SEEING THROUGH THE "OTHER", EXPOUNDING ON THE METAPHORICS OF TRANSLATION: THE CASE OF HÉLÈNE CIXOUS, CLARICE LISPECTOR AND ANNA AKHMATOVA

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> *The other in all his or her forms gives me **I**. It is on the occasion of the other that I catch sight of **me**; or that **I** catch **me** at: reacting, choosing, refusing, accepting. It is the other who makes my portrait. Always. And luckily. The other of all sorts, is also of all diverse richness. The more the other is rich, the more I am rich. The other, rich, will make all his or her richness resonate in me and will enrich me.*[1]

Translation, by its very nature, is an act that demands the understanding of the "other" or as Walter Benjamin puts it, is *"a manner of coming to terms with the otherness of languages."*[2] Even though in t/his philosophical essay Walter Benjamin's main focus is on language, highlighting the otherness of languages, one can link the emphasis Benjamin puts on "otherness" to the agents of a "foreign" culture. By way of translated texts accompanied with scholarly works, it becomes feasible for a given (hegemonic) culture to re-constitute certain images through the representative features of a given (foreign) culture. In a non-dialectical relationship between a colonized culture and its colonizer, the representative features of the remote culture are selected from the vantage point of the hegemonic culture with the purpose of constituting a particular image: the agents of the dominant culture set out several patterns regarding what is "foreign" to them and through these patterns and models

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[1] Hélène Cixous and Marille Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, London-New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 13, emphasis original

[2] Walter Benjamin "The Task of the Translator", trans. James Hynd and E. M. Valk, in *Delos A Journal on & of Translation*, National Translation Center, Austin, Texas, [1923] 1968, p. 84

constitute a "foreign" image that is entirely contradictory with the actual socio-cultural values of that particular culture. As Mahasweta Sengupta points out, these so-called images *"construct notions of the Other and formulate an identity of the source culture that is recognizable by the target culture as representative of the former–as 'authentic' specimens of a world that is remote as well as inaccessible in terms of the target culture's self."*[3] In this sense, this "foreignness" –or precisely speaking, the presence of a remote culture– inherent in translation becomes the heart of any discussion when the issue is taken into account from the perspective of the postcolonial and gender related approaches developed within academia in the last three decades.

As early as in the days of the Roman Empire, translation has been one of the major ways of spreading out power for the dominant forces of the world history. When the geographical shifts of knowledge and power in history[4] are read in conjunction with the ancient theories, like *translatio studii et imperii* which maintains that *"both knowledge and imperial control of the world tend to move in a westerly direction,"*[5] the close association of translation with the hegemonic powers of a given period of time in history becomes comprehensible. In this respect, one can see how throughout the ages, translation has been a unique way of expanding authority for the ascendant powers of any given period.[6] A brief glance at the metaphors associated with translation strengthens this claim to a certain degree: for instance, "taking the original captive" metaphor, in which, *"the translator, rather than letting himself* [sic] *be 'bound' or chained by the original author through literal or 'slavish' or 'servile' translation, seizes the control of the text and its meaning, and thus of the original author and source culture, and enslaves them,"*[7] can be taken as a point of departure in terms of developing an approach to the metaphorics of translation from the vantage point of Gender Studies.

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[3] Mahasweta Sengupta, "Translation as Manipulation: The Power of Images and Images of Power", in Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier (eds.) *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts*, Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995, p. 159

[4] The pivotal role translation played during the course of the evolution of Roman literary and aesthetic tradition can be considered as a clear-cut example of this fact.

[5] Robinson, Douglas, *Translation and Empire*, Manchester: St. Jerome, UK, 1997, p. 124

[6] Yet, in some instances translation has been used as a form of resistance and subversion. For example, in the relationship between the Tagalogs and their Spanish colonizers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, translation has been used as a form of resistance. For a comprehensive account on the subject, see Vicente L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism*: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society Under Early Spanish Rule, Durham: Duke University Press, [1988] 1993, ch.3 and ch.4, and Douglas Robinson, *Translation and Empire*, Manchester: St. Jerome, UK, 1997, pp. 93-100

[7] Ibid., pp. 55-56

It becomes quite remarkable when the "taking the original captive" metaphor is read side by side with the definite articles used in languages, such as German (*die Sprache*) and Greek (*η γλώσσα*) to specify the very word "language". In both of these examples[8] the word is feminine; hence, the nature of the instantiated languages bestows upon the translator a masculine image. As Lori Chamberlain's study indicates, when the notion of fidelity –the eternal debate on the study and practice of translation– is taken into consideration either from the viewpoint of the French tradition of *les belles infidèles*, or from the standpoint of the German Romantic tradition, the demarcation lines between the "feminine" and the "masculine" tend to blur:

> *In its gendered version, fidelity sometimes defines the (female) translation's relation to the original, particularly to the original's author (male), deposed and replaced by the author (male) of the translation. In this case, the text, if it is a good and beautiful one, must be regulated against its propensity for infidelity in order to authorize the originality of this* ***production****. Or, fidelity might also define a (male) author-translator's relation to his (female) mother-tongue, the language into which something is being translated. In this case, the (female) language must be protected against vilification.*[9]

Chamberlain keenly points out the paradoxical relationship between the "feminine" and "masculine" images intrinsic in the translation act, and further on in her study provides a prolific analysis of the metaphorics of translation through firm criticisms of Serge Gavronsky's and George Steiner's works.[10] The theoretical conclusion Chamberlain draws in her essay is that Jacques Derrida's revisionist theory of translation has served to undermine the concept of difference which *"produces the binary opposition between an original and its reproduction – and finally to make this difference undecidable."*[11] Jacques Derrida, by re-reading the theories of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, who is chiefly regarded as the *"founder of modern linguistics,"*[12] demonstrated how meaning is actually the product of infinite systems of both present and absent differences. The very word difference here

[8] The argument can be taken one step further when the feminine image conferred upon the compound nouns "*ana dili*" and "mother tongue" in languages, such as Turkish and English respectively, is taken into account.
[9] Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation", in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, London-New York: Routledge, [1988] 2000, p. 319, emphasis original
[10] Cf. Ibid., pp. 320-322
[11] Ibid., pp. 324-325
[12] George Turner, *Stylistics*, Penguin Books, UK, 1973, p. 14

deserves further attention since Derrida's approach to translation derives from this word. In order to describe his understanding of meaning, Derrida, *"coined the term **différance**, taken from the French verb **différer** meaning 'to differ' as well as 'to defer', but also marking a **différance** from both these meanings by changing the usual **-ence** ending to **–ance**."*[13] Within this context, one can see the significance of Derrida's approach in terms of refuting the binary opposition inherent in the languages.

