ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE
PHILOLOGICA 1/2016
PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

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CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE
KAROLINUM PRESS
2016

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This publication has been supported by the Programme for the Development of Research Areas at Charles University P09: Literature and Art in Intercultural Relations, subprogramme *Transformations of the Cultural History of Anglophone Countries: Identities, Periods, Canons*.

http://www.karolinum.cz/journals/philologica

ISSN 0567-8269 (Print)
ISSN 2464-6830 (Online)

CONTENTS

2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 7–21
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

EM/BEDDED NARRATIVES: MARRIAGE, SEDUCTION AND ADULTERY IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH NOVEL

SOŇA NOVÁKOVÁ

ABSTRACT

The article deals with embedded stories of seduction in the context of eighteenth-century novels. Although literary history has focused mainly on the novel of courtship, marital and family life has actually had a very important place in literature throughout the century. Within novels about the life of a marriage the tales of chaste wives repeatedly run in narrative conjunction with embedded tales of fallen women. These do not function merely as cautionary contrasts but participate in the process of consolidating the discourse of marriage and love in the period of sensibility. The principal object of analysis is the novel of Frances Sheridan (1724–1766) *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1761) where embedded tales of seduction problematise traditional concepts of female and conjugal morality. The article relies on recent approaches to the history of the family and on the methods of feminist narratology.

Keywords: Frances Sheridan; novel of marriage; women novelists; eighteenth-century English novel; feminist narratology; love in literature; history of family

In her book *A Literary History of Women's Writing in Britain, 1660–1789*, Susan Staves observes that many "women novelists turn away from the courtship plot to make the relationship of husband and wife within marriage an important subject" (Staves 2005: 339). If the ideal wife, at least according to the prescriptive conduct and religious literature of the time, was to be always chaste and turn a blind eye to the infidelities of the husband, of what interest could the life of a marriage be for a novelist? The married heroine of Henry Mackenzie's *Julia de Roubigné* writes to her correspondent that she has nothing else to write since "comedies and romances […] always end in marriage, because, after that, there is nothing to be said" (Mackenzie 1999: 116). But as this novel itself proves, the post-marriage plots involve many complications: violence, abuse, economic distress, the return of a first love, even infidelity. The questions posed by such narratives thus bring into focus the whole notion of conjugal love, the role of the family, obedience and morality. Moreover, several major texts of the time include embedded narratives that rehearse a range of alternatives for the heroine. Of significant interest among these are

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.24

interpolated stories of seduction, which, as I shall argue, provide insights into the ways the novels' representation of marriage should be read. This analysis shall address seduction tales narrated by married women as embedded stories within their own story. Here, seduced and married women are not at all simply contrasted but actually connected through themes, structural links and other complex narrative interactions. Thus, there is an at least double hermeneutics at play. Embedded tales of women who bedded men other than their husbands provide an invaluable source for the study of eighteenth-century discourse of marriage, love and subjectivity. Although brief excursions into other eighteenth-century women's texts will have to be made, the article intends to concentrate on the developments in the latter part of the century, focusing its attention mainly on Frances Sheridan's *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* (1761).[1]

Marriage and Adultery

Although our understanding of the sexual mores of early modern England has greatly advanced in the recent years, relatively little is known in detail about the period from the Restoration to the late eighteenth century. Historians are aware that patterns and ideas of family and domestic relations were undergoing significant changes especially in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A number of studies about divorce, prostitution, kinship patterns and family relations have begun to make good this neglect, but many gaps still remain in our understanding of the changing cultural, social and intellectual context in which illicit sexual activity was viewed and discussed.[2] For example, relatively few studies have explored the cultural representation of adultery as a topic in its own right, despite the visibility of marital breakdown as a theme of a wide variety of texts.[3]

Historians of the family have viewed the early modern period as one of "privatization" of domestic relations. Until the late seventeenth century, society viewed the well-governed patriarchal family as a microcosm of the state. Vice was regulated by church courts and magistrates, together with a range of community-based public shaming rituals. Over the course of the seventeenth century, analogy between familial and political order began to break down. The family was increasingly cast as a private sphere, a refuge of intimacy distinct from the public world of politics.[4] Harsh strictures on relationships of power and

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1 Frances Sheridan (1724–1766) was an Anglo-Irish novelist and playwright, friend of Sarah Fielding, Catherine Macaulay, Samuel Johnson and David Garrick, who visited her London house very often. Sheridan is now famous for two of her novels: *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, a novel of sensibility, and *The History of Nourjahad*, an Oriental tale published posthumously in 1767. Sheridan's son, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, included several incidents from *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* in his famous play, *The School for Scandal* (1777). Also *Nourjahad* influenced drama. Its theatrical version, a musical called *Illusion, or The Trances of Nourjahad*, was staged at Drury Lane in 1813. Its author was anonymous, but the play was often attributed to Byron.

2 Classic texts tracing the history of the family are studies by Lawrence Stone (1977), Randolph Trumbach (1978); challenging views are offered by e.g. Ruth Perry (2004) and Naomi Tadmor (2001).

3 To name just a few examples of novels from the latter part of the eighteenth century: Eliza Haywood's *The History of Miss Betsy Thoughtless* (1751), Sarah Fielding's *The History of the Countess of Dellwynn* (1759), Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791), Mary Wollstonecraft's *Mary, A Fiction* (1788) and *Maria: Or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798).

4 For such an account see e.g. Amussen (1988) or Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall (1987).

subordination within the family, which had dominated puritan conduct literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, gave way to a marked emphasis on marital love. Its fullest expression came in the cult of domesticity that dominated the discourse of family in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[5]

In many ways, this is a persuasive account, yet to a great extent it ignores the complexity of the public – private relation. As e.g. McKeon (2005) or Houlbrooke (1995) have shown, gender, family and sexuality continued to be important to the political debate in this period. Not only was it translated into a growing interest in the relationship between private virtue and political probity, marked by an increased attack on aristocratic vice by the middling sort, such as we find in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), but it is even more obviously applied in the so-called amatory novels[6] of Delarivier Manley, who stages sexual relations within and without the family as a vehicle of political satire and more or less direct political intervention.[7]

The history of early modern family life is best seen in terms of structural continuity, punctuated by changes in the "media of expression" (Houlbrooke 1998: 2). Sex and marriage were topics of great interest, and sexual behavior such as adultery became more public than ever before. As Richetti (1992) rightly argues, the greatly popular genres such as scandal chronicles, memoirs of all kinds and secret histories served up tales of sexual adventures of the upper class, which allowed the readers to experience the thrills of clandestine love vicariously.

Adultery is seen as a key fault line of gender difference in early modern society. Conduct books typically see adultery as a misdemeanour in the husband, while preaching to the wife to not only remain faithful but even turn a blind eye to her husband's failings. As George Savile, Marquis of Halifax puts it in *The Lady's New Year's Gift*:

> Remember that the next to the danger of committing the fault your self [*sic*], the greatest is that of seeing it in your husband. Do not seem to look or hear that way: if he is a man of sense he will reclaim himself, the folly of it; if he is not so, he will be provoked but not reformed. To expostulate in these cases looketh like declaring war, and preparing reprisals. (Halifax 1688: 35)[8]

Halifax's advice is famous for its explicit treatment of the double standard: the notion that in a patriarchal and patrilineal society the adultery of wives, with its damaging effects on property transfer, was more serious than that of husbands.[9]

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[5] This was first promoted on the pages of the early eighteenth-century periodicals *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, published by Addison and Steele, and later developed in the cult of sensibility and the domestic novel.

[6] The term was coined by Ballaster (1992).

[7] Delarivier Manley (1663–1724) was a Tory propagandist pamphleteer, journalist (she took over *The Examiner* from Jonathan Swift) and novelist. Her most famous work now is an anti-Whig political allegory called *The New Atalantis* (1709).

[8] This conduct book was originally written as a wedding present to Halifax's twelve year old daughter. It was immensely popular and went through thirteen reprints in the eighteenth century. Its popularity was eventually superseded in 1774 by John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* and Dr James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1766), ridiculed in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* when Mr Collins tries to read it aloud to the Bennet sisters.

[9] This idea forms the basis of Keith Thomas's (1959) classic statement of the sexual double standard.

Studies of the gendered nature of adultery have mostly concentrated on the consequences of illicit sexuality rather than its causes. But why did people embark on extra-marital affairs? What were the emotions or moral dilemmas raised by such behaviour? We still know very little about this.

The focus of this article is therefore on the meanings of illicit sexuality, including adultery and extramarital sex as a result of seduction, and the ways in which these were conveyed. If writers of the 1720s and 1730s like Eliza Haywood and Delarivier Manley write about the sexual act in fairly explicit ways, describing, for example, the erotic attractions for women of revealed male bodies, such openness is not to be found in the texts produced by women in the latter decades of the century. Yet, the cult of sensibility demands attention to physical reactions to emotions and feelings. In the discourse of sensibility the heart is the most important organ and feeling is given the greatest authority as a way to truth. If, as I argued above, according to historians of the family the eighteenth century witnesses the gradual emergence of companionate marriage as an ideal, this obviously carries a new imperative for women: to know the heart and make the right decisions based on emotions. Yet, women struggle to decode the new semiotics of courtship and love as this is being constituted and they waver between dilemmas, such as how to square moral social demands, the respect and filial duty owed to parents, and acting on one's own emotional impulse. I want to argue at this point that precisely such conflicts become central to a number of novels from the 1750s onwards. In order to resolve these issues, women writers reach for various narrative strategies, especially repetition and the use of interpolated tales.

Seduction

History and narrative interact: narrative helps to constitute and to resolve conflicts as certain stories are compulsively repeated at various times. The latter part of the eighteenth century seems preoccupied with seduction, as a virtuous heroine is either seduced into believing her lover's false vows and consenting to sex, or, yielding to her emotions actually becomes complicit in the act of seduction. For the first time, women have "a right to a heart," as Clarissa claims (Richardson 1985: 87). The story of seduction is, in fact, a story of women's failed knowledge of this heart. Consequently, it has more to do with a history of emotions than a history of sexuality. The seduction narrative's epistemology of the heart, then, is a part of the larger movement of sentimental philosophy, as advanced in the writings of Francis Hutcheson or Anthony Ashley Cooper, the Third Earl of Shaftesbury. Seduction also requires the cultural belief that women's consent in sexual relations is necessary. Women then need to be included in conceptions of subjectivity which Lawrence Stone terms "affective individualism" (Stone 1977: 221 and *passim*).[10] Yet it also requires the sexual double standard where female chastity is unequally valued and male sexual freedom accepted.

[10] Stone coined this concept and developed it especially in chapter 6 of *The Family, Sex and Marriage* (1977).

Traditional feminist interpretations of seduction tales assume a mimetic model in which the repetition of this plot functions to indoctrinate women into restrictive ideas of female chastity. They discipline female readers not to have desires, not to go out in public, not to marry without familial consent. Nancy Armstrong (1987) argues that in writing domestic fiction women created for the female her own confinement. Spencer's reading is more nuanced, yet she also explicitly claims that "[b]y idealizing the heroine as an innocent victim of men and fate, the novel of seduction sometimes reinforced rather than challenged the oppressive ideology of femininity" (Spencer 1986: 113).

However, the popularity of seduction tales in the period could be claimed to reflect the absence, rather than the presence, of a clearly formulated dominant ideology that would constrict female desire. In such a reading, seduction tales are not indoctrinating didactic texts, punishing women who act on their feelings, but actually exploratory texts probing the nature of women's affective and erotic lives. Seduction can be understood as a discursive practice where discourse is understood in Foucauldian terms as the system of thought within which knowledge is produced. It produces new objects (romantic love, the heart, a new set of meanings for 'love' etc.) and imbues them with new authority.

How heroines determine the knowledge of their own heart in many later eighteenth-century narratives occurs through their own reading of other seduction narratives. *Clarissa* stands as the *ur-text*, when repetition of the telling of an event from multiple points of view speaks to the absence of firm discursive practices around seduction. Wollstonecraft's *Maria: Or, The Wrongs of Woman* (1798) or Mary Hays' *The Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (1796) stand on the opposite ends of the spectrum where the repetition of reading as an event points to a more solidified set of practices. The protagonists (Maria and Emma, respectively) both read Rousseau's novel *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and model their ideas of lovers on the tender hero, St Preux. We move from the *untold* story of Clarissa's unacknowledged love to clear textual articulations of personal emotion which are read and reread over and over again. In between this range, contradictory and competing versions of the tales exist simultaneously and these differences point us toward the untold possible narratives buried under the weight of the ideal of femininity.

There were many different seduction stories exploring the new landscape of love and companionate marriage by choice. But all later eighteenth-century seduction tales pursue a number of questions about women, love and marriage. Should a woman marry a man she does not love out of family duty? Does affective choice constitute a legitimate justification for disobeying parents? Can a woman fall in love twice? Can love without money sustain a relationship? Is love outside the bonds of marriage ethically superior to mercenary sex inside marriage? What is the relation between passion and emotion, love and sex?

Narrative Situations of Embedding

Critics have noted the important influence of women's amatory fiction (such as was written by Manley, Haywood or Aphra Behn) on sentimental writers including Samuel Richardson and Frances Sheridan, but the traditions are crucially distinct in their representation of seduction and in its narration. Seduction in amatory fiction is mostly related

in third-person narration. It functions as part of a plot of intrigue less attuned to characterization than to action, or to interiorized models of subjectivity than to exteriorized ones. However, seduction tales in the sentimental novel almost always dramatize the act of narration. The heroine narrates the telling of her tale repeatedly throughout her tale, both in the frame narrative (often an epistolary address) where she justifies the telling of her story, or in the stories within the story where her story is told to an intra-diegetic listener. For example, Agnes in Amelia Opie's *Father and Daughter* (1801) is seduced and abandoned in the opening pages of the novel and then proceeds to repeat the story of her seduction to multiple listeners with different effect. Through repeatedly staging their own telling as events in the plots, seduction tales incorporate multiple ways of knowing as experiments with the way meanings are determined within a narrative context.

By making the act of narration part of its formal structure and thus requiring attention to the context of enunciation, the interpolated, or embedded, seduction tale presents a particular challenge to narrative theory. Many critics, notably feminists, have argued that narrative theory, especially, in its structuralist form, remains primarily formalist and resists addressing questions of politics and history. Susan S. Lanser was one of the first to introduce contextual material to narrative theory and the attacks on her seminal essay "Toward a Feminist Narratology," published in 1986, demonstrate the resistance to history and determination of narratology to produce a transhistorical science of narrative.[11] I build upon Lanser's view of narrative in its dialogue between the formalist terms of narratology and the historical claims of the situatedness of gender: "The study of gender and narrative explores the (historically contingent) ways in which sex, gender, and/or sexuality might shape both narrative texts themselves and the theories through which readers and scholars approach them" (Lanser 2013: paragraph 1). Within this field of enquiry, "feminist narratology" has explored the implications of gender for understanding the "nature, form, and functioning of narrative" (Prince 2003: 65). I also understand narratology through Robyn Warhol's definition as the study of narrative strategies which "consider the influence of gender on the production of certain kinds of narrative structures" (Warhol 1989: 4).[12]

My interest lies primarily in the relation between the digression into a seduction tale and the primary plot of the heroine's life after marriage as presented in novels written by women. What place do seduction tales have in the story of the life of wives? How are both narrated with a view to the context of seduction in the life of wives? Married women, by definition, are no longer sexually innocent and their erotic knowledge should render them beyond the power of seduction. For this reason, married heroines who are victims of seduction are extremely rare,[13] yet seduction is central to their stories. Wives are sym-

[11] Ansgar Nünning summed up these debates in the sense that "though Lanser and other feminist narratologists have incurred the displeasure of those to whom this sounds suspiciously like an ideological balkanization of narratology, the new approaches have raised pertinent new questions which have proved to be of greater concern to a larger number of critics than the systematic taxonomies, typologies and models so dear to the hearts of narratologists" (2000: 354).

[12] The classical foundation texts of this discipline are, apart from Lanser's seminal article, e.g. Robyn Warhol's "Toward a Theory of the Engaging Narrator" (1986) and *Gendered Interventions* (1989), Susan S. Lanser's *The Narrative Act* (1981) and *Fictions of Authority* (1992), and Kathy Mezei's *Ambiguous Discourse: Feminist Narratology and British Women Writers* (1996).

[13] A case in point is Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791), where the seduction and moral failing of Lady Elmwood is refused to be narrated at all: "To state the progression by which vice gains a pre-

pathetic listeners to other women's seduction tales, and I read scenes of story-telling to think about what these embedded narratives add to the primary tale.[14]

Embedded tales can serve many narrative functions: they can stand as thematic contrast, provide causal explanations for a character's actions or be self-contained digressions, to name a few.[15] The tales of seduction told within novels of marriage do not serve any one single purpose, but their presence forces the reader to ponder the relationships between marriage and seduction, love inside and outside sanctioned bonds, sexual knowledge and sexual ignorance, and chastity and contamination. The way in which a writer deploys embedded tales – as contrast, as frame, with a homodiegetic or heterodiegetic (that is, a first-person narrator who is part of the story versus a third-person narrator who is external to the plot) – reveals much about their attitude towards a woman's new right to her heart. Tzvetan Todorov describes the embedded narrative as "the *narrative of a narrative*" (Todorov 1977: 72). By staging the scene of narration the tale-within-the-tale highlights the narrative act of the novel itself and provides a *mise en abyme* for the text's own reading. "The embedded story," Mieke Bal points out, "contains a suggestion how the text should be read" (Bal 1988: 147). In other words, the narrative acts of embedded seduction stories provide insight into how the novels' representation of marriage should be understood.

The repeated presence of embedded seduction tales within novels about the life of a marriage could be read as confirming the critical supposition that women have no story to tell once they wed, that their lives end in marriage – and thus their plots must come from elsewhere, from the seduced characters' sexual transgression. The married heroine of Henry Mackenzie's *Julia de Roubigné* makes a similar observation, as seen above. But there are many novels in the period which do write beyond the marriage ending. For instance, Julia de Roubigné herself refutes her own claim when she discovers that her marriage does not shield her from the dangers of love. Evelina's famous last words announcing her marriage in Burney's novel – "All is over, my dearest Sir, and the fate of your Evelina is decided!" – do not hold true for a great number of novels in the period which chart an indecisive fate for women after marriage (Burney 1982: 406). Counter to what the contemporary critical focus on the courtship plot might suggest, novels about marriage are quite common in the later eighteenth century.[16]

What does the popularity of embedded tales of seduction within novels of marriage actually imply? One answer is provided by Jane Spencer, who notes their frequent occurrence as digressions within the main plot and interprets this as signifying that fallen heroines are demoted to secondary status. Seduced heroines are marginalized in order

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dominance in the heart, may be a useful lesson; but it is one so little to the satisfaction of most readers, that it is not meant to be related here, all the degrees of frailty by which Lady Elmwood fell; but instead of picturing every occasion of her fall, come briefly to the events that followed" (Inchbald 1987: 170). Note how again focus is not on the causes but rather on the consequences of adultery.

14 The term 'embedded narrative' refers here to any tale within a tale. I will not be making a distinction between primary narratives embedded in a frame, and tales which are outside the text's diegesis. For closer scrutiny of such distinctions see Bal (1988).

15 For a fuller analysis of embedded narratives and their functions see Nelles (1997).

16 Of note here are especially *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition* (1742), Samuel Richardson's continuation of *Pamela,* Henry Fielding's *Amelia* (1751), Sarah Fielding's *The Adventures of David Simple, Volume the Last* (1753), Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire's *Emma; Or, The Unfortunate Attachment* (1773), and Charlotte Smith's *Desmond* (1792).

to provide a "foil to the heroine", contrasting purity with contamination (Spencer 1986: 123). Thus, she assumes the embedded narratives function only as contrasts. But it seems, as I will attempt to show, that there is a more complicated interaction at play between the two narrative levels. Seduced and married women are linked in these novels not only by way of contrast but through thematic overlaps, structural causalities and sympathetic identifications.

Telling and Reading Seduction Tales

Frances Sheridan's homodiegetic narrator[17] in *The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph* allows a greater involvement in pursuing the question of love in marriage and a great degree of leniency toward the seduced victim. Sheridan's message remains ambiguous in the end and the novel relates both the tale of seduction and the place of affective agency in marriage. The choice of narrative voice produces complex and complicated transferences between married female narrators and the seduced "I" of the embedded tale. The identifications and dis-identifications between narrative voices and levels question, in both, the roles and responsibilities of women to their own hearts.

The fates of the married Sidney Bidulph and her seduced counterpart, Miss Burchell, are intimately connected. Sidney's marriage is caused, in the first instance, by Burchell's seduction tale: the principled Sidney accepts her mother's decision that she relinquish all claims to her fiancé, Orlando Faulkland, because her mother believes he has previously seduced and impregnated Burchell, and thereafter Sidney marries Mr Arnold, a man not nearly as attractive as her first love but one recommended by her mother. All the suffering Sidney experiences – her husband's infidelity, her loss of reputation, her poverty – spring from Burchell's story of seduction. The interlaced fates of the two women guide the plot: Sidney refuses to vindicate herself from her husband's accusations of adultery because she is protecting Burchell; Burchell waits until after Arnold's death to ask Sidney to intervene with Faulkland on her behalf; and Sidney rejects Faulkland's second proposal because of Burchell's continuing desire for him. The plot entanglements that repeatedly bring the two women together in an unquestioned bond of female solidarity stem from Sidney's sympathetic response to Burchell as a victim of seduction and give the novel a feminist undertone, for it repeatedly insists, as Margaret Doody has observed, on "the *rights* of the woman seduced" (Doody 1986: 331). That Burchell turns out to be less-than-seduced, to have been an active agent in her moment of ruin, does not undermine the earlier identification between the wife and the fallen woman. When the truth finally comes out that Burchell was a willing victim, Sidney still supports her prior claim to Faulkland, and the novel refuses an 'all or nothing' approach to female virtue,

[17] As Susan Lanser has observed, women writers are far more likely to employ homodiegetic narrators because, and this may seem as a paradox, they are actually far more likely to create a distance between the writer and the internal narrator. That distance is increased by using private forms, such as diaries, memoirs, letters etc. Thus, the narrator never directly addresses the reader; such address is filtered through framing devices, such as epistolary addressees, editor's intervention in procuring journals or memoirs etc. For more interrogation of such techniques see Lanser (1986).

attempting instead to hold men, as Susan Staves notes, "to standards of good conduct and chastity as strict as those said to be appropriate to women" (Staves 2005: 347).

The novel resists a clear divide between wife and fallen woman. The intimate relationship between the two women and their different fates – Sidney's life contains misery and poverty whereas Burchell gets the man she loves – twists our expectations of poetic justice.[18] In *Sidney Bidulph* good characters are not rewarded, nor are bad ones necessarily punished. The moral of the story is announced in the extradiegetic narrative, which frames the story of Sidney's memoir (the editor tells us how he received Sidney's journal from his friend's mother, Cecilia, and in turn, Cecilia introduces the journal and tells us how it came into her hands). The male editor and Cecilia agree that Sidney's story

> may serve for an example, to prove that neither prudence, foresight, nor even the best disposition that the human heart is capable of, are of themselves sufficient to defend us against the inevitable ills that sometimes are allotted, even to the best. (Sheridan 1987: 9–10)[19]

The rewards for virtue, the frame insists, are given in the next world. If we isolate Sidney's memoir from its frame and analyse it without the overtly moral extra-diegetic narrative, another lesson is suggested. Should Sidney have relinquished her moral authority to her mother? Had she claimed her right to act on her heart and married Faulkland, could she have found happiness in this world? Such a reading would corroborate Betty Schellenberg's observation that "Sheridan exposes Sidney's lack of moral authority because she refused to assume moral agency" (Schellenberg 2005: 38). This refusal is presented by Sheridan as a problem.

The sheer misery Sidney endures serves to counteract the rigid moral code of feminine propriety that the extra-diegetic level of the text tries to establish. Even Samuel Johnson found the lack of poetic justice too despairing and questioned its morality: "I know not, Madam," he is reported to have told Sheridan, "that you have a right, upon moral principles, to make your readers suffer so much" (Boswell 1934: 390). *Sidney Bidulph* presents a mixed message, and readers have questioned the extent to which passive female resignation is its clear moral. This confusion results from the novel's inability to answer the central question: how does a woman act on her heart's choice when there are conflicting claims upon it?

Sidney Bidulph follows a series of plot lines in trying to solve the problem – promoting marriages of esteem over passionate love, obedience to parents over self-interest, dutiful wives over selfish lovers – yet these moralizing lines often lead nowhere and end in misery, ultimately demanding the reader's skepticism toward strict lines and absolute principles. In doing so, the novel leaves its female readers with little to guide their affective choices.

The first dawning of *Sidney Bidulph*'s moral confusion can be traced to the embedded story of seduction, or, more precisely, to the fact that this story is *not* told. 'Miss Burchell's history' carries all the weight of Sidney's suffering but it remains untold through most of the novel. The story of Miss Burchell's seduction has no content, but it

[18] Sheridan actually frames her novel with a debate over the necessity of poetic justice in works of art.
[19] From the very beginning the reader understands that Sidney Bidulph's efforts will indeed preserve her virtue but will not bring her either fortune or happiness.

has many resonances. As Ross Chambers argues: "It is a story with no intrinsic meaning: it has the form of a story but (in its fragmentary form) does not make sense *except* as a device […] It is literally uninterpretable *except* within the framework of the total situation" (Chambers 1984: 6). Burchell's story has no content and its meaning derives entirely from its situation but it *acts* in the narrative. Burchell's story is constituted in multiple narrative acts and the situation in which each act occurs brings into focus the hermeneutical limitations and complications of determining female knowledge and agency.

'Miss Burchell's history' first enters the novel in the form of a letter written by Burchell to Faulkland and anonymously sent to Sidney only days before her marriage; the letter informs Faulkland of Burchell's pregnancy and calls upon him to help "the most unfortunate woman in the world" (Sheridan 1987: 37). Because Sidney is ill and unable to act for herself, her mother, Lady Bidulph, assumes hermeneutic authority in determining the letter's meaning: Faulkland is a libertine who seduced a poor woman and his engagement with her daughter must be broken. Her interpretation is grounded in her dichotomous system of sexual difference: she sees the sexes as universally engaged in a battle in which men attack female chastity. Sidney describes her mother's view by saying that she has a "partiality to her own sex, and where there is the least room for it, throws the whole of the blame upon the *man's* side" (45). Lady Bidulph's inflexible hermeneutics result in a fatal misreading. While there are signs in Burchell's letter that the story is not one of simple seduction – Burchell acknowledges "our mutual fault" and blames "my own weakness" (37) – Lady Bidulph reads these only as reflecting how any virtuous woman would blame herself. Also her own past colours her reading of the present. Lady Bidulph's fiancé abandoned her at the altar because he had previously seduced a woman and, thus, she reads her own story into her daughter's. While Sidney knows of her mother's bias, she does not question her interpretation. At this point, on one hand, the novel seems to promote a kind of skepticism about the mother's universal view of men by tracing it to a particular personal experience; on the other hand, the mother's principles seem endorsed by Sidney's consent to break with Faulkland and her assertion that her "mother is severe in her virtue, but she is in the right" (48).

When Burchell first enters the novel, the reader expects clarification: either her story will confirm Lady Bidulph's belief that women are innocent victims, or it will show her mistaken and wrong in enforcing her moral principle. However, as will be repeated throughout the course of the novel, expectations of a clear line between Sidney's virtue and Burchell's vice are frustrated.

When Lady Bidulph pays Burchell a visit, the reader expects a revelation and a reckoning. Yet, the story does not even get a chance to be told. As Kathleen Oliver points out, "Lady Bidulph literally puts the word 'seduce' in Miss Burchell's mouth" (Oliver 2003: 689). It is the situation in which the conversation takes place that leads Lady Bidulph to reach conclusions in keeping with her beliefs: the house is "a very neat box, with a pretty garden" and an "elegant" dining room; Burchell appears "modest" and her tears reflect her sentiment (Sheridan 1987: 92). All these signs point Lady Bidulph to proclaim the case one of seduction:

> 'Tis as I suspected, said my mother, Mr Faulkland is an ungenerous man. A young lady of your modest appearance, I am sure he must have taken more pains to seduce, than he will

> acknowledge. Miss B. blushed exceedingly – Oh! madam, you have a charitable, generous heart, I was *indeed* seduced. I knew it, replied my mother. Did he promise to marry you? She coloured deeper than before. I will not accuse him of that, madam. (93)

Lady Bidulph ignores Burchell's confession that there was no breach of promise involved, and focuses on the claim that Burchell was "*indeed* seduced." This functions for Lady Bidulph as a universal signifier for female innocence; no more telling of the story is required. For Lady Bidulph the story is complete.

However, Sidney's narration of her mother's encounter casts doubt on Lady Bidulph's interpretation. Because the novel is told in the form of Sidney's journal, Sidney remains the narrator throughout and mediates the story of her mother's encounter. In this instance, the reader is given Sidney's narrative of the story her mother told her about the interview with Burchell. And Sidney does provide her own interpretation of the meeting to her addressee, Cecilia, after she had recounted her mother's:

> I know not, my dear, whether you will be of my opinion; but I cannot help thinking, that there was something like art in Miss Burchell's behaviour, far from candour which Mr Faulkland seemed to expect from her. My mother mentioned the *pains* that she supposed had been taken to *seduce* her; her deep blush at this hint, makes me suspect that her answer was not dictated by sincerity. She saw my mother was not acquainted with the particulars, and that she was willing to pass a favourable judgment on her fault; it looks to me as if she laid hold of this prejudice – and yet she *owned* that Mr Faulkland had never promised to marry her – I know not what to think. (94)

While Lady Bidulph does not suspect Burchell in the least, the deeper blush immediately registers suspicion in Sidney. Yet, the suspicion does not materialize in any action on Sidney's part, except her sacrifice of the man she loves and the embracing of her mother's opinion. At this point, it may be argued that the gap between Sidney's interpretation and her behaviour is the effect of the novel's desire to question Lady Bidulph's rigid principles and to justify Sidney's choice to sacrifice her desires for another woman's.

The text's confusion over Sidney's response to Burchell's story later translates into confusion over the place of romantic love in marriage. The novel provides signs both to indicate that marrying without love dooms Sidney to misery and to suggest that she is rewarded for her conduct-book resignation of her will. She is both better off for not having her heart's love and worse off for marrying without her heart.

With the knowledge that Arnold is not the chosen one of her heart and that Lady Bidulph's judgement is not to be fully trusted, the reader questions Sidney's perfect resignation. These doubts are justified when disaster strikes after her marriage: she loses her husband's affections, he has an affair with Mrs Gerrarde, accuses Sidney of adultery and throws her out of the house and shortly thereafter loses the family fortune. Marrying without love seems to be represented as a mistake.

Yet another interpretation of the Arnolds' marriage is simultaneously possible, for there are many signs pointing to Sidney's marital happiness. Her decision to marry Arnold initially seems to be a good one. They have children and live happily: "Arnold-abbey seems a paradise to me now," Sidney observes (104). The misery that awaits the marriage finds a tonic in the domestic bliss that accompanies the reconciliation. Though

the Arnolds are reduced to poverty, Sidney has never known such happiness: "I never, since I was married, enjoyed life until now" (247). Sheridan appears to be leading us down a path where marriage founded on conduct-book principles produces the most solid love imaginable.

However, lest we rest with this principle to guide our marriage choice, the novel allows such happiness only a fleeting existence – shortly after the reconciliation, Arnold dies and leaves his wife destitute. Meanwhile, Burchell, the seduced woman, lives a comfortable bourgeois life in London and does not suffer because of her dalliance; even Sidney notes: "The girl's family is not contemptible; her fortune is pretty large, her person lovely; the unfortunate false step she made is an intire [*sic*] secret" (255). Whose virtue is rewarded? How are we to interpret the message?

The moral direction is repeatedly doubled. The reader anticipates that Burchell's seduction story will clarify the novel's moral framework by speaking the truth of her identity. In holding back the whole story, the novel aligns the reader's desire for narrative completion with the desire to hear the full truth of the seduction. Unsurprisingly, our desire for clarification is frustrated and Burchell's final act of storytelling only serves to further complicate the reader's knowledge.

The story is situated at the moment when Sidney can correct her earlier error and change the direction of her life to happiness with her beloved. She finds herself widowed, able to remarry, and Faulkland again offers his hand to her. The doubts cast upon the veracity of Burchell's story come to a crisis and we expect that its final telling will free Sidney to marry her love. Burchell finally admits that she was a willing participant, that Faulkland was "not a *seducer*," and that she was less than truthful with Lady Bidulph (282). Counter to the reader's expectations, the revelation comes with no attending romantic climax. Sidney's response is to deny that Faulkland has any "interest in my heart" (284). Sidney decides to pursue Burchell's claim because she believes Burchell has remained true to her love for Faulkland and that she is properly contrite ("the confession she had made to me had humbled her" [283]). The reader is again disappointed in the quest for clarity in courtship and love. What are the rules of feminine propriety? The knowledge gained from the embedded tale's content does not end in affecting Sidney's plot even though the tale's situation set up the expectation that Sidney would live happily ever after with Faulkland after she hears the truth of Burchell's sexual agency. The disjunction marks a refusal of the clarity that a firm divide between fallen woman and wife would allow the text.

The novel does not end with Burchell's marriage to Faulkland and the final twists in the plot only increase, rather than reduce, the sense of dislocation. The marriage of Sidney to Faulkland does finally take place but the circumstances of the marriage (Faulkland believes he has killed his wife and her lover, and in despair, demands that Sidney marries him) and the subsequent discovery that Burchell, now Mrs. Faulkland, is not dead, turn what should be the climax of romantic courtship into the climax of Gothic tragedy. Marriage to "the chosen of my heart, my first love" does not bring Sidney happiness (412–413).

The moral ambiguity in which the text dwells suggests a different lesson from the one of absolute resignation stated in the novel's prefatory framing. Since there are no absolutes in her world, the lesson Sidney should learn is that she must rely on her own moral

agency and that her moral choices need to adapt to changing circumstances. She needs to give up her "*inflexible* heart" and not rest on outdated principles like the ones she inherits from her mother (410).

What the reader has learned through Burchell's postponed embedded tale is the importance of situation to acts of meaning and thus the necessity for women to assume the authority to make their own affective and erotic choices. Eve Tavor Bannet argues that "Frances Sheridan uses each position to show up the shortcomings of the other and complicates the issues to the point where it becomes apparent that no simple or single, one-time answer will serve" (Bannet 2000: 111). Sidney's misery is caused, in part, by her unwillingness to act on the doubts she has after Burchell's initial seduction tale and by her inability to interpret the specific situation of the tale. By not being an active listener and, instead, applying her mother's universal answer to the seduction tale, she brings about the traumas of her own situation.

In the last narrative act of the novel, the flower-seller's story, Sidney is able to revise her response to a seduction tale and to become the active listener she should have been to Burchell's. The embedded tale of Miss Price, a girl Sidney meets on the street selling artificial flowers, seems, at first, superfluous. Only when viewed as a corrective to Burchell's unsatisfying tale do we realize the effect of the embedding narrative. The evil son of Miss Price's father's benefactor, Mr. Ware, preys upon Miss Price's virtue and though she successfully fights him off and she and her father escape to London, the younger Ware hunts them down and has the father imprisoned on false charges. The girl tells her own story from beginning to end, but Sidney interrupts her when a particular detail does not make sense. She later rejoices, "I was glad I had interrupted the thread of her story, as by that means she had obliged me with so many interesting particulars" (366). Sidney is determined not to make the same mistake she made with Burchell's seduction tale, so she pays the father a visit too and solicits the story from him to see "if she [the daughter] has falsified in any thing [*sic*]" (380). Only with these actively sought proofs does Sidney come to aid virtue in distress, not only saving the family from ruin but also marrying Miss Price off to a suitable husband. The telling of this seduction narrative rewrites the happy ending not allowed by Burchell's story.

Sidney Bidulph's moral ambiguities do not emerge from a masterful play between narrative levels nor do they indicate that Sheridan intended one thing and the text unconsciously produced another. Rather, the novel's ambiguities reflect multiple visions circulating in Sheridan's contemporary culture about marriage, love and a woman's right to her heart. The narrative situations stage the conflict between affective agency and social duty and never resolve it, ultimately representing the two as incommensurable. *Sidney Bidulph* concludes with Sidney observing: "In my virgin state, when I was a wife, and in my widowhood, I was equally persecuted" (430). Lest a woman think her only fear is seduction, and that if she resists the one false step before marriage, her ending will be happy, *Sidney Bidulph* reminds her that no female role frees her from persecution. The novel does provide, however, a compelling argument for women's active participation in moral choices, and that abdicating affective and erotic agency to conventional gender rules will certainly not bring women happiness.

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VLOŽENÉ PŘÍBĚHY: MANŽELSTVÍ, SVÁDĚNÍ A CIZOLOŽSTVÍ V ANGLICKÉM ROMÁNU 18. STOLETÍ

Resumé

Článek se zabývá literárním ztvárněním příběhů svedených žen v kontextu románů o manželství (novel of marriage) z 18. století. Ačkoliv stávající literární historie zkoumá zejména romány, které se věnují předmanželskému dvoření (novel of courtship), manželský a rodinný život zaujímá důležité místo v literatuře celého 18. století. Osudy věrných manželek probíhají v zajímavé narativní konjunkci s vloženými příběhy svedených žen, které nefungují pouze jako varovné kontrasty, ale participují na procesu konsolidace diskurzu manželství a lásky v období sentimentalismu. Páteřním textem pro analýzu je román spisovatelky Frances Sheridan (1724–1766) *Příběh Sidney Bidulph* (*The Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph*, 1761), kde vložené epizody svedení problematizují tradiční pojetí ženské a manželské morálky. Článek za tímto účelem využívá nálezy historiografie rodiny a postupy feministické naratologie.

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2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 23–30
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

BYRON AND KAREL HYNEK MÁCHA: USES OF OSSIAN AND SUBVERSIONS OF OSSIANISM

MARTIN PROCHÁZKA

ABSTRACT

The article contrasts Byron's use of Ossianic themes and style with Romantic Ossianism in the work of the leading Czech Romantic Karel Hynek Mácha (1810–1836). Although Byron's uses of Ossianic material seem restricted to his "juvenile" poetry (*Hours of Idleness*), it has been argued that features of Ossian poems are employed in Byron's later work. The analysis of Byron's uses of Ossianic material will show their affinity with Romantic Ossianism, especially in proto-existentialist terms, but also in view of hybridization of genres and styles (amalgamating a minuscule story of Ryno and Orla in the fifth book of *Fingal* with the Classical story of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Aeneid*). In the work of Karel Hynek Mácha, often described as the most important Czech follower of Byron, these features are strengthened in contact with a popular form of German Ossianism (Ernst Christoph von Houwald's tale *Madness and Death*) and also in resistance to dogmatic aspects of Czech nationalist ideology. In Mácha's poetry and prose fragments the juvenile features of his Ossianism (analogous to those of Byron) are overcome. Ossianic symbols (the stringless harp, the blind harpist) are used both "against the grain," to deconstruct the nationalist ideology of the Czech "revival" or "resurrection," and creatively – in Mácha's figurative language articulating the tragic temporality of individual and collective existence.

Keywords: Lord Byron; Karel Hynek Mácha; James Macpherson; Ossian; Ossianism; Romanticism; genre; style; nationalism; ideology; cycles of history

This article contrasts Byron's early uses of Ossianic themes, imagery and style with the Romantic Ossianism in the work of the leading Czech Romantic Karel Hynek Mácha (1810–1836). The sublime qualities of Macpherson's imagination, both of natural environment and of the distant past, had a powerful influence on both authors.

