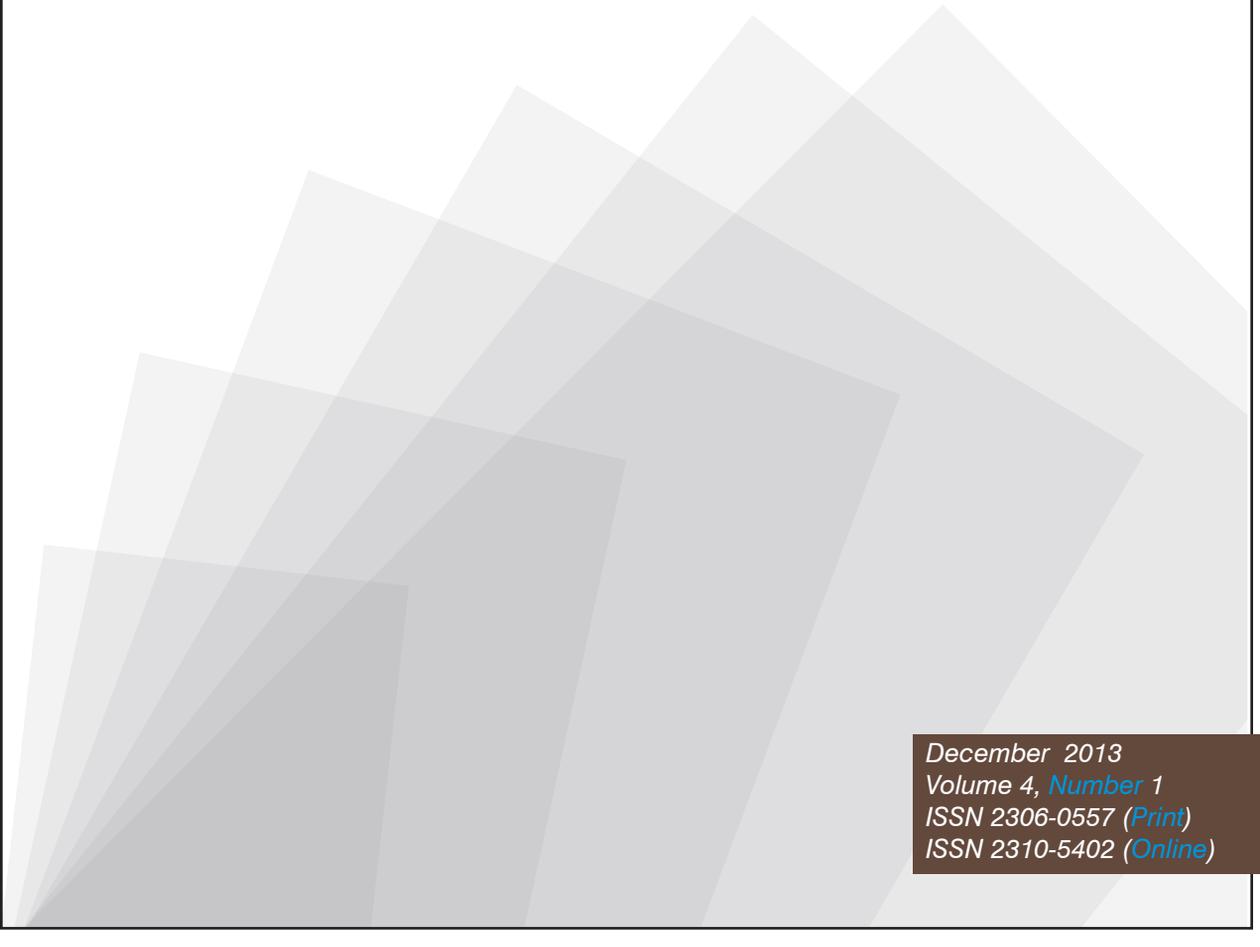




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## Reasons for the Popularity of Turkish Soap Operas in Albania

### **Abstract**

*Many new media technologies seem to have played a certain role in introducing different cultures, traditions and lifestyles. Although of the oldest, television and its programs remain among the most vastly used. While a documentary is a television program that presents a country with little or no fiction, the case is not the same when it comes to soap operas. The action, fiction and their characters make people watch more eagerly. Once they enter a country there follows a flow difficult to stop, with some of them even garnering the highest rating ever received by a television program. Whether they have been produced to achieve this aim or to make immense profits is not the main concern of this article. This study aims to explore reasons for the popularity of Turkish soap operas (Albanian case), which have since 2008 become popular not only in the Middle East but also in most Balkan countries. The objectives of this study were achieved through review of articles in newspapers and magazines, and an analysis of a survey conducted in Tirana, the capital city of Albania. Regarding the fact that they are subtitled and not dubbed in the case country, this research also aimed to explore whether watching soap operas helps to learn/improve a language (when the viewer already knows some Turkish), or arouses viewers' interest towards it (when the viewer doesn't know any Turkish at all).*

**Keywords:** Media; Turkish Soap Operas; Language Learning; Albania

## 1-Introduction

Since the world's first-ever television transmission, which dates back 84 years ago, television has undergone rapid and dramatic changes regarding set, broadcast and programs. One of the reasons for these developments might be the appearance of new media technologies such as internet and mobiles, which, despite being more fashionable, seem to have not questioned the role television plays in people's lives. Television transmission seems to capture everything from news, commercials and fashion trends to economy, celebrity life and political debates, all of which have their broadcasting time, be it weekly, daily or hourly. Another important and distinguishing feature of television is the key role it has played and plays in introducing cultures, traditions and lifestyles. Unlike documentaries or culture sections of news programs, which present countries with little or no fiction at all, soap operas, which were originally intended for other purposes, manage to do this more easily and surprisingly successfully. They appear to have enjoyed an incredibly increasing popularity from the first time they were broadcast to this day. Soap operas were initially perceived as a solution to an advertising problem: how might radio be used during daylight hours to attract the largest audience of potential consumers of certain products? (Allen, 1985). However, nowadays we see television soap operas, especially prime time serials, claiming the highest costs of advertising products in their commercial intervals.

From a staple in the daytime television of the US in the early 1950s, (wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) the prime time soap opera as a television genre, has consistently captured the imagination of millions of people around the world. At a later stage we see the appearance of television daytime or primetime serials, which turned out to be drama that appeals to people. Then there is the UK era to be followed by Australia and New Zealand, Mexico and Latin America, ending up in most European countries.

Soap operas have in fact, become such an inseparable part of their audiences' everyday lives that to define viewers' growing interest in them I would quote here Andrew Anthony when he underlines the place of television in our lives emphasizing that the presence of television is so pervasive that its very absence is a kind of affront to the modern way of life (Anthony, 2013). Although, not everyone so obsessed with television might feel the same about soaps, there should be very few people, why not none at all, who have never in their lives watched at least an episode or part of a soap opera.

While some countries developed their local productions and broadcast them at home only, many others aimed a lot more; they couldn't ignore the international impact. Many soap operas that have become so popular at home have very often achieved the same success around the globe (Allen, 1985). 'In a globalized world

it is not surprising that these serialized programs have become central to the discussion of the nation not only in developed countries but also in many parts of the developing world (A. la Pastina, C. M. Rego, J. Straubhaar, 2003).

## **2-Changes in trends**

Although soap opera ratings have since the early 2000's significantly fallen in some countries (the US especially), they have, surprisingly or not, reached high scores in many others (the Balkans, Middle East and Turkey). Whether this is because the former have already fed this insatiable need and the latter still haven't, or because it is a situation that most countries experience at a certain stage of their development, remains open to further discussion and even research. Another interesting fact is that while in some countries domestic soaps are becoming increasingly popular, in many others foreign productions have found significant success. Reasons for this phenomenon differ: the former might have grown bored with foreign productions and want to have some home stuff; and the vice versa could be a reason for the latter. Another reason for the former could be just a matter of time and development they might now be enjoying the peak of progress and success in cinema and film productions, something which most of developed countries achieved long time ago. Interestingly enough some countries' domestic productions are enjoying success and popularity at home, and they are doing so abroad as well, which is the case with Turkish soaps.

## **3-Reasons for popularity**

Reasons why people watch soap operas differ dependent on the country of origin or the country where they are broadcast, as well as the topics they treat and how. Generally speaking it can also be stated that people watch soap operas for their stories, the characters, the entertainment value and because the program-makers structure the series in such a way that everyone wants to know what happens next (Hobson, 1989). According to Buccianti the entertainment value and the cultural values amplified by several elements also play a role (Buccianti, 2010).

In certain periods of time particular soaps have become distinguishably popular, one or some replacing the previous ones. This is what happened in Arab countries when Turkish series dethroned their Mexican rivals which had ruled Arab screens in the 1990's (Buccianti, 2010). This is what has been happening in the Balkans for over five to six years. Considerable acceptance of Turkish soap operas noticed in a lot of countries in the Middle East was immediately followed by a high popularity which has had its influence in the Balkans as well. Are the reasons that make Turkish soap operas so popular in these countries the same or is it something else? After conquering Middle Eastern countries, Turkish soap operas command top television ratings in Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo beating US and Latin competition (Bechev, 2012). The first obvious reason behind the success of Turkish television series in the Middle East and in the Balkans is the fact that Turkish plots are culturally appealing to audiences which have a share in the Ottoman/Muslim history as well as to audiences which can identify with the Turkish way of

life displayed in the series, while still being attracted by certain forms of modernity (Russelin, 2013). While trying to take a broader view of Turkey's position in the Balkans, Bechew mentions that one of the reasons for the popularity of Turkish soap operas in the Balkans is a mixture of sentimentalism and family drama which appears to be appealing to Balkan audiences (Bechev, 2012). Other researchers say that the artistic quality of Turkish soaps was another reason (Uysal, 2012). The primary aim of this research was to explore whether historical proximity and the topics treated in these soaps are the same reasons for their popularity in Albania. Another objective was to analyze if proximity between the two societies makes Albanians find Turkish soaps closer to their reality therefore arousing/increasing interest.

#### **4-Soaps for other reasons**

Whatever reasons they are watched for, soap operas have undoubtedly played an important role in many countries' development. Some of them were intended to be so as there is the case with the Indian soap "Hum Log", which proved to be successful (A. Singhal, E. M.Rogers, 2001). Others may do so indirectly, which can be perfectly illustrated with the Peruvian soap *Simplemente Maria*, whose audience success and unintentional educational effect, inspired Miguel Sabido, a television writer-producer-director in Mexico to develop a methodology for entertainment-education soap operas (A. Singhal, E. M.Rogers, 2001). Another case is that of the Chinese soap *Ke Wang (Aspirations)*, which was designed primarily to entertain people but also addressed many of the important issues confronting the Chinese society (M.Wang, A. Singhal, 1992).

In addition to occupying so much of people's time, soap operas cause changes in the viewers' opinion about the country of origin and in attitudes towards the respective nation. Many have considered the entrance of Turkish soap operas in many countries as part of Turkey's foreign policy to strengthen its role in the region and why not in the world. In 2011, Kujawa would state that there is no doubt that Turkish television series and movies shown on Arab television and in cinemas have also led to a small cultural revolution in Arab countries (Kujawa, 2011). Arab viewers reportedly noticed the splendor of Istanbul as they were not familiar with Turkey and used to think it was unclean and underdeveloped. (Uysal, 2012) Studies also show that partly thanks to such films in 2009 more than one million Arabs decided to choose Turkey as their holiday destination (Kujawa, 2011) Even though not exactly the same soap operas as in Arab countries, most of the ones broadcast in the Balkans enjoyed almost the same success. The average Turkish soap displays glamorous lifestyles in metropolitan Istanbul and challenges long-standing prejudice against Turkey as a backward society. (Mathieu, 2013) If so, have they already met the purpose they were intended for? Do we see this happen in the Balkans and in Albania? While they create a positive image of Turkey among Arabs, we can't say the same process happens in other countries, in our case, Albania, either because this positive attitude already exists or because there might not be a negative one.

## **5-Linguistic impact**

Like all other foreign films or cinema productions, soap operas are brought to the viewers through translation in two ways: dubbing or subtitling. There are frequently claimed advantages of both methods regarding how much they affect second or foreign language learning. Visual media can provide a valuable source of authentic input for students who do not live in the country where the L2 is spoken. Not only do they provide additional input, they are also beneficial because they might provide the sole source of supplying the language learner with native-speaker input (Jung, 2010). As Koolstra put it in 1999, vocabulary learning from natural language occurs not because the learner is trying to learn words but because the learner is trying to understand what is said, sung or written (J. W.J. Beentjes, C. M. Koolstra, 1999). This could be likened to the process of mother tongue learning, in which all children either pick up words and use them naturally or ask their meaning when they haven't understood and use it at the moment or later. Believing that translated subtitles help in learning new words and structures and improve comprehension of the language, another aim of this research was to examine the language impact of watching soap operas with translated subtitles.

## **6-Data and methodology**

Data collected from 107 questionnaires, which were applied in the city of Tirana have been statistically evaluated using SPSS package. The total number of questionnaires was 110 but 3 of them turned out invalid either because the respondents were not willing to complete them or because they never watched soap operas or at least pretended not to. This questionnaire consisted of demographic data, questions about reasons for the popularity of Turkish serials in Albania and reasons why participants started watching a Turkish soap opera. Participants were also asked to compare Turkish soaps to those from other countries. Since the aim of this research was to observe whether watching serials helps viewers to learn the respective language some of the questions were if the serials had aroused any interest in the language, if the viewers had done something in this aspect and whether they had learned any words or not from the soap operas they had watched/were watching.

## **7-Results and Data Analyze**

### **7.1-Demographic data**

As shown in Table 1, 28 males (26.2%) and 79 females (73.8%), in total 107 respondents participated in the survey. Respondents' age varied from under twenty to over fifty which helps in creating a more overall analysis. Regarding education 52 respondents (48.6 %) out of 107 were university graduates or undergraduates. As for their professions the respondents who filled in the required field belonged to 12 different career groups. Some degree of unwillingness to provide information about their profession was observed as there were 40 respondents (37.4%) who hadn't completed this field.

**Table1. Respondents' gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	79	73.8	73.8	73.8
	male	28	26.2	26.2	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 2.Respondents' age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	under 20	29	27.1	27.4	27.4
	20-30	19	17.8	17.9	45.3
	30-40	29	27.1	27.4	72.6
	40-50	14	13.1	13.2	85.8
	over 50	15	14.0	14.2	100.0
	Total	106	99.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.9		
Total		107	100.0		

**Table 3.Respondents' education**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	secondary	18	16.8	17.6	17.6
	high	32	29.9	31.4	49.0
	university	52	48.6	51.0	100.0
	Total	102	95.3	100.0	
Missing	System	5	4.7		
Total		107	100.0		

By observing results in Table 4 and Table 5, it can be concluded that only 5(4.7%) of the 107 participants never watched soap operas, and out of 107 respondents only 3 (2.8%) had never watched a Turkish serial.

**Table 4. Respondents' frequency of watching soap operas**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I regularly watch soap operas	43	40.2	40.2	40.2
	I watch soap operas if I come across while zapping	16	15.0	15.0	55.1
	I watch soap operas rarely	30	28.0	28.0	83.2
	I watch soap operas very rarely	13	12.1	12.1	95.3
	I never watch soap operas	5	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 5. Respondents' frequency of watching Turkish soap operas**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	always	23	21.5	21.5	21.5
	often	46	43.0	43.0	64.5
	some episodes	35	32.7	32.7	97.2
	never	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Table 6 and table 7 give figures about the number of respondents watching particular Turkish soap operas. Although it was not one of the primary aims of this survey, results showed that currently the most watched Turkish soap opera in Albania is “Suleyman the magnificent”, with 60 (56.1%) viewers out of 107 respondents, followed by “Ezel” with 58 (54.2%) viewers out of 108 respondents. Third comes “Gumus” with 47 (43.9%) viewers out of 107 respondents.

**Table 6. Respondents watching “Suleyman the magnificent”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	60	56.1	56.1	56.1
	no	47	43.9	43.9	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 7. Respondents watching “Ezel”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	58	54.2	54.2	54.2
	no	49	45.8	45.8	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 8. Respondents watching “Gumus”**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	47	43.9	43.9	43.9
	no	60	56.1	56.1	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Tables 9-13 show results about reasons why the respondents had started to watch a Turkish soap opera. 56 (52.3%) out of 107 respondents appear to have started watching because of the topic and 30 (28.00%) because they like Turkish language. Liking or disliking a country doesn't seem to affect respondents watching a soap opera from that country or not. The effect that advertisements might have on watching soap operas appears to be very little; out of 107 respondents 10 (9.3 %) were influenced by the advertisement. Only 11 participants (10.3%) had watched/ were watching because they usually watched any type of serial despite its country of origin.

**Table 9. Someone recommended it**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	24	22.4	22.4	22.4
	no	83	77.6	77.6	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 10. Because of the topic**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	56	52.3	52.3	52.3
	no	51	47.7	47.7	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 11. Because they like Turkey**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	26	24.3	24.3	24.3
	no	81	75.7	75.7	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 12. Because they like Turkish language**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	30	28.0	28.0	28.0
	no	77	72.0	72.0	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 13. Because they saw the advertisement on television**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	10	9.3	9.3	9.3
	no	97	90.7	90.7	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 14. Because they watch any type of soap despite country of origin**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	11	10.3	10.3	10.3
	no	96	89.7	89.7	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Table 14 shows results about respondents' opinion of Turkish soaps being more interesting than those from other countries. 76 (71 %) out of 107 respondents agreed or totally agreed that they were more interesting, while 12 (11.2 %) out of 107 disagreed with this.

**Table 15. Social/family topics**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	47	43.9	43.9	43.9
no	60	56.1	56.1	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table16. The way romantic relationships are treated**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	13	12.1	12.1	12.1
no	94	87.9	87.9	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 17. Importance given to family**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	40	37.4	37.4	37.4
no	67	62.6	62.6	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 18. Lack of erotic scenes**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	29	27.1	27.1	27.1
no	78	72.9	72.9	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 19. Being closer to Albanian reality**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid yes	51	47.7	47.7	47.7
no	56	52.3	52.3	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Cultural and historical proximity is thought to be a reason for watching a soap opera. (Russelin, 2013) Table 20 results show that 92 out of 107 respondents (86.0%) agree that the common past/history has an influence on Turkish soaps watching, while only 15 respondents out of 107 (14.0%) think that the common past does not influence at all. Table 21 indicates that 61 out of 107 respondents (57.0 %) agree that cultural and traditional proximity push Albanians to watch a Turkish soap/serial, whereas 23 others (21.5%) don't think this can even be a reason for watching a serial.

**Table 20. Influence from the common history**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	46	43.0	43.0	43.0
	partially	32	29.9	29.9	72.9
	only a few people	14	13.1	13.1	86.0
	It has nothing to do with the past	15	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 21. Influence from cultural and traditional proximity**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes, most of them	61	57.0	57.0	57.0
	this can't be a reason for watching a soap	23	21.5	21.5	78.5
	I don't think there culture proximity between the 2 countries	11	10.3	10.3	88.8
	I don't think that what we see in Turkish soaps is the Turkish culture	9	8.4	8.4	97.2
	I have no idea about this	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Crosstabulation technique is used to get combined categorical variables. Table 22 shows that out of 92 respondents who agree that the common history makes Albanian viewers watch Turkish serials more eagerly, 40 also agree that cultural and traditional proximity accounts for the interest shown. Out of 61 participants who thought that the cultural and traditional proximity was a reason for interest only 3 didn't agree that the common history had nothing to do with the eagerness shown towards Turkish serials.

**Table 22. Common history and traditional proximity crosstabulation**

		Do the traditions and culture proximity push Albanians to watch Turkish soap operas?					Total
		yes, most of them	this can't be a reason for watching a soap	I don't think there culture proximity between the 2 countries	I don't think that what we seen in Turkish soaps is the Turkish culture	I have no idea about this	
Does the past influence the interest shown in Turkish soap operas by the Albanians?	yes	40	2	2	1	1	46
	partially	16	10	4	2	0	32
	only a few people	2	5	2	3	2	14
	It has nothing to do with the past	3	6	3	3	0	15
	Total	61	23	11	9	3	107

Tables 23-29 results show how our respondents agree on the reasons that increase the popularity of Turkish serials in Albania. Not surprisingly out of 107 respondents 88 (77.6%) agree or totally agree that the topics treated in Turkish serials are a reason that increase their popularity. The reason with the second highest values is the importance Turkish serials give to family life. Out of 107 respondents 78 (72.9 %) agreed with this. 77 (72.0%) out of 107 respondents agree or totally agree that being close to Albanian reality increases the popularity of Turkish serials. Friendship between the two countries appears to be a reason for popularity for 58 (54.2%) out of 107. Surprisingly the same number of respondents 58 (54.2 %), but not necessarily the same participants, agree or totally agree knowing Turkey increases the popularity of Turkish serials. Table 29 results show that knowing Turkish is a reason for 44 (41.1%) out of 107 participants, while 25 (23.4%) seem to have no idea about this. Only 38 (35.5%) out of 107 disagree that knowing Turkish increases the popularity of Turkish serials.

**Table 23. Friendship/relationships between Albania and Turkey**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	totally agree	28	26.2	26.2	26.2
	agree	30	28.0	28.0	54.2
	have no idea	22	20.6	20.6	74.8
	disagree	18	16.8	16.8	91.6
	totally disagree	9	8.4	8.4	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 24. Common history of the 2 countries**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	totally agree	23	21.5	21.5	21.5
	agree	38	35.5	35.5	57.0
	have no idea	27	25.2	25.2	82.2
	disagree	16	15.0	15.0	97.2
	totally disagree	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 25. Topics treated in Turkish soaps**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	totally agree	40	37.4	37.4	37.4
	agree	43	40.2	40.2	77.6
	have no idea	15	14.0	14.0	91.6
	disagree	7	6.5	6.5	98.1
	totally disagree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 26. Importance given to family life**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	totally agree	50	46.7	46.7	46.7
	agree	28	26.2	26.2	72.9
	have no idea	13	12.1	12.1	85.0
	disagree	11	10.3	10.3	95.3
	totally disagree	5	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 27. Being close to Albanian reality**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	totally agree	44	41.1	41.1	41.1
	agree	33	30.8	30.8	72.0
	have no idea	14	13.1	13.1	85.0
	disagree	10	9.3	9.3	94.4
	totally disagree	6	5.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 28. Knowing Turkey**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	totally agree	15	14.0	14.0	14.0
	agree	43	40.2	40.2	54.2
	have no idea	27	25.2	25.2	79.4
	disagree	15	14.0	14.0	93.5
	totally disagree	7	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

**Table 29. Knowing Turkish**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	totally agree	18	16.8	16.8	16.8
	agree	26	24.3	24.3	41.1
	have no idea	25	23.4	23.4	64.5
	disagree	24	22.4	22.4	86.9
	totally disagree	14	13.1	13.1	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Table 30 gives combined variables about the language impact soap operas have had on the respondents. Turkish soap operas have aroused the interest of 76 respondents (71.0 %) out of 107 to learn Turkish and 22 out of 76 have done something in that respect; 95 (88.8%) out of 107 participants have learned one word, some or a lot of words from Turkish soap operas, while only 12 (11.2%) out of 107 haven't learned any words at all. Interestingly, even participants who haven't shown an interest in learning Turkish after watching a serial, 31 (29.0%) out of 107, appear to have learned words; 23(74.2%) out of 31 have learned one word, some and one of them even a lot of words, and only 8 (25.8) out of 31 haven't learned any words at all. 95 (88.8%) out of 107 participants have learned a word, some words or a lot of words, while only 12 (11.2%) out of 107 participants haven't learned any words at all.

**Table 30. Language impact (Crosstabulation)**

		Have you learned any Turkish words from the soap operas?				Total
		A lot	some	one	none	A lot
Have Turkish soap operas made you want to learn Turkish?	Yes, and I've done something in that respect	12	10	0	0	22
	Yes, but I haven't done anything about it	10	38	2	4	54
	No they haven't	1	16	6	8	31
Total		23	64	8	12	107

**8-Conclusions**

The finding outlines of this research indicate that female viewers in Albania tend to watch more soap operas than male viewers, since all of the female respondents had at least watched a soap opera or some. As far as Turkish soap operas are concerned, even viewers who had never watched other soap operas had started to, which is explained by the fact that Albanians find Turkish soap operas closer to Albanian reality than other (Latin-American, Italian, etc.) soap operas, which represent a lifestyle different than theirs.

The main reasons for the popularity of Turkish soap operas in Albania are the topics they treat and the importance given to family and family ties, a tradition which among Albanians has weakened during the last 10-15 years. Among other factors that appear to have aroused Albanian viewers' interest are the common history (Albanians lived for 500 years under the Ottoman Empire reign) as well as cultural and traditional proximity. Social and moral values depicted in Turkish soaps are something that brings them closer to Albanian reality and makes Albanians identify with the characters easily, thus increasing the soaps' popularity and the viewers' interest.

Watching a Turkish soap opera also aroused the viewers' interest in the language and some of them even did something in this respect. Soap opera viewing may also result in the intentional or spontaneous process of vocabulary learning. This means that specially designed subtitled courses would benefit L2 learners and would increase motivation in second language acquisition. Taking into consideration this survey's results about the language impact of the soap operas it could be concluded that production of soap operas for both development and language learning could also be considered by different publishers.

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## **Cohort Research on Russian Youth Intraregional Migration and Education**

### **Abstract**

*Migration has huge influence on demographic structure formation both in donor and host areas. Internal migration's effect is the most significant. As long as migration involves mainly young people, their relocation to regional centers accelerates population ageing in peripheral areas and thus depopulation. Ageing is particularly fast in the Russian hinterland. There are areas with the median age of population reaching the edge of 50 years. The cohort research on youth's migration to the centers on the last two Russian census data shows that up to 70% of school graduates leave the regional periphery for good. At the end of the article a method of estimating the trend in regional center's migration attractiveness for the youths is proposed.*

**Keywords:** *Youth migration; Periphery depopulation; Center-peripheral population dynamics; Cohort migration studies; Method of shifting ages; Education.*

## 1-Introduction

In face of depopulation, Russian reality of the last decades, migration becomes the key factor influencing the demographic structures. According to the idea of the Third Demographic Transition, migration's impact on the dynamics of the population is growing significantly in the most demographically developed countries (Coleman 2006). This tendency became clear on the international level only in the last several decades when, after the Second World War, the developed countries experienced a great inflow of international migrants (Fassmann, Münz 1992; Massey, Arango et. all 1993; Wilson, Sobotka, Williamson, Boyle 2013). On the internal level of migration research the significance of migration impact on population dynamics was noticed much earlier (Ravenstein 1885; Hicks 1932; Price 1948; Lee 1966; Greenwood 1975; Frey 1995). But the empirical verification of theoretical constructions came much later and firstly on the international level. In this research we are studying impact of migration on demographic structures on sub regional level of administrative territorial division using empirical census data. Migration is the lot of young. This thesis is very well known. The selectiveness of migration was noted even in Ravenstein's "Laws of migration" (Ravenstein 1885). The term of "differential mobility" was firstly introduced by Dorothy Thomas (Thomas 1938). Empirical support for this finding was provided later (Casrto 1983; Bailey 1993; Millington 2000). Naturally, impact of youth migration on the demographic structures is the greatest.

Our prime focus on youth migration is important for Russian migration study due to our county's specific history of migration data collection. Liberalization of rules of tabulation by place of residence in Russia after USSR disaggregation caused great problems in migration statistics (Chudinovskikh 2005). The most problematic group proved to be the youths, especially the so-called "student ages" (usually 17-19 years old). Hence, we are focusing our attention mainly on this particular age group.

Since current migration record cannot provide us with the precise information (apart from distorting the age-sex proportions of the migration flows) we are forced to use census data for migration study. The comparison of two main sources of migration statistics brings us new valuable information. But the main idea of using the data from the last two censuses is about analyzing spatial mobility of the population on intraregional level. Only census data allow us to operate on this scale. Intraregional movements change demographic structures most dramatically. The research for the previous period between two censuses in Russia (1989-2002) showed that up to 40 percent of school graduates leave regional periphery in the search of better opportunities (Mkrtchan 2012). Our research demonstrates that the migration situation in the Russian hinterland is becoming more and more negative.

## 2-Intraregional Youth's Migration Estimation

For our research on intraregional youth's spatial mobility we chose several contrasting regions. Our choice fell on five regions with available statistics: Altai Krai, Kostromskaya oblast', Kurskaya oblast', Rostovskaya oblast' and Bashkortostan Republic.

We took five 1-year cohorts: 1988-1992 years of birth. At the moment of Census 2010 they were 18-22 years old - "student ages". Each of these cohorts has

experienced the 18-years peak of migration activity during the period between the censuses 2002 and 2010. Naturally, at the moment of census 2002 they were 10-14 years old.

The idea of the method is quite simple. People can live, die or move, not vanish. Therefore we can evaluate the migration balance comparing the censuses data considering mortality (which is quite insignificant in the young ages – hardly exceeding 1 percent in our cohorts). This method is known as the method of “shifting ages”.