Chamberlain's article is quite illuminating since it tackles the metaphorics of translation from various angles, such as the colonial perspective and gender related approaches. In the colonial perspective, for instance, the metaphorics of translation serve to demonstrate how the once conqueror of the Ancient Greek Culture, the Roman Tradition, has become the subject of appropriation and naturalization in the hands of their English and French translators. Nevertheless, the excerpts –as well as the theoretical conclusion[14]– Chamberlain offers in her study are confined within the limits of the established comprehension of translation that merely considers the act of translation as a linguistic transfer between the ST and the TT.

In what follows, this paper will attempt to broaden the concept of the metaphorics of translation through the theoretical and fictional works of the prominent French scholar/playwright/critic Hélène Cixous. The purpose of doing so is to peel away the notion of translation from the naïve mainstream understanding of translation as a linguistic transfer between two languages. In order to do so, two main phases of Cixous' career –the former being the scholar's encounter with the works of the Brazilian writer Clarice Lispector, and the latter being Cixous' collaboration with Ariane Mnouchkine in the productions of Théâtre du Soleil, and one of her plays from that period, namely *Black Sail, White Sail*– will be analyzed in terms of the metaphorics of translation. Prior to the analyses, however, Brazilian translation scholar Rosemary Arrojo's critical study on the relationship between Hélène Cixous and Clarice Lispector will be taken as a starting point with the aim of developing a meta-critical discourse on both of the scholars: Rosemary Arrojo and Hélène Cixous.

[13] Susan Sellers, *Language and Sexual Difference: Feminist Writing in France*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1991, p. 21

[14] Needless to say, Derrida's groundbreaking contribution to the study and practice of translation offered the unique chance for scholars to develop approaches that can challenge the traditional view of translation. Therefore, this statement –rather than being a negative one– should be regarded as an interpretative remark in terms of pursuing Derrida's arguments regarding translation through the metaphorics of translation.

Rosemary Arrojo and the Limits of Criticism

Brazilian translation scholar Rosemary Arrojo's article entitled "Interpretation as Possessive Love: Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector and the Ambivalence of Fidelity" suggests itself as a representative example of a critical study which aims at questioning Hélène Cixous' interpretation of Clarice Lispector. Arrojo's article is an enlightening one at this point because it discusses translation precisely in terms of a multi-valenced notion of fidelity both in terms of Cixous' reception and her usage of Clarice Lispector during the course of her creative process. By doing so, Arrojo shakes the foundations of the traditional viewpoint with regard to the act of translation and through her discussions of the issue ranging from psychology to postcolonial theories develops an interdisciplinary approach to translation.

In her article Arrojo problematizes Helene Cixous' perception and representation of Clarice Lispector. Using Jacques Lacan's notion of "the subject who is supposed to be known," Arrojo signals a warning against the presumption of objective knowledge by the subject, a warning that is all the more at stake for artistic creations; Arrojo provides a postcolonial reading of Lacan's notion of "the subject presumed to know":

> *[T]he subaltern culture desires the knowledge which supposedly belongs to the dominant, the latter never doubts the legitimacy of its status as the owner and guardian of such knowledge. [C]onsequently, from such a perspective, the tragedy of the subaltern is precisely the blindness with which it devotes itself to this transferential love that only serves the interests of the dominant and feeds the illusion of 'the subject presumed to know', as it also legitimates the latter's power to decide what is proper and what is not, what is desirable and what is not.*[15]

The relationship between Hélène Cixous and Clarice Lispector can be considered as an exemplary case when it is taken into consideration from the postcolonial perspective that Rosemary Arrojo provides. As Mahasweta Sengupta observes, *"while choosing texts for rewriting, the dominant power appropriates only those texts that conform to the preexisting*

[15] Rosemary Arrojo, "Interpretation as Possessive Love: Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector and the Ambivalence of Fidelity", in Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (eds.), *Post-Colonial Translation*, London-New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 143

[sic] *discursive parameters of its linguistic networks,"*[16] and in the case of Hélène Cixous and Clarice Lispector, translation takes a "covert" form of rewriting in the hands of authority. This authority then functions to impose a certain attitude toward a literary figure – one that stands for a "foreign" culture.[17] The emphasis on the adjective covert deserves further attention owing to the fact that in the Cixous-Lispector relationship, the translations of Lispector's works into other languages –the so-called dominant Western languages, such as English and French– were strictly rejected by Hélène Cixous. Hence, Cixous appears to intend to possess the knowledge that she discovered in Lispector, and to own it for herself alone. Cixous establishes an allegedly "dialectical" relationship with the Brazilian writer in which Lispector's figure as an inspiring literary figure becomes dependent on her conformity to Cixous' way of thinking.[18]

