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HETEROTOPIAN MULTILINGUALISM: THE *WESTINGHOUSE TIME CAPSULE* (1939)

Abstract:
The article investigates the multilingual features inherent in one of the most elaborate and erudite time capsule projects of the early 20th century, the so-called *Westinghouse Time Capsule of Cupalloy*, contrived for, and deposited at, the 1939 World Fair in New York. In its endeavor to pass on an authentic snapshot of the material and intellectual culture of its time to a distant future, the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* had to solve a number of technical and logistic problems. For instance, it had to come up with a paratextual apparatus to keep its message intelligible to those who will receive it in the year 6939, the capsule's ambitious target date. Part of its paratextual apparatus is a Rosetta Stone-like 'key to the English language', which, together with other internal and external provisions thought up by the capsule's creators, functions much like similar provisions at work in the canonization of classical texts. Central to the classicalness of certain texts and the longevity of the time capsule is an internal multilingualism, which operates underneath a seemingly monolingual surface in order to assure the readibility and timeless significance of the cultural legacy at stake.

Keywords:
time capsule ◆ heterotopia ◆ internal multilingualism (heteroglossia) ◆ paratext ◆ canon/canonization

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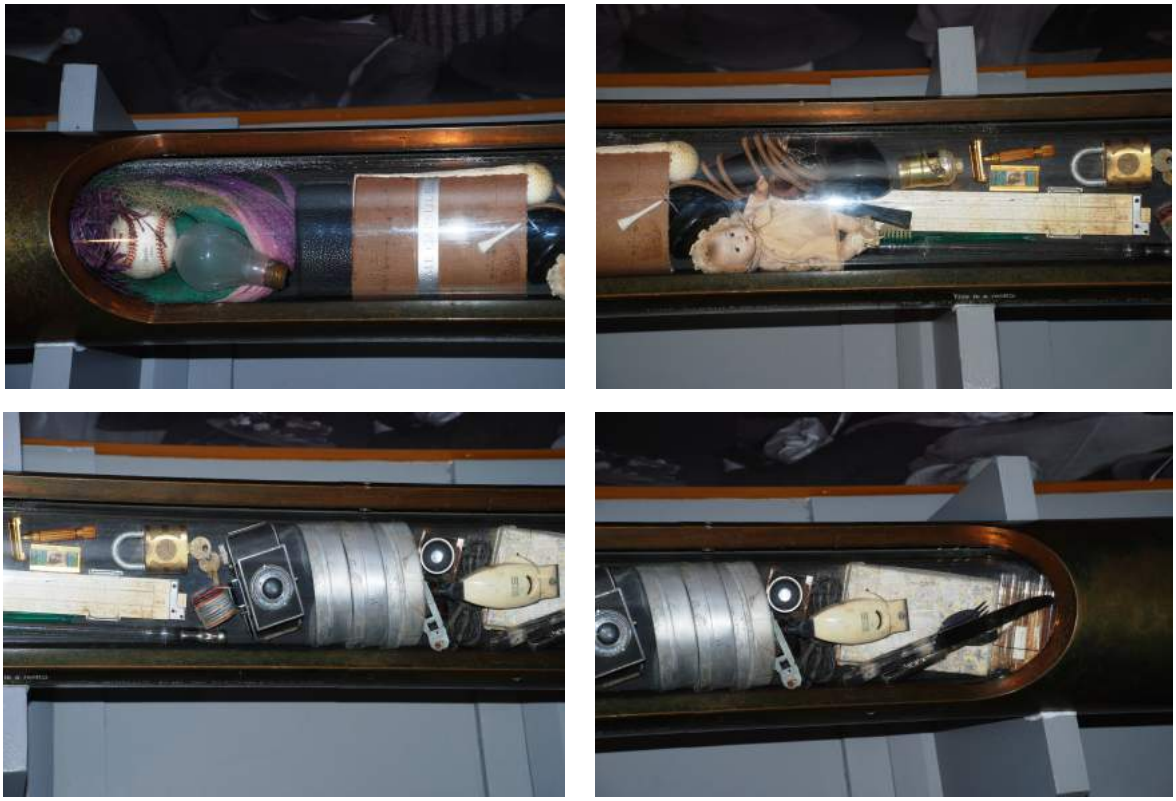
Figure 1: The Time Capsule of Cupaloy, 23. September 1938, World Fair New York, Flushing Meadows 1939 (Immortal Well). (Pendray, Story, 20)

