



# LITERACY AND THE CULTURE OF READING

Proceedings of the  
Forum MARE NOSTRUM VI  
26 May 2011, Turku, Finland

**The European Writers' Council**



**The European Writer**

**ISSN: 1560-4217**

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With the assistance of Ciara Healy, 2012 EWC Trainee, University of Limerick, Ireland.

**Published by the European Writers' Council**

Rue du Prince Royal 87, Brussels, Belgium.

<http://www.europeanwriterscouncil.eu>

**The 2011 Forum Mare Nostrum** was organised by the European Writers' Council with the sponsorship and coordination of the Association of Finnish Non-Fiction Writers, the collaboration of the Society of Swedish Authors in Finland, and the Union of Finnish Writers, and the support of the City of Turku, the European Capital of Culture 2011.

**The European Writers' Council / Fédération des associations européennes d'écrivains - EWC-FAEE AISBL** is the non-profit international federation of professional writers' and literary translators' national and trans-national associations in 34 European countries, working in 40 languages. It was established in Belgium in 2006 as an "association internationale sans but lucratif" (AISBL). It was first founded in 1977 in Munich as a private association under the name of European Writers' Congress.

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# Literacy and the Culture of Reading

*Do we get too much information? Do we understand all the jargons and genres we face in our daily lives? Is there enough time to concentrate on reading and on the art of texts?*

*The role and meaning of reading and literacy are changing. There are several ways to produce texts and mediate them; the digital revolution is only one part of the change. The diversity of genres and texts and the increasing flow of information need to be handled with different strategies. Languages and cultures live together; sometimes they might compete with each other, sometimes they nourish each other.*

*Authors are the key actors in the field of reading.*

*How to promote and encourage reading?*

*How to encourage and promote writing for various audiences?*

The **Mare Nostrum** series was created by the European Writers' Council as a European forum for the dialogue between cultures in the Mediterranean area and the rest of Europe. The **Forum Mare Nostrum VI** was held in Turku, the European Capital of Culture 2011, to expand the dialogue to the Nordic Sea region. The previous events were held in Delphi (1999), Barcelona (2001), Cyprus (2004), Trieste (2007), and Marseille (2009). The Forum Mare Nostrum VII will be held in Malta in 2013.

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# **I. Literacy and the Culture of Reading**

## **Introduction**

**Pirjo Hiidenmaa**

**EWC President**

"The death of the book" is a phrase that we hear very often. What does it mean? Are the concrete objects that we call "books" disappearing and we are preparing for a shift towards other publishing formats: digital books or e-books or internet websites? This change is ongoing and transforms quite a lot the publishing business, the reading habits or access to content. The idea of the book does not lie in its concrete surface, in the paper and covers, but in the content. Therefore, the book might not be dying but just changing its form.

Does "the death of a book" mean that we prefer watching TV and movies, listening to the music, and spending our time in audiovisual culture? A book is much more than the content and concrete object: it is literature.

And when we think of music and films of fact-based documents, we can see them as a part of literature, poetry, drama, non-fiction. Consequently, the book is essential to literature. Literature is not dying. We can see everyday the huge influence of story-telling and knowledge representation. We need this literature, despite of its form. Maybe the written language is acquiring a new role, creating a new ecological niche.

"The death of a book" can mean that there is a shift towards a short form instead of long tens and hundreds of pages of long-fiction or long analytical, narrative or descriptive stories. Is the future filled with short columns, short news, short comments, short facts and no-one has time or passion for long forms telling stories and giving knowledge? The short form is increasing, and so in its interaction; but this does not make literature and the long form disappear. The short form can increase our ways to communicate and create a common understanding of the world, but longer genres still have their places in our lives.

In conclusion, the book is not dying. Creative writing –whether fiction or non-fiction– is not dying. Reading is not dying. Literature is not dying.

All these exist only if we have authors who devote their time to this type of work.

**Message from Ms. Androulla Vassiliou**

**European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and  
Youth**

**to the Conference on 'Literacy and the Culture of Reading'**

**Mare Nostrum VI, Turku, 26 May 2011**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm sorry I can't be with you in person at your conference today, but fortunately, I am still able to address this message to you.

Technology has brought about a revolution in the way we communicate; in the way we read, write and convey information. Life has become more complex. Very few people can get by with only basic skills.

Employers want workers who can handle a whole range of text-based and digital media, and who can understand and be creative with this media.

The importance and benefits of reading cannot be over-stressed. If culture is the life of the mind, reading is its lifeblood.

Yet, today in Europe, some 80 million adults have low literacy skills. As members of society, it is the job of all of us to change this. Schools alone cannot achieve universal literacy; parents and the community in general also play an important part in nurturing a positive reading culture.

Finland –the country with the highest PISA scores in reading in Europe and the second highest in the world– has clearly understood this. I congratulate you for this success. As European Commissioner responsible for education, I will certainly be doing my part to enable other countries to learn from your valuable experience.

Since I took over my responsibilities as Commissioner for Education, I have launched several actions to address the issue of literacy. We are funding reading and literacy projects through our Lifelong Learning and Culture Programmes.

At the start of 2011 I launched the High Level Group of Experts on Literacy. They are looking at ways to improve reading skills and are presenting their proposals in 2012.

I have also launched a literacy campaign called 'Europe loves reading'. Through a series of reading events across Europe, we are promoting the value of reading.

With these EU actions we want to address the importance of literacy and contribute to a European reading culture. I know that you share this goal.

I wish you a fruitful meeting and continued success with your work!

See **Final Report, September 2012 - EU HIGH LEVEL GROUP OF EXPERTS ON LITERACY**

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/literacy/what-eu/high-level-group/documents/literacy-report.pdf>

[Note from the editor]

## **The Dangers of Reading**

**Riku Korhonen**

**Finnish Winner of the 2010 European Prize for Literature  
for Emerging Writers**

My name is Riku Korhonen and I'm a Finnish writer and a former teacher. The title of the little speech that I'm about to give you is "The dangers of reading". I decided on this subject for purely personal and subjective reasons, as this – the dangerous side of literature – is something that has been very much on my mind during the last two or three years.

But first I have to give you some background information about myself so that you'll know who is talking to you and how much you should trust my words.

I published my first novel in 2003. It was a collection of interconnected stories about a Finnish suburb, and quite a dark book. After publishing it I have never been able to read the book again, nor have I wanted to read it. It was born in a way that I think many first books are born, all by itself, in a way that I had little control over.

In my eyes through that book flows a certain youthful and even vain self-disgust that I find quite unacceptable nowadays, and I think the book is also filled with too many absurd accidents. Back then I used to think that you need hope in your life but not in your art. Now I think hope is essential both in life and in art. So in eight years I might have become a weaker person. But I also do think that hope is a very difficult and challenging thing to express honestly. To be able to do that one day is for me the heart of the artistic calling, an ideal that may never be attainable.

After the first novel I have written poems, short stories and another novel. I also work for newspapers and magazines. Sometimes I look at my life and feel quite surprised that at least outwardly it seems to be a writer's life, that my life seems to have

become what I wanted it to become from a very young age but that I also often doubted and thought that it would never happen to me.

Besides working as a writer I have worked as a teacher of Finnish language and literature, and creative writing. I did my first teaching period as a substitute teacher when I was nineteen years old, still almost a child myself. I was afraid of the teaching situation but I also realised I loved it. I felt I could connect with the students and give them something of myself, to be of use to other people. During my own University studies I worked at various high schools, teaching mostly Finnish and Literature. After finishing my University studies I applied for a teaching job at the University of Turku and became accepted.

I taught creative writing at the Humanities faculty for four years. Those were the best years of my teaching time, very intensive and inspiring and full of optimism and belief in the work I was doing. Throughout those four years I also knew that someday, maybe quite soon, I had to stop being a teacher. This was a matter of principle. When I could no longer believe in teaching I would stop it and become only a writer. This happened in 2008. It was all very simple. I knew it suddenly during one of my courses in the spring of 2008. The next day I went to my professor and said that I would have to quit. She asked why. I said I wanted to concentrate on writing. And that I no longer believed I had anything of value to teach to anyone.

All this had a lot to do with reading and the dangers of reading. As I have gotten older every year I have realised more clearly just how much, how enormously books have affected me, changed me and formed me. Today books seem to be more responsible than my own parents for what I now am. And with each passing year reading has become a more serious matter to me, something not to be taken lightly, without devotion.

These are the words of the Anglo-American poet W. H. Auden: “the so-called traumatic experience is not an accident, but the opportunity for which the child has been patiently waiting – had it not occurred, it would have found another – in order that its life become a serious matter.”

Those are important words to me and I think they strike to the heart of the dangers of reading and the seriousness of serious reading.

I have felt that the readings of some books have been traumatic experiences for me. I don't mean to say that all my traumas are of a literary kind. Unfortunately, they are not. I have had the usual sudden blows of fate, the deaths of loved persons and friends, weird accidents and occasional poverty, and the regular bad news of all kinds. But there is something special about dangerous books and the way in which they can traumatize us.

When looking back I can see myself almost as a child patiently waiting for these certain texts to hurt me by revealing some horrible human truths to me. They came my way and I let it happen. I wanted it to happen. While reading I concentrated and encouraged the books to disturb me and to tear me up a bit. I was curious. They were moments of growth and moments of acquiring knowledge. But they were also moments of loss and sadness. After reading those books something in me was no longer attainable, had vanished, gone away from me. To be hurt by a book is no trivial matter, just as life and love are never trivial matters. Sometimes the literary cuts can run deep, to the center of our being, even though the assaulter is only a printed book.

As I've experienced them, there are at least three kinds of dangers of reading. There are political dangers, philosophical dangers and strictly personal, intimate dangers of reading.

Let me try to give you a few examples of them.

I was thirteen years old when I read the novel *1984* by George Orwell. My Finnish teacher gave it to me to read as she thought I was ready for it and she was quite correct. Before that I had already been a keen reader for years but I had mostly read light books, detective stories, touching stories about animals, science fiction books and a whole library of comic books.

Orwell's novel knocked me off my feet. I read it in a state of concentrated frenzy one weekend. I saw everything in it with my own eyes and sensed that I was there, in this horrible world of power and control and lies and manipulation. I had dreams about it.

On Monday I went to my school and saw it with different eyes. The book was working inside me and I looked at everything with suspicion, trying to see signs of Orwell's world in our school. In a way it was the end of my political innocence, of my child's trust that the Finnish society was a benign thing that was there to protect us and to give us good and meaningful lives. How could we know? That trust was a thing that I had to lose in order to grow in awareness but to lose it was painful and scary. I have never read *1984* again and I don't intend to read it. It already gave me everything it had to give that weekend in 1985 when I read it and it took away something that I have never got back.

The second time I became as deeply traumatised by a book was thirteen years later in 1998 when I was twenty-six years old. I was a student at the University of Turku and I read the English translation of the novel *Cosmos* by the Polish writer Witold Gombrowicz.

From the first page I became totally haunted by this strange and sad and funny book that is a philosophical tale and also a parody of a detective novel.

The story begins when the narrator finds a sparrow hanged with wire to a tree. He and his friend start to wonder who has hanged the sparrow and why. They start collecting meaningless clues that might explain the brutal mystery and they end up behaving very irrationally. *Cosmos* tries to describe how we give meaning to the world and try to build order in a chaos of details and particulars, and how our constructions one by one stumble back into meaningless chaos, leaving us with fear and confusion and a sense of cosmic loneliness. It is a deeply skeptical book about the human condition and our ability to control ourselves and our ability to behave morally. I have read it at least ten times and I wrote my Master of the Arts thesis about it. It is still a mysterious book to me. I am thankful that I have read it, even though it has caused serious doubts in me by revealing a disturbing vision of the world that is as powerful as it is impossible to forget. Here is a passage from *Cosmos* describing the narrator's confusion:

“Ought I to say something? But what? I was lost, did not know which way to go, there were so many threads, associations,

implications. Supposing I counted them all up from the beginning, the cork, the tray, the trembling hand, the chimney, no, I should not get lost in a cloud of meaningless objects and other imperfectly and vaguely defined matters, one little thing kept fitting in perfectly with another like a couple of cog-wheels, and then other links leading in other directions arose, and that was what I lived on, it wasn't living at all. It was chaos, like putting my hand into a ragbag and seeing what came out and whether it was suitable... for building my house with, and my house assumed pretty fantastic forms. And so on ad infinitum.”

The third time a text has wounded me happened only a few months ago, in the beginning of January 2011. I happened to read an essay-book by the Romanian philosopher Emile Cioran. In this book he discussed a text written by Scott Fitzgerald. I became interested as Cioran said that it was the most important thing that Scott Fitzgerald ever wrote. I had been a great fan of Scott Fitzgerald and loved his stories and novels when I was young. Cioran praised a text that was published 1936, four years before Scott Fitzgerald died. It was a magazine piece for *Esquire*, called “The Crack-Up”.

“The Crack-Up” describes Scott Fitzgerald’s mental crisis and his painful realization that something in him had cracked and would never heal again. He writes about his crisis with charm but also with a brutal honesty that is quite painful to read if one has been thinking about the same questions in one’s own life. It is not a pretty picture of aging and growing that Scott Fitzgerald paints.

