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## **Volume 6, Issue 3, September 2019**

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**ATHENS INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION AND  
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ATINER is a **World Non-Profit Association** of Academics and Researchers based in Athens. ATINER is an independent **Association** with a **Mission** to become a forum where Academics and Researchers from all over the world can meet in Athens, exchange ideas on their research and discuss future developments in their disciplines, **as well as engage with professionals from other fields**. Athens was chosen because of its long history of academic gatherings, which go back thousands of years to *Plato's Academy* and *Aristotle's Lyceum*. Both these historic places are within walking distance from ATINER's downtown offices. Since antiquity, Athens was an open city. In the words of Pericles, **Athens "...is open to the world, we never expel a foreigner from learning or seeing"** ("*Pericles' Funeral Oration*", in *Thucydides, The History of the Peloponnesian War*). It is ATINER's **mission** to revive the glory of Ancient Athens by inviting the World Academic Community to the city, to learn from each other in an environment of freedom and respect for other people's opinions and beliefs. After all, the free expression of one's opinion formed the basis for the development of democracy, and Athens was its cradle. As it turned out, the Golden Age of Athens was in fact, the Golden Age of the Western Civilization. *Education* and *(Re)searching* for the "truth" are the pillars of any free (democratic) society. This is the reason why *Education* and *Research* are the two core words in ATINER's name.

# Athens Journal of Philology

ISSN NUMBER: 2241-8385

DOI: 10.30958/ajp

Volume 6, Issue 3, September 2019

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# Athens Journal of Philology

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Before you submit, please make sure your paper meets some basic academic standards, which include proper English. Some articles will be selected from the numerous papers that have been presented at the various annual international academic conferences organized by the different divisions and units of the Athens Institute for Education and Research.

The plethora of papers presented every year will enable the editorial board of each journal to select the best ones, and in so doing, to produce a quality academic journal. In addition to papers presented, ATINER encourages the independent submission of papers to be evaluated for publication.

The current issue of the Athens Journal of Philology (AJP) is the third issue of the sixth volume (2019). The reader will notice some changes compared with the previous issues, which I hope is an improvement.

**Gregory T. Papanikos, President**  
**Athens Institute for Education and Research**



**Athens Institute for Education and Research**  
*A World Association of Academics and  
Researchers*

**13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Languages & Linguistics**  
**6-9 July 2020, Athens, Greece**

The [Languages and Linguistics Unit](#) of ATINER, will hold its 13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Languages & Linguistics, 6-9 July 2020, Athens, Greece sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Philology](#). The conference is soliciting papers (in English only) from all areas of languages, linguistics and other related disciplines. You may participate as stream organizer, presenter of one paper, chair a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2020/FORM-LNG.doc>).

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- Abstract Submission: **2 December 2019**
- Acceptance of Abstract: **4 Weeks after Submission**
- Submission of Paper: **8 June 2020**

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**Athens Institute for Education and Research**  
*A World Association of Academics and  
Researchers*

**13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Literature**  
**1-4 June 2020, Athens, Greece**

The [Literature Unit](#) of ATINER is organizing its **13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Literature, 1-4 June 2020, Athens, Greece** sponsored by the [Athens Journal of Philology](#). The aim of the conference is to bring together academics and researchers from all areas of literature and other related disciplines. You may participate as stream leader, presenter of one paper, chair of a session or observer. Please submit a proposal using the form available (<https://www.atiner.gr/2020/FORM-LIT.doc>).

**Academic Member Responsible for the Conference**

- **Dr. Stamos Metzidakis**, Head, [Literature Research Unit](#), ATINER & Emeritus Professor of French and Comparative Literature, Washington University in Saint Louis, USA.

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## **The Past as the Key for the Future: What Does (Medieval) Literature Mean Today in the Twenty-First Century?**

*By Albrecht Classen\**

*The Humanities are increasingly challenged by the fields of Science, Medicine, and Business, but people desperately need to understand their fundamental human side in order to cope constructively in this world. Continuing previous explorations of this large topic, this paper focuses, once again, on the questions what history really means for us today, how literary narratives allow us to ruminate on the human condition, both materially and spiritually, and how we can profit from the philosophical insights developed by Karl Jaspers in his reflections on *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (1949). Despite, or just because of the rapidly expanding digitization of nearly every aspect of human existence, the Humanities continue to be of essential relevance in everything we do, study, embrace, or pursue in our lives.*

**Keywords:** *Humanities, History, Literature, Relevance, Karl Jaspers, Medieval Studies, Philosophy, Religion*

### **The Meaning of History for Us Today**

Every historian is only too well aware about the fact that history as we know it is the result of our modern research into the past. If we did not care about it, it would simply disappear from our view and our awareness. In a way, we create that past through the application of our lenses and by pursuing our research interests with which we turn to older sources and documents. One recent example proves to be the history of the Avars, a nomadic people who lived in the steppes of the Carpathian Basin from the sixth to the ninth centuries and have been mostly ignored by research until only recently, especially because they left practically no written documents. Now, together with the significant help of archeologists, historians such as Walter Pohl have finally succeeded in bringing back to life what we can tell regarding the Avars, and future research promises to yield even more results (Pohl 2018). Of course, this does not yet tell us why the world of the Avars would matter to us today, and by the same token, the history of the Celts, the Lombards, the Visigoths, or the Vandals. Obviously, the weights given to one people or one culture, to that ideology or another, can easily shift, from generation to generation, much depending on our modern interests and needs for cultural identity. Significantly, for instance, Eurocentrism is currently being replaced by globalism, and the public debate concerns deeply what constitutes the relevance of culture, history, and the arts in the present world (Sharman 2019)<sup>1</sup>. Some historical periods and

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<sup>1</sup>Sharman argues, for instance, that the rise of Europe to the level of an imperialist and colonizing superpower in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was only a temporary experience,

its documents are now the center of attention that have been ignored before, as illustrated, for example, by the enormous growth in interest dedicated to medieval women's literature; other generations of (male) scholars cared very little about that. Another issue, this one being of a very political nature, now proves to be the very serious efforts by the Polish government to deny any Polish responsibility for the Holocaust by means of legal measures, which has caused serious tensions between Poland and Israel (Polonsky 1990, Wolff-Powęska and Forecki 2013, Bikont 2015, Dreifuss 2017)<sup>2</sup>. Our relationship with the past casts long shadows on our individual and collective identity.

### **The Role of the Humanities Today**

This paper will examine the relevance of medieval history and literature for our modern discourse regarding the meaning life, both from a very pragmatic and a philosophical perspectives. To help us understand the larger context better, here I will draw strongly on philosophical insights developed by Karl Jaspers and combine those with reflections on a wide range of medieval narratives addressing religious/spiritual, political, economic, gender issues that continue to be of great relevance for us.

Modern research constantly re-discovers poets and poems from the pre-modern time, as documented by the ongoing efforts to edit and translate texts from the past and thus to make them more available for us today (Busch and Reich 2014). None of that is simply *l'art pour l'art*; instead, the exploration of the past is always intimately tied into contemporary political, ideological interests (Simonton 1994, Jenkins 1999). Deliberately putting a lid on history thereby constitutes a specific strategy most people might not even be aware of, especially when certain memories are supposed to be repressed, as we see it happening right now in 2018 and 2019 with various eastern European countries making strong attempts to distance themselves entirely from the Holocaust and thereby try to assume the position that they had been nothing but victims of Nazi violence. This is a political debate, just as the argument pertaining to the genocide of the Armenians by the Turks in 1915, which the present Turkish government denies. We could also point out the ominous parallels between Hitler's power grab after the arson of the Reichstag on February 27, 1933, and threats by the US government in Feb. 2019 to declare a state of emergency, giving the president extraordinary powers, allegedly because of a national crisis at the southern border. Significantly, we can and must go even further in history to recognize the engines that drove humanity and thereby created the groundwork or the cultural soil from which we then emerged. In short, the

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while the true superpowers in the East, such as China, are currently regaining their traditional and common world position.

<sup>2</sup>For the latest situation, see Friedberg E (2018, February 6) "The Truth About Poland's Role in the Holocaust". *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://ces.to/poewDm>; and <https://ces.to/GIcTY0> (last accessed on May 31, 2019).

Middle Ages are right with us, and so the voices of medieval poets in many intriguing fashions.

### **Past and Present: How Do We Face the Tomorrow?**

To refocus our investigation here, all of us working in the profession of education are constantly challenged by the universal and always relevant question what the relevance of history or the humanities might be, especially when tomorrow's challenges are already knocking on our doors. The common response relies on the observation by Jorge (George) Santayana (1863-1952) (Farré 1953), which is by now widely disseminated and has almost fallen into the trap of being nothing but a platitude or a cliché: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (Wippel 2011, Krüger 2005, Hunt 2018, Wineburg 2018). He also commented about philosophy and the reverse ranking of the major contributors, mostly dismissing the moderns in favor of the ancients: "...the progress of philosophy has not been of such a sort that the latest philosophers are the best: it is quite the other way...the later we come down in the history of philosophy the less important philosophy becomes, and the less true in fundamental matters"<sup>3</sup>.

However, this is not a paper about the philosophy of history, but about the history of our culture and its meaning for us today. The same question, after all, can be raised regarding the history of literature, especially medieval texts, and why they would matter for us today. Or, we could inquire about the meaning of the history of art, architecture, philosophy, religion, technology, sciences, or medicine in the present day and age. The surprisingly simple, perhaps naive answer would be: everything we do or deal with has a past and lives from its own history, and there are no firm rules as to the value or validity of modern contributions versus ancient or medieval ones. Instead, we live in a long concatenation of ideas that all deserve to be recognized, especially because many have proven their timeless relevance, some submerging, others emerging, in direct response to our contemporary discourse. Nevertheless, this claim regarding the relevance of historical documents (literature, chronicles, art works, etc.) for today needs to be fleshed out, expanded, and illustrated further. The investigation of the historical dimensions of the Humanities forces us, ultimately, to reflect upon the meaning of our entire field, an enterprise which is not new at all, but one that certainly needs to be carried out over and over again because it constitutes the fundamental epistemology of our cultural identity as Humanities scholars (Verene 2018, Bess and Pasuka 2018)<sup>4</sup>.

Many poets and intellectuals from antiquity to the present have reiterated this idea as formulated by Santayana, regularly lamenting people's disinterest in the past, although it is the ground from which we all have grown<sup>5</sup>. However,

<sup>3</sup>Quoted from Flamm MC "George Santayana (1863-1952)". *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from <https://ces.to/DAbYJ1>.

<sup>4</sup>See also the impassionate appeal by Nussbaum (2012).

<sup>5</sup>For a good selection of relevant statements, see, for instance <https://ces.to/aeO019>.

today we live in a very fast age, with changes happening around us all the time which less and less people can really grasp or handle properly, if at all. Digitization, robotization, and thus the emergence of Industry 4.0 place great demands on the young generation to prepare itself for the new challenges and thus to gain jobs and the ability to maintain their own lives. Newspapers witness a steady decline of subscriptions; libraries are turning increasingly into media or community centers neglecting their traditional purposes and functions to make available books, i.e., printed material, while archives are mostly neglected by the younger generation. At the same time, the flood of predigested data drawn from the internet occupies all our minds, blocking us from pursuing free thinking and deep cultural awareness. Instead of growing into new independence and global perspectives, the current readership is incrementally becoming dependent and subject to digital controls.

Not surprisingly, this forces us to probe, once again, where all this leaves the Humanities, or the Social Sciences, that is, every subject matter that does not seem to be directly related to the practicalities of professional life outside of the academia? To raise this question opens a Pandora's box that many scholars, politicians, writers, and artists have addressed already, both in the past and in recent years<sup>6</sup>. Most of them have reached the consensus, broadly speaking, that our lives are not only determined by material conditions; instead, we are, as human beings, spiritual, cultural, intellectual, and emotional as well, and each area needs to be addressed as much as possible in our existence if we want to thrive and achieve the highest potential possible.

There is no price tag on all those dimensions, structures, ideals, and values, but I believe that we can all agree on the supreme importance of those intangibles in our existence, irrespective of our cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or political backgrounds. They are intangibles, yet they are very real as well, whether it is love, the search for God, friendship, the value of beauty, the meaning of life, or death.

### **Outline of the Argument**

One major contributor to the discourse alluded to here was the German philosopher Karl Jaspers, who endeavored to come to terms with this issue in his famous study *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (On the Origin and Goal of History) (1949); written after the horrible experiences of the Second World War and the Holocaust which came very close to home in his case, with his wife being Jewish. Jaspers was also a witness of the new development of the atom bomb and modern technology, though he was not yet aware of the computer and the Internet. We will have a great opportunity to draw some insights from his reflections and to apply those to the more specific inquiry about the relevance and meaning of pre-modern literature in the twenty-first century. While there have been many other philosophers, such as Santayana,

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<sup>6</sup>For a very recent response to this question, see Hunt (2018), and MacMullen (2014). The list of relevant studies both in history and in literature, in art history and social studies is legion.

who examined the same issue in their own way, Jaspers's comments have not yet been considered closely enough in our present context.

This paper thus intends to reflect critically once again on the deep meaning of the past for the present and the future, the perennial challenge for every individual here on earth because we constantly move forward, forget the yesterday, and are thus constantly in danger of ignoring our own background, our past, our traditions, our values, our ethics, and our ideals. We stand to profit from Jasper's insights to this larger discourse in a unique fashion, but first I will examine more concrete examples from medieval history, philosophy, and poetry. In particular, today the relevance of literature is at stake, considering the constant calls for STEM at schools and universities to the disadvantage of the liberal arts, including the study of foreign languages. However, this is not a new phenomenon; instead, already since antiquity intellectuals felt the need to defend poetry and the arts at large. Moreover, much recent research has confirmed that graduates in the Humanities are not really worse off than those in fields such as Engineering. The Liberal Arts continue to be of great significance and are essential for the growth of our society in a meaningful way, and this in every sector of our economy, education, political system, the medical field, the arts, and also sciences<sup>7</sup>.

This study consists of three parts closely interwoven with each other. First, I will revisit the broader field of Medieval Studies to gain a better understanding of how we can explain to our present student generation and the public why the past matters so much, especially the Middle Ages as the last most impactful cultural period determining the rise of the western world ca. thousand five years ago after the fall of the western Roman empire. Second, looking briefly at a number of specific examples from medieval literature, I want to outline how we can approach this difficult issue and translate it into a productive tool for many academic and non-academic purposes. Third, drawing from some philosophical reflections by Karl Jaspers and other cultural critics, I will examine the meaning of the past for us today in detail, exploring why history is relevant for us in our present day and age in a significant manner because we remember so many mistakes, errors, faults, shortcomings, failures, and even crimes committed by our predecessors which we really want to avoid in order to move forward as a civilized society. However, memory is not necessarily a negative; on the contrary, remembering allows us to think critically about this world and our own position here on earth, not blindly assuming responsibility for our forefathers, but keeping in mind what they have done, for better or worse. Without the archaeology of knowledge, as Michel Foucault had called it, we are in danger of not understanding anything in our present condition. After all, major intellectual achievements and ideas created

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<sup>7</sup>As to a direct response to the challenges posed by STEM against the Humanities, see Dafoe (2016) and Classen (2018a). For the long tradition of intellectuals and writers rallying to the defense of the Humanities (poetry, literature, the arts, etc.), see the very useful collection of relevant excerpts (Davis and Finke 1989). For most recent data regarding career opportunities for graduates in the Humanities, see the report by Catharina B. Hill and Elizabeth Davidson Pisacreta "The Economic Benefits and Costs of a Liberal Arts Education". *The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Reports*. Retrieved from <https://ces.to/1HU60L>.

in the past continue to have a huge impact on us today and guide us toward the future, like a pilot light in the darkness of life. In Foucault's words,

the analysis of the archive, then, involves a privileged region: at once close to us, and different from our present existence, it is the border of time that surrounds our presence, which overhangs it, and which indicates it in its otherness; it is that which, outside ourselves, delimits us. The description of the archive deploys its possibilities (and the mastery of its possibilities) on the basis of the very discourses that have just ceased to be ours; its threshold of existence is established by the discontinuity that separates us from what we can no longer say, and from that which falls outside our discursive practice (Foucault 1972: 130-131).

My favorite metaphor for history and human culture is the tree. Every biologist will confirm that all parts of a tree are essential in guaranteeing that this living creature can exist and survive. Without the leaves up to the very treetop, there would not be photosynthesis, evaporation of water, and subsequently no capillary movement or transportation of water from the roots to the very extremities of the tree. Only a close cooperation of all parts makes it possible for the tree to thrive and to achieve its full potential. This applies, of course, to every other living creature as well, which hence means that we must always consider two principal vectors, the horizontal (present) and the vertical (past, present, and future). In human terms, this means the central importance of connectivity, as Brené Brown (2017) has stated famously<sup>8</sup>, but not only in contemporary terms. If we understand and appreciate the history and culture of our neighbors (in the village, in the town, in the state, in the country, in the world), we build the deep roots of connectivity that are not only two-dimensional, but essentially tridimensional. We must move beyond the tiny dots in the endless curve of life and reach out for the circle that constitutes existence in a holistic fashion, irrespective of religious or cultural differences. That circle, or tree, draws from many different directions and constitutes the true world wide web, consisting of memory, the archive, the human drive toward the good (Boethius), knowledge about past and present, and the love for our neighbors.

### **Part I: Humanities, Literature, the Middle Ages**

Human existence is, in a very meaningful way, determined by narratives; we are constantly telling our own history and create it by means of narration that always contains many different threads, going sideways (present) and downwards (past). Autobiographies mirror ourselves, but the text-producing

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<sup>8</sup>She argues, here quoting from an online summary of the book, "True belonging requires us to believe in and belong to ourselves so fully that we can find sacredness both in being a part of something and in standing alone when necessary. But in a culture that's rife with perfectionism and pleasing, and with the erosion of civility, it's easy to stay quiet, hide in our ideological bunkers, or fit in rather than show up as our true selves and brave the wilderness of uncertainty and criticism. But true belonging is not something we negotiate or accomplish with others; it's a daily practice that demands integrity and authenticity. It's a personal commitment that we carry in our hearts".

individual has always been in the intriguing position of determining life through its own perspective, which in turn is determined by the words coined by the individual in its interchanges with the physical dimension outside of the self (Bruner 1988, Hatch and Wisniewski 1995, Brockmeier and Carbaugh 2001, An et al. 2018). The chorus of voices is therefore rather expansive and difficult to handle, and yet each voice has the potential of sharing valuable information or data, conveying ideals, values, and concepts. But we also must keep in mind what Plato had allegedly formulated a long time ago: “Wise men speak because they have something to say; Fools because they have to say something”.

As in the case of Boccaccio’s *Decameron* (ca. 1350), for instance, or Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (ca. 1400), people develop and grow in communities, they depend on sharing, and thrive on the experiences passed on to them by those voices from the past. Reading literature, for instance, thus proves to be a process of connecting ourselves with our roots, or other roots, and developing new trunks and stems for future leaves and flowers. I am, however, not concerned with a limited list of individual texts, or specific languages, but with the fundamental value of the literary discourse in its cultural-historical context, which is tantamount to a forest of trees, each of which has its own value, though they all resemble each other in its fundamental composite parts.

Before we proceed, we must also make a distinction between history and cultural history. Traditional study of history focused on wars, rulers, feudal structures, urban dwellings, economic conditions, epidemics, religious conflicts, and other major developments. Here I am concerned, by contrast, with cultural history, also with the history of mentality, and the history of everyday life, as commonly expressed by literary narratives, written or formulated orally (Dinzelbacher 1993/2008). More precisely, the focus here will rest on the meaning of literary and philosophical texts as historical documents and the question how we can approach them today in a way that makes sense for modern readers and convinces them that they can and really should engage with them intensely because they shed important light on present-day, or universal, issues of great significance. The subsequent reflections are to be understood as representative of all efforts to come to terms with our past and to figure out a pathway toward the future.

Let us thus assume that literature is of relevance, globally, irrespective of its origin and date, and irrespective of whether it was recorded in writing or has been preserved orally only. In this paper, however, I am not concerned with the age-old debates regarding the canon versus trivial texts (Classen 1993, Classen 2011a, Classen 2013a, Bloom 1994, Sinaiko 1998)<sup>9</sup>, and I do not want to enter into the abyss of endless discussions about whether the Humanities have any value today. Of course, they do, very much so, maybe even more so than in the past, but they face difficult times today because of enormous economic pressures on our young student generation.

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<sup>9</sup>The literature on this issue is legion; the discussion of the canon and its meaning involves race, sexism, misogyny, power structures, and many other political issues both in the past and the present.

However, as many scholars and journalists have noted with a strong emphasis, a degree in the Humanities continues to be of great relevance and prepares our graduates in rather surprising fashions for their professional lives, even if they might not apply directly what they have learned through the study of *Beowulf*, the *Nibelungenlied*, Boccaccio, Shakespeare, Aphra Behn, Molière, Goethe, Turgenev, Faulkner, Virginia Woolf, Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Christa Wolf, and many others. In fact, considering most recent challenges and explorations, the Humanities and STEM are not that far apart from each other, especially because the study of literature makes possible the exploration of the widest range of human experiences and concerns, which in turn can be applied to practical aspects in the Sciences, Medicine, Politics, and the Economy (Pleshakova 2009, Gleason 2018, Bradley 2018). By the same token, those working in the Humanities are also called upon to understand the Sciences and Medicine as much as possible because they are an intimate component of all human life. We can also simply add that the very fact that we are human beings and define ourselves through culture and selfhood, for instance, confirms the centrality of our subject matter because it allows us to return to our own identity and to explore who we are and what constitutes our spiritual and material frameworks (Sorabji 2006, Schiffrin et al. 2010).

In a number of different articles, I have already discussed at length how we could make medieval literature relevant for modern readers, or specifically, how we as teachers and scholars can bring to light what messages in many different texts in the pre-modern world continue to speak to us because of their timeless relevance (Classen 2013b, Classen 2015a, Classen 2016a, Classen 2018b). There are countless opportunities to examine, for instance, heroic literature as a medium to explore such universal issues such as honor, treason, murder, war, betrayal, loyalty, individuality, and ultimately, leadership, integrity, and role models (Classen 2000, Classen 2011b). If we are interested in investigating the huge discourse on toleration and tolerance, for instance, we find numerous examples already in high and late medieval literature with unique inclusive perspectives and will find ourselves in the surprising company of pleasantly startlingly open-minded writers, philosophers, and even theologians (Classen 2018c).