This above picture was taken in 1938. It shows the burial of the so-called *Time Capsule of Cupaloy*, contrived and manufactured by the *Westinghouse Electric Company* and named after the alloy of copper, chromium and silver employed in the enterprise. The *Westinghouse Time Capsule* was the first object of its kind to bear the title of a "time capsule," a name that has become synonymous with this sort of undertaking. The capsule was sealed and deposited on the occasion of the 1939 New York World Fair, and aligns itself with the fair's overarching topic of building the "World of Tomorrow". Although exceptional in many ways, the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* is only one of many similar projects, emerging from the first half of the 20th century, all of which have certain crucial features in common. Inspired by the first time capsule of its kind, Oglethorpe University's *Crypt of Civilization*, which was begun in 1936 and sealed in 1940, the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* stands not only for other millennia-spanning, deliberately targeted repository projects from the "Golden Age of the Grand Time Capsules," between 1935 and 1982 (Jarvis 2003: 138). It also outdoes most of them given its level of technological planning, scientific underpinning, and intellectual sophistication. It innovatively addresses many of the challenges ambitious time capsules have been facing ever since, and prepares the ground for capsules designed for a post-civilized age that no



Figures 2–5: 1939 Westinghouse Time Capsule Replica. Pittsburgh, PA, Senator John Heinz History Center.

longer shares basic commonalities—like a common language—with its predecessors. Later space-time capsules, as well as later deliberations about informational relay-systems for nuclear waste disposal, need therefore to be seen in line with the spirit and logistics of the time capsule discussed here (Jarvis 2003: 122–28; Sebeok 1984).

But the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* also set new standards in documenting its existence and whereabouts, and in explaining its content and purpose. By documenting itself the capsule not only performs an "epistemic practice," inherent to all documents, which both show and interpret what they show (Gitelman 2014: 1). The capsule's self-documenting features are rather quintessential to its functioning as a time capsule and make up an integral part of its overall body. As such, they need to be read on at least two levels: as sources that provide insight into the otherwise inaccessible inside of the capsule, and as devices that enable the capsule's task of communication. One of these features is the *Story of the Westinghouse Time Capsule*, a booklet devised by George Edward Pendray, then Vice-President of the Westinghouse Company and driving force behind the project. It arranges the capsule's content in five sections, conveying at once a notion of the somewhat "messy" thoroughness that unites its widespread array of objects: (1) small

articles of common use; (2) textiles and materials; (3) miscellaneous items (such as seeds, books, and money); (4) texts on microfilm; and (5) newsreel (Pendray 1939: 24). By way of such objects and documents, the capsule seeks to create a snapshot of the material and intellectual culture of the year 1939. While many of these objects seem trivial and mundane by nature—an alarm clock, a can opener, a safety pin, a tooth brush, toys for boys and girls, a woman's hat from the 1938 fall season, a pack of cigarettes, a baseball, rubber fabrics, a dollar bill and optical instruments—, others reveal their informational value explicitly: such as newspaper articles from 1938, detailed documentation of the World Fair in 1939, a video recording of Jesse Owens' winning 100-meter-dash from the 1936 Olympics, and a sound film displaying the bombing of Canton by Japan in 1938.

Still other items clearly aim to portray the cultural and artistic life and achievements of the Western world at the time. Among them are a microfilmed copy of Picasso's *Guernica*, music recordings, and a photograph of Arturo Toscanini. Finally, some objects are *literary* objects in a more specific sense of the term (more specific, that is, than the majority of the over 22.000 pages of text, stocked on microfilm inside the capsule). These literary texts are: a leather-bound copy of the Holy Bible, the Aesopian *Fable of the Northwind and the Sun*, and three essays by Thomas Mann, translated into English—the latter consisting of lectures Mann had presented at the New School for Social Research in New York in 1937: "Freud und die Zukunft", "Goethes Laufbahn als Schriftsteller", and "Leiden und Größe Richard Wagners" (Mann 1937; Pendray 1939: 30). These literary texts, no less than the capsule's other texts and images, are meant to speak to those who will find the capsule and tell a posterior age the story of a world bygone.

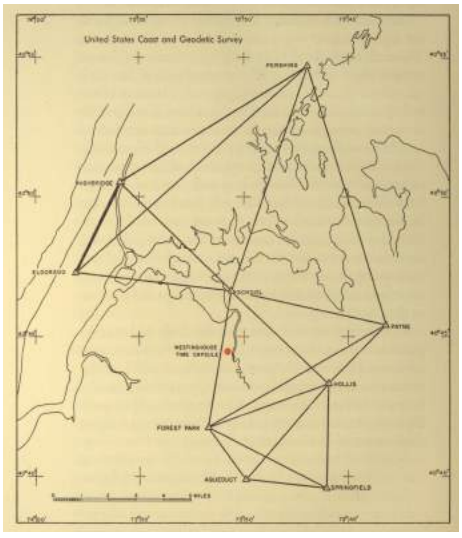


Figure 6: Map locating the burial site of the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* (*Book of Record*, 42)

This very concept makes the *Westinghouse Time Capsule*, like many other similar endeavors of the 20th century, a "microcosmic" time capsule (Jarvis 2003). *Microcosmic* time capsules—a term coined by Brian Durrans, one of the few researchers of time capsules— are intended to present a cross-section of an entire society, condensed into its material relics and recorded knowledge, which are likely to reveal to those in the future an informational surplus about the time of their

assembly (Durrans 1992: 57-58). Unlike private time capsules, such as the cookie jar in the backyard, microcosmic time capsules (1) are planned and contrived institutionally; (2) utilize innovative techniques and materials; and (3) aim at shaping a collective memory.

