RaY

Research at the University of York St John

For more information please contact RaY at ray@yorksj.ac.uk

by Parménides García Saldaña, and the novel *Obsesivos días circulares* (1969) by Gustavo Sainz as the most demonstrative examples of the manipulation of linear time.

The foundation of the process of text re-creation is the ownership of the text. Whoever is in charge of maintaining a text is responsible for all its constructs – from the storyline to protagonists. In the Onda text, as I have attempted to demonstrate elsewhere, there are two main text owners: the narrator and the editor. The narrator's principal task is to deliver the story either in first or third person. In a first person narrative, the narrator is also the protagonist and, therefore, a text construct; in a third person narrative, the narrator appears to be unaffected by the changes to the text. The editor's principal task is to edit the main text as it is being delivered. Regardless of the nature of the text, the editor remains a constant entity, rarely visible in the main text yet with almost unlimited power over all the components of the text. The relationship between the narrator and the editor will be examined in greater detail later in this essay.

This essay focuses on the process of remembering, forgetting and re-creating which contributes to the destruction of the traditional text. The study argues that forgetting and remembering or re-building characters or plot lines reconstructs the narrative. This disrupts the linear progression of the text and ultimately leads to the destruction of linear narrative. The analysis also adopts a cross-disciplinary approach to the Onda texts by including in its theoretical framework both contemporary scientific discoveries, studies of memory and linguistic theories. The essay will employ string and membrane theories to examine the interaction between the main text and the editorial text as the dominant force behind this process. Considering that the Onda text is an amalgam of transcultural influences, not all of which are literary, such an approach is deemed viable. Paul Ricoeur's view of the connection between literary and non-literary works supports this stance:

> We might try to deny the problem [of literary works vs. non-literary works], and take the question of the impact of literature on everyday experience as not pertinent. But then we paradoxically ratify the positivism we generally fight against, namely, the prejudice that only a datum that is given in such a way that it can be empirically observed

and scientifically described is real. We also enclose literature within a world of its own and break off the subversive point it turns against the moral and social orders. We forget that fiction is precisely what makes language that supreme danger which Walter Benjamin, following Hölderlin, speaks of which such awe and admiration.[4]

In his essay 'Some Thoughts on Quantum Mechanics and the Treatment of the Past in Mexican Theatre', Peter Beardsell establishes a link between quantum mechanics and the interpretation of the portrayal of history in Latin American literature. By applying the uncertainty principle to explain multiple perceptions of a single historical event, Beardsell opens up a number of possibilities for a cross-disciplinary examination of Latin American texts. One of these possibilities is the use of string theory to the analysis of an apparent narrative disruption in the Onda works. I will draw upon the studies of memory and recent findings in the field of subatomic physics to explore multiple narrative lines in the works of García Saldaña, Agustín and Sainz.

The process of remembering, forgetting and re-creating temporal relationships is an example of what Paul Ricoeur calls 'retroactive realignment of the past', or the reconstruction of the text which disrupts the linear progression of the narrative temporality. His assessment of re-reading a story concludes that, after the story becomes familiar, the surprise of the plot is replaced with the expectation of the episodes leading to the end of the storyline. The linear progression of the plot is no longer applicable since the reader knows the outcome before (re)reading the story: 'It is as though recollection inverted the so-called "natural" order of time. By reading the end into the beginning and the beginning into the end, we learn to read time backward, as the recapitulation of the initial conditions of a course of action in its terminal consequences.'[5]

In fact, remembering and forgetting enhances the non-linear nature of the narrative and leads to the conflict with the traditional linear text. Lyotard states that narrative is 'the setting into diachrony of what takes place in a time that is not diachronic since what happened earlier is given at

4   Ricoeur 1984: 79.
5   Ricoeur, 67.