LEXIA 29-30

LEX 29–30

Intenzionalità
Intentionality

L'idea della possibilità di recuperare l'intenzionalità di una mente a partire dalla struttura di un testo costituisce l'idea di autore. Questa è messa alla prova sotto molti punti di vista: dalla storia, poiché si tratta di un'idea sviluppatasi parallelamente alla nozione occidentale e moderna di soggettività; dalla tecnologia, giacché gli esseri umani creano fonti sempre più efficienti di creazione non–umana; dalla società, poiché le nuove ideologie semiotiche sembrano configurare un mondo nel quale hanno luogo interazioni efficaci anche senza un consenso volontario. Questo numero speciale della rivista Lexia tratta di alcune di queste sfide, nel quadro della semiotica, attraverso la stimolante cooperazione tra studiosi occidentali e cinesi.

Contributi di / Contributions by Emanuele Antonelli, Xiaoming Chen, Jifang Duan, José Enrique Finol, Nan Gao, Remo Gramigna, Massimo Leone, Julia Ponzio, Marco Sanna, Bruno Surace, Guanghui Tan, Bianca Terracciano, Ugo Volli, Xiaoming Wu, Jiang Zhang, Yiheng Zhao, Liyuan Zhu.

Intenzionalità / Intentionality

INTENZIONALITÀ
INTENTIONALITY

a cura di
Massimo Leone
Jiang Zhang

In copertina / Cover
Anonymous, Zhang the Immortal Shooting a Pebble Bow at a Heavenly Dog, Late Qing Dynasty (late 19th Century), from "The New Year Painting of Zhang Xian". Image in the public domain.

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a cura di
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Prefazione / *Preface*

Massimo Leone[*]

Intentionality is one of the most crucial areas of inquiry in both sciences and the humanities. The different disciplines explore it through various approaches. In semiotics, and especially in structural semiotics, intentionality is investigated in relation to the concept of text. If a text is a portion of meaning that a culture isolates as peculiarly significant in relation to its context, the issue of intentionality essentially bears on the origin of textual significance and meaning. We realize that there is meaning in a text. But where is it from? In semiotics, the problem of intentionality comes down to asking meaning the same question that is usually addressed to a stranger: where are you from, meaning? The different disciplines of meaning, as well as the different branches of semiotics, answer this question in discrepant ways.

For some, meaning essentially comes from the reader, the listener, the spectator, etc. The one who receives a text becomes its master, and injects into it, or even onto it, one's subjective desire for meaningfulness. According to this perspective, the meaning that I find in the Divine Comedy, for instance, ultimately depends on what I, consciously or unconsciously, decide to project on its signifying surface. Ultimately, I am Dante, I am Virgil, I am Beatrice, I am the God of the text.

An alternative approach answers the same question "where are you from, meaning?" in a radically different way. It looks for indexical links between the surface of the text, that is, the way in which a roman, a fresco, a symphony, etc. appears, and those agencies that have caused this surface to be phenomenologically arranged as it is. The intentionality that matters in the creation of meaning, according

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to this perspective, is not that of the reader but that of the author. Ultimately, it is the author's mind that I look for when I peruse a text.

The novelty of the semiotic approach, and especially of Umberto Eco's point of view, has consisted in suggesting that a third kind of intentionality exists between that of the reader and that of the author. It is the intentionality of the text itself. The author arranges the text as she or he pleases, yet this arrangement takes place within a grammar and, even more importantly, within a culture. In creation, the author is never entirely free, not only for it draws the communicative materials from a socially shared deposit of semiotic forms but also for, once these forms are set, they entail meaningful consequences that usually escape the author's intentional control. A text means because of its author but also and above all beyond and sometimes even despite such author, especially as regards complex artistic texts. When this third approach faces the question: "Where are you from, meaning?", it looks for an answer neither in the subjective response of the receiver nor in the objective impulse of the author but in the inter–subjective encyclopedia of cultural relations that, shared by a community of interpreters, begets the grid of meaningful determinations through which a text is read.

Umberto Eco's solution, however, does not solve the problem of the intentionality of meaning but elegantly displaces it toward a different domain, that of cultural semiotics. How and, even more crucially, why does a community of interpreters take shape, bringing about a certain configuration of the socially shared deposit of forms and meaning that guides the correct interpretation of texts within the community? Even more mysteriously, if the intention of a text is inter–subjectively set by a society's hermeneutic culture, how does it change? And how do individual interpretations, including the wrong ones, influence this process?

The deep nature of textual intentionality, moreover, must be investigated not only theoretically but also historically, with an eye to considering the way in which it is affected by changes in communication technology. For example, how is a "community of interpreters" established in a society that, increasingly globalized, circulates meaning across traditional ethno–cultural and linguistic boundaries? Can such a thing as a "global community of interpreters" exist?

L'auteur peut–il mourir ?**

Jiang Zhang*

English title: Can the Author Die?

Abstract: The relation between a text and its author represents a recurring problem in modern and contemporary scholarship. From Russian formalism through structuralism to deconstruction, the traditional idea of this relation was completely reversed in the literary and hermeneutical theory of the contemporary West. The "intentional sophism" of the new criticism, Roland Barthes's concept of the "death of the author", and Michel Foucault's speculation on "what is an author" follow each other like a guideline that determines the exclusion and the negation of the author, leading to the disruption of its relation with the text, and to its definition as an independent object. Such perspective has turned into a general trend nowadays. To this regard, however, a question arises: if the text is created by the agency that writes it, can such relation between the creator and the creature be erased by the text's interpreters? The article claims that the author or the writer of a text exists, that it exists in the text, and that the interpretation must recognize its objectivity, indipendenlty from its hermeneutic bias.

Keywords: Author; Text; Interpretation; Identity of the Writer; Structuralism; Imposed Hermeneutics.

1. Le texte est celui de l'écrivain

Le texte est la production de l'écrivain, c'est un fait objectif et indéniable. Un texte déterminé ne peut s'établir que par un écrivain précis, c'est l'écrivain qui produit ce texte, qui fait exister le texte. Le texte

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n'existe pas sans la production de l'écrivain. L'existence gravée sur le parchemin est touchable, consultable et tenable, c'est l'existence matérielle indiscutable. C'est cette existence fondamentale qui permet de comprendre et d'interpréter. Au sens historique, le texte produit par ce qui l'écrit est un fait déterminé. *Hamlet* est le produit personnel de Shakespeare, cela est indéniable, personne ne peut le disputer ; sa signification classique ne se définit d'une certaine manière qu'à partir de cet auteur. On ne peut pas dire qu'il est l'œuvre de quelqu'un d'autre sans preuve archéologique, sinon, on tombe dans le nihilisme de l'histoire. Au sens du droit d'auteur, on doit respecter l'auteur et son droit sur le texte ; si l'on déclare sa mort avant qu'il soit mort, ce n'est qu'une violation de droit. Certaines critiques posent la question comme ceci : qui est l'auteur d'une épopée nationale ou d'une légende mythologique dans l'histoire archaïque? Par exemple, la mythologie grecque n'a pas d'auteur précis, et cela serait une preuve de la futilité de l'idée d'auteur. Mais ce raisonnement n'est qu'une erreur. En tant que texte spirituel dans l'histoire, la mythologie grecque est le produit collectif du peuple. L'histoire est créée par rhapsodes au moment de grands événements historiques ; à travers les vérifications, les raffinements et les façonnements de l'histoire et du peuple, les textes d'aujourd'hui se produisent, ceux qui correspondent au besoin du peuple sont intégrés et amplifiés, ceux qui trahissent les intérêts et les traditions du peuple sont éliminés ou corrigés. Qui est l'auteur du texte ? Ce sont les peuples collectifs (ou bien le peuple singulier, ou bien l'unité de peuples multiples) à l'époque grecque. L'époque et le peuple créent la mythologie grecque, ils expriment leurs volontés et leurs esprits par la mythologie. Notre interprétation du texte ne se fait pas pour le savoir ou l'admirer, mais pour connaître et comprendre sa progression et son élaboration par l'époque et le peuple. C'est aussi le sens de l'existence de l'auteur, la raison de ne pas le nier ou le supprimer.

Selon la théorie traditionnelle, on écrit pour s'exprimer, l'écrit de l'écrivain se fait pour exprimer le sentiment et la pensée, de lui–même ou de la société. Par la construction des mots en texte, le phénomène spirituel s'objective en existence matérielle, le sentiment et la pensée se figurent en état du texte et se transfèrent aux autres. C'est un processus de concentration et de diffusion. L'esprit de l'auteur se concentre dans le texte qui devient son objectivation, sa matérialisation, son moyen de réaliser et de conserver sa propre vie. L'auteur parle avec

d'autres à travers son texte, il s'y présente et sa pensée s'y prolonge sans fin. La mort physique de l'auteur est inévitable, mais son esprit ne meurt pas, il s'enracine dans le texte qui le conserve. Comme le dit le philosophe italien Emilio Betti, le texte ou l'œuvre est « une chose objectivée de l'esprit » de l'auteur. Et puis, un philosophe chinois Derong Pan se demande : « qu'est–ce que cette chose objectivée de l'esprit ? », il se répond : « l'écriture, les chiffres codés, le symbole de l'art, la représentation du langage et de la musique, l'expression du visage et le comportement, etc., ce sont les formes du sens, les choses objectivées de l'esprit qui se présentent et se reconnaissent ». Cependant, cette chose objectivée se distingue du sens et du contenu de lui–même : « la chose objectivée appartient au domaine " physique ", mais le sens et le contenu qu'elle emporte sont au domaine " spirituel ". La connaissance de phénomène spirituel se fait par la connaissance de chose objectivée, autrement dit, la connaissance de son sens et de son contenu ». (Derong Pan 2013, pp. 374). Ainsi, au point de vue de Betti, le texte est avant tout le produit de l'auteur, autrement dit, il est le produit objectivé de l'esprit de l'auteur. Le produit spirituel que l'auteur nous offre n'est pas reproductible ni remplaçable. C'est dans ce produit personnalisé que l'auteur et le texte fusionnent : l'auteur assigne sa pensée et son esprit dans le texte, le texte s'en charge et devient le producteur du sens. La négation de l'auteur est une négation du texte, l'existence du texte ainsi produite a donc un sens et une valeur tout autres.

Au point de vue foucaldienne, l'écriture n'est pas une expression, « l'écriture d'aujourd'hui s'est affranchie du thème de l'expression » ; l'écriture n'exprime plus le sentiment, la pensée ou la valeur de l'écrivain, elle n'est qu'un jeu ou une pratique des mots, l'accumulation et la multiplication silencieuses des signes, où il n'y a pas de signifiants ni de signifiés, et qui n'a aucun rapport avec l'écrivain, « Dans l'écriture, il n'y a pas de la manifestation ou de l'exaltation du geste d'écrire; il ne s'agit pas de l'épinglage d'un sujet dans un langage; il est question de l'ouverture d'un espace où le sujet écrivant ne cesse de disparaître » (Foucault 1992, pp. 288).

Nous ne commentons pas le sens ou la valeur de ce jugement, regardons seulement son discours, nous avons trois points à discuter. En premier lieu, si l'écriture n'est qu'un jeu des mots, et qu'elle n'exprime pas l'intention de l'écrivain, alors le jeu propre n'est–il pas

une expression ? S'il en est, qui exprime cette expression ? Comme Foucault le dit, le joueur est le sujet de l'écriture, c'est le joueur qui joue. En ce sens, l'écrivain ou le joueur existe. Quand il dit que « l'ouverture d'un espace où le sujet écrivant ne cesse de disparaître », le concept de « sujet écrivant » témoigne déjà de son existence. En second lieu, si l'écriture est un jeu pur qui n'exprime pas la pensée du sujet, le produit du jeu, la sélection et la juxtaposition des signes, la structure et la déconstruction des mots, sont–ils pas une écriture autonome du joueur ? Cet acte n'est–il pas une action consciente du sens ? On joue de cette manière et non pas d'autres, c'est le sentiment, la pensée et la valeur de l'auteur qui y fonctionnent, qui y expriment l'existence de l'auteur, qui définissent ce « jeu » des mots comme tel, qui impliquent la volonté de l'écrivain. Tous ceux–là ne sont pas effaçables ni éliminables. En dernier lieu, « la création d'un espace de disparition pour le sujet d'écrire » laisse en effet la trace de sujet écrivant. Si le sujet écrivant doit disparaître, cette disparition est un processus progressif, le sujet se disparaît progressivement dans le jeu, même la manière et le chemin de disparition se multiplient selon le sujet différent. Sinon, il n'y a plus de différents styles du texte.

En plus, concernant le problème de l'existence de l'auteur, Foucault le montre de façons différentes. Dans « Qu'est–ce qu'un auteur ? », Foucault substitue le fonctionnement de l'auteur à l'auteur, et il indique ses quatre manières, et puis il donne un concept surprenant — « fondateurs de discursivité »,

> mais il me semble qu'on a vu apparaître, au cours du XIXe siècle en Europe, des types d'auteurs assez singuliers et qu'on ne saurait confondre ni avec les " grands " auteurs littéraires ni avec les auteurs de textes religieux canoniques, ni avec les fondateurs de sciences. Appelons–les, d'une façon un peu arbitraire, " fondateurs de discursivité ". Ces auteurs ont ceci de particulier qu'ils ne sont pas seulement les auteurs de leurs œuvres, de leurs livres, ils ont produit quelque chose de plus: la possibilité et la règle de formation d'autres textes. En ce sens, ils sont fort différents, par exemple, d'un auteur de romans, qui n'est jamais, au fond, que l'auteur de son propre texte. Freud n'est pas simplement l'auteur de la Traumdeutung ou du Mot d'esprit; Marx n'est pas simplement l'auteur du Manifeste ou Capital : ils ont établi une possibilité indéfinie de discours. (Foucault 1992, p. 299)

À notre avis, il y a un conflit évident. Foucault propose générale-ment la disparition de l'auteur, mais dans ce texte, il assigne l'auteur à

n'importe quel producteur du texte. De ce fait, le producteur du texte ne peut être que l'auteur, il n'a pas d'autres titres. Le plus important est que les auteurs comme Freud et Marx, ils sont non seulement les auteurs de leurs œuvres, mais aussi « fondateurs de discursivité ». Un auteur du discours n'est–il pas « fondateur de discursivité » ? Comme Foucault le dit,

> quand je parle de Marx ou de Freud comme " instaurateurs de discursivité ", je veux dire qu'ils n'ont pas simplement rendu un certain nombre d'analogies possible, ils ont rendu possible (et tout autant) un certain nombre de différences. Ils ont ouvert l'espace pour autre chose qu'eux et qui pourtant appartient à ce qu'ils ont fondé. (Foucault, pp. 300)

Un « fondateur de discursivité » est chargé donc de fonction importante, il est l'auteur de ses œuvres, car il a une influence profonde et permanente, et cette influence continue à fonctionner dans l'expansion et la multiplication de ses œuvres. Il est impossible que l'auteur ne soit rien. Dans le fonctionnement de « fondateurs de discursivité », l'auteur est immortel.

2. L'identité de l'écrivain

L'identité est un problème important dans les études contemporaines de cultures et de philosophies. Il semble que la discussion sur l'existence ou la disparition de soi, l'affirmation ou la négation du sujet et la question « qui suis–je ? » ou « qui es–tu ? » manifestent l'affaiblissement de soi ou du sujet. Mais en effet, c'est le sentiment de soi faible et le souci de cette faiblesse qui suscite la recherche et le questionnement de soi, qui mettent en cause la pensée et l'acte théorique de soi. Personne ne veut abandonner le soi. À partir de la deuxième moitié du xxe siècle, la tendance philosophique d'éliminer et de déconstruire le sujet est destinée à l'échec.

Alors comment l'écrivain envisage–t–il le problème de sa propre identité ? Il y a trois rapports entre le texte et l'écrivain : d'abord, l'œuvre est l'autobiographie ou la demi–autographie de l'auteur ; ensuite, l'expérience de l'écrivain influence profondément l'écriture, et le texte est la représentation de son expérience ; enfin, le texte n'a aucun rapport avec l'auteur lui–même, il est complètement fictif. Les

deux premiers ne sont pas en question, ce genre de textes possède une grande proportion dans l'histoire littéraire. Ce qui est problématique est le troisième rapport dans lequel il n'y a aucun rapport entre le texte et l'auteur, et l'auteur déclare « le degré zéro de l'écriture » où aucun sentiment, pensée ou jugement de l'écrivain ne soit lancé dans le texte. Le texte littéraire, surtout les romans fictifs, y correspond mieux. Pourtant, même dans ce genre de textes, le spectre de l'auteur se trouve partout. Il est certainement difficile à le prouver dans le texte philosophique et historique. Par exemple, dans « Qu'est–ce qu'un auteur ? » de Foucault, l'influence personnelle de Foucault, sa disposition politique, sociale et culturelle, sa conception du monde et de sa valeur ne contribuent–elles pas à aucune influence ? Foucault n'est–il pas dans son discours ? Peut–on ignorer Foucault comme l'auteur de ses discours ?

Commencer par Beckett. Foucault amorce sa discussion à partir d'une phrase de Samuel Beckett, « peu importe qui parle ». Ainsi, regardons comment Beckett envisage l'identité de l'auteur dans le texte, autrement dit, comment il envisage le rapport entre texte et auteur, comment il s'y confirme. En tant que grand dramaturge français du théâtre de l'absurde, Beckett présente au monde son idée et sa pratique théâtrale d'une manière expérimentale, abstraire et absurde, son style simple, abstrait et fantastique est étonnant et impressionnant. Il semble qu'il n'y ait aucune marque de l'auteur, qu'il laisse de grands espaces pour les interpréteurs. Mais ce n'est qu'une connaissance superficielle. Si l'on approfondit, on voit que Beckett comme auteur du texte n'est jamais séparé de son œuvre. Sa mémoire, sa pensée, son sentiment, son langage, son point d'origine de l'existentialisme s'enroulent entre les lignes comme un spectre.

La preuve directe est que l'implication de son enfance, sa jeunesse, son amour, sa famille et son corps se trouve dans la plupart de ses œuvres. Le plus remarquable repère est sa mémoire d'enfance qui réside partout dans son texte en se manifestant distinctement à la manière de lui–même. Beckett soulignait et admirait « la mort de l'auteur » de Roland Barthes, mais il ne peut pas nier l'usage de sa propre expérience de la vie dans le texte, en pleine image et détail, le texte devient la vérification de son expérience, « un homme avec son fils, main dans la main, traverse les montagnes », « une larche se transforme en vert toujours plus tôt que les autres », « les résonnances de carrière hantent

au–dessus des montagnes de sa maison ». Comment s'y envisage–t–il ? Il ne peut que l'admettre, « il est impossible de leur échapper » (Knowlson 1996, pp. 20). Ce sont les choses qui doivent apparaître dans le texte, car elles sont l'esprit le plus dynamique du texte.

La preuve indirecte est l'usage du langage. Le langage du peuple dublinois se trouve souvent dans le texte de Beckett. Le rythme lent avec plein de pauses fait apparaître l'identité irlandaise de l'écrivain, « Dans Watt, Beckett utilise pour la première fois son style particulier : la syntaxe conservatrice et incertaine, nier et affirmer les autres possibilités, l'usage extraordinaire de virgule » (Cronin 1996, pp. 337). Ce style du langage se manifeste particulièrement dans la Fin de partie :

> Clov: (les yeux stagné, le ton plat et étroit) fin, c'est la fin, ce sera la fin, ce sera peut–être la fin. (Pause) Les grains tombent sur les grains, un par un, un jour, tout à coup, il devient une pile, une petite pile, une pile ennuyeuse. Il ne peut plus me punir. (Beckett 2006, 4, pp. 6–7)

Cette forme d'expression du langage avec la répétition, la pause et l'incertitude, est non seulement celle du peuple dublinois, mais aussi celle de la mère de Beckett. Sa mère, en tant que descendante d'aristocrate en décadence, est connue comme une protestante dévotieuse. Elle enseigne elle–même son fils, et le conduit sur le chemin pour comprendre la Bible, le protestantisme et le langage. Ce sont ces éléments généraux de la culture qui constituent la figure de Beckett, qui laissent ensuite leurs traces dans ses textes, et deviennent finalement le sujet que le lecteur rencontre dans ses textes.

Beckett était troublé par le problème de l'absence et de la présence de l'auteur, « si je peux, où je vais ? Si je peux, qui je serais ? Si j'ai de la voix, de quoi parlerais–je ? Qui parle de ça en disant que c'est moi qui parle ? », « Je ne suis pas dans sa tête. Je ne suis pas dans son corps ancien. Mais je suis encore là, puisqu'il est là, avec lui. Tout est en désordre ». « Il suffisait d'avoir lui, je n'aurais pas présenté. Mais ce n'est pas comme ça, il me demande d'être là, avec la figure, avec le monde, comme lui, peu importe qu'il soit comment, je suis tout, comme il est rien ». « Et puis, l'histoire commence, tout est commencé, je suis encore de loin. Je suis loin de mon histoire, en attendant son départ, en attendant sa fin, il est impossible que ce soit ma voix » (Beckett 2006, pp. 91–92).

Beckett formule le rapport entre lui–même et " lui " qui flotte sur ses œuvres par un langage poétique. Il expose une sorte de fragmentation de l'esprit sous le rapport entre " moi " et " lui " : c'est " moi " qui est dans la vie, c'est « lui » qui écrit comme l'auteur ; " lui " force sans cesse " moi " de parler, il parle à ma place ; il m'accuse de mal exprimer ; et il faut que " moi " se sépare de " lui ". Mais est–il possible de les séparer ? C'est à cause de l'impossibilité de les séparer que " moi " insiste à les séparer. " Moi " et " lui ", on est le même. Sa souffrance est la mienne, ma morte est la sienne. Ainsi, il faut que je prenne mes distances avec lui, avec l'œuvre, en sorte que la souffrance de mémoire disparaisse. Le geste beckettien de s'éloigner de l'identité de l'auteur décèle exactement la profondeur du rapport entre l'auteur et le texte, et qu'il est si difficile à le supprimer. En tant que grand dramaturge, Beckett attache une importance particulière à « l'intention de l'auteur ». Dans sa série de Quad, quatre personnages traversent la place de quatre coins comme des fous, ils semblent attentifs, ils évitent soigneusement de passer par le centre de la place. James Knowlson demande à Beckett : est–ce que ce centre dangereux désigne « le milieu calme » dans le taoïsme ? Beckett lui répond : « Non, au moins, ce n'est pas mon intention première ». En effet, ce qu'il veut relever, c'est « l'humeur nerveuse agitée sans cesse dans l'existence de l'homme » (Hamynes et Knowlson 2006, pp.13). Cette fâcheuse « intention de l'auteur » n'est pas facile à supprimer, c'est l'identité qu'il faut chercher et prouver non seulement pour l'auteur, mais aussi pour le lecteur.

Retournons ensuite à Foucault. Ce qui fait distinguer les œuvres de Foucault avec celles d'autres théoriciens, c'est son attachement fort à la pratique de vie, parfois personnelle, et plus exactement, ses œuvres principales s'achèvent souvent sous l'influence de ses propres expériences et observations. Le motif d'écrire l'*Histoire de la folie* est qu'il est invité par les amis à travailler dans l'hôpital Sainte–Anne, dans les prisons parisiennes, si bien qu'il lui est possible d'observer à profondeur. Comme il dit, « Je me sens que je suis proche des malades, peu de différences avec eux ». Ces expériences le stimulent à « écrire l'histoire de la psychiatre de manière de critique historique ou d'analyse structurelle » (Beicheng Liu 2012, pp. 36). En 1952, Foucault témoigne « une scène inoubliable dans la vie », c'est celle de carnaval avec la participation des fous de l'hôpital psychiatrique. Foucault dit,

le jour de carnaval, les fous — évidemment ce ne sont pas les fous de maladie grave — se consument et entrent dans le village. Ils sont dans la fête, mais les résidents s'éloignent d'eux en les regardant anxieusement. Après tout, c'est extrêmement horrible. Parce qu'ils ne peuvent sortir que ce jour–là, et ils doivent jouer réellement les fous en ce jour.

Beicheng Liu commente, « dans les œuvres à la suite, surtout concernant les images sur la fête des fous dans l'*Histoire de la folie*, on peut voir les traces de cette mémoire » (Beicheng Liu 2012, pp. 35–36).

Un autre exemple est celui de *Surveiller et punir* qui est écrit entre 1972 et 1974. Dans cette période après mai 1968, il y a des mouvements politiques de féministes, d'homosexuels, de réforme des prisons, de la protection de l'environnement, d'antipsychiatrie, etc., qui s'enlèvent partout. Foucault en est l'un des activistes, surtout dans le mouvement de réforme des prisons. Il lance ses « expériences de limite » dans son propre champ politique : en 1971, il fonde le Groupe d'information sur les prisons (GIP) pour permettre aux prisonniers de s'exprimer sur les conditions de leur incarcération ; le premier mai 1971, Foucault organise une assemblée devant la porte de prison pour supporter le mouvement des prisonniers, et il se fait attaquer et arrêter par la police ; le 18 janvier 1972, avec Sartre et Deleuze, Foucault organise un sit–in dans le hall du ministère de la Justice, ils sont expulsés dans la rue par les CRS ; le 31 mars 1973, Foucault et Mauriac marchent au premier rang de la manifestation [...] (Beicheng Liu 2012, pp. 186–188) Les professeurs du Collège de France en sont étonnés et mécontents, mais Foucault n'avait pas arrêté ses recherches et créations intellectuelles, « bien que Foucault perde du temps dans les mouvements sociaux et politiques, mais il en profite pour ses recherches », « ce sont les expériences comme ce que dit Nietzsche " le plaisir de détruire ", il est aussi ce que Foucault appelle " les expériences de limite " » (Beicheng Liu 2012, p. 195) Cela explique comment Foucault écrit *Surveiller et punir*, comment ses expériences propres contribuent à ses œuvres.

En tant qu'écrivain, Foucault trouve son identité dans le texte, il s'exprime et se justifie par le texte. En ce sens, on lui rend hommage en disant, « ainsi, on voit Foucault comme tel — une figure troublante qui se produit, se détruit et se découvre, une figure qui " recule dans la forme de représentation de ses œuvres " », Foucault « déverse son impulsion la plus folle dans ses œuvres, il s'efforce de le comprendre,

l'interpréter et l'exprimer ». « Plutôt, ses œuvres sont la représentation commune de ses livres et sa vie » (Miller 2005, pp. 212, 530, 525). C'est l'identité de Foucault, c'est les actions nécessaires d'un écrivain responsable, c'est la correspondance entre la pratique et la pensée, entre l'acte et l'écriture, c'est la recherche et le réel de l'identité de l'écrivain. Dès lors, on ne peut plus dire que « peu importe qui parle ». S'il n'y a pas de Foucault, il n'y a pas de ses textes ; les textes sans Foucault perdent aussi leurs sens significatifs. Le rapport entre eux est donc : Foucault est le texte, le texte est Foucault. Si le texte n'est pas mort, l'auteur non plus.

3. Réflexion sur la raison de la mort de l'auteur

L'auteur est mort, et le texte ne lui appartient plus. Comment ce thème ridicule au sens commun devient–il une proposition importante de la philosophie et de l'herméneutique ? Cela nous fait réfléchir. Il est évident qu'il a une sorte d'hégémonisme du discours. L'auteur existe, sa pensée existe. Pourquoi les formalistes, Barthes et Foucault disent–ils que l'auteur est mort ?

La raison des formalistes est simple. C'est pour se dégager de la critique dominante de la société et de l'histoire à partir du XIXe siècle. La renonciation de l'auteur est une sorte d'insurrection, de progrès. Sous l'influence longue de la critique sociale et historique, la littérature se trahit d'elle–même. Elle se justifie par la sociologie, l'histoire et la vie de l'auteur. Par conséquent, elle perd sa liberté et son indépendance. La critique littéraire devient donc l'écho de la proposition sociale et historique. La littérature doit retourner à la littérature. C'est une suggestion simple et charmante. L'énonciation de Roland Barthes est plus profonde et compliquée. « La mort de l'auteur » n'est qu'une métaphore, un relèvement du problème. Dans l'arrière–plan, c'est l'avertissement structuraliste pour contre le sujet, le centrisme et le rationalisme, c'est la violente expansion déconstructiviste dans le champ de la théorie littéraire et de l'herméneutique. « Qu'est–ce qu'un auteur ? » de Foucault est plutôt systématique. En appuyant sur « la mort de l'homme », Foucault avance la nécessité de « la mort de l'auteur ». Il analyse la fonction du discours et la condition de la pratique du discours, il transforme le slogan splendide en théorie sé-

rieuse. Néanmoins, en dépit de ces spéculations philosophiques et de ces revendications sociales et politiques, qu'est–ce que le but essentiel de ces slogans et discours au sens de l'herméneutique ?

L'enjeu du problème se trouve dans le pouvoir et le critère du dis-cours sur l'interprétation du texte. À côté du pouvoir de l'interprétation, si l'auteur est mort, le lecteur devient naturellement l'interprétateur supérieur et le reproducteur du texte. Dans l'espace multidimension-nel du sens de texte, les interprétations de toutes sortes deviennent possibles. Le lecteur ordinaire comme le commentateur professionnel peut produire sa conclusion à sa propre volonté. À côté du critère de l'interprétation, le sens perd sa source lorsque le texte perd son auteur. L'interprétation ne se détermine plus par un seul sens, mais par la com-pétition et le dialogue entre multiples imaginations et expériences, tout est possible. Cependant, est–ce que l'intention première de l'auteur peut arrêter les interprétations sans limites ? Même l'auteur lui–même n'est plus le juge dernier du sens, puisque son écriture trahit souvent sa propre intention, et parfois, il n'a même pas d'intention.

> Lorsqu'on pense que l'auteur a un pouvoir créatif sans limites, notre pra-tique de lecture et de critique le met au bourrier du langage qui renferme les sens et les significations de manière unique sans divergences. De ce fait, Foucault dit, " L'auteur est donc la figure idéologique par laquelle on conjure la prolifération du sens ". On désire un auteur cohérent, puisqu'un tel auteur nous plaît avec son idée du sens concret du texte. (Andrew Bennett, Nicholas Royle, pp. 24)

L'explication de Barthes est plus claire,

> on sait maintenant que le texte n'est pas un rang des mots qui délivre le sens unique de théologie (les informations provenant de l'auteur–dieu), mais un espace multidimensionnel où les écritures différentes s'y mêlent et s'y contredit, sans origine. Le texte est l'entrelacement des désignations provenant de multiples centres de cultures [. . .] Une fois que l'auteur est exclu, l'interprétation de la proposition du texte devient inutile. Imposer un auteur au texte, c'est le contraindre arbitrairement, c'est imposer le signifié définitif, c'est enfermer l'écriture. (Bennett et Royle 2007, pp. 22–23)

A partir de la moitié du xxᵉ siècle, cette idée de l'interprétation et cette théorie de l'auteur font apparaître une tendance de « l'inter-prétation imposée ». Le champ de l'interprétation devient le terrain

d'essai où les différentes théories se mettent en jeu et en compétition. « L'interprétation imposée désigne la trahison du discours de texte et la suppression de la signification littéraire. L'interprétation se fait par l'intention et la conclusion du lecteur, en supposant la position et le modèle préexistant » (Jiang Zhang). La popularisation de " l'interprétation imposée " provient primordialement de la théorie formaliste de l'auteur.

Le développement de la théorie littéraire du xxᵉ siècle se fait par plein de tours et de détours. Le fil directeur de la transformation de trois types théoriques est probablement clair. Selon l'ordre du temps, il y a le centrisme de l'auteur, du texte et du lecteur qui se nient et se déplacent l'un par l'autre. Après la décadence de la critique traditionnelle de la sociologie apparaissent les théories originales comme l'intuitionnisme de Croce, la psychanalyse de Freud et l'archétype mythologique de Jung. Mais elles sont toutes le centrisme de l'auteur. Le " formalisme russe " présenté par Jakobson, la " critique nouvelle " présentée par Ransome et le " structuralisme " présenté par Barthes tournent au centrisme du texte. La " phénoménologie de lecture " à l'initiative d'Ingarden, l'herméneutique de Gadamer et la " réception critique " fondée par Austen et Iser présentent le centrisme du lecteur. Cette classification verticale est d'une certaine manière raisonnable. Dans une période particulière, la théorie à la mode et plus impactant devient donc la tendance générale. Mais si l'on réfléchit en profondeur, il y a un pouvoir plus puissant qui fonctionne derrière ces phénomènes. Ce pouvoir se manifeste à toutes les stratégies et méthodes possibles, il pousse la théorie littéraire vers d'autres chemins pour la constitution d'un centre nouveau. Ce pouvoir est celui de la théorie propre. La domination purement théorique détermine l'orientation et le statut essentiel de la théorie littéraire. Le critère de théorie est rigide, elle corrige la réalité, et le réel est subordonné à la théorie. La production automatique de la théorie conduit au foisonnement illimité théorique. La vérification de la théorie elle–même devient le critère de la vérité théorique. Au champ de la littérature, après le centrisme de l'auteur, du texte et du lecteur, il y a donc celui de la théorie. Toutes les interprétations se font autour de la théorie, le seul fondement de l'interprétation du texte est la théorie. Néanmoins, le texte n'est pas fait pour la théorie, il est né pour lui–même. De ce fait, la domination théorique oblige d'en faire l'interprétation

imposée, l'auteur de la théorie se transforme donc en l'auteur du texte. Il n'y a presque aucune idéologie qui peut s'échapper de ce stéréotype. C'est la raison réelle de la mort de l'auteur. Jameson avait une phrase pour expliquer la source heideggérienne d'œuvres littéraires, « on sait que dans les dernières années d'Heidegger, il est un peu mystérieux. Qu'est–ce que le sens exact de ses phrases ? Mon interprétation est extrêmement démesurée. Mais on a le droit de les interpréter de différentes manières, puisqu'il est déjà mort » (Jameson 1997, p. 183). Le motif de supprimer l'auteur apparaît évident. Il n'y a aucune importance de la mort vraie ou fausse, ce qui compte est le pouvoir et le critère de l'interprétation, et qui possède ce pouvoir. Quand l'histoire et l'auteur sont éliminés, on a donc l'espace et la liberté de l'interprétation imposée, la violence et la suprématie de la théorie deviennent donc possibles.

Certes, dans la profondeur de l'histoire, la " mort de l'auteur " n'est qu'une élaboration de la " mort de Dieu ". Le slogan nietzschéen se fait pour la négation définitive de la raison humaine, de la métaphysique traditionnelle. À ce titre, " la morte de Dieu " et " la réévaluation des valeurs " détermine l'orientation essentielle de la philosophie et la littérature contemporaine de l'Occident. Le déconstructiviste présenté par Derrida en joue à l'extrême. Dieu est mort, la connaissance s'ouvre à tous les hommes ; l'auteur est mort, le texte s'ouvre à toutes les interprétations. Quel est donc le fondement de la connaissance et de l'interprétation ? Il n'est plus les choses elles–mêmes ou le texte propre, ni la raison ou la règle, mais l'impulsion de la vie et la volonté du pouvoir, " la volonté constituée " et " la volonté assimilée ". De cette façon, on a ces nombres idées et valeurs à distinguer et expliquer, notre question " l'auteur peut–il mourir " est inclue. C'est un thème si large que nous ne pouvons pas le résoudre dans une seule discussion. Il faut plus de recherches profondes et réalistes au champ des théories.

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Ideology and Science in the Debate about the Non–Existence of the Author

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TITOLO ITALIANO: Ideologia e scienza nel dibattito intorno alla non–esistenza dell'autore

ABSTRACT: This article tries to explore the meaning of the famous polemic of the Sixties in which Barthes and Foucault supported the "nonexistence of the author", showing its ideological and non–scientific character and the link with an anti–humanistic project whose philosophical roots are found in Heidegger and the political ones in Marxism. It is further argued that semiotics, in light of its competence on narrative syntax, has the tools to show the scientific groundlessness and the pretentious character of the controversy.

KEYWORDS: Author; Narrator; Barthes; Foucault; Semiotics; Test Intentionality.

1.

As Leo Strauss (1952) masterfully showed, when we find in a strong theoretical work a thesis which is evidently inconsistent and baseless, it is worth asking why this proposition was inserted in the text. There are three main answers to this question. The first and more traditional one is that these are mistakes, imperfections, confusions, maybe bad transcriptions, or that we ourselves have not understood and misinterpreted a correct thesis. According to all these hypotheses, the author is not responsible for the error. The second answer, that of Strauss,

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proposes the idea that in these cases, in order to save himself from possible persecution and repression, the author is purposely hiding his own positions, pretending "in front of the masses" to support points that he does not share, but he is purposely leaving in his work trivial errors and inconsistencies in order to let the "wise few" understand that his secret opinion is very different. Strauss has shown that this situation is often found in the history of philosophy, for example in the cases of Maimonides and Spinoza: this is an important contribution to the technique of interpretation, which semiotics should assimilate.

But there is also a third possible reason: a bold ideological stance, a political attitude which defies good sense, with the conviction of obtaining consent (even from oneself) precisely because of its tough groundlessness: credo quia absurdum. Someone can make absurd his position, just in order to solicit faith. Ideology can be defined exactly as the decision not to let the wretched empirical facts obscure his own sublime convictions. Someone can not wrongly believe that farther from the empirical facts is his position, the more it can become the object of ideological belief. Call it "intellectual provocation": épater le bourgeois is always a good communication strategy in order to acquire the precious status of original thinker and maitre à penser. And if there are some people who don't buy the thesis, this fact will be considered not a demonstration of its own weakness, but the clear proof of how reactionary and evil is the position of those who refuse the "revolutionary truth".

The mechanism is the same of the beginning of famous Andersen's fable *The Emperor's New Clothes*: the scammers who sell to the emperor non–existent clothes at a high price are careful to point out before their show that only the wicked ones will not see their marvelous product. This is a powerful ideological device: you need being an "innocent" kid in order to dare to tell that the king is naked. And it is not useless to add that in many circumstances to say a truth contrary to ideology is expensive. This third case of "faith test" is the most likely when the baseless position is not an individual one, but it is collectively shared by some group or intellectual sect.

This is clearly the case of "postmodernism". There is a huge anomaly, a real pragmatic self–contradiction, when Michel Foucault writes that «it is meaningless to speak in the name of — or against — Reason, Truth, or Knowledge» (in May 1993, p. 2) or «All my analyses

are against the idea of universal necessities in human existence» or again that «reason is the ultimate language of madness» (1965, p. 95); or when Stanley Fish confesses happily, «relieves me of the obligation to be right [...] and demands only that I be interesting» (1992, p. 190). What these authors tell is the exact denial of what they do, namely theoretically arguing. The closest ancestor of these positions was Nietzsche's thesis that «there are no facts, only interpretations» (1885–1887, p. 299; for more general criticism, see Ferraris 2012), paradoxically presented in turn as a fact. These texts are plain, easy to interpret, and the timing does not allow the hypothesis of transcription errors. Postmodernists lived in democratic and open societies, even if they preferred to deny it, and had a prominent position in the intellectual system, such that no one could think of repressing them and they had no need to mystify their opinions, according to the Straussian hypothesis.

Examples of this inconsistency could be multiplied ad lib, but these are enough for understanding that any discussion would be futile in these terms. Postmodernism is a form of self defeating nihilistic intellectual religion — unless it is the opposite, under a Strauss strategy: the demonstration of the rational impossibility of relativism or rather and more probably a rhetoric device for legitimizing a bankruptcy, subversive politic stance already discarded by history (Hicks 2004) — but for sure this was not the intention of their authors. With postmodernism, what is true is the third hypothesis, that of the mechanism of ideology; not the Straussian one, implying the existence of a message to be kept secret to all, except for a select few. There is no message, only the totalitarian will to use their speech to make that of dissenters impossible and win the admiration of self–hating bourgeois.

This is not the place for discussing this movement or intellectual stance in all its implications. But semiotics is directly called into question by this discourse. Let us start there from some very common although rarely explicitly expressed thesis of postmodernism and cultural studies. I will express them in the most direct and therefore the most naive and uncritical form:

a) there is not such a thing as the meaning of an expression. Meaning is just interpretation and in general it depends on strength relationships;

b) there is not such a thing as the author of a text. Authorship is just a social invention and an interpretation;

c) interpretation is free, not bound to some principle. However, it reflects the interpreter's position, i.e. his or her gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, political affiliation, etc.

The polemical object of these theses is evidently the diligent analysis of the texts, that aims at the purpose of clarifying their meaning and their intentionality (or their intentionalities in the plural, if we accept the hypothesis of Eco [1979]) with the purpose of replacing it with voluntarily "subversive" political readings, deconstructing the European cultural tradition and replacing it with a "revolutionary" hegemony.

The main strategy used by postmodernist for justifying this stance is limiting oneself to the textual level, which after all is the one on which the theoretical discussions are rewoven. Over a textual surface you can find no meaning, of course, because a text always works as a sign in the Peircean sense «A sign is an object which stands for another to some mind» (*Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*, vol. 3: 1872–8, p. 68), and the referred or signified object, be it some concrete or abstract thing, is always another, something not present in the text. And not even the author, of course, can be in the text, because the "I" that stands for him is never more than a trace. As Charles Baudelaire wrote (*Lettre du Voyant, à Paul Demeny, 15 Mai 1871*) «Je est un autre». External to the text must also be its interpretation, since no text can include its entire interpretation, without falling into a regression, in which the interpretation would in turn be interpreted and so on to infinity.

So, from a postmodernist point of view, those entities that could have an ontological external existence in front of the text, namely author and meaning, literally do not exist, because the analysis must be limited to the surface of text. So texts are always enclosed in themselves as windowless monads. On the other hand, they can not claim the same nonexistence with regard to interpretation, just because postmodernist practice takes always the shape of analysis of previous texts and therefore their discourse is always somehow an interpretation (thus in an eminent manner in the case of Derrida). But all interpretation of a text is another text, which is again a windowless monad. The

new text of course "exists", but as such is "groundless" (not by chance the same way as the "Being" of Heidegger 1929) and therefore is not bound by any rule to any external reality, including the commented text. It has no responsibility towards anyone or anything, it must not even be intellectually loyal to his object, because at its textual level it has no reference, object or meaning. What is worth noting here is that these ideas depend on a "closure of the text" that may seem common to some aspect of the semiotic theory (Marrone 2010). Let's examine this point better.

One of the first axioms of postmodernism is indeed «il n'y a pas de hors text», «there is nothing outside of the text» (Derrida 1988, p. 144) and this seems something very close to the very known and so often quoted exclamation of Algeirdas Greimas «There is no salvation outside the text!». In fact, this last proposition is not found in a well thought written text, but only orally pronounced by Greimas answering questions at the end of an important conference dedicated to him (Marrone 2009). Its metaphorical and provocative character immediately emerges from the wording: Greimas is not denying the "existence" of anything beyond text, but the possibility of "salvation" in it. In the expression it is obvious reading a clearly autoironic reference to Catholic theology, namely to te well known sentence of St. Cyprian in Epistle 72 to Pope Stephen «Salus extra ecclesiam non est». But what could be "salvation" for a scholar of texts, a semiotic? Of course only a method can be the guarantee of disciplinary work.

It is worth emphasizing again the difference between these two expressions. Beyond the formal similarity, the point is that the expression of Derrida has a gnoseologic, if not metaphysical claim, where Greimas speaks at epistemological level. Derrida's thesis (as the other postmodernist principle that I have quoted) should be read as an elaboration of Gorgias famous stance elaborated in the lost book *On Nature or the Non–Existent*:

a) nothing exists;
b) even if something exists, nothing can be known about it; and
c) even if something can be known about it, knowledge about it can't be communicated to others
d) even if it can be communicated, it cannot be understood. (Sprague B3.77–84)

On the contrary, Greimas is not denying (nor stating) anything about the structure of the reality or about its knowability. He is just proposing some methodological limits to the specific semiotic work, namely: in order to perform a pure semiotic analysis, one should not rely on extratextual knowledge, but the analysis must be limited to exploring in depth the internal structures of the text. This is what is called, not by chance, "the principle of immanence". Semiotics does not deny in principle that other researches around texts, for example historical, sociological, psychological and even neurological investigations, can be well founded and scientifically useful. However, according to Greimas' proposal (from which it is legitimate to dissent and many in fact disagree), it limits its investigations to the extent of the text. Indeed it makes the rational definition of these boundaries (usually called "decoupage") the first result and at the same time the prerequisite of the research.

There are very obvious consequences of this difference in principle. Semiotics absolutely does not deny the existence of meaning, on the contrary it investigates how the text produces meaning effects, because it is well aware of the Saussurian principle for which never we can find pure signs, namely meaningless signifiers, but in order something being a sign it must always be a "two–sided entity" where signifier and meaning cannot be separated without destroying the sign effect (and even more so for the text, which is a complex fabric of signs held together by some general meaning relation). On the contrary, the objectivity of the signifier that is materially present in the analysis is what allows us to investigate how are produced the meaning effects that make its communicative value. This is exactly the heart of semiotic work.

While also semiotics recognizes that the author is necessarily always absent from its work, it takes into consideration the act of enunciation as transcendental horizon of the text, necessarily presupposed in every enunciate and therefore it seeks in every text traces of the enunciation, its simulacra, its more or less explicit masks. The author is not in the text, but every text speaks of him/her, shows his/her activity, recalls his/her *Encyclopedy*. These two levels of research together constitute the mechanism of intentionality of the text, and their correlative investigation is part of every semiotic study. But instead of focusing on these well–known research methodologies, it is worth-

while here to study the peculiar notion of author, which is perhaps peripheral to the nihilism of postmodernism, but has a peculiar and not fully explored semiotic interest.

2.

Let us start from the definition of the word "author" In the Merriam–Webster (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/author). We find two main meanings:

— a person who starts or creates something (such as a plan or idea);
— a person who has written something; especially: a person who has written a book or who writes many books.

Other authoritative dictionaries as Cambridge (https://dictionary. cambridge.org/dictionary/english/author), Collins (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/author), or Oxford dictionaries (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/author) mention more or less the same definitions, often with the same exact words. Renouncing for the moment to analyze these definitions in depth, it is worthwhile to integrate them with some etymological information, which will allow us to quickly enter into a theoretical discussion about this concept. In fact in this word there is something much more than the craftsmanship of the director or writer. Again the Merriam–Webster suggests this derivation:

Middle English *auctour*, from Anglo–French *auctor*, autor, from Latin *auctor*, promoter, originator, author, from *augēre*, to increase.

More details are found in one etymological dictionary:

Mid–14c., auctor, autour, autor "father, creator, one who brings about, one who makes or creates" someone or something, from Old French auctor, acteor "author, originator, creator, instigator" (12c., Modern French auteur) and directly from Latin auctor "promoter, producer, father, progenitor; builder, founder; trustworthy writer, authority; historian; performer, doer; responsible person, teacher", literally "one who causes to grow", agent

noun from auctus, past participle of augere "to increase", from PIE root *aug– (1) "to increase".
From late 14c. as "a writer, one who sets forth written statements, original composer of a writing" (as distinguished from a compiler, translator, copyist, etc.). Also from late 14c. as "source of authoritative information or opinion", now archaic but the sense behind authority, etc. In Middle English the word was sometimes confused with actor. The –t– changed to –th– 16c., on model of change in Medieval Latin, on mistaken assumption of Greek origin and confusion with authentic. (https://www.etymonline.com/word/author)

This is the commonly accepted etymological path. But the great linguist Émile Benveniste (1969) was not entirely satisfied with this explanation:

> Cet ensemble rattaché à augeo s'est ensuite disloqué en cinq groupes : 1) augeo, augmentum ; 2) auctor, auctoritas ; 3) augur, augurium ; 4) augustus ; 5) auxilium, auxilior, auxiliaris. Mais « le sens premier de augeo se retrouve par l'intermédiaire de auctor dans auctoritas » : « Toute parole prononcée avec autorité détermine un changement dans le monde, crée quelque chose » ; elle a le pouvoir qui fait surgir les plantes, qui donne existence à une loi. Et « augmenter » n'est donc qu'un sens secondaire et affaibli de augeo, non pas celui dont dérivent auctor et auctoritas. « Des valeurs obscures et puissantes demeurent dans cette auctoritas, ce don réservé à peu d'hommes de faire surgir quelque chose et — à la lettre — de produire à l'existence ».[1]

So, calling "creator" an author is not just a metaphor. The only true Author, following this linguistic path, is only God. According to this concept, which lasted undisputed until the full affirmation of modernity, but of which we have traces still today, also the great masters (in literature, arts etc.) are not only just artists but somehow real Authors (with capital letter) although their authorship belongs to a second level, originating from the primary divine creation. Also the notion of "possible world", widespread in philosophy after Leibniz

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1. This set attached to *augeo* was then broken up into five groups: 1) *augeo, augmentum*; 2) *auctor, auctoritas*; 3) *augur, augurium*; 4) *augustus*; 5) *auxilium, auxilior, auxiliaris*. But «the primary meaning of *augeo* is found through *auctor* in *auctoritas*»: «Every word pronounced with authority determines a change in the world, creates something»; it has the power that makes plants appear, which gives existence to a law. And "to increase" is therefore only a secondary and weakened sense of augeo, not the one from which *auctor* and *auctoritas* derive. «Dark and powerful values remain in this auctoritas, this gift reserved for few men to bring out something and — literally — to produce existence» [*my translation*, U.V.].

and today widely used in logic, semiotics and above all in narratology, responds to this logic: who invents a story, an image, a movie, but also who imagines, desires, promises, fears something, "is creating" a "possible world" that has the characteristics described in the text. The metaphor of "artistic creation" triumphs in the romantic age, but the idea of "inspiration" (by a Muse, a personal Genius, by the Talent or directly by the Omnipotent) is as old as Homer and the Bible. "Inspiring" (namely "blowing in" some material to give it life), is the divine action, as seen for example in Genesis 2.

This small etymological analysis serves to establish that the notion of author, that seems so natural, because it describes an indispensable condition for the production of any work, that is the existence of someone who designed and executed it, is also a social institution whose specific determinations are cultural. Authorship entails also a certain way of thinking about the production and authority of texts, which has not always been there, has changed in different cultures over time. But can we say that the postmodernist refusal of the notion of author is limited to this line of "creationist" thinking about the author? It is worthwhile to briefly explore its development to better understand this point. Let us make a very simple historical scheme.

In a first phase, extended to a good part of the so–called primitive societies and at the beginning of our ones, we know no authors, in the simplest sense of some identified producers of the text. There is no historic and identifiable author for the *Pentateuch*, for the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, for *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, for Gilgamesh (even if they can have mythical authors like Homer or the very complex figure of Moses – see Volli 2012).

The second phase begins in the so–called "axial epoch", between the 8th and 6th centuries, with the Hebrew prophets, Hesiod and the Greek lyric etc. The authors assert themselves by writing about themselves, becoming characters of themselves. Isaiah tells of his own vocation, Sappho of her love. The full "author" is born with the use of the first person at least in part of the text. But in semiotic terms, what we describe as author (the "external" or "real" one, but always a social figure) is here a product of the narrator (the internal one, a semiotic essential device, which is an implicit part of every text). This does not mean that the author is not there, but only that its appearance in the text is the result of a social convention that authorizes it. In the

same way the painters, as authors of the images, have always been there from the earliest figurations on the neolithic caves. But only at a certain point did they begin to sign their paintings and perhaps depict themselves in them. It is a social innovation that concerns the representation of the author, not his existence.

The author is therefore born by writing "I", or something "we": to say it with a motto that became famous with the Renaissance, et in Arcadia ego: to be an author means becoming part of a literary republic, albeit very competitive and in pastoral version. As noted by Detienne (1995), this passage is contemporary and parallel to the signature of works of art and in a similar way it develops in a habit of professionalism: Pindar gets paid as Zeusi. But they are paid by those exalted in their works, not by general public. In Rome the authors sold their text to the "publishers" of the time, giving them all rights.

In the Middle Ages we witness for a long time a return to a situation similar the first phase. The new literature and European art is born anonymous and the only recognized authors are those of the past. The intellectual production in theology and philosophy are organized in a kind of scale of authority. In medieval scholastic Latin, auctoritas is defined as the affirmation or the doctrine of a doctor authenticus (or auctor), which can be used as the foundation of a demonstration. The auctor is therefore who guarantees the will or the affirmations of others. In a more restricted sense, auctor is properly considered a philosopher, a writer, a poet who has the power of persuasion and can serve as a guide and a witness, generating an opinion worthy of being followed.

For instance Uguccione da Pisa distinguished between auctor as augmentator, a word which also comes from augeo, and author as inventor artium, who must be a person of great authority. Uguccione did however derive the word author (as a poet, and with the same auctoritas), from the verb auieo = ligare, in a step certainly known and followed by Dante (Alighieri 1304–7) in the *Convivio* (Banquet), IV, VI, 3–5[2]. In the same work the term authority appears several times

2. Cf. Alighieri D. (1304–1307) *Il convivio* (eng. trans. *The Banquet*, https://digitaldante.co lumbia.edu/text/library/the-convivio/); (1303–1305) *De vulgari eloquentia* (eng. trans. http://alighieri.letteraturaoperaomnia.org/translate_english/alighieri_dante_de_vulgari_elo quentia.html).

(e.g. IV, VI, 18: «congiungasi la filosofica autoritade con la imperiale»)[3], and in the important place of the book IV, VI, 3–5 Dante tries to rely on Aristotle's "authority" in order to demonstrate his right to the supreme moral predominance. Auctor therefore (although Dante does not designate this figure with this name but, as for Virgil, he calls him "my teacher" in I, IX, 9) here means "dignissimo di fede e d'obedienza"[4]. On the contrary, in the De vulgari eloquentia (II, VI, 7) auctores are poets. In Inf. I, 85 by calling Virgil "my author", he wants to qualify him as someone who, by his example, inspires the actions of others and is "guide", "creator", "promoter". In The Divine Comedy Inf. IV, 113 «di grande autorità ne' lor sembianti»[5], the term "author" assumes the value of "great influence" due to the wisdom, honor, magnanimity of the characters mentioned. Of God, supreme auctor, inspirer of the divine auctoritas (the Scripture) and source of truth, Dante speaks in Par. XXVI, 40 «Sternel la voce del verace autore, / che dice a Moisé, di sé parlando: / "Io ti farò vedere ogne valore"»[6]. This is maybe the most important literary proclamation in European culture that God is "the true author". Said by a poet who was perhaps the first in Middle Age to claim for himself an almost prophetic role, it is a definitively influential idea. Not so much in its direct form, which will slowly be made weaker by the process of secularization that develops in Europe from Humanism onwards, but in the conversational form that derives from it culturally if not logically. We can summarize it this way: if the only true author is the Creator, then also the authors (at least the great authors, who are also somehow true Authors too) must be creators. The pretention of a "creativity" of artists and writers goes hand in hand with the claim of their "authorship", beyond the fact that the professional status of the author remains substantially unprotected for twenty centuries up to the thresholds of bourgeois society.

The firsts of these "privileges" which assign legal rights to works of authorship date back to the at the beginning of the XVIth century, and they generally protect printers, not authors. Aldo Manuzio is perhaps

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3. «Join the philosophical authority with the imperial».
4. "Very dignified of faith and obedience".
5. «Of great authority in their appearances».
6. «The voice of the true author, / who tells Moses, of himself speaking: / "I will show you every value"».

the first printer to enjoy such rights having obtained in 1497 a ruling by Venice Republic granting him the exclusive right to print Ariosto's poems. In following centuries there will be authors obtaining similar privileges in first person, like Rabelais, but they would be exceptions. In fact, the basis of copyright, namely the distinction between the physical object (the book) and the "work", is mostly ignored for centuries even after the invention of the technical reproducibility of the literary work. The owner of the object (book) owns also of what is written on it and can do with it what he wants, for example print it again or copy it, except for an explicit sovereign privilege. The first theorist who made this difference was Immanuel Kant in a small essay of 1785 entitled *The illegality of counterfeiting of books*.

After the Enlightenment and the establishment of bourgeois society, with its strong ethic of work, literature becomes institution, writing (or painting, composing music etc.) becomes a work without ceasing to be "creation", and the author finds protection and social role. It is a period that lasts just over a century, until the advent of the cultural industry, which, due to productive and economic necessity, practices forms of collective authorship, while in some cases maintaining the ideology of "creation". But this ideology is less and less aware of itself and less demanding on the theoretical level. Gradually, the author's qualification extends to every productive activity and the theological notion of "creation" becomes trivialized in the advertising one of "creativity". Anyone can be an author, but above all anyone must be creative: the tailor and the cook, the craftsman and the journalist, the gardener and the barman. The relationship with the divine, however, passes from the figure of the author to that of the interpreter. The actors, the musical performers, the models become "stars", or, as some prefers, "godlike". All this story and sociology of the social presence of the author, and the many details that could and should be added here, however, do not concern the existence of the author, but his cultural consideration, the way in which the different societies have thought of a role that in itself has always existed.

3.

This is where Barthes's analysis intervenes, arguing not against the theological remains of authorship, and not even against the ambiguous notion of "creativity" but against the individual character of authorship, the idea that there is a personal relationship between author and text.

Barthes struggles to replace it, this author as productive and explanatory principle of literature, with impersonal and anonymous language.

> Un texte est fait d'écritures multiples, issues de plusieurs cultures et qui entrent les unes avec les autres en dialogue, en parodie, en contestation ; mais il y a un lieu où cette multiplicité se rassemble, et ce lieu, ce n'est pas l'auteur, comme on l'a dit jusqu'à présent, c'est le lecteur [. . .] l'écriture est la destruction de toute voix, de toute origine [. . .] un texte n'est pas fait d'une ligne de mots, dégageant un sens unique, en quelque sorte théologique (qui serait le "message" de l'Auteur–Dieu), mais un espace à dimensions multiples, où se marient et se contestant des écritures variées, dont aucune n'est originelle: le texte est un tissue de citations, issues des mille foyers de la culture. [. . .] Donner un Auteur à un texte, c'est imposer à ce texte un cran d'arrêt, c'est le pouvoir d'un signifié dernier, c'est fermer l'écriture.[7]

The author, according to Barthes, is replaced by the scripteur, ie the copyist, whose only power is that of «mêler les écritures, de les contrarier les unes par les autres, de façon à jamais prendre appui sur l'une d'elles»[8]. Precisely the opposition between écrivain, which in the article is synonymous with auteur, and the scripteur plays a fundamental role in understanding the autonomous and trans–historical character of the literary language to which Barthes submits all the activities produced around literature.

7. «A text is made of multiple writings, coming from many cultures and entering into dialogue, parody, contestation; but there is a place where this multiplicity comes together, and this place is not the author, as we have said so far, it is the reader [. . .] writing is the destruction of every voice, of every origin [. . .] a text is not made of a line of words, giving off a unique sense, somehow theological (which would be the "message" of the Author–God), but a space with multiple dimensions, where marry and disputing various writings, none of which is original: the text is a tissue of quotations from the thousand homes of culture. [. . .] To give an author to a text is to impose on this text a deterrent, it is to provide it with a last signified, it is to close the writing».

8. «To mix the writings, to annoy them one by the other, so as to ever rely on one of them».

First of all, Barthes' theory on the "death of the author" shows the pretension to be an empirical statement: nowadays, in the bourgeois world, there were authors, he says, but now there is no such an entity. Or... maybe it never existed, not even in the example form what the article of Barthes takes its beginning: a short fragment of one of the most bourgeois writers of the French literature, Balzac's novel Sarrazine, where a certain "psychological" evaluation of a character is given. Barthes declares himself unable to understand who is uttering this judgment:

> In his story Sarrasine, Balzac, speaking of a castrato disguised as a woman, writes this sentence: «It was Woman, with her sudden fears, her irrational whims, her instinctive fears, her unprovoked bravado, her daring and her delicious delicacy of feeling».
> Who is speaking in this way? Is it the story's hero, concerned to ignore the castrato concealed beneath the woman? Is it the man Balzac, endowed by his personal experience with a philosophy of Woman? Is it the author Balzac, professing certain "literary" ideas of femininity? Is it universal wisdom? or romantic psychology? It will always be impossible to know, for the good reason that all writing is itself this special voice, consisting of several indiscernible voices, and that literature is precisely the invention of this voice, to which we cannot assign a specific origin: literature is that neuter, that composite, that oblique into which every subject escapes, the trap where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes.

Let me say: this is a bad (or rather: a rhetoric) question; hence there is no right answer to it. After Bakhtin we know that in many novels there is polyphony; after Genette that there are different degrees of distance and presence of the Author/Narrator in the story. Semiotics tell us that never the Narrator (which is always a function of the text, which can be more or less personalized) should be confused with the empirical Author. Almost every description, every psychological characterization, every perception of events in all literary texts it is characterized by the same uncertainty; it is almost never possible to say whether the judgment is of a character, of the narrator, of the author, of his Encyclopedia. This is the rule of the game of diegesis, as opposed to mimesis, according to a theorization that goes back to Aristotle (Poetics, 3.1448a, pp. 21–2). In the diegetic form of narrative there is a programmatic ambiguity between narrating voice, author,

characters, bystanders, which in mimesis, for example in theater and in painting, is missing. On stage only the characters speak and the author has no word; in each narration, instead, the tone of the narrator's voice, identified or not with a character or with the author, is always present. This is not an argument neither for nor against the existence of the author, it is a necessary feature of third person narrative form. Except when some narrative devices of detachment is acting — a circumstance that is always possible, as when Leporello says «Signor, il padron mio… / badate ben… non io… / vorria con voi cenar…»[9], the text is always ultimately taken over by the Narrator.

Barthes could not be unaware of such a basic feature of every narration and therefore here its mention is just instrumental and specious. The problem is not to know if a certain expression of the text "belongs" to the Narrator or to the Author, to a character or to the general Encyclopedia. It must always be attributed to "the Narrator", even if this expression "betrays" the author's personal opinions or refers to the current ideology or to certain literary stereotypes or even if it in some way exudes from a character. In every narration there is always the Narrator, if only as an implicit anchor of the adopted point of view. The Narrator is part of the structural characteristics of every story, even in "authorless" narratives, as the existence of a purpose within the story, of the one who pursues it, of its obstacles, etc. A text without Narrator, even if it is implicit and not figurativized, is not a story.

Furthermore the indisputable fact that behind a text there is always an empirical author, or more than one, of which identity we may or may not have knowledge, depends on a very general feature of the world. That is, from the fact that texts are constructed objects. And of course all the artfacts or constructed objects are works of people (usually human beings but we can also imagine that they are gods, animals, angels, extraterrestrials builders or in this case authors). Those who build those particular works that are the texts are defined authors. It does not matter if we know them or not, if we can identify parts of the text with their beliefs or if we think that what is written in the text does not correspond to the "true" thoughts of the author.

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9. *Don Giovanni*, Act 2, xi: «Sir, my owner… / mind you well… not me… / would like to have dinner with you…».

This is a problem of criticism or biography, but from the point of view of the theory of communication this question and also the inability to answer cannot delete the fact of the existence of the author.

Perhaps in order to avoid having to give his justification in front of these obvious questions, which could reveal so weak and dogmatic a position that it obliges us to think of the explanation of Leo Strauss, Barthes quickly goes on to examine the historical question of the author. But also the historical approach of this text is very poor. Let us read some lines:

> The author is a modern figure, produced no doubt by our society insofar as, at the end of the middle ages, with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, or, to put it more nobly, of the "human person" Hence it is logical that with regard to literature it should be positivism, resume the result of capitalist ideology, which has accorded the greatest importance to the author's "person".

It is a very arbitrary reconstruction that ignores important historical facts. I have already provided elements that contradict this scheme, but it is worth mentioning a couple more: What about Augustin *Confessions*? Or about Dante Alighieri's *Commedia*, with its apparent interlacement between life and work? It would be superfluous (and boring) to continue the analysis of this text in detail. Just I want to show his conclusions:

> The reader has never been the concern of classical criticism; for it, there is no other man in literature but the one who writes. We are now beginning to be the dupes no longer of such antiphrases, by which our society proudly champions precisely what it dismisses, ignores, smothers or destroys; we know that to restore to writing its future, we must reverse its myth: the birth of the Reader must be ransomed by the death of the Author.

Has "the" Reader now to be born? Really? Needs he to be protected against the Author? At the price of the "death" of this last figure? This is too fanciful and arrogant a conclusion to be taken seriously. And in fact the article of Barthes is just seven pages, it was no expanded nor even republished in a book until the death not of some abstract figure of Author, but of its empirical author Roland Barthes. This one did not bother even of reconsidering his problem with Balzac while, three

years after this paper, he analyzed the same novel in a whole book, *SZ*, with very different analytical tools and also results. We should conclude that Barthesian "Death of the Author" is just an intellectual provocation, a stance in favor of the experimental literature of those years, similar to what we read in the just as weak and contradictory distinction between "pleasure" and "enjoyment" in *The Pleasure of the Text*.

Or rather it should be read as a philosophical and political stance against the individual responsibility and autonomy that are implicit in the notion of author. The main (and in my opinion very superficial) idea here is that the "author" is essentially a "bourgeois" figure and that the (post)modernity is the occasion for destroying it together with all the "bourgeois ideology". The first and more original supporter of this idea was Walter Benjamin, who, thirty years before Barthes (1936), claimed that mechanical reproduction of art was a good thing above all because it constituted the technical condition capable of abolishing the "aura" of artwork (and therefore the charismatic figure of the author) with the militant presence of the masses, as was the case (in his opinion) for Soviet cinema.

I cannot elaborate this point, but there are clues in the same direction also for the second main source for this "death of the author", the more serious essay of Michel Foucault *What is an author?* (1969). Foucault is interested in the author as a "function" and in the production/proliferation of sense:

> The author is not an indefinite source of significations that fill a work; the author does not precede the works; he is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction. In fact, if we are accustomed to presenting the author as a genius, as a perpetual surging of invention, it is because, in reality, we make him function in exactly the opposite fashion. One can say that the author is an ideological product, since we represent him as the opposite of his historically real function. When a historically given function is represented in a figure that inserts it, one has an ideological production. The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning.

These ideas are not isolated in Foucault's production. For instance he writes that the author is «the superficial effect of larger units»

(1969b, p. 36). And referring to himself: «Do not ask me who I am and do not ask me to stay the same: it's a civil status morality; reigns on our documents. Leave us at least free when it comes to writing» (1969a p. 20). The author for Foucault is therefore:

— the person responsible for the speech (i.e. legally punishable, expressing property);
— the guarantor of sense (for knowledge of tradition or for divine inspiration, expressing credibility);
— the designer of a speech (coherent in style and ideas, expressing constancy in value and unity of style);
— the bearer of a simulation of different subjects who talk at the same time (the one who does the job, the one who in the work takes a shared position, the one who tells the same work inside other past and future works).

Foucault, less provocatory, but in a much ideological and subversive way, has in common with Barthes the idea of a link between authorship and "humanism". Foucault and Barthes are both against the author because it is a principle of responsibility (also in theoretical sense proposed by Hans Jonas) and their political objective is overthrow not just "capitalism" but in a much wider sense humanism, or the principle of individual responsibility, which is one of its important prerequisites. There is a source for this move: it is Heidegger, who was much popular in France at this time. The reference goes to his "Letter on humanism" but also to "On the way to language". Barthes writes: «for Mallarmé, as for us, it is language which speaks, not the author». This is clearly an open quotation of Heidegger (1959):

> Language speaks. What about its speaking? Where do we encounter such speaking? Most likely, to be sure, in what is spoken. For here speech has come to completion in what is spoken. The speaking does not cease in what is spoken. Speaking is kept safe in what is spoken. In what is spoken, speaking gathers the ways in which it persists as well as that which persists by it–its persistence, its presencing. But most often, and too often, we encounter what is spoken only as the residue of a speaking long past.