Nonetheless, the dialectical relationship which Cixous assumes to have established with Lispector, according to Rosemary Arrojo, actually lacks the essence of a true dialogue because it relies on imagination and transference. Ultimately, it is a conversation with herself and not with another. As Arrojo argues, *"in this truly asymmetrical dialogue, while Cixous practically does all the 'talking', Lispector is inevitably forced not only to be saying 'the same thing everywhere', as Cixous explicitly declares in an essay on* ***Água Viva****, but also to agree unconditionally with her powerful reader."*[19] Moreover, according to Arrojo, the day in which Cixous' encounter with Lispector takes place, that is to say 12th of October 1978, is indicative of the French scholar's "colonization" of Clarice Lispector.[20] The point that Arrojo makes in her article is the fact that Hélène Cixous, by using Clarice Lispector as a stimulating literary figure in her theoretical and fictional works becomes, *"'the subject presumed to know', particularly for those [her proponents] who are blindly devoted to her texts and who have transformed her into the author (and the authority) that she is today within the broad area of cultural studies."*[21] On the whole, Arrojo, by taking Cixous' artistic and stylistic employment of Lispector as a focal point, explores the relationship between the two authors from the perspective of postcolonial theories. Yet, when Hélène Cixous' position and the phase she has

[16] Mahasweta Sengupta, "Translation as Manipulation: The Power of Images and Images of Power", in Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier (eds.) *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts***,** Pittsburgh and London: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1995, p. 159
[17] Rosemary Arrojo, "Interpretation as Possessive Love: Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector and the Ambivalence of Fidelity", in Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (eds.), *Post-Colonial Translation*, London-New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 155, 159
[18] Ibid., p. 147, 150
[19] Ibid., p. 153
[20] Cf. Ibid., p. 156
[21] Ibid., p. 155

been through prior to her canonization within that "broad area of cultural studies" is taken into account, Arrojo's arguments deserve further attention in order to develop a firm understanding of the relationship between Hélène Cixous and Clarice Lispector.

Hélène Cixous (b. 1937) is a native of Oran, Algeria. Because of the diversity inherent in her parents –her mother and grandmother being German, and her father being Jewish– Cixous was grown up in a polyglot environment. As a consequence of this environment, Cixous says that she has *"a foreign relationship to the French language,"*[22] and from this "otherness" her writing stems. Furthermore, during the years in which the Cixous family lived in Algiers they were harassed by the people in their neighbourhood because of their ethnic origin. As Ian Blyth and Susan Sellers remark, *"the corpses of cats and dogs were thrown over the wall surrounding their garden. Cixous and her brother Pierre were chased, beaten and, once, spat upon the street."*[23] This memory dating back to the turbulent years in Algeria indicates how Hélène Cixous herself had been treated –and even tormented– as the "other" in her childhood because of her ethnic origin. Consulting Cixous' personal writings at this point might give a better account of her family's situation in Algiers: *"For never were we 'inhabitants' of this neighborhood, we never managed, on the right hand begins the Ravin de la Femme Sauvage and we never entered there, the 50,000 indigenous people fifty meters from us remained impenetrable. In three meters our poverty was wealth."* [24] In this respect, Cixous' situation as a "colonizer" in Arrojo's study –when the early years of her life are taken into account– controverts with the main idea that Arrojo develops to some extent.

Additionally, when Arrojo's argument with respect to Cixous' transforming of Clarice Lispector's name into a noun, adjective and a verb with the intention of appropriating the Brazilian writer to her own texts[25] is read in line with Cixous' style, the validity of Arrojo's claim becomes dubious. Mireille Calle-Gruber refers to this aspect of Cixous' style in their interview: *"I have in mind a variation you do on 'the stone that flies [**la pierre qui vole**]': the stone [**pierre**] becomes Pierre, the name, then, pushing the logic and the music of the differential to the limit: **Pierre Vole** would fly and reach his/its secret goal, everyone would receive one pierre or another, what is important is that '**Pierre**' should fly, he or she,*

[22] Hélène Cixous and Marille Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, London-New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 84
[23] Ian Blyth and Susan Sellers, *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 10
[24] Hélène Cixous, *Stigmata: Escaping Texts*, trans. Keith Cohen, Catherine A. F. MacGillivray and Eric Prenowitz, London-New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 160
[25] Cf. Rosemary Arrojo, "Interpretation as Possessive Love: Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector and the Ambivalence of Fidelity", in Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (eds.), *Post-Colonial Translation*, London-New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 155

*coming from a he [**il**] or from a she [**elle**], or from an isle [**īle**] or from an el."*[26] Arrojo takes her claim one step further and argues that Cixous's approach to Lispector regarding the transformation of her name stems from the situation of Lispector; Clarice Lispector, according to Arrojo, being the representative of a peripheral culture can become the subject of this appropriation, but as far as the distinguished literary figures of the twentieth century writing, say, Franz Kafka, James Joyce are concerned, Cixous's approach differs.[27] Yet, when Hélène Cixous' theoretical and fictional works, like *Neutre* in which Cixous puns with Kafka's name *"O dar**K** dark dark amid the blaze of moon"*[28] and her theoretical essay "Difficult Joys"[29] which is a wordplay on James Joyce are taken into consideration, Arrojo's claim/s become debatable once again.

Furthermore, Rosemary Arrojo's argument regarding the dialectical relationship between Hélène Cixous and Clarice Lispector is open to discussion from the vantage point of Cixous' style. Deploying literary figures as a source inspiration is a deliberate choice on Cixous's side. On a question concerning the selection of Cixous' characters in her fictional works, Cixous replies:

> *I wonder if I don't do that for secretly ethical reasons: I allow myself to borrow characters that are at once true characters, that have consistency (which Shakespeare does), that have existed and that, at the same time, cannot be hurt. They cannot be hurt because they are dead – and because they are strong. Because they already have, in themselves, at their disposal, that other world which is the world of writing. So I do not feel guilty: even if I invent lives for them, they are first of all defended by their own work (i.e. their own life), which is available, one can go and verify it. While if I took hold of a real character that has not left memories or archives, I could do him* [sic] *harm by inventing.*[30]