In “The Crack-Up” Scott Fitzgerald describes his mental change like this:

“This is what I think now: that the natural state of the sentient adult is a qualified unhappiness. I think also that in an adult the desire to be finer in grain than you are, ‘a constant striving’ (as those people say who gain their bread by saying it) only adds to this unhappiness in the end –that end comes to our youth and hope. My own happiness in the past often approached such an ecstasy that I could not share it even with the person dearest to me

but had to walk it away in quiet streets and lanes with only fragments of it to distill into little lines in books –and I think that my happiness, or talent for self-delusion or what you will, was an exception. It was not the natural thing but the unnatural –unnatural as the Boom; and my recent experience parallels the wave of despair that swept the nation when the Boom was over.”

I was especially shocked to read these words: “My own happiness in the past often approached such an ecstasy that I could not share it even with the person dearest to me but had to walk it away in quiet streets and lanes with only fragments of it to distill into little lines in books.”

A bit earlier I had written a series of drama monologues for a stage production. In one of these monologues I had written words that echo Scott Fitzgerald’s words that I had not yet read then. This monologue deals with the sense of catastrophe that has come over the person talking who has previously enjoyed a long period of enchantment and happiness.

A small part of the monologue goes like this:

“I have to confess this. Happiness has a peculiar voice. When it’s talking you hear its talk all the time, without confusion. You understand its language even if you are stupid.

I heard my own happiness talking almost always and understood it well. I heard it in the morning when I got up from the bed and pulled on a shirt and went to the hall to fetch the morning newspaper full of deceit and destruction. I heard my happiness soothing me with words of self confidence and heard it saying that I need not fear. I will stay pure. I will always survive. Happiness blessed me with little words that had more power than the entire western press.

Sometimes I heard my happiness get so loud that I had to get away from everybody and walk in loneliness just to calm down. I then usually walked to an abandoned industrial area of my hometown. I walked the quiet streets there and watched the run down machine halls and junkyards and the empty workshops and wondered how I had deserved all this.”

Scott Fitzgerald’s text brought up something in me that was already there, that I did not know I was thinking about and processing and it left me feeling vulnerable and even angry. I could see a same kind of thing happening to me, the waning of youthful illusions and the onset of despair and depression. I could not deny it and I felt powerless. No one wants to hear that such things might await us in future and yet, in a strange paradox, I believe that this knowledge might be useful in protecting oneself against “the real dark night of the soul” that Scott Fitzgerald describes in his piece.

Emile Cioran tried to formulate the paradox of harmful knowledge and dangerous reading like this:

“Insomnia sheds a light on us which we do not desire but to which, unconsciously, we tend. We demand it in spite of ourselves, against ourselves. From it, and at the expense of our health, we seek something else: dangerous, harmful truths, everything that sleep has kept us from glimpsing. Yet our insomnia liberates us from facility and our fictions only to confront us with a blocked horizon: it illuminates our impasses. It dooms us while it delivers us: an ambiguity inseparable from the experience of the night.”

I could give you more examples of dangers of reading but let these three suffice. With time, as my own life has become a more serious matter, I have come to think of literature as a kind of a fatal profession. You have to give yourself to it and you cannot know what of yourself you are going to get back. It is truly an adventure, not a picnic to the park. That’s why I would not want to try to guide any young person towards books, or reading and maybe one day writing them, like I used to do when I was younger. I will

most probably always read and write, and love literature and what it has done to me and my life, but my teaching days are forever over.

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## Do you Like Reading Books?<sup>1</sup>

Gerlinde Schermer-Rauwolf

Board member of the German Writers Union “VS”

Riku Korhonen told us about the dangers of reading, but I think some of us have the question:

Is there a future for a “long form narrative for immersive reading” anyway?

Perhaps this a question of age? ...and of the profession?

(A small survey shows that while only 4 % of German students use reading devices, 40% of people in the media business do, the "early adopters")

And we know: Younger people / our kids / the digital natives tend to do

zooming,

zapping,

“Switching“.

Here you'll see

=> **Lane Smith, It's a Book, New York 2010**

Book Trailer: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4BK\\_2VULCU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4BK_2VULCU)

OK.

=> **Book** [image of a book]: It's a **book**,

=> **E-Bookreader**: Currently it contains around **80 books**

=> **Notebook**: It's a “**notebook**” with around **200 books**, music, encyclopedias, dictionaries...

(=>) **i-Pad**: It's like a notebook, but more colourful, and you have to stroke, fondle it like a pet ;-)

=> **Smartphone**: It's the little brother with **2 books** currently

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<sup>1</sup> The present text is the author's version of her oral presentation. [Note from the editor]

So what does it mean if I ask you: "**Do you like reading books?**"

It means: do you like books as physical objects?

As the UNESCO-definition says:

“A book is a non-periodical printed publication of at least 49 pages exclusive of the cover pages, published in the country and made available to the public.”  
(1964)

And you are a reader who enjoys visiting bookstores, taking books from the shelf or from the little table in the cosy corner reserved for heavy art books and small volumes of poetry and to feel the weight of them? Do you marvel at the cover, open the book, caress the paper, admire the carefully chosen font, and smell this typical odour?

And then you buy the book and look forward to reading it at home – preferably in an easy chair, with a glass of wine beside you, undisturbed for hours and hours?

Or do you like just reading, pure and simple?

Are you happy to immerse yourself in another world by reading a good story, to laugh at the funny events you read about, to be happy to learn new and interesting things about the world and their odd and bizarre inhabitants?

And what about this anywhere and anytime with just one reading device which enables you to read one of the 500 novels or more which you are carrying with you wherever you go, plus many newspapers and magazines, reference books, guidebooks and maps, all sorts of little non-fictional helpers... anything only one click away – a vast treasure chest of information easily managed by the search function of your reading device?

Or do you need the solid weight, the typical smell of old paper to see Tom Sawyer at the garden fence in your mind's eye?

There are **Advantages** and **Disadvantages**:

- With your own library in your pocket there is a vast choice of reading stuff.
- In countries without a [net book agreement](#) e-books are cheaper.

- In countries with few bookstores (like in USA) you can buy e-books very easily
- I can rent them anywhere from my library.
- You can look up persons, historical events, music samples, pictures of where the story is set...
- There is a search function (!)

But maybe you don't bury yourself in texts for hours and hours like you did before – now it's just too tempting to look up just this tiny bit of information you need and to read a little bit of this and a little bit of that.

Does this make a difference for your reading? Does it make a difference for what you read in a story...for what you remember of it? And what kinds of books do you read? Or does it make a difference for how you expect them to be written?"

- Should authors investigate more meticulously and write more thrilling books now?
- Should reading turn into an event like a visit to a cinema?
- And should the books be shorter? Is there even a new chance for short stories?

A friend of mine read "War and Peace" from beginning to end on his mobile phone. He declared that the many short chapters you can easily read in twenty minutes or so make it the ideal book for this device. It seems that Tolstoi was ahead of his time, in a way unappreciated so far. (There are already statistics saying that the average i-Pad-reader devotes to a reading session only 16 to 30 minutes, while the traditional book lover in his easy chair normally spends about two hours with a story.)

And new narrative forms already exist. For example, Oliver Bendel wrote Handy-Novels ("Lucy Luder" and "Handygirl") – with short sentences, interactive and with Links.

There is the possibility of **Social writing**. A few younger writers made a try.

And there is the possibility of **Social reading**,

- Amazon/Kindle try networking with the "Popular Highlights": If three people underline the same sentences and statements in a book, you see it on the Amazon-Website AND on your own Kindle-E-Books (a bit bizarre, I think, they have a used look then, like the old books from a library)
- There is the Vision of enhanced E-books with a link like Facebook: "Meet people in your neighbourhood who are reading, like you, the same book!"

**Disadvantages:**

Every book feels the same, it doesn't make any difference if it's a small book of poetry or a massive art book or a tabloid.

And it's quite difficult to say if you are in the middle or near the end of a story – an odd feeling.

It also smells the same – actually, it doesn't smell anymore. But there is help:

**Toilet water** for your E-Books!

(the advertisement is shown on screen)

<http://smellofbooks.com/>

The classic: **New Book Smell**, the smell of a bookshop,

the **Classic Musty Smell** like a really old book,

the **Scent of Sensibility**, violets and horses (!),

the **You Have Cats-Eau** for animal lovers

and the **Crunchy Bacon Scent**, the first one for a series of Lifestyle-Books (only 5 Dollars, the Classic Scent is 30 Dollars.)

**Other disadvantages:**

- There is no cover. You can't impress people with your reading stuff in the bus or the train ;-)
- In Germany (I don't know about other countries) it's not possible to buy new foreign literature except if you have a Kindle (then you have to buy it from Amazon) or an i-Pad (then you have to buy from Apple)
- Some people feel a kind of urgency and time pressure as if they were sitting on their computers
- The danger of more distraction (there are so many other things to read and to read about)
- It's less relaxed (no reading in the bathtub ;-)
- You have to be careful with coffee spots, grains of sand, heat
- It doesn't help you to fix a wobbling table
- You may have problems to save your stuff over [a longer period of time](#): Paper is the best [storage medium](#)!

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I think that in the future there will be a [peaceful coexistence](#) between printed books, e-books, enhanced e-books

(I would like to read the printed book at home and to have the e-book-version for my journeys)

but I think there will be a serious competition with other media:  
in Germany it looks like the loser is television.

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**Questions to the audience:**

Writers are obsessive readers, I think.

Who has experience with reading books on any of these new devices?

And who is writing by hand instead of writing on the computer? Because I think, this was a cultural quantum leap similar – or bigger? – than reading books without paper.

Here I provide a link for you, if you understand Spanish or German:

YouTube: **Kennen Sie BOOK?**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01IKFuA\\_\\_VM&NR=1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01IKFuA__VM&NR=1)

# **The Illusions of Subtitling: Thoughts on the Cultural Potential of Subtitles**

**Tiina Tuominen**

**University of Tampere, Finland**

In this article I will discuss the nature of subtitling as a form of screen translation and, contrasting it with dubbing, consider the possible implications subtitling might have for culture as a whole. Could the prominence of subtitling increase the popularity of reading? Does subtitling make foreign languages and cultures more accessible to its audience? What is, in general, the nature of subtitling as a form of communication, and should its use be encouraged over dubbing?

## **What Is Subtitling?**

Subtitling is a method of screen translation that can be defined as

...a translation practice that consists of presenting a written text, generally on the lower part of the screen, that endeavours to recount the original dialogue of the speakers, as well as the discursive elements that appear in the image (letters, inserts, graffiti, inscriptions, placards, and the like), and the information that is contained on the soundtrack (songs, voices off) (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 8).

This means that, in subtitling, any relevant, mostly spoken verbal information is transformed from the source language into the target language and into written form. Therefore, the audience of a subtitled programme will encounter both the (spoken) original text and the (written) translation.

Subtitling operates under a number of restrictions caused by the audiovisual medium and its technical demands. These restrictions have a definite effect on the resulting translation and its ability to express the style and content of the source text. Because of this, subtitling has been, slightly negatively, called “constrained” translation (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 11-12). While the negative implications of this term must not be allowed to minimise the

expressive potential of subtitles, the restrictions should be kept in mind when considering the nature of subtitles as a form of expression.

The most obvious example of these restrictions is the screen itself and its physical limits. The size of the screen only allows a certain number of characters to be displayed, and, in order not to cover too much of the screen, only a maximum of two lines of text can usually be allowed on screen at any time. In addition, the amount of text must match viewers' average reading speed so that the viewers will be able to read the text completely in the time it remains on screen. The flow of the film is constant and unstoppable, which means that viewers must be able to understand the subtitles in one single reading, and they must have enough time left over to look at the picture and listen to the sounds as well. These restrictions mean that subtitles are usually a somewhat condensed translation of the original text. The translator must therefore decide which elements to include and which to leave out.

Subtitles must also take into account the visual and auditive information accompanying them, minimising any potential conflicts between verbal, visual and auditive information within the programme. For example, if a film contains a pun which has a visual dimension, such as talking about "jamming the radar" while displaying a jam container on screen, the subtitles must attempt to conform to what is seen in the picture, even if the same pun is not available in the target language. Furthermore, subtitles must not cover any significant parts of the picture, and they must be in synchrony with both the sound and the picture. Thus, the audiovisual nature of the source text determines quite significantly the form and content of subtitles.

It would, however, not be accurate to see subtitles simply as an inferior text with poor expressive potential. While it is true that subtitles face strict limitations and must always eliminate some elements of the source text, carefully constructed subtitles are fluent, informative, appropriate in style and blend into the programme in a way that allows the target-language audience to view the programme with ease. Subtitling is a form of translation with its own peculiar challenges and conventions, and it is always performed in subservience to the original programme, but it is a creative process whose end result is a text that allows new viewers to enjoy a programme they would otherwise have not been able to understand.

## **The Illusions of Subtitling**

Rather than focus only on the shortcomings and constraints of subtitles, it is useful to also consider the particular methods of expression that are used to make subtitles work. In this regard, subtitles can be thought of as a set of illusions, and the act of subtitling as the construction of such illusions: the subtitler acts as an illusionist who attempts to produce a translation which is fluent despite its limitations and allows viewers to enjoy the film as if they were watching it in their mother tongue. In this section I will present five types of illusions which characterise subtitles and explain their nature as translation and communication.

