IMAGE: A MAP OF THE STARS OF THE ORION CONSTELLATION

Print ISSN: 2515-5784 Online ISSN: 2515-5792

JournalPreview

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 26 | Issue 1 | Compilation 1.0

Great Britain Journals Press

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Great Britain Journals Press

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University of Chile

RESUME

Virtual Education was born in 2002 from a joint project between the Center for Improvement, Experimentation and Pedagogical Research CPEIP and the Links Center for Education and Technology.

CPEIP has developed a line of distance teacher training through the Internet, running several courses since 2002, and Over the last 15 years, Links has dedicated its efforts to providing teachers and students with access to educational opportunities associated with new information and communication technologies. Both institutions decided to join forces and develop a joint project that integrates the CPEIP distance teacher training line, until now aimed at updating the curriculum and implementing different strategies to support the appropriation of ICTs and their curricular integration.

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Classification: LCC Code: LB1028.38

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573301
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

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I. INTRODUCTION

Virtual education, delivered through e-learning and blended learning modalities for teacher development, is an initiative with coverage throughout the Chilean territory and is financed by the Ministry of Education of Chile through the Center for Improvement, Experimentation and Pedagogical Research (CPEIP).). It has been developed by the Center for the development of innovations in education. The training is inserted in the framework of the curricular reform, and incorporates ICT resources in the learning and teacher training activities.

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This modality was born in the context of a line of teacher training with the support of a virtual component implemented by the CPEIP. On the other hand, a recent study carried out within the framework of the Links project shows that 92% of establishments have technological infrastructure and 76% of teachers have been trained in the use of ICT, the above as a result of the implementation of the project. Links. On the other hand, the penetration in the use of ICT in teachers is growing: 80% of teachers with computers at home, 51% of them with Internet, 58% of them with broadband (Collect and Links 2004).

The development and implementation of the experience included: a) the selection and training of tutors, b) the pedagogical design of the course, c) the design and implementation of the course on the Moodle platform; d) development of various resources to support the content, e) application of Pre and Post Test and summative and formative evaluations.

The course trained 786 teachers nationwide, divided into 29 courses, with an average of 27 students per course. For tutorial support during the implementation of the course, a community of tutors was created to support them in their tasks of tutoring the course in the areas: administrative, technical, social and pedagogical. The work methodology placed the teacher at the center of learning, as an apprentice who autonomously defines her learning path. In this context, the participant builds knowledge through interaction with: the materials, the tutor and classmates.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The development and implementation of the experience included:

- *The selection and training of tutors,* for which the Salmon e-moderating model was used, creating activities as learning objects. A profile was designed to select the tutors and they were trained through a course in the e-learning modality that concluded with a meeting face-to-face.
- *Pedagogical design of the course* , which has been conceived under an interactive model for the teaching of mathematics whose conception is very close to the expression of the Madison Project, which is synthesized in: "guess - try, put the idea to the test - observe what what happens and... learn as follow ";
- *Design and implementation of the course on the Moodle platform*; gazed out the organization of the contents in units, which have three areas: *Activities and Evaluation* : it is found with the set of activities organized weekly, within the week by day and within the day, the specific activities with a brief description and estimated time of development, consider a weekly formative assessment and a grade per unit; *Interactions:* includes a discussion forum, a space for consultations and a bulletin board; *Library:* groups the different resources such as readings, guides, Applets, training material, reference.
- *Development of various content support resources*: guides, reference material, applets (application component that runs in the context of another program, for example in a web browser), readings, references to sites, among others means.
- *The application of a Pre and Post Test*: A pre-test was applied at the beginning of the course and at the end a post-test.
- *Obtaining and analyzing information such as*: statistical data on face-to-face participation, evaluations with qualifications on the platform and registration of participation in interactive spaces in the platform.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section the main results of the course are presented, they have been obtained through the different information registration systems such as: the application of the Pre and Post Test, the attendance at the face-to-face sessions, the results of the summative evaluations on the platform and the data obtained from the platform regarding participation in the interactive spaces.

3.1 Course Participation

During every week, the active students in the course were monitored, issuing a weekly report which accounts for the number of active and inactive students in the week, in addition to counting those without any connection in the course.

In this section the main results of the course are presented, they have been obtained through the different information registration systems such as: the application of the Pre and Post Test, the attendance at the face-to-face sessions, the results of the summative evaluations on the platform and the data obtained from the platform regarding participation in the interactive spaces.

3.2 Course Participation

During every week, the active students in the course were monitored, issuing a weekly report which accounts for the number of active and inactive students in the week, in addition to counting those without any connection in the course. Figure 7 shows the behavior of these parameters during the 14 weeks of the course.

3.3 Participation Face-to-Face Sessions

The course includes three face-to-face sessions, at the beginning, at the end of the course and after the first content unit. For the development of these face-to-face sessions, the tutor was given a plan to follow with the activities to be developed and digital resources as a presentation for their support.

3.4 Participation in Exchange Spaces

This section will analyze the participation of the participants in the various asynchronous spaces contemplated for communication between the tutor and the students and between the participants themselves.

3.5 Participation in Permanent Spaces

The permanent spaces are a set of tools, mainly forums, that are available for use by the participants throughout the course.

165 *technical doubts are presented* , an average of 5.5 per course. These doubts are related to the use of the platform and the configuration of the computers to run certain applications such as Applets.

In the *social forum* there are 765 topics opened by the participants, within them there are various levels of interaction that are difficult to quantify, the average is 26.3 open topics per course, remember that these topics are initiated and encouraged by the participants themselves, with none or little participation of the tutor, except in the welcome forum that the tutor initiates in this space. The social forum becomes a kind of "virtual teachers' room".

In *novelties*, a space restricted to publications only by the tutor that cannot be debated by the participants, 624 interventions are registered with an average of 21.5 interventions. These correspond to information and guidelines that the tutors send to their students regarding the development of activities, delivery of evaluations and evaluation criteria, among others.

3.6 Participation in Interactive Spaces

Participation in the interactive spaces, although it is variable in each unit, follows similar trends that are later reflected in the global of the three units, in this sense the discussion forum concentrates most of the interventions, followed by the daily mural forum and queries.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The course presented an effort to provide teachers in the second cycle of primary education with a process of quality improvement, which allows building the knowledge, both disciplinary and didactic, necessary for the participants to improve their pedagogical practices. The foregoing in a distance mode that favors interaction with peers and the tutor within a learning community. The main conclusions are:

High interest in participating in the course: The interest shown by teachers to perfect themselves in Geometry has been reflected in the high numbers of enrollments and enrollments, which confirms the perceived need to train in this area. A total of 1,004 registered participants are registered.

Active students: The number of students who have remained active in the course is highly positive of the 1,004 original enrollees 786 gave the summative evaluation 1,78% of effective participation, and between these and those who take the final evaluation there is a retention level of 83% of the participants. Additionally, an average of 670 participants connect weekly to the course, 85% of active participants.

*Evaluation of the contents and resources***:** The contents of the course and the various resources it provides have been valued by the participants, due to their quality, contextualization and the feasibility that they can use them and transfer them to work in the classroom. The Applets applications have been within this set the most innovative, since they simulate geometric constructions.

The face-to-face meetings The positive aspects of the face-to-face meetings focused mainly on the possibility of carrying out collaborative work, sharing experiences, increasing the feeling of belonging and resolving doubts associated with the methodology and the use of technology. The first face-to-face presented problems in its development due to the call and problems with the platform, the second developed normally. The participants have suggested for future versions to incorporate work directly related to the contents and some, despite being a distance course, suggest more face-to-face courses.

The platform: The platform has shown great stability, it was only seen with problems at certain specific moments in the development of the course, mainly related to the online questionnaires, in general terms it has been in a high percentage operational and accessible. The way in which the interactive spaces have been arranged is positively evaluated by the

participants. They highlight its ease of use, they find it “friendly, and they frequently use the spaces and they find them useful. In this sense, providing differentiated spaces for discussion, sharing resources, clarifying doubts and interacting on free topics such as the "social forum" we believe is an element that contributes to increasing the interaction and organization. When participants are asked about the platform, they usually end up talking about the course and that is a sign that it has become “invisible” to them, it has merged into a single great element: the course.

The Interactions: An interesting use was made by the participants of the interactive spaces. Concentrating the interventions in the discussion forums 66%, the "Mural Diary" and "Consultations" register 28% and 6% respectively of the interventions. There was also a permanent space in which the social forum that captured the greatest participation based on issues raised by the participants, transforming itself into a kind of "virtual teachers' room". In this sense, we believe that the key to participation was having established differentiated spaces for the types of interventions, which were able to channel the type of interventions that the participants normally carry out in these courses, in addition to the animation of the tutor, especially in the forum of discussion.

Community of tutors: The community of tutors has been a space that has allowed the coordination of the pedagogical and tutorial team that coordinates the project with the tutors, through it it has been possible to guide and support the tutors in the development of their work, the main spaces used have been: orientations, consultations, requests for information and reports, as can be seen, the first two are dedicated to pedagogy and the other two to administration. An active role of tutors is observed in this community, especially those who achieve better results in their studies. courses.

The tutors: The tutors are relevant agents in the development of the course, they have developed various tasks in the areas: pedagogical, social, technical and administrative. The role played by them especially at the beginning of the course to "enchant" those who did not attend the face-to-face and in the times of assessments so that students take them within the established deadlines has been vital to keep students active. The work of these professionals has been highly valued by the participants, they perceive constant support in the development of the course and its activities as well as the clarification of doubts of a pedagogical and administrative nature, they perceive them close and always attentive to answering their questions. A factor that has probably contributed is the weekly reports that were sent to them regarding the active and inactive participants of their course, this allows them to determine how their course is going in relation to their peers at the national level, several of them have received congratulations and recognition of the pedagogical team and their peers for the achievements achieved.

Formation of groups: In large regions such as the Metropolitan Region where the country's capital is located, forming groups according to the teacher's address, we believe that it is not the most optimal, since it transfers existing social divisions into the virtual environment. Teachers from schools in poor districts with their peers and those from more affluent schools with theirs. This from the perspective of the social construction of knowledge and the concept of Vigotsky's Zone of Proximal Development is not very adequate. In this sense, we believe that the participation of teachers of Private establishments can become a contribution to the rest of the learning community, especially when they are integrated into groups from more popular sectors.

Evaluations: At a general and unit level, important advances in learning are observed, reflected in the differences between the pre and post tests. Additionally, the summative online assessments also reflect these advances. A relevant element in our opinion is that the difference obtained in relation to the online summative tests and the pre and post tests reflect that these are significantly closer to the post test, for which they account for the learning acquired, overcoming initial mistrust that these do not reflect individual learning since the teacher is

presumed guilty of carrying it out with additional support to their own knowledge.

The process followed by the participating teachers has been largely successful, without a doubt, it can be improved in various aspects. It has meant the development of a virtual experience of teacher training that has provided the participants with a new way of accessing content, quality materials and interaction with peers, tutors and specialists, in a theme that is a priority in the mathematical training of students. Chilean children such as geometry. The experience of this course shows a way forward in these new ways of updating teachers that integrate the use of ICT as a channel of communication and training during professional life, giving access to a training experience that many of the participating teachers do not they would have had access in the traditional face-to-face training formats.

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Gadamer's Hermeneutics and Literary Translation

Dr. Gerardo Piña

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to review some postulates of hermeneutics according to Hans-Georg Gadamer in light of literary translation. The link between the hermeneutic cycle and literary translation is perhaps not so clear at first glance. However, at the heart of both processes (the interpretation of a text and the translation of a literary text) the phenomenon of comprehension is crucial. One cannot interpret or translate correctly what one does not understand. Moreover, the comprehension of a text is not limited to the comprehension of the words that comprise it. Truly understanding a text has implications that transcend mere textual exegesis; understanding something has political, ethical and ideological implications, among others.

Keywords: translation, Gadamer, interpretation, hermeneutics.

Classification: LCC Code: P306

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573302
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 26 | Issue 1 | Compilation 1.0

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Keywords: translation, Gadamer, interpretation, hermeneutics.

I. INTRODUCTION

In this article, I will review some postulates of hermeneutics according to Hans-Georg Gadamer to show how they are of great relevance in literary translation. After all, the translator –like every attentive reader– is always an interpreter. In his book *Wahrheit und Methode* (Truth and Method), Gadamer developed several themes whose influence has been decisive in the field of hermeneutics. The link between the hermeneutic cycle (which we will discuss later) and literary translation is perhaps not so clear at first glance. However, at the heart of both processes (the interpretation of a text and the translation of a literary text) the phenomenon of comprehension is crucial. One cannot interpret or translate correctly what one does not understand. Moreover, the comprehension of a text is not limited to the comprehension of the words that comprise it. Truly understanding a text has implications that transcend mere textual exegesis; understanding something has political, ethical, and ideological implications, among others. And these implications completely affect a translation process. As Maria Tymoczko states:

> A translation's ideology is determined only partially by the content of the source text-the subject and the representation of the subject, even though this content may itself be overtly political and enormously complicated as a speech act, with locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary aspects of the source text all contributing to the effect in the source context. The ideological value of the source text is in turn complemented by the fact that translation is a metastatement, a statement about the source text that constitutes an interpretation of the source text (Tymoczko).

Hence the importance of reflecting on the understanding and interpretation of a literary text before translating it. "For he who listens to the other, always listens to someone who has a horizon," says Gadamer. In a similar way, the translator never reads and interprets only one text; he also interprets a horizon from a set of horizons that are his own. Hence, translating is also a way of conversing.

> Because who listens to the other, always listens to someone who has THEIR horizon. This is the same thing between I and you as between nations or between cultures. Everywhere we face this same problem. We must learn that it is precisely in listening to the other that the real path opens up, in which we find solidarities [...] Language belongs to practice, to human togetherness, and to interpersonal relations. And hermeneutics says that language belongs to conversation. That is, language is only what it is at all when it experiences attempts at understanding, when it experiences exchange and speech and

counter-speech, when it is both answer and question" (Bachmann)[1].

To speak of literary translation is, of course, to speak of a use of language that involves a series of decisions made on the basis of a sort of conversation between the translator, the writer of the source text and the text itself. Each of the participants in this equation occupies a place, which constitutes an ideological positioning, as we have already mentioned. In the words of Maria Tymoczko:

> The ideology of a translation resides not simply in the text translated, but in the voicing and stance of the translator, and in its relevance to the receiving audience. These latter features are affected by the place of enunciation of the translator: indeed they are part of what we mean by the 'place' of enunciation, for that 'place' is an ideological positioning as well as a geographical or temporal one. These aspects of a translation are motivated and determined by the translator's cultural and ideological affiliations as much as or even more than by the temporal and spatial location that the translator speaks from (Tymoczko).

Gadamer is considered the founder of modern philosophical hermeneutics. Hermeneutics has always been part of theology, philology, and jurisprudence. The linguist who wants to understand Homer, the pastor who interprets the Holy Scriptures, or the judge who is going to apply a law needs to learn hermeneutics as part of their professional training. Gadamer has placed hermeneutics at the center of philosophical analysis. He did not regard it as an auxiliary discipline but as a discipline in its own right. For him, hermeneutics is based on language even before it is based on a certain application. Understanding follows from and is established through language; for Gadamer, understanding is always a linguistic understanding and language is always at the core of history.

The emphasis on the historical character of human beings allowed Gadamer to reflect on the epistemological opportunities presented by a productive confrontation with the past. If we look at this relationship in the literary field, it is not difficult to recognize that every literary text belongs to a tradition; however much one may wish to emphasize the individual style or talent of an author, the fact is that both the writer and the translator are born into a historical background that will influence all kinds of decisions (including, of course, the various ways of understanding, analyzing and interpreting texts). Moreover, literary works also belong to a historical becoming within which, over the years, readers classify or evaluate them. Ignoring, for example, that such a work belongs to the tradition of fantasy literature, science fiction, testimonial poetry of a certain country or ethnic group, for example, severely limits the ability of the translator to understand the source text (and its scope and possibilities of interpretation). Does this mean that whoever translates a literary text must be a specialist in a certain period, genre, etc.? Not necessarily, but it would be very convenient if literary translators could specialize in certain areas and publishers could locate such translators when venturing into the translation of a new work for their catalog. In this regard it is important to note that, for Gadamer, tradition is not fixed.

For him, tradition is something that has to be pondered anew in each generation; something that has to be redefined on the basis of what is seen as valuable to a person or group of people: what deserves to be continued. But, although it may seem a mere truism, this critical examination of tradition is only possible if one is aware that one is in a tradition. If this awareness does not exist, one cannot choose critically, one cannot maintain a critical relationship with history nor, by extension, with the present. An uncritical relationship with the literary texts to be translated can result in a myriad of practices with undesirable ethical or political repercussions. Translating racist manifestos or misogynist texts, for example, presupposes a conscious decision on the part of the translator. In no case could it be

[1] All quotations have been translated into English by myself unless otherwise indicated.

said that the translator is not obliged to engage in a critical relationship with herself, with the working material and with the audience and social context for which her translation is intended. From this perspective, translation, although linked to linguistic studies, has more to do with a mediation of meaning, as Jane Elisabeth Wilhelm states:

> Translation, for Ricoeur or Gadamer, does not appear as a problem essentially belonging to the field of structural linguistics, whose epistemological characteristic is to stand within the enclosure of the universe of signs, but as a mediation within a world that the human being apprehends through language. Ricoeur points out that a system of signs, as an autonomous entity of internal dependencies, has neither subject nor outside (Wilhelm).

Therefore, belonging to history requires a different way of thinking about one's own context, as well as history itself. According to Gadamer, the interpreter's encounter with historical and literary texts is a living and open dialogue. If, for example, we read poetry from the time of Goethe, we also test our own prejudices, we expose our own time horizon and confront it with the time horizon of the text and thus engage in a kind of conversation. Gadamer calls this process "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*). For Gadamer, interpretation is a constant, everyday praxis because we always seek to understand something and we always succeed in understanding something; we often have opportunities to question our understanding and our way of interpreting what surrounds us. For him, all understanding is transmitted linguistically, real understanding takes place in interpersonal communication, not in the self-referentiality of the individual. Language is the primary medium of hermeneutics, our joint exploration of the world. The relevance of hermeneutics lies in the search for a common language, for key concepts understood between two or more involved; a task in which the interpretation and correct translation of texts are fundamental. Gadamer states:

> For we see this everywhere, that attempts of understanding between the blocs, the zones, the nations, the generations, fail because no common language can be found, but the used key words like irritant words rather tear open and deepen the contrasts and increase the tensions, which one actually came together to solve.

This shows us the experiential and everyday part that goes hand in hand with the hermeneutic theory of this German philosopher. In a similar way, literary translation feeds on this same philosophy through some of its key ideas, such as "finiteness" of knowledge. This means that our knowledge cannot predict how the conditions to which a person is subject at any given time will operate. We cannot add up an infinite amount of knowledge and therefore we have to constantly review how much we understand of the things that are under our control; "finiteness" forces us to be self-critical and to review again and again the relevant factors when interpreting a literary text. For Gadamer, history and language function as conditions of our knowledge that surpass our ability to identify our own dependence on them. The context and the hermeneutical tools we have are the same, and this limits and conditions our ability to understand a given text.

Moving within a tradition and, therefore, within a certain finitude, does not imply that we are condemned to interpret, understand, analyze, etc., only from a given point of view. In fact, Gadamer invites us to a permanent revision of those assumptions we take for granted with the intention of reviewing and, if necessary, modifying the tradition to which we belong. By tradition in literary translation, I am referring both to the literary tradition of the texts we translate and to the steps and methods of translation we follow in doing so. For example, to translate an English or German sonnet from the Renaissance, what should I privilege: rhyme, meter or meaning? And once certain decisions have been made when translating a literary text, the translator may very well change his or her mind when revising them or translating other similar texts, if he or she considers it pertinent in each case. In fact, the awareness of the finiteness

of knowledge is what forces the translator to constantly revise their translation practices. This process implies a deep understanding of the text and of the context around it, as well as the translation itself.

Gadamer expands about the concept of "understanding" in *Wahrheit und Methode*. Understanding is the way of realizing our existence. Since the author returns to this idea to explain it in different ways throughout his book, I have synthesized these ways in three brief sections: a) understanding as something that is grasped intellectually, b) understanding as practical knowledge, and c) understanding as a way of agreeing with someone.

1.1 Understanding as an Intellectual Act

Understanding (*verstehen*) refers in a general way to becoming aware of something (understanding), to seeing things more clearly, to being able to incorporate a particular meaning into a larger frame of reference. To Wilhelm Dilthey, Gadamer's predecessor, understanding seemed to be the most elementary cognitive process in the humanities. For him, understanding an expression meant understanding the manifestation of a life experience (*Erlebnis*), which we seek to recreate through such understanding. For him, the humanities had to follow a rigorous method to guarantee a true understanding of what is read in the field of the social sciences and the humanities. This is what he called hermeneutics. In the same tradition are the works of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, Johann August Ernesti and Samuel Friedrich Morus, for example. They all spoke of the act of understanding a text as turning an obscure passage into something intelligible. Gadamer begins by questioning whether a rigorous method is really all that is required to understand a text.

1.2 Understanding as Practical Knowledge

The idea of understanding as the result of a solely intellectual process had already been discussed by Martin Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* (Being and Time) (1927). For him, understanding has less to do with a cognitive process than with a practical knowledge, an ability, a capacity and a possibility of our existence. Heidegger reminds us that the expression "sich auf etwas verstehen" means "to be capable of something". For him, someone who understands is not someone who has a specific knowledge (such as "mastery" of a foreign language in the case of a translator, for example) but someone who can perform a practical skill. A good sportsman, a good carpenter, for example, is not necessarily someone who has a great intellectual background, but he *understands* his trade. Another important point of Heidegger's that Gadamer would later take up is that the German locution "sich verstehen" (to understand) is reflexive; this implies that in understanding something there is always implicitly a self-understanding. A being that is always concerned with itself (the Heideggerian Dasein) is also concerned with human existence and is in search of an orientation. This orientation is executed through a certain "understanding", through my abilities, my capacities, etc. that add up to the act of "realizing my own existence", as Gadamer would say. Hermeneutics is for Heidegger a search for ontological understanding, but for Gadamer it is enough to arrive at hermeneutics of texts, not of existence. That is, if we acquire a practical ability to handle texts, we are already interpreting them.It is not necessary to delve into ontological existence in order to interpret a written work. For Gadamer, to understand something is to be able to apply a certain meaning in a certain circumstance; to understand is to apply. Similarly, in the case of the literary translator, we can say that to understand is to have the ability to make the right choices in an accurate translation. It is not necessary to be an accomplished philologist of the source language.

Gadamer draws on Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* (commonly translated as "wisdom") in order to propose his own definition of the act of understanding as practical knowledge. According to Gadamer, Aristotle recognizes that the point of practical wisdom is in its realization, which always involves an element of self-knowledge, since it is always a possibility of the self that is involved in a concrete practical situation. This argument constituted a type of criticism that Aristotle

exercised towards a part of Plato's work. For example, when faced with the idea of the Platonic "good"; a universal and abstract "good", Aristotle said that this concept was not as important as being able to do good in everyday life; in a concrete situation. When speaking of translation processes, the validity of an interpretation on the part of the translator (someone who by force becomes a type of specialized reader) is decisive for the result. Subsequent interpretations will take this first interpretation as a basis (unless the source text is also taken into account in the exegesis).

1.3 Understanding as an Agreement with the Other

Later in his book *Wahrheit und Methode*, Gadamer presents us with another meaning of the act of "understanding". In German, "to understand" (sich verstehen) also means "to agree," "to concur." Gadamer reminds us that the noun *Verständigung* (derived from *verstehen*) means "agreement." This locution also exists in English: "we understand each other well," for example, in the sense that it is easy for such people to come to an agreement. Gadamer asks: when speaking of "understanding," is it the same thing to try to understand a text (the epistemological *Verstehen*), to know one's own craft (the practical *Verstehen*) and to agree with someone on something in particular (*sich verstehen*)? For him, these three senses of the act of "understanding" are not mutually exclusive. This is fundamental for addressing ethical issues in translation practice or in teaching literary translation, for example. Choosing to translate a given book does not only imply understanding the text at the linguistic level and then elaborating a correct interpretation; it also implies agreeing on the transmission of ideas, images, stories, descriptions, etc., from the source text. *Understanding*, according to the hermeneutic epistemological tradition (e.g. Dilthey), states that it is a matter of *reconstructing* in a disinterested way the meaning of a text in agreement with the one who wrote it. However, Gadamer claims that this hides the fact that the one who interprets the text is also involved with the content of the text. The meaning of *Verständigung* (agreement) emphasizes that the one who reads and interprets a text shares a basic "agreement" or "understanding" with the author of the text about it. Gadamer uses the following example: when I read a text by Plato on the topic of justice, I do not read it solely in order to register Plato's views on this topic, I also share and bring into play a certain (at least basic) understanding of what justice is; otherwise, I could not have the slightest idea of what Plato is talking about. For Gadamer, this basic understanding of the matter at hand is inherent in every process of understanding and is fundamental, since according to him, the understanding of a text or of someone's discourse relates at a first level to the subject matter at hand and not to the author's intention. For him, the intention of the author of a text is of a secondary order in the process of understanding the text. That is, in certain cases one can understand and interpret a text without agreeing with its ideas, but one cannot *understand* it in the deeper sense, since this implies making those ideas one's own. Even if my goal is to analyze the intention of the author of a text, I must first be familiar with the topic or subject matter of the text.[2]

The sense of "agreement" implicit in the act of "understanding" (*verstehen*) is fundamental for Gadamer when speaking of text interpretation because "coming to an agreement" or "agreeing" is something that happens above all through language, dialogue or conversation (activities that are intimately linked to reading). Gadamer places the linguistic character of the "understanding" of something above the epistemological sense (i.e. the reconstruction of a process of creation as proposed by Dilthey) or the pragmatic sense (Heidegger). For him, to understand is to put something into words; to articulate (a meaning, an act, an object) in a series of words that are always one's own and at the same time belong to that which one aspires to understand. It may be objected to this, that not everything that someone

[2] This point is not minor. Irony, for example, often escapes interpretations even of classical texts. While this may be due to the writer's failure to clearly express his or her ironic tone, it is often the reader's lack of understanding of the main theme or subject that causes the irony to be misunderstood. See: Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony*, University of Chicago Press, 1974.

understands can be put into words. Someone can understand a piece of music, for example, and not necessarily be able to articulate in words an interpretation. Indeed, someone could interpret a certain work through a language that does not involve words (e.g., perform a ballet from a painting). Gadamer has taken these objections into account on the basis of the example of an artist who claims that trying to explain in words the experience of looking at a certain painting or listening to certain music makes little sense. Gadamer claims that such an artist could only discard one interpretation articulated in words in favor of another that might seem more pertinent to the artist. However, even this other interpretation (e.g. the ballet mentioned) can also be analyzed and expressed in words.

The central point in the act of interpreting (especially when interpreting a text) is for Gadamer that its linguistic character is inherent. Whoever reads a text seeks to understand something, and for this purpose questions, sketches answers, investigates, interprets and arrives at the words that best express their understanding. This process does not guarantee understanding or the correct interpretation of a text. Sometimes this process fails and what is put into words does not coincide with the content of the text. Hence the importance of putting it into words, Gadamer thinks, from what those words do not say, we can recover the experience of understanding the text. For him, the unsayable is only unsayable insofar as someone particular at a given moment cannot say something (not because it is not possible to say it). "[Language] is not a closed area of the sayable, beside which other areas of the unsayable would stand, but it is all-embracing. There is nothing that is fundamentally withdrawn from being said, as long as only what is meant means something." Gadamer adds a little further on: "Everything said does not have its truth simply in itself, but refers backwards and forwards to unsaid things" (Gadamer, Gesammelte Werke. Bd.2. Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode -2. Ergänzungen).

The limits of language, for Gadamer, confirm the universality of language as a means of understanding. This is why the idea of "agreement" (Verständigung) within the act of "understanding" is so important; understanding is expressed in words if dialogue and agreement are to be reached. It is important to note that many of the linguistic resources when translating arise spontaneously (as in literary creation). Of course, there is a passive vocabulary in each person who translates, but this is activated at the moment of translation in the same way that occurs, to paraphrase Gadamer, in any conversation; one does not know beforehand everything one is going to say. That is why there is a need, for some scholars of hermeneutics linked to translation such as Arno Renken, to point out that both (language and idiom) are, strictly speaking, momentary realizations of an infinite process:

> If translation appears at the threshold of understanding, it is because it intervenes simultaneously on two limits that meet: that of speaking and that of language [...] Language, Gadamer will not cease to insist on this point, is not available; it is not given as such: it emerges from dialogue, from the *Gespräch*, which is not the frozen face-to-face of two individuals emitting a message in a linguistic code that they activate, but the joint elaboration of a common language. Language, always caught in the movement of dialogue, thus always has a lack as a background: it is never there, never sufficient, never completed (Renken).

And as Gadamer states, more than putting ourselves in the place of the other, understanding is linked to our way of expressing ourselves through language, as our interlocutor does.

> Understanding what one says means, as we have seen, to communicate in language and not to put oneself in another's place and to comprehend his experiences. We emphasized that the experience of meaning, which happens in such a way in understanding, always includes application. Now we note that this whole process is a linguistic one. It is not for nothing that the actual problem of understanding and the attempt to master it artfully-the subject of hermeneutics-traditionally belongs to the field of grammar

> and rhetoric. Language is the center in which the understanding of the partners and the agreement on the matter takes place (Gadamer, Gesammelte Werke. Bd. 1. Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode-1).

According to this, as we mentioned before, there are three connotations in the concept of "understanding" for Gadamer; there is a cognitive, a practical and a linguistic element. These elements are added together and we have the concept of "application". This concept is key to the whole process of interpreting a text and its translation. As Jean Grondin states, this concept "has been widely misinterpreted in a subjectivist sense, [as something] that would open the door to relativism"; that is, to think that Gadamer proposes that everyone should interpret what he wants, excusing himself in his own particularity. The German philosopher called this hermeneutic nihilism. In *Truth and Method* he warns us of "overinterpretation" as a consequence of subjectively biased interpretations. Gadamer uses a statement by Paul Valéry as an example of the absence of a communicative intention in the work of art and the consequences this has for its interpretation: »Mes vers ont le sens qu'on leur prête«[3] ("My verses have the meaning that we lend them."). In this regard, Gadamer states:

> Paul Valery has indeed seen things this way. He also did not shy away from the consequences that result for the one who confronts a work of art and tries to understand it. If it is true that a work of art is not complete in itself, what is the measure of the adequacy of its reception and understanding?... It follows, then, that it must be left to the perceiver to decide what he, for his part, makes of what is present. One way of understanding an entity is then no less legitimate than the other. There is no standard of adequacy. Not only does the poet himself not possess such a one... Rather, every encounter with the work has the rank and right of a new production. - This seems to me an untenable hermeneutic nihilism (Gadamer, Gesammelte Werke. Bd.2. Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode -2. Ergänzungen).

For Gadamer, the meaning of what is to be understood (not only of a text but of an event, a picture, etc.) always requires a kind of translation; so that understanding, application and translation become equivalent terms for him. Actually, the term "application" refers to something similar to "translation" in his work. That is, to an adaptation of content with emphasis on the receiver without falsifying the information. Gadamer continues:

> It is in the disturbed and aggravated situations of communication that the conditions under which any understanding stands become most readily apparent. Thus, the linguistic process in which a conversation in two languages foreign to each other is made possible by translation and transmission is particularly revealing. Here the translator must transfer the meaning to be understood into the context in which the partner of the conversation lives. As is well known, this does not mean that he may falsify the meaning that the other person means (Gadamer, Gesammelte Werke. Bd. 1. Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode-1).

