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EDITOR'S MESSAGE



I am delighted to introduce this Issue 2, Volume 5 of *English Studies at NBU*!

It offers nine articles on a wide array of topics, from teaching English as a second language (*Christina A. DeCoursey*) including with the use of ICT (*Abdelmajid Bouziane and Rachid Elaasri; Liubomir Djalev and Stanislav Bogdanov, and Elias Bensalem*) to existential therapy against death anxiety and conceptual metaphors in poetry (*Issa Omotosho Garuba; Robert Tindol*) to mythic device to construct narratives in novels (*Tadd Graham Fernée*) to translating linguistic metaphors (*Charlène Meyers*) and the study of attitudes to democracy in Bulgaria (*Zhivko Minkov*).

As always, my considerable appreciation goes to all my colleagues whose generous contributions of time and effort have made this issue of ESNBU possible.

Let me end by wishing our readers, authors, reviewers and the entire editorial team a very happy, peaceful and prosperous 2020.

Boris Naimushin,
Editor in Chief

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2019 IN REVIEW

It's been a great year! Again!

English Studies at NBU keeps growing and developing.



Our most significant achievements this year? We became members of Crossref and started registering doi numbers - this will definitely provide more visibility of the output of our authors.

MIAR, a database for analysis of scientific journals of the University of Barcelona, has given us a 9.1 rating, up from 2.8 for 2017.

NACID, the National Centre for Information and Documentation of the Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science, has included us in the list of indexed journals, which has local gains for Bulgarian authors. Index Copernicus included us on the Journals Master list database so published articles are now “worth” 20 value points from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

In terms of archiving and long term preservation, we keep sending digital full-text copies to CEEOL and hard copies of the journal to the Library of Congress.

On a different note, we updated the landing abstract pages on the web site by implementing the PlumX metrics widget so our authors and readers can better understand where their papers are used. Indeed, the web site has undergone great optimization to load faster, especially on mobile devices. Additionally, we reorganised the content - the [Backstage](#) blog is dedicated to news and educating our readership while the main section of the web site is entirely dedicated to the journal.

We stick to our mission and publish work by PhD candidates, which are now about a third of our authors.

We also see more of our authors opt in for OpenData and provide their raw data publicly – we believe this has a tremendous impact on these researchers' credibility.

We wish for more reviewers to opt in for Open Reviews but it is hard to change common, deeply rooted beliefs of institutions that anonymous reviews are better. We're open for discussion on this matter on our [Facebook group](#) or privately by e-mail.

For the next year? We have plans, stay tuned!

Wishing you all a happy New Year 2020!

Stan Bogdanov

Managing Editor

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AGE AND GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EVALUATING THE PEDAGOGICAL USABILITY OF E-LEARNING MATERIALS

Liubomir Djalev, New Bulgarian University
Stanislav Bogdanov, New Bulgarian University

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the pedagogical usability of interactive e-learning materials for foreign language practice. It is based upon two studies of the expected between-group and within-group differences among participants in the educational process. The sample consists of two groups – lecturers and students, a total of 100 participants, each evaluating four materials specifically prepared for this study. Two consecutive repeated measures ANOVA were conducted in which the gender/age, the position of the participants in the educational process, and usability dimensions were the independent variables. Results indicated that all independent variables and their interactions have a significant effects on the evaluations of the pedagogical usability. Women tend to assign higher values than men. Age groups generally differ in their evaluations, although there is a tendency to give similar ratings for the individual dimensions of pedagogical usability. The 31-40 years age group evaluates the materials higher while the lowest evaluations are given by the groups of 21-30 and 50+ year old participants. Students tend to rate the pedagogical usability systemically higher than the lecturers. Usability dimensions also have a significant effect on evaluations. The most prominent feature of the materials, by a great margin, is their Applicability. The findings corroborate previous research which show age and gender differences in web usability do exist. We conclude that these differences exist as much in pedagogical usability as in technical usability. Further investigations are suggested to explore more deeply the differences in the perceived pedagogical value of e-learning materials as this has implications for instructional designers, teachers and learners alike.

Keywords: pedagogical usability, e-learning, foreign language teaching, instructional design, age differences, gender differences

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Technical and pedagogical usability

Usability is a concept born in recent years in the field of computer science, which initially focuses on human-computer interaction. In this mode of thinking, the starting point for the development of software applications is not so much their technological aspect, but consumers. Very soon, due to the fierce competition on the market for goods and services, this concept crosses the boundaries of the computer sphere, a testimony of which is the definition of usability in the international ISO standard. According to ISO 9241-11 (1998; 2018) for the Ergonomic requirements for working with visual terminals (later transformed into the more general Ergonomics of human-system interaction), usability is defined as "the extent to which a product can be used by specific users for achieving specific goals with efficiency, productivity and satisfaction in a specific context of use". According to this definition, usability is a quality that manifests in the interaction of humans with products, systems or services created by the human mind and hands. While the concept is still primarily used as a feature of software applications and web sites, it is also applicable to appliances, tools, and anywhere where people interact with objects, products or services. The word "specific" emphasizes that the product used is easy, convenient, and satisfying; it enables users to do the job it is intended for. There is no product that is usable or not usable in itself - this quality depends on the goals and needs of specific users in a particular context.

Despite the widespread adoption of the concept of usability, empirical research in this field, particularly the practical application of the ISO standard, is too scarce (Jokela et al., 2004). The reason for this is perhaps less in the weak theoretical or pragmatic interest than in the novelty of the concept, which is still seeking its quantitative and qualitative parameters. For example, Quesenbery (2001), noting that usability as "ease of use" of the product is a simplification of the problem, sets a series of challenging questions about what people really understand by "usability". Is it the result of any activity (for example, a software product), or is it a customer-centered development process, or is it a set of techniques (e. g. heuristics), or a product development philosophy designed to meet the needs of users? (Quesenbery, 2001)

Strictly speaking, none of these questions has a correct answer including the last one which tempts us to prefer it because of its generalization. Usability is a characteristic of the product, but it cannot be considered as its inherent, human-independent feature. In

accordance with Heider's (1958) early ideas in his Attribution theory, one can say that in the process of interaction with the product individuals attribute the characteristics of "usability" to the product. This property, however, exists only in their minds.

On the other hand, usability can be seen as a quantitative result, which is a desirable consequence of the application of a holistic user-oriented product development philosophy. Here specific techniques are used to increase the level of this feature. The authors draw attention to the multidimensionality of the concept of usability, and Quesenberry (2001) ingeniously identifies five "Es" which collectively describe consumer requirements of the product: it must be Efficient, Effective, Engaging, Error free and Easy to learn. We may notice the versatility of this view of usability.

The concept of pedagogical usability fits perfectly into this conceptual framework. It arises as a result of the natural evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and their use for educational purposes. In this setting, researchers begin to pay attention to the pedagogical aspects of the usability of these technologies. Teaching materials used in the learning process are products designed to support the achievement of certain educational goals and they must be subject to at least the same usability requirements. However, the understanding of pedagogical usability is not limited to simply replacing the term "product" with "teaching material" in any of the usability definitions.

Many researchers distinguish between "technical" and "pedagogical" usability of educational technologies. According to Hadjerrouit (2012), technical usability refers to the seamless interaction between the person and the product (or the system, in particular certain educational software), which aims to reduce the cognitive load (Sweller, 1988) in the interaction and to free up cognitive resources. These resources can be used in the learning process, the support of which is the main purpose of pedagogical usability. Specifically, in the context of e-learning, technical usability is expressed in terms of how much an educational site is convenient, practical, and useful for learners as regards shaping the content, information structure, navigation and overall site design. Several systems of criteria have been developed to assess technical usability (see Nielsen, 1990; Nielsen, 2000, Nokelainen, 2005, Hadjerrouit, 2012; Djalev & Bogdanov, 2013). Pedagogical usability refers to the learning aspects of educational technologies and their potential to support the learning process (Melis, Weber &

Andrès, 2003). To evaluate these aspects of e-learning systems, Nokelainen (2004, 2005) has developed a comprehensive system of criteria that can be applied to any e-learning material (see also Hadjerrouit, 2012; Djalev & Bogdanov, 2013).

The two concepts are interconnected. Furthermore, the pedagogical aspects of e-learning materials can be considered as added value to their technical aspects. Kukulska-Hulme & Shield (2004) examine the usability of e-learning websites as a multi-layered feature in which technical usability forms the bottommost layer without being self-sufficient.

Research objective

In previous publications (Djalev & Bogdanov, 2013; Bogdanov, 2013a), we presented some results from an empirical study of the pedagogical usability of e-learning materials (EDM) used in English language teaching settings. We examined the problem from the viewpoints of the two main groups of participants in the learning process - teachers and students. In particular, we presented the results of the analyses of (1) the latent structure underlying the evaluation of the pedagogical usability of the EDM; (2) the reliability and consistency of the pedagogical usability ratings of the two groups of participants; as well as (3) some expected differences depending on the role of the participants in the educational process; whether the teachers were native or non-native English speakers; the university where students are trained, and the type of EDM. In another paper Bogdanov (2013) presented results from a study of the effect of the intensity (frequency of exposure) of e-learning on the evaluation of the pedagogical value of the e-materials.

The aim we set out in this paper is to complement the emerging complex picture of the pedagogical usability of the EDM with two studies of the expected between-group differences by gender and age among participants in the educational process. The interaction of these factors with the role of individuals in the educational process and with the dimensions of pedagogical usability of EDM will also be analyzed.

Method

Design

This study focuses on the search for between-group differences in evaluating the pedagogical usability of the EDM used in English language training at C1 level of Bulgarian

students from two universities in the country. For this purpose two consecutive analyses of variance were conducted in which the gender and age of the participants were taken as the main independent variables. As an additional between-group variable with two levels - teachers and students, the position of the participants in the educational process was used. The study also included a within-group independent variable with 10 levels, which were the dimensions of pedagogical usability. Thus, the design of each of the analyses was mixed, with two between-group and one within-group variables, with the latter two (position and usability) being used to examine only their interaction with gender and age. The dependent variables were the participants' evaluations of the individual EDM pedagogical usability dimensions, expressed by their composite scores on the subscales of the Pedagogically meaningful eLearning questionnaire (PMLQ) (Nokelainen, 2006) presented later. The method applied for statistical analyses of the data was repeated measures ANOVA.

Materials

For the purposes of the study, four sets of e-learning materials were developed, designated as EDM 1, EDM 2, EDM 3 and EDM 4. The materials were developed in accordance with the advanced level C1 curriculum according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages developed by the Council of Europe (2001) in the general English language courses at New Bulgarian University. EDM 1 is designed to introduce a new grammar structure and consists of 20 screens with embedded images; EDM 2 is designed as revision of thematic vocabulary and consists of 5 screens with interactive exercises and built-in audio recordings; EDM 3 consists of a 9-screen sequence of a grammatical structure, divided into small portions in the following mode: presentation - practice - elaboration; EDM 4 is a continuation of EDM 3 and consists of 11 screens for extra practice for listening comprehension, finding key vocabulary, and word order practice. (for more details about the purpose, structure and the development of the EDM, see Djalev & Bogdanov, 2013).

Measurement tool

The evaluation of the pedagogical usability of the EDM was performed using the Pedagogically Meaningful eLearning Questionnaire (PMLQ), developed by P. Nokelinen and a team (2006) from the University of Tampere, Finland. The questionnaire has two forms - for students (with 56 questions) and for teachers (with 60 questions). The two forms are equivalent with the exception of the last four questions from the teacher form

which only concern this group of participants in the educational process. Therefore, these four questions (57, 58, 59 and 60) were removed from the questionnaire, as well as three other questions (16, 17 and 18) because of their inapplicability to the developed EDMs. The responses to the questions are on a 6-point Likert-type scale in which values range from 1 (disagree) to 5 (completely agree), and 6 - N/A (not applicable to this material). Prior to data processing, the last point (6) was transformed to a zero value, giving the scale at least ordinal meaning without altering the verbal meaning of that point.

The questions are randomized but organized into ten subscales of pedagogical usability - 1. *Learner control*, 2. *Learner activity*, 3. *Cooperative/ Collaborative learning*, 4. *Goal orientation*, 5. *Applicability*, 6. *Added value*, 7. *Motivation*, 8. *Valuation of previous knowledge*, 9. *Flexibility*, and 10. *Feedback*. Further information on the PMLQ and its scale structure, as well as the English version of the questionnaire, can be found in Nokelainen (2006), and in Djalev & Bogdanov (2013).

Participants

The study included two categories of participants: English language teachers and students attending general English language courses, with a total sample size of 100 subjects. The first group consisted of 20 lecturers recruited for the study because of their participation in various interest groups on the Internet, that are involved in developing interactive learning content. Participants in this group were 10 women and 10 men. With respect to age, all participants were divided into four groups (21-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 50+ years). Among the teachers, the representatives of the first age group (21-30) were 5 (25%), 4 teachers (20%) were between 31 and 40 years old, 5 teachers (25%) were aged 41-50 years and another 6 teachers (30%) were 50 and more years old. In terms of nationality, 8 of the teachers (40%) were Bulgarians, the rest belonged to eight other nationalities as follows: United Kingdom - 5 participants (25%), and Australia, The Netherlands, France, Germany, New Zealand, Poland and USA – 1 teacher (5%) each. Teachers for whom English is mother tongue were 8 (40%). The rest are speakers of their national languages respectively. The teachers' profiles suggest that the sample is well balanced with regard to gender and age, with a predominant share of the participants in the higher age groups, therefore with greater teaching experience.

The group of students included 80 participants, 48 of whom were male (60.00% of all students) and 32 female (40.00%). The largest subgroup fell within the age range

of 21-30 years ($n=67$, 83.75%). The other participants were relatively evenly distributed in the higher age groups, with 4 students in the 31-40 age group (5%), 3 in the 41-50 age group (3.75%) and 6 of the participants were over 50 years old (7.50%). Most of the participants in this group were students at New Bulgarian University (NBU) ($n=63$, 78.75%) and the rest were students at the University of National and World Economy (UNWE) ($n=17$, 21.25%).

The NBU students' profile is very diverse due to the specifics of the organization of foreign language learning at the university, where students from different majors, years of study and of different ages may be enrolled in the same English language course at level C1. The profile of UNWE students is much more homogeneous. Another significant difference between the students of the two universities can be seen in their experience with EDM and in e-learning in general. While for NBU students, much of the curricular content of the courses in the various majors, including those in full-time education, is also available through the institutional Moodle as an e-learning platform, for the students of the UNWE, e-learning is rather "incidental" and "extra", which is provided to them when possible and desired by teachers.

Procedure

The interactive e-learning materials developed as objects of evaluation, along with instructions and the PML questionnaire, were uploaded to a designated web site. The instructions, the same for teachers and students, required the participants to do the interactive online exercises and, after each EDM, to evaluate it using the online questionnaire. Responses to questions were stored in an online database¹. Time constraints on the task were not specified because it was of no interest to the present study. The data were collected from April to June during the second semester of the academic year.

Results

Two consecutive ANOVAs with repeated measures were performed with different configurations of independent and dependent variables to examine between-group and within-group differences.

¹ Data is available as open data on Mendeley; see References.

Between-group gender differences

The first analysis is designed to compare the results of the evaluation activity of the participants in the study, differentiated into two gender groups. As noted, the sample of participants is fairly balanced (a total of 58 men and 42 women). In the study participants were asked to evaluate each EDM, but not all did the task correctly. Therefore, the analysis was performed on data from 393 responses. Two more variables were included in it. A second independent variable reflects the position of the participants in the educational process with two levels (lecturers and students), and the latter represents the various aspects (dimensions) of the pedagogical usability of the EDM, presented through the subscales of the PML questionnaire. Dependent variables were the composite scores on these subscales. This outlines the complex between-within design of the study, which includes two between-group and one within-group factor. Repeated measures ANOVA analysis was performed on the data. The results are presented in the following Table 1.

Table 1

Results of the Repeated measures ANOVA with factors Gender, Position of the participant in the educational process and Dimensions of pedagogical usability

Effect	SS	df	MS	F	p	Partial eta-squared	Observed power (alpha=0.05)
Intercept	918369.76	1	918369.76	18120.17	0.00	0.98	1.00
Gender	3691.10	1	3691.10	72.83	0.00	0.16	1.00
Position	3337.64	1	3337.64	65.85	0.00	0.14	1.00
Gender*Position	571.79	1	571.79	11.28	0.00	0.03	0.92
Error	19715.36	389	50.68				
Usability	268327.5	9	29814.17	2543.30	0.00	0.87	1.00
Usability*Gender	1496.7	9	166.29	14.19	0.00	0.04	1.00
Usability*Position	766.7	9	85.19	7.27	0.00	0.02	1.00
Usability*Gender*Position	680.4	9	75.60	6.45	0.00	0.02	1.00
Error	41041.0	3501	11.72				

The table contains a lot of evidence about the existence of statistically significant dependencies between the variables included in the analysis. First of all, we will look at the results of the general comparison of the gender-based groups, which express the main effect of this factor, as well as its interaction with the factor, representing two groups of participants in the educational process and with the pedagogical usability subscales of the PML questionnaire.

Considering gender as a single between-subjects factor, the difference between the mean scores of the two gender groups was statistically significant at $p = 0.00$. Women tend to assess the pedagogical usability of the EDMs systematically higher than men - the mean scores of the groups were $M = 20.19$ and $M = 17.78$ respectively, with equal standard deviations ($SD = 0.20$ for both groups). The difference between the two means estimated by the effect size is large ($\eta_p^2 = 0.16$) (Cohen, 1988; Miles & Shevlin, 2001) at the maximum power of the test ($1 - \beta = 1.00$).

As an independent single factor, the position of the participant in the educational process also affects the evaluation ($p = 0.00$), i. e. lecturers and students differ significantly in their evaluations of the pedagogical usability of the EDMs. In this comparison, students tend to rate the pedagogical usability systemically higher than the lecturers. The respective means scores were $M = 20.13$ and $M = 17.84$, with standard deviations shows greater homogeneity in students' evaluations ($SD = 0.13$) compared to the teachers' (0.25). The difference between the two means estimated by the effect size is large ($\eta_p^2 = 0.14$) at the maximum statistical power ($1 - \beta = 1.00$).

The latter factor also has an effect of interaction with the gender of the participants. Although with a small effect size ($\eta_p^2 = 0.03$), it nevertheless has a high statistical power ($1 - \beta = 0.92$). The following graph illustrates the systematically higher ratings that women (both lecturers and students) give to the pedagogical usability of the EDMs.

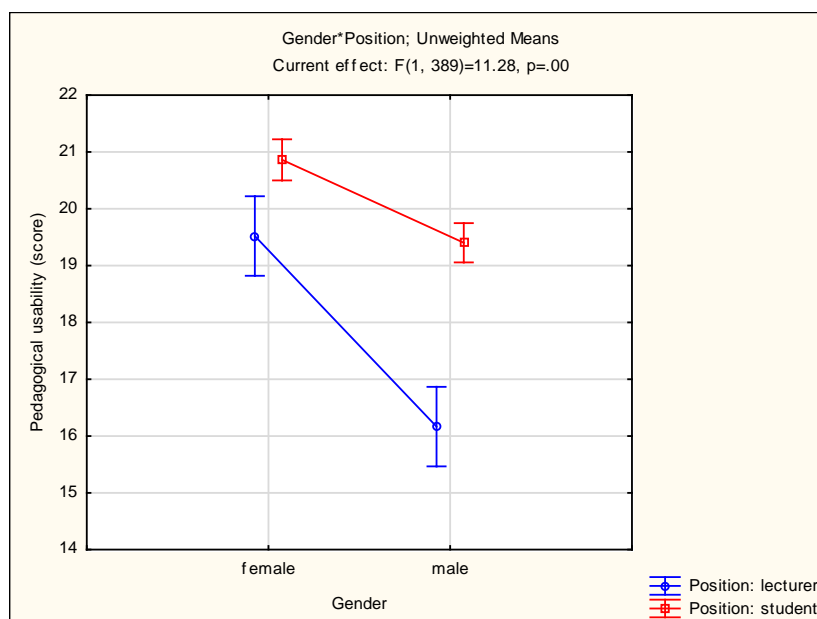


Figure 1. Unweighted mean scores of pedagogical usability evaluations - interaction of the factors Gender and Position of the participants in the educational process

However, the differences between the mean scores of the four categories of participants are not the same and have no equal significance. The confidence intervals around the means and the Bonferroni post-hoc test showed statistically significant differences between each two categories ($p < 0.05$), with the exception of the female lecturers and male students ($p = 1.00$).

The data in Table 1 show significant differences in the ratings of the participants on the individual subscales of the PML questionnaire, which means differences with respect to the dimensions of pedagogical usability. The level of statistical significance ($p = 0.00$), the large effect size ($\eta_p^2 = 0.87$), as well as a high power of the test ($1 - \beta = 1.00$) show unequivocally that the individual aspects of pedagogical usability of the EDMs, as a within-subject factor, have a significant effect on evaluations.

Although statistically significant, differences were observed among all subscale pairs ($p < 0.05$) except for subscales 6. *Added value* and 9. *Flexibility* ($p = 1.00$), most of the mean subscale scores were in the relatively narrow range of 10.12 (subscale 8. *Valuation of previous knowledge*) and 24.81 (subscale 2. *Learner activity*). In contrast to these relatively low values, the mean score on the subscale 5. *Applicability* reaches 48.07, which demonstrates the high quality of EDMs developed for the purposes of the study with respect to this important dimension of pedagogical usability.

An interaction of within-group factor and each of the two between-group factors (Usability*Gender, and Usability*Position) was observed, with significance levels at $p = 0.00$, with medium to low effect sizes but with a high power of the test ($1 - \beta = 1.00$). In the interaction between usability dimensions and gender, Bonferroni post-hoc test showed statistically significant differences in almost all combinations of the levels of the two factors ($p < 0.05$) with few exceptions. Overall, the level of the scores depends on the gender of the subjects and on the concrete dimension of usability, with women giving higher ratings than men.

In the second combination of usability dimensions and position of the participants factors, Bonferroni post-hoc test showed almost the same type of relations between the levels of the two independent variables ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, the mean scores depend on the participant's position and on the particular dimension of usability, with a clear tendency for students to rate usability higher than lecturers.

Especially interesting is the observed interaction of the three independent variables (Usability*Gender*Position). The following graph illustrates the strength and direction of their interaction.

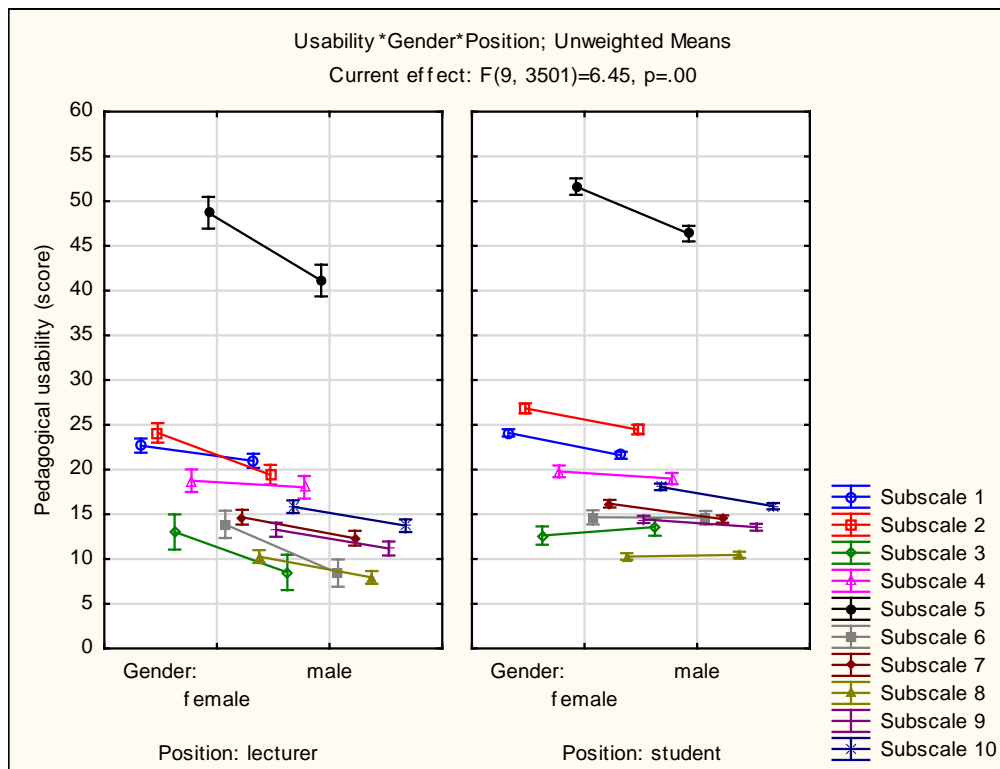


Figure 2. Unweighted mean scores of pedagogical usability evaluations - interaction of the factors Dimensions of pedagogical usability, Gender and Position of the participant in the educational process

The graph shows the almost ubiquitous dominance of female ratings (both teachers' and students' ones) of the individual pedagogical usability dimensions over those of male subjects. Some exceptions are also observed, for example in the ratings of subscales 6. *Added value*, 8. *Valuation of previous knowledge* and 3. *Cooperative / Collaborative learning*, and only for students.

There is also a particular stratification of the subscales, more clearly expressed in the students' ratings. Considerable higher ratings of all subjects on the subscale 5. *Applicability* are observed. After the top layer, which includes only this subscale, follows a second layer formed by two subscales - 1. *Learner control* and 2. *Learner activity* which were rated higher both by teachers and students, women and men. For students, this layer is separated, and for lecturers, it is diffusely connected to the lowest layer in which all other subscales are located.

Between-group differences by age

The next research question is related to the search for between-group differences in the age factor, as well as its interaction with other factors affecting the evaluation of EDMs. The design of this study is similar to that of the previous one. As the first independent variable, the age of the participants was selected at four levels: 21-30, 31-40, 41-50 and over 50 years old. As a second independent variable, the position of the participants in the educational process with 2 levels (lecturers and students) was included. Another variable was also included, related to the various aspects of the pedagogical usability of the EDMs, which is presented through the subscales of the PML questionnaire. Dependent variables were the composite scores on the individual subscales of the same questionnaire.

As with the results of the previous analysis, this design also features a number of significant effects, some of which have large effect sizes and high statistical power. Such effects on pedagogical usability evaluations are exerted by all three independent variables, as well as by all interactions between them. The data from the analysis are presented in the following Table 2. Since the main effects of the position and usability factors were presented in the previous study, we will consider here only the main effect of the age factor and its interactions with other factors.

Table 2

Results of the Repeated measures ANOVA with factors Age, Position of the participant in the educational process and Dimensions of pedagogical usability

Effect	SS	df	MS	F	p	Partial eta-squared	Observed power (alpha=0.05)
Intercept	666092.31	1	666092.31	15459.26	0.00	0.98	1.00
Age	2237.70	3	745.90	17.31	0.00	0.12	1.00
Position	6899.07	1	6899.07	160.12	0.00	0.29	1.00
Age*Position	3024.29	3	1008.10	23.40	0.00	0.15	1.00
Error	16588.48	385	43.09				
Usability	200076.30	9	22230.70	2020.01	0.00	0.84	1.00
Usability*Age	2789.82	27	103.33	9.39	0.00	0.07	1.00
Usability*Position	2022.11	9	224.68	20.42	0.00	0.05	1.00
Usability*Age*Position	1672.30	27	61.94	5.63	0.00	0.04	1.00
Error	38133.25	3465	11.01				

The significance of the effect of factor Age as a single demographic variable is at $p = 0.00$, with the power of the test $1 - \beta = 1.00$. Figure 3 shows interesting dynamics in

evaluations of the pedagogical usability of EDMs with increasing age of the subjects. The subjects of the lowest and the highest age groups are more critical of the qualities of the EDMs, and those aged 31-40 tend to rate them the highest. One common downward trend can be observed in the level of mean EDMs usability evaluations with the increasing age of the participants. This overall tendency is also pronounced, as the effect size is rather strong ($\eta_p^2 = 0.12$).

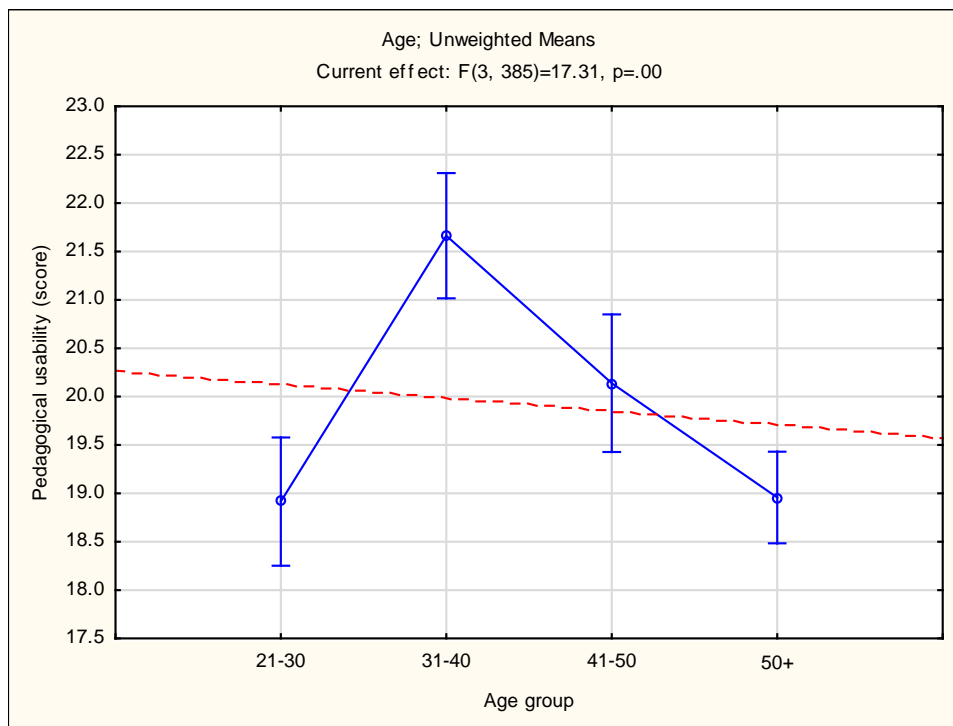


Figure 3. Unweighted means of pedagogical usability evaluations by age groups

The application of Bonferroni post-hoc test indicates that statistically significant differences exist only between some of the age groups. More generally, the lower levels of scores of the two end groups (ages 21-30 and 50+) contrast with the higher levels of the two middle age groups (31-40 and 41-50 years). In particular, the statistical significance of the differences between the mean scores of the 21-30 age group with the next two is respectively $p = 0.00$ and $p = 0.03$. The 41-50 age group holds a special place among the others. In terms of its scores, its representatives are close to both the 31-40 years old group ($p = 0.37$) and the 50+ age group ($p = 0.45$).

The interaction of factors age and position also has a significant effect on participants' ratings, with a level of significance $p = 0.00$, effect size $\eta_p^2 = 0.15$ and a high power of the test $1-\beta = 1.00$. The analysis of the mean scores of the different categories of participants presented in Figure 4 shows that, overall, students rate the pedagogical usability of EDMs

more highly than lecturers. However, a significant effect of the interaction between the two factors was observed only in the first two age groups (21-30 and 31-40 years old).

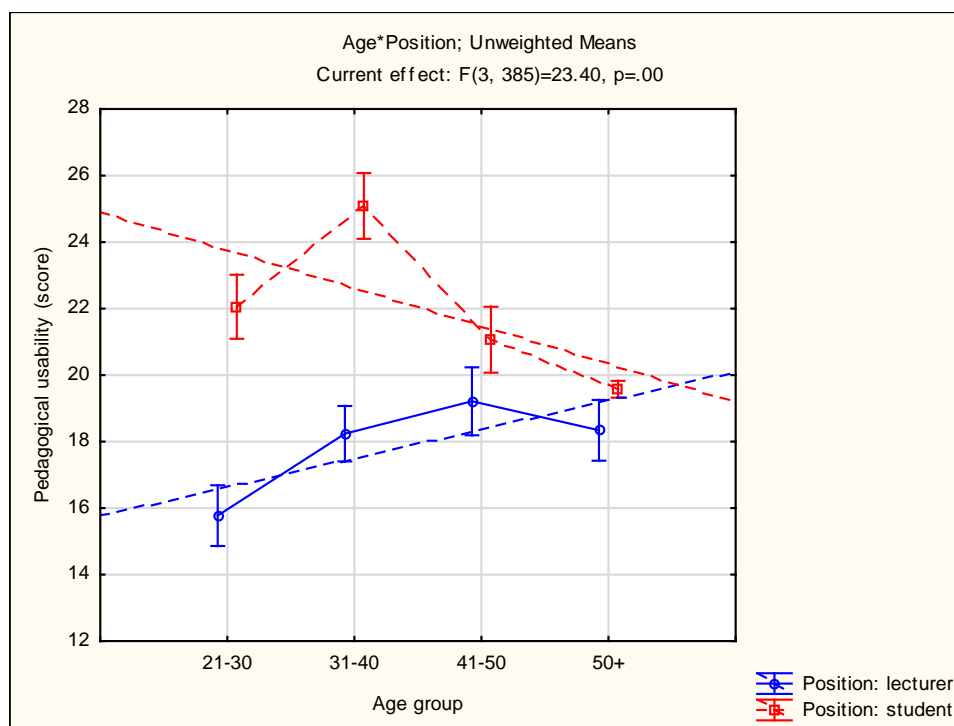


Figure 4. Unweighted mean scores of pedagogical usability evaluations - interaction of the factors Position of the participant in the educational process and Age

There is a clear and opposite tendencies of participants' evaluations of the pedagogical usability of EDM depending on their position in the educational process and age. While with increasing age teachers tend to rate more EDM highly, older students become more critical of the qualities of EDM than their younger counterparts. Thus, older participants in the educational process (teachers and students aged 41-50 and 50+ years) converge in their opinions, which makes the differences between their ratings non-significant.

The interaction between the factors Dimensions of usability and Age also has a significant effect on participants' ratings at $p = 0.00$, with a medium effect size $\eta_p^2 = 0.07$ and a statistical power $1-\beta = 1.00$.

As can be seen in Figure 5, participants from different age groups have generally similar ratings across the individual subscales. For most of the dimensions of pedagogical usability of the EDMs, for example subscales 1. *Learner control*, 4. *Goal orientation*, 7. *Motivation*, 8. *Valuation of previous knowledge* and 9. *Flexibility*, the mean age group evaluations are close or, if there is a significant differences between some of

them, they have a small effect size. For the other dimensions, such as 2. *Learner activity* or 6. *Added value*, and in particular 3. *Collaborative learning* and 5. *Applicability*, there are more considerable differences, with greater effect size; and the highest scores of the EDMs being assigned by the 31-40 years age group and the lowest – by 21-30 years age group. Perhaps the most interesting result of this analysis is the contrast scores of participants from the four age groups on the quality of EDMs on subscale 5. *Applicability*, which oppose their ratings on all other subscales. Obviously applicability is the most valuable quality of the EDMs developed for the purpose of this study.

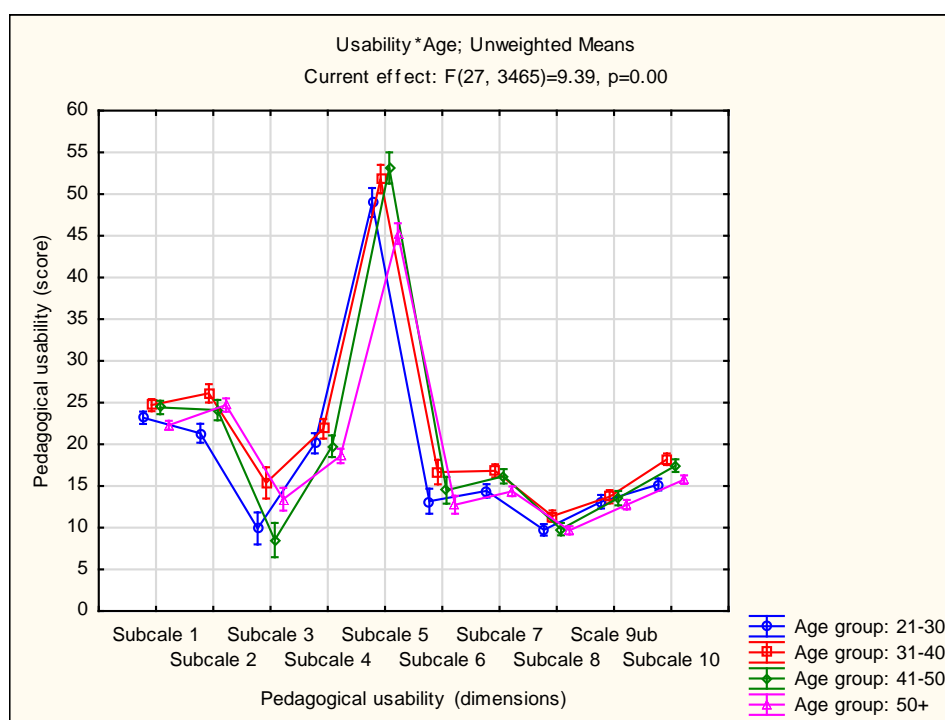


Figure 5. Unweighted mean scores of pedagogical usability evaluations - interaction of the factors Dimensions of pedagogical usability and Age.

The interaction between the three independent variables (Usability*Age*Position) is also characterized by statistical significance at $p = 0.00$, with a rather medium effect size $\eta_p^2 = 0.04$ and the power of the test $1-\beta = 1.00$. The data presented in Figure 6 show some similarities in the evaluations of the different categories of participants, determined by their position in the educational process and their age.

Here again, similar to the analysis of the interaction between the factors dimensions of usability, gender and position of the participants, a three-layer vertical structure of the evaluations of the pedagogical usability subscales are noticed. The topmost layer, which includes only 5. *Applicability* subscale, is clearly distinguishable

(with means in the range 42.60-57.88). The second layer is comprised of two (or three) subscales: 1. *Learner control* (with mean values in the range 20.70-28.06) and 2. *Learner activity* (with mean values in the range 17.80-30.18). Near these subscales, especially in the profile of the 21-30 age group, the subscale 4. *Goal orientation* is located (with mean values in the range 16.75-23.76). The other subscales form the lowest, denser layer where the subscales of the pedagogical usability are clustered and are more difficult to differentiate.

