

## LANGUAGE THROUGH FICTION: LANGUAGE MATTERS IN WILLA CATHER'S *MY ÁNTONIA*

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As a language teacher I find it relevant to draw students' attention to uses and varieties of English, bearing in mind what Crystal and Davy rightly argue: «One test of a successful education is whether it has brought us to a position whereby we can communicate, on a range of subjects, with people in various walks of life, and gain their understanding as well as understand them» (1985: 4-5). Furthermore, they also stress an aspect which is often, unfortunately, neglected in the EFL context, namely: «it is important that the syllabus for foreign language teaching should be so ordered that it includes instruction in those varieties of English that [the student] will be likely to meet and need most frequently» (1985: 7).

It is my belief that *My Ántonia* is an excellent tool for this purpose, firstly because, as Crystal and Davy claim, «literature», and fiction as part of it, «can be mimetic of the whole range of human experience and this includes linguistic as well as non-linguistic experience» (1985: 79); secondly because of *My Ántonia*'s many examples of «Englishes», chiefly in the flourishing contributions of its many new foreign settlers: Bohemian, Russian, Austrian, among others.

For this presentation Wales's statement that «Stylistics or general stylistics can be used as a cover term to cover the analyses of non-literary varieties of language or registers» (1991: 438) is of utmost importance. In order to promote the students' awareness of specific relevant language features the following aspects should be examined:

- Selection of different registers according to the tenor
- Sensitivity to lexical temporal features
- Different language levels (contrast in the narrator's discourse versus the other characters' discourses).

I shall start my paper with Virginia Woolf's ever pertinent interrogations: «Where are we to begin? How are we to bring order into this multitudinous chaos and so get the deepest and widest pleasure from what we read?» (in «How Should One Read a Book?»).

The EFL student is often supposed to spend such a large amount of time reading compulsory texts, mostly canonical and theoretical ones for academic purposes, that he/she easily develops mechanical skills, and thus a passive attitude, in order to be able to cope with his/her studies. On the other hand the language class offers a wide range of authentic texts, carefully organized under topic areas or grammar structures, where students listen to the so-called «standard English» aiming

at the further development of communicative skills that they have gradually acquired. What is left for critical awareness, independence and motivation to do in debating ideas?

In an era dominated by information technology mechanical activities no longer apply and interpretative skills are increasingly required. It is time, therefore, to implement some guidelines in the language classroom for a lifelong project so that individuals can both face and overcome any difficulties and simultaneously read for language acquisition, development and its consolidation, for cultural knowledge, for pleasure, among others.

Literature, undoubtedly, intermingles this multitude of roles and does not exist solely for the critic's sake, bearing in mind Crystal and Davy's assumption that literature «can be mimetic of the whole range of human experience and this includes linguistic as well as non-linguistic experience» (1985: 79). Furthermore, literature «allows a greater range and more extreme kinds of deviation from the linguistic norms present in the rest of the language,» apart from presupposing «an understanding of the varieties which constitute normal, non-literary language» (1985: 4-5).

In addition, Alan Durant has advocated that language courses, at least at advanced levels, should, therefore, include literary texts in their syllabi, since «the deictic terms literary texts contain generally refer to virtual or imaginary contexts, and so function as challenging interpretative puzzles rather than as merely frustrating gaps» (1992: 160-1).

While selecting texts the language teacher should be aware not only of his/her students' language competence, cultural background, intellectual needs and interests, but also of the length of the text to be tackled and time available. John McRae, and many contemporary stylisticians, claim that lesser authors, that is, unknown ones not so frequently mentioned in literary courses (who make up part of literature *with a small «l»* according to McRae) should be read. The technique I usually suggest is based on a permanent teacher-student negotiation in that the latter is given a wide range of literary extracts which he/she reads not for the content, for the story, but rather to take into account stylistic features: graphology, phonology, lexis, grammar, context and cohesion — fundamental aspects for text analysis. Concerning vocabulary, I also share many stylisticians' assumptions that the non-native speaker ought to deal with more contemporary texts on the grounds that he/she does not have a thorough knowledge of the foreign language, avoiding by this means any possible initial misunderstanding of the lexis: intuitive response to a text is certainly the starting point for text interpretation. Yet, not all intuitions correspond to the «real» meaning conveyed by the text; so a systematic checking of interpretation should be carried out by the reader and only then, and I share John Peck's views on the ways of tackling a text, should one rely on the critics' opinion.