Gender issues, marriage, sexuality, friendship, and many other topics were of central concern for medieval and early modern theologians, philosophers, and poets, and they certainly continue to be so for us today (Blažek 2018). There is no shortage of relevant medieval texts dealing with foreigners, monsters, and strangers. The issues of multilingualism and multiculturalism find rich reflections as well (Armstrong and Strietman 2017, Classen Forthcoming-a). World exploration, economic exchanges, scientific and medical learning, translation issues, homosexuality, and also the close interaction between humans and their natural environment were all well represented in pre-modern literature, as modern research has richly documented<sup>10</sup>. Even the relationship between people and robots was already a significant topic in the pre-modern world (Truitt 2015). The issue of war and peace has been discussed not only in

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<sup>10</sup>Instead of referring to many different studies, see the contributions to Classen (2015b).



the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but the relevant discourse can be traced back to a very old tradition grounded in the Middle Ages, but also in antiquity (Jansen 2017, Classen Forthcoming-b).

Our contemporary philosophical investigations are so deeply determined by their historical roots that we do not even need to question the relevance of the pre-modern world in this academic discipline (von Kutschera 2019). The same applies to religion, whether Christianity, Judaism, or Islam (in the Western world and the Middle East), which is intimately connected with literature. In fact, we could read virtually all major religious texts as literature, and much of our literature through the lens of religion (Lang 2019). In other words, all our basic human needs for spirituality find full expressions in literary texts, whether we think of the parables in the New Testament, the medieval mystical accounts by individuals such as Hildegard of Bingen or Mechthild of Magdeburg, the miracle stories by Caesarius of Heisterbach, the esoteric reflections by Master Eckhart, Martin Luther's hymns and table talks, and countless other examples.

### **Religion and the Human Quest for Spirituality**

Religion and literature are intimately tied in with each other and contribute to the expansion of the spiritual dimension within human life. Most if not all religious authors convey profound, often ineffable and apophatic messages, which members of secular societies tend to ignore or reject, although those very messages continue to be there waiting for us throughout time. While there might be severe tensions between representatives of different faiths, each rejecting the holy scriptures held dear by the others, religious poetry, for instance, whether by Rumi, Maimonides, Heinrich von Meissen, Yehudah Halevi, Catharina Regina von Greiffenberg, Angelus Silesius, or Emily Dickinson has always enjoyed a different status, addressing universal religious experiences not bound by specific church teachings or faith communities.

The idea of the human quest, whether formulated in a narrowly religious fashion, or in literary terms, has permeated all literary cultures and constitutes to a large extent the very nature of literature. Quite parallel to the biblical accounts, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, Tundale the Knight's *Visios*, the many different medieval Grail quest narratives, Gottfried of Strasbourg's *Tristan*, Dante's *Divina commedia*, William Langland's *Piers Plowman*, Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, or John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, to name a few medieval and early modern texts, have all followed the same path and experimented with the model of *catabasis*, outlining the individual's effort to survive the deep fall into hell and to climb back not only to earth, but to reach Paradise as well (Tormey 2018).

The protagonist often cannot achieve this goal without help, whether it is Virgil who appears in *Inferno* to support and guide Dante, or whether it is a secret society that appears in the background steering the protagonist onto the right path and providing the necessary encouragement for idealism to come to full fruition, such as in Johann Valentin Andreae's *Christianopolis* from 1619

(Brecht 2008, Comenius 1992, Murphy 1995). The same phenomenon emerges in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Magic Flute* from 1791 and then in Johann Wolfgang Goethe's *Willhelm Meister's Lehrjahre* from 1795/1796, where each time a group of wise and old people observes, tests, and assists the hero on his or her path toward a spiritual goal (Classen 2012). Even Thomas Mann (*The Magic Mountain*, 1924) and Hermann Hesse (*The Glass Bead Game*, 1943) subscribed to that ideal, which medieval poets expressed most vividly in the various Grail romances. The quest is ongoing, and we as people continue to stumble through our lives, not knowing much about our purposes and directions. If we look only forward, we lose the orientation; if we look only backwards, we cannot move forward.

This takes us back to the same metaphor mentioned above, the tree, which represents all life, with the roots communicating with the treetop, the branches with the trunk, the wood with the leaves, etc. Existence has much to do with communication, and not just among equal elements, but across the spectrum of individual creatures, which often requires translation. This communication, however, does not simply aim for the future, but is deeply based on the narrative past upon which stories continuously grow that will be told tomorrow.

For instance, although we still cannot quite identify the exact stepping stones that connect the Arabian stories of *One Thousand and One Nights* with the world of medieval and early modern story telling ("The Arabian Nights" 2010, Ouyang and van Gelder 2005, David 1992, Sallis 1999)<sup>11</sup>—Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis*, the anonymous *Gesta Romanorum*, Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum*, Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the anonymous *Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles*, and Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, here disregarding many other medieval and early modern anthologies—we are on solid ground when we consider the global network of storytellers. Moreover, the ancient Indian *Panchatantra*, which the medieval Europeans learned to appreciate in the Latin and then many different vernacular versions under the title *Liber Kelilae et Dimnae* by Johan of Capua, otherwise known as the *Directorium humanae vitae*, not to forget the collection of tales known as *The Seven Wise Men*, all demonstrate the shared interest in and concern with the universal human need to learn from past experiences and to gain insight into many different types of human behavior, bad and good (Clements and Gibaldi 1977, Chinca et al. 2006, Grubmüller 2006).

Despite the vast number of available stories, which all differ, at least to some extent, from each other in theme, content, moral lessons, and values, storytellers have always provided the same narrative material in which the audience (readers or listeners) could mirror itself and learn from. What is there to talk about, both yesterday and today, and what will we talk about tomorrow? There are not many issues that deserve our attention, whether in religious or in secular texts. Considering the situation in world literature, we observe the obvious. Writers and poets have always addressed the quest for the self, the search for the meaning of life, and for the purpose of death, the quest for God,

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<sup>11</sup>Both here and in countless other short narratives, the theme of sexuality dominates; see Ghanim (2018).

for one's own identity, the exploration of honor and its opposite (shamefulness, failure, shortcoming, etc.), love, sexuality, and maybe also the experience of beauty and joy. Hence, it does not come as a surprise that many scholars have identified the Bible as literature; and *mutatis mutandis* this also applies to the other holy scriptures, such as the Torah and the Koran (Gottcent 1979, Clark Kee 1997, Knauer 1997, McAfee 1998, Norton 2000). After all, there are no patent answers to any of the myriad problems we all face here in our lives. On the contrary, there are countless uncertainties, and fears and worries commonly vex us as soon as our reflective capacities have set in and confront us with the uncanny limits of our existence. No amount of money and no worldly powers can save or protect us from death, from sickness, from lack of friends, from loneliness, from hopelessness, and from desperation.

Both Boethius (d. 525) and Johannes von Tepl (d. ca. 1415) knew that very intimately when they composed the *Consolation of Philosophy* and *The Plowman and Death* respectively. Both faced certain death (imminent in Boethius's case; the loss of the own wife in Johannes's case), suffering, desperation, and yet both pulled themselves up from their sorrow and deep frustration by writing their narratives in which they both gained insight into the true path toward happiness and beauty, finding themselves at the end not in the doldrums of death and hell, but on their path toward the goodness, the *summum bonum*. They were followed by many early modern and modern writers who also explored, in their own ways and means, how to make sense out of life and to lay the groundwork for future readers/listeners to forge their own path toward the future.

Of course, each period and each era faces its own problems and challenges, and yet each generation produces its own literary voices that address them and help us to come to terms with the fundamental issues, each time picking up there were a predecessor has left off, or resuming the same discourse as pursued by the various poets in the past. We will be required each time to translate some of the messages into a language or imagery that is understandable for us today, thus building connections between us today and our predecessors in previous centuries. Nevertheless, translation has never been an insurmountable hindrance and constitutes only an intellectual challenge the Humanities are most familiar with. Every individual competent in a second language thus becomes a crucial ambassador connecting different cultures over time and space.

### **A Modern Perspective: Fontane**

One intriguing fairly modern example would be Theodor Fontane's (1819-1898) ballad "Die Brück' am Tay" (1879; The Bridge Spanning the Tay) in which the poet, drawing both from Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and a contemporary tragic accident affecting the famous new railroad bridge spanning the Firth-of-Tay near Dundee in Scotland, ruminates upon the human hubris in face of the enormous forces of nature. The bridge seemed to be a miracle of modern technology at that time, but when the train crossed it on December 28, 1879,

the storm gained such strength that the entire structure collapsed, resulting in the death of seventy-five people. Fontane reflects the pride in human ingenuity, but also reveals our limitations in front of the natural forces.

As the allegorical figures in the refrain emphasize over and over again, no human effort can achieve the desired result when the true power of the world around us is ignored. A modern example would be the deeply sobering account entitled *Phi Phi Island: ein Bericht* (2007), written by the Austrian author Josef Haslinger who, along with his family, would have almost drowned in the tsunami of 2004 and reflected in his text on their experiences under those terrifying and life-threatening circumstances.

## Part II: The Challenges of the Past in Our Own Time

One of the critical issues in our own world today is the condition of women within society, and of the members of the LGBTQ community. The gender discourse, however, is not new at all, and can easily trace its origins back to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Marie de France, for instance, famous for her *fables*, *lais*, and hagiographical narratives (d. ca. 1200), was already deeply committed to the question of how women could find personal happiness within their feudal world. She composed numerous *lais*, above all, in which she explored women's destiny, especially as wives and young ladies who dream of marrying the man whom they love. Marriage and loyalty emerge as central themes in her texts that continue to appeal to modern audiences throughout the world (Kinoshita and McCracken 2012, Classen 2016b). She also sheds light on the issue of homosexuality ("Lanval") and incest ("Les deus amanz"), and explores how young individuals can navigate through a web of highly complicated social conditions that often stand in the way of achieving personal happiness ("Milun", "Yonec"). In fact, Marie's *lais* prove to be extraordinary insightful narratives in which cases of human conditions are examined, studied from a variety of perspectives, but all this always with the aim to realize fundamental values and ideals ("The Lais of Marie de France" 2018).

If we look for early feminists fighting for women's rights and causes, Christine de Pizan (1364-ca. 1430) immediately comes to our mind, even if she did not necessarily espouse quite the same values as our postmodern successors might do today (Margolis 2011, Classen 2016b). Of course, my point here is not to introduce individual writers of great significance at their time and to idolize them within their historical context, but to emphasize the timeless value of many of the pre-modern voices who continue to appeal to us today because of their bold visions and creative approaches in matters such as gender relationships. We could also draw on the rich body of medieval literature, philosophy, and theology where we can detect traces or even strong indications of toleration and tolerance, such as in the works of Wolfram von Eschenbach, Rudolf von Ems, Boccaccio, Ramon Llull, Nicholas of Cusa, or Sebastian Franck (Classen 2018c).

The past has not simply faded away; the present can certainly learn in profound manner from the lessons left behind in those medieval and early modern texts, especially if we simply adapt them carefully to the current conditions and accept them as the bases for the critical examination of rather difficult or even dangerous situations separating or marginalizing people today because of their race, religion, or gender orientation. We have an enormous treasure trove available to reflect upon who we are, what we could turn into, and what to avoid in light of past experiences. Those literary laboratories allow us to carry out endless human experiments and to learn about many different potentials to realize our goals, dreams, and ideals.

A rather somber and depressing example would be war, whether the Thirty Years' War, the Napoleonic wars, the First World War, the Second World War, or our global fear of a possible Third World War (Jacob et al. 2018). There are many approaches to war possible, both historical, military, technological, political, and literary. Some might regard wars as necessary valves releasing human energy in its constant conflict with that of others. We could also point toward the high need of people to defend themselves against military aggressors. It would also be possible to identify wars as the outcome of technological developments, or of ideological, religious conflicts. At any rate, despite the fact that there is much literature glorifying war and male heroism, most writers and poets throughout time have voiced severe criticism and opposition to war, identifying it as the collapse of humanity and our cultural ideals ("War and Peace" 2011, Classen 2016c, Classen Forthcoming-b). While twentieth-century writers such as Ernst Jünger, Ernest Hemingway, or Erwin Dzwinger still could idealize war as the ultimate medium for a man's self-fulfillment, the present situation with nuclear bombs having the potentiality of destroying humankind altogether, makes us view wars very differently today. However, this is not a new perspective, as we can observe in numerous medieval and early modern texts, maybe most famously by Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) who voiced harsh criticism of wars in a variety of writings ("About War and Peace" 2018).

We can now draw some preliminary conclusions in light of the wide gamut of examples listed above. It would be wrong to eliminate the historical differences and to claim that all people from throughout time have gone through the same experiences. Of course, the situations and conditions in the Middle Ages and the early modern age were very different from those in our own time. No one would naively claim that we could easily draw from pre-modern literature as a treasure trove of lived lives for us today. There were different kinds of fears, anxieties, norms, values, and ideals in the past, compared to our modern western world today. Nevertheless, if we accept that the fundamental struggles in the past continue to be of supreme importance and that those involved in them faced the same difficulties as we do now, we can return to three key concepts developed above: 1. life is a tree, with its vertical and its horizontal dimensions; 2. life is a narrative, and via the endless concatenations we all participate, consciously or not, in the same discourse, searching, for instance, until today for true happiness and spiritual meaning; and 3. as people we are connected not only to those who live as our

contemporaries, but also to those who were our predecessors and who will be our successors.

Crime and violence are maybe more contained today than in the past, but they explode in our societies many times just as well. The reasons might be somewhat different today, and our reactions to them are not quite the same as in the past. Nevertheless, both the medieval world and we today have established laws, rely on a legal and judicial system, and make every attempt, just as our predecessors did, to restrict violence and thus to establish peace. When Walther von der Vogelweide (d. ca. 1220), in his famous stanzaic poem “Ich saz ûf eime steine” (L 8.4, no. 27; I sat upon a boulder), appealed to his contemporaries to establish peace and justice before anything else, whereupon there might be the possibility to achieve the elusive goal of gaining both material wealth and public honor, and this combined with God’s grace, he basically addressed the same issue that we face today under many different circumstances (von der Vogelweide 2003: p. 140, trans. on p. 141). The discourse continues, but at times it appears to be much easier to focus on older narratives and poems where we can examine the case in isolation and with a little more critical perspective without the personal impact.

### **Part III: The Meaning of the Past, in Karl Jaspers’s View**

From here I would like to turn to the ideas developed by Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), a German-Swiss intellectual who is famous for his deep influence on many fields of thought today, such as theology, history, psychiatry, philosophy, morality, and ethics. Jaspers almost became a victim of the Nazi regime, but he survived, and emerged as a major spokesperson of the German world, courageously addressing the issue of guilt, responsibility, morality, and ethics. At the end of the sixth episode of the BBC documentary series *The Nazis: A Warning from History* (1997), he was quoted as: “That which has happened is a warning. To forget it is guilt. It must be continually remembered. It was possible for this to happen, and it remains possible for it to happen again at any minute. Only in knowledge can it be prevented” (Jones 2011). Leaving most of the intellectual contributions by Jaspers aside, here I want to focus on his comments concerning history and its relevance for us today. Jaspers generally pursued a global perspective, trying to comprehend world history in its connectivity, but we can contend ourselves here with an analysis of how past and present interact with each other (Wallraff 1970, Olson 1979, Thornhill 2002, Bormuth 2006, Fuchs et al. 2014, Jaspers 2008).

Jaspers’s *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* cannot be summarized and analyzed in all the necessary details here, especially because he is mostly concerned with establishing a universal perspective regarding the structure of world history, the schema of world history, the relationship between history and the modern sciences and technology, the possible avenues toward the future, the relevance of peace, the differences between ideological systems

(socialism versus capitalism), and the role of faith (Jaspers 1949/2017)<sup>12</sup>. Jaspers did not believe in the global ideas of a perennial return of past structures without significant changes (Nietzsche), of an apocalyptic development (Spengler), of a cyclical movement of all history (Toynbee), or of an idealized future world without social classes (Marx); in short, he rejected the notion of human determinism and argued, instead, that the principles of individual freedom and personal responsibility would guide and steer all individuals toward their future. History offers possibilities, options, and each individual can choose to make the best use of them, or to reject or ignore them. In Kurt Salamun's words, "Die weitere Entwicklung hängt vom vernünftigen und verantwortungsorientierten Handeln der einzelnen Menschen ab" (ed. Salamun, XIII; The further development depends on the rational and responsible actions of the individual people).

Jaspers underscored the central importance of faith as a projection by people that have to be understood in symbolic terms because each concept of God proves to be an effort to come to terms with transcendence that is always present but cannot be easily, if at all, identified by the human mind (204). Freedom emerges as the central hallmark of history, as Jaspers observes: "Der Widerhall aus der Geschichte, das Beschwingende im Umgang mit unseren Ahnen bis an den Ursprung des Menschengeschlechts ist ihr Suchen der Freiheit, wie sie Freiheit verwirklichten, in welchen Gestalten sie sie entdeckten und wollten. Wir erkennen uns wieder in dem, was Menschen vermochten und was sie aus ihrer geschichtlichen Wirklichkeit zu uns sagen" (205); [The echo of history, the energy resulting from the engagement with our ancestors down to the original beginning of humanity, is their search for freedom, is the realization how they achieved freedom, in what form they discovered it and wanted it. We recognize ourselves in what people were capable of doing and what they are telling us from their historical reality]. The past was not predetermined, and no predetermination rules of people in the present time; instead, everything depends on the individual's choice, the freedom that guides the individual toward his/her decisions (205).

Throughout time, people have always ruminated on the secrets of this world and have marveled about the potentiality that evolves all the time, especially because the world is the site of the tasks that people have to face as part of their lives (205). At the same time, for Jaspers the role of faith ruled supreme: "Die Geschichte ist der Gang des Menschen zur Freiheit durch die Zucht des Glaubens" (206); [History is the march of people toward freedom by means of the disciplinary forces of faith]. Subsequently, Jaspers carefully differentiates between tolerance and toleration, the latter being nothing but "Gleichgültigkeit" (206); [indifference], while the former is defined by the realization of the own limitations, also in matters of faith (206). Although humanity proves to be extremely diverse, all people go back to the same roots and share the same origins (206). The individual can grow and develop only

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<sup>12</sup>Jaspers was strongly opposed to a deterministic world view and rejected such intellectuals as Arnold Toynbee, Oswald Spengler, and Karl Marx (see ed. Salamun, XIII-XIV).

when there is faith in all people and their potentiality, which, in turn, can be traced back to a unified origin (206).

All human beings, because of their humanity, carry within them the basic instinct of tolerance, which opens fascinating perspectives toward the past where we can find, indeed, the origin of this discourse on tolerance. The world does not consist only of materiality, but is much more profoundly determined by spirituality (207), which thereby underscores the relevance of history as a staging ground for those experiments to find the pathway toward the spiritual dimension. Jaspers seriously doubts that the future development will see the rise of a completely secular world empire without any forms of faith. Despite the countless backlashes throughout history, there has always been a stream of individuals, carried by a deep faith, who moved humanity forward throughout time. Hope for the future would be realistic only then when “die vielfachen Glaubensgehalte frei bleiben in ihrer geschichtlichen Kommunikation ohne Einheit eines objektiven, allgemeingültigen Glaubensinhalts” (211); [the multiple concepts of faith remain free in their historical communication without being bound by the unit of one, objective, universally obligatory faith].

Subsequently, Jaspers turns more specifically to the role of history and insists that we need the past in order to understand ourselves because it represents our memory from which we all live (215). We must always remember that we are human beings, and we can do that only if we hold on to our own past. Naturally, crises have regularly characterized past epochs, and the present world, that is, the entire late nineteenth and twentieth century, hence also our own time today, would have to be identified as being in the clutches of a crisis. But human idealism can be traced even in the worst times, which makes the study of history to such an elementary task (216). In order to understand who we are, where we have come from, and where we might be heading we would need to know what the limits have been of all human history: “Was die Geschichte als Ganzes bedeutet, hören wir vielleicht am ehesten von ihren Grenzen her” (216); [What history means in its totality we might hear most likely from the borderlines]. This does not help, of course, to comprehend history at large in its universality, but the probing of meaning would constitute already the pathway toward a fundamental understanding of human existence. The essential aspect of history consists of the “Überlieferung durch Autorität und darin eine Kontinuität durch erinnernden Bezug auf das Vergangene” (217); [tradition through authority and in that the continuity through a remembering reference to the past].

Jaspers goes even one step further and claims that true history constitutes the events that are not squashed by time (217). Insofar as human beings will always be incomplete and will always strive for completion, they are not only in search of, but also in need of historicity: “Denn wir sind nicht die Gottheit, die richtet, sondern Menschen, die ihren Sinn öffnen, um Anteil zu gewinnen am Geschichtlichen, das wir daher, je mehr wir es begreifen, um so betroffener immer noch suchen” (217); [We are not the Godhead who is judging, but people who open up their minds to gain involvement in the historical process. The more



we understand it, the more we'll be searching for it as a result of us being so affected].

History is, as Jaspers formulates, both being and self-consciousness (218). Our existence is framed by a constant coming and going, by decline and rebirth, and we all belong to the same process which is historical and not at all just horizontal in its development (219). All cultures are born, live, and ultimately experience their death as well (219), and ignoring this constant up and down would mean the ignorance of history, and hence the refusal to understand what really defines and determines human life. We are, as Jaspers emphasizes, both tradition and nature, both intimately interlaced with each other. While we develop as living creatures, we establish culture only through our historical awareness (220). Nature, such as our genetic code, remains the same all the time, whereas culture and tradition are always easily subject to loss and disappearance; history is highly unstable. For Jaspers, all life is deeply identified through a spiritual substance which is "erfüllt und klar durch die in der Geschichte sich vollziehende geistige Bewegung. In ihr geht sie Verwandlungen ein" (220); [fulfilled and transparent through the intellectual movement as it takes place through history]. Taking one step further, he then argues that the historical dimension is not identified by the actions of the individual in his or her temporal essence, but in the unique and irreplaceable being behind all life. Not the individual, but the universal aspect of reality filled with a spirit constitutes true history (224).