[26] Hélène Cixous and Marille Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, London-New York: Routledge, 1997, pp. 47-48
[27] Cf. Rosemary Arrojo, "Interpretation as Possessive Love: Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector and the Ambivalence of Fidelity", in Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (eds.), *Post-Colonial Translation*, London-New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 156
[28] Ian Blyth and Susan Sellers, *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 42, emphasis added
[29] Cf. Ibid., p. 128, fn. 22
[30] Hélène Cixous and Marille Calle-Gruber, *Hélène Cixous, rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, London-New York: Routledge, 1997, p. 91

Thus, when Cixous' personal opinions concerning the issue are taken into account, Arrojo's article can be regarded as an attempt of defending, or as Cixous puts it, "going and verifying" the works of Clarice Lispector during the course of Cixous' re-presentation of the Brazilian author in her theoretical and fictional works. Yet, Arrojo, while being critical of Cixous' usage of Lispector here in her article under observation, seems to neglect analysing Clarice Lispector's short stories on one of her case studies which leaves room for a discussion of the labyrinth image that Lispector deploys in her short story entitled "Looking for Some Dignity".[31]

Above all –and that is the bottom line– as the quote by Cixous concerning her treatment of the "other" at the beginning of this paper explicitly shows, the existence of the "other" is the unique way for Cixous to enrich herself, and as a matter of fact, her creative process. When seen from this perspective, one can infer how Arrojo aims at undermining a fact that Cixous does not deny herself in the first place. On the other hand, Arrojo, though the starting point for her study might be problematic to some degree, delves into other issues (i.e. dialectics of power) from a postcolonial viewpoint. One of these issues that Arrojo discusses in her study is Cixous' approach to translation and it can be taken as a reference in terms of pursuing Cixous' comprehension of the translation act. Cixous' understanding of translation would also offer insights both in terms of her position within the broad area of cultural studies and in the sense of developing a gender based approach to translation.

As Rosemary Arrojo's study has shown, Hélène Cixous strictly rejected the idea of having translations of Clarice Lispector into the dominant languages of the academic world, such as English and French. Apparently, the ultimate reason for Cixous to neglect the impact of translation during the course of discussing the "other" stems from the possessive love she feels for Clarice Lispector. Since Lispector, being the "treasure" of an exotic land would be the unique source of inspiration for Cixous in her creative process. However, when the roles are exchanged, and Cixous takes the position of the ST author to be translated, her ideas on the act of translation change to a certain degree as well. In one of her interviews, as a reply to a question regarding the translations and performances of her plays in other languages, thus in other countries Cixous says:

[31] Cf. Rosemary Arrojo, "Writing, Interpreting and the Control of Meaning", in Edwin Gentzler and Maria Tymoczko (eds.), *Translation and Power*, University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 2002, pp. 63-79 with Clarice Lispector, "Looking for Some Dignity", in Celia Correas de Zapata (ed.), *Short Stories by Latin American Women: The Magic and the Real*, The Modern Library, New York, [1990] 2003, pp. 129-137.

They are always performed 'in another language.' That is, as soon as they are ***performed****, it is another language. The first staging, even if it is in France, is already another language. The text keeps being performed differently all the time. Even while I write it, it is already different, I feel something, I write something else onto the page. So translation is always part of the process. It is very strange, I enjoy the strangeness. I am always surprised, and I think it is wonderful, to see how a message goes through so many different interpretations and becomes alive differently. I never feel I own a play. I owe the play all the unfore-seeable adventures it will cause. There might be 'losses' at some levels, for instance, when it reaches a totally foreign country, because my play refers to a large background, which is historical, geographical, political, ethical, literary, et cetera, which is not available in another country, and what happens then is something I can't really measure. But then the 'losses' at the level of reference are largely compensated by all kinds of unexpected gains. When I watch a production of one of my plays (in a good staging, of course), I feel that my work is given to me and given back to me a hundred times.*[32]

As Cixous' entire answer to the question shows, the scholar is in favour of translations of her works into foreign languages. Moreover, she emphasizes the fact that she never owns a play and regards translation as a creative process in which more than one participant take place, and here, in the case of theatre all the people involved in a given staging process. This creative process that Cixous mentions becomes quite significant when one thinks of theatre as a system of its own in which discourses from surrounding contexts come into play and take part actively during the course of staging a dramatic work.[33] What is more, Cixous' answer also holds a key to a sound understanding of the probable effects of her collaboration with Ariane Mnouchkine and Théâtre du Soleil on her writing process. Cixous, prior to her collaboration with Théâtre du Soleil, was writing alone and did not favour any kind of intervention in the writing process. Be that as it may, Théâtre du Soleil from the beginning of its establishment in 1964 functioned as a collective entity, and *"Mnouchkine and the actors work[ed] together, through improvisation and experiment to 'write' the plays they*

[32] Bernadette Fort, "Theater, History, Ethics: An Interview with Hélène Cixous on *The Perjured City, or the Awakening of the Furies*", in *New Literary History* Vol. 28:3, The University of Virginia Press, USA, 1997, p. 452, emphasis original

[33] Cf. Sirkku Aaltonen, *Time-Sharing on Stage*, Multilungual Matters, Clevedon, 2000, pp. 32-33

perform."[34] In this sense, when Cixous' own creative process and Théâtre du Soleil's collaborative approach to a given staging process are compared to each other, a fundamental difference can be observed. Yet, hopefully as the following pages will show, through this fundamental difference Cixous would develop a very different approach to her works in her career.

This positive opinion with respect to translation and its crucial role in a given staging process, however, becomes questionable when Cixous' ideas on the translations of Clarice Lispector's works into foreign languages are borne in mind. Indeed, Cixous' plays – by way of translations– can be understood even in a totally foreign country through a good staging. Seen from this perspective, one can infer how the very word translation can be the ultimate way of exposing Cixous' ideas in terms of further expanding her authority within the artistic realm. Moreover, Cixous' remarks on the act of translation can be further tackled both from the perspective of the current issues in Translation Studies (i.e. re-writing a given author, censorship, and so forth) and from the vantage point of metaphorics of translation (i.e. the way that Anna Akhmatova, the main character of the play, associates herself with the act of translation) in her play entitled *Black Sail, White Sail* (1994).

