of societies like the Spanish one during the coronavirus crisis and its submission to that ethical trompe l’oeil designed by the Spanish government called “social responsibility”.

This moralistic and counter-republican assault on the right of survival of every individual begins in the 18th century and is definitively established in the 19th century with the creation of transcendental ethical categories such as empathy or patriotism that place, both the citizen and the real community formed by human beings of flesh and blood, at the service of imaginary communities such as the free market and the nation-state. Take as an example the liberal philosopher Stuart Mill, who in 1861 affirmed that empathy (an ethical category that did not exist as such before the 18th century) is the basis of human rationality because it makes the individual activate “his instinct of self-defense” when there is “any conduct which threatens the security of the society” so that

the power of sympathizing with human beings generally, enables him to attach himself to the collective idea of his tribe, his country or mankind, in such a manner that any act hurtful to them, raises his instinct of sympathy, and urges him to resistance (147)

This liberal and counter-republican morality has penetrated so much our consciences that we have come to believe that a category devoid of all ethics such as empathy (sister of patriotism and enemy of brotherhood) is the basis of civility and solidarity. Empathy, however, is nothing more than an emotional arrest of one's own emotions and of one's own rationality by the interests of the great powers, which aims to render invisible all death and all suffering that is out of the narrow focus of the society of the spectacle. The idea that in the name of empathy a human being and a real community transfer their right of self-defense to the defense of an imaginary community is something totally unthinkable in the revolutionary natural law that underpins the republican ethics of the early-modern world.

The ethical category par excellence before the emergence of liberalism is not empathy, but prudence, an intersubjective conception of the public good linked to republican realism that exemplifies, among others, Machiavelli. According to this ethical approach each individual has, for the sake of self-preservation, the natural right to decide what is good and what is evil regardless of dominant ideological interests. It is only through the intersubjective principles of self-preservation that the human being can pursue an interest anchored in the preservation of life and the public good that is, at the same time, individual and communitarian and that combats in its ethics the morality of the great powers.

This is something obvious in authors of the forgotten early-modern Spanish republicanism such as Baltasar Gracián, who in the warning to the reader of *El Héroe* (1637) alerts us in a Machiavellian and counter-imperial key that “here you will not have a political or an economic reason of state, but a reason of state of yourself” (“aquí tendrás no una política ni económica, sino una razón de estado de ti mismo”) (36). This reason of state of oneself—a legitimacy to decide how to manage reality—is the ethical basis of republicanism and has its origins in the period of emergence of early-capitalism, as Pedro de Portugal shows us in his *Sátira de felice e infelice vida* (circa 1450), by proclaiming that since his work “is directed towards worldly things and not towards divine, it is reasonable to choose prudence and leave charity” (“a cosas mundanas se dirige et no a divinas, es razonable elegir la prudencia e dexar la caridad”) (104).

This indissoluble relationship between democratic republicanism and the defense of individual interests survives even in the middle of the 19th century in radically republican individualist discourses like those of the anarchist Max Stirner. However, the idealistic conceptions of history that permeate the nineteenth century through the episteme of the nation-state, liberalism, and Marxism completely banished the intersubjective—that is, republican—ethical-political value of the individual³. The blind trust that both liberalism and orthodox Marxism have in industrial and technological development as a factor of progress sacrifices the ethical-political prudence of the individual and the community in

3 It should not be forgotten that Marx and Engels write the more than three hundred pages of *The German Ideology* as an attack on *The Ego and Its Own* by Max Stirner, a member of the Hegelian left critical of Hegelian idealism.

favor of an economic self-regulation that ideally should be the result of the free market—a magical and transcendent structure— or of the abolition of all social classes through class struggle.

That is why recovering early-modern ethical-political categories such as prudence allows us to reopen essential debates of modern republicanism that have been obscured by the enlightened mythology of industrial and technological progress. The most urgent of these debates consists in discussing whether domination is an intrinsically political phenomenon, as defended by anarchism and the republican democratic tradition, or economic, as orthodox Marxism claims. In this sense, the totalitarian management of the coronavirus crisis, together with the accelerated implementation of hyper-digitization, shows us that the massive destruction of work is a phenomenon that favors the accumulation of capital apart from the exploitation of labor. For this reason, theses like those of Paul Mason that predicted a collapse of the capitalist system in a hyper-digitized world as a consequence of capitalism's own contradictions, seem to have been wrong. Political domination appears to be a precondition for economic domination, and not the other way around. This is at least what theories critical with the values of progress of the industrial revolution, the Enlightenment and industrial-technological determinism show us, such as those of Silvia Federici, Douglas Rushkoff or David Graeber. These authors jeopardize the teleological linear conception of history that underlies nineteenth-century liberalism and Marxism by showing that the transition from feudalism to capitalism meant a worsening of living conditions and an exponential increase in exploitation. We should, therefore, look back at other forms of life and social structuring prior to those imposed from the 18th century industrial and enlightened revolution.

It is precisely because we have left the republican prudence of pre-illustrated modernity aside that we have accepted without the slightest discussion and against the existing scientific evidence an abusive and irrational confinement plan. The perverse logic of empathy and “social responsibility”, induced by government authoritarianism to avoid all political responsibility, has led us to believe that daring to deliberate as a society about the pertinence of other strategies to contain/eradicate the virus to better preserve the common good is an abject crime and a criminal proof of lack of solidarity.

Justifying confinements, draconian curfews or the imposition of measures without real scientific support as necessary, we are validating the exercise of a technocratic and military authoritarianism that has nothing to do with the defense of life and that has, for example, led the president of The Philippines to allow police to shoot citizens who breach lockdown. It is a new political stage in which neoliberalism puts aside all democratic rhetoric and claims a non-democratic state capitalism as an ideal model that is accepted as necessary by the population via an authoritarian neo-liberal rationality that is presented as apolitical.

One of the greatest dangers of this new stage of political domination and capital extraction is that it tries to make us believe that we do not have the right to decide in a republican way which direction technological innovation should take and in what ways digitization should be promoted. For this reason, it is necessary to rethink the role that individuals and intersubjectivity have in the survival of a real democratic republicanism. Only prudence can save us from being excessively reckless and surrender to the interests of the great powers.

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**Tensions in Literature,
Language and Translation
Revealed Through the Lense
of Polysystem Theory**

Language as a Space for Collision

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If every language is acquirable, its acquisition requires a real portion of a person's life: each new conquest is measured against shortening days. What limits one's access to other languages is not their imperviousness but one's own mortality.

Benedict Anderson, 1983

Recognition of Inherent Human Dignity¹

The first line in the preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations general Assembly on 10 December 1948 establishes that the aim of the Declaration is to ensure “recognition of the inherent dignity” of every person on the planet. These rights may set out collective claims, but they nevertheless apply to and are founded upon each specific individual: “Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible” (Art. 29/1). We are social creatures, and our existence cannot be imagined without interaction with others. If each individual is to be protected, it is essential to ensure a social environment that favors personal accomplishment.

Clearly, huge tensions are created between opposing individual rights, and this becomes especially noticeable where linguistic issues are concerned. If everyone could use their first-choice language without any kind of restriction, would this solve anything? Can the concept of human rights cancel out these linguistic differences? I have just made a false conceptual leap, but it is one that is nevertheless so common that it might easily pass unnoticed. It is important to remember that the UDHR of 1948 defines many issues that

1 I owe the idea for this article to the debate entitled “Global Language Justice: An Interdisciplinary Workshop”, hosted by the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia University (June 30, 2020), and particularly the observations made by Professors Lydia H. Liu and Anupama Rao.

were highly sensitive in a world that had just emerged from a bloody world war, but it makes no mention whatsoever of the use of languages. It does not include linguistic rights as human rights. It does talk about “freedom of speech”, “freedom from fear” (Preamble), “freedom of thought, conscience and religion” (Art. 18) and “freedom of opinion and expression” (Art. 19), as well as “freedom of peaceful assembly” (Art. 20/1). It is assumed that all of these freedoms may be exercised without having to think about the language in which one must express oneself in order to achieve them.

This conceptual slip that links human rights to linguistic rights is very common. The assumption is quite logical; humans are linguistic beings, and our innate linguistic abilities unquestionably form part of what the United Nations jurists defined as “the inherent dignity [...] of all members of the human family”. The fact that we speak and communicate with one another is simply an indispensable requirement of our human condition. It is for this reason that so many people are convinced that the UDHR enshrines their right to express themselves in the language of their choosing. “The dignity and worth of the human person” (Preamble) is necessarily tied to the fact that we humans are capable of linguistic expression, and it could not be otherwise. It seems logical that everyone who speaks, expresses themselves and thinks, regardless of the language they use, has the right to demand this inherent dignity without any distinction being made “on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs” (Art. 2).

This connection seems logical, but it is not one that has been established in law. The UDHR offers protection against exploitation in the workplace, against the abuse of power and against the arbitrary application of justice, and it establishes measures to ensure universal access to education and health as essential conditions for living with dignity. Language is only specifically mentioned in Article 2, and even then it is not linked to the passage that I have just quoted in relation to “the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs”. In the Declaration, language is not treated as a social contract or as a politically structured space, but instead as a characteristic of the individual that is as defining and inalienable as “race, color, sex, *language* (sic), religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth and other status” (Art. 2).

The list of factors identified as grounds for discrimination is long, and it brings together concepts that are probably too diverse. It is troubling that so soon after the defeat of Nazism and its racial “laws”, the possibility of racial distinction is maintained without nuance, and that the language of the time talks about “sex” and not “gender”. In any case, all of these characteristics are intended to define an unambiguous form of belonging. By being included among them, language is regarded as though it were burnt onto a person’s skin and subject to an implacable loyalty to a particular religious affiliation. The first observation we could make at this point is that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights implicitly regards everyone as monolingual. Language is one of those kinds of unique characteristics that supposedly define us whether we want them to or not.

This assumption, that people can be defined on the basis of certain unequivocal characteristics, is deeply problematic in all cases because, when it comes down to it, “race”, religion, gender and skin color are cultural constructs and not objective facts. The very idea that subtle differences between individual people is what allows for the *fetishism of difference*

(Bhabha) and with it all the discrimination that can still be found based on “eternal” or “ineradicable” differences.

Discrimination is based on outward signs of cultural, historical or racial difference that are defined in a specific way, to the point of creating a veritable stereotype of the other person. We become convinced that the same differences are repeated at every point in history, and we overlook the changes that may have occurred within a particular society. Explanations of the past or predictions for the future imbue the social fabric with the effect of a truth that is not only probable but also predictable, which always gives rise to a surfeit of prediction that exceeds the number of actual facts that can be empirically proved. To acquire the kind of meaning that works successfully, a stereotype requires a continuously repeated series of other stereotypes. Cultural mummification leads to the mummification of individual thought. It is obvious that the process of articulating fetishist tropes in colonial societies focused on the visible fetish of dark skin. This “all too visible” feature served to obscure all the other features that distinguished one person from another within that group. Colonial discourse was based on fixing the color of one’s skin as a signifier that could not be set free, that could not circulate freely outside its racial type (Bhabha 78).

The rejection of a social group based on fetishism requires the construction of a symbolic order in which the relationship between factual external reality and subjective internal experience is supplanted or interrupted. “There is the theatre in which your truth was performed before you took cognizance of it”, remarked Slavoj Žižek in the *Sublime Object of Ideology* (19). Discrimination is based on a line of thinking that runs in a closed circle, confronted, not by reality but by an imaginary stage on which the action being played out is immutable, always the same². We know that a coin is a material object like everything else, but we behave as though it were made from a substance over which time has no power. The same subliminal mechanism as the one demonstrated by this classic example drawn from Marxist political economics can turn membership of a particular social group into a fetish. We all know, observes Žižek, that Jews are people, but there have nevertheless been times when a huge number of other people who were living alongside them, who knew them personally, began to behave as if Jews were made from a special substance, a substance that allowed one to say they were all the same, despite the ordinary events that demonstrated, day after day, the individual differences between them.

In this regard, the Universal Declaration of 1948 was right to include language among the factors from which exclusion could develop, based on prejudices that are so deeply rooted that they have become invisible. Linguistic discrimination exists and works more or less in the same way as structural racism based on skin color or religion. The fixing of stereotypes around the speakers of any language considered to be inferior, underdeveloped, useless and expendable is one of the most frightening tools of social repression

2 “I will ask you a simple question. The Yoruba, in Nigeria, number 40 million. Icelanders number a quarter of a million. How can it be that 40 million people are a tribe and yet a quarter of a million people are a nation? It depends on how you frame a situation, and it is within this same mental framework that people interpret conflicts in Africa: they do not look at the economic, ideological or political differences between the different sides. They literally focus on a leader and say, ‘ah, he’s from such and such a region, that’s where the problem comes from, it’s a tribal conflict’. They use highly simplistic mental frameworks to define African realities that are extremely severe”. (Ngũgĩ “Seminari”)

that exist. Massive pressures against speakers of marginalized languages have succeeded in breaking people down to the point of robbing them of all human dignity. Speaking a language that is not authorized by the authorities can effectively be one of those fetishes that justifies some of the most violent discrimination.

When we claim that linguistic rights should be viewed as human rights, I see this as wanting to correct the shocking possibility of separating languages into those that are worthy and those that are unworthy. Defending the dignity of all languages is to go to the heart of discrimination. However, as in the other cases mentioned in Article 2 of the Universal Declaration, language on its own is not the problem. The problem is the mechanism for exclusion that is created around a differentiating characteristic and the exploitation of this difference until it has become grounds for hatred. What can we do to change these deeply rooted secular forms of discrimination?

It is only when an individual has the right to be an active member of their own linguistic community that fundamental human rights such as “freedom of speech”, “freedom from fear”, “freedom of thought, conscience and religion”, “freedom of opinion and expression” and “freedom of peaceful assembly” can actually be achieved. All of these freedoms are clearly linked to the possibility of expressing oneself in a particular language without coercion. This is, in fact, the definition of fundamental linguistic rights that we see clearly set out in the Universal Declaration of 1948.

We must aspire to be the subject of all our own phrases, to be able to speak like someone who feels that their identity is recognized by others and who therefore feels free to be who they are, capable of communicating with anyone from a position of trust and curiosity. The most insidious consequence of discrimination is that it creates barriers that at times can seem insurmountable: “No *jchi’iltik* [a term used in Chiapas for the original inhabitants of the region] dared to address his landlord or some *jkaxlan* [term referring to the descendants of the Spanish colonists] from the *jteklum* [an urban area with a predominantly Spanish-speaking population] in Spanish” (Ruiz 191). This extreme situation that had been imposed in the Chiapas highlands is captured in a scene in Rosario Castellanos’s first novel. It is the nanny who is speaking. She is a member of the indigenous population herself, but she has adopted the role of forming part of a well-off family in the city. When she sees an “Indian” asking for a ticket to the fair in Spanish, she exclaims, “Well I never, what an insolent Indian! He’s speaking *Castilian*. Who has given him permission to do that? Because there are rules. Spanish is a privilege that belongs to *us* [sic]. And we address our superiors formally as “*usted*”, our equals as “*tu*” and the Indians as “*vos*”. (Castellanos 39).

The *jkaxlan* felt superior because they spoke Spanish, even though “the majority knew neither how to read or write” (Ruiz 192), as Lucas Ruíz Ruíz explains in his examination of the conditions that led to the Zapatista uprising of 1994, one of the few academic texts written from an indigenous perspective: “The power of the *jkaxlan* did not lie in the possession of economic goods, since the majority of them were poor. Nor did it rest on their level of education, because the majority were illiterate. It did, however, lie in their *kaxlan k’op* [the term used to describe the Spanish language] and their ethnic and social origins” (144). At the heart of their racism and secular discrimination was “the fact that the *jkaxlan* have never accepted the establishment of a communicative relationship with the indigenous peoples” (207).

Languages that cannot be used naturally and without fear become walled redoubts, areas of exclusion. The greatest aspiration of a threatened language should not, therefore, merely be the preservation of the language itself, but should also involve claiming the right to gain access to other realities. Not having a recognized right to their own form of expression will diminish an individual to the point that they feel excluded from the path to acquired knowledge. Linguistic discrimination means being condemned to ignorance. Condemnation to functional illiteracy and a total refusal to communicate were elements in the system of symbolic values that sustained colonialism. Thanks to this linguistic discrimination, one could ensure the availability of a cheap and compliant workforce over long periods of time. Denying the oppressed the ability to communicate and learn was a key feature of colonial oppression.

As Ngũgĩ repeatedly points out (“Moving”), there is no danger in learning several languages, in mastering with relish the language of one’s conquerors, provided that one’s most immediate surroundings also form part of the knowledge system, and that one’s most direct and intimate experience clearly forms part of the acquisition of knowledge. Colonial oppression denied colonized subjects the right to recognize themselves in their own open spaces and to connect their own experiences with those of other people as equals. What the repression of languages regarded as inferior does is deny their capacity to be regarded as valid interlocutory vehicles. It is precisely in situations of serious inequality that we must cultivate the desire to learn everything that we do not know and to connect the local with the universal: “In dialogical thinking, it is not about imposing the cultural values of any one group, but rather about creating societies with equal opportunities. Or, as Bakhtin would say, in a dialogical encounter, two cultures do not fuse or mix, but instead each retains its own unity and open totality, but they are mutually enriched” (Ruiz 221).

A Productive Paradox Built into Spaces

From June 6 to 8, 1996, Barcelona played host to the World Conference on Linguistic Rights, organized by PEN International’s Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee and CIEMEN (Escarré International Centre for the Ethnic Minorities and Nations). It was attended by around a hundred representatives from various PEN centers and NGOs from linguistic communities around the world. The Conference culminated with the drafting of a Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, which was intended to be the missing piece in the United Nations’ legal mechanism for ensuring the dignity of all people, in the linguistic sense as well.

PEN International’s website currently proclaims that “In 1996, the Translation and Linguistic Rights Committee played a leading role in the creation of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, which *was eventually adopted* by UNESCO”. The italics used to highlight the way in which the thorny question of the text’s legal validity is evaded are, of course, my own.

This text carries a title that it should not have in terms of the international nomenclature, since this Universal Declaration was never even discussed by the United Nations General Assembly. The Follow-up Committee which was formed a few days after the Barcelona World Conference began to pave the way for its formal recognition

with the then Director General of UNESCO, Federico Mayor Zaragoza. From 1999, when Mayor Zaragoza's term ended, UNESCO turned its attentions towards defending cultural diversity, as indicated by the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) (Argemí 13).

Once the route through UNESCO had been closed off, efforts to authorize the Barcelona Declaration were focused on the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, with regular meetings aimed at convincing the "47 ambassadors belonging to this Council", though these efforts were unsuccessful. "However, it always seemed quite impossible to make them understand," wrote Aureli Argemí, one of the main driving forces behind this initiative, "that our position referred to indivisible linguistic rights *per se*, and not the linguistic rights of the so-called majorities and minorities. And it was of course equally or even more difficult to make them understand that it was necessary to promote linguistic policies that were consistent with these principles" (13).

The Barcelona Declaration is an initiative that remains unfinished, the product of civil society that was, it must be said, organized on a planetary scale, and that was aimed at articulating a series of proposals on how to act in order to achieve a *pax linguae*, something that has been sought since the dawn of humankind. It is nevertheless an influential text which over the past twenty-five years has helped articulate the claims of many linguistic cultures and communities. From the outset, the Declaration proclaims, "the equality of linguistic rights, without any non-pertinent distinctions between official and non-official, regional and local, majority and minority, or modern and archaic languages". (UDLR 12). However, the most important feature of this document, which was conceived after years of coordinated effort among experts in this field, is that "the Declaration considers inseparable and interdependent the collective and individual dimensions of linguistic rights, for language is collectively constituted within a community; it is also within this community that people make a personal use of it. In this way, the practice of individual linguistic rights can only be made effective if the collective rights of all communities and all linguistic groups are respected by everyone". (UDLR 12).

The first step is unquestionably protecting the individual as part of a community of speakers that has the right to organize itself and to exist. Language must not be seen as an essential and immutable feature, because it is precisely this essence, this immutability of linguistic belonging, which makes discrimination possible. In situations in which discriminatory labels are seen as valid, speaking the "wrong language" condemns one forever, before there can be any discussion. In order to break the spell that sets people in stone on an individual basis (discrimination is only effective if it actually succeeds in endangering an individual's personal wellbeing), we must restore the environment in which each person feels that they are participating in their own linguistic community.

The linguistic discrimination that sprang from colonialism was particularly effective thanks to the destruction of the connection between the individual and his or her community, unleashing ferocious attacks that destroyed any innate sense of pride and with it the deepest bond that everyone needs in order to recognize themselves in the mirror as who they are. Identity is not something we can invent; a large part of our own identity depends on recognition from others, on actual approval that we can be who we are without causing visceral rejection. Discrimination always creates a whole chain

of prejudices which makes any kind of sensible or rational thought impossible. That is why racism is so pervasive, as is the hatred that feeds on the prejudice directed towards “expendable” languages. We should remember that secular hatreds have taken root precisely because the relationship between cause and effect has lost any logical connection. There are no explanations; that is the issue. Discrimination always works as the result of hollow thought. Hate is always irrational, impossible to describe or contextualize, pure emotion, visceral feeling, impulse.

To restore the dignity of the individual in situations that bear such a severe burden, it is necessary, as proposed in the document drafted at the Barcelona Conference in 1996, to offer the individual the chance of seeing him or herself reflected within a group with which he or she can identify. Instead of disappearing under the weight of colonial indifference (“blacks” or Indians” are, according to this terrible ideology of exclusion, all the same, indistinguishable from one another), the individual rediscovers the possibility of being both unique as a person but also part of a shared narrative.

“Each time they did so, they modified parts of the script, so while the play was written by Dakxin Bajrange, it can truly be said to come straight from the oral tradition of tribal theatre. It is not an imaginary perception of suffering; it is based on the lived, traumatic experiences of being branded a criminal”, explains the printed edition, translated into English by Sonal Baxi, of the theatre play, *Budhan*. The man whose name the play takes belonged to one of the “denotified and nomadic tribes” in India and died at the hands of the police in Purulia in February 1998. His death inspired the creation of a center for the study of the language and culture of the Adivasi people, who suffered, and still suffer, terrible exclusion. It also inspired an initiative among young people from the Chharanagar district in Ahmedabad, an authentic “Chhara DNT” ghetto, who began to write and perform theatre plays with the aim of fomenting social change. When I visited their cultural center, a beacon of hope in the heart of a desolate urban environment plagued by repression and structural violence, one of these young people told me that “*Budhan*” is “not a piece of theatre, it’s life”. I believe that this is one of the most beautiful lines I have ever heard: words soothe, cure, regenerate.

Denying people their own language is to deny them the possibility of healing wounds that run as deep as these. The greatest injustice committed by the colonizers, imposing their languages, imbued with unlimited power, on the original peoples, is that they denied these peoples the chance to express their pain in an authentic way that could be experienced and shared with their own community.

The articulation of linguistic rights, according to the 1996 Declaration, differentiates between the presence and the use of languages, based on differing typologies that cannot be reduced to one single possible model, i.e. “linguistic communities historically established in their territory in order to set up a scale of references”, “linguistic groups with various degrees of historicity and self-identification” and “individuals who live outside their native community” (UDLR 12).

This distinction between the differing conditions in which linguistic uses develop is particularly important in contexts in which highly homogeneous and dominant immigrant communities have formed in a territory and interpreted the right to use their own language as a way of creating communities that are both sufficiently large and sufficiently

autonomous that they do not need to integrate themselves into the pre-existing community but can instead replace it. If, on top of this, they have political support, as has happened dramatically, for example, in the case of Tibet, then the replacement of the earlier group is guaranteed in the short or medium term. Generic statements on linguistic rights that can be generally applied in some contexts may be used to justify or even legitimize situations that are clearly unfair in others.

The Barcelona Declaration of 1996 nurtured the hope that the global community could begin to pay a little attention to the claims from the many millions of people who were living with a metaphorical stone in their shoe. At every turn in their daily routines, they had to face up to their linguistic identity because the environment in which they lived reminded them that the language they spoke was not worthy, or recognized, or respected, but was instead an annoyance.

The progress made in 1996, as compared with the ideas that underpin the Universal Declaration of Human rights of 1948, lay in the fact that, in Barcelona, language was defined as a political, negotiable, transformable space that had the capacity to withstand tension and resolve conflicts. A language that is seen as the heritage of a particular linguistic group is no longer just an essence that one cannot detach from an individual but rather an historical articulation of belonging. In other words, language is a phenomenon that evolves, adapts to circumstances, something that can be used to communicate with and distinguish oneself from others, and much more.

That proposal did not succeed in overcoming the diplomatic complexities that lead to the heart of the United Nations. The definition of language as a space that is articulated through historically cohesive communities merely aroused mistrust among the official representatives of States which, for the most part, held the conviction that a Nation State could only be functional if it was politically and economically, but also linguistically, homogeneous. The Barcelona Declaration was a disingenuous document, a wish list that was probably only directed towards stateless nations. The message that should be taken away from this document is one of firm support for the cultural approach and for the dignity of all languages, without any prior classification.

The document underlined the importance of the bonds between people and treated each individual as part of his or her surroundings. The Barcelona Declaration thus made a call for the recognition of culture as a decisive factor. Cultural cohesion, the dignity that makes it possible to see that one is acknowledged by others, these are factors that form the basis for both economic wellbeing and political stability. To construct a functional society, it is not enough to homogenize everything in the name of progress, with the use, where necessary, of force and techniques of colonial discrimination. If a society has been built by forcing a large number of its members to live in permanent conflict with what they see in the mirror, it will be neither stable nor fair.

A good example of the importance of preserving the roots of a culture as a condition of economic progress, political stability (after a violent process involving great confrontation) and artistic creativity can be found in Ireland. Gaelic has succumbed to the power of English. This linguistic supplantation has been much talked about, but the change of language has not meant the elimination of all cultural memory and even less the elimination of identity. The Irish approach is difficult, but the incredible creativity and the

influence of Irish culture is clearly connected to a capacity to analyze the given conditions. “Doubleness is a risky way of life, however”, writes Maria Tymoczko in one of her essays devoted to Irish culture, but “in a society where double consciousness is widespread, writing about the conditions of doubleness becomes an analogue to ‘the talking cure’ as a means of sorting through social and personal identities in order to find healing for both the community and the individual” (39).

The efforts made at the Barcelona Conference to define the rules for linguistic co-existence free of coercion were also reflected in the document approved in the Basque Country in 2016. The city of Donostia took advantage of the profile it enjoyed following its election as European Capital of Culture and brought together a wide range of associations from around the continent, among them CIEMEN and PEN International as the sponsors of the 1996 document, to promote its Protocol to Ensure Language Rights (2016).

It should perhaps be mentioned here that PEN International nevertheless continued to support the view that linguistic rights should be guaranteed for every individual *a priori*. The Girona Declaration of 2011 proclaimed that, “The right to use and protect one’s own language must be recognized by the United Nations as one of the fundamental human rights”. This brief statement was aimed at reducing the contents of the 1996 Declaration to a series of summarized sentences that would be sufficiently powerful to make themselves heard once again. Its final point, number ten, thus returned to the link between linguistic dignity and human dignity, and it called on the United Nations to declare the right to one’s own language as a “fundamental human right”.

The mistake made in setting the argument in such summary terms is twofold. The 1948 UN Declaration did not list human rights as distinct categories but instead defined the principles that should be respected so that the lives of every individual could enjoy greater dignity, security, creativity and stability. In the same spirit, it would have been better to demand the creation of an environment in which languages could be used without coercion, rather than define language itself as an inalienable right, without considering any other circumstance. If formulated in this way, a collision between individual “rights” will clearly be unavoidable; if everyone has an exclusive right to use their own language whenever and however they wish, how are we to approach mediation (and co-existence) in spaces that are linguistically diverse? This is an important point.

The other mistake made in taking this approach is that the formulation of linguistic rights as fundamental human rights leads to the re-emergence of the age-old problem of essentialism. It creates a conviction that each person has one single authentic language that defines them above all things. Language is, in this case, something that is passed on as an inheritance, like property, forever immutable. A person may only express themselves linguistically within a community that accepts and articulates that language socially, in the same way that each individual, with their presence and their linguistic usage, ends up contributing to the linguistic reality in which they live. The person and the group depend mutually upon one another.

In the same way that it is impossible to save a threatened species by locking up the few remaining examples in a zoo, it is also impossible to preserve languages in a hermetically sealed glass jar. If we want to save diversity, we must save the environment in which diversity can be maintained over long periods of time; we must talk about the

conditions that make linguistic diversity possible, and we require an approach that will work in situations that are truly conflictive and complex, rather than seeking one single recipe.

A Real Portion of a Life

Aspiring to global justice means pursuing the Utopian aim of regulating the behavior between human beings to the point of eliminating any potential for conflict. A justice system, that is universally valid, would have to be one that is capable of resolve conflict between opposing needs.

The concept of fundamental rights granted to each individual, however, would be difficult to reconcile with this desire for universality. The rights of each individual person can only be guaranteed through a process of negotiation. Rights are classed as being so unstable that they have been placed in a space that is eminently political; that is to say, they belong to the space of unending negotiation. That is the great accomplishment of this legal categorization. Rights are demands that evolve and change over time and that are necessarily applied according to circumstances. Priorities have to be renegotiated, and spaces that are regarded as safe are constructed using highly complex processes. The classification of human rights thus avoids becoming dogma simply because their classification is not very stable but instead has the ability to evolve along with society.

The use of one's own language is difficult to place within the structure of human rights. However, it is not possible to resolve this issue by claiming that individual rights can be replaced with generalized rules for global justice that are applicable everywhere. Is it possible to regulate linguistic usages for everyone in a uniform (and non-negotiable) way? Can a set of scales in the hands of a blindfolded Muse be used to weigh our individual identity based on neutral criteria, from a position of perfect equidistance?

The reasons why we belong to a particular group are complex and never unequivocal or definitive. Yuri Lotman defines culture as a space for "semantic collision, oscillating in the space between complete identity and absolute divergence" (Lotman 172). In other words, all culture is the result of a negotiation between these two extremes of belonging. No-one can be completely identical to the other members of their group, just as there is no group that is entirely divergent from all the others.

Lotman hammers home the point when he says that "For human thought all that exists is that which falls into any of its languages" (134). The change in terminology that seeks to abandon the use of linguistic "rights" and the implicit claim that they be regarded as human rights, in order to move the debate into the territory of linguistic "justice", also forms part of the semiologist's calm assertion; I repeat, "all that exists is that which falls into any of its languages". Thinking about language, thinking about our linguistic existence, is something we can only do using language, which is not a neutral medium. Allow me to illustrate these observations with an example taken directly from the seminars held at the University of Columbia on the subject of defining the need for global linguistic justice.

At one point in the presentation by Michele Moody-Abrams, the entire room burst out laughing. The professor had offered an amusing example. Students from New York found

it very funny that some Quebecois believed that being able to request a soft drink in French on board a plane going home should be considered a human right.

What are human rights if they are not a request for dignity, for recognition from others? Human rights are not a list of advantages that everyone has the right to demand, rudely and obstinately. Not at all. The concept of human rights is an idea that sprang from a desire to in some way repair historic injustices and rebalance relations that had been based on exploitation and inequality. In other words, the possibility of making such a claim presupposes that those who are in a position of power will be willing to set aside their privileges, if the privileges in question are due to the clear neglect of the needs of those who do not have their power.