No less ambitious than the representational aspirations are the target dates of most microcosmic time capsules—that is, their designated time of retrieval. The *Westinghouse Time Capsule* is "deemed capable of resisting the effects of time for five thousand years" (counting from the day of its burial). Not until the year 6939 AD shall it be reopened. Hence, the capsule's elaborate safety features: Its case, roughly two-and-a-half meters (90 inches) long and 25 centimeters (8.75 inches) wide, is made from a highly durable copper alloy. The capsule sits about 15 meters (50 feet) below ground level, a spot meticulously laid out on a map, based on astronomically calculated data, in order to prevent the capsule from being forgotten or dug out prematurely.

More challenging even to its makers than the capsule's material is its commemorative steadiness, the accounting of its existence, which must be maintained from generation to generation for a very long time, in spite of its hiddenness from plain sight. Thus, the knowledge of the time capsule needs to be handed down also independently of the capsule—in a space external to the space of the capsule itself. But even if in the year 6939 humankind still recalls the capsule's whereabouts, will it also be able to read and decode its message?

The microcosmic time capsule movement of the early 20th century is evidently inspired by archeological experiences of the time (Endres 2014). One might think of Heinrich Schliemann's excavation of Priam's treasure (in 1873), or of Howard Carter's famous recovering of the tomb of Tutankhamen (in 1922). The *Crypt of Civilization*, for example, developed by the Oglethorpe University in Atlanta between 1936 and 1940, alludes to archeological sights, such as the antechamber of Tutankhamen's tomb in the Valley of the Kings, famously photographed by Harry Burton on the occasion of its excavation (Endres 2014: 222–223).[1] Microcosmic time capsules thus re-enact an archeological experience in reverse; they allow a present age to imagine itself as a potential object of the archeological curiosity of a time to come. Archeological reminiscences are also at work in the target dates of many microcosmic time capsules, which frequently calculate their retrieval date in reference to the (presumed) age of the Egyptian calendar (Jarvis 2003: 139–150). However, time capsules are also different from pyramids, ancient tombs, sunken cities and empires in at least one crucial respect—as *intentional* remnants of a

given age, and as *deliberate* messages to posterity, they inevitably need to plan for their own afterlife.[2]

In response to such an existential requirement, the inventors of the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* came up with a set of measures. First of all, they created what I have termed a paratext to the capsule, a textual apparatus that accompanies the capsule and not only comments on the project, but also ensures the future legibility of the capsule's message (Endres 2014).[3] The paratext in question is the *Book of Record*, a book stored on microfilm inside the capsule, and distributed in 3,649 hard copies to lamaseries in Tibet, Shinto shrines in Japan, Buddhist temples in India and to 2,000 libraries, museums and universities across the world. Designed as an *external* communication device that might survive even if the memory of the capsule doesn't, the *Book of Record* cannot exist or speak for itself, but serves as a mediator between the text of the capsule and its prospective reader. Its purpose becomes most obvious in the fact that it contains what its authors call a Rosetta Stone that, like the eponymous Rosetta Stone that allowed scholars from the 19th century to decipher the Egyptian hieroglyphs, is intended to assist the finders of the time capsule in deciphering its content. In the case of the time capsule, however, that stone is neither an actual stone nor a single object, but a series of tools geared to the same purpose: to ensure the understandability of the English language and thus to prolong the capsule's linguistic code beyond the point of its probable extinction. The capsule's Rosetta Stone is therefore a meta-lingual feature, supporting and commenting on the language of the capsule itself, making the survival of said language a central concern of the whole enterprise. Furthermore, such a meta-lingual feature that works towards inscribing the capsule's message into the long-time memory of humankind without tampering with the message itself is reminiscent of similar techniques effective in classical texts to achieve "classicalness," or canonicity, in the first place.

By classicalness, I here understand the ability of textual artifacts to both survive and remain exemplary for a long time. To this extent, my considerations follow general conceptions of classicism, which understand classicism not so much as an epochal term but as a "mode of communication for aesthetic values and achievements." Classicism, in this sense, is engaged as well in the "construction of a highly reliable and authoritative understandability of the artwork" (Voßkamp 2010: 289). This relates classicism to questions of canonizing and suggests an understanding of the former as a "category of canon forming" ("Kanonisierungskategorie", Schulz-Buschhaus 1994: 70). Features commonly ascribed to both canonical texts and the canon itself are exceptionality,

representativeness, and the acknowledgement of such qualities by cultural institutions pertinent to the canon (Auerochs 2007: 372). The role of the canon for its users is insofar threefold, in that it (1) provides them with an identity, (2) equips them with a powerful means of legitimization, and (3) orients their actions (Winko 1996: 597; Heydebrand & Winko 1996).