This is not the occasion of deepening this relation between postmodernism and the anti–humanistic ideology of Heidegger and other

intellectual supporters of Nazism. For performing this task, it should be necessary considering other points of contact, for instance the figure of Paul De Man. But it is clear enough here that the theory of the "Death of the Author" is not a literary or communicational empirical theory; it is something much more self referential and ideological. Postmodernism is not interested in discovering how literary, artistic and general communication text really work. What is called "theory" in the United States and in the cultural periphery of it, is just a self centered discourse, used as a rhetorical device for challenging the tradition of humanism, more than to understand literature.

This idea of theory as a device for subverting the humanistic tradition of Europe naturally entails the other ideas of postmodernism: absence of an autonomous meaning of the work and forced interpretations of literature, art etc., in order to expose its secret oppressive (namely patriarchal, colonialist, classist, homophobic, etc.) character. It intends to use the instruments of the critic as weapons for deconstructing the European political and cultural tradition of liberal thought. Deconstructionism is of course indifferent to a fair lecture of texts. It was not invented by Derrida, but by Heidegger and it has always been a political weapon. The result of this push are the so called "cultural studies". In the definition of these disciplines is included the programmatic engagement to exclude any form of objectivity requirement, replacing it with a melting of writing and militancy, academia and political commitment

Italian semiotics, and in general semiotics does not belong to this "theory". As general semiotics it thinks itself as a part of philosophical epistemology; as applied semiotics as empirical research characterized by a "scientific vocation" as Greimas used to tell. The semiotic who felt more the duty of confronting the degeneration of this "Theory" was Umberto Eco, maybe also because his experience as an author. There are three books of Eco about this point: *Lector in fabula* (1979), *I limiti dell'interpretazione* (1990), *Interpretation and Overinterpretation* (1992). Let me quote some line from this last book (p. 24):

> To say that interpretation (as the basic feature of semiosis) is potentially unlimited does not mean that interpretation has no object [. . .]. Some contemporary theories of criticism assert that the only reliable reading of a text is a misreading, that the only existence of a text is given by the chain of responses it

elicits, and that, as maliciously suggested by Tzvetan Todorov (quoting Georg Cristoph Lichtenberg apropos of Jakob Boehme), a text is only a picnic where the author brings the words and the reader brings the sense. Even if that were true, the words brought by the author are a rather embarrassing bunch of material evidences that the reader cannot pass over in silence, or in noise. If I remember correctly, it was in this country [England] that somebody suggested, years ago, that it is possible to do things with words. To interpret a text means to explain why these words can do various things (and not others) through the way they are interpreted. But if Jack the Ripper told us that he did what he did on the grounds of his interpretation of the Gospel according to Saint Luke, I suspect that many reader–oriented critics would be inclined to think that he read Saint Luke in a pretty preposterous way.

It may seem that the author's theme is secondary. After all, Barthes and Foucault do not deny that in fact a certain person has written *Hamlet* or the *Divine Comedy*, they limit themselves to arguing against its unity or uniqueness and against the link that the work would maintain with these composers, rejecting a paradigm that we could to call the "intentionality" of the work. An intentionality that must be understood in a complex manner, as Umberto Eco has already shown, and which is even more problematic in contemporary digital society (Leone 2018).

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Textual Intentionality in Art and Literature

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titolo italiano: L'intenzionalità testuale nell'arte e nella letteratura

abstract: Intentionality, the speculation projected by an consciousness towards an object, is the starting point for the creation of meaning. It includes the intentionality of the sender of the text, that of the receiver, and the seemingly subject–less "textual intentionality" that occurs between the sending and receiving. The sender's intentionality consists of both the artist's and, more importantly, the demonstrator's intentions. Demonstration reveals the cultural category of the text and, therefore, exercises a more decisive influence on the interpretation. During the reception of an artistic or literary text, the "textual intention" is a crucial step, determining the "artefacthood" and the intrinsic quality of the text. In the texts of art and literature there are huge amounts of intentional traces that call for interpretive intentionality. The more "meaning indeterminants" there are in a text, the higher the interpretative tension and the greater the need for interpretation.

1. Intentionality in Art and Literature

Meaning is found where consciousness meets the material world. Consciousness, as the starting point and the initiating component of meaning, projects intentionality, which maintains the relationship between consciousness and object. No discussion of meaning can ever obscure compound intentionality, which includes both the sender's and receiver's intention; between them is a third, more complicated

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kind of intentionality, i.e. textual intentionality. The text itself has neither consciousness nor intention, yet within it are scores of intentional traces left by its sender that are the object of the receiver's intention. The interaction of the conflicting intentionalities of the sender and the receiver and those traces plays a vital role in generating the meaning of art and literature.

Consciousness divides the world into at least two parts: things (including substances, events and others' intentions) and their texts, which can be represented in any medium. For the three types of intentionality discussed above, only the sender deals with things directly. The receiver merely interacts with the texts, which are not the things themselves, but the mediatised texts of symbols. This paper does not avoid discussions of the intentionality in texts of art and literature; just the opposite, it directly addresses "textual intentionality", the most daunting problem in the field.

First, the demonstrator's intention is re–evaluated so that the sender's intentionality, which is somehow easily neglected, is included. How does a receiver know whether he or she is facing a piece of art and literature? The receiver can only be prepared for the necessary interpretive intentionality if the demonstration indicates textual intentionality. The creator's intentionality becomes subordinate to the demonstrator's intentionality.

For nearly half a century, the heated debate on how to define art and literature has considered the status of intentionality. *The Dispute over Kafka's Intentions* has appropriately revealed the difficulties of this puzzle.

As Jorrold Levinson (1979) has pointed out, "artefacthood" is not only the embodiment of artistic symbols in texts, it is also the link between texts and cultural histories (p. 25). Such a link places intentionality within the objects, making them art. This is what Levinson meant by proposing to "define art historically": some texts are considered artworks because they are «something which is intended for regard or treatment as previous art works have been regarded or treated» (Oppy 1992, p.154). Here the word "intended" refers to textual intentionality, and "as" refers to the same category. The genre of art and literature texts "requires" that the receiver identify the object as art.

Kolak (1990), instead of taking textual intentionality seriously, gave a seemingly straightforward example of its unimportance in his *Art*

and Intentionality: in his will, Kafka asked his friend Brod to burn the manuscripts of his novels *Der Prozess* and *Das Schloss*, suggesting these texts should have no intentionality, and should not be linked to his "previous artworks" (p. 160). These works, however, are monuments in literary history. Levinson refutes Kolak's argument by pointing out that regardless of what Kafka thought before dying, the art intentionality was already in Kafka's texts, never to be erased, even by his final will. Livingston (1998), who also contested the idea of intentionality, argued that undoubtedly Kafka had had contradictory intentions for his novels; however, the issue was whether his novels were truly artistic texts, and this decision was unaffected by anyone's intention (p. 837). For Livingston, the actefacthood was determined by the text's quality, which was unrelated to the sender's intention.

It can be seen that the intentionality of art and literature is much more complicated than is generally recognised. The author's own intention is not equal to the text's intention. Initially, Kolak and Levinson debated Kafka's intention, but their discussion eventually considered whether demonstrators, in this case publishers, can replace the author's intention with their owns. A clearer illustration of this point than Kafka's novels is the piggy "Picasso" in South Africa. The "art circle" seemed to treat the works of this South African pig as art and they were sold at a price of 100 thousand yuan. Similarly, the paintings of the deceased famous orangutan Congo were reportedly sold for 10 thousand yuan[1].

Biological communities have so far not decided whether animals can have the intention to create art, yet the intention of demonstrators (like galleries and auction houses) is clear; demonstration injects artistic intention into texts, forcing us to interpret the pig's works according to the intention of "fine arts". So, when faced with a symbolic text, the interpreter is confronting competing and coordinating intentions from more than one subject. In that case, the intention of Brod, Kafka's executor, mattered more than Kafka's stated intention.

The concept of "art" itself, in both Chinese and Western languages, suggests artificiality: the word "art" is defined by Western cultures as "human skill or workmanship as opposed to nature". The Chinese

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1. See: http://collection.sina.com.cn/dfz/henan/yj/2016-11-29/doc-ifxyawmp05244 53.shtml (last accessed 19 November 2018).

character "藝" initially meant "to plant"; "木", in the top left, stands for plants and the right part of the character means to cultivate by hand. In ShuowenJiezi, a Chinese wordbook analysing the form and origin of Chinese characters the character, "術" is explained as "the path in a city", or a "way" or "approach". Evidently, the initial meaning of this concept was almost the same in both Chinese and Western languages, i.e. manual skills. This observation highlights the question of intentionality. In Western languages, the word "art" has retained a pretty clear connotation of "artificial", as it shares the same word root; in Chinese the artificiality of art has to be highlighted.

Artworks, as artefacts, are meant to possess artistic intentions. The scribbles of apes or elephants, even if they are very similar to some work created by true artists, are rejected by many, as animals can never have the intention to create art. Nonetheless, these symbolic texts are given artistic intentions when they are displayed as some artworks. Once demonstrated (for example, in an auction house), they immediately gain cultural co–textual pressure; once they are considered artworks, they are incorporated into the category of art. As Levinson argued, they are intended for regard or treatment as previous art works have been regarded or treated, thus interpreters must interpret them according to the expectations for real art.

An unavoidable question is this: can nature not produce artworks? Or, isn't it true that natural things or events have often been seen as art? Although there is a long history of describing natural objects as «the miraculous masterwork of the nature», geological processes or biological evolution can never have artistic intentions, unless one believes in deities. There is only one way to turn completely natural things into art: through artistic demonstration. Tree roots, strange–looking stones or human bodies are not artworks until intentionality has been injected into them by demonstrators. However, even mountains or rivers can be placed within a demonstrative frame, or displayed in a "sight–viewing way". Therefore, demonstration generates intentionality, and although it may sometimes be hidden nor ignored, it must always exist in artworks. Demonstrated things are no longer purely natural things, for artistic intention has been added.

A mediatised text will undoubtedly become an artwork if the boundaries between intentional meaning, textual meaning and interpretive meaning are clear. The author of this paper believes that

in human societies and cultures it is artistic demonstration (rather than creation) that gives the texts their final intentionality, because demonstration activates the cultural mechanism and places the texts in the network of arts.

Artistic demonstration is a form of intention with a strong tendency towards sociability: caves of primitive murals, medieval churches, editors' compilations, and contemporary galleries and art festivals are all significant mechanisms to construct literary and artistic intentionality. Music performers and singers, for instance, realise the essence of music by adding a "hyper–intentionality" to the intentions of the lyricists and composers. All of these examples prove that, as a "second–order intentionality" the demonstration intention can outweigh the original intention, which may not exist at all (as in the example of animal "painters") or can no longer be found (such as Homeric Hymns) or be overshadowed by demonstration intention (as in Kafka's final will).

Readers often do not recognise that it is the social and cultural intentionality added to a text that forces them to examine the object as an artwork. A poem, for example, will not be read as a poem if it is not written on separate lines or with rhymes, or if there is no title or subtitle indicating that it is a poem. Without these codes, readers will not seriously interpret the object as a poem. Some people, perhaps sentimentally, consider the text itself to have "deep meanings". However, if they read a text as a poem, they will find deep meanings even if there is actually no meaning. Hence, the artistic intentionality of artists does not ensure the generation of art. Only demonstration can precisely position a symbolic text as a work of literature or art. As the mechanism of demonstration supports the whole process, receivers have no opportunity to conduct a pure assessment free of cultural conventions. As Louis Althusser (1970) said, the viewers are "interpellated" by the cultural mechanism into the position of artistic interpreters. This "interpellated" force works because our interpretations have been "formatted" by our culture.

Artistic demonstration, by forcing interpretation, is the mechanism that "locates" texts in a culture. As the title of Chinese aesthetician Zhu Qingsheng's book says, «No One Is an Artist, and No One Is Not an Artist» (2000). From the perspective of demonstration intentionality, this could be changed to «No text is absolutely an artistic text, and no text is definitely not an artistic text». Perhaps artworks

are waiting to be set free from rigid physicality; otherwise both vases and sculptures are sealed off from interpretation, keeping interpreters outside. Only in the field of arts can the irreconcilable antagonism between subjectivity and objectivity be set aside. In sum, a sender's intention does not determine whether a symbolic text belongs to art or literature; what plays the decisive role in this determination is the intention to demonstrate the work as an artistic or literary work.

2. Textual Intentionality

The academic history of intentionality shows the gradual evolution of this vital concept. It was originally seen as a psychological activity, then understood as a presentation of pure consciousness, then a mode to form meaning in the world, and eventually an interpretive way to construct cultural communities.

The concept of intentionality was first proposed by the German philosopher Brentano in the 19th century. According to Brentano, intentionality is an object–oriented psychological activity (1974, p. 88). His student, Husserl, who saw intentionality as the cornerstone of modern phenomenological philosophy, accepted Brentano's opinion that an intention is directive, but refuted its psychological structure. For Husserl, simply put, intentionality is meaningful, because it is expressed as an abstract connotation structure of consciousness.

To understand "textual intentionality", it is necessary to ask how a text, a non–subject, can have intentions. One easy answer is that the creative subject's intention can be recognised in the text. However, textual intentionality is beyond the control of an individual subject, meaning that it does not belong to a single writer or painter. As discussed, a social element is added to the text by the demonstrator, therefore textual intentionality is a product of social and historical subjectivity. This combination of assorted elements verifies that texts gain intentionality from cultural history.

Actually, except for performances where some of the creators directly face the receivers, these two groups do not meet during the interpretation process of most literary or artistic texts. Instead, receivers or interpreters directly face the texts and are influenced by textual intentionality rather than the creators' intentionality. In the

literature, there has not been any straightforward discussion of the concept of textual intentionality, yet many scholars, particularly analytic philosophers, have discussed similar concepts. Many believe that intentionality is the core issue of phenomenology; in fact, it is semioticians who are most concerned with the intentionality present in texts. Thus, it is semiotics that underpins the arguments in this paper.

The semiotician Eco (1992), for example, put forward the concept of a "text's intention", believing that the intention must be present in texts to be interpreted. Kaye Mitchell (2008, p. 64) called it the "intention of the form", which is the intentionality carried in the textual form. Important contributions to the discussion were made in Mukarovsky's *Intentionality and Unintentionality in Art* (1943) and the language philosopher Searl's masterpiece *Intentionality* (1983).

Mukarovsky classifies various elements in a text as "intentionality elements" and "nonintentionality elements". The former are elements generated by the "writer's intentionality". However, Mukarovsky believes that signs created for literature and art differ from those created for practical use, which he calls "signs for communication". These signs are not created for the purpose of effectively conveying a certain meaning. What matters most in artworks, therefore, is the unified significance that is composed of both intentionality and nonintentionality elements. He further clarifies that the so–called "nonintentionality elements" are not intended by the author; that is, they are the parts of a text that are not part of the creator's intention. These elements form interpretive obstacles that need to be supplemented by the perceivers. In this way, Mukarovsky echoes Ingarden's "indeterminacy" from the perspective of semiotics. The splendid explanation of intentionality given by Searl is quite close to the idea of "textual demonstrator's intentionality" used in this paper. To make a text literary or artistic, one represents it as literature or art. For this reason, in phenomenology, textual intentionality, namely the creative and demonstrative intention embodied in symbolic texts, is more of a cultural characteristic than an individual intention (McIntyre, and Woodruff Smith 1982).

Although it seems abstract, textual intentionality is part of the concrete classification of texts into genres, so it is a vital part of the "textual metalanguage", which operates along with a kind of text–imposed cultural pressure on interpretation. In the understanding of artistic texts,

textual intentionality dwarfs the criteria of "artistic quality", as the genre classification, which is a cultural form, and decides the textual meaning. Similarly, in terms of the expression of textual intentionality, the form category matters more than the content.

In the history of modern thought, there is abundant discussion of intentionality; the role of textual intentionality in art has been a focus of both phenomenology and analytic philosophy. However, each field uses exclusive terms, and there is a lack of a straightforward illustration of the intentionality of textual demonstrators. To support the arguments in this paper, it is necessary to scrutinise the statements of different schools of thought.

3. Demonstration and "Indeterminacy"

How does textual intentionality guide the interpreted artistic meaning? One example is Husserl's analysis of Dürer's copper etching Knight, Death and the Devil. First, the viewer takes the etching as an "image carrier"; then, the viewer identifies some images created by the lines, namely "the knight on the horse", "Death", "the Devil", etc. Lastly, artistic reflections form at the third layer, where viewers see the substantiality of the images formed by black lines: a flesh and blood knight. These three processes (image vehicle – image object – image subject) cannot proceed without imagination. Husserl offers a vivid description of the viewer's movement from perception to recognition. He believes that the generation of meaning requires the blending of the viewer's intentionality (Husserl 1996, pp. 270–271).

Ingarden (1973, p. 56), a literary theorist in the phenomenological field, expands Husserl's ideas: the artwork that an interpreter faces is neither a physical object nor a conceptual one, but a pure intentional object that is a combination of the two. Ingarden argues there are four hierarchical levels of a literary work: sounds and phonetic composition; sense–groups and sentences; schematic outer appearance though which appear various images described in the work; and objects described by the events of intentionality (p. 10).

The contribution made by Ingarden lies in his emphasis on how interpreters "fill–in" artistic texts. This occurs in the consciousness of interpreters at the third hierarchical level; as Ingarden points out, this

schematic level can impossibly represent every aspect of the real object. There are, in this layer, a series of "indeterminants", where meaning is incomplete or unclear. Ingarden called the process through which interpreters supplement these ambiguities «the concretization of the intended objects» (p. 145).

This type of «intention tension caused by indeterminants» [Missing page number for quotation.] is exactly what activates interpretation. Literary and artistic texts use the maximum number of "indetermi-nants" to form tension in the interpretive process. Therefore, these texts are able to activate the meaning intentionality of the interpreters, and encourage them to pursue meaning. For example, untitled music, abstract art and avant–grade drama are all equipped with numerous "indeterminants", forcing the interpreters to search for meaning. Writ-ers and artists who do not know this theory may apply it instinctively, creating works with an increasing number of "indeterminants" until they nearly dominate the works. Thus, literary and artistic texts al-most require interpreters to reconstruct them, thus turning the pieces into examples of "open meaning".

Although they have different terms and approaches, many schol-ars have identified the same process. Culler, for example, raised the concept of "naturalization" (1975, p. 129). The German narratologist Monica Frudnick further proposed, in her book *Establishing a "Nat-ural" Narratology* (1996), that the criteria for achieving "natural" is oral expression. That is, once a narrative text can be expressed by its readers as a "natural" oral presentation, then the turbulences in this text have been straightened out and intelligibility has been achieved. Frudnick's comments have made "secondary narrative" a heated de-bate once again; a group of scholars such as Richardson have strongly opposed the ideaand proposed the alternative "unnatural narratology" (Alber *et al.*, 2010, p. 23). They believe that many narratives cannot be expressed as "natural" oral presentations, and are "unable to be clear and coherent". In response, the author of this paper has proposed four approaches to the problem of "secondary narratives": correspondence, collation, compromise, and creation (Zhao 2014). These approaches cannot be achieved without the intentionality of the interpreters, and all are part of readers' intentional responses to the "indeterminants" in artistic texts. Only by reconstructing intentionality can literature and art become meaningful.

The ancient Chinese may have shown a more in–depth understanding of "indeterminants" than modern scholars. The poetics of Zen Buddhism consider the "barrier of a text": i.e., it recognises that words in a text both facilitate and hinder understanding. They may advance the interpretation, but are more likely to obscure the meaning. Tang Xianzu, a writer in the Ming Dynasty, once made the following excellent remark: «When Dharma came from India, from heart to heart he imparted Buddhist spirit to his disciples». As the five scriptures of Zen Buddhism emerged and prevailed, the use of words again became popular among monks. It was probably after Buddhism spread to China that the majority of Buddhists acquired its spirit by listening to explanations of the doctrine. Alternatively, the heart–to–heart approach may have fallen into a rut; for example, instead of directly explaining doctrines, the Buddha just picked a flower while another saint smiled (Xianzu 1982). In the Zen tradition, which is a branch of orthodox Buddhism, the kasaya, a vestment worn by monks, is used as a token of imparted doctrines. However, due to their tradition of using words to express ideas, the Chinese people tried to remove barriers to understanding words, as they sought the sudden enlightenment hoped for in Zen Buddhism (Fuzi 2008, p. 76). Another scholar from the end of the Ming Dynasty elaborated on the function of "indeterminants": «If meaning is made clear, it is good; if not, better: where there is ambiguity, there is space for interpretation» [Missing citation].

Therefore, "indeterminants" in literary and artistic texts are the traces left by the sender's intentionality; they summon the interpreter's intentionality. The combination of the two types of intentionality makes literature and art objects of pure intent.

For example, prose and poems are read differently; to read poems is to perceive deeper symbolic meaning, as gaps in meaning need to be filled. A short text is prose when put in an anthology. A poem is a poem when among other poems; but when it is read as prose, even the same words can have a totally different meaning. Once produced, a text is interpreted according to its genre — that is the "expectation" caused by textual intentionality.

This is even more the case for other forms of art. What makes Duchamp's Fountain and Warhol's Brillo Boxes "art" is their placement in art exhibitions; performance art must be performed by the

artist. Similarly, animals' paintings may be considered fine art if they are exhibited as fine art. There are jokes about installation art, which involve"ignorant" housekeepers who throw out collections worth millions of dollars as garbage. Art consists of mediatised texts of symbols created by humans. An interpreter can immediately understand the genre intentionality of the text based on its demonstration context. Then, he or she will use prior experiences to evoke a"prior understanding" of the genre. Thus, an agreement is reached between the interpreter and a cultural tradition: to interpret an object in accordance with some existing genre category. The interpreter may not be aware of this process, for the interpreting model is nearly intuitive, scarcely requiring any effort to apply.

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Experiencia, postmemoria e intencionalidad

José Enrique Finol[*]

> Y luego tenemos el otro (tiempo), que es el presente del pasado, que se llama memoria.
>
> Borges J.L.[**]

ENGLISH TITLE: Experience, Post–Memory, and Intentionality

ABSTRACT: In the following paper we propose a Semiotic approximation to the concept of postmemory formulated by Hirsch (1997), for which we suggest to examine it amidst other concepts which contribute to outlining its structure. In this sense, postmemory is approached from Semiotic concepts of memory, of experience and of intentionality. Later, the concepts of altered bodies and altered worlds are introduced, contributing to show some processes of incarnation in postmemory. The theoretic discussion is exemplified with two audiovisual texts; *La teta asustada* (2009), from Claudia Llosa, and the Spanish series *Pulsaciones* (2016).

KEYWORDS: Postmemory; Experience; Body.

1. Introducción

Los procesos semióticos que constituyen la experiencia y la memoria han despertado un creciente interés entre los investigadores de las ciencias de la significación. Se trata de fenómenos cuyo estudio exige

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una visión interdisciplinaria, de modo que su análisis y sistematización sea lo más completa posible. Para la semiótica, cuya vocación interdisciplinaria es conocida, los fenómenos experienciales y memorísticos plantean retos enormes y, en consecuencia, debe apoyarse sobre aportes previos de otras disciplinas.

Así mismo, el estudio semiótico de los procesos de postmemoria deben inscribirse en el marco del estudio de la experiencia, pues es en los distintos niveles experienciales donde contenidos de experiencias anteriores se filtran, se re–viven como recuerdos, emociones y acciones. Una visión fenomenológica, en la que sujetos insertos en el mundo actúan, generan experiencias que dinámicamente alimentan la memoria con contenidos que se procesan, se conservan, se olvidan o se modifican, evitaría la a–contextualización de los procesos de sentido que, en el mundo, los sujetos dan a tales experiencias.

2. Memoria y postmemoria

En 1997 Marianne Hirsch, en su libro *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory*, utilizó por primera vez el término "postmemoria" para referirse a «las relaciones de la segunda generación con poderosas y a menudo traumáticas experiencias que precedieron su nacimiento pero que, no obstante, le eran transmitidas tan profundamente que parecían constituir memorias en su propio derecho» (2008, p. 1). De acuerdo con esta definición, se trata de fenómenos psicológicos que se generaban gracias a historias contadas en familia, fotografías, filmes, diarios, etc. En una entrevista que se le realizara en 2013, Hirsch agregó: «Comme je la conçois, la connection avec le passé que je définis comme postmémoire ne s'opère pas au travers d'une forme particulière de remémoration, mais d'un investissement imaginaire, d'une projection et d'une création» (2013, p. 6).

Podría decirse que, en cierto modo, la postmemoria es una cuasi–ficcionalización construida a partir de relatos, sean estos verbales o visuales, sobre hechos reales, relatos que pasan por el tamiz de la experiencia y la memoria de un sujeto que cuenta y de la memoria y las experiencias de uno o varios sujetos que los reciben. En esas relaciones intersubjetivas, entre narrador y receptor, relaciones mediadas por mensajes y medios concretos, es donde se sitúan el "imaginario", la "proyección" y la "crea-

ción" que Hirsch menciona. Es la "variación imaginaria", como dice Merleau–Ponty (1996), lo que detona, en el marco de variables experienciales y memorísticas, un conjunto de proyecciones y creaciones.

Con mayor o menor éxito heurístico, numerosos trabajos de investigación y análisis se han realizado a partir del concepto de postmemoria, tanto en la literatura y el arte como en la psicología y el psicoanálisis, pasando por la historia y las ciencias políticas; entre ellos, cabe mencionar los de Bayard (2014), Aubin, para quien «l'espace urbain s'avère le lieu privilégié de l'expression de la postmémoire puisqu'il accueille en même temps qu'il performe les enjeux mémoriaux contemporains» (2011, p. 114); Imbroscio (2011), quien se refiere a la postmemoria y su impacto en la formación de identidades; Hernández Martínez (2018), relaciona la postmemoria con la biografía familiar. También Edurne Portela (2007) vincula la postmemoria con dispositivos propios del discurso literario, lo mismo que Varas (2011), Ennis (2009), Gómez (2014), Constales (2015) y Parra Rojas (2014); mientras que Álvarez–Sancho (2016) y Kramer (2015) aplican ese concepto a la realización fílmica, y Outeirinho (2017) a la historia. Quílez Esteve (2014) relaciona el concepto con la novela gráfica, la fotografía y el documental. Por su parte, Sarlo considera innecesario el concepto de postmemoria, «algo que pertenece al orden de lo evidente» (2005, p. 128), parte de lo que llama "inflación teórica" (p. 132), que solo por su carácter subjetivo se diferencia de la construcción de memoria que realiza el historiador o el arqueólogo. También Ciancio (2015) problematiza el concepto a partir de otros como performatividad y género.

3. Postmemoria y memoria discursiva

Para mejor cernir el concepto de postmemoria es importante distinguirlo de lo que algunos analistas de discurso han llamado memoria discursiva:

> Nous introduisons ainsi la notion de mémoire discursive [...] : toute formulation possède dans son « domaine associé » d'autres formulations, qu'elle répète, réfute, transforme, dénie..., c'est–à–dire à l'égard desquelles elle produit des effets de mémoire spécifiques ; mais toute formulation entretient également avec des formulations avec lesquelles elle coexiste (son « champ de concomitance », dirait Foucault) ou qui lui succèdent (son « champ d'anticipation ») des rapports dont l'analyse inscrit nécessairement la question de la durée et

celle de la pluralité des temps historiques au coeur des problèmes que pose l'utilisation du concept de Formation Discursive. (Courtine 1981, p. 52)

Otros se han referido a un fenómeno similar como memoria inter-discursiva, definida como aquella que se realiza «lorsqu'il y a réelle-ment allusion aux dires de l'autre, on serait dans l'ordre de la mémoire interdiscursive» (Moirand 2014).

Sin embargo, más allá de las memorias discursivas e interdiscursivas es necesario tomar en cuenta lo que el propio Moirand llama memo-ria–saber: «lorsque le mot évoque des faits, tels par exemple Tchernobyl, il s'agirait plutôt pour moi de connaissances, de représentations liées à des savoirs et à des événements de l'histoire» (2014, 89). Así, la memo-ria–saber son los relatos que evocan hechos históricos, individuales o sociales, los que, a su vez, se transforman en lo que Hirsch llama post-memoria, lo que implica una transición de las memorias de un sujeto hacia otro y que este otro las toma como vivencias propias.

Más cercana a la noción de postmemoria es la conceptualización elaborada por Paveau, quien en 2013 proponía los términos dememoria y amemoria como parte de los procesos de transmisión de discursos. A la primera la define así:

J'appelle démémoire discursive un ensemble de phénomènes de discours qui permettent la révision des lignées discursives, c'est–à–dire des transmis-sions sémantiques culturellement et socialement assurées par les outils de la technologie discursive (les plaques de rues par exemple). (2013, p. 14)

Luego define amemoria:

Je parle donc d'"amémoire discursive" pour désigner, non plus, comme pour la démémoire, une révision, mais un effacement, conscient ou inconscient, d'un passé ou d'un legs discursif, de "formulations–origines" (Courtine) dont le locuteur ne voudrait plus rien avoir à dire, mais qui se disent quand même, par le biais de l'inconscient et de la somatisation, d'autres manières, dans les langages infiniment innovants du symptôme. (*Ibidem*)

4. Semiótica y experiencia

Desde un punto de vista de la significación hemos definido la experiencia como el resultado de las prácticas que afectan la conjunción dinámica

de textos y contextos realizada por un sujeto semiótico (Finol 2018). Sin embargo, para la conformación, organización y jerarquización de las experiencias son necesarios procesos previos que parten del mundo de lo sensible, se continúan en el mundo de lo perceptible, lo cual ya supone una primera etapa de organización de significados, y se prolongan hacia la memoria, la cual se vincula y obtiene su sentido a partir de los contextos en los cuales esos procesos se han dado. A la semiótica de la experiencia le interesa lo vivido en las relaciones, siempre dinámicas y cambiantes, entre el sujeto y el mundo[1], relaciones en las cuales es posible identificar al menos cuatro vectores: espacio, tiempo, acción y sujeto. En cuanto al componente espacial, como dice Riera Jaume, «Todo ocurre como si el espacio vivido fuese también nutriente de sentido, vínculo umbilical que nos une al mundo, pacto natural fuera del cual se siente uno a la intemperie, matriz afectiva de ciertos lugares» (2010, p. 193).

Así mismo, el tiempo es un factor que, de diversos modos, marca las experiencias de lo vivido, lo que Braudel llamó «la dialectique de la durée» (1987, p. 10), pues estas solo se realizan dentro de variables temporales que le dan sentidos específicos a tales vivencias. Las acciones que los seres humanos realizan son siempre modos de modificar el mundo donde ellas se realizan, modos que incluyen no solo la acción propiamente dicha sino también el reposo. Finalmente, es el sujeto quien, al transformar el mundo gracias a sus acciones, y al hacerlo en un tiempo y en un espacio determinado, va a consumar sus experiencias, vistas estas no como procesos solipsistas sino como hacer compartido en el mundo de las relaciones intersubjetivas.

La experiencia, pues, va más allá de lo meramente sensible e, incluso, de lo meramente perceptible, pues ella supone acumulación de significaciones, memoria y sentido. Una semiótica de la Experiencia trata, justamente, sobre los procesos de significación que se generan en las relaciones entre sujetos y el mundo, entre un conjunto de sensaciones y

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1. Edéline y Klinkenberg llaman *anasemiosis* al conjunto de estímulos que vienen del mundo exterior y *catasemiosis* a la dimensión pragmática que se expresa en las acciones del sujeto sobre el mundo, las cuales parten de un proceso previo de interpretación: «nos organes périphériques reçoivent et organisent les stimulus en provenance du monde extérieur [...] Ceci constitue un premier moment du processus expérientiel de formation du sens, ou anasémiose. [...] Le sens peut retourner au monde sous forme d'action, un second type d'expérience. Ce processus — que nous appelerons catasémiose — part lui–même de l'interprétation [...]: partie de la corporéité de l'expérience, la sémiose retourne à cette autre corporéité qu'est l'action» (2018, p. d1).

percepciones y de las acciones o no–acciones que se fundan desde ellas y a partir de ellas.

En la construcción de sentidos en los procesos experienciales interviene un principio de pertinencia que permite a los sujetos, en el marco de contextos determinados, privilegiar unos sobre otros. Como afirma Rastier, «La légitimité de l'interprétation dépend du problème de la pertinence, qui commande toute identification d'unités» (2018, p. 211). En otras palabras, en las operaciones semióticas que van de lo meramente sensible y perceptible a la configuración de una memoria interviene un principio de relevancia que tiene que ver con marcos experienciales anteriores, cuya influencia es decisiva para las nuevas prácticas de la vida social. La memoria, entendida no como un mero depósito de recuerdos, significados y experiencias, es un sistema dinámico que opera dialécticamente entre los contextos situacionales y circunstanciales presentes y los contextos históricos pasados.

En las realizaciones concretas el principio de pertinencia puede vincularse con la categoría semiótica de intencionalidad que Greimas toma de la fenomenología y que él diferencia de la motivación y de la finalidad. De este modo, la intencionalidad «permet ainsi de concevoir l'acte comme une tension qui s'inscrit entre deux modes d'existence: la virtualité et la realisation» (1979, p. 190).

5. Semiótica y postmemoria

Para la Semiótica es importante analizar cómo se producen los mecanismos discursivos en la construcción de postmemoria, mecanismos mediante los cuales una historia basada en vivencias y recuerdos se transforma en vivencias y recuerdos del sujeto que la oye, ve o, en general, recibe. Hirsch se ha referido, sobre todo, a una experiencia individual compartida, en la que un Sujeto1 comunica, diferida en el tiempo, una acción vivida por él a un Sujeto2, bien sea en comunicación directa o indirecta, mediada o cara a cara, lo que convierte a esa acción vivida en acción narrada. En esa narración, mientras el Sujeto1 actúa como objeto de una experiencia — que también lo convierte en testigo, depositario y narrador de un saber experienciado, como producto de una vivencia —, el Sujeto2 vendrá a actuar como fiduciario, como heredero o legatario; proceso narrativo que luego convierte la acción narrada en acción recuperada.

Lógicamente, no se trata de procesos lineales sino de operaciones semióticas que se desplazan en diversas direcciones entre Sujeto1 y Sujeto2, y que hacen intervenir complejas variables actoriales, espaciales y temporales. Usualmente las acciones vividas y las acciones narradas ocurren en lugares distintos; los dispositivos narrativos para la construcción de acciones recuperadas también ocurren en lugares diferentes a las acciones vividas. Del mismo modo, el proceso de construcción de postmemoria implica variables temporales que atraviesan las acciones vividas, narradas y recuperadas.

Ahora bien, la construcción y articulación de postmemoria, como ya se sugirió, supone un principio de pertinencia que se actualiza al distinguir memorias y recuerdos gratificantes o "positivos" de aquellos que son traumáticos o "negativos". Esos procesos de marcaje parten de dispositivos como los que Schutz y Luckmann han denominado "ámbito finito de sentido" y Cassirer (1998) "acento de sentido". Para los primeros «un ámbito finito de sentido consiste en experiencias de sentido compatibles entre sí» (2001, p. 43), lo que en el caso de la postmemoria significaría una homologación coherente entre la memoria vivida por un Sujeto1, con experiencias en determinados tiempos y espacios, y la asumida por un Sujeto2 en tiempos y espacios diferentes. Si bien Schutz y Luckmann señalan la imposibilidad de compatibilizar dos ámbitos diferentes de sentido, también arguyen que «la transición de un ámbito de sentido a otro solo puede realizarse mediante un "salto" [...] este salto no es sino el cambio de un estilo de vivencia por otro» (p. 43), que es exactamente lo que ocurre al Sujeto2 cuando asume como propias las memorias del Sujeto1; en otros términos, para que la postmemoria funcione necesita de una compatibilidad de sentido con la memoria original; se trata del "salto" de una memoria propia a una memoria ajena, un proceso que implica operaciones semióticas de focalización, recuperación y apropiación de sentidos tomados de relatos, fotografías y textos que expresan recuerdos de un otro distante en espacio y tiempo. Es entonces cuando en ese proceso interviene también un mecanismo de acentuación de sentido[2], pues cuando el Sujeto2 selecciona como pertinentes unos recuerdos sobre otros, pone énfasis en estos últimos para, entonces,

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2. Para ver la aplicación del concepto de "acento de sentido" al rito de la misa católica, ver Blanco (2008). Zilberberg (2006) lo utiliza para su análisis de lo sagrado.

asumirlos como recuerdos propios, como inscritos en su memoria. Si, como dice Blanco, el «acento de sentido no es otra cosa que "acento expresivo", es decir, afectivo» (2008, p. 48), vemos que, justamente, en las operaciones de construcción de postmemoria interviene un aspecto pasional que tiene que ver con el afecto hacia aquella persona, el Sujeto1, de la cual el Sujeto2 asume su memoria.

Entre experiencias vividas, constituidas por acciones concretas en espacios y tiempos concretos, y experiencias re–vividas se establecen diferencias cualitativas determinantes, específicamente en el sentido de la historicidad de ambas. Mientras las primeras responden a discursos corporales, pertenecientes a un orden pragmático — cuerpos que ejecutan acciones, físicas o mentales, sobre otros cuerpos —, las segundas responden a discursos narrativos (relatos, fotografías, etc.) pertenecientes a un orden narrativo.
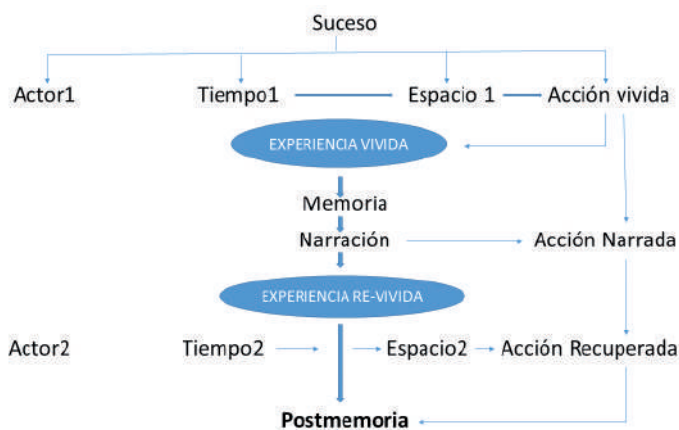
Esquema 1. Experiencia, memoria y postmemoria.

Ese complejo proceso de generación de postmemoria afecta no solo el ámbito individual sino también ámbitos colectivos, pues ambos se entrecruzan y cabalgan sobre las historias propias, tal como lo señalara Halbwachs:

> Si la mémoire collective tire sa force et sa durée de ce qu'elle a pour support un ensemble d'hommes, ce sont cependant des individus qui se souviennent, en tant que membres du groupe [...] chaque mémoire individuelle est un point de vue sur la mémoire collective, que ce point de vue change suivant

la place que j'y occupe, et que cette place elle–même change suivant les relations que j'entretiens avec d'autres milieux. (1950, pp. 23–24)

Sin embargo, en comparación con la memoria individual la memoria colectiva supone dispositivos narrativos más complejos, tal como ocurre, por ejemplo, cuando los museos, entendidos como macro dispositivos discursivos y textuales, provocan que algunos individuos re–vivan experiencias cuyas memorias asumen como propias.

6. Postmemoria como proceso semiótico

Como ya dijimos, para mejor comprender los fenómenos que se agrupan en torno a la denominación de postmemoria, es necesario colocarlos en el marco de otros procesos mucho más complejos de los cuales ella forma parte. En tal sentido, proponemos ver la postmemoria como un proceso semiogenético, dinámico, transformativo y transformador, que se sitúa en el marco de variables como las que se presentan en el esquema 1, el cual hemos utilizado en un trabajo anterior (Finol 2018), y que aquí hemos desarrollado un poco más.
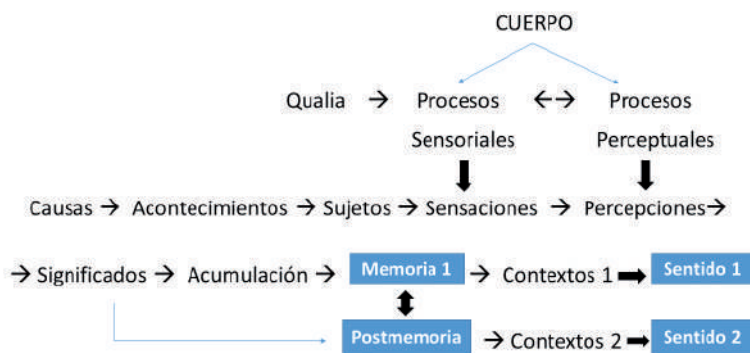
Esquema 2. La construcción semiogenética de la experiencia y de la postmemoria.

A pesar de la rígida linealidad del esquema anterior, es posible visualizar en él algunas de las variables fundamentales que intervienen en los procesos corporales, experienciales, memorísticos y postmemorísticos, cuyos entrecruzamientos e interacciones son inevitables.

Todos ellos deben verse en los marcos temporales, espaciales y actoriales que los constituyen y sin los cuales la inteligibilidad de los mismos queda limitada; marcos que también son lugares de anclaje de la memoria.

Desde el punto de vista semiótico, la postmemoria es, en una primera aproximación, un conjunto de significaciones caracterizadas por su opacidad y su desorganización, lo que a veces conduce a su dificultad para interpretarlas. Sin embargo, los sucesivos procesos de acumulación de información y de interacciones testimoniales, tanto en círculos comunicativos cercanos como en referencias históricas, van decantando y acotando significados y limitando los sentidos de las narrativas compartidas y, en consecuencia, los sujetos van asumiendo como propias las experiencias de otros. En la configuración de la postmemoria hay, para decirlo con términos de Merleau–Ponty, procesos semióticos centrífugos y centrípetos, los cuales afectan tanto los mecanismos intersubjetivos como los de la memoria en el marco de las variables contextuales.

Para mejor ilustrar lo que hemos venido diciendo, vamos a analizar brevemente dos ejemplos de historias ficcionales, la primera de las cuales, no obstante, está inspirada en hechos reales a los cuales también nos referiremos.

6.1. La Teta asustada, *de Claudia Llosa*

En la película peruana *La teta asustada*[3] expresión traducida del quechua Mancharisqa Nuñuun, un ejemplo clásico de representación ficcional de la postmemoria, encontramos expresada esa relación diná-

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3. *La teta asustada* (2009); Duración: 95 min.; País: España–Perú; Idioma: español, quechua sureño; Directora: Claudia Llosa; Guion: Claudia Llosa; Música: Selma Mutal; Fotografía: Natasha Braier; Productora: Vela Producciones, Wanda Visión S.A., Oberón Cinematográfica S.A., CONACINE de Perú; Montaje: Frank Gutiérrez; Distribuidora: Wanda Visión S.A.; Reparto: Magaly Solier (Fausta), Susi Sánchez (Aída), Antolín Prieto (Hijo de Aída), Efraín Solís (Noé), Marino Ballón (Tío Lúcido), Bárbara Lazón (Perpetua), María del Pilar Guerrero (Máxima), Delci Heredia (Carmela), Karla Heredia (Severina), Fernando Caycho (Melvin), Edward Llungo (Marcos), Marco Antonio Ramírez (Soldado 3), Doris María Ramírez (Soldado 4). Premios: 2009 Festival Internacional de Cine de Berlín; 2009 Festival Internacional de Cine de Guadalajara; 2009 Asociación de Críticos de Cine de Québec; 2009 Festival de Lima; 2009 Festival de Cine de Bogotá; 2009 Festival de Cine de la Habana; 2009 Asociación Peruana de Prensa Cinematográfica; 2010 D–World Awards (Vallejo 2011).

mica que caracteriza su organización y donde intervienen las cuatro macro–dimensiones que consideramos fundamentales para su análisis e interpretación: cuerpo → experiencia → memoria → postmemoria. En *La teta asustada*, Fausta, la protagonista, cree que a través de la leche materna ha recibido en carne propia las consecuencias de la violación de su madre durante la guerra en Perú (1980–2000), entre las fuerzas armadas peruanas y el grupo guerrillero Sendero Luminoso, un conflicto sangriento en el cual se produjeron numerosos asesinatos y violaciones de mujeres, muchas de ellas indígenas.

Theidon ha recogido testimonios que revelan el proceso mediante el cual hay un tránsito corporal entre madre e hija y que lleva a la primera a transmitir, a través de la leche materna, sus sufrimientos a la segunda:

> Mi hija nació al día siguiente de la matanza de Lloqllepampa. Estaba escondida en una choza. Le tuve que botar a mi esposo porque si venían los militares le hubieran matado. Solita me atendí. Ese tiempo escondiéndonos, ni siquiera tenía leche para darle a mi bebé. ¿De dónde le iba a dar si no comía? Un día me habían dicho: «Si le dejas a tu hija en el cerro, le puede pachary se puede morir». Recordando eso le dejé en un cerro para que se muera. ¿Cómo ya iba a vivir así? Yo le había pasado todo mi sufrimiento con mi sangre, con mi teta. La veía de lejos, pero como lloraba mucho tenía que regresar a recogerla porque si los soldados escuchaban, hubieran venido a matarme. Es por eso que digo que mi hija está ahora traumatizada por todo que le he pasado con mi leche, con mi sangre, con mis pensamientos. (Mujer quechua hablante. En Theidon 2004, pp. 76–77)

En su investigación, Theidon se interesa por

> la transmisión intergeneracional de las memorias tóxicas, en un sentido literal. [. . .] la transmisión al bebé del sufrimiento y del susto de la madre, sea esta transmisión en el útero o por medio de la sangre y la leche. Se dice que la teta asustada puede dañar al bebé, dejando al niño o niña más propensos a la epilepsia. (2004, p. 77)

La teta asustada comienza con la madre de Fausta rememorando, en medio de un intenso monólogo, cómo fue violada:

> A esta mujer que les canta, esa noche le agarraron, le violaron. No les dio pena de mi hija no nacida. No les dio vergüenza. Esa noche me agarraron, me violaron con su pene y con su mano. No les dio pena que mi hija les

viera desde dentro y no contentos con eso, me han hecho tragar el pene muerto de mi marido Josefo. Su pobre pene muerto sazonado con pólvora. Con ese dolor gritaba: «Mejor mátame y entiérrame con mi Josefo. No conozco nada de aquí». (Llosa 2009)

Fausta cree que su madre, violada mientras estaba embarazada, le ha transmitido, a través de su leche, el acontecimiento vivido y, por lo tanto, asume para sí el mismo miedo, la misma experiencia, lo que la llevará a colocar una papa en su vagina para evitar ser violada; esa suerte de escudo vegetal impediría que pueda ser penetrada, «con su pene y con su mano», por otros violadores. Como se ve, la madre de Fausta no solo le transmite una memoria a través de un relato sino también a través de una conexión corporal; se trata de una postmemoria corporalizada no solo en su origen sino también en sus efectos.

La película nos narrará los procesos mediante los cuales, poco a poco, Fausta vence sus miedos y traumas y después de enterrar a su madre transforma su cuerpo en un nuevo espacio para la fecundación, lo que la película simboliza, al final, con una planta cuya forma fálica (Cabrejos 2009) representa la fertilidad y, por esa vía, el renacimiento. En esta representación ficcional de la postmemoria se reproducen experiencias reales que Theidon ha recogido en Ayacucho, región peruana donde la guerrilla de Sendero Luminoso prosperó, y donde guerrilleros y soldados cometieron crímenes terribles[4]. Representación fílmica y hecho histórico comparten el tránsito que hemos mencionado: cuerpo → experiencia → memoria → postmemoria.

Desde un punto de vista semiótico podría decirse que se trata, en fin de cuentas, de la correlación dialéctica entre hechos que pertenecen, el primero, a una dimensión histórica y, el segundo, a una dimensión ficcional.

6.2. *La memoria del corazón*

Un caso similar ocurre en la serie española *Pulsaciones*[5], en la cual durante diez capítulos se cuenta cómo un médico (Alex) recibe el

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4. Para una detallada relación del conflicto armado ver el Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación de Perú (2003).

5. *Pulsaciones* (2016). España. Dirección: Emilio Aragón, David Ulloa, David Victori. Guion: Emilio Aragón, Francisco Roncal, Carmen Ortiz, Ángela Obón, Adriana Rivas, Ramón Tarrés, Juan María Ruiz Córdoba. Música: Juan Carlos Cuello. Fotografía: David

corazón de un periodista asesinado (Rodrigo), lo que obliga al primero a vivir como propias las emociones, vivencias y recuerdos que el segundo había experimentado y, además, a cumplir las tareas que dejó pendientes al ser asesinado. Para algunos, la serie de ficción tiene fundamentos en la realidad, pues varios investigadores, después de examinar testimonios de diez recipientes de trasplante de corazón y de los padres y amigos de donantes y receptores, han señalado que existe una memoria sistémica que podría ser comunicada a quienes reciben tales órganos: «Living systems theory explicitly posits that all living cells possess "memory" and "decider" functional subsystems within them» (Pearsall, Schwartz y Russek 1999, p. 65); una conclusión que se apoyaría en la teoría de los sistemas dinámicos de energía[6].

Como en *La teta asustada* también en *Pulsaciones* la memoria se transmite corporalmente y no a través de fotografías, relatos o cartas; en la primera, la comunicación de la memoria, como se ha señalado, se realiza a través de la leche materna y en la segunda a través de un corazón ajeno. No obstante, en una hay una cercanía consanguínea en la segunda esta no existe. En *Pulsaciones* el corazón, una vez más, aparece con una densidad simbólica extraordinaria; ya no se trata del lugar de los sentimientos o de las emociones sino de la memoria acumulada por el Sujeto1 y que se transmite al Sujeto2. Pero también la leche es un denso símbolo de vida, especialmente si esta es de origen maternal.

Ahora bien, mientras en *La teta asustada* no opera una intencionalidad, en tanto considerada como finalidad o como motivación de la

Omedes. Reparto: Pablo Derqui, Leonor Watling, Meritxell Calvo, Ingrid Rubio, Juan Diego Botto, Fernando Sansegundo, Javier Lara, Alberto Berzal, Antonio Gil, Manel Dueso, Carolina Lapausa, Ana Marzoa, Juan Blanco, Aitor Merino, Nacho Marraco, Amparo Vega León, Cristina Marcos, María Mercado, Martin Aslan, Julia Lara, José Pedro Carrión, Rubén Fulgencio, Nicolás Gaude, Anna Gonzalvo, Alex Navarro, Carolina Clemente, Òscar Rabadan, Aroa Madurga, Naia Madurga. Productora: Atresmedia y Globomedia. Género: Serie de TV. Thriller psicológico (Filmaffinity 2016).

6. Una intensa discusión se ha desarrollado sobre el concepto de *memoria celular*, con posiciones que van desde el extremo escepticismo, como la de quienes prefieren suicidarse antes que cambiar su punto de vista sobre el tema, pasando por la de Carroll, quien adversa la teoría pero considera: «Even so, the stories are intriguing and may lead to some serious scientific investigation at some time in the future» (1994, s/p); hasta Dossey quien propone como alternativa el concepto de *nonlocal mind*: «I suggest that the consciousness of a donor is fundamentally united with the consciousness of a recipient via nonlocal mind, and that it is this connection that makes possible informational exchanges between the two individuals, which take the form of posttransplant phenomena» (Dossey 2008, p. 292).

acción, ya que la madre que transmite su memoria a Fausta no busca un fin determinado, en *Pulsaciones* podría decirse que opera la intencionalidad considerada en tanto finalidad, ya que Rodrigo, donante del corazón, buscaría que Alex, receptor del órgano, cumpla las tareas que el primero no pudo realizar, lo que resuelve la tensión narrativa entre virtualidad (Rodrigo) y realización (Alex) a favor del segundo.

7. Corporalización de la memoria

> La signification anime la parole comme le monde anime mon corps. (Merleau–Ponty 1960, p. 88)

Cuerpo y memoria son sistemas significantes que interactúan y se conforman recíprocamente, como expresión de las relaciones activas entre sujeto y mundo. Es por ello que las alteraciones dialécticas del mundo se expresan también en las alteraciones corporales, pues este no es ajeno al mundo sino objeto y sujeto del mismo; son «l'exercice de notre corps et de nos sens» los que «nous insèrent dans le monde» (Merleau–Ponty 1960, p. 69). Como se ha dicho con frecuencia[7], nuestro cuerpo, "sistema de sistemas"[8], es nuestra forma de semiotización del mundo. Además, como dicen Schutz y Luckmann, «los límites de mi cuerpo frente un mundo cuyos objetos le ofrecen resistencia, y las funciones rutinarias del cuerpo en el mundo, son la base de lo primero que se toma como "obvio" en el acervo del conocimiento» (2001, p. 111).

En un trabajo anterior hemos dicho que los mundos alterados «se caracterizan por una disrupción capaz de modificar sustancialmente las relaciones sociales, políticas y económicas de convivencia en de-

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7. Para nosotros es cuerpo es la base de nuestra semiotización del mundo; es decir, de la generación de procesos de sentido. Al respecto ver, entre otros, Martin–Juchat (2001); Rosales Cueva (2010); Contreras (2012); Finol (2015). Para Fontanille, por ejemplo, «el cuerpo puede ser definido como el operador de la semiosis» (2008, p. 32).Edéline y Klinkenberg, definen lo que es la semiotización: «Dans son geste élémentaire, l'opération de sémiotisation peut se définir par la formule: sémiotiser c'est (d'abord) segmenter et regrouper. En un seul mot: discriminer» (2018, d3).

8. «Il faut donc reconnaître sous le nom de regard, de main et en général de corps *un système de systèmes* voué à l'inspection d'un monde, capable d'enjamber les distances, de percer l'avenir perceptif, de dessiner dans la platitude inconcevable de l'être des creux et des reliefs, des distances et des écarts, un sens [. . .]» (Merleau Ponty 1960, 66. Cursivas nuestras).

terminadas sociedades; son mundos trascendentemente rotos» (Finol 2019); y que los cuerpos alterados son «aquellos que se apartan abiertamente, por un lado, de los cánones de la proporción, entendida como la relación equilibrada entre las partes y el todo; y, por el otro, de los cánones contemporáneos de la belleza» (*ibidem*). Creemos que estos dos conceptos, a pesar de su generalidad, son aplicables a los dos casos de ficción que hemos mencionado. En efecto, en *La teta asustada* encontramos la alteración profunda de la vida política peruana, como consecuencia de la terrible guerra emprendida por la guerrilla Sendero Luminoso contra las instituciones del Estado, fenómeno del cual los traumas corporales del síndrome de la teta asustada aparecen entre numerosas víctimas de violaciones y torturas. En la serie española *Pulsaciones* el mundo alterado se expresa en el asesinato del periodista, la casi muerte del médico y el impacto que ambas situaciones llevan sus respectivos entornos familiares, pero, principalmente, se expresa en la oscura trama de corrupción y crimen que afecta a más de cuarenta víctimas cuyo sistema inmunológico se implanta en otras personas. Ese mundo alterado que la serie presenta también altera el cuerpo de Alex no solo porque recibe un corazón trasplantado sino también por las memorias de Rodrigo que ese órgano lleva consigo.

Como se ve, tanto en *La teta asustada* como en *Palpitaciones*, la postmemoria es también una historia del cuerpo o, si se prefiere, una corporalización de la memoria, la cual, al ser asumida y vivida como propia, conduce a la postmemoria. Recordemos que, como decía Merleau–Ponty, «Malgré la diversité de ses parties, qui le rend fragile et vulnérable, le corps est capable de se rassembler en un geste qui domine pour un temps leur dispersion et impose son monogramme à tout ce qu'il fait» (1960, p. 68).

8. Conclusiones

Podemos deducir del análisis anterior que la espesura del cuerpo y la densidad de la memoria se articulan en los ejemplos presentados para forjar y resolver tensiones y generar nuevos sentidos en los procesos de semiotización del mundo, pues, en fin de cuentas, se habita la memoria como se habita el cuerpo y uno y otro habitan el mundo. El Sujeto2 al instalarse en las memorias del otro, también semiotiza su mundo

y, de retorno, semiotiza sus propios recuerdos, les da nuevos sentidos, modifica experiencias y re–vive sus memorias. Las acciones de los sujetos resuelven la tensión intencional realizando alguna de las posibilidades virtuales generadas, como en un abanico, por las tensiones y conflictos del mundo.

La definición semiótica de la memoria y la postmemoria nos obliga a buscar su origen en los procesos experienciales, donde cuerpo y mundo interactúan, se redefinen sin cesar y se articulan a acciones y tensiones que provocan transformaciones semióticas recíprocas, sentidos nuevos que dinamizan la cultura, las relaciones sociales, el cuerpo y el mundo.

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The Place of Will in Meaning

On Signification and Intentionality**

Remo Gramigna*

ABSTRACT: In the present paper, an attempt is made to study the concepts of natural sign and given sign from Augustine of Hippo (354–430) to contemporary semiotics. The enquiry is primarily concerned with three issues: 1) to expound and interpret the notions of natural and given signs and to unravel problems of terminology; 2) to discuss the argument of intentionality considered as a criterion by which this division was originally based; 3) to review the contemporary debate within semiotics on the notions of natural and intentional signification.

1. Introduction

Reviving an ancient subject, in this essay I propose a study of the division between "natural" and "given" signs from Augustine of Hippo (354–430) to contemporary semiotics. Although the distinction of natural and intentional meaning in its various formulations is pervasive in the history of philosophy (Chisholm 1952; Rollin 1976) and it represents a milestone in the disciplinary field of semiotics (Deely 2009;

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Ullmann 1973; Todorov 1977), the concepts of natural and given signs have often been misunderstood. The drift of the present paper is, thus, threefold: 1) to unravel the notions of natural and given signs and to explain the basic terminology associated with these concepts; 2) to discuss the argument of intentionality considered as the criterion by which the division of natural/given signs is based; 3) to provide a critical review of the contemporary debate within semiotics on the notions of natural and intentional semiosis[1].

Because the doublet natural/given sign is rooted in the thought of Augustine, I will first discuss the concepts and terminology as found in his works. Moreover, the paper provides a review of the contemporary debate on natural and given meaning with a keener eye to the implications of this division for the theory of signs. In order to do so, I will explore some contemporary interpretations of the distinction of natural and given signs. With this purpose, I will discuss Engels' (1962), Markus' (1957), and Jackson's (1969) interpretations of the issue.

2. Augustine's Definitions of Signs: *Signa Naturalia* and *Signa Data*

The root of the division between "natural signs" (*signa naturalia*) and "given signs" (*signa data*) is spelled out with clarity in the works of Augustine. This distinction is epitomized in the second book of the *De doctrina christiana* (396)[2]. Here Augustine first distinguishes signs (*signa*) and things (*res*). *Signa* are things used in order to signify something and *res* are things that are not employed in order to signify, that simply exist. After laying out the distinction of *signa* and *res*, Augustine provides a definition of sign (*signum*) that became canonical: «Signum est enim res praeter speciem, quam ingerit sensibus, aliud aliquid ex se faciens in cogitationem uenire» («A sign is a thing which causes us to think of something beyond the impression the thing itself makes upon the senses»)[3].

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1. In the present study, I will not discuss the concept of intentionality beyond the semiotic threshold of human agency. For an overview of the debate on intentionality in biosemiotics, see Hoffmeyer 2012; Favareau and Gare 2017.

2. *De doctrina christiana* was composed in two times. Books I–III 25, 36 were written in 396. Books III–IV were penned in 426–7.

3. *Doctr. chr. 2, 1* (eng. trans. Robertson, *On Christian Doctrine*, 34).

The second essential branching concerning signs is the division between *signa naturalia* and *signa data*. Augustine defines *signa naturalia* as follows:

> Naturalia sunt quae sine voluntate atque ullo appetitu significandi praeter se aliquid aliud ex se cognosci faciunt, sicuti est fumus significans ignem. Non enim volens significare id facit, sed rerum expertarum animadversione et notatione cognoscitur ignem subesse, etiam si fumus solus appareat.[4]

By bringing forth the class of *signa naturalia*, Augustine is referring to an existing debate that was a commonplace when he was writing and, for this reason, it could not be entirely dismissed. Although Augustine, in passing, makes reference to the topic of natural signification as a part of the division of signs, the subject falls outside the scope of the inquiry as not directly relevant (*alia quaestio*).

Augustine includes among the genus of *signa naturalia* several examples:

a) the smoke as a sign of fire;
b) the tracks (*vestigia*) of an animal in the environment;
c) the face of an angry or a sad man or any other "movement of the soul" that unwillingly manifest itself through the physiognomics.

It is revealing that Augustine's illustrations are not exclusively confined to the realm of natural events or phenomena, but he also refers to what today goes under the rubric of non–verbal communication. Indeed, Augustine includes among natural signs the expressions of an angry or sad man as involuntary cues of one's emotions (anger or sadness) that are interpreted by an onlooker for whom such cues becomes meaningful. Thus, the examples provided show the reference to an ancient debate on natural semiosis[5].

4. ([Natural signs are] those which, without any desire or intention of signifying, make us aware of something beyond themselves, like smoke which signifies fire. It does this without any will to signify, for even when smoke appears alone, observation and memory of experience with things bring a recognition of an underlying fire); *Doctr. chr*. 2, 2 (eng. trans. Robertson, *On Christian Doctrine*, 34).

5. On the large bibliography available on the tradition of the medics and their view on natural semiosis, see Stough 1969 and Shands and Melzer 1975.

Signa data, the second branching of the division of signs outlined in the *De doctrina christiana*, are defined as follows:

> Data vero signa sunt quae sibi quaeque viventia invicem dant ad demon-strandos quantum possunt motus animi sui vel sensa aut intellecta quaelibet. Nec ulla causa est nobis significandi, id est signi dandi, nisi ad depromen-dum et traiciendum in alterius animum id quod animo gerit qui signum dat. Horum igitur signorum genus, quantum ad homines attinet, considerare atque tractare statuimus, quia et signa divinitus data quae scripturis sanctis continentur per homines nobis indicata sunt qui ea conscripserunt.[6]

Thus, *signa data* are thought of as deliberate and intentionally given signs. Augustine provides numerous examples that illustrate this species of sign. He classifies signs used by men according to the sense to which they belong. In other words, signs are arranged from the standpoint of sensory modality:

Sight. Among visual signs Augustine includes:

— nodding;
— the motions of the hands;
— gestures and the movements of their members by actors and pan-tomimes;
— banners and military ensigns and standards (*vexilla*).
— written words as visual signs of spoken words.

Sound. Among the many signs that pertain to the sense of hearing, Augus-tine lists:

— spoken words;
— the sound of the trumpet, the flute, and the harp.

Smell. Among olfactory signs he includes the following:

— the odor of the ointment with which Jesus' feet were anointed.

Taste.

— The Eucharist.

6. «Given signs are those which living creatures show to one other for the purpose of conveying, in so far as they are able, the emotions of their spirits or something which they have sensed or understood. Nor is there any reason for signifying, or for giving signs, except for bringing forth and transferring to another mind the action of the mind in the person who gives the sign. We propose to consider and to discuss this class of signs in so far as men are concerned with it, for even signs given by God and contained in the Holy Scriptures are of this type also, since they were presented to us by the men who wrote them» (*Doctr. chr*. 2,2 [trans. Robertson, *On Christian Doctrine*, 34–35, slightly modified]).

Touch.

— The reference is to the healing of a woman who touches the hem of Jesus' garment.

Among such a great variety of signs, words have the first place. Indeed, words are thought of as the signs par excellence. In contrast to all the other signs, words are both quantitatively and qualitatively predominant. Not only words are larger in number and widely used as compared to other signs but they also possess a wider semiotic capacity, as it were: «Words have come to be predominant among men for signifying whatever the mind conceives if they wish to communicate it to anyone»[7]. Language is thought of as a system of signs and it is set aside from other signs systems because it can be used to signify and describe all other sign systems. This feature is unique to language. No other sign systems, except for language, can be employed to describe all the other systems of signs. This makes language logically superior to the other systems and, in this respect, more powerful[8].

3. Problems of Terminology: Engels' Interpretation of the Terms
   Signum Naturale / Signum Datum

To J. Engels is due the merit of having established and worked out the clarification of terms involved in Augustine's division of signs. Indeed — at least until Engels' seminal study *La doctrine du signe chez Saint Augustin* (1962) — the division between *signa naturalia* and *signa data* was not been properly understood. Since this branching has been a source of confusion, let us first elucidate Augustine's use of the terms by reviewing Engels' argument.

Unfortunately, there is no equivalent English translation for Augustine's terminology. The first member of Augustine's branching — *signum naturale* — has been generally translated into English as "natural sign", while the second — *signum datum* — has been a hard nut to crack for the translators. Regrettably, the history of such a term is a quite infelicitous chapter in the history of ideas. Indeed, *signum datum*

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7. *Doc. chr*. 2, 3 (eng. trans. Robertson, pp. 35–6).
8. I have treated this subject elsewhere in more details. See Gramigna 2013.

has been generally translated as "conventional sign". Robertson (1958), for instance, in his English translation of Augustine's treatise, used the term "conventional" as opposed to "natural". Likewise, Combès and Farges (1949, p. 238) in the French translation S. Augustin, *Le Magistère Chrétien* translated Augustine's terms according to the opposition natural/conventional. Many other scholars translated Augustine's terms along the same lines (Cenacchi 1985, p. 303). As a result, these studies bring Augustine's division naturalia/data under the larger rubric of natural versus conventional signs.

Yet J. Engels (1962) pointed out that translating Augustine's terminology *signa naturalia* and *signa data* as "natural signs" and "conventional signs" is inaccurate and profoundly misleading. Engels aptly argued that such a translation is a misconception because it conceals the rationale of Augustine's own division of signs. Engels realized that Augustine, with the distinction *naturale/datum*, did not intend to follow the motivated/unmotivated opposition (natural vs conventional), which had become traditional from Plato's *Cratylus* onwards. Instead, it was apparent that Augustine's intention was to determine such opposition in virtue of the presence or absence of intentionality in the emission of signs. Engels suggests "given sign" (*donnés*) as a more appropriate term for translating Augustine's *signum datum*. He correctly interprets Augustine's division of *signa naturalia* and *signa data* as opposition between non–intentional versus intentional signs. I endorse Engels' thesis because it preserves Augustine's original intention. Jackson 1969, Todorov 1977, and Deely 2009 all acquiesce with Engels' conclusion.

4. The Intentionality Argument

In light of the terminological clarification discussed above, we can now proceed with a more detailed discussion of the division. For Augustine, *signa naturalia* are «those which, without any desire or intention of signifying, make us aware of something beyond themselves, like smoke which signifies fire»[9]. Natural signs, thus, signify independently from the will or desire to signify something else (*sine voluntate atque*

9. *Doctr. chr.* 2, 2 (eng. trans. Robertson, *On Christian Doctrine*, 34).

ullo appetitu significandi). In other words, natural signs are "preformed things of physical nature" and belong to «the analogical network of nature. [. . .] They are not made by man, but rather they are said to be discovered» (Leckie 1938, pp. xxx–xxi).