The term “soft drinks” used by Professor Moody-Abrams exposes the conditions within a cultural world that is so self-sufficient that it is no longer capable of analyzing the foundations on which it was originally based. In his essay entitled “Saligia” (2001 [1974]), Czesław Miłosz analyses the seven deadly sins from the space that opens up as the result of differences between languages. The essay’s title is made up from the first letters of the Latin words *superbia*, *avaritia*, *luxuria*, *infidia*, *gula*, *ira* and *acedia*. He analyses each word from the perspective of the term in his native Polish, comparing it with Latin as the language of ritual and with English, since the United States had become his adopted homeland. *Avaritia* in Latin, translated as *łakomstwo* in Polish, corresponds to the idea of “covetousness” in English. When translated into the Slavic language, the idea is slightly altered, and for this reason the author acknowledges that he associates this deadly sin with an irrepressible desire to eat sweets. When he was young, confectionary was a rare treat.

Miłosz goes on to add this wise observation: “And who would have explained to me then that just such a yen for sweets was the mainspring of our civilization’s grim history, that it provided the impetus for usury and the establishment of factories, for the conquest of America, the oppression of the peasants in Poland, the brilliant idea perfected by the pious citizens of Amsterdam that they could use their ships to traffic slaves? Certainly, the mighty of this world always have wanted dessert”. (Miłosz 289).

This brief paragraph, written by a poet, chillingly illustrates the impact of an expression that is as seemingly neutral as “soft drinks”. Miłosz talks about a childhood longing to have more than one needs as the driving force for development of the Atlantic basin, a development that was based on greed and that caused atrocious suffering. The brilliant idea of the pious citizens of Amsterdam that they could traffic slaves in order to meet the requirement for cheap labor in the sugar cane plantations had many consequences. The irrepressible desire of a child from Central Europe to eat sweets is one consequence of this trade. The most inland parts of Europe, the parts furthest from the sea, also succumbed to the temptations of sugar, the availability of which depended on the availability of slaves.

To rebalance the world linguistically speaking, it is not enough just to give way to some Quebecois who want to be able to speak their own language in their own day-to-day lives without causing either laughter among their neighbors or some kind of conflict. Language is a cultural construct, and it encompasses that collective memory that no speaker has complete control over, as Paul Celan took great pains to demonstrate with all his mental powers. When we speak a particular language our words and sentences carry

with them facts that are nothing more than sets of prejudices, associations that defy all analysis. In the New York seminar mentioned above, we find the laughter of the Professor and students worrying because the Quebecois are right to demand that French should form part of their fundamental human rights. We do not even have to go that far, because each language simply requires some real portion of a life to be able to exist and grow. And these favorable conditions can be achieved through the use of a political space that is structured to allow these negotiations. In other words, linguistic usage within a bilingual territory is not a battlefield in which there can only be one winner. All countries are spaces for co-existence, and they must be seen as such. Languages that are in permanent contact must ensure that they maintain a mutual respect for one another and guarantee spaces in which each conflicting language has the chance to occupy some real portion of a life. With the opportunity for dialogue, these continuous frictions end up creating spaces that are particularly creative and tolerant.

The relationship between the conqueror and the subordinate is not a life sentence. There is a possibility, and one that is highly desirable, that two opposing forces may reach a state of balance. This balance of opposites merely means that each opponent is encouraging the other to “want to play”. This “illusion” of a game is, according to Bourdieu, the basic active ingredient of all social transformation. Society moves forward because of a desire to act, with the conviction that it is worthwhile continuing to play.

Pierre Bourdieu concludes that in each society one finds differing positions that are tied to specific differences. These differences create a “real language” of symbols that we use to create our own self-image. They can be as banal as being thin or showing off one’s stomach, driving a Volvo or a truck, drinking beer or champagne, playing football or golf. They are differences that are visible because they are not ones that we generally ignore. We accredit them with social importance because there is consensus among all of the people who share the same space as to how they should be valued and the meaning they should be given. Such differences could also mean knowing how to distinguish between a brightly colored poster and a painting by Van Gogh. We constantly define ourselves as agents of a social space, since our reality is constructed from all these small details. However, on its own, the social space is an invisible entity that cannot be physically grasped. Its existence is defined by the fact that it can give form to the symbolic representations constructed by players in a specific space. The differences we mentioned earlier can only have meaning if they exist in a space in which these features can take solid form as marks of distinction.

Every community tries to bring its members together to be as similar as possible within the group and as different as possible from all the others. Despite this, however, differences always persist, both inside and outside the group. No society allows itself to be completely homogenized, and there is therefore no social class or nation in the strict sense of a closed group with determined and predictable characteristics. Quite the contrary, all groups exist in a permanently nascent state, as potential groups that are constantly forming through either cooperation or conflict. This dynamic of the social sphere means that “social agents are likely to reproduce the conditions of their immediate status, favorable or not”. It is difficult to detach oneself from the old ways, but at the same time this constant lack of satisfaction creates the “dissatisfaction necessary to keep players involved in the game” in pursuit of change. (Inghilleri 2005: 136-137)

The positions that one assumes within a social space also include your own assumptions about how that space should be, observes Bourdieu. We cannot observe society from the outside, we are part of the space that includes us and that we help to define with our own contributions. We are unable to see all of the reality that surrounds us unless it is from the perspective that we ourselves occupy within it. The social space is therefore both the first and the last reality, because the image that social actors have of their own society is determined by those actors themselves. (Bourdieu 1979)

What is really troubling about the “soft drinks” observation is that we can imagine that any citizen of the world might want to ask for a Coca Cola on board an airplane. We would not be able to find signs of any kind of a cultural shock between the USA and Canada as regards the drinks found on airplanes, but speaking a different language means in many cases eating differently, having different values, holding beliefs that frequently exclude and having expectations in life that don’t always match.

The world cannot be translated without consequences. The greatest trap that cultural imperialism falls into is this, thinking that linguistic diversity is nothing more than saying the same thing using different words. Linguistic rights cannot be perceived as a huge automatic translation machine, a room full of interpreters with headsets and microphones patiently listening to words in one language, processing them in a head that has been trained for this particular battlefield, and then changing them into words that have an identical value but are simply expressed in another language.

The automatic translation machine, even as just an idea, is only possible in contexts that already form part of a system of shared values. International politics is clearly dependent on interpreters who are conversant with the argot of global communication. However, such communication, however influential it may be, forms an infinitesimal part of the world’s linguistic richness, not in terms of different languages but as regards ways of thinking, ways of life.

The greatest threat to diversity is the idea that there is only one possible way of behaving in the world and that all the other ways of organizing one’s life with dignity should be “translated” into a single way of life with standardized aspirations and shared expectations. It is roundly false to think that the world would be a better place if each and every one of the planet’s inhabitants longed to ask for a Coca Cola in our own language, while we travel great distances comfortably seated on board our airplane. This unification of desires, this narrowing of the possibility of living life with dignity, has instead brought us to the brink of planetary collapse. There has been an error in the way progress has been designed and it is time we faced up to the fact (Sousa Santos).

We do not need to enact any universal law to ensure respect for languages that we do not understand and that arouse in us an instinctive and fierce terror due to our fear of losing control. We need much more than a law or right that is universally recognized. We need to abandon the epistemology that led to the construction of progress in the way that we know it today. We need to abandon the idea that only a world that is known is a world that is safe. We need to re-embrace linguistic diversity with all its richness of nuance and tension that makes the world literally untranslatable, because culture is not born in a closed system but instead results from the interaction between at least two different elements: “The idea that the starting point of any semiotic System is not the simple isolated sign

(word), but rather the relation between at least two signs causes us to think in a different way about the fundamental bases of semiosis. The starting point occurs not in a single isolated model, but rather in semiotic space". (Lotman 172)

Humanity, with all its capacity for cohesion and innovation, would not exist if it were not for those episodes of friction between unidentical elements. But when a culture begins to define itself, it tends to create a simplified image. "This may be compared with the fluid boundaries of language on a map showing their natural distribution in contrast to their clear articulation, for example, on a political map". (Lotman 172)

The theoretical space that we occupy when talking about the co-existence of languages is almost always defined by political maps. We see languages as stable structures that are internally completely unified, with borders that are also stable and definitive, drawn on a map. We identify languages, perhaps not directly with existing States (though we frequently do this too), but certainly with a very specific territorial distribution. If we focus the lens a little, we will certainly see areas of intersection, interstices where two or more languages coincide. We have also unavoidably acquired the notion that there are spaces, particularly big cities that have become communication hubs, in which linguistic diversity is so complex that it is no longer possible to break the constitutive elements down into any kind of coherent pattern, everything fluctuates, affiliations are unstable, people come and go, or they rapidly turn into the speakers of another language.

And here lies the heart of the question. Linguistic maps, however detailed they may be, are territorial representations that reduce our linguistic existence to a monolingual one. According to these oft-repeated simplifications, we perceive Barcelona as a city in which a certain section of the population *only* speaks Spanish while the other section *only* speaks Catalan. Those who are aware of the real situation can only smile at such ignorance.

However, going beyond the violent consequences that still result today from attempts to enforce linguistic standardization, do we really have to think about language in this way, fused to who we are, at one with our bodies, with our minds, something that we cannot be separated from in any way?

At this point we must focus on an important component that clearly does not originate from the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We must examine the nature of this unbreakable bond between a person and a single possible authentic language. Linguistic rights are almost always considered and defined on the basis of this kind of exclusivist thinking, without any possible nuance. The problem with this perception of a single original language that defines the individual is not just its strict monolingual approach that requires a kind of religious loyalty from the individual, but also the structuring of this linguistic belonging as part of an absolutely homogenous community.

It is for this reason that the concept of "linguistic rights" has become unusable in the current context. From this perspective, language is not seen as what it is, a conscious decision to belong, a political space that is under constant construction, but rather as an unalterable essence. Languages are highly complex spaces for communication, permeable but at the same time closed. Any language will allow for the incorporation of new speakers and users, while at the same time isolating this group from all other groups and making it internally binding. The nature of language is twofold, it is simultaneously open and closed,

but above all, language is not a uniform structure but instead involves a great amount of internal stratification.

All languages are socially hierarchical spaces, and they operate like battlefields on which a fight to achieve dominance is constantly being fought out. However much the speakers of a particular language may be able to communicate with one another without difficulty, the way that one uses a language is a social, and therefore by association, an economic indicator. Languages are codes, replete with the kinds of markers that rule out or legitimize a particular provenance. (Bourdieu, 1982) Speaking English with an Oxford accent is not the same as speaking it with the accent of some far-off colony; speaking fluent Bavarian is not the same as expressing oneself in the hyper-correct German spoken by the children of immigrants who are keen to assimilate. The first of these two examples is a clear illustration of the privileges that have been passed on from generation to generation. It means a pure linguistic code, in which an accent or a badly written word can crush any social advancement because language operates like an invisible filter that sorts everyone into categories within the society in which they live.

The second example is perhaps a more important one to bear in mind, because it operates in reverse. Only those who actually occupy a secure position within the linguistic hierarchy can allow themselves the luxury of taking a relaxed approach, to speak a dialect as a sign of distinction, of prestige, of a special kind of belonging. An example of this is the Mayor of Pau who mentioned Bourdieu in his weekly briefing and whom the press applauded because he had given a speech in “excellent Occitan”. What was unusual was for him to speak the disparaged language of the region, because no-one questioned the fact that his French would be anything less than perfect. Newcomers, by contrast, because they have such a servile approach to linguistic hierarchies, attract criticism for the beauty of their linguistic expression, their excessive desire for integration. As demonstrated by the chilling example of Chiapas that we mentioned above, where the indigenous people were forbidden from addressing the landowners for whom they worked in Spanish, it is not enough to speak the language of those in power correctly, you must wait for those in power to grant you access to such a prized asset as full linguistic integration.

The claim that someone can master all the languages that they need seems constantly to be challenged by a shortage of time. In one lifetime, however long it might be, it is not possible to master more than about a dozen languages, and what point is there in all this learning and effort if our knowledge will always end up being limited and partial?

This type of argument involves a particularly strong contradiction, one that in my opinion is unsustainable. Because arguments about the pointlessness of linguistic diversity do not come from the wise heptalinguists; they instead come from within those intellectual circles that are frightened by the challenge of language learning. Someone who actually ends up speaking seven or more languages knows that behind this ability is nothing more than “real portions of a life”. Any language that we truly need can be accessible. In my day-to-day life, because of a particular series of circumstances, I actually use all the seven languages that I speak on an almost daily basis, some of them more for formal communication, others among friends and family. I don’t feel I have achieved anything extraordinary or difficult, it was merely a question of living with an open mind and taking advantage of the opportunity to participate in the environments in which, for one reason or another, I found myself.

Are we more accepting and tolerant, we heptalinguists? Even this can be shown to be a simple fallacy, because languages operate within their own context, and they can easily lead their speakers to take a radical, belligerent stance. Wisdom does not necessarily protect one from any action of exclusion. Intransigence is a quality frequently found among the erudite.

Linguistic justice based on the principle of free access to *any* language that we cross paths with is particularly contradictory. Presupposing that any individual can become a wise heptalinguist without even realizing it, purely because they have lived in different environments, is a risky assumption to make. Clearly, such a useful ability, if it were generally applicable, would facilitate communication in a way that has never before been seen, but would the world be a fairer, more equitable, more peaceful place as a result? And would it be better organized?

Justice is not a concept that is unconnected from all reality, free, like a mathematical axiom, from all conditioning factors. Justice exists within a system of values, and it is only applicable, with all its measures of redress and coercion, within a politically organized society. Justice could be global if we could organize a global system of values, by connecting existing realities in a network that is not hierarchical or authoritarian, and that above all is capable of avoiding the symbolic dominance that is so frequently disguised with an invisible cloak, like in an old fairy tale.

The main problem with protecting the use of languages is that a language does not belong to an individual; the use of a language is only meaningful if we can share it with others. Law is intended to protect the individual, the specific person, against abuses of power and against individual actions that could harm the established order. Killers and thieves are tried, forgers and the corrupt are sentenced, and victims and the defenseless are protected by law. Judges hear specific cases, actions that involve protagonists whose roles are well explained and factual descriptions of the acts that are to be condemned or that require protection under the law. But as illustrated by Moira Paz's study entitled, "The Failed Promise of Language Rights: A Critique of the International Language Rights Regime", international justice does not actually have the capacity to resolve linguistic conflicts.

Talking about justice in the plural is difficult. The concept of genocide and crimes against humanity was tackled by two brilliant jurists, Rafael Lemkin and Hersch Lauterpacht, at a crucial moment in history, when the crimes of the Nazis had reached such extreme levels of systematic planning that it no longer came down to condemning people one by one but instead required condemnation of the entire mechanism that had made such moral obfuscation and the creation of such a deadly ideological machine possible (Sands).

Nowadays, the hand of justice is increasingly tempted into applying extreme interventionism, the kind seen in a state of emergency, to ordinary daily affairs. The police have been transformed into the armed wing, quite literally I fear, of a justice system that hands down judgement not against individual offences but against collective causes that endanger the status quo of the established powers. The moral victory that was achieved with the establishment of well-founded legal concepts such as "human rights" and "crimes against humanity" or "genocide", all of them valid even though they spring from different

roots, is today looking fragile. The same emphatic and idealistic rhetoric is being clumsily used to condemn movements in civil society, with political authorities making claims of discrimination and even the commission of crimes.

Linguistic rights fall precisely at this intersection between individual and collective rights. Law can protect individual rights, even in the hostile context of an open conflict. However, it is frustratingly powerless to protect collective causes, while the suggestion that it should be the judges who “blindly” decide which languages have the right to be used and which do not is an idea that fills one with horror. Why? Because linguistic rights fall into the domain of politics rather than law, and when politics gets involved with the judiciary the judges all too frequently apply their own prejudices and their own ideology. To achieve the *pax linguae* that humankind has probably sought from its very beginnings we must establish functional societies that are capable of living with the aporias that are inherent in the human society. As humans we are smart, curious, born explorers. However much the geopolitics of a particular moment in history draws uncrossable borders and turns mountain ranges or oceans into definitive barriers, we know that nothing has ever been able to prevent the eternal dance of human migration; we move and we transform ourselves, constantly, everywhere. For the same reason, languages also do not represent any barrier or obstacle; all we need is some “real portion of a life” in order to be able to communicate in any language that is not our language of birth.

We can live with and understand one another precisely because language is not a part of our body. My language is not an inseparable part of me. We must however change how we think about language in relation to both its individual and collective use. We must overcome our secular prejudices, our fears when facing the most internalized unknowns. We must open ourselves up to the world, use translation not just as a tool, but as a way of being. We must learn to open ourselves up to things that are unknown to us, to trust in the innate curiosity that characterizes us as a species.

Then, perhaps that global society that is able to accept diversity as its very substance might come up with a legal framework, some laws that will protect us against abuses and fraudulent behavior. “Virtually all existing models of deliberative democracy simply take for granted that everyone shares a common language. Establishing a common language of public debate, therefore, can be seen as one of the preconditions for the sort of inclusive and justice promoting democracy we seek” (Pattern and Kymlicka 15), a statement so true that it sends a chill down the spine. Languages that are not strong enough to impose themselves are seen as an obstacle to peace, democracy, the very possibility of creating an inclusive society. It is the kind of perverse way of thinking that could be attributed to the guileful Tancredi Falconeri, the legendary character from *Il Gattopardo* by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: *Se vogliamo che tutto rimanga come è, bisogna che tutto cambi*”. And I have purposefully left the quote untranslated.

At present, talk of an “oppressed majority” frequently prevails in debates about linguistic rights, demonstrating that even the status of victim can be reversed. In the years immediately preceding the Balkans crisis at the end of the 20th century, Milorad Pavić wrote the novel *Dictionary of the Khazars*, intended from the outset for wide international circulation, something that it achieved: “It was published in Paris as well in Belgrade in 1984, by which time another dozen translations were already under way. By the late nineties, it had been translated into no fewer than twenty-six languages, including Japanese

and Catalan, and had sold several million copies in all. Yet the book's international success involved the neglected or outright misreading of its political content" (Damrosch 261).

The broad acceptance of this book can be put down to the ease with which people identify with the right of the strongest power. Pavić gave the world a new and genuine representation of the need to crush any claim that runs contrary to the interests of the majority that holds power: "Look at the results of this democracy of yours. Before, big nations used to oppress small nations. Now it's the reverse. Now, in the name of democracy, small nations *terrorize* (sic!) the big. [...] Your democracy sucks" (Pavić, quoted by Damrosch 274).

Many died in the Balkans, and the courses of many lives were dramatically interrupted because of this idea that a solution must be imposed and democracy would have to be less democratic, so that only those who had always been in power could remain in power. "Poet of a radically fallen world, Pavić creates a book from his own passions and prejudices, expecting that different readers may find ways out of his book that he himself cannot take or perhaps even find," David Damrosch wisely concludes in his analysis of the book.

Regarding legal regulation as a way of determining which identifying characteristics are acceptable is harmful because it creates a false sense of immunity; if the law allows it, any behavior seems legitimate. When the affirmation of one's individual rights are seen from this perspective, one only defends that which is one's own, one never actually thinks of the rights of others. Having a right is not the same thing as imparting justice. The concept of human rights forces us to look at the context in which injustices occur. And this means that they must always be redefined when they are practically applied. A right can only be exercised if this is done at a specific time and in a specific space. Human rights have little use as an abstract idea; we can only regard them as useful if they can change individual lives and, in doing so, also transform society. To achieve the profound transformation we need to transform the basis for our thinking, change the epistemology, because if we do not, the old ideas, however much we may transform them, will always lead us up the same old blind alleys.

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National Literary Awards and the Basque Literary System¹

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In 1985, with Francisco Rico as director of the Classic Library of the Royal Spanish Academy, the Ministry of Culture decided to give major boost to the National Literary Awards by passing a new decree in order to invigorate them. This decree established that the Awards were open to those creations in any of the four languages considered to be official in their respective autonomous communities: Spanish, Catalan, Galician, and Basque. Creations in Asturian were left out of the ordinance, though.

That new regulation, which was implemented under socialist rule and with Javier Solana as Minister of Culture, contributed, to my mind, to the establishment of a fruitful and collaborative relationship between literature in the Basque language and a support platform for its globalisation and internationalisation. Nevertheless, this resolution was not unanimously accepted and it gave way to countless debates about its function within the literary system.

The proposal designed by the Ministry was clearly political in nature and sought to strengthen ties with the so-called State of Autonomies. Thus, in this case, the political system clearly encompassed the literary system. In this light, the application of the methodology proposed in the Polysystem Theory becomes an ideal tool to assess both literary stances and practices.

Today, the motivation which gave way to these awards is described on the website of the Ministry of Culture: “The linguistic and cultural diversity that characterises Spanish society, the wide variety and richness of literature in Spanish, Catalan, Galician, Valencian and Basque is supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport in all expressions

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related to books”. Surprisingly enough, instead of finding a justification for these awards in the diversity of the prizes awarded, as one may think, such justification lies in the composition of the panels of experts: “This is reflected in the composition of the panels of experts, which include a representative from each of the institutions that oversee the official languages of Spain” (Ministry of Culture official website).

In this regard, we should bear in mind Itamar Even-Zohar’s statement in which he defines the status of literature as a symbolic element which plays an essential role in the creation of national identities, regardless their plurality, as in the Spanish case:

La literatura nunca renunció a su influencia como hecho que significa poder y distinción, y ésta ha sido posiblemente su función primordial como actividad organizada. Los gobernantes, manteniendo el hábito de perpetuar actividades textuales, señalaban su superioridad, distinguiéndose a sí mismos del resto de la sociedad o de otros dirigentes “indignos”, por decirlo de algún modo [...]. En resumen, poseer una “literatura” era uno de los indispensables del poder (Even-Zohar 2017 59-60)

Literature never forwent its influence, if we read “influence” as power and distinction, and this may be deemed to have been its primary role as an organised activity. The rulers’ superiority was highlighted by the fact that they continued perpetuating texts, and this distinguished them from the rest of society or from other “unworthy” rulers, so to say [...]. In short, possessing a “literature” was one of the minimum requirements for power (own translation)]. At a later stage, Even-Zohar remarks that not only does power collect texts but it can also collect creators: “*Para poder acumular este capital [simbólico] hay que invertir en mercancías relevantes. Por ejemplo, coleccionar textos [...]. Y, además, coleccionar personas que produzcan textos*”(Even-Zohar 2017 79) [In order to be able to raise this [symbolic] capital you must invest in relevant goods. For instance, you must collect texts [...]. And, what’s more, you must collect the people who produce texts (own translation)]. I will not dare say that the Ministry of Culture meant to collect both texts and creators, but, indeed, their interest in the creation of the award sought the plurality of those awarded. A little-known anecdote which took place over the process of discussion of the 1985 National Award—which was intentionally held in San Sebastian— demonstrates this latter point. At the behest of Juan San Martín, representative of the Royal Academy of the Basque Language, the panel of experts of the National Literary Award/Essay Category had agreed to award the prize to a work written in Basque, *Euskal Baladak*, a compilation of Basque popular songs carried out by Joseba Lakarra, Koldo Biguri and Blanca Urgell. Unexpectedly, they realised that the work had been published in 1983 instead of in 1984 as the terms and conditions of the awards stated, so it couldn’t be taken into consideration.

A Survey of the National Awards in the Basque Country

If we make a list (see annex) of those awarded with the different National Awards from this new stage onwards, we will realise that the presence of Basque writers (and illustrators) is rather significant whenever we take into account all writers from the Basque Country, either if they write in Basque or in Spanish, and if we take a comprehensive approach while we perform the recount. The basic criteria for that open-mindedness is their place of birth. Bearing this in mind, the circumstances are complex: writers who have been born

here but who have developed their professional career somewhere else (Amestoy, Gomá), those who were born in a different Autonomous Community but decided to live in the Basque Country (Sastre, Guerra Garrido), or those who have kept strong cultural ties with the Basque Country, mainly through the University or other institutions, are included in the list. If we are generous, we can find 25 awards. There are 3 National Spanish Literature Awards. 5 National Literature Awards/ Narrative Category. No National Literature Awards/ Poetry Category. 3 National Literature Awards/ Dramatic Literature Category. A vast list of 7 National Literature Awards/ Essay Category. 2 in Children's and Young People's Literature Category, oddly enough, awarded to two writers in Basque. Eventually, we find one in each of these categories: National Award for the Best Work of a Translator, National Comic Award, National Illustration Award and National Support for Reading Award. We will discuss the reversed 2016 National Award for the Best Translation further below, and we will not take into account the finalists for the Awards, since they are not confirmed, in spite of the fact that Felipe Juaristi was on the verge of winning the 1998 National Literature Award/ Poetry Category, and Ramón Saizarbitoria was on the edge of winning the National Literature Award/ Narrative Category, on two different occasions, in 2001 and in 2013.

If we focus on those writers in Basque who have been awarded a prize, which is the main topic covered in this article, we can find 3 National Literature Awards/ Narrative Category, 2 National Literature Awards/ Children's and Young People's Literature Category, 1 National Literature Award/ Essay Category and one National Award for the Best Work of a Translator. To these we would add the reversed 2016 National Award for the Best Translation awarded to Luis Baraiazarra for his translation of *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila (Santa Teresa Jesusena. Idazlan guztiak)*. At that time the terms and conditions stated that the awards would take into account translations from a foreign language and, for that reason, it couldn't be granted to translations from any of the languages found in Spain, in this case, Basque-Spanish, so the award was reversed a day later. The Minister of Culture extended his apologies for the repeal. Changes to these terms and conditions were made that same year.

National Literature Awards and the Basque Literary System: Narrative Category

Only 4 (Children's and Young People's, Essay and Best Work of a Translator), out of the 7 prizes awarded to literary works written in Basque haven't been subjected to a subsequent debate within the Basque Literary System. The National Literature Award/ Narrative Category being granted has always given way to reactions and debates. Hence, we can already state a first feature of the Awards: those genres which can be found at the core of the system are more prone to be debated than those which are at its periphery. Thus, the awards granted to Anjel Letxundi for Essay or to Mariasun Landa and Juan Kruz Igerbide for Children's and Young People's have not become controversial, whereas those granted to Bernardo Atxaga for *Obabakoak* (1989), Unai Elorriaga for *SPrako tranbia/ A Tram to SP* (2002), and Kimen Uribe for *Bilbao-New York-Bilbao* 2009 have been subject to extreme controversy.

On the other hand, each of them represents a different case and they must be considered in a different light, even though the same arguments are repeated periodically. Tensions within the system arise because there exist two differing stances. One of them

takes into consideration the advantages for the writer who is granted the award whereas the other envisions problems for the literary field. In other words, there exists a tension over the symbolic capital implied in the fact that a work written in Basque is granted an important award in Spain.

The Basque literary society is averse to literary awards, no matter whether they are national or not. On the one hand, established authors or those who have a strong trajectory and have no difficulty in publishing their work do not enter competitions. Thus, they leave room for new writers, what drives the organizers to desperation as no renown winner can be identified. When a renown writer signs up, it is usually for economic reasons. Furthermore, within the literary system we can find a large segment of avant-garde writers who are extremely critical of awards focusing on the fact that literature cannot be “measured”, and on the fact that it is inappropriate to participate with an institution that identifies literature with a race. However, let’s focus on the reactions raised by each Narrative Award:

1989. Bernardo Atxaga: *Obabakoak*

The award granted to *Obabakoak* in 1989 served as a wake-up call and a trigger. It couldn’t be compared to the Iparraguirre National Prize awarded to Gabriel Aresti in 1968 for his work *Harri eta Herril Stone and Country*. Bernardo Atxaga stepped in amid a favourable social context, within a political system which aimed to become legitimate through literary creation.

This became an emblematic case because it was the first one, but, more importantly, it became emblematic because it came to prove that Basque literature could be first-rate and that it deserved to be known beyond language boundaries. Its impact endangered Atxaga’s very work as he feared being considered a national writer and that this might affect his work (Atxaga 1996; Larrauri 2007). To my mind, the Award gave visibility to the literature written in Basque which then began its international foray in a world which would soon become globalised.

As is well-known, *Obabakoak* is made up of a collection of short stories whose common thread is the alphabet which is formed using the first letter of each of the stories, and whose balance is represented in the aesthetic coherence of the stories told which are set in a mythical place called Obaba.

Atxaga was already renown in the world of Basque literature, but his being granted the award earned him bigger respect and it had important repercussions on the literary system. The first consequence entailed a feeling of self-esteem. It increased the self-confidence of a society which could boast about a literature which could be part of bigger literary systems as the translations of the work were gaining major acceptance rates. Thus, literature in Basque had become ready to be exported. Creations in that small language had become noticeable, not only in Spain but in the world. However, it turned the National Award into an important instrument for the Basque literary system: it was an effective platform to become known and to reinforce a writer’s career. The second consequence modified the Basque literary system, which up to that moment drew heavily from activist writers. Atxaga came to prove that it was possible and even necessary to consider employing

those strategies of a professional writer. His aesthetics, which promoted the autonomy of literature was soon to clash with those stances that supported the idea that the literature in the Basque Country had to be structured around “realism” and the dissemination of the independentist currents, close to the ideological movements of the radical left (Billelabeitia 2016). Furthermore, this work changed the centre of the system by placing narrative in a privileged and hegemonic position and displacing poetry to the periphery. The third aftermath was of a social nature: in a spite of the author’s reluctance, the prize became a symbol of the capacity to create of the Autonomous Community. What’s more, it came to prove that the cultural policy of the autonomous government was being implemented in an effective manner.

Nevertheless, Atxaga had already been subjected to criticism from a number of those that conformed the culture of the radical left. Not only from Álvarez Enparantza, Txillardegui (1929-2012) who stated that the main aim of literature in Basque was to become the voice of an “oppressed people,” but also from a writer, Anton Azkargorta, who in 1989 had claimed that *Henry Bengoa Inventarium* was a work at the service of the bourgeoisie. Indeed, the 1989 National Literary Award was not received in a neutral location by the author.

2002. Unai Elorriaga: *SPrako tranbia/A Tram to SP*

The award to Unai Elorriaga came as a surprise to everybody. It was his first novel and readers were caught by the play of naïve aesthetics and surrealism. The novel dealt with an unprecedented theme in Basque literature: the loneliness of the elderly, their homesickness for the lost worlds which were represented by a tram that had existed in their city, but which had disappeared and by their hope of being able to keep alive the dream of reaching the peak of the Shisha Pangma. Unai Elorriaga creates an oneiric and caring world by placing himself close to the disease of the protagonists (Alzheimer’s). Basically, the writer was an unknown novelist who did not occupy the centre of the literary system, he was not as popular as Atxaga, but the award acted as an extraordinary springboard to make his work known.

In spite of his relative peripheric position, his award received unparalleled feedback. Accepting the Award meant receiving a positive opinion granted by an organization which had nothing to do either with the literary system or with the ideological system. Even though it is true that betrayal is not mentioned, we *do* talk of a kindness towards an “other” who is placed away from a “we” who are part of the literature which is committed to the Basque Country.

