From *Effet de Réel* to *Effet de Mémoire* – A Study of the Concepts

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1. Memory, narratives and details

Telling stories about our lives, whether it includes a written or an oral medium, such as autobiographies or simple storytelling about a past event in a conversation, necessarily includes two actions – remembering and narration. The effort to transmit the events from the past turns focus onto memory which again gets transmitted in the narrative form. Indeed, the act of remembering and the act of narration are closely linked, as Astrid Erll (2009) points out in her essay about the relation that can be established between memory and narratology. A reminiscent look at our past invokes a retrospective narration and often includes elements that can be found in a narratological analysis, like the analysis of time structure by Genette. In fact, and quite appropriately, as Erll points out, Genette has established his taxonomy (involving the categories of narratological time analysis) "on what is arguably the greatest 'novel of memory' written in the twentieth century" (Erll 2009: 213). The novel is *À la recherche du temps perdu*, by Marcel Proust, which not only offers a reflection about the workings of memory but also brings forward a narrative structure based upon the act of recollection. All in all, a literary work that provides a representation of memory processes has proven to be an important medium for the investigation of narrative discourse.

Based on such close relationship between remembrance and narratology, Erll offers a classification of German and British war novels of the 1920s. Interested in how different versions of the past are created in literary works, she picks several types of novels that establish, each one in its own way, a certain "rhetoric of collective memory" (Erll 2009: 219): experiential, monumental, historicizing, antagonistic, and reflexive. These *memorial modes*, as Erll calls them, are seen as different types of remembering which include a different type of narrative representation. The modes that she focuses her attention on are the *experiential mode* that presents the past as lived-through experience, then the *antagonistic mode* that offers one presentation of the past and rejects another, while the *reflexive mode* focuses on the very act of remembering with critical pondering over it.

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For the sake of this paper, reference is made to Erll's description of the experiential narrative mode:

> Typical forms of the "experiential mode" of literary remembering are the "personal voice" generated by first-person narration; forms of addressing the reader in the intimate way typical of face-to-face communication; the use of the present tense or of lengthy passages focalized by the "experiencing I" in order to convey embodied, seemingly immediate experience; and a very detailed presentation of everyday life in the past (the *effet de réel* turns into an *effet de mémoire*) (Erll 2009: 220).

As it can be seen in the end of the citation, the literary remembering in these novels, especially the one that includes a detailed presentation, evokes the term *effet de réel*, which then, as Erll puts it, transforms into *effet de mémoire*. Although this reference finds itself at the mere end of the explication and, moreover, it is put inside parentheses, we find it very intriguing. Not because of a new light that it would cast upon the experiential novel but because of the very encounter between the two terms. It is the relation created between them that we find challenging. The term *effet de réel* is a very influential term that has a concrete and clearly defined meaning. The *effet de mémoire*, in turn, promises an insightful rendering of the strategies of memory representation. Since the two terms have been brought together in a close connection, we wish to investigate what this relation really suggests and what questions and conclusions it imposes. We do not wish necessarily to compare the terms. Rather, we can say that the terms provide a framework for a research of memory, truth and mimesis in the novels that represent remembering.

2. *L'effet de réel*

The term *effet de réel* was first suggested by Roland Barthes in his essay *L'effet de réel* published in 1968. Barthes evolves the essay from the fact that the literary work contains certain notations which could neither be classified through a structural analysis nor possess indirect functional value deriving from the description of a character or atmosphere[1]. Therefore, they represent a kind of narrative "luxury" or superfluous details which often permeate literary works: "Even if they are not numerous, the 'useless details' therefore seem inevitable: every narrative, at least every Western narrative of the ordinary sort nowadays, possesses a certain number". (Barthes 1989: 142) What is the function and the justification for these "scandalous" notations, Barthes seems to ask.

Such "insignificant notations", according to Barthes, can be found in descriptions. In the history of Western culture, as Barthes explains, descriptions had a specific function, primarily the aesthetic one. They are present in the works from classical period and Middle Ages and even Flaubert's descriptions of Rouen, as Barthes argues, can be associated with the aesthetic intent. But Barthes speaks of the description, of the "useless detail", that has no "finality of action or of communication" (Barthes 1989: 143).