Accounting for a writer's style does not necessarily mean analysing thoroughly every feature of the language used; on the contrary, peculiar distinctive linguistic features should be pinpointed and discussed, otherwise, as Davy and Crystal assert, a feature will be attributed to the style of an author when «it is effectively a common feature of usage in the language as a whole» (1985: 77).

After being shown a wide selection of extracts from literary texts and without having the slightest idea about their author, my students chose the following ones, taken from *My Ántonia* by Willa Cather, a novel to be read in detail in the language classroom.

*I can see them now, exactly as they looked, working about the table in the lamplight: Jake with his heavy features, so rudely moulded that his face seemed, somehow, unfinished; Otto with his half-ear and the savage scar that made his upper lip curl so ferociously under his twisted moustache. As I remember them, what unprotected faces they were; their very roughness and violence made them defenceless. These boys had no practised manner behind which they could*

retreat and hold people at distance. *They had only their fists to batter at the world with.* Otto was already *one of those drifting, case-hardened labourers* who never marry or have children of their own. Yet he was so fond of children!

....

On Christmas morning, when I got down to the kitchen, *the men* were just coming in from their morning chores — the horses and pigs always had their breakfast before we did. Jake and Otto shouted «Merry Christmas!» to me, and *winked at each other* when they saw the waffle-irons on the stove. Grandfather came down, wearing a white shirt and his Sunday coat. Morning prayers were no longer than usual. He read the chapters from Saint Matthew about the birth of Christ, and as we *listened*, it all seemed like *something that had happened lately*, and near at hand. In his prayer he thanked the Lord for the first Christmas, and for all that it had meant to *the world ever since*. He gave thanks for our food, and prayed for the poor and destitute in great cities, where the struggle for life was harder than it was here with us.

MA, 55-6 [Italics mine]

As a matter of fact, this passage invites the student to read on through the whole text for its strikingly simple but meaningful language where remembrance is put in evidence. Students were made aware of peculiar issues, as Millington states, «elements that invite us to understand storytelling both as narrative form and as implying a stance toward experience, a way of life, a culture» and ultimately «an exchange of meaning» (1994: 689); in other words, the characters' experiences, a rural way of life contrasting with the ever-growing small cities and the roots of the American culture are implicitly emphasized. Besides, «making meaning» is for Willa Cather the crucial issue in a novel.

Storytelling throughout the novel constantly draws the reader's attention to the continuous acts of memory: of Cather (of Nebraska in the 1880s); of Jim (the narrator); of Ántonia (with her first Tale of Old Hata); of Pavel and his story of the bride being fed to the wolves; of Otto Fuchs, whose legend stating that «sunflower-bordered roads always seem... the roads of freedom» (MA, 21) definitely impressed Jim; of Widow Steavens and her narrative about Ántonia's ruin, used at that time in the ethic sense, among other narratives. Each of them is worth interpreting not only for their peculiar meaning in the novel and for character description but also for cultural understanding.

Anyone can write, even if one starts telling one's childhood memories in some kind of chronological order until some period of adulthood. That is Jim's case, who has just collected all that he could remember of Ántonia, a Bohemian immigrant child who came with her family to Nebraska at the same time as he did.

