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ÁREA DE LITERATURAS DE LÍNGUA INGLESA

**FRAGMENTED MESSAGES:  
A READING OF L.P. HARTLEY'S NOVEL  
*THE GO-BETWEEN***



Dissertação submetida à Universidade Federal do Rio Grande  
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Leslie Poles Hartley (1895-1972)

Man is a rope, fastened between animal and Superman – a rope over an abyss: A dangerous going-across, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous shuddering and staying-still.

Nietzsche  
(Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Part III)



When someone comes from a trip he has something to tell.

(The Storyteller, Walter Benjamin)

Neither courage nor fear would save us.  
(Gerontion, T.S. Eliot)

## RESUMO

A intenção deste trabalho é efetuar uma leitura do romance *O Mensageiro*, do autor inglês L.P. Hartley, na forma de uma jornada ao *país estrangeiro* do passado do protagonista-narrador. Tal leitura é uma espécie de *convite aceito* para a viagem, que esteticamente deixa sugestões sob a forma de truques, fragmentos de mensagens veladas, expressões ambíguas, sombras, vazios no caminho. Todavia, *Mercúrio*, o mensageiro dos antigos deuses, o protetor dos viajantes, o trapaceiro, é agora um ser indistinto, cuja imagem e função passou por grandes transformações ao longo da viagem até a modernidade. Guerras, restos de experiências traumáticas coletivas e pessoais são recuperadas na rota movediça do narrador melancólico, sob a forma de substância própria para a narração. Nietzsche e Walter Benjamin são companheiros na trajetória, provendo o suporte teórico básico para a viagem.

## ABSTRACT

The intention of the present work is to make a reading of the novel *The Go-Between*, by the British writer, L.P. Hartley, in the form of a journey through the strange country of the protagonist/ narrator's own past. Such reading comes as *an accepted invitation* to make the trip together with the narrator, who aesthetically leaves suggestions under the form of tricks, fragments of veiled messages, ambiguous expressions, shadows, gaps on his way. However, Mercury, the messenger of the ancient Gods – the protector of the travelers, the trickster is now is an indistinct being, whose image and function has undergone great transformations during the journey until modern times. Wars, remains of traumatic collective and personal experiences, are visualized in form of substantial fragmented material proper for narrative throughout the unstable route of the melancholy protagonist. Nietzsche and Walter Benjamin provide the basic theoretical support throughout the route.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

It was after the Seminar about the Contemporary British Drama in 2002/2 that I made my option for *The Go-Between* – a novel by L.P. Hartley – as the object of my thesis. The present work is an attempt at making a thematic reading of the novel, focusing on the aspects that converge to the idea of personal and social *losses* and *fragmentation*.

The opening line of the novel has become famous: *The Past is a foreign country: they do things differently there*<sup>1</sup>. In fact, it synthesizes the whole atmosphere of the novel and the feelings of the protagonist, Mr. Leo Colston, the elderly well-dressed English man, who narrates the story. Among such feelings are: isolation, non-recognition, melancholia, rupture and absence of a meaningful centre of consciousness. In his own perception: – He was *vanquished*. At this point, he starts a gradual journey into the events that marked his life forever during the Summer of 1900, recovering the experience *not registered in words at the time*, aesthetically represented by the sudden *interruption* of his notes inside an old diary.

Among some other reasons to justify my choice of *The Go-Between*, one of them needs a specific mention. It refers to the way the process got there. The first contact I had with the alluded story was not through the original text of the novel. Instead, it happened through its adaptation to the cinema *medium* successfully made by Harold Pinter<sup>2</sup>, the English contemporary playwright, whose work is greatly recognized by his *comedy of menace* and the artfulness with which he explores the uncertainties of reality. Pinter's aesthetic treatment of the text emphasizes the ambivalences hidden behind the assumed notions of truth that permeate discourses, human actions, and the silences.

Because of such intentional effect, I was taken by the disagreeable, uncomfortable sensation of reaching a quicksand, an unsafe space, where much was posed, but where something of the substantial matter was still covered like in the middle of a *miasma*<sup>3</sup>. It was after this initial experience as spectator I felt a certain

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<sup>1</sup> Hartley, L.P. **The Go-Between**. Prologue. p.9.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Pinter's work on *The Go-Between* is better detailed in Chapter 3.

<sup>3</sup> *miasma* – A mass of air that is dirty and smells unpleasant (frequently remitting to the idea of illness). Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary.

need to go deeper into the story in search of solving its enigmas, its unstable truths and its open spaces which seemed to possess a power of its own: an oppressive absence (or, should that be posed as presence?). As certain, there was only this attractive invitation to intrusion, as an ancient unsolved Sphinx's enigma, whose act of deciphering could detain my own redemption. I was moved by desire. The very own desire for narrative, as the emperor by Sherazade's. The first element of a good narrative had been achieved. I was involved.

The abyss was definitely there on the narrator's view impeding the crossing, installed between the two opposite extremes of the protagonist's life. The absent presence of the abyss was so clear to draw as it was difficult to transform it in language proper for narration. So, I invite you (my virtual possible reader) to have a look at the schematic chart<sup>4</sup> I prepared to help us in the crossing from one side to the other of the empty space in order to reach the foreign country, where Leo's life was kept prisoner. The absent presence functioned as a suggestion of some unspeakable drama.

Inevitably hypnotized by the valley of shadows of the unwritten text, of the unstable terrain of ambiguities and ruptures of the text, I accepted the invitation to visit the *chiarousco* that constituted Leo's past life. Whatever was hidden there, it comprehended a chronological existence of half a century (1900-1950), time enough for great changes inside and outside the characters.

Simultaneously, I associated that *absent presence* to a successful observation included by Walter Benjamin in his essay *The Storyteller*. The object of its analysis was the deterioration of the act of storytelling and Benjamin alludes to the phenomenon as a result of a process of modernization in human society and, mainly, because the words do not seem to transmit the intensity of human experience. Benjamin's standpoint is that great traumatic passages (e.g. just after wars), are (at least, partially) responsible for the reduction of publications in post-war times. So, the central texts to support the present reading are Walter Benjamin's *The Storyteller* and *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, but there are other Benjaminian texts whose illumination would be equally of great help.

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<sup>4</sup> See the schematic table at Attached A.

In my perception, there was the need of identifying a philosophical vision of the world of modernity which could support, though not explain the atmosphere of the literary work. That came nearly as a natural link, after reading some apocalyptic works by Frederic Nietzsche, the thunderous prophet, whose words influenced the modern conceptualization of the human existence in a profound way. To tell the truth, in many ways *Zarathustra* came to cross Benjamin's pathways as the ideal company to *Angelus Novus*, as both foresaw turbulent passages ahead.

Therefore, the basic questions that made me read the novel were: – What could have caused the protagonist to undergo such an impressive loss of *vital energy*? What could be hidden in this *vaccum* that could be understood as a "passage"? In what forms could the social-historical environment of the time be related to the traumatic interruption in Mr. Colston's diary? What could be the message metaphorically held by that deceived go-between? What represented the act of writing or its suppression? What is the role played by language in the context of the story? And finally, in what sense the emphasis of filmic version differs from the novel?

Finally, there came *Mercury (or Hermes)*, the ancient protector of the travelers, of the passages, the porter of messages of the Classical Gods, of the underground. The problem with him is that his present role is of undefined nature. His ancient powers were greatly lost toward the modern times. But moved by a trick, a typical hermetic characteristic of him, I finally accepted the implicit invitation "to take the last bus" in search of the fragments lost on the way. The first chapter is, then, an account of the theoretical presuppositions, starting with the definition of terms such as *fragmentation, loss and melancholy*.

Therefore, it was among the words of the novel, aesthetically distributed in a net of human relationships temporarily displaced, as advocated by Georg Lukács that I turned in order to solve the enigmas, to fulfill the silences and to give human dimension to the narrator's discourse. Thus, it was there, in the genre of the novel that I found old fragments of historical events, social behaviours and personal dramas of the protagonist, pieces of messages lost on the way. By comparison, it was also possible to "meet" and identify other narrators and speaking voices, of the literary period, which left their own messages about the difficulty of knowing the truth, the deterioration of human relationships and the complexities of human self-

experience. In the company of Mr. Colston, they too represent common desolate human figures of the same literary period. That is the constitution of Chapter I.

Another important reason to work on the novel *The Go-Between* consisted of a personal desire to study the work of a name of the English Literature of the Twentieth Century, relatively unknown among Brazilians, in spite of the great elegance and sensibility of his writings, either in the literary or the critical field. Therefore, I took my own lack of knowledge as part of the justification for my selection. Chapter II refers to the exploration of Leslie Pole Hartley's life and works. At the end of the same chapter there is a brief anticipation of the plot that will provide elements for the exploration of the novel and the movie adaptation.

The third chapter comes as the result of my reading of the novel *The Go-Between*. As a complementation, in the same part, there are some comments about the film-script by Harold Pinter, as well as some aspects of my perception over the filmic version of the story.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the present reading is obviously just one among many other possible ways to approach the plurality of readings offered by a great literary work. Thus, it will not be considering one specific theoretical perspective, as psychological or mythical or, better yet, a hermeneutical interpretation of its enigmas. In my view any partial approach would not be worth the journey. In spite of this particular (polyvalent) view, there was a constant preoccupation in not transposing the limits of a scientific writing. The perils of making a too subjective reading of the novel was always present. The result is a collage made of chaotic images, joined together in an effort of extracting some possible meaning to the empty space, when approaching the end of the *voyage*.

Thus a complementary, if not necessary comment, is that the whole idea of the work was conceived on two premises: first, the vision of a journey, with all the elements and imagery involved and second, the awareness that such vision is formed of uncountable fragments, whose apparent chaotic desolation and non-recognition is part of the theme and perspective of the enterprise, until it comes to a certain point of the way.

Before starting the journey, I suppose, there is the need of a little break to remind my travel companion (and reader) that, as in a real travel the next image coming into the angle of our vision sometimes seems strange. It is only within the

right distance from the object that may provide a better understanding of the whole scene. Whether the message is valid, that depends on the *go-between* on duty.

So, let *Mnemosyne* look after Leo's memories, and *Mercury*, *he* of the winged feet, join *Angelus Novus* to help us through the shadows. There comes *Zarathustra* descending from the top of the mountain to rescue us all. The three of them seem to be carrying messages for the modern narrators and readers. But that is a better subject for some final considerations.

## 2 CHAPTER I – PERSPECTIVES OF THE JOURNEY

### 2.1 The Beginning of the Journey: Walter Benjamin & the *Angelus Novus*

Whenever we go on a trip, we carry our luggage along. In it, we have the tools that will make the journey easier. In order to help us in this investigation of the foreign country of the aesthetic past of a literary construct, the perceptive mind of Walter Benjamin is the first element to be consulted.

My present reading of the novel *The Go-Between* under Walter Benjamin's thoughts depends, on the greatest part, on two images:

- a) the angel's vision of History/Human Culture and Benjamin's melancholy perception of the relation of past things and human behaviour while referring to new forms of culture;
- b) the crisis of the modern narrator whose act of communicating his (or another's life) experience was interrupted due to the traumatic confluence of those events politically represented by the Two Great World Wars simultaneously as those of the personal dramas. In both cases, death was waiting as a constant, absent presence.

If the intersection of those two lines or segments of life, the inner world and the outer world could be synthesized in one single word, that should possibly be "Passages". The expression gave title to one of Benjamin's works (*Passagenwerk*, the work of the passages).<sup>5</sup> The term was employed by the author, as he seems to appreciate the idea of something between, still in formation, not clear enough to be seen one way or the other. For different reasons, the protagonist of *The Go-Between* (as it is conveyed in the title), is submitted to many forms of passages on his journey through life. This is represented by the philosopher as a kind of flashlight.

Walter Benjamin's intellectual production, mostly made of essays and aphorisms, is still nowadays of great interest, no matter the subject of our search. For the purpose here included some essays were privileged, nor without a sense of shame for the omission of the other ones. Among them are: "The Storyteller" and

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<sup>5</sup> MISSAC, Pierre. **Passagem de Walter Benjamin**. Trad. Lilian Escorel. Iluminuras. 1987.

“Theses on the Philosophy of History”, as they can add a new dimension to the historical setting/ background to be further analyzed.

The first essay to be introduced is “The Storyteller – Reflections on the Works of Nicolai Leskov”<sup>6</sup> as it considered as having the major aspects of interest in this reading of *The Go-Between*. These points of Benjamin’s conceptions about the storyteller involve: 1. The origins of the storyteller; 2. The idea of a storyteller as one who comes from a travel and, consequently, has something to tell to his audience and counsel (or wisdom); 3. The crisis of the modern narrator under the process of a growing introspection; 4. Capitalism and the traumatic experience of wars behind the phenomenon; 5. The modern man facing Death.

As its title states, the essay is a reflection about the role (and struggle) of the contemporary narrator. Benjamin’s standpoint is that the narrator has lost “the ability to exchange experiences”<sup>7</sup> to a point that Benjamin foresees that the art of storytelling was “coming to an end” right at the first paragraph, what – fortunately - has not happen up to now. According to Benjamin the art of storytelling, a kind of “craftsman work”, has been losing its “value” and changing its ancient features in modern days. He includes Capitalism among those operative leading forces: “The time once spent in accumulating and placing the layers of the precious product of experience of telling stories has passed” as well as the those human arts that tried to imitate the “patient process of Nature”, such as miniatures, ivory carvings, stones perfectly polished and engraving. He refers to Paul Valéry’s words with respect to the modern use of time: “time is past in which time did not matter. The modern man no longer works at what cannot be abbreviated”.<sup>8</sup> As an example, Benjamin makes reference to the short-story genre as a successful abbreviation of storytelling.

Another reason to this decreasing value of experience is the traumatism caused by war: “With the First World War a process began to turn apparent which has not halted since then. Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent – not richer, but poorer in communicable experience?”<sup>9</sup>

Here, Walter Benjamin emphasizes the real dimension of human suffering. By the use of the binary opposition of richer/poorer he suggests what should be the ideal

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<sup>6</sup> BENJAMIN, Walter. **Illuminations**. p.83.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p.83.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.93.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 84.



position of someone who had come from a war: a survivor, whose major acquisition should be wisdom, in the form of a broadened experience of life and by extension the possibility to pass it on (communication). In other words, he, who could become a porter of new messages and a future storyteller is moved in the inverse way, introspectively.

The modern man is then described as someone who has no counsel to others nor to himself, as the first step to reach this point is through language itself: "After all, counsel is less an answer to a question than a proposal concerning the continuation of a story which is just unfolding. "To seek this counsel one would first have to be able to tell the story".<sup>10</sup> In this sense, Benjamin writes that people imagine the storyteller "as someone who has come from afar" and quotes the German people: "When someone goes on a trip, he has something to tell about." This "something" can be of practical importance, or can be of moral value or even a "proverb or maxim". In any case, "the storyteller is a man who has a counsel for his readers".<sup>11</sup> The relation between the "old-fashion ring" of giving counsel and the decreasing communicability of experience is a job to be developed in Chapter 3, where the characters attitudes are supposed to be in correspondence with Benjamin's words.

Another topical aspect of the essay for the development of the analytical reading ahead is Benjamin's suggestion of the two original groups of precursors of the art of storytelling: "the resident tiller of the soil and the other, the trading seaman"<sup>12</sup>. In them, Benjamin visualizes the origin of the storytelling under the "intimate interpenetration of the two archaic types, particularly during the Middle Ages in their trade structure":

The resident master craftsman and the traveling journeymen worked together in the same rooms; and every master had been a traveling journeyman before he settled down in his home town or somewhere else. If peasants and seamen were past masters of storytelling, the artisan class was its university. In it was combined the lore of faraway places, such as much-traveled man brings home, with the lore of the past, as it best reveals itself to natives of a place.

In this image, the peasant who spent his life ploughing the ground up is the porter of one kind of experience, that of tradition, of the past as a solid centre of references to pass on. Possibly, we could suggest it to be defined as the vertical, the

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<sup>10</sup> BENJAMIN, W. *Illuminations. The Storyteller*. p.86.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p.86.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*. p.85.

synchronic kind of knowledge. On the other hand, the traveler carries another kind of knowledge brought by the news he brings, the places he has visited. He is responsible for the knowledge of the present. We could say, the horizontal, the diachronic kind of knowledge.

According to Benjamin, it is from both these ancient types that the modern narrator descends, as they came to work at the same places as artisans, interchanging their stories. Benjamin also understands that the art of storytelling is reaching its end “because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out”.<sup>13</sup> Even so, the philosopher locates the decline of the art of storytelling as having its beginning with the invention of the print, when the novels disseminate. His standpoint is that the storytelling is based on the epic side of truth, or “the wealth of the epic” which differs considerably from what is “the stock in trade of the novel”: “What differentiates the novel from all other forms of prose literature – the fairy tale, the legend, even the novella – is that it neither comes from oral tradition nor goes into it”.<sup>14</sup> Walter Benjamin concludes saying that “The storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale”.<sup>15</sup>

Another aspect of the essay refers to the distinction established between information, when contrasted with those of narration of a story:

The value of information does not survive the moment in which it was new. It lives only at that moment; it has surrendered to it completely and explained itself to it without losing any time. A story is different. It does not expend itself. It preserves and concentrates its strength and is capable of releasing it even after a long time.<sup>16</sup>

This idea will be helpful when analyzing the relation between Leo’s old diary and the present narration of an old story.

Benjamin also points to another reason why storytelling is declining, which is the way modern men is faces Death. According to his words, “the general consciousness” related the subject underwent a process of changing, whose starting point can be traced back to some centuries ago. However, it has accelerated since the nineteenth century. On account of “hygienic and social reasons” the bourgeois

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 87.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.87.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.90.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.90

society together with private and public institutions adopted new procedures whose implementation transformed death in a “less vivid and omnipresent” body, as if under the new face it were possible for people “to avoid the sight of the dying”.<sup>17</sup> In the novel, such understanding will be perfectly fit to explain the dry form of transmitting to the reader the hygienic approach to the subject under the form of a suicide and the collective war during the two wars.

Under the influence of a brief digression, I ask permission to bring into the text, the image of a funeral extracted from one of those Greek tragedies to establish a counterpoint with the aseptic image of a modern funeral, on which “dying has been pushed further and further out of the perceptual world of the living”. There is a scene on the tragedy by Euripedes, *The Trojan Women*, in which Hecuba, Priamo’s wife, has to mourn in loneliness for her dead grandson, Astyanax. The boy, had been horribly killed with all men and boys of Troy, in order to avoid any possibility of future reaction against the victorious Greeks. The scene shows the little body being brought into the scene. His grandmother is left alone with the dead body. The sequence of the mourning is shown through an extremely long soliloquy, during which she keeps touching the body, the hair, the hands, exposing her grief in mixed images of past jokes and destroyed hopes related to a great happy future. In the next quotation, there is a brief part of Hecuba’s grief,

[...] O hands, how sweet the likeness ye retain of his father, and yet ye limp in you sockets before me!” Dear mouth, so often full of words of pride, death hath closed thee, and thou has not kept the promise thou dist make, when nestling in my robe, “Ah, mother mine, many a lock of my hair will cut off for thee, and thy tomb will lead my troops of friend a fond farewell of thee.”But now “tis not thy hand that buries me, but I, on whom is come old with loss of home and children, am burying thee, a tender child untimely slain, am burying thee. Ah! Me Those kisses numberless, the nurture that I gave to thee, those sleepless nights – they are lost. What shall the bard inscribe upon thy tomb about thee? [...]<sup>18</sup>

As it is perceived, in the tragedy, death is vividly omnipresent, with all the suffering and horrid aspect it involves, as part of life.

Once more, Walter Benjamin’s vision is profoundly in accordance with a real passage, a change in human modern culture. His words had not lost its topicality, and this proves that the phenomenon was perceived at the right angle: “Today

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.94.

<sup>18</sup> BENTON, William. *Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripedes. Aristophanes*. p.280.

people live in rooms that have never been touched by death, dry dwellers of eternity, and when their end approaches they are stowed away in sanatoria or hospitals by their heirs"<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, in spite of the effort in shading the image of death, the modern man could not avoid the regularity of its appearance and both are points to be rethought in chapter 3.

One more point to be explored ahead refers to a feature directly related to the narrator-protagonist in the story. It involves the imaginative power, as intuition and creativity, an active presence during Leo's young life. That source of knowledge or power had been losing its importance for a long time, more precisely since the advent of the Modern Age, with its discoveries and scientific advances. However, a new approach to the old kind of knowledge became object of research and the subject of many artistic representation by the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th, its revival was made through influential studies about myth, such as *The Golden Bough*, by Sir Georg Frazer, who had a great influence on T.S. Eliot works later on. Frazer's images were not only represented in Eliot's poems, but also in *Murder in the Cathedral*, a drama.

But it was not only myth which came to light, in a nostalgic revival of the past. Mysticism and other forms of the so-called old arts as alchemy, astrology, magic also brought into the scene a certain melancholy related to the old vision of the world<sup>20</sup>. That was also a power apparently lost in the traumatic passages. What has Benjamin to say about the subject?

That old time when the stones in the womb of the earth and the planets at celestial heights were still concerned with the fate of men, and not today when both in the heavens and beneath the earth everything has grown indifferent to the fates of the sons of men and no voice speaks to them from anywhere, let alone does their bidding.<sup>21</sup>

None of the undiscovered planets play any part in horoscopes any more, and there are a lot of new stones, all measured and weighed and examined for their specific weight and their density, but they no longer proclaim anything to us, nor do they bring us any benefit. To conclude the idea he states: "Their time for speaking with men is past".

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p.94.

<sup>20</sup> Presented in a next section.

<sup>21</sup> BENJAMIN, W. *Illuminations*. p.97.

And so we came to the vision of history as a whole succession of facts and changes and comings and goings. The subject has deserved many essays by Benjamin, and other hundred of pertinent studies about his words. However, among the diversity of approaches at my disposition, I will choose two aspects of his *Theses on the Philosophy of History* for discussion and I will connect them with some statements included in his essay about culture and violence. However, as a first step, I propose to borrow Jeanne Marie Gagnebin's pertinent thoughts about Benjamin. The following ideas are included in her book about History and Narration in W. Benjamin works.<sup>22</sup>

One of the points whose importance attracted the author's attention, was that which connects History with Narration, not only in the cultural world plan, but also in the personal. Let us start, here, with the second, the personal. Gagnebin highlights the relevance of narration to the subject's constitution: "This has always been perceived as a process of repossession of the past – which otherwise would fall into forgetfulness and silence"<sup>23</sup> To complement her thought, the French philosopher, makes some comments about the act of registering the experience to avoid its disappearance from memory (and, consequently, its death).

To establish a connection with the modern forms of keeping an event alive, she points to some ancient forms of keeping the links with past events. It is Ulysses's wife who is referred to, as an example. Penelope's attitude to keep faithful to the her husband (and metaphorically, to the past) by using an artful trick is nowadays used in different forms, although containing the same significance. The art of collecting is one of the forms to keep the remembrances at sight.

Another image remits to the hero of the *Odyssey* itself, Ulysses. Gagnebin refers to Horkheimer and Adorno's work *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, in which the authors compare Ulysses's journey to that of the constitution of the subject. The "delays" on the route are seen as occasional impediments, gaps on the route and blank spaces. So it happened when the winds of Eolos, the mermaid and other events delayed Ulysses' journey back home for many years (and, symbolically, the trip to his essential self). So, narration as well as other tricks of the kind is of crucial importance to evade death. That aspect will be later explored in the novel as well as that of the collector's activity.

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<sup>22</sup> GAGNEBIN, Jeanne Marie. **História e Narração em W. Benjamin**. 1994.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p.3. [My translation].

With relation to History of culture itself, I ask permission to bring into the scene, a special kind of messenger, that one who comes from above: – Paul Klee’s *Angelus Novus*, the paint described by Walter Benjamin, in *Theses on the philosophy of History*. Whatever the angelical messenger carries in his staring eyes comes as a complementing vision of the remains of human culture. His vision represents the apocalyptical necessary link with the ongoing journey, with the absent-presence of wars, and victorious and losers in the background. Two aspects are referential under the *Angelus Novus* perspective: 1. What the angel possibly sees; 2. How, if ever possible, is such vision passed on as message.

Nowadays time is an expensive product. No one invests on it if not under the perspective of profit, as we have already been reminded. In addition, the same frame that brings ideas such as those of time connected with its resulting profit and relating both to the vision of an ascending line toward unlimited progress, there in the same confluence it is possible to visualize the deposit of their ruins. It comes from a direct relation to what Benjamin’s focuses through the *Angelus Novus* staring eyes.

Benjamin’s argumentation makes reference to the relation between History and the form on which its transmission is made from one generation to the next. Benjamin refers to the inevitable historical empathy with the victorious participants of the events. The comment is made after Benjamin’s considerations about a hypothetical resuscitation of Carthage. According to Benjamin’s ideas it would bring more sadness than euphoria, because it would bring a whole set of suffering represented by the experience of the loser which is actually absent from the historical traditional standpoint. All the rulers, he says, “are the heirs of those who conquered before them”. Consequently, “whoever has emerged victorious participates to this day of the triumphal procession in which the present rulers step over those who are lying prostrate”.<sup>24</sup>

The above-mentioned images are pointed out because the absent presence of some losers to whom no voice is given in traditional representation of History finds other means of re-possessing and representing the experience of personal and social losses.

Under Benjamin’s understanding of the relation between the historical episodes and its re-actualization from different perspectives, it is possible to visualize

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<sup>24</sup> BENJAMIN, Walter. *Illuminations*. p.256.

a silent and out of place narrator, who was also a carrier of messages, in a capitalist society whose time can not be invested in the long narratives of an ex-mariner, ex-craftsman, who have no audience nor substance to pass on.

So, leaving the vision of the angel for a while , but still following Benjamin’s counsels of perceiving the experience from diverse angles, let us make another stop. This time not to look into the clouds, but to climb the Olympus, where Mercury, another messenger, has a diverse view of mankind.

## 2.2 On Hermes / Mercury and Other Messengers

There is something derogatory when we say that somebody is a “go-between”. However, the “go-between” is one of the major representations of the figure of the Messenger, the god Hermes in Greek literature, corresponding to Mercury, in Roman mythology.

Before making specific comments regarding the figure of Hermes or Mercury in mythology, it is important to present the motivation to include him, with his multiple powers, in this already mixed text. In fact, all the above-mentioned terms are related to Leo Colston, the so-called *mercury* of the story, by the idea of a great imagination in opposition to a posterior loss of powers. This is being anticipated in order to avoid the misunderstanding, deviation of the theme of fragmentation or digression within the chapter.

So, in order to give the reading a more coherent structure, the ancient qualities attributed to the deity are present in the sequence, while the contemporary performance (irony<sup>25</sup>) of the god will be commented in the analytical chapter.

Mercury, the Roman denomination for Hermes, is the God who represents the herald of the Olympian Gods in Mythology. He is usually portrayed using a caduceus<sup>26</sup>, symbol of the harmonious conjunction of the opposites. He also has

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<sup>25</sup> For the purpose of the present work, the term IRONY is being employed in the encyclopedic/literal meaning: a contrast between what appears to be and what really is; when the surface meaning is of what one says or writes is the opposite of the intended meaning. (FARRELL, Edmund et al. Arrangement in Literature. Glenview. Illinois. USA: Scott, Foresman and Co. 1982).