What I seek to translate is always, at first, something strange to me, but at the same time that strangeness makes me want to interpret it. If I wish to understand a scientific theory or a sonata, for example, I cannot say whatever I want and have that count as a valid interpretation; however, I can only unfold my understanding in terms of what I can follow and what I hope to be able to communicate. This even in cases of supposed untranslatability. For example, if I want to understand a word in ancient Greek for which there is no equivalence in modern English, I need to put into words familiar to me what such a word might mean; once I make a decision to translate such a word I have made an *application* (in the terms proposed by Gadamer). This decision is not necessarily final. I may return to this question and change my mind, choose another word or another way of translating. This is a search for "applications" rather than words according to Gadamer, for application carries the burden of understanding a term, of its due interpretation

[3] *Apud* Gadamer, 1999: 100.

and thus of a translation proposal. All this as part of a process in which our prejudices play a very important role.

According to Gadamer, our prejudices are conditionings for comprehension. At the beginning of reading and interpreting a text we have some vague anticipations of what we are going to read; these anticipations will undergo a revision as our reading progresses. The most stimulating readings, according to the German philosopher, are those that refute our prejudices, that break with the expectations of these anticipations. He speaks of basic hermeneutical experience. At the end of the second section of *Truth and Method*, Gadamer concludes that true hermeneutical experience (i.e. true understanding) must lead us to an open-mindedness that allows us to revise our own prejudices and beliefs with a view to new experiences. Someone with sufficient experience will be ready to leave open several possible interpretations, since no interpretation can be exhaustive. This openness (followed by the questioning of one's own prejudices and beliefs) makes a literary translator recognize in each translation project a different experience that requires a different creative stimulus. It is this hermeneutic experience that leads us to foster new approaches and methods for translation; it encourages us not to approach different source texts in the same way, nor to solve translation problems in the same way as we usually do. It is an invitation to permanently question our abilities as readers and also as authors of our translations.

Some critics of Gadamer, such as Claus von Bormann, have objected that in reality this hermeneutic experience can also serve to further reaffirm our prejudices. In this sense, our practices of analysis or translation, for example, may also be reaffirmed rather than questioned. Ultimately, we can never fully transcend our prejudices, for we are always limited by ourselves and our circumstances at any given moment, but we can transcend those that we have seen that do not work, that can be improved, or that simply have not contributed anything positive to our personal development. Hence Gadamer divides our prejudices into false and true. The true ones are those that we do not understand and, consequently, fail to see. And there is no method to guarantee that we will always be able to recognize the difference; it is a personal work born of a true desire to understand oneself and, at the same time, the other through reading, dialogue and interpretation. As experiences add up and offer us more and more opportunities to contrast our prejudices with the object of analysis and interpretation in front of us, time is a key element in learning to recognize our true prejudices.

> Often the time gap is able to make the actual critical question of hermeneutics solvable, namely to separate the true prejudices under which we understand from the false ones under which we misunderstand. Hermeneutically trained consciousness will therefore include historical consciousness. It will make conscious the own prejudices guiding the understanding, so that the tradition, as an opinion of difference, will in its turn stand out and be validated. To make a prejudice as such stand out obviously requires to suspend it in its validity. For as long as a prejudice determines us, we do not know and consider it as a judgment. How is it to be set apart as such? To bring a prejudice before us, as it were, cannot succeed as long as this prejudice is constantly and unnoticed in play, but only when it is, so to speak, disturbed. What is able to disturb in this way is precisely the encounter with tradition. For what tempts to understanding must have already brought itself to bear in its otherness. The first thing with which understanding begins, as already said above, is that something appeals to us. This is the highest of all hermeneutic conditions. We now know what is required by this: a fundamental suspension of one's own prejudices. But all suspension of judgments, consequently and especially that of prejudices, has, logically seen, the structure of the question (Gadamer, Gesammelte Werke. Bd.2. Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode -2. Ergänzungen).

Thus, Gadamer adds, "it is often through a temporal distance that we come to resolve the

critical question about hermeneutics." This process is known as hermeneutic circularity. The first antecedent of circularity in interpretation comes from Friedrich Schleiermacher, whose contributions to the area of translation are nicely summarized by Jane Elisabeth Wilhelm:

> Schleiermacher's description of the "hermeneutic circle" as the fundamental structure of understanding [...] will become after him the hermeneutic act for translation. The figure of the circle illustrates the movement of understanding from the particular to the general and back again in a back-and-forth relationship [...] This first circle illustrates, by way of example, the need for the translator to have an overview of the original text and to know the context as a necessary complement to the polysemy of words. If Schleiermacher describes understanding as proceeding from the circular reference of meaning between the detail and the whole, or the part and the whole, he also introduces the dichotomy of the objective and the subjective in the process (Wilhelm).

Gadamer's hermeneutic circle is also based on the circle proposed by Heidegger in *Being and Time*, as we will see below. For Heidegger, every interpretation (*Auslegung*) presupposes understanding (*Verstehen*), because every interpretation is guided by anticipations. However, this idea of circularity may presuppose a vicious circle for Heidegger, because from an epistemological perspective, an interpretation results from reaffirming what was already presupposed before. Escaping this vicious circle is practically impossible for Heidegger. Gadamer, on the other hand, sees it differently. First of all, he reminds us that this circle of interpretation as a way of understanding something comes from the classical philosophers, for whom the parts of a text had to correspond to the whole and vice versa. This principle of rhetorical composition passed into hermeneutics where it had a purely phenomenological meaning; that is, it was used to describe the movement back and forth from the parts to the whole made by the one who seeks to understand a text.

> What Schleiermacher developed as subjective interpretation may be set aside altogether. When we try to understand a text, we do not put ourselves into the mental condition of the author, but if one wants to speak of putting oneself into it, then we put ourselves into the perspective under which the other person has gained his opinion. This means nothing else than that we try to accept the factual right of what the other person says. If we want to understand, we will even try to strengthen his arguments. This already happens in conversation. How much more is it true in the understanding of what is written that we move in a dimension of what is meaningful, which is understandable in itself and as such does not motivate a decline to the subjectivity of the other. It is the task of hermeneutics to clarify this miracle of understanding, which is not a mysterious communion of souls, but a participation in the common meaning (Gadamer, Gesammelte Werke. Bd.2. Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode -2. Ergänzungen).

Gadamer's hermeneutic circle describes the constant process of revising one's anticipations before undertaking the interpretation of a given text, in order to achieve each time (at each turn) a better interpretation and a better understanding of the whole. This coherence that is refined by the process of going back and forth to our anticipations and to the text (similar to what happens in literary translation) is what leads us to the "correct criterion of comprehension". This coherence between the whole and the parts, Gadamer claims, is what one seeks to understand; it is the tacit anticipation. According to this, understanding presupposes that meaning constructs a coherent whole. Since there is a primordial anticipation there is the hermeneutic circle for Gadamer.

The adequacy between what the reader anticipates and the meaning that seeks to be understood functions as the main goal of text interpretation, according to Gadamer. Hence, understanding always involves coming to terms with the subject in question.

> The anticipation of perfection, which guides all our understanding, thus proves itself to be determined by content. Not only is an immanent unity of sense presupposed, which gives guidance to the reader, but the reader's understanding is also constantly guided by transcendent expectations of sense, which spring from the relation to the truth of what is meant. Just as the recipient of a letter understands the messages it contains and first sees things through the eyes of the letter writer, i.e. considers true what the letter writer writes - and does not seek to understand the strange opinions of the letter writer as such - so we also understand transmitted texts on the basis of sense expectations that are drawn from our own prior factual relationship. And just as we believe news of a correspondent because he was there or otherwise knows better, so we are fundamentally open to the possibility that a traditional text knows better than one's own prior opinion wants to let stand. Only the failure of the attempt to let what is said count as true leads to the endeavor to "understand" the text as the opinion of another -psychologically or historically-. The prejudice of perfection thus contains not only this formal thing, that a text should express its opinion perfectly, but also that what it says is the perfect truth (Gadamer, Gesammelte Werke. Bd.2. Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode -2. Ergänzungen).

Coupled with this prejudice of perfection, with this constant forgetfulness of weighing other opinions besides our own as being susceptible of being true, is the reiteration that our finitude is linguistically constituted. Every hermeneutical tradition, every philosophical, scientific inquiry, etc., is posited (and understood) according to the terms of a certain conceptual language that has its own history. This can be seen not only in the tradition of any hermeneutical current but also in the rhetoric and metaphorical language, for example, of a certain literary current or epoch (e.g. the use of hendecasyllables in the Spanish Golden Age or blank verse in Elizabethan poetry). Gadamer suggests that already our linguistic interpretation of the world constitutes a kind of bias in our thinking. From this point of view (and in a great consonance with the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*) language is the true limit of our finitude.

> We are always biased in our thinking and knowing by our linguistic interpretation of the world. To grow into this linguistic interpretation means to grow up in the world. To this extent, language is the real mark of our finitude. It is always out beyond us. The consciousness of the individual is not the standard de which the being of language can be measured. Indeed, there is no individual consciousness at all in which a spoken language is actually present. How then is language present? Certainly not without the individual consciousness, but also not in a mere summation of the many who are each a particular consciousness for itself (Gadamer and Linge).

The influence that language has on our thinking is such that it exceeds the limits with which we can identify such influence. Language is the first medium through which history exerts its influence on us. Gadamer calls the series of effects that language has on us *Wirkungsgeschichte* or "History of Effects" (Gadamer 1999, 305 ff.). With this term he seeks to point to the causal conditioning aspect of our relation to history. These effects include the perception of materiality, of economy, aesthetics, politics, etc. and, while they are still words, they cannot be reduced to just that either. That is to say, the history that shapes me as an individual (my identity) is constructed from a narrative (where I was born, who my ancestors were, etc.) but that identity can never be reduced to that narrative alone (*Philosophical Hermeneutics* 18-43).

For Gadamer, language is the medium that increases or enhances the intelligible character of reality. Language is the repository of tradition and the medium in and through which we exist and perceive the world (*PH* 29). For him, to lack language would make our understanding of the world infinitely poorer than it is. Hence, the various languages we have, the different languages, for example, allow us to have more

tools to understand reality. Translation creates opportunities for access to a greater understanding of reality not so much (or not only) by the transfer from a source text to a target text but by the interpretation that the translator makes and the windows, so to speak, that it opens to the reader to exercise his own interpretations of a text that otherwise (not knowing the language of the source text) would have remained completely closed to him.

That knowledge always depends on historical, linguistic and normative conditions-which is a relative point of view for each person who interprets a text-does not imply an inherent danger towards gaining knowledge; in fact, it shows its possibilities. Transcending our prejudices, our limiting conditions, is a way of obtaining and propagating knowledge; this is what literary translation does (H.-G. Gadamer, Gesammelte Werke. Bd. 1. Hermeneutik: Wahrheit und Methode-1).

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Language, Culture and Marginal Identity in Post-1971 Bengali Fiction on Fishing Communities

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the interrelationship between language, culture and identity through a cultural-linguistic analysis of marginalised fishing communities as represented in post-1971 Bāṁlā (Bengali) fiction from Bangladesh and West Bengal. This study is situated at the intersection of cultural studies and sociolinguistics. It treats language not simply as a medium of representation, but as a social practice through which cultural meanings and power relations take shape.

This article addresses the following research question: How do post-1971 Bāṁlā novels represent the vernacular speech and occupational registers of marginal fishing communities, and how do these linguistic representations mediate cultural identity and ethnic marginalisation? The corpus consists of selected post-Liberation novels from both Bangladesh and West Bengal that centre on fishing communities identified as jele, mālo, kaivarta and jaladāsa.

Keywords: Bengali fiction, fishing communities, language and identity, sociolinguistics, cultural studies, discourse analysis, marginalised communities, post-1971 Bangladesh literature.

Classification: LCC Code: PL4387

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573303
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 26 | Issue 1 | Compilation 1.0

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The essay draws on linguistic anthropology, discourse analysis and cultural theory. Within this framework, culture is understood as a dynamic and contested repertoire of meanings, while identity is treated as plural, relational and historically situated. Here, language emerges as both a symbolic resource and a political marker-capable of sustaining cultural memory while simultaneously reflecting structures of exclusion.

The analysis distinguishes between cultural identity, rooted in shared livelihood practices and linguistic forms and ethnic identity, which emerges through political categorisation and access to resources in complex societies. Select post-Liberation Bāṁlā novels depicting fishing communities-commonly identified as jele, kaivarta, mālo, jaladāsa-are examined with attention to vernacular speech, occupational registers and dialogic exchanges. The analysis employs close textual reading combined with discourse-analytic attention to dialogue, narrative framing, lexical choice and code differentiation between standard and non-standard varieties. For example, in several post-1971 novels identified by Jaladas (2008; 2009), fishermen characters are introduced through regionally marked vernacular dialogue before narrative exposition reveals their caste or economic position. Such sequencing foregrounds linguistic difference as the primary marker of social identity. In these texts, lexical choices related to tides, net-making, river currents and fish taxonomy function not merely as occupational terminology but as repositories of ecological knowledge and cultural memory.

The study demonstrates that literary representation systematically marks fishermen's speech as socially 'other' through lexical rusticity, phonological variation, and dialogic positioning, while simultaneously constructing that speech as a repository of ecological knowledge, collective memory, and moral authority. The study argues that linguistic difference is not simply an indicator of social hierarchy, but a crucial force in sustaining cultural identity and alternative worldviews. By foregrounding marginalised speech communities in Bāṁlā literature, the article demonstrates how

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London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

language mediates power, belongingm and resistance within postcolonial South Asian contexts.

Keywords: Bengali fiction, fishing communities, language and identity, sociolinguistics, cultural studies, discourse analysis, marginalised communities, post-1971 Bangladesh literature.

I. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The relationship between language and culture has long been a central concern across the humanities and social sciences. While language is often treated as a means of expressing cultural experience, it also plays a formative role in shaping social identity. Rather than functioning as a passive reflection of culture, language provides a structural basis through which individuals and communities interpret their social world.

In multilingual and socially stratified societies, language frequently becomes a key marker of belonging and exclusion. The recognition of one or more languages as 'national' languages often contributes to the formation of collective identity, even in contexts characterised by deep linguistic and cultural diversity. As a result, language operates not only as a communicative resource but also as a political instrument through which power relations are articulated and maintained.

Over the past few decades, the intersections of language, culture, and identity have received sustained attention within cultural studies and sociolinguistics. A recurring question in this scholarship concerns the relationship between cultural identity and ethnic identity. While these terms are sometimes used interchangeably, they refer to analytically distinct processes. Cultural identity is generally rooted in shared practices, values, and modes of life, whereas ethnic identity tends to emerge within complex societies through political classification and unequal access to resources.

These distinctions are particularly significant in postcolonial contexts, where language often mediates competing claims to belonging, recognition and authority. Scholars such as Roosens (1989), Dorais (1991), and Stairs (1992) have advanced divergent interpretations of language's role in the formation of identity, whether conceived as singular or plural. A continuing point of debate concerns whether a cultural or ethnic group can retain distinctiveness in the absence of an autonomous language—or at least its own variation of a shared one, such as a dialect, pidgin, or vernacular. The enduring question is whether linguistic particularity remains a necessary condition for cultural uniqueness. To what extent can a culture or ethnic group be regarded as distinctive if it lacks an autonomous language, or even a dialect, pidgin or vernacular? This essay seeks to explore some of these questions.

In South Asia, linguistic differences have played a decisive role in shaping national movements, social hierarchies, and cultural affiliations. The Bengali context is especially instructive in this regard, given the historical and political significance of Bāṁlā (or Bengali) in the formation of collective identity across Bangladesh and West Bengal, India.

This article examines how language contributes to the construction of cultural and ethnic identities by analysing marginal fishing communities as represented in post-1971 Bāṁlā fiction. By focusing on literary depictions of vernacular speech and occupational language, the study explores how linguistic practices reflect social marginalisation while also enabling forms of agency and cultural continuity.

The article contributes to existing scholarship by (i) bringing marginal occupational speech communities into dialogue with cultural-linguistic theory, (ii) distinguishing analytically between cultural and ethnic identity within literary discourse, and (iii) demonstrating how post-Liberation fiction encodes internal hierarchies within Bāṁlā itself.

II. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The relationship between language and culture has been examined extensively within linguistics

and anthropology. Early formulations emphasised the close interdependence between linguistic structure and cultural perception. They suggested that language both reflects and shapes how speakers understand their social world. These perspectives position language as more than a neutral vehicle of communication, positioning it instead as integral to cultural experience.

One influential strand of this debate is associated with the principle of linguistic relativity, often linked to the work of Edward Sapir (1921, 1923, 1983) and Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956). In its strongest form, this view holds that language determines thought by constraining what can be conceptualised. Weaker formulations suggest that language influences perception and interpretation without fully constraining cognition (Campbell 1997). Although deterministic claims have been widely criticised, the broader insight that language and culture are connected continues to guide sociolinguistic research. Contemporary sociolinguistic research has largely moved beyond deterministic formulations, emphasising instead indexicality-the idea that linguistic forms point to social meanings without rigidly determining cognition. This perspective is especially relevant to literary representation, where language indexes class, caste and locality.

An alternative perspective treats language primarily as a reflection of cultural values and practices. From this view, linguistic forms do not determine thought, but are shaped by social norms, beliefs and communicative needs of a community. Because languages are flexible and capable of innovation, speakers can adapt them to express new ideas as social conditions change. This approach highlights the responsiveness of language to cultural context rather than its cognitive dominance.

Contemporary research generally moves beyond this opposition by viewing language and culture as mutually constitutive. Language is understood as a dynamic system through which cultural knowledge is acquired, negotiated and transmitted. At the same time, cultural frameworks shape how linguistic resources are used, interpreted and valued within particular social settings.

This relational understanding is especially important when culture itself is recognised as a contested concept. Rather than a fixed or homogenous system, culture is increasingly understood as a shared yet continually reworked repertoire of meanings, practices and symbols. From this perspective, language functions as a central medium through which both cultural continuity and change are sustained.

Adopting this view enables analysis of language not only as a cognitive or communicative tool but also as a social practice embedded in relations of power. Linguistic forms and choices can reinforce social hierarchies, but they can also provide resources for resistance and alternative self-definition. This framework is particularly useful for examining marginalised communities, whose linguistic practices often reveal tensions between exclusion and agency. In the case of Bāṁlā fiction depicting fishing communities, this framework enables us to analyse how non-standard varieties are narratively framed: whether as comic, inferior, authentic, resistant or epistemically authoritative.

Clifford (1986) insists that culture is not a fixed body of meanings but a contested and evolving site, while Britzman (1991) highlights its role in shaping and reshaping identities, desires, and investments. George and Louise Spindler (1990, 1994) further advance a processual view of culture, emphasising how individuals continually reconstitute cultural assumptions in everyday socialisation. These models distinguish between the enduring self (rooted in past experience and identity), the situated self (adapting to immediate contexts), and the endangered self (emerging when adaptation conflicts with continuity). This dynamic perspective reinforces the argument that cultural systems are not inert structures but living processes of negotiation, conflict, and change.

III. CULTURE AS A CONSTANTLY REDEFINED REPERTOIRE OF MEANINGS

Taken together, contemporary approaches to language and culture converge on a shared insight: culture is best understood not as a fixed and homogenous system, but as a socially shared repertoire of meanings that is continually redefined through practice. Within this framework, culture is neither static nor self-contained. It is produced and sustained through everyday social interaction, in which language plays a crucial role.

Although culture is often associated with continuity and tradition, it is also inherently adaptive. Cultural forms respond to changing social, economic, and environmental conditions, while retaining elements of historical inheritance. Tensions frequently arise when cultural change is perceived as threatening established values or ways of life. Such tensions are particularly visible in communities whose livelihoods are closely tied to specific ecological and occupational contexts.

Cultural change does not occur uniformly within a community. Generational differences, social position, and access to resources shape how individuals interpret and respond to shifting cultural norms. As a result, culture cannot be reduced to a single, unified perspective. Although members of a culture share a collective framework-sometimes called a 'great tradition' or 'cultural identity,' they sometimes show multiple and competing interpretations that coexist within a shared symbolic framework.

This understanding allows culture to be viewed as both collective and differentiated. While members of a community share certain values, practices and symbolic references, they also express these differences in distinct ways. Such variation gives rise to the formation of subcultures that remain connected to, rather than separate from, broader cultural systems.

Conceptualising culture in this way has important implications for the study of identity. If culture is dynamic and contested, then identity cannot be treated as fixed or singular. Instead, identities emerge through ongoing engagement with cultural practices, social expectations and historical conditions. Language serves as a key medium in this process, shaping how individuals locate themselves within cultural and social hierarchies.

This perspective provides a foundation for analysing how marginalised groups negotiate cultural belonging under conditions of inequality. In such contexts, cultural practices may function simultaneously as resources for continuity and as sites for contestation, where dominant norms are questioned and alternative meanings are articulated. In the novels under discussion, such contestation is frequently dramatised through intergenerational dialogue-older fishermen invoking inherited riverine knowledge, while younger characters confront market forces, mechanisation, or urban migration.

The literary representations examined here implicitly challenge homogenising language ideologies by foregrounding the cultural legitimacy of marginal speech varieties. Viewing language as a fundamental right emphasises its role as a social and cultural marker of identity. Only by maintaining linguistic diversity can societies guarantee the continuity of both national identity and the cultural richness that gives it strength. As an example, we examine small-scale fishing communities and define their language and cultures, as reflected in Bangla fiction.

IV. IDENTITY AND MARGINALISATION: THE CASE OF FISHERMEN IN BENGAL

Identity is best understood as a relational and historically situated process. It emerges through everyday social practices and is shaped by an individual's position within wider structures of power, economy and culture. In contexts marked by inequality, identity is often formed under conditions of constraint, where access to resources, recognition and representation is unevenly distributed. Language plays a crucial role in these processes, mediating how individuals and communities articulate belonging, difference and social value.

In social analysis, a distinction is often drawn between *cultural identity* and *ethnic identity*. Cultural identity refers to shared practices, values and ways of life that develop through common experiences, particularly those linked to livelihood, environment and tradition. It is sustained through everyday activities and transmitted across generations, often through language, ritual, and collective memory. Ethnic identity, by contrast, tends to emerge within complex societies characterised by formal political structures and social stratification. It is shaped through processes of classification, categorisation and boundary-making, frequently linked to differential access to power and material resources. While these two forms of identity are analytically distinct, they are deeply interconnected in lived experience.

Fishing, as is well known, is one of humanity's oldest survival methods. It requires specific adaptations to marine ecosystems and technologies, which in turn shape distinct cultural practices. Across the globe, small-scale fishing communities have developed unique attitudes, gear and organisational forms through generations of experimentation. Despite belonging to different societies, fishers often share remarkably similar cultural traits, rooted in the shared challenges of working in marine environments. Exceptions occur where broader cultural traditions override this cross-cultural similarity-for instance, while women play vital roles in fish processing and distribution in many regions, cultural norms in places such as Zambia, parts of Indonesia, and Malaysia restrict their participation in fisheries. The values of fishing communities are thus the product of accumulated adaptive expertise.

Fishing communities in Bengal exemplify this intersection of cultural and ethnic identity. Their cultural identity is rooted in a water-centred way of life shaped by rivers, canals, estuaries, and coastal environments. Fishing is not merely an occupation but a mode of existence that structures social relations, seasonal rhythms, belief systems and linguistic practices. Knowledge of tides, fish behaviour, weather patterns and navigation is embedded in everyday speech and transmitted through specialised vocabularies and occupational registers. Language in these communities thus carries ecological knowledge, collective memory and cultural continuity.

At the same time, fishermen occupy a marginal position within broader Bengali society. Their ethnic identity is shaped not only by cultural distinctiveness but by their location within entrenched systems of social hierarchy. Historically, fishing communities have been associated with low caste status within Hindu social organisation, while similar forms of occupational marginalisation have persisted among Muslim fishing groups through class-based and caste-like stratifications. In both contexts, fishermen have often been positioned as socially inferior, economically vulnerable and politically peripheral.

Marginalisation operates here as a structural condition rather than an incidental outcome. It is reproduced through limited access to land, credit, education and institutional support, as well as through cultural representations that stigmatise fishing as an impure or undesirable occupation. These processes restrict social mobility and reinforce patterns of exclusion across generations. As a result, fishermen's identities are shaped by a constant negotiation between cultural continuity and social devaluation.

Language is central to this negotiation. On one level, fishermen's speech reflects their marginal position. Vernacular forms associated with fishing communities are often marked as rustic, coarse, or inferior within dominant linguistic hierarchies. Such evaluations mirror broader social attitudes that associate linguistic refinement with education, urbanity and higher social status. As a consequence, fishermen's language is frequently excluded from formal domains such as administration, education and literary canon formation.

On another level, however, language also provides a resource for agency and self-definition. Within fishing communities, vernacular speech functions as a marker of solidarity and belonging. Occupational terms, idiomatic expressions and

narrative styles encode shared experience and collective knowledge. These linguistic forms affirm cultural identity even in the face of social exclusion. The same language that is devalued in dominant contexts becomes a source of pride and resilience within the community.

The post-1971 context is particularly significant for understanding these dynamics. The Bangladesh Liberation War and the subsequent recognition of Bāṁlā as a central marker of national identity reshaped linguistic hierarchies across the region. While the elevation of Bāṁlā created new opportunities for linguistic inclusion, it also produced new forms of exclusion within the language itself. Standardised varieties associated with education and urban elites gained prestige, while non-standard and occupational speech forms remained marginalised. Fishing communities thus continued to occupy a peripheral position within the newly consolidated linguistic order.

Literary representations of fishermen in post-Liberation Bāṁlā fiction capture these tensions with particular clarity. Fiction provides a space in which marginal voices can be rendered audible, even as it reflects the constraints under which those voices operate. Through dialogue, narrative voice, and characterisation, literary texts register the ways in which fishermen's identities are shaped by both cultural inheritance and structural exclusion. For instance, in several post-1971 novels, fisherman characters are introduced through marked vernacular dialogue before narrative exposition identifies their caste or class position. This sequencing foregrounds linguistic difference as the primary marker of social identity. In contrast, elite characters are frequently associated with standardised Bāṁlā or bilingual competence, reinforcing stratified linguistic capital. In a number of post-Liberation Bāṁlā novels catalogued by Jaladas (2009: 100-107), fishermen are characterised through dense clusters of occupational vocabulary-terms referring to specific nets, seasonal fish species, tidal rhythms and riverine hazards that are left untranslated within the narrative. This stylistic choice creates a layered linguistic space in which readers encounter the epistemic world of the fishing community on its own terms.

In several narratives, elite or urban characters are associated with standardised Bāṁlā or bilingual competence, while fishermen speak in regionally inflected varieties marked by phonological compression and idiomatic directness. When such speech is mocked or corrected by socially dominant characters, the text dramatises linguistic hierarchy; when it is used to articulate moral clarity, ecological wisdom, or resistance to exploitation, the narrative revalues that same vernacular.

These representations frequently foreground the relationship between language and power. Characters from fishing communities are often depicted as struggling to be heard within dominant social frameworks. Their speech may be mocked, ignored or dismissed, reinforcing their marginal status. At the same time, moments of linguistic assertion-whether through defiant dialogue, storytelling, or refusal to conform to imposed norms-signal acts of resistance. Language becomes a means through which characters challenge their assigned positions and assert alternative understandings of self-worth and belonging.

Gender further complicates these processes. Women within fishing communities often experience marginalisation in intensified forms, shaped by the intersection of caste, class, occupation and patriarchy. Their linguistic practices reflect both constraint and agency. While women's voices are frequently confined to domestic or informal spaces, literary texts sometimes highlight moments where female characters articulate resilience, endurance, and cultural continuity. Through everyday speech, women transmit cultural knowledge and sustain community bonds, even as their social power remains limited. Some novels also foreground the speech of fisherwomen in domestic and marketplace contexts, where bargaining, lamentation and ritual language reveal both constraint and agency. While female characters may be excluded from formal decision-making, their speech often encodes community memory

and pragmatic survival strategies. In these instances, gendered vernacular becomes a vehicle for transmitting cultural continuity across generations.

Marginalisation, however, should not be understood solely as deprivation. It also produces distinctive forms of social consciousness. Living at the edges of dominant systems often fosters acute awareness of inequality and exploitation. In literary representations, fishermen are frequently shown as possessing a grounded understanding of social injustice derived from lived experience rather than abstract ideology. Their language reflects this awareness through irony, scepticism, and pragmatic reasoning.

By examining fishermen's identities through the combined lenses of culture, marginalisation and language, it becomes possible to move beyond reductive portrayals of these communities as passive victims. Instead, they emerge as active participants in the ongoing negotiation of meaning and belonging. Their identities are shaped by constraint, but not determined by it. Cultural practices, linguistic resources, and collective memory provide tools through which fishermen navigate social hierarchies and assert continuity amid change.

This integrated approach also underscores the importance of literary texts as sites of sociolinguistic insight. Literature does not merely reflect social reality; it participates in shaping how marginalised groups are imagined and understood. By foregrounding fishermen's speech and lived experience, post-Liberation Bāṁlā fiction offers a counterpoint to dominant narratives that exclude or homogenise subaltern voices.

In this sense, identity and marginalisation are not separate analytical categories, but mutually constitutive processes. For fishermen in Bengal, identity is forged through marginality, while marginality is experienced and contested through language. Such representations reveal that marginality in these texts is not only socio-economic but also semiotic: fishermen are positioned at the periphery of both material and linguistic power, yet their speech remains central to the narrative world's moral and ecological imagination.

In fact, in one representative post-1971 novel, a fisherman character refuses to abandon traditional fishing grounds despite mechanised competition, declaring in vernacular speech that "the river knows our fathers' names." The metaphor collapses ecology, ancestry, and language into a single symbolic field. The river is not merely a resource but a cultural archive, and the use of unstandardised Bāṁlā reinforces that this worldview stands outside elite nationalist discourse. Such moments illustrate how vernacular language becomes a medium of existential rationality rather than economic calculation.

Local languages, spiritual and cultural wisdom, and ecological knowledge are central to sustaining both the fisheries and community identity. These assets also face competition from other sectors-agriculture, tourism or aquaculture-further straining fishing livelihoods. In India and Bangladesh, the cultural debate around development reflects these tensions. Some groups demand modernisation and growth while insisting on preserving local language and identity; others call for reduced resource exploitation in response to environmental crises, even at the cost of traditional livelihoods. Their identity is thus shaped by both cultural distinctiveness rooted in livelihood and ethnic positioning influenced by larger power structures. The post-1971 novels that depict fisherfolk capture this very tension: the fishermen as custodians of cultural continuity through their practices and speech, while also being ethnic minorities who are economically and politically marginalised in a society undergoing rapid redefinition of language and nationhood.

V. CONTEXTUAL CONDITIONS OF MARGINALISATION AND THE FISHERMEN

The marginalisation of fishing communities in Bengal is rooted in a combination of historical, economic and social factors that have shaped

their position within both rural and urban settings. While the cultural distinctiveness of fishermen has already been outlined, it is necessary here to identify the material and institutional conditions that structure their everyday lives and inform their representation in literature.

Marginalisation may be defined as is the gradual exclusion of individuals or groups from a society's periphery through the devaluation of their needs and participation. It operates at multiple levels-entire societies, classes, communities, families, or individuals-and changes over time with shifts in social position and power. Across both West Bengal and Bangladesh, fishing has historically been treated as a low-status occupation. Within Hindu social organisation, fishing communities were commonly positioned at the lower end of caste hierarchies, with occupational identity inherited across generations. Similar patterns of marginalisation developed among Muslim fishing groups through class-based and caste-like stratifications, where occupational status often determined social standing and access to communal institutions. These hierarchies limited social mobility and reinforced the association between fishing, poverty and social inferiority. In this cultural space, caste-based hierarchies have historically underpinned exclusionary practices.