Tales — the oldest form of oral tradition, much closer to the language of conversation, more familiar to non-native speakers — are for the listener highly meaningful and, quoting Millington, «place the reader in the company of the teller» (1994: 694). Morgan and Rinvold (1994) also claim that «successful second-language learning is far more a matter of unconscious acquisition than of conscious systematic study» (p. 1), and in storytelling «the complexity lies sometimes in the story rather than in the language» (p. 128) providing that the former presents «the language of personal communication that is so often absent from the foreign language classroom» (p. 3).

The very opening paragraph of the novel uses simple straightforward language, a sign of the culture of oral storytelling, in which hearing and speaking are explicitly mentioned:

I first heard of Ántonia on what seemed to me an interminable journey across the great midland plain of North America. I was ten years old then; I had lost both my father and mother within a year, and my Virginia relatives were sending me out to my grandparents, who lived in Nebraska. I travelled in the care of a mountain boy, Jake Marpole, one of the «hands» on my

father's old farm under the Blue Ridge, who was now going West to work for my grandfather. Jake's experience of the world was not much wider than mine. He had never been in a railway train until the morning when we set out together to try our fortunes in a new world.

MA, 5

The reader is given exact references about the place setting — Nebraska, North America — as if it were caught by a snapshot and which was completely unknown to Jim, and therefore referred to as «the new world». In this case this phrase is used in a restricted sense, meaning the place where Jim's grandparents' farm was located. Striking is the symbolism of the land — «vast, impersonal land, not yet a country but just the raw stuff of which countries are made» (MA, 7) — while in other contexts it implies a broader significance when compared to the «Old World», namely Europe with all its cultural values:

Mrs Shimerda dropped the rope... took his hand and kissed it. I was a little startled, too. Somehow, that seemed to bring the Old World very close.

MA, 87

That vast arable landscape to be tamed by brave immigrants is as unpredictable as the behaviour of people who desperately tried to survive and succeed no matter what it cost. Moreover, Jim was struggling and trying his fortune: his quest for identity and maturity is as hard as the newcomers' lives. By the 1880s there were still Americans living totally apart from each other as well as from the outside world, in spite of the existence of both the transcontinental railroad and «farm machinery and automobiles on the rich farms» (MA, 129).

According to the narrator's remarks the accomplishment of one's dreams did not depend on God's will but on fate, this contrasting with his grandparents' religious beliefs. He was privileged, meant to have a better «fortune», which was a fact of general agreement, for instance: Ántonia once reminded him «Now, don't you go and be a fool like some of these town boys... You are going away to school and make something of yourself» (MA, 143); Jelinek, who advised him not to go into his place because he knew Jim's grandfather would not approve or it for religious reasons, stating, «you know how the church people think about saloons» (MA, 139); his grandmother also contributed to his isolation — «But it ain't right to deceive us, son, and it brings blame on us. People say you are growing up to be a bad boy, and that ain't just to us» (MA, 145). So he was «shut out of» all that.

Gaston Cleric introduced me to the world of ideas; when one first enters that world everything else fades for a time... some of the figures of my old life seemed to be waiting for me in the new.

MA, 165

As he was meant to go on studying, in that «new world» there was no place for him to get along with his underprivileged friends, that is, the lively immigrant girls whose fortune was quite different, having to «batter the world with their own fists», having no other possessions than their own «trunks» with scarce items from the «Old World» but full of dreams and lacking in communication skills in the English language:

The older girls, who helped to break up the wild sod, learned so much from life, from poverty, from their mothers and grandmothers; they had all, like Ántonia, been early awakened and made observant by coming at a tender age from an old country to a new.

...



The Bohemian and Scandinavian girls could not get positions as teachers, because they had had no opportunity to learn the language. Determined to help in the struggle to clear the homestead from debt, they had no alternative but to go into service.