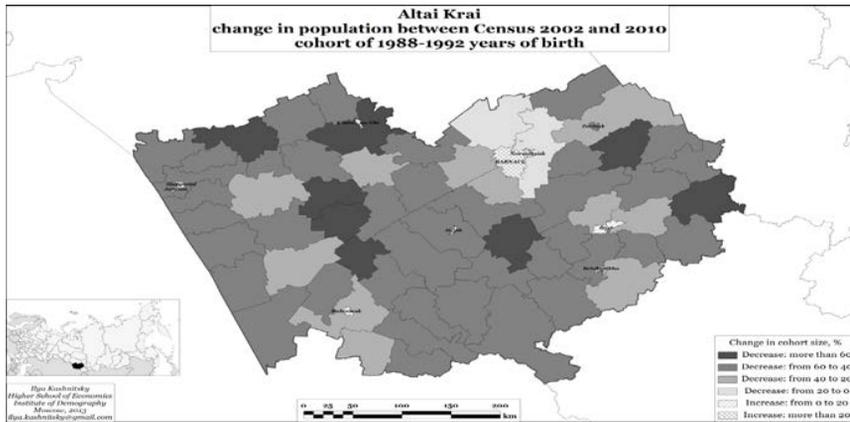
**Table 1. The discrepancy in youth’s migration statistics (given in thousands). (Censuses 2002 and 2010, the current migration record.)**

	Region				
	Altai Krai	Kostromskaya oblast'	Kurskaya oblast'	Rostovskaya oblast'	Bashkortostan Republic
<b>Cohort of 1988-1992 years of birth</b>					
Population in 2002	183.5	51.4	84.4	297.5	346.4
Population in 2010	172.5	44.4	74.4	335.3	324.3
Change by the Censuses	-11.0	-7.0	-10.0	37.8	-22.1
Deaths in 2003-2010	-1.6	-0.4	-0.6	-2.0	-3.0
Registered migration in 2003-2010	-5.9	-1.4	-0.6	1.4	-1.1
Discrepancy	-3.5	-5.1	-8.8	38.3	-18.1
<i>Unaccounted cohort change. %</i>	<i>-1.9</i>	<i>-9.9</i>	<i>-10.5</i>	<i>12.9</i>	<i>-5.2</i>

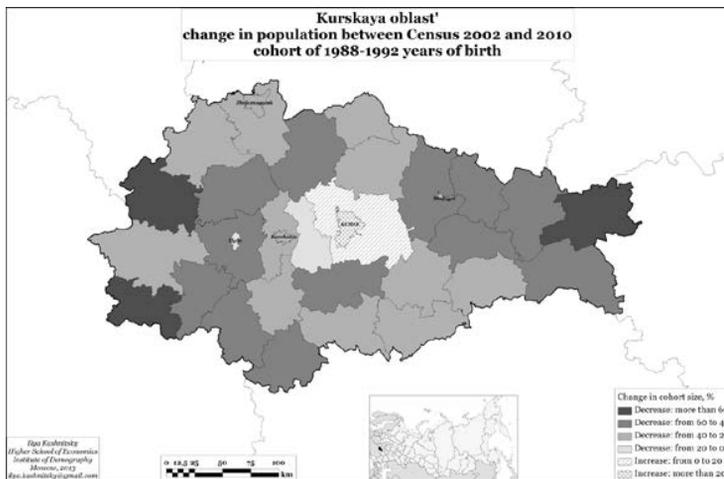
The discrepancy is striking. The two sources of migration statistics are incomparable. The decrease in cohort size unseen by the official record reached 10.5 percent of the original number in Kursk region. At the same time, in the Rostov region the current migration record missed the 12.9 percent increase in the size of chosen cohort. Though the number of registered migrants is less than the number of the dead during the period in Rostov region!

The scale of the research allows us to look at the inter-census (almost precisely migration) losses of regional periphery by every municipal district. And the picture is really horrible. Up to 70 percent of the youths (cohort 1988-1992) leave the periphery for good!

**Figure 1. Change in cohort size during the period between Censuses 2002 and 2010 ( Altai Krai)**



**Figure 2. Change in cohort size during the period between Censuses 2002 and 2010. (Kurskaya Oblast)**



The maps (Figures 1, 2 and attachments by the link) show that only the big cities can attract the youths. In the case of Kursk region only the regional center is attractive enough for the young.

The regional hinterland's state of depressiveness depends strongly on the level of migration depletion. There are some regions like Altai krai and Bashkortostan

republic where rural population is still quite large. In such regions even huge outmigration of youths has not yet resulted in fatal deformation of demographic structure. And even small towns here are attractive enough for the youth from local hinterland.

Unfortunately, our research shows the demographic fatality of Russian hinterland. We can only imagine the future of the population where just 30 percent of the youths are willing to stay.

### 3-Cohort intensity of intraregional migration

We found highly interesting to compare the cohort intensity of intraregional migration by several adjacent one-year cohorts (from 1988 to 1992 in our case). Using the data of current record we calculate the intensity of migration for every age of every cohort in every possible calendar year. The size of the cohorts was calculated from the Census 2002 data. We considered mortality and the balance of the external for the region migration. Then by comparing these intensities we can make some conclusions about the dynamics of intraregional youth's migration in the region.

Figure 3. The intensity of the intraregional migration in Kostromskaya oblast'.

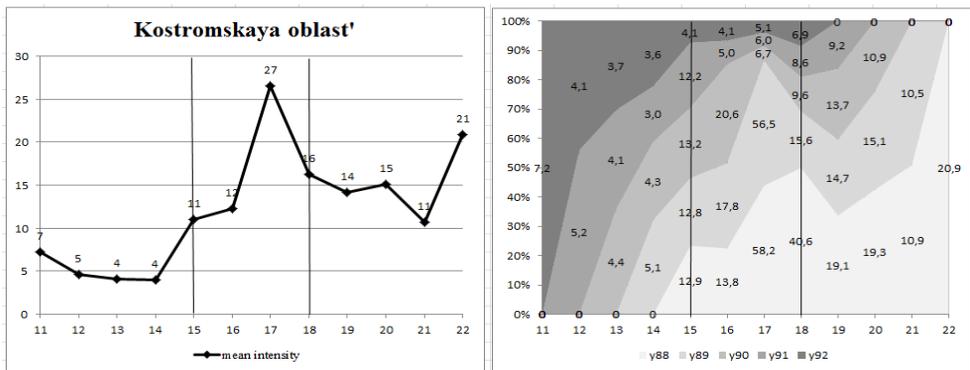
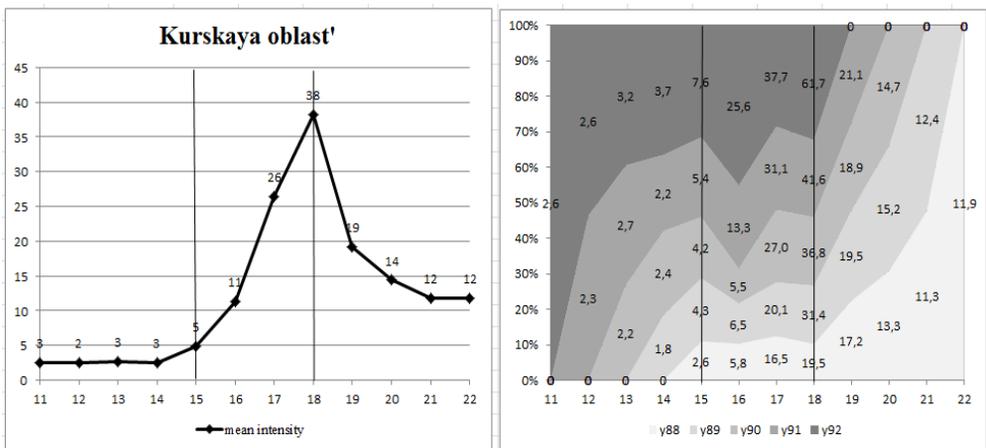


Figure 4. The intensity\* of the intraregional migration in Kurskaya oblast'.



\* Left: the mean value of migration intensity for 5 cohorts at the same age. Right: the shade of grey shows the relative value; the absolute value of intensity is inscribed over the diagram.

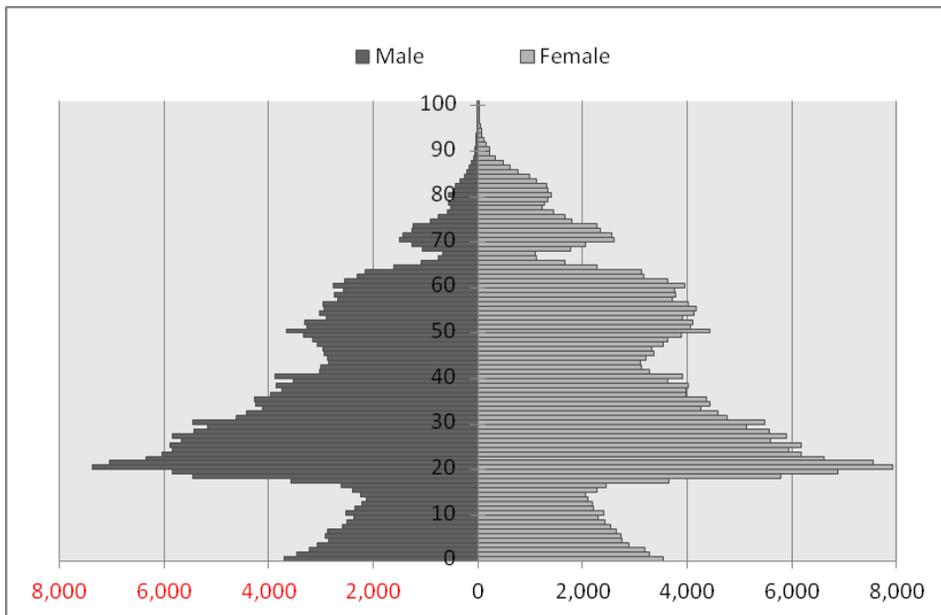
The given graphics (Figures 3, 4) point out the decrease in migration intensity in Kosrtoma region and the increase in migration intensity in Kursk region. We compare only migration intensity of the adjacent one-year cohorts at the same age. Thus we can only make the full matching for the ages 15-18, because every single cohort from our choice (1988-1992) lived in these ages during the period 2003-2010.

The author's hypothesis states that by the means of this analysis we can roughly judge the dynamics of regional center (centers) migration attractiveness.

#### 4-Impact on education

As migration involves mainly young people, there is a strong relationship between attractiveness of core area as an educational center and migration influence on demographic structure composition. Rich educational opportunities in regional centers come as a significant pull factor for those willing to move from periphery. For rproof of this thesis let us look at the demographic structure of Tomsk, well-known Russian educational center in Siberia (Figure 5). The "skirt" in ages 18-23 is the clerly visible effect of huge student in-migration to Tomsk.

**Figure 5. The demographic structure of Tomsk, Tomskaya oblast', Census 2010.**



Educational attainment of Russian cohorts born in 1990-s is increasing. This is the usual change of generation's behavior connected to demographic waves (Stapleton, Young 1988). When a relatively small cohort replaces a bigger one educational attainment tends to increase. And this is exactly the case of modern Russia. Now the small generation born during the fertility crisis of 1990-s is reaching student ages. Thus they experience much better educational opportunities than their precursors from relatively big cohorts born in 1980-s. And these improved educational opportunities in regional centers are likely to increase the outflow of the young from regional periphery.

There could be another possible impact of intraregional migration on education through shifts in age-sex composition. As was shown in Cynthia Miller's research (Miller 1996), spending for public education depends strongly on the proportion of age groups. In general, the bigger the share of elderly population is, the less money would be spent on public education. And this interrelation is much clearer at local area administrative level. Potentially, rapid population ageing in periphery caused by relocation of young to regional centers may have negative influence on public education in province. In Russia this concern is not of great importance because local budgets are not properly self-governed.

## **6-Conclusion**

This research focuses on the way the demographic structures form under the influence of migration. In this paper we consider mainly the internal migration (more intraregional, less interregional) as the key factor. The research is held on the level of municipal districts, which allow us to analyze the intraregional migration dynamics.

We note the increase in the intensity of the centripetal movement in the regions. The pace of depopulation and ageing in the hinterland is accelerating. The most depressive districts have lost more than 60 percent of school graduates during the last inter-census period. Migration proves to be the main factor of changes in the demographic structures.

The remoteness of the peripheral district determines the level of its depressiveness as well as the attractive power of the center. Every big center of migration attraction forms a depressive ring around itself. This is the result of "migration exhaustion". We propose that study on cohort intensity of intraregional migration can give some information on the trend of regional center's attractiveness for youth relocation.

As long as migration involves mainly young people, it has significant impact on demographic structure composition. The young move to the regional centers, periphery is rapidly ageing. Such big intraregional disproportions may have noticeable influence on public education

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Appendix (links to maps)

The whole gallery of maps (18) can be viewed and downloaded here: <https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B1Cid1hm5YLRRk5oQ09Zd3FJX00&usp=sharing>

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## A Case for Using Excel in Scoring Multiple Choice Test Items and Conducting Item and Test Analysis

### Abstract

*Scoring of multiple choice objective test items and conducting item analysis has been a problem for teachers at all levels of Nigerian educational system. In view of the longer procedural steps it will take for item and test analysis coupled with complex mathematical / statistical computations involved, teachers nowadays jump the protocol of the normal procedure to be followed in constructing items for a credible, reliable and valid tests. The effect of this is that teacher-made tests are no longer yielding the true performance of examinees' ability. This problem persists because of the inability of making teachers to fully integrate ICT into the school assessment practices. This paper makes a case for the use of spreadsheet package (Microsoft Excel) in scoring multiple choice objective test items and conducting item / test analysis. Excel was used in this article to score hypothetical 15 students' responses to 20 items multiple choice questions. This same excel was later used to compute the difficulty index, discrimination index of the items and also validity and reliability of the test. The scoring and the analysis of both test and item statistics were performed at faster rate and with utmost great accuracy. It is hereby recommended that:*

- 1. Government, University Management and Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) should as a matter of urgency organize seminars and workshops for lecturers / teachers periodically so as to update their knowledge in ways of using spreadsheet package (Microsoft Excel) to score multiple choice objective test items and conducting item / test analysis.*
- 2. Curriculum of Teachers Training programme needed to be re-designed to enable prospective teachers have firsthand experience during their training programme on how to use computers to score their students' tests, analyze the psychometric properties of such tests and even familiar with the ways of using statistical packages like Excel, Lotus 1-2-2, SPSS and E-views in analyzing data emanated from their research project.*

**Keywords:** Excel; Scoring; Multiple Choice Objective Test Items; Item and Test Analysis

## 1-Introduction

Education in Nigeria has been adopted as an instrument for national development. It is an indicator for a community social well-being, standard of living and social justice. In the opinion of Akindutire (2010), education is regarded by many as the key that unlocks the development of personal and national potentials of individuals including their rights and powers. In view of the realization of these laudable goals of education to national development, educational institutions were established for the training of the individuals. Since the value and functionality of any educational system lies in its ability to actualize the goals of education, the machinery through which the extent of knowledge and skills acquisition is determined at each stage of education has been set up. This is in form of assessment.

Assessment is an important aspect of teaching and learning. Assessment provides information for decision-making about the students, schools, programmes and policies with which the sole purpose of ensuring that good results are obtained (Afemikhe, 2005). Assessment should be the true reflection of the knowledge gained in any educational institution (Atabong, Okpala, Abondem and Essombe, 2010); hence, any action that undermines assessment poses a great threat to the validity and reliability of assessment results and certification (Hassan and Ogunmakin, 2010). This assertion was earlier noticed by Charles Spearman in 1904 when he propounded Classical Test Theory (CTT). To Spearman, the observed score (X) of any student in any test is a composite function of his true score (T) and error score (E); expressed symbolically as  $X = T \pm E$ . The more the error score tends towards zero, the more the true score becomes the observed score.

Poor assessment culminating from faulty items of a test remains one of the most serious threats to the validity and reliability of teacher-made tests in Nigeria. Teachers' made tests have come under strong criticisms in recent time in Nigeria (Adeyemo, 2003; Osakuade, 2006). The basis for the criticisms was borne out of the fact that teachers' made tests lack sound psychometric properties.

There are five major basic procedures to follow while constructing good test items (Okpala, Onocha and Oyedeji, 1993). The steps are:

- identification of the purpose of the test;
- stating the general objectives;
- writing the table of specifications (test blue print);
- construction of the items; and
- item analysis.

Out of these five major steps, item analysis was the major problem teachers are facing because of complex mathematical steps involved. As a result of this, teachers end up selecting items from textbooks and past question papers to form their tests without mindful of the psychometric properties of such items. According to Kolawole (2006), item analysis attempts to find out the following about test items:

- discriminating power – its ability to discriminate between the brilliant students and poor students.
- Its difficulty level, that is, the proportion of the testees who answer an item correctly.

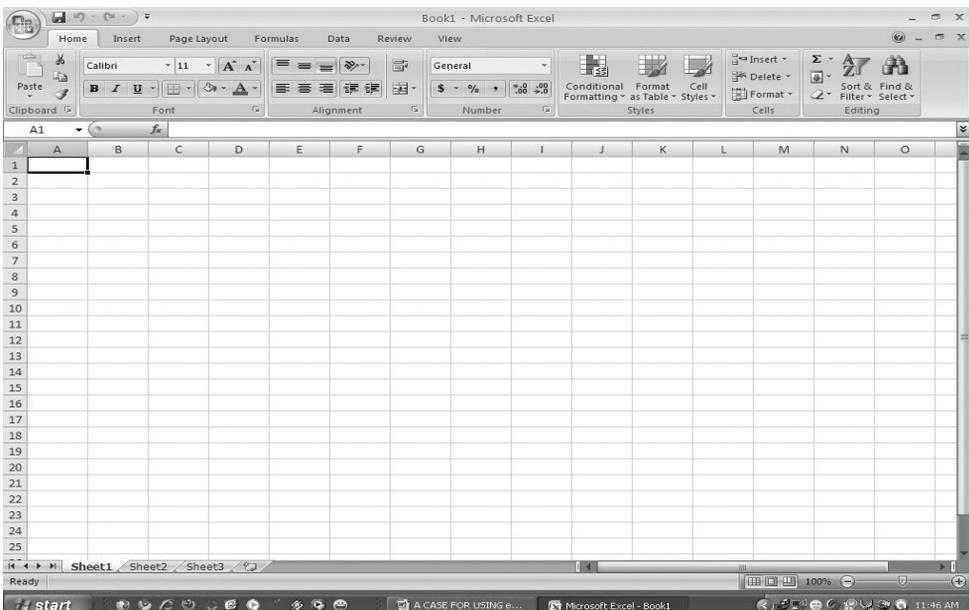
- number of testees who answer the item correctly
- number of the testees who choose the distractors, that is, distractors analysis.
- number of the testees who do not attempt an item.

The place of computer in item analysis cannot be over-emphasized. The spreading applications of sophisticated mathematical / statistical procedures in item analysis is an aspect of the computer revolution. Teachers in Nigeria today have not been able to realize that item analysis can be done with computer using a spreadsheet package (Microsoft Excel). This research paper is put in place to sensitize teachers on how to use Ms-Excel to score multiple choice objective test items and finding the psychometric properties of such items (i.e. difficulty index, discrimination index, validity index and reliability index).

## 2-Spreadsheet Structure

Ms-Excel like other spreadsheet packages is organized in a tabular structure with rows and columns. The intersection of a particular row and column designates a cell. The rows are usually numbered while the columns are lettered. Single letter identify the first 26 columns, double letters are used thereafter (A, B, C, ..., Z, AB, ...AZ, B, BA, ..., BZ, ..). Most spreadsheets permit up to 256 columns and over 8,000 rows. Three things can be entered into each cell. These are texts, numbers and formulars. Texts are usually in the form of labels used to identify rows and columns from each other. Numbers form the basis of calculations, unless otherwise specified, numeric entries are right justified on the right edge of each column, and text entries are left justified. However, one can specify what entries to be left- or right- justified or centered in the column. Formulars are used for calculations. A formular is always preceded by a plus (+) or equal (=) sign.

**Figure 1: MS-Excel Worksheet Structure**



### 3-Materials and Methodology

The study made use of responses of 20 students to a 15-question multiple choice objective test items fed into Ms-Excel worksheet. This section of the paper is divided into three parts. The first part deals with the scoring of the responses using Excel, the second part deals with the preliminary item statistics using Point-Biserial Correlation (item discrimination) and P-Values (item difficulty), the third part deals with test statistics (validity and reliability power). Details of the analysis are shown forthwith.

### 4-Experimentation and Procedure

#### 4.1-Part A: (Using Excel To Score Multiple Choice Objective Test Items)

To score the responses of 20 hypothetical students in a 15 question multiple choice objective test items using excel, the first thing is to open blank Excel worksheet in which we will designate the rows for individual students. In row 1 starting with cell A1, we type in the following labels for columns: "item", "key", "S1", "S2", ... "S15". For column A starting with cell A2, we type in the following labels for rows: "Q#1", "Q#2", ... "Q#20". The data table is now set and ready for entering student responses. First enter the keys to all the 20 multiple choice questions. Then enter students' responses (e.g., A, B, C, D). You have now created your data table and ready to score the responses with respect to the keys. The key and the pattern of students' responses to the items are as shown below in table 1

**Table 1: Responses of 20 students to 15 Questions Multiple Choice Objective Items**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
1	item	key	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15
2	Q#1	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	B	A	A	A	A	C
3	Q#2	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	B	C	C	A
4	Q#3	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	C	B	B
5	Q#4	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	C	A	A	A	A	D	A	A	C
6	Q#5	B	A	B	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	B	B	B	C	B	B
7	Q#6	C	C	C	C	A	C	B	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	A	A
8	Q#7	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	B	B	C	A
9	Q#8	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	B	B	B	C	B	B
10	Q#9	C	A	A	C	C	B	C	A	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	A
11	Q#10	D	D	D	D	C	D	D	B	C	D	C	D	D	C	D	D
12	Q#11	A	A	C	A	A	A	C	A	B	A	B	A	A	A	A	C
13	Q#12	C	C	C	A	C	C	C	C	A	C	A	C	B	B	C	A
14	Q#13	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	A	A	A	C	B	A	C	B	B
15	Q#14	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	C	C	B	A	D	D	A	A	C
16	Q#15	B	B	B	C	B	A	B	A	A	A	B	B	B	C	A	B
17	Q#16	C	C	C	C	A	A	B	B	C	C	A	C	B	C	A	A
18	Q#17	A	A	A	A	C	D	D	B	B	B	B	A	C	A	C	A
19	Q#18	B	A	B	C	B	B	D	B	C	C	B	A	A	C	A	B
20	Q#19	C	A	A	B	B	B	C	A	B	C	C	D	A	B	C	A
21	Q#20	D	D	D	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	C	C	A	C	B	C

### 4.2-Scoring Students Responses

To begin scoring the responses of the students, first, we will copy column and row headings together with key in table 1 above and paste in another area of the worksheet. To achieve this, we will highlight cells A1 to Q21, select Copy from the pull-down menu of Edit, click cell A22, then select Paste from the pull-down menu of Edit. Click at cell C23, type in the formula dialogue box “=IF(C2=\$B2,1,0)” and then press Enter, cell C2 is now scored and displayed in cell C23. Click at cell C23, place your cursor at the lower right-hand corner of cell C23 until your cursor changes to a cross, press down your mouse and while keeping it pressed, drag the mouse forward to cell Q23, release your mouse. Without clicking, place your cursor at the lower right hand corner of cell Q23 until it changes to a cross, press down your mouse and while keeping it pressed, drag the mouse downward to cell Q42 (the response to the last multiple-choice question by the last student in Q21), release your mouse. Now all students’ responses to multiple-choice question have been scored. The above mouse dragging and releasing process is called AutoFill. The final analysis of scoring is to calculate each student’s total score on the test. Click at cell C44, click at the summation sign E on the tool bar, use your mouse to select cells C23 to C42 then press Enter. The total score for the first student (S1) is now calculated. Use Autofill to calculate the total scores for other students. We can equally calculate the total number of students that answer each item correctly. To achieve this, click at cell R24, click at the summation sign E on the tool bar, use your mouse to select cells C23 to Q23 then press Enter. The total score on item 1 (Q#1) is now calculated. Use Autofill to calculate the total scores on the remaining items. We have now completed scoring all students’ responses and it is been shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2: Sample scoring worksheet of the 15 students in 20 Questions Multiple Choice Objective Items**

Item		Student															TOT	
	key	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15		
23	Q#1	A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	13
24	Q#2	C	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	12
25	Q#3	B	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	12
26	Q#4	A	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	12
27	Q#5	B	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	11
28	Q#6	C	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	11
29	Q#7	A	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	11
30	Q#8	B	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	11
31	Q#9	C	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	10
32	Q#10	D	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	10
33	Q#11	A	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	10
34	Q#12	B	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	9
35	Q#13	C	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	9
36	Q#14	D	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	9
37	Q#15	B	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	8
38	Q#16	B	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	7
39	Q#17	A	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	7
40	Q#18	A	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	6
41	Q#19	B	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	4
42	Q#20	C	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
44	TOT SCORE		16	17	15	14	15	14	7	7	12	13	15	10	9	14	8	

### 4.3-Part B: Conducting Item Analysis – Item Difficulty and Item Discrimination

We will now calculate item difficulty and discrimination for each of the items on the test. First, use mouse to select cells A1 to A21 from table 1 above and paste in cell A47. in cell B47 type “Points”, in cell C47 type “Difficulty”, and D47 type “Discrimination”. Type in maximum point for each of the items (in this case “1”) in column “Points”. Click at cell C48 to begin calculating item difficulty. Type “=SUM(C23:Q23)/(15\*B48)” in the formula dialog box and press Enter (15 is the total number of students), the difficulty index for item 1 is calculated. Use AutoFill to calculate the item difficulties for other items. Now click at cell D48 to begin calculating item discrimination. Type in the formular “=CORREL(C23:Q23,C\$44:Q\$44)” and press Enter. The item discrimination for item 1 is now calculated. Use AutoFill to calculate item discrimination for the rest of items. The results of item difficulty and item discrimination is as shown below:

**Table 3: Item Difficulty and Item Discrimination**

item	MAX. PTS	DIFFICULTY	DISCRIMINATION
Q#1	1	0.9	0
Q#2	1	0.8	1
Q#3	1	0.6	0
Q#4	1	0.8	1
Q#5	1	0.7	0
Q#6	1	0.5	0
Q#7	1	0.7	0
Q#8	1	0.8	0
Q#9	1	0.8	0
Q#10	1	0.6	1
Q#11	1	0.2	0
Q#12	1	0.7	0
Q#13	1	0.7	0
Q#14	1	0.6	1
Q#15	1	0.7	0
Q#16	1	0.5	1
Q#17	1	0.7	1
Q#18	1	0.6	0
Q#19	1	0.7	1
Q#20	1	0.6	0

### 4.4- Conducting Test Analysis – Test Validity

Calculating correlational coefficient is very paramount in validation. The analysis requires two sets of scores – one is from the test under validation, and another is from a different test that is considered to be credible thus the criterion. To achieve this, create another four rows labeled as “Student”, “Test score”, “Criterion Score”, and “Pearson Correlation Coefficient”. Type in the four headings at cells A71, A72, A73, and A74 accordingly. Enter the students identification numbers, their total scores and their criterion scores. The criterion scores used for this article were the students’ performances in their previous examinations / tests believed to be valid. To calculate the correlation coefficient, at cell C74 type “=CORREL(C72:Q72,C73:Q73)” and press Enter. The validity index is now calculated and shown in the table below

**Table 4: Test Validity**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
74	STUD		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15
75	T SCORE		10	4	13	8	10	8	10	7	10	11	10	10	9	8	9
76	CRIT SC		60	45	65	43	43	20	33	56	42	43	60	44	58	44	51
77	PEARS	=	0.4														

**4.5-Conducting Test Analysis – Test Reliability**

To calculate reliability coefficient, just revisit table 2 above and create additional column in “S”. at cell S22 type “Var”. at cell S23, type “=VAR(C23:Q23)” at the formular dialog box and then press Enter. The variance for item 1 is now calculated. Use AutoFill to calculate the variances of other items and of total test scores. The variance for total test score is displayed in cell S44. Now type in any blank cell e.g cell S45 “Cronbach Alpha=”, click at a cell on its right (cell U44) and type in the formular dialogue box “=(20/19)\*(1-SUM(S23:S42)/S44)” and press Enter. The Cronbach’s alpha is now calculated and the result is as shown in table 5 below:

**Table 5: Test Reliability**

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	
22	Item	key	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15	TOT	VAR		
23	Q#1	A	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	13	0.12	
24	Q#2	C	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	12	0.17	
25	Q#3	B	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	8	0.26	
26	Q#4	A	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	12	0.17	
27	Q#5	B	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	0.24	
28	Q#6	C	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	8	0.27	
29	Q#7	A	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	0.24	
30	Q#8	B	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	12	0.17	
31	Q#9	C	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	12	0.17	
32	Q#10	D	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	9	0.26	
33	Q#11	A	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	0.17	
34	Q#12	B	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	11	0.21	
35	Q#13	C	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	10	0.24	
36	Q#14	D	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	9	0.26	
37	Q#15	B	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	11	0.21	
38	Q#16	B	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	8	0.27	
39	Q#17	A	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	10	0.24	
40	Q#18	A	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	9	0.26	
41	Q#19	B	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	11	0.21	
42	Q#20	C	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	8	0.26	
44	TOT SCORE		8	15	15	8	18	10	15	7	13	19	17	14	11	16	12		14.2		
45																				Cronbach	0.727

## **5-Summary and Conclusion**

This paper examines ways of reducing the problems associated with the teachers' analyzing the psychometric properties of a test during test construction. It introduces the practical application of a computer spreadsheet package – Microsoft Excel in the scoring of multiple choice objective test items and the computation of item analysis of the test at a faster rate with maximum accuracy irrespective of the number of items in the test and the number of students that took part in the test. Teachers, Lecturers, test experts and post graduate students in tests and measurement who are constantly familiar with the use of manual method of computation of item analysis will find this paper more useful to generate valid and reliable tests so as to produce the results that will be true reflection of the examinees.

### **5.1-Recommendations**

Based on the roles of Spreadsheet package – Ms-Excel in reducing the problems associated with the scoring of multiple choice objective test items and the analysis of the psychometric properties, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Government, University Management and Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) should as a matter of urgency organize seminars and workshops for lecturers / teachers periodically so as to update their knowledge in ways of using spreadsheet package (Microsoft Excel) to score multiple choice objective test items and conducting item / test analysis.
2. Application of computers in teachers training programs cannot be brushed aside. Teachers Training program needed to be re-designed to enable prospective teachers have first hand experience during their training program on how to use computers to score their students' tests, analyze the psychometric properties of such tests and even familiar with the ways of using statistical packages like Excel, Lotus 1-2-3, SPSS and E-views in analyzing data emanated from their research project.
3. This paper was only limited to the scoring of multiple choice objective test items and the analysis of the psychometric properties like the difficulty index, discrimination index, validity index and reliability index using excel, it is hereby recommended to future researchers to replicate this work by calculating item response patterns, student performance by group of items

With these practices, true score of an examinee can be reliably estimated.