However, a particular aspect of canonical texts—usually overlooked in recent canon debates—are the meta-lingual facilities canonical texts employ, facilities that address the linguistic system of the text by means of an auxiliary, internal multilingualism that is enclosed into an otherwise monolingual user surface. The internal multilingualism of classical texts thus functions similarly to what Mikhail Bakhtin has famously called the "heteroglossia" of the novel—a term referring to the "internal dialogism" at play in literary prose fiction (Bakhtin 1981: 279). Such internal multilingualism comprises, among other things, the various dialects that are spoken inside the novel and merged into the monolingual interface of the novel as a whole. It further contains other instances of the novel's multivoicedness, such as the languages of the author, the narrator, the characters, and other features. Bakhtin can thus continue: "The stylistic uniqueness of the novel as a genre consists precisely in the combination of these subordinated, yet still relatively autonomous, unities (even at times comprised of different languages) into the higher unity of the work as a whole […]" (262). The fact that modern stylistics had been largely unaware of the internal dialogism of the novel is owed to an overall tendency of the individual novel, as well as the genre as such, to homogenize its manifold languages in favor of an overarching "unitary language" that subdues the centripetal forces of the former (271).

My argument concerning the internal multilingualism of classical texts follows a similar trajectory while it extends beyond the scope of the novel. Much like the novel in Bakhtin's view, classical texts tend to integrate the multiple languages incorporated in them into an apparently monolingual surface design, which renders them invisible for the most part. Classical texts thus perform on a large scale what Bakhtin has observed on the scale of the novel: Their "'general literariness' attempts to introduce order into this heteroglossia, to make a single, particular style canonical for it" (382). The process of "canonization" can therefore be described in other words as a successive and incessant transformation of *internal* multilingualism into *external* monolingualism:

> It is precisely in the most sharply heteroglot eras, when the collision and interaction of languages is especially intense and powerful, when heteroglossia washes over literary language from all sides (that is, in precisely those eras that most conduce to the novel) that aspects of heteroglossia are canonized with great ease and rapidly pass from one languages system to another: from everyday life into literary language, from literary language into the language of everyday, from professional jargon into more general use, from one genre to another and so forth. (418)

Different from the novel, though—yet similar to the *Westinghouse Time Capsule*—classical texts rely on their internal multilingualism not only as a constitutive element, but as a helping feature that ensures their intelligibility—as will be explained below.

As for microcosmic time capsules, the multilingual apparatus does much the same. It assists the transfer of information from below the seemingly "unitary language" in which the capsule's message is composed. Multilingualism, understood in this way, is not the opposite of monolingualism, but a means of protecting understandability on a principal level—as it protects the English language practiced by American people in and around the year 1939 from being forgotten. Like classical texts, microcosmic time capsules aim for significance beyond their present time while also being representative of the historical moment that brought them forth.[4] The capsule's various meta-lingual features—which will be specified in the following paragraphs—thus uphold its surface code from within and play out as a multilingualism "in the second degree" (Genette 1997b), that is on a hypertextual level. More precisely, the similarities between the internal multilingualism of microcosmic time capsules and the mostly implicit multilingualism of classical texts revolve around three major commonalities: (1) their respective resemblance to a Rosetta Stone; (2) their *paratextual* layering; and (3) their functioning as spatiotemporal *heterotopias* in a Foucauldian sense—that is, as counter-sites "that have the curious property of being connected to all the other emplacements [of a society], but in such a way that they suspend, neutralize, or reverse the set of relations that are designated, reflected, or represented by them" (Foucault 1998: 178).

1. Rosetta Stone

The Rosetta Stone inside the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* consists of four different tools connected to each other and collected in a device referred to as a "Key to the English language" (*Book of Record* 1938: 19–38). It was developed by John Peabody Harrington,

American anthropologist and permanent field ethnologist at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. Harrington had been one of many scientists involved in the planning and execution of the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* project. Today, Harrington's fame is based on his extensive studies of the languages of the native peoples of California. He has left behind over 200 meters of shelf space with about one million pages of phonetic writings, documenting native Californian languages, many of which have since become extinct.