In spite of Byron's complaints about "turgid and bombastic diction" in "some parts" of the Ossian poems (Byron 1980a: 375, note 130 to "The Death of Calmar and Orla"), his imitations reveal a strong spell of the Ossianic sublime connected mostly with visual effects of natural and supernatural forces. Nonetheless, while Macpherson's English mostly keeps within the boundaries of period usage, Byron attempts to escalate the emotional expression to the limits of the sensible and even imaginable. In one of his Ossianic

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.25

imitations, the "dark Ghost" of a warrior "gleams on the red streams of tempests" and "[h]is voice rolls on the thunder" (Byron 1980a: 115, "The Death of Calmar and Orla," lines 120–2). The ambiguity of the word "gleam" (both "bright flash of light" and "brief or dim indication or appearance" gives unusual power to Byron's synaesthetic metaphor, in which a glimpse of an emerging dark spectre seems to reflect the bright flash of red lightning and its voice assumes the rolling sound of thunder. In contrast to Macpherson, who always clearly distinguishes between different meanings of "gleam", using qualifiers like "bright" or "dim" or even explaining less typical uses of the verb, such as in the passage "spirits gleamed, at times, with their half-finished forms" (Macpherson 1996: 283; *Temora*, Book VII), Byron's sublime diction can be said to transform the reader's consciousness, opening it to non-representable percepts, whose intensity may well gain the momentum of madness.

Byron's Czech follower Mácha is mostly influenced by Macpherson's German epigones, whose clichés (especially that of the "mad blind harpist") he uses expressively, under the influence of Polish Romantic Messianism, to voice his despair at the condition of his oppressed homeland: "I stood insane on a lonely peak / […] / 'My father does not hear, and my mother is dying!'" (Mácha 1959: 236).[1] At the same time, Mácha treats the popular German representations of Ossian ironically, subverting Romantic dreams of the heroic past, as in this manuscript fragment: "A blind harpist at Kamýk Castle in the country of his youth. Even the loveliest dream does not please when dreamt as a mere dream. – A child plays with the same knife which cut it; so do I" (Mácha 1972: 235).[2] While Byron's poetry develops the creative potential of Macpherson's imagination to the limits of madness, Mácha transforms the "mad harpist" produced by Macpherson's epigones into a subversive and self-alienating figure, which foreshadows Existentialist despair, described a decade later by Søren Kierkegaard.

Unlike Mácha's lifelong attachment to Ossian as a symbol of Romantic madness, self-alienation and ultimate loss of the past, Byron's Ossianism seems almost entirely restricted to his juvenile poetry (especially to *Hours of Idleness*). Nonetheless, it can hardly be disregarded or dismissed, as Henry Brougham did (anonymously) in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1808, which provoked Byron to write *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*:

> If, then, the following beginning of a "Song of bards," is by his Lordship, we venture to object to it, as far as we can comprehend it. […] of this kind of thing there are no less than nine pages; and we can so far venture an opinion in their favour, that they look very like Macpherson; and we are positive they are pretty nearly as stupid and tiresome. (Brougham 1808: 288)

In the part of his review dedicated to Byron's Ossian imitations, Brougham focuses on the same passage that I have discussed earlier and also on the already mentioned features of Byron's style: its unusual intensity and inventiveness, attacking the limits of the imaginable. He illustrates this by a metaphor which goes beyond the anthropomorphic

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1 Karel Hynek Mácha, "Hoj to byla noc!" (Ah, what a night!) (Mácha 1959: 236). All English translations from Mácha are my own.

2 A fragment from Mácha's MS *Zápisník* (*Notebook*, 1833–1834).

imagination: "to smile through the tears of the storm" (Byron 1980a: 116, "The Death of Calmar and Orla," line 130).

In spite of Brougham's severe dismissal, Byron's Ossianism was further mentioned and discussed. First by John Galt, who in his *Life of Lord Byron* (1830) chose to quote the already discussed passage of Brougham's review. Later, at the turn of the twentieth century, Ossian's importance for English and European Romanticism was explored by William Lyon Phelps. In his comparative approach Phelps emphasized the expressive power of Macpherson's rhetoric: "[i]ts wildness, melancholy, sublimity – entire disregard of conventionality" breaking "fetters both of thought and of language" (Phelps 1904: 153). Highlighting Byron's Ossianism along with that of Chateaubriand and Goethe, particularly in *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, he pointed out an important influence of Macpherson's poetry on the "sublimity of sentiment" (Phelps 1904: 152) in which – according to Byron's manuscript note in the 1806 edition of Ossian – the ancient Scottish bard is equal to Homer. Phelps' most important, although reductive, statement makes a direct link between Ossian's poetry and "subjective Romanticism, which culminated in England in the poet Byron" (1904: 152).

In a more recent approach, R. R. Agrawal notices the mediatory role of Ossian poems in the shaping of the sublime and Gothic features of Byron's poetry and points out that Macpherson's poetry, supported by Byron's reading of Chateaubriand, Sénacour and Goethe, was one of the major influences on Byron's principal works and in particular on the dark heroes of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, the epic tales and *Manfred*. And he coincides with Phelps' approach in asserting the importance of the "Ossian feeling" which is "constantly manifest" in Byron's poetry (Agrawal 1990: 189).

Reading Byron's Ossianic poetry in this light, I can claim that Macpherson's influence goes far beyond affecting the Sentimental and Gothic features of Byron's imagery and style pointed out by Phelps and Agrawal. It can be said to trigger the process of generic and stylistic hybridization typical not only of Byron's works but of Romanticism in its entirety. It can be argued that even the slighted juvenile poems in *Hours of Idleness* reveal what David Duff has described as "the irreconcilable tension between opposed artistic values and conflicting perceptions of time" (Duff 2009: 136). Rather than pointing to the collapse of the genre system often ascribed to Romanticism, this tension marks the beginning of a significant transformative moment, in which traditional genres, such as the heroic epic, ode, eclogue, elegy or even sonnet are not only subjectivized but also reshaped to form a new genre system characterized by multiple forms and functions of individual genres (e.g., Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is a synthesis of a Pindaric ode and a sonnet) and their tension in individual works, thus also forming a new consciousness of literature and its uses (Duff 2009: 1–20; 206–211).

The conditions of this Romantic genre transformation can be traced back to the latter half of the eighteenth century. In 1762 Richard Hurd, Bishop of Worcester, published his Critical Dissertations as part of his Latin edition of Horace's epistles, including *Ad Pisones* (*Ars Poetica*) and *Ad Augustum*. In Dissertations "On Poetical Imitation" and "On the Marks of Imitation" Hurd maintains that "imitation […] does not exclude the exercise of […] invention" which can improve the original. In this way, metaphors of an "excellent poet" can be turned "to another purpose" in a different culture ("nation") (Hurd 1811: 232–271). And Malcolm Laing points out in his famous "Preface" to the 1805 edition of

the Ossian Poems that "in Ossian, there are some hundred similes and poetical images, which must either be original, or derived from imitation" (Laing 1805: vi). He later claims that the Ossianic imagery is "derived from the classics, scriptures and modern poetry" (Laing 1805: vii). In brief, the Ossian controversy, in which Laing's edition and its preface played a major part, may now be seen in a different perspective, showing the seemingly rigid Neo-classical notions of imitation and invention open a new creative space for both Macpherson and Byron in *Hours of Idleness*. The most important features of imitation combined with invention will now be traced in Byron's Ossianic poems included in *Hours of Idleness*. I will also attempt to demonstrate the impact of Byron's early Ossianism on his major later works.

One of the longest Ossianic poems in *Hours of Idleness* is "The Death of Calmar and Orla: An Imitation of Macpherson's 'Ossian.'" Here Byron works very freely with the text of Macpherson's epic *Fingal*. He completely changes the character and the story of Calmar, linking him with a minuscule story of Ryno and Orla in the fifth book of *Fingal*. More importantly, he amalgamates this yarn with a classical story of the warrior friendship of Nisus and Euryalus in Book IX of Virgil's *Aeneid*. In this way a new, transgeneric and transcultural work emerges: heroic epic is synthesized with elegy and so are the values of friendship and heroism in Antiquity with the modern invention of old Celtic culture.

Byron's poem in prose is an attempt to radically change the traditional, normative approach to imitation (i.e. poets imitate "beautiful nature" – *la belle nature*, which exists only in the works of the Ancient Greeks and Romans[3]) transforming Macpherson's expressive language. His transformation mainly develops varied rhythms of short, almost bare sentences and clusters of metaphors. Byron's phrase "soft was the flow of his yellow locks: they streamed like the meteor of the night" (Byron 1980a: 112, "The Death of Calmar and Orla," lines 11–12) transforms and expands the sublime metaphor of the chief's sword in the Fifth Canto of *Fingal*: "his sword is before him as a sun-beam, terrible as the streaming meteor of night" (Macpherson 1996: 92). Byron's expressive imagery is produced by techniques analogical to those of musical modulation, a change from one key to another, generated by the polysemy of the word "meteor," meaning both "shooting star" and "aurora borealis."

Byron's Virgilian travesty can also be seen in the context of Scottish nationalism: the universal values of Antiquity are appropriated for the benefit of Scottish culture and nationalist construction of history. Byron's poem emphasizes, to a much greater extent than *Fingal*, the absence of Cúchulainn, the ancient Irish hero, thus transforming the adapted Classical story into a celebration of Scottish heroism.

Another poem in *Hours of Idleness*, "Ossian's Address to the Sun in 'Carthon,'" reveals the importance of Macpherson's poetry for Byron's later works. The major theme of Carthon, the tragic conflict between father and son, is a prominent feature of Byron's oeuvre, dominant in *Parisina*, the discarded drama *Ulric and Ilvina*, the Venetian play *The Two Foscari* and the late tragedy *Werner*. In formal terms, Macpherson's powerful anthropomorphic imagery – e.g. "[mist] came, in the figure of an aged man, along the silent plain" (Macpherson 1996: 129) – often transcends traditional heroic similes, comparing human

[3] "[L]e vrai qui peut être, le beau vrai, qui est représenté comme s'il existoit réelement, et avec toutes les perfections qu'il peut recevoir" (Batteux 1746: 27).

heroism with the power of natural forces: "Who comes so dark from ocean's roar, like autumn's shadowy cloud? Death is trembling in his hand! his eyes are flaming fire! – Who roars along dark Lora's heath? Who but Carthon, king of swords?"(Macpherson 1996: 133). The impact of this transcendence can be seen not only in "Ossian's Address" – for instance "Thy face, O Sun, no rolling blasts deform, / Thou look'st from clouds and laughest at the Storm" (Byron 1980a: 4, lines 19–20) – but also in Byron's *Manfred*, both in the initial scene, where the spirits of the elements appear, and in the "Hymn of the Spirits" to Arimanes, where Macpherson's sublime is intensified and expanded to cosmic dimensions:

> He breatheth, and a tempest shakes the sea –
> He speaketh – and the clouds reply in thunder –
> He gazeth – from his glance the sunbeams flee;
> He moveth – earthquakes rend the world asunder.
> (Byron 1986: 81; *Manfred* 2.4.5–12)

The thematic structure of the poem is based on the tension between the sun as a figure of supreme authority and the impermanence of the star, whose life will repeat the life cycle of Ossian. Developing this imagery in *Manfred*, Byron follows the course of Macpherson's poetry, but transcends its limits given by the cyclic natural time, moving towards the cyclical nature of historical time (symbolized by the image of the Colosseum in the opening monologue of the final scene of the third act in *Manfred*, 3.4.1–40, which is also prominent in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* IV) and its implications for individual existence.

The last poem from *Hours of Idleness* discussed here is the "Elegy on Newstead Abbey." Already its epigraph from "Oina-Morul" emphasizes the shift from sublimity and cyclic existence of nature (evoked by the verb "roll" used by Macpherson also for the sound of thunder) to that of historic memory: "It is the voice of years that are gone: they roll before me, with all their deeds" (Macpherson 1996: 323). It is most likely that Byron read the following comment on this passage in Hugh Blair's "Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian" included in his edition: "under this true poetic inspiration, giving vent to his [Ossian's] genius, no wonder we should so often hear, and acknowledge in its strains the powerful and ever-pleasing voice of nature" (Macpherson 1996: 356). Whereas Blair emphasizes the divine power of nature underlying Ossian's poetic inspiration (further quoting the lines from Ovid's *Fasti* 6: "Est Deus in nobis, agitante calescimus illo" – "there is a god in us, when he stirs, he sets us aglow"; Macpherson 1996: 356), Byron's poem uses Macpherson's epigraph to accentuate the themes of the lapse of time, memory and history. Praising the ruinous building of the Abbey,

> Yet he prefers thee, to the gilded domes,
> Or gewgaw grottos, of the vainly great;
> (Byron 1980a: 110; "Elegy on Newstead Abbey," lines 149–150)

the "Elegy" anticipates the famous reflection on Roman ruins in *Childe Harold IV*:

Admire – Exult – despise – laugh – weep – for here
There is such matter for all feeling – Man!
Thou Pendulum betwixt a smile and tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this span,
This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The Pyramid of Empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the Sun's rays with added flame were filled!
Where are its golden Roofs? where those who dared to build?
(Byron 1980b: 160; *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* IV, 109, lines 973–981)

In contrast to Ossian's world, which is safely framed by the vegetative power of nature, expressed in the final line of "Berrathon," or "*Ossian's last hymn*": "my fame shall remain and grow like the oak of Morven; which lifts its broad head to the storm, and rejoices in the course of the wind" (Macpherson 1996: 472; 198), Byron's microcosm of Newstead is devastated by raging cycles of violence which do not seem to stop:

Time steals along, and Death uprears his dart;
Another Chief impels the foaming steed,
Another Crowd pursue the panting hart.
(Byron 1980a: 109; "Elegy on Newstead Abbey," lines 134–7)

In the same way, but without the hope in the "meridian ray" of the future sun, the cycles of violence in global history are represented in the Colosseum stanzas of the fourth canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*:

And thus they plod in sluggish misery,
Rotting from sire to son and age to age,
Proud of their trampled nature and so die,
Bequeathing their hereditary rage
To the new race of inborn slaves, who wage
War for their chains, rather than be free,
Bleed gladiator-like, and still engage
Within the same arena where they see
Their fellows fall before, like leaves on the same tree.
(Byron 1980b: 157; *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* IV, 94, lines 838–846)

Departing from the Ossianic sublime, Byron's poetry here plunges headlong into the maddening vision of the absurdity of history, from which there is no escape but in individual strategies of survival.

Leaving Byron's poetry in the lower depths of despair, let us move to the poetry of his Czech Romantic follower. Mácha's poetic reflections start where Byron's Ossianic musings end. The proto-Existentialist features of Mácha's poetry are nurtured by a popular form of German Ossianism, especially the tale "Wahnsinn und Tod" (Madness and Death, 1826) by Ernst Christoph von Houwald (1778–1845). In Mácha's poetry and prose fragments, the clichés of German imitators of Macpherson, namely the stringless harp, the mad blind harpist and the ruinous ancestral hall are transformed into the

dynamic metaphors of *oxymora*. These ironic figures of speech express the temporality of human existence (both individual and collective) and the loss of historical memory:

> The tone of the broken harp, the sound of torn strings,
> […]
> This is the beautiful childish time of the dead.
> (Mácha 1959: 45)

> I am silent as a stringless harp
> Hanging in the vault of departed fathers.
> (Mácha 1959: 191)

Mácha uses these radically transformed Ossianic figures either against the grain, to deconstruct the ideology and major values of Romantic nationalism (the ancient past or the emancipation of the nation represented as the Resurrection), or creatively, to articulate the tragic temporality of individual existence and national history.

The major aim of Mácha's Ossianism is to deconstruct the Romantic ideology of Czech nationalism based on forged medieval manuscripts (*The Manuscript of Dvůr Králové*, 1817, and *The Manuscript of Zelená Hora*, 1818) and imitating, as well as developing, thematic and stylistic features of the Ossian poems. *The Manuscripts* contain historical narratives invented to suit the demands of the nationalist movement. These were presented by nationalists as products of a collective oral tradition and, at the same time, as representations of the wholeness and creative nature of an imaginary ancient Czech language constructed out of disjointed elements of all Slavonic languages. *The Manuscripts* were also used as evidence of the territorial integrity of the Czech state and as the tools of appropriation of historical space by means of linguistic activity.

Responding to this cultural and political manipulation, Mácha repeats the Ossianic clichés adopted by the nationalists "in order to produce a difference." The ideological statements, which were accepted as "natural" by his contemporaries, are "dissolved and reassembled polemically" (Said 1983: 124). Mácha's poetry thus appeals to the active forces of individual and collective memory and succeeds in repossessing history as a fundamental discontinuity. This gesture may be seen as an effort to open a passage beyond the limits of Ossianic madness and Byronic absurdity of history.

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BYRON A KAREL HYNEK MÁCHA – VYUŽITÍ OSSIANOVSKÉ POEZIE A SUBVERZE OSSIANISMU

Resumé

Článek kontrastuje vliv ossianovské tématiky a stylu s romantickým ossianismem v díle vedoucího českého romantika Karla Hynka Máchy. Ačkoli se může zdát, že se užití ossianovského materiálu omezuje na Byronovy básnické juvenilie (sbírku *Hodiny zahálky*), někteří badatelé poukazují na to, že rysy Ossianových básní lze nalézt i ve zralém Byronově díle. Rozbor Byronova užití ossianovského materiálu ukazuje na blízkost k romantickému ossianismu, zejména z protoexistencialistického hlediska, ale také vzhledem k hybridizaci žánrů a stylů (např. syntéza drobného příběhu Ryna a Orly z páté knihy eposu *Fingal* s klasickým příběhem o Nisovi a Euryalovi z Vergiliovy *Aeneidy*). V díle Karla Hynka Máchy, často označovaného jako nejdůležitější český Byronův následovatel, se tyto rysy zesilují zejména díky kontaktu s populárním ossianismem v díle Ernsta Christopha von Houwalda (např. v jeho povídce Šílenství a smrt) a také v odporu k dogmatickým stránkám ideologie českého nacionalismu. V Máchově zralé poezii a prozaických zlomcích je patrné překonávání juvenilních rysů jeho osianismu. Ossianovské symboly („harfa bezestrunná", „slepý harfeník") slouží buď k dekonstrukci nacionalistické ideologie českého obrození, nebo jsou využity tvůrčím způsobem k vyjádření tragické časovosti individuální a kolektivní existence.

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2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 31–43
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

"LOOK[ING] INTO THE FIERY EYES OF WAR"*: BYRON'S *WERNER*

MIRKA HOROVÁ

ABSTRACT

This article addresses the ways in which Carl von Clausewitz's theory of modern warfare, as described and studied in his fragmentary magnum opus *On War*, might elucidate heretofore underappreciated intricacies of Byron's German drama *Werner*. Not only does it allow us to uncover new connotations of the drama besides the traditional ones, i.e. the Gothic, the melodrama, the *Sturm und Drang*, but it also allows us to connect these traditional approaches to our new perspective centred exclusively on the phenomenon of war and its crucial role in Byron's drama. War is discussed in the immediate historical context (both of the seventeenth-century dramatic plot and of Byron's own time), as well as in the ontological and the aesthetic sense, laying bare the impact of these on the traditional concept of ethics in relation to the drama and in general.

Keywords: Byron; drama; *Werner*; von Clausewitz; war; Deleuze and Guattari; war machine; Schiller; Thirty Years' War

Byron's German drama set during the Thirty Years War, *Werner, or the Inheritance*, is in many ways the odd one out in the Byronic dramatic canon, considering its setting, topic and genre execution. The plot revolves around the competition for the famed Siegendorf inheritance, sought by the rightful but disgraced and exiled heir, disguised for the sake of personal safety as the lowly Werner, his brave but mysterious son Ulric, and the unrelenting family foe also in pursuit of the inheritance, Stralenheim. Upon the murder of Stralenheim, Siegendorf reclaims his inheritance and his son Ulric becomes engaged with Stralenheim's only heir, Ida. As can be expected, things then do not go according to plan as the identity of Stralenheim's murderer is revealed, marring the potential reconciliation of the two aristocratic families. The Byronic ending then rocks the traditional feudal world order, as well as bending the rules of the tragic genre.

Notwithstanding the obvious aesthetic inspiration of the Gothic, manifest in its fictional predecessor, Harriet Lee's "Kruitzner, or the German's Tale,"[1] and the drama of the pre-Romantic *Sturm und Drang* tradition, war had particular appeal in the post-rev-

* *Werner* II.i.160.

1 Published in Volume IV of Harriet and Sophia Lee's popular *Canterbury Tales* (5 vols, 1797–1805).

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.26

olutionary and post-Napoleonic context. The agonistic game enjoyed by the audience in *Werner* is supplied by the contest of dramatic ironies deftly played against one another – while one set of characters is privy to Ulric's marauder past, the other is privy to Ulric's identity as Werner's son but ignorant of his "forrester" identity, while everyone including the audience is left guessing as to the identity of the murderer. This has the dramatic drive of "who dunnit" about it and has perhaps contributed to the immense popularity of *Werner* on the nineteenth-century stage. However, for the purposes of this essay, we will need to think carefully about Byron's understanding of war, and we will do so with the help of war theory, both modern and that written by Byron's contemporary, the Prussian war theorist Carl von Clausewitz.

The consequences of an immoral act – the murder of Stralenheim – are clear insofar as Ulric's ties with his family and fiancée are torn – the heir is disinherited, yet again,[2] this time, ultimately, as a moral outcast. This, however, is not the message that Byron's ending unequivocally puts across[3] – Ulric leaves of his own accord, and, given his disdainful speeches mocking the constraints of the social life of high feudal nobility at the castle that curtails his free spirit, he is more than happy to take off and go back to the life of a wandering outlaw and brigand chief wreaking havoc and prophesying war:

> Ulric: What would you have? You have forbid my stirring
> For manly sports beyond the castle walls,
> And I obey; you bid me turn a chamberer,
> To pick up gloves, and fans, and knitting-needles.
> And list to songs and tunes, and watch for smiles,
> And smile at pretty prattle, and look into
> They eyes of feminine, as though they were
> The stars receding of a world-winning battle –
> What can a son or man do more? (IV.i.402–11)

His "nature" "not given / To outward fondling" (IV.i.329–30), Ulric cuts a bold, "manly," "sporting" figure, here exhibiting a strong sense of being oppressed by filial duty. The courtly life of an aristocrat bores him and "feasts in castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not / [his] spirit" (IV.i.21–2). His bitter, ironic glance at the "stars receding of a world-winning battle" signals his true allegiances and aspirations.

In fact, throughout the drama, but especially in the final scene, Ulric is the symbol and precursor of an impending war soon to take over after the all-too-brief interlude guaranteed by the peace treaty. As Schiller's *History of the Thirty Years' War* puts it, the "treaty of Prague only covered the embers of a future war,"[4] and, according to Jerome McGann, "Byron may owe to Schiller some of the historical particularity that encourages the revisionary view of the rebel hero" (McGann: 696). How exactly is Byron's rebel hero "revisionary," though? This question calls for a discussion of the character and his role in a wider scheme of things – specifically in the context of war. Undeniably nurtured in

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[2] Repeating "the sins of the fathers," referring to Werner's own fleeing the castle of Siegendorf in his time. This facilitates the Freudian reading of the drama.

[3] Cf. Shelley in the dedication to *The Cenci* (1819) openly maintains that tragedy has to transcend "what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose" (Shelley 1970: 276).

[4] Schiller, http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/6774/pg6774.html.

the *Sturm und Drang* tradition featuring the likes of Schiller's Karl Moor[5] and drawing to a certain extent on the Byronic Hero, the character of Ulric fulfils and transcends both these traditions to signify something far more interesting than the inherited dramatic conventions of the time – he is the epitome of a new order, or rather disorder, his actions not only marking the end of the feudal order but also the immediate onslaught of another thirteen years of war.

Indeed, Byron revises inherited literary notions of the "rebel hero" by scripting the personification of a certain kind of warfare, rather than simply rebellion. Ulric and his band of "forresters" (V.ii.47) are the agents of guerilla warfare, which Deleuze and Guattari describe as a "war machine" that is

> of a different origin, is a different assemblage, than the State apparatus. It is of nomadic origin and is directed against the State apparatus. One of the fundamental problems of the State is to appropriate this war machine that is foreign to it and make it a piece in its apparatus, in the form of a stable military institution. (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 312)

We might even say that Ulric stands for the Ur-nature of war – the "nomadic" war that has its origin outside the state, is always "foreign to it," and that is fundamentally, in its "very assemblage," "directed against" the state, rather than rebelling against the state's ideological hegemony from within. Ulric is "directed against" state authority in whatever guise this confronts him in, be it Stralenheim, the family foe, who is eliminated so that Werner and his family can reach their rightful Siegendorf inheritance, or Werner himself, on assuming the title of Count Siegendorf. Thus, we see that Ulric's double identity as the chief of the *condottieri* insurgents and the heir of Siegendorf cannot hold. These identities belong to two systems, of "different origin[s]" and "foreign" to one another. The laws of one are not the laws of the other.

Ulric's men, then, are not mere "marauders" (IV.i.57), but guerilla fighters, referred to as "our force" (IV.i.112), or "ten thousand swords, hearts, and hands" (V.ii.45–46) at Ulric's disposal. The phantom menace of the frontier forests is uncovered at last. In Harriet Lee's tale, the atrocities of war, lawlessness and anarchy are marked as "excesses [that were not] confined to the base or the ignorant alone." As she puts it, "souls class themselves" (Lee 1832: 241). The shadow companies "came no one knew whence, vanished no one knew whither" (Lee 1832: 241), terrorizing the country. Crucially, Byron's rendition of Ulric's "black bands"[6] places their existence beyond the confines of morality. "Unlike its model," as Martin Procházka notes, "Byron's *Werner* repudiates a generalized, ethical vision of society. […T]he general ethic of social duty is supplanted with individual strategies of power" (Procházka 2002: 218). Byron eschews moral issues such as whether

[5] Friedrich Schiller, *The Robbers* (*Die Räuber*, 1781).

[6] Gabor's descriptive account of the activities of the condottieri: "banditti, / Whom either accident or enterprise / Had carried from their usual haunt – the forests / Of Bohemia – even into Lusatia. / Many amongst them were reported of / High rank – and martial law slept for a time. / At last they were escorted o'er the frontiers, / And placed beneath […] civil jurisdiction." (V.i.233–240) brings us to Clausewitz' historian's view of the condottieri phenomenon: "extremes of energy or exertion were conspicuous by their absence and fighting was generally a sham." From their feudal heyday, "the *condottieri* survived into the Thirty Years' War" (Clausewitz 1989: 587–8). This sober, de-romanticized historical rendition of the condottieri would suggest a counter-argument to the role of Ulric as a representative of new order, and see him rather in the waning light of another feudal remnant.

"the forresters" are driven by the base motive of greed; what repeatedly comes across is Ulric's innate nomadic urge for essential freedom, unfettered by the state-ordained constraints of the feudal code. Ulric's rebellion thus marks the limit of the old feudal order, and speaks instead in the tones of Rousseauesque freedom: "I'm a forester and breather / Of steep mountain-tops, where I love all / The eagle loves" (IV.i.222–4).

Ulric's role is not, however, simply an affirmation of individualistic rebellion, nor of a spiritual, Rousseauesque freedom in nature. Ulric's last retort, aimed at his father, now representing the state machine, is effectively a threat to plunge Europe back into full-blown military conflict, confirming Ulric's anarchic role as an incendiary device: "Go tell / Your senators that they look well to Prague; / Their feast of peace was early for the Times" (V.ii.49–50). It would take thirteen more years of bloody chaos before the Westphalia Peace treaties were signed. As Fritz, Stralenheim's valet, aptly remarks earlier on, the war "had dwindled into / A kind of general condottiero system / Of bandit warfare; each troop with its chief / And all against mankind" (II.i.126–9). Ulric reactivates precisely this kind of generalized warfare, with everyone fighting everyone else. According to Deleuze and Guattari, this is an inevitable by-product of the official (or "State") war machine – particularly its potential to "continually recreate unexpected possibilities for counterattack, unforeseen initiatives determining revolutionary, popular, minority, mutant machines" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 313). But this is only part of the story in *Werner*. Ulric needs must be in opposition to the state machine, not simply because its own attacks on him, not least in the person of his own father, force him into counterattack but also because his heart, as we see in the final act, truly lies with his fellow "forresters" (V.ii.46). Their "different," "nomadic origin" and their "different assemblage" at the margins of the "realm of [state] law" betray their polemic[7] state of "wild dispositions" beyond the world of "order and progress." Disavowing his filial ties to Werner, and in so doing his ties to the state, Ulric exits the official stage to take up arms at the fringe and wage war against the system, but not just for those reasons he brings with him from that system. Rather, his is an allegiance to war itself – to *polemos* – which "[l]eave[s] no less desolation, nay, even more / Than the most *open* warfare" (IV.i.53–4).

> Stralenheim: [A]fter thirty years of conflict, peace
> Is but a petty war, as the times show us
> In every forest, or a mere arm'd truce.
> War will reclaim his own. (II.i.169–172)

As the antagonist aptly puts it, "peace is but a petty war" in the world of Byron's drama and "war will reclaim his own." It certainly reclaims Ulric. For this reason, we need to think a little bit more about exactly what war means to Byron in *Werner*, and the most comprehensive treatise on war, the Ur-text of all modern war theories, which emerged from the same historical context as Byron's drama, Carl von Clausewitz's opus magnum *On War* (*Vom Kriege*), helps us to do precisely this.[8]

An obvious question presents itself at this point, however – namely – how exactly is Clausewitz's theory of war relevant to reading Byron's *Werner*? It is not a text Byron

[7] 'Polemic' is used as the adjective of *polemos* here (not in its usual sense of 'debate').
[8] The opus magnum is unfinished, published posthumously 1832–1834.

could have read (originally published in the 1830s) and I have not found any evidence as to Clausewitz ever having read Byron. There are, nonetheless, pertinent reasons for bringing Clausewitz into the picture. On the one hand, there is Clausewitz's "Romantic" approach to his subject, working against the established Enlightenment closed system of law and order discussed with the ironic detachment of a *philosophe*. What Clausewitz's unfinished treatise presents us with is an open system of swiftly changing values, perspectives and situations. On the other hand, Clausewitz's account of war deliberately builds on its parallels with art, especially dramatic art – his military jargon reflects this in its terms, exemplified in "the theatre of war" (Clausewitz 1989: x). The *theatrum belli* becomes the focus of the *theatrum mundi*, presenting war essentially as a *mise-en-scene*, a carefully crafted theatrical production. If we recall that the staged strategic plans of battles and lined-up combat of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries fall nothing short of choreography, it is not far-fetched to consider the many striking similarities between the stage and the battlefield. Indeed, the theatre of war – with its protagonists and antagonists staging the strategies of offensive or defensive with a range of possible results – often evoked dramatic, rather than purely historic, genres, as in the case of Waterloo, which became a lasting synonym for tragic defeat.[9]

If theatre and its tropes proved so useful to war theory based on the Napoleonic wars, then the most influential treatise on those wars seems likely to provide an illuminating perspective on Byron's drama, first drafted in the wake of Waterloo.[10] Crucially, we find that in Clausewitz's rendition the logical order of pre-considered strategy is shattered in practice by other forces at large in the theatre of war:

> War is more than a true chameleon that slightly adapts its characteristics to the given case. As a total phenomenon its dominant tendencies always make war a paradoxical trinity – composed of primordial violence, hatred and enmity, which are to be regarded as a blind natural force; of the play of chance and probability within which the creative spirit is free to roam; and of its element of subordination, an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone. […] A theory which ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless. (Clausewitz 1989: 89)

Clausewitz presents a particularly vivid idea of war as organic, flexible, inscrutable, governed by a "paradoxical trinity" of forces – brutal violence and subjective feeling, complemented by a free-play space created by the interaction of chance and probability, all under the guiding instrument of rationality set to restrain and control the other two random forces. Precisely this "paradoxical trinity" of forces is present and plays itself out in *Werner*, and for this reason Clausewitz is an interesting lens through which to bring

[9] "It may be true that many a petty play of emotions is silenced by the serious duties of war, but that holds only for men in the lower ranks who, rushed from one set of exertions and dangers to the next lose sight of the other things in life […] The higher a man is placed, the wider his point of view. Different interest and a wide variety of passions, good and bad, will arise on all sides. Envy and generosity, pride and humility, wrath and compassion – all may appear as effective forces in this greater drama" (Clausewitz 1989: 139).

[10] We should also recall Byron's tour de force 'self-Napoleonization' in *Don Juan* (XI, 55–56): he "[w]as reckon'd, for a considerable time / The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme." "But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero / My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain."

into focus and better understand Byron's take on war. The interlocked, "grappl[ing]" foes, Werner and Stralenheim, might, for example, stand for the first of Clausewitz's forces – primordial violence – while the second, the element of chance and probability, nicely describes the plot of Byron's tragedy, bringing as it does friend and foe to the same spot on the Silesian border, and bringing Gabor to Prague for the tragic denouement. The third of Clausewitz's forces – the force of rationality – is, perhaps surprisingly and with an acute Byronic twist, manifested in the character of Ulric. But Clausewitz, in fact, enables us to do more than simply map out the conflicts in Byron's drama with useful terms and concepts. He enables us to pinpoint precisely what is wholly original about *Werner*, what it adds to contemporary war theory.

Clausewitz's treatise provides a captivating analysis of the intricate interplay of forces and elements which constitute and nourish the phenomenon of war, and Clausewitz repeatedly refers to them from various vantage points throughout his *opus magnum*: "Four elements make up the climate of war: danger, exertion, uncertainty, and chance" (Clausewitz 1989: 104). But Clausewitz is particularly interested in the element of unpredictability and chance and the extent to which these unaccountable forces influence and shape the phenomenon of war. This is where he throws particular light on Byron's understanding of war, and helps us to better grasp this understanding. He sums up these subversive influences under the principle of "friction":

> Everything in war is very simple, but the simplest thing is difficult. The difficulties accumulate and end by producing a kind of *friction* that is inconceivable unless one has experienced war […] Countless minor incidents – the kind you can never really foresee – combine to lower the general level of performance […]. Friction is the only concept that more or less corresponds to the factors that distinguish real war from war on paper. […] it is a force that theory can never quite define. (Clausewitz 1989: 119–121)

In war, we are dealing with uncertain variables – chance, imagination, emotional forces such as hatred, rancour and fear, and primordial violence. Hence there are irrational passions at work, inscrutable games of chance and probability, co-defining and complicating the sphere of influence set by rational forces such as political orders or the aims of military campaigns as defined by the authority of the state. The recurring echo in Clausewitz unequivocally chimes that "war is the realm of chance":

> War is dependent on the interplay of possibilities and probabilities, of good and bad luck, conditions in which strictly logical reasoning often plays no part at all and is always apt to be a most unsuitable and awkward intellectual tool. (Clausewitz 1989: 580–1)

Byron's drama captures the very essence of war as defined above, illuminating the crucial importance of what Clausewitz terms "friction" – the unforeseen, the unexpected, which alters or mars strategic plans, however brilliant in theory.

Despite rational theoretical strategy setting itself up as the sole controlling element within the "trinity" of forces that comprise Clausewitz's war phenomenon, the "subjective nature of war – the means by which war has to be fought," Clausewitz tells us, ever mindful of the ubiquity of the unpredictable – "will look more than ever like a gamble," as "the element in which war exists is danger" (Clausewitz 1989: 85) – from "the very start

there is an interplay of possibilities, probabilities, good luck and bad that weaves its way throughout the length and breadth of the tapestry" (Clausewitz 1989: 86). These unpredictable forces render the "subjective nature of war" as the setting for a "gamble" whose untold stakes are life and death. Crucially, Clausewitz points out that the "creative spirit is free to roam" within this fluid space shaped by the "interplay of possibilities and probabilities," and if we take this line of argument a step further, this intricate "tapestry" of war becomes not only a fretwork featuring intermittent randomness and potential absurdity – a premise which Byron often builds on – but also a free-for-all of unbridled creativity. This unbridled creativity is manifest in the character of Ulric, and we shall see later how Clausewitz's theory of war helps us specify the intricacies of Ulric's engagement with war.

Clausewitz's abstract theories of warfare help us to get to grips with the intricacies of *Werner* – a drama that has not, on the whole, enjoyed wide critical appreciation. The first of Clausewitz's "paradoxical trinity" of forces in war is "primordial violence, hatred and enmity," and in Byron's drama Stralenheim's and Werner's contest for the famed Siegendorf inheritance (highlighted in the subtitle of Byron's drama) is referred to by both contestants as a "hunt" – in Werner's words, for example: "I have been a soldier, / A hunter, and a traveller" (I.i.33–4); "when the ebb / Of fortune leaves [us] on the shoals of life" (I.i.41–2); "I have been full oft / The chase of Fortune" (I.i.61–2). As we have seen, whereas Stralenheim's strategy is the offensive, an active pursuit of the inheritance, ruthlessly hunting down Werner and his family, Werner plays the role of the hunted – on the defensive, hiding under a pseudonym, eluding his enemy. From the information provided about his past, this has often been the case. Werner is and always has been "the chase of Fortune." And the game of Fortune brings both to the self-same nameless spot on the Silesian border, bringing into play the second of Clausewitz's trinity of forces: "the play of chance and probability."

Werner repeatedly refers to the aleatory inscrutability of fate at work, as we have also seen. These melodramatic outcries evoke the characteristic features of the state of war in Clausewitz's early writings on the Thirty Years' War, specifically his study of Gustavus Adolphus's martial strategies, which concludes with the following dictum: "[der Krieg] *gab so dem launischen Spiel des Schicksals Raum für seine Zufälle*" (Clausewitz 1837: 67) – "thus war gave the capricious game of fate space (occasion) for its coincidences." Clausewitz's understanding of war allows us to see the extent to which war and its unpredictable climate *fills* the dramatic space of *Werner* – war is fundamental to Byron's drama; even the time of peace occupied by the action of the drama is saturated with war, and its atmosphere of ubiquitous fear and suspicion is partly caused by what Clausewitz summarizes under the heading of "Uncertainty of all Information":

> The general unreliability of all information presents a special problem in war: all action takes place, so to speak, in a kind of twilight, which, like fog or moonlight, often tends to make things seem grotesque and larger than they really are. Whatever is hidden from full view in this feeble light has to be guessed at by talent, or simply left to chance. So once again for lack of objective knowledge one has to trust to talent or to luck. (Clausewitz 1989: 140)

This quite perfectly spotlights both the quandaries of anonymity and the heightened Gothic atmosphere we encounter at the beginning of *Werner*, which lends itself to the

grotesque shadow-play of cloak and dagger drama down gothic galleries where "chance" and luck or sheer "talent" are the only decisive forces. As Clausewitz observes, "[d]aring […] boldness, rashness, trusting in luck are the only variants of courage, and all these traits of character seek their proper element – chance" (Clausewitz 1989: 85).