Signa data, on the contrary, are «those which living creatures show to one other for the purpose of conveying, in so far as they are able, the emotions of their spirits or something which they have sensed or understood»[10]. This class of sign is the product of a voluntary operation.

Thus, it is in plain sight that the discriminating factor for discerning the bifurcation of the two kinds of signs is the concept of *voluntas* (intention). This is pivotal for understanding Augustine's division of signs. *Signa naturalia* signify without the intention to signify (*sine voluntate significandi*), thus the will is absent, whereas *signa data* are given intentionally in order to show or express (*ad demostrantum*) the movements of the sign–giver's mind (*motus animi*), what one feels or thinks. This is why Engels argued against the use of the term "conventional signs" and favored the use of "given signs" because the element of intentionality remains concealed in the opposition natural / conventional, which is, instead, the distinctive feature of Augustine's division.

To sum up, the difference between *signa naturalia* and *signa data* in Augustine should be understood as an opposition between willed / not willed signs, and thus the concept of intentionality is of cardinal importance. With good reason, the theory of signs of the *De doctrina christiana* has been called a "volitional theory" (Sirridge 2000). As I pointed out earlier, this distinction was initially misunderstood. The root of this misconception is that the *naturalia / data* division was absorbed in the vexed question of *nomos* and *physis* (convention versus nature). The nominalism versus conventionalism debate does not concern us here, since the position of Augustine does not fit into this dualism. It suffices to say that the distinction between natural and conventional meaning has a long pedigree and that this was the background against which also Augustine's division was assessed.

Some scholars have expressed perplexity towards Augustine's division of signs. Favareau, for instance, pointed out that

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10. *Doctr. chr*. 2, 2 (eng. trans. Robertson, *On Christian Doctrine*, 34–5).

Augustine's distinction raise[s] [sic] as many questions as they propose to answer. And among these many questions are: For whom do such natural signs «lead to knowledge of something else» [...] other than those with «the intention or desire for using them» as such? And must the given signs that «living beings mutually exchange in order to show [...] the feelings of their minds» be deliberately and expressly exchanged — or may they be subconsciously performed and registered? Do animals use signa naturalia or signa data? And in what relations toward each other do these two categories of "natural" and "given" sign relations ontologically stand? Perhaps most importantly of all: Is it "perception" and "awareness" on the part of some agent that gives a sign its representational efficacy — or does the agent merely "apprehend" a relation in the world that is already there, regardless of its apprehension? (Favareau 2008, p. 7)

Indeed, in his treatise Augustine mentions the *naturalia/data* division and then quickly moves on to the real focus of the *De doctrina christiana*, namely, *signa data*. This point is worth pondering. Because Augustine explicitly rules out the subject of natural signification from his treatise, a full assessment regarding *signa naturalia* in Augustine cannot be satisfactorily made. The sources for *signa naturalia* should be found elsewhere, and this would entail a separate study that tracks back the debate Augustine was referring to.

As for the apprehension of signs among animals, it is important to note that throughout Book II of the *De doctrina christiana*, Augustine explicitly refers to the use of signs in animals («a cock who finds food makes a sign with his voice to the hen so that she runs to him. And the dove calls his mate with a cry or is called by her in turn»).[11]

This is an aspect that deserves attention. Despite the fact that among *signa data*, words are the most common and predominant signs, this does not mean that *signa data* are an exclusive byproduct of men. On the contrary, there is abundant evidence that Augustine conceived of *signa data* as signs used among animals other than humans, too. The issue, however, is not treated with precision here, and it shows Augustine's hesitation in taking up an issue that is not directly relevant for his enquiry: «Augustine is uncertain whether or not noises of animals may be classed as deliberate, *signa data*» (Atkinson 1969,

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11. *Doctr. chr.* 2, 2 (eng. trans. Robertson, *On Christian Doctrine*, 36). As already pointed out, however, Augustine rules out a discussion on this subject because it is not immediately relevant for his enquiry. Thus, both men and animals can employ *signa data*.

p. 24). Jackson (1969, p. 13) contends that Augustine's use of terms like *cogitatio and animus* may lead to think that *signa data* have an anthropomorphic connotation, yet the reference to "living creatures" he makes in the definition of this type of sign is general enough to include both men and other animals among the subjects who produce and employ such signs[12].

Moreover, it is important to spell out that the issue of intentionality in the signifying process should be considered from both ends: the sign–giver and the sign–receiver. While *signa naturalia* stress the aspect of volition from the side of the sign–receiver, *signa data* tend to focus on the intentionality from the perspective of the sign–giver. We shall return to this point in our discussion section.

5. The Place of *Voluntas* in Augustine's Theory of Signs

In what follows, we are concerned with three main questions: 1) because the ruling principle underlying the division *naturalia/data* is the concept of *voluntas*, an inquiry about the possible sources of this concept is relevant; 2) to assess whether this is a systematic division or not in Augustine's thought; 3) to ascertain whether this is a distinction of types of signs or of source or origin of signs.

The first node is particularly difficult to fathom. The concept of *voluntas* in Augustine is very complex and the implications of this notion to the idea of intentional signification is only one corner of the issue. Previous studies conducted on Augustine's theory of signs have not identified one extant source that stands out for the division *naturalia/data* but it is clear that there exist many strands of thought that became confluent in Augustine's sign theory and were commingled.

Atkinson (1979) regards Aristotle as a plausible source for Augustine because they share several principles regarding the treatment of words. Like Augustine, Aristotle also regards words as signs or symbols. It is worth mentioning Aristotle's passage of the *De interpretatione*, where he discusses words:

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12. For a treatment of the issue of the place of the signs of animals in Augustine's classification, see Eco 1985. See also Sirridge 1997.

> By a noun we mean a sound significant by convention [...]. The limitation "by convention" was introduced because nothing is by nature a noun or name — it is only so when it becomes a symbol; inarticulate sounds such as those which brutes produce are significant, yet none of these constitute a noun.[13]

Like Augustine, Aristotle conceives of written words as signs of spoken words. Moreover, both concur that words express the "affection of the soul". Lastly, there is an apparent analogy between Augustine's distinction of *signa naturalia* and *signa data* and Aristotle's distinction between natural and conventional meaning (Atkinson 1979, p. 22).

Despite the numerous analogies between the two thinkers, unlike Augustine, Aristotle did not include the concept of the will in his treatment of signs. Nevertheless, there is a good reason to believe that Aristotle should not be dismissed as a source for Augustine (Atkinson 1979, p. 23). And yet, since Aristotle disregarded the notion of will in his theory, the question we seek to answer cannot be satisfactorily determined.

Arguably, there is also a striking analogy between Augustine and Aristotle with regard to the example of facial expression as natural signs. In the pseudo–Aristotelian treatise *Physiognomica*, Aristotle refers to the «doctrines of the semeiotics of human character» and writes:

> Gesture and the varieties of facial expression are interpreted by their affinity to different emotions: if, for instance, when disagreeably affected, a man takes on the look which normally characterizes an angry person, irascibility is signified.[14]

It is also true that gestures, hands movements, and facial expressions played a crucial role in rhetoric, in which Augustine was well–versed. A possible source for Augustine reference to gestures and facial expressions as signs might well be Cicero (Cary 2008). Likewise, the illustration of smoke as a sign of fire also shows that Augustine was particularly cognizant of the Stoic theory of meaning, where this example is recurrent. Although fire is not visible, common experience

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13. *De int.* 2: 16a, 19–29.
14. "Physiognomica", eng. trans. by T. Loveday and E.S. Forster, in *The Works of Aristotle*, VI, 806b, 29–32.

establishes a connection between visible smoke and (unseen) fire. Thus, smoke is taken as a sign of fire not by virtue of an arbitrary determination but because of a common recorded experience among mankind. In other words, such a knowledge — the inference that if there is smoke, then there is fire — is acquired from a preexisting experience that linked one event (smoke) with another (fire). Augustine's example of the smoke as a natural sign of fire, clearly echoes the Stoic "admonitive sign", and he probably shapes the idea of *signum naturale* on the model of the Stoics.

The Stoics had a very complex and sophisticated semiotics. The Stoic theory of meaning identified two classes of beings, namely, the given and the non–given. The Stoics had a threefold division of non–given things: 1) completely non–given; 2) obscure at the time; and 3) obscure by nature (Allen 1935, p. 16). The example of smoke signifying fire — which Augustine reiterates in his own theory — is catalogued among the second class of non–given things and later understood as "admonitive sign".

The Stoics distinguished between the "Indicative sign" and the "Admonitive sign":

> The object of our knowledge we find distinguished as either evident or obscure. That we can know of the things evident is plain, but can we know of the things obscure? Shall this be the case it must be by some sign, by some thing evident, and this sign be either by its own nature a priori and absolutely indicative of that which is obscure, or as one of two appearances formerly remarked by us, in connection and relation one with another, remind us of the other subject of that relation, now accidentally removed from apprehension. Thus, motion would be held to be an indicative sign of the principle of life, and smoke be an admonitive sign of fire, or scar of the wound. (Prentice 1858, p. 10)

The point of interest is that Augustine seems to retain the Stoic idea of the "admonitive sign" and yet he adds to it the factor of volition or intentionality (*voluntas*), which he most likely draws from the field of forensic rhetoric, with which he was acquainted.

To sum up, at present is not possible to identify one particular extant source for Augustine's distinction of *signum naturale/datum* but rather a bundle of possible sources that are combined in a quite original way. As it will be seen, the division of *signa naturalia* and *signa*

data, will be taken up in contemporary semiotics, albeit in a slightly different fashion.

The next point to consider is whether the distinction of natural/given signs is systematic in Augustine's thought. E. Martinez (1976) has argued that such a division is not systematic but pedagogic in its essence and purpose because the distinction is limited to the *De doctrina christiana* and does not recur elsewhere. On closer scrutiny, however, one may argue that the idea of natural signs is present in the *De trinitate*, as Daniels (1976; 1977) poignantly remarked. Moreover, the tenet of the process of signifying understood as an act of giving signs is found both in the *De dialectica* and in the *De magistro*. Despite the fact that the duet natural/given sign is specific to the *De doctrina chirstiana*, there is enough evidence that the principle of the signifying process, and speaking in particular, is couched in terms of "giving signs" also in other works.

The third and last issue to ponder is whether the division of natural/given signs is a division that has to do with the origin of signs or whether it shows that these are two kinds of signs. B.E. Rollin (1976) tackled this pivotal issue. He unraveled this dilemma and concluded that

> the distinction between natural and conventional meaning was primarily intended to mark two sources of meaning [...]. What I also wish to claim is that a systematic confusion [...] grew out of this aspect of the distinction. What was meant to mark a difference in origin came to be taken as a marking a difference in kind. (Rollin 1976, p. 93)

This point is of paramount importance and it is applicable to the division we have been discussing up to now. The matrix of the division of signs in Augustine rests upon the idea that signs have different sources, and as such, can be differentiated into natural and given.

As we shall see in what follows, the "systematic confusion" that Rollin referred to is reflected in the debate on natural and conventional semiosis in the field of semiotics.

6. The Contemporary Debate on Natural and Given Signs in Semiotics

A glance at the literature on the history of semiotics testifies to the same unhappy association discussed above, namely to conceive the

division of natural/given signs in terms of natural and conventional meaning. Winfried Nöth, for instance, in his *Handbook of Semiotics* writes, «Augustine opposed natural and conventional signs» (Nöth 1990, p. 107). The literature on semiotics that uses a similar distinction is abundant (Clark 1990, p. 23; Danesi 2014, p. 16; Jensen 1995, p.18; Pelc 1980).

Moreover, the division between natural signs and given signs is often taken as an opposition between natural and conventional meaning, leading to the branching of semiotics into two distinct areas: a "semiotics of signification", which studies unintentional semiosis, and a "semiotics of communication", which focuses on intentional semiosis[15]. To give a flavour of these two trends, in the first front (the semiotics of signification) we can include, first of all, R. Barthes (1964), who advocates for the inclusion of all sign systems as object of study of semiology, and J. Ruesch (1972) who extends the study of communication also to its nonintentional forms. In turn, those who fall into the "semiotics of communication" trend, rule out nonintentional forms of expression from the object of semiotics. The most well–known advocates of this view are Buyssens (1943), Martinet (1961), Prieto (1966; 1975), and Segre (1969).

The original division natural/given signs gave rise to multifarious vocabularies that most often do not overlap. In certain contexts, the idea of naturalness was assessed against the background of artificiality, yielding to the opposition of "natural" versus "artificial" scenarios in which signs are created and used. Schaff (1962, p. 157), for instance, distinguishes between "natural signs" and "artificial signs", also called "proper signs". Among the class of natural signs Schaff includes indices and symptoms. Schaff follows Martinak (1901), who had distinguished between "real signs" and "finalistic signs".

Along the same lines, Jakobson distinguished signs according to their mode of production and singled out signs produced ad hoc and things used as signs: «the signs ad hoc produced by some part of the human body either directly or through the medium of special instruments» and «a semiotic display of ready made objects» (Jakobson 1971 [1968], p. 702).

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15. For a good overview on these two general trends, see Ponzio 1976.

7. Some Contemporary Interpretations of Augustine's Division: R.A. Markus

There has been an interesting debate between Markus and Jackson on the accurate interpretation of Augustine's distinction between *signa naturalia/data*. This specifically concerns Markus's reading of Augustine's natural/given signs.

Augustine's definition of *signum* is generally regarded as involving a triadic relation. Markus (1957, pp. 71–2) has argued that the three terms of this relation are: 1) the object or *significatum*; 2) the thing itself; and 3) the subject. On the basis of this triadic structure of the sign, Markus initially interprets the distinction of *signa naturalia* and *signa data* «according to whether the relation of dependence is between the sign and the object, or between the sign and the subject» (Markus 1957, p. 72). His triadic model of the sign is thus modelled in dyads in order to account for the distinction. Viewed from this theoretical perspective, *signa naturalia* entail a dyadic relation between sign and object, whereas *signa data* presuppose a two–term relation between sign and subject. Moreover, drawing on Peirce's semiotic terminology, Markus used the term "symptom" to refer to *signa naturalia* and "symbol" for *signa data*. This is how Markus describes the issue:

> I shall call this type of sign [signa naturalia] "symptoms". A "symptom" [...] is anything which "goes together with" that of which it is taken to be the sign. It may be a "symptom" in the conventional sense, a "portent", or "evidence" in a more general sense; it might depend on its significatum as an effect on its cause, as for instance, smoke depends on fire; it might be a part of a total condition as a rash is of measles; or it might give rise to its significatum, as a southwesterly wind may both bring and signify rain. (Markus 1957, p. 73)

A "symbol" in his [Peirce's] terminology denotes roughly the same sort of sign as Augustine's *signa data*: «A symbol is a sign which refers to an object that it denotes by virtue of a law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object» (Markus 1957, p. 82).

We must express some reservations regarding Markus's interpretation of Augustine's distinction. The first point to be addressed is the claim that a symbol for Peirce amounts to a relation between sign and interpreter. In point of fact, both types of sign (index and symbol)

have to do with the relation between the sign to its object. Thus, the separation of symptom and symbol «according to whether the relation of dependence is between the sign and the object, or between the sign and the subject» (Markus 1957, p. 72) does not hold, or at least does not overlap with Peirce's conception.

More importantly, however, Markus proposes, as the basis of the division, a ratio that does not overlap with Augustine's. Markus's interpretation reduces Augustine's natural signs to an argument of causality or real connection between signs and object. We express reservations towards such a parallel. As shown earlier, the crux of the matter is different — namely, whether the source of the sign is natural and involuntary or voluntary. Finally, Markus claims that «what we are dealing with is the distinction between the two fundamentally different types of sign» (Markus 1956, p. 74). This view is far from being accurate since what we are dealing with in Augustine's division is not a matter or kind but an explication of the source of signs. Rollin underlined this important aspect: «The natural–conventional meaning dualism is a mode of classifying the origins of meanings. To argue from a difference in origin to a difference in kind is mistaken» (Rollin 1976, p. 94).

8. Jackson's Interpretation: Significance and Occurrence of Signs

Jackson does not comment upon Markus's terminology, although he is critical in relation to Markus's interpretation of *signa data*, that is, Markus's view that, in the case of *signa data*, «the thing or event which is the sign is the product of the sign–maker's activity and owes its significance entirely to this» (Markus 1957, p.73). Jackson takes issues with Markus and claims that Markus stretched Augustine's position to far by arguing that «*signa data* depend upon the will of the sign–giver for their significance» (Jackson 1967, p. 14).

Jackson puts forward an important clarification, although not widely known, in regard to the discussion of Augustine's division of *signa naturalia* and *signa data*. He singles out two separate aspects that should be taken into account when discussing such a division. These two aspects are the "occurrence" and the "significance" of a sign. Jackson has specified that, when Augustine speaks of *signa data*, he has solely in mind the occurrence of a sign: «For all that Augustine says here

is that *signa data* depend upon the will of the sign–giver for their occurrence, not for their meaning» (Jackson 1967, p. 14). Thus, at least in the first part of his treatise, Augustine is concerned primarily with the occurrence of signs, which therefore occur willingly (*signa data*) or unwillingly (*signa naturalia*).

For an explication of the additional aspect Jackson singles out, namely, the "significance" of a sign, we must turn to a further section of the *De doctrina christiana*:

> Augustine says that certain letters and sounds mean one thing to the Latins, another to the Greeks, not because of nature but because each society has its own agreement and consent as to their significance (*non natura, sed placito et consensione significandi*, II.xxiv.37, 10–12 and ff.). Thus, in *De doctrina*, at least, Augustine holds that an important class of signs (letters and sounds) has significance by convention. (Jackson 1967, p. 14)

Jackson, thus, concludes that the concept of intentionality in respect to meaning making is twofold: «Augustine speaks of will with respect to both occurrence and the significance of signs» (Jackson 1967, p. 15).

I endorse ninety per cent of Jackson's interpretation. I must, however, express some criticism towards his argument with regard to natural signs. As far as Jackson's argument goes, Augustine refers to the will in respect to both *signa data* and *signa naturalia* and with respect to both occurrence and significance of signs. *Signa data* occur willingly and their significance is established by a covenant in which consent and agreement are essential. The explication of *signa naturalia*, however, leaves something to be desired. It is true that these signs occur naturally, that is, without will from the side of the sign–giver. However, I am not completely sure that we can talk about significance by nature in respect to *signa naturalia*, as Jackson seems to imply (Jackson 1967, p. 15). I would rather argue that, although *signa naturalia* occur without will from the part of the sign–giver, for their significance we would need a covenant and a willed consent about the meaning of such signs.

9. Conclusions

A recapitulation of the main highlights of the problem of intention in meaning includes the following points:

— it is misleading to equate the Augustinian division of signs into *naturalia* and *data* to the doublet "natural" and "conventional signs". Although the translation of *signa naturalia* in "natural signs" did not cause problems, using "conventional signs" for *signa data* obfuscates the distinction;

— for Augustine, *signa naturalia* are involuntary (occur without intention of signifying) and *signa data* are deliberate, are given, they occur because a living being wills that they do so;

— the division of *signa naturalia* and *signa data* is a systematic division;

— such a distinction has to do with the source of signs rather than with the types of signs;

— semiotics has employed similar distinctions of signs producing a multifarious terminology that most often does not overlap and sometimes has distorted the original meaning that such a division was meant to display.

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The Double Excess of Intentionality and the Politics of Performative in Judith Butler

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TITOLO ITALIANO: Il doppio eccesso dell'intenzionalità e la politica del performativo in Judith Butler

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on Judith Butler's analysis of linguistic violence in *Excitable Speech* (1997), which connects the American debate on linguistic violence with the theoretical question of the intentionality of utterance. The connection is particularly thought–provoking, for it gives rise to the relation between intentionality and embodiment. The idea of linguistic violence, indeed, presupposes the power of an utterance to act on a body, to injure a body exercising a force on it. The article shows how, in Butler's thought, this connection between intentionality and embodiment entails a reformulation of the idea of intentionality within a horizon in which the subject reacquires a bodily dimension and a relation with alterity.

KEYWORDS: Hate Speech; Speech Act; Intentionality Constitution; Resignification.

1. Introduction

In this paper, I will dwell on Judith Butler's analysis of linguistic violence in *Excitable Speech* (1997). In this work, Butler connects the American debate on linguistic violence, inaugurated by M. Matsuda's influential book *Words that wound*, with the theoretical question of the intentionality of utterance. This connection is particularly

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thought–provoking because what emerges from it is the relation be-
tween intentionality and embodiment. Indeed, the idea of linguistic
violence presupposes the power of utterance to act on a body, to
injure a body exercising a force on it.

I will show how, in Butler's though, this connection between in-
tentionality and embodiment entails the exigency of a reformulation
of the idea of intentionality. In this sense, Butler supports Derrida's
critic of the traditional idea of intentionality and his attempt to over-
come the link between intentionality and the idea of a self–founding,
self–aware and disembodied subject, which masters its act and its
language and that, starting from itself, constitutes and gives sense to
reality by its intentional acts.

In Butler's perspective, the idea of intentionality should be resigni-
fied in a horizon in which the subject reacquires a bodily dimension
and a relation with alterity.

2. The Illocutionary Model of Hate Speech

In *Excitable Speech*, Butler analyses the illocutionary model of hate
speech as a model according to which the addressee is constituted
as a subordinated subject who is not allowed to renegotiate and to
discuss its subordinated position. In her analysis of hate speech, Butler
makes extensive use of Austin's theory of speech acts. Her first aim is
to understand if Austin considers hate speech an illocutionary or an
perlocutionary speech act.

As stated by Sbisà (2013, p. 32), in Austin the differentiation between
the perlocutionary and the illocutionary aspect of speech acts is based
on the distinction between nature and culture. In *How to Do Things
with Words* to Austin argues:

> The illocutionary act "takes effect" in certain ways, as distinguished from
> producing consequences in the sense of bringing about states of affairs in
> the "normal" way, i.e. changes in the natural course of events. (1962, p. 117)

Instead of hinging on the respect of conventional conditions, as in the
case of illocution, the performative effect of a perlocutionary act is linked
to the possibility of producing extralinguistic consequences that have to

do with the feelings, the thoughts or the actions of the addressee and that are not necessarily determined by the direct and deliberate will of the utterer. These extralinguistic consequences take place in the act of the utterance, therefore they are connected with the locutionary and the illocutionary aspects of speech acts. For this reason, the perlocutionary aspect of speech acts is not detached from what Austin calls "total linguistic situation" that is a set of rules and conventional conditions that a speech act has to respect to be effective (Sbisà 2013, p. 47).

According to Austin, insults are perlocutionary speech acts and, as Butler highlights, he uses the case of the insult as an example to clarify that the consequences of a speech act are not always intentional (Butler 1997, p. 17). In Austin's discourse, as Butler suggests, although hate speech takes place in the total linguistic situation, it does not depend on the conventions that the speech act fulfils at the moment of the utterance. Hence, in Austin's discourse, hate speech is "individual" and "occasional", to the extent that is impossible to foresee with certainty its consequences (Austin 1962, p. 101). Using and, at the same time, betraying Austin's theory, Butler analyses the consequences of the illocutionary model of hate speech.

As Butler observes:

> According to this illocutionary model, hate speech constitutes its addressee at the moment of its utterance; it does not describe an injury or produce one as a consequence; it is, in the very speaking of such speech, the performance of the injury itself, where the injury is understood as social subordination. (Butler 1997, p. 18)

Hate speech, considered as an illocutionary speech act, does not simply act on the addressee, but rather it constitutes the addressee at the moment of the utterance.

Though Butler uses here the phenomenological notion of "constitution", she distances herself from some of the fundamental principles of this philosophical tradition.

In phenomenology, the concept of constitution is deeply linked with the concept of intentionality. Sokolowsky in *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution*, observes that, according to Husserl (above all in the *Logical Investigations*), every intentional act operates a double constitution: «in every objectivating act, a meaning is constituted and an object is constituted as meant» (1970, p. 54). In other words, inten-

tional objectivating acts constitute both a meaning (*Bedeutung*) and a referent. In Husserl's discourse, constitution is «the manner in which an object is formed and given its particular structure and attributes by certain a–priori acts of consciousness» (Moran and Cohen 2012, p. 70). Therefore, constitution, in Husserl's thought, does not create but rather structures the object through an operation in which the object acquires a meaning. In the phenomenological theory, the concept of constitution is profoundly connected with the idea of an intentional consciousness. Indeed, constitution «is an achievement of intentional consciousness. Husserl thinks of constitution not so much as an active constructing (*Aufbau*) by the subject and more as a particular manner in which meaning is disclosed» (*ibidem*, p. 71).

In an essay titled *Performative Act and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory*, Butler writes:

> Though phenomenology sometimes appears to assume the existence of a choosing and constituting agent prior to language (who poses as the sole source of its constituting acts), there is also a more radical use of the doctrine of constitution that takes the social agent as an object rather than the subject of constitutive acts. (Butler 1988, p. 519)

Unquestionably, this "more radical use of the doctrine of constitution" is influenced by the "constitution of subject" formulated by Foucault, who remains one of the most important reference points in Butler's thought. In Foucault, subject is not the constituent source of reality, but rather it is constituted by processes of constitution which have to do both with practices of subjection and with practices of emancipation (cf. Foucault 1994, p. 210).

The main difference between Butler's idea of constitution and the phenomenological one is the fact that according to Butler this operation does not take place in the instantaneity of a present. On the contrary, for Butler, these processes of constitution take place through linguistic practices that, because of their ritual–conventional character, exceeds the presence of the intentional consciousness.

This search of a wider temporal dimension is the main reason for the displacement of hate speech from the field of perlocution to the field of illocution.

This displacement, as I will try to show, has significant consequences on the question of intentionality and on its relation to con-

stitution. Indeed, in the phenomenological thought, the connection between intentionality and constitution takes place in the presence of consciousness in which the intentional act occurs.

As Deely points out in *Intentionality and Semiotics*: «The Husserlian intentionality begins with the consciousness as being directed toward or related to its objects» (2007, p. 28). The displacement of the constitutive dimension of hate speech beyond the presence of consciousness inevitably entails a resignification of the notion of intentionality. The illocutionary model of hate speech provokes this displacement of the constitutive dimension of hate speech beyond the present in which hate speech is uttered. Indeed, according to Austin, on the one hand, illocutionary acts do what they say in the moment of that saying, but, on the other hand, their force and their effectiveness is due to the iteration of conventional, ritual or ceremonial formulas whose institution precedes and exceeds the present in which an utterance is uttered.

3. Intentionality and Iterability

When Butler states that iterability is the main feature of illocutionary speech acts, she explicitly refers to Derrida's *Signature, Event, Context*, published in 1972 (cf. Butler 1997, p. 145). In this significant essay, Derrida inaugurates a critical analysis of the theory of speech acts that will continue with his 1988 work *Limited Inc.* that is an answer to Searle's critic of his interpretation of Austin (cf. *Reiterating the Difference. A Reply to Derrida*, pp. 198–208).

In *Signature, Event, Context*, Derrida calls into question the relation of speech acts with the presence of the utterer, of the addressee and of the context. In this work, Derrida disengages speech acts from the present of utterance and connects them with the idea of writing. If a speech act is considered as writing, it becomes a part of a productive machine that works beyond the presence of the utterer, of the addressee and of the context. The way in which this writing machine works is the iteration of the utterance. What Derrida calls "writing" can be defined as the possibility of its iterability which does not need the presence of the author of the utterance. Written signs, according to Derrida, are characterised by their force of breaking with their

context. In other words, they are characterised by their "essential drifting" (1967, p. 316) that exposes them to the possibility of being re–written otherwise. This idea of writing, in Derrida's thought, is not referred to the written sign in a narrow sense, but it is referred to every operation that has to do with the construction of a text.

As Moati suggests in *Derrida/Searle. Deconstruction and Ordinary Language* (2014, p. 20), Searle, in his critic of Derrida's interpretation of Austin, asserts that since Derrida disregards Austin's distinction between perlocutionary and illocutionary speech acts, he does not give relevance to the conventional force of illocution (cf. also Sbisà 2013, p. 47). As a matter of fact, Derrida highlights the conventional aspect of the illocutionary force of speech acts, showing that the idea of "convention" is necessarily linked to the idea of repetition and iteration.

This connection of speech acts with their iterability has significant repercussions on the question of intentionality both in Derrida's and in Butler's thought because it questions the coincidence between the source of intention and what intentionally the utterer intends to say. What Derrida calls *voloir–dire*, which translates Husserl's *Bedeutung*, exceeds the presence of the utterer. This means that intentionality is no longer situated in the presence of an intentional consciousness that completely masters its *voloir–dire*.

Derrida's connection of speech acts with their iterability does not question the concept of intentionality, but rather its telos (1988, p. 56). In the phenomenological concept of intentionality, intentions are not always fulfilled. Nevertheless, fulfillment is the telos of every intention. An intention is realised only when it is fulfilled by the presence of the intentioned object (cf. Derrida 1988, p. 121). The iterability of speech acts questions this relation between intentionality and its telos and, with it, all the values such as consciousness, presence, original intention, etc. that the phenomenological thought connects with the idea of intentionality.

As stated by Derrida, intention «is divided and deported in advance, by its iterability, towards others, removed (*écartée*) in advance from itself» (*ibidem*, p. 56). For Derrida, this division is not provisional as in the phenomenological idea of intentionality. This situation in which intentionality is divided and deported becomes in Derrida the condition of possibility of intentionality. Intentionality is, in Derrida's thought, the infinite and not provisional deferral of fulfilment.

The idea of writing as a linguistic machine has often been considered as a total displacement of the question of intentionality on the side of the addressee (cf. Eco 1990, p. 27 et seq.). As a matter of fact, as Culler highlights, what emerges from the connection of the illocutionary force of speech acts with their iterability is not the absolute independence of the utterance from the utterer's intention and from the context of reference. Rather, what emerges from this connection is the possibility to "graft" the utterance in another context and the impossibility to circumscribe the context and to control it in its totality (cf. Culler 1992, p. 109 et seq.). In Derrida's thought, in Culler's words: «Meaning is context–bound, but context is boundless» (1983, p. 123).

This possibility of recontextualization, of "grafting", is fundamental in Butler's analysis of hate speech.

4. Ritual Aspects of Hate Speech

In *Excitable Speech*, Butler starts from Derrida's connection between the illocutionary force of speech acts and their iterability, but her originality consists in an attempt to displace the discourse from writing to body.

In her afterword to *The Scandal of Speaking Body* by Fellman, Butler says that Derrida, highlighting the connection between speech acts and writing, obliterates the relation between speech acts and their organic and bodily dimension. In other words, according to Butler, Derrida moves to the background the relation of speech acts with the physical act of utterance. If, on the contrary, the speech act is reconnected with its bodily dimension, according to Butler, it «loses its claim to sovereignty in a different way than it does when recast as writing» (2003, p. 114).

In *Performative Act and Gender Constitution*, Butler defines body as «an intentionally organized materiality», that «is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical conventions» (1988, p. 551).

This passage from intentional consciousness to a body intended as an intentionally organised materiality, is important and crucial because it displaces the focus on an embodied subject that is not only constituent but also, and first of all, constituted (cf. Butler 1988, p. 519).

The effect of hate speech, as Butler claims, is the constitution of this embodied subject as a subordinated subject. The idea of this constitution implies, as mentioned above, the displacement of hate speech from the field of perlocution to the field of illocution.

Whereas perlocution produces effects in a consequent future, illocution produces instantaneous effects. But, as Butler points out, these instantaneous effects depend on the repetition of a ritual–conventional formula.

Illocutionary acts presuppose, as Butler observes, an authority conferred by an institution or by a tradition which enables someone to repeat a ritual scene which involves not only verbal but also extra–verbal elements such as the fact that the utterance should occur in a specific place, that the utterer has to be dressed in a particular way, etc.

If hate speech is effective, according to Butler, the moment of the institution of the conventional/ritual formula and its authorization seems to be coming from an immemorial time which does not have a place in history.

This impossibility of situating this moment of institution, in which hate speech receives its force and the possibility to be effective, makes hate speech appear as not–instituted and hence not–conventional. This means that to be effective, hate speech has to look like a perlocution, in other words, it has to pretend to be independent of the institution of the convention and of the authorization of the utterance.

This perlocutionary semblance of hate speech is, according to Butler, the primary condition of its force and effectiveness. That the hate speech seems to be independent from the institution of a convention entails that its effect seems to depend on a particular situation of the addressee, on his/her psychological attitudes, for example on his/her particular sensitivity, or on the occasional relation between the utterer and the addressee (cf. Sbisà 2013, p. 47). This perlocutionary façade of hate speech consists in the fact that its effects seem to depend on how the addressee is, that is to say, on the "being" of the addressee. In the illusory connection with the "being" of the addressee, hate speech occults its constitutive character, that is to say, the fact that in the moment of the utterance hate speech constitutes the being of the addressee because it is «bringing into being what it names» (Butler 1997, p. 66).

For Austin, the non–conventionality of perlocution is connected with its irreversibility. This illusory irreversibility of hate speech is

what prevents the addressee from reacting and renegotiating the subordinated position that the hate speech constitutes.

To effectively constitute a subordinated subject, hate speech has to exercise what Butler calls "sovereignty effect", that is to say, it should be able to exclude every possibility of renegotiating the subordinating relation. For this purpose, this "effect of sovereignty" consists in the occultation of the constitutive power of hate speech.

If this constitutive power is occulted, the subordinating relation appears as a natural state of fact, as a situation that is neither changeable nor negotiable.

Analysing the illocutionary model of hate speech, Butler foregrounds, firstly, its constitutive aspect, that is to say, the fact that hate speech constitutes a subordinated subject and, secondly, shows that its force and effectiveness depends on the dissimulation of this constitutive aspect. Butler describes this dissimulation as the illusory loss of context, the illusory loss of spatial and temporal borders that delimits the effectiveness of hate speech.

Butler writes:

> To be injured by speech is to suffer a loss of context, that is, not to know where you are. [. . .] The capacity to circumscribe the situation of the speech act is jeopardized at the moment of injurious address. To be addressed injuriously is not only to be open to an unknown future, but not to know the time and place of injury, and to suffer the disorientation of one's situation as the effect of such speech. (Butler 1997, pp. 3–4)

Highlighting its illocutionary aspect, Butler recontextualizes hate speech. This operation of recontextualization consists in connecting the present in which hate speech is uttered both with the ritual/conventional situation that it iterates and with the moment in which the authority of uttering the hate speech is conferred.

Butler writes:

> Who speaks when convention speaks? In what time does convention speak? In some sense, it is an inherited set of voices, an echo of others who speak as the "I". (*Ibidem*, p. 25)

If hate speech is considered as illocutionary, the identification of the source of its intentionality becomes very difficult because of the rit-

ual/conventional character of illocution which overcomes the present of the consciousness.

Butler agrees with Derrida when he considers the conventional character of illocution as what disengages intentionality from the presence of consciousness (cf. *ibidem*, p. 56).

Analysing the illocutionary model of hate speech, Butler focuses her attention both on its conventional/ritual character and on its link with authority. Both these aspects displace intentionality beyond the intentional consciousness. Indeed, in the illocutionary model of hate speech, the uttering subject turns out to be an impersonal, collective social and political subject. Therefore, the intentionality of hate speech, which precedes both the utterer and the addressee, on the one hand, constitutes the utterer as who has the authority to utter the hate speech and, on the other hand, constitutes the addressee as a subordinated subject. This means that uttering the hate speech, the utterer does a double linguistic work. Firstly, he works for itself, producing a consequent and deferred effect in the addressee. Secondly, he works for a social order that is reaffirmed and reproduced through a hidden process of repetition, which ritualises a power relation, thus freezing it in a time without history and institutive moments. This function of language, that Rossi–Landi calls "social reproduction" (cf. 2005, p. 97 et seq.), is crucial in Butler's analysis of hate speech because is the moment in which hate speech works beyond the control both of the utterer and of the addressee.

5. Recontextualization and Resignification

Butler's analysis of the conditions of effectiveness of hate speech questions what Derrida indicated as the two fundamental principles of the phenomenological idea of intentionality, i.e. the fact that intentionality has as source the presence of consciousness, and the telos of fulfilment.

In the illocutionary model of hate speech, as mentioned above, the source of intentionality is displaced beyond the presence of the utterer because of the ritual/conventional character of illocution. Hate speech works through the dissimulation of its constitutive effect. This dissimulation is what produces, in the case of hate speech, this semblance of

fulfilment, which hinders every possibility to reinterpret the subordinating relation that hate speech establishes. This effect of fulfilment of hate speech is one of the main conditions of its effectiveness.

Butler writes:

> Even if hate speech works to constitute a subject through discursive means, is that constitution necessarily final and effective? Is there a possibility of disrupting and subverting the effects produced by such speech, a faultline exposed that leads to the undoing of this process of discursive constitution? What kind of power is attributed to speech such that speech is figured as having the power to constitute the subject with such success? (Butler 1997, p. 19)

The problem of the possibility of resistance to linguistic violence is essential in Butler's thought. The constitution which hate speech operates is not final and effective because what it intentions is not an object, but a living body. Therefore, in Butler's analysis, body is both what is vulnerable to linguistic violence, and the possibility to resist to it.

Hate speech inscribes a body in a subordinated social position through an act of nomination that only apparently is objective and descriptive and in which only apparently the conditions of effectiveness are individual and occasional.

Thus, the act of calling an injurious name is, as stated by Butler, «not descriptive but inaugurative» (Butler 1997, p. 34) and its reiterative operation has the effect of sedimenting its "positionality" over time.

In this sense, hate speech, because of its ritual–conventional structure, turns out to be political act whose effectiveness is linked to the dissimulation of this political character.

By the act of the attribution of an injurious name, Butler argues, what is situated in a system of relations is not a disembodied consciousness but rather a living body. If hate speech is effective it involves body: hate speech immobilises a body materially depriving it of the freedom of movement, and, at the same time depriving it of the freedom of speech, that is to say, of the possibility to question the subordinating relation that hate speech institutes or confirms.

Because of its illocutionary and performative power, hate speech is an action of a body on another body. Indeed it, according to illocutionary model, is not only the prefiguration of violence but rather a violent act, because it can injure a body immobilising it in a subordinate position. For this reason, when we say that the words wound, we

are not using a metaphorical expression. The hate speech effectively, and not metaphorically, constitutes an injured subject, constitutes a body which can have access only to some locations, that have to move only in a certain way, that has to wear only certain clothes.

The body which hate speech constitutes is forced to perform itself by the institution of an habitus. But, the moment of this institution is erased. That's why this performance does not appear as such. Rather, it appears as the only "natural" possibility of being of that subject. Is this the sense in which Butler says that body is constituted by speech acts as an "intentionally organized materiality", that «is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical conventions» (Buttler 1988, p. 551).

The relation between language and body is a question which is extremely relevant in the whole theoretical work of Butler, who, on the one hand, highlights language as constitutive of body and, on the other hand, never stops reaffirming the impossibility to reduce body to its linguistic construction.

In *Senses of Subject* Butler observes:

> For my purposes, I think it must be possible to claim that the body is not known or identifiable apart from the linguistic coordinates that establish the boundaries of the body— without thereby claiming that the body is nothing other than the language by which it is known [...]
> The body escapes its linguistic grasp, but so, too, does it escape the subsequent effort to determine ontologically that very escape. The very description of the extralinguistic body allegorizes the problem of the chiasmic relation between language and body and so fails to supply the distinction it seeks to articulate. (Butler 2015, pp. 20–1)

In *Bodies that Matter*, Butler defines this process of linguistic constitution of body as a process of materialization:

> The process of that sedimentation or what we might call materialization will be a kind of citationality, the acquisition of being through the citing of power, a citing that establishes an originary complicity with power in the formation of the "I". (Butler 1993, p. 15)

Whereas the first cornerstone of intentionality, i. e. its connection with the presence of consciousness, is questioned by the conventional/ritual character of illocution, the second cornerstone of

intentionality, i.e. the telos of fulfilment, is questioned by a chiasmic relation between language and body. In this relation, language materialises body, but, at the same time, body exceeds language and escapes to every attempt of totalization. Butler writes:

> That the speech act is a bodily act does not mean that the body is fully present in its speech. The relationship between speech and the body is that of a chiasmus. Speech is bodily, but the body exceeds the speech it occasions; and speech remains irreducible to the bodily means of its enunciation. (1997, pp. 155–6)

In line with Foucault, Butler connects this excedence of body with the unavoidable relation between subjection and subjectivation. Attributing an injurious name, hate speech recognises a social group and produces subjects and the possibility of their agency (1993, p. 15). Butler suggests that the injurious name is also the name that recognises and, for this reason, it can be resignified, grafted in another context and thus used as an instrument of resistance to the subordinating relation.

The possibility of resistance consists in an unauthorised use of language, in a process of appropriation and resignification of the words of power. This process of resignification is not simply a "free interpretation". It is not the interpretative act of an "external" and disembodied consciousness. On the contrary, this process of resignification is embodied in that body which is materialised by the processes of sedimentation of speech acts. When the subordinated subject uses the injurious word to nominate itself, he/she pronounces the word of dominant discourse with his/her own voice, starting from the body itself that the injurious name has materialised.

The subject who acts in this process of resignification, that is the possibility of resistance to linguistic violence, is an embodied subjectivity, which does not speak starting from itself, which does not "invent" its own language, which does not self–found itself. On the contrary, this resistant embodied subjectivity is vulnerable to language and exposed to recognition. It speaks through the other's language, starting from a body constituted by the other, it uses the words of the dominant discourse, but displacing and recontextualising them. In this act of resignification, the performative turns out to be not only reproduction and reiteration of a past but, rather, the production of the possibility of a radically different future (Butler 1997, p. 160).

This dislocation of the words of the dominant discourse is not a reappropriation of language, is not a moment in which the subject takes back the control of intentionality and reaffirms its absolute freedom of interpretation. Differently, this dislocation is an operation which works starting from the fact that intentionality exceeds both consciousness and fulfilment. Butler describes this operation of re-contextualisation as opened and unforeseeable. And it is rather this impossibility of control and ultimate fulfilment of this operation of recontextualization that becomes in Butler the possibility of political discourse: «the political promise of performative, one that positions the performative at the center of a politics of hegemony, one that offers an unanticipated political future for deconstructive thinking» (Butler 1997, p. 61).

Exceeding both consciousness and fulfilment, intentionality is thus disengaged from the theory of knowledge and from the theory of representation. It becomes, as Butler says speaking of Sartre's thought, «essential structure of the being of human life» (1987, p. 102), that is to say, the structure of desire and imagination which are, for Butler, the conditions of possibility of the politics of sense.

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Le intenzioni della memoria

Ipotesi per una teleologia semiotica da *Das Ghetto* a *A Film Unfinished*

Bruno Surace[*]

ABSTRACT: In 1942 a troupe of German servicemen shot a film in the ghetto of Varsavia which was subsequently found in an archive only in the 1960s. For over 30 years historians used this film as a base for their studies of life in the ghetto. In 1998, however, another reel was discovered containing elements which had been excluded from the first, and which made it clear that the situations shown in *Das Ghetto* were for the most fruit of a mis–en–scene, staged by the Nazis for purposes of propaganda. Historians had placed their trust in a text without knowing its context. In 2010, Israeli director Yael Hersonski produced *A Film Unfinished*, for the first time including in the same film *Das Ghetto* and the revealing 1998 reel, and editing everything together with testimonies of survivors and extracts from diaries and documents belonging to those who had lived in the ghetto. The result is a film of rare complexity, where numerous layers of intentionality are entwined. The aim of this essay is to propose an analysis of the dialectic of intentions inscribed in *A Film Unfinished* and how this relates to *Das Ghetto*. Parallel to the narrative and formal inquiry, it will be necessary to re–examine the paradigm of "textual autonomy" and define the way in which semiotics can interface with historical research through intentional analysis.

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1. *A Film Unfinished*

Nel 1942 una troupe di militari tedeschi fu assoldata per girare un documentario sulla vita nel ghetto di Varsavia, istituito nel 1940 e luogo di prigionia per migliaia di ebrei destinati da lì a essere deportati, in buona parte al *Vernichtungslager* — campo di annientamento, ossia di eliminazione immediata — di Treblinka. Il film era probabilmente pensato, come pressoché tutto il cinema del Terzo Reich sotto l'egida di Joseph Goebbels[1], a scopo propagandistico. La pellicola, mai montata, trabocca di rappresentazioni delle presunte contraddizioni e infamie degli ebrei all'interno del Ghetto, divisi in benestanti dediti alla vita più lussuosa e in poveri, ignorati dalla loro stessa gente anche quando ormai cadaveri nelle strade. Si tratta, in altre parole, del progetto di un vero e proprio *mockumentary ante litteram*, basato su una falsificazione programmatica della realtà interna al ghetto.

Le *intentiones* inscritte nel film erano per l'epoca abbastanza anomale[2].

La storia del girato non è delle più semplici. Una bobina di 60 minuti venne ritrovata in un archivio della Germania Est intorno agli anni '60, fu etichettata semplicemente come *Das Ghetto*, e divenne subito prezioso materiale per gli storici nonostante la sua sostanziale incompiutezza (mancava di colonna sonora e di accreditamenti iniziali e finali, cioè di ogni peritesto), forse dovuta alla liquidazione del

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1. Sebbene sia stato il contemporaneo regime fascista a porre la massima attenzione sul cinema come strumento di propaganda (si pensi alla nota locuzione mussoliniana "un'arma poderosissima", per approfondimenti cf. Manetti 2012), l'importanza delle immagini filmate era ben nota anche ai nazisti, come dimostrano film come *Triumph des Willens* (Leni Riefenstahl 1935) o *Der ewige Jude* (Fritz Hippler, capo sezione cinematografica del Ministero della Propaganda 1940). L'ingerenza governativa nella produzione culturale e cinematografica era massima, com'è tipico nei totalitarismi. Per un'analisi approfondita della propaganda cinematografica nazista cf. Welch 1983 (poi rivisto nel 2001). Tuttavia il tipo di film di propaganda di cui stiamo trattando non è stato mai oggetto di studio specifico.

2. Si adopera qui il lemma latino in accordo con il concetto di *intentio* così come formulato da Eco, su cui si focalizzerà la trattazione. La propaganda nazista si era fino ad allora mossa su altre direzioni, e non aveva dovuto enfatizzare la miseria morale dell'ebraismo mostrando determinati contrasti; il film in questione segna dunque un punto di giuntura, che in sede della abietta estetica perseguita dai nazisti portava però a una impasse, giacché per enfatizzare il contrasto gli operatori erano anche obbligati a riprendere il volto della fame, delle malattie e della morte ingenerate dal nazismo.

ghetto[3]. Tuttavia nel 1998 venne scoperto un ulteriore rullo che rivelò gli inquietanti retroscena dietro al primo reperto, a quasi 40 anni di distanza. In esso si vedono chiaramente i membri della troupe nazista manipolare le situazioni oggetto di ripresa, ma si assiste anche a una sorta di backstage con diversi outtake, i quali dimostrano la totale artificiosità del girato e le condizioni di coazione cui erano sottoposti gli "attori", probabilmente speranzosi in una qualche forma di salvezza se avessero collaborato operosamente.

È a partire da questo ritrovamento che prende le mosse *A Film Unfinished* (in ebraico *Shtikat Haarchion*, [שתיקת ה'רכיון] "archivio silenzioso"), diretto dalla regista israeliana Yael Hersonski nel 2010 e basato sulla risemantizzazione di *Das Ghetto* resa possibile dalla scoperta delle scene tagliate. Il risultato è un film di rara complessità, ove numerosi piani ermeneutici s'intersecano dispiegando molteplici letture e implicando una serie di problematiche semiotiche, riassumibili in un vorticoso dialogo fra istanze intenzionali, il quale necessita di essere esplorato.

2. *Das Ghetto*

Fino al 1942 la propaganda antiebraica si sviluppava su programmi narrativi consolidati: gli ebrei erano una razza dannosa e andavano, per imperativo morale, epurati:

3. *Das Ghetto* non è l'unico esempio di politica dell'inganno perpetrata dai nazisti attraverso il cinema. Un caso particolarmente rilevante è rappresentato dal film *Theresienstadt. Ein Dokumentarfilm aus dem jüdischen Siedlungsgebiet* (Kurt Gerron, sotto la supervisione di Hans Günther e Karl Rahm 1944). Il film racconta la vita all'interno di Theresienstadt (città limitrofa a Praga), noto anche come ghetto di Terezin (un vero e proprio campo di concentramento), in maniera del tutto manipolata, rappresentando il luogo come una sorta di ghetto–paradiso idilliaco, ove i prigionieri vivevano spensierati e con ogni comodità. L'idea del film avvenne in seguito a una reale messinscena organizzata per fronteggiare la visita nel campo di alcuni membri della Croce Rossa Internazionale e del governo danese. L'artificio ebbe successo, anche perché tutte le presenze "ingombranti" nel campo (i prigionieri visibilmente spossati) erano state fatte deportare preventivamente, e da questo scaturì l'idea di realizzare un film con una simile "sceneggiatura", ove Terezin sembrasse un «regalo di Hitler agli ebrei». Kurt Gerron, il regista, girò il film pensando di ottenere in premio la salvezza, ma trovò invece la morte ad Auschwitz. Per approfondimenti, significativo è Adler 2017 (in tedesco Adler 1955, poi prima ed. in inglese 1960). A Terezin è anche dedicato *Le dernier des injustes*, film documentario di Claude Lanzmann del 2013 che recupera un'intervista del 1975 al decano del Judenrat del ghetto Benjamin Murmelstein.

Soprattutto il cinema veicola un'immagine dell'ebreo fortemente stereoti-
pata. Tre opere paradigmatiche escono in sala nel 1940: *Jud Süss* (*Süss l'ebreo*),
di Veit Harlan, *Die Rothschilds* (*I Rothschild*), di Erich Waschneck e *Der ewige
Jude* (*L'ebreo errante*), di Fritz Hippler.[4]

Nel maggio 1942 a Varsavia si verifica un inevitabile slittamento
di questa prospettiva, per più ragioni. Gli ebrei erano imprigionati
nei ghetti e la guerra stava prendendo una piega non favorevole per
la Germania (si stagliava all'orizzonte la battaglia di Stalingrado, ove
la Wehrmacht cadde rovinosamente contro l'Unione Sovietica). Lo
sterminio nel mentre era di fatto già ben avviato sin dalla conferenza
di Wannsee, 20 gennaio 1942, con la *Endlösung der Judenfrage*, e pertan-
to la teoria degli ebrei come causa di tutti i mali si faceva cedevole
di fronte a una guerra che continuava a imperversare nonostante la
loro programmatica eliminazione. Le intenzioni di *Das Ghetto* vanno
inquadrate in questo preciso contesto storico. Il film avrebbe segnato
uno scarto essenziale rispetto a quelli precedenti di propaganda. Il pro-
blema era di ordine semantico, e consisteva nel modificare i contenuti
del testo a partire da una svolta nel programma narrativo canonico,
in modo da mantenere intatta l'efficacia della propaganda antisemita.
Lo scopo pragmatico restava quindi immutato, ma bisognava marcare
un punto tendenzialmente trasceso: l'ignominia interna alla razza
giudea, incapace nemmeno di provare pietà per il suo popolo. Tale
messaggio doveva passare e gli operatori dovevano certamente se-
guire dei modelli (Hippler forse quello principale, sia come temi sia
come tipologia di sequenze), e nel contempo far fronte a una realtà
imprevista per la sua negatività assoluta (la fame, i cadaveri, la mise-
ria) che andava coniugata con gli stereotipi dell'ebreo primitivo (ma
vivo), ricco, amorale, sporco. In potenza dunque, ossia virtualmente,
il complesso delle riprese propone uno scarto dell'intenzione propa-

4. La seguente voce è tratta dalla sezione "La propaganda antiebraica", www.
ghettinazisti.it, Fondazione Museo della Shoah, ultima consultazione 7 giugno 2017. Nella
voce si fa riferimento al film di Hippler come modello di una certa narrazione propagan-
dastica, constatazione confermata da molte fonti. Girato all'interno dei ghetti di Łódź e
Varsavia il film ad esempio metaforizza gli ebrei europei con immagini come una marea di
topi portatori di malattie che invade il continente, veicolando lo stereotipo dell'ebreo ratto.
L'ultimo in particolare, uno pseudo–documentario girato nei ghetti di Łódź e Varsavia,
rappresenta gli ebrei europei attraverso una serie d'immagini metaforiche, come la marea
di topi portatori di malattie che invade il continente, mettendone in rilievo, con piglio
"naturalistico" la presunta natura meschina e subumana.

gandistica rispetto al canone, come avverrà due anni dopo per il caso Theresienstadt. La retorica andava virando per mantenere intatta la perlocuzione.

Laura Fontana, responsabile dell'Italia Mémorial de la Shoah, sostiene (2014) che probabilmente le scene più drammatiche erano destinate a essere espunte dal montaggio finale. Tuttavia tale ipotesi pare fragile, poiché non avrebbe avuto senso allora girarle con tale perizia (operazione che, ad esempio, per il caso analogo su Theresienstadt, non fu fatta). Pare invece che *Das Ghetto* possa essere letto come un "anello di congiunzione", tra la propaganda in stile *Ewige Jude*, secondo la quale l'ebreo era un danno da estirpare, e quella in stile Theresienstadt, secondo la quale l'ebreo, pur se arginato, era trattato dignitosamente anche sotto il nazismo. In questo contesto *Das Ghetto* è cioè il caso sintetico di una dialettica intenzionale costretta a calibrarsi in conseguenza degli eventi della guerra. Semioticamente il problema che emerge è come fare dialogare le intentiones di un testo come questo, incompiuto, con quelle dei suoi autori. Un problema che si amplifica con la sua risemantizzazione in *A Film Unfinished*.

3. Avviluppamenti intenzionali

A Film Unfinished sovrappone l'enunciazione secondo diversi piani. In esso si ritrovano le immagini di *Das Ghetto* così come era stato pensato dall'intellighenzia nazista, contestualizzate però alla luce del ritrovamento del rullo "rivelatore", ma anche una serie di altri dispositivi formali utili a definire l'intenzione primaria del film, che non è unicamente documentale, ma anche e soprattutto interpretativa. Hersonski non dispone il girato linearmente, bensì lo monta e lo interpola con una serie di altri contenuti, allo scopo di dare una lettura aumentata dell'evento, che comunichi anche una riflessione sull'idea stessa di ricerca storica e delle sue fonti e, dal punto di vista semiotico, sulla rilevanza delle intentiones nel testo. Le stesse immagini, se montate diversamente, parlano diversamente.

Districarsi nella congerie di narrazioni incrociate all'interno del film non è operazione facile, e il metodo migliore per procedere, almeno inizialmente, è paratattico, definendo gli strati autoriali e narrativi che lo compongono, e che restituiscono secondo il film «molti strati di

realtà»[5]. L'idea è di procedure nell'individuazione delle presupposizioni intenzionali, convinti di questa direzione: «L'analisi narrativa offre una formulazione sintattica della topica dei mezzi e dei fini, attribuendole un ruolo più generale nell'analisi dei discorsi dell'azione entro i quali reintroduce un orientamento teleologico» (Bertrand 2002, p. 184).

La base di partenza è *Das Ghetto*, il cui girato va imputato alla troupe tedesca di cui non rimangono nomi, se non quello dell'operatore Willy Wist. Esso nel film costituisce una delle voci narranti attraverso l'attore Rüdiger Vogler, che lo impersona leggendone — anzi recitandone — la testimonianza. Wist è nel film la concrezione dell'intera troupe tedesca, di cui alcuni membri tuttavia compaiono per pochi secondi in qualche frame; il suo "grado di autorialità" verrà discusso in seguito, date le sue reiterate dichiarazioni di non essere stato altro che uno strumento, cui ogni libertà (ivi da intendersi innanzitutto come espressiva) era negata, e le cui azioni era conseguenti agli ordini di un gerarca soprannominato "Goldpheasant" (letteralmente: "fagiano d'oro") e allocato al Pałac Brühla, quartiere generale dei nazisti a Varsavia capeggiati da Auerswald. Il secondo livello di narrazione è rappresentato da Adam Czerniaków, capo dello *Judenrat* del Ghetto[6], controversa istituzione concepita come consiglio intermediario fra i nazisti e gli ebrei del ghetto, imposto dal Governatorato Generale. La voce, recitata da Janusz Hamerszmit, aggiunge uno strato intenzionale ed è tratta da una serie di diari personali che testimoniano di un movimento interno al ghetto desideroso di perpetuarne l'umanità residua, in misura del tutto clandestina, al di là delle angherie dei tedeschi. Va infatti precisato come all'interno dei ghetti non esistessero fonti di informazione (nonostante, come testimoniato anche dal film, ci fossero rumors di cosa accadesse nei lager, comprese le gassificazioni)[7]

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5. Questa e le successive citazioni dirette del film sono traduzione nostra dall'inglese.

6. Gli Judenräte erano diffusi in tutti i ghetti a partire da una circolare emanata da Reinhard Heydrich nel 1939. Il loro ruolo era estremamente delicato poiché i membri, tendenzialmente anziani, dovevano nel contempo sincerarsi che gli ordini delle SS fossero eseguiti e cercare quanto più possibile di preservare le vite del ghetto. Il più controverso presidente di uno Judenrat fu Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski, del ghetto polacco di Łódź, noto per il suo ligio asservimento ai nazisti e per questo figura storica incerta, le cui azioni da un lato sono lette come atti collaborazionisti, e dall'altro come disperati tentativi di salvare almeno una parte della popolazione. Morì ad Auschwitz con la sua famiglia nell'estate del 1944. Lo stesso Murmelstein costituisce una figura controversa. Sullo Judenrat cf. Trunk 1972.

7. Il problema della mancanza di informazione interna ai ghetti non è di poco conto, e una certa ossessione documentaristica interna, oltre ad assolvere primariamente al bisogno

se non la *Gazeta Zydowska*, bollettino ufficiale controllato dai tedeschi. La cronaca reale che abbiamo a disposizione è quindi dovuta al rischioso sforzo dei deportati di *lasciarsi* attraverso memorialistiche segrete, che nel caso del Ghetto di Varsavia furono programmaticamente raccolte — e a ogni piè sospinto incoraggiate — dal fondatore dell'Oneg Shabbat Emanuel Ringelblum (recitato da Eliezer Niborski), fucilato agli inizi del 1943. Nell'Archivio Ringelblum rimane conservata una storia scritta su cartacce e carte annonarie, pezzi di giornale e così via, che restituisce il progetto iniziale del suo fondatore, riportato dal film di Hersonski con queste parole: «Un ritratto multistrato... il ritratto finale»[8]. Di questo ritratto rimangono testimonianze che ci dicono molto sulla prospettiva degli ebrei prigionieri circa le riprese di *Das Ghetto*, come quella di Mary Berg:

> Giunta a scuola, ho trovato tutti gli insegnanti e gli alunni alle finestre. Nella sede della nostra amministrazione, di fronte a noi, si notava un'agitazione insolita. Anche qui veniva girato il film dei tedeschi. Riflettori potenti erano stati installati in vari punti dell'immobile e lunghi fili e cavi elettrici si attorcigliavano sui pavimenti. Cineprese su rotaie viaggiavano in ogni direzione con i loro operatori, circondate da una folla di funzionari e da visitatori che si trovavano per caso negli uffici. Ho visto un tedesco raggruppare diverse persone intorno al presidente Czerniaków e ai principali funzionari della comunità. Più tardi, non so per quale motivo, tutti sono stati ammucchiati in una sala e hanno avuto l'ordine di inginocchiarsi. Naturalmente i cadaveri abbandonati nelle strade non verranno fotografati e tanto meno i bambini nudi, moribondi di fame.
>
> I tedeschi hanno certamente deciso di fare uno straordinario sforzo di propaganda. Recentemente il tono dei loro bollettini di guerra sembra mutato; parlano di «ritirate strategiche» da varie località russe. Quelli che sanno leggere tra le righe sono molto sollevati. (Berg 1991, pp. 157–158)[9]

di rimarcare la propria umanità sistematicamente smantellata, può essere letta a un secondo grado come una controrisposta alla mancanza di informazioni dall'esterno. Su tale tema anche la finzione si è spesa, come nel romanzo *Jakob de Lügner* (Jurek Beker 1969), poi tradotto in film prima nel 1975 da Frank Beyer e poi nel 1999 da Peter Kassovitz. La storia è quella dell'ebreo Jakob che all'interno di un ghetto polacco si fa portatore di speranza attraverso la diffusione della notizia dell'arrivo delle truppe sovietiche liberatrici, mentendo sul fatto di avere una radio nascosta e di essere costantemente informato sullo sviluppo della questione.

8. Nel merito cfr. ad esempio Costazza 2005.

9. Mary Berg, sopravvissuta al ghetto, aveva quando scriveva (lei data queste righe "8 maggio 1942"), sui 18 anni. Il diario è di immediatezza, quindi con imprecisioni sia nelle osservazioni che nelle valutazioni. Qui la valutazione "naturalmente i cadaveri..." appare inesatta, per chi conosce il film (che lei ovviamente non conosceva).

Czerniaków si suicidò nel 1942, in seguito all'ordine di consegna di tutti i bambini del ghetto, che furono comunque prelevati e deportati assieme al pedagogista Janusz Korczac cui Andrzej Wajda dedica un film nel 1990 attingendo alcune delle immagini, come Hersonski, da *Das Ghetto*[10].

Un terzo livello è quello di Hanna Avrutzki, Luba Gewisser, Jurek Plonski, Aliza Vitis–Shomron e Shula Zeder, superstiti del ghetto e ora protagonisti, ma pure in qualche misura autori, di *A Film Unfinished*, ripresi nell'atto di guardare le stesse immagini cui è esposto lo spettatore e commentarle con i propri ricordi, smentirle o confermarle, rifiutarsi di guardarle, gioire per aver ritrovato la forza di piangere — nel vortice metafilmico di cui è imbevuto, obbligatoriamente, l'intero film. L'ultimo livello è quello della Hersonski stessa, che monta il film e ne racconta le vicende tramite il commento di Rona Kenan.

4. Intenzioni trasversali

La sintassi autoriale riportata comporta una seria riflessione sulle istanze intenzionali che reggono il testo filmico. Ricapitolando, verticalmente la grammatica autoriale è la seguente:

— Yael Hersonski, "dirige" un film che
— è basato sul lavoro di un troupe, incarnata del cameraman Willy Wist che
— è stato assoldato da una serie di superiori nazisti, in primis il cosiddetto "Goldpheasant", che
— si basano su una serie di programmi narrativi, emblematizzati dalla politica comunicativa di Joseph Goebbels tesa a dimostrare la liceità del progetto sterminazionista, che
— incarna l'ideologia nazista, autore simbolico finale di *Das Ghetto*.

Ma anche sezionando il film trasversalmente è possibile individuare delle istanze quantomeno meta–autoriali. I superstiti contribuiscono

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10. «Per esempio, quando alcuni nazisti compiono nel ghetto le riprese, Wajda fa uno stacco e ripropone nella loro forma originaria le stesse immagini. Esse [...] interagiscono totalmente con quelle della fiction nel fare da sfondo al frustrante operato del dottore [...]. Lo spettatore è costretto anche lui a confrontarsi in maniera diretta con la realtà del ghetto» (Gaetani 2006, pp. 185–6).

spontaneamente alla creazione di contenuto, risemantizzano le immagini sia caricandole di valenze emotive che enfatizzandone il portato fortemente revisionista. Particolarmente indicativa in questo senso la scena in cui una di esse, di fronte alla messinscena di un finto funerale ebraico che doveva sembrare lussuoso a dimostrazione dell'archetipica opulenza semitica, esclama che non è usanza ebraica quella di seppellire i propri cari come mostrato dalle immagini[11]. È evidente dunque che l'intento propagandistico optò, in forza di una maggiore intelligibilità della rappresentazione revisionista, sulla messinscena di un rito funebre stereotipizzato.

Ma pure gli ebrei stessi ripresi nel ghetto, consapevoli della ripresa, non solo attorializzano *Das Ghetto* ma in qualche modo lo autorializzano, ne sanciscono un'intenzione — e cioè una volontà di significazione — diametralmente opposta a quella della committenza: dal loro lato vi è la speranza che la collaborazione sia sanzionata con la salvezza, dall'altro vi è il mistificatore progetto dei nazisti. Si tratta qui di un'istanza meta–autoriale in cui si rintraccia un'intenzionalità. Ricordiamo ancora una volta che un'ulteriore autorialità va tenuta di conto, e cioè quella della memorialistica di Czerniaków e di alcuni altri prigionieri del ghetto la cui storia, attraverso diari o simili, compare in prima persona nel film, come Chaim Aron Kaplan e Reuven Ben–Shem (entrambi recitati da Alexander Senderovich), Abraham Lewin e Hersh Wasser (recitati da Mendy Cahan), Jonas Turkow (rec. da Gera Sandler), Rokhl Auerbakh (rec. da Chava Alberstein). Va però puntualizzato che Czerniaków è senz'altro un autore volontario e intenzionale, «un attore che recita se stesso», come si dice nel film, mentre l'intenzionalità degli ebrei ripresi in massa nelle principali strade di Varsavia come Leszno è tutta da dimostrare, e si rivolge a un orizzonte semioetico particolarmente delicato. L'ipotesi che costoro da "attori" diventino autori, parzialmente corroborata dalle numerose interpellazioni — sguardi in camera — presenti nel girato (parzialmente poiché in ogni caso la situazione doveva apparire quantomeno curiosa), può essere ad esempio calibrata con le notazioni di Cordesse che, come riportato da Berta, sostiene quanto segue:

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11. Per approfondimenti sulla ritualità funebre ebraica cfr. Reif, Lehnardt e Bar–Levav 2014.

> L'autonomia del personaggio divenuto autore è tale che il lettore, in mancanza di indicazioni, può incorrere in un corto–circuito comunicativo: ovvero può attribuire al romanziere ipodiegetico il testo stesso che sta leggendo. (Berta 2006, p. 56)

Trattare gli ebrei rinchiusi nel ghetto come dei personaggi e come dei meta–autori, nonostante sia lecito in sede analitica, richiede delle cautele che qui ci riserbiamo di mantenere, e anche la tesi di una loro intenzionalità attoriale–autoriale va contestualizzata. Essi erano costretti alla ripresa, che pertanto fu un atto violento.

A Film Unfinished è dunque, al di là delle ultime precisazioni, un testo soggetto a una Gestalt intenzionale, ove la summa autoriale travalica le singole parti che la compongono. Per mettere ordine nell'intrico è necessario innanzitutto definire con più precisione cosa si intende per intenzionalità del/nel testo. Una buona definizione operativa è quella di "volontà di significazione", che la semiotica tende a definire come è noto secondo la tripartizione echiana delle istanze dell'autore, dell'opera e del lettore. Nonostante la disciplina spesso si sia spesa, in misura quasi assiomatica (si pensi al dogma del "fuor dal testo non v'è salvezza"), nel rivendicare il principio di autonomia del testo, ci pare che casi come *A Film Unfinished* rivelino invece la necessità di riconsiderare la questione come una complessa negoziazione fra le tre istanze. Non è possibile sostenere un'interpretazione del testo in questione a partire unicamente dall'intentio operis, e anzi va sottolineato come sia stata proprio l'autonomia del testo a fornire, fino al ritrovamento del rullo con gli outtake, un'ermeneutica storica piuttosto fuorviante. Non è possibile leggere il film di Hersonski senza prendere atto delle pretese di significazione che sono innestate nei suoi sottotesti, e con un ragionamento induttivo si potrebbe avanzare la seguente ipotesi: ogni testo, contenendo esso stesso una più o meno marcata componente metatestuale, è innanzitutto una forma di negoziazione di testi precedenti e nello specifico delle loro intenzioni, una ri–aspettualizzazione. Così Hersonski ribalta le intenzioni del rullo originale facendolo significare con una luce opposta, rivelandone gli orrori: il testo poi, in "autonomia", parla in vece di tutti gli autori che hanno contribuito a scriverlo.