His "key to the English language", designed for the time capsule, was a similar endeavor—except that the language at stake is the very same that has driven the native languages of California to their demise. However, over the course of 5,000 years the English language would be facing a similar threat itself:

> After five thousand years all the spoken languages of the present time will have become extinct or so altered as to require a key for their understanding. The English language spoken in the United States today, if not replaced by some other natural or invented tongue, will have suffered complete reforming many times over through the laws of linguistic evolving – laws which though proceeding in regular paths will, because of their complexity, work the apparent result of radical havoc. […] Records of the Etruscan language of ancient Italy in Greek letters which are easily readable have amply survived to the present time, but no one has been able to understand the words and their meaning. We have a whole book in Etruscan, but no one can understand it. The key to the deciphering of ancient Egyptian was found in a brief chance inscription, the trilingual Rosetta stone, made for another purpose and never thought of at the time as being useful as a key. If the Etruscans, Egyptians, or other ancient peoples had planned to make a key for us, what would have been their procedure? If all connecting links had been removed, how could such a people have conveyed to us the pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary of their language? (*Book of Record* 1938: 19–20)

The answer to this question is the capsule's "key to the English language" with its four major components: a "vocabulary" of the most-used words of English in phonetic spelling; a phonetic transcription of the Aesopian *Fable of the Northwind and the Sun*; a basic "Grammar of English", explained in a cartoon-like image language; and a *Mauth Maep*, "showing exactly where each of the 33 sounds of 1938 English is formed in the oral cavity" (22).

With these features, the receiver of the time capsule is thought to be capable of "re-enacting" the articulation of the English language and of rebuilding its historic body from scratch. Although accompanied by inter-lingual translations, such as the Aesopian fable into 100 languages, the Lord's Prayer into 500 languages, and a German letter by Albert Einstein into English, the capsule's Rosetta Stone is *not* a translational device. Translations—among different national languages—could hardly solve the problem of language extinction. Once the year 6939 has come, those national language varieties, due to the "laws of linguistic evolving", will have become as unintelligible as the English language itself. On the contrary, the time capsule's "deliberate" Rosetta Stone seeks to remain "entirely independent of any furnishing of translation" (*Book of Record* 1938: 20). Unlike translations proper, its goal is not to render different language codes compatible with one other, but to enable the reconstruction of an entire language system no longer current. It displays linguistic information in both iconic and acoustic (phonetic) terms, thereby establishing a meta-lingual level on which the English language can be referenced as an object in and of itself. Consequently, one cannot but think that English—or more precisely *American* English—is not just a medium to the capsule's message, but also its very message. For the same reason, the confidence of the makers of the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* in the timeless relevance of the English language, and the fact that all its textual documents are either formulated in or translated into English, is not at all at odds with the capsule's hopes to survive every other human testimony of the time – since its language is at once the highest of all cultural achievements the capsule strives to pass on.

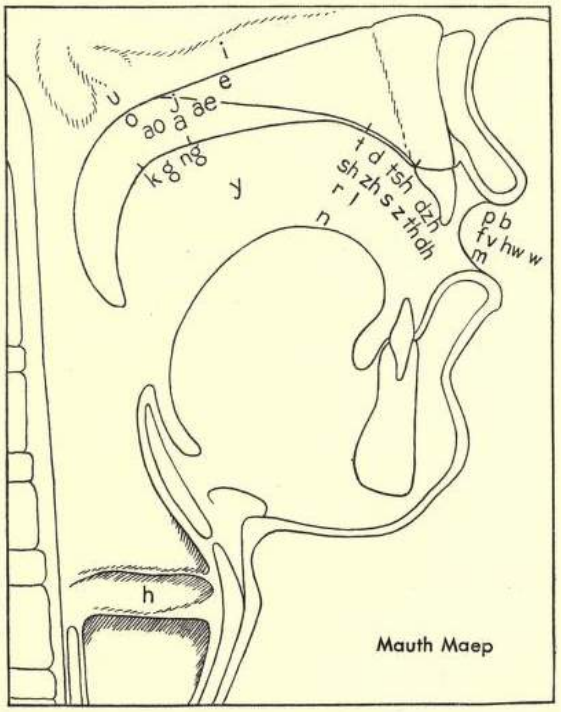


ILLUSTRATION 1, SHOWING EXACTLY WHERE EACH OF THE 33 SOUNDS OF 1938 ENGLISH IS FORMED IN THE ORAL CAVITY.

[22]

Figure 7: The "Mauth Maep". (*Book of Record*, 22)

Harrington's Rosetta Stone seems to foster the notion that a language stays alive only for as long as it is spoken. The

effort to communicate a true image of the phonetic reality of 1938 English needs to be seen in that light. While the capsule's Rosetta Stone understands "spokenness" in the most literal terms, as something that can be reinstated if lost, it also emphasizes the importance of a language's soundscape to its survival as a system: dead languages are languages no longer spoken.[5] Yet Harrington knew from his work as a field linguist that if the practice of a language sinks into oblivion, documents *written* in that language survive as its only traces. The closest knowledge we have, for instance, of Latin as a language once spoken is encapsulated in classical texts, which outlived the demise of the language as a living practice. And if the receivers of the time capsule are to have no sense anymore of the English language as a language once actively used by American people at the beginning of the 20th century, the time capsule, and its *Book of Record*, will become their only gateway to it: "Wer schreibt, der bleibt!"[6]