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## Reading Ayi Kwei Armah's Two Thousand Seasons as an Intertext

### **Abstract:**

*Ayi Kwei Armah (1939-) is a Ghanaian novelist who has written so far seven novels, famous among which are his first *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* (1968). *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973) comes fourth in order of appearance, but it is the first where Armah plunges into Africa's millennial past. *The Healers* (1979), *Osiris Rising* (1995) and *KMT in the House of Life* (2002) all span a given period related to African history, the last two even go as far as Ancient Egypt with its heliographic scripts, but *Two Thousand Season* in a number of respects remains an unparalleled book in Armah's oeuvre. This article answers what it means to write a historical novel while the initial intention is to evoke the frustrations of an unhappy present. Armah has started his novelistic career with a book – *The Beautiful Ones* – that carefully examines the postcolonial reality in his home country. In order to bypass the unhappy state of affair of the present, Armah sought to undo the damaging effects of master-narratives through a mythical construction of Africa's millennial existence. For him, what caused pitfalls from political independences – as evocatively dramatized in *The Beautiful Ones*; *Fragments*; *Why Are So Blest?* – is Africans' trust and sometimes belief in the stories made and circulated by essentially non-Africans. In other words, the reductive clichés, and generalized stereotypes have furnished the imperial powers with the necessary verbal tools in terms of a 'discourse' whereby these powers have been able to carry on and perpetuate its control and manipulation. In this connection, Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* can be read as a text wrestling against other texts in the battle of representing Africa. The present study, thus, details on which texts *Two Thousand Seasons* draws upon, in what way and towards which end?*

**Keywords:** *Intertextuality; African History; Colonial Occupation; Cultural Representation; Millennial Past*

## 1- Introduction:

With *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973) readers observe that another phase in Armah's writing career has begun: his immersion in the history of his Akan people can be read as a willingness to depart from the *ex nihilo-nihili* state of the man, Bako and Modin in the three early novels. Right from the prologue of *Two Thousand Seasons* readers find what can be considered a review on Modin and Solo's careers: "The noise the hypnotized make, multiplied by every echoing cave of our labyrinthine, is heavier, a million times louder than the sound we carry" (p. xi) Modin, readers recall from *Why Are We So Blest?* (1972), is left bleeding to death not far from a French military base in the Algerian desert. His physical castration can be approached as a metaphor for his emptiness from life juices, a fact that typifies his masculine unproductivity and foreshadows his uselessness for the task of regeneration. The picture, however, is not all bleak as the narrative emphasizes that there are some 'returning casualties' whose coming back to origins make them learn how to undo the chaotic present. Armah's reading of Africa's continental history differs and defies the monopoly established by western narratives. *Two Thousand Seasons* can be regarded as a spiritual biography of the continent. In showing that Africans had have a long history of struggle, and of survival and sometimes material triumphs despite the wrongs inflicted as a result from that struggle, the novelist has already made an unusual step towards a mental awakening. In the prologue, readers note the stress laid on the telling of one's story:

The ears of hearers should listen far towards origins. The utterer's voice should make knowledge of the way, of heard sounds visions seen, the voice of the utterers should make this knowledge inevitable, impossible to lose. (Armah, 1973. xiv)

## 2- Scope and Objective:

In the space of the present article, I attempt to review the tools by means of which Armah projected his people's history, and how his projection has been central to what can be considered his fully-fledged program for a prosperous Africa. How does his system work?—and what determines the scores and shortcomings in following such a program?

As indicated below, Armah's discourse in *Two Thousand Seasons* is predominantly mythical. The framing of the narrative evolves around the deployment of myths, legend, tales, dream-visions, parables and allegories. The novel never tires of drawing from this fantasia-mythical stock in order to impress its reader by showing to what extent the African present can possibly be of instructive consequences. In short, *Two Thousand Seasons* works ceaselessly at debunking western misrepresentations by providing one's own history. For Armah, African history in reality is neither a representation of Africa as a caricature of humanity, nor a world of naïve savages existing outside history, but a rather complex and civilizational entity. In *Two thousand Seasons*, readers find how the narrator becomes the unelected voice of the voiceless by merely evoking history. The community turns effectively from its paralyzing slumber once it learns about its position in space and time. Its reality of a community caught in a life or death tussle, worthy of being waged to defend its life style from the intrusion of alien lifestyles, is determined only when it is set in a historical situation. For apart from learning about one's identity and

individuality, history instructs how to confront life actively and responsibly. Edward Said pertinently observes:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination (Said, 1994, 9)

In this regard, power itself is subject to history and thus it can be subject to contestation, competition and seizure. Since it is not God-given, power like anything worldly is initially a mental construction. He who wins materially has to win imaginatively first. This is why:

...appeals to the past are among the commonest of strategies in the interpretation of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but uncertainly whether the past really is past, over and concluded, or whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps. (Said, 1994, 3)

The writing of the past, in this context, is always motivated with some needs of the present. Differently put, the invocation of the past by a considerable novelists, of whom Armah is one, can be interpreted as an anxiety to settle some old 'scores' and 'answer back' some reductive clichés and misrepresentations as these latter have been inflicted by western domineering powers in the battle over the geography of Africa. The reductive clichés and generalized stereotypes have provided the imperial powers with the necessary verbal tools in terms of a 'discourse' whereby these powers could have carried out its control and subjectification.

Indeed, it seems that what prompts Armah to write *Two Thousand Seasons* is the vocation to 'answer back' or 'counter-write' the colonial discourse. Towards this end, Armah's novel can be considered as a text that wrestles with other texts that when combined all together in an analytic perspective figure in the *casus belli* over Africa. For readers can consider *Two Thousand Seasons* as 'an intertext' or 'a text between texts' (Plett, 1991, 5) For some of the key events in the novel are starkly reminiscent of similar events in other narratives. There is a cluster of allusions, centos, parodies, travesties, collages and other no less important references to master western texts. Chief among these texts is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902), and a little referred to short story by Conrad titled: "Karain: A Memory" (1897). Similarly, *Two Thousand Seasons* hints at Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana or: The Ecclesiastical History of New England*. (1702) Certainly, not all these cases of intertextualities fall within the same effect. While the relationship between *Two Thousand Seasons* and the texts of both Conrad and Defoe vary between 'inversion' and 'negation', there lies some sort of 'repetition' between Armah's book and Cotton Mather's.

### 3-Contextualizations

Before developing on these cases of intertextuality and how they variably interact

with Armah's text, there lies the need to stress the cultural aspect of making sense of these books. Since all the works referred to are indicative of certain cultural backgrounds, the task of reviewing them should follow the same line and examine the cultural impact as it is observed from the angle of intertextuality. In this light, reading African historical novels, written by various African writers cannot be fair or objectively satisfactory without considering western narratives (novels) that touch upon the historical realities of Africa. In other words, since "each cultural work is a vision of a moment, we must juxtapose that vision with the various revisions it later provoked." (Said, 1994, 66) This is how Said arrives at his famous investigative cultural method he names 'Contrapuntal Reading'. This last means the act of reading a text "with a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history that is narrated and those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts." (Said, 1994, 67) .

#### **4-Approach and Method Followed:**

Hermeneutically, such readings are judicious since the logic which approves the right for one culture to reduce other cultures to inferiority tolerate to these 'inferiorized' cultures a right to answer back and vindicate themselves. There remains only the technical question: how can this be carried out successfully? Michel Foucault's observations prove insightful. For apart from the archaeologies which deal exclusively with the discontinuities of an episteme in one moment of time, genealogies investigate the entire fabric of changing epistemes all through time. Unlike traditional historical schools, genealogy does not seek meanings of isolated events as it scans epistemes individually, that is, as value-free events. What privileges Foucault's genealogical method is the fact that it historicizes the 'problem', not the period (Flynn, 2001, 42). The difference between the two operations lies in the idea that genealogical investigation always "should be seen as a kind attempt to emancipate historical knowledge [from the hierarchical order of power associated with science], to render them, that is capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse." (Said, 1994, 51)

Given this theoretical context, it seems that Armah's way of projecting genealogically the history of his people has been shaped by his predominating deployment of myth. To equalize the evocation of myths with factual history may sound an undue degradation of the serious, and in Armah's case, most enduring task of self-definition and identity. For the sake of appropriate self-definition, it is often presumed that one needs more than fictive means. One has to be, in this logic, fanatically committed to factual history. Such uncritical assumptions regarding factual history, however, do not pay adequate attention that this latter can be ideologically biased and value laden. This explains the modern crisis of epistemology. With post-structuralists' readings of history, it is rather common to find factual history driven towards "ego-history". Perhaps most damaging to objectivity is the moment when the means of representation become considered of minimal value when compared to factual history.

Myths and other means of representations (what can be called: mythico-fantasmatic reserve) can be launched as active participants in the imaginary contestation over the physical and mental space of Africa. With the clarification of the importance of myths in the task of literary representation, a deep investigation of Armah's

representation in *Two Thousand Seasons* can be started. At first, there is an attempt to show how Armah's discourse impenitently and actively contributes to the debunking of Western reductive myths and mis-representations. The political and cultural implications of *Two Thousand Seasons* as an intertext whose cultural project varies between negation and inversion of other meta-texts written mainly by Defoe and Conrad. Simultaneously, as the task of debunking is carried on Armah's mythification is taking place. Armah constructs the myth of a resilient, an ever-battling and undefeated Africa. The myth that *Two Thousand Seasons* ultimately draws is the novelist's own effort at bestowing a new definition to the African self and identity. The over-all achievement of the text is a reinstallation of hope against the delirium and disillusion of the present impasse, so powerfully dramatized in the earlier three novels.

### **5-Two Thousand Seasons as the African Genesis: the Puritans as a Role Model**

*Two Thousand Seasons* projects itself as an African legend epic form. Like most legends, it celebrates the birth of a race and traces its continuity (hopes, achievements, disappointments and failures) through time. Considered from the focal perspective of the present moment, the novel claims history and re-charts geography for a people long wondering amid unconscious forgetfulness and hideous deletion. Moreover, the novel re-appropriates its historical reality over the question of identity and matches the African self to its immediate physical environment. Soyinka reads *Two Thousand Seasons* as centered around "...a theme that is far too positive and dedicated and its ferocious onslaught on alien contamination soon falls into place as a preparatory exercise for the liberation of the mind." (Qtd. Soyinka, 1992, 45) Reference has already made above that *Two Thousand Seasons* shares some affinities with Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana*, the famous puritan epic. Prima facie, both works aim at one end: the projection of the self as self-sufficiently independent entity. Both, too, deploy the same literary devices to attain this end. In addition, the influence can be viewed in terms of analogy, regarding the special affinities of each writer's position and history. At the time of his death, Mather, the Harvard graduate, left more than 400 pieces of writing, both published and unpublished. As a prolific writer, he was not exceptional; he descends from a family and community known for their extensive writings. Writing, both factual and imaginative, established the puritans' foothold in a land that is basically not theirs. The sheer extensiveness of Mather's *Magnalia* (more than 800 pages in some editions), together with the recurrent repetition, the celebrations, the invocation of secular and religious history, and of course the glamorizing attitude of the style—all these elements normalize the puritan adventure to the New World, and most importantly legitimize their appropriation of land.

Let Greece boast of her patient Lycurgus, the lawgiver, by whom diligence, temperance, fortitude, and wit were made the fashions of a therefore long-lasting and renowned commonwealth: let Rome tell of her devout Numa, the lawgiver, by whom the most famous commonwealth saw peace triumphing over extinguished war and cruel plunders; and murders giving place to the more mollifying exercises of his religion. Our New England shall tell and boast of Winthrop, a lawgiver as patient as Lycurgus, but not admitting any of his criminal disorders; as devout as Numa, but not liable to any of his heathenish madneses; a governor in whom the excellencies of Christianity made a most improving addition unto the virtues, wherein

even without those he would have made a parallel of the great men of Greece, or of Rome, which the pen of a Plutarch has eternized. (Mather, 1702, 340)

To begin with, there is no material evidence which directly indicates that Armah has read Mather's *Magnalia* before embarking on the writing of *Two Thousand Seasons*. Any objective reader, nevertheless, cannot fail to witness the striking analogy between these two texts. Armah's similarly opens and proceeds with celebrations, repetitions, invocations of factual and mythical histories, and again deploys the same glamorizing style. Furthermore, both texts do compare their respective 'selves' with radical others, be they Romans and Greeks or Arabs and Europeans. Armah's novel opens also with: "We are not a people of yesterday. Do they ask how may single seasons we have flowed from our beginnings till now?" (Armah, 1973, 1) All along the American experience, there has been an anxiety, perhaps unequalled with other experiences, to justify the appropriation of the land, the expulsion of its native inhabitants, and interestingly enough, to cast the European colonists with an 'Americaneness' from the same terra firma.

In the fourth chapter of the *Magnalia*, and from which the above quotation reads, Mather writes the biography of the governor of Massachusetts colony John Winthrop. It is not for nothing that the chapter is entitled 'Nehemias Americanus'. The appellation 'Nehemias' calls to mind the famous Biblical leader who led the Israelites back from Babylon, ordered the reconstruction of Jerusalem, and gave the city its present famous typological byword: 'the city upon a hill.' As indicated by one commentator, the parallel of John Winthrop with the Nehemias of old had been vital for the justification of the entire puritan adventure in the New World. The parallel is carried on with the help of some technical tools by means of which Mather was able to effect finally the identification of the Biblical past with his grandfathers' 17th century crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. The identification, literally speaking, plays around; first, the stretching exemplariness of Nehemiah as a timeless leader; second, as an archetype to be followed; and third as a 'micro Christ' who fits in with the prophecies of the Biblical telos. Thus past and present combine together, and both envisage the ever renewable future. Nehemias, Winthrop and all the Puritans down to the last one in the line are to figure within the Christian prophecy / myth of the millennium and Jesus' second coming. (Goldsmith, 1999) Instead of being exclusively that dead historical figure, Mather's narrative lifts him to the status of a symbol that not only reflects or projects but principally radiates the entire earthly life of Biblical believers (Israelites, Puritans and present day Americans, all at once included).

*Two Thousand Seasons*, with the exception of some minor details revolves around nearly the same symbolic structure. Anoa's prophecy of "two thousand seasons thrown away to destruction" (p. 12) functions as an African telos, while the nameless narrator with his temporal—atemporal presence embodies the engravings of the community in the portrait of time. The metaphoric web in which the story is narrated helps carry the analogy with Mather's text. Instead of Jerusalem's destruction by the barbarians, the subsequent flight, the return and the reconstruction of the city upon a hill, we read of the intrusion of the 'Ostentatious Cripples from the desert', the escape through the bog-land and the foundation of Anoa city. But Armah's special innovation is that instead of the exemplification of the community in one man or woman in order to symbolize the move from past and present to future, it

is the entire community which represents itself and finds its spokesperson in an anonymous superintending narrator. Even Anoa, the prophetess, is not immortalized for “[she] was not the first, not the second, not the third to speak. [of the prophecy] Hers, however, was a different, fuller utterance.” (p. 13) Other women both before and after Anoa share the same burden and it is their accumulated experience rather than the weird spell that shape the meaning of the prophecy. Unlike the American Calvinists who stand consciously helpless before the surrounding wilderness and seek the redemptiveness of the telos to define their lives there, Armah’s Africans approach their historical reality somehow differently, without being psychologically befuddled—and more importantly, freed from any spell.

But in both Mather’s and Armah’s texts one can notice that time is not conceived only as a linear. On the contrary, time operates circuitously, too. The future can be found in the past, and the present is the reenactment of both past and future. Allegorical figurations help advance the idea that history, while connecting linear time with the multiple separate events, also reflects an eternal-cyclical reality, which is bigger and all encompassing. Anoa, the woman and the city are on one hand the figure whose sayings foreshadow what was to come for the community, but equally on the other, is a symbol that deconstructs linear time in the very construction and survival of the city, named in that woman’s honor. Again, all that happens to the community does not bear very much on the isolated events, nor on the words of the prophecy, but on Anoa’s atemporal experience. Instead of anything else, Anoa’s significance in the novel relies much on her symbolic dimension.

For purposes of understanding this symbolic dimension and how it is successfully carried on literally, one has to consider the role of the ageing—ageless narrator in the story. As readers follow the community’s linear beginnings from incipience to where the narrator chances to stop, that same narrator simultaneously proves that all eventful—factual—linear history either rotates around or falls within the same formula which Anoa once happened to enunciate. If the narrator can be considered a man, that man has to be, in Armah’s creative vision, an ahistorical subject who does not shy before the weight of safeguarding the interests of the community he speaks for. In cultural terms, he must be an intellectual committed to his people’s cause; nevertheless, literally he can be an archetype who parallels other lives and other lives parallel his too. Armah’s emphasis on the spirit rather than the letter of the events pushes the reader repeatedly to think of the mythical spell of Anoa as valid and timeless. The narrator’s vocation which he enjoys in consequence of his representativeness must allow him to transmute factual history into a biography of the entire continent, and once this is achieved every African (living, unborn and dead) sees his or her own biography in that continental account.

Put differently, the narrator can be processed as symbol of Anoa. He makes her prophetic words come true. Yet, the drama is more ambitious than just that. For the reader absorbs the definition of the exemplary African. The narrator symbolizes the African’s role in history, and it is that same role that makes sense of the biography and places it in context. The typical African, say, Isanusi, Abena or any other one in the fifth grove, untie their collective life with the exemplary life of the narrator and thus can eventually identify with him. The source of their personal identity becomes neither their birth right in Africa, nor their kingship connection with the historical narrator, but essentially the tuning of their collective efforts with the narrator’s historical work.

Armah's image of Africa carries the idea of a committed Africa. He is African who emulates the narrator's symbolism. Again, he is African who conceives of the sense of mission by examining the day by day challenges and works for the teleological view which "our way, the way" imparts. The rebuff of the factual reading of events and insistence on circularity instead allows everyone in the African community to work out his or her Africanity as prerequisite proviso towards materializing one's identity. The repetition of the rhapsodic "our way, the way", besides casting a structural unity on the narrative or stressing the particularity of the African locale, also provides the African with the spiritual uniqueness of that locale which is manifested in Anoa's prophecy and the narrator's typicality. In making the meaning of Africa rest on the extended metaphors of the woman, Anoa, plus the—ever present narrator, Armah transfers the mythical past into a resistance to slavery, later to wars against colonial occupations etc... In all respects, Armah expects that the future will vindicate him. All the same, Armah's construction of this particular narrative borrows predominantly from the "mythico-fantasmic" reserve. Such a borrowing empowers Two Thousand Seasons to evolve genealogically and shed light only on what is hotly controversial for historians and propagandists alike. Beginning with the first page of the book, and just after the nameless narrator's 'hard-hitting' assertion of his people's antiquity, the same narrator embarks directly on what seems to be his principal assignment: the telling of one's story in the form of a genealogical biography of the continent. The central incident from which the novel originates is nothing short of a quasi-fanciful causality. One despairing resident of "the farthest grove" (p. 9) while dying, utters how it all started. The story of the black race, according to this nameless narrator—revelator started in the dimmest past "on a clear night" with an ancient woman and her seven children" (p. 1) The reader, indeed, wonders if this delightfully 'clear night' is not an allegory that heralds a good omen awaiting the descendents of this woman and her children. They are all the luckier since despite all the misfortune they are destined to meet, there will always be someone who leave a word about their passage in life, trace their origin and hence create a possibility of their proper identification. Already here one notes a typically African myth competing with the Judeo-Christian and Islamic myth of Adam and Eve, as the fathers of humanity. The fratricidal dispute between Adam's own sons becomes the infamous "seven warring factions" (p. 9) which that dying woman narrates.

Readers can observe the writer's anxiety to offer a competent myth of creation and beginnings resembling all people's creation-myths, in order to let his African readers claim their history. The myth of the dying woman with her seven children, again, tactfully negates the Hegelian—Darwinian 'orientalizations' which postulates the development of the black race from the chimpanzee: the lowest grade of progress and thus shows his appropriation by imperialists as a blessing bestowed on him, while he—the ever misconceived African—ought to be thankful for. Such degradations are there with the purpose of maintaining what Achille Mbembe views as "the West's obsession with, and circular discourse about, the fact of 'absence', 'lack', and 'non-being', of identity and difference, of negativeness – in short of nothingness." (Achille, 2002, 4) Further reading of the novel indicates how Armah envisions Africa's ancestry and its contemporary translation in today's politics of identity in the sweeping narratives of modernity. Contrary to the Islamic and Judeo-Christian myth, Africa is essentially 'Adamless', where male's role is not only unimportant or minor but can be destructive and endangering to 'our way, the way'. It is the legendary Yaniba who with the help of some indescribable efforts

(we are not told how) settled the fratricidal dispute and ended the tough reign of the Fathers. Simultaneously, Yaniba ushered in the commencement of the rule of Women, which Armah finds egalitarian and fertile for the well being of the entire community.

No less instrumental in the project of counter-writing the modern narratives with Armah is the use of rhetorical devices (puns, paradoxes, and the repetitions of key words, the metaphorising of proper names). These devices function not only to convey an outlook, but to provide historic substance to an aesthetic vision that finally figures in the creation of an epic. Once more women play a central role in this scheme. The work of Azania and her group of liberating women in that “night of nights” is nothing short of a miracle in a prehistoric fable. The libertine voluptuaries – the likes of Hussein, Hassan, Faical, Muhammed and the other debauched Arab rulers – were killed in the midst of their adulterous pleasure as by a fateful spell. The scenery leading to their death looks like a fairy tale propagated by a just, all-seeing power handed to women to do the right thing at the right moment.

### **6-The Centrality of the Feminine Principle in Africa’s Self Defintion:**

For Armah, then, drawing on mytho-biography can be an important contributor for knowledge of the self. In all the turning points of *Two Thousand Seasons*, that is, the toppling of Arab rule, Anoa’s prophecy, the crossing of the bog-land, the miraculous escape from the slave ship and the subsequent resistance in the fifth grove, --in all these crucial incidents, it is women who take the lead and execute the redeeming task in the body-politic of the community, a task which men are depicted as inherently incapable of doing. Observed from the perspective of the novel’s prospects as an African ‘genesis’, Armah’s celebration of African woman “indicates that the suppression and exploitation of women are contrary to ‘our way, the way’, being habits that opportunistic bamboozled admirers of white ‘predators’ from the desert.” (Owomoyela, 2002)

That women stand for liberty and redemption from the sins of the entire community is perhaps more than a happy convergence between Armah and Chiekh Anta Diop. Indeed, it is Diop who first brought to the intellectual fore:

The dichotomy between the patriarchal North and the matriarchal South. The Osiris-Isis-Horus myth reflects the virtues of familial harmony and of fertility in which the woman enjoys due respect and pride of place. But Indo-European culture as a culture which had systematically subjected womanhood, had troubles coming to terms with that positive image of the myth. (Okpewho, 1983, 241).

Armah attributes the task of enlightening the African community to women. Women cannot be left on the periphery of pressing issues, as it is the case with other cultures and traditions. With the appropriate use of her womb (seducing Hussein and his likes), Azania bears the sins of the entire community and purges every member anew. For this reason, too, are placed in direct opposition to white women in all respects. The scene where a white woman collaborates with the white slavers is capital for demarcating a difference between white women and their black counterparts. Readers are told that the European woman marks her presence with “first [like] an apparition exactly like a ghost.” As she approaches the enchained

Africans, the narrator denounces her strangeness: “There was space before her, space to her left and right, space behind her: her figure seemed the shape itself of loneliness. It seemed impossible that she could be together with any other being.” (p. 119).

### **7-The African Space Resisting: the Limitations of the Conradian Perspective**

The space surrounding the European woman from the four directions betrays her unharmonious presence in the physical space that is unremittingly rejecting her. Unless she turns to her homeland, she stays out of place, a venomous outcast who is innately incapacitated to be in spiritual communion with any other being including herself. Such line of thinking develops some lines later and reads: “she looked like one trapped in a perpetual nightmare ... Each flitting backward look was a desperate attempt to keep the object of her fear behind her...” (pp. 119-20) reminds the reader of a similar scene detailing Kurtz’s African mistress by Marlow in Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902). Similarly, Marlow observes: “And from right to left along the lighted shore moved a wild and gorgeous apparition of a woman... She was savage and superb, wild-eyed and magnificent... Suddenly she opened her bared arms and threw them up rigid above her head, as though in an uncontrollable desire to touch the sky.” (Conrad, 1902, 87-8) What looks as a simple inversion on the part of the narrator of *Two Thousand Seasons* of Marlow’s falsifications is a deeper and more complex reaction than what is thought of at first glance.

As indicated by Chinua Achebe in his celebrated essay “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*”, the black mistress “fulfills a structural requirement of the story: a savage counterpart to the refined, European woman.” (Achebe, 1988, 6) For in Conrad’s novel, and in order to define the presumably civilized European woman, “with a mature capacity of fidelity, for belief, for suffering”, he had had the trouble to contrast it with its antithetic Other: Kurtz’s African mistress. The inversion of the two women in both works—Conrad’s and Armah’s—insists on keeping them in two diametrically opposed constituencies as each charts an identity unique to its own. Armah’s narrative distinguishes itself by benefiting from the whole historical context of the Atlantic slave trade, while Conrad’s willingly and repeatedly dilutes any depth of the sort and endlessly delivers its philosophizing about the vanity of human efforts. Wittingly Edward Siad remarks that Kurtz and Marlow were “to recognize that what they saw, disablingly and disparagingly, as a non-European ‘darkness’ was in fact a non-European world resisting imperialism.” (Said, 1994, 30).

With the narrator of *Two Thousand Seasons*, readers are in a position to realize that the physical space actively participates with the moral one in the rejection of the enslaving European woman. The latter syncretism is made to look in the form of violence perpetuated against the natural order of things—a violence that prompts the same victimized nature to deter its violator, the European woman, humanity in revenge. Little wonder, then, that the woman-enslaver by her strangeness involuntarily cast the enslaved African women with their humanity, simply by being subjects to ‘reification’ in the volatile slave trade.

### **8-Armah’s Historical Mythification versus Conrad’s Mystifying Mythification**

Again Armah’s fictional ‘answering back’ against Conrad’s imaginaire extends

from mere inversions of certain categories to deeper negations of over-all structural combinations of important parts of *Two Thousand Seasons*. Conrad actually treats in some of his little studied fiction the struggle over geography, but this is a dimension that has been inaccessible to readers as a result of his overt mystification and propagation. Nevertheless, the structure of at least one of his least referred to short stories, "Karain: A Memory", bears witness to its intended allegory of one native woman. Armah's narrator also shows cultural clash over physical space can be generated from a dispute over one's honor and one's woman.

King Koranche in *Two Thousand Seasons*, readers find out, sells a number of his subjects to chattel slavery when he is denied Abena whom he intends as a bride for his son, Prince Bentun renamed Bradford George. In his dogged persistence over the elegant Abena, King Koranche has to alter the rules of the 'Dance of Love' ceremony. Rules favourably altered yet Abena while dancing is able to slip "untouched past the dancers of the middle circle." (p. 93) Defeated in his own plans and humiliated in his own son, King Koranche contemptuously invites the dancers on board his white friends' ship and betrayed them to slavery in revenge. That King Koranche bears some striking resemblances with King Korinchi Karain, in Conrad's afore mentioned tale is not a hap-hazard case of intertextuality. Armah must have read "Karain: A Memory" while embarking on this very part of *Two Thousand Seasons* Korinchi Karain is a Malay ruler who turns out to be a slavish lackey who beg some European arms smugglers on their schooner's deck to take him to their land. With the death of his closest and enigmatic body-guard, Karain's memory bursts up unexpectedly and unreasonably before his white friends so much so that he starts unfolding the one mysterious chapter of his life. He could not sleep for six days because he once has betrayed his closest friend Matara on account of one woman, Matara's own sister.

As with Armah's Koranche in *Two Thousand Seasons*, Korinchi Karain in Conrad's story could not have betrayed Matara without the presence of European power in the background. Indeed, it is that presence that sets the stage for a Dutch trader to settle in the vicinity of the Eastern Archipelago. Matara's sister elopes to the Dutch begging for refuge from an unwelcome marriage. She thus compels Matara to go and fetch her. Because of the Dutch fleet (imperial power) in sight, Matara cannot claim his sister back. Some time after, his sister's captor leaves with the captive. Matara and his 'presumably' faithful friend Karain are free to follow the couple and cleanse dishonor. Years of search, they found the couple and work out a little plot to kill them; Matara is to seek out the Dutchman while Karain is to kill "with a sure shot" the sister. The moment that everything seems to go according to plan, Karain falls prey to the beauty that "silences the reason of men" (Conrad, 1897, 52) and shoots his friend Matara instead. From that moment, readers are told, Karain is haunted by Matara's ghost and his spirit has grown restless ever since. His meetings with a pious Muslim pilgrim (his late bodyguard) enables him to forget the apparition haunting him. With the death of this bodyguard, Karain finding no peace of mind except in his white friends' schooner. He practically begs them for a new charm. In order to get rid of him, Hollis (the sailor) provides him with a significant charm: "a Jubilee sixpence. It was a gift, it had a hole punched near the rim." Hollis adds: "The thing itself is of great power – money, you know – and his imagination is struck. A loyal vagabond; if only his puritanism doesn't shy at a likeness..." (Conrad, 1897, 64) As the Jubilee sixpence exhibits the effigy of Queen Victoria, Karain mistakes it for his mother who had been a native ruler, an acute case

of identity confusion.

Very symbolic indeed is the new charm imparted to Matara's betrayer, Korinchi Karain. Instead of burying his friend's shame, which is his too, by shooting the prostitute sister dead, Karain mysteriously hopes she would acknowledge his sparing of her life and eventually be his. Despised in his presumed love, Karain loses all sense of manhood by keeping the new charm and by being serviceable to the white mercantilists. The charm Hollis provides supersedes the one offered earlier by the Arab and sums up the symbol of the age, capitalism. Both King Karain Koranchi and King Koranche adhere to the ethic of the age as soon as they taste heaps of money. Both prove ready to betray the promise given to their respective communities in exchange of some capital.

It is likely that a central issue of this magnitude remains unacknowledged in Conrad's tale. The reader has to get used to the story's style which is highly ironic in order to appreciate its deeper meaning. The contrasted purposes of both stories prove the judiciousness of a confrontational study of the two works. Conrad's narrative remains marred with reductive oriental images, and his nameless white narrator cast such images with a stock of words like: shades, illusions, apparitions, charms, love, women, drinks and blood. These all escalate the exotic quality of the place and render their referents—the same Malay people—as irrational, flimsy and dreamy creatures. These images reduce oriental people to essential betrayers and lackeys always in the service of whatever prevailing power. Following the domination of Arabs (induced from the workability of their charm over Karain), there comes Westerners' turn to do their best. Again, while there is reference to arms smuggling, there is but little dramatic use of it, if not a deliberate intention to stay silent on the betrayal of native rulers and their reliance on foreign backing.