These were some of the remarks on Elorriaga which can be summarised according to the following positions in the system. When Elorriaga received the award, his editor Xabier Mendiguren claimed that Basque writers: “[*No necesitamos los aplausos de los de fuera*]” (Urtekaría 2003:100). [Do not need the support of others (own translation)]. And another Basque writer, Jon Alonso, complained that: “[*Es probable que sea duro admitir que un gesto del mundo cultural castellano puede hacer cambiar la estructura vasca*]” (Urtekaría 2003:112). [It might be difficult to admit that a gesture from the Spanish cultural world might make the Basque structure change (own translation)]. (Translated by the author of this article).

Undeniably, the National Literary Award *does* have consequences in the Basque literary system. It works as a canonising institution. Nevertheless, this criticism ignores the fact that the awarded works—clearly in the case of *Obabakoak* and to a lesser extent when we refer to Unai Elorriaga—had already been accepted within the Basque literary system. These opinions are not aware of the intrinsic permeability of the literary systems and of the constant existing exchange between them. To this regard, the National Literary Award is similar to translations to other languages, as Itamar Even-Zohar remarks (Even-Zohar 2017 89), in a dual sense: the awarded works are assimilated in a different literary system and they give way to new relations within the system in which they have been created.

Nonetheless, in the case of Unai Elorriaga the award sparked yet another debate within the Spanish literary—or journalistic—system. In the peak of Aznar's rule, the right wing press claimed that when the award had been granted, the panel of experts had not had the complete translation of the awarded work at their disposal. A biased reading of the following event gave way to this minor debate. That year, the panel of experts met twice. Before the summer, they did not have access to the complete translation, but they gave the work a vote of confidence. After the summer, during the final meeting, the panel of experts *did* already know the complete work, on which they rendered their decision.

However, Unai Elorriaga is, so far, the author who has taken less advantage of the Award for his consolidation as a professional writer. His reasons have been both, aesthetic and biographical. His aesthetics fail to make his works popular and they prevent him from becoming a best-seller. His following works were published: *Van't Hoffen ilea /El pelo de Van't Hoff* (2003, translation 2004) and *Vredaman* (2005, translation 2006). Nevertheless, his extremely interesting latest novel, *Iazko hezurak* (2014, Susa) has yet failed to find an editor for its Spanish version. On the other hand, and for personal reasons, the author has decided to devote himself to teaching.

2009. Kirmen Uribe: *Bilbao-New York-Bilbao*

Kirmen Uribe is an example of an author whose aim is to become professional and to make his work international. The 2009 National Literary Award/ Narrative Category helped reinforce his powerful writing vocation. It became the scaffold which helped him create the conditions that would allow him to leap from the minority Basque literary system to stronger ones. Ideological reasons influenced the debate raised by his work even before he was awarded the prize. In 2008 he was awarded the prize granted by the Ramón Rubial Fund, founded as a tribute to the former president of the Socialist Party in the Basque Country. In 2009, when the socialist Patxi López took his oath as President of the Basque Government, he read a poem by Kirmen Uribe (and another one by Wislawa Szymborska). Uribe was never forgiven for these two events. That same year a group of Basque writers sent to the media a fake decision of the Critics' Choice Award, even before it had been awarded. The National Literary Award/ Narrative Category was attributed to Kirmen, who got to obtain it in the end. The National Award/ Poetry Category was apocryphal, as it corresponded to the name of a character create by Joseba Sarrionandia. Since this action didn't get much repercussion, the authors explained it a year later.

Nevertheless, that anecdote can serve as an example of the situations the author had to undergo because of the Award. It became evident that the political transversality the writer claimed, had not been accepted by the literary system. It was obvious that the award was understood as a major symbol, since on July 20th 2010 the author received the prize, symbolically in Bilbao, from the then Prince and Princess of Asturias, Felipe and Letizia.

It is not easy to find any public reaction to the acceptance of the award. However, the intranet of the publishers with whom the author usually works received countless negative remarks on the author who was even subjected to anonymous violent threats, as he himself has confessed.

Before the Award, the work had already received harsh criticism, based on its literary quality on this occasion. We can, for instance, recall one of them: [*La cuestión reside en ver qué resultado consigue este proyecto lleno de riesgo y ambición. En mi opinión la novela naufraga desde el principio, como si fuera una pequeña chalupa y el lector se mueve en ella de un lado para otro a merced de las olas*] (Sarasola). [The question is to see what the outcome of this risky and ambitious project is. To my mind, the novel flounders from the beginning, as if it were a small boat and the reader struggled hard with the waves (own translation)].

In spite of the maliciousness that can be found within the system, *Bilbao-New York-Bilbao*, consolidated the author's projection and turned him into a model for Basque literature. Furthermore, we can state that Uribe's literary career has boosted. Indeed, the novel has been translated into 13 languages.

Breaking News

We will close this tour of the National Literature Awards granted to Basque literature with the news that reads that Bernardo Atxaga was granted the National Spanish Literature Award in 2019. This award did not raise any debate within the literary system. Indeed, the fact that the Spanish media were the ones to hold the discussion over whether it was a political question or not, is quite paradoxical.

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Annex. National literary awards granted to basque writers

National spanish literary award

1985. Julio Caro Baroja/ 1986. Gabriel Celaya/2006 Raúl Guerra Garrido/ 2019 Bernardo Atxaga.

National literary award/narrative category

1989. Bernardo Atxaga/ 2002. Unai Elorriaga/2006. Ramiro Pinilla/ 2009. Kirmen Uribe/ 2017. Fernando Aranburu.

National literary award/dramatic literature category

1993. Alfonso Sastre/ 2002. Ignacio Amestoy/ 2013. Ramón Barea.

National literary award/essay category

1982. Fernando Savater/ 1986. Paloma Díaz Mas/ 1998. Jon Juaristi/ 2000. Javier Echeverría/ 2003. Daniel Innerarity./ 2004. Javier Gomá./ 2010. Anjel Lertxundi.

National literary award/ children's and young people's literature category

2003. Mariasun Landa/ 2018. Juan Kruz Igerabide.

National award for the best work of a translator

2013. Josu Zabaleta.

National award for the best translation (reversed)

2016. Luis Baraiazarra.

National comic award

2010. Antonio Altarriba.

National illustration award

2015. Elena Odriozola.

National support for reading award

2015. *Territorios. Suplemento Cultural de El Correo.*

Tensions Between the Navarrese and Basque Literary Systems in the Last Quarter of the 20th Century and the Beginning of 21st Century

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The Different Transition in Navarra

Navarre, XX. In the second half of the twentieth century, it underwent several changes. Emigration on the one hand: a) there was a great emigration to America in search of work in the sixties and seventies; b) there was a large emigration to nearby industrial areas, such as Bizkaia or Gipuzkoa. On the other hand, immigration to the industrial zones of Navarre.

It is known that with the death of General Francisco Franco, in the Spanish State a new stage (called “The Transition”) began in which, autonomous communities were to be formed. In Navarra, after an initial debate and some doubts of some party (for example, the Socialist Party of Navarra, initially was in favor of forming a community with the three Basque provinces), then the majority political parties in Navarra opted to form the Foral community of Navarra, without ties of union with the Basque autonomous Community.

As in many parts of the Spanish state, supposedly in a province so “loyal” to the Franco regime, Navarre also began to form “new” political movements and groups in 1975. In Navarra (as in other Spanish territories), some political currents that had long been clandestine (patriotism, communism, socialism, etc.) began to appear under the acronyms of some political parties. Foralism was a transversal tendency, a characteristic of

sovereignty for nationalists, a stimulus for regionalists to be under Spain, and so on. In any case, there were many expectations and unknowns in those times.

The transition period the political paths in Navarra and Euskadi were remarkably different. Even so, the territories of Las Vascongadas and Navarra clung to a foral system that we are not going to describe here, but that somehow united them in the way of managing the politics of those territories.

The so-called Basque conflict also had a different history in Navarra. The hard times of attacks came to Navarra years after the Basque provinces, but on certain occasions it also struck people who were in favor of Basque culture (but not in favor of a socialist-Marxist revolution). This is the case of the attack against Jesús Ulaiar, father of big family and former mayor of Etxarri-Aranatz, who was Basque speaker and promoter of Basque culture in his native valley. Alberto Barandiaran Amillano (Altsasu, 1964), journalist and writer wrote a chronicle on this painful subject and in it he gathered testimonies and journalistic quotes from the media of that time on how the matter was followed (107-126).

The account of the conflict (“our sad account,” according to Aingeru Epaltza) appears more than once in the literature we examine or appear; for example, in the novel Iñaki Zabaleta’s *110th Street-eko geltokia* or in Aingeru Epaltza’s *Ur uherrak*.

Some politicians during the Franco regime also began to collaborate with political change. Among them is Miguel Jabier Urmeneta (1915-1988), former mayor of Pamplona, military and “Basque”, who tried politics from 1975 onwards and took part in various initiatives in favor of Basque culture.

These attitudes of personalities were significant in those times: they were scandalous to some; warming spirits for others. Some people who were well-known and famous in the cultural life of Pamplona also began to learn Basque: José María Jimeno Jurio, Jorge Cortés Izal, Pablo Antoñana, among others... It was a symbolic gesture; especially since the majority of the Parliament of Navarre was not in favor of a strong language policy (in favor of the Basque language).

Specific Institutions in Navarra

There are two periods of the so-called Basque Renaissance and, in the first period (1876-1930), the influence of the “Asociación Euskara de Navarra” must be emphasized starting even in the nineteenth century. It also spread throughout the 20th century, thanks to the contributions of scholars such as Arturo Campion (1854-1937), who played an important role in the creation of Eusko Ikaskuntza (Basque Studies Society) and Euskaltzaindia (Academy of Basque Language). In our opinion, it should be recalled and highlighted that a special dynamic was developed in Navarre in terms of Basque culture. In the face of the loss of sovereignty (after the loss of the Carlist Wars), the feeling of helplessness or abandonment was particularly deep in some Navarrese cultural figures, which led to a precedent for the creation of the “Basque Association of Navarre” (Spanish version, “Asociación Euskara de Navarra”). In fact, up to that no association was created in the whole of the Baskonia territories, as long as it was a public initiative that supported the Basque language and culture in a direct and effective way, in a series of publications (*Revista Euskara de Navarra* was the

official publication, but in other publications such as *El Arga* and *Lau Buru*, the Euskaros developed their political discourse) and with the support of various actors.

A few years after the end of the Civil War, the “Institución Príncipe de Viana” was created in Navarre, which was in a way the heir to the Basque Association of Navarre (Asociación Euskara de Navarra). At least initially, they followed a work begun by the “Euskaros”: they continued to recover the ruins of the Old Kingdom; that is, they developed plans to repair the remains of the Old Kingdom in places like Leyre, Olite, Roncesvalles-Orreaga, La Oliva, Iratxe. But there was another “remain” that had to be recovered: the language of Navarre, Basque. Efforts have been made since 1957 to fill this “gap” within the Príncipe de Viana. In the same year, a section was promoted to raise the Basque language and, among other activities, the Basque speaker children of Navarre were rewarded with 200 pesetas: between 1957 and 1966. In total, 6,192 children were awarded, while in the rest of the Basque territories the Basque language was silenced in the education system. This led (though precariously) to a thin conductive thread that had its roots in the period before the Civil War, and was like a weak light on the night of Franco. In addition to that, various Basque festival and “Juegos florales/Lore Jokoak” and bertso sessions were organized throughout Navarre.

Thus, although this turning point (the creation of an institution such as the Prince of Viana) led to the reversal of the precariousness of a system, it may have been more important for the literary system to create a “supplement” or supplement in Basque within Príncipe de Viana. Initially it was 4 pages long and later it went from 6 to 10 pages. The last issue, 149th, was published in 1985 and the authors of the articles include the Navarrese: Jose Mari Satrustegi (1930-2003), Mariano Izeta (1915-2001), Angel Irigaray (1899-1983), Bernardo Estornés (1907-1999) and Pedro Díez of Ulzurrun (1924-1994); the latter was director from the creation until 1973.

In addition, Navarra has had a language policy law to manage its own language, Euskera, very different from the Basque autonomous community. This law was promulgated in 1986 with little consensus but with a majority in the parliament of Navarra and by that law (Jurisdictional Law of Basque, Ley Foral del Vascuence) it is established that Basque is only co-official in the Basque-speaking zone (unofficial in the mixed zone or in the non-Basque-speaking zone).

Therefore, as a consequence of this law and unlike what occurred in the Basque Autonomous Community (which normalizes the use of the same language, Basque, in the public sphere) and what happened in other communities of the Spanish state, not all Navarrese could, no can they now, exercise their right to use either Basque or Castilian in their interactions with the public administration, nor will they be attended to in the language of their choice. The citizens of Navarre also lack the legal right to receive education in Basque in the various levels of instruction. Amongst other reasons, the Navarrese administration will not take the initiative to create a school which uses Basque as the language of instruction, nor will knowledge of the language be required for functionaries of the various centers that depend on that administration. (Barandiaran Amarika “The Fifth Administrations” 256)

This had consequences in the field of literature as well. One of them is that in the public education system, education in Basque is only protected in the Basque-speaking

area. This means that, among other things, the demand for literature (manuals, texts, fiction, poetry, “albums”...) in Basque, in the Navarre education system, is proportionately much lower than in the “Basque” education system (to put it in some way).

Media with Specificities: Literary Consequences

This lack of public support has had to be replaced or completed with a system of popular initiative schools, the *ikastolas*, private, but with financial help from the government. Also on the impulse of private initiatives have emerged in the early 80's media such as the newspaper *Navarra Hoy* (1982-1994), which tried to report with a more progressist profile than the prevailing among the community newspapers statutory. Within that newspaper they began to publish a supplement in Basque (a novelty since before the Franco period) where they began to exercise with literary style articles journalists and writers who were then key in this Basque literary sub-system of Navarre. It was the *Nafarroa Gaur* supplement (1987-1990, weekly supplement, 140 issues in total).

Indeed, the supplement *Nafarroa Gaur* (1987-1990), within the newspaper *Navarra Hoy* had as its collaborators several Navarrese writers. They used a standardized Basque language but full of features (accepted for the standard Basque language) of Navarre origin. That made the possibility that the indirect consumers¹ of Basque literature by authors from Navarre increased.

We just mentioned this supplement, and before we mentioned the *ikastolas*. As the writer Aingeru Epaltza (Iruñea, 1960), he was president of the federation of the *ikastolas* of Navarre (1990-2002) and, for a few years he was director of the *Nafarroa Gaur* supplement. I think that data like this show us how important certain people are in a literary subsystem like Navarre and how in such a small area, those people, who acquire the character of “brand” or “institution”, have to be multi-employed, to try to carry out their cultural and political projects.

As Joxemiel Bidador (1970-2010) stated, with initiatives such as *Nafarroa Gaur*, a bridge is drawn between the writers of the Franco era and those who came later, and began to write in another supplement, *Nafarkaria* (1991-2001), of the newspaper in Basque *Euskaldunon Egunkaria*. In this last supplement, it was also a new window with a very Navarrese glass or prism for Navarrese writers-journalists (Bidador “Materiales”).

Nowadays, in the newspaper entirely published in Basque (*Berria*) the texts or the contributions of Navarrese writers continue to be present. A weekly column that is still active in the form of a blog is significant, but in the newspaper *Berria* it has had a presence for years called “Nafar periferitik” [From the Navarre periphery]. The blog (which is inside the platform or digital site *berria.eus*) also collects quasi-philosophical aphorisms created by the author and articles also in Basque published in the newspaper *Diario de Noticias de Navarra*. In fact, if one enters the page of Bixente Serrano (1948-2020, he has recently passed away) in the site called “literaturaren zubitegia”, we see that this author has several literary works published:

1 Even Zohar 38-39.

- A book of aphorisms titled *Jauzika* (2010, Pamiela)
- A narrative work, *Onkoteak* (1987, Pamiela)
- Several essays with high literary value: *Beldurra bera zaldi* (2002, Pamiela); *Bakezale gerlari horiek* (2004, Pamiela); *Benetako bakea helburu, ez dago baketzerik* (2004, Pamiela); *Nafarroa. Historiaren hariak* (2005, Euskara Kultur Elkargoa)².

In *Bakezale gerlari horiek*, for example, analyzes different aspects of the reality of that time and among them is the violence generated by the terrorist organization ETA (at some time, very close to him, because he was part of it in the last years of Franco regime), trying to lay the foundations of an ethical judgment, and affirming, among other ideas, that his political infantilism is behind a militarism that by that time (we are around 2004) had caused unjustifiable and condemnable bloodshed, that would lead only to a negotiated end. In the work, *Jauzika*, still not an essay, but a work of aphorisms, also somehow makes a critical analysis of what he sees and shows once again as unorthodox within the general discourse of Basque culture or, above all, the culture made in the Basque language. In the introduction, he also uses at a time an epigraph that means “the heterodoxies of the periphery” (99):

[Heterodoxies of the periphery

Between the security of orthodoxy and the slipperiness of heterodoxy, I prefer to choose heterodoxy. Orthodoxy ensures immobility and failure (the Navarrese periphery is witness to having learned about this). Heterodoxy, on the other hand, ensures mobility; for failure is not a sure thing, but happens as much as possible³.]

Navarrese writers, on the other hand, in the capital of the province, Iruñea/ Pamplona, got used to collaborating on the only Basque radio in the Pamplona basin: Euskalerrria irratia/radio. It was a radio that for more than 25 years was a-legal, because the Navarrese authorities did not grant them the licenses to be legal, although several of the license contests were appealed and had to be repeated (Barandiaran Amarika “Linguistic Policy” 314-316).

Is the Basque Literary System in Navarra Peripheral?

Taking into account that the cultural, linguistic and literary situation of the “Basqueness” in Navarra does not enjoy official aid, perhaps we could ask ourselves if this has led it to be peripheral or not.

The Euskadi literature awards, on the other hand, are often an interesting indication. Navarrese authors are relatively well-rewarded, but that has not clearly brought them to the center of the system. Since 1997, the Euskadi literature awards have more modalities than those that existed from the beginning, in 1982. These modalities are: Basque, Spanish, translation, children’s and young people’s literature, illustration, essay in Basque, essay in Spanish.

2 zubitegia.armiarma.eus/?i=608

3 Translation made from Basque by the author.

Precisely in the year 1997 Navarrese Aingeru Epaltza (Pamplona, 1960) wins the literature prize in Euskera, with *Tigre ehizan*, which in 1999 would be published in Spanish with the title *Cazadores de tigres* (Xordica editorial). In 2004 the Navarrese Jokin Muñoz also wins it with *Bizia lo*, later published in Castilian as *Letargo* (Alberdania, 2005). Four years later, the artajonian Jokin Muñoz returns to win the Euskadi prize with *Antzararen bidea* (2008), translated into Spanish as *El camino de la oca* (Alberdania, 2008). In 2016, Luis Garde from Pamplona wins the prize with *Ehiztariaren isilaldia* and in Spanish *El silencio del cazador* (2016, Alberdania).

| Year | Title | Author |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1997 | <i>Tigre ehizan</i> | Aingeru Epaltza |
| 2004 | <i>Bizia lo</i> | Jokin Muñoz |
| 2008 | <i>Antzararen bidea</i> | Jokin Muñoz |
| 2016 | <i>Ehiztariaren isilaldia</i> | Luis Garde |

Despite this presence at the awards, it is not clear that authors such as Aingeru Epaltza or Jokin Muñoz are at the true center of the Basque literary system. One of the reasons may be the division (subjective and / or caused by the educational system and its proposals for literary readings) that exists among authors who write in Basque:

Mendearen azken hamarkada honek eman du zeresanik euskal literaturaren barnean. Nire ustetan, Euskara eskolan sartu den unetik gertatzen den idazleen arteko hierarkizazioa izango litzateke lehen puntua, edo nahi bada, kanonizazioa. Ramon Saizarbitoriak adibidez, idatzi du euskal idazleen arteko familia bakarra zatikatu egin dela, eta jada idazleen arteko desberdintasunak agertu egin direla gure artean. [...]

Kanonizazio joera honek beste eragin batzuk ere izan ditu. Adibidez, narratzaileen artean nabari da noizbait kexa xume bat: kritikak ez gaituela ongi tratatzen. Eta inoiz Xabier Mendigurenek deituriko 64ko belaunaldiak ez omen du lortu behar eta merezi bezain besteko oihartzuna: Aingeru Epaltza, Edorta Jimenez, Xabier Mendiguren bera, Pako Aristi... zaila da izen hauen inguruan monografikoak aurkitzea, erraza bada ere prentsa artikuluko dossier zabala egitea. (Kortazar Uriarte "Euskal literatura" 255)

[This last decade of the century has played a role in Basque literature. In my opinion, the first point, or if you will, the hierarchy between writers that has taken place since the introduction of Basque in school, would be the canonization. Ramon Saizarbitoria, for example, has written that the only family of Basque writers has split up, and that differences between writers have already emerged between us. [...]

This trend of canonization has also had other effects. For example, there is a humble complaint among narrators at some point: that criticism does not treat us well. And never has the 64th generation called Xabier Mendiguren gotten as much attention as it deserves: Aingeru Epaltza, Edorta Jimenez, Xabier Mendiguren himself, Pako Aristi... is the department to find monographs on these names, even if it's easy to make an extensive press article dossier.]

If we take as a focus the genre of literary essay, we also see that the Navarrese authors who write this type of essays are quite relative and comparatively with the essayists of other Basque territories. In 1989, Professor Josu Landa wrote:

[Navarre literature has managed to stand out tremendously these four or five years. Without fear of being wrong, through Pamplona we have had the most surprising discoveries lately, in terms of novelty at least. They have had (the editorial) “Pamiela” as a platform to publish, and the (journalistic) supplement “Nafarroa Gaur” as an influential element for a linguistic model.]⁴

But Aingeru Epaltza himself tackles the theme of the center and the periphery in a mini-essay that was published in 2005 by an association called Asociación Euskara de Navarra-Nafarroako Euskararen Elkargoa:

[In Navarra, since it has that name, Castilian and Basque have never been equal, not even when most of Navarre were Basque speakers. In Navarre the official discourse has placed Spanish in the center and Basque in the periphery. What is the central place? The center is who thinks to himself, who has language, who uses it in public, civilization and modernity, culture, the city, light, visibility, maturity, wealth understood in all its senses... On the periphery, on the other hand, are concerned with the opposite concepts. The periphery is brutality, the forest, the dark, the inside of the house, the invisibility, the immaturity, the antiquity, the inability to think and speak - and if you think or talk, it does not matter, because you do not understand it. The periphery, after all, is poverty, with all the meanings of the word: economic, social, moral, cultural poverty...]

That has been the message that has been transmitted in Navarre century after century, almost always stealthily, but also sometimes explicitly.]⁵

Therefore, taking into account these quotes and these points of view, we can say the following: there are two types of periphery,

1. The periphery within Navarra, where the predominant discourse has relegated what there is of Basque culture in the culture of Navarre to the periphery. Within this marginalized Basque culture are also Basque literature, its literary discourses and its points of view.
2. The periphery that constitutes the discourse of Navarre authors in the Basque language. This discourse is heterodox with respect to the “central” discourse carried out mainly by successful Gipuzkoan authors and by cultural agents and institutions (official, private and public) that are more hegemonic.

This is an indication that the Basque literary system is a polysystem that is in continuous contact with other surrounding (poly)system. For what we call the literary system does not exist outside the literary activities within that system of relationships⁶.

4 Translated from Spanish to English by me.

5 Epaltza “Ad intra” 153-154

6 Even-Zohar 29-30

In Spite of Everything, We Don't Want To Be Tutored

Despite this difficult or uncomfortable situation of Basque culture in Navarra, from the center of the Basque cultural polysystem, many agents still have (in this period that concerns us) a paternalistic vision towards Navarre, an incomprehension towards the correlation of forces or trends very different from those of Euskadi

Aingeru Epaltza, for instance, often speaking about the people of the Basque autonomous community, comments that they are confused when it comes to Navarra (in Elustondo):

Uste dut Nafarroan, gehienok, baita oharkabean ere, egina dugula gogoeta. Orain EAEn ere egitea gustatuko litzaideke. Mendebaldeko jendearekin, maiz egiten dut neure baitan: "Jesus, Maria, zer despistea daramaten! Oraindik, lurrundu den amets baten ondotik ari dira!". Ez dira ohartu amets hori ez dela egiazkoa... [...] Urte hauetan han zer gertatu den ikusi, hain gertu izan (Arabaz ari da), eta ez dute ondoriorik atera. Horregatik diot existitzen ez den zerbaiten ondotik ari direla.

[I think that in Navarra, most of us, even without realizing it, we have reflected on the topic. Now I would like them to do it in the Basque Country as well. With the people of "Mendebaldea", I often say to myself: "Jesus, Mary, how confused they are! They are still after a dream that has evaporated! "They have not realized that this dream is not true... [...] Seeing what has happened there over the years, being so close (he is talking about Álava), and they have not drawn any conclusions. That is why I say that they are looking for something that does not exist".]

That misunderstanding is brought to light implicitly in literary works such as *Ur uherrak* (murky waters), by Aingeru Epaltza, or *Hausturak* (1995) and *Joan zaretenean* (When you are gone) by Jokin Muñoz. *Atlantidara biajia* (2000), also by Jokin Muñoz, could be the list of literary works that show an alternative Basque cultural discourse, in Navarre. Speaking about Jokin Muñoz, Professor Amaia Serrano (229) affirms the following:

Euskal literatur sisteman idazle kanonikoa da, nahiz eta jorratzen dituen gizarte- eta politika-gaiekiko ikuspegiak iritzi ezberdinak sorrarazi dituen, bereziki euskal abertzaletasunarekin agertzen duen jarreragatik.

[He is a canonical writer of the Basque literary system, although his approach to social and political issues has given rise to divergent opinions, especially his attitude towards (leftist) Basque nationalism.]

In all these literary works, in addition, the tendency to use within the unified Basque language stands out, the linguistic forms of Navarre origin, whether or not common to the rest of the possible readers in Basque.

In *Joan zaretenean* (1997), the protagonist, does not want to know anything about his past when he was young and communed with the political militancy of the Abertzale left. In fact, the protagonist has left the Basque Country and lives in Madrid, and that's where a friend from adolescence (possibly a member of ETA) comes to see him asks him to stay at his house for a few days.

Euskal gatazkatik aldendu ezinean bizi da, beraz. Alde egin arren, urruntasun geografikoak ez dio errealtate horrekiko distantzia handiegirik ekarriko, eta, bere gogoetan, etengabe bueltatuko da garai hartan gazteek hartutako bi bideez jardutera: drogazaletasunaz eta talde armatuan parte hartzeaz. (Serrano Mariezkurrena 231-232)

[He therefore lives in a position that cannot escape the Basque conflict. Despite his departure, his geographical distance does not lead him to distance himself from this reality, and he thinks that he will constantly return to the two paths taken by young people at the time: drug addiction and participation in the armed group.]

In *Atlantidara biajia* (2000), also by Jokin Muñoz, the narrator tells us with an ironic humor a four-day walking trip through the south of Navarra, where speeches in favor of Basque nationalism are generally very alien to life of the inhabitants of those villages.

This author tells us in later works (*Bizia lo*, 2004; *Antzararen bidea*, 2007) that the vital conflict is much more complex than political discourse that attempts to explain the social and national conflict. *Bizia lo* is a book of five stories and one of them is “Isiluneak” (2005), especially significant:

“Isiluneak” kontakizuna detaile sinbolikoz josita dago, bai eta elipsiez beteta ere. Su-etena (agian 1998koa) apurtu osteko giroan gaude. Gurasoak lotara doaz, baina kezkatu daude. Egun horretan etakide batzuk hil dira, autoan zeramatzen bomba lehertuta. Mendian omen dagoen semea izan daiteke hil diren gazteetako bat, aukeraren bat bada behintzat. Baina, gauean elkarrekin daudelarik, ez diote beldur hori elkarri aitortu nahi, “esan nahi eta ezinean” daude. Narratzaileak, zertzeladaka, momentu horretaraino ailegatu arteko familiaren bizitza eta gorabeherak erakusten dizkigu, analepsiaren bitartez. Josebak (aita) ezker-abertzaletasunaren jarrerak defendatzen ditu. Julia (ama) kritikoa da. Jon Jarrai-n sartu zen instituto-garaian. Guraso biei burura datozkie bizitzan izandako euskal gatazka zoritxarrekoaren “mugarriak”. Oroitzapen horiek sorrarazitako zirrarak eta kezkek, ordea, ez dizkioten elkarri kontatu nahi. (Barandiaran Amerika “Gatazka” 57)

[The story of “Silences” is full of symbolic details, as well as full of ellipsis. We are in an atmosphere after the ceasefire (perhaps 1998) was broken. The parents are going to sleep, but they are worried. Some members of ETA died that day when a bomb they were carrying (in their car) exploded. A son who is said to be in the mountains may be one of the young men who died, at least there is a chance of it. But, when they are together at night, they don’t want to admit that fear to each other. The narrator, in turn, shows us the life and events of the family that have reached this point, through analepsy. Joseba (the father) defends the attitudes of left-wing patriotism. Julia (mother) is more critical. Jon joined Jarrai during high school. Both parents remember the “milestones” of the unfortunate Basque conflict in their lives. The excitement and worries caused by these memories, however, do not want to be told to each other.]

Jokin Muñoz takes the stories to the social peripheries and, sometimes, to the geographical peripheries (Ribera de Navarra) of Euskal Herria or Baskonia. A centrifugal force makes Basque literature more of the “Ribera”⁷ and less “goierritarra”⁸. His literary stories invites us to look at the close reality, but without using the lenses of political

7 South of Navarre, in which the Basque cultural presence was erased and removed many centuries ago.

8 From the Goierri area, the “High Lands” of Gipuzkoa, considered by many the “core” of the Gipuzkoan Basqueness.

discourse or rhetoric, not in a manic or simplistic way; because they are humble and tragic events, as well as ironic humor, bright beacons for the reader, lest we sink into our turbulent sea.

That fervor to give visibility to Basque peripheries such as those shown in the novel *Tigre ehizan* (1997) or *Sasiak ere begiak baditik* (1986) by Aingeru Epaltza, is an implicit reproach of the Basque mainstream literature.

In this “dominant” Basque literature many literary works are set showing a problem of the most Basque and central areas of Euskal Herria: the Goierri of Gipuzkoa, many of the times (Obaba, it can be perfectly a town of the Gipuzkoan Goierri, or the high lands of that territory). In *Tigre Ehizan* the part of the story of the novel takes place during the Second World War, in the territory of Lapurdi (Basque-French Country). A family of Basque exiles due to the Civil War stays there and begins to “suffer” the German occupation of all of France, including the territory where they live.

Honako honetan, nafartasunaren partez, periferikotasunaren ikuspegia nabarmentzen da. Lapurdin gertatzen den kontakizuna da horren adibide gardena: Lapurdi ez dago Euskal Herriaren erdigunean. Lapurdi galtzaileen gunea da, erbesteratuen babeslekua, baina horren babeslea ere ez da, han ere tigreak baitira. Eleberrian tigreak tankeak dira, hamarkada batzuk geroago GALen sikarioak izango zirenak. Baina Martintxu izeneko protagonista baten borroka ez da “Tiger” izeneko tanke alemanaren kontrakoa soilik: bere burua agertzeko, bere nortasunaren bila egindako borroka-bidaia da, nafar euskaldunen borroka antzerako bat. (Barandiaran Amarika “Gatazka” 37)

[In this (novel), instead of Navarreness, the vision of the periphery stands out. The history of Lapurdi is a clear example of this: Lapurdi is not in the center of the Basque Country. Lapurdi is the site of the losers of, the refuge of the exiles, but it is not so “protective” either, since there are also tigers. In the novel, the tigers are German tanks, which a few decades later would become the GAL’s hitmen. But the fight of a protagonist boy named Martintxu is not just the opposite of the German tank called “Tiger”: it is a fight to show himself, it is a fight journey in search of his identity, a similar fight of the Basques of Navarre.]