The *first* illusion which subtitling constructs is the illusion of spoken language. Subtitling is not only translation; it is also the transformation of (predominantly) spoken language into written form. In an early, defining article on the nature of subtitles, Henrik Gottlieb (1994, 104) calls this kind of translation diagonal: it combines the vertical transformation of speech into writing with the horizontal transformation of one language into another. The translated text must, therefore, be modified to conform to some conventions of written language in order to be comfortably readable. However, the language of subtitles must not be too “written” in style, because it represents speech, and it must evoke in the audience a feeling of receiving spoken text through a written medium. The illusion of spoken language is therefore constructed through modifications which, on the one hand, create an easily readable text and, on the other, retain enough of the relevant stylistic features of spoken language to maintain a feeling of spokenness.

The *second* illusion of subtitling is the illusion of synchrony. Subtitles must appear on screen simultaneously with the original, spoken text, so that they are read at the correct time, following the rhythm of the programme. However, they are brought on screen in blocks, not as a continuously scrolling string of words. This means that some words of the subtitles will be read before the same content is said on screen, whereas others will be read after the fact, and an individual’s reading speed will affect the synchrony of speech and translation significantly (Gottlieb 1994, 102). The challenge of the subtitles, then, is to be timed so precisely and carefully that they create an illusion of the words being read in

synchrony with the original text, giving the viewers an impression of reading the words on screen simultaneously with observing the same events in the picture and sound.

The *third* illusion of subtitling is the illusion of completeness. As was mentioned above, subtitles are always a more or less condensed version of the source text. However, even this condensed text must project the appearance of a full text by consisting of fully formed sentences and a logical presentation of thoughts, which allow the viewer to follow the plot of the programme. Together with sounds and pictures, subtitles must construct a fully understandable, coherent audiovisual message, which does not make viewers think that they are missing something by not understanding the original. Thus, the subtitler must be careful in choosing how to condense the subtitles so that no relevant information is missed and that the coherence and cohesion of the programme are not compromised.

In addition, the illusion of completeness is a relevant question in discussing the subtitles' ability to convey non-verbal elements of the source text. In Gottlieb's words (1994,102), subtitling is "fragmentary in that it only represents the lexical and the syntactic features of the dialog." This means that elements such as intonation cannot be accurately conveyed in subtitles, and viewers must find this information in the surrounding audiovisual context. Subtitles can present some nonverbal elements through the means of punctuation, italics and word order, for example, but this is never a full account of the source text's repertoire of expression. Therefore, the illusion of completeness is constructed by using the few means that are at the subtitler's disposal, as well as by allowing the subtitles to follow the source text and audiovisual context so accurately that viewers will be able to pick up all necessary nonverbal messages from the context, not paying attention to the fact that this information did not come from the subtitles.

The *fourth* illusion of subtitling is the illusion of being a part of the picture. This means that, even though they are added to the picture afterwards and they visually stand out, subtitles should not be visually distracting. For example, they must not cover any significant parts of the picture, and they should not cover the faces, particularly eyes and mouths, of people on screen. Their timing must follow the rhythm of the picture, so that they are in synchrony with editing points and other visual devices. Through these means the subtitles will not appear to the viewers as separate and as something added after the fact, but a natural, cohesive part of the picture. This will allow viewers to feel as if the

information contained in the subtitles is also a part of the programme (Díaz Cintas and Remael, 51-53).

As observed by Jan-Emil Tveit (2009, 90), the relation of subtitles to the picture is becoming a more and more challenging question, as the visual pace of programmes is increasing. Films and television programmes are being edited faster and faster, and subtitles must conform to this fast pace in order to maintain the illusion of belonging in the picture. Consequently, the construction of this fourth illusion is something that will probably be emphasised in future discussions on the quality and readability of subtitles.

The *fifth* illusion of subtitling is perhaps the most fundamental of all: the illusion of understanding. This illusion is the combined result of the four previous illusions. The purpose of well-crafted and fluent subtitles is to produce a viewing experience where viewers feel they understand the programme fully. Such high-quality subtitles can create a comfortable viewing experience where subtitles themselves are not, in fact, given much notice. Instead, viewers feel as if they have understood the programme itself. This can lead some viewers to overestimate their knowledge of the source language, or even think that their understanding is so great that they would not need subtitles at all. This is a positive sign from the subtitles' point of view, as it shows that the subtitles have performed their function and made the programme fully understandable, and have also become a fluent, unobtrusive part of the programme. In other words, such reactions prove that the illusions of subtitling work.

In essence, these illusions work together to make subtitling a form of translation hidden in plain sight. Subtitles are very visible on screen, and the presence of the source text makes it clear that they are a translation. However, viewers are not expected to spend considerable time thinking that they are watching – and reading – a translation. Instead, their focus is on viewing the programme as a whole, and subtitles are an aid in this process. Thus, the obvious, even intrusive presence of subtitles becomes something taken for granted and is not given much conscious notice.

## **To Subtitle or to Dub?**

Next to subtitling, the other dominant form of screen translation is dubbing. Dubbing “is the replacement of the original speech by a voice-track which is a faithful translation of the original speech and which attempts to reproduce the timing, phrasing and lip movements of the original” (Luyken, et al. 1991, 73). Thus, the resulting translated film has the appearance of an original-language film, as no visual intrusion to the picture is present and the voices of the dubbing actors have been matched, as closely as possible, to the expressions, gestures and lip movements of the actors. Furthermore, viewers do not face the additional demand of having to read the translation while simultaneously hearing the original text.

In comparison to subtitling, several differences become immediately obvious. To begin with, while subtitles convert spoken language into written language, in dubbing the original speech is translated into target-language speech. The second difference is that the two methods of screen translation face different kinds of restrictions: whereas subtitles are restricted by the space available on screen, dubbing is restricted by the need to be in close synchrony with the lip movements and other gestures of those speaking on screen. Furthermore, a dubbing translation does not physically cover parts of the screen, as subtitles do. Instead, dubbing covers some sounds, i.e. the original voices of the actors. Jan-Emil Tveit (2009, 92-93) has remarked that, due to this masking of the original voices, dubbing suffers from a lack of authenticity and credibility. This can distort some of the original director’s and actors’ creative vision and make the resulting audiovisual product less compelling to the audience.

On the other hand, it could also be argued that dubbing allows a kind of authenticity of expression that subtitles lack because of their visibility as translations, their spatial limitations and the transformation of speech into writing. Subtitling can also be more taxing for the viewer, as it forces the viewer to read and splits the viewer’s attention between the subtitles and the programme itself. The added verbal, written layer of subtitles demands additional attention from the viewers, whereas the viewers of dubbed programmes can watch the programme in the same way as the viewers of the original programme do, concentrating their attention on its visual and auditive elements. In short, a dubbed programme looks and sounds more like a source-language programme than a

subtitled one and can therefore be easier to follow. In addition, dubbing allows access to those viewers who are not quick readers or who, for example, have poor eyesight.

However, dubbing and subtitling also have some similarities. For example, as both are methods of screen translation, both have to contend with the challenges of the audiovisual medium, and neither is an independent, complete text, but only conveys part of the message along with the visual and auditive information of the programme. In addition, due to the continuous flow of the programme, both must deal with the challenges posed by time. For example, both must find ways to make the translation synchronous with the programme, in subtitling by timecueing the subtitles to fit the programme's pace, and in dubbing by matching the spoken words of the dubbing actors to the visual rhythm of the characters' speech and the duration of the original utterances. In the words of Luyken et al. (1991, 39), both subtitling and dubbing

represent a meeting-point of science, art, technology, linguistics, drama and aesthetics. The quality of the end product results directly from the harmonious fusion of these parts. To achieve this is to carry out a fine balancing act between the creation of a new set of messages which are easily comprehensible to the viewer and with which he is comfortable, and, conversely, the prevention of the same set of messages from distracting and therefore misleading the viewer whether aurally, visually or in terms of content or linguistic style.

As this statement shows, both subtitling and dubbing are challenging, multidimensional methods of translation, which must take into account the accompanying auditive and visual messages.

The question of whether dubbing or subtitling is a preferable method of screen translation is a common theme of discussion, both within academic research and in everyday conversation. However, such a judgement is impossible to make: both dubbing and subtitling have their own drawbacks as well as their own strengths. Both dubbing and subtitling must contend with some loss in comparison with the source text: neither can fully reproduce all elements of the source text, and both must settle for compromises, as the audiovisual medium puts strict demands on translation.

In academic discussion, preferences have been shown for both types of screen translation. Henrik Gottlieb (1994, 103), for example, promotes subtitling for “human interest stories” such as fictional television programmes and films, where the programme type is “expressive” and requires a kind of authenticity only subtitling can provide. On the other hand, he does not favour subtitling for informative programmes such as documentaries, where the information load is so heavy that it would be difficult to reproduce in subtitles. Similarly, Jan-Emil Tveit (2009, 95-96) concludes that subtitling is usually preferable but that documentaries should rather use a spoken translation to avoid the loss of information which subtitling would cause. In addition, Tveit suggests that fast-paced programmes should perhaps be dubbed, because subtitling would cause a significant loss of information. In such a case, Tveit states, “dubbing may be the lesser of two evils” (Ibid. 96). Thus, it could be argued that the current trend towards fast-paced programmes might result in a preference for more dubbing, because subtitling and time-cueing such programmes adequately is becoming quite difficult.

In Europe, most countries have developed their own, fairly uniform screen translation culture, with a preference for either dubbing or subtitling. The subtitling countries tend to be countries where smaller languages are spoken, such as Finland, Belgium and Greece, whereas dubbing countries cover larger languages, including French, Italian and German (Luyken *et al.*, 31). The choice between subtitling and dubbing is, thus, largely dependent on the country and language in question, and differences arise between countries and language groups.

These divisions are quite difficult to eliminate. Typically, viewers appear to prefer the method of translation they are used to, so that viewers in subtitling countries often prefer subtitling, whereas viewers in dubbing countries prefer dubbing (Tveit, 94; Luyken *et al.*, 38). Therefore, switching from one to the other can be difficult and can meet with resistance. In Finland, for example, the television station MTV3 showed the soap opera *The Bold and the Beautiful* dubbed instead of subtitled for one week in 2001. Although this was known to be a one-time special event, it met with significant criticism (Sarkoja, 2004). Tveit (94) reports of a similar experience in Norway, another subtitling country. These two examples are a good indication of how difficult it can be to move from one translation method to the other, and how resistant a country’s audience may be to this

change. In general, subtitling countries want to remain subtitling countries, and dubbing countries want to remain dubbing countries.

### **Is a Subtitling Culture a Reading Culture and a Multilingual Culture?**

Although it is impossible to make a value judgement on whether dubbing or subtitling is a “better” method of screen translation, from the point of view of reading, it appears natural to prefer subtitles. In order to understand a subtitled programme, a viewer must read, and must be able to read and understand the written text at a fairly quick, irreversible pace. Henrik Gottlieb (2004, 88), for example, calls subtitles “an important and effective reading drill”, and remarks that subtitles appear to be the main motivator for Danish children to learn to read. It is easy to believe that the same could be true of other subtitling countries. In this sense, a subtitling culture is, in a very concrete way, a reading culture. Because of the previously mentioned preference for the type of translation one is used to, viewers in a subtitling country tend to accept reading as a part of the film and television-viewing process, while viewers in a country where subtitling is not prevalent can, for example, talk disparagingly of “reading a movie”, thus projecting a more negative attitude towards reading.

However, it is difficult to determine whether these attitudes carry over to other kinds of reading. More targeted, systematic research would be needed to see any possible connections between subtitle-reading and reading in general, as well as between subtitle-reading and the development of reading skills. A casual observation suggests that a child reading subtitles is quite likely to develop fluent reading skills more easily than a child who does not read subtitles, but such an observation alone does not tell how significant a role subtitles may play in the process of learning to read. It is, however, clear that subtitles provide a comfortable, motivating setting for reading, and they therefore have potential as a tool for the promotion of reading.

Another interesting question is whether viewing subtitled programmes helps viewers learn foreign languages and develop a better understanding of foreign cultures. Again, a casual observation would suggest that, quite naturally, hearing foreign languages side by side with the translation must be beneficial for language-learning. This topic has been discussed quite extensively and investigated in a number of studies.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a

multinational, longitudinal research project on the connection of subtitles to language learning is currently underway (SubLangLearn). Such a research framework will certainly provide valuable, new information on the topic. Many findings of such studies already indicate that subtitles can indeed be helpful in learning foreign languages. However, the potential for learning through subtitles is somewhat limited, and grammar, for example, is not easily acquired through subtitles. Therefore, subtitling alone does not build multilingualism, but it can be one means used to support language-learning and the understanding of other cultures.

Subtitles' potential for promoting language learning has been recognised in Finland by SUKOL, the Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland. SUKOL awarded YLE, the Finnish public service broadcasting company, a special language achievement award in 2007 for their pioneering decision to subtitle rather than dub foreign programmes in the early days of television (SUKOL, "Vuoden kieliteko –palkinnon historiaa"). This award can be seen as one indication of the perceived value of subtitles as a factor in learning languages. Furthermore, it shows a significantly positive attitude towards subtitles as a method of translation, despite their limitations and challenges.