Economic vulnerability further intensifies this marginal position. Small-scale fishing communities typically depend on seasonal and environmentally contingent livelihoods. Access to productive resources-such as fishing grounds, boats, nets, and credit-is often mediated by landlords, traders or moneylenders, creating relations of dependency that restrict autonomy. Debt cycles, exploitative brokerage systems, and unstable incomes are recurring features of fishermen's lives, and these conditions frequently surface in literary narratives.

Educational exclusion represents another persistent dimension of marginalisation. Limited access to formal education has historically constrained fishermen's opportunities for occupational diversification and political participation. Linguistic practices associated with fishing communities have consequently remained confined to informal domains, reinforcing their exclusion from institutional spaces where standardised language varieties dominate. This linguistic marginality both reflects and reproduces broader social inequalities.

Religious and communal dynamics further complicate these patterns. In Bengal, fishing communities exist within both Hindu and Muslim social frameworks, each marked by internal hierarchies and exclusionary practices. In Muslim contexts, distinctions between elite and occupational groups have historically shaped access to religious authority and social recognition. Such divisions underscore that marginalisation operates not only between communities but also within them. Parallel to the four-fold caste divisions among Hindus, stratifications also existed among Bengali Muslims-Āshrāf (noble/foreign), Ātrāf (artisanal), and Ājlāf/Ārzāl (lowest)-where language and occupational identity frequently signalled social rank (Dey, 2012). Urban elites associated prestige with literacy in Urdu, Persian, and Arabic, whereas the majority of rural Muslim populations used Bāṁlā (Haq, 1968). Occupational groups such as weavers and fishermen (e.g., Nīkāri) were often stigmatised and excluded from religious and communal institutions (Levy, 1931; Chowdhury, 2009).

The post-1971 period introduced significant political and linguistic transformations, particularly with the consolidation of Bāṁlā as a marker of national identity. While this shift elevated the status of the language as a whole, it did not eliminate internal hierarchies within Bāṁlā-speaking society. Standardised and educated forms of the language gained institutional prestige, while occupational and vernacular varieties associated with fishing communities remained marginal. As a result, linguistic inclusion at the national level coexisted with continued exclusion at the social level.

These historical and material conditions form the backdrop against which literary representations of fishermen must be read. The novels examined in this study do not simply portray individual

hardship, but engage with the structural forces that shape fishermen's lives. Poverty, debt, social stigma and restricted mobility appear not as isolated misfortunes, but as systemic features of a marginalised existence.

By outlining these conditions, this section provides a contextual framework for the literary analysis that follows. The focus now shifts from social structure to textual representation, examining how Bāṁlā fiction registers, critiques, and reimagines the marginalisation of fishing communities through language, dialogue, and narrative form.

Within the region under consideration, fishing communities in Bangladesh and West Bengal exemplify involuntary marginalisation. Their occupational identity is hereditary and low-status, their livelihoods precarious, and their access to resources mediated by entrenched hierarchies and market exclusions. Although they remain outside capitalist productive and reproductive activity, their work is indispensable to the social economy, creating a paradox in which essential services coexist with social devaluation.

Given that the fishermen's stories-and especially their language practices-are underrepresented in scholarship, this study examines how Bāṁlā novels from both Bangladesh and West Bengal in India render the fishermen's marginalisation and identity. It treats cultural and ethnic identity as analytically distinct but interlinked, showing how literary language encodes both the symbolic devaluation of the group and its strategies of resilience. There existed sharp cases of caste discrimination and exclusion among the Muslims in most of the villages in both countries. The socially, culturally and economically marginalised people have always had a very insignificant part in the local power structure and actually had very trivial or almost no role to play in transforming the political and economic situation of their own communities in the country.

This study concentrates on the cultural and linguistic representations of fishermen, known as 'jele' (জেলে), 'dhīvara' (ধীবর), 'mālo' (মালো), 'kaivarta' (কৈবর্ত), 'jalaputra' (জলপুত্র), or 'jaladāsa' (জলদাস)-a marginalised segment of the Bāṁlā speech community-through novels written in the post-1971 period. The focus on the post-Liberation era is particularly significant. These hierarchies form the implicit backdrop against which post-1971 Bāṁlā fiction constructs fishermen's speech. The literary encoding of dialect, lexical choice, and narrative positioning cannot be separated from these entrenched material and symbolic structures. Socio-historical hierarchies are not merely background conditions; they are embedded in the novels' linguistic texture. Debt cycles, brokerage exploitation, and caste-based exclusion frequently surface in dialogues between fishermen and moneylenders, where asymmetries of power are mirrored in asymmetries of speech. The contrast between deferential address forms used by fishermen and authoritative registers adopted by landlords or traders encodes structural inequality at the level of discourse.

VI. THE LITERARY DEPICTIONS AND SOME OBSERVABLE FEATURES

Post-Liberation Bāṁlā fiction offers a particularly rich terrain for examining how language mediates the representation of marginalised fishing communities. Rather than treating fishermen merely as thematic subjects, the novels examined in this study foreground linguistic practice as a central element of social experience. Through dialogue, narrative voice and occupational registers, these texts render marginalisation not only visible but audible.

One prominent feature across these novels is the use of vernacular speech to mark social positioning. Characters from fishing communities frequently speak in non-standard varieties of Bāṁlā that differ from the language of educated or elite figures within the narrative. These linguistic contrasts are rarely neutral. They often function to signal asymmetries of power, education and authority, reinforcing the social distance between fishermen and dominant groups. At the same time, the persistence of vernacular speech affirms cultural continuity and collective belonging within the fishing community.

Occupational registers play a crucial role in this process. Fishing-related terminology, metaphors drawn from riverine life, and references to tides, nets, and seasonal rhythms appear consistently in dialogue and narration. Such language embeds ecological knowledge and lived experience within the text, anchoring identity in livelihood rather than abstract classification. These registers also distinguish fishermen's speech from that of administrators, landlords or traders, whose language reflects institutional authority and economic control.

Dialogic exchanges frequently expose the unequal distribution of voice within the novels' social worlds. Fishermen are often placed in situations where their speech is disregarded, interrupted, or treated as lacking legitimacy. Commands, threats, and dismissive responses from dominant characters underscore how linguistic interaction mirrors broader relations of power. Silence, too, becomes meaningful. Moments where fishermen choose not to speak, or are denied the opportunity to do so, signal the limits imposed on their agency within hierarchical structures.

Yet these texts do not depict fishermen's language solely as a marker of subordination. Moments of linguistic assertion recur across the narratives. Characters challenge authority through refusal, irony, or direct confrontation, using language to contest imposed norms. Such moments are often brief and fragile, but they carry symbolic weight. Speech becomes a site where marginalised subjects assert dignity, even when material conditions remain unchanged.

Narrative voice further shapes how fishermen's language is received. In several texts, the narrator adopts a position that aligns closely with the perspectives of fishing communities, allowing vernacular speech to appear without corrective framing or ridicule. This narrative strategy resists dominant linguistic hierarchies by presenting fishermen's language as internally coherent and contextually appropriate, rather than deficient. In other cases, shifts between narrative registers highlight tensions between insider and outsider perspectives, reinforcing the instability of representation itself.

Gendered speech patterns add another layer of complexity. Women's voices often emerge in domestic or communal settings, where language serves as a medium for transmitting cultural memory, managing survival, and negotiating everyday hardship. Although women's speech may lack overt authority within the narrative, it frequently carries emotional and ethical weight, sustaining social bonds and articulating resilience in the face of loss and precarity.

Across these novels, linguistic difference functions as a narrative device that links identity to marginalisation without reducing characters to passive victims. Language encodes social exclusion, but it also preserves forms of knowledge and solidarity that resist erasure. By closely attending to how fishermen speak and how their speech is framed within the text, these literary works reveal the complex interplay among language, power, and lived experience in postcolonial Bengal.

One of the earliest literary representations of fishermen's resistance to social domination appears in *Kaivarta Khaṇḍa* (1994) by Mahasweta Devi. Set against the historical backdrop of the Kaivarta revolt, the novel depicts the violent suppression of a marginalised fishing community by entrenched political authority. Rather than recounting history for its own sake, the text foregrounds language as a site of confrontation between power and subaltern assertion. The conflict between King Bhīma, a leader from the Kaivarta community, and the ruling elite is articulated through dialogic exchanges that expose the logic of domination. Royal speech is marked by threats, erasure, and dehumanisation, while Bhīma's responses draw on collective suffering and moral endurance. His refusal to submit linguistically, even in the face of annihilation, functions as an act of symbolic resistance. Through this contrast, the novel presents speech not merely as reaction but as an assertion of communal identity under siege.

A similar tension between conformity and resistance emerges in *Gahin Gāṅ* (1980) by Sadhan Chattopadhyay, which explores the everyday struggles of fishermen within a

contemporary social setting. The novel portrays how economic precarity and social superstition regulate community behaviour, particularly through ritual obligations that impose financial strain on already marginal households.

This tension is crystallised in the protagonist Śrīpada's refusal to perform an expensive funerary ritual following his father's death. While elder figures advocate compliance in the name of tradition and survival, Śrīpada's speech challenges the authority of such norms by foregrounding material reality and indebtedness. His rejection of ritual obligation is articulated not as rebellion in abstract terms, but as a pragmatic response to structural exploitation. Language here becomes a means of questioning inherited authority and exposing the economic costs of unquestioned conformity.

Together, these texts demonstrate how fishermen's speech is positioned at the intersection of marginality and agency. Whether confronting overt political violence or entrenched social custom, characters deploy language to negotiate dignity, responsibility, and survival. Literary dialogue thus renders visible how linguistic practice mediates identity formation under conditions of social constraint.

A comparable exploration of linguistic negotiation under conditions of marginalisation appears in *Padmāra Pālīdvīpa* by Abu Ishaq, which centres on conflicts over the ownership of newly emerged riverine land (*cara*). In the novel, control over the *cara* is secured not through legal entitlement but through coercion, revealing how informal power structures regulate access to resources in fishermen's lives.

Dialogic exchanges between fishermen and local authorities foreground this imbalance. When Erfan Matubbar attempts to claim the land through cultivation, his speech is marked by deference and negotiation, while the language of officials is coercive and extractive. Erfan's repeated concessions-offered through appeals, payments, and indirect requests-underscore how linguistic submission becomes a survival strategy within asymmetric power relations. At the same time, the novel registers moments where speech shifts from accommodation to mobilisation, as Erfan later addresses fellow villagers in a language of collective responsibility and resistance. Through these contrasts, the text demonstrates how fishermen's language oscillates between compliance and assertion in response to structural vulnerability.

Questions of livelihood, aspiration, and identity are further explored in *Gaṅgā Ekṭi Nadīra Nāma* (2001) by Shyamal Gangopadhyay. The novel juxtaposes urban affluence with rural precarity, focusing on Hājrā Hāldār, a factory worker who remains emotionally and culturally bound to fishing. His speech repeatedly returns to the river as a site of possibility, even when economic logic discourages such attachment.

Hājrā's expressed desire to return to fishing-articulated in the context of arranging his daughters' marriages-can be read as an instance where cultural identity competes with material constraint. While his language appears to accommodate prevailing social norms, including the financial pressures surrounding marriage, it simultaneously reveals a deep affective attachment to fishing as a way of life. The novel thus presents language as a medium through which conflicting values-economic survival and cultural belonging-are negotiated rather than resolved.

Gendered dimensions of linguistic agency are most explicitly foregrounded in *Jalaputra* (2008) by Harishankar Jaladas. The narrative centres on women who confront loss, economic hardship, and social vulnerability in the absence of male breadwinners. Female speech in the novel departs from silence or resignation, articulating endurance and resolve through everyday language.

Utterances by characters such as Bhuvaneśvarī and other women in the fishing community emphasise survival, dignity, and the necessity of education. Their speech resists the stigma attached to women's labour and reframes fishing-related work as legitimate and honourable. Rather than overt rebellion, these

linguistic acts constitute pragmatic assertions of agency within restrictive social conditions. Language here becomes a means of sustaining cultural continuity while negotiating shifting gender roles.

Taken together, these novels demonstrate that fishermen's language in Bāṁlā fiction is neither uniformly oppositional nor wholly submissive. Instead, it reflects a spectrum of strategies shaped by context: negotiation, concession, persuasion, and occasional confrontation. Literary dialogue captures how marginalised speakers navigate power not only through action, but through carefully calibrated speech.

VII. CONCLUDING REMARKS: LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND MARGINAL IDENTITY

This study has examined how post-1971 Bāṁlā fiction represents fishing communities at the intersection of language, culture and marginal identity. Rather than reiterating general theoretical claims about linguistic relativity or cultural construction, the analysis has focused on how specific literary texts encode marginality through vernacular speech, occupational registers and dialogic positioning.

Drawing on selected novels from both Bangladesh and West Bengal, particularly those catalogued in studies by Jaladas (2008; 2009)-the article has shown that fishermen characters are frequently introduced through marked non-standard Bāṁlā before their socio-economic status is narratively clarified. This structural sequencing foregrounds language as the primary index of marginal identity.

The discussion began by conceptualising language as a constitutive social practice embedded in relations of power. Drawing on cultural studies and sociolinguistics, the paper treated culture as a dynamic and contested repertoire of meanings, and identity as plural, relational and historically situated. This theoretical positioning allowed for a distinction between cultural identity, grounded in shared livelihood practices and linguistic forms and ethnic identity, shaped through political categorisation and unequal access to resources. Rather than treating these dimensions as mutually exclusive, the analysis demonstrated their interdependence in lived experience.

The case of fishing communities in Bengal provided a concrete context for examining these processes. As communities whose identities are deeply tied to water-based livelihoods, fishermen embody forms of cultural continuity sustained through language, occupational knowledge and collective memory. At the same time, their social positioning within caste-and class-based hierarchies (Deshpande 2010) has subjected them to persistent marginalisation. This dual condition-cultural rootedness alongside structural exclusion has shaped not only their material lives but also the ways in which they are represented and heard.

The literary analysis showed that Bāṁlā fiction engages with these realities through careful attention to language. Vernacular speech, occupational registers, and dialogic interaction function as key narrative devices through which marginality is articulated. Fishermen's language is frequently marked as socially inferior within the fictional world, mirroring dominant linguistic hierarchies in broader society. Yet the same linguistic forms also operate as resources of solidarity, resilience, and self-definition within the community. Literary texts thus register both the constraints imposed on marginalised speakers and the possibilities for agency that language affords.

This work, from a linguistics point of view, has tried to simplify the idea of language-culture interplay a little more and put it in this way that one major concern of discourse analysis of fishermen's language is the relationship among the language and the speakers and the hearers by and for whom it is produced-a concern with how speakers take and renounce the role of speakers, how culture and social roles affect language options in terms of who speaks when and what they can talk about, and how the actual form of utterance is conditioned by the social relationships between the participants.

The work has also tried to analyse the oral representations by which they projected how they carried their traditional reservoir of marginalised *patois* into the environs of their profession. It has investigated the language of their oral representations, where, in the same candid and boisterous flair that characterised their earlier folk culture, they kept on spinning their dialogues that reflected their early life, their daily experiences with a variety of clients, squabbles with their *dāndandāras, bahaddāras* and identical professional threats and hazards.

Importantly, the novels examined do not present language as a simple instrument of resistance. Acts of linguistic assertion are often fragile, partial, and context-bound. Speech may challenge authority in one moment and be silenced in the next. This ambivalence reflects the lived complexity of marginalisation, where dignity and dispossession coexist. By foregrounding such tensions, literature avoids romanticising subaltern speech while still acknowledging its social significance.

Gendered dimensions of linguistic practice further complicate this picture. Women's voices, though frequently confined to informal or domestic spaces, play a crucial role in sustaining cultural continuity and articulating survival strategies. Their speech underscores the fact that marginal identity is shaped by intersecting structures of occupation, caste, class, and gender. Attention to these voices reinforces the argument that identity emerges through everyday linguistic practice rather than through fixed social categories alone.

Taken together, the findings of this study suggest that linguistic differences should not be understood solely as an index of social hierarchy. While language undoubtedly reflects unequal power relations, it also sustains alternative ways of seeing and inhabiting the world. In the context of fishing communities, vernacular speech preserves ecological knowledge, collective memory and cultural values that remain largely invisible within dominant discourses.

The study contributes to existing scholarship in three ways. First, it analytically distinguishes between cultural and ethnic identity within literary discourse. Second, it demonstrates that linguistic marginality in these novels is not incidental but structurally embedded in narrative technique. Third, it shows that vernacular speech functions not merely as a marker of deprivation but as a repository of ecological knowledge, moral authority, and community resilience.

By analysing literary representations of fishermen's language, this paper contributes to ongoing debates in cultural studies and sociolinguistics concerning voice, marginality, and representation. Literature emerges here not simply as a mirror of social conditions, but as a site where the tensions between exclusion and belonging are negotiated and made legible. In foregrounding marginalised speech communities within Bāṁlā fiction, the study highlights the role of language in mediating power, identity, and cultural persistence in postcolonial South Asian contexts. However, the study has been limited to a select group of post-1971 novels and has not undertaken a quantitative or diachronic survey of all literary representations of fishing communities. Further research might examine comparative regional dialect representation, reader reception of vernacular speech or intersections with contemporary ecological discourse.

By foregrounding the speech of marginal fishing communities, post-Liberation Bāṁlā fiction reveals that linguistic difference is not merely a symptom of hierarchy but a dynamic force in the ongoing negotiation of cultural survival and political belonging. In doing so, these novels invite us to reconsider the place of subaltern vernaculars within the broader narrative of Bengali literary modernity.

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The New Novalis' Bible, Watts of Power and Reverend Karl: A Criticism on Marx's Philosophy of History

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ABSTRACT

This paper is aimed to discuss Karl Marx's works, its flaws and merits, in order to offer a historical comprehension of its content and determinant conditions. Departing from a philosophical and cultural tradition still too much in debt to the classical tradition, it is argued that Marx had never thoroughly accomplished the allegedly inversion of Hegel's Idealism in his own works. Trying to articulate philosophy of history to the critical study of classical Political Economy, under the dialectical historical materialism theory, Marx lost the final cohesive aspect of his reflections while ideologically promoting ethical-moral values which he had understood to be urgent the diffusion through the industrial Europe at his time. The cultural background Marx was inserted in was still too much charged by religious values, which used to function as guidance principles to human lives and actions towards the future. Here the problem is not strictly about the secularization process of historical teleology or the meaning of history, but about how alienation in both Marx and Hegel may be fundamental to understand and justify the unfolding of human world as the realization of history, either under Reason or historical materialism.

Keywords: marxism; history; alienation; value; culture.

Classification: LCC Code: B3317

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573304
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 26 | Issue 1 | Compilation 1.0

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This paper is aimed to discuss Karl Marx's works, its flaws and merits, in order to offer a historical comprehension of its content and determinant conditions. Departing from a philosophical and cultural tradition still too much in debt to the classical tradition, it is argued that Marx had never thoroughly accomplished the allegedly inversion of Hegel's Idealism in his own works. Trying to articulate philosophy of history to the critical study of classical Political Economy, under the dialectical historical materialism theory, Marx lost the final cohesive aspect of his reflections while ideologically promoting ethical-moral values which he had understood to be urgent the diffusion through the industrial Europe at his time. The cultural background Marx was inserted in was still too much charged by religious values, which used to function as guidance principles to human lives and actions towards the future. Here the problem is not strictly about the secularization process of historical teleology or the meaning of history, but about how alienation in both Marx and Hegel may be fundamental to understand and justify the unfolding of human world as the realization of history, either under Reason or historical materialism. The strict Political Economy content of his works shall also be evaluated so we can state the most important part of his overall work relates to the political humanitarian perspective belonging to the superstructure dimension of human affairs, despite not losing its Political Economy intellectual value.

Keywords: marxism; history; alienation; value; culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

Criticism and opening to creativity. The cognitive instinct and respect to cultural norms that allow us to bookishly, contemplatively or rationally move from a concept or a fact to multiple theories, despite of disagreements and incongruences amidst them, have been long unfolded in the European intellectual stage. From the edges and dawn of reason, human nature has struggled to become itself, something else and beyond. Theodore Adorno credited perverse logics of optimizing processes to modern human reason's complex nature. Those logics are not, by any means, irrational ones.[1] Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud also touched the boundaries of human reason and irrationality.[2] Reason,

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[1] ADORNO, T.; HORKHEIMER, M. *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

[2] FOUCAULT, Michel. *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*. In FOUCAULT, Michel. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980, p. 139-164; FOUCAULT, Michel. *Nietzsche, Freud, Marx*. Buenos Aires: Editorial La Página; Editorial Anagrama, 2010; NIETZSCHE, Friedrich. *The Use and Abuse of History*. In NIETZSCHE, Friedrich. *Thoughts Out of Season: Part II*. London; New York: George Allen & Unwin Ltd.; The Macmillan Company, 1909, p. 1-100.; FREUD, Sigmund. *The Ego and the Id*. In FREUD, Sigmund. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: The Ego and the Id and Other Works*. v. XIX. London: The Hogarth Press; The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1923-1925, p. 1-66; See SCHACHT, Richard. Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and the Future of Self-Alienation. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, v. 28, n. 2, p. 125-135, Apr. 1991. https://doi.org/10.1108/eb013142.

irrationality, formal logics or phenomenon intrinsic logics are not identical despite their possibilities of being related. Reason is a conscience's faculty. Irrationality may be a dysfunction of psychic structures or even part of mind's constitution depending on how we may face its psychanalytical triadic nature, with its historical or anthropological causes. Logics are relations and/or rules that structure events, understanding and somehow even things own nature, hanging a little unstable on the boundaries between logics, ontology and metaphysics.

The discourse cut across its on constituent enunciations and subjects, while not conscious phenomena and outcomes move along through consciousness and choices-actions consequences under structural updating processes. Those processes can change culture or subjects, but there is always an intentional surplus that may produce a little bit more or a little bit less of result-based consequences according to predetermined choices and actions. This works over actions and speech actions, words and movements, reintroducing us to the boundaries between logics, language, and phenomena, as well as to the forms of their understanding. This is mentioned here because of the relations one may suppose be real and occur related to accurate interfaces of events and understanding. Logics overlaying ontology. Metaphysics overlaid by philosophy of history. This is important to be considered when evaluating the dialectics between history-the narrative and/or form of knowledge-and History-the phenomenon even if identified with its representations.[3]

Under a few set of perspectives, Friedrich Hegel's philosophical enterprise meant to make move forward the dense philosophy developed by Immanuel Kant. After had studied the edges and potentialities of human reason, describing its structure and nature, as well as the ways time and space relate to it, and the free will relate to judgement, choices, consequences, and universal principles of causes, Kant also reflected about how History as a transcendental phenomenon that moves beyond singular individuals should behave-occur along time. A reasonable subject should be able to improve its own life and world, so the world moving in time and space should necessarily be better afterwards. The everlasting collisions of plural individual's free will by means of intentional surplus of their choices and actions is little by little refined as more cohesive and possible events-phenomena. In other words, the ancient political animal should be able to be best tomorrow since we think, speak, communicate, and learn. Humankind inside time-space configured as History should necessarily develop itself and people. Time after time, events in the world should be better. Kant named those processes regarding History progress, predicating time qualitatively: as it goes, it becomes best.

There were few alternatives so Hegel could properly improve Kant's philosophy. It is not the case of arguing on how and if Hegel actually read Kant's works to actually produce his owns, proving actual reception processes. The supposition is rather based on major cultural phenomena shared in an age as we will further discuss. As a cultural readable background of scientific and philosophical production of knowledge, there were left to Hegel only a few options to unfold rational mechanisms of human life. Philosophically criticized by Kant, reason became Reason under the work of the Spirit and the State in Hegel's philosophy. It seemed necessary something reasonable should guide human action derived from free will and so many of its dissonant outcomes. The age was still too much far from being allowed and allowing disbelief in God and its effects. So until then, History and human affairs were still believed to be guided and organized by God or by a transcendental force akin to God. Believed real, God should be necessarily related to human reality effectuation in time and space. Being everywhere, pure potency and able of knowing everything, God's magnitude has to necessarily be

[3] KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *Sediments of Time: On possible histories*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing history, Spacing concepts*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

updated in the world in human coefficients so human reality may not be destroyed. Power implies being able to happen and make happen; pure potency implies to happen anything anywhere when it may be the case.[4]

However, the ways God acts sometimes are contradictory or seems to be, leading humankind to be still living under so many different conditions all over the world. Colonies, indigenous people, Europe civilization, war and progress seemed not so credible under God's power and benevolence. Should the original fall justify human sins of not creating a better world? Was this reasonable? Religious creation of humankind under the image and resemblance holy principle leads to subsequent human power and potency. A human-made Paradise seemed feasible and possible under reasonable historical processes. World's modern secularization never implied wholly disbelief in God or religion

Hans Blumenberg interestingly argued about the secularization processes of modern world towards contemporaneity. Some historians, philosophers, and social scientists worked on this phenomenon as well. Reinhart Koselleck's and Fernando Catroga's works may best represent the state of the art on studies about modern secularization. Their works describe and analyze history, discourses and institutions so we can properly understand those transformations.[5] However, Blumenberg's works have the especial feature of focusing on cultural phenomena, their forms, and contents, their fundament and movement through History. The logical-tropical relations of metaphors and their histories make those processes possible to be understood as Blumenberg's proposed. His sincere admiration of Ernst Robert Curtius' works can be apprehended from his studies such as *Paradigms for a Metaphorology* and *The Readability of the World*.[6]

In *The Readability of the World*, Hans Blumenberg offer us a history of metaphors by which world and reality could be read, from ancient times until the discovering of human genetic code in the 20th century. In ancient times stars and bowels used to offer the possibility to foresee the future, presenting relations between things, phenomena and their signs, being understandable to human mind. In modern age stars started to become understandable as deploying new sort of forces over the human world, both above and below nature's fundamental intrinsic structures as physical world, a sort of new modern science's development derived from mystical-religious versions of former sublunary and supralunary worlds. Contemporaneously, reading the world and human beings has begun to demand perception of micro-structures in a broader sense, from physics to discourses and politics, stars left aside whether not under meteorological terms.[7]

[4] KANT, Immanuel. *Anthropology, History, and Education*. New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007; KANT, Immanuel. *Critique of Practical Reason*. New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; KANT, Immanuel. *Critique of Pure Reason*. New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; KANT, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. New York; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; HEGEL, Georg. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1977; HEGEL, Georg. *Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Indianapolis; New York: The Liberal Arts Press; The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1953.

[5] BLUMENBERG, Hans. *La legitimación de la Edad Moderna*. Valencia: Pre-Textos, 2008; BLUMENBERG, Hans. *Paradigms for a Metaphorology*. Ithaca; New York: Cornell University Press, 2010; BLUMENBERG, Hans. *The Readability of the World*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2022; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *Sediments of Time: On possible histories*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing history, Spacing concepts*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002; CATROGA, Fernando. *Entre Deuses e Césares: Secularização, Laicidade e Religião Civil: uma perspectiva histórica*. Coimbra: Almedina, 2010.

[6] BLUMENBERG, Hans. *The Readability of the World*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2022, p. 5-7; CURTIUS, Ernst. *European literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Trans. by Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013.

[7] BOTTÉRO, Jean. *Mesopotamia: writing, reasoning, and the Gods*. London; Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992; HALLYN, Fernand. *The Poetic Structure of the World: Copernicus and Kepler*. Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 1997.

But in the Germanic principalities from late 18th century creativity and tradition were still important to guide the subjective drive stunned by wider phenomena under current development. New ways of understanding human reality started to emerge in order to allow best understandings of immediate social-historical world, which was undergoing a complexifying process from early 19th century on. It felt necessary to make human world as steady as possible while reorienting it. American colonies' independence and French Revolution covered up for considerable time length the loud noise resounded by the liberal revolutions from the age as well as the one on process by means of working Indian cotton and weaving machines. "Proclamations of downfall do wonders, however, for the preservation of historically legitimated institutions. Scarcely a year after the republicanization of Rome, German Romanticism set out to rediscover the Middle Ages."[8] The loss of meaningful orientation to worldly human experience did not seemed so much radical at the beginning as it would unfold itself almost one century later after Hegel's and Napoleon's deaths.

Amidst other understandings and despite possible contradictions, the Enlightenment's and the Romantic's cultures in the Germanic principalities from late 18th and early 19th centuries were still configured by intentions of retrieving or making evolve totalizing apprehensions of reality and consequent human experience. Aesthetics, ethics, history, and other representational -discursive phenomena claimed more complex and relational totalizing interfaces related to human world than the 18th century encyclopedic endeavor. Reading the world in books and the Encyclopedia seemed no longer enough to let one know about the whole world phenomena. Despite of former recovering of Oriental and Ancient forms of culture, Europe persisted majorly catholic, especially because kingdoms were related to Church. That way, God persisted as the main solution to human problems and the fundament to all the books around the world already published or yet to come. The powerful background of those books provided by God as The Bible – word derived from the Greek *biblos*, plural form for books – had still too much strength to affect life and culture, even though radical anthropological differences were prompting all over the world. The Bible represented all that must be in a book as all the possible books inside God's creation and the human world. The other books may not be enough to deal with life's problems. If not specifically as singular forms and contents, at least as human content to be unfolded by human life in a human world. From The Bible all the other histories should unfold. Under this intentional organizing vector, Novalis, Schlegel, Goethe, and Herder amongst others, challenged the human life and world's reading hegemony from traditional religious cultural backgrounds. However, Novalis is the main character to strictly and effectively articulate an idea of unique and absolute book, both by its referential and representational natures, that would be able to happen along human's lives unfolding phenomena.[9]

> It would then be no arbitrary linguistic gesture to use the word "Bible" for "the idea of an infinite book." Such a book could not be a means to some end, given its attribute of infinity. It would a "personified idea." In order to illustrate the unity of this book, Schlegel does not refer to the unifying principle of the biblical books but to the classical poems of the ancients. They form an inseparable organic whole-that is, "seen properly, One Poem, the only one in which poetry itself appears complete." In the highest form of literature, which we must once again envisage, "all books will be One Book" in like fashion.[10]

As mentioned above, despite all the Germanic thinkers who had thought about a book or narrative that would reorganize human experience in History towards the future or final redemption, Novalis was the one that best articulated the Encyclopedia's enterprise in relation to biblical-historical teleology. He suggested the idea of a book pointing where to go.

[8] BLUMENBERG, Hans. *The Readability of the World*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2022, p. 222.

[9] BLUMENBERG, Hans. *The Readability of the World*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2022, p. 193-221.

[10] BLUMENBERG, Hans. *The Readability of the World*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2022, p. 224.

A book as a path to read the modern world. Reading the book would suffice to read the world. Reading the book would be acting the world. This reading would enable possibilities of bringing back cohesiveness to human world after it had gotten so scattered by modern figuring out of old no more hidden novelties of existing peoples.