<sup>26</sup> Caduceus – The symbolism of the harmony between opposites is derived of the following mythological episode: One day, *Mercury* intervened with its caduceus trying to separate two snakes

winged feet. Mercury is not a pure Olympian God, because he descends from Jupiter (Zeus) and of a nymph, named Maya<sup>27</sup>. For such reason, he is a kind of outsider, who does not belong either to the divine or to the human sphere alone. Mercury is also the deity who transits between two worlds, the one of the alive and that of the dead, as he is the God who takes the dead to Hades.<sup>28</sup> Many mythological passages describe him as the protector of the shepherds and the thieves for having stolen and kept Apollo's cattle. He is the protector of all the travelers, roads and boundaries, the athletes (he was given credit for having invented the foot-racing and boxing) and the merchants<sup>29</sup>. He was given credit for having invented the flute from the carcass of a hollow tortoise, as well.

Mercury is also remembered for being the protector of weight and measures and for his characteristics of cunning and shrewdness. A special emphasis should be given to Mercury's role as protector of Oratory and Literature<sup>30</sup> as well as his primitive attribute of being a phallic god who had numerous affairs with goddesses, nymphs and mortals, with whom he had a great number of children. One of them is Hermaphroditus<sup>31</sup> (also known as Aphroditus) who was conceived after the union of Hermes and Aphrodite. He was an androgynous deity, having the characteristics of both sexes.<sup>32</sup>

According to Otto's study, the denomination Hermes is derived from the expression "he of the stone heap": The primitive element in Hermes is revealed by his very name, which points to cult usages of high antiquity. His pillar stood upon a heap of stones by the wayside, to which every passer-by piously added one. This gave him his name, for there can be no doubt that Hermes means "he of the stone heap." In later times the phallus remained as a characteristic of the stone pillars of Hermes, and this too points to a very ancient conception. The power of procreation, as shall soon appear, is by no means basic to Hermes' character. But we know of the phallic form in the sphere of the Titanic divinities, where it denotes a very massive aspect of primal ideology.<sup>33</sup>

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during a fight. As a result, the snakes twisted themselves around the caduceus. ROLA, S. p.62 – See Attached C and D for picture.(My translation).

<sup>27</sup> HESIOD, *Theogony*, v.938.

<sup>28</sup> Hymn to Hermes. *Himnos Homéricos*. Batracomiomaquia. p.151.

<sup>29</sup> OTTO, Walter. **The Homeric Gods. The Spirit Significance of Greek Religion**. p.104.

<sup>30</sup> Internet. <http://www.pantheon.org/articles/h/Hermes.html>. Access 11/03/03.

<sup>31</sup> Hermaphroditus – See Attached E.

<sup>32</sup> Internet. Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> OTTO, Walter. Ibid. *The Homeric Gods*. Hermes. p.106.



Hermes (and his Roman copy, Mercury) was greatly worshipped by his magical power, for good and for bad luck. It was him, who charmed the hundred-eyed giant Argus with his flute in order to release Io (Zeus lover) from Zeus' jealous wife, Hera. In Homeric Hymns, Hermes is described as using his charms as soon as a toddler in order to trap his brother Apollo. It was by thievery that he once freed Ares from imprisonment.

Doubtlessly, the ancient god who concentrated so many attributes was an operating, agile figure. Otto's standpoint is that Hermes is an active god in all the referred realms. He also emphasizes what he understands as being the underlying thought in the concept of Hermes (and Mercury): "His activity has a special style [...] Petitions are directed to all gods "to give the good", and they are praised as "givers of good", but this formula is applied to Hermes in particular. He is the "friendliest of the gods to men and the most generous giver. But how does he bestow his gifts?"

The scholar completes his thought, saying that

From him comes gain, cleverly calculated or wholly unexpected, but mostly the latter." And "when the gods endowed and decked woman, who was to cause man's fall, it was Hermes who "contrived within her lies and crafty words and deceitful nature". Everything lucky and without responsibility that befalls man is a gift of Hermes. He is the god of jolly and unscrupulous profit. But this involves an obverse: profit and loss belong together. If one man becomes rich in a twinkling, another becomes a pauper in a twinkling. The mysterious god who suddenly puts a treasure trove in a needy man's way, as suddenly makes treasure vanish.<sup>34</sup>

Having the same deity (and still under the name of Mercury) as focus of attention, there is another allusion to be made. It refers to its chemical properties. The chemical substance, whose denomination takes the god's name, Mercury has as its major characteristic the property of being a catalyst converter.

Another reference to the term "mercury" and also to the ancient god, relates it to Chemistry. Such relation will be established in the literary text as Leo Colston, the imaginative young boy, who claims to possess magical powers he mixes many elements to obtain "the good" results he wishes. Anyway, in Chemistry, the element mercury - represented by the symbol **Hg** – is an extremely volatile substance, whose vapors are toxic. It possesses a density that is extremely high for a liquid, *dissolving* gold, silver and lead very easily. Another characteristic of mercury is the *acceleration*

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p.109.

of the process , making the process *faster without changing* itself. The process is a device used in the exhaustion system of motor vehicles *to reduce the damage* caused to the environment. Due to these specific and rich characteristics of the chemical element – that of dissolving very quickly and that of accelerating the processes – mercury is most frequently employed as catalytic converter.<sup>35</sup>

Following the same idea of “catalyzing” and “converting the energy of an environment in something other” it seems possible to approximate the procession of messengers we know from historical, religious and literary texts whose performances involve similar roles. So let us start commenting on the function of the messenger in Literature.

This aspect of the messengers who changes the scenery if introduced to the mixture (as the chemical element, mercury) is perceived if we consider some characters as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*<sup>36</sup> in Tom Stoppard’s most recent re-writing of the roles performed by those two figures in the Shakespearean text, *Hamlet*. The playwright (and later, the movie director) is recognized by by the extraordinary verbal wit and comic treatment of the philosophical issues in his texts. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*, the author, subverts the original Shakespearean text. If in *Hamlet* both characters were nothing else than ordinary characters, functioning as plot devices in order to follow Claudius’s instructions of killing Hamlet. In Stoppard’s version they become the central figures of the story told, as they are ordinary people caught in events they neither can understand nor control. In this ironical inversion, the other characters function as plot devices and will bring the messages to the scene.

In both treatments of the text, Shakespearean or Stoppard’s, the characters of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern function as messengers of the events. They try to perceive the amount of fate or luck that exists in any human being’s action. In a way, the role of any messenger should not be to influence the next action, but the events are subject to the natural law of cause and effect, and so, it appears in literary representation.

Actually, literature is full of these anonymous figures, whose appearances as a matter of fact are frequently ignored or transformed to ridiculous figures (as in the opening act of *Antigone*). On the other hand, I was just thinking about the messenger

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<sup>35</sup> OXFORD Advanced Learners Dictionary. p.195.

<sup>36</sup> STOPPARD, Tom. **Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead**. 1990.

placed by Clytemnestra<sup>37</sup> on the top of the mountain to expect the light that would inform them that the Trojan War had finished, in order to initiate the proceedings to her revenge against Agamemnon. Therefore, imagine if, instead of doing his job, such messenger had fallen asleep and failed to see what he was supposed to see, and consequently changed the whole development of the story. Probably the whole trilogy would have been changed.

The messenger as a literary function is a figure who symbolizes a kind of knowledge. He brings the message that the receivers still ignore. And it means power, the power of knowing first, before the other human beings. This knowledge can be of several natures. Just to start with, we can consider the Holy Bible, where we can suggest, for instance, the figure of Gabriel, the archangel who knew that Christ would come even before His own mother did. In fact, there are many other ways and functions allowed to the messenger, if we include for instance – the voices that are heard among them, as when God Himself sentenced Adam and Eve about their expulsion from Paradise. So are the dreams, with all their implications in myth and literature, even when the messengers are anonymous undistinguished olympiads servants who come and go without any voice. All of them possess a kind of power (and knowledge) that no one else around them has, at least until the message is transmitted.

But, what to say when the messenger, moved by a particular or common experience, fails to bring the message? What is the implication of that failure? What is of relevance to highlight is the role played by real, mystic or literary messengers: they are supposed to execute their part. Their failure represents the failure of a sequence of action, of thought, or even of history and life. Consider Rosencrantz and Guildenstern acting in a different way, or Gabriel, the archangel, or if the messenger in *Romeo and Juliet* had not failed, what would be the end of the plot? Thus, angels, prophets, messengers, alchemists, magicians all of them portray their messages, a new vision, the unknown, the future, they represent a special kind of knowledge.

In a way, we, humans, are surrounded by messages and messengers, and the respective emotions that they can inflict or arise on the receiver may represent happiness, sufferings, deceptions, and all kind of changes in the human spirit.

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<sup>37</sup> Aeschylus, *The Oresteia Trilogy*, p.5

### 2.2.1 Alchemists, Magicians and Other Modern Tricksters

For a while, let us abandon the god who carries the unknown, and, by extension, the good and bad news and, detain our attention again at the turn of the century. As the intention here is to present another kind of fissure and fragmentation. It refers to the magic/logus<sup>38</sup> dichotomy. During the last decades of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th it was detected the incidence of a phenomenon related to the old kind of knowledge, that related to the intuitive, imaginative and mystical power, such as magic, astrology alchemy, among others. Its re-entrance into the cultural scenery was caused by a certain atmosphere of nostalgia in response to the great advances in the scientific fields during the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It meant a revival of those old arts.

Literature also reflected the tendency to occultism, myth and magical rituals. The extensive study made by Sir Georg Frazer<sup>39</sup> by the end of nineteenth century about ancient mythology, for example, was one of Eliot's recognized sources of reference to write *The Waste Land*, where the Fisher King, the Earth Mother and the Old Mariner make their appearance. In *The Waste Land*, a reference is made to Madame Sosostriis, a modern detorted version of the ancient trustworthy sybil.

According to the scholar, Hugh Kenner, who wrote a successful book on Eliot<sup>40</sup>, the poem assumes a "functional obscurity". The obscurity is composed of fragments which are supposed to convey subtle messages, as that of mixing pieces of tradition to fragments of modern experience to express a feeling of inadequacy, of dislocation. Let us look at the "modern" sibyl of the poem. The ironic sibyl seems to have lost her intuitive true power. She has not the the ancient power of "knowing" anything. She "performs" the sibyl. The speaker's voice of the poem exposes what she is: a boardliner, one of the modern tricksters. She runs from the police rules: "One must be careful these days" she says, while consulting curious boys, instead of classical old heroes. Nowadays, her job is grounded on a shabby argument, as she answers "because she must". What the poem shows within its fragmentary allusions is that the present prophetic condition is an illusion as it has lost its divine aura, a

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<sup>38</sup> On which the magic word represents the mystery truly accepted and shared; the logus, representing the passage to the its opposite, when the word does not represent the divine.

<sup>39</sup> FRAZER, Sir James George "The Golden Bough".

<sup>40</sup> KENNER, Hugh. **The Invisible Poet**. p.137.

decadence, a decrepitude of an old capacity, which gave great figures in myth as the Cumaean Sibyl<sup>41</sup>, Tiresias and Cassandra.

Still taking advantage of Kenner's study, the appearance of Madame Sosostriis "is the image of the late phase of Roman civilization, now vanished". She is also 'the mind of Europe. Kenner makes the comparison in the chapter denominated "The Death of Europe", stating that Europe's mind "is now very nearly exhausted by the effort to stay interested in its own contents".<sup>42</sup>

The old art of Hermes or Mercury, the Alchemy, became very much appreciated during the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century. In one of its symbol, the mythical figure of the *Ouroboros*<sup>43</sup>, a dragon or serpent eating its own tail, symbolizing the cyclical and eternal nature of the universe, the Infinite: "From the One to the One". Everything proceeds from the One and returns to the One. It also represents the cycle of the Universe and its reflex, the *Magnum Opus*: perfect immobility and perfect movement. The symbol of Gold (O) represents the same idea of "encounter of opposites". In the picture, the color green means the Initiation, while the red means the *Magnum Opus*. However, it is in the colorful mixture of red and green that the message is conveyed.

Mixtures of different, opposite elements! This also happens in the old art of alchemy. Its basic elements, whose reunion will result in the *Magnum Opus*, The Great Work, consists in "achieving both the spiritual fulfillment as much as the material"<sup>44</sup>: The legendary father of Alchemy, Hermes<sup>45</sup>, in his Philosophical Stone, calls it "Alchemy of the Sun Operation": "It is a truth without lie, certain and the more truthful, that what is beneath is like what is above and what is above is like what is beneath, in order to make the miracles of a unique thing come true".<sup>46</sup>

The obscurity that involves the alchemic images and symbols is basic to the art. And here, again, the characteristic invisibility of the god contributes to the idea of union of opposites and to the hermetic quality, hermeneutics coming from the same

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<sup>41</sup> The Sybil of Cumma, an ancient priestess who in her better days answered questions by flinging from her cave handfuls of leaves bearing letters which the postulant was required to arrange in a suitable order. The alluded sibyl asked Appolo for eternity but forgot to mention she wanted to stay young. As a result, she was kept in a jar as she became senile and was compelled to stay alive. Her next desire was death. **Dictionary of Mitologia Griega Y Romana**. Pierre Grimal. Barcelona. España: Paidós. 1979.

<sup>42</sup> KENNER, Hugh. p.137.

<sup>43</sup> See Attached F.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> Hermes – See Attached C and D.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p.9.

origin, that of hiding its enigma. The texts must be read a thousand times before they show their meaning to the specialist. Not only the specialists, but also the skeptics agree with the fact that if the content of the texts and symbols of alchemy were clear, the alchemists would have been persecuted throughout history.

The same obscurity is due to other reasons, as well. They constitute a challenge to those who have a heroic nature, and try “to know his (own/self) inner nature”. Like Theseus, the candidate faces the Labyrinth. This Labyrinth challenges the linear logic, which in the context, is useless. The attack to logic is made by the Minotaur of the absurd. In a short time, the Minotaur will reduce the hero to nothing, because the hero will be unable to resist the attack if he thinks logically. Only through intuition and inspiration – Ariadne is golden thread – the enigma can be solved, bringing light where darkness dwells.<sup>47</sup>

It is also a physical law that the natural tendency of the opposites is their mutual attraction. So, it happens in the old art of Alchemy. The conjunction or perfect solution is two united bodies, whose dissolution is converted into liquid.<sup>48</sup> The male principle, the “seed” of the *Magnum Opus*, is also known as an old man. It combines with the female principle in the profundity of the earth; on the mountain there is an angel (volatile element) who is above a red castle (fixed element).<sup>49</sup> There are seven stages during the alchemic process, whose effect can be not only the perfect *solutio* but also the putrefactio, the rotten result. The first result will be successful as a child that is given birth; the second certainly not. The sequence of the alchemic operation is: distillation, sublimation, elevation, dissolution, coagulation, solution and putrefaction<sup>50</sup>. Rola refers to an ancient document *De Summa* to make comments about what in Alchemy is denominated the eternal transmutation:

The beauty of the manuscript *De Summa*, which is at Paris Arsenal is that it is reproduced in its integrity. Two illustrations (XXXVII and XXXXVII) The sequence shows the transmutation of the elements, whose interpretation should not be considered as literal. In fact, there are only two elements: Earth which contains Fire and Water which contains Air. These are the two elements which experiment transmutation. Water makes Earth convert itself into liquid, which by its turn, will convert again into Earth. In liquid condition, the fixed

<sup>47</sup> ROLA, Stanislas. p.9 – My translation.

<sup>48</sup> ROLA, Stanislas p.59 – Perfect *Solutio*

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p.30. Nicola d'Antonio degli, 1480, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticano, Cód. Urb. lat. 899, f.106, v.91. See Attached G, H and I.

<sup>50</sup> ROLA, Stanislas. p.50. My translation. See Attached G, H and I for representation of the perfect solution and putrefaction.

transforms itself into volatile and while being reduced and transformed in Earth, the volatile is fixed. The eternal transmigration or sublimation is symbolized by the pigeon that flies up and down. The conjunction and separation are represented by the eagles. There are seven pairs of operations in the manuscript and they correspond to the seven eagles which precede the exaltation of the Fifth Essence.<sup>51</sup>

According to the alchemists,

To the alchemists there are real – and fundamental – correspondences between the visible and the invisible, the superior and the inferior, the material and the spirit, the planets and the metals. The metal Gold, due to its incorruptible nature and its notable physical characteristics is for the alchemists the sun of the matter, an analogy of final perfection which they try to achieve from the mixture of the common metals in the hope of getting the sacred state of gold. As the gold is, in a certain measure, also the shadow of the Sun, the Sun is also the shadow of God.<sup>52</sup>

In order to make a connection with the old principles of alchemy, I would like to make reference to an aspect which is present not only as a component of the material world but also as a psychological element of human nature. It refers to the idea of antagonism, of opposite elements dwelling, sharing the same space, what comes first since God's message advising Adam and Eve<sup>53</sup> that they would carry forever the good and the evil. The mythical explanation<sup>54</sup> to the origins of the world makes references to the separation of the basic primordial forces in two parts: high and low, humid and dry, cold and hot occurred when Chronos separated Gaea (Earth) from his father Uranus (Sky) It seems that one may interpret this mythical episode also as a primordial rupture, a kind of cosmic division or fragmentation.

Thus, within the biblical or mythical approaches about the origins of the world, a dualistic vision would be part of every new moment in human life. Therefore, finding the middle-term, the intermediary place, the ideal centre is the only possibility of avoiding a less traumatic experience, or *the putrefatio*<sup>55</sup> as in the alchemic solution.

The structure of every kind of passage from the womb until the way back, seems to be chaotic and traumatic in each step: a given moment, a traumatic passage, followed by period of disorder and desolation. The next step is a period of

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<sup>51</sup> My translation.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p.8.

<sup>53</sup> Genesis, 3.5.

<sup>54</sup> Hesiod, **Theogony**. (v.126-127).

<sup>55</sup> See Attached G, H and I.

re-organization (solution) or established desolation followed by a symbolic (or real) death (putrefaction). Under the presupposition that a comparison could be allowed here, why not to approach the idea of Life (Birth) and Death (Resurrection) as following the same pattern, and why not the pattern of the narrative itself? To conclude the image of the passage from one situation to its opposite, in case of a failure during the crossing, the consequences may be disastrous, leaving their sequels, like personal tragedies and death.

The above-mentioned comments are not any intentional digressions from the theme of fragmentation. On the contrary, they serve to underline two presuppositions: First, the human being carries, since birth, the implicit element of loss of something he was supposed to previously possess and this loss brings nostalgia. Depending on the point of view, this “something” can be defined as essence, substance, unity, divine center, God. The main character and the whole story to be presented ahead, is intimately related to the theme of loss, and, by consequence, of melancholy. Through a fictional story, a framework is presented whose main idea is the same: loss, fragmentation of this centre of vital energy.

The sense of loss appears in all the levels of Leo’s story, the historical, the psychological, the linguistic, the aesthetic: loss of energy, power, of desire, of creativity, of friends, of father, of colors, of magical powers, of imagination, of sexuality, of Life itself (Eros principle). The second presupposition is that every crossing from one stage to its opposite may be a traumatic experience and carries, in a way, death and resurrection at the same time. So, when the possibility of resurrection becomes a small light at the end of the tunnel, it is time to prepare the way for the go-between again.

### **2.3 Echoes of Other Voices**

As nothing comes from nothing, I consider it pertinent to cast a look at the fragments of views of other intellectuals, philosophers and artists that also live in the troubled world of the turn of the century. With their help we can be able to reach some answers to our puzzles. They are: Frederic Nietzsche, the philosopher,



Virginia Woolf, the writer, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, both great American-British poets and literary critics and Malcom Bradbury, another English literary critic.

The philosopher Frederic Nietzsche, a self-declared “friend of enigmas”<sup>56</sup> also wrote about opposites. In his first published work *The Birth of Tragedy*<sup>57</sup>, whose subject is an attempt of comparison between the contemporary German culture and the origins of the classical Greek drama, he alludes to the distinction between the Apollonian and the Dionysian appearance of the world. Driving his thoughts to artistic human characteristics, Nietzsche associates the Apollonian spirit to light, moderation and measure, thus relating it to the plastic art.

On the opposite side, the Dionysian spirit is related to the spirit of music, bringing excess, loss of the self and total immersion in the underlying reality concealed by the Apollonian spirit. Having these characteristics in mind, Nietzsche conceived the emergence of tragedy, under the presupposition that the Dionysian spirit came first with its intoxication of the senses and the “undifferentiated chorus”, evolving for a discursive and discrete presence of Apollonian action and characters.

Bringing back the theme, perhaps one could say that every achievement of the human beings brings together its rupture, and every advance in human culture brings together its retreat. Let us take a relatively recent advance within Bio-Medicine: the decoding of the DNA structure. Together with the obvious positive implications for human beings, as in Genetics itself, Law, Archeology, History, etc. There came some distortions of the benefit, as the commercial uses of human organs and cells. Another previous (and classical) example is the atomic technology, and the airplane invention, whose knowledge was meant for better uses than the bombing during wars.

### 2.3.1 Decadence and Literary Representation

The vision of History by the end of the nineteenth century was that of an eternal rising spiral, whose signs of incantation and progress were made visible after the Industrial Revolution, especially in England, where it initially took place.

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<sup>56</sup> NIETZSCHE, F. *The Birth of Tragedy*. Translated. *O Nascimento da Tragédia*. Tradução: J. Guinzburg. 1992. p.13.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* p.13.

Malcom Bradbury<sup>58</sup>, the English literary critic employed a successful term in his essay entitled “The Impress of the Moving Age: English Culture, 1870-1914”. It may serve to illustrate this experience for the common man: A moving age!

The qualifying word – which brings in its genealogy the idea of movement, an agitation – characterizes the moment of the post-industrial revolution, under the welfare and recent improvements in quality of life for the human beings. Adding significance to this, the advances in Sciences and technological areas, such as railways, cars and airplanes imposed new conceptions of time and space to the new man. The cities – for the first time in History – registered more population than the rural areas, producing crowds of strange figures wandering in their smoggy/ smoky streets. London was the first city to reach the rate of one million citizens.<sup>59</sup>

However, Malcom Bradbury also made reference to another impress of the moving age in England. He detected another feeling in the air, going in the opposite direction, a kind of saturation:

England began the Industrial Revolution and by the turn of the century many of its implications had been known for a very long time. English thought and art had been saturated, for most of the century, by concern about and imaginative comprehension of those rising forces – socially, the *bourgeoise*; intellectually, the rise of utilitarian and rationalist thought; culturally, the redispersed relationships of an industrializing society – and the persistent themes of English romanticism are eminently complex artistic responses to such matters.<sup>60</sup>

Thus, the same “moving” age carries a double significance, as it contains the idea of positive movement and of saturation, and – due to the same movement – a sense of dislocation. Therefore, it is a helpful image to restore the atmosphere of the turn of the century and the first decades of the twentieth century in Europe, and particularly in England.

At the same time, some great names of Philosophy, Art and Literature contested the view of History as made of progress and hope. Nietzsche as well as Walter Benjamin were among the first group. Frederick Nietzsche<sup>61</sup>, in his book *Human All too Human*, defended the need of writing well in modern times in order to

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<sup>58</sup> BRADBURY, Malcom. The Impress of the Moving Age in the English Culture, 1870-1914. In: **The Social Context of Modern English Literature**. Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1971. p.36.

<sup>59</sup> GIUDICCI, Vittorio. **The 20th Century – An Epoch of Dramatic Change**. Florence, Italy: DoGi spa. 1999.

<sup>60</sup> BRADBURY, Malcom. p.36.

<sup>61</sup> NIETZSCHE, Fredrick. **Human All too Human, III**. The Wanderer and His Shadow.

make it possible to communicate not only within the cities but also out over the nations. Justifying his comment, he pointed out to what Aristotle allowed for an extreme limit of the size of a city during the classical Greek: it should be possible for the herald to make himself audible to the whole assembled community.<sup>62</sup> Nietzsche's concern was the growing "sickness of this century", due to the decline in "translatable" communication.

Virginia Woolf's characters, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, are examples of the kind. Septimus, as a remainder of war who is going to commit suicide, says "communication is health; communication is happiness".<sup>63</sup> Clarissa's husband, Richard Dalloway also detects the problem when he performs the difficult task of telling his wife he still loves her: "the greatest mistake in the world is never say what has to be said."<sup>64</sup> And it is Clarissa who concludes that "death was an attempt to communicate [...] people feeling the impossibility of reaching the center which, mystically, evaded them; closeness drew apart; ruptured, faded; one was alone. There was an embrace in death."<sup>65</sup> In the novel, the protagonist-narrator, Clarissa, compares life to a doomed ship, whose lonely occupants should spend their hours in sociable rituals while expecting the end of the bad joke,

As we are a doomed race, chained to a sinking ship (her favorite reading as a girl was Huxley and Tyndall, and they were fond of these nautical metaphors), as the whole thing is a bad joke, let us, at any rate, do our part; mitigate the suffering of our fellow-prisoners (Huxley again); decorate the dungeon with flowers and air-cushions be as decent as we possibly can.<sup>66</sup>

The illness of the century was perceived through poetic vision, as well. Ezra Pound, in his poem *The Garden*, diagnosed it as emotional *anaemia*: "And she is dying of emotional anaemia".<sup>67</sup>

David Harvey's book *The Condition of Postmodernity- An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, dedicates Chapter V (Part I) to what he defines as the

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<sup>62</sup>NIETZSCHE F **All Tpp Human. The Wanderer and his Shadow in** [www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/was.htm](http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/was.htm) .

<sup>63</sup> WOOLF, Virginia. **Mrs. Dalloway**. p.104.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p.127.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. p.202.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p.86.

<sup>67</sup> POUND, Ezra. **Personae**. Collected Shorter Poems. London Faber and Faber, 1926. See Attached I.

process of Modernization. It is a "troubled and fluctuating aesthetic response to conditions of modernity produced by a particular process of modernization".<sup>68</sup>

According to his position, Marx and Engels were the first to offer a more complete interpretation to capitalist modernization when they wrote, in *The Communist Manifesto*, that

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous "cash payment"... for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation... Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones... All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.<sup>69</sup>

[...] the subjection of nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to agriculture and industry, steam navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground – what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labor?<sup>70</sup>

Simultaneously, great names of human culture referred to the sickness of their time, as the same positive revolution carried its paradoxical undesirable consequences as pollution, noises, and speed, while accelerating the whole idea of progress, and provoking a corresponding amount of deterioration. This is *putrefatio* under another version. The price to be paid is high, "violence, destruction of traditions, oppression, reduction of valuation of all activity to the cold calculus of money and profit".<sup>71</sup>

Harvey goes on exploring Marx and Hegel's words:

Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier times. All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of venerable ideas and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become obsolete before they can ossify. All that is solid

<sup>68</sup> HARVEY, David. **The Condition of Postmodernity**. Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1989, p.99.