5. Il documentario interpretante

Ciò nondimeno è comunque il testo infine a dire l'ultima parola, a parlare con intenzione propria, e nuovamente *A Film Unfinished* lo dimostra chiaramente, se si legge a partire dal suo cuore pulsante, ovvero l'ideologia nazista: l'intenzionalità autoriale è inscritta nel testo, configurando «i processi di cooperazione tra l'autore e il suo destinatario» (Eco 1992). Ogni stratificazione autoriale comporta uno strato intenzionale aggiuntivo, che dialoga in modalità semi–autonoma con gli altri. La committenza simbolica, cioè il nazismo, ordina un film propagandistico nel ghetto di Varsavia avendo in mente un risultato, che è decodificato da Goebbels (significante in carne della comunicazione nazista) che è a sua volta decodificato dai gerarchi in loco, che è decodificato dall'operatore Wist, la cui mano rintraccia tutte le intentiones che lo precedono, ma pure aggiunge qualcosa, anche se minimo, di suo al testo. Egli pretende, forse con intento autoassolutorio, di essere letto dal suo interrogatore (recitato da Alexander Beyer) come il Serafino Gubbio di Pirandello, operatore cinematografico che "finii d'esser Gubbio" per diventare mano. Tuttavia pure ammette di intuire il progetto della committenza, così come fanno numerosi ebrei nel ghetto, di cui scrive Czerniaków con amara ironia riferendone come di "star" o "professionisti" con diversi gradi di "qualità fotogeniche":

5.V.1942 [...] La troupe cinematografica continua a fare foto. Povertà estrema e lusso (i bar). [...] In città continuano a girare voci allarmanti sulla deportazione. [...] 15.V.1942 – + 14°C. La mattina in Comunità. In casa alle 8,30 attendo la troupe. Ho chiesto che vengano assunti un uomo e una donna che poseranno per le foto. Sono arrivati alle 8,45 e hanno girato fino alle 12,30. Hanno messo sulla porta una targhetta con non so quale scritta. Hanno portato in casa due donne e un «primo amoroso». Inoltre un vecchio ebreo. Hanno girato una scena.
In città continuano le voci sull'espulsione. [...] Nel pomeriggio, la troupe ha girato nella camera da letto dei vicini di Zabłudowski. Hanno fatto venire una donna che si è truccata davanti allo specchio. A casa mia la troupe era entusiasta di una statua di Confucio e della scultura di Ostrzega *Maternità*. [...] Durante le riprese in casa mia hanno acchiappato per strada un vecchio ebreo con la barbetta a punta. È rimasto da me per qualche ora, ma il suo aspetto fotogenico non è stato sfruttato. Mi immagino cosa sarà successo quando, tornato a casa, avrà tentato di spiegare a sua moglie che non aveva guadagnato perché, per tre ore, aveva fatto la star. Chissà, se ti rincontrerò

mai, collega di lavoro! Forse, tutt'e due abbiamo scelto il lavoro sbagliato. In ogni caso, quando guarderà al cinema qualche scena, si dirà con sarcasmo: «Come se non lo sapessi fare anch'io». (Czerniaków 1989, pp. 328–329)

Hersonski, pur rivoltando l'intero costrutto di *Das Ghetto*, non può che comunque avere a che fare con il suo sedimentato intenzionale, prenderne atto. Se non lo facesse, semplicemente il suo film non avrebbe senso: «Senza intenzionalità i "fatti segnici" non possono essere riscattati al senso» (Basso 2002, p. 224). Il film si pone come intenzione quella di rilevare e rivelare l'abominevole ipocrisia nel rullo iniziale, la sua intenzione primaria, quella di farsi testo dal forte potere pragmatico e perlocutivo. Il documentario si fa interpretante nella più peirciana delle maniere, «un'altra rappresentazione riferita allo stesso oggetto» (Eco 1975, p. 101), intrinsecamente votato alla semiosi illimitata.

Dunque la regista non solo adopera il montaggio per rivelare l'inganno di *Das Ghetto*, e implicitamente quello della finzione filmica e del documentario — e del documento — di per se stesso, ma anche si asserve di una moltitudine di ausili stilistici. Vi è innanzitutto l'utilizzo dell'audio, che contrasta il girato originale di *Das Ghetto*, muto. *A Film Unfinished* vanta la presenza di tre componenti sonore: la voce degli attori già citati e del commento, una colonna sonora, e il crepitio quasi costante del proiettore cinematografico. Su questi ultimi due elementi vale la pena di soffermarsi. Entrambi si fondono con le immagini in modo organico a tal punto da costituire un significante tutt'uno[12]. La colonna sonora composta dall'israeliano Ishai Adar è fatta di toni cupi, e presenta una particolare analogia con il *Theme from Schindler's List* composto da John Williams per il film del 1994 di Steven Spielberg. Non è facile reperire una partitura del tema di Ishai Adar ma se si ascoltano il motivo principale di Williams e quello di *A Film Unfinished* si noterà la marcata conformità, salvo il viraggio dissonante della seconda. Data la vicinanza tematica dei film, e la fama mondiale di quello di Spielberg, è possibile postulare una relazione intenzionale fra le due colonne sonore,

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12. Nel merito ci si riferisce alla teoria di Andrew Goodwin, che nonostante sia elaborata su un tema sensibilmente diverso (il videoclip musicale), ci pare particolarmente calzante. Egli sostiene che «the sound–image fusion is sometimes so great that the two signifiers are actually one» (Goodwin 1992, p. 58).

e pare — nonostante la possibilità di accusa di sovrinterpretazione[13] — che la svolta dissonante in Adar possa essere letta come un tentativo di distaccarsi dall'universo raccontato da Spielberg. Questi infatti, nonostante la tragicità degli eventi, conclude il suo film con la scena a colori degli ebrei sopravvissuti che posano una pietra a testa sulla tomba di Oskar Schindler, mentre Hersonski pone alla fine il racconto del suicidio di Czerniaków, e associa con una similitudine visiva la "fine degli ebrei" del ghetto con la ricollocazione delle pellicole nel loro archivio (peraltro in b/n, dopo un breve passaggio a colori poco prima del finale).

Affiancata alla soundtrack come si è accennato la pellicola manifesta la sua presenza materica durante tutto il film. Il suono del proiettore man mano che il film avanza si fa sempre meno percettibile, ma rimane presente, a ribadire la natura innanzitutto testuale della memoria. Ciò è ribadito da un uso insistito di enunciazioni enunciate. Il film inizia e si conclude con il maneggiamento stesso della pellicola che lo spettatore sta per visionare; la visione è inscritta metatestualmente in un quadro ove è possibile vedere più volte il proiettore; un sistema metaspettatoriale (i superstiti) fa da contraltare a chi guarda il film creando un ulteriore cortocircuito.

Figure 1. Dispositivi metatestuali: il proiettore e la superstite.

13. Si precisa l'accreditamento nei titoli di coda del film dei Steven Spielberg Film & Video archives.

Pertanto nuovamente si ribadisce come la memoria sia un processo di costruzione, e come i testi debbano essere decodificati alla luce delle loro intenzioni, e non come veritieri di per se stessi. L'ipermediazione (Bolter e Grusin 1999) è anche nell'uso massivo di ralenti e fermi immagine, con ulteriori marche enunciative su alcuni dettagli illuminati (tendenzialmente le immagini dei cameraman fra gli ebrei). E ancora vi è l'intermittenza semantica mirata a enfatizzare l'intento di misrappresentazione nazista. *A Film Unfinished* è montato intenzionalmente anche quando rispetta il (non)montaggio originale, capace secondo la regista di "dire l'indicibile", specie nella prima parte del film, che in una sorta di climax ascendente contrappone le riprese di ebrei in condizioni disumane (le case diroccate e i cumuli di feci in fermo immagine, i bambini malnutriti e i cadaveri...) con immagini di ebrei facoltosi o ridenti, che partecipano a cene di gala e si allietano con spettacoli teatrali, ove ralenti e suono enfatizzano le condizioni del pubblico costretto a ridere fragorosamente per ore e ore di fronte alla messinscena preparata ad arte dai nazisti[14].

Figure 2. Gli operatori fra la folla, illuminati.

A questo montaggio / non–montaggio Hersonski aggiunge e interpola il nuovo rullo, mostrando ad esempio come l'episodio dei disordini in Smocza fosse stato premeditato, con presenza di cameraman fra la folla, prima riunita lì e poi dispersa a suon di spari per aria, o esibendo in sequenza i vari take di una delle tante scene che ponevano nella stessa inquadratura, con un ottimo senso della costruzione plastica dello spazio profilmico, ebrei ricchi ed ebrei poveri.

14. In uno di questi spettacoli suonò Ruth Zandberg, piangendo poiché sua madre, l'artista yiddish Zusha Zandberg, era appena morta di tifo.

Figure 3. Una benestante e una mendicante, entrambe ebree (due frame dalla stessa inquadratura, panoramica verticale).

Si pensi alla scena del negozio di alimentari ove si vede entrare una benestante signora totalmente noncurante dei due bimbi mendicanti che osservano affamati il cibo esposto (scena di cui esistono molti take, con angolazioni e punti di vista diversi).

Figure 4. Quattro take della stessa scena.

6. Conclusioni

Film come *Das Ghetto* prima e *A Film Unfinished* poi, ma pure come *Theresienstadt*, inquadrano l'importanza di trattare il testo documentale con un'analisi intenzionale, che ne sappia mettere in luce non solo il funzionamento interno. Gli storici che hanno basato le loro deduzioni su *Das Ghetto* hanno, per così dire, aderito con troppo zelo al paradigma interpretativo dell'autonomia del testo, ritenendo vere le immagini documentali[15]. È vero da un lato che il principio della cooperazione interpretativa, quello per il quale un testo «esige dal suo destinatario di riempire gli spazi del non–detto» poiché «è un sistema di istruzioni» (Magli 2004, p. 36), è sacrosanto. Tuttavia i pattern che esso consente di rilevare non rispondono dell'intenzione che sta dietro al documento, del perché il documento *documenti*. Dunque si necessita, e si è provato a dimostrarlo con questo saggio, in primis di adottare un approccio semiotico capace di restituire la struttura formale del documento o del documentario come costrutto, quindi come interpretazione del mondo non necessariamente veritiera, e in seguito che questo, almeno per quanto concerne l'apporto della semiotica alla ricerca storica, possa essere scandagliato con un'analisi intenzionale, mediante un'apertura all'intentio auctoris (e cioè al contesto discorsivo), che in ultima istanza affiora nell'intertestualità. Una teleologia testuale per la quale la semiotica è più che equipaggiata.

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Fighting without an Opponent

An Analysis of Intentionality in *Shotokan kata*

Bianca Terracciano[*]

ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is exploring how the *kata* of Shotokan karate constitute an embodied intentionality. *Kata*, a traditional way of training in karate for more than a century, consists in fighting without the presence of a real opponent. The article enquires about the origin of its meaning and the way in which its intentionality is expressed. *Kata* can be considered a narrative text that tells the story of a fight while mimicking it in such a way that every pre–established technique bears a specific meaning. *Kata* involve time and space because they reflect a predetermined set of sequential techniques that realize the intentionality and meaningfulness of a karateka's practice. During the practice of *kata*, the karateka's bodily attitude, both sensible and sentient, is expressed through fine–tuning aimed at establishing a causal relationship with an external, imaginary being, so that intentionality takes on the reflexive knowledge of the body. Intentionality affects form and strength, gestures and postures, incarnating a combative logic behind each of these elements. It is a sort of order of consciousness regarding mind and body, entailing active participation and involvement. It is a reflexive and discursive consciousness that requires knowledge and interiorization of the techniques that are embodied by the karateka and memorized in his/her mind. When performing *kata*, the karateka masters the consequences of the techniques because he/she appears as the intentional agent of the action that makes the ideal fighting something that can be accepted and understood or acknowledged. The paper points out that the *kata*'s intentionality concerns both creation of meaning by the observer — who can reconstruct the fighting between two opponents — and the original purposes of the master that has designed the scheme

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of techniques; moreover, it implies the possibility of recognizing that surplus of sense which legitimizes belonging to a certain culture.

KEYWORDS: Body; Culture; Intentionality; Intersubjectivity; Karate; Space.

1. Imaginary Fighting as a Text

There is an art that expresses the deep nature of a certain culture but it is practiced beyond its boundaries, both geographic and linguistic, social and symbolic. Its name is karate and is a Japanese martial art, born in Okinawa due to the banishing of weapons that was enforced twice, the first time during the realm of King Hashi of the Shō dynasty (1372–1439), the second around 1580 by the Shimazu, military governors of the Satsuma clan from Kyushu (Funakoshi 1988, pp. 18–9). During these two dominions it was necessary to think about "empty–hand" defense and Okinawan people started to practice a peculiar form of fighting derived from Chinese *kenpō*, arrived on the island thanks to the frequent exchanges with the continent. The precursors of karate, *Okinawa–te* and *Tō–de*, originated from these exchanges. The art of empty–hand fighting as we know it nowadays were systematized by Gichin Funakoshi, who studied karate with the two most important masters of the 19th century, Azato and Itosu.

The word *karate* is the result of the union of two ideograms, kara and te, but the first one has the double pronunciation of "China" and "empty", the second one that of "hand". As said earlier, karate has its roots in the Chinese *kenpō*, but Funakoshi (1988, p. 25) preferred the second meaning, the one of emptiness, because karate is a purely Japanese martial art. This etymology usually refers to the fact of fighting with empty (bare) hands, or to not resorting to weapons, although the same Funakoshi indicated that the real meaning of "emptiness" consisted in erasing selfishness so as to fortify the physical body. To this regard, Funakoshi (1975, p. 47) recalls Buddhist texts that contain sentences about emptiness, like *shiki soku zeku*, "the matter is empty", or *ku soku zeshiki*, "everything is vanity". In these two statements, the syllable *ku* can be also pronounced as *kara*, so the emptiness is in the heart of matter and in its creation. Therefore, Funakoshi was

sure that emptiness is the true structure of the universe, that can be perceived only after becoming conscious of the infinity of its forms and elements. In other words, karate embodies the basis of all martial arts because its form is equal to emptiness, and viceversa. *Kata*, hence, is the most accomplished figurativization of the emptiness of karate, of its the essential principle. *Funakoshi karate–do* has also its cultural roots in Japanese religions like Buddhism, therefore the word do refers to a chosen path or to a way of spiritual perfection, of illumination.

Gichin Funakoshi's *karate–do* is also known as Shotokan, and it differs from other karate styles for some changes in techniques and their applications. Although Funakoshi was opposed to the diversity of styles because he believed in a universal karate, in addition to his *Shotokan–ryu*, he recognized also *Goju–ryu* and *Shito–ryu* as legitimate karate branches. The term "Shotokan" originated from the union of three kanji, "sho", "to", and "kan", and it literally means mean "pine wave hall", or "pinewood breeze hall". This word appeared for the first time in 1936 as the name of the first official dojo[1]

Thanks to Funakoshi, karate spread across Japan, attracting the attention of the government, the imperial family and even of Jigorō Kanō, the founder of another martial art, judo. Funakoshi's karate then gained widespread international recognition in a few years, but it took longer for it to become an Olympic sport like judo, probably for the complexity of one of its pilaster, the *kata*, and its peculiar type of embodied intentionality, which is the main object of the present paper.

Kata are the formal exercises of karate, aimed at developing rhythm and coordination in techniques, forming the three parts of this martial art training together with *kihon*, the basic rudiments of this martial art, and *kumite*, which consists in fighting with the opponent. *Kata* is sort of an untranslatable word, specially if we consider its artistic and cultural significance in Japanese. Possible translations include "form", "style", "pattern"; this term is used both in karate and in the theater nō

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1. A *dojo* — literally "place of the Way" — is a hall where karate and other martial arts are practised. of karate, to pay a tribute to Funakoshi, who used to compose poetry under the pseudonym of shoto, because he was inspired by the breeze blowing among the pine trees and producing a sound similar to that of the sea waves when they crash on the shore (cf. Clayton 2004).

to describe a scheme of predefined movements to be learned. Before Funakoshi, the teaching of *kata* in Okinawa was veiled by secret, so much so that masters would choose a particularly deserving student to hand them over. There are, therefore, as many versions of *kata* as their various interpretations and alterations in oral transmission.

During Funakoshi's youth, about a hundred people were practicing *kata*, but Master Itosu brought them to fifteen, because he considered that a smaller group of participants would lead to better awareness of techniques and their aesthetics (see Funakoshi 1975).

Funakoshi practiced only one *kata* to the point of exhaustion, until reaching the perfection, only to grant the will of his other master Azato, who pushed him to train hard, recommending to consider the hands and feet of opponents as swords, because in karate every part of body is a potential weapon and it is necessary to pay attention. The original *kata* were created by unknown masters, and surely those who came to Funakoshi were subjected to variations attributable to oral transmission. *Kata* have been further modified by Funakoshi to be simpler for being taught in schools and he has also changed their names to make them more pronounceable for the non–Japanese people.

Nowadays Shotokan karate includes twenty–six *kata*, plus three introductory, developed by Funakoshi from *Kanku–Dai*, included the five basic *kata* called Heian, "peace", because they are explicitly designed to prepare the karateka to the most complex ones, bringing him step by step to knowledge, in a "soft" way. *Kata* are divided into two categories by convention: the first one is called *Shorei–ryu* and it concerns those hard and strong, while the second, *Shorin–ryu*, the light and fast ones. There are some correlations between *kata* because they are based on variations of a small number of techniques, strictly speaking the combination of blocks, strikes, punches and kicks. Their characterizing techniques or their articulation in the space are reflected in the names of the *kata*, as we can see in *Gojushiho–sho*, — literally "Fifty–four footsteps" —, or in *Kanku–dai* — "observing the sky" —, where the first movement of karateka is with both hands in front and above forehead, similar to when we look at sunlight. Furthermore, there is the *kata* called *Bassai Dai* — "breaking the fortress" — that starts with an uchi–uke, an inward block, expressing the explosive strength of the irruption, or even *Gangaku* — "the crane on the rock"

— totally based on the balance of the defensive stance on one leg, that produces a sort of zoomorphization of the karateka, whose body constitutes meaning effects because he / she evokes and incarnates a crane, generating an illusive transformation. *Kata* are transmitted by master to student according to the degree of belt and difficulty, and they are substantially the same since they were designed by Funakoshi, even if some slight changes are due to the various interpretations by masters or federations, which depend on how the real application of techniques is conceived, or on how the fight is imagined. We can say that *kata* are a traditional way of training that has been implemented for more than a century, aiming to practice the fundamentals of karate, showing the spectator a fight without the presence of a real opponent, that can be intuited from the movements of the karateka, by the direction of his gaze that precedes, though lasting a fraction of a second, the technique that assumes a change of direction. Moreover, certain techniques presuppose the rejection of a weapon and it is said that there are some secret techniques hidden in many *kata*, especially in the simple ones, because they were practiced in secret and, besides, masters did not want to share advanced knowledge with everyone, but only with chosen apprentices. On the other hand, contemporary *kata* are aimed to be preparatory for kumite, the fight between two opponents, and serve to convey the meaning of the movements of the limbs and the bases of attack and defense. Therefore, we can consider *kata* as a narrative text that tells the story of a fight while mirroring it, where every pre–established technique has a meaning

2. Embodied Intentionality in *Shotokan Kata*

Traditional *kata* are the basis for a good training, and they lead to the complete understanding of the value of self defense techniques. *Kata* imply movements in all directions and the limbs are used to the same extent, so they are equally trained. In addition, the practice of advanced *kata* reveals unknown elements of the basic karate techniques, giving them new meanings. The important thing is not to memorize the succession of movements or to perform them fluently, but to impress the effectiveness of the techniques having their purpose clear in mind, therefore expressing their intentionality.

If the do is the path leading to self–improvement, the *kata* are capable of transforming innerself structures, developing them, controlling breathing and energy.

Seriousness in training means always having an opponent in mind, being committed with heart and soul, aiming at a never–ending improvement.

Karate is an introspective martial art, as its *kata* practice leads to the experimentation of such concepts first with oneself, then with the real opponent. Understanding karate does not just mean practicing *kata*, but evaluating their meaning.

The *kata* is rigid, but at the same time flexible because although the sequence has to be strictly respected, the interpretation depends on karateka and on its personal style. Karate is like a dress[2].

All *kata* have a fixed structure in common, recognizable at the beginning and end of the performance with rei, the ceremonial greeting in musubi–dachi stance, where the heels are together, which figurativizes humility, respect for the opponent and intentional honesty, because, as said by Funakoshi, the karate spirit does not exist without courtesy. After greeting by bowing there is the *tokui kata* — the declaration of the name of *kata* with vigor and loud voice using the diaphragm — and then there is a change of stance that depends on the chosen *kata*, called the *yoi* position — the true starting point of the execution — which in *hachiji–dachi* can be with the legs open at shoulders distance, or with the feet close together in *heisoku–dachi*. This is considered as the first movement of *kata* and is called *kamae*, the posture that expresses a state of relaxed but vigilant mind infused with deep concentration. The karateka performs *kata* starting from embusen, the ideal line where every movement departs from and where he/she must return for a correct execution. Once *kata* is finished he/she returns in yoi position and then to *musubi–dachi* to bow again, but he/she has to maintain the focus, because this is the phase named zanshin, which means "remaining mind". The end of the fight does not coincide with guard lowering. *Kata* start and finish in a codified way, but there is another recurring element called *kiai*, a potent

2. I have to give credit to my karate master Annamaria Iaccarino for this statement. adapting itself to the body of the practitioner and so one may have high or low positions, broad or narrow ones, more powerful or flattering movements, all of these elements depends on the subject.

emission of voice, a loud expiration, generated from the concentration of strength in tanden — the barycenter — corresponding to two attack techniques in each *kata*, the most effective ones, where the karateka's power is at its peak. So kiai is the narrative climax, while *kamae* and zanshin are respectively the beginning and the end of the story.

3. Kinds of Intentionality

Kata are definitely an example of spatial discourse because their techniques are inscripted in the space allowing a discoursivization in terms of duration and of spatial and temporal aspectualization, giving meaning to slowness and rapidity as the average between the time of the karateka and that of the observer (cf. Greimas, Courtés 1979, p. 12).

Therefore we can consider the sequence of blocks and attacks as an aspectual configuration because all the aspectual semes are articulated in *kata*: the inchoative moment corresponds to *rei* and *yoi* position, the durative one to the sum of techniques, and the terminative one to *zanshin*.

Kata involves time and space because it reflects a predetermined set of sequential techniques that realize the intentionality and meaningfulness of karateka's practice.

Movements express a certain degree of intentionality, even if we must be careful to not confuse the intentional nature of the movement and the fact of expressing it and making it perceptible as its quality. Barry Allen (2015, pp. 128–129) has solved this problem with the notion of expressive intentionality, to highlight the perceptible quality of martial art techniques, underlining their different aesthetic.

Underneath the intensity of techniques there is obviously violence, they are designed to be used in a fight, but it must be remembered that in karate, as in all traditional martial arts, violent purposes are rejected. So if we distinguish the intentionality of the techniques from the purpose of action that produces intentional and sequential movements, such as in *kata*, we see that the violence is not a question of wanting to hurt the opponent, but it is an attitude, expressed by the martial behavior that makes the practice credible.

Intentionality affects form and strength, gestures and postures, incarnating combative logic behind each of these elements. It is a

sort of order of consciousness regarding the mind and the body, that implicates active participation and involvement in doing it.

It is a reflexive and discursive consciousness for which there is a need for knowledge and an interiorization of the techniques that are embodied and incorporated, in the limbs of karateka, and obviously in his mind. During the practice of *kata*, the karateka's bodily attitude, both sensible and sentient, is expressed through fine–tuning aimed at establishing a causal relationship with an external, imaginary being, so that intentionality takes on the reflexive knowledge of the body.

The question of the absence of the opponent leads us to reflect on the abstraction of intentionality, which is inscribed in every technique in relation to wanting to do and being able to do, which gives the status of subject to the model opponent.

In carrying out some techniques, the karateka has to use his body as a unit of measurement, which serves as a reference point for calculating the correct position of his/her hands and feet. In the fourth *kata*, for example, called *Heian Yondan*, it is necessary to fully extend the arms and hands at face level, as if to grasp back the opponent's head. Here, the karateka's head will coincide with that of the model opponent, and then we can say that the one to beat is the inner self, not the real other. Here is one of the fundamental traits of karate: the constant search for improvement that lasts for life. The model opponent reflects the self of karateka, contributing to the concrete construction of time and space of *kata*, returning the inner world that produced it to its expression.

Kata are designed to perform any technique depending on a pre-defined scheme that includes movements in each direction: forward, back, right, left, and diagonal. According to Fontanille (2003, p. 385) the directions that shape the movement are intentional indications, immanent to body matter. As Fontanille wrote (*ibidem*, p. 37) it is precisely the orientation of the gesture to emphasize its intentional aspect and to emphasize the definition of the form that is produced by a combination of forces, i.e. a completely overlapping concept to that of *kata*. Fontanille refers to tensive and rhythmic forces, and in karate we can find the first type in the muscle tension at the imaginary point of impact, while the second in the elegance and fluidity of the movements punctuated applying strength at the right time to balance the interaction between the different forces, by calculating the maai,

the good distance from the absent opponent. In addition to spatial distance, maai also includes a time factor: in other words, in executing a *kata* the karateka has to concentrate on imagining the real opponent and calculating the right space–time interval to hit the target, giving form to an imaginary battle field, making a convocation of subjectivity and of actantial forms, and also of their interaction manifesting vigor, delicacy and speed at the same time with natural movements and gestures. This is the difference between the true interpretation of the *kata* and its execution following the manual, respecting only the rhythm and order of the techniques. So practicing *kata* is not only a question of memorization and of technical perfection, but it is also about to figuring out their real meaning.

The signification of gestural discourses in *kata* appears in form of «programmed texts thus undergirded by an implicit intentionality, and as theatrical utterances, produced in function of an observer» (Greimas, Courtés 1979, p. 136), and therefore it is doubly meaningful.

If we look at *kata* through intentionality lenses it «can be conceived as a tension which is inscribed between two modes of existence: the modes of virtuality and of realization», close to the idea of modal competence (*ibidem*, p. 157).

According to Fontanille (2003, p. 87), intentionality is a stratification of semiotic modes of existence: the first is the virtualized one where the karateka has the fighting spirit, the motivation to perform *kata*, knowing that it is necessary to measure himself against the model opponent; then there is the potentialized mode, the one regarding beliefs, which is triggered when karateka can evoke the imaginary battle. The representation of the opponent is completed providing his own simulacrum and the *kata* as act of enunciation can be actualized through rei and ceremonial greeting. The karateka knows that there is an opponent in front of him, and he/she can intensify his fighting intents because he/she knows that an attack is coming. This is the last mode of existence, the realization one, where the *kata* is always starting with a blocking technique, because «there is no first attack in karate» is one of the main Funakoshi's teachings. The fight comes to reality thanks to model opponent pressure, that requests defense.

4. Creation and Surplus of Meaning

Intentionality connects the different instances of discourse of *kata* and resides in every gesture and technique, so that sensomotricity is the real link with intentionality (cf. *ibidem*, p. 193). This is how the body gives meaning to the world, and originates actancial structures, constituting as the vector of the prehension, the place of symbolic elaborations.

In the interaction between matter and energy, the *kata* itself is generated, the form, transforming the karateka's body into the one of the model opponent.

In this way, following Greimas and Courtés (1979), we can consider *kata*'s intentionality as an orientation towards the world, a transitive relation from which the subject builds itself and the world as object.

According to Fontanille (2003, p. 250), in the canonical narrative scheme, we can find a posteriori the intentionality of the concatenation of actions and their meaning, although direct and sensitive perception is not always possible due to the contextual variations generated by culture. This a posteriori recognition through the scheme is not only for searching for an object of value, but also for the meaning, which is to be recognized with the analysis. The meaning produces value, structural by difference and phenomenological by intentionality, which both coincide with the aesthetic appreciation of the world (Fabbri and Marrone 2001, p. 269). If we apply the canonical narrative scheme to *kata*, we see that karateka is manipulated by his master and his colleagues because he/she has to perfect herself/himself and then he/she has to practice techniques to obtain the competence to have a great *kata* performance, which is judged, sanctioned, by the master, or the arbiter in case of competition, or even by an object, the *embusen*, the ideal line where he/she has to return at the end of the *kata*.

When performing *kata*, the karateka has control of the consequences of the techniques because he/she appears as the intentional agent of the action that makes the ideal fight something that can be accepted and understood, or acknowledged. Also in *kata* intentionality concerns both the creation of meaning by the observer, who can reconstruct the fighting between two opponents, and the original purposes of the master that has designed the scheme of techniques, but it is also the possibility of recognizing that surplus of meaning which le-

gitimizes the belonging to a certain culture. Regarding this last point we are in the field of cultural, aesthetic and historic intentionality, which has shaped *kata* embodying in them the background and circumstances of their native Japanese culture, establishing a connection with other cultures involved.

Kata intentionality activates intersubjectivity that is a semiotic frame of construction and sharing of meaning where habits, intentions, points of view are embodied and sedimented during the history of karate. Therefore, on the one hand we have the authorial instance that oscillates from the master who created the *kata*, i.e. Funakoshi, to the karateka who executes it, rewriting it starting from his body, who builds the model opponent in its image and likeness; on the other hand there is the spectator who must evoke the fighting scenario by projecting his simulacrum in place of the opponent. In addition to these, there are the various cultures involved, geographically distant semiospheres, but united by karate in which *kata* and techniques have the same name everywhere, where the rule of interpreting tradition, which is embodied in the body itself, is applied. Karate is a cultural universal, where intentionality is deduced and reconstructed, based on rules, idealizations, passions, interests and purposes.

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Schematismo e figura

Il testo come mediatore intenzionale del giudizio

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ABSTRACT: The article comments on the critique of Franz Brentano, Edmund Husserl, and Immanuel Kant proposed by Bernard Stiegler. It describes its implications for a theory of intentionality. It focuses, in particular, on the notion of "tertiary retention". Thanks to this notion, Stiegler rehabilitates the first version of Kant's *Transcendental Deduction*. The article concentrates on the relation between the notion of externalized retention and the Kantian notion of *schema*. It underlines its consequences on how the role of imagination is conceived in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Hence, a parallelism emerges with Erich Auerbach's hermeneutical notion of *figura* as found in biblical and later on also in non–biblical hermeneutics. Kant's notion of *schema* and the notion of *figura*, indeed, share some common functions and features. They both refer to intermediate entities whose role is to bridge two incommensurable realms: the former connects sensibility and concepts; the latter, *umbrae* and *veritas*. Thanks to Stiegler's lesson on tertiary retentions and *schema*, it can be argued that *schema* and *figura* share not only the same essence and function, but also the same formal genesis. The article concludes with a focus on the rhetorical setting of both the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Bible*, showing that they put on stage a common scenario.

KEYWORDS: Schematism; Figuralism; Retentions; Kant; Auerbach.

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Per molto tempo si è ritenuto che la traduzione migliore del lemma greco *mimesis* fosse *rappresentazione* (tradizione già affermata nel XVI sec., e.g. Fracastoro 1555). Il fatto che la parola immaginazione portasse con sé la medesima radice sembrava confermare l'esistenza di una relazione essenziale tra la capacità di creare immagini e la *mimesis*, e così rassicurare sulla bontà della traduzione invalsa. Accettare tale soluzione linguistica comportava inoltre abbracciare, in confortevole continuità, le considerazioni di Platone, Aristotele e Husserl tra gli altri, in merito al ruolo che il plesso semantico espresso dalla radice *mimos* era chiamato a ritagliarsi nell'esercizio della conoscenza mediante giudizi: il minore possibile.

Se è fin troppo noto il bando energico di Platone, forse non lo è altrettanto il dibattito che intercorre tra Edmund Husserl e Franz Brentano al medesimo riguardo. Il primo infatti rimproverò al secondo di aver concesso uno spazio inopportuno all'*immaginazione* nel suo studio sull'intenzionalità e il tema del tempo. Brentano ragionò in effetti sulla nozione di *associazione originaria* nel tentativo di fare luce sull'esperienza di ciò che *sta* passando, per esempio una melodia (Fugali 2001). Secondo Husserl il problema si poneva nella misura in cui Brentano faceva della ritenzione primaria un passato che l'immaginazione era chiamata a associare alla percezione presente: tale soluzione appariva inammissibile poiché implicava che la dimensione temporale dell'esperienza — il caso di scuola verte sulla melodia, un oggetto temporale che scorrendo coincide con il flusso della coscienza (HUA X, p. 34; trad. it. p. 59) — fosse in fin dei conti immaginata. Husserl propose invece di considerare la ritenzione primaria, cioè il ricordo del non appena passato, in opposizione al ricordo propriamente detto, cioè la ritenzione secondaria, proprio al fine di tenere separati immaginazione e percezione, garantendo a quest'ultima il suo pieno valore epistemico. Per distinguere ritenzione primaria e ricordo, fece della prima l'estremo passato dell'estensione temporale dell'intenzionalità, arrivando così a concepire la nozione di *intenzionalità longitudinale* (Ricoeur 1988, p. 43). Husserl proporrà di considerare l'intenzionalità come una tensione estesa nel tempo, i.e. contrapporrà all'idea di percezione puntuale una sintesi originaria di presente, non–appena (la ritenzione primaria) e non–ancora (la protensione). È questo il dibattito a cui Bernard Stiegler si rifà per fondare la propria articolazione del problema, nella serie *La tecnique et le temps* (1994–2001).

Nel terzo tomo, in particolare, Stiegler ha chiarito che il nucleo del proprio interesse giace proprio nel rapporto che si ritiene di dover istituire tra ritenzione e percezione, ovvero dello spazio che siamo costretti a lasciare all'immaginazione. A suo avviso, la distinzione analitica tra ricordo, un prodotto dell'immaginazione, e ritenzione primaria, una *sezione* dell'esperienza intenzionale del presente, va confermata; ciò non deve però implicare la negazione dell'esistenza di una mutua influenza, a cui va invece sostituita la consapevolezza che la «percezione non sia mai pura da ogni immaginazione» (2001, pp. 38–39, n. 1). Per sostenere questa tesi a suo modo rivoluzionaria, Stiegler ha rivolto l'attenzione su un terzo tipo di ritenzione, il ricordo esternalizzato.

La nozione di ritenzione terziaria, plasmata sulla *coscienza d'immagine* husserliana, ha una prima funzione metodologica, ovvero mette in luce le condizioni di possibilità di ogni analisi fenomenologica dei vissuti e degli oggetti temporali: perché lo studio di una melodia possa dischiudere osservazioni rilevanti sulla relazione tra ritenzione primaria e ritenzione secondaria è necessario che l'oggetto temporale in questione sia a ogni ripetizione uguale a se stesso. Resasi disponibile la tecnologia per garantire l'esistenza di una ripetizione perfetta dell'identico, il fonografo, si è anche offerta l'intuizione del fatto che la coscienza che fa esperienza del medesimo è sempre diversa, proprio nella misura in cui è già sempre il risultato dell'esperienza precedente. A ogni ascolto, la melodia ci si darà in modalità diverse, non già perché essa sia diversa (cosa che il fonografo ci permette di escludere con certezza, a differenza delle esecuzioni *dal vivo*), ma perché la coscienza che seleziona le ritenzioni primarie è stata modificata dall'esperienza trascorsa. La ritenzione terziaria, il disco, rende così evidente che l'immaginazione — mediante il ricordo — interviene al cuore stesso della percezione, ovvero condiziona la trama dell'intenzionalità longitudinale. La ritenzione primaria, in quanto processo di selezione del ritenuto e dell'obliato, è influenzata nei propri criteri procedurali dalle aperture nella griglia delle selezioni precedenti, in modo tale per cui «le ritenzioni secondarie abitano in anticipo il processo di ritenzione primaria» (Stiegler 2001, p. 43). Altresì, la ritenzione terziaria diventa per Stiegler elemento teoretico fondativo di un nuovo modello di funzionamento della coscienza.

La ritenzione terziaria è il ricordo riattivabile di qualcosa che non è stato vissuto direttamente dalla coscienza; la totalità, o quasi, degli oggetti che popolano il nostro mondo, cioè le immagini, statiche o in

movimento, i libri, la musica, i monumenti, hanno questa caratteristica. Dal punto di vista genetico, si tratta di oggetti che comportano la presunzione di realtà di un passato che però non abbiamo vissuto noi. Il passato che non abbiamo vissuto e che tuttavia dobbiamo fare nostro — la *Weltgeschichtlichkeit* — è veicolato dalle ritenzioni terziarie (tracce mnestiche per lo più tecniche) che ci circondano. Da Heidegger, Stiegler riceve inoltre la consapevolezza della centralità del problema della *finitudine* umana, e nella fattispecie della finitudine ritenzionale, ripercorrendo la strada che porta a Kant.

Il terzo tomo de *La tecnique et le temps* è infatti un sostenuto corpo a corpo con la filosofia kantiana e in particolare con la questione dello schematismo trascendentale e del suo rapporto con l'immaginazione. Ispirato dalle riflessioni di Adorno e Horkheimer sulle *industrie culturali* e il loro rapporto con lo schematismo (Id. 1966, pp. 131 ss.), Stiegler propone di affrontare la questione del rapporto tra immaginazione e percezione ritornando all'argomento con cui Kant analizza l'unità della coscienza nella prima versione della *Deduzione trascendentale* e del ruolo che vi attribuisce all'immaginazione. Egli sostiene che la descrizione fenomenologica della sintesi temporale della coscienza, per la quale la percezione del presente è sempre tramata da ritenzioni e da protensioni, primarie secondarie e terziarie, corrisponda all'analisi proposta da Kant, e che renda più perspicua l'oscura dottrina dello schematismo.

Sarà utile mettere in parallelo la presentazione kantiana della triplice sintesi (d'apprensione, riproduzione e ricognizione) della prima versione della *Deduzione trascendentale* con l'articolazione fenomenologica dell'esperienza del tempo in ritenzioni e protensioni. Stiegler ritiene che l'impasse in cui era scivolato Kant[1] sia la stessa in cui, secondo Husserl, era rimasto bloccato Brentano: nessuno dei due sarebbe riuscito a rilevare la distinzione analitica tra apprensione e riproduzione. Descrivendo la sintesi della riproduzione, Kant sta parlando della ritenzione primaria. Gli esempi analizzati, caso per altro raro nella *Critica* e indice della difficoltà che la materia gli presentava, sono rivelatori.

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1. Il malinteso in cui era incorso, induce Kant a rinunciare a questa prima esposizione della *Deduzione trascendentale* per presentare, sei anni più tardi, una nuova versione in cui le sintesi descritte sono due, la prima delle quali, che genera le rappresentazioni, è definita *speciosa* o *figurata* (A 119, rigo 28).

Se il mio pensiero perdesse sempre le rappresentazioni precedenti (le prime parti della linea, le parti precedenti del tempo, oppure le unità rappresentate successivamente), e se io non le *riproducessi* mentre procedo verso le rappresentazioni seguenti, in tal caso non potrebbe mai sorgere una rappresentazione completa. (B 78–79, corsivo nostro)

Tenere distinte le due sintesi confuse da Kant permette a Stiegler di evitare il vicolo cieco da cui Kant era uscito solo con la stesura della seconda versione della *Critica*. Salva la distinzione analitica tra sintesi dell'apprensione, *i.e.* ritenzione primaria, e sintesi della riproduzione, *i.e.* ritenzione secondaria, Stiegler può recuperare la relazione analiticamente chiara ma proceduralmente complessa per cui la sintesi della riproduzione in effetti accompagna sempre quella d'apprensione, *i.e.* per cui il ricordo accompagna sempre, come criterio di selezione, la ritenzione primaria. La terza sintesi, di ricognizione, assicura, in quanto proiezione protensionale, la coerenza della coscienza con se stessa, l'unità della coscienza in quanto flusso: il processo complessivo garantisce *l'unità dell'appercezione*, la quale può così accompagnare ogni rappresentazione.

Dopo Husserl, Stiegler rimprovera anche Kant di non essersi reso conto che l'unità dell'appercezione, del flusso di quella coscienza che è la coscienza dello stesso Kant, gli si mostrava solo grazie al testo scritto su cui stava annotando la propria esperienza; un testo mediante il quale noi stessi possiamo riattivarla come un passato che non abbiamo mai vissuto e che tuttavia, imparando a pensare come Kant, siamo in grado di assumere come nostro. La finitudine ritenzionale non gli impedì di concepire il proprio lungo argomento perché *supplita* dal testo che egli stesso stava stendendo, ovvero da una ritenzione terziaria, una versione esternalizzata e tecnicamente unificata del suo flusso di coscienza. Senza il testo vergato su carta, Kant non avrebbe potuto tenere a mente la lunga sequenza di rappresentazioni di cui si compone il suo argomento. Anzi, senza il sostegno di sintesi esterne che contenessero la sua finitudine ritenzionale, Kant stesso non sarebbe stato nient'altro che un costante fluire di rappresentazioni[2].

2. Per limiti di spazio, lasceremo da parte le considerazioni relative al ruolo della terza sintesi, della ricognizione, e del suo rapporto con le protensioni, ovvero con la terza estasi temporale (Stiegler 2001, c. 3). Ci permettiamo di segnalare che l'unità della coscienza è supportata da tutte le memorie esternalizzate con cui il soggetto commercia

L'unità della coscienza, che è condizione di possibilità di ogni giudizio, è resa possibile dalla ritenzione terziaria, che svolge dunque il ruolo di quarta sintesi, tecnologica.

Il commercio della coscienza con il mondo degli oggetti e delle tracce mnestiche che la circondano non le garantisce solo il supplemento necessario a *contenere* la finitudine ritenzionale del fluire costante; l'analisi di Stiegler mette in luce una seconda funzione della ritenzione terziaria, ancora più rilevante. Dopo aver trattato della *Deduzione trascendentale*, Kant si dedica allo schematismo: secondo l'autore della *Critica della Ragion Pura*, lo schema è quel prodotto dell'immaginazione che media tra la sensibilità e l'intelletto, *proiettando* le categorie pure a priori sul molteplice dell'intuizione (Stiegler 2004, par. 58). Lo schema è una regola, una procedura, con cui la coscienza mette in forma i dati sensibili, categorizza le intuizioni, sussume il particolare sotto l'universale. È lo strumento con cui le categorie dedotte nella sezione precedente vengono applicate al molteplice dell'intuizione, con cui il sensibile *riempie* il concetto:

> Lo schema è in se stesso ognora un prodotto dell'immaginazione; ma in quanto la sintesi di questa non ha in vista alcuna singola intuizione, bensì solo l'unità nella determinazione della sensibilità, lo schema è pertanto da distinguere dall'immagine. Così, se io metto cinque punti uno dopo l'altro: •••••, *questa è un'immagine del numero cinque*. Invece, se io penso soltanto a un numero in generale, che può essere poi cinque o cento, questo pensiero è piuttosto la rappresentazione di un metodo, per rappresentare in una immagine una molteplicità (per esempio, mille) in conformità di un certo concetto, che non questa immagine stessa, che io in quest'ultimo caso difficilmente potrei contemplare e comparare al concetto. Ora, questa rappresentazione di un processo generale dell'esperienza rivolto a procurare a un concetto la sua immagine, è quella che denomino lo schema per questo concetto (A 135).

Kant pare non considerare che i cinque pallini, il numero cinque, e ogni altra rappresentazione grafica dipendono, a pari merito delle immagini, dalle ritenzioni terziarie tecnologiche. Senza una storia delle tecniche di computazione, dalle dita alle righe sulla sabbia ai computer, nessuno avrebbe potuto, all'epoca di Kant come alla nostra, immaginare

quotidianamente, basta pensare all'esperienza di straniamento e frammentazione che prende chi sia costretto di punto in bianco a rinunciare a tutte le proprie *cose*.

il numero mille. Pur avendo funzioni diverse e dunque dovendo essere distinti analiticamente, gli schemi, *i.e.* "i metodi per rappresentare in immagine", e le immagini sono co–originari, e sorgono dal commercio con le ritenzioni terziarie disponibili a ogni momento storico dato.

Da questa breve presentazione della lettura stiegleriana della materia kantiana abbiamo conquistato un elemento fondamentale della nostra riflessione: la ritenzione terziaria, *e.g.* il testo scritto, supplisce la finitudine ritenzionale e contiene il fluire dell'unità dell'appercezione; inoltre essa condiziona e media, in quanto criterio di selezione e di associazione, la produzione della rappresentazione[3], ovvero l'esercizio della facoltà di giudizio (Stiegler 2015, par. 100).

Sulla base di quanto mostrato, vorremmo ora mettere in luce un'analogia formale che lega la prima *Critica* e il testo sacro della tradizione cristiana, nella convinzione che tale operazione possa portare maggiore chiarezza alla lettura di entrambi. Lo strumento con cui proponiamo di aprire questo percorso analitico è la nozione di *figura*. L'osservazione elementare da cui partire concerne non solo l'uso che Kant fa del termine, in un contesto così delicato come quello richiamato[4], ma il fatto che esso traduca in latino il greco *schema*. Il pretesto linguistico lascia aperte molte possibilità di fraintendimento, ma la funzione e la natura dello schema nella dottrina kantiana chiarita dall'interpretazione stiegleriana, e della nozione di figura nell'ermeneutica e nella tradizione biblica e romanza ci permetteranno di avanzare con maggiore sicurezza. La materia su cui imbastire il confronto tra le due nozioni è la seguente: lo schema svolge la funzione di mediazione tra il molteplice dell'intuizione e la categoria, tra sensibilità e idealità. La nozione di figura ha assunto nell'ermeneutica già neotestamentaria e segnatamente paolina, poi patristica e soprattutto agostiniana e in generale biblica, la funzione di mediazione tra la vicenda mondana, mortale, corporale e l'ordine provvidenziale, divino, trascendente;

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3. «Les sélections dans les rétentions primaires que je fais depuis mes rétentions secondaires sont [...] elles–mêmes soumises à des processus de sélection issus d'un passé que je n'ai pas vécu, dont j'hérite comme rétentions tertiaires qui constituent le monde dans lequel je vis, ET QUE J'ADOPTE» (Stiegler 2001, p. 99). Cfr. anche Stiegler 2004 (par. 58) e Beaubois 2015.

4. Vedi nota 1.

tra la peripezia terrena e la vita eterna; tra la storia individuale e la storia universale della redenzione.

Pur contando maggiormente sul valore probatorio dell'analisi funzionale, sarà nondimeno opportuno ricordare i tratti essenziali della storia del termine, perché da essi emerge la natura *intermedia dell'ente* denotato dal termine figura. La storia antica del termine oscilla tra i significati che il greco, già più strutturato e differenziato, esprimeva mediante i termini μορφή, εἶδος, τυπος, σχημα. Pur affermandosi autonomamente, in latino il termine *figura* manterrà rapporti di sinonimia con i termini latini *forma*, *umbra*, *imago*. La prima occorrenza censita è dovuta a Terenzio che la usa con il significato di "formazione plastica". Il senso della vista nella determinazione del plesso semantico perde presto la sua preponderanza; già in Varrone si presenta «l'idea che ci siano figure anche per il senso dell'udito» (Auerbach 1966, p. 178); inizia anche a presentarsi l'uso del termine *figura* per definire una formazione grammaticale o sintattica — così per altro già Aristotele, che parla di *schemi sillogistici*. In Cicerone il termine verrà poi utilizzato per definire i tre livelli dello stile, *figura gravis*, *mediocris*, *attenuata* (Id. 1966, p. 181). Si passa a un uso tecnico che trova fortuna nel campo della grammatica e della retorica in cui ancora oggi vede il suo uso più frequente[5]. Al di fuori di questo campo, la nozione mantiene la sua fondamentale rilevanza nel campo dell'ermeneutica biblica e dantesca.

Secondo Auerbach, «l'interpretazione figurale stabilisce fra due atti o persone un nesso in cui uno di essi non significa soltanto se stesso, ma significa anche l'altro, mentre l'altro comprende o adempie il primo» (Ivi, p. 196); l'adempimento è definito in genere "veritas", mentre la figura è *umbra* o *imago*.

Auerbach ha a cuore l'analisi dell'interpretazione figurale in contrapposizione a quella allegorica e esalta lungo i suoi scritti la compiuta storicità di entrambi i poli della relazione messa in luce. Per esempio: «la figura ha una realtà storica pari a quella di ciò che essa

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5. Non sarà superfluo ricordare che il significato principale della nozione di stile è *modo di fare*: le *figure* retoriche non sono dunque altro che *modi sin–tattici*, modi di comporre versioni esternalizzate delle proprie esperienze del reale. In questo senso va anche l'uso aristotelico del termine *schemata* per descrivere gli *atteggiamenti* mimetici dei danzatori: sempre di *modi* si tratta; cfr. Arist., *Poetica*, 55a. È per altro già stato messo in luce il fatto che con tali *schemi* «il corpo si fa *immagine e supporto di memoria*» (De Min 2016, v, corsivo nostro): un modello di azione pronto per essere imitato.

profetizza. [...] è un fatto storico–concreto, ed è adempiuta da fatti storico–concreti» (ivi, p. 186). Ricorda altresì Agostino:

> Anzitutto, fratelli, vi ammoniamo e ordiniamo in nome del Signore, che quando udite l'esposizione del mistero delle Scritture che narra di cose avvenute, crediate effettivamente nella verità storica dell'avvenimento di cui leggete. (Agostino, *Serm.*, 2, 6 ss. [cit. in Auerbach 1966, p. 190])[6]

Tuttavia, il senso del nesso ermeneutico si comprende solo nella misura in cui, forti della precisazione analitica offerta da Auerbach, ci si concentri sul ruolo di *intermediazione* offerta dal principio figurale. A una *umbra*, o *imago* storico–concreta — *e.g.* i profeti dell'Antico Testamento — San Paolo per primo e la patristica poi, associano le vicende della storia di Gesù, della Chiesa, della salvezza. Ancorché storica, la figura è sempre al tempo stesso ideale; mondana, essa partecipa già della storia divina; questa è la caratteristica che le permette di garantire il nesso tra due vicende che potrebbero sembrare incompatibili o incommensurabili e che invece assicurano una compiuta esperienza di verità proprio in forza del legame che le unisce.

Per rendere pienamente pertinente l'analogia formale che abbiamo individuato è necessario mettere in luce un dettaglio su cui Auerbach sembra sorvolare (così anche Maine 1999), ovvero il fatto che la Bibbia sia un testo che pretende, esattamente come la *Critica della Ragion Pura*, di offrire gli strumenti per comprendere il mondo. La relazione triangolare su cui si fonda la dottrina dello schematismo trascendentale non deve dunque essere cercata solo nell'interpretazione intratestuale della Bibbia, ma nella relazione tra il lettore, la Bibbia e il mondo — questione che domina, pur rimanendo sullo sfondo, *Mimesis* (Auerbach 1953). Il molteplice sensibile di cui il lettore della Bibbia trova gli strumenti per fare esperienza sensata e vera non è dunque l'Antico Testamento, ma la propria stessa vita, storica, concreta, reale. La figura, ricordo esternalizzato, cioè tramandato dagli autori della Bibbia come ritenzione che il lettore non ha ovviamente vissuto in prima persona, agisce come schema mediante il quale il fedele può sovrascrivere il *nesso* intenzionale e imporre la categoria

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6. Ci limitiamo a ricordare, in nota, che è proprio Agostino ad anticipare il discorso husserliano relativo alla *distensione temporale* dell'io, questione su cui per altro finirà per convergere anche il tardo Brentano, definendo la nozione di *proterestesi*.

opportuna alla propria esistenza, molteplice, caotica. Il testo media, in quanto ritenzione terziaria che condiziona le sintesi dell'apprensione e della riproduzione, l'esercizio della facoltà di giudizio[7] del lettore nei confronti della sua realtà.

In altri termini, perché si dia giudizio *valido*, secondo l'interpretazione e la metodologia figurale e analogamente a quanto sostenuto da Kant, è necessario associare al prodotto dell'intuizione storicamente determinata l'opportuna categoria della vicenda divina[8]; ciò che rende possibile la mediazione tra sensibilità e idealità, è lo schema; tra mondanità e storia della salvezza è la figura. Il tratto essenziale, analogamente a quanto ci spiega Kant in merito allo schema, è proprio la doppia omogeneità, tanto alla vicenda umana del lettore, quanto a quella divina, fonte della rivelazione e trascendentale di ogni esperienza di senso per il cristiano. L'essenza intermedia della figura svolge dunque un ruolo analiticamente analogo a quello dello schema kantiano e ne condivide la genesi.

La materia esposta nella dottrina dello schematismo trascendentale è il cuore della *Critica della ragion pura* e viene introdotta da un paragrafo che ci ricorda quale sia lo scopo fondamentale dell'intera opera. L'"Introduzione" all'*Analitica delle proposizioni fondamentali*, di cui lo schematismo dei concetti puri dell'intelletto costituisce il primo capitolo, reca infatti il titolo *Della capacità trascendentale di giudizio*, in

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7. In questo contesto, rimaniamo fedeli a esempi biblici ma l'interpretazione del figuralismo che proponiamo rende chiare anche le vicende di Don Quijote o di Mathilde de la Mole, o di Madame Bovary: i loro schemi, tratti dai testi di cui si sono letteralmente infarciti la testa, mediano i loro giudizi in modo anacronistico, cioè slegato dall'enciclopedia di esempi e figure invece condivisa tra i membri della loro comunità di riferimento (Géfin 1999). Cfr. anche Ankersmit il quale, a proposito di Don Quijote, nota che «the knight's mind is excellent, but things tend to go awry *somewhere between* reality and his perception of it. In other words [...] Don Quixote's confusion is not merely psychological but rather *epistemological*» (Ankersmit 1999, 56, corsivi nostri). Insomma, come già Auerbach, è «meglio essere legati al proprio tempo consapevolmente che inconsapevolmente» (cit. in Mazzoni 2007, p. 83).

8. Come fatto in precedenza (v. nota 3), accenniamo al fatto che così come lo schema e la figura corrispondono alla forma passata, la ritenzione terziaria, la sintesi della ricognizione, i.e. del concetto, è parallela alla protensione, è l'attesa, la profezia, l'anticipazione. Il suo compimento è la *veritas*. Auerbach insiste sul fatto che il tema della *finitudine* è ben presente agli autori che affrontano la questione del figuralismo. A differenza di quanto si possa dire di Dio, che vive fuori dal tempo, la *veritas* per il cristiano è sempre rimandata a un momento a venire: il compimento dell'idea di giustizia è d'altronde rinviato al momento in cui si realizzerà il regno dei fini (Auerbach 1966, pp. 191–2).

generale. Qualificata l'analogia formale tra le condizioni di possibilità del giudizio in generale per come sono esposte da Kant e per come restano implicite ma evidenti nell'interpretazione figurale, ci si presenta un'ulteriore elemento di analogia.

Ritradotte senza eufemismi né ritrosie, le terminologie bibliche e kantiane solo in parte richiamate in questo articolo rendono infatti trasparente il fatto di condividere un comune riferimento *scenografico*. Le figure principali della vicenda neotestamentaria richiamano in effetti alla dimensione tribunalizia a cui lo stesso Kant fa risaputamente riferimento nell'imbastire la scena del suo lungo argomento. Se il filosofo critico parla di Tribunale della Ragione, utilizzando non solo il gergo del giudizio, ma ricevendo dalla tradizione la centralità del termine *categoria* — il cui etimo ricorda l'accusa e la cui traduzione perifrastica darebbe come risultato: «condurre verso la pubblica piazza [per accusare]» —, la Bibbia mette in scena il dibattimento tra una *vittima*, un accusatore (questo il primo significato dell'espressione *Satan*), un avvocato difensore (questo il significato dell'epiteto dello Spirito Santo, il *Paracleto*) e un giudice.

Esplicitato il comune scenario, possiamo desumere dal nostro parallelismo un'implicazione ermeneutica. Kant ci spiega che la capacità di giudizio è un talento particolare, non proceduralizzabile, frutto di addestramento e esercizio, coadiuvati dall'esposizione a esempi opportuni (A 131, righi 26–28). Il figuralismo sembra condividere questa consapevolezza e utilizza il medesimo accorgimento: l'Antico Testamento è un florilegio di esempi di giudizi emessi da un popolo che ha *già da sempre* iniziato a ragionare sulla questione dell'accusa, della categoria, e che il Nuovo Testamento (convinto di portare a termine l'esercizio intrapreso dalla propria tradizione) si propone di sottoporre a un *nuovo* esame critico, nella speranza di farne uno strumento di *veritas* per tutti i lettori. Per realizzare questo obiettivo, la soluzione individuata è logicamente analoga a quella proposta, quasi suo malgrado, da Kant. Perché il molteplice sensibile — le esperienze dei soggetti storici, i casi — possa essere connesso all'idea (di giustizia) secondo *veritas*, è necessario poter contare su di una mediazione, *un'immagine*, uno *schema*, uno stile *sin–tattico*[9] — cioè su un *modo* di

9. Possiamo appena ricordare che la fama di Auerbach è dovuta, oltre che alla sua interpretazione del figuralismo, alla riflessione sul contributo offerto dal testo biblico al

comporre l'accusa, o la difesa. Non si può giudicare senza esperienza diretta, ma neanche senza gli schemi forniti sotto forma di ritenzioni terziarie, ovvero l'esperienza indiretta. È questo il *punctum* biblico: «Guardate, è già successo, questo è il *modo* giusto per capire che sta succedendo di nuovo e giudicare secondo verità e giustizia». La Bibbia, almeno secondo coloro che si batterono per il trionfo dell'interpretazione figurale, sembra aver accettato che l'esempio *differito* tratto da un'enciclopedia condivisa tra i membri della comunità dei giudicanti–aventi–esperienza sia il migliore degli schemi disponibili; forse perché, almeno secondo l'interpretazione che ne ha fornito René Girard (1996), è anche consapevole che la *mimesis*, cioè l'immaginazione, ha una parte preponderante nell'esercizio della facoltà di giudizio, e che è dunque meglio essere guidati dalla figura–schema, esempio terziarizzato e *già criticato*[10], che non dalla massa dei prossimi, da sempre *persecutori*.

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superamento della *Stiltrennung* classica (Auerbach 1953). Questa tesi conferma, e ne è a sua volta arricchita, il senso della nostra operazione: perché la *figura* potesse svolgere il suo ruolo di mediazione tra la vita e il divino, fu necessario liberare il testo, *mediatore intenzionale del giudizio*, dalle strutture rigide a cui era ancora ancorato. Solo così «i luoghi e gli oggetti comuni, gli aspetti assolutamente privati della vita interiore, l'imperfezione dei corpi, tutti quei lati del mondo che per l'arte classica erano senza interesse, o degni tutt'al più di un interesse comico, vengono riscattati da questo nuovo orizzonte teologico, dove ogni individuo ha un significato universale e il divino si manifesta in circostanze quotidiane» (Mazzoni 2011, pp. 116–17). Non sfuggirà per altro il fatto che l'origine della *Stiltrennung* non è altro che la sclerotizzazione di *modi di fare* creati per affrontare la finitudine ritenzionale dell'aedo, così anche Bakker (1999, p. 13). Lo stile è insomma un criterio con cui tagliare il *continuum* dell'esperienza al fine di metterlo in forma per la rappresentazione. *Lo stile è uno schema*. Troviamo nelle ricerche recenti di Fabrizio Desideri un'interessante convergenza con le tesi qui elaborate: lo *schema estetico* — e le funzioni che egli vi attribuisce: *a)* indice di auto–orientamento; *b)* pattern di riconoscimento per oggetti, aspetti, proprietà, eventi; *c)* dispositivo euristico — *anticipa* gli schemi categoriali. In questo senso, lo schema estetico, la cui origine è indagata in profondità da Desideri, rivela un'affinità con il meccanismo grammaticale (Desideri 2017, p. 12; 2018). Desideri ci permette anche di fuggire dal rischio del relativismo a cui la nostra tesi potrebbe richiamare: lo schema infatti non è né innato, né storico. La sua origine epigenetica — superveniente — è il frutto di un processo di adattamento nutrito da una sorta di *Wechselwirkung* con attrattori oggettivi (Von Foerster 1987, p. 121, cit. in Desideri 2017, p. 10).

10. Anche in questo caso il parallelo è illuminante: Kant apre la stagione della filosofia critica proprio nella misura in cui si rende conto che la filosofia oramai non può fare altro che mettere al vaglio, criticare, si dirà poi in seguito ma convinti di essere fedeli alla linea tracciata, *sospettare*, *decostruire*.

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Semiotica e coscienza estesa

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Abstract: The present article stems from the deep conviction that the main concept of the Lotmanian epistemology — "the semiosphere" —, if reconceived from an anthropological perspective as a cognitive pattern of extended mind (following Semenenko's suggestion), can offer a unique epistemological framework, fundamental for the development of an interdisciplinary dialogue, especially between humanities and cognitive neurosciences. This study is meant to show how the conceptual framework built on the Lotmanian model suggested here is able to extend the interrelational dimension to consciousness conceived as integrated information, as suggested by Tononi in the neuroscientific field. In the same way, also the mirror neurons, discovered by the neuroscientific school of Parma, can be seen as a network of semiotic boundaries meant, on the one hand, to preserve the specialistic functions of the different cerebral components and, on the other hand, to allow the informational integration among them and the different consciousnesses taking part in the cultural semiosphere.

1. Semiosi e cognizione incarnata

Nella semiotica della cultura di Jurij M. Lotman, il problema dell'intenzionalità è largamente esplorato. Lotman sostiene che l'origine della semiosi, non solo quella umana, dipende dalla possibilità, per

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l'individuo, di scegliersi un comportamento davanti a diverse possibilità, superando così le limitazioni della memoria genetica, che tende a uniformare i comportamenti del collettivo (Lotman 1993, p. 12). Ciò comporta la necessità di prevedere l'effetto delle proprie azioni e di quelle altrui. Da dove sorge questa intenzione consapevole? Essa è forse legata all'interpretazione di un comportamento–testo e dunque alle nostre abilità semiotiche, oppure c'è qualcosa di più "profondo" nella comprensione dell'agentività come intenzione? La domanda è legittima alla luce dei recenti risultati delle neuroscienze cognitive, che ormai mettono in seria discussione la cosiddetta "teoria della mente" del cognitivismo classico (Ammanniti e Gallese 2014). I neuroscienziati della Scuola di Parma hanno scoperto una "cognizione incarnata", che precede — essi sostengono — ogni elaborazione mentale dell'esperienza intersoggettiva. Grazie alla presenza dei neuroni specchio nella corteccia premotoria, il nostro sistema cervello–corpo è in grado di rispondere in modo identico, ossia con l'impiego degli stessi circuiti neurali, sia quando il soggetto compie un'azione intenzionale (dotata di uno scopo), sia quando vede un altro individuo compiere un'azione simile a quella di cui si è fatta esperienza (Rizzolatti e Sinigaglia 2006). I neuroni specchio nell'area F4 del macaco risuonano sia quando l'animale afferra una nocciolina per portarla alla bocca, sia quando vede un'altra scimmia o un uomo afferrare una nocciolina. Ecco che, osserva Gallese, il sistema motorio non solo partecipa alla cognizione, ma ne è alle fondamenta. Noi comprendiamo le azioni altrui dotate d'intenzione perché le mappiamo sulle stesse aree neurali che presiedono alle nostre azioni intenzionali (Gallese 2017).

La semiotica è forse in grado, con i propri strumenti, di occuparsi di tale "simulazione incarnata"? Da un lato, le scoperte sui neuroni specchio ci dicono che lo sviluppo della cognizione è sempre intersoggettivo, e questo apre alla possibilità di un dialogo con la semiotica della cultura. Qualunque passo in questa direzione, dall'altro lato, deve risolvere il problema di come l'azione altrui, nella cognizione incarnata, diventi testo che acquista un senso nella vita intersoggettiva (nella cultura). La cognizione incarnata è di sicuro pre–linguistica, ma è anche pre–semiotica? Gallese sostiene che il sistema mirror è in grado di rilevare l'agentività, (di capire chi compie l'azione) poiché sebbene siano gli stessi neuroni ad accendersi nei casi di atto compiuto e atto veduto, nel secondo caso la loro risposta è meno intensa (Amman-

niti e Gallese 2014). Questo già introduce al problema semiotico del rapporto fra Soggetto, Antisoggetto e Oggetto, secondo la semiotica strutturale (Greimas 1984). Il fatto che la vista di un oggetto del quale io ho esperienza di contatto predisponga all'azione il mio sistema motorio m'informa, seppure in modo ancora inconscio, sulla presenza di qualcosa con cui io potrei essere congiunto (possesso) o disgiunto. La differenza fra i due stati è evidentemente percepita con stati emotivi (forici) opponibili, che in relazione al valore attribuito all'oggetto potremmo definire, usando termini adottati in semiotica, disforici o euforici (Greimas e Fontanille 1996). Seguendo Damasio, a questo livello c'è già una forma di coscienza, sia pure legata ad un "sé nucleare" (Damasio 2013). Una coscienza che però non è ancora in grado, presumibilmente, d'istituire una differenza cognitiva tra soggetto e oggetto: vivendo interamente nell'automatismo incarnato la congiunzione o la disgiunzione, il nostro sistema cervello–corpo presumibilmente non è in grado di costruire in modo speculativo l'assenza o presenza dell'oggetto ma semmai di avvertire una mancanza emotiva che deve essere compensata per reintegrare la condizione euforica del soggetto. Esiste la relazione, che è la relazione fra l'oggetto prensile e la sua memoria visiva, tattile, ecc. — si veda il concetto di affordance (Gibson 1999) — ma non la distinzione conscia.

Per una cognizione evoluta è dunque necessaria una più netta distinzione dei due termini, e la consapevolezza di questa distinzione. A questo livello sembra indispensabile l'intervento del sistema mirror, che determina le condizioni per le quali la cognizione incarnata è integrata da una rappresentazione cognitiva di grado superiore (Damasio 2010; Ramachandran 2004 e 2013). Il vedere l'azione compiuta da un altro e il rispecchiarmi in quell'azione come se io la compiessi di persona, benché si tratti ancora di cognizione incarnata, mi dà più informazioni rispetto al livello precedente sulle relazioni in gioco: l'oggetto al quale io attribuisco un valore emotivo può essere disgiunto o congiunto da me, anche in dipendenza dell'azione di un altro soggetto. Due cani che si contendono un osso hanno una coscienza incarnata sia del valore dell'oggetto sia della possibilità che sia l'altro soggetto a impossessarsene, ed è per questo che essi scatteranno il più velocemente possibile per sottrarre l'osso al contendente. Vi è dunque una comprensione incarnata dell'agentività, ma non un'attività semiotica incarnata: l'osso alla vista resta sé stesso, indistinto dal proprio valore

e non «qualcosa che sta per qualcos'altro» (Peirce, *CP* 2, p. 128). Ci sono i presupposti per l'emersione di un sé–in relazione all'altro, ma non vi è un sé autoriflessivo che è capace di staccarsi dall'azione e dal comportamento per immaginare, poniamo, una strategia alternativa di conquista dell'osso.