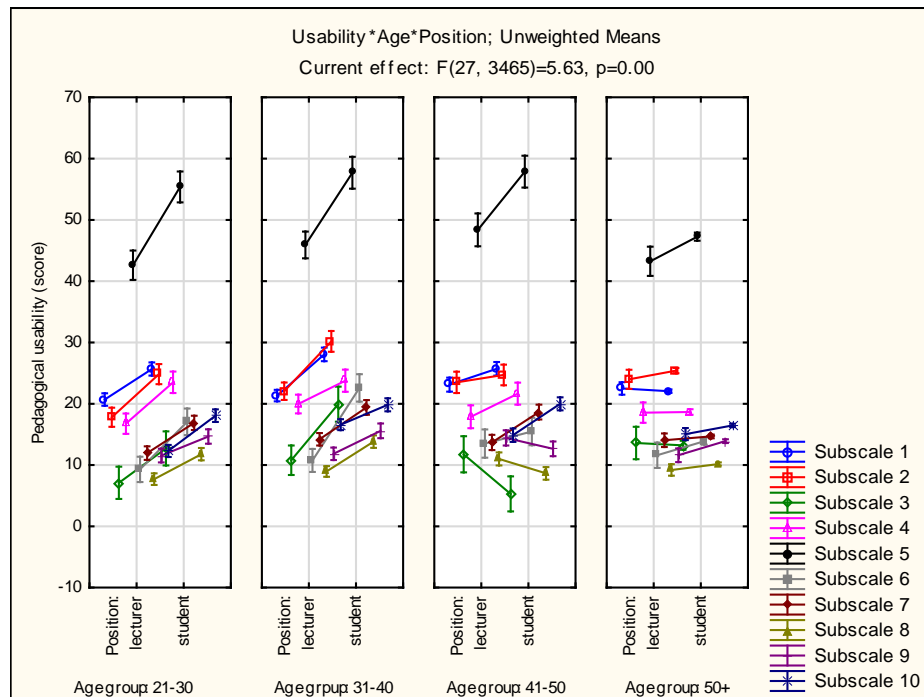


Figure 6. Unweighted mean scores of pedagogical usability evaluations - interaction of the factors Dimensions of pedagogical usability, Age and Position of the participant in the educational process

This stratification of the profiles of the individual subscales illustrates the effect of the factor Dimensions of usability. The overall vertical position of the profiles in the individual plots reflects in turn the effect of the age factor. It is best seen in the positions of the profiles of the subscale 5. *Applicability*. The overall mean subscale scores of the four age groups are respectively 18.92, 21.66, 20.14 and 18.96. The effect of the position factor is expressed in the slope of the profiles of the individual subscales. In most profiles, students' ratings are higher than those of the lecturers', especially in the first two age groups. Also, in most of them the differences between the mean scores of the two groups of participants are statistically significant. The following two higher age groups show mixed trends. In the 41-50 age group, students also score higher on

subscales with overall higher ratings, and lower scores on scales in the lower layers. In the 50+ years group, the scores of the two groups of participants are more aligned, with more non-significant differences between the respective means.

Discussion

The major aim of this study was to explore the gender and age differences in the evaluation of the pedagogical usability of interactive e-learning material designed for English language teaching. The position of the participants in the educational process and the dimensions of pedagogical usability were observed as additional independent factors. Numerous previous studies have shown that gender preferences do exist in web usability, for instance, web design in e-business (Cyr & Bonanni, 2015). However, even studies in e-learning contexts, such as the study by Cuadrado-García et al. (2010), who investigated gender differences in e-learning use and assessment, have studied technical usability features. Such studies have examined, for instance, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness (Okazaki & Renda dos Santos, 2012; Ong & Lai, 2006), while we found no studies with a focus on pedagogical usability.

The results of this study showed that all independent variables, as well as all possible interactions between them, have a significant effect on the pedagogical usability evaluations of the EDM. Generally, women tend to assess the pedagogical usability systematically more highly than men. In the interaction of gender with the position of the participants, both female teachers and female students rate usability more highly than their male colleagues. The level of ratings depends on the interaction between the participants' gender and the usability dimensions, with women more likely to give higher ratings than men on the individual dimensions. The interaction between the three independent factors also has a significant effect, within which several tendencies emerge - women tend to rate usability more highly than men; and students more highly than teachers; and that different dimensions have different levels of usability. The study shows that Subscale 5. *Applicability* is the most prominent dimension of pedagogical usability regardless of age, gender and the position of the participant. An explanation of these findings can be based on the claim that women are at an advantage in language education (Astleitner & Steinberg, 2005) and all materials in the present study are designed for foreign language practice. Further investigations are suggested to understand more deeply why a particular feature, in our case

Applicability, is given preference and under what conditions.

As a separate factor, age also has a significant effect on evaluation of pedagogical usability. There is an interesting curve in the usability evaluations which shows that the two age groups of participants, youngest and oldest, tend to rate usability lower than the participants in the two middle groups. The general tendency is for decreasing evaluations with increasing age. However, observing the interaction of the factor Age with the position of the participants in the educational process gives a more accurate picture of this dynamics. In general, students give higher usability ratings than faculty members. On the other hand, with increasing age, students tend to give lower usability scores and teachers tend to give higher scores. The general difference in the levels of evaluation between the two groups could be explained by experience with e-learning materials. Teachers have experience in both the development and application of EDMs for educational purposes, which keeps them at a certain distance from these concrete EDMs and leads to more criticisms of their qualities. Students, probably not all, have experience only as EDM users and have not yet developed the sensitivity to the qualities of EDMs that will make them more critical. The different directions of trends for students and teachers are probably due to generational differences related to their overall experience of working in an online environment and with web applications. Younger generations of students are more active Internet users who accept easily and appreciate highly the various web-based technologies. In contrast, older students would probably prefer some of the classic methods of presenting training materials. Younger teachers, probably for the same reasons, are more critical than their older colleagues who can be satisfied even with smaller steps towards new Internet technologies. All participants value almost equally some usability dimensions such as *Learner control*, *Goal orientation*, *Motivation*, *Valuation of previous knowledge* and *Flexibility*, and *Feedback*, with the age groups giving close ratings across all EDMs. For the other dimensions, such as *Learner activity* or *Added value*, and in particular *Collaborative learning* and *Applicability*, there are more considerable differences and the highest scores of the EDMs being assigned by the 31-40 years age group and the lowest – by 21-30 years age group.

Overall, the data from this study did not provide sufficient information to explain the difference in the perceived value of any of the pedagogical dimensions of e-learning

materials. On the other hand, it corroborates previous research that shows differences in age and gender when assessing usability. Our conclusion is that age and gender differences in pedagogical usability exist as much as they do in technical usability. Obviously, the gender and age gap has not yet closed, though the Internet and computers are more widely available at home and in institutions. Meanwhile, computer-based education is spreading fast. Therefore, it could be that male and female, as much as young and mature users as learners, have agreed on the saliency of certain features of educational software and systems.

One of the limitations of the study is that we did not look at the differences between young and mature female learners and young and mature male learners, which may have offered insight into the differences in the evaluations of these subgroups. Further research is necessary to try to find what motivates such differences since pedagogical usability has implications for instructional designers, teachers in online settings and ultimately (language) learners in online and hybrid learning environments.

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ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (EFL) TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND USE OF MOBILE DEVICES AND APPLICATIONS

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Abstract

This paper reports on a study of how a group of tertiary level EFL teachers perceived and used mobile devices in their teaching and personal learning. One hundred and fifty teachers (66 female, 84 male) from public universities in Saudi Arabia completed an online questionnaire. Results showed that the majority of participants used mobile devices and applications in their teaching and learning. Survey data showed that the vast majority of teachers had positively perceived and frequently used mobile technologies in their teaching and personal learning. In addition, there was a correlation between teachers' use of mobile technologies in their teaching and their use in learning. There was also a correlation between how teachers perceived the value of mobile technologies in learning, and how they use them in their teaching.

Keywords: EFL, mobile devices, Web 2.0 applications, technology integration

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The widespread use of mobile devices and proliferation of applications are reshaping the way people learn. Mobile devices include any portable, connected technology, such as basic smartphones, netbooks, tablets, and iPads (Schuller, Winters & West, 2013). Mobile applications include social networking sites or social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter), blogs, and video sharing sites (e.g., YouTube). Today's always-on world has undoubtedly increased learning opportunities for students. It has also encouraged many instructors to consider incorporating mobile devices and applications into their teaching, given the educational benefits that can be reaped (Lai & Lee Smith, 2017), especially considering that the majority of students own a mobile device that they use at university (Morris, Lambe, Ciccone, & Swinnerton, 2017).

Many studies have documented the potential benefits of integrating mobile devices and applications into teaching and learning. These devices offer students the opportunity to have autonomy over their own learning. Students can switch learning contexts from formal to informal with ease (Dias & Victor, 2017; Lai, Khaddage, & Knezek, 2013). Mobile devices can not only allow quick access to information and course content but also foster class discussions (Shraim & Crompton, 2015) and facilitate collaborative learning (Garofalakis, Lagiou, & Plessas, 2013) Schroeder & Greenbowe, 2009; Shih, 2011). Shih (2011) reported that incorporating peer assessment through the social media platform of Facebook, in learning English writing has improved student writing skills and increased learning motivation.

In another study, Zou, Xiang, & Jeaco (2012) investigated the use of Web 2.0 tools in learning a foreign language among students. They found that Web 2.0 tools such as social networking sites and Wikis provided effective platforms for students to discuss language learning materials and collaborate with other individuals. Within the same vein, Vurdien (2013) explored the use of blogs as a computer-mediated tool by a group of EFL students in Spain. Findings showed that participants spent more time on planning and editing their work before submission. Furthermore, blogs have helped students to improve their writing skills via peer feedback, and enhanced their collaborative skills- yielding better quality of written products.

However, the integration of mobile devices and applications in education brings with it a number of challenges. Some of these challenges include teachers' lack of time and

confidence to integrate new technologies, especially when their schools do not provide them with adequate training and technical support when they face technical problems (Becta, 2004). Furthermore, teachers need to figure out how to prevent these devices from turning into a source of disruption (Dahlstrom, Walker, & Dziuban, 2014). Another challenge would be how to use mobile devices as teaching tools, rather than aides, in order to enhance learning (Lai & Lee Smith, 2017). In fact, it is difficult to adopt and adapt to mobile-device based teaching without providing professional development opportunities (Newhouse, Williams, & Pearson, 2006), which aim at developing teachers' technological pedagogical content knowledge. Perhaps the most prominent barrier is related to the teachers' attitudes and approach to integrating new technologies (Balanskat, Blamire, & Kefala, 2006). Instructors' perceptions of how mobile devices and applications can be integrated in classroom practice are likely to have an effect on how learners make use of mobile technology in their learning (Lai & Smith, 2017).

While many studies have been carried out on the benefits of technology integration into the classroom, there is an apparent dearth of literature in the foreign language teaching field about the use of mobile devices and applications in personal learning and how teachers use them in their teaching at the tertiary level (Lai & Lee Smith, 2017; Sanchez, Cortijo, & Javed, 2014), particularly among foreign language teachers. One of the main goals of the current paper is to help fill this gap in research. Therefore, the current study sets out to shed light on how a group of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers from Saudi universities perceived and used mobile devices and applications in their teaching and personal learning.

The research study aimed to answer the following two questions:

1. How often did university teachers use mobile devices and applications? Is there a significant difference between male and female teachers?
2. Is there a correlation between teachers' use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching and their use in learning?
3. How did EFL teachers perceive the use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching?
4. Is there a correlation between teachers' perceptions of value of mobile device and applications in learning, and how do they use them in their teaching?

Method

Participants and procedure

The sample for this study was 150 EFL teachers (66 females, 84 males) who participated in the study in 2019. They came from public universities in Saudi Arabia. The majority of teachers were aged between 31 to 50 (73.33%). About 16.66% were aged 51 or above. Only 10% of the participants were 30 or younger. In terms of academic rank, most of the participants held the position of assistant professor or a higher rank (68%). The remaining participants were either lecturers or teaching assistants (32%). The majority of participants have at least 6 years of teaching experience (83.34%) while 16.66% have 5 years or less of experience in the profession. Teachers who volunteered to participate were instructed to respond to an online survey about how often they used and perceived mobile devices and applications in their learning and teaching. Given the fact that the researcher's host institution has a small number of teaching staff in the English department, faculty members from three other universities were invited to participate in the study. Prior to the beginning of the study, the questionnaire was piloted with a small number of teachers. Adjustments were made to small number of items, based on the feedback received from the participants of the pilot study.

Instruments

Background questionnaire. It was designed to elicit respondents' information related to age, gender, academic rank, and teaching experience.

The mobile devices and applications questionnaire. An adapted version from Lai and Smith's (2017) questionnaire was used to elicit how often participants made use of a list of mobile devices and applications in their learning and teaching. The frequency of use was based on a scale of 1 to 5 (1= never, 2 = a few times a year, 3 = a few times a month, 4 = a few times a week, and 5 = daily). Consistent with methods used in Lai and Smith's (2017), items were placed into three categories: never (nonuser); occasionally (a few times a month or a year); and frequently (daily or a few times a week). The second part of the questionnaire had ten items that elicited participants' perceptions of using mobile devices and applications in their teaching and learning. Items were

measured using 5-point Likert type scales. The scale had an acceptable level of internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.77

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics (i.e., means and standard deviations) were used to summarize participants' perceptions of value of mobile technologies and applications in learning, and how they use them in their teaching. In addition, the Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to test the correlation between teachers' perceptions of value of mobile devices and applications in learning, and how they use them in their teaching. Statistical significance for all analyses was set at an alpha level of .05.

Results

1. How often did university teachers' use mobile devices and applications? Is there a significant difference between male and female teachers?

Table 1 reports EFL teachers' use of mobile devices and applications. The vast majority of EFL teachers used mobile devices both in their teaching and learning. The most frequently used devices are tablets followed by smartphones. Blogs (70%) is the most popular application for teaching while the majority of participants used WhatsApp as their favorite application for personal learning (89.33%). It is interesting that 31.33% of participants reported frequent use of social media in their teaching and only 23.34% of teachers frequently used social media in their learning.

Since the data is not normally distributed, Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine whether there is a difference between male and female participants regarding the use of mobile technologies in their teaching and learning. . Results showed no difference between males and females regarding the use of mobile technologies in teaching ($U = 2697.500$, $p = ns$, mean rank for male teachers = 73.37, female teachers = 76.38), and learning ($U = 2740.000$, $p = ns$, mean rank for male teachers = 75.02, female teachers = 75.88). Even in terms of individual devices and applications there is no significant difference.

Table 1

EFL teachers' (male and female) use of mobile devices and applications (in percentage)

Device/application	Teaching			Learning		
	Frequently	Occasionally	Nonuser	Frequently	Occasionally	Nonuser
Smartphones	48.67	26.67	24.66	28.67	39.33	32.00
Tablets	70.66	21.34	8.00	38.66	40.00	21.34
Social media	31.33	44.67	24.00	23.34	47.33	29.33
Podcast	78.00	20.00	2.00	50.67	40.00	9.33
YouTube	38.67	39.33	22.00	21.33	48.67	30.00
Blogs	70.00	16.67	13.33	46.67	26.66	26.67
WhatsApp	59.33	25.33	15.34	89.33	6.67	4.00

2. Is there a correlation between teachers' use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching and their use in learning?

In order to examine the relationship between teachers' use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching ($M = 16.87$, $SD = 3.16$) and their use in learning ($M = 15.46$, $SD = 3.31$), Spearman rank correlation was calculated and reported in Table 2. Results of the analysis showed that there was a moderate positive correlation between teachers' use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching and their use in learning, $r = 0.696$, $n = 150$, $p < 0.01$. Participant who frequently used mobile devices and applications tended to use the same devices and applications in their learning.

Table 2

Correlation between teachers' use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching and their use in learning

	Teaching		Learning	
	Pearson Correlation	1	.696**	
Teaching	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N	150	150	
	Pearson Correlation	.696**	1	
Learning	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	150	150	

*Note**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

3. How did EFL teachers perceive the use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching?

Table 3

Descriptive statistics of EFL teachers' (male and female) perception of the use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching.

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. I believe students' learning is enhanced in my lecture if mobile devices and applications are used.	4.22	1.06
2. I am willing to learn how to incorporate mobile devices and applications in my teaching to support students to engage in informal learning to increase their formal learning.	4.43	.74
3. Mobile devices and applications can help create learning opportunities for my students.	3.76	1.23
4. I have used devices and applications to create learning opportunities outside class for my students.	4.25	.91
5. All students should have access to mobile devices to support their formal and informal learning.	3.04	1.41
6. I believe using mobile devices and applications will enable students to become knowledge producers.	2.87	1.38
7. I believe using mobile devices and applications in my teaching will increase my workload.	2.98	1.31
8. I believe using mobile devices and applications makes students less critical in using information.	3.29	1.24
9. My department supports the use of mobile devices and applications for teaching and learning.	4.07	1.04
10. I believe incorporating mobile devices and applications into teaching can improve the quality of teaching programs at my university.	4.07	1.04

Overall, EFL teachers held positive perceptions regarding the role of mobile devices and applications in teaching. As Table 3 shows most EFL teachers were willing to learn how to integrate mobile devices and applications in their teaching practice (Item 2) since they believed such devices can enhance students' learning (Item 1). They also believe that mobile devices create learning opportunities for students outside class (Item 4). In addition, it seemed that participants were ready to utilize mobile technologies in their classroom practice since they did not think such strategy would increase their workload (Item 7). It is interesting that respondents do not

believe that access to mobile devices and applications would not help students to become knowledge producers.

4. Is there a correlation between teachers' perceptions of value of mobile device and applications in learning, and how do they use them in their teaching?

In order to examine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of value of mobile devices and applications in their teaching ($M = 37.00$, $SD = 6.25$) and how they use them in their own learning ($M = 15.46$, $SD = 3.31$), Spearman correlation was calculated. Results of the analysis showed that there was a weak positive correlation between teachers' use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching and their use in learning, $r = 0.380$, $n = 150$, $p < 0.01$ (see Table 4). Respondents who valued the role of mobile devices and applications in learning tended to frequently use the same devices and applications in their learning.

Table 4

Correlation between teachers' perceptions of value the of mobile devices and applications in their teaching and how do they use them in their teaching

		Teaching	Learning
Teachers' perceptions of mobile devices and applications in learning	Pearson Correlation	1	.380**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	150	150
Use of mobile devices and applications in teaching	Pearson Correlation	.380**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	150

*Note**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

Overall, teachers used mobile devices and applications frequently and had a positive perception of mobile technology usage, and they were willing to learn how to use mobile technologies. One possible explanation for this is that most participants were young and thus were more accepting of the idea of utilizing mobile devices to enhance student learning opportunities both inside and outside the classroom environment. In fact, the collected data

showed that younger teachers were more positive about new technology use and were more willing to use it in their classes. A second explanation is related to the fact that most universities in Saudi, especially those seeking accreditation, are under the obligation to implement quality assurance measures in order to assure quality and the attainment of their performance objectives. Quality involves technology integration in teaching practices. Therefore, teachers are under pressure to use technology in the classroom in order to comply with quality standards. Furthermore, faculty members who are seeking academic promotion are required to prove utilization of technology in their own teaching. In a word, integrating technology into classroom practices is no longer an option. Most respondents acknowledged the support of their department for the use of mobile devices and applications for teaching and learning. This shows that the use of mobile technologies is a serious matter for Saudi universities. The same arguments could be used to explain the fact that there was no difference between males and females, regarding the frequency of mobile technologies use in learning, and teaching, even though technological use is usually construed as a male area of interest (Lai & Lee Smith, 2017).

Survey data collected in this study also showed that there is a correlation between teachers' use of mobile devices and applications in their teaching and their use in personal learning. In other words, teachers who frequently use mobile devices and applications in their teaching tend to use them in their own learning. This outcome is in line with the results reported by Lai and Lee Smith (2017). In their study carried out at a New Zealand university, teachers who frequently used mobile technologies in their personal learning were highly likely to use them in their classroom teaching. Lai and Lee Smith (2017) argue that teachers should be encouraged to use mobile technologies in their leisure time, since a positive experience with mobile devices in personal learning may lead to mobile technology integration in their teaching.

Regarding the use of mobile devices and applications in teaching, most respondents exhibited positive perceptions of incorporating mobile technologies and

applications into their classroom teaching. Most instructors in this study showed confidence in their ability to learn how to integrate mobile devices and applications into their teaching practice. They believed that mobile technologies enhance students' learning in class and create ample learning opportunities outside class. The same findings were corroborated by the results reported by Lai and Lee Smith (2017). One key reason for positive perceptions reported by participants is that new trends in teaching methods and strategies make use of mobile devices and applications to enhance language acquisition. The use of mobile devices enhances foreign language learners' vocabulary learning (e.g., Chen & Chung, 2008; Lu, 2008; Stockwell, 2010; Thornton & Houser, 2005) along with the major four language skills namely, speaking (e.g., Ducate & Lomicka, 2009; Han & Keskin, 2016); listening (e.g., Huang & Sun, 2010), reading (Chen & Hsu, 2008; Plana, Gimeno, & Appel, 2013), and writing (e.g., Andujar, 2015). Similarly, some applications such as WhatsApp and Facebook have proved to be efficient learning platforms. Facebook can be used to improve language learners' grammar Shih (2013) and writing skills (Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008). Several studies have documented the efficiency of WhatsApp in boosting vocabulary learning (e.g., Bensalem, 2018; Fageeh, 2013; Basal, Yilmaz, Tanriverdi, & Sari, 2016). Today, many of the workshops organized by Saudi universities that target EFL teachers focus on the effective ways to utilize mobile technologies in the classroom.

Finally, the current study revealed a relationship between teachers' perceptions of the value of mobile devices and applications in their teaching and how they use them in their own learning. This means that participants who had positive perceptions of the important role of mobile devices and applications were likely to frequently use mobile technologies in their learning. Comfort with using technology (Rakes, Fields, & Cox, 2006) and overall support from institutions (see Lowther & Ross, 2000) were cited in the literature as the main barriers to technology incorporation in the classroom. Lai and Lee Smith (2017) argue that some teachers who were interviewed in their study chose not to use mobile technologies because they did not have proper professional development. However, this did not seem to be the case for the participants of this study, who reported support from their respective departments. This may explain the lack of discrepancy between positive views of mobile technologies and their use in actual teaching and learning.

Conclusion, Limitations and Future Research

The purpose of this study was to examine how tertiary level EFL teachers perceived and used mobile devices and applications in their teaching and personal learning. The participating teaching staff showed awareness of the benefits of using mobile technologies as tools that may enhance students' learning. This positive perception had an impact on how frequently participants used mobile devices and applications in their teaching and learning. It is argued that the support received from institutions, which are making technology integration a pressing matter, could be a key reason why teachers were engaged in using mobile technologies in their classroom practice. However, future large-scale empirical studies are needed to further validate the findings of this study. This study relied on a self-reported survey by teachers and this makes it difficult to generalize the results. Conducting interviews with a number of participants may have yielded more information about the reasons behind the motivations for preferring the use of particular applications over others. Furthermore, it would be interesting to explore any potential role played by socio-biographical factors such as age, gender, academic rank and teaching experience, in using mobile devices and applications in their teaching and personal learning.

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MOROCCO E-READINESS ASSESSMENT: UNIVERSITY CONTRIBUTION

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to explore the critical issues that impede an effective implementation of information communication technology (ICT) as related to higher education (HE) in Morocco. An e-readiness survey based on Harvard e-readiness assessment framework is administered in order to check the role of university in getting Morocco e-ready. First, a diagnosis is done at the level of preparedness of Moroccan institutions in networked areas of access, society, economy and policy. The data was collected from the annual reports of Moroccan Telecommunications regulations agency (ANRT), reports from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Global Information Technology Report (NRI), quantitative and qualitative surveys from previous research studies, and statistical websites. The findings reveal that Morocco has, apart from networked economy and local digital content, a fairly advanced e-readiness status in other indicators in the model of Harvard Centre of International Development. Ironically, such findings show that it is the Moroccan university that needs to catch up with society.

Keywords: ICT, e-readiness, assessment, Networked World, Morocco

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Despite the continuous efforts, developmental initiatives, high investments, and previous research implications, the use of ICT in higher education in Morocco can be best described as sporadic, or in some cases as lagging behind. From a critical perspective, there is ample evidence to denote that there is a missing link between the official objectives of ICT use and day-to-day practices. While this is often attributed to internal factors (from within the university), this study considers, at a first stage, the wider “macro” level (from outside the walls of the university) on the basis of actual data of the advancement of Moroccan community in most critical ICT usage fields. It is assumed that the current stage of Morocco’s e-readiness may have some potential impact on the implementation of ICT in the Moroccan university. To check this assumption, the first step is to conduct an e-readiness assessment which enables multi-stakeholders and policymakers to have more visibility as to the current state of preparedness to integrate into the global information society. Findings emanating from the analysis in this study will help with the shaping of decision making in advanced ICT implementation in Moroccan university.

It should be acknowledged that some surveys partly addressed readiness issues in Morocco. For example, a detailed report by the world bank (Constant, 2011) provides data to the Infodev newsletter on broadband and internet access in Morocco. It identifies major challenges of broadband infrastructure shortcomings, affordability constraints, and inadequacy of connectivity coverage. Other reports from the ANRT annually disseminate information on the tremendous improvements of the national telecom sector. International business analysts either in Europe or the U.S. have analyzed the trends, practices and expectations of internet access and information infrastructure in the Kingdom (Constant, 2011; Group, 2015b; Hathaway & Spidalieri, 2018; Kettani & Moulin, 2014; Schwab, 2014; Zaied, Khairalla, & Al-Rashed, 2007). Nationally, a large-scale survey of different training providers in Morocco shows that the face-to-face training still dominates (72%) and e-learning touches only a few transversal domains of training in a blended format (18%) (Proactech, 2012). Yet, none of these studies or reports have provided detailed data on the level of ICT readiness of Morocco. The present study gathers data from national and international reports, studies, surveys and statistical websites in order to give a closer picture on the state-of-the-art of ICT use in Morocco. It aims to show whether the scarce use of ICT in Moroccan

universities (Ait Kaikai, 2014, 2015; Bouziane, Ait Kaikai, & Lamtara, 2018) can be attributed to the e-readiness of society at large. To do so, it intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of e-readiness in Moroccan society?
2. What is the responsibility of Moroccan university for boosting, or slowing down thereof, e-readiness in Morocco?

Theoretical Background

"The electronic Readiness" or e-readiness is a given degree of advancement in IT domains through which a community reaches readiness to integrate into global knowledge societies. A definition adopted for this study reads:

"An 'e-ready' society is one that has the necessary physical infrastructure (high bandwidth, reliability, and affordable prices); integrated current ICTs throughout businesses (e-commerce, local ICT sector), communities (local content, many organisations online, ICTs used in everyday life, ICTs taught in schools), and the government (e-government); strong telecommunications competition; independent regulation with a commitment to universal access; and no limits on trade or foreign investment" (CID, 2002, quoted in Bui, Sankaran, & Sebastian, 2003, p. 6).

By participating in the global information network, developing nations not only help to build a better society but also benefit from the opportunities of using the network to connect and make business with other users (Harvard University, 2000). It is gauged through diagnoses of progress in the fields of ICT use and the quality of its applications. Such assessment provides ample descriptions of e-readiness of communities and implications for strategic planning "Regardless of a country's level of development, readiness is assessed by determining the relative standing of its society and its economy in the areas that are most critical for its participation to the networked world." (Tolica, Sevrani, & Gorica, 2015, p. 8). E-readiness assessment tools serve communities' policy-makers to measure key indicators, plan for ICT incorporation, and identify critical areas where further effort is required. However, Krull (2003) warns against the inadequacy of assessment alone and puts forward two challenges for

decision-makers to overcome: “First, they need to understand how ICT can help their countries achieve economic and social benefits, and to set realistic goals accordingly. Second, they must take concrete steps toward effective and sustainable ICT use that will help their countries realize development goals” (Krull, 2003, p. 11). Equally, for an effective use of new technologies, as the world bank claims “a country must be “e-ready” in terms of infrastructure, the accessibility of ICT to the population at large, and the effect of the legal and regulatory framework on ICT use. “If the digital divide is to be narrowed, all of these issues must be addressed in a coherent, achievable strategy that is tailored to meet the local needs of particular countries” (Tan, 2008, p. 139)

In broad terms, the assessment tools can be basically categorized into two dimensions: those that are developed to assess e-business related issues and those targeting e-society concerns. Methodologically, the e-business assessments tools seem to put much focus on physical access to ICT (infrastructure, network and equipment), use of ICT in business as well as macroeconomic environment affecting ICT usage. On the contrary, the e-society assessment tools look at the country’s global preparedness to reap the benefits of ICT. Basic areas of their diagnostic evaluations mainly have to do with socio-cultural factors that affect ICT use, integration of ICT into peoples’ lives, ICT capacity and training as well as affordability of ICT in the local context. Choosing to use one of the two types of assessment tools depends on the users ‘objectives. A model by Shareef, Ojo, & Janowski, (2008) focuses on goals that mainly address business and e-commerce, the areas in which ICT is used effectively, the political, economic and social factors that affect its growth, and how it can affect people’s lives. Another model labelled STOPE (standing for Strategy, Technology, Organisation, People and Environment) with different factors and explanations for each of its constituents is put forward by (Al-Osaimi, Alheraish, & Bakry, 2006). However, this study uses a modified e-readiness assessment framework developed by the Center of International Development at Harvard (CID), and the adjusted framework contains a set of 14 indicators categorized under four areas of connectivity: network access, networked society, networked economy and network policy. Each of the 14 main indicators is measured through the assessment of sub-categories that comprise 46 sub-indicators in total (see Appendix):

Table 1
Main indicators of e-readiness

		Main Indicators
E-readiness Networked Areas	Network Access	Information infrastructure,
		Internet availability,
		Internet affordability,
		Network speed and quality,
	Networked Society	People and organizations online,
		Locally Relevant Content,
		ICTs in Everyday Life,
		ICTs in the Workplace,
	Networked Economy	ICT employment policies,
		B2B,
		B2C,
		e-government
	Network Policy	Telecommunications regulations
		Trade policy.

The CID framework will yield significant information on the degree of readiness of key areas, spot the constraints impeding the effective use of ICT and suggest constructive recommendations. This framework, in addition to external factors, provides measuring tools to assess the internal environment of the organization. The modified version of the CID framework looks comprehensive as it assesses both micro and macro levels. One more interesting point about this framework is that it provides important accounts about education. It includes a major indicator on (networked learning) devoted to assessing key areas in education, namely schools access to ICTs, enhancing education with ICTs, and developing the ICT workforce. It also encompasses indicators of staff training and local digital content. Therefore, the CID covers almost all the factors that influence e-readiness categories such as access to education, government, economy and policy & regulations. It clearly describes how the tool should be used as well as how to use the results, including identifying potential challenges and key areas with low level of e-readiness. This model is adopted in this study as it seems to be the most suitable to assess the university e-readiness in Morocco. It considers both society- and school-related indicators. Yet, this study does not deal with scores of the networked learning as it focuses more on macro levels of readiness. It mainly considers external factors that may have potential impediments to effective integration of ICT in education and mainly in university. Micro factors like those of university ICT

infrastructure, professional training, digital content and technical support are handled in a later work and therefore they are beyond the scope of this study.

Methodology

The staging of each of the four categories was estimated as an average value of the calculated main indicators. The results of the 46 sub-indicators were used to estimate the current stage of each key indicator. These indicators are ranked in a 1 to 4 scale, where 1 represents a lower level and 4 a higher level of ICT preparedness. Numeric values are assigned to each stage. Stage 1 ranges between 0.5 and 1, stage 2 between 1.5 and 2, stage 3 between 2.5 and 3, and the top stage, stage 4, between 3.5 and 4. These values are estimated on the availability basis of each sub-indicator; that is, the assigned figure to each sub-indicator is based on the following qualitative perspective: stage 1 means “not available”, stage 2 “less available”, stage 3 “available”, and stage 4 “available enough”. It is worth mentioning that “available” stands for an “e-ready status” while “not available” signifies “not e-ready yet”. Calculating the total score of Morocco readiness, however, is not the main purpose of the present study. Rather, it aims to bring the ICT policy planning process to the surface and stimulate a constructive discussion over the ICT critical issues in the country with a particular focus on what hinders ICT implementation in university system.

The data used as the bases of calculations is collected from the annual reports of Moroccan Telecommunications Regulations Agency (ANRT), reports of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Global Information Technology Report (NRI), quantitative and qualitative surveys from research studies, and statistical websites.

The compiled data is categorical in nature; the calculations of different factors and sub factors to be considered in the study are calculated and transformed into visual graphs using Microsoft Excel software. The analysis serves to draw some conclusions and implications.

Results

The main purpose of this study is to find out how widely ICT is integrated in Moroccan society in general. To do so, an overview of existing reports helps to figure out the e-readiness status of Morocco’s ICT usage as related to four areas of use: network access, networked society, networked economy, and network policy. The study

uses a modified e-readiness assessment framework developed by the Center of International Development at Harvard for developing communities. The results of the study are presented below (see Appendix 1 for detailed calculations of sub-indicators):

Table 2

E-readiness Indicators Rankings

Indicator	CID ranking
NETWORK ACCESS	2.676
NETWORKED SOCIETY	2.152
NETWORKED ECONOMY	1.082
NETWORK POLICY	3.25

The collected data reveals low to high preparedness levels of e-readiness. It is clear from the figures in Table 1 that apart from networked economy, Morocco has a fairly high e-readiness status in all of the indicators provided by the Harvard Center of International Development. Table 2 shows that the network policy has scored the highest readiness level of the four indicators with a 3.25 score. The second best score has been granted to the network access. With little difference, the networked society reached an above average score. The indicator that achieved the lowest degree of digital preparedness and that seems to need more performance is networked economy.

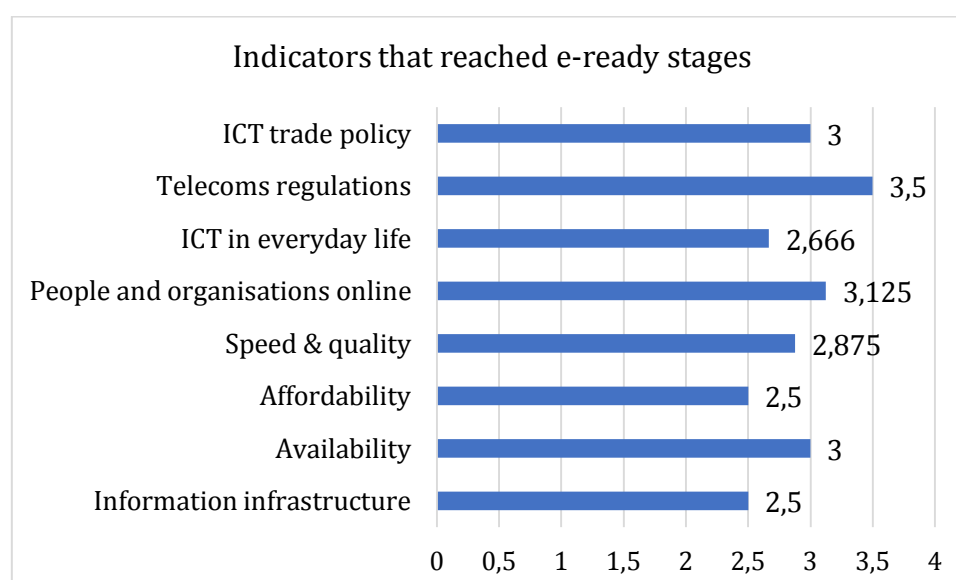


Figure 1. The indicators showing above average to high rankings on the CID

Figure 1 shows the indicators that achieved levels enabling them to gain the status of e-readiness. The section of network policy, which includes telecommunication

regulations and trade policy reached advanced stages of electronic preparedness ranging between stage 3 and 4 where noticeable progress is being made in telecoms services and businesses, namely the presence of independent regulatory body, foreign direct investments, liberalized trade market, and vibrant competition among mobile wireless providers. The two subcategories of the networked society indicator, ICT in everyday life and people & organizations online, also reached high e-readiness positions where readiness depends upon the community's incorporation of ICTs into the fabric of its daily activities. Similarly, the network access, including information infrastructure, affordability, availability, and speed and quality, achieved levels beyond average ranking.

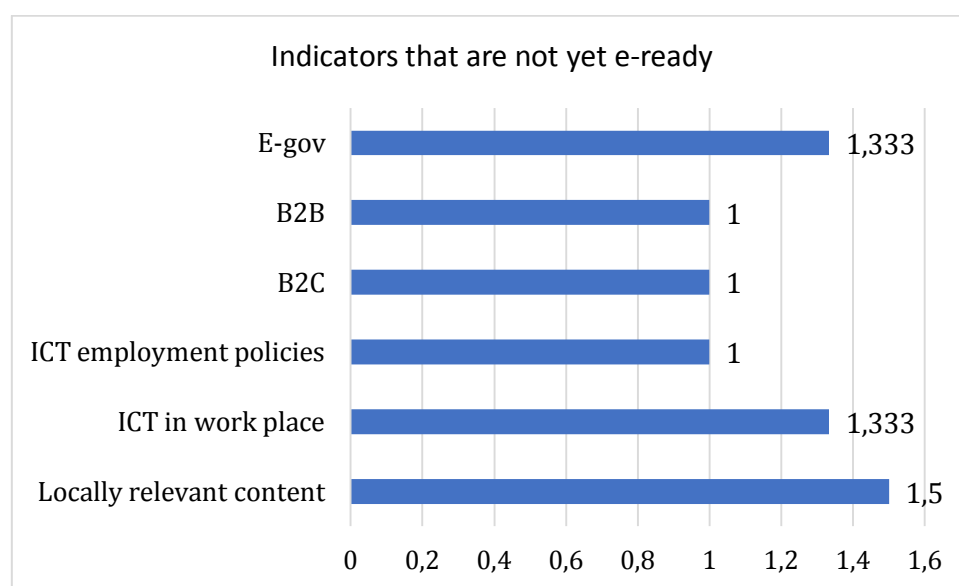


Figure 2. The indicators showing low rankings on the CID

Figure 2 shows the indicators that need boosting according to the existing data and reports. These sub-indicators failed to reach the minimum conditions to gain the benefits of the networked world. The top indicator, locally generated digital content, which is a major driver of growth of IT usage has reached only 1.5 while the other indicators have scored lower ranging from 1 to 1.3.

The findings in this part answer the research questions. They show that generally Morocco is e-ready in three out of the four assessed areas. The areas that are developed have very little to do with training in universities or colleges. However, those that need improvements are those to which the universities are expected to contribute. Failing to prepare potential people to generate locally relevant content, to use ICT in workplace, to launch B2B or B2C or e-gov online practices, to fit in the ICT employment

policies can be related to university failure. Preparing people for these tasks will boost the use of ICT in Moroccan universities (see Chan, 2016) on the economic and social benefits for completing a college degree). Concretely speaking, the obstacles of using ICT in Morocco, both at work and in studies, are not related to infrastructure or hardware or software; rather, they are related to human resources.

Discussion

Looking into the e-readiness of higher education institutions requires revisiting their role in society and reviewing their internal indicators. Cautiously, the three main indicators that scored above the average of e-readiness need further scrutiny as some of the sub-indicators still need further improvements to meet the requirements (see Appendix 1) as discussed in the subsequent part.