<sup>69</sup> MARX, Karl; ENGELS, Friedrich. **The Communist Manifesto**. Chapter I. Bourgeois and Proletarians.

<sup>70</sup> MARX, Karl; ENGELS, Friedrich. **The Communist Manifesto**. Chapter 1. Bourgeois And Proletarians – Available: [www.indepthinfo.com/communistmanifesto.text](http://www.indepthinfo.com/communistmanifesto.text). Access on December 11, 2004.

<sup>71</sup> MARX, Karl; ENGELS, Friedrich. **The Communist Manifesto**, 1952, p.25 apud HARVEY, David. **The Condition of Post-Modernity**. p.99

melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real condition of life and his relations with his kind.<sup>72</sup>

At the same time, a whole previous set of beliefs of the man of the early twentieth century had been profoundly affected by the new technological apparatuses and the recent advances of Science and Psychology. Nietzsche's proclamation of the disappearance of God, Darwin's writings about the origin of species, Freud's studies about dreams and the unconscious and Einstein's theory of relativity are a few examples that convey elements to provide new forms of understanding and representing reality.

The assumption up to this point is that fragmentation is a process whose origin is related to an initial separation from an essential status, whose explanation depends on religion, myth, chemistry, whatever. However, there are other causes for fragmentation, according to other points of view. If one takes England as reference, the passage from Victorian to Edwardian Age also represented a kind of loss to the traditional English citizen. Until the last decades of the 19th century, the English Empire alone ruled over a great part of the world. Such power suffered a decrease after the turn of the century, under the struggles for independence of its colonies.

It seems that the journey until modernity (and in special during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) increased the process of fragmentation of the self, due to the new technological apparatus and working conditions. The question is to what extension is an observable loss of energy related to it? Are there forms of overcoming that? The possibility of any existing answer to such questions might only arise under the analysis of some elements presented in the situation. It refers to the journey of Leo Colston in chapter 3, under the circumstances proposed by the narrative, where the sense of loss and melancholia are part of the same process of fragmentation, for the reason that they are altogether responsible for the melancholy atmosphere evoked by the novel.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p.100.

### 2.3.2 Fragmentation of the Self

Up to this point, we have already seen some fragmentation and fissures along the journey. However, there is the need to define and delimitate the use of these basic and recurrent expressions to be employed along the exploration of the theme. To start with, let us consider the uses of the term fragmentation. What interests me here is not directly the common-sense use of the term fragment, which means, “what is broken into small pieces or parts” or “into small pieces that are not connected or complete”.<sup>73</sup>

Going straight to the aesthetic dimension of the term, we find a description employed by Dennis Brown (1989), a professor of English Literature in his work *The Modernist Self in Twentieth-Century English Literature. A Study in Self-Fragmentation*. The book explores the meaning of the term fragmentation in the Modernist aesthetic representation of selfhood, focusing, in particular, the literary field. Within its six specific chapters of detailed approaches to: the fragmentary self of Modernism, the self at war and to the dissolving self, he makes a journey across poems, novels and other literary works of the twentieth-century literature. Therefore, it is within Brown’s work that the specific meaning of the term is being considered. Right at the Introduction the author makes a distinction between “fragmentary” self and “fragmenting” self. According to Brown (1989) there is an important distinction between them,

The term “fragmentation” may bear a double implication. Writers represent fragmentary selves, and such representations constitute selfhood as inherently fragmentary. There is a subtle complicity between perceived reality and constructed description. And this complicity is not a static relationship but a developing torsion.” [my emphasis]<sup>74</sup>

In consequence, if one is in search of its aesthetical dimension it must take into account the fact that it is “an ongoing process”, “an active and exploratory process”. It also presupposes “some kind of pre-existent unity which is in the process of being broken down.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> OXFORD, Advanced Learners Dictionary, p.534.

<sup>74</sup> BROWN, Dennis. 1989. p.4.

<sup>75</sup> BROWN, Dennis. p.2.

The aesthetical use of the term follows a similar phenomenon as a piece of paper (stone) or the metaphysical resonance of a process of fragmentation (e.g. God/Man, as the case of the loss of Unity). It represents a distortion, a mutilation, a traumatic passage. The same study remits to an expression employed by T.S. Eliot in his essay *Tradition and Individual Talent*<sup>76</sup>, where Eliot refers to “the substantial unity of the soul” to express this locus of unity, previous to the separation. Hugh Kenner has called the first phase of T.S. Eliot’s literary works, *The Poetics of Fragmentation*.

During the period, he wrote poems whose speaker’s voice transmitted images of a chaotic world, where the human voice sounded as in a desolate state. *The Waste Land*, *Gerontion*, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* and *The Hollow Men* explore the images of fragmented souls, carrying their carcasses through a devastated world. According to Kenner<sup>77</sup>, Mr. Prufrock, Gerontion, and Mistah Kurtz are examples of the type. Emphasizing the paradoxes of human existence those *dramatis personae* oscillate between two extremes, until they become hollow, invisible or worse, fragmented men as

[...]  
 Between the idea  
 And the reality  
 Between the motion and the act  
 Falls the Shadow

Between the conception  
 And the creation  
 Between the emotion  
 And the Response  
 Falls the Shadow

Between the desire  
 And the spasm,  
 Between the potency  
 And the existence  
 Between the essence  
 And the descent  
 Falls the Shadow<sup>78</sup>  
 [...]

In Eliot, the shadow is the representation of the one who does not “dare to disturb the universe” [...] “like a patient etherized upon a table” as in *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. Prufrock, whose indecision, poses so many questions,

<sup>76</sup> ELIOT, T.S. *Tradition and Individual Talent*.

<sup>77</sup> KENNER, Hugh. **The Invisible Poet T.S. Eliot**. London:Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1986.

<sup>78</sup> AIKEN, Conrad. **American Poetry**. New York The Modern Library. p.369.

[...]  
 Is it perfume from a dress  
 That makes me so digress?  
 Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.  
 And should I then presume?  
 And how should I begin?

[...]  
 Shall I , after tea and cakes and ices,  
 Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?  
 But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,  
 Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald)  
 Brought in upon a planter,  
 I am no prophet – and here´s no great matter;  
 [...]<sup>79</sup>

The shadow is also Gerontion in his “wilderness of mirrors”. He, “the old man” whose house “is a decayed house”, the “dull head among windy spaces” who considers that “neither fear nor courage would save us”.

Brown´s exploration of the use of the term fragmentation is the literary representation of selfhood in the Modernist period.

### 2.3.3 Melancholy as Message

The term derives from the Greek word melancholia (melanos: somber, dark, sad + chole: bile). The encyclopedia<sup>80</sup> defines a melancholy person as that whose state is of vague sadness, habitual disposition to pessimism, disappointment with life. It is commonly used with reference to things and places that inspire such feeling, as a “melancholy scene”. Another use of the term remits to a more technical approach, whose meaning refers to an intense depression and moral pain, characterized by reduction of psychomotor activities and by idea of suicide. The moral pain is profound, and usually associated to self-punishment /self-accusation and decadence. Introspection is commonly associated to the symptoms, but the intellectual work does suffer interruption during the crisis.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.363.

<sup>80</sup> OXFORD Advanced Dictionary, Oxford University Press. 2000. p.832.

<sup>81</sup> Microsoft Encyclopaedia. Encarta. 2001.



However, the concept of melancholy acquired major relevance during three moments of human history, according to the writer (and doctor) Moacyr Scliar, who has studied the phenomenon of melancholy in the history of Brazilian culture as a product of the civilization brought from Europe<sup>82</sup>.

The first moment happened during the times of Classical Greece, simultaneously to a period of advances in Sciences, Art and Philosophy. However, what should be taken as pure euphoria was accompanied by sadness. The phenomenon was apparently inexplicable. According to the doctor, melancholy is exactly this, a reaction to what is new, to the unknown. During the 5<sup>th</sup> b.C., Hipocrates explained that the human temper is regulated by four humours: blood, lymph, yellow bile and black bile.<sup>83</sup> The characteristic of the bloody temper is dynamism by action; while the black bile is commanded by Saturn, the master of Geometry. The black bile is responsible for melancholy, apathy and sadness. During the next centuries the surgeons would try to promote the equilibrium of the humours, sometimes using grotesque methods, such as bloodshedding.

The second moment when the concept of melancholy acquired importance came with the advent of Modern Age, the maritime discoveries, the invention of the press, and scientific advances, including the new medical perspectives as in anatomy and afterwards William Harvey's studies about the blood circulatory system.<sup>84</sup> The classical book written by Robert Burton, written in... *The Anatomy of Melancholy*<sup>85</sup>, was the first of a series, whose subject would be melancholy. In the book, the famous picture by Albrecht Dürer, *Melancholie* (1514) is reproduced<sup>86</sup>. In the picture, Dürer put himself in the confluence of the symbolism of the liberal art, with the astrology as theme and in melancholy temper, trying to express the limits of the human science. Each object represented in the scene has its symbolic meaning (the bell and the hourglass mean time), or functional (tools, staircase), geometry, forms, measures.

According to tradition, the melancholic temper is favorable to imagination, to the manual arts and drawing. Doted of a great sensibility, the melancholy man perceives the limits of logical reflection, for such reason he is seen prostrated (at the

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<sup>82</sup> SCLIAR, Moacyr. **Saturno nos Trópicos**. São Paulo: Cia. das letras. 2003.

<sup>83</sup> See Attached J. The Four Humours represented.

<sup>84</sup> Microsoft Encyclopaedia. Encarta. 2001.

<sup>85</sup> BURTON, Robert. **The Anatomy of Melancholy**. New York: The New York Review of Books, 2001.

<sup>86</sup> DURER, Albrecht. **Melancholia I, gravure**. Paris. Bibliothèque. Photo@Biblio.nat. 24 x 18,8 cm. See Attached J.

right side). Within the tranquil atmosphere of the scene, marked by eternity, according to the Renaissance vision, the artist works and creates.<sup>87</sup>

According to Scliar's study, and also pointed by the author in an essay for *Zero Hora*<sup>88</sup>, the third moment of the malady came within the last century, whose scientific advances included robotics, computer science, genetic engineering, among others. In consequence of that, another shock of modernity occurred: the new conjecture scares people, with its following unemployment and insecurity. As a result, melancholy is again showing its face. Now it is called depression. The old humours have changed their names. Nowadays, they are called neuro-transmitters and the treatment consists of manipulating the biochemical centers of the brain.

Although, the concepts and forms of dealing with melancholy have apparently changed throughout history, the basic attitude of prostration, of sadness has been transmitted from generations to generations. Sigmund Freud has his own explanation for melancholy. In a way, it is related to mourning. To Freud<sup>89</sup>, melancholy presupposes a phase, when there is an identification of the ego with the object of his desire. This phase does not exist in mourning. Therefore, after a period of mourning for a dead object, the individual is supposed to overcome the loss, which does not happen in the first case, because the ego "dies" with the dead object. In such cases, the empty space left by the dead "ego" is replaced by melancholy.

In this sense, the Freudian psychoanalytical approach came to unveil part of the mysteries and behaviour of the human mind, lighting up some of the areas of human thought, previously under the dominion of religion and mysticism, which is the case with the unconscious. As a direct consequence, old concepts of illnesses were reconsidered. The old notion of madness is one of them, as well as the perception of what is normal or abnormal, as homosexuality or depression.

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<sup>87</sup> LAROUSSE. Encyclopaedia Nova Cultural. 1999. V.16. p.3909. My translation.

<sup>88</sup> SCLIAR, Moacyr. **Os Três Momentos da Melancolia**. In: ZERO HORA. 10.02.2002. My translation.

<sup>89</sup> FREUD, Sigmund. **Duelo y Melancolia**. Trad. José L. Etcheverry. Buenos Aires. Amorrortu Editores. 1989.

### 2.3.4 And There Comes Zarathustra

But, after all, who are the messengers of these modern chaotic times? From the standpoint of Philosophy, the visual influence came under the scene of the Nietzschean mystic messenger, Zarathustra. He descended from the top of the mountain to proclaim the death of God and to announce the advent of a new generation of supermen who would replace the decadent slaves of a post-Christian society.

Returning to the internal oppositions that can evolve into fragmentation, it is Nietzsche, again, better saying the self-declared prophet (of modernity), who defines what could be seen as a moderate view with reference to the oppositions of human thought and feeling. Nietzsche disagrees with the binary way of thinking which prevails in human understanding of matters, postulating that there are not differences, but degrees, thus leading to transitions, instead of oppositions,

The general imprecise way of observing sees everywhere in nature opposites (as, e.g., "warm and cold") where they are not opposites, but differences of degree. This bad habit has led us into wanting to comprehend and analyze the inner world, too, the spiritual-moral world, in terms of such opposites. An unspeakable amount of pain, arrogance, harshness, estrangement, frigidity has entered into human feelings because we think we see opposites instead of transitions.<sup>90</sup>

In fact, one of the greatest influences in the experience of loss for the modern man came in the wake of Friederic Nietzsche's proclamation of God's death, leaving behind a profound awareness of the precariousness of human condition on earth: "To say later that "If life is a constant fight in which only those more apt survive, then force is a major virtue and weakness, its unique defect. Good is what survives, what wins and evil is what gives up or fails".<sup>91</sup>

Zarathustra, the one who climbed to the highest mountain in order to re-think human existence at the right time descended to convey his words of sapience. Then he spoke

Truly, my friends, I walk among men as among the fragments and limbs of men! The terrible thing to my eye is to find men shattered in pieces and scattered as if over a battle-field of slaughter. And when

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<sup>90</sup> NIETZSCHE, Friedrich. **Human All to Human. The Wanderer and his Shadow**. Aforism # 67.

<sup>91</sup> DURRANT, Will. A Filosofia de Nietzsche.

my eyes flees from the present to the past, they always discover the same thing: fragments and limbs and dreadful chances – but no men!<sup>92</sup>

Nietzsche, through his literary prophet, was convinced that the old values were responsible for the decadence of Europe as the centre of irradiation of culture. He attributed such decline to the moral values proclaimed by Christian and Jewish theology. In his standpoint, society should overpass this stage, proclaiming its own independence of thought. This supposed operation was denominated “transvaluation” of the Christian values. The way out of the present “slavery” condition appointed by the philosopher is creativity. Using the imaginative, creative power, man should be able to establish his own form of life, free and without any kind of guilt. According to Nietzsche, guilt is another of the annihilating tricks of Christianity. Feeling guilty man tries to revert his actions in order to be accepted again in Paradise. In his words, it is made clear that man should live his life as he expects, under the conditions he creates, instead of spending his life expecting for eternal life. Later on, Sartre would develop the philosophy of Existentialism, which would emphasize the human life in opposition to the Christian view on of happiness.

And then, came Zarathustra again to conclude his discourse before dawn,

I walk among men as among fragments of the future: of that future which I scan. And it is all my art and aim, to compose into one and bring together what is fragment and riddle and dreadful chance. And how could I endure to be a man, if man were not also a poet and reader of riddles and the redeemer of chance! To redeem the past and to transform every ‘It was into an ‘I wanted it thus – that alone do I call redemption!<sup>93</sup>

Unfortunately, however, the messenger of the antichristian society would also disappear into the shadows of his own illness before the advent of the pre-announced time. Man was losing his references.

Zarathustra will appear again in the next chapter, portraying messages for the hero of the story, the Hercules-to-be, one of those whose creative power could have transformed him into the first Superman of modern times. Thus Spoke Zarathustra!

With the dawn there came another reality, another piece of the fragments within the text – which is nothing else than the reflection of the environment approached here. Thus, let us go ahead into this waste land, where the ruins of old

<sup>92</sup> NIETZSCHE, F. **Thus Spoke Zarathustra**. p.160.

<sup>93</sup> NIETZSCHE, F. **Thus Spoke Zarathustra**. p. 161.

cultures share space with carcasses of heroes and hollow men. The next stop of the journey in direction to the foreign country of Leo Colston, our protagonist-narrator, is connected with war and economic survival.

Beneath the same turbulent effervescence of the moving age, the social and the politic conflicts that would run into the First World War were growing, when a great number of soldiers and civilians lost their lives, and other equivalent number of bodies were mutilated. No number can be provided with reference to the deadly marks inside millions of souls, as those counted among the survivals. But they are mostly included among the remaining hollow men. The sense of chaos would install itself “in and out of the fragile human body”<sup>94</sup>, in the suffering for so many losses.

Regardless of their powers, humans need to think of surviving in a time of increasing capitalist dominance, with its good and bad implications. Thus, one of the forms found by the man of the early decades of the twentieth century to overpass the struggles of this moving age, was found in the growing need to guarantee his own economic survival. In an epoch historically associated with the Great American Depression - for instance – to restrict the use of mind and rationality in favour of the everyday situations is *per se*, a successful enterprise.

All these factors would end up in producing an inner feeling of dislocation and strangeness with relation to human existence. The human being could not perceive the other as part of his own existence any longer. Apart from God, apart from his proclaimed Christian brother, he was left alone wandering without references. The very notion of centre had disappeared.

### 2.3.5 The Loss of the Centre and the Absent Presence

This section should start by defining what is meant by the expressions “centre” and “loss of the center”. In fact, it hardly needs a definition, as it became a kind of common sense to identify the expression with the first decades of the

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<sup>94</sup> In allusion to an image employed by Walter Benjamin in *The Storyteller, Reflections on the works of Nicolai Leskov*. It was used on his comments over the impact of the new reality over the human consciousness: “A generation that had gone to school on a horse-drawn streetcar now stood under the open sky in a countryside in which nothing remained unchanged but the clouds, and beneath these clouds, in a field of force of destructive torrents and explosions, was the tiny, fragile human body”. p.84.

twentieth century, at least in Literature. Some famous passages in Literature registered the feelings of artists whose impressions were of someone whose ground beneath his feet had been moved away. Hovering in the polluted air, an unidentifiable sense of incredulity and search for answers could be sensed. Where to find the stable point the centre in a time of disturbance, wars and quick changes? Maybe it would be possible to establish a parallel with Greek history, in which human beings could not trust the divine mythical word anymore. Then, they were moved by the necessity of looking into their own self in search of answers. Therefore they brought their duality and ambiguities in form of existential questions to the theatre. By doing so, they could experiment and represent life with its uncertainties in the form of tragedy. This was the passage of *magic* word to *logos*.

Obviously, there is not any intention of including here any suggestion of a similar phenomenon, such as the classical Greek drama in its religious sense, but, in its existential aspect. In the present case, they could be moved by men's need of reflecting (and self-reflection), of searching for new forms to express the antagonism of reality.

On one hand, the English citizen who had brought the legacy of the Enlightenment ideal adds to it the set of values of a Victorian Age, whose project pointed to a solid golden future. On the other hand, the same subject had the opposite perception of a future in which technology and speed, even if meaning progress, could also be a synonym to truth suddenly deconstructed, or as Karl Marx puts it, "All that is solid melts into the air".

Considering the loss of faith, so tangible at the turn of the century, psychoanalysis had its active participation in the new state of immobility and isolation of the self. What was perceived (or judged) by many human beings under the realm of superstition, or under the sphere of the divine, could then be scientifically explained as product of unconscious motivation, after the advent of psychoanalysis for instance. In this sense, perhaps we could understand Modernism as a search for forms that could better translate the internal conflict, which was a collective conflict.

Living in a age when reality has so many faces, it would be impossible to exist a collective experience to exist. The tragic experience of the modern times is lived in the inner self, silently and in isolation. The collective experience, represented under several forms during Modernism was a frenetic attempt on orientation, a reflection about society and individuals of the new century.

Thus, each painter, each writer, poet, artist, tried in his own way to mediate what was felt as being the rupture between the divine and chaos, in a world whose religiosity was lost in a post-war time filled with skepticism and pessimism. Cubism tried to express the anguish of the war. Futurism, in painting or poems and fragmented texts like Fernando Pessoa's presented the euphoria and anxieties of man whose self is perceived as too small, worthless, facing the myth of the machine. Within the visions of Salvador Dali's paintings, exposing how time scapes from our incapable hands, Dadaism, with its collages and deconstructions, all tendencies tried to translate the untranslatable, the ominous undefined absent-presence of the war.

Messengers, narrators and life's protagonists would be affected, diaries would suffer eventual interdictions, voices would become silent, until the approach of a new time that would open a new passage under another language, that of fiction.

### 3 CHAPTER II – L.P. HARTLEY: LIFE AND WORKS OF A RUNNING SHADOW

#### 3.1 A Life in the Shadow

“It was the first year of the new century, and the last Victorian summer. Within six months, the old Queen would be dead”. This melancholic view was taken from Adrian Wright’s introductory words to the first (and unique) authorized biography on *flawed* hero, Leslie Pole Hartley. The first edition of *Foreign Country – The Life of L.P. Hartley* was published in 1995. Consequently, the greatest amount of comments about the novelist comes from that source.

Leslie Pole Hartley was only five years old in that distant hot summer of 1900, but he never forgot the tropical heat that beat down on England that first year of the new *golden century*.<sup>95</sup> The emanation of that 93° Fahrenheit *in the shade before great storms* as much as the opposite sensation, the one caused by the nostalgic coldness provoked by things forever lost, as childhood, as the Victorian slipping values would all appear fifty years later in *The Go-Between*.

The sadness, the shadows of personal dramas together with the worldw traumatic experiences permeate most of Hartley’s literary works and they are accurately signaled in the above-mentioned images of *Foreign Country – The Life of L.P. Hartley*.<sup>96</sup>

According to Adrian Wright, in the introductory section, the book came as a *natural link* in face of the author’s profound admiration for the *flawed* hero of his boyhood, Leslie Poles Hartley. Wright explains that, at the age of twenty-one, he had already read all the novels written by L.P. Hartley, after having started at the school library with *The Go-Between* and *Eustace and Hilda* when he was in his “late teens”. He recalls the difficult steps he went to follow a figure who “through his writings kept the world at a distance”, and had once said that “the facts of my life are meager and dull and you won’t find hard to discard them”.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian. **Foreign Country**. p.7.

<sup>96</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian. **Foreign Country. The Life of L.P. Hartley** .London. Tauris Parke Paperbacks, 1996, p.1.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p.2 – quoted: letter LPH to Kay Dick, 11 January 1953.



In spite of Hartley's perception of his own life as a failure, Wright explains that his passion for Hartley's novels never faded as he found "consolation in their atmosphere of an autumnal understanding, the understanding that comes from a man who knows the world too well".<sup>98</sup> He, then, adds that

perhaps one of the reasons why I was so fascinated with him was that in his characters I recognized much of my own: their eagerness to please, the deep craving for approval, the sense of isolation, the snobbishness, the deep feeling that the best has been long before..."

What he *sensed* about his hero at the early age of twenty-one was not quite distant of what he *knew* by the end of his work, "Little as I could discover of the man (there seemed to be nothing to discover), even then I felt I knew him – sensitive, gifted with an extraordinary knowledge of the human heart, and deeply sad." As he states at the end of his study "it lacks the exact knowledge".<sup>99</sup>

Adrian Wright finishes the section bringing the words of Mr. Richard Mardick, also a protagonist-biographer in *The Brickfield*<sup>100</sup>, one of Hartley's autobiographical novels: "As I told you, I would like the shadow of it to be thrown on anything that might be written about me. The shadow of the fact, but not the fact itself. Never the fact".<sup>101</sup>

What is made clear in Wright's work about L. P. Hartley is that it is "a piecing-together of a man's life from original sources".<sup>102</sup> As he elucidates to his reader "not for one moment it was intended as an attempt on his (Hartley's) life, nor of getting the fullness of the truth." In this sense, Mr. Mardick's statement, in *The Briekfield*, one of Hartley's autobiographical novels, is in perfect agreement, according to his above mentioned words.

The fullness of truth! With relation to this philosophical quest, it arises as a constant worry in Hartley's life and work and it may be perceived on the linguistic level beneath elegant ironic dialogues, ambiguous situations and in the way he presents the morals of the Edwardian epoch, especially in *The Go-Between*.

Despite Hartley's effort in depreciating his own image or in "erasing" his passage through the foreign country of his life, the theme of the "need to return" – as

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p.1.

<sup>99</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.4.

<sup>100</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. **The Briekfield**. p.193.

<sup>101</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian. **Foreign Country – The Life of L.P. Hartley**. p.4.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, p.3.

described by Wright – crosses most of his best works, exposing a paradoxical truth: the difficult struggle between knowing or not knowing the truth about the self.

On the other hand, what comes to the sight of the reader is that most of Hartley's protagonists in one way kept their truth hidden, closed inside their boxes, whose key-words must be rescued piece by piece, until they may disclose their secret beauty. The anguish and difficulties of reaching a stable furtive truth which penetrates the dialogues and discourse of the narrators are presented at the chapter dedicated to the specific analysis of *The Go-Between* and/or when referring to other literary works by Hartley.

The difficulty of getting biographical elements about the facts relating to the novelist's life is made clear by Adrian Wright, as most of Hartley's papers have been destroyed by his personal order. Therefore, after a reading ofn Adrian Wright's biographical work about Hartley's life and literary production, it is reasonably safe to extract at least some basic events of his solitary crossing through the land of the fallen-gods. The assumption is that this may add amplitude to the psychological dimension and the way he constructs his characters.

Some of these elements of Hartley's life to appear constantly in his works include the figure of an outsider, someone whose place is not evident and whose condition is not clear in spite of his effort to find such truthful centre. Hand in hand with the outsider comes the condition of feeling himself a stranger.

Another element to arouse in his works is that concerning to moral preoccupations and guilt for things done in another place (or time). Finally, the element of past itself, under which, the novelist revolves and dissolves the sense of things forever lost, as childhood, plenitude and happiness, "For I think of it as being the colour of gold. I didn't want to go back to it but I wanted to come back to me, and I still do".<sup>103</sup> No doubt, a melancholy statement...

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<sup>103</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian. (p.7). The phrase was taken from a typescript at Fletton; undated.

### 3.2 The Man Behind the Shadows

Leslie Poles Hartley was born in Whittlesey, Cambridgeshire, England, in December 30, 1895 and died in 1972. His parents, Harry (a solicitor) and Bessie Hartley raised a middle class family whose basic economic source came from the brick industrial activity. Leslie was named after Leslie Stephen (Virginia Woolf's father, who had written the *Dictionary of National Biography*).<sup>104</sup> He had two sisters: Enid Mary and Norah.

The childhood illnesses that tested Leslie left their hypochondria and neurasthenic sequels in later years and can be traced throughout his literary work. He suffered from croup attacks, with violent spasms in the throat, bronchitis, just to mention two of them<sup>105</sup>. At least, part of his illnesses could be attributed to the local environment. Bessie, his mother, regarded Whittlesey as "nothing more than a breeding ground of disease." One of the specters to haunt Bessie daily was of diphtheria, due to the primitive system of sanitation still in use. Such anxieties with respect to illnesses were partly justified by the fact that Hartley's mother was a Fenland woman and being so "she would have been conscious of the prevalence of the malaria, the fen plague"<sup>106</sup>

The sense of stagnation Bessie felt was symbolized by "the open-drainage dykes and drains, their surfaces covered with what locals call "cott", a thick scum that only shifts when a strong wind curdles it and whips it up into little banks."<sup>107</sup> Paradoxically, it proved to be with the clay of that wet "unwholesome" soil of East England that the economic growth of the family would start: "Neither she nor Harry realized that, at the beginning of the new century, their fortunes would improve dramatically. The reason was brick."<sup>108</sup>

Actually, the brick industry was already the major economic activity in the surroundings: "There had been clay pits in the Fens throughout the 1860s and 1870s, mainly in Whittlesey and Stanground, where the mass of brickyard labourers lived." In order to illustrate the surroundings of Leslie's upbringing, the following lines

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<sup>104</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian. p.18.