Only with *Two thousand Seasons* readers feel adequately prepared with necessary contexts and fully-fledged drama. Tracing King Koranche genealogically helps in shedding light on his venomous contempt against his community. Koranche, the narrative announces, descends from a long line of incorrigibly corrupt native rulers (eighteen to be exact) who “usurp undeserved positions as caretakers, in the course of generations [and] imposed themselves on a people too weary of strife to think of halting them.” (p. 64) Suffice it to add that Koranche the boy is the product of King Topre's “copulation with none but his own sister.” For this reason:

Koranche of all children of his time was slowest. It was his habit to stay wherever he was left from morning till evening and sit staring straight ahead of his body. He could not smile. The only expression he has was a constant dull, flat, ever-staring look from which diviners themselves would have been defeated trying to draw a meaning. He could not cry like other children. If he fell – something he did often enough, though how did it from such an immobile postures was always a mystery – if he fell and banged his head against a stone he lay quite still, silent the time it takes a person to swallow his moisture seven times. Then only would Koranche decide to begin to cry. And then he cried with a constricted, explosive violence quite astounding to all hearers. (p. 66)

In spite of the surrealistic quality of the description that details on Koranche's childhood, its moral however is sufficiently significant for situating the boy's future choices and decisions. Brought up without qualities except “a genius for obliterating

the proofs of other people's superiority to him" (p. 67) Koranche cannot hesitate before selling members of his people in spite. After a brief period spent courting the beautiful and wise Idawa, Koranche knew that "in spite of everything the lucky social pomp could do to hide his emptiness the one woman he wanted more than any other, the person who would reaffirm him his manhood, that person felt for him nothing but contempt." (p. 73) Denied in his last chance to prove his dubious manhood (the double refusal of Idawa and later Abena) Koranche becomes an outright betrayer, courting the regards of the Whites.

The plot similitude between Conrad's story and Armah's is remarkably complex. On the surface level, both stories dramatize the life of corrupt native rulers whose motif behind betrayal originates from a woman's unrequited love. This is only partially valid and by no means can cover the distance between intended authorial meaning. Conrad's tale goes on insisting that Karain's friendship to Matara and his commitment to his cause remains undisputed till suddenly and inexplicably, falls prey to a queer sensation (since it cannot be love) and betrays his friend. This unexpected reaction is all the more damaging since it confirms the orientaling images like "Orientals are inveterate liars, they are 'lethargic and suspicious', and in everything oppose the clarity, directness and nobility of the Anglo-Saxon race." (Said, 1978, 39) With Armah's historical depiction, there exists undeniably a clarity of vision, for if Koranche is a born betrayer that is not only because he inherits his defects from an awful ascendancy, but principally because his defects themselves are the result of a natural error. (his being the result of an essentially illegitimate union).

While this is uncovered, the narrative does not give the impression that such a deplorable case is the final thing and the story has eventually attained its projected objective. If reading is limited to this stage, as Conrad's implied reader is supposed to do at least as far as this story is concerned, then one would miss an important dimension in the story and risk a simplistic reading. Because contrary to Conrad's narrator and right from the start of *Two Thousand Seasons*, readers can trace that often unacknowledged, but existent, however feeble, other part. This part is equally crucial in the incidents that the narrative engages with: that is the human cost of such aggression (be it slavery or colonial occupation) and – more importantly – resistance to it. This dimension is obvious even in Conrad's setting too. The miserly supply of arms and ammunitions in "Karain". In Armah's story, there exists those Koranche's trips to Poano and his secrets invitations to the Whites to visit Anoa city. Isanusi, from the position of a court speaker and upon "hearing the news of secret visits between the king and the white men, asked questions in open court." (p. 99) With little success, but unlike Conrad's portrayals, Armah's Isanusi resists and does not leave matters to themselves.

Indeed, it is Armah's project to historicize that very stage of the community's journey through its millennial past. The novel's style takes the reader almost irresistibly to read through the last page. The prose breathes the air of slavery times and the omniscient narrator keenly places us in the midst of the tragic drama down to its minutest detail. This is achieved with the focus on the slave-hunt, the middle passage, the geographical exploration of the African coasts etc... What the narrative enfolds as history stays revelatory. Every sad occasion the community comes cross shapes an opportunity for positive knowledge and needful experience.

## 9-Inspirational versus Incomprehensible Physical Spaces: Aramh reads Defoe

Once on the island to which the community of the newly freed detainees (those sold by Koranche and later escaped the slaving ship) turns, intimacy with the physical space is strengthened. Shelter, food, soap, the construction of canoes, even plans of return home together with a determination to pursue the fight till total deliverance—in short, everything low and lofty comes in magnanimous ease and thorough harmony with nature. The ever present narrator records that “... there was every tree, every plant to serve the needs of work, of shelter, of food and of healing too.” (p. 144) In all these fantastic elaborations we can follow the collision of Armah’s text with another master narrative, this time, Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (). The Africans portrayed in *Two Thousand Seasons* do not handle themselves as savages observed with a glass from afar by Crusoe as they eat human flesh “with merriment and sport” on the occasion of some unspeakable rites, performing “postures and genstures...stark naked, and had not the least covering upon them; but whether they were men or women, that [he] could not distinguish.” (Defoe, 1969, 134)

It seems that Armah’s narrator does the corrective task of satisfying Crusoe’s curiosity in revealing these alleged savages’ proper identity. This is simply carried on by dramatizing that part of the narrative in the jungle of a nearby island. In that jungle the community was not performing a nasty ritual in the contentment of some lusty merriment but was principally preparing for the sophisticated work of revering slavery as a power system. Even back in the fifth grove and around the stone city of Anoa, Isanusi is readying his group for the work of enlightenment and knowledge, thus dispelling the negative image of Africans ‘eating human flesh’ and ‘dancing stark naked’. More than simply debunking Orientalists’ narratives, such perfect closeness to nature is but ‘Africano-graphy’ where the physical space defines the social one; and when this is done, the African self justifies and legitimizes itself beyond any other discourse.

Bernth Lindfors attacks *Two Thousand Seasons* as a “xenophobic oversimplification used to be found in B-grade films manufactured in Hollywood during the Second World War, in which fanatical kamikaze pilots and fat, stupid, goose-stepping German generals represented all that was reprehensible in the world.” (Lindfors, 1992, 271) Isanusi and his group of freedom fighters are compared with these fanatic kamikaze warriors, yet Lindfors for some reasons cannot see that history actually vindicates Armah’s community’s intellectual growth to maturity and consciousness. Confined in one of Mussolini’s top-security prison, Antonio Gramsci explicitly expresses similar echoes with Armah’s detainees. The idea out of incarceration, Gramsci makes explicit in one of his letters, is simply to cut up any possibility of knowledge and ensure a “great listlessness instead.” To overcome and resist such severe intellectual conditions, Gramsci resorted to nature:

I wouldn’t be surprised if a tiny, timid little rose were to come out at the end of this year. The thought gives pleasure, since for the past year I have been interested in cosmic phenomena. Perhaps as they say in my native region, the bed is placed in line with terrestrial fluids; and when I am resting, the cells of my body rotate in unison with the whole universe. I’ve been anxiously waiting for the summer solstice, and now that the earth is bending toward the sun...I feel much better... I feel the cycle of seasons, linked with

solstices and equinoxes, as if they were flesh of my flesh...The weather seems to have a body ever since the dimension of space was denied me. (Gramsci, 1970, 150)

Gramsci, as he makes known in other letters refuses sources of intellection that come from a fascination with books. Like Armah, for Gramsci it is one's historical experience which is a derivation from one's contact with nature that shapes understanding and hardens intellectual rigour for better apprehension of social reality around. Nature, or better, one's setting and space of living, dictates that man can be at his best when he is in harmony with the primal laws of that same space. The cosmic synchronization, however feeble or unperceived, plays a vital role in guiding a given community towards its egalitarian ideals. In extreme and desperate cases like Gramsci's or Armah's community in the slave ship, nature assists and supervenes man's senses in order to comprehend reality (knowledge apprehension) so at the end deliverance material threat, not "...illusions of the Garden of Eden" can be achieved. Space, then, has influential effects, and critics like Bernth Lindfors seem to underestimate its potential to objectively assess reality.

### **10-Conclusion:**

Culturally considered, *Two Thousand Seasons* attempts to treat the political crisis of modernity by presenting the opinion of those who are on the other side of the power-game. That presentation is the expression of "the problem of political desires in subjects whose identity is rooted in social injustice who can no longer count on the magic of progress to redeem that injury." (Brown, 2001, 15) Apart from its technical merits in reversing the inhibitive impacts of European master narratives, Armah's novel demonstrates his inability to break free from the traumas inflicted by these master narratives. The manner in which his narrator appears haunted about his identity (witness the heavy recurrence of the "they" and "theirs" almost in direct opposition to the "wes" and "ours") indicates how far that African identity is initially a western invention. Denying or "writing back" to solely refute orientalizations can become a counter productive way of spreading knowledge about the self. Edward Said has long demonstrated that "Occidentalism" cannot be a solution to Orientalism. 'Reciprocity', one of Armah's key African concepts, goes counter to his 'overstating' the case of African identity as essential and historically separate from other identities.

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## The function and meaning of dreams in the novel "Albanian Song" by Kasëm Trebeshina

### **Abstract**

*The novel "Albanian Song" by Kasëm Trebeshina, is one of the most important novels in Albanian Literature. The author is widely known as a dissident during the period of dictatorship, a fact that makes his voice unique and trustworthy in the whole Albanian writer's ensemble. The novel "Albanian Song" is mainly based in the Realism Method and represents the ethnical Albanian society. The collective knowledge is one of the main ways to create a canonized society, a society named as 'ethnos', that's why it is important for us to study how dreams are represented in this novel. The society represents its inner world, the spiritual dimension upon what they think and believe about the powers of dreams; as dreams become a way to communicate with the supernatural, or they can predict. On the contrary, stands the Psychoanalysis of the Dreams, represented by Freud and Jung, who give scientific and logical explanations about them. We are going to analyze the dreams in the novel by both of them, so even by looking with curiosity in the perspective of the ethnicity upon them, even if they are only superstitions; and even by the scientific methods. What is of interest for us, is to give importance to every perspective that may help us understand the role of the dreams in the novel. The study will be focused on these issues: Dreams as expression of the fantastic and as a way to create relations with the supernatural, Dreams as prolepsis, Dreams for the devastation of family, Communication through dreams, Dreams in addition to shortages of life, Dreams as a compensation of the forbidden.*

**Keywords:** *Dreams, Ethnicity, Time, Prolepsis, Interpretation.*

## 1- Introduction

Dreams are one of the most important moments of the narration to create the fantastic element in the novel; we have to admit that the importance and frequency of using them in is high. They are important to the novel, because they have an important function for the main story-line, for the composition and for the character's individualities. As the society in which the story happens is an illiterate one and as a consequence the scientific knowledge about the dreams is missing, we see that the main meanings given to the dreams come from superstition and the believe that they can predict. These attributes are given to the dreams in non urban societies, where the missing knowledge creates the field of alternative explanations about the phenomena; they are given spiritual meanings and powers.

Trebeshina in "Albanian Song" shows us the imagination of the folks and the tradition on dreams in Albanian ethnic society, becoming gradually a representation of the spiritual belief of our society on dreams. Dreams can express: privation, pain, non-fulfillment, fear, but in this society dreams can even predict, which in the time figures represent an analepsis or a prolepsis.

The alienated logic used in the novel, considers as dreams, not only the moment we call as dreams in psychology – when we see a dream in our sleep; but even when we are faced many times with a certain condition in which the consuming sadness and melancholia affects on the characters so painfully and powerfully that creates as another reality, which they chose to name as a 'dreamy'. This condition sometimes becomes so powerful that the characters loose the perception on the true reality and the 'dreamy' one they created, as the second becomes more important for them than the first one, because it gradually becomes the reality in which the character lives in. An existentialist discussion would put in question this new realm, which the characters themselves believe to be their new reality; as we notice, the referential systems change, as our conception on what is the truth becomes vague.

## 2-Body: Dreams as expression of the fantastic and as a way to create relations with the supernatural

Though all the history of civilization and the process of knowing the human nature, it is observed that not everything about human nature can be known, achieved, understood with logic and science. From the sociological point of view, the more primitive a society is, the more it interprets the unknown (dreams) with the help of fantastic, imagination and even superstition. At the other hand, the more cultured and educated a society, the more it distances from the spiritual dimension of interpretations. In the novel "Albanian Song" by Kasëm Trebeshina, the reality of live and the mentality of the society, are given with a detailed and typical realism at the same time. The society described in the novel is just beginning the process of urbanization when the way interrupts the normal social development; the dreams are considered to have magical powers and as a way of communication with the supernatural, due to the fact that the society is not informed for the scientific, psychological explanations about them.

The knowledge is created by the memory we have upon familiar objects and phenomena and the case of the concepts, so the mental visions, makes a problem

because of the discussions it causes and from the formation of a populist memory, which is not objective; a memory made of legends, superstitions, myths etc. (Hume, 2001)

This kind of memory, the collective knowledge is one of the main ways to create a canonized society, a society named as 'ethnos'. Rexhep Ismajli as investigated upon some features for the ethnical Albanians in the series of papers in his work "Ethnicity and Modernity"; he admits that our ethnicity shows some specific features, when the historical and geographic records, are important:

"Our society located and forced to exist and develop in a place with refraction and permanent communications and movements, attendance and devastating passages from the time of the Romans towards Euxinis, through the desolations of the Goths, the ravages of the Crusades, and serious violations, massive ravages of our century; this spiritual life except ancient - Balkan layers, except Indo-European ones, traces of paganism in isolated areas and later developments, shows the stratification of the western and eastern layers, with the seal of the three religions." (Ismajli, 1994)

The realm of the dreams possesses the power to alienate the images, relations, to overthrow, to open new visions, endless compositions, to act free from the time; because it is outside of every normal logic. By breaking the logic, a new world can be remade, with its own regulations, a world which we don't judge, just a remarkable world where everything is possible. If we need a definition for 'dreams' we will refer to this:

"Dreaming is considered mostly as a nice mental activity and close to the personal fantasy and imagination of the individual. In the center of dreaming is putted the evocation of a possible reality, or a mental evocation of a wishful subject, why not even invented by the person." (Zeneli, 2004)

By trying to understand how the dreams are considered in the novel, their narrative function and by trying to touch different interpretations, we spot two ways of studying them. Before we try to make possible interpretations to detect the narrative functions they have in the text, we have to explain the opposition that stands to the interpretation of dreams according to the tradition and the psychoanalytic ways.

"The interpretation of dreams shows the courage to become a part of the old ways and superstitions against the claims of the strict science. Of course it went very far by trying to notice in dreams a messenger of the future, whose disclosure the humans try to achieve in vain with all kind of forbidden means." (Freud, 2005)

### **2.1. Dreams as prolepsis**

Often dreams are considered to have a kind of relation with the supernatural, because they are evocated in a subcontinent condition and the person's creative and imaginative abilities take high stimulations. When we recall the Agamemnon's belief in dreams, we don't as if such a belief is strange for a great strategist of the war, but every one of us remembers how the subject of the poem happens as predicted in the Agamemnon's dream, reinforcing the belief that the dream comes from forces beyond our world. Can this dream be interpreted with the pagan

belief, or it has to do with Freud's clinical results, we avoid a definite answer to this problem, because while we try to understand the fantastic, it is important for our work to describe the beliefs and conceptions of the characters and the given society; without judging their veracity. The characters believe in the dreams, just like in every society with strong superstitions and we notice that they are spotted mostly in women, as they are more afraid from the power of the dreams and the unrevealed future.

"The women were afraid because of a dream Nazenini had seen. – What did she saw? –Qemal asked surprised. – You know... she saw a... a scary thing! I already told you, a scary dream... She wept in her sleep!... – Ah, so she wept? – said Qemal, -don't worry: it means something happy will happen." (Trebeshina, 2001)  
In the Albanian belief it is difficult to define only one source when the dreams come from, this derives from the chaos of the religions and their symbols, the indifference of the people on religions and the absence of the theological cultivation; but they are sure only for this: the dreams can foretell and if we cannot understand them, it is our own incapacity.

In the beginning of the novel, while the history of the family is told, it is mentioned in fear the 'ghost of the lady of the tower', a motive we notice in the whole novel, like a deep, heavy, dreadful melody. This ghost metonymically invokes the murders of the past, the first sins of the family. Abaz, when he sees this ghost in his dream, decides immediately to make a 'tyrbe' (Bektashi shrewd).

"One night Abaz dreamed something white, that turned off the light around him and after that this light complained that they didn't show compassion for her. Maybe she saw that dream because of his concerns, but the next day he decided with the women that they must build a 'tyrbe' near the tower, for the ghost" (Trebeshina, 2011).

Although the character knows nothing about psychology, as he thinks about the dream, he thinks by intuition, that maybe the source of it are his concerns, as psychologists suggest (Orhani, 2004).

Firstly, we notice in this dream, the fact that there appears this certain imaginary shadow, which only in dreams, can enter into a relationship with the living world. In the imaginary world of dreams, and only here, the dead may have contact with the living. And secondly, we see that as usually appears in folklore, shadows require attention, she complains, pretending that her peace depends on the the world of the living. And if we recall the end of the novel, we would be sure that the function of this dream that is given at the beginning is that of a prolepsis, that tells shows the reader what is going to happen.

We are going to focus on another dream, very interesting for our study, which foretells through many signs the death of the character that dreams it, Nazenini, the youngest daughter in law of the family... we are going to loo at the signs given in the text and we will proceed with their significance. This will be a model of many other dreams used in the novel with the same function, so it is a representation of the writer's style in many ways.

“Once Naze saw a dream, there was a lake and she was covered with white lilies. Then, the flowers seemed like they were swimming over the water, the light of the moon seemed like gold and there was a road that went up from the surface of the water and went. .. To the sky! She took a flower in her hands, a flower yet not in blow and it then she fell, she fell from the lake. Like walking on a path she began her way to the moon, an unexplored way of sadness and loneliness. She saw Aziz down, and she noticed how sad he was, from down there. He saw her with saddened eyes.” (Trebeshina, 2011)

Many symbols and analogies used on the next event: the way to heaven - analogous to the raising the soul to heaven after death, other times mentioned in the novel, rupture of bud flowers - analogy with the rupture of the Nazenin unwritten life. The flower itself is a symbolic representation of the character, it is a lyric symbol used frequently in the novel. The narrator is very tender with this character, her fate is tragic, because just when she believes she found her happiness by marrying the man she loved, everything will be completely opposite of what every one expects, she will die in childbirth.

The symbolic structure of this dream, is a model we find throughout the novel and of course the signs are understandable for the reader; as they are used many times and repeated, just like the dreams for the devastation of the family.

## **2. 2. Dreams for the devastation of family**

As prophetic dreams are common for this society, if one knows the explanations of them, mostly in this novel are used to give signals for the devastation of the family because of a curse; and to remind them of past sins, which definitely will one day be revenged. Obviously this is not a Freudian explanation of dreams in the classic sense, because we don't see the embodiment of forbidden desires or needs, however, a reading which includes the unconscious, it would be more efficient, because unconscious fears are expressed in these passages from past, the fears from the family curse; which the characters do not even dare to mention in their lives, just like the euphemism “he who is away from us” is believed to keep away the devil, because of not pronouncing his name.

Qerime sees a dream that even herself calls it as fatal: “With these thoughts she slept ... Then she heard that the door of the corridor opened... then silence ... maybe it was her ears fault... No!... In the hallway she heard light steps... steps ... Who was it? ... It seemed to her that she saw in her dream a woman dressed in black and... nothing else! However, the dream had been terrible! She tried to remember... A black woman, just like her!... And then ... Why was that dream so scary?” (Trebeshina, 2011)

The next day the family will take serious actions to tame the persecution of the dead woman's ghost. Throughout the whole novel the ghost doesn't leave in peace the family. We can say that the culmination of the whole narration on this 'curse' will be the last chapter of the novel, when Qerime will be the only person left alive from the family, with a baby in her arms. Dressed in black, she is now alike her ancestor's ghost. The fear for the devastation of the family represents the fear that everyone has about its future, but we can say that for this certain family it has turned into a phobia “The general state of Fear does not necessarily appear in phobias. People,

whose whole life is surrounded by agoraphobia, can be free. It is accepted that some phobia: fear of spaces, fear of railways etc., are acquired in adulthood.” (Freud, 2009)

Even Freud, who stands for the opposite of the folks belief that dreams can predict, at one point he admits, that maybe the person sees in a dream what he projects in his subconscious about the future. The most powerful sign expressed by dreams in the novel is the identification of the character (Qerime) with the black ghost of her ancestor. And even in this case, as well as in other cases, nobody in the family is allowed to talk about these items. Freud in “Totem and Taboo” describes how the pagan societies had a taboo about mentioning the dead; the articulation itself was a taboo, because they believed word had power upon the reality. (Freud, 2006)

### **2. 3. Communication through dreams**

Worlds and their relationships have infinite communications in dreams, there are no limits on the partition living - dead, no partition between past - present – future, there are no rules, everything flows according to logic, desired... feared... it does not matter, everything can happen in it. As it is known in Albanian superstitions, if a dead appears to someone in a dream, he wants something, he has a pledge that will doesn't let him rest in the afterworld, and the dream is the only possible way of communication. In the novel “Albanian song” family ancestors appear in dreams to seek a relative in order not to be alone. In all cases where the deceased appears for this reason, a relative dies and the predictive power of the dream is fulfilled.

We name this form of the structure of building the subject through prolepses, “motive” in analogy with Vladimir Propp, who calls “motive” the simple schematization of a narrow instance of event:

“The sign of the motive is its figurative monomial schematization; such are the further non-diffraction elements of low mythology and tales. For example - a father has three sons - is a motive, a stepdaughter leaves from home - is a motive etc...” (Propp, 2004)

The first to dream such a dream is Abaz, who dreams his father that tells him that he will take his firstborn son, Musa, in his world, which has gone in Spain as a volunteer in the civil war and dies there in battle. This is a warning about the death of Musa, the dead call on the living.

“He came to me and said” I'm bored alone. I don't have anyone to talk with. Send me Musa...I said unto him “Musa is not here!” he said “I know, I know, he is with me already from some days! You are not well!... You became sad... I am going...” (Trebeshina, 2011)

Even within the dream the self-consciousness of the fact that such dreams are related to reality is awake, terrified Abaz is terrified and his father understands it that his father “You became sad...I am going...”

Likewise his deceased speaks to Abaz in his dream: “He woke up (attention: he calls it deliberately waking) surprised when his wife approached him smiling... apparently she had talked with Musa!... He opened his eyes and couldn't understand

where he was.” (Trebeschina, 2011)

Yet again a dead person of his family appears in his dream, but now it is his wife, Asime, which still talks to him about death, a death already occurred that warns other deaths. It is only talked about death, even by dead people and in fact all this is not something nonexistent – all the family disappears.

#### **2. 4. Dreams in addition to shortages of life**

Psychology recognizes and argues the fact, that for many reasons the dreams fulfill the shortages of man in life. His crushed dreams – impossible or not allowed, are not such in the dream world. Everything is reborn and modeled according to our desire and it expresses the fantasy and the spiritual inner world of everyone. The character most affected by these dreams is Nuredin, which because of the unfulfillment of his love for Feride no longer sees the life as before, life has no more colors for him and living itself becomes a burden. His relationship with dreams is contradictory because they help him to suffer the painful reality creating him the illusion that his love is fulfilled and in the same time he doesn't desire these dreams as they don't allow him to live without the memory of his love, which has a very tragic fate herself. Of course, in this kind of dreaming day-dreaming is included, accepted even by psychology. Let's mention on of these cases of day-dreaming: “He closed his eyes and Feride was there again: in the scent of the harvested clover, in the song of the cranes in distance, in the forest that couldn't be seen on the other side of the hill...There where they had been together.” (Trebeschina, 2011) But once the dreaming ends, all the remembrance of the happy past brings him to a very heavy condition. “He wanted to enter the forest, but suddenly fell on his face in the poplar forest and started to cry bitterly as he didn't have hope about nothing and...He couldn't live like this.” (Trebeschina, 2011) As stated in Freudism, remembrance of the beautiful past in the moments of a disappointing present is extremely aggravating in the human psyche. Nuredin's true wish is not to dream about Feride and her beauty as this would simply pain him and he would remember how hopeless their love was – he wished for oblivion. “To sleep...to sleep...and never wake up...Or to be erased once the life was finished and to finally fall into oblivion...” (Trebeschina, 2011)

Jung in his advanced studies “Freud and Psychoanalysis” thinks than in these cases “Dream seems to be more than a symbolic presentation of its idea about life in general and about moral principles, on which it tries to inspire and according to which tries to live in order to achieve happiness.” (Jung, 2003)

Nuredin reaches the point when he can't distinguish the dreams from the reality. He dreams of a place where these things wouldn't happen and where the people where happy. In his dreams he looks always a desert and a shadow. The desert is the representation of a different world, far away of the one that made him so desperate and a place where different laws and ethics take place. The shadow is a representation of his beloved Feride. Just like Propp mentions in the “Morphology of the Folktale” (Propp, 2004), the ‘magic tool’ that in tales makes everything possible, the dream world in Trebeschina's novel resembles to this tool, it is the only way to make things possible.

## 2. 5. *Dreams as a compensation of the forbidden*

It may seem that dreams of this classification can be categorized as well in the second category, but we make a similar classification based on the ideas of Freud and Jung in which not each compensation is based on something impossible. Freud explains the idea generally and illustrates it in his book "Totem and Taboo". The greatest taboos presented by Freud have to deal with the terrorizing idea of the incest. In the novel exists an attraction between the two characters, Qerime and Abazim, which are brother and sister in law in a double bound, two sisters are married with two brothers. The attraction act in a different way to them because Abaz had an vague memory of young Qerime, which he seemed to love, but for the reason of the age he married her sister, Asime, a pain that was left to him for the whole life, but which he never expressed. In the counterpart, Qerime had another relationship. Her husband died when she was very young (in the novel it is said that she doesn't even remember the time when she was married) and her desires were suppressed but not vanished.

"In the cases where psychosexual needs of the woman to get married and have a family are needed to get fulfilled, she is always warned about the premature end of the relationship." (Freud, 2006) This desire became stronger to her when she is obligated from the socio-economical conditions of the period to live in the same house with the sister and the brother in law; they would make a regular family life and wouldn't care for her suppressed desires. This situation became weird when the sister of Qerime, before death, leaves the will that Abaz and Qerime should get married. For our society this is an extraordinary taboo. Qerime is ashamed from this will and it becomes a source of pain and isolation from the entire world. Abaz from the counterpart sees her like a random body and in addition his sexual desire for Qerime is very low. All the pressure from these situations is manifested to her dreams, where in one of her dreams she imagines the sexual act of the zoophile. This is catastrophic as she sleeps in the same room with the children's. These concerns become frequent like a symptom and she does not accept her sexual desire from the suppression of the Super Ego. "The symptom is a sign of the lack of pleasure, results from a process of suppression. The suppression comes out of the Ego and with the order of the Super Ego does not accept the passion that exists on him." (Freud, 2009) From the other part Qerime has a second complex towards Abaz, beyond the sexual desire which makes the relationship more possessive. Qerime is suppressed completely to Abaz and she even sees with admiration everything he does. This comes from the Theory of the types, whom Freud cites mostly in his works. "... they are so afraid of the temptation that the man will be incorporated in the figure of an elder woman, maybe in reality not of his mother, but a woman who is like his wife." And Qerime has created the model of the husband from Abaz, because she was orphan and when Abaz married her sister she was a child. Although the suppressions, Qerime realizes the ideal marriage that she dreamed for a long time "She got undressed and goes to him like she was drunk... This seemed like a dream". The sexual act with seemed like a dream to Qerime, forbidden and impossible to her.

### 3- Conclusions

In the end of this study upon dreams on the novel "Albanian Song" by Kasëm Trebeshina, we observed that many interpretations are given to the dreams; according to the belief and superstition of the ethnicity as well as according to the modern psychology. The importance of the role of dreams in the novel refers to the structural composing of the text, because in many part of the novel, dreams are prolepsis to the reader of what is going to happen next. At the same time, they are important because they describe the worldview of the author and his novel, by expressing how the ethnical Albanian society considers the dreams. The realm of the dreams possesses the power to alienate the images, relations, to overthrow, to open new visions, endless compositions, to act free from the time; because this world is outside of every normal logic. By breaking the logic, a new world can be remade, with its own regulations, a world which we don't judge, just a remarkable world where everything is possible. That is why the dreams are important to express the style and originality of the author himself. The methods we have used to study the dreams and their function or meanings in the novel are influenced by the ways the narrator used and actualized them in the novel, that's why we have divided the study in many parts. Semiotic, Structuralism, Psychology, Psychoanalysis are combined to understand better and deeper the role of the dreams in Trebeshina's novel.

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## Implication of Ivan Illich's Deschooling Ideas to Educational Planning in Kenya

### Abstract

*Education is a basic necessity for wholesome living to every human being. Basic functional skills, knowledge and values are mandatory for life to have any meaning and be worth living. With the school being the most recognized agent for the provision of education, enormous resources are channeled through it by both the state and individuals to provide educational services. Resources on the other hand are universally known to be scarce; this calls for thoughtful and systematic planning of the process of resource mobilization and utilization for the provision of educational services to the society. This paper examines the process of educational planning in the light of Ivan Illich's ideas. Illich's concept of Institutionalization of Values, Illich's concept of the school, the paradox of the school as an agent of education and the relevance of Illich's school of thought in educational planning are the key issues that this paper will focus on.*

**Key Words:** Education; Schools; De-schooling; Rituals

## 1-Introduction

Ivan Illich was an Austrian priest and a philosopher who lived between 1926 and 2002. He was a close ally of Everett Reimer. Both questioned the idea of having obligatory schooling to all people. They regularly met at the Center for International Documentation (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, Mexico. His radical ideas about deschooling the society came to light in the 1970's. This was a time when the western countries were going through what was known as the Industrial revolution. Other trends of the time included the rising educational budgetary allocations in the National budgets especially in the United States of America. Additionally, this was at a time when the Catholic Church was slowly moving to the third world countries such Latin America and Africa to spread Christianity. This is worth mentioning because his radical ideas about deschooling the society are not far much removed from his philosophical and religious affiliations.

## 2-An Overview of Deschooling Society by Ivan Illich

Ivan Illich (1970) called for the disestablishments of schools. He argued that many students, especially those who are poor, know that they are schooled to do (...) "to confuse process and substance (...)". Illich held that:

(...) once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better are the results; or, escalation leads to success. "The pupil is thereby schooled to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is schooled to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work (...)" (Illich, 1970: 5).