## Conclusion

I break off at this point because Jaspers then increasingly turns to ethical, almost religious arguments correlating the universal being in history with love, the soul, and other transcendental components that might not serve our purposes enough in the present context. However, it still deserves to be noted that he concludes with the following thought: "Was wir als geschichtlich Besonderes zu eigen gewinnen, läßt uns voranschreiten zur Gesamtgeschichte als zu einem einzigen Individuum. Alle Geschichtlichkeit wurzelt im Grunde dieser einen umfassenden Geschichtlichkeit" (225); [That what we gain as a historically unique entity allows us to go forward toward universal history which is a unitarian individuum. All historicity is rooted in the ground of this one and all encompassing historicity]. But he then also comments that the meaning of history is the growth of an interconnectedness of meanings that bring together the entire world, based on a universal sense of oneness (242).

We recognize here, to return to my previously mentioned simple iconic image, the historical tree, the one living organism called human life which spreads out and grows both vertically from the past to the future and horizontally in an expansive way, staking its own ground here in this life, as a historical being.

Moreover, Jaspers places greatest emphasis on the presence of a historical spirituality that creates a universal network beyond all religious and ideological

divides. This kind of tolerance, however, is only possible, as we have already seen above, if we all recognize and accept the historical roots of our own values and ideals, behind which always rests a commonly shared humanity. The huge corpus of pre-modern literature and historical and religious documents, for instance, allows us to tap into this enormous reservoir of lived experiences, each one of them having contributed to the growth of the root and then the trunk of the metaphorical tree.

Of course, cynical critics would easily dismiss most of those thoughts and point only toward the overarching need to develop new technologies, to establish innovative production sites, and to set up research labs for future machines, robots, computers, and the like. The ever-growing world population needs to be fed, so we need new drought resistant crops, for instance, and should not waste our time with sophisticated, esoteric reflections on our origins and the essence of human existence. As a matter of fact, we have to accept those demands all by themselves without any restrictions since we live today and evolve together as a society into a new generation challenged by external, material demands.

Nevertheless, as both Jaspers's theoretical reflections and the numerous literary examples introduced above have clearly indicated, human life does not simply consist of productivity and consumption. We are not machines, but living creatures with feelings, ideals, dreams, values, and hopes. Individual happiness is not possible within the exclusive framework of a capitalistic society. Already Boethius recognized this profound insight shortly before his death when he composed his *Consolatio Philosophiae* in 525. What poet or philosopher in the following centuries would not have agreed with him, as countless courtly love poems, grail romances, heroic poems, *lais*, tales, *mæren*, religious plays, fables, and many texts in other genres have strongly confirmed.

A great example, to conclude these ruminations, would be the late medieval alliterative romance, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (ca. 1370) (Cooper and Harrison 2014)<sup>13</sup>. Apart from the narrative excitement based on the wonders, magic, grizzly beheading, sexual temptations, tricky wager over hunting exploits, the anonymous author also addressed a fundamental issue in human life, or rather aimed at it overall, that is, how to maintain one's honor and to enjoy happiness in face of the greatest challenges. Gawain could have easily given in to the sexual offers by Bertilaks's wife; he could have easily fled from that mysterious site in the forest and avoided the Green Chapel, as the servant encourages him to do. He had already lied about the green belt and did not hand it over to Bertilak as part of their agreement concerning the wager. But he is subsequently only slightly punished with a small neck wound, and Bertilak immediately forgives him because he understands fully that Gawain only wanted to live and tried to believe in the magic of the belt.

In short, as we can learn at the end, the greatest knight of them all has slightly failed, and Gawain feels deep shame, but everyone at King Arthur's court only laughs about this in sympathy and demonstrates their empathy with

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<sup>13</sup>There are countless critical studies on this alliterative romance; see, for instance, Burrow (1965/1966); Barron (1980).

his suffering and tribulations. In fact, they all put on a green belt thereupon as a sign of the humility which truly behooves a knight. All this, however, directly speaks to us today since we are also prone to fail, since we also want to live and are mostly prepared to pay any price to achieve that goal. But there is, after all, the ultimate goal of maintaining one's honor, and Gawain knows only too well that he has not been able to observe every aspect of the wager. We are, as this alliterative romance plainly tells us, human beings, weak in many respects, but also spiritual people who continue to strive for honor even if we might never quite achieve it or cannot hold on to it.

This is the history of the human existence, it is rooted in ancient experiences, and when we want to march forward, we must at first make sure that we know how to look backwards to make out the markers of our path toward the future. The literary example serves as an experiment or a laboratory of human experiences, good and bad, and whenever we examine literary, or philosophical texts, we are invited to consider extreme situations that allow us to reflect upon ourselves without necessarily being forced to face the same conditions. We have always accepted that the genre of fairy tales serves our goals of teaching children fundamental values, and the consequence would simply be that good literary texts, however defined, serve equally well for us as human individuals to comprehend the critical issues in our existence and come to terms with them in a constructive fashion. Jaspers would have certainly agreed with this assessment, although his philosophical reflections are much more transcendental than my own concrete examples and arguments.

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## On Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* 258–264

By Mauro Agosto\*

In this paper, the author deals with Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, 258–264. These lines are highly relevant to the development of the play, but their interpretation and textual tradition are problematic. These pages are intended to provide a background for understanding the striking anacoluthon (inconsequent syntax) inherent in the selected passage. According to the author, that anacoluthon reveals an intertextual reference from *Iliad* 18.99-106 and has very consequences for the comprehension of the plot. The author proposes a new translation of the words ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τάδ' in l. 264 ("because that is me" instead of the current solution "which is why I (will face) this (battle)"). Moreover, he reassesses the whole interpretation both of this line and of the immediate context. In addition, in line 260, the author proposes the oldest extant Sophocles manuscript, L (*Laur.* 32.9), to be superior to the generally accepted text.

**Keywords:** *Sophocles – Oedipus Rex ll. 258–264 – Textual criticism – Sophocles' manuscripts – Intertextuality – Homer's reception*

### Introduction

(S. OT 255–265)<sup>1</sup>

οὐδ' εἰ γὰρ ἦν τὸ πρᾶγμα μὴ θεήλατον, 255

ἀκάθαρτον ὑμᾶς εἰκὸς ἦν οὕτως εἶναι,

ἀνδρός γ' ἀρίστου βασιλέως τ' ὀλωλότος,

ἀλλ' ἐξερευνᾶν· νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ κυρῶ τ' ἐγὼ

ἔχων μὲν ἀρχὰς ἅς ἐκεῖνος εἶχε πρῖν,

ἔχων δὲ λέκτρα καὶ γυναῖχ' ὁμόσπορον, 260

κοινῶν τε παίδων κοῖν' ἄν, εἰ κείνῳ γένος

μὴ 'δυστύχησεν, ἦν ἂν ἐκπεφυκότα –

νῦν δ' ἐς τὸ κείνου κρᾶτ' ἐνήλαθ' ἡ τύχη·

ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τάδ', ὡσπερὶ τοῦμοῦ πατρός,

ὑπερμαχοῦμαι, ... 265

**258.** νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ editores plerique : νῦν δ',

ἐπεὶ Hermann, Ritter 1870, 157 "wie aber

jetzt die Sache steht (nunc vero)" | ἐπεὶ κυρῶ

τ' ἐγὼ Laur. Conv. Soppr. 66, S, conl. Pierson

and Burton : (νῦν δέ) γ' ἐπικυρῶ τ' ἐγὼ Paris.

gr. 2820 : ἐπικυρῶ rell. | τ' libri : γ' Benedict |

**260.** ἔχων δὲ] ἔχω δὲ LAP<sup>ac</sup>Zc

Lines OT 258–264 are highly relevant to the development of the play. They mark the transition from the previous inert attitude of the city to Oedipus' strong engagement in promoting a thorough investigation into Laius' murder.

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<sup>1</sup>Textus vulgatus. Apparatus is mine. Where not otherwise indicated, translations are my own.

Even though the oracle had issued no command, you ought not to have allowed the death of so excellent a man and monarch to have gone unpunished; now however fortune has willed that he should perish: his throne and widow have come into my possession, and had he left offspring, that offspring would have been in common to him and me: wherefore it is my duty to take care, as if I were taking care of my father, that his assassin be put to death (Mitchell 1840: 58).

The coherence between ll. 255–264 is clear, but a major problem lies in their syntactical structure. "The sentence does not proceed on a regular grammatical course [...], and it gets off to an unpromising start here, since τ' is irregularly placed" (Dawe 1982: 120). In fact, the succession ἐπεὶ (l. 258) – ἀνθ' ὧν<sup>2</sup> (l. 264) produces a strong anacoluthon (cf. Brown and Halsall 2012: 46: "A change of construction in the middle of a sentence that leaves its beginning uncompleted;" for Sophocles, see Moorhouse 1982: 21, 77; Budelmann 2006: 49, fn. 41; Battezzato 2012: 315-6) in respect to which the commentators have nothing better to quote than a Latin example from Cicero (Trollope 1825: 25).<sup>3</sup> As Finglass (2018: 255) remarks, "the stylistic effect of anacoluthon is rarely obvious", and – according to his interpretation – Oedipus' complicated syntax mirrors his tricky family relations. Oedipus' case is not complicated in itself: he is the second spouse of a widow having no children by the first marriage. Everything gets complicated with the discovery of incest, but this does not happen before the line 1,060 at least. In my view, such an allusion would be a premature anticipation of what is to follow. According to other commentators, it is a "free and conversational form" (Mitchell 1840: 58), as in a sort of stream of consciousness (Stella 2010: 204, "flusso di pensieri") where

"l'anacoluto deve far pensare. [...] Sembra [...] che il locutore stia seguendo ora il filo di un soliloquio interiore. Edipo passa dal rimprovero ai Tebani [...] a elencare, come tra sé e sé, i diversi motivi per cui combatterà in favore di Laio" (Stella 2010: 204)

But, even under the assumption of such an Oedipus of Shakespearean taste (Cousins and Derrin 2018) a soliloquy seems rhetorically unfit for the context. A soliloquy is an important dramatic tool that performs the function either of conveying the development of the play to the audience, or of providing an opportunity to scrutinize thoughts, feelings, and motivations of a certain character; which does not seem to be the case here: Oedipus talks about well-known facts (he is the king, he is the successor to Laius, he married with Jocasta and fathered four children), not to mention that "no surviving Attic drama furnishes a true instance of soliloquy" (Gray 2018: 113). In fact, an Oedipus who, oblivious to the hearers present, stops in the middle of a harangue to the crowd, and starts speaking to himself, is not suitable to the context, especially at a time of high

<sup>2</sup>This expression means "For all which reasons" and is in itself perfectly correct (see, e.g., S. Ant. 237, El. 575, OC 967).

<sup>3</sup>"ἐπεὶ is followed, v. 264. by the relative ὅς instead of οὗτος, Elmsley compares Cicero, Orat. I. 14. *Nam, quoniam, quicquid est quod in controversia aut in contentione versetur, in eo, aut sitne, aut quod sit, aut quale sit quaeritur: – sitne, signis; quid sit, definitionibus; quale sit, recti pravique partibus; quibus ut uti possit orator, &c.*" The reference is to Elmsley 1825: 22.

emotional distress. As Lausberg (1998: 395, §888.1) warns us, "The speaker's isolation from the concrete environment, caused by the emotion, borders on the comical." An anacoluthon is a legitimate tool for poetical effect, but it must serve a clearly defined purpose. At present, however, such a purpose is anything but evident in these lines, and we see a disproportion between the means (an abrupt break in the sentence) and the end (the alleged speaker's confusion or emotion needing dramatization). But if that irregularity is not the result of design, I am reluctant to attribute it to Sophocles' negligence or carelessness ["aus Nachlässigkeit und Unachtsamkeit" (Kühner and Gerth 1898-1904, II 2, 589, § 602, 1)], with the implicit assumption that "the protasis has run to such length that it is thought of as an apodosis: ἐπεὶ is forgotten" (Earle 1901: 174). I believe that there is still a need for discussion on this passage, and this paper aims to investigate the root cause of the problem in order to design a better solution. Wherefore, we will focus on two main questions: i.) is there in our lines any real anacoluthon? ii.) If so, what is the desired effect?

### The Manuscript Evidence

The evaluation of the manuscript evidence should form the basis of every discussion about the textual shape of every ancient literary record.

In the first instance, we could call into question the soundness of the transmitted text either in l. 258 or l. 264. This last line is consistently transmitted by the manuscripts and it seems to be beyond suspicion. In l. 258 all important witnesses agree in their reading, νῦν δ' ἐπικυρῶ τ' ἐγώ, making the syllable -πι- long (Ellendt 1835: 1002).<sup>4</sup> Ms. *Paris. gr.* 2820 (188<sup>f</sup>)<sup>5</sup> of the fourteenth century (see Turyn 1949: 165). transmits νῦν δέ γ' ἐπικυρῶ τ' ἐγώ. This reading received the honour of being adopted in some old editions (Brunck 1808, Dalzel 1811: 22) but the most acute critics did not fail to reassert its manifest character of interpolation (Elmsley 1825: 22, "manifesta interpolatione"). Here, "we swiftly come to recognise [...] the universal panacea γε [...] for adjusting quantities" (Dawe 1964: 44)<sup>6</sup> The slight metrical uncertainty of the manuscript tradition was restored by Pierson (before 1752) (Finglass 2009: 205. cf. Augustus 2016, Finglass 2018 *apparatus ad I*) and Burton (1779: 27),<sup>7</sup> and, notwithstanding some disagreement (Heath 1762: 28, 1791: 292)<sup>8</sup> it was recognized as an

<sup>4</sup>The element corresponding to (ἐ)πί cannot be occupied by a short syllable. Dawe 1973: 109 reports, "ἐπικυρῶ **R**"; *ibid.* 220, "Only Laur. *Conv. Soppr.* 66 has the correct reading, but **R** comes close to it with ἐπικυρῶ." **R** is the siglum for *Vat. gr.* 2291, but this codex (f. 45<sup>v</sup>) shows exactly the same reading as **VGN** (ἐπικουρῶ), as it is easy to verify at [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.gr.2291](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.2291) (retrieved 2018-02-16). I don't know from whence Dawe's report came. s.v. κυρέω, "Oed. R. 258, ubi pro ἐπεὶ κυρῶ, quod *certa emendatione* [emphasis added] Burtonus intulit, libri ἐπικυρῶ." On the periphrastic use of κυρέω, see Bentein 2012.

<sup>5</sup>It is readable online at <https://bit.ly/2YIT8O9> (retrieved 2019-01-16).

<sup>6</sup>We must likewise judge the proposal afforded by Heath 1791, 292, νῦν δ' ἄρ' ἐπικυρῶ τ' ἐγώ.

<sup>7</sup>"Lege ἐπεὶ κυρῶ pro ἐπικυρῶ [ut Ed. vulg.] cum hoc postulet tum metrum tum etiam sententia."

<sup>8</sup>Under verse 266 = 258 of modern editions), "τὸ ἐπεὶ respuit plane et syntaxeos et sententiae ratio".

irrefutable emendation (Ellendt 1835: 1002).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the issue was considered closed after the same wording was later found to be the reading of two manuscripts that were not available to Pierson and Burton: *Laur. Conv. Soppr.* 66 (around 1291) and *Vat. Urb. Gr.* 141 (early xiv cent.). From that moment on, no critic or editor of OT (Lloyd–Jones and Wilson 1990, Bollack 1991, Dawe 1996, Manuwald 2012, Augustus 2016, Finglass 2018) has ever (quite rightly) assailed that reading. In fact, the witness of ms. *Laur. Conv. soppr.* 66 (Battezzato 1996: 33 n.19)<sup>10</sup> is especially prominent, owing to its relatively early date, shortly after the start of the large-scale flourishing of the Byzantine scholarship that began circa 1290 (Turyn 1949: 94). For "copies made before c.1300 are more likely to remain unaffected by the operations of Byzantine scholars" (Lloyd–Jones and Wilson 1990: xi). It is generally accepted that Byzantine scribes or readers were hardly inclined to replace crabbed and obscure expressions with perfectly clear equivalents, although the transmitted text was obviously corrupt (Zuntz 1965: 154).<sup>11</sup> This is even more relevant when dealing with the metrics of a text (Campbell and Abbott 1886: lxxxix).<sup>12</sup> Exceptions sometimes occur, but Byzantine scholars skills are unlikely to exceed the level we can find in the aforementioned ms. *Paris. gr.* 2820 (188<sup>r</sup>). Conversely, ms. *Laur. Conv. soppr.* 66 offers an entirely dissimilar solution, as it is not content with patching up a damaged verse, but offers instead a reading which involves a different word division combined with a divergent syntactical structure. These circumstances strongly suggest that the metrically correct reading transmitted by *Laur. Conv. soppr.* 66 has really been preserved by genuine tradition and it was not arrived at by conjecture.<sup>13</sup> As a consequence, we can rule out the possibility of any verbal emendation.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup>s.v. κυρέω, "Oed. R. 258, ubi pro ἐπεὶ κυρῶ, quod *certa emendatione* [emphasis added] Burtonus intulit, libri ἐπικυρῶ."

<sup>10</sup>"per le tragedie sofoclee della triade il modello sembra unico", which exempts us from a closer analysis of *Vat. Urb. Gr.* 141, the more recent of the two witnesses.

<sup>11</sup>"the corruption is of the most obvious; the need for correction, with Byzantine scholars, hardly so".

<sup>12</sup>"A test of Byzantine metrical knowledge is afforded by O.T. 1505, where παρίδης passed unquestioned. The line had twelve syllables, and that was enough!". See also Di Benedetto 1965: 166–7, "Giorgio Pisides, del settimo secolo, è secondo il Maas [to wit Maas 1903] l'ultimo poeta che segue la prosodia antica pressoché senza eccezioni. Dall'ottavo secolo alla metà del X, invece, non si riscontra una regola fissa: si constatano continuamente errori prosodici [...]. D'altra parte, se queste "licenze" prosodiche si / permettevano i versificatori dell'epoca, ancora di più è da ritenere che fossero disposti a tollerare inesattezze simili i grammatici dell'Università che venivano a contatto con un testo già corrotto in tal senso. In realtà, sino alla fine del secolo XIII l'ignoranza perfino delle regole più elementari del trimetro giambico deve essere stata assoluta. È Manuele Moschopulo, infatti, il primo che abbia incominciato ad intuire la natura del trimetro e alcune sue correzioni rappresentano il primo riaffiorare di una sensibilità metrica dopo secoli di ignoranza."

<sup>13</sup>The ancient *scholia* do not offer any new insights, the only exception being an intriguing interlinear scholion in ms. *Paris. gr.* 2820 (188<sup>r</sup>): κ(αι) ὁ θ(ε)δ(ε)ς κινεῖ κ(αι) ἐγὼ ἐπιβεβαιῶ. It heads in the direction of κυρώω (instead of the periphrasis κυρέω ἔχων). Reading ἔπη instead of ἐπεὶ seems to be the only way we could make sense of κυρώω (in this regard, see Dawe 1973, 109 and 220, as discussed on footnote 14 above). But the absence of the article is difficult to justify. Moreover, if, as seems to be the case, ἔπη mean the divine oracles, we cannot hide the fact that Sophocles never uses ἔπος/ ἔπη ("oracle(s)") without a modifier that may clarify this

As for the rest, the postpositive form ἐγώ has no special weight (see Dik 2003: 535-550) and the transmitted τε is certainly to be preserved against γε proposed by Benedict (1820: 64–65). It is a "non-connective" τε and marks the passage from the speaker's perspective to a shared knowledge ("as is known") and anticipates an immediately following enumeration ("μὲν... δέ... ").<sup>15</sup> We could render it in this way: "This time, however, *as is known*, ... " Moreover, in this passage the μὲν ... δέ complex "conveys little more than τε ... καί" (Denniston 1970: 370 adds: "This is particularly the case when the same word is repeated before μὲν and δέ"), with no idea of strong contrast. Now, research shows that, with the μὲν ... δέ complex, a "transition from participial to finite construction is often found" (Denniston 1970: 369) and such a syntactical change usually involves a new topical spin<sup>16</sup> "or it may mark a new intonational contour" (Bonifazi et al. 2016: IV.2.2.3, § 34). If that is the case, probably the reading transmitted by L, Λ (see Scattolin 2016: 120) P<sup>ac</sup> and Zc (to wit: ἔχω δέ: ἔχων δέ cett.) is to be preferred as *lectio difficilior*. Besides, avoiding a too obvious symmetry, underlined by anaphora, it is perfectly suitable for a magniloquent style (see Denniston 1970: 372, n. 1).<sup>17</sup> Thus, these statements can be processed through three distinct argumentative levels (l. 258-259: the political motivation; l. 260: the moral supporting reason; ll. 261–3: the emotional appeal or pathos, yet almost incidentally enunciated) and possibly as many intonation units.

### Questioning the Translations

To come back to the main subject, the textual basis seems to be above suspicion. The problem could be with the translation, not with the original text. For the moment, I shall set aside some minor issues (τάδε in l. 264) to focus on the syntactic articulation νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ - ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τάδ'. In the sequence νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ, we can easily recognize a standard idiom. I would mention, for example, *Il.* 9.344; 18.101 (with anacoluthon) and 333; 23.150 and 225; *Od.* 6.191; *Soph. OT* 985; *E. Heraclid.* 9, to confine myself to the poets. Most times νῦν δ'

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peculiar connotation (cf. *OT* 89; *Tr.* 822; *OC* 624 and 629). And besides, "to confirm" is not the meaning that we would expect. "To accomplish" would be much more suitable, but κυρώω does not convey this meaning as early as Sophocles.

<sup>14</sup>At a certain point, I considered the possibility of changing ἐπεὶ into ἔπει, which should be understood either as κυρέω + dative ("I am faced with an oracle"; a very disputable solution), or as "owing to a word I happen to have..." (with reference to the word ἄνθρωπος by which Oedipus solved the riddle of the Sphinx). This latter is a more acceptable Greek, but νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ is an idiomatic chunk and it ought certainly to be preserved.

<sup>15</sup>I owe this analysis to the online publication Bonifazi, Drummen, de Kreij 2016, IV.2.3.1, §§ 54–69 and 2.3.6. §§ 85–87 at <https://bit.ly/2Zooarx> (retrieved 2019–02–06).