In conclusion, subtitles do show promise as a way of promoting reading and foreign languages, and this promise has been recognised by organisations, researchers as well as the individuals who read subtitles. However, the full impact of subtitles on culture can only be speculated on. More systematic research on various national and cultural contexts could provide a better understanding of whether the chosen method of screen translation is a significant factor in learning.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

It is important to give serious thought to the different methods of screen translation and their potential contributions to local cultures. Audiovisual materials – whether in the cinema, on television, on the Internet or elsewhere – are a prominent part of our communicative experience and the culture we encounter every day. The choice of screen translation method, and the quality of the translations, is therefore a significant question. Exposure to a certain type of screen translation can affect the audience's conception of the translated material: for example, it is easy for viewers of subtitled films to see that a film

is, indeed, a translation and a representative of a different culture, while viewers of dubbed films might fail to perceive the distinction between local films and translated films. Thus, it can be argued that subtitles are a more effective method of providing exposure to different cultures. In addition, subtitles are, quite obviously, a more effective method than dubbing of providing exposure to foreign languages. As subtitling and dubbing both have their strengths and weaknesses, it would not be accurate to simply name one of them as the better translation method. However, if the purpose is to encourage reading and increase exposure to foreign cultures and languages, it must be admitted that subtitles are more beneficial in working towards this goal.

In my view, subtitles can be an excellent method of screen translation. Their ability to convey the verbal message of the film can, in turn, perhaps support learning. However, in order to fulfil that purpose, subtitles must be carefully crafted and be in compliance with set conventions, recognisable to the target audience. This means that subtitlers must be qualified professionals who are provided with working conditions which allow the crafting of high-quality subtitles. These working conditions include fair compensation for their work, realistic timetables, high-quality subtitling software, access to a script or dialogue list, and opportunities to seek collegial support and feedback (see also Abdallah, 2011). Moreover, both the commissioners of subtitles and the translators themselves should be aware of their cultural role. Subtitles are read extensively and by a large sector of the population. This must mean that subtitles have a significant effect on people's local linguistic experience and bear some responsibility for, for example, children's developing conception of their mother tongue. The quality of subtitles is therefore far from irrelevant, and attention should be paid to it.

However, even if all the conditions of high-quality subtitles are fulfilled, the illusory nature of subtitles must be kept in mind: subtitles are always a result of compromises and tricks of illusion, and they always lack some elements of the source text. High subtitle quality does not mean that the subtitles are a word-for-word representation of the source text; it means that the illusions of subtitles have been successfully constructed. Occasionally, the constraints of the medium, such as very fast pace, can be so significant that subtitling becomes increasingly difficult, and its advantages over dubbing could be outweighed by the loss of information and readability resulting from the contextual

demands. This means that the potential of subtitles as a medium for learning is somewhat limited.

First and foremost, subtitles are an instrumental text, whose purpose is to help viewers understand the programme. Within their specific boundaries, subtitles can also be useful as a means for supporting learning, and, as such, their use can be recommended. It would, however, be impossible to name subtitling as the only recommendable form of screen translation at the cost of dubbing. Dubbing has its uses, for example, in programmes aimed at children who are not yet proficient readers. In my opinion, therefore, subtitles are not the automatically preferable choice of screen translation, but it would be beneficial to offer the option of subtitles whenever possible, so that viewers themselves can make the choice and the potential for learning would be available. With current technological advancements, such choice could quite realistically be offered in many media.

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1. See, e.g., d'Ydewalle and Pavakanun (1997, 145-155); Van de Poel and d'Ydewalle (2001, 259-273); Van Lommel, Laenen and d'Ydewalle, (2006, 243-258); Condinho Bravo (2008); and Danan (2004, 67-77).

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## **Reading Literacy and Reading Engagement: PISA 2009 in Finland**

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PISA has become a powerful assessment tool that produces comparable data on 15-year-old students' learning outcomes in reading literacy, mathematical literacy and scientific literacy in more than 60 countries all over the world. The PISA assessment is repeated every three years with its main assessment area varying. In 2000 as well as in 2009, reading literacy has been the main assessment area receiving most of the testing time in PISA.

In terms of reading literacy PISA measures students' skills to understand, use and reflect on texts as well as engagement in reading that is needed in today's knowledge-society in future studies, in work life and in everyday life as an active citizen (OECD 2009). The emphasis of the assessment is on young people's ability to use and apply their skills and knowledge to cope with the demands of future studies and work life regardless of the context of learning.

Finland has gained wide international attention since in the light of PISA assessments from 2000 to 2009 it seems to provide its students with a solid reading literacy foundation. In PISA 2000, Finnish students showed the highest and in 2009 the third highest performance in reading literacy among all the countries and economies participating in PISA. Furthermore, the performance of Finnish students showed not only high quality but also high equity since the gap between poor and top readers is relatively narrow (the standard deviation in PISA 2000 was 89, and 86 in 2009) and clearly below the OECD average. Additionally, the number of poor readers in Finland is relatively low in international comparison (OECD 2001, 2004, 2007, 2010a; Linnakylä & Sulkunen 2002, 2005; Arinen & Karjalainen 2007; Hautamäki et al. 2008; Sulkunen et al. 2010).

This paper describes the results of the PISA 2009 reading literacy assessment. Particularly, the paper focuses on reading engagement as an essential factor behind the reading performance. While the results of the Finnish students are emphasised, an international point of view is held throughout the paper.

### **Reading Literacy Performance**

In PISA 2009, the highest achieving OECD country was Korea with the reading literacy mean score of 539. Finnish students' reading performance was in practice at the same level, since their reading literacy mean score was only 3 score points smaller (536). This was also the case with Hong Kong where students' performance was only slightly below that of the Finnish students (mean score 533).

Shanghai, which participated in PISA for the first time in 2009, had the highest performance level in all assessment areas in PISA. Also in reading literacy Shanghai was beyond comparison with a mean score as high as 556. It is to be noted that both Shanghai and Hong Kong represent economies rather than the whole China – and economies outside the OECD. This means that comparison of the PISA results to other participants is somewhat complicated. This does not, however, in any way undermine the excellent results achieved in these two economies.

Looking at only OECD countries, it seems that in addition to Korea and Finland, also English-speaking countries Canada, New Zealand and Australia achieve a high performance level in reading literacy. Also Japanese students' performance in reading literacy is at an equally high level as that of their peers in New Zealand and Canada. It is noteworthy that the Netherlands, placed 7<sup>th</sup>, is the second best European country after Finland with the mean score of 508. This is clearly above the OECD average but also clearly below the top OECD countries Korea and Finland. Other Nordic countries – Norway, Iceland, Sweden and Denmark – as well as plenty of other European countries achieve a reading literacy level that is above the OECD average although lagging behind the top countries in reading.

The weakest performing European OECD countries include Turkey, Austria, Luxembourg, the Slovak and Czech Republics.

OECD has adopted the view that has been part of the educational philosophy in Nordic countries for decades (Husén 1974; Malin 2005) as it emphasises that the most successful schools systems manage to even out the impact of students' home background on learning outcomes. This can be seen in countries that combine performance above the OECD average and below-average relationship between socio-economic background and performance (OECD 2010b, 27). Successful school systems with these criteria are Korea, Finland, Canada, Japan, Norway, Estonia, Iceland and Hong Kong. Top-performers such as Shanghai, Singapore and Australia, however, have average impact of socio-economic background on reading performance, and in New Zealand the impact is even higher than on average in the OECD (Ibid. 28).

From the perspective of equity in education, the most notable concern in Finland as well as in many other countries is the gender difference in reading literacy. Finland has the largest gender gap in reading among all the OECD countries, 55 score points, which corresponds approximately one and a half years progress at school (OECD 2010a). In Europe, other countries with a large gender gap are, for instance, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic, Poland, the Czech Republic, Norway and Greece. All these countries have a gender gap clearly above the OECD average (39 score points). European countries with a clearly smaller gender gap include the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Belgium, Denmark and Spain. In no OECD country is there a gender gap favoring boys.

### **Reading Engagement**

Reading engagement has gained a stronger emphasis in PISA since it was included in the definition of reading literacy for the 2009 assessment (OECD 2009). Reading literacy is now defined as understanding, using, reflecting on and *engaging with* written texts, in order to achieve one's goals, to develop one's knowledge and potential, and to participate in society (Ibid. 23). Although measuring reading engagement has always been an essential part of the reading literacy assessment in PISA, including the concept in the definition emphasises that a literate person not only can read but also values reading and reads on a daily basis.

The measure of reading engagement in PISA includes five aspects: enjoyment of reading, time used for reading for enjoyment, the diversity of (print) reading, the diversity of online reading materials and reading for school (OECD 2010c, 26). This paper focuses on the first mentioned four aspects as the school's point of view is left out.

Enjoyment of reading is measured in PISA with multiple attitude statements that students agree or disagree. Students' responses to these statements have been combined into one index of enjoyment in reading. The OECD average for the index is set to 0 and standard deviation to 1. Thus, positive values of the index indicate enjoyment above the OECD average, and negative values indicate enjoyment below the OECD average (OECD 2009c).

The Finnish students' enjoyment of reading measured as interest in reading (0,05) is only slightly above the OECD average. In Europe, students with the most positive attitude towards reading are in Turkey (0,64) which is in a league of its own. Also students in Portugal (0,21) and Hungary (0,14) show interest in reading clearly above the OECD average. In quite many European countries students' interest in reading is clearly below the OECD average. The Netherlands is the country where students are least interested in reading (-0,32), but also their peers in Slovenia, Belgium, Norway and Luxembourg show clearly less interest in reading than students on average in the OECD. Also the students in Iceland, Denmark and Norway show interest in reading below the OECD average. This means that although the Finnish students' interest in reading is only at the OECD average level, they are more interested in reading than their peers in other Nordic countries.

As reading performance, also interest in reading shows a gender gap favoring girls in all OECD countries. Again, the gap is widest in Finland followed by Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland and Sweden. The smallest gender gap in interest in reading in Europe is in Ireland and in France – yet it is still approximately half a standard deviation in these countries. One explanation for the large gender gap might be that the measure of interest in reading is actually measuring interest in reading *books*. (The statements in the measure of interest in reading include statements such as *I find it hard to finish books, I feel happy if I receive a book as a present*). Girls in many countries read books more actively than boys – at least fiction.

In many countries students' interest in reading has decreased since the 2000 reading literacy assessment. In Europe, the decrease is quite clear at least in the Czech Republic, Finland, Portugal, Switzerland, Denmark and Iceland. However, there are countries that have managed to increase significantly the students' interest in reading. In Europe, the only OECD country that has succeeded in this is Germany since there have been many efforts to improve the reading performance level from 2000.

Another important measure of the students' engagement in reading is the time used for reading for enjoyment. This tells us how much time students use for reading every day for their own pleasure. This does not include reading for school work. However, the type of reading or reading materials read for enjoyment have not been defined or restricted in the PISA questionnaire. Students may read different kinds of materials, both printed and online.

In the OECD countries, less than two thirds of students read for enjoyment every day while 37 percent do not read for pleasure on daily basis at all. In Europe, Greek, Turkish and Hungarian students read for enjoyment more than their peers: In Greece only 17 percent of students reported using no time for reading for enjoyment; in Turkey and in Hungary approximately every fourth student reported the same. Also in Poland, Finland, Denmark, Italy and Portugal the share of students that do not read for pleasure every day is below the OECD average. Still, in these countries approximately every third student does not read for enjoyment. However, in Austria, the Netherlands and Switzerland the situation is clearly worse: in these countries nearly half of students reported not reading for pleasure every day.

The third measure of reading engagement used in PISA is the diversity of students' reading materials. This measure combines different types of reading materials, namely newspapers, magazines, comics, fiction and non-fiction, and the frequency of reading them into one index, the index for diversity of reading (OECD 2009c).

Among the OECD countries, Turkish students showed the highest level of diversity in reading (0,49) and the Finnish students were close as second (0,45). Also students in Norway, Iceland and Denmark showed a diversity of reading above the OECD average (0,32, 0,19 and 0,07 respectively). Sweden was the only Nordic country showing diversity

of reading on average level (-0,01). Also in Estonia, Hungary and Switzerland diversity of reading was above the average.

European countries with a low level of diversity of reading were Greece, the Netherlands, Italy and Spain (-0,32, -0,32, -0,31 and -0,30 respectively). This means that students in these countries read diverse printed texts clearly less than students in the above mentioned European countries. They may, however, read less diversely. The share of students that do not read any printed materials included in the PISA questionnaire (newspapers, magazines, comics, fiction and non-fiction) in several European countries is below 10 percent. In these countries – Turkey, Finland, Austria, Estonia, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, the Slovak Republic and Luxembourg – nine out of ten students do read at least some kinds of printed texts frequently. On the other hand, there are also countries such as the Netherlands where every fifth student reads none of these printed texts.

Nowadays also electronic texts and other online materials are part of most people's everyday life. The youngest generations are no exception, on the contrary. In the PISA 2009 assessment, students reported also the frequency of different online activities, such as reading online news, chatting, looking for information for school work or for practical purposes and so on. Again, these were combined into one index of online reading activities. The results showed that students in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Hungary and Slovenia are the most active in online activities in the OECD. Also the Nordic countries Iceland, Norway and Denmark showed an above-average level of activity online. The Finnish students' online activity, however, was only slightly below the OECD average. In Europe, the Irish students' online activity was the lowest.