According to Illich (1970), the school polarizes a society and grades the nations of the world according to an international caste system. This way, the school divides the society and undermines the social fibre. Illich (ibid) maintained that:

Countries are rated like castes whose educational dignity is determined by the average years of schooling of its citizens, a rating which is closely related to per capita gross national product. The very existence of obligatory schools divides any society into two realms: some time spans and processes and treatments and professions are "academic" or "pedagogic," and others are not. The power of school thus to divide social reality has no boundaries: education becomes unworldly and the world becomes non-educational (Illich 1970: 10).

Illich (1970) held that the school is recognized as the institution which specializes in education. Its failures are taken by most people as a proof that education is a very costly, very complex, always arcane, and frequently almost impossible task. School appropriates the money, and good will available for education and in addition discourages other institutions from assuming educational tasks. Work, leisure, politics, city living, and even family life depend on schools for the habits and knowledge they presuppose, instead of becoming themselves the means of

education. Simultaneously both schools and the other institutions which depend on them are priced out of the market.

Illich (1970) observed that the school was meant to give everybody an equal chance to any office. Many people wrongly believe that the school ensures the dependence of public trust on relevant learning achievements. However, instead of equalizing chances, the school system has monopolized their distribution. Illich (1970) held that:

(...)The school system rests on the assumption that most learning is the result of teaching. Teaching, it is true, may contribute to certain kinds of learning under certain circumstances. But most people acquire most of their knowledge outside school, and in school only insofar as school, has become their place of confinement during an increasing part of their lives (...) (Illich, 1970: 12).

In Illich (1970)'s view, the school system performs the threefold function common to powerful churches throughout history. These Illich (1970) identified as: the Myth of Institutionalized Values, the Myth of Measurement of Values and the Myth of Packaging Values. According to Illich (1970), School initiates the Myth of Unending Consumption. This modern myth is grounded in the belief that process inevitably produces something of value and, therefore, production necessarily produces demand. School teaches us that instruction produces learning.

The existence of schools produces the demand for schooling. Once people have learned to need school, all their activities tend to take the shape of client relationships to other specialized institutions. Illich (1970) argues that once the self-taught man or woman has been discredited, all nonprofessional activity is rendered suspect. In school learners are taught that valuable learning is the result of attendance; that the value of learning increases with the amount of input; and, finally, that this value can be measured and documented by grades and certificates. Illich (1970) maintained that:

Once young people have allowed their imaginations to be formed by curricular instruction, they are conditioned to institutional planning of every sort. "Instruction" smothers the horizon of their imaginations. They cannot be betrayed, but only short-changed, because they have been taught to substitute expectations for hope. They will no longer be surprised, for good or ill, by other people, because they have been taught what to expect from every other person who has been taught as they were (Illich, 1970: 28).

This transfer of responsibility from self to institution, Illich (1970) observed, guarantees social regression, especially once it has been accepted as an obligation. He points out that; "the man addicted to being taught seeks his security in compulsive teaching (...) the woman who experiences her knowledge as the result of a process wants to reproduce it in others" (Illich, 1970: 28). Illich (1970) discusses that the school initiates young people into a world where everything can be measured, including their imaginations, and, indeed, man himself. But personal growth is not a measurable entity. It is growth in disciplined dissidence, which cannot be measured against any rod, or any curriculum, nor compared to someone else's achievement. In such learning one can emulate others only in

imaginative endeavor, and follow in their footsteps rather than mimic their gait. Illich (1970) puts it that:

(...) the school pretends to break learning up into subject “matters,” to build into the pupil a curriculum made of these prefabricated blocks, and to gauge the result on an international scale. People who submit to the standard of others for the measure of their own personal growth soon apply the same ruler to themselves. They no longer have to be put in their place, but put themselves into their assigned slots, squeeze themselves into the niche which they have been taught to seek, and, in the very process, put their fellows into their places, too, until everybody and everything fits (...) (Illich, 1970: 29).

In Illich (1970)’s belief, people who have been schooled down to size let unmeasured experience slip out of their hands. To them, what cannot be measured becomes secondary, threatening. They do not have to be robbed of their creativity. Illich (1970) puts it that under instruction, such people have unlearned to “do” their thing or “be” themselves, and value only what has been made or could be made (Illich, 1970: 29). Once people have the idea schooled into them that values can be produced and measured, they tend to accept all kinds of rankings. Illich (1970) rests that:

There is a scale for the development of nations, another for the intelligence of babies, and even progress toward peace can be calculated according to body count. In a schooled world the road to happiness is paved with a consumer’s index (Illich, 1970: 29).

While calling for the disestablishment of schools, Illich (1970) maintained that the School sells curriculum; “a bundle of goods made according to the same process and having the same structure as other merchandise. Curriculum production for most schools begins with allegedly scientific research, on whose basis educational engineers predict future demand and tools for the assembly line, within the limits set by budgets and taboos. This way, Illich (1970) held that the distributor-teacher delivers the finished product to the consumer pupil, whose reactions are carefully studied and charted to provide research data for the preparation of the next model, which may be ungraded, student-designed, team-taught, visually-aided, or issue-centered” (Illich, 1970: 29).

Illich (1970) observed that the result of the curriculum production process looks like any other modern staple. “It is a bundle of planned meanings, a package of values, a commodity whose balanced appeal makes it marketable to a sufficiently large number to justify the cost of production. Consumer-pupils are taught to make their desires conform to marketable values. Illich (1970) rests that thus they are made to feel guilty if they do not behave according to the predictions of consumer research by getting the grades and certificates that will place them in the job category they have been led to expect (Illich, 1970: 29). Illich argued that the school pushes the pupil up to the level of competitive curricular consumption, into progress to ever higher levels. Expenditures to motivate the student to stay on in school skyrocket as he climbs the pyramid. This way, Illich (1970) puts it:

(...) “that on higher levels they are disguised as new football stadiums, chapels, or programs called International Education (...) if it teaches nothing else, school teaches the value of escalation (...)” (Illich, 1970: 30).

According to Illich (1970), school programs hunger for progressive intake of instruction, but even if the hunger leads to steady absorption, it never yields the joy of knowing something to one’s satisfaction. Each subject comes packaged with the instruction to go on consuming one offering after another, and last year’s wrapping is always obsolete for this year’s consumer. The textbook racket builds on this demand. Educational reformers promise each new generation the latest and the best, and the public is schooled into demanding what they offer. Illich (1970) held that:

(...) Both the dropout who is forever reminded of what he missed and the graduate who is made to feel inferior to the new breed of student know exactly where they stand in the ritual of rising deceptions and continue to support a society which euphemistically calls the widening frustration gap a “revolution of rising expectations.” (...) (Illich, 1970:30).

Illich (1970), propounded that the school serves as an effective creator and sustainer of social myth because of its structure as a ritual game of graded promotions. Introduction into this gambling ritual is much more important than what or how something is taught. Illich (1970) held that (...) “It is the game itself that schools, that gets into the blood and becomes a habit. A whole society is initiated into the Myth of Unending Consumption of services (...) this happens to the degree that token participation in the open-ended ritual is made compulsory and compulsive everywhere (...)” (Illich, 1970: 31).

According to Illich (1970), the School directs ritual rivalry into an international game which obliges competitors to blame the world’s ills on those who cannot or will not play. Illich (1970) concluded that:

(...) the school is a ritual of initiation which introduces the neophyte to the sacred race of progressive consumption, a ritual of propitiation whose academic priests mediate between the faithful and the gods of privilege and power, a ritual of expiation which sacrifices its dropouts, branding them as scapegoats of underdevelopment (...) (Illich, 1970: 31).

### **3-Illich’s Concept of Institutionalization of Values**

Ivan Illich strongly argued against the current trend of institutionalizing values. For instance in his opening remarks, this is what he has to say about the school and the process of institutionalizing values:

The pupil is thereby “schooled” to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is “schooled” to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive

work. Health, learning, dignity, independence, and creative endeavor are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools, and other agencies in question (Illich, 1970:1)

According to Illich, the school acts like a processing plant that produces “goods” in form of values and Knowledge. A school is demanded for what it can produce. Illich strongly argues against having the school as the main agent of passing values and Knowledge and that the only way through which the acquisition of values can be measured is with the use of certificates. His school of thought seem to have some sense especially when the society begin to imagine that any valuable value or knowledge can only be learnt in a formal set up i.e. in a school. When the state gives an ultimatum that formal education at the primary and secondary level is obligatory, is this not to suggest that what is freely shared in the society is of either no significance or no value at all. Look at how the innocent child is forced to learn even his/her own value in a foreign language. Does it make sense to have the child learn his or her own culture in a foreign language? If this is not slavery of some kind, then can somebody help me better describe this kind of a treatment to the school going child. Why should we use a foreign language to learn our own culture and traditions? Are we not loosing direction? This is a matter that the government, policymakers and all concerned educational stakeholders should seriously look into. Are we going to sit and helplessly watch our most valuable culture waste away in the name of civilization or being assimilated to the so called “modernity”?

#### **4-Illich’s Concept of School**

According to Illich, a school is nothing less than a factory whose responsibility is to produce goods for resale with an aim of making a profit. The school is like a market where buyers and seller of knowledge freely interact. He further argues that the school produces and packs knowledge for any willing buyers at a price. Precious values that used to be freely exchanged in the society are now regarded as products sold at a price.

(...) Rich and poor alike depend on schools and hospitals which guide their lives, form their world view, and define for them what is legitimate and what is not. Both view doctoring oneself as irresponsible, learning on one’s own as unreliable (Illich, 1970: 4).

His school of thought is still relevant to policy makers even as they think of reviewing education to make it more responsive the needs of the society. Current trends in education regard any knowledge acquired outside the school environment as irrelevant and of no or less value. The current version or meaning of what true knowledge mean is somehow deceptive. In fact, one is regarded ignorant, illiterate and backward before he/she has set his/her foot in a school classroom. All that one learns outside the school is either given no or less regard by the modern society. You are devoid of meaningful knowledge before you are schooled. This should partly explain why we teach our children foreign values such as forcing them to communicate in a foreign language instead of having them learn what they must learn in a language they understand most. This is

punitive and inhuman. Why would an innocent African child be made to slush grass the whole day for having communicated a point to a colleague at school in a language that is not English? Is it that true knowledge can only be learned in a foreign language? I don't believe so.

### **5-The Paradox of the School as an Agent of Education**

While it is true that there is some meaningful education that goes on in schools, scholars like Ivan wondered whether real education took place only in schools. The belief that education can only take place in schools is what Illich strongly spoke against. His line of thought was that the school was not the only agent of Education. In fact according to him, the school is currently doing more harm to the society than good. This is a line of thought I would also wish to support.

The view point that all that which has value must be learnt formally in a school is rather a misleading and an absurd school of thought. Before the introduction of formal schooling in Africa, people had their own way of exchanging values and knowledge. They could provide health care services to the society freely. For instance there are some certain leaves and roots of trees that are up to date known to very old people to be curing some certain ailments. The modern schooled person can't regard such an old man as this as having any form of education.

Ivan observes that the school has an effect of closing up the minds of individuals. By going through the formal schooling process people stop being creative. All that happens at school is mostly the memorization of concepts some of which are far removed from their immediate social realities. The school limits the creativity of the child. For instance, this is what Illich has to say:

All over the world the school has an anti-educational effect on society: school is recognized as the institution which specializes in education. The failures of school are taken by most people as a proof that education is a very costly, very complex, always arcane, and frequently almost impossible task (Illich, 1970: 8)

Another way the school has failed is the manner in which the school is creating new pockets of poor people in the society in the name of raising educational standards. For instance, those who have never gone to the school are regarded nearly useless to the society. Their Knowledge and skill is perceived to be of no or minimal use in the society. They are least allowed to participate in any productive activity where the schooled are involved. In fact if one does not attain a certain level of education, he/she is regarded as poor. This is a concept Ivan refers to as modernization of poverty. It is true that the school is partly losing direction. Instead of raising the living standards of people in the society, it is seriously in the business of creating more poor people; the ones referred to as unschooled. The business of rewarding people based on educational level is rather absurd. Why is the society often less interested in rewarding the unschooled person who does real work simply because he/she can't read and write? Of what significance is reading to a hunger stricken society? This is the kind of a mentality Ivan seems to be fed up with in as displayed in his statement that says:

Welfare bureaucracies claim a professional, political, and financial monopoly over the social imagination, setting standards of what is valuable and what is feasible. This monopoly is at the root of the modernization of poverty. Every simple need to which an institutional answer is found permits the invention of a new class of poor and a new definition of poverty...Now to begin and end life at home become signs either of poverty or of special privilege. Dying and death have come under the institutional management of doctors and undertakers. (Illich, 1970: 5)

This trend is a call to policy makers and other education agents to review the definition and purpose of what education and schooling is. The school has turned out to be a vessel where those who have the potential to be rich are separated from the potentially poor people by the use of a certificate. When one fails to attain a certain grade in a given subject, he/she is given a certificate labeling the individual as being a failure. The individual is of less value to the society now that he/she has not attained a certain set standard by the school. I agree with Illich at this point, that this should not be the role schools should be playing.

Illich strongly questioned the manner in which financing of education is done. He was concerned with the rising cost of education. Providing education through the school was and is very expensive. He questioned the items that governments funded in the school. He was for the idea that educational resources should go directly to the learner. The learner should be the one who decides what, where and when to learn.

Right now educational credit good at any skill center could be provided in limited amounts for people of all ages, and not just to the poor. I envisage such credit in the form of an educational passport or an "edu-credit card" provided to each citizen at birth. In order to favor the poor, who probably would not use their yearly grants early in life, a provision could be made that interest accrued to later users of cumulated "entitlements." Such credits would permit most people to acquire the skills most in demand, at their convenience, better, faster, cheaper, and with fewer undesirable side effects than in school (Illich, 1970: 13)

This is a brilliant line of thought that governments and schools could embrace to reclaim and recapture the slowly diminishing role of the school as an agent of education. Governments have an obligatory role of making educational services available to all and most importantly to the poor and marginalized groups in the society.

## **6-Relevance of Illich's school of thought in Educational Planning**

First, redefining educational planning in the light of Ivan Illich's ideas would mean embracing the philosophy of liberalism in education. Liberalism is a school of thought that gives the learner an opportunity to decide what to learn. On the basis of this ideology, the school curriculum should not be as rigid as it is at the moment. Learners should from time to time sit with planners to decide what, where and when to learn what they need to learn. The planning process as it is today at whatever level of education does not give the learner an opportunity to participate in the planning process. This is not realistic. How does a plan become realistic if the

beneficiary is mere blind recipient of what is planned? In fact, in many countries, the planning process is very undemocratic. The learners are perceived to be recipients of what the policy makers have dictated to them. Is it not time that we redefined our educational planning process?

Secondly, Ivan Illich's ideas are of great significance to policy makers even as they reflect on the different mechanisms of how education should be financed. A lot of resources channeled to education by the government do not directly reach the learner. The felt needs of the learner are not a priority to policy makers. For instance expenditure on food and clothing are items that are to be funded by the parents. For children who come from originate economically disadvantaged background, this becomes a major obstacle that stands on their way towards attaining education at whatever level. For learning to effectively take place at school, proper nutrition A child that is not pro rarely concentrates in class.

## **7-Conclusion**

While it is a fact that schools have and still play a big role in serving as agents of education, many trends in the education sector have made us question the schools' effectiveness in serving as agents of education. The fast growing number of degree certificates holders at the primary school level in Kenya that have no bearing on the quality of education is an alarming trend. Why should the government adjust the teacher's salary upward even when the higher qualification attained by the teacher has no bearing on the quality of education provided to students.

It is also important to note that the educational planning process for decades has neglect the learner. The student has and is still least involved in the educational planning process. It is high time we moved away from this kind of a tradition and begin to appreciate the fact that the learner process.

Finally, resources channeled by the government or any other educational stakeholder towards the provision of education must directly target to benefit the learner. Corruption trends make it almost impossible for projects that do not target the learner to be of great impact to the learner.

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## The Innovative Qualities in “Catch-22” of Joseph Heller

### **Abstract**

*This abstract is a study of Catch-22 (1961), a specific early document of American postmodern literature. In particular, this one is going to present the critical argument on this novel as parallel to the wider concept of the postmodernism. My claim is that, this novel is going to be treated in accordance with postmodern thought to paradox, irony, black humor, which is a line between fantasy and reality and readers of the novel are unsure about the point at which realism fades into fantasy and a collapsed literary possibility, traditional techniques in literature, for these literary issues in fact have come out many interpretations. So to attain best this argument is an approach to Catch-22 of Joseph Heller. In attempt to, firstly, demonstrate how critics have reduced the potential meaning of the novel in imposing its own notions of a literary historical circle and secondly, how readings of Heller's characters in the novel can reveal an untapped possibility for further exploration of the broadest definitions and interpretations of the project of postmodernism. Through this work will be obviously explained some of the most essential and basic postmodernist devices especially through the art of writing and language used. Not only marginalized, lateral characters will be on the spotlight of observation and analyses but also the major and protagonist ones will characterize the typical features of postmodern notion.*

**Keywords:** Black Humor; Catch-22; War; Madness; Bureaucracy

## 1-Introduction

Joseph Heller's darkly humorous war novel *Catch-22* is a modern-day Juvenalian satire, one whose "angry" humor, rather than affirming conservative norms that its audience can agree on, questions and undermines many values at the heart of American life. "Aggressive capitalism, bureaucracy, and certain 'insane' and destructive elements of modern civilization which endure at the expense of humanity and compassion" are caricatured in Heller's novel. Heller's caricatures are often made grotesque by "the psychological equivalent of character reduction" (Balliet 248) monomania. His capitalism empire is made to stand for corporate greed and amorality by Heller's hyperbolic portrayal of his single-mindedness. Such satire, betrays a new twist on the Juvenalian satire. Heller and other dark humorists of the postwar period are informed by a radical agenda. A well-known critic, James Nagel identifies this sensibility as "essentially opposed to war, capitalism, bureaucracy, and traditional religion, and in favor of freedom, peace, agnosticism, sex, and life." In one of the earliest reviews of Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, Whitney Balliett, writing in the *New Yorker*, charges that Heller uses nonsense, satire, slap-stick, and farce. He dips into his own laughter, and finally drowns in it. What remains is a piece of sour jokes, stage anger, dirty words, synthetic looniness, and the sort of antic behavior the children fall into when they know they are losing our attention. It seems somewhat strange now to remember such initial misgivings about the humor of *Catch-22*, particularly in view of the fact that Heller's novel has become increasingly conspicuous among those discussed in studies of the comedy of horror, black humor, or, indeed, "angry" humor.

### 1.1 *The paradox*

The paradox inherent in each of these phrases indicates something of the complexity of any attempt to codify the humor of the novel. There has not yet been published a single substantial article which specifies precisely what is funny about it, what the implications of such humor are, and what generic associations are implicit in its form. The importance of genre classification for a study of the novel is, of course, a matter of attempting to come to it on its own terms, without imposing irrelevant standards and obscuring fundamental themes. This is a problem which many reviewers encountered when they judged *Catch-22* as a realistic "Novel" and found it wanting in verisimilitude, depth of characterization, and plot. However, a few recent critical studies attempt some classification of genre. In the best of these, Constance Denniston develops an interpretation of the book as a "romance-parody." In other articles, Eric Solomon argues that it is a parody of serious war fiction, and Victor Milne calls it a mock-epic. These discussions, although they make some important contributions, do not satisfactorily describe the generic properties of *Catch-22*, for it is demonstrably a satire, essentially a Juvenalian satire which functions within the historical patterns of that form. What pure "comedy" exists is evidently superficial, if enjoyable, and serves only as a surface for the underlying thematic foundation of the novel.

### 1.2 *The Pun, the Gag and the Black Humor*

The humor of *Catch-22* is not the gentle entertainment of comedy but the harsh derision and directed social attack of satire. Unlike comedy, which depicts failures or excesses of basic human nature, the satire of Heller's novel is selective, hitting

out against definable groups within American society and creating a unified front against a corrupt and ridiculous enemy. In effect, as David Worcester theorizes, "Satire enters when the few convict the many of stupidity." In the case of *Catch-22*, one might say "stupidity and wickedness," for its objects of satire are portrayed as being both fools and knaves, and a sympathetic reader, laughing at the satirized subjects, feels himself to be a member of a select aristocracy based on virtue and intelligence. As Northrop Frye has indicated, satire requires at least two elements: humor resulting from the portrayal of fantasy, the grotesque, or the absurd; and a definable object of attack. *Catch-22* easily meets these requirements: (Frye; 244) Milo's bombing of his own squadron on Pianosa is fantasy; the old man of the whore house, to mention just one character, is grotesque; and the continuing logic and inexorability of the regulation *Catch-22* lapses into absurdity. The attack seems to center upon aggressive capitalism, bureaucracy, and certain "insane" and destructive elements of modern civilization which endure at the expense of humanity and compassion. As an art form, *Catch-22* uses the standard devices of satire to enforce its traditional thesis that "vice is both ugly and rampant" and that the solution of the problem is to "live with fortitude, reason, honor, justice, simplicity, the virtues which make for the good life and the good society." (Solomon, 851-66) To make these points, the method of characterization becomes caricature: Heller's military officers, like Swift's Yahoos and Pope's Dunces, are reductive and distorted projections of human personality types. In this matter, Heller's novel is not so purely Juvenalian as Philip Roth's *Our Gang*, which launches a vituperative assault on thinly disguised individual human beings. Rather, in *Catch-22* each character becomes associated with an "aspect of the civilization under attack, the whole range embracing a wide variety of social levels and attitudes." (Heller; 9)

The psychological equivalent of character reduction is monomania, and Heller is a master at portraying this condition: Milo Minderbinder, a modern reincarnation of Defoe's economic man, is a myopic encapsulation of the Madison Avenue mentality. He can make a profit on anything from making chocolate-covered cotton to selling supplies to the Germans, an enterprise he justifies in classical business terms. At one point he even has a Piltown Man for sale. Lieutenant Scheisskopf, who becomes a General before the novel is over, is perfectly willing to nail men together in formation, or to wire their hands to their sides, if it will result in more orderly parades. His decision not to do so is not the result of compassion but of the inaccessibility of nickel-alloy swivels and good copper wire. In addition to Milo and Scheisskopf, Captain Black (with his Loyalty Oath Crusade), General P. P. Peckham (who wants all the tents to face Washington and thinks the USO should take over military operations—which it finally does), and Colonel Cathcart (who wants desperately to be featured in the *Saturday Evening Post*), are caricatures who cannot be evaluated by realistic standards. If they are to develop any functional thematic depth at all, they must be seen in their satiric roles as symbols of social attitudes, traditions, and patterns of behavior. Just as the characterizations of *Catch-22* are within the framework of satire, so are other elements of the novel. For example, a traditional satiric plot tends to be both episodic and cyclical, as are the rapid, almost jarring, shifts of scene in *Catch-22*. Also conventional in satire is the pattern of action which intensifies, rather than resolves, the central conflict.

### 1.3 Satire and the Subtle Irony

In addition, the setting of satire is often chaotic, crowded, and filled with images of corruption and decay. Alvin Kernan says that the satiric scene is one where “the deformed faces of depravity, stupidity, greed, venality, ignorance, and maliciousness group closely together for a moment, . . . break up, and another tight knot of figures collects. . .” (Heller;12) Kernan cites as examples Juvenal’s Rome, Pope’s land of Dunces, and Don Juan’s London, but he could easily have used Heller’s setting: Aarfy for depravity, Cathcart for stupidity, Milo for greed, the old man for venality, and almost any of Yossarian’s superiors for maliciousness. Yet another characteristic of satire, the ubiquitous image, has several expressions in Heller’s novel: images of a soldier covered entirely in white, of Yossarian naked in a tree at Snowden’s funeral, of the trunk of Kid Sampson tottering momentarily on a raft, and of the horrible moment when Yossarian opens Snowden’s flight jacket. These brutal and shocking images underscore the serious threats to human life which are behind Yossarian’s dilemma. Perhaps the most significant dimension in which it is important to distinguish the humor of *Catch-22* from simple comedy is that of the normative values which are essential to satire. As Northrop Frye points out, unlike a comedy, a satire’s “moral norms are relatively clear, and it assumes standards against which the grotesque and absurd are measured.” (Frye;59). From this point of view, a critical reading of the novel as a satire, indeed any reading of the novel, must formulate and describe those norms which are the basis of ethical conflict and which make the satire operative.

In his essay “Notes on the Comic,” W. H. Auden says that “satire flourishes in a homogeneous society with a common conception of the moral law, for satirist and audience must agree as to how normal people can be expected to behave, and in times of relative stability and contentment, for satire cannot deal with serious evil and suffering.” (Auden; 73) Auden’s premises would seem to be viable in dealing with traditional satire but wholly inadequate in describing the mode of *Catch-22*. America is not a homogeneous society; it has no unifying moral law; these are not times of stability; and Heller’s satire does deal with serious problems. What has happened to the satire of modern America is that the traditional conservative norm has been abandoned in favor of a “radical” one, one not endorsed by the majority of the population. One of the effects of this fundamental alteration is to create an uneasy humor resulting from the singularity of the normative base. Such humor, often employing scenes of violence or even horror, has been variously described in criticism as “angry” or “black” comedy. The social implication of this device is to call into question the prevailing ethical structure of the society, rather than to use its norms as a point of reference. Heller’s method is the inversion of the satirical mode employed by Aristophanes in *Lysistrata*, in which war and society are satirized from the perspective of conservative norms. *Lysistrata* emphasizes that a return to the style of life of the recent past, a style clearly defined historically, would be a solution to the problems, whereas in *Catch-22* what seems to be advocated is a movement forward toward some ill-defined yet positive and brave new world. In intellectual terms, such a stance is tenuous at best, and yet even this amorphous norm is effective in the satire. At this time of social misgiving and disenchantment, *Catch-22* allows its readers to celebrate their ethical superiority over, and distance from, the military machine and bureaucratic structure, which are made to look ridiculous and insane in the novel but seem unassailable and incorrigible in reality.

### 1.4 Modern Angry Humor

Modern angry humor, which has its historical foundation in Juvenalian satire, is an attack on the basic principles and fundamental order of society. Such an attack is not far beneath the surface of Heller's novel. The knaves and fools of *Catch-22* are all embodiments of the weaknesses in American middle-class morality. There is a Texan who believes that "people of means—decent folk—should be given more votes than drifters, whores, criminals, degenerates, atheists and indecent folk—people without means (Milne; 50–69). Appleby, whom Yossarian hates and whom Orr smashes in the head with a Ping-Pong paddle, is "a fair-haired boy from Iowa who believed in God, Motherhood and the American Way of Life, without ever thinking about any of them. Major Major's father is described as a "long-limbed farmer, a God-fearing, freedom-loving, law-abiding rugged individualist who held that federal aid to anyone but farmers was creeping socialism". The humor here results, at least in part, from the revelation of the corruption within the middle-class ethic itself, a theme made even clearer in the description of Major Major, who always did exactly what his elders told him:

"He never once took the name of the Lord his God in vain, committed adultery or coveted his neighbor's ass. In fact, he loved his neighbor and never even bore false witness against him. Major Major's elders disliked him because he was such a flagrant nonconformist" (Worcester; 77). Nearly every facet of American life is made laughable through either diminution or hyperbole, from Milo's incredible capitalism to the Anabaptist chaplain's Christianity, which is expected to assist in getting tighter bomb patterns. The American economic classes are well represented in Nately, a wealthy but somewhat simple romantic, Aarfy, an economic striver who is the most blind and corrupt character of all, and Dunbar, the son of a poor man who worked himself to death trying to compete within the system. Perhaps this economic theme is most clear in the chapter "Nately's Old Man," in which Nately's father, who never wears anything but Brooks Brothers shirts and knows all the answers, is contrasted with the lecherous old man of the whore house who has no answers at all but professes the life ethic that Yossarian finally adopts: "anything worth dying for . . . is certainly worth living for" (Heller; 82). The old man is pragmatic and unpatriotic, but he convinces Nately that his father is a "Son of a Bitch" (John W.; 115-118).

Nately thus moves toward the radical norm, as indeed do Dunbar, Orr, and Yossarian. Even the chaplain, who had always believed in an "immortal, anthropomorphic, English-speaking, Anglo-Saxon, pro-American God", wavers in the faith, develops lust for his wife, comes to sympathize with Yossarian, and finally lies to get himself into the hospital. It would seem clear that the normative values of Heller's satire are essentially opposed to war, capitalism, bureaucracy, and traditional religion, and in favor of freedom, peace, agnosticism, sex, and life. The conflict between these two sets of values is related to the most pervasive theme of the novel, that of insanity. Madness is, of course, a consistent motif in satire: as Kernan says, the satirist "typically believes that there is no pattern of reason left in the world." The logical order of daily existence has somehow gone awry, leaving the satirist "alone in the lunatic world to stay its progressive degeneration. . . . He becomes the only champion of virtue who dares to speak the truth in a world where the false insolently maintains itself as the real." (Clinton S Jr; 120). This assessment of traditional satire goes a long way toward defining the operative norms of modern angry humor—especially in Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Catch-22*. From

the beginning it is clear that Yossarian's mind is not in harmony with the established thinking around him. Either he is maladjusted to a logical world, or the world is itself insane.

## 2- The Structure of the Novel

The structure of the novel moves systematically to a demonstration that the latter is the case. In the first chapter Yossarian reveals his position when he says to the chaplain, "insanity is contagious. . . Everybody is crazy but us. This probably the only sane ward in the whole world, for that matter" (Heller; 29). What is sane about them is, of course, that they have opted out of the war by going to the hospital. The Narrator's judgments, which intrude frequently, support Yossarian's perspective: "Men went mad and were rewarded with medals. . . . The only thing going on was the war, and no one seemed to notice but Yossarian and Dunbar. And when Yossarian tried to remind people, they drew away from him and thought he was crazy" (Mck. Henry; 138). But Yossarian is "mad" only in terms of his inability to accept the absurdity of war and in his compulsive desire to remain alive. Many of the other characters are "deranged" in more destructive ways.