<sup>16</sup>It can be spelt out in conjunction with Oedipus' not being related to the victim by bonds of blood (as he thinks) and the highly significant, in this play, tension between kin and nonkin. Cf. Segal 1998: 141 and Steadman and Palmer 2003: 342, 347.

<sup>17</sup>"Demetrius (*De Eloc.* 53), in discussing τὸ μεγαλοπρεπές, deprecates excessive regularity: Χρὴ δὲ καὶ τοὺς συνδέσμους μὴ μάλα ἀνταποδίδοσθαι ἀκριβῶς, οἷον τῶ 'μὲν' συνδέσμῳ τὸν 'δέ' μικροπρεπές γὰρ ἢ ἀκριβεία· ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀτακτοτέρως πως χρῆσθαι."

has not a time-related meaning, as pointed out by Ritter 1870, 157, "wie aber jetzt die Sache steht (*nunc vero*)" (cf. Earle 1901: 174 (*ad OT* 263), "νῦν δ'": in its idiomatic sense (= ὡς δ' ἔχει τὰ πράγματα)). This is regularly reflected in the translations (e.g. Benloew *ap.* Ahrens 1877, 74, "nunc vero") and the commentaries (Dawe 1982: 120, "as at 222 and 263: 'as things are'"; Finglass 2018: 255, "As it is"). Nevertheless, in this particular case, I share the view expressed by Earle (1901: 173),

"νῦν δ'": these words have not here their ordinary idiomatic meaning (cf. v. 222) after an unreal case. Were it so, ὑμᾶς (256) would be unemphatic (and ἡμᾶς (*sic*) would stand more naturally), and ἐπεὶ here would be followed by something like τὸ πρᾶγμα θεήλατόν ἐστι. Sophocles has not written for the eye primarily here. Harsh as it seems, we must, I think, understand ἐπεὶ κυρῶ τ' ἐγὼ νῦν, with νῦν contrasted with πρὶν (which is otiose else): 'but since, as luck would have it, it is I that now,' etc., – unless, indeed, Sophocles wrote ὡς δὲ νῦν."

In both cases, the anacoluthon remains unaffected.

Difficulties increase as we reach l. 264. There, "the subordinate sentence ἐπεὶ ... ὁμόσπορον, after the two declarative sentences in 261–263, suggested by ὁμόσπορον, have been thrown in parenthetically, is made dependent not on an independent member, as would be legitimate, but on the relative sentence, ἀνθ' ὧν" (White 1874: 101). In other words, "the protasis has run to such length that it is thought of as an apodosis: ἐπεὶ is forgotten" (Earle 1901: 174) and Sophocles "uses ἀνθ' ὧν as a resumptive formula" (Dawe 1982: 121, Finglass 2018: 256). Scholars, however, do not agree on its translation, and whilst some of them interpret it as "ἀντὶ τούτων or the like" (Earle 1901: 174, cf. also Benloew *ap.* Ahrens 1877: 74, "horum vice"), others favour a neutre pronoun (e.g., White 1874: 101, "for which things' sake"; Dawe 1982: 121, "for those reasons"; Finglass 2018: 257, "Because of this"). Both choices are grammatically possible, but the first one seems to be ruled out by the context, because it should include Oedipus' children and Laius' unborn offspring amongst those on whose behalf Oedipus intends to fight his battle. The second option<sup>18</sup> is more in line with the context, but it can barely erase the impression of an unnecessarily complicated syntax. Maybe there is a third way that no one has explored, to my knowledge. As witnessed by Ant. 1068 (ἀνθ' ὧν ἔχεις μὲν τῶν ἄνω βαλὼν κάτω, "For you have thrust below one who belongs above", transl. by Fainlight and Littman 2009: 178), ἀνθ' ὧν sometimes takes a quasi-causal meaning. Hence, Wunder (1846: 117) wrote, "ἀνθ' ὧν esse idem fere atque διότι notum est", and Humphreys (1891: 173) explained,

"*Because* [emphasis original] – an unconscious extension of ἀνθ' ὧν = ἀντὶ τούτων ἃ (cogn. obj.) as in ἀνθ' ὧν εἶ ἔπαθον,<sup>19</sup> and hence equiv. to ἀντὶ τούτων, ὅτι. So Ar. Plut. 434. Rare in prose, as Plat. Menex 244 C [...] Id. Min. 321 A [...]. Analogously Dem. xvi.13."

<sup>18</sup>See also S. El. 575; OC 275, 1010, 1295.

<sup>19</sup>The reference is to S. OC 1489.

The complete formulation is used, e.g., by Theocritus (epigr. 20, 3-4 = A. Pal. vii.663, ἐξεῖ τὸν χάριν ἅ γυνὰ ἀντὶ τήνων, / ὧν τὸν κοῦρον ἔθρεψε), as indicated by Matthiae (1818: 694-5), who writes, "for this reason, that', and without/ a pronoun demonstrative, ἀνθ' ὅτου, ἀνθ' ὧν, in the sense of 'because.'" A more balanced analysis would emphasise the primary meaning of ἀντί, "in exchange for". So, for instance, Woolsey (1835: 104), "*in requital for, on account of this, viz. that [emphasis original]*", or Griffith (1999: 306), "in return for the fact that." That is an important point, but, though such wordy renditions are acceptable in commentaries to emphasise the meaning, one has to wonder if they are stylistically valid in a literary translation, especially when compared to the shortest original ἀνθ' ὧν. At any rate, and here comes the answer to the first question, the omission of the preceding demonstrative pronoun produces "a kind of ἀνακολουθία" (Matthiae 1818: 694), with a slight syntactical irregularity, but without sense-break. In this context, however, the content of the causal proposition intimated by ἀνθ' ὧν needs to be clarified. Its content, I think, is represented by the words ἐγὼ τάδ(ε). The current interpretation of τάδ(ε) in l. 264 is at least as old as Wunder (1847: 42, see also Finglass 2018: 258 ("internal accusative")):

"Dictum hoc est ex usitatissima Graecorum consuetudine loquendi, a viris doctis tamen, quod sciam, nondum explicata. Solent enim Graeci saepissime pronomem aut adiectivum casu accusativo et genere neutro elatum cum verbis cuiusvis fere generis sic coniungere, ut id ad notionem substantivi, quae verbo, quocum iungitur, continetur, referendum sit. Itaque ταῦτα ὑπερμάχεσθαι τινος breviter dictum pro ταύτην τὴν μάχην μάχεσθαι ὑπὲρ τινος. Sic Ai. 1346: σὺ ταῦτ', Ὀδυσσεῦ, τοῦδ' ὑπερμαχεῖς ἐμοί;"

But, apart from the obvious difference between ταῦτα and τάδε (see Taylor 2017: 57),<sup>20</sup> we have no exact parallel for the phrase τάδ' ὑπερμάχεσθαι τινος, and its supposed similarity to Aj. 1346 rests on a gratuitous assumption: particularly when there is a more direct explanation to hand. In fact, as Matthiae (1818: 728) explains, "Especially in the poets, τάδε is often found as a substantive followed by a noun masculine or feminine in the predicate. *Soph. Œd. T.* 1329 Ἀπόλλων τάδ' ἦν 'that was Apollo', especially in negative propositions" (see also Finglass 2018: 575, "It was Apollo"). As a consequence, I firmly believe that the phrase ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τάδ' means 'because that is me'<sup>21</sup> and it highlights Oedipus' authority and status among the Thebans. Oedipus' words convey his purpose of re-assuring the subjects by the assertion that his actions will be fundamentally in accordance with his own character and history. He is Oedipus, and not anyone else. He primarily refers to the obligation to act

<sup>20</sup>"Words that are virtually synonymous most of the time can acquire idiomatic distinctions in a particular context: we saw [...] the difference between εἶπε ταῦτα *he said this (already quoted)* and εἶπε τάδε *he said this (about to be quoted)* [emphasis original]." As Oedipus' fight is described in ll. 235-241, we would expect to read ταῦτα in l. 264.

<sup>21</sup>Purists' eyebrows might have been raised by such a syntax (but, for a thorough examination of this topic, see Alford 1864: 142-145), but this phrase is not more incorrect than Oedipus' anacoluthon in l. 264.

honorably and generously owing to his high rank and celebrity. He is ὁ πᾶσι κλεινὸς Οἰδίπους (l. 8), the κράτιστον πᾶσιν Οἰδίπου κάρα (l. 40), the saviour of the city (l. 443; also ll. 1200-1), the best of all the marksmen (ll. 1196-98), the pillar of the city (l. 1201), the king keen to obey the god's command (l. 77) in order to overcome the existing problem. As Amerasinghe (1970: 204) remarks:

"In the *Oedipus Tyrannus* Oedipus is the good citizen and the good ruler. As good citizen he identifies himself totally with the weel-being of his people. As good ruler he takes it for granted that it is his responsibility to save his people from the troubles which afflict them. The people in their turn look to him as spontaneously as he assumes his responsibility. In the pursuit of his task he shoes the singleness of purpose and fortitude that are characteristic of the hero. He will let nothing deter him from his task."

Oedipus' words, though slightly narcissistic,<sup>22</sup> are not unjustified, and here he is not boasting: owing to what he represents for the Thebans, Oedipus is expected to satisfy higher standards of accountability and more exemplary sense of duty than common people. And even the lexical choice for ἀντί is revealing. After a long series of contingent causes, all introduced by ἐπεὶ ("after that", a temporal conjunction with an accessory idea of cause, "since, because, inasmuch as"), we get to the real reason for Oedipus' involvement: ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τὰδ'. These words, when literary translated, mean "in exchange for me being that", or even "as the price of being what I am." They rely on his sense of noblesse oblige and what he believed were his responsibilities towards the kingdom. Yet, in those words ("because that is me") we can recognise the root of Oedipus' future misfortune. "Impelled by heroic dedication to his task, he transgresses against *sophrosyne*" (Amerasinghe 1970: 204). He is the man who is convinced that he is even superior to Teiresias (ll. 391-2), and he has no doubt about his future achievement (l. 441, τοιαῦτ' ὀνειδίζ', οἷς ἔμ' εὐρήσεις μέγαν) and his good luck (l. 1080): he can shape his destiny to suit himself (ll. 1081-85). Just as in ll. 1084-85 ("Such is my nature, I have no wish / to change it" transl. by Fainlight and Littman 2009: 47), we could repeat Dr Dawe's (1982: 205) comment: "Here Sophocles himself [...] makes Oedipus' own character the determining force in his exposure and downfall." Oedipus' sense of self-worth ("because that is me") is thick with dramatic irony. He is really the only entitled person to pursue that struggle precisely because he is himself (Laius' son), though he doesn't yet know it. All Oedipus' insistence, in vv. 258–264 and in the proclamation in general, that his possession of the kingdom is contingent (l. 258), that Laius' death – a work of chance, τύχη (cf. l. 262), and that he is a "stranger to the story and the deed" (l. 219f.) is charged with tragic irony. For none of it is obviously true and Iocasta's and Oedipus's belief in the rule of τύχη (977–9, 1080) will prove delusional in the end. Those words, however, "because that is me", are the cornerstone of the entire situation. Oedipus' self-

<sup>22</sup>How can we forget Narcissus' exclamation upon perceiving himself in the water of the fountain, *Iste ego sum* "that is me" (Ov. *Met.* 3.463)?



confidence will fall victim to his lack of knowledge.<sup>23</sup> Teiresias warns him against his own ignorance (ll. 366-7), and Oedipus himself (l. 397) claims with tragic irony that he is ὁ μηδὲν εἰδὼς Οἰδίππου, "Oedipus, the ignorant." Jocasta's final wish is that Oedipus may never learn who he is (l. 1068 ὃ δύσποτμ', εἴθε μήποτε γνοίης ὃς εἶ, "Unhappy man, may you never know who you are!") and Augustus (2016: 56) was probably not wrong to correct l. 1348 so as to read ὃς σ' ἠθέλησα μηδὲν ἄν γνῶναί ποτ' ἄν, "how I wish you had never known anything!" All this, however, requires a clear starting point, which can only be in those words ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τάδ(ε) "because that is me." It is hard not to hear the echo of Odyssey xvi 205 (ὄδ' ἐγὼ "this is me"), where Odysseus reveals himself to his son Telemachus and announces that the end of misfortunes has begun. And after all, since his first appearance on the scene, Oedipus speaks like a new Odysseus (OT 8 "I, Oedipus renowned by all" has long since been recognised as an echo of Od. ix 19-20 "I am Odysseus, who am known among men, and my fame reaches unto heaven") (see Dawe 1982: 86, Augustus 2016: 64). But maybe Sophocles owes Homer more than a few concise expressions.

### Homeric Intertextuality

It is no secret that the Homeric imagery survives to a large extent in Sophocles, the most Homeric of playwrights (cf. Saravia de Grossi 2017). Particularly with regard to *Oedipus Tyrannus*, it has been known for a long time that there is a significant parallelism between Sophocles' Oedipus and Achilles, who, in Iliad xviii, "learns of the death of Patroclus, and immediately realises his own responsibility and his past errors" (Rutherford 1982: 145). In Oedipus' case, Sophocles exploits "the Iliadic themes of self-knowledge and understanding of the divine plan" (Rutherford 1982: 145). Achilles passionately invokes divine revenge for the murder of Patroclus, "but with bitter and ironic consequences for himself. (See i 407—12, 505—10; xviii 73—84)" (Rutherford 1982: 145). The analogies with the story of Oedipus are there for all to see. Both Achilles and Oedipus receive warnings and prophecies (from Thetis and Teiresias, respectively), but "human advice and divine forewarning are insufficient guides" (Rutherford 1982: 156) since the two heroes are deeply convinced that they can dominate events thanks to their intrinsic superiority.

"Thus the *peripeteia* of the *Iliad*, like that of the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, depends on a change in the hero's knowledge of his position, a change that confirms and explains past foreknowledge. This new knowledge also reveals the extent and the catastrophic consequences of past ignorance and / error." (Rutherford 1982: 145-6)

<sup>23</sup>According to Paul Ricoeur (1970: 616), "Oedipus calls down curses upon the unknown person responsible for the plague, but he excludes the possibility that that person might in fact be himself. The entire drama consists in the resistance and ultimate collapse of this presumption. Oedipus must be broken in his pride through suffering; this presumption is no longer the culpable esire of the child, but the pride of the king; the tragedy is not the tragedy of Oedipus the child, but of Oedipus Rex."

Just as Achilles, Oedipus must eventually admit his own incapacity, despite his power and prestige, to influence the course of the affair, and the conclusion of his personal story shows that his knowledge and weakness grow hand in hand (Rutherford 1982: 146).<sup>24</sup> All these findings convinced me of a possible intertextual relationship between OT 258–264 (see above) and Il. 18.99–106:

ὁ μὲν μάλα τηλόθι πάτρης  
 [100] ἔφθιτ', ἐμεῖο δὲ δῆσεν ἀρῆς ἀλκτῆρα γενέσθαι.  
 νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ οὐ νέομαι γε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,  
 οὐδέ τι Πατρόκλω γενόμεν φάος οὐδ' ἐτάροισι  
 τοῖς ἄλλοις, οἳ δὴ πολέες δάμεν Ἑκτορι δίῳ,  
 ἀλλ' ἤμῃ παρὰ νηυσὶν ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης,  
 [105] τοῖος ἐὼν οἷος οὗ τις Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων  
 ἐν πολέμῳ: ἀγορῇ δέ τ' ἀμείνονές εἰσι καὶ ἄλλοι.  
 ὡς ἔρις ἔκ τε θεῶν ...

"Far, far from his own land hath he fallen, and had need of me to be a warder off of ruin. Now therefore, seeing I return not to my dear native land, neither proved anyway a light of deliverance to Patroclus nor to my other comrades, those many that have been slain by goodly Hector, but abide here by the ships. Profitless burden upon the earth—I that in war am such as is none other of the brazen-coated Achaeans, albeit in council there be others better—so may strife ..." (translated by Murray 1947: 295-7).

The term *intertextuality* was first coined by Julia Kristeva (Kristeva 1969) to identify the relationship between a text and other texts, but it has been "used indiscriminately by students of allusion of every stripe and critical inclination" (Pucci 1998: 15) over the years. In real terms, intertextuality may occur in a number of forms (e.g., "direct quotation, citation, allusion, echo, reference, imitation, collage, parody, pastiche, literary conventions, structural parallelism" Zengin 2016: 300), but it chiefly denotes any "transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another" (Kristeva 1984: 59). Hence, it is not to be confused with comparative analysis and "study of sources" (cf. Kristeva 1984: 59). Broadly speaking, to be identified as an intertextual pair, two texts "usually require some similarity or opposition of ideas, and by an unwritten convention, connections between at least two identical or related words in each text, though a single word may suffice if particularly rare" (Kelly 2008: 166). In our case, the joint appearance of both νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ and the anacoluthon is a good starting point. However, many scholars have developed more sophisticated criteria. Among them, one of the most promising approaches for determining a conscious or intentional allusion was provided by New Testament scholar MacDonald (2001: 2-3, his criteria have proved to be valid for classical authors, too. cf. Friesen 2015: 67, fn. 58) some years ago. He recommended six

<sup>24</sup>"Finally, Achilles is the archetypal tragic figure in his inability, for all his power and greatness, to dictate or influence the course of future events: for even when he seems most in control, his own plans and prestige form part of a wider picture which he can see only in details. And even in the later books of the poem, as his knowledge and understanding of events increase, so too does his helplessness."

criteria to check the trustworthiness of a possible intertextual reference: (i) accessibility (the likeliness the hypotext was available to the author), (ii) analogy (the popularity of the same text with other authors), (iii) density (the amount of parallels between two texts), (iv) order (the similarities between the sequences of the two texts), (v) distinctive traits (unusual shared characteristics predicting an imitation), and (vi) interpretability (the capacity of the hypotext to make sense of the authorial intent hidden in the hypertext). In this paper, we will use these criteria to assess the intertextual status of Sophocles' OT 258-264 over *Iliad* 18.99-106.

(i) The first criterion requires no further proof after Rutherford's (1982) article. (ii) Analogy is a less obvious assumption. Our verses (*Il.* 18.99-106) are not quoted by Hunter (2018) in the large study he devoted to the ancient reception of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Nevertheless, two fragments from Aeschylus' *Myrmidones* (TrGF III 138 and 139) are likely to present Achilles lamenting Patroklos (van Dijk 1997: 169-171; Rodriguez Adrados 1999: 243), and "this is not unlike what happens in the *Iliad* (cf. 18.97-104), where / Achilles in his grief considers himself responsible for the death of Patroklos because he failed to protect him when needed" (Hadjicosti 2013: 127-28). The lack of further data is the likely consequence of the loss of countless literary works through the centuries. (iii) Density constitutes an important parameter to be taken into account. *Il.* 18.99-106, and the broader context in which those verses are situated, could be summarised in this way: when Achilles

"learns of Patroklos's death, he expresses not guilt for causing it but terrible grief at such a loss (18.22ff.), regret for not having been able to protect him and his other companions who were slain by Hector (18.98-99, 102-103), [56] and a desire to avenge his death (18.114-115) and so win *kléos* (18.121) at the expense of his own life." (Muellner 1996: 161)

The contact points with OT are evident. When Oedipus learns of Laius's death, he expresses not guilt for causing it (l. 219 ξένος μὲν τοῦ λόγου, "a stranger of this account") but terrible grief at such a loss (l. 257), regret for the citizens not having been able to act worthily of Laius (*Il.* 255-58), his own commitment to protect Laius' former kingdom and family (*Il.* 259-261), [56] and a desire to avenge Laius' death (l. 265) for the sake of his own honour (l. 264 ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τάδ'), cost what it may (l. 265). (iv) Order is related to density. However, in the narrow context of OT 258-264, other sequential parallels are detectable: both Achilles and Oedipus begin by mentioning their country (*Il.* 101; OT 259, where ἀρχὰς is an indirect reference to the city he ruled). Then their thoughts are with the closest persons to them (*Il.* 102, Patroclus; OT 260, the spouse), the other loved ones (*Il.* 102, the other comrades; OT 261, the children). Then the picture becomes wider and the number of the characters in the background increases (*Il.* 103, those many that have been slain by goodly Hector: OT 261, Laius' hypothetical offspring, for his children were practically killed with him before coming into the world). The section ends with a short mention of the superiority of the hero over the others (*Il.* 105, I am such as is none other; OT 264 ἀνθ' ὧν ἐγὼ τάδ'), and that is from where the motive for

future action will come. v. Distinguishing characteristics are represented by the phrase  $\nu\tilde{\nu}\nu$   $\delta'$   $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota$  (*Il.* 101; OT 258), the unexpected change of syntax, or anacoluthon (*Il.* 107; OT 264), which leaves the above hanging. vi. Finally, interpretability leads us to examining why Sophocles may have targeted that model for imitation. Lines 258-264 of *Oedipus Tyrannus* meet at least two purposes. Firstly, they reveal much about Oedipus' self-concept. He sees himself as having a heroic stature (l. 264  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta'$   $\tilde{\omega}\nu$   $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\tilde{\omega}$   $\tau\acute{\alpha}\delta'$ , "because that is me"), and heroic mission (l. 265  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\theta'$   $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho\mu\alpha\chi\tilde{\omicron}\mu\alpha\iota$ , His criteria have proved to be valid for classical authors, too. cf. Friesen 2015, 67, fn. 58. "I shall fight in his defence"), with a unique commanding role (l. 258-9  $\nu\tilde{\nu}\nu$   $\delta'$   $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota$   $\kappa\upsilon\rho\tilde{\omega}$   $\tau'$   $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\tilde{\omega}$  /  $\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omega\nu$   $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu$   $\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\tilde{\alpha}\varsigma$ , "but now I hold the power") that could not be carried out by anyone else (the subjects were completely inadequate for the task, cf. *Il.* 255-8, and the only ally worthy of Oedipus is god himself, cf. *Il.* 244-5  $\tau\tilde{\omega}$   $\tau\epsilon$   $\delta\acute{\alpha}\iota\mu\omicron\nu\iota$  ... /  $\sigma\tilde{\upsilon}\mu\mu\alpha\chi\tilde{\omicron}\varsigma$   $\pi\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega$ , "I am an ally to the god"). There is no possible comparison between what others experience and what he senses (cf. *Il.* 60-1 "though you are enduring affliction I know well that there is not one of you who suffers equally with me"). Such a heroic temper can only be compared to that of Achilles, who desired to die owing to the loss of his beloved friend, Patroclus,<sup>25</sup> and had only one aim in mind - to find Patroclus' slayer (*Il.* 18.114):  $\nu\tilde{\nu}\nu$   $\delta'$   $\acute{\epsilon}\tilde{\iota}\mu'$   $\delta\tilde{\omicron}\rho\alpha$   $\phi\acute{\iota}\lambda\eta\varsigma$   $\kappa\epsilon\phi\alpha\lambda\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$   $\delta\lambda\epsilon\tau\tilde{\eta}\rho\alpha$   $\kappa\iota\chi\tilde{\epsilon}\acute{\iota}\omega$  "But now will I go forth that I may light on the slayer of the man I loved" (transl. by Murray 1947: 297). His statement is extremely similar to that pronounced by Oedipus (OT l. 265-6):  $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\pi\iota$   $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau'$   $\acute{\alpha}\phi\acute{\iota}\xi\tilde{\omicron}\mu\alpha\iota$ , /  $\zeta\eta\tau\tilde{\omega}\nu$   $\tau\tilde{\omicron}\nu$   $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\tilde{\omicron}\chi\epsilon\iota\rho\alpha$   $\tau\tilde{\omicron}\tilde{\upsilon}$   $\phi\tilde{\omicron}\nu\tilde{\omicron}\nu$   $\lambda\alpha\beta\tilde{\epsilon}\tilde{\iota}\nu$ , "I will go to any lengths, eager to seize the slayer." But, as Lausberg (1998: 199, § 420.2) teaches us, "Every *simile* (owing to the lack of complete identity) also has an inherent *dissimile*: this very tension between *simile* and *dissimile* makes for the value and attraction of the *simile*." In our case, the dissimilarity lies in the quality of the expected outcome. Achilles knows that the gods are not on his side and he is ready to resign himself to fate (*Il.* 18. 115-16  $\kappa\tilde{\eta}\rho\alpha$   $\delta'$   $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\tilde{\omega}$   $\tau\tilde{\omicron}\tau\epsilon$   $\delta\acute{\epsilon}\xi\tilde{\omicron}\mu\alpha\iota$   $\delta\tilde{\omicron}\pi\tilde{\omicron}\tau\tilde{\omicron}\tau\epsilon$   $\kappa\epsilon\nu$   $\delta\tilde{\eta}$  /  $\text{Ze}\tilde{\upsilon}\varsigma$   $\acute{\epsilon}\theta\tilde{\epsilon}\lambda\eta$   $\tau\epsilon\lambda\tilde{\epsilon}\sigma\alpha\iota$   $\eta\delta'$   $\acute{\alpha}\theta\tilde{\alpha}\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\iota$   $\theta\epsilon\omicron\iota$   $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\iota$ , "for my fate, I will accept it whenso Zeus willeth to bring it to pass, and the other immortal gods" (transl. by Murray 1947: 297)). Instead, Oedipus is intimately convinced of his own success and he firmly believes that the gods are on his side and he is a champion of justice: "may our ally Justice, and all the gods be propitious for ever" (OT 274-5). This optimism later turns out to be unfounded and will prove to be the fruit of Oedipus' ignorance.