Instigated by the apparent absence of significance of the "détails inutils", Barthes seems to succeed in finding a function for these "residues of functional

[1] Barthes starts his essay giving the example of a description present in Flaubert's tale "Un coeur simple", which refers to the apparently insignificant presence of a barometer: "an old piano supported, under a barometer, a pyramidal heap of boxes and cartons" (Barthes 1989: 141). The reference is seen as a "useless detail" without a functional value for the structural analysis.

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analysis". The notations, he explains, that cannot be subsumed by a structural analysis, like insignificant gestures, objects and words, denote the "concrete reality" – "the pure and simple 'representation' of the 'real'" (Barthes 1989: 146). Here he finds a significant correspondence with the historical narrative, "which is supposed to report 'what really happened'. "What does the non-functionality of a detail matter then," Barthes (1989: 146) asks, "once it denotes 'what took place'; 'concrete reality' becomes the sufficient justification for speaking"[2]. In cases like this, the real is self-sufficient, it has no need for a "function" nor does it need to belong within any kind of structure, it is in itself proof enough of its incidence.

The final Barthes' argument is the semiotic analysis of the very creation of the "referential illusion" which resides in changing the structure of the sign. "The truth of illusion is this: eliminated from the realist speech-act as a signified of denotation, the 'real' returns to it as a signified of connotation"; (Barthes 1989: 148). The production of a "reality effect" depends upon the expelling or redirecting the category of signified. As Barthes (1989: 147) suggests, "the 'concrete detail' is constituted by the *direct* collusion of a referent and a signifier". Thus, the details like those Barthes finds in Flaubert and Michelet, do not have the role to denote the reality but rather to signify it.

3. *L'effet de mémoire*

The next, central part of the work, is the result of pondering over the consequences of Barthes' ideas presented in his famous essay, particularly regarding the literary discourse seeking to achieve the mimesis of memory. If within the realist literature details are used to emphasize and achieve the impression of reality, we can conclude that the creation of an illusion of reality was set up as an important objective of such poetics and also that the illusion of this reality was achieved through set conventions, in this case, through details. Therefore, we are now going to start with the question of the relation towards reality of memory discourses and literary works depicting memory and remembering, so as to later point to the ways these works achieve the illusion or the memory effect, especially one that can be brought into association with Barthes' term. In the case of the latter, we will therefore use the term *effet de mémoire*.

3.1. Memory (novels) and reality

In a historical sense, the notion of memory has gone through a number of transformations and it cannot be regarded as a unique term with always the same meaning. Yet, individual or collective, memory has always represented a crucial role in conferring meaning on past events, giving important features to the concepts of

[2] As Barthes argues, historical discourse is "in fact the model of those narratives which consent to fill in the interstices of their functions by structurally superfluous notations, and it is logical that literary realism should have been – give or take a few decades – contemporary with the regnum of 'objective' history to which must be added the contemporary development of techniques, of works, and institutions based on the incessant need to authenticate the 'real': the photograph (immediate witness of "what was here"), reportage, exhibitions of ancient objects [...], the tourism of monuments and historical sites" (Barthes 1989: 146).

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reality. In this regard, memory has always had an important role in the transfer of knowledge. Greek epics can already be related to the memory of the community since they nourished and transmitted essential knowledge and experience of a certain culture. The role of memory and mnemotechnics was important in the rhetorics of classical Roman, medieval and early-modern periods, which considered memory as the system of mnemonic operations that were supposed to facilitate the act of remembrance. The aim of remembering was related to the transfer of knowledge – the memory was considered as the basis for knowledge and understanding. As Anne Whitehead puts it: "classical, medieval and early-modern practices of remembrance were not particularly concerned with reviving past events, but rather with bringing back to mind knowledge that had been previously stored". Mnemotechnics, or the "art of memory" (where the word "art" is conceived as "technique"), had, as a primary objective, the storing and the posterior recuperation of the information which suffers no alteration in the process (Whitehead 2009: 6).

In the centuries that follow (after the Renaissance), memory is associated with the capacity of reviving the past that Whitehead spoke of. The past here concerned is principally that of the individual: "Through memory, then, the past of the individual can be revived or made actual again, in the sense of being brought into consciousness" (Whitehead 2009: 7). In fact, ever since John Locke (who acknowledged the great importance of memory in providing a sense of individual continuity), memory has been evidently brought into a close connection with identity.