MA, 127-8

These were highly praised by Jim, who believed «they were almost a race apart... among Black Hawk women» (MA, 127) in spite of being called «the Harlings' Tony», «the Marshalls' Anna» or «the Gardeners' Tiny», and here the possessive form is intentional, denoting lack of identity except for their nationality or even their family names. For everybody in the city the immigrant girls' past education or social level did not matter at all. Jim, even as a child, could not hide his contempt:

I thought the attitude of the town people toward these girls very stupid. If I told my schoolmates that Lena Lingard's grandfather was a clergyman, and much respected in Norway, they looked at me blankly. *What did it matter? All foreigners were ignorant people who couldn't speak English.* There was not a man in Black Hawk who had the intelligence or the cultivation, much less the personal distinction, of Ántonia's father. Yet they were all Bohemians, all «hired girls».

MA, 129 [Italics mine]

Rather noteworthy in Jim's previous utterance is the narrator's use of free indirect speech, thus conveying irony and a wry criticism, frequently intermingled with indirect speech. This constitutes a distinctive stylistic feature in this narrative where storytelling, along with snatches of popular songs, religious hymns, prayers and rhymes agreeably presented, engage the reader with the fictional world of the characters: their experiences, way of life and misfortunes that are part of American History.

When accounting for modes of speech Leech and Short explain that with indirect speech «the person who is reporting... intervenes as an interpreter between the person he is talking to and the words of the person he is reporting...What is reported can thus become fully integrated into the narrative... he only commits himself to what was stated» (1986: 320).

Unfortunately, this linguistic explanation does not apply to Krajiček, the Shimerdas's only interpreter who certainly manipulated speech for his own sake. This character was quite typical and popular among the non-English group of immigrants in America during the period of exploration and colonization, taking advantage of the foreigners' complex language contact situation characterized by lack of communication, isolation due to little contact with each other or with other communities — a vital issue in American culture.

«Krajiček encouraged them in the belief that in Black Hawk they would somehow be mysteriously separated from their money. They hated Krajiček, but they clung to him because he was the only human being with whom they could talk or from whom they could get information».

MA, 23

The presentation of direct speech in the narrative is undoubtedly intentional. On the one hand the reader has the opportunity of getting to know the characters as if they really existed. On the other hand, and borrowing Leech and Short's explanation, the narrator, Jim, «faithfully produces the original speaker's syntactic and lexical structure» and sometimes represents «as closely as possible the pronunciation of the original» words (1986: 320) so that the reader may be acquainted with different speech styles, registers, degrees of English proficiency among these

foreign characters of heterogeneous origin: the Netherlands, Bohemia, Russia, Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, Italy, not to mention the black slaves from Africa (see the case of «Blind d'Arnault, the Negro pianist») whose global contribution played an important role in the history of American English.

«They can't any of them speak English, except one little girl, and all she can say is 'We go Black Hawk, Nebraska.' She's not much older than you, twelve or thirteen, maybe, and she's as bright as a new dollar. Don't you want to go ahead and see her, Jimmy? She's got the pretty brown eyes, too!»

This last remark made me bashful, and I shook my head and settled down to *Jesse James*. Jake nodded at me approvingly and said you were likely to get diseases from foreigners.

MA, 6

I was awed by his intonation of the word «Selah». «He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom He loved. Selah.»

MA, 11

The little girl was pretty, but Án-tonia — they accented the name thus, strongly, when they spoke to her — was still prettier.

MA, 17

While we were disputing about the ring, I heard a mournful voice calling, «Án-tonia, Án-tonia!» She sprang up like a hare. «*Tatine!* *Tatine!*» she shouted ... He placed this book in my grandmother's hands, looked at her entreatingly, and said, with an earnestness which I shall never forget, «Te-c-ach, te-c-ach my Án-tonia!»

MA, 20

The first time I see my papa laugh in this Kawn-tree. Oh, very nice.

MA, 23

He [Peter] was usually called «Curly Peter», or «Rooshian Peter».

MA, 24

He [Fuchs] spoke and wrote his own language so seldom that it came to him awkwardly.

MA, 56

Who's that goin' back on me? One of these city gentleman, I bet! Now, you girls, you ain't goin' to let that floor get cold?

