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This volume is dedicated to Associate Professor Pavel Kolář, one of the key figures of the Linguistic School of the Silesian University in Opava.

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# EDITIORS' NOTE

*Marie Crhová and Michaela Weiss*

The volume *Silesian Studies in English 2021* presents selected papers from the 6th International Conference of English and American Studies Silesian Studies in English – SILSE 2021, which took place on 9th – 10th September 2021 at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Philosophy and Science, Silesian University in Opava, Czech Republic.

As was the case with the preceding SILSE conferences, there was no prescribed theme of the contributions. Scholars were invited to present their latest research in the fields of Linguistics and Literature without being limited to a specific topic. The present volume thus reflects the current research trends – not only – in Central Europe, namely Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, but also Tunisia.

Following the structure of the conference, the current volume has been divided into two sections with 7 papers in the Linguistics section and 17 in the Literature section. We also decided to include a review of the most recent Czech translation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that was published shortly after the conference and is addressed in one of the papers in this volume. *The Chicago Manual of Style* was chosen as the reference style for the proceedings; papers on linguistics use the author-date system, whilst the literary papers use footnotes.

To provide fast and easy access to the volume, it will be produced not only in print but also in PDF form on the Institute of Foreign Languages webpage.

Similarly to previous years, the volume does not include all papers presented at the conference. While some participants did not meet the deadlines for submitting their contributions, others did not reach the required quality standard and their contributions were not accepted for publishing. All the papers published are full-length research articles.

We would like to express our thanks to the Institute of Foreign Languages in Opava, the reviewers, the organizers, and the participants, who created an excellent atmosphere and made the conference a memorable and successful event.

# I. LINGUISTICS

# SENEGAMBIA AS A NEW LANGUAGE HOTSPOT

*Miroslav Černý*

ABSTRACT: Drawing on the concept of the so-called "language hotspots", conceived and developed by linguists Gregory D. Anderson and David Harrison, the article aims to provide evidence that the present-day Gambia and Senegal represent a concentrated region with many endangered languages. The author will introduce the assessment of both the archive and fieldwork data, with the focus put on the analysis of selected language vitality factors. The paper is meant as an unpretentious contribution to the field of documentary linguistics and/or language revitalization.

KEYWORDS: Senegambia, language hotspot, language loss and endangerment, language diversity, language vitality

## INTRODUCTION

As many linguists and anthropologists have given notice throughout previous twenty years (Crystal 2000, Hagege 2009, Austin and Sallabank 2014 or Thomason 2017), linguistic diversity of our planet is at great risk. Many of the world´s languages are being lost at an alarming rate "to the everyday pressures of money, violence, social prestige, climate change, and frayed community" (Hymes and Sezalioglu 2018, 1). It has been calculated that 97 % of Earth´s total population (about 7 billion people) uses just 4 % of the languages (about 280 out of 7000). This unequal proportion means that 96 % of all languages is spoken by only 3 % of the world´s populace (cf. Harrison 2007, 3–14). The language demise affects primarily minority languages as approximately 10 % of them (700) have fewer than 10 native speakers. However, no less than 50 % of languages are expected to vanish throughout this century.

In response to this crisis, with the plan to stop or, at least, to slow down the erosion of language diversity – which inevitably causes the erosion of cultural heritage and its knowledge and belief systems (see, e.g., Evans 2010 or Hirsh 2013) – scholars and endangered communities members struggle to find ways to keep the languages alive

and to ensure their future (cf. Grenoble and Whaley 1998, Hinton 2002). Some of them study, analyze, and put into practice diverse revitalization programs, techniques, and language planning strategies for families and schools (Grenoble and Whaley 2006, Hinton and Hale 2008, Hinton 2013), whilst others focus on fieldwork language documentation, generally viewed as a prerequisite to any successful revitalization effort; they compile dictionaries of minority languages and construct their grammars. There is also a group of devoted researchers whose aim is to identify the *hotspots of language diversity and endangerment*, and who travel the world to map these places.

The intention of this paper is to describe a geographical region in Western Africa which has not been identified as a language hotspot yet – the Senegambia.


## 1. THE CONCEPT OF LANGUAGE HOTSPOTS

The term "language hotspot" was coined by David K. Harrison (in collaboration with his colleague Gregory D. Anderson) in 2006. The main idea behind the coinage and development of the concept was to create a model that would help us understand the complexity of language diversity and language threat. Harrison defines language hotspots as "those regions of the world having the greatest linguistic diversity, the greatest language endangerment, and least studied languages" (2010, 88). In other words, language hotspots are geographical areas where the threat of language loss is most critical. By identifying such locations, linguists can initiate an immediate action and start the process of language documentation and revitalization.

The concept of language hotspots was inspired by the concept of so-called *biodiversity hotspots*. As Evans (2010, 16) notes, there are close parallels between the linguistic and biological worlds. For example, areas rich in languages frequently have rich biodiversity (e.g. the tropical zone). Both the world of words (*logosphere*) and the world of living organisms (*biosphere*, *ecosphere*) face the damage of diversity. Furthermore, despite modern science research, there is still so much we do not know about their structure and functioning. Whilst approximately 80 % of species have not been identified, only about 10 % of languages have been fully documented and analyzed. In their search for

correlations between the linguistic and biological worlds, Nettle and Romaine (2002, 41–49) go as far as to describe the commonness and intimate interconnectedness with the term *