But, as the works of the authors from the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century show, memory is no longer considered a reproduction of the past events in the sense that they remain the same. Transformed by the process of remembrance, "memory represents not a copy of an original but more precisely a version of it" (Whitehead 2009: 51). The "art of memory", as Aleida Assmann (2011: 33) suggests, has neglected the dimension of time which alters the stored information. The process of remembering, Assmann continues, is a process of reconstruction and there is no safe place for a memory.

Still, in spite of the growing consciousness of its instable nature, memory holds an important place when it comes to the perception of personal past. As the much mentioned citation in Rushdie's novel vividly puts it:

> Memory's truth, because memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality, its heterogeneous but usually coherent version of events; and no sane human being ever trusts someone else's version more than his own (Rushdie 1981: 211).

As suggested by the citation, the relation between memory and reality is of a special kind – in the process of conferring meaning to past events, memory creates its own truth and reality.

Yet, over the last three decades, in academic research, there has been a growing interest in the constructed nature of memory, revealing its mechanisms and strategies that are brought together in a close connection with the elements of fiction and narratives. In turn, there is a kind of connection, especially in contemporary fiction, between literary works and theories of memory where literature often

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becomes a field of aesthetic memory research, through the representation and the problematization of memory. Before we examine this close, and often mimetic relation, we will refer to the relation between novels that rely on processes of remembering and reality.

Memory novels draw upon and reflect certain reality and here we could ask ourselves: what is the aspect of reality that the mimetic relation is called upon, and what kind of reality gives the narrative the authority of the real?

Firstly, we can approach this problem empirically and say that our own experience of memory can already be considered as subject to imitation by a literary work. The mimetic relation thus achieved evokes legitimacy by indicating the reality we are familiar with. As Astrid Ell states: "Readers consider novels like Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* to be realistic because such literary narratives represent the past in a way that appears to conform to our own, 'real life' ways of remembering" (Ell 2009: 214–215). In a way, Proust's novel creates an illusion of reality by evoking the idea of personal experience.

When we speak about the illusion of reality created by the mimesis of memory, we need to bear in mind the fact that not every type of memory has a narrative character. The memory concerned here is the episodic-autobiographical memory like that used to describe stories from our past. This kind of memory, or, the processes of remembrance, rely on the mechanisms also present in literary narratives, such as the strategies of selection and combination of narrative elements. Simply put, in the process of story making, the acts of recollection (as well as the acts of literary narration) "choose" certain elements and combine them in a certain way. Once the elements are brought together, the story gains meaning, through the acquired dimensions of time and causality (see Erll 2011: 147).

Proust's novel does not only bring forward the narrative representation of memory processes. It also questions and reflects upon memory and remembrance. One of the most frequently mentioned examples is the case of the involuntary memory, which has a status of a "pure" memory, capable of restoring entire segments of the past. The representation of this kind of memory is often brought into relation with the historical context of psychological theories of the time, like those of Henry Bergson. This line of thought, therefore, emphasizes the time specific and historically dependent features of discourses of memory. In this sense, although she defends the idea that literature is never "a simple reflection of pre-existing cultural discourses", Birgit Neumann still believes that literature is indeed in a close relation to reality as it "draws on contents and concepts of memory that already circulate in a culture" (Neumann 2010: 335). Astrid Erll also acknowledges this tight relationship between memory, reality and fiction. While admitting that "literary works can vividly portray individual and collective memory – its content, its workings, its fragility and its distortions", she also adds that "literary representations of memory not only exist in a dynamic relationship to cultural concepts of memory; they also change along with them" Erll (2011: 79).

However, as we will witness further on, the legitimacy of the text relying on remembrance can also attain its authority of the real within the genre affiliation. Similarly to Barthes referring in his essay to historiography, here we can contemplate genre models like biographies, autobiographies and memoirs. In this sense, according to Andrea Zlatar, there are "texts that count on a certain kind of

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'privileged referentiality'". Such texts, as Zlatar elaborates, "are basically of historiographic nature even though they concentrate on the history of one person like biographies or autobiographies. They count on the credibility and authenticity (autobiographies) as their guarantors" Zlatar (1989: 20).

The quotation has been used in order to refer to the following: there are discourses of memory (autobiographies and memoirs) holding a privileged status in the process of remembrance transmittal – the value of authentic and justified transmittal of the past has been attributed to them. They are justified since the described events did happen.