> Then, for a moment that seems to combine sober insight with defiant genius, Novalis grasps the delusional aspect of the concept of the absolute book only to generalize precisely that as the new human standard: "The desire to write a Bible-is an inclination to madness that every capable person must have in order to be complete." In programmatic terms, we have here the prelude to the Romanticism to come: positing, in place of the ideal of the personality, the anonymous accumulation of creative powers that produced myths and fairy-tales, epics and songs in the same way that they make history – and that in Marx will even produce the technical inventions that enter "the open book of man's essential powers." All this had first been demonstrated in Friedrich August Wolf's dissolution of Homer into multiple blind bards. Authorship of the "absolute book" becomes the site for recasting the master plan of early Romanticism. The subject who will write the new Bible, the infinite novel, is just as undetermined as the subject who brings the world into being in "magical idealism." Hence the interchangeability of world and book. After all, it is this same subject who reads the absolute book and completes it through his reading, this creative transformation of Enlightenment "critique."[11]

Making use of a metaphor based on the religious cultural content from the historical moment under concern, we may assume the sermon delivered by Hegel got secularized by Marx's catechism, which historically convert the unreachable in life into the pursue of a non-place. The kingdom of post-capitalist freedom mirrored original The Garden, so the end of labour could be correlated with wonders before the fall and original sin. Human disruptive dissociation from nature was an effect derived from alienation processes not yet finished and resulted from human knowledge, analogously to the banishing from The Garden. In order to restore this ideal condition, Communism should be reached. When not completed, the alienation process does not allow the human nature and being to find and be found by itself in a self-recognizing phenomenon which also creates the mind-soul's opening to beyond, otherness, and simultaneous integration to the whole as part of it. To know and to alter nature is part of evolutionarily human condition. Humans need to shelter, to eat, to reproduce the species.

> In other words, we are all 'fallen', torn away from the natural state-that is our condition as self-conscious beings. However, for Hegel, that is not the end of the matter.
>
> The story seems to imply that the first instinctive and natural state of life is the ideal. It appears to suggest the romantic view that our loss of 'innocence and harmony with nature', our exclusion from the garden, is a misfortune and hence also that the human condition of self-consciousness is a misfortune. But Hegel questions that interpretation. The human condition is one of division from nature and of self-division-a state of contradiction, a restless state, which creates its own drive to overcome it. As a result of our breach from nature, we are condemned to labour. But 'if it [labour] is the result of disunion it is also the victory over it'. For through working on the world we also come to objectify ourselves, to transform ourselves, to humanise our world and make ourselves at home in it.[12]

The "science" of historical materialism has been confronted with the persistent problem of being originated from the established relations between Political Economy and philosophy of history, specifically built based on the natural sciences

[11] BLUMENBERG, Hans. *The Readability of the World*. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2022, p. 225-226.

[12] SAYERS, Sean. Creative Activity and Alienation in Hegel and Marx. *Historical Materialism*, Leiden, v. 11, n. 1, p. 107-128, 2003, p. 112-113.

standards, principles, and methods from the age. Identifying dialectical processes to ontological ones as necessary occurrences in reality lead Marx's propositions derived from Hegel's philosophy to unsolvable contradictions, which follow from the doubtful denial of traditional philosophy by minimizing its functional importance until the simultaneous adoption of philosophy as theory and method. Despite the logical and procedural similarities between Saint Thomas Aquinas's reasoning method to philosophize and the Hegel-Marx's set of dialectics, there are differences between them that only further research will hereafter make clearest. However, the method of questioning by means of stating hypothetical ideas and advanced questions that may be contradictions, so one can reach conclusion and truth have been persistent from Aquinas to Marxist heritage of reasoning. The problem Aquinas was aware and apart from, that both Hegel and Marx worked differently, is the identification between things, phenomena, and reasoning processes. In other words, the problem of properly or not properly identifying metaphysics, ontology, and logics.[13]

> According to Thomas Aquinas, both logic and metaphysics are characterized by the same universal scope. The consideration of metaphysics extends to everything which is, as its subject is being insofar as it is being. And the science of logic too considers everything which is, not as it exists in reality but insofar as the whole of being falls under the consideration of reason. Because of the equivalence between the logical sphere of reason and the real sphere of being metaphysics has an affinity with logic.
>
> This similarity is mentioned by Aquinas in order to explain the legitimate use of a logical mode of reasoning within metaphysics. Metaphysics is not identical with logic, but the *modus logicus*, the logical mode of reasoning, is to a certain extent useful for the philosopher in his inquiry into metaphysical matters.[14]

Being and reason only coincide in a few occasions, but certainly not fully when history or social affairs are under consideration. The prognosis of future cannot wholly coincide with actual phenomena. History is beyond human life because it occurs under its own transcendental nature and as a condition of existence for human affairs. That said, socialism-communism cannot be unavoidable not only for the sake of human freedom, but also because would give up and release any form of human work or activity towards it. The final freedom from labour and capitalist constraints can only happen if considered as a final movement of alienation, preserving Idealism inside historical materialism. By means of necessary inner movements of contractions between social modes of production, communism should necessarily happen in the future. Human work and action towards it would not be necessarily, despite possible suffering of peasants and workers if forever not working or making any form of activity.

Marx did not await standing still for the coming of a specific future. He wrote the *Communist Manifesto* and promote political action using philosophy and ideology, which in his own terms, is derived from superstructures. So philosophy, even traditional ones, could still change the world. The changing power of philosophy had become to be associated exclusively to nature and its phenomena by means of scientific transforming action. Departing from Hegel and/or from Francis Bacon, depending on the philosophical perspective, Marx believed "the 'true community' of which the communist society is a case", would allow the laborers to be united and "self-consciously" able to use "natural laws to reform nature and society." This would be "the basic condition for the individual to gain freedom".[15]

[13] TE VELDE, Rudi. Metaphysics, Dialectics and the *Modus Logicus* according to Thomas Aquinas. Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales, v. 63, p. 15-35, 1996. https://doi.org/10.2143/RTPM.63.0.525861.

[14] TE VELDE, Rudi. Metaphysics, Dialectics and the *Modus Logicus* according to Thomas Aquinas. Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales, v. 63, p. 15-35, 1996, p. 15. https://doi.org/10.2143/RTPM.63.0.525861.

[15] ENGELS, F.; MARX, K. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. And the Communist Manifesto*. Translated by Martin Milligan. Amherst: Prometheus Books,

But the religious content persistent in the dialectical historical materialism developed by Marx was not fully original product from his own creation. Secularized by philosophical thought, this form of the transcendental derived from the religious had at least partial origins in considerations such as those by Immanuel Kant on reason's and ethics' outcomes through time and space as History. Progress should happen if reason exists and happens. According to Hegel's formulation, those processes should result from the dialectics of Reason, the Spirit, and the State, the secular phenomena of humans progressively choosing and acting better under organized collective conditions and forms.

> It may be seen from the foregoing that in Hegel the concept of alienation is mystical and subjective. Since he takes Spirit as the primary point of departure, Hegel inverts all actual relations. The "Absolute Idea" alienating out of itself the world of Nature is simply the religious doctrine of creation in new dress. There is no such thing as an independent Idea of logic divorced from the human brain and the world of nature. But even more preposterous than the myth of God creating the world is that of the logical Idea being able suddenly to change itself in a trice into nature. Because his system demanded it, Hegel further held that alienation could be completely overcome and absolute freedom attained, which violates dialectics and arbitrarily places a determinate conclusion to the endless process of development of the world. This illustrates the conservative aspect of his philosophy.[16]

Therefore, to deal with those problems presented by the relations between metaphysics, ontology, and logics, and later analyses of *The Capital* text, this work will be built under certain Wittgenstein's assumptions. This study is basically built over the method of operating formal logics and philosophical text analysis over linguistic and cultural sources of knowledge. To do so, the following analyses throughout this text will be built mostly based on Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Considerations about language, discourse, linguistic phenomena, and culture will be straight referenced when and as needed. In order to justify the discussion and use of only a few initial statements by Wittgenstein, from the opening of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, we will take on Sir Bertrand Russell's cohesive and clear statements as they follow below.

> In order to understand Mr. Wittgenstein's book, it is necessary to realize what is the problem with which he is concerned. In the part of his theory which deals with Symbolism he is concerned with the conditions which would have to be fulfilled by a logically perfect language. There are various problems as regards language. First, there is the problem what actually occurs in our minds when we use language with the intention of meaning something by it; this problem belongs to psychology. Secondly, there is the problem as to what is the relation subsisting between thoughts, words, or sentences, and that which they refer to or mean; this problem belongs to epistemology. Thirdly, there is the problem of using sentences so as to convey truth rather than falsehood; this belongs to the special sciences dealing with the subject-matter of the sentences in question. Fourthly, there is the question: what relation must one fact (such as a sentence) have to another in order to be capable of being a symbol for that other? This last is a logical question, and is the one with which Mr. Wittgenstein is concerned.[17]

So, considering both the reflections made by Rudi Te Velde about Thomas Aquinas and Bertrand Russell's considerations on Wittgenstein's concerns, we will be supplied by the intellectual tools to understand how Marx's historical

1988; RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation" – from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 70. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339.

[16] RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation" – from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 44. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339.

[17] RUSSELL, Bertrand. *Introduction*. In WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, p.ix-x.

materialism confuses philosophy of history with Political Economy by means of operating Hegelian dialectics as both an ontological and a logical principle. That way, phenomena in reality is overlaid with logical reasoning and further considered as truth despite not being. This makes of ideology and politics-superstructure's features-the most valuable aspects of Marx's works. As we will verify in the next session, there several serious logical mistakes at the very beginning of *The Capital*, what makes sink his whole historical materialism endeavor as an identification of Political Economy and philosophy of history. In the background, the opening phenomena of cultural creativity made possible by classical heritage and philosophical tradition yet too much loaded by religious content, as we can see from Blumenberg's considerations on cultural developmental processes by means of metaphoric relations and interfaces. Where science or logics may not proceed proper, culture and speculation may help as wisdom flirting with knowledge.

To finish, Wittgenstein offer us the straight tools to hold reasoning out from logical mistakes when evaluating how Marx proceeded his thought connecting dialectical conclusions one after the other, from premises (theses) to subsequent reasoning-questioning (antitheses) until reaching in an end what should be a truth state of affairs about reality. If Marx's fails dialectically defining capitalist value and its fundamental unit, further conclusions may not be truth or considerable, making historical materialism a hypothesis, a theory, but not a truth reality of human phenomenon or a scientific law.

> If things can occur in states of affairs, this possibility must be in them from the beginning.
>
> (Nothing in the province of logic can be merely possible. Logic deals with every possibility and all possibilities are its facts.)
>
> Just as we are quite unable to imagine spatial objects outside space or temporal objects outside time, so too there is *no* object that we can imagine excluded from the *possibility* of combining with others.
>
> If I can imagine objects combined in states of affairs, I cannot imagine them excluded from the possibility of such combinations.
>
> Things are independent in so far as they can occur in all *possible* situations, but this form of independence is a form of connexion with states of affairs, a form of dependence. (It is impossible for words to appear in two different roles: by themselves, and in propositions.)
>
> If I know an object I also know all its possible occurrences in states of affairs.
>
> (Every one of these possibilities must be part of the nature of the object.)
>
> A new possibility cannot be discovered later.[18]

In order to differentiate logics, reasoning as a sort of metaphysics fundamentally built on linguistic phenomena, and ontology, so truth could be thought and stated, Wittgenstein affirmed "the world is the totality of facts, not of things", being "all that is the case". This means only the world can be thought, because human reality is in the world. This case that makes "the world is determined by the facts, and by their being all the facts", all that matters under reasoning. A state of affairs implies a set of logical relations, where "the totality of facts determines what is the case, and also whatever is not the case". "Each item can be the case or not the case while everything else remains the same", since not under consideration and persisting being only itself in the world. However, to no lose the grip over reality, closing relations to ontology and actual truth in the world, Wittgenstein closes this logical circularity stating that "a state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things)", making sure logical things are in objects under certain aspects and dimensions, because "it is essential to things that they should be possible constituents of states of affairs" in order to be truly understood. So, considering "the facts in logical space are the world", which has to be divided "into facts" so things can be truly understood under their specificities, detaching themselves from the

[18] WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophi cus*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 9.

continuum of everything else that truly exists, "the case-a fact-is the existence of states of affairs", of logical relations that represent reality in a specific way. "In logic nothing is accidental: if a thing can occur in a state of affairs, the possibility of the state of affairs must be written into the thing itself. It would seem to be a sort of accident, if it turned out that a situation would fit a thing that could already exist entirely on its own".[19]

I the next session we will evaluate if the commodity is the capitalist minimum unit of value under specific and proper capitalist form, allowing to think Marx's version of Capitalism and his philosophy of history, their truth or not, and if exchange truly makes the specific form of creating capitalist value.

II. ALIENATION, IDEALISM, HISTORY, TRADE AND VALUE: EXAMINING THE PROBLEM RELATED TO DIALECTICS AND ONTOLOGY

From now on we will proceed with the criticism of Marx's ideas based on philosophical analysis of his texts, most from *The Capital*, by means of performing logical analysis of it. For practical reasons of textual length, we will consider only the first pages of *The Capital* Book I, *Capitalist Production*, first part, *Commodities and Money*, chapter first, *Commodities*, especially the first section, *The two factors of a Commodity: Use-Value and Value (the substance of Value and the magnitude of Value)*. This analysis of *The Capital* supposes that the flaws observed by the fore-analyzed set of statements can only generate successive sequences of logical failures not allowing thus to obtain a true understanding of the world and human reality. The small logics mistakes can only derive more mistakes since Marx's organize his texts based on dialectical methodological movements scaling up his arguments under successive sequential connections of theses, antitheses and syntheses, derived one set after the other, until so wide conclusions as it became his philosophy of history can be generalized. Those mistakes become serious because of his resourcing of dialectics as method and ontological principle, derived from Hegel's works.

Considering the theoretical aspect of Marx's works under consideration, we must inform Hegel's *Science of Logic* established the fundaments of dialectical method and its supposed necessary ontological relation that allows the understanding of the ways human nature unfold itself in and trough the world. "In setting out the three great laws of dialectics, Engels pointed out that the law of contradiction occupies the entire second portion of Hegel's Science of Logic, which is moreover the most important section – the Doctrine of Essence [*Dialectics of Nature*]." For Hegel, "the realm of essence is also the realm of manifest contradiction, of contradictions latent within 'being'." This means what is exterior, alien to essence is an opposition because does not belongs into what something or one are. This makes the Doctrine of Essence in the *Science of Logic* to be fundamental to the law of contradiction.[20]

In Hegel's and Marx's works we can find several formal and/or informal references to authors and philosophical theories derived from ancient times, such as Aristotle or Goethe. Traditional philosophy and forms of knowledge had never lost value for them and their worlds. The core problem was rather the philosophy and forms of knowledge at the age had most lost straight or direct function to their worlds' such urgent and latent problems of effective reality and everyday life. Reflections on transcendence or the mystical-religious aspect of human reality and ontological-metaphysical questions, despite of still being important and frequent amongst philosophers and intellectuals of the time, could not answer anymore the new industrial and liberal civil societies' concerns just emerging. The social-political context that would make Marx affirm philosophy's misery suggested that

[19] WITTGENSTEIN, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 7.

[20] RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation" – from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 40. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339; SAYERS, Sean. Creative Activity and Alienation in Hegel and Marx. *Historical Materialism*, Leiden, v. 11, n. 1, p. 107-128, 2003.

dialectically, those contradictions could require new adjustments of human forces in order to solve them into an effective historical synthesis, which could situate the world into a new starting pointing towards the future. However, after Hegel's death in 1831, "due to Germany's political and economic development and that of the struggle between the bourgeois and feudal forces, Hegel's philosophy thanks to its internal contradictions," split into "the Old Hegelian school (the Right Hegelians) and the Young Hegelian school (Left Hegelians). The Old Hegelians leaned toward conservatism, emphasizing the Hegelian system; the Young Hegelians were progressive, emphasizing the Hegelian method". Notwithstanding this historical division and judgements from his critical heritage, Karl Marx belonged to both as recorded in his whole work. According to Wang Ruoshui, "the 'true socialists' emerged under the influence of Hess."[21]

In *The Poverty of Philosophy*, *The German Ideology*, *Theses on Feuerbach*, as well as the *Economic and philosophic manuscripts of 1844* and the *Selected writings in sociology & social philosophy*, Marx establishes main principles and conceptions of his historical materialistic philosophy of history based on dialectics, also present within and along *The Capital*.[22] The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* is his work that fully belongs to superstructure phenomena, aiming to change workers immediate lives by politics means. Being revolutionary does not deny propaganda, education, and politics belongs to something else than social-productive phenomena of the base. Causing, conditioning, and/or determining do not imply the nature of the state of affairs under Marx and our considerations are other than derived and belonging to superstructure. The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* aims to direct and to condition our comprehension about historical phenomena, how they flow, and their directions towards a determined future, shaping human actions according to it.[23]

The problem becomes more severe in *The Capital*, since Marx's philosophy of history supposes industrial capitalism's nature as the resulting synthesis from feudal social production relations overcame into bourgeois society. In *The Capital* Marx was describing industrial capitalism inner constituents and functioning processes. However, alienation as materialization of ideas into objects is human activity outcome by its own nature. Work is another form of it. Commodities cannot be judged cornerstone to capitalism under historical materialism unless we subvert the concept of value as being majorly composed by exchange value, even though pre-capitalist commerce also had produced it. Being exchange value the soul of the commodities, commerce cannot be left out of capitalism phenomenal engine. The problem is if surplus is mostly produced by commodities circulation or production from wage-paid labour. We should ask how differently radical is producing cogwheels, garments, and machines, from collecting goods in a country and selling in another. Is the labour in question paid to the workers? Initial value of the good was lesser than its final version? Sugar and dried pepper are capitalist commodities if sold

[21] RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation" – from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 47, 53. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339.

[22] ENGELS, F.; MARX, K. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. And the Communist Manifesto*. Translated by Martin Milligan. Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1988; ENGELS, F.; MARX, K. *The German Ideology: including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy*. Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1998; MARX, Karl. *Miseria de la Filosofía: Respuesta a la Filosofía de la Miseria de Proudhon*. Ciudad de México, D.F.: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1987; MARX, Karl. *Selected Writings in Sociology & Social Philosophy*. London; Columbus; New York: C. A. Watts and Co.; McGraw-Hill, 1964.

[23] In *Futures Past*, Koselleck exposes us Kant's insight about the possibility of foreseeing and its potentialities regarding historical actions related to the future. In order to foresee the future is necessary to steadily build the path towards the projected aimed end, guiding those processes according and along time from present conditions on. KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *historia/Historia*. Madrid: Minima Trotta, 2004; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *Sediments of Time: On possible histories*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018; KOSELLECK, Reinhart. *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing history, Spacing concepts*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002.

into the Amsterdam Stock Exchange in the 17th century? Fundamentally commercial and/or transactional, capitalist alienation of work's value happens by taking away workers produced objects apart from themselves, in a second degree movement of making a subjects' idea external-alien to himself.

"Feuerbach's humanism is fundamentally materialist, for he sees man as a part of nature," as Marx also did in order to justify human right to survival by means of reproducing its own life producing goods that would fulfill this purpose. "Feuerbach's materialism was, however, intuitive, not thoroughgoing. He noted the need to observe man in terms of his relationship with nature, but not in terms of his relationship with society." This lead Marx to think those questions raised by Feuerbach and Hegel, about the fundamental phenomenon of alienation, under the industrial contemporary society conditions of his time. As Feuerbach had done before, "as soon as the realm of social history was touched on, he fell back into idealism," i.e., as it has been argued, this also happened to Marx while allegedly inverting Idealism into historical materialism.[24]

It is by means of alienation processes and phenomena that humans create value. Human ideas transform original things into secondary ones, aggregating qualities to those original things. This second degree of qualities applied on things by working them through creative action is the source of anthropological and social value. Wool only naturally "wear" the sheep. There are abundant bibliography revising historical materialism, Marx's works and the related theoretical-methodological approach used by him and the subsequent tradition, but the perspective adopted here is rather different. It will not be considered on first hand that Marx's theories are or can true because they were built under systemic fashion and logics. Marx's theories were meant to one and whole uniform set in front of the human rational understanding action.[25]

Once we set down this philosophical background which has to be considered along and articulated to the cultural background from world's and Germany's historical conditions from late 18th and early 19th centuries, still considerable religious, as we have seen before, we will proceed logically analyzing Marx's text in *The Capital*, so later may be clearer that the following logical flaws have huge effects on Marx's philosophy of history, making it unsuitable to be truth about human affairs and world's reality. The secularization process in progress in the age were still too much charged by traditional-religious background, subsequently translated to philosophies of history and metaphysics of human world, which anyhow, had to be considered in relation to and answer human questions from the moment, mostly related to social-cultural changes caused by the crash of Old Regime, the uprising of several liberal revolutions and the development of modern-contemporary industrial forms of production.

Thus, Marx begins *The Capital* with an analysis of the commodity taken as the fundamental form of value production in order to synthetize the necessary character of socialism-communism advent. When stating "the wealth of those societies in which the capitalist mode of production prevails, presents itself as 'an immense accumulation of commodities,' its unit being a single commodity. Our investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity," Marx proceeds similarly to Thomas Hobbes in *The Leviathan*, who built his political theory starting from the senses and related physics, as minimal

[24] RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation" – from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 51, 52. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339.

[25] BLANK, D.; CARVER, T. *Marx and Engels's "German ideology" Manuscripts: Presentation and Analysis of the "Feuerbach chapter"*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; MEANEY, M. *Capital as Organic Unity: The Role of Hegel's Science of Logic in Marx's Grundrisse*. Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media, 2002; MOSELEY, F. (Ed.). *Marx's method in Capital: a reexamination*. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1993; NESBITT, N. (Ed.). *The concept in crisis: Reading Capital today*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017; SMITH, T. *The Logic of Marx's Capital: Replies to Hegelian Criticism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

units of human reality in a world ruled by God and political common-wealth, so discourse could be fully justified from its minimum parts until general conclusions. Trying to develop his own philosophy of history and revision of classic Political Economy, Marx started his attempt to justify human labour value inside capitalism under the same analytical rule, from parts to the whole. His effort starts arguing how there was a specific form of capitalist value created from nature-based values and subsequent objectified ideas transformed by capitalist forms of work. As it is known, he believed the total social amount of value had been historically taken out from workers by means of historically determined social modes of production.[26]

According to Marx, the wealth in majorly capitalist societies is presented under the specific form of all the commodities configured as the set of produced things. Commodity is the singular unitary fundamental form of value so value can be produced and accumulated under the form of wealth. According to this logics, capitalist wealth presents itself as capital. As a first argument, he states his "investigation must therefore begin with the analysis of a commodity", i.e., a dialectical thesis logical moment, a first idea to be investigated. "A commodity is, in the first place, an object outside us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of some sort or another." Commodities can be related to hunger necessities or intellectual ones, they can be objects that satisfy direct needs-wants, "directly as means of subsistence, or indirectly as means of production." Further, Marx emphasizes the importance of criteria by means and rule of which objects can be useful, endowed with value, so later he can argue on the ways exchanging is done. The problem starts to be unfold by the point of view of equalizing processes social-historically ruled by conventions or the intrinsic value of objects relating to their own natures. No matter the social mode of production, in a minimum degree, all them require to consider exchange asks for knowing objects own natures.[27]

So why is the capitalist form specific? Marx follows ahead arguing "utility of a thing makes it a use-value", although this use-value does not exist out of the physical materiality of things which are going to become commodities. Things are useful and use-value because they have specific qualities independent of being transformed by human work. Marx insists "use-values become a reality only by use or consumption," reaffirming Hegel's concept of alienation. And performing an anticipated logical movement of antithesis, he affirms use-values are "the substance of all wealth, whatever may be the social form of that wealth. In the form of society we are about to consider, they are, in addition, the material depositories of exchange value." This starts the dialectical movement of subsuming by identification the concept of exchange value under/to an absolute concept of value, as if they were equivalent and superior to use-value, even though use-value is the necessary fundament of any value phenomena under consideration in his work.[28]

After explaining use-value has to be considered by quantity and quality, Marx develops his arguments preliminarily defining the concept of exchange value in terms of quality-quantity, affirming "exchange value appears to be something accidental and purely relative, and consequently an intrinsic value, i.e., an exchange value that is inseparably connected with, inherent in commodities, seems a contradiction in terms." Making use of his dialectics, in order to achieve successive syntheses, Marx invite us to "consider the matter a little more closely." However, most of what follows are examples based on content, things, that should fulfill mathematical relations not necessarily exemplary to his own arguments. At this point of his initial theoretical movement, it is more decisive to consider how he tries to

[26] Marx read and referenced Hobbes' *Leviathan* in *The Capital*. MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 41, 189, 426, 676, 855; HOBBES, Thomas. *Hobbes's Leviathan. Reprinted from the Edition of 1651*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1909, p. 8-12.

[27] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 41-42.

[28] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 42-43.

differentiate and conceptualize use-value and exchange value instead of considering his examples of traditional historical commodities. If for use-value he stated: "So also is the establishment of socially recognised standards of measure for the quantities of these useful objects. The diversity of these measures has its origin partly in the diverse nature of the objects to be measured, partly in convention;" for exchange value he wrote: "Exchange value, at first sight, presents itself as a quantitative relation, as the proportion in which values in use of one sort are exchanged for those of another sort, a relation constantly changing with time and place," deriving through another axis of reflection that "an intrinsic value", inner to the thing own reality similar to what happens to use-value, could be "an exchange value that is inseparably connected with, inherent in commodities," that despite seeming "a contradiction in terms" should be solved by dialectical thinking; so he could finally state a presupposed truth for both forms of value, that: "To discover the various use of things is the work of history;" and therefore, historical materialism was intrinsically woven into his Political Economy revision in *The Capital*.[29]

Despite of further Marxism's critical heritage about pre-capitalist forms of social-production, at this point of his arguing, Marx defines capitalism as an essentially commercial form of production, recording that things are exchanged by values expressed in equal relations, and that "exchange value, generally, is only the mode of expression, the phenomenal form, of something contained in it, yet distinguishable from it." Sentences like "the use-values of commodities furnish the material for a special study, that of the commercial knowledge of commodities," reinforce interpretations that capitalism is a further development beyond commercial forms of production, mostly usually identified to mercantilism or previous forms of production and value creation, hence exchange value is considered the capitalist form of value in absolute terms. Marx suspending abstracts (*aufheben*) the strict concept of value when affirming that in exchange relations "there exists in equal quantities something common to both" things under exchanging. Despite affirming "exchange value, generally, is only the mode of expression, the phenomenal form, of something contained in it, yet distinguishable from it," these conclusions are not equivalent to affirm exchange value is the determinant ontological and metaphysical form of the strict concept of value itself. In Marx's works, value is analytically broke into two constituent sub-forms, use and exchange. The symbolic form of value in its monetary form is not enough to solve the problems he had under consideration. Neither does help using geometrical examples of triangles since calculating areas and diagonals are not equivalent of exchanging goods. Coal and gold values are historically determined under social forms and geometrical relations follow strict permanent rules. The common something that allows a rational agreed exchange action is necessarily the utility or social valorization of a thing. The utility of wool, coal, or iron are exchanged according to historical relations of equalizing value strict sense, which must be in a common equivalent relation at a moment. However, what makes a thing use-value will always define the dropping side of the scale. Only under hypothetical apocalyptical conditions use-value could be fully reconfigured in a non-historical form, allowing exchange value to be the actual form of value, hence food is more important and necessary to survival than gold.[30]

Marx's next steps is based on suggesting rational abstract procedures as ways to judge value. He states value under its exchange value is the "common 'something'" to things to be trade. According to him, this something common cannot be natural properties of things, but rather labour accumulated over time. This happens so he can affirm the beginnings of his philosophy of history inside *The Capital*, aiming to convince History is guided by a vector meaning of human affairs towards overcoming social modes of production towards socialism-communism. When he states a

[29] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 42-44.

[30] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 42-44.

use-value is as valuable as any other if they exist in equational balanced quantities between themselves, he does not argue such equalizations never played in favor of wheat when compared to diamonds or steam machines. The underlying question is how much wheat is necessary to exchange and pay a locomotive, not otherwise. Marx's suspension of use-value is not enough to solve the antithesis proposed by himself. The statement "as use-values, commodities are, above all, of different qualities, but as exchange values they are merely different quantities, and consequently do not contain an atom of use-value," does not find answer in his own factual examples. No rational being exchanges abstract numbers, suspended of use-value and real effectivity towards survival. Marx affirmed "along with the useful qualities of the products themselves, we put out of sight both the useful character of the various kinds of labour embodied in them, and the concrete forms of that labour; there is nothing left but what is common to them all; all are reduced to one and the same sort of labour, human labour in the abstract." Historically, even Soviet Union had to further choose between promoting agriculture or industry. [31]

Contradictorily, Marx stated the importance of the Idea when reassuring primary alienation as the second criteria of value creation, affirming "when looked at as crystals of this social substance, common to them all, they [forms of work embodied in commodities] are-Values," denying however the use-value once more, in order to identify by subsumption, "Value" to exchange value. That way, transforming ideas and raw material into something else by means of work. The core of producing value is still this transformational process. If "such properties claim our attention only in so far as they affect the utility of those commodities, make them use-values," and "the exchange of commodities is evidently an act characterised by a total abstraction from use-value," we have to face an unsolvable logical and phenomenic contradiction, implying there will not exist a theoretical synthesis for Marx's theory after all. His derivation of value creation mostly by labour is the before mentioned movement of weaving philosophy of history into his revision of Political Economy.[32] On this point, he starts another dialectical movement offering another thesis-synthesis of his own intellectual movement, unveiling his thoughts and method while summarizing his arguments, as we can be observed althrough *The capital* pages.

> We have seen that when commodities are exchanged, their exchange value manifests itself as something totally independent of their use-value. But if we abstract from their use-value, there remains their Value as defined above. Therefore, the common substance that manifests itself in the exchange value of commodities, whenever they are exchanged, is their value. The progress of our investigation will show that exchange value is the only form in which the value of commodities can manifest itself or be expressed. For the present, however, we have to consider the nature of value independently of this, its form.
>
> A use-value, or useful article, therefore, has value only because human labour in the abstract has been embodied or materialised in it. How, then, is the magnitude of this value to be measured? Plainly, by the quantity of the value-creating substance, the labour, contained in the article. The quantity of labour, however, is measured by its duration, and labour time in its turn finds its standard in weeks, days, and hours.[33]

Before initiating the second section, Marx obfuscate us with intrinsically contradictory reflections, which cannot be sustained under detailed critical-logical analysis. The logical analysis to be proceeded from here on is only one of possible many others to be performed from *The Capital*'s pages. Let us analyze the following

[31] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 44-45.

[32] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 44-45.

[33] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 45.

logical structure between the sentences: (1) "Lastly, nothing can have value, without being an object of utility;" (2) "The utility of a thing makes it a use-value;" but the logical-philosophical sequence of sentences only gets concluded at the end of first section with (3) "A thing can be a use-value, without having value." This logical contradiction accepts only a few limited solutions, but the synthesis-conclusion that "Value", absolute "value" is fundamentally exchange value does not sustain itself faced to the contradiction that: (1b) all the useful things are endowed with value; from what follows (2b) a useful thing is use-value; from what cannot be concluded that (3b) a thing can be useful without being and/or being endowed with value. The logical sequence and their relations do not follow true under reasoning. If we accept them and their possible conclusions/consequences, we must be aware that the reasoning outcome will exist only in the opinion realm of mental activities. At the beginning of first section, *The Two Factors of a Commodity: Use-Value and Value* [absolute concept] *(The Substance of Value* [possibly use-value] *and the Magnitude of Value* [possibly exchange value]*)*, Marx affirms "being limited by the physical properties of the commodity, it [the utility of a thing or use-value] has no existence apart from that commodity," so the commodity and use-value are associated by identification. A commodity needs to be/have use-value because the commodity is subsequent to use-value and to physical characteristics derived from raw material or use-value. It is the raw material materiality or use-value that condition the commodity, not otherwise.[34]

Marx's labyrinth-simultaneously Theseus and Minotaur-, is both the trap and the hero's redemption. Even recovering his own dialectical initial theses, the syntheses do not sustain themselves. This is effect of Marx's explicit effort to honestly answer real and effective problems from his own time and world. However, his inversion of Idealism is not real or truth. He stated sentences about use-value related to alienation processes that in Hegel's works are related the animals' conditions: "use-values become a reality only by use or consumption". Hegel affirmed the difference of animals' and human alienation processes based on their capacities to preserve the alienating synthesis or not. Humans are supposed to be able to sustain their alienating outcomes under objectified forms or not. It only seems an inversion of Idealism towards historical materialism. And, to be fair, since dialectical, Marx was also worried about the logical mode of his thinking when trying to somehow specify useful qualities are qualities to human life.[35] So we can proceed, Marx also

[34] (Number) refers to original statements and first part of analysis. (Number b) refers to further logical analysis based on original statements from analysis first part. MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 42, 46, 47-48; To further help understand the edges, potentialities, and challenges of how to express truth by justified ways towards scientific knowledge, see: GETTIER, Edmund. Is Justified True Belief Knowledge? *Analysis*, v. 23, n. 6, p. 121-123, Jun. 1963; TURRI, John. Is knowledge justified true belief? *Synthese*, v. 184, n. 3, p. 247–259, Aug. 2010-2012. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-010-9773-8. Alternative version: https://philarchive.org/rec/TURIKJ.