Sappiamo che una delle differenze fondamentali fra il sistema mirror dell'uomo e quello delle scimmie antropomorfe sta nel fatto che quest'ultimo è in grado d'incarnare non solo le azioni altrui evidentemente dotate di uno scopo (prendere una mela per mangiarla) ma anche un gesto non finalizzato, in totale assenza visiva dell'oggetto (ad esempio, far finta di prendere qualcosa con la mano che "mima" la presa di un oggetto con una certa forma (Gallese e Guerra 2017). In entrambi i casi, il mio sistema mirror risuona, ma lo fa in maniera più o meno intensa a seconda che l'oggetto sia realmente presente o che sia immaginabile dalla forma della presa della mano. Questa differenza nel grado di cognizione incarnata potrebbe costituire un meccanismo importante per l'avvio di processi semiotici. Nell'osservare qualcuno che fa finta di afferrare qualcosa di palesemente assente, infatti, il mio cervello è probabilmente obbligato ad attribuire comunque un senso a quell'azione, e questo è possibile soltanto se il mio sistema cognitivo è in grado di sostituire a quella presa vuota un oggetto dalla forma corrispondente alla presa (Gallese e Guerra 2017).

Per questa attività immaginativa è necessario che io ricorra quantomeno alla memoria visiva dei diversi oggetti con i quali sono venuto a contatto, e scegliere fra quelli che potrebbero stare nella presa della mano altrui, secondo la mia memoria di azioni relazionate ad oggetti. L'oggetto potrebbe essere una mela, ma anche un pomo immangiabile o un sasso. Le differenze di presa rese possibili dal nostro pollice opponibile aprono a infinite possibilità di attribuzione di senso a gesti che si differenziano anche in piccoli particolari (Gibson 1999). Per questo tipo di competenze cognitive è presumibilmente necessario un "sé autobiografico" (Damasio 2013). Soltanto distinguendo l'oggetto dal gesto e astraendo il gesto dall'agente, la mia mente può costruire la categoria soggetto/oggetto e comprendere in maniera autoriflessiva che io sono solo un potenziale possessore di quell'oggetto, così come potrebbe esserlo il contendente. Per sostituire l'oggetto visto con uno non visto occorre un'astrazione che la sola cognizione incarnata non è in grado di compiere; occorre un'esperienza autobiografica legata a

una memoria semantica degli oggetti in sé, o dei loro tratti, staccati dal loro contesto di azione–conquista. È questo il presupposto affinché "io" sia diverso da "lui" e contemporaneamente dal valore del nostro contendere.

Ma questa elaborazione di discernimento nasce in una condizione d'intersoggettività, dove è in primis la comprensione condivisa del valore dell'oggetto a rendere possibile il suo isolamento semiotico e l'isolamento dell'agente dal continuum sensomotorio. Una volta però che l'oggetto diventa segno, anche il gesto vuoto conquista una sua autonomia, e può diventare un atto comunicativo convenzionale. Il "prendere" gestuale senza oggetto può servire da segno per indicare qualcosa di astratto, un "prendere" generico che può ricevere senso dalla presa di diversi oggetti immaginari. Ecco che anche l'azione si distingue dal comportamento finalizzato e si semiotizza. A sua volta, solo un gesto così astratto dal contesto può servire per un'ulteriore sostituzione semiotica, ad esempio nel descrivere lo stesso gesto con un verbo linguistico. Il vantaggio è la condizione di possibilità per lo sviluppo esplosivo della semiosi e dunque delle forme esclusivamente umane di attribuzione di valori e significati al mondo esterno.

Lo svantaggio (che è indissolubile dal vantaggio) è che questo sistema intersoggettivo di comprensione del mondo può causare fraintendimenti, comprensioni parziali o sbagliate di ciò che un dato soggetto vuole comunicare a un altro. Io posso mimare il gesto di presa di un oggetto pensando che sia una mela, ma l'altro, in assenza di linguaggio, può attribuire al mio gesto la presa di un sasso e modificare completamente il senso dell'azione mimata. Tuttavia, la possibilità stessa di essere "compresi male", unita alla consapevolezza di ciò, può dare luogo a finzioni volontarie dirette a confondere l'interlocutore, a indurlo a "indovinare", e così via. Posso far finta di prendere la mela contesa dal mio avversario per fargliela afferrare e invece colpirlo alla mano dopo che lui se ne sia impossessato. La memoria di due azioni immaginarie divenute segno al di fuori del loro contesto pragmatico mi consente di articolarle in un progetto più complesso, in un programma narrativo (Greimas 1984) mirato alla conquista dell'oggetto anche con l'uso della finzione e dell'inganno, secondo lo "schema narrativo canonico" del semiologo francese.

Jurij M. Lotman (1992) pensava che fosse proprio questa nostra capacità di agire al di fuori delle regole genetiche o dei programmi

standard del comportamento a differenziare l'uomo dagli animali. L'animale si attiene a regole precise di comportamento e nell'intersoggettività può agire soltanto con una migliore o peggiore esecuzione di un programma definito geneticamente o comunque interamente acquisito anche dai suoi consimili (Lotman 1993). L'uomo può essere "sleale" rispetto alle regole condivise proprio per la sua capacità d'immaginare azioni imprevedibili per l'altro, azioni che non fanno ancora parte del mio repertorio esperienziale diretto né di quello altrui. Su quali dispositivi "aggiuntivi" rispetto al sistema cognitivo animale il nostro sistema cervello–corpo possa contare, è un tema cruciale per un fecondo dialogo interdisciplinare.

2. Il cervello metaforico

Le tecniche di neuroimaging hanno mostrato che il sistema mirror del soggetto umano, il quale osservi l'azione di un altro, è diffuso in precise aree del cervello: la corteccia premotoria ventrale, che include l'area di Broca (deputata alla comprensione e elaborazione del linguaggio) e la parte anteriore del lobulo parietale inferiore (Gallese e Guerra 2017). Ramachandran (2013) ipotizza che questa piccola porzione del cervello, che gli esseri umani possiedono in esclusiva, sia in grado di elaborare contenuti di tipo metaforico–multimodale, ad esempio associando suoni a forme visive. Nel noto esperimento del "Bouba Kiki", persone di lingue e culture anche molto diverse fra loro chiameranno spontaneamente Kiki il disegno con margini acuminati e Bouba quello a forma di nuvoletta, e ciò perché, spiega Ramachandran, i tratti comuni astratti di figure e suoni, anche in relazione alla conformazione dei nostri apparati fonatori, formano a un metalivello un sistema univoco (Ramachandran e Oberman 2006).

Lo stesso accade per la sinestesia, dove si associano, al di fuori di ogni convenzione culturale, colori a numeri o a note musicali, ecc. (Ramachandran 2004). Sempre Ramachandran sostiene che queste prime forme associative pre–linguistiche siano rese possibili da un sistema neurale in grado di elaborare le astrazioni, il quale, nel corso dell'evoluzione, si è poi specializzato per astrazioni sempre più complesse, e individua nel Lobulo parietale inferiore il centro elaborativo di queste costruzioni. Dapprima questo apparato serviva per le astra-

zioni del tipo Bouba–Kiki e per la sinestesia "inferiore", in seguito, per esaptazione, si sarebbe sviluppata nello stesso modulo cerebrale una porzione, esclusivamente umana, in grado di elaborare astrazioni "superiori" con il coinvolgimento del linguaggio. Così, ad esempio, noi possiamo associare numeri, giorni e mesi dell'anno, grazie al concetto astratto di "ordinalità" (Ramachandran 2004), oppure inventare metafore multimodali come "camicia chiassosa" o "sapore pungente" (Ramachandran 2013, p. 130).

Approcciando questi studi con un metodo semiotico, diremo che il lobulo parietale inferiore nell'uomo è implicato in un sistema cognitivo–semantico che funziona per relazioni semisimboliche (Greimas e Courtés 2007, *ad vocem*). Non sono gli oggetti con le loro qualità a essere assimilati, ma le categorie che essi rappresentano nella relazione. Così, ad esempio, se io esprimo con i gesti del capo un "sì" o un "no" a seconda che abbassi il mento o ruoti il capo, posso comprendere questi messaggi perché un codice convenzionale assegna al "no" un movimento orizzontale e al "sì" un movimento verticale del capo (Greimas 1984). Un altro esempio di queste relazioni riguarda la distribuzione dello spazio testuale nell'arte visiva, come nell'arte sacra tradizionale dove la parte alta del quadro è il luogo del "divino" e quella bassa dell'"umano" (Marsciani 2012).

Ramachandran ipotizza che la capacità di astrazione di LPI dipenda dalla sua singolare posizione nel cervello: la giunzione TPO, infatti, separa e insieme unisce le aree del tatto, della vista e dell'udito, e LPI con la sua fitta rete di circuiti mirror è situato al centro di questo incrocio nella corteccia premotoria (Ramachandran 2013). LPI è insomma nella posizione funzionale più adatta per mettere in contatto fra loro aree sensoriali diverse, probabilmente integrandole con gli stimoli propriocettivi ed emotivi, e di mediarne la comunicazione attraverso i neuroni bimodali o plurimodali che contiene. Da qui la sua capacità di raffrontare i messaggi visivi, motori e tattili e di trovarvi elementi astratti comuni come nel caso della sinestesia "superiore" o delle metafore linguistiche.

Questa attività di astrazione in cui si sarebbe specializzato LPI è distribuita in entrambi gli emisferi: abbiamo il lobulo sinistro capace di elaborare prevalentemente metafore linguistiche, mentre il destro "le metafore legate al corpo e al suo rapporto con lo spazio" (Ramachandran 2013). Assumendo tale ipotesi, per un semiologo è fondamentale

comprendere se questa attività creativa implichi l'integrazione funzionale dei due emisferi, capire, ad esempio, se una metafora "linguistica" possa nascere senza l'ausilio di concetti astratti elaborati nella parte "spaziale–corporea", e viceversa. Assunto fondamentale dell'epistemologia lotmaniana è che nessun linguaggio possa funzionare se non all'interno di un sistema (semiosfera) dove interagiscano almeno due linguaggi diversi, i quali hanno l'uno rispetto all'altro difficoltà di traduzione reciproca (Lotman 1990, pp. 123 ss.).

Supponiamo di essere un uomo preistorico che osserva un dipinto sulla roccia, raffigurante un bisonte, appena realizzato da un altro uomo. I tratti impressi sulla roccia, le loro dimensioni, i colori e la stessa bidimensionalità del disegno sono evidentemente tutt'altra cosa rispetto all'esperienza visiva del bisonte "autentico". Diremo per comodità esplicativa che il disegno è una metafora del bisonte. Le similarità dei tratti informativi che giungono al mio cervello nell'osservare un bisonte vero rispetto a uno disegnato devono essere elaborate sotto forma di astrazioni in una qualche parte del nostro cervello. Prima ancora di poter riconoscere certe parti anatomiche caratteristiche, ad esempio, occorre che l'osservatore padroneggi un sistema di relazioni spaziali come: alto/basso, davanti/dietro, alla mia destra/alla mia sinistra, e così via. Riconosco la "testa" perché sta davanti, o la groppa perché sta tra il capo e la coda, prima ancora di "scoprire" che il disegno raffigura fra le altre cose "testa" e "gobba".

Già nelle primissime forme d'arte conosciute troviamo inoltre il tentativo di riprodurre un movimento. Il pittore di Chauvet, per raffigurare una leonessa in corsa disegnò tre teste, una successiva all'altra e parzialmente coperte l'una dall'altra. L'autore ha cioè introdotto nel proprio disegno un "prima e dopo". È probabile allora che qui entri in funzione l'attività di LPI sinistro, deputato ad astrarre catene sintattiche a partire dalla cognizione incarnata del movimento. Questo movimento è relativo allo spostamento degli occhi nel vedere un soggetto in corsa, e si riproduce nel percorso oculare a cui invita il disegno (Zechi 2007), un movimento del corpo dell'animale che noi siamo dunque in grado di avvertire simile al nostro spostarci nello spazio (Rammachandran 2013).

Gli esempi fatti mirano a sottolineare la necessità, dal punto di vista informativo, che le parti complementari di un sistema (in questo caso, i due LPI) non siano semplicemente artefici di uno scambio di

informazioni utili ma esercitino un vero e proprio dialogo per poter comprendere la realtà esterna attraverso il sistema cervello–corpo e la loro interrelazione. Il problema non è soltanto di capire se le aree di specializzazione funzionale del cervello comunichino o meno, ma anche quello di spiegare come queste aree, se comunicano, rendono possibili i processi astrattivi "superiori" della cognizione. Occorre cioè un modello che consideri, oltre al messaggio, alla sua produzione e alla sua ricezione, anche i processi di traduzione delle sue componenti nei vari formati cognitivi. Un messaggio visivo che viene elaborato dal sistema motorio mantiene intatto il suo valore informativo iniziale, oppure questo viene modificato per poterlo adattare al formato proprio del sistema ricevente? Queste riflessioni sui sistemi informativi sono alla base della teoria semiotica di Lotman.

Immaginiamo due sistemi cognitivi, senza altre definizioni, dei quali sappiamo che ciascuno ha un proprio modo di costruire le informazioni che processa, in coerenza con il proprio "formato rappresentazionale" (Ramachandran). Il messaggio che proviene da "A" viene scomposto e ricomposto nel nuovo formato "B", e viceversa. Se i contenuti del messaggio "A", dopo la traduzione nel nuovo formato restassero identici, ossia ri–traducibili nel passaggio inverso, non si avrebbe nessun accrescimento d'informazione nel sistema complessivo che include i due linguaggi. Se, invece, la traduzione nel formato ricevente comportasse una selezione di tratti significativi per quel sistema e le novità introdotte potessero indurre una riorganizzazione cognitiva dello stesso, ci sarebbe un significativo aumento d'informazione. Lo stesso, evidentemente, nel caso inverso. Se, dunque, il dialogo fra sistemi cognitivi parziali (modulari) è reso difficile dalla differenza di linguaggio dei rispettivi formati, la stessa difficoltà di traduzione rende possibile un incremento informativo del sistema generale che comprende "A", "B", e tutti gli altri moduli funzionali del sistema, riuniti in un sé metacognitivo integrato e autocosciente. Siamo di fronte allo stesso meccanismo studiato da Lotman per i sistemi culturali, secondo il modello della semiosfera (Semenenko 2016), dove il fatto che i diversi linguaggi siano solo parzialmente traducibili l'uno nell'altro arricchisce il sistema e non porta affatto a una Babele cognitiva (Fabbri 2003, pp. 68 ss.).

3. Processi d'integrazione e di specializzazione

Un altro neuroscienziato la cui teoria ha ottenuto grande diffusione, Giulio Tononi (Massimini e Tononi 2013b; Edelman e Tononi 2013a), ha definito la coscienza umana esattamente come un sistema di informazione integrata. Seguendo Lotman, l'unico modo per il quale una tale integrazione possa funzionare è il dialogo delle componenti specializzate, che — oltretutto — devono aumentare come effetto dello stesso dialogo la propria ricchezza informativa specialistica (Semenenko 2016). Potrebbe essere proprio questa tensione fra individualità semiotiche e loro appartenenza a un sistema, fra specializzazione e integrazione — che Tononi definisce "improbabile" —, a rendere la coscienza umana tanto ricca e complessa. Se questi processi di specializzazione–integrazione riguardano anche la simulazione incarnata, bisognerebbe riconoscere che anche il sistema motorio, pur nella sua complessità multimodale, non sia in grado da solo di fungere da "base" per gli altri formati, ma che esso stesso si forma e si sviluppa nell'interazione e nell'intersezione funzionale con i linguaggi sensoriali, a cominciare dal tatto che, già nell'utero materno, è implicato nella comprensione prelinguistica della relazione tra il feto e il suo mondo di riferimento (Ammanniti e Gallese 2014).

Nel caso dell'accoppiata vista–motricità, abbiamo però un elemento ulteriore di complicazione; l'oggetto di cui pure abbiamo avuto esperienza tattile è distante dal nostro corpo, e implica l'intervento di un sistema rappresentazionale che inscriva il rapporto soggetto/oggetto in uno spazio di relazioni elaborato a partire da un corpo situato (Merleau–Ponty 2003). Siccome l'oggetto può non essere "a portata di mano", i due sistemi in dialogo concorrono a formare un sistema semantico astratto di categorie quali: vicino/lontano (a portata vs fuori portata); in alto/in basso; alla mia destra/alla mia sinistra; dietro/davanti; e così via.

Se questa ipotesi è plausibile, si potrebbe interpretare in chiave semiotica (nel paradigma lotmaniano) il ruolo funzionale giocato dai circuiti mirror nella formazione della coscienza in quanto informazione integrata. Tale compito potrebbe essere quello di "filtrare" i messaggi utili all'uno o all'altro sistema, permettendo l'ingresso di messaggi "esterni" ancora da tradurre. Selezionando soltanto tratti utili all'elaborazione di un dato sistema ricevente, il messaggio che

proviene dal sistema emittente è evidentemente trasformato. Tuttavia, per i ragionamenti già fatti, questa distorsione non è affatto un handicap per l'integrazione: l'introduzione di un elemento nuovo nel sistema obbliga quest'ultimo ad adeguare il messaggio al proprio formato di elaborazione, portando non solo ad un'aggiunta quantitativa di dati ma ad un adeguamento del sistema ricevente, costretto a integrare la nuova informazione nel proprio stile di elaborazione. Lo stesso accade, evidentemente, nel passaggio inverso, quando il sistema che prima riceveva l'informazione ora la trasferisce al ricevente passando per il filtro di un circuito mirror.

Visto in questo modo, il ruolo dei neuroni specchio è quello di formare un confine semiotico che insieme unisce e separa le parti modulari (individualità semiotiche) in dialogo fra loro (Lotman 1990, pp. 131 ss.).

Potrebbe essere questo processo che ha consentito al nostro cervello di svincolarsi dalla modularità — che supponiamo incidere assai più fortemente nella mente degli animali, e tanto più indietro nella scala evolutiva — e di formare un sistema cervello–corpo completamente integrato, come presupposto per l'autocoscienza. L'integrazione di sistemi parziali in un sistema più complesso comporta che, saturata l'integrazione (nel sistema non circolano più messaggi nuovi), nessun modulo possa più dirsi indipendente ma al contrario il suo ruolo è subordinato alla funzionalità del sistema inclusivo di cui è parte. Ciò significa che non ci sono più diversi moduli situati a uno stesso livello, perché essi si integrano in un metalivello superiore che è più importante delle parti che include. L'integrazione informativa si mostra dunque come un fenomeno rivoluzionario nella cognizione umana dal punto di vista evolutivo, perché il comportamento dell'essere umano, giunto a questo stadio, comincia a dipendere da una "co–scienza", e pure gli automatismi che conserva nelle parti più antiche del cervello, del tutto attivi, entrano in conflitto con il sistema cognitivo che ora ha preso il controllo generale. Tutto ciò però non basta per il "grande salto".

Tononi (Massimini e Tononi 2013) ha dimostrato che ciascun emisfero sviluppa la propria integrazione dei sistemi interni indipendentemente dall'altro. Se noi recidiamo il corpo calloso, con i suoi miliardi di fasci che collegano sistemi complementari nei due emisferi, il soggetto vive e si comporta a seconda che la situazione richieda un tipo di coscienza o un altro. L'emisfero sinistro comprende i disegni ma

non sa parlare, e così via. Come si forma, allora l'integrazione delle due parti che porta a una coscienza unificata?

Secondo quanto detto prima, si avrebbe un identico processo di integrazione, soltanto che i confini fra i sistemi sono dislocati e messi in contatto con ponti che passano dall'uno all'altro emisfero, dove l'informazione viaggia in entrambi i versi. Le singole parti di ogni sistema emisferico dapprima scambiano informazioni con le parti modulari complementari dell'emisfero opposto, oltre che con quelle modulari del proprio emisfero. Ma questo non è un processo solipsistico: come si è detto, dipende dall'interrelazione fra simili. Il problema è allora comprendere come le coscienze individuali si integrino nel sistema semiosferico della coscienza collettiva o "cultura".

Oltre i meccanismi profondi della simulazione incarnata, il mondo di relazione degli uomini è immensamente più complesso di quello degli altri animali. La specializzazione emisferica ha reso l'uomo imprevedibile agli occhi degli altri nel comportamento, e il vivere comune deve essere dettato da regole convenzionali. Regole che nascono nelle menti dei singoli individui davanti al bisogno condiviso. Per istituire convenzioni occorre un oggetto esterno, che emerga per alcuni tratti dal continuum in cui è inserito e che nella relazione intersoggettiva diventi testo della cultura. Nell'intersoggettività, l'oggetto della convenzione deve essere interpretato da ciascuna mente individuale e questo impone dei limiti al successo della comprensione reciproca. Lotman ha spiegato che l'incomprensione ha svolto un ruolo altrettanto importante a quello della comprensione intesa come comunicazione classica (Lotman 1993, cap. "La canna pensante"). Se la crescita dell'informazione distorta porterebbe immediatamente al caos della comunicazione, il tentativo comune delle menti d'includere comunque in un sistema superiore e inglobante informazioni che sappiano adeguarsi al linguaggio comune del sistema, compensa l'ambiguità senza poterla risolvere. A complicare le cose si aggiunge il fatto che il sistema "cultura" è fatto di sottosistemi costituiti dai diversi sistemi semiotici. Ma anche qui, il sistema generale, la semiosfera culturale, beneficia in ricchezza di informazione dai continui dialoghi fra le parti "indipendenti" della cultura, quali sono le varie forme d'arte e, in genere, i vari linguaggi. È una forma perfetta d'informazione integrata.

Tutto il lavoro teorico di Jurij M. Lotman è ispirato dal principio che il testo creativo, proprio per la sua capacità di mettere in con-

nessione le menti pur lasciando che ogni mente possa liberamente trarre da quel testo un arricchimento, sia un vero e proprio dispositivo pensante (Lotman 1990). L'opera d'arte, secondo Lotman, cerca sempre nuove forme per rendere più complesso il rapporto fra il mondo immaginato che ha ispirato l'opera e il mondo "reale". Ciò non vuol dire assolutamente distorcere il reale, ma semmai scardinare le convinzioni, le abitudini, i comportamenti stereotipi, che la cultura ha cristallizzato nelle sue convenzioni. L'artista affida a un testo (che ha un proprio sistema di segni) la sua liberazione da queste costrizioni e introduce nella semiosfera elementi di rinnovamento (Semenenko 2012) D'altra parte, a sopprimere queste forze creatrici individuali ci sono le forme di gestione politica del potere che nascono dal bisogno che ha una cultura, per essere riconosciuta nella sua individualità e unicità, di autodescriversi.

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The Death of the "Intent"
and the "Life towards Death" of the Author**

Xiaoming Chen*

TITOLO ITALIANO: La morte dell'"intento" e la "vita per la morte" dell'autore

ABSTRACT: The question of "the absence or the presence of the 'intent'" raised by Zhang Jiang has extraordinarily practical significance. The theory of "the death of the author" or "the intentional fallacy", as a modern theory, has its own background of development, which is the product of the change of the humanities of the 20th century, and also the intrinsic need of literary criticism. As a kind of thought of modernism, it has its inevitability as well as its bias. In fact, even the most radical theorists of the text, such as Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida, have an indissoluble bond with the authors when they discuss the text. The critical activities are to locate the position of the authors or poets in literary or ideological history through explaining their texts, and set up a kind of thought or idea through elucidating these authors or poets. Even if it might be hard to understand or grasp a certain author (poet), the critic still tries to build a complete image of this author (poet) even based on the fragmented text. The Chinese literature after the 1990s, indeed, encountered difficulties in the high–lift of thought. At present, to revive the ideological power of Chinese literature is the responsibility of literary criticism and it does need literary criticism to analyze the author's thought through the text. Thus the renewed emphasis of literary theory and criticism on the authorial intent becomes a meaningful interactive creation.

In 2016, Zhang Jiang published a lengthy paper titled *The Absence and the Presence of the "Intent"*, questioning the relationship between the "author" and the text. This is another paper written by Zhang Jiang following his article titled *Compulsory Interpretation Theory*, which investigates into the fundamental problems of literary theory and criticism, and has triggered much discussion and undoubtedly had positive significance. Zhang Jiang said that

> no matter how the intent is dispelled or resisted, it always exists in the text, even if the "author dies", and the text cannot be altered after being delivered to readers. The intent — to say exactly the authorial intent, still remains present, and determines the quality and value of the text, affecting the understanding and interpretation of the text by the other. This other many not perceive the influence and decision, or the other can also automatically resist the intent, but the infiltration and the decisive force of the intent runs throughout the whole process of the understanding and interpretation of the text. Whether you admit it or not, accept it or not, it has always played a role unavoidably. (2016, p. 1)

Although what is discussed here is the relationship between the author and the text, and whether the writing of the author affects and decides the composition and value of the text, it also contains the questioning of the radical change of the contemporary literary theory and criticism, as well as the doubt about the turn from the subjectivity of literary criticism towards textuality. At present, it is of great constructive significance as the Chinese literary theory criticism tries to clarify the premise of all these theories and to find the path more suitable to Chinese literary criticism. Although it is impossible for the discussion of this question to reach consensus quickly, or to form a complete and more desirable theoretical system, the opening of the problem domain indeed offers a theoretical orientation, and also a theoretical foundation for the seeking to reconstruct the relationship between literary criticism and creative literary practice.

1.

Separating the relationship between the authorial intent and the text, and declaring the "death of the author", are both the products of the

contemporary literary criticism developing into a radical stage, and the fundamental symbol of the transformation of the contemporary theory, which shows that it has entered the stage of textuality. In response to Zhang Jiang's viewpoint, Nan Fan quoted Terry Eagleton's exposition and summarized the three stages of contemporary theoretical criticism, namely, from the author to the text, and then to the reader. Nan Fang insightfully pointed out that contemporary Chinese literary criticism has not undergone these three phases strictly and explicitly (Nanfan 2017, p. 2). To view from the current Chinese literary theory and criticism, "the death of the author" is merely a theoretical concept, which began to circulate in the late 1980s, but it did not have practical effect. Chinese theoretical criticism still pays more attention to the author, that is, the main body of Chinese literary criticism is still associated with biography and impression. There is almost no pure textual criticism which does not pay attention to the author. Even so, it is important to clarify the question theoretically, as it reflects the course of contemporary theory criticism, with its radicalization and extremism.

The author–centered criticism era is also the era dominated by cultural elitism, and when the discipline of literary criticism as a sort of cultural type has been established, it is really difficult to make a clear definition. Since the time of Plato, people have started talking about literature and art, and the ancient Chinese reportedly began this in the Preface to Mao Poems. *The 300 poems* compiled by Confucius and his theory of "Xing Guan Qun Yuan" constitute the origin of Chinese literary theory and criticism. There is no doubt that both Chinese and foreign literary criticism have long histories. But literary criticism, as a discipline, is a modern thing[1]. According to the contemporary French critic, Albert Thibaudet (1874–1936), the exact starting year is 1827, for in this year the courses about literary criticism appeared in French universities. There were three critics who taught literature as their profession and they were, namely, Guizot, Cousin and Vihlman. Thibaudet believes that there are three factors that determine the emergence of literary criticism: the first is the emergence of the

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1. For a long time, in the development of the history of Western academic studies, there was no such term as "literary theory", so in our statement we will pay attention to the different era background and carefully use the concept of "literary theory".

professions of education and journalism, the second is the need to summarize due to the increase of the historical sense, and the third is the diversified writing and appreciative taste[2].

Apparently, in the beginning of the 19th century when literary criticism came into fashion, it was related to the profession of journalism, the new courses set up in the universities, as well as the appreciative taste towards the writing. And this showed that it was bound to have a close relationship with authors. During that period, literature began to produce larger influence in modern society, and authors were highly valued and paid attention to in the community. Just think about the time in the beginning of the French Modernism, with only his *Enamels and Cameos*, Théophile Gautier (1811–1872) dared to wear a red vest in the French theater, showing off and attracting the attention of a large number of ladies and maids. So it is not difficult to understand that the author holds an indisputable authoritative position towards his own writings. The influence of authors in society is undoubtedly the basic reason why literary criticism can never omit the dominant role of authors, and at the same time, there are many other reasons that function the same: literature boosts humanitarianism and critical ideology, and the epistemology and methodology of the historical doctrine plays a crucial role in literary criticism. All these show that it is all natural for literary criticism to center on the author and emphasize the authoritative role of the author. Wilhelm Dilthey (1833—1911) once pointed out:

> Autobiography is the highest and most instructive form in which the understanding of life confronts us. Here is the outward, phenomenal course of a life which forms the basis for understanding what has produced within a certain environment. The man who understands it is the same as the one who created it. A particular intimacy of understanding results from this. The person who seeks the connecting threads in the history of his life has already, from different points of view, created coherence in that life which he is now putting into words. (Dilthey 1961, pp. 85–6)

Dilthey's remark distinctively elaborates on the superiority of biographical criticism, revealed the intimate relationship between the

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2. For the analysis of this problem, see Thibaudet 2003, p.34 . I have also published a chapter entitled *The History of Criticism and the Mysterious Literariness* in my book *The Great Changes of Aesthetic* (2009).

people who understood the works (as critics) and the authors, and even viewed the understanding (from the historians or literary critics) as a complete realization of the authorial intent. They could achieve the unity in the experience and meaning of life, and complete the mutual blending of spirit and experience. In Dilthey's view, a great historian must be a person who can combine oneself with the living state of others, and this is undoubtedly people's expectation of great critics at that time, as well as later long afterward.

In the long classical and modern periods, literary criticism has always held the notion of centering on the author, but in the 20th century, with the boom and crisis of literature, this notion was challenged and shaken. When we discuss the emergence of New Criticism in the United States and the formation of text–oriented criticism, we need to focus on a larger historical background. About this large background, I believe, there are three points that need to be considered:

Firstly, the flourishing of English literature. Terry Eagleton pointed out in his Introduction to Literary Theory of the 20th century that New Criticism flourished while riding on the head of wartime nationalism. This statement shows that English is associated with the expansion of British colonialism to the world in the First World War, and the tide of globalization and cosmopolitanism which arose in the 20th century. English, this Anglo–Saxon language, also gradually became the language spoken by the whole world in the 20th century, and English literature has become the most widely read texts in the world. Also earlier, British Industrial Revolution had promoted the dissemination of English literature to the global public, and the British overseas colonization also carried out the educational means of English literature for its culture and value. At the same time, Oxford and Cambridge became the center of English literature education, and the criticism of English literature has formed the school of "New Criticism". The rise of British and American "New Criticism", which was represented by Ransom, Richards, Eliot, Empson, also helped with the spreading of English literature around the world. Although these critics may not be consciously compatible with the globalization of English, "text reading" itself showed the profound beauty of English. "New Criticism" did not explicitly advocate separating the text from the authorial intent, but they reversed the mainstream of centering on biographical criticism, and returned to the text and English

words, which characterized another period of criticism. As a particular representative of "New Criticism", Eliot made it clear: «[P]oetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality» (Eliot 1974, p. 43). He believes that poets can be good poets only if they obey traditions and comprehend traditions. Not having poets' own personality and removing poets' feelings, actually minimizes a poet's subjectivity to the lowest level and lets only words speak for themselves. He literally analyzed line by line the poems by Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909), and commented that «the meaning and the sound are one thing. He is concerned with the meanings of the word in a peculiar way: he employs, or rather "works", the word's meaning» (Ransom 1979, p. 143). Eliot maintains that to Swinburn «[I]t is the word that gives him the thrill, not the object» (*ibidem*, p. 144). Ransom greatly appreciated this opinion: «The poet stops on the words, not uses the words to go beyond them» (*ibidem*, p. 144). Later, while evaluating works by T.S. Eliot as a critic, Hartmann says, «Eliot is not concerned with intellectual revolution or a mediumistic profaning of the dead, but with purifying the language, with enabling it to digest — if it must— a "heavy fund of historical and scientific knowledge"» (Hartman 2007, p. 57). The interpretation of English poetry by New Criticism undoubtedly has helped people understand the profound beauty of English language. We certainly cannot say that "New Criticism" helps English become the language of the world, but the rise of the Anglo–American "New Criticism" is not irrelevant to English becoming a world language.

Secondly, the rise of scientism. After entering the 20th century, the previous human culture affected by great thoughts, turned into one affected by scientism. The previous study of humanities since Plato, which has a pedigree of the thought history, has shifted to the linguistics which emphasizes the method of empirical analysis. Freudian psychology and Saussure's linguistics strongly influenced literary studies. Both the Geneva linguistics and the Russian formalism have made the focus on textual research on the basis of methodology, and thus formed a trend. With the influence of the doctrines of Semiotics and Structuralism on literary studies, Structuralism spreads to the whole field of the social sciences and even leads to the weakening of traditional philosophy. In the 1950s and 1960s, as a stronghold of post–war

European ideology, France was changing quietly. Existentialism had to give way to Structuralism and the era of Sartre ended. The younger generation of intellectuals emerged and they expressed other social concept and professional conviction. In retrospect, Foucault said,

> suddenly, and without apparent reason, one realised, about fifteen years ago, that one bad moved far, very far, away from the previous generation, the generation of Sartre and Merleau–Ponty — the generation of the Temps Modemes that used to be the norm for our thinking and the model for our lives. Sartre's generation appeared to us an extremely courageous and magnanimous generation, which passionately invested themselves in life, polities, and existence. We, however — we have discovered something else for ourselves, another passion, the passion for the concept and for that which I would wish to call the system. (Broekman 1974, p. 2)

More young students cheered on the scientific nature of structuralism, and they even cheered about finally having a socialist science thanks to the structural anthropology. Before this period, the humanities could not be called "science", and in the heyday of scientism, many intellectuals even feel ashamed for literature lacking "scientific characteristics". Now Structuralism changed the situation. Lévi–Strauss explained that «structural linguistics aims at discovering general laws, either by induction or [. . .] by logical deduction, which would give them an absolute character» (Levi–Strauss 1963, p. 33) When asked by someone about the moral responsibility of intellectuals, Lévi–Strauss emphasized the authority generated from the intellectual's writing, with its strict and precise prudence.

Dominated by this sort of notion and method, the text itself builds a world of language and symbols, which can only be analyzed by scientifically empirical methods. As to the issues such as the "authorial intent", how to relate to text, how to appear as a system of the text's signs and words, because it is difficult to give a "scientific" description, they are bound to be excluded from the text. Obviously, from the perspective of empirical analysis, the "authorial intent" is a concept which can neither be measured nor be clarified, that is, it cannot be proven false. All the concepts that cannot be falsified are difficult to be confirmed.

Thirdly, the influence of linguistic analytic philosophy. After the 1930s, the linguistic analytic philosophy of Europe and the United

States replaced the traditional metaphysical philosophy. In Cambridge and Oxford, the ordinary linguistic philosophy became more active, and then the representatives, such as J.T.D. Weston of the Cambridge School, and G. Rael, J. Austin, and P.F Strawson of the Oxford School, swiftly occupied the central position in academism philosophy. During and after the Second World War, logical empiricism evolves out of the analytic philosophy, and developed further in the USA, and its representatives include Rudolf Carnap, Hans Reichenbach, Herbert Feigl, Carl G. Heimpel, Willar Van Quine, etc. who replaced or reformed pragmatism, and occupied a dominant position in the American philosophical circles. This philosophical background can also explain the theoretical turn of American literary criticism after the 1970s and 1980s, and the comprehensive and thorough textual analysis of *Yale School's Gang of Four*, with narratology and deconstructionism which were more popular than "New Criticism".

It is worth noting that the philosophy of linguistic analysis is not concerned with the significance of statement analysis, nor does it believe that the meaning of statements is important, and they analyze the logical relationship of the statement. Willard Van Orman Quine did «feel no reluctance toward refusing to admit meanings» (Quine 1961, p. 11). He argues that «meanings themselves, as obscure intermediary entities, may well be abandoned» (*ibidem*, p. 22), and we do not need the imaginary entities called as meaning, because it does not say anything, and «the explanatory value of special and irreducible intermediary entities called meanings is surely illusory» (*ibidem*, p. 12). As a logical pragmatic analysis philosopher, Quine denies the meaning as an independent reality or psychological existence. And if we start from this philosophical point of view, it is undoubtedly inconceivable and meaningless for the intent of a modernized author to be linked with the text. The main idea of analytic philosophy is also not so advantageous to the definite relationship between the author and the text.

Of course, it lacks academic buttress trying to explain why contemporary theoretical criticism separates "the intent of the author" away from these backgrounds, but it is more than enough to invalidate the intent of the author.

2.

The difficulty for the "the intent of the author" to be implemented in the text is directly related to the viewpoints held by the contemporary literary criticism towards the text: the linguistic signs of the text cannot constitute a complete system, and the text does not possess a central decisive significance. This is of course a typical textual view from deconstruction, as Jacques Derrida pointed out:

> there was no center, that the center could not be thought in the form of a present–being, that the center had no natural site, that it was not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of nonlocus in which an infinite number of sign–substitutions came into play. This was the moment when language invaded the universal problematic, the moment when, in the absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse–provided we can agree on this word–that is to say, a system in which the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely. (Derrida 2002, pp. 353–4)

Admittedly, Derrida wrote this passage in refuting Levi–Strauss's idea of "incest prohibition" being the basis for the origins of kinship relations in the primitive society. In 1966 Derrida delivered a paper titled *Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* at Johns Hopkins University, challenging structuralism and proclaiming that the system, wholeness and center of structuralism could not be found at all, which was like a bomb dropped on the field of the humanities. If the closeness of the text in structuralism could break the authorial control over the text, then the idea of the decentralization and endless difference of the signs make difficult for the author to establish a meaning system, which could be determined by the author with an authoritative voice. What deconstruction does is to analyze the contradiction in the authorial intent, and dismantle the dislocation between the authorial original intention and the narration. Both Derrida and de Man have analyzed Rousseau's Confessions. Rousseau attempted to vindicate his pious confession in his Confessions, but in the analysis by Derrida and de Man, Rousseau's text itself is incomplete, and his narrative is disingenuous in its own.

Derrida believed that Rousseau's Confessions was caught in a sub-
stitute game for the lack of origin. It is said that the manuscript of
Confessions had been lost and then edited later, so the completeness of
this book may be questionable[3]. Derrida adopted Rousseau's strategy
in the book to deal with his narration. Rousseau has said that words are
the "dangerous substitutes" for speech, which means that the author's
writing is unreliable, not necessarily his true words. Derrida made a
small joke with Rousseau, saying that in Rousseau's constant expres-
sion of his love and gratitude towards "Mamma", Madam de Warren,
it contains a long replacement chain. On the one hand, Rousseau him-
self despised the substitution of words, but on the other hand he relied
on such substitutes. It was like his dependence on "Mamma", which
shows all the hypocrisy of Rousseau. "Mamma" (Madam de Warren)
is not Rousseau's mother, but his mistress, with Rousseau being 21
years old and Madam de Warren 29 years old. Rousseau's so–called
"mother" at the same time committed adultery with many servants
and might appear comparatively speaking more enthusiastic towards
Rousseau. The young Rousseau, who was immersed in the bitterness
of masturbation, was naturally grateful to Madam de Warren. His
memoir was filled with his praise of Madam de Warren: he licked
the dishes that "Mamma" used, kissed the curtains that "Mamma"
touched, lay on the bed where "Mamma" once slept and indulged
his fantasy [. . .]. All of these are the substitutions of "Mamma" being
absent, but they are the substitutions of the alternative. This "Mamma"
is actually a substitute for Rousseau's desires. Rousseau's biological
mother was not present (who died in childbirth). This was the substi-
tute chain, and then the emergence of companion Therese became a
substitute for Madam de Warren, and it was also a "dangerous substi-
tute". Rousseau said in Confessions that the substitution made him
mad because it was neither present nor absent and it destroyed their
happiness and innocence. Everything is a substitute, a substitute of
substitute. Derrida argued that the series of substitutes showed some
inevitability: «That of an infinite chain, ineluctably multiplying the sup-

3. There are three versions of the manuscript of the *Confessions*. The first version, or
the earliest one was incomplete, and the plot suspended in chapter iv. After his client
Du Beilu died, he handed to the Neuchatre library. The second part is the whole, which
is preserved in the House of Paris Library. Another is the Geneva manuscript, which
Rousseau made the text of this manuscript published finally.

plementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing they defer: the mirage of the thing itself, of immediate presence, of originary perception. Immediacy is derived. That all begins through the intermediary is what is indeed "inconceivable" [to reason]» (Derrida 1997, p. 157). The reason for Rousseau's confession, and his thanking Madam de Warren, in fact, got trapped in the substitute games of those descriptions of "claims" (such as "Mamma", "masturbation", "crazy", "gratitude" and so on). We do not even know what Rousseau was talking about and Rousseau himself saw no result in this "dangerous supplement" game. Derrida said, «[T]he supplement, which is neither simply the signifier nor simply the representer, does not take the place of a signified or a represented, as is prescribed by the concepts of signification or representation or by the syntax of the words "signifier" or "representer"» (*ibidem* 1997, p. 303).

Later Paul de Man also commented on Rousseau's the New Heloise in his Allegories of Reading, questioning the author's authoritative voice and Rousseau's truth and authenticity? In the New Heloise Rousseau wrote about two teenagers' love until they became young man and woman, claiming that these two young people came from the Alps. In fact, these two people were fabricated by Rousseau, but he avoided telling this in the text. He neither admitted nor denied the authenticity of the letters. The story in the book has no real scene and its reality points to fiction. It is clear that readers are not aware of this background, and they are reading the story as a real one, believing the fictitious fake. Rousseau denies his own identity in the book deliberately, saying that who the actual author is does not matter, and that what matters is the logic of the text itself. The true author who is considered the most authoritative in the traditional reading system does not possess the decisive power, and Rousseau also admits that the actual reference of the text cannot be completely mastered by reading. De Man's focus is on revealing the "allegorical meaning" of Rousseau's work; apparently he tries to get rid of the control of the author's authority, and prefers to portray the image of the author having fear and distrust towards reading, and negate the possibility of restoring the intent of the author through reading.

Although we could see that the theory of breaking up the immediate relationship between the authorial intent and the text has its basis in time and the history of thought, it does not mean that the

theory has permanent rationality in the academic sense, nor does it mean that it can effectively form a final verdict. In fact, even those extremists, such as Roland Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, and Paul de Man would unconsciously talk about the author of the text, whenever they talk about a text, and they always discuss the text in the name of the author. Whether de Man is talking about Proust's In Search of Lost Time or Rousseau's the New Heloise, or Derrida is deconstructing Levi–Strauss' structural anthropology, or Kafka's *Before the law*, both of them are discussing the works under the author's name, in the author's consistent background of creating their works. Then why is the "author dead"? The meaning of "the death of the author" is actually quite limited. Almost all the critical readings of the text, of course, also including the deconstruction criticism of Derrida and de Man, have all repeatedly returned to the author's thought so as to explain the various practices. As Zhang Jiang pointed out: «[T]he work or text has a definite existence, and the name of the author is circulated in the world» (Zhang Jiang 2016, p. 7), indeed, the intent of the author may not run entirely through the text, and the readers may not follow fully the intent of the author through the story, words, rhetoric or themes of the text, but this cannot deny the author's authority in the text. The author, who once lively created the text in his life must have influenced the formation and generation of the text. Zhang Jiang emphasized that «[W]riting is the author's consciously rational activity, and develops under the restriction and guidance of definite thinking and logical rules. And the basis is that writing itself is a conscious activity, and is the autonomous construction of conscious behavior» (*ibidem*, p. 8). After conscious rational activities are transformed into linguistic symbols, narratives and rhetoric, their intentions would more or less be altered or diminished, but after all, it is always necessary to discuss the text in the name of this author, so as to make it meaningful and to release more of its comprehensive meaning.

Of course, theoretically admitting that there is relationship between the author and the text is one thing, and determining the dominant function of the authorial intent to the text is another matter. The difference lies not only in degrees, but also the theoretical foothold to clarify the basic meaning of the intent of the author. If the intent of the author has an effect on the writing and reading of the text, then the

statement about the author's death is an exaggeration. Whether the independence of the text itself is affirmed, or the rhetorical function of words is emphasized, we cannot deny the authorial influence on the text.

Although Derrida gives people the impression that he is a deconstructionist trying to delete the author's function, his habitual tactic is to let the text go so close to the author, that the author and his every word could be actively connected together. He lets the intent of the author appear and disappear, and makes those words play with the author a dodging game. When invited by Panorama of French Literature to comment on the status of Mallarme in the history of French literature, he first asked himself a question, «[I]s there a place for Mallarme in a "history of literature"? Or, to begin with: does his text take place, take its place, in some overall picture of French literature?» (Derrida 1992, p. 111). Derrida's question means that he is going to mark the position of Mallarme in literary history by reading his poetic texts. Derrida said that Mallarme helped with the "rupture" of many categories in literature, such as literary history, literary criticism, and various philosophies and hermeneutics. Here at this moment Derrida tried to understand Mallarme under Mallarme's own name and wrote:

> If Mallarme marks a rupture, it is still taking the form of repetition. For example, it will reveal what the essence of literature in the past is. One would have to discover, with the help of this text and through it, the new logic of this double operation; which moreover we could only attribute to Mallarme by resorting to a naive and self–interested theory of the signature, the very one which Mallarme (Derrida 1992, p. 113).

Even it was to establish the status of Mallarme in an authoritative dictionary or the literary history volume, Derrida did not talk about Mallarme's life experiences, instead he made a thorough cross–reading of Mallarme's poems, essays, reading notes and other texts to establish Mallarme's deviation from the French literary tradition and his decoding of the writing rules laid down by the philosophy derived from Plato. Derrida believed that in Mallarme's poems, the language of poetry was no longer the primary ingredient of language. Mallarme's text escaped the representation control, and went back to its own syllable, mutual rhetoric, with the words addicted to the game

of their own. This is apparently an example of the most extreme criticism of there–is–nothing–beyond–the–texts, and even in such a paradigm, Derrida strangely quoted Mallarme's prose and notes as footnotes, which undoubtedly was exploring the intent of Mallarme, even though arranged by Derrida like games between texts. Derrida claimed that in Mallarme's poetry, the missing author was «actively inscribed, it is not an accident of the text, it is rather its nature; it marks the signature of an unceasing omission» (*ibidem*). In order to strengthen the effect of the disappearance of the authors, Derrida also quoted Mallarme's statements in *Crisis of Poems* and *About the Book*, as Mallarme also seemed to believe that he wrote poems and organized them into a book, «in order to omit the author». He tried to accomplish something exceptional or different, such as "the omission of the author" or "the death of the author" and so on. Mallarme fled away from his text of poetry, and after many years, in order to prove "the death of the author", Derrida turned to Mallarme's text and proved "the death" of Mallarme as an author.

No matter whether it is the author who wants to escape from himself, or whether it is the critic who tries to diminish the imprint of the author's signature, the author is always present. All the talks about the text are all the time attributed to the author's name and constitute the author's countless sayings of this text, which increase the author's reputation and artistic vitality.

3.

The notion of the "intentional fallacy" is also the greatest challenge to the "the intent of the author"[4]. Since all readings could be "misreading", even if the authors have had intent embedded in the text, readers may not be able to get it. This could be the case from the empirical point of view, but a considerable number of people can read out the same theme from the same text and also feel the same emotion. This may contain certain identity. Human beings have sympathies and shed similar ideas to the similar things, and if this statement will not be

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4. This statement comes from the two articles co–authored by W.K. Wimsatt and M.C. Beardsley: "the Intentional Fallacy" and "the Affective Fallacy".

completely denied, then the author also has his aspect of being an ordinary person, living in the world, eating cereal grains, behaving and speaking like every one of us, and language can also to some extent express common thoughts and emotions. Therefore, the "intent" of the author might "be misread" in the reading, but also possibly, it would be conveyed correctly.

However, it is important to note that Harold Bloom's "misreading" theory is not so simple, and the theological influence leads Bloom to see the great authors as a creator next only to the Supreme God, and this creator distorts or "misreads" the source of His thoughts, especially the inspiration from God's thoughts. Though the works created by the great authors are the "misreading" of God's thoughts, they are the classic texts second only to those created by the Supreme God. Hartmann of the *Yale school Gang of Four* once analyzed Bloom's "misreading" theory, and pointed out that "misreading" was a wrongly named term, which was lively but not quite useful. The term reminded people of the fact that reading was not purely a matter of interest, a reflection or a theoretical matter. It was as practical as what the British tradition often required. Moreover, by adapting to a scientific ideal and making it simple, the British tradition made the practical utilitarian, or something that can be conveyed without mistake. "Misreading" theory expressed a kind of resistance to British utilitarianism and scientific idea, and through the creative application of words, "New Criticism" opened up a literary world, where the confusion of reality could be eliminated. To Harold Bloom, criticism was a contemporary form of theology. Critics had the same or even greater ambition than authors. However, the "New Criticism" excessively indulged in the words in practice and almost completely forgot Eliot's ideal of "literary as a substitution religion".

In fact, no matter how certain theorists claim the "death of the author" or "the intentional fallacy", most of the specific critic activities tend to regard their own reading of the texts as the intent of the author. The attention people attach to the life subject of a creative work is far greater than the text. It is evident that the activity of criticism locates the position of an author or poet in the history of literature or thoughts through interpreting their works, and set up an idea or notion through interpretation the author or poet. No matter how hard it is to understand or grasp the author (poet), the critic always tries

his (her) best to build a complete image of the author through the fragmented text.

Alain Badiou once wrote a fairly unique article, titled *Philosophical Task: To Become the Person of the Era Represented by Pessoa*. The paper argues that the current era is still dominated by the trend of anti–Platonism. As Nietzsche claimed, his greatest task is to cure people of their Disease of Plato. The direction that Nietzsche oriented apparently continues to the 20th century. Badiou tries to explain that Fernando Pessoa is neither Platonic nor anti–Platonic. Although Platonism is mainly viewed from a mathematical perspective, but the basic meaning is the same, that is, whether there is an objective of the rationale that constitutes the source of all the truth. It is clear that in a certain sense the question of the decisive function of the "author's intent" is also platonic. Is the "author's intent" the origin of all the truth that form the objective understanding of the text? According to Badiou, the current era of anti–Platonic thought cannot let the intent of the author exist inside the text as an objective meaning, or determine all the readings. Badiou carried out an analysis of Pessoa from a very special perspective. He analyzed the phenomenon of Pessoa's "heteronyms", that is, Pessoa wrote poems with four different names. In addition to Pessoa, he also often used three distinct names: Alberto Caeiro, Álvaro de Campos and Ricardo Reis. Surprisingly, these three different names all had their corresponding real figures and Pessoa invented for these three different names their own life, so that they looked like real. Those poems which were actually written by Pessoa are now classified under the name of different authors. Because they have their own different pedigrees themes and styles of writing, Pessoa treated them as "different authors" rather than the pen names he used. As for Pessoa, he even believed that he wrote poems under the incarnations of several people. Since childhood, he always liked to fantasize about a virtual world around himself. He might imagine some friends and people who had never existed in real life. Since he realized his own existence, he always needed some non–realistic figures with their own image, personality, behavior, and character. This secretive game was to hide the real author Pessoa himself, and to keep the author's name secret, so that it was not void of reality. These authors with their own "experience of life" wrote out their very diverse poems. This inadvertently explains that the meaning and style

of poems are related to the author's character and life, and the author would imprint their personality, psychological temperament onto the text. Even if it were fictional characters, the text and the author should have some relevance. When Pessoa wrote the poems with other pen names, he became that person in these particular poems. He imagined all the things about this pseudo character, letting him merge with his verses. This is a game in which the author avoids himself and also reconstructs himself, and it is also a technique of removing as well as reconstructing the intent. In *Hate You, Christ, I Do Not* Pessoa wrote:

> Life is multiple,
> all days different from each other,
> And only as multiple shall we
> Be with reality and alone. (Pessoa 2004, p. 107)

Pessoa tried to evade himself and even his own name throughout his whole life. According to the researcher Teresa Rita Lopes' research statistics, altogether Pessoa in his lifetime created 72 heteronyms. He has created so many heteronyms and remains lonely still; maybe because of being lonely, he has created so many heteronyms to accompany himself. The family of these heteronyms enjoyed flourishing popularity, but Pessoa had remained unknown for many years. He was almost buried in the history of European literature, but his poems had been there until one day, to be found again, and to be given under the name of Pessoa. In 1935, Pessoa died (at age of 47), and seven years later after his death in 1942, Pessoa Anthology in 2 volumes appeared and it was collected and filed by Adolfo Casquez Monte. In the same year, the Complete Works of Pessoa was released, and this 11–volume collection was painstakingly and carefully collated by Luis de Montalvo and Joao Gaspar. According to Alain Badiou, for more than 50 years after his death, Pessoa became gradually known by the French, and Badiou himself was also one of these "shameful latecomers". Until Pessoa became a figure, with a complete sense of the author or poet, his poems were valued by people. Pessoa has so many heteronyms, at least four major ones, and which is his true identity as a poet? Or, which heteronym expresses his true intent most? Badiou categorized Pessoa's philosophical thinking according to his four heteronyms, between Plato and anti–Plato, «in the interval that the poet has opened

up for us, a veritable philosophy of the multiple, of the void, of the infinite» (Badiou 2005, p. 45). In this way, Badiou elevated Pessoa to the position of God: «[A] philosophy that will affirmatively do justice to this world that the gods have forever abandoned» (*ibidem*). Pessoa who had escaped into the infinite heteronyms was brought back to life by Badiou like a holy figure, to lead us to the future of the world. Because the author has already been killed, this age is the one in which the author is needed, but could not be produced. Thus, Badiou tried his best to rescue Pessoa from the infinite division of heteronyms and let him become a prophet.

Badiou so confidently exposed the essentials of Pessoa and made it a solution for salvation, which is undoubtedly an encouraging move. Of course, we will also have doubts about Badiou's criticism, because it links the gist of the text with countless heteronyms, and finally comes to a conclusion aiming to lead the world, which is indeed a courageous and respectable action. Of course, this is the usual heroic behavior of a Marxist critical philosopher, and Badiou's reading of Pessoa puts forward a task of the age, and also a call to literary criticism. Today's literary criticism needs to reconstruct the sense of history and humanism, which is especially important to Chinese literary criticism. Although Chinese literary criticism has never undergone rigorous scrutiny of close textual reading, and the authority of the author towards the text has never been questioned, how to connect the traditional historical and social literary criticism with textual criticism, discover and feel the emotion of the authors and the essence of their thought, or as a reference, to examine the ideological connotation and emotion of the text by Chinese author, it is a task that literary criticism should be responsible for.

The return of the author, the rediscovery of the relationship between the author and the text, the re–confirmation of the ideological meaning of literature, what ideology that literature of this age is to expose, what kind of commitment the authors have for literature, and what responsibilities the authors have for the contemporary society, all these are the requirements raised by the task of reconstructing the image of the author and the exploration of the intent of the author. When people are talking about "the end of history" and the end of "ideology", it becomes a sort of extravagant hope to expect literary works to have great ideas, but it is necessary for the author to lift the

banner of spirit. Quite possibly, it is because of the tiredness towards the contemporary thoughts that the textual critics evade to the words in the text, expecting that the rhetoric reading of the text can overtake their sense of being lost. Roland Barthes once said that «for the writer, a language is nothing but a human horizon which provides a distant setting of familiarity, the value of which, incidentally, is entirely negative» (Barthes 1970, p. 10). In the early 1990s, the Chinese poet Ouyang Jiangyang also said that poets were the dead souls of a group of words. Ouyang Jiangyang is also an extremely outstanding poetry critic, and he is very good at analyzing the rhetoric of language full of imagination. However, it is of no use to feel sad about this situation, as Chinese literature after 1990s did encounter difficulties in the high–lift of thoughts. And today how we can revitalize the ideological power of Chinese literature does require literary criticism to discover outstanding works, to analyze the intent of the author (poet), which in itself should generate interaction and excitation. Pessoa said intriguingly in his poem:

> You may not have caught anything. But when the empty
> shadows filled in you, you will arrive at the quietness of dusk.
> You will be immersed in it as if you had been placed in a foreign place.
>
> *Read Aloud in front of the Twilight Mirror*

Anyway, we have to seize him — Pessoa and those "empty shadows". Did not Badiou claim that he had already caught them? We can seize them because we are rooted on the land of China.

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The Meaning of Literary Works as Produced by the Process of Transfer and Acceptance**

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TITOLO ITALIANO: Il senso delle opere letterarie in quanto prodotto del processo di trasferimento e accettazione

ABSTRACT: The meaning of literary works is determined by the "acceptance and transfer" relationship between the works and the receptors. This relationship is the effect of the receptors' acceptance cultivated by their empirical understanding. The meaning originates from the process of transfer and acceptance, on multiple vertical level bases such as perceptual presentation level, the universal and generality level, and the level of historical extensibility. The meaning is determined by many factors, which is the presentation of historical structure and context in the process of acceptance and transfer. The construction of reality is the deconstruction and reconstruction of historical structure and is presented in the state of question to draw the attention of the receptor by appealing to their desires and expectations. In addition, the meaning is hidden between the lines, which implies meaning is a result of the mutual understanding and interaction between the author's intention and the receptor's comprehension. This is to prove that the meaning of literary works is not confined in the verbal text, as the scholars in the West argued. The generality of nonverbal meaning is produced by the character of acceptance and transfer of literary works. The implied meaning of literary works is universally recognized.

KEYWORDS: Literary Works; Meaning; Relationship.

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1. Introduction

Literary activities, including creation, distribution, acceptance and criticism, are all purposeful and meaningful. Literary works are the lingual dictated state of literary activity. All the aspects of literary activities, such as creation, distribution, acceptance and criticism, and the limits on these aspects from even larger social activities and social relations are embodied in the text to some extent, and represented as textual meaning. Textual meaning is determined from various angles by the differences in the relationship such as between creation and distribution, between creation and acceptance, between creation and criticism and is realized by the transfer and acceptance of the text. In terms of textual meaning determined by these relations, the relation–determined meanings are ignored, weakened and disregarded in some criticisms on the meaning of literary works and researches on literary theories that aim at exploring the meaning of the text. These practices continuously make the meaning of literary works misunderstood, subjectively understood, isolated and even lost in the criticisms and theories. Therefore, it is of theoretical significance to explore the meaning of literary works from the perspective of various relations involved and that of transfer and acceptance.

2. The Meaning of Literary Works Produced by Acceptance Relationships

Since the 19th century, researches on the meaning of literary works in the West can be classified into three approaches: the truth theory of the classicism, the text–centered theory and the acceptance theory. According to the truth theory, the significance of the literary works lies in its exposure of the truth in the world, that is, the meaning is provided by the reality. Text–centered theory originated from formalism, with Saussure and Ransom as its representatives. According to this theory, textual meaning exists in the text itself. According to the acceptance theory, the meaning is determined by the process of acceptance, based on the reception theory, hermeneutics and reading theory. The three approaches mentioned above are closely related to linguistics and semiotics, because each approach is dependent on the

language and signs in the literary works. The meaning theory in this article focuses on the common core of these three approaches, that is, the production of the literary meaning. It is highlighted as the basic approach to explore meaning, with its focus on the relative nature of literary works. It isn't difficult to see the relationship between form and content in truth theory, the relationship of different verbal signs in the text theory or the text–acceptance relationship in the reception theory are all reflected in relations and regulated in relations; while they give no sufficient consideration on textual meaning itself.

Meaning is a concept subject to and formed in relation, and can be classified as a relational concept. This type of concept was named «propositions standing in internal relations» (Wittgenstein 1979, p. 12). As for these unsubstantial concepts, sensed in certain relationships, Greimas proposed a name "ecart differentiel" —

> differential temporal distances will not appear in "the material substance", they are just results, in which the discontinuance in the world is sensed. We know nothing about the world. The above mentioned temporal distance is formed by the relation and difference of the various aspects of matters that can be compared. (Greimas 2005, p. 6)

Foucault explained some concepts by their relative attributes from the perspective of philosophy, and he argued «the sign does not wait in silence for the coming of a man capable of recognizing it: it can be constituted only by an act of knowing» (1989, p. 65), that is, signs are the products of the interrelationship between man and his knowledge about the subject matter.

In recent years, academic circles in the West have gradually shifted their attention to understanding the denotation in the above mentioned relations and the generality of relations that is accumulated, discovered and summarized in the discontinuous reality with changing objects. However, it is no easy task for the Western scholars to change their thinking habit of hundreds of years in several decades, giving up their dualistic metaphysical tradition that has originated since 17th century and denies the change of roles in certain relationships.

The significance of literary activities, while pursued and researched as the meaning of a literary work, is generally thought to exist in the state of the textual meaning. Meaning thus exists in the text. This

is the approach to explore the meaning of literary works in the first half of the 20th century. This seemingly reasonable approach is not self–evident when the work–object relation is taken into consideration. In order to explore the meaning of a literary work, a fundamental relationship is established between the explorer and the explored: to whom, to what is the work of significance? The work–object relation is a prerequisite factor to acquire meaning. The meaning, produced in the relation between different works with the same object or the same object with different works, will be entirely different. These differences come from the different understanding of the latter for the same (different) former(s) or the meaning offered by the same (different) former(s) for the latter. This is a kind of interaction. Many Western scholars have followed the hermeneutics principles proposed by Heidegger and Gadamer, who have also ended the traditional author–centered and text–centered theories. But some of them would like to get out of the tendency of unsteady and unclear description because of their metaphysical tradition, though the tendency itself is sometimes self–contradicted or drifts off course. Some scholars confine these relations in a circle, making them a definite research object. Some scholars take the uncertainty out of the relation, making them meet a certain standard. Ingarden's four heterogeneous strata is an example of the former, while Ransom's theory of structure and texture is an example of the latter. Thus they will be fully satisfied in the certainty. In the end, linguistics and semiotics finds shelter in language and signs for the changing relations that perplex the Western scholars who got used to metaphysical thinking way. The relation theory of Heidegger and Gadamer was shrunk by the recent tendency of the structural linguistics (some other open–minded structuralists were against this idea) so that some are eager to announce the death of the writer and only text exists, following the writer–centered and text–centered notion. Nonetheless, the meaning of literary works can not be shrunk or confined in the text itself. It is continuously asked to whom the work is significant. And once who participates is decided, meaning is only as what he accepts.

To accept is not to take it as it is, but it is to accept by choice and after transfer. The choice is based on the expectation, which is called "horizon of expectations" by Hans Robert Jauss. It is not merely an expectation, but an expectation that is directed by and subjected

to some needs. Ferdinand de Saussure tried to limit the sense of language by his linguistic theory, but unexpectedly, it is his invention of the concept of "the signified" and "the signifier" that makes "the signified" open to the audience by "the signifier". The dual character of Saussure's theory makes room for the expectations of acceptance, which is confined by both "the signified" and "the signifier". As for the expected signified, the signifier is just one of the choices; as for the expected signifier, the signified is also just one of the choices. They are expected as one of the possibilities in need, and what is in the horizon of expectations is to be present in the obscurity. Jauss said «it expects the experience in the future and thus reveals the possible scope of activities» (Zhu 2001, p. 661). The horizon of expectation is empirical, and it is based on the experience and to be tested by the expected experience. At the same time, new experience that is related to and surpasses the past experience is accumulated. The transfer feature of the text acceptance helps to understand and offer the empirical difference of the literary receptors. The image in the text might be changed in the mind of the reader due to his personal experience. As the poem goes, "flowers bloom and fade", the "signified" the author refers to might be "peach blossom", while the reader may think of "prunus". The image of a flower may be thus made and accepted. In phenomenological terms, there is no experience there as phenomenon, and experience is not appearance, though it can not go without appearance. Experience is gained in the past, and is called up and organized when faced with the reality. Object is the real organizer of experience understanding object, so the understanding of the object with experience is always a gegenst and liche activity. The object becomes object only when it organizes and changes the reader's experience and makes the experience become the object to understand. When talking about the works of art, Hans–Georg Gadamer said «the work of arts exits when it changes the experience of experiencer» (Zhu 2001, p. 596).

To understand meaning by the relation between text and its acceptance is actually not necessarily to be contradicted with the idea of acquiring meaning from language in the view of linguistics and semiotics. The sense analysis based on the internal difference in language is fundamentally the analysis based on the researcher's understanding of the language. In this seemingly closed analysis, they have already

taken part in the process in advance as a receptor. That accounts for the following phenomenon: scholars such as I.A. Richards, William Empson, Robert Penn Warren are obsessed with close reading, but they are hesitant in the process of acquiring meaning[1].

Then here comes a tough question, since the meaning results from the relation between the text and the acceptance, then where does the meaning lie, in the text or the acceptance? Where the meaning lies can be declared as the focus of attention. In fact, it will not be a question if the mode of dualism is broken, with the relation taken into consideration. With the relation in mind, we can get the textual meaning if we pursue the meaning from the text, and we can get the meaning of acceptance if we pursue the meaning from the acceptance. It is the acceptance meaning of the text, or the acceptance of the textual meaning. The prerequisites of the above mentioned conclusion is that the original text and the reader must have their own experiences and meaning generating system, which is surely different. Their meaning generating systems are not meaning, but an instrument to generate meaning, just like peoples' digestive system is not the nutrition digested. The meaning system of the text and that of the readers interacts with each other in the textual meaning, thus meaning is usually produced, that is to say, meaning results from their interaction. Considering the relation structure of signs, Jürgen Habermas holds that

> Only when a value is inscribed into an utterance that describes a state whose function establishes the junctive relation between the subject and the object can we consider this subject and this object as semiotically existing one for the other. Such as assertion, far from being a metaphysical flight of fancy, on the contrary serves an eminently practical end: By defining semiotic existence as a structural relation, it excludes from our considerations the ontological problematics of subject and object, and by formulating this relation as constitutive of a canonical utterance describing a state, it gives us a formal framework and identifying criteria for semiotic facts that are relevant to any analysis. (Greimas 2005, p. 90)

1. Richards places an emphasis on that language truth has nothing to do with reality, but later he believes that the truth of language is indispensable to the reader's attitudes. The notion of having something with the reality takes the place of that of having nothing to do with reality. Ransom emphasizes the text–centered theory. His "structure–text" theory is in accord with the gist of the text –centered theory. Text is the basic vehicle to carry the nature of the world. Text is open to the world, and judged by the world experience (Zhao 2001, p. 29)

3. The Meaning Attributes and Rules of the Acceptance Relatives

Then comes the next question: is what is understood in the reception relations equal to the meaning we pursue? If the answer is yes, the empirical understanding is meaning, or in other words, meaning is the understanding with experience. Under this circumstance, it is meaning in a wide sense, because some empirical understanding is not meaningful. For example, when we see a bowl of water or a fly, it is generally a recognization of objects or facts with personal knowledge. Since there is nothing new produced in this process, there is no meaning. If meaning is to be acquired from these recognized items, other requirements have to be fulfilled. Although we want to figure out the meaning of literary works in the relation of empirical understanding, we don't mean empirical experience and meaning are the same, we just intend to point out that meaning lies in and is demonstrated by the empirical understanding. The empirical understanding based on the relation between a literary work and its readers is the shelter for and prerequisite of meaning. Meanwhile, the empirical understanding in the reception relations or the reception relation of understanding with experience is regulated by the meaning. Then the question arises: what is the meaning in the empirical understanding? The answer is closely related to the concept of literary meaning. Then we encounter a series of questions: what is meaning? Where does the meaning produced in various relations come and go? Is meaning decided by relation, historically set or changed continuously and produced in languages? When we judge an activity or something meaningful, where does the standard come from? What is the difference between the meaning of literary works and that of the other activities or things?