We can therefore presume that literary works imitating or at least containing the elements of a "historiographic nature" attract or invoke the effect of authenticity. Like literary narratives, historiography and other forms previously mentioned are also made of narrative forms, but unlike the works of fiction, they refer to events that really did happen and therefore this narrative form gains a status of truth and reality:

> If we consider, for instance, the relationship between a fictionalized biography of an actual person and a novel composed in the form of biography, it appears that the crucial difference between them is that the former tells the story of events which have in fact occurred, while the latter covers events which have not taken place in reality (Zlatar 1989: 20).

The implications of fiction being contrary to the reality are here exposed. However, the fact that this goes for literary works (with an inherent status of fictionality) does not diminish their mimetic power when imitating the legitimacy specific to non-fictional genres with inherent retrospective analysis. As Michael Rifaterre, in his analysis of the idea of fictional truth, succinctly puts it: "Words may lie yet still tell the truth if the rules are followed" Rifaterre (1990: xiii). Rifaterre believes that what produces the effect of truth in a fictional work does not necessarily involve a factual experience: "truth, in fiction, rests on verisimilitude, a system of representations that seems to reflect a reality external to the text" (Rifaterre 1990: xiii)[3].

We do not wish to question here the legitimacy of fiction and its relation to truth *in extenso*, due to the focus of our work; rather to point at the fact that, as in the case of Barthes' "reality effect", related to the discourse of historiography, we can find a parallel in discourses of memory that include the genres of autobiography, biography etc. As in the case of historiography, the presence of "concrete reality" in memory discourses that tell us "what really happened" can find its functionality and justification in representing "the real". Whether it be biographical works, memoirs or historiography itself, we can establish a relation with memory fiction, a relation that gains its authenticity by following the rules of a genre.

3. 2. "The memory effect" and "l'effet de mémoire"

If, in the context of literature, we used the term "memory effect" in a simple and direct way, we could say that it refers to the strategies of memory representation used to provide a memory-like effect, an imitation of the acts of memory. A literary

[3]According to Rifaterre, "the truth" in fiction is a convention – a system of signs that creates verisimilitude that eventually makes readers react to a story "as if it were true" (1990: 2).

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narrative can produce such "mimesis of memory" in a number of ways[4]. One of the central occurrences includes the dimension of narrative time. Here we can refer to the already mentioned Genette's narratological time analysis, which determines categories that can eventually be related to the workings of memory[5]. Genette's notions of "anachronies" (*analepse* and *prolepse*) as well as of "duration" and "frequency" are illustrated through the temporal structure of Proust's novel *À la recherche du temps perdu*. The movements behind Genette's notions, like the narrative "va-et-vient" (Genette 1972: 87) or the repetition of analogue moments, can all be related to movements of recollection.

Different dispositions within the dimension of narrative time (referring to the way that events of the past are arranged) are related to different types of memory novels. As Birgit Neumann (2010: 336) suggests, novels that transmit a coherent version of the past (like classical fictional autobiographies or the form of a Bildungsroman) have a chronological order of past events which conveys the idea of "a meaningful life-narrative". On the other hand, the novels that depict the past in a way that includes an irregular disposition of time levels can give an illusion of "a subjective experience of time" (Neumann 2010: 336).

The latter kind of narration is frequent in contemporary literature where the acts of memory are being problematized – the novels often evoke the selective, fragmented and subjective nature of memory, dependent upon imaginative and fictional processes, necessary to confer meaning to the remembered past[6]. Such novels that depict the workings of memory, problematizing its constructed nature and questioning its capability to appropriate the past, necessarily interfere with the mimetic quality of the text. The presence of destabilizing factors which underlie the fictional nature of a literary text therefore challenge the creating of the illusion of memory.

Nevertheless, let us finally ask ourselves if, in the case of literary works that rely on narrative recollection, we can establish a closer connection with Barthes' term *effet de réel*? If we presume that the use of the term *effet de mémoire* entails a reference to *effet de réel*, then, in a correlative sense, we would have to look first for elements that can be related to "insignificant notations" within a memory discourse. These are the notations, let us remember, that cannot be subsumed by a structural analysis, descriptions that have no aesthetic function or that of describing a character

[4] Here we use the term "mimesis of memory" in the sense explained by Birgit Neumann (2010: 334): "This term refers to the ensemble of narrative forms and aesthetic techniques through which literary texts stage and reflect the workings of memory". Also, due to the specific perspective of our text, we are aware that our analysis of mimetic strategies is limited. For a more detailed analysis about the creation of mimesis of memory, see Neumann (2010).