Navarrese Essayists

Another significant fact is that Navarra has contributed numerous authors of literary essays in Basque. The literary essay is not a hegemonic genre in Western literature, or in Basque literature, although it has made contributions to socio-political thought and reflection in our country. One of the first was Eduardo Gil Bera (Tudela, 1957), as I mentioned in one of my contributions (Barandiaran Amarika “Bezperaren bezpera” 122):

Asko dira aldez edo moldez entseguak idatzi dituztenak Nafarroan eta ez da zalantza handirik izan entsegugintza literaturaren barnean kokatzeko, besteak beste, eta zenbait egilerekin bat etorritz, ondorenean aipatuko ditugu entseguetan estilo literarioa jorratu izan delako. Eduardo Gil Bera dugu, 80ko hamarkadan aitzindarietako bat genero hau jorratzen. Atea bere erroetan bezala (1987, Pamiela), O tempora! O mores! (1989, Pamiela) ditugu errenkan argitaratu zituen entseguak. Entsegu filosofikoak ditugu, baina, batez ere entseguak ditugu, sormenez, hitz jarioasunez eta orijinaltasunez idatziak izan direlako. Eduardok ez du idazten doktorego tesi batean eskatzen den zehaztasun eta doitasunez: mintzaira joria eta literarioa darabil behin eta berriz eta horrek entsegugile eitea ematen dio egile honi.

[There are many who have written essays in Navarra in one way or another and there has been little doubt in placing the essay within the literature, among others, and according to some authors, we will mention them later because the essays dealt with literary style. We have Eduardo Gil Bera, one of the pioneers of the 80s on the subject of this genre. Atea bere erroetan bezala (1987, Pamiela), *O tempora! O mores!* (1989, Pamiela) we have the essays he published in a row. We have philosophical essays, but above all we have essays because they have been written with creativity, fluency and originality. Eduardo does not write with the precision and precision that a doctoral thesis requires: he repeatedly uses rich and literary language, which gives this author the opportunity to be an essayist.]

But before moving on, I would like to mention other Navarre essayists who contribute to increase the repertoire of essays with literary value of the Navarrese literary system. I want to start with Patziku Perurena (Goizueta, 1959), who as well as poet and narrator, stands out for his essays (twelve published), among which are the first: *Harripilatan ezkuatu zeneko apo tipiaren burutazioak* (1990) and the latter, *Goizuetato dokumentu zaharrak (1324-1918)* (Pamiela, 2017). Without going into an analysis with deepening their contributions, one common feature can be mentioned: their point of view more or less dissident or discordant with respect to the Basque cultural discourse in general:

Entsegugile polemikazalea dugu, itxuraz erretxina, eta herriaren jakituriaren biltzaille ageri zaigu bere lanetan. Bere noizbehinkako kritika zakar eta zorrotzen atzean, naturarekiko eta lehengo ohitura eta esaerarekiko liluraz urtzen den egilea ezkututzen da, hainbat urtetan bilketa eta ikerketa lanak egiteko gai izaten dena, gero eta entsegu mamitsu eta estiloz oso bereak argitara emateko. (Barandiaran Amarika 2013:124)

[He is a controversial essayist, apparently curmudgeonly, and he seems to us a collector of the wisdom of the people in his works. Behind his occasional harsh and sharp criticism hides the author, who melts by the fascination for nature and its ancient habits and sayings, who for many years has known how to do compilation and research work, publish his own essays and styles very much his own.]

It is also worth mentioning Jon Alonso (Pamplona, 1958), who, in addition to the author of novels and narrative books, is also the author of essays such as: *Idiaren eraman handia* (1995, Euskaltzaindia-BBK), *Agur, Darwin, eta beste arkeologia batzuk* (2001, Pamiela); *Astrolabioa* (2007, Pamiela); *Saski bete intxaur ezalditan bilduak* (2011, Alberdania); *Beltzaren koloreak* (2016, Susa). Without going into an analysis with deepening his contributions, one common feature can be mentioned: his point of view more or less dissident or discordant with respect to the Basque cultural discourse in general.

But if we have to mention a few essays by authors from Navarra that mark a milestone, we will mention the following “trilogy”:

Gu, nafarrok (Pamiela, 2007), by Xabier Zabaltza.
Euskal Herri imajinario bat alde (Elkar, 2008), by Santi Leoné.
Bezperaren bezpera (Pamiela, 2007), by Aingeru Epaltza.

These three essays form a trilogy due to their closeness at the time of publication and by an affinity that, although not sought after, surprises when preparing a literary discourse from a Navarrese point of view. In fact, Xabier Zabaltza affirms that the title *Gu, nafarrok* (We the Navarrese) is a Basque version of Joan Fuster’s title: *Nosaltres, els*

valencians (1962), where he wanted to reflect on Valencian Catalanism but to stop being a mere branch of the Catalan provinces and wanted to self-explore, to discern their true identity, not the one that they want to grant them. Xabier Zabaltza aspires that his essay serves for something similar, although without the pretensions of repercussion obtained by that Valencian book.

The essay *Euskal Herri imajinario baten alde* by Santi Leoné is his first work in the Basque language, in terms of publications in Basque book format, and it does so with an elegant, incisive and graphic prose, accompanied by illustrations by the Navarrese illustrator Patxi Huarte (Falces, 1966) of pen-name *Zaldieroa*. In the first part of the book exposes the different positions (in Navarra especially polarized, more than in the Basque Autonomous Community) around the concept of *Euskal Herria*, always very discussed, but in the political conjuncture of Navarra then (and in the recent) was controversial. The work proposes, among other things, that in order to sustain and promote the idea of *Euskal Herria* in Navarra, it is not necessary to rely on history. It is not necessary to deny that the concept of *Euskal Herria* that one wants to reach (on the one hand, of the Navarrese population as well) is imaginary. What's more, that the concept is imaginary can give it a plus of legitimacy, provided it has a social backing. It is a kind of "third way" between a political dilemma that arises and that keeps society in a paralyzing state of affairs.

We could highlight the argument of Santi Leoné by which he reproaches those who feel Basque Navarrese: that tendency and commitment to want to search in history facts that affirm the essence and reality of *Euskal Herria*. Aingeru Epaltza also argues or criticizes in the same direction in his essay:-

[The Basque patriots have a special relationship with History. We often mention it. Many times we look for it to put it on our side. Remember: «because they were, we are; because we are...». The key to what we are must be in the past.

I am more and more of the opposite opinion. I think it is better for us not to take history into account. [...] Really, we ended up revolting at the past. We would give an arm to change our past(s).] ("Bezperaren bezpera" 40).

Another trilogy, that of Aingeru Epaltza with his historical novels, tries to make this point of view visible in the life of Joanes Mailu, faithful agent of the kingdom of Navarre who swims and stays afloat in a world that has fallen apart (being conquered the Kingdom of Navarre by Castile) and in which somehow he will fight to recover it ... Although we already know, if we have any historical notion about the subject, that will not succeed. It is a serious trilogy written, once again, with an archaic style in the forms (ambience at the time), but without extremism (so as not to lose current readership) and Navarre in their linguistic choices (always respecting the rules of standard Basque). With the adventures and misadventures of Joanes Mailu we are told that even in a uchronia that started from the non-conquest of Navarre, what the Navarrese nationalists long for would not have been achieved (Barandiaran Amarika "Aingeru Epaltza"). These are these three anti-epic historical novels:

1. *Mailuaren odola* (Elkar, 2006)/ *Casta de bastardos* (Ttartalo, 2008)
2. *Izan bainintzen Nafarroako Errege* (*Erresuma eta Fedea II*) (Elkar, 2009)/ *Yo que fui rey de Navarra* (*El Reino y la Fe II*) (Ttartalo, 2011)
3. *Gure Jerusalem galdua* (Elkar, 2013) / *Nuestra Jerusalén perdida* (Ttartalo, 2015)

But the critical contribution to the dominant discourse within the Basque culture is not limited to the three previously mentioned works. Already with the work *Ur uherrak* (Pamiela, 1991), or *Aguas turbias* (Hiru, 1995) in Spanish we are shown what the so-called armed struggle could bring to a Basque-Navarrese village: dark and sordid stories of failure and marginalization that put evidence totalitarian political discourses that do not bring the redemption, but the rupture and almost incurable wounds. It is a critical vision that is also appreciated in his works such as *Lasto sua* (Alberdania, 2005) or *Rock'n'Roll* (Elkarlanean, 2000). Nationalist essentialism, which has long been hegemonic in the discourse of Basque culture, with its institutionalist version and its version in favor of armed struggle, is deprived of its essence in a Basque-hybrid world, perhaps post-nationalist (Gabilondo 262-264).

In addition, some authors in Navarre began to have a great deal of shadow. Before the year 2000 (some of them have had “achievements” in the form of awards) they began to publish notable literary works (Juanjo Olasagarre, Aingeru Epaltza, Jokin Muñoz, Patxi Zabaleta... to name a few). After crossing the 2000s, they maintained the same prosperity for years to come. To this small group was added a group of other younger writers: Castillo Suárez, Hedoi Etxarte, Iñigo Astiz, Angel Erro, Garazi Arrula, Fertxu Izquierdo, Beatriz Chivite, Luis Garde, Alberto Ladrón Arana, to name a few. Whether or not we can assign the designation of a literary generation to this group may be debatable; among other things, because the concept of the literary generation has several problems (Kortazar Uriarte “Belaunaldi literarioa”).

We can take some examples from this generation or group of “younger” Navarrese writers. One of Hasier Larretxea’s (Arraioz, 1982) poetic works is a turning point in the Basque poetry of Navarrese authors. I am referring to the *Azken bala* (2008, Point de Lunettes) poetry book. The title itself (*Azken bala / La última bala/ The Last Bullet*) suggests the subject of violence, and the fact that the book (including the title) is bilingual shows that it wants to build a kind of bridge between the worlds. But because of the bullet in question, we can’t melt a nuance unnoticed: it’s the last bullet, and being the last one suggests that the “shooting” is over (or wants to end). Hasier Larretxea felt very close to the violent conflict that our country has suffered during his adolescence and this poem is an exorcism of himself and an implicit reader behind a “you”. This “you” is Hasier himself, but he can also be a “revolutionary” friend of his youth, immersed in the crazy wheel of political violence, to the detriment of himself and those close to him (sterilizing all political plans, too). Poetry is both a challenge and a salvation board, with that “you” always in front of your eyes. Because ideology has often left many young people around us without ideas. These ideas (expressed in this way) are very uncommon among young Basque writers.

It seems clear that there is an implicit tension between the literary tendencies of Navarrese authors and the literary tendencies of other Basque authors who make literature in Basque. That implicit tension becomes explicit in the next authors’ contribution that I will comment.

From the Marginality We See Your Weaknesses Better

In the last part of my intervention I focus on the critical vision from the Navarre periphery, starting with the author Jon Alonso (Iruñea / Pamplona, 1958). In addition to

being a writer, he is a translator by profession and also a translator of literary texts (he won the Euskadi Award for literature in the translation modality, with the translation of *El Sitio de Lisboa*, by Saramago). His literary production has alternated the narrative with the essay. From the beginning of his works he has shown his obsessions for different aspects of literary criticism and also, in works such as *Euskal karma* (2003) he parodies the Basque cultural system, with its tendency towards centralism and essentialism. The narration becomes a parodic thriller when the protagonist has to go from Arantzazu to the Amazon in search of a certain Kolko Mitxoleta (a name that paraphrases Koldo Mitxelena, a well-known Basque linguist) who will be the “savior” of Basque culture and language, because he knows something key: the canon. Ibon Egaña well discerned that, in Jon Alonso, from his peripheral atalaia, he has more vision and more freedom to see the defects of the “heart” of the system, and he shows it with sarcasm in this novel:

Pedantezeria, filologiarako euskaldunen joera edo kultur erakundeen hierarkizazioa dira bidaian agertutako pertsonaia bitxi bidez Alonsok kritikatzeko dituen elementuetako batzuk.

[Pedantry, the tendency of the Basques towards philology or the hierarchy of cultural institutions are some of the elements that Alonso criticizes through the strange characters that appear on the trip.]

It is not surprising that Jon Alonso’s position (2007) led to an attack on the prize system in Basque literature, with his article in the magazine *Argia*, where he criticized the Euskadi literary awards, to which he was invited to be part of the translation modality court. In the narrative (with large doses of literary drama, in my opinion) Jon Alonso criticizes what in he thinks it was an attempt of manipulation by the institution in the jury’s decision. In this way he concludes his article-chronicle, standing before the system of that literary award:

Zeren, literaturaren aitzakian beste zerbaitekin epaitzen ari denean, ofizioa denean barkatzen ez dena, planto egiteko garaia iritsi dela garbi geratzen baita. Ez gaitzaten tronparazi beren baraja markatuekin, uneko egokieraren arabera aldatzen dituzten arautegiekin, botoak kontatzean egiten dituzten hutsekin. Planto egin, baraja zaharra puskatu eta berria eskatu.

[Because when you are judging something else under the pretext of literature, when you are not forgiving when it comes to a job, it is clear that the time has come to stand up. Let’s not be fooled by their marked decks, by the regulations that change according to the relevance of the moment, by the mistakes they make when counting the votes.

Stand up, break the old deck and ask for a new one.]

We are not surprised either that in the same year 2007 several Basque writers signed a manifesto against the Euskadi awards of literature “Utikan Euskadi Sariak”, “Euskadi awards go away”. Among the signatories, of course, was Jon Alonso, who with his article in the aforementioned *Argia* magazine, was one of the instigators.

Nowadays, Jon Alonso keeps on affirming (Bereziartua), most of those signed that manifesto continue to maintain their position. Still in the Euskadi Literary Awards there are some authors (very few) who continue to refuse to receive them⁹. There has been a debate

⁹ An example of this is Mikel Peruarena, who refused to receive the prize for his novel *Su Zelaiak* (2015) and, instead, proposed to the institutions a series of measures to promote the literary system and young writers.

on this topic. There have also been some changes in the awards process that have made it possible to better manage those who refuse to receive it and those who are willing to receive it. Jon Alonso, however, continues to have a critical view (of greater depth) about the Euskadi award system:

[...] ez zait interesatzen sariak eraberritzen edo hobetzen ahal diren edo ez. Ez da nire afera. Sariak literaturari buruzko kontzepzio jakin baten porrotaren irudia dira. (Bereziartua "Euskadi Sariak")

[I don't care if the awards can be renewed or improved. It's not my affair. The awards are a picture of the failure of a particular conception of literature.]

Another distinctive sign is the language used in literary works. Authors like Aingeru Epaltza continue to use a normative literary language but with a clearly Navarrese linguistic tendency. In one of the critical reviews of one of her novels (*Rock'n'Roll*, Elkarlanean, 2000), Mainer Arizti looks at this aspect, and tries to highlight it, making an interpretation of its meaning:

Aingeru Epaltzaren idazkeraz, berriz, zeresanik ez. Nafarroan euskara kutsua duen ororen aurkako eraso ankerra bidean den honetan, Nafarroatik euskarari egin dakiokkeen ekarpenik handienetakoa egin digu euskal irakurleei Epaltzak. Euskal literatura aberasten ari baldin bada, Epaltza bezalakoan idazkerari esker da. Hedabideek erabiltzen duten euskara batuan nekez entzuten diren hitz eta joskerak erabiltzen ditu, irakurleoi, euskara lingua navarrorum izan arren, egun hedabide eta liburu gehienetan irakurtzen den euskararen nafarrera kutsua duen oro ia desagerturik dugula gogoraraziz. Hizkuntzarekin jolastu eta hizkuntza menperatzen dutenetan ere handienetarikoa dela erakutsi digu beste behin Epaltzak.

[There is nothing wrong with the writing of Aingeru Epaltza. Epaltza has made one of the greatest contributions that can be made to all the Basque readers from Navarre, in the face of a cruel attack on everyone with a touch of Basque in Navarre. If Basque literature is being enriched, it is thanks to the writing of people like Epaltza. He uses words and phrases that are difficult to hear in the Basque language used by the media, reminding readers that, despite the fact that Basque is the Lingua navarrorum, almost everything that has a Navarrese touch in Basque, which is read in most media and books, is now extinct. Epaltza has once again shown us that he is one of the greatest people who can play with the language and master the language.]

Part of this "Navarrese style" is a hypercritical view that leads certain authors to become notorious in their linguistic uses (always giving preference to "Navarrese" variants) and in their critical vision from the watchtower of the periphery. The case of the writer Eduardo Gil Bera is revealing. In his philosophical essays he forges a philosophical language that sinks part of its roots in the Navarrese-Labortano of Axular, or Leizarraga (authors of several centuries ago). That, together with his heterodox vision in the philosophical and social, brought him some criticism that, it seems, have made him stop publishing in Basque. In one article, Aritz Galarraga lamented the loss, citing authors who also regret the deprivation.

Atea itxi —zaratots handirik atera gabe, hori bai— eta alde egin izanagatik —Angel Errok: "Euskal literaturak galdu duen egilerik interesgarrienetakoa"—. Eta batek daki barne-kritika zaila delako. Akaso bai, agerkari honetantxe aitortu baitzuen: "Tudelatik euskalduna! Ematen dik gainera jantzia dagoela, badakiela. Baina hasi duk hiperkritiko eta ganberro xamar eta, ixii!". Auskalo

zergatik, baina desertatu du, utzi egin dio, ez da gehiago izango —Hasier Etxeberriaren hitzetan: “lastima den arren, seguru asko euskarak betiko galdu duena”—.

[Close the door —without much fuss, of course— and leave —Angel Erro: “One of the most interesting authors of Basque literature”. And one knows because internal criticism is difficult. Perhaps yes, because he confessed in this publication: “Basque from Tudela! He also gives that he is dressed, that he knows. But he’s started to be hyper-critical and a bit chambered, shut up! “No matter why, but he has deserted, he has left, there will be no more— in the words of Hasier Etxeberria: “although it is a pity, the Basque language has probably lost forever”.]

And the Basque literature of Navarrese authors is still trying to get closer to the center, but without losing the “Navarre” point of view: this point of view makes readers sometimes continue to move these literary works to the periphery.

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Three Decades of Polysystem Theory at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF)

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Introduction

This paper hopes to analyse the role played by the Polysystem Theory (Even-Zohar) in the shaping —as well as the reinventing— of the fields of translation studies and intercultural relations at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF) in Brazil. In order to understand its most significant developments, we will divide the paper into four parts: (i) a brief history and description of the university, focusing only on the particulars that are relevant to this discussion; (ii) an analysis of the undergraduate papers and graduate theses and dissertations defended which have utilized the Polysystem theory; (iii) a discussion of research and laboratorial practices based upon the theory; (iv) and a proposition of the path that is yet to be followed.

UFJF: The Long and Short of It

Several aspects of our university are relevant to the shaping and reshaping of our languages, translation and literature departments and programs. When cross-referencing with the role played by the Polysystem theory in this process, we arrive at four main points: how recent the university and its educational system are; how diverse its student body is; how connected to society as a whole the university is; how the current political climate is affecting the university.

This paper is being written as the university turns 60 years old, having been founded on December 23rd, 1960. Its creation was, as the date already indicated, finalized somewhat

in a hurry. Then president Juscelino Kubitschek was in the final stretch of his term (which ended on January 31st, 1961) and was determined to create as many medical schools as possible. As a result, the university was created before the campus had even been built. The main campus was eventually inaugurated in 1969.

However, for the sake of our analysis, we will focus on another major shift, along with the entire federal university system. In 2008, the federal government initiated a program to expand the federal university system, called REUNI. An interesting point to mention is that our current students seem to be utterly unaware of how contentious this process of implementation was. In the case of our university, as it happened in many others, the police forces had to be called to make sure the voting process deciding whether to adhere to the program actually was allowed to take place.

The primary concern at the time was that the federal system, which was of limited access, but exceedingly high quality, would suffer a setback in the academic achievement indicators, in order to allow more students. Throughout the process, 14 new universities were created, as well as 128 new campuses. The number of students more than doubled. It also meant the creation of European-style bachelor degrees in Humanities, Arts and Exact Sciences, but this shift did not affect our college, given that the field of linguistics, languages and literatures —called *Letras*— chose not to join the humanities BA.

We did, however, experience exponential growth, given that our college provides language classes to the entire university. As a result, the number of majors available reached 7 teacher training courses and 4 translation bachelor of arts courses. This last group of courses will be the focus of our study in the last section, given that it has been marked by the Polysystem theory since its inception in 1987.

More than a numeric increase in courses and students, this led to the creation of majors that did not previously exist in the country, of new approaches and to an unforeseen connection between the five regions of the country, with professors and students travelling countrywide to look for the best opportunities to work and study. This scenario led to an effervescence of possibilities and problem solving, which changed a previously very traditional and steady system.

One of the greatest challenges presented by this new system was the arrival of a very heterogeneous group of students. Since 2012, all federal universities have had the results of the national high school exam (ENEM) compiled in different groups: 50% of the vacancies are open to anyone who wishes to enrol. The other half is divided between those who apply under a combination of factors regarding family income, ethnicity and public school education. More recently, a new subgroup regarding people with disabilities was also created.

This new scenario generated logistical needs, regarding financial aid, for instance, as well as educational ones. Several introductory classes were created, the tutoring system was expanded and new junior research scholarships were designed specifically to the affirmative action students. Within the classroom, the differences also created unprecedented effects. The quota students had several gaps in their access to literature and previous knowledge of foreign languages or even formal uses of the mother tongue, but they were also more resourceful, and hungrier for every educational and cultural opportunity that the university had to offer. Our campus had become a gateway to a

world of possibilities, and that mentality ended up affecting the entire student body. As I am going to detail in the third section of this paper, adherence to volunteer positions in research groups and various projects increased exponentially in recent years, changing the very concept of university training from the previous notion of an enterprise restricted to the classrooms.

One final point to be made regarding the diversity of the student body is connected to the variety of majors now available. Even though students have to choose a major during their second year in college, they usually combine their chosen specialty with electives in other fields, generating a group who has contact with multiple foreign languages, as well as with school and translation environments. They also tend to volunteer as the welcoming party for exchange students, and tutoring refugees learning Brazilian Portuguese, thus providing a wider scope of learning, which leads us to the third point regarding our educational background, our connection to society as a whole.

The Brazilian university system is generally described a “triple propeller”, with its three main areas —teaching, research and extension— feeding of one another, in constant interaction. In recent years, however, the first two elements have received greater attention, leading to an effort to strengthen the extension projects and programs, in constant contact with society as a whole. At our university, this interaction is more visible in the fields of education —with various programs in teacher training, including those aimed at the elderly, at refugees, and at groups of at-risk youth— as well as healthcare, with two public hospitals and a dental clinic that addresses the needs of over 10% of the city population.

In our discussion, however, the main relevant point is the cultural sphere. The university is responsible for half of the theatres and museums in the city, not to mention that it hosts an annual book fair as well as a wide variety of film festivals and open courses. Combined with the fact that we have a very heterogeneous student body, as mentioned before, the university then functions as a widener of cultural repertoire for its students and the community at large, leading to an environment in which the students are eager to better comprehend the processes of production and circulation of symbolic goods, as well as to being a part of said process.

Unfortunately, the cultural and artistic field was probably the most deeply affected by successive budget cuts, which have taken place since 2016. This scenario has affected not only the extension projects, but research as well, with the recent exclusion of the fields of Arts and Humanities from the list of possible recipients of federal studentships. This is linked to a larger political movement that falls beyond the scope of this paper, so we will focus only on the narrowing opportunities of experiencing, producing and discussing the cultural repertoire of our country and region.

The Academic Polysystem at UFJF

At UFJF, two fields of study have profited greatly from analysis regarding the Polysystem Theory: Translation Studies (both as an undergraduate course and in the graduate programs) and the professional master’s degree aimed at public school language teachers. We will focus first on the pioneering course, in translation. This path began

in 1987, with the founding of the first two undergraduate courses with emphasis in translation, focusing on English-Portuguese and French-Portuguese translation.

The English option developed into a full, independent major, while the French option experiences a hiatus, which lasted until 2013, when it returned as a major, along with Latin. The list of majors was completed in 2017, and the Spanish language joined the academic enterprise.

The translation bachelor's degree begins, in every language, by an initial year of introductory classes in Linguistics, Literary studies, Classical languages and parameters, Translation studies, as well as academic writing and Portuguese language, by the end of which the students choose a language and a path to follow, i.e. teaching or translating.

Those who opt for the translation path then take up theoretical classes regarding the history and main concepts in Translation Studies, Applied Linguistics, and advanced language classes, followed by a professional cycle of practice in technical and literary translation, subtitling, localization and oral interpretation. The Polysystem theory is studied from the fifth semester onwards, alongside a number of other theoretical approaches, ranging from cultural perspectives to linguistic studies on methods and procedures.

The course culminated with the writing of an undergraduate thesis, developed during the final year, with weekly individual supervision meetings. Such thesis is then defended before a panel of two professors, in an event usually attended by the academic community, as well as family and friends. About 90% of the undergraduate theses defended since 1989 have already been made publicly available at the university website. Our following analysis will be conducted based on said database.

As far as the translation undergraduate course is concerned, there have been twenty-six theses dedicated to discussing a variety of works and phenomena from the perspective of the Polysystem Theory, approximately half of the fifty-four works that have already been made available on the database.

In terms of topics, there have been theses discussing audio-visual translation—subtitling, dubbing and soundtrack—, song translation, non-fiction translation, comic book translation, intersemiotic translation, not to mention a majority of literary translation theses, focusing either on specific works and authors, or on entire genres and specific political and cultural contexts.

It has been applied to identify how film adaptations interact with the system of literary translations of the source text, in order to compare two different audio-visual translations of the same film, to comprehend patterns and challenges in translating comic books as well as role-playing games, to deepen the discussion on writers who also translate, to discuss non-fiction works in nineteenth century France, and to map out the first publishing house to focus on literary translation in Brazil, as well as many other relevant works. The topics and theoretical basis are always chosen by the students themselves, and later paired up with a suitable supervisor, highlighting the impact that the Polysystem theory has on their academic development.

Another relevant point is that there have been theses defended in the fields of English and French language translation (since Spanish does not have any graduates yet and Latin follows a different standard). It is interesting to notice the variety of professors who have

supervised said theses, proving that the use of the theory is not due to any particular research choices from the professors.

The theoretical combinations also encompass a wide range of possibilities. Most of them are linked to cultural and ethical approaches to translation, focusing on manipulation of texts based on political, ideological or artistic standards, but there are also combinations with linguistic methodologies, such as corpora analysis, as well as efforts regarding discourse and content analysis.

On a graduate level, the master's degree with the greater number of occurrences of theses regarding the Polysystem Theory is ProfLetras, which focuses on the continuing training of public school teachers. In that academic environment, the Polysystem theory is applied mostly to understanding the academic background centred in forming young readers.

It is worth pointing out that, since ProfLetras is a professional master's degree program, it culminated with an action plan, i.e. a project or initiative to be implemented in the school environment where the teacher in question works. Therefore, about a dozen dissertations, which have been defended in our program, have resulted in projects being implemented in our public schools, based on the theory.

A third field of application, also in terms of graduate programs, is related to the creation of the creative writing and literary translation line of research at the Literary Studies master's and doctor's degree programs at the university. In this field, it is possible to defend a novel, a collection of poems, or a literary translation, alongside a theoretical study of the work conducted. The area is still in development and no dissertations or theses have been defended yet, but it should be highlighted that five of the embryonic works that led to the creation of this line of research have applied Polysystem in their proposal. As a result, the main structuring class the students will take in the first year of their programs will also include this theoretical approach as part of the syllabus.

Beyond the Classroom

Apart from official undergraduate and graduate degrees, the Polysystem theory has been a core element of the research and laboratories at UFJF, especially through initiatives by the research group Prisma—interculturality and translation.

In terms of undergraduate studentships, the theory has been applied in three major endeavours: exploring cultural visibility through translation (2016 onwards), discussing hate speech on social media (2016/2017) and understanding international reception of Brazilian literature (2017 onwards).

The first project in question focused on the translation of indigenous legends as a means of reaching a greater level of cultural visibility. In this scenario, the Polysystem theory was applied to investigating the repertoire that had already been constructed by previous translations and the target audience of such narratives. Once those aspects had been mapped out, the students, from high school as well as university levels were tasked with translating a few legends. The purpose of the exercises was to reflect upon the consequences of such contextual research on the choices made by translators,

particularly those referring to the visibility of the translation process and on the processes of foreignization or domestication of cultural references (Venuti 2004 [1995])¹.

The project on hate speech, on the other hand, was the only one unrelated to the subject of translation. The focus was on the proliferation of examples of hate speech on social media, which was a global phenomenon at the time, but held particular relevance in the Brazilian context². Based on a systemic approach, it was possible to identify the main recurring elements, the first one being normalizing hatred, such as when public figures voice perspectives previously only mentioned in fringe groups. This specific phenomenon was noticed in the discourse of political figures, religious leaders and even comedians at the time.

The second aspect was the repetition of soundbites, or utterances that were repeated several times, as representative of social groups or cultural phenomena much larger than the original message. This scenario was found to be linked to a third element, in which labelling replaced an argument. This matter was verified in instances in which derogatory terms were used to belittle those who were perceived as being part of a rival group, thus eliminating the need to argue against them.

This third element was of particular relevance to the study, given that it revealed a tendency to eliminate that which the Polysystem Theory constructed as zone of interference. When each group operates in its own echo chamber and labels the opposite group as a means of not engaging with them, there is no middle ground left in which to negotiate positions or policies. The elimination of the zone of interference also favours the view of otherness as a threat, which fuels the entire system.

The project revealed new potential for polysystemic research at UFJF, which was eventually combined with the already popular approaches on translation studies, expanding the possible focal points to online interactions. This connection has been explored, for instance, in the ongoing project “Exporting Brazilian Literature”, which aims to map out translations of Brazilian books, as well as the reception of such works.

The initial results pointed to an uneven presentation of the history of our literature, focusing primarily on twentieth-century novels written by male writers and published in the southeast of the country. In terms of reception, it was also worth noticing that there was little to no mention to individual styles, schools of thought or historical moments in journalistic articles or even press releases³.

These findings led to a new project within Prisma, which combined literary translation with Polysystem analysis. The purpose of the project is to translate texts that have not been previously or properly translated into Portuguese, as well as translate into English short stories of similar themes and historical moments, to produce compiled volumes.

1 The paper which resulted from this project is available, in Portuguese, at <<https://periodicos.ufjf.br/index.php/principia/article/view/29890>>

2 Every undergraduate research project at UFJF conducted since 2017 concludes with a short video in which its main findings are presented. For this specific project, the video is available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8t4Vmjh5rY>>

3 The video based on the first phase of the Project can be found at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A3MDz7KfaU&t=57s>> , while the second phase is discussed on <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Piz6U88XRa0>>

So far, two books have been constructed —*Alter Worlds* (Magaldi org. 2020) and *Alter Feminae*, to be published in 2021—, with two more in the process of text definition. For the twenty professors, graduate and undergraduate students taking part in the enterprise, it has been an opportunity to reflect upon the construction of cultural repertoire, as well as about intercultural connections of authors of similar topics, writing in different languages, from different countries. It has also provided a chance to utilize translation (foreign language to mother tongue) as a syntactic and lexical research tool for what we generally call version (mother tongue to foreign language).