### **Relationship between Reading Performance and Engagement in Reading**

It is interesting to look at different countries' profiles in terms of reading engagement. In Finland, for instance, students' interest in reading is only at the level of the OECD average. Every third Finnish student does not use time for reading for pleasure on a daily basis, and the share of these students has increased from 2000 (from 22 to 33 percent). The diversity of reading, however, is the Finnish students' strength: as in 2000, also in 2009 they showed a diversity of reading clearly higher than their peers in the OECD. On the other hand, the Finnish students' activity using online resources – both texts and social

media – is slightly below the OECD average. Apart from the diversity of reading, Finnish students have an average engagement for reading.

The Netherlands, which was the second best country in reading literacy in Europe, has a different profile. Dutch students showed the lowest level in enjoyment of reading Europe. Additionally half of the Dutch students did not use time on a daily basis for reading for pleasure, and they showed the lowest level of diversity of reading in Europe and in the OECD. However, Dutch students did show online activities above the OECD average. Overall, Dutch students' engagement profile can be characterised as quite passive.

Turkish students are a good example of the opposite engagement profile. They showed the highest level of enjoyment in reading in the OECD. Additionally, Turkey had one of the smallest shares of students who do not use any time (daily) for reading for their own pleasure. Turkish students also showed a high diversity of reading. However, their online reading activities were slightly below the OECD average. The Turkish students' engagement profile is very active. Yet, Turkey had the third lowest reading literacy mean score in the OECD.

In an international level – comparing countries with each other – it seems that reading engagement does not correlate with reading performance. However, *within* every country the relationship is quite clear: students showing a high degree of reading engagement show a higher performance in reading than those showing a lower level of reading engagement (OECD 2009c; Sulkunen et al. 2010).

It is, however, important to understand the nature of the relationship between reading engagement and reading performance. Not only are more engaged readers better readers but also good readers are more engaged readers. In plain language this means that those who read actively diverse materials have more opportunities to practice their reading skills. Thus, active readers have self-generated learning opportunities (Guthrie & Wigfield 2000). On the other hand, good readers usually find reading easy and fun, and therefore they read more, i.e. are engaged in reading. Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) emphasise that the relationship between reading engagement and reading performance can be explained with motivation: motivation to read is mediated by engagement; it is the link between motivation and performance.

PISA also shows that reading engagement can reduce some gaps, such as the gender gap, in reading performance. The gap between girls' and boys' reading performance level can be partly explained by their different levels of engagement. Given that the boys' engagement in reading was at the same level as that of girls, the gender gap in reading performance would be reduced significantly (OECD 2009c).

From the perspective of improving reading performance it is important to read regularly and preferably diverse materials, including electronic texts. In some countries reading fiction is preferred and valued more than reading any other materials. In other countries students read more diversely different kinds of texts, and this is valued also at school. In the Finnish national core curriculum a large variety of different types of texts are included in the content for the mother tongue curriculum (NCC 2004). Thus it is acknowledged that modern texts are multimodal (Cope & Kalantzis 2000) and they use multiple meaning-making systems in addition to written language.

Engagement in reading is considered an essential objective in the mother tongue curriculum as such (NCC 2004). It is stated in the curriculum that reading engagement is important since engaged readers practice their reading skills more but it is also emphasised that every student should be able to develop a reader identity and learn to choose interesting reading materials. This objective becomes even more important now that PISA results show a decrease in the Finnish students' reading activities and also in reading performance. No doubt, this will be a challenge also in many other, if not most, European countries.

Whose responsibility is it to aim for improved reading engagement and reading performance in Europe? It must be everyone's responsibility. Parents and educators, teachers, are key persons in supporting children's and young students' reading engagement. But literacy can only thrive in an environment in which everyone values reading and acts as a role model for the younger generations. It is time that we all become aware of the value of reading – and show it too.

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# **II. Censures**

## **visibles**

## **et invisibles**

Table Ronde du projet sur la liberté d'expression  
dans les pays européens et du bassin méditerranéen  
de l'European Writers' Council,  
le Comité pour la Paix du PEN International et  
le PEN club français

## **Introduction à la table ronde sur la liberté d'expression**

**Sylvestre Clancier**  
**Vice-président de l'European Writers' Council**  
**Président du PEN français**  
**Membre du Comité exécutif du PEN International**

Reconnue comme une liberté fondamentale de l'être humain (1789 en France, 1948 aux Nations Unies, 1950 au Conseil de l'Europe), la liberté d'expression n'a pas la même portée dans tous les pays qui la proclament. Ainsi, elle ne recouvre pas chez nous, en France, les incitations à la haine raciale ou au négationnisme (certains écrits de Céline, par exemple).

Il existe plusieurs manières de restreindre la liberté d'expression : directe ou indirecte, ouverte ou dissimulée, propre au monde de l'édition ou extérieure à lui. La première et la plus forte est évidemment l'autocensure. Les restrictions peuvent donc présenter selon les cas un caractère politique (pression politique, morale ou religieuse), et se manifestent le plus souvent le jour même d'un livre publié, ou un caractère « technique » (frein économique, linguistique ou éditorial) et naissent en amont de toute publication, en vue de l'éviter. Les pressions du premier type finissent souvent par apparaître au grand jour, les autres demeurent confidentielles, voire invisibles.

La France n'est pas en Europe le pays où les occasions de dénoncer les atteintes à la liberté d'expression sont les plus fréquentes. En dépit de quelques dérives, les libertés républicaines restent solidement ancrées dans les esprits, qui plus est au pays de Beaumarchais et du droit d'auteur.

Dès lors qu'une administration, une structure associative ou un particulier font publiquement obstacle à une publication (interdiction administrative, action en justice) la presse, l'édition et les auteurs s'emparent aussitôt du sujet, et la publicité induite suffit généralement à mettre un terme aux difficultés. Quant au juge, il semble se montrer en matière de liberté d'expression plus rigoureux pour le livre que pour la presse, peut-être

pour distinguer la mission d'information dévolue à celle-ci de la fonction de référence reconnue à celui-là.

L'affaire est plus délicate lorsque les pressions sont discrètes et souterraines. La ligne éditoriale, le calendrier des publications, les contraintes de l'actualité, la rentabilité attendue du titre sont autant de raisons de ne pas publier un livre. L'argument économique est évidemment le plus puissant et le moins apparent, puisqu'il dépend des structures gestionnaires. Enfin, si les groupes et les grandes maisons d'édition ont les moyens de supporter les frais d'un procès, voire de plusieurs, il n'en va pas de même des petites maisons, pour qui la perspective d'une procédure est souvent rédhibitoire. C'est probablement la forme la plus sournoise de l'autocensure.

Nous portons depuis l'an passé au sein de l'EWC, associé en cela avec le Comité pour la Paix du PEN International et le PEN club français, un projet consistant à recenser la situation diversifiée et contrastée de la liberté d'expression dans les pays européens et du bassin méditerranéen.

Il s'agit d'indiquer à partir d'exemples concrets les différentes formes de censures plus ou moins visibles, jusqu'à l'autocensure même qui en est la forme la plus pernicieuse.

Ce projet piloté au sein de l'EWC par deux membres du Conseil d'administration: Tiziana Colusso et moi-même, a consisté, en un premier temps, à adresser aux membres de l'EWC et à ceux du Comité pour la Paix du PEN International présidé par Monsieur Edvard Kovac, présent aujourd'hui à cette table ronde de notre Congrès Mare Nostrum, un questionnaire destiné à les guider dans l'examen de la situation de la liberté d'expression dans leur propre pays.

Nous avons recueilli à partir de là un certain nombre de contributions qui ont été complétées par les interventions d'écrivains de différents pays lors de Congrès internationaux : le premier à Haïfa, en Israël, en décembre 2010, le second à Bled, en Slovénie, au début du mois de mai 2011.

A ce stade d'avancement du projet, nous avons en préparation une publication avec une trentaine de contributions variées et très riches. Nous allons entendre ici même dans

notre Congrès Mare Nostrum les interventions de Monsieur Jean-Claude Bologne, président de la Société des Gens de Lettres de France, de Monsieur Edvard Kovac, président du Comité pour la Paix du PEN International et de Madame Heidi Hautala, présidente au Parlement Européen de la Commission de défense des droits de l'homme.

26 mai 2011

## **La censure du réel**

**Jean Claude Bologne**  
**Société des Gens de Lettres**

Le premier alinéa du premier article des statuts de la Société des Gens de Lettres lui donne pour but « de propager la langue française dans le monde et de défendre la libre expression des œuvres de l'esprit ». C'est dire si cette préoccupation est essentielle à nos yeux. C'est ce qu'a reconnu la loi française le 25 septembre 1946, en donnant à notre Société la possibilité, à l'exclusion de toute autre personne, d'ouvrir un recours en révision contre les condamnations prononcées pour outrages aux bonnes mœurs commis par la voie du livre. Mais voilà : l'expression « outrage aux bonnes mœurs » a disparu du Code pénal depuis la loi du 29 mars 1993, les articles correspondants (227-23 et 24) ne protégeant plus que les mineurs<sup>1</sup>. Pour les adultes consentants, en principe, il n'y a plus de censure en France. Surtout parce qu'il n'y en a plus besoin : nous avons d'autres moyens de limiter la liberté d'expression.

Qu'il n'y ait pas de malentendu : à côté de régimes non démocratiques qui exercent encore un contrôle de l'information et une répression des opinions divergentes, il serait obscène de nous plaindre. Mais la défense de la liberté d'expression est une perpétuelle vigilance. La graine de la censure est aussi dangereuse que la censure elle-même. Pour cette raison, nous avons rejoint en 2007 l'Observatoire de la liberté de création de la Ligue des Droits de l'Homme. Ces nouvelles formes de censure sont nombreuses, et nous y avons souvent été confrontés : censure économique par une interdiction de vente aux mineurs, autocensure ou censure de l'éditeur devant de ruineuses tracasseries judiciaires, le « contenu explicite » défini par la mythique communauté des internautes pour inviter à un tout aussi mythique « contrôle parental »<sup>2</sup>, possibilité reconnue à certaines associations de se porter partie civile en cas de mise en péril de mineurs<sup>3</sup>, glissement d'une histoire objective vers une histoire mémorielle<sup>4</sup>... Une nouvelle censure d'autant plus pernicieuse qu'elle est passée du sommet à la base : la qualification n'étant plus exclusivement du

ressort des experts, mais de plus en plus le fait des associations ou des internautes, la réaction épidermique l'emporte sur l'analyse, les critères moraux sur les critères esthétiques. La critique littéraire elle-même, qui avait toujours été, en France, une critique esthétique, tend à devenir, comme dans les pays anglosaxons, une critique morale<sup>5</sup>. On a même vu des animateurs de télévision appeler au boycott d'un livre, *Un cri dans le silence* de Brigitte Bardot, ainsi que de tous les ouvrages de son éditeur<sup>6</sup>. Même s'il n'y a pas de conséquences judiciaires, les campagnes médiatiques peuvent être lourdes, et en tout état de cause, la censure de ses pairs est la plus douloureuse pour l'écrivain.

De toutes ces nouvelles censures auxquelles sont consacrées cette table ronde, je souhaiterais développer la plus sournoise : la confusion entre la réalité et la fiction, qui aboutit à une censure du réel pour contourner celle de la création. L'arme n'est plus la censure préalable ni la procédure pour outrage aux bonnes mœurs, mais les plaintes pour plagiat, diffamation ou atteinte à la vie privée. Les affaires se sont multipliées depuis que confusion entre réalité et fiction a été épinglée par un arrêt de la Cour de cassation du 25 février 1997. Celle-ci en effet a estimé que l'ouvrage *Graine d'angoisse*, « présenté comme une œuvre de fiction », mais qui constituait « en réalité une autobiographie mal déguisée, permettant l'identification aisée des divers protagonistes dans leurs relations psychologiques et affectives au sein du milieu familial » portait atteinte à la vie privée du frère et de la sœur de l'auteur<sup>7</sup>. S'il s'agissait, à bon droit, d'éviter que la littérature ne devienne un prétexte à des règlements de compte, la conséquence a été de brouiller définitivement la frontière ; des victimes opportunistes se sont engouffrées dans la brèche à côté de situations véritablement douloureuses. Ainsi, Lucio Mad, en 1998, qui avait obtenu l'accord d'un proche évoqué dans son roman *Paradis B*, a-t-il cru pouvoir le publier sans problème. Mais le proche en question l'a assigné pour atteinte à la vie privée en se vantant auprès d'amis communs : « Je vais faire cracher Gallimard, je vais ramasser un paquet. » Ces confidences, rapportées au tribunal, l'ont fait débouter<sup>8</sup>. Mais depuis cette époque, il n'est pas d'année où nous ne soyons informés d'une ou de plusieurs affaires similaires.

Toutes ces affaires relèvent de catégories différentes : contrefaçon, diffamation, atteinte à la vie privée, ou viol du secret de l'instruction, comme ce fut le cas en 2000 du *Moloch* de Thierry Jonquet. Toutes n'ont pas connu les mêmes procédures : certaines se

sont retrouvées devant des tribunaux, mais d'autres ont été réglées à l'amiable par une indemnisation, ont abouti à une autocensure avant publication ou lors d'une réédition. Ainsi, en 1998, Michel Houellebecq accepte de changer le nom du camping où se situe une scène des *Particules élémentaires* ; en 2009, l'éditeur d'*Un roman français* demande à Frédéric Beigbeder de supprimer un passage concernant un procureur de la République en poste. Il s'agit alors d'une forme sournoise de censure exercée par l'auteur lui-même ou par une pression de son éditeur. Ces formes de censure sont les plus difficiles à déceler, mais risquent de devenir les plus nombreuses. Les procès en effet coûtent cher, même lorsqu'ils sont gagnés, et les éditeurs s'entourent de plus en plus d'équipes juridiques qui travaillent en amont.