The sub-indicators that failed to gain advanced stages of readiness in the *Networked Society* are those related to generating local content. Some content is generated by citizens at all levels of the country. Many websites provide dynamic information on local topics and are often updated and a significant amount of information is available through websites in local languages especially in social media websites. However, a shortage of local community and business digital content in Morocco is salient. A good number of national websites are neither hosted locally nor updated regularly. For example, more than 90% of internet traffic involves web resources located outside the Kingdom (Kettani, 2015). Moreover, most of the existing digital content is largely basic information mostly generated by social media users, email exchanges or news web pages. Within the four strategic priorities of Maroc-Numeric 2013 ("Portal MEF | Ministry of Economy and Finances," 2013) was the development of local content capable of raising the interest of Moroccan users to consume, produce and promote the Moroccan digital content. Unlike what has been planned for and achieved by the government with the e-maroc strategy so far, social content has progressed significantly in comparison with e-government and economic contents. ANRT in 2015, for example, reported that social networks, media and news, sports and gaming and leisure represent the favourite content for Moroccan internet users (ANRT, 2015). In another report published by the Nielson magazine in 2014 (Nielsen, 2014), it is stated that social networks top the list of activities with 77% of internet subscribers. Streaming online videos is a number one habit of Moroccan

internet users as 42 percent of these users spend time watching video. Chats (38%), downloads (29%) and emails (19%) are also included in the list of the Moroccans' favorite online activities. The same findings are confirmed by Oukarfi (2013) in a paper investigating 1030 respondents which assesses "the second digital divide" show that Moroccans mainly use the internet for mailing (79%) and social networks (78%) and information seeking (77%). In contrast, there is an alarming lack of e-government and economy contents, though, according to (Kettani, 2015), big budgets have been invested in e-Morocco programs. Action is needed to fix several failures related to rather poor e-government applications, shortage of local data and limited social impact.

Another sub-part of the above main indicator, *ICTs in the Workplace*, also lags behind. For an organization to rank at the fourth stage it must achieve major efficiency gains through the deployment of IT systems, in-house computers are supposed to be fully networked nationally or internationally and most employees have internet access from their own workstations. According to the Oxford Business Group (OBG) report of 2015, Morocco still must invest more efforts, energy and time to meet the desired objectives of its new technologies projects with particular focus on the business sector. While the World Economic Forum, in its "Global Competitiveness Report (2014)" ranked the kingdom 57th out of 144 countries in terms of the availability of the latest technologies, it scored poorly in terms of firm-level technology absorption and was ranked in the 75th position (Group, 2015a). The OBG reports that despite private sector dynamics and government-led policies, a large share of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the country still lack adequate insertion of new technologies into their daily operations and transactions.

It is quite surprising that none of the four sub-indicators (ICT employment opportunities, B2B, B2C, and e-government) of the *Networked Economy* overpasses stage one. This category deals with businesses and governments that employ ICT to find more sophisticated ways of managing their external relationships and communications. Accordingly, several auxiliary measures were also planned along with Digital Morocco strategy to set up a specialized committee with the goal to manage the human capital, customize training packages in order to fit the needs of the IT industry and, revise engineering schools, (The Moroccan Government, 2013). A sector that stands, according to Bouzoubaa, a general manager at Sigmatel, an IT services firm, as a major challenge in

Morocco. Bouzoubaa reported to the OBG that “IT academic programs in universities and engineering schools are mainly focused on technical skills and not enough on management and soft skills. The graduates are not well prepared for professional life: they don’t know much about how a company operates,” (Group, 2015b, p. 262). In terms of hiring qualified IT profiles, the OBG confirms the difficulty of finding staff with IT competencies and language skills; they either lack one or the other. Morocco’s rank according to the global competitiveness index in terms of skills is 114 out 140 countries and 117 in terms skill set graduates (Schwab, 2017).

The country’s economic growth and foreign business investments had positive impact on IT sector in the last ten years. This is witnessed in the continuous progress of the telecoms industry as well as in the consolidation of a promising outsourcing sector, which has been attracting international and local investment. Yet, as a common practice in the current business context, Morocco’s IT sector remains unbalanced as only a very small portion (10%) of companies monopolizes the biggest share (80%) of the sales market, knowing that most IT investors consist of smaller domestic operators (Group, 2015a). With less qualified staff, market monopoly, international competitors and fragmented IT sector, online trading will not worth serious investments.

The figures provided by international trade specialists and economists on export.gov webpage shows that most of business to business (B2B) transactions in Morocco are done offline. Quite inexplicable, the country has one of Africa’s highest internet penetration rates and e-commerce is being built on such infrastructure, there is still a lack of online payment systems which will enable both businessmen and customers to make purchases of large volume.

E-government, as defined by the central government, is making available online administrative services in order to enrich the digital content and make the administration interacting with the public in better ways, speedy manner, and with higher productivity (The Moroccan Government, 2013). Within this framework, some administrative projects were initiated; namely, Service-Public.ma, public portal which aims to promote administrative procedures and e-government services available online; the interoperability centre that aims to publish the national ICT standards/protocols; to share government platforms, applications and services; and to encourage the use of open/free software (Gouvernement du Maroc, 2011). These initiatives were costly on

the national budget but achieved few outcomes as proved by Kettani (2015) who claims that the outcomes of e-services are too low or even non-existent. According to Kettani, there are few transactional portals; the national interoperability platform of eGovernment has simply not been developed; many projects are simply not implemented, including e-Health, e-Wilaya, e-Invest, Cyberbases, CACs, e-procurement, e-Tenders, DGCL while other projects are weakly implemented such as e-Justice, GENIE, Regional Portals, eFoncier, Damancom, etc. The fact that none of the sub-indicators achieved an average stage can be attributed either to the inappropriateness of the “Rupture” and “Counter Reaction” management style in building up efficient ICT strategies or lack of transparency, limited citizen contributions, entrenched bureaucracy, corruption, regressive policy and unskilled human resources (Kettani, 2015; Schwab, 2014, 2017).

Ironically, all the missing sub-indicators are more related to capacity building of human resources. This is the university system’s business *par excellence*. Therefore, if universities launch courses that address the missing sub-indicators that are far below the average, they will already get into the trend of serving the job market and responding to society’s needs. Training college students on e-commerce, e-governance, IT skills, digital content creation and data management will not only help these students start a career, but it will scale up the countries status among the information societies as well.

Conclusion and recommendations

The purpose of this study is to measure the e-readiness status of Moroccan ICT usage in terms of four areas of use: network access, networked society, networked economy, and network policy. Particularly, it aims to check the role of university in boosting the use of ICT by society. The study used a modified e-readiness assessment framework developed by the Center of International Development at Harvard for developing communities. While three of the four indicators target achieve above average to high ranks of e-readiness, one main indicator, networked economy and two sub-indicators, local digital content & ICT in workplace, fail to reach at least average stages. Morocco is gradually aspiring to integrate the networked societies in the world and thus join the information society. However, more care and attention are expected to be devoted to developing digital contents in areas of education, administration and economy.

Although the overview of existing reports suggests that Morocco is to a greater extent satisfactorily e-ready, it identifies some major challenges that can impede future initiatives for gaining respectable position within the information societies. These challenges include poor e-government and economy contents, inadequate insertion of ICTs in the workplace, limited IT access in business, and inefficient or inexistent business to business online interactions. Therefore, some recommendations are put forward.

Training is the key measure to overcome the existing deficiencies. A professional training in technology skills should be scheduled to help improve the utilization of business transactions, and businesses are expected to incorporate the World Wide Web into their sales, marketing, and customer service systems. Moroccan websites of national domains are supposed to provide dynamic information on local topics in local language. Citizens at all levels of society should be encouraged to generate digital data through websites, online bulletin-board systems, Usenet groups, newsletters, and/or blogs. The Government needs to address the issue of poor e-gov content and deficient applications. It should endeavour to enrich the digital content and provide quality services to the public. To reach all these suggestions, the Moroccan universities need to design adequate curricula to enable their graduates to get ready as technicians, engineers, digital content writers, bloggers, programmers, designers, developers etc. to meet the requirements for the demanding challenges of information society. By doing so, they will serve both themselves and society.

The present study has some limitations. It surveys secondary data from national and international reports rather than collecting its primary data from a representative sample. As such, a nationally extensive e-readiness assessment launched by multiple specialists is needed. In addition, the use of another e-readiness assessment tool might have revealed that the network indicators may score better.

The main conclusion of this overview is that Morocco has gone through major improvements in terms of regulations, infrastructure and access during the last ten years. There are still some major challenges that require immediate intervention, particularly boosting market dynamism, ICT skill and capacity building, upgrading labor market, and generating local digital content. Building up on the achieved gains in order to overcome the impediments of ICT integration should be handled even more rigorously by different stakeholders.

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Appendix 1: Details of e-readiness calculations

Network area	Main indicators	Sub indicators	Stage	Average	Mean	Readiness status
NETWORK ACCESS	Information Infrastructure	Teledensity	1.5			
		wireless penetration	4			
		Cable service subscribers	2			
			2.5	Average		
	Availability	ISPs per 1,000,000	3.5			
		bandwidth solutions	3.5			
		web hosting services	3.5			
		public Internet access	3.5			
		dial-up connection	3			
		Private leased lines to businesses	1		2.676	e-ready
			3	Average		
	Affordability	Cost for internet	1.5			
		Prices competition	2.5			
		Prices decrease	3			
			2.33	Average		
	Speed & Quality	Dropped connections	3.5			
		domestic calls success	2.5			
		Mainlines faults	2			
		High speed	3.5			
			2.87	Average		

Network area	Main indicator	Sub indicator	Stage	Average	Mean	Readiness status
NETWORKED SOCIETY	People & organizations online	Internet users	3.5			
		Regular internet access	4			
		Locally registered domains	4			
		Online advertising	1			
			3.12	Average		
	Locally Relevant content	Online local content	1.5			
		Content creators	1			
		Local websites content	2			
			1.5	Average	2.152	e-ready
	ICT in everyday life	Personal use of ICT	3			
		ICT social use	2			
		Public internet access	3			
			2.66	Average		
	ICT in work place	Networked computers	2			
		Internet at work	1			
		Professional emails	1			
			1.33	Average		

Network area	Main indicator	Sub indicator	Stage	Average	Mean	Readiness status
NETWORKED ECONOMY	ICT employment policies	Technical skills	1			
		Trade management	1			
		ICT trade strategy	1			
			1	Average		
	B2C	Business online	1			
		Online retail	1			
			1	Average		
	B2B	B2B online transactions	1			
		B2B online sales	1		1.082	Not e-ready
		Business online tracking	1			
			1	Average		
	E-gov	Public agency online content	2			
		Interactive government webs	1			
		Government online mediation	1			
			1.33	Average		

Network area	Main indicator	Sub indicator	Stage	Average	Mean	Readiness status
NETWORK Policy	Telecoms regulations	Liberalized telecom sectors	3.5			
		Effective regulations	3			
		Independent regulatory body	4			
			3.5	Average	3.25	e-ready
	ICT trade policy	ICT tariffs	3			
		Liberalized trade services	2.5			
		ICT foreign investors	3.5			
			3	Average		

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ECHOES OF THE INFERNAL MACHINE: 1940s FRENCH AND ENGLISH LITERATURE OF RESISTANCE AND COLLABORATION AS A REVOLUTION IN THE MYTHIC IMAGINATION

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Abstract

This article comparatively examines French and English literature based on two novels published in 1947, Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* and Jean-Louis Curtis' *The Forests of Night*. Both novels employ the mythic device to construct narratives on the twilight of the British Empire and the German occupied French Vichy regime, respectively, depicting experiences of resistance and collaboration on the eve of and during the Second World War. Both invent a system of symbolic imagery modelled on the Surrealist template in Jean Cocteau's *The Infernal Machine*, that turns the classical mythic device still prevalent in the early 20th century (i.e. in Joyce or Eliot) upside down. The revolution in Mythic Imagination follows the Structuralist Revolution initiated by Durkheim, Saussure and Bachelard, evacuating fixed ontological architecture to portray relational interdependency without essence. These novels pursue overlapping ethical investigations, on "non-interventionism" in Lowry and "fraternity" in Curtis. The novels raise questions about the relation between colonialism and fascism and the impact of non-Western mythic universes (i.e. Hinduism) upon the Mythic Imagination. They have implications for our understanding of gender relations, as well as the value of political activism and progress.

Keywords: 20th century modernism, English-French literary comparison, Malcolm Lowry, Jean-Louis Curtis, Jean Cocteau, French Resistance, anti-colonial struggle, Indian philosophy, Structuralism and myth, gender politics

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Books of the Dead: Myths for remembering or burying the 1930s-40s

Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* is a Book of the Dead for the British Empire. Jean-Louis Curtis' *Les Forêts de la Nuit* is a Book of the Dead for the French Third Republic. Both were published in 1947, the year of Indian national independence. *Forests* won the prestigious 1947 Prix Goncourt. *Volcano* inspired a generation of experimental writers. Jack Kerouac wrote to Neal Cassady in 1951 that it is "the best (for you) since Proust [and] Joyce" (Charters, p. 325). The title *Forests* refers to William Blake's 'The Tyger' in *Songs of Experience* (1794), while *Volcano* invokes Charles Baudelaire's 'Forest of Symbols' from the 1857 *Flowers of Evil*. In featuring doomed heroes in predetermined universes, however, both foremost reproduce Jean Cocteau's *Infernal Machine* (1932) as a modernist template. Cocteau modernized Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*. This commonality grounds their revolutionary shift in the 20th century mythic imagination.

A political activist or resistor, and a paralyzed will or collaborator, are somehow a single person behind the double, just as Sophocles' Oedipus *actively* fought fate as prophesied, only to become its *passive* instrument in a pre-recorded universe. In *Forest*, paralysis of the will is represented in Gérard. He tortures himself over the suspicion of passive collaboration, yearning for the heroism of the Resistance. Gérard's options are based upon a cast of mythic constructs that enslave him within a system of mass production, cynically manipulated, obstructing original or authentic action:

It is a dirty time to be alive ... you want to chuck in your job. You want to throw yourself into the tricks and the black-market trafficking, like so many others. After all, you needn't be very cunning. Just an absence of moral scruples and some guts... What am I doing in this world, when all is said and done? Neither a terrorist, nor an active collaborator, neither a black-market shark nor a dissident hero ... Neither good nor bad, neither great nor even mediocre, just one more instance of mass production (Curtis, p. 101).

Knowledge cannot alter the future. This, of course, undermines the central modern Enlightenment tenet: objective knowledge can help to avoid suffering produced by foreseeable consequences. Where the future and past are equally fixed, abandonment of hope removes needless suffering from inevitable suffering. Helene de

Balansun, in *Forests*, the sister in a sibling duo echoing Cocteau's *Enfants Terribles* (1929), thus invokes the Infernal Machine:

"Everything is a vast joke, to make us suffer slowly. Nothing ever ends. We say that hope is a theological virtue. I think sometimes it's the most sinister torture inflicted upon humankind. What a sweet rest, the day that no possibility for hope remains. This afternoon, I remained mad with joy that the Americans had arrived in Africa. Now it appears another trick in the universal joke. Later tonight, my belief will reawaken" (Curtis, pp. 119-120).

The Consul, in *Volcano*, finds "sanctuary" in "the paradise of his despair", like "the scorpion, [who], not wanting to be saved, had stung itself to death" (Lowry, p. 338). The disgust felt by the characters over hope springs from mistrust of information circuits: public and private. Rejection of hope correlates to spurning democracy: for, the conflicting solidarities and hopes of everyday people are the fundamental legitimization of democracy as the non-violent negotiation of differing interests and values, ironically born violently in the French revolution of 1789. It envisions the possibility of progressive change by ordinary people. In a personal account of the French Resistance, *Contre L'Oubli [Against Forgetting]*, by Henri Lecres, it is written:

The dead remain alive for as long as the living do ... I wanted to restore this past episode to the present in order never to be forced to relive it. History is not an exact science, but an eternally new beginning (Lecres, pp.10, 149).

Lecres "new beginning" is, of course, the wellspring of hope. The future is unmade. A contemporary affirmation of the Enlightenment, it is one more voice in the information war that inspired Helene's wish for hope's extinction that she might rest. She yearns to "to remember nothing, to envision nothing ... To crush the last cold ray of consciousness", that she might live "in the night forever, and all the rest be abolished" (Curtis, pp.154-156).

Just as Helene's utterance invokes the postmodern annihilation of the "subject", or rational consciousness, both *Volcano* and *Forests* have been acknowledged as novelistic embodiments of the twilight of modernism. In a 1992 study of Lowry's writings, Sue Vice wrote:

It preserves all the features postmodernism is credited with: it celebrates not the autonomous modernist work but the provisional, contingent text [in] the death of the subject and the author; it relies on pastiche and collage [while] using traditional forms in displaced manner [such as] Aztec deities, Mexican history, and a whole lore and language of the cantina [which displace] the usual high modernist unrest in Christian myths and European history (Grace, p. 133).

Vice argues for the distinctiveness of *Volcano*. It is neither “modernist” nor “post-modernist”, she contends, because – unlike “William Burroughs” – it is a “collage with conscience” and a “dialogic novel” (Grace, p. 133). This could also be said of *Forests*. A 2007 review identified the “key” to the novel in the quintessentially postmodern deconstruction of meta-narratives, or “predominant ideas, great slogans, anthems, and boasts, in fabricated poses built on false pretences.” Yet, in deeply human fashion, the novel plunges the reader into the “genuine feel of the time, far from the reconstructions forced upon collective memory” (Penvin, 2010). The recent Sebastian Faulks novel, *Paris Echo* (2018), uses *Forests* as almost a historical alter ego while – again in a postmodern pathos - examining the “possibility of seeing ourselves from a different angle” (Bari, 2018). Yet, *Forests* remains a somehow obscure book in France, a piece of the underground consciousness linked darkly to the Vichy memory, and therefore correspondingly little read in Anglophone circles as exemplifying French modernism. Though comparatively famous, *Volcano* shares with *Forests* a certain marginal status in modernist literature, which, despite being a “masterpiece” “revisited year after year by a few zealous defenders”, “the rest of the world [remains] only barely aware of ... as an exotic and harrowing read” (Kerr, p. 21). Yet, I argue that these novels neither anticipate postmodernism, nor affirm humanism, despite commingling these unlikely currents. They commonly invoke a pathos of tragedy in which beautiful precision is built upon preordained movement. As in Friedrich Nietzsche’s Eternal Return, neither the divine justice of Theodicy nor Enlightenment progress survive. Nietzsche called this the “the innocence of becoming” (Nietzsche, p. 35). Divine determinism reasserts itself through divination in the bloody evisceration of Cocteau’s Infernal Machine, as an experience of exstasis produced by forgetting. Forgetting is collaboration with fate; remembering is resistance to create change.

The core Infernal mechanism, from Sophocles to Cocteau, is forgetting. The 20th century revolution in the mythic imagination occurs here. The rapidity of industrial transformation creates a society which differs day by day, rupturing continuity. This inflicts blindness where, every day, sight is regained, but always without adequate time to cultivate clarity. Cocteau wrote: "Our machine dismembers itself more every day and every morning man awakens with a new shackle" (Cocteau, 1989, p. 163). In Sophocles, prophets incarnate an unknowable fate whose being is, by nature, forgotten. Cocteau substitutes this with forgetting in industrial fugacity, requiring a new type of myth "never envisioned en bloc" (Cocteau, 1989, p.140). In both, a constellation of irrational actions produces amazing coincidence, but the succinct oracular utterance yields to information war which deploys myth to seize power.

Cocteau's 1925 *Enfants Terribles* described two housebound orphans, sister and brother, cut off from the outside, losing their identities in obsessions with the Hollywood femme fatale and American film heroes. An industrial inheritance flow sustains their isolation. Their mythic world includes slavery, doublings, sacrifices and miracles, living "as in the movies", becoming insomniac "wandering souls" haunted by "spectres", meeting violent ends in the "game" (Cocteau, 1925, pp. 48, 81-2). Gradually drawn into the outside world - the sister entering the fashion industry as a model - their "innocence" is destroyed. It is an "innocence" at once "animal and vegetable", driven by "dark instincts", retained "in memory no more than pain", an "alien world" invisible to adults (Cocteau, 1925, p. 8). This was Cocteau's first sketch of the Infernal Machine, unveiling the "forgotten" abyss dividing being from appearance:

The trap sprang open and extended its winding machines. The moribund and the young woman touched it, turned it over, dismantling the gears of the Infernal Mechanism one by one (Cocteau, 1925, p. 119).

This template corresponds to both *Forests* and *Volcano*. A family tragedy follows the inside/out workings of an Infernal Machine. Each explores a philosophical problematic. *Volcano* engages Tolstoy's non-interventionism (i.e. the state is institutionalized violence, opposed to the 'law of love' in Christian doctrine), against Empire's twilight and the non-interventionist policy of the Liberal Powers during the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). *Forests* engages French Revolutionary "Fraternity" (i.e.

“Liberty”, “Equality” and “Fraternity”), a mandate for direct popular action, under Nazi German military occupation and the collaborationist Vichy regime (1940-44).

Nationalist Myths: the Revolutionary Republic and the Counter-Enlightenment

Forests describes Saint-Clar under Nazi military occupation, a south-western village bordering the non-occupied “free zone” of the Vichy regime (1940-42). France was bisected by the 1940-42 demarcation line, suggesting doubling or split personality. Historical sources employ a Cocteau-esque language of the mirror to describe the “cruellest predicament faced by the French people in their history”:

On May 10 1940, the French army, reputedly the largest and most powerful in the world, was destroyed within a month by the German *Blitzkrieg* ... Maréchal Petain signed the June 22 armistice, appealing to the people in the name of patriotism, for cooperation with the occupying force in the national interest ... From London, General de Gaulle, with his call of June 18, announced the continuation of the struggle outside of French borders and in the colonies ... On the other side of the mirror, Vichy France sank ever deeper into a spiral of collaborationism (Arnaud et. al., pp. 129-130).

By tracing the destinies of French resisters (seventeen-year-old Francis de Balansun), collaborators (Mme Costellot, who causes his death) and those floating in paralyzed limbo (Gérard), *Forests* subverts the resistance-collaborator binary to examine shockingly ambiguous and complex identities. Post-war France nurtured a nationalist myth of Resistance. Most Frenchmen had been resisters, through arms or civil disobedience, opposing a few collaborators. Unrevised by historians until the early 1970s, *Forests* unsettled the myth decades before:

Official opinion distinguished two camps: the good and bad, the wicked and heroic ... Yet the reality was far less simple. Between extreme attitudes, there were middle terms ... Beneath crude labels attached to people, there were many thousands of nuances possible (Curtis, p. 255).

Forests depicts a joke of the gods in an Infernal Machine. It follows Cocteau’s summation of the Infernal Machine in “the gods exist” and “they are the devil” (Cocteau, 1934, p. 5):

For an Olympian, it must have provided a puzzle of the highest comic order ... Everything could be multiplied ... through infinite combinations, spiced with death. The Olympians had to be rolling with laughter. Everything endured the upheaval of Primeval Chaos, unwanted tourism, on a scale completely derailing the European Machine, its schedules ruled by a probability as fantastic as its weather forecasts, where only Chance was king (Curtis, p. 121).

Francis – the principal hero – aids resisters in fleeing across the border. The frontier has a metaphysical meaning in the place where all worlds meet. The opening border-crossing pairs the fallen Count's child, Francis, with a resistor from the inferno of the Paris underclass, the "Mohican". His name echoes the colonies, cementing urban misery and distant conquest. Their dialogue embodies Innocence and Experience. Wars and revolutionary mass movements suppress barriers separating classes and social groups, opening unprecedented dialogic horizons and social possibilities.

The "Mohican" describes brutal poverty and violence, a life of thieving, as an orphan whose adoptive mother perished insane in a public hospital. He initially hates Francis' naiveté, mimicking him: "I don't hate anyone, I'm too well brought up for that. Hate is fine for the lower classes". The "Mohican" ultimately feels a bond of "Fraternity" (Curtis, p. 33). The Infernal Machine hovers invisibly. The "Mohican" asks Francis: "Do you think that everything will be finished when the Germans are driven out, when the country has recovered its liberty, and when the entire French population sings a song of victory, communists and Christians together?" When Francis replies, "Yes, I think so ... I hope so", the "Mohican" retorts: "In that case, you are mistaken. No, it will be only the beginning" (Curtis, p. 35). Hope is the engine of destruction. Francis assigns the "Mohican" the task of discovering the whereabouts of Helene's fiancé, a French soldier imprisoned in Sargasso. It triggers the anonymous cause-effect patterns leading to Francis' death, demolishing the Balansun family on the eve of the Liberation. The "Mohican" is the oracle, his discourse ratified by a constellation of unconscious actions.

Francis embodies the Lamb in Blake's "Innocence-Experience" duality. The Creator of the Lamb equally created the Tyger (Mme Costello; the French Gestapo; the mafia) that kills him. God is simply a mirror, equally capable of loving kindness and lethal violence. Theodicy is subverted by ordinary causality, as, "underneath the

disorder, hate flowed through the radios night and day” (Curtis, p. 121). Mme Costellot, having once suffered a slight by English snobs, becomes a fascist collaborator on equally random grounds:

After June 1940, her morbid condition exploded like a tropical flower... Mme Costellot cherished her sickness. She cultivated it. With the help of newspapers, it became a natural fever equal parts anti-Semitic and anti-Masonic... She devoured Anglophobe literature... She elaborated a philosophy of History... Judeo-Saxon capitalism was the cause of all their miseries... She availed herself of arguments alternately insidious and gigantic, abstract and emotional... (Curtis, pp. 164-5).

Francis is an unlikely hero, presenting his mission as flotsam and jetsam on life’s sea. He tells Gérard, upon being asked how he joined the Resistance:

They didn’t ask me to sign a contract, you know! The man who I assisted in crossing the border charged me with a commission to do another. This second one confided me with another project elsewhere. And so on. It was very simple. Papa makes a big mystery of the story. You know how he dramatizes everything. It really wasn’t such a big deal (Curtis, p. 242).

Francis embodies “chance”. The Count’s “faith” underpins his “dramatizations”. In pre-revolutionary mythos, a Great Chain of Being grounded a divine order behind events. Against “this materialistic era”, the Count upholds the “virile disciplines of antiquity” (Curtis, p.18). He combines colonial overseer with fallen European lord:

At rest, he resembled an English engraving of the Sahib, the administrators of British India, or an officer in the Bengali regiment. In motion, he again became what he really was: a democratized Gascon gentleman, the petty nobleman whose ancestry were forced, after 1793, to abandon their castle and, subsequently, to become a scrivener, but who had retained ... something of the distinctive breeding of the old world, all the while mitigated by bourgeois geniality (Curtis, p. 17).

The Count’s commitment to a “crusade in defence of the French cultural heritage” echoes counter-revolutionary French politics (Curtis, p. 20). Joseph de Maistre had argued in the 18th century for a “return” to the hierarchic order of church and throne, while denouncing “humanity” (i.e. the Fraternity principle). Count Balansun

hails from a noble family defined by “heroic conduct”, but violently uprooted with the 1789 French Revolution. His illustrious ancestor:

[...] mounted the steps to the guillotine with arrogance, shouting at the crowd, shouting the family motto ‘Always Higher’ to the executioner. It brought tears of laughter to the eyes of the old women knitting below, knowing his head would soon tumble down into the basket set up below the scaffold (Curtis, p. 22).

Resisting “daily democratic mediocrity”, the historic Balansun family aspired – ultimately unsuccessfully - to resurrection through the modern regime of capitalism, as 10 % of the national income was transferred to capital during the first half of the 19th century and wages stagnated (Piketty, p. 282): “Ruined by the French Revolution, the family sought to lift itself again through petty financial speculation” (Curtis, p. 22). The Count hybridizes nobility and capitalism, as he pursues “the path of modernism”, becoming a “specialist in foreign affairs” (Curtis, pp. 23-26). The Count “juggled” a “diversity of mythological entities, from the White House, the Foreign Office, the Wilhelmstrasse, and, after 1918, the Kremlin”. He dreams of “flourishing colonies, markets in the East ... and no separation between Church and State”. The Count despises the secular 1789 Equality principle grounding “Fraternity”. He “invented his own aristocratic version of Cartesian philosophy, [and] held his domestic servants as ‘rabble’ and simple machines” (Curtis, p. 59). Conspiracies and Theodicy provide his mythic strategy for coping with European modernization. In this way, the Count embraces fascism:

[...] the world situation was just about settled; Germany would conquer the ‘Soviet-Jewish-Saxon coalition’ ... The Count had spontaneously and, without discussion, embraced the [fascist] programme of the New France; and, with him, many thousands of honest and decent people across France. He was a collaborator with neither passion nor acrimony (Curtis, pp. 58-59).

The “decay of the Balansun family” corresponds to Edgar Allen Poe’s 1839 *House of the Fall of Usher* (Curtis, p. 23). A noble family irreversibly declines, marooned in nostalgic dreams. The Count’s son becomes a doomed resistor, his daughter the lover of an underclass black market gangster, then ultimately the quasi-slave of a wealthy bourgeois, Mr Costellot, in the post-Liberation order. Mme Costellot “pushes a trigger and sets the machine in rotation” which leads to Francis’ death (Curtis, p. 259). He becomes a scrap of information manipulated as propaganda in the post-Liberation

power struggle, “a dead who brings profit” (Curtis, p. 410). The transmission of noble power is terminated, as the Count’s children become commodities. Lowry’s *Volcano*, similarly, recounts the decay of a colonial family in British India, who fall from Raj to rags, paralleling the French Revolutionary impact on European nobility, and the Indian national movement upon Empire’s elites. The siblings in both novels explode apart, from intimate sanctuary to disaster, hiding in mythic explanations which fail to absorb the shocks from outside. Stricken with “melancholy”, Helene dreams of restoring “security” and “purity”, but finds it irretrievable, as with Cocteau’s *Enfants Terribles* (Curtis, p. 216).

Myths of Empire: the fall of a Black Magician

Volcano recounts the death of Geoffrey Firmin, a British consul in Quauhnahuac, on the Mexican Day of the Dead, 1938. He is murdered by the rising forces of fascism in Mexico, alone and having rejected all attempts to help him, in a “trick of the gods” (Lowry, p. 16). The Consul is a thorough product of Empire. Born in India, he suffered childhood family tragedy:

His mother had died when he was a child, in Kashmir, and, within the last year or so, his father, who’d married again, had simply, yet scandalously, disappeared ... One day he had walked up into the Himalayas and vanished, leaving Geoffrey, at Srinagar, with Hugh, then a baby in arms... (Lowry, p. 19).

The following memories haunt the novel, which mostly transpires over one day. A naval officer during World War I, Firmin was court-martialled, when, aboard a submarine destroyer, captured German officers were incinerated in the boiler. Subsequently, guilt stricken, Firmin received “the British Distinguished Service Order or Cross”, sowing anxieties over *vita activa* and the mythic prestige of Empire (Lowry, p. 32). Firmin, “no less than a hero”, sought “to enter the Indian Civil Service”, only to be “kicked downstairs into ever remoter consulships.” He ends up in Quauhnahuac, “a position where he was least likely to prove a nuisance to Empire, in which with one part of his mind ... he so passionately believed” (Lowry, p. 31). Thus, Firmin’s mind is divided. Like the 1940-42 demarcation line, its apparent dualism swarms with alcohol-induced hallucinations of “familiar”, or intervals where, alone, “for a moment, he could have sworn the house had been full of people” (Lowry, pp. 69, 141). Images of broken unity and proliferation define the revolution in mythic imagination. It follows the

Structuralist Revolution (1895-1916) initiated by Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand de Saussure (Durkheim, p. 9; Saussure, p. 42). Similarly, in epistemology, Cartesianism yielded, in the revolutionary 1934 writings of Gaston Bachelard, to a “tissue of relations” instead of “simple substance”, i.e. soul (Bachelard, p. 152). All species are assemblies of genes, interacting randomly with environments, without fixed or permanent identity. Identity is defined by multiple relations of difference, a flux, evacuating fixed ontological architecture. It is relational interdependency without essence. This tendency unifies both novels. In scattering every fixed edifice of the human imagination projected as a social reality, forgetting defines the relation to fragmentary mythic constructions.

Cocteau’s *Infernal Machine* centres Lowry’s narrative, when, mid-way through the last day of the Consul’s life, he stumbles across the paperback, patterning subsequent events:

The Consul ... came downstairs quietly, picked up a paper-backed book lying on the table, sat down and opened it ... It was Jean Cocteau’s *La Machine Infernale*. ‘Oui, mon enfant, mon petit enfant,’ he read, ‘les choses qui paraissent abominable aux humains, si tu savais, de l’endroit où j’habite, elles ont peu d’importance.’ ... ‘The gods exist, they are the devil,’ Baudelaire informed him [translation: My child, the things which appear abominable to humans, if you knew, where we the gods live, are of little importance] (Lowry, p. 209).

Wandering in an evening carnival, the Consul reenounters the *Infernal Machine* as an attraction ride. It is linked recurrently to Hindu Dharma. A chapter opens with: *Behind them walked the only living thing that shared their pilgrimage, the dog* (Lowry, p. 125), a direct citation from the *Mahabharata* (Garrett, p. 441). In the final journey of the pious king Yudhishtira, at the summit of a holy mountain, his place in heaven is determined when he prefers to forsake heaven than abandon his dog. The Consul’s dream, this anticipates the future pattern of events by mimicking the *Mahabharata*, inverting the image while resolving it to its carnal basis. In the final image, the Consul’s cadaver is thrown into a ravine with a dead dog. The dog recurrently mirrors the fate of the characters. The *Infernal Machine* represents *Dharma*, yet conceived as a “child’s structure”, thus invoking Cocteau’s *Enfants Terribles*:

The Consul was gazing upward dreamily at the Ferris wheel near them, huge, but resembling an enormously magnified child's structure of girders and angle brackets, nuts and bolts, in Meccano; ... *the wheel of the law, rolling* (Lowry, p. 218).

The wheel of the law is a Buddhist concept of Dharma, the law as necessity in universal conditioning (*dharmadhatu*), entailing the Four Noble Truths (Vivenza, p. 72). Lowry ignores distinctions between Hindu and Buddhist thought, implying the arbitrary Orientalist imaginary which seizes fragments at random. The mythic shifts from a classically unified conception to disintegration, as mythic ensembles are deconstructed and re-intertwined in modern-classical permutations. The Upanishadic 'self-cosmos identity', or Brahminic unification, deteriorates as in Poe's *House of Usher*. Arriving in Quauhnahuac, the Consul had undertaken a book on comparative mythology before yielding to alcoholism. He writes to his ex-wife Yvonne, confessing a search for classical unity gone astray:

[...] do you see me as still working on the book, still trying to answer questions such as: Is there any ultimate reality, external, conscious and ever-present etc. etc. that can be realised by any means that may be acceptable to all creeds and religions and suitable to all climes and countries? (Lowry, p. 39)

The demise of a newly universalist classical unity – appropriate for Empire – corresponds to the fall of Empire. The Consul resigns when the U.K. and Mexico sever diplomatically, following the 1938 nationalisation of Mexican oil reserves. He dreams of fleeing "from the people with ideas" (i.e. liberals, conservatives, socialists, or every intellectual reckoning with complex modern societies). The Consul aspires to "follow William Blackstone [in] leaving to dwell among the Indians" (Lowry, pp. 92, 126). His utopia is the mythic construct of human reality unmolested in its simplest and purest being, resembling Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927) in its most anti-modernist utopianism:

Why should anybody interfere with anybody? Why should anybody interfere with the Tlaxcalans, for example, who were perfectly happy in their own stricken in years trees, among the web-footed fowl in the first lagoon" (Lowry, p. 309).

Ultimately, the Consul suspects his utopia of romanticizing Empire's victims: "Indians might turn out to be people with ideas too" (358). His utopia is Empire's bad

conscience, the mythic return to innocence. The Consul envisions becoming a “dark magician in his visioned cave” (Lowry, p. 202), retreating to an enclosed inside, fallen from the mythic universal heights defining his early life and career. His ideals of unsullied purity isolate him: “Let me truly suffer. Give me back my purity, the knowledge of the Mysteries, that I have betrayed and lost.-Let me be truly lonely, that I may honestly pray” (Lowry, p. 289). Chronic alcoholism, the Consul believes, provides access to a transcendent dimension: “how, unless you drink as I do, can you hope to understand the beauty of an old woman from Tarasco who plays dominoes at seven o’clock in the morning?” (Lowry, p. 50). It is a world populated by transcendental creatures: “Erekia, the one who tears asunder; and they who shriek with a long drawn cry, Illirikim; ... Glesi, the one who glistens horribly like an insect” (Lowry, p. 185). The Consul encounters God in this world: “do you see that sunflower looking in through the bedroom window? It stares into my room all day. ... Stares. Fiercely. All day. Like God!” (Lowry, p. 179). The Consul’s heightened aesthetic consciousness implies an elitist self-created universe. Alcoholism is a “great battle”, he states, for “the survival of human consciousness” (Lowry, p. 217). The Consul seeks “correspondences” between “the subnormal world and the abnormally suspicious”, i.e. Baudelaire’s “correspondences” (Lowry, p. 34). The Consul’s friend, Jacques Laruelle, recognizes that the Consul is “insulated from the responsibility of genuine suffering” (Lowry, p. 219). Following the *Enfants Terribles*, the Consul forgets the world of others, and suffering born of responsibility for the social ceases in a private narcissism.

On the day of the Consul’s death, Yvonne returns to Mexico from the United States hoping to rekindle their marriage. His brother Hugh arrives from Europe, having supported the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War, to report on fascist activity in Mexico for the London Globe. Embracing Marxism and Indian nationalism, Hugh yet suffers corrosive doubts about identity:

Is India my home? Disguise myself as an untouchable ... and go to prison on the Andaman Islands for seventy-seven years, until England gives India her freedom? ... you would only by doing so be embarrassing Mahatma Ghandi, secretly the only public figure in the world for whom you have respect. No, I respect Stalin too, Cardenas, and Jawaharlal Nehru-all three of whom probably could only be embarrassed by my respect (Lowry, p. 153).

The Consul despises Hugh's political activism, citing a quasi-Tolstoian non-interventionism. This disguises his resistance to rescue by others from alcoholism. Eating live shellfish with toothpicks, the Consul drunkenly challenges Hugh's socialist ideals of Fraternity:

Now you see the sort of creatures we are, Hugh. Eating things alive. That's what we do. How can you have much respect for mankind, or any belief in the social struggle? (Lowry, p. 303)

When Hugh speaks of a "shark netted with a shoal of other fish and killed" as providing a "good symbol of the Nazi system which, even though dead, continues to go on swallowing live struggling men and women", the Consul retorts: "It would do just as well for any other system ... Including the communist system" (Lowry, pp. 303-4). All systems are equally condemnable. In modern reality, he contends, no meaningful differences of value separate political orders: "it seems to me that almost everywhere in the world these days there has long ceased to be anything fundamental to man at issue at all ..." (Lowry, p. 309). The Consul's non-intervention, pacific in appearance, conceals nihilism. He continues:

Ah, you people with ideas! ... All this ... about going to fight for Spain ... and poor little defenceless China! Can't you see there's a sort of determinism about the fate of nations? They all seem to get what they deserve in the long run. ... Read history. ... What is the point of interfering in its worthless stupid course? ... Countries, civilizations, empires, great hordes, perish for no reason at all, and their soul and meaning with them... (Lowry, p. 310)

Clearly, the Consul's fatalism in the late 1930s should sound the alarm over the twelve-year Nazi era, and the systematic state-sponsored killing that exterminated two thirds of Europe's Jewish population between 1939 and 1945. Penultimately, the Consul is murdered by petty fascists, having driven away those seeking to rescue him. An epiphany of mirrors strikes him, when he sees himself, at a younger age, in a brutal policeman preparing to assassinate him:

[...] the Consul knew where he'd seen him before: the Chief of the Gardens might have been the image of himself when, lean, bronzed, serious, beardless, and at the crossroads of his career, he had assumed the Vice Consulship in Granada (Lowry, p. 359).