When dealing with classical texts, we tend to forget that they are time capsules just like the *Westinghouse Time Capsule*. They are remnants of a (language) culture no longer practiced the way it used to be. Yet classical texts are also implicit Rosetta Stones that, through their very existence, evoke an oral past absorbed into the written evidence of a text that is still present. In that sense, classical texts speak at least two languages, the one that *is* the text, and the one that *became* the text at the very moment it ceased to exist: "Was unsterblich im Gesang soll leben, / Muss im Leben untergehen".[7] Classical texts are the walking dead as it were of a deceased oral culture, which they have inherited. And by "oral" I mean the sum total of all differences that distinguish literary artifacts from the "parole" on which they are based. Hence, what the phonetic image of 1938 English is to the *Westinghouse Time Capsule*, the Tuscan dialect is to Dante's *Divine Comedy*—an historic language variety present and hidden in a seemingly monolingual text.

It is not by chance that Harrington's language key begins with a literary quotation from a 19th-century Anglican church song by a certain Edward Henry Bickerstedt:

> Our years are like the shadows
> That o'er the meadows fall,
> Are like the fragile wildflower
> That withers by the wall –
> A dream, a song, a story,
> By others quickly told,
> An unremaining glory
> Of years that soon get old. (*Book of Record* 1938: 19)

The thematic references of this little poem to the topic of Harington's language key and the overall enterprise of the time capsule are self-evident: the lines sing of the evanescence of human life, its hopes, and not least its stories and songs, its verbal and oral expressions. They will fade like the world, the shadows, meadows and flowers that used to surround them. And so will the world onto which the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* tries to hold. What will remain, however, is the message of the time capsule, like the song that bears witness of the transience of the human voice, but will itself keep going. Encoded into the poetic features that preserve the speech act after which it is modeled, the literary song will turn into a highly durable, internally multilingual vestige of a voice that has long since fallen silent. Again, classical texts function much like this: they are long-lived to the extent that they pass on a language, which in turn they supersede.

2. Paratext

Microcosmic time capsules need paratexts to survive. Otherwise they are forgotten or become unintelligible. Besides the "key to the English language", the *Book of Record* thus contains a detailed description of the capsule and its content, an explanation of its documentary purpose, an erudite specification of its burial site in both image and text, an instruction of how to electromagnetically locate metallic substances beneath the ground, and a table with units of linear measurement according to the English and the metric system. Although also stored inside the capsule, as a "peritext" materially connected to the text of the capsule (the "10,000,000-word essay" that *is* the capsule) and partially identical with it, the *Book of Record*'s foremost purpose is to leave word of the capsule in a space *peripheral* to it – which makes it an "epitext" in the sense of Gérard Genette (1997a). As such it adds an additional language level to the language of the capsule itself.

Likewise, the survival of the classical text also depends on paratexts such as editorial texts that equally enable and channel their reading. Those paratexts complement an already existing text and occasionally re-write it at the same time. In case of the *Westinghouse Time Capsule*, this becomes very clear as we read in the *Book of Record*: "We pray you therefore, whoever reads this book, to cherish and preserve it through the ages, and translate it from time to time into new languages that may arise after us, in order that knowledge of the Time Capsule of Cupaloy may be handed down to those for whom it is intended." (*Book of Record* 1938: 6) While the text of the capsule may by no means be altered or tampered with—just like the generally accepted form of a classical

text—its paratext must be flexible and adjust to the changing needs of its users: "We likewise ask: let the Time Capsule rest in the earth until its time shall come; let none dig it up for curiosity or for any other reason. It is a message from one age to another, and none should touch it in the years that lie between." (*Book of Record* 1938: 6) The *Book of Record* is thus not just a public epitext, which is openly handed down alongside the main text (to once more quote Genette 1997a); it is also an "open text" in the sense that it is *non*-canonical, as opposed to the text that it refers to. Much the same goes for classical texts: Their paratexts aren't sacrosanct either, unlike the classical text, but inscribe into it a historically mutable multivoicedness, which resonates from its edges whenever the classical text is read.

3. Heterotopia

According to Michel Foucault, heterotopias are

> […] real places, actual places, places that are designed into the very institution of society, which are sorts of actually realized utopias in which the real emplacements, all the other real emplacements that can be found within the culture are, at the same time, represented, contested, and reversed, sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are actually localizable. Because they are utterly different from all the emplacements that they reflect or refer to, I shall call these places "heterotopias," as opposed to utopias (Foucault 1998: 178).