There is, however, a second aspect inherent in the Homeric allusion. The eighteenth book of the *Iliad* marks the beginning of a new anger of Achilles, reconciled to Agamemnon, and eager to appease the Manes of his friend, Patroclus. The Homeric intertextuality hidden in OT 258-264 indirectly foreshadows Oedipus' anger, as he is eager to do justice to the memory of his slaughtered predecessor. As magistrally shown by Muellner (1996), for the Greeks, anger is not only a strong negative feeling but rather an "highly

<sup>25</sup>Cf. *Il.* 18.98-9  $\acute{\alpha}\nu\tau\tilde{\omicron}\kappa\alpha$   $\tau\epsilon\theta\tilde{\nu}\alpha\iota\eta\nu$ ,  $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\epsilon\iota$   $\sigma\tilde{\upsilon}\kappa$   $\acute{\alpha}\rho'$   $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\epsilon\lambda\tilde{\lambda}\omicron\nu$   $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\alpha\iota\rho\tilde{\omega}$  /  $\kappa\tau\epsilon\iota\nu\tilde{\omicron}\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omega$   $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\alpha\mu\tilde{\omicron}\nu\alpha\iota$ , "Straightway may I die, seeing I was not to bear aid to my comrade at his slaying." (transl. by Murray 1947: 295).

specialized social term denoting the cosmic sanction against tabu behavior" (Muellner 1996: 133). Anger is not only a destructive passion. It has also a creative aspect inasmuch it works as a cosmic sanction against behaviour that violates the most basic religious and social rules. Such a connotation is not absent in Oedipus' reaction. Nevertheless,

"Oedipus lacks the power to see the relation of one thing to another and to maintain a due proportion in the expenditure of energy. Oedipus can see only one thing at a time, and it is his habit to act immediately on half-knowledge with the utmost intensity and abandon. /... This is the flaw in the character of Oedipus - a weakness at the very centre of his being, from which all other weaknesses, such as his fatal tendency to anger, naturally arise." (Barstow 1917: 158-9)

His angry leaves a trail of destruction in Oedipus's life. Blinded by anger, he cannot tolerate the cautious reticence of Teiresias (ll. 316-446). He charges the old seer with Laius' murder (ll. 348-9), then he suspects Creon to seize the throne (l. 535), and, after many vicissitudes, in the end he turns his anger against himself. According to Ricoeur (1970: 517): "The underlying link between the anger of Oedipus and the power of truth is [thus] the core of the veritable tragedy." The Homeric reminiscence discreetly outlines that link and foreshadows what is about to happen next.

## Conclusion

As a result, having explained the high value of the anacoluthon in l. 264 and accepted ἔχω δέ instead of ἔχων δέ, I should translate the whole passage (ll. 258–264) as follows: "Now, however, since I happen to possess, as is known, the ruling power that he held in earlier days, / and, what's more, I possess his bed and the wife common to both of us / (and cognate<sup>26</sup> [brothers] of cognate children would have born to us, / if he had been blessed with descendants. / But evil fortune turned on that man), / because that is me, as if he were my own father, / I shall fight for his cause ..."

Expressed in these terms, the speech flows smoothly and logically from section to section; and our interpretation accounts for the otherwise disturbing anacoluthon. Moreover, our interpretation highlights the true nature of these lines: in this passage lies an extraordinary example of tragic irony.<sup>27</sup> These words encapsulate the central theme of the play: Oedipus proudly believes in the power of his sagacity<sup>28</sup> and underlines that his kingship is a matter of chance (not the result of inherited power). He is persuaded that his knowledge of the truth is infallible, and he knows everything about himself, but the reality

<sup>26</sup>I translate "cognate", not "consanguineous", because they all would have been related by birth by being born from the same mother. On consanguinity (κοινῶν/κοινά), see Avezzù and Longo 1991: 25–61, 127–39.

<sup>27</sup>How can we forget Teiresias' savage irony in l. 440, οὐκ οὖν σὺ ταῦτ' ἄριστος εὐρίσκειν ἔφες;

<sup>28</sup>See also OT 441, τοιαῦτ' ὀνειδίξ', οἷς ἔμ' εὐρήσεις μέγαν.

shows us Oedipus' will facing his destiny which lies hidden a new riddle, the mystery of his identity, from whence he will come out defeated.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>See Vernant 2006: 27-28, "Œdipe est double. Il constitue pour lui-même une énigme dont il ne devinera le sens qu'en se découvrant en tout point le contraire de ce qu'il croyait ou paraissait être. Le discours secret qui s'institue, sans qu'il le sache, au sein de son propre discours, Œdipe ne l'entend pas. Et nul témoin du drame sur la scène, en dehors de Tirésias, n'est non plus capable de le percevoir. Ce sont les dieux qui renvoient à Œdipe, en écho à certaines de ses paroles, son propre discours déformé ou retourné. Et cet écho inverse, qui/ sonne comme un éclat de rire sinistre, est en réalité un redressement. Ce que dit Œdipe sans le vouloir, sans le comprendre, constitue la seule vérité authentique de ses propos [...]."

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## Metonymy in Czech Word Formation in Terms of Cognitive Linguistics

By Božena Bednaříková\* & Zuzana Novotná†

*Substitutional metonymy is generally considered as one of the basic conceptual processes that have the power to indirectly name the reality. The principle of the metonymy is a shift of meaning based on certain internal connections (for metonymy Kövecses and Radden 1998, Koch 1999, Peirsman and Geeraerts 2006, Langacker 2009). According to the cognitively oriented linguist Laura A. Janda, similar metonymic relationships can be identified in Czech word-formational processes (Janda 2010). The base of the study is an idea that between the vehicle and the target there is a relationship which is similar to the substitutional metonymy. The aim is to apply that perspective on the specific language material. The database of linguistic material was excerpted from two fairytales by Karel Čapek (Čapek 1972). The research has focused on nouns. The analyzed material consists of 193 nouns formed by suffixation, desuffixation, conversion (for conversion in Czech see Bednaříková 2009), as well as the combined processes. The crucial point are the analysis of metonymic relationships and the number of their occurrences in the database of nouns. The most often metonymic patterns for vehicle and target are also presented, as well as the most frequent suffixes. The analysis clearly indicates that there are verbs that have the strongest position in the word formation of nouns. Regarding the metonymic pattern the most frequent target within the database are the abstraction, entity and agent. In the end of the study there is a conclusion summarizing the main findings.*

**Keywords:** Conversion, Metonymy, Target, Vehicle, Word formation

### Introduction

*The milk tipped over* (Janda 2010, 2011, 2014) is a prototypical and often-cited example of metonymy. The majority of studies have focused on what is called lexical metonymy so far. The above cited example is a typical one. In lexical metonymy, the source (here the term VEHICLE is used) is associated with the word and the TARGET is the meaning that is actually accessed. Thus the shift consists of a CONTAINER that is accessed by reference to its CONTENTS. What is in fact shifted is the whole lexeme. That is the basis of the lexical, i.e., substitutional metonymy. Looking at another example, *květináč* ("flower-pot") one could argue that there is a relationship which is similar to the substitutional metonymy. The VEHICLE corresponds to the founding word (the source word) *květina* ("flower") and the TARGET to the word-formational affix *-áč*. The shift itself seems to be parallel to that of substitutional metonymy. A CONTAINER is again accessed by reference to its CONTENTS, but this time the shift is achieved by grammatical means, in this case by the morphological process of derivation using the formant *-áč-Ø*, where *-áč* is the derivational suffix, and *-Ø* is the inflectional suffix (desinence, ending).

The first part of the study explains the aim of the study and the type of the research. The next section briefly outlines the theoretical background and the

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up-to-date literature. What follows next is building up the database for the research. Then the analysis of the language material is presented and discussed. The final section communicates the conclusion.

### **The Purpose of the Research (A Case Study)**

The main purpose of the study is to break new ground for the Czech word-formational theory which would be based both on the concept of morphology as study of the inner structure of a word (Komárek 2006, Bednaříková 2009, 2017) and on cognitive linguistics. What is also intended here is to apply the classification system of word-formational metonymy elaborated by Janda (2010, 2011) on a particular language material. Janda's system is based on traditional word-formational theory as seen in Dokulil (1962) and in Dokulil et al. (1986) and parallel to Peirsman and Geeraerts (2006). The aim of the case study is a) to construct and analyse the database of nouns which were formed by either suffixation or conversion, b) to explore the most frequent metonymical relations, c) to explore the metonymical patterns and to find the central word-formational formants.

### **Theoretical Background – a Brief Survey**

What first must be mentioned is the specifics of the Czech word-formational theory elaborated by Dokulil (1962) and by Dokulil et al. (1986). Dokulil created the onomasiological model of word-formation which consists of 4 abstract conceptual categories complying with the four basic parts of speech (word classes). The conceptual categories are: substance, quality, action and circumstance. The meaning of the coined word is based on the interrelations between them. Thus the onomasiological structure has the pattern: MARK (vehicle/source) + BASE. In the coined word *hlupák* ("fool, blockhead") the MARK (vehicle) is the adjective expressing the category of quality *hloupý* ("foolish") and the BASE (target) is the formant *-ák-Ø* (derivational suffix-ending) representing the category of substance (someone who bears the quality of *hloupý*).

As far as the notion of metonymy is concerned it has various meanings according to various branches of scholarship. The Greek word *metónymia* means "renaming" that is based on the transmission of meaning. Metonymy is mainly employed in literary theory as one of the tropes, i.e., indirect naming of reality. In lexicology, it is used in the sense of multiplication of meanings, as something causing the emergence of polysemy (Dokulil 1962, Hauser 1980, Filipec and Čermák 1985). With regard to cognitive linguistics, the term metonymy is used in two senses:

- a. as a shift (mapping) within a single domain (Croft 1993, Langacker 1993, 2009, Kövecses and Radden 1998, Kövecses 2002),
- b. as a contiguity relationship (Jakobson and Halle 1980, Peirsman and Geeraerts 2006).

Here the research leans upon the way in which the metonymy is handled by Janda (2010, 2011, 2014), i.e., metonymy as a referential relational between two concepts: a source (VEHICLE) concept is overtly named and provides the mental access to a TARGET concept in a given context. Similarly the notion of metonymy is understood in Kövecses and Radden (1998) as a cognitive process in which one conceptual entity (VEHICLE) provides mental access to another conceptual entity (TARGET). Thus the cognitive strategy of metonymical association uses conceptual force to access the target.

Making the best use of Dokulil's theory of onomasiological categories (Dokulil et al. 1986) and the inventory of substitutional metonymy by Peirsman and Geeraerts (2006) as well as the VEHICLE for TARGET model for classification of metonymy (Lakoff 1987) Janda designed a classification system which she used for exploring the Czech word-formational metonymy signalled by suffixation [see Dokulil's part of *Mluvnice češtiny*, Dokulil et al. (1986)]. Her activities aimed to demonstrate the parallels between substitutional and word-formational metonymy (Janda 2010).

### Database of Czech Word-Formational Metonymy

The language material that served for our research were two fairy tales from the book by Karel Čapek (1890–1938) *Devatero pohádek* ("Nine fairy tales"), namely *Pohádka pošťácká* ("Postman's fairy tale") and *Pohádka tulácká* ("Drifter's fairy tale"). The limitations for the excerpt and analysis covered the necessity to excerpt only nouns. The morphological means on the stock were only derivation (suffixation) and conversion. What was excluded were modification category, i.e., deminutives as *hvězdička* ("star") or augmentatives as *názvisko* ("title"). Excluded were also the proper names, but only as target, not as vehicle/source: *Bugatti*→*bugatka*, and hypocoristics. But not excluded were deverbal nouns as *žebrot/žebrán/→žebrání* ("beg/begged/→begging").

The size of our final corpus in the database was 193 nouns. The structure of the database consisted of the founding/source word as the VEHICLE/source, the founded/coined word as the TARGET, metonymical relation following the model: VEHICLE/SOURCE for TARGET), the morphological process of either of suffixation, or conversion, the central word-formational formant and the supporting formant as the phonological alternations, type of declension (type of the morphological "pattern" represented by the model/WORD/ generally used in Czech grammars). A short sample of the structure of the database is shown at the Table 1<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>"To quarrel→fairy tale", "to call (called)→profession", "to pasture→shepherd", "black wizard ADJ (or black book)→black wizard", "water (or water ADJ)→water goblin", "post office→postman", "write down→writing", "declare→public notice".

**Table 1.** *The Structure of the Database*

| VEHICLE→<br>TARGET                               | VEHICLE→<br>TARGET                                   | Process                       | Central+<br>Supporting formant |
|--|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Pohádat→<br>pohádka                              | ACTION→<br>PRODUCT                                   | suffixation                   | -k-a+/ŽENA/                    |
| povolat<br>(povolán)→<br>povolání                | ACTION→<br>ABSTRACTION                               | conversion                    | -í/STAVENÍ/+n-ň                |
| pást→<br>pastýř                                  | ACTION→<br>AGENT                                     | suffixation                   | -(t)ýř-Ø+á~a/MUŽ/              |
| černokněžný (or<br>černá kniha)→<br>černokněžník | CHARACTERISTIC→<br>ENTITY                            | (composition+)<br>suffixation | -(n)ík-Ø+i-ě/PÁN/              |
| voda (or<br>vodní)→<br>vodník                    | LOCATION→<br>LOCATED or<br>CHARACTERISTIC→<br>ENTITY | suffixation                   | -ník-Ø+/PÁN/                   |
| pošta→<br>pošťák                                 | LOCATION→<br>LOCATED                                 | suffixation                   | -ák-Ø+t~ť+/PÁN/                |
| napsat→<br>nápis                                 | ACTION→<br>PRODUCT                                   | conversion                    | -Ø/HRAD/+a~á                   |
| vyhlásit→<br>vyhláška                            | ACTION→<br>PRODUCT                                   | suffixation                   | -k-a+s~š/ŽENA/                 |

As far as classification of the language material, i.e., the metonymical excerpts, is concerned, one has to face a couple of limitations which often appear to be interesting challenges.

- a) The first one concerns identification of the VEHICLE/source: As seen in Table 1 the word *vodník* ("water goblin") may have two interpretations concerning its VEHICLE. It can be either the noun *voda* ("water"), or the adjective *vodní* ("water, of water, aquatic"). This may result in different metonymical relations. If the founding word interpretation leads to the noun *voda*, then the slot for VEHICLE in the general metonymical relation VEHICLE→TARGET is occupied by LOCATION and the TARGET by LOCATED. In the latter case, that is with the adjective *vodní* as the founding word, the VEHICLE is occupied by CHARACTERISTIC and the TARGET by ENTITY. The decision (here both solutions) leans upon Dokulil's word-formational theory.
- b) Another limitation to deal with is the fact that a VEHICLE may serve for two TARGETS, formally quite homomorphous. A good example may be the verb *psát* ("write"). By applying the word-formational process of conversion namely using the past participle *psán* ("written") for substantivization we may have two different words *psaní* and with that, of course, two different metonymical relations: either ACTION for ABSTRACTION ("the process of writing"), or ACTION for PRODUCT ("a letter as a result of writing, as something what has been written"). Understanding the respective meaning is obviously context bounded. At the same time one can think of the process of concretization of the abstracts (here the result of the action is a respective noun).
- c) What should not be omitted is the context boundedness: as partly seen in the previous paragraph the context boundedness may play a crucial role in interpreting the metonymical relation. The noun *vrták* ("drill") as a coined word with the word-formational pattern *vrtat*→*vrták* ("to drill→the drill") can be seen as a TOOL, though in the case of the analyzed text (a fairy tale) it bears a

metonymic meaning of ENTITY, since it is expressively used in relation to a person, i.e., "one who screwed up something, clumsy, lubber". In these cases it is the context and the updated meaning of the word in the text that decide.

- d) What also should be handled is the question of interpretation of the word-formational formant: A good example may be nouns as *nádiva*, *nezdoba* ("stuffed, not ornamented"). Even if there is a detachable segment in the end of the words, i.e., *-a*, it is not a word-formational suffix, but a grammatical suffix of nominative singular. Both words are word-formationally the result of conversion *nadívát se*→*nádiva*, *nezdobit*→*nezdoba* ("to stuff→the stuffed, not to ornament→the not ornamented"), both following the metonymical relation ACTION→AGENT. The central word-formational formant is the change of inflection, that means that here the conjugation of the original verb was replaced by declension of the newly formed noun. Thus the segment *-a* in the end of the noun is not a word-formational suffix, but the representative of the whole inflectional paradigm, usually represented by the inflectional pattern PŘESEDÁ.

### *Analysis of Metonymical Relations*

The database of excerpted language material in this research contains 193 nouns, which were subsequently subdivided according to individual metonymical relations, suffixes, and conversion types. Further research focuses primarily on the number of words (occurrences) in each category of metonymic relationships, the number of words within individual suffixes or types of conversions, as well as on what metonymical pattern and what part of speech prevail in the VEHICLE/source and the TARGET. Altogether 33 kinds of metonymical relationships were identified in the language material database. The "top ten" metonymical relations according to the number of items are shown in Table 2<sup>2</sup>.

As evidenced by Table 2, the most commonly identified metonymical relationship is the ACTION for ABSTRACTION. In the context of analyzed nouns, the ACTION was most often used to point to a specific ABSTRACTION. There are 43 nouns in this category, but only eight of them are derivatives. Although it is the strongest model, it is associated only with three derivational suffixes. Thus within this category three suffixes have been identified, namely *-b(a)*, *-ost-Ø* and *-e-Ø* (*sloužit*→*služba*, *litovat*→*lítost*, *loupit*→*loupež*, "to serve→service, to regret→regret, to rob→robbery"). Even if the number of words in this metonymical category is the highest, the number of suffixes is comparatively small compared to other categories. All other words within this metonymical relationship have been created by word-formational process of conversion (type verb→noun); for example *překvapit/překvapen/*→*překvapení*, *šramotit*→*šramot*, "to surprise (surprised)→surprise, to rustle→rustling"). Such a large number of words resulting from conversion can be attributed to the fact that our analysis also includes verbal nouns. Indeed, all these nouns belong to that particular metonymical relationship.

<sup>2</sup>"to serve→service", "to surprise (surprised)→surprise", "good→good guy", "to guard→constable", "to produce→product", "quick→quickness", "to toddle→novice", "to connect→connector", "mill→miller", "king→kingdom", "to consume→foodstuff".

The second most common metonymical relationship is the CHARACTERISTIC for THE ENTITY, in which a total of 24 nouns were identified. Within this category, 19 nouns were created by the word-formational process of derivation (15 nouns were created by suffixing—*dobrý*→*dobrák* ("good→good man"), four nouns by desuffixation—*darebný*→*dareba*, "roguish→rogue"). The model is associated with eight derivational suffixes: *-ic-e*, *-ák-Ø*, *-ník-Ø*, *-ek-Ø*, *-ec-Ø*, *-enec-Ø*, *-ík-Ø*, *-och-Ø*. The remaining five words were created by conversion, namely the adjective→noun type: *mužský*/adj./→*mužský*/noun/("male→man").