The focus on Romanticism, as well as Gothic and Sci-fi narratives has proven particularly useful, given that the texts are in public domain, that Romanticism is the first fully Brazilian literary style and that these texts have a wide number of contemporary readers. The wide volume of readers will hopefully make it possible to collect data on the critiques and opinions of both national and foreign writers, via online platforms and bookstores.

A second ongoing project at Prisma e centred on indirect translations using Esperanto to facilitate the spreading of knowledge, especially among minority or lesser-known languages. The initiative is still in early stages, but it has already made it possible to identify a previously unknown network of Esperanto translators, who operate from a different perspective from standard modern language translators in their study of the source text. Among other relevant aspects.

Both of these projects will provide grounds for further discussing the Polysystem theory and the field of Descriptive Translation Studies as a whole, given that it shifts our understanding of a source and a target cultures. Among the questions we are interested in solving we have: How is the interaction between source and target cultures changed by the patronage (Lefevere 1992) of the source culture in the translation process? Are cultural markers (Newmark 1988) translatable in indirect translations using a created language? Can the construction of literary archives in the shape of short story collection influence the notion of literary repertoire in a country like Brazil?

The possible outcomes of such questions is currently favoured by the presence of professors from different regions of the country, their supervisees, as well as foreign collaborators. This scenario will certainly contribute to a more multifaceted set of possible answers to questions previously presented.

These projects, however exciting as they might be, do not fully represent the possibilities of exploring the Polysystem Theory within our areas of expertise, which leads us to the final section of this discussion.

Moving Forward

As far as research goes, our university still has plenty of room to study the Polysystem theory in terms of literary systems regardless of the presence of translated literature, as well as within the fields of linguistics, particularly the areas related to intercultural communication and bilingual studies.

Within the field of Translation Studies, the analysis of the undergraduate and graduate theses conducted for writing this paper made it clear that we need to move past the

crystalized notion of the Polysystem Theory as a tool to contextualize source and target cultures of a translated literary work, and combine it with new theoretical approaches. There have been a few innovative alliances, but the bulk of the theses connected the Polysystem theory to discussions on manipulation and cultural markers.

A third point to be made is that the theory could provide a greater understanding of the roles played by translators, professors, students and teachers in the construction, maintenance and renewal of repertoire, setting away from the notion of “cultural bridge” that has long been utilized when referring the place held by translators in several societies.

A final element that is vital to our academic environment is the possibility of utilizing the Polysystem theory to raise awareness as to the importance and the challenges facing the sign language interpreters who work at our university. This has long been a contentious subject at the institution, with poor work and life quality linked to old-fashioned notions of fidelity in interpretation and a somewhat tumultuous cultural connection between deaf and hearing cultures. A well-based project could provide both academic and practical advancements in the work of translators who have the university as their place of work.

The second and third phases of the existing projects will also bring new perspectives, with the inclusion of different languages, both natural and constructed, as well as new literary styles and themes. Moreover, we will be able to collect data from the reception of the first published volumes.

Conclusions

The plurality of approaches and subjects regarding the Polysystem Theory at the university reveals the creative force behind the theoretical approach. In the academic environment here describes it even affected the manner in which other theories are approached, with innovative combinations with related fields, such as Philosophy, Anthropology of Psychology, as well as a variety of text genres and topics.

It is also worth noticing that there is no shortage of research regarding the importance and potential of the Polysystem Theory (cf. Cattrysse, Aveling, Desai). This tendency has been particularly relevant in minority languages and peripheral nations, providing a relevant tool to comprehend their own relevance in the global stage. Despite not being an exception to this scenario, our university benefits from having it academic landscape largely constructed by The Polysystem Theory, as well as from a combination of possibilities emanating from the plurality of languages, heterogeneous student body and theoretical combinations constructed over the past thirty years, showing that the most profitable and exciting output is yet to come.

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**Polysystem Theory as a
Platform for Transversal Studies.
On the Intersections
of Nature and Urban Spaces
in the Global World**

Polysystem of Resilience in the Anthropocene. Understanding the Role of Heterogeneity in Human-Nature Systemic Interactions

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Introduction

Resilience as a metaphor has developed over the years into a scientific concept (During and van Dam, 2019). Originally resilience was used as a concept or metaphor to describe a potential increase in strength in children who grew up in adverse conditions. Resilience in its primitive meaning was used as a metaphor for a recovery process that nobody really understood (During and Van Dam, 2019). Nowadays the meaning is more or less confined to the contribution of the citizens of a society in tackling all kind of wicked problems. The concept is used in an analytical and a performative manner, depending on who is talking. Scientists tend to use it in an analytical way, while politicians see themselves as magicians who can turn a lethargic society into a resilient community.

Resilience is now widely used in Anthropocene discussions of climate change. The Anthropocene, according to Nobel Prize winner Paul Crutzen, implies that mankind has evolved into a form of living that literally changes the geology of the earth. Problems of climate change are worsening more quickly than governmental institutions' ability to solve them. Beyond the institutional, citizens are called upon to help counter the causes and effects of climate change. Resilience here has the meaning of being prepared for severe changes to living conditions, and it has translocated the ability to adapt from

state to citizen (Cons, 2018). Due to this claim, it is now firmly positioned at the point where nature and mankind meet¹. The influential Stockholm Resilience Centre calls this socio-ecological resilience. This position is interesting, because resilience theories in environmental and social sciences may differ to such an extent that the questions rises whether they should be considered fundamentally incompatible.

In ecological theory, the concept refers to nested processes of self-organization, which keeps the effects of stress within the boundaries of what are termed tipping points. Despite a lot of change in species-species and species-habitat interactions, the identity of a resilient system remains the same. In ecological theory, heterogeneity stands for the evolutionary process of a system towards an ever-increasing complexity in the relations of its constituent parts. Stress may harm that complexity and subsequently affect the biodiversity of a system. Homogeneous systems are (but not always!) considered to be vulnerable: if one species is affected, a whole system may collapse. Heterogeneity in ecological theory is a system concept that is replaced by biodiversity in fieldwork, which gives a relative measure showing whether one piece of land has more species than another.

In social theory, resilience is about learning and improving in response to adverse conditions: “that which does not kill us only makes us stronger” is the saying by Friedrich Nietzsche. In social theory, heterogeneity is often understood as discursive or mental diversity, characteristic of the resource part of dealing with stress. For instance, social learning yields better results in conditions of dissensus or dissent. Heterogeneity is the driving force behind the source of ideas that never dries up.

Confronting ecological and social resilience theories leads us to divergent views on heterogeneity as a resource and as an effect parameter. Resilience thus has a complex relationship with heterogeneity. On the one hand, heterogeneity implies more variety in responses to environmental or societal stress. Yet on the other, it also implies more vulnerability, because the mechanisms of stress leading to changes may also be diverse and complex. We need to dig deeper in this relationship to better understand the full complexity of the role of heterogeneity in resilience. We will analyse the role of heterogeneity and diversity in social and ecological resilience theories, using both general systems theory (GST) and polysystem theory (PST). With our focus on heterogeneity, we will make the argument that in order to understand resilience in mankind-nature interactions, elements of both theories have to be combined. No ecological theory can account for heterogeneity-based resilience in society and conversely, no social theory really helps us to understand the relation between biodiversity and resilience in nature. To substantiate our theoretical arguments, we will discuss a case in which social and ecological resilience can be found. This case will show the complexity of mechanisms of resilience in ecological and social systems, and how they can interact. We believe understanding the nature of these interactions to be the basics of any theory that accounts for anthropocenic resilience.

1 In January 2021 a report will be issued about resilience in the relation between mankind and nature by During *et al.*

The Concept of Heterogeneity in Ecological Resilience Theory

Ecological Resilience Theory

In ecology, the concept of resilience helped to surpass the old idea of equilibrium in nature. The old notion of equilibrium changed into what is even called “disequilibrium ecology” (Cote and Nightingale, 2012). This leads to an understanding of ecosystems with dynamic feedbacks, and potential transitions to other states of a system.

Holling (1973) defines it as “*resilience determines the persistence of relationships within a system and is a measure of the ability of these systems to absorb change of state variable, driving variables, and parameters, and still persist*”. This widely adopted definition already contains a moral qualification: any change in natural ecosystems has a negative connotation. Walker (2002) sees resilience as something manageable, with a manager that tries to keep change within certain boundaries.

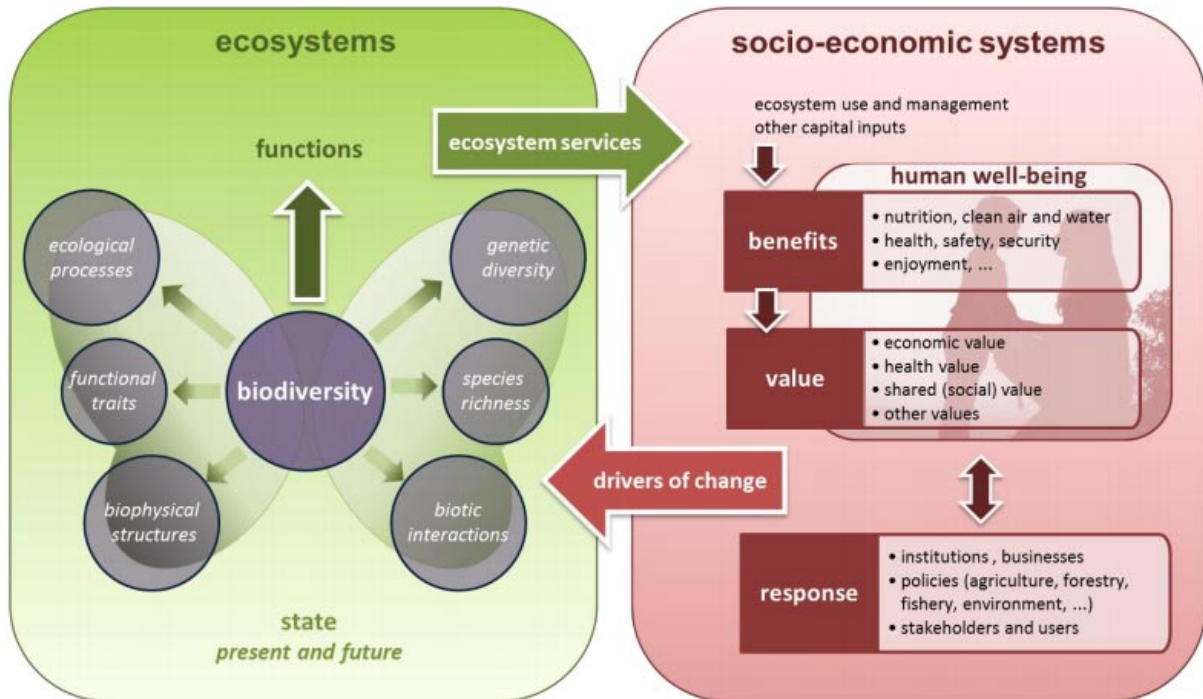
The main characteristics of system resilience are (Holling, 1973):

- The degree of change caused by stress, without losing its key structures.
- Its capacity for self-organization.
- Its capacity for learning and adaptation.

Despite the claim of disequilibrium, the basic idea of a system that holds its key structures still exists. The old idea of equilibrium is combined with system theoretical concepts like feedback mechanisms and self-organization at a lower organizational level. Stress coming from outside the system is coped with at a lower level in a process of self-organization. Species and species relations adjust to increasing levels of stress and attempt to survive. Adaptation is considered to be a key process of resilience. If the stress coming from outside surpasses a certain tipping point, the system changes rather rapidly. And often it changes to a less complex state of organization, because it loses a substantial number of its species that play a role in the feedback mechanisms. The use of systems theory allowed some very interesting generalizations in resilience thinking, such as the functioning of self-organization at a lower level in the system and the occurrence of tipping points. This idea of tipping points is being applied to social problems, and incorporated in transition theory (Dakos *et al.*, 2019).

It remains to be seen if these generalizations can be applied to social systems as well.

According to the aforementioned Stockholm Resilience Centre, resilience is the capacity of a system, be it an individual person, a forest, a city or an economy, to deal with change and continue to develop. It is about how humans and nature can use shocks and disturbances like a financial crisis or climate change to spur renewal and innovative thinking. This innovative thinking is required to prevent human development pushing our planet dangerously close to its boundaries. In this way, resilience theory uses the concept of socioecological systems in anthropogenic discussions.



From the perspective of biodiversity, the concept of socio-economic-ecological systems is used, as visualized above (EC, 2013). This concept is used by the European Commission in its Biodiversity Strategy. It shows us how an ecosystem delivers services to society. Society is responsible for the drivers of change, due to mechanisms associated with the economy and culture, which make use of ecosystems. Biodiversity is put at the centre of ecosystems, as the primary characteristic of concern. Here we are primarily interested in the fact that two separate systems are portrayed, and, more specifically, in the interaction between them. Many authors see this interaction in terms of management (Armitage *et al.*, 2009, Olsson and Folke, 2004, Gunderson and Holling, 2002). They focus on social learning, institutional capacity and learning within institutional arrangements, leadership and trust. They see a link with self-organization, described as community-based systems of management of the commons. Resilience here is seen as the process of bottom-up self-organization. This self-organization refers to determinism in the same way that ecologists understand adaptation as an answer to stress. An important notion concerns genetic diversity. Populations with greater genetic diversity are considered more resilient than those with less diversity, which may be caused by isolation. The time of year when many birds breed is inscribed in their DNA. Adjusting to climate change requires adjustment of their DNA. This is much easier if there is great diversity in the DNA and with the selection of the fittest, as Darwin outlined. These concepts and ideas about resilience already show the cross-disciplinary linking that is required to understand Anthropocene problems.

The Role of Heterogeneity in Ecological Resilience Theory

The classical view in ecology distinguishes between heterogeneity as the composition of parts of different kinds, and variability as different values of a variable of a particular

kind (Kolasa and Rollo, 1991). A further distinction is made between spatial and temporal heterogeneity (Kolasa and Rollo, 1991). Temporal heterogeneity is quite similar to spatial heterogeneity, except that it refers to one point in space and many points in time. The concept is embedded in three basic ecological concepts (related to three metaphoric entailments): randomness, chaos and determinism. Spatial heterogeneity is considered to make a crucial contribution to resilience, because if the habitat of a key species changes, it has other habitats where it can survive and from where it might be able to reconquer the lost one. The same holds for temporal resilience. If a certain insect species only has a very narrow window of time to emerge, grow to maturity and produce offspring, and the flowering conditions of its host plant are changing due to climate change, this species is considered to be vulnerable. If this species were to have more than one period in which it could complete his life cycle, it would be considered less vulnerable and more resilient. Very specialized butterflies, like the one whose larvae live in ants' nests and feed on rare plant species, are generally considered to be extremely vulnerable to a changing environment. In this case, the complexity of interwoven life cycles that involve a number of species is considered not to have that positive a contribution to resilience.

We must note here that temporal and spatial heterogeneity can also occur in an interwoven process. This could lead to great diversity, in the situation where one system withdraws from a certain area and another system enters it. For instance, a nature reserve in a peat district that is characterized by upward groundwater seepage may become an infiltration area because of an adjacent land reclamation project. The plant species that profit from upward seepage of mineral rich water may survive for quite some time, even as those which prefer rainwater conditions are already starting to penetrate the area. The result may be a temporary abundance of plant species which is doomed to decline. This view of heterogeneity and diversity is not popular among ecologists. They believe that highly diverse vegetation is old and stabilized, which requires proper management of the abiotic conditions to maintain this situation.

To conclude, some remarks can be made that allow a comparison with social theory. Firstly, due to the distinction between spatial and temporal heterogeneity, spatial heterogeneity is nothing more than biodiversity. Temporal heterogeneity likewise is a reduction of complexity, by highlighting the emergence of a species or object at different moments in the day or year. Secondly the ecosystem concept under discussion lacks the notion of complete openness with regard to the social system. A fundamentally open structure would otherwise lead to dissipative structures (Prigogine and Lefever, 1973) instead of those involved in self-organization and change being the norm and the equilibrium the unusual situation.

The Concept of Heterogeneity in Social Resilience Theory

Social Resilience Theory

Resilience as a concept initially referred to recovery processes in children that scientists did not understand. It was used in the 1960s to give expression to the phenomenon that a high percentage of the children who grew up in adverse conditions became happy as adults. William Frankenburg in his opening speech (1987, cited in Grotberg, 1995) of the

Fifth International Conference on Early Identification of Children at Risk, *Resilience Factors in Prediction*, clarified that when looking at children through pathological models, you will only see pathological patterns. In many subsequent conferences this positive view of the strength of children was elaborated. Many scientists tried to define the characteristics and factors that contribute to resilience. They discovered that it cannot solely be explained by internal characteristics, and that the social environment played an important role. Initially it was defined as the universal capacity of a person, group or community to cope or overcome damage and adverse conditions (Grotberg, 1995). Later, resilience became a matter of behaviour. The universal definition was appropriated and subsequently modified by a variety of scientific disciplines. In health care it became the speed with which a patient could overcome illness (Tusaie and Dyer, 2004). Coming from practical considerations, they highlighted the need to tailor this definition to different phases of life in an attempt to construct a model that focused on the homeostasis of an individual, in terms of psyche, physiology and spirituality. Should this homeostasis become disrupted, four different outcomes were foreseen (Tusaie and Dyer, 2004):

- Personal growth, self-consciousness and an increase in defensibility.
- Return to homeostasis.
- Return with a certain loss of homeostasis.
- Dysfunctional return.

All attempts to measure resilience in the social sciences failed, although some indicative methods were developed in trauma processing. The initial idea of homeostasis was discarded in favour of another, which was called “bouncing forward” (Manca *et al.*, 2017). *Psychology Today* describes resilience as: “Resilience is that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever. Rather than letting failure overcome them and drain their resolve, they find a way to rise from the ashes”. (<https://positivepsychology.com/what-is-resilience/>).

We may already stipulate here that some fundamental differences can be observed with respect to ecological theory. One is the notion of bouncing back or bouncing forward. The other is about the timing of bouncing: bouncing before (in nature) or after (in society) the harm has been done. Bouncing forward refers to the process of learning and development every human undergoes. Resilience tells us how the developmental path will go. A more fundamental difference lies in dealing with context. Ecological resilience theory allows a number of generalizations and rules that more or less predict the difference between less and more adaptive ecosystems, and thus resilient. In social resilience theory, decontextualization does not seem to be feasible. One has to include the course of events and the context to understand the role of resilience in coping with stress.

Until now we spoke about resilience on the level of the individual. VU University Amsterdam has established an institute for the study of resilient societies (<https://fsw.vu.nl/en/research/institute-for-societal-resilience>). It starts from the notion that a society is resilient when individuals (micro level), groups and organizations (meso level) and societies (macro level) are able to survive and adapt in times of adversity, threats, disasters and wars, and most importantly are able to find a way (back) towards a well-functioning or even better social system and a healthy society. Three main contributing factors to the resilience of a societal system are distinguished:

- Being aware of existing threats and making sure they can be discussed openly;
- The ability to offer a sense of purpose or meaningfulness, even in a threatening situation and/or after a traumatic event;
- Being creative in existing patterns of behaviour and improvising in dealing with changing conditions.

In their definition, the idea of bouncing forward is preferred to the idea of bouncing back, but both are seen as possible outcomes. In the contributing factors, we can already discern an element of heterogeneity, namely the creativeness to move beyond existing patterns.

The Role of Heterogeneity in Social Resilience Theory

According to Masten (2007), there have been four waves of resilience research. The latest focuses on the dynamics of adaptation. It has been found that the factors explaining resilience encompass genetic, neurobiological, temperamental and environmental influences (Etilé *et al.*, 2017). Increasingly, resilience is seen to be modifiable to some extent at both the individual and cultural levels. Heterogeneity stands for the immense diversity in the ways in which people respond to adversities. An analysis of heterogeneity shows the minimum and maximum levels of resilience, see e.g. Etilé (2017), and also tries to understand why some are resilient and others are not. The political dimension of this question lies close at hand.

More interesting is the presence of heterogeneity in the production of ideologies and ideas to overcome environmental and biological decline. Heterogeneity here functions as a resource for innovations that may constitute private initiatives (Van Assche *et al.*, 2019). Compared to ecology, heterogeneity is much more about explaining the dynamic character of the origination of ideas and actions that citizens add to those of NGOs and governmental institutions. It has less to do with diversity as a static trait. Taking a closer look, it contains a wealth of mechanisms for resilience that combine issues, discourses, normative dispositions and motivations. All of these mechanisms seem to combine the individual and the social beyond the idea of the sum of individual resiliences.

Until now, we have briefly discussed resilience theory and heterogeneity in resilience theory in ecology and the social sciences. Much more can be said about it, but already we can see that there are fundamental differences. The idea of individual resilience and the resilience of a system is the same. But we have seen differences like bouncing back or forward, and static versus dynamic understandings. Moreover, resilience in ecology refers to rather static system integrity based on the dynamics of internal self-organization, whereas in the social context it refers to a fundamental process of change, based on social learning and coping. These differences already give a strong indication of the difficulty in capturing both forms of resilience in one and the same theoretical framework. This difficulty will certainly not disappear when looked upon from a practical point of view. To the contrary, a closer look at resilience in the relations between society and nature in the Netherlands will show a bit more of the immense complexity in how ecological and social resilience mechanisms concurrently mix and stimulate each other.

Table 1

Some indications of the fundamental similarities and differences in the understanding of resilience in ecological theory and social theory

| | Resilience in ecology | Resilience in social theory |
|---------------------|--|--|
| Similarities | Adaptation of the individual species → homeostasis of the species composition | Adaptation of the psyche of an individual → psychic homeostasis |
| | Systems approach of biodiversity | Systems approach of resilient society |
| Differences | Bouncing back | Bouncing forward or back |
| | Relatively static systems that, when passing a tipping point, may change rapidly to another steady state | Change is in the nature of the system |
| | Generalizations possible | Generalizations improbable, because context matters |
| | Heterogeneity is applied to spatial and temporal patterns | Heterogeneity is applied to the variety of responses and the perpetual production of new ideas |

Nature in the City: Interpretations of Social and Ecological Resilience

At first sight one does not really get a nature-friendly impression in a city. But nature itself adapts wonderfully to all that concrete, stone, asphalt, plastic and glass. There is more nature and biodiversity in the city than most people would expect. Urban nature is certainly not second-class nature. On the contrary. Generally speaking, urban areas may well be more biodiverse than farmland. Some say that cities have become islands of diversity surrounded by a more monotonous cultivated landscape. An environment with plenty of greenery has many advantages. It has a positive effect on people's health and improves the quality of life in a neighbourhood. Companies like to settle in surroundings with a lot of greenery, demand increases for real estate, and the economic growth of a city can be boosted. Nature also plays an important role in climate adaptation, because a city with abundant green structures has lower temperatures during summer heatwaves, and the water from heavy downpours is absorbed in unpaved areas.

People have designed the city primarily for themselves, but within the margins that people offer, nature also seizes its chance in the city. Sometimes nature improves the living conditions of the urban dweller, but nature is equally likely to go its own, usually hidden way. Nature in the city often grows despite oppression or seizes the opportunities with all kinds of new developments. Plants and animals that live in the city have conquered a place here due to their robustness or adaptability. Some species even depend largely on human activity or goodwill.

There is a lot of 'immigrant' nature in the city. The origins of what are known as adventitious species can often be traced back to urban activities. Adventitious plants are plants that do not originally occur in a specific place but suddenly appear there, for example because the seed of an exotic plant was (unintentionally) supplied. Sometimes

the population of an adventitious plant can become so large that it disturbs the ecological balance and measures must be taken. For example, aquarium plants and animals sometimes end up in city moats or canals, bird seeds germinate in garden walls and garden crops spread to other areas as wild plants.

Adaptability and Resilience of City Nature

Two centuries ago, only about 3 per cent of the world's population lived in cities. Today it is about 50 percent. The tremendous growth of cities has changed large parts of our planet. All kinds of artificial biotopes have developed in those cities, where plants and animals thrive surprisingly well. Biodiversity in rural areas, heathlands, semi-natural grasslands and agricultural areas is declining. Many original species are disappearing, while a few opportunistic ones are increasing in number, so that a kind of homogenization or flattening occurs. Ecosystems in rural areas are increasingly converging. The special ecosystem of the 'city', on the other hand, is becoming greener, larger, richer in species and more varied. The structure of the city with the alternation of dense and sparse vegetation and with the 'rock formations' in the form of buildings creates a diversity of microclimates, which in turn allows an enormous diversity of flora and fauna. The nutrient-poor soil in the city is much more favourable for plants compared to the soil of agricultural areas. Less risk of hunters, slower traffic and an abundance of food (leftovers) ensure that the city has become attractive for fauna. The higher temperatures and an abundance of sheltered spots are other plus points. While the species diversity in agricultural areas continues to decline, it only increases in the city. Of course, there are many species that have specific requirements for their habitat and will never be able to survive in the city. Factors such as the soil, light, climate, relief and water determine whether or not an animal or plant species is able to survive. Other factors, such as the presence of other plants and animals and importantly the cultural factor 'humans', also play an important role.

This means that the city and nature are not opposites. The occurrence of different types of plants and animals in the city is promoted by or even depends on human influences. The wide variety of biotopes provides specific terrain and environmental conditions. The city can be seen as a separate ecosystem with its own biodiversity. The city of Amsterdam for instance lodges well over 10,000 species in its territory. There has been great interest in biodiversity in recent years, given its decline on a regional and global scale. The aim is to stop this decline, but in practice this turns out to be difficult. In the meantime, there appears to be more biodiversity than was assumed in the urban environment. The concrete barrier created by urbanization has turned out to be a surmountable obstacle. More and more species are able to adapt to the conditions in the city.

Fostering City Nature Through Grassroots Initiatives

In Dutch urban areas nowadays, inhabitants undertake all sorts of initiatives that result in a greener, more biodiverse city. On the one hand this should not be considered as a surprise, because of the innumerable citizens' initiatives that emerged after the call for a 'participation society'. After the number exceeded several hundreds of thousands, NGOs and the government stopped counting. Many of these initiatives address nature

and landscape in the daily living environment of citizens. There is a diverse picture to be painted here, see illustration 1.



Illustration 1. A house of a nature lover, with weeds growing at its doorstep

Citizens claim the management of certain public green spaces, they protect the plants they like, they reshape their gardens into nature gardens, create façade gardens (see illustration 2), and manage their kitchen gardens on a more natural basis. In the peri-urban space they also collectively set up and/or manage privately run nature reserves and develop a societal food forest. We might speak of a plethora of innovative and creative initiatives. These initiatives are not undisputed, we have to admit. Whereas some people value how the quality of nature improves, others become distressed because of the increase in weeds, disturbing the idea of neatness and control so characteristic of a city. Below we will illustrate a few of these initiatives. The bottom line that connects them is the change of perspective on unwanted weeds, whereby they are seen as valuable elements of city nature.



Illustration 2 An example of a façade garden, with bicycles smashed into it

Garden Nature: Nature Garden, Garden Reserves and Tuiny Forests

A nature garden refers to a garden with an animal-friendly and natural design. The nature garden is a collective name for the Insect Garden, Bee Garden, Butterfly Garden, Bird Garden and Native Species Garden (*heemtuin* in Dutch). The natural value of the plants and the design are important elements. Garden reserves, an initiative of the Dutch radio nature programme *Vroege Vogels* ['Early Birds'], was inspired by an idea from France

where the Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux ('bird protection league') called on people with a garden to create 'refuges' by rearranging their own garden to suit birds. People who joined the initiative could then hang a sign on the garden gate. In the Dutch initiative, to receive the predicate 'Garden Reserve', a garden must meet 7 of 10 criteria whereby food and hiding/nesting places for animals, among other things, are guaranteed. Plants should preferably be native. More than 1,750 garden reserves have been registered as such on the website of the Year-Round Garden Count (www.tuintelling.nl), which is a platform for garden biodiversity that organises annual counts by citizens. More than 21,000 gardens participate in the Year-Round Garden Count, and the Dutch Butterfly Foundation assumes that most of these gardens are natural gardens.

Guerrilla Gardening

Guerrilla gardening originated in cities where there was little green space. Ignored patches of green in the city are taken over by garden enthusiasts, in protest against the general decline of nature. They do this not for themselves, but for the community. Sometimes after a night's work there are suddenly beautiful flowers on the verge of a road, and sometimes useful vegetables such as broad beans. Seeds are planted in empty flower boxes or plots of land where no flowers and/or other plants can be found yet. By sowing precisely in these places, biodiversity is stimulated. Because guerrilla gardening is strictly forbidden, something like resilience seems to be involved.

Botanical Sidewalk Chalks

Recently, a French initiative 'Botanical sidewalk chalk' blew over to the Netherlands, whereby chalked messages draw attention to weeds appearing spontaneously between paving stones: nature in miniature format, right nearby and, moreover, that arrives under its own steam. Anyone can encounter these sidewalks, or pavement, plants. Normally, the municipal park department would get rid of them by spraying glyphosates. However, recently European legislation was introduced forbidding this. The municipality now controls the weeds with more environmentally friendly measures. The effect of this has been an increase in weeds in the pavements. The chalk writers believe that putting the name of a weed on the pavement provides a bit of protection for it. They believe that weed controllers are less inclined to remove it if they have read its name.

Context Matters

Generally speaking, one can observe heterogeneity in the examples of ways in which people take action in relation to greenery in the city. These examples vary in the motivations of the people involved and in how the actions and initiatives evolve. For example, it depends whether the actions take place in the public domain or in private gardens, whether they are taken collectively or alone, whether actions in the public domain are welcomed by the authorities or not, whether institutions facilitate the actions or not, whether there is a focus on the results (e.g. a certain kind of nature) or a focus on

doing things together, social cohesion and *'gezelligheid'*, which is a Dutch word for the joy of being in good company, and notoriously difficult to translate. There are all kinds of variations on these and other factors, yet one can say that each example has its own ideology and specific connections with boundaries and institutions.

Interactions Between Ecological and Social Resilience

In these few small examples one can see many resilience mechanisms at work. Often it starts with concern and opposition: concern about the loss of biodiversity on various scales and opposition towards the commercial garden centres, only selling stuff that is bad for nature. The opposition comes from the way the management of green structures is contracted by the public administration, leading to dull lawns and to the abundant use of herbicides. Many citizens have become very concerned about the decline in bee populations and have started to reshape parts of the public space as bee-friendly environments. They have learned that planting beautiful flowers, rich in honey production, is not the best solution. Local native vegetation turns out to be most attractive for insects. But local vegetation is seen as a lack of weed control, so there are many potential threats to this approach.

When people encounter small, insignificant plants in the pavement, they superimpose human characteristics, such as braveness, strength and beauty. Somehow this helps them to act without any indication of results that contribute to biodiversity goals at the neighbourhood or city level. The number of actions that are taken in this way is large and must be considered as a significant contribution in overcoming the resilience gap.