<sup>105</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian, p.18.

<sup>106</sup> WRIGHT, p.7.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, p.18.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, p.19.

are reproduced in its fullness, as they may provide a counterpoint between a still handmade labour/work in an England under a frenetic process of industrialization,

For them, bricks were often a family affair, a way of life. In the spring, it was common to see the father mixing clay in a pugmill, one of his older sons making the bricks, his wife carrying them to the hacks, and her small children setting the bricks out to dry. Labour was cheap, and often provided by immigrant families who settled to a life of poverty in the Fens.<sup>109</sup>

The Fletton brick industry (its bricks known as “flettons”) had blossomed in the late 1870s, but it was only a little later that a lucky discovery would transform the activity in something successful. It consisted of making bricks “not in the conventional way, from clay taken from the surface, but from the Lower Oxford Clay that lay beneath. It was only now that the extraordinary talent of the submerged clay was discovered.” Hartley’s biographer considers that “even the geologist Dean Buckland, who first identified its presence, had not realized that the Lower Oxford would burn”.

Harry, as a solicitor and a astute businessman, saw the potential in the brick industry, and thought he could make a better go of it than his clients (and owners, Arthur James and George Keeble). In 1898 he became one of the three directors of the new *Whittlesea Central Brick Co.Ltd*. In 1908, another site was added, doubling the size of the Central Empire. What was firstly regarded as “little more than a hobby” brought wealth. In fact, the Hartley were really lucky to get involved in the industry “at the time when the properties of the clay had begun to be appreciated and exploited so successfully”.<sup>110</sup>

When things were improving and Bessie was better able to afford her preoccupation with the family’s health, Harry bought Fletton Tower<sup>111</sup>, a Gothic hall, a miniature castle, on the very edge of Peterborough, built in 1840. The fact that Fletton Tower had drains made the move inevitable, in spite of being “clearly beyond them financially”.<sup>112</sup> The surrounding streets were developed during the 1850s and 1860s to answer the housing needs of the local railwaymen. The railway that laid close to the rear of the property, became one of Leslie’s delights, specially waving at the fireman on the Flaying Scotsman on the 10 a.m. from London. Later, on his adult

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<sup>109</sup> WRIGHT, p.19.

<sup>110</sup> WRIGHT, p.19.

<sup>111</sup> See Attached L – Fletton Tower.

<sup>112</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.21.

life, he would write an autobiographical novel, *The Brickfield*, using the environment he had grown up in.

Hartley's basic education was taken at Northdown Hill preparatory school and later on at Harrow and Balliol College, Oxford. During his boyhood, Leslie spent his days playing with his two sisters nearby. It is said that "although timid in most respects, Leslie was brave" as in the case described by Wright's book in the chapter "To be the hero". In August 1906, Leslie's grandfather Thompson asked him to eradicate the plague of wasps that was terrifying Bessie and her sisters,

The agreed payment was one penny a wasp. Although timid in most respects, Leslie was brave when it came to wasps, and set his target at 1000 corpses. After successfully catching the mass of them with his butterfly net and plunging them into boiling water (and only suffering one sting on the finger) he was awarded the prize of four and twopence.<sup>113</sup>

Hartley's aspirations to be a kind of hero is commented in the same chapter: "to be the hero seemed to Hartley the romantic ideal, something to which he perhaps should not, but longed to, aspire. Success, or even a reasonable stab, at sport offered a passport of sorts". It was in one of these occasions that he playing football in the rain, after being knocked down, bit the end of his tongue and had two stitches put in it. But he was not at all dismayed: "I felt a hero and even got one or two friends to treat me as such." In such statement extracted from personal letters by Adrian Wright, we find a certain need to please, associated sometimes with his hypochondriac tendency: "I never had a cold that I did not think would turn to pneumonia". These are feelings and reactions quite transparent in the analysis of Leo Colton's character.

The problem with the image of heroes, is what *it is not* expected of one of the kind.<sup>114</sup> In this sense, one episode – also extracted from Adrian Wright's biographic work – the dark side of a disappointing hero as, in a certain occasion, "an already adult and uneasy Leslie, would kill swans quite easily, near his home in Avondale"<sup>115</sup>:

A male swan on the river had been rushing at his boat. It was his enemy [It used to disturb the silence of the region with its sounds].

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<sup>113</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.28.

<sup>114</sup> See Chapter I – the allusion to the instinctive hero facing the minotaur in the labyrinth and Chapter III for comments on Leo's failure trying to become a kind of *Heracles*.

<sup>115</sup> One of the houses Hartley lived. It was located at the margin of the Avondale River. See picture at Attached M.

On the morning of Good Friday in 1958, Hartley and Charlie [a servant] walked down to the water's edge. The cob and its mate came up from the river to meet them. Hartley fed the cob bread pellets in which he had wrapped barbiturates. Charlie attempted to divert the pen with undoctored bread, but in her greed she too swallowed up the poisoned offering, and it was she who was the first to collapse. Hartley described to Enid how the creature folded up before his eyes. The cob weakened and fell lifeless to the ground shortly afterwards. *Hartley was surprised at the speed of their deaths.* The two men hid the corpses, returning that night to bury the cold, white bodies".<sup>116</sup> (My emphasis)

During World War I Hartley served in the Norfolk Regiment, but due to his poor health condition he was considered unfit for the active service. He was sent to tNorfolk regiment, and served as a post-man. Hartley's perception of the war was shifting, even affirming that he was "unbelligerent" and that he "hated the idea of fighting, in however good a cause".<sup>117</sup>

Leslie Hartley was an introspective person, whose thoughts and feelings were only eventually rescued/recovered with the help of some existing letters or direct testimony of old acquaintances. The relationship with his father Harry is an example of a figure kept at a distance, in spite of his admiration for the way Harry behaved with respect to his literary pretensions. Just after his father's death, Hartley is supposed to have said to his friend Christabel that he had finally realized how indulgent his father had been, letting him lead a literary life "when the family had very little money and Hartley seemed to have no prospect of making any".<sup>118</sup>

To his friend and supposed lover, Lord David Cecil, the novelist said one year before his father's death, "Fletton, for some reason, is inimical to me. Whether my father was more severe than other Victorian parents I don't know – he certainly didn't mean to be – but I always felt at Fletton I had done something wrong – especially in the North wing".<sup>119</sup> In the chapter "Dissatisfaction with truth", Adrian Wright (p.154), refers to this ominous feeling experimented by the novelist when the subject is Fletton or parenthood,

There is little tangible in the relationship he had with Bessie and Harry in their late years. The emotional repulsion Hartley felt for Fletton Tower was always a barrier to closeness between them; the distance from them that he had created could never be bridged. The

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<sup>116</sup> WRIGHT, p.191.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, p.46.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid. p. 179.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p.179.

discomfort of Bessie's love, the strength of Harry's moral conviction, left Hartley defenceless to the end."

For sure, the "sense of doing wrong" was intimately related to Fletton, and associated to matters of morals in many ways, as Hartley has established the same relation in other occasions, "But there was something, too, in his relationship with Harry, that left him uncomfortable at Fletton."<sup>120</sup> "It seems that the novelist could not comply with what was supposedly expected of him, as for instance, to follow his father's steps in the brick industry. There was, also, the matter of his homosexuality.

According to Hartley's biographer, the novelist commented what the feelings for his father were like, on the occasion of Harry's final illness (during which he never lost his good humour). Hartley, then, declared that his nerves responded more violently than his emotions to the "material happenings of death". That was a direct reference to the moment of Harry's passing, which occurred just after Hartley had asked him what he would accept for lunch. To the question, Hartley's father declared in a "strangely loud voice: Brandy sauce", and died.<sup>121</sup> That strong impression about the material happenings of death will be later rescued in the next chapter as well as the implications of this problematic father-son relationship to Hartley's personal and fictional life.

For all these, he would never get rid of a certain guilt. The distant relationship between father and son is supposed to be related to those facts. In consequence, Fletton Hall stood as a negative image of the father, tradition and continuation.

Returning for a while to the point where a place, and in the case, a house, is associated with the writer's feelings, there is at least another situation to refer. In a letter to Clifford Kitchin, dated 9 August 1947, who was a good friend and the person to whom Hartley "could say things he would not say to no one else", Hartley wrote, referring to his house in Avondale,

You asked me if this house was home. I don't know that it quite is. Mother cannot reconcile herself to my living away from Fletton; every letter she writes is a sort of persuasion to me to go back there. I do go, every month or so, but I don't want to live there."<sup>122</sup>

Here, again, there is presence of a veiled sense of guilt and need to please associated to family and place.

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p.26.

<sup>121</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian, p.179.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p.143.

It would not be wrong to associate the image of Leslie Hartley as a *running shadow*<sup>123</sup>. Not only because of the effort he spent to make his image disappear, but also because he was a kind of peregrine, constantly uneasy, changing places, moving. He loved being near the water, as proved in his fascination for Venice. There, he spent the greatest part of his best days. He once said in a letter to his mother: "It is the least arduous town in the world".<sup>124</sup> In a way, the water of Venice represented the ideal centre of energy of his life, "Whatever its mood, the Venice water that was hotter than the air, provided the ideal sensation; moving across it, Hartley's senses were bound together into a contentment that no other experience, physical or spiritual, could achieve".<sup>125</sup>

The waters could never disappoint him. Neither could San Sebastiano, the martyred saint whose image in Venice, was also be seen as an allusion to the way the novelist perceived his own life. He loved bridges and the channels of Venice. It was possibly because of the pleasure of recollection that he bought an eighteenth-century stone mansion in Bath, with a garden that sloped down to the river Avon. In weeks he became a familiar figure patiently rowing the Avon in his second –hand skiff. He called the place "Paradise Paddock".<sup>126</sup>

But what was the opinion of the critic about the man? In a way, it seems that in every statement the critic of the man is at work. Taking for granted what Hartley once said to David Horner, a friend, he perceived his own life as a desolate picture, being "so much in arrears that it presents the melancholy appearance of a whole station-full of missed trains".<sup>127</sup> In another episode, just when he was purchasing a new house in Avondale, he said that "everything I do brings – not pain, that would be presumptuous – but dissatisfaction and disappointment to someone".

One of the most apparent characteristics in Leslie Pole Hartley's life and literary work is the perception of his own self as an *outsider* in his relation with the family affairs and tradition, with his schoolmates, in social gatherings and, by extension, in the entire world. In fact, it was not only his health prospects that kept him apart from other people. Leslie Hartley was considered an outsider in many aspects of his personal life. In his family tradition and at school, for example, "If he in

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<sup>123</sup> Denomination given by Adrian Wright to one of the chapters of his book: Chapter X.

<sup>124</sup> Letter dated 17 September 1922.

<sup>125</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.144.

<sup>126</sup> Hartley rowing at Avon River, near his house, England – See Attached M.

<sup>127</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.137.



any way felt an outsider, it was the fault of politics and religion. He was the only Liberal in his house, and there were not more than twenty in the entire school”.

As to religion, he changed the family tradition from Methodist to Church of England. This change was accepted by his parents, but this breakaway from family tradition was a significant step in Leslie’s development “as it distanced him from what they might have expected – it was, indeed, one of the few decisive steps he ever took.” This element appears with constancy in his work, as in the first line of *The Go-Between*. In the chapter named “To be the hero”, Adrian Wright makes comments about Leslie’s fascination for the upper-class life, whose level “would mean so much to him for the rest of his life. It presents the basic predicament that Leslie would always face: he was an outsider”.<sup>128</sup> In Wright’s comments it is made clear that Leslie was not ashamed of his middle-class upbringing, but his desire was “to move out into greater waters.”

The biographer adds some comments about his acceptance among people in general and about the literary gentry saying that he never had what the author calls “a natural place among the titled people he loved to mix with the literary cliques that he stood on the edges of.” His *entrée* among these groups had to be worked out. Wright, then, explains that “There is clear evidence that he put himself about to gain an *entrée* to these social companies” and completes “all had their reservations about his place in the social scheme of things; he was identified as an interloper”.

Virginia Woolf “ first met Hartley in the early summer of 1923 in Garsington<sup>129</sup> “when there were thirty seven people to tea”; a bunch of young men no bigger than asparagus”. (WRIGHT, p.75 / Apud)<sup>130</sup>. What she confided to her diary with reference to the four of them was literally,

Lord David is a pretty boy. Puffin Asquith an ugly one – wizened, unimpressive, sharp, like a street boy. Sackville West reminded me of a peevish shop girl. They all have the same clipped quick speech and politeness, and total insignificance. Yet we asked Lord David and Puff to write for the Nation, and also a dull fat man called Hartley.<sup>131</sup>

In exchange, Hartley described her as a “cruel tease”.<sup>132</sup> But as declared by his biographer he was afraid of her as when she asked him, “Have you written any

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<sup>128</sup> WRIGHT, p.31

<sup>129</sup> Lady Ottoline Morell’s house.

<sup>130</sup> WOOLF, Virginia. **Diary of Virginia Woolf**. V.2, 1920-1924 (Hogarth Press 1978), p.243.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid. p.243.

<sup>132</sup> WRIGHT, p.75.

more shabby books, Mr. Hartley?” He was so surprised that he dropped the parcels he was carrying. He asked which of his books she meant. She replied “ The one that might have been written by a man with one foot in England and the other in Venice” adding in a more kindly tone, “If you could break up your crystal sentences”.<sup>133</sup> The fact is that they did not meet very frequently and Hartley was never inclined to be part of the Bloomsbury set, referred by Hartley as “Wild Waves” after *The Waves* had been published. Hartley’s sexual choice also aggravated his sense of guilt and need to be approved. The second would appear in the novel.

Leslie Hartley’s references to wars are many throughout his literary works. In fact, what comes to one’s mind is that the novelist in his personal life, and narrators as Leo Colston, blame the war for transforming the hopes of a Golden Age in a “hideous century.” According to Adrian Wright<sup>134</sup>, “his belief in his fellow man was corroded in the aftermath of war.” And here comes again, the feeling that the best was left behind and the element of loss appearing in the novelist’s solitary crossing through the foreign country of his life.

In 1956, Hartley travelled to Germany on a lengthy lecture tour” across the country. Among the cities visited were Hannover, Hamburg and Cologne. At the time, he was already recognized as a celebrity,

The country, still recovering from the great conflict that ended only eleven years before, had the opportunity to see and hear the most British of the novelists, whose newly found international fame sprang largely from a book about that most peaceable of ages, Edwardian England. It depressed Hartley to see how the great cities of Germany had been so destroyed.<sup>135</sup>

### 3.3 The Writer Behind the Man

The first impression we get when looking for L.P. Hartley’s critic fortune is that this will not be an easy enterprise. In spite of the quality of his writings, Hartley’s name is not commonly referred among the most canonical icons of English fiction. At

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid, p.85.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid, p.54.

<sup>135</sup> WRIGHT, p.181.

the same time, it is equally observable that it is easily found when looking it up at the good guides to literature in English, although the information available is limited.

It was still at basic school that the literary inclination made its first appearance (or showed up) in Leslie Hartley's life. Among the earliest of Hartley's papers, his biographer gives account of a fragment of a story written when he was eleven "and in bed with caterpillar rash". It was a fairy-tale. In it, Wright foresees the characteristics of Hartley's future style: "the directness, simplicity and naivety".<sup>136</sup> Making good use of Wright's observation, it would be profitable to add his fondness for mythological elements, as both will give amplitude in *The Go-Between*, through the literary figures of *Robin Hood* and *Maid Marian*, *Hercules*, *Icarus* and *Mercury*, the messenger of the Olympian Gods, mainly. Confirming the early inclination on myths, the young Leslie also made at least one attempts in Poetry, having *Icarus*<sup>137</sup> as inspiration.

The poem *Aviation* was written while he was still studying in Northdown in 1909, when Leslie was fourteen years old. It was possibly inspired by Blériot's flight from Baraques to Dover in July 1909:

One great desire of all mankind  
From many years ago,  
Has been the conquest of the air,  
As you perhaps may know.

For Dedalus in ancient times,  
Who, wise in many things,  
From Minos, lord of land and sea,  
Escaped by using wings.

But Icarus, when over the sea  
Too near the sun did fly;  
The wax, with which the wings were stuck  
Did melt, and he did die.

The poem received an observation from a Mr. Holt, the teacher: *Where is the main verb?* He was referring to the second stanza. Leslie, then, completed ironically:

But men in present times, who are  
In all respects quite sane  
Have wonderful results obtained,  
Using an airplane.  
This wonderful affair is made  
With planes both light and strong,

<sup>136</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.34.

<sup>137</sup> Icarus is again referred in *The Go-Between*, pointing to a recurrent element to be approached in the psychoanalytical section in the sequence of the chapter.

While a petrol motor, strongly made,  
Sends the machine along.

The chief success was gained at first  
(I do hope this line scans)  
By Wilbur (also Orville) Wright  
By nation americans.

The mythical motifs, especially, *Icarus*, would appear later in the *Go-Between*, as well as his appreciation for the fables. Adrian Wright understands that “fable forces Hartley’s writing to the bareness of truth, in the simplicity of the form, his strongest feelings about the human condition break through uncluttered, undisguised perhaps even unknowingly”. Later on, but still during the early years of Hartley’s life, his literary tendencies and imaginative mind would try his ways on Drama, writing “The Tower of Fletton”<sup>138</sup> having his sisters Norah and Elid as actresses.

For a man who started writing so early in life, writing was not an easy enterprise. Throughout the biographic work here adopted, there are some passages putting in relevance the struggle it caused him. In September 1944, for example, when the draft of the second book of the trilogy of *Eustace and Hilda* (to be published later in 1946 as *Sixth Heaven*) was completed he said to Elizabeth Bowen: “It doesn’t go very well. I’m afraid. How difficult it is to find the right circumstances for writing and the right frame of mind”.<sup>139</sup> Revising and correcting proofs was also a “tiresome interruption”, a job which the writer detested.

Hartley’s preoccupation with morals was transparent in his novels. Once, he confessed to a friend that “I often wish I could write a novel without moral preoccupations, but what I write about individuals is a reflection, an anagram of what I feel about people in general – a microcosm of the macrocosm.”<sup>140</sup> According to Wright’s standpoint, Hartley had no talent to make minor decisions.

One of Hartley’s more clear characteristics is the autobiographical element, a characteristic to appear throughout his literary work, according to his biographer. His complete literary production consists of short stories, novels and one volume of critical essays. A full account of it is provided in the Appendix. With respect to the literary influences observed in Hartley’s writings, it has been emphasized the influence of Henry James’s style, especially in *Simonetta Perkins*.

<sup>138</sup> Fletton – Hartley’s family house. See Attached L.

<sup>139</sup> Letter dated 6 December 1944 – Apud WRIGHT, Adrian, 1995.

<sup>140</sup> Letter to Peter Bien, 5 May 1962 in WRIGHT, Adrian, p.217.

In fact, Hartley has acknowledged the occurrence, especially with reference to the understatements.<sup>141</sup> However, two other writers had left their potent impressions on Hartley's life since he was a boy. The first one was Emily Brontë with her sole masterpiece *Wuthering Heights*; the second, Nathaniel Hawthorne (*The Scarlet Letter*). Both "remained with him for the rest of his life", according to Wright's words, as Hartley "recognized that both were writers discarding their innate Puritanism in order to get at a deeper understanding of life." Hartley developed a deep understanding of Emily Brontë work. Emily's words precede *The Go-Between* and *The Shrink and the Anemone*. The opening words of the latter are "I've known a hundred kinds of love, All made the loved one rue".<sup>142</sup> *Adrian Wright's perception is that the sentence "encapsulates what Hartley believed of the human condition" and continues to express what he thinks is the case,*

Possibly, Hartley admired Emily because she used her writing to rebel against the life that had been imposed on her; she had found an aesthetic escape. He thought that part of Emily's tragedy was that she did not want friendship, but love – and this tussle was one crucial to Hartley's later life."<sup>143</sup>

Hawthorne and Emily, *Wuthering Heights* and *The Scarlet Letter*. Those were the books that as a boy, Leslie was first attracted to his grandfather's bookshelves. In a comparison he established between Emily Brontë and Hawthorne, he wrote,

Perhaps the parallel between these writers is not very rewarding except in so far as it illustrates the means whereby two lonely, misanthropic novelists, unwilling or unable for one reason or another to receive sustenance from the community, were still able to produce great works of art. In composing these works they found compensation, and consolation, for whatever it was in their natures that made for solitude, unhappiness, frustration, guilt. Though their circumstances differed, and their aims differed, they were linked souls who "desired a better country – that is, a heavenly one".<sup>144</sup>

However, the greatest influence recognized by Hartley came from Hawthorne. He saw in the American writer "the biggest influence on my mind and general attitude towards reality".<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.41.

<sup>142</sup> BRONTËE, Emily – Apud WRIGHT, A. p.40.

<sup>143</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.41.

<sup>144</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. *The Novelist's Responsibility*, p.134 – Apud WRIGHT, A. p.41.

<sup>145</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.42, letter to Peter Brien, 1956.

According to Hartley's biographer: "There was so much about him [Hawthorne] that Hartley admired: he thought no writer had ever written better prose".<sup>146</sup>. Hartley was referring to

[...] the way in which Hawthorne (like Poe) saw reality as different from our daily experience of it; he was captivated by Hawthorne's thought that the human nature must be good, when Hawthorne was convinced in his heart that it was evil. He recognized Hawthorne's preoccupation with "the magnetic chain of humanity" and the consequences of trying to break away from it."

In such pieces as *Endicott and the Red Cross* Hawthorne delineates the guilt, or guilty secret, that leads to separation from the mainstream of life, a breaking of the chain of humanity. Hartley looked to Hawthorne for an understanding of sin, coming to terms with the theory that sin is regenerative of power of life. How concerned Hartley was, all his days, with the question that Hawthorne posed in his novel *The Marble Faun*:

Is sin, then, which we deem such a dreadful blackness in the universe, is it like sorrow, merely an element of human education through which we struggle to a higher and purer state than we could have otherwise attained? Did Adam fall that we might ultimately rise to a far loftier paradise than this?" (Wright, p.42 – apud *The Novelist Responsibility*, p.113).

Hartley's first short stories were published in a volume called *Night Fears and Other Stories* (1924), which was followed by numerous other collections, among them *The Killing Bottle* (1932), *The Travelling Grave* (1951), *The White Wand* (1954) and *Two for The River* (1961). Those books have established his reputation as a leading writer of the genre. In Hartley's stories forces of the supernatural interact with human forces, such as guilt, misplaced emotions, for no apparent reason. The last published short story appeared, as informed by Wright (p.271), in the Christmas edition of the *Spectator*, a few days after Hartley's death. The Tribute spoke of him as,

possessing the stoic Olympian melancholy of a man who has faced and come to terms with worse things than death,.. His life, he knew, was in its way, tragic and this his novels reflect. Their

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<sup>146</sup> *ibid*, A. p.42.

autobiographical content was high, he chose Venice, knowing marriage to be impossible... His reputation seems certain to rise".<sup>147</sup>

Hartley's novels began with *Simonetta Perkins* (1925), which was set in Venice, but it was with this trilogy, *The Shrimp and the Anemone* (1944), *The Sixth Heaven* (1946) and the title volume, *Eustace and Hilda* (1947), that Hartley won the critical admiration. He was then 52 years old. The trilogy follows the relationship between Eustace and his elder sister Hilda, through childhood to adulthood in Oxford and Venice. Many other novels followed the trilogy, including *The Go-Between*, which was published some years later, in 1953. Other novels are *A Perfect Woman* (1955), *The Hireling* (1957), *Facial Justice* (1960), *The Brickfield* (1964) and its sequel *The Betrayal* (1966), *Poor Clare* (1968) and *The Lover Adept* (1969). Altogether, he wrote fourteen novels. A full list of Hartley's literary production is provided at the Appendices.

### 3.4 The Critic Behind the Writer

Leslie Pole Hartley started his writing career not as a novelist, but as a critic, just after leaving Oxford. He became a reviewer for *The Spectator*, an association which would last until his death, in 1972.<sup>148</sup> He also wrote for *Nation and Athenaeum*. When it finished (April 1924), he was already in consistent demand as a reviewer of contemporary fiction. For the *Saturday Review*, he wrote weekly until 1930.

From 1935 to 1942 Hartley was reviewing for the *Observer*, for *Life and Letters Today*, *Time and Tide* and the *Illustrated London News*. There was also regular work for the *Calendar of Modern Letters*, but (according to his biographer, "his greater allegiance in the inter-war years was to the *Sketch*, a glossy magazine which Hartley joined in October 1929. When he joined this newspaper he was already introduced to the readers as a "very well-known literary critic. J. B. Priestley, the playwright, was one among those who considered him a very good literary critic. He described Hartley as "the best reviewer of fiction" at the time. According to Wright (1995, p. 78): "For the reader, there was the confidence that the review was the work

<sup>147</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.271 – Spectator 12.23.1972.

<sup>148</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.77.

of a man of taste and sympathy with the ability to illuminate his subject. And for the writer “there was the confidence that his or her work had been judged considerately”.

Hartley was a critic whose “judgement was seldom questioned and his wisdom was often acknowledged.” One example is given by Priestley’s words: “every time you put your finger on something that most people seem to miss you always say something that makes me see my own work more clearly”<sup>149</sup> or what Hugh Walpole, another writer, wrote “you have really made writing a less lonely business for me”.<sup>150</sup> But it was only in 1967 that Leslie Pole Hartley published a volume of critical essays, *The Novelist’s Responsibility*. It included works on Nathaniel Hawthorne, Jane Austen, Emily Brontë and Henry James, among others. In his book of essays, called *The Novelist’s Responsibility*<sup>151</sup>, Hartley expresses his understanding about the function of the artist,

Today the middle class is being squeezed out of existence, and it is indeed difficult for anyone observing the political or social scene to believe there is such a thing as a really disinterested action. Yet art demands altruism as no other activity does; the artist must believe that his work is more important than he is; he must be prepared to sacrifice himself to it in order to be reborn in it.

In Adrian Wright’s standpoint, the book is permeated by a lack of interest in modern literary world and Hartley “expects the past to offer up its old magic. He is persuaded by recollections of pleasures”.<sup>152</sup> But Hartley also included three essays on the craft of writing. One of them, refers to the short-story, as the title informs: *In Defense of the Short Story*. The other one is *The Novelist and his Materia* which defines Hartley’s attitude towards the decline of individualism “ the fact that he sees the symbol of modern civilization as the orderly queue, taking away the need for any coherent or aggressive moral responsibility, ” a kind of modern “slaves”, to use Nietzsche’s definition.