In addition to the obvious monomaniacs, Milo and Scheisskopf, McWatt is crazy in that he does not mind the war and flies straight in over a target, and because he risks lives unnecessarily by flying low over Yossarian's tent. The dangerous potential of his acrobatics is realized when he zooms over the raft and slices Kid Sampson in half. In *Catch-22*, insanity becomes definable as an inability to recognize the reality of danger. Clevinger is insane because he doesn't believe Yossarian's conviction that "the enemy . . . is anybody who's going to get you killed" (Heller; 297) Aarfy is also insane in his complacent indifference to danger. The resolution of this theme comes when Yossarian is analyzed by a psychiatrist, Major Sanderson, who pronounces him mad. Sanderson says, "The trouble with you is that you think you're too good for all the conventions of society. . . . You have a morbid aversion to dying. . . . You have deep-seated survival anxieties. And you don't like bigots, bullies, snobs or hypocrites. . . . You're antagonistic to the idea of being robbed, exploited, degraded, humiliated or deceived. Misery depresses you. Ignorance depresses you. Persecution depresses you. Violence depresses you. Slums depress you. Greed depresses you. Crime depresses you. Corruption depresses you.

You know, it wouldn't surprise me if you're a manic-depressive!" (Heller; 299). A moment later, when Yossarian seeks assurance from Doc Daneeka that "they're not going to send a crazy man out to be killed, are they?" Daneeka responds, "Who else will go?" It is clear that the military, with its form letter of condolence, its power struggles, its bureaucracy, its bombing of villages to block roads, is the insane factor in the novel and that Yossarian, who really does feel himself "too good for all the conventions of society," endorses a much more humane standard for sanity. By the end of the novel, Kraft, Mudd, Snowden, Clevinger, Dunbar, the soldier in white, Hungry Joe, McWatt, Kid Sampson, the old man, Michaela, and Nately are all dead. In such a world, standing naked in formation, walking backward with a gun, and taking off for Sweden may well be the actions of a sane man. In Yossarian's desertion at the conclusion of the novel, there seems to be little humor. Such a development is within the tradition of Juvenal, whose works move from comic to tragic satire when the protagonist is left alone as the enemy becomes increasingly

more powerful. Yossarian's rejection of Cathcart's deal is not only a moral act in itself, but is consistent with the traditional response of the reader to Juvenalian satire. As Ronald Paulson explains, "with Horace the reader's experience is to feel complicity in the guilt; with Juvenal it is to feel repugnance at the evil." (Ronald;148). Yossarian's rejection of Cathcart and his world allows him to escape the role of tragic victim and to become an agent in his own destiny. He declares himself apart from and above the military world, and as he do, the poles of values become distinct and stable. Catch-22 conforms to Maynard Mack's description of traditional satire: "madness and blindness are . . . the emblems of vice and folly, evil and good are clearly distinguishable, criminals and fools are invariably responsible (therefore censurable), and standards of judgment are indubitable."

### 3-Conclusion

In conclusion, the basic assumptions and organization of American society are effectively satirized and, through juxtaposition with idealistic norms, are shown to be wanting in fundamental humanity. It is in this dimension, as social commentary, that Heller's satire develops its most profound themes, themes which emerge with clarity and force from the depth of its angry humor. It tells the ironic and critical portrait of dozens contemporary problems of America at 1960-s. Classifying Joseph Heller as a postmodernist has led some critics to consider the author's tendency towards literary pastiche and his treatment of paranoia.

Although Heller certainly incorporates earlier texts into his fiction, his literary borrowing is not quite the form of pastiche Frederic Jameson identifies as central to postmodern creation,

nor is it merely an empty echoing of previous work. Instead, Heller's pastiche transcends Jameson's narrow definition and functions as a variety of the broader concept originally called *pasticcio*. By borrowing famous literary characters, situations, and styles which deal with absurdity, mortality, and futility, Heller draws his reader's attention to the ubiquity of these themes throughout literary history and emphasizes their relevance to the individual today. Finally, Heller reveals that the paranoia so prevalent in the postmodern world is little more than a manifestation of the very human fear of mortality. Rather than suggest the existence of the massive conspiracies which characterize the fiction of such postmodern writers as Thomas Pynchon, Heller depicts a world where delusions of persecution would be a way to avoid the harrowing secret in Snowden's entrails: that man is nothing more than dying matter.

Heller's characters, on the other hand, cannot blame a conspiracy for human suffering; death comes to everyone: "sooner or later God murders us all, doesn't He, and back we go to the dust from which we came". Life, then, is the individual's futile struggle against mortality, a fight so consuming that it leaves no room for delusory neuroses. Thus, as death is inevitable and Yossarian's fear of mortality is considered to be paranoid behavior, paranoia must be the human being's fear of the inevitable, Sartre's existential nausea. Although some influential critics dismiss Catch-22 as a Period Piece, professors, students, businesspeople, retirees, and individuals from all other walks of life continue to read the novel.

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## “Mestiza” Daughters and Cultural Electras: Transborder Matrilineage in Rebecca Walker’s *Black, White and Jewish* (2000)

### Abstract

*This paper is a qualitative analysis of the cultural notion of the “mestiza” daughter and of the way the lines of transborder matrilineage spread through Rebecca Walker’s *Black, White and Jewish*. The cultural ‘Mestizas’ try to strike a balance in between their insider and outsider status in the society for then coming to terms with their multiple identities and adopting the role of cultural ambassadors. In this autobiography Rebecca Walker is revealed transforming herself from a rebellious black adolescent living with her mother in the bohemia of San Francisco to an upper middle class Jewish girl living with her father and her stepmother in the suburbs of Manhattan. Shuttling between coasts and cultures makes Walker feel a “movement child” psychologically, physically and politically. At times feeling completely at home in her mother’s world, other times going through disruption from the mother as a way of waging war on her search for identity, Rebecca maps up her identity through the “Mestiza Daughter” and the “Cultural Electra” trope.*

*Literally traveling between two or more worlds and developing a tolerance for contradictions and plurality, the “Mestiza” is involved in self-negotiations and mediations that make her side with the dominant culture instead of identifying with the matrilineal heritage or becoming a cultural replica of the Electra complex. Typical of the matrilineal relationship in Rebecca Walker’s *Black, White and Jewish* is the matrophobic rejection of the mother’s peculiarities and the desire to become purged once and for all from the remnants of her culture. Considering her mother as the inner scapegoat and the inherent blemish, Rebecca recognizes failure to live up to the societal standards of good mothering and turns to her father as a point of reference for her life. Nevertheless, there seems to be no place for a biracial, multiethnic daughter in the xenophobic society of the father, and this makes Rebecca decide to discharge the father’s surname and highlight the mother’s one as a sign of privileging blackness and downplaying whiteness. Walker’s perpetually shifting locations create a narrative that partakes of fact and fiction, fantasy and experience, storytelling and collective unconscious, and present the protagonist as a compulsory amnesiac absorbed in the shapelessness of identity, time and location.*

*Absorbed in an existence which is void of daily routines, and finding permanence*

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*only in the transitional accommodation of airports, Rebecca will claim and disclaim separate parts of her character in every new location periodically moving from the East Coast to the West Coast, from the white Jewish suburbia to the black artist bohemia, from the white outsiderhood to the black insiderhood. Stylistically speaking the author has intentionally capitalized Home because no conventionality of space or attitude can deserve that name. She feels content with an off the map position and as a mediator.*

*Rejecting the existence of a stabilized and unified identity and considering herself the tragic mulatta caught between both worlds like a proverbial deer in the headlights, Walker grows aware of her binary marginality and asserts that identity emerges not when identification is made, but when it fails to be made. The sense of multiplicity conferred by Jewishness refers to the potential to transcend dichotomies such as black and white and leave other facets unarticulated.*

**Keywords:** *Black Female Autobiography; Cultural Mestizas; Matrilineal Heritage; Cross Cultural Mediator; Multiple Identities.*

## 1-Introduction

Subtitled her book *Autobiography of a Shifting Self*, Walker describes how she developed from a rebellious black adolescent living with her mother in the bohemia of San Francisco, to an upper middle class Jewish girl living with her father and her stepmother in the suburbs of Manhattan. The unusual custody arrangement, the daughter having to spend two years with each parent, poses her shuttling between coasts and cultures and made her feel a movement child psychologically as well as politically. Placed on the mainstream's margins, and born biracial, comes to her as a conditioned invitation to view the world from the perspective of both an insider and an outsider. Adding a third dimension to the typically black and white dyad of U.S. race relations, her book deploys Jewishness to unfold the plurality of whiteness and challenge the dichotomies of race and identity. Nevertheless, Walker's ultimate conclusion is that we must strive to come to terms with our ethnic identities in order to be able to assume the role of cultural ambassadors.

Besides reflecting the experience of growing up biracial, Walker's narrative is also about the way parental neglect forced her to become prematurely independent, and extravagantly indulging in drug and sex attitudes. The author's depiction of a tangled upbringing comes out as frank to the point of lacking insight. Along the memoir Rebecca absorbs the very stereotypes she claims to recycle. The memory selectivity questions the reliability of every statement she makes, and the ancestral origins and matrilineal relationship serve as guidelines and route digressers at the same time, letting the work hover between the status of memoir and fiction. When asked about her writing style, her life and activism, Walker considers her work as one fighting against the media distorted characterizations of feminism, trying to remove the rigid societal frameworks, and voicing the needs of the oppressed and the afflicted.

### **1.1. "Mestiza" Daughters and Cultural Electras: Transborder Matrilienage in Rebecca Walker's *Black, White and Jewish* (2000)**

Just as autobiographical writing rises up beyond the individual accounts of a specific person, woman-of-color mother-daughter writing raises beyond the constraints of double marginality, promoting gender and ethnic consciousness and turning mothers into the political fronts against racism and sexism. As Wendy Ho observes:

As much as there were intense conflicts with mothers, many women writers of color emphasized the mother's powerful social and emotional presence in nurturing their creativity and in establishing the home place as a political space for survival and resistance for their subordinated racial-ethnic families. (qtd. in Schulterman 2005, p. 7).

The mother-daughter relationship in Rebecca Walker's autobiography wavers from closeness and association to disruption and separation as a way of seeking identification, and at the same time waging war on one's search for identity. In her *Of Woman Born* (1986), Adrienne Rich considers the mother-daughter relationship as one of inherent symbiosis and reciprocal identification, life shaping since its pre-natal existence. It is likely that there is nothing in nature more resonant and more tuned than the flow of appreciation and mutual recognition between a mother and her daughter. In Rich's words, "this cathexis between mother and daughter-

essential, distorted, misused—is the great unwritten story.”(226), but like every intense feeling and relationship it may sound threatening to men and this leads the daughter into a disruption from her mother, as a form of claiming acceptance in the white framework. The emotional and spiritual attachment is described even through a scene of bodily symbiosis:

Night after night Mama and I are tucked into our king-size bed on the warm side of the blood-red velvet curtains, and night after night I fall asleep with my pudgy copper arms wrapped around her neck. As we drift out of consciousness, I feel the ether of my spirit meet the ether of hers and become all tangled up. As I fall asleep I do not know where she starts and I begin. (Walker Black, *White and Jewish* ,p.56).

Another episode in which Walker feels completely at home in her mother's world is the one in which her mother takes her along to the Library of Congress, thereby opening up a new world of writing and escapism in verse, and making Rebecca feel proud of being identified as Alice's daughter. The Library of Congress is a niche where neither her father, nor her stepmother, nor anybody else may dare to stamp on:

At the Library of Congress I become the daughter of my mother. That is how people know me. This is the speaker's daughter. You know the woman who read the poetry? [...]. It is easy to be my mama's daughter, all I have to do is stand next to her and smile at all the people who come over to talk and shake her hand. (102).

Nevertheless, as the rest of the work will reveal, this easy ready-made identification will not be long-lasting and the mother-daughter relationship will end up oscillating between reconciliations and separations. As feminist criticism reads it, Rebecca Walker's autobiography orients the protagonist's struggle for self-assertion and identity-mapping toward two tropes: the trope of Anzaldua's, "The Mestiza Daughter"; and of Jung's "Cultural Electra". The new "Mestiza", a hybrid identity, a cross-border, a mediator of different realities or cultures, literally travels between two worlds, developing a tolerance for contradictions and plurality and feeling, overwhelmed by a sensation of belonging to two localities and to neither of them at the same time.

Finding herself immersed in a quest that opens up further ambivalences and ambiguities about her mixed ethnic identity and heritage, the "Mestiza" needs to claim her matrilineal relations rather than let herself be claimed by them and this entails self-negotiations and mediations of her multiple ethnic heritages. It is this dilemma which leads to question, "which collectivity does the daughter of a dark-skinned mother listen to?" (Anzaldua 1987,p.100), and it is the same dilemma that leads Walker into wondering whether she is possible, whether there exists anybody able to reconcile cultures and ethnicities without suffocating or misrepresenting one or the other.

Nowadays, the concept of the "Cultural Electra" reaches as an extension of the impact the Jungian psychoanalytical feminism has on the readings of contemporary ethnic texts. The sexually charged distortion of the mother-son relationship, coined as the "Oedipus Complex" by Sigmund Freud, has got as its counterpart the "Electra Complex", the identification of the daughter with the father figure, as an

act of individuation. As Silvia Schultermundl states in her dissertation *Unlinear Matrilineage, Mother-Daughter Conflicts and the Politics of Location in Contemporary Asian American and Caribbean American Women Writers*(2004), when a daughter “sides with the dominant culture instead of identifying with the matrilineal heritage her mother embodies, she replicates the dynamics of the ‘Electra Complex’ on a cultural level.”(Schultermundl 2004, p.50). Feeling that the matrilineal heritage is not strong enough to speak up for her in the world, the “Cultural Electra” targets and blames her non-American mother for the oppression and frustration she experiences and sticks to her father’s supremacy for identification:

“But when I see them in my mind’s eye, gray-haired Grandma Jennie, staring squarely into the lens and Grandmother Poole looking out, exhausted, over the hill, I can not help but wonder if either of them ever would have fully claimed and embraced me.” (Walker Black, White and Jewish,p.151).

Adaptation to the father’s cultural world and absorption of his suburban supremacy requires jeopardizing her African American heritage and her matrilineal bond. The context-boundedness of the “Cultural Electra”, suggests a cultural and emotional alienation from the mother as a mode of societal affirmation. The process of disassociation from one’s mother also takes up other different names: to Adrienne Rich it is a “radical surgery” from the mother (Rich 1986,p.78), to Hirsch it is an illustration of the daughter’s Othering (Hirsch 1989, p.136-137). In Chodorow’s terms, on the other hand, girls always have more flexible ego boundaries and need for the presence of an “Other” to succeed in their self-assertion, while boys have more rigid ego boundaries and come to define themselves as separate: “From the retention of the Oedipal attachments to their mothers, growing girls come to define themselves as continuous with others.”(Chodorow 1978, p. 169). The motherly consideration of daughters as extensions of themselves lays the grounds for identification with the father as a foil for her separation from the mother.

In Walker’s autobiography, as well as in many autobiographies of second generation women of color, the collective matrilineal heritage also inadvertently absorbs the patriarchal societal expectations that it attempts to eliminate. In postmodern society, as Adrienne Rich claims, woman is principally viewed through the lens of motherhood, and the complexity of her being is dismantled by the absorption of such generalizations and stereotypes as “childbearer, and the center of life’s creation.”(Rich 1986, p.11). The disconnection with the mother, and the attempted assimilation with the father, is rooted in what Adrienne Rich calls “matrophobia”--“a womanly splitting of the Self, in the desire to become purged once and for all of our mother’s bondage, to become individuated and free.”(Rich 1986,p. 236). The matrophobic rejection in *Black, White and Jewish* primarily originates in Rebecca’s awareness that what she hates most are remnants of the mother’s culture that make her unacceptable in the eyes of the society.

To Rebecca, the mother stands for the victim, the scapegoat inside of her, the convex mirror of her innermost reality, a blemish which she would wish to hide or to ignore at every exposure to the critical eye of the white society. It is the rejection of her pre-teenage crush in the third grade that makes her aware of the fact that white well-to-do guys would never date a black girl, and leads her to think that she will have to show off in the company of not black people like her stepmother

and her paternal grandmother, thereby considering her mother as a “clandestine Other.” (Schultermandl 2005, p. 9). Her Othering of the mother continues with her feeling reluctant to be seen accompanied by her in school plays, and her consideration of blackness as an uncherished dimension of her multiple identities and Selves.

Bryan Katon, her teenage crush, voices his dislike for black girls and immerses Rebecca into the existential dilemma of trying to uncover the innermost depths of her being: “Bryan Katon tells me that he doesn’t like black girls [...]. And that is when all the trouble starts, because suddenly I don’t know how to be not what he thinks I am. I don’t know how to be a not black girl.” (Walker Black, White and Jewish, p. 69). It is this episode with Bryan that will deepen the breach between her and her mother and cause in her mixed feelings of longing and relief, frustration and contentment.

I don’t tell my mother too much about the play, and she doesn’t ask. It isn’t a big deal I say, hoping she won’t see through my mask of nonchalance; I don’t want to hurt her but I don’t want to lie either, but how else am I going to convince her not to come to see me on play night [...]. Even though everyone says I was good, my mamma, the one with the most important voice, can never say this to me. Shame sticks to me like sweat. (71-72).

Rebecca’s alienation from her mother also stems from her recognition of the mother’s failure to live up to the standards of good mothering. An eight year old cannot understand that a mother has to neglect her children in order to be devoted to public engagement and activism, she cannot comprehend how a mother can choose books, poetry and writing to having walks and going shopping with her daughter. In the episodes to follow, Rebecca reveals of her mother being too busy working on a screenplay and so hiring someone to do the paperwork and act as a liaison between her and the school. The whole situation is awaited with confusion and revolt by the daughter, but it does not cause any kind of reaction or empathy in the mother who quite cynically complies with Rebecca’s hidden agreement not to rely on her mother anymore, and not to ask for her assistance:

I miss my mother walking up the speckled smooth cement stairs with me on the first days of school, but I am so excited about being an Urban student. I don’t dwell on it until the school has an open house for new students and their parents and my mother sends the woman she hired [...]. And then on a meaningful, comic but cynical postcard with a mother gorilla and her child on the front she writes to her daughter that, “She is proud of me for being independent and being able to do well without her. She writes that I will have to continue to do what I always say I can: take care of myself.” (p.263-264).

Alice even sometimes seems to Rebecca like a nasty sister with whom she will have to quarrel over many possessions, but who will never provide her with the care and tenderness typical of a mother. Tired of life and of the many challenges being a single mother poses to her, Alice becomes blind to the behavior of Rebecca. Whenever her daughter acts in a vicious way, slamming doors, talking back and shouting, she thinks it is all part of her being spoiled in the urban environment of the father. Whenever she plays the perfect child, doing the household chores and

toiling to look ideal, her mother declares that she finds a sister in Rebecca and makes her just part of the plot of looking good in front of the others.

In interviews my mother talks about how she and I are more like sisters than mother and daughter. I am game, letting her sit in my lap for a photo for the New York Times, playing the grown-up to my mother's child for the camera. I feel strong when she says those things, like I am much older and wiser than I really am. It is just that the strength does not allow for weakness. Being my mother's sister doesn't allow me to be her daughter (231).

Nevertheless, the mothers always remain reference points for daughters. In the case of *Black, White and Jewish*, Rebecca turns to another female figure, the stepmother, for support. The stepmother seems to be there even when her mother is absent and teaches her things about life. This middle class suburban housewife, her father prefers to his artist ex-wife, becomes the norm of motherhood Rebecca measures her mother with:

While my father is upstairs sleeping and she is sewing name tags for summer camp on all of my jeans, hooded red sweatshirts, and underwear, it is she, my stepmother, who tells me about penises and vaginas and about how babies are made [...]. One day I have some kind of rash and I itch. I call out to her. She is downstairs in the kitchen. Before I can stop myself, I yell out, "Mom, where is the calamine lotion? And then I stop, resting my hand on the wooden banister, waiting to see if she will answer me, if she will accept this new name." (91).

But mid-way through the memoir, the meanwhile teenaged narrator gives a more critical account of her attempted assimilation and views even the stepmother under a new light. Once her father and stepmother move to Larchmont, the Jewish dream in the suburbs, Rebecca becomes more aware of the race tensions and the class discrimination:

The move is some kind of plot my stepmother has concocted to kill me, to wipe away all traces of my blackness or to make me so uncomfortable with it that I myself will it away [...]. I think that she and I are doing battle for my father's soul, me with my brown body pulling him down memory lane to a past more sensual and righteous, she scratching the dirt off place Jewish roots I didn't know she had. (206-207).

By the end of her orientationlessness, Walker comes to the conclusion that she feels more closely connected with the African American heritage and entertains the notion that her black collective past and present are more representative of her personal experiences within the dominant white society. While feeling disparate from her father's extravagant, xenophobic attitudes and lifestyle and compelled to abide to the rules of the white suburban city, Rebecca chooses ethnic marginalization to being scapegoated as her father's au-pair or baby-sitter. Her awareness grows as she realizes that the white culture is leaving no room for her multiple, fragmentary Selves, and that in a seemingly perfect urban landscape she is just an aberration of her father's life, just a "dark spot in an otherwise picture-perfect suburban family." (230). Rebecca engages in a quest for self-creation and self-assertion

based on her mother's black culture and heritage. Feeling at the peak of her achievements and excelling in everything makes her draw closer to her mother by having something undeniable like naming run between them. As Schultermantl states in her book *Transnational Matrilineage* (2009), what can be more "undeniable than discharging oneself of the father's surname and highlighting the mother's one as a sign of privileging blackness and downplaying whiteness." (Schultermantl 2009, p.56).

Why should that line, that clan of people who have been so resistant to my birth, claim the woman I have become? [...]. I want to be closer to my mother, to have something run between us that cannot be denied. I want a marker that links us tangibly and forever as mother and daughter (Walker, *Black, White and Jewish*, p.312).

By moving Leventhal to a more obscure middle position and placing Walker at the end, she emphasizes her link to the minority culture and claims her identity as a non-white woman rather than as a merciless Semitic. Faced with identity mapping problems and having secured a stable position of outstanding existence in the dominant culture, Rebecca comes to realize that articulating empathy for the marginalized and paying respect to one's roots is the best way to finding a belonging. After some remarks her father had said on the trial scene she begins to react defensively and bringing out all the buried hatred toward the Jewish inheritance:

I react defensively, asking why I should want the name of the man who disowned my father when he was only eight years old. Why I should carry the name of the man who beat my grandmother and has refused to this day to see me or any other of his son's children. (313).

The answer to all the whys lies in the realization that she mostly identifies with the underdog rather than with the supremacy of the white Jewish society. She finds herself in the legacy of slavery and the black struggle against brutality and prejudice:

Do I feel I have to choose one of these allegiances in order to know who I am or in order to pay proper respect to my ancestors? No. Do I hope that what my ancestors love in me is my ability to master compassion for those who suffer, including myself? Yes. (307).

Walker's new home is in tolerance and in human compassion, and her new role is that of a cross-borderer, an ambassador of two or more cultures. This ambassador role of hers provides her with an epiphany about what is more important to one's identification and she concludes that identity goes beyond genetic make-up. It is only the liberal transnational and trans-cultural consciousness which provides the individual with the utmost freedom for the expression of one's true Self.

One of the most influential and widely recognized formulations of the women-of-color politics of location is Gloria Anzaldúa's "borderland concept". In her experimental autobiography *Borderlands La Frontera: the New Mestiza* (1987), Anzaldúa challenges the displacement of the "mestiza", whose multiple, cultural

and gender placements go beyond conventional boundaries of identity. According to her, searching for home also means searching for one's real Self but, as far as quest for one's Self faces recognition of an inherent Other, women come to see the alien within them, internalize the sense of exile and end up split up within themselves and between one another. This is the criteria upon which Rebecca Walker has built the multivocal account of growing from childhood into adulthood:

We return in widening spirals and never to the same childhood place where it happened; first in our families; with our mothers; our fathers. The writing is a tool for piercing that mystery, but it also shields us, gives a margin of distance, helps us survive. (Anzaldúa 1987, p.25).

A self-described movement child, Walker moves literally and metaphorically. She alternates every two years between her parent s homes, thus growing up in Jackson Mississippi, Brooklyn, San Francisco, Washington D.C., and the suburbs of the New York City. Shuttling back and forth across the country, Walker moves among binary identifications such as white or black, Puerto Rican or Jew, heterosexual or bisexual, suburb child or an inner-city girl, middle class or radical bohemian artist.

### **1.2. *Shifting in between locations and cultures***

The racial and ethnic duality becomes even more difficult to manage as she shifts between cultures and worlds. This is regarded by Rebecca as coming of age and journeying "from planet to planet between universes that never overlap." (Walker Black, White and Jewish, p.117). Rebecca s dislocation and subsequent victimization starts with her parent s divorce and their joint custody agreement. As Rebecca periodically moves from the East Coast to the West Coast, from her "father's white Jewish suburbia to her mother s black artist bohemia, from being an outsider among the white people, to being an outsider among the black community. "(Schultermandl 2004, p. 60), the divorce decision is the one to open up new required spaces for both her parents and eventually set her on a mobile transitional existence that distorts her character, and urges her to claim and disclaim separate facets of her character in every new location.

What their decision means is that every year of my life, I have to move, change schools, shift. My father returns to the life that was expected of him, marrying a nice Jewish girl he met as a kid in a summer camp, and my mother falls for a Morehouse man, an old sweetheart from her Spellman days. For them there is a return to what is familiar, safe and expected. For me there is a turning away from all of those things. (Walker Black, White and Jewish, p.117).

Moving from household to household sounds to Rebecca like switching between radio stations and listening to a music whose beat she finds it difficult to follow: "Doing the switching is easy, its figuring out how one relates to the Other (dancer) that is hard." (39). Absorption in the spiritual, character and cultural displacement sounds home-like to Rebecca to the point that no other ritual of life sounds as natural. Her existence is void of the daily routines that may sound trite to any other girl of her age like waking to an alarm clock, thumbing magazines, drifting off to slumber according to some pre-set schedule, or finding oneself in some unchanging workplace. Her body seems to be made up of ether, there is an internal

mercurial drive of forever being in motion rather than recognizing one's origins as deeply rooted in ancestry.

I can never release myself from the mercurial aspects, can't allow myself to stand on some kind of ground. Instead I tend toward that which destabilizes and feels most like home: change, impermanence, a pattern of in and out, here and there, city to city, place to place [...]. I unpack and pack my belongings, shedding some and picking up others with ease and economy. (167).

The ether-like quality of her life, is reflected even in the fragmentary and shifting multiplicity of her selves and identities, and determines the flow of her narrative. As the entitling of the subchapter *Self and Memory* reveals, she has to make thousands of choices a day, and is never completely free to opt for any of them, her life always seeming to have a direction, but never reaching a dead end (228).

The locations she memorizes best are airports, opened doors that never take much time to close behind her, windows whose landscapes she never takes the time to enjoy, an exteriority that never remains such because of her willingly or reluctantly melting into the borders and the frontiers of her existence. Her appearance adopts the form of a chameleon, a malleable substance to be molded after every encounter, a missing core never to be found. The other reason why she prefers airports is because they are neutral spaces, not demanding much identity mapping, and disclaiming the luxury of stability and coherence in the name of fragmentation and bordering. In the passages to follow the author has intentionally capitalized *Home*, because no conventionality of space or of attitude can deserve that name. Refusing to stay somewhere long enough to develop a ritual of familiarity, coziness or safety, Walker prefers lingering in the in-betweenness rather than on the act of performance:

I remember airports [...]. I am more comfortable in airports than I am in either of the houses I call, with undeserved nostalgia, *Home* [...]. Airports are limbo spaces-blank, undemanding, neutral. Expectations are clear. I am the passenger. I am coming or going [...]. I do not have to belong to one camp, school, or race, one fixed set of qualifiers, adjectives based on someone else's experience [...]. I am a transitional space, form-shifting space, place of a thousand hellos and a million goodbyes (4).

Regardless of the tragicality with which she asserts the already imposed life pattern, Rebecca considers moving as an "alchemical reaction that happens when the seasons change." (63). Rebecca's recognition of her off-map position and her outings into each parent's world constitute a challenge to her cultural and ethnic adaptation. When her mother picks her up for poetry reading, she is happy about being initiated into a world of "poetry, Indian restaurants and curvy brown women" (101), for after some time going back to the ritual of having lunches prepared by the stepmother, "going to ballet classes, and walking with Marc home from school." (103).

Rebecca nevertheless somehow seems to crave for some sense of belonging, either in Bali or Jamaica, or to the Jewish heritage of her father or the black ancestral wealth of her mother. This creates in us an illusion of stability, a fake

sense of permanence and belonging, which will be undermined within a few lines. On her journey to Bali she states: "In these places where many of the people have skin the same color as mine, and where I am not embroiled in the indigenous racial politics of the day, I get a glimpse of a kind of freedom I have not experienced at home." (304). Considering food as a manifestation of cultural heritage as much as homeplace is, Walker's description of Riverdale and other Jewish lieu sharpens her dislike for the bourgeois lifestyle of her father and highlights her sense of displacement.

My father and stepmother live just in Riverdale, but I live in Riverdale and Bronx. Riverdale to me means Nanny and the Liebermans and shopping down on Johnson Avenue for challah for Friday-night dinner [...]. It means a little store that sells Oshkosh overalls for my stepmother [...]. It means walking around with my stepmother, this Sephardic looking Jew who calls me her daughter around people who never question (199).

Ultimately she confesses feeling more at home in the modest household of Theresa, among the uneven set of concrete chairs, the mess and the dramatic darkness of her house. She feels most welcome by the lower class modesty and simplicity rather than by the luxurious premises of her father's house which seem to provide room for everybody and everything but her: "there [in Theresa's house], I find a corner to fit into, walls that contain me." (205).

Rebecca is not alone, she is not the only one required to act as a bridge, a mediator of two cultures. Jessie, a gay man, is also a human bridge that "seems to do all this moving up and down and in and out more seamlessly than she herself can." (244). This is an open invitation of hers to probe within ourselves only to recognize that within every Self there is an exiled Other, in every seemingly well-situated identity, there is a Rebecca-like shifter that stitches and unstitches the patchwork of our identity.

## 2-Conclusions

Concluding we may state that Rebecca Walker's autobiography builds up on the consideration that deconstruction is the best response to the relativism and multidimensionality of the American experience. In the mother-daughter relationship the focus shifts from the features of the bond in itself to the bond of mothers to society as a whole. The conflict between a mother and her culturally alienated daughter arises due to the daughter's recognition of a need for a break in the matrilineal legacy and the mother's growing awareness of her failure in social reproduction. While waging a war in her search for identity, considering herself as disparate from the mother and avoiding standing on the borderland, the ethnic daughter negates even an integral part of herself without which she can never be whole.