A strong incentive for garden owners is the number of flora and fauna species that live in the garden. They are counted annually and some counts show over a thousand species in a small city garden. This should not be seen as a mere competition, but as a sign of appropriate knowledge on how to manage your garden in an eco-friendly way. Moreover, it gives a boost to the esteem of the owner, who gets attention in the media.

Most important on the social side is the friendly cooperation between those who share an eco-friendly lifestyle and who want to change the world by starting an initiative. In one example in the city of Zwolle, this started with façade gardens and ended with the adoption of sustainable energy projects and the expelling of cars to the outskirts of the city. The step from one action to a subsequent, bigger one is easily taken in a community.

Coincidence also plays a role in the ways in which nature enters the city. Plant seeds travel in the mud on mountain bikes from the woods to the city, and they travel in the clods of earth around olive tree roots, transported from the Mediterranean to the very centre of Amsterdam. Moreover, one species may be the vector of another. We see foxes and other mammals in cities, and they bring all kinds of seeds with them, that germinate in city parks. In a similar way to the situation in the countryside and in nature reserves, the soil in a city becomes more fertile because of nitrogen deposition. When plants grow between the paving stones in a pavement, the soil changes: the organic matter increases, contains more soil life and become more receptive to other plants.

This seems to be a success story, but we have to point out that there are still substantial contrary trends that show us how afraid citizens still are of the nearby nature.

People are particularly afraid of ants, bats, exotic mosquitos and so on. Superstition and fear of illness influence people's behaviour. It seems that neither of the opposing trends outweighs the other. Nevertheless, this shows the resilience of those who choose a different path, though often mocked by their neighbours. All these positive examples together should be seen as an indication of a resilient society cooperating with a resilient nature in search of nature-inclusive solutions for daily life in cities.

Reflections on Polysystem

A common way to protect nature is to create nature reserves in the countryside in remote places and manage the abiotic conditions and its vegetation. The Netherlands lacks a dedicated governmental policy on the protection of nature in cities. If nature development projects are developed in the city, they are always based on voluntarism. What we see here is the emergence of a new repertoire of nature protection. Greening the city gives rise to many new and innovative practices, often heavily disputed. Who wants a neighbour with a natural —seemingly unorganized— garden? Such a neighbour would be subject to gossip and shame. But now the times are changing. Weeds are welcomed, and people are discovering that native weeds attract more insects and more rare species than the beautiful flowering plants coming from far away. The initiatives by citizens that we have discussed are polysystem. Some of them are embraced by the government, but most are neglected as too insignificant. We can see heterogeneity at work here: the production of ideas takes place in an environment of ambivalence. People are worried about the wellbeing of future generations, feel the need to step in for nature, they mistrust the government and see the shortcomings of industry, which is failing to become truly sustainable. On the other hand, they understand the immenseness of the problems and how insignificant their small contribution to a better world really is. But there is a saying, which says “together we can make the difference”. One can see that all these initiatives are embedded in social practices. Some of them are based on status and recognition (my garden is richest in terms of biodiversity), but most of them are embedded in *gezelligheid* and concerns about the environment.

Polysystem theory clarifies how innovations sprout from ambivalences and ambiguities. So what is the ambivalence here? It is interesting to note that the actions that citizens take address both climate change and biodiversity loss. From a policy point of view, each of these problems has its own power structures working on solutions. They are no more than loosely connected. But citizens' actions address the combination of these problems. Is this an ambivalence? We think so, because it is not widely acknowledged that cities can play a significant role in safeguarding biodiversity. That implies that citizens are in fact performing experiments, while not having lost their fear for nature. Many of them poison the ants that colonize their patio, or the caterpillars feeding on their boxwood shrubs, but grow bee-friendly plants and feed the birds and hedgehogs. The proof of the positive effects of their actions does not come from the centres of power but is generated within the networks they belong to. With the aid of mass media and a couple of NGOs, they perform inventories of species in their gardens and local neighbourhoods, and the results are publicized by the mass media. A power centre such as the Stockholm Resilience Centre acknowledges to some extent the relevance of active citizens, for instance when

they speak about the resilience gap (the problem cannot be dealt with by governments and their institutions), but the centre is not actively reaching out to make a connection.

Generally, culture is presented as quite the opposite of nature. This contrast between mankind and nature is deeply rooted in our thinking and in the language with which we express that thinking. What do Botanical Sidewalk Chalks, Garden Reserves and Tuiny Forests, which is a concept for a tiny, forest like garden, of show with regard to the perspective on 'weeds', on more nature in the city? Or on more control or less, order or chaos? One can observe the forming of a repertoire that tries to reject the canon 'free from weeds' and 'raked nature'. As PST outlines, heterogeneity is a key issue in understanding and making sense of what happens. We see that local communities and national networks are active, responding to each other, producing new ideas and putting them into practice. The production of new ideas almost seems more important than supporting the ones that are already being put into practice. When nature responds positively, this is observed, shared within the networks and signified as proof of good action. A new repertoire is invented, and the first steps towards canonization are taken.

Here we have to talk about the complexity at stake. Each initiative has a unique combination of social and ecological resilience mechanisms. They are extremely intricate. If people notice resilience in nature, such as the growth of a small plant between paving stones, or a robin breeding in the bumper of a car, they are moved and willing to make sacrifices to ensure the fragility is not disturbed. To make a sacrifice, such as not using your car until the young robins have left the nest, may call upon your resilience. Emotions play an important role here. Knowledge plays its role too. If species such as the wolf return to the Netherlands after an absence of almost two hundred years, the knowledge that is stacked in our social memory becomes activated and provides some sense of trust to permit the animal to cohabit with us in the densely populated countryside. So, on the human side of the interaction, it is about allowing nature into your daily environment, helping nature to find a place in the city, not overreacting with lots of poison when invasive new species appear, and trying to create a movement in greening the city. Increasingly, people see its beauty and stop seeing the greenery as invasive unwanted plants.

These are just some small examples, and many more observations could be made. How on earth can one draw up a grand ecological theory on socio-economic systems that helps to explain this knitting of ecological and social processes? This is all resulting in fundamental change: nature nearby becomes more important than nature in far-off reserves. The canon is slowly changing. Those in power stick to their repertoire, which consists of agreements on CO₂ reduction, biodiversity strategies, Green Deals and so on, each neatly framed by policy windows. But below the surface, grounded in conviviality, a whole new repertoire is emerging. Literally and figuratively, we are talking about grassroots. When seen as a set of polysystem, they embody a powerful surge in society to combine nature protection with climate adaptation.

Conclusions

The question we will try to answer here is whether the closure of the so-called resilience gap that deals with man-nature interactions can be theorized and understood

from a mono-disciplinary perspective. We have shown that ecological and social resilience theories seem to be incompatible. Bouncing back in ecology is fundamentally different from bouncing forward as social scientists see resilience. When focusing on the role of heterogeneity in ecological and social resilience theories, the problems becomes even greater. This shows the improbability of generalizations that cut the context out of the whole picture. The notion of socio-ecological systems however is not useless or a dead-end road, but it should be loaded and embedded in different theoretical frameworks. By confining it to ecological theory, its use would underestimate the essential role of heterogeneity and context. There is no way in which ecological theory can be used to explore and understand the role of culture. There are no tipping points in society at which useless weeds are suddenly seen as beautiful elements of nature. For the time being a combination of theoretical concepts seems to be the maximum multidisciplinary achievement. From a social point of view, emotions, knowledge, social memory, motivations, improvisations and culture should all be addressed in a theory of resilience in human-nature interactions.

The basic distinction between culture and nature, based on a traditional fear for nature, plays its role here. It hinders the development of a new repertoire and models showing how mankind can co-exist with nature in our daily environment. By seeing the experiments as polysystem, we can start to understand the creation of a new repertoire, with which people find new ways to make cities more liveable and promote biodiversity. Despite the fact that many scientists believe that climate change is an ecological problem, we have to bounce forward!

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Polysystem Studies, Ecocriticism and the Homogenization of Biocultural Diversity

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Polysystem Studies deal with the complexity and interdependency of socio-cultural systems and offer a useful framework for analyzing cultural diversity. Ecocriticism deals with the complexity of ecosystems and the interactions between human beings and nature. Assuming that biological diversity and cultural diversity are intricately linked, Polysystem Studies and Ecocriticism could inform and enrich each other. Both of them are very useful tools when focusing on the loss of biocultural diversity and analyzing cultural homogenization processes. The point of this paper¹ is to analyze cultural homogenization from an ecocritical and polysystemic point of view.

Since the emergence of ecological awareness and “ecologised thought”, the close relationship between humans and nature has become evident in Western society (Morin, “La pensée écológisée”; Roque). The Earth depends on the human that depends on the Earth, according to Edgar Morin. A reciprocity that leads Michel Serres to claim a “natural contract” where nature is recognized as a subject of law: “as much as nature gives to man, as much he has to return to nature which has become a subject of law” (Serres, “Le contrat naturel” 67, own translation). Instead of treating and analyzing nature and culture, the human and the non-human separately, as is usually done in the West², it is necessary to

1 This article is an English adaptation of the chapter “Eco-crítica de la homogeneización cultural” published in *Naturalezas en fuga: ecocrítica(s) de la ciudad en transformación*, Barcelona: Anthropos.

2 “The majority of the languages and cultures of the world do not have a concept of nature equivalent to that used in Western natural sciences [...]. Almost all the world’s religions and spiritual traditions refer to the natural world with concepts that are diverse, broader, more holistic, and more encompassing and that incorporate intrinsic, spiritual values”. (Mallarach 22)

treat them as a complex whole, as Edgar Morin defends, integrating natural and human sciences and putting a brake on the hyper-specialization that has dominated (and still dominates) the development of science. Starting from the need to ecologize sciences, in this case Humanities, this paper wants to explore the close link between biodiversity and cultural diversity, two realities threatened by a cultural homogenization to which a complex, ecologized and polysystemic thought could put a brake. In the same way that man depends on the Earth that depends on man, it could be postulated that cultural diversity depends on biodiversity that depends on cultural diversity.

There is a very close link between biological diversity and cultural diversity, a link that is not just a metaphorical one. In a study published in 2012 that attempted to quantify the co-occurrence of linguistic and biological diversity, Professor Larry J. Gorenflo and his collaborators showed that in areas with more biodiversity, there is also more linguistic diversity: of the more than 6,900 languages spoken currently on Earth more than 4,800 occur in regions with high biodiversity. Although there are still few certainties about the reason for this co-occurrence of linguistic and biological diversity, “in a lot of cases it may well be that biodiversity evolved as part-and-parcel of cultural diversity, and vice versa” (Kinver). Some research suggests that in areas with greater biodiversity, small and self-sufficient communities are more easily formed, thanks to the diversity of resources, while in areas with low diversity and less variety of resources, the population is forced to travel larger territories, which usually leads to a greater homogenization of culture and language.

The low cultural diversity seen in northerly latitudes is understandable, even expected. In this relatively unproductive environment, individuals must range over large areas to eke out a living. This movement of people tends to homogenize culture and language. The puzzle is to explain the higher cultural densities in more productive areas. Why do humans not just form one large and homogeneous cultural group in ecologically richer areas such as New Guinea? It may be that human subpopulations continually split off from larger groups, and from around defensible resources —be they tracts of forest or fishing grounds— because individuals seek to control those resources. [...] Over time, these self-sufficient groups emerge as daughter cultures and then as fully fledged different societies with their own customs, specializations and behavioural rules. (Pagel and Mace)

Other research indicates that the European biological expansion of people, diseases and languages has contributed to the loss of cultural and linguistic diversity in many areas of the planet. Without necessarily seeking a causal link, the coexistence of biodiversity and cultural diversity suggests a link between both of them that goes beyond a metaphorical relationship, beyond a simple parallelism where one diversity could serve as a metaphor for the other. They are intertwined, they go hand in hand, they need each other. Languages and cultures are ‘nourished’ by biodiversity, in the same way that biodiversity is made visible and revalued through languages and cultures. When humans live in a specific environmental context, they have had to learn to sustainably manage the natural resources of their environment in order to (over) live. The knowledge, practices and beliefs that have been accumulating in this regard constitute what is known as traditional ecological knowledge or traditional environmental knowledge. This knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation through language and culture, contributing to the construction of a particular worldview and a sense of place.

If there is one aspect that appears very often in research on the connections between cultural, linguistic and biological diversity, it is the decline of each of them. A decline that occurs simultaneously. The loss of one seems often to entail the loss of the other, as UNESCO emphasizes:

While it is widely acknowledged that the degradation of the natural environment, in particular traditional habitats, entails a loss of cultural and linguistic diversity, new studies suggest that language loss, in its turn, has a negative impact on biodiversity conservation.³

The fact that linguistic, cultural and biological diversities are under threat by the same forces and the fact that loss of diversity at all levels spells dramatic consequences for humanity and earth (Maffi, "Linguistic, Cultural and Biological Diversity" 599), led in the 1990s to the development of the concept of "biocultural diversity". Very useful in resisting the nature-culture dichotomy⁴, this concept has become in recent years a fascinating area of transdisciplinary research (Maffi, "On Biocultural Diversity"). According to Luisa Maffi, "biocultural diversity comprises the diversity of life in all of its manifestations —biological, cultural, and linguistic— which are interrelated (and likely coevolved) within a complex socio-ecological adaptive system" (Maffi and Woodley). To complete the definition, she highlights several key elements. First, "the diversity of life is made up not only of the diversity of plants and animal species, habitats and ecosystems found on the planet, but also of the diversity of human cultures and languages". Second, "these diversities do not exist in separate and parallel realms, but rather are different manifestations of a single, complex whole". Lastly, "the links among these diversities have developed over time through the cumulative global effects of mutual adaptations, probably of a co-evolutionary nature, between humans and the environment at the local level" (Maffi and Woodley). In certain ways, the concept of biocultural diversity as defined by Maffi recalls the idea of polysystem as defined by Itamar Even-Zohar: "[...] if the idea of structuredness and systemicity need no longer be identified with homogeneity, a semiotic system can be conceived of as a heterogeneous, open structure. It is, therefore, very rarely a uni-system but is, necessarily, a polysystem - a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent" ("Polysystem Theory" 11). The concept of biocultural diversity led to even greater collaboration between UNESCO and the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). In June 2010, during the International Conference on Cultural and Biological Diversity for Development, held in Montréal (Québec, Canada), a collaborative program was launched and the "2010 Declaration on Biocultural Diversity" was adopted, where it is recognized that biological and cultural diversity are "intrinsically and inextricably" related, and that they are key for sustainable development and "for the survival and well-being of contemporary societies,

3 More details: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/biodiversity-and-linguistic-diversity/>

4 Other concepts and approaches have been developed to overcome the nature-culture dichotomy and to conceptualize the interconnectedness of nature and culture. An interesting summary can be found in *Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature in Protected Areas*, where Steve Brown and Bas Verschuuren propose to use the term naturecultures "to recognise that humans, non-human species, more-than-human entities, and landscape are intimately bound (that is, integrated or entangled), while nature-culture is used to indicate nature and culture as binaries or separate domains" (10).

both in urban and rural areas”. In addition, the Declaration expresses deep concern about the threats suffered by cultural and biological diversity, “particularly in the face of the homogenizing forces of globalization”⁵.

These homogenizing forces do not arise only in the era of globalization. We can also observe them in the Roman Empire, in the era of the “great discoveries”, conquests and colonizations and, more recently, in the era of nations (and nationalisms). At present, they are driven by a capitalist world system that ended up determining all living conditions (Žižek 11) and by ruling classes and elites whose main objective is to increase their economic benefit⁶ and wish to dominate and control ever larger spaces, from cities, regions, nations and empires up to Earth, integrating them (locking them up) into a single system and imposing on everyone a single vision proposed by “idea-makers” and “culture entrepreneurs” (Even-Zohar, “Ideational Labor and the Production of Social Energy”) or, as Bruno Latour states it, “a single vision, entirely provincial, proposed by a few individuals, representing a very small number of interests, limited to a few measuring instruments, to a few standards and protocols” (13). In such a context it is not surprising that there is an incessant loss of cultural diversity and biodiversity, often the loss of one leading to the loss of the other and vice versa.

When joining (or obliged to join) global market economy, local and indigenous communities no longer cultivate the land to satisfy the demand of their community but cultivate their lands to satisfy external demands of Western elites (and others), endangering food sovereignty. They change their way of farming and adopt methods more in line with the capitalist culture and the growth economy, leaving aside traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). They carry out productive activities “that reduce the time that people spend in nature, which in turn interferes with the transmission of cultural knowledge” (Reyes-García 51-52, own translation). Traditional ecological knowledge is being lost and with it the language. The example of African land used to feed Europe is well known. “The EU uses almost 20% of the Earth’s biocapacity although it comprises only 7% of the world population” and “its citizens are currently using twice more than what the EU’s ecosystems can renew”, according to Living Beyond Nature’s Limits report (2019) by WWF and the Global Footprint Network. We could also evoke the case of Brazil where soybean cultivation —in the hands of one French and three American multinationals (Poinssot)— has quadrupled in the last twenty years, according to the FAO, to reach 15 million tons per year and thus meet demand from other countries and continents⁷. Various NGOs, such as WWF or Greenpeace, have been warning for many years about the disastrous consequences of soy monoculture: deforestation, loss of biodiversity, climate impact, violation of human rights, etc. Surrounded by lands that no longer feed or belong to them, local populations are forced to migrate, disinherited and evicted (Sassen). The scarcity of resources makes them depend on other cultures and communities. Turned into ‘peripheries’ of the dominant cultures of the capitalist system, they contribute to the economic development of the center and, at the same

5 The complete 2010 Declaration on Biocultural Diversity can be found here: <http://www.cbd.int/doc/meetings/development/icbcd/official/icbcd-report-en.doc>

6 “El hecho primordial de la Edad Moderna no es que la Tierra gira en torno al sol, sino que el dinero lo haga en torno a la Tierra” (Sloterdijk 67).

7 More details on: <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QC>

time, suffer underdevelopment and impoverishment of the 'periphery' (Achterhuis). It causes an economic, social and administrative dependency that generates an asymmetric and mimetic relationship and causes a loss of territory, cultural identity, biodiversity, and cultural diversity. The homogenizing forces and the corresponding losses not only concern the indigenous and remote peoples of Africa, they also affect the other continents, both the former colonizers and the former colonized.

[...] the sense of vertigo, almost panic, that traverses all contemporary politics arises owing to the fact that the ground is giving way beneath everyone's feet at once, as if we all felt attacked everywhere, in our habits and in our possessions. [...]

It is a question of attachment, of lifestyle, that's being pulled out from under us, a question of land, of property giving way beneath us, and this uneasiness gnaws at everyone equally, the former colonizers and the formerly colonized alike. But actually, no, it upsets the former colonizers much more, as they are less accustomed to the situation than are the formerly colonized. What is certain is that all find themselves facing a universal lack of shareable space and inhabitable land. (Latour 8-9)

Since the modern era, cultural homogenization has intensely accompanied industrialization in the West (Gellner) and has been intimately linked to the formation and expansion of the Western nation-state (Conversi, "Nación, Estado y Cultura"). Modern society turned to nationalism and compulsory education to nationalize its citizenship and impose on it a homogeneous, often monolingual, and standardized culture (Gellner). Through homogenization and cultural planification (Even-Zohar, "Planificación de la cultura" 71-96), the "pedagogues of nationhood" (Harrington) and the ruling classes of the nation-states attempted to make citizens ethnically and culturally "congruent" (Conversi, "Nación, Estado y Cultura" 457). By using nationalism and educational systems, they tried to unify and homogenize society. These policies of homogenization and standardization are often radicalized in times of war and, in their most extreme form, have led "to the elimination of entire social classes, particularly the peasants and proto-nationalist elites, up to the mass transfer of the inhabitants of cities and entire regions, to end their physical elimination through the supreme crime, genocide" (Conversi, "Nación, Estado y Cultura" 468, own translation). This internal cultural homogenization has also been accompanied by a more global homogenization process, a westernization of the world (Latouche). The nation-state model and neo-liberal ideology have spread across much of the planet. A globalization process that "was articulated as a unidirectional process of cultural homogenization, as a result of which never before so many individuals had participated in the consumption habits of the old Western elites" (Moreno and Conversi 78-79).

By taking over the planet and expelling the poor and disinherited (Sassen), Western civilization endangers traditional civilizations and their biocultural diversity. A paradox, according to Edgar Morin, since Western civilization, immersed in a crisis, presents itself to developing countries "as a cure, while it carries the disease in itself" (Morin, "Penser global" 78, own translation). Westernization and mass consumerism promote associability behaviors, destroy traditional solidarity (Morin, "Penser global" 71; Morin, "La Voie" 32) and have a very negative impact on the environment and biocultural diversity. The appropriation of vast pieces of land and industrialization destroy the biosphere and cause environmental injustices (Larrère). Mining and industrial operations render the land infertile, pollute the water table and the oceans, and have a negative impact on the

health of populations (Sassen 169-235). The elites of neoliberal globalization exploit and deplete natural resources, and impose cultural assimilation and homogenization of cultural diversity.

How can we counter the negative impacts of the homogenizing forces? How to deal with the decline in biodiversity and cultural diversity? How to change direction? More than one considers that the current crises (political, economic, environmental, social, cognitive) force us to rethink everything or, as Michel Serres says: “since everything has to be redone, everything still needs to be invented” (Serres, “Thumbelina” 15). As “everything is to be rethought” and “everything has to be started again”, Edgar Morin considers that a metamorphosis is necessary, where the creative capacities would be regenerated (“La Voie” 49-51). A lot of creativity will be needed, a creativity that is already bearing fruits at grassroots level through many local initiatives seeking to regenerate sectors in crisis, although many of them are (still) unknown and have yet to join forces:

There is already, on all continents, in all nations, a whirlwind of creative activities, a multitude of local initiatives directed towards economic, or social, or political, or cognitive, or educational, or ethical, or existential regeneration. But everything that should be connected is isolated, separated, scattered. These initiatives do not know about each other, no administration counts them, no political party takes note of them. But they are the breeding ground of the future. They should be acknowledged, registered, collated, and listed in order to open a plurality of reformation paths. These are multiple pathways that will be able, when jointly evolving, to combine and form the New Path, which will break down the path we are following and direct us towards the still invisible and inconceivable Metamorphosis. Salvation originated from the ground”. (Morin, “La Voie” 52, own translation)

However, creativity, instead of leading to change, can also perpetuate the neoliberal and capitalist system and reinforce processes of cultural homogenization. It is the kind of creativity that ruling classes promote actually in contemporary society. As Oli Mould points out in his book *Against Creativity*, “contemporary capitalism has commandeered creativity to ensure its own growth and maintain the centralization and monetization of what it generates” (intro.). By mobilizing the creative industry, capitalism “actively seeks out those who are opposed to it and offers them fame and fortune”, “[...] stabilizes those movements, people, and ideas that are “outside” it by naming them” (intro.) and by bringing them into the “mainstream” (in a process of cultural homogenization). Capitalism turns them into a resource to exploit and commercialize, in a fertile and stable ground for an ever expanding market. “Many countercultural movements, from hippy culture to punk to skateboarding, have fallen foul of capitalism’s lure of monetary reward” (intro.). In the same way creativity is mobilized in urban development. The policy of the “creative city” (Mould chap. 5) uses “creativity” to better sell the city’s brand, position itself better in the market and increase economic benefits, it brings graffiti and other alternative movements into the urban capitalist agenda, and “reactivates” and “revives” (read “gentrifies”) deprived urban areas, often forgetting the socio-cultural and economic specificities of the place, and transforms them into neighborhoods that welcome a wealthy and “creative” class. As it incorporates alternative and subversive cultures in its political and urban agenda (city councils finance parks to practice skateboarding, order graffiti, organize guided tours of alternative spaces), it neutralizes them and turns them into merely economic tools,

which leads Oli Mold to conclude that the creative city turns out to be the antithesis of urban creativity:

[...] within this broad idea of urban subversion, their resistance to, or indeed their inclusion in, the Creative City policies themselves are looking to such activities in order to maintain the uniqueness and innovative image that propels economic competitiveness, in other words to maintain their brand. Therefore we see commercialised forms of parkour and skateboarding, urban exploration tours of peri-legal sites, community-led planning interventions being sponsored by city governments and so on. But in so doing, the Creative City, despite rhetoric and ‘spin’ to the contrary, is ultimately reducing such activities to economically determined instruments of urban development and politically, conceptually and linguistically whitewashing any transgressional, subversive or resistive characteristics in favour of more putative urban and economic development aims that can be homogenised and replicated. And thus, returning to the original *problem* - the Creative City as the anthesis of urban creativity. (Mould, “Urban Subversion and the Creative City” 4)

For creativity to be a force for change in the world and a catalyst for social and environmental justice, “it must be rescued from its current incarceration as purely an engine for economic growth” (Mould, “Against creativity” intro.). Instead of the discourse about creative city, which has become “a unidirectional and homogenizing policy tool”, and instead of the creativity as promoted by capitalism that enacts “a ‘slow violence’ that grinds down any other forms of social organization, to the chorus of ‘There is no alternative’”, there is another kind of creativity, a “radical” and “revolutionary” one that shows that there are alternatives, “if we only know where and how to look” (Mould, “Against creativity” Conclusion).

In order to know where and how to look, we need to cultivate and educate our gaze to come aware of those alternatives that allow us to resist capitalism and cultural homogenization, we need to perceive the connection between cultural, linguistic and biological diversity, a perception that is disappearing in an increasingly industrialized and urban world, where people consider that they do not depend on nature to be able to live, something that does not happen in small or indigenous societies. According to Luisa Maffi,

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the breakdown of the perceived link between humans and nature underlies many of the environmental and social problems humanity faces today. The historic loss of understanding of the finiteness and fragility of the natural world, which has come with urbanization and industrialization, goes along with the ability, brought about by economic globalization, to turn a blind eye to the profound social and environmental consequences of massive exploitation and transformation of nature. Together, these two factors create a deleterious feedback loop that further pushes our planet—and humanity with it—toward the brink. Thus, there is an ever more pressing need to understand the connections between biodiversity and cultural diversity, and to act on this understanding, in both policy and practice, to support and restore vitality and resilience to biocultural systems. (Maffi and Woodley)

The ability to perceive and understand the connections between biodiversity and cultural diversity faces another obstacle: the loss of a certain sense of place due to the expansion of *non-places*. Those non-spaces do not generate a singular identity or relationship, but loneliness and similarity (Augé, “Non-lieux”). They are no longer in supermarkets, gas stations and airports anymore, and moved to city centers, even to our homes:

Today it can be said that the *non-place* is the context of every possible place. We are in the world with references that are totally artificial, even in our home, the most personal space: sitting in front of the TV, looking at the mobile phone, the tablet, with the headphones at the same time ... We are in a permanent non-place; these devices are permanently placing us in a non-place. We carry the *no-place* with us. (Augé, “Con la tecnología”, own translation)

In this permanent non-place, technology and complex connectivity allow us to move around the world without leaving the place, consuming products and artifacts created in distant places. An experience of deterritorialization that reduces contact with our local environment and weakens the link between culture and place (Tomlinson 29-30), while promoting and strengthening a process of cultural homogenization that obeys the algorithms designed by the big tech companies (Google, Amazon, Facebook, Apple).

The need to land becomes urgent, as Bruno Latour advocates in *Down to Earth*, a landing on the “Terrestrial” (40) that overcomes the opposition between local and global, to reconcile ourselves with the real world on which we depend and to start defining a common world through discovery of how our existence is tied to others. The need to promote an eco-cosmopolitanism, in the way proposed by Ursula K. Heise, and the need to “complete the value of the concrete experience of places by an acute perception of the abstract relationships that govern the biosphere” (Schoentjes 177, own translation), avoiding focusing exclusively on the local: “The task of ecocriticism with a cosmopolitan perspective is to develop an understanding and critique of the [Planet Earth’s] mechanisms as they play themselves out in different cultural contexts so as to create a variety of ecological imaginations of the global” (Heise 62). The need to land with a complex thought, capable of understanding and explaining reality from all possible perspectives, from the most diverse areas of knowledge, avoiding not only a reductionism or a fragmented knowledge, but also a holistic thinking that exclusively reduces knowledge to the knowledge of a whole: “[...] The knowledge of a whole requires the knowledge not only of its constituent parts, but also that of the actions and reactions that exist permanently between the parts and the whole when this whole is active, when it is alive, when it is a social whole, a human whole” (Morin, “Penser global” 114, own translation). The need to replace the paradigm of disjunction, reduction, unidimensionalization by a paradigm of distinction and conjunction, which allows distinguishing without dismantling, associating without identifying or reducing (127). In short, the need for ecological / ecologized and complex thinking.

What about Polysystem Studies? In which way could it contribute to develop, promote and cultivate complex and ecologized thinking? The juxtaposition of Maffi’s definition of biocultural diversity and Even-Zohar’s view of Polysystem Studies, as previously observed, certainly suggests it might be worth continuing to foster dialogue between Ecocriticism and Polysystem Studies. Just a few suggestions for further research. On the one side, Polysystem Studies could be a great contribution to Ecocriticism and to research on biocultural diversity. If the decline of biocultural diversity is (partly) the result of cultural homogenization and cultural homogenization has to do with cultural transfers, contacts between cultural systems, the making of repertoires, idea-makers, culture entrepreneurs, power relations, and so on, there is no doubt that Polysystem Studies can be a very useful tool, if we want to describe, analyze and understand all these phenomena.

On the other side, Ecocriticism could also be a great contribution to Polysystem Studies. So far Polysystem Studies has focused mainly on human agents, on idea-makers and culture entrepreneurs, it would be worth to include nature and environment when studying dynamics between cultural systems, and to retrieve a “sense of place” (Heise).

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Polysystem Theory and Research Applications: Planning and Social Research Commitment in an Analysis of the Expositive and Dissemination Project *The City, the Way and Us* as a Case Study

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A Planning and Social Theory; Transdisciplinary and Interventional

Since its earliest manifestations, Polysystem Theory has shown its planning component, already clearly present in 1990. In fact, Itamar Even-Zohar along with the authors of the most suggestive analytical proposals and developmental praxes that followed—as far as I am aware—incorporated this component both in an explicit and implicit way, and to multiples ends. In this sense, Polysystem Theory is a planning theory: 1) It allows us to study planning processes and results and 2) enables us to offer planning proposals, either implicitly or explicitly, when studying current and active processes.

Polysystem Theory began as a literary theory, designed for the study of literary systems. The very conception of polysystem, which sought to avoid simple structuralist identifications, necessarily pointed to a sociology of literary activity. It identified the macro-factors, agents, instruments, channels, etc., that were involved in said activity. Furthermore, it already had the prevention, or rather the *foresight*, of addressing not only texts, but products and producers as well. It was not limited by the written functions of

the authors alone, but also of their *receptors* —not only readers—. These considerations had their locus in the concept of *repertoire* which, when talking about norms and models, in addition to materials, proposed a holistic perspective on this activity.