Certaines affaires évoquent des personnages réels : en 1999, Mathieu Lindon est poursuivi pour diffamation par Jean-Marie Le Pen pour une œuvre de fiction où l'homme politique était nommé ; en 2007, Philippe Besson est condamné pour avoir évoqué dans *L'enfant d'octobre*, sans changer les noms, l'affaire Villemain. D'autres camouflent les noms de façon plus ou moins transparente ; en 2004, Alain Absire évoque sous le nom de Jean S. la vie de Jean Seberg, et est poursuivi par le fils de l'actrice, Diego Gary. Mais le lien peut être extrêmement ténu : en 2011, Christine Angot est poursuivie par l'ex-femme de son compagnon qui s'est reconnue dans le personnage central des *Petits...* Et en 1999, Nadine Monfils est poursuivie par un cafetier qui s'est courageusement reconnu sous les traits d'un gros abruti à la moto jaune.

Les faits peuvent porter sur les détails de la vie privée : en 2003, le mari d'une de nos sociétaires a poursuivi sa femme en justice pour avoir utilisé dans un de ses romans des faits de leur intimité. Mais aussi sur des paroles, qui constituent le principe même de la mise en dialogue dans le cadre d'une fiction romanesque : en 2000, la journaliste Catherine Erhel reproche au romancier Emmanuel Carrère de lui avoir attribué dans *L'adversaire* des propos qu'elle n'a pas tenus. Des situations sont aussi visées, ce qui est contraire à toute la jurisprudence française. On sait, par exemple, qu'on ne peut protéger le trio mari / femme / amant, jugé trop banal. Pas plus que la mort d'un proche. Pourtant, en 2007, une romancière s'est sentie victime d'un « plagiat psychologique » à la lecture du roman d'une consœur. Cette dernière avait évoqué sous forme de fiction la mort d'un enfant, drame qu'elle n'avait pas vécu, mais qui avait été vécu et raconté dix ans plus tôt par la première. Le comble est atteint lorsqu'on s'en prend au lieu même de l'action : en

2010, le Marché Saint-Pierre attaque Lalie Walker pour avoir situé en ce lieu l'intrigue d'un roman policier. Dans ces conditions, il ne serait plus possible de raconter n'importe quelle histoire en la situant n'importe où ! Précisons tout de suite que la première affaire n'a pas connu d'issue judiciaire, et que dans la seconde, le plaignant a été débouté.

Toutes ces affaires, dans leur diversité, ont cependant un point commun : la confusion entre la réalité et la fiction, qui évite de parler de censure en reportant le délit sur la vie dite réelle. Et toutes, d'une manière ou d'une autre, aboutissent à une restriction de la liberté de création ou d'expression.

Certes, il ne s'agit pas d'un phénomène nouveau, et il est légitime que les écrivains, qui sont des personnes responsables, soient soumis à la loi du 29 juillet 1881 qui réprime la diffamation. La responsabilité de l'écrivain (et de son éditeur), avec les risques de procès qu'ils encourent, est la conséquence inéluctable de l'abolition de la censure préalable. Il ne s'agit donc pas de remettre en cause ce devoir d'honnêteté. Mais le poids judiciaire peut aboutir à une autocensure préalable. Il est symptomatique, cependant, que le délit ait d'abord été défini dans une loi sur la liberté de la presse : le but n'était pas de censurer la création romanesque. En quoi, dès lors, la fiction peut-elle ou non garantir la liberté d'expression ? En fait, en rien. Le plus inquiétant, dans la multiplication récente de ces affaires, est peut-être la subtilité croissante, et proprement ubuesque des analyses.

En tant que tel, par exemple, l'affirmation de la fiction peut au contraire devenir une circonstance aggravante. La mention classique « Toute coïncidence avec des personnages réels ou ayant existé ne peut être que fortuite » n'est pas absolue : elle peut au contraire démontrer que le romancier est conscient d'une possible identification ; du coup, cela n'induirait-il pas une volonté de nuire ? La question a pu être posée. Il n'y a pas atteinte à la vie privée d'une personne décédée, certes, mais si, en décrivant l'accouchement de Jean Seberg, le romancier laisse apparaître la tête du nouveau-né, bien vivant, le délit est constitué. Plus surprenant encore : le fait d'attribuer à un personnage réel, dans un roman, des poèmes composés par le romancier expose celui-ci à une condamnation pour contrefaçon, puisqu'il reconnaît dans une fiction la paternité du poème à un personnage historique dont l'œuvre, quoique fictive, serait toujours sous droit ! Si l'auteur est censé penser comme ses personnages, surtout s'ils sont narrateurs, il devient difficile de mettre en scène des protagonistes négatifs : en 2005, Éric Bénier-Bürckel est

accusé d'avoir prêté à un des personnages de *Pogrom* des propos antisémites ; en 2006, *Les bienveillantes* de Jonathan Littell posent le problème de l'empathie par identification que peut éprouver le lecteur devant un narrateur responsable de crime contre l'humanité. Les campagnes de presse qui s'en sont suivies ont constitué une forme de censure morale plus blessante pour les romanciers qu'un impossible procès.

Il peut apparaître tout aussi paradoxal d'être reconnu coupable d'atteinte à la vie privée pour des faits inventés. Ce fut pourtant le cas en 2004 : le *Renard des Grèves* de Jean Failler attribue à un personnage de fiction des détails empruntés à une femme identifiable, mêlés à des faits imaginaires. Selon les juges, ces faits inventés sont du coup susceptibles de porter atteinte à la vie privée de celui qui s'y est reconnu. Plus surprenant encore, en 2011, Christine Angot est à la fois accusée d'avoir calqué des éléments réels et de les avoir déformés, coupable à la fois de réalité et de fiction. « L'idée selon laquelle la littérature plagierait indûment, voire criminellement, le réel » s'apparente « à une forme de censure », estime Tiphaine Samoyault, en particulier parce qu'elle ôte à la littérature sa fonction première : « montrer ce qu'on ne voit pas » et mettre en forme une réalité qui restera informe tant qu'elle n'est pas passée par les mots<sup>9</sup>.

D'où est venue cette dérive qui compromet gravement la liberté de créer et d'exprimer? D'abord, sans doute, du jugement du 25 février 1997 qui a donné une jurisprudence plus précise. Mais cela ne suffit pas. Il s'est inscrit dans une tendance de fond de la littérature française, sinon de la culture mondiale.

La tendance de plus en plus marquée à enfermer la littérature dans un calque du réel a accentué le phénomène. La formule d'Adorno, en 1949 (« écrire un poème après Auschwitz est barbare »), et surtout les élucubrations qu'elle a engendrées et que le philosophe a lui-même contestées, ont peu à peu instauré une dictature de la réalité brute. Le culte de l'*autofiction*, terme proposé en 1977 par Serge Doubrovsky, a accentué cette tendance. Doubrovsky lui-même a plus d'une fois été confronté à l'autocensure, changeant un nom ou retranchant des passages pour éviter un procès. Pourtant il pouvait se targuer d'« avoir confié le langage d'une aventure à l'aventure du langage<sup>10</sup> », recouvrant cette réalité brute du voile stylistique d'une langue très travaillée. Depuis, l'*autofiction* cherche à l'inverse un « effet de réel » dans une langue dépouillée et simplifiée à l'extrême qui

brouille les frontières entre réalité et fiction. La multiplication des procès pourrait être un retour de bâton qui n'ose aller jusqu'au bout de sa pensée. « Ce qui gêne et déçoit les plaignants finalement, c'est le manque d'imagination des romanciers », concluait Catherine Argand en évoquant cette nouvelle tendance<sup>11</sup>. Non pas : c'est au contraire le refus de l'écriture littéraire, qui brise le pacte fictionnel et souligne l'emprunt à la réalité.

Mais la rupture du pacte fictionnel est aussi due à la parcellisation de la lecture. L'accélération du temps nous oblige à des pirouettes intellectuelles et invite à des raccourcis illégitimes. Nos parents avaient connu la mode des résumés outranciers dans les *Reader digests*. Nous en sommes aujourd'hui à la culture des *snippets*, ces extraits de deux lignes qui, sur un moteur de recherche, situent un terme dans le contexte de la page web ou du livre numérisé où il apparaît. Il est en effet impossible, dans ces extraits, de distinguer correctement la pensée d'un auteur ou d'un de ses personnages, ce qui confère à la fiction un statut d'opinion ou d'information. En obtenant sur ce point la condamnation de Google sur base du droit moral, la Société des Gens de Lettres a insisté sur l'importance de l'intégrité de l'œuvre. Sans vouloir accuser une entreprise en particulier de cette dérive, la parcellisation a pu entraîner des lectures malveillantes et des plaintes injustifiées. C'est ce que soulignait la 17<sup>e</sup> chambre correctionnelle dans l'affaire Bénier-Bürkel, en fondant son jugement sur la lecture intégrale de l'œuvre<sup>12</sup>. Voilà pourquoi le droit à l'intégrité, une des principales composantes du droit moral « à la française », constitue le meilleur garant de la liberté d'expression : il garantit l'auteur contre les mauvais procès.

Or, cette accélération de la lecture est inversement proportionnelle à la masse croissante d'informations et de livres disponibles et à l'injonction de tout lire. L'information n'est plus maîtrisable, sinon par des moteurs de recherche automatisés. Sa diffusion par Internet, les alertes Google, les flux RSS font que les victimes potentielles, ou qui se croient telles, sont aussitôt averties. Nous le savons en écrivant ; l'innocence de l'acte d'écrire est désormais impossible. Le mythe de la transparence est contemporain de la dénonciation de la langue de bois : le *politiquement correct* est la plus efficace des autocensures. Tant mieux, sans doute, si les victimes potentielles disposent de meilleurs moyens de faire valoir leurs droits, à condition bien entendu que les motivations se résument effectivement à la dénonciation d'un dol. Mais l'information étant désormais disponible et théoriquement répandue sur l'ensemble de la planète pour l'éternité,

l'Internet risque de devenir une peine de carcan perpétuel. Le droit à l'oubli que garantissaient jadis les délais de prescription est devenu illusoire. En 2009, Daniel Cohn-Bendit s'est vu reprocher des propos qu'il avait tenus dans un livre publié dans *Le Grand bazar* en 1975, à une époque où non seulement ces propos ne posaient aucun problème, mais où ils pouvaient refléter les idées dominantes. Il est devenu courageux d'écrire en sachant que dans trente-cinq ans, lorsque les valeurs morales auront changé, nos propos pourront nous être reprochés. La liberté d'expression, mal comprise, devient alors une paradoxale entrave à la liberté de création.

Poussons jusqu'au bout le paradoxe, en évitant de tomber dans le cynisme : pour assurer la liberté de création, il faut retrouver une forme de droit à l'oubli, que seul nous assure le droit de paternité (ou l'anonymat qu'il peut garantir), le de retrait et le droit de repentir, autres composantes du droit moral « à la française ». Voilà aussi pourquoi la Société des Gens de Lettres le défend farouchement, persuadée qu'il constitue non pas un blocage et une entrave à la liberté d'expression, mais le garant indispensable de la liberté de création. Pour que l'auteur ait la possibilité de tout dire, il faut qu'il soit le seul à maîtriser ce qu'il dit.

Le nouveau danger est donc celui d'une censure par surplus et non par interdiction de contenu. Bernard Noël, victime célèbre de la censure pour *Le château de Cène* (1969), l'avait déjà dénoncé en 1985 dans *Le Sens, la sensure*. Si la censure s'en prend à la parole en l'interdisant ou en la mutilant, la sensure s'en prend au sens des mots en oblitérant leur signifiant. Plus sournoise, elle s'opère à l'insu de la victime et ne peut être objectivée comme les ciseaux d'Anastasia. Anne Malaprade a résumé leur opposition dans une formule célèbre de Coluche : « ferme ta gueule », dit la censure ; « cause toujours », dit la sensure<sup>13</sup>. Si notre rôle d'écrivains consiste à faire sens, pour inventer le réel dans une réalité qui, par nature, est soumise à l'aléatoire et à la diversité des significations, la pire des c/sensures consiste bien à nous réduire à de simples transpositeurs de la réalité, pour nous le reprocher aussitôt.

Mars 2011

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Décret 93-726 1993-03-29 art. 9, publié au JO le 30 mars 1993, en vigueur le 1er mars 1994.

<sup>2</sup> « Cette vidéo peut contenir des séquences que la communauté des utilisateurs de YouTube considère comme potentiellement offensantes pour certains internautes », « Des membres de Dailymotion ont signalé ce contenu comme réservé aux adultes »...

<sup>3</sup> « Toute association, inscrite auprès du ministère de la justice dans des conditions fixées par décret en Conseil d'Etat, est recevable dans son action même si l'action publique n'a pas été mise en mouvement par le ministère public ou la partie lésée en ce qui concerne l'infraction mentionnée à l'article 227-23 du code pénal » (Loi n° 2004 -1 du 2 janvier 2004 relative à l'accueil et à la protection de l'enfance). Le roman *Rose Bonbon* de Nicolas Jones-Gorlin (Gallimard) avait fait l'objet d'une plainte de la part des associations l'Enfant bleu et la Fondation pour l'enfance, de même que le roman *Il entrerait dans la légende* de Louis Skorecki (Léo Scheer) de la part de la Fondation pour l'enfance.