The meaning of literary works has a value effect, based on the judgment in history and reality. This value effect could be the truth in real life, the saint in the religious world, and the goodness in people's communication. It also could be the touching feelings or interest, as Richards' "truth in the poetry"[2]. The value effect of this

2. By the phrase "truth in poetry", Richards does not mean to talk about truth, on the contrary, he believes the statements in poems are pseudo–statement. His "truth in poetry" is only "acceptability", or "convincing power". In this way, Richards introduces an artistic

type lies in various relations of history and real life, and is saved and expressed in the elements of literary works. In literary works, what can be regarded as meaning is just element of value effect. They become accepted value effect in the process when the work is read, understood and accepted. Just like gold ore, it contains the elements to become gold. Only after it is dug out and refined, could it obtain the value of money. Literary works are made of words. The different combination of words produces something valuable in literary works. The value understood in the process of acceptance is expressed as meaningful elements by various language structures such as plot, characters, setting, character's relationship and clue of behaviors. That is how the meaning of literary works is produced.

The acceptance relations are established when the literary works are read by the readers. This relation is not only established while reading, but also before and after reading. The reading process is just an apparent acceptance behavior. Before or after reading, there has been a general correspondence between the writer and the reader. This correspondence is formed by their experience. Writers know there some readers awaiting them, so that they have to think how to write for their potential readers, what their reading expectations are, and what are their experiences and interests. Readers know what the writers will write for them and want them to understand and accept. This is the prerequisite for the establishment of the relation between creation and acceptance. The reading activity shows the relation between creation and acceptance, which is the presentation of those invisible relations. The two parties in the reading process express and accept the values, also called the meaning, made by words in the literary works. When the reading activity is over, new invisible relation is established which will lead to the reflection of creation and acceptance. These relations indicate the formation and existence of the meaning of the literary works. Although different prerequisites lead to different acceptances, the meaning of effective value is conceived in the writing process.

The meaning of literary works is decided by the work–acceptance relations, not closed or self–evident as Richards believes. Richards,

value that has nothing to do with "reality", the value that is convincing and touching. This value from real life is based on the same emotional pursuit. (Zhu 2001, p. 827)

Ransom and René Wellek are regarded as the representatives of new criticism, and they all incline to believe that meaning is set in the literary works. When the meaning is to be explored, literary criticism is used to trace the "existing meaning" (Richards 1930, p. VII)[3].

The relation between work and acceptance on which meaning is based, and other relevant relations are virtually related and are influenced relatively. The meaning becomes true because it is acquired by empirical understanding and subject to the general principal of value formation (Russell 1992, p. 317)[4]. We have no intention to deny the spiritual nature of acceptance relation and other related social relation. All the relation activities in real life are spiritual; otherwise it is not a real relation activity. Emphasis is placed on the acceptance activity and relative activities to indicate that the meaning of literary works is built on the above mentioned empirical understanding. To understand with experience becomes the medium of work–acceptance relations and is constructed by the work–acceptance relations since it helps to understand the effective value depicted by the words in the literary works. In such framework, the empirical understanding is subject to the relations in real life. The real function of other relative relations is also performed by the work–acceptance relations.

The meaning of literary works is produced in work–acceptance relation, while the work–acceptance relation is also regulated by the

3. In 1929, Richards wrote in his preface to *Practical Criticism*, «It follows that criticism itself is very largely, though not wholly, an exercise in navigation». like a compass. However, they ignore the fact that either in the activities of creation or acceptance, the subjects of both sides exist in the real life, becoming changing subjects in the relations of various activities. They are influenced by various relations in the process of their participation in the activities and thus the audience including them is influenced as well. Hence it becomes true that the acceptance relation is open and passive. Text reading is closed and isolated in some research on the acceptance of literary works or on the acceptance of textual meaning in the past. Apparently, this approach lays emphasis on the acceptance of the text itself, while this emphasis is not laid on the real and concrete relations, but on the subjective and imaginative relations. In this approach, the text–centered theory is accepted. According to the text–centered theory, text becomes the source of meaning, and the reader's initiatives are confined not to challenge the text's status as the center, which makes readers become mere acceptors, decorations or ornaments.

4. Truth is the premise of meaning. The truth is facts that can be proved. When it comes to the question of meaning, Bertrand Russell points out that the question of meaning is the question of truth. Its premise must be based on truth, although «factual premises may not be certain, but there is nothing more certain by which they can be shown to be false» (Russell 1992, p. 317).

meaning it generated. This regularity that stipulates the meaning of the relation is formed by the writer's creation, and functions while the writers are writing. It is firstly a regulation representing the writer's creative psychology. It is not only subject to the writer's aim of creation, but to his attitudes, his passion and his experience. It sets rules for the writer to choose the style, methods, and words. Gustave Flaubert must be depressed for the misfortune of Madame Bovary, while Madame Bovary is created for his pain. He writes because of his sufferings and he suffers while he is writing. Therefore, Madame Bovary's pain is created in accordance with the inner part of the work–acceptance relation and outer psychology. Obviously, the writer is regulated by the text–acceptance relation in which he is involved. The regulation for the writer's creation is exactly the regulation for the expected meaning of acceptance. As for this regulation existing before the creation and determining the creative meaning, Allen Tate once asked "whom is a poet responsible for?" and then explained

> What is a poet responsible for? He is only responsible for his virtue as a poet and his special aretee. He must be capable of using a language skillfully so that he can express his comprehension of real life accurately. In Yeats' words, poets have to make the reality a notion. (Zhao 2001, p. 525)

The meaning of some value effect is produced by the work–acceptance relation and the work–acceptance relation is also regulated by the meaning of some value effect. That is interaction of meaning generation and regulation.

4. Multiple Sources of the Meaning of Literary Works

How does the meaning of literary works, as the result of acceptance relation and other interactions? It is an important question of theoretical and critical significance. As for researchers and critics, the meaning of literary works is a new finding and judgment in the acceptance relation and other interactions. In his book An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, Russell regarded it as an important truth proposition, that is, "warranted assertibility" (Russell 1992, p. 318). Meaning originates from the assertibility of finding and judgment.

4.1. *Literary Works as Experiences*

"Assertibility" is the definite feature of the object, for example, the sky is blue and water is flowing. If the identifiable feature of an object is verified to be true, or suit the object, the verification needs such an object to prove, which is a "warrant". Therefore, the proposition of "warranted assertibilithy" by Russell tells us the two factors to identify the truth of an object: the assertion form expressing truth, and the causal relation to prove this identified assertion. At that time, this proposition caused a debate between Russell and Dewey. Russell insisted that experience is the decisive factor to decide whether a proposition is true, and the present percept is something beyond doubt in experience. In this debate, Russell's view on meaning centers on the relation between language and facts. He then explores this issue further and establishes his analytical philosophy. In the exploration of the meaning of literary works, Russell's proposition that meaning is decided by experience could be resorted to explore the origin of the meaning of the literary works.

As mentioned above, literary meaning is the product of experience, and experience is the reflection of meaning from life. Experience comes from life and reality, which guarantees that meaning is not fabricated. What's more, the real experience is nourished by perception when it is involved in the formation of meaning — «at least as regards empirical assertions, that it is to be effected by their causes. An empirical assertion which can be known to be true has percepts, or percept, among its proximate or remote causes» (Russell 1992, p. 325). According to Russell, language is a tool of the perception of experience, and this theory can be used to understand the literary meaning by the creation of image. Since meaning is related to experience, literary works in the perception relations is the iconic representation of its author's experience. It is originated from literary imagination, enters the literary works via words, and forming the plot, character, settings and images respectively. For the recipient in the reception relations, the meaningful experience is decided by words in literary works. The readers' life experience and literary acceptance experience are awakened, collected and organized to sense, recognize and accept the implication by reproductive imagination. They not only judge and understand the story, characters, settings, emotion and images in the

text, but take part in the construction of these elements. These experiences are inter–structural in acceptance, as Russell has mentioned «single events which only happen once» (Russell 1992, p. 324). The non–repeatability in the acceptance of literary works can be explained by the conclusion that it is not restricted to understanding the literary work with experience, but interrelated with other related elements. The interaction occurs repeatedly, which makes the relation change all the time. The change is not repeatable in the development of the relation of both sides.

4.2. *The "Universal" and "General" of Literary Works*

When the experience that helps to conceive the meaning of literary works in the acceptance relation is a particular one that can not be repeated, it can not get the character of assertion as experience, let alone to be guaranteed. Just as Russell pointed out, this non–repeatable percept can not exist before and after its presence. It is self–evident momentarily and disappears soon. But only something that is common in this moment could exist at this moment, before and after this moment, in the form of expectation or reflection, to assert the relevant object. Then what is the common in this moment? Russell uses "a universal" and "generality" to answer this question "what is a word?" He takes the word "dog" as an example, and he believes the word "dog" is "a universal". He then explained "just as dog is a universal", the former dog is a dog in word, and the latter is a dog in life, a dog running and jumping around. They all bear "a universal" of a dog. He also explains "universal" in this way «but in fact we utter two examples of the same species, just as when we see two dogs we see two examples of the same species. There is thus no difference of logical status between dog and the word "dog": each is general, and exists only in instances» (Russell 1992, p. 24). The key in this explanation is "universal" and "general", the dog in word has the abstract of "the universal" and "the general" of the dog in life, and the dog in life has "the universal" and "the general" of the dog in word. In this way, they are correspondent in meaning while in use, which accounts for the relationship between language and momentary percept. The word referred to here by Russell is the same in expressing meaning as the story or image in the literary works. The image created in literary

works is perceptible and tangible, and "universal" and "general" at the same time. "The universal" and "the general" are the perceptible evidence in experience and in real life, and then becomes the "warranted". The second source of literary meaning is discovered in this way; it is not the meaning or significance of a single event, but the "universal" "general" meaning or significance of many events. The meaning in various relation sets rules for the creation and acceptance of literary works, and is warranted in the process.

The realism based on the literary epistemology is frequently related to the question of "universal" and "general", generally in the name of the essence of phenomenon, the phenomenon of essence, the generality of particularity, or the particularity of the generality. In the 80s or 90s of the 20th century, the topic of literary typicality was discussed heatedly among the critics of Chinese literary circle. The particularity and generality is judged by the standard of typification focusing chiefly on the cognitive value. In this article this topic is discussed from the perspective of meaning, which is not only an emphasis on epistemology, but also an extension on the relation in practice. It is obvious that the significance of a series of events or literary images to the knowing is different from their significance to doing, although they both have the problem of being true or false. In epistemology, meaning is something common, certain, stable or definite, so they are regarded as truth in philosophy. Text–oriented theory once popular in China is closely related to the meaning in epistemology, in which text is the vehicle of meaning[5]. The meaning from the perspective of epistemology is not excluded from or limited within what is emphasized here. While literary works are discussed in the in the view of practice and acceptance, the significant "universal" and "generality" is usually temporary not permanent, incidental not inevitable, organic not isolated. They are found and experienced as changing "universal" or

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5.   In *A Coursebook of Literary Theories* (Beijing: Higher Education Press,1992) by Tong Qingbing, text–centered theory is still popular, though literature is renamed as literary activity and text is mere result of literary activity. Judged from the framework of the textbook, the spell of text centered theory is not broken; the arrangement and development of several chapters are based on text. M.H. Abrams' "four elements" was introduced in the textbook. Although the world is mistaken for social life in the textbook, world is a notion instead of a social life. Therefore, in the four elements of "text–audience–author–world", meaning is produced within the relation confined to consciousness. The text–centered theory, which is based on epistemology, is retaining its livelihood.

"generality" in the changing reality and other relations. Thus, when the poem *Flames of war have risen higher and higher, letters from home are worth their weight in gold* is read, someone may think of nostalgia and affinity, others may think of historical transcendence (in digital age, the feel of "letters from home are worth their weight in gold" has gone forever), still others may think philosophically of the relativity of "far or near" and "light or heavy". Is there some "universal" or some "general" in this temporary, incidental and organic process? It is the associational "universal" and the generality of "experience". No matter how wild is your imagination, "a letter from home" is related to home, and "flames of war" is related to war, such as the balefire of The Crusades, Anti–Japanese War, Kosovo War, and the Iran–Iraq War. Such "universal" and "general" is not for offering truth (not excluding from offering truth), but for experiencing life, inspiring spirits and enlightening. Russell's fundamental contribution to analytical philosophy is that he places regularity in changes and seeks the significance of the regularity of changes in reality. That is why he is frequently criticized by western scholars who insist that meaning is absolutely defined.

4.3. Historical significance of literary works

The reader gets a momentary "universal" and "generality" while understanding the perceptive meaning, but in terms of duration, meaning has a non–stop journey, what a reader captures is just a temporary image. What a reader is experiencing is temporary, while the meaning itself is a product of history[6].

Without any doubt, no matter what change the accepted "universal" and "general" may have in the reception relation, they are acquired in the accumulation of history, and they are handed down from generation to generation. This process enters the river of the tradition and practice in history, surpassing the individual acquisition. For the forthcoming reader, it is not only cognitive, instructive, encyclical, but behavioral, acceptable, and empirical. Therefore when a reader enters the general

6. In the west, some scholars insists that the meaning of languages and signs are produced at the moment, disregard of historical context, leading to the limit of meaning and disavowal of value effect.

acceptance relation before he begins his reading practice, he has already had a status of some historical background. He has the history accepted by him and he is the history accepted. He is always modeled by history. This is a power from history. Therefore, it is not as the semiologists or linguists believes that value or meaning is produced by words or signs; on the contrary, the value or meaning presented by words or signs is produced by history. The historical status is merged into the literary works by the writers, and extracted by the readers, thus the meaning of literary works originates. Meaning is originated from its historical status and gains the status of historical meaning. It is the third source of meaning: history. The progressive order mentioned here is a logical order, when the literary works are created and accepted, the three sources — individual experience, "universal" and "general", and history — are functioning simultaneously.

Greimas mentioned the historical structure confined the meaning when he was talking about the relation between historical structures and meaning structure, that is, the historical accumulation to produce meaning has set a limit on the interpretation of the meaning, indicating directivity for proper understanding. Greimas' explanation on the historical constraint is meaningful in historical hermeneutics, and historical comparison, because comparison and interpretation are the results of mental activities, in which the constraints also exist. From this point of view, Greimas' opinion on historical constraints is guaranteed in the real thinking process. He says: «History is not, as many people say repeatedly, something open; on the contrary, it is something enclosed. There is new meaning in the structure, but the door to the meaning is latched. It is far from a starter, but a brake» (Greimas 1989, p. 110). The historical constraints mentioned by Greimas, reflecting the spiritual activities in the historical reality, offer reasonable explanation from the perspective of semantics, revealing the spiritual activities producing meaning. Readers, researchers and critics accept and inherit historical experience, "the universal" and "generality" from literary works; what's more, they also integrate the experience into the meaning produced. In terms of historical meaning, the reception relation and the related relations are historically regulated, and the creation and acceptance are also made in historical context. Greimas further summarizes the function of historical spiritual activities in this way: history «always froze structure into normal operation, and

resulted in the formation of set phrase. Undoubtedly, this inertia can be regarded as one element to explain the historicity. Some people have an assertion full of wisdom: it remains the same despite all the changes. It is quite reasonable» (Greimas 2005, p. 110). We can safely conclude that the constraints by historical spiritual activities are "predetermined" by historical reality. As for the generation of the meaning of literary works, the constraints of historical thinking accounts for the difference of literary meaning caused by nationality, social culture, and historical stages. Different nationalities, different social culture and different historical stage are demonstrated by difference in historical thinking, thus difference in historical thinking is formed. Besides, in terms of historical continuity, it is the difference in historical reality, which "predetermines" the historical value and meaning of the difference.

5. The Meaning of Literary Works Made by Various Factors in Life

The meaning of literary works is determined by the reception relation and other relations, which makes the meaning of literary works open to realities. The real state of reception relation and related relation are continuously presented in social practice.

Being open to reality and being confined by history are two states of social structures that interact with and form each other. Represented in every concrete step of social progress, they are integrated in social practice by understanding, thinking and designing. That is, the whole process of social practice, from setting goals, choosing methods, adjusting strategies and realizing aims, to setting new aims and taking corresponding measures, is an interacting process of being open to the reality and confined by history. It is the temporary openness in historical closeness, and historical closeness in the temporary openness. History is the continuity of history and reality is the extension of reality, which forms contemporary historical practice.

According to different aims, methods and processes, the diversified contemporary historical practice can be classified into economical, political, religious, moral, and aesthetic practices which make up the practice in the spiritual field and social life. Contemporary historical

closeness and historical contemporary openness are thus developed respectively in different fields. The social practice developed in various aspects, enters the reception relation by personal perception in the efforts by the writers and readers. The meaning of literary works is comprehensively developed by perception, generality and history. Thus in the process of realization, the framework of being open to reality, and having multiple sources were synthetically formed.

It is a process of structuring and contextualization to analyze the meaning by using the theory of structuralism and contextualism, which is closely related to the meaning theory. In terms of the structuring of meaning open to reality, it is the structuring of the behavioral system, verbal system, and psychological system of personal social practice. In terms of the meaning of literary works, the structuring of contemporary openness is presented synthetically in the interaction of reception relation and other relation of literary acceptance, which forms the historical and contemporary source of literary meaning. Structuring is historical process, and it is the tendency and contemporary situation of history. Reality is always structuralized and in the process of history; while history always exists in the contemporary structure, which acts as history by contemporary structure and the corresponding conscious behaviors. There is no sufficient theoretical exploration to the structural continuity in western structurology.

The structuring relation of history and reality is not suspended in an empty social structure, but exists in various real social relations as a whole and represented by people's behaviors, languages and psychology. The structuring of historical reality makes every part of any type of social life and any single personal activity, including conscious activities related to meaning, regulated by the whole structure of social life. The representative figure of structuralism, Lucien Goldman has noticed this phenomenon when he analyzes the integration of structure of literary works, psychological structure of the writer and the structure of social life. He said

> the concrete essence or the meaning of phenomenon can be reached by understanding the whole instead of something particular or abstract. Thinking is something alive and intact, just part of reality that is not so abstract. In other words, people are a component of social community. The true meaning of a thought or a book can be captured only when the receptor's life and behavior is taken into consideration. (Zhu 2001, p. 369)

There are two opposite tendencies in structuralism: closeness and openness, which indicate the paradox and complexity of structuralism. The paradox and complexity of structuralism reflect the paradox and complexity of social life and social practice it faces.

Reality is not the repetition of history, and current structure of social life is not the historical one, but the realization and openness of the historical structure. The occurrence and appearance of new circumstances of social life and social development is the attack and deconstruction of the existed social structure, and reconstructed in the lasting historical structure. Reality is not only the continuity, deconstruction and reconstruction of history, but also the standpoints for people to understand, control and change life. A variety of meaning is derived from and judged by reality. As for this point, Goldman has mentioned «When they place a work into the progress of history and connect history with social life, the researchers are capable of getting the objective meaning, of which is frequently unaware by the author himself» (Zhu 2001, p. 370).

The contemporary structure is deconstructed and reconstructed by reality through raising arresting questions. The question, if truly meaningful, could not be single and isolated from but connected with the whole structure. Herbert Marcuse regards the way in which questions are depicted by Marxism, also called question structure, as the chief conflict from the whole social structure. From the perspective of structuring, questions arise when some connecting dots are hindered, twisted, damaged and broken under the circumstances when some node in the whole structure influences other nodes and the problem cannot be solved. The wider and the heavier the influence are, the more meaningful the answer to the questions is. If the questions of social structure are reflected in a literary work, and the keys to these questions are quested in an imaginative and effective way, the literary work is meaningful correspondently. The meaning is of contemporary and historical significance. It is cognitive and practical, which is the value judgment of "practice–spirit" mentioned by Karl Marx.

The significance of literary works can be demonstrated by questions they raised through structuring and contextualization. Context is different from structure because as a rule of relation, it is vividly called "word before and after" by Richards. It is an influencing factor, not a structuralized one. This is a pushing force for a certain direction in

dynamic social connections, also called context effect or field effect by some scholars. Examples are in the context of the national salvation movement in the May 4th Movement era of China, and the context of masscult in the new period (in literature it refers to China from 1978). The rising masscult in the new era witnessed the deterioration of elitism in literary works. Context influence can be gradually structuralized through various relations, and then establish stable relations. As for the contemporary significance of context, it is still a flowing changing pushing force, in which a literary work in a certain context gains negative or positive impact.

While thinking of the significance of semiotics, Greimas find the subtle difference of value judgment between structuring and contextualization. He proposes a notion of meaning field by imitating Hjelmslev's linguistic theory. He believes there are two ways to understand the meaning of the relation between person and society: one is a projection style and the other is a grid–like one. The projection style is different from the language differentiation and analysis of social structure. «Its operation mode is like a reference frame of life experience, the projection of a community on an individual's 'consciousness' — one is more or less aware of its existence» (Greimas 1989, p. 98). Grid–like style is related to social typology. «It move an individual from one grid to another by evaluation, praise or punishment» (*ibidem*) given to an individual by the community, «as if it is originally human nature». The value judgment caused by the former is context determined, while the value judgment caused by the later is structure determined. Both are realistic.

6. The Non–Verbal Feature of the Meaning of Literary Works

It goes without saying that literary works are normally and typically made of words.

However, that literary works are made of words does not mean everything described in language is verbal; on the contrary, a lot of things conveyed are nonverbal. Emotion is a case in point, though it holds a very important position in ancient Chinese literature. Take poems as an example, they are the literary style when literature originates in China. Emotion in poems is of motif significance in ancient Chinese

literature. It is very interesting to express one's emotion without words. It is a great success to express rich emotion without words. Besides expressing emotion, ancient Chinese also expressed their life experience without words. «Words fail to carry meaning, therefore image is constituted to fully demonstrate meaning» is from *The book of Changes*, which summarize that meaning can be carried out without words, and the saints express themselves in a special way, to create image. Thus we understand the typical state of wisdom in ancient China, the nonverbal state. Nonverbal state of wisdom is traditional normal state of life wisdom and philosophical wisdom, and it is also the normal state of art wisdom in ancient China, which includes literature. Wen (Writing) is a vehicle for Dao (the Way), an approach to name Dao. Wen here includes literature. «Tao defined is not the constant Tao. No name names its eternal name». The most important content is not expressed in a literary work by concrete words. The content of the literature can be expressed, but cannot be expressed directly and merely in words. What is expressed directly is the surface meaning, the spirit of the meaning cannot be expressed straightforwardly. The content of a literary work, including the sceneries, the matters, the characters, the settings and the plots, is better expressed if not expressed directly. A fundamental character of ancient Chinese literature is to express without words, which is called "concrete ration"[7].

In fact, not only Chinese literature, even world literature is somehow of non–verbal attributes. Many researchers have tried to find out the secrets in Hamlet. These secrets are hard to discover, simply because they are buried between lines, that is, they exist but they are not expressed directly and clearly. Jaques Lacan has interpreted "bait heroine" Ophelia in Hamlet in this way

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7. According to his personal and deep understanding of the western and eastern culture, Cheng Zhongying called the nonverbal wisdom in China as "concrete ration". As for this nonverbal, but universally spead and accepted wisdom, he further analyzes «First, man lays his eyes on the concrete objects to observe their behaviors and state. Based on a large amount of empirical observation and experience, Yi Jing is developed into changing philosophy from the interchange of Yin and Yang. We can find the ultimate entity such as Tian or Dao from the language used in the Chinese Classics. They are not general or abstract terms in logics, but common and concrete content, which can be understood by direct and wide experience» (Cheng 1988, p. 97). by famous American Chinese scholar Cheng Zhongying.

Shakespeare makes her more important in developing the plot. She is used to "smell out" Hamlet's secret unexpectedly. She then becomes the most mysterious elements in the play Hamlet— the play Hamlet in which desire lost its way. When the hero of the play is approaching his death, unwillingly and passively, Ophelia is a necessary support. (Zhu 2001, p. 324)

Lacan finds that the following items are generally not stated directly: the "secret" unexpectedly revealed, one of "the most hidden" elements and the "helpless" destination. Therefore many western scholars are interested in discovering the secrets in the literary works.

Literary work itself is nonverbal, which makes the acceptance of meaning nonverbal. The reader can gain a lot from literary works, but he cannot recite it accurately. In his systematic research on British romantic lyrics and tradition, Harold Bloom found there is no difference between the original text and the derived text in the process to get the meaning out of the text. It is not expressed by language, but an experience of text comparison. It exists in the comparison, influence and change of a text and other texts, called "intertextuality". This is an acceptance process, the nonverbal meaning of acceptance comes from the inner difference of text activated, and are presented in the difference. Thus from the perspective of nonverbal meaning, reading is kind of "error reading" out of text. «All the interpretation is subject to the comparison of meaning, not decided by the relation of an assumed text and its sense» (Zhu 2001, p. 739).

The meaning of literary works is nonverbal, the acceptance of the meaning is nonverbal, and the meaning that occurs and demonstrates in their acceptance relation is also nonverbal. The meaning may come from the inner expectation of the reader from the work, from the response to or contrast with the reader's experience, from the convergence and divergence of meaning conveyed by the work and sensed by the reader from other works, from the interaction of something in the work and the pattern of the reader's character or even the reader's subconscious initial pattern. When Jameson proposes the "meta–criticism" of literary works, he mentions the nonverbal, abstract, formless but widespread meaning: «It makes sense by the sensible appearance, and it could not be extracted, existing in a normal state. It has to exist in a particular sense» (Wang 2004, p. 8). The nonverbal meaning is of prevailing significance since it is existing, ac-

cepted in advance, experiencing current life, comparing different text, and historical continuity. To read between lines is a regular channel to make sense of a literary works; it is the same when it comes to acquire meaning in the reception relation of literary works.

Since a lot of nonverbal meanings of literary works can be inferred, some stiff, straitlaced western theories are not self–justified since they confine meaning to language and signs, and make language and signs solidified.

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Text and Intention

The Presentation of Meaning in Literary Texts

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TITOLO ITALIANO: Testo e intenzione: la presentazione del senso nei testi letterari

ABSTRACT: Text and intention are two key issues in literary interpretation. Traditional literary criticism emphasizes the functions of intentional interpretation in texts. With the development of modern literary theories, intentional interpretation has been criticized by formalists and deconstructionists. The anti–intention theory insists on the independence of text from authorial intentions, and denies the validity of author's intentional interpretation and the possibilities of interpretational standards. Theoretically, anti–intention theory takes the presence of authorial intention as its premise and basis, and establishes the theoretical target of intentional criticism based on the multiplicity of literary textual presentations. Its endeavor to deconstruct not only cancels the legitimacy of the authorial intention in critical interpretation, but more importantly, implies an anti–essentialist intellectual sharpness which represents an absolute subjective claim presented in literary text with a clear deconstructive hue. In terms of the presentation of meaning in literary texts, text and intention pose no absolute opposition, and thus intention theory and anti–intention theory rely on each other. The conflicts between these two theories might temporarily be mitigated and balanced concerning intention interpretations. However, the ultimate extermination of the conflicts is not the reasonable way of textual interpretation. The interpretation of text and the presentation of meaning in literary texts still demand a pertinent interpretational approach to further establish the rationality and validity of intention criticism.

KEYWORDS: Text; Intention Theory; Anti-Intention Theory; the Objectivity of Intention.

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1. Presence or Absence of Authorial Intention

Authorial intention is a key topic in contemporary literary criticism and theories. Criticism against authorial intention can always be found in contemporary western literary theories all the way from formalism, new criticism, structuralism, narratology to deconstructionism and postmodernism.

In previous studies, such criticisms against the authorial intentions can be seen as the representation of a turn in western theories to "inwardness" and to the "readership", which was also the climax of theoretical development. In other words, anti–intention criticism is also a conflict between different ideas and thoughts within the theoretical "field", and even a conflict of innovation. Behind the arguments lies certain logic: the authorial intention is worthy of debates and anti–intention theory is reasonable; the former needs to be replaced by the later. Yet questions like «Why should we argue against authorial intention?» and «Can anti–intention theory solve all the remaining problems left by the theoretical defects of intention theories?» remain untouched. Studies on the rationality of criticism have replaced those on the theoretical legitimacy of anti–intention theory.

Why against authorial intention? Prof. Zhang Jiang from Chinese Academy of Social Sciences put forth the question of authorial intentions once again in his recent published paper *On the Presence or Absence of Intention*, providing both an opportunity to reflect on such a theoretical topic in contemporary western theories and a chance to rethink the return to authorial intention in current context. This paper provides a huge space for reflecting on such a topic. No matter how theories and criticism develop, such questions as the definition of text, the ways in which authorial intentions are presented in texts and its functions, as well as the manner of readers' interpretation constantly lie in the specific process of literary interpretation. Abrams's conception of four elements in literature and Antoine Compagnon's five components in literature, and even Eco's idea of "the open text", all center on the basic process of authorial intention and literary interpretation. As a new theory about intention and interpretation, it proves the simple fact that no matter what anti–intention theory argues, the specificity and problem involved in the interpretation of literary meanings can never be suspended or ignored. This is the difficulty that the anti–intention theory faces.

In his paper, Zhang Jiang summarizes the three types of anti–intention theory. One of them is W.K. Wimsatt's representative of New Criticism, "Intentional Fallacy". It denies the influence of authorial intention on textual interpretation. Another is Clive Bell's "Significant Form" which cuts down the connections between authorial production and textual construction. The third one is French structural semiotics which stresses that text is the free operation of signs, the author is just the medium manipulating signs and the presentation of authorial intention is veiled even cancelled by the self–assembly and self–structure within sign system. Zhang Jiang analyzes the three concepts mentioned above from the perspectives of theoretical origin, development and influence, and explores the way how authorial intention gradually becomes absent in contemporary western literary theory. On the issue of "Intentional Fallacy", he argues, «any serious and responsible theoretician and critics, should study the authors and their productive intentions in order to understand and interpret correctly the texts within traditions and contexts, and why "intention" is taken as "fallacy"?» As for the "Significant Form", he believes that

> for the art of any type or in any form, there always exists the intention of creation and writing and this intention remains throughout the process of artistic creation and the aspects of literary text. Art needs understanding and resonance, and its object is also intention, the forms of intention and all the contents presented by certain forms.

Finally, Zhang Jiang points out, such questions as classic authors' knowledge and judgment, their awareness of their writing and intentions and their implementation of intention in writing process can not be solved by anti–intention theory. He employs plenty of facts and cases in the history of literature and literary theories only to prove the presence of intention (Zhang Jiang 2016, p. 9). Prof. Zhang Jiang's paper *On the Presence or Absence of Intention* is one of the most important works of scholarship in his study of coercive critique, and also one of the most fruitful case studies on the specific issues of contemporary western literary theories. It is of some theoretical constructive significance. In the process of studying coercive critique, Zhang Jiang has already proposed a theoretical path of ontological interpretation to reflect on contemporary western literary theories (Zhang Jiang 2014). Thereafter, he has carried deep explorations into intention, authorship,

presupposition, interpretive context, non–literary theory application, subjective presupposition, theory–centered studies, etc., which has brought about frequent academic exchange and dialogue, and triggered heated discussion in the academia. It is self–evident that Zhang Jiang's argument provides a pivot to rethink the western literary theories and «puts forward a critical framework of interpretive analysis for the knowledge universe and practices in contemporary western theories» (Duan Jifang 2016, p. 12). The study of authorial intention facilitates the theoretical development of the past coercive critique.

To discuss whether authorial intention is present or not, we should first of all clarify such questions as why authorial intention is present and why it is legitimate. The existence of the question of the presence of authorial intention is decided first of all by the core position of literary creation in literary theories and the subjective function of literary creation. In the previous studies, authorial intention points to the study of authorship from both a subjective and social perspective of literary creations. From the mimetic theory of Ancient Greece, to the modern representation theories, then to the later romanticism, realism, Marxism and various kinds of contemporary interpretation theories, authorial intention has been indispensable in literary theories. American critic Abrams proposes his concept of four elements in literature, while French scholar Antoine Compagnon puts forward five components in literature, namely «author, literary works, reader, language, signification» (Compagnon 2011, p. 18). Authorial intention remains as an important issue. For such theoreticians, the importance of authorial intention lies in the systematic quality of literary interpretation. Thanks to authorial intention, the process and the structure of literary textual interpretation is established and different kinds of theories on elements or components of literature are made possible. Some scholars have pointed out that there are four types of main paradigms for authorial intention studies in the history of western literary theories: «author as maker, author as creator, author as producer, and author as scripter» (Zhang Yongqing 2015, p. 11). These dominant paradigms reveal the fact of authorship as theoretical base in literary theories. «Authorial intention is the academic or teaching standard to understand literary meaning in a traditional way. To restore authorial intention is and would continue to be the main or even the only one requirement in textual interpretation» (Compagnon 2011). Besides, whether authorial

intention is indispensable or not depends on the needs in textual interpretation and critical practices. Authorial intentions are principles and necessity for the interpretative process between author, text and interpreter. To be more specific, authorial intention is consciously or unconsciously seen as the main source of literary works.

For the western theories of interpretation starting from the ancient hermeneutics to the current theories of interpretation, the source and direction of interpretation cannot be found without authorial intentions. Western theories of interpretation start from the source of Hermes philosophy and develop into the modern hermeneutics, laying an emphasis on the process of interpretation in presenting the "truth" of author and text in order to «understand it within a relationship between text and its original intention» (Iser 2008, pp. 32–3). If in the process authorial intentions have been excluded, the object and direction of hermeneutics criticism would be lost. Antoine Compagnon also points out that in literary understanding «only the recognition of authorial intentions can guarantee a meaningful interpretation employing unity and complicity» (Compagnon 2011, p. 86). In this sense, authorial intention is the guarantee of interpretive process and its meaning, even as it exists only as a theoretical hypothesis. Yet, only in this context can the multiple perspectives of criticism and interpretation exist. This is to say that the meaningful interpretation of literary works should have a general direction, especially for the researchers and critics. No matter it is in biographical criticism, formalism, hermeneutics, or other theories, the questions of authorial intention and of the sources of meanings always exist. Such masterpieces as Hamlet and *Dream of the Red Mansion* have undergone criticism for several hundred years, while one basic problem remains: either in research or teaching, we first assume their authorial intention and believe that the texts embody literary meanings and that its sources presume authorial intentions. As a result, even Wellek and Warren who argue against authorial intention and insist on studying literary forms have to admit that "the most obvious origins for a literary work is its creator, the author" (Wellek and Warren 2006, p. 75).

Theoretically, authorial intention and meaning generation is one meta–question in literary studies. Meta–question influences the structuring of interpretative framework and the development of interpretation, as well as also the theoretical orientations. In contemporary west-

ern theories, there exist various kinds of arguments against authorial intention and in fact some paradoxical relationship between the two remains. «Even those critics try their best to expel authorship, have something of interpreting intentions of literary texts» (Compagnon 2011, p. 71). Antoine Compagnon points out two oppositional stands in discussing authorial intention: intention theory and anti–intention theory. Intention theory originates from such facts as: 1) we need to find what the author tries to express in the texts; 2) authorial intention is the only standard for a successful interpretation. Anti–intention theory believes: 1) what we find in text is independent of authorial intention; 2) authorial intention can not explain text, and the standard of interpretation does not exist (*ibidem*, p. 72).

In the studies of literary theories, especially in the course of the development of western literary theories, there are various kinds of anti–intention theories, in which there is one obvious characteristic. That is, all of them take the presence of the authorial intention as the hypothesis and basis. It is true even with the most well–known anti–intention theorists, such as Wimsatt of new criticism, Roland Barthes of French structuralism, and British critic Clive Bell. For instance, Wellek and Warren emphasize the study of the inner literariness and deny the outside references of literary texts. However, their criticism also has a primary theoretical target. That is, the contextual study is prior, while the biographical criticism has been embraced in the process of literary criticism. American scholar Susan Sontag who proposes her idea against interpretation argues that interpretation cannot completely solve the problems of representation of textual meanings. Her claim of a literary pornography in fact refers to the theoretical efforts to decode the authorial intentions.

Besides, regarding the specific ways of representation, anti–intention theory does not simply deny the authorship. Behind various kinds of anti–intention theories there hide the ideas of anti–essentialism, representing the transformation of literary interpretation. This means that the change of Western theories from author–centered, text–centered to reader–oriented is not to deny authorial intention. In other words, anti–intention theory presents only a theoretical position of deconstruction. What is deconstructed is intention itself other than the author, and there is a big difference between the two. Compagnon notes that there is a binary opposition between intention theories and

anti–intention ones. In fact, besides Compagnon's binary opposition, intention theories and anti–intention theories are mutually generative and mutually dependent. Compagnon's solution emphasizes the study of context and he believes that only in contextual studies can intention theories and anti–intention ones can achieve certain extent of balance and even solutions. However, this is in reality a compromise in theoretical construction, and it makes no difference between internal study and external study in contemporary western theories. The internal study facing the close reading as methodology and text as historicity finds no effective solution and results in the termination of internal study after new criticism. In this regard, the contextual study of anti–intention theory would eventually face with such problems. To put it in a more direct way, there are obvious problems or even defects in both intention theories and anti–intention theory, and the latter cannot give an ultimate solution to the remaining problems hidden in the former. This is exactly what Zhang Jiang's paper tries to clarify.

2. The Possibility of the Death of the Author

Has authorial intention really been denied? In the three theoretical clues provided by Zhang Jiang, French structuralist Roland Barthes and his concept of "life on paper" has been thoroughly explored. Roland Barthes's *An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative* does not only lay the foundation for narratology, but also a framework for French structuralism. It has exerted great influence on literary theories after structuralism, along with Bremon Claude's "Logics of Narrative possibilities" and Greimas's "Structuralist Semantics". *An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative* is an exclusive study on narratology which serves as a structural analysis of narrative works, a semiotic analysis of narrative discourses, and a semantic analysis of narrative elements. With reference to multiple works and theories, it extends into further exploration of the internal structures, the semantic organization of narrative works, as well as the formal representation of narrative discourses. Barthes employs linguistic methodologies to discuss the forms and structures of narrative works as the object of literary studies. In so doing, Barthes puts forwards the idea

of "life on the paper" which aims at the authorship in narrative studies and the authorial intentions. As Zhang Jiang points out, Roland Barthes argues against the idea of taking traditional narrator as the author, and believes that a semiotic analysis of narrator should be conducted because narrators and characters are merely "life on the paper" and "the (real) author cannot be mistaken as the narrator in the narrative work" (Barthes 1989, p. 29). The idea of "life on the paper" shows Roland Barthes's insist on formalistic textual analysis and the typical methodologies of narrative and structuralism which are against authorial intentions. Besides, Roland Barthes also expresses his anti–intention theory in his work Writing Degree Zero. In this very book, Barthes points out that such writing is a "white writing" in a direct way without any restraints of language orders: «Correctly speaking, this is a journalistic writing without any hidden places or any secrets, so that we can say this is a kind of cool–minded writing, or an innocent writing» (Barthes 2008, p. 48). For Barthes, the purified writing is in fact a formalistic textual criticism with its own meaning and value: «all "forms" embody some "value" so that another space of formal reality lies in the language structure and styles — and this is writing» (*ibidem*, p. 10).

Roland Barthes's structuralist analysis of narrative works and his concept of "writing degree zero" have been influential in western literary theories. To some extent, "writing degree zero" receives more critical attention than "life on the paper". As a more intensive anti–intention argument, the idea has been always seen as a theoretical turning point from authorship to readership. Admittedly, Roland Barthes's strong–mind has left certain regrets in his theoretical constructions. No matter how much Barthes emphasizes on the structuralist analysis, the issue of narrator always remains in his discourse as the most complicated part.

Barthes explores the roles of narrator, and disagrees with the past practices of equalizing narrator with author in a natural or social sense. For Zhang Jiang, such anti–intention theory is also a "hegemonic discourse", because

> from the interpretative power, author becomes the supreme interpreter and producer of the text after the death of author. In the multi–dimensional space of textual meanings, any interpretation is possible as critics and readers alike

in their free deduction. From the standard of interpretation, the practices are no longer subject to any single meaning and any interpretation will be right, while imagination and experiences clash with each other, if there is no longer the author and the source of meaning. (Zhang Jian 2016, p. 9)

Zhang Jiang's argument is reasonable: if it is as Barthes argues that the appearance of narrator means the death of the author, then the study of literary narrative will become meaningless. The so–called "life on the paper" can only be an imagined aesthetics and illusionary object of narratological studies. This conclusion is not in accordance with literary common senses and thus difficult to persuade scholars with disbelieves of the death of author. Before Roland Barthes's "The Death of Author", French Scholar Michel Foucault published his well–known paper *What is the author*. He argues that it is not enough to repeat some slogans, such as the death of author, God and man. On the contrary, we should re–examine the remaining spaces after the disappearance of author; we should scrutinize its new boundaries, relocations and redistribution of its spaces after the death of the author (Foucault 1991, p. 49). For Barthes, «the death of author' is a conclusion of narratology», and this conclusion has specific significance in Barthes's structuralist analysis of narrative works. If deprived of its reference to context and the signified, it is probably not a reasonable conclusion. Such idea has been elaborated on in *The Author cannot Die* by Zhang Jiang as he points out that «there will be no text without Foucault's speaking; there will be no meaning in text without Foucault. So the right relationship will be: Foucault is text, and text is Foucault. Text does not die as long as Foucault lives» (Zhang Jiang 2016, p. 5). Although in contemporary western theories, "the death of author" is to some extent transformed into «textual sciences against humanism» (Compagnon 2011, p. 42), such idea receives no deeper theoretical interpretation in critical practices. In other words, even if Roland Barthes is right, we could hardly extract any useful idea from his concept of "the death of author"; or as Foucault argues, what Barthes's idea of "the death of the author" leaves for the study of authorial intention has always been empty. Barthes's conception of "the death of the author" proves to be positive towards the development of narrative theories, and to some extent has already become the theoretical rationale for textual autonomies in narrative studies. However,

problems still remain. At the level of theoretical criticism, Barthes's reference to structuralist analysis of narrative works is so strong that it ignores some basic commonsensical knowledge of literary theories, or makes them questionable. If this is really a hegemonic discourse, then its direction points to the challenges of theoretical common senses which are more worthy of critiques.

3. The Open Text

In studying literary theories, the text–author and text–reader relationships involve such issues as authorial creation, authorial intention and textual interpretation, and the basic concepts and questions in literary criticism, while the study of authorial intention functions as the link in the system. It is not so much an emphasis on the importance of authorial intention but on the structural loss of meaning in literary interpretation without consideration of authorial intentions. Before the rise of various anti–intention theory, theorists have not so much doubts about authorial intentions. Even at the time when Wimsatt's "Intentional Fallacy" was popular, not all critics held it as a theoretical Bible or denied authorial intentions because of its obvious theoretical tendencies which is too radical and absolute. In his paper *On the Presence or Absence of Intention*, Zhang Jiang poses the questions: Why is there a rise of various anti–intention theory in contemporary western literary theories? What is the object of theoretical study after authorial intentions become the target of theoretical critique and hence are easily denied? In my opinion, such theoretical reflections are necessary. As theoreticians of new criticism such as Wimsatt and Beardsley propose, the so called "intention" is in fact «the deliberation or planning of the author» (Wimsatt and Beardsley 2001, p. 234). Yet, for a poem in this case, «we do not examine which part is intention, or which part refers to meaning. Poetry, in this way, is the existence, the autonomous being» (*ibidem*, p. 235). Such similar theoretical ideas echo with that of Andrew Bennett, the British scholar who questions «the indeterminacy of authorship facilitates so many interests in reading» (Bennett 2015, p. 215). With the influence of such theoretical ideas, it seems to be old–fashioned to interpret authorial intentions in a text. Accordingly, the anti–intention theory

deny the necessity of studying authorial intention. In this case, the interplays between text and society, and between text and author have undergone an obvious break, and various kinds of textual autonomy start to prevail. Within it, formalism stands for a theoretical school, while reader–oriented theories are also typical models. Besides, there are also other important theoretical ideas which inspire textual autonomies, and text–centered theories grow to be dominant in the development of western theories.

Theories of this type cut off both the relations between text and society and between text and readers, attempting to turn to critical autonomies at the level of textual science. This is not to say that text is closed or is producing meaning automatically without any interpretation, but it points to an openness which leads to its autonomous interpretation of meaning without any social or biographical criticism in a traditional sense. In this regards, Italian scholar Eco puts forward his concept of "the Open Text". In his book, Eco provides a new artistic theory based on his idea of "the Open Text", which is also an important anti–intention discourse. For Eco, the so–called "openness" is to redefine the new relationship between works and the interpreter, and «to explore the "definiteness" and "openness" of art» (Eco 2015, p. 3). The open text is flexible and open in its combination of grammar, semantics and words. Eco takes French poet Mallarme's work *The Book* as an example, and believes that it is a "work in movement" which is also an open text. The Book is the last book of Mallarme. As Eco points out, Mallarme has spent his lifetime writing this book and it is not only the ultimate goal of the poet but also the purpose of the world, as «the world exists for this single book» (*ibidem*, p. 14). This book, having embraced a wide range of ideas, is profound in meaning and flexible in language, grammar and structure, and even the pages are not ordered in numbers but different booklets in different orders according to certain rules. You can turn at random to any pages. However you move, the meaning on the paper is complete. Eco argues that

> obviously, the poet is not aiming for any definite meaning from any combinations, but looks after inspirations in each of this combination of words and sentences, which makes each meaningful so that there will be new relations and new understands for new inspirations. (*Ibidem*, p. 15)

As for the textual interpretation, Eco once argues for the concepts of textual interpretation and over–interpretation of anti–intention theory. The open text better presents Eco's concept of text–centered theories. This textual concept has obvious characteristic of anti–intention, which is quite different from other anti–intention theory, especially "Intentional Fallacy" of new criticism. First, "Intentional Fallacy" insists on textual autonomy which is to some extent text–centered while Eco believes that «the author's production itself is closed and could be understood and appreciated in the way when he creates» (*ibidem*, p. 3). But such closure is a combination of autonomy and dynamics of textual forms and structures. The open text is in reality the aesthetics of formalism, as its openness is not unconditionally free but has to return to the formal values of textual forms, semantic meanings and etc. Second, the aesthetics of formalism does not only insist on textual autonomy but also emphasize its dynamics of meaning interpretation which leads to the possibilities of understanding and interpretation. «In essence, only when a form can be understood in different ways can it be recognized as aesthetically valuable with various types of outlook and resonance» (*ibidem*). Compared with "Intentional Fallacy" of new criticism, Eco's concept of open text clearly embodies deeper theoretical significance and more obvious effort to redress the authorial intention. As texts are open, the issue of authorial intention is naturally not the core of textual interpretation. And this goes farther than new criticism and its "Intentional Fallacy". As Eco points out, the first theoretical self–awareness of the open text idea is symbolism in the late nineteenth century, and the Irish writer James Joyce's Finnegans Wake is a typical case. In this book, we can find a world unfolding in an Einsteinian way, «the initial word connects the last one, and it is indefinite when it ends. Every event, every word is possible to relate to other events and the choice of words decides the method to understand other events »(*ibidem*, p. 11). This text is a typical structural text, and the interpretation of authorial intentions is limited. To put it simpler, authorial intentions cannot help to decode the textual meaning.

Eco also points out that the concept of open text cannot solve all the problems of contemporary art. In the movement of open text, we still need to examine the textual characteristics and their specific contexts. In works like Finnegans Wake, the internal structure of text,

language and semantic meanings are the core elements of textual interpretation, but not all the work has its structural elements. As a result, the natural open text is difficult to find, and it is safe to say that specific method of interpretation has to return to the contextual conditions in a complicated relationship between open text and textual interpretation. However, once the target and direction is definite in textual interpretation, authorial intention cannot be denied. Therefore, it is bold to deny the relation between authorial intention and text, which is also a problem that Eco's concept of open text cannot ignore.

4. Return to Authorial Intention: Possibilities and Challenges

After Russian formalism, new criticism, structuralism, deconstructionism, issues of authorial intention have been replaced by aesthetic formalistic studies, linguistic and semiotic studies and semantic narrative studies. Authorial intention has been marginalized in literary criticism, which leads to a dislocation of intention and anti–intention theory. In current context, the proposal of anti–intention cannot solve the theoretical gap and aporia of what intention theory leaves behind. Efficient criticism in either intention theory or anti–intention theory is not possible without a deliberation of returning authorial intention to the commonsensible understanding of intention and interpretation and a confrontation with challenges in multiple significations of literary meanings. It requires various adjustments for literary criticism, a vehicle of the key concepts of humanity studies, to fully and quite possibly return to the talk of authorial intention, but not to the pure literary criticism and aesthetic judgments. The pure aestheticism is confronting with the theoretical issues of absolutism and professionalism brought by the break between form and history, which should be reconsidered and reflected on by contemporary theories.

   Contemporary western literary theories always attract theoretical challenges for its frequent transformations. From the early 20th century on, various theories have embraced differences in their patterns of thinking, conception of ideas and discourses of critique, but all have certain overlooks or problems in theoretical or knowledge construction. Formalism and the ideas of "life on the paper" or "Open

Text" of Eco are examples. Many scholars criticize the theoretical tendencies. But among them there is one thing we should pay close attention to: even though western theories include many developing theories, and some concepts prove to be unique for literary criticism and theoretical studies, it is still clear that we need constant reflection and critique. It is the same with western theories and literary criticism itself. As some researchers argue, «when we dive into literary theories, we tend to find something useful for us, while we don't want to be its slaves» (Barry 2014, p. 8). As for the authorial intentions in contemporary literary theories, we should keep our theoretical insights and critical spirits. Anti–intention theory insists on its autonomous identity but its validity is based more on the subversion of the past theoretical ideas and in this way achieves its goal of anti–intention. However, this is not the ultimate goal of theories, nor the theoretical liquidation of the author, but only alternative way for theoretical studies. What needs further consideration is its rationality in approaching practical issues.

From the perspective of theoretical rationality, anti–intention theory emphasizes the autonomous identity of textual interpretation and this theoretical standing first of all targets at the idea of historicism in literary studies. Historicism builds up the reliability of textual interpretation on «certain principles and relations between historical phenomena of the period and the time of evaluations», and tends to «place art in history and interpret its meaning in history» (Fokkema and Ibsch, p. 5). Anti–intention theory denies historicism in literary criticism with the reason that textual criticism of historicism easily leads to relativism and causes an ignorance of textual specificity. However, anti–intention theory's challenge of historicism returns to formalism, which over–redresses the problems by insisting on an universal principle of literary criticism of possibilities of textual science. Formalism had led to a popularity of close reading and scrutiny of textual meanings. It had played a positive role in studying textual forms, but the closure and science of textual forms cannot avoid the destiny of the decline of new criticism. Even though Eagleton asks for «"a rewriting" of all the literary works by the societies in which they are read» (Eagleton 2006, p. 176), it is still too bold to reach such a conclusion. New criticism has been replaced by deconstruction, which proves that the textual autonomy may not be eternal. It is

probably safe to say that most anti–intention theories feel frustrated in textual analysis.

Among them, some ideas are worthy of close deliberation. The frustration encountered by anti–intention theories does not mean a return to authorial intention. First, authorial intention is not equal to textual meaning as there is a richness of interpretation between authorial intention and textual meaning. If we equalize them in a simple way, we would have a reduction of criticism and a cancelation of critical values. In simpler words, it is not proper to say that in literary study the presence of author accounts for all meanings. Second, to return to authorial intention is not to return to authorship as the two differ in a unitary interpretation. This single interpretation presents a lineage of criticism, and this is not the case of literary criticism because theories of authorship are multiple existences and multiplied interpretation. That is to say authorial intention can be denied but authorship cannot, which means the two cannot be the same on the issue of the absence of critique. In conclusion, text interpretation is about both methodology and ontology.

In textual interpretation, both form and history have multiple significations and thus cannot be reduced simply to such issues as language, structure, metaphor, irony and other linguistic questions. In fact, form has certain ontological connotations, and there is a complicated and dialogic relationship between form and other elements of literature such as history, society, politics and etc. At the same time, "history" in textual criticism is not equal to "biography", "social context" or "historical background", but to the origins of literary meanings. *Dream of the Red Mansion* has its own form and history, so do Shakespeare's works. Heidegger's explanation of Vincent van Gogh's work *The Shoes* poses the question of art and its essence which refers both to its form and function. On issues of authorial intention, an emphasis on the binary opposition between form and history is only replaced with another problem, instead of solving it. It is the same with the understanding of authorial intention. There are rich findings in studying both authorial intention and anti–intention theories Whether it is for or against authorial intention, the binary oppositions should be avoided and we should turn to the richness and multiplicity of theories and ideas instead. In this case, relativism in interpretation should be rejected. It is true that one thousand

readers have one thousand Hamlets, but it does not make any sense except for a wordplay.

The French scholar Compagnon notes that «the whole literary theories more or less relate to the premise of the death of the author» (Compagnon 2011, p. 43). British scholar Andrew Bennett also mentions that «once you start to examine the authorship, you will find them everywhere in western literature and culture» (Bennet 2015, p. 181). In studying literary theories, reflections on authorial intentions are necessary. Yet, whether to argue for or against author's presence or intention, the binary oppositions should be avoided. To achieve that, we should hold the belief that the basic issue of existence is suspended or even denied without some exploration of the origins of literary meanings, no matter how open the texts are and how multiple the interpretations can be. Therefore, the origin of meaning in literary works cannot be separated from the authorial intention, text and the process of interpretation. Maybe it starts an entirely new cycle, but without this dynamic cycle the target and task of literary criticism is deprived of a basic platform of meaning production. Anti–intention theory has many problems, but to return to authorial intention is certainly not the ultimate solution to literary interpretation. Interpretation of literary meanings has to deal with the complicated relationship between authorial intention and text. Authorship should not be overlooked, but the credibility of authorial intentions and textual interpretation also lie in various methods of presentation of meaning and interpretation of intention. It is the very complicatedness of both theories and criticism that decide the meanings and values of textual interpretation. Thus, how to avoid coercive interpretation and return to the "truthfulness" of text has always no fixed answer. That is why the process and paradigm of the literary critical practice should assume greater importance.

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On the Sources of Meaning of Literary Works from the Perspective of Hermeneutics

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TITOLO ITALIANO: Sulle fonti del senso delle opera letterarie dal punto di vista dell'ermeneutica

ABSTRACT: In our attempt at studying the sources of literary works' meaning, hermeneutics occupies a quite significant position among all possible perspectives. Since the mid–20th century, there are two important theoretical trends within western hermeneutics: one is the philosophical ontological hermeneutics from Heidegger to Gadamer, bringing forward the reader–centered theory; the other is represented by the Italian philosopher Betti, his *Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the Geisteswissenschaften*, asserting that the author (subject) is one of the important sources when interpreting literary works. Owing to complex reasons, Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics has been occupying a prevailing position in European and American academia, while the latter hermeneutic tradition of Betti is less influential. Since the 1990s, the Chinese academia of literature and art have been largely influenced by the theory of hermeneutics of Heidegger, Gadamer and receptive aesthetics, while Betti's theory is still negligible. Therefore the reader–centered theory is widely accepted in terms of studying literary works, whereas the author's role in conferring the initial meaning of works is heavily weakened or even negated. Since Zhangjiang advocated the theory of "Coercive Interpretation" in the the year 2014, there has arisen a reflection on the one–sidedness of reader–centered theory in the study of literary works in China, and scholars have begun to refocus on the undeniable role authors play in the process of generating literary works' meaning. This article draws on the methodology of Betti's hermeneutics, and takes the practices of literary creation into account, so as to explain that the meaning of literary works is not only entrusted by the author, nor arbitrarily created by the reader. It's rather an interactive dynamic process, where the author and the reader coin the meaning together,

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and the three cardinal elements, author, text and reader work together, so as to keep the meaning of literary work in an open, continuously generating status.

Where does the meaning of literary work come from? This is an old and continually renewed issue. For a long time, it's widely accepted in western academia of aesthetics and literary theories that the author entrusts the work with its meaning. And it is the author who expresses and therefore infuses the meaning into the work via literary language. This view is highly affirmed in romanticism of the 18th and 19th century when the overall social atmosphere of elevating genius, emphasizing self–expression is prevalent. And with the development of psychological aesthetics and the popularity of Freud's psychoanalysis in the late 19th century and the early 20th century, the influence of this assertion is further expanded. As a result, most literary theorists and critics put their emphasis on studying the author's life, experiences, biographies and so on in an attempt to seek, conjecture or conceive the author's genuine intentions and attribute the sources of the meaning of the work entirely to the author's projection and endowment. This is the "author–centered theory" in a general sense. However, in the first half of the twentieth century, with the "linguistic turn" and the rise of Russian formalism, Prague school, new criticism, linguistic analytic aesthetics, semantic criticism, structuralism, semiotics and so on, the inquiries of the meaning of literary works have also undergone a shift, from the emphasis on author to the address of the text. Hence, a new view has emerged, that is, once the work completed, its meaning is independent of the author and presented in the language structure of the text, and the meaning of literary works can only be obtained from the independent text itself (its language structure and form). This is the so–called "text–centered theory". Almost in the same period, the movements of phenomenology and existentialism have appeared on the stage with an overwhelmed momentum, and the modern hermeneutic philosophy has come into being and made a huge impact in thezz 1960s with the representative figures such as Heidegger and Gadamer. Later on, the receptive aes-

thetics has given extra impetus to the emergence of this new theory, namely, the meaning of the literary works is derived from the reader (including critics) and carried out with their reading experience. At the same time, the theoretical trend of post–structuralism holds the similar opinions with modern hermeneutics in terms of studying the sources of the meaning of the work, which puts more emphasis on the reader. The convergence of the above two trends has brought the reader–centered theory into its full blossom, which has became the mainstream discourse of contemporary western literary theory. In a general retrospect of the theoretical development of the past century, it is interesting to notice the significant shifts western literary theory have undergone, namely, "author–centered theory → text–centered theory → readers–centered theory", corresponding directly to the three fundamental constituents of literary activities, that is, the logical process of "creation → works → acceptance". Though there maybe more complicated historical reasons, and their own rationalities respectively, there are also one–sidedness and theoretical mistakes for the above three theoretical "centers" to reflect on.

In my humble view, the two major shifts offer the very possibility of a comprehensive, open vision in response to the issue of studying the sources of literary works' meaning. Though this issue can be investigated from different perspectives and studied in various dimensions, considering the significance of modern hermeneutics and the given historical debate, this paper intends to inquire into the issue from the perspective of hermeneutics so as to bring the issue to the table again.

1.

First of all, the above two major shifts are closely related to the modern transformation of hermeneutics. In the 18th and 19th century, the "general methodological hermeneutics" represented by Schleiermacher and Dilthey was still in the pre–modern stage or the romantic stage, that is, the epistemological and methodological stage. Schleiermacher argues that the original meaning of the work can only be obtained from the author, the goal of our interpretation is to draw close to and reveal the author's intention and meaning. While Dilthey's

hermeneutics of "experience"asserts the view that understanding is to restore, experience and rebuild the psychological procedure during the author's writing, so as to reveal the "original intention" of the text, that is, the original meaning of the author. In terms of attributing the meaning of the work to the author, Schleiermacher and Dilthey hold the same view, but Dilthey emphasizes the ambiguity of understanding caused by the interpreter's individuality, and subjectivity. Since the middle of 20th century, the general methodological hermeneutics represented by Schleiermacher, Dilthey has been surpassed, with other two important modern theoretical trends coming into being. One is the philosophical ontological hermeneutics from Heidegger to Gadamer, the other is represented by the Italian philosopher Betti, his *Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the Geisteswissenschaften*. Both breakthroughs and inheritances have made compared with the general methodological hermeneutics represented by Schleiermacher and Dilthey. But among the two, Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics surpasses more and inherits less, whereas Betti's *Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the Geisteswissenschaften* hasn't took the path of ontological transformation. These two different modes of modern hermeneutics bring new values into being, which will be elucidated as following.

Gadamer has inherited and developed Heidegger's phenomenological "hermeneutics of facticity" (*Hermeneutik der Faktizität*), and transformed the previous epistemological and methodological hermeneutics into ontological hermeneutics, bringing forward a fundamental transition from the pre–modern to modern period. In the first place, he argues that understanding is not the way in which the reader (the interpreter, the subject), by some means, seeks and interprets the meaning of the text (object) and author which is external to himself, but the mode of being of Dasein itself. He asserts that: «Heidegger's temporal analytics of Dasein has, I think, shown convincingly that understanding is not just one of the various possible behaviors of the subject but the mode of being of Dasein itself». (Gadamer 2004, p. XXVII) Therefore, the concept of understanding goes beyond the scope of epistemology, elevated to the fundamental prescription of the existential category of human kind (The *Dasein*). Accordingly, the subject and object of understanding are not in a preexistent , fixed, divided status, but constructed in the process of understanding activities. In

this sense, on the one hand, Dasein (person) as the subject, has being constructed, generated and presented in the process of understanding activities. On the other hand, text (in a general sense) as the object of our understanding, is not just a fixed text or the finished product (*Endprodukt*) constituted by language, but constructed and generated in the understanding activity, acting as part of that process of understanding. In this way, the meaning of the text is neither the immediate meaning as a certain object of knowledge beyond Dasein, nor the fixed meaning entitled by the author of the text. It's rather generated in the understanding activity, namely, the dual constructed process of the text and Dasein (Human). Hence it's the fundamental mobility of Dasein that determines the generating, mobility and fluidity of the meaning.

Secondly, according to the perspective of ontological hermeneutics, Gadamer puts forward the theory of "historically effected consciousness", that is "understanding" (*Verstehen*) is never a kind of subjective activity towards a given "object", but belongs to the effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). That is to say, understanding is the being (*Sein*) of things to be understood" (Gadamer 2004, p. xxvii). It seems to him that the "history" (in whatever form) unfolded before people can not be purely objective historical facts (reality). The influences of the interpreter and factors of interpreter's own understanding of history always count. Therefore Gadamer puts that,

> The true historical object is not an object at all, but the unity of the one and the other, a relationship that constitutes both the reality of history and the reality of historical understanding. A hermeneutics adequate to the subject matter would have to demonstrate the reality and efficacy of history within understanding itself. I shall refer to this as "history of effect". Understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event. (Gadamer 2004, p. 299)

In other words, the kind of history of effect is essentially an understanding activity, and it is in the process of understanding that the historical Dasein (the self) and the historical reality (the other) have achieved an fusion of horizon, that is, the interpreter places the present horizon of the self into the specific historical (other) horizon. It is neither the coercive self–assimilation of a particular historical horizon by dint of the present horizon, nor discarding and dissolving the horizon of the present completely in the historical (other)

horizon. It's rather the fusion of both horizon so as to overcome the particularities of both and rise to the understanding of "a higher universality" (Gadamer 2004, p. 304). The present horizon is placed in the process of understanding and plays its role together with the historical perspective in the construction of effective history. Therefore it also re–prescribes and reproduces history to some extent. Therefore in my humble view, the historically effective consciousness constitutes the theoretical core of Gadamer's modern hermeneutics.

For Gadamer, the present horizon of the subject (the interpreter) of the effective history is primarily the pre–understanding and the fore–structure, namely, the fore–meaning (*Vormeinung*), fore–sight (*Vorsicht*), or prejudice (*Vorurteil*), which the interpreter brings into his own understanding. For him, the interpreter inevitably harbors some kind of their own prejudices in any kind of understanding activities, and the prejudice is the basis and premise of any understanding and interpretation. This is a fundamental point where Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics differs from and transcends traditional hermeneutics. It's a direct continuation of Heidegger's ontological hermeneutics. On the one hand, Gadamer criticizes the traditional hermeneutics, in particular the attempt to «eliminate all prejudices as the general requirement of the Enlightenment». For example, Schleiermacher prescribes that "all tasks" of hermeneutics as "to avoid every misunderstanding", and the goal of interpretation is clearly to eliminate the prejudices in search of "the original meaning" (quoted in Pan 2003, p. 89).

Gadamer believes that the prejudices in the process of understanding can not be denied, overcomed and eliminated. And the proposition of eliminating all prejudices itself is a prejudice. On the other hand, he clearly affirms the rationality and legitimacy of prejudices in our understanding. He emphasizes that, «if we want to do justice to man's finite, historical mode of being, it is necessary to fundamentally rehabilitate the concept of prejudice and acknowledge the fact that there are legitimate prejudices». This is quite essential for the modern transformation of the perspective of hermeneutics. Therefore, the prejudice and pre–understanding are not something that have to be overcome or eliminated, on the contrary, «the primal condition in hermeneutics is always prejudice». He argues that the prejudice not only limits and prescribes the interpreter's understanding in terms of its province, scope and focus to a certain extent, so as to make the

understanding express some inclinations, but also help stimulate the productivity and creativity of the understanding. In Gadamer's view, «the interpretation is to re–create (*Nachschaffen*) in a particular sense» (Gadamer 2004, p. 278), namely, the process of the production and construction of meaning.

In terms of how prejudice plays the role and constructs the meaning in the process of understanding, Gadamer offers an elaborate exposition of Heidegger's thesis,

> a person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting [. . .]. The process that Heidegger describes is that every revision of the fore projection is capable of projecting before itself a new projection of meaning; rival projects can emerge side by side until it becomes clearer what the unity of meaning is; interpretation begins with fore–conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones. This constant process of new projection constitutes the movement of understanding and interpretation. (Gadamer 2004, p. 269)

Here, prejudice ("fore projection", "fore conception", "expectation of meaning", "projection of meaning") is not fixed or unitary, but in a process of diverse competitions. It's constantly chosen, modified and updated in the interaction with the contents of the text, leading to the movement of meaning in the entire process of understanding and interpretation. It can be seen that prejudices and expectations of meaning play a significant role in the process of continuous creation, construction, production of meaning .

But Gadamer doesn't come to the extreme of completely attributing the production of meaning to the recreation of reader's prejudices. He points out that in the process of understanding, it's essential to notice the prejudices (fore–conception and the expectations of meaning), which is elucidated as following:

> The rules of such textual criticism can be left aside, for the important thing to note is that applying them properly depends on understanding the content. The fore–conception of completeness that guides all our understanding is, then, always determined by the specific content. Not only does the reader assume an immanent unity of meaning, but his understanding is likewise guided by the constant transcendent expectations of meaning that proceed from the relation to the truth of what is being. . . so also do we understand traditionary texts on the basis of expectations of meaning drawn from our own prior relation to the subject matter. (Gadamer 2004, p. 294)

This passage contains three meanings: a) Prejudice is only a kind of the expectation of meaning, it guides, instructs and even dominates the process of reader's understanding of the text (historical tradition) and the process of producing meaning. There can't be understanding and the interpretation of the text's meaning without prejudices; b) There's no determinate content of the reader's expectation of meaning in the understanding. It is on the basis of the content of the text and in the process of understanding that the indeterminate is transformed into the the determined again and again. The content of the text is the sources of the production of meaning; c) The content of the expectation of meaning which guides reader's understanding comes not only from the historical tradition (text), but also the reader's own historical situation (prior relation to the subject matter). It's the mutual interaction and unification of the above two aspects that counts. Understanding is therefore described as

> the interplay of the movement of tradition and the movement of the inter-preter. The anticipation of meaning that governs our understanding of a text is not an act of subjectivity, but proceeds from the commonality that binds us to the tradition. But this commonality is constantly being formed in our relation to tradition. Understanding is, essentially, a historically effected event. (Gadamer 2004, p. 293)

This view is identical to the above discourses of historically effected consciousness and the fusion of horizon in terms of understanding the meaning of the text. Meanwhile, historical, collective and commonable prejudices gain the fundamental position in modern hermeneutics.