Black Sail, White Sail and the Metaphorics of Translation

Hélène Cixous' engagement with theatre has always been one of the most significant aspects of her career. Yet, Cixous' involvement with theatre in the mid 1980s differs from the one in the 1970s to a certain extent. Whereas in the 1970s, for Cixous theatre was the unique genre in which she could challenge the traditional theatre forms with the purpose of emancipating the female object from repression, in the 1980s, Cixous' engagement with theatre was a political act. A brief look at Cixous' plays after her encounter with Ariane Mnouchkine and Théâtre du Soleil actors confirms this claim: *The Conquest of the School at Madhubaï* (1986), *The Indiad or the India of their Dreams* (1987) *Manna, for the Mandelstams for the Mandelas* (1988), *The Terrible but Unfinished Story of Norodom Sihanouk, King of Cambodia* (1994), *The Perjured City, or the Awakening of the Furies* (1994), and *Drums on the Dike* (1999) can be shown as representative examples of Cixous' political plays. The plays referred here are worthy of mentioning owing to the fact that all of them signify how Cixous' theatre moves towards the "East". By doing so, Cixous, with a

[34] Ian Blyth and Susan Sellers, *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 51

political drive, aims at bringing the issues, traditions, and socio-cultural elements of the "unknown" to the notice of the Western world. In this respect, one can see how Cixous' engagement with theatre in political terms offered the unique chance for her to allow the "other" speak more explicitly in her theoretical and fictional works than the ones in the 1970s: Hélène Cixous' establishment of poetic identity would allow the "other" speak in her works in the 1990s, while the "other" of the 1970s in Cixous' works was more silent.

Black Sail, White Sail was written within this aesthetic and political context. The play itself depicts the final years of one of the most influential literary figures of Soviet Russia, namely Anna Akhmatova in the Post-Stalin Era. An overall look at *Black Sail, White Sail* indicates the peculiar style of Hélène Cixous that can be observed in most of her fictional works: constituting a play merely from female characters. However, as the titles of the play mentioned in the previous paragraph indicate, theatre has been quite significant for Hélène Cixous during the course of her aesthetic development thanks to the fact that the scholar's introduction of male characters (i.e. Nelson Mandela, Osip Mandelstam) has taken place through the chances theatre offered for her. Even though there are no male characters who actively participate in *Black Sail, White Sail*, male characters, such as Osip Mandelstam, Anna Akhmatova's son and husband, Lev Gumilev (Liova) and Nikolai Gumilev respectively, are referred as "The Absent-Presences", and the then living poet Boris Pasternak as "The Present-Absences characters"[35] in the beginning of the play. The presence of male characters in *Black Sail, White Sail* has a striking role in the plotline. Even though the first impression the reader might get after reading *Black Sail, White Sail* is the importance of Anna Akhmatova's publication of her poems, what dominates the play is the poems of one of the absent-present characters: Osip Mandelstam. As Julia Dobson puts it, *"he [Osip Mandelstam] has achieved the ultimate exile that of the dead from the living,"*[36] and from this perspective, one can infer how Cixous' re-presentation of the literary figures who no longer exist in this world shifts radically from being the usage of female literary figures to the usage of male literary figures.

In *Black Sail, White Sail* Hélène Cixous draws the attention of the reader to the lives of Anna Akhmatova and her friends in a period, in which the presence of the oppressive regime of Joseph Stalin is highly felt. Although Joseph Stalin is no longer alive, the

[35] Cf. Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994, p. 223
[36] Julia Dobson, "The Scene of Writing: The Representation of Poetic Identity in Cixous's Recent Theatre", in *Theatre Research International*, Vol. 23:.3, 1998, p. 259

suppressive effects of his regime are in the air,[37] and stressed throughout the play as one of the most crucial (political) features of the play's plotline: *"I swear Stalin wasn't human. He was the hairy avatar of a vampire. Otherwise, how do you explain the fact that even after his death, he's still persecuting us?"*[38] Furthermore, Cixous, therefore her play characters, are careful to draw the attention of the reader/spectator to the vicissitudes outside of Russia as well: *"Do you know what real Hell is? I don't. You don't either. Here we're merely in the vestibule of Hell. Actual Hell isn't here. According to those who travel, it's in South Africa.* ***(To the samovar.)*** *You don't want to boil? My friends scold me, my country attempts to forget me, my samovar wants to be begged. If there were a train bound for next generation, I would rush to the station.*"[39]

Under these circumstances, Akhmatova and Nadezhda Mandelstam, the wife of Osip Mandelstam, set themselves the goal of getting Akhmatova's poems published. In fact, for the literary figures, like Anna Akhmatova, Nadezhda Mandelstam, both of whom experienced the oppressive regime of Stalin regime to a certain extent, hiding their poems within the realm of their memories with the purpose of getting them published when the right time comes was the ultimate way of ensuring the emancipation of an artwork.[40] In this context, Lydia Korneyevna's role in the play with respect to re-writing Akhmatova's entire poems[41] becomes comprehensible to a certain extent. Additionally –and maybe more significantly– the dramatic tension in the play arises from the dilemma which Akhmatova finds herself in: whether allowing the agents of the regime to censor her poems and arbitrarily publish them, or trying to protect her son in prison.[42] The ambiguity of the text stems from this complicated situation of Akhmatova. Not for a single second the reader/spectator can be sure if Akhmatova's son Liova, who was imprisoned and expelled and then re-arrested, will meet again with her mother, or if Akhmatova will get her poems published.