In the mechanics of Karma, the Consul's past returns to him. He recognizes his identity with all beings, "surrounded by these phantoms of himself, the policemen, ... the luminous skeletons, even the rabbit in the corner..." (Lowry, p. 362). His rejection of "interference", he understands, was in bad faith. Intentions, as the Buddha argued, are actions. The Consul secretly yearned for rescue from self-destruction: "For the first time the Consul scented the tangibility of his danger. ... how lonely he was ... He knew he'd half hoped all along Yvonne would come to rescue him ..." (Lowry, p. 360). However, it is too late. After being shot, the Consul experiences an epiphany of "Fraternity":

Where was everybody? Or had there been no one. Then a face shone out of the gloom, a mask of compassion. It was the old fiddler, stooping over him. "Companero-" he began. Then he had vanished" (Lowry, p. 371).

Paradoxically, the need for others corresponds to the Consul's recognition of their intrinsic otherness, negating the Brahminic absolute. Following the Structuralist Revolution, the negation of ontology implies universal identity based on non-identity, or "emptiness" as defined by 2nd century Indian Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna (Vivenza, p. 79). Reducing others to his phantasmagorical vision, the Consul has lacked respect for their separate autonomy:

When he had striven upwards, as at the beginning with Yvonne, had not the 'features' of life seemed to grow more clear, more animated, friends and enemies more identifiable, special problems, scenes, and with them the sense of his reality, more *separate* from himself? And ... the further down he sank, the more those features had tended to dissemble, to cloy and clutter, to become finally little better than ghastly caricatures of his dissimulating inner and outer self ... (Lowry, p. 361).

The Consul forgets the reality of those around him, seeing the dream surrogates woven of imagination. The root of his forgetting is the craving for a utopian simplicity, to escape responsibility embedded in complex modern realities. The Consul seeks this escape in myths: those of totalizing Empire, then those of prelapsarian purity. His awakening from amnesia resembles the Count's recollection, following Francis' death, when a "forgotten" image invades his mind in "a memory that suddenly exploded, naked, precise and pitiless" (Curtis, p. 396). The Count experiences a psychological breakdown. The arrogant veneer masking the Count's forgetting pushes his family to

destruction, whether embracing fascism or shifting superficially to the Resistance inspired by his son's heroism. It is not coincidental that the Consul and the Count, by both professing to stumble irreversibly into "hell" as an existential reality, tragically affirm a heavenless religious universe as the denouement of their forgetting (Lowry, p. 314; Curtis, p. 394). They echo Hannah Arendt's explanation for why describing Nazi concentration camps *sine ira* would be not "objective", but condonement: "When I used the image of Hell, I did not mean this allegorically but literally" (Arendt, p. 159). The only hell, she suggests, is the one made by human beings for each other and themselves. Beyond Arendt's humanist argument, however, these narratives embody the Infernal Machine. Ordinary experience has mythic inevitability, an eternal pattern that is devoid of morality but perfect.

Infernal Machines

Both novels conform to Cocteau's description of "infinity" in *Infernal Machine*. An infinite chain of gods demands infinite obedience, tantamount to accepting fate:

Obey. Mystery has its mysteries. The gods have their gods. We have ours. They have theirs. This is what we call infinity (Cocteau, 1934, p.30).

In *Volcano*, the epiphany of otherness is ultimately overridden by the Consul's obsession with "correspondences". A recurrent white horse, with the number seven branded on its rump, unifies the narrative in a core "correspondence". Before being shot, the Consul releases the tethered white horse from a tree, which "wheeled around and plunged neighing into the forest" (Lowry, p. 373). Yvonne, who, with Hugh, is crossing the forest to find the Consul, is trampled to death, hallucinating fairground cars "whirling around her", the planets "burning and spinning", and the "Ferris wheel" in her final seconds (Lowry, p. 335). Neither the Consul nor Yvonne are aware of the "correspondence". Yet it confirms the Consul's supernatural sight, elevating ordinary tragedy to infinite design. His earlier delirious rantings about "Amrita, the nectar of immortality", in "the Rig Veda" and the "immolation of wives" are affirmed (Lowry, p. 307). The Consul, obsessed with controlling Yvonne in life, has her follow him into death in a further permutation upon the Hindu mythic universe. The mythic function, we see, manifests the obsessive desire to control women's bodies and lives. The Consul's final words, before being shot, are: "if only you'd stop interfering, stop walking in your sleep,

stop sleeping with my wife, only the beggars and the accursed" (Lowry, p. 372). *Volcano*, like *Forests*, is partly about the crisis of masculinity attending the progressive advances in women's empowerment through early 20th century experiences of war and revolutionary upheaval.

The Infernal Machine built into *Forests* echoes the central metaphor of the night in Louis Ferdinand Céline's *Journey to the End of Night* (1933). The novel culminates in a woman shooting a World War I veteran in the back of a taxi ("I will wake you up", she says) in a similar fear of increasingly empowered women in societies modernized through war and industrial upheaval (Céline, p. 490). In *Forests*, similarly, Gérard obsessively desires to control Helene, retaining her within the mythic frame of the Classical "Amazon". Helene finally joins the Resistance Bebop-Zazou subculture. Gérard initially hates her because she ceases to fulfil his secretly nurtured "Amazon" image. He then realizes that he has never known Helene except as his projection:

I'm a puritan bastard ... By ceasing to conform to the ideal of high nobility, that I mentally constructed for her, and by which I hoped to contain her, she has sunk in my view to irretrievable depravity (Curtis, p. 348).

The night is a metaphor of inevitability, where the chaotic flow of events advances irreversibly. Experience is depicted as blind. Surely, the depiction of chaos also conceals progressive changes, such as advances in women's emancipation. The recurrent labyrinthine metaphor of the night in *Forests* is a vast machine of Fate:

In this disorderly night, bristling with hatches and traps, one routinely lost one's way ... respective natures were brutally unveiled in their irreducible truth. Each person's choices were authentically theirs, and these choices irrevocably judged them. In the dark chaos of those years, each individual had to confront the lightning flash of their own truth, and struggle with it (Curtis, pp. 255-6).

Individuals are depicted as the unconscious outcome of habits engrained in ancestry, class and history, becoming embodied in mass produced "characters":

Nothing in the world could disassociate a psychological and verbal mechanism installed over many years, with the force of nature and instinct ... The puppet had become all powerful, the character had eclipsed the person (Curtis, p. 322).

The Infernal Machine in *Forests* is a system of mirrors. There is no white horse as such. The relations between the characters under German occupation are simply mirror systems. Gérard is a masochist, he sees in Helene only his fantasy of an “Amazon”, a “Femme Fatale”, the mirror image of his own desire, not Helene. Tortured ceaselessly by guilt over being a “passive collaborator”, he projects his salvation onto a woman he knows only as a reflected image. Gérard invokes his daily experience as “the crisis of masochism” (Curtis, p. 125). Helene sees only the reflection of her mythic hero, i.e. her fiancé – Gérard is the negation of that hero, as the collaborator, a coward. The Count, similarly, sees in his two children merely the reflection of his own fantasies about the past. The world is a mirror of his obsessive longing to retrieve the past, producing in him nefarious political convictions. Upon finally opening his eyes, the Count sees only “futility” in the world. His son has “died for nothing”. He has “never known his century” (Curtis, p. 390-94). The Count, like Helene and Gérard, are not persons but systemic relations enmeshed blindly in the Infernal Machine. When Helene is enslaved by a bourgeois collaborator after the Liberation, he emphasizes the futility of all political struggle in terms similar to the Consul’s tirades:

Whatever the Cause, theoretical communism, Hitler’s New Order or American democracy with Fordist mass production, capitalist Jews, the Ku-Klux-Klan, official optimism, and Hollywood ... I would opt for American democracy, assuming I had the good fortune to be neither black nor unemployed (Curtis, p. 276).

The Infernal Machine suppresses the distinction between “ethical choices” and “personal choices”. Strawberries and apples are neither right nor wrong, it is a matter of preference. “Ethical choices” are objectively right or wrong. One may choose to do wrong, by committing acts harmful to others. This choice can never make the action right. We know that many of our small everyday actions, for example, contribute to destroying the natural environment, and thus ourselves and future generations. These are objective “ethical choices”. *Forests* implies that “ethical choices”, i.e. “ideals”, are a luxury of peace. In an emergency situation, ideals cease to exist. This depiction ignores figures like the Iraqi journalist Omar Muhammed, who created Mosul Eye at great risk to his life, upon deciding his only ethical choice was to fight ISIS rather than collaborate. In *Forests*, Francis is presented as a resistor with character (i.e. he refuses to reveal his comrades’ identities under torture) but driven by “innocence” in Cocteau’s sense. Adult

resistors (i.e. Francis' leaders) are portrayed as shallow power seekers. Although such resistors exist, there are others who base their actions on "ethical choices". *Forests*, however, presents a vision of war as purifying human beings of their peacetime hypocrisy, and showing their nakedness as self-interested creatures for whom ethics are irrelevant. This follows the World War II Nazi collaborator Céline's metaphor of the night, which concludes that "we can never be wary enough of words", i.e. ethics or ideals (Céline, p. 487). Although Curtis disparaged fascism, he reproduced Céline's deep metaphor as an aesthetic. As Indian historian Romila Thapar argued, in *Time as a Metaphor of History*, even as "readings of time and history undergo mutations", sometimes a deeply shaping "metaphor remains" (Thapar, p. 44).

A similar vision sweeps through *Volcano*, where, although love is raised aloft as somehow supreme, the pursuit of "ethical choices" in political struggle is a futile endeavour. When Hugh argues, "But my God it's *against* such [an oppressive] state of affairs that people like the Loyalists-", the Consul cuts him off: "But with calamity at the end of it! There must be calamity because otherwise the people who did the interfering would have to come back and cope with their responsibilities for a change-" (Lowry, p. 311). We needn't confuse the writer with his characters. Nor need we dismiss the argument that outside intervention is frequently a deeply unethical act. The underlying argument, however, that political action is in itself not worthwhile requires rebuttal. The tacit hostility to progressive political change in the Infernal Machine leaks through, for example, when the Consul turns his attack upon Yvonne:

[...] *you* don't pretend to love 'humanity', not a bit of it! You don't even need an illusion... to help you deny the only natural and good function you have. Though on second thoughts it might be better if women had no functions at all! (Lowry, p. 313)

Consider, as a counterpoint, a figure like Colette, who, roughly at this time, had experienced the end of World War I and the total reorganization of the entire French economic sector, including journalism. Colette pioneeringly broke into French journalism when women were strictly forbidden in the profession. In 1938, she wrote the story of an ex-dancer, Suzette O'Nil-Dranem, who had become the leader of a squad of nurse-parachutists who explained how their actions were "forging a new destiny for women" by simply doing things that women had – according to longstanding myth – been unable to do

(Colette, pp. 231-235). It is this side of human experience, the shattering of received limitations projected onto subordinated groups, that the Infernal Machine template seems incapable of conceiving. These transcendent moments, by contrast, are conceived in French Resistor Lecres' "eternally new beginning", or the argument that the future is unwritten.

Myths of Universal History: from classical objectivity to the mid-20th century breakdown of values

As *Books of the Dead*, these two novels assist with the journey of the dead through the underworld of myth to the afterlife of collective memory. Only once purged of myth can we remember an event as objective universal history. Struggle over the meaning of "universal history", however, undermines immediate certainties. Early 20th century modernism (James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, or Ezra Pound) retained moorings in the 17th century "classical age". The "order" of the classical past, via "archetypal" myth, opposed the "chaos" of the present. In this bid for transcendence, modern life is only a fragmentary part within the eternal universality outside of the "times". This is not the universal history of Lowry or Curtis, where cosmic consciousness never gets outside of the "times". The genesis and extinction of human existence is contained in the "times" (Lowry, p. x-xiii).

Longstanding inside/out conventions, defining human identity, were thereby disturbed by the revolution in mythic imagination. This revolution had its partial genesis in the wide spectrum of realities encountered in anti-colonial struggle. The inside/out dichotomy fundamental to European modernity, i.e. Hegel's Eurocentric universal as movement of God, was deflated by multiple new realities of meaning. This is why King Yudhishtira's dog, narrated in the closing chapter of the *Mahabharata*, the Indian Pariah dog transposed to 1930s Mexico, defines the spiritual geography of *Volcano* about a British consul's journey to hell at Empire's twilight. Similarly, *Forests* opens with a crisis in provincial Saint-Clar, triggered by radio news of upheaval in the distant Algerian town of Mers-el Kabir. It closes with a woman adherent of Rabindranath Tagore's non-violence, a counterpoint to revolutionary republican and monarchic traditions in their century long battle before the 1940 Fall of France, being scapegoated and dragged into the street by the Liberation crowds to have her head

shaved. The Vichy regime had built a mass campaign on the myth that emancipated women had caused the fall of France, and only by forcing them back into the home could France become strong again. *Forests* ends by depicting the entire accumulation of violence and hatred from the Occupation vented on women.

Mythic constructs in Lowry and Curtis correspond to a new understanding of myth, not as the cosmic stabilizer, i.e. *Dharma*, *Nazim* or the Great Chain of Being, but as redefined by Claude Lévi-Strauss in his 1958 “structure of myths” following Saussure and Durkheim. Myths reflect not the universal human condition, but “present contradiction” without resolution, where “the succession of events is not subordinated to any rule of logic or intrinsic continuity”. The “contingent content of myths”, combined with “diverse reproduction of characteristics across regions”, constitutes the “fundamental antinomy” defining myths as ceaseless disintegration. Myths are the creations of organized power dynamics, where “nothing resembles mythic thought more than political ideology” (Lévi-Strauss, pp. 235-39).

Cocteau, in *The Difficulty of Being* (1947), wrote:

Beauty is one trick of nature used to attract beings to one another and ensure their collaboration. It employs beauty amidst a vast disorder. What man calls vice is common to all species. Its mechanism functions blindly. Nature reaches its ends at whatever cost. We poorly imagine the springs of this mechanism in the stars, since the celestial light which informs us results either from a reflection, or, as with all light, a decomposition. Man imagines that the stars serve as his chandeliers, but he witnesses them only in deterioration and death. It is certain that the rhythm of this great machine is a cruel one. Even the tenderest lovers collaborate (Cocteau, 1989, p.145).

Cocteau’s dark view hides a political confession. Everyone is a collaborator with something cruel, irrespective of individual character. It is a blind, not a conscious, process, immune to judgement by any moral standard. Human experience is fundamentally defined by deterioration and death. It is already too late to change the future or the past. The only consolation is radical aesthetic experience. Cocteau practiced this philosophy living under the German Occupation. In his landmark 1950 surrealist film *Orphée*, cryptic angel utterances were based on coded BBC radio calls to the French Resistance. But under

the Occupation, Cocteau was among the topflight French artists who “gave themselves a free pass because of their art”, a “cocktail party collaborator” (James, pp. 130-31). In Cocteau’s *Infernal Machine*, a pre-recorded universe predestines mathematically certain self-destruction. This is certainly a new myth. It is only a myth. Lowry and Curtis sought eternal harmony cutting through even the worst upheaval. This underlying aesthetic template is prone to collaboration, seeing eternity everywhere, even as Lowry and Cocteau radically pushed the boundaries of intellectual thought and aesthetic sensibility with their path-breaking visions of our time.

The theme of too late-ness or irreversibility permeates *Volcano*: “Over the town, in the dark, tempestuous night, backwards revolved the luminous wheel”, a “corpse transported by express”, everything moving with the “precision of the planets” (Lowry, pp. 42-45). Communication is ruptured by radio transmission, implying a technological remaking of human encounters. In the opening pages, the character Jacques Laruelle glimpses a street poster for the 1935 movie *Mad Love*, about hands lost in an accident, replaced by those of a murderer. Laruelle sees a contemporary reflection:

What a complicated endless tale it seemed to tell, of tyranny and sanctuary, that poster looming above him now, showing the murderer Orlac! An artist with a murderer’s hands; that was the ticket, the hieroglyphic of the times. For it really was Germany itself that, in the gruesome degradation of a bad cartoon (Lowry, p. 25).

Laruelle muses that “a defeated Germany was winning the respect of the cultured world by the pictures she was making”. He then witnesses “the first newsreels from the Spanish War, that have come back again”, suggesting globally circulating news images in eternal return, blending fact and fiction, reality and myth (Lowry, p. 26). The cinematic unconscious is inverted into a paranoiac externality, watching the Consul as a spectator, echoing from the walls: “I’m watching you ... You can’t escape me” (Lowry, p. 300). Manmade famine and opportunities for imperial expansion seem to have triggered a gigantic guilt complex.

Labyrinth of the Guilt Complex: Doomed Heroes and anti-Heroes as Myths

The *Infernal Machine* is the fundamental mythic device in the novels of Lowry and Curtis, which refers to the guilt complex. Both novels feature *circular constructions*.

The heroes are doomed from the beginning. *Forests* opens with Francis, seventeen-year-old Resistance fighter, obsessed with circulating information as a political weapon. In the closing pages, tortured and murdered, Francis has himself become just a bit more information, used manipulatively by cynical political candidates – most of whom, fascists under Vichy, have now changed chameleon-like - in post-Liberation elections. *Volcano* opens with Jacques Laruelle remembering the death of Consul Geoffrey Firmin, the anti-hero, exactly one year hence – thus creating a loop which warns of how the story will end.

The characters in *Volcano* and *Forests* are obsessed with collaboration as an existential predicament: by living everyday life, one perpetuates a gigantic system of evil. This echoes Christopher Marlowe's 1592 *Dr Faustus*, where the desire to exploit a new mastery over the world conflicts with the limits of traditional values. But Faustus retained a lucid expectation of consequences: "Faustus' end be such as every Christian heart laments to think on, Yet, he was a scholar once admired for wondrous knowledge" (Marlowe, p. liii). Since the Faustian ancestor, the entire planet had been transformed by a vast revolutionary tide of technology and commerce producing countless unseen linkages. From steam engines to the perils of the atom, new systemic consequences were difficult to weigh in improved wellbeing for some and the terrible industrial toll on environment and populations. Cocteau's *Infernal Machine* captures this predicament in the succinct image of a silver pin piercing multiple overlapping folds in a piece of fabric:

If you pierce this mass with a single needle, then remove the needle, then smooth out the fabric to remove all traces of the folds, do you think a rural simpleton could ever believe that the countless holes which are reproduced infinitely at a great distance have all resulted from a single needle prick? The time of human experience is nothing more than folded eternity (Cocteau, 1934, p. 72).

Cocteau invokes this to explain a fundamental blindness in a departure from the natural processes of the Earth, and a reflection of automation in assembly lines and mass production. The problematic of "consequences" shadows heroes in a labyrinthine guilt complex. A resistor, Francis had always dreamed of a career in the colonies: "After the war, when everything had become again like before, then, undoubtedly, Francis would attend Colonial School. He had always dreamed of a post in Timbuctoo" (Curtis, p.

234). Francis views the future as through a mirror reflecting back the myths he has internalized. The future will be as the past, for the French colonial mission is eternal. The heroism of his anti-occupation Resistance activities in no way contradicts his dream of occupying populations in Mali, who will similarly resist. Francis' heroic status as a Resistor is undermined by his enslavement to myths that obstruct his capacity to clearly see the world. One lost in illusion cannot make ethical judgments. Being ethical is the precondition for deserving the label of a hero.

Myths, as collective representations, present a cult of fatality. We are neither in the realm of force nor persuasion, but ontological imperative. The Infernal Machine is a nostalgia for inevitability, or the entitlement of dominant groups. At the end of alternatives, looking back is the only option. The Infernal Machine is the nihilistic metaphor concealed inside John Osborne's 1956 *Look Back in Anger*. Banalized "kitchen sink drama", supposedly purged of myth, it declares the only worthwhile state as being "a lost cause", "corrupt and futile". The iconic English "angry young man" Jimmy Porter declares political action useless:

I suppose people of our generation aren't able to die for good causes any longer ... There aren't any good, brave causes left. ... No, there's nothing left for it, but to let yourself be butchered by the women (Osborne, pp. 101, 89).

Echoing fascist Vichy ideology, Leftist Porter embraces the myth that women are at the root of post-war England's social misfortune. Myths spread insidiously in lieu of the empowering consequentialist analysis fostering political action. The myth of an essential separation between colonialism and fascism, once dislodged, reveals them as two modalities of one form of violence. Consider how Hannah Arendt, in 1951, imaginatively built the theoretical scaffolding for historian Mark Mazower's 1998 empirical claim:

Fascism – like older imperialisms – saw its civilizing burden lying chiefly outside of Europe, [but] National Socialism did not: and just here, no doubt – by turning Europeans back into barbarians and slaves – lay the Nazis' greatest offence against the sensibility of the continent (Mazower, p. 73).

Inside/out conventions of European identity, built on colonial domination, are subverted, unveiling a linkage between fascism and colonialism. The heroes of the French Resistance could become the oppressors in the Algerian War of Independence (1954-62) because white supremacist myths occluded an underlying human reality. Arendt had already exploded such myths: "Imperialism was born when the ruling class in capitalist production came up against national limitations to its economic expansion", in a "capitalist system whose inherent law is constant growth" (Arendt, p. 107). She analysed historically self-reproducing institutional "elements". The productive and technological power of capitalism, with its fundamentally expansive logic, were preconditions of the colonial laboratory that sired its totalitarian fruit at the heart of modern European societies. A sociological continuum united modern colonialism and totalitarianism as practices:

Many things that nowadays have become the speciality of totalitarian government are only too well known from the study of history ... centuries of extermination of native peoples went hand in hand with the colonization of the Americas, Australia and Africa ... Not even concentration camps are an invention of totalitarian movements. They emerge for the first time with the Boer War ... and continued to be used in South Africa as well as India for 'undesirable elements' (Arendt, p. 121).

A second example underlines the significance for "agency", or what we might call a hero. In 1946, George Orwell wrote about the "guilt complex" in Arthur Koestler's *Arrival and Departure* (1945): "it is a tract purporting to show that revolutionary creeds are rationalizations of neurotic impulses ... [A] psychoanalyst drags out of a [young ex-Communist] the fact that his revolutionary enthusiasm is not founded on any real belief in historical necessity, but on a morbid guilt complex arising from an attempt in early childhood to blind his baby brother" (Orwell, p. 276). Orwell objects that, although "all revolutions fail", it does not follow that they are "all the same failure". They are not "to make the world perfect but to make it better" (Orwell, p. 278).

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MILTON'S TWO-HANDED ENGINE AS A CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

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Abstract

One of the longstanding mysteries of English poetry is the identification of the “two-handed engine” from John Milton’s 1638 poem “Lycidas,” with which Saint Peter threatens to “strike once, and strike no more” the clergy who have been remiss in their duties. A new way of looking at the image is to read the entire passage with George Lakoff and Mark Turner’s theory of conceptual metaphors in mind. The strength of this approach is to show that identification of the two-handed engine should be considered within the context of the entire poem. As many commentators have argued, Lycidas’s posthumous fate as the “genius of the shore” does not rest solely in the actions of Saint Peter, but instead involves a reconciliation that amalgamates elements of both Christianity and the classical world as well as nature. The conceptual metaphor thus provides a single combinatory image.

Keywords: John Milton, “Lycidas”, George Lakoff, Mark Turner, conceptual metaphor

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John Milton's pastoral elegy "Lycidas" has for almost four centuries been a cause for both poetic befuddlement and clarity. The background of the poem is very straightforward, however: a Cambridge University acquaintance of Milton's named Edward King was sailing from England to Ireland on 10 August 1637, when his ship smashed into rocks and sank, drowning everyone on board.¹ King's friends and colleagues decided to publish a book containing elegies composed in his honor. Milton wrote "Lycidas" for the volume,² and the rest is literary history.

Although the facts are straightforward and the poem accomplishes its intended goal of properly commemorating King, attempts at interpretation have nonetheless been remarkably complex and labored. One particularly enigmatic image from the poem for which generations of scholars have proffered explanations is the famous "two-handed engine" reference. Disagreements have arisen because Milton doesn't make explicitly clear what he had in mind as a physical object, nor does he make it any easier for the reader to interpret precisely how the image fits into the larger framework of the poem. Yet, as the critic Mark Womack notes (1997), readers have not been particularly hampered in not being able to identify the two-handed engine (p. 131). What I would like to argue is that the metaphor itself is perhaps vague but not confusing because it is a conceptual metaphor of the kind described by the cognitive theorists George Lakoff and Mark Turner.³ In other words, I hope to show that the two-handed engine may be ambivalent if we attempt to settle on a single object, but unproblematic if we are comfortable with a conceptual notion that allows the reader to contextualize the specific image within the larger metaphorical meaning of the entire poem.

The relevant lines occur approximately midway through the 193-line poem, at the end of a passage in which the narrator (one of Lycidas's fellow shepherds) invokes a succession of figures to contemplate the significance of Lycidas's passing. The final

¹ Additional details are available in Lipking (1996), "The Genius of the Shore."

² The book was published in 1638 as *Iusta Eduardo King Naufrago*. Milton republished "Lycidas" in 1645 in the book *Poems of Mr. John Milton*.

³ I will refer throughout this paper to Lakoff and Turner's 1989 book *More Than Cool Reason*.

speaker of this section is probably Saint Peter,⁴ and it is clear that the holder of the “two massy keys” is either the same individual or else is in close consort with the wielder of the two-handed engine:

Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake.
Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his mitered locks, and stern bespake:
“How well could I have spared for thee young swain,
Anow of such as for their belly’s sake,
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold?
Of other care they little reck’ning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers’ feast
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned ought else the least
That to the faithfull herdman’s art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped,
And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
But swoll’n with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread,
Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing said!
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.”⁵

If the pilot of the Galilean lake is indeed Saint Peter, then we are to understand that he performs his eternal function of staffing the door of heaven by wielding two keys – one made of gold that allows admittance, and one of iron that prevents admittance. The pilot informs the narrator that he could have had a less emotionally wrenching task

⁴ Edwards (2011), “The Pilot and the Keys,” p. 605. While acknowledging that critical opinion “identifies the pilot with Saint Peter,” Edwards concludes that the Christ identification makes better poetic sense because “to admit...a figure who...cannot be at rest in any conventional specimen of the bucolic mode – is to testify that no regeneration of English society will be possible until its literature too has been restored by one who bears in his hand the keys of death and hell” (p. 618).

⁵ Lycidas, *The Annotated Milton* (1999), pp. 122-132. All quotations from the poem will be taken from this text.

if he had been called upon instead to eulogize one of the many clergymen who, unlike Lycidas, were unworthy. The pilot then heaps a fair amount of invective against those clergymen for their shortcomings, pointing out that that the clergymen (or bad shepherds) are failing their flocks by not feeding them properly or protecting them from outside harm. However, the bad clergymen will get their just due, which will come in the form of a smiting that will require only a single blow.

Is Saint Peter referring to himself as the holder of the two-handed engine? We initially find him beside the door, and what eternal door would a clergyman desire – even a corrupt clergyman – other than the eternal reward of walking through the door to heaven? The answer seems fairly unambiguous: the two-handed engine is an implement of retribution and/or punishment directed against those who do not perform their willingly assumed tasks with fidelity. But if the answer is really this simple, then why does Saint Peter not simply state that he will strike down the unworthy? Why is an inanimate object the subject of a sentence with an action verb? In other words, why is the two-handed engine itself seemingly the actor? Before these questions can be addressed, it is first necessary to review past interpretations, which are far too numerous to include in a single journal article. Thus, I will be fairly selective.

To begin at the heart of Milton criticism, we may do no better than peruse the handy volume published by noted Milton scholar C.A. Patrides in 1961. The list of contributors included essays from luminaries such as Cleanth Brooks, M.H. Abrams, and Northrop Frye. Patrides himself added a preface and an annotated version of “Lycidas” in which he refers to the two-handed engine reference as a “famous riddle” (p. 6n), and directs readers to the appendix, in which he includes more than 40 bibliographical entries of articles and commentary speculating on the identity of the image (pp. 240-241). Patrides takes no side in the debate, instead referring to the matter as “[t]he most curious aspect of the commentaries on *“Lycidas.”*” (p. 240).

Nor do any of the contributors to *Milton’s Lycidas* offer a specific interpretation, although Northrop Frye provides a carefully supported answer in which he states that the question of “why” the image is present in the poem yields a single response “that

illustrates how carefully the poem has been constructed” (p. 206). By contrast, Frye offers, the question of identity yields “forty-odd answers, none of them completely satisfactory” (p. 206).

As for the many other explanations, a brief sampling will presumably suffice. Leon Howard, in a 1952 essay, states that most critics through the years have favored one of two Biblical identifications for the two-handed engine: “the ‘axe’ laid at the root of those trees which do not bring forth good fruit, in Matthew 3:10 and Luke 3:9, and the ‘two-edged sword’ issuing from the mouth of the Lord in Revelation 1:16” (pp. 174-175). That may be, but the opinion is by no means unanimous. David Sansome, for example, thinks that the winnowing fan is also a perfectly good candidate.⁶ But if so, then surely the threshing flail is just as likely a two-handed implement.⁷ Moreover, the reaper’s scythe is surely another likely choice.⁸ But harvesting is by no means the only metaphor that critics have associated with the two-handed engine. In a 1930 article, Donald C. Dorian concludes (after speculating on the shortcomings of various other suggestions) that “the ‘engine’ was liberty, which ‘hath a sharp and double edge’; the ‘two hands’ were those of parliament” [which] “had then only to seize this weapon, liberty, and ‘smite once, and smite no more’ in order (as Milton thought), to remove not only the corrupt clergy, but whatever was ‘grievance and unjust’ to the people” (p. 215). Harry F. Robins (1954) offers his own summation of identifications by claiming that “commentators have split into two groups, the first taking ‘engine’ to signify ‘a weapon of war or destruction,’...and the second group allowing the word a figurative sense based upon the idea of dual function alone” (p. 28).

However, I return to the Patrides book, and especially to the essays by David Daiches and Northrop Frye which both argue that the poem transcends any single

⁶ According to the Winnowing entry in *Wikipedia*, the winnowing fan is an implement that is used to separate the wheat grain (the edible part) from the chaff (the part generally discarded) by throwing the cracked grain into the air and allowing the lighter chaff to float away.

⁷ This information comes from the Flail entry in *Wikipedia*. Before the winnowing fan is used to throw the wheat into the air, the grain is first cracked mechanically. In the old days this was done by literally beating the grain while it lay on the ground, typically with a two-stick implement that resembles the nunchuks that one sees in martial-arts movies.

⁸ Detailed information can be found in the Scythe entry in *Wikipedia*. I do not include the sickle, which is a one-handed device that is automatically eliminated from consideration as a “two-handed engine.”

tradition. Daiches, in fact, provides an overview of the poem that is helpful in contextualizing the role of Saint Peter, who after all is the center of attention in the two-handed engine passage:

In *Lycidas* Milton circles round the problem, and with each circling he moves nearer the centre (he is spiraling rather than circling), and he reaches the centre only when he has found a solution, or at least an attitude in terms of which the problem can be faced with equanimity. (p. 104)

Rather than fix upon the sanctity of Edward King, Daiches explains, the poem instead addresses “the fate of the poet-priest in all his aspects, both as individual and as social figure” (p. 114). Thus, it is unnecessary to dwell on the identity of the two-handed engine, Daiches adds, because “all that is really necessary for an understanding of the poem is to note that retribution is certain through a device which suggests purposive activity on the part of society” (p. 115).

And, last but not least, I should also include Stanley Fish, who did not contribute an essay to the Patrides collection but is arguably foremost among contemporary Milton scholars. In a 1976 review article, Fish acknowledges the importance of the two-handed engine “interpretive crux,” (interestingly, a word that Patrides does not use), but suggests that this and other similar difficulties to be found in Milton’s works “are problems that apparently cannot be solved,” and moreover, “that they are not *meant* to be solved, but to be experienced” (p. 465).

If such luminaries as Fish and the contributors to the 1961 Patrides collection argue that one should not labor too arduously on a specific identity of the two-handed engine, then does the scholarly world really need yet another paper on the topic? My answer is that I have no intention of proffering another specific identity of the object, but instead a suggestion that cognitive metaphor theory may reinforce the views of Frye, Daiches and others that the various traditions invoked by Milton in the poem should be

taken as a whole.⁹ To make this case, it is best to begin with the work that began in earnest with cognitive linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson's 1980 book *Metaphors We Live By*. Their central proposition is that metaphors are by no means simply literary decorations, but are actually a standard feature of everyday life. As Lakoff and Johnson write, "our fundamental concepts are organized in terms of one or more spatialization metaphors" that are "rooted in physical and cultural experience" (p. 17). Some years later, Lakoff collaborated on another book – this time with Mark Turner -- titled *More Than Cool Reason* (1989). This work furthered the argument that metaphor is common in everyday experience and that poetic metaphor in fact comprises particularly elegant instances of language usage that is marked by "[the poets'] talent for using these tools, and their skill in using them" (p. ix). Although Lakoff and Turner do not explicate "Lycidas," they nonetheless provide novel readings of various poems, including "Because I Could Not Stop for Death," by Emily Dickinson, and "To a Solitary Disciple," by William Carlos Williams. The latter reading is especially suited to my own thesis, not because of any purported thematic relationship between the two poems, but rather because Lakoff and Turner make a compelling case for Williams's having achieved a novel poetic vision due to the way he employs both specific visual metaphors and then contextualizes them to create a more general impression.

The Williams poem forges a link between the physical appearance of a church (the "source domain") with a nuanced take on religion (the "target domain") that proceeds directly from an extended musing on the source domain (p. 63). How is this even possible? The answer is that the imagery, or "iconicity" of the poem, is presented in such a way that our understanding of the nature of religion is expanded. Lakoff and Turner explain the relationship as follows:

Iconicity provides an extra layer of metaphorical structure to the poem. As we have seen, the religious meaning of the poem is understood metaphorically in terms of images. The iconic layer is the mapping from he

⁹ At least one critic, Blaine Greteman (2009), has employed Lakoff and Johnson's work in analyzing Milton's metaphors. Greteman's essay, however, focuses on the prose works and does not concern "Lycidas."

structure of the language to the structure of the image presented and to the overall meaning of the poem. Our intuition about the degree of organic unity of a poem is based on our unconscious recognition of just such coherences between the formal and conceptual aspects of the poem. (p. 157)

What makes the poem a unique expression of religion, and why cannot the same concepts be expressed by means of another vehicle? The answer is that the source domain and target domain are expressed in such a way that only an imagistic rendering in a lyric poem would fully express the sentiment. As Lakoff and Turner explain,

Imagination is the formation of an image, something the mind can “see,” and which therefore provides a form of knowledge. Imagination can be understood via this metaphor as the power to arrive at knowledge by constructing an image, say, an image that allows one to overcome blockage by re-perceiving the situation unconventionally. (p. 158)

One reason that the Williams poem is efficacious as a model for a conceptual reading of “Lycidas” is because Lakoff and Turner identify the former poem as employing a sort of two-stage metaphorical process:

First, it discusses how to look at a scene. In doing so, it makes considerable use of metaphor. Second, the poem as a whole can be given a metaphorical interpretation, in which the disciple to whom the poem is addressed is told how to understand the nature of religion in terms of the scene presented to him. (p. 141)

My argument is that their interpretation of “To a Solitary Disciple” coincidentally addresses a poem very similar in metaphoric structure to the Pilot of the Lake passage from “Lycidas.” Just as the former poem contains both information on how to interpret its imagery as well as a metaphoric guide to a larger interpretation, I argue that “Lycidas” also instructs the reader in how to understand the metaphoric connections in smaller detail, and at the same time how to arrive at a larger aesthetic and/or political and religious context.

Metaphors are not difficult to come by in the passage, for Milton begins by identifying the speaker as a “pilot of the Galilean lake.” The reader must bring certain pre-existing information to bear in understanding the lines, first of all that there is a similarity in guiding a ship through the water and directing a life on the proper path. Lakoff and Turner would undoubtedly identify the source concept as “life as a journey,” which they identify throughout the book as a standard concept in Western culture.¹⁰ The argument is not at all to say that identifying a spiritual guide as a “pilot” is original – and in fact, such is far from the case. Rather, the idea is to identify Milton’s employment of the pilot in this passage as a particularly original insight into the human experience, and I argue that doing so is quite easy if one regards the larger context of the passage. In other words, there is nothing particularly original about identifying life – or certain aspects of it – as best led by a guide of some sort, nor is there anything original about calling this guide a pilot. But the larger context will hint at a new and original vision.

Thus, we begin with several Lakoff/Turner metaphors that are immediately recognizable: that “life is a journey,” that “purposes are destinations,” and that “time is a changer.” The second and third conceptual metaphors identify the spiritual quest as a voyage necessitating a time integration, and further, as a destination that is by no means certain. Thus, “time is a changer” is a conceptual metaphor that can take several directions in “Lycidas” that each employs other conceptual metaphors: that “time is a destroyer,” “time is a healer,” “time is an evaluator,” “time is a pursuer.” In fact, I think that there are actually far more conceptual metaphors at work in just this opening line “The pilot of the Galilean lake.” But this list of Lakoff/Turner conceptual metaphors should more than demonstrate the complicated metaphorizing that is going on in the poem.

Regardless of whoever or whatever this pilot is, he is already established as an integral participant in our humanness insofar as we strive to engage in a meaningful existence, and are constrained in doing so not only by the human time scale but also by

¹⁰ This and the other conceptual metaphors such as “freedom is up,” “time is a destroyer,” and so on, all come from *More Than Cool Reason*. The authors provide a useful index of metaphors at the end of their book, with references to textual pages in which they discuss the metaphors.

certain forces – certainly religious and perhaps political as well – that are much larger than our own individual situations. And lest we miss this point, the very next line reminds us that the pilot is the keeper of two keys. The lines contain so many metaphors that they are worthy of repeating so that we can more easily keep track:

Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain)

The word “massy” is not a metaphor because it refers to the quality of a physical object that makes it heavy, and thus is “semantically autonomous” (Lakoff and Turner, 1989, pp. 111-112). Everyday objects and quantities are semantically autonomous if they “are grounded in the habitual and routine bodily and social patterns we experience, and in what we learn of the experience of others” (Lakoff and Turner, 1989, p. 113). However, “keys” is clearly a metaphor in that it satisfies Lakoff and Turner’s requirements in which “the logic of the source-domain structure is mapped onto the logic of the target-domain structure” (p. 103). In this case, the source-domain structure is the physical door that is lockable and the matching key which locks and unlocks it, while the target-domain structure is the life-pathway that can be determined by admission or debarment to the door. Gold, of course, is a “good” metal that has many positive associations, while iron is a common or “base” material. Again, my purpose here is not to argue in favor of any specific religious interpretation of specific metaphors, but to highlight the complexity of the metaphors that Milton employs in the space of a few simple words. And finally, I should also add that the door serves as metonymy in that it “involves only one conceptual domain” (that is, a door and an interior region), and because “one entity in a schema is taken as standing for one other entity in the same schema, or for the schema as a whole” (Lakoff and Turner, 1989, p. 103). Thus, metaphor and metonymy work together to inform the reader that the pilot holds the “key” to a proper life both metaphorically and physically.