<sup>4</sup> Voir l'appel du 12 décembre 2005, à l'origine de l'association *Liberté pour l'Histoire*.

<sup>5</sup> Voir Emmanuel Pierrat (dir.), *Le livre noir de la censure*, Paris, Seuil, 2008 ; Agnès Tricoire (dir.), *La création est-elle libre ?*, Latresne, Le Bord de l'Eau, 2003 ; Agnès Tricoire, *Petit traité de la liberté de création*, Paris, La Découverte, 2011 ; dossier du *Monde*, 13-14 juillet 2008, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Liberation.fr*, 11 juillet 2003 ; communiqué du Syndicat national de l'édition, juin 2003.

<sup>7</sup> Cour de cassation, chambre civile 1, Audience publique du mardi 25 février 1997, pourvoi n° 95-13545.

<sup>8</sup> Catherine Argand, « A-t-on encore le droit de s'inspirer des faits divers ? », dans *l'Express.fr*, 1<sup>er</sup> mai 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Tiphaine Samoyault, « Extension du domaine du plagiat », dans *Libération*, 21 février 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Quatrième de couverture de *Fils*, Paris, Galilée, 1977.

<sup>11</sup> Catherine Argand, *Op. cit.*, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Tricoire, *Op. cit.*, 2011, p. 210.

<sup>13</sup> Bernard Noël, *Le Sens, la sensure*, Le Rœulx, Talus d'approche, 1985. Voir Anne

Malaprade, *Bernard Noël. L'épreuve des c/sensures, les c/sensures à l'épreuve*, Paris, Seli Arslan, 2003.

## **Liberté d'expression: censure visible et invisible**

**Edvard Kovač**

**President of**

**the Writers for Peace Committee of PEN International**

La liberté d'expression est une des libertés fondamentales, c'est pourquoi toute société désire donner au moins l'apparence d'une liberté des médias, de la parole et du discours publics. Même les régimes totalitaires qui limitent cette liberté se justifient en affirmant que cette interdiction nécessaire ne serait que temporaire et permettrait d'éviter des catastrophes concernant l'État ou la nation. C'est pourquoi les régimes autoritaires cultivent l'illusion que la suppression de la liberté d'expression n'est que passagère et font tout leur possible pour que cette limitation de la liberté d'expression devienne socialement acceptable et donc interiorisée.

Cependant, les sociétés démocratiques ne sont pas, elles non plus, exemptes de censure de même qu'elles ne sont dépourvues d'aspirations totalitaires et d'idéologies. Mais cette censure invisible est plus difficilement reconnue et donc avouée. La censure invisible dans une société démocratique est beaucoup plus interiorisée qu'elle ne l'est dans les régimes autoritaires. En effet, toute société interiorise non seulement les valeurs fondamentales comme par exemple le respect de la vie mais aussi les préjugés et les postulats de l'idéologie dominante. Les idéologies nous affirment que certaines choses vont de soi et qu'elles ne souffrent pas d'examen critique.

Il est donc très important que, dans toute société, les intellectuels et les écrivains repèrent les facteurs idéologiques dominant une civilisation. On voit que ce qui prédomine aujourd'hui dans la société occidentale c'est le soi-disant « génome individuel » qui signifie que tout homme est pleinement réalisé s'il se réalise en tant qu'individu. Le devoir et le droit inaliénable de l'individu est de se mettre en valeur. La protection de l'individu et de sa propriété constitue la base qui dicte un certain style et un certain type d'expression. Ainsi naît un parler qui de façon invisible devient loi et qui inflige aussi des sanctions si l'on pêche contre le « politiquement correct ».

Cette table ronde se propose de mettre en lumière les valeurs et les opinions qui, dans une société, sont exigées par le « politiquement correct ». La question demeure de savoir comment dépasser les cadres et les schémas de pensée que nous avons intériorisés et qui fonctionnent comme de nouveaux « tabous ». Ou plus précisément comment l'intellectuel et l'écrivain trouvent l'expression authentique de la pensée et de la poésie qui exprimerait le miracle de l'être humain ou l'extraordinaire « événement » qu'est l'homme, l'homme avec d'autres hommes et l'homme dans le monde au-delà des normes établies.

**La liberté de conscience et le dépassement de l' auto-censure est la  
condition première de la liberté d'expression**

**La liberté d'expression quant à elle est toujours menacée**

**Sylvestre Clancier,**

**Président du PEN français,**

**Membre du Comité exécutif du PEN**

**International et Vice-président de l'European Writers' Council**

Pourquoi, nous écrivains du PEN Club, nous interrogeons-nous sur la liberté d'expression, sur les censures visibles et les censures invisibles ? Certainement pour faire advenir et défendre le modèle social d'une pleine démocratie qui serait respectueuse des droits de l'homme. La Charte à laquelle nous avons souscrits ne dit-elle pas que la littérature ne connaît pas de frontières et ne souffre aucune limite, aucune restriction, à la liberté ?

Or, aujourd'hui même, il y a encore dans le monde des écrivains mis à l'index, injustement persécutés et condamnés, après des simulacres de justice, qui nous montrent par la lucidité et le courage dont témoignent leurs écrits et leurs prises de position en faveur de la liberté d'expression qu'ils sont toujours les meilleurs garants d'une véritable liberté et d'une pleine démocratie.

C'est pourquoi, il est plus que jamais nécessaire de mettre en relief la vertu de la liberté d'expression, mais aussi celle de la lucidité et de la liberté de conscience qui pour un écrivain est toujours première et fondatrice.

Je voudrais mettre en lumière le fait que ces deux libertés entretiennent entre elles des liens consubstantiels, c'est-à-dire que l'une ne va pas durablement sans l'autre et cela dans un rapport de réciprocité.

En effet, que peut valoir la liberté de conscience, si celle-ci doit être contenue en notre for intérieur, conservée dans le secret de notre intimité silencieuse, voire muette ? Elle deviendra au fil des jours, des mois et des années d'enfermement, si l'on est emprisonné ou simplement muré dans son silence réprobateur au sein d'une société totalitaire ou policière, une sorte de fruit sec, une plante mal arrosée que l'on regarde avec anxiété et détresse, en espérant pouvoir la libérer en l'exprimant un jour quand d'autres temps meilleurs adviendront, avec le risque de mourir sans avoir connu ce moment de libération et d'expression libre.

Il en va de même de cette liberté de conscience qu'au sein de leurs foyers, dans l'ombre et le secret, avec toujours la peur au ventre d'être trahis et dénoncés, entretenaient entre eux et leurs familles ces malheureux « conversos » ou « marranes », dans la péninsule ibérique, quand les beaux jours de l'Andalousie, premier exemple de société multiethnique et multireligieuse, eurent disparus après la « reconquista » d'Isabelle la Catholique.

On le voit, seule la liberté d'expression effective permet durablement à la liberté de conscience de s'exercer et de s'épanouir. Et cette liberté d'expression, si souvent malmenée, voire mutilée, par la censure ou bâillonnée par la terreur ou la répression de régimes fascistes, totalitaires et policiers ne respectant ni le suffrage universel, ni le pluralisme politique, religieux, agnostique ou athée, ce sont précisément ceux et celles à qui elle fera en premier défaut, si elle vient à manquer, qui en sont et en seront toujours les premiers et les plus ardents défenseurs, c'est-à-dire les écrivains, les poètes, mais aussi les autres défenseurs de la liberté d'expression qui est consubstantielle à leur vocation et à leur profession que sont les journalistes, les grands reporters, les avocats.

D'où la place centrale qu'occupent cette question et sa problématique au sein de notre organisation du PEN International et de notre Comité International pour la Paix et la Liberté d'Expression.

Mais la liberté de conscience et de jugement n'est pas toujours évidente, l'écrivain n'est pas toujours à l'abri d'un certain conformisme de pensée. Il existe, plus qu'on ne le pense, des sujets tabous ou tellement incorrects sur le plan moral et le plan des valeurs

dominantes qu'il est souvent tentant de rechercher un certain confort intellectuel en s'accommodant de la pensée dominante du moment.

Rares sont les Louis Guilloux, les Armand Robin, les Jean Genet, les Adamov, les Vian ou les Thieuloy.

Quant à la liberté d'expression, qui lorsqu'elle s'exerce est la meilleure défense de la démocratie, j'ajouterai qu'elle ne peut véritablement être garantie et s'exercer naturellement que dans une société démocratique organisée pleinement selon le principe dogmatique du respect absolu de la liberté de conscience de chaque citoyen.

Or, ce modèle de société, seule, à mon sens, la République Française l'a entièrement proposé à ses concitoyens, en faisant voter et en adoptant, en 1905, il y a un peu plus de cent ans, la séparation de l'église et de l'Etat, comme principe de l'organisation de la nation. Ainsi, aucune croyance ou religion n'est privilégiée dans la sphère publique, puisque aucune ne doit interférer dans les affaires de la cité et de l'Etat. Mais toutes les croyances ou religions, ainsi que la libre pensée, l'agnosticisme, le rationalisme ou l'athéisme sont possibles dans la sphère privée.

C'est précisément parce que ce modèle est peu répandu dans le monde que fleurissent un peu partout les censures pour anathèmes ou blasphèmes dont sont victimes de nombreux écrivains. On a tous présents à l'esprit la terrible fatwa qui condamna Salman Rushdie à vivre caché pendant des années avant de pouvoir accepter la présidence du PEN américain où il fit merveille tant son courage et sa renommée étaient à juste titre admirés par tous ses amis écrivains. On se souvient également des simulacres de procès qu'eut à subir Ouhannou Pamuk à Istanbul avant de bénéficier d'une relative immunité grâce à son Prix Nobel de Littérature.

On intervient encore chaque année à travers notre *Comité des écrivains en prison* pour la défense de plusieurs centaines d'écrivains persécutés à travers le monde : le monde arabe, la Russie, l'Asie, les Amériques, l'Afrique et même l'Europe ne sont pas exempts d'atteintes parfois très graves à la liberté d'expression. C'est dire à quel point la tâche qui reste à accomplir pour faire advenir sur la planète toute entière un véritable respect des droits de l'homme est immense.

C'est pourquoi, il nous revient à tous, chers amis écrivains, en déjouant en nous la tentation de l'autocensure et la séduction du conservatisme, de dire et d'écrire aujourd'hui notre intime conviction et de manifester ainsi comment liberté de conscience et liberté d'expression sont les meilleures garantes de nos rêves humanistes.

## **Governments Must Respect the Freedom of Speech**

**Heidi Hautala**

**Member of the European Parliament, 2009-2011 (Finland)**

**Minister for International Development to the Finnish Government<sup>2</sup>**

Dear colleagues, dear friends,

I am very happy to have been asked to participate in this “Literacy and Culture of Reading” conference, by the European Writers’ Council, the Association of Finnish Non-Fiction Writers, the Society of Swedish Authors in Finland, the Union of Finnish Writers, the French PEN and the City of Turku, European Capital of Culture 2011.

I wish to address the issue of freedom of speech and link it to the discussion concerning censorship, dealt with by the two previous speakers. These two issues are very closely linked. To address the current challenges to the freedom of speech, it is indispensable that the subject of censorship be included too.

To be able to discuss the challenges we face today, it is necessary to remember the foundation of the freedom of speech. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression and that this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

According to Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the right to freedom of expression comprises three different elements: first, the right to hold opinions without interference; second, the right to seek and receive and the right of access

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<sup>2</sup> Ms. Hautala was appointed to this post on June 2011, therefore a month after she delivered the present speech.

to information; and third, the right to impart information and ideas, either orally, in writing, in print or through media.

Last week, in Mexico, I was able to meet with an NGO called Article 19 and with them I discussed the very same issues.

We must also be mindful of the fact that the right to freedom expression, like all rights, imposes legal obligations upon governments. Firstly, governments must respect that right and refrain from interfering with the enjoyment of that right. Secondly, governments must take proactive measures to ensure that the people are able to exercise this right. Lastly, a government must prevent and provide redress for any harm caused by other individuals by way of expressing their views and opinions.

Dear friends, the importance of the right to freedom of expression for the development of genuinely democratic systems stems from the fact that this right is closely linked to the rights to freedom of association, assembly, thought, conscience and religion, and the right to take part in public affairs and decision-making.

As such, the effective enjoyment of this right is an important indicator with respect to the protection of other human rights and fundamental freedoms. It is an important tool for combating impunity and corruption, as well.

Indeed, my late colleague, the prominent Finnish Human Rights lawyer Matti Wuori, called the respect for freedom of speech the litmus test of the strength of the democracy of all the societies. Against this background it is easy to see how grave the challenge of censorship can be to democratic societies.

As has been pointed out by the previous speakers, the challenge of censorship is twofold; we can talk about visible and invisible censorship.

I won't spend much time talking about the visible censorship, since it is the most common and understandable form of expression of information. What I want to focus on is precisely the other form, the invisible censorship, the more dangerous one. It is often difficult to realise that it has been put into place.

For example, if we look at the way in which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been described by the media, we can see that a different language and terms are used by different media outlets.