If Werner is "the chase of Fortune," bedraggled and on the run, his son Ulric enters the drama as a true hero, having saved Stralenheim from a flooded river. He is "of that mould which throws out heroes" (II.i.157); a "stalwart, active, soldier-looking stripling, / Handsome as young Hercules ere his first labour" (II.i.254–5). Indeed, Ulric stands out as a paragon of heroic prowess, in the Clausewitzian terms of "daring, boldness" and "trusting in luck," until the very end. Even when the truth about Stralenheim's murder must out, Gabor's rendition concentrates on Ulric's "wonderful endowments" – with "unrivall'd" courage, Ulric is deemed "almost superhuman": a "man / Of wonderful endowments: – birth and fortune / Youth, strength, and beauty, almost superhuman" (V.i.244–6). Furthermore, the uncertain climate that Werner finds crippling is Ulric's "proper element" – he exemplifies Clausewitz's "creative spirit," "free to roam"[11] within the "play of chance and probability." As Fritz, Stralenheim's valet, puts it, "there [is] something strange and mystic in him" – his nature is "wild" and "exuberan[t]" (II.i.122–3). Indeed, this "wildness" and "exuberance" are two of the many signals signposting Ulric's true allegiance to *polemos* – the force of Ur-nature, which, according to Heraclitus, exists, like Ulric, in the realm of eternal change and flux: "*panta chorei,*" "*panta rhei.*"[12] It is Clausewitz's world of "chance and probability" found in warfare, that Ulric finally retreats back to, having cut all familial ties, and that forever threatens to wreak havoc on the world of order – the feudal order, the order of tragedy but also the interim period of peace, which, as Byron never ceases to remind us, would have, at some point, inevitably dissolved back into the chaos of conflict.

Ulric is, in fact, "the child of war" exactly as this is envisaged by Clausewitz. Ulric is marked by the

> fierceness the late long intestine wars
> Have given all natures, and most unto those
> Who were born in them, and bred upon
> The knees of Homicide; sprinkled, as it were
> With blood even at their baptism. (IV.i.66–72)

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[11] Ulric's self-portrait is telling in this respect, circling around the concept of the superhuman:

> Ulric: I'm the true chameleon
> And live but on the atmosphere; your feasts
> In castle halls, and social banquets, nurse not
> My spirit – I'm a forrester and breather
> Of the steep mountain-tops where I love all
> The eagle loves. (IV.i.219–224)

Ulric stands outside society – feudal "feasts in castle halls" "nurse not his spirit." He aligns himself with the elemental forces and liminal spaces – forests and mountain tops – again, in a telling signal of his allegiance to the elemental conflict which defines *polemos*. Ulric proclaims his right to freedom with Manfred-like bravado.

[12] The theory of universal flux was attributed to Heraclitus by Plato in the fragmentary *Cratylus*. Plato, *Crat* 402a: "Heraclitus says […] that all things move and nothing remains still, and he likens the universe to the current of a river, saying that you cannot step twice into the same river" (Sandywell 2011: 322). Heraclitus sees "the world is an interminable activity and process" (ibid.).

Ulric is the offspring of war, "bred upon the knees of Homicide." Ulric's heroism and "superhuman" prowess is tainted – abstracted, pedestaled heroism has no place in Byron's mature thinking. In the proverbial chatter of the castle guards, Ulric is both a hero of unparalleled chivalric dexterity, "whose plume nods knightlier"[13] than anybody else's, and, simultaneously, "the sort of knave" war "leaves living. / Like other parents, she spoils her worst children" (IV.i.41–3).[14] Ulric is marked by "the savage love of enterprise," "seeking peril as a pleasure."[15] This brings us yet again back to Clausewitz who reminds us "the element in which war exists is danger." Ulric's "pleasure" in this element is the key point. Ulric is that kind of "creative spirit" that *desires* to be "free to roam" in a climate of heightened existence – war is his "pastime." Crucially, Byron puts Ulric on a par with the illustrious players on the "grand scale" of history: "Your Wallenstein, your Tilly and Gustavus, / Your Bannier, and your Torstenson and Weimar" (II.i.139–141), emphasizing both the idea that Ulric is not merely a fictional character, but one that represents a historical phenomenon, and the fact that the concept of war-as-play lies at the basis of this drama, as well as at the basis of Byron's understanding of war as such.

In part, then, we might already describe Ulric as a Clausewitzian figure – possessing a natural "talent" for war and the "courage" to "trust" that "talent" – or even just "luck" – a character defined by "daring" and "boldness." But for much of the drama he also, and perhaps most strikingly, bodies forth Clausewitz's third force driving war – that of rational override. As Clausewitz observes, "true war, or absolute war" is "completely governed and saturated by the urge for a decision" (Clausewitz 1989: 488–9). Before Act V, Ulric's key decision is the murder of Stralenheim. It tells us a lot about Ulric as a character. His decision is, for a start, chillingly rational – murder is a means to a logical end:

> Ulric: Is it strange
> That I should *act* what you could *think*?
> We have done with right and wrong and now must only ponder
> Upon effects, not causes. Stralenheim …
> Was a rock in our way which I cut though

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[13] Eric: Pity the wars are o'er! […]
Pity, as I said, that the wars are o'er: […]
Who like him with his spear in hand, when, gnashing
His tusks, and ripping up from right to left
The howling hounds, the boars makes for the thicket?
Who backs a horse, or bears a hawk, or wears
A sword like him? Whose plume nods knightlier?
Hen: No one's, I grant you. Do not fear, if war
Be long in coming, he is of that kind
Will make it for himself, if he hath not
Already done as much. (IV.i.22–38)

[14] Clausewitz instructs us as follows: "It may be true that many a petty play of emotions is silenced by the serious duties of war, but that holds only for men in the lower ranks who, rushed from one set of exertions and dangers to the next lose sight of the other things in life […] The higher a man is placed, the wider his point of view. Different interest and a wide variety of passions, good and bad, will arise on all sides. Envy and generosity, pride and humility, wrath and compassion – all may appear as effective forces in this greater drama" (Clausewitz 1989: 139).

[15] Fritz: "But there are human natures so allied / Unto the savage love of enterprise, / That they will seek peril as a pleasure" (II.i.132–5).

As doth the bolt, because it stood between us
And our true destination – but not idly.
As stranger I preserved him – and he *owed* me
His *life*: when due, I but resumed the debt. (V.i.452–463)

Ulric's disturbing self-justification hinges on a kind of "economy" of murder – having unwittingly "preserved" Stralenheim at the beginning, Stralenheim "owed [him] his life" – he "but resumed the debt" "when due."[16] Still, this is little more than self-justification. Ulric's superhuman self-awareness is, in fact, made manifest by his simply "cut[ting] through" the "rock in our way" as "doth the bolt" – here Ulric works with the alacrity of lighting – fundamentally driven by the "urge for a decision." Crucially, as Clausewitz instructs us, "any move made in a state of tension will be of more importance, and will have more results, than it would have made in a state of equilibrium. In times of maximum tension this importance will rise to an infinite degree" (Clausewitz 1989: 222). Ulric's murder of Stralenheim is, of course, of crucial importance to the drama, and Clausewitz helps us not only to read Ulric, but also to see how Byron presents this particular historical peace not as "a state of equilibrium," but as "a state of tension," indeed of "maximum tension" – an ongoing state of war, in fact – and, as such, a situation in which Ulric assumes for himself a "heroic" role – that of a soldier, not a murderer.

Thus Clausewitz's war theory allows us a more methodical appraisal of the character of Ulric than we yet have – one that sees him driven not by the vengeful *agonistic* motivations of tragedy, nor working within the constraints of tragic morality, but, instead, driven by the demands, necessities, challenges and impulses of all-out warfare. Ulric is the epitome of a war-like state of being – he has courage, he is blessed with luck and he is able to navigate the confusing climate of war because it is his natural habitat. Moreover, he is also in possession of all information, that invaluable currency in this uncertain time of feeble peace, and he has a rational plan of action based on this information which he executes when chance lends him an opportunity to act. Ulric, then, deploys all three of Clausewitz's "paradoxical trinity of forces" of war to his advantage. From this military perspective, all other strategies in Byron's drama are flawed: Werner is hindered by a lingering sense of ethics, which to Ulric translates as simply lack of courage, while Stralenheim is on a par with Ulric when it comes to everything but the information that makes Ulric's "force of rationality" possible – not knowing that Ulric is Werner's son proves to be fatal for Stralenheim. From a Clausewitzian perspective, Ulric represents the only successful strategy for dealing with conflict, leading to the elimination of the enemy and a rightful restoration of the inheritance. In "the climate of war," made up of "danger, exertion, uncertainty, and chance," the Ulrics of the world rule. But it seems that this is also the case, in *Werner*, when peace is restored. In this way, Clausewitz allows us to also say something larger about Byron's drama – that it is an exploration of the fact that even in peace, the tensions of war still play themselves out, even to the point where "war will claim its own." For Byron, in *Werner* at least, the rules of peace and the rules of war seem to be no different – each is a game of violence, hatred, enmity, chance, probability,

[16] As Pal-Lapinski observes, "if Stralenheim becomes indebted to Ulric for saving his life, by killing him, Ulric creates the perfect symbolic reciprocity between life and death, and cancels the debt, simultaneously extricating himself from a system of capitalistic exchange" (Pal-Lapinski 2011: 192).

creativity and reason, and each is a game to be won or lost by whoever has the courage to trust "to luck" and the "talent" to make the best of the chances thrown at them.

With the help of Clausewitz's theory of war, then, we can more accurately see how Ulric's decision to kill Stralenheim marks him out as a "child of war" through its demonstration of his apt use of rationality, his natural "talent" for conflict, and his courage, daring and boldness in the face of "chance." His ultimate elemental allegiance to war, not family, is exemplified in the dramatic denouement:

> Ulric: Go tell
> Your senators that they look well to Prague:
> Their feast of peace was early for the times;
> There are more spirits abroad than have been laid
> With Wallenstein! (V.ii.48–52)

Ulric, "born on the knees of homicide," threatens more war: "look well to Prague." The "feast of peace was too early for the times" Moreover, he is "not alone: nor merely the vain heir / Of [Siegendorf's] domains; a thousand, ay, ten thousand / Swords, hearts, and hands" are with him (V.ii.44–6). His threat is not motivated by revenge, however. Refusing his father's aid of "protection" (V.ii.43), he disinherits himself – "No, count, / Henceforth you have no son!" (V.ii.39–40) – and hurries off to join his "forresters" (V.i.46), but not to wage a private war on his father. Rather, his threat is directed at Prague and the peace treaty recently established there. Nor is his threat motivated by remorse, guilt or a desire to cover the tracks of his own violence with general violence. He does feel remorse for having killed the father of his fiancée, Ida, but, as we have seen, and as he repeats in this fraught final scene, he has no regrets for having killed Stralenheim in any other respect. Indeed, his father's morality, which would lead to "sacrifice [his] whole race to save / A wretch to profit by our ruin" (V.ii.38–9), is contemptible to him. Stern and unyielding, he offers a dark comment less on individual motivations than on larger forces that operate on and through history. Ulric will wreak chaos on the world not for emotional or psychological reasons but out of sheer contempt for all forms of order, all "*arches*," all those rules that would see him "[d]enounced – dragg'd, it may be in chains" to submit to the moral prerogatives that they uphold. This to Ulric translates as merely "inherent weakness, half-humanity, / Selfish remorse, and temporizing pity" (V.i.35–7) – a whole world of rules and the pitiful submission to those rules that he now vows to fundamentally subvert by throwing it back into the chaos of warfare and into the "realm of chance." It is at this moment that Ulric pulls clear of the world of tragedy altogether, shifting instead into the world of *polemos*.

The ending of the drama sees Ulric exit the stage as a new kind of Byronic Hero about to embark on a new kind of tale. We are not privy to this tale. However, the inglorious implications of Ulric's future role in history, outside the scope of this drama, might, in part at least, be supplied by the final part of Schiller's *History*, which renders vividly the infamous ramifications of the Thirty Years' War. In the end, that war would become nothing but a mercenary war fought for gain by official or unofficial pirate gangs that flew out of control, a war that dragged on miserably, corrupting and bankrupting almost everyone involved:

> In this long and general confusion, all the bonds of social life were broken up; – respect for the rights of their fellow men, the fear of the laws, purity of morals, honour, and religion, were laid aside, where might ruled supreme with iron sceptre. Under the shelter of anarchy and impunity, every vice flourished, and men became as wild as the country.[17]

One cannot but surmise that the Peace of Westphalia was one of utter exhaustion. The war machine, having gained momentum, continued by itself – war for war's sake. As general Isolani remarks in Schiller's *Wallenstein*: "der Krieg ernährt den Krieg," war feeds itself, *bellum se ipsum alit* – not only in the original strategic meaning of feeding the armies off the spoils of the currently occupied territory, but also in the larger metaphorical sense of a war machine perpetuating itself *ad absurdum*. Byron's *Werner* points directly to this universal destruction, degeneration and demoralization – the true inheritance of a protracted, universal war – while, and this is crucial, simultaneously opening up his tragic drama to a world beyond the moral constraints of dramatic justice. Abounding in complex resonances as to the nature of war as a phenomenon, and its effects on society, *Werner* is a step-change not only in Byron's dramatic project but in his entire mature oeuvre, disclosing an unforgiving universe founded upon ubiquitous conflict. Even within supposed peacetime, Byron presents us with a canny play between states of order and randomness. Their clash fuels the dramatic action. The drama thus represents a historical *inter-bellum*, and by implication, perhaps, all times of peace, as a paradox – the Thirty Years' War is here suspended only for the duration of a dramatic conflict that is itself inescapably part of that war, part of the violent past and the grounds for the impending violence of the future. Byron's drama thus unfolds a complex ontology of perpetual, inescapable conflict.

Byron's Bohemian rhapsody, set during the fragile interim of the Peace of Prague in 1635, recalls but also amplifies *Childe Harold's* famous reading of the "one page" of history, dramatizing as it does one of the most devastating European relapses into barbarism and chaos – a turbulent era of history acutely relevant to the contemporary post-Napoleonic times of its creation. But in an even wider context, Byron's drama epitomizes "the disproportionate part assigned to the play of probability and chance in determining the course of events" throughout human history (Clausewitz: 139), as well as laying bare the unsettling implications of a world of being and becoming that is, essentially, anarchy – implications that Nietzsche would so famously, and devastatingly, take up later in the nineteenth century.

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[17] Schiller, http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext04/fs14w10.txt. As Peter Limm concludes in his study of the Thirty Years' War: "Once it was realised that the fighting could not be terminated by a single victory or a brilliant feat of arms, a general cynicism helped to create a depressing war psychology which perceived life as nasty, brutish and short" (Limm 1984: 93).

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"POHLEDĚT DO OHNIVÝCH OČÍ VÁLEČNÝCH"[18]: BYRONŮV *WERNER*

Resumé

Tento článek se zabývá moderní teorií války Byronova současníka Carla von Clausewitze, jíž rozvinul ve svém rozsáhlém nedokončeném díle *O válce*, ve vztahu k Byronovu německému dramatu *Werner* a nahlíží způsoby, jimiž nám tato teorie pomáhá porozumět nedoceněným finesám tohoto díla. Díky Clausewitzovi se nám vedle tradičních konotací jako gotická literatura, melodrama či *Sturm und Drang* otevírají nové rozměry Byronova dramatu, které lze s těmito tradičními styčnými body propojit v nových souvislostech. Tyto nové souvislosti se zcela zaměřují na fenomén války a jeho klíčovou roli v Byronově dramatu. Válka je zde nahlížena v bezprostředním historickém kontextu (a to jak v kontextu dramatické linie sedmnáctého století, tak Byronovy současnosti), ale také v ontologickém a v estetickém smyslu, což v posledku nastiňuje dopad na tradiční pojetí etiky nejen v rámci Byronova dramatu, ale i v širších souvislostech.

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[18] My translation into Czech.

2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 45–54
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

"I HAVE BEEN A CHIPPEWA BORN": ANNA BROWNELL JAMESON'S NATIVE CANADIAN TRANSFORMATIONS

KLÁRA KOLINSKÁ

ABSTRACT

The article discusses one of the canonical works of nineteenth-century Anglophone Canadian literature, a travelogue by Anna Brownell Jameson (1794–1860), a dedicated, if conservative, early feminist, who commented publicly on the issue of the rights of women in different social contexts. Her book *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (1838) represents a symptomatically Canadian genre oscillating between a classic travelogue and an extensive diary, and provides a detailed account of the author's originally involuntary sojourn in Canada between December 1836 and August 1837, during which she became the first woman of European descent who, all by herself, accompanied only by Native guides, left the safety of the city, ventured into the wilderness of northern Ontario and encountered the Native inhabitants of her new country. Jameson welcomed these encounters as enriching opportunities for intercultural comparison, in which it was particularly the position of Native women that interested her. What makes Jameson's text original is not the choice of genre but, rather, the fact that it provides an authentic literary testimony about the process of intercultural transformation of the authorial subject. Unlike her literary contemporaries, the sisters Catharine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie, Jameson was not satisfied with merely recording her exploratory experience, but consciously strove to reach the inner substance of "otherness," to achieve a kind of voluntary cultural marginalization which would facilitate the real, unmediated understanding of this otherness, as well as of herself. The article analyses the process of Jameson's symbolic transformation into a "new Native Canadian," the literary account of which became one of the foundation texts of Canadian national literary culture.

Keywords: Anna Brownell Jameson; nineteenth-century Canadian literature; travelogue; national literature; Canadian Native culture

British writer Anna Brownell Jameson (1794–1860) was, according to *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, "a determined, though conservative, early feminist, one of the many in her generation who were vocal about their rights in law and their needs and opportunities in society." Her book *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada* (1838), long regarded as a cross between a classic travelogue and a diary, provides an account of her

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.27

initially unwanted experience in the colony of Canada from December 1836 to August 1837, where she was one of the first female travelers to leave the relative safety of a city, and the – then sample – position of a woebegone exile, to dare into the wilderness of northern Ontario, and to meet with an open mind and intellectual, as well as emotional enthusiasm, the Native people of the "new" country.

The circumstances of Jameson's visit to Canada are well known, but nonetheless symptomatic; she had been an established writer and respected intellectual among her circles before her brief, but determinative Canadian sojourn, with special interest in the situation of women in the arts, as well as in society at large. She was a proficient art and literary critic, connoisseur of German culture, and a keen and insightful commentator on the social and political realities of her time. It was namely her fictional *Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826) and *Characteristics of Women* (a study of Shakespeare's heroines, 1832) that initially established her public repute and indicated her deeply ingrained intellectual orientation, which was later reflected in her Canadian oeuvre.

Another constitutive aspect of her Canadian experience was the fact that hers was a case of involuntary immigration: from 1825 Jameson (née Murphy) had been married to lawyer Robert Jameson; however, the marriage was not happy, and by the time her husband was appointed chief justice of Upper Canada in 1833, the couple had lived separated, apparently without mutual regret. In 1836, however, Robert Jameson summoned his wife to Toronto, in order to maintain an image of a stable and respectable family background. Anna, conversely, most probably came to Canada with the intention to obtain her husband's consent to legal separation, which he eventually granted her a year later.

These circumstances indicate that Jameson reflected her brief encounter with Canada through a very particular mindset, which enabled her to give it an unusually fitting aesthetic form. In spite of the fact that initially she was far from inclined to assume the role of a public advocate for Canada – or, for emigration as such, for that matter – she was well equipped and qualified to formulate poignant, thoughtful observations of her new surroundings, and it was particularly the presence of the Native people that made the most radical and lasting impression upon her.[1] True, her very first account of meeting several of them was, from the point of view of the rhetoric used, still consistently in line with the prevalent post-romantic discourse of the day, lamenting the plight of the "vanishing race":

> The impression they left, though amusing and exciting from its mere novelty, was melancholy. The sort of desperate resignation in their swarthy countenances, their squalid, dingy habiliments, and their forlorn story, filled me with pity and, I may add, disappointment; and all my previous impressions of the independent children of the forest are for the present disturbed. (1990: 27–8)

[1] Admittedly, descriptions of the "Indians" were almost requisite in accounts of North American emigration and settlement written by Europeans, both male and female. Often these descriptions responded to one of two (equally inaccurate) stereotypes: the North American Native as an example of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's nature-tutored and innocent "noble savage," or the American frontier depiction of the fierce, bloodthirsty warrior and enemy of white settlers. Interestingly, it was more typically female writers, such as Canadian settlers Susanna Moodie or Catharine Parr Traill, who refused to accept the usual stereotypes, preferring to base their accounts on their own experiences with their new neighbours.

Nonetheless, a moment later she deliberated on the situation in a tone that resolutely departs from the dominant discourse and opens space for a much more authentically informed and much less culturally biased debate on the issue:

> These are the first specimens I have seen of that fated race, with which I hope to become better acquainted before I leave the country. Notwithstanding all I have heard and read, I have yet but a vague idea of the Indian character; and the very different aspect under which it has been represented by various travellers, as well as writers of fiction, adds to the difficulty of forming a correct estimate of the people, and more particularly of the true position of their women. Colonel Givins, who has passed thirty years of his life among the north-west tribes, till he has become in habits and language almost identified with them, is hardly an impartial judge. He was their interpreter on this occasion, and he says that there is as much difference between the customs and language of different nations, the Chippewas and Mohawks, for instance, as there is between any two nations of Europe. (1990: 28)

Jameson's initial response to the encounter with the New World is primarily a literary or aesthetic one, marked with European romantic sensibility and composed using language arsenal stemming from the concept of the sublime. Like most newcomers who provided written accounts of their visits to North America, she was instantly affected by the immensity, grandeur, and what had already been defined as "beauty" of its nature and landscape. Indeed, "whether they were French or English, whether they were born in Canada or elsewhere, most Canadian writers before 1850 both found the Canadas to be beautiful and accepted the convention of the sublime as the basis for much of their description of the natural world" (MacDonald 1986: 49). Jameson's discursive engagement with the new situation that inevitably engulfed her very powerfully was immediately not only aestheticized, but genuinely personalized, in line with Edmund Burke's famous description of the sublime:

> Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. (Burke 2008: 36)

Jameson's description of the Niagara Falls, which forms one of the climactic points of the *Summer Rambles*, clearly fits all of Burke's criteria for the sublime, and becomes a textbook, perhaps even lyricized, example thereof:

> The verge of the rapids is considerably above the eye; the whole mighty river comes rushing over the brow of a hill, and as you look up, it seems coming down to overwhelm you. Then meeting with the rocks, as it pours down the declivity, it boils and frets like the breakers of the ocean. Huge mounds of water, smooth, transparent, and gleaming like the emerald, or rather like the more delicate hue of the chrysopaz, rise up and bound over some unseen impediment, then break into silver foam, which leaps into the air in the most graceful fantastic forms; and so it rushes on, whirling, boiling, dancing, sparkling along, with a playful impatience, rather than overwhelming fury, rejoicing as if escaped from bondage, rather than raging in angry might – wildly, magnificently beautiful! The idea, too, of the immediate danger, the consciousness that anything caught within their verge is inevitably hurried

> to a swift destination, swallowed up, annihilated, thrills the blood; the immensity of the picture, spreading a mile at least each way, and framed in by the interminable forests, adds to the feeling of grandeur; while the giddy, infinite motion of the headlong waters, dancing and leaping, and revelling and roaring, in their mad glee, gave me a sensation of rapturous terror, and at last caused a tension of the nerves in my head, which obliged me to turn away. (1990: 204)[2]

However, it was when Jameson began to see the Native people as part of the anything but inferior Canadian landscape and comment specifically on their situation that she was able to depart from the "literariness" of her perspective, authenticate and problematize her observations and give voice to a variety of perspectives, including ones that had, so far, been mostly marginalized – and, of these, it was particularly the situation of Native women that interested her most. This was, for her, the decisive point of departure, in both literal and metaphorical sense, in which she liberated herself from the discourse of the sublime, traditionally gendered as masculine, in order to eventually find her own voice.[3]

Jameson soon realized that in order to achieve this goal she needed unmediated, personal exposure to and experience with her subject matter; while the first part of her literary account of Canada, aptly titled *Winter Studies* (comprising roughly one fifth of the whole text), is dedicated largely to theoretical considerations, expressed through the prism of her European education and expectations, in the considerably more ambitious *Summer Rambles* she reaches much further, both metaphorically and literally speaking. In June 1837, she set out, mostly alone, for a journey taking her from Toronto to Niagara, Hamilton, Brantford, Woodstock, London, St. Thomas, Port Talbot, Chatham, and Detroit; from there she continued by boat to Mackinaw, Sault Ste. Marie and Manitoulin Island on Lake Huron, and finally to Petetang and Lake Simcoe. This "wild expedition" (1990: 542), as she herself referred to it, turned into the subject matter for one of the representative narratives of early Canadian literature, and for Jameson not only into a fundamentally transformative experience of the discovery of Canada, but, ultimately, the discovery of her self. Her "engaged, contactual discourse" (Gerson 1997: 9) gives evidence of her distinctly gendered approach to the moment of exploration and discovery, in which the self, the "epic subject," is "not a predetermined, static entity awaiting discovery and description, but rather a living, changing process revealed through relationships, partly including […] her manipulation of traditional genres" (Gerry 1990–91: 36). Jameson

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[2] Descriptions of the Niagara Falls were perhaps as mandatory in the travel discourse of early North America as those of the Native people. The very first one of them, written by the Catholic missionary Father Louis Hennepin and published in 1699, already sets a typical tone which, judging by the striking similarity of both accounts, might have inspired Jameson's: "This wonderful Downfall is compounded of two cross-streams of Water, and two Falls, with an isle sloping along the middle of it. The waters which fall from this horrible Precipice, do foam and boyl after the most hideous manner imaginable; making an outrageous noise, more terrible than that of Thunder; for when the wind blows out of the South, their dismal roaring may be heard Fifteen off …" (Louis Hennepin, *A New Discovery of a Vast Country in America, Extending Above Four Thousand Miles, Between New France and Mexico*. London: Henry Bonwicke, 1699, https://archive.org/details/newdiscoveryofva12henn).

[3] Both the classics of the philosophical discourse of the sublime, Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant, gender the beautiful as female and the sublime as male. Sublimity is seen as a powerful, masculine force, while women are literally declared to be a source of beauty for men, along with, at best, calm nature and "disciplined" landscape art. In Burke, sublimity is associated with the "authority of a father" and beauty with a "mother's fondness and indulgence" (2008: 89).

achieved this "manipulation of genres" mostly by putting emphasis on "the personal (and the feminine) as the principles of meaning and order" (Freiwald 1986: 65).[4]

At the beginning of her journey, Jameson consciously placed herself in an almost archetypal vantage point, necessary for her to accomplish her personal – and literary – mission, requiring both determination and awareness of possible consequences: "I was alone – alone – and on my way to that ultimate somewhere of which I knew nothing, with forests, and plains, and successive seas intervening" (1990: 196). This distance, however, is soon to be crossed, and the acknowledged mental void is readily filled with a sequence of personal encounters which Jameson embraced as extremely enriching opportunities for intercultural comparison and original social analysis. Witnessing the reality of Canada's Native community and its undeniable, then mostly un-admitted exploitation by the mainstream society thus leads her to issuing a noteworthy invitation extended to other members of her community to share in the experience, and consequently in responsibility:

> I am inclined to think that the idea of the Indians becoming what *we* call a civilized people seems quite hopeless; those who entertain such benevolent anticipations should come here, and behold the effect which three centuries of contact with the whites have produced on the nature and habits of the Indian. The benevolent theorists in England should come and see with their own eyes that there is a bar to the civilization of the Indians, and the increase or even preservation of their numbers, which no power can overleap. Their own principle, that "the Great Spirit did indeed create both the red man and the white man, but created them essentially different in nature and manners," is not perhaps far from the truth. (1990: 305–6)

Jameson, an educated cultural worker, articulate translator and sensitive artist, poses a rhetorical but pressing question with serious ethical implications:

> With regard to all attempts to civilize them, what should the red man see in the civilization of the white man which should move him to envy or emulation, or raise in his mind a wish to exchange his "own unshackled life and his innate capacities of soul" for our artificial social habits, our morals, which are contradicted by our opinions, and our religion, which is violated both in our laws and our lives? (1990: 309–10)

In these statements, Jameson unhesitantly challenges and transcends "the uncertainty of many women writers daring to assume the authority of the travel narrator, whose heroic adventures and breadth of knowledge were conventionally gendered masculine" (Mills 1991: 77). Throughout the nineteenth century, women's area of literary expertise and authority was seen primarily in "their own lives, which they depicted in diaries, memoirs, and personal anecdotes, all included in the catch-all category of autobiography" (Dagg 1992: 113). At the same time, however, travel books about North America written by women were also popular, for particular pragmatic reasons:

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[4] Bina Toledo Freiwald determines a structural difference between "conventional forms of autobiography" and Jameson's text in "Jameson's emphasis on the presence of an addressee who is specifically *other*," and terms her work an "epistolary journal," while discerning a "frame narrative" in it which combines the personal/feminine with Jameson's consciousness of the female other (1986: 68).

> Early publishers found them lucrative because thousands of readers wanted to learn about little-known parts of the world. Women were seen as suitable authors for such books because they did not need to step out of their prescribed roles as companions to men, and they had time and inclination to observe and describe the interesting minutiae of distant or foreign parts. (Dagg 1992: 115)

In that sense, travel accounts by women authors, often containing elements of personal anecdote or sketch as an added value, were appreciated precisely for their authenticity and factual currency:

> Based on real-life experience, blurring the line between fiction and non-fiction, they contain documentary elements, which make them closer to women's letters and journals of that time than to the improbable sentimental fiction being published alongside them. (McMullen and Campbell 1993: 8)

In the course of her self-appointed pilgrimage from "civilization" to "wilderness," or, rather, transfer from one point of reference to another, Jameson undergoes a discernible transformation, not so much of her opinions but, rather, of her own positioning and understanding thereof, which is indeed unusual for her time. In the Afterword to the *New Canadian Library* Edition of *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*, Clara Thomas notices that:

> Once on the road she was a different person from the Anna, frost-bound in body and spirit, who was the centre-stage heroine of "Winter Studies," gallantly upholding her ideas on culture even with the temperature at twelve degrees below zero and the ink freezing in the ink-well. Anna, the practiced traveller of "Summer Rambles," enjoyed all manner of people and related well to them, from the reclusive Colonel Talbot, the "Lake Erie Baron," to the picturesque voyageurs who rowed her *bateau*. Most importantly she found all the Indians fascinating cultural studies: some of them […] became lasting friends. (Thomas 1990: 547)

Judging by her own account, Jameson's narrative evidences her success in what Bridget Orr in her analysis of early North American women's discourse describes as "a construction of encounters with the other as productive meetings in which the autonomy and difference of each partner is left intact" (1994: 156).

The key to understanding Jameson's accomplishment in this respect rests in the fact that she did not only content herself with making and aptly recording her observations, but made herself their active component: first of all, she willingly admitted that the Native people, namely the women, "excited the strongest surprise and interest" (1990: 200) in her, which she then instilled into her sometimes exulted but persuasive descriptions. In an account of her meeting with a Native woman at Niagara she thus recalls:

> As she spoke, her black eyes flashing, she extended her arms, and folded them across her bosom, with an attitude and expression of resolute dignity, which a painter might have studied; and truly the fairest white face I ever looked on never beamed with more of soul and high resolve than hers at that moment. (1990: 201)

Jameson blends her acknowledgement of the newly discovered realities with the verbal imagery and linguistic apparatus that her readers would recognize, in order to advocate their status of equality of value; even though in the Preface to her book she almost apologetically refers to it as mere "'fragments' of a journal addressed to a friend," she is acutely aware of the implications of "venturing to place [it] before the public […] particularly at this time, when the country to which it partly refers is the subject of so much difference of opinion, and so much animosity of feeling" (1990: 9). Equally importantly, she is aware of having been "thrown into scenes and regions hitherto undescribed by any traveller […] and into relations with the Indian tribes, such as few European women of refined and civilized habits have ever risked, and none have recorded" (1990: 9). Therefore, she was clearly writing with both the private and public agencies in mind, "venturing outside the domestic sphere […] in the name of good works" (McMullen and Campbell 1993: 3). Jameson's strategy can be described in line with the parameters of female travel writing as such, generically described by Sara Mills as: "differ[ing] from the writings of male travel writers in the stress they lay on personal involvement and relationships with people of the other culture and in the less authoritarian stance they take *vis-à-vis* narrative voice" (1991: 21).

Moreover, Jameson was openly appreciative of the reception she received from the Native people, many of whom she considered personal friends – she proactively created favourable conditions by her openness and unfeigned interest in them. Halfway through her *Summer Rambles* she proudly reports to her reader:

> Mr. Johnson tells me, what pleases me much, that the Indians like me, and are gratified by my presence, and the interest I express for them, and that I am a subject of much conversation and speculation. Being in manners and complexion unlike the European women they have been accustomed to see, they have given me, he says, a name among themselves expressive of the most obvious characteristic in my appearance, and call me the *white* or *fair English chieftainess* (Ogima-quay). (1990: 429)

Although here we might sense a touch of wishful thinking blending with the sincerity of objective rendition – Jameson was certainly neither the first nor the last white "benefactor" boasting of his/her adopted Indian name,[5] and her assertion that "I go among them quite familiarly, and am always received with smiling good humour" (1990: 429) sounds almost touching on that account – she does deserve credit for going as far as she possibly could along the path of personal exposure, authenticity, and conceptual transgression. In the frequently cited finale of her journey, after bravely descending the falls on Lake Huron in a canoe with her Indian companions, she is adopted into "her" Chippewa

[5] One of the most famous cases in the Canadian context is that of Edmund Kean, English actor and one of the first "celebrities" on theatre stage. During his 1825 tour of North America, organized in the hope of mending both his, at the time scandalous, reputation and financial situation, Kean met with four Huron chiefs in Quebec, and gave to each a medal made by a goldsmith called Smillie. In return, he was received into the Huron tribe under the name of Adanieouidet (or Alanienouidet) and was apparently given the Huron costume and arms. After leaving Quebec City, Kean travelled to New York and from thence back to England, in December 1826. Both in New York and London, it amused him to wear his Huron costume and he was so proud of his Indian name that he had it engraved on the back of his visiting card.

family, in the personalized act of which she symbolically attested to the possibility (and, perhaps, to her own wish) of the coexistence of the Native and non-Native constituents of the future Canadian nation. Similarly to her early Canadian literary sisters, Catharine Parr Traill and Susanna Moodie, she, according to Carole Gerson: "Powerful as white but disempowered as female […] share[s] with Native women some marginal space on the outskirts of frontier culture" (1997: 10). However, unlike Parr Traill's and Moodie's stories, hers is an act of voluntary, almost self-imposed marginalization, based not simply on putting up with unasked-for circumstances, but on actively seeking those that would authentically inform her of the reality of which she became a part. Her self-marginalization is thus transformed into an openly political gesture of uncompromising social commentary, by which she completes the circle and invades the primarily male-dominated sphere "through the back door." Her concluding comparative remarks about the position of Native women therefore reach beyond the discourse of ethnicity to more general moral issues concerning femininity, and humanity at large:

> When we speak of the *drudgery* of the women, we must note the equal division of labour; there is no class of women privileged to sit still while others work. Every squaw makes the clothing, mats, moccasins, and boils the kettle for her own family. Compare her life with the refined leisure of an elegant woman in the higher classes of our society, and it is wretched and abject; but compare her life with that of a servant-maid of all work, or a factory girl – I do say that the condition of the squaw is gracious in comparison, dignified by domestic feelings, and by equality with all around her. If women are to be exempted from toil in reverence to the sex, and as *women*, I can understand this, though I think it unreasonable; but if it be merely a privilege of station, and confined to a certain set, while the great primeval penalty is doubled on the rest, then I do not see where is the great gallantry and consistency of this our Christendom, nor what right we have to look down upon the barbarism of the Indian savages who make *drudges* of their women. (1990: 516)

For all these aspects, Jameson's personalized, but nonetheless socially and aesthetically conscious story of (self)exploration forms one of the early foundations of Canadian national culture, in line with John Moss' conclusion about the genre of gendered "wilderness narrative":

> Men and women have learned to tell the stories of their reality in different ways. In writing of wilderness experience, the structural anarchy and creative discontinuity of women's narratives are refusing absence and adversary, finding instead the wilderness a place where people find things, sometimes themselves. In reading women who have learned to revel in freedom from meaning, from numinous tyrannies, women who, in denial of male authority and privilege, write to dismantle the constructed world […] subversively exploding notions of conquest and reduction of the natural world to metaphor, in reading such writers we can break from the narrative conventions that determine perception and shape our experience. We can rediscover wilderness as a good place to be, *Dasein* with a difference, ourselves at home in the lovely amplitude of time. (1998: 106)

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„NARODILA JSEM SE JAKO ČIPEVAJKA": KANADSKÉ DOMORODÉ TRANSFORMACE ANNY BROWNELL JAMESONOVÉ

Resumé

Článek pojednává o jednom z kanonických děl kanadské anglofonní literatury devatenáctého století, cestopisu Anny Brownell Jamesonové (1794–1860), jedné z odhodlaných, byť konzervativních raných feministek, které se svým dílem veřejně vyjadřovaly k otázce postavení ženy v různých kulturních kontextech. Její kniha *Zimní studie a letní putování po Kanadě* (Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada, 1838) představuje pro Kanadu příznačný žánrový typ na pomezí klasického cestopisu a rozsáhlého deníku a podává detailní záznam o autorčině původně nedobrovolném pobytu v Kanadě mezi prosincem 1836 a srpnem 1837, během něhož se stala první Evropankou, která zcela sama, jen s domorodými prů-

vodci, opustila bezpečí města, vstoupila do divočiny severního Ontaria a setkala se s původními obyvateli své nové vlasti. Tato setkání vítala jako obohacující příležitosti k interkulturnímu srovnávání, na němž ji zajímala především situace domorodých žen. Na textu Jamesonové není originální jeho žánrové zařazení, ale skutečnost, že zprostředkovává autentické literární svědectví o procesu interkulturní transformace autorského subjektu. Na rozdíl od svých literárních současnic, sester Catharine Parr Traillové a Susanny Moodieové, se Jamesonová nespokojila s pouhým zaznamenáváním svých objevitelských zkušeností, nýbrž vědomě usilovala o proniknutí do samotné podstaty „jinakosti", o jakousi dobrovolnou kulturní marginalizaci, která by jí umožnila skutečné, nezprostředkované pochopení této jinakosti i sebe sama. Článek analyzuje proces symbolické transformace Anny Brownell Jamesonové v „novou domorodou Kanaďanku", jehož literární zpracování se stalo jedním ze základních textů kanadské literární kultury.

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2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 55–67
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE AND PÁDRAIC Ó CONAIRE: UNEXPECTED FELLOW TRAVELLERS BETWEEN ROMANTICISM, REALISM AND BEYOND

RADVAN MARKUS

ABSTRACT

In common perception, the Irish Literary Revival and the Gaelic Revival often appear as essentially unrelated movements, divided by language and with little in common. The essay points to deeper similarities between them on the basis of two of their prominent representatives, the renowned playwright John Millington Synge (1871–1909) and the Irish-language prose writer Pádraic Ó Conaire (1882–1928). It takes into account instances of direct influence of Synge on Ó Conaire, but the main focus is on the reflection of various streams of European thought in the oeuvres of both authors. The most important are late legacies of Romanticism, which include the emphasis on artistic individuality, the celebration of wild nature, and an interest in people on the margins of society. Also the influences of realism, naturalism and incipient modernism are discussed. The correspondences between both prominent authors assume surprisingly concrete forms and testify to the need to study modern Irish literature in both languages side by side.