Hartley’s last twenty years were not at peace. He, who had always taken “liberal doses of alcohol” was then drinking heavily:<sup>153</sup> “There may have been reasons in anger, in frustration, in the suspicion that his writing life and personal life both suffered from the same disability, whatever that might be.” He sensed that “he

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<sup>149</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.78 – Letter to LPH in August, 1929.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid, A. p.79 – Letter dated July 1, 1927.

<sup>151</sup> HARTLEY, 1967, p. 190. – Apud. WRIGHT, p.235.

<sup>152</sup> WRIGHT, A. p.234.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid, p.190.



could do little to prevent the corrupting influence of the outside world that threatened to destroy the idyll he expected".<sup>154</sup>

If it were possible to summarize in a few words what an artist represented (or was) during a life-time, I would choose the following words, hoping not to disappoint Hartley's running shadow, one of the most successful expressions used by his biographer, Adrian Wright: Leslie Poles Hartley was an outsider in his own sex, family, in his own group, in his own world, not forgetting his own self. In consequence of this position, his major role was being *between*. This position of being between two points is going to appear in *The Go-Between*.

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid, A. p.190.

## 4 CHAPTER III – THE JOURNEY TO THE FOREIGN COUNTRY IN *THE GO-BETWEEN*

### 4.1 General Comments About the Novel

The plot of *The Go-Between* could be condensed in a very few words. In this case, it would probably contain something of the following type: “An elderly solitary English man finds the diary he was writing in the beginning of his adolescence and decides to re-visit the *locus* of his experiences.” But, the facts are not what counts here. It is the subtlety of the protagonist’s perception transformed into images and those into words that guarantee a special place for *The Go-Between* among the greatest English novels of the time.<sup>155</sup>

Right at the very first line, Leslie Pole Hartley, the author, condenses not the facts themselves, but the sad atmosphere that emanates from the novel in less than a dozen words. The famous statement<sup>156</sup> with which the old Mr. Leo Colston introduces his melancholy reminiscences says, “The past is a foreign country, where they do things differently.” The referred sentence exposes a grief for things forever past, a sense of loss and non-recognition of the protagonist’s own essence or centre of consciousness.

Symbolically, the *foreign country* of Leo’s life represents the past which is perceived as a kind of *alien* entity. Leo’s thin figure is referred as a third personal pronoun.<sup>157</sup> Thus, being the object of Mr. Colston contemplation, there is a clear separation between the distant adolescent Leo, the object of reference, and the old protagonist-narrator (as he describes himself), Mr. Colston, who is telling the reader his version of the facts in the first person.

Therefore, the melancholy which pervades and occupies the blank space, the lack in his life, can be approached as resulting from what Freud has considered the distance he places in relation to the object of the desire: his own self, whose attachment to the young Leo is now perceived as a separated (lost) entity. In this

<sup>155</sup> INGLIS, Rewey Belle, SPEAR, Josephine. *Adventures in English Literature*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956, p.347

<sup>156</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian. *Foreign Country – The Life of L. P. Hartley*. 1995

<sup>158</sup> The third person is supposed to indicate the object of the discourse.

sense, Mr. Leo Colston's journey can be approached as an effort to "resuscitate" the old magic, that of the past things.

#### **4.2 The Country Re-visited – A Summary**

The story can be read in many ways and, in all of them, the protagonist is a kind of outsider, a figure "between", if the image can be employed, someone between the tragic and the comic, a strange solitary figure. The narrative comprehends many aspects of his life from childhood to his old age. It is narrated by Mr. Leo Colston, a man about sixty, who thinks back the events that marked his life forever during the summer of 1900, when he was holidaying at his schoolmate's house – Brandham Hall, near Norwich, England.

The Maudleys were a typical snobbish Edwardian family. The protagonist ironically refers to them as divine figures "gods" and "angels", to later on, correct the previous definition to "fallen angels". Here, again, there is a decadent status, another type of loss, that involving the narrator's vision of the "divine" gas exhaled by Victorian gentry.

During the three weeks he spent at Brandham Hall, Leo was asked to act as messenger between Marcus's sister, Marian, and a local farmer, Ted Burgess. At the time, her engagement to the aristocratic viscount Lord Hugh Trimmingham was being prepared by her family, as the Maudsleys were a prosperous business family, but they lacked nobility, as a great part of the English new rich.

The novel is narrated in flash back and in the first person. An authorial point of view is adopted, under Leo's exclusive perspective. In spite of it, an intrinsic net of factors subtly suggested relates him to the century, up to a point when the image of the "hideous century" can not be dissociated from that of a double of the protagonist.

At that time, Leo was on the threshold of adolescence and he was going to learn many lessons, among picnics, cricket matches and parties. At the same time he would be crossing many other passages, as those from familiar to social environment, from countryside to city life, from innocence to adulthood, from

imagination to rational thinking. In fact, this stay in Brandham Hall, among pleasurable comings and goings meant just the stillness hiding the turbulence, as the temperature in the thermometer was indicating. And the *tornado* arrived on the hot day of Leo's thirteenth birthday. The Maudsleys had prepared a party for Leo. Previously, during the same morning, Marian's mother, Madeleine, had arrived while Marian and Leo were in the garden. Marian had just passed a note to Leo who should give it to Ted. The frightening Madeleine tried to trap and convince Leo to show the message, but she did not succeed. However, the incident left an ominous atmosphere in the air. It sounded like a bad presage.

The party was set for early in the evening. Marcus, Marian's brother, had told Leo that Marian had bought a green brand-new bicycle as gift. It was already packed waiting for the solemn moment. The evening came. And so, the thunderous storm fell. The guests arrived, as well as the cakes and the candles. But Marian did not! A servant was sent to her old nun's house where she was supposed to be. The clock stroke 6:00, then 7:00 p. m. and no news of Marian arrived. The wet servant returned alone. All of a sudden, Madeleine jumped from her chair, caught Leo's arms violently and brought him with her, out of the house, in order to bring her home. She forced him to accompany her to the outhouse of the deadly plant *Atropa belladonna*.<sup>158</sup> And there, she was making love with the *rough* farmer. The whole situation was a shock for the young and naive Leo, who was painfully awaking to the realities of adult life and emotions. At the same time, Leo's unanswered questions related to sexuality came to an abrupt end. The impressive scene, whose consequences changed Leo's life, is remembered with magnitude and delicacy as a result of Hartley's well-succeed choice of words and images.<sup>159</sup>

The transcription to the screen follows the essential atmosphere of the original text, thus providing a good example of fidelity and sensibility to the original text. The screen version of the novel, was adapted by Harold Pinter and was directed by Joseph Losey, two extremely sensible professionals of the screen language.

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<sup>158</sup> *Atropa Belladonna* – A poisonous plant – See Attached R (and comments at 3.3).

<sup>159</sup> See comments on the thunderstorm at 3.3 and Attached Q for painting reproducing the *Whirlwind of Lovers*, by William Blake, as a visual suggestion of the tornado which carried many bodies and souls.

It is under the symbolism of the storm of emotions that the anxieties exhaled by the tension in the air and would explode causing great damages. The happenings of that distant summer would leave their own trail of violence. Among them, the worst was Ted Burgess's suicide. He could not bear to go on living after what had happen to Marian. The old Mr. Colston remembers that, still under the shock after the happenings of the outhouse, he had *somehow* been informed about Ted's death by shot.

The whole situation was traumatically perceived by Leo, as he shared a profound identification with the farmer and because he accepted as his own, the responsibility for Ted's violent attempt against life as his own. From that moment on, the ex-messenger would carry new feelings, as shame for the proportion of the public scandal involving the Maudsley family in the (still) rigid post-Victorian society and guilt for Ted's fate. In fact, when tragedy came, all lost a great deal. Marian's mother, Madeleine, gradually lost her mind and was condemned to stay the rest of her life inside an asylum. Her father also died. After the tragic summer of 1900, Lord Trimmingham married Marian, who was already pregnant and gave birth to Ted Burgess's son, *Hugh*.

When, after fifty years, Mr. Colston returns to the place, he gets to know that Marian's husband, her son and her two brothers had died during the wars. *Alethea*<sup>160</sup>, who was Marian's daughter-in-law, as well as her father had also died.

As to the creative young Leo, whose dream at the turn of the century was to become the best writer of the *Golden Age*, he stopped writing his diary. On the other hand, his social life went on, after some months of total amnesia and silence. After the personal trauma, Mr. Colston made *an arrangement with life*, becoming a kind of invisible empty figure. Simultaneously, the world and the *hideous century* continued on their paradoxical mixture of *ascending spiral toward progress* and their dreadful war ruins. This is the period which is made blank in the diary. It lasted fifty years, until the old melancholy man, at a rainy winter night of London, contemplates a box, which contains the old diary and, metaphorically, his old *self* as a dead body. Observing his distant life as a foreigner, he decides it is time *to take the last bus to his home in the*

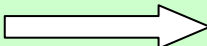
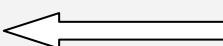
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<sup>160</sup> In Greek means "Truth", "Unveiled truth" – *Alethea* was considered a dull person by Marian.

*past – if not lost*<sup>161</sup> – and to face “the cerements, the coffins, the vaults, the whole experience<sup>162</sup> for every man is important to himself one time or another“.<sup>163</sup>

Having finished the presentation of the story, it is my intention to invite my reader to explore the fissures of the text as presented in the next chart trying to understand the blank space between each of its items. To help in the crossing, I ask you to carry along the illuminations taken at the previous chapter.

Following there is the schematic perception of the opposite points, showing the “*an absent presence*” at the centre:

TURN OF THE CENTURY		
		
PAST = HOPE	<b>PASSAGE</b>	PRESENT= DISENCHANTMENT
Summer		Winter
An Individual self		A Social Self
Young		Old
A lion		A dull dog
Imaginative & creative talent		Dutiful business man
Dionysian attitudes		Apollonian attitudes
A writer to be...a strong desire		An undertaker in the Art fields - an arrangement in life
Instinctive actions, moved by desire Under Erotic Force		Rational reactions / moved by Will Under Self-Preservation Force
An Active Figure - Who was used to run <u>through the forest, on foot</u>		A Passive Figure – Who drives an <u>automobile in the modern city</u>
messages on paper and oral		Messages by phone and oral
Potency: Nature (trees, river)& His Life		Weakness & infertility Nature & His Life

<sup>161</sup> The Go-Between, p.22.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, p.24.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, p.26.

Magical Power = Intuitive Knowledge	Social Power = Formal Knowledge
People at Brandham Hall were seen as Angels (or Gods)	Seen as "fallen angels"
Life, as a great happy party	Life, as a lonely empty space
A comedy full of his tricks & pride	The tragedy plenty of guilt & misunderstandings
The Beginning = Summer Afternoons/SUN	The End = Winter evenings/MOON

#### 4. 3 One Country: Two Visions

The novel is a well-written portrait of the Edwardian time. The narrative is constructed in traditional form and elegant style, in spite of its (sometimes, humorous) ironies and implicit critic about the system of classes in England. Right at the first chapter, the narrator gives an example of the kind, when he makes comments about the invitation received by young Leo to visit Marcus Maudsley (rented) mansion,

The Court Place *predisposed him (Marcus) in my favour*, as I suspected it also did his mother. But they were mistaken, for Court Place was quite an ordinary house, set a little back in the village street, behind looped chains, of which I was rather proud. Well, not quite ordinary, for part of the house was reputed to be very old; the bishops of Salisbury, it was said, once held their court there; hence the name. Behind the house we had an acre of garden, intersected by a stream, which a jobbing gardener attended to three days a week.<sup>164</sup>

Thus, the narrator adds his ironical view to the description of the place: "It was not a Court in the grandiloquent sense of the word, such as Maudsley, *I fancy*,

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, p.27. My emphasis.

believed it to be.” There is, also, a clear gap between the way the narrator describes young Leo’s house as it really seemed to be and what was being expected of Leo’s house, from the point of view of the Maudsley family, a typical Edwardian family, whose values were still greatly linked to the Victorian Age. In spite of being considered a well off family, prosperous in the financial business, the implicit irony is that the Maudsleys were in search of that kind of *aura* that money did not bring: *the aura of tradition*.

At the same time, if the tenses of the verbs are taken into consideration, it is difficult to ignore the intrinsic fissure that has arisen between the present perception of the facts by the narrator and that of the old time. He chooses *I fancy* (which points to...*now, here*), in opposition to what his friend, Marcus, *believed* it to be (*past, there*).

Before starting the analysis of the items of the scheme that show the gaps and fragmentation between the young Leo and the melancholy Mr. Colston, it would be profitable to present some basic psychological aspects about the protagonist.

Many things could be said about the ritual of passage from paradise to complete disenchantment in the life of the pre-adolescent who was approaching his thirteenth birthday when he got involved in an erotic triangle, whose explosion would mark his life forever. Right in the *Prologue*, there is a well-constructed vision of how he felt facing his life and the new century in that year of 1900 and how he was feeling at the moment he opens the old diary and starts his journey back to the old country. The moment when his fingers touches the diary is specially sublime and worthy of a mention. After he opens the box containing some relics – including the diary – he considers,

The relics were not exactly dirty nor were they quite clean, they had the patina of age; and I handled them, for the first time for over fifty years, a recollection of what each had meant to me came back, faint as the magnets’s power to draw, but as perceptible. Something came and went between us: the intimate pleasure of recognition, the almost mystical thrill of early ownership – feelings of which, at sixty-odd, I felt ashamed. It was a roll-call in reverse; the children of the past announced their names, and I said “Here”.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> HARTLEY. L.P., *The Go-Between*. p.9.



However, it is when Mr. Colston describes his hopes , so strictly related to the hopes he projected to the coming Twentieth Century that the whole novel reaches its greatest universal significance, as both the inner and the outer worlds ended in disappointment and defeat. In the text, the century is associated with *The Golden Age*<sup>166</sup>, in a direct allusion to the mythological / primordial period of the perfection, of the *Olympian* gods,

The year of 1900 had an almost mystical appeal for me; I could hardly wait for it: Nineteen hundred, nineteen hundred, I would chant to myself in rapture; and as the old century drew to its close, I began to wonder whether I should live to see its successor. I had an excuse for this: I had been ill and was acquainted with the idea of death; but much more it was the fear of missing infinitely precious – the dawn of a Golden Age.<sup>167</sup>

There are several possibilities of exploration to the expression “the golden age”, apart from Hesiod’s *Theogony*. One of them is related to the chemical excellence of the metal, whose material is considered of high quality. In alchemy, the symbolism also points to the idea of perfection, as it is related to light, sun, knowledge and, by extension, to God as referred along the previous chapter<sup>168</sup>. Still considering the same allusion to the golden age, as the age of the perfection and of gods, the future pointed to the sun and the light, in an ascending spiral, whose significance suggests that praised by the *Enlightenment*.

I knew that the year must return to winter and begin again; but to my apprehensions the zodiacal company were subject to no such limitations: they soared in an *ascending spiral towards infinity* [...] And the *expansion and ascension*, as of some divine gas, which I believed to be the ruling principle of my own life, I attributed to the coming century.<sup>169</sup> (My emphasis).

However, it is within the next statement that the protagonist-narrator emphasizes the relation between the two spheres in which the delusion would be installed, the inner and the outer world, “For that was what I believed the coming

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<sup>166</sup> Hesiod, *Theogony*.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid*, p.12.

<sup>168</sup> See Attached S for the Lion and the Sun.

<sup>169</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. p.12.

century would be: a realization, on the part of the whole world, of the hopes that I was entering for myself".<sup>170</sup>

Therefore, one of the reasons for the protagonist's fragmentation of selfhood leads to the *personal* tragedy, involving at the same time, a sexual awakening. Even not intending to analyze human behaviour here under the medical perspective, it would be unprofitable *not* to consider, at least, some of the several terms presented along the text and extracted from psychoanalysis, as in the following paragraph,

Excitement, like *hysteria*, bubbled up in me from a hundred unsealed springs. If it isn't too late, I thought confusedly, neither is too early. I haven't much life left to spoil. It was a last flicker of the *instinct of self-preservation* which had failed me so signally at Brandham Hall.<sup>171</sup> (My emphasis).

Thus, considering those expressions as permission to introduce – even for a brief visit to the present text – Freud's studies, as a suggestive link between the psychoanalyst and the subject of the events in the essay *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy*.<sup>172</sup> In this case, Leo can be considered (in his old dried age) as a typical case of a neurotic reaction after having seen some erotic scenes, a traumatic experience that defined his whole future. In the case analyzed by Freud, the problem became known and was treated only after the patient's adulthood.

Another possibility is that the protagonist's deceptive adult life is a product of a frustrated attempt to possess the object of his desire, in this case, Marian, the Virgin and unique female figure of his Zodiac:

As for the Virgin, the one distinctively female figure in the galaxy, I can scarcely say what she meant to me. She was dressed adequately, but only in the coils and sweeps of her long hair; and I doubt whether the school authorities, had they known about her, would have approved the hours of dalliance my thoughts spent with her, though these, I think, were innocent enough. *She was, to me, the key to the whole pattern, the climax, the coping-stone, the goddess* – for my imagination was then, though it is no longer, passionately hierarchical; it envisaged things in an ascending scale, circle on

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid. p.24.

<sup>172</sup> FREUD, Sigmund. V.XVII. p.13.

circle, tier on tier, and the annual, mechanical revolution of the months did not disturb this notion.<sup>173</sup> (My emphasis).

At this point of the text, a new passage is approaching in Leo's life: that of the image of the mother, characterized by the mother-figure, who is mystified and is protective while looking after her progeny from above, from Heaven (Divine realm), to the Earthly figure, the woman, the poisonous *belladonna*. However, the protagonist is not entirely sure of his supposed innocence at the time as he tries to pass to the reader. Having described the Virgin in an ambiguous way, as his reference to the way she is covered (only by her long hairs), he will later on compare her with a deadly plant, the *Atropa Beladona*.<sup>174</sup> In fact, Leo's perception of the female figure would deserve a whole analysis, which is not the intention here.

However, still keeping in mind the same portrait of the female figure as object of desire and future source of frustration, there is another suggestive passage when the narrator prepares the link with Freudian studies about sexuality and desire. In the scene, Madeleine<sup>175</sup>, who is Marian's mother, is trying to get the message Leo is about to take to Ted Burgess. Then, there is an ambivalent conversation,

Mrs. Maudsley walked slowly down the steps.

What were you fighting about?' She asked.

Oh! 'Said Marian, 'I was teaching him a lesson...

She got no further, for at that moment, as Dennys might have done, I dropped the letter. Crumpled, untouchable, it lay on the ground between us.

Was that the bone of contention?' Mrs. Maudsley asked.

Marian picked up the letter and stuffed it in my pocket.<sup>176</sup>

The bone of contention! In fact, most of the talks and looks that permeate the story are ambiguous. Nothing is clear, especially at the present time of the narration. In several moments, Madeleine is described as a very proximate cousin of the *Sphinx*, especially to Leo. Therefore, the above-mentioned dialogue does not differ

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<sup>173</sup> HARTLEY, L. P., p.12.

<sup>174</sup> *Atropa Beladona* – A deadly plant, with high level of toxins. Its ingestion may cause hallucination, dilation of the pupil, dryness in the mouth and trembling. See Appendix R.

<sup>175</sup> There is also an ambiguity with plenty of significance here, if we consider the biblical figure, whose role performed has more than one connotation.

<sup>176</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. p. 268.

from the others. To what kind of *bone* was Madeleine referring? The paper which Leo and Marian were playfully disputing? Was she referring to the affair about whom she was certainly suspecting? No matter what her intention was, the expression serves to highlight Marian's position in the whole plot. She was the bone of contention disputed by Ted Burgess, the Viscount Hugh Trimmingham, not to forget the young innocent Leo, in juxtaposition to the new presentation of the dispute of a virgin among eleven figures of the Zodiac.

At the same time, as said by Leo, the eleven figures of the Zodiac disputed the unique female of the circle. In this sense, Leo was crossing another passage, that of transferring his contemplation of the heavenly divine *Virgin* of the Zodiac (and by extension, his mother, and the good version of the female figure) to the attraction by an earthly profane *Beladonna*, the poisonous version of the female representation<sup>177</sup>. The passage from the divine sphere to the profane in the sexual aspect was equally disastrous and would represent another fragment taken out of the protagonist's life, leaving its permanent sequel, as shows the dryness of his future life will prove. In order to illustrate the two presentations of the same figure, the divine and the profane image of woman I invite my travel companion to look into Appendices for a suggestive painting by Ticiano (1515). Marian, represented both to Leo.

Deceived by the discovery of Marian's attraction to Ted at the moment she was about to get married, Leo decides *to kill the poisonous plant*, extracting the danger literally "by its root", in a sequence filled with symbolism and eroticism, worthy of mention. Note, that here comes another image of fertility, that of the mythical *mother earth*, frequently associated to a tree, which – in the present case – is pulled out of the ground.

Leo is an adept of magic rituals, so Leo prepares the chemical experiment to curse the spell on the plant: "Though my eyes got gradually accustomed to the darkness I was almost on the top of the outhouses, before I saw the tick blur of the deadly nightshade. *It was like a lady standing in her doorway looking out for someone*".<sup>178</sup> In these first images, it is already possible to perceive there is an initial approximation between two ideas: the plant and the woman.

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<sup>177</sup> Two female versions – See Attached Q.

<sup>178</sup> Emphasys mine.

The text and the *crescendo* go on, “I was prepared to dread it, but not prepared for the tumult of emotions it aroused in me. In some way *it wanted me*. I felt, just as I wanted it; and the fancy took me that it wanted me as an ingredient, and would have me” [my emphasis]. Again, and more clearly, grows the suggestion of a female not in the physical presence, but as substitution. Carl Jung, in his book *Man and his Symbols*, makes reference to what he calls the “bush soul”,

It is a well-known psychological fact that an individual may have such [mystical participation] an unconscious identity with some other person or object. This identity takes a variety of forms among primitives. If the bush soul is that of an animal, the animal itself is considered as some sort of brother to the man. [...] If the bush soul is a tree, the tree is presumed to have something like parental authority over the individual concerned. In both cases an injury to the bush soul is interpreted as an injury to the man.<sup>179</sup>

Even the careful choice of the word to describe the scene converges into the imagery of a sexual intercourse, “The spell was not waiting to be born in my bedroom, as I meant it should be, but here in this roofless shed, and I was not preparing it for the deadly nightshade, but the deadly nightshade was preparing it to me.” The protagonist was being kept prisoner to the power of the poisonous plant, whose antagonism he had already mentioned: he felt irremediably attracted to poisonous plants. Rejection and attraction, coming together, intertwined! *Good* and *evil*, proving that human beings carry both and have to make their choice at every step they take.

Leo’s imaginative mind enriched the happenings by definitely associating the vegetal world ( bush tree) to a woman’s figure, hearing virtual voices,

Come in, it seemed to say; and at last after an unfathomable time I stretched my hand out into the thick darkness where it grew and felt the shoots and leaves close softly on it. I withdrew my hand and peered. There was no room for me inside, but if I went inside, into the unhallowed darkness where it lurked, that springing mass of vegetable force, I should learn its secret and it would learn mine. And *in* I went.<sup>180</sup> (My emphasis).

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<sup>179</sup> JUNG, Carl. *Man and his Symbols*. 1978. p.7.

<sup>180</sup> HARTLEY, L. P. p.255.

Before proceeding with the narration, so rich in images, it can be fruitful (using the same frame of vocabulary) to connect two ideas at this point. The thirsty of knowledge! The suggestion of the tree of knowledge reminds to Adam and Eve, in the sense that it was for their cunning attitude of hurting, extracting, touching it, eating of it that they fell into eternal disgrace, loss and guilt. From that moment on, they knew both sides, “*For God knows that in the very day of YOUR eating from it, YOUR eyes are bound to be opened and YOU are bound to be like God, **KNOWING good and evil.***” (Genesis 3:5)<sup>181</sup>. Leo was facing the good and the evil aspects of his attitudes.

The fancy became quite real involving the hero in a whirlwind of ominous emotions,

It was stifling, yet delicious, the leaves, the shoots, even the twigs, so yielding; and this must be a flower that brushed my eyelids, and this must be a berry that pressed against my lips... At that I panicked and tried to force my way out but could not find the way out: there seemed to be a wall on every side, and I barked my knuckles. At first I was afraid of hurting the plant, then in my terror I began to tear at it, and heard its branches ripping and crackling. Soon I cleared a space round in my head, but was not enough, it must all be clear.<sup>182</sup>

And then, came the surprise

The plant was much less strong than I supposed: I fought with it: I got hold of its main stem and snapped it off. There was a swish; a soft, sighing fall of leaf on leaf a swirl; a debris of upturned leaves, knee-deep all round me: and standing up among them, the torn stem. I seized it and pulled it with all my might, and as I pulled the words of the missing spell floated into my mind out of some history lesson – ‘*Delenda est belladonna! Delenda est belladonna!*’

At this point, there is another connection between historical facts and personal happenings. In the case, the expression *Delenda* (of Roman origin) became famous during the destruction of Carthage: *Delenda est Carthage! Delenda est Carthage!*<sup>183</sup> Again, exploring the comparison, it could be possible to state that Leo was facing a fight for power and at the same time for knowledge, as he himself exposed. Not to

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<sup>181</sup> My emphasis.

<sup>182</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. **The Go-Between**. p.255.

<sup>183</sup> Encyclopedia Microsoft. Encarta. 2002.

forget the fact that a tree, suggesting a female figure, was occupying the place of his opponent. The last moments of his ritual are as follows,

I heard the roots creaking and cracking, felt their last strength arrayed against me, the vital principle of the plant defending itself in its death-agony. 'Delenda est belladonna' I chanted, not loudly, but loud enough for anyone listening to hear, and braced myself for a last pull.

The last words of the action, bring the impression of a loosening of tension, after the "the little shower of earth" that falls on the leaves like "rain"; like the relaxation that follows a sexual intercourse. The same atmosphere is highlighted by the narrator's confession that the protagonist "was lying on my back in the open, still clutching the stump, staring up at its mop-like coronal of roots, from which grains of earth kept dropping on my face."

The whole episode opens the possibility of introducing several aspects of the text and this is the reason to have it transcribed here integrally. It worked as an explosion, whose combustion was increasing due to the high level of the elements involved, like those used in chemistry, especially if the element *mercury* is included in the mixture.

The first aspect to be discussed refers to the *initiatory ritual*, the passage from childhood to adulthood. It is a fact that young Leo during his visit to the Maudsleys, tried many times to free himself from the anxieties of knowing and not knowing about the mysteries of sexuality. He had some dialogues with his friend Marcus, who showed signs of having already crossed the door of this kind of truth. Leo had been informed that Ted's mare was pregnant, and later that *she* had given birth. He tried to get more information about the subject with Ted, but that proved to be unfruitful, as Ted pointed out to the adolescent boy he was not prepared to perform the "father figure". He disappointed Leo, who replied that he would ask the other father figure, Marian's *fiancée*, the Viscount. The viscount, Hugh, proved to be a teacher with relation to Leo's ritual initiation on the social sphere, which means that he introduced Leo to the conveniences for a young man as the smoking room and the cricket matches.