In the third line of the passage, the pilot begins addressing the narrator, directly referring to him as the “young swain.” One of the themes of “Lycidas” is love, and it is not difficult to see not only the love of friendship in the relationship, but also a hint of

romantic love, as exemplified by the insistence of Milton in referring to the surviving shepherd as the “swain.” The poem begins with the reflections of another shepherd referred to as the swain, and this multiplicity of the theme of love as romantic and Platonic is reflected in the narrator’s anxiety that he will himself be cut short by death before he has had a chance to fulfil his mission (in other words, he worries about a loss of self-realization by dying before love is consummated, but also a loss in not being of service to others). The narrator’s other concern is in reconciling the hope of resurrection with the limiting fate of an Orpheus-type dismemberment—the fate that Edward King’s body presumably suffered after it became water-logged—for somehow the good shepherd must transcend his physical shortcomings if he is to survive in spirit. The narrator’s anxiety within the context of the poem concerns his success in protecting his flock, but there is an implied anxiety about the physical remains of his drowned fellow. Further, he feels concern for the flock because it will be left to the wolves if he happens to suffer the same fate as Lycidas.

All of these concerns are in the swain’s mind as the pilot addresses him in the following lines:

How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
Anow of such as for their belly’s sake
Creep and intrude, and climb into the fold?
Of other care they little reck’ning make
Than how to scramble at the shearers’ feast
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.

The pilot here employs a type of reasoning known as the *reductio ad absurdum*. The swain would not have to worry about commemorating his departed friend if the friend had been like so many other shepherds who are simply unworthy of love. What is most remarkable about this strategy is that it replicated the bifurcated structure that we have already seen in the passage, with the choice of gold or iron keys, and of course, the choice of literally sinking or swimming if the Galilean lake is intended to remind us of Peter’s abortive attempt to walk on water. To truly commemorate the drowned Lycidas,

the swain must also understand the implications of losing a fellow shepherd who is not worthy of commemoration.

This bipartite structure is further manifest in the next lines, in which the pilot changes tacks from explaining what choices the bad shepherds make at the expense of their flocks to precisely what actions they fail to accomplish:

Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learned ought else the least
That to the faithfull herdman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? They are sped,

A sheep-hook might presumably be considered a viable choice for the identity of the two-handed engine, but it simply cannot be so because the action of the sheep-hook is clearly taken here to be a benefit for those who may be inclined to "wander." Once again employing the Lakoff and Turner conceptual metaphor "life is a journey," the wandering in this case is unambiguously a pathway to avoid for those who wish to remain righteous, and certainly a practice to avoid on the part of the clergy who are entrusted with the proper handling of the "sheep-hook" in keeping their flock on course. Also given is the fact that the sheep-herder must himself be on the proper course, or else he will lead the entire flock astray, whether he employs his sheep-hook or not.

On the other hand, the pilot seems to imply that the bad shepherds will not necessarily be disastrous in leading the entire flock astray, for there is nothing in these lines to suggest abject failure of the entire shepherding project. Rather, the peril is for a few individuals to wander astray on their own, which indeed puts them in danger of the truly bad actors (the wolves), just as the most common natural disaster for a sheep-herd would be for a few strays to be picked off because it is convenient and easy for the wolves to do so.

Moreover, the action of the sheep-herders may be inadequate as far as proper implementation of the sheep-hooks is concerned, but also because there is something deficient in the music they make. Like most shepherds and swains, the bad shepherds to

which the pilot refers are adept in music, and we see no reason to think that their music is not superficially pleasant:

And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.
The hungry sheep look up and are not fed,
But swoll'n with wind, and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread,

Are the “flashy songs” thus competent at the surface level, but nonetheless lacking import because of the other failings of the shepherds, or are they the cause of the failure? Presumably the former, because a song must at least be superficially pleasant to be “flashy,” even though it may otherwise be produced as a “grate” and arise from an instrument made of “wretched” material. At any rate, the sheep may seem to be superficially “fed” (presumably meaning both literally fed and also “fed” with the words of sound doctrine), but in fact may only appear plump because of gas distention.

What is the final outcome? According to the pilot, the deficient shepherds should not become too complacent or they may suffer retribution:

But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more

Employing one final time the “life is a journey” metaphor, we may assume that the “door” refers to the passageway that the pilot controls with his gold and iron keys. The bad shepherds have lived their lives deserving a dose of the iron, so to speak, but we are still not clear precisely how they will get their due. Does retribution come after they are dead and face eternal judgment? Are the bad shepherds as a class (in other words, the contemporary clergy of John Milton’s day) in danger of some sort of purging here on earth before they die? One can make the latter case by perusing the preface that Milton added to the 1645 edition, which reads as follows:

In this monody the author bewails a learned friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester [in W. England] on the Irish seas, in 1637. And by occasion foretells the ruin of our corrupted clergy, then in their height.

As Dartmouth University's on-line *John Milton Reading Room* explains in a gloss, the original publication of "Lycidas" in *Juste Eduardo King Naufrago* contained no preface at all, while the Trinity Manuscript (a handwritten copy of various Milton poems discovered in the Cambridge library in the early eighteenth century), includes as a preface the first sentence quoted above but not the second. At any rate, the entire preface can be interpreted to mean that "ruin" may indeed befall a bad clergyman before Saint Peter has had a chance to choose the key of eternal reward or punishment.¹¹ However, if only one strike is sufficient to accomplish the final result, then why mention the possibility of another, even if it is discounted? After all, a secular judgment on the church of the type that befell the Anglican Church in the early 1640s would be the first of two judgments, the second being eternal judgment at the door of heaven.¹²

One answer may be found if we review the passage from the Book of Matthew in which the keys are introduced. According to the passage, Jesus Christ awards Peter the keys of heaven for having recognized his divinity:

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16: 17-19)

The key passage thus begins with a bipartite structure, not necessarily empowering Peter to bind anyone in either place, but declaring that anyone bound

¹¹ Critical opinion on the matter, as is the case with the two-handed engine, is rather complicated. In his 2009 essay, Neil Forsyth is unambiguous in asserting the political changes from 1637 to 1645 in England to have accounted for Milton's having "called further attention to St. Peter's speech" (p. 697). However, Stephen B. Dobranski (2008) raises the interesting possibility that the 1645 preface may not have even been written by Milton but by someone at the publishing house (p. 402).

¹² Robins, in his 1954 essay "Milton's 'Two-Handed Engine,'" believes that both the 1645 preface and the relevant lines in the poem refer to an eternal judgment. In particular, he rejects Edward S. Le Comte's 1950 assertion that the "smiting" alludes to a political consequence. In particular, I think that Robins has a point in critiquing Le Comte's claim that the pilot's words refer to John 10:12-13, in which Jesus says that he is a good shepherd because he refuses to leave his flock to the care of hirelings who may ineptly let sheep fall victims to wolves. The logic breaks down because the pilot's warning seems very general and comprehensive insofar as it applies to all clergymen. It is not merely an injunction against hiring incompetent underlings.

while Peter is on earth shall also be bound in heaven, and conversely, whomever he looses (freed?) on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Once again, we may employ conceptual metaphors to sort out precisely what is getting bound and loosened in a single act that seemingly may have two separate pathways. If the semantically autonomous concept, or source domain, of binding is literally tying up an individual to limit his or her freedom of movement, then the target domain is the judgment that eventually is imposed on an individual who has for some period of time exercised his or her free will. Loosening, by contrast, must have as its source domain the act of freeing an individual from physical restraint, and the target domain must be a judgment that guarantees a judgment that is essentially a “not guilty” verdict. This binding and loosening is not solely an act that occurs in heaven after death, according to this passage, nor simply here on earth, but rather as an amalgamation of the two. To be “bound on earth” is therefore to have already been judged somehow to be derelict in duty, which is the judgment that the pilot is apparently levying against the bad shepherds. To be “loosed on earth,” by contrast, is to have been judged to be in compliance of duty, even though there seems to be no earthly reward for having been righteous – or at least no reward that precludes premature death before one has even had the chance to live a full life of service and compliance. But eternal reward or punishment is also an integral part of the equation.

My conclusion is that the two-handed engine is simply not the final word for Lycidas within the context of the poem. The pilot may indeed have the power to strike those who have earned disfavor, but the strike seems almost an afterthought if one considers that there is no parallel “smiting” that can possibly apply to Lycidas the good shepherd. A conceptual reading of the metaphors of the passage therefore necessitates our relegating the pilot to the other voices on the list who have already provided only partial answers. Earlier in the poem, for example, Phoebus has touched the trembling ears of the swain after the latter’s lamentations that Lycidas has missed a chance at earthly fame and accomplishment, assuring him that fame is not of this earth. What Phoebus does not assure him is that Lycidas’s death has had any ultimate meaning. Next,

the swain in a roundabout way inquires of the sea god Neptune by way of Triton whether some mishap of nature was responsible for Lycidas's death. After inquiring around, Triton replies that a bad boat constructed in inauspicious times was responsible. Again, the response provides an answer that transcends human understanding, but is still deficient: Lycidas did not die as a part of the natural order of things, but rather as an accident that is still unexplained. After this, the swain inquires of Camus, perhaps to understand whether Lycidas's untimely death can be reconciled in the world of scholarship. Camus's answer? Not really.

The progression of the swain is thus to begin with the gods of classical antiquity, who have no good answer, and then to nature, which also comes up short, and then to the secular world of learning, which seems too distraught to even form a good answer, and finally to Christianity, which contents itself with deeming the good shepherds such as Lycidas to be eligible for an eternal reward, and with smiting the bad shepherds such as Lycidas's inferior colleagues with a final judgment. But I would argue that the swain still has no answer about the significance of Lycidas's death.

What is the swain's next step? To call for the flowering of the world, which at least in part will serve to decorate the tomb of Lycidas, given that his body is lost and that no specific burial site can even be adorned. But surely a comprehensive adornment will serve to reintegrate Lycidas as much as possible, given that no other agency, classical, Christian or the world of nature or learning, has provided much hope for recovery. Thus, Lycidas may indeed be reintegrated, although not in his former state:

So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves!
Where other groves, and other streams along
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek, of joy and love.

Lycidas will thus achieve resurrection, although this particular triumph is severely hedged with the inclusion of the word "mounted." As a final invocation of the

Lakoff and Turner conceptual metaphor, this word can be taken as a literal mounting of an object on a wall or pedestal. The target domain is just as passive, suggesting an individual being displayed with little or no freedom of movement, so the rising is a mixed blessing for Lycidas, as is the laving of his locks, which seems to be little more than a funerary preparation of his body for display. Also, he is to be reintegrated in some sense with the human destiny of procreation, because he will also be rewarded with the “unexpressive nuptial song.” In addition, he will be entertained by “all the saints above,” and in a final amalgamation of classical mythology with Christian, will become the “genius of the shore.” But as for Lycidas the shepherd full of promise, the past is done and the future is a compromise. There’s nothing really to do other than for the swain to get on with his life.

In sum, the conceptual metaphors employed in the poem are associated with location, and existence, while metaphors associated with time are secondary and derivative. For example, “control is up” from the Lakoff and Turner list is obviously employed by Milton in the closing lines of the poem, when it becomes apparent that the departed Lycidas rises much like the heavenly bodies, and does so because of the influence of Jesus Christ. “Mortal is down” is also employed in our being assured that a Lycidas merely languishing in some obscure spot in the ocean is an undesirable outcome that calls for intervention, both human and divine.

However, both of these metaphors are problematic because the notion of control and freedom is quite contradictory, both for Milton and, I would submit, for Christianity in general. The Matthew 16 passage suggests that “binding” and “loosening” are relative terms at best, and that “binding” can in fact be a “freedom” from control, of sorts, while “loosening” can clearly be associated with religious adherence.

Therefore, certain other metaphors are highly problematic, including “being controlled is being kept down,” which is seemingly the fate that Lycidas will suffer if no one memorializes him nor attempts to “recover” his lost body, either physically or figuratively. “Freedom is up” is likewise problematic, in the association of the freedom

of everlasting life with servitude to the Christian God. In fact, virtually all of the conceptual metaphors employed by Milton are slippery in one way or another, and this is precisely how I would like to keep my promise to show that the “two-handed engine” passage embodies both metaphors of “how to look at a scene” as well as a way in which the “poem as a whole can be given a metaphorical interpretation,” as Lakoff and Turner claimed for the William Carlos Williams poem “To a Solitary Reaper” (p. 141). And in doing so, I will also hopefully keep my promise to demonstrate that the two-handed engine is simply another metaphor whose identification is not particularly crucial to understanding the message of “Lycidas.”

If the two-handed engine is simply another metaphor, then the structure must be along the following lines: the source domain is a dangerous hand-wielded instrument that can be used to discipline or otherwise judge the miscreant. The target-domain, quite simply, is the behavior that is in need of discipline. The two-handed engine is therefore associated with an act of punishment in which rectitude provides either an “attitude adjustment,” in modern American parlance, or else a final accounting that leaves the disciplined party forever sorry for his or her transgressions, but with no hope of attaining a second chance. Likely we should assume the latter, considering that the pilot informs the swain that the two-handed engine strikes only once and never a second time. Final retribution seems to be the end-result of the employment of the two-handed engine, and whatever the precise effect on the body, it is quite certain that there is no avoiding the blow and that there is no way to prevent it once the swing has begun.

Another way of looking at the two-handed engine is via the “Great Chain metaphor,” which Lakoff and Turner employ to describe the order that humans tend to impose on physical entities. Human beings are highest on the Great Chain, naturally, and are followed in descending order by animals, plants, fashioned objects (or “complex objects,” as Lakoff and Turner describe them), and lowest of all, “natural physical things” (p. 171).¹³ The two-handed engine is obviously a complex object, and as such

¹³ The entire list can be found in this paragraph, although Chapter 4 of *More Than Cool Reason* is devoted entirely to the Great Chain of Being.

resembles most closely the ship that the swain has been informed was most literally responsible for Lycidas's death. Thus, the Great Chain metaphor further reinforces the view that the pilot's action (if he is indeed the wielder of the two-handed engine) has its consequences, but that neither death by drowning in a defective ship, nor judgment by smiting with a two-handed engine, is sufficient to determine why Lycidas died and whether he continues in some alternate sense.

Therefore, I offer that the analysis of "Lycidas" in light of conceptual metaphors also points to the limitation of this metaphor as a final end for the just and righteous. True, the bad shepherds may very well receive their eternal judgment with the blow (and again, we must assume so given that the device strikes only once), but there is a way to circumvent this fate handed by the pilot, and this is the key to the "larger metaphorical interpretation" in the Lakoff and Turner scheme. I argue that the pilot offers only two options for the departed Lycidas, who indeed avails himself of the more preferable one. But the swain has not been satisfied with this solution, and continues to ask what has been the true meaning of Lycidas's life and whether he is truly gone from the earth in all senses both spiritual and physical. The pilot simply has nothing final to offer the swain for Lycidas in the choice of gold or iron keys, just as Phoebus has provided no comprehensive solace by saying that fame is a heavenly affair, and certainly not Camus, who can simply remark that the loss of Lycidas is indeed a blow to the world of learning.

The overall integration, then, suggests that Lycidas can indeed be memorialized in such a way as to preserve his continued relevance, but that this memorialization is not simply a function of his beatification alone, or of his joining the natural world after he has been properly flowered and laved, or of his vicarious participation in the marriage ritual when he is properly commemorated by his mates back at the university. In fact, the proper memorialization of Lycidas requires all of the above, and even then his continuance as a viable force in the living world will be quite limited.

On the other hand, the Matthew 16 passage can also be interpreted so as to suggest that our affairs on earth are in an integrated continuum with our affairs in

heaven. Saint Peter, after all, is seemingly given the power, first, to bind or loose on earth, and second, the promise that the things he binds or looses on earth will also be bound or loosed in heaven. Perhaps the final conclusion to be reached is that “Lycidas” has a tricky way of suggesting that we go beyond the standard religious interpretation that provides us with an eternal paradise after death, but no continuance on earth, and actually suggests that we may be limiting the promise if we conclude that being “loosed in heaven” has no continuing physical consequences. But these consequences require a struggle such as that of the swain, and should not be relegated to a mere strike of a two-handed engine of some sort.

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THE AGEING POET AND DEATH ANXIETY: ART AS EXISTENTIAL THERAPY IN JOHN PEPPER CLARK'S "OF SLEEP AND OLD AGE"

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Abstract

Death anxiety refers to the human experience of death awareness and the accompanying inescapable disquiet it provokes. It is a phenomenon in human existence which has attracted substantial studies from existential and psychological perspectives. Noting that every individual experiences this anxiety at some point in life, largely as a result of the awareness of the inevitability of death, the manner and extent to which it is experienced vary from individuals. Meanwhile, existential reflections have described 'death acceptance' as the healthy route to lessening this angst. It therefore presupposes that acceptance of death (i.e. knowing that one is a being-towards-death and therefore embracing and acknowledging it) is existentially therapeutic. On this note, in studying J. P. Clark's *Of Sleep and Old Age*, artistic creativity is being constructed in the study as an existential therapy against death anxiety for the poetic persona. It is premised, on the one hand, on the poet's eloquent vision of the boredom of existence and the horror of death which characterize the atmosphere of the text. On the other, the poet's age has been considered as a factor-agent which has bestowed on him the capacity to be conscious of an imminent death, thereby accepting it via keen reflections in his art. The study adopts two theoretical models in existential studies: (1) Monika Ardel's 'Wisdom', 'Religiosity' and 'Purpose in Life' and (2) John Sommers-Flanagan and Rita Sommers-Flanagan's model of 'Existential Therapy' to assess the sway and/or centrality of death anxiety to understanding the text.

Keywords: aging, death anxiety, existential therapy, John Pepper Clark, existentialism

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It has been established that one of the cardinal objectives of existentially-informed theorists and practitioners is anchored in a reminder of individuals of the temporality of our existence as human beings and of the inevitable inter-relationship between living and dying. This is significant in that, like our forebears, we can equally strive to “live lives that include death within our awareness of living” (Spinelli, 2008, p. xix). This further underlies the fact that one of the bases of existential thinking is indeed the “philosophy of life” (Choron, 1963, p. 222). Such a philosophical reflection on life is acknowledged to be practically impossible without reflection on the end of life, death in other words (Tomer & Eliason, 2008, p. 8). The significance of such reflection on human existence is underscored thus:

Death illuminates the concrete existence of the individual, helps us understand what is limited, unique, problematic, or precious in his existence. On the other hand, our concepts of the nature of the individual, of concrete life, can illuminate the event of dying. Thus, meditations on life and death complement one another and may point both to strengths and to weaknesses in one another. In addition to being connected to an examination of human life and its meaning, or lack of meaning, philosophical reflection on death has engaged in an examination of Being, and the meaning of it. (Tomer & Eliason, 2008, p. 8)

Although all these reflections may have been constructed and articulated from diverse perspectives, they all boiled down to what is regarded as the human psychological encounter with death, bearing in mind that death is “the only certainty in life. All living organisms die; there is no exception. However, human beings alone are burdened with the cognitive capacity to be aware of their own inevitable mortality and to fear what may come afterwards.” (Wong, 2008, p. 65)

The above phenomenon of death awareness is perceived as a universal human experience and the accompanying inescapable mental uneasiness it provokes in every individual is described in several philosophical and psychological studies on death as *death anxiety* (Spinelli, 2008, p. xx). Regardless of age, state or status in life, from an existential standpoint, it is an anxiety which every human being experiences. Importantly, it is noteworthy that death anxiety “does not mean a life has not been well-lived or that the individual does not love life” (Niemic & Schulenberg, 2004, p. 388). Rather, it is “rooted in the realization that life is inevitably moving towards death” (Cohn, 1997, p. 60). However, the manners as well as the extent to which individuals respond to this anxiety vary from one another. Thus, these variations in human

response, in terms of manner and degree, have constituted substantial studies from existential, psychological and spiritual perspectives prominently regarded as death attitudes in human beings.

On the forgoing, bearing in mind that literary studies is indeed inseparable from existential, psychological and even spiritual studies, this study beams its search light on the manifestation of the phenomenon of death anxiety in the poetic persona, in a particular or specific form, in John Pepper Clark's poetry volume *Of Sleep and Old Age*. Specifically, the study adopts two theoretical models: (1) Ardel's (2008) approach to death attitudes in aging adults, constructed on a triangular basis of 'Wisdom', 'Religiosity' and 'Purpose in Life'; and (2) Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan's (2004) model of 'Existential Therapy'. The justification for the choice of the two theoretical perspectives is locatable in the poetic persona's status as an ageing individual vis-à-vis the conclusion of Ardel (2008) in her study that:

Older adults tend to encounter death frequently and on a more personal level than do younger adults, and they often have already accepted the fact that their own death is more than a theoretical possibility.... Hence, some older adults might have to come to terms with the finitude of their life and might even look forward to a life after death and a reunion with their loved ones, while still being afraid of the unknown that death represents. (p. 151)

Indeed, the above attitudes, as part of the overall death anxiety in the poetic persona, are substantially traceable in the mood and tone of the entire collection of poems in the volume.

Theoretical Framework

In her study on death attitudes in ageing adults, the sociologist Monika Ardel establishes that the phenomena – wisdom, religiosity and purpose in life – are three personality qualities from the perspectives of which the manifestation of death anxiety in this category of persons could be constructed. According to her, these personality qualities have been established as capable of alleviating death anxiety and negative attitudes towards death (2008, p. 140). In terms of scope, a number of 164 older hospice patients, nursing home residents, and community dwelling adults (of 58 to 98 years) from North Central Florida are sampled for the study (p. 140). The result of the study, therefore, shows a substantial positivity on the effects of wisdom, religiosity and purpose in life on death attitudes in older or aging adults. This is because, for such a

people, as evident in the study, “fear of death and death avoidance are independent of their acceptance of death” (p. 151). In other words, it is revealed that ‘fear of death’ and ‘death avoidance’, as the two most prominent elements against which the manifestation of death anxiety can be measured in individuals, are less in aging adults in whom the above qualities are ascertainable, as compared to younger ones.

First, the definition of wisdom is constructed on three dimensions of personality characteristics. These are *cognitive*, *reflective* and *affective*. In conceiving these three parameters, it is posited that:

Wise people tend to look at phenomena and events from many different perspectives to overcome subjectivity and projections (*reflective dimension*) and to discover the true and deeper meaning of phenomena and events (*cognitive dimension*). This process tends to result in a reduction of self-centeredness, which is likely to lead to a better understanding of life, oneself, and others and, ultimately, to an increase in sympathy and compassion for others (*affective*). (p. 140)

Considering the above as the basis of wisdom, an individual in that state is said to possess the mental capacity to comprehend the fact that physical deterioration and death are inherent existential truths that can neither be ignored nor denied. Hence, it is of considerable expectation that wise people at this state in life remain relatively unafraid of death because they not only understand the true nature of existence, but have also “lived a meaningful life, and, therefore, are able to accept life as well as death.” (p. 140)

The positive correlation of religiosity on death anxiety in the study is premised on the notion that “the main task of religion is to make sense of life and death” (p. 140). Hence, presumably, religious people tend to be “less afraid of death, because they often believe that they will be rewarded for their religious behavior in the afterlife” (p. 141). This implies that less or non-religious people are vulnerable to terror of death.

Similarly, the significance of purpose or meaning as the cardinal objectives upon which individuals could view their existence is highly emphasized. That is, individual adults who have lived their lives meaningfully and found purpose in it, unlike “older people whose lives do not appear to be worth living due to physical and/ or emotional strain”, tend to “be less afraid of death and also more ready to let go” (p. 141).

Existential therapy, on the other hand, also has its basis in existential philosophy. It is described as a therapeutic activity that “plumbs the depths of an individual’s most basic impulses in an effort to acknowledge, embrace, and integrate every bit of being

and energy into the whole person” (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2004, p. 144). Essentially, it helps individuals to be able to face and embrace the “ultimate concerns” of existence. Death, freedom, isolation and meaninglessness are the four conceptual phenomena described as the ‘ultimate concerns’ in existential therapy. The significance of these to existence is underscored thus:

These four concerns capture the nature of reality for existentialists. Everyone who lives is confronted with real demands and truths inherent in human existence. In turn, we are all free to choose our response to those demands and anxiety-producing truths. (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2004, p. 146)

Against the background of the fact that all the four phenomena “produce anxiety” in every individual, therefore, in order to ensure healthy existence, it is maintained that they deserve to be “dealt with either directly or indirectly via defence mechanisms” (p. 146). Defence mechanisms, from an existentialist purview, are “not an elusive, automatic unconscious process, but a style or pattern of avoiding anxiety that can and should be brought to awareness” (p. 146). This thus presupposes the possibility of a therapeutic framework or frameworks with which these anxiety-producing abstractions could be dealt with in such a manner that it would translate into positive or healthy existence in an individual.

Meanwhile, on the forgoing, the phenomenon of death has been singled out, of the four, as being pertinent to this study. Citing the position of one of the prominent existentialists, Irving Yalom, Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan (2004) assert that concerns about death are existentially therapeutic in two ways. First, it “whirs continuously beneath the membrane of life,” and, thus, “exerts a vast influence upon experience and conducts” (p. 146). Secondly, it is conceived as “a primordial source of anxiety” and thus assumes “the main source of psychopathology” (p. 146), provided a significant level of comprehension is demonstrated towards it in order to embrace it as an ultimate truth of existence. This philosophical insight is reminiscent of Ernest Becker’s assertion in the preface to his most powerful psycho-philosophical book *The Denial of Death*. According to him, “...the idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is a mainspring of human activity – activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is final destiny of man” (1973, p. ix). All of these are indeed significant pointers to the fact that this anxiety is inevitable; that is, it is ascertainable in the activities of every individual.

Hence, for the existentialists, concerns about death; that is, confronting, embracing and accepting it as an existential reality is therapeutic against its anxiety:

The purpose of facing death for existentialists is to experience life more deeply and fully. To face death is to motivate oneself to drink with great enthusiasm from the cup of life. Obviously, this is not a call for morbid preoccupation about life's end, but instead a call to shed external trappings and roles and to live in the now as an individual self with freedom of choice. (Becker, 1973, p. 147)

In the above, Ernest Becker is indeed unequivocal about the existentialists' preoccupation with end of life. As an existentially inescapable phenomenon, death is being portrayed as central in the overall human dealings with life. Hence, a resolve to confront it presupposes a move towards understanding life more deeply and fully as transient experience, which would consequently ease the inherent anxiety, if not obviated.

Contextualising Aging in the Poet vis-à-vis his Writing: A Frame of Tradition and Change

John Pepper Clark is one the most celebrated Nigerian poets. He is a poet, playwright and an essayist who rose to prominence especially in the 1960s and 70s concurrently with the likes of Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Christopher Okigbo, Gabriel Okara, among others, largely considered as the first generation of modern Nigerian writers. This period in Nigeria was significant to them in many respects. It was the post-independence era and their youthful age when they wrote with enormous vigour and social vision as writers who were highly sensitive to the socio-political travails and agonies of a nation that was experiencing post-independence troubles, culture conflict and the negative consequences of colonialism. Then, it is observable that explorations of personal issues in form of interior motives or individual psychology rarely got their way into the works of this set of writers. Rather, they were vigorously preoccupied with getting the nation on the right track by frowning at the pervasive social ills and setting proper ideological agenda for her in their writings. With specific reference to Clark, Egudu (1977) offers an overall overview of his poetry thus: "Greif, chaos, insecurity, and irredeemable loss are the hallmarks of the deftly woven fabric that is Clark's poetry. A tragic vision of life pervades his poems". (p. 25)

Despite the above, it is not surprising if the tradition is perceived to have somewhat metamorphosed into an exploration of the personal or foremost interiority of

the poet as exemplified in his recent volumes written in his late 50s: *Afterword* (2002), *Of Sleep and Old Age* (2003) and *Once Again A Child* (2004). The poet's concern in these three volumes shifts significantly from his earlier works. This implies thus that these latter works assume another topical phase in the poet's artistic career. Here, the question of aging is largely being considered as the significant agent-factor for the ideological shift. Universally, the age bracket or period within which these works were written is an aging period in every individual, bearing in mind that it indeed falls within the age range contained in the scope of Ardelt's (2008) study. Hence, as apparently conveyed in the title of the volume under study *Of Sleep and Old Age*, Clark could be perceived as unconsciously exhibiting the so-called 'end of life' anticipations, typical of persons of his age, on a more personal rather than social level. Critically, this is conceivable as an aesthetic deviation from that which is identifiable with his earlier writing vision, occasioned by an unconscious shift in the frame of mind peculiar to individuals of such age range. By implication, thus, it could be hypothesized that, as an aging poet whose existence is construed as that which is currently fast winding down, the anxiety of the imminent death has unconsciously impacted this work, especially, as well as others cited above. Thus, the poet assumes, in this work, an existentialist-poet who seeks to confront death, as Becker (1973) posited, in a bid to "experience life more deeply and fully". (p. 47)

Death Anxiety in *Of Sleep and Old Age*

Of Sleep and Old Age is to a very great extent an exploration of personal human experience of the poet. The memory ranges from his family background, to his journey from childhood to old age and his career as a writer. In these intricately woven facets of experience, the question of living and dying are central. More specifically, like the existentialists, the poet reflects on the phenomenon of 'death' as the foremost decree on man which lies beneath his existence. The poet's eloquent vision of the boredom of existence and the horror of death observable in this text inform the existential reading of it which takes 'death anxiety' as central to the critical understanding of the text vis-à-vis the psychology of the poet as a being in transition into old age.

Beginning with the very first poem "My father's house", the reader is taken through the poet's current mental state; the feeling of emptiness in him which his father's house, who has long passed on, is now symbolic of. This is perceived thus, giving

his description of the house as a world, like a market place, once filled with people but which has now been horrifically deserted. This, for him, is terrifying because what he can now perceive at the moment is only his own reverberating heartbeat:

A courtyard,
Once like a market,
Night and day;
Now, not even an echo...
I hear my heart beat. (Clark, 2010, p. 317)

While in the above state, the memory of his loved ones, his long gone parents, as well as the atmosphere of those days when his father's house used to be peopled is grossly rekindled. This strong memory could be seen as a way of assuaging his mental desolation. This is vividly revealed in the two successive poems "A photograph" and "The last of the wives". In the former, the poet expresses how he stumbles on a photograph of his father amidst an ambience of desolation:

Then, one morning at home, feeling low, while
The people were out again in streets
And squares, looking for a man who would only
Lead them deeper into their wilderness,
I found in a cabinet, locked away
In a chamber, long out of use, among
Forgotten council papers, this picture
Of an old man, going back a hundred years. (p. 318)

In the above, in addition, the poet conveys a sense in which men are seen as beings wandering the earth's surface in search of life but, ironically, they are in search of what "would only lead them deeper into their wilderness", the state in which he has found himself following years of longing for existence. In the latter poem, the poet's loneliness is heightened such that the last of his father's wives, who is also still alive, is dragged into the picture as equally experiencing similar desolation, probably for him to feel some relief knowing that he is not alone in that state:

A woman now lives alone
In a compound where once she had
The company of other wives
As many as her husband
Had fingers.
...
With memories of an age
Long gone, she moves alone, like
A millipede, between her
Living rooms and her kitchen,

At opposite ends of a courtyard,
Now the great fair has dispersed
And husband and all other wives
Have gone their separate ways
To homes in a place nobody knows. (pp. 322-323)

The significance of all of these is that, to him, that current state is entirely symbolic of “a call to heaven”, as the title of the poem below bears, premised on the realisation that his late father as well others who have also passed on had once lived, but their souls have returned to the true owner, God who gave them in the first place:

God who has all
Wants the small life
He gave man;
God who is all
Still wants back all
He gave man and wife. (p. 327)

At the above point in time, as a result of that realisation of the temporality of human existence, the poet thus overtly demonstrates his awareness that his days are equally winding down. This is observable in his assertion that, in a world where his “days down the years make magic past masquerades”, what he is left with are simply “debris of days” (p. 328). Against this backdrop, therefore, he realises a kind distance between him and his living mates, which is being gradually created, by his depleting days and the closeness or proximity to establishing a re-union with his loved ones who had once lived but have now been committed to the mother earth:

Those closest to me
Grow distant every day,
But those far away
I reach quite easily. (p. 329)

The above mental state is largely influenced by the poet’s current state of growing old. This is in line with the final submission of Monika Ardel in her study that “older adults tend to encounter death more frequently and on a more personal level than do younger adults, and that they often have already accepted the fact that their own death is more than a theoretical possibility” (p. 151). Indeed, the poet is perceived to be in that state of mind, i. e., to be amidst such an encounter with death and thus already having accepted its inevitability. Moreover, in this submission, it is evident that aging individuals are identifiable by two qualities of which the poet has equally demonstrated: awareness that death looms every day as well its inevitability. To this

end, in the poem that follows, the poet is perceived to be indeed attributing his possession of these qualities to his age; that is, his age as the significant factor which has actually enhanced his being brought into that encounter with death:

Age has given me a gift
I could not have found with all
My meandering in the space
Of sleep. Now that I sit back
In the shadow of myself
I can see dizzy before me
The black hole down which my days
Disappeared, may be to form
A singularity all my own.
I do not see any light
Down this hole, bound by no walls. (p. 330)

On the foregoing, it can be established that the poet's age is what has endowed him with the mental capacity to be aware of the realities and/or circumstances surrounding the phenomenon of death as an existential fact. In Ardelt's (2008) study, this is regarded as the personality characteristic of 'wisdom'. It is a state whereby the aging individual demonstrates adequate comprehension of the fact and inescapability of death, having been able to live a meaningful life. The poet exhibits this line of thought, specifically in the reflective and cognitive, by imagining the futility that characterise existence. Horribly, it is like drops of rain collected in a basket over a specific period of time:

A stretch of rope can go down
A hole, and come up with water
In a pot, but here in a hollow
Of myself, now I am awake
To the fact that this thing we call
Life belongs to none of us here,
However loud our claim, I think
The years I have done to this point,
More by means of chance than grace,
Are drops of rain I collected
In a basket, touched sometimes
By sun rays. How many days of sleep
Have I left to fill a sump, still
Sinking through fields no one can drill? (p. 332)

Indeed, the above shows the poet's cognition of 'existence' as a phenomenon which invariably translates to 'being-towards-death', to use Martin Heidegger's conception. Hence, obviously, he already has accepted it. To this end, he unconsciously

pictures himself, in a dream-like state, as having joined those in the life beyond. This unconscious encounter with the dead ones is related momentarily thus:

The many faces I see again and
Again in my sleep, not counting
Family, friends and the thousands
I touched through work and play
I still do not know any to give
Them names, when crushed by their mass
I emerge out of breath from sleep (p. 339)

Upon regaining his consciousness, in the following stanza, the reader is made to understand that, beyond an imagination, what is revealed in his unconscious state earlier on amounts to a preview of the kind of company he is getting closer to eternally keeping, as his days unstoppably wind down:

These are no creations out of my art
But strange populations, moving on planes
I cannot summon out of space
For others to see and share their tongues.
Now, if this is all a preview
Of the company I am to keep
When I take my last sleep here on earth,
Then I want nothing of revelation. (p. 339)

In spite of the fact that the poet has, to a great extent, demonstrated cognition of the inevitability of death, the revelation that clouds his sleepy state above is still quite horrifying. Hence, he would want no further preview of such until the arrival of that crude moment when he will inevitably join his compatriots in the life beyond.

Traversing the World of the Dead as a Therapeutic Measure against Death Anxiety

There is no denying that living beings have the natural propensity to relate with the dead ones. This is a fact that psychological studies have equally corroborated, having located this interaction within the realm of the unconscious, especially in dreams. Sigmund Freud's study on dreams is a substantial pointer to this. Nevertheless, this does not disregard the fact that it would provoke some level of mystery when an individual is said to have had, or be having, an interaction with the dead. It would become more mysterious when such an individual demonstrates the ability to confidently relate the details of such engagement(s). The poetic persona in this study is indeed seen to be exhibiting this mental capability, as if he now visits and dines in the realm of the dead.

The poet's ability to traverse the world of the dead in his unconscious (sleep state) is identifiable as a significant gift of age which has positioned the poet as a witness to the realities of the world beyond. This is a world between life and death that the poet is critically seen to inhabit at certain points in time. Sleep assumes his constant medium of journeying to afterlife, which indeed is significantly enhanced by his old age. To this end, the ultimate message he returns with is the imminent closure of his existence that his old age has inevitably condemned him to. This understanding largely signals the poet's acceptance of that very closure (death), even when it is ascertainable that an element of fear is still being entertained, considering his partial resistance to sleep at certain points as a way of avoiding being unconsciously thrown into the dream world wherein he constantly encounters death. The very poem that bears the title of the entire volume critically pictures the poet amidst this existential vicissitude:

Of sleep and old age, I believe,
 I may now speak as a witness
 Of truth. Not only is one state
 A function of the other,
 Sleep mimics so well the last act
 Of old all it wants is
 The very seal of closure.
 But while I can in all truth
 Resist the power and pleasure
 Of sleep, attendant upon
 My years in declension, old age,
 With unseen chains, leads me
 A bondsman to death, the master
 From whose beck and call it has
 No manumission. These twin
 Agents daily rock my bed. (p. 341)

At the above point in time, the manifestation of the therapeutic essence of the poet's concern about death in his artistic engagement is beginning to take shape. This is because the process of writing is perceived to have significantly aided him, in spite of the inherent terror, to be able to face and embrace death, as one of the ultimate concerns of his existence:

This life I lead I now find a load,
 As many I know also feel.
 Yet, just to think of letting go
 Fills me with fear of the void
 Into which we all vanish. (p. 347)

Despite the above cognition of the circumstances surrounding existence and death, and the resolution to embrace and deal with them accordingly, it is not surprising that such an element of fear of death is still being entertained. It is only because he possesses, by virtue of his old age, the cognitive capacity to reflect into the past and see the void in the efforts of those who have passed on to avoid what was obviously and understandably unavoidable:

Old age truly is time
Top look back at events in the past,
Not to retrieve anything
For some archive, but I find,
Out of fear, the old try all
They can to fill the void
They see clearly in their front. (p. 348)

Amidst the entire concern, importantly to the poet, he craves for one more thing, which is equally of great concern to his reflection on and cognition of living and dying – the existence of good critics that would demonstrate such keen, philosophical and psychological insights. That is, good literary critics in the contemporary period, like the class of which he knew, who would probably be able to read his work appropriately in the light of his direct confrontation with one of the ultimate concerns of existence. This is perceived as the construction of death in his art which ultimately assumes an existential therapy against death anxiety:

If it must be said again,
Good critics of art are rare
To find, more so in these days
Of no law and order in the practice,
As there is none all over the land.
Of the rare class I knew well enough
To show my work, as it came,
Several now have gone to rest,
While others are just silent,
Or otherwise engaged in a world,
Driven mad by gain. (p. 352)

The rationale behind the poet's longing or craving for such critics above is locatable in the subsequent poem "A mirror image" wherein which the poet's concern is tantamount to an activity of subjecting his entire state of being, like a mirror image, to a form of artistic re-evaluation for others (critics) to read via diverse critical lenses:

When I look at myself in a mirror,
Made special by some craft,

I see my right becomes my left,
And my left, my right. The image
Then is not as others see me,
Dressed up as I may be for a party,
Which may also be stepping out
Of myself. Yet I have it in my mind
This firm belief I look truly myself,
When I see myself in my mirror,
Knowing well the face I see
Is only a shade I show the world. (p. 357)

Seeing and constructing himself critically as only a mere shade being shown to the world through his artistic mirror, he paradoxically weighs his life (i.e., the grand sum of what he could regard as his achievement) as rather illusory because all was given to him only to be taken back by the giver at any time against his will. He thus queries the essence of his so called existence when even only a minutest part of it could be, by chance, left to immortalize him:

All I have collected every day
To myself amount to grand sum
I like to call my life, the one thing
In life I do not own, knowing now
It was given to be taken back
Any day against my will; and I
Also know that, when all has been said
And done, only a part of that
I have collected in my life will,
With some small luck, be left to my name. (p. 383)

At this point, the above assumes a novel knowledge of existential truth to the poet. Therefore, as a literary artist, this is being confronted with and embraced in his art. This is what is conceived in this study as being the medium through which the poet seeks to purge himself of the underlying anxiety of death. Hence, he makes his terminal testament which greatly signifies his ultimate acceptance of the ultimate existential concern. Critically, thus, these final words from the poet which are translatable to his acceptance of death, as embodied in the last poem of the volume "My last testament", are conceived as indeed constituting a therapy for the poet against the terror and anxiety of death upon his perception and/or cognition of its inevitability and imminence:

This is to my family:
Do not take me to a mortuary,
Do not take me to a church,
Whether I die in or out of the town,

But take me home to my own, and
To lines and tunes, tested on the waves
Of time, let me lie in my place
On the Kiagbodo River.
If Moslems do it in a day,
You certainly can do it in three,
Avoiding blood and waste;
And whatever you do after,
My three daughters and my son
By the only wife I have,
Do not fight over anything
I may be pleased to leave behind. (p. 385)

Truly, the foregoing greatly re-echoes the poet's cognition of his existence as ultimately a being-towards-death and, therefore, acceptance of this crude reality. This is especially evident in his explicit message to his family emphasizing the need to eschew wastefulness in terms of time and material resources during his funeral while he would be, above all, pleased if no feud is entertained among them over whatever property he leaves behind. All of these are enormous pointers to the poet's preparedness to confront or embrace that very last moment on earth upon its arrival.