Whether the issue concerns Israel's surprise attack in Gaza on 27 December 2008 and the three-week hostilities, the Goldstone report that followed, or the settlements or intifada, the reports across the political lines differ greatly with regard their substantive allegations. State channels in China have largely ignored the Arab uprising. According to Egyptian state television, there were hardly any demonstrations at a time when Mubarak was already about to resign.

Aljazeera has portrayed the Arab uprising as a secular movement calling for democracy, whereas the Iranian Press TV has branded it as Islamic revolution.

Immigration is portrayed in different countries, even in European Union countries, in very different ways. As the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt unfolded, I was very frustrated because in most interviews the journalists were interested only about refugees coming into Europe whereas the focus, in my opinion, should have been on how the EU can help the demonstrators.

In this context it is essential to talk also about the Internet. In the year 2000, there was the idea that nobody could limit or block the Internet. Nowadays we know that it is indeed possible. Some repressive regimes just gather all the servers in the same place, so that the government can easily shut everything down. Certain words perceived as a threat such as Jasmine –stemming from the Tunisian Jasmine revolution– have been blocked in China. The “Jasmine crackdown” has turned out to be the largest crackdown on dissent in China for over a decade. Iranian authorities have broken into communication networks in order to crackdown on the democracy activists. New technology has enabled many of the revolts to take place; this is exactly why the censorship in the cyber world has spread like a wild fire.

In such a politicised and cynical environment, it is most useful to go back to the basics of the freedom of speech. Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights, usefully also foresees that everyone has the right to seek information. This means that people have a right to try to find out the truth of the matters that are reported to them by their authorities and the press. The other most useful component of Article 19 is that the Governments should indeed take all necessary measures to improve access to public information.

This is in fact what I have been working on for many years. At the moment I am preparing a report for the European Parliament on the need for more transparency and openness in the EU.

Effective access to information is another vital precondition for the democratic foundation. Only by being able to exercise this right the people can hold their authorities accountable. There are certain elements that all policies concerning the access to information must include: narrowly defined limitations to the public access; the presumption of the public nature of documents; reasonable fees and time limits; independent review of refusals to disclose information, and penalty for non-compliance.

If mechanisms to promote the right of access to public information are lacking, then the members of society will not be able to participate, and decision-making will not be democratic.

In the spirit of Article 19 of the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the Human Rights Council in its resolution 12/16, noted that “the freedom of expression is one of the essential foundations of a democratic society, is enabled by a democratic environment, is essential to full and effective participation in a free and democratic society, and is instrumental to the development and strengthening of effective democratic systems.”

While the non-democratic systems and non-democratic values are the root of censorship problems, they are also the outcome of systematic manipulation of information. Dear participants, to stop this vicious cycle of corruption, oppression and censorship, the one thing we can do is to stand up for our rights to speak, our rights to know and access to information.

I pay tribute to the European Writers' Council, the Association of Finnish Non-Fiction Writers, the Society of Swedish Authors in Finland, the Union of Finnish Writers, the International PEN and other organisations who stand up for everyone's right to express their views freely and without fear.

## Contributors

**Jean Claude Bologne** was born in Liège (Belgium) in 1956. He is president of the French Writers' Society (Société des Gens de Lettres). After a Master's degree in romance philology, especially in medieval philology, he became a critic and a writer. He also teaches medieval iconology at Icart (Institut des carrières artistiques, Paris). He is a member of several literary juries. Since 1986 he writes professionally and from 2002 is committed to defending the rights of the writers in the "Société des Gens de Lettres". He was Secretary General during six years before assuming the presidency. Since the success of the *History of Modesty* (1986), he has published about thirty books in three principal areas: novels, essays (mostly historical) and dictionaries. Latest published titles: *History of male foppery* (Perrin, 2011), *The female modesty* (Seuil, 2010), *The angel of tears* (Calmann Lévy, 2010), *Dictionary of historical allusions* (Larousse, 2007). <http://www.jean-claude-bologne.com>

**Sylvestre Clancier** participe aux avant-gardes littéraires (*TXT, Génération, Textruction*) à la fin des années soixante et jusqu'en 76. Poète et philosophe, peintre à ses heures, il enseigne à l'université. Il devient ensuite éditeur (éditions Clancier Guénaud et éditions Erés), puis revient à l'écriture en 90. Il a publié des essais et une vingtaine de recueils, citons les principaux :

*Enfrance, L'herbier en feu, Le Présent composé, L'Animal animé, Pierres de mémoire, L'Âme alchimiste, Ecritures premières, Une Couleur dans la nuit, Un Jardin où la nuit respire, Généalogie du paysage, Le Livre d'Isis, Expansion du domaine de la bulle, La Mémoire improbable.*

Son essai, *La Voie des poètes*, célèbre ceux qui surent vivre en poésie Artaud, Daumal, Michaux etc.

Il fonde le mouvement *La Nouvelle Pléiade* et signe son premier manifeste en mars 2005. Membre de l'Académie Mallarmé dont il est aussi le secrétaire général, il préside le PEN Club français et le cercle des Amis de Gaston-Miron. Il est administrateur de la Société des Gens de Lettres, et vice-président de l'European Writers' Council (Fédération des Associations Européennes d'Ecrivains) et de l'Association Internationale de la Critique Littéraire (AICL). Il est membre du Comité Exécutif du PEN International.

**Myriam Diocaretz** is the EWC Secretary-General (the Netherlands) since 2006. Socrates Professor, “Extraordinary Chair in Humanism and the Digital Society” (2007-2012), Tilburg Centre for Cognition and Communication (TiCC), Tilburg University (Netherlands). As an international academic editor she established five scholarly book series in French, English and Spanish respectively, including Critical Studies in 1989 (Rodopi, Amsterdam/ New York), which she still directs. Her current research relates humanism with Social Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, Future and Emerging Technology. She has published reports on ICT innovation, e-publishing, e-content, mobile Internet services, rich media authoring tools and LivingLabs. From her earlier literary career she is the author, editor, and co-editor of over 18 books and fifty scholarly essays in English, French and Spanish on poetics, translation studies, gender, and dialogical criticism. Since 2004 she has been selected as evaluator and reviewer for the European Commission DG Information Society, DG Research, and DG Education and Culture. Studies: PhD in Comparative Studies, State University of New York; MA Stanford University (English and American Literary Studies). <http://www.myriamdiocaretz.net/>

**Heidi Hautala** was appointed as the Minister for International Development to the Finnish government in June 2011. She deals with the ministry’s development cooperation affairs and the government’s ownership steering within the Prime Minister’s Office.

Hautala has been referred as the Grand Lady of Finnish Human Rights politics. She is a former member of the European Parliament and the chairwoman of the parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights. She was in charge of European Parliament’s human rights policy in external relations. She believes in furthering human rights, transparency, environmental responsibility and global justice. During the past years Heidi Hautala has been known as a versatile, active and fearless politician internationally and in Finland, where she has been a household name for two decades.

<http://www.heidihautala.fi/front-page/?lang=en>

**Ciara Healy** is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Law Plus (LLB) undergraduate student at the University of Limerick in Ireland. She was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 1992 and is originally from County Kerry, Ireland. She is currently undergoing her Co-Operative Education as a trainee at the European Writers’ Council. In Ireland, she has participated in various voluntary programmes such as the Higher Education Access Volunteer Programme as well

as having a strong involvement in several Peer-Mentoring programmes throughout her education.

**Pirjo Hiidenmaa**, PhD., EWC President, Director of the Open University (Finland),  
Areas of expertise: linguistics, Finnish language, text analysis, stylistics, language planning and language policy. Has worked at the University of Helsinki as researcher and teacher (1992 - 1994)

Head of unit at Research Institute of languages in Finland (1995 - 2006)

Head of unit at the Academy of Finland (national research funding agency) 2006 – 2011

Director of the Open University ( University of Helsinki) 2011 -

The chair person of the Finnish association of non-fiction authors 2003 - 2011

**Riku Korhonen** (b.1972) made his literary debut in 2003 and has quickly established himself as one of the central Finnish modern writers. He writes about serious and important topics, but in an entertaining style that brings his narrative skills to the fore. Before he became a full-time writer and columnist, he worked as a Finnish teacher in high-school and as a lecturer of creative writing at the University of Turku. His debut novel, *Kahden ja yhden yön tarinoita*, won the prestigious Literary Award of Helsingin Sanomat in 2003. The novel has been adapted into a stage play by Turku City Theatre. Korhonen's second novel, *Lääkäriromaani*, established him as one of the leading writers of his generation, winning the Kalevi Jäntti prize for young authors. Korhonen has a regular column in the newspaper Helsingin Sanomat.

His book *Lääkäriromaani* (Doctor Novel) was awarded the 2010 European Union Prize for Literature for emerging authors in contemporary fiction, for Finland.

His publications include:

*Kahden ja yhden yön tarinoita*. Turku: Sammakko, 2003. ISBN 952-5194-64-7.

*Savumerkkejä lähtöä harkitseville*. Turku: Sammakko, 2005. ISBN 952-483-001-9.

*Lääkäriromaani*. Turku: Sammakko, 2008. ISBN 952-483-001-9.

*Hyvästi tytöt*. Turku: Sammakko, 2009. ISBN 978-952-483-112-3.

**Edvard Kovac** was born in Slovenia in 1950. He studied philosophy at Ljubljana University and at the Philosophy Faculty of ICP in Paris, where he obtained his doctorate in 1986 on the subject: "L'Intrigue de l'alterité chez Emmanuel Levinas".

Among philosophers, he is considered to be a disciple of Levinas. He continues to develop his philosophical ethics, and he is also a translator of his works into Slovene.

He has been teaching at the Philosophical Faculty in Toulouse since 1986 and also at the University of Ljubljana since 1991.

He has been a member of Slovene PEN since 1993 and chairman of the Writers for Peace Committee since 2007. He has published numerous philosophical articles in French and Slovene, and also writes essays on philosophy. His main works are: *Nietzschejeva tragicnost* (The Tragedy of Nietzsche), Ljubljana: Nase tromostovje, 1980. *Modrost o ljubezni* (The Wisdom of Love), Ljubljana: Mihelac, 1992. *Oddaljena blizina*, (Zbirka Kultura). Ljubljana: Mladinska knjiga, 2001. *Plus haut et plus intime* (Distant Intimacy), Paris: Cerf 2009

**Gerlinde Schermer-Rauwolf**. Born in the Rhineland area, she moved to Munich more than thirty years ago to study German literature, History of Art and Philosophy and worked as a freelancing editor for magazines, in the management of an environmental institute and as an assistant/corrector for the Goethe-Institut and was co-organizer of transregional music festivals. In 1987 she co-founded a team of translators (Kollektiv Druck-Reif) and started her career as a translator of English fiction and non-fiction.

In addition she helps colleagues as a member of the “mediafon”-team, a telephone consultant service organized by ver.di, is a member of the supervisory board of the collecting society VG WORT since 2003, was president of the German translators' association “VdÜ” from 2005 till 2008 and is a member of the board of the German Writers Union “VS” since 2005.

**Sari Sulkunen** currently works as a university lecturer at the Department of Languages at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her fields of expertise are reading literacy, international reading literacy assessment, authentic assessment and text authenticity in assessment and instruction. She completed her PhD degree in Finnish language in 2007 (thesis Text Authenticity in International Reading Literacy Assessment. Focusing on PISA 2000). She has also worked as a senior researcher at the Finnish Institute for Educational Research, University of Jyväskylä. She has broad experience in several international reading literacy assessments, such as the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) implemented in Finland in 1997 – 2000 and OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in years 2000, 2003 and 2009. Currently she is responsible for the

reading literacy assessment of PISA 2009 in Finland and acts as a national research coordinator (NRC) for IEA's Progress in Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in Finland.

**Tiina Tuominen** has graduated with an MA in Translation Studies (English) from the University of Tampere, Finland. She currently teaches translation at the University of Tampere, and her teaching focuses on audiovisual translation and subtitling. She is about to submit the manuscript of her doctoral dissertation, which investigates the reception of subtitled films in Finland. Tuominen has also worked as a translator and subtitler for several years, has co-edited a book on audiovisual translation, and has co-authored an English-Finnish dictionary of obscene words and phrases.

**Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou** is currently European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism, Youth and Sport. Previously, she served as Commissioner for Health, from February 2008 to end 2009. Ms Vassiliou studied law and international affairs in London and practiced law in Cyprus for 20 years (1968-1988). During this period she acted as legal advisor to The Standard Chartered Bank and, later, to the Bank of Cyprus. Before her appointment to the EC, Ms Vassiliou was actively involved in politics in her home country, Cyprus. She was twice elected to the Cypriot House of Representatives: in 1996 and 2001 – representing the Movement of United Democrats (affiliated to the European Liberal Democrats and Reform Party ELDR). As a Cypriot parliamentarian, she was an active member of the European Affairs Committee and represented the Cyprus Parliament to the Convention for the future of Europe as an alternate member.

Ms Vassiliou was also President of the Cyprus Federation of Business and Professional Women from 1996 until 2000, Vice-President of the ELDR and chairperson of the European Liberal Women's Network (2001-2006). Commissioner Vassiliou is married to Dr George Vassiliou, former Cypriot President and Chief Negotiator for Cyprus' accession to the EU.

[http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_2010-2014/vassiliou/page/europe-loves-reading\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/vassiliou/page/europe-loves-reading_en.htm)