Again, from the point view of the above theory of prejudices, Gadamer belittles the role that the meaning of the author plays in general. Given the fact that the understanding of texts is a creative activity of meaning–production, in which the reader participates. Therefore the meaning of the text must go beyond the meaning of the author, for example, Gadamer asserts, «the mens auctoris is not admissible as a yardstick for the meaning of a work of art. Even the idea of a work–in–itself, divorced from its constantly renewed reality in being experienced, always has something abstract about it» (Gadamer 2004, p. xxviii). One of the reasons why he debases the original intention of the author is the psychological inclination of Dilthey's traditional

hermeneutics. Gadamer is unsatisfied by that kind of confining the target of interpretation to the search of the author's intention via psychological experiences. In Gadamer's view, psychological testimony proves to be problematic. He questions as following,

> Does the original meaning of the text actually lies in mens auctoris? Is understanding just the reproduction of the original product? Then he continues, the meaning of reproduction here indeed can't be limited to the self–conscious infusion of meaning by the author. As is well–known, the self–explanation of artists is quite problematic. The meaning of their creation still poses the one–dimensional approaching task to the interpreter. (Gadamer 2004, p. 295)

The kernel of the above refutation is an objection towards author–centered theory. Gadamer believes that the purpose of interpretation is not to approach, restore or reproduce the so–called "objective" meaning of the original product (texts). Meanwhile, the meaning of the text can not be subsumed merely to the endowment of the author, It should rather go beyond and transcend the intention of the author. Therefore the author's self–explanations are often unreliable and inadequate. The process of understanding and interpretation, as the activity of reproduction and recreation, is actually the interaction and fusion of the present horizon of the recipient and the historical horizon of the text. Wherein the intention of the author is largely excluded from the understanding process. The second concern of Gadamer here is to re–interpret the conventional proposition that «the interpreter may understand the author better than the author himself». He employs the principle of the effective history so as to infuse new meaning to the old saying in a quite different historical context. Gadamer says,

> That subsequent understanding is superior to the original production and hence can be described as superior understanding [. . .]. The real meaning of a text, as it speaks to the interpreter, does not depend on the contingencies of the author and his original audience. It certainly is not identical with them, for it is always co–determined also by the historical situation of the interpreter and hence by the totality of the objective course of history. (Gadamer 2004, pp. 295–296)

The third concern for him is that, «The meaning of a text goes beyond its author. That is why understanding is not merely a repro-

ductive but always a productive activity as well» (Gadamer 2004, p. 296).

Though Gadamer's theory of prejudice does not completely refute the fact that things to be understood (historical text) are determined to some extent in its content, the main source of the production of the meaning of the text is still subsumed to the re–creation of the reader in the guide of prejudice and the expectation of the meaning. In this sense, Gadamer does prefer the reader–centered approach. The listed reasons of debasing the role the author plays in the production of meaning above is quite reasonable in the viewpoint of making understanding ontological. However there is a certain degree of subjectivism and relativism from the methodological and epistemological viewpoint. Gadamer himself also admits frankly that, the basic position of hermeneutics is the position of every reader (quoted in Pan 2003, p. 365). It is true that, as mentioned earlier, Gadamer regards the productivity and creativity of the interpretation as the origin and drive of the understanding. He illustrates the inevitable ambiguity of interpretation and its rationality. Those views push the traditional hermeneutics forward dramatically. However, via legitimizing the identical accountability of every interpretation, it may risk the slide into relativism on one hand, and on the other hand the subjectivity of reader–centered theory run the risk of an uncontrolled and unlimited subjectivism, and the subjectivity of the interpretation may be perverted to an arbitrary one, trapped in the relativism as its results. Gadamer is quite cautious about that, he adds that, «it's in no means to legitimize the kind of individual, arbitrary prejudice, because there is an distinct line of responsibility here» (Gadamer 2004, p. 300). However, he doesn't put forward explicitly the distinct boundary and objective criteria to help differentiate among various kinds of ambiguous interpretation. Hence it also paves the way for the relativism of reader–centered theory.

Receptive aesthetics has developed the basic idea of Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics, which emphasizes the viewpoint of reader–centered theory. The representative figure Jauss directly inherits and elaborates Gadamer's theory, saying, "historically effected consciousness", "fusion of horizon". Jauss puts forward the basic principle of the literary history of reception or the literary history of readers. He regards the reader as the decisive factor of the historical life of

literary works and the fundamental drive in the construction of literary history, while the basic role of the author in the composition of literary history is ignored. Jauss builts the framework of literary history on the basis of the reader's activity of acception, thus bringing the reader's role to the unprecedent height and posing a powerful challenge to the traditional theory and research of literary history. The reader–centered theory emerging in Gadamer's theory is pushed forward by Jauss thoroughly to a new stage.

Gadamer thinks that Jauss goes too far in emphasizing the role of the reader in construction of the meaning of literary works. He criticizes that, «the receptive aesthetics of H.R. Jauss already contains this view, but his overemphasis makes him slide unwillingly to the edge of Derrida's "deconstruction" (*Dekonstruktion*)» (Jauss and Holub 1987). That is, Jauss slides into the same relativism as deconstructionism. Interestingly, Jauss is also dissatisfied with Gadamer's view that the historical text has some kind of objectivity, and he criticizes the materialism of Gadamer's interpretation. Their disputations also reflect the fact that Jauss goes further in terms of reader–centered theory.

There's also a theoretical strand represented by the Italian philosopher Emilio Betti, his *Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the Geisteswissenschaften*. As early as the year 1954, his book *The Groundwork of General Interpretive Theory* (*Zur Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Auslegungslehre*) has been published, known as the *Declaration of Hermeneutics*. And in the year 1955, his two volumes book*Basic Theory of Interpretation* has been published, with a greater length than Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. Betti is deeply dissatisfied with the fact that Heidegger and Gadamer's modern hermeneutics has abandoned the whole tradition of romantic hermeneutics embodied by Schleiermacher and Dilthey. He regretfully points out that

> Such a glorious hermeneutics (theory of interpretation) of time is no longer an animated property in human sciences in contemporary Germany. It seems to be obsoleted. The rich heritage of hermeneutics in today's Germany seems to have been almost forgotten, and that inheritance of great romanticism is nearly interrupted (It is difficult to estimate the province of which has already happened). (Quoted in Bleicher 1980, p. 52)

Therefore Betti puts forward the methodological hermeneutics in confrontation with Heidegger, Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics.

Although at that time it has no obvious influence in Germany where the profound tradition of hermeneutics takes its root, Betti still shows his theoretical attempt to develop and revivify the romantic tradition of Schleiermacher and Dilthey. As the American scholar Palmer points out, «Betti tried to rebuild the old while meaningful German tradition in his earlier encyclopedic book *Basic Theory of Interpretation* (*Teoria generale della interpretazione*)» (Palmer 1969, p. 51).

Betti does not agree with the view of Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics that focuses more on the interpreter while despises the author. Betti insists on the epistemological and methodological view of understanding. The core concept of his hermeneutics is the "objectivations of mind», which is called the "the meaningful form" (*sinnhaltige Formen*). It's from the importance and necessity of human understanding and communication that Betti conceives his theory of hermeneutics. He puts it as: «Nothing is of greater importance to man than living in mutual understanding with his fellow–men». He regards all kinds of "objectivations of mind" in the past («from fleeting speech to fixed documents and mute reminders, from writing to chiffres and to artistic symbol, from articulated language to figurative or musical representation, from explanation to active behaviour, from facial expression to ways of bearing and types of characters» and so on) as "meaningful form". And he asserts that «through these forms others mind is recounting», and our understanding and interpretation is to discover and show «the meaning contained within these forms» (quoted in Bleicher 1980, p. 53)

Betti emphasizes that, «the condition for our interpretation is merely caused by meaningful forms». And forms in his view can be understood in a general sense as our homogenous perceptual structure, which is suitable for preserving the forms of creation and the character of the mind (authors and others) that is embodied in it. Due to the kind of meaningful form, we (interpreters) resort to the reciprocal mobilization of corresponding perceptual elements in the chain of the conceptual universe, so as to achieve «the striking of the same chord on their mental instrument to bring forth thoughts that correspond to those of the speakers» (quoted in Bleicher 1980, p. 54). It is crucial here that Betti holds the view that the thoughts of others (the author) can be objectively transformed into "objectivations of mind", namely "the meaningful form". As the object of interpretation for the interpreter, it has the hermeneutic autonomy external to the interpreter. Given

the fact that the objectivations of mind or the meaningful form of others (the author) can be recognized by the interpreter. This is the main difference between Betti's epistemologcial and methodological hermeneutics and Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics.

Betti phrases the process of understanding as the unification of three elements (author, the meaningful form namely the linguistic text, the subject of interpretation), and he formulates it as following:

> The phenomenon of understanding is therefore a triadic process at the opposite ends of which we find the interpreter as an active, thinking mind, and the mind objectivated in meaning–full forms in which an objectivated mind confronts the interpreter as an unalterably other being. Subject and object of the process of interpretation, i.e. interpreter and meaning–full forms, are the same that can be found in every process of cognition; only here they are characterized by specific traits which derive from the fact that we are not dealing with just any object but with objectivations of mind, so that the task of the cognizing subject consists in recognizing the inspiring, creative thought within these objectivations, to rethink the conception or recapture the intuition revealed in them. It follows that understanding is a re–cognition and reconstruction of a meaning — and with it of the mind that is known through the forms of its objectivations — that addresses a thinking mind congenial with it on the basis of a shared humanity: it is a bridging through a kind of arc, a bringing together and reuniting of these forms with inner totality that generated them and from which they seperated; it is, of course, an internalization of these forms in which their content is transposed into the differing subjectivity of an Other. (Bleicher 1980, pp. 56–7)

Here Betti offers a very clear and accurate description of the essence and process of understanding. Firstly, He affirms that the linguistic text is the production of the creative activity of the author and the meaningful form produced by the objectification of mind. It's the irreversible object "other" that the interpreter confronts. Secondly, he equally affirms that the activity of understanding can not be carried out without the active participation of the subject (the other), the interpreter. That is, he not only does not deny the active role of the reader and interpreter in the understanding activity, but also affirms the irreplaceable role the interpreter plays. Thirdly, Betti points out that the linguistic text as the objectification of the mind, is the medium of the establishment of connection and communication between two subjects. And the text is the starting point and direct object of under-

standing and explanation. Only via the text can the interpreter have access to the author's mind, therefore making the communication and understanding of the meaning of texts possible. In this regard, Betti advocates the text–centered theory, but not the kind proposed by the structuralism and formalism, which cut off the connection between text and the author. Fourth, Betti regards understanding as the interpreter's re–understanding and re–construction process of the meaning of the text and the author's inner world. Hence, the focus of understanding not only lies in the interpreter and his prejudice, but also depends on the text and its author. Certainly, the aim is not to restore the hidden intention of the author, but the kind of reconstruction with the participation and intervention of the interpreter. It's the communication and communion of mind between two subjects, it's a kind of inter–subjectivity. Fifth, Betti places the mutual understanding of inter–subjectivity on the basis of the common human nature, which is clearly inherited from the traditional hermeneutics of Schleiermacher and Dilthey.

Betti carries out the above methodology of hermeneutics to the operational level, and puts forward the famous "Four canons and guidelines of interpretation". The first is the «canon of hermeneutic autonomy (*Autonomie*) of meaning or rules of standardized internality». The second is the «canon of cohesion and integrity» (*Kanas der Ganzheit*). The third is the «canon of actuality of understanding» (*Kanon der Aktualitat des Verstehens*). The fourth is the «canon of the correctness of the meaning», or the rules of coherence of meaning of hermeneutics (*Kanon der hermeneutischen Sinn. Entsprechung*). The first two rules are mainly concerned with the object of interpretation, the basic spirit is that the text is autonomous and independent for the interpreter. The main criterion of validity of interpretation should be consistent with the author's intention, rather than cater to the intention or purpose of the interpreter (quoted in Bleicher 1980, p. 59). This is completely different from Gadamer's abandonment of the author's intention. The latter two rules mainly concern the subject of the interpretation. Betti affirms the subjectivity of understanding, its legitimacy and necessity. Without returning to the assertion of traditional hermeneutics which aims at overcoming the subjectivity of understanding (quoted in *ibidem*), Betti criticizes the idea of completely ignoring the text (meaningful form) and the objective

autonomy of the author's intention. Hence he holds a strong position in terms of maintaining the objectivity of the meaning of the text, and the idea that understanding should draw "close" to the objective meaning of the text (quoted in *ibidem*). Essentially, the two rules that emphasize the subjectivity are congruent with the previous two rules of objectivity.

In general, Betti's methodological hermeneutics is different from the reader–centered theory of Gadamer, Jauss, and the author–centered theory of traditional romantic hermeneutics. It may be summarized as the text–centered theory which combines the author with the reader. As soon as *Truth and Method* is published, Betti shrewdly notices the subjectivism of Gadamer's hermeneutics which negates the objectivity of interpretation. Betti makes a quick objection and criticism towards that tendency. He put it as,

> the subjectivist position rests on a shift of meaning which identifies the hermeneutical process of historical interpretation with a situationally de-termined meaning–inference (as it is the case in eschatological mean-ing–inference) as a result, the fundamental canon of the hermeneutical autonomy of the object is altogether removed from the work of the history. (Bleicher 1980, p. 73)

In particular, he criticizes the core concept of Gadamer, such as "prejudice", "pre–understanding" and "fore–structure". Betti points out that, «the objection to this is obvious: the texts which are approached with a meaning–inferring "pre–understanding" are not to be used to confirm already held opinions; we have to suppose, instead, that they have something independently of our meaning–inference». And it's here Betti affirms that the questionable character of the subjectivist position comes into full light. And Betti points out bluntly that,

> It is obviously influenced by contemporary existentialist philosophy and tends towards the confounding of interpretation and meaning inference and the removing of the canon of the autonomy of the object with the con-sequence of putting into doubt the objectivity of the results of interpretative procedures in all human sciences. (Bleicher 1980, p. 73)

Gadamer responds to and objects to Betti's criticism. Considering the length of this article the long disputation can't go into details, but it should be pointed out that the essence of their theoretical

divergence lies in whether recognizing the autonomy of the object of interpretation or not. Palmer has an objective comment on this issue, and he points out the fact that Betti proposes «to understand the objective factor in accordance with the object itself», whereas Gadamer asserts the subjectivism of understanding. In other words, «the nature of "objective" interpretation has been Betti's concern». Meanwhile, Palmer stresses that

> Betti argues, however, that recent German hermeneutics has so occupied itself with the phenomenon of Sinngebung (the interpreter's function of conferring meaning on the object) that this has come to be equated with interpretation. Betti asserts that his main purpose is to clarify the essential distinction between *Auslegung* (interpretation) and *Sinngebung*. Precisely because this distinction is ignored, the whole integrity of objectively valid results in the humanities (*die Objektivitat der Auslegungsergebnisse*) is challenged. (*Ibidem*)

Therefore, Palmer emphasizes that, «it is fundamental and is the first canon of all interpretation to affirm the essential autonomy of the object» (Palmer 1969, pp. 56–7). This assertion is particularly pertinent.

Now we can see that methodological hermeneutics represented by Betti is irreplaceable in the history of western hermeneutics. It is radically opposite to Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics. However, they should be considered as two distinct directions of complementary progress and development of the hermeneutics in Schleiermacher and Dilthey's tradition. Thus, the significant influence from Betti's hermeneutics to Gadamer's should not be overlooked. Firstly, in modern hermeneutic theories, it is not a subjective overestimation but a theoretical fact that only Betti's methodological hermeneutics, which is so completed and rigorous in its philosophical basis, system, idea, category, method, etc., that is a matched rival and in a comprehensive dialog with Gadamer's hermeneutics. The expert in history of hermeneutics, Palmer, in his famous work Hermeneutics, puts a whole chapter under the title of "The Contemporary Battle over Hermeneutics: Betti Versus Gadamer". He argues explicitly that,

> The fundamental contrast between Betti and Gadamer is clear. We are confronted with two very different conceptions of the scope and purpose of hermeneutics, the methods and kinds of thinking appropriate to it, and the essential character of the discipline as a field of study. (Palmer 1969, p. 59)

However, Palmer also contends that

> The two positions are not totally antithetical. Rather, the two thinkers are working on different aspects of the hermeneutical problem [...] for hermeneutics as a whole, both the philosophical positions yield important approaches to the hermeneutical problem. (Palmer 1969, p. 60)

Moreover, Betti is not alone in the history of contemporary philosophy. His thoughts have been attached great importance, assimilated and developed by many theorists. For example, the distinguished French hermeneutic theorist Paul Ricœur advocates the textual hermeneutics. He describes Betti as «devoted to offer applicable and rigorous rules to hermeneutics of objectification of the mind», and at the same time reserves its applicability. He thinks that «the scope of application for Betti's systems is limited to the hermeneutics of written "texts", rather than all objectification of the mind, i.e. all forms of civilization and culture in human societies» (quoted in Pan 2003, p. 385–6). What's more, even for Gadamer, despite his great disagreement with Betti, still takes the theoretical significance of Betti's methodological hermeneutics seriously and speaks highly of it. Gadamer thinks that it is Betti who completely avoids both the risk of naïve historical objectivism and the overestimation of arguments suggested by subjectivism. Gadamer comments that,

> Betti seeks the mean between the objective and the subjective element in all understanding. He formulates a complete canon of hermeneutical principles, at the head of which stands the text's autonomy of meaning (Sinnautonomie), according to which the meaning—i.e., what the author intended to say—can be gained from the text itself. But he also emphasizes with equal clarity the principle of the currency of understanding—i.e., its adequacy to the object. This implies that he views the interpreter's being inevitably tied to a particular perspective (Standortgebundenheit) as an integrating element in hermeneutical truth. (Gadamer 2004, p. 511)

Thus, Gadamer admits that his hermeneutic theories and that of Betti's are interrelated to some extent rather than merely antithetic.

In my opinion, Betti's great theoretical contribution to hermeneutics seemingly haven't been fully valued and affirmed from the perspective of a longer historical period. Its position in the academic and theoretical history should be re–valuated. The seemingly "injustice"

phenomenon is closely related to the main academic trend of Europe in the first half of last century, especially in Germany. At that time, the phenomenological movement which initiated by Husserl and propelled by Heidegger, swept across Europe and occupied the prevailing position in philosophy. Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics was under the influence of this trend and pushed it to the climax in turn. Challenged by the strong impact of the ontological hermeneutics, Betti's methodological hermeneutics was marginalized. With his death in 1968, it's impossible to further his controversy with Gadamer and make a development of his unique interpretation theory. Hence, there's no chance for Betti to expand his influence in the Western academia. With his influence gradually fading away, Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics has firmly occupied the prevailing position in European and American academia.

2.

Since 80s of last century, the academia of Chinese philosophy, aesthetics and literary theory has been significantly affected by Heidegger, Gadamer and hermeneutics of the receptive aesthetics, while Betti's influence is almost negligible.

The reasons for the formation of such a selective acceptance of Western Hermeneutics in China in the new period are likely to be complicated. But the main two aspects can be divided into subjective and objective: the objective aspect of what has been mentioned above, Heidegger and Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics always occupy the mainstream status in the western countries, while the influence of Betti's methodological hermeneutics is very limited. Consequently, the academia in our country will naturally put the main focus on the former when making the introduction and translation. The subjective aspect, in my opinion, is the ideological liberation movement during the initial stage for reform and opening–up, which formed a specific acceptance context in our ideological and academia.

Most notably in this context, firstly, is the humanitarian discussion at the beginning of 1980s in philosophy, aesthetics and literary theory academia, which is a beautiful landscape in the liberation movement of academia in early 80s. The background of the discussion is

as follows, since the Third Plenary Session of the 11th CPC Central Committee, with the gradually deepening universal criticism and reflection towards the doctrine of the personal worship and absolutism during "Cultural Revolution", with the return of the Enlightenment spirit of May Fourth, humanism, there has been a general consensus among the people and intellectuals about the humanitarianism that values human and human value. Artistic creation and outstanding works, which show the humanitarian spirit, continue to emerge, the proposition «literature is about human knowledge» had also been reintroduced[1]

The great discussion of humanism and the proposition of the theory of subjectivity are the two representative achievements of the ideological liberation movement and cultural modernity transformation in 80s. The internal cause of their emergence is an urgent internal demand in the field of cultural and academic studies based on criticizing and reflecting on the "left" line of the Cultural Revolution and absolutism. The external cause is the tide of reform and opening–up to break the long–term seclusion of the situation. Foreign thoughts, especially western academic culture and literary thought

1. Qian Gurong 1980 (1957); written in October 26, 1957, it is a statement for his *On "Literature Is About Human Knowledge"* ("Literary Monthly", 5, (1957)), which received a long–time criticism. (Qian 1980), and generally accepted by the literature and theory academia, all of which became a social psychological and cultural basis of the discussion. At the same time, through careful study and discussion on Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts in 1844, there was a boom of discussions on Manuscript in academia, which won the recognition of Marx's humanitarian ideas, and made this discussion reach an unheard–of depth and width. According to incomplete statistics, from the second half of 1978 to the end of 1982, around 500 papers were published on issues of human, human nature, human rights, human feeling, human alienation, and humanitarianism, half of which concerned literary and aesthetic. The second aspect of the background is, at the end of 1985, the emerge and the development of the discussion of Liu Zaifu's literature subjectivity theory can be recognized as the continuation and deepening of the great discussion of humanism and the concept of "literature is about human knowledge" in a sense. However, its direct theoretical source is Li Zehou's subjective practical philosophy. The main content of this concept is that the literary and artistic creation should put human beings into the main body of the practice in the historical movement, which means that treat human as ends, not means. Besides, the true meaning of this immortal proposition, "literature is about human knowledge" is that the writer should be aware that the destiny of literature is up together in a common cause with the destiny of human beings, which means not only to restore the people as the subject of practice in the literary field, but also to extend the "inner space", and admit that «literature is about pneumatology, characterology and noology of human beings» (Liu 1985–6).

come in a continuous stream. Contemporary western literary aesthetics and literary theory, especially modernism literature theory comes in flocks (Gao 2011, p. 425). And postmodern literature and literary theory has gained a certain number of translation and introduction (Zhu 2014). They brought a lot of foreign culture in academia of new ideas, new conceptions, new methods, which not only have a certain impact on the inherent thinking habits in Chinese academia, but also provide many enlightenments for us to answer and deal with current practical problems in Chinese ideological and cultural field through a critical reference and absorption. To effectively promote the further liberation of thought in literature and art and culture of academic, strengthen the collision, communication and exchanges between western and Chinese cultural and academia, promote the transformation and innovation of the research methods and the transition state of our academic discourse system. This ideological and cultural atmosphere also contributed to the prosperity and diversity of literature, art, aesthetics and literary theory in the '80–'90 of the last century. In the late 1990s, Mr. Qian Zhongwen and Mr. Tong Qingbing once said:

> Under the guidance of reform and opening–up, the literary theory has introduced the theory of foreign literature on a large scale, and introduced the western literary thoughts in the past hundred years. In the past few years, people have cheerfully done imitation, propaganda and experiment, almost practiced again all European and American literary trends in the past hundred years, and all of the literary thought was very active. (Qian and Tong 2000)

This is true in literary theory. We have introduced the translated many genres' work and thoughts, such as expressionism, Russian formalism and intuitionism, psychoanalysis, semantics, new criticism, phenomenology, existentialism, archetypal criticism, structuralism, semiotics, Western Marx doctrine schools, hermeneutics, receptive aesthetics, deconstruction, feminism, new historicism, postmodernism, post–colonialism, space theory, cultural studies and cultural theory, all of which have been referred or tried to be used in different degrees in Chinese literary research and criticism practice, although this application is not always successful, and often be misread, distorted or deformed.

According to both internal and external factors and forces above, on the one hand, it gradually shaped the practical needs and new context that we accept the external ideology and culture; on the other hand, it would correct, adjust, change, or accept this reception context based on the practice of reference and application. However, the introduction and reference (not entirely westernized) of such a wide range of (only on the scope, without criticism) foreign cultural academic (mainly western) was mainly happened in the beginning of the first 10 years. After the mid–90s, the consciousness and selectivity of reference was improved, the scope is gradually concentrated instead of scattered, and the focus is prominent. In retrospect, since the new period, Phenomenology and Existentialism which are initiated by Husserl and promoted by Heidegger, Merleau–Ponty and Sartre as well as the Philosophical Hermeneutics by the successor Gadamer — as one of (not the only one, the Marx doctrine also had a big impact) the western academic thoughts — gained the most and longest attention in our academia (including literary theory and aesthetic academia). The reason is very complex, while in my opinion, there are two main reasons: one is the modern Chinese academia's re–understanding on the major issues of humanitarianism, subjectivity and their theory demands has an intrinsic correlation with the thought of phenomenology and existentialism. For example, Husserl's transcendental phenomenology holds that the intentional structure of consciousness and the recognition of consciousness and the ability of subjectivity can be grasped intuitively through phenomenological reduction; Heidegger stressed that "Dasein", "being in the world" and "Sein" structure, is essentially continuous with the intentional structure of consciousness of Husserl's ideas, but more basic and takes more priority over Husserl's intentional structure of consciousness; His hermeneutics, which stated that an activity of understanding is premised on the basis of the interpreter's subjective pre–understanding and pre–structure, was in full swing and ascension in Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, all of which are a certain internal fit to the theoretical pursuit of our academia. This is the internal mechanism and the ideological and cultural context of the translation, the introduction and acceptance of the foreign ideological trend, which is driven willingly or not willingly by the Chinese academia. Secondly, the mainstream Chinese academia always treat the Marx doctrine as a guide, since the new

period, we break the shackles of dogmatism of "Western Marxism is not Marxism" and studied systematically and critically reflection on the various schools of Western Marxism thought for more than 100 years. And Recognized that the contribution of Western Marx doctrine's contribution to historical development in western countries, made a lot of innovation and progress in theory, and produced a tremendous impact and had large significance to our country in the construction of contemporary Marx theory research. And the phenomenology and philosophical hermeneutics have overlapping relations with western Marx doctrine in many aspects. For example, Lukács constructed the ontology of social being according to phenomenological intentional analysis and constructive method. Marcuse, one member of the Frankfurt School, absorbed Heidegger's ontological thoughts of Dasein phenomenology, criticized economic determinism that completely negate the subjectivity of human being, and alleged to the comprehensive understanding of Dasein (subjectivity) from the two aspects of material and spirit at the same time. Sutter's phenomenology of existentialism tried to restore the human being inside the Marx's doctrine — the freedom of the individual. Merleau–Ponty interpreted Marx's "real–life man" as the "history of the body" (that is, "body–subject"), which made a dialectical unity of the spirit and flesh, spirit and material in order to make a new interpretation of historical materialism, and so on and so forth. Chinese scholars would be more accessible to exploring phenomenology and Existentialism theory through the introduction and study of Western Marx doctrine. Heidegger has a profound understanding of the relevance of phenomenology, existentialism and Marxism and Marx's Transcendence of them, he said:

> Because Marx went to the essence of the history when realizing the alienation, so the historical point of view of the doctrine of Marx is superior than other history. But Husserl does not, it seems to me that Sutter is not aware of the nature of the history in existence, so neither existentialism nor phenomenology has reached to this stage, and only in this stage can be qualified to make conversation with Marx. (Heidegger 1996, p. 383)

These two aspects constitute the internal mechanism and the ideological and cultural context of the selective translation, introduction and reception of foreign thoughts consciously and unconsciously in

Chinese academia. As one of the earliest (late 1980s) scholars to introduce the receptive aesthetics (Zhu 1989), I have practical experience with the specific context, that why the theory of meaning of literary works — from Heidegger and Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics to receptive aesthetics and to reader–centered theory — would be widely accepted in China. And I realize that is also the main reason why the effect of the work's original meaning given by the author is imperceptibly reduced, dilute in that period.

3.

This situation saw a significant change until 2014, when Zhang Jiang published an essay named Coercive Interpretation (Zhang 2014), which makes a significant impact on the the literary theory academia of our country. In Zhang Jiang's Coercive Interpretation and a series of papers[2], he points out one of the major (not the first or only) defects in critique of Contemporary Western Literary Theory: the coercive interpretation, and at the same time, also deeply reflects on reader–centered theory that exaggerates the decisive role that reading, criticism and interpretation creates the meaning of work in Gadamer's and receptive aesthetics. It should be noted I do not fully agree with Zhang Jiang's theory, but I quite approve the main point of his view. His critical reflection, in fact, helps me to reflect on the one–sided emphasis on the views of meaning in Gadamer's hermeneutics and the reader–centered theory. Needless to say, this is also very important for my future academic research.

Zhang Jiang criticizes the reader–centered theory of ontological hermeneutics, and points out trenchantly that «Heidegger and Gadamer pushed it to the top, "the interpretation is to supplement meaning, not to find meaning" (Gadamer 2004, p. 426). As a result, the understanding of the text is always a drift, not fixed». This makes the exploration to the text meaning (including author's meaning), completely excluded from the function of interpretation and criticism, so only the readers and critics' "supplement meaning" makes up the understanding and explaining, which is obviously contrary to com-

2. Mainly included in Zhang 2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d, 2017.

mon sense. When it comes to the relationship between the historical understanding (which means to be interpreted in the historical context that the text produced) and the current understanding, Zhang Jiang says,

> the understanding of the history of the text, that is, the understanding of the native discourse of the text, is the premise of all understanding. Only on this basis, will the current understanding have attachment, and will the current understanding of the text exist. The current understanding of the text can be built on the original intention of the text, but it cannot distort the original meaning of the text, or impose the current understanding of the interpreter upon the text.

Here Zhang Jiang uses several concepts like "the native discourse of the text", "the original intention of the text" and "the original meaning of the text" to emphasize that the original meaning of discourse and the primary text has its autonomous nature, which is undeniably independent of the readers and critics. And besides, the author's meaning is objective, therefore, the current theory cannot displace the original text or the author's dominant idea (by «I think that refers to the original intention of the author») or even redefine the work. Zhang Jiang stresses that, it is the power of critics to understand the original text with the new theory, however, not rewrite. The existence of the text is different from others' interpretation. Once rewritten, the understanding is not the understanding from the text, but from the interpreter. The relationship between them should be, the existence of the text comes first, the understanding comes later; the existence generates the understanding, and the understanding attaches to the existence; «without the existence, the understanding will also be lost» (Zhang 2014). It is clear that the text always comes before the understanding from the epistemological point of view, not the other way around from the hermeneutical point of view". In my opinion, although it is common sense, it has initially put forward the textual meaning–centered theory, which also includes the author's meaning.

This point of view has further developed in Zhang Jiang's recent research. He finds another branch theory of hermeneutics, which is different from Heidegger and Gadamer's ontological hermeneutics—Betti's hermeneutics of epistemology and methodology. Zhang

Jiang says, «I am more in favor of the view of the Italy philosopher Betti, specifically, I agree that "the text or works, is the objectification of the spirit of the author"»,

> in Betti's position, the text is firstly the author's creation, which is the objective product of the author's spirit. The author, with ideological and spiritual power, provides us with a very personalized spiritual product, which cannot be copied, recycled or replaced by others. The author and text get fusion and refining in such a personalized product, and the author gives the text his mind and spirit, while the text carries them and becomes the material author. The denial of the author is equal to the denial of the text, and makes the existence of the text totally a different meaning. (Zhang 2016)

Zhang Jiang makes a brilliant and concise analysis of Betti's viewpoint,

> the writer's spiritual demands are all in the text. Text is the object of the author, the materialized object of the author, the way or method for the author to achieve and retain himself. He uses this text to talk with the later generations, and to express himself and extend his thought immortally. The author can die physically, but the spirit will be perpetual. And the text is rooted in the spirit of the author, or the text exists because of the spirit. (Zhang 2016)

This is to improve the irreplaceable status of author, who does the creation and gives the works' original meaning, also further expounds the textual meaning–centered theory, which includes the author's meaning, and has re–affirmed the important role and status of the author in the theory of hermeneutics.

Borrowing from Betti's theory, Zhang Jiang not only criticizes the reader–centered theory from Gadamer and receptive aesthetics, which belittle the status of the author, but also criticizes the "the author was dead" of structuralism and deconstruction. In fact, the contemporary western literary theory overemphasizes readers' status of creating meaning, and this tendency to deny and abolish the significance of author's meaning, is the results of interaction between phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics and formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, which consequently becomes the dominant idea of the contemporary western literary theory. Roland Barthes put

forward the famous proposition of «when the author is dead, the writing begins» (Barthes 2004, pp. 506–7), and draws the conclusion from the intertextuality and the multiplicity of the text, «this multiplicity is concentrated on one place, that is the reader, not the author. [. . .] We know that in order to give writing a future, we must overthrow this myth (by "the writer is the only person in literature"): the birth of the reader must be at the expense of the author's death» (Barthes 2004, pp. 511–2). This is obviously an extremely violent, one–sided interpretation theory both eliminating the author's and raising the reader's status.

In this regard, Zhang Jiang criticizes profoundly from the perspective of the power of utterance interpretation, that Barthes' «"the death of the author" is just a metaphor, a question raised. Behind "the death of the author", it is the anti–subject, anti–center, anti–rationalism proposition of deconstruction, which is the expansion of deconstruction in the field of literary theory and hermeneutic», «From the perspective of hermeneutics, what is the basic purpose of these slogans and theories? [. . .] We can judge that the core of the problem is the power of discourse and the standard of text interpretation». From the power of interpretation, if the author dies, the reader becomes the highest interpreter and the creator of the text. In the multidimensional space of the text meaning, any interpretation can be generated, and the critic, as well as the general reader, randomly generates his own conclusion. From the standard of interpretation, if the text loses the author, its meaning will no longer have a source, interpretation will no longer be dominated by a single meaning, all imagination and experience will have conflicts with each other, and all the interpretation will be correct. Zhang Jiang finds the root of "coercive interpretation" from the perspective of hermeneutics,

> it is this kind of thought and theory of the author, makes "the coercive interpretation" of the western literary theory become popular since the middle of the twentieth century. And interpretation has become the experimental field of the various theories to play in and compete in. (Zhang 2016)

In addition, he also reveals that the reader–centered theory (whether the ontological hermeneutics or the theory of author's death of Deconstruction) is bound to fall into the trap of relativism and subjectivism.

Thus, the tendency for the contemporary western literary theory to overemphasize the status of the readers for meaning and deny or even abolish the significance of the author, to some extent, is the combination of phenomenology, existentialism, claims of part of hermeneutics schools and theorists, formalism, structuralism and deconstruction, and gradually become the main trend and dominant idea of contemporary western literary theory, which is also one of the main causes of the prevalence of coercive interpretation. A series of Zhang Jiang's papers cuts the popular main stream, which belittles the meaning of the author in domestic literary theory academia, and gives more attention to the author's meaning in literary activities again. Although this change has just begun, it is of great significance, which is a theoretical turning point for the reconstruction of a comprehensive and dialectical view of the meaning of literary works.

4.

Now let's return to the discussion of the source of literary works' meaning. I think, in general, the meaning of literary works should be generated in the dynamic process and bilateral interaction of the author, the text and the reader, which is not wholly endowed by the author, or entirely created by the reader, but in the interaction and co–creation in the author and the reader, and it is the two subjects' "inter–relationship" of author and readers, and produces in the three elements' dynamic process of both the author, the text and the reader. It can be said that this is a generative theory of meaning.

Among the three elements, we should first be sure that the author's creation is the source of the original meaning of the work, which shouldn't be ignored. For a long time, we have been greatly influenced by the reader–centered theory of meaning, so it is necessary to focus on the importance of the author's meaning.

Does the writer have any intention of writing and creation (author's meaning)? A general overview weakens or even denies the existence of the author's intention in the works because the writer's intention is not conscious or clear. I don't think that is scientific. In fact, Zhang Jiang once asked Mo Yan if there is intention when writing a fiction, Mo Yan clearly answered "yes", although it is not very clear in writing, and often change a lot. According to this, Zhang Jiang says,

I am in favor of the creativity of literature, and it is impossible to have one unchanging purpose from beginning to end, [...]. But we should make one thing clear that if the writer is rational and sober, it's impossible for him to write a novel without knowing what he has wrote about [...] if a novelist doesn't know what he has written, how could he make other people understand what himself write about? (Zhang 2016)

I should admit that Zhang Jiang's argument is very powerful. I can also take Mo Yan's example for his work named *Red Sorghum*. He once made it clear that his "Red Sorghum"

is not described as a certain kind of plant in the novel, but as a symbol. A long time ago it was said that the red sorghum in the north is natural, healthy and upward, just like the young people in the northern countryside. In this novel, sorghum does not present as one by one, but endless, as vibrant and mighty. When I create this image, I know that such a way of writing and description will make the image of sorghum to get a promotion, and makes it become a literary, philosophical image in my writing. But as a writer, I think it's not necessary to think too well on its meaning. This is also a problem, which often be faced with in our novel creation that if a writer especially gives a clear symbolic meaning to something in his novel in the description, then it will be very thin. A description of chaos may be possible to produce a broader, deep symbolic meaning only when the writer feels something but does not particularly clear. (Mo Yan 2016)

Mo Yan's speech is a true description of the chaotic state of mind, that the author does have ideas and intention, although always not too clear when doing creation, which can be used as a footnote to Zhang Jiang's argument. It is obvious that the author's idea, which is "not too clearly", is the source of the meaning of literary works, and should not be ignored or denied by readers and critics. Give another example of "root–seeking literature" in 80s. Wang Anyi recalls that the Hunan writer Han Shaogong, who is the initiator of root–seeking literature, once wrote an article named "the root of literature", and put forward that we should find the root of our culture. It represents the common pursuit of a group of writers,

it seems that there is a commotion. Zheng Yi, who comes from Shanxi, rides a bike to go along the source of the Yellow River to find traces of civilization; Li Hangyu, from Hangzhou, makes up a river called Gechuanjiang, which reflects Jiangnan history; Han Shaogong writes a novel titled *Bā Bā Bā* (which literally means "Dad Dad Dad" in Chinese), intends to explore the

> ancient space of Chu. These writers, either doing fieldwork or searching a heap of musty old books or papers, ask themselves that where we come from, how our nation forms, what regulates our character, and where and when we have our fate [...],

«As if on cue, we all form a story in a virtual space, for me it is "the little Bao Village", Li Hangyu's Gechuanjiang, Han Shaogong's Ba Ba Ba makes up an ancient village where witchcraft and totem are in prevalence», «There's also a fictional village in Shandong writer Zhang Wei's novel *The fable of September*» (Wang 2016). In my opinion, the authors of "root–seeking literature" do have the intention of writing, moreover, the intention is very conscious and clear, that is seeking our cultural root, although they express in different ways. The original intention of the author can be said to be a blend of collective consciousness and collective unconscious, the cultural root seeking is the basic meaning that the collective consciousness gives their works in origin, and when they start to write, the collective consciousness, presented as the collective unconscious way, dominates his distinctive writing process, and their creation is the "spiritually objectified substance" which embodies their personality. But in any case, it is the collective consciousness of seeking cultural root that consists the common creative intention of the writers in this group, that is, the original intention of the author. This is an objective fact. Literary criticism cannot arbitrarily interpret their works in a powerful and unconstrained style, completely ignore or abandon the author's original intention.

People may wonder, «is it true that "there are a thousand Hamlets in a thousand people's eyes"?» Does this truth still effects? I think it is of course still effective. But truth is conditional and limited. Because this old maxim implies another layer of meaning that often overlooked: in one thousand minds of the audience can exist one thousand Hamlet, but although there's one thousand, or even ten thousand Hamlet, it must still be the Hamlet, rather than other irrelevant person. Here Hamlet can be understood as Shakespeare's creation of the spiritually objectified substance, namely, the text of the works. And this text is the limits and the boundaries of interpretation that the audience (reader) can make, which cannot be broken. Italian writer and critic Umberto Eco once said:

> The authors provide to the appreciator a kind of work to be done: he does not know exactly how his works will be done in certain way, but he knows that the completed work will still be his work, not another work. After the end of the deduction of a conversation, the form will be specified, and this form is still his form, though the form is made up by others in a way that the author is not completely predictable of. (Eco 2005, p. 24)

Acknowledged that readers (appreciators) have the right to add their understandings in different ways to increase the value of meaning, in order to complete the "to be done" works that the authors provide, Eco stresses that «the finished work will still be his works», the author's power of dominating the meaning of the work should not and cannot be deprived. The meaning from the author is a guidance, direction and restriction to the reader's reading and reception.

Secondly, the text of the works is one of the three elements in literary activities, and also the second one of the three–links in the activities. On the one hand, it is the achievement that the writer uses artistic creation to objectify his own thoughts and feelings through literary discourse, namely, spiritually objectified substance of the author, which should contain the author's original meaning; But the text, as an intermediary connection between the writer and the readers, is an important part of the meaning chain in literary activities, it is not just an extension of the original meaning from the author, but much more than (not be equal to) the author's original meaning. Because the literary text, which consists of literary discourse, has its relative independence when breaking away from the author, whose meaning filed has great expansion. Especially the excellent literary works had great possibility of being explained for its contemporary and late–era readers and interpreters. On the other hand, the text does not exist in isolation, and it exists in the contact with the reader, and in the reader's reading, appreciation and creative interpretation. However, for the reader, the text is the basis, premise and starting point of reading, appreciation, understanding and interpretation. Without the text and its meaning, reading, appreciation or interpretation will be out of question. Therefore, although the text has independence, it is a relative independence. It cannot be said that the text has nothing to do with the author after being created as structuralists claim. Meanwhile, it cannot be isolated from the reader, or it is just a lifeless language symbol, and its meaning cannot be presented and

realized. Here, text takes intermediary role between authors and readers in literary activities, which is a necessary part of literary meaning chain in value–added transition from author to reader, and it is after all given by both the two subjects.

It should be noted that, although the meaning of literary text comes from the author, it is much more than (not be equal to) the meaning that the author gives to. The literary text has its relative independence after being separated from the author, and its meaning field must be expanded, particularly the outstanding literary work, which leaves a huge space for interpretation for the readers of different ages. For many reasons, I just mentioned three points: one is the rhetoric of literary language in literary works, the reader is bound to have some deviation, change or development from the author's meaning when reading, the range of their interpretation may not be completely confined to the original meaning of the author. One argument in Chinese classical poetry that «Poetry has no absolute interpretation» (Dong, p. 106) shows that the meaning of poetry is beyond (much more than) the meaning of poet. Secondly, the literary works, especially the Chinese classical poetry pursues implied meaning and image out of images in the relationship between the language, the meaning and the image. There's one thesis in the *Book of Changes* that «words don't convey all its connotation, establishing lively and concrete images to express abstract meaning». For this, the Confucian Ethnics in the Song dynasty Zhu Xi said that the language of poetry should convey the meaning of the poet with lively and vivid image. Consequently, it shouldn't take a lot of linguistic reasons to analyze the poetry, or the poet's own living meanings will be killed. Here means that the "meaning" and the "image" is more than "language", especially the whole lively image can contain endless implication. The literary text, through language building and the construction of the literary image of every figure (image), expresses rich connotation which is greater than the language symbol refers to, and certainly beyond the author's writing intention and purpose in specific context and certain state of mind. Thirdly, the literary work itself leaves huge space for the reader to hermeneutics. As Roman Ingarden, an expert of phenomenological aesthetics once said, literary works are a whole organic structure composed of four levels, among which the "represented object" and "schematized aspect" often contain some "uncertainty" and "blank"

(Ingarden 1973), which need to be filled, determined and re–created by the reader. Hereon, the text of the works, as the product of the author's intentional activities, of course, contains the meaning of the author, which is one of its potential elements; However, it remains unfinished and cannot be self–sufficient, the viewer must «"explain" the work as usual, or [. . .] reconstruct the work according to its effective characteristics through the common creative activities of appreciation» (Ingarden 1973, p. 199), so the meaning of the works must be greater than the original intention of the author.

The above three points, illuminate that the meaning of literary text, which is a bridge between the author and the reader, should firstly contain the meaning of the author. But compared to the author's meaning, it has expansion and development; while compared to the reader's meaning, it has a relative independence, objectivity and freedom, and cannot freely manipulate by the reader. Literary text should be an important link and inevitable extension of literary works' meaning. It is the premise and starting point of reading, interpretation and criticism. It is the intermediary and link between the author and the reader. It is one of the indispensable aspects and main sources that consists the whole meaning of literary works.

In the next place, the third meaning source of literary works is the reader's reading, interpretation and criticism. According to the social and historical context and the individual literary experience, the readers and the critics will have a creative interpretation of the literary texts with certain objective freedom, which must lead to accretion of implications: including creation, development, supplement, expand, modification, adjustment, and so on.it may also be correction, part–change, transformation with the change of the times. The foregoing has been made more elaborate on this point, I will no longer repeat here.

In a word, we can say that the meaning of literary works, must include the author's meaning, but it is not only endowed by the author; must contain re–creation meaning from readers, but not completely created by the reader; It should be created by the author and the reader to interact with each other, and continuously generated in the dynamic process among the three elements of the author, the text and the reader. In short, on the source of the meaning of literary works, I hold a generative textual meaning–centered argument, which includes the meaning from the author and open to the reader's re–creation.

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The Subjective Intention in the Historical Entity and Its Objective Interpretation

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ABSTRACT: In response to the discussion in the field of literature about whether the author's intention is present in the interpretation, this essay proposes to investigate the universal "historical entity" in order to grasp philosophically the actual existence of the subjective intention in such entity and the ways in which the objective interpretation of the historical entity encompasses and transcends the subjective intention. My basic point is that various intentions of the historical agent cannot but be present in the truly objective interpretation of the historical entity, but it is insufficient and sometimes misleading to orient the interpretation simply toward the subjective intention, because the "author" and her intention are themselves rooted in specific conditions of the time or historical circumstances. The problematic facing contemporary hermeneutics is the interrelation between the circumstances of the author of the "text" and those of the interpreter herself. The development of contemporary hermeneutics, especially the reassessment of the significance of "prejudice", the explication of the concept of the "fusion of horizons" and the establishment of the principle of "effective history", enables us to carry out the inquiries into this topic in a more profound and more productive way.

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The discussion about the appreciation and interpretation of the work (or text) seems to attract much interest in recent times in the field of literature. Due to Jiang Zhang's zealous advocacy and sharp questioning, such questions as whether the "author" is dead and whether the "intention" is present will perhaps become the focus of debate, thus encouraging in–depth studies on the realistic appreciation and objective interpretation of the artistic work and the search for a road that can truly avoid any relativistic or nihilistic conclusion. It is obvious that, with the progression of such inquiries and debates, their subject matter will not be limited to the field of literature but develop gradually and inevitably into philosophical and hermeneutic issues that are of broader significance. The present essay thus attempts to 1) investigate the universal "historical entity" in order to 2) grasp philosophically the actual existence of the subjective intention in such entity and 3) the ways in which the objective interpretation of the historical entity encompasses and transcends the subjective intention.

1.

The truly objective interpretation of the historical entity must first and foremost incorporate in itself man's subjective intention, because the historical entity establishes itself first in its contrast and confrontation with the natural entity, and such contrast and confrontation are always and fundamentally defined by whether or not there is the engagement of man's subjective intention. The relatively crude ideas of history in early times, on the one hand, only achieved objective interpretations of history through the cancelation and obfuscation of man's subjective intention in favor of Providence or the divine will; on the other hand, they were totally unable to command and settle man's subjective intention and could only linger in merely contingent and subjective understandings of history. Vico's great vision of historical reason at the beginning of the 18th century only comes into full bloom in the era of classical German philosophy, especially Hegel's philosophy, before which people still «believed history to be built on an unfathomable stream, on the summit of an unforeseeable volcano, so that any attempt to find in it some kind of law, idea,

divinity or eternity would be legitimately and harshly rejected as a boastful display, a priori nonsense, or empty imagination» (Gans 2001, p. 1).

The true difficulty occurring here consists in the fact that philosophy, science and even what is generally called knowledge are all characterized by the basic «exhortation to objectivity /Sachlichkeit/» (Gadamer 2004, p. 70), which in general means their separation from subjectivity or the subjective intention; however, the fundamental characteristic of the historical entity is precisely that it is premised on subjectivity and permeated by the subjective intention. It is as impossible to imagine a historical entity not permeated by the subjective intention as it is to constitute a natural entity premised on subjectivity. What is essential in the objective interpretation of the historical entity is therefore that such interpretation cannot be truly objective unless it manages to encompass adequately and grasp firmly the subjective intention involved in the historical entity. H.–G. Gadamer rightly deems Hegel «one of the greatest champions» (*ibidem*) of the objectivity of thinking because Hegel not only demands philosophically that "history" be raised to a principle but also demands on the basis of "the thing that matters" that the objectivity of history be grasped with reference to the encompassment of all subjectivity or subjective intentions. The achievement of such objectivity certainly relies on major development of philosophical thinking, but for the sake of convenience, we may directly refer to Hegel's renowned formulation "the cunning of reason".

For Hegel, it is reason that rules the world and hence history. Reason is not only powerful, developing and actualizing itself in the guise of the infinite capability, but also crafty and cunning, always achieving its own end through man's subjective intention and finishing its own work through man's subjectivity (desire, passion, opinion, etc.).

> Thus, what we have called the subjective element—i.e. needs, impulses, passions, particular interests, and opinions or subjective ideas—is immediately present to itself from the beginning in the shape of natural being or natural will. This vast conglomeration of volition, interests, and activities is the sum total of instruments and means which the world spirit employs to accomplish its end, to make this end conscious and to give it reality. (Hegel 1975, p. 74)

Every individual (or nation) is ignorant of reason's own end, but she actualizes it through her subjective intention and act without being conscious or aware of it. Reason completes itself precisely by virtue of such "cunning", and only by virtue of such passage through the subjective intention can reason manifest itself as the concrete reality of history. We can then see that Hegel indeed incorporates man's subjective intention in the objective interpretation of history.

Such incorporation is so resolute and explicit that Hegel on the one hand sums up as the "idea" the principles, ends, missions, etc. of reason that still remain on the level of abstract universality, and on the other hand sums up as the "passion" man's subjective aspects such as needs, impulses, interests and intentions. The term "passion" used here denotes the subjective aspect of any act of the will. Hegel claims that, but for the "passion", no great project in world–history would succeed. The abstractly universal "idea" remains merely in–itself or a kind of latent possibility without passing from its "inwardness" to true "existence". Therefore,

> a second moment is necessary before it can attain reality—that of actuation or realization; and its principle is the will, the activity of mankind in the world at large. [. . .] The activity which puts [ideas] into operation and endows them with real existence has its source in the needs, impulses, inclinations, and passions of man. (*Ibidem*, pp. 69–70)

Since Hegel comprehends the universal idea and the act of man's will as the warp and weft of world–history respectively, since only through the interweaving of such warp and weft can the concrete reality, i.e., the unity of essence and existence, begin to be actively constituted, then, just as the majestic ebb and flow of the historical process contain and reside in the act of man's will in the most extensive way, only through incorporating rather than canceling man's subjective intention and act can the interpretation of the historical entity be truly objective. It can be said in a metaphoric way that the severance of either the warp or the weft will make the historical image crisscrossing the textile fall apart and thus render illusory any objective depiction of that image.

A preliminary conclusion presents itself accordingly: although the "world spirit" as world–historical reason has its own end that is disparate from man's subjective intention, such subjective intention and

its act nevertheless participate and reside ubiquitously in the historical reality; it is in this sense that the realistic grasp of history has to contain the subjective intention of man's act, or alternatively, that such subjective intention has to be "present" in the objective interpretation of the historical entity. The attempt to reject and banish completely man's subjective intention in order to shield the objective interpretation of history amounts to none other than advocating a kind of crude, naïve and unthinking objectivity or, to borrow J.G. Droysen's words, "eunuch–like objectivity"[1]. A vivid analogy referred to by Hegel can help us illustrate the ways in which man's subjective intention participates in the objective process of history. Say a man driven by some perhaps not groundless motives for revenge sets fire to his foe's house. With respect to his subjective intention, what he wants is to take vengeance on his foe, so that he merely applies a small flame to a certain beam; however, it results in a big fire ruining the entire block and causing vast casualties and economic losses, which certainly goes far beyond the arsonist's subjective intention. The first point this analogy indicates is that this fire is a "historical event" and the arsonist's subjective intention is essentially related to it, which is why the arsonist's subjective intention cannot but be incorporated or, alternatively, present in the objective interpretation of this historical event. If this destructive fire were regarded as effectively far beyond or at odds with the arsonist's subjective intention, so that such intention should be totally removed from the objective interpretation of this event, then this event would no longer be a historical event but a natural one, e.g., a wildfire or a fire caused by lightning or drought. It follows that man's subjective intention must be integrated adequately into the objective interpretation of the historical entity.

However, this analogy at the same time indicates the principle that, precisely because this historical event goes beyond and deviates from that man's subjective intention significantly, because this event involves something outside the agent's will and consciousness, the objective interpretation of the historical entity cannot consist of man's subjective intention alone. For the subjective intention is insufficient for such objective interpretation—rather, it is precisely due to such insufficiency that the decisive significance of some kind of universal

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1. Quoted in Gadamer 2004, p. 28.

is revealed. «The perpetrator may not have been conscious of» the big fire mentioned above, «and it may not have been his remotest intention, but it is nevertheless the universal and substantial essence of the deed itself, and a necessary consequence of it» (Hegel 1975, p. 75). Hegel is right insofar as the subjective intention is necessary and yet insufficient for the objective interpretation of history, and such insufficiency nevertheless makes visible what is "universal and substantial" in history. For the objectivity and objective interpretation of the historical entity can in no way be attributed entirely to man's subjective intention: what has to be recognized here is not someone's or certain people's subjective intentions, nor the sum or average of all people's subjective intentions, but something substantial and universal. Hegel understands this as reason or the spirit that is absolute, and thus ultimately calls his philosophy of history "the real theodicy", the verification of God in history; Marx certainly destroys such speculative theological idea decisively, but this does not mean that Marx ascribes the objective interpretation of the historical entity either to nonhuman Providence or to man's subjective intention (or the sum of such intentions). In this regard, K. Löwith rightly says that what is distinctive of Marx's thought lies in that «he defends Hegel against Feuerbach because he has grasped the decisive significance of the universal; he attacks Hegel for casting a veil of philosophical mystery over the universal relationships of history» (Löwith 1965, p. 411). In brief, the universal that is of decisive significance is for Marx not the speculative absolute spirit but the changing structure of the mode of production.

Therefore, in order to articulate the historical entity in a truly objective, that is, concrete and realistic, way, one must on the one hand grasp in depth the universal that is of decisive significance, and on the other hand render man's subjective intention actively present in the objective interpretation of history and link it intrinsically to the fundamental orientation of the universal. For it is precisely such link or what I call the interweaving of the warp and weft that determines how or in which ways the orientation of the universal is actualized, as well as how and to what extent man's subjective intention participates in the project of that fundamental orientation. For example, as a major historical event, the collapse of the Roman Republic was clearly connected to Caesar's acts and subjective intentions; it was also easy

to discern among his various subjective intentions his great thirst for the supreme power and fierce ambition. Even though such intention was an «individual interest and egotistic desire», it had its place in the objective constitution of this historical event. Only when a specific and intrinsic link came into being between the fundamental orientation of the universal and Caesar's subjective intention could this fundamental orientation be actualized "promptly and resolutely" as an objective historical event, and Caesar's desire, ambition, etc. become part of this objective event instead of simply falling into mere dreams or illusions, as was often the case for others. In this sense, what made Caesar's intention come true «was at the same time an inherently necessary determination in the history of Rome and of the world. Thus not just his own personal advantage was involved, for his work was the product of an impulse which accomplished the end for which his age was ready» (Hegel 1975, p. 76).

2.

In the previous section I only deal with the subjective intention in the historical entity and its objective interpretation in the most general sense, and thus arrive at a most general view: the subjective intention of the historical agent cannot but be present in the truly objective interpretation of the historical entity, but an interpretation derived from such subjective intention alone is inadequate and even misleading. Moreover, as is known to all, there are different forms of historical entities and different scales of historical interpretations, and the subjective intentions of historical agents can also be classified into disparate levels and types, from the simplest intentions originating from individual interests and egotistic desires to those oriented by specific political or social goals and even such inherently "divine" intentions as morality, ethos and religious piety, as well as various ideals such as those of "rationality", "good", and "truth". There is no doubt that the objective interpretation of a specific historical entity is contingent on the concretization of these differentiating factors under the guidance of the aim of interpretation — I, however, only intend to indicate the necessity of such concretization of the objective interpretation instead of making any accurate classification.

What needs considering now is the problem of the objective interpretation of the "work". In connection with the discussion above, what is involved here is first the problem of the relationship between the "author" and the "work", of the position of the author's subjective intention in the objective interpretation of the work. Just as "work" itself has extremely numerous meanings (one can even refer to any historical entity as a "work"), the numerous objects in the work that are most closely related to the task of interpretation constitute the domain of the so–called "text". The author of the text is a writer in a broad sense, and just as such writers are varieties of people existing in history, the text is itself a historical entity. In this most general sense, the relationship between the writer and the text, or the inclusion of the writer's subjective intention in the internal constitution of the text, on the whole parallels the position accounted for above of the subjective intention in the objective interpretation of the historical entity; however, we must be aware that the text is such a special type of historical entity that not only does the writer's subjective intention in general differ from common types of intentions, but it is necessary to carry out a differentiation of that intention according to the topic and distinctive content of the text itself.

In most historical texts, for instance, the author's political intention and the political situation in which that intention is located always manifest themselves explicitly or implicitly. This is the case even when historical consciousness strongly demands to "extinguish the individual" in order to maintain the "neutral" objectivity of the historical narrative. As we know, L.V. Ranke famously provides a celebrated formula for the ideal of historical thinking by saying that the true task of historical consciousness consists in understanding all evidences from a previous time on the basis of the spirit of that previous time, that is, those evidences must be freed from the prejudices of our own present life and thus the past be known as a human phenomenon. Obviously, this formula requires our own present prejudices (let alone those which can be called "intentions") to be strictly contained in order to achieve the objective account of the historical entity. However,

> even in those masterworks of historical scholarship that seem to be the
> very consummation of the extinguishing of the individual demanded by
> Ranke, it is still an unquestioned principle of our scientific experience

that we can classify these works with unfailing accuracy in terms of the political tendencies of the time in which they were written. When we read Mommsen's History of Rome, we know who alone could have written it, that is, we can identify the political situation in which this historian organized the voices of the past in a meaningful way. (Gadamer 2004, p. 6)

In regard to the topic discussed here, such fact suggests that, first, in such a historical text, the author's intention—her political intention in particular—is always present in a certain sense, for it would not be possible to discern it in the text if it were not present at all. Second, such political intention, whatever direction it points toward, is always essentially related to the political trend and political situation of a specific time, or alternatively, is grounded in and feeds on the underlying political conditions of that time. Third, even though it may be a reasonable demand to contain one's own intention or prejudice (in order not to misinterpret past evidences), the Rankean exhortation does not seem successful: on the one hand, texts striving to comply with this exhortation still let out signs of intentions or prejudices in one way or another; on the other hand, is a historical text completely purged of what belong to the individual, especially the intention and prejudice, really possible? The moment such question arises, it is justifiable that philosophical hermeneutics demands to reassess the position and significance of "prejudice" in the writing and understanding of the text.

In major historical events and eminent philosophical texts, we can also observe similar circumstances, namely the ways in which the "author's" sociopolitical intention participates in the event or the text and constitutes one of its substantial components. Socrates's death and Plato's Republic are two well–known examples. Concerning the former, it is easy for us to regard the death penalty imposed on Socrates as a tragedy that was brought about by ignorance and imprudence and could have been avoided, the philosopher being the wronged protagonist. There were two charges against Socrates: first, he seduced the youth into disobeying their parents; second, he disbelieved the old deities and promoted a new deity. While the old deities existed in the ethical world of Greece and served as the guardians of its divinity, the new deity could not but come into fierce conflict with that still existent ethical world and become its dangerous

saboteur. The new deity was subjective freedom, self–consciousness or the inwardness of thinking disclosed through the aphorism "know thyself", and Socrates's articulation of this new principle evinced his genius; however, it was therefore justifiable that the national spirit of Athens accused Socrates in order to «[rise] against the principle which became fatal to him». «In place of the oracle, the personal self–consciousness of every thinking man has come into play. This inward certainty, however, is undoubtedly another new god, and not the god of the Athenians existing hitherto, and thus the accusation of Socrates was quite just»[2]. It follows that, in this great historical event, not only was Socrates present but his intention that might be called a sociopolitical one was decisively present, and it was this philosophically articulated intention that acted as a justifiable party in opposition to another equally justifiable party, namely the ethical spirit of Athens.

What about Plato's Republic, then? This text is often viewed as a utopian fiction and even synonymous with such fiction. It is, however, all too superficial only to regard it as Plato's arbitrary fabrication or subjective imagination. The time of this text was basically Socrates's time, the quintessence of which was the slow yet forceful emergence of the principle of particular subjectivity and its progressive invasion of the ethical world of Greece. Although this undoubtedly consti-tuted the sociohistorical conditions of the writing of the Republic, we should at the same time spell out how Plato's sociohistorical intention was embodied in that text. While Socrates recognized and articulated the new principle, it was indeed Plato's Republic that accounted for the nature of the Greek ethos. «Plato was conscious that there was breaking into that life a deeper principle which could appear in it immediately only as a still unsatisfied longing, and so only as a source of corruption. To combat it, he had to seek aid from that very longing itself» (Hegel 2008, p. 13). It is this explication that should become the pivot of the objective interpretation of the Republic, the phrase "to combat it" pointing directly to Plato's sociopolitical intention. Were such intention totally dismissed, the "republic" would at most amount to the thinker's mere fantasy, and no truly objective interpretation

2. G.W.F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, eng. trans. by E.S. Haldane, https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/hp/hpsocrates.htm.

would be possible at all. Since the new deity, i.e., subjective particularity, appeared in the Greek ethos immediately only as a source of corruption, since the author of the text explicitly intended "to combat it",

> in his Republic, Plato presents substantial ethical life in its ideal beauty and truth; but he could only cope with the principle of self–subsistent particularity, which in his day had forced its way into Greek ethical life, by setting up in opposition to it his purely substantial state. He completely excluded such particularity from his state. (*Ibidem*, p. 183)

We can see most clearly from this that the objective interpretation of the text of the Republic has to unambiguously incorporate Plato's sociopolitical intention, regardless of our attitude toward such intention.

However, it is precisely here, when we demand to integrate the "author's" subjective intention into the objective interpretation of "the thing that matters", be it an event or a text, that the interpretation oriented merely toward the author's subjective intention immediately and unmistakably gives away its most serious insufficiency—this is the case even for those great thinkers and great philosophers who are extraordinarily creative. On the one hand, the substantial content of the event or the text, which can be regarded as the evolution of the zeitgeist or the process of historical practice, transcends to a great extent the "author's" intention and can by no means be created by that intention. While the objective interpretations of Socrates's death or Plato's Republic have to include the "author's" intention, the possibility of the functioning of such intention lies in none other than the situation of the time, namely the vital turning point faced by the ethical world of Greece invaded by the principle of subjective freedom. On the other hand, therefore, neither the author as such nor her intention as such counts as the ultimate and thus no longer questionable ground for the objective interpretation of the work. Although it is the author and her intention that foster the comprehensive concretization of the work and actualize it, only the universal that is of decisive significance and can be briefly called "the situation of the time" constitutes the realistic foundation that has substantial content. In this sense, just as the work is to be seen as the product of the situation of the time, the author and her intention are also to be deemed such

products. Only in the situation in which the principle of subjective freedom invaded and threatened the ethical world of Greece could there be Socrates's death and Plato's Republic as well as Socrates's intention of proclaiming firmly the principle of subjective freedom and, by contrast, Plato's intention of attempting to reject that principle in favor of the substantial state.

3.

Now that the general relationship between the subjective intention in the historical entity and its objective interpretation has by and large been clarified, we are faced with some more complicated and more profound problems that are to be addressed as distinctively hermeneutic problems. The key issue is first the enormous "gap" between the situation of the text and that of the interpreter herself, and thus the task of hermeneutics is «the bridging of personal or historical distance between minds» (Gadamer 2004, p. 95). Despite their aspiration to achieve in specific ways the objective interpretation of the text and its author, early hermeneutic schemes nevertheless neglected or even dismissed the historical situation in which the interpreter's objectivity was rooted. In this regard, such schemes were naïvely oriented toward the elimination of the interpreter's own situation. For example, Plato's situation when writing the Republic and the situations of today's interpreters in the 21st century are as different as heaven and earth, but the objective interpretation of the Republic was alleged to consist in totally forsaking the interpreters' present situations and being immersed in the situation in which Plato's intention took shape and operated. Such a scheme was already brought forward even in Spinoza's biblical exegesis, which held that we must deduce the author's own intention or mens from historical materials, that our basic task was to grasp historically the author's mind and what she had meant, and to overcome our prejudice. Similarly, although it is the incomparable merit of F.D.E. Schleiermacher and W. Dilthey to establish the prototype of contemporary hermeneutics, they still believe the knower's (interpreter's) own present situation to be merely negative. That is to say, such situation is at the root of prejudice and distortion that hinder the achievement of the correct understanding, and is thus what the

interpreter must transcend. Such a hermeneutic scheme is admittedly right in a preliminary and partial sense, and is in line with people's common sense, but is soon vehemently challenged in philosophical terms.

Thanks to Heidegger's ontological critique of the philosophy of subjectivity (of cogito or self–consciousness), and thanks to Gadamer's reestablishment of philosophical hermeneutics on that basis, the position that seeks to locate the objectivity of the interpretation of the historical entity (especially the text) merely in the situation of the author's intention, and to thoroughly forsake or banish the interpreter's own situation, becomes deeply problematic. To put the question simply: is it possible for us to thoroughly escape our own sociohistorical situation and to utterly dwell without prejudice in the situation of the author's own intention? Or in more philosophical terms, is the self–determining subject of transcendental philosophy that is essentially without a situation and non–historical possible? Can the objective understanding of the historical entity be achieved by means of the subjective act that removes each and every situation and hence prejudice of the interpreter?

Despite certain preparations made by earlier philosophical giants, particularly Hegel, Marx and Heidegger, for the solution to the question, it is Gadamer who gives a systematic response to it in the form of universal hermeneutics. He calls the position that supposes the interpreter or knower to be capable of escaping and departing from her own historical situation "methodological alienation", and points out critically that the historical situation in which we exist may be cast aside only when it is no more than a purely contingent and subjective condition for our understanding or interpretation; but if the interpreter's own present situation is the ontological condition for the unfolding of all her acts, such situation is already involved essentially and antecedently in the entire process of her understanding or interpretation. Therefore, the interpreter can in no way get rid of and leave her present situation merely by means of adopting some attitude. We understand such situation to be the conditions of the time determined in a concrete sociohistorical manner, from which neither the author of the text nor its interpreter can be separated, and it cannot be otherwise. As Hegel states, «it is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to

fancy that an individual can overleap his own age, jump over Rhodes» (Hegel 2008, p. 15).