Keywords: Pádraig Ó Conaire; John Millington Synge; Irish Literary Revival; Gaelic Revival; Romanticism; Realism; Naturalism; Modernism; Tramps

In the first draft of his essay "The Old and New in Ireland," the renowned playwright John Millington Synge described the Irish Literary Revival and its Gaelic counterpart as "two literary currents, which have nothing that is not antagonistic except a national feeling" (Kiberd 1993: 217). This attitude very much prefigured the subsequent critical treatment of the two movements in question – barring exceptions, they are rarely studied side by side. Yet, despite Synge's supposition, there are obvious merits in such a comparative approach – after all, both revivals occurred at the same place and time and were shaped, albeit in different ways, by the same intellectual currents existing in Europe at the turn of the century.

Ironically, Synge himself, with his deep interest in the Irish language, is an obvious candidate for comparisons with Gaelic writers of the same period. Anne Markey has already explored the similarities between J. M. Synge and Pádraig Pearse, focusing on the Irish-language oeuvre of the latter. Despite the fact that Pearse initially denounced Synge

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.28

as "a sort of Evil Spirit" (Markey 2012: 208), Markey concludes that "the varying recourse of these two writers to Irish folklore reveals that they came to have more in common than has previously been acknowledged" (2012: 221).

While Markey's conclusion is undoubtedly valid, there remain vast differences between the two authors, starting with their diverging world-views and ending with the obvious incommensurability of their writing in terms of literary quality. Yet there is another candidate whose proximity to Synge is so obvious that only the above-mentioned compartmentalization of scholarship can explain why it has not yet been picked up as a major theme by critics. The author in question is Pádraic Ó Conaire (1882–1928), generally regarded as the most accomplished Gaelic writer of the period in a similar way as Synge is considered the Irish Literary Revival's best playwright. An author of, among other works, 473 short stories, Ó Conaire is today best remembered for his proto-modernist novel *Deoraíocht* (1910) and the short stories later republished in the collection *Scothscéalta* (1982). This essay aims to compare the lives and works of Ó Conaire and Synge in the context of the cultural milieu of the period.

Direct Influences

Given their different family backgrounds – one a scion of the Protestant Ascendancy, the other the son of a Catholic publican in Galway – it is striking how many biographical parallels can be found. Both became alienated from their family, class and religion early in their lives. Synge famously admitted losing his faith after reading Darwin's work at the age of fourteen (Synge 1982, II: 10); at the age of seventeen, Ó Conaire abandoned his studies for the priesthood, and any dreams of Catholic middle-class respectability along with them (Ní Chionnaith 1995: 64). The minds of both were shaped by prolonged sojourns abroad; both adopted broadly socialist views and had concerns about the well-being of Irish-speaking peasants in the West of Ireland. Both were proclaimed lovers of nature who frequently roamed the Wicklow countryside as well as travelling in Connemara and Mayo at various points of their lives. And last, but not least, both died young, albeit due to different causes, thus acquiring posthumous fame of youthful literary heroes akin to that of many Romantic poets before them.

Unlike the above-mentioned case with Pearse, Synge and Ó Conaire never got into direct contact or conflict. It is doubtful even whether Synge was aware of Ó Conaire's writing, given the fact that during Synge's life Ó Conaire's short stories had appeared only in journals and much of his work was written or published later. Moreover, if we consider the opinions expressed in his scathing unpublished letter "Can We Go Back into our Mother's Womb" (Synge 1982, II: 399–400),[1] Synge was not particularly inclined to read the work of authors associated with the Gaelic Revival, whatever their merit might have been.

On the other hand, Ó Conaire was certainly aware of the dramatic oeuvre of his more famous contemporary. There is direct evidence that he, similarly to most other Gaelic

[1] In the letter, the kind of Irish used by League members is referred to, among many other insults, as "gibberish" and "incoherent twaddle."

Leaguers, disapproved of Synge's *The Playboy of the Western World,* although in this particular case the evidence is characteristically colourful. According to his friend, the historian and activist P. S. Ó hÉigeartaigh, Ó Conaire enjoyed the language of the play, but regarded the characters as absurd and unrealistic. He became particularly enraged during the third act when Christy Mahon was tied and Pegeen Mike was goading the other characters against him. When watching the first London production of *The Playboy*, Ó Conaire loudly exclaimed, "cut the rope, Peig!" and expressed his disgust when she did not obey (de Bhaldraithe 1982: 48–49).

However, Ó Conaire's work clearly shows that he highly esteemed other Synge's plays, to the extent that he echoed them and developed their themes in his short stories. The central role of *The Shadow of the Glen* in Ó Conaire's story "M'Fhile Caol Dubh" [My Poet, Dark and Slender] has been already noted by Alan Titley (2009: 98–99),[2] and the description of the boat accident at the beginning of "An Bhean ar Leag Dia Lámh Uirthi" [The Woman on Whom God Laid His Hand] owes much to the influence of Synge's *Riders to the Sea* (Riggs 1994: 66). Despite Ó Conaire's initial negative reaction to *The Playboy,* it is therefore clear that he recognized his connection to the famous playwright, although he never acknowledged it publicly.[3]

Late Romantics

Tracing direct influences always runs the danger of superficiality and an anecdotal approach, although the latter is hardly avoidable when discussing a writer with such a colourful life as Pádraig Ó Conaire. A deeper affinity between the authors can be discovered if we study their particular reflections of various streams of European literary thought influential at the time. An avid interest in European literature was, after all, another common feature of both authors. The wide scope of Synge's reading has been amply documented, with various critics stressing the importance of Ibsen or contemporaneous French literature (Ben Levitas 2009: 77–91; McGuinness 2000: 57–66). While the dramatist famously chose to use native material for his plays, its shaping was clearly mediated through a refined European consciousness. He directly stressed the importance of Europe, for example, in his criticism of the Gaelic League, whose members he denounced as people that "with their eyes glued on John Bull's navel, […] dare not be Europeans for fear the huckster across the street might call them English" (Synge 1982, II: 400).

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[2] Echoes of the tramp's final speech from *The Shadow of the Glen* (Synge 1982, I: 57) play a crucial role in the titular poet's seduction of the narrator/protagonist, Eibhlín. In the context of the Gaelic Revival, the story is remarkable due to its setting within Dublin Anglophone revivalist circles.

[3] And it is possible that even Ó Conaire's reaction to *The Playboy* eventually changed – consider, for example, the following threat made in a 1919 journal article aimed at the defence of workers' rights: "Rud dainséartha tua agus rud dainséartha pic, agus nach ndeir Seán M. Synge linn gur le lái a mharaigh '*Gaiscíoch an Domhain Thiar*' a dhaid?" [The axe is a dangerous thing and so is a pickaxe, and doesn't John M. Synge tell us that the "*Playboy of the Western World*" killed his dad with a loy?] (Ó Conaire 1989: 49) Translation my own. After all, the anecdote about the London production implies that he was not only enraged, but engaged as well.

Ironically, in the light of such animosities, Synge's interweaving of Irish and European influences in his work was strikingly similar to Pádraig Pearse's programme that he set up against his more conservative colleagues in the language revival movement:

> Irish literature, if it is to live and grow, must get into contact on the one hand with its own past and on the other, with the mind of contemporary Europe. It must draw the sap of its life from the soil of Ireland, but it must be open on every side to the free air of heaven. (1906: 6)

While Pearse arguably did not live up to his bold maxims in his own creative output, which is, for the most part, ridden with sentimentality, his plea for the inclusion of European thought into Gaelic literature was put into practice by his most diligent disciple in the field. This was no other than Pádraic Ó Conaire, one of the most avid readers of contemporaneous European literature in the language movement.[4] Although Ó Conaire always stressed the importance of Russian authors for his work (Ní Chionnaith 1995: 285), he was clearly inspired also by Norwegian and French literature. It therefore does not come as a surprise that there is a significant overlap in the lists of European authors that inspired, in some way or other, the work of Synge and Ó Conaire, including Henrik Ibsen, Anatole France and Maurice Maeterlinck (Synge 1982, II: 396; Riggs 1994: 70–71).

In what ways, then, did various European influences shape the work of the two authors? Starting with the oldest and most prominent stream of thought, both Synge and Ó Conaire have been described, for various reasons, as late Romantics. This may be taken as a platitude, given their involvement in nationalist revival movements, whose rationale can be derived from the thoughts of Johann Gottfried Herder, significantly developed in the Romantic period proper (Leerssen 2006: 97–101). However, Synge and Ó Conaire differed from their contemporaries by espousing more specific, and often more radical, legacies of Romanticism.[5]

One of the distinctively Romantic features of Synge's and Ó Conaire's work is the emphasis on the individuality and subjectivity of the author. The importance of the author's life and personal vision is stated in poetic words at the beginning of Synge's "Autobiography": "it is this almost cosmic element in the person which gives great art, as that of Michelangelo or Beethoven, the dignity of nature. […] art is the expression of the essential or abstract beauty of the person" (Synge 1982, II: 3). Comparable is Ó Conaire's insistence on subjective artistic truth, expressed in a number of his essays, such as "An Fhírinne agus an Bhréag sa Litríocht" [Truth and Falsehood in Literature]: "If the author reveals the world according to his mind and heart, regardless of the praise or criticism of others, there will be truth in that person's work" (Ní Chionnaith 1995: 284).[6]

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[4] Ó Conaire's opinions about contemporaneous European literature are most clearly expressed in his essay "Seanlitríocht na nGael agus Nualitríocht na hEorpa" [Old Gaelic and New European Literature] (Ó Conaire 1978: 42–52).

[5] It is not necessary to trace the precise origin of these Romantic influences – the overall milieu of the revivals played its role, as well as the ready availability of the work of English Romantics. Some of the Romantic influences were mediated by contemporaneous authors featuring aspects of both Romanticism and modernism, such as Henrik Ibsen and the Norwegian novelist Knut Hamsun (1859–1952), whose *Sult* [Hunger] (1890) very probably inspired Ó Conaire's *Deoraíocht*.

[6] Translation my own. In the original: "Má nochtann an t-údar an saol de réir a éirime aigne agus a chroí féin, gan beann aige ar mholadh ná ar cháineadh aon duine eile, beidh an fhírinne i saothar an duine sin."

It is not surprising that this insistence on subjectivity and reluctance to conform to opinions of the crowd resulted in both authors getting involved in controversies. The turbulent reactions following the staging of Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen* and *The Playboy of the Western World* are well documented; it is not so well known that also Ó Conaire's work, far less renowned, attracted objections on the account of its immorality and indecency. The most famous instance happened in 1917, when Ó Conaire's novel *Deoraíocht* and his short story "Nóra Mharcais Bhig" were removed from courses of National University of Ireland following a letter of complaint written by another novelist, Peadar Ó Laoghaire (Ní Chionnaith 1995: 369–73). One of the passages that Ó Laoghaire objected to was then cut out of all subsequent editions of Ó Conaire's novel both in the original and in the English translation, and, almost unbelievably, first reappeared in a Czech edition published as late as 2004 (Ó Conaire 2004: 47).

Synge's Tramps

The Romantic emphasis on subjectivity implied a certain dividing line between the artist and the rest of humankind. Connected to it was, both in Romanticism and in the case of our authors, a definite sympathy to other people separated from society, usually perceived as outcasts – tramps, beggars, madmen and the like.[7] The similarity between tramps and artists was explicitly noted by Synge in his essay "The Vagrants of Wicklow":

> In the middle classes the gifted son of a family is always the poorest – usually a writer or artist with no sense of speculation – and in a family of peasants, where the average comfort is just over penury, the gifted son sinks also, and is soon a tramp on the roadside. (Synge 1982, II: 202)

Accordingly, Synge's most poetic characters are usually, in one way or the other, society's outcasts: the tramp in *The Shadow of the Glen,* the blind Martin Doul in *The Well of the Saints,* or the supposed parricide Christy Mahon in *The Playboy*.[8]

Allied to the artistic/poetic faculty of the vagrants is their ability to perceive the sublime beauty of wild nature. Consider the tramp's speech at the end of *The Shadow of the Glen* or the following quotation from Synge's essay "People and Places":

> Man is naturally a nomad […] and all wanderers have finer intellectual and physical perceptions than men who are condemned to local habitations. […] But the vagrant, I think, along with perhaps the sailor, has preserved the dignity of motion with its whole sensation of strange colours in the clouds […], affections and lonely songs that rest for a whole life time with the perfume of spring evenings or the first autumnal smoulder on the leaves. (Synge 1982 II: 195–6)

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[7] Famous examples from English Romanticism include William Wordsworth's poems "The Female Vagrant" or "The Old Cumberland Beggar" from *Lyrical Ballads* (2009: 314–22; 442–7).

[8] All of this, of course, chimes not only with European Romanticism, but also with the Irish tradition of the itinerant rake poet of the 18th century, epitomized in the semi-folklore character of Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin.

This is, needless to say, entirely in tune with Romantic aesthetics. What betrays the later provenance of Synge's work, written after Karl Marx and William Morris, is his explicit endorsement of the vagrants' and beggars' right to refuse paid work.[9] In the era of industrial mass-production, Synge saw such work as alienating, and in a way, implying a sell-out of a person's authenticity for money. In "People and Places," he argues:

> The slave and the beggar are wiser than the man who works for recompense, for all our moments are divine and above all price though their sacrifice is paid with a measure of fine gold. Every industrious worker has sold his birthright for a mess of pottage, perhaps served him in chalices of gold. (Synge 1982, II: 196)

The same dynamic can be observed in *The Well of the Saints,* where Martin and Mary Doul finally refuse the gift of sight partly because it would force them to participate in the alienating economy of mainstream society. Rather than sacrificing their internal poetic vision, the pair opts for a life of blind itinerant beggars, although it implies most probably a premature death. Elsewhere in Synge's oeuvre, the venality of modern wage-labour is contrasted, in a way reminiscent of William Morris, with the "primitive," pre-industrial life in the Aran Islands, where "every article […] has an almost personal character" and "gives this simple life […] something of the artistic beauty of mediaeval life" (Synge 1982 II: 58–59).

Ó Conaire's Outcasts

The treatment of the social outcast in Ó Conaire's oeuvre is strikingly similar. The separation between the artist and society, as well as the importance of wild nature is related in explicit terms in his short story "Ná Lig Sinn i gCathú" [Lead Us Not Into Temptation]. In this allegory, set in a fictional oriental world, a sculptor leaves the city and chooses a hermit's life in the wilderness in order to fully concentrate on his work. A mysterious woman appears, who acts as the sculptor's muse for a while – but when the muse turns into a woman of flesh and blood, demanding gold and jewels, the effort to satisfy her eventually leads to the sculptor's compromising of his art by submitting to popular taste and the king's wishes (Ó Conaire 1982: 44–51). Significantly for Ó Conaire, the story concentrates not only on the value of the artist's seclusion in nature, but on its limits as well – the mysterious muse represents the real human world, without which the sculptor would never get his inspiration, but which, nevertheless, mars his work in the end.

Like Synge's, Ó Conaire's work also swarms with characters living on the margins of society – the blind prominently appear in the short stories "Páidín Mháire," "Ceoltóirí," or "Beirt Bhan Mhisniúil," the eponymous main character of "Nóra Mharcais Bhig" is a prostitute, and the protagonist/narrator of the novel *Deoraíocht* is a one-armed, one-

[9] Nevertheless, one has to bear in mind that this tendency appeared in Romanticism from its very beginning. Consider, for example, the following lines from Wordsworth's "The Old Cumberland Beggar": "May never House, misnamed of industry / Make him a captive; for that pent-up din / Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air / Be his the natural silence of old age!" (2009: 447).

legged cripple, exiled in London. These characters are often gifted with a poetic vision drawing its strength from the world of wild nature, such as when the eponymous protagonist of "Páidín Máire," just before his death, envisions an imaginary underwater world where he would live among the seals (Ó Conaire 1982: 144–5). The greatest poet among all Ó Conaire's characters is perhaps Micil Ó Maoláin, the protagonist of *Deoraíocht*. In famous passages, full of intriguing shades of colour, he contemplates the sublime beauty of Galway Bay at night, oscillating between calmness and anger, and the change that comes on it with dawn (Ó Conaire 1994: 52–53). The sublime quality of the sea and sky is a given of Romantic aesthetics, as, according to Edmund Burke, they evoke terror and awe with their vastness (Burke 1792: 107). Ó Conaire, as a late Romantic and early Modernist, however, was able to transfer the sublime feeling to industrial sights connected to the city, so that the terror and awe increases. One of the most memorable passages in *Deoraíocht* is the scene of the burning factory, which, particularly in its colour imagery, echoes the earlier scene of the sea and sky in Galway Bay:

> In the direction they were going, the lower part of the sky was red and a great torch of light was rising up into the firmament, like a long narrow tongue trying to suck blood. […] As the flames made contact with the chemical products in the building, they kept changing colour. They were every colour of the rainbow. White here, yellow there. Blood-red in another corner. It was like magic, how the different colours kept interchanging, and at one stage combined into one great blaze of crimson glory. "The blood of the poisoned women," I shouted. (Ó Conaire 1994: 96, 99)

The scene has a definite socialist tinge to it, and therefore it does not come as a surprise that we can also find in Ó Conaire the rejection of alienating work, noted already with Synge. In the story "Páidín Mháire," the "organic," pre-modern life of a fisherman is, in the mind of the central character, contrasted unfavourably with the better paid, but entirely dull and unpoetic employment at road construction (Ó Conaire 1982: 134), as well as the oppressive environment of the workhouse. This rejection reaches its apex in *Deoraíocht*, if we allow for an allegorical reading of Micil Ó Maoláin's engagement in Alf Trott's side-show. Micil's performance, admittedly well paid, involves a rejection of his poetic, idealistic self in order to impersonate an inarticulate German madman, wielding a blood-stained knife and emitting terrifying roars. The allegory can, as in "Ná Lig Sinn i gCathú," signify the sell-out of art for the market, but can be even more generalised – the circus may serve as a metaphor of any paid work that implies a sacrifice of the self, perceived as authentic. In this light, Ó Maoláin's subsequent destruction of the show is understandable, notwithstanding the fact that it means his relapse into penury.

Such a sharp division between "authentic" and alienating work might be seen as too exalted and distinctively impractical, yet it is clearly shared by Synge and Ó Conaire. Its main value lies in the effect on the reader – both Synge's *The Well of the Saints* and Ó Conaire's *Deoraíocht* are able, more than a hundred years later, to evoke deep sympathy with the marginalized members of society, even if they clearly refuse to adapt to the work ethic of the majority. Needless to say, this sympathy can have considerable political impact in the twenty-first century, given the frequent vicious attacks against such "unadaptable" individuals and groups in the public discourse of many countries.

Ó Conaire as Synge's Tramp?

The Romantic motifs of seclusion from society and nomadism powerfully resonate also in the lives of both Synge and Ó Conaire. There is, however, an important difference between the two authors. Unlike J. M. Synge, whose numerous wanderings were, in the manner of many Romantic poets of the nineteenth century, always ventures of a reasonably well-off member of the upper classes into the enticing realm of the wild and "primitive," Ó Conaire, especially in the last ten years of his life, periodically lived the life of a real tramp with all its hardships. In contrast to Synge, who arguably overcame his puritan upbringing only in his work (Mattar 2004: 136), Ó Conaire was known for his personal disrespect for any social conventions whatsoever. It is therefore tempting to explore parallels between Ó Conaire as a person and Synge's characters, notably the tramp from *The Shadow of the Glen* – after all, Ó Conaire often spent whole summers wandering and sleeping rough in the Wicklow countryside where the play is set (Ní Chionnaith 1995: 147). The tramp's speech at the end of Synge's play is echoed not only in Ó Conaire's short story "M'Fhile Caol Dubh," mentioned earlier, but also in another story, entitled "Cuireadh" [An Invitation], in which he, rhetorically, invites the reader to accompany him on his wanderings: "Come with me, o friend of my heart, and let us enjoy the sight of majestic mountain peaks and dark pine forests […] come along for Spring is at hand, and fresh blood is flowing through your veins and mine" (Ó Conaire 1966: 14).

And just like Synge's tramp, Ó Conaire was successful, even at that stage of life, in convincing respectable members of the opposite sex to share his life, if only for a short while. One of the numerous interesting stories to be gleaned from his biography is that of his elopement in 1925 with the wife of Thomas Brown Rudmose-Brown, the Professor of Romance languages at Trinity College Dublin and the mentor of Samuel Beckett – here was at least one Irish woman to elope with the tramp, to contradict Arthur Griffith's scathing critique of *The Shadow of the Glen*.[10] The incident led to the rejection of Ó Conaire's later work by the Gaelic League and the composition of an irreverent poem quoted by the poet Oliver St. John Gogarty, with the refrain "She's away with the gaberlunzie man!" (Ní Chionnaith 1995: 387; Gogarty 1954: 55–56). There is no doubt that this effort to live up in full to his maxims of Romantic individualism resulted in numerous hardships, as well as hastening Ó Conaire's premature death in the paupers' ward of the Dublin hospital in 1928, with his only possessions famously consisting of an ounce of tobacco, an apple and a pipe (Ní Chionnaith 1995: 453). This personal intimacy with the downside of Romantic subjectivity is one possible explanation why in Ó Conaire's best stories the individualism of the characters leads to explicitly tragic consequences – very much in contrast to the endings of Synge's plays such as *The Shadow of the Glen* or *The Well of the Saints,* which, despite the forebodings of hardship, contain a liberating momentum.

[10] Sinn Féin's founder Arthur Griffith famously objected to the denouement of the play, stating that while loveless marriages in Ireland occur, and women "die of a broken heart," they never "go away with the Tramp" (Griffith 1903: 1).

Social Realism

For all their Romanticism, neither Synge nor Ó Conaire would endorse the resigned sentiments of Wordsworth's "The Old Cumberland Beggar": "As in the eye of Nature he has lived / So in the eye of Nature let him die!" (Wordsworth 2009: 447). Both displayed a lively interest in the social conditions that made "artistic souls" end in penury and did not hesitate to criticise these circumstances in their work. In other words, both our late Romantics were, in many aspects of their oeuvre, uncompromising realists, unlike most of their contemporaries in the revival movements.

In the above-quoted essay "About Literature," Pádraig Pearse set out a realist programme for his fellow writers:

> We want no Gothic Revival. We would have the problems of today fearlessly dealt with in Irish: the loves and hates and desires and doubts of modern men and women; […] the tragedy of the emigration mania; […] the drink evil; the increase of lunacy; such social problems as (say) the loveless marriage. (Pearse 1906: 6)

Again, rather than finding expression in Pearse's own work, the main short-term effect of the outlined programme was that it inspired Pádraic Ó Conaire, who was able to connect it with his wide reading of the Russian realists. He praised the audacity of authors such as Gogol, Turgenev or Gorki to reject false mythologies and get to grips with the more sinister aspects of human nature and society. This is clear from the following passage where, again, the word "truth" denotes subjective philosophy or vision:

> Some of them dug deep in the earth looking for truth, for they were in earnest. They had faith and they were not satisfied with the false legends that were presented to them. When they emerged from the hole where they were searching, they carried a dirty, stained thing with human form and cried out at the top of their voices: This is a human! This is a man! This is the truth![11] (Ó Conaire 1978: 47–8)

Interestingly, Pearse's and Ó Conaire's rejection of the "Gothic Revival" and "false legends" in Irish-language literature calls to mind Synge's rejection of "a purely fantastic unmodern breezy springdayish Cuchulanoid national theatre" (Kiberd 1993: 111) in favour of treating social problems of contemporaneous Ireland. In the playwright's oeuvre, social criticism is the most pronounced in the series of essays "In Connemara." These articles, illustrated by Jack B. Yeats, were originally commissioned by the *Manchester Guardian* as a report from Connemara's "congested districts," one of the poorest areas of Ireland at the time. While most of the critical comments on Irish society from nationalist quarters in the period contented themselves by laying all the blame firmly at the English door, Synge was quite perceptive in uncovering also local causes of the hardships – such as the manipulations of small landholders and shopkeepers, who constituted much

[11] Translation my own. In the original: "Chuaigh cuid acu ag rómhar go domhain i dtalamh ar lorg na fírinne, mar bhí siad i ndáiríre. Bhí creideamh acu agus ní raibh siad sásta leis na finscéalta bréagacha a bhí curtha os a gcomhair. Nuair a tháinig siad aníos as an bpoll ina raibh siad ag cuartú bhí rud salach smeartha a raibh dealbh duine air acu agus ghlaoigh siad amach in ard a ngutha: 'Seo é an duine! Seo é an fear! Seo í an Fhírinne!'"

of the rising Catholic middle class in the rural areas (Synge 1982 II: 129–30). Neither do Synge's plays shrink from portraying social problems that abounded in their rural settings, and some of the themes treated are strikingly, and ironically, similar to those outlined by Pearse above. The refusal of the widespread tendency to idealize the Gaelic-speaking West of Ireland significantly contributed to the plays' turbulent reception – the unending parade of the West's vices such as greed, loveless marriage, madness or cruelty to animals was certainly difficult to accept.

Interestingly, Ó Conaire spent the formative years of his life in the "congested districts" that Synge wrote about in 1905 – being brought up, since the age of six, by his uncle, who ran a shop in Connemara's Ros Muc. From that position he had a unique opportunity to observe both the plight of the poor and the greed of the middle classes. Moreover, he did not share the hypocritical approach of many revivalists who saw the poverty of the Irish-speaking areas as a virtue that guarded the language and the pastoral simplicity of the inhabitants against foreign pollution. The exact opposite is true – Ó Conaire was a lifelong advocate of economic improvement of the Gaeltacht as the only way to ensure the continuation of Irish as a living language (Ó Conaire 1989: 162–4; Ní Chionnaith 1995: 176).

Ó Conaire's stories that have a rural realistic setting point to similar social problems as the realistic features of Synge's oeuvre. The most important point of contact, perhaps, is the above-mentioned short story "Páidín Mháire," being a rare literary reflection of the relief works organized by the Congested District Board, reported upon by Synge. As Páidrigín Riggs has noted, the road that the central character helps to build at the beginning of the story belongs to the project in Connemara's Ceantar na nOileán district described at length by Synge in his essay "Among the Relief Works" (Synge 1982, II: 296–301; Riggs 1994: 135). As discussed earlier, the attitude of both authors to such alienating work is shared. Other examples can be easily found. The short story "An Bhean ar Leag Dia Lámh Uirthi," apart from bearing the direct influence of Synge as mentioned above, combines a touching description of the development of madness in the protagonist's mother with the criticism of her sister Máire, who runs a prosperous public house with her husband in Mayo, but bluntly refuses to help (Ó Conaire 1982: 52–65). In her greed and hypocrisy, Máire may serve (patriotism and gender excepted) as a good representation of the abominable groggy-patriot-publican-general-shopman type noted with disgust by Synge in his letter to McKenna (Murray 2000: 82). Another story, "An Bhean a Ciapadh," is a merciless and tragic study of an arranged marriage between a middle-aged man and a young woman entirely based on economic considerations. Moreover, it features aspects of sexual violence, rarely represented at the time (Ó Conaire 1982: 119–132).

Naturalism and Beyond

Romanticism and realism are, of course, not the only elements in Synge's and Ó Conaire's oeuvre, despite the fact that they undoubtedly constitute the biggest area of contact. Speaking about later influences, both authors, for instance, display a certain naturalist slant, ultimately traceable to the effect of Darwinism on European thought. This strand of thought combines a belief in a fundamental affinity between people and

animals, with certain anxieties connected to the effect of natural selection on humans. Darwin's profound influence on Synge is well documented, starting with the vivid description of his encounter with evolutionary theory in the playwright's *Autobiography* (Synge 1982 II: 10–11). Refractions of Darwinism are then traceable from ubiquitous comparisons between people and animals in *The Aran Islands* to the fears of the decline of Synge's own aristocratic class expressed in the essay "A Landlord's Garden in County Wicklow" (Synge 1982 II: 230–3).[12] Similar *fin-de-siècle* sentiments are present also in Ó Conaire's work, best exemplified by the description of the degeneration of Irish immigrants in London in *Deoraíocht* (Ó Conaire 1994: 105) – a description that is, however, quite conventional in the context of the Gaelic Revival.[13] The animal theme is explored in Ó Conaire's later stories with animal protagonists, in which shared features with humans are foregrounded. While these stories lack the quality of Ó Conaire's previous work, they can be credited for introducing animal protagonists into modern Irish literature, as they seem to have inspired Ó Conaire's friend Liam O'Flaherty.[14]

It is, however, in the most modernist layer of their works that the two authors differ the most. While Synge's ironic use of the Oedipal and Cuchulain myth in *The Playboy of the Western World* prefigured much more elaborate uses of this method by James Joyce (as well as Irish-language authors such as Eoghan Ó Tuairisc), Ó Conaire's brand of modernism, as displayed in *Deoraíocht,* reminds us more of the earlier works of Knut Hamsun or later works by Franz Kafka. Its main feature is the tracing of the disintegration of personal identity in the anonymous and hostile environment of the city. Certain parallels may be found in Irish-language literature of the second half of the century, such as the later stories and novellas of Máirtín Ó Cadhain, or the poetry of Máirtín Ó Direáin. Despite the differences in the brand of modernism they represented, both Synge and Ó Conaire may be thus credited for pointing the way to later, more pronouncedly modernist authors.

Conclusion

The exploration of numerous parallels between J. M. Synge and Pádraic Ó Conaire in this essay has uncovered a deep affinity between the two authors. Synge's denial of any similarity between the two revivals in "The Old and the New in Ireland," noted at the beginning, thus acquires not a small touch of irony. Synge's mistake, of course, was that he simply could not envision literatures in both languages flourishing in Ireland side by side – rather, as a reader of Darwin, he imagined them as two species competing for the same resources, a process which inevitably had to end in the survival of one and the extinction of the other.[15] This is clear from "Shall We Go Back to our Mother's Womb,"

[12] For a more detailed assessment of the influence of Darwin on Synge see Mattar 2004: 130–184 and Burke 2011: 55–71.

[13] The importance of the fears of degeneration in the overall mentality of the Gaelic revival has been traced by Brian Ó Conchubhair (2009).

[14] Much about the friendship of the two writers can be gleaned from O'Flaherty's account in De Bhaldraithe 1982: 51–57.

[15] As noted by Mattar (2004: 154) and Burke (2011: 63). Not surprisingly, Synge does not mention the possibilities of symbiosis or inter-species cooperation, more prominent in later evolutionary thought. Arguably, these could serve as more fruitful models for the coexistence of languages.

where he prophesies the death of Irish a few years after the demise of its last monoglot speaker (Synge 1982: 399). Interestingly, Ó Conaire shared the same attitude, with the important difference that he would do anything short of murder to prevent this from happening: "When only people who speak both languages are left in Ireland, Gaelic will be finished. […] We have to expel […] English or suppress it and restore the old tongue […] to the top" (Ó Conaire 1989: 143).[16]

These prophecies were clearly not fulfilled – Irish is still spoken in Ireland and its use seems to be on the increase in traditionally English-speaking areas in spite of the fact that monoglot speakers are a rare species indeed. Bilingualism therefore seems to be the only viable path for the future existence of Irish on the island. The problems related to the tremendous pressure of English as the world *lingua franca* on a small minority language such as Irish have been long recognized. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that the continuing existence of both languages and literatures side by side has also considerable advantages and has always been a major source of cultural richness. One definite proof of the positive effects of bilingualism is the very existence and quality of the work of J. M. Synge and Pádraic Ó Conaire.

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JOHN MILLINGTON SYNGE A PÁDRAIC Ó CONAIRE: NEČEKANÍ SOUPUTNÍCI MEZI ROMANTISMEM, REALISMEM A DALŠÍMI SMĚRY

Resumé

Irské literární obrození, jehož výsledkem byla díla v angličtině, a obrození jazykové, jež oživovalo literaturu v irštině, se i přes časovou a místní souvislost obecně považují za dvě antagonistická hnutí s málo styčnými body. Článek poukazuje na hlubší souvislosti mezi oběma směry na příkladu srovnání životů a děl dvou jejich významných představitelů – světoznámého dramatika Johna Millingtona Synga (1871–1909) a nejlepšího prozaika jazykového obrození Pádraica Ó Conaireho (1882–1928). Všímá si příkladů Syngova vlivu na Ó Conaireho, ale jeho hlavním těžištěm je zpracování odrazů evropských myšlenkových směrů v díle obou autorů. Jako nejdůležitější se jeví pozdní vliv romantismu, který oba vedl k důrazu na individualitu autora, k oslavě krásy divoké přírody i k zájmu o lidi na okraji společnosti, jako jsou tuláci, slepci či šílenci. Oba literáti byli také nekompromisní realisté, kteří si všímali stinných stránek častokrát idealizovaného života na západě Irska a neváhali poukázat na jeho lokální příčiny. Mezi další vlivy se pak řadí naturalismus a počínající modernismus, jejichž zpracováním Synge a Ó Conaire ukázali cestu pozdějším spisovatelům. Souvislosti mezi oběma významnými autory nabývají překvapivě konkrétních forem a poukazují na potřebu studovat moderní irskou literaturu v irštině a angličtině společně.

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2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 69–77
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

LANGUAGE AND "THE THINGS THAT ARE THERE": PAUL DE MAN'S "POETIC ATTITUDES" APPLIED TO POST-WWII AMERICAN POETRY

STEPHAN DELBOS

ABSTRACT

In his essay "Process and Poetry" (1956), Paul de Man identifies two types of "poetic attitude," a poetry of process and a poetry of substance. Where de Man illuminates these attitudes by focusing on the content rather than the form of poems written by Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Hölderlin, this essay will apply these attitudes to post-war American poets while expanding de Man's consideration to include elements of prosody and their relationship to "process" and "substance." The purpose of this essay is to argue for the applicability of these attitudes to American poets of the era and further to argue that such a critical approach offers fresh views of this work. There are clear examples of de Man's attitudes in poetry written in the US since 1945, and these are reflected in the dominant critical model of this poetry as divided between avant-garde and academic styles. By examining the free verse poetry in Donald Allen's anthology *The New American Poetry* (1960), and the formal poetry in Robert Pack, Louis Simpson and Donald Hall's anthology *New Poets of England and America* (1957), this essay will identify poems that exemplify each of de Man's attitudes, before taking into account the Language poetry of the 1970s as a development in American poetry of process. Finally, the essay shall identify a poet who, as de Man argues for Hölderlin, has found "accomplishment" by synthesizing process and substance, writing what have recently been termed "hybrid" poems.

Keywords: Paul de Man; Post-war American Poetry; The New American Poetry

In his essay "Process and Poetry," (1956) Paul de Man identifies two types of "poetic attitude." Using Stéphane Mallarmé and Charles Baudelaire as examples, de Man distinguishes between a "poetry of process," and a "poetry of substance" (de Man 1989: 64). Poetry of process, de Man writes, is primarily concerned with "maintaining itself as consciousness at the expense of the sensuous object" (1989: 71). He posits Mallarmé as a poet of this attitude, citing the prose poem "Midnight" as exemplary, and suggesting that the work "justifies its existence by speaking a truth" (1989: 70). For a poet of this attitude, "the poetic consciousness of becoming maintains itself as self-consciousness. […] Such poetry knows itself fully and is able to account for its own existence" (1989: 70). De Man

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.29

contrasts this to a poetry of substance, exemplified by Baudelaire, who insists that art has no place in moments of genuine self-presence:

> Whereas for Baudelaire, truth is a triumph over time, albeit a momentary one, a space from which time has been eliminated, and a purification of space inside which time appears as a negative and destructive element, Mallarmé, on the contrary, finds the essence of truth in the synthesis of the double significance, both spatial and temporal, of the term "presence." (1989: 69)

De Man finds a profound trust of language in Mallarmé, and a belief that through language the poet can achieve truth. Because language is a record of self-consciousness, for the poet of process, there is no need to account for the poet's tools in his works of art, according to de Man. In contrast, a poetry of substance like Baudelaire's achieves its end in recapturing "a lost plenitude" (1989: 71). A poet of this attitude is haunted by the past and by exotic places, and believes time is the enemy of the eternal. In seeking to be eternal, or "metatemporal," (1989: 70) a poet writing with this attitude desires to "imprint on the process of becoming, the character of being," to make his mark on the reader and the world (1989: 70). Ultimately, by attaining true presence, metatemporal poetry, or the poetry of substance, seeks to extricate itself from the grasp of time, for if poetry "can attain essential presence, then history can have no hold on it" (1989: 65).

As a mid-point between these two attitudes, de Man posits Hölderlin, who achieved a "genuine poetics" (1989: 71) by allowing his work to oscillate between the poetry of substance and the poetry of process. For Hölderlin, "poetry becomes the putting into language of the failure of the true to found itself" (1989: 66). In other words, poetry is the constant negation of the eternal, and can be interpreted as a "dialectic of intention and desires," according to de Man (1989: 71). By identifying the Hellenic world with the sensuous, and the Occident with the process of becoming, Hölderlin was able to include both within his poetic ken. This attitude is ideal for de Man, because, "by giving in too much to the ease of becoming, poetry is distorted, and thus strays from its authentic vocation" (1989: 74). De Man more clearly defines the poetry he values when he writes: "only when poetry is willing to give up its desires to be concrete and eternal will it be able to find accomplishment" (1989: 75).

The purpose of my consideration of "Process and Poetry" is to apply de Man's poetic attitudes to American poetry written after World War II, to determine whether these attitudes are applicable to American poets of the era. There are clear examples of de Man's attitudes in post-war American poetry, and these are reflected in the dominant critical model of this poetry as two camps split between avant-garde and formal styles. By examining the free verse poetry in Donald Allen's anthology *The New American Poetry* (1960), and the formal poetry in Robert Pack, Louis Simpson and Donald Hall's anthology *New Poets of England and America* (1957), I will identify two poems that exemplify each of de Man's attitudes. I shall then look at the Language poetry of the 1970s as a dramatic development in American poetry of process. Finally, I shall identify a poet who, like Hölderlin, has found "accomplishment" (1989: 75) by achieving a synthesis of process and substance. Throughout the essay, I will apply de Man's attitudes to the form as well as the content of these poems, to identify the formal repercussions of each attitude in post-war American poetry.

Process in the New American Poetry

The dominant debate in post-war American poetry has not been one of process versus substance, but rather of formal verse and free verse. Perhaps this is not so far removed from de Man's attitudes as it may at first appear. Robert Creeley, one of the most outspoken apologists for the New American Poetry, seems to describe accurately the poetry of process in his comments on form: "A poetry denies its end in any descriptive act, I mean any act which leaves its attention outside the poem. Description does nothing, it includes the object. […] Poems are not referential, at least not importantly so" (Creeley 1970: 23). Creeley's words seem to have informed much of the New American Poetry, and Creeley's own work, of course. In Creeley's poetry, there is an evident trust in the language of the poem, and an emphasis on it, rather than image, which was central to much of the formal poetry of the era. His poem "The Counterpoint" exemplifies this style. It consists of three couplets:

> Let me be my own fool
> of my own making, the sum of it
>
> is equivocal.
> One says of the drunken farmer:
>
> leave him lay off it. And this is
> the explanation. (Allen 1960: 78)

The poem is not clearly descriptive. The only phrases that suggest image or reference are "fool," and "drunken farmer." Largely, the poem consists of spare language that has more rhythmic weight than evocative power. The couplets direct the pacing of the poem and give it heft on the page, but the form of the poem seems to have been imposed by the language itself, and the lack of referentiality forces the poem back on itself in examination. Such a poem does not "long after a lost world," (de Man 1989: 73) trying to capture the realness of objects or artefacts, as does de Man's poetry of substance. This is a poetry of process that does not seek to capture the physical world, but rather a mental state, a mode of being. In other words, it seeks to capture the truth that lies beyond the merely visual and tangible.