Time capsules, such as the *Westinghouse Time Capsule*, evidently fit such a description. They are equally real *and* ulterior to other real sites, which they carry along on their insides. As such, they have to leave the culture they are designed to "mirror" – like the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* that mirrors the "arts, entertainments, religions, philosophies, educational systems, sciences, technology and medicine" of its age—and therefore cannot remain within it.[8] Foucault's description of the heterotopian nature of mirrors thus applies to time capsules as well: "Due to the mirror, I discover myself absent at the place where I am, since I see myself over there. From that gaze which settles on me, as it were, I come back to myself and to reconstitute myself there where I am" (Foucault 1998: 179). Likewise does the culture that reflects itself in the microcosm of the time capsule—and that projects itself into its own future state—appear both absent from, and present to, the here and now. To this effect, time capsules resemble other heterotopias such as archives, museums, libraries, or cemeteries, which also reside on a spatiotemporal threshold of a society they simultaneously "represent, contest, and

reverse". And like these, time capsules need to be removed to an extraterritorial space of sorts, from which they can only be retrieved when their designated time has arrived: they need to be buried, locked up, hidden, or somehow displaced in space.

As spatiotemporal exclaves, time capsules are situated in a precarious place and engineer an equally precarious disruption of the order of time accepted in their environment. Similar to cemeteries—an example of time-space disruption prominently featured in Foucault's argument, in which death, the most eccentric exception of a continuous progression of time, takes hold—the break in time caused and maintained by a time capsule also becomes permanent. It is that very positioning at the verge of time that empowers it with an imagination of its own afterlife and allows it to look back at itself from a future point of view. A time capsule is thus like a "ship," the "heterotopia par excellence", "a piece of floating space, a placeless place, that lives by its own device, that is self-enclosed and, at the same time, delivered over to the boundless expanse of the ocean" (Foucault 1998: 184–5). And like a ship, a time capsule not only "visits different spaces, it reflects and incorporates them" (Johnson 2006: 80)—as does the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* that asks future generations to "translate it from time to time" and thus to embark on its journey.

More precisely, heterotopias *incorporate* elements from other real sites of society, which they, in turn, re-contextualize. As a consequence of their re-contextualization, the purpose of these elements changes. Like postage stamps that go into a stamp collection, they lose their *former* use value and take on a *new* one. We may therefore say that heterotopias are agencies of revaluation: by being relocated to the *Westinghouse Time Capsule*, the Holy Bible, for instance, ceases to be a holy or religious object in the proper sense, and becomes an historical document. Thomas Mann's essays, to mention another example, which were once directed at a contemporary audience and pursued a contemporary objective, start speaking about themselves when transferred to the time capsule (see Endres 2017). The extra-territoriality these books gain through their de-contextualization reflects back on how one reads them: they become heterotopias in relation to their previous meanings and former selves.

While the paratext of time capsules implements an intergenerational multilingualism that allows the capsule to remain legible throughout the ages, its heterotopianism serves a different—yet equally important—function: it lends a representative status to its objects. By moving to a heterotopian site, an object—such as a text—becomes potentially self-

referential. Classical texts, for their part, owe their classicalness not least to their heterotopian relationship to the culture that treats them as such—rather than to the exquisiteness or a particular quality of their form or content. Like the interior of a time capsule that becomes relevant due to being selected (instead of being selected due to being relevant), canonicity, as a procedure, is less a matter of *what* than of *how*. For the same reason, the criteria for exceptionality and representativeness posited for canonicity are as much beyond a definition based on substance alone, as are the criteria for a "right" object for a time capsule: An object is considered representative of a certain time, people and tongue because of the meta-historical significance its heterotopian status grants it.

Unlike a paratext, though, the allocation of a text to a heterotopian space is not just a matter of framing. Frames make visible; they highlight, center, and channel one's gaze. Heterotopian spaces, on the other hand, withdraw from sight what would otherwise be visible. The objects of the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* are high-circulation commodities of their time: newspaper articles, mass products, copies. Every one of its items is actually a replica of an item freely available in the capsule's environment. Only the capsule provides an artificial scarcity to its inventory by concealing it and extricating it from the realm of daily use. That is precisely what heterotopias do:

> Heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that isolates them and makes them penetrable at the same time. In general, one does not gain entry to a heterotopian emplacement as if to a windmill. Either one is constrained to enter, which is the case with barracks and prisons, or one has to submit to rituals and purifications. One can enter only with a certain permission and after a certain number of gestures have been performed. There are even heterotopias that are entirely devoted to those purification activities, a half-religious half-hygienic purification as in Muslim baths, or an apparently purely hygienic purification as in Scandinavian saunas. (Foucault 1998: 183)

In the case of the *Westinghouse Time Capsule*, the sealing, consecration and public burial ceremony, as much as the ritualized instructions for its retrieval, account for a para-religious practice in this sense, one that monitors and regulates the semi-transparence of the space as defined by the capsule.