MA, 123

If *Pygmalion* by Bernard Shaw constitutes a valuable example of English accents within England, in *My Ántonia* a mosaic of accents in American English is clearly depicted. Among the immigrants there were also English-speaking ones, in most cases uneducated and of low birth, who brought with them regional dialects from Scotland and Ireland, thus being regarded differently and in a more favourable position.

Insofar as vocabulary evidence is concerned, the reader learns a wide range of lexical terms related to rural life, especially farm work and simple home life, characteristic features of the early nineteenth century, contrasting with the flourishing tools and developments of the modern American period of the turn of the century.

Although Willa Cather has written *My Ántonia* at the beginning of the twentieth century, she clearly tries to recall previous values. Dillard acknowledges that «the regional pattern most

easily demonstrated by rural terminology has become a lesser factor in American English ... urbanization during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was perhaps the greatest factor of all in vocabulary change...Nevertheless, the people of the United States had long continued to be primarily a rural and small-town population». (1993: 206-7)

To-day the best that a harassed Black Hawk merchant can hope for is to sell provisions and farm machinery and automobiles to the rich farms where that first crop of stalwart Bohemian and Scandinavian girls are now mistresses.

MA, 129

The growing piles of ashes and cinders in the back yards were the only evidence that the wasteful, consuming process of life went on at all.

MA, 140

Cather, through Jim, an educated character, presents lively and dynamic descriptions of the landscape whether focusing on its harshness or its warmth, its beauty and bright colours or aggressiveness by means of poetic, therefore, literary language.

This cornfield, and the sorghum patch behind the barn, were the only broken land in sight. Everywhere, as far as the eye could reach, there was nothing but rough, shaggy, red grass, most of it as tall as I.

...

I wanted to walk straight on through the red grass and over the edge of the world, which could not be very far away. The light air about me told me that the world ended here.

MA, 12-3

As far as we could see, the miles of copper-red grass were drenched in sunlight that was stronger and fiercer than at any other time of the day...How many an afternoon Ántonia and I have trailed along the prairie under that magnificence! And always two long black shadows flitted before us or followed after, dark spots on the ruddy grass.

MA, 28

On the contrary Ántonia's speech sometimes introduces a comic tone into the narrative, above all in her initial minor sentences: «House no good, house no good!» (MA, 17) Owing to her determined «wish to learn» the English language fast she took some reading lessons with Jim and could even attend school for some time. Particularly interesting is the process of creation by analogy present in her learning which makes the non-native reader realize something about the acquisition of a foreign language. If at an early stage memory is needed to learn new words by heart, later one should try to exercise one's critical thinking, and so did Ántonia.

She got up on her knees and wrung her hands. She pointed to her own eyes and shook her head, then to mine and to the sky, nodding violently.

«Oh,» I exclaimed, «blue, blue sky.»

She clapped her hands and murmured, «Blue sky, blue eyes,» as if it amused her... She learned a score of words. She was quick and very eager.

MA, 19

Ántonia had opinions about everything, and she was soon able to make them known.

MA, 22

Her first utterances become quite complex in a short time, especially after going to town to work for the Harlings, and present a complex sentence pattern and simultaneously follow the

patterns of «standard English». Her language is straightforward and the use of the vocative is characteristic in her speech, pointing to her direct way of addressing people. Soon she becomes Jim's favourite story-teller, since her speech is highly passionate and emotional and accompanied by non-verbal language — gestures which are highly effective for communicative purposes.

We all liked Tony's stories. Her voice had a peculiarly engaging quality; it was deep, a little husky, and one always heard the breath vibrating behind it. Everything she said seemed to come right out of her heart.

MA, 113

It is interesting to analyse *Antonia's* last utterances, after marrying Cuzak and living in the country again, as they show some drawbacks due to the fact that she did not speak English very often any more.

I can't think of what I want to say, you've got me so stirred up. And then, I've forgot my English so. I don't often talk it anymore. I tell the children I used to speak real well». She said they always spoke Bohemian at home.