Conclusion

The study has attempted to construct aging as the impulsive context of John Pepper Clark's confrontation with death or the process of dying in his poetry volume *Of Sleep and Old Age*. Premised on the notion that death exists simultaneously with life, and is thus capable of exerting anxiety on an individual (Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan, 2004), the aging poet is critically seen to be preoccupied in his art with a therapeutic measure to absolve himself of this anxiety in the form of a strong will to confront, embrace and deal with it in order to be able to accept it as an ultimate truth of existence. In view of this, for the aging poet or persona, art significantly serves the purpose of existential therapy. This is because it is within this realm of existence that he is perceived to have been able to purge or divest himself of the inherent anxiety by subjecting his existence to a critical frame describable as 'to be, and, therefore, is not to be'. It is similar to what is called the process of *meaning-making* in death studies which involves "the construction of meaning through language, culture, story, goal-striving, and personal development". (Niemic & Schulenberg, 2011, p. 390)

Furthermore, it is also deducible from the study that Sommers-Flanagan's & Sommers-Flanagan's (2004) conception of existential therapy indeed corroborates the findings of Ardel's (2008) study which, by implication, constructs wisdom, religion, and purpose in life as having the propensity to impact positively on the attitudes of aging individuals towards the phenomenon of death. In this way, thus, reading the text within the two theoretical contexts has yielded a specific, interwoven premise on which the two theoretical expositions on death attitudes adopted in the study can be further justified.

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METADISCOURSE, WRITER IDENTITY AND READER CONSTRUCTION AMONG NOVICE ARABIC-SPEAKING ESL WRITERS

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Abstract

This study used qualitative analyses to explore novice ESL writers' concepts of writers, readers and texts. Metadiscourse studies tabulate frequencies of discourse markers in order to characterise the different ways novices and experts, native-speakers and non-native speakers, construct themselves as writers, engage with their readers, and guide readers through their text. But the picture created by these descriptive statistics lacks many content areas voiced by student writers, including their reliance on visual content, and their emotions. Student writers' experiences in a world saturated by visual media and marketing views are also factors shaping how they construct their identities as writers, the identities of their projected readers, and how they understand what they are doing when writing text. This study used content and transitivity analyses to assess how Arabic native-speaker novices understand themselves as writers, how they project their readers' identities, and how they try to engage them. Results show that visuals are indistinct from text, and verbs of seeing are used for reader understanding, in novice writers' sense of their texts, and how they understand engaging the reader. These novices have a demographically granular assessment of audiences, but aim to please readers with expected content rather than challenge them with academic content, and they downplay important elements of teacher talk, syllabus and second-language (L2) composition instruction, particularly data, research, structure and language.

Keywords: metadiscourse, systemic functional linguistics, content analysis, transitivity analysis, English for Academic Purposes, writer concepts, reader concepts

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Instructors of university composition classes routinely assess student essays in terms of their content and their structure, using terminology such as “thesis statement”, “topic sentence”, “argument”, “cohesion” and others. They discuss the language students use when writing essays, using terms such as “grammar” and “register”, and the mechanics of student essays using terms such as “punctuation”, “spelling” and “citation” (Alexander, 2012; Biber & Gray, 2010). This teacher-talk is felt to shape how learners understand the kind of thing academic writing is, and the metalanguage they employ when talking about their own essays (Gilquin & Paquot, 2008). L2 writers often take in lexical bundles from their teachers, redeploying them in their own work (Meunier & Granger, 2008). However, L2 writers also have their own, personal lives, and this also shapes what they think they are doing, when they write. However, academic analysis has rarely explored how student writers’ own lives shape their understanding of their rhetoric practice.

Literature Review

The term metadiscourse refers to the language used by writers to construct their own manifestation within the text, and the language through which they communicate to readers about their meaning. Two models of metadiscourse have been articulated, including the reflexive model focused on elements that organise the text, (Ädel & Mauranen, 2010), and the integrative model which embraces a greater range of interpersonal resources writers employ, and includes how writers construe readers and texts (Hyland, 2005). The integrative model has given rise to two analytic approaches. Interactive analyses focus on resources through which writers limit and direct how readers understand their text. These studies tabulate frequencies of transitions (but, thus), frame markers (in conclusion, finally), endophoric markers (as noted below, see section X) and code glosses (such as, namely). Interactional analyses focus on resources through which writers implant themselves within the text, and create relationships with their material and their readers. These studies tabulate frequencies of hedges (perhaps, somewhat), boosters (clearly, in fact), engagement markers (you can see that, note that) and self-mentions (first-person pronouns). Quantitative studies have tended to tabulate frequencies, where studies using qualitative methods have analysed extended examples in order to highlight the complexity of the writer’s relationships with text and reader (Hyland & Tse, 2004). While these studies have improved our understanding of inexperienced

academic writers' text, they cannot reveal how those inexperienced writers understand what they are doing, when they make those choices in their writing.

Metadiscourse studies began by addressing corpora formed from expert academic writing, at the level of masters, PhD and research article writing (Hyland, 2002; 2004). More recently they have focused on novice and L2 writers, as the teaching of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has become a global activity (Negretti & Kuteeva, 2011). Hyland's (2006) study comparing how Hong Kong final-year undergraduates and expert academic writers constructed relationships with their readers found that expert writers used interpersonal devices more than twice as often as novices. He asserted that "[a]nticipating readers' expectations and responses to what they write...can be very difficult for novices who are not used to seeing writing as interactive or to imagining the perceptions, interests, and requirements of a potential audience" (Hyland 2006, 364). He concluded that Hong Kong novices were reluctant to engage the reader, viewing academic writing as quite strictly referential. He also argued for the influence of the field, stemming from the relative inability of soft-knowledge fields such as humanities and the social sciences to make unequivocal knowledge claims, meaning that these writers were more likely to use persuasive interpersonal devices such as second person pronouns than were writers in the sciences. Thus he suggested a cline between invitational devices which invite writer-reader solidarity and establish greater intimacy, such as second-person pronouns and asides, at one end, and manipulative devices such as directives and questions which manoeuvre the reader in certain directions, at the other.

However, a separate stream of research on Confucian learning styles suggested these could be accounted for as dimensions of Chinese culture such as valuing accuracy over emotional immediacy (Cheng, 2000). Solidarity is pre-eminently important in Chinese culture, but is assumed and explicitly not articulated (Yao, 2000), something non-Asians often encounter when seeking to understand why Chinese people do not say thank-you to each other (Al Falasi, 2007). Chinese culture discourages the expression of personal views and emotion (Chen et al 2005). Culturally polite styles in Chinese culture are indirect, employing hedges, and mixing positive and negative comments (Wei & Lei, 2011). These conventions must impact Chinese native-speakers' writing style, and in particular the use of interpersonal and engagement resources. We should expect that

other novice writers' cultures would impact them also. But cultural values are difficult to use, in analysing metadiscourse (Søndergaard, 2012).

Culture is a factor in several recent metadiscourse studies (Abdi, 2009; Pérez-Llantada, 2010; Mur-Dueñas, 2011). Vande Kopple (2012) explored multiple examples of how culturally specific writing conventions shaped novice writers' use of interpersonal resources in constructing readers and texts. Exploring the semantic impact of non-native speaker constructions in English, he asserts that "metadiscourse deserves a prominent place in second-language instruction" in helping students understand English-language conventions for accuracy, ethics and forms of address (Vande Kopple, 2012, 42). This perspective fits with research in contrastive rhetoric, exploring the cultural sources of stylistic and ethical contentions in academic writing, within different languages and varieties (Connor, Nagelhout & Rozycki, 2008).

The culture of contemporary novice L2 writers is complex. To begin with, it goes well beyond the local. As English learners, they participate in an imagined global culture with nearly 2 billion others worldwide (Graddol, 2007). Globalisation has redefined their identities, allowing them to participate in selected transnational trends, and to blend local with international elements of their choice (Doiz, Lasagabaster, & Sierra, 2011). This study explores how Arabic native-speakers of English as a second-language (ESL) employ metadiscourse to write about themselves as writers, their texts, and their readers. Some impacts of Arabic-speakers' cultural on their use of metadiscourse have already been studied. Sultan's (2011) study of metadiscourse differences between Arabic and English native speaker research writers showed that Arabic-speaker writers used more interactive discourse markers, particularly using transitions three times as frequently as English speakers, as well as using evidentials and code glosses more frequently. By comparison, they used fewer frame markers and endophoric markers. Alshahrani's (2015) study of Arabic native-speaker academic writers suggests that the relative usage of specific discourse markers reflects Arabic writers' field of study and institutional context. However, there are no studies of more the impacts of contemporary, transnational cultural elements, on the metadiscourse of Arabic speakers. The present study examines the views of Arabic-speaker ESL novice writers. These novice writers naturally reflect the 21st century context, of ubiquitous cross-platform computing and social networking (Crystal, 2006). The tools, platforms and

domains of their daily digital literacies inform how they write (Mangan, 2008). The authentic composing habits they have grown up with inform their understanding of themselves as communicators, of the texts they write, and of how to engage with their readers (Fitze, 2006). Thus, we should expect that metadiscourse will be reframed by contemporary digital discourse.

Conventional metadiscourse research seems relatively unable to frame these cultural and digital elements of novice writers' identities, and their understanding of their rhetorical practice. While it has allowed researchers to say quite precisely what various groups of writers are doing, it is less successful in revealing why they do so, and what it means to them. For this, the rich content of a qualitative study would be more useful. This study aims to question the connotations of the term novice, which may include a sense of uncertainty in the role of the writer, or diffidence in forming relationships with readers. This paper suggests that this is simply not the case, and that contemporary L2 novice writers would be better understood as assertively self-confident in their understanding of their role and their relationship to their readers. This is not to argue that their views are sufficiently developed or accurate. However, this paper does attempt to problematise the term 'novice'. Hyland asks, "Should students be writing for their teachers, their peers or their examiners?" (2012, p. 364). While expert writers understand the academic rhetorical situation and novices cannot, contemporary novices appear to have written the teacher out of the picture, and placed their peers squarely in the position of dominance. EAP instructors may or may not agree with those ideas. Yet we must acknowledge that EAP has been transformed from the bottom up, in areas such as World Englishes, active pedagogies, gender and identity issues, evolving teacher and student roles, and others. Metadiscourse, then, is inter-discursive. Metadiscourse is a two-way street.

This study explores Arabic native-speaker novice views of themselves as writers, their texts and readers. It elicited extensive qualitative data from novice writers, in order to create a complex picture of their self-understanding. This was then used to reflect on the current understandings coming from conventional metadiscourse studies. Research questions included the following: what content do Arabic native-speaker novice writers realise, about themselves as writers? When engaging readers and

shaping their texts? What kinds of readers do they project? How do they understand their agency as writers? The agency of the text, and of readers?

Method

Qualitative data was collected from 85 participants, all of whom were Arabic native-speakers, and students at a US-accredited, English-medium-of-instruction university in Cairo, Egypt. All had advanced English proficiency, having attained the IELTS 5.5 or TOEFL iBT46-59 level required for institutional admission. All were registered in a section of a freshman composition course. While information on participant majors was not available, all sections contained a variety of majors. Within the institution, there were more than three times as many undergraduate science, engineering and business than social science and humanities majors (AUC, 2015). Participants were invited to write a weekly personal reflection of about 100 words on the topic, "What was this class like for you this week, and why?" The prompt was framed as a generalised, open stimulus, to reduce artificially defining and structuring thematic content in the data as would be the case if a survey had been used. Instead, this method allowed participants to realise content they felt was important to them (Neumann, 2013). Given the nature of teacher talk and of the assignments in composition courses, writers, texts and readers were bound to be realised as topics, and could be extracted analytically. Data was collected weekly over four consecutive weeks, during which time participants produced their final research essay. Participants had previously produced two essays, both of which had been through three drafts. Therefore, they had sufficient experience to understand the composition terminology that would be realised in the classroom. They also had a personal experience of producing a university research essay. However, their experience was not sufficient to allow them to be understood as experts. Data was aggregated into a corpus and thematically relevant data was extracted, to assess patterns in metadiscourse.

Data was analysed in three ways. First, content analysis was used to generate an overall scheme of frequently-realised themes and subunits participants connected with their projected readers. Second, this data was re-unitised to enumerate specific kinds of readers. Third, transitivity analysis was used to examine the process types that participants attributed to themselves as writer, and also to text and reader.

Content Analysis

Content analysis represents the thematic content realised in extensive textual data as a set of themes, broken down into sub-topic, as a set of realisation frequencies (Roberts, 2000). While the complete ideational content of a corpus may be coded, emergent coding schemes are more frequently used (Neuendorf, 2016). This tabulates frequencies only for themes and subtopics which have “a direct bearing on the question,” producing smaller but more reliable frequency scores (Bazerman & Prior, 2004, p. 19). The clause is used as a bounded coding unit, as it is the smallest viable unit of meaning for generating frequency scores (Bryman, 2004). Syntactical units are felt to be “‘natural’ relative to the grammar of the medium of the data” (Krippendorf 2012, p. 105). The smallest contiguous range was taken to be between the single word and the clause (Krippendorf, 2013). “Metadiscourse is often realised by signals which can stretch to clause or sentence length” (Hyland, 2010, p. 126). In this study, clauses were coded for a single unit of meaning, with cross-clause and distal clauses counted separately, but n-gram dichotomous word-stem variables excluded (Hopkins & King, 2010). Manifest content was included, but latent content excluded (Stemler, 2001).

The first content analysis focused on frequently-realised themes and subunits. This produced a coding frame comprising four themes, each with six subunits, as in Table 1.

Table 1

Emergent coding frame for participants’ perceived readership

THEME	SUBUNIT
improving the reader’s comprehension	through language through research through data through visuals through structure through content
improving the reader’s experience	making it more enjoyable (unspecified) making it more popularly appealing including better data making it more visually interesting using better language tailoring it to reader identities
making the reader believe your ideas	through persuasion (unspecified) through adding research through pleasant words through argumentation through excellent language proficiency through visuals

problems	confusing the reader boring / demotivating the reader placing burdens on the reader poor language / grammar poor structure poor visuals
----------	--

Thematic content was then reunited, to construct a list of frequently-realised reader types (Krippendorf & Bock, 2009). Clauses identifying readers through a noun or nominal group (“The ability to understand resources is one of the major skills that writers and communicators have to acquire”, “I’m targeting individuals that are educated”) were used to construct an emergent coding frame (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The reunited coding frame can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2

Kinds of readers realised in reflection corpus

THEME	SUBUNIT
Self as reader	
Instructor as reader	
Undefined reader	
Reader as target	
Reader as viewer	
Reader as language consumer	
Reader as content consumer	
Specialist readers	Educated Politically informed Defined by area of interest Defined by major

Content was coded by the lead researcher and a research assistant, each with more than 200 hours’ experience. A concordancing program was used to identify word, collocation and colligation counts for specific terms within each subunit, in order to ensure accuracy and completeness (Baayen, 2008).

Transitivity analysis

People construe their experiences as processes unfolding in time. Processes, or verbs, convey the element of activity or change within the clause (Egins, 2004). Because metadiscourse is a projection of the ideas of the writer, the process types selected to represent writer, text and reader reveal participant views about their own

agency and identity (Halliday, 1994). Transitivity analysis focuses on how actors, participants and processes are construed within the clause (Martin, 2005). The “cornerstone of the semantic organization of experience” (Halliday, 1971, p. 19), processes are fundamental lexical items in human neurolinguistic processing (Druks, 2002; Vigliocco, Vinson, Druks, Barber & Cappa, 2011). Process types encode a specific mental image of how reality works – its actions, actors, and circumstances - in the experience of the person realising them (Thompson, 2004). Processes are organised as a system network comprising six types and eleven categories (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), as in Figure 1.

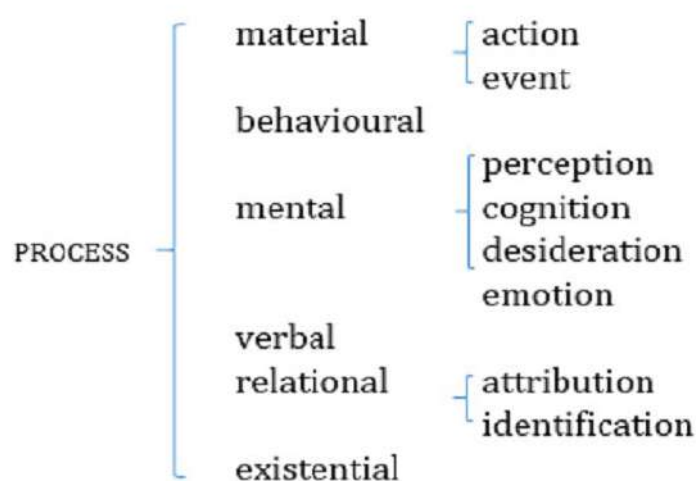


Figure 1. The process system network

Process types may be used as a coding scheme (Dong, Kleinsmann, & Valkenburg 2009). Material processes construe events unfolding outside the self, either as an action transitively taking an object (“I researched the sources”), or as an event (“it is not the worst that could happen”). Mental processes construe Actors’ experiences inside themselves (“I felt really disappointed”). Behavioural processes inhabit a medial position between these two, construing physiological events happening within the body of the Actor (“I always oversleep”). Relational processes construe the identification and characterisation of internal and external objects and events, through clausal extensions elaborating on the circumstances, usually through adverbial or prepositional phrases (“I collected data [extension:] about whether people believe in aliens or not”). Relational processes were not tabulated in this study, as most contained referential or ideational content, making it difficult to use them to understand how participants construe writers, texts and readers. Verbal processes mediate between mental and relational

categories, and construe ways of saying (“today's session will help me improve my draft and clarify that”). Existential processes mediate between material and relational processes, construing simple being/not being. These realisations were too numerous and indefinite to illuminate participant views of readers, writers and texts, and thus were not tabulated.

Coding process types reveals patterns and regularities in a participant groups' understanding (Lavid & Hita, 2002). Realisation frequencies were tabulated to detail how participants encoded the agency of readers, writers and texts. For this third method of analysis, clauses were again the unit of analysis, including clauses complexes organised by the same process (Martin, 2014). For example, the five clauses of this sentence are all extensions of the clause containing the verb “target”: “(a) my targeted audience are people (b) who are more concerned (c) about studying the psychology of individual (d) when being exposed to visuals (e) such as business owners and marketing managers.”

Intercoder Reliability

Inter-coder reliability was calculated for both content analyses, and the transitivity analysis (Freelon, 2016). The measure used was Cohen's κ (free-margin and percent overall) (Lombard, Snyder-Duch & Bracken, 2004).

Data

Individual reflections were aggregated into a corpus of 43 075 words and 5881 clauses. Of these, 3998 clauses contained content relating to writers, texts and readers. Reliability values of 8.58 (f-m) and 8.40 (p-o) were robust, and not attributable to chance.

Content analysis of frequently-realised themes and subunits

Content sorted into four themes. The first comprised clauses focused on several methods participants felt would improve their projected readers' comprehension of their essay (“Interpreting these findings on a graphical representation is a helpful tool to explain to the audience the various findings”), as in Figure 2.

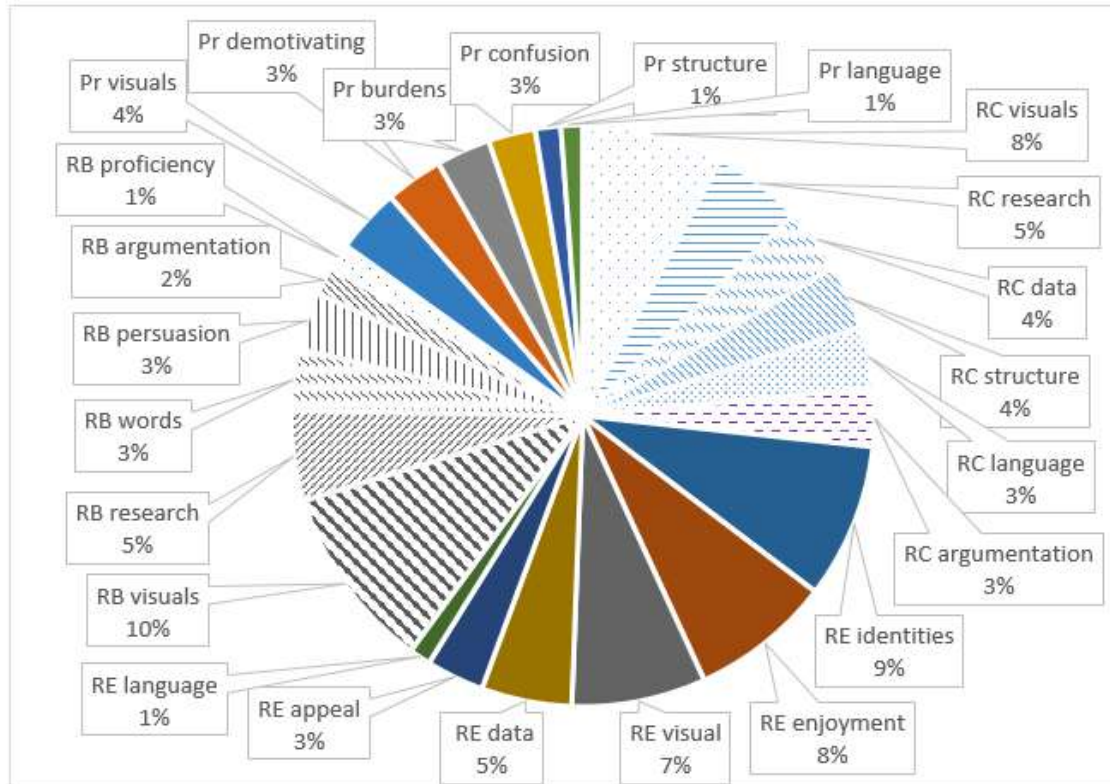


Figure 2. Content analysis themes and subunits

These clauses realised the concerned that readers understood the writers' referential content. The second comprised clauses focused on ways to improve readers' personal experience of reading their essay ("design aims to make the communicated data more appealing to the reader, allowing for the overall experience of reading to be more enjoyable and pleasant"). The third comprised clauses focused on methods participants felt would cause readers to believe their ideas. These clauses differed from those in the first two themes as they were directive, rather than invitational ("I now know that employing different sources in different topics is significant in making my writing more credible. The reader will then find the writing as being more authoritative and credible"). The fourth theme comprised a selection of problems participants anticipated they would encounter, as writers and within their texts. Subunits recurred across themes, including (a) visuals, (b) research, meaning reading research articles, government documents and so on, (c) data, meaning the numerical contents of graphs, tables and charts, (d) the organisation or structuring of the paper into sections such as the introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion and the use of thesis statement and topic sentences, and (e) language, comprising grammar, registerial choices, spelling and punctuation, though the latter two were not realised frequently.

Content analysis of reader types

The reunited content analysis yielded seven distinct kinds of readers projected by participants, plus an eighth omnibus category of specialist readers, as in Figure 3.

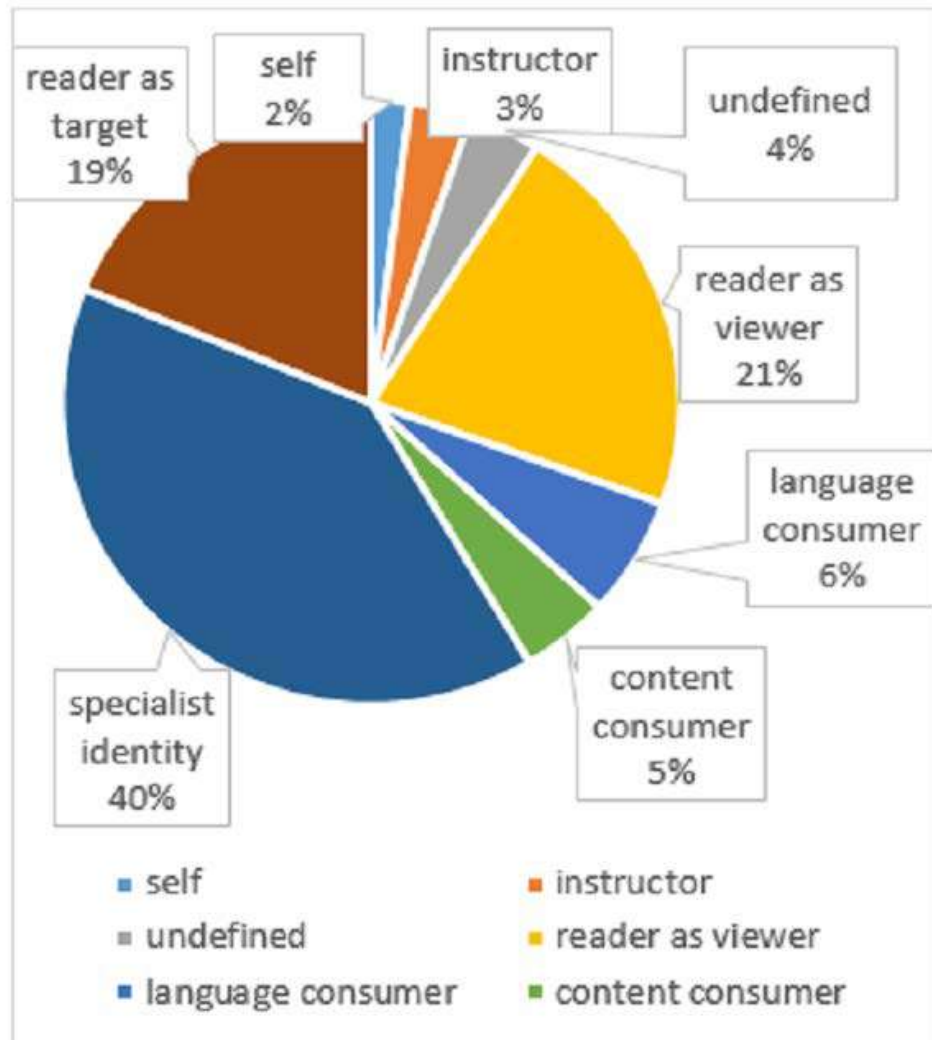


Figure 3. Re-united content frame: Kinds of readers

Of these reader types, projected specialist readers comprised the largest number at 40% (“My readers are in business”, “my reader has to be in politics like me”). Readers understood as viewers were the next largest group at 21% (“I can think of how to make it easier in steps for readers to see and understand the data and also retain faster”, “when one sees, for example, a picture that is colorful and of high quality then the reader will feel a sense of attraction”). Finally, projected readers as targets comprised 19% of realisations (“my targeted audience are people who are more concerned about studying the psychology”, “my target audience is consumers”). The instructor, who was understood by participants to be the only real reader, received only 3% of realisations.

Process analysis

Of 3,998 clauses containing metadiscourse content, 2,110 contained process types that could be classified within the reduced schema, or were distal to such a clause. This produced different profiles for writer, text and reader as agents with very different characteristics, as in Figure 4.

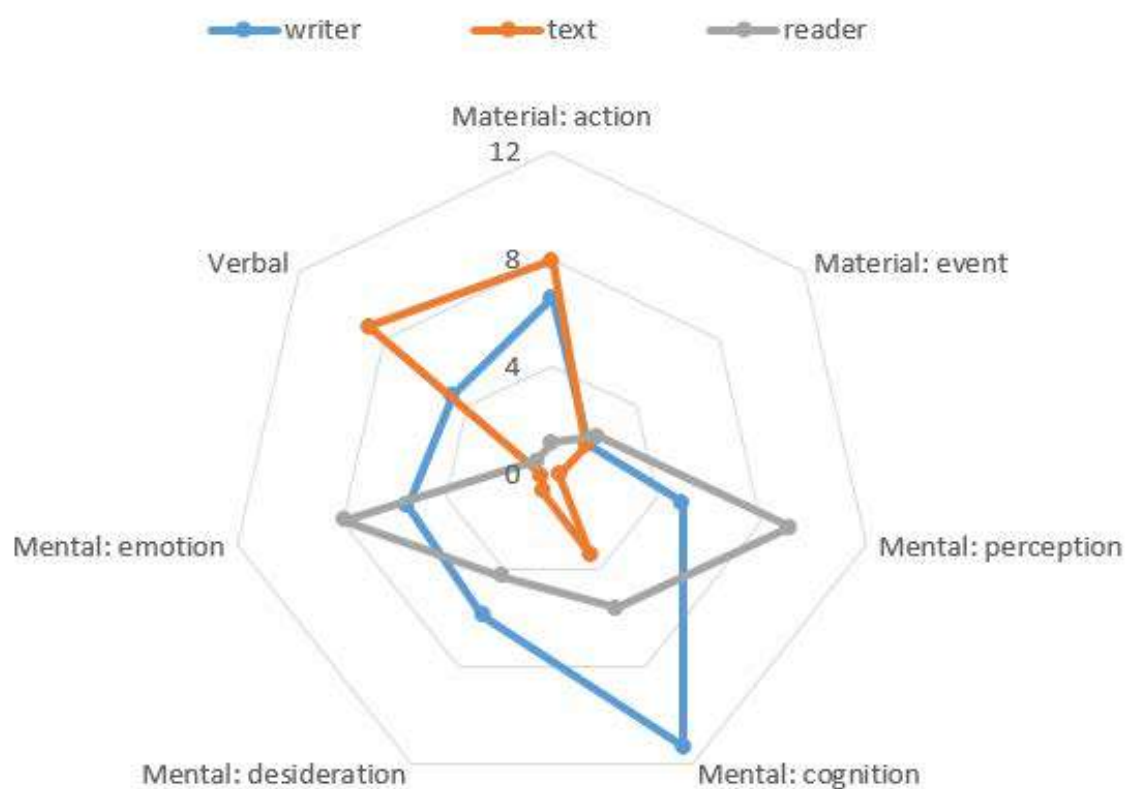


Figure 4. Process types realised by participants for writers, texts and readers

Writers were primarily characterised by cognition (understand, know) and material actions (develop, distinguish) (“a writer knows how to persuade,” “the writer develops an emotional connection with the texts they read”). Texts were primarily characterised by saying (express, persuade) and material actions (make, target) (“this part expresses my mind”, “my essay makes them think about the reality of this problem.”) Readers were primarily characterised by mental perception (view, look) and emotions (enjoy, be interested) (“the reader gets a chance to see my point”, “my audience is those who are interested in the human psyche in general. Who isn't my audience is those who are uneducated, uninterested.”)

Inter-coder reliability

Inter-coder reliability was calculated for both content coding frames, and also for the transitivity analysis, as in Table 3.

Table 3

Inter-coder reliability (p-o, f-m)

	P-O	F-M
Content frame 1	0.828	0.810
Content frame 2	0.834	0.823
Transitivity	0.815	0.806

These values indicate robust reliability in the coding process, and are not attributable to chance.

Discussion

This study has limitations. It used a relatively small participant group in a single location, and analysed data from only 4 weeks, and the writing of a single essay. A larger participant cohort, and data from a greater time span within the first year would allow a more precise understanding of contemporary novice concepts of writers, readers and texts. Still, this study has demonstrated that novice writers have assertive, self-confident concepts about their roles as writers. The statement, “[w]hen we write an essay, we don’t write it as students we write it as writers” shows the awareness of taking on this role. Content analysis suggests that they understand this role as trying to interest and satisfy readers. They assume consonance between the writer’s and the readers’ role, projecting readers who occupy niches parallel to their writerly role, as shown in the example assuming psychologists write for people interested in psychology. They understand their reader as wanting to be satisfied, with reader satisfaction playing a more powerful part in defining the writer’s role than any sense of the academic or expert role, or the academic qualities or content of a text.

Second, way these novices understand the writer-reader relationship resembles marketing concepts far more than traditional views of the expert. Thematic content from the first coding frame showed that participants were more concerned with providing readers with a good experience (166=33.33%) than with improving reader comprehension (133=26.71%). They were more concerned with making them believe the author’s ideas (124=24.90%), but not greatly concerned (75=15.06%) with problems areas in their texts. For example:

Nowadays, technology have provided individuals with a variety of tools to understand their resources in the simplest way possible; writers are obligated to explore their audience personalities and mentality to reach their communication goals. Identifying the audience is one of the magnificently relevant steps to the process, as it helps communicators to determine whether the understood resources used is properly related to their audience experiences, mentalities, and education.

Here, the writer understands his role as ensuring that his text coordinates well with his readers' daily experiences, including what they can find on the internet. In this example as in many other cases, these novices' sense of the writer's role resembles customer service.

Third, these novices privilege visual content in their understanding of how the writer should communicate, and what the reader does in order to understand the text. In the content analysis data, three of eight subunits understood visuals as assisting reader comprehension, constructing reader experiences, and making readers believe the author's views. Had these subunits been combined, they would have comprised nearly a third of all realisations. By comparison, participants downplayed data, research articles, and language, all of which would be more likely to challenge writers and readers, and make their relationship more complex and demanding.

These novices' understanding of writing conflates visual with textual elements, to the point that they almost fail to distinguish the two, for example:

Visual communication is a daily life routine which we go through in each second but we do not realize. I have learnt that each picture I see, I do analyse it in seconds and produce conclusions. This is what I can easily use to help my reader take my ideas

Here, the writer uses his previous visual experience to characterise himself as an average person, specifically applying this to how he reads and thinks, which he then applies to how he should write because this is how his readers also will read. Content analysis suggests that participants viewed visuals including graphs, charts, photographs, illustrations and infographics as more important than reading research articles, presenting data or using sophisticated language, in constituting effective authorship: "this deep, complex meaning can be achieved through clear visuals which

appeal to the viewer.” Analysis of the reunited coding frame showed that these participants most frequently characterised their readers as viewers (“will see”, “can see”). This indicates the profound degree to which contemporary novices are shaped by the media environment they live in, and by their own daily digital reading habits.

Fourth, the qualitative data analysed in this study revealed an implicit sensory disjuncture between writers and readers. At the same time, the prosaic reality that the instructor is the only actual and real reader seemed unimportant to them, suggesting that the impact of media saturation is a degree of fantasy in conceptualising the rhetorical situation. Transitivity analysis showed that these novices understood themselves as thinkers, but their readers as viewers. Participants represented themselves mainly as thinking, the most frequent activity in the corpus, but their readers mainly as perceiving (seeing or viewing), the second most frequent activity in the corpus. For example:

The writers have to express their thoughts and information in a professional way. Then it is much easier for the reader to see ending results and numbers based on the conducted survey rather than scattered numbers that will confuse the reader and decrease the readers motivation to learn more about a certain study conducted.

In sentence 1, the writer as actor realises thought. But in sentence 2, where the reader is the actor, the process enacted is seeing. Visuals are valorised as better than “scattered numbers”. That is, this writer believes that placing numerical data into the text would require the reader to do too much work or work that was too difficult. In the tension between writing and readerly confusion, the demotivation of the reader is used as the proper way to make writerly decisions. This solution to the tension created by writerly expertise and readerly experience was seen in many cases. Transitivity analysis showed that texts were constructed as enacting verbal (“my essay claims”) and materially-active (“My paper will make a dull topic interesting”) processes. For example:

The text must refer to the pictures to engage the reader to look at the pictures and analyze. Tables, flowcharts and diagrams help a lot in your writing as it gives evidence and support to what is written.

Here, the text is the actor and its activity is to engage, but the meaning of engage is extended in first in look, which indexes analyse, and only by implication, read. For these novices, then, the visual affordances of modern digital texts ha devalorised the role of words in conveying information.

Fifth, visuals are understood to be more powerful as agents of comprehension than text. To some degree, the integration of data into sentences, and the intellectual processes which formerly defined the process of reading - analysing and understanding – have been replaced by processes of seeing which require relatively little conceptual effort. These novices understand visuals as driving the readers' understanding than arguments constructed from words, or data in the form of numbers. For example:

Visuals have an enormous effect on how the reader views or receives the message behind the text or what is written. Every visual that is put in the text speaks for itself. For example, you can indicate and be sure of what the movie would be like because of its picture.

Here, visual elements of the text are rhetorically active, and the relationship between the words and the graphic is conceived as directly correspondent. The analogy with the movie poster is revealing. While not entirely incorrect, the recommendation to use visuals with an iconic character in expert writing is simplistic, compared to the relationship between, for example, an expert academic abstract and article. Many comments in the corpus understood the visual media as the primary referent in the readers' understanding, and this view governed their ideas of how to construct and relate to their readers:

I aim to achieve an overall meaning to the audience through vision. My visual communication incorporates the art of carefully selecting a suitable design and layout that is compatible with the delivered content, and the intended audience.

That is, while novice writers have understood the need to relate to the audience, they understand visuals as having primacy in achieving this goal. Thus they downplay or even fail to focus on content, the complexity of which must be mastered by the writer, in order to write at an expert level,. They choose to avoid burdening the reader with the work of reading and understanding complex content. Instead, they tend to conflate positive reader reception with a good understanding of content:

with a picture that is colorful and of high quality then the reader will feel a sense of attraction, diverting full attention to the picture. If this picture is within a text then the reader will try to correlate its meaning to the text, therefore trying to find the message behind the picture.

This and many similar examples reveal the impacts on these novices, of growing up in a media-saturated context. This result highlights the need to teach multimodal rhetorical analysis, along with composition.