[35] "These ideas are also fundamental to Hegel's philosophy. According to Hegel, work plays an essential role in distinguishing human beings from other animals. The animal has a purely immediate relation to nature, both to the objects around it in its natural environment and to its own nature, its own appetites and instincts. Hegel calls this immediate relationship to nature 'desire'. The animal is driven by its desires and appetites to consume objects which are directly present to it in its natural environment. Furthermore, this consumption involves the immediate negation, the annihilation of the object. The human being, by contrast, is not a purely natural being but rather a conscious, a self-conscious being, with 'being-for-self'. [...] The human being's ability to 'duplicate himself' and 'represent himself to himself' is most evident in thought, in self-consciousness. But it also takes a practical form. Work is a mode of this practical being-for-self and a means by which it develops. Work involves a break with the animal, immediate, natural relationship to nature. In work, the object is not immediately consumed and annihilated. Gratification is deferred. The object is preserved, worked upon, formed and transformed. And, in this way, a distinctively human relationship to nature is established. These ideas are also used by Marx. They are at the basis of his notion of work as man's 'species activity'. Like Hegel, Marx contrasts the relationship to nature established through work with the immediacy of the animal's relation to nature." SAYERS, Sean. Creative Activity and Alienation in Hegel and Marx. *Historical Materialism*, Leiden, v. 11, n. 1, p. 107-128, 2003, p. 109-110; MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 42.

bequeathed us more straight linguistic contradictions such as the one which follows. The diamond example given by himself is contrary to his own thinking if we consider what follows stated below. The time to produce diamonds from coal would be in nature or by human work, not possible to be equalized to any other product based on labour-time.

> Commodities, therefore, in which equal quantities of labour are embodied, or which can be produced in the same time, have the same value. The value of one commodity is to the value of any other, as the labour-time necessary for the production of the one is to that necessary for the production of the other.[36]

Dialectically, Marx initiates the third section based on the presupposed synthesis taken as thesis to be examined along next pages of *The Capital*. However, it is important to notice that under this dialectical method, its reflexive-argumentative terms presuppose the thesis is an initial idea-hypothesis, the antithesis is an open hypothesis with contradictory consequences and ideas, which follow logical relations, and the synthesis is a sort of conclusion that may allow further reasoning and logical movements. Under the title *The Form of Value or Exchange Value*, Marx verifies and tries to rectify the general line of his arguments based on one more dialectical movement.

The value of commodities is the very opposite of the coarse materiality of their substance, not an atom of matter enters into its composition. Turn and examine a single commodity, by itself, as we will. Yet in so far as it remains an object of value, it seems impossible to grasp it. If, however, we bear in mind that the value of commodities has a purely social reality, and that they acquire this reality only in so far as they are expressions or embodiments of one identical social substance, viz., human labour, it follows as a matter of course, that value can only manifest itself in the social relation of commodity to commodity. In fact we started from exchange value, or the exchange relation of commodities, in order to get at the value that lies hidden behind it. We must now return to this form under which value first appeared to us.[37]

Subsuming Value, i.e., absolute value, to exchange value, in order to justify the allegedly relations between his criticism on classical Political Economy and his philosophy of history, especially from the point of view of capitalist modern-contemporary societies, Marx clearly manifests his not inverted Idealism, abandoning historical materialism allegedly inversion of it, when stating sentences like those above. In Marx, only human mind and experience can historically endow value to things, no matter if they come from mental human necessities or from body survival. Those equations relating to value, use-value, and exchange value are not sustained either to justify his philosophy of history or as truth about basic capitalist mechanisms and constituents. Value comes out from primary alienation caused by human strangeness over and about nature, from the acknowledgement-and thus, from the spirit activity over the material manifestations of the Idea-of the intrinsic qualities embodied in things and nature. Value can also appear from secondary alienation caused by human work and activity in anthropological sense, wherever the social mode of production under consideration. Exchange value only maximizes value, therefore, only creates value from densification and consolidation processes that may create value through optimizing or concentration-rationalizing logics.

It is not an error to affirm capital is the social form of wealth under capitalism. In the end, Marx's capitalism is commercial by nature and industrial by anthropological condition. However, subsuming under and/or identifying exchange value to absolute value is a logical mistake with serious philosophical and theoretical consequences.

III. CONCLUSION

In his works, Marx frequently subsumes alienation as the original work to create value

[36] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 46.

[37] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 55.

under the category of socially codified labour in order to justify the attempted theoretical-conceptual connection between his historical materialist philosophy of history and his analyses of proper capitalism's social-economic mechanisms. The world Marx is concerned about is the one on the happening of industrial novelties and outcomes, a world that just and barely crossed structural thresholds out of medieval-modern conditions, habits, cultures, and believes. Throughout successive and incessant dialectical movements along *The Capital* pages, Marx's discourse lost potential towards truth. His theories do not compose an uniform whole. If there may be there a lot of truth about capitalism's inner mechanisms, the same does not happen to his disguised philosophy of history woven in descriptions of how modes of production would allegedly overcome each other by necessary historical law.[38]

> It is also said that Marx never again used the idea of alienation in later periods, and it is argued from this that the idea should be jettisoned. Some theorists also try to show that because Marx later gave up the concept, the old Marx did not measure up to the young Marx.
>
> Both views are mistaken. In fact, in Capital, the most important work of his career, alienation remains a major theme of study. After gaining the historical materialist outlook, Marx devoted his efforts to the study of this problem: how should the basic outlook of historical materialism be applied to the anatomy of capitalist society and economy? In capitalist society, what is the concrete process of alienation of labor? How are the worker's products expropriated? Marx used the theory of surplus value to answer this.[39]

The making of a thing-in-nature into something else, thus acquiring distinct qualities of the original thing is alienation as an intrinsic first instance anthropological feature of human potential to activity. The right to use the created thing-and, therefore, aggregated value-is a fundamental categorical human prerogative. When the creator loses the usufruct and/or property of the created object, the creator is alienated from the object in a second degree of alienation phenomena. The idea that conformed the object becomes material and is no more only in the creator's mind. When historical materialism got created, Western European social institutions were already sufficiently determined by and in History, so became possible to exponentially alienate value under not majorly and strictly juridical forms bequeathed by tradition and customary law. The problem was not strictly the right to property and alienation on individual level, but rather an intensification of those logics under new forms and values.

If there is any true intentional direction in Marx's assumptions about capitalism, it is that capitalism's essence might be commerce and trade. The difficult problem here is that alienating value from workers happens under the industrial standard of paying wages in exchange for value created by labour. The human anthropological nature of creating and accumulating value by means of producing something is only orthogonally realized in capitalism as such: the exchange, the trade happens between capitalists and workers, intensifying alienation in all terms. Only this way creating becomes the soul of capitalism. Exchanging is the capitalism engine, its driven force.

[38] "Conversely, as regards Marx, the very idea that he has a single and clear-cut 'theory of alienation' is questionable. In particular, Marx does not always apply the concept of alienation only to capitalism, as Lukács maintains. In the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, it is true, the term is central to Marx's critique of capitalism, as Lukács suggests; but, later, his account of capitalism is developed in more specific economic terms. Throughout, however, Marx also uses the term 'alienation' to describe aspects of work which are not specific to capitalism, such as that it is stultifying, externally imposed, that it is merely a means to the end of satisfying material needs, that it takes place within an oppressive division of labour, etc. These are features of work in all class-divided societies." SAYERS, Sean. Creative Activity and Alienation in Hegel and Marx. *Historical Materialism*, Leiden, v. 11, n. 1, p. 107-128, 2003, p. 120, 121.

[39] RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation" – from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 66. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339.

Those questions have been worked and consolidated in discussions about the theoretical edges relating to capitalist value concentration logics and processes, from primitive accumulation to most advanced forms such as those under industrial capitalism. Those processes were considered to be related to their own superstructure expressions. This has been understood as the specific historical beginnings of capitalism according to the tradition derived from Marx's works and ideas. Some interpretations state capitalism could not had been risen because only industry and paid work could lead to specific forms of capitalism production, societies, and value accumulation. Marx's answer has its core on paid work and labour-time, requiring civil liberal forms of society. Marx's capitalism, i.e., industrial capitalism, required concentration value by means of work alienated by time, creating the contradiction of a Hegelian alienation process where humankind found itself alienated not in or face to nature, but rather into liberal industrial societies, not recognizing itself anymore.

In the end, Marx's theses about commodities, value, use-value, and exchange value have to be faced to the alienation processes, so no matter the existing things we may take under consideration and work/activity can be conformed as an useful object that might relate humans to life and the world. The being, i.e., all that exists, must be conformed by the idea and the spirit. Value has to become capital, the modern-contemporary form of wealth. The raw material has to be moved towards human reality so it can be useful and become value. When one recognizes the stone's qualities that may turn it into a spearhead, human thought performs dialectics while alienating itself from itself, so the events following the transformative action can be recovered as power over the outcome and simultaneous acknowledgement of the difference between oneself, its actions, and the world under potential human condition. Alienation makes somehow human what is nature or not human, creating difference and value.

Regarding Marx's philosophy of history, we can assert capitalism may fall one day, however, this fall is not necessary by any historical law and the outcome may be anything else but those forms of socialism-communism Marx and his contemporaries predicted. History will unfold the intentional surplus derived from human choices and actions so something one day may change. Historical materialism allegedly inversion of Idealism cannot be sustained after all. If Marx intended to reach the truth about capitalism and its further future transformative unfolding outcome as a more developed society and form of social production, his theoretical-dialectical conclusions should not had started from value as it had been.

> Marx's target appears to be Hegel's idealism; but he has not got this clearly in his sights. It is true that, for Hegel, economic labour is not the highest stage of spirit's development. This continues further through art, religion and philosophy. These higher activities do not supersede labour, they supplement it. However, Marx is in no position to criticise these ideas, since he holds similar views himself. For Marx, too, believes that art and philosophy (if not religion) constitute a higher 'realm of freedom' and a higher sphere of human development. This is a direct descendent of the Hegelian view, as I have been arguing.[40]

Between the alienating process of creating value and the advent of a new mode of social production, which would free humankind from work, there is an ontological-dialectical phenomenon that makes not feasible this endeavor in its very own beginnings. The dialectical freedom depends on alienation and conduces human beings to similar states of nature conditions in the end. To dialectically promote the final sublimation of the Spirit implies to return at the Absolut Idea, from which human beings would necessarily need to alienate themselves again in another form of nature. In this hypothetical, logical-historical stage of development humans would lose part of their own humanity, been required to recover it by means of creative actions, activities and work. "Overcoming

[40] SAYERS, Sean. Creative Activity and Alienation in Hegel and Marx. *Historical Materialism*, Leiden, v. 11, n. 1, p. 107-128, 2003, p. 119.

alienation therefore means to return to the individual as the starting point."[41]

> First, alienation is a monistic concept, one which recognizes that the universe has only one foundation or origin, and due to the development within this basis of self-contradiction it generates its opposite from within (one divides into two), creating the opposition of matter and spirit. The idea of alienation does away with the view of thought and existence as disjunct, parallel things, and argues that no matter how inimical they may appear, one is always derived from the other, is a transformation of the other. If idealism made nature into the alienation of the Idea, there was nothing to stop materialism adopting the concept and, adjusting the relationship between them, making man into the alienation of nature. For Hegel, because the Idea is taken as the point of departure, the development from Nature to man is not alienation but sublation of it, i.e., the return to itself of the Idea. Since dialectical materialism takes nature, matter as point of departure, we should recognize that Spirit is in the first place alienated out of Matter, Man is alienated out of Nature. Of course, given the premise that we recognize the primacy of matter and secondariness of spirit, we do recognize in a sense that there is a process of alienation of matter to spirit.[42]

Thus, Marx's socioeconomic reflections on latter industrial capitalism, his critical revision on Political Economy, his revolutionary work ideology, and his dialectical historical materialist philosophy of history are distinct parts of his works that not necessarily fits each other without incongruences and mistakes. Here, ideology should be understood as both a superstructure effect-phenomenon and as a sort of justified wisdom derived from scientific knowledge surplus, as proposed by Clifford Geertz. The wisdom and knowledge that guide action is no less important because existing beyond justification and constituting ideology. The sociocultural and political forms expressed by a determined social mode of production also determined Marx's own revolutionary conceptions. Somehow, the strong Hegelian elements of his works even reaches the edges of religion from his time. This culture updating subjects through historical time. Work as anthropological condition is culture anyhow. The interesting manifest ideologically – according to Geertz theory and concept of it – built in order help improving people's lives and material conditions does not allow or justify the denial of major theoretical errors his theories may bring along. Marx was a subject from an age when science was considered to be necessarily able to give truth, proper, and right answers about the world. The knowledge surplus derived by ideological phenomena was still configured as being derived from the struggle of opinions. His world was awaiting sort of a final word on some questions. The European religious heritage, tradition, and cultural background was still strongly effective and able to offer options of final words on a few matters.[43] Ruoshui reflected about the supposed inversion of Idealism and the displacement occurred to religion regarding its fundamental function in Hegel's philosophy while considering Feuerbach:

[41] "The 'true socialists' emerged under the influence of Hess. They turned socialism into a meditation on realizing human nature, above class struggle, while they were in fact merely used as a weapon against the bourgeoisie by various dictatorial governments in the German federation. On the other hand, Hess raised this question for thinking about how to overcome capitalist alienation: Whence does the conquest of alienation lead? What state would constitute a genuine overcoming of the alienation of capitalist society? Hess himself answered as follows: All authorities are 'abstract universals,' are 'alienations'; only the individual's life is authentic reality. Overcoming alienation therefore means to return to the individual as the starting point. The ideal is an anarchistic society in which no one is subject to any authority, and all enjoy absolute equality and freedom. Another member of the Young Hegelians, the Russian Bakunin, was later to take this idea of Hess's and develop it into a systematic anarchism with which to combat Marxism. This was the theoretical outcome of making humanism the core of communism." RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation"-from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 53, 70. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339.

[42] RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation" – from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 45. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339.

[43] GEERTZ, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 33-83, 193-233.

> Religion is the alienation of man's essence. Man projects his essence out of himself, and, creating god in his own image, transforms him into an independent subject, claiming that God has created man in *his* own image. An inversion is thus brought about of the relationship between God and Man, and the product of man's brain rules over man himself.
>
> The essence of man is the human "species." Individual humans are limited, imperfect, impotent; only in the "species" can man cast off these limitations. In religion, man by alienation changes this "species" into God. God has the perfection of the "species": he is limitless, perfect, omnipotent. Man looks upon his own essence as something otherworldly. God's essence is nothing but the essence of man: cleansed, rid of human limitations, i.e., of the essence of actual, corporeal man; objectified, i.e., seen and treated as an otherworldly, independent essence and so worshipped. Hence all formulations of God's essence are attributes of human nature [cf. EC: 14].
>
> What is human nature, man's "humanity"? What things are common to all men? They are Reason, Will, and Love [cf. EC: 3]. These human characteristics are again precisely what pertain to God. Whatever man thinks and proposes, God likewise thinks and proposes. The consciousness of God is man's self-consciousness, although the believer has no direct awareness of this. The believer claims: God is love. This simply means that love is higher than anything else. But since man has endowed God with his own essence, he himself is impoverished. "To enrich God, man must become poor; that God may be all, man must be nothing" [EC: 25].[44]

So, it is not out of reason and purpose to recover some of Marx's own reflections about religion written in *The Capital*. His book has plenty of religious references, discussions and allusions:

> This primitive accumulation plays in Political Economy about the same part as original sin in theology. Adam bit the apple, and thereupon sin fell on the human race. Its origin is supposed to be explained when it is told as an anecdote of the past. In times long gone by there were two sorts of people; one, the diligent, intelligent, and, above all, frugal elite; the other, lazy rascals, spending their substance, and more, in riotous living. The legend of theological original sin tells us certainly how man came to be condemned to eat his bread in the sweat of his brow; but the history of economic original sin reveals to us that there are people to whom this is by no means essential. Never mind! Thus it came to pass that the former sort accumulated wealth, and the latter sort had at last nothing to sell except their own skins. And from this original sin dates the poverty of the great majority that, despite all its labour, has up to now nothing to sell but itself, and the wealth of the few that increases constantly although they have long ceased to work. Such insipid childishness is every day preached to us in the defence of property. M. Thiers, *e.g.*, had the assurance to repeat it with all the solemnity of a statesman, to the French people, once so *spirituel*. But as soon as the question of property crops up, it becomes a sacred duty to proclaim the intellectual food of the infant as the one thing fit for all ages and for all stages of development. In actual history it is notorious that conquest, enslavement, robbery, murder, briefly force, play the great part. In the tender annals of Political Economy, the idyllic reigns from time immemorial. Right and "labour" were from all time the sole means of enrichment, the present year of course always excepted. As a matter of fact, the methods of primitive accumulation are anything but idyllic.[45]

Industrial modern-contemporary Europe asked for another sort of explanation about how humankind had reached such a tragic condition

[44] RUOSHUI, Wang. On the Concept of "Alienation" – from Hegel to Marx. *Chinese Studies in Philosophy*, v. 16, n. 3, p. 39-70, 1985, p. 49-50. http://dx.doi.org/10.2753/CSP1097-1467160339.

[45] MARX, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*. New York: The Modern Library; Random House, 1906, p. 784-785.

on the verge of its own success. Reason seemed not to guide human beings properly anymore. Something seemed inadequate and religious words sufficed no more. Old centuries of rural communal ways of life under customary and natural laws could not be found in the industrial world society. Technology wrong-paced ethical-moral development along and through History. "So something like this transpired in the 19th century, for thinkers like Hegel, Marx and Nietzsche, when philosophy ceased to be fundamentally metaphysical and took an 'anthropological' turn – a turn that was also political, social and cultural." "Issues pertaining to the quality of human life became central", leading from questioning "matters of 'what we can *know*'", mostly related to ontological and/or metaphysical problems, to questions "of what we can (and can best) *become*," i.e., questions only expected to be answered by science.[46] However, in this work we have intentionally based our insights and reflections on Hans Blumenberg's accounts on metaphorical displacements and movements through cultural experience and life that allows intellectual creativity, looking for to reflect on how science may be deeply culturally biased. Meaning historically moves itself in, by means of, and through metaphorical relations every time the edges of reality become so strictly static that shards of old forms of experience persist any way. "The traces lead us back to where wishes took shape and struck root, and from there through the guises and disguises of their traditions."[47]

> These questions, which could be multiplied at will, remind us of what we had almost forgotten. They run counter to all criteria of what can be known and is deemed worth knowing; superseded and made redundant by progress, they still lie deeply embedded in all scientific results. "Metaphorology" is a method for recovering the traces of such wishes and expectations, which do not have to be "repressed" to justify our interest in them. [...] The magnitude of history is not constituted by the sheer multitude of years or centuries. The obstinacy with which some things return and metamorphose is more thought-provoking than the constancy with which others simply linger. But the danger of being deluded by what returns and releases its energetic charge for the opportune historical moment is also in play: what can only ever be a corrective of the respective present then appears as a tangible future.[48]

In Marx's works, the religious cultural background and subsequent metaphorical relations opened up the author's intellectual perceptions to creative ways of explaining an urgent fast changing new world. Despite of the logical mistakes analyzed before and the criticism on how he insufficiently tried to articulate his Political Economy to his own philosophy of history, his works have huge value. The logical mode structured in his statements does not allow us to accept as true some of his propositions. For those subjects back in Marx's age, it was an important task "to break history into two and not just" chronologically, as others had done. They presupposed new forms of systematically interpreting the world would create something analogous to a "religion [explanation or theory, with which] begins a new world history." "It was the imitation of an imitation, however: the French Revolution had already given the calendar a new beginning, and there was no other way to compete than to repeat the slogan that everything will be new and restart the clock". Late 18th and early 19th centuries were the *loci* when new discourses sprung in order to explain the then deficit of humankind integrative sociocultural nature and forms of life.[49]

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Cristina Álvarez Romero

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Classification: LCC Code: LC4717

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573305
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 26 | Issue 1 | Compilation 1.0

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Preliminary feedback from the 57 families highlighted its potential to enhance classroom dynamics and foster inclusion.

Keywords: autism, children, inclusion, education, lighthouse, pictograms, sensory integration, assistive technology, inclusive education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Autism, or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a neurodevelopmental condition characterized by the synaptic dysfunction, which affects cognition and social processing. This distinguishes ASD from other developmental disorders that primarily involve motor or purely cognitive impairments. ASD primarily impacts communication, social interaction, and behaviour, manifesting in a wide range of ways across individuals. Globally, it is estimated that approximately 1 in every 100 children is diagnosed with ASD, with higher prevalence reported in boys. In Spain, recent estimates suggest that over 450,000 people live with this condition [1].

Despite increasing awareness and evolving diagnostic criteria, individuals with ASD continue to face significant barriers to social adaptation, including challenges in education, employment, and interpersonal relationships. These barriers may increase vulnerability to social exclusion and peer conflict, potentially limiting personal development and autonomy [1]. In response, early education about ASD is crucial to fostering empathy, understanding, and inclusion from a young age.

Current research in Spain and Europe have highlighted gaps in inclusive educational strategies and accessible tools that support social integration for children with ASD. This study addresses these gaps by exploring innovative approaches-such as sensory-based educational technologies-that can facilitate early understanding of ASD and promote inclusive classroom environments.

1.1 Considerations for Understanding Autism

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a complex neurodevelopmental condition that presents significant variability across individuals. While research has identified common characteristics, each person with ASD exhibits a unique profile of

strengths and challenges. This heterogeneity means that no single intervention is universally effective; instead, professionals focus on providing tailored support to enhance communication, learning, and social participation [2]. At the same time, research into the genetic, neurological and environmental factors underlying ASD continues to advance, contributing to a deeper understanding of its causes.

Over the years, a number of recurring patterns have been observed, but these vary widely in presentation and severity. Some children may develop advanced skills in certain areas, while others face greater developmental challenges. Similarly, some enjoy social interactions, whereas others may prefer solitary activities. Recognizing these differences highlights the importance of viewing ASD through the lens of neurodiversity, emphasizing that these variations reflect differences rather than deficits.

There are many international frameworks that contribute to understanding a diagnosis, such as the ICD-11 by the World Health Organization, provide complementary perspectives on diagnosis and classification. Others, like the latest edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association in 2013 [3], core features of ASD that include the following difficulties:

1. Communication and social interaction difficulties

- *Communication difficulties:*
  - Difficulty in developing spoken language.
  - Reduced spontaneity in verbal expression.
  - Deficits in nonverbal communication, including gestures and facial expressions.
- *Limitations in reciprocal socio-emotional interaction:*
  - Lack of response and interest in social interactions.
  - Difficulty understanding others' behaviour.
  - Stronger relationships with adults than with peers.
  - Tendency to prefer solitary play over group play.
- *Cognitive difficulties:*
  - Difficulty understanding their sensations (such as pain).
  - Poor comprehension of non-literal language.
  - Lack of functional and imitative interpretation.
  - Difficulty adjusting their behaviour to different contexts.

2. Pattern of repetitive behaviours and restricted interests

- *Mental rigidity:*
  - Resistance to changes in routines, environments, etc.
  - Repetitive use of objects, routines, or specific rituals.
- *Repetitive self-regulatory movements:*
  - Stereotypies: Repetitive movements that express calm or joy.
  - Echolalia: Repetition of words or phrases previously heard.

3. Sensory processing alterations

- Hypersensitivity or hyposensitivity to particular sounds, textures, or lights.
- Unusual interest in specific sensory stimuli, such as contact with particular objects.

4. Other difficulties

- Sudden behavioural changes, and possible aggressive behaviour.
- Eating and sleeping disorders.
- Altered psychomotor system.

In addition to challenges, many individuals with ASD exhibit distinctive strengths, such as heightened pattern recognition, extensive knowledge in specific areas of interest, exceptional memory, or strong attention to detail [1]. Understanding ASD as a spectrum of diverse abilities and differences, rather than solely as a set of deficits, supports a more inclusive, strengths-based approach to education, intervention, and social integration.

1.2 Adaptation to Autism

Adapting to autism involves adjusting environments, educational practices and activities

to the specific needs and characteristics of each child with ASD, rather than expecting the child to conform to standardized norms. This approach aligns with the social model of disability, which emphasizes that barriers to participation often arise from inflexible social and educational structures rather than from the individual [5]. Effective adaptation is essential to improving quality of life, ensuring equitable access to education, and supporting meaningful social integration for children with autism.

A range of individualized support strategies has been shown to facilitate inclusion and learning in children with ASD:

- *Use of specific interests:* Many children with ASD develop strong interests in particular topics. Leveraging these interests, rather than suppressing them, can significantly enhance motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes [4]. For example, educators can incorporate a child's preferred themes into subjects such as reading or problem-solving activities, thereby strengthening comprehension and participation.
- *Self-regulation and sensory integration:* During periods of sensory overload, children with ASD may exhibit difficulties in self-regulation. Support strategies focus on helping them manage these moments through sensory integration approaches, including the use of sensory toys, breathing exercises, structured calming routines, or mindfulness-based techniques [4]. For older children, evidence-based interventions such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) have also been shown to support emotional regulation and adaptive coping strategies [6].
- *Visual supports and structured communication:* Visual supports, including Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems, play a crucial role in supporting understanding and communication. Tools such as pictograms, visual schedules, and structured teaching approaches, help children anticipate routines, understand expectations, and communicate more effectively within educational settings [4]. In Spain, pictograms from ARASAAC (*Centro Aragonés para la Comunicación Aumentativa y Alternativa*) are widely used and have become a standardized visual language, adopted by numerous educational tools to develop AAC communicators with a pictographic system.

Fig. 1: Digital communicator through pictograms.

- *Anticipation and routines:* Anticipating events and maintaining structured routines provides a sense of security and reducing anxiety, particularly in situations involving change. A widely used tool for this purpose is the use of visual schedules of daily routines, which support predictability.
- *Play:* Play is essential for child development; activities aligned with children's interests promote engagement and support social and

communication skills, such as turn-taking through collaborative games.

a b

Fig. 2: Games for children with autism: a) Fidgets, b) Texture game.

Empirical research consistently supports the effectiveness of these adaptive strategies in promoting autonomy, reducing anxiety, and enhancing participation among children with ASD [4]. By combining environmental adaptation with structured and educational settings can better accommodate neurodiverse learners and foster more inclusive classrooms.

II. SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS WITH FAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS

The theoretical framework of this study is fundamental for understanding the general aspects of autism. However, to achieve a deeper understanding of the issue, it is essential to listen to the voices of those who experience it firsthand. For this reason, a survey-based study and some interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data from families of children with autism and professionals working in the field.

A semi-structured survey was administered to 57 participants, including relatives and professionals from various autism associations across Spain. Participants were selected through voluntary participation via these associations. Additionally, three families connected through personal contacts, participated in telephone interviews, providing detailed accounts of their experiences and methods through direct conversation. The collected responses were analysed using thematic analysis, allowing recurring patterns, concerns, and needs to be identified.

2.1 Key Findings

The analysis identified several key themes related to daily challenges, communication, sensory regulation and inclusion:

Daily challenges and interests

Participants reported significant challenges related to daily routines, transitions, and sensory regulation. At the same time, they highlighted common interests among children, such as puzzles, numbers, colours, and video games, which often serve as effective motivators for learning.

Sensory regulation strategies

Families described various strategies used during moments of sensory overstimulation, including the use of sensory toys, listening to music, or retreating to a safe and quiet space, such as a corner of the child's room.

Communication needs

Communication emerged as a major area of support, with many children relying on pictogram-based keyboards to express themselves and understand their environment. Respondents also emphasized the importance of anticipating

changes in routines through visual supports to reduce anxiety.

Inclusion and societal awareness

Finally, most participants stressed the need for greater public awareness, better training for educators and more adapted resources in public spaces. They noted that fostering understanding of autism among peers and families could help reduce social stigma, as well as lessen the constant need for parents to justify their children's behaviour.

Some of the mothers surveyed commented

"There is a lack of societal awareness because it is invisible to the eye. And there is a lot of judgment toward families and children when behaviours fall outside what is considered normative."

"They do not learn worse, but differently and this is often not taken into account."

These findings align with existing literature on invisible disabilities, social stigma, and inclusive education, reinforcing the need for tools that support both autistic children and their surrounding communities. Inspired by these insights, this project led to the development of an interactive educational tool designed to support communication, sensory regulation and inclusion within early childhood educational environments. Auri is born.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL IDEA

To develop Auri, the project adopted Kees Dorst's Frame Creation methodology, a design thinking approach particularly suited to addressing complex challenges such as autism inclusion. This methodology is structured around nine iterative steps, which guide the process from problem exploration to the development of innovative design solutions through continuous reframing and reflection [7]. These nine steps are the following: archaeological phase, paradox, context, field, themes, frames of reference, future phase, transformation phase and integration phase, which are named using illustrative terminology to guide the design process.

The process began with an archaeological phase, focused on gaining a deep understanding of the problem through theoretical research and analysis of existing solutions. This step was addressed through an extensive literature review, allowing the identification of key difficulties faced by children with ASD in childhood.

From this research, the central paradox of the problem was identified: while early education is a crucial stage for fostering inclusion, the young age of children limits their ability to fully understand autism. At the same time, children with ASD are expected to adapt to highly social and stimulating classroom environments, creating tension between collective dynamics.

The context was then defined, focusing on mainstream early childhood classrooms where play plays a fundamental role. This stage included the identification of the main stakeholders involved: children with ASD, neurotypical children, teachers, school management, and families, highlighting their roles, responsibilities, and influence on inclusion.

In the field phase, particular attention was given to the values, needs, and experiences of the most influential actors. Insights gathered from interviews with parents of children with ASD were especially relevant, as they provided first-hand knowledge of children's daily challenges. This information was translated into invented stakeholder archetypes, helping to humanize the problem.

From this understanding, several key themes emerged, reflecting deeper needs shared across stakeholders: the need for flexibility in play, the challenge of balancing stimulation and relaxation, and the importance of perceiving the classroom as a safe space. These themes acted as a bridge between research and conceptual development.

The next step involved creating frames of reference, using metaphorical thinking to reframe the problem. Through statements such as "If the problem was approached as..., then the solution should be like...", different metaphors were explored. The following statements were formulated using this method:

"If the lack of integration of a child with ASD in a preschool classroom is approached as limited flexibility in play, then the solution should be like a puzzle, where each piece fits together depending on its placement."