According to Julia Dobson, for Cixous, *"the theatrical form is presented as a way forward for the writing process through its employment as model for the subversion of*

[37] For a comprehensive account on the phase women had been through in the Soviet Russia, and in the Stalin Period, see Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, Virgo, UK, [1977]1999, pp.168-176, esp. 172, 174, 175.
[38] Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994, p. 249
[39] Ibid., p. 285
[40] Cf. Sam Driver, *Anna Akhmatova*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1972, pp. 32-33
[41] Cf. Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994, p. 239, 303, 309 and *et al*.
[42] Cf. Ibid., p. 233, 275

the self/other dialectic."[43] In the light of this statement, one can see how Cixous by chronicling the lives of Anna Akhmatova together with her friends in the Post-Stalin Era gives a say to the suppressed voices of the period. Cixous' interaction with the audience in certain parts of *Black Sail, White Sail*[44] clearly testifies the importance of the spectator for Cixous. Cixous' interaction with the audience becomes quite striking when Akhmatova says: *"And you expect me to believe that Stalin is dead?* ***(To the audience.)*** *But he hasn't left us. For ten generations his poisonous sperm has sowed our water, our air…"*[45]

Cixous' interaction with audience merits further discussion when her intention of giving voice to the "other" is taken into consideration. In writing for the theatre, write Ian Blyth and Susan Sellers *"through the interaction that takes place between the writer and the character/actor, or the play and audience, Cixous finds it possible for the other* [sic] *to 'inhabit' and be involved in her writing to a previously* ***unprecedented*** *degree."*[46] Even though, Blyth and Sellers underscore the importance of interaction in a given staging/writing process for Cixous, they actually point out one problematic aspect of Cixous' plays: to what extent does Cixous allow the "other" to inhabit her texts? At the end of *Black Sail, White Sail,* Akhmatova jettisons her identity as a vivid literary figure and asks: *"And tell me, you who live later, do you know who Mandelstam truly was? Akhmatova? And Pasternak? Gumilev? Tabidze? Tsvetayeva? Do you know who among us was loyal, who was betrayed, who was a traitor, who saw the doors of air open? Is this clear later on in our poems? Has the History of the Truth begun?"*[47]

Within this context, one can infer how Cixous controls the limits for her play characters, or precisely speaking for the "others" to inhabit her texts. By doing so, Cixous, fortifies the roles of Akhmatova, Nadezhda and the rest of her play characters *"as witnesses within the narrative."*[48] In fact, a general glance at *Black Sail, White Sail* reinforces this claim to a certain degree. At the beginning of the play Cixous, allows freedom to the actresses as much as she can when she indicates the setting of the play: *"[R]ather than a set, a space where the actresses will have at their disposal whatever is indispensable to them. Nothing*

[43] Julia Dobson, "The Scene of Writing: The Representation of Poetic Identity in Cixous's Recent Theatre", in *Theatre Research International*, Vol. 23:.3, 1998, p. 258
[44] Cf. Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994, p. 233, 299, 303, and *et al*.
[45] Ibid., p. 243
[46] Ian Blyth and Susan Sellers, *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 55, emphasis added
[47] Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail,* trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994,, p. 351
[48] Julia Dobson, "Asserting Identities: The Theatres of Tsvetaeva and Cixous", in *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 35: 3, 1999, p. 267

more."[49] At the end of the play, however, this "free" atmosphere that Cixous creates for actresses and the reader/spectator does not hold true for her play characters. Julia Dobson takes this point of argument one step further and discusses how Cixous' control on her characters surfaces during the course of her establishment of a poetic identity in her plays.[50] Arguably, moreover, Cixous' possession of her play characters takes one back to the questions previously raised in this paper: her rejection of the translations of Clarice Lispector's texts into Western languages, the role of translation in the Cixous-Lispector relationship, and as well as the metaphorics of translation.

Black Sail, White Sail is by no means a mere historical play. Below the chronicled lives and vicissitudes of the Post-Stalin Era, another drama plays itself out, one in which the act of translation is shown to be connected to most of the current debates, such as re-writing a given author, censorship, authorship, and so forth, going on within the realm of Translation Studies. In addition to that, the play itself takes the reader/spectator to a journey in the twentieth century. When the notion of the metaphorics of translation is taken into consideration, this journey can be extended to the world history with the purpose of reflecting upon the subject from a contemporary perspective. Indeed, Cixous' usage of the metaphorics of translation in various parts of the play brings into mind the metaphors associated with translation throughout history, thus calls for a re-reading of the text from the vantage point of Translation Studies.

As early as in the beginning of *Black Sail, White Sail*, the translation act is depicted in a negative manner: *"All our life taking shaky steps, two crutches carrying poetry. And crossing, slipping, losing our balance, nearly dying, picking ourselves up again. Everything so as to simply survive. Don't push me, Nadinka. And likewise: translating. Rather than writing: translating. To earn her pittance Akhmatova kills herself translating foreign poets."*[51] Cixous, by weakening the affirmative opinion regarding Akhmatova's comprehension of translation as a "refuge",[52] develops a counter approach to the act of translation. Moreover, by doing so, Cixous signifies how rather than being a "refuge", translation itself becomes an exile for Akhmatova. Cixous' negative approach takes a more explicit form during the course of the play and becomes associated with a masculine image