There was another fundamental component already in the first formulations of the theory, namely the relevance —social, national, and international— of literary activity. Relevance as a good, relevance as a tool, which is already quite explicit in the author's 1993 work. It was this relevance that sought out other types of agency dedicated to the same functions and determined the relative importance of literary activity in the constitution of societies or communities, and in their perpetuation throughout history. A certain relevance, by the way, that in many societies today seems to have been replaced or neglected (Even Zohar, Torres Feijó and Monegal, 2019), and which implies looking into where the relevant elements or agents in those societies are, how they manifest or function. This requires the study of literary activity not as an object in itself or *as itself*, but as part of culture when it serves to answer research questions on these subjects. Necessarily, when speaking in terms of its construction, cohesion, and social upkeep, the notion of repertoire —of the structuring ideas geared towards that purpose— moves into the foreground. A semiological understanding of its functioning accompanies this shift to center stage, which is also the basis of the first formulations of the theory. In that semiological niche, as well as in Bourdieu's concepts of *repertoire* and *habitus* (1979), the notion of culture as the ways in which people and communities see, classify, and interact with the world constitutes the starting point, and most importantly, the logic underlying the theory.

This consideration clearly approaches the theory of polysystem, in its most modern enquiry and advances, and resembles the general outlines of other multidisciplinary spheres. Within the Galabra Network, a stirring case in point in approaching this theory via its similarities to ecosystem theories, can be found in the work of the biologist Emilio Carral, resulting in a high degree of compatibility and overlap between one and the other (vid. Carral, 2021, in this volume).

This concept of repertoire, of culture, of considering society's activities from these points of view, calls for a type of research that is no longer merely disciplinary or even transdisciplinary, but which requires —for lack of a better understanding of the phenomena— a certain transdisciplinary attitude and perspective, set at the crossroads, if possible, where intertwined disciplines begin to appear. In our case, regarding the research projects in this work —alluded to in note 1— researchers from various fields have participated throughout its development: tourism studies, literary studies, sociology, ecology, biology, economics, computational linguistics, lexicography, the audiovisual realm, anthropology. Inclusive research of this nature, following the work of Even-Zohar, might be described as “cultural research”. It is not a question, in other words, of having teams with people who are expert in certain academic disciplines. It is rather about trying to formulate research questions according to the teams' possibilities and expertise (and with whatever external resources may prove necessary) and being able to guide them towards unified, transdisciplinary answers. We understand that a transdisciplinary logic improves upon the production of valuable knowledge in any delimited object of study.

The holistic consideration of the object of study and the planning component of the given theory for social analysis beckons us to think in terms of social intervention. I do

not intend with this statement to be categorical in the debate about whether or not the researcher should intervene socially, even though I have already had the opportunity to express my position on the subject (2015 traders); but it is clear to me that social intervention should be incorporated into professional research work, in the sense of working with the sectors who are involved or interested in the research, making the results known to them and to the society in which they work, while welcoming the possibility of receiving feedback from these or other sectors, which can potentially modify the research questions of professional teams. Of course we must maintain academic autonomy, objectivity with regards to outcomes, and the ability to integrate knowledge and people in any phase of research without them being research professionals, all while promoting well-determined objectives with clear limits and possibilities.

Socially Commitment Research

As a necessary corollary of this component, which I think is inherent to Theory—especially from the formulations of 1997 and solidified, for example, in 2010 by its author— years ago I outlined (“Tourism” in Torres Feijó): “the proposal of socially responsible research (first as Social Research Responsibility), as an element derived from the theory’s logic. As was indicated in this text,

by Socially Responsible [Commitment] Research we mean (SRR) the commitment to share results and the explanations of the research processes that lead to them with the human subjects involved in it and/or the social sectors potentially interested in or affected by those results. A generic definition of SRR might describe it as the commitment acquired by a research entity with the communities that are potentially interested in or affected by its research. We talk about result analysis and explanation in order to refer to those actions that lead to the understanding of research questions and their objectives, the processes used to arrive to the results and the information derived from them.

We believe that, together with teaching, research, the promotion of corporate or self-employment initiatives by students or researchers (wrongly called sometimes entrepreneurship), SRR (and Social Responsibility in the Teaching-Learning process) must become one of the main missions of higher education,

SRR is not proposed as a type of research, though it does involves this; but rather, as a necessary intrinsic research postulate, in general, in social sciences.

Concepts such as the aforementioned can integrate other concepts (as in the case of the Galabra Network) as inherent, particularly that of sustainability and social welfare, to the extent that it is conceived as one of its core concepts; and demands the cooperation of communities, with particular focus on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, from our point of view.

In this direction, in recent times, more attention and concern has been shown by various institutions to combine concepts of responsibility and sustainability in their recommendations and guidelines for public institutions (extending it to other spheres as well, both public or private). I believe that this direction should be central in the conception of the university and public service, alongside its traditional teaching and research missions. In several international institutions, this concern has also appeared for

years. Nevertheless, it still suffers from certain problems regarding its implementation: the communities are usually more on the receiving end than proactive themselves, which means receiving ideas, recommendations or instructions without generating them from their own needs or desires; they are without additional information and training to make the applied measures effective; they lack facilitation and monitoring of actions; lastly, a certain idea is based, in some cases, on social responsibility linked more to the entity's internal functioning (transparency, good environmental practices, etc.), than to a real and effective connection to the communities affected by its action. Thus, the initiatives are often inserted or affected instead of being directly responsive to the need of the communities in question.

I use two examples that are relevant at the international level to show this: the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ESSA project. The former indicates mechanisms for monitoring and calculating investments and eventual resources vectors (and international solidarity) but neglects empowerment of the communities and sectors involved, leaving the implementation and detection of needs and application formulas to the discretion and competence of states or administrations. The second, which includes the student sector as participant, results in a concept of Social Responsibility that does not quantify the relationship of the entity with its surroundings and the eventual contributions of said entity towards improvements to the quality of life in the communities —particularly those in more precarious situations—. In fact, it mirrors a reinforcement of the action within the entities in question —in this case the universities— but without any real attention to their applicability outside these institutions. The ESSA (<https://www.essaproject.eu/>). And yet, these projects by the UN and the EU, for the cases that concern us, point towards goals that could truly be much more satisfactory provided that the model shifted and the criteria of community empowerment and real benefit was incorporated

I treated this aspect in more detail in the conference alluded to in note 1.

II. **The Project *The City, the Way and Us***

The project of diffusion and results-sharing encompassed under the general title *The City, the Way and Us*, represents aspects related to the findings of two research projects: “Discourses, images and cultural practices on Santiago de Compostela as a destination of the Ways of St. James” (2012-2016) and “Narratives, uses and consumption of visitors as allies or threats to the welfare of the local community: the case of Santiago de Compostela” (2018-2021), funded in part by the Spanish State Research Agency.

The first of the projects identified three major narratives of an international scope that would later be used, with more or less explanation and importance, in the tourism advertising campaign used from the nineties onwards by the Galician Government and the Municipality of Santiago de Compostela, which resulted in significant changes in the local community and in the number and type of visitors (vid. Torres Feijó “Bem-estar”). These three great narratives are those elaborated by the Catholic Church (namely, by John Paul II on his trips to Santiago in 1982 and 1989), UNESCO and the European Union with the various distinctions given to Santiago and the Way (declared World Heritage

Site in 1984 and 1993, respectively) and the one crafted by Paulo Coelho's *O Diário de um mago* (1987) [*The Pilgrimage*, in english version]. The first of these, established the idea of the strength of the Catholic Church with the pilgrimage and the Way linked to *structuring*–to European cohesion, with Christianity as the basis of this European identity and connectedness. And it established the idea of the Apostle Santiago and the Way as objectives and processes of the Catholic conversion and overcoming. The International Organizations (UNESCO / EU) link the Way to Christianity in their Declarations and as an element of anti-Islamic defense, stressing its medieval nature and the massive heritage it has given rise to over time. Paulo Coelho's book also delves into the notion of individual overcoming and transformation, a religious-mystical conception of life and the search for happiness.

The analysis of these three narratives posits a working hypothesis for the invisibility of the local community and its culture that they carry and give rise to (Torres Feijó "Discursos"). Thus, in the first of the aforementioned projects, we delimited four areas of study: visitors from Galicia, and, taking as a source the data from the Center for Tourism Studies (CETUR) in 2008 (the study's *ab quo* temporal marker, two years before the most recent Holy Year to date-2010) the areas from which the greatest volume of people came at the time; the rest of Spain, as well as Portugal and Brazil (the largest set of visitors from the EU and outside the EU)–where compilation labors, field work and later analysis was done on the following corpus; several surveys of visitors, inhabitants and merchants from Santiago de Compostela; and finally cataloguing books (literary texts, travel diaries, tourist guides, etc.), web pages and audiovisual productions. The data can be consulted in the following resource: https://redegalabra.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/ExpoWEB_GalCasEn_PaineisDEF_maio2019.pdf.

As the panels themselves show, the project stems from Polysystem Theory and its Socially Responsible Researcher correlate. This can also be seen in several of the group's publications, among which we find (I mention it in order to more broadly encompass some of the research's strongest elements) Torres Feijó (2019): *Community welfare and visitors in Compostela: great narratives, ideas and cultural practices linked to the Way of St. James* [original in Galician/portuguese language]. Concepts and tools proper to the theoretical framework of Polysystem Theory, such as idea-makers, repertoire, communities and community identities, are centrally present in the project's approach throughout, in its design and development, and is supported by rigorous work in the field.

On the other hand, the usefulness of the theoretical framework manifests itself in the effectiveness of its planning component. As an example, we show that economic and educational level are the factors that most condition the cultural uses and practices of people visiting the city. Thus, if we wish to reverse the adverse effects of these practices it will be precisely at the level of narratives that work on the city where they occur. This, in turn, demands a strong investment of transdisciplinary work to give a unified answer to questions that are complex for us, answers which must be researched within the community.

We will have the opportunity to demonstrate this planning component in the analysis of how the exhibition project was developed as well.

II.1. DIFFUSION PRECURSORS AND RESULTS SHARING

On the basis of our definition of SRR, we made several presentations and shared results with various social and economic sectors in order to fundamentally understand the possible interest that our work might have for them and to be able to better focus our subsequent dissemination and work.

In this way, and in collaboration with our newly created spin-off *Faz consultora. Cultura e Desenvolvimento*, we made an initial presentation of partial results in the Chamber of Commerce of Santiago de Compostela (<http://fazconsultora.com/faz/pt/2012/10/07/faz-en-prensa-outubro-2012/>; <http://www.camaracompostela.com/notas/061012.pdf>; <http://www.camaracompostela.com/notas/151012.pdf>). The year was 2012 and we presented the results of field work carried out on clients of 36 commercial establishments in the historic part of the city. With sparse audiences, nevertheless local politicians and some businesses were in charge. Due to this meeting, several organizations, among them hotel owners and the Heritage Commission of the Galician Cultural Council, became interested in the work we were doing; months later we presented the main initiatives of our field work to this Commission. In the spring of 2015, we convened two meetings, one with residents and neighbors associations and another with various merchant and entrepreneurial associations. Of the 54 neighborhood associations registered in the municipality of Santiago de Compostela, only 8 attended; in this meeting we could see that many associations either didn't exist or didn't regularly meet. Those remaining expressed serious expectations of participation, as well as a lack of political and social rapport with the local administration. In the case of business associations, we found this same interest in knowing data and some reticence regarding the reliability and eventual application of the results (this process, together with analyses of the expectations shown regarding our work in surveys made to merchants is described in Torres Feijó "Tourism"). In February 2016, we presented the first results in a public monographic act ("Monographic Meeting with Cultural Heritage: 2. Tourism and the Way of St. James") organized by the Heritage Commission of the Galician Cultural Council (<http://consellodacultura.gal/noticia.php?id=4440&tipo=noticia>), with a large public turnout and media coverage (<http://consellodacultura.gal/evento.php?id=200438>; <https://www.elcorreogallego.es/santiago/ecg/plan-zona-vieja-no-transforme-guirilandia/idEdicion-2016-02-19/idNoticia-981059/metrics>, which, with some inaccuracies, already collected the planning aspect of our work). We collaborated again with the Galician Cultural Council in July 2017 as part of the symposium "Mass tourism and heritage. Convergence and divergence in a potential dialogue" (<http://consellodacultura.gal/noticia.php?id=5127&tipo=noticia>), a title which already hinted at the evolution of the city's tourism.

We noticed a broad interest, expectation and diverse opinions about the affect of tourism and visitors in general, about the local community and vague ideas—in short, a lack of real information about what was happening in the city.

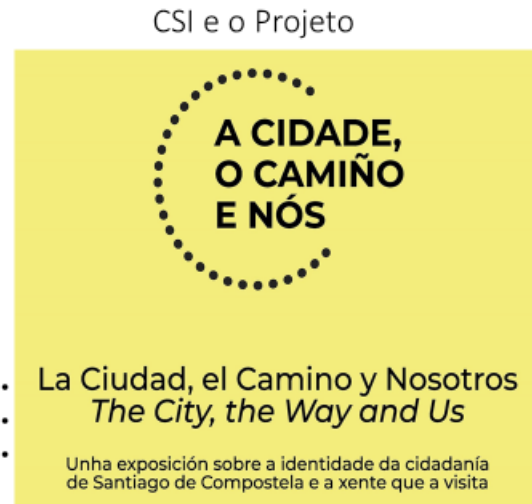
In the meantime, the research team produced an important scientific volume of works and presentations, part of which can be consulted at <https://redegalabra.org/impactos-caminho-comunidade-local-santiago-compostela/>.

II.2. THE EXHIBITION PROJECT: THE CITY, THE WAY AND US

II.2.1. *The Signing and Objectives of the Collaborative Protocol Between the University of Santiago de Compostela and the City Council of Santiago*



<https://redegalabra.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/RedeGalabra/>



After several working conversations and in keeping with the Government Group of the Municipality of Santiago de Compostela, a protocol of cooperation between the University of Santiago de Compostela and the Municipality of Santiago de Compostela was signed in April 2019 *FOR CARRYING OUT EXHIBITIONS AND ACTIVITIES REGARDING DISCOURSE, IMAGE AND CULTURAL PRACTICES OF VISITORS AND HOUSEHOLDS OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 83 OF LAW 6/2001*.

In this protocol, and in paragraph 3 of its explanatory memorandum, the main considerations can be read for a SRR:

Third. That the CITY COUNCIL and the USC consider it essential to establish joint actions that aim to provide information and societal support regarding a reality as important for the present and future of Santiago de Compostela as is the discourse, image and cultural practices of visitors and inhabitants of the city. It is information that is of interest in the field of knowledge and city planning, primarily at a cultural and social level.

These considerations are based on the aforementioned protocol’s Technical Annex, which stated that the “specific goal of the agreement” was:

to provide the results of the aforementioned research that may be of interest to society, in its various sectors and activities and public authorities, in order to have a more specific and concrete knowledge of certain dynamics and phenomena importantly linked to the well-being of the local community.

Furthermore, for the fifth item the sphere of collaboration and partnership that the university can have with relation to municipal objectives it was stated that:

Fifth. That the COUNCIL does not have the appropriate media to face this task, and that is why a collaboration between both institutions is necessary, which allows the project's goals to be met, within the framework of article 83 of Law 6/2001.

The first clause was the **“Purpose of the collaboration agreement,”** which outlines the entire project to be developed:

The present agreement establishes the conditions for the collaboration between the Council and the USC for the organization, documentation and curatorship of four exhibition shows on the results of the research projects of the Galabra group related to the cultural practices of visitors to Santiago de Compostela, as well the perspective of the city and visitors to the city and the commercial sector. The exhibitions will fall under the general title: DISCOURSE, IMAGE AND CULTURAL PRACTICES OF VISITORS AND INHABITANTS OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA, as well as the parallel activities that will take place according to the plan and budget included in the technical annex included as part of this agreement.

In the listing of activities in the technical annex, **“open activities of dissemination and debate,”** are defined with the following objective:

(...) by means of the plural and open participation of diverse sectors of the population, the emergence and collective elaboration, from the data and analyses contained in the expositions, of ideas, proposals, questions and observations about the phenomenon in focus.

Continuing:

For this, it will be necessary to count on the co-participation of various leaders and political parties, associations of all kinds that feel challenged by these issues and the citizenry in general. The participation of social agents, local and socio-cultural associations, sectors (particularly in the field of commerce and catering) and educational entities will be a priority..

With regard to the 4 planned expositions, its reference in the Annex was preceded by the following reflections:

The city of Santiago de Compostela has been notably transformed, since the early nineties, by virtue of the primacy given to tourism linked to the Way of Saint James.. This transformation has diverse dimensions: identity, life habits, access to resources, uses of the city and public space, commercial, cultural and social activity, etc. After twenty five years since the beginning of this transformation, the Galabra Group has data and striking analyses in this sense, as a result of research, and it seems appropriate to offer it to the public to contribute to its better knowledge and formation of opinion. For this purpose, 1 central and 3 sectional expositions are foreseen, the first static and the remaining 3 itinerant in various parts of the city.

Before the official opening of the exhibition, we called the neighborhood associations and the municipal groups represented in the Santiago de Compostela City Hall, in order to

introduce the general lines of the divulgative project and to hear observations that would be helpful to the project. The work with the associations confirmed the lack of a real and effective forum for their relationship with the public administrations. In some cases, they even came to us as if we were in some way part of the public administration. Groups coming from the rural area (where approximately 16,000 people live, around 16% of the total population of Santiago) expressed a feeling of being poorly represented in the study, reflecting in this way a feeling of general marginalization they brought to the meeting. Although the rural area was sufficiently represented in terms of percentage throughout the survey, the Research Team tasked itself to conducting field work with its own funds in rural areas, whose most significant results were included into exhibition *The City and the People Living in it*. The work was done in the late spring and early summer of 2019 with 100 surveys. As for political organizations, all of them expressed interest and appreciation for the research done and its usefulness.

II.2.2. *The Exhibition and Dissemination Project*

The central exhibition was installed in a place slightly removed from the city, but still central enough, an emblematic and widely used as a space for walking, leisure and sports: the Alameda de Santiago. The space was chosen by taking into account the need for a noise free environment, given the clearly Compostelan nature of the exhibition (what the various data from our surveys revealed). It consisted of 32 iron panels (all the production was made by small companies in the region), grouped into 4 thematic clusters:

COMPOSTELA AND THE WAYS

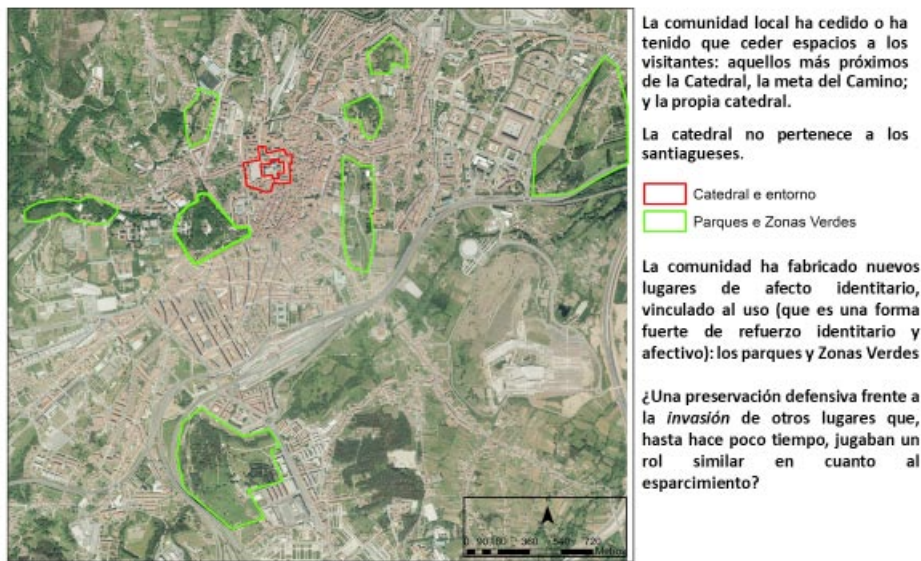
HOW DO WE SEE OURSELVES?

HOW DO THEY SEE US?

HOW DO WE SEE WHO COMES?



Visitors to the exhibition talking with a member of the Research Team



Local community, visitors and public spaces. Slide show presented by the author at a conference at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra (ISPS —International Society for Polysystem Studies— Third Meeting, October 2018) about subjects related to the project

In the first of the exhibition's thirty panels, we indicated the goals and the characteristics of the showing:

- THINKING, TELLING, FEELING, AND CARING FOR THE CITY AND ITS PEOPLE. THIS IS THE CHALLENGE.
- *We present four exhibitions (this general one and three others which will circulate through city neighborhoods) which mark a synthesis of some of the results of the research carried out by the Galabra Network since the year 2008 on visitors in general and, in particular, the effects of the Way of Saint James on our city. (...) analyze the discourse, images, and practices taking place in Santiago both from businesses and residents of Compostela, as well as people from countries who provided the largest number of visitors at the time*
- *(..). We study the ideas present in the books read by those who visit us, the films they watch and the websites they consult. We derive solid and meaningful facts regarding who comes here and who experiences the city from out of the questionnaires and qualitative interviews we conduct.*
- *In it, we also realized the parallel activities designed by the Research Team:*
- *And beyond this main exposition we urge participation in a variety of parallel activities: –Sectorial exhibitions in the City Council's sociocultural centers: The city and its inhabitants/ The city and its visitors / The city and commercial activity. –Thematic round tables discussions with city specialists and representatives. –Education and schoolchildren participation from the city's Secondary Schools. –Citizen participation and photographic exhibition: "How does the Way influence your daily life? Citizens (re)thinking the Way"*

We transcribed the Exhibition's Technical Details, which we now give for a better understanding of the type of research conducted:

Type of inquiry carried out: Personal with a structured questionnaire Accuracy level
 Sampling procedure: Convenience-based Geographic location: Santiago de Compostela
 Catalogued: 559 books 211 websites 90 audiovisual materials Universe: Visitors from Galicia, the rest of the State, Portugal and Brazil (largest number of visitors from EU and from outside the EU in 2008 [Source: CETUR]. Sampling error: $\pm 2.15\%$ Dates: From March 2013 to March 2014 Residents in Santiago de Compostela or in surrounding municipalities (Teo and Ames): Infinite population ($>100,000$) Sampling error: $\pm 3.2\%$ Dates: Second half of 2014 to May of 2015 Economic and commercial activity in Santiago de Compostela Population (sampling section): 4,096 Sampling error Dates: April and May, 2015 Sample size: Visitors Inquiries 2,081 valid inquiries Galicia: 398 Rest of the State: 878 Portugal: 408 Brazil: 396 Local inquiries 929 valid inquiries Santiago: 684 Teo: 104 Ames: 101 Economic and commercial activity inquiries: 410 valid inquiries Qualitative interviews: Visitor interviews: 271 Rest of the State: 100 Galicia: 56 Rest of country: 100 Portugal: 56 Brazil: 59 Interviews to pilgrims: 34 from Porto Alegre (Brazil) 6 conversation groups in the local population Control inquiries to test tendencies 155 visitors 50 inhabitants 50 shops (note: The results of the control inquiries made in 2018 are fully reliable but not statistically representative. Their value lies in detecting signs of evolution or, if it were the case, confirming the trend consistency manifested in the 2013-2015 inquiry).

ATIVIDADES DE DEBATE PARALELAS Á EXPOSIÇÃO

Todas as actividades están subordinadas ao asunto central da exposición e terán lugar na **Sala de Actos do Instituto Rosalía de Castro**, excepto indicación expresa neste programa, de 19:30 a 21 horas. Toda a información en redegalabra.org

- 9 de maio Encontro cos grupos políticos con representación no concello.
- 16 de maio Encontro con Asociacións Veciñais: Zonas de intensidade turística e comercial.
- 23 de maio Encontro con Asociacións Veciñais: O rural, zonas emerxentes e periferia da cidade. Ou Comerciantes, restaurantes e produtores agrícolas locais.
- 4 de xuño Encontro con representantes da USC, Catedral, CETUR: A cidade patrimonial, universitaria, relixiosa, turística, habitábel, ...
- 5 de xuño Encontro con comerciantes, restaurantes e produtores/as agrícolas locais
- 6 de xuño Encontro con comerciantes da Zona Vella: A actividade comercial singular na parte antiga da cidade.
- 13 de xuño Encontro con representantes comerciais, empresariais e sindicais: A actividade comercial e empresarial e a cidade na Cámara de Comercio.
- 18 de xuño Encontro con especialistas en turismo e urbanismo. + Encerramento da exposición "A Cidade, o Camiño e Nós" (na Sala de Actos da Facultade de Filosofía).





Mesas redondas

Round table program and a few of their photos

The finished work can be seen documented on the facebook page of the Galabra network <https://pt-br.facebook.com/RedeGalabra/>. The central exhibition catalog and the supporting leaflet can be found at <https://redegalabra.org/>. In the period of 2020-2021, the catalogs of the central exhibition and the three sectional exhibitions with additional information on their impact will be published, as well as the results of the round tables,

repercussions on the city and in the press and the social interactions made by the Research Team.

Details on the development of the project

- a) Given the changeover in government in the municipality as a result of the local elections on May 29th, 2019, and also in order to avoid overlap, an agreement was reached with the new political leaders, on the one hand, to extend the central exhibition located in the Alameda until July 10th, 2019 and, on the other hand, to start the itinerancy of the sectional exhibitions after the summer of this year, from October 2019 until February of 2020.
- b) With the postponing of the sectional exhibitions, the photographic competition, which was planned to run parallel to these, was postponed as well. Work began at the end of 2019, segmenting it into two phases (December-April and April-August, to cover two different moments of the influx of visitors to the city) and raising funds for the awards (aimed at supporting local administrations and trade associations through small purchases at their sites for the people awarded). Due to the COVID-19 crisis, this process was suspended.
- c) The response of the schools to the text inviting participation sent at the end of April 2019 was absolutely non-existent. We are considering a second mailing at winter's end, soon after the planned itinerancy of the sectional exhibits throughout the Council's Sociocultural Centers, unable to occur because of the crisis of COVID-19.

II.2.2.1. Some Effects

The roundtables held with the Neighborhood Associations served to note the lively interest of the entities convened (several requested additional information) and a chance to break down the information: in this sense, several entities asked us open up a forum for debate regarding findings that could serve as a meeting point between them. This took place in October 2019, with scarce attendance, focusing once again on the issues being commented, and called for a reorientation of the work in this area. Some of them are also using the model we proposed in order to promote debates related to these issues, such as Raigame, in the Ensanche neighborhood (the most highly populated area of Santiago: 16,000 inhabitants, approx.), which opened a series of Round Tables with our participation (<http://aavvraigame.blogspot.com/p/novas.html>).

The political and institutional participation tables also caused interest. In the electoral campaign that took place at that time (May 2019) certain groups used our data in a relevant way (<https://praza.gal/politica/desafiamos-os-poderes-facticos-e-somos-peza-a-bater-pero-estamos-en-condicions-de-revalidar-o-gobierno-de-compostela>). Galabra's idea of proposing a city observatory to the municipality made up of specialists is currently underway, with several USC research groups taking part.

Merchants emphasized the lack of unity of the sector and the need for it, as well as the usefulness of these sorts of studies for their activity. Guild associations (Ourives de Compostela, e.g.) asked us for guidance.

The coverage received in the press was equally important, which we reference in the following. The exhibition allowed our work to gain strong visibility. The interest came from general and specialized media (hotel industry), shedding light on the fundamental concerns that these media collect and/or convey: tourist massification, local food and production, cultural identity, and, in general, a reassessment of the tourist phenomenon in the city.



Screen shot of redegalabra.org with news from the newspaper La Voz de Galicia collecting the act of presentation of the central exhibition, with the presence of the mayor's office, members of the various political groups represented therein and the Rector of USC, in addition to presidents of the faculties of Philology and Economics, the curators of the exhibition and assistant public a https://www.lavozdegalicia.es/noticia/santiago/santiago/2019/05/04/muestra-recoge-vision-vecinos-turistas-sobre-santiago/0003_201905S4C5991.htm

In addition to our presence in those newspapers with the largest audience (<https://www.elcorreogallego.es/santiago/ecg/santiago-reflexionara-turistificacion-exposiciones-charlas/idEdicion-2019-04-29/idNoticia-1180057>; https://www.lavozdegalicia.es/noticia/santiago/santiago/2019/05/04/muestra-recoge-vision-vecinos-turistas-sobre-santiago/0003_201905S4C5991.htm), certain media became interested in our work for specific reasons (<http://www.galiciaconfidencial.com/noticia/96797-polbo-marisco-dilemas-agricultores-restauradores-nunha-cidade-turistificada>, on the table of the food sector) or specialized media covered us (such as CompHostelería magazine, Asociación de Hostelería de Compostela, which dedicated a cover spread to us and an interview for its number 187 https://issuu.com/albertoseoane/docs/revista_ch-187__web_).



Questionnaire for residents and non-residents visiting the central exhibition

A brief survey on the central exhibition was available in three languages (Galician, Spanish and English): the central exhibition was written in Galician with a QR code referring to the Spanish and English versions hosted at galabra.org) at the exhibition itself (see annex to this text). These were the results received from residents:

Table I
Social Rating Questionnaire of the Main Exposition – Residents

| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Average | Standard Deviation |
|--|-----|---------|---------|---------|--------------------|
| The exhibition was interesting | 135 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 5,87 | 2,31 |
| The results of the research were surprising. | 139 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 4,77 | 2,27 |
| This exhibition bored me. | 136 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 2,74 | 2,37 |
| I understood the contents of the exhibition. | 135 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 6,58 | 2,06 |
| Money should not be spent on this type of projects. | 137 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 2,64 | 2,51 |
| I am satisfied with my assistance to this exhibition. | 139 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 5,75 | 2,26 |
| I will recommend this exhibition to my acquaintances. | 137 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 5,19 | 2,48 |
| I believe that these types of projects are useful for society. | 138 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 5,93 | 2,44 |
| I would like more researchers to display their results in this manner. | 137 | 1,00 | 8,00 | 6,09 | 2,41 |
| Valid number (by list) | 125 | | | | |

It should be pointed out that the statistical value of these surveys is relative and works more as evidence. Therefore, on a scale from 1 to 8, the highest values (exceeding 6 out of 8) correspond to the understanding of the contents exposed and the pleasure / willingness to continue interacting with data or other surveys of this nature.

At the opposite extreme, 2.5 relays annoyance from their the visit to the exhibition and consider it to be money badly spent (therefore, it is communicated approximately the same).

At nearly 6, an appreciation of the usefulness of our research (exactly 5.93) and the interest of the exhibition (5.87 to be exact), which they recommend a great deal (5.19), although the results were not very surprising (4.77).

We declared 25% of the completed questionnaires null, due to incompleteness or being used for improper purposes.

More women than men participated, and many more young people (under 30; a good part of them not students!) than other age groups. By neighborhood: Ensanche, whose proximity was likely a factor, clearly wins; San Pedro, an active and historical neighborhood, receiving arrivals from the French Way, marks an important presence; this is followed by the Old Zone, of the 17 zones in which we divide Santiago.

This is the result of the questionnaire to non-residents.