"If the lack of integration of a child with ASD in a preschool classroom is approached as a difficulty in finding a balance between fun and relaxation, then the solution should be like yoga, providing calm through movement and posture imitation."

"If the lack of integration of a child with ASD in a preschool classroom is approached as non-existent sense of a safe space, then the solution should be like a lighthouse, a constant light guiding for navigators in the darkness that provides them orientation and security."

From this process, the first metaphorical concepts arose: the puzzle, yoga, and the lighthouse.

Based on these frames, the future phase generated several preliminary design concepts, all aimed at combining relaxation, socialization, and play while prioritizing the needs of children with ASD without excluding their peers. Some ideas were a *Sensory Planetarium, Guided Path* and *Refuge House*. These concepts were intentionally left open to evolution.

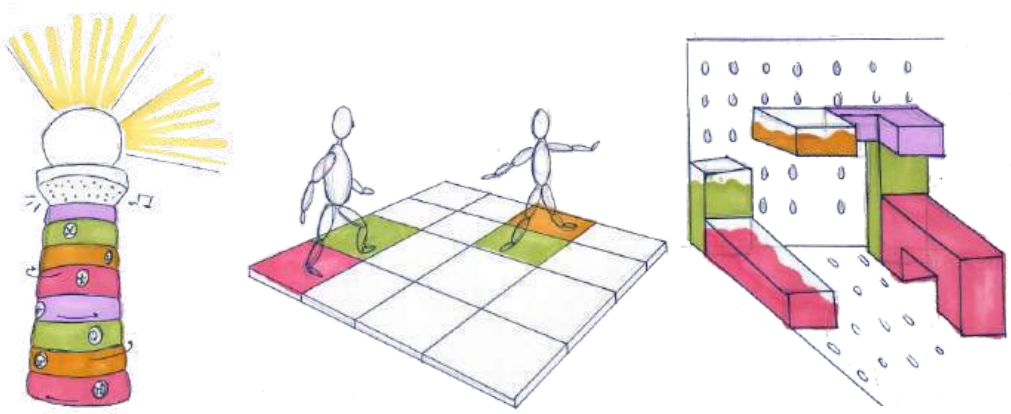


Fig. 3: Conceptual ideas developed from the frames of reference. First, the Sensory Planetarium, second the Guided Path, third the Refuge House. Own elaboration.

During the transformation phase, the proposed ideas were evaluated against a set of design requirements derived from autism-friendly principles, such as sensory balance, intuitiveness, personalization, and cooperative learning. This evaluation led to the selection of the *Sensory Planetarium* concept as the most valuable solution.

Finally, in the integration phase, functional, aesthetic, and educational requirements were combined to define the final design. The lighthouse metaphor was translated into the product's form and interaction logic. This process ultimately resulted in Auri, an interactive educational tool designed to support communication, sensory regulation and inclusion in early childhood classrooms.

IV. PRESENTATION OF AURI

Auri is an interactive, lighthouse-shaped educational device that combines audiovisual projection and visual communication supports to foster inclusion in early childhood classrooms. Conceived as a shared classroom resource, Auri is designed to support communication, emotional regulation, and peer understanding, particularly benefiting children with autism while remaining engaging to all students.

The lighthouse form is both symbolic and functional. Symbolically, it represents guidance, a key element for children who may experience uncertainty in the classroom. Functionally, its vertical structure allows light projections to be distributed so that uniform and easily adjustable lighting environments can be created.

The body of the lighthouse incorporates pictograms that enable interaction across different activities, supporting Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). Additionally, the projector located at the top allows the display of varied content, relaxing, educational, or playful, adapted to the specific goals of each activity. All this facilitates receptive and expressive communication, promote moments of relaxation in the classroom and encourages interaction among peers.

Auri differs from other AAC tools by offering a collective, sensorial, and play-centred experience that introduces this form of communication to all children through play, promoting empathy with children with autism.

Fig. 4: Presentation of the Auri game.

4.1 Description of the Game

The game is centred on a lighthouse-shaped structure that functions as a communication tool. The lighthouse is composed of rotating discs that can cover or reveal different pictograms. The game would consist of children being guided by a professional to complete different activities with these discs, such as identifying specific pictograms, forming sentences, or creating stories with them.

Fig. 5: Child rotating the discs of Auri.

Once the children have completed the tasks assigned by the instructor, the instructor activates the projector through an app. This functions as a form of reward, providing the children with a variety of audiovisual content after a successful completion of an activity. The projections include sensory videos to relax children, educational representations of concepts such as animal

movement and games projected onto the floor that encourage physical interaction. Additionally, Auri plays calming audio, creating an enriching experience.

Fig. 6: Children watching an Auri projection on the wall.

4.2 Auri's Features

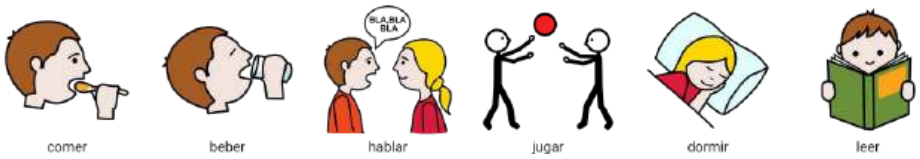
The game, standing 95 cm tall, comprises several key parts: a base, a central axis, eight discs, a projector mount and a projector. Its characteristics includeHeavy and stable base, smooth rotation of the discs, soft colours for a visually pleasant experience, eye-catching lighthouse-inspired shape with an attractive and symbolic design, easy assembly and resistant materials to falls and frequent use.

The color palette, composed of soft tones, helps children distinguish with facility between the different groups of pictograms represented on each disc.

Auri's body features 54 pictograms organized into nine thematic bands, covered by discs that children rotate to reveal the pictograms. The themes are as follows:

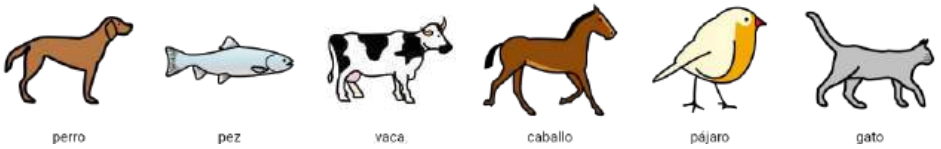
- *Emotions*

- *Daily activities*

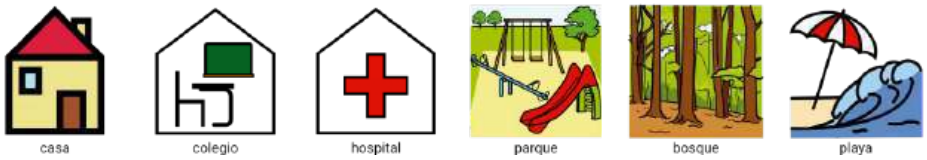


- *People*

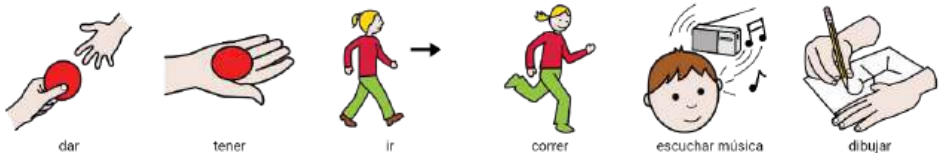
- *Animals*



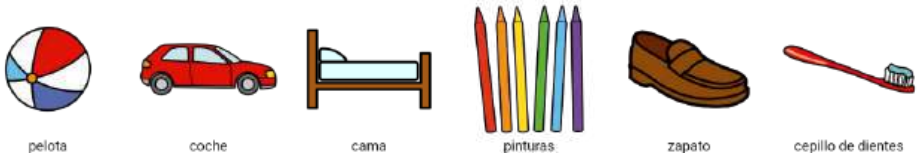
- *Places*



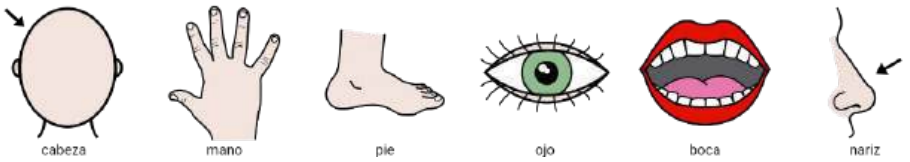
- *Actions*



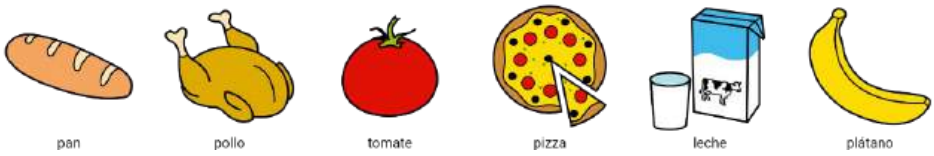
- *Objects*



- *Parts of the body*



- *Food*



(Pictograms from ARASAAC.org)

To overcome the limitation of fixed themes, the combination of pictograms is customizable thanks to their sticker format, allowing the teacher to select them according to the classroom situation.

Fig. 7: Part of Auri where the pictograms are visible attached to the structure.

4.3 Projector

The projector is positioned at the top of the lighthouse. It is mounted on an axis that allows it to rotate 360°, enabling projection in all directions. In addition, it is also capable of playing audio.

Fig. 8: Projector of Auri.

4.4 Audiovisual Content and Activities

The audiovisual content is activated whenever the teacher deems it appropriate, managed through a mobile application, which features a simple and user-friendly design. The app includes games, control of the projections and pedagogical tracking systems.

Fig. 9: Mobile app of Auri.

4.5 Proposed Activities

This section presents a set of example activities designed to support teachers in integrating Auri into everyday classroom dynamics. The proposed activities illustrate how pictograms and projections can be used to foster communication, emotional understanding, cooperation and inclusion among children with diverse abilities. All scenarios are flexible and can be adapted according to the age, needs and characteristics of each group.

- *Activity 1: Scenario Simulation*

Objective:

To encourage the development of social, emotional and problem-solving skills through the simulation of familiar social contexts.
Suggested Duration: 10–15 minutes.

Description and use of Auri:

The teacher introduces a scenario projected by Auri, such as:

"Imagine you are at the supermarket, and you see a child who seems lost."

Using the pictograms displayed on Auri, children are invited to select pictograms relevant to the situation (e.g., *sad, ask for help, supermarket*). Auri supports both verbal and non-verbal participation, allowing all children to contribute by pointing or naming pictograms.

(Pictograms from ARASAAC.org)

Once the choices are made, Auri projects a short educational video showing a child shopping with their parents in a supermarket. This helps contextualize the environment and reinforces understanding through visual learning.

Fig. 10: Children watching an Auri projection on a projection screen.

Role of the teacher:

- Facilitate turn-taking and shared decision-making.
- Ask guiding questions such as:
  - *"How do you think the child feels?"*
  - *"What could we do to help?"*
- Encourage respectful listening.

- *Activity 2: Cooperative Stories*

Objective:

To encourage the development of language, creativity, turn-taking, narrative sequencing and cooperative interaction through shared storytelling.

Suggested duration: 20-30 minutes.

Description and use of Auri:

The teacher invites the children to collaboratively create a story using Auri as a shared communication tool. The activity begins with the prompt:

"Let's create a story together. Each of you will choose a pictogram from Auri and add something to our story."

One at a time, children rotate a disc on Auri and select a pictogram representing a character, action, object, place, or emotion. Children then contribute a short addition to the story. For example:

"A group of children found an abandoned ball in a park and felt happy because they could play together."

(Pictograms from ARASAAC.org)

After the story is completed, Auri projects an interactive floor-based game in which children follow a visual path by stepping on specific geometric shapes. This movement-based

extension promotes entertainment, supports sensory regulation and reinforces body coordination.

Fig. 11: Girls playing a game projected on the floor by Auri.

Role of the teacher:

- Facilitate turn-taking and ensure equal participation.
- Support narrative coherence by prompting with questions such as:
  - *"What happens next?"*
  - *"How does the character feel now?"*
- Encourage decision-making.

- *Activity 3: Exploring Emotions*

Objective:

To support recognition of emotions, emotional vocabulary, self-awareness and empathy by linking emotions to everyday situations.

Suggested duration: 15-20 minutes.

Description and use of Auri:

The teacher introduces the activity by selecting an emotion pictogram on Auri (e.g., happiness, sadness, anger). The group is then prompted with the question:

"What situations might make us feel like this?"

(Pictogram from ARASAAC.org)

Children are encouraged to respond by sharing personal or imagined experiences.

Once several situations have been identified, Auri projects a short video designed to either stimulate or calm, depending on the selected emotion. This visual content helps children associate emotions with bodily sensations.

Fig. 12: Children watching a relaxing Auri projection on the ceiling.

Role of the teacher:

- Guide the discussion in a supportive and non-judgmental way.
- Help children label emotions accurately and validate different responses.
- Ask reflective questions such as:
  - *"Have you ever felt like this at school?"*
  - *"What helps you feel better when you feel this way?"*
- Adjust the emotional intensity of the projected content to respect individual sensory sensitivities.

V. CONCLUSION

This project presented the conceptual design and development of Auri, an interactive educational system intended to support communication, sensory regulation and inclusion for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in school classrooms. Auri is proposed as a design-led response to challenges identified through theoretical research and qualitative input from families and professionals.

Auri combines pedagogy with technology: a pictogram-based communication system aligned with Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) principles, and a multisensory projector designed to provide controlled audiovisual stimuli. The intended educational value of Auri lies in its ability to combine communication, play, and sensory experience within a single interactive framework. The following table illustrates how Auri can support the development of key skills in children.

Table 1: Alignment of Auri features with developmental competencies.

Skill	How it Develops the Skill
Communication (verbal & non-verbal)	Children use pictograms to express ideas, needs, and emotions. Through the various activities offered by Auri, all children can learn to use and understand the Augmentative and Alternative Communication system better.
Turn-taking / Social interaction	Structured activities and group interactions encourage waiting for turns. Also, interaction with peers around Auri's projected games promotes cooperative play.
Empathy with Autism	It introduces this type of communication to other children, who may not need it in their daily lives, but benefit from it to better understand what their autistic peers want to express.
Creativity & storytelling	Children invent narratives using pictograms and projections.
Emotional regulation / Self-calming	Projected calming videos, soothing lights and scenario-based learning videos allow children to manage stress or other specific situations and practice self- regulation.
Problem-solving & decision-making	Children choose responses to social scenarios during some activities with Auri (for example, Scenario simulation activity) or decide which pictograms to use, promoting reasoning, planning and decision-making.
Attention & focus	Children must attend to teacher's instructions before play or maintain engagement with interactive projections.
Collaboration / teamwork	With Auri's example activities, children collaborate to create stories, respond to scenarios, or play projected games together.

These developmental goals are theoretically grounded in inclusive education and Universal Design for Learning approaches; however, their effectiveness has not yet been empirically measured.

Also, the system was designed to be adaptable, allowing educators to modify pictograms, activities, and projected content according to the needs of each group, which represents one of its main strengths for long-term classroom integration.

At this stage, the evaluation of Auri is limited to its conceptual coherence and preliminary qualitative feedback. Informal responses from families associated with autism support organizations in Spain indicate a positive perception of the project's potential usefulness in educational and domestic contexts. The following statements reflect the perspectives of families who participated in the final survey:

"I find it very valuable that initiatives like this are being considered to support the learning of children with this type of disorder, and that it is designed for use in classrooms to promote inclusion with their peers."

"Thank you for contributing something of great value. My son is older (21 years), and I would have liked there to be much more awareness about his condition."

Nevertheless, this feedback should be understood as exploratory, as no structured pilot study, usability testing, or quantitative assessment has been conducted. Consequently, claims regarding

impact on motivation, emotional regulation or social skills should be interpreted as intended outcomes.

Several limitations must therefore be acknowledged. The absence of real-world testing with children and educators restricts the ability to assess usability. Future work should address these gaps through mixed-methods research, including classroom pilots, observational analysis and engagement metrics such as participation levels.

Despite these limitations, the project aims to demonstrate the potential of viewing assistive technologies not merely as compensatory tools, but as shared pedagogical ecosystems that promote mutual understanding among all children. By introducing AAC-based communication through collective, play-centred experiences, Auri seeks to normalize diverse forms of communication and reduce barriers associated with invisible disabilities.

In conclusion, this project contributes a design-oriented perspective to the field of inclusive education, highlighting how interactive, multisensory systems can be conceptually structured to support neurodiverse learners while fostering empathy and cooperation in early educational environments. Further empirical validation will be essential to determine Auri's practical impact, but the framework developed here offers a foundation for future research and implementation in inclusive classroom design.

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Violation of the Geneva Convention: A Comparative Study of the Shackling of Prisoners of War in Europe, 1940-1943

Dr. Lee Rippon

ABSTRACT

During the First World War, the practice of reciprocity through reprisals and maltreatment against prisoners of war led to the international law against such actions in the newly developed 1929 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Despite the new Convention, the practice of reciprocal treatment in the form of reprisals remained significant among belligerent states during the Second World War. Yet, it is important to understand how international conventions such as the Geneva Convention could be manipulated to pursue a course of reprisal action that would impact prisoners. Critically, the ability to manipulate the enemy through the treatment of their prisoners of war (POWs) established the British government's attitude toward prisoner of war reprisals. Equally important, the Australian and Dominion governments' response to the treatment of their Prisoners of War (POWs) during instances of reprisals and punishment as a sovereign government and member of the British Empire.

Keywords: geneva convention, prisoners of war, shackling crisis, reprisals, second world war, international humanitarian law, pow camps, british empire military policy, italy world war ii, wartime legal diplomacy.

Classification: LCC Code: KZ6471

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573306
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 26 | Issue 1 | Compilation 1.0

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During the First World War, the practice of reciprocity through reprisals and maltreatment against prisoners of war led to the international law against such actions in the newly developed 1929 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Despite the new Convention, the practice of reciprocal treatment in the form of reprisals remained significant among belligerent states during the Second World War. Yet, it is important to understand how international conventions such as the Geneva Convention could be manipulated to pursue a course of reprisal action that would impact prisoners. Critically, the ability to manipulate the enemy through the treatment of their prisoners of war (POWs) established the British government's attitude toward prisoner of war reprisals. Equally important, the Australian and Dominion governments' response to the treatment of their Prisoners of War (POWs) during instances of reprisals and punishment as a sovereign government and member of the British Empire.

How the Convention and reprisals against prisoners in POW camps were implemented, and the difference between punishment and reprisals is important. Although the punishment of shackling in November 1941, inflicted on Australian soldiers in Italian camps, violated international conventions as well as Italy's military regulations. This act of shackling originated from an incident within the POW camp itself. It can be compared to the more widely recognised political reprisal known as the shacking crisis of 1942-1943. Analysing the ongoing violations of international conventions leading up to the shackling incidents and distinguishing between the two episodes is essential to understanding how belligerent governments manipulated the Convention to serve their national interests. Central to these events is the impact on prisoners in POW camps, who were particularly vulnerable; therefore, the actions in Italy and during the shacking crisis are comparable in this regard. However, during the crisis, Britain and Germany exploited prisoners of war as political instruments, transforming the episode of reprisal into a wartime weapon. A comprehensive review of the Geneva Convention, especially the articles concerning reprisals and the mistreatment of prisoners, in relation to British and Dominion forces, will illuminate the treatment of prisoners during the Second World War.

Keywords: geneva convention, prisoners of war, shackling crisis, reprisals, second world war, international humanitarian law, pow camps, british empire military policy, italy world war ii, wartime legal diplomacy.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is important to establish the distinction between punishment and reprisals taken against prisoners in POW camps, as set out in the articles of the Convention. However, before the difference between punishment and reprisal can be examined, it is crucial to understand the events that led up to the creation and implementation of the *1929 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*.

Before the First World War, the first significant piece of legislation specifically addressing POWs was the *Declaration of Paris of 1856,* which marked the end of the Crimean War (1853-1856).[1]

[1] James Garner, *International Law and the World War, vol.1* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1920), 12.

While it did not recognise the status of POWs or how they should be treated during the conflict, the treaty did identify what should happen to the prisoners at the end of the war, stating, 'Prisoners of War shall be immediately given up on either side.'[2] During the nineteenth century and in the years after the *Declaration of Paris of 1856*, a significant number of international conventions were revised or developed.[3] Three years after the end of the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the Brussels Conference was assembled in 1874.[4] The conference produced the first international code of land warfare, which set down twelve basic rules governing the treatment of prisoners of war.[5] Article 23, most importantly stated, 'They must be humanely treated'.[6] It was the first time that the humane treatment of prisoners of war was documented in international law. The *Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague, II)* followed in 1899, providing greater detail on the treatment and management of prisoners of war; from that time, prisoners of war have been recognised in international law.[7]

In the twentieth century, international laws continued to be revised and developed. While the *Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field* was improved in 1906, the most significant pre-war convention to be revised regarding prisoners of war would be the *Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV),* 18 October 1907.[8] Heather Jones suggests that reprisals were standard practice in previous European conflicts.[9] As a result of reprisal activity during earlier conflicts and with nothing to prevent the activity in international law, belligerent governments understood that reciprocal agreements would also need to be negotiated to ensure decent treatment of the POWs. Therefore, the 1907 Hague Convention would be significant in the management and treatment of prisoners of war. When the First World War broke out, the pre-existing body of untried international law governing how hostilities should be conducted and how prisoners of war ought to be treated would be tested. During the war, belligerent governments began to expose the deficiencies in the Hague Convention as it related to prisoners of war, especially in the context of reprisals and reciprocity. At times, they have to negotiate their own reciprocal arrangements to ensure the welfare of those in captivity. Even with the Hague Convention and manuals of military law, events in April 1917 showed that POWs remained a significant political and military problem that could be used as a tool to manipulate enemy behaviour and highlighted the deficiencies in the current convention. In June 1917, the Australian government was informed that a delegation would proceed to the Hague for an Anglo-German

[2] Treaty of Paris 1856, Article 6. http://content.ecf.org.il accessed 22 June 2021. The Declaration was drafted and signed between the warring monarchs of Great Britain, France, the Ottoman Empire, Sardinia and Russia.

[3] International laws revised or developed between 1856 and 1874 include, *Instructions for the Government of Armies of the United States in the Field, Lieber Code*, 24 April 1863. http://ihl-databases.icrc.org accessed 22 June 2021., *Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field*. Geneva, 22 August 1864 https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/120 accessed 30 September 2022., *Additional Articles relating to the Condition of the Wounded in War*. Geneva, 20 October 1868. https://ihl-atabases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/125 accessed 30 September 2022., *Declaration Renouncing the use, in time of war, of explosive projectiles under 400 grammes weight*. St Petersburg, 29 November to 11 December 1868. http://ihl-databases.icrc.org accessed 22 June 2021. The Declaration forbid the use of specific explosive projectiles with the aim of fixing the technical limits the necessities of war ought to yield., *Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague, II)* 29 July 1899. Treaty Series 403, 1899., International Declaration concerning the Laws and Customs of War., Brussels, 27 August 1874 https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/135 accessed 4 October 2022.

[4] Tracey Leigh Dowdeswell, "The Brussels Peace Conference of 1874" and the Modern Laws of Belligerent Qualification". *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 54, no. 3 (2017): 805.

[5] Dowdeswell, "The Brussels Peace Conference of 1874", 806.

[6] Project of an International Declaration concerning the Laws and Customs of War. Brussels, 27 August 1874. http://ihl-databases.icrc.org accessed 22 June 2021.

[7] *Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague, II)* 29 July 1899. Treaty Series 403, 1899., *Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV)* 18 October 1907. Treaty Series 539, 1907.

[8] *Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field*. Geneva, 6 July 1906. https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/180 access ed 30 September 2022., *Laws and Customs of War on Land (Hague IV)* 18 October 1907.

[9] Heather Jones, *Violence against Prisoners of War in the First World War: Britain, France and Germany, 1914-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 134.

Conference. Set for 28 June, the British and German representatives would discuss issues involving prisoners of war, including reprisals.[10] The Anglo-German Conference produced a newly negotiated agreement titled, *An Agreement between the British and German Governments Concerning Combatant and Civilian Prisoners of War*, which clarified several issues that had complicated prisoner treatment between the two states.[11] The new prisoner of war agreement with Germany was sent to Australian Prime Minister William 'Billy' Hughes on 28 July 1917. Significantly, point 9 addressed the matter of reprisals between the belligerents,

> That all reprisals against individuals shall be at once cancelled. No further reprisals shall take place except on four weeks' notice, and the execution of all sentences for offences committed by combatants or civilians between the date of capture and 1 August shall stand over till the conclusion of peace ends.[12]

The issue of reprisals and the necessity for agreements during the First World War served as the catalyst for the revision of international law in the interwar period.

II. THE 1929 GENEVA CONVENTION FOR PRISONERS OF WAR

With a number of documented failings in the management of prisoners of war during the First World War, it was recognised that the Hague Convention was inadequate to deal with POW matters and needed to be revised.[13] This recognition ultimately led to the 1929 Geneva Conference and the formation of a specific convention on the treatment and management of prisoners of war, known as the *1929 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*.[14]

Preparations for a new and improved convention began in Geneva in 1921, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) wrote the draft convention in 1923.[15] The draft code was circulated to participating countries shortly before the conference, and governments made numerous recommendations for the amendment of the POW regulations. Considering the willingness of belligerents to participate in reprisals during the war, the reprisal issue mentioned in the draft document provoked surprisingly little conversation.[16] The British government did propose that states be allowed to apply reprisals under certain circumstances; however, the British proposal found little support, and the matter was never put to a vote.[17] What was less clear was whether those present at the conference honestly believed it was possible to completely abolish reprisals under a new prisoner-of-war law.[18] The 1923 draft was reviewed at the 1929 Geneva Diplomatic Conference. The outcome of the 1929 Conference was a document containing new regulations explicitly governing the treatment of prisoners of war.[19] The *1929 Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, with over ninety articles specifically aimed at the treatment and management of prisoners of war, did not replace the Hague Convention.[20] The new Geneva Convention would complement the Hague Convention, which provided only seventeen articles concerning prisoners of war. Importantly, it covered other aspects of conduct in war that

[10] NAA: A2 1919/67 Prisoner of War Agreement with Germany. Telegram Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Prime Minister, 30 June 1917.
[11] NAA: A2 1919/67 An Agreement between the British and German Governments Concerning Combatant and Civilian Prisoners of War, July 1917.
[12] NAA: A2 1919/67 Telegram Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Prime Minister – new prisoners of war agreement with Germany, 28 July 1917.
[13] A. Gillespie, *A History of the Laws of War Volume 1, the customs and laws of war with regards to combatants and captives* (Oxford: Hart Publishing Ltd, 2011), 180.
[14] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*. Geneva Treaty series 846, 1929.
[15] Allan Rosas, *The legal status of prisoners of war: a study in international humanitarian law applicable in armed conflicts* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1976), 76.
[16] Neville Wylie, The 1929 prisoner of war convention and the building of the inter-war prisoner of war regime. In S. Scheipers (eds) *Prisoners in war*, pp. 91-108 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 98.
[17] Wylie, The 1929 prisoner of war convention and the building of the inter-war prisoner of war regime, 98.
[18] Wylie, The 1929 prisoner of war convention and the building of the inter-war prisoner of war regime, 98.
[19] Rosas, *The legal status of prisoners of war*, 76.
[20] Gillespie, *A History of the Laws of War Volume 1*, 180.

were not included in the Geneva Convention, and would remain in force for the States that did not ratify the new Geneva Convention.

For the first time, a convention provided POWs with the right to have representatives within the camps and regulations concerning judicial and disciplinary proceedings. Critically, it outlined the role of the protecting powers and what authority the protecting powers would be provided to safeguard the interests of POWs. Finally, it described the humanitarian role of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which was considerably different from that of the protecting powers.[21] However, the most insightful development of the 1929 Geneva Convention was the prohibition placed on reprisals and collective punishments.[22] Given the usefulness and political advantages of reprisals, and some countries' views on the issue, the ICRC's ability to secure an agreement for the total abolition of such activities was especially notable.[23] These attitudes toward reprisals and deficiencies in the Convention would once again become problematic as the new, untried Convention would be put to the test during the Second World War.

2.1 Second World War and the Geneva Convention

Belligerent states during the Second World War would refer to the Geneva Convention for guidance regarding the humane treatment of men in captivity.[24] At times of maltreatment and reprisal, belligerents drew in particular on Article 2 of the convention, which stated, 'measures of reprisal against them [i.e., POWs] are prohibited.'[25] Crucially, the convention did not provide details about what constituted maltreatment or reprisal, nor did it include any penalties for the violation of the articles relating to the enforcement of reprisals and maltreatment. Nonetheless, Article 2 Section 2 would continue to be referred to when reprisal measures were undertaken, stating, 'They [POWs] must at all times be humanely treated and protected, particularly against acts of violence.'[26] Even so, this did not prevent belligerent governments from resorting to reprisals throughout the war in an attempt to manipulate the behaviour and policy of the enemy government. Although belligerent governments were well aware of international conventions regarding prisoners of war and included articles to the effect in their military manuals, belligerents employed a policy of reprisals and maltreatment against prisoners of war to curb enemy behaviour in the general war effort and on the battlefield.

In the early days of the Second World War, Berlin had a catalogue of complaints about British conduct on the battlefield.[27] Previously, German accusations of wrongdoing had met with protests of innocence and efforts to appease for the sake of the prisoners on behalf of the British. However, a considerable number of incidents led to complaints from the Germans dating back to the previous year, and the British willingness to back down was waning.[28] Maltreatment and reciprocal reprisals persisted throughout the war. Even in the last days of the war, the Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Canberra expressed its concerns regarding reprisal action,

> The High Commissioner directs me to say that he has been asked to invite the attention of the Commonwealth authorities to the fact that a report has appeared in a Swiss newspaper and was cabled to the United Kingdom from Switzerland on 14 March [1945] to the effect that the Germans are contemplating reprisals

[21] Geneva Convention of July 27, Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Article 86, 87 and 88, 957-958.
[22] Rosa, The legal status of prisoners of war, 77.
[23] Wylie, The 1929 prisoner of war convention and the building of the inter-war prisoner of war regime, 98.
[24] Roger Deacon. "Clausewitz and Foucault: War and Power," *Scientia Militaria* 31, no. 1 (2003): 41.
[25] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*. Geneva Treaty series 846, 1929. Article 2, 938.
[26] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, Article 2, 938.
[27] Bob Moore. The treatment of prisoners of war in the Western European theatre of war, 1939-45. In S. Scheipers (eds) *Prisoners in war*, pp. 111-125 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 114.
[28] Mackenzie, "The Shackling Crisis: A Case-Study in the Dynamics of Prisoner-of-War Diplomacy in the Second World War," 85.