De Man confines his explorations in "Process and Poetry" to the content of the poems. But considering the centrality of formal debates in post-war American poetry, when poets such as Creeley made it their specific task to oppose the formalism of academic verse, any discussion of the poetry of the era must take formal elements into account. One of the clearest dictums regarding form in the New American Poetry is Creeley's pronouncement that "[f]orm is never more than an extension of content," (Allen 1960: 387) as quoted by Charles Olson in his influential free verse manifesto "Projective Verse" (1959). These poets believed that form was an element of poetry inseparable from language itself, and that language, having form by nature of its very existence, gave form to the poem. Received forms were external frames imposed on language. These poets rejected those forms and sought new ones, trusting the actuality of language and believing that language earned its right to exist as a poem by expressing a truth, or a state of

consciousness, rather than as a record of the poet's formal abilities in rhyme and meter, and other obvious elements of traditional form.

Mallarmé offers similar examples. This nineteenth-century French poet is today considered one of the most radical formal innovators in European poetry, having extended beyond the line-by-line form to embrace the page as frame in his poem "Un Coup de Dés" published in 1897. This poem, in which the words are constellated across several pages, is now seen as a precursor to Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, and the concrete and visual poetry that arose in the 1950s, as well as Olson's "Projective Verse" and the concept of a breath-based poetics that, according to Olson, utilized the "large area of the whole poem […] the FIELD" (Allen 1960: 391) much as Mallarmé's poem had.

Much of the New American Poetry, like that written and advocated by Creeley and Olson, can be read under de Man's poetry of process. Formally, these poets seem to pay particular attention to the layout of the poems on the page. Theirs is a poetry of process in terms of the unfolding of thought and perception, and in terms of the unfolding of the poem in the process of reading, as Olson directs: "And if you also set up as a poet, USE USE USE the process at all points, in any given poem always, always one perception must must must MOVE, INSTANTER, ON ANOTHER!"(Allen 1960: 388). The poem therefore achieves a kind of presence in time, and in the space of the page, as de Man suggests a poetry of process does (de Man 1989: 69).

Olson's theories about form, poetry and language, which align with the poetry of process, were developed more explicitly in Language Poetry, which emerged in the San Francisco Bay area in the early 1970s. Concerned with language itself more than its ability to capture the world through reference, Language Poetry often makes language and its utterance in time the subject of the poem. Indeed, many of these poems make virtually no reference beyond the confines of the poem and the language of which it is composed, and in fact often stymie logical coherence or sense. A poetry eschewing logical sense is by definition not a poetry of substance, as the signifier is freed from the dominance of the signified, and thus nothing physical is "captured" by the language. This state is inverted in the poetry of substance, as the language itself is secondary to the thing described, be it a far-off island, the scent of a woman's hair, or the "flowers, skies, and setting suns" that de Man quotes in Baudelaire (de Man 1989: 68).

A selection from "The Maintains" by Language poet Clark Coolidge will exemplify this dramatic poetry of process. The poem appears traditional, utilizing tercets and quatrains, yet it seems cobbled from individual words, containing nearly no referents, and thus it does not encourage the reader to move, in consciousness or imagination, beyond the confines of the page. As decreed by Creeley, there is virtually no description in the poem:

> laurel ratio sharp or hard
> instrumental triple to or fro
> granule in award
>
> one to whom is made
>
> nave
> spectacle
> as the near wheel (Silliman 2007: 237)

Moments of logical clarity are present, but even the words that point beyond the poem: "nave," "bean," or the momentary logic of the first two lines, or between lines four and five, do not bring coherence to the piece as a whole. Much of the language of the poem functions more as rhythmic units than signifiers, guiding the reading of the poem in terms of pause and pacing, rather than developing images. It must be stated, however, that not all poets and critics would agree that such poetry is devoid of meaning. It is rather that the meaning is "self-embodied" (Bernstein 1992: 18) in the language of the poem itself, according to Charles Bernstein, whose comments on form in Language Poetry echo Creeley's regarding organic form:

> … the meaning is not absent or
> deferred but self-embodied as the poem
> in a way that is not transferable to another code
> or rhetoric. (1992: 18)

There are many parallels in the work of poets who follow Bernstein's or Creeley's suggestions regarding form, and the poetry of process de Man describes in his essay. More could be said regarding the evolution of the poetry of process in post-war American poetry, but it is necessary now to turn to de Man's other poetic attitude: The poetry of substance.

Substance in the New Poets

In seeking to recapture what de Man calls a lost plenitude, an erstwhile oneness with the physical world through verse, poets of substance reach out to the world, address it and try to caress it, to capture it in language (de Man 1989: 71). This desire is evident in much of the formal poetry written in America in the decades following World War II. This poetry was represented in Robert Pack, Louis Simpson, and Donald Hall's anthology, *New Poets of England and America* (1957). Sometimes this desire, which may be otherwise described as longing, is metaphorical, and at other times it is literal, as in the case of James Wright's poem "To the Ghost of a Kite," which explicitly addresses an object from the physical world. The narrator speaks to a kite, lamenting the passing of summer, and all its metaphysical implications. By attempting to capture the essence of the kite in language, the poem becomes an attempt to capture the plenitude of summer, the farthest season from which the poem begins:

> Winter has wrecked the legend of your wings
> And thrown you down beside the cold garage.
> The silken gold that caught the air at large
> Wrinkles and fades among some rusted springs.
> There was a wind that sang below your breast,
> Astonished air blown seaward on your breath.
> That summer sound, lifted away and lost,
> Mutters around the corners of the earth.
> …

Ghost of a dragon, tell me how to charm
The spirit back to fill the body now … (Hall, Pack, Simpson 1957: 336)

Addressing an object from the physical world, the poem expresses longing for something that has been lost. Just as Baudelaire ached for worlds of sensory delight and freedom that had long passed, the narrator in Wright's poem longs for the grace of summer, and wishes "to build / Some high magnificence to last as long / As the clear vision of the summer child." Similarly to the poems of Baudelaire, time is the enemy in this poem, hastening us forward to darker seasons, age, regret, and, finally, death.

The formal elements organize the poem and allow it to achieve an absorbing narrative. Rather than enacting the process of language unfolding in time, the poem presents a unified, evocative expression. As the lines move toward conclusion, the emotional picture of the kite and its meaning for the speaker is more apparent. This gesture inverts Creeley's desire for non-descriptive poetry.

Perhaps there is no style of poem more indebted to and bound up in substance than the ekphrastic poem, which is a "detailed description of an image, primarily visual" (Greene et al. 2012: 393). This type of poem points directly beyond, or rather through itself, to a painting, and seeks to capture the image, or to evoke its power through language. Donald Hall's poem "Munch's Scream" also featured in the *New Poets* anthology, is a fine example of the ekphrastic poem. It is divided into two parts, the first of which more or less accurately describes the painting, while the second moves into a consideration of aesthetics, and poetry. The poem begins:

Observe. Ridged, raised, tactile, the horror
of the skinned head is there. It is skinned
which had a covering up before,
and now is nude, and is determined

by what it perceives … (Hall, Pack Simpson 1957: 96)

Opening with a clear directive, "observe," the poem immediately points through itself to an object in the real world: Munch's famous painting. The first half of the poem is taken with describing, in rhyming quatrains, the painting, and also the acts of perception and interpretation:

… Habit foists
conventional surrender to one

response in vision, but it fails here,
where the partaking viewer is freed
into the under-skin of his fear. (1957: 96)

"Munch's Scream" is concerned with the interaction between man and art, that is, between man and the physical world. Moreover, the poem is concerned with the effect that art has on man, and the evocative power of objects. This aligns the poem with what de Man calls the poetry of substance. What is most fascinating about this poem in terms

of de Man's poetic attitudes is the conclusion, in which Hall seems to describe the method of the poetry of substance explicitly:

> So the poet, the talker, aims his
> words at the object, and his words go
> faster and faster, and now he is
> like a cyclotron, breaking into
>
> the structure of things by repeated
> speed and force in order to lay bare
> in words, naturally, unworded
> insides of things, the things that are there. (1957: 96)

According to Hall, by focusing language on the physical world, the poet illuminates it, and lays it bare, thus allowing him to recapture and present the essence of the natural world, the "unworded/insides of things […] that are there." Rather than using language as an end in itself, then, poets of substance, such as Hall, Wright, or Baudelaire, use language as a tool with which the physical world may be illuminated, and the essence of things recaptured. These poets are thus set in contrast to those who favor an attitude of process – poets who are more interested in tracking the development of thought through language.

De Man's attitudes are clear in post-war American poetry. But de Man also identifies Hölderlin as a unifying figure capable of both attitudes. If such a poet were evident in post-war American poetry, one likely place to search would be the anthology *American Hybrid* (2009), which purports to identify a recent trend in American poetry combining the tendencies of the New American Poetry with the more traditional poetry represented by Hall's anthology. In her introduction to the anthology, the editor Cole Swensen defines the hybrid poem as follows:

> Today's hybrid poem might engage such conventional approaches as narrative that presumes a stable first person, yet complicates it by disrupting the linear temporal path, or by scrambling the normal syntactical sequence – Or it might foreground recognizably experimental modes such as illogicality or fragmentation, yet follow the strict formal rules of a sonnet or a villanelle. […] Hybrid poets access a wealth of tools, each one of which can change dramatically depending on how it is combined with others and the particular role it plays in the composition. (Swensen and St. John 2009: xxi)

The evolution from formalism to free verse is common among post-war American poets, including James Wright, whose later work abandoned the strict formal qualities of his early poetry, like "To the Ghost of a Kite." Such poets, it could be said, oscillate from one poetic attitude to another over the course of a career. It is less common that a poet completes that oscillation over the course of a single book, or even more rarely, a single poem. Yet it does happen.

Robert Hass is an example of a poet who has achieved such fluidity, ranging from the formal poems in his first book, *Field Guide* (1973), through his translations and incorporation of poets as diverse as the Japanese poet Issa and the Swedish poet Tomas Tranströmer. While Hass does not venture quite as far into the poetry of process as the

Language poets, his poem "The Garden of Delight," collected in *American Hybrid*, moves from a poetry of process to a poetry of substance, almost line by line.

> The floor hurts so much it whines
> whichever way they step
> as if it had learned the trick
> of suffering.
> Poor floor.
> This is the garden of delight,
> a man pointing at a woman
> and a bird perched
> on a cylinder of crystal
> watching. (2009: 1984)

Hass begins with a poetry of substance: The poem refers directly to the floor, grounding itself in the physical world and conjuring an allegorical setting in which "they," who are soon revealed to be a man and a woman, can unfold within the narrative. Yet, the fifth line of the poem, "poor floor," shifts from the clear referential description of the floor, to abstract commentary on the floor, and does so with rhyme, which calls attention to itself as one of the few instances of rhyme in the poem. This one-line sentence does not further the image of the floor that has been created in the first four lines, but rather moves the narrative away from the floor and calls attention to the process of the narrator's interpretation of the floor, and the language he uses to voice that interpretation.

Furthermore, we can see how the positioning of this one-line sentence between two longer, more descriptive sentences, makes the line work as a buffer both conceptually and rhythmically, and thus functions in a style more reminiscent of Coolidge's one-word lines than the rest of this poem. Thus, Hass oscillates between a poetry of substance in the first four lines to a poetry of process in the fifth line, before resuming his substantive evocation of the floor in the fifth line. The fact that he goes on to describe the "garden of delight" that the title suggests aligns the poem with de Man's reading of the longing evident in the Baudelairean poetry of substance. Surely the garden of delight is lost plenitude par excellence.

De Man concludes his essay by insisting "only when poetry is willing to give up its desire to be concrete and eternal will it be able to find accomplishment" (de Man 1989: 75). One can conjecture that, for de Man, this might be achieved in two ways: By a poetry that insists on the process of becoming, that is, a pure poetry of process, or by a poetry that oscillates between becoming and substance. It would seem that some post-war American poets such as Hass have achieved the same oscillation that de Man describes in Hölderlin. Perhaps it is most accurate to say some poets of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have achieved a poetry of substantive process.

Applying de Man's poetic attitudes to post-war American poetry brings new points of view and possibilities to a debate that is usually limited to considerations of poetic form, to the exclusion of other important social, political, racial, and gender-based elements and implications. There have been other modes of inquiry that parallel de Man's attitudes, including Charles Bernstein's modes of "absorption" and "anti-absorption," which he explores in his essay "Artifice of Absorption" (Bernstein 1992: 9). But where even the

most liberal American poetry critics seem hesitant to move beyond questions of form, de Man inhabits a critical space well beyond these limits. His interpretation of poetic attitudes is both illuminating and promising, as these attitudes point to new methods of inquiry and interpretations of questions that have dominated the critical discourse on American poetry for more than fifty years. While de Man does not comment specifically on form in his essay, it is possible to draw conclusions about the form of the poems in which his attitudes are visible. Doing so not only broadens the critical debate about form in post-war American poetry, it opens up the possibility of other modes of discourse on this rich and at times controversial body of poetry.

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JAZYK A „VĚCI, KTERÉ EXISTUJÍ": DE MANOVY „POETICKÉ POSTOJE" VZHLEDEM K AMERICKÉ POVÁLEČNÉ POEZII

Resumé

Paul de Man ve svém eseji Proces a poezie („Process and Poetry", 1956) rozlišuje dva typy básnického postoje („poetic attitude"): poezii procesu a poezii podstaty. Tento esej aplikuje dané postoje na díla poválečných amerických básníků a rozšiřuje de Manovy úvahy o zahrnutí prvků prosodie a jejich vztahu k „procesu" a „podstatě". V poezii napsané v USA po roce 1945 nacházíme jasné příklady de Manových postojů. Ty se odráží i v převládajícím kritickém modelu poezie tohoto období, který ji vnímá jako rozdělenou na avantgardní a akademickou. Pomocí zkoumání poezie psané volným veršem v antologii Donalda Halla *Nová americká poezie* (*The New American Poetry*, 1960) a formální poezie v antologii *Noví básníci Anglie a Ameriky* (*New Poets of England and America*, 1957) Roberta Packa, Louise Simpsona a Donalda Halla identifikuje tento esej básně, které ilustrují de Manovy postoje, a poté se zamýšlí nad „Language poetry" sedmdesátých let minulého století jako nad americkou poezií procesu.

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2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 79–92
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

LOCATING UTOPIA IN POETRY*

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ABSTRACT

The contemporary canon of utopian writing includes primarily philosophical works and narrative prose; nevertheless, utopias have appeared in the form of poetry as well. The article begins by sketching the relationship of utopia and poetry. Subsequently, it focuses on two poems with a utopian vision at their center – Jorie Graham's "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia" (1997) and Elizabeth Bishop's "Santarém" (1978) – with regard to the particular locations of utopia in these poems. Although these poems cannot be considered representative – as the article highlights in the conclusion by drawing attention to Nikki Giovanni and Charles Bernstein – they suggest a variety of utopian locations in poetry.

Keywords: utopia; poetry; Jorie Graham; Elizabeth Bishop; Nikki Giovanni; Charles Bernstein

In Book X of *The Republic*, Plato famously banished poetry from his "properly run state" (1955: 435). "The only poetry that should be allowed in a state is hymns to the gods and paeans in praise of good men," he wrote, since "once you go beyond that and admit the sweet lyric or epic muse, pleasure and pain become your rulers instead of law and the rational principles commonly accepted as best" (1955: 437). The contemporary canon of utopian writing does some justice to Plato as it includes primarily philosophical works and narrative prose; nevertheless, utopias have appeared in the form of poetry as well. In the following pages, after sketching the relationship between utopia and poetry, I will discuss two poems with a utopian vision at their center: Jorie Graham's "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia" (1997) and Elizabeth Bishop's "Santarém" (1978), focusing on the location of utopia in these poems. Critics pointed out that while early-modern utopias were typically located in another space, modern "better worlds" are placed in the future. After the first futuristic utopias appeared in the seventeenth century, the genre began to shift towards "uchronia," as Raymond Trousson observed, or as Tom Moylan wrote, for after the consolidation of capitalism in the mid-nineteenth century, utopias "could no longer look to an alternative located in the present time" (1986: 6). A number of

* A shortened version of this article in Czech will be published under the title "Hledání utopie v poezii."

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.30

contemporary utopias in prose exemplify this transformation of the genre, and texts from Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* to Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower* envision utopia in the future. Nevertheless, the aforementioned poems by Graham and Bishop locate utopia elsewhere: "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia" envisions utopia as a permutating immaterial space contemporaneous with the present and in "Santarém" utopia emerges in the past. Although these poems cannot be considered representative – as I highlight in the conclusion by drawing attention to Nikki Giovanni and Charles Bernstein – they suggest a variety of utopian locations in poetry.

Defining Utopia

Ever since "the spirit of neologism possessed the future saint" (1979: 1) Thomas More and resulted in his coining the word "utopia," as Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel put it in *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, various imaginary as well as real formations have been referred to as "utopias." Peter Fitting has pointed out that the genre nevertheless began to emerge in the Western world only at the end of the nineteenth century, when James T. Presley was asked to collect information about works that resemble More's *Utopia*. Presley's studies included imaginary voyages, satire, as well as philosophical and sociological texts, and his approach opened up a way to future interdisciplinary studies, such as *The History of Utopian Thought* (1923) by Joyce Hertzler, which discusses *The City of the Sun* by the Italian monk Tommaso Campanella and *The New Atlantis* by the English essayist Francis Bacon alongside the writings of the French philosopher Charles Fourier and the Welsh social reformer Robert Owen (Fitting 2009). The marked expansion of the genre at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s came hand in hand with further attempts at its formalization. Lyman Tower Sargent's 1967 article "Three Faces of Utopianism," together with Darko Suvin's "Defining the Literary Genre of Utopia: Some Historical Semantics, Some Genealogy, A Proposal and a Plea" (1973), established a definition of utopia that scholars have been returning to ever since. According to Sargent, utopia is

> a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space. In standard usage utopia is used both as defined here and as equivalent for eutopia or a non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived. (Sargent 2010: 6)

Suvin, on the other hand, has defined utopia as

> the verbal construction of a particular quasi-human community where sociopolitical institutions, norms and individual relationships are organized according to a more perfect principle than in the author's community, this construction being based on estrangement arising out of an alternative historical hypothesis. (Suvin 1973: 132)

Although these definitions are similar, as Sargent himself pointed out, they differ in that the former remains open to fantasy, while the latter is a verbally formed "non-exis-

tent country on the map of *this* globe," a "possible impossible," as Suvin put it elsewhere (1973: 126, original emphasis). Suvin's "more perfect" rather than "better" is also worth dwelling on because it avoids both the stasis associated with the adjective "perfect" as well as the endless progress associated with the comparative adjective "better."

However, my intention here is not to probe the differences between these two definitions of utopia – it is rather to highlight the fact that in principle, the genre is open to any "verbal construction," while in practice, it has included primarily fiction and theory. For example, the 2010 *Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature* includes the following texts in the canon:

c.370–360 BC Plato, *The Republic*
c. 100 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*
1516 Thomas More, *Utopia*
c. 1605 Joseph Hall, *Mundus Alter et Idem*
1619 Johann Valentin Andreae, *Christianopolis*
1623 Tommaso Campanella, *The City of the Sun*
1626 Francis Bacon, *New Atlantis*
1638 Francis Godwin, *The Man in the Moone*
1641 Samuel Hartlib, *A Description of the Famous Kingdom of Macaria*
1648 Samuel Gott, *Nova Solyma*
1652 Gerrard Winstanley, *The Law of Freedom in a Platform: Or True Magistracie Restored*
1653–94 François Rabelais, *Gargantua and Pantagruel*
1656 James Harrington, *The Commonwealth of Oceana*
1657 Cyrano de Bergerac, *Histoire Comique Contenant les États et Empires de la Lune*
1666 Margaret Cavendish, *The Description of a New World, Called the Blazing World*
1668 Henry Neville, *The Isle of Pines*
1675 Denis Vairasse, *The History of the Sevarites or Sevarambi*
1676 Gabriel de Foigny, *The Southern Land Known*
1699 François de Salignac de la Mothe Fénelon, *The Adventures of Telemachus*
1719 Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*
1726 Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*
1737 Simon Berington, *The Adventures of Sig. Gaudentio di Lucca*
1751 Robert Paltock, *The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins*
1756 Edmund Burke, *A Vindication of Natural Society*
1759 Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas*
1762 Sarah Scott, *Millenium Hall*
1764 [James Burgh], *An Account of the First Settlement … of the Cessares*
1771 Louis-Sébastien Mercier, *Memoirs of the Year Two Thousand Five Hundred*
1772 Denis Diderot, *Supplement to Bougainville's 'Voyage'*
1793 William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*
1795 Thomas Spence, *Description of Spensonia*
1798 Thomas Robert Malthus, *Essay on Population*
1808 Charles Fourier, *Theory of the Four Movements*
1811 James Henry Lawrence, *The Empire of the Nairs*
1818 Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
1826 Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*
1827 Charles Fourier, *The New Industrial World*
1836–44 Robert Owen, *The Book of the New Moral World*
1840 Etienne Cabet, *Voyage en Icarie*
1848 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*
1852 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*
1864 Jules Verne, *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*
1871 Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *The Coming Race*
1872 Samuel Butler, *Erewhon*
1880 Mary Bradley Lane, *Mizora*
1888 Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward 2000–1887*
1890 Theodor Hetzka, *Freiland*
1890 William Morris, *News from Nowhere*
1890 Ignatius Donnelly, *Caesar's Column*

1895 H. G. Wells, *The Time Machine*
1896 H. G. Wells, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*
1898 H. G. Wells, *The War of the Worlds*
1901 H. G. Wells, *The First Men in the Moon*
1905 H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*
1905 Gabriel Tarde, *Underground Man*
1908 Jack London, *The Iron Heel*
1915 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland*
1916 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *With Her in Ourland*
1923 H. G. Wells, *Men Like Gods*
1924 Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We*
1930 Olaf Stapledon, *Last and First Men*
1932 Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
1933 H. G. Wells, *The Shape of Things to Come*
1937 Katharine Burdekin, *Swastika Night*
1948 B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two*
1949 George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
1953 Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*
1954 William Golding, *The Lord of the Flies*
1958 Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World Revisited*
1962 Aldous Huxley, *Island*
1962 Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange*
1970 Ira Levin, *This Perfect Day*
1974 Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*
1975 Joanna Russ, *The Female Man*
1975 Ernest Callenbach, *Ecotopia*
1976 Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*
1986 Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*
1987 Iain M. Banks, *Consider Phlebas*
1992–6 Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Mars Trilogy*
1996 Jack Halperin, *The Truth Machine*
1997 Ronald Wright, *A Scientific Romance*
2000 Brian Aldiss, *White Mars*
2003 Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*
2005 Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*
2007 Chuck Palahniuk, *Rant*
2009 Margaret Atwood, *The Year of the Flood*
(Claeys 2010: xiv–xv)

This "Brief Chronology of Key Works of Utopian Literature and Thought" spans across several centuries and nationalities, and it includes theoretical texts as well as fiction. The absence of other literary forms besides the novel is nevertheless notable, and although in this particular case, it can be explained by the need to draw attention to a plethora of works in the genre, it seems that when it comes to utopian literature, it is common to privilege prose in general and the novel in particular. So what is the relationship of poetry to utopia?

Poetry and Utopia

To contemplate the question above, we may begin by noting that utopian prose often includes poetry, as a result of which a polyphonic nature of utopia becomes manifest. A good example is Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward 2000–1887*. The novel reproduces a fragment of Alfred Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," in order to prove that an artist may envision the future. Yet Tennyson's poem is edited to fit the novel's needs and merely lines 119–120, 127–130 and 137–138 are reproduced:

> For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
> Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be; […]
> Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags were furled.
> In the Parliament of man, the federation of the world.
> Then the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
> And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law. […]
> For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns. (Bellamy 2000: 98)

In the entire poem, Tennyson's imaginary future is different from that of Bellamy. Therefore lines 121–122, which read "the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails, / Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales," were omitted as visions of such heavenly technological miracles did not coincide with Bellamy's envisioned future. Lines 135–136 were left out as well, because Bellamy's utopia emerged as the result of an inevitable peaceful evolution, whereas Tennyson's poem offers a powerful image of a popular mass uprising: "Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion, creeping nigher, / Glares at one that nods and winks behind a slowly-dying fire." The fact that these lines were left out suggests that Bellamy consciously turned away from doubt and revolution. Yet "Locksley Hall," of course, continues to haunt *Looking Backward*. The poem therefore stands in an intertextual relationship to the prosaic parts of the text, debating its central message.

Besides contributing to the polyphonic nature of utopia in prose, poetry has generated its own utopian visions, which Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" illustrated already. Some poets and critics go as far as considering poetry itself in utopian terms. The poet Charles Simic, for example, saw poetry as utopian because it lets us enter the lost past:

> A young man in a small town in Patagonia or in Kansas reads an ancient Chinese poet in a book he borrowed from the library and falls in love with a poem, which he reads to himself over and over again as the summer night is falling. With each reading he brings the voice of the dead poet to life. For one unforgettable moment, he steps out of his own cramped self and enters the lives of unknown men and women, seeing the world through their eyes, feeling what they once felt and thinking what they once thought. If poetry is not the most utopian project ever devised by human beings, I don't know what is. (Simic 2012)

Andrew Lawson argued that poetry is utopian because it stands in opposition to capitalist society and instrumental reason that governs this society:

> Poetry condemns society just by existing in its margin: only when it accepts that margin does it lose its force. Furthermore, poetry does not sacrifice itself entirely to the aesthetic, the intuitive and non-rational: its intuitive form is its rational or critical function. Precisely because poetry is useless it is free: its critical function is unavailable to instrumental reason, and offers a critique of that reason. In this way, modern poetry is both a utopian prolepsis and a space "within the present […] where a feasible future might grow," both a "space of experience" and a "horizon of expectation." (1991: 98)

More recently, this idea has been developed by Alain Badiou, who departed from Plato's rejection of the poem as an imitation of an imitation, asserting instead that "the poem is an unthinkable thought" (2014: 48). "Poets," according to Badiou, "are those who try to make a language say what it seems incapable of saying. Poets are those who seek to create in language new names to name that which, before the poem, has no name" (2014: 94). For this reason, "there exists an essential link between poetry and communism" (Badiou 2014: 93) – communism, needless to say, not in the sense of what has been referred to as communism by various regimes in the past, but as a utopian "life in common" (Badiou 2014: 93).

To see poetry as utopia may seem an attractive concept also when considering the Greek root of the English word, to "make" or to "create," or the root of Czech and other Slavic expressions that mean to "fabulate." But to perceive the poet and poetry in utopian terms is not the only way in which they may be viewed. The poet has been seen as a philosopher, a propagandist, a pedagogue, a witness, a political activist, a pretender, a fool, a neurotic, a Sunday man, a priest, a jurist and even an archetypal mother. Poetry, too, may inform, teach, delight, disturb, deceive, witness, and oppose as well as spread ideology. In other words, poetry exists alongside and across other cultural forms, from which it is moreover hard to distinguish. The only seemingly firm definition of poetry as opposed to prose is that the former is printed in lines the length of which is determined by the author, which, of course, is challenged by prose poetry and non-poetic discourses that use lines. It could be argued that there is nothing particularly special about poetry.

Again, my intention here is not to probe the definition and potential of poetry but to suggest that considering poetry (or literature and art in general) as utopian is ultimately explosive of the concept of utopia. To avoid rendering the concept meaningless, it is practical to return to the definitions offered by Sargent and Suvin, which enables us to consider only poems with a considerably detailed vision.

"The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia"

Another example of a popular poem with a utopian vision, besides "Locksley Hall," is an anonymous thirteenth-century vision of Cockaygne, a land located "[f]ar out to sea and left of Spain" (line 1). In comparison to Cockaygne, Paradise pales: whereas "[i]n Paradise what's to be seen / But grass and flowers and branches green?" (lines 7–8) in Cockaygne, the night never comes; rivers are filled with milk, oil and honey; houses are built of pastries; and there are no bugs and animals – with the exception of graceful singing birds and "best-dressed" geese that seasoned with "garlic in great quantity" fly "roasted on the spit" and "cry out 'Geese, all hot, all hot!'" (lines 104–106). In Cockaygne, people eat and play: young monks, when in "sporting mood," fly around "with their fluttering sleeves and hood" (lines 125–126), especially after young nuns, who dedicate themselves to swimming in the river with no fluttering sleeves or hood. Even though in order to gain entry to Cockaygne, one must serve a rather non-appetizing stint in purgatory, seven years of wading through pig shit up to the chin does not sound any less humane than the purgatorial fires imagined by the likes of St. Augustine.

Skipping several centuries, let me now turn to a contemporary poem that also considers utopia in "another space": Jorie Graham's "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia." The poem exemplifies central methods of Graham's oeuvre, namely "constantly changing experiments with looking and describing" (Spiegelman 1998: 244), marked by tension between ordering and disordering strategies (Tan 2007: 98) and "constantly long[ing] for the transcendent and the ineffable" (Molesworth 1988: 276). The poem appeared in *The Errancy* – Graham's challenging seventh collection, which among other things includes several guardian-angel poems, each delivering a warning against stasis and an affirmation of errancy.

Yet despite the poem's free form – the absence of regular meter and rhyme, and the irregularity of line length – "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia" is marked by a sense of closure. Three separate, enclosed spaces are depicted: a dreary windy outside, an inside "cunning little hermeneutic cupola" (line 32) and a space on "upper floors" (line 48) inhabited by a restless angel, who is also the poem's speaker. Kathy-Ann Tan, Bonnie Costello and Brian Henry have all compared the angel to an artist, "sequestered on the upper floor of a house" and "thankful not to have to participate in the superficial conversations of the party guests downstairs" (Tan 2007: 108). The angel's rearranging of flowers, Tan added,

> seems to allude to the act of writing itself as a process of endless reworking and revision, and the allegory of the upper and lower floors corresponds to the world of the artist and that of society, or to the freedom of the imagination versus the constraints of social existence. (2007: 108)

Costello expressed a similar point, arguing that in the poem, "we recognize poetry as an activity of restless rearranging, straining against both the noise of human discourse and the inchoate flow of existence" (Costello 1997). The angel is also the guardian of a "little utopia," in which s/he arranges and rearranges ideas and dreams that rise up from the mundane downstairs.

The downstairs space is depicted in detail but with a condescending attitude. It is a material space that is plagued with souvenirs (line 23) and with pretentious relations, pretentious joviality and pretentious language, which is evident in lines such as "forcing the breaths to marry, marry" (line 31); "bobbing universal heads, stuffing the void with eloquence" (line 27), "whips of syntax" (line 25) and "effort-filled phrases" (line 67). Graham alludes to several utopian visions which the downstairs space does not embody. One of these is the land of milk and honey. Downstairs, we learn, "the hive is gone, queen gone" (line 66). Both the words "honey" and "honeycomb" have negative connotations here. "The sheerest innuendos" are "honeyed-open" (line 68), which implies flattery. When "the napkins wave, are waved, the honeycombing / thoughts are felt to dialogue" (lines 34–35), the word "honeycombing" can imply subverting and undermining, especially because in the previous line, "footprints stall and gnaw in tiny ruts" (line 33). "Honeycombing" may also imply honeycomb lungs as the pathological cystic patterns are diagnosed by x-ray and the word "wave" occurs twice on the same line as "honeycombing"; moreover, air, wind, evaporating and breathing occupy a central place in the poem. In any case, the aforementioned references to "honey" and "honeycombing" reinforce the depiction of downstairs as a dystopian space of homeless "buzzing" (line 65) beings who live without honey, sustained by mere "fluorescent drinks" (line 25).

The angel, or the conceited yet insecure utopian artist, stands above, constructing immaterial castles in the air and cities on a hill: "the hollow, fetishized, and starry place, / a bit gossamer with dream, a vortex of evaporations, / oh little dream, invisible city, invisible hill" (lines 45–47). Through these references to utopian visions, the angel's "little utopia" appears to complement the mundane space as well as answer what the people below need and lack (lines 41–42). It is an endless, evanescent project. Brian Henry has drawn attention to the concluding lines, namely the reference to Henry Vaughan's "Distraction" and the angel's final turn towards the outside:

Oh knit me that am crumpled dust,
the heap is all dispersed. Knit me that *am*. Say *therefore*. Say
philosophy and mean by that the pane.
Let us look out again. The yellow sky.
With black leaves rearranging it. … (Lines 74–78)

The biblical "you knit me together in my mother's womb" is changed here (as in Vaughan's "Distraction") into "knit me that am crumpled dust" and the angel's "little utopia" crumbles. Although it is unclear who the addressee of these lines is (it may be the people downstairs, the reader, or God), it is not possible to assert "*I* think therefore *I* am," and the only philosophy is hence poetry. (The turn to the pane perhaps evokes Goethe's comparison of poetry to a stained-glass window.) The image of black leaves rearranging the yellow sky parallels the utopian artist's endless arranging and rearranging – s/he begins all over again as the poem ends.

As Costello put it, "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia" describes "a search for direction, for renewed terms of utopia, a heating up of passion for this object, a brandishing of language toward the plenitude, where it blooms and then fades for the exhausted imagination" (Costello 1997). Utopia is depicted here as a permutating space above where ideas and dreams are arranged and rearranged, and where the "dead cordless ones, the yellow bits past apogee" (lines 15–16) are removed like dry flowers. It hovers above the shifting mundane material space downstairs and remains separate from the autonomous outside. (There are no doors, only windows.) As a whole, the poem therefore presents a world where "all that is solid melts into air" but where no utopia exists: there is no utopian horizon towards which the world would approach.

"Santarém"

The second poem that I will discuss, Elizabeth Bishop's "Santarém," focuses on the utopian function of nostalgic memory. Locating utopia in the past is not original to Bishop. After the French Revolution, for instance, the Romantics projected utopia into the future or into another space, but texts such as Coleridge's pantisocratic poems were counterbalanced by nostalgic visions that returned to the lost moment of hope, which is memorably depicted in Wordsworth's "The French Revolution as It Appeared to Enthusiasts at Its Commencement." "Santarém" does not turn back to a major revolutionary event, but it is equally backward-looking, although it recognizes that utopia here is beautified through nostalgia.

"Santarém" is one of Bishop's late poems, completed after she published her last collection, *Geography III*. Although begun over a decade and a half earlier, the poem differs from other reflections on Bishop's life in Brazil, such as "Arrival at Santos," "Brazil, January 1, 1502" and "Questions of Travel," which describe and gently mock the traumatic confrontation of a traveler's ideal with reality. "Santarém," as Costello wrote, "makes perhaps the strongest contrast to the critical ironies of [Bishop's] earlier work" (1991: 173). It depicts Santarém as a place of fulfillment, abundance and synthesis: the evening is golden, the port is gilded, and the inhabitants and animals lazily move on the golden

sand. Besides gold (and yellow), the scene is dressed in blue: buildings are "blue or yellow, / one house faces with *azulejos*, buttercup yellow" (lines 25–26, original emphasis); zebus are "gentle, proud, / and *blue*" (lines 29–30, original emphasis). "Hierarchies dissolve as people and zebus merge in the earth" (Costello 1991:173) and opposites are synthetized in the confluence of two rivers where Santarém is located. There is motion (rivers flow, riverboats skitter, people change their minds) yet the speaker perceives it as pleasant and despite the bustle, which resembles rather the buzz of bees in a hive, Santarém appears at a moment of closure and stasis. Momentarily, it even evokes the Garden of Eden: "Hadn't two rivers sprung / from the Garden of Eden?" (lines 13–14).

"No, that was four / and they'd diverged" (lines 14–15) the speaker responds immediately. At several other places in the poem, she reminds the reader that Santarém is beautified through nostalgic memory, and that, "[o]f course [she] may be remembering it all wrong / after, after – how many years?" (lines 1–2). Moreover, the pleasing bustle of the port threatens to gradate any moment into disastrous calamity. The promenade and the belvedere are "about to fall into the river" (lines 22–23); the cathedral has a "widening zigzag crack all the way down" (line 61) and the priest's bed is "galvanized black" (line 64) after being struck by lightning. "Santarém" also has an un-Eden-like history of colonization: "After the Civil War some Southern families / came here; here they could still own slaves" (lines 40–41). Among other things, "they left occasional *blue* eyes" (line 186, my emphasis).

Similarly to Graham's poem, in "Santarém" the tension between an idealized vision and reality culminates in the concluding stanza, where the speaker admires an empty wasps' nest. Given the utopian allusions in the poem, the contrast between a wasps' nest and a beehive or a honeycomb offers itself. A wasps' nest is a home for insects that few utopias have welcome. One example would be H. G. Wells's *A Modern Utopia*, where "houses, streets and drains [are] planned and built to make rats, mice, and such-like house parasites impossible" (1971: 230), but as specified already in Cockaygne, "there's no fly or flea or louse / In clothes, in village, bed, or house" [lines 37–38].) If this "dystopian hive" becomes a metaphorical representation of Santarém, it is possible to argue that it becomes "an artifact of beauty" (Diehl 1993: 26) or even a prize the speaker clutches and "carries off with pleasure" (Goldensohn 1992: 16, 187), but the golden glitter of the opening scene is gone. Costello has drawn attention to this when she wrote:

> A miniature of the stucco houses in Santarém, it suggests some of the complexity of all the homes [Bishop] entertains in her poetry. Once the dwelling of pests, a source of stings, a motive for travel, it becomes, as a souvenir, not just innocuous but beautiful, a treasure, a kind of poem. (1991: 174)

But even Costello preferred to downplay the weight of the last words of the poem, which are not uttered by the speaker but a certain Mr. Swan, "Dutch, the retiring head of Philips Electric, / really a very nice old man, / who wanted to see the Amazon before he died" (lines 73–75). "What's that ugly thing?" he asks, and the poem ends on the low note of "Mr. Swan's song," so to speak. Santarém definitely loses its utopian aura.