The third most frequent metonymical model is the ACTION for AGENT (*strážit*→*strážník*, *stvořit*→*stvořitel*, "to guard→constable, to create→creator"). In this category, 23 nouns were identified, 14 of which were formed by suffixing and nine by conversion (type *verbum*→noun, *nadívat se*→*nádiva*). In this category, a total of ten suffixes have been found, namely *-ník-Ø*, *-tel-Ø*, *-ák-Ø*, *-č-Ø*, *-č-í*, *-ek-Ø*, *-ík-Ø*, *-t/ýř-Ø*, *-c-e*, *-ouch-Ø*.

**Table 2.** The "Top Ten" Metonymical Relations

|    |                            |    |  |
|----|----------------------------|----|--|
| 1  | ACTION→ABSTRACTION         | 42 | <i>sloužit</i> → <i>služba</i><br>("to serve→service")<br><i>překvapit</i> ( <i>překvapen</i> )→ <i>překvapení</i><br>("to surprise (surprised)→surprise") |
| 2  | CHARACTERISTIC→ENTITY      | 24 | <i>dobrý</i> → <i>dobrák</i><br>("good→good guy")  |
| 3  | ACTION→AGENT               | 23 | <i>strážit</i> → <i>strážník</i><br>("to guard→constable")   |
| 4  | ACTION→PRODUCT             | 14 | <i>vyrobit</i> → <i>výrobek</i><br>("to produce→product")  |
| 5  | CHARACTERISTIC→ABSTRACTION | 11 | <i>rychlý</i> → <i>rychlost</i><br>("quick→quickness")   |
| 6  | ACTION→ENTITY              | 8  | <i>capat</i> → <i>căpek</i><br>("to toddle→novice")  |
| 7  | ACTION→INSTRUMENT          | 8  | <i>spojit</i> → <i>spojka</i><br>("to connect→connector")  |
| 8  | LOCATION→LOCATED           | 7  | <i>mlýn</i> → <i>mlýnář</i><br>("mill→miller")   |
| 9  | LOCATED→LOCATION           | 6  | <i>král</i> → <i>království</i><br>("king→kingdom")  |
| 10 | ACTION→PATIENT             | 6  | <i>požívat</i> → <i>poživatina</i><br>("to consume→foodstuff")   |

#### *Analysis of VEHICLE/SOURCE*

The analysis shows that the most common type of VEHICLE is ACTION: *stvořit*→*stvořitel*, *vyhlásit*→*vyhláška* ("to create→creator, to declare→decree"). ACTION as a VEHICLE has been found in eight categories of metonymical relationship, and generally appears in 106 words. The most frequent part of speech for ACTION is, as can be expected, the verb. Nevertheless, verbs may also correspond to the metonymical model of STATE if it is a verb expressing state (ex. *stát*→*stanice*, *čekat*→*čekání*, "to stand→station, to wait→waiting"). Consequently, the verb appeared as VEHICLE (and the founding word) in 110 words from the database, and is thus the most common part of speech expressing the VEHICLE.



The second most common type of VEHICLE is CHARACTERISTIC (*mrňavý*→*mrňavec*, *rychlý*→*rychlost*, "tiny→tot, quick→quickness"). It was identified in five categories of metonymical relationships. CHARACTERISTIC appears as VEHICLE in 39 words, so the number of words exactly matches the number of adjectives. Nevertheless, the adjectives do not correspond to the second most common part of speech for the VEHICLE, because all other metonymical patterns (LOCATION, ABSTRACTION, LOCATION, etc.) correspond to nouns. The total sum of nouns was 40, i.e., one more than the adjectives. Table 3 shows all the metonymical patterns for VEHICLE/SOURCE.

**Table 3.** Analysis of VEHICLE/Source

| VEHICLE/SOURCE (metonymical patterns) | Number of words |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| ACTION                                | 106             |
| CHARACTERISTIC                        | 39              |
| LOCATION                              | 8               |
| ABSTRACTION                           | 7               |
| LOCATED                               | 6               |
| PATIENT                               | 4               |
| QUANTITY                              | 4               |
| ENTITY                                | 3               |
| STATE                                 | 3               |
| PRODUCT                               | 3               |
| GROUP                                 | 3               |
| AGENT                                 | 2               |
| MATERIAL                              | 2               |
| CONTENT                               | 1               |
| WHOLE                                 | 1               |
| PART                                  | 1               |

#### Analysis of TARGET

Table 4 shows how many TARGETS (in founded words) were identified within the metonymical patterns. The three most common TARGETS are then commented in more detail.

**Table 4.** Analysis of TARGET

| TARGET (metonymical patterns) | Number of words |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| ABSTRACTION                   | 58              |
| ENTITY                        | 43              |
| AGENT                         | 34              |
| PRODUCT                       | 14              |
| LOCATION                      | 13              |
| INSTRUMENT                    | 9               |
| LOCATED                       | 7               |
| PATIENT                       | 7               |
| EVENT                         | 4               |
| GROUP                         | 1               |
| CONTAINER                     | 1               |
| WHOLE                         | 1               |
| PART                          | 1               |

It is clear from the table that the most common TARGET is ABSTRACTION, followed by ENTITY and AGENT. If we compare the results with the previous analysis of the VEHICLE, it is clear that the difference between the first and the second position in TARGET is not as evident as the difference between the first and the second position as was the case with the VEHICLE.

Again, it is necessary to mention that the higher number of TARGETS included in the ABSTRACTION is likely to be the result of the inclusion of deverbal nouns (created by conversion). Of the suffixes, then the suffix *-ost-Ø* (nine occurrences) is most involved in the formation of the ABSTRACTION, then *-b-a* (four occurrences), *-ež-Ø* (two occurrences) and *-ek-Ø* (two occurrences). Of the total number of ABSTRACTIONS, there are 20 words derived (suffixed or formed by the combination or prefixation and suffixation), the remaining 38 words being created by conversion. For converted words, the most common type of conversion is verb→noun (36 words).

The second most common TARGET is ENTITY, the formation of which consists of 11 suffixes. The most ENTITIES were formed by the suffix *-k-a* (seven), then *-ák-Ø* (six), *-ic-e* (four), *-ek-Ø* (three), *-ec-Ø* (2), *-k-Ø* (two). Altogether, 34 nouns were formed by derivation, the remaining nine were formed by conversion (five by the type adjective→noun, four by the type verb→noun).

The AGENT was the third most common TARGET, with a high number of suffixes (a total of 15) and one type of conversion. For the AGENT the following suffixes have been identified: *-ník-Ø* (five), *-ák-Ø* (three), *-ář-Ø* (3), *-tel-Ø* (two), *-č-Ø* (two). Only one occurrence appears within the following suffixes: *-č-í*, *-ek-Ø*, *-ík-Ø*, *-ýř-Ø*, *-c-e*, *-ec-Ø*, *-ouch-Ø*, *-ent-Ø*, *-ist-a* and *-at-Ø*. Thus 25 nouns were formed by suffixing, with the remaining nine formed by conversion of the type verb→noun.

#### *Analysis of the Central Word-Formational Formant*

A total of 126 nouns formed by the word-formational process of derivation were found in the database of language material. A total amount of 36 suffixes have been identified of which the most productive appeared *-k-a* (17), cf. *spojka*, *vyhláška* ("connector, decree"), employed in eight metonymical relations. The second most productive suffix, found in 13 nouns, is suffix *-ák-Ø*, cf. *tulák*, *chudák* ("drifter, poor man"). In total, nine metonymical relationships have been identified with this suffix. Even though this suffix was identified with fewer words than the suffix *-k(a)*, the diversity of its metonymical relationships is slightly higher. The suffix *-ník-Ø* has been found in 11 nouns, serving primarily for the expression of LOCATED (e.g., *vodník*, "water goblin"), AGENT (*loupežník*, "robber") and ENTITY (*četník*, "policeman"). In this suffix, six metonymical relationships were distinguished.

In this research we worked with live texts, and therefore, necessarily, all of the existing suffixes for forming nouns are unlikely to appear<sup>3</sup>. In addition, we

<sup>3</sup>Janda identified 207 suffixes in her study (Janda 2010). She worked with artificially created linguistic material to try to capture all words resulting from suffixing (including conversion as Janda considers this type of word-formational process as a kind of suffixation).

differentiate between suffixation and conversion as different word-forming processes, and we comment on them separately.

In the language material database, a total of 67 words formed by conversion were identified. To be more specific, here is a table that lists the identified conversion types (Table 5).

**Table 5.** *Types of Conversion*

| Type of conversion | Number of words |
|--------------------|-----------------|
| verb→noun          | 58              |
| adjective→noun     | 6               |
| noun→noun          | 3               |

For verb→noun conversion, there was a total of six categories of metonymic relationships, most often ACTON for ABSTRACTION (35 nouns; *porušit* (*porušen*)→*porušení*, "break (broken)→breach"). The most productive central word-formational formant in the metonymical relationship ACTION for ABSTRACTION is the declension type represented by the pattern *-í* (STAVENÍ). Significantly less productive is the adjective→noun type of conversion where only two categories of metonymical relationship have been identified, namely CHARACTERISTIC for ENTITY (*cestující* adj.→*cestující* noun, "travelling→traveller") and CHARACTERISTIC for ABSTRACTION (*horký* adj.→*horko* noun, "hot→heat"). In these cases, the adjectives were substantivized and there were the following central word-formational formants represented by the declension types of *-í* (PRŮVODČÍ), *-ý* (HAJNÝ), and *-o* (MĚSTO). The noun→noun type of conversion was always combined with prefixation, i.e., with prefixes *pří-* or *ná-*. The conversion occupied the declension type *-í* (STAVENÍ), see *střecha*→*přístřeší*, *město*→*náměstí* ("roof→shelter, town→square").

## Conclusion

The purpose of the case study was to support the debate on relationship between metonymy and word-formation by application of Janda's classification system (2010, 2011, 2014). Janda (2010) created a systematic study dealing with the role of metonymy in Czech word formation. She worked with an artificial language material excerpted from the Czech grammars, and tried to capture all the words formed suffixation. On the contrary, our research worked with live text, and aimed to apply Janda's classification system on a particular language material. The theoretical background leaned upon the theory of metonymy as cognitive strategy using a conceptual VEHICLE/source to access a TARGET **through word-formation**. The robust impetus for conducting the research was Janda's call for more thorough studies of this issue (Janda 2014). The core premise here is that suffixal word-formation can be motivated by the general cognitive strategy of metonymic association. The database of Czech word-formational metonymy supplied a vivid, realistic language material through

which the metonymical relations were identified<sup>4</sup>. The findings resting on a solid database show the VEHICLE/source–TARGET patterns are realized not only via suffixation as the type of derivation (i.e., affixal word-formation), but also via conversion (i.e., non affixal word-formation where a mere change in morphological characteristics possesses the word-forming power). The strongest metonymical relations appeared to be:

- **ACTION for ABSTRACTION;**
- **CHARACTERISTIC for ENTITY;**
- **ACTION for AGENT.**

The strongest metonymical patterns for VEHICLE/source were:

**ACTION, ABSTRACTION.**

The strongest metonymical patterns for TARGET were:

**ABSTRACTION, ENTITY, AGENT.**

As far as the central word-formational formant is concerned, the strongest one appeared to be suffixation (126 nouns, the most productive being the suffixes *-k-a*, *-ák-Ø*, *-ník-Ø*, *-ost-Ø*, *-ek-Ø*. Conversion was applied with 67 words of which 58 words were formed by verb→noun type of conversion. Interpretation of the results shows that the strongest metonymical relations are:

**ACTION for ABSTRACTION;**  
**ACTION for AGENT.**

The above mentioned respective findings support the metonymical classification elaborated by Janda (2010). What appears to be the most interesting result is the frequency of the verbal actions. ACTION is the most widespread VEHICLE/source: it appears in eight metonymical relations and 107 nouns, while verbs are the most frequent part of speech (word class) for VEHICLE/source. Thus the **verbal ACTIONS** are the most salient in Czech word-formation. There may be two sources for explanation: a) employing of conversion as an important word-formational process, b) the type of narrative as the source of language material, i.e., the fairy tales.

What the results of the analysis also show is that the outcomes seem to point to trends in mental concepts of human beings, namely to ACTION: it plays a leading role in facilitating access to many other concepts (PARTICIPANT, ABSTRACTION, INSTRUMENT, and EVENT).

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<sup>4</sup>These are the conclusions of the case study, so we did not use sophisticated statistical methods.

## Acknowledgments

The contribution was created with the support of the Czech Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, grant project IGA\_FF\_2018\_025: "Czech Studies: Modern Philology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". We thank all anonymous reviewers for their careful reading of our manuscript and for their inspiring comments and suggestions.

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## On the History of Compositional Aspect: Vicissitudes, Issues, Prospects

By *Krasimir Kabakčiev*\*

*Compositional aspect (CA) is a fundamental language phenomenon discovered in 1972 by the Dutch linguist Henk Verkuyl. It is the mechanism of explication at the level of the sentence of the values of perfectivity and imperfectivity, otherwise found in verbs as lexical entries in Slavic and some similar languages. Its discovery ultimately made a huge breakthrough in linguistics, but the recognition of its significance came after years and decades of misunderstanding and twists and turns in conceptualization. Even today, nearly half a century after the discovery of CA, the theory behind it remains rather misconceived, despite the sea of publications dealing with it. This paper offers an overview – through the eyes of the author, hence inevitably polemical – of some of the history of CA, with its vicissitudes, issues and, most significantly, prospects.*

**Keywords:** *Compositional aspect, Verbal aspect, Markers of boundedness, Mapping of boundedness and non-boundedness*

### Compositional Aspect – Some of its History

CA is a fundamental language phenomenon, discovered by the Dutch linguist Henk Verkuyl in 1972 on Dutch and English data. Entitled *On the Compositional Nature of the Aspects*, Verkuyl's (1972) work made a gigantic breakthrough in the understanding of aspect that dominated linguistic theory at that time – although, as we shall see, the impact of the discovery of CA on linguistic thinking was far from sudden. It materialized slowly through the years and decades, and the process of the recognition of CA by the aspectological community has not ended to the present day. The theory of CA is now almost half a century old and this review of its development contains facts from the more distant history too – for a better understanding of what happened in the past and what is happening today.

Previous conceptions in linguistics, roughly until the 1970s, maintained that aspect – not only called verbal aspect (henceforward VA) until then but also regarded solely as such, is represented exclusively by verbs as lexical entries and restricted to the Slavic languages, plus some other (Latin, Greek) as a heritage of Proto-Indo-European. Reigning unchallenged in aspectology until the 1980s was Jakobson's (1957) idea that aspect is a category *per se* that has nothing to do with the participants in an event or a state – in contrast to, for example, voice. Actually, as will be demonstrated soon, aspect is *precisely the opposite*: a phenomenon inseparably linked to the participants in situations<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>"Participants in situations", also called "nominal sentence components (or nominals) taking part in the explication of aspect", is my term, launched in Kabakčiev (1984b: 670); the one more frequently employed is "arguments". I take participants in situations to be a term better suited to CA analyses.

In Verkuyl's (1972) theory, aspect, represented by the distinction between perfectivity and imperfectivity<sup>2</sup>, is not a feature of the verb or the VP but of the whole sentence, and its effectuation takes place within two semantico-syntactic schemata, a perfective and an imperfective one. Entities with different semantic and grammatical properties take part in the schemata. Perfectivity is a situation (in terms of Vendler's 1957 model of situations)<sup>3</sup>, which is temporally bounded and has an initial and an end point. These two points, together or separately, can be subsumed in a simple sentence/clause or outwardly given. A perfective situation, apart from being temporally bounded, is also normally "brought to a natural end", whereby the "natural end" is interpreted in pragmatic terms, as an inherent result of the situation on the arrival at the end point<sup>4</sup>. It broadly corresponds to the Slavic notion of perfectivity. Conversely, imperfectivity is a temporally non-bounded situation – whether or not an initial and/or an endpoint are present or subsumed in it, whether it describes a generally valid state of affairs (*Birds fly*) or a current activity (as in the English progressive), or an indefinitely repeated event (*I wake up early*). It broadly corresponds to the Slavic notion of imperfectivity.

Unfortunately, as often happens with revolutionary findings, Verkuyl's work first met with reactions that were not exactly negative but were not enthusiastic either. Critics accepted his major assertions but regarded the newly-discovered phenomenon as peripheral, with a restricted scope. Most importantly, they saw no link between CA and aspect in the Slavic languages (Dahl 1975, Comrie 1976). Until the end of the 1960s and even later the established view in linguistics was that not only is there no Slavic-like aspect in English but that seeking possible manifestations of it is a waste of time (Zandvoort 1962, Dušková 1983). However, against the background of the circumstance that until the 1970s aspect in languages like English was a virtual *terra incognita*, Verkuyl's work gradually started to gain recognition. Today his contribution to linguistic theory with the discovery of CA is widely acknowledged, as evidenced in hundreds of publications worldwide dealing with CA in one way or another. But the mass enthusiasm about CA rarely translates into a truly adequate understanding of it.

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<sup>2</sup>Verkuyl (1972) used the (now exotic) terms non-durativity (for perfectivity) and durativity (for imperfectivity).

<sup>3</sup>Vendler's classification of situations, consisting of four members, states, activities, accomplishments and achievements, is so widely known today that familiarity with it presupposed.

<sup>4</sup>This is valid for prototypically perfective situations. There are non-prototypical perfective situations as well, temporally bounded but lacking the pragmatically interpretable feature "brought to a natural end". I term these "episodes" (Kabakčiev 2000: 279-307) – represented by Slavic delimitative verbs, Bulgarian imperfective Aorists, English *for-time* adverbials, etc. They will not be explored here.



### Verkuyl's Theory

Underlying Verkuyl's theory is Vendler's (1957) classification with its four members – states, activities, accomplishments and achievements, but CA is a radical development of it. Vendler's (1957) classification mainly rests on the semantics of verbs and verb-noun collocations. Verkuyl's CA is explicated at the level of the sentence.

Why explicated and not expressed? Because explication, or signaling, is the indirect, covert signification of something, in contrast to its direct expression (denotation/marking/encoding)<sup>5</sup>. To give an example, in modern linguistics today (based on English) there is not a shade of a doubt that: (i) a sentence such as (1a) below is perfective, in contrast to (1b), which is imperfective; (ii) sentence (1a) is equivalent to a sentence with a perfective verb in Slavic, cf. Russian (1c); (iii) sentence (1b) corresponds to a sentence with an imperfective verb in Slavic, cf. Russian (1d):

- (1) a. The boy ate a fig.  
 b. The boy ate figs.  
 c. Mal'čik s'el<sub>PFV</sub> smokvu.  
 "The boy ate a/the fig"  
 d. Mal'čik el<sub>IMPFV</sub> smokvy.  
 "The boy ate figs"

However, while the Russian verb *s'el* "ate" is marked for perfectivity, the corresponding English verb *ate* is *not* – as can easily be seen from the comparison between (1a) and (1b), two aspectually differing sentences containing the same verb form. Therefore, while the Russian *s'el* "ate" expresses perfectivity, the English *ate* in (1a) only explicates/signals it. The same with the Russian *el* "ate" in (1d) – it expresses imperfectivity, while the English *ate* in (1b) explicates/signals it. On a side note, the fact that today nobody in the linguistic community doubts the perfectivity of an English sentence such as (1a) represents proof that there is progress in scientific thinking. Prior to 1972, an assertion in linguistic circles that (1a) is perfective and (1b) is imperfective would either be laughed at or treated as heresy. But progress in linguistic thinking does not necessarily equate an adequate understanding of CA. Convinced that an English sentence such as (1a) is perfective, many aspectologists are still unable to grasp the true reasons why it is perfective, see below.

Let us return to Verkuyl's (1972) theory. His sentences (2) explicate perfectivity, due to the presence of determiners, including articles, proper names or similar bounding elements in the nominals, plus a telic meaning of the verb as a lexical entry:

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<sup>5</sup>I proposed the notion "explication" in Kabakčiev (2000). In my English grammar (Kabakčiev 2017), I mainly use the term signaling for the same phenomenon.

- (2) a. Katinka knitted a Norwegian sweater.  
 b. Greetje walked from the Mint to the Dam.  
 c. Den Uyl gave the Labor Party badge to a congress-goer.  
 d. Fritz played Schumann's cello concerto.

Conversely, Verkuyl's sentences (3) explicate imperfectivity, due to the so-called imperfective leaks (Verkuyl 1993: 232-233). At least one leak must be present for a sentence in (2) to turn into an imperfective one:

- (3) a. Katinka knitted Norwegian sweaters.  
 b. Policemen walked from the Mint to the Dam.  
 c. Den Uyl gave the Labor Party badge to congress-goers.  
 d. Fritz hated Schumann's cello concerto.

The leaks, henceforward called Verkuylian in honor of their finder, are: a bare plural in the direct object (3a), the subject (3b), the indirect object (3c); an atelic lexical meaning of the verb (3d). Thus, as can be seen from the comparison between (2) and (3), the perfective or imperfective value of an English sentence may depend, *inter alia*, on the lexical properties of the verb, cf. (2d) and (3d) – *played* is a telic verb, *hated* is an atelic verb, or the presence or absence of an article or a similar determiner – cf. the other pairs in (2) and (3).

But, despite the fact that languages like English lack aspect in verbs as lexical entries<sup>6</sup> and feature a regular pattern of a definite and an indefinite article, while, conversely, the Slavic languages feature verb aspect and most of them have no articles, neither Verkuyl, nor the already innumerable followers of the CA theory pay the necessary attention to the article – if they notice it at all. Instead of studying its all-round impact in – and on – the structure of language, they subsume it under the notions of *determiner* or *quantifier* and sidestep it (Filip 2000, 2017, Młynarczyk 2004, Borer 2005, Borik 2006, MacDonald 2012 – to name but a few). Some authors, apart from rejecting without any argumentation the aspectual function of the article, even separate the definite article from the indefinite one. Instead of viewing *a* and *the* as a unified entity, "the article", serving the explication of perfectivity (in contrast to "the zero article" – serving the explication of imperfectivity), they insist that the definite article has nothing to do with aspect (Młynarczyk 2004, Fleischhauer and Czardybon 2016, see Kabakčiev's 2018 response), ignoring huge argumentation provided years earlier (Kabakčiev 2000). Some (Berezowski 2011) explore the zero article and make no mention of its unbounding function; others (Husband 2012) ignore the article (*the* and *a*) despite handling Verkuyl's theory – because aspect for them is the individual/ stage distinction (see below), not the perfective/imperfective one.