> on Allied prisoners of war for the recent bombing of certain German cities.[29]

These examples of reprisal actions undertaken throughout the war varied in type and length depending on the enemy's supposed wrongdoing or breach. Sadly, for the prisoners, some were more severe than others. Fortunately, in the Western European theatre, the Geneva Convention was mostly upheld; violations and cases of ill-treatment, including death among prisoners, were considered the exception rather than the norm.[30] However, as will be explored below, the existence of the conventions did not guarantee the consistent treatment of POWs during the Second World War, because where there was an unspoken reciprocity principle, the better negotiating position was held by the power holding the greater number of enemy prisoners.[31]

What would be important at the time of reprisal and maltreatment of prisoners is the role of neutral organisations. Neutral organisations were relied upon by belligerents to oversee the treatment of prisoners and ensure their humane treatment.[32] The Geneva Convention envisaged that the protecting power would be the primary inspector of POW camps, collector of information, and reporter of any breaches and violations. Article 86 lays out the role and responsibilities of the protecting power regarding the safeguarding of prisoners of war,

> Representatives of the protecting power or its accepted delegates shall be permitted to go to any place, without exception, where prisoners of war are interned. They shall have access to all places occupied by prisoners and may interview them, as a general rule, without witnesses, personally or through interpreters.[33]

The ICRC's role was not defined in the same way by the Geneva Convention as that of the protecting powers; even so, its humanitarian work was considered essential. Article 88 recognised the ICRC's contribution to the wellbeing of POWs in enemy captivity, stating 'the foregoing provision are not an obstacle to the humanitarian activity which the International Committee of the Red Cross may use for the protection of prisoners of war, with the consent of the interested belligerents.'[34] As part of its role to humanise war and ease the suffering of prisoners, the Red Cross became intimately involved in monitoring the fate of POWs.[35] At the outset of the war, the ICRC considered its role to be a liaison between national Red Cross Societies and governments.[36]

2.2 Australians in Italy

The experience of captivity in Italy was varied and largely depended on the conduct of the camp commandants. Attitudes of individual camp commandants did not appear to be a consideration under the convention; it was assumed that all signatories would comply. However, Italy, though a signatory, had not ratified the Convention and, as a result, was not required to adopt it. Article 82 recognises that not all States were party to the Convention[37], but does in Article 1 state,

The present Convention shall apply, without prejudice to the stipulations of Title VII:

1. To all persons mentioned in Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the Regulations annexed to the Hague

[29] NAA: A1066 IC45/6/2/15 Office of the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Canberra, 20 March 1945.
[30] David Rolf. 'Blind Bureaucracy': The British Government and POWs in German Captivity, 1939-45. In B. Moore and K. Fedorowich (eds) *Prisoners of War and their captors in World War II*, pp. 47-67(Oxford: Berg, 1996), 56.
[31] Walter Wynne Mason, and New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs War History Branch. *Prisoners of War* Official History of New Zealand in the Second World War 1939-45 (Wellington: War History Branch Department of Internal Affairs, 1954), 52.
[32] Moore and Fedorowich, *The British Empire and its Italian Prisoners of War 1940-1947,* 16.
[33] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War,* Article 86, 957.
[34] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War,* Article 88, 958.
[35] Gerald Steinarcher, *Humanitarians at War: The Red Cross in the shadow of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 8.
[36] International Committee of the Red Cross. *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War (September 1, 1939 – June 30, 1947) vol. 1 General Activities* (Geneva: ICRC, 1948), 67.
[37] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War,* Article 82, 956.

> Convention respecting the laws and customs of war on land, of October 18, 1907, and captured by the enemy.[38]

Italy ratified the 1907 Hague Convention, which contained articles, though not as comprehensive, regarding the treatment of prisoners of war. Importantly, in 1938, Italy produced a document titled the *Italian War and Neutrality Laws*. A copy was translated and sent to Viscount Halifax at the Foreign Office by the British Ambassador in Rome, James Drummond, the Earl of Perth.[39] The document discussed Italy's role in a time of war and its position on neutrality. It also made specific reference to the matter of prisoners of war, adopting the expression 'prisoners of war: hostages,' which led to the suspicion that Italy would consider prisoners of war and hostages to be the same in any future hostilities.[40] The document suggested that the Italian government was prepared to follow the Geneva Convention: 'Prisoners of war will be treated in accordance with the relative international conventions.'[41] More importantly, Article 101 explains,

> A measure will be issued by the Head of the Government containing the regulations regarding the formation and function of offices to provide assistance and information for prisoners of war and to regulate relations between prisoners and foreign countries.[42]

A month after Italy entered the war, Lord Halifax communicated to Rome Britain's position concerning the Geneva Convention. Although Britain was aware that Italy had acknowledged the use of relevant conventions in the *Italian War and Neutrality Laws*, Britain sought formal agreement. Still, it was December 1940 before Britain, and as a result, Australia received notification of Italy's intentions toward the Geneva Convention.[43] This was because the Italian government had reservations regarding several articles of the convention, under Article 83, 'upon commencement of hostilities, authorised meetings of representatives of the respective authorities charged with the administration of prisoners of war.'[44] Italian authorities instructed the United States Embassy in Rome to inform Britain that they required a number of articles to be negotiated and would await the British response before considering the Convention to be in force.[45] There was, for example, disagreement with the Italian government regarding Article 86, which recognised that the protecting powers would be 'charged with safeguarding the interests of belligerents.'[46] Furthermore, Italy did not agree to the protecting power taking a predominant role in POW matters; instead, it favoured the Red Cross.[47] The United States, which was acting as the protecting power for Britain and the Dominions, was not happy about being refused the opportunity to fulfil its responsibilities under the convention. They suggested that such refusal could have embarrassing repercussions for all concerned, including Italian prisoners of war detained in Britain.[48] However, as Italy had not ratified the Convention, they were not obligated to follow the regulations.

In December 1940, the United States Embassy in Rome wrote to Anthony Eden at the Foreign Office. Included in the communication was Rome's response to Lord Halifax's earlier correspondence from 1 July 1940 regarding the

[38] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War,* Article 1, 938.
[39] TNA: FO 916/2597/4 Foreign Office: Consular (War) Department, later Prisoners of War Department. Welfare of Australians in Italy. Translation of Italian War and Neutrality Laws, 31 December 1938.
[40] TNA: FO 916/2597/4 Translation of Italian War and Neutrality Laws, 31 December 1938, Article 99, 46.
[41] TNA: FO 916/2597/4 Translation of Italian War and Neutrality Laws, 31 December 1938, Article 101, 46.
[42] TNA: FO 916/2597/4 Translation of Italian War and Neutrality Laws, 31 December 1938, Article 101, 46.
[43] NAA: A1608 A20/1/1/Part 1 American Embassy Rome to Anthony Eden Foreign Office, London, 30 December 1940.
[44] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War,* Article 83, 957.
[45] TNA: FO 916/161 Italian and British Prisoners of War – reciprocal treatment, 1941. Translation from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the United States Embassy, Rome, 10 December 1940.
[46] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*. Geneva Treaty series 846, 1929. Article 86, 957.
[47] TNA: FO 916/161 Letter from American Embassy, London to the Foreign Office, 7 January 1941.
[48] TNA: FO 916/161 Letter from American Embassy, London to the Foreign Office, 7 January 1941.

Geneva Convention. The Italian government replied, 'Italian Government considers in force [the] International Convention relative to [the] treatment of prisoners of war, signed at Geneva July 27th, 1929, without prejudice.'[49]

When Australian prisoners of war arrived on the Italian mainland, they were transferred to several different camps. Most Australian soldiers found themselves detained at Grupignano (Campo PG57).[50] The Camp Commandant, Vittorio Calcaterra, was described as a fervent fascist previously in charge of an Italian Police District. To the POWs, he proved to be a particularly strict and ruthless disciplinarian; his attitude caused the violation of the Geneva Convention on many occasions.[51] Harsh and arbitrary sentences of imprisonment were common at Grupignano.

Among the incidents of maltreatment that violated the Geneva Convention at Grupignano was the so-called hair-cutting episode described by a number of Australian POWs in their repatriation interviews with Australian Army Intelligence. One such report was made by Corporal Claude Day. During his repatriation interview, he said, 'I did 31 days in cells in Grupignano being [a] collective punishment'.[52] A more detailed account regarding the incident was sent to the High Commissioner in London, in which Day describes Calcaterra's order of close clipping.

> Each man who refused to submit to hair clipping was removed from the ranks and handcuffed. After about 22 had been so handcuffed, Camp Leader Sgt. Maj. Cotman, an Australian prisoner of war who had been temporarily absent from the compound... upheld protests whereupon he was handcuffed and forcibly hair cropped in front of the whole parade amid derisive laughter from Calcaterra and his officers.[53]

This was a violation under Articles 46 and 54 of the Convention. Article 46 explains,

> Punishments other than those provided for the same acts for soldiers of the national armies may not be imposed upon prisoners of war by the military authorities and courts of the detaining Power...Collective punishment for individual acts is also forbidden.[54]

While Article 54 states,

> Arrest is the most severe disciplinary punishment which may be imposed on a prisoner of war. The duration of a single punishment may not exceed thirty days. This maximum of thirty days may not, further, be exceeded in the case of several acts for which the prisoner has to undergo discipline at the time when it is ordered for him, whether or not the acts are connected.[55]

During the incident, the Australian prisoners voiced their support for their camp leader, Sergeant-Major Cotman, calling out, 'Good luck to you, Cotty'. Calcaterra claimed that they called him a dog *(cane)* in Italian, resulting in every fifth man, thirty in all, including Cpl Day, being handcuffed along with the twenty-two already in handcuffs for refusing a haircut.[56] In his interview, Day complained about the injustice he faced during his time at Grupignano.[57] Fortunately, Day was not the only prisoner to record the shackling at Grupignano; other prisoners corroborated his

[49] NAA: A1608 A20/1/1/Part 1 American Embassy Rome to Anthony Eden Foreign Office, London, 30 December 1940.

[50] Tom Trumble, *Tomorrow we escape: one man's extraordinary story of courage and survival from Tobruk to the prison camps of occupied Europe* (Australia: Penguin Books, 2014), 107.

[51] Peter Stanley., R. Reid., J. Moremon., and N. Anderson. *Stolen years: Australian prisoners of war* (Canberra: Commonwealth of Australia, 2002), 14-15.

[52] NAA: B833 NX8889 Day Claude Frederick.

[53] AMW 54 779/4/2 Australian Prisoners of War in Europe, 15 July 1943., also see AWM: 54 779/3/116. Statement by NX8889 Cpl C. F. Day – AASC 18 Bde, 10 July 1943., NAA: A989 1943/925/1/17. Cablegram Prime Minister's Office to High Commissioner's Office, London, 15 July 1943.

[54] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*. Geneva Treaty series 846, 1929. Article 46, 949.

[55] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*. Geneva Treaty series 846, 1929. Article 54, 950.

[56] AWM: 54 779/4/21 [Prisoners of War and Internees–Treatment by Enemy:] Reports by International Red Cross and Protecting Powers on conditions existing in Prisoner Of War Camps in Germany and Italy 1941-1945. Department of External Affairs to Department of Army, 15 July 1943.

[57] NAA: B833 NX8889 Day, Claude Frederick.

account, allowing for a better understanding of the event and how the collective reprisal action led to a breach of the Convention.[58] Malcolm Webster described the event in considerable detail in his memoir,

> During November 1941, the Colonel mounted his far-reaching edict dubbed the 'hair raid'. All prisoners were ordered to have their hair removed. On principle, we protested against this order…Next day, our refusal to have all our hair cut off prompted the Colonel to react angrily. He quickly called a full parade and descended on us with squads of military guards and Carabinieri. Machine guns were set up…The Colonel and his Command, on one hand, needing to enforce their authority and we stubborn Australians trying to stick to our guns. Twenty-two pairs of handcuffs were wheeled in on a handcart… Following further refusal, the first twenty-one prisoners in our group were handcuffed. They were marched off to have their hair shorn off by the camp barber.[59]

Webster's account explains the outcome of the hair-cutting episode,

We were all handcuffed to the rope. This forced us to remain in a standing position for many hours each day for almost three weeks. Conditions were quite grim and very uncomfortable. Every morning we were escorted, in pairs, by the guards, to a wash house. Five minutes only was allowed to wash our hands and faces. As the window shutters were kept closed, the goal interior was dark and gloomy. No exercise was permitted outside the goal…Father Cotta, who was originally at Prato all'Isarco, visited the 'boob.' He was appalled at the inhuman conditions prevailing at the goal and immediately declared he would have things improved by reporting to the authorities in Geneva, Switzerland. Shortly afterwards, a Swiss Delegation arrived, and after their inspection, conditions improved for the inmates.[60]

During the punishment taken against the prisoners for refusing to cut their hair, an agent from the protecting power frequently visited, while the ICRC only visited twice.[61] During a visit from the ICRC, their representative, Dr Lambert, spoke with Colonel Calcaterra, who informed him that the reprisal was the fault of the prisoners. Calcaterra complained to the ICRC representative on his own behalf about the hair-cutting situation; he protested against the prisoners' resistance to the order to have their hair shaved.[62] Lambert, in his report, explained that twenty prisoners had been confined in a special hut that served as a prison. He further stated that the prisoners were allowed out of the hut to walk in the small outdoor space provided; otherwise, they were treated the same as the other prisoners.[63] Despite what Lambert's camp report records, it does not correspond with the repatriation reports or personal memories of the prisoners in the camp. Furthermore, it does not mention handcuffs or the extra prisoners punished for allegedly calling Calcaterra a dog. The inaccuracy of the ICRC report, unknown to the Australian government at the time.

The Australian government was slowly gaining information regarding the treatment of its POWs in Italy. By July 1943, Australian authorities had received several reports from the protecting powers, the ICRC and an advance party of repatriated Australian POWs from Italy, describing the conditions and activities of mistreatment.[64] Additionally, in July, the Department of External Affairs received a report containing a statement from Major Raymond Binns, an Australian medical officer, who

[58] NAA: A989/1/1943/925/1/17 Treaties Red Cross prisoners of war reports on Italian camps 1943-1944. Cablegram Prime Ministers Department to High Commissioner's Office London, 15 July 1943.

[59] Malcolm Webster. *An Italian experience* (Victoria: M. R. Webster, 1995), 78.

[60] Webster, *An Italian experience*, 79.

[61] NAA: A989/1/1943/925/1/17 Prime Ministers Department to High Commissioner's Office London, 1 July 1943.

[62] NAA: A816 67/301/16 Australian prisoners of war in Germany and Italy – reports on camps – File III. ICRC camp report Grupignano Camp visited on 9 December 1941, P Lambert, 5.

[63] NAA: A816 67/301/16 ICRC camp report Grupignano Camp visited on 9 December 1941, P Lambert, 5.

[64] AWM 54 779/4/21 Secretary Department of External Affairs to Secretary Department of Army, 1 July 1943.

described the handcuffing at Grupignano. The report stated that the leading cause of complaint at the camp was the brutal attitude of the camp commandant, Calcaterra. Binns explained, 'Men [are] frequently handcuffed in detention for up to four hours a day and, as they must exist on Italian rations, are in very weakened condition at the end of thirty days.'[65] Captain Gordon Gilbert, also a medical officer, made a statement regarding the harsh treatment of POWs and the ruthless attitude of Calcaterra. He explained that though he did not witness the shackling of the prisoners during the hair-cutting incident because he did not arrive at the camp until 6 November 1941, the incident was reported to him on his arrival. Included in his statement, Gilbert provided an appraisal of Calcaterra, stating he was 'harsh, overbearing and arrogant'.[66] Prior to the early repatriation of some sick and wounded prisoners and protected personnel, it would have been difficult for the Australian government to establish a clear understanding of what was happening in Italy due to the slow receipt and possibly inaccurate camp reporting. Despite this mistreatment of Australian prisoners at Grupignano, Captain James Ryan of the 11th Field Ambulance explained in his report to Army Headquarters, once repatriated, that during his time at the camps between 1 December 1941 and 16 February 1942, the morale of the Australian prisoners was excellent, recalling that 'One was proudest of being an Australian in a prison camp.'[67]

2.3 The Shackling Crisis 1942-1943

At no other time during the war was the issue of politically motivated reciprocity as significant as in the case of the shackling crisis. German prisoners captured and handcuffed during the raid at Dieppe and later during the British commando raid on the Channel Island of Sark were the catalyst for what became the most well-known example of political reprisal and attempted military manipulation during the Second World War.

The reprisal began on the morning of 8 October 1942 at a number of camps located in the German Reich. The shackling of prisoners in camps, as a result of alleged battlefield violations, was in itself a breach of the convention under the above-mentioned Articles 2, 49 and 54. The shackling continued into November, and it became increasingly evident that not everyone in British political circles supported the reprisal. Major Quintin Hogg MP wrote to Churchill to 'express in the strongest possible terms my disapproval of the Government's policy on the chaining of German prisoners.'[68] Hogg continued that he believed this tactic would fail, fearing that the Germans intended to use British prisoners as hostages, and he implored Churchill to reverse the War Office's policy.[69] The Archbishop of York and the Archbishop of Canterbury also became involved in the debate over reprisals. They acknowledged that the British government had made a number of protests to the German authorities about the reprisal; however, they also made it clear to the British government that they opposed any reprisals against innocent prisoners of war.[70] The opposition did not sway Churchill and as the shackling continued, but significantly so did resistance to the action.

The British Prisoners of War Relatives Association also expressed their disapproval of the reprisals, which they had opposed since the beginning, writing to Churchill's Private Secretary, Anthony Bevir, in order to draw attention to letters sent by

[65] AWM 54 779/4/2 Australian Prisoners of War in Europe. Secretary, Department of External Affairs, 1 July 43.
[66] AWM 54 779/4/19 Statement by Captain Gordon Gilbert SX 5894 – Brutal Treatment of PW in Italian Camps.
[67] AWM 54 781/6/6 [Prisoners of war statements – Europe] File containing material (Statistics citations, escapes, etc) prepared by L Parker at Central Army Records Office for use of Official War Historian, in the preparation of section dealing with Australian Prisoners of War (Army) taken in the Middle East, Greece and Crete and held in Camps in Germany and Italy. Prisoners of War in Europe – Report on Italian prison camps by QX 6083 Capt., J. J Ryan, MC, AAMC.

[68] TNA: PREM 4/98/2 Shackling of Prisoners of War, 01 October 1942 – 31 December 1943. Letter to Prime Minister Churchill from Major Quintin Hogg, MP, 7 November 1942.
[69] TNA: PREM 4/98/2 Letter to Prime Minister Churchill from Major Quintin Hogg, MP, 7 November 1942.
[70] TNA: PREM 4/98/2 Bishopthorpe, York to Prime Minister, 15 October 1942., letter Canterbury to Prime Minister, 2 November 1942.

British POWs. The prisoners had reported to their families that their German guards disliked carrying out the order to handcuff the prisoners, so they suggested it could be 'an opportunity for calling the thing off. If both sides are averse to it, it would make it much easier to do.'[71] Notably, one letter summarised by Churchill's Private Secretary explained, 'While loyally supporting you, [they] are very anxious about reprisals which they regard as a mistake.'[72]

Letters received from British officers in German camps in November 1942 described the shackling of prisoners. One such letter included the number of prisoners in the camp suffering from the reprisal action, 'besides the Canadians in the same barracks as we, think there are 232 other officers handcuffed, including the colonies.'[73] In his ICRC report, received from Rudolf Burchhardt, who had visited Oflag VIIB, Eichstätt, on 2 November, it was reported that there were 350 handcuffed officers and orderlies, but the nationality of the prisoners concerned was not provided. He also explained that 'the handcuffed officers and orderlies make it a point of honour not to show how deeply they resent this treatment.'[74] The later protecting power report discussing visits to the camp from 6 January to 17 March 1943 explained that the handcuffed officers were not kept entirely separate from the other prisoners.[75]

The political issue surrounding the reprisal prompted the British authorities to examine their policies and their interpretation of the Geneva Conventions.[76] In 1943, the British government attempted to differentiate between the treatment of POWs on the battlefield and their treatment once they were officially detained in POW camps. They based their claim on the principle that the Geneva Convention had no bearing on the battlefield.[77] The British government used Article 1, Section 2, to form their argument. They believed the article allowed for certain exceptions to the treaty regulations.[78] The present Convention shall apply without prejudice,

> To all persons belonging to the armed forces of belligerent parties, captured by the enemy in the course of military operations at sea or in the air, except for such derogations as might be rendered inevitable by the conditions of capture. However, such derogations shall not infringe upon the fundamental principles of the present Convention; they shall cease from the moment when the persons captured have rejoined a prisoner of war camp.[79]

The article allowed relaxed regulations under certain conditions, which the British government used to support its stance. It can be argued that Britain's attempt to justify its actions by citing Article 1 was lacking merit, since the Geneva Convention's Articles 5 and 6 specify rules for the capture of enemy personnel. However, these articles only cover interrogating prisoners of war upon capture, not the procedures for capturing prisoners or the use of physical restraints. A letter from Britain's Minister in Bern, Sir Clifford Norton, to Anthony Eden, dated 16 April 1943, discussed the application of Article 2 and the practice of shackling prisoners during military operations.

> The Geneva Convention lays down generally that prisoners of war must be humanely treated, and the point at issue between His Majesty's Government and the German Government is what constitutes such

[71] TNA: PREM 4/98/2 British Prisoners of War Relatives Association to Private Secretary of the Prime Minister Anthony Bevir, 20 November 1942.
[72] TNA: PREM 4/98/2 Note for Prime Minister, 22 November 1942.
[73] TNA: PREM 4/98/2 Note for Prime Minister, 22 November 1942.
[74] AWM: 54 779/4/21 Prisoners of War and Internees – Treatment by Enemy. Australian Military Forces PW in Europe, Oflag VIIB – Eichstedt visited by ICRC 2 November 1942.
[75] AWM: 54 779/4/21 Prisoners of War and Internees – Treatment by Enemy. Australian Prisoners of War in Europe, Oflag VIIB, Protecting Power visits to camp 6 January to 17 March 1943.
[76] Moore, The treatment of prisoners of war in the Western European theatre of war, 1939-45, 114.
[77] TNA: CAB 66/33/38 War Cabinet – Shackling of Prisoners of War Draft telegram to Berne. Draft telegram to Mr. Norton, 24 January 1943.
[78] International Committee of the Red Cross. *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War,* 368.
[79] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War,* Article 1, Section 2, 938.

> treatment. The Geneva Convention gives very little guidance on this question and lays down no rule about the shackling or binding of prisoners during operations…His Majesty's Government have and will continue scrupulously to observe not only the terms but also the spirit of the Geneva Convention, Article 2 of which lays down that prisoners of war shall "at all times be humanely treated and protected". I should perhaps add that that article of the Convention of which Germany was a signatory also provides that "measures of reprisal against them are forbidden".[80]

At the same time, in April 1943, the British War Cabinet continued to support ending reprisal measures, while still emphasising the need for battlefield restraints under certain conditions.

> I believe my colleagues are generally agreed that we must maintain our present position and continue to press for the removal of the reprisal measures. The disadvantage of this course is that, if it is adopted, there is no present prospect of our prisoners of war being unshackled; on the other hand, to accept without reservation the German demand would involve the prohibition of certain measures of restraint which are not only in our view consistent with a true interpretation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention but have hitherto been regarded as necessary for the efficient conduct of military operations.[81]

While the British government was trying to end the reprisal, the War Cabinet recognised the key issue that led to the breakdown in negotiations with their German counterparts,

> The German government had asked for an assurance that the shackling of German prisoners in any circumstances whatsoever would be forbidden, but that we had maintained that in certain circumstances on the field of battle, binding of prisoners was permissible and that it was on this point that negotiations had broken down.[82]

The British government remained steadfast in its position. In August, the Swiss Foreign Minister informed the British government that both von Ribbentrop and Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel had expressed their support for abolishing the shackling and intended to approach Hitler regarding the matter.[83]

III. DOMINION OPPOSITION

Opposition in the Dominions toward the shackling of POWs continued to grow. Still, Britain had not recognised the depth of the Dominions' sensitivity over the fate of their prisoners. It continued to insist on its collaborative POW policy that was now considered not fit for purpose.[84] The shackling crisis had severely damaged the Canadian government's confidence in the united POW policy that had now resulted in a system of reprisals. Like Canada, other Dominion governments lent their voice to the growing opposition to the reprisal action. New Zealand was not in favour of the approach taken by the British government. A telegram from the New Zealand government to the Dominion Office, also sent to the Australian government, explained that the situation had been carefully considered and that this course of action could not be defended. It also noted that the New Zealand government advised Britain that 'little was to be gained by taking the matter further', considering it was not likely to improve the situation and would likely lead to 'unfortunate consequences.'[85] At the same time, the High Commissioner for the Union of South Africa, Sidney Waterson, responded to the reprisal action, explaining that General Jan Smuts said the Union government was concerned about the possible results of what may be described as a

[80] TNA: CAB 66/36/8 War Cabinet – Shackling of Prisoners of War Proposed Statement, Annex 2, 16 April 1943.
[81] TNA: CAB 66/36/8 Shackling of Prisoners of War Proposed Statement, 16 April 1943.
[82] TNA: CAB 65/34/10 War Cabinet Meeting, 19 April 1943.
[83] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Telegram from Dominion Office to the Australian government, 10 August 1943.
[84] Wylie, *Barbed Wire Diplomacy*, 211.
[85] TNA: WO 32/11107 Inward Telegram from New Zealand government to the Dominion Office, 12 October 1942; and NAA: A816 54/301/242 Cablegram from the Prime Minster of New Zealand to the Prime Ministers Department – Australian War Cabinet, 12 October 1942.

competition in reprisals, with Germany setting the pace. Smuts went further, saying it was the opinion of the Union government that 'all possible avenues of escape from the seeming impasse should be explored before we commit ourselves to a policy of competitive reprisals.'[86] Australian High Commissioner Stanley Bruce added Australia's criticism of the action. He made it clear that in the first instance, Australia had taken a strong line against the tying up of prisoners in the field of battle and if steps were taken by the German authorities to intensify the current situation by shackling a greater number of prisoners that the Commonwealth government would undoubtedly agree that it would be wrong for it to take any action that would lead to a competition of brutality with the enemy.[87]

The Australian government continued to voice its opposition to the reprisal, informing the Dominion Office in London of its concerns regarding the issue, explaining that 'the matter is one of such general concern and potential danger to a large number of Australians now in the hands of the Japanese.'[88] The government went further, stating,

> We have little faith in the value of reprisals, especially in cases where the burden falls on helpless captives on both sides and where competition in cruelty can be carried on indefinitely with far more embarrassment to us than to the enemy. We are greatly concerned at the consequences to prisoners held by [the] Japanese.
>
> There seems to be a valid distinction between prisoners detained during the actual progress of operations and those who are in secure custody. The validity of this distinction is clearly in dispute between belligerents within the meaning of Article 87 of the Convention. Therefore, a Conference should be suggested under Article 87, and the German government asked in the meantime to withdraw its order for manacling of Dieppe prisoners.
>
> Before your decision in announced, we desire to be informed of it, also of the view of other Dominions, so that we can determine our position.[89]

On 15 October 1942, there was additional communication between the Secretary of the Department of Defence, Frederick Shedden, and the Australian Government's Accredited Representative in London, Sir Earle Page. In it, the Australian government once again confirmed its position on the ongoing policy of reprisal,

- Contrary to express provisions of the Geneva Convention
- Repugnant to deep-seated humanitarian instincts.
- Quite ineffective as a deterrent to German barbarism.
- Likely to involve cruelty to prisoners in Japanese hands.[90]

The Dominion government's response and the attitude of Churchill led the Dominion High Commissioners to make representations to Churchill regarding the situation in November 1942. They were adamant that the current state of affairs was unsatisfactory; nevertheless, they did recognise the difference between the course Britain had taken and the position the Canadian government had imposed on them.[91] While moves were being made in London to break the stalemate, Mackenzie King noted in his diary on 3 November that he spent time drafting a letter to Churchill about the shackling issue, along with a

[86] TNA: WO 32/11107 Letter from High Commissioner for Union of South Africa to Mr Clement Attlee Dominion Office, 12 October 1942.
[87] TNA: WO 32/11107 Army Council Secretariat – Prisoners of War, War Cabinet held on 14 October 1942
[88] NAA: A981/4 TRE 742 External Affairs Department, Treaties Red Cross – Chaining of Prisoners of War, Cablegram from the Prime Minister's Department to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London, 11 October 1942.
[89] NAA: A981/4 TRE 742 Cablegram from the Prime Minister's Department to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London, 11 October 1942.
[90] NAA: A981/4 TRE 742 Cablegram from Mr Shedden to Commonwealth Accredited Representative, London, 15 October 1942.
[91] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Prime Minster – Chaining of Prisoners, 27 November 1942.

message to the Dominion Office.[92] In the telegram, the Canadian government informed Britain that it was worried about the tying up of prisoners of war. It was also made clear that the governments of South Africa, Australia and the United States were of the same opinion.[93] Like the other Dominions, Canada had, since the beginning of the war, agreed that the welfare of the empire's POWs in enemy hands should be managed by the Foreign Office and a branch of the War Office in London, the Imperial Prisoners of War Committee, which was not formed until April 1941, with representatives from each Dominion forming the committee.[94] At its first meeting on 5 November 1941, the chairman, Mr Duncan Sandys, reminded the committee that 'the treatment of POWs was always likely to assume political importance and cause a great deal of feeling if things went wrong.'[95] In his view, the committee could perform an essential administrative function regarding prisoners of war by discussing broader policy questions.[96] It quickly became evident in London that the Dominion governments were worried that the crisis might escalate to the point where it would adversely affect more and more prisoners. Consequently, within days of the first round of shackling, they informed London of their strong desire for a negotiated solution.[97]

In December 1942, the War Committee of the Canadian Cabinet told the British government that the 'War Cabinet feel Canada is compelled to take independent action with a view to effecting the unshackling of prisoners of war.'[98] It was considering two options. The first was approaching the Swiss government directly through the Swiss Consul General in Canada. The second was fixing a date on which the shackling of prisoners of war in Canada would cease, regardless of the action taken by the British or German governments.[99] This course of action did not sit well with the British War Cabinet. It was thought that if the Canadian government acted independently of Britain, the result would be unfortunate since 'it was essential that we should act in step.'[100] Due to the problems Churchill had in gaining the support of the Dominions, he faced questions in parliament about the level of consultation, if any, he had with the Dominions in relation to the shackling issue. Mr Stokes asked Churchill whether the Prime Minister of Canada had been consulted before the decision to manacle prisoners was taken. Churchill responded,

> On account of the urgency, it was not possible to consult any of the Dominion Governments upon the counter-measures to the German shackling which were deemed necessary in October by His Majesty's Government.[101]

Australia declined to participate in the shackling of German prisoners within its camps on the Australian territory. Consequently, due to Canada's initial engagement in the shackling of prisoners, Canada's High Commissioner in Canberra, Thomas Davis, received an angry response from the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Dr. Herbert Evatt. Nonetheless, Prime Minister John Curtin adopted a more measured tone, informing Mackenzie King of his concerns that such reprisals might adversely impact Australians held by the enemy. These concerns were presumably influenced by reports from Berlin indicating that any mistreatment of

[92] MG26-J13, 12725 WLM King, Mackenzie King diary entry, 3 November 1942.
[93] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Telegram from Canadian government to the Dominion Office, 3 November 1942.
[94] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Telegram from Canadian government to the Dominion Office, 3 November 1942.
[95] TNA: WO 163/152, Imperial Prisoner of War Committee – War Office and Ministry of Defence and Predecessors 1 November 1941- 28 February 1943. First Committee Meeting 5 November 1941.
[96] TNA: WO 163/152, First Committee Meeting 5 November 1941.
[97] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Telegram from Canadian government to the Dominion Office, 3 November 1942.
[98] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Telegram from Canadian High Commissioner in London to Dominions Office, 2 December 1942.
[99] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Telegram from Canadian High Commissioner in London to Dominions Office, 2 December 1942.
[100] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 War Cabinet 164, 3 December 1942. Telegram from Dominion Office to Australian and other Dominion government, 3 December 1942.
[101] Hansard, House of Commons, Volume 385, 8 December 1942 – Chained Prisoners of War.