In conclusion, we might say that in her *Black, White and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self* (2002), Rebecca Walker challenges the notion of a home-place as a site of belonging. Acting as a catalyst of the difference between white and women-of-color feminism, and making the protagonist intentionally disassociate from the ancestral and matrilineal culture, she converts the supposedly self-asserting homecomings into geo-politically and socio-culturally insecure locations. The

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ether-like rhythm of her life breaks any possibility for a uni-linear traditional narrative and contributes to the sketch-like organization of chapters. Involved in the mad wandering through a multitude of spaces, locations and identities, Rebecca reaches the conclusion that the best way out is attempting to become mediators rather than claim for clear-cut identities never to be reached. Lacking the black contours, and the permanence of a unified gestalt, the body ends up being just a remnant of the past, a painful reminder of the happy days.

Whenever Rebecca chooses not to remember, memory is converted into some sort of parasite that creeps into the tissues of her body, and makes itself evident in any confrontation with different people, cultures or realities. but then she is reminded that the truth does not lie in what her parents told her about the infinite opportunities. She must once again wear a mask of calmness and tranquility and alignment with the reality.

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## Where the Soul Is: Meeting the Psychosocial Needs of Orphan Younger with Intellectual Disabilities in the Social Context of Education

### Abstract:

*The question of special needs, more than psychosocial needs, of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities in the context of education is being of growing interest and concern to professionals in Albania.*

*The contribution in this paper intends to give an overview of key aspects regarding psychosocial needs of these persons in the social context of education.*

*It provides further a description how one professional can meet their psychosocial needs and where the soul of all that is.*

*At the end, there are suggested some guidelines to be taken into account from professionals from area of health, psychology, psychiatry and education and policy making in order to make external efforts to improve the wellbeing of these vulnerable persons and their future education too.*

**Key words:** *psychosocial needs, orphan younger with intellectual disabilities, social context of education*

## 1- Introduction

All orphans younger with intellectual disabilities are vulnerable to a certain degree. When the autonomy of a group of individuals is guided and they are placed under the care of another group of people, and when this takes place in an environment which is to a large extent public aware, the kind of intervention and social care has to be taken into consideration. To this context, Stenfert & Kroese, (1998) believe that: "Despite the vulnerability of people with intellectual disabilities to mental health problems, historically there has been a general lack of interest in or regard for the needs of this client group". I think, in recent years, the interest is growing: this is why a range of international and regional instruments have been adopted by the international and regional bodies to ensure that the fundamental human rights of persons with disabilities are protected in all the fields of life. However, if we would refer among others to the education as a human right to them, they need additional intervention and protection; it's not merely a question to be included in education. Some of them may experience increased suffering due to inadequate facilities and lack of professionalism available and not only, but addressing to all the needs in a wider social context. The classroom environment for example itself will exacerbate their existing problems. They, as persons, may suffer from humiliation, physical and psychological abuse, due to their disability. They suffer both due to their existing special needs, and due to the additional risks they confront, stemming from their particular status. In this regard, the question of special needs, more than psychosocial needs, of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities in the social context of education is being of growing interest and concern to professionals in Albania which as a society is being confronted by the challenge of integrating the disability face in everyday life, in their home, in the street, in the classroom etc. Competence and human right in dealing with this significant issue is being recognized as a requirement by the European Union as one the prerequisites to have fully access as one of its members and already something has begun to move developing integrating strategies as National Strategy of Persons with Disabilities (2006) which recognizes the human rights of persons with disabilities to be respected; it was drafted to improve the access of persons with disabilities to social and medical care, education, culture, sport, employment, information, transportation, and participation and representation in public life.

But due to the vulnerable issue, their special needs cannot be considered as a marginalized component of only certain education management policies. To one can assume that we have to guarantee that orphan younger with intellectual disabilities with particular needs are treated in accordance with the requirements of international human rights standards, while their prospects of social integration in the social context of education are enhanced. Therefore, in this contribution, it is hoped to provide some answers addressing to following questions:

1. Which are the key aspects regarding psychosocial needs of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities in the social context of education?
2. How one professional can meet the psychosocial needs of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities?
3. Results: *Where the soul of all this is?*

*Suggestions: some guidelines to be taken into account from professionals and policy making*

as a society is being confronted by the challenge of integrating the disability face in everyday

## 2-Overview Of Key Aspects Regarding Psychosocial Needs Of Orphan Younger With Intellectual Disabilities In The Social Context Of Education.

When discussing intellectual disability question, a complicating factor is the absence of agreement on the most appropriate terminology. Moreover, some of the existing terms reflect very important and sensitive debates; nevertheless the operational concepts are given according to objective of the article:

**Firstly: psychosocial needs**-are the needs that all people have – especially orphans younger whose brains, bodies and social lives are developing – to be happy, creative, to belong in social groups, and to have hope for the future.

**Secondly: an orphan younger with intellectual disabilities**- is a person socially abandoned or biologically left who suffers a generalized disorder appearing before adulthood, characterized by significantly impaired cognitive functioning and deficits in two or more adaptive behaviors. Thus, emotional difficulties and acute or persistent mental disorders can present in both typical and atypical ways

**Thirdly: social context of education** here focus on the intersection of schooling and broad social policy, including health, housing, work, and community development; it involves the relationship between schools and society, with specific reference to the role of race and ethnicity, social class, and gender in education (Oxford Bibliography)

### 2.1-Overview of key aspects

It is mentioned here not only disability issue but as well orphan disabled, with nobody. Therefore the orphaned younger due to their intellectual disability experience more psychological distress than children who still have both parents, or children who are orphaned due to other causes. These younger require protection and nurture that meets their needs and ensures their health, affectionate relationships that support their developing psychological and social capacities, and ongoing interactions with encouraging adults that promote their language and cognitive development regardless their disability. The psychological, social and material needs of these younger during their development are best met by a constant group of dedicated people, related to one another, in lifelong family-type groups or as the case of home-families. When it is referred to the psychosocial needs of these persons, it can be based on the psychosocial approach which emphasizes the close connection between

- psychological **aspects of an individual's experience** (namely, thoughts, feelings and beliefs) and

- the wider **social experience** (namely, relationships with family, community and friends) as well as the broader social environment (i.e. culture, traditions, religion, socio-political environment).

This approach takes into account:

- **spiritual aspects** (value systems and beliefs) which may include traditional healing, traditional beliefs in ancestors, the existence of a Supreme Being or God, and cultural rituals and traditions associated with various rites of passage

- **physical aspects**, there is a dynamic relationship between the psychological and social effects of experiences on the individual person, with each continually influencing the other.

Reflection: Putting these persons into inclusive classroom as a human right and a human need, it is necessary to be taken into account what Newman explains that “behavioral and emotional disorders are repetitive persistent patterns of behavior that result in significant disruption of other students.” In this case it is given in the article: Guidelines for Understanding and Serving People with Intellectual Disabilities and Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders, that “the influence of the environment directly impacts the neurological development of the brain. Social relationships are usually difficult for people with mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. Researchers believe that this may be the result of distinct neural systems in the temporal cortex which may impact the understanding the actions of others and in determining one’s intentions and the intentions of others” (O’Connell et al., 2009, pg 2).

Therefore, although in the social context of education it can be used by educators the **Universal Design** as a benefit of universal accessibility for all, taking into consideration the Universal Design for Learning that is an educational approach that seeks to establish classroom accessibility for all students (Meyer & Rose, 2006), it is still a very difficult process. Moreover, the authors Giangreco F. M & Putnam W. J. note that “the essence of regular class integration for students with severe disabilities is providing specially designed instruction in regular education environments” (pg 246).

It can be discussed in this line another important element; the social context, the relationships. Just as strong foundations provide the basis for positive and healthy adaptations, weak foundations create physiological disruptions that can undermine subsequent learning, behavior, and lifelong physical and mental health. This biological evidence explains how, in the absence of nurturing and supportive relationships—the type of environment in which many these may live and participate—adversity can create “toxic stress” that undermines all aspects of an orphan younger’s with disabilities subsequent development, creating significant, physically based, long-term obstacles to positive outcomes for them. Therefore it is needed the psychosocial care which is to be given day-by-day, consistently nurturing care that constitutes the building blocks of younger psychosocial wellbeing, including how they learn, develop and adapt. Such efforts are key investments in human capital development provided through interpersonal interactions.

Another investment would be Cultivating Caring Teacher–Student Relationships according the author Mihalas. S (2008,) who points that “Although there is no one solution to the multifaceted issue of effectively educating children and adolescents with Emotional and Behavior Disorder, an important step that schools can take is to create a school climate that values and emphasizes caring. A growing emphasis by researchers on approaches such assuring positive behavior supports and wraparound services (e.g., Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002; Marquis et al.,2000; Stichter, Clarke, & Dunlap, 2004); emphasizing collaboration among educators and related service providers. (pg 3).

## 2.2- How one professional can meet the psychosocial needs of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities?

In the beginnings of 2011 working with persons with disabilities as a clinical psychologist, I began to carefully study the existed programs and social policies to this field. One of the main things based on Manual of Standards of Social Service of State was the evaluation of needs and problems of persons with disabilities in the fields as autonomy, psychomotor, communication, health and education. At meetings with multidisciplinary equip, I often noticed the caregivers mentioning the sentence “they have special needs” in a certain given field of development. They talked to me mainly within the field of care giving and less about the education one. Then it suddenly came up an idea, discussing the concept of psychosocial needs in providing as a response the psychosocial care in the social context of education, too.

Under the rubric ‘we are all human’ is the implication that ‘we are all the same’ it is predicted for a practical understanding of the concept worldview as one’s experienced reality that can be translated: “We must be able to recognize that we operate from our worldview and simultaneously be able to be free of our worldview so that we might be able to understand and appreciate the meaning of another’s worldview perspective”. Having this into account, we as professionals in the area health, psychology, education and psychiatry also need to acknowledge competent and human behavior as a necessary professional passport not only to avoid harmful and costly deficits in effective care but building supportive and fostering relationships with these persons in need. When it is possible, provide psychosocial care and where is needed, provide psychosocial intervention. Although the author P. Willner (pg 73), states that “Historically, people with learning disabilities have had little or no access to psychotherapeutic interventions, although there are signs that, over the past decade, this situation has seen some gradual improvement”, we as professionals have to know that psychosocial care describes a continuum of care and support and aims at ensuring the social, emotional and psychological wellbeing of individuals, their loves and communities in order to ensure endlessness improvement.

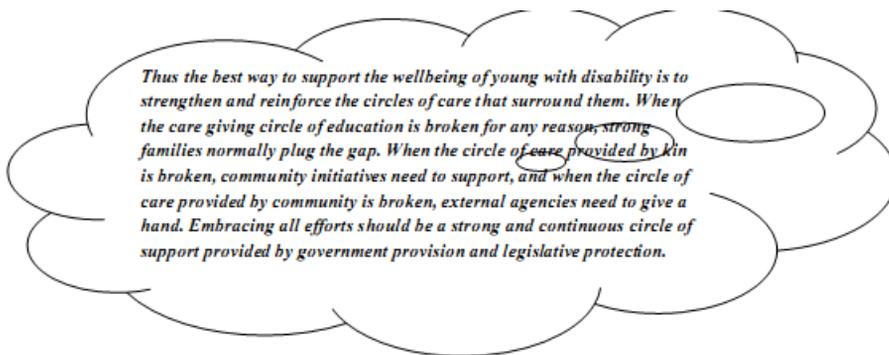
In the article How to respond to psychosocial needs from International Federation Reference Centre for Psychosocial it is given “Support from a community-based approach which is based on the premise that communities will be empowered to take care of themselves and each other. In this way dependency on outside resources is reduced, through community mobilization and strengthening of community relationships and network.(pg 42-43)

Another kind of intervention which has its core in behavioral principles is arguably the most effective way of treating emotional and behavioral disorders according (Hallahan and Kauffman; Kauffman and Landrum; Stichter; Walker, Ramsey and Gresham [15]. The Behaviour Modification Model, the Development Sequence Model, the Biosocial Interaction Model of Childhood Externalizing Behavior and Hayden’s Storied Model have all been widely accepted as tools to be used with children who exhibit emotional and behavioral disorders- stated at Anderson S, (2012).

### 3-Conclusion and Suggestions

#### 3.1- Where the soul of this is?

Given my experience: The psychosocial care is to be found in the “the warm social climate” and it is here the soul that the main thrust of external efforts to improve the wellbeing of orphan younger with intellectual disability must be directed. These Younger have many needs, most of which are met through everyday activities in their home-families, supported by communities and assisted by government services. They need stability, affection in an attempt to be educated and have the education as a right access and to be supported in the continuum pathway. In this case they do not have a family, so the social context can be a family setting, with the same characteristics of commitment, continuity and individualized affectionate care.



Then the social contexts are best placed to provide the right response to the psychosocial needs of these younger that have nobody and suffer from a disability.

#### 3.2- Suggestions: Guidelines to Be Taken Into Account From Professionals And Policy Making

Responding to the psychosocial needs of orphan younger with disabilities in the social context of education by providing day to day psychosocial care is not an easy process. If one cannot provide this vital need to them during school context, after that, another professional have to prepare psychosocial interventions to treat and manage the severe cases turning back to the first point which is not welcome at all for the mental wellbeing of these younger.

- A professional needs to look at its own practices, structures and policies to see what factors hinder the inclusion of orphan younger with intellectual disabilities and contribute in their wellbeing and education by prioritizing everyday systems of care – families, schools and communities.

- All efforts to enhance the psychosocial wellbeing of these young must ensure the support of these natural systems of care in everyday life. This younger need to be included in the design, implementation and evaluation of psychosocial projects to ensure their participation and foster hope for their untraveled future.

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- It may be suggested a human nature and as well a flexible adaptation of psychosocial programmers to be able to adjust to the needs of these younger. Generally, the work needs to be regarded as a continuous process of learning for the professional himself. Learning about other cultures requires first of all a self-reflective stance.
  - Integrated responses are needed, and these are best provided by all of us by investing long-term in integrated services to promote psychosocial wellbeing.
  - However, there is now a need to call the policy makers who have a crucial role to play, particularly in providing education, health and social services that meet their needs and in developing policies that promote their physical and psychosocial wellbeing,
  - Governments need to lead as well as resource coordinated efforts that match the vigorous responses to vulnerable younger that are striving to enter in Civil Society as citizens with full rights.

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## The Evaluation of Psychological Service in School

### Abstract

*One of the main school responsibilities remains the provision of the psychological service, recently sanctioned in the new law of Pre-university Education, 2013. The psychologist's role in the school is seen as a necessary task. This service is provided through the process of handling different problems, the identification and treatment of children with psycho-social, needs as well as the design and the implementation of precautionary risk programs, according to the needs of school community. Our society is free and open towards the innovation, but at the same time it is very sensitive towards the social, economic, spiritual and individual difficulties. In this process the psychologist should be close to children, teenagers and the problems they are facing. In addition to that, the psychologist gives an important contribution to the students in successfully facing the curriculum, its goals, objectives and content. The psychologists in close collaboration with teachers enable the students to successfully accomplish their education. The need for designing the guideline "The inspection and self evaluation of psychological service in school" came as a result of the lack of an evaluation system at school, relating to the motivation and the improvement of the psychologist activity. It is the first time that the psychologists have an appropriate professional tool, which is detailed in measurable indicators and instruments involving all the elements of the psychological service, based on contemporary methodology of inspection and evaluation of educational services. In this context the guideline offers great opportunities that help in achieving the self-evaluation process and the external evaluation of the psychological service in school. This process need time, efforts and professional engagement. Moreover it needs a fruitful combination of school self evaluation in annual basis with the external evaluation carried periodically by the State Education Inspectorate. This material, as the co-author of this manual, presents the content and the methodology in order to clarify the way in which this manual of the evaluation of psychological service should be used and serve. The manual is conceptualized in five essential fields of inspection and self evaluation.*

*Field number 1: Evaluation*

*Field number 2: Planning*

*Field number 3: Consulting and collaboration*

*Field number 4: Advising*

*Field number 5: Professional development of school psychologist*

*The diffraction of the content of this manual is oriented by the professional standards of the school psychological service in school. These standards are taken in consideration, combined with the international co operations in this field.*

*Apart from the aspects of the inspection and self evaluation, this guideline tends to help and improve further the professionalism of psychological service in schools.*

**Key words:** *Inspection; Self Evaluation; Psychological Service; Instruments; Evaluation Standards*

## 1-Introduction: Presentation

The process of self-evaluation (Self-evaluation means the internal evaluation) and external evaluation, relating the psychological service (The school psychologist means also the female person who holds the position) in schools, requires an appropriate scientific methodology which should be clear, reliable and contemporary. This methodology provides real data, reflecting the strengths and the weaknesses, as well as the opportunities raised for the school psychologist to provide a professional qualitative service first, as well as meeting its needs in order to assure a better performance in the future. On the other hand, an important aspect remains the fact that the same methodology and the same indicators are used simultaneously by the school psychologist, the school internal evaluation team and the external evaluation team (State Education Inspectorate: State Education Inspectorate is the official institution that is responsible for the external evaluation in the pre-university educational institutions, as well as other educational services). This approach compares these evaluations that tend to improve the psychological service in school and determine the level of its performance. The goal of the Inspectorate is to encourage step by step the implementation and the installation of the culture of the self-evaluation in the institutions of pre-university education. This is a challenging professional way which requires knowledge and mastering of the ethic and professional standards of evaluation. In addition, it requires commitment and responsibility demonstrated by all representatives involved in the process, such as the internal evaluation teams, the school psychologist in particular, and the managerial authorities of the educational institutions.

What are the methodological elements used in the process of the self-evaluation and external evaluation, in terms of the psychological service in schools?

The definition of the fields and sub - fields of evaluation regarding the psychological service in school.

The field (State Education Inspectorate is the official institution that is responsible for the external evaluation in the pre-university educational institutions, as well as other educational services) is conceptualized as an essential direction or dimension of the activity of the school psychologist. The field is directly related to the implementation of professional standards as well as the process of his professional activity. The definition of the fields is based on the educational legal acts and the normative provisions, regarding the psychological service in the institutions of pre-university education.

It is agreed to define 5 essential fields which derive from the professional standards of the psychologist. The fields are considered and judged by lectures and field experts as main dimensions that connect straight forward to the service, the school psychologist provides.

Field number 1: Evaluation (State Education Inspectorate is the official institution that is responsible for the external evaluation in the pre-university educational institutions, as well as other educational services.)

Field number 2: Planning

Field number 3: Consultation and collaboration

Field number 4: Counseling

Field number 5: Professional development of school psychologist

- The sub-field is a subdivision, and a necessary element that indicates and completes the content of a certain field where the school psychologist operates. In actual terms, in the field of psychological service defined as “Evaluation” the subdivisions of the field are: a) The process of evaluation, b) The ethics in the evaluation process. These subfields tend to identify what happens with the evaluation provided by the school psychologist. Moreover it provides a complete panorama of all the elements this field involves. These subfields are seen as opportunities to identify, to observe and evaluate in detail the activity of the school psychologist. As mentioned above the subfields fulfill two functions:

- a) divide the field into organic and necessary elements
  - b) enable the recognition and an objective evaluation of the situation of the psychological service, in the institutions of the pre-university education.
2. The definition of a system consisting of valid, useful, sufficient, measurable and practical indicators.

- The indicator is expressed with an affirmative measurable sentence that indicates how the level of the field should be. Through the indicators we are able to evaluate the quality of the psychological service the school provides.

The indicator features are:

- they are designed to every subfield accordingly.
- they are always measurable, in terms of facilitating the process of self-evaluation and its inspection.
- affirmations, that specify the field to be measured.

Chart displaying examples of fields, subfields and indicators.

Number	Field	Subfield	Indicators (examples)
I	The evaluation	The process of evaluation	The school psychologist develops (designs) evaluation procedures according to the plan, implementing the necessary professional steps.
II	The planning	Planning procedure	The school psychologist operates a range of activities planned in advance
III	Consultation and collaboration	The concept on the consultation	The school psychologist provides consultation for the teachers.
IV	Counseling	The counseling procedure	The school psychologist operates ethically respecting the clients, their privacy and the highest interest of the client and the institution.
V	The professional development	Updating with the last professional development	The school psychologist is updated with the innovation and the contemporary experiences regarding the psychological service in school.

**The observational instrument** (The observational instrument describes the indicator) is a sentence that defines the way the targeted indicator is implemented, developed or displayed. By using the observational instruments, information is collected in order to provide necessary data for the indicators of the psychological service.

**The scales of evaluation** are the levels used to assess the psychological service

based on its fields. The levels of assessment are four: very good performance corresponds to number one, good performance corresponds to number two, sufficient performance corresponds to number three and poor performance corresponds to number four. The four scale evaluation scheme is widely used in the evaluations carried out by several professional services in the European educational systems. Moreover, this system divided in four scales, enables an objective evaluation and involves all the levels a psychologist can achieve through the service he provides according to the indicators.

**The evaluation standard** is defined as the description of the situation, the psychological service is provided in every field. The standard determines the evaluation, according to the levels mentioned above. The evaluation is the result of data processing that derives from the observational instruments of evaluation relating to every indicator as well as the data gathered by the applied methodology during the process of self evaluation, or inspection in general.

The final evaluation of the field is always based on the importance and the weight of the indicators in the framework of the psychological service.

### **Field number 1: Evaluation**

The evaluation constitutes one of the main fields in the activity of school psychologist. The evaluation intends to gather and integrate data concerning the issue of the psychological service, school performance and the progress of certain interventions in the framework of psychological welfare and education. The evaluation cannot be mistaken with testing. It constitutes an effective use of instruments/techniques in order to gather data, to modify and improve the instruments in use, their interpretation and reporting or their further use. (Tests constitute one of the instruments used for collecting data and evaluating).

The evaluations carried out by the psychologists, are developed through the observation of hard copy or on-line school documentation, through observation and interviews, focus groups, surveys and tests designed for this purpose. During the process of evaluation the psychologists take into consideration the applied scientific criteria for data interpretation and the rules for outputs administration. Used by unqualified psychologists, the evaluations provide us with wrong data which lead to wrong interpretations associated with unwanted impacts in the process of education and psychological well being.

In his evaluating task the school psychologist integrates the data taken by the academic evaluation combined with those of behavior in order to have an objective panorama of the phenomenon that concerns the student and the school.

### **The subfields that compose the “*Evaluation*” are:**

- a) The knowledge and the capability to evaluate
- b) The evaluation procedures
- c) The ethics while evaluating.

## Field number II. Planning

The psychological service in school is provided in an organized, coordinated and planned way through a chain process of activities. The group of professionals in charge plan in advance their agenda based on the identified needs and the data taken from the evaluations. The school psychologist masters the appropriate knowledge over the models and the methods which ensure the necessary information for identifying the strengths and the weaknesses, the problems raised and the measurement of the school progress. All the interventions are studied and planned in advance.

The school psychologists are part of the groups who plan the interventions. Most of the time, they give their contribution, cooperating with other actors and only in rare cases they design the plan individually. The planning processes tend to perform certain interventions. The psychologist's contribution in planning is clearly expressed and doesn't face any limitations. It is implemented through his participation in the workshops, through his suggestions on the interventions, while reporting the findings of the evaluations, through his specific role in the planning process, through recording the documentation of his activities etc. Other examples of this contribution are the participation in planning the trainings, suggestions for curricular improvements, awareness campaigns, recreational activities etc.

Planning of the psychological service in school is usually a process that starts after identifying and evaluating the students' needs. The evaluation of students' needs enables the identification of the main concerning issues. By doing so, the actors involved in planning, design the schedules of the intervention whether at school level, or at district/regional level. They enable a good combination of data taken by the evaluation with the creativity and the fantasy. The purpose is to make an effective use of data and to adopt them according to identified needs and the psychology of groups benefiting this service. (Teachers, parents, students). The planned interventions fit into the category of students' academic performance, their psychological welfare and their behavior.

### The domain of “*Planning*” is divided into two subfields:

- a) knowledge acquisition in this field, and ability to plan.
- b) planning practices

## Field number 3: Consultation and Collaboration

The school psychologist does not operate isolated by other actors involved in the school life and community. He frequently gets involved in consultation activities and sessions and cooperates effectively with the other actors in all the process phases comprising evaluation, planning therapy at individual, group or system level.

Consultation is understood in various ways. Generally speaking, it is seen as an exchange of thoughts, but there are cases when it is considered as a way to suggest interpretations and certain actions. In fact, consulting involves these activities and goes beyond them, it engages also on the problem solving situations. Consequently processes like thought exchanging, suggestions, support, encouragement, and inhibition and information transmission happen.

Consultation covers issues associated with the academic, behavioral, and psychological progress. It allows us to complete a full analysis of needs (the analysis of the needs is achieved by the evaluation procedure, while consultation can be used to realize this analysis) in order to find out the problems the schools are facing. In front of this reality these problems should be brought and taken into consideration to be solved in specific projects.

The school psychologists are keen not only to collaborate with other stakeholders, but they are interested in their contribution too. They provide the consultation in a collaborative atmosphere with the stakeholders. Hence they plan their job; they put priorities, take responsibilities, negotiate and take decisions at individual, group or system level.

Collaboration constitutes an important area of psychologist activity and intends not allowing isolated actions inside a complex system concerning the actors involved, their relationship, activities and features.

The new role of the psychologist is based on a deep collaboration between him and the actors. As every teacher has to deal with his own subject, in the core of the psychologist's duty remains the collaboration with other stakeholders and actors. In this process, interpersonal skills like: the ability to build and maintain relationships, the ability to listen to the others and respect them, the ability to appraise the contributions and a successful collaboration, remain crucial.

**The field of “Consultation and collaboration” is divided into four subfields.**

- a) Knowledge on the consulting process,
- b) Consulting procedure
- c) Knowledge on the collaboration process
- d) Collaboration procedure

#### **Field number 4: Counseling**

Thecounseling(<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/PsychSocial/GuidelinesSchoolPsychology.pdf>) represents a process in which the school psychologist helps the students to maximally benefit from the educational investment in general and the opportunities it offers.

Counseling is the kind of service that provides help for people who face difficulties in their life. These experiences sometimes impede them to fulfill their potential.

Counseling is scheduled individually and in group with all the actors involved: the students, parents, teachers, the supporting staff and the community groups. Counseling (National Inspectorate for Pre-university Education “Inspection and Internal-evaluation of School” Tirana , 2011) tends to open all available opportunities to individuals, to encourage the efforts for optimistic changes, to overcome obstacles, to support change, to encourage and motivate success in the academic performance, to improve social relations and personal achievement.

In the position of a counselor the psychologist operates individually or applies group therapy. The individual counseling is provided during confidential individual

meetings. He mainly covers issues related to psychological welfare of students, their academic performance. On the other hand he recommends teachers who deal with students with special needs, and parents about the ways they should treat their children during the phase of adolescence. The process of providing counseling for different target groups is provided through workshops aiming to raise consciousness, inform, train and support. The more frequent form of “group counseling” is developed under the form of training.

The counseling process happens also during critical incidents and intervention in cases of crisis. In these interventions the psychologist job consists in: building teams to afford crisis, giving the first psychological aid, identifying people who need support and attention, coordinating the external aid in order to afford the school’s crisis and informing about the existence of extra resources. Some of the essential proficiencies, while performing the role of a counselor, a school psychologist should have are: building and maintaining relationships, challenging, effective communication, empathy, sensitization and support.

**The component subfields of “Counseling” are:**

- a) Knowledge on the field of counseling
- b) Counseling practice

**Field number 5: The Professional Development of The School Psychologist**

The school psychologists are frequently engaged in their professional development, in order to be updated with the latest professional developments. This process means a deep knowledge of the scientific researches in the field of school psychologist activity. As a result the schools psychologists stay in touch with the results of the scientific researches, they study the periodicals and the publications in the field of psychology, attend scientific conferences and trainings in order to advance the knowledge and support the professional development of the psychologist.

The school psychologists (National Inspectorate for Pre-university Education “Inspection and Internal-evaluation of RED/EO” Tirana, 2011.) make progress by reflecting on their own personal experiences. Usually they pay attention to their best personal practices, but they also focus on the poor performances and activities in order to improve them. During this process the school psychologist study the cases they treat in many aspects; like evaluation, planning, consultation, advice; they analyze their personal experiences and they choose the best experiences that fit in offering an effective service to the school bodies and school community. In this context they dedicate time to personal achievement.

The schools psychologists work systematically by exchanging the appropriate professional experiences with each other. In this context, they periodically gather together and hold discussions, they arrange meetings, seminars, symposiums, and take an active part in forums and professional organizations. They support each other in their efforts to cultivate the profession and find solution to practical issues.

In their efforts to advance professionally, the schools psychologists become members of associations, act under organized ways, defend their interests and

community interests, document and publish their activities and researches, get trained as well as ask and provide supervision.

**The component subfields of “Professional development of the school psychologist” are:**

- a) The official qualification and training of the school psychologist
- b) Periodical updating with the professional development
- c) Reflection on individual experience
- d) Experiences’ exchange with colleagues
- e) Professional communion membership

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## **Analysis on youth development status and conditions in Elbasan region, in Albania**

### **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this article is to provide an overall descriptive analysis of key psychological dispositions related to resilience and well-being of youths in Elbasan region in Albania. The strength-based approach presented by Search Institute's Development Asset Framework was selected to better serve this purpose. In this framework the institute has produced the Development Asset Profile. DAP is a research-based framework that identifies 40 elements of young people's positive growth and development. DAP will be used as an assessment tool that seeks to picture how youths in Elbasan are experiencing those 40 Developmental Assets. Assets are considered to be crucial "building blocks" of a healthy development for all youth. In this article we will present the assessment results by stressing the power of development assets and the role that everyone may play in building these assets.*

*This article summarizes the extent to which youth experience the Developmental Assets within schools in the targeted geographical area. Therefore, the data analysis and interpretation will provide a detailed overview of the state of development assets among young people, aged between 12 and 18 years old, in schools in Elbasan area, in 2 different moments in time. The purpose of this mixed methods triangulation design study was to explore how "non-formal education" methods and life-skills curricula has affected targeted youth's overall level of Developmental Assets over time. Actually, to accomplish this longitudinal study, around 300 youths has been engaged twice in answering DAP survey questions: once during the first cohort of measurement in 2011 and then after 3 years, during the second cohort of measurements that took place during November–December, 2013. This longitudinal study seeks to provide a general analysis according to the development of eight assets categories (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity) before and after a 3 year programme intervention targeting youths in Elbasan area.*

*The article concludes by analyzing and interpreting findings and DAP scores and at the same time is trying to analyze pros and cons of using DAP for a longitudinal study.*

**Key words:** *development assets profile, longitudinal study, strength-based approach, youth positive development.*

## 1-Introduction

Albania is a transition country facing many challenges including the development of adequate education, health and social services that will enhance the well-being of its population. Albania has one of the highest birth rates and is the second youngest country in Europe (after Kosovo) and its youth population is close to 70% of the total .