MA, 216

To conclude, much more could be stated under this vast topic, namely «language matters». In fact, a thorough analysis of non-literary varieties of language or registers as well as a distinction between the syntax of spoken and written English whose examples are enlightened in *My Antonia* would be of utmost interest. Nevertheless, such analysis might not be successfully carried out in such a short period of time. I decided, therefore, to include one of my worksheets (please see your handout) to go along with the study of the novel in the language classroom. In order to promote the students' awareness of specific relevant language features the following aspects have been tackled:

- intertextuality
- grammar in context: spoken and written English
- sensitivity to lexical temporal features
- modes of speech representation



Literature cannot be examined in any depth apart from the language, any more than the language can be studied apart from the literature. In the case of foreign languages...this assumption is not difficult to justify, for it is obvious that a literary work cannot be properly understood without a thorough knowledge of the language which is its medium of expression.

G. Leech, 1985: 1

*My Ántonia* by Willa Cather

## I

READ THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS ON IT.

I didn't have time to arrange it; simply wrote down pretty much all that her name recalls to me. I suppose it hasn't any form. It hasn't any title either.

(*My Ántonia*, Introduction)

1. Who is speaking? Under what circumstances?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Who is s/he referring to when s/he writes «her name»?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The narrator is referring to his/her memories, relevant past events. Can you recall any episode in the novel which struck you most? Narrate it in no more than 100 words.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Why does the narrator state that the novel hasn't any form? How does it get its unity? State your reasons.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you also choose *My Ántonia* as the title for the novel? If not write an alternative title and account for your answer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## II

### INTERTEXTUALITY

READ THE FOLLOWING POEM BY THOMAS HARDY.

#### The Ruined Maid

— «O'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!  
Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?  
And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?» —  
— «O didn't you know I'd been ruined?» said she.

— «You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,  
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;  
And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers three!» —  
«Yes: that's how we dress when we're ruined», said she.

— «At home in the barton you said "thee" and "thou",  
And "thik oon", and "theas oon", and "t'other"; but now  
Your talking quite fits 'ee for high company!» —  
«Some polish is gained with one's ruin», said she.

1.5

1.10

— «Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak  
But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek,  
And your little gloves fit as on any lady!» — 1.15  
«We never do work when we're ruined», said she.

— «You used to call home-life a has-ridden dream,  
And you'd sigh, and you'd sock; but at present you seem  
To know not of megrims or melancholy!» — 1.20  
«True. One's pretty lively when ruined», said she.

— «I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,  
And a delicate face, and could strut about Town!» —  
«My dear — a raw country girl, such as you be,  
Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined», said she.

Thomas Hardy, 1866

1. To what extent can you compare these female characters, taking part in the dialogue, to any characters in *My Ántonia*? Name them and account for differences /similarities concerning:

- . physical/ psychological description
- . time and place setting
- . language register

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### III

#### LANGUAGE IN USE

- A. CORRECT THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES, CHANGING THE WORD ORDER OR INSERTING ANY NECESSARY WORD (PREPOSITION, VERB FORM, CONJUNCTION,...)

1. 'Yes'm,' said Otto: ' and he's sold 'em his oxen and his two bony old horses (...)if I'd'a thought it would do any good. But Bohemians has a natural distrust of Austrians.' (16)
2. 'My *tatínek* say when you are boy, he give you his gun. Very fine, from Bohemie. It was belong to a great man, very rich, like what you not got here; many fields, many forests, many big house. My papa play for his wedding and he give my papa fine gun, and my papa give you.' (Ántonia, 29)
3. 'My papa find friends up north, with Russian mans. Last night he take me for sec, and I can understand very much talk. Nice mans, Mrs Burden. One is fat and all the time laugh. Everybody laugh. The first time I see my papa laugh in this Kawn-tree. Oh, very nice!' (Ántonia, 23)
4. 'Krajieck says he's turrible strong and can stand anything (...) He asked me if they was good to eat ... but he just looked like he was smater'n me and put 'em back in his sack and walked off.' (Jake, 47)
5. 'You got many things for cook. If I got all things like you, I make much better.' (Mrs Shimerdas, 58)

- B. FILL IN THE BLANKS WITH THE APPROPRIATE POSSESSIVE FORM.