[5] Although, in the opinion of Astrid Erll (2009: 214), Genette, in his analysis, shows a neglect for the explicit reflection upon the relation between memory and narrative, still we find there such references. Commenting upon the growing discontinuity and the presence of temporal *lacunes* in Proust's novel, Genette (1972: 128) explains: "comme si la mémoire du narrateur, à mesure que les fait se rapprochent, devenait à la fois plus sélective et plus monstrueusement grossissante".

[6] The mimetic relation of fiction and memory can of course include other narrative techniques. Here we can mention another example of a mimetic agency. It concerns the notion of "collective memory" – a term established by Maurice Halbwachs, who interpreted memory as a social phenomenon. An example of a mimetic fictional transfiguration of this notion can be linked to the presence of different narrators that offer different perspectives on a subject. It is the multivocal nature of narrative that transmits the notion of multiple memories that form the memory of an individual.

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or an atmosphere. The primary function of such "superfluous details" is to indicate a "concrete reality". On behalf of the similarity and interconnectedness between the terms *effet de réel* and *effet de mémoire*, the insignificant notations in memory discourses could also be seen as a reference of seemingly useless details (objects, words and gestures) which would in turn have the function to indicate an act of memory or a memory-like quality of the text[7]. Different types of representation of recollection have already been mentioned (*the memory effect*), but here we are in search of specific details that, apart from denoting a memory process, point to a specific kind of memory that we could call "concrete memory" (if we are to stay truthful to Barthes' notion of "concrete reality").

The insignificant notations, let us recall, entail a specific function within a narrative structure. They are responsible for the creation of a *referential illusion* that is the result of "the *direct* collusion of a referent and a signifier", "the pure encounter of an object and its expression" (Barthes 1989: 147, 148). In the end, it is "the real" that is being signified. The result of this changed structure of the sign, therefore, is a sense of "reality" and objectivity. Like the elements of a historical document, or of a photography, the seemingly superfluous details do not need a justification for their presence – they simply denote "what really happened".

Now that we have a better understanding of the nature of Barthes' notations, we can try to find a similar occurrence within memory discourses as narratives relying on acts of recollection. A simple experiment would entail the use of Barthes' reference to Flaubert's tale "A Simple Heart" and imagine it as a part of a memory discourse. For the purpose of this experiment, the reference to Mme Aubain's new house and the description of her parlour are now imagined as a result of recollection by a reminiscing narrator[8]. Let us therefore assume that the narrator is "recalling" that "an old piano supported, under a barometer, a pyramidal heap of boxes and cartons"[9]. The reference to the barometer, as Barthes (1989: 141–142) argues, has seemingly no purpose or justification:

> For if, in Flaubert's description, it is just possible to see in the notation of the piano an indication of it owner's bourgeois standing and in that of the cartons a sign of disorder and a kind of lapse in status likely to connote the atmosphere of the Aubain household, no purpose seems to justify reference to the barometer, an object neither incongruous nor significant, and therefore not participating, at first glance, in the order of the *notable* (Barthes 1989: 141–142);

[7] We are well aware that this problem could be examined in a way that would include the context of structural analysis as well as the analysis of a specific literary text, but this angle would demand a much larger scope considering that our aim was to reflect upon the implication of the use of the term *effet de mémoire* in regard to its theoretical provenance.

[8] Barthes' reference to Flaubert's text is part of the following description sequence: "Un vestibule étroit séparait la cuisine de la salle oú Mme Aubain se tenait tout le long du jour, assise près de la croisée dans un fauteuil de paille. Contre le lambris, peint en blanc, s'alignaient huit chaises d'acajou. Un vieux piano supportait, sous un baromètre, un tas pyramidal de boîtes et de cartons. Deux bergères de tapisserie flanquaient la cheminée en marbre jaune et de style Louis XV. La pendule, au milieu, représentait un temple de Vesta; – et tout l'appartement sentait un peu le moisi, car le plancher était plus bas que le jardin" (Flaubert 1986: 43–44).

[9] Here we are using the example present in the English translation of Barthes' essay (as translated by Richard Howard).

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In his essay, Barthes seems to find "the significance of this insignificance" insofar as they signify "the real": "Flaubert's barometer, Michelet's little door finally say nothing but this: *we are the real*; it is the category of 'the real' (…) which is then signified;" (Barthes 1989: 148). The production of such an illusion has already been explained, we can only, in view of our experiment, see how the illusion refers to a recollected narrative. In this sense, we can conclude that the presence of remembered, seemingly insignificant, details points to elements that do not need justification for their existence. They are present because they were memorized. The presence of such notations, therefore, entails a sense of an authentic portrayal. Once again, expelled from the sign, the signified returns to signify – this time, a faithful account of past experience.