Sixth, the way these novices mix visual and textual elements should be used to retool our understanding of previous research on metadiscourse. These novices constructed a range of relationships with their projected readers, realising both invitational and directive dimensions of Hyland's cline. But they do so with visuals. In the comment, "[w]ithout the aid of visuals, such as diagrams, graphs, or pictures the text will not appeal to the reader as much as it would with one including them", the invitation lies in the process "appeal" which is done through visuals. In "graphs are specially good to use because they make it clear to the person what your idea is like, and exactly what you want to say", the directive is found in the verb "make". These novices' sense of metadiscourse is visual at least as much as it is textual. Another example clarifies this:

I had completely forgotten about flow charts, so perhaps now I can think of how to make it easier in steps for readers to see and understand the data and also retain faster.

Here, the writer's process ("think") is directed at ensuring better reader viewing, not better reading or thinking, and the writer understands seeing as closely analogous to comprehending ("see and understand"). In the word "retain", it is difficult to distinguish thinking and seeing.

Seventh, these novices viewed readers as an array of niche identities. Content from the reunited frame showed that the largest theme by far collected specific reader identities as subunits, indicating that participants were highly aware of needing to shape their writing for specific readers. For example, in "[w]riters are obligated to explore their audience personalities and mentality to reach their communication goals", the novice focuses on the interiority or psychology of readers. In "I will be using

sophisticated terminologies because my topic and my audience are both sophisticated and need to be clear to architects”, the writer was an architecture student who understood herself to be writing for other architects. In “I am writing to a very sophisticated educated people who are interested in knowing the causes for sexual harassment especially in eastern countries, such as, K.S.A, Iran, and Egypt etc”, the writer understands her audience as those engaged with a specific issue. In “I choose my audience depending on my topic” the writer is self-aware about this process of selecting specific sub-groups of readers.

These novices believe they should have a sophisticated and granular sense of demographic analysis of their intended readers. They wrote about reader attributes including personality, beliefs, education, interests, age and occupation. This perspective likely reflects their experiences living in a market-driven society. This view is relatively resistant to the EAP view of expert writers and readers. An expert academic writer would project academic readers with a professional grasp of methods and theories, able to follow complex content realised in advanced concepts and field-specific language. Despite more than forty hours of composition input, an academic concept of expert writing and reading is nearly absent from the corpus.

Finally, the strength of these novices’ own beliefs, that they should write in ways that attract and satisfy readers, was more powerful than teacher talk and classroom input. That is, these novice writers set aside class input and teacher talk. In its place, these novices retain a customer service sense of their role and their proper relationship to their readers. All elements of EAP terminology and teacher talk take up a relatively small place in the corpus, and thus in the content and transitivity analyses. In particular, the following items had a small presence: (a) the organisation or structuring of the paper into sections such as the introduction, body paragraphs and conclusion and the use of thesis statement and topic sentences, and (b) elements of language and mechanics such as grammar, vocabulary and register, style, citation, spelling and punctuation. This result is consonant with the slight acknowledgement of the teacher as an audience or reader, and suggests that these novices’ enter the EAP classroom with a robust preconception of their role as writer and of their proper relationship to their readers. This preconception seems to interfere with EAP input, and may mean they fail to notice the value of composition course content, terminology and teacher talk. This

has significance for EAP learning outcomes, as the elements these novices seemed to downplay connect fundamentally with the cognitive tasks involved in academic writing.

Overall, this study suggests that L2 freshers' sense of themselves as writers may not be best described by the word novice. A term such as 'conventional' may be more apt. The term 'novice' does capture their lack of understanding of the cognitive effort and attention to language required for expert writing. But it does not reflect their self-confidence, or their conviction that they know who their audience is, and how they should reach them, and that pleasing them is more important than challenging them. That is, it does not capture the marketing character of their construction of their rhetorical style and task, their conflation of seeing and understanding, and their intellectual fusion of visually captivating an audience with expertly representing and exploring an issue. Advanced subject knowledge based in research-level reading, skilled reasoning and careful language, which are still required for a novice to become experienced, were notably under-realised in this corpus, despite the fact that they must have defined participants' classroom and conferencing experiences.

It seems that EAP teachers must find ways to challenge novices' ideas about writing and reading. The awareness of visual elements that these novices bring into the classroom could be sophisticated through integrating advanced multimodal analysis into composition courses (DePalma & Alexander, 2015). Novices' concepts of expert writers and reader could be interrupted and interrogated with slower, more difficult and more authentic academic practices. This is a significant need, in a global media environment which routinely disdains and misrepresents expertise (Nieto-Galan, 2016). The field of marketing itself offers concepts which could be employed in EAP contexts for this purpose, distinguishing various kinds of worth – for example market worth as compared to real, equity and assessed worth. Marketing offers contemporary ethical frameworks based in relationships and objectives other than pleasing consumers (Eagle & Dahl, 2015). These might be used to help students critically examine how they understand their identity as writers, their views of readers, and their understanding of the texts they write.

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DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFYING AND TRANSLATING LINGUISTIC METAPHORS: A SURVEY AND EXPERIMENT AMONG TRANSLATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

A survey of twelve translation students in 2017 revealed that they tend to find translating figurative and metaphorical language difficult. In addition, an experiment also conducted in 2017 showed similar results. During the first phase of this experiment, two trained researchers coded metaphorical items in a text from the *New Scientist* following the *Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam* (MIPVU). Based on Cohen's kappa, the researchers reached an initial coding agreement of 0.692 (strong agreement) and a final agreement score of 0.958 (almost perfect agreement) after discussion. The second phase of the experiment involved the coding of the metaphorical items previously identified by the researchers in the same text by 47 students who received a two-hour introduction to conceptual metaphor theory and a simplified method to code metaphorical items. However, the results of the students' coding showed that they had failed to identify metaphors in 49.96% of cases. Nevertheless, a chi-squared test ($p < 2.2 \cdot 10^{-16}$) revealed that the students' coding was not due to chance alone and therefore not arbitrary.

Keywords: metaphor-related words, metaphor identification procedure, translation studies

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The use of metaphors in language for specific purposes

Before the cognitive turn of linguistics in the seventies, metaphors had long been solely considered as ornamental figures with the aim of adding a stylistic effect to a text. However, the study of metaphors as conceptual objects, initially proposed through the *conceptual metaphor theory* by Lakoff & Johnson in 1980, proved that metaphors were more than mere ornamental figures and could be understood as ways to conceptualize the world or any kind of action or phenomenon: “Metaphor is not simply an ornamental aspect of language, but a fundamental scheme by which people conceptualize the world and their own activities” (Gibbs, 2008, p. 3).

According to Lakoff & Johnson, metaphor is a matter of thought, because it shapes our way of thinking and acting which they call our *conceptual system*: “Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.” (1980, p. 454)

Since communication relies on the same conceptual system used to think and act, language is a good indicator of the metaphorical nature of that system: “[...] language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like” (1980, p. 454). Therefore, even though the basis of conceptual metaphors is cognitive, there is evidence of their presence in language.

A conceptual metaphor enables the understanding of an idea or a concept in terms of another. It can be defined as a cognitive mapping from a source domain to a target domain: “In short, the locus of metaphor is [...] in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another” (Lakoff, 1993, p. 203).

For instance, ARGUMENT IS WAR¹ is a good example given by Lakoff & Johnson (1980) to demonstrate what a conceptual metaphor is. In ARGUMENT IS WAR, there is a mapping from the source domain of WAR onto the target domain of ARGUMENT. The structure of argument is experienced, thought of, visualized, etc. in terms of war; the human mind tends to conceive argumentation as a war, which gives rise to various linguistic realizations expressing this conceptual metaphor, such as “he *attacked every*

¹ Conceptual metaphors are conventionally written in small capital letters.

weak point in my argument” (1980, p.454), “your claims are *indefensible*” (1980, p.454), “I’ve never *won* an argument with him” (1980, p.454), etc.:

The essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another. It is not that arguments are a subspecies of war. Arguments and wars are different kinds of things – verbal discourse and armed conflict – and the actions performed are different kinds of actions. But ARGUMENT is partially structured, understood, performed, and talked about in terms of WAR. The concept is metaphorically structured, the activity is metaphorically structured, and, consequently, the language is metaphorically structured. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 455)

In other words, conceptual metaphors are mappings (ARGUMENT IS WAR) that occur at the cognitive level and that are found in language through linguistic realizations (“your claims are *indefensible*” (1980, p. 454)):

It is now widely agreed that metaphor is a cognitive phenomenon, and a mass of evidence has been accumulated to support the proposition that many linguistic metaphors, especially those that are most conventionalized and embedded in the language are realizations of mental mappings. (Deignan, 2008, p. 287)

The conceptual metaphor theory also stresses that metaphors are “pervasive in everyday life” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 454), as human thought is highly metaphorical in essence. Since conceptual metaphors structure everyday life and since their linguistic realizations are present in language, translators and student translators also have to deal with conceptual metaphors and more specifically with their linguistic realizations in the various texts they translate.

This study aims to show how student translators cope with identifying and translating linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors in vulgarized scientific texts: twelve students were surveyed about their ability to identify and translate metaphorical language in two texts. In addition, the ability of 47 students to identify the linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors in one text was tested in an experiment by comparing their coding with the coding made by two researchers.

Students' difficulties in translating metaphorical language: a survey

Translation students tend to have difficulties dealing with metaphors and figurative language in their translations. A short survey of twelve Master's students in translation, conducted in 2017, indeed revealed that students are to some extent aware of the metaphoricity of a text but find it hard to translate metaphors.

Students were first asked to translate in French two texts about black holes from *Scientific American* ("The Benevolence of Black Holes" and "An Echo of Black Holes") and then to answer a questionnaire aimed at testing their awareness of metaphors in the two texts. The first part of the survey consisted of different questions, including some about figurative language. The word "metaphor" was deliberately left out of the survey in order not to influence the students in their answers. That is why the words "figurative language" were preferred.

One of the questions was "Considérez-vous que le langage du texte que vous avez traduit était 'imagé'?" [Did you perceive the language of the text as being figurative?]² All students answered "yes" to that question, which means that they were somewhat aware that the language in the source text was figurative.

In the next question, students were asked to explain why they perceived the language in the text as figurative. Here is a sample of their answers:

- "Des métaphores étaient utilisées comme, par exemple, black holes keep the galaxy's stellar population at a perfect simmer." (ID: 2)³ ["Some metaphors were used, as in the following example: 'black holes keep the galaxy's stellar population at a perfect simmer'."]
- "Une phrase qui m'avait marquée tant elle était imagée était celle qui concernait l'horizon et plus particulièrement ce qu'il se passe lorsqu'une particule de la paire de photons passe cet horizon." (ID: 5) ["There was one sentence that struck me because it was so figurative. It was about the horizon and more specifically about what happens when a particle from the pair of photons passes through this horizon."]

² Text between brackets is the author's translation.

³ The online survey tool that was used, called Lime Survey, automatically anonymized students' names and replaced them with an identification number.

- “L’auteur comparait souvent les trous noirs à d’autres choses, probablement afin de le rendre plus abordable.” (ID: 6) [“The author often compared black holes with other things, probably to make the text more accessible.”]
- “Les trous noirs étaient comparés à des monstres. Le texte faisait référence à des démons libérés durant la création des trous noirs. Il mentionnait également des maisons de retraite et des cimetières pour les étoiles. Une galaxie recevait ‘a kick in the pants’.” (ID: 9) [“Black holes were compared with monsters. In the text, there were references to demons, which were unleashed during the creation of black holes. The author also wrote about nursing homes and graveyards for stars. A galaxy received a ‘kick in the pants’.”]

In his/her answer, student #2 explains that he/she found the language was figurative because of the presence of metaphors. It should be stressed that student #2 deliberately used the word “metaphor” on his/her own. While student #5 expressed his/her puzzlement about the figurative aspect of one sentence, students #6 and #9 argued that the text was figurative because black holes were compared with other things, such as monsters. Hence, the students’ answers clearly demonstrate they perceived the text as figurative and/or metaphorical.

The second part of the survey involved reading tasks. Students were asked to read the following excerpt (that was taken from the source text used for the translation task) and to decide whether it contained figurative language: “Somewhere in between the zones of forming and exploding young stars and the nursing homes and graveyards of ancient ones is a place that is “just so”, and our solar system resides in such an environment.” In total, 83.33% of the students said that the excerpt was figurative. Then, students were asked to explain why they found it to be figurative. Here are some of their answers:

- “On utilise des termes comme maison de retraite ou cimetière pour parler d’astrophysique.” (ID: 2) [“Terms such as nursing home and graveyard are used to talk about astrophysics.”]
- “Je ne comprends pas le rapport entre les ‘nursing homes’, les ‘graveyards’ et les étoiles...” (ID: 6) [“I do not understand the relationship between ‘nursing homes’, ‘graveyards’ and the stars...”]
- “Personnification des étoiles.” (ID: 8) [“Personification of stars.”]

- “Car les étoiles sont comparées à des êtres humains.” (ID: 9) [“Because stars are compared with human beings.”]

Again, the answers show that students perceived the language as being figurative. Student #2’s answer pointed to the mapping between the source domain of human facilities with the use of the words “nursing homes” and “graveyards” and the target domain of astrophysics. Students #8 and #9 identified the metaphorical personification of stars. In addition, student #6 admitted he/she did not understand why stars might live in nursing homes and end up in graveyards. It seemed difficult for him/her to understand the metaphorical mapping in the excerpt: he/she identified the source domain by naming the human facilities such as “nursing homes” and “graveyards” as well as the target domain represented by the “stars”, but failed to grasp the mapping (or “the relationship” in his/her own words) between the domains.

Subsequently, students were asked to decide whether the same excerpt was difficult to translate. All of them answered “yes” to that question. Here is how a few of them justified their answers:

- “Structure syntaxique, difficulté de rendre les images en FR.” (ID: 4) [“Because of the syntax of the sentence and because it is difficult to render the images in French.”]
- “Beaucoup de ‘and’, et le passage est très imagé.” (ID: 6) [“There were a lot of instances of ‘and’, and the excerpt was also very figurative.”]
- “Il faut trouver une image semblable en français et la rendre harmonieuse.” (ID: 8) [“It is necessary to find a similar image in French and to make it fit in the target text.”]
- “D’abord, car la phrase est assez longue, il y a de nombreux éléments à placer et ensuite, car une ‘maison de retraite pour étoiles’ ne passe pas très bien en français.” (ID: 9) [“First, the sentence is quite long. There are a lot of elements to position in this sentence and because ‘a nursing home for stars’ is not quite suitable in French.”]

Overall, many arguments in the students’ answers stress the difficulty of translating the figurative aspects of the text.

A method for identifying linguistic metaphors

As mentioned above, conceptual metaphors are the result of a cognitive mapping, while their realizations in language are linguistic. Researchers can identify conceptual metaphors based on their linguistic realizations and name them according to their intuition: conceptual metaphors are labelled according to the semantic interpretation that the reader or researcher gives to the linguistic realizations that lead to these conceptual metaphors. There is no fixed method to determine how to systematically identify and therefore label conceptual metaphors.

In contrast, a successful method has been created to identify the linguistic realizations underlying the conceptual metaphors. The first version of this method was developed by Steen *et al.* (2007) and called the *Metaphor Identification Procedure* (MIP). It was revised afterwards resulting in a second version (Steen *et al.*, 2010): the *Metaphor Identification Procedure Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam* (MIPVU). Both versions of the method enable the identification of metaphor-related words (MRWs). MRWs are the linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors⁴.

Both the MIP and the MIPVU are conceived to be followed on a step-by-step basis to facilitate the decision-making process. Several types of metaphor-related words can be identified: indirect metaphorically used words (indirect MRWs), direct metaphorically used words (direct MRWs), ellipses and lexico-grammatical substitutions used metaphorically (implicit MRWs), and finally words that signal a potential cross-domain mapping, i.e. metaphor flags (MFlags). This study only focuses on indirect MRWs and direct MRWs.

An indirect MRW is a word with a contextual meaning that differs from its more basic meaning but can be understood in comparison to this basic meaning. Finding indirect metaphor-related words is defined as follows in the MIPVU:

Indirect use of lexical units which may be explained by a cross-domain mapping is basically identified by means of MIP, with some adjustments. This means that the following guidelines should be adopted:

⁴ Since both the mapping and the linguistic realizations are sometimes simply called “metaphors” and because of the confusion the various terminologies may entail, from now on I will refer to cognitive mappings as *conceptual metaphors* in the words of Lakoff & Johnson (1980) and to their linguistic realizations as the *metaphor-related words*, as they are defined by Steen *et al.* (2010).

1. Identify the contextual meaning of the lexical unit.
2. Check if there is a more basic meaning of the lexical unit. If there is, establish its identity.
3. Determine whether the more basic meaning of the lexical unit is sufficiently distinct from the contextual meaning.
4. Examine whether the contextual meaning of the lexical unit can be related to the more basic meaning by some form of similarity.

If the results of instructions 2, 3, and 4 are positive, then a lexical unit should be marked as a metaphor-related word ('MRW'), which may be made more precise by adding the information that it is 'indirect' (as opposed to 'direct' or 'implicit', see below). (Steen *et al.*, 2010, pp. 32-33)

Direct MRWs are words for which the metaphorical mapping is made clear, most often by the presence of both the source domain and the target domain in context. Here is the procedure to find a direct MRW described in the MIPVU:

1. Find local referent and topic shifts. – Good clues are provided by lexis which is “incongruous” (Cameron, 2003; Charteris-Black, 2004) with the rest of the text.
2. Test whether the incongruous lexical units are to be integrated within the overall referential and/or topical framework by means of some form of comparison. – Good clues are provided by lexis which flags the need for some form of similarity or projection (Goatly, 1997).
3. Test whether the comparison is nonliteral or cross-domain. – Cameron (2003, p. 74) suggests that we should include any comparison that is not obviously non-metaphorical, such as *the campsite was like a holiday village*. Consequently, whenever two concepts are compared and they can be constructed, in context, as somehow belonging to two distinct and contrasted domains, the comparison should be seen as expressing a cross-domain mapping. Cameron refers to these as two incongruous domains.
4. Test whether the comparison can be seen as some form of indirect discourse about the local or main referent or topic of the text. – A provisional sketch of a mapping between the incongruous material functioning as source domain on the

one hand and elements from the co-text functioning as target domain on the other should be possible.

If the findings of tests 2, 3, and 4 are positive, then a word should be marked for direct metaphor ('MRW, direct'). (Steen *et al.*, 2010, pp. 38-39)

The MIPVU was applied in the experiment described below by two researchers to identify MRWs and by students (in a simplified version) to corollate their identification of direct and indirect MRWs with the researchers' and therefore evaluate their abilities to identify linguistic realizations of conceptual metaphors.

Students' difficulties in identifying metaphorical items: an experiment

An experiment also carried out in 2017 has shown that 47 Master's students in translation failed to recognize metaphorical items in a source text about astrophysics in half of the cases even after having taken part in a two-hour seminar about metaphors and coding. The experiment was divided in two phases: in the first phase, two researchers identified MRWs in a text about astrophysics from the *New Scientist*, then selected 21 MRWs. In the second phase, 47 Master's students in translation became acquainted with the same text in a sight translation class. The week following the sight translation class, students received a two-hour introduction to conceptual metaphor theory and a simplified method for coding metaphorical items. They were then asked to code the 21 selected items in context to decide whether those items were metaphorical.

Methodology of the coding experiment

In the first phase of the experiment, a source text about astrophysics in English was coded for metaphor-related words by two researchers specializing in metaphor theory. The MIPVU (Steen *et al.*, 2010) was applied to identify the different lexical units of a text and to code those lexical units for direct MRWs, indirect MRWs and MFlags by the two researchers.

Inter-rater agreement was calculated to check for coding reliability between the two researchers thanks to Cohen's kappa. Inter-rater agreement helps researchers remove bias that can come from their personal interpretation of the data:

When one has to decide whether a word in a corpus is used metaphorically or not, or to perform any other kind of semantic association, it is useful to collect

opinions of different annotators and check if they tend to agree or disagree. A well-known measure of inter-rater agreement is Cohen's k ('kappa'). It is based on the observed proportions of inter-rater agreement and disagreement compared to the expected proportions. [...] Similar to correlation coefficients, the scores range from [...] -1 (complete disagreement) to 1 (full agreement). (Levshina, 2015, p. 201)

The inter-rater agreement was calculated⁵ in three steps: during the first step, the score was calculated on the coding of direct MRWs and indirect MRWs only, as the MIPVU recommends overlooking the coding of MFlags in the inter-rater agreement calculation. The results are shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Inter-rater agreement on MRWs

	Percent Agreement	Cohen's Kappa	Number of agreements	Number of disagreements	Number of cases	Number of decisions
Indirect MRWs	93.3%	0.697	457	33	490	980
Direct MRWs	99.6%	0.665	488	2	490	980

The Cohen's Kappa reached for both indirect and direct MRWs is respectively of 0.697 and 0.665. Those results can be interpreted as substantial agreement between the two raters: "Cohen suggested the Kappa result be interpreted as follows: values ≤ 0 as indicating no agreement and 0.001-0.20 as none to slight, 0.21-0.40 as fair, 0.41-0.60 as moderate, 0.61-0.80 as substantial, and 0.81-1.00 as almost perfect agreement" (McHugh, 2012, p. 279).

During the second step, the inter-rater agreement was calculated on metaphoricity only (regardless of the items being direct or indirect MRWs), as advised by the MIPVU. The inter-rater agreement score reached by the researchers showed a Cohen's kappa of 0.692, which is also representative of "substantial agreement" (McHugh, 2012, p. 279). The results are depicted in Table 2:

Table 2

Inter-rater agreement on metaphoricity

	Percent Agreement	Cohen's Kappa	Number of Agreements	Number of Disagreements	Number of cases	Number of decisions
Inter-rater agreement before discussion	92.9%	0.692	455	35	490	980

⁵ The inter-rater agreements were computed with ReCal OIR (Reliability Calculator for Ordinal, Interval, and Ratio data) (Freelon, 2013).

As recommended in the MIPVU, a third inter-rater agreement was performed after discussion of cases of disagreement and a last coding session. In this third and final step, the inter-rater agreement after discussion reached a Cohen's kappa of 0.958, which shows "almost perfect agreement" (McHugh, 2012, p. 279). The inter-rater agreement scores are summarized in Table 3:

Table 3

Inter-rater agreement after discussion

	Percent Agreement	Cohen's Kappa	Number of Agreements	Number of Disagreements	Number of cases	Number of decisions
Inter-rater agreement after discussion	98.8%	0.958	484	6	490	980

The researchers selected 21 MRWs out of ~60 (depending on the rater: the first researcher had identified 69 MRWs, while the second researcher had identified 63 MRWs) based on the fact they all had been initially identified as MRWs in the first coding by both researchers and that they were evenly distributed in the text.

During the second phase of the experiment, 47 Master's students in translation were asked to translate the same text used for the coding by the two researchers during a sight translation class. The aim was to let students get acquainted with the text. The following week, the same students received a two-hour seminar aimed at simplifying Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) conceptual metaphor theory and at giving explanations of the MIPVU coding. Students were given a short manual for coding, examples of metaphorical coding, a spreadsheet with the 21 selected items in context and the source text from which the items were extracted and which they had translated the week before.

Then, students were asked to code the 21 selected items following the simplified explanations they were given about the MIPVU. The decision to ask students to code only a third of all MRWs identified by the researchers was motivated by the idea to limit the duration of the coding in order to avoid both making it too tiresome for students and going past a class hour. All collected data is used with the students' permission and all the names are anonymized in the following figures and plots.

Students, who were not aware that the selected items had previously been identified as metaphorical, were asked to decide whether those items were

metaphorical or non-metaphorical by either applying a code of 1 (= metaphorical item) or 2 (= non-metaphorical item). Items were presented within their context (in segments) in a spreadsheet to facilitate coding and to enable students to comment their decisions if they felt the need to, as depicted in Figure 1:

ID	Segment	META	VII	ORG	remarques éventuelles
Seg 1	Looking into the [voids] could help explain dark energy.	2	3	3	
Seg 2	Looking into the voids could help explain [dark] energy.	1	2	1	même s'il n'y a pas d'autres termes employant ce genre d'image dans ce texte, on emploie également "dark" dans d'autres cas, comme par ex
Seg 3	[holes] in the universe could help explain why it's [ripping] apart.	2	3	3	
Seg 4	Holes in the universe could help explain why it's [ripping] apart.	1	2	1	
Seg 5	The number and size of cosmic voids could shed light on the mysterious dark energy that is causing the universe to [grow] at an ever-increasing pace.	2	3	3	
Seg 6	In the late 1990s, astronomers realized that the expansion of the universe was accelerating and attributed this to the inherent "dark energy" of [space]-time.	2	3	3	
Seg 7	But we understand little about dark energy. Each unit of space-time contains some, but if this energy density changes with time, it implies different [rates] for our universe.	1	2	1	
Seg 8	If it is constant, as current observations suggest, then the universe will [expand] forever.	2	3	3	
Seg 9	But if it changes, we could be heading for a more [dramatic] end, like a big rip or a big crunch.	1	1	2	
Seg 10	But if it changes, we could be heading for a more dramatic end, like a [big rip] or a big crunch.	2	3	3	
Seg 11	But if it changes, we could be heading for a more dramatic end, like a big rip or a [big crunch].	1	2	2	
Seg 12	One way to understand whether dark energy changes with time is to observe its effect on the [large-scale structure] of the universe.	1	1	2	
Seg 13	Just instants after the [big bang], quantum fluctuations in the fabric of space-time led to regions that had more matter than their neighbours.	2	3	3	

Figure 1: Spreadsheet given to students for the coding experiment

The initial experiment included coding for metaphoricity, conventionality of metaphorical items (inspired and simplified from Kövecses' typology (2010, p. 324) and with the use of a terminology database and a dictionary to verify metaphors' presence in usage and polysemy) and metaphorical entailment (based on students' ability to infer a thematic bond with other metaphorical words or terms). However, metaphorical conventionality ("VIE", for "life" in French, in Figure 1) and entailments ("ORG", for "organization" in French, in Figure 1) are not discussed in this article, as students found it more difficult to understand and code these concepts than conceptual metaphoricity. Therefore, the details given here only concern the coding of metaphoricity of items ("META" in Figure 1). At the end of class, every student submitted their spreadsheet on an online platform. Data for metaphoricity was compiled in a new cross-table.

Results of the coding experiment

The coding of the 21 items by the 47 students shows that globally, students were able to code items as metaphorical in 50.04% of the cases, as summarized in Figure 2:

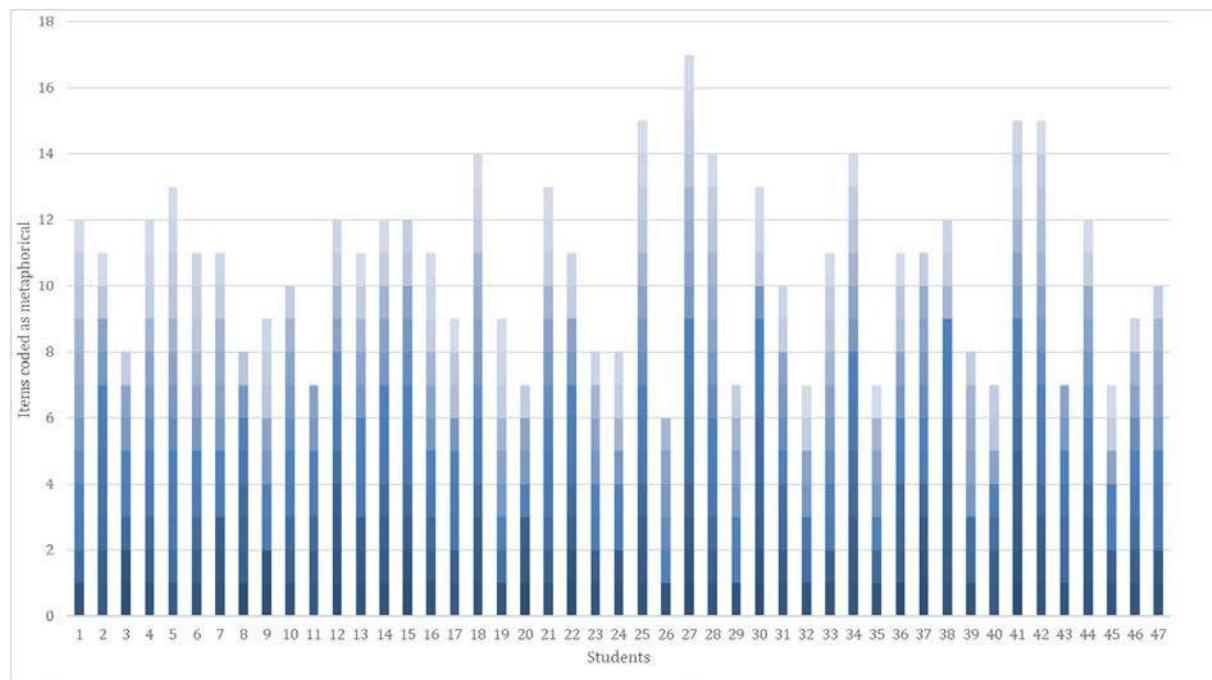


Figure 2: Coding of 21 items by 47 students

The lowest number of metaphorically coded items is 6 out of 21 (by student #26 in Figure 2 above), while the highest number of metaphorically coded items is 17 out of 21 (by student #27). The mean of coded items is 11, while the standard deviation of the students' coding is $\sigma = 2.70$. As a rule of thumb, the closer the result of the standard deviation is to the mean, the less dispersed is the data:

The standard deviation for one sample is often difficult to interpret on its own; as a guideline, the smaller the SD is in relation to the mean, the less dispersed the data is, that is, the closer individual values are to the mean. (Rasinger, 2013, p.136)

Here, the results show that the coding by students is strongly divergent, which means their abilities to identify metaphors are very different.

Nevertheless, a chi-squared test was run to verify whether the students' coding of metaphorical items and non-metaphorical items was statistically significant and therefore not due to chance (H_a = alternative hypothesis) or whether items were indifferently coded as metaphorical or non-metaphorical, meaning that the coding was due to chance alone (H_0 = null hypothesis). The chi-squared test showed that the null hypothesis could be ruled out ($p < 2.2 \cdot 10^{-16}$) and that the coding of items by students was not due to chance alone. Several items were coded fewer times as metaphorical by students, such as "grow", "expand", "evolved", and "regions", while the most frequently coded items were "crunch", "rip", "bang" (as in "big bang"), "fabric", "dark" (as in "dark energy") and "light-years", as shown in Figure 3:

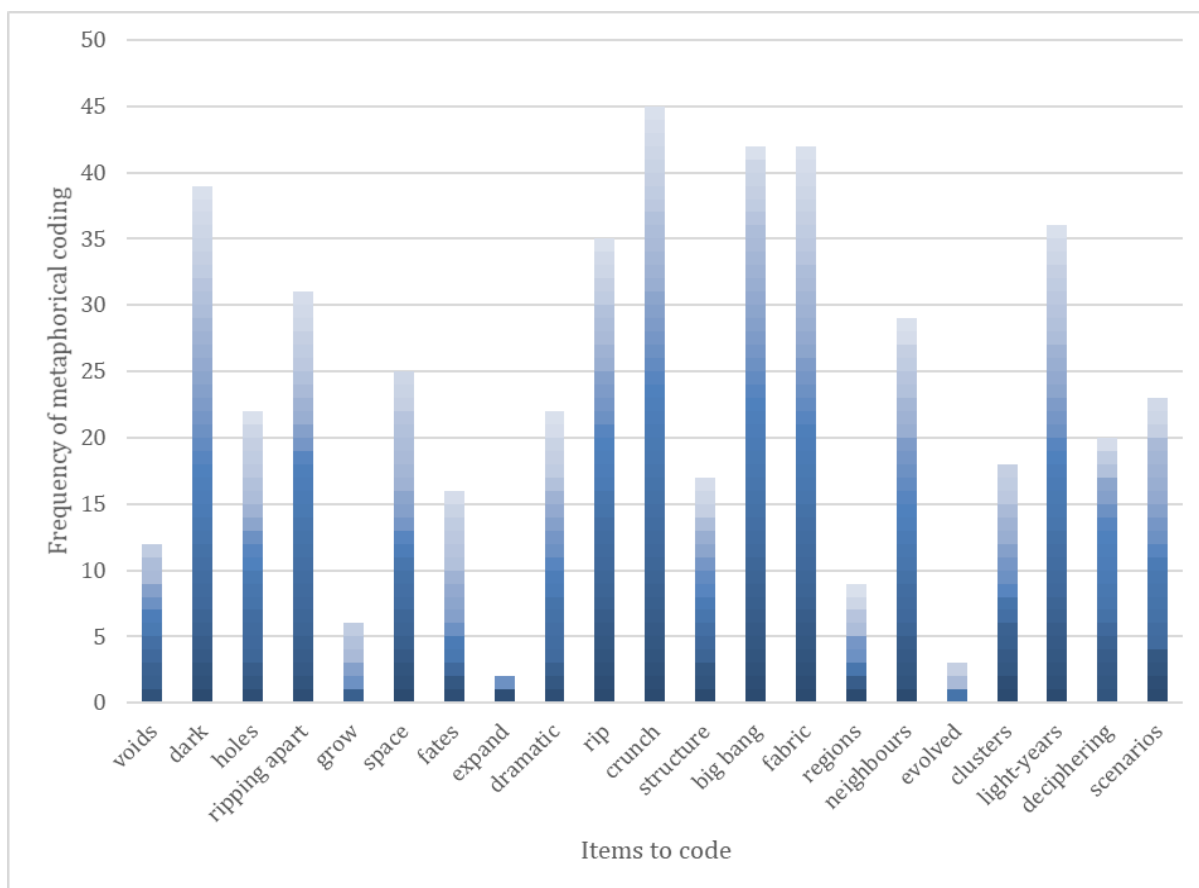


Figure 3: Frequency of items coded as metaphorical

The results of the experiment show that students can identify items as metaphorical in roughly half of the cases after having followed a seminar on the coding of metaphors and that their coding is statistically significant.

Conclusion

This article stressed the difficulty encountered by translation students in dealing with metaphorical language in vulgarized scientific texts. In a survey led in 2017, twelve students claimed to be able to identify metaphorical language but also admitted having difficulties translating linguistic realizations of metaphors. In addition, an experiment with the aim of correlating the coding of a text for metaphor-related words by two researchers on the one hand and by 47 translation students on the other hand highlighted that students were able to identify MRWs in only 50.04% of the cases in comparison with the researchers' coding. Nevertheless, a chi-squared test run on the students' coding led to the conclusion that their coding was not arbitrary. A plausible way to improve the skills of translation students in identifying and translating linguistic realizations of metaphors could be through the development of awareness-raising activities.

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ATTITUDES TOWARDS DEMOCRACY IN BULGARIA: THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

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Abstract

This research is an attempt to examine the developmental relationship between democracy and the socioeconomic conditions in Bulgaria. The assumption is that one of the factors contributing to the negative attitude towards democracy in Bulgaria is the high level of social inequality. After discussing the relevance of studying democracy and socioeconomic conditions from a developmental perspective, the paper traces the socioeconomic development of Bulgaria from 1989 to date and examines public perceptions of social inequality in the country. The research has not revealed any overall negative public attitude towards democracy in Bulgaria. However, the findings have demonstrated a clear tendency for the public support for democracy to decline reflecting the growth of social inequality.

Keywords: democracy, attitude, Bulgaria, socioeconomic conditions, inequality, poverty

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The research is based partly on the information from several representative polls, conducted by the sociological agencies Mediana and Sova-Harris for the period 2010–2014. The polls were ordered from the Project “Quality of democracy in Bulgaria: democratic consent and civil participation” carried out by the department of Political Sciences at New Bulgarian University and financed by the National Science Fund (NSF) of the Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria, Grant number: ДТК 02/17/16.12.2009

Social environment and the study of democracy

The first step in this paper is to formulate answers to a crucial and challenging question: “How relevant is the study of Bulgaria’s democracy through the prism of social inequalities?” Delving into this question inevitably brings the argumentation forth into the broader field of democracy studies. It is worth noting that democracy studies have offered conflicting views regarding any possible answers.

In the majority of existing approaches, the correlation between socioeconomic environment and democracy has been considered irrelevant. Thus, both early studies (Schumpeter, 1943) and contemporary ones (Huntington, 1991) have been based upon the idea that an election system is the essence of democracy. In *Polyarchy*, Dahl (1971) expanded the core essence of “elective democracy” with equal rights of participation in elections and the presence of civil and political rights allowing for free association, dissemination of and access to information relevant to participation in elections and political decision-making. According to Dahl (1971), the existence and proper operation of these sets of rights and institutions embody the two essential elements of democracy: freedom and equality. Dahl also proposed another element that he considers not merely an essence of democracy but also crucial to its functioning: participation in politics, construed as both voting in elections and as the broader involvement in important political decision-making.

Dahl’s concept of ‘participatory democracy’ laid the groundwork for a multitude of comparative international studies and simultaneously stimulated new developments in the field, focusing on comparing democracies, i.e. the degree to which existing democracies guarantee political participation and uphold freedom and equality. An array of authors such as O'Donnell (1998, 2004), Morlino (2004), Lauth (2000, 2004), Diamond (1999), Hadenius (1992) and others have elaborated extensive research concepts aiming to achieve a deeper level of comparison. Regardless of the differences between these approaches, they are mostly unified by being tied to an expanded but essentially political notion of democracy. It is constructed around the rationale that the essence and stability of democracy are expressed by the degree to which freedom and equality are guaranteed; more specifically, freedom and autonomy of the individual (freedom of action, protection from government intrusion, equality before the law,

inalienable rights, free expression of will, etc.), and political equality (equal participation in the political process, the right to elect and be elected, the right to information, the right to control the government, etc.). From this perspective, public welfare and the distribution of wealth are not regarded as primary goals or essential elements of democracy, but rather as issues that should be resolved via the democratic mechanisms guaranteeing the broadest possible civil participation in politics and political decision-making.

There is another approach to democracy studies, which is crucial to this study. Its principal foundations have been laid by Lipset (1981), Sen (1979), Held (1996), Heller (1934), Rawls (1971), Rueschemeyer (2004), Meyer (2011), Merkel (2004) etc. Despite significant differences, all of these authors base their conclusions on a very broad definition and understanding of democracy. It includes the elements of both electoral and participatory democracy but emphasizes citizens' social conditions, treating them as vital for a fair, all-inclusive and meaningful civil participation in politics (Bühlman, Merkel, Wessels & Müller, 2007, p. 5). For instance, it was Lipset (1981, p. 31) who first formulated the now-classical relation between socio-economic environment, poverty and democracy. In his own words, "The more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chance that it will sustain democracy". In this particular case, Lipset views high levels of prosperity and low levels of poverty not as essential elements of democracy, but as important prerequisites for its stability and sustainability in the face of radical political ideas and/or destabilizing class conflicts.