1. I do not remember our arrival at \_\_\_\_\_ (my/ farm/ grandfather).
2. We went into \_\_\_\_\_ (the store of dry goods of Duckford).
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (cane/ snake/ grandmother/ your) wouldn't do more than tickle him.
4. Fuchs had been a cowboy, \_\_\_\_\_ (driver of a stage), bartender, a miner.
5. As we approached the \_\_\_\_\_ (Shimerdas)...
6. We put sheets of \_\_\_\_\_ (wool/ cotton) under it for a \_\_\_\_\_ (field of snow), and \_\_\_\_\_ (the mirror of the pocket of Jake) for a frozen lake.

- C. A lot of place references are often to be found in the novel. WRITE THE ADEQUATE ADJECTIVE TO EACH NOUN AS WELL AS ITS PHONETIC TRANSCRIPTION.

Scandinavia / \_\_\_\_\_ / -  
Norway / \_\_\_\_\_ / -  
Russia / \_\_\_\_\_ / -

Bohemia / \_\_\_\_\_ /-  
 Germany / \_\_\_\_\_ /-  
 Pennsylvania / \_\_\_\_\_ /-  
 Virginia / \_\_\_\_\_ /-

D. READ THESE SENTENCES AND ANALYSE THEM ACCORDING TO:

- . LANGUAGE REGISTER
- . LANGUAGE LEVEL

1. 'He got out his «chaps»! (11)
2. 'I've got a sackful of mail for ye.' (73)
3. 'Gosh! I wouldn't want to do any business with that fellow myself, unless I had a fence-post along.' (33)
4. 'They [Ántonia's eyes] were big and warm and full of light like the sun shining on brown pools in the wood.' (17)
5. 'Who's what goin' back on me? One of these city gentlemen, I bet! Now, you girls, you ain't goin' to let that floor get cold?' (123)
6. 'I was wondering whether that particular rocky strip of New England coast about which he had so often told me was Cleric's patria.' (170)
7. 'Oh, dear Saviour! Lord, Thou knowest!' (62)

E. READ THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES.

1. 'I was not the only boy who found these dances gayer than the others.' (MA, 126)
  2. 'Tony made a warm nest for him in her hands; talked to him gaily and indulgently in Bohemian.' (MA, 27)
  3. 'She carried a little tin trunk in her arms, hugging it as if it were a baby.' (MA, 6)
  4. 'Its real splendours, however, came from the most unlikely place in the world — from Otto's cowboy trunk.' (MA, 54)
  5. 'I used to retire to my room early on Saturday night.' (MA, 141)
- a) EXPLAIN THE MEANING OF THE UNDERLINED WORDS IN THEIR OWN CONTEXTS.  
 b) WRITE SENTENCES USING THE SAME WORDS WITH A DIFFERENT MEANING.

F. Reported speech is a distinctive linguistic feature in *My Ántonia*.

1. Justify this statement giving examples.

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2. Write in direct speech whenever it is possible.

'One night brother William came in and said that on his way back from the fields he had passed a livery team from town, driving fast out the west road. There was a trunk on the front seat with the driver, and another behind. In the back seat there was a woman all bundled up; but for all her veils, he thought 'twas Ántonia Shimerda, or Ántonia Donovan, as her name ought now to be.' (200)

'I asked her, of course, why she didn't insist on a civil marriage at once — that would have given her some hold on him. She leaned her head on her hands, poor child, and said... (201)

'Yulka showed me the baby and told me that Ántonia was shocking wheat on southwest quarter.' (205)

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