[49] Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994,, p. 223
[50] See Julia Dobson, "Asserting Identities: The Theatres of Tsvetaeva and Cixous", in *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, Vol. 35: 3, 1999, pp. 261-269
[51] Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994,, p. 227
[52] Cf. Sam Driver, *Anna Akhmatova*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1972, p. 34

when Akhmatova says: *"For three months I've been translating those Korean poets (**who don't mean a thing to me**) and I only stop to translate Victor Hugo. I feel old, bearded, pompous, and moreover exiled from myself in a rhymeless world where I trample and am trampled on. Recite my **Requiem** for me, Lydia Korneyevna, and give me back a life."*[53] In a similar vein, Akhmatova through the metaphorics of translation acquires a masculine image.[54] Akhmatova's words are indicative of the significance of her own poems: while translating the works of Korean poets can turn Anna Akhmatova into a bearded old man, hearing her own poems can revive her. The masculine imagine that Anna Akhmatova acquires through the metaphors of translation becomes more obvious when she starts to tyrannize over Lydia. Lydia is asked to cite, and to jot down the poems of Akhmatova constantly throughout the play. Lydia, through getting in touch with the audience gives the first impression of her suffering: *"**(To the audience.)** And she'll listen to me! No! She'll listen to herself in me. Me, she doesn't hear. Poor lackey, poor third estate, less than a tree, less than a chair. I know I don't write, and that my aching mouth is not a fountain for the thirsty crowd. But still, in my corner, I need a life too. **(To Akhmatova.)** Well I adore Victor Hugo."*[55]

And finally, Lydia gives vent to her anger:

> *No. And you, I've been carrying you and you've been tormenting me for 35 years. You're a genius. You're a hero. But you're also the Empress of China and you tyrannize your humble subjects. I too am old and have swollen legs. They took my beloved too and threw me into eternal night. Write down your poems, Anna Andreyevna, I beg of you. Jot them down and liberate me. I want to live without trembling for your verse more than for my own daughter. And without wearing out my eyes rereading your translations when I haven't finished my own. And allow me to weep for my dead in my own words.*[56]

Actually, Akhmatova's coercive power on her friends gives its first clues in the preceding parts of the play. Take, for instance, the struggle takes place between Akhmatova

[53] Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994, p. 303, emphasis added
[54] Cf. Lori Chamberlain, "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation", in Lawrence Venuti (ed.), *The Translation Studies Reader*, London-New York: Routledge, [1988] 2000, pp. 318-320
[55] Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994, p. 303
[56] Ibid., p. 309

and Nadezhda regarding the authorship of a poem called "Tear".[57] With this feature, *Black Sail, White Sail* pinpoints one of the most important issues dominating discussions on Translation Studies, that is to say, the notion of authorship. According to the established understanding of translation, the ultimate challenge that translation might pose to the notion of authorship derives from the possibility of altering the ST. As Lawrence Venuti maintains, *"and insofar as the translator focuses on the linguistic and cultural constituents of the foreign text, translation provokes the fear that authorial intention cannot possibly control their meaning and social functioning."*[58] Venuti tackles the issue of authorship by adding the socio-cultural aspects inherent in translation, and offers a re-reading of the established understanding of a given translation process to a certain extent. At this point, borrowing Lefevere's concept of "rewriting", in which any type of re-writing, including criticisms, reviews, anthologies, scholarly editions of a particular text can be regarded as translations,[59] one could argue how the idea of translation is broadened to include *"all forms of interpenetration of works and discourses."*[60] When these theoretical contexts are borne in mind, one can take a step further and regard *Black Sail, White Sail* as a form of rewriting in which the act of translation becomes open to interpretation from the perspective of metaphors associated with translation during the course of the play.

One further point in *Black Sail, White Sail* with respect to the metaphorics of translation deserves mentioning is the rewriting process of Anna Akhmatova's plays. When Akhmatova gets on the train and heads towards Leningrad in order to sign the contract for the publication of her poems, Lydia enters and brings the bad news:

Lydia

No, no. Since you're here, I'd rather not see her. Yet another black sail. The Editorship wants to suppress the Burned Notebook cycle. What shall I do? It's because of the word "burned." Do you understand?

[57] Cf. Ibid., pp. 259-263
[58] Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference*, Routledge, London-New York, 1998, p. 31
[59] André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992, ch.2 and ch.3
[60] Barbara Godard, "Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation", in Susan Bassnett, and André Lefevere (eds.), *Translation, History and Culture*, Cassell, London, 1995, p. 93

Nadezhda

Burned, ah yes! Of course. There's a fishy word! It has a worrisome odor. They need poems without water without fire, without odor and without air as well, and tomorrow it will be without music and without verse and then finally without words. Burned, out! God, out! River, out!

Lydia

But what shall I do? I can't remove "burned." "The notebook cycle." That doesn't mean anything.

Nadezhda

Burns can't be "burned." We'd better discuss it with the author.

Lydia

Oh no, I don't relish causing a second stroke.

Nadezhda

We can't let her leave for Leningrad to sign that contract without having warned her.

Lydia

What if we were to call the cycle "The Eglantine in Flower." You remember: "I'll no longer repeat / Unspoken words / But in memory of this failed encounter / I'll plant an eglantine."

Nadezhda

"This failed encounter," do you think that will pass, "failed"?

Lydia

Well really, I'll insist on it! I'll fight! So about the title? You'll tell her?

Nadezhda

No, let's not say anything. Besides, during the time it takes to make the trip they'll have changed their minds and their target again. Let's try to pass between their teeth. Even mutilated, even amputated, poetry can still cause us to weep with joy.[61]

[61] Hélène Cixous, *Black Sail, White Sail*, trans. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray, in *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation* 25, 1994, pp. 319-321. (Since the play is published as a bilingual edition, the page numbers of the English translation are given in odd numbers).

Under the suppressive circumstances of the Post-Stalin Era, Lydia and Nadezhda discuss over the title of Akhmatova's book. As a consequence of the strict censorship, the very word "burned" cannot be included in the title, and what is more, omitting this word would be doing harm to the poetry of Akhmatova. In such a paradoxical situation, Lydia and Nadezhda opt for using titles, such as "The Eglantine in Flower" and "This Failed Encounter" both of which have direct references to Akhmatova's poems. Lydia and Nadezhda with the purpose of getting Akhmatova's book published without being intervened by the censorship, acquire a vital role during the re-writing process of Akhmatova's poems. Furthermore, the entire dialog quoted here reverberates with Cixous' understanding of translation, namely, being faithful by being unfaithful. For Cixous, any given translation project: *"[R]equires a person who knows about the issues and who has an ear for languages. And, since you cannot save or preserve the special effects in language (I mean signifiers), you cannot find equivalence in the arrival language, you have to look for equivalence by displacing the effects."*[62] When Lydia and Nadezhda's discussion regarding the "suppressed" title of Akhmatova's poems is re-read in the light of Cixous' thoughts with respect to translation, it can be inferred that the two close friends of Akhmatova alter the text in order to come to grips with the strict censorship of the Post-Stalin Era.