Seen as a strategy of memory representation, *l'effet de mémoire* invokes the idea of a certain type of memory called upon by insignificant details. Such occurrences will now be examined in the context of autobiographical narratives. We will, therefore, refer to Mark Freeman's considerations about the relation between autobiographical narratives and the concept of "true memories"[10]. An autobiographical discourse, a retrospective narrative, relies on memory. However, as Freeman argues, autobiographical memory and narrative are strongly marked by a conventional dimension. Conventions are a part of every story telling about the personal past that resides on memories. The process of remembering the personal past, as Freeman (2010: 263) explains, is a reconstructive process – it is mediated by the conventions of remembering, by the process of narrativization that transforms memory into narrative, the impact of present experience, the influence of the memories of others as well as of the stories and images from different media like books and films. So if the way we remember our past experiences, as Freeman argues, is permeated with conventions, is there a way to "speak the truth"? This is the preoccupation of many writers who choose to write about the personal past.

For the sake of illustrating an idea of that "truth", we can refer to Ernest Schachtel when he gives an account of adult memories:

> If one looks closely at the average adult's memory of the periods of his life after childhood, such memory, it is true, usually shows no great temporal gaps. It is fairly continuous. But its formal continuity in time is offset by barrenness in content, by an incapacity to reproduce anything that resembles a really rich, full, rounded, and alive experience. Even the most 'exciting' events are remembered as milestones rather than as moments filled with the concrete abundance of life. […] But it is not the events that are remembered as they really happened and were experienced at the time (Schachtel 1948: 130).

What is being remembered are the moments that are "conventionally supposed to be significant" (Schachtel 1948: 130).

We mention this excerpt because we believe that the "insignificant details" in memory discourses can give an impression of the memories that Schachtel speaks of. Firstly, an act of such recollection can transmit the idea of events remembered

[10] Freeman 2010: Mark Freeman, "Telling stories", in Susannah Radstone, Bill Schwarz (eds.), *Memory: history, theories, debates*, New York, Fordham University Press. We are using here the example of autobiographical narratives as narratives relying on acts of recollection.

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"as they really happened", secondly, the act can give the impression of an unmediated memory (undistorted by conventions) and, finally, it can confer the idea of a "concrete abundance of life", "a really rich, full (…) and alive experience". In Barthes' essay, the "superfluous notations" stand for the "real", "supposed to be self-sufficient" because they simply represent 'what is' (or has been)". In turn, a recollection of past experience that includes such notations, implies a sense of an authentic transmittal that reports "what really happened" ("as it happened"). The function of such notations is finally to authenticate the memories as "real" and "true". Because they are represented "as they happened", such memories (referring to concrete details) reflect the idea of unmediated memories considered to be "pure", free of conventions and, once again, "true".

The immediate experience is also a notion that can be evoked by the literary representation of a "concrete memory". Let us remember that Erll (2009: 220) has stated, in her description of the "experiential mode", that these narratives tend to convey "embodied, seemingly immediate experience" with the use of present tense "or of lengthy passages focalized by the 'experiencing I". The presence of "concrete memories" in a text, we presume, can give an illusion of such immediate experience. In the work of many theorists of autobiographical memory and narrative, says Freeman (2010: 271), there is the assumption that the immediate experience of the moment represents "a kind of baseline of the real", the "indubitable archive of What Really Happened". "Even if it is recognized that the immediate is itself mediated", he continues, "there nevertheless remains the assumption that it is somewhat purer, less tarnished by the sundry designs and desires we bring to the world upon looking backward and trying to make sense of it all"[11]. By representing the immediate experience (that belongs to the present moment), an effect of "true memories" is achieved – the memories seem less distant, mediated and distorted.

Finally, we can conclude that the insignificant notations in memory discourses can denote the memory-like quality of the text, like an effect of reality is achieved in the case of Barthes' notion. But such notations point to specific kinds of memory. Firstly, this kind of "concrete memory" can be related to the idea of an authentic portrayal, an almost spontaneous effusion of memories that do not need a reason, a justification for their appearance. Secondly, they can transmit an idea of "pure" memories, unmediated by conventions or narrativization and, thirdly, they can be brought into connection with the immediate experience.