Sen (1979; 1996), Held (1996), Heller (1934), Rawls (1971), Rueschemeyer (2004) and Meyer (2011) have formulated a different notion. For them, the mere legal establishment of civil and political rights, without the presence of a social footing for their genuine support, cannot guarantee the correct functioning of democracy and/or its complete establishment. Consequently, they claim that governments must guarantee the resources necessary for the genuine existence and exercising of these rights to the largest possible number of citizens. This approach maintains that resources and goods must be deliberately redistributed within society (i.e. civil and political rights must be expanded and reinforced by social rights); it is this redistribution that makes democracy as complete as possible through the practical integration and inclusion of

the vast majority of citizens in democratic procedures (Bühlman et al., 2007, p. 5). For example, according to Rueschemeyer (2004, pp. 76-90)¹, the presence of inequalities in extra-political areas (such as economics or the discrepancies between available resources and access to goods caused by market forces) has a considerable direct and indirect impact on politics and essentially constrains political equality and participation. If these groups of influences appear to be extremely broad, the measures (interventions) proposed for mitigating their negative impact are even more diverse, stepping beyond the boundary of pure redistribution of material welfare (income). They include measures for providing genuine equal access to political processes and procedures (e.g. equal public funding of electoral candidates, guaranteeing equal media time coverage, etc.); for guaranteeing sufficient cultural, social and educational resources (the right to education irrespective of social status, the right to information and access to information, etc.), which provide all citizens with an equal opportunity for active participation.

Despite forming an integral part of the tradition of democracy studies, this trend seems to have lost its topicality during the last decades of the 20th century. The reasons for this are manifold and complex. The collapse of socialist regimes, the ascent and prevalence of the neoliberal ideology, and the evolution of a global economy have all eroded the acceptability and relevance of this doctrine of democracy. The wide dissemination of free market ideas, the questioning of interventionist and redistributive policies by the social state, and the increasingly popular belief, even in academic circles, in the ultimate triumph of democracy as the only model for sustainable social progress have undermined the authority of this approach and the attention to its analytical value. Paradoxically, the topical question about the quality of democracy that emerged at the turn of the 21st century, has led to the re-emergence of the issue of the influence of social inequalities in democracy studies. At the end of the 20th century, the euphoria

¹Within this broad framework, he focuses on a variety of aspects: opportunities for groups possessing dominant economic and social resources to gain an advantage in the electoral process owing to these resources; opportunities for dominant groups to exert a cultural hegemony, i.e. to shape directly and indirectly the views, values and preferences of subordinate groups through their control over information channels (media) and/or socialization systems (education, culture), etc., by blocking the legitimization of opposing interests, values or opinions; or the impact of socio-economic inequalities as a factor that limits not only the actual equal participation in political life but also leads to an overall exclusion from all areas of public life.

from the Third Wave of democratization subsided, giving way to soberer evaluations of democratic results, if not outright disappointment and dissatisfaction. The conclusion that only a portion of the transitions underway have led to the establishment of an effective democratic rule broadened the focus of research toward the issue of democracy consolidation (Erdmann & Kneuer, 2011, p. 9). The results were twofold. On the one hand, there emerged the necessity for a differentiated conceptualization of democracy to encompass its diverse experiences and outcomes and the justification for genuinely existing subtypes: the so-called 'democracies with adjectives' (Collier & Levitsky, 1996, p. 1). On the other hand, emphasizing the issue of consolidation and the quality of democracies stimulated the return to wider, more complex notions in democracy studies encompassing a greater variety of factors and dependencies. This allows me to speak about an increasing topicality of the questions related to social inequalities and the study of democracy.

An instance of that is Wolfgang Merkel's conception of studying and appraising democracy: embedded democracy. Merkel builds upon the rationale that besides the prerequisite of 'free elections', we must also include those partial regimes of the political system which guarantee that elections are meaningful (Hadenius, 1992). In other words, the presence of an institutional guarantee that democratically elected representatives will use their power in compliance with the principles of democracy and the law in the periods between elections. Merkel defines five partial regimes: regime of democratic elections, regime of rights to political participation, regime of civil rights and liberties, institutional guarantee of control over the government (horizontal accountability), and de jure and de facto guarantee that democratically elected representatives 'govern effectively' (Merkel, 2004, pp. 36-43). Particularly relevant to this report is Merkel's general premise that stable, law-abiding democracies are doubly secured. First, the regular operation of the abovementioned partial regimes (the balance between their interdependency and independence) guarantees internal stability and sustainability. Second, Merkel believes that the partial regimes are situated inside rings of extra-democratic factors, which benefit democracy and safeguard it against external and internal shocks and destabilization. Drawing from the premises of the theory of political systems, Merkel (2004, p. 44) defines the following *external rings*: socio-economic environment, civil society, and international integration of the state (stateness).

Merkel justifies the significance of the socio-economic environment with respect to democracy in a fairly wide context. His first foundation is the interrelation between high levels of prosperity and the prospects of democratic stability demonstrated by Lipset. Merkel (2004, p. 44) adopts the impact, as proven in numerous studies, of positive economic development and prosperity on the sustainability and consolidation of democracy, without, however, imposing it as an essential prerequisite for the existence of democracy or the improvement or deterioration of its quality. His second, equally important foundation interprets the socio-economic environment as the effect of social inequalities on democracy, and in particular on political equality and participation. The general premise holds that if the unequal distribution of resources and welfare leads not only to considerable diversity in citizens' income and welfare access but also drives a major number of citizens below the line of poverty, then this will affect democracy negatively (Merkel, 2004, p. 44). The negative effects are directly linked to violating the principles of participation and equal political rights: the lack of sufficiently homogeneous economic basis or the presence of widespread poverty restricts the access to various resources and prerequisites (material and social resources, such as education, culture, a broad social network, and access to information) that are vital for the existence of active and aware citizens. Therefore, if the principle of political equality is inextricably bound to the principle of democracy, then both principles are threatened when equal political rights cannot be guaranteed because of extreme socio-economic inequalities (Merkel, 2004, p. 44).

The presentation so far provides several major arguments for the relevance of studying democracy across the prism of the socio-economic environment and social inequalities. It seems appropriate to list them in an order that highlights their importance with respect to democracy. As demonstrated, the inclusion of such a correlation (social inequalities —democracy) is not alien or novel to existing traditions in democracy studies. Although formal, this first argument entails a second one, which I consider to be the most essential one. It holds that the entire development of democratic societies (including European ones) has provided us with enough grounds to update democracy studies in correlation with social inequalities. The facts underlying this presumption are symptomatic.

The last few decades have been a time of development characterised by a constant growth of inequalities and an increasing range and intensity of the risk of poverty and social exclusion. These processes, to a varying degree, have been affecting both so-called new democracies and old democracies. In fact, it appears that for the first time in recent history, reality has refuted the axiom, hitherto universally accepted and supported by multiple studies, that democracy leads to a significant ‘shrinking’ of social inequalities. Democratic regimes themselves are currently caught in a radically new environment of existence and evolution. This is precisely what necessitates appraising the characteristics of the new environment and looking for its potential impact on the evolution of democracy. Thirdly, the rationalization, examination and evaluation of democracy through the prism of socio-economic development and social inequalities gains an additional relevance and value when applied to so-called new democracies in states like Bulgaria—especially considering the great burden and social disruption caused by the overall democratization process. Just as important is the fact that even countries like Bulgaria who have accomplished the transition demonstrate contradictory trends in their social development (including their economic evolution) and can be validly called societies with deepening inequality, poverty and exclusion. From the perspective of democracy studies, the ‘Bulgaria case’ represents a combination of two overlapping factors: a relatively recent transition to democracy, and a considerable amount of social inequalities.

Dynamics in the evolution of social inequalities in Bulgaria

The examination of the leading socio-economic characteristics (economic development and social inequalities) in Bulgaria is subject to the necessity to describe a significant part of the environment that is considered an ‘external ring’ of democracy. Therefore, I am looking for factors in this ‘external ring’ that may benefit and reinforce or, alternatively, destabilize and damage Bulgarian democracy. To this end, I have employed several standardized criteria which bring together indicators of economic development, income disparity and the levels of social inequalities in Bulgaria: GDP per capita, Gini coefficient, income inequality, Europa 2020 indicators.

Bulgarian economic development since 1989 has been characterized by considerable fluctuations. There was a stage (1990 – 1997) of economic collapse with

decrease² of the Gross Domestic Product by approximately 25.6-31% (Agentsia za ikonomicheski analizi i prognozi [Agency for economic analyses and forecasts], 2005, p. 6; Hristov, 2009, p. 12)³. From 1999 to 2008 Bulgarian GDP grew regularly, remaining between 4.2% and 7% per year: more than twice greater than the EU average. The upward trend was broken by the world financial crisis in 2008. After a GDP decrease of 3.6% in 2009, economic growth in Bulgaria has stagnated at 0% in 2012, 1.8% in 2014, and then stabilized between 3.9 and 3% where it remains today (Table 1).

The numbers per se outline a generally positive trend in Bulgarian economic development. At the same time, placing these economic trends within a comparative context paints another picture, leading to far more moderate conclusions, especially when we try to appraise the welfare of the population. In 2000, Bulgarian GDP per capita amounted to 28% of the EU average and along with Romania (at 26%) was the lowest for all candidate member states. The subsequent above-average economic growth naturally boosted Bulgarian economy; in 2018, GDP per capita already amounted to 50% of the EU average. (Table 1). At the same time, in spite of this optimistic trend, Bulgaria along with Romania are the EU members with the least developed economies and lowest living standards. In fact, in comparison to the other new EU members, Bulgaria's welfare has grown relatively little. Over the period in question, Bulgaria has 'caught up' with EU by 22%, whereas countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia, which were more economically developed in 2000, have done much better, growing by 28-36%.

Table 1

GDP in purchasing power (EU-27=100)

	2000	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2018	% change*
EU-27	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	
Bulgaria	28	40	43	44	44	46	47	50	22
Estonia	45	70	69	63	63	67	68	81	36
Latvia	36	57	58	54	54	58	62	70	34
Lithuania	40	59	61	55	57	66	70	81	41
Slovakia	50	68	73	73	73	73	75	78	28

² Compared to 1989.

³ Also 21.3% unemployment (1996) and 65.6 % collapse of real income of the population.

* Author's calculations

Note: Source: Eurostat, 2019, last visited on Sept. 13 2019,

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tec00114>

However, this data would remain pointless if not supplemented with an analysis of the trends concerning the existing distribution of wealth in Bulgarian society, that is, the dynamics in income distribution. In that respect, at the beginning of the transition (1989), Bulgaria was among the European countries with the lowest income inequality—its Gini coefficient being 21 (Hristov, 2009, p. 24). Afterwards, there was a clear trend toward a swift and regular increase of income inequalities. From 2003 to 2018, Bulgaria's Gini coefficient rose to 39.6 (Table 2). In a period of 15 years, Bulgaria ended up as the EU member with the highest income inequality.

Table 2

Gini coefficient EU-28 and selected member states

	2000	2008	2016	2017	2018
EU 28			30.8	30.7	
Bulgaria	25	35.9	37.7	40.2	39.6
Germany	25	30.2	29.5	29.1	
Estonia	36	30.9	32.7	31.6	30.6
Spain	32	32.4	34.5	34.1	33.2
Latvia	34	37.5	34.5	34.5	35.6
Lithuania	31	34.5	37.0	37.6	36.9
Poland	30	32.0	29.8	29.2	27.8
Slovenia	22	23.4	24.4	23.7	23.4
Slovakia		23.7	24.3	23.2	

Note: Source: Eurostat, 2019, last visited on Sept. 13 2019,

https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_di12&lang=en

The characteristics of this process are equally reinforced by the trends in the income distribution between the 20th percentile of highest-income population and the remaining 80%. At the turn of the century, this indicator amounted to 3.7 (Table 3). Until 2018, the income ratio of the upper quintile and the other 80% increased twofold, reaching 7.6, which is among the highest values in EU-27, along with countries such as Latvia, Spain and Greece. The statistics unequivocally indicate that the opening of the 'scissors' between the highest income group and the remaining 80% in Bulgaria has been the widest in 2000-2018.

Table 3

Income distribution inequality (20/80) – EU-28 and selected member states

	2000	2007	2016	2017	2018
EU 28			5.2	5.1	
Euro area		4.8	5.2	5.1	
Bulgaria	3.7	7.0	7.7	8.2	7.66
Greece	5.8	6.0	6.6	6.1	5.51
Spain	5.4	5.5	6.6	6.6	6.03
Latvia	5.5	6.4	6.2	6.3	6.8

Note: Source: Eurostat 2019, last visited on Sept. 13 2019,
https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_di11&lang=en

Of course, inequalities are a natural phenomenon in market economies. Their existence cannot in itself be examined as a factor affecting the quality of democracy. Inequalities start exerting an impact on the quality and sustainability of democracy only when they affect major groups of people who live in a state of poverty, risk of poverty and/or social exclusion. Therefore, the present analysis must draw attention to precisely this aspect of inequalities in Bulgaria.

Since 1989, there has been a trend of very high risk of poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria. In 2002, at the start of the period of stable economic growth, 14% of Bulgaria's population lived at risk of poverty after social transfers. While this was one of the lowest values across the EU in 2002, it grew by 8 points by 2018, reaching 22%: the highest value in the EU (Table 4). This demonstrates that in Bulgaria, economic growth coupled with the increase in income inequality has generated a considerable risk of impoverishment for an increasing portion of the population. The second indicator (population in a situation of severe material deprivation) is most indicative of the horizon of the risk of poverty and material deprivation. In 2006, its value for Bulgaria was 57.6%. From 2006 to 2010, the intense economic growth reduced this to 45.7% for Bulgaria—still far above the EU average (8.4% in 2008). With the advent of the economic crisis, the positive trend was reversed, witnessing a stagnation in the numbers of people living in a state of severe deprivation. In the period 2016-2018 it dropped to 20.9%, compared to the 5.9% EU average for 2018 (Table 4). For the third indicator (population living in a household with very low work intensity), analysing the data for Bulgaria only confirms the general picture of social inequalities and poverty. In 2006, its value was 14.7% for people ages 0 to 59—the highest in the EU. We can see

the same correlation with economic development; in the period up to 2010, due to the increase in labour activity and employment the number fell to 8%, which is below the EU average. The years from 2010 up to and including 2019 draw another parallel. Whereas in 2010, people living in such families amounted to 8% of the population, their number rose to 11.1% in 2017 and dropped to 9% in 2018 (Table 4).

Table 4

Europe 2020 indicators

People at risk of poverty after social transfers (% of population)					
TIME	2002	2007	2016	2017	2018
EU 28	:	:	17.3	16.9	:
Bulgaria	14	22	22.9	23.4	22
Romania	18	24.6	25.3	23.6	23.5

Population in a situation of severe material deprivation (% of population)					
	2007	2010	2016	2017	2018
EU 28		8.4	7.5	6.6	5.9
Bulgaria	57.6	45.7	31.9	30	20.9

People living in households with very low work intensity (% of population)					
	2006	2010	2016	2017	2018
EU 28		10.3	10.5	9.5	
Bulgaria	14.7	8	11.9	11.1	9

Note: Source: Eurostat 2019, Europe 2020 indicators, last visited on Sept. 13 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/europe-2020-indicators/europe-2020-strategy/main-tables>

The accumulation of these statistics and their analysis permit me to draw a general picture of the dynamics, range and character of the risk of poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria. They clearly demonstrate that currently, Bulgaria is the EU member with the highest proportion of people living in poverty and/or risk of poverty and social exclusion. Furthermore, this trend has been regular in nature. Thus, at the end of the period of sustainable economic development in Bulgaria, 2008, 44.8% of the general population lived at risk of poverty and social exclusion, as opposed to about 24% in the rest of the EU. At the end of 2011, nearly half the Bulgarian population (49.1%) lived at risk of poverty and social exclusion and in 2018, the numbers dropped to nearly one third of the population, compared to 22.4% EU 28 average (Table 5).

Table 5

Population at risk of poverty and social exclusion: EU-27 and selected member states

	2008	2011	2016	2017	2018
EU 28		24.3	23.5	22.4	
Bulgaria	44.8	49.1	40.4	38.9	32.8

Note: Source: Eurostat, 2019, Europe 2020 indicators, last visited on Sept. 13 2019, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/t2020_50/default/table?lang=en

However, the period since 2000 has marked an undeniable stage of relatively stable and positive development of the Bulgarian economy. We can regard it as a process of growing national welfare. Nevertheless, the trend has taken place on a level that is low compared to the EU average, and despite the relatively positive economic growth, Bulgaria remains the EU member with the lowest living standards. I can also claim that Bulgaria has witnessed an extremely swift process of increasing income inequalities and general fragmentation of the pre-1989 social stratification. The process of increasing inequality in Bulgaria is creating an expanding front of poverty or risk of poverty and social exclusion. Characteristically, the dynamics of this process follow the logic of economic development fluctuations. Thus, at times of economic growth the risk of poverty and social exclusion decreases, without, however, changing significantly the high numbers of population groups threatened by poverty. In fact, even during the years of economic growth, the indices of the risk of poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria are among the highest across EU-28.

Public perception of inequality in Bulgaria

The previous conclusions may justify us in claiming that in a comparative context, Bulgarian society has been marked by processes of increasing inequalities and a broad front of the risk of poverty and social exclusion, but they provide no answers as to whether the examined trends will be recognized as a significant issue by the population. Of course, looking for established attitudes and opinions among the general population poses its risks and always implies a certain degree of subjectivity. However, this (unclear as to what the 'this' refers to.) does negate their existence and persistence, much less depreciate the significant role they play in forming an overall view of a particular reality and motivating the political conduct and participation of citizens.

A logical entry point is to seek an answer to the question to what degree poverty and the risk of social exclusion have been reflected in public attitudes and how the Bulgarian public views their existence as a whole. A 2010 study revealed that in their subjective opinions, 59% of Bulgarians saw themselves as poor, 32% as average, and only 8% as rich (Alfa Risarch [Alfa Research], 2010, p. 2). The same or even more pessimistic approaches characterize the period from 2010 to 2013. Thus, Bulgarians who perceive their material situation as very good constituted 1% of the population in 2010, 1.3% in 2012, and a mere 0.2% in 2013. Those who see their own status as normal (i.e. not poor) were 30.3% in 2010, 26.2% in 2012, and 25.1% in 2013. The majority place themselves at the other end of the scale, with 45.4% (in 2010), resp. 47.7% (in 2013) claiming to have a hard life, and 23.3% (in 2010), resp. 26.9% (in 2013) claiming to barely make ends meet (Table 6). In sum, over 70% of Bulgarians define their own status as poor or relatively poor. It is striking that these pessimistic self-evaluations far exceed the real statistical data which are tied to concrete criteria and poverty lines.

Table 6

How do you evaluate your material situation?

	2010	2012	2013
Very good	1.0	1.3	0.2
Normal	30.3	26.2	25.1
Hard	45.4	49.2	47.7
I barely make ends meet	23.3	23.2	26.9
	100 %	100 %	100 %

Note: Source: Mediana, 2013

The data do not change considerably even when self-evaluation becomes more differentiated. The respondents to a 2012 representative survey by Mediana, given the opportunity to define the material situation of their family on a broad scale, confirmed this trend. A mere 11.9% of people placed their families between the middle of the scale and its high end. Over 88% regarded themselves as occupying the area between a disastrous material situation and the middle of the scale (Table 7).

Table 7

On a scale of 1 to 10, please evaluate your and your family's material situation.

	% of all participants
1.	4.9
2	13.8
3	23.0
4	24.1
5	22.4
6	7.8
7	2.9
8	1.1
9	0.0
10.	0.1
	100 %

Note: 1 - extremely poor, 10 - extremely well-to-do in terms of material situation.

Source: Mediana, 2012

Given such evaluations, it is no surprise that Bulgarians consider poverty to be a major problem and mention it very frequently in public surveys. In 2012, a poll conducted by the Open Society Institute revealed that according to Bulgarians, the dominant social problems are related to the risk of poverty. Thus, for 66.5% of the respondents, the leading problem is low wages. Unemployment garnered a similar number: 63.9%. Although less prominent, other poverty factors were also present among the top ten problems: poor economy, 32.1%, and poor education, 7.5% (Institut Otvoreno Obsthstvo [Open Society Institute], 2012, p. 10). Public opinion attributed poverty to the following five major factors: unemployment, 67%; unfair wages, 47%; social injustice, 35%; health problems, 29%; lack of adequate education, 27%. One most recent poll of Open Society Institute revealed that according to Bulgarians the dominant problems in the country in 2018 were poverty (32%) and unemployment (18%) (Institut Otvoreno Obsthstvo [Open Society Institute], 2019, p. 5).

It is also quite revealing to examine public opinion about the efficiency of existing social programmes for the poor and about the actual role that public policy plays in mitigating poverty. The data demonstrate that the majority of the population believes such policies do not exist or even if they do, they do not perform their functions and offer no support in the event of ending up in a dire material situation. Thus, only 9% of the respondents believe they can rely on state support in case of extreme poverty. Over half of the Bulgarians (67.9%) categorically state that they cannot rely on such support, and 23% remain undecided. The same attitude applies to

local authorities. Again, only 9.7% believe that they can rely on their municipality in such a situation, whereas 67.2% say they cannot, and 23% provide no answer (Table 8). To make matters even more obvious, most respondents list the traditional structures of family and the extended circle of relatives and friends as their major source of safety and support in such circumstances. The notion that there is no effective institutional support makes the majority, 62%, of Bulgarians place their hopes on families, relatives and friends in the event of poverty.

Table 8

Can we rely on external help?

Do you believe that the state will help you if you go bankrupt and end up in a dire material situation?

	% of all respondents
Yes	9.0
No	67.9
I do not know / cannot say	23.0

Do you believe that the municipality will help you if you go bankrupt and end up in a dire material situation?

	% of all respondents
Yes	9.7
No	67.2
I do not know / cannot say	23.0

Do you have relatives and friends you will depend upon to help you if you go bankrupt and end up in a dire material situation?

	% of all respondents
Yes	62.0
No	24.7
I do not know / cannot say	13.3

Note: Source: Mediana, 2012

As I noted above, however, the factors that form the public image and perception of inequalities and poverty are not essential to this section. What matters are the actual opinions and attitudes of Bulgarian society in these regards. The analysis of social opinion not only confirms the scope of inequalities and poverty described in the previous section, but also demonstrates that Bulgarian society treats them as problems of paramount importance.

Social inequality in Bulgaria and attitudes towards democracy

The presentation of social inequalities and their public perception in Bulgaria in the previous sections allows me to steer the present study to determining how they affect the attitude toward Bulgarian democracy. I believe, it is important to note that in the context specific to Bulgaria since 1989, that democracy has been construed as a collective concept embodying not only the results of the transition, but also the development perspectives for the country. Against this backdrop, the high level of inequalities in welfare distribution and the wide front of the risk of poverty and social exclusion in Bulgarian society imply not only the need for evaluation but also the existence of a considerable field of probably negative influences on the future sustainability and quality of Bulgarian democracy. The present section aims to outline the impact of the socio-economic environment (social inequalities) on attitudes towards democracy, mostly concerning its legitimacy as a model of sustainable social development in Bulgaria.

It could be argued that with the growing number of democratic regimes around the world, the question of the legitimacy of democracy appears to have lost its relevance. Nevertheless, this question, to me, seems appropriate in the case of Bulgaria and most countries who have undergone a recent democratic transition. This is caused not only by the fact that in countries like Bulgaria, the transition to democracy has been related to the rapid disintegration of former social statuses and the emergence of a society with a high degree of social exclusion and poverty, but also by the ambivalent assessment of the past. Or as Steven Friedman says, 'For the present, citizens of new democracies do seem to have concluded that freedom is preferable to bondage, even if it widens the gulf between those who have and those who do not. But it is at least possible that this has much to do with recent memories of authoritarianism and that, if current trends in the distribution of resources, opportunities and capabilities continue, or even if they are not significantly reversed, the next generation may find continued or growing inequality less tolerable than an authoritarianism that they have ever experienced.' (Friedman, 2002, pp. 15-16)

Friedman's argument provides me with a direction for interpreting the impact of Bulgarian social inequalities on the attitude towards democracy. Are there grounds to

believe that the accumulating high levels of social inequalities in the country undermine the legitimacy of democracy as a model for sustainable development? With such a formulation of the question, I believe it is important to distinguish between two dimensions in the search for its answer. First, it is vital to determine the general position of Bulgarian citizens regarding democracy. It is necessary to highlight the common trends and attitudes: how is the current situation perceived, provided that democracy is a collective concept for all post-1989 changes in Bulgaria; is there a clear-cut consensus about accepting democracy as a successful model for social development or not. Second, I should look for any correlations (or lack thereof) and impact of existing social inequalities and the outlined general attitudes with respect to democracy. The systematic elaboration of these two lines of analysis may pinpoint the possible influences of the socio-economic environment (social inequalities) on Bulgarian democracy.

A brief examination of the transition period reveals that Bulgarians perceive democracy as a generally positive concept. Thus, in 2001, 45.2% evaluated democracy as a very good form of government, another 41.2% as good, whereas only 13.2% saw it as poor or very poor (Hristov, 2007, p. 37). It appears, however, that this attitude has changed over the subsequent period. Ten years later, Bulgarian citizens are more hesitant and divided in this respect. In 2010-2013, 45-47% answer the same question positively, 22-26%, negatively, and 28-29% cannot decide (Table 9).

Table 9

Do you rather agree or disagree with the following statements?

	2010			2013		
	Yes	No	Don't know	Yes	No	Don't know
Democracy is the best form of government	45.2	26.6	28.2	47.6	22.9	29.5
Democracy is no good for a country like Bulgaria	39.4	35.5	25.1	39.8	33.6	26.5

Note: Source: Mediana, 2013

If the results above apply to approving of democracy in principle, this must indubitably be attributed to the democratic experience accumulated in Bulgaria. The representative sociological polls conducted between 2010 and 2013 demonstrated that Bulgarians clearly understand the nature of the changes related to democracy. The most

positive benefits have been identified as greater freedom (49%) and better development perspectives (39.5%). The opportunity of individuals to assert their positions is also perceived as a gain (26-29%) (Table 10).

Table 10

Do you rather agree or disagree with the following statements? (% of all respondents):

	2010				2013			
	Yes	It's worse	It's the same	Don't know	Yes	It's worse	It's the same	Don't know
1. The present is more humane.	11.1	54.4	17.6	16.9	14.5	49.6	16.8	19.1
2. The present is fairer.	11.6	53.7	18.6	16.1	13.2	49.7	17.0	20.1
3. The present is richer.	29.0	40.3	12.6	18.1	21.3	47.9	12.6	18.2
4. I feel freer now.	48.4	24.6	12.1	14.9	48.9	23.5	11.8	15.8
5. I have better prospects now.	37.4	33.6	11.7	17.3	39.5	30.5	10.2	19.8
6. I feel safer now.	9.2	62.5	13.0	15.4	8.2	62.1	12.5	17.3
7. I feel better now.	12.8	53.8	14.9	18.5	13.5	56.2	10.9	19.4
8. The voice of ordinary people can be heard more easily now.	26.0	34.4	20.0	19.6	29.5	33.1	16.7	20.7

Note: Source: Mediana, 2013

In contrast, all other dimensions of change are linked to mostly negative or insufficient development in comparison to the former socialist period. This conclusion is based on observing that 49-54% of Bulgarians believe that the socialist society was more humane and fairer than the democratic one; only 11-14% hold the opposite opinion, while 17-18% see no significant change. The assessment of democracy as a period of sustainable development and welfare accumulation is similarly important. Only 21-29% of the population believe that the democratic society is richer than the socialist one. 40-47% counter that they are now poorer, 12% perceive no obvious difference, and 18% cannot decide (Table 10). These data, although generalized, indubitably point to a predominantly hesitant and negative assessment of what the transition achieved as well as the present level of welfare in Bulgarian society.

In the context of these evaluations, if we ask the question whether democracy is good for a country like Bulgaria, 2013 witnesses a draw between negative and positive answers. Just over 39% of Bulgarians maintain that democracy is not good for their country, approximately 34-35% hold the contrary opinion, and a considerable group of 22-23% cannot provide a clear answer (Table 11). A more thorough scrutiny of the data reveals the presence of significant generational and education-level diversity, without changing the overall hesitant assessment of democracy. The age groups 18-30 and 31-40 demonstrate the highest degree of support for democracy—respectively by 48.1 and 45.5%, against 19.9 and 27.8% negative opinions, and 32 and 26% withholding an answer. Perhaps most telling for the future is the relatively high fraction of uncertainty among youth (18-30 - 32%), which implies that the democratic experience gathered by the generation that has never been aware of the totalitarian reality is largely contradictory and ambivalent. The assessment of the age groups 51-60 and 60+ forms a distinct contrast: their negative evaluation of democracy is respectively 40 and 46% (Table 11). Similar conclusions can be drawn from the presence of the same differences in attitude to Bulgarian democracy among the distinct educational-degree groups. The groups of people with secondary or higher education are characterized by a relatively high evaluation: respectively 40.3 and 49.8%. Bulgarians with primary or lower education occupy the other end of the spectrum: disapproving of democracy by 43.2 and 41.5% respectively.

Table 11

Do you think democracy rather benefits or harms a country like Bulgaria?

	Educational degree				Average
	University	High school	Primary	Lower	
Rather benefits	49.8%	40.3%	26.2%	9.8%	38.6%
Rather harms	27.1%	34.1%	43.2%	41.5%	34.5%
I cannot decide	23.1%	25.7%	30.6%	48.8%	27.0%

	Age groups					Average
	18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	60 +	
Rather benefits	48.1%	45.5%	39.6%	34.9%	29.5%	38.6%
Rather harms	19.9%	27.8%	31.8%	39.9%	46.5%	34.5%
I cannot decide	32.0%	26.7%	28.6%	25.2%	24.0%	27.0%

Note: Source: Mediana, 2013

We may also note that Bulgarians do not subscribe to a clear-cut and categorical evaluation of the socialist period. More than twenty years into the transition, a comparison between the former regime and the democratic rule elicits divided opinions. Thus, in 2013, 35.3% of Bulgarians not only harbour no negative feelings about the pre-1989 period, but would also welcome the restoration of the former regime. Nearly the same percentage, 31.3%, prefer the current democratic government, and the remaining third, 33.4%, cannot make up their minds about the advantages and disadvantages of the two regimes (Table 12).

Table 12

If it were up to you, would you restore the former system (prior to 10 November 1989) or do you prefer the present one?

	2010	2013
I would restore the former one	33.6	35.3
I prefer the present one	35.5	31.3
I cannot say	30.9	33.4
	100 %	100 %

Note: Source: Mediana, 2013

The observed trends can be partially explained by various researchers' claim that there exists some nostalgia for the totalitarian years (Hristov, 2009, p. 36). Indeed, in Bulgaria's case, we must take into consideration the relatively recent establishment of democracy. This fact, although not a major factor for the attitude towards democracy, has its importance and impact. To say the least, part of contemporary Bulgarian society consists of generations who have not only spent a considerable portion of their lives during socialist times, but cherish relatively positive memories and assessment of their lifestyle then. The very fact that such a sentimentality exists does not, however, imply that it should be evaluated only in its irrational context, disregarding the possible existence of rational dimensions. A point in case, especially for the elderly generations, is the fact that these age groups include the people who have not only lived most of their life in the totalitarian period but are also the individuals (e.g. retired people) who have been affected the worst by poverty and the risk of social exclusion. A similar, though less encompassing, reasoning can be extended to the existence of a considerable group of youth who do not have an explicit view of democracy as a sustainable and useful model for development of Bulgaria. This is particularly relevant to people aged 16-24, where the level of the risk of poverty and social exclusion was 33.3% in 2018 (Eurostat, 2019).

If we pursue these reflections further, we must also look for other factors to account for the described assessments and attitudes towards Bulgarian democracy. One of them relates directly to the nature and scope of the social inequalities and the process of losing social status, regarded as direct consequences of the transition and the operation of Bulgarian democratic society. The correlation is easy to observe, repeating across all of the aforementioned dimensions of people's attitude to democracy. In that respect, the positive and negative appraisals of the post-1989 changes exhibit a strong correlation with the material situation of Bulgarians and their self-evaluation of their social status. The groups who perceive their material situation as hard or extremely hard ('I have a hard life' and 'I barely make ends meet') also offer the most negative evaluation of Bulgarian democratic society. As a matter of fact, the general attitude of all Bulgarians tends to be pessimistic and negative in this respect. Thus, 50% of those who believe they have a very good life claim that the present society is less humane, less fair and less rich than the pre-1989 one. The other 50% of this group say there are no obvious differences (Table 13). The group of Bulgarians who believe their life is normal is the one that offers the most positive attitude to the characteristics of the established democratic society. 26.4% of them consider the present society to be more humane, 25.7% see it as fairer, and 32.8%, as richer (Table 13). This positive assessment is not so prominent and remains restricted mostly to that portion of the population that may be said to have benefited from the transition, accounting for a relatively minor part of all Bulgarians—25-30%.

In contrast, the groups evaluating their material situation as hard or very hard ('I have a hard life', 'I barely make ends meet') offer an explicitly negative opinion. A small fraction of them, 12.1% ('I have a hard life') and 7.7% ('I barely make ends meet'), perceive the present society as more humane. The majority hold the opposing view, 54% and 57.9% respectively. 19.4%, resp. 12.9% see no difference between the democratic and the socialist societies, and 14.6%, resp. 21.4% cannot make up their minds. The same attitudes apply to fairness in post-1989 society. 53.1% ('I have a hard life') and 61% ('I barely make ends meet') claim that the democratic society is less fair than the socialist one; 20.6%, resp. 11% see no difference; and 15%, resp. 21.4% cannot say for sure. The question whether the present society is richer than the previous one produces similar responses. More than half the participants from these two groups

(50.1% and 58.3% respectively) believe that the present society is poorer than the pre-1989 one; 13.4%, resp. 11.4% see no difference in their material situation over the two periods; and 15.7%, resp. 19.2% offer no categorical opinion. (Table 13)

Table 13

Self-evaluation of one's material situation with respect to the present society as compared to pre-1989 times

		How do you evaluate your material situation?				Average
		Very good	Normal	Hard	I barely make ends meet	
The present society is more humane.	Yes		26.4%	12.1%	7.7%	14.5%
	It's worse	50.0%	32.3%	54.0%	57.9%	49.6%
	It's the same	50.0%	16.1%	19.4%	12.9%	16.9%
	Don't know		25.2%	14.6%	21.4%	19.1%

		How do you evaluate your material situation?				Average
		Very good	Normal	Hard	I barely make ends meet	
The present society is fairer.	Yes		25.7%	11.3%	5.2%	13.2%
	It's worse	50.0%	30.8%	53.1%	61.5%	49.8%
	It's the same	50.0%	15.4%	20.6%	11.5%	16.9%
	Don't know		28.1%	15.0%	21.9%	20.1%

		How do you evaluate your material situation?				Average
		Very good	Normal	Hard	I barely make ends meet	
The present society is richer.	Yes		32.8%	20.9%	11.1%	21.2%
	It's worse	50.0%	33.2%	50.1%	58.3%	48.1%
	It's the same	50.0%	11.5%	13.4%	11.4%	12.4%
	Don't know		22.5%	15.7%	19.2%	18.3%

Note: Source: Mediana, 2013

The presence of a correlation between existing social inequalities and the risk of poverty on the one hand, and the legitimacy of democracy on the other, is confirmed by the overall attitude to democracy and the assessment of its usefulness and appropriateness as a model for sustainable development in Bulgaria. Here, the influence of social inequalities and Bulgarians' self-evaluation of their material situation is even

more prominent, forming two distinct groups. The democratic regime is perceived as a good option for the development of Bulgaria by those Bulgarians who assess their material situation and social status as very good or normal. Thus, this group mostly rejects the proposition that democracy is no good for a country like Bulgaria. The respondents who evaluate their material condition as very good provide the greatest support: 66.7%; among them, there are no negative opinions (Table 14). The second income group, assessing their material situation as normal, displays similar attitudes, although with some obvious differences. The greatest portion of these participants (47%) regard democracy as a good thing for a country like Bulgaria, and another 22.1% would categorize it as neither good nor bad. However, in this group, there is also a distinct negative assessment of democracy, expressed by 30.8% (Table 14).

Table 14

Democracy is no good for a country like Bulgaria' against self-evaluation of one's material situation

		How do you evaluate your own material situation?				Average
		Very good	Normal	Hard	I barely make ends meet	
Democracy is no good for a country like Bulgaria'	It is not		30.8%	40.8%	47.4%	39.9%
	It is	66.7%	47.0%	35.8%	16.7%	33.6%
	Don't know	33.3%	22.1%	23.4%	35.9%	26.5%

Note: Source: Mediana, 2013

In contrast, Bulgarians who assess their material situation as hard or very hard ('I have a hard life', 'I barely make ends meet') offer the opposite evaluation of democracy. They express a predominantly negative opinion, with 40.8% ('I have a hard life') and 47.4% ('I barely make ends meet') respectively seeing democracy as no good for a country like Bulgaria. Correspondingly, there is an increasingly smaller fraction of people in the two groups approving of democracy: 35.8% of 'I have a hard life' and a mere 16.7% of 'I barely make ends meet.' A sizeable portion of these respondents assume a neutral or indeterminate position, amounting to 23.4% and 35.9% respectively (Table 14).

The categorical interpretation of these data is difficult, and it would be unjustified to insist on an explicit rejection of democracy, i.e. a clear-cut tendency for undermining its legitimacy. Nevertheless, the data permit us to claim that nowadays, more than twenty years after the changes and the establishment of the democratic system in Bulgaria, public opinion is far from embracing an unqualified acceptance of democracy. Furthermore, the data and their connection to general attitudes towards democracy demonstrate that the presence of negative trends in the socio-economic development of Bulgaria (growing inequalities, risk of poverty and social exclusion) have a considerable impact on the overall perception of democracy as a successful model of sustainable development.

Conclusions

Examining the legitimacy of Bulgarian democracy in the context of social inequalities allows us to reach several important conclusions. Firstly, the assessment of Bulgaria according to the initially set criteria provides us with grounds to claim that the country's socio-economic development includes a number of important processes and features that cannot be regarded as beneficial or conducive to the legitimacy and quality of Bulgarian democracy. Over the past twenty years, Bulgaria has been going through a dynamic and profound increase of inequalities, which led to the emergence of a broad front of risk of poverty and social exclusion affecting approximately half of the population. Consequently, Bulgarian public attitudes largely perceive the existing inequalities and risk of poverty as crucial problems. The existing levels of inequalities and risk of poverty indubitably affect the attitude towards democracy. Although we cannot claim that there exists an unequivocally negative public attitude to democracy in Bulgaria, we have witnessed that there does exist a tendency for this attitude to change; as time goes by, it does not veer toward the positive but clearly moves in the direction of decreasing certainty as to accepting democracy as a successful model for societal development. It must be also pointed out that the latest polls of attitudes towards democracy in Bulgaria reveal continuing slow growth of this negative trend. For example, the poll conducted by Open Society institute in 2019 indicates that democracy is supported as the best form of government for Bulgaria by about 45% of the population – 7% lower than in 2015 (Institut Otvoreno Obshchestvo, {Open Society

Institute}, 2019, p. 2). We must therefore conclude that at least on a primary empirical and analytical level, social inequalities and the risk of poverty appear to have a strongly negative impact on the legitimacy of democracy in Bulgaria. Of course, these conclusions can have only a partial significance in the context of the overall study of the quality and legitimacy of democracy in Bulgaria. The answer to that broader and more general question requires the examination of numerous additional dimensions of Bulgarian democracy as well as the selection of criteria to evaluate them and factors to determine their concrete characteristics.

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