Lydia and Nadezhda's search for "displacing the effects" is indicative of Cixous' approach to translation which regards the process as a creative one and reveals once again her opinion in the interview she has given to Bernadette Fort with respect to the act of translation.[63] Furthermore, as can be understood from the quoted excerpts concerning Cixous' opinions and metaphors of translation, both in Fort's interview and in *Black Sail, White Sail*, Cixous is in favour of a dynamic relationship between all the participants involved in a given project. This project can either be the staging process of a dramatic work, or a translation process in which author-translator synergy suggest itself first and foremost as the crux of the project. In this sense, *Black Sail, White Sail* –contrary to the negative images created concerning translation proper through the metaphorics of translation– becomes a dramatic work in which current issues of Translation Studies, such as authorship, rewriting, censorship, and so forth are seriously discussed.

[62] Cixous quoted in Ian Blyth and Susan Sellers, *Hélène Cixous: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 7-8
[63] Bernadette Fort, "Theater, History, Ethics: An Interview with Hélène Cixous on *The Perjured City, or the Awakening of the Furies*", in *New Literary History* Vol. 28:3, The University of Virginia Press, USA, 1997, p. 452

Conclusion

During the course of history, translation has been used as one of the major ways of imposing authority on the remote cultures by the hegemonic powers. Even though it is most probable for one to find instances in which translation was used as a form of resistance and subversion, to a considerable degree, the metaphors associated with the act of translation indicate that translation was one of the most important ways of shaping a remote culture for the dominant forces of the world history: translation has never been innocent and the role it acquires during the course of re-shaping a given culture is vital. When the issue is taken into account from a contemporary perspective, it can be seen that studying translations within a wider context has the potential of revealing the power relationship/s between cultures and the representative literary figures of the cultures in question.

In this respect, Brazilian translation scholar Rosemary Arrojo's one of case studies can be considered as a significant step taken towards exhibiting the actual relationship between Hélène Cixous and one of her main sources of inspiration Clarice Lispector. Arrojo's study indeed offers a prolific account of Cixous' re-presentation of Clarice Lispector in which it becomes possible for one to discuss the issue from various angles, such as postcolonial perspective, gender related approaches, Cixous' approach to the "other", Cixous' approach to translation, and as well as the way she depicts literary figures through the metaphorics of translation. Cixous' one of dramatic works, namely *Black Sail, White Sail*, in this sense, can be regarded as play that is rife with metaphors of translation in which one of the most important literary figures of Russia Anna Akhmatova associates herself with.

As the analyses undertaken in this paper have indicated, the discussion of the metaphorics of translation has much to offer for various scholarly works that can challenge the established understanding of translation which regards the act of translations as a linguistic transfer between the ST and the TT. Tackling the notion of the metaphorics of translation, this paper aimed at offering an interdisciplinary approach to the theoretical and fictional works of one of the most pre-eminent names of the academic realm: Hélène Cixous. In doing so, the paper has expected to demonstrate the function of translation for Hélène Cixous in her theoretical and fictional works. Whilst in the relationship Hélène Cixous established with the Brazilian author Clarice Lispector, the act of translation has a covert role, and strictly rejected by Cixous, in her play entitled *Black Sail, White Sail* translation –through the contrasting employment of the metaphorics of translation on the notion of translation

proper– becomes one of the most effective tools in terms of developing a critical approach to the established understanding of translation.

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Özet:

Tarih boyunca çeviri eylemi ile özdeşleştirilmiş metaforları kendisine çıkış noktası olarak alan bu makale, Fransız tiyatro kuramcısı Hélène Cixous ile sırasıyla, Brezilyalı yazar Clarice Lispector ve Rus şair Anna Akhmatova arasındaki ilişkinin bir değerlendirmesini sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda öncelikle, Brezilyalı çeviri araştırmacısı Rosemary Arrojo'nun, Cixous ile Lispector arasındaki ilişki üzerine odaklanan çalışması, hem Cixous hem de Arrojo'ya yönelik eleştirel bir yaklaşım geliştirebilmek amacıyla inceleme altına alınmaktadır. İncelemede, Arrojo'nun, Hélène Cixous'yu sömürgeci, Clarice Lispector'ı da sömürgeleştirilen olarak nitelendiren çalışması, Cixous'nun "öteki" kavramına bakış açısı ışığında değerlendirilmektedir. Böylece Clarice Lispector'ın, Hélène Cixous'nun kuramsal ve kurgusal eserlerinde sahip olduğu rol ortaya çıkarılmaktadır.

Makalenin sonraki bölümü ise Hélène Cixous'nun 1994 tarihli ***Black Sail, White Sail (Siyah Yelken, Beyaz Yelken****) adlı oyunu üzerine odaklanmaktadır. Rus şair Anna Akhmatova'nın Stalin sonrası Rusya'da, şiirlerini yayınlatabilme uğruna verdiği mücadeleyi konu alan oyun, çeviri metaforlarının kullanımı açısından ayrı bir anlam kazanmaktadır. Makale, çeviri metaforlarıyla Cixous'nun, Akhmatova'yı bahsi geçen oyununda nasıl ele aldığı üzerinde durmakta ve bu şekilde, Hélène Cixous, Clarice Lispector ve Anna Akhmatova arasındaki ilişkiyi ortaya çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır.*