Still exploring the symbolical implications of the night with the *belladonna*, a great consequence of Leo's action was related to fecundity. Extracting the roots from

the soil is equivalent to cutting the possibility of life, of procreation, and by extension, of producing or extending life. In a way, Leo would feel guilty from that moment on, because he had prepared the whole magical ritual under the intention of cutting the possibility of Marian and Ted is staying together. In his naivety, the young Leo understood that things could head towards a tragic ending, in case the viscount eventually coming to discover the running affair. So, if he could extinguish the bone of contention, the enigma would be solved. However, contrary to the myth content, the enigma was not solved, the present Oedipus was *already blind* by the effect of the poisonous plant, and that made him commit the next error.

In fact, there are many other psychological possible explanations for Leo's reactions facing the birth of his sexual energy, but it is not my intention to go into the psychoanalytical field as deeply as the text deserves. What I want is just to point out to this other possibility in the text, as the suggestion of sexual awakening is a constant theme in several of Hartley's works, according to his biographer, Adrian Wright. Maybe it would be useful at this point to mention that the novelist Hartley, "he had never read a book by Freud" which does not fit with the understanding of the critics.<sup>184</sup>

In the following lines, I invite my travel companion to observe one feature of young Leo's character, which is that of *trickery* in his actions, a typical characteristic of the god-messenger, and also a characteristic whose origin involves imagination and creative power.

That is important in order to accompany another passage of the protagonist's life. In one of the scenes, when he went outside the house in order to destroy the poisonous *belladonna*, he acted exactly as Mercury, the god, would do, performing his role hidden in the dark of the night, alone, led by a personal desire to interfere in someone else's life. He tries to convince himself of the validity of his attitude, but the modern messenger is not sure of what the gods of the Olympian Mansion would think: otherwise, he could take the plant out of the ground during the day, as it was considered a truly danger, because of its wicked substance. However, the true motivation for his tricks is quite clear. It was beneath the bush branches that Ted and Marian met.

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<sup>184</sup> According to The Wordsworth Companion to English Literature, p.411.



Another admitted trick is the intentional register of the instructions for the ritual with precaution to be easily “taken out for his own safety”. The same trick, however, presents another feature of the protagonist. It directly connects action (life) to words (language). When action disappeared, language would stop representation. That is an early propensity to be developed later in Leo’s life, in such a way that when he stops doing something it he stops registering. As an example of such concomitance, let us refer to the passage when the narrator exposes what he has done after the episode in question,

How much of these instructions I was able to repeat I cannot tell; I had written them down on a blank page of my diary, which I meant to tear out, for my safety’s sake, as soon as I had ceased to be proud of them. But I forgot to do that, as I forgot many other things, the following day.<sup>185</sup>

In this passage, as well as in many others skills attributed to the ancient god have already been changed on the route from childhood to adult life, as for instance, the connotation given to this loss of vital confidence concentrated in the expression “as I forgot many other things”. The Greek god was famous since he was four days old, when he stole his brother Apollo’s cattle, by a trick. After the subtle action, he made his marks on the ground appear as he was following the opposite direction. The episode shows a similar enthusiasm to that of Leo’s making his chemical receipt disappear.

The problem with the modern version of the deity is that he “forgot” how to do things through trickery, without falling into his own trap. Where are the old nymphs of memory, the *mnemosynes*? Gods are not supposed to fail in such a deplorable way. So, another delusion as “things are falling apart “ says the poem by Keats!

Leaving the scene of the tree for a while, there are many precious tricks proclaimed by Leo Colston in the past. Why isn’t there any in the present of narration? Come with me in order to reconsider what is beneath these little tricks. The subject “trickery” is being successively repeated intentionally. Trickery is here (and beneath most of the narrator’s actions) because Leo’s imagination is about to collapse leaving another empty space. In the episode recently proposed, the idea is

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<sup>185</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. **The Go-Between**. p.254.

to point out the fact that Leo is *not a magician in essence*, under the effect of any mysterious spell, but *he truly believes in his imaginative (intuitive, internal) power*, as it is perceived from the start of his narration. He is still under the power of imagination until it starts to fail him. The process is gradually installing the loss. Leo starts walking toward the passage where he is going to lose the greatest part of such natural power.

For one more example of the loss of vital energy, let us look back to the scene left behind at the winter rainy night of London. When Mr Colston first tried, he was not able to open the lock of the diary. Memory did not help much. He knew there was something hidden inside the diary. He kept concentrated, trying to remember the secret to open the object. He finally succeeded. The point of interest here is the way the narrator describes how easily young Leo used his powers in the past, in confrontation to his present skills as a trickster, "I took the combination lock and began to finger it, for I remember how, at school, I could always open it by the sense of touch when someone else had set the combination".<sup>186</sup>

And he completes saying that

It was one of my show-pieces, and when I first mastered it drew some applause, for I declared that to do it I had to put myself into a trance: and this was not quite a lie, for I did deliberately empty my mind and let my fingers work without direction. To heighten the effect, however, I would close my eyes and sway gently to and fro, until the effort of keeping my consciousness at a low ebb almost exhausted me.<sup>187</sup>

At the time, the narrator proved to possess the sensorial kind of knowledge at service in its integrality, as he used, in one single action, the greatest part of his senses: visualizing, touching, hearing and, the most important, the using of his intuitive perception of reality in plenitude. He knew by intuition (or instinct, like an animal) what he should do. He acted with confidence (like a lion in action) and pride.

At the same time, another characteristic of the animal, and of the ancient god Mercury, he did not feel *guilty* when his spell made his two schoolmates fall and break their legs. He acted as those gods, by retribution. Instead, after his stay with the Maudsley, which symbolically represents the process of Leo's socialization his

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<sup>186</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. **The Go-Between**. p.10.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, p.10.

next “curse”<sup>188</sup> would fail because he would feel guilty for everything related to his action.

However, in the present of the narration, the still Christian follower, Mr. Colston, carries a lot of guilt on his back. The first remorse would come under Ted’s suicide and its implications related to that Summer and his curse of the beladona. The biggest, his own life to be later put into the same account.

According to Nietzsche, the Christian attitude seems to fit with the sad figure represented by Leo Colston, as the Christian influence over human race was destructive, because man lost sight of his own happiness, replacing the empty space with suffering and penitence in order to merit living in Heaven for eternity. In this sense, our narrator comes to project the sad image of a condemned soul, whose body is still wandering over the waste land as a carcass being carried *to and fro* while in the meantime between the lost primordial paradise and the promised life back in heaven.<sup>189</sup>

The protagonist is also representative of the characteristics of the Dionysian Leo under the tree, moved by instinct rage, jealousy, a sense of revenge, smelling the soil, touching the plant. In the opposite side of the fissure of his life, is the hollow and melancholy man, who gave up the initial enthusiasm of becoming the best writer of the century, receiving the glories destined to the heroes, making an “arrangement with life” obviously under a certain circumstance (a negotiation, typical of a British imperialist citizen, whose major achievements were not supposed to involve losses until the end the ending century).

The “working arrangement” was made on the condition that “there should be no exhumation”.<sup>190</sup> Two main ideas are here involved, loss of everything related to Desire (creativity, desire, imagination), an increasing substitution of that by a need of a new kind (business) and Death. The inversion is confirmed if we take the frame of words that accompany not only the passage, but also the whole discourse of Mr. Colston (exhumation, cerements, vaults, resurrection, coffins, cindery creature), in opposition to Leo’s (glory, magnets, ambitions, aspirations, sensuous premonitions,

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<sup>188</sup> The episode involving the Atropa Belladonna.

<sup>189</sup> There is a painting by Bosch, whose imagery greatly corresponds to the view of a man’s solitary earthly journey. See appendice V.

<sup>190</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. **The Go-Between**. p.22.

physical force, instinct, dreams, hopes, curiosity, fantasy,...) each of them referred in the text.

It is another fact that he compared himself to a lion, when he was a child. His name being Leo, it was a natural association to the king of the forest. Another proper comment here refers to what Carl Jung calls “bush soul”. There was in the first stage a declared identification between Leo and the image of the wild king of all the animals,

My birthday fell in late July and I had an additional reason, an excellent one, though I should have been loath to mention it at school, for claiming the Lion [of zodiac] as my symbol. But much as I admired him and what he stood for, I could not identify myself with him, because late I had lost the faculty which, like other children, I had once reveled in, of pretending that I was an animal<sup>191</sup>.

This feeling of losing the previous identification with the world of Nature, seems to point out to the fact that he comes to tell in the sequence, that the process of socialization, of individualization at school in the case, may represent the beginning or the advance of another process of fragmentation. Thus, here comes Leo’s impression about this new passage: “A term and a half at school had helped to bring about this disability in my imagination; but it was also a natural change. I was between twelve and thirteen, and I wanted to think of myself as a man”.<sup>192</sup> A natural change, should it be understood under this point of view?

Nietzsche would disagree, certainly. In his thunderous language, imaginative power should be preserved as it is the only way to redemption, if Zarathustra can be called again to pass a little of his words to this *dull dog*, whose hypochondria and inertia keep prostrating him,

If my twelve-year-old self, of whom I had grown rather fond, thinking about him, were to reproach me: Why have you grown up such a dull dog, when I gave you such a good start? Why have you spent your time in dusty libraries, cataloguing other people’s books instead of writing your own? What has become of the Ram [zodiac], The Bull, and the Lion, the examples I gave you to emulate? Where above all is

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<sup>191</sup> Ibid, p.12.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p.12.

the Virgin, with her shining face and long curling tresses, whom I entrusted to yo – what should I say?<sup>193</sup>

So, the wild, proud king of the wild animals would become a domesticated lazy “dull dog”, whose image is frequently associated to melancholy (see the painting by Albrecht Dürer<sup>194</sup>).

The dull dog referred has another connotation, that of being a servant, of being next, near to his owner, of not having its own visibility and place in the world, depending on someone else’s will. A Nietzschean kind of modern slave, whose lack of vital energy and will can lead to a nihilist life of invisibility? It does not come as a surprise the fact that instead of becoming the most glorious writer of the century he would become an anonymous clerk in the “undertaker’s art”. So, here another example of fissure and fragmentation is installed. That between vital energy (a divine gas, an ascending force, a heavenly romp, an illuminating flash-light lost among a universe of annihilating and alienating perspectives in the social sphere, working environment and historical events. The “arrangement with life” also points to the fact that it comes as a protection, as becoming a dull dog, an invisible clerk, a solitary person, because it does not expose the “Hercules-to-be” to any kind of immediate risk, nor involves courage.

Another opposition that would lead to another fragmentation of the internal self refers to what Viscount Trimmingham and Ted Burgess symbolize in the plot. They stand for the *Apollonian* and the *Dionysian* models. Thus, let us make a comment about the two of them, as they played an important role in the protagonist’s life especially with relation to his personal failure. Ted Burgess was a farmer, a “rough” man, who rented some soil to plant corn on. Leo liked him. It was to Ted he asked for answers when the need of knowing more details of the mysteries of love and sexuality. He was a passionate being, who lived in straight contact with Nature, in the fields, an earthly representative. He was frequently swimming in the river nearby.

The river is also another symbol for life and sexuality. The farmer enjoyed his time with the animals, firing rabbits (a symbol of fertility). He was taking care of the newborn horse after helping its mother to give birth. He had Marian’s love. He was the first in line as candidate to a model to be followed, in spite of Leo’s fear of a poor

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<sup>193</sup> Ibid, p.22.

<sup>194</sup> See Attached J. Chapter 1.

life. Ted represented passion, fertility. He was the color of gold. The fields were the color of gold. He was the color of red. He was seen with blood. Blood was in his element.

A short time later, Leo realized that he himself also liked that blood. Blood was, for his own surprise, one element they both share. Thus, when Ted committed suicide, it was a great loss, followed by a profound sense of guilty soul. He was dead. In a way, the part of Leo's personality – still in formation – also died. That was a potential portion, the one which brought the Dionysian side of his life. And so, his life became dull and nihil.

On the other hand, the Viscount Hugh Trimmingham represented tradition, solidity, the light coming from traditional knowledge. And fragmentation installs itself once more among the pile of ruins deposited in the absent presence of a diary.

It is a natural perception for the travel companions of the old man during his journey back to his young self that of the animals and people visualized along the way on both sides of the passage (the old and the young) seem to be performing a kind of role in Leo's life: that of searching for an authentic identity, a place of his own to finally re-encounter his centre.

The next sentence in the protagonist's double discursion shows another mythical figure, also strongly related to a kind of loss, desire, already referred to. It involves the figure of *Icarus*, to whom the young Leslie Hartley, the novelist (chapter II), wrote a poem: "I should have an answer ready. "Well, it was you who let me down, and I will tell you how. "You flew too near to the sun, and you were scorched. This cindery creature is what you made me".<sup>195</sup> The cindery creature is a gray one, at the moment of the narration, in opposition to *the green boy*, who was seen running through *the forest* to distribute luck and fate. At the same time, Leo is described as being seen flying toward the sun.

There is a picture taken from hermetic alchemy, whose illustration is helpful to show the green lion who is in search of other satisfaction, that of the sapiens, of the light.<sup>196</sup> The suggested interpretation of the symbol is that the green color represents matter in a brute, basic, natural force. The sun represents the fire of sapience. Thus,

<sup>195</sup> HARTLEY, L. P. **The Go-Between**. p.22.

<sup>196</sup> See Attached S for picture. In Rosarium Philosophorum, século XVI, Stadtbibliothek Vadiana, St.Gallen, M.S. 394a. f.97, 92.

after eating the golden sun, the lion will become illuminated and as precious as the sun. It is an hermetic symbol. (Alchemic symbol).

To summarize, Leo's search for an identity crosses many *loci*: that of the divine realm, the god in a zodiac infinite circle, *Mercury*, that of *Hercules*, who possessed the force of the super-man, but also a mediation between god and man; that of the *lion*, that which possesses the wild, animal power, that of a *Robin Hood*, another kind of hero with power (not related to physical/ muscular potency, but who possessed the imaginative power of the trickster who takes things from one to give them to another, the outsider). Later on, he would identify himself with the *tree* (which possessed the fertility power, the belladonna, and later yet with that of the *dull dog* (the placidity of a *nihil* dull life). The latter image associates Leo's social being to the idea of decrepitude.

Then, when the moment of confronting the two sides of the same person came during that boring night, the two only possibilities were to raise from the dead being or to stay among them. The century is again related to the narrator, as he says, "But you have had half a century to get over it! Half a century, half a century, that glorious epoch, that golden age that I bequeathed to you!" "Has the twentieth century, I should ask, done so much."<sup>197</sup>

As the long and deceptive journey from childhood progresses until the protagonist's later life, it reveals a mixture of errors, misunderstandings and deceptive relationships, it brings its gelid message of loneliness and decay. It would be unforgivable not to consider his metaphysical quests. What I observe, from my own position – distant in time from those two figures (young Leo / old Mr. Colston) and also distant from the two great world wars – is the permanent metaphysical duality of the human condition, under which men oscillate before finding their own ephemeral truths.

To say more, Leo is the archetypical figure of every man who suffers waiting for the message, for certainties, forever divided between two opposite points<sup>198</sup>. Leo, all along his educational journey, displays the suffering for the absence of answers to fundamental questions: "*To be or not to be, that – still – is the question!*". Who will answer it?

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<sup>197</sup> HARTLEY, L.P., p.23.

<sup>198</sup> See Chart in Attached A.

Or, even before the (unknown) answer... *who* hears such soliloquy? I see Leo as a wanderer, who, in 1900, is transposing the line from one reality to another. In the next statement, part of these oppositions is made clear “*Knowledge may be power, but it is not resilience, or resourcefulness, or adaptability to life, still less is it intuitive sympathy with human nature; and those were qualities I possessed in 1900 in far greater measure than I possess in 1952.*”<sup>199</sup>

It is again through the narrator that we are introduced to the melancholy atmosphere that will pervade the reminiscence of Leo’s life up to the end of the novel...”He is alone sitting in a drab, flowerless room of London “in the winter evenings contemplating the past “instead of being “sitting in another room, rainbow-hued, looking into the future and not alone”.

Every statement or reflection suggested by Mr. Colston is a melancholy confrontation of two visions. The flowerless room is in opposition with the green fields on which the *belladonna* – even with its wicked and dangerous property – attracted the young man.

The statement made by the old protagonist also projects the shadows of a Benjaminian light, which points to the conditions involving the circumstances on which the modern narrator stands, where solitude and boredom is a necessary link to writing. Benjamin, as previously seen, makes allusion to the image of the bird preparing its eggs for life in the solitude of an individual. Equally, and a long time before Benjamin, the novelist Hartley through the protagonist Leo’s alludes to the same idea of writing and preserving life – I would say – using the bird and the egg as an image. Leo says, referring to his own diary,

And on the other hand there was the intimate pleasure of brooding over the diary in secret, like a bird sitting on its eggs, hatching, creating; losing myself in zodiacal reveries, speculating upon the glorious destiny of the twentieth century, intoxicated by my almost sensuous premonitions of what was coming to me. These were joys that depended upon secrecy. They would vanish if I told them or even betrayed their source.”<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> HARTLEY, p.22.

<sup>200</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. *The Go-Between*. p.14.



While the bird of freedom, if this image is possible, projects hopes to its progeny as birds, the writer in the case projects them as golden gods of a heavenly zodiacal nature, because he is used to identifying himself with a god-to be.

Much more could be transcribed from the text to draw a better picture of Leo. In fact, in his attempt at goodness, Leo seems to be so naïve and confused that his actions usually finishes in disappointment. However, as the plot progresses, we change the perspective from where the reader look at him and begin to “sense” the changes in the mood infiltrating the atmosphere of Leo’s world. The previous light (funny?) veil is gradually transformed into something else that is not clearly defined. His anger becomes self-pity, his desires are transformed into menace, his courage to say “no” fails and he is taken by “hybris”. Tragedy, then, enters his life, leaving a gap behind.

#### 4.3.1 Between the Diary and the Novel Fall the Shadows

At certain moments of a trip, we travelers, must recur to an extra effort to be aware about the nature of the place we are crossing in order to avoid the risk of being lost inside our own labyrinth of a (fictional) world. In fact, the situation is a distortion of vision caused by the natural identification (and attraction) established between readers and narrators, protagonists, writers. Therefore we – as readers and companions of a journey in *The Go-Between* – must have in mind that following Leo’s step into his self-discovery may lead us to that same unrecognized blank space where his essential being is supposedly lost, hidden inside a hollow carcass, or worse, closed inside a dead body to yet resuscitated (or, lyrically speaking, “like a patient etherized upon a table”, to be sublimated by poetic language, or faith, is the case with T. S. Eliot’s<sup>201</sup>.

The intention of calling the attention to the ground where we are is important because it changes our own perception of what is out of vision and in consequence it causes changes when choosing the direction ahead. So, let us pay attention to the ground where we are, observing Mr Leo Colston, as producer of two diverse

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<sup>201</sup> ELIOT, T. S. *The Love Song of J. Prufrock*. p.360.

scriptures: a *diary* and later on, a novel and let us see both “productions” in what they have in similarities and differences.

To start with, the diary is constructed with linguistic evidences of something written under the intentional purpose of promoting the glory of its writer. It contains the routine of the typical English Victorian ideal. Leo’s selected events contain references to matches, social meetings, teas, among other amenities. It is a clear evidence that young Leo was projecting to his own life, a kind of status similar to that lived by the common citizen of just after the Industrial Revolution. That brilliance and magnitude would gradually fade during the first years of the Edwardian Age, when the British Empire would be drastically reduced. It may also indicate that when Leo translates the best of his contemporary life into the diary, he acts as the historian whose register focalizes the best, in detriment of the other aspects of reality.

In another sense, he used the diary as a projection of what he was expecting for his own life. It was as if the diary had the same function of a mirror. What he expected his social life to become, he registered there, what he wanted to hide from the outer world (and even from himself) he did not refer to. Having a diary is not only a case of memory, where the good moments or the bad ones are preserved to avoid death (as Benjamin reminds us). Leo’s register functions as a great link with the quest for identity. It symbolizes another anthropomorphic version of the human search for an identity. At the same time it is the egg, where the bird is preparing language for the use he wanted in his glorious future in the golden age: that of a successful writer. Thus, he was used to choosing the most acceptable, the most agreeable expression to conquer the future reader, he created codes to hide what should not be communicated and symbols to trap his followers. He had the power to communicate and to hide communication.

As a writer-to-be, however, he had an ambiguous attitude towards the diary that can be extended to his perception of reality at the time. It was the controversy frequently alluded to writers, that of telling or not telling what is behind the limits of his social being. The novelist Hartley, himself, in another literary work, *The Brickfield* places another autobiographical character, also a writer, saying that “the shadows of the facts” should be transposed to the fictional field, but “not the fact”, “never the fact”, as mentioned somewhere in chapter II.

So, Leo is divided between showing or not showing what is in his diary (by extension, the facts or real life) to the outer world, “My attitude to the diary was

twofold and contradictory: I was intensely proud of it and wanted everybody to see it and what I had written in it, and, at the same time I had an instinct for secrecy and wanted nobody to see it. I spent hours balancing the pros and cons of either course“.<sup>202</sup>

As already referred to, the diary functions as a mirror to the young man in search of his own image in the world, and in this sense it is a hobby adopted by millions of boys and girls during the passage from childhood to adolescence. That habit, however, usually comes to an end when they finish the crossing from one stage to the other. However, in the case of Leo’s diary, it also serves as a laboratory for experiences with language, where the tools are the codes, the symbols, the words, and that will later in life be replaced by another related substance, that of real experience instead of tricks. The diary is a passage to a more special kind of “register”, if not of “vision” of the world, a sublimation of his own dull real life. If the main characteristic of a diary is the register of reality based on true events (at least, to a certain point), then that of the novel is the opposite.

So, let us look to the opposite side of the place where we are (the gap) in the direction of the object of our attention: the novel.

The novel is also a kind of registering of the world of experience, but in another level. Walter Benjamin and Georg Lukacs have alluded to it, as the genre that better represents the modern man. Both could be perfectly alluding to Mr. Colston’s experience from the diary into the novel.

To write a diary, its producer needs to collect the experience and transform it into narration. It serves, as seen, to preserve experience from the traps of the human mind, not assisted anymore by the *mnemosynes* of the ancient mythical credos. Apart from that, it also functions as a mirror where the older owner can re-visit and re-possess his own history. In spite of that, writing a diary does not involve creativity, as it serves to reproduce the events, supposedly under fidelity to the events, unless, there is a dissipated intention beneath its words. That was the case with the adolescent Leo, who had made it clear his dreams to become the most successful writer of the new century.

Writing a novel seems to involve some basic ingredients in order to making the dish a palatable one. The first of them is TIME. The other one is the net of human

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<sup>202</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. **The Go-Between**. p.14.

relationships where the ingredients will necessarily be absorbed and absorbing and and later transformed, as in the alchemic formulas. Time is the liquid that will dissolve them, mercury (the messenger) will function as the go-between that will change (without being changed itself) the environment and the relations among the components.

In the theoretical field, we have already seen that Gyorgy Lukacs in *The Theory of the Novel* has expressed his idea that this genre is the way of expression that better represents the modern human experience, because – differently from drama, for example – it present the man within the net of human relationships and in his temporal dimension. Thus, this is an aspect not included in a diary, the time comprehended between the experience and the register. A novel was needed to give the proper dimension to this life's story.

Only time can provide the right angle of vision and focalize (with a minimum proximity) the truthfulness of human experience. In this sense, a journey is a necessary link to create the distance to better understand what has survived the previous vision of the events. The way back to the origin of the experience is then the next step to establish the relation between past things and the present on which the writer is going to create his work. In this sense, we can again refer to the image of the bird preparing its eggs to come out of their closed world.

Both Benjamin and Leo Colston have related it to the act of writing. It is as if the time between the diary and the novel, has not been a time of *nothingness* but, on the contrary, it was a time of profound inner elaboration of life, of creation of the eggs after which they would be ready to be shown to the outer world. In the case of the writer of the novel, not as a physical continuation but as art aiming universality.

So, there are two ways of understanding the *gap* between the two points in Leo Colston's life in its relation to his writing production. The first is to relate it to LIFE and continuity, itself.

The second perception of it comes as consequence of what is external to our narrator, who in any case, carries on his back his autobiographical substance for narration which is being re-elaborated (that of Mr. Leo Colston, whose title we are not allowed to know, because he still in process of writing) and that of the historical (non-fictional) environment where the novelist L.P. Hartley hatched his own eggs until *The Go-Between* came to light.

Here, the two apocalyptic messengers Angelus Novus e Zarathustra come to the scene again to call our attention to the sequels left on a narrator's experience by the turbulent environment. Actually, chapter II has already conveyed their silent message of a world in fragments, so now it is time to put their message into fictional figures in order to obtain a better view of what makes a man become what he is (as Nietzsche points in autobiographical work *Ecce Homo*), what is it that makes a writer stop writing, what makes a lion become a dull dog, or an ancient active porter of divine messages become an anonymous passive clerk whose job is collecting and organizing someone else's works of art? Then, the absent presence in the existent gap between the two references in Leo Colston's life can be approached as we have already mentioned in the Introduction as a consequence of a violent epoch, where war and death make their visit regularly and invisibly, even when not explicitly referred in the text.

If we take war as object for this analysis, then, two diverse situations are mentioned in the text. The first is the Boer War, which was behind Ted's suicide. If we are to be reminded of the plot, Marian's *fiancé*, the Viscount, was planning to send Ted Burgess, Marian's lover to the war in Africa. Ted resisted this idea, but he finally committed suicide because of the happenings that followed. The point here is that, thousands of young men died during this war. Leo certainly must have known about those lost lives. Even the Viscount, a kind of Apollo figure, due to his "pure" divine blood, the modern Apollo, has his own scars on the face, to remind us that even a god of beauty and sun light is affected in a world of dissolution.

Another consequence is a decreasing economical situation to all, which would provoke a change in the working conditions. Much more people would increase the time spent at work, so the time previously employed in leisure as reading, listening to old stories to be passed on by to youngers, disappeared. So, time became a preciousness, whose investment was made only on what deserved it. In the same way, there follows the idea that even the boredom that helps to elaborate the experience in order to pass it on has suffered. Beneath all is the war. And yet the immediate relation of traumatic experience such as war or personal dramas causes loss of memory and (or) interdiction of language.

The novel is itself a kind of messenger as it conveys a certain kind of message, that transmitted by the narrator, and when the narration is suddenly interrupted it must be carrying a new kind of truth in its open space, like that of

modern fragmented paintings. The novel is also the vehicle of transportation of moral codes, in spite of L.P. Hartley is having said that we always wished to write a novel without moral preoccupations. In a way or the other, there is always a way to face the world and that projects a certain preference of behaviour, and excludes others beneath the words of the novel. So, if the narrator does not feel confident about his own experience, how can he be ready to convey his message, and how can he give counsels as referred by Benjamin? Leo, having become a dull dog, could not pass his experience ahead, unless he makes the journey back in search of this lost experience and fill the blank space of his own life.