In a letter she sent from her trip to the Amazon, Bishop wrote: "Santarém – I'd like to go there for a rest cure or something – no pavements, just deep orange sand, beautiful

houses – and absolute silence – walks along the waterfront and two cafes – just the way a town should be laid out" (quoted in Goldensohn 1992: 16). As Goldensohn observed, in "Santarém" "Bishop inscribes longing in a strange constellation of images and feelings, pivoting of death, rest, underworld quietude and stasis, and within what looks like the deadly sleepiness of myths of completion and perfectability" (Goldensohn 1992: 16). But the picture of "Santarém" is knowingly underwritten by a utopian impulse and it is beautified: "I liked the place; I liked the idea of the place" (line 12), the speaker says. Moreover, as we have seen, this picture is repeatedly subverted and the static vision disintegrates by the end.[1]

The affinity of Graham and Bishop has not escaped the critics, so it is perhaps not surprising that their view of utopia is similar. Graham's imagination in "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia" has the same function as Bishop's memory in "Santarém": they both generate evanescent constructs. But Bishop's turn towards the past adds another dimension here. Utopias have a complicated relationship to the past. Even when located in the future, they often unconsciously recreate the past. (Bellamy is a good example of this; Milton Cantor has argued that "contrasting the old and the emergent, Bellamy continually reaffirmed small-town virtues in an urban society that seemed to threaten values he held dear" (1988: 24). These values were based on Bellamy's childhood in Chicopee, which was "composed largely of Protestant, reasonably well-educated, English-speaking, churchgoing families with impeccable Anglo-Saxon credentials" [Cantor 1988: 24].) Sargent went as far as arguing that "most utopias are inevitably recreations of the past placed in the future" (2007: 311), but utopian past is

> what the past would have looked like if the past got it right. One can call this romanticizing the past, and sometimes this is the correct label. Sometimes it is nostalgia, but nostalgia is always for a past that did not exist, that has been made better in memory, with the pasts that make us uncomfortable or embarrassed conveniently forgotten. (Sargent 2007: 311–312)

On the one hand, a positively selective approach to the past need not be politically conservative; as Fredric Jameson has written:

> if nostalgia as a political motivation is most frequently associated with Fascism, there is no reason why a nostalgia conscious of itself, a lucid and remorseless dissatisfaction with the present on the grounds of some remembered plentitude, cannot furnish an adequate revolutionary stimulus as any other. (1974: 82)

On the other hand, Raffaella Baccolini has drawn attention to the ethics of forgetting (and implicitly, I think, of the positively selective memory of nostalgia) by recalling Ronald Reagan's visit of the graves of SS soldiers buried at the Bitburg Military Cemetery. "I don't think we ought to focus on the past," Reagan said on that occasion, "I want to

[1] This insistence on motion that corrodes stasis is frequent in Bishop's poetry, as Robert Lowell observed already in reference to her first collection, *North and South*, specifically poems such as "The Weed." "North Haven," an elegy Bishop wrote for Lowell, around the time when she completed "Santarém," mourns precisely the lack of motion in his verse after his death: "You can't derange, or re-arrange, / your poems again. (But the Sparrows can their song.) / The words won't change again. Sad friend, you cannot change" (lines 28–30).

focus on the future. I want to put that history behind me" (quoted in Baccolini 2005). Baccolini asked,

> what is one to do with traumatic memories? Who is to say what is right to do in the case of traumas? On what grounds is one to tell a veteran, an incest survivor, someone who has gone through the experience of the Holocaust, or someone who has lost a member of his/her family to a conflict to just put the past behind? (Baccolini 2005)

Such questions may not be answered in the abstract and once again, this is not a place to delve into them. What remains clear is that Bishop's "Santarém" lays out the tension between nostalgic memory and memory that has a less (or differently) selective approach to the past. Finally, just as "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia," Bishop's poem does not envision any Utopia – no apocalyptic redemption of the past, no "[d]ivine intervention in human history" that would reveal "that time would have an end [and the] dead would rise again," as I. F. Clarke described the apocalypse (Clarke 2000: 16).

Although contemporary utopias in prose envision a better world primarily in the future, Graham's "The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia" and Bishop's "Santarém" locate utopia elsewhere. Moreover, both poems depict utopia as an evanescent and illusory vision. Yet these two poems can hardly be seen as representative and their authors' skepticism is not shared by other contemporary poets. Nikki Giovanni's recent collection *Chasing Utopia* takes a more vigorous approach. "Utopia" in the title here is not merely a better world, but also the name of an expensive special brew of Sam Adams. Due to its high percentage of alcohol (between 20 and 28 percent), the beer was impossible to find in certain American states. When Giovanni was invited to lecture in one government agency, she used the opportunity to ask its employees to locate Utopia with the help of their "world's best computers" (Giovanni 2013: 2):

> "Please, sir," said I, "can you find Utopia?" "Of course, little lady," said the Director. "It's in your heart and mind." He smiled a lovely smile and patted me on my shoulder. Not wanting to appear to correct him, I smiled the smile of the defeated. And waited for him to leave. I asked his assistant. "I think," he pontificated, "it is in your soul. Search deep and you will find it." I knew I needed someone of color. Finally an older man, grey hair cut short, came by. "Please excuse me," I said, "I'm trying to find Utopia. Can you help?" "Why sure," he said "as soon as I can find a safe computer." We moved into another room and he made me stand way away from him so that I could not see the screen. He pulled up a website. "Here you go." And he was right. "I can't buy it as it's against the rules, but get someone else to go to this site. I hear it's a great beer. At $350 a pint, it ought to be."
>
> And now that I've found Utopia, I am at peace […] drinking the Jazz Series from Dogfish brewery: Brother Thelonious, Bitches Brew, Hellhound on My Ale. I have Utopia, and if I were Egyptian I would be buried with it. I use it to start conversations and make friends. It is not for Mortals. Or Americans. Utopia is for Poets […] or the Gods. (Giovanni 2013: 2–3)

Although Giovanni's approach may seem frivolous, the reason why the poet set on her "chase" after Utopia was the death of her mother and aunt, who both enjoyed drinking beer. Through Utopia, she "tried to find a way to bring them back" (Giovanni 2013: 1). Giovanni thus drew attention to the central problem of utopia – the problem of death.

Theodor Adorno once remarked that utopia is unthinkable "without the notion of an unfettered life, freed from death" (Adorno and Bloch 1964: 10) and that "every attempt to describe or portray utopia in a simple way – i.e., it will be like this – would be an attempt to avoid the antinomy of death and to speak about the elimination of death as if death did not exist" (Adorno and Bloch 1964: 10). Perhaps for the same reason, Giovanni suggested that utopias are superficial but her attitude to the mundane material world was not negative, contrary to the attitude of the white government officials she met (and contrary to the attitude of the angel/poet in Graham's poem).

But I will conclude with yet another turn of the mundane. Poets such as Bernadette Mayer, Anne Waldman and Charles Bernstein have intervened into the genre of utopia with more optimism and, sometimes, with more political energy than Graham and Bishop. The anthology of Occupy Wall Street poetry, for example, includes Bernstein's poem "In Utopia." The poet himself noted that "In Utopia" "resonates strongly with the OWS moment," but maybe also with other moments, such as the day of Martin Luther King's assassination in 1968, when Bernstein turned eighteen (Bernstein 2011). This is worth emphasizing because, as Ernst Bloch wrote, "one might live for the moment […] in a completely superficial way" (1956: 207). The objective of the turn to the mundane for our purposes here is to explode the historical continuum and to bring "the now-time, which generates enthusiasm and partiality and which is worth it, into connection with other periods of awakening, no matter how long they were in the past and how differently embedded they were within the historical continuum" (1956: 216); it "is a liberating act that frees all essentially related, utopian moments from before and after" (1956: 218). I think the poem needs to be understood with the above qualification in mind. It is not a practical scheme but according to Bernstein, no politics may exist without the "political sentiment, even […] sentimentality" that poems such as "In Utopia" generate – for the past, the present as well as the future:

> In utopia they don't got no rules and Prime Minister Cameron's "criminality pure and simple" is reserved for politicians just like him. In utopia the monkey lies down with the rhinoceros and the ghosts haunt the ghosts leaving everyone else to fends for themself. In utopia, you lose the battles and you lose the war too but it bothers you less. In utopia no one tells nobody nothin', but I gotta tell you this. In utopia the plans are ornament and expectations dissolve into whim. In utopia, here is a pivot. In utopia, love goes for the ride but eros's at the wheel. In utopia, the words sing the songs while the singers listen. In utopia, 1 plus 2 does not equal 2 plus 1. In utopia, I and you is not the same as you and me. In utopia, we won't occupy Wall Street, we are Wall Street. It utopia, all that is solid congeals, all that melts liquefies, all that is air vanishes into the late afternoon fog. (Bernstein 2012)

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HLEDÁNÍ UTOPIE V POEZII

Resumé

Současný kánon utopické literatury zahrnuje zejména díla teoretická a prozaická, ale existují i utopie ve formě poezie. Po krátkém nastínění vztahu utopie a poezie se tento článek věnuje dvěma básním, které představují utopickou vizi: „Strážný anděl malé utopie" („The Guardian Angel of the Little Utopia", 1997) od Jorie Grahamové a „Santarém" („Santarém", 1978) od Elizabeth Bishopové. Důraz je kladen na umístění utopie ve zmíněných básních. Kromě těchto dvou děl článek zmiňuje i jiné básně, které je možné interpretovat v kontextu utopické literatury, např. sbírku Honba za utopií (Chasing Utopia, 2013) básnířky Nikki Giovanniové a „V utopii" („In Utopia", 2012) od Charlese Bernsteina.

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2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 93–121
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

FRAMES, SHAPES AND SELVES: TOWARDS THE IDEA OF SPACE IN VIRGINIA WOOLF'S FICTION

MARTIN ŠTEFL

ABSTRACT

The article discusses affinities between physical and mental spaces in selected works of Virginia Woolf in connection with the main philosophical and aesthetic problems posed by the changes in modernist representation of character with respect to space and place. In doing so, the argument assesses Woolf's in-human humanism in short stories like "Kew Gardens," "The Fascination of the Pool" or "A Simple Melody," assessing the interrelation between states of mind and the material universe, the way in which consciousness accommodates various material "admixtures" and how subjectivity "escapes" from subject to its own outside.
Using the post-Cartesian aspects of Henri Bergson's philosophy (pure perception, role of memory, philosophy of space and duration), Gaston Bachelard's thought on the "cogito of the dreamer," and Miroslav Petříček's theory of framing and frames, the argument examines how the instability of these newly constructed cavernous subjectivities enables interaction with space, place and materiality. This interaction challenges traditional ideas of unity of self, personal identity and autonomous agency, resulting in new, essentially modernist representations of reality. Drawing on a number of themes from visual arts, the discussion connects these psychological factors with the notions of solidity and fluidity, stability and instability of material reality and individual objects, moving bodies or things in space.

Keywords: Virginia Woolf; Henri Bergson; short stories; space; states of mind; impersonality; memory

At the beginning of the sixth chapter of her famous novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927), while harmlessly reflecting on the effect of lengthening summer evenings on human imagination, Virginia Woolf, out of the blue, formulates an unexpectedly philosophical statement about a mysterious feature which is in her opinion inherently present in the process of perception. According to Woolf's philosophical interlude, perceived images, for example images "of cliff, sea, cloud and sky [are] brought purposely together to assemble outwardly the scattered parts of the vision within. In those mirrors, the minds of men, in those pools of uneasy water, in which clouds forever turn and shadows form, dreams persisted" (1990: 116–117). However unexpected, this intriguing statement, in a manner

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.31

quite typical of Woolf's poetics, interestingly complicates, blurs and bends the supposedly clear-cut relationship between the perceiving subject and the perceived object, shattering a relationship which was taken for granted by dominant literary and philosophical movements of the time, i.e. radical empiricism, pragmatism and scientific positivism on one hand, and literary materialism of the so-called Edwardian authors on the other.

Challenging these dominant conceptualisations of reality, Woolf's fiction paints a different, rather phenomenological world-picture in which perception, which no longer equals passive reception but active (re-)composition of what is perceived, compromises the stable boundary between mind and matter, time and space, and continuity and fragmentariness. Exploring the consequences of this complication, the following article examines precisely those states of heightened imaginative intensity that illustrate these otherwise barely visible conceptual changes, and holds them to be the key to Woolf's fiction. In order to achieve this, the following analysis examines the spatial organisation of reality, and describes the way in which it becomes perceived, shaped and moulded by the consciousness of the perceiving subject. The discussion of the process of perception, however, quickly transforms itself into an analysis of the way perception transcends its epistemological quality and deviates into an inquiry into the conditions of human being-in-the-world as such.

The representation of human subjectivity in Woolf's fiction incorporates a number of closely related questions. First, it is tempting to suggest that the numerous contradictory interpretations of Woolf's fiction[1] are not primarily caused by the fact that there is no conceptual framework behind her work but rather, adhering to a more optimistic interpretation, that Woolf's fiction presents a picture of the human subject as something essentially unstable and changing in relation to time and/or to space. Challenging the traditional philosophical ideal of a stable substance, Woolf's fiction systematically implies that "people are collections of different selves" (Matz 2001: 175) that constantly vary, mingle and shuffle in relation to the environment. To put the matter differently, Woolf's fiction does not present one unified mind but different states of mind which, sometimes smoothly, sometimes suddenly and violently, pass, jump or pass from one to another, dissolve, and disappear only to emerge again. Importantly, these states of mind represent something more than mere moods or humours. Instead, they stand quite close to what might be understood as a changed ontological state of the human subject.

Though the essential changeability of human consciousness necessarily implies time, it also presupposes a very important role of space or extension. Dwelling on this aspect, the following argument focuses on the key interaction of human consciousness with extended substances, and shows how thought, memory and consciousness subsist, become mixed, and externalised into objects, places or spatial structures, and discusses the role

[1] Over the past decades Woolf scholarship has introduced a number of often contradictory theoretical as well as textual analyses of Woolf's fiction. Besides feminist, socialist or political interpretations, which are beyond the scope of this article, Woolf's fiction has been interpreted as standing philosophically close to the position of philosophical idealism, existentialism, Husserl's phenomenology, radical realism of G. E. Moore, empiricism, empiriocriticism, pragmatism or Bergsonism. For a comprehensive summary of philosophical interpretations of Woolf's fiction see esp. Rosenbaum (1971: 316); for a radical-empiricist and early-twentieth-century interpretation see Judith Ryan's *The Vanishing Subject: Early Psychology and Literary Modernism* but especially Judith Ryan (1980); for a very interesting phenomenological interpretation see the chapter on Virginia Woolf in Matz (2001).

of spatial structures, in particular of frames, rims and edges. Creation of these animated half-material objects and impersonal bodies constitutes the substrate of an intricate spatial structure that is composed of both physical and mental constituents and an ever widening and shrinking circle of the self.

The Problem of (Dis)Continuity and the "Fiction of Isolated Objects"

Despite the strong emphasis that Woolf studies often put on time and the so-called stream of consciousness, i.e. consciousness imagined in its fluidity and dynamism, Woolf's fiction is full of stable material objects: cupboards, snails, gramophones, pieces of furniture, glass splinters, rims and frames. Their relation to consciousness and the role these objects play in the intricate spatial structure of Woolf's texts is at the heart of the following discussion. Woolf's classic stories such as "The Mark on the Wall" (1917, 1919, 1921) or "Kew Gardens" (1917), as well as a number of comparably less famous stories such as "The Fascination of the Pool" (1926), "The Searchlight" (1944) or "Solid Objects" (1920) primarily rely on things, objects, shapes, complex heterogeneous spaces and materials for their structure, theme and imagery. It is precisely these material objects which not only provide individual stories with structural coherence but also play a crucial role within the story by providing solid counterpoints to the fluid consciousness. These assumptions are particularly valid in the case of Woolf's probably most popular stories: "Kew Gardens" and "The Mark on the Wall."

At least since Bergson, the world of art and philosophy has been preoccupied with the problem of continuous and discontinuous things. The temporal but first of all spatial articulation of these issues becomes felt with increased intensity in the work of the artists and philosophers of the first half of the twentieth century. Virginia Woolf is no exception. Her early text "Kew Gardens" contains perhaps all of the most important aspects of spatial imagination: an emphasis on "that kind of life that resides in material detail," which is at the same time an essential part of "some more essential vision" (Matz 2001: 174), a keen eye for shapes and outlines, instances of sympathetic/empathic affinity between the observer and the observed; shifting points of perspective, as well as an intricate and multiple spatio-temporal structure. As it has been suggested, the following argument relies on a number of problems that were systematically addressed in the work of one of the most influential philosophers of the period – Henri Bergson. What follows is a brief exposition of the most salient aspects of his thought which are essential for the interpretation of Woolf's texts.

Henri Bergson and Pure Perception

The importance of the selected problems of Bergson's thought requires a brief preliminary sketch which should represent a referential point for the following exposition. For the purposes of the discussion it is salient to introduce two connected themes: (a) Bergson's thesis concerning human subjectivity, and (b) the thesis concerning continuity and discontinuity.

Bergson's philosophy can be seen as a philosophy of fluidity and its opposite – stability; his non-Cartesian dualism is famously based on changing degrees and gradation of these two qualities rather than on their sharp oppositions. Bergson's perhaps most fundamental philosophical innovation relies on postulating a fundamental difference between space and time. Space should, according to Bergson, be understood as homogeneous, discontinuous, allowing repetition, external, suitable for the operation of intellect and dependent on the use symbols and signs (such as language). Time, on the other hand, or more specifically – *duration*, represents the true reality, graspable by intuition, unique, continuous, inner, and directly graspable. As Bergson poetically puts it:

> There is, beneath these sharply cut crystals and this frozen surface, a continuous flux which is not comparable to any flux I have ever seen. There is a succession of states, each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it. […] Whilst I was experiencing them they were so solidly organized, so profoundly animated with a common life, that I could not have said where any one of them finished or where another commenced. In reality no one of them begins or ends, but all extend into each other. (1912: 11)

With this being said, one of the key themes of Bergson's philosophy is the stipulation of the essential fluidity of our consciousness, which should be approached in its sequential continuity in time, or in duration and not in static space. In his seminal *Introduction to Metaphysics* (1903), which has been available in English thanks to T. E. Hulme's translation since 1912, Bergson states:

> Now, there are no two identical moments in the life of the same conscious being. Take the simplest sensation, suppose it constant, absorb in it the entire personality: the consciousness which will accompany this sensation cannot remain identical with itself for two consecutive moments, because the second moment always contains, over and above the first, the memory that the first has bequeathed to it. A consciousness which could experience two identical moments would be a consciousness without memory. It would die and be born again continually. (1912: 12)

By ascribing memory an active part in the process of perception, Bergson introduces a new, dynamic conception of human subjectivity that is based on continual flux, or duration. This flux consists of a succession of states which, analogically to for example William James's psychology of the stream of consciousness, cannot be separated because each of these states announces what follows and contains in itself traces of that which precedes it. The successive *duration* of human subjectivity (and consequently also of human personality) in time requires a new method which would be able to grasp reality in its dynamic nature in unifying coherence. Bergson calls this method "intuition," defining it in opposition to the analytical method of science, language, habit and spaces. Intuition, which is according to Bergson the only method capable of grasping its object (for example human personality) in dynamic fluidity and temporality is by Bergson defined as "intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible" (1912: 7).

In the earlier *Matter and Memory* (1896), Bergson further endeavours to explore human subjectivity as fluid and heterogeneous in respect to the role of personal memory

and the way it participates in perception. According to Bergson, there is no perceptive act which would not be "loaded" with memory and personal history of the subject's memory, which continually penetrates into present perception. This memory consequently constitutes the foundation of the individuality of the perceiving subject. Every perceptive act should thus be seen as a mixture of perception with a piece of memory. Typically for Bergson's philosophy, the ratio of these two ingredients (i.e. of memory and perception) is not *stable* or fixed but may change in time according to our "attention to life." Accordingly to the exposition in *Matter and Memory*, the "mental life" of a healthy human individual being "oscillates" between two extreme states of existence: 1) purely "sensori-motor actions" of "pure perception," i.e. perception *without memory*, which is oriented towards praxis and action, and 2) a "hypnotic," dream-like existence of a pure memory, as remote from reality as possible. Bergson schematises these two extreme hypothetical positions using a cone-like sketch of human mental life, in which the bottom slab represents the world of reality and the cone the ever-widening sphere of memory. In this scheme Bergson located the limit state of "pure perception" on the apex "S" of the cone and dream-like existence of "pure memory" onto the base "AB." These two hypothetical liminal states mark the limits within which the "tones" (1929: 221)[2] of human existence move.

In a hypothetical scenario, any subjectivity which would exist on the apex "S" could exist only as a subjectivity of "pure perception," of the "now" without any admixture of personal memory. A human being endowed with such subjectivity would "remind us of some sort of a robot, whose behaviour is identical with itself" (Fulka 2003: 34). Accordingly, any such person would represent pure non-thinking and non-consciousness, and would be able to perform only actions […] without reflection" (Fulka 2003: 34). Significantly, this type of perception would come as an un-reflected reaction to the outside world and thus could be described as taking place *outside* the perceiving mind, in objects and things. On the other hand, any consciousness that would find itself exclusively on the base "AB" would exist in "pure memory" without any excitation by the material world, dwelling in a state of continual dreaming.

This unstable and oscillatory nature of human subjectivity is of crucial importance for the presented interpretation of changed states of consciousness and exteriorisations of subjectivity in Woolf's fiction. Returning to the problem of intuition, it is again important to stress its role as a unique Bergsonian method of reaching the dynamic and reality of the object of perception, or in other words as a way of knowing. In the *Introduction* Bergson provides us with the following definition of his intuitive-sympathetic method:

> [P]hilosophers, in spite of their apparent divergences, agree in distinguishing two profoundly different ways of knowing a thing. The first implies that we move round the object; the second that we enter into it. The first depends on the point of view at which we are placed and on the symbols by which we express ourselves. The second neither depends on a point of view nor relies on any symbol. The first kind of knowledge may be said to stop at the relative; the second, in those cases where it is possible, to attain the absolute. […] For this double reason I call such motion relative: in the one case, as in the other, I am placed outside

[2] For detailed explanation of the problem see Bergson (1929), Chapter III: "Different Planes of Consciousness."

> the object itself. But when I speak of an absolute movement, I am attributing to the moving object an interior and, so to speak, states of mind; I also imply that I am in sympathy with those states, and that I insert myself in them by an effort of imagination. Then, according as the object is moving or stationary, according as it adopts one movement or another, what I experience will vary. And what I experience will depend neither on the point of view I may take up in regard to the object, since I am inside the object itself, nor on the symbols by which I may translate the motion, since I have rejected all translations in order to possess the original. In short, I shall no longer grasp the movement from without, remaining where I am, but from where it is, from within, as it is in itself. I shall possess an absolute. (1912: 3)

Crucially, Bergson compares two methods of knowledge: one absolute, internal, direct, emphatic or sympathetic; the other: external, detached, partial, mediated by symbols or signs (for example by language), and relying on perspective. The first method is that of Bergsonian intuition and the second one is that of the classical method of positivist science – external observation. It is most instructive to compare the intuition as a philosophical method of exactness and absolute knowledge (Fulka 2003: 15; Deleuze 1991: 13) with the certainty offered by a classical definition, represented here by the method of Cartesian *Meditations*:

> First, I know that if I have a vivid and clear thought of something, God could have created it in a way that exactly corresponds to my thought. So the fact that I can vividly and clearly think of one thing apart from another assures me that the two things are distinct from one another – that is, that they are two – since they can be separated by God. Never mind how they could be separated; that does not affect the judgment that they are distinct. So my mind is a distinct thing from my body. Furthermore, my mind is me, for the following reason. I know that I exist and that nothing else belongs to my nature or essence except that I am a thinking thing; from this it follows that my essence consists solely in my being a thinking thing, even though there may be a body that is very closely joined to me. I have a vivid and clear idea of myself as something that thinks and isn't extended, and one of body as something that is extended and does not think. So it is certain that I am really distinct from my body and can exist without it. (Descartes 1641: VI. 9)

Descartes in his epistemology famously relies on "the fact that I can vividly and clearly think of one thing apart from another [which] assures me that the two things are distinct from one another" and on the fact that the "I," as a thinking non-extended substance, is clearly separated and *outside* of the perceived material object. The argument concerning Woolf's fiction relies precisely on different ways of transgressing these clear and distinct divisions of the Cartesian epistemology. Taking one step further, it is possible to summarize the difference between the two approaches, the classical-Cartesian and Bergsonian in terms of unity and multiplicity, or continuity and discontinuity. The classical pre-Bergsonian world is a world which relies on clarity, distinctness and isolated quality of discrete units (atoms, ideas, impressions), so typical for example for Locke's, Hume's or Hobbes's empiricism. This world is based on an analysis of these discrete units and on external observation, on keeping the boundaries between objects and subjects and not on "inserting the observer" into the object observed.

As the following pages will demonstrate, the distinction between the two approaches marks the essential difference between intuitive-internal approach, favoured by authors

such as Woolf and D. H. Lawrence, and the classical detached-external approach of the anti-romantic Wyndham Lewis or the later conservative thought of T. E. Hulme. Expressed in the spatial terms of unity, discontinuity, oneness and multiplicity, the problem becomes articulated most ostensibly on the level of material objects, their continuity in space and the discussion of the clarity, sharpness and distinctness of their outline. This being said, Woolf's texts are going to be examined for imagery that crosses, dissolves and corrodes the clear and distinct divisions between objects, and between objects and minds, using strategies that are essentially similar to the sympathetic-intuitive method that places the observer *inside* the observed object. The main achievement of this method is the unified vision of an absolute dynamism of the observed object, however, at the cost of compromising the self-integrity and destabilisation of the rational order of things that used to "stand distinct" from each other.

Akin to Worringer-Riedel's Empathy (Einfühlung), the Dionysian principle of intuitive knowledge is from the classicist perspective of the ordered, "universalist" worldview, necessarily condemned as chaotic, romantic, individualistic and subjectivist. As it will be seen, one of the reasons is that the intuitive method exposes the nominalist nature of language: its arbitrary classification, orders and categories, which are no longer granted by God or Universal laws of positivist science, but rather force reality into "moulds that always crack" (Woolf 2009: 9). When Hulme writes in his "Humanism and The Religious Attitude" about the error in the idea that "the discontinuities in nature are only apparent, and that a fuller investigation would reveal the underlying continuity," against which he sets his desire for theories which "assert the existence of absolute gaps between one region of reality and other" (Hulme 1960: 3–4), he aims at Bergson's philosophy and his *intuitive* method. The question which of the numerous gaps between objects, bodies or subjectivities are arbitrary and which are "natural" is the main focus of this essay.

Woolf's Poetics of Identification

As a natural extension of these problems, "Kew Gardens" is from the very beginning a story of movement and rest, clear-cut and discrete, outside and inside. The inherent dynamism of the story presents itself as early as in the very first sentence.

> From the oval-shaped flower bed there rose perhaps a hundred stalks spreading into heart-shaped or tongue-shaped leaves half way up and unfurling at the tip red or blue or yellow petals marked with spots of colour raised upon the surface; and from the red, blue or yellow gloom of the throat emerged a straight bar, rough with gold dust and slightly clubbed at the end. (Woolf 1967: 32)

The sentence-initial preposition, together with the excess of dynamic verbs, immediately evokes a momentum of growth and vertical movement of the flowers which point away *from* the surface to the space beyond the flower bed. Due to its dynamic nature, the story quickly overflows its starting point; the narrative rapidly acquires a spatial structure typical for Woolf: a rhythmic pulsation of expansion and contraction where everything seems to be connected and smoothly passes from one thing to another. On a closer look,

it is possible to see that the rhythm of alternating expansions and contractions, which covers the whole space of the scene, comprises of two poles: a) a pole of material reality, of things that are extended and solid and often presented in a close-up, and b) a pole of abstract, fluid and immaterial reality, of memories, of words, but also of luminosity and translucence of colourful light and colour patches.

The Bergsonian dialogue between these two poles of reality, between the "granite and rainbow" (Woolf 1982: 161) of the story, is playfully expressed in the following quotation. The scene captures the moment after the focus of the narrative moves upwards from the story-central oval flower bed (first paragraph) and focuses on the periphery with a figure of a man and woman approaching it. Keeping his distance from the woman, the man remains absorbed in his day-dreaming thoughts.

> "Fifteen years ago I came here with Lily," he thought. "We sat somewhere over there by a lake and I begged her to marry me all through the hot afternoon. How the dragonfly kept cycling round us: how clearly I see the dragonfly and her shoe with the square silver bucket at the toe. All the time I spoke I saw her shoe and I knew without looking up what she was going to say: the whole of her seemed to be in her shoe. And my love, my desire, were in the dragonfly; for some reason I thought that if the dragonfly settled on the leaf she would say 'Yes' at once. But the dragonfly went round and round: it never settled anywhere." (Woolf 1967: 33)

As in Lawrence's "The Shadow in the Rose Garden" or "The Shades of Spring," being physically present at a certain place while at the same time "mentally" occupying the same place in the past and re-living an intimate affair that once happened, there is a strange type of time travel that unites two temporal dimensions into one spatial cluster. The equivalence of the mental and physical presence allows for both the physical and mental aspects to equally contribute to an idea of reality as a sum of all possible worlds. This effect embodies a recurrent motif in Woolf's fiction – the problem of continuity and discreteness (or dis-continuity) of the respective place. This problem can further be related to the subjectivity of the time-traveller and his Bergsonian identity in time in relation to memory and present perception which clearly imbues perceived objects with personalised significance. Meanwhile, the scene in the garden quickly evolves from the descriptive to reflective mode, further connecting the process of perception and personal memory.

> Doesn't one always think of the past, in a garden with men and women lying under the trees? Aren't they one's past, all that remains of it, those men and women, those ghosts lying under the trees, […] one's happiness, one's reality? (1967: 33)

As a part of his analysis of a number of opening scenes from various classical novels (including Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, 1925, and *To the Lighthouse*), Miroslav Petříček, as if in passing, notices how an "in medias res" beginning of a book paradoxically contains simultaneous hints of continuity as well as discontinuity. Petříček develops this remark into a general observation on how this "discontinuity suddenly changes into continuity." According to Petříček

> impressionism in visual arts […] discards painting in favour of colour and atmosphere precisely because it wants to stress the continuity of all events. However, it is precisely because of this that it finds itself in conflict with the present "moment" and its discontinuity of the pure "now." (2009: 98–99; my translation)

The problematic nature of such "continuity in discontinuity" of a particular *now* which finds itself torn between two temporal moments while at the same time remaining united in one location or concentrated in a point in space (dragonfly, buckle, leaf) is a part of a larger cluster of spatiotemporal problems in Woolf's fiction. These problems are connected with the need to face the (dis)continuity of not only (purely) temporal moments (if there is such a thing) but, more substantially, of objects or things, places, space and, importantly, of human subjectivity. This essentially Bergsonian question of "unity in discontinuity" is in Woolf's story represented by its characteristic dynamism. This dynamism can be compared to the way in which the "impressionist temperament [of Woolf's characters] thrives on dialectic movement" (Matz 2001: 177) between material and spiritual poles of reality, between "the shoe with the silver square buckle" and the dragonfly on the one hand and "my love and my desire" (Woolf 1967: 33) on the other.

The poetic naïveté of what might be described as unconscious leaning towards solid objects and material things that are momentarily at hand or close enough to provide a safe material store-house for one's emotions, feelings and/or memories is something that might be observed on a number of occasions to follow. Expressing the irresistibility of "attaching oneself to one thing especially of the things one saw" (Woolf 1990: 54–55), "Kew Gardens" offers another instance in which mental states alight on common objects that immediately surround the thinkers, giving themselves to their sympathetic looks. The flower bed is approached by a young man and a young woman this time.

> The couple stood still on the edge of the flower bed, and together pressed the end of her parasol deep down in the soft earth. The action and the fact that his hand rested on the top of hers expressed their feelings in a strange way, as [their] short insignificant words also expressed something, words with short wings for their heavy body of meaning, inadequate to carry them far and thus alighting awkwardly upon the very common objects that surrounded them, and were to their inexperienced touch so massive; but who knows (so they thought as they pressed the parasol into the earth) what precipices aren't concealed in them […]. (Woolf 1967: 37)

The concentration of meaning and emotional content that is romantically but also half-mockingly imbued into the gesture of pressing a parasol into the flower bed serves as another example of exteriorisation of the contents of one's mind. At the same time, the downward direction of this gesture counterbalances the upward movement of the growing flowers and structurally unites the scene with the opening of the story, suggesting a complex (dis)continuous structure of horizontal layers. Each individual pair that passes the flower bed introduces its own momentum into the story and installs its own system of movement, its own interpretation of reality. Importantly, the multiplicity and heterogeneity should not be ascribed to the spatial structure of the story but also to the essentially multiple nature of human consciousness, so typical for Woolf's psychology.

Following this trend, Woolf wrote many years later in *Orlando* (1928):

> [T]hese selves of which we are built up, one on top of another, as plates are piled on a waiter's hand, have attachments elsewhere, sympathies, little constitutions and rights of their own, […] so that one will only come if it is raining, another in a room with green curtains, another when Mrs Jones is not there, another if you can promise it a glass of wine – and so on; for everybody can multiply from his own experience the different terms which his different selves have made with him. (Woolf 2011: 294)

In respect to these newcomers, the flower bed becomes a stable centre around which their microcosms circulate and bring with them their own particular structures – the dragonfly circling around a shoe, life imbued in a buckle, a parasol pressed into the ground, and a "ponderous woman [looking] through the pattern of falling words at the flower bed standing cool, firm, and upright in the earth."

> So the heavy woman came to a standstill opposite the oval-shaped flower bed, and ceased even to pretend to listen to what the other woman was saying. She stood there letting the words slowly fall over her, swaying the top part of her body slowly backwards and forwards, looking at the flowers. (Woolf 1967: 36)

Typically, the imagery of this scene directly connects the woman with the flowers in the flower bed and temporarily disrupts the continuity of the whole space. It is easy to see how close the scene comes to a state of complete identification of the woman with the swaying flowers, underlining a significant theme that recurs in Woolf's fiction and connects early stories such as "Kew Gardens" with similar scenes from later fiction, as for example *The Waves* (1931), where the multiplicity of character-voices and human subjects finds itself very close to the situation of the woman in "Kew Gardens": "I am green as a yew tree in the shade of the hedge. My hair is made of leaves. I am rooted to the middle of the earth. My body is a stalk" (Woolf 2008a: 8). Later on in this text, this type of disembodied perception goes even further:

> So the landscape returned to me; so I saw the fields rolling in waves of colour beneath me, but now with this difference; I saw but was not seen. I walked unshadowed; I came unheralded. From me had dropped the old cloak, the old response; the hollowed hand that beats back sounds. Thin as a ghost, leaving no trace where I trod, *perceiving merely*, I walked alone in a new world, never trodden; brushing new flowers, unable to speak save in a child's words of one syllable. (Woolf 2008a: 239)

Such moments of sympathetic identification of an individual with "his" perceived objects, in which one's consciousness momentarily disappears and sees but is "not seen" and the only thing that remains is an inhuman gaze that penetrates into the depths of matter are strongly reminiscent of the problems formulated by Bergson's philosophy discussed above.

Embodying Bergsonian pure perception, i.e. perception without remembering, unheralded, untainted by the *old* cloak, *old* response, *old* memory, the narrator, *merely perceiving*, walks alone worlds that are new, worlds that were never trodden before, worlds which are not *remembered*, only perceived ever again, ever afresh. Perception without memory

leaves no traces; it sees its object always for the first time, as if it would "die and be born again continually" (Bergson 1912: 12–13). The extreme doctrine of sensation which such scenes represent shows a state in which the human subject is set free from the load of the *temps perdu* and temporarily becomes identified with the object it perceives. The inability to speak save in "child's words" is only a natural extension of these problems precisely because human language, in its nominalist and conventionalist nature, relies on the same kind of repetition as perception that is not pure and relies on memory.

Returning to the discussion of the spatial arrangement of "Kew Gardens," it is further possible observe that the flower bed, besides being the centre of the story, has a structure and a story of its own. The flower bed is a place of a qualitatively diverse and more or less linear passage of time (the journey of the snail) that stands in opposition to the non-linear private temporal systems of those who walk past it. As was pointed out, individual visitors are temporarily related to the flower bed as to the natural centre of the spatial arrangement of the story. This flower bed thus constitutes a sort of planetary system around which the newcomers revolve for a while, tracing the oval-shaped orbit of the flower bed, perhaps even pausing for a while, and inevitably disappearing beyond the frame of the story. From this perspective, it is interesting to observe the extent to which the flower bed "double-frames" the space of the story.

If we imagine the flower bed as a picture that is framed and whose frame is the very condition of the existence of the story's concentric composition, its frame not only frames what is inside it (the snail and the flowers) but also what is outside it, i.e. the movement of the passers-by and their impressionistic disappearance that is staged, in a typical fashion, as a loss of shape/outline and a merging with the colour-background.

> Thus one couple after another with much the same irregular and aimless movement passed the flower-bed and were enveloped in layer after layer of green blue vapour, in which at first their bodies had substance and a dash of colour, but later both substance and colour dissolved in the green-blue atmosphere. […] Yellow and black, pink and snow white, shapes of all these colours, men, women, and children were spotted for a second upon the horizon, and then, seeing the breadth of yellow that lay upon the grass, they wavered and sought shade beneath the trees, dissolving like drops of water in the yellow and green atmosphere, staining it faintly with red and blue. It seemed as if all gross and heavy bodies had sunk down in the heat motionless and lay huddled upon the ground, but their voices went wavering from them as if they were flames lolling from the thick waxen bodies of candles. (Woolf 1967: 38–39)

The difference between the clearly demarcated line of the oval bed and the vagueness or haziness of the colourful vapours and shadows introduces an important distinction between the solid and the fluid and calls to mind the classical distinction between line and colour in visual arts, in which the choice between line and colour expresses contradictory artistic aims:

> the adherence to line was understood as a expression of the desire to make an objective statement about the reality portrayed; the predilection for colour, on the other hand, was understood as indicating the wish to reproduce the reality as it appeared to the senses, without the intermediacy of inquisitive, discriminating observation. (Barash 1998: 19)

The impressionistic quality of the mode of representation that dissolves the boundaries between objects becomes a gesture performed from a privileged position of uninterested detachment, of pure observation, without any pre-mediation of expectation, without any pre-established social, epistemological, linguistic or gender pre-classification, or, to allude to the Bergsonian formulation of the problem, without *memory*, which in this context becomes a carrier of individuality. Importantly, Bergson's thought of pure perception brings the perceiving consciousness dangerously close to the perceived object, or, literally, places the perception *within* the object as such. As Josef Fulka points out in his most instructive study on Bergson's notion of memory: "The impersonal perception, the perception in its pure state, is rather a part of the things perceived than of ourselves. Because it is deprived of all traces of its individual character, it would make us […] see things where they find themselves rather than in us" (2006: 27).

The problem of memory in Woolf's stories is naturally connected to the problem of time. Time, as it was argued above, is in Woolf's fiction in turn closely tied to the problem of space. Shifting perspective from the microcosm of the flower bed to the macrocosm of the walking pairs, the story juxtaposes a number of mutually connected spatial systems or units that embed different time-flows. In this respect, the spatio-temporal structure of the story stands very close to Joseph Frank's discussion of the spatialization of form in modernist prose. In his *The Idea of Spatial Form*, Frank offers the following analysis of a country fair scene from Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, based on the fact that: "For the duration of the scene, at least, the time flow of the narrative is halted; attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships in the immobilized time-area" (1991: 33).

Adhering to the main points of Frank's analysis, Woolf's text analogously juxtaposes "units of meaning" (individual scenes), without halting the "interplay of relationships in the immobilized time-area," however. Instead of freezing the flow of the narrative, Woolf's text relies on *simultaneous* existence and juxtaposition of regions with a different flow of time, or "heterochronies" (Foucault 1984: n.pag.). As the attention of the story focuses on the people who pass the flower bed, the time-frame in the flower bed passes at its own (very slow) pace while, at the same time, the garden as a whole lives its life against the background of the murmuring city with its "motor omnibuses." As Woolf herself puts it some eleven years later in her biographical novel *Orlando*, the heterogeneous nature of time is for her something quite natural and represents a recurrent topic in her fiction.

> [A] conclusion which, one cannot help feeling, might have been reached more quickly by simple statement that "Time passed" […]. But Time, unfortunately, though it makes animals and vegetables bloom and fade with amazing punctuality, has no simple effect upon the mind of man. The mind of man, moreover, works with equal strangeness upon the body of time. An hour, once it lodges in the queer element of human spirit, may be stretched to fifty or a hundred times its clock length; on the other hand, an hour may be accurately represented on the mantelpiece of the mind by one second. This extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind is less known than it should be and deserves fuller investigation. (Woolf 2011: 94–95)

Keeping in mind the well-known distinction between the qualitative and quantitative conceptualisation of time, it is important to point out that the heterogeneous nature of time cannot be treated separately from the analogically heterogeneous nature of space.