Table II

Questionnaire on local community perception and the visit in relation to the information contained in the central exhibition. Non-resident

| | Tourism modifies your visit | The Way is a part of Santiago's identity | Have a lot of contact with the local people | Talk more with Santiago's inhabitants | Prefer to focus on the visit that I prepared previously | Would like to frequent places where people from Santiago usually go, local events, etc. | More interested in the visit you have planned previously | This exhibition may change your perception, consumptions and places to visit |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Valid | 67,00 | 70,00 | 71,00 | 69,00 | 57,00 | 68,00 | 58,00 | 68,00 |
| Losses | 6,00 | 3,00 | 2,00 | 4,00 | 16,00 | 5,00 | 15,00 | 5,00 |
| Average | 4,99 | 6,94 | 5,25 | 6,25 | 4,18 | 6,91 | 3,98 | 4,82 |
| Median | 5,00 | 8,00 | 6,00 | 7,00 | 4,00 | 7,00 | 4,00 | 5,00 |
| Standard deviation | 2,06 | 1,70 | 2,27 | 1,89 | 2,20 | 1,47 | 2,13 | 2,30 |
| Range | 7,00 | 7,00 | 7,00 | 7,00 | 7,00 | 6,00 | 7,00 | 7,00 |
| Minimum | 1,00 | 1,00 | 1,00 | 1,00 | 1,00 | 2,00 | 1,00 | 1,00 |
| Maximum | 8,00 | 8,00 | 8,00 | 8,00 | 8,00 | 8,00 | 8,00 | 8,00 |

As we can see, simply as an indicator and without a noteworthy statistical value, this type of information can modify the visit (4.18) and the interests of the visiting person (3.98) and even their perception (4.82). We also use these surveys to define indicators of the quality of the visit by the local community and the visitor, which is one of the dimensions of our projects.

III. Appreciation

The results speak for themselves, in our view, that this process of sharing results and working with entities, agents, and people interested in the process is beneficial in many ways. In the city a dynamic of social participation and activation is generated to which we noticeably contribute, to the extent we are able to. And it appears to be positive for society that this type of proposals receive greater development and presence. We can count, in approximate terms, an average of between 75 and 100 quality visitors (those who dedicate more than 5 minutes to reading) daily, which is statistically significant. Ours is, therefore, a very positive evaluation; but not without errors and difficulties. We would like to cite, among others:

- a) **Information design and selection.** The intelligibility of data and analysis: the difficulty in translating research results of this type into expository and dissemination proposals. And this, in spite of working with an unusually gifted exhibition design team.
- b) **It's not customary for people to attend this class of activities.** One can perceive, in cases and as a consequence, the tendency of some people to either experience a sort of *dejá vu*, or rather, to discredit of the results in general—part of a larger tendency to doubt results in the field of Social Sciences in general.
- c) **The Round Tables have an extraordinary participation of people and groups but suffer from sparse audiences:** overload, poor choice times or place, poor communication, lack of interest? The hypotheses are open and under examination.
- d) **The lack of professional recognition of these types of groups:** still overcome by the strong commitment of the team, this can be clearly demoralizing and tiring.
- e) **A future reflection on the relationship of these actions with the international and national Agendas that the group considers necessary.** Actions such as this, for example, may notably satisfy or complement some of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicated by the UN which we referred to at the outset here. In the very least, they offer reflections for society to work on these issues. This is the case with goals 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth; 10. Reduced inequalities, and 15. Life of land (the economy and relation sustainability and affectivity of local community identity; vid. Torres Feijó “Bem-estar”). These issues can then be coordinated with this specific agenda and also highlight what further needs must be addressed.

Reflections on SCR and Its Development

What is exposed above are aspects related to an ongoing process, both in the team's divulgative project and in its derivations. We understand SCR, then, as a permanent process, with different degrees, phases and participants. We consider that, besides teaching,

research, promotion of self-employment of students or researchers (commonly called —sometimes by mistake— entrepreneurship), the SCR (and the Social Commitment in the Teaching-Learning process), should constitute one of the fundamental missions of higher education, due to the very nature of the sense of research (learning in order to improve people's lives) for, in this case, working with public resources and for being able to offer alternatives of social and/or professional activity that are not dependent on any interests acting against the above-established principles. In this sense, at least three dimensions can be considered: 1) the diffusion and dissemination of results, 2) their transference and means of obtention via agents or professional or social entities and 3) cooperation towards the improvement of the quality of life of the entire community, or for the studied sectors.

In these derivations, the transfer of knowledge and results produced by the university may have several functionalities, in both the social realm as well as in cultural and professional fields. And it must be the object of promotion and dissemination of results, both in mass media as well as in specialized media¹. We believe, for example, that advising public and private companies is an interesting line of work, because it approaches entrepreneurship from the point of view of self-employment, small businesses and professional development in several dimensions: The incorporation of synergies between universities and companies and the processes of transference (*spin-offs* here, but widely understood as a transfer between universities and companies); the possibility of making the research profitable because of its capacity to create jobs; opportunities to innovate through relationships to various research components; and, last but not least (although from a subjective perspective), setting aside resources to prevent the disappearance of professionals by large corporations or lack of possibilities for business development, and avoiding such dependency on major transnational trends or present high rates of market vulnerability. But even more relevant as a line of work is the social work to be developed with sectors, particularly those with fewer or more disadvantaged resources, in order to share knowledge and formulas that make their well-being grow and consolidate.

In this case, and as an integral part of our exhibition project, parameters such as population loss or reorientation of commercial activity according to the visiting people translates into the aforementioned loss of social relationship and emblematic spaces showing the possible existence of conflicts of interest of groups within the local community and conflicts between sectors of this community and its visitors, which may point to a loss of social cohesion in the medium or long term. Here, as in other cases, a sphere of subjectivity and calculation about the evolution of the supposed symptoms is opened, which makes it difficult to craft proposals for solutions, especially if the problems are not felt by the city's population as a whole or if they are indifferent to them; this poses an important challenge in terms of Social Research Responsibility that we would like to simply leave here, on the table. For reasons of our ethical conception of research, both in the sense of the information obtained and in the purpose of their analysis, the dissemination of results to general society and, in particular, to the community (the object

1 We have no knowledge of any study carried out from this point of view. However, there is useful bibliographical material for this purpose on the participation / lack of participation of residents in planning processes (Stenseke, Eshliki, S. and Kaboudi, M., see also the recent review by Hatipoglu *et al.*, on sustainable tourism); and there are also studies analyzing new forms of participation (Viren, P.P., *et al.*).

of study) must be present in the research agenda: dissemination, clarification, debate and feedback bearing in mind the quality of life and cohesion of the whole community. This has to do, in part, with what we enunciate as Social Research Responsibility: the cooperative and/or collaborative work with the sectors of the community to achieve these same objectives of improving the quality of life and cohesion, with priority for people with fewer resources or in more disadvantaged situations. As indicated earlier, this is a complex and debatable subject: Research must always be subject to rigor and verifiability. At the same time, what is at stake is the real need of the research team to work with the people it interacts with in its investigation in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives. A long and complex debate can be opened about whether the researcher should act as an active citizen, whether his/her interaction with the community invalidates or disturbs his/her work, or even whether s/he should interact, as such, with the community. A simple easy answer could be “no,” but with a *boomerang effect* on *what the real final object of the investigation should be* (at least, the one carried out with public money). The development of work among many, the delimitation of the role of each person and the consequent action... This is a difficult manner and demands a great deal of self-reflection and self-analysis, in the way Pierre Bourdieu discusses this (2004).

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Tourism and Gastronomy in Santiago de Compostela (Galiza): A Case Study Under Polysystem Perspective in Relationship With Other System Analysis

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Introduction

Complex systems are characterized by high levels of entropy, meaning high degrees of organization, mediated by a significant diversity of elements and by the relationships established between them. This nature of the system makes the sum of the parts more than the whole, significant and meaning that goes through the history of human thought from Aristotle, von Bertalanffy (founder of the Theory of Systems) to Von Humboldt or Ritter, pioneers and fathers of landscape ecology discipline¹. In this sense, the system is characterized by possessing and manifesting certain emerging properties resulting from the interactions/relationships between the different components, a concept proposed by Ramón Margalef (Walker). However, it is quite common for approaches to the study of systems to be given in sectoral form, either by greater ease of analysis and/or by following certain specific interests in that study. This perspective escapes from a global vision, and therefore obvious and loses the information corresponding to the richness and diversity

1 Basically the analysis of the landscape (landscape ecology) recognizes the need for a holistic study that allows to recognize and understand the relationships between the different structural elements of the landscape system, arranged on the territory. This holistic perspective is reflected in the need to recognize that the sum of the parts is more than the whole.

of the elements that make up that system, and to the corresponding relationships that are established between its components.

Interpreting the words of Itamar Even-Zohar, reductionist analyses imply, from a theoretical point of view, a break in the functioning of the system: “a system is unable to function by confining itself to his home repertoire only...” “Weak situation”. And when we obtain the results from this reduced and/or sectoral study, the practical recommendations of application to the management of the system also cause a breakage or dysfunction in it, since it will be modified as responses to sectoral interests, seeking to achieve partial objectives (reduction and simplification).

At this point, we understand that the analysis performance derived from Polysystem Theory (PST) allows an approximation, theoretical and practical, that contributes to the system characterization by way of completing contributions from the general theory of systems, and other models derived from more specific fields, but which follow the same line (Landscape Ecology: Ritter, von Humbolt; Entropy: Boltzmann; Information theory: Shannon; Ascendancy and Panarchy in ecosystems: Ulanowicz, Gunderson and Holling²³). However, Even-Zohar’s proposal from the world of literary analysis, in the form, but really social in substance, provides us with a fundamental tool to be able to analyse systems from a clearly social perspective, which ends up becoming a social, economic and environmental perspective (sustainability), and therefore allows us to assess the resilience of system, that is, their resistance or recovery from change. Even-Zohar’s proposal makes it really easier for us to escape the neutral model of analysis, methodologically

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- 2 Both Ludwig Boltzman’s universally well-known proposal, which for what we are interested in in this text, means a clear dependence between the level of organization, available energy and number of elements of the system (upward positive relationship between number of elements, available energy, organization and entropy). That is, a greater wealth of the system from the point of view that concerns us, can also be defined or characterized by Claude Shannon’s theory of Information, which can be interpreted in the same direction, indicating to us that the greater entropy of the source that emits the message derived into a less capacity to compress it. The concept of wealth of the system leads to what Itamar Even-Zohar exhibits in relation to its weakness by the procedure of its simplification, and the play between peripheries and centre mediated by power (energy source). From the point of view of the functioning of ecosystems, it is also necessary to indicate the coincidence with the theory of Ascendancy (Ulanowicz), which allows us to approximate the measurement of the total activity of the system according to the quantitative interaction between its elements, characterized by subordinate interactions: marginal or conditioned probabilities of one event/element over the other (probability of one event occurring based on the presence of a previous event). It becomes clear that sectoral management, or the aforementioned periphery-centre game proposed by Even-Zohar, and usually designed by the sectors that hold the power, it has the ability to modify and direct such interactions by suppressing certain elements, or interactions between them (basic facts in the characterization and functioning of the ecosocial system, beyond pure social capital, because we are interested in the relationship of social capital-natural capital), meeting at the end of the road with clear processes of homogenization and impoverishment of the system, far away from the eco-social pattern.
 - 3 Systems theory is an interdisciplinary field of science that studies the nature and processes of complex systems, a term designed to describe evolving hierarchical systems with multiple interrelated elements, offering an important new framework for understanding and resolving this dilemma. Panarchy is the structure in which systems, including those of nature and humans, as well as combined human-natural systems, are interrelated in continuous adaptive growth, accumulation, restructuring and renewal cycles (Gunderson and Holling). The term [Panarchy] was coined as an antithesis of the word hierarchy (literally, sacred rules). The authors thus describe the theory: “The cross-border, interdisciplinary and dynamic nature of theory has led us to coin the term Panarchy for it. Its essential objective is to rationalize interaction between change and persistence, between the predictable and the unpredictable”.

interesting, but which considers the elements, their characteristics and their relationships as equivalent (Hubbell), leading us to an assessment of the reality of the system, and its consequences for human communities, or rather, the consequences arising from the interaction between those communities and the resources of the environment (ecosocial system: natural capital, social capital and their interaction). That is, the application of PST allows us to understand, or at least approach in a real and truthful way, that power makes the social system (in the end all are), and the management of them by the “elites” conduces, usually, to homogenization of the system due a loss of the wealth of it by reduction of constituent elements, and the number of potential or real relationships established between them. As a consequence, we found loss of entropy, simplification of dynamics and decrease of capacity for time/space permanence/adaptability: decrease in system resilience. We can conclude that Polysystem Theory becomes a powerful tool for the analysis and characterization of what we understand as ecosocial systems (Colding and Barthel), in which the interaction between human communities and environmental resources play at the same level of importance, always trying to seek a plane of balance or win-win performance.

Case study: Tourism and Gastronomy in Santiago de Compostela (Galiza)

Presentation

The Touristic System is one of the most complex that exist by its truly nature: fuel consumption, housing and displacement infrastructures, consumption of basic resources (food, water, energy), waste production (treatment and environmental impact), and socio-economic relations with the environment destination. Following Farrel and Twining-Ward, we can say that research into this phenomenon should be interdisciplinary, and collect transformations in related fields of knowledge, such as ecosystem ecology, environmental economics, global change science and complexity theory. That is, its analysis has to escape reductionism and integrate into the human-natural complex, under a pan-hierarchical vision (Panarchy)³.

The need for holistic analysis, and especially from the point of view of the Panarchy, has also been highlighted by the same authors, focusing specifically on the concept of resilience or the ability of a system to resist or recover at the force of an alteration. In our case (design and management of the tourist event) it becomes clear that these vectors of alteration/modification derive from the political-administrative power. Returning to Itamar Even-Zohar, and to the importance of studying the peripheries, centres and canonical models in the design and management of systems, we clearly reinforce the need for holistic approach, and from a practical need, we can more easily identify those elements that manage and direct the system, usually following sectoral interests. In addition, this combined approach also allows us to identify structures: subordinate relationship between elements (the ascendancy of the system). We can then, once the elements and control relations are located, head towards a critical analysis of the ecosocial system, and make proposals to modify its management and design, which potentially directs the system towards a sustainable balance point (environmental and socioeconomic factors).

Scope of Study

The characterization of the tourist event in Santiago de Compostela was carried out for the period March 2013-March 2014 under the umbrella of the research project “Local community well-being through cultural visitors narratives, consumption and uses: Santiago de Compostela case-study” FFI2017-88196-R.

The tourist event studied is a complex system with the presence of numerous elements and interactions between them, in addition to being related to various areas of knowledge of the social, economic and environmental sphere, as we will perceive.

The consumption of food by visitors (pilgrims and non-pilgrims), the gastronomic offer by bars and restaurants, and its spatial distribution in the city (physical location), has been characterized. The usual consumption of food by the Galician population, and the gastronomic information provided by three official tourist information websites during the study period (Turgalicia.es-Turismo.gal, Gastronomiadegalicia.com, Santiagotourism.com) was also analysed (Carral *et al.*). In addition, the potential food production of the region of Santiago was defined under the foodshed frame (Carral and Carreira).

Results

Out of a total of 2081 interviews, 51% identify Galiza with gastronomy, while food consumption by visitors is mainly concentrated in two types of product: seafood and octopus (25, 38% and 22.9% of food-related responses). Compared to both the usual consumption and the production of the foodshed of Santiago de Compostela, we find that these preferences are clearly moving away in relation to these two facts. For normal food consumption we have to both seafood as octopus are not the most consumed products in daily life by Galicians, since they appear in the 48th and 65th places of a total of 564 food items (groups of food products commonly consumed), being the first places occupied by fruits, milk, fresh vegetables, meat and bread: positions 1, 2, 6, 7, 8 respectively. In addition, food productions in the region of Santiago are mainly concentrated in horticulture products and milk and meat production.

Moreover, 28.8% of the city’s commercial activity is related to the gastronomic offer, of which 34.7% relates to bars, restaurants and grocery stores. In the specific field of catering, the star products of restaurants are octopus and seafood. On the other hand, the historical City area (around the Cathedral) concentrates 24.6% of the places dedicated to bars and restaurants.

Finally, the results obtained from the analysis of the three websites indicate that gastronomic-tourism marketing is somewhat broader than what reflects consumption and supply, although clearly the tendency is to promote these products: the most consumed by the visitor and the most offered by the catering service (Carral *et al.*).

Polysystem Analysis

The overall analysis indicates that both consumption and gastronomic supply are initially positioned paradoxical from the perspective of PST, since the characterized

consumption-offer fact should be considered as a central element within the tourist model studied (canonical model), since it is clearly majority, dominant and representative of the system, while if we frame it in the most global analytical landscape, usual consumptions of the country and food production capacity of the basin, the preferred and most offered products (seafood, octopus) are placed in a clearly peripheral position. This periphery-center transit (offer-consumption canon) follows the path suggested by Itamar Even-Zohar, when he talks about the importance of power for its ability to transform peripheries into a center, according to certain sectoral interests, and in this case clearly propagandistic with regard to the promotion of the Camino de Santiago-Pilgrim Way (Pazos-Justo *et al.*). It responds to a central-canonical model of activity, management and tourism promotion, which tends to concentrate supply and demand around very few elements of the system: two types of food and a main spatial area of supply location. A promotion specifically designed for the attraction of tourists (pilgrims or not), with the main objective of increasing the number of visitors, clearly de-lying from the other elements of the system: local production, social relationship and consumption-production-culture relationship. That is, there is a simplification of the system, clearly moving away from the ecosocial system pattern and orienting it towards a bulk-tourism phenomenon. It can also be seen as a clear example of converting an element, that we can consider peripheral within the tourist model, such as the Camino de Santiago, into the central element, transforming it into a “nature” of the touristic event to respond to certain sectoral interests (economic and power management). Following the statistics of the Pilgrim’s Office, we have 179,891 pilgrims registered in 2004 and 327,378 in 2018. The historical series more clearly shows this process, with less than 18,000 in the 1980s as a whole, reaching 272,417 in 2010, Holy Year (<https://www.editorialbuencamino.com>).

This change in the management/promotion of the tourist event, based on clearly sectoral and non-holistic promotions, contributes to the creation of a very un-resilient system, so that it will be affected by unforeseen alterations, although theoretically possibilistic, such as the emergence of a factor that decreases the flow of pilgrims, and therefore “de facto” cancels out the tourist event. In this sense, the emergence of the covid-19 pandemic clearly reflects this fact: according to the register of the municipal tourist office of the City of Santiago de Compostela (www.santiagoturismo.com), dated August 15, 2020, face-to-face consultations by tourists were 1,756, compared to 7,979 in 2019 for the same month.

Clearly, the most appropriate data for this comparison would be data from the Pilgrim’s Office, but which are not currently available. However, the information published by the daily press directs us on this same path, so “La Voz de Galicia” gathers the following news: In July 2020 9,752 pilgrims were registered, representing 18.2% of the 53,319 pilgrims who arrived on the same dates of 2019 (<https://www.lavozdegalicia.es>, 2020). These figures tell us the weight of pilgrims in the tourism model and the low degree of resilience of the system. That is, a model completely removed from the pan-hierarchical pattern that considers the performance of the system as a whole, with the aim of maximizing its resilience. On the contrary, in our case the sectoral promoted model leads to a state of low responsiveness to unforeseen, but predictable modifications/alterations external to it. Consequently, we are clearly faced with a model designed and managed from an evident sectoral central canon, and supported

by the administrative power, which is oriented to meet specific human needs (sectoral interests), and not to develop learnings of how human communities can adapt as part of the system, bearing in mind the different spatial and temporal scales, that is, the full development of the ecosocial system.

The resulting landscape clearly reflects the periphery-centre disjunctive, being clearer when you see the uneven spatial distribution in the location of restaurants and bars. Again the appeal of power, physically represented by the location of the Cathedral, symbolic and clearly publicized asset, directs the distribution of the elements of the system, leading it towards a homogenization of it, which results in an inequality in the distribution of benefits related to gastronomic tourism for the whole city, and an increase of the negative social impact by the concentration of these premises in a specific area of the city, with the consequent damage related to the gastronomic-offer spatial concentration (“gastronomification” in parallel with gentrification concept): agglomeration of visitors, spaces available for daily- life development diminished, etc. We are then faced with a very homogenized system, confined in itself, with little adaptability to changes resulting from a lower influx of visitors (e.g. covid-19), and anchored in a weak situation in the face of such changes (“Weak situation” Even-Zohar). By the other hand, other sectors of local production and catering of “non-typical” products was levy to the periphery of the system, a position characterized by the difficulty of penetration and normal participation in a reduced and homogenized system (Communications in the Round table starring A Moa restaurant (Manuel, one of the owners), Blue Café (Rita, the owner), Airas Nunes catering (Xavier, the owner) and local producer (Carmen Freire).

The main questions released from this round table were:

Rita (Blue Café). Need for a sustainable development model for the tourism sector. It is necessary to include the visitor in the daily life of the city. The owner should serve as a guide to local/proximity food production for the tourist, as they are the ones dealing directly with tourists, and therefore we have to develop such responsibility.

Manuel (A Moa restaurant). Need to develop gastronomic projects that promote local and seasonal food products. Relationship with sustainable production and trade. The problem is the absence of a stable and powerful supply network. It is also necessary to adjust the price and quality of the product, and to be able to transmit this relationship to the customer.

Carmen (local producer). Not only is it necessary to produce food, it is also very important to produce social relationships. The visitor must know, and be aware, of the relationship between cultural and productive elements (ecosocial system). The development of equitable and holistic governance systems is essential to achieve these objectives.

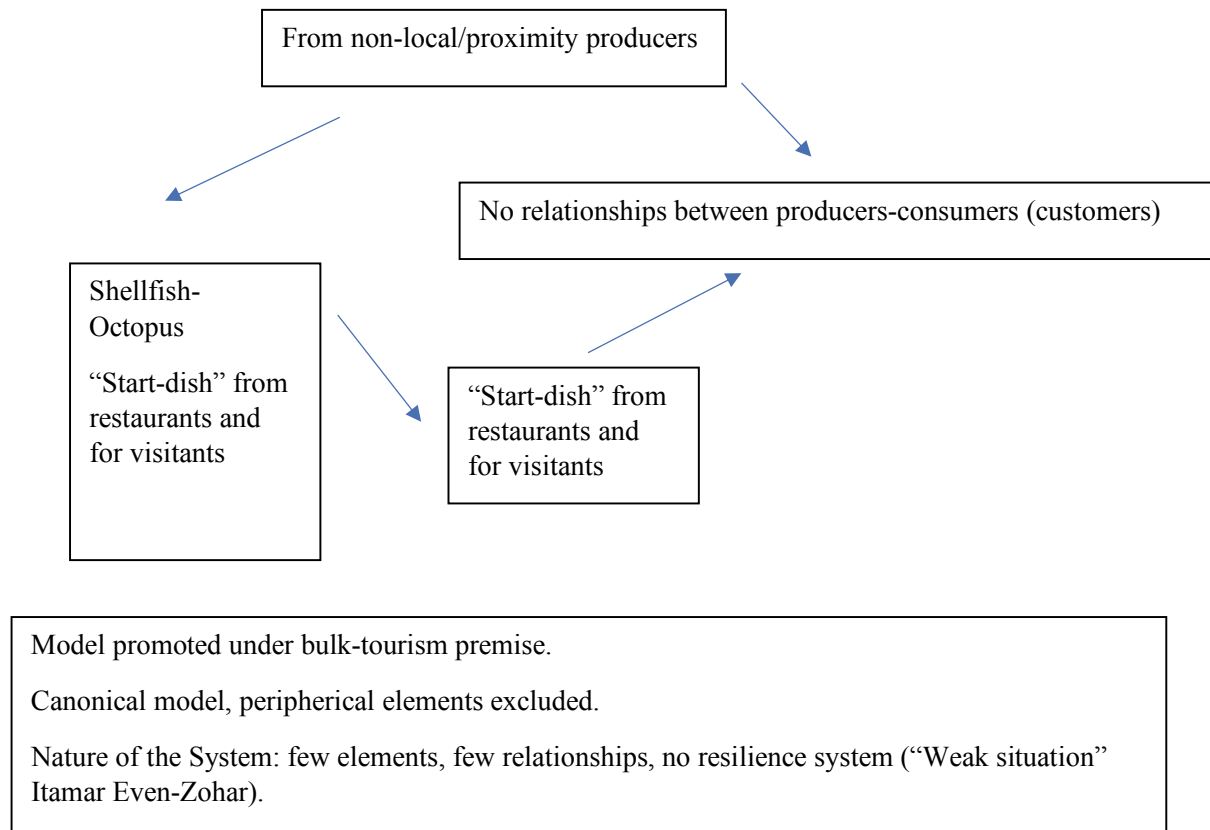
Xavier (Airas Nunes catering). The scale in tourism development is very important. Large-scale tourism promotion distorts the system, preventing the development of a sustainable model in practice. Cooperation between different actors (administration, restaurants, producers, academia) is essential.

As can be seen, it is necessary to develop a complex, more equitable system without a clear center or periphery, which allows for a greater number of key elements and,

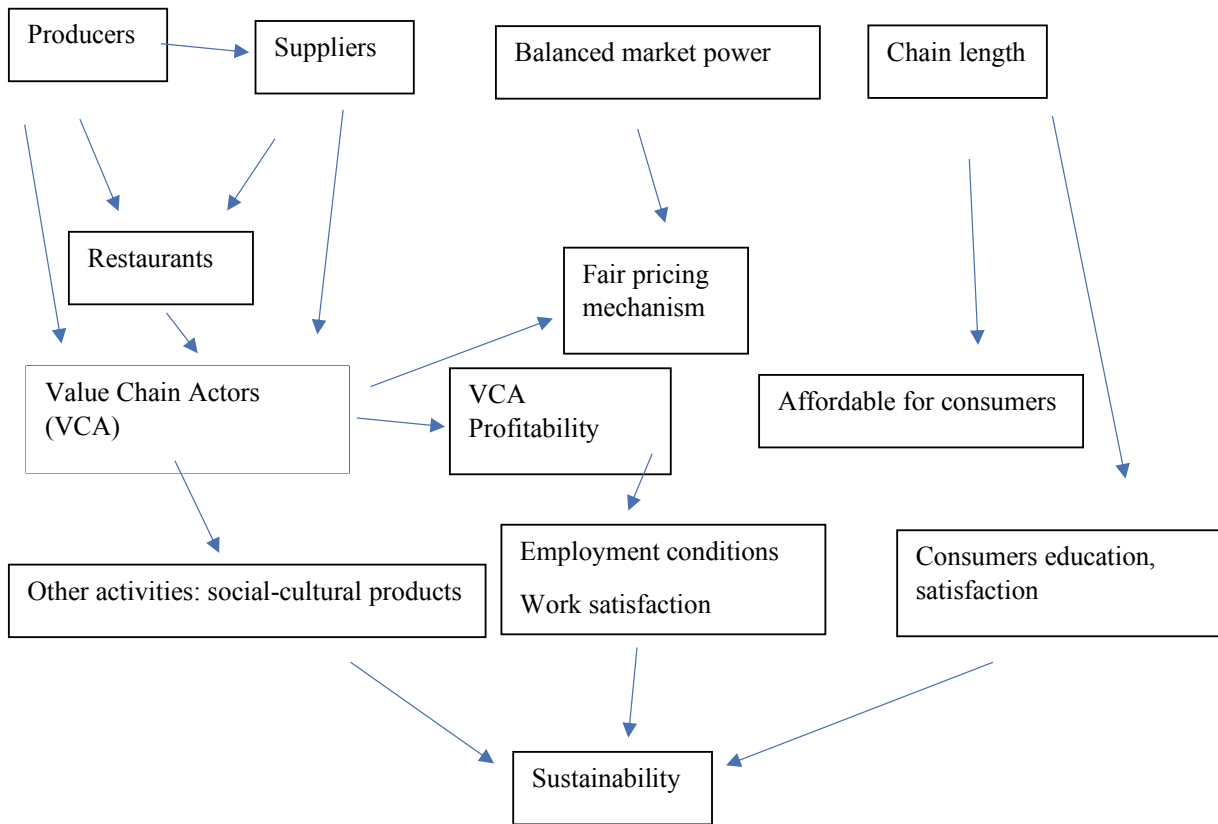
consequently, the establishment of an important network of relationships, which will increase the resilience of the system. In order to achieve this objective, the type of governance is essential, as we must escape from a large-scale model of tourism, as well as from a central role of a sectoral management.

We can conclude that the leading players in this round table have clearly defined the need to escape from a canonical model, in which management is in the hands of a central power, and the peripheries do not count in the promotion and management of the current tourism model. That is, we are facing a landscape clearly object of analysis from the perspective of Polysystem Theory: peripheral elements, central element, canonical model, management from power, importance of scale...., and very important, help to us in the process of design a more sustainable system as we can see in the next graphic proposal.

Actual System



Ecosocial System (scheme modified from Sureau *et al.*)



Model promoted under social ecosystem associated premises.
 Not canonical model, peripheral elements not excluded.
 Nature of the System: a lot of elements, several relationships, equitable governance, resilience system.

Conclusions

The application of the Polysystem Theory allows us to analyse and obtain timely conclusions and applicable to tourism management, with the aim of designing a program of management of it, that seeks the non-creation of peripheries, both in the consumption and supply of products, which are clearly harmed within the established tourist system.

On the other hand, and with the help of this theory, we can see as a clearly peripheral element from a holistic view of the system, such as a reduced gastronomic supply/demand, becomes into a canonical model and central element, promoted by particular sectoral interests, and correspondingly associated with the centre of power in decision-making on the tourism model to be developed. Likewise, even if it is a canonical element,

being circumscribed and confined to an extremely small scope within the holistic system of the tourist phenomenon, it places the current system in a position of weakness in the face of events of change, that always request a necessary adaptation of the system to new conditions, a basic characteristic for the survival of this (resilience).

Finally, and from a methodological theoretical point of view, we must consider PST as a fundamental cooperative contribution to system analysis, coordinating perfectly in the study and diagnosis of different ones along with the other models (panarchy, ascendancy), and being of clear application and support within the sphere of study of ecosocial and bio-complex systems. The tourist phenomenon can be determined as a bio-complex system, understanding biocomplexity (Bolte *et al.*) as the description of models rich in interactions and behaviours between the natural community and the human community, therefore related to the concept of ecosocial systems at the time when we place such states, human and nature, at the same level of importance. Then this partnership, including the concept of an ecosocial system, facilitates the evaluation of system cycles, networks and resilient/vulnerability capacity. This help provided by PST is revalued by simplified and meaningful analytics, as given the complexity of the system, it is the only way to start analysing and understanding it. That is, it allows us to recognize the key variables (periphery, centre, canon), as well as retain us in the importance of temporal and spatial scale, importance on the other hand, also recognized by the other analysis models already mentioned. The Polysystem Theory brings these elements, and their relationship with the power system, to the centre point of focus, to the front plane.

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Idea makers allied to centers of power are able to flood the citizenry with a Nile-sized flow of images each and every day, a current so large and seemingly untamed that it robs many otherwise perspicacious people of their ability to remember a key, and we believe, unassailable postulate of Polysystem Theory critical outlook: that there is no cohesion, and therefore no recognizable schemas of meaning in culture without the "curating" of extant cultural inventories. In short, Even-Zohar's theory teaches us that, however invisible their presence might seem to be in a given moment, there are always relatively small groups of people working in concert with key power holders to generate and maintain elite-friendly concepts of "reality" for the rest of us, and that with a little bit of searching, we can actually locate and expose to others exactly who they are, and how they work their semiotic magic on the majority.

Zabalduz

Jardunaldi, kongresu, sinposio, hitzaldi
eta omenaldien argitalpenak

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