Doing that, he becomes again a traveler, and so, we can here again hear the echoes of Benjamin's words saying, "people imagine the storyteller as someone who has come from afar".<sup>203</sup>

The novel is representative of a system of classes. In *The Go-Between*, as we have already seen, a certain feature of this system is reflected through ironic eyes, where the Maudleys and the Colstons are inserted, both intending to climb to higher levels of the social pyramid. The novel can also be seen as a reservoir of many and diverse elements and intentions. It can be read as a way to salvation, as Leo refers somewhere, in the beginning that opening the coffins and making "the exhumation" of the dead (including himself) corresponds to the possibility of facing his own life, as important at least once in a lifetime.

At that moment he will be starting the Epilogue of his own story. So, it really functions as a mirror, where his own identity is a matter of survival, of salvation from death. Here Leo's writings of the diary presented two connotations. The first is the interruption of language and communication. The second is directly related to the annihilation and spiritual death, as consequence of isolation. His Golden Age "did not make better", becoming also a "hideous" a real monster being responsible for millions of dead.

From where we stand, as travel companions of a narrator who is representing some else's life, that of a Leo Colston, a protagonist, and as readers a novel entitled *The Go-Between*. At the present moment of the journey let us pay attention to two directions, or objects of observation, on the route. The first is the diary which was written by a young enthusiastic writer-to-be. The second is a novel whose epilogue is

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<sup>203</sup> BENJAMIN, Walter. *Illuminations*. p.84.

still being created. Let us observe some characteristics and mainly some differences. The major aspects involved aspect are creation and language.

To say more, one could say that the whole story is contained in the famous first statement, "The past is a foreign country where we do things differently" Thus, it is this sentence that will provide the basic elements to be analyzed. They express the way Leo Colston, the protagonist, perceives his previous life. Feelings such as fragmentation, separation, a sense of loss, of time past, and melancholy.

Under the intention of following Leo Colston in his journey, one has to start the process from the very moment when the elder man is at his lonely room in a foggy winter night of London. It is a tedious moment, that when he finds and opens his symbolic box of memories. The association of this ordinary, quite common action, to Walter Benjamin's words in "The Storyteller" is immediate/ natural,

There is nothing that commends a story to memory more effectively than that chaste compactness which precludes psychological analysis. And the more natural the process by which the storyteller forgoes psychological shading, the greater becomes the story's claim to a place in the memory of the listener, the more completely is it integrated into his own experience, the greater will be his inclination to repeat it to someone else someday, sooner or later". (BENJAMIN, *Illuminations*, p.91)

This disposition of the spirit, which Benjamin calls "state of relaxation" is present right in the beginning of the story, fomenting the true substance of the future narration. Leo's state of relaxation is *boredom*: "If sleep is the apogee of physical relaxation, boredom is the apogee of mental relaxation. Boredom is the dream bird that hatches the egg of experience".<sup>204</sup> The statement is perfectly adapted to the circumstances on which the old Mr. Colston starts his narration, on which the atmosphere of contemplation induces to the idea of loneliness,

"I should not be sitting in this drab, flowerless room, where the curtains were not even drawn to hide the cold rain beating on the windows, or contemplating the accumulation of the past and the duty it imposed on me to sort it out. I should be sitting in another room, rainbow-hued, looking not into the past but into the future: and I should not be sitting alone".<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> BENJAMIN, Walter. *Illuminations*. 1968. p.91.

<sup>205</sup> HARTLEY, L.P. *The Go-Between*. p.10.

According to Adrian Wright (2001, p.84) In a letter to his father Harry Hartley<sup>206</sup>, the author of *The Go-Between* wrote,

In normal times the Past stands by you, a kind of harmonising background that justifies what you are; but when the majority of the people have lost the "Sense of the Past" how is one to rediscover oneself both to oneself and other people? The difficulty is that one cannot gaze into the pool of the past and see one's reflection tranquil there: the spirit of the Present sweeps across and troubles the waters.<sup>207</sup>

Wright refers to these feelings, commenting that Hartley was probably,

"caught in the web of conflicting emotion", as he was facing the death of many young men, many as gifted as he was and all of them gifted at least with hope for the future, he should become even more obsessed with his own hope for a future, he should become even more obsessed with his own place in the world the war had left behind.

Thus, Leo's social and personal losses are clearly (and aesthetically) visualized through the blank space in his diary. It is a metaphor for the sudden interruption of the capacity of communication. He stops writing. This is a meaningful loss considering that he had foreseen for himself a most successful career as the best writer of the coming *Golden Age*. In fact, this supposed place of annihilation, of no action, of no visibility, can also be read as the proper birthplace for a real novelist to start his writing after a period of silent elaboration of his truths, as during this time of nothingness in which the egg of experience is being hatched. Interdiction does not mean death, necessarily. It can also mean a provisory (and, why not, necessary) stop in order to get the appropriate angle of vision, as was stated by Benjamin, "writing a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life".<sup>208</sup>

And, again, Benjamin's words exposing what is a necessary complement to become the birthplace of a novelist: is solitude, isolation:

The novelist has isolated himself. The birthplace of the novel is the solitary individual, who is no longer able to express himself by giving examples of his most important concerns, is he himself uncounseled,

<sup>206</sup> Dated 21 December 1917 in WRIGHT, Adrian, p.55.

<sup>207</sup> Letter to Harry Hartley (father) in 21 December 1917.

<sup>208</sup> BENJAMIN, W. *Illuminations*. p.97.



and cannot counsel others.<sup>209</sup> In the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living.<sup>210</sup>

It is at the point when Walter Benjamin exposes his thought over the authority brought by the vision of the spectrum of death that the protagonist, Mr. Leo Colston's, appears in its authority of storyteller of his own life. As Benjamin puts,

It is characteristic that not only a man's knowledge or wisdom, but above all his real life – and this is the stuff that stories are made of – first assumes transmissible form at the moment inside a man as his life comes to an end – unfolding the views of himself under which he has encountered himself without being aware of it – suddenly in his expressions and looks the unforgettable emerges and imparts to everything that concerned him that authority which even the poorest wretch in dying possesses for the living around him.<sup>211</sup>

In addition, the author considers that death is the sanction of everything that the storyteller can tell, as he has borrowed his authority from death.

#### 4.3.2. Between the Novel and the Movie – Fall the Shadows

One of the major critical comments made by specialists and spectators when a text is adapted to the cinema medium is that related to *fidelity* to its origin. In Harold Bloom's description of what fidelity to the original text involves, he points out that it should re-create the essential atmosphere of the original in a new medium.

That is what Harold Pinter and Joseph Losey, the director, have done to perfection. And, for this reason, Harold Pinter's adaptation is considered one of the most faithful to the spirit of the original text ever produced<sup>212</sup>. As a result, the movie achieves the rare agreement between the spectator and the reader.

In spite of the alleged fidelity to the original text, Harold Pinter's emphasis undoubtedly goes to one of the many aspects of the story: the uncertainties and ambiguities of language in action. In other words, his element is the message itself and its (im)possibilities of decoding. In this sense, the novel *The Go-Between*, written

<sup>209</sup> BENJAMIN, W. *Illuminations*. p.97.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid*, p. 87.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>212</sup> WRIGHT, Adrian. *Foreign Country, The Life of L.P. Hartley*. 1995.

and published in 1953 offered the ideal field for Pinter's artistry. The relation between post-war times and language was referred in Chapter I (Walter Benjamin's essay *The Storyteller*), Benjamin's thought about the difficulty of expressing in words the traumas eventually suffered was pointed out. And, *that* was a time of silence more than expressive words, as the words could not transmit the truth of experience anymore. It was time for the absurd with its gestures and circularities of the scenes, exposing the human situation of the modern man as "a stranger in an inhuman universe".<sup>213</sup>

Harold Pinter was on his best, having silences, discrepancies between assumed notions of truth and undefined gestures. The arrival of an alien element, represented by a messenger who will function as a catalyst converter to the group or situation, is perfectly tailor-made material for Pinter's exploration and craftwork, according to Esslin<sup>214</sup>. In my opinion, all these aspects of the plot made Harold Pinter (and Joseph Losey) spend about ten years to convince Leslie Pole Hartley to authorize the dealings.

However, there is another aspect to be briefly reminded, with relation to the emphasis put by Pinter's version on the ambiguities and ironies of the text. The filmic version appeared in 1971. It was a new time again, a time of *deconstructing* the notions of truth, the time of Jacques Derrida. The allusion to the French philosopher is made as a link to point out for another "passage" in the life of the Leo Colston from the novel to the movie: that of language, which would meet with Post-structuralism and Postmodernity by the end of the sixties and beginning of the seventies.

In the presentation of Derrida's work *Structure, Sign and Play in The Discourse of The Human Sciences*, Adam and Searle (1985)<sup>215</sup> state:

It remains that Derrida's work must be taken into account, no matter how one conceives of philosophical and critical traditions, simply on the strength of his most important insight. Derrida shows with exhaustive ingenuity that the fate of Western metaphysics is inextricably involved with the notion of the sign, and that the representation of the sign paradoxically requires a transcendental signified to be "present" to consciousness, *even as that signified is always absent, always already displaced by another signifier.*<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> OUSBY, Ian. **Wordsworth Companion to Literature in English**. p.3.

<sup>214</sup> ESSLIN, Martin. **The Theatre of The Absurd**. 1982.

<sup>215</sup> ADAM, Hazard; SEARLE, Leroy. **Critical Theory Since 1965**. p.80.

<sup>216</sup> My emphasis.

The original text allows the playwright to “revisit” some of Leo’s presumptions and apparent certainties, inflicting new light to these moments of doubts and silences of a post-war time, whose notions of truth had already been bombarded or definitely destroyed. The protagonist, Leo Colston, is then placed (or displaced) between two realities,

Doing this, I got very hot, the stone hurt my toes and took the polish off my treasured shoes; but this was a relief to me. And I had a curious experience, almost an illusion, as though a part of me was stationed far away, behind me, perhaps in the belt of trees beyond the river; and from there I could see myself, a bent figure, no bigger than a beetle, weaving to and fro across the ribbon of road. Perhaps it was the part of me that would not take the letter. This dual vision remained with me, dividing me from myself, until I reached the farmyard gate”.<sup>217</sup>

One of Pinter’s favourite themes is the use of language as a source of power to convince and dominate, a well explored aspect in *The Go-Between*, the novel. Those aspects were wonderfully explored and highlighted by the movie, especially when referring to Marian and Madeleine’s dialogues with Leo. Another refers to Pinter’s use of the power carried by language to pose metaphysical quests, such as in Pinter’s poem *Death*.<sup>218</sup> In the poem, written after he was diagnosed with cancer of the *oesophagus*, in January 2002. Using everyday common language, the speaker’s voice of the poem throws a torrent of brief complex questions quite difficult for a supposed (ideal) hearer to react in time. Its effect is something like a tempest falling intensively over the interlocutor and taking his breath away, suffocating him and consequently impeding any answer. The impression to the reader is more sensorial than anything else. Together with it, the poem spills over the reader a mixture of anxiety, uncertainty and most of all a sense of emptiness, as it is obvious that no one knows the answers. In this sense the speaker’s voice resembles Beckett’s tramps in *Waiting for Godot*, who formulate the questions, even knowing that there will be no corresponding reply, because the only certainty is that there is no answer, just silence between questions or strange talks to be still deciphered or internalized.

In this sense the filmic version reached the point of perfection. Following the characteristics of a messenger whose major function should be the communication, Pinter’s script calls the attention to the implicit irony, as nothing is clear or explained,

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<sup>217</sup> HARTLEY, p.181.

<sup>218</sup> See Attached U.

not even to the porter of the message. That is a postmodern characteristics of language.

Harold Pinter explores the figure of Leo in *The Go-between*, as the strange element, the *catalyst converter, mercury*, whose intervention will change the previous scene, and more than that, will accelerate the process of disintegration of the group. In this sense, Harold Pinter makes the better, as the spectator gets involved in a net of growing tension, whose final result can not be other than the explosion of unknown emotions.

The same passage taken from the moment the selfish Marian exercises her cruel power over Leo became the following passages, under Pinter' sensibility (note that the offenses has been updated as the original sentence states... "and then I ask you a simple thing that a child in the street that I' d never spoken to would do for the asking – and you have the infernal cheek to say you won' t . We've spoilt you".<sup>219</sup>: Now it becomes.

[.....]

MARIAN: – what are you talking about? You come into this house, our guest, a poor nothing out of nowhere, we take you in, we know nothing about you, we feed you, we clothe you, we make a great fuss of you – and then, you have the damned cheek to say you won't do a simple thing that **any tuppenny-ha – pennyrag-a-muffin in the street would do for nothing!**

Long shot.

MARIAN and LEO alone on the path.

- Nothing!

She raises her hand. Leo starts back. They are still.

Close-up of MARIAN.

- You want paying, I suppose. I see. How much do you want?

Two shot.

LEO snatches the letter and runs.

Exterior. Country lane. Very high shot.<sup>220</sup>

LEO, **a tiny figure in the landscape, walking, kicking a stone.**<sup>221</sup>

[...]

Through the great distance of the camera, it is not difficult to establish the relation between the "poorness", "nothingness" of the small figure of Leo in the world he was entering, represented by the forest.

Another perfect realization in the script is the last scene by Pinter. It was a synthesis of what is on the novel, in another media and the aspect to be emphasized

<sup>219</sup> Ibid, p.177.

<sup>220</sup> All the words underlined by the author of this essay.

<sup>221</sup> PINTER, the screenplay, p.336.

is that it keeps the fidelity to the novel and add a poetic atmosphere to the melancholy description of the moment by Hartley. It goes like this,

Exterior. Road.Day.  
The south west of Brandham Hall springs into view.  
The elms have been cut down. The car stops. Brandham Hall.  
A cloud of dust from the car slightly obscures the view.<sup>222</sup>

But, unfortunately this last image does not appear in the movie, nor the transformation suffered by the elm.

I could go on *ad infinitum* writing and re-considering my perception about the original text, the script, the film, and about Pinter's plays. That is why I would like to conclude this work, saying that what I found out during the time I spent entirely involved with Pinter, Hartley and Losey's job is something at least intriguing. The fact is that Leo Colston, as well as all Pinter's characters has really something in common. In the same way they bring their messages to the other, they are also involved by the unknown, in search of their place in the world, all of them outsiders in a way or another. No one is safe if they go outside their own particular world. Even there –sometimes- they feel extremely alone and lost. In these moments neither of them cannot count on language, because it is stranger than silence. This can be called absurd, can be described as a frightful world, but it is in a such place that people are sharing the same rooms, furniture and amenities. In fact, a tragicomic world.

Leo was not a prisoner in a room, threatened by forces or people whose precise intentions neither the characters nor the audience can define, as most of Pinter's plays are, but as a newcomer he has also suffered all the pressure of a poisonous moral code and the uncertainties of an era between wars.

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<sup>222</sup> PINTER, Harold, *The Go-Between, the Screenplay*, p.367.

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS: A MESSENGER AT SERVICE AGAIN

We are now approaching the last stop of the present journey on which we have followed the protagonist of *The Go-Between*, back to the old country of past. As if it were a real journey, all those travelers who are near the arrival make their arrangements and check the tools and everything carried along or used in their luggage. However, the most important part of an ending journey is to recall the experience and the major scenes visualized on the route to keep them in sight and in memory. Such attitude is adopted under the intention of extracting the best of the travelling experience, which is the possibility of seeing scene from different angles, looking before it passes the point, while it is crossing in front of it, and after having crossed it.

In this sense, I suppose the travel within the novel meant pervading the spatial and temporal dimension of one life throughout his diary's point of view at twelve, from the novel-to-be (inside the novel) still in process of collecting the experience, and later on, when we e travellers and readers got in touch with a new view of the story, this time, from the post-modern angle of vision, in a movie. All those moments contributed to give human dimension to one life, Leo's, and opened my own vision of experience, because making the journey and passing the same fissures of the fragmented route, crossing the dark tunnels of heavy solitude, passing the quicksand terrain of the ambiguous dialogues all made the message a little clearer at the end of the journey. So, let us proceed to some pertinent comments before leaving the foreign country of Leo Colston's past.

At the beginning of the journey, even before meeting the narrator, the plan was to observe some aspects of the protagonist's story in order to fulfill in any possible way the reason for the great transformations observed inside Leo's own life that left fissures and fragments along the route, expressed in words and in a violent gap in the diary. The tools to be used were the lanterns provided by some great thinkers as Walter Benjamin and Nietzsche. The first with the vision of *Angelus Novus* upon the remains of culture, progress and destruction and that of the narrator, whose experience is extremely fragmented in modern times, a great part due to wars.

The figure (and function) of narrator descends from an old mariner whose stories and experience should be passed on after he had returned from his trip. Remember Benjamin's saying? ("When someone comes from a trip, he has something to tell".) So, the writer – in this case, Mr. Hartley, as *The Go Between* is admittedly an autobiographical novel – has something to transmit after returning from this journey to the past. Following the same idea Leo Colston has the two ancient descendents, because when he stopped writing in early age, he became a clerk. Then he added to his experience that of those craftsmen who spent their lives in a unique locus, thus resulting that they possess a kind of vertical knowledge. While the mariner (and Leo) after his return from the distant land of the past will be the carrier of both kinds of knowledge the synchronic and the diachronic ones and thus he becomes a suitable perfect narrator. It follows that both experiences will enrich the substance of what is going to be transformed in creative power again, in germinative power, as an egg that is being hatched.

In the same essay, Benjamin alerts to the decreasing experience with (memory) and language after the traumatic experiences, and especially in Post-war times. It is also a clear observation during our trip the visualization that death has lost its previous visibility. It is under near invisibility that modern man faces death. Ted's suicide was so briefly referred to that it constitutes in its own absent presence, a great Benjaminian affirmation. Actually, it was due to this profound tragedy that Leo's world was suddenly affected in the personal sphere, so why should it be so briefly registered? War with all its losses is a real absent presence, as it will affect most of lives involved in the story, devastating a whole family. In spite of it, its occurrence is never expressed explicitly. The reference, however, is made through expressions like "the hideous century".

With reference to Nietzsche and his thunderous prophet, Zarathustra, we all saw when the strange apocalyptic figure descends from the top of the highest mountain to foresee what would befall to humanity after the disappearance of God. Man should react to his propensity of being a slave of Christianity by following his own instincts and needs. He saw the way out of it and out of the ideas of sin, punishment and guilt that constitute the Christian moral through a new life, where individualism and creativity would constitute the values to replace man to its previous state, that of the Dionysian perception of life, a pre-Christian vision of happiness. That happiness would come with the advent of Superman.

Leo Colston is the prototype of what Nietzsche foresaw as the fragmented man of modern times. He lost his Dionysian characteristics in favor of an annihilated social existence and personal emptiness, whose appearance showed a social insignificant mask, a conformist, as he describes himself, a dull dog, who makes arrangements with life. That transformation is perfectly explained by the passage from the individual to the social sphere of life, as well as that of a young boy who did not carry guilt because of any action to a guilty destroyed soul, in a dead body, in need of a resurrection act. He is no more than the representative of all invisible citizens, hollow men, slaves in the anonymity of wanderers that cross silently, through the waste land.

But following and checking the premises established in the beginning, let us see the questions that gave direction to this journey. They made reference to the supposed reasons for the loss of vital energy perceived since the first moment of the narration in all aspects of the protagonist's life and how to change that status, as shown in the schematic-table. The easy and difficult answer to that point is that all the facts, and none of them, in special, contributed to it. Obviously, this would be the only possible reply, even before the study. I would say no. As Nietzsche proposed in his autobiographical work *Ecce Homo*, it is on the way that someone becomes what he is. Under the same idea, it is visualizing a scene that we are able to get a more clear vision of a fact or situation (more clear but never the real truth) of an episode as stated by Marlow, the narrator in *Heart of Darkness*. And so, made Leo in search of meaning for his own story.

The loss of vital energy in Leo's life is a growing process, whose beginning started with personal and social factors, some of them considered perfectly natural as adolescence and the process of socialization at school and some others related to his own perception and attitudes facing the world, as his early propensity for trickery, for intrusion on someone else's lives, etc, that would cause him a traumatic passage.

On the other hand, he undergoes serious transformations, especially because of the losses in consequence of the wars on the background of the plot, carrying with regularity many lives and leaving their ruins in piles of mutilated bodies and souls. The capacity of communication also means another important loss for someone who had planned to become a great writer. It is also reflected metaphorically in the same blank space where all the shadows are condensed and represent the incommensurability of expressing some sufferings.



There was a time when writers wrote about travels, there was another time when they wrote about the impossibility of representing the running thoughts and then made it through experimental language as stream of consciousness, like Virginia Woolf, one of the references. Later on, came a time when language expressed, in other forms the content of a fragmented experience, as in the form of invitations, and enigmas. It is the novel questioning itself, as it seems to be the case.

The gap, then, can express everything and nothing in special. A form of metafiction process, a way of investigating the act of writing, making the writer go in search of its own meaning and truth? Possibly! As many of the contemporary novels and short stories. In fact, Leslie Pole Hartley, the novelist, created a novel, where someone is creating a novel after reading his own diary. In this sense, I would say that *The Go-Between* presents many features of a contemporary literary work, as ironies, enigmas, symbols to be deciphered as it would be proper of a go-between whose major characteristic is being associated to the god of secrecy and paradoxically of communication.

So, the major role played by our messenger Leo, conductor of the Ariadne thread, in our labyrinth, is that of carrying one message. The message is that nothing stays unchangeable when in contact with other elements. Differently from the chemical *mercury*, whose action accelerates the transformations without changing itself, in the world of fiction, narrators are forcibly conductors of changeable and only provisory notions of truth.

The narrator himself is submitted to great transformations due to the environment where he performs his role, as the incidence of wars, working conditions, loneliness around his perimeter of action, and so on as showed by Benjamin. So, are we readers completely exposed (and admittedly open) to changes when we take a seat in a journey through the shadows of someone's life, especially when the shadows of the facts can be exposed, but "never the facts". This is the hermeneutic dilemma of the contemporary reader, whose credulity has been submitted to the changes of a post-structuralism view of truth. We are attracted to the possibility of looking into the shadows even knowing that truths are not included in the ingredients of a plot anymore. They disappeared as God did in the words of Zarathustra. So the role of a reader is nowadays to keep himself in the valley of shadows, of the blank spaces of the diaries and in the passage-way between the clarity of vision and darkness (fiction and reality). Paradoxically, it is when the reader

shares spaces with both sides in order to obtain the better angle of two (provisory) worlds, that he/she experiments a timid sense of truthfulness.

This locus, passage, empty space, where fiction and real world meet, is possibly the center where Leo's (and the reader's) perception of essence and center is best visualized.

And if Time can be defined, then it is Time which is the only catalytic converter. Time can touch and transforms everything (metal, nature, human feelings), without suffering any change itself.

To conclude, an aspect of the story is that involving the role of language when the crossing seems to be in danger. What seems to be present in *The Go-Between* is also a characteristic in other literary works. It is the fact that language is the possible bridge that can make all the oppositions become transitions, to use an image by Nietzsche. So, to make the way a less traumatic passage, let us construct a bridge made of words that can mean salvation, resurrection if taken in a religious sense, or let us use language in the artistic poetical form in a process of sublimation. In all cases, the messenger is the one to carry the bad and the good news. In the case of Leo Colston, after the long way back, re-visiting his experience and re-possessing his own life, he is back again on his route and role of carrying messages not only to Marian's great-son, but also as a novelist, whose story he possesses now the substance proper for narration.

Simultaneously, the novel form is also the messenger, the catalyst converter of the modern times. So, it is in the novel genre that the whole complexities of modern experience are placed together and mixed to a point when the explosions may transform every one of the involved elements in something else, exactly as it happens in real life, when sublimations, putrefaction and solutions are possibly obtained.

And in this sense we can say that TIME is the great catalytic converter of our fragmentary experience, as it only after all those mixed elements of real life are put together, that this mercury, this porter of messages lets them take the proper form for narration. And as in the chemical mercury property, it makes the transformations without any change in itself.

Zarathustra and Angelus Novus may provide us the best vision, the best words and Mercury, the best message, while we are still here in our own valley of shadows and provisory truths.

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**ATTACHED A**  
**Between two worlds – a schematic table**

<b>THE TURN OF THE CENTURY</b>	
<b>BEFOR</b>	<b>** 1900 **</b>
<b>PAST = HOPE</b>	<b>PRESENT= DISENCHANTMENT</b>
▪ Summer	▪ Winter
▪ An Individual self	▪ A Social Self
▪ Young	▪ Old
▪ A lion	▪ A dull dog
▪ Imaginative & creative talent	▪ Dutiful business man
▪ A writer to be...	▪ An undertaker <sup>223</sup> in the Art fields...
▪ a strong desire	▪ an arrangement in life
▪ Instintive actions, moved by desire	▪ Rational reactions / moved by Will
▪ Under Erotic <sup>224</sup> Force	▪ Under Self-Preservation Force
▪ Used to run through the forest, on foot	▪ Drives an automobile in the modern city
▪ Potency: Nature (trees, river)& His Life	▪ Weakness & infertility Nature & His Life
▪ Magical Power = Intuitive Knowledge	▪ Social Power = Formal Knowledge
▪ People at Brandham Hall were seen as Angels (or Gods)	▪ Seen as "fallen angels"
▪ Life, as a great happy party	▪ Life, as a lonely empty space
▪ A comedy full of his tricks & misun – derstandings	▪ The tragedy plenty of errors/mistakes & uncertainties
▪ The Beginning = Summer Afternoons	▪ The End = Winter evenings
<p>▪ <b>A possibility of mediation ... the bridge</b></p> <p>▪ <b>Resurrection: re-possessing the Past (diary=facts of life) ... NON-FICTION ... LEO</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">▪ <b>Sublimation: re-telling the story (the novel) ... FICTION ... HARTLEY</b></p>	

<sup>223</sup> Not to forget the ambiguous significance of the word as it can also means the commerce of coffins; In mythology Mercury is the one who carries the souls to Hades ,place of the dead.

<sup>224</sup> As exposed by Socrates in Plato`s "Symposium": "It is an interior energy, an impulse that moves forward, upward, the Desire among small and hungry human desires".