German prisoners would necessitate reparations by the entire Allied prisoner of war contingent.[102]

By mid-December 1942, the British government informed the Dominions that it had rescinded the order to carry handcuffs into combat, should such an order have existed.[103] Nevertheless, with Churchill's nonchalant approach toward the retaliation measures, concerns within the Dominion government regarding prisoners of war continued to escalate. The Dominion Office recognised the need for reassurance; consequently, by the end of December 1942, Australia and other Dominion governments were notified that it had always been the policy of the British government to scrupulously observe both the letter and the spirit of the Geneva Convention. Furthermore, it declared its ongoing commitment to strictly adhere to the principles of the Geneva Convention.[104] This information would have been reassuring to the Australian government had its troops been involved in the missions at Dieppe or Sark, which prompted the unusual form of retaliation. Nonetheless, the Australian government understood that the actions of one Dominion could influence another. Moreover, the Australian government had no specific reason to believe that Australian prisoners of war would be implicated in the current events, particularly since the initial application of shackling targeted the prisoners at Dieppe. However, Australian prisoners of war were included in the political reprisals when the handcuffing policy was subsequently extended to other prisoners.

IV. ICRC AND THE PROTECTING POWER UNDER THE GENEVA CONVENTION

While Australia urged the British to seek a solution under Article 87 as early as 11 October 1942, the Swiss authorities, in their role as the protecting power, had already contacted both Britain and Germany regarding the shackling issue under Article 87 in September 1942, before the first handcuffs were even in place. They were aware of the previous threats and wanted to stop the reprisal before it began. They suggested that in order not to inflict any further suffering on the POWs and ensure reciprocal respect for the prisoners' welfare, the reprisals under which British, Canadian and German soldiers were suffering be brought to an end.[105] However, it was at the point where the dispute seemed irreconcilable that the ICRC also decided to intervene. In a telegram addressed to all the governments concerned, dated 9 October 1942,

> Official press reports refer to reprisals against prisoners, measures contrary to Article 2, Section 3 of the Geneva Convention of 1929. In the view of the ICRC, such a measure might gravely prejudice the whole question of PW and affect the work of the Red Cross. The ICRC offers its good offices for all mediation in the situation requires.[106]

Due to the apparent deadlock in negotiations, the ICRC and the protecting power became involved in the dispute under Article 87 of the Geneva Convention. Article 87 states,

> In case of disagreement between the belligerents as to the application of the provisions of the present Convention, the protecting power must, in so far as possible, lend their good offices for the purpose of settling the difference.[107]

The British government were extremely hesitant to engage in any external intervention. German authorities, on the other hand, looked favourably on the Swiss and ICRC's offers of help to bring the crisis to an end and publicise Germany's complaints.[108] By late October 1942, possibly after receiving the ICRC's letter, the British

[102] Vance, "Men in Manacles: The Shackling of Prisoners of War, 1942-1943", 487.
[103] NAA: A981/4 TRE 742 Cablegram from Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Prime Minister's Department, 19 December 1942.
[104] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Shackling of Prisoners of War, 01 October 1942 – 31 December 1943.
[105] NAA: A981/4 TRE 742 Cablegram from Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Prime Ministers Department, 8 September 1942.
[106] International Committee of the Red Cross. *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War,* 369.
[107] Geneva Convention of July 27, *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, Article 87, 958.
[108] Wylie, *Barbed Wire Diplomacy,* 149.

government began to look more positively at the offers of intervention. After discussions with the Swiss, the British government approved the unshackling of all German prisoners by Christmas 1942. In contrast, the German High Command never openly agreed to end the reprisal, and the shackling continued.[109] Then, in December, the Swiss Foreign Minister Marcel Pilet Golaz informed the British government that the German government now declared that 'it will act at once if the cause of its reprisal is removed.'[110]

By the European summer of 1943, the Swiss government, in its role as protecting power, indicated that it believed the time was right for a new initiative to bring the crisis to an end. And so, after receiving a message from Marcel Pilet-Golaz in July, the Swiss Foreign Minister in Berlin spoke with the German Foreign Office about the shackling issue.[111] Unfortunately, despite the Swiss Minister in Berlin's frequent representations to the German authorities, there was no question of releasing shackled prisoners, because Hitler personally insisted on this action, and von Ribbentrop, despite his previously mentioned declaration that the shackling should end, supported him.[112] Accordingly, on 17 August, the Swiss ambassador in Berlin contacted the German foreign office with what was described as an 'unofficial suggestion' from Marcel Pilet-Golaz. It was explained that an end to the shackling would benefit prisoners of war on both sides and enable talks regarding an exchange.[113] There need not be an official statement indicating any loss of face, but the Swiss minister could report to London, through Bern, that the shackling had ceased.[114]

In mid-November 1943, ICRC representative Carl Burckhardt went to Berlin to meet with von Ribbentrop, and the two formed a plan. First, it was agreed that the handcuffs would be removed from prisoners held in Germany.[115] Thereafter, a report would be sent to the British and Canadian governments advising them that this had happened. The information would be distributed in confidence and not for publication. Then, finally, on 21 November, all handcuffs were officially removed.[116] The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs informed the Australian War Cabinet on 30 November 1943 that Professor Burckhardt had returned to Bern from Berlin and had sent a personal message to Anthony Eden, stating that, from 22 November, the Germans had agreed to remove the handcuffs.[117] Even so, the order would not be officially withdrawn, but would merely no longer be carried out. In addition, the Australian government was informed that the ICRC representative in Berlin would immediately start visiting camps to confirm that German authorities were following the withdrawal of handcuffs, with the reports to be sent to the British government. However, Burckhardt specifically asked that no publicity be given to the unshackling of the prisoners.[118]

By the end of the war, Max Huber, president of the International Red Cross, had come to the conclusion that 'practical success depends not only on legal reciprocity but also on one national interest balanced with the other.'[119] Under these conditions, an international convention agreed to in peacetime proved a poor defence against the pressures of total war. The shackling reprisal was a political fight that served to remind both sides of what could happen if the mutual-hostage factor were ignored.[120] In the context of the British Empire, however, it strained the relationship between London and the Dominions, particularly Australia and Canada.

[109] Mackenzie, "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in World War II", 493.
[110] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Diplomatic Bag from Berne to Foreign Office, 13 December 1942.
[111] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Telegram from Dominion Office to the Australian government, 19 July 1943.
[112] TNA: PREM 3/363/2 Telegram from Dominion Office to the Australian government, 10 July 1943.
[113] Mackenzie, "The Shackling Crisis", 93.
[114] Mackenzie, "The Shackling Crisis", 93.
[115] Caroline Moorehead. *Dunant's Dream: War, Switzerland and the History of the Red Cross* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc, 1999), 402-403.
[116] Moorehead, *Dunant's Dream: War,* 402-403.
[117] NAA: A2684 1091 Cablegram from Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London to War Cabinet, 30 November 1943.
[118] NAA: A2684 1091 Cablegram from Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, London to War Cabinet, 30 November 1943.
[119] Mackenzie, "The Shackling Crisis", 98.
[120] Mackenzie, "The Shackling Crisis", 97.

V. CONCLUSION

Reprisals and mistreatment of prisoners of war manifested in various forms and were not exclusive to a single belligerent nation. The concepts of reciprocity and reprisals in POW policy remained pertinent throughout the duration of the conflict. Prisoners suffered such politically motivated reprisals as governments sought to gain advantages and influence the behaviour of opposing sides. Notably, a distinction existed between political reprisals and disciplinary punishments within prison camps. The example of punishment discussed in this paper pertains to the shackling punishment inflicted on POWs at Grupignano in Italy. Although such actions still contravened the Geneva Convention, they originated from the camp commandant's perception of the prisoners' resistance to obeying orders. Despite the questionable legitimacy of the commandant's directives, this incident is correctly classified as 'punishment' because it occurred within the prison camp and was initiated by camp officials.

In contrast, the retaliation involving the shackling of prisoners of war carried out by Germany, Britain, and Canada in 1942 and 1943 was a consequence of the handcuffing of German POWs on the battlefield. The shackling of prisoners in POW camps became a highly publicised contest of wills between Churchill and Hitler. It served as a notable example of the influence of reciprocity in the treatment of prisoners of war. As a broader phenomenon extending beyond any individual camp, it markedly differed from the shackling at Grupignano. In this instance, the shackles became a political instrument and a visual symbol of specific reprisal methods employed to influence future battlefield conduct. This event resulted in over a year of political retaliation inflicted on prisoners of war by belligerent governments. Consequently, the shackling crisis emerged as the most prominent political reprisal of the war, exemplifying the power of reciprocity and national interest in prisoner treatment. The shackling at Grupignano occurred in November 1941, eleven months prior to the so-called shackling crisis of 1942-1943, and there is no evidence to suggest that German authorities chose handcuffs because Italians had previously employed this method. Conversely, it was evident that handcuffs were used in German camps during the shackling crisis because they had been used on the battlefield by British and other Allied soldiers upon capturing prisoners. These episodes of punishment and reprisals would lead to future changes in the Geneva Convention in the postwar period, which would influence the treatment of prisoners of war in later conflicts.

The Role of English Literature in Teacher Preparation and Curriculum Development in Palestine: A Systematic Review

Dr. Abir Subhi Abu Nimeh

ABSTRACT

Teacher preparation in Palestine operates within a complex educational landscape shaped by political constraints, limited resources, and increasing demands for inclusive and innovative pedagogy. This study systematically reviews 2020-2025 literature related to teacher education, inclusive practices, curriculum development, and the role of English literature in shaping effective teaching following PRISMA guidelines. Drawing on both Palestinian and international scholarship, the review synthesizes empirical and theoretical studies to identify key patterns, challenges, and gaps in current educational practices. The findings indicate that while teacher preparation programs emphasize subject knowledge and pedagogy, limited integration exists between inclusive education, curriculum innovation, and literature-based teaching approaches. Moreover, English and Palestinian literature emerges as underutilized yet powerful tools for enhancing critical thinking, cultural awareness, and reflective practice among teachers. By establishing these connections, the study provides a conceptual bridge between theory and practice, leading directly to a deeper interpretive discussion of the reviewed findings.

Keywords: palestinian education, pedagogical innovation, english literature, teacher preparation, curricula development, inclusive education.

Classification: LCC Code: LB1775

Language: English

Great Britain Journals Press

LJP Copyright ID: 573307
Print ISSN: 2515-5784
Online ISSN: 2515-5792

London Journal of Research in Humanities & Social Science

Volume 26 | Issue 1 | Compilation 1.0

The Role of English Literature in Teacher Preparation and Curriculum Development in Palestine: A Systematic Review

Dr. Abir Subhi Abu Nimeh

ABSTRACT

Teacher preparation in Palestine operates within a complex educational landscape shaped by political constraints, limited resources, and increasing demands for inclusive and innovative pedagogy. This study systematically reviews 2020-2025 literature related to teacher education, inclusive practices, curriculum development, and the role of English literature in shaping effective teaching following PRISMA guidelines. Drawing on both Palestinian and international scholarship, the review synthesizes empirical and theoretical studies to identify key patterns, challenges, and gaps in current educational practices. The findings indicate that while teacher preparation programs emphasize subject knowledge and pedagogy, limited integration exists between inclusive education, curriculum innovation, and literature-based teaching approaches. Moreover, English and Palestinian literature emerges as underutilized yet powerful tools for enhancing critical thinking, cultural awareness, and reflective practice among teachers. By establishing these connections, the study provides a conceptual bridge between theory and practice, leading directly to a deeper interpretive discussion of the reviewed findings.

Keywords: palestinian education, pedagogical innovation, english literature, teacher preparation, curricula development, inclusive education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in Palestine faces complex and persistent challenges shaped by historical, political, and sociocultural conditions that directly influence teacher preparation and student learning outcomes (Albadawi & Sabbah, 2022; Snounu, 2019). Prolonged instability, limited resources and disruptions to schooling have placed additional pressure on the educational system, particularly on teacher education programmes and curriculum development processes (Farag, 2025; Jassim, 2024). Within this context, the demand for well-prepared teachers has become increasingly urgent, especially in relation to inclusive education, curriculum innovation and culturally responsive pedagogy that addresses the diverse needs of learners (Aleghfeli, 2024; Lucena-Rodriguez et al., 2025).

English language education occupies a central position within Palestinian schooling; however, it is often delivered with a predominant focus on grammar instruction and reading comprehension. While these components are essential, English literature remains underutilised despite its recognised potential to enhance holistic learning outcomes (Farag, 2025; Jassim, 2024). When integrated effectively, English literature functions not only as content but also as pedagogy, offering meaningful opportunities to develop critical thinking, ethical reasoning, cultural awareness, and reflective teaching practices.

Existing research has examined teacher preparation, inclusive education, and curriculum development in Palestine as separate domains. Nevertheless, studies such as Snounu (2019) indicate a noticeable gap in systematically connecting these components with the role of English literature in classroom practice. This absence limits a comprehensive understanding of how teacher education programmes can prepare educators to implement inclusive, contextually

relevant, and pedagogically innovative approaches through literary instruction.

Incorporating English literature into teacher preparation and curriculum design can contribute significantly to linguistic proficiency, analytical skills, and cross-cultural understanding. Moreover, it supports professional development by enabling teachers to adopt reflective and student-centred Pedagogies aligned with contemporary educational trends. Accordingly, this systematic review preparation and curriculum development in Palestine, with particular attention to its potential to strengthen inclusive practices and enhance pedagogical effectiveness. (Farag, 2025; Jassim, 2024).

Teacher preparation and curriculum innovation are central to achieving equity and quality in education, particularly in contexts affected by political instability and resource constraints, such as Palestine. Literature-based pedagogy, both English and Palestinian, offers opportunities to enhance critical thinking, cultural awareness, and reflective teaching practices. Despite progress in teacher education, there remains a gap in systematically integrating literature-based approaches, inclusive education strategies, and curriculum development. This review addresses these gaps, providing evidence-based insights and recommendations for policymakers, educators, and researchers.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although Palestinian education has advanced in teacher preparation and curriculum development, integration of inclusive practices, pedagogical innovation, and literature-based instruction remains limited. This gap affects teachers' ability to address diverse student needs, promote equity, and implement culturally and contextually responsive practices.

2.1 Significance of the Study

This review is significant because it:

- Provides insights into effective teacher preparation and inclusive education in a Palestine.
- Offers guidance for curriculum developers and policymakers on integrating literature-based pedagogy.
- Bridges the gap between theory, practice, and culturally responsive education.

2.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this paper are to

- Examine current practices in teacher preparation and professional development in Palestine.
- Explore the implementation of inclusive education and its challenges.
- Investigate the role of curriculum development and pedagogical innovation.
- Analyze how English literature supports critical thinking, cultural awareness, and reflective pedagogy.
- Identify gaps and propose strategies for improve teacher education and literature-based pedagogy.

2.3 Review Questions

- What are the current practices in Palestinian teacher preparation?
- How are inclusive education strategies implemented in teacher training?
- What challenges exist in curriculum development and pedagogical innovation?
- How does English literature contribute to teacher professional growth?
- How can literature-based pedagogy enhance student learning outcomes?

By addressing these objectives and questions, the following literature review systematically examines research on teacher preparation, inclusive education, curriculum innovation and the role of English literature. This review highlights key findings, identifies gaps, and establishes a foundation for understanding how these components collectively strengthen teacher education and enhance student outcomes in Palestinian classrooms.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Teacher Preparation and Professional Development

Effective teacher preparation is the foundational for quality education. Palestinian classrooms, affected by social-political and infrastructural challenges, require teachers equipped with theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and reflective capacities (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2020; Abadawi & Sabbah, 2022). Professional learning communities and mentoring programs strengthen teacher growth and prepare educators to address diverse classroom needs (Opfer and Pedder, 2011; Muhammad & Liu, 2025). Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) further argue that bridging academic theory with real-world classroom experiences is essential for meaningful teacher development. In the Palestinian context, Albadawi and Subbah (2022) and Khaldi and Wahbeh (2002) show that reflective practice and contextual responsiveness are critical for effective teacher preparation. Recent international research supports that preserve teacher initiatives, coupled with authentic field experiences, strengthen self-efficacy and readiness for inclusive classrooms (Muhammad & Liu, 2025). Together, these studies underline that teacher preparation must be multidimensional, blending theory, reflection, and practice.

Understanding teacher preparation sets the stage for examining inclusive education practices, which ensure all students can benefit from these competencies.

3.2 Inclusive Education and Equity

Inclusive education guarantees equitable learning opportunities for all students. While teachers generally demonstrate positive attitudes toward inclusion, structural barriers and curriculum hinder implementation (ALadini, 2020; Barriers to Inclusive Education under Occupation, 2023). International studies emphasize that inclusion is most effective when teachers receive targeted training and ongoing support aligned with curriculum goals (Forlin et al., 2013; Lucena-Rodriguez et al., 2025). Regardless of ability, gender, or background. Aleghfeli (2024) and Ainscow & Sandill, (2010) demonstrate how inclusive teaching strategies in Palestinian classrooms enhance literacy in reading and science, providing practical approaches to reduce educational marginalization. International literature confirms that teacher attitudes and preparation are pivotal: systematic reviews indicate that inclusion-focused teacher training significantly improves classroom practices and equity (Lucena-Rodriguez et al., 2025; Forlin et al., 2013; Cochran-Smith, 2005). Collectively, these studies show that inclusive education relies on both competent teachers and supportive systemic policies. Building on teacher preparation and inclusive practices, curriculum development becomes crucial in translating these principles into effective classroom teaching.

3.3 Curriculum Development and Pedagogical Innovation

Curriculum development bridges policy and classroom practice. Innovations, including blended and technology-enhanced learning, improve student engagement and adaptability when supported by teacher training (Al-Qudsi, 2923; Karaduman & Akman, 2024). Albadawi and Sabbah (2022) stress that curriculum innovation requires corresponding professional development to ensure successful implementation. Globally, Shulman (1987) introduced the concept of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), emphasizing the importance of linking subject knowledge with instructional strategies. Fullan (2007) adds that sustained professional learning is vital for curricular reform to have lasting effects. The TPACK framework links technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge, providing a foundation for reflective and inclusive teaching. Further supports integration of technology, pedagogy, and content knowledge to enhance curriculum implementation (Karaduman & Akman, 2024). Internationally, teachers emphasize the need for dynamic, evidence-based, and culturally aligned curricula (Jurado-de-los-Santos et al., 2021).

3.4 Role of English Literature and Teacher Education

English literature fosters critical thinking, empathy, cultural awareness and reflective practice. English and Palestinian texts enable teachers to explore social, ethical, and human issues, connecting professional learning with students' lived realities (Farage, 2025; Jassim, 2024). Interactive methods such as debates, role-playing, group interpretation, and reflective writing enhance learner engagement and bridge theory and practice (Lazar, 1993; Wajnryb, 1990). (Farrell, 2015) said that development of critical thinking skills the study of literature enhances critical thinking by encouraging close reading, interpretation and evaluation of complex ideas and perspectives analytically (Bloom, 1956; Lazar, 1993). It also enhances cultural awareness and empathy through diverse cultural and historical contexts promote empathy and intercultural understanding. Through exposure to varied voices and narratives, poetry, drama which supports inclusive pedagogy in multilingual classrooms (Bank, 2016). With innovative teaching strategies, literature provides rich opportunities for the use of interactive and learner-centered teaching strategies, such as role-playing, debates, group interpretation and reflective writing (Lazar, 1993).

English literature contributes to curriculum design through serving as a source of authentic language input. Literary texts present language in natural, meaningful contexts, allowing learners to encounter vocabulary, idiomatic expression, and discourse patterns as they occur in real communicative situations. This authenticity enhances linguistic competence and communicative awareness (Hall, 2005). further, a literature-based curriculum supports the integrated development of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills (Carter, & Long, 1991). the pedagogical in English literature is clearly articulated in Carter and Long's (1991) three-model framework like the cultural model which focuses on introducing learners to different cultures and traditions; the model of language which uses literary texts as resources for teaching grammar, vocabulary and stylistic features in meaningful contexts. Finally, the personal growth model which encourages learners to engage emotionally and intellectually with texts, connecting literature into their personal experiences. Beyond linguistic and cognitive goals, literature plays a crucial role in moral and ethical development. Through characters, conflicts and narrative outcomes, students are encouraged to reflect on values like justice, responsibility and critical moral judgment (Bloom, 1956; Lazar, 1993).

English literature serves as both subject content and a pedagogical tool, fostering critical thinking and reflective practice. Farag (2025) shows that Palestinian women's anglophone writing acts as cultural commentary and a resource for teacher development, enhancing analytical and interpretive skills. Jassim (2024) emphasizes Palestinian literature as a record of social struggle, providing teachers with contextual understanding of learners' realities. International research supports literature's role in developing empathy, literacy, and inclusive pedagogy (Wajnryb, 1990; Lazar, 1993). Florian and Spratt (2013) provide a framework for integrating literature into inclusive pedagogy, allowing teachers to address diverse student needs and learning styles. Collectively, literature enriches teacher preparation and curriculum innovation, bridging theory, practice and cultural awareness.

English literature dominates a privileged status in the curriculum of teacher preparation as well as curriculum development in Palestine. The use of English literature provides beneficial benefits, such as language proficiency, since narratives offer authentic, interacting contexts for reading and writing, in addition to communication. Critical thinking, provides analyzing characters, themes and literary devices develops higher-order cognitive skills.as for cultural awareness. Exposure to local and global texts enhances empathy, identity formation, and cross-cultural understanding. Along with all these benefits, pedagogical focus on literature-based instruction motivates interactive, student-centered learning and strengthens teacher competency and classroom engagement.

3.5 Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges include limited resources, insufficient training, political instability and curriculum gaps. Opportunities include digital tools, local literature and innovative teaching approaches, enabling teachers to implement literature-based pedagogy effectively. remain, while the advantages of literature combining research are obvious. Thus, Numerous studies like Farag (2025; Wajnryb, 1990) argued that limited access to quality English narratives or literary works, are insufficient as well as poor instructor training, and political instability are essential restrictions. Particularly, the identical challenges also reveal opportunities. By positively making use of digital resources, innovative teaching strategies and local authors, educators are able to overcome resource restrictions and employ efficient literature-based curricula (Farag, 2025).

Besides, systematic unification and institution-wide incorporation and coordination of literature into Palestinian curricula should encourage long-term educational resilience and flexibility for teachers and learners to work effectively and to take part in English language learning considerably and contextually in specific related track (Farag, 2025).

3.6 New Contribution to Teaching-Learning Process

This review fills a critical gap in Palestinian education by presenting a framework for literature-based pedagogy, teacher training and curriculum innovation, highlighting the role of literature in enhancing language proficiency, critical thinking and cultural consciousness.

IV. METHODOLOGY (FLOWCHART IN APPENDIX)

This study utilized a systematic review design to examine how English literature contributes to teacher preparation and curriculum development in Palestinian schools and universities. Systematic reviews provided a stringent approach to synthesizing existing research, ensuring that findings are evidence-based, comprehensive and applicable (Moher et al., 2009).

4.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- *The following criteria were applied to select studies that included in the review:*

In terms of inclusion criteria:

  - Focused on English literature and its role in pedagogy or curriculum development.
  - Conducted in or relevant to Palestinian educational contexts.
  - published between 2020 and 2025
  - Peer-reviewed journals, theses, books and institutional reports.

- *As for exclusion criteria: The review excluded the following data:*

  - Studies relevant to literature incorporation or curriculum design are excluded.
  - English language instruction studies without a literature component are excluded.
  - None-peer-reviewed sources lacking sufficient rigor are excluded.

4.2 Search Strategy

The literature search was conducted across multiple databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, JSTOR, and SpringerLink.

Keywords used included: English literature, Palestinian curriculum, teacher preparation and literature-based pedagogy.

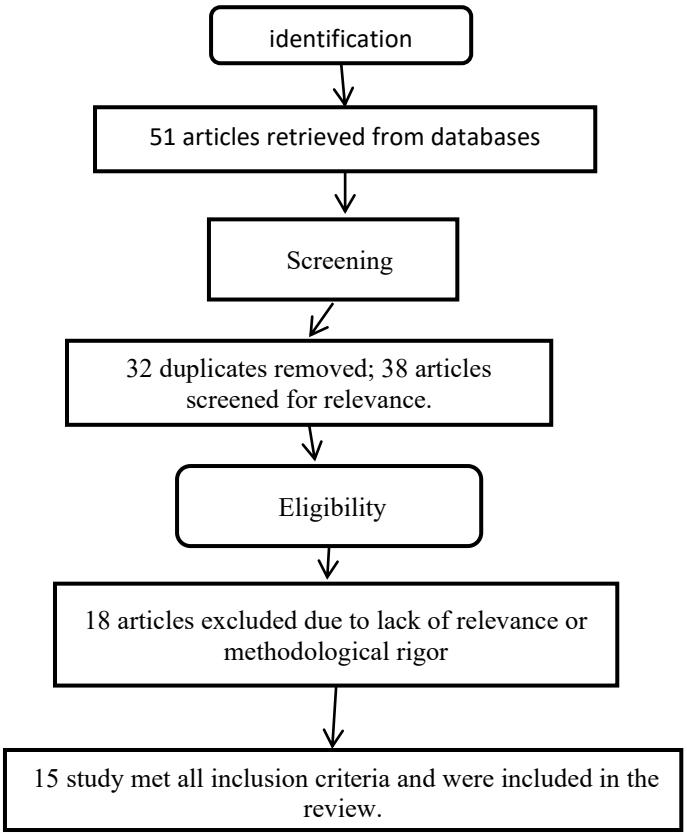
Boolean operators (AND, OR) were applied to refine search results. Titles, abstracts, and full text were screened for relevance by the researcher.

4.3 Study Selection-PRISMA Guide

Following the PRISMA framework (Moher et al., 2009), the study selection process involved:

- *Identification:* 51 articles retrieved from databases.
- *Screening:* 32 duplicates removed; 38 articles screened for relevance.
- *Eligibility:* 18 articles excluded due to lack of relevance or methodological rigor.
- *Included:* 15 study met all inclusion criteria and were included in the review.

4.4 Data Extraction and Synthesis



(Adapted from Moher et al., 2009)

Figure 1: Flowchart of the systematic review process examining the role of English Literature in teacher preparation and curriculum development in Palestine.

Figure 1 shows the real process of systematic review from identification, screened, eligibility, excluded and to included studies.

Data were obtained via systematic template recording:

Author(s) and year, study setting and context, research methodology, key findings related to literature integration, teacher preparation and curriculum development, implications for practice and policy. Synthesis was done using thematic analysis, which revealed language proficiency improvement, critical awareness and ethic innovation and teacher professional development, identifying key themes across studies. Language proficiency enhancement, critical awareness and ethical reasoning, pedagogical innovation and teacher professional development, opportunities for implementation.

Checklist

- *Identification:* Records identified from databases and sources (peer-reviewed journals, theses, books, institutional reports); Time frame: 2020-2025; context: Palestinian schools and universities.
- *Screening:* Removal of duplicate records, title and abstract screening, excluded: studies unrelated to English literature.
- *Eligibility:* Full-text articles assessed for eligibility; inclusion criteria: focus on English literature in pedagogy/curriculum; relevance to Palestinian educational context; exclusion criteria: English language instruction without literature, studies not related to teacher preparation
- *Inclusion:* Final studies included in the systematic review synthesis and analysis.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

These findings show a strong interdependence between teacher preparation, inclusive education, curriculum development, and literature-based pedagogy. While Palestinian teachers generally support inclusive education, structural barriers, limited training, and insufficient curriculum integration hinder effectiveness. Literature-based pedagogy, particularly using English and Palestinian texts, fosters critical thinking, cultural awareness, empathy, and reflective practice, but remains underutilized in formal teacher preparation programs.

5.1 Detail Discussion

Align with broader international debates on teacher education, while highlighting context-specific challenges unique to the Palestinian educational system, the findings of this literature review reveal a clear interdependence between teacher preparation, inclusive education, curriculum development and literature-based pedagogy. Across both Palestinian and international studies, teacher preparation is consistently identified as a foundational factor influencing classroom effectiveness and student outcomes. However, the literature suggests that preparation programs often prioritize theoretical knowledge over integrated, context-responsive practices that address diversity and inclusion (Albadawi & Sabbah, 2022; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2020). Inclusive education emerges as a central yet challenging goal within Palestinian classrooms. While teachers generally demonstrate positive attitudes toward inclusion, structural barriers, limited professional development, and curriculum constraints hinder effective implementation (Aleghfeli, 2024; Aladini, 2020). International research reinforces that inclusive practices are most successful when teachers receive targeted training and ongoing support aligned with curriculum goals (Forlin et al., 2013; Lucena-Rodriguez et al., 2025). This alignment, however, remains inconsistent in the Palestinian context.

Curriculum development serves as a critical bridge between policy and classroom practice. The reviewed studies highlight that curriculum innovation, particularly through blended and technology-enhanced learning, can improve engagement and accessibility when supported by teacher training (Al-Qudsi, 2023; Karaduman & Akman, 2024). Nevertheless, gaps persist between curriculum design and teachers' practical capacity to implement inclusive and reflective Pedagogies. Notably, the role of English and Palestinian literature is insufficiently integrated into teacher preparation despite its demonstrated potential. Literature fosters critical thinking, empathy, and cultural awareness, enabling teachers to connect pedagogy with students' lived realities (Farag, 2025; Jassim, 2024). Palestinian literature, in particular, offers culturally grounded narratives that support identity formation and contextual understanding, yet remains underrepresented in formal teacher education frameworks. This omission represents a significant missed opportunity for holistic and culturally responsive teaching.

Collectively, the literature underscores the need for an integrated approach to teacher education, one that aligns preparation programs, inclusive practices, curriculum development, and literature-based pedagogy within a coherent framework.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the systematic review, the author highly proposes the following recommendations:

- Integrate English and Palestinian literature across all grades to enhance language skills, critical thinking, and cultural awareness.
- Conduct longitudinal research to measure literature's impact on student proficiency, cognition, and ethical reasoning.
- Use a multi-genre approach: poetry for linguistic sensitivity, novels for narrative comprehension, and drama for interactive learning.
- Provide pre-service and in-service training in literature-based pedagogy, lesson planning, and student-centered methods.
- Implement mentorship and peer-learning programs to support teacher confidence.

- Use digital tools and multimedia to enrich classroom instruction.
- Develop policy frameworks and culturally relevant materials, emphasizing Palestinian texts to foster identity and empathy.
- Monitor curriculum effectiveness using teacher feedback, student assessment and longitudinal studies.

VII. LIMITATIONS

Despite that, this review informative, but numerous limitations:

- Political instability and limited resources may restrict implementation.
- Few empirical studies limit generalizability.
- Language and transformation barriers may have excluded much relevant studies, specially Arabic-language literature on pedagogy.

Despite such limitations, the review provides important insights into teacher preparation, curriculum reform, and literature-based pedagogy.for advancing teacher preparation and curriculum reform via English literature.

VIII. CONCLUSION

This systematic review provides a comprehensive, context-sensitive synthesis of teacher preparation, curriculum development, and literature-based pedagogy. In Palestine. Integrating English and Palestinian literature into teacher education enhances critical thinking, empathy, cultural awareness and reflective practice, while systematic curriculum alignment and professional development support effective implementation. The study offers a roadmap for policymakers, educators and researchers to modernize curricula, strengthen teacher preparation and improve student outcomes, advancing equity, quality and innovation in Palestinian classrooms.

Ethical Stetement

This study follows ethical research standards in accordance with APA guidelines. All sources are properly cited to ensure academic integrity and to avoid plagiarism. As the review based exclusively on published secondary sources and does not involve human participants, personal data or field experimentation, formal ethical approval was not required. Intellectual property rights are respected and transparency is maintained throughout the analysis.

Funding and Disclosure

The author did not receive funding from any specific agency and there isn't any award. The author also declares no conflict of interest regarding authorship, research, or publication. No other researchers contributed to this study. It is fully the author's. The author also declares no certain awards from any area.

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