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<sup>6</sup>Aspect is a grammatical category found in Slavic verbs as lexical entries. A verb is either perfective or imperfective, save for biaspectual verbs, a relatively small group. English also features grammatical aspect – with the progressive, an imperfective aspect restricted to ongoing situations. But the progressive is not located in verbs as lexical entries. It is marked on them through the *be + -ing* construction in their syntactic realization. The same with the *used to + inf* and *would + inf* constructions that encode imperfective aspect – in its habituality variant.

CA is impossible to understand adequately without recognizing that perfectivity, as in (2), and imperfectivity, as in (3), are only *primary interpretations*, i.e., prototypical, default, basic readings of sentences, not semantic values fixed on them once and for all (Kabakčiev 2000: 59, 137). I find it a weak point in Verkuyl's theory that this circumstance is not accounted for. The default (basic/primary/prototypical) nature of aspectual values of sentences can easily be demonstrated through time adverbials (Kabakčiev 1996). For instance, adding an adverb of non-bounded iterativity (*often, regularly, from time to time*) changes a sentence such as (2a) from a perfective into an imperfective one, cf. (4a) below; adding adverbials of a sudden change of state turns prototypically imperfective sentences like (3d) into perfective ones (4b):

- (4) a. Katinka *often* knitted a Norwegian sweater.  
 b. Fritz *suddenly* hated Schumann's cello concerto.

A counterargument to the effect that (4) are new sentences, i.e., not those in (2a) and (2d), is not valid, as it is clear that aspect-changing adverbials can linger in the surrounding context and still exercise their effect. The addition of aspectual elements (too many and too complex to be described here) and the general impact of context often interfere with Verkuyl's perfective and imperfective schemata and alter the initial aspectual readings of sentences (Kabakčiev 2000). Furthermore, there are pragmatic constraints and triggers influencing Verkuyl's schemata and changing default aspectual values. I subsume these under the label "knowledge of the world" (Kabakčiev 2000: 309-326). The various factors altering the explication of perfectivity and imperfectivity make CA theory hard or even very hard to understand. But this cannot, of course, detract from its significance.

One of the most important theses in Verkuyl's model, emphasized by Dowty (1979: 64), is that "the sub-categorization with respect to aspect must take place at an even higher node than the VP". This means, for example, that (5a) below is a perfective sentence, but it would be a mistake to think that its perfectivity is solely or mainly due to the perfectivity of the VP *visited a castle* vis-à-vis the imperfectivity of *visited castles*, as in (5b). The perfectivity of (5a) is due *simultaneously* to the boundedness of *the tourist* and *a castle* and the presence of a telic verb, *visited*, the three elements *together* allowing (5a) into the perfective schema. Should a Verkuylian leak appear in any of the three components of (5a), or in more than one, the resulting sentence is imperfective. See below: (5a) is perfective (precisely why – to be explained); (5b) is imperfective because of an object leak (*castles* – unbounded by the bare plural); (5c) is imperfective because of a subject leak (*tourists* – non-bounded); (5d) is imperfective because of a leak in the verb (*knew* – atelic, in contrast to *visited* – telic). Finally, (5e) is imperfective because of two Verkuylian leaks: one in the subject, another in the object (Verkuyl 1972, 1993):

- (5) a. The tourist visited a castle.  
 b. The tourist visited castles<sub>LEAK</sub>.  
 c. Tourists<sub>LEAK</sub> visited a castle.  
 d. The tourist knew<sub>LEAK</sub> a castle.  
 e. Tourists<sub>LEAK</sub> visited castles<sub>LEAK</sub>.

Within a decade after the appearance of Verkuyl's (1972) work, many separate features of his theory were considered and duly recognized (Friedrich 1974, Schopf 1974: 56-58, Zydariß 1976: 54, Heinämäki 1974/1978: 10, Dowty 1979: 3-64, Markkanen 1979: 54-57, Carlson 1981, Mourelatos 1981)<sup>7</sup>. However, an extremely important element escaped the attention of researchers or was inadequately analyzed: the link between CA, as found in English, and VA, as in the Slavic languages. It was revealed in 1984, in two articles of mine (Kabakčiev 1984a, 1984b), which demonstrated the cross-language significance of CA. Elements of language structure, viz., the presence of verb aspect, as in the Slavic languages, and the regular pattern of an article (definite and indefinite), as in the Germanic languages, underlie the considerable difference between the two groups of languages. In a publication dealing with aspect in English, Bulatović (2013: 65) points out to works by Vendler, Verkuyl and Kabakčiev as "the cornerstones of what is known today as compositional aspect" – a laudatory assertion but requiring an explanation of what exactly I did. After the two 1984 papers I first made a detailed assessment of Verkuyl's theory (Kabakčiev 2000) in both his initial work and its later version (Verkuyl 1972, 1993)<sup>8</sup>. Second, I developed my initial understanding of aspect in the two papers – which provided a universal picture of aspect, based simultaneously on cognition and language structure (Kabakčiev 2000). Third, I described CA in languages like English as *a mirror image* of VA in the Slavic languages, and, consequently, VA in the Slavic languages as a mirror image of CA in the Germanic languages (Kabakčiev 2000: 153-161). Fourth, the representation of CA as a mirror image of VA – and vice versa – is, however, impossible without prior acceptance of some major assumptions, most essential of which is the all-pervading temporality of participants in situations (discussed below). Regrettably, the temporality of participants remains largely ignored or misunderstood today, and the necessity to disperse doubts surrounding the idea of the temporality of participants in situations lies in the focus of this paper.

### More on Primary and Secondary Readings of Sentences

As already pointed out, one of the differences between Verkuyl's CA model and mine is that he assigns strict aspectual values to sentences. According to him, (2) are invariably perfective sentences, (3) invariably imperfective. This is an

<sup>7</sup>The term *compositional aspect* was launched not by Verkuyl (1972) but later, by other authors. The first one to use it was probably Friedrich (1974: 37).

<sup>8</sup>The analysis of Verkuyl's work occupies a large part of my 400-pages monograph (Kabakčiev 2000).

inference based on Verkuyl's (1993: 182) insistence that there is no way for sentences such as *Judith ate sandwiches* to be perfective. But it is simply not true that sentences like *Judith ate sandwiches* cannot be perfective – a point analyzed in Kabakčiev (2000: 239). There can hardly be a perfective English sentence for which an imperfective context cannot be found; there can hardly be an imperfective English sentence structured along the lines of CA for which some perfective context cannot be found – or specially built. Preoccupied with finding and selecting data and preparing the complex argumentation for the validity of the two schemata, Verkuyl, understandably, did not envision sub-rules: sub-rules that would allow perfective sentences to be sometimes imperfective, as an exception, and imperfective sentences to be sometimes perfective, again as an exception. Another reason seems to be "aesthetic". Verkuyl, a true scientist, is clearly prone to perceiving CA rules as approximating the exactness of rules in natural sciences, e.g., physics. His two schemata are such a solid basis of CA that soiling their beautiful structure with "pragmatic stuff" such as secondary readings probably appears a sacrilege to him (cf. Verkuyl 2001). Language, however, is first and foremost a pragmatic tool. Hence its structure, too, addresses ordinary human needs and cannot necessarily be expected to approximate laws like those of physics. Guided by this understanding, I posited rules to the effect that sentences like (2) are perfective on their default (primary/prototypical/basic) reading, and that, analogously, sentences like (3) are imperfective as a default (Kabakčiev 2000, 2017).

### On the Temporality of Participants in Situations

But the largest difference between the two models, Verkuyl's and mine, lies in the treatment of participants in situations (Verkuyl's "arguments")<sup>9</sup>. It must be noted that in his initial work Verkuyl (1972) assigned temporality to arguments. When the relevant NPs contain determiners and quantifiers such as articles (*a/the*), demonstratives, possessives, proper nouns, numerals, etc., the participants are quantified. Without these elements they are non-quantified<sup>10</sup>. The relevant NPs contain the semantic information "specified quantity of X" – when quantified, and "unspecified quantity of X" – when non-quantified. To quote precisely (Verkuyl 1972: 96-97), the notions "specified quantity of X" and "non-specified quantity of X" "pertain directly or indirectly to the time axis". Furthermore, "the quantities of X involved are expressible in terms of linearly ordered sets of temporal entities" (Verkuyl 1972: 96-97). These statements on "quantified" and "non-quantified" arguments are not unambiguous. But the following one leaves no doubt as to the temporal nature of participants: "the category SPECIFIED could be characterized

<sup>9</sup>A side note concerning arguments. I reject the idea that arguments can be internal and external in aspectological terms, as in Verkuyl's (1993: 21) "asymmetry of arguments" (Kabakčiev 2000: 235-238). I treat all participants in situations as equal in status. Asymmetry has nothing to do with CA, it is a notion in transformational-generative theory handling the tree-representation of the distribution of subject- and object-NPs (Kabakčiev 2000: 238).

<sup>10</sup>"Quantified" is Verkuyl's terminology. Other studies employ the term "quantized" – with the same meaning.

as 'giving the bounds of the temporal interval in question'; the category UNSPECIFIED as 'not giving the bounds of the temporal interval in question'. Since the expression 'giving the bounds of an interval' involves referential information, SPECIFIED is provisionally located in the Determiner" (Verkuyl 1972: 59). Note that this assertion also amounts to an acknowledgment that the article, being a determiner, is a marker of temporal boundedness on nominals – another major issue in CA theory.

Thus in my two 1984 papers outlining the significance of CA and its relationship with VA (Kabakčiev 1984a, 1984b) I subscribed to the idea in Verkuyl's (1972) first work, ground-breaking and inspiring, of participants in situations (arguments) as temporal entities. It was precisely on this basis that I built the theory of the inverse interdependence of markers of boundedness – which encompasses the mechanism of mapping temporal values between nominal and verbal components. Verkuyl's (1993) withdrawal from the idea of the temporality of participants, completely unmotivated, did not, of course, change my position. It only led to my harsh criticism of this unexpected change, between 1972 and 1993, in Verkuyl's thinking (Kabakčiev 2000: 66-67, 94ff).

In contrast to Verkuyl's approach – temporal in 1972, atemporal in 1993, I have always maintained one in which all participants in situations, e.g., those in sentences (2) through (5) above, are *purely temporal entities*, with values (boundedness/non-boundedness, with sub-features) that ultimately coincide with the temporal value of the verb in the sentence/clause. Thus *the tourist* and *the castle* in *The tourist visited the castle* are temporal entities, bounded. Their temporal boundedness is, first, marked by the article, then mapped onto the referent of the verb (Kabakčiev 2000: 123-151)<sup>11</sup>. Conversely, *castles* in *The tourist visited castles* is a non-bounded entity whose temporal non-boundedness in the form of indefinite iterativity is marked through the zero article and the marker of plurality. The non-boundedness of *castles*, including the sub-feature "indefinite iterativity", is mapped onto the verb, making its referent non-bounded. And, in order to take part in the situation *visited castles*, *the tourist* itself must be a temporal entity. In even simpler terms, for an observer to be able to utter *The tourist visited castles*, depicting an indefinitely recurring situation, s/he must have observed (been told about, imagined) a "moving picture" of a tourist visiting castles. It cannot be the case that *the tourist* is a "physical entity" beyond time, as it were, divorced from the rest of the sentence/proposition, i.e., from *visited castles*. Analogously, viewed from the angle of *the tourist*, the participant *castles* in *The tourist visited castles* cannot be a static picture consisting of castles standing simultaneously on neighboring hills. In the imperfective reading of this sentence *castles* is also a "moving picture" – of a non-bounded time series of castles, appearing one after the other, each castle successively visited by *the tourist*. It would be illogical to claim that while *castles*

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<sup>11</sup>The mapping of temporal features onto the referent of the verb is possible because the English preterite (the past indefinite tense) has no aspectual meanings of its own. It can be likened to an empty bag (Kabakčiev 2017: 227) that can accommodate any aspectual value arising in the sentence or context. As for "verb referent" as a term, it is analogous to "nominal referent". It is the abstract entity a verb refers to. Note that nominals **can** refer to entities that are situations (actions, states, etc.). Conversely, verbs **always** (only) refer to entities that are situations.

is a non-bounded recurring temporal picture, *the tourist* is a physical entity, with unknown parameters. Why unknown? Because if *the tourist* is regarded as a temporal entity, its content is clear: a fleeting thing engaging in castle-visits. But if *the tourist* is a physical entity, some questions arise: what does *the tourist* consist of? The "material substrate" of *the tourist*? If yes, when, in what time interval? Does the "material substrate" cover the lifetime of the tourist, up to the moment of utterance? And if *the tourist* in *The tourist visited castles* is something physical, how does it look like? Obviously such questions about the "material essence" of *the tourist* are impossible to answer on the basis of the single sentence *The tourist visited castles*. Furthermore, even if the observer/speaker has more information about the "material status" of *the tourist*, the hearer, receiving *The tourist visited castles*, does not obtain it – the sentence provides to the hearer no information about *the tourist* as a physical thing. Whereas concerning the temporal status of *the tourist* the hearer's knowledge is adequate and fully sufficient for the purposes of communication. The entity *the tourist* is temporal, with features inseparably linked to the features of the referent of the verb *visited* and of the participant *castles*.

Put otherwise, *The tourist visited castles* is a sentence portraying a tiny stage of the individual "the tourist"<sup>12</sup>, namely, one engaged in visiting castles. And if someone asks how the individual behind the expression *the tourist* must be depicted, i.e., not within the confines of *The tourist visited castles*, the answer is easy. A longer passage or a short story about the tourist, describing this entity in more detail, will be a description of the individual "the tourist", including aspects of its physical appearance<sup>13</sup>.

But even now there remains a crucial question. Precisely how does it happen in cognitive and structural language terms that *the tourist* in *The tourist visited castles* acquires a temporal status? Note that the explication of temporal features by nominals such as *the tourist* and *castles* above mirrors the denotation of temporal features by abstract nouns such as *a grin, a deal, a fall, a party*, on the one hand, and *love, beauty, ineptitude, pride*, on the other. Detailed explanations of these two groups can be found in Kabakčiev (2000). Note the general rule in English for bounded nouns (*a grin, a deal, a fall, a party*) to be accompanied by an indefinite article, and for non-bounded nouns (*love, beauty, ineptitude, pride*) not to be accompanied by an indefinite article. Why is a castle-visit, represented by *a castle* in (5a), bounded at its ends, whereas *love* is non-bounded? Because, as we know from everyday experience, a visit to a castle is something that begins at a particular moment in time (entering the castle gates) and ends at another particular moment (leaving the castle gates), whereas *love* is something that has no definite initial point and no definite endpoint. In even simpler terms: we do not know and cannot say exactly when we started loving something or somebody; nor do we know when we stopped loving something or somebody. And it is here that an adequate explanation of the perfectivity of *visit a castle* and *have a party*, on the one hand, and of the

<sup>12</sup>The individual/stage distinction goes back in linguistics to Carlson (1977) and Quine (1960).

<sup>13</sup>On the necessity of a television/video representation for a description of the situation, including the temporal status of participants in such sentences, and actually in all kinds of sentences, see Kabakčiev (2000), Kabakčiev (forthcoming).

imperfectivity of *visit castles* and *have pride*, on the other hand, can be given. First, in a linguistic analysis all nominals can and must be treated as temporal entities at the sentence level – whether they otherwise, as lexical entries, denote physical objects (*tourist, castle*) or situations (*party, love*). Second, observe how clearly the indefinite article signifies temporal boundedness (*a grin, a deal, a fall, a party*), while the zero article marks temporal non-boundedness (*love, beauty, ineptitude, pride*); see Kabakčiev (2000) for lots of further detail. And against the background of such crystal-clear facts, there are linguists today who question the function of the article to mark temporal boundedness (see below)! But the temporality of participants in situations such as people and similar "material objects", that could be expected to turn into a theoretical issue, is not an issue in an appropriate temporal model of CA. What is more, it allows a sweeping generalization:

*All participants in situations are temporal entities – not only in all sentences in English but in all sentences in all languages!*

If the referents of nominals and verbs in English sentences like those above are temporal entities, they will, consequently, be temporal entities *in any language*. However, the structural specifics of each particular language must be taken into account when describing the mapping of temporal features between sentence elements: whether the language features CA or VA, whether it has articles or verbal aspect, etc. (see participants as temporal entities in the Slavic languages in Kabakčiev 2000: 155ff, 300). Regrettably, this extremely important aspect of the CA theory, temporality of participants, remains today systematically sidestepped by aspectologists, with some exceptions (Bulatović 2013, 2016). But the mass turning of blind eyes to an important aspect of a theory is actually a reassuring development – for it can be argued that if a major element in a theory has not been seriously contested for two decades after being reported by a major scientific publisher, it must be considered valid (until, if ever, proven otherwise).

### **On the Mechanism of Mapping Temporal Values in the Sentence – From Nominal Components onto the Verb, or Vice Versa**

The previous section provided arguments related to the necessity to view participants in situations as temporal entities, something based in cognition. Let us continue the discussion of the temporality of participants, now considering the mechanism of mapping as also related to language structure. It was established that *castles* in (5b) is a temporal entity that is non-bounded and indefinitely iterative, and that these features arise thanks to the zero article and the plurality marker. Note that it is precisely the non-bounded and indefinitely recurring entity *castles* that initially explicates the imperfectivity in the sentence. But precisely how is imperfectivity maintained until the final imperfective reading obtains? Clearly, a sentence beginning with *The tourist visited* is neither perfective nor imperfective, but can easily end up perfective by having a



bounded object as in *The tourist visited a/the castle/some/ two/many castles*. *The tourist visited castles*, however, ends with the temporally non-bounded entity *castles*. What happens then is that *castles* maps its non-boundedness in the form of indefinite iterativity back onto the referent of the verb *visited*, making the latter non-bounded and indefinitely iterative (cf. diagrammatic representations of mapping in Kabakčiev 2000). Note that while the perfectivity of *The/a tourist visited the/a castle* develops gradually and is maintained relatively smoothly from the beginning to the end of the sentence, the imperfective *The tourist visited castles* starts with the aspectually ambiguous phrase *The tourist visited* and with *the tourist* seemingly bounded, through an article. After the addition of *castles* the ambiguous phrase *The tourist visited* is re-interpreted as imperfective. To a person non-versed in CA this may seem strange, though not yet bizarre. What happens next already borders on the bizarre, and is at the same time very interesting, as it underlies the fundamental structure of CA. The analysis of the imperfective sentence *The tourist visited castles* cannot stop with the assertion that *castles* imparts a non-bounded (indefinite iterativity) reading on *visited* and on the VP *visited castles*. If a major CA assumption, to which I subscribe, Verkuyl's, is that all nominals (arguments) take part in the explication of the final aspectual value of a sentence, it is absolutely necessary to define also the role of the participant *the tourist* and see exactly how its final temporal constitution arises.

The analysis started with the assumption that to be able to utter *The tourist visited castles* the speaker must have perceived recurring castle-visits by a tourist. And if the sentence is about recurring castle-visits by *the tourist*, *the tourist* is a temporal entity, consisting of a time series of stages of the individual "the tourist", coinciding with the castle-visits. In other words, *the tourist* in *The tourist visited castles* is an entity with a temporal status **exactly equivalent** to the temporal status of *castles*. But this non-bounded temporal status of *the tourist* does not materialize out of thin air, especially taking into account that it contains an article, hence it ought to explicate boundedness. The final temporal status of the entity *the tourist*, viz., non-bounded iterativity, is **forced (mapped) on it, despite the article!** Initially by the participant *castles*, and then by the VP *visited castles*. Cognitive science may for the time being know very little about what happens in speakers'/hearers' heads when sentences like these are processed in the brain, but there can hardly be any doubt that the complex and incessant mapping described above does take place in people's heads!

With the explanation above, now it can easily be assumed that *the tourist* is an unidentifiable number of tourist stages in the vision and mind of the speaker uttering *The tourist visited castles*. The assumption makes sense in everyday terms too. For the speaker of *The tourist visited castles* to be able to utter this sentence truthfully, s/he has to have observed not only an unidentifiable number of castle-visits but also such castle-visits that precisely *the tourist* executed. The explanation is also valid with respect to the structural language terms in which *the tourist* becomes a non-bounded, indefinitely

recurring entity in *The tourist visited castles*<sup>14</sup>. This happens thanks to the plurality and non-boundedness of *castles* – mapped back onto the referent of the verb *visited* and the whole VP *visited castles*, and then, further back, onto the referent of *the tourist* (see Kabakčiev 2000: 123-151).

As a synopsis, underlying the above model of CA is the idea that, understood semantically as a distinction between perfectivity and imperfectivity, in functional terms,

*compositional aspect actually represents an all-pervading and perpetual process of mapping temporal features between elements of the sentence, especially between referents of verbs and of nominals that are participants in situations (i.e., verbs' arguments)*

and also, partly, in the context (but this issue is not explored here). The possibilities for mapping temporal features between verbs and nominals are described exhaustively in Kabakčiev (2000), also using diagrammatic representations, cf. also Kabakčiev (forthcoming). Finally, as already argued, there is no reason not to assume that the mapping of temporal features between verbs and nominals in the sentence/clause (plus some other elements, mainly adverbial) is **a universal phenomenon**, valid for all languages. As for exactly how mapping of aspectual values from verbs onto nominals in VA systems works, e.g., in the Slavic languages, and exactly what consequences it brings about, this is an issue in need of future research.

### **The Failure to Recognize the Two Different Types of Aspect: CA and VA**

The assumption that Verkuyl's CA theory, characteristic of languages such as Dutch and English, could be applied to languages with VA may not be especially popular in aspectology, but it is not an exotic one either. Attempts at directly applying CA to Slavic data have been made by Borer (2005) and Borik (2006), among others. This is done on the basis of their obvious, but tacit, assumption that CA ought to work in the Slavic languages too. Borer (2005: 124, 187) writes that there are languages (Slavic) that mark perfectivity directly on the verb, i.e., boundedness there is "assigned range directly" (Borer 2005: 344) – and this gives rise to "the violability of Verkuyl's generalization" (Borer 2005: 345). Put otherwise, Verkuyl's theory may generally hold for languages like English, but not for the Slavic group.