Consequently, we are faced with a far more complicated issue. While our previous discussion already confirms that the objective interpretation of the historical entity must include, but not be limited to, the "author's" (agent's) subjective intention, and such non–limitedness is because the historical entity itself, the agent and her subjective intention are transcended and endowed with meanings by their specific sociohistorical situation, what should also be attended to now is the interpreter who exists and interprets in a quite different sociohistorical situation, along with her intention determined in that situation; moreover, due to the huge gap between the author, her work and the conditions of her time, on the one hand, and the understander or interpreter and the conditions of her time, on the other, it becomes necessary to grasp the relationship and construct a communication between the two parties. Contemporary hermeneutics clearly works and makes achievements mainly in this field, and such problematic will immediately enable us to considerably enrich and meaningfully enlarge our discussion about the subjective intention in the historical entity and its objective interpretation. The following three hermeneutic topics are particularly relevant to our discussion.

First, the significance of so–called "prejudice" is to be reassessed. When Schleiermacher and Dilthey equate the meaning of the text or the deed with its author's subjective intention, thus regarding the task of understanding or interpretation as recovering the meaning of the text or the deed that belonged to the original author herself, the interpreter's own historical situation is totally castrated, and she becomes an abstract, supra–sociohistorical subject as a result—it is alleged that only such subject's neutral and unprejudiced consciousness can guarantee the objectivity of knowledge. However, Gadamer asserts that such subject and objectivity of knowledge do not exist at all, for the actual interpreter who exists in a specific historical situation is a finite subject (in contrast to that kind of abstract and infinite subject) who is only able to constitute "prejudiced" objective knowledge insofar as it cannot be rid of its own situation and become the author's own consciousness. "Prejudice" thus by no means implies the possibility of arbitrary interpretation but, on the contrary, implies that the interpreter's own intention should be recognized as having

its real source in the interpreter's own concrete historical situation. In this regard, instead of being an obstacle or negative factor that needs removing, "prejudice" is precisely a positive premise on which the finite interpreter existing in a specific situation is capable of historical understanding. «In fact, the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the initial directedness of our whole ability to experience. Prejudices are biases of our openness to the world» (Gadamer 2004, p. 9). In a nutshell, prejudice is here derived from the interpreter's existence in her own historical situation; we call the interpreter "prejudiced" because she and her intention work within the bounds of such situation. Reversely, only things without consciousness, i.e., natural entities, and that which is not bound by any situation, i.e., God, can be unprejudiced.

The second point concerns the concept of the "fusion of horizons". Since there exists a huge gap between the text and its author, on the one hand, and the interpreter, on the other, since it is impossible for the interpreter to wipe off her own historical situation and subject herself without prejudice to the intention of the very author of the text, how can the communication between the two parties be possible? What is called for here is an active "dialogue" between them, between the text and the interpreter. Like every genuine dialogue, the hermeneutic dialogue taking place between the text and the interpreter involves a kind of mutually penetrating interplay and has the dialectical feature of altering both the orientation of the meaning of the text and the exercise of the interpreter's understanding. Such dialogue is guided by questions, so that what the interpreter must recover and discover are the questions the text attempted to answer and at the same time posed constantly to its interpreters. While this point of view has its source in Hegel's description of the acquisition of knowledge in his Phenomenology of Spirit (that is, the consciousness that is taking cognizance of its object and that object itself are simultaneously transformed and reunited with each other at a higher and broader stage), it is in our continual dialogue with the text that, for Gadamer, we may continually transcend the historical horizon of the text and fuse it with our own horizon that is at the same time changed. The exercise of understanding together with the interpretation founded on it is always the fusion process unfolding through the dialogue between different horizons. In this sense, understanding and interpretation

are by nature not only dialogical but also supra–subjective—the fusion and transformation of horizons occurring in understanding and interpretation transcend the interlocutors' subjective consciousness.

The last point concerns the principle of "effective history (*Wirkungsgeschichte*)". This principle basically consists in that, when historical thinking seeks to grasp some historical object, it must also be aware of its own historicity, of its being itself located, as is the case for its object, in a concrete historical situation. «The true historical object is not an object at all, but the unity of the one and the other, a relationship that constitutes both the reality of history and the reality of historical understanding» (Gadamer 2004, p. 299). Thus, true hermeneutics must reveal the entire reality of history precisely by means of understanding, and understanding or interpretation by nature pertains to "effective history". Heidegger's articulation of the ontological significance of "understanding" establishes the foundation of such principle of "effective history". For Heidegger, understanding is not some subjective "act" but a mode of being. It is the historicity of Dasein itself that evinces the utter impossibility of eliminating the understander's own participation in the historical present by means of ever more refined methodological reflections; all interpretations, including scientific ones, are indeed bound by the interpreter's concrete situation. Gadamer hence comprehends effective history as an ontological condition that precedes every new possible dialogue between the interpreter and the text or the event she attempts to understand. In this sense, so–called effective history not only provides multiple possibilities for different understandings and interpretations of the historical entity, but also equips supra–subjective understanding and interpretation with the realistic foundation on which they can rest:

> All self–knowledge arises from what is historically pregiven, what with Hegel we call "substance", because it underlies all subjective intentions and actions, and hence both prescribes and limits every possibility for understanding any tradition whatsoever in its historical alterity (*Andersheit*). (*Ibidem*, p. 301)

We cannot in this short essay elaborate and explicate all this in greater detail. The gist of this essay is that the developments and achievements of contemporary hermeneutics offer some principal lines of thought that enable us to carry out the inquiries into the

subjective intention in the historical entity and its objective inter-
pretation in a more profound and more productive way, and along
which our basic conclusion can be expressed more clearly. There is
no doubt that the positive progress of contemporary hermeneutics
and its authentic inheritance follow and continue the path beaten by
classical German philosophy, especially Hegel's philosophy, so that its
achievements prove the heir to a great heritage, namely the concept
of "objective spirit"—it is the objective spirit that aufhebt subjective
consciousness, subsuming the latter within itself. With regard to the
objective interpretation of the historical entity, hermeneutics funda-
mentally acknowledges the presence and importance of the subjective
intention (without being so naïve as to seek to totally exclude subjec-
tivity), but is at the same time fully aware of the severe inadequacy
of interpreting the historical entity through the subjectivity of the
act of meaning. When hermeneutics claims that understanding or
interpretation can transcend — and this is always necessarily the
case — the "author's" subjective act of meaning, it already locates
antecedently such subjective act in the objective understanding of the
historical entity; since, however, the "author's" subjective intention
is not likely to be no more and no less than the historical meaning
of her act, the objective interpretation must not confine itself to the
"author's" subjective plan or subjective intention. At any rate, the true
progress of contemporary hermeneutics always involves the demand
to further the objective interpretation of the historical entity that, far
from eliminating the subjectivity of the act of meaning, discovers via
such subjectivity the realistic foundation in which it is grounded, and
thus arrives at the domain in which the objective meaning of history
resides.

> For the real task of historical study is not to understand the subjective inten-
> tions, plans, and experiences of the men who are involved in history. Rather,
> it is the great matrix of the meaning of history that must be understood and
> that requires the interpretive effort of the historian. (Gadamer 2004, p. 103)

It may be provocative to abandon this basic task and fundamental
orientation, and to derive extremist and eccentric views simply from
a bricolage of hermeneutic doctrines in a fragmented way, but this
gesture goes astray from the outset.

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On Emotion

Judgement of Narrative under the Pressure of Affective Intentionality

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TITOLO ITALIANO: Sull'emozione: il giudizio della narrazione sotto la pressione dell'intenzionalità affettiva.

ABSTRACT: Emotion is the judgement of a narrative transformation from tendentiousness to purposiveness through "co–feeling" on the part of the subject and the physical and mental reactions elicited by thisjudgement under the pressure of affective intentionality. The "faculties endowed with feelings" are a priori, while the feeling itself is empirical and symbolic. Emotion can be symbolisedbybeing and happiness, both located at a higher level. Emotion is only one phase in the quest for meaning. The semiotic feature of emotion is relative: it is neither the onset nor the end of the pursuit of meaning.

KEYWORDS: Affective Intentionality; Tendentiousness; Purposiveness; Judgement; Emotion Semiotics; Happiness.

1. Emotion and Narrative

Many analytic studies have focused on the causes of emotion. Zhang (2011) summarised the perspectives on the semiotics of emotion as 1) «carrying a sense of "structural" trait», based on Roland Barthes' analytic perspective in *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*; 2) Algirdas Julien Greimas and his student Jacques Fontanille's semiotics of passion based

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on modal theories; and 3) Barthes' narrative perspective in the "Journal of Mourning". Moreover, Sartre (2007) proposed a perspective «founded on the passionate subject, the opposite of the judgemental subject», and Anne Henault offered a textual perspective by "feeling" emotionless expressions. Each perspective conveys a fundamental matter overlooked by most philosophers: the underlying cause of emotion is narrative. For instance, when someone is afraid of a hand in the dark, that person feels fear only after turning it into a narrative of an experience threatening one's personal security. A simple sign has no effect on emotional status. Narrative ability is a prerequisite for emotion. If we consider "flower" as a sign, the sign itself evokes no feeling in the recipient. It can only trigger emotions after becoming a narrative. In tragic contexts, it is an emblem of sorrow, like Lin Daiyu shedding tears at the sight of a flower. In happy contexts, it becomes a symbol of joy, as flowers are an indispensable part of festivals. In horror movies, it is the embodiment of fear, as represented by Li Kelong's film *Flower's Curse*. In short, emotionis derive from narrative. Narrative ability is essential for triggering emotions. In turn, people with emotions are able to create narrative.

According to several studies, there are two types of narratives: "objective narrative" or "zero–emotion narrative" and "emotional narrative" or "subjective narrative". Abrams (1990, pp. 223–4) argued that

> anobjective work is one in which the author (or the narrator) presents the invented situation or the fictional characters and their thoughts, feelings, and actions and undertakes to remain detached and noncommittal [. . .] [In contrast,] a subject work is one in which the author (or the narrator) incorporates personal experiences, or projects into the narrative, his or her personal disposition, judgements, values, and feelings.

In short, narrative focuses on emotional involvement rather than emotions. In terms of narrative outcomes, the "injected" emotions may affect the recipient's emotional response, but not to a degree of domination, as different recipients may report varied responses for the same narrative. The emotional gap between the narrator and the reader, even among readers themselves, is due to emotions being incorporated not in a narrative but in the secondary narrative of the recipient–related text. Even for the narrator, the emotions injected into the text are developed in the secondary narrative.

Lloyd (2013, pp. 54–5) listed several definitions of emotion from different perspectives, all relevant to signs, meaning and narrative:

> Human emotion is conceived to be a motivation–laden feeling resulting jointly from shifts in arousal and from the meaning attached to those arousal shifts; [...] Emotion is seen as a sensory–feeling state that acts as a motivator, categorizer, and selector of perceptual and cognitive events and behaviors; [...] Emotion is held to be a differentiated action set, often context bound based on a specific information structure in memory; [...] Emotion is an integrated unit of experience consisting of: 1) a distinctive perception; 2) an implicit wish and implied action (motive); and 3) a typical expression (facial and/or postural) that is species–specific (and in man also culturally adapted).

The first definition relates to two points, "shifts" and "meaning", both referring to narrative. The second definition addresses the "cognitive events and behaviors", both also relevant to narrative. Although vague, by mentioning "action set", the third definition is undoubtedly narrative–related. Finally, the fourth definition highlights the "implied action (motive)" and the wish of the subject, emphasising its connection to narrative. In other words, these various perspectives on emotion further illustrate that emotion is derived from narrative.

In conclusion, emotion is the tendentious reaction to a certain narrative in which the emotional subject isinvolved by way of co–feeling.

"Co–feeling" is essential to emotion generation. If one is prone to "co–feeling" and considers possible outcomes by putting him/herself in the character's position, he/she will have emotional responses. Mundane emotions must be completely uprooted if one wants to be "nonchalant". As the saying goes, "fellow sufferers commiserate with each other", with "commiseration" resulting from "similar sufferings"; this makes it easier to co–feel, as resemblance is its foundation. Here "co–feeling" means "transference". The term "transference" was coined by American scholar Robert Visher and Carl Gustav Jung, who wrote a book titled The Psychology of the Transference. Chai and Qing (2012, p. 260) proposed that «both the "angle of shooting" and "perspective taken by a narrator" fall into the early extension of transference, which requires the interlocutors to really "co–feel" with each other by being in the other's shoes to arouse emotional resonance». Thus, "co–feeling" is the first step towards "transference",

indicating that the recipient can only register emotions through ten-dentiousness by envisioning him/herself as one of the characters. As Wang (2015, p. 198) proposed in her interpretations of Ji Kang's On the Absence of Sentiments in Music, «music knows nothing about sorrow or joy; it all rests upon the susceptibility of the listener and the degree of proficiency of the performer».

Neither "transference" in psychology nor "empathy" in art dis-cusses the mechanism of emotion generation, which is often consid-ered an established fact. "Empathy" in art refers to the projection of one's feelings on the object, by «shifting my own feelings to other beings, so as to become part of their experience» (Zhu 2012, p. 145). Conversely, "transference" in psychology is a "psychological schema", referring to «an enduring symbolic framework that organizes constel-lations of thought, feeling, memory, and expectation about self and others» (Grant & Crowley 2007, p. 6). The semiotics of emotion differs from these two terms as it is based on the mechanism of emotion gen-eration, suggesting that emotion carries meaning whose underlying principles are analysed. By "co–feeling", one substitutes him/herself for the character in the narrative and makes tendentious judgements whose outcomes and responses are emotions.

2. Intentionality and Affective Intentionality

"Intentionality" and "affective intentionality" are two connected but nuanced concepts. Intentionality is the nascent point of Edmund Husserl's school of phenomenology, which is itself based on Descartes (Stumpf & Fieser 2013, p. 421). Simplifying and clarifying this notion, Thompson (2013, p. 20) wrote that «in a narrow sense, they define intentionality as object–directedness. In a broader sense, they define it as openness to the world or what is "other" ("alterity")». According to Husserl, intentionality illustrates the relationship between expression, meaning and object. Zhao (2015, p. 19) proposed that «intentionality is the tendentiousness of consciousness to search for and acquire the meaning of an object, as well as the main function and mode of existence exhibited by consciousness», which involves not only the "object" but also the "meaning". Velarde–Mayol (2014, pp. 35–6) also argued that «expressions have not only meaning but a reference

to an object», in other words, «the physical part of an expression is completely indifferent to what it means». In short, intentionality hasat least two implications: object– and meaning–directedness. Moreover, when summarizing Husserl's ideas, Spiegelberg (2011, p. 155) defined intentionality as "directing activity to object". In addition to intentionality, many scholars have paid attention to "object", such as Bara (2013, p. 60)who argued that intentionality has two layers of significant connotations: "intention is always object–directed" and "intentionality is always deliberateness". Other scholars have focused on "meaning"; for instance, бонларко (2012, p. 89) proposed that «intentionality can be regarded as the nature of various linguistic meanings». Regardless of its various interpretations, intentionality invariably relates to "directedness".

As a specialty of the mind, intentionality serves to distinguish between human and machine (Thagard 2011, p. 211). John Searle's thought experiment, known as the "Chinese Room", and Alan Turing's "Turing Test" shed light on this issue. Yet, prior to intentionality, there is "agency", which allows primitive macromolecules to «have enough complexity to perform actions», as «there are reasons for what macromolecules do, but the macromolecules are unaware of those reasons» (Dennett 2012, p. 21). In other words, agency allows intentionalityto grow. From a micro–level perspective, agency is the product of directedness; without the latter, agency would not exist. Therefore, directedness is the precondition of intentionality, which leads our consciousness to incorporate the object in conscious activities, whereas affective intentionality guides our consciousness to immerse the object in affective ones.

This paper does not mix affective intentionality with tendentiousness. The term "tendentiousness" is unclear in Western languages or in Chinese. Based on common sense, tendentiousness is a possibility rather than an established fact. Ryle (1992, p. 41) argued that «to possess a dispositional property is to be bound or liable to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change, when a particular condition is realized». According to Ryle, tendentiousness is close to "dispositional property". In other words, it refers to the possibility of achieving a certain outcome rather than the outcome itself.

Thompson (2013, pp. 317–8) contended that the "dynamics of affect" came from a primordial fluctuation of the body's feeling and move-

ment tendencies. «This fluctuation manifests in any given instance as a particular movement tendency or motion disposition inhabited by a particular affective force». The fluctuations of "valences" are analysed as follows: as movement tendencies, they exhibit habit movement and posture valences — "toward/away, approach/withdrawal, engage/avoid, receptive/defensive"; as feeling tendencies, they exhibit affective and hedonic valences — "attraction/repulsion, like/dislike, pleasant/unpleasant, and positive/negative"; as socially situated, they exhibit social valences — "dominance/submission, nurturance/rejection"; finally, as culturally situated, they exhibit normative and cultural valences — "good/bad, virtuous/unvirtuous, wholesome/unwholesome, worthy/unworthy, praiseworthy/blameworthy". Although complicated, this classification highlights the fundamental problem of the dynamics of affect: all emotion is the product of two opposite judgements (positive and negative). The analysis of emotional tendentiousness cannot escape the "bipolarity of feelings", which refers to positive and negative attitudes (Feng 2011, p. 7). Here, tendentiousness indicates the orientation of emotions.

In the semiotics of emotion, the term "affective intentionality" relates to the directedness exhibited by the subject of value who makes judgements by connecting object and meaning with "personally associated" experiences. Emotion refers to the physical and mental reactions provoked by such judgements. Thus, as a unique intentionality of consciousness, affective intentionality refers to the judgements about the ego and the object. Although some scholars have attempted to reduce affective intentionality and the intentionality of familiar intentional attitudes, such as desires or cognitions, Montague (2009) viewed it as sui generis and unreducible. In other words, affective intentionality remains a controversial concept.

Summarising Dufrenne's ideas, Deng suggested that «intentionality boils down to the affective intentionality» (2012, p. 478), considering emotion as a priori serving as not only the premise of our getting–to–know–the–world acts, but also the essence of intentionality. Similarly, Dufrenne (1992, p. 480) proposed that emotion «should be realized at the outset that affectivity is not invoked here merely as the means by which the a priori is revealed. The a priori can itself be affective in nature just as the a priori of understanding is rational in nature». In addition to Dufrenne, both Heidegger and Merleau–Ponty

«had made emotion the original mode of existence for human beings» (Zhang & Hu 2011, p. 232). Unlike Husserl, Max Scheler's phenomenology focused on the emotional side of consciousness or the rational side of the unconscious mind. However, he also contended that «compared to other behaviors, the affective intentionality is bestowed beforehand» (Frings 2006, p. 185). Sartre (2007, pp. 472–3) adopted a similar stance on desires, suggesting that «desire cannot posit its suppression as its supreme end nor single out for its ultimate goal any particular act, it is purely and simply the desire of a transcendent object». He associated desire with Scheler and Husserl's discussions on affective intentionality, demonstrating that desire cannot be theorised. Despite many discussions about intentionality and affective intentionality, studying these concepts remains a priority because of our limited knowledge of their generation mechanisms. Indeed, Boden (2006, p. 100) admitted that «we have sufficient reason to believe that the neuro–protein carries intentionality, but we know nothing as to how does it, as neuro–protein, develop such kind of ability». Cognitive science has not yet properly addressed this issue, leaving it temporarily to philosophy.

Acknowledging affective intentionality, Roland Barthes (2003, p. 32) found it elusive: «Affect was what I didn't want to reduce; being irreducible, it was thereby what I wanted, what I ought to reduce the photograph to; but could I retain an affective intentionality, a view of the object which was immediately steeped in desire, repulsion, nostalgia, euphoria?». Although difficult to grasp, affective intentionality remains a subject of interest in philosophy.

Dufrenne (1992, p. 483) considered (affective) a priori as «a capacity of the subject to open himself to the object and to predetermine its apprehension; as constituting the subject as subject, [. . .] a priori characterizes both the object and the subject (as well as specifying their reciprocity)». Deng (2012, p. 478) summarized affective intentionality as «resting on our personal experiences and subjective imagination». In other words, affective intentionality involves the subject and the object and their reciprocity. According to Scheler,

the affective intentionality boils down to behaviors of love; [. . .] affective intentionality lies in the preference for behaviors of high (or low) value over those with imparted value, [in which preference]is the voluntary attraction

to a certain object, residing in the heart and the order of love, [and good and evil] are no correlates with the affective intentionality. (Frings 2006, pp. 192–3)

Here "love" and "preference" highlight the attitude of the subject towards the object, while "good" and "evil" represent judgements without "love" and "preference". This definition explicitly distinguishes between intentionality and affective intentionality, the latter focusing on the "ego" as the starting point, whose targets of intention are the judgement and attitude of the subject towards the object. Dufrenne (1992, p. 483) also emphasised «the difference between a judgement which makes a representation explicit and one which articulates a feeling», which can be interpreted as the difference between intentionality and affective intentionality.

In short, affective intentionality is the cause of emotion and exerts pressure, similar to the pressure that intentionality exerts on meaning acquisition behaviors. Wang (2009, p. 6) brilliantly inferred that

as is recorded in *The Book of Rites*, «those filial offspring who love their parents dearly are supposed to have congenial temperament, which registers gaiety on their face; in turn, those with gaiety are bound to have fair countenance». Deep love serves as the premise for those natural modifications.

This chain of affective reactions from "congenial temperament" to "gaiety" to "fair countenance" is rooted in "deep love", which denotes affective intentionality, also called tendentiousness. In short, intentionality is engendered by affection and indifference, which in turn incite tendentiousness. With "deep love" as the root of affective intentionality and tendentiousness, the generation of such feelings is only natural and certain.

3. Tendentiousness, Anticipation and Judgement

The main difference between intentionality and affective intentionality is their targeted object: the former deals with signs, the latter with narrative. For instance, Zhao (2015, p. 21) remarked that the object of meaning–acquisition actions was "presented by signs", with meaning as the goal of intentionality. Based on the above analysis, one can

conclude that emotions do not exist without narrative and that the basic unit of the object of emotion is narrative rather than signs; thus, the object of affective intentionality can only be narrative. Narrative may be left unfinished if it constitutes a potential, as the target of emotion must include the relationship between the subject and the object. Conversely, the target of meaning may only include the object, as both emotion and meaning require a subject for intention generation.

This explanation, like our understanding of "flower", can be divided into two parts. First, if the intentional subject is to acquire the concept of "flower", one simply has to register the intention behind the association of the sign and the entity "flower". Indeed, connecting oneself with the flower is unnecessary. In contrast, when considering one's feelings towards the flower, one must generate another intention so as to assess whether one is willing to take the flower as an object and whether one will experience gaiety by associating oneself with the flower. In other words, the a priori condition of emotion is the transformation of the subject's tendentiousness towards the object to the target of intention. An intentional object involves a causal relation between the intentional subject and the intentional object, rather than a pure object. As Hume (2009, p. 448) remarked, «when we have the prospect of pain or pleasure from any object, we feel a consequent emotion of aversion or propensity». In this example, "we" relates to the subject, and we "have the prospect" to behaviors and "pain or pleasure" to changes, consistent with the definition of narrative proposed by Zhao (2013, p. 7) as «a text of signs, composed by certain subject by encompassing character–involved incidents, which is permissible to be interpreted as demonstrating both time and meaning». Emotion is still directly related to narrative.

We can define the purpose of the tendentiousness of emotion as "anticipation", suggesting that the potential of emotional tendentiousness is more important than the outcome itself. The "pain or pleasure" mentioned by Hume denotes anticipation. Anticipation is the basis of narrative, just as acts are the "aspect of meaning" of emotion. Without anticipation, there is no aspect of meaning, and therefore no emotion. The aspect of meaning of emotion is based on a supposition: «As soon as I discover the falsehood of that supposition, they must become indifferent to me» (Hume 2009, p. 451). In this way, longing ceases, and thus no action can be derived by emotion. Gunther (2004, p. 7) also

argued that «based on their phenomenology, emotions differ from higher cognitive and motivational states in that their force (attitude) is an indissoluble aspect of their contents». Thus, tendentiousness and anticipation are two integral parts of emotion. An unfinished narrative often leaves the reader in an awkward situation, as all stories are expected to have an end. Affective intentionality is the longing for emotional experiences, while tendentiousness is the supposition of a certain ending, tragic or happy, which in turn generates anticipation. If we realise the impossibility of an end, emotion will not be available.

Tendentiousness for the outcomes of narrative varies with each individual, so does anticipation. The Chinese idiom «that which causes the ones close to you pain causes joy in your enemies» reveals how emotions generated by one identical incident differ due to different stances and perspectives, leading to different tendentiousness. A person's emotional attitude towards another individual or matter may change as a result of tendentiousness transformation. For instance, reading Lu Xun's novel Kong Yiji, most readers show sarcastic feelings (negative emotion) towards Kong Yiji at the beginning; however, they often feel more compassionate (positive emotion) with his tale of woe as the narrative continues, as he is a victim of society. As a result, by rereading the first half of the story, readers are more prone to sympathy. The reason for this change is that readers are more inclined to co–feel with Kong Yiji when they understand him better. The more intense their co–feelings, the more likely they are to make positive judgements. People are generally prone to judge positively, thus "co–feeling" increases this compassion by emphasizing his resemblance to the readers.

If one skips intentionality and tendentiousness to directly reach the end–purpose of anticipation, is this a valid emotional experience? The answer is self–evident. Considering the scenario in which we are vaguely informed that "finally they got married" with little knowledge of the story (is it a tale of woe or weal, for instance), no emotional response can be elicited. Furthermore, if one directly registers an emotion by skipping intentionality and tendentiousness, such as using drugs without getting ready for euphoria, it will be hard to conclude that one actually experiences euphoria. Conversely, if one achieves euphoria through reading or mental preparations, it is fair to conclude that one really experiences this feeling. For instance, a mentally re-

tarded neurosis patient may feel happy or sorrowful for no reason in an instant, which does not suggest that he / she truly experiences this feeling. In short, anticipation is a prerequisite for emotion, but anticipation alone is not sufficient.

However, even when all conditions are satisfied, the affective process still misses one essential factor — judgement. The object of judgement is the relationship of tendentiousnessand anticipation. Lloyd (2013, p. 64) supported the idea of Chrysippus, an ancient Greek philosopher, that «passions do not just incorporate judgements (Kriseis): they are judgements», which is a clear overstatement. Being only one part of the affective process, judgement differs from emotion, like a killer making sorrowful judgements about his prey while being nonchalant about killing. Yet emotion depends on judgement whose minute variations can lead to disparate emotional experiences. For instance, from Yan Jiayan's (2014, p. 76) point of view, the character Third Fairy in Zhao Shuli's novel Xiao Erhei's Marriage "presents as a comic figure", while Lei (2009, p. 230) interpreted her as a tragic figure. These different judgements may result from tendentiousness or may be caused by "misreading" or "misjudgement". Based on "deconstructive reading", Eco (2009, p. 9) strongly advocated that the pattern of misreading be a «parody's mission: it must never be afraid of going too far». Various modes of deconstruction and judgement can lead tomeaning discrepancies, which in turn elicit different emotional responses.

The trends exhibited in modern novels, such as concealed narrative intention and emotional intention, advocate for misreading on the part of the reader. Mo (2013, p. 36) argued that

> those novels with full–length are capable of being misread by later generations [as] the charming thing about literature lies in its potential for misreading, [. . .] [therefore], I also intend to befriend those who have misread or misunderstood my novels, for they proved that the images in my novel have transcended its thoughts.

In short, judgements about literary works are left to the reader, relieving these works of attached emotional connotation, simultaneously vindicating the idea that emotion is derived from judgement.

In conclusion, emotion is the judgement of a narrative transformation from tendentiousness to purposiveness through "co–feeling" on

the part of the subject and the physical and mental reactions provoked by thisjudgement under the pressure of affective intentionality.

Based on experiments, Kunda (2013, p. 181) inferred that «our judgements tend to be congruent with our emotions». His research intended to prove that feelings or emotions could affect our judgements, contrary to the above discussion suggesting that judgement modifies our emotional responses. In fact, interplay lies between emotion and judgement. For instance, in experimental philosophy, Knobe and Nichols (2013, p. 337) revealed that «there is no sharp separation between the way we ascribe mental states and our values, and that suggests that two mental capacities (theory of mind and moral cognition) may interact in interesting ways». This argument further demonstrates that judgement is not only closely related to emotion but also strongly contributes to the affective process.

The above discussion tackles the domain of discourse of one of the three faculties of the mind defined by Kant (2013 p. 380): the three a priori faculties — cognitive faculties, feelings of pleasure or displeasure and the faculty of desire — corresponding to three cognitive faculties — understanding, judgement and reason, respectively — which apply to nature, art, and freedom [. . .]. Emotion, relevant to aesthetics, falls into the second category. Regarding the relationship between emotion and judgement, Kant argued that the representation is referred to the subject if one is aware of an accompanying sensation of delight, «and what is more to its feeling of life — under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure — and this forms the basis of a quite separate faculty of discriminating and judging», suggesting that feelings affect the category of judgement. In contrast, the

> given representations in a judgement may be empirical, and so aesthetic; but the judgement which is pronounced by their means is logical, provided it refers them to the object. Conversely, even if the given representations be rational, but are referred in a judgement solely to the subject (to its feeling), they are always to that extent aesthetic. (*Ibidem*, p. 382)

According to Kant, feelings are not judgements but the a priori faculties and conditions for making a judgement. In other words, judgement is not the prerequisite for feelings of pleasure or displeasure; rather, feelings are intuitionistic, and thus «those who are always intent only on enjoyment (for that is the word used to denote

intensity of gratification) would gladly dispense with all judgement» (*ibidem*, p. 385).

This paper does not intend to overthrow Kant's domain of discourse, but rather seeks to illustrate that studies of "emotion a priori" can go further. Affective intentionality can be seen as a priori; feelings of pleasure and displeasure as anticipation, which is the purposiveness of emotion; and preference and partiality as tendentiousness. None of these concepts can be considered as emotions; thus, emotion is not intuitionistic but the product of judgement. The difference between this paper and Kant's idea lies in the interpretation of "emotion". In Kant's definition, feeling is «what we shall call that which must always remain purely subjective, and is absolutely incapable of forming a representation of an object» (*ibidem*, p. 385), whilethe representation is «referred solely to the subject and is not available for any cognition, not even for that by which the subject cognizes itself». The emotion evoked here is pure feeling, while the emotion discussed in this paper involves their formation process.

Kant's emotion–related case referred to «the green color of the meadows [that] belongs to objective sensation, as the perception of an object of the senses; but its agreeableness belongs to subjective sensation, by which no object is represented: i.e. to feeling» (*ibidem*). If emotion is truly a priori, then it should not differ much between individuals. However, as the foregoing chapters demonstrate, "the green color of the meadows" may not delight different individuals and feelings may evolve into pleasure, displeasure, fear or nothing at all because of the potential effect of accompanying emotions, misreading or partiality. In other words, the "faculties endowed with feelings" are a priori, while the feeling itself is empirical and symbolic.

4. The Symbolic Nature of Emotion

Kant regarded emotion as pure feelings free of any object. However, the connotations of signs defined by Saussure or Pierce always imply an object. In this case, emotion would have nothing to do with signs. Zhao (2012, p. 1) defined the sign as "the meaning–carried perception". Although Kant referred toemotion as sensation (or perception), the meaning of emotion is emotion itself. Hence, emotion is mean-

ing–free, and therefore cannot be viewedas a sign. Nevertheless, the following section demonstrates that this pioneering definition can help to symbolise emotion.

Langer (1986, p. 33) attempted to define art as "the symbol of feeling", suggesting that the "form" of art belonged to the sign and "feeling" naturally denoted meaning (later revised as "significance") and, thus, that significance was the essence of art. However, she also proposed that the meaning of the art symbol was the intrinsic nature of any artistic work. According to Tang (2013, pp. 132–5), Langer was trapped in the paradoxical "Langer's dilemma", whose solution was the replacement of Saussure's semiology by Pierce's semiotics to break the referential theory of the significance of the symbol and the organic theory of the art symbol. «Not all forms of art belong to the symbol of feeling, [. . .] [although] undoubtedly, feeling accounts fora major trait of art symbol, but not the whole package» (*ibidem*, p. 135). Feelings are examined by incorporating them into the category of "meaning" and "interpretant" in Langer's limitation and related defence. Feelings are formless, unrepresentative yet perceptible; thus, emotion, not being a sign itself, can be seen as the meaning or interpretation of signs. In short, Langer's aesthetic theories are based on Kant's theoretical framework.

If Langer's statement that the meaning or significance of the art symbol only resides in the artwork is true, then the meaning or significance should share the structure of the artwork. Based on Liu Daji's defence that a is an artwork and b anaffective concept, Langer (1986, pp. 13–4) argued that "art work and human's feeling are not the same thing, thus a does not identify with b, rendering a valid semiotic relationship between them", thereby relating artwork and affective concept to Saussure's semiology featuring two components of the sign: concept and sound–image. Therefore, the sign is not an artwork, but its integration into an affective concept, with the artwork as the signifier and the affective concept as the signified. In any case, the affective concept itself is not a sign.

Conversely, according to Zhao (2012, p. 1), signs are "the mean-ing–carried perception". Given that a sign is necessarily perceptible or a perception itself and emotionis also perceptible but not an ob-ject, emotion is fully equipped with the requirements to be a sign. Therefore, the question is whether emotion is a meaning carrier.

Mankind invented signs in the pursuit of meaning, as «meaning can only be conveyed by signs» (Zhao 2012, p. 1). According to Aristotle (2003), mankind lives in the pursuit of happiness, which is our final goal and the final good, «happiness, then, is something final and self–sufficient, and is the end of action» (p. 19), as «happiness has been said to be a virtuous activity of a soul, of a certain kind. Of the remaining goods, some must necessarily pre–exist asconditions of happiness, and others are naturally co–operative and useful as instruments» (p. 26). In short, emotions are not necessarily the final end of mankind, but the means to pursue happiness. Therefore, the significance of emotion lies in being and happiness. Emotions are neither the end nor the meaning itself, but a pure sign. According to Tang (2015), "sign is the medium", "symbolization is mediumlization" and artwork is nothing but "mediumlization", that is, the symbolisation of emotions. In addition, a sign can be interpreted as "the meaning–carried perception", and hence the symbolisation process can be conducted in ideology. In this way, discussions on the affective sign enter the field of pure abstraction.

Emotion cannot be the ultimate goal of humanity; otherwise, we would never need so many feelings. In other words, our various emotional experiences serve as intermediaries to other meanings, those of being and happiness, themselves only acquired through various emotional experiences. As Gao (2014, p. 146) suggested, «happiness itself, devoid of concrete joy or pleasure in daily lives, would descend into hollow nothingness». In addition, being and happiness are generated not only through joy or pleasure, but also through sorrow, hope, fear, melancholy and other emotions, which is the point advanced in Li Shangyin's Jeweled Zither. In search of lost times, both our perplexed dreams, like Chuang Tzu, and our immersion in wishes and woes, like Emperor Wang, are the spring of our happiness. The tears (sorrow) shed by mermaids become precious pearls. Similarly, if viewed from afar or on a beautiful day (in a good mood), everything exudes beauty and happiness. We can be ignorant and puzzled by experiences that later become happiness in moments of recollection. What we call "recollection" is the symbolisation of experienced feelings to bask in ethereal yet inaccessible feelings, that is, happiness, the meaning of life. Indeed, happiness, «which is dynamic and stratified» (Tan 2013, p. 29), has no end. Old blessing or woe can be later symbolized as the object of "recollection".

In other words, the semiotic feature of emotion is relative rather than absolute. In one situation, emotion is the meaning, in another, the sign. For instance, in one life stage, we acquire emotion by the "narrative" of our past "experiences" (practice), with "narrative" as the sign and emotion as the meaning. Conversely, in another, we "recall" or "recollect" these faded feelings, which serve as the sign and happiness and being as the meaning, consistent with Pierce's principle of "infinite semiosis". According to this principle, «the sign process, by definition, boasts no end for one interpretant linked to a sign generates another» (Zhao 2012, pp. 104–5). In short, the interpretation of a sign calls for another sign; hence, we can define the "interpreted sign" as the sign and the "interpretant sign" as the meaning. The flow of the interpretation process in which the meaning of a sign is viewed as a new sign is infinite, as the new sign can itself generate another meaning. When searching for "meaning", we may encounter a temporary end, which will stop our ultimate pursuit.

In conclusion, the affective process is one stage in our quest for meaning. It is neither the onset nor the end, but both the meaning and the sign, the purpose and the tendency, the interpretant and the representation, and the signified and the signifier. Only when we examine emotion in this context can we realise that it is not only the object of study in semiotics but also an inevitable issue in the humanities, such as philosophy, aesthetics, psychology, phenomenology, and cognitive science.

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Ignorant Design

L'universo della Moda

Massimo Leone*

> La mode n'est pas quelque chose qui existe en robes seulement. La mode est dans le ciel, dans la rue. La mode peut avoir quelque chose avec les idées, la façon dont nous vivons, ce qui se passe.
>
> Coco Chanel

English title: Ignorant Design: The Universe of Fashion

Abstract: There is only one word that captures the passage from microscopic intentionality to macroscopic emergence, from the apparent causality of local interactions to long–term structural randomness, and, therefore, to the emergence of trend lines, in the diachronic development of reality, unexplained in terms of a purely causal logic. This word is "fashion". The universe follows fashion. Culture follows fashion. Language follows fashion. Therefore, one should not — as proposed by the theory of intelligent design — project the causal scheme that underlies the local reading of the world onto a universal scale but, instead, lean towards the idea that the pockets of causality in the universe are nothing but concretions limited in time and space, local phenomena on which a causal logic manages to have a grip only if it considers them as isolated from the very long period in which they are located, and with respect to which, on the opposite, it would be more correct to adopt a theory of ignorant design, that is of a blind, casual, but nevertheless effective development of the universe. The article exemplifies such dialectics with reference to a key study: the emergence of the value of transparence in turn–of–the–century western cultures.

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1. *Est moda in rebus*

"Moda" è un termine emotivamente ambiguo. Abbinato agli indumenti, può suonare euforico. "Vestire alla moda" è un obbiettivo di molti, sebbene possa dispiacere ai dandy, o agli snob. Traslata in altri ambiti, tuttavia, "alla moda" è locuzione perlopiù derogatoria: se qualcuno, nell'ambiente accademico, sostiene che abbiamo pubblicato un libro pieno di concetti "alla moda" sicuramente non è un nostro amico. Chi ricerca la creatività, e di conseguenza l'originalità, rifugge in effetti la moda, se non nel tentativo di inaugurarne una nuova, non seguendo gli altri, dunque, ma essendone seguito. In generale, allora, la moda è un valore in quei contesti nei quali si perseguano insieme il sentimento di una distinzione e uno di appartenenza, mentre diviene un disvalore in quelle circostanze in cui la prima risulti di gran lunga più rilevante della seconda.

A ben vedere, tuttavia, la moda non è mai espunta neppure dagli ambiti più esclusivi ed elitari. Chi guardi con attenzione e un po' di distacco al mondo accademico, per esempio, si accorgerà che le ricerche, i convegni, le lezioni, etc. ma anche gli articoli, i saggi, le monografie, etc. tendono ad assomigliarsi tutti attraverso il rivolgere delle stagioni. Il fenomeno è particolarmente macroscopico nell'università statunitense, ancora molto influente anche a livello globale, in cui esistono quelle che Umberto Eco definiva le "magic words", vale a dire corte espressioni di una o due parole che, improvvisamente, calamitano l'attenzione di tutti i ricercatori, vengono poste al centro di mille iniziative, delineano uno spartiacque: chi le usa è *in*, chi le trascura è *out*. Ve n'è una approssimativamente ogni uno o due anni, con un ritmo non molto dissimile rispetto a quello delle collezioni di moda: "storytelling" nel 2015–2016, "fake news" nel 2016–2017, chissà che cosa nell'annata successiva. Anche in questo caso, alcuni centri e alcuni nomi sono più importanti di altri nel far girare la ruota della moda intellettuale: Harvard invece di Milano, questo o quell'accademico statunitense invece di Giorgio Armani.

L'analogia però non finisce qui: anche in ambito intellettuale, chi segua pedissequamente le mode, e ripensi al proprio operato con senno di poi, avrà, se si guarda con lucidità, la stessa impressione di chi rimira vecchie foto che lo ritraggono con gli abiti ridicoli che erano alla moda dieci o vent'anni prima. "Ma come ho fatto a organizzare un

convegno sullo storytelling?", ci si chiederà, con la stessa incredulità con la quale ci si chiede "ma come ho fatto a portare le giacche con gli spallini?" Però vi è anche il rischio opposto: chi giochi sempre il ruolo del "maverick", come lo definiscono gli americani, senza mai nulla cedere all'imperio delle mode, guardandosi indietro avrà l'impressione opposta di essere dolorosamente vissuto fuori dai tempi e dalle epoche, di essere rimasto un po' fuori dal mondo, isolato.

2. *In moda stat virtus*

In questo ambito, però, la mediocritas di chi segue sì, le mode ma *cum grano salis* non è necessariamente l'ideale. L'ideale è essere come Picasso, varare un linguaggio apparentemente incomprensibile che però tutti si ritrovano dopo un po' a seguire quasi in automatico, come se fosse l'elisir della creatività. Ma i Picasso della storia sono pochi. Sorgono inattesi nei luoghi più disparati, inventano un nuovo percorso, lo battono con tenacia, raggiungono frustrazione dopo frustrazione il centro nevralgico della cultura del loro tempo, e lì esplodono, in vita se sono fortunati, oppure postumi; comunque esplodono, e fanno deflagrare un terremoto che ha in loro stessi l'epicentro, e che rapidamente cambia tutto il paesaggio circostante, il modo di sentire, vedere, rappresentare.

Una semiotica del genio, tuttavia, non è impossibile, anche se rischia di sortire gli effetti di quella semiotica del comico tanto agognata da Umberto Eco: filosofare sul riso non fa ridere per nulla, e smontare i processi della creatività di solito li smorza. Però è chiaro che anche Picasso non sorge dal nulla, ma da un humus creativo di cui si possono identificare alcuni ingredienti, come l'apporto di culture provenienti da un lontano e incompreso altrove, per esempio. In ogni modo, se questi scoppi di creatività sussistono, e si comportano come terremoti, le culture evolvono invece perlopiù secondo la metafora che Ferdinand de Saussure utilizzava per descrivere il cambiamento linguistico: placidamente, impercettibilmente, lungo lentissimi scivolamenti delle placche tettoniche che mai completamente si arrestano, che sempre producono micro–alterazioni nella crosta terrestre, ma che nessuno percepisce, se non i sismologi a mezzo dei loro sofisticati strumenti. Muta infatti la lingua tutto intorno a noi, muta in noi, e muta anche

per causa nostra, a seguito delle micro–variazioni che, giorno dopo giorno, parola dopo parola, introduciamo nella *langue* attraverso la nostra parole; eppure noi perlopiù non ce ne accorgiamo, o ce ne accorgiamo di rado, per esempio quando un terremoto linguistico ha luogo, producendo stravolgimenti immani, allorché l'instaurazione di un nuovo regime politico, vedi la Turchia, cambia il sistema di trascrizione di un'intera lingua, ovvero lesionando l'edificio della lingua già nota, come accade quando emergono dei neologismi.

In generale, però, noi sediamo sulla lingua come sulla superficie terrestre: tutto si muove sotto di noi, ma con tale lentezza che ne deriviamo una sensazione d'inamovibile stabilità. L'arco temporale delle nostre vite funge infatti da parametro per accorgerci in maniera più o meno perspicace del mutamento. Come della persona amata, che vive accanto a noi giorno dopo giorno, e le cui fattezze osserviamo quotidianamente, non ci avvediamo che il tempo le segna il viso, le ammacca la pelle, le imbianca la chioma, per non parlare di quel decadimento degli organi interni che solo gli esami diagnostici riescono a rilevare, così, di ciò che ci è vicino e familiare, come la lingua, per esempio, o come la stessa cultura, non ci accorgiamo che cambia, se non quando ce ne allontaniamo per un periodo piuttosto lungo, e nel ritornarvi la ritroviamo mutata proprio come il viso di una persona amata da cui per qualche motivo fossimo stati costretti ad allontanarci. Se ad esempio dopo lungo tempo che ciò non ci accade ci troviamo a chiacchierare con un ragazzino, allora ci renderemo conto che questi preferisce con ogni spontaneità parole ed espressioni inusitate, che risveglieranno in noi l'idea del tempo che passa.

Di altri mutamenti più profondi, però, non nel lessico ma nella sintassi, o nella semantica di una lingua, di solito non ci capacitiamo, perché mutano con lentezza eccessiva rispetto all'arco delle nostre vite e all'acutezza della nostra percezione. Se però, come in quei video che mostrano accelerandole le immagini di una pianta nel tempo, dimostrandoci che essa si muove quasi come un animale — sebbene noi non ce ne accorgiamo perché tale movimento avviene troppo lentamente — fossimo in grado di accelerare la nostra appercezione della sintassi, allora ci renderemmo conto non solo di fenomeni macroscopici e perlopiù sotto gli occhi di tutti, come il progressivo recedere del congiuntivo nella lingua italiana, per esempio, ma anche di evoluzioni più sottili, di fatto quasi impercettibili a occhio nudo.

3. *Moda propria*

A guisa di sismologi, gli studiosi di culture, e dunque pure i semiologi, osservano invece questi mutamenti al microscopio, e ne scorgono indizi e tracce. Sono dunque capaci di descrivere come la lingua e la cultura mutano, ma restano invece perlopiù silenziosi quanto a una seconda, più ambiziosa domanda, quella che si chiede non solo il come, ma anche il perché di questo mutamento. Perché la lingua muta? E perché muta la cultura? Sospinta da quali forze, da quali agentività? Di fatto, Ferdinand de Saussure non risponde a questa domanda, e perlopiù non se la pone. Intento ad edificare una linguistica di ambizioni scientifiche, epurandola dalle scorie di soggettività della filosofia romantica del linguaggio, egli rifugge da ogni considerazione che non rimanga confinata in una concezione sistemica della lingua, in cui nessuna forza esterna ad essa sia vista come in grado di esercitarvi una pressione.

La filosofia della storia romantica e post–romantica, invece, formula ipotesi sull'etiologia del cambiamento culturale, fino a sfociare in quella che, più di tutte, segna e influenza il pensiero novecentesco sull'argomento. In Marx, la cultura evolve in maniera ancillare, come sovrastruttura il cui mutamento non è appunto autonomo ma legato a quello, più profondo e vero, della struttura economica. Le mode vestimentarie, per esempio, in quest'ottica non hanno una loro dignità e autonomia fenomenologica ma sono solo il portato tessile di cambiamenti più rocciosi nel sistema di produzione del valore e di formazione delle classi socioeconomiche.

Per quanto affascinante nella sua semplicità, tuttavia, questa prospettiva, sia pure edulcorata da tentativi culturologici alla Althusser, risulta sempre più problematica agli occhi dello studioso di culture, al quale risulta viepiù evidente che l'economia stessa, a inclusione di certi suoi fondamentali come il concetto stesso di valore o di plusvalore, non permangono immutati attraverso le epoche ma sono invece soggetti a mutamenti che li configurano piuttosto come fenomeni linguistici, o meglio ancora come configurazioni semiotiche. Mentre nella produzione novecentesca del valore, perlopiù legata all'attività industriale pesante, si poteva in effetti essere tentati di spiegare l'attaccamento di un operaio della Fiat alla Juventus come fenomeno sovrastrutturale in cui una classe socio–economicamente egemonica

infondeva e inculcava una passione sportiva nel proletariato al fine di fidelizzarne l'operato, oggi che il fatturato dell'industria dell'immaginario eguaglia e in certi casi supera quella dell'automobile si è quasi mossi a rovesciare il ragionamento, e a pensare che l'attaccamento sportivo produca passioni e valori–guida anche per i comparti più tradizionalmente strutturali di produzione del valore.

La critica semiotica alla filosofia romantica o post–romantica della storia consiste, più in generale, nel ravvisare che il mutamento culturale non ha niente al di fuori di sé, e dunque non può essere spiegato con riferimento a un'agentività esterna, sia essa economica, sociale, o religiosa. Persino il cambiamento naturale, che parrebbe poggiare su uno zoccolo duro e inamovibile, fuori dalla portata del linguaggio, a ben vedere non può essere recepito dalla specie se non attraverso il filtro della cultura. Il fatto di vivere in un territorio estremamente tellurico, per esempio, senza dubbio incide sull'ideologia religiosa delle culture nipponiche, eppure questa incidenza non è mai diretta, ma si esplica tramite il filtro della rielaborazione culturale, una rielaborazione così insistente che finisce con il prendere il primo piano della scena del mutamento, sostituendosi in quanto seconda natura culturale alla prima natura. In effetti, tanti sono i territori tellurici abitati dalla specie umana, ma non in tutti si manifestano gli stessi tratti culturali, a riprova del fatto che la natura delle conformazioni geologiche o delle plaghe climatiche fornisce il quadro ma non la definizione delle concrezioni culturali che vi si manifestano, e che anzi finiscono con il condurre i soggetti a letture a volte diametralmente opposte dello stesso dato "naturalistico".

4. *Moda vult decipi*

Ma cosa resta se, come nel modello di semiotica delle culture proposto da Jurij M. Lotman, nulla, né l'economia né la natura, risulta esterno alla semiosfera, e invece tutto vi resta inesorabilmente racchiuso, confinato nello spazio omogeneo della significazione, con la necessità dunque di esservi spiegato nei termini a esso interni, senza ricorso al nesso causale che ancori l'effetto culturale a un'origine eterologa? Di fatto, nonostante Lotman s'ispiri a Saussure ma se ne distacchi nel tentativo di "dinamizzarlo" — operazione del resto indispensabile dato

il passaggio da una semiotica del linguaggio a una della cultura — lo studioso russo, al pari di quello svizzero, sembra porsi il problema del come del cambiamento culturale, ma non del perché. Il sofisticato metalinguaggio della semiotica della cultura cattura con acribia i processi minuti del mutamento culturale, sottolineando, fra le altre cose, il bisogno di pensare la frontiera culturale come dispositivo dinamico di traduzione e dunque di generazione di senso. Questo metalinguaggio però non spiega né formula ipotesi sull'origine del vento che, spirando lieve ai margini della semiosfera, poi prendendo forza man mano che un meme culturale viene riprodotto, fino a sospingerlo con veemenza verso il centro e il cuore di una cultura, muove e rimuove l'universo del senso; non spiega, dunque, da quale gioco di masse d'aria fredde e calde esso si sprigioni, e come mai a un certo punto si sollevi, o scemi.

Forse però non è la risposta a costituire un problema, ma la domanda. Forse la distinzione fra come la cultura cambia e perché essa cambia non è poi così rilevante. Lo è se si proietta su di essa un quadro epistemologico di tipo causale, che è quello che quasi spontaneamente adottiamo quando cerchiamo di decifrare le nostre vite. Tuttavia, più abbracciamo con lo sguardo non tanto gli accadimenti minuti che ci concernono, e che riusciamo a leggere secondo questo schema, in fondo narrativo, di cause ed effetti, quanto le grandi linee dell'esistenza nostra, allora il perché di questo o quel rivolgimento comincia a sfuggirci come in una nebulosa, perdiamo i fili sottili e spesso invisibili che ci hanno condotti fino a un certo segno, stentiamo poi infine a cogliere il perché delle cose, sovente disperandocene.

Ma se cambiassimo prospettiva, se cambiassimo radicalmente prospettiva, e considerassimo invece che questa condizione del non poter scorgere le cause di ciò che ci accade non è l'eccezione nell'universo, ma la norma, e che il nostro ravvisare cause ed effetti, esso sì è invece un'illusione, prodotto di uno schema cognitivo utile senza dubbio, ma relegato nell'ambito locale della nostra cognizione, allora forse capiremmo che l'universo e la cultura, giù giù fino alla lingua, sono ambiti troppo vasti per essere sorretti da un perché, da una causa che ne sospinga i mutamenti, e che tutto invece vi si manifesta in base a interazioni perlopiù casuali, che divengono cause solo se viste in un ambito d'osservazione ristretto e limitato, quale la psicologia di un'interazione, per esempio.

Il sogno filosofico di tradurre la casualità in causa andrebbe allora rovesciato nel suo opposto, ovverosia nel quietismo filosofico che accetta la causa come illusione ottica limitata all'interno di un universo essenzialmente casuale, ove direttrici del senso sia naturale che culturale emergono, ma a seguito di interazioni perlopiù non intenzionali, perlomeno non sorrette dal progetto preciso di creare "quel" senso. Nuovi astri, nuovi pianeti, nuove specie, ma anche nuovi stili pittorici, nuove parole, nuovi racconti, emergerebbero dunque non in virtù di un'agentività determinata ma per impulso di un'agentività diffusa, ove micro–agenti seguono perlopiù logiche locali, o quelle che essi ritengono esser tali in virtù di un'illusione prospettica, ma poi, sommandosi le loro azioni su larghissima scala, danno luogo ad alterazioni strutturali di portata globale, il cui sprigionarsi non è affatto riconducibile alle micro–intenzionalità che vi hanno condotto.

5. *Moda semper certa est*

C'è allora una parola sola che catturi questo passaggio dall'intenzionalità microscopica all'emergenza macroscopica, dalla causalità apparente delle interazioni locali alla casualità strutturale del lungo periodo, e dunque al manifestarsi di linee di tendenza, nello sviluppo diacronico del reale, inspiegabili nei termini di una logica puramente causale. Questa parola è "moda". L'universo segue la moda. La cultura segue la moda. Il linguaggio segue la moda. Non si deve dunque proiettare lo schema causale che sorregge la nostra lettura locale del mondo su scala universale, come propone la teoria dell'*intelligent design*, ma invece propendere per l'idea che le sacche di causalità che scorgiamo nell'universo non siano che concrezioni limitate nel tempo e nello spazio, fenomeni locali sui quali una logica causale riesce ad avere una presa solo se li considera isolati dal lunghissimo periodo in cui essi pure si collocano, e rispetto al quale, invece, sarebbe più giusto adottare una teoria dell'*ignorant design*, ovvero di uno sviluppo cieco, casuale, ma comunque efficace, dell'universo. In effetti, non è difficile spiegare Picasso causalmente, ma è invece difficile accettare di spiegarlo casualmente, come prodotto che emerge dal tempo lunghissimo della cultura esattamente come una nuova specie animale attraverso gli eoni dell'evoluzione biologica. La moda, dunque, sarebbe il concetto

chiave non per spiegare, ma per accettare di non spiegare le pieghe della cultura.

Per una sorta di legge dei grandi numeri, la forza del caso che si esercita attraverso la storia e le culture vi produce delle polarizzazioni, e dunque delle dialettiche. Sarebbe però forse fuorviante, e sintomo di un ritorno surrettizio a una logica causale, interpretare queste dialettiche in modo hegeliano, come opposizioni destinate a produrre una sintesi finale, un equilibrio. Invece, come pare che l'universo si espanda a partire da un iniziale big bang solo per poi contrarsi successivamente in direzione diametralmente opposta, e così via all'infinito senza alcuna possibilità di *storytelling* che non sia quello della mera constatazione di tale movimento, così anche le culture danno luogo a dialettiche, ma queste non si ricompongono in uno stato di equilibrio, bensì si traducono in mere oscillazioni: le culture tendono casualmente verso l'esaltazione di una certa caratteristica, poi raggiungono un frangente di saturazione, e allora si ripiegano su sé stesse per inseguire dapprima timidamente, poi in maniera sempre più decisa una direttrice culturale opposta, fino al rallentamento e alla stasi dall'altra parte dello spettro.

6. *Moda ponens, moda tollens*

Una delle caratteristiche che il metalinguaggio della semiotica riscontra nelle semiosfere è proprio la tendenza a un certo grado di opacità, in quanto contrapposto al polo diametralmente simmetrico della trasparenza. Opacità e trasparenza sono fatti di moda in senso stretto, nel senso che la moda essenzialmente si fonda anche sulla decisione di ostendere od occultare a sé stessi e agli altri porzioni più o meno ampie della superficie corporea, ma sono anche fatti di moda in senso lato, nel senso che tutta la cultura, e non solo quella vestimentaria, deve regolare al proprio interno ciò che la semiotica greimasiana denomina "attante osservatore", vale a dire il modo in cui tutti i testi, e non solo quelli tessili e vestimentari, decidono di far circolare oppure di bloccare la circolazione d'informazione. È solo in virtù di questa concezione per così dire allargata della polarizzazione tra trasparenza e opacità che si possono cogliere le relazioni strutturali che intercorrono fra vari regimi discorsivi dell'ostensione o dell'occultamento,

all'interno di configurazioni testuali anche molto distanti in termini di media, generi, formati, stili, e contesti. Il giudizio sulla misura della trasparenza o dell'opacità in vigore non può dunque dipendere che dalla relazione con lo spettro di questa polarizzazione, senza mai la possibilità di stabilire misure né tantomeno standard assoluti. Una cultura è più o meno trasparente rispetto a un suo stadio passato o futuro, e mai in assoluto. Il semiotico della cultura deve comunque attingere i suoi materiali da più sfere discorsive, cercando di compiere carotaggi quanto più pertinenti e rappresentativi ma poi sforzandosi di ricollegarne i risultati al fine di maturare una comprensione olistica della semiosfera, del punto in cui essa si trova in relazione alle polarizzazioni strutturali che la caratterizzano.

È abbastanza evidente che, dal disfacimento dell'Unione Sovietica in poi, la trasparenza sia diventata un elemento essenziale di ogni retorica di cambiamento politico. Lungo una direttrice che ha radici antichissime, ma che ha trovato una sua coagulazione essenziale, almeno per quanto riguarda i tempi attuali, nella decisione di Mikhail Gorbachev di adottare "glasnost" come parola–chiave della sua opera di riforma della politica e della società sovietiche a partire dal 1986, la trasparenza, che è una delle traduzioni possibili di *glasnost*, appunto, guadagna rapidamente il cuore della semiosfera globale e diventa per ciò stesso oggetto di moda. Non solo nei Paesi dell'ex blocco sovietico, ma anche nell'Europa occidentale, accumulare consenso politico richiede un riferimento sistematico a questa *magic word*, i cui riverberi poi all'interno dei gangli della semiosfera sono multipli, nel senso che non riguardano solo l'operato delle gerarchie politiche o degli apparati burocratici, ma cominciano a "contagiare" anche altre sfere della produzione culturale, a cominciare da quelle legate ai sistemi politico–burocratici.

Quando, a distanza di una decina d'anni dalla caduta del muro di Berlino che seguì alla politica sovietica della glasnost, la Germania decise di dotarsi di un nuovo Reichstag, la sua manifestazione architettonica parve incarnare, nella struttura stessa dell'edificio oggi visitabile nella capitale tedesca, e una delle sue massime attrazioni, il passaggio da una moda dell'opacità a una della trasparenza, non solo in politica, ma anche in altri ambiti di produzione culturale, primo fra tutti quello dell'architettura che traduce la politica in edifici e palazzi istituzionali. Da un lato, nel 1995, la coppia di artisti Christo e Jeanne–Claude

impacchettò l'edificio secondo loro costume, quasi a segnalare cosa la politica tedesca era stata prima della caduta del Muro: un luogo di opacità estrema, impenetrabile a uno sguardo esterno, che del palazzo del potere conservava la stazza imponente e la forma austera, ma che nulla offriva a un desiderio di trasparenza (Fig. 1).

Figura 1.

Dall'altro lato, quando nel 1999 si completò l'opera di ristruttura-zione del Reichstag guidata dal progetto dell'*archistar* inglese Norman Foster, parve inevitabile aggiungervi un dettaglio che non era in effetti contenuto nel progetto iniziale, ma che divenne in seguito l'elemento più riconoscibile e di fatto scatenante della nuova identità politica e architettonica del landmark berlinese: una splendida, immensa cupola di vetro. Lì dove regnava un'opacità assoluta, denunciata dall'impac-chettamento di Christo, avrebbe regnato una trasparenza assoluta, una visibilità della politica esposta allo sguardo e al controllo da parte dei cittadini (Fig. 2).

Come spesso accade nelle semiosfere, i tracciati delle polarizzazioni strutturali devono tradursi in manifestazioni sensibili, nelle quali la scelta della specifica materia adottata non è affatto indifferente, ma si traduce nella configurazione culturale dei materiali. È evidente che, imperando una retorica politica improntata alla trasparenza, essa

Figura 2.

debba incarnarsi in un materiale diafano, quale appunto il vetro, che insieme traduce tale retorica e al tempo stesso se ne impregna.

L'andamento delle polarizzazioni strutturali della semiosfera è tuttavia tale che esse non solo tendono alla saturazione del flusso di moda prima di ripiegarsi lentamente su sé stesse e dare luogo alla tendenza opposta, ma comporta altresì un continuo strabordare, per contagio, in ambiti discorsivi paralleli a quello in cui prendono abbrivio. Dopo che "glasnost" diventa parola d'ordine nell'ambito della politica e ne caratterizza finanche i palazzi, la trasparenza pian piano comincia a pervadere anche domini discorsivi tradizionalmente votati alla discrezione, alla segretezza o persino alla menzogna, quali la diplomazia, per esempio. In altre epoche culturali non si sarebbe messo in dubbio che, per difendere gli interessi nazionali del proprio Paese, un ambasciatore si attenesse al basso profilo, all'understatement, alla riservatezza, o persino praticasse la diceria e la menzogna per depistare i governi ostili. L'avvento di Wikileaks, che un filo storico ma soprattutto retorico sottile collega al varo sovietico della Glasnost, sconvolge nel senso della trasparenza anche il reame della segretezza: pare normale a tutti, a un certo punto, che si rivelino e diffondano dispacci diplomatici, così come sembra legittimo, a pochi anni di distanza, che i segreti militari di una superpotenza vengano esposti attraverso l'opera dei *whistleblowers* Snowden e Manning.

Interpretare questi fenomeni come segno di puro progresso dell'umanità nel suo destino sempre più ravvicinato di una democrazia compiuta significa travisarli, o almeno trascurarne la componente estetica, ugualmente fondamentale. La trasparenza s'impossessa del

discorso globale, dalla politica all'architettura, dalla diplomazia agli affetti, non perché sia giusta in sé, ma perché viaggia e si gonfia sulla cresta dell'onda della moda. Ciò suonerà forse dissacrante, ma non cogliere l'aspetto modaiolo di certi fenomeni di estetica politica significa illudersi rispetto al fatto, molto probabile, che questa tendenza a una sempre maggiore trasparenza non sia destinata a continuare all'infinito, ma a raggiungere un estremo al di là del quale essa è inevitabile che si configuri come problema più che come risorsa, con il risultato di dar luogo a fenomeni culturali di rottura, nel senso dell'opacità piuttosto che della trasparenza.

7. *Moda capta est*

A dire il vero queste controtendenze si manifestano già proprio nelle mode vestimentarie, le quali raccolgono e istituzionalizzano nelle pratiche del marketing, della pubblicità, della commercializzazione, e ovviamente anche del design una tendenza globale che ha le sue radici essenzialmente nello stesso evento che segna, dal punto di vista politico, la rottura della tendenza a una sempre maggiore trasparenza inauguratasi con la Glasnost nel 1986. Tale evento è senza dubbio l'11 settembre 2001, il quale da una parte segna la fine della pax americana post–sovietica: a partire da questa data, l'Occidente dovrà sempre più rivedere i suoi standard di trasparenza nella necessità di collocarsi e difendersi in relazione a nuove forze ostili, riconsiderando per esempio l'operato dei servizi segreti nazionali e il loro furtivo monitoraggio delle "vite degli altri"; dall'altra parte, questo evento sancisce anche l'arrivo, sulla scena della storia e della cultura globali, di forze culturali ed estetiche prima minoritarie o marginali, le quali prendendo piede all'interno delle semiosfere occidentali vi impongono nuovi standard di trasparenza non solo politica ma anche estetica, obbligando le semiosfere dell'Occidente a un'azione che è volta a volta di contrasto o di assorbimento.

Il velo islamico, per esempio, chiaro dispositivo di occultamento e di opacità, prima si manifesta come pietra d'inciampo delle estetiche occidentali della trasparenza corporea, le quali cominciano a manifestarsi in Occidente già con l'inizio della secolarizzazione ma che esplodono con la riscoperta del nudo nel '68; il velo islamico in Occi-

dente "fa problema" perché mette in crisi questa concezione ormai affermata del corpo femminile e della sua carica erotico–sessuale. In seguito allo shock, però, quando la novità culturale si afferma sempre più, fa nascere fenomeni semiosferici di accomodamento, come quello che si manifesta nella recente campagna pubblicitaria del brand di moda italiano Versace (Fig. 3).

Figura 3.

Da accessorio–cardine del codice vestimentario islamico, impregnato del valore di opacità proiettato sul corpo femminile, il velo viene sdoganato in quanto indumento alla moda, rivisitato in chiave vintage recuperando il fazzoletto della donna occidentale, condiviso con il maschio strizzando l'occhio ai modi di vestire dell'uomo della penisola arabica, e soprattutto, in posizione centrale, valorizzato proprio in quanto hejab, di cui Versace però inverte la polarità scopica da superficie tessile occultante a tessuto esibito, accentuando il paradosso erotico di fatto già insito nel velo.

8. Conclusione: *moda in mobili*

Il vento che agita l'universo, che muove le particelle subatomiche, che incita gli astri alle loro rivoluzioni, che battezza nuovi pianeti, quel

vento che spira attorno a una nuova specie di pianta, o alla forma
inusitata della pinna di un pesce, e che soffia altresì nei teatri, quelli
dell'invenzione greca, o nella nuova fattura dei mosaici bizantini, o
nell'emergere della prospettiva, fino alla miriade d'interazioni che
incoronano un meme come campione di viralità, e sotto a tutto questo,
da che la vita è senso, sospinge in avanti il linguaggio, i sistemi di segni,
e soprattutto la lingua, che ognuno parla e che ognuno cambia, ma
senza avvedersi dei refoli sottili che ne animano il mutamento, ebbene
questo vento non è un vento reale, non si sprigiona da un motore
lontano, dal contrasto epocale di freddo e di caldo, ed è solo per un
attimo, attraverso l'istante delle vite nostre, quando per un mistero
l'universo finge di allinearsi con le volontà del pensiero e dell'atto, che
ci pare di sentirlo, mentre poi ne diverge in maniera catastrofica e ilare,
tanto che se avesse un volto riderebbe continuamente del pensiero
degli uomini, e del loro giocare con i simulacri vuoti di cause ed effetti,
in quanto questo vento è un vento apparente, è quello che si anima
dall'animarsi stesso delle cose, che non sono mosse dal vento ma che
invece sono vento, noi siamo vento, e tu che leggi queste parole, e
queste parole stesse, che a te sembra abbiano un qualche senso, ma
sono solo un grumo di polvere di una qualche bellezza in un turbinio
insensato.

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