The young people in Albania face many difficulties that may reflect violent and inappropriate living conditions that unfortunately are leading to frequent cases of their engagement in risky behaviors and other developmental problems. Actually, in our country there is a huge need to be more focused on young people and their development, by researchers and different developmental practitioners.

Obviously, there is more need to intensify and better coordinate our efforts to foster young people toward a more productive adulthood. It is imperative that a supportive environment should be created for them along the way. Research indicates that a better sense of self-worth, self-confidence together with continuous external support (support from family, school and community) are considered to be essential factors leading to positive youth development. To foster the creation of such supportive and caring environment, those engaging with youth should at first gain a more adequate understanding of the actual conditions our youths are living in, at a given place and during a particular period of time.

And then, those engaged in this field, should join forces and coordinate actions and interventions, promoting positive development by ensuring that our youths feel valued, cared for, loved and protected and feel comfortable while growing in healthy environments and safely accessing all the services available to them.

## 2-Theoretical background

### 2.2-What is 'Youth development' all about?

Researchers have defined 'Youth development' as:

"...the ongoing growth process in which all youth are engaged in attempting to meet their basic personal and social needs to be safe, feel cared for, be valued, be useful, and be spiritually grounded, and to build skills and competencies that allow them to function and contribute in their daily lives" (Pittman, 1993, p. 8).

Based on this definition, 'youth development' can be described as a natural process all adolescents and youths need to go through on their way to adulthood. The actual experiences of adolescents and youths during this journey are supporting them to succeed in their adult life. Youth development approaches encompasses interventions strategies that attempts to meet their needs, to have adequate education and life skills, to feel valued and useful, to be cared for and protected and to be psychology and spiritually grounded.

Therefore, this process requires the engagement of other people around them, thus, family, school and community must be engaged. Thus, youth development could be defined as a combination of all of the people, places and services contributing in creating this supportive and productive environment that will encourage them developing into worthy, valuable and competitive and competent

adults of tomorrow.

Actually, youth development approaches and theoretical background are particularly new in the development field. Until 1980s, young people have been implicitly or explicitly considered “as problems to be solved” (Benson, 2006; Roth, Brooks-Gunn, Murray & Foster, 1998). Basically, this approach was mainly motivated by a “problem identification” angle (e.g. school drop-outs, substance abuse, violence, juvenile delinquency, etc.) On identification, different prevention programs were designed to mitigate those problems.

Findings and lessons learned generated by this approach interventions, was further used to make continuous adjustments to interventions designed by relevant entities around provision of different social services. (Lerner et al. 2005; Benson, 2003; Granger, 2002). Indeed, it is very important to engage in providing the right support to mitigate or reduce problems, but prevention programs should also consider linking with other youth development programs and approaches, in order to properly meet young people’s needs.

At the beginning of 1990’s, researchers acknowledged the need to support youth develop across different areas, by taking into consideration cognitive, psychological, moral, social, cultural, vocational and physical wellbeing. In this regard, researchers started to broaden the range of intervention strategies that addressed young people by highlighting the importance of promoting positive elements of human development (Pittman et al. 2003).

Alternative youth development approaches are trying to connect the efforts of building and developing assets with the concept of Resilience as a component of Positive Youth Development Approaches. Resilience could be defined as the ability to respond adequately to prominent and/or perceived dangers and to develop normally even under adversity circumstances.

As well, Resilience is theorized to be “an inborn developmental wisdom that naturally motivates individuals to meet their human needs for love, sense of belonging, respect, identity, power, mastery, challenge, and meaning” (WestEd, 2002, p. 2; Benard, 2004). This conceptual framework is interlinked with the development assets framework as it is anticipated, that through supporting youth to reinforce their external resources can help to meet youths’ basic developmental needs, which, in turn will enhance internal assets . (Benard,2004; Benard & Slade, 2009). One of the key conceptual ideas inspiring this approach is considering youth as contributors to their own development. (Roth et al. 1998; Benson, 2006).

However, it is generally agreed that there is a need to see all those approaches as complementary of each other. Without withdrawing completely from the problems’ prevention and reduction approach, especially in terms of addressing emergent needs and problematic situations, the main focus could be on promoting young people positive aspects, by building their internal and external assets, toward fostering better resilience, which, in turn will enable them to grow up healthy and reach successfully adult age. Therefore, Building Resilience and Strengthening Asset based approach will be the overall guiding approach in this article. The development assets and their relationship with the component of resilience are considered to be crucial in protecting a young person from involvement in “risky” behaviors, as well, in contributing to improved health, psycho-social and academic

outcomes.

Therefore, assessing those assets at different stages of youth development could be considered a good indicator of their internal and external developmental conditions and could be used to monitor how youths are doing on their development journey. By building on these data, it is possible for those working with youths to compare response patterns and identify needs for interventions according to different contexts.

However, this is rarely done in Albania, since it is unlikely that most professionals engaged with youths, have access to the resources needed to properly understand local situation and develop interventions accordingly. Therefore, this paper could be considered an attempt to draw attention of different practitioner's and researcher (as school teachers, school psychologists, and other professionals) not only on youth related issues and developmental challenges, but also to introduce these progressive assessment resources, that could be used to understand local contexts, living conditions and situation in which our youngsters grow and develop.

## **2.2-Methodology**

The study utilized a triangulation mixed-methods research approach. A combination of different research methodologies has been used in this regard. A quantitative research component included a pre and post survey using the Developmental Asset Profile (DAP) and the qualitative portion consisted of one-on-one in depth interviews and focus group discussions. As well, secondary data were collected since the research design stage, from different local and national level Governmental and Public Institutions. Using such information gathered from suitable qualitative and quantitative methods provided more accurate information according to the particular research questions and indicators.

The Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) was used to determine the level of assets in each of the eight areas, prior to the initiation of a particular intervention aiming at enabling positive youth development in Elbasan region and also asses the DAP results after the projects interventions has been completed. DAP is developed by Search Institute , based on the Development Asset framework and validated for the Albanian context.

DAP was administered individually as any other self-reported type of survey. DAP is an assessment instrument that contain forty (40) concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. DAP consists of the 8 individual asset categories grouped in 4 external, and 4 internal categories. DAP can generate scoring of each of individual assets as well as a total assets score category.

Researchers from Search Institute, in their effort to identify variables of a strength based approach to healthy development have been engaged in designing the framework of "development assets" (Benson 2006). According to them, "development assets" are "building blocks" that all young people needs, in order to grow up healthy and successfully.

Therefore, DAP questionnaire was selected to assess the actual status and then to monitor the development of these assets through time, with the same targeted youths within their schools. Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) was used as a survey tool with young people to understand their perceptions about the external and internal assets in their community in 2 different moments in time (Time 1 first measurements cohort on 2011 and Time 2 second measurements cohort on 2014). During the research design stages, it was envisioned to use DAP as a “before” and “after” measurement tool.

By doing so, it was intended to be able to establish an initial-baseline level in terms of development assets and then be able to track change over time. It was anticipated that this tool could provide meaningful information in terms of articulating the impact that the 3 years programme intervention that has been implemented with targeted youths within the selected schools in Elbasan, had achieved.

During the first cohort of measurements that took place in 2011, DAP was considered to be appropriate for such purposes, as it was designed to be a longitudinal study measurement tool, performed twice with the same children in the same schools. DAP was supposed to involve repeated measurements and observations of the same variables over long periods of time, even more than 3 years.

As such, it was suggested to be appropriate for this kind of longitudinal research study. Anyway, it was very difficult to link these changes to any particular intervention within selected schools, therefore, a more rigorous research design, employing qualitative methods was needed. Additional, qualitative methods as Focus Groups Discussion has been used to understand better trends, patterns and children’s perspectives on the DAP scores during the second measurement in Elbasan area. Findings and learning from this study will enable future researchers and professionals while designing interventions and programming to understand if and how, “non-formal education” interventions employing life-skills curricula methodologies, are contributing in strengthening assets to help young people improve internal and external conditions in order to have better resilience and reach their full adulthood potential.

### **2.3-Sampling strategy**

The overall sampling strategy that has been used in all the measurement in this report was designed to enable us to understand the actual level of assets for children and youths in a given community at a particular moment. In Elbasan area, a random sample of children and youths aged 12 to 18 was selected. It was anticipated that by this sample methodology, we would have been able to provide children’s perspectives on changes in their community after using “non-formal education” interventions and life-skills curricula within their schools.

The main instrument used to collect quantitative data was DAP (Development Assets Profile). To accomplish this study, around 300 youths has been engaged twice in answering DAP survey questions: once during the first cohort of measurement in 2011 and then after 3 years, during the second cohort of measurements that took place during November –December, 2013. DAP is a self-report assessment instrument standardized for Albanian young people, 11-18 years of age, consisting of 58 questions used to create a profile around the “development assets” of those

youths.

As well, the qualitative component consisting of in-depth student interviews and focus group discussions were completed with different participating youths in Elbasan area, to help determine if designed non-formal education interventions did facilitate youth asset development.

#### **2.4-DAP Scoring Methods**

On each occasion when the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) was administered, participating youths were required to answer fifty-eight questions by selecting from a simple four-point response scale for all its items (Not at all or Rarely / Sometimes / Often/ Always). Questions that were answered with “not at all or rarely” receive a score of zero.

Those questions that were answered as “somewhat or sometimes” were scored with a score of one. A score of two was used if the young person selected the “often” choice. Finally, a score of three was given if youths selected “always.”

The assessment yielded quantitative scores for each of the eight asset categories and was considered to be a useful descriptive tool. As mentioned earlier, the survey items can be grouped and interpreted according to eight assets’ categories (1.support, 2. empowerment, 3. boundaries and expectations, 4. constructive use of time, 5. commitment to learning, 6. positive values, 7. social competencies and 8. positive identity), by providing in this way useful information on the state of development assets among youth in Elbasan area. Scoring levels include “low,” “fair,” “good,” and “excellent.”

The eight asset category scores were compiled and categorized into “levels” as follows: Low=0-14, Fair=15-20, Good=21-25 and Excellent=26-30.

These levels were also used for the “external” and “internal” categories. The “total” score as by categories used the following levels: Low=0-29, Fair=30-40, Good=41-50 and Excellent=51-60.

The assessment was administered in the field by a team of researchers, composed by 5 students of the Faculty of Education in “Aleksander Moisiu” University of Elbasan. The data drawn from the DAP assessment instrument was later analysed and interpreted as by the stipulated guidelines of Search Institute. It took on average 50 minutes to administer DAP with young people – this time includes not only completion of DAP survey by youth but also a warm up exercise and instruction provided at the beginning of the process.

Results from Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) questionnaire, were entered into a Microsoft Excel spread-sheet according to eight asset categories scores as well as the internal, external, and total scores. After screening for validity and recoding any problematic responses, DAP surveys data has been scored and then analysed using Excel according to each asset in each category.

### **3-Research Questions and Indicators**

The purpose of this mixed methods triangulation design study was to explore how “non-formal education” interventions and life-skills curricula affects youth’s overall level of Developmental Assets. DAP survey measurements are carried out to measure well-being and assets in children and youths. Quantitative data were obtained by using a pre and post assessment.

Specifically, the Developmental Asset Profile (DAP) was used to determine the impact of “non-formal education” interventions and life-skills curricula” in the overall levels of developmental assets experienced by targeted children and youths.

Additionally, detailed research questions was developed based on composition of several youth well-being indicators as by stipulated DAP guidance described in the table 1: Additional Research Questions – DAP Indicators.

In this table, additional research questions are framed as indicators with a specific definition and are linked consequently with a detailed description of the “Developmental Asset Framework” related to each of the assets. Developmental Asset Profile (DAP) was used to determine if “non-formal education” employing life-skills curricula methodologies had increased the overall levels of developmental assets experienced by targeted youths.

#### **3.1-DAP Research Participants Demographics**

Table 2 gives a more in-depth description of the participants by sharing demographic data, desegregated by ethnicity groups and gender. For more information please see Table 2 - DAP Research Participant Demographics – Gender and Ethnicity, at the end of this article. The quantitative research sample included a total of 603 youths that has been engaged in the DAP survey in Albania. Specifically, as noted in the chart below, from 603 young people that filled out DAP survey, 380 were females (63% of the youths engaged) and 223 (37%) of them were males.

Of the 603 youths, only 7.5% of the young people engaged belong to ethnic minority groups, such as Roma and/or Gypsy. The majority of this population has been reached out during the second cohort of measurement, where 24 Roma and Gypsy youths was engaged. Only 9 youths from minority groups was reached during the first cohort in Elbasan area. As noted in the table 2, a total number of 33 other young people (9 during the first cohort of measurements and 24 during the second cohort of measurements) of this community were reached in Elbasan areas.

It should be mentioned that in these areas was very difficult to involve more young people because of their nomadic nature.

As well, difficulties in involving those youths in the study are connected with a lack of adequate statistics and demographic data regarding these communities in the respective authorities and state structures. Therefore, in terms of most vulnerable children, the “Snow Ball” sample methodology was used to reach out and include those belonging to those communities in this study.

Actually, we need to mention here that many of the children that were reached during the first cohort of measurements were impossible to be reached again during the second cohort of measurement, which happened 3 years later. Therefore, it was decided to identify and select new youths belonging to these categories, that was latter on engaged in non-formal education initiatives, to make sure that a representative sample of children and youths from these communities is included in the survey. The table 3 summarizes the age demographic composition of the DAP quantitative survey sample. As we can notice, during the first cohort of measurements most of the children were from 11 to 14 years of age.

Actually during the second cohort of measurement, which happened 3 years later, children's age grow to be between 15 to 18 years old. This is e a very important demographic component that should be taken under consideration during data analysis and interpretation. For more information please see Table 3 - DAP Research Participant Demographics – Age, at the end of this article.

## **4-Quantitative Results**

### **4.1-Discussions and Results**

Some of the most significant findings will be explained below. Surprisingly, form the first measurement cohort T1 to the second one T2, the results of the total DAP scores went down rather than an expected increase. As noted in the table 4, the total assets score in development assets profile was 44 during the first cohort of measurements T1 and it actually decreased to be 40, during the second cohort of measurements T2. We can notice, as well, that during the first cohort, 58% of children scored 'good' and 17% scored 'excellent'; whereas at the second cohort, 41% scored 'good' and 14% scored 'excellent'.

In the table 4 below, all the DAP results will be presented next to their relevant Research questions and DAP measurement indicators. As well, each of the assets scores that have decreased, is indicated below. See Table 4: Research questions and DAP measurement indicators results, for more information.

As well, in the table 5 below high DAP scores are defined as consistent response of "Often" and "Always" while low DAP scores are defined as consistent response of "Rarely" or "Sometimes". Actually, on each occasion that the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) was administered, the data generally showed high positive responses with children reporting high scores.

Even if DAP scores slightly decreased during the second cohort of measurements, trends from qualitative data gathered suggest that children have been reporting an increased quality of well-being since the 2011. See Table 5: DAP Results desegregated by gender, for more information

There was a significant difference between girls and boys on the scores, with higher percentage of girls reporting high DAP scores in comparison to boys.

Therefore, it is a need to desegregate data and analyse separately responses for children depending on their gender and non-formal programme type of interventions could be more focused on these differences.

## 5-Discussion

As mentioned earlier in this article, after the quantitative data obtained through DAP questionnaire was analyzed, during the second cohort of measurements the need to explore farther and validate findings, especially in terms of impact analysis, emerged. Therefore, additional (FGDs) Focus Groups Discussions has been organized to be able to generate qualitative triangulation data on this matter.

After the quantitative analysis of DAP score, the Focus Groups Discussions and the individual interviews was slightly modified to be able to bring some more information on the reasons why DAP scores were lower than 3 years ago.

By matter of facts, there are several factors that could contribute to the lowering of DAP scores and it is unclear as to the precise reason in this context. Different FGDs has been organized with young people that took part in DAP survey, to validate the findings and to explore further the reasons behind DAP scores.

Youths has been presented with the results from the quantitative DAP survey and was asked to validate the quantitative findings (questions like “do you agree with the results?” and “why do you think that your friends are rating this things lower now compared to 3 years ago?” has been asked to them). The value of the discussion resulted in a deeper understanding of children’s and youth’s views about assets in their communities and their ideas has been analyzed together with DAP quantitative data.

During data interpretation stage both qualitative and quantitative findings and various factors have been analyzed together, to better understand DAP scores. There were mentioned several factors that could have contributed to the lowering of DAP scores.

All youths that took part at the DAP survey during the first cohort of measurements, was aged 13-18 years old and after 3 years their age were 16-21 years old. If we consider age, even as a standing alone factor, could be a very significant component in lowering of DAP scores. Actually, research show that older youths tend to be more realistic (and sometimes even much more pessimistic) while assessing and evaluating their own psycho-social reality, therefore their level of satisfaction according to those assets might have decreased.

As far as DAP is a self-report survey it is mostly based on individual perceptions of respondents according to these assets. As young people become more aware of what assets mean to them their self-reporting of internal and external assets have decreased.

Participating youth have perceived a greater sense of deprivation according to their reality and the situation of assets in their community, as a result of their engagement in different non-formal programme type of interventions, aiming mostly at making children and youths more aware around problematic issues and challenges in their realities.

As well, interventions were focused on strengthening assets to enable youngsters to succeed in their life. Therefore, young people have become more aware of what

assets they need, throughout the 3 years of interventions. As well, during the first cohort of measurements when DAP was administered, many youths respondents did not had any chance to “experience the need” for the existence of different assets and their value. As they mention during FGDs, many “developmental assets” was particularly new “concepts” for them.

The administration of the DAP assessment during the first cohort was conducted with children who were subsequently involved in different non-formal education and life-skills type of activities and interventions.

Targeted children since the first measurements had the opportunity to learn and be engaged in different non-formal education type of interventions and life skills curricula. As well, they have been brought together in several working groups within the school. They were engaged in student government structures that were dealing mostly with child-led type of initiatives, addressing services related to their schools, mostly based on the “child friendly school” methodology.

As well, other participating youths have been engaged in “peer educators” groups that have been working mostly on community service related issues – one intervention strategy based on the “life skills” curricula methodology. Additionally, many of them have been largely engaged in different summer activities as youth volunteers and/or as participants.

Therefore, at the second cohort of measurement, even if relevant discussions was held in terms of qualitative methods, it was not possible to connect the DAP findings with any specific programming intervention and/or particular activities.

Anyway, youths admitted that after participating in various “non-formal education” and awareness raising activities, they had a better understanding of the “real meaning” of different assets and therefore they might have perceived a greater sense of deprivation when asked again around them, during the second cohort of DAP measurements. Consequently, deeper understandings of these assets have resulted in lower scores.

As well, to be able to interpret these findings correctly, the fact that the time span between the first cohort of measurements and the second cohort of measurement was approximately 3 years, should be taking under consideration.

Researchers suggest that depending on the intensity of programming to which targeted youths are exposed, even a once a year surveying might be too infrequent to actually pick up positive changes that are occurring closer to the end of a short term project or intervention experience. Without a booster sessions after a project intervention, research suggests that initial gains often dissipate over time.

Thus, if the same targeted youths was surveyed at Time 1 in 2011 and then at Time 2 after 3 years, not immediately after the project intervention occurred, actually, it might be very difficult to see positive change simply because the initial gains eroded over time. Therefore, in this case any kind of conclusions around the effectiveness and the impact of the “non-formal education” type of programming might be irrelevant of incorrect.

Consequently, at the end of the qualitative data gathering process it was generally agreed that it is not possible to make impact analysis, based on the nature of data generated in this regard. Since the first cohort of measurements was conducted, only now tools and sampling guidance are developed on how, when, and with who to administer DAP, by Search Institute. Of course, those sampling guidance could be better utilised to increase the effectiveness of using this measurement tool for longitudinal type of studies, in the future.

## **6-Conclusion**

Even if it was not possible to articulate any impact analysis in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of the “non-formal education” type of interventions, it should be mentioned that actually, on each occasion that the Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) was administered, the data generally showed high positive responses, with children and youth reporting high scores. Therefore, even if there is no opportunity to promote any single “best model” or “right way” for launching and sustaining a school-wide asset building interventions and initiatives, however, certain dynamics appear to be essential.

The fact that the assets that have the lower scores was in the categories of “constructive use of time” “empowerment” and “positive identity” which indicate the need for building further these assets. Therefore, asset based interventions in Albania, generally require a proper representation of all the social systems and voices within the education system and in a larger community scale, always including youths, not only to gather information but also in planning and taking the lead in mobilizing the school and community’s asset-building capacities.

Both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that assets are crucial for the healthy development of youth, regardless of their school environment, community size, geographic region, gender, economic status, race, or ethnicity.

This article summarizes the extent to which Elbasan youths experience the Developmental Assets in two different moments in time. Even if, age is a very important factor in lowering DAP scores; anyway assets have a very strong relation with youth behaviour, resilience components, school and education outcomes and the overall well-being.

As noted earlier in this article, there was a significant difference between boys and girls and children not belonging to any minority groups and those from Roma/ Gypsy minorities on the scores and girls report high DAP scores in comparison to boys. These results triangulated with qualitative results and secondary data reviews are compelling:

The more assets our adolescents have, the better. Youth with high asset levels are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviours (such as violence, school drop-outs, drugs abuse, suicide, etc.), and more likely to engage in thriving behaviours (such as helping others, doing well in school, and taking on leadership roles).

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**Endnotes**

Sources: Council of Europe, Youth policy in Albania, July 2010; Facts about Albania (2009).

According to Benard & Slade, external resource assets are e.g., support from teacher, parents, peers and other community members etc.

According to Benard & Slade, internal assets are e.g., ability to solve problems, self-worthiness and self-esteem or the ability to empathize and connect with others.

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<b>Research Questions - Development Assets Profile Indicators</b>
<b>DAP Total score Indicators</b> - measuring the mean total score within all the asset categories
<p><b>Internal Assets</b> - measuring 20 internal assets that reflect internal values, skills and beliefs that young people need to fully engage with and function in the world around them. This type of wisdom is necessary for young people to make responsible decisions about the present and future measure internal qualities that guide positive choices and foster a sense of confidence, passion, and purpose.</p> <p>This framework includes 4 categories:</p> <p><b>Social Competencies,</b>                      <b>Positive Identity,</b>  <b>Commitment to Learning</b>                <b>Positive Values,</b></p>



Indicator 6 *The strength of <b>empowerment</b> asset category as reported by youth (boys and girls) 12-18 years of age	<b>2. Empowerment</b> —valuing of young people by their community; having opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure.
Indicator 7 *The strength of <b>boundaries and expectations</b> asset category as reported by youth (boys and girls) 12-18 years of age	<b>3. Boundaries and Expectations</b> —Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are "in bounds" and/or "out of bounds."
Indicator 8 The strength of the <b>support</b> asset category as reported by youth 12-18 years of age.	<b>4. Support</b> —Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families, neighbors, and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments.

**Table 2 - DAP Research Participant Demographics – Gender and Ethnicity**

	Elbasan T1		Elbasan T2		<i>Total</i>			
	Total	Female	Total	Female	<i>Total</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male%</i>	<i>Female %</i>
Gender	296	190	307	190	<b>603</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>36.98%</b>	<b>63.02%</b>
Ethnicity	Non-minority	Minority	Non-minority	Minority	<b>Non-minority</b>	<b>Minority</b>	<b>Non-minority %</b>	<b>Minority %</b>
	287	9	283	24	<b>570</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>94.53%</b>	<b>5.47%</b>

**Table 3 - DAP Research Participant Demographics - Age**

<i>Age</i>	<i>Elbasan 1</i>	<i>Elbasan 2</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Total %</i>
11	59	0	59	9.8%
12	50	6	59	9.8%
13	60	6	66	10.9%
14	59	34	93	15.4%
15	18	40	58	9.6%
16	19	62	81	13.4%
17	25	75	100	16.6%
18	6	77	83	13.8%
19	0	5	5	0.8%
20	0	2	2	0.3%
<i>Mean</i>	<b>13.36149</b>	<b>16.3355</b>	<b>14.8485</b>	
<i>Total</i>	<b>296</b>	<b>307</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Table 4: Research questions and DAP measurement indicators results.**

<b>DAP indicators.</b>	<b>Elbasan T1 results</b>	<b>Elbasan T2 results</b>
<b>DAP total assets score indicator:</b> The strengths of the assets in which youth live, learn and work as reported by youth	Total assets score in development assets is “ <b>good</b> ”44 points	Total assets score in development assets is “ <b>fair</b> ” 40 - <b>decreased</b>
	16.9% of children scored excellent in total development assets score	13.7% of children scored excellent in total development assets score - <b>decreased</b>

category as reported by youth 12-18 years of age.	50% of children scored “good” in <b>positive values</b>	33.9% of children scored “good” in <b>positive values - decreased</b>
	17% of children scored “excellent” in <b>positive values</b>	15.5% of children scored “excellent” in <b>positive values - decreased</b>
Indicator 5 *The strength of <b>constructive use of time</b> asset category as reported by youth (boys and girls) 12-18 years of age	Total score in category of <b>constructive use of time</b> is "fair" (17points).	Total score in category of <b>constructive use of time</b> is "fair" (18points).
	17.6% of children scored “good” in <b>constructive use of time</b>	11.1% of children scored “good” in <b>constructive use of time - decreased</b>
	5.4% of children scored “excellent” in <b>constructive use of time</b>	16.6% of children scored “excellent” in <b>constructive use of time</b>
Indicator 6 *The strength of <b>empowerment</b> asset category as reported by youth (boys and girls) 12-18 years of age	Total score in category of <b>empowerment</b> is "good" (21points).	Total score in category of <b>empowerment</b> is "fair" (20points)- <b>decreased</b>
	37.5% of children scored “good” in <b>empowerment</b>	32.2% of children scored “good” in <b>empowerment - decreased</b>
	14.5% of children scored “excellent” in <b>empowerment</b>	12.4% of children scored “excellent” in <b>empowerment – decreased</b>
Indicator 7 *The strength of <b>boundaries and expectations</b> asset category as reported by youth (boys and girls) 12-18 years of age	Total score in category of <b>boundaries and expectations</b> is "good" (25points).	Total score in category of <b>boundaries and expectations</b> is "good" (22points). - <b>decreased</b>
	28.7% of children scored “good” in <b>boundaries and expectations</b>	30.3% of children scored “good” in <b>boundaries and expectations</b>
	54.1% of children scored “excellent” in <b>boundaries and expectations</b>	27% of children scored “excellent” in <b>boundaries and expectations – decreased</b>

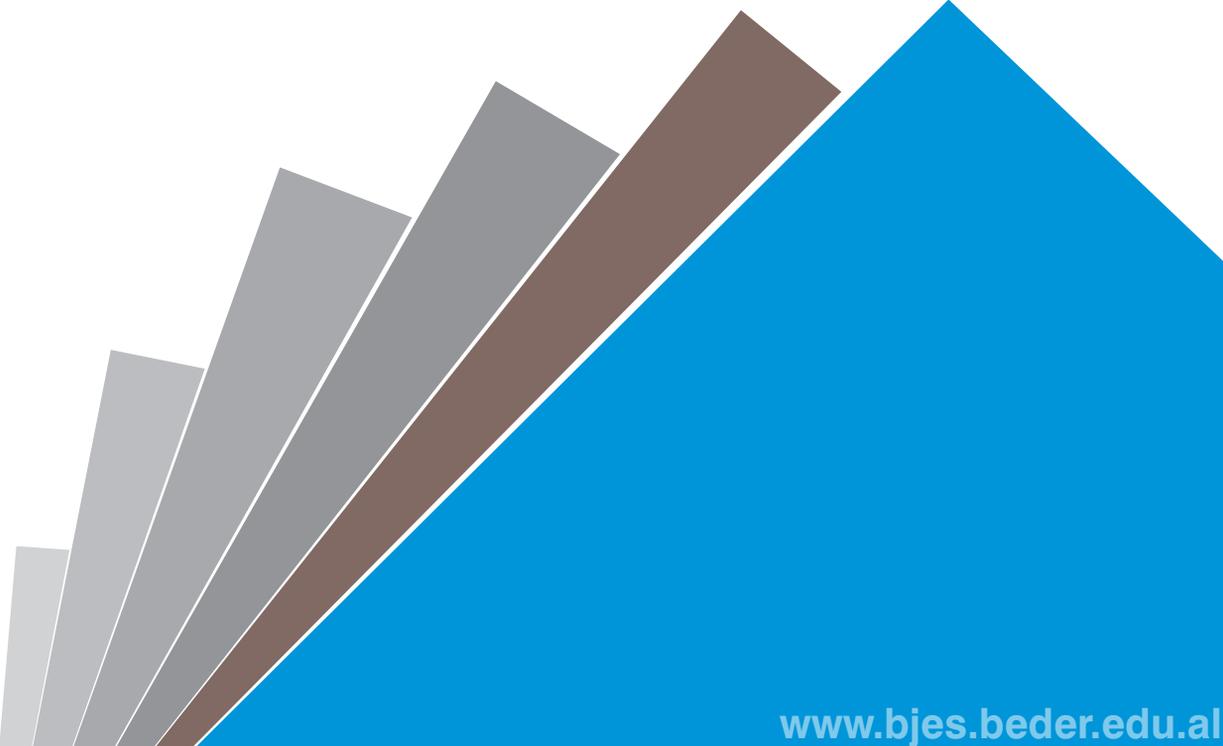
Indicator 8 The strength of the <b>support</b> asset category as reported by youth 12-18 years of age.	Total score in category of <b>Support</b> is "good" (24points).	Total score in category of <b>Support</b> is "good" (21 points). - <b>decreased</b>
	37.8% of children interviewed scored "good" in the category of <b>support</b>	28.7% of children interviewed scored "good" in the category of <b>support - decreased</b>
	45.6% of children interviewed scored "excellent" in the category of <b>support</b>	21.2% of children interviewed scored "excellent" in the category of <b>support - decreased</b>

Table 5: DAP Results desegregated by gender.

Group	% High DAP scores	% Low DAP scores
All Girls	74.0	26.0
All Boys	65.0	35.0







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