Structurally the Germanic and the Slavic languages differ essentially in that while most Germanic languages feature a regular pattern of a definite and an indefinite article and lack VA, all Slavic languages feature VA and lack articles (some Slavic languages have a definite article but no indefinite). Borer (2005: 156) fails to recognize this essential difference between the Germanic and the Slavic languages in terms of what articles and their absence can do,

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<sup>14</sup>Of course, indefinitely recurring does not mean "recurring forever" but recurring an unknown number of times.

something explained years earlier on the basis of the thesis that aspect takes two separate forms, CA and VA (Kabakčiev 2000). The failure to recognize the two distinct types of aspect and the mixing up of the two phenomena leads to an impasse, with no space left for valid generalizations on aspect.

Similarly Borik (2006), treating perfectivity in English as configured in the VP instead of at the sentence level, provides examples from Russian showing that "a direct internal argument of some perfective verbs can receive a generic interpretation", i.e., Verkuyl's "unspecified quantity of X" (Borik 2006: 91). The CA theory cannot make valid predictions about Russian if it ignores the fact that Russian manifests VA, not CA. Like Borer, Borik argues that Verkuyl needs a value in the direct argument to obtain perfectivity. Hence, when perfectivity is available in the verb, as in Russian, it ought to induce "specified quantity of X" in the argument. But it does not, says Borik, as in sentences like *Petja razdelil ljudej na dobryx i zlyx* "Petja divided people into kind and mean" the verb *razdelil* "divided" is perfective but the argument *ljudej* "people" is generic, i.e., non-quantified (Borik 2006: 92). And as the association of a perfective verb with a non-quantified argument is not envisioned in Verkuyl's perfective schema, the schema, according to Borik, is defective.

It is worth asking: could Verkuyl not have made his perfective schema compatible with the Slavic data? The answer is: not really. His concern up to 1972 was the explanation of how aspect is realized in languages like Dutch and English – given that it was clear then how aspect is realized in the Slavic languages: as VA. This means that from the very discovery of CA in 1972 it became fully evident that CA represents *another type of aspect*, different from VA – something sidestepped by Borer and Borik. As for how CA and VA relate to each other, this is explained in Kabakčiev (2000: 123-161), years prior to Borer and Borik's publications.

Thus Borer and Borik illegitimately apply Verkuyl's CA theory to Russian, a language that features VA (not CA) and is radically different from English and Dutch – the languages for which CA was architected. Indeed, Verkuyl himself had also thought that his theory is applicable to all languages, including Slavic. However, aware of the distinction between CA and VA made in Kabakčiev (2000) – see Verkuyl's (2001) large review of my work (Kabakčiev 2000) – he never produced convincing data and arguments that CA is universal "as is", without drawing a distinction between CA and VA and without pinpointing the specifics of VA. As for Borer and Borik, they assign to Verkuyl's theory a defect, namely, inapplicability to languages with VA and without articles – that is actually a defect of their own approach and consists in the failure to distinguish between CA and VA systems. The wrong assumption that CA is directly applicable to all languages led to the wrong conclusion that Verkuyl's theory is defective or with an insufficient explanatory power. Verkuyl's theory is a gigantic breakthrough in linguistics and its explanatory power is enormous. But it needs to be complemented by a correct conceptualization of CA as a mirror image of VA, the mechanism of mapping temporal values between

referents of verbs and nominals, and the inverse dependence between markers of boundedness in verbs and nouns across languages<sup>15</sup>.

### Mass Failure No 1 in CA Theory: Assumption of an Atemporal Approach Instead of a Temporal

My approach, treating all referents of participants as temporal (see above, also Kabakčiev 2000, Kabakčiev forthcoming) easily overcomes the impasse inherent in atemporal approaches (Krifka 1989, 1992, 1998, Filip 2000, 2017, Padučeva 2004, Borer 2005, Borik 2006, MacDonald 2012, Tatevosov 2015, Fleischhauer and Czardybon 2016). In many publications the atemporal, hence spatial, boundedness of a participant in a situation is claimed to be mapped onto the verb, making the verb's aspectual value bounded. Most popular among atemporal approaches is the one exploring the so-called incremental-theme verbs, purported to be "convenient for explaining perfectivity". Incremental-theme verbs are mainly verbs of creation and annihilation (consumption). They are held to acquire perfectivity within VPs because of the spatial boundedness of the argument – created or annihilated. For example, *a fig*, when consumed entirely, as in *The boy ate a fig*, is said to "measure out" the eating of the fig. Let us carefully analyze the reasoning behind the "measuring-out". Exactly how can the spatial boundedness of *a fig* translate into the temporal boundedness/perfectivity of *ate* in *ate a fig*? For some seemingly strange, but actually very clear reason (see below), the participant *the boy* rarely, if ever, draws the attention of the followers of the incremental-theme trend. Their attention is fixed on the object to be consumed, and their reasoning goes like this. The argument *a fig*, being something bounded through the article, transfers its boundedness onto the verb. *A fig* is regarded as a physical object, which means that the boundedness is spatial. And as the boundedness of *a fig* in *The boy ate a fig* is spatial, the explanation, offered in hundreds of publications on incremental-theme verbs, amounts to a formulation (well articulated in Padučeva 2004: 50) that the spatial boundedness of objects transforms into the temporal boundedness of the verb.

How can spatial boundedness turn into temporal boundedness? This is ***an outright mystery*** – that would surely be welcomed in a fairy tale or a fantasy novel. But its place in linguistic analyses is questionable, to say the least. Indeed, as was to be expected, at one point a major advocate of the incremental-theme approach recognized the problem: "Take as an example the reading of a book; every part of the book corresponds to a part of the reading and vice versa. With other thematic relations, these properties normally do not obtain; for example, there is no correspondence between parts of the person that is reading and the reading event" (Krifka 1992: 44). This is the reason why the participant *the boy* in sentences like *The boy ate a fig* rarely, if ever, draws the attention of the advocates of the incremental-theme trend. Because if the

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<sup>15</sup>See the inverse dependence between markers of boundedness in verbs and nouns in Kabakčiev (2000: 153-161).

consumption of *a fig* appears to match the physical constitution of the fig, there is nothing similar that can be said to happen to *the boy* as regards the eating of the fig. Hence, in order not to compromise the approach with revelations such as Krifka's, its supporters were quick in clothing the problem in bizarre jargon. The miraculous transformation of spatial features into temporal ones was labeled "homomorphism" (Krifka 1992)<sup>16</sup>; "a theory called mereology"<sup>17</sup>, was harnessed to help explain how spatial features happen to metamorphose into temporal ones (Krifka 1998, Filip 2000, 2017). But, of course, the problem will always, mercilessly, persist: it can be assumed that a part of a book corresponds to a part of reading it, but it cannot be assumed that parts of a person reading correspond to the reading – as Krifka honestly admitted. Whether Krifka noticed the incompatibility between the incremental-theme approach and Verkuyl's postulate that the aspect of a sentence is a result of the impact of all the components, not just of the object on the verb, is unclear. In any case, the incompatibility, which otherwise simply does not exist in a temporal model, is a fact.

Another problem of the atemporal incremental-theme trend is that its supporters, struggling to explain perfectivity as described above, turn a blind eye to the circumstance that incremental-theme verbs are a tiny portion of all verbs in a language capable of explicating perfectivity. As I put it recently, "it does not matter whether you *draw/eat an apple* or *cut it, throw it, notice it, prefer it* or *forget it*. While only the first two are verbs of creation/ consumption, all the phrases above are perfective (prototypically, not always), and in a stable theory of aspect it is the perfectivity of all of them that has to be explained – not just of those with incremental theme verbs" (Kabakčiev 2018: 967). In my approach to the status of participants in situations, a purely temporal one (Kabakčiev 2000, Kabakčiev forthcoming), there is not a trace of doubt as to how mapping takes place. It is realized as *a transfer of temporal values* – no matter whether these are accommodated in nominal or verbal language structure.

## **Mass Failure No 2 in CA theory: Ignoring the Mechanism of Mapping Temporal Values, Coupled to a Misunderstanding of the Function of the Article**

There are certain minor exceptions to the trend of ignoring the mechanism of mapping temporal values. For example, some peripheral statements in two publications by Slabakova (1997, 1998) point to temporal features of nominals and the possibility for a verb to impart "its temporal properties to the object NP" (Slabakova 1998: 77). The major exception to the mass inclination to bypass the issue of NP temporal values is, to my knowledge, Bulatović (2013; 2016) – her publications show that she follows a temporal approach, albeit one that

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<sup>16</sup>Krifka (1992): "consider mapping to events and mapping to objects, the two relations which constitute the core of the construction of the homomorphism from objects to events".

<sup>17</sup>Mereology (Greek *meros* "part", Ancient Greek *lógos*, "word, speech"), dealing with wholes and their parts.

needs sophistication. But although the temporal approach is not popular, it is one that offers a definitive solution to several of the most fundamental issues in the CA theory, as already demonstrated.

As for the hypothesis for a rejection of the mechanism of mapping temporal values or of the inverse dependence between markers of boundedness in verbs and nouns, there are two publications (Czardybon and Fleischhauer 2014, Fleischhauer and Czardybon 2016) challenging my theory of the article-aspect interplay (Kabakčiev 2000) and providing some linguistic analysis, though not relevant to the challenge. There is something to emphasize here, however. My temporal approach may, indeed, be not very popular, but my theory of the inverse dependence between markers of boundedness (described below) is not solitary in aspectology. In the year of publication of my book on CA (Kabakčiev 2000), Leiss' conception of the article-aspect interplay also appeared (Leiss 2000). According to Leiss, the emergence of the definite article in three Proto-Germanic languages, Old Icelandic, Gothic and Old High German, is the result of the gradual loss in these languages of perfective verbs. The two conceptions, Leiss' and mine, complement each other and could even be regarded as one theory, establishing an article-aspect interplay: simultaneously synchronic and diachronic, across millennia and across languages that are very different grammatically.

Both Leiss' conception and my idea of the article functioning as a grammatical entity marking temporal boundedness on nominals (and hence perfectivity after the effectuation of the mapping mechanism) are rejected by Fleischhauer and Czardybon (2016). The authors' argumentation? It equals nil. They offer *no argumentation*, evading the scientific burden of proof (Kabakčiev 2018). Furthermore, strangely, their rejection of the aspectual function of a determiner is directed solely towards the definite article. Similar peculiar reasoning, divorcing the definite article from the indefinite one, is offered by Młynarczyk (2004: 69). Indeed, in a footnote in a previous publication Czardybon and Fleischhauer (2014: 392) mention the indefinite article as a quantization device, but insist that quantization is not enough to guarantee perfectivity. Why do they think quantization is not enough to guarantee perfectivity – or, in their phraseology, "is not enough to yield a telic predication"? Their answer: the definite article is not sufficient to yield a telic predication because "it is also compatible with an atelic predication", as in *She ate the sandwich in/for five minutes* (Czardybon and Fleischhauer 2014: 392).

First, as these gentlemen insist that sentences such as *She ate the sandwich* or *Peter ate the apples in ten minutes* are perfective, or, in their phraseology, "express a telic predication due to the referential properties of the incremental theme argument" (Czardybon and Fleischhauer 2014: 379), the following question begs to be put forward to them. Since *She ate the sandwich* and *Peter ate the apples* are equivalent to sequences such as *The/A woman ate the sandwich* and *The man/A man ate the apples*, what exactly is it in sequences or sentences like these that guarantees the explication of perfectivity? The answer is clear, and consists of two parts: (i) the thing that *cannot* guarantee the explication of perfectivity is the verb *ate* – because it takes part in both perfective (*The/A woman ate the/a sandwich*) and imperfective sentences (*The/A woman*

ate sandwiches); (ii) the thing that *guarantees* the explication of perfectivity in such sentences *is the article* – be it the definite article or the indefinite one, as seen in the four possible versions of the sequence *The/A woman ate the/a sandwich*, and as explained in detail above.

Second, the two authors' assertion that "the definite article is not sufficient to yield a telic predication" implies, and actually requires, that an additional device be found to "yield a telic predication" in sequences such as *The/A woman ate the/a sandwich*. Let us look for such a language device in one real sentence, *The woman ate the sandwich*. Recall that Verkuyl's theory identifies the telicity of the verb to be a necessary element for triggering perfectivity. However, what Czardybon and Fleischhauer (2014: 392) have in mind in their assertion that "the definite article is not sufficient to yield a telic predication" is obviously *not* the verb *ate*, as their assertion holds precisely for sentences such as *She/The woman ate the sandwich*, i.e., containing the verb *ate*. Hence, if the definite article and the verb are not sufficient devices for the explication of perfectivity, what is it in *The woman ate the sandwich* that triggers the perfectivity? I am afraid that, apart from the lexical meanings of the nominals *woman* and *sandwich*, there is simply nothing else left to generate perfectivity. Could the lexical meanings of *woman* and *sandwich* trigger perfectivity? I am afraid not. Furthermore, it must be heavily emphasized here that the analysis of *The woman ate the sandwich* is not at all a discussion of a single sentence. It is a discussion of the properties and functions of a super-gigantic semantico-syntactic schema, embracing millions of similar sentences and coinciding with Verkuyl's perfective schema. The schema serves as a nucleus for explicating perfectivity through two prototypical participants: a bounded agent performing a bounded action, the action falling onto a bounded object!

Third, the two gentlemen's insistence that sentences such as *Peter ate the apples in ten minutes* express "a telic predication due to the referential properties of the incremental theme argument" reveals that they are unaware of one of the fundamental tenets in the CA theory: aspect is explicated at the level of the sentence, not at the level of its components. In simpler terms, if *Peter ate the apples* "expresses a telic predication", this is *not* due solely to the referential properties of the incremental theme argument but is also due to the subject *Peter* being temporally bounded through a hidden article *the*! This becomes clear when the subject *Peter* is replaced by *ants*. Cf.: *Ants ate the apples* – this sentence is prototypically imperfective, for reasons explained above (and in Kabakčiev 2000). It appears that the awareness of certain fundamental CA tenets is a requirement a bit too high to meet.

In any case, the analysis above demonstrates that not only is Czardybon and Fleischhauer's reasoning deviant, the wrong statement "the definite article is not sufficient to yield a telic predication" re-confirms, even if indirectly, the major thesis, launched 35 years ago (Kabakčiev 1984a, 1984b) and later made more sophisticated (Kabakčiev 2000), that the article – both the definite and the indefinite – in English and similar languages is *a marker of boundedness*

*that guarantees the explication of perfectivity* through the mechanism of mapping temporal values between referents of nominals and verbs<sup>18</sup>.

### **On the Markers of Boundedness in Verbs and Nouns**

According to Abraham and Leiss (2012: 326), "the first researcher to note that languages develop either a category of aspect or an article system was the Bulgarian linguist Kabakčiev (1984b, 2000)". Indeed, as already claimed, one of my most essential conjectures within the CA theory is that there exists an inverse relationship across languages between markers of temporal boundedness on verbs and nouns. If a language lacks markers of temporal boundedness in verbs, they are found in nouns; and vice versa, if a language lacks markers of temporal boundedness in nouns, they are found on verbs. I outlined this interdependence in Kabakčiev (1984a, 1984b) and later developed and elaborated it (Kabakčiev 2000). The markers of temporal boundedness in verbs are prototypically represented by the perfective aspect, as in the Slavic languages. The markers of temporal boundedness on nouns are prototypically represented by the definite and the indefinite article, as in English and other modern Germanic languages. In languages like Finnish the markers of temporal boundedness are also located on nouns, but these markers are not articles. The encoding of temporal boundedness in Finnish is executed by the nominative and the accusative case. The marker of temporal non-boundedness in languages like English is the zero article; in languages like Finnish it is the partitive case. There are hybrid languages too, manifesting a mixture of markers of boundedness and non-boundedness on verbs and nouns. Among these languages are Bulgarian and Greek – featuring simultaneously the perfective aspect in verbs and a definite article, but no indefinite article. The theory of the inverse relationship across languages between markers of temporal boundedness in verbs and nouns complements Leiss' (2000) theory of the link between the disappearance of perfectivity in the verb and the appearance of a definite article in Proto-Germanic<sup>19</sup>.

Three decades after the revolutionary discovery of CA, in a review of Kabakčiev (2000), Verkuyl (2001) argued that "we are at the beginning rather than in the final stage of theory formation about tense and aspect". The mass failure of researchers to recognize not only the mechanism of mapping temporal

<sup>18</sup> A recent paper rejecting the aspectual function of the article, using an exclamation mark as its only "argument" and offering the revelation that a theory of aspect is simply impossible, is Pátrovics (2017). Its form of evading the burden of proof is drastic. Instead of an analysis of at least a single sentence, the author offers free reasoning accompanied by a philologist's understanding of theoretical physics.

<sup>19</sup> An anonymous reviewer points to the need for a typological study across languages to confirm (or disprove) the inverse relationship between markers of temporal boundedness. While the suggestion is, without doubt, absolutely reasonable, such an enterprise will require enormous resources (both material and intellectual) to identify the relevant data, including for languages that are severely understudied, and to pinpoint the internal mechanisms for every language – and these will surely be intricate (cf. those for English described above). Definitely a grand task – that stands before research teams and institutions rather than separate enthusiasts.



values, to which Verkuyl (2001) does not subscribe, but also some of the fundamental tenets of his own model – for example, that aspect is explicated at the level of the whole sentence, appears to lend credibility to his 2001 position and to suggest that it might, unfortunately, be valid even today. I do not share such an opinion. The fact that there are publications leading the CA theory astray, no matter what percentage of all writings they are, cannot weaken or damage it.

### **Prospects for the Development of CA**

Apart from some efforts described above to challenge Leiss' (2000) and Kabakčiev's (2000) theory of the aspect-article interplay, there have been, to the best of my knowledge, no other attempts at refuting it within the two decades after its publication separately by the two authors. It is a pity, however, that Leiss' (2000) extremely insightful theory of the rise of the definite article in parallel with the demise of verbal aspect in Old Germanic remains ignored by specialists in Proto-Germanic. A brand-new large study specifically devoted to article emergence in Old English only mentions in a footnote Leiss' work and the possibility for the emergence of articles in the Germanic group to be due to the loss of aspect (Sommerer 2018: 47). Given that Leiss' theory handles the heart of the matter, it would have been natural for Sommerer to analyze Leiss' theory and to endorse or reject it; she sidesteps it instead. On the other hand, the absence of proof that Leiss and Kabakčiev's theory of the aspect-article interplay is wrong – for almost twenty years already, constitutes support for its viability. Two decades is more than a sufficient period for critics and disbelievers to find contradicting data, formulate the necessary argumentation and refute a theory.

The heuristic potential of CA, including the theory of the inverse dependence of markers of boundedness and Leiss' theory of the emergence of articles in the Germanic languages as a result of the loss of aspect were recently put to the test by myself, in a study of aspect in Old English (Kabakčiev forthcoming). Among the conclusions is that: "from the point of view of the continuum between VA languages and CA languages, where Proto-Indo-European and the Slavic languages occupy one end (VA), and most modern Germanic languages (English, German, Dutch, etc.) occupy the opposite end (CA), Old English is a very interesting hybrid language with its remnants of VA and at the same time a CA system featuring no definite article at one stage, and a gradual emergence of a definite article (and later an indefinite one) in following stages". Thus, provided these conclusions are correct, of course, the theory of CA with the inverse dependence of markers of boundedness and Leiss' aspect-article diachronic link proves capable of providing a description of an extinct language, Old English, with a grammatical system that is completely different from Modern English.

Another area for future applications of the CA theory is grammar, with a complete absence of information on CA in English grammars – a defect in a

sphere important for the whole of humanity (in view of the world status of the English language) that went almost unnoticed for decades after the discovery of CA (but see Schüller 2005). My English grammar (Kabakčiev 2017) uses the CA theory to explain in a uniform way tense, lexical meanings of verbs and nouns, the articles (*a, the*, the zero article) and time adverbials for the signaling of aspect, and this makes it the first grammar to use CA in the description of English (see Bulatović's 2018 review of it)<sup>20</sup>. It was several years earlier that a publication by Bulatović (2013) had raised, for the first time in linguistics, very serious and detailed criticism against the treatment of aspect in English grammars and voiced the need for them to include CA. Apart from opening the eyes of the linguistic community as regards the conspicuous need for certain major issues in English grammar (among which tense, articles, time adverbials) to be explained through the CA theory, Bulatović's (2013, 2016) work actually confirms that CA is such an essential phenomenon in English and similarly structured languages (Dutch, German, and actually the large majority in the Germanic group) that not only foreign learners but also teachers and educated native speakers of these languages will profit immensely from acquiring the knowledge of it.

## Conclusion

The theory of CA, almost half a century old already, is not a thing of the past! It is still developing – with the inevitable vicissitudes and issues – and has a lot more to offer. It should appropriately deal with the trends leading to dead ends and be enriched by novel ideas and approaches. Possible directions of future research? The heuristic potential and the explanatory power of the theory of the inverse dependence of markers of boundedness in verbs and nouns, with the underlying conception of the temporal nature of all participants in situations, could be applied to any natural language: living or extinct, located anywhere on the planet, comprehensively studied or not, related or non-related to the languages that are already well-known. The mechanism of mapping temporal values between nominals and verbs in the sentence could be applied to languages with VA systems also – to see exactly how verbs map their temporal properties onto nominals and what effects this brings into the semantics of sentences and the general grammatical and lexical structure of the relevant language. The CA system itself, as known today and discussed predominantly on English and Dutch data, can, and must, be extensively analyzed on data from other Germanic languages as well – to see exactly how these languages differ from English and Dutch. For example, German considerably differs from English in its tense system, hence it also differs significantly in its arsenal of devices for explicating perfectivity and imperfectivity.

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<sup>20</sup>Huddlestone and Pullum's (2002: 118-125) solitary recognition (first in a comprehensive grammar of English) that the perfective/imperfective contrast exists in English is a ray of hope for the future of English grammars.

Finally, as the short reference above to Finnish shows (a language with a case system serving the explication of aspect), the theory of CA can be expected to undergo considerable progress and be especially enriched if applied to languages that are structurally very different (e.g., tenseless, without VA, without articles and/or cases related to aspect – in various combinations of these features) from the well-known modern Indo-European ones used so far in its development.

### Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers of this article for their comments and suggestions.

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