Going beyond the Bergsonian treatment of time and space, and drawing out the implication of Foucault's statement that "[h]eterotopias are most often linked to slices in time," it is necessary to stress that each heterotopia is also necessarily a heterochronia. Similarly for Foucault: "The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time" (1984: n.pag.).

The absolute break with traditional time, which is the standardized time of the Big Ben as in *Mrs. Dalloway* or the habitual time of everyday routines and rituals, is granted in "Kew Gardens" precisely by the sketched complex spatio-temporal structure of the story in its triple-concentric heterotopic structure (London – Kew Gardens – flower bed) but also by the temporally limited halts and stops in the dynamic flow of the story. All of these moments illustrate not only the space-based multi-temporality of the story's structure but also attest to the qualitative rather than quantitative understanding of time as flowing with different pace in different places. On the background of what was demonstrated, these individual regions of qualitatively different time are centred in Woolf's texts around the axis of the flower bed and connected with some firm materiality, such as the shoe buckle. The way in which these material objects embed folded memories, emotions, feelings and other "stuff of thought," plays a crucial role in an equally famous story – "The Mark on the Wall."

Solid and Fluid

Analogically to "Kew Gardens," the spatial structure of "The Mark on the Wall" is essentially concentric, or to be more precise – double-concentric. The text likewise adheres to a loosely cosmological structure, although it differs from "Kew Gardens" in that the role of the material centre of the story, a mark on the wall, from which the story emanates and to which it returns, is much more concentrated than the flower bed. Contrary to "Kew Gardens," where the movement of the focal point shifts from the flower bed to individual visitors who pass by it and eventually "dissolve like drops of water in the yellow and green atmosphere" (Woolf 1967: 30), "The Mark on the Wall" offers a structure of two centres: the mark (a solid material pole) and the narrator, i.e., the observing subject and her "train of thought" (Woolf 1967: 46). These two poles effectively set the framework of the whole story, illustrating "[h]ow readily our thoughts swarm upon a new object, lifting it a little way, as ants carry a blade of straw so feverishly, and then leave it" (Woolf 1967: 40).

The mark itself can be interpreted as having a number of related functions. In the first place, it is a solid and fixed external reference point, a counterpart of the fluidity and instability of human consciousness. As such, it rhythmically reappears in the text and surfaces from the waves of fluid thoughts as something towards which the contemplating consciousness always clings to in order to escape from itself. The dialectics of liquid thoughts and their external reference points in material reality again echoes the key themes in Woolf's fiction – the dynamic dialectics of solid and fluid, stable and dynamic. Once again, this dialectics is in Woolf's fiction very closely related to the discussion of the problematic position of the human subject. The following extract offers more material to address these problems in context:

> Indeed, now that I have fixed my eyes upon it [mark on the wall], I feel that I have grasped a plank in the sea; […] Here is something definite, something real. Thus, waking from a midnight dream of horror, one hastily turns on the light and lies quiescent, worshipping chest of drawers, worshipping solidity, worshipping reality, worshipping the impersonal world which is a proof of some other existence than ours. That is what one wants to be sure of. […] Wood is pleasant to think about. It comes from a tree; and trees grow, and we don't know they grow. […] I like to think about the tree itself: first the close dry sensation of being wood; than the grinding of the storm; then the slow, delicious ooze of sap. (Woolf 1967: 47)

In Woolf's universe solid things and materials are safe to turn to. A thing as simple as a newly perceived cupboard offers an escape from the complexity of inter-subjective as well as intra-subjective relations. Paradoxically, such object is reassuring as well as, given the intricacies of Bergsonian pure perception, extremely dangerous. As Septimus in Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*, experiencing his mortal fear of a dangerously real gramophone, has it: "[R]eal things – real things were too exciting. […] Nothing could be more exact. […] None of these things moved. All were still; all were real" (Woolf 2000: 120). These objects, for example the mark on the wall, play an important role in Woolf's conceptualization of human subjectivity and its occasional tendency to cling to material objects.

This role consists of destabilising the coherence of what in the western philosophical tradition is typically referred to as "subject" in a loosely Cartesian sense, that is, the idea of human subjectivity as a "fixed, indivisible, and permanent whole (I think, therefore I am) [which] has underpinned existing notions of consciousness and reason" (Elliott 1994: 6). As part of this effort, the following discussion focuses on specific states of heightened perceptive intensity in which the perceiving subject stumbles on the verge of collapse and mixes itself with what it perceives.

The Successive Self

In her well-known criticism of the so-called Edwardian authors, published in a thematically related series of essays "Modern Fiction" (1919), "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" (1923), and "Character in Fiction" (1924), Woolf reproaches the old generation of authors for paying too much attention to material and social aspects of reality while neglecting various shades or tones of consciousness. As a result of this critique, Woolf utilises in her texts her own original version of materialism which overcomes the supposed materialism of her literary predecessors by systematically levelling and/or blurring the subject-object boundary. The instability which results from Woolf's innovative approach to consciousness is a recurrent motif in her fiction.

All of these motifs can be interpreted in relation to the Bergsonian position, according to which human consciousness cannot be described as a single, stable and homogeneous whole but rather as transitioning between "diverse tones of mental life" so that "our psychic life might be lived at different heights, now nearer to action, now further removed from it, according to the degree of *our attention to life*" (Bergson 1929: xiv).

A similar reading is advocated by Jesse Matz who in his *Literary Impressionism and Modernist Aesthetics* relates Woolf's deliberate choice not to provide her readers with

a conclusive treatment of human subjectivity and her reserved attitude towards philosophy to Woolf's statement that "human mind, as opposed to the critical one, varies" (Matz 1998: 175). Woolf herself formulates a very interesting statement on the dynamic nature of the unity of the human subject, or "Self" in her 1927 short story-like essay entitled "Street Haunting." In this text Woolf discusses the dynamic nature of human subjectivity based on the classical problem of unity of the self in time and the idea of the self as a heterogeneous mixture. Stopping for a while in her "quest for an ink pencil," Woolf deliberates:

> But what could be more absurd? It is, in fact, on the stroke of six; it is a winter's evening; we are walking on the Strand to buy a pencil. How, then, are we also on a balcony, wearing pearls in June? What could be more absurd? Yet it is nature's folly, not ours. When she set about her chief masterpiece, the making of man, she should have thought of one thing only. Instead, turning her head, looking over her shoulder, into each one of us she let creep instincts and desires which are utterly at variance with his main being, so that we are streaked, variegated, all of mixture; the colours have run. Is the true self this which stands on the pavement in January, or that which bends over the balcony in June? Am I here, or am I there? Or is the true self neither this nor that, neither here nor there, but something so varied and wandering that it is only when we give the rein to its wishes and let it take its way unimpeded that we are indeed ourselves? Circumstances compel unity; for convenience's sake a man must be a whole. The good citizen when he opens his door in the evening must be banker, golfer, husband, father; not a nomad wandering the desert. (Woolf 2009: 182–183)

Instead of being clearly separated from the Non-I, Woolf clearly treats the self as a "mixture" of different "colours" and various *outside* influences. From the conventional unity of this aggregate, the self (in a rather postmodern gesture) radiates to its own *supplementary* outside, distracted by desires, and "choked with observations" (Woolf 2008b: 91). The idea of human subjectivity Woolf gives in her essay addresses the problems discussed so far. In Woolf's account, individual moments in the linear existence of the self are simultaneously placed next to each other and their substantial unity and belonging to "oneself" is questioned. Perhaps it is this "multiplicity in unity" of the self which motivates Woolf's occasional multiplication of sentence-subjects. The following extract from *Mrs. Dalloway* is a very good example of this strategy which translates a metaphysical principle onto the level of syntax. Each deliberately and from the stylistic perspective redundant "she" represents a slightly different "self" from the next "she" of the supposedly "identical" subject:

> She reached the Park gates. She stood for a moment, looking at the omnibuses in Piccadilly. She would not say of anyone in the world now that they were this or that they were that. She felt very young; at the same time unspeakably aged. She sliced like knife through everything; at the same time was outside, looking on. (Woolf 2000: 7)

The excessive multiplication of subjects in the extract above contributes to the feeling of the successive existence of the human subject in Woolf's "Street Haunting." It is very interesting to compare this problem of the unity of a self, which is unable to accommodate the temporal multiplicity of its successive states, with Bergson's dynamic account of

consciousness. The changes that each individual "she" undergoes while perceiving things create a new, slightly modified "she." What gives unity to these successive selves? Is it one's personal memory? If so, what happens to the self in a state of pure perception? In *An Introduction to Metaphysics* Bergson offers a formulation that explicates Woolf's multiplication of "shes":

> Now, there are no two identical moments in the life of the same conscious being. [… T]he consciousness which will accompany this sensation cannot remain identical with itself for two consecutive moments, because the second moment always contains, over and above the first, the memory that the first has bequeathed to it. (Bergson 1912: 12–13)

Dwelling on the problems of unity and multiplicity as well as on the problem of (dis) continuity of the self, of perception, and in turn of reality as such, Woolf's fiction relies on the cavernous duality of two terms or notions: the duality of the solid and the fluid or the continuous and discrete. The interaction between these two notions and their respective effect on the character of human subjectivity and its coherence acquires crucial importance in Woolf's treatment of human perception.

One of the instances in which this instability manifests itself most acutely is the existence of peculiar mental states in which consciousness overcomes the Cartesian duality and mixes itself with material objects, subsists in them or becomes completely exteriorized and identified with its object, leading towards states in which "an object mixes itself so profoundly with the stuff of thought that it loses its actual form and recomposes itself a little differently in an ideal shape which haunts the brain when we least expect it" (Woolf 1967: 80).

Thought not very well known, "A Simple Melody" is a remarkable short story which Woolf began to write in early 1925. Expanding on the theme of changed states of mind related to material objects, "A Simple Melody" benefits from intricate spatial organisation, and charmingly develops the crucial dynamic of things that are continuous and at the same time discreet. It tells a story of a man who, while being bored at a high-society party, projects himself into a landscape painting that hangs on the wall of a party room. Reminiscent of Thomas Hardy's poetics, the painting captures a Norwich heath-landscape with a pond and a nearby group of women, strolling in natural surroundings: "Like all landscapes it made one sad, because the heath would so long outlast all people; but the sadness was so elevated […], it was beautiful, that it should endure" (Woolf 2003: 196).

The sympathetic identification of Mr Carslake, the protagonist of the story, with this painting is of a slightly different kind than those discussed so far, for example in "Kew Gardens" or in *To the Lighthouse*. Instead of straightforwardly relying on a concept of identity between the perceiver and the perceived, the sympathetic appreciation of the painting in this story takes the form of multiplication of the perceiver's subjectivity, which temporarily finds itself in two places at once: standing in the corner of the party room while at the same time walking in the picture. It is important to note the similarity of this concept with Woolf's Bergsonian discussion of the unity of the self in time and space in "Street Haunting." With the party the scene continues and the narrator explains that:

> It often happened to George Carslake; there was nothing strange about it – this sense of being in two places at once, with one body here in a London drawing-room, but so severed, that the peace of the country, its uncompromising bareness and hardness and spirit, affected that body. He stretched his legs. He felt the breeze on his cheek. (Woolf 2003: 199)

The scene relies on the simultaneous existence of an individual in two spaces, one physical, the other mental (or imagined), united solely by the spectator. The situation is similar to the experience of the characters physically present at a certain location while at the same time mentally occupying the same place in the past, uniting two temporal dimensions into one spatial structure, as discussed above. The action that takes place in the pseudo-idyllic setting of the picture clearly seems to be heterotopic, standing in sharp contrast to the artificial social space and the time of the ongoing party.

The two spaces, that of the picture and that of the party, are in the story contrasted at least at two points. First, both places have their own special discourse. Consistently with Woolf's mistrust of language, the main character constantly complains about the artificial, unnatural and mannerist character of the party-talk as well as the desperate behaviour of other party guests whom he imagines to be as bored and repulsed as he is. The guests are talking "silly nonsense" (Woolf 2003: 199), they are "not listening to each other" (2003: 195) or suffer silently, "standing alone lifting a paper knife in his hand and looking at it in a strange way" (2003: 196). Necessarily based on social convention and a certain code of behaviour, the criticised party discourse simply "produces dissimilarity" between people, and fails to capture the simplicity and almost scarcity of "little simple talk" that would be shared by people in a "natural condition" – for example while walking on the heath, i.e., in the picture.

> All human beings were very simple underneath, he [Mr Carslake] felt. Put Queen Mary, Miss Merewether and himself on the heath; it was late in the evening; after sunset; and they had to find their way back to Norwich. Soon they would all be talking quite naturally. […] They would be talking about the way; how far it was; and whether this was the sort of country they liked; also, if they were hungry; and what they would have for dinner. That was natural talk. (Woolf 2003: 195–196)

The Rousseauesque distinction between the two types of discourse implies the over-complicated nature of human relationships and turns to the painting, which in this respect resembles a still-life rather than a landscape painting, as a means of withdrawal from the ever-increasing demands posed by the over-complexity of human relationships, social conventions and mechanical language that fails to capture the essential aspects of human existence and traps reality "into the words" (Woolf 2003: 197). Consequently, the image of the heath is often associated with the landscapes of Thomas Hardy, whom Woolf knew very well, representing a mechanism that, as one of the greatest admirers of Hardy's work, D. H. Lawrence, has it: "sets the human consciousness within the vast, uncomprehended and incomprehensible morality of nature or life itself" (Lawrence 1970: 419). Thereby, the picture represents a contribution to what seems to be one of Woolf's cardinal topics – the difficulty or even impossibility of human communication, or, in Woolf's own spatial metaphor, of "fitting one's mind to other people's" (Woolf 2003: 198).

From this perspective, the simplification of human relationships to what is "natural" is a tendency that can be found in all of the stories concerned with the relationship of one's subjectivity with the perceived material object. Articulating the same problem in a different way, the momentary standstill and sympathetic identification of the woman in "Kew Gardens," and the narrator's conscious withdrawal from the world of action by not coming to look closer in "The Mark on the Wall,"[3] but also the bizarre collection of glass lumps in "Solid Objects," represents the same escape from "the human" (i.e., the social, the articulated, the regulated, the clear-cut, the fixed) and depicts a move towards impersonal objectivity and perhaps even unification with material objects, towards transcending everyday existence in search of "some crystal of intensity, remote from the known pleasures and familiar virtues, something alien to the processes of domestic life, single, hard, bright, like a diamond in the sand, which would render the possessor secure" (Woolf 1990: 116–117).

As part of his meditation on what it would feel like to be in the painting rather than at the party, George imagines himself and other characters walking on the heath and, importantly, swimming in the pond. The pond, the central element of the landscape scenery, becomes for him a symbol of this new, simple and natural understanding – a rebirth, a recollection. As such, it becomes a sort of alternative "equal ground" on which he and other party guests can meet and which would act as a sort of topographical objective correlative.

> Perhaps one was a little brutalized by the open air. Thirst brutalized; a blister on the heel. When he [George] was walking there was a hardness and freshness about things: no confusion; no wobbling; the division at least between the known and the unknown was as distinct as the rim of a pond – here was dry land, here water. Now a curious thought struck him – that the waters possessed an attraction for the people on earth. When Stuart Elton took his paper knife or Mabel Waring looked about to burst into tears, and that man with the tooth brush moustache glared, it was because they all wished to take to the water. But what was the water? Understanding, perhaps. There must be someone who is so miraculously endowed, so fitted with all the parts of human nature, that these silences and unhappinesses, which were the result of being unable to fit one's mind to other people's, were all rightly understood. Stuart Elton dived in: Mabel dived. Some went under and were satisfied; others came gasping to the top. He [George] was relieved to find himself thinking of death as a plunge into a pond; for he was alarmed at the mind's instinct, when unguarded, to rise into clouds and Heaven, and rig up the old comfortable figure, the old flowing garments and mild eyes and cloud like mantle. In the pond, on the other hand, were newts, and fish and mud. The point about the pond was that one had to create it for oneself; new, brand new. (Woolf 2003: 198)

It is very interesting to observe the unexpected way in which this scene develops the theme of impersonality and a sort of transcendence of material reality, which has already been observed in the previous stories. "A Simple Melody" seems to favour the impersonal,

[3] As the narrator herself puts it: "I want to think quietly, calmly, spaciously, *never to be interrupted, never to have to rise from my chair*, to slip easily from one thing to another, without any sense of hostility or obstacle. I want to sink deeper and deeper, away from the surface, with its hard and separate facts" (Woolf 1967: 42).

down-to-earth realm of the heath landscape to the helter-skelter of human interaction. Importantly, the key to telling the two apart is the clearness and visibility of divisions, of dividing lines between things, between land and water or between the known and the unknown. The story relies on imagery and mood that echo Hardy's or Lawrence's landscape imagery rather than the impressionist representation of landscape and reality more commonly characteristic of Woolf's art, for example the park in "Kew Gardens," numerous passages in *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. The heavily asserted materiality of the pond becomes a symbol of death by drowning as opposed to the "mind's instinct […] to rise to clouds […] and there to sing and meet the dead" (Woolf 2003: 198), reminiscent again of D.H. Lawrence and his water scenes, such as "The Water Party" in *Women in Love*, the flood scene in *The Rainbow* or, perhaps most acutely, the pond-wading scene in "The Horse-dealer's Daughter." Water, however, also testifies to the inherent ability of our conscience to radiate beyond the reach of our centralized self and to multiply one's experience, following the diverse needs of the "selves" within the mind.

Similarly to John's sympathy for pieces of matter in "Solid Objects," George's sympathy for nature and his anti-social behaviour puts him into a position of a "dark horse" and a "queer fish" (Woolf 2003: 201). Ironically, both John and George can be seen as being aware of some type of exoteric, impersonal knowledge of the materiality of non-human things, objects and landscapes, which "emphasize the nonhuman realm of objects that contains and transcends complicated human activities" (Gillespie 1991: 228). As both stories clearly show, this knowledge is, or at least threatens to be, a reductive one, precisely because it grants understanding only at the cost of reducing and simplifying what is essentially human to the inhuman gaze of Bergsonian pure perception. Woolf takes the non-human nature of the affinity between the mind and matter, time and space, spirit and extension far beyond mere metaphorical account, as it is possible to observe from the following account:

> He [George] thought at once of the lark, of the sky, of the view. The walker's thoughts and emotions were largely made up of these outside influences. Walking thoughts were half sky; if you could submit them to chemical analysis, you would find that they had some grains of colour in them, some gallons or quarts or pints of air attached to them. This at once made them airier, more impersonal. But in this [party] room, thoughts were jostled together like fish in a net, struggling, scraping each other's scales off, and becoming, in the effort to escape, – for all thinking is an effort to make through escape from the thinker's mind past all obstacles as completely as possible: all society is an attempt to seize and influence and coerce each thought as it appears and force it to yield to another. So he could see everyone engaged. But it was not, strictly, thought; it was being, oneself, that was here in conflict with other beings and selves. Here was no impersonal colouring mixture: here walls, lights, the houses outside, all reinforce humanity, being themselves expression of humanity. People pressed upon each other; rubbed each other's bloom off, or, for it told both ways, stimulated and called out an astonishing animation, made each other glow. Whether pleasure or pain predominated, he could not say. On the heath, there would be no doubt about it. (Woolf 2003: 200)

The influence of the heath environment goes as far as literally mixing the material particles of the air and colour with the walker's thoughts, compromising his subjectivity

when George thinks "at once of the lark, of the sky, of the view." The walker's mind, mixing itself with what it perceives, can be considered very problematic. One of the side-effects of Woolf's strategy of mixtures and material influences that press upon human subjectivity and replace parts of it with "impersonal colouring mixtures" is the loss of the classical, unproblematic homogeneity and integrity of the human subject, championed not only by Edwardian authors but also by positivist science and pragmatic, radical empiricist philosophies, so prominent at that time. The title of the story, "A Simple Melody," already suggests that the escape from the complexities of human interaction can only take place at the risk of reducing "the human" to what is in the story referred to as the simplicity or sincerity of natural thoughts. To put the matter perhaps a bit crudely, George's walk on the heath is sincere since it reduces the over-complexity of social reality to a blister on a heel or, in other words, to yet another collection of "solid objects." The straightforward nature of these material counterparts to the fluidity of the human mind, which Woolf describes in her fiction as moments of extreme proximity (or even identity) between the perceiving subject and the perceived objects, thus becomes both remedy and poison. The double-edged nature of these objects typically announces itself through spatial imagery and the rhetoric of solid and fluid, stable and dynamic, continuous and discrete, clear and blurred, one and many.

Similar problems are strongly present in another of Woolf's minor short-story sketches – "The Fascination of the Pool." Written in 1929, this appropriately named short story adheres to the material sympathy of water, depicting an unnamed character sitting in front of a pool and meditating on those who sat there and looked into the pool in the past. With symbolic clarity, the dark and seemingly limitless depth of the pond blatantly contrasts with a white placard that floats on the surface, announcing the sale of a nearby farm.

> The centre of the water reflected the white placard and when the wind blew the centre of the pool seemed to flow and ripple like a piece of washing. One could trace the big red letters in which Romford Mill was printed in the water. A tinge of red was in the green that rippled from bank to bank. But if one sat down among the rushes and watched the pool – pools have some strange fascination, one knows not what. The red and black letters and the white paper seemed to lie very thinly on the surface, while beneath went some profound under-water life like the brooding, the ruminating of a mind. (Woolf 2003: 220)

The picture of the pool in this particular story once more harks back to the impressionist mood of dissolving colours, reflections, depths and surfaces. In its openly symbolic structure, the secrets of the pond are safely coiled in the underwater life, both beyond and beneath the floating signifier that sails on the surface, dissolved, dislocated, pointing towards nothing, and stressing the inadequacy of the standard forms of human communication to capture the richness of the underwater brooding. Unlike the pond in "A Simple Melody," the scenery here is not brutalizing and impersonal, but at the same time it does not favour distinct, clear cut divisions. Being rather poetic and mellow, the scene nevertheless makes use of very similar imagery: a thin line of appearances on the surface and a profound life brooding underneath. Holding on to its poetic qualities, the prevailingly realistic description of the pond takes an unexpected esoteric turn.

Day-dreaming on a bank of the pond, the heroine, overcome by the spirit of the place, notes the following:

> Many, many people must have come there alone, from time to time, form age to age, dropping their thoughts into the water, asking it some questions, as one did oneself this summer evening. Perhaps that was the reason of its fascination – that it held in its waters all kinds of fancies, complaints, confidences, not printed or spoken aloud, but in a liquid state, floating one on top of another, almost disembodied. A fish would swim through them, be cut in two by the blade of a reed; or the moon would annihilate them with its great white plate. The charm of the pool was that thoughts had been left there by the people who had gone away and without their bodies their thoughts wondered in and out freely, friendly and communicative, in the common pool. Among all these liquid thoughts some seemed to stick together and to form recognisable people – just for a moment. (Woolf 2003: 221)

What seemed to be a mere metaphorical representation of a "profound under-water life [pictured as] the brooding, the ruminating of a mind" transforms into another instance of a mixture of mind and matter, this time in a sort of reverse – not materials subsisting in thought but liquid thoughts subsisting in the water. Consistently with the well-established rhetoric of fluid and solid, the disembodied thoughts freely compose and recompose themselves, as they are "cut in two by the blade of a reed." Although not so structurally complex as "A Simple Melody," the story has a typical concentric structure with a material core that, similarly to "Kew Gardens" or "The Mark on the Wall," contains within itself a compressed multiplicity of thoughts, images and memories. These fragments, the "incessant shower of innumerable atoms [and] shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday" (Woolf 1967: 88), continually form new interpretations once imbued with their imagined significance. Relying on similar tropes, the pool, like the silver shoe buckle, the dragonfly or the painting of the heath, becomes a material container or a battery within which folded thoughts, memories or emotions unfold and evolve. Containing in its depths stories of a "man who had been to the Exhibition; and the girl who had drowned herself and the boy who had seen the fish; and the voice which cried alas alas!" (Woolf 2003: 221), the pool becomes a strange node that condenses the multiplicity of temporal events in one location and replaces temporal succession with the spatial arrangement of depth. Significantly, in what might be seen as her own genuinely post-Bergsonian poetics, Woolf here systematically transcends the Bergsonian idea of space as a homogeneous, quantitative multiplicity, and ascribes to it the fluid and dynamic qualities Bergsonian metaphysics reserves for time qua duration.

The qualitative multiplicity of space that concentrates compressed or folded memories and "thoughts [that] come and cover one another" (Woolf 2003: 221), interacting with the subjectivity from the outside, is a recurring theme of Woolf's fiction. Be it pieces of glass, snails, dragonflies, pictures, trees or ponds, all of these material and impersonal objects become "reverie companions of the dreamer" (Bachelard 1970: 162) that directly influence his *cogito*. As Gaston Bachelard poetically puts it in his analysis, in such states the "cogito of the dreamer"

> is easy; it is sincere, it is linked very naturally to its complementary object. Good things, soft things offer themselves in complete innocence to the innocent dreamer. And the dreams

> (*songes*) accumulate in front of a familiar object. […] Easy certainties come to enrich the dreamer. A communication of being develops in both directions between the dreamer and his world. A great dreamer of objects […] knows those hours when reverie becomes animated in an undulating ontology. An ontology with two united poles reverberates its certainties. (Bachelard 1970: 162–163)

Adhering to an interpretation that sees the numerous instances of changed states of mind in Woolf's fiction as standing very close to what might be described as a dream-state or reverie, it is possible to paraphrase with Bachelard that the idea of human existence should be understood as closely coexisting with its material pole: loving "beneath all this summer transiency, to feel the earth's spine beneath him; or […] anything indeed, so long as it was hard" (Woolf 2011: 18–19), and expressing the impossibility to resist the "strange intimation which every gull, flower, tree, man and woman, and the white earth itself seemed to declare" (Woolf 1990: 116–117).

At the same time, however, it finds itself constantly stretched in the dialectical dynamism between itself and its object. Drawing on the last two stories, Woolf's texts indeed manifest a sort of positive or friendly naivety, openness and innocence. The way in which individual characters approach the objects of their fascination but also the way in which these objects "offer themselves" to the imagination of their dreamers can thus be seen as a trademark of Woolf's poetics. The naïveté of Woolf's fiction should not be understood in a generic, potentially derogatory sense but as a deliberate manifestation of her well-elaborated rejection of pre-established social and linguistic structures of the world, a rejection of an uncritical acceptance of the hypothesis of the world, and an attempt to stretch one's mind outside of social, linguistic and cognitive patterns, into the "world seen without a self" (Woolf 2008a: 239).

As Bachelard further points out, a process in which "[t]he reverie dreamer's diffuse cogito receives from the object of its reverie [is] a tranquil confirmation of its existence" (Bachelard 1970: 166), the mutual dependence of the dreaming consciousness and the dreamed object "equalizes the dreamer and the object" (1970: 154). Coming close to the Bergsonian line of thought, Bachelard systematically talks about a special kind of dreaming – about a "sub-human" reverie. This type of sub-humanity is closely connected with the special kind of impersonal humanity which was identified as the core of Woolf's post-Bergsonian approach to the representation of human consciousness.

Another variation on the topic of in-human or sub-human day-dreaming are stories that further complicate the simultaneous multiplication of spaces by playing with framing and reflection. Besides the already discussed "The Fascination of the Pool," it is "The Searchlight" or, more importantly, "The Lady in the Looking-Glass: A Reflection."

Reflections and Mirrors

Published in 1929, "The Lady in the Looking-Glass" depicts yet another short significant scene from the life of an individual that contains a very close relationship with material objects. Reminiscent of Septimus's gramophone anxiety, "The Lady in the Looking-Glass" introduces an analogous indoor drama of an indiscreet mirror that attempts to

freeze reality, failing to capture an anthropomorphised gang of animated house-objects. At the very beginning of the story the reader finds out that:

> The house was empty, and one felt, since one was the only person in the drawing-room, like one of those naturalists, who, covered with grass and leaves, lie watching the shyest animals – badgers, otters, kingfishers – moving about freely, themselves unseen. The room that afternoon was full of such shy creatures, lights and shadows, curtains blowing, petals falling – things that never happen, so it seems, if someone is looking. […] Nothing stayed the same for two seconds together. But outside, the looking-glass reflected the hall table, the sunflowers, the garden path so accurately and so fixedly that they seemed held there in their reality inescapably. It was a strange contrast – all changing here, all stillness there. One could not help looking from one to the other. (Woolf 1967: 87)

Playfully punning on the old idealist dilemma dealing with what happens to the world when the observer turns away or closes his eyes, Woolf's story, comparing a curtain to an otter, paradoxically attributes life and change to inanimate objects and stillness to their images fixed in the mirror. On the most obvious level, the spatial organisation of the story relies on the simultaneous existence of two heterogeneous types of space – the space in the mirror, with its fixed time and intolerance of human imagination, and, in opposition to it, the space of the room with the "transient and perishing" otter-like curtains: "there was a peaceful sighing and ceasing sound, the voice of the transient and perishing, […] while in the looking-glass things had ceased to breathe and lay still in the trance of immortality" (Woolf 1967: 87).

Significantly, Woolf experiments in the story with a fixed linear perspective from which the narrator, uncompromisingly seated in the "depths of the sofa" (Woolf 1967: 86), looks into the mirror and sees reality through it. This strategy only increases the degree of stability of things reflected in it. The use of a fixed perspective is not a common in strategy in Woolf's texts, with one important exception – "The Mark on the Wall." In "The Mark on the Wall," the narrator is also comfortably seated most of the time, "surrounded by solid furniture" (1967: 41), not thinking for a moment about standing up and checking the stained wall herself, i.e., she looks at the mark from one fixed point and does not move around the perceived object. Furthermore, both "The Mark on the Wall" and "The Lady in the Looking-Glass" deal with a number of closely related epistemological issues: the nature and conditions of truth, and the contrast between dynamic and static, solid and fluid reality, objects, thoughts and imagination.

In addition to the role played by the fixed perspective, the epistemological conditions of both stories are directly affected by an intricate system of reflections. Curiously enough, the role of these reflections as well of the looking-glasses seems to be a little different in both stories. The narrator in "The Mark on the Wall," meditating about "dressing up a figure of [herself] in [her] own mind," observes the following:

> [I]t is curious, how instinctively one protects the image of oneself. […] It is a matter of great importance. Supposing the looking-glass smashes, the image disappears, and the romantic figure with the green of forest depths all about it is there no longer, but only that shell of a person which is seen by other people – what an airless, shallow, bald, prominent world it becomes! A world not to be lived in. (Woolf 1967: 43)

In this extract, Woolf in fact introduces two types of reflection. The first is the image in the looking-glass, in fact a self-image, which seems to be positive, something that makes the world more interesting or worthwhile to live in. This is the image set against the second type of reflection, which is a "shell of a person *seen* by other people." Considering Woolf's imagery and her arguments, it is tempting to say that the difference between these two types of reflection, which is at the same time a difference in representation, is analogical to Woolf's well-known distinction between Edwardian and Georgian writers from her famous 1920s essay series:

> As we face each other in omnibuses and underground railways we are looking into the mirror; that accounts for the vagueness, the gleam of glassiness, in our eyes. And the novelists in the future will realize more and more the importance of these reflections, for of course there is not one reflection but an almost infinite number; these are the depths they will explore, those the phantoms they will pursue, leaving the description of reality more and more out of their stories, taking a knowledge of it for granted. (Woolf 1967: 44)

The influence of these strange reflections which covers the clear-cut reality of standard, opaque things in "The Mark on the Wall" is a part of the more general discussion of the arbitrary nature of language and other standardised means of communication, behaviour, etc. This is connected with the way in which this dynamic series of reflections replaces the supposedly factual and "solid" truth of "leading articles and cabinet ministers," and disintegrates the supposed "thing itself, the standard thing, the real thing, from which one could not depart save at the risk of nameless damnation" (Woolf 1967: 44).

This approach relies precisely on juxtaposing imaginative "perspectivist" interpretations of reality, based on creative reflection, with the fixed reality of the arbitrary "things themselves." From a more general point of view, the distinction between these two orders of reality closely resembles a classical philosophical problem of choosing the criteria for the way in which we classify/divide the "myriad impressions – trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel" (Woolf 2009: 9) that fall on us every day and shape this chaos into the moulds of species and genera of positivist science, into social and linguistic systems and other arbitrarily pre-conditioned forms of our perception.

> In short, the observer is choked with observations. Only to prevent us from being submerged by chaos, nature and society between them have arranged a system of classification which is simplicity itself; stalls, boxes, amphitheatre, gallery. The moulds are filled nightly. There is no need to distinguish details. But the difficulty remains – one has to choose. (Woolf 2008b: 91)

As it was demonstrated, this problem is inherent to Woolf's fiction on a number of levels, manifesting itself by the constant fluctuation between the poles of the solid and the fluid, the structured and the loose, the discrete and the continuous, the outlined and the coloured, the artificial and the simple, the material and the immaterial, the physical and the mental. This series of dialectical pairs forms an integral part of the general discussion of the continuity and discontinuity of things, shapes and selves, and the ways

in which Woolf balances the two extremes – a stale world of "standard things" and the absurd anti-order of Foucault's "Chinese encyclopaedia" (Foucault 2002: xvii).[4]

Returning to the discussion of "The Mark on the Wall" and "The Lady in the Looking-Glass," it is possible to observe that contrary to the multiple reflections of ourselves in the eyes of others and contrary to the reflection of the self-image in "The Mark on the Wall," the mirror in "The Lady in the Looking-glass," similarly to the painting in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, reflects or reveals a stable core of the "factual" truth, i.e., the emptiness of the main protagonist, Isabella Tyson.

> Everything dropped from her – clouds, dress, basket, diamond – all that one had called the creeper and convolvulus. Here was the hard wall beneath. Here was the woman herself. She stood naked in that pitiless light. And there was nothing. Isabella was perfectly empty. She had no thoughts. She had no friends. She cared for nobody. As for her letters, they were all bills. Look, as she stood there, old and angular, veined and lined, with her high nose and her wrinkled neck […]. (Woolf 1967: 92)

The woman herself – the hard wall beneath the imagination, the snail on the wall, the crystal in sand – represents a different, hard and solid order of reality that is juxtaposed with reflections of the imagination which are, like "the convolvulus itself [,] trembling between one's eyes and the truth"(Woolf 1967: 87). "The fact and vision" (Woolf 1982: 298) – these two orders of reality, but also two different approaches to reality, exist simultaneously in Woolf's texts next to each other in a relationship of mutually supportive supplementarity.

Considering the characteristic quality of Woolf's fiction, the relationship of these two attitudes to reality that fluctuates between states of uncompromising opposition and indifferent juxtaposition, raise an important question of reality and simulacrum, or an image and its original. Woolf occasionally refers to the images in her fiction as "half phantoms" (1967: 44) or describes her characters as "will-o'-the-wisps" (2009: 35). However, in the reversed epistemology of "The Lady in the Looking-glass," the difference between reality and image is once more decided by a very specific, yet perfectly logical means: by the golden rim or frame of the looking glass. With the "difference between reality and image being that reality is not en-framed" (Petříček 2009: 38; my translation), this golden rim introduces a clear-cut dividing line between the space of petrified facts, i.e. objects reflected in the mirror, and scenes full of imagination and visions that materialize after the heroine is no longer reflected in the mirror, and is no longer directly seen by the narrator who is still fixed in her comfortable chair.

Given the specific logic of the story, the imaginary comes to be seen as more natural than the reality reflected in the mirror: "Half an hour ago the mistress of the house […]

[4] To illustrate the problem of classification in his *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault famously comes up with a bizarre fictional classificatory system that points out the arbitrary nature of our classificatory system – a "certain Chinese encyclopaedia," according to which "'animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.' In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thinking, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *in this way*" (Foucault 2002: xvii).

had gone down the grass path in her thin summer dress, carrying a basket, and had vanished, sliced off by the gilt rim of the looking-glass" (Woolf 1967: 87).

Following the logic dictated by the narrator's perspective, Isabella is cut in half, together with "the long grass path leading between the banks of tall flowers" (Woolf 1967: 87), by the golden rim of the mirror precisely at the moment when she leaves the space of facts, i.e. the space that is reflected in the mirror and that can be seen from the narrator's limited perspective, and enters the space of modality that is controlled by imagination rather than sight. This space transcends the mirror image and opens itself to an account of truth that favours story-telling.

Accordingly, when referring to this slice of reality, the narrator, who cannot see, inevitably "supposes" and "presumes," or in other words places Isabelle at the centre of all sorts of different narratives. As if the play was more important than its result, the unknown, the dynamic, and the moving always seems closer to life than the known. As Woolf's narrator confesses in "An Unwritten Novel" (1921): "[I]t's you, unknown figures, you I adore; if I open my arms, it's you I embrace, you I draw to me – adorable world!" (Woolf 1967: 26).

The importance of a rim or frame understood as a dividing line between two heterogeneous spaces, structures or worlds, i.e. between the "adorable world" of limitless possibilities and reflections and the dry standardized "world not to be lived in" (Woolf 1967: 43), can be observed in all the stories discussed so far. The most obvious example of a frame (rim) that divides two heterogeneous spaces is the edge of the flower bed in "Kew Gardens," where, as was suggested, the edge creates a dividing line between two regions of different flow of time and of different degrees of detail and solidity, and functions as the oval-shaped centre of relative stability in the dissolving world of colours. Moreover, the rim, understood as a dividing line, can be traced in both stories that feature the reflection of the water surface, i.e. "The Fascination of the Pool" and "A Simple Melody."

The complex relationships of "reality" and its image in stories like "The Fascination of the Pool," "A Simple Melody" and "The Lady in the Looking-Glass," enhances the ambiguity of the continuity or discontinuity between the two regions. Commenting on the ambiguity that results from the process of en-framing, Miroslav Petříček concludes that:

> If the picture, the foundation of which is the frame, allows what is framed to be in some way distinguished from the external environment, and if the edge, understood as a frame, also organises that which is en-framed, it follows that every picture separates the legible from the unintelligible. However, a picture, understood more narrowly and in a more explicit sense, i.e. a picture which seems to be in an analogical relation to reality, which depicts reality, mirrors or imitates it, is in this sense remarkably ambiguous: being the other (separated by the frame) it is not reality itself (relationship of discontinuity), being analogical, i.e. representing reality, it connects to it and is related to it (continuity). And so another strange situation emerges: a frame or a framework is a barricade against the unintelligible which surrounds what we picture. This border, however, *must not be insurmountable*. (Petříček 2009: 39; my translation)

The continuous/discontinuous spatial arrangement of structures that rely on this ambiguous permeability of the edge testifies to the general ambiguity and paradoxical nature of Woolf's cavernous, semi-interconnected universe in which individual objects and selves exist as separated but at the same time not entirely discrete entities, spaces or images.

The states in which human consciousness or the subject's thoughts contain particles of matter assert a central role in the discussion of Woolf's in-human humanism, resulting in the problem of mixing of objects with the "stuff of thought," potentially resulting in impersonality and ultimately, the problem of the coherence and unity of objects and selves. The impossibility of our introspection or self-reflection to ascertain whether the perceived object remains in its traditional location, i.e. "outside" the subject's mind or whether, perhaps under some special circumstances, some parts of the object *physically* enter *into* the perceiving consciousness or become one with it, abolishes or at least seriously weakens the ontological difference between subject and object, turning "life" into Woolf's proverbial "luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end" (Woolf 2009: 9). This in turn violates the supposedly clear-cut conception of human consciousness as en-framed *inside* the subject and spills it to the material outside. Consciousness consequently becomes a product of external forces over which it has no control. As noted above, this exteriorisation usually takes place under psychologically or perceptively intense situations. Temporary states of ontological insecurity, extreme visual sympathy, instances of object-inspired day-dreaming, moments of pure perception, all compromise the cogito of the dreamer that is "less lively that the thinker's cogito. […] The dreamer's being is a diffused being [… and] escapes the punctualization of the *hic* and the *nunc*" (Bachelard 1970: 167).