Conclusion

The term *effet de réel*, as created by Roland Barthes in his essay from 1968, has had a widespread reception and a significant impact on academic works. Because of its theoretical strength and also because of its suggestive allure, it has been sometimes used to create new terms (like *effet de fiction* or *effet de mémoire*). Based on the reference to Barthes' term, the new term is sometimes created or used

[11] Ernest Schachtel (1948: 131) argues that while memory as well as experience are both socially determined, the conventional dimension is more present in memory processes than in the case of perception and experience: "experience and perception always are in *some*, however flimsy, immediate relation to the situation experienced, the object perceived, while memory is distant from it in time and space".

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without necessarily implying the "theoretical apparatus" of the former. This was the starting point for our investigation. By bringing together the terms of *effet de réel* and *effet de mémoire*, we tried to examine the latter in the light of the complex significance of Barthes' term.

Firstly, we have shown that the connection between memory and reality reveals a number of questions regarding the idea that memory discourses transmit the truth and "the real". We have mentioned the types of narratives that account for providing a more authentic reconstruction of the past – those that mimic our own conceptions about remembering as well as those that possess a status of "privileged referentiality". We have also emphasized that the relation between narratives of memory and reality is connected to the historical concepts of memory that change through time. In this sense, the novels correspond to (and influence, as well) the contemporary concepts of memory in a certain cultural context.

The central part of our analysis has been reserved for the strategies of memory representation, especially those that can be brought into connection with Barthes' term. In this sense, the notion *effet de mémoire* is seen as a strategy of memory representation. By using references that, in view of Barthes' essay, could be regarded as "superfluous" or "insignificant notations", a narrative that resides on remembrance provides an effect of a "spontaneous" memory and, at the same time, gains the authority of the real. On one hand, a detailed account of the past mimics an effusion of a spontaneous, random, and unmediated memory that gives an impression of immediate experience. On the other hand, the useless details can be seen as denoting a "concrete reality". Being a "pure and simple 'representation' of the 'real", the details find their justification in simply reporting "what really happened" (Barthes: 146). Once again, the narrative model for such notations can be found amongst historical or autobiographical narratives that have the obligation to report "the truth" and do not need a justification for relating the facts of reality.

In his essay, Barthes indicates the historical moment of literary realism, contemporary with the influence of "objective" history, the development of techniques (like photography) and institutions designed to show and give proof of "the real". On the other hand, we too live in a specific moment, a time that Huyssmann (2000) describes as a time "obsessed with memory". In his view, this "obsession" is manifest in the political as well as in the cultural sphere. It includes the salient popularity of museums, patrimony enterprises, retro fashion, "a mass marketing of nostalgia", autobiographies, memoir writing etc. (Huyssmann, 2000: 24–25). The ever growing theoretical interest in the phenomenon of memory is partly due to historical changes that affect the society we live in and also, due to the transformations that occur "from within". The theoretical works analyse the nature of memory discourses and challenge its capability to provide truthful and authentic ways of narrating the past. Like historiography, memory discourses are being analysed as narrative forms that convey meaning to the past by means of reconstruction. In this sense, we believe that the term *effet de mémoire* stands for an insightful notion that can bring forward another aspect of the constructed nature of memory. It reminds us about the theoretical need to focus our attention even on the slightest details of a memory story that, on one hand, make it "stronger", more credible, and on the other, reveal its fragility.

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Abstract

The basic premise of this article is the conceptual confrontation of two notions – *effet de réel* and *effet de mémoire*. The first notion is that found in Roland Barthes' work and it refers to the creation of a "reality effect" within the realist discourse. By analysing the details present in the realist literature, Barthes describes how one achieves a kind of referential illusion (*illusion référentielle*) by staging these details. The second notion (*effet de mémoire*) is a derivative of the first and is therefore explained based on Barthes' term. The term *effet de réel* is a very influential term that has a concrete and well defined meaning. The *effet de mémoire*, in turn, promises an insightful rendering of the strategies of memory representation. Since it appears in some of the critical and theoretical works on memory discourses, we wish to examine the implications of creating such a concept. The aim of the article, therefore, is to establish the extent to which the latter conceptually draws on the former and what kind of consequences this confrontation yields. The article will thus touch upon the relation of novels depicting memory and reality, and the way in which the illusion of memory is achieved in a work of literature.

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