Classical texts, in turn, describe a secluded space like a time capsule, and can also be accessed only under certain conditions—conditions that assure their proper use. For instance, in order to access a classical text, one is required to know more than one

language beside one's own. Among other things, such a requirement is manifest in the history of literary studies curricula, which—especially in Europe—are traditionally based on multilingual training, although the knowledge of the source language of the classical text in question would seem sufficient. But by putting up a multilingual language requirement, the accessibility of a classical text can be controlled. This isn't a new observation (see, for instance, Wegmann 1994: 402–3).[9] What has been mostly overlooked, though, is how this institutionally requested multilingualism of the reader affects the reading of a classical text. I would go so far as to say that it inscribes itself into the classical text, thus adding to its internal multilingualism. Its functioning is that of a translation in reverse – instead of transferring the language of the classical text into the language of its reader, the language proficiency of the reader slips in another "dialect" into the linguistic registers of the classical text. In this sense, classical texts even speak (of) languages that aren't their own.

The translations inside the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* are based on the same principle. Its authors didn't assume that the receiver of the capsule would read the English texts in translation. The reference to the Rosetta Stone is quite clear: by using those translations the reader is supposed to gain not only an understanding of the English *text*, but of the English *language* as such. His or her ability to read multiple languages will allow him or her to understand a text, which is, paradoxically, written in neither one of those languages.[10] Yet again, the understanding of multiple languages on the part of the reader informs the reading of a text that seems to be perfectly monolingual.

The internal multilingualism and Rosetta Stone-like quality of microcosmic time capsules and canonical texts, their paratextual features and their heterotopian status are therefore equally crucial to their functioning, and can hardly be addressed separately. For instance, while their heteropianism is reflected in their paratextual layering, it also proves essential to their multilingualism. All these elements work together to assure that time capsules, and classical texts, not only survive and stay exemplary, but remain intelligible over time. Time capsules, and classical texts, are thus durable to the extent that they are "over-structured", which is to say that they have to encode their messages on multiple levels at once in order to achieve timeless significance.

Author's Note: The author thanks the Heinz History Center (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania) for permission to reproduce images 2–5.

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[1] An explicit reference to the "opening of King Tutankhamen's tomb" was also made in a Westinghouse press release advertising the time capsule project (Heinz History Center, Detre Library & Archives, George Westinghouse Museum Collection).

[2] This might also be true for tombs. They are, however, usually not intended to be reopened, but to live on by virtue of their sufficiently meaningful exteriors (which may, nevertheless, be underpinned by reference to an otherwise secluded interior).

[3] The achievement, which the idea of a paratext represents in terms of the entire project, can be fully acknowledged only if compared to earlier suggestions of how to pass on the memory of the capsule – suggestions I will have to discuss elsewhere.

[4] On the concurrence of the "normativity and historicity" of classical texts, see Voßkamp 1993: 5–8.

[5] The idea of organizing the language key around the concept of "spokenness" successively emerged from conversations Pendray had with Benjamin L. Whorf (who was the first to be asked to design it) and Harrington – details, which I cannot go into here. Interestingly enough, the idea to teach "futurians how to pronounce English, when the real problem is to teach them how to read it", was originally met with concerns among the initiators of the time capsule (letter from Pendray to Harrington, September 6, 1938; Heinz History Center, Detre Library & Archives, George Westinghouse Museum Collection).

[6] "He who writes, remains" (German proverb).

[7] "All, that which gains immortal life in song, / To mortal life must perish!" Friedrich Schiller, *Die Götter Griechenlandes* (1800), lines 127–128 (Schiller 1987: 173, translation mine).

[8] Press release from the Westinghouse Company (Heinz History Center, Detre Library & Archives, George Westinghouse Museum Collection).

[9] Following a practice of 19th-century philology, to determine the suitability of a text for philological treatment by the technical difficulties it presents to the editor, rather than by its 'classical' content (Wegmann 1994: 415), the content of the *Westinghouse Time Capsule* appears more classical (i.e., worthy to be preserved) in proportion to the technical and physical obstacles it has to survive. Similarly, the "reconstructive reading" that the future recipients of the time capsule will have to undertake to decipher the capsule's message mimics the reconstructive reading that informs the reception of a classical text (Wegmann 1994: 417).

[10] This aspect of the Rosetta Stone—and its distinction from a translation tool—was made clear in a letter from Harrington to Pendray in which the former clarifies: "If anyone asks whether the present key deals more with the pronunciation of 1938 English than with the interpretation of this English, let me say that with the phonetic key, the texts, the list of one-thousand words and the dictionaries the futurites can study out and ascertain the pronunciation and meaning of every word contained in the Time Capsule. THE KEY IS ENDLESS IN ITS SCOPE, LIMITED ONLY BY THE AMOUNT OF STUDY SPENT ON IT." (Harrington to Pendray, September 8, 1938; Heinz History Center, Detre Library & Archives, George Westinghouse Museum Collection)