Based on the series of arguments presented above, it is possible to conclude that Woolf's fiction relies on an intricate interplay of classical philosophical and aesthetic categories of time and space, consciousness and materiality, drawing a picture of reality as constituted by heterogeneous layers of space. This post-Cartesian but also post-Bergsonian space consists of both human and inhuman, spiritual and material constituents. Representing an equally realistic alternative to the works of her literary predecessors, the idea of mutual mirrors and reflections on one hand, and contours, rims and edges on the other, helps Woolf in creating her spatial articulation of her central philosophical theses on the aqueous dis-continuity of reality.

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RÁMY, TVARY A SUBJEKTY – K POJETÍ PROSTORU V PRÓZE VIRGINIE WOOLFOVÉ

Resumé

Článek se věnuje problematice vztahu mezi fyzickým a psychologickým prostorem v díle Virginie Woolfové v kontextu filosofie a estetiky počátku dvacátého století s ohledem na změny ve ztvárnění prostoru, místa a lidské osobnosti. Diskuse se zaměřuje na problematiku jednoty lidské subjektivity především v povídkách jako Kew Gardens, The Mark on the Wall, A Simple Melody či The Fascination of the Pool a sleduje vztah mezi změněnými stavy lidské mysli a její interakce s vnějším světem a jeho proměnlivými strukturami. Výklad se dále zaměřuje na alternativní způsoby „prostorového" vyjádření procesu decentralizace lidské subjektivity, její prolínání s materiálním světem, hmotou a prostorem a studuje proměnlivý vztah mezi subjektem a jeho vnějškovostí, především v kontextu myšlení významného filosofa přelomu 19. a 20. století Henri Bergsona. Zkoumání prostorových struktur a jejich prolínání s lidskou subjektivitou vychází z problematického pojetí lidské subjektivity v esejích Virginie Woolfové a z jejího odmítnutí literární a filosofické tradice jejích současníků jako například Johna Galsworthyho. Ztvárnění lidské subjektivity odmítající tradiční dogmata karteziánského dualismu, tedy neproblematické rozlišení mezi dvěma základními, od sebe oddělenými res cogitans a res extensa, umožňuje Woolfové spolu s dynamickým pojetím prostoru, vzájemné prolínání těchto dvou dříve oddělených „výseků reality", jejich vzájemné prolínání a překládání. Vzniklý obraz světa jako oduševnělé matérie či materializovaného ducha, je Woolfové základním stavebním kamenem reality. Woolfová uvádí tato teoretická východiska do praxe pomocí četných formálních i obsahových experimentů, v nichž využívá obrazy vrstvení, prolínání či překládání prostorových struktur a jejich mísení (obraznému i doslovnému) se subjektivitou svých postav. Důležitou roli v těchto experimentech pak sehrávají filosofická východiska právě Bergsonovy filosofie – pojem čistého vnímání, Bergsonův nekarteziánský

dualismus, role paměti, či dynamické pojetí lidské subjektivity. Výklad se opírá právě o tyto styčné body a doplňuje je o výklad založený na čtení novějších, či současných filosofů – Gastona Bachelarda (cogito snivce) a Miroslava Petříčka (rám, rámování a problematika kontinuální diskontinuity).

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2016 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 123–135
PHILOLOGICA 1 / PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

METAFICTIONALITY, INTERTEXTUALITY, DISCURSIVITY: IAN MCEWAN'S POST-MILLENNIAL NOVELS

ZDENĚK BERAN

ABSTRACT

In his twenty-first-century novels, *Atonement*, *Saturday*, *Solar* and *Sweet Tooth*, Ian McEwan makes ample use of narrative strategies characteristic of postmodernist writing, such as metafictionality, intertextuality and discursive multiplicity. This article discusses how this focus distinguishes his recent novels from earlier ones. Thus *Sweet Tooth* is read as a text which includes the author's attempt to revise his own shorter texts from the onset of his career in the mid-1970s. The use of parallelisms and allegory in McEwan's 1980s novels *The Child in Time* and *The Innocent* is then contrasted with more complex strategies in *Saturday* and *Solar*. Special attention is given to the thematization of the role of discourse in *Solar*; it is argued that the novel is not just a satire on modern science and its corruption by commercialization but also a reflection of "ontological relativism" as a product of prevailing contemporary discourse formations.

Keywords: contemporary British novel; Ian McEwan; discourse; Foucault; intertextuality; metafiction

Ian McEwan's recent novel, *Sweet Tooth* (2012), reveals the author's proclivity for the use of metafictional writing at its most entangled and transgressive best. After more than three successful decades on the British literary scene,[1] McEwan has here offered his

[1] The outstanding position of Ian McEwan as one of the most successful contemporary English writers can be documented by the many literary awards his work has received across decades: His early collection of short stories *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) won the Somerset Maugham Award in 1976. Seven years later, when he began to produce more politically-conscious work, he was awarded *The Evening Standard* award for best screenplay for *The Ploughman's Lunch*. His novel *The Child in Time* was the winner of the 1987 Whitbread Novel Award and *Amsterdam* of the Booker Prize in 1998. Other works have been nominated for the Booker too: *The Comfort of Strangers* in 1981 (shortlisted), *Black Dogs* in 1992 (shortlisted), *Atonement* in 2001 (shortlisted), *Saturday* in 2005 (longlisted) and *On Chesil Beach* in 2007 (shortlisted). *Atonement* won the W. H. Smith Literary Award in 2001, *Saturday* the 2005 James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction, and *Solar* the 2010 Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize for comic writing. His international prizes include the 1993 French Prix Fémina Étranger; the 1999 German Shakespeare Prize; the 2003 National Book Critics' Circle Fiction Award (USA) for *Atonement*; the 2005 Harold and Ethel L. Stellfox Visiting Scholar and Writers Program Award (USA); and the 2010 Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Author Award (USA). In 2011 he received the Jeruzalem Prize for the Freedom of the Individual in Society, which he accepted despite controversy and pressure from the opponents of the Israeli government. In 2000, McEwan was awarded a CBE.

DOI: 10.14712/24646830.2016.32

readers and fans a portrait of the artist as a young man, in the form of the character of a writer at the beginning of his career – Tom Haley. Perhaps the result could more accurately be termed a "self-portrait in a concave mirror,"[2] as the author's *alter ego* is involved in a spy-story that has little to do with McEwan's youth in the early 1970s, and the role it plays is largely intended as subversive of traditional modes of writing and reading a literary text. Not all reviewers and critics have been enamoured of this wilful conjunction of low-brow and high-brow with all its postmodern import. The immediate response to *Sweet Tooth* shows, among other things, a stark disagreement as to whether the novel is a masterpiece or a failure, with every gradation in between. Among a score of reviews I was able to retrieve from McEwan's personal website and other internet sources, some even fail to see how far-reaching the novelist's self-referential strategies are.[3]

While Mike Doherty correctly points out that "Haley has other parallels with his author: the stories he writes are subtly changed tales from McEwan's own 1978 collection, *In Between the Sheets*, and a post-apocalyptic novella is derived from an abandoned novel of McEwan's" (Doherty 2012) and Catherine Taylor notes in parentheses that "careful readers will notice a reworking of a story from McEwan's 1978 collection" (Taylor 2012), James Lasdun sounds more vague when pointing out that "[m]ost of Haley's stories turn out to be versions of the dazzling pieces that launched McEwan's own career in the 70s" (Lasdun 2012), and other reviewers prove to be even less certain about the character of authorial hindsight. Thus, according to Julie Myerson, "Haley's short stories […], with their insistent themes of sexual jealousy, obsession and betrayal, resemble McEwan's early oeuvre" (Myerson 2012), and according to Lucy Kellaway's bold but absolutely ungrounded statement, Tom Haley's short stories "are not in the same league" as McEwan's: "While McEwan wrote about incest, chopping up bodies, and burying people in cement, Tom writes a relatively wholesome story in which a man falls in love with a shop mannequin, takes her home, is sexually enthralled by her aloofness, but then breaks her into pieces and throws her out in a bin bag" (Kellaway 2012).

Yet the story of a man falling in love with a shop mannequin is exactly the one Mike Doherty speaks about: "Dead As They Come" from *In Between the Sheets*. What seems relevant in this case, however, is not the fact that McEwan quotes his own early text, in what he calls "a sort of gaminess" (Doherty 2012) (a trick inspired, perhaps, at least indirectly, by Italo Calvino's postmodernist novel *If On a Winter's Night a Traveller*, 1979) but that he revises it in a substantial way. The most important alteration in the story comes at its end: while in the original version the frustrated millionaire, unable to bear suspicions about his lover's unfaithfulness, destroys his precious collection of art objects in a fit of rage but leaves the dummy untouched, in Tom Haley's story it is the fashion mannequin that ends up dismembered and eventually discarded for ever; in other words, the eccentric hero of "Dead As They Come" is not able to get rid of his perverted sexual delusions, which he cherishes as a means of masochistic self-torture, while his mature "Tom Haley"

[2] McEwan himself characterizes the novel as "a muted and distorted autobiography" and adds, with a slight self-deprecatory gibe, "though unfortunately a beautiful woman never came into my room and offered me a stipend." See Cooke 2012.

[3] Tom Haley shares a number of details with McEwan: they both commenced their brief academic career at the University of Sussex in the early 1970s; they both experienced public reading with Martin Amis; their first publisher was Tom Maschler from Jonathan Cape; their common mentor was Ian Hamilton; but most importantly, Haley produces altered versions of McEwan's own early stories.

double is (the scene also echoes, in a burlesque mode, the motif of the dissection of Otto Eckdorf's body in *The Innocent*).

There are two other early texts transplanted into *Sweet Tooth*: the above-mentioned project of a dystopian novel, which McEwan finally left unfinished, but from which he saved two fragments published in *In Between the Sheets*, and "Reflections of a Kept Ape," a story revolving around a psychologically disturbing situation of the writer Sally Klee, narrated by her ape, which turns out to be her lover and potential husband; here the *Sweet Tooth* version makes it clear that the ape is entirely the writer's idea, a projection of her frustrations and creative blocks. The revised versions of McEwan's early works, it seems, acquire significant new meanings in *Sweet Tooth*: from the original vignettes of bizarre circumstances in which contemporary (mid-seventies) urban Westerners find themselves inevitably steeped, they are transformed into accounts of the ways in which people are allowed to recognize that their lives are based on simulations – and are given a chance to cope with the fact. This is also supported by re-contextualization of the source texts; instead of being placed amongst the tales of sexual perversion from the original collection ("Pornography," "In Between the Sheets," "Psychopolis"), they are accompanied by an account of an extremely possessive love relationship resulting from a seemingly innocent interchange of roles between twin brothers, and a story about a young couple solving their financial problems in a somewhat unorthodox way. The fundamental difference is that Tom Haley's literary attempts display undeniably powerful ethical concerns and thus may be aligned with the fiction of McEwan's "mature" period.

I do not want to claim here that inserting one's own earlier texts into a later work and thus recontextualizing them should be regarded as a hallmark of McEwan's narrative strategies characterising this single novel, nor do I mean to suggest that quoting one's own text is an invention of postmodernity. We know that T. S. Eliot used, among a plethora of other sources, his own early poem "The Death of Saint Narcissus" to provide a few somewhat altered lines for the first part of his *Waste Land* (1922).[4] McEwan himself famously refers to his earlier novel, *The Child in Time* (1987), in *Saturday* (2005: 67), the point of which is, according to Dominic Head, to make a statement concerning the improper categorization of the novel as an example of magic realism in British fiction, while "the kind of quasi-plausibility [of the time slip]" it contains "is never attempted in magic realism proper" (Head 2007: 188). What I would like to propose instead is that McEwan uses intertextuality and metafiction to complicate the idea of ontological hegemony: reality is not what is nor even what seems to be, but what becomes. Reality in *Sweet Tooth* is the result of a creative process: when we learn on its final pages that the story of the protagonist, Serena Frome, has not been an authentic picture of her young life, as seen by herself over a gap of forty years from the vantage point of 2012, but actually Tom Haley's fantasy of his lover's past, spurred by the morally dubious basis of their affair, we find ourselves exactly in the centre of this process of becoming, where metafictionality,

[4] This fact is mentioned, for instance, by B. C. Southam in *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber, 1968) 74. The lines in question are as follows: "(Come in under the shadow of this red rock), / And I will show you something different from either / Your shadow at morning striding behind you / Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you." In "The Death of Saint Narcissus" the passage reads: "Come in under the shadow of this gray rock, / And I will show you something different from either / Your shadow sprawling over the sand at daybreak, or / Your shadow leaping behind the fire against the red rock."

intertextuality and discursivity are the defining factors. McEwan's concave mirror thus plays a multiple role: on a metafictional plane, it enables readers to perceive how Tom Haley sees how Serena sees him (including how she sees how he sees her); and on an intertextual plane it reveals how McEwan sees his literary beginnings and, perhaps, how he would like to see them. Call it spying, if you will.

The following section will focus predominantly on McEwan's previous novel, *Solar* (2010), for the simple reason that the major critical works on McEwan, such as Claudia Schemberg's *Achieving "At-one-ment"* (2004), Dominic Head's *Ian McEwan* (2007) or Sebastian Groes's (ed.) *Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (2009), had all been published before the appearance of this text. At the same time, *Solar* will be viewed as a work firmly embedded in the latest phase of McEwan's career, which includes *Atonement*, *Saturday*, *Solar*, and *Sweet Tooth*, all published in the twenty-first century. These novels can be characterised as texts consisting of discourses of various kinds; the world of fiction they represent results, to a considerable extent, from the power struggle between these discourses.

This fact should not, however, be understood in terms of poststructuralist resignation to the serious ethical and other questions stemming from, and defining, a concrete historical period and the replacement of these by a reality conceived as pure linguistic construct. On the contrary, McEwan seems to be conscious of an imperative which Schemberg sums up in the following way: "We need a discourse that puts us back in touch with the ethical dimension of literary texts and offers us pragmatic solutions to the difficult (moral) choices we are faced with in life" (Schemberg 2004: 14–15). The same critic sees such anti-poststructuralist and anti-postmodernist reorientation of literature as the programme of the generation of English writers to which McEwan belongs:

> Dissatisfied with postmodernism as "a culture of pastiche, depthless intertextuality and hermeneutic break with the real," the "Brit Pack" of the 1980s and 1990s – including writers like Martin Amis, Graham Swift, Julian Barnes, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Ian McEwan – turned to innovative forms of plot-oriented storytelling that combined a pronounced interest in contemporary (British) culture and (recent) history with a concern for social and ethical questions. (Schemberg 2004: 25)

The paradox of McEwan's later works is that he uses narrative strategies typical of postmodernism, such as intertextuality, metafictionality or plurality of discourses, to complicate the perspective in which literature traditionally reflected ethical, social and other issues, while at the same time he indisputably approves of this role. This is perhaps the most prominent feature distinguishing McEwan's twenty-first-century novels from his fiction of the preceding phase (including *The Child in Time*, 1987, *The Innocent*, 1990, *Black Dogs*, 1992, and *Enduring Love*, 1997).[5]

The fact that in *Solar* McEwan wrote a kind of eco-satire, with a morally repulsive Nobel Prize-winning physicist as its protagonist, may have come as a surprise to a number of critics, especially those who believed that Ian McEwan was one of the few contem-

[5] I exclude *Amsterdam* (1998), *On Chesil Beach* (2007), and *The Children Act* (2014) on the basis of their length, which may qualify these texts as novellas rather than novels and thus put them closer to *The Cement Garden* (1978) and *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981).

porary writers able to incorporate science into his works with due seriousness. In his tribute to the "rationalist McEwan," published as the foreword to *Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives*, Matt Ridley asserts that "there is no doubt that McEwan is a groupie of Enlightenment rationalism – so long as science subjects itself to the same rigorous scepticism that it does to myth" (Groes 2009: ix). *Solar*, indeed, offers a different picture of modern science and its handling of pressing global problems: while in *Saturday* the central character, Henry Perowne, a neurosurgeon, does not hesitate to operate upon his potential killer, Baxter, shortly after an attempted assault, such noble, altruistic attitudes dictated by the "scientific" mind are alien to Michael Beard in *Solar*. This character is willing to come up with a partial solution to global warming only as part of his business project; his own scientific mind is not subject to a rigorous scepticism inherited from the Enlightenment, but rather to pure personal profit inspired by the period of *laissez-faire* capitalism. Instead of facing problems he is permanently running away from them.

As in some of his previous novels, the author shows his antihero in scenes that seem to be relatively isolated from the main narrative but which provide important interpretive clues. Such a method is characteristic of McEwan's writing even in his earlier period. These "independent" episodes have various functions, from a technical point of view. Thus, in *The Child in Time* the main character, Stephen Lewis, is involved in a car accident: a lorry, taking over, leaves the winding road and turns over. Stephen is trying to pull the driver out of the deformed cab, head first, through a hole in the floor; he then takes him to the nearest police station and continues on his way to visit his Sussex friend without much delay. The incident has no direct bearing on the story; Stephen is not asked to stay at the police station to be interrogated or to give evidence during further investigation. Isolated from other events in the book, the scene nevertheless sticks in the mind as an image symbolically foreshadowing the childbirth at the end of the novel where Stephen will assist with the same care. The function of such a scene is to create a *parallel* to the climax, a cryptic rehearsal of the inevitable (i.e. "that which comes in time") for the hero as well as for the reader, and thus achieve semantic intensity and density. In the following novel, *The Innocent*, the drastic scene in which Leonard and Maria dismember the dead body of her ex-Nazi husband, Otto, stands for an *allegorical* representation of the post-war political situation in central Europe: Germany and Berlin have been fragmented into sectors controlled by the former Allies, but in the Cold War atmosphere of the early 1950s this carving up of the body politic creates a problem, the same burden as the parts of Otto's human body in Leonard's luggage.[6] The scene also invites a more personal interpretation, being symbolically analogous to Leonard's loss of both political and sexual innocence, but this reading does not seem as convincing as the allegorical one. Here the parallelism creates an analogy between the personal and the political, between the private and the global, and in doing so underscores an opposition between innocence and brutality, which works on more than one semantic level.

This private-public binarism seems to characterize McEwan's politically-oriented novels of the late 1980s and early 1990s (including *Black Dogs*), as can be evidenced by the tension resulting from the two distinct types of discourse used in *The Child in Time*:

[6] On the dissecting scene as political allegory, see e.g. Jack Slay, Jr., *Ian McEwan* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996) 136–7.

the impersonal, emotionally indifferent and bureaucratic language of social institutions (quoted in the chapter epigraphs) versus the engaging, emotional language of the narrative itself which reflects the uneasy, distressing situation of the protagonist. This model, however, has been gradually abandoned and the later novels seem to employ more complex strategies.

In *Solar*, an episode charged with crucial meanings appears quite early on: frustrated by the impending collapse of his fifth marriage, Beard accepts an offer to take part in a trip to the Norwegian Arctic with a group of artists and environmentalists to see the first large-scale effects of global warming. During the week which they have to spend together in the close quarters of a ship anchored at the Spitsbergen, whatever noble aims the expedition had turn into meaningless diversions and chaos, which manifests itself especially in the boot room. This is what critics find symbolic. As Bryan Walsh says in his review for *TIME* magazine: "The ship's boot room, where people load and unload their polar gear, and which steadily descends into chaos, becomes a symbol of humanity's problems with planetary management" (Walsh 2012). Though correct in principle, this symbolic reading rests on one of the most obvious aspects of Beard's polar experience, and thus puts the novel's antihero in a position from which he can deliver his rightful moralizing judgement: "How were they to save the earth – assuming it needed saving, which he doubted – when it was so much larger than the boot room?" (McEwan 2011: 109). At face value, Beard as a scientist knows better than a bunch of irresponsible artists, and his pragmatic, rational recipe depends not so much on humanity, the very source of both arts and sciences, but on laws and law-abiding citizens: "Leave nothing, Beard decided, to science or art, or idealism. Only good laws could save the boot room. And citizens who respected the law" (McEwan 2011: 111). A subversive, cynical aspect of this statement becomes the more obvious when we realize that Beard is a person who has never respected basic laws of moral behaviour, neither in his private nor his professional life, and never will.

For Beard, science and morality exist as two separate and exclusive concepts, which are mutually non-interpenetrative even by analogy. He demonstrates this view vociferously during the only evening that brings "an isolated discordant note" (McEwan 2011: 107). A "gangling novelist called Meredith" attempts to speculate on the application of Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle in the realm of ethics, saying that its basic idea "encapsulated for our time the loss of a 'moral compass,' the difficulty of absolute judgements" (McEwan 2011: 106). This spontaneous intrusion by an artist into the sacred territory of science offends Beard so much that after his eighth glass of Libyan wine, he brings his fist down hard on the table and shouts: "So come on. Tell me. Let's hear you apply Heisenberg to ethics. Right plus wrong over the square root of two. What the hell does it mean? Nothing!" (McEwan 2011: 106–7). This reaction perplexes Meredith as well as the rest of the group, and the implication is, of course, that Beard does not see it necessary to build any genuine moral system for himself in his professional career (not to mention his private life which consists of a string of extramarital love affairs) simply because this is irrelevant for his strictly rationalist views. But McEwan's feel for nuanced scene-construction goes even further here: the "gangling novelist Meredith" evokes the actual nineteenth-century novelist, George Meredith, famous for his scathing analyses of egoism. In his heated conflict with the ideas of the artist, Beard gives way to the folly of

egoism that seems to define his personality as its most essential feature, much in the way George Meredith exploits the term in the prelude to his tour de force novel, *The Egoist* (1879), as well as in his *Essay on Comedy* (1877). Beard's condescending view thus stems from his conviction that he should be respected for being "valiant, while sober, while socially valuable, nationally serviceable," (Meredith 1995: 6) irrespective of his actual moral standards, as the minute intertextual reference suggests.

On the satirical plane, parallel motifs operate on a minor scale: e.g. when Beard comes to confront his wife's lover, Rodney Tarpin, this sturdy man approaches him fresh from a hot tub with "a not very large red towel tucked around his considerable waist" (McEwan 2011: 58); after his return from the Arctic, Beard finds the rival, wet from the shower and wrapped in Beard's own dressing gown, taking a nap in the sitting room of Beard's house – only this time it is not Tarpin, but Tom Aldous, Beard's bright post-doctoral student. During a snowmobile excursion, Beard is nearly attacked and killed by a polar bear; in parallel, the humiliated student dies slipping and falling on a polar-bear rug. The role of such parallel scenes is refractive: what originally seemed a highly comic situation pointing out the antihero's inadequacy (his attempt to be revenged on his wife's seducer ends up with him receiving an open-handed smack; the danger of his encounter with a polar bear pales before the comic detail that the Nobel laureate had been pressing the headlight switch instead of the ignition button) refracts into a presentation of an acute moral problem, precisely in terms of Meredith's rationalist conception of the Comic. Such modification of parallel motifs serves to expose Beard's egoism in its most repulsive form – after getting into a bad fix, he does not repent but rather decides to profit from the situation and kill two birds with one stone. He arranges things in such a way that eventually Rodney Tarpin is accused of Aldous's murder and imprisoned for sixteen years; Beard also shamelessly appropriates the results of his dead student's research to launch a new phase of his academic (and business) career, increasing his personal renown. The egoist thus becomes a manipulator and a thief.

The tripartite composition of the novel (each part takes place in a different year – 2000, 2005 and 2009, respectively) enables us to see how the use of analogous motifs intensifies this defining characteristic. In the middle part, Beard finds himself in a train compartment seated opposite a young man in his thirties and helping himself voraciously to this traveller's salt and vinegar crisps, mistaking them for his own. The young man can be considered a reincarnation of Tom Aldous, or what Tom Aldous might have become in five years' time, his ponytail now transformed into a shaved head with ear piercings. The scene mirrors, externalizes, and also trivializes Beard's persistent, ethically problematic, instincts. Similarly, in the final section, situated in a New Mexico desert where a prototype array of next-generation solar panels is about to be triumphantly switched on, Beard discovers with nightmarish horror that Tarpin, released from prison in the middle of his term, is after him; yet when it turns out that he does not intend to kill his one-time rival (unaware of Beard's role in his imprisonment) but to ask him for a job, Beard re-assumes his previous position of a large-scale manipulator and refuses to employ him. On the satirical level, Beard is thus portrayed as a man whose immoral, unscrupulous social climbing and machination in all spheres of life makes manifest the illusion of his unrelenting powers, but at the same time threatens to betray a hidden cause of his final fall, as an ominous black mark on the back of his hand indicates.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the attractiveness of the hilariously funny (and ultimately repulsive) portrayal of a contemporary intellectual, this reading can be discarded as reductive and shallow. A deeper semantic analysis reveals much more ambiguity that characterizes the protagonist; this is simply because the reality in which Beard finds himself entangled is not, strictly speaking, a reality of hard facts which he can use for his own benefit, but an elastic, ever-changing reality of clashing discourses. What Michel Foucault defined as "discourse" refers, according to Chris Weedon, to "ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and relations between them." Weedon also explains that "[n]either the body nor thoughts and feelings have meaning outside their discursive articulation, but the ways in which discourse constitutes the minds and bodies of individuals is always part of a wider network of power relations, often with institutional bases" (Weedon 1987: 108). This understanding of the term applies quite neatly not only to *Solar* but also to the other twenty-first-century novels of Ian McEwan, with their prevailing power game of various discursive situations.

An exemplary moment appears in *Saturday* – though, strangely, the episode I refer to tends to be neglected in critical analyses of this novel: Henry Perowne decides to spend part of a Saturday morning at the squash centre, playing a match with his colleague Jay; for critics, this event is only important because on his way to the sports centre Perowne has a minor car accident which becomes his first encounter with a young delinquent who will, later in the day, break into his flat and threaten several members of his family gathered for a party. This is undoubtedly a crucial moment in the plot development, but the subtlety of McEwan's art of construction rests in the way in which he manages to connect a dramatic scene, relevant for his central theme of different forms of violence in the post-9/11 world, with an event that can provide a more universal clue to what kind of reality we live in. This event is the squash match itself which Perowne believes he has won, only for victory to be snatched from him at the last as his rival convinces him that the last service was a let, and must be repeated; after accepting this view Henry, subsequently, loses the match. Not only does this mean that reality is not what is or what seems to be, but what becomes, principally as a result of the discursive power relations (in which what is can be revised and completely reversed), but also that nothing exists as one's private possession, least of all an event turned into a story, however much Perowne would like to cherish such a notion: "Isn't it possible to enjoy an hour's recreation without this invasion, this infection from the public domain? He begins to see the matter resolving in simple terms: winning his game will be an assertion of his privacy. He has a right now and then – everyone has it – not to be disturbed by world events, or even street events" (McEwan 2005: 108). Losing the game is interpreted in this sense as the result of the intrusion of the world into the private sphere – anticipating the critical scene of violent intrusion into Perowne's home later that day but also, perhaps more importantly, linking the match with Perowne's initial encounter with Baxter, which was in fact resolved in the same way as the squash match: the situation that seemed almost lost for Perowne finally turned in his favour due to his eloquence or, more accurately, discursive power. In this way his lost match mirrors, in a reversed manner, his previous triumph and creates semantic balance between the two closely related scenes. At the same time, it prepares us for the resolution of the final crisis: first it seems that the only effective means to break

the pernicious dominance of Baxter over the Perowne family is Henry's authority as a neurosurgeon and, by extension, his possession of a clue to Baxter's brain, a clue which lends Perowne the power of manipulation. But the precise tool that effectively disarms the pathological delinquent is, paradoxically, poetry – Perowne's daughter Daisy's reading of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach." Here the intricate web of discourse power relations is foregrounded in full: while in the morning Perowne won over Baxter by lying to him about his disease and soon after lost his match by being distracted from what he believed was the truth, in the evening the family is saved by Daisy's plagiarised performance of Arnold's poem. Reality is thus defined by ontological relativism or, in other words, by how we *construct* reality in our discursive strategies.

A similar conceptualisation reappears in *Solar*. If Perowne's triumph (which includes his expertise, his moral integrity and his belief system) seems to be repeatedly challenged by the rivalling discourse strategies and is ultimately undermined by the ontological relativism of multifaceted reality, the portrayal of Beard's egoism, expressed superficially in his opportunist manoeuvring, his revolting immorality and his lack of tolerance, similarly loses its definition in scenes whose reading invites yet more ambiguity. While on the satirical plane Beard appears as an unscrupulously manipulative, self-seeking man, more profound semantic levels reveal him also as a victim, prey to the intricate discursive matrix of the contemporary world, not just as a thief but also one who has been robbed. This is not conveyed to the reader by means of refracted parallelisms but of *multiplied echoes* (motif multiplication) of the same variety discussed in relation to the triumph-defeat dichotomy in *Saturday*. Beard is introduced to reality as intellectual construct rather than hard fact by Nancy Temple, a professor of science:

> She said she could best explain her field by outlining a recent project, a four-month in-depth study of a genetics lab in Glasgow as it set out to isolate and describe a lion's gene, Trim-5, and its function. Her purpose was to demonstrate that this gene, or any gene, was, in the strongest sense, socially constructed. Without the various "extending" tools the scientists used – the single-photon luminometer, the flow cytometer, immunofluorescence, and so on – the gene could not be said to exist. These tools were expensive to own, expensive to learn to use, and were therefore replete with social meaning. The gene was not an objective entity, merely waiting to be revealed by scientists. It was entirely manufactured by their hypotheses, their creativity, and by their instrumentation, without which it could not be detected. And when it was finally expressed in terms of its so-called base pairs and its probable role, that description, that text, only had meaning, and only derived its reality, from within the limited network of geneticists who might read about it. Outside those networks, Trim-5 did not exist. (McEwan 2011: 181)

However much Beard resists accepting this interpretation of reality, believing "that the world exist[s] independently, in all its mystery, awaiting description and explanation" (McEwan 2011: 181–2), he cannot help becoming part of such a conception. Not much later he is confronted with it again when he meets Jeremy Mellon, lecturer in urban studies and folklore: "Well, I'm interested in the forms of narrative that climate science has generated. It's an epic story, of course, with a million authors" (McEwan 2011: 203). Beard identifies this as "the Nancy Temple tendency" and manages to distance himself from it so far, to stand outside such a world. His aloofness soon becomes untenable, however,

and the gap between disengagement and involvement is bridged by the repeated motif of being sick: first, Professor Temple responds to Beard's explanations about the scarcity of women in science by announcing that she will "go outside to be sick, and I mean violently sick because of what I've just heard" (McEwan 2011: 185); later, while Beard opens his speech at a conference saying that the planet is sick it turns out that "using the word 'sick,' rather like vomiting itself, gave Beard some instant relief" (McEwan 2011: 204); and, finally, Beard is actually sick and vomits behind a curtain after finishing his speech where he defends the idea of the impending negative effects of global warming. This instance of motif multiplication plays the role of moral imperative: explicitly, Beard is sick because he has eaten some bad smoked salmon but implicitly, and therefore more significantly, he becomes sick because in his speech he has unashamedly appropriated the ideas of Tom Aldous, the student whose death he was indirectly responsible for and the reincarnation of whom he robbed of his crisps. Thus the cause of Nancy Temple's sickness and of Beard's sickness is shown to be identical – it is Beard himself. This series of motif echoes then makes a semantic connection between Nancy Temple and Jeremy Mellon with his "Nancy Temple tendency": if the young man in the train compartment stands for a reincarnation of Tom Aldous, Mellon is a metamorphosed Professor Temple. He too interprets reality as a social – and linguistic – construct, and entangles Beard in the web of such a reality, insisting that his story from the train, which Beard has presented during his speech, is a stock rhetorical strategy called "the Unwitting Thief." This means that the sociolinguistic discourse robs Beard of the authenticity of his experience and, even more distressingly, makes any authentic experience, any sign of individuality, highly dubious.[7]

A paradoxical outcome of this situation is that the egoist, with all his instincts of possession and appropriation, is finally appropriated by something stronger, by the egoism of discourse. Beard, who initially believed that the idea of global warming simply ensued from scientific narratives and was proud to keep his distance from such constructs, becomes subject to a multifaceted discursive reality. He is fragmented into an environmentalist, a womanizer, a "'Neo-Nazi' Professor" and, finally, into a medical case, which an American doctor describes "with a disengaged, insulting frankness" (McEwan 2011: 329). Yet at this final stage of Beard's transformation, the roles are reversed: Beard

[7] Curiously, the question of authenticity has become acute in Ian McEwan's own literary career. As Tibor Fisher points out in his review of *Solar* for *The Telegraph*, there was "a ridiculous palaver over material McEwan had acknowledged in *Atonement* and two years ago McEwan read out a section of *Solar* at The Hay Festival which immediately invited comparisons with a passage from Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*" (Fischer 2010). To avoid suspicion of plagiarism, in the published version McEwan let Mellon cite a number of books and films in which the archetypal story of the Unwitting Thief appears in various modifications, including Adams's novel. A more serious case of plagiarism, with which McEwan was charged in the *Mail*, occurred in *Atonement*, where the story of Briony's service as a hospital nurse draws in many details upon Lucilla Andrews's *No Time for Romance* (1977) and an unpublished transcript called "The Memoir of Mrs A. Radloff." On this, see Natasha Alden's "Words of War, War of Words: *Atonement* and the Question of Plagiarism" (Groes 2009: 58–69). That McEwan tends to be problematically inspired by other people's works can also be demonstrated in the above-mentioned "magic-realist" citation of *The Child in Time* in *Saturday*: the same trick appears in Julian Barnes's *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984), where the narrator chides a young novelist for inaccuracy and quotes a sentence about "the first, suppressed edition of *Madame Bovary*," the fact that he dismisses as nonsense (Barnes 1985: 85); the sentence in question is transferred verbatim from Barnes's own first novel, *Metroland* (1980) (see Barnes 1981: 93). Such "loans" suggest that even authors are entrapped in a web of discursive acts and become unwitting (or perhaps not so unwitting) thieves.

no more clings to law and independent existence as he always claimed to do; instead he identifies with the discursive reality of ontological relativism and this new bias of his must be checked by the old-fashioned rationality with which Doctor Parks warns him: "This won't go away just because you don't want it or are not thinking about it" (McEwan 2011: 328). Paradoxically, this grave statement lends a serious air to the opening passage of the novel, which at first reading appears to be merely the narrator's light-hearted way of introducing a comic character: "He belonged to that class of men – vaguely unprepossessing, often bald, short, fat, clever – who were unaccountably attractive to certain beautiful women. Or he believed he was, and thinking seemed to make it so" (McEwan 2011: 3). With Doctor Parks' words the circle of Beard's story closes; seeming has transformed into becoming.

Michel Foucault asserts that there are set rules to the processes of appropriation of discourse. As he writes in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, "in our societies (and no doubt in many others) the property of discourse – in the sense of the right to speak, ability to understand, licit and immediate access to the corpus of already formulated statements, and the capacity to invest this discourse in decisions, institutions, or practices – is in fact confined […] to a particular group of individuals" (Foucault 1982: 68). This relative autonomy, this egoism, of discourse stands behind the idea of power with which each discursive strategy is endowed. According to Weedon, power "is a relation […] exercised within discourses in the ways in which they constitute and govern individual subjects," and at the same time, power "structures relations between different subjects within or across discourses" (Weedon 1987: 113–14). McEwan's recent novels seem to follow the same assumption, showing what effects such power strategies can have in practical life. In *Solar*, an intellectual in a world dominated by information technologies is envisaged as being eventually disarmed by the power of discourses he is unable to oppose and which more and more infect his conceptual sphere; in *Saturday*, another intellectual has to surrender, at least temporarily, to a discursive strategy he is very sceptical of, and to admit its superior power.

Sweet Tooth and *Atonement* show that the relationship between the subject treated by a specific discourse and the reality from which the subject is "appropriated" is arbitrary. Serena's life as "stated" by Tom's narrative differs from her real life due to the interference of the writer's imaginative powers; in the same way the lives of Cecilia and Robbie in Briony's account are vastly different from the reality that inspired them. And it does not matter that the discursive strategy in both novels is a literary one; each discourse manipulates and thus reshapes. Briony's presentation of real events is not determined merely by her misinterpretation of them, i.e. her inability to understand what has happened; it is to a large extent dictated by the intrinsic rules of a specific discourse, which in this case may be understood as the literary fashion of the 1940s. In the formation of a discourse, the personal meets the extra-personal. When Briony's radical aesthetic views – "A modern novelist could no more write characters and plots than a modern composer could a Mozart symphony. […] The novel of the future would be unlike anything in the past" (McEwan 2002: 281–2) – are toned down by a *Horizon* editor's recommendation to allow for "the backbone of a story" (McEwan 2002: 314), we are invited to enter the world of ontological relativism where we cannot draw a clear line between a real-life story and a story as a *sine qua non* of literary discourse.

Compared to McEwan's post-2000 novels, *Enduring Love* offers a more unproblematic relationship between what is happening and how these events are interpreted by the protagonist-cum-narrator, Joe Rose. Stalked by Jed Parry, a young man who tries to convince him of his love, Joe rightly indicates such behaviour as a case of de Clérambault's syndrome. Joe's ability to understand reality correctly and not to get deluded by medical discourse, turns the novel into something close to a thriller in which a character must defend his truth against all odds. McEwan's later novels tend to entangle their characters in a more complex web of discursive strategies. The moral focus has thus shifted but the issue of responsibility, now for a world defined very much by language, remains as intense and disconcerting as ever before in Ian McEwan's fiction.

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METAFIKCE, INTERTEXTUALITA, DISKURS V ROMÁNECH IANA MCEWANA PO ROCE 2000

Resumé

Ve svých románech publikovaných po roce 2000 (*Pokání*, *Sobota*, *Solar* a *Mlsoun*) využívá Ian McEwan narativních postupů typických pro postmoderní prózu, např. prvky metafikce, intertextuality a diskursivní plurality. Článek se zabývá otázkou, jak se toto pojetí liší od postupů užitých v autorově předchozí románové tvorbě. Román *Mlsoun* je tak interpretován z hlediska McEwanovy snahy revidovat vlastní krátké texty z počátků své literární dráhy v 70. letech minulého století. Do protikladu jsou poté postaveny romány z 80. let (*Dítě v pravý čas* a *Nevinný*), pro něž jsou charakteristické takové postupy jako motivický paralelismus a alegorie, a pozdější tvorba, využívající složitější vypravěčské postupy. Zvláštní pozornost se nakonec věnuje tematizaci diskursu v románu *Solar*, který není prezentován jako pouhá satira na moderní vědu a korupční vliv komercializace, ale také jako reflexe „ontologického relativismu" daného autoritou různých diskursních formací v současném světě.

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ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE
PHILOLOGICA 1/2016
PRAGUE STUDIES IN ENGLISH

Editors: Martin Procházka, Mirka Horová
Cover and layout by Kateřina Řezáčová
Published by Charles University in Prague
Karolinum Press, Ovocný trh 3–5, 116 36 Praha 1
www.karolinum.cz
Prague 2016
Typeset by DTP Karolinum Press
Printed by Karolinum Press
ISSN 0567-8269 (Print)
ISSN 2464-6830 (Online)
MK ČR E 18597

Distributed by Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague,
nám. Jana Palacha 2, 116 38 Praha 1, Czech Republic
(books@ff.cuni.cz)