**ATTACHED B**

**Angelus Novus – a painting by Paul Klee**

**The Barbarous Civilization**



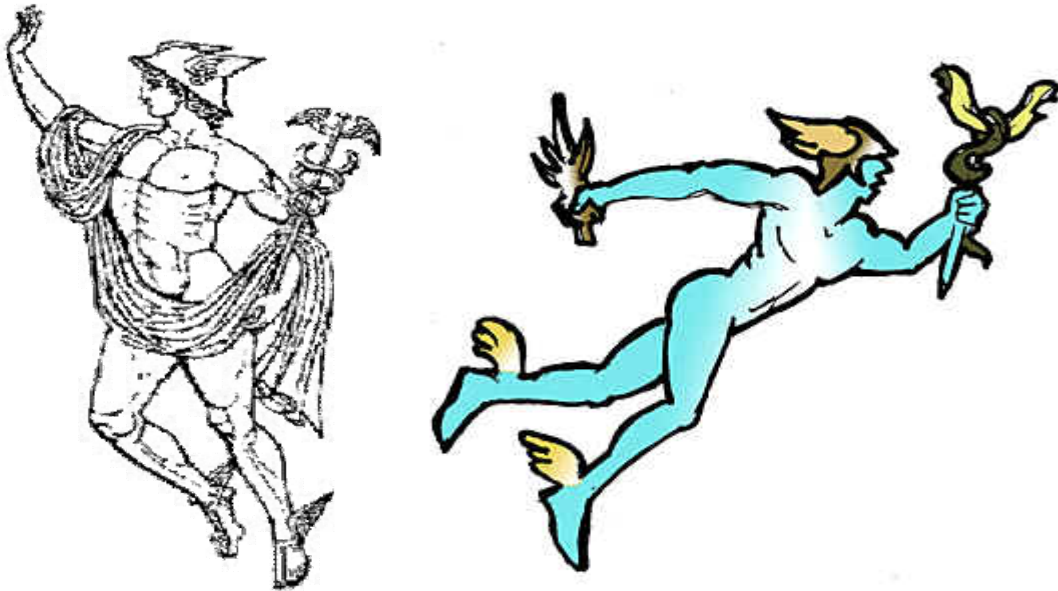
<http://www.wbenjamin.org/voorthuis.html>

"There is no document of civilization which is not also a document of barbarism."

("On the Concept of History" IX (in "Theses on the Philosophy of History")

## ATTACHED C

### Hermes / Mercury – the messenger of the gods



**Hermes** (Greek Ἑρμῆς IPA [her'me:s]), in Greek mythology, is the Olympian god of commerce, boundaries and of the travelers who cross them, of shepherds and cowherds, of orators and wit, of literature and poets, of athletics, of weights and measures and invention and commerce in general, and of the cunning of thieves and liars. The Homeric hymn to Hermes invokes him as the one "of many shifts, blandly cunning, a robber, a cattle driver, a bringer of dreams, a watcher by night, a thief at the gates, one who was soon to show forth wonderful deeds among the deathless gods." As a translator, Hermes is the messenger from the gods to humans. An interpreter who bridges the boundaries with strangers is a *hermeneus*. Hermes gives us our word "hermeneutics" **for the art of interpreting hidden meaning**. In Greek a lucky find was a *hermaion*. Hermes as an inventor of fire<sup>[1]</sup> is a parallel of the Titan, Prometheus. In addition to the syrinx and the lyre, Hermes was believed to have invented many types of racing and the sport of boxing, and therefore was a patron of athletes. Modern mythographers have connected Hermes with the trickster gods of other cultures. Hermes also served as a psychopomp, or an escort for the dead to help them find their way to the afterlife (the Underworld in the Greek myths). In many Greek myths, Hermes was depicted as the only god besides Hades and Persephone who could enter and leave the Underworld without hindrance.

(<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermes>. Access in October 14, 2004)

**ATTACHED D**  
**Hermes / Mercury, the alchemists**



**Hermes Trismegistus** and the creative fire that unite the polarities. (D. Stolcius vn Stolcenberg, *Viridarium chymicum*, Frankfurt, 1624)

Named after Hermes Trismigestus (Hermes the three times great), the Greek moniker of the Egyptian God Tehuti (Thoth), alleged author of hundreds of mystical tractates, the Hermetic tradition is an eclectic spiritual tradition that encompasses elements from from many religions.

You shall separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, suavely, and with great ingenuity and skill. Your skilful work ascends from earth to heaven and descends to earth again, and receives the power of the superiors and of the inferiors. So thou hast the glory of the whole world – therefore let all obscurity flee from thee. This is the strong force of all forces, overcoming every subtle and penetrating every solid thing.

**Hermes Trismegistus, [The Emerald Tablet](#)**

**Related Symbols:**



## ATTACHED E Hermaphroditus



In Greek mythology, **Hermaphroditus** (or **Hermaphroditos**) was a child of Aphrodite and Hermes. He was born a remarkably handsome boy but was transformed into a hermaphrodite (one of only two found in Greek mythology, along with Tiresias), by the nymph Salmacis. His only attestation is in Book IV of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Hermaphroditus' name is derived from those of his parents, Aphrodite and Hermes. All three of these gods figure largely into the Greek tradition of fertility gods and all possess distinctly sexual overtones. Sometimes, Hermaphroditus is referred to as **Aphroditus**. Half-siblings of Hermaphroditus include the phallic god Priapus and the youthful god of desire Eros.

### **Story**

Hermaphroditus was raised by nymphs on Mount Ida, a sacred mountain in Phrygia. At the age of fifteen, he grew bored of his surroundings and traveled the cities of Lycia and Caria. It was in the woods of Caria that he encountered Salmacis the Naiad in her pool. She is overcome by lust for the boy, and tries to seduce him, but is rejected. When he thinks her to be gone, Hermaphroditus undresses and enters the

waters of the empty pool. Salmacis springs out from behind a tree and jumps into the pool. She wraps herself around the boy, forcibly kissing him and touching his breast. While he struggles, she calls out to the gods in prayer that they should never part. Her wish is granted, and their bodies blend into one intersexual form. Hermaphroditus, in his grief, makes his own prayer: cursing the pool so that any other who bathes within it shall be transformed as well.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Salmacis\\_and\\_Hermaphroditus.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Salmacis_and_Hermaphroditus.jpg).

Access on October 23, 2004.

## ATTACHED F

### Ouroboros, the soul of the world



1.

The **Ouroboros** is a greek word, and means "tail swallower." The ouroboros is usually depicted in the form of a snake swallowing its tail, and is usually circular, although it is sometimes depicted in a lemniscate shape. It originated in Egypt as a symbol of the sun, and represented the travels of the sun disk. In Gnosticism, it was related to the solar God Abraxas, and signified eternity and the soul of the world.



In **alchemy**, it represents the spirit of Mercury (the substance that permeates all matter), and symbolizes continuous renewal (a snake is often a symbol of resurrection, as it appears to be continually reborn as it sheds its skin.), the cycle of life and death, and harmony of opposites. A double ouroboros (two creatures swallowing one another) in alchemy signifies volatility. Spiritually, it signifies the

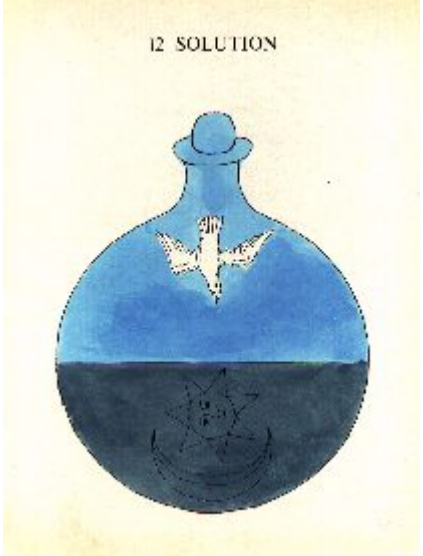



balance of the upper and lower natures. The Ouroboros appears in many other cultures and settings as well the Serpent [Jormungandr](#) of Norse legend, who encircled the world, and guarded [Yggdrasil](#), the Tree of Life, is often depicted as an ouroboros. The Aztec serpent God [Queztacoatl](#) was depicted similarly, and Chinese alchemical dragons have both similar shapes and meaning.

. Access on April 15, 2004.

## ATTACHED G

## The perfect solutio and the fifth essence

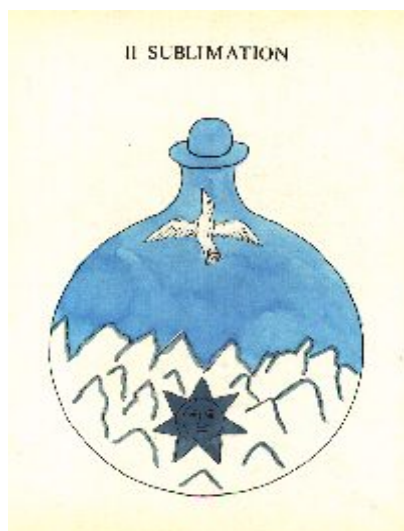
<p style="text-align: center;">12 SOLUTION</p>  <p>This <b>Solution</b> is the reduction of a dry thing into water. By this Solution metallic bodies are reduced into their first form, that is into their next matter, to wit, Mercury and Sulphur from whence they took their beginning.</p>	
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## ATTACHED H

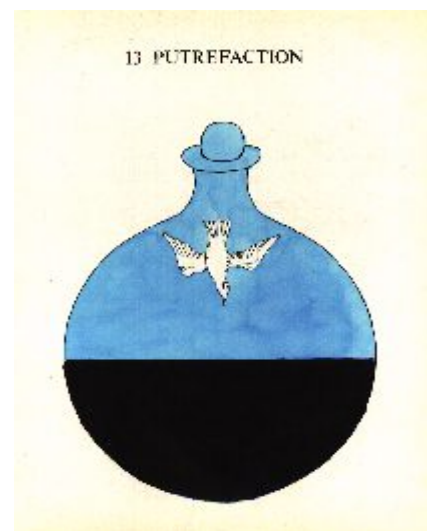
### Narrative – putrefatio, solutio, sublimatio



Saturate the  
Chemical Subject  
in the Root of Art



Sublimation according to some  
is when that which is extracted  
into the sublime part of the  
vessel is stirred up and doth  
subsist there.



Putrefaction according to  
some is the resolution of that  
which is mingled into the hot  
and moist by a natural  
putrefaction

**ATTACHED I****The garden, a poem by Ezra Pound**

Like a skein of loose silk blown against a wall  
She walks by the railing of a path in Kensington Gardens,  
And she is dying piece-meal of a sort of **emotional anaemia**(\*)

And round about there is a rabble  
Of the filthy, sturdy, unkillable infants of the very poor.  
They shall inherit the earth.

In her is the end of breeding.  
Her boredom is exquisite and excessive.  
She would like some to speak to her,  
And is almost afraid that I will commit that indiscretion.

In: *Collected Shorter Poems*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd. 1926.

(\*)*My emphasis.*

**ATTACHED J**  
**Melancholie, by Albrecht Dürer**



OS QUATRO TEMPERAMENTOS



[http://www.lanrice.edu/CSLShowcase/Germanproject/Albrecht\\_Durer\\_information\\_files/melancholie.jpg](http://www.lanrice.edu/CSLShowcase/Germanproject/Albrecht_Durer_information_files/melancholie.jpg)

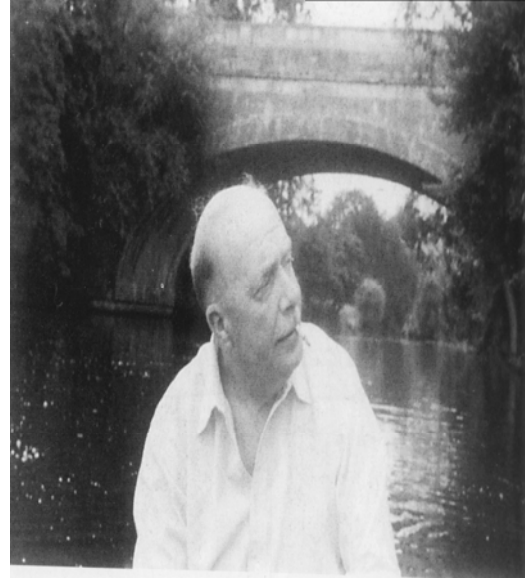
Acess on March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

**ATTACHED L**  
**Fletton Tower, Hartley's family house**



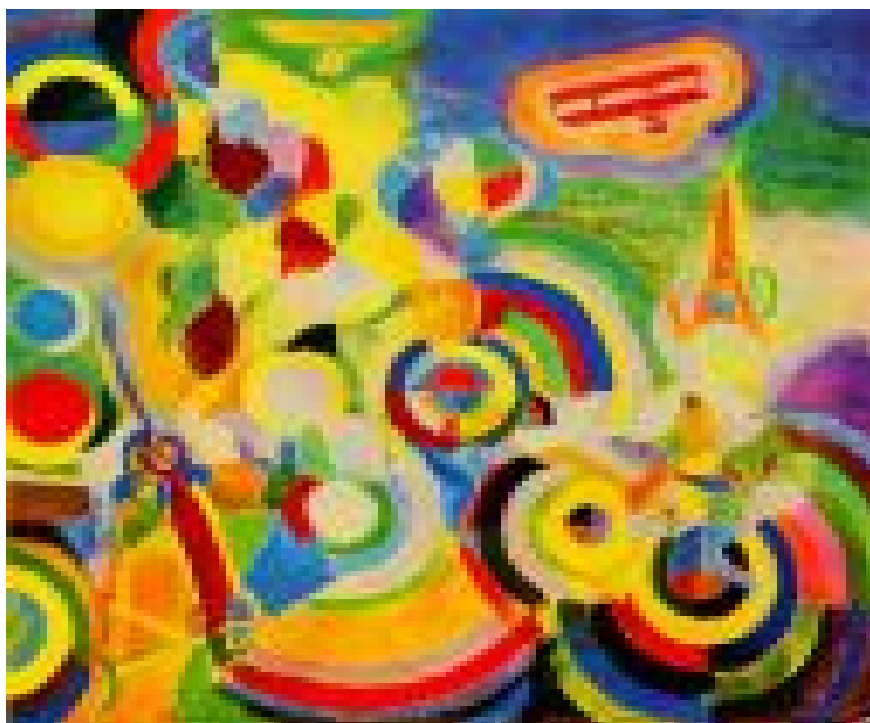
**ATTACHED M**

**Hartley: war time picture an later, rowing at Avon River, near his house**



(Images taken from WRIGHT, Adrian. Foreign Country, 2001)

**ATTACHED N**  
**Tribute to Blériot, a painting by Robert Delaney**



[http://www.artchive.com/.../homage\\_to\\_bleriot.jpg](http://www.artchive.com/.../homage_to_bleriot.jpg). Access on September 25th, 2004.



**ATTACHED O**  
**Works by L.P. Hartley (1895-1972)**

(Dates of first British publication)

- Night Fears and Other Stories (Putnam 1924)
- Simonetta Perkins (Putnam 1925)
- The Killing Bottle (Putnam 1932)
- The Shrimp and The Anemone (Putnam 1944)
- The Sixth Heaven (Putnam 1946)
- Eustace and Hilda (Putnam 1947)
- The Boat (Putnam 1949)
- The Travelling Grave (Barrier 1951)
- My Fellow Devils (Barrier 1951)
- The Go-Between (Hamish Hamilton 1953)
- The White Wand and Other Stories (Hamish Hamilton 1954)
- A Perfect Human (Hamish Hamilton 1955)
- The Hireling (Hamish Hamilton 1957)
- Facial Justice (Hamish Hamilton 1960)
- Two for the River (Hamish Hamilton 1961)
- The Brickfield (Hamish Hamilton 1964)
- The Betrayal (Hamish Hamilton 1966)
- The Novelist's Responsibility: Lectures and Essays (Hamish Hamilton 1967)
- The Collected Short Stories of L.P. Hartley (Hamish Hamilton 1968)
- Poor Clare (Hamish Hamilton 1968)
- The Love-Adept (Hamish Hamilton 1969)
- My Sister's Keeper (Hamish Hamilton 1970)
- The Harness Room (Hamish Hamilton 1971)
- Mrs Carteret Receives and Other Stories (Hamish Hamilton 1971)
- The Collections (Hamish Hamilton 1972)
- The Will and the Way (Hamish Hamilton 1973)
- The Complete Short Stories of L. P. Hartley (Hamish Hamilton 1973)

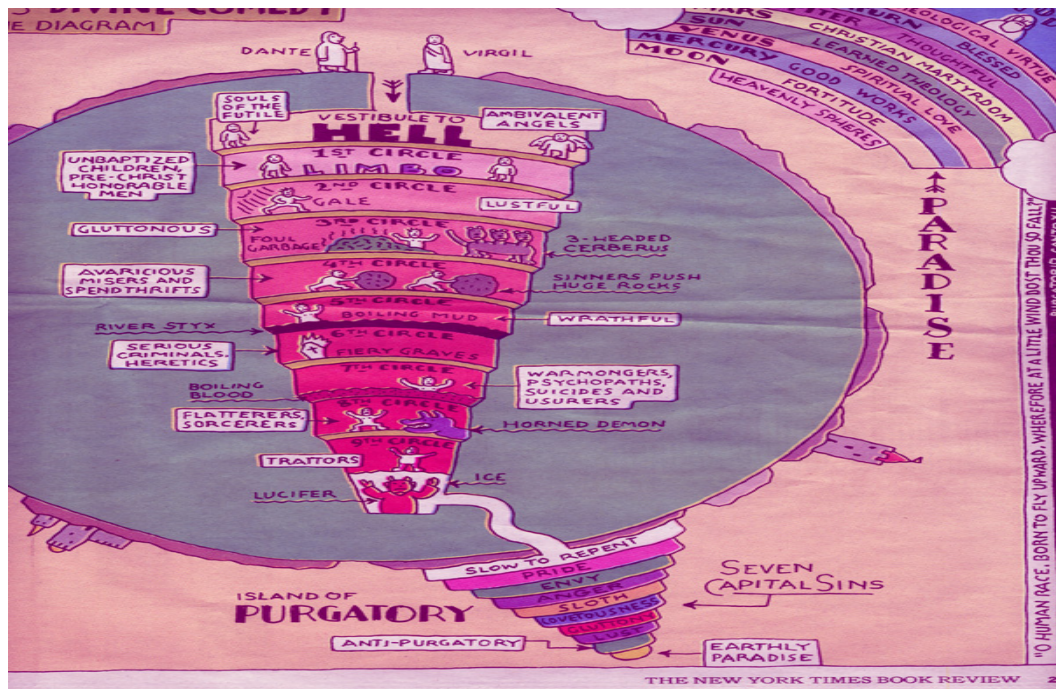
### ATTACHED P

## Whirlwind of lovers, the William Blake's masterpiece



<http://www.lbiblio.org/louvre/pain/auth/blake/lovers.jpg>

## Painted to illustrate HELL in *The Divine Comedy* by Dante



**ATTACHED Q****Sacred love and profane love, a painting by Tiziano Vecellio****(1490-1576, Venezia)**

[www.wga.hu/frames-e.html/tiziano/mytholo/sacred\\_v.html](http://www.wga.hu/frames-e.html/tiziano/mytholo/sacred_v.html).

## ATTACHED R

### Atropa Belladonna deadly nightshade



**HISTORY and USES:** Deadly nightshade is native to Europe, western Asia and northern Africa. *Herba bella dona*, or "herb of the beautiful lady" is known for its poisonous effects (belladonna increases heartbeat and can lead to death), like many other plants it is an important and beneficial remedy when used correctly. Belladonna contains *atropine* used in conventional medicine to dilate the pupils for eye examinations and as an anesthetic. In herbal medicine, deadly nightshade is mainly prescribed to relieve intestinal colic, to treat peptic ulcers and to relax distended organs, especially the stomach and intestine. Deadly nightshade is also used as an anaesthetic in conventional medicine.

**MAIN PROPERTIES:** Smooth muscle, antispasmodic, narcotic, reduces sweating, sedative.

[www.cartage.org.lb/en/themes/Sciences/Botanical/Sciences/Medicinal/plants](http://www.cartage.org.lb/en/themes/Sciences/Botanical/Sciences/Medicinal/plants). 25/10/2004

Marian, Leo's ideal of a woman, was only one person, but she represented the sacred and the profane in Leo's life: She belonged to the divine sphere of Heaven and at the same time, the deadly plant in the earthly sphere. A virgin and a serpent. A beautiful flower and a deadly plant, salvation and destruction, life and death.

## ATTACHED S

### The Green Lion, an alchemical symbol



<http://www.alchemylab.com/grnlion.GIF>

What The Green Lion means...

Of ancient but uncertain origin, alchemy was the earliest scientific enquiry into man's relationship with the cosmos. And as the alchemists heated and calcinated, crystallised and distilled, they witnessed for the first time many of the reactions and transformations which became fundamental in the development of modern chemistry, medicine and materials science. However, without the benefit of the language of modern science, the alchemists described the events they saw by drawing parallels with nature. For example, a Black Toad was their image for the seething black mass of substance digesting in the flask, while a White Eagle was white fumes which rose up into the neck of the flask from a substance being heated below. In the same vein, Green Lion was the way alchemists described the green raw energy of nature: *"the green fuse which drives the flower"* as Dylan Thomas elegantly put it. Thus, Green Lion is the alchemists' description of the chlorophyll in a plant's leaves which they would extract for their work. Indeed, the Green Lion was considered so potent that

many would also attempt to create living processes in their flasks by looking for precipitates or crystallisations which merely resembled leaves or plant forms. This led alchemists to mix hydrochloric acid (made from common salt which often crystallises in fern-shaped 'fronds') and nitric acid to create a particularly potent Green Lion – aqua regia – a green-tinged liquid that could dissolve even gold! Another symbology links the image to the long and difficult way from the natural world (the earth, the wild, the green, the earth, the ground) until a man reaches the upper levels of knowledge (the sun, the light). In the process of absorbing the sun (knowledge) there is a great amount of suffering, symbolized by the color red of the blood. The young protagonist of this story, Leo, was an alchemist, too. And he was a wild green lion, in search of light, success and knowledge. However, in his way to the sun he suffered more than he expected.

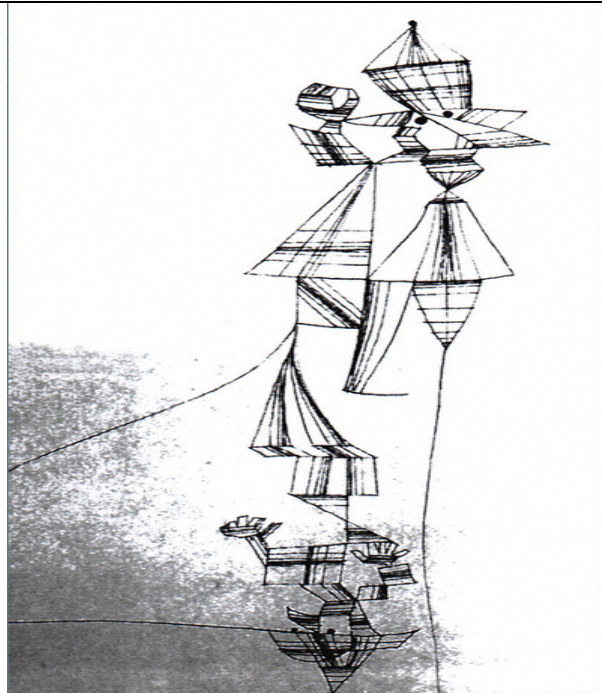
**ATTACHED T**  
**Statuettes of disabled war heroes**

In *Statuettes of Disabled War Heroes*, Klee plays with the construction of meaning. In this drawing, a dual meaning presents itself: On the one hand he abstracts the figure of the disabled war veteran, on the other hand he presents the technical visual problem of uneasy stability.

The means for his artistic expression is the weakness of the lines. It seems as if the figures will fall apart because of the isolated lines. *Klee did not intend to paint the war hero who survived the war without any physical harm. (My emphasis)*

Instead, he wanted to present the exact opposite: the permanently injured war veteran who is no longer able to function normally,.

[www.legacyproject.org](http://www.legacyproject.org).



**Artist:** Paul Klee

**Date:** 1927

**Medium:** Ink on laid paper mounted on light cardboard

**Dimensions:** 26.7 x 13.7cm

**Event:** World War I

**Motif:** Isolation

**Credits:** © 2001 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn.

This is the case, with the heroes in *The Go-Between*. The author of the novel as well as most of its main characters have their permanent war injuries: Ted Burgess, Hugh Trimmingham and Marian's brothers.

**ATTACHED U**  
**Death – A poem by Harold Pinter**

*(Births and Death Registration Act 1953)*

Where was the dead body found?

Who found the dead body?

Was the dead body dead when found?

How was the dead body found?

Who was the dead body?

Who was the father or daughter or brother

Or uncle or sister or mother or son

Or dead and abandoned body?

Was the body dead when abandoned?

Was the body abandoned?

By whom had it been abandoned?

Was the dead body naked or dressed for a journey?

What made you declare the dead body dead?

Did you declare the dead body dead?

How did you know the dead body was dead?

Did you wash the dead body?

Did you close both its eyes?

Did you bury the body?

Did you leave it abandoned?

Did you kiss the dead body?

(1997)



## ATTACHED V

### The path of life (the wayfarer) by Hieronimus BOSCH



<http://www.oldmasterpiece.com/temp/bosch,hieronimus,pathoflife.thewayfarer>

This is part of a triptych\* by Bosch. Even being a naturalistic scene, the painting contains sinister elements. The dog snarls at the old miserable figure, while very odd things are seen at the centre: a skull and remains of dead animals left over along the way. Some thieves are attacking a traveler at the other side, while a gallows appears at the background. [My translation]. (BECKETT, Wendy. *The History of Painting*, 1994). The painting offers a pessimistic vision of life. The path that Leo Colston takes to re-visit his old country, the Past, is also crowded with sinister elements, remains of wars and dead creatures. This is what he sees when looking back over the years of his early life.

(“Neither fear nor courage would save us” – Gerontion, T.S. Eliot)

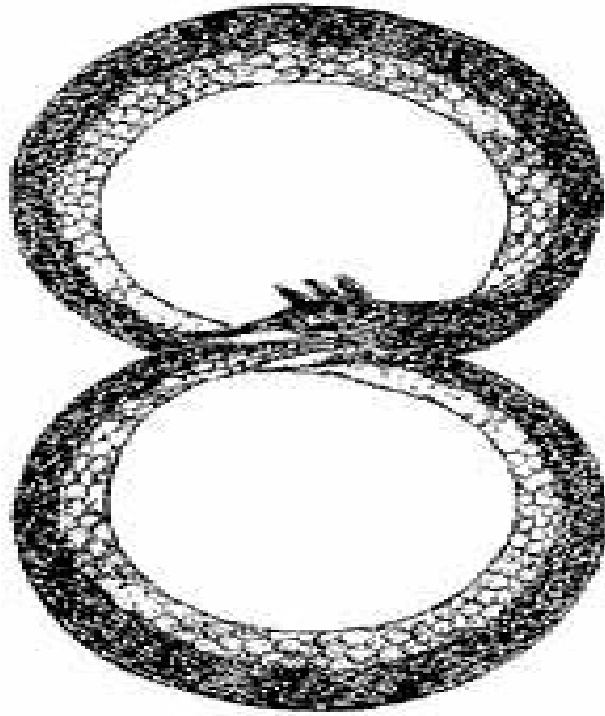


*This long lane behind us: it goes on for an eternity.  
And that long lane ahead of us – that is another eternity.*

*They are in opposition to one another, these paths;  
they abut on another: and it is here at this gateway that they come together.*

*The name of the gateway is written above it: **Moment.***

Nietzsche  
(Thus Spoke Zarathustra, III, 2, p.178)



## Meeting

It is the dead of night  
The long dead look out towards  
The new dead  
Walking towards them

There is a soft heartbeat  
As the dead embrace  
Those who are long dead  
And those of the new dead  
Walking towards them  
They cry and they Kiss  
As they meet again  
For their first and last time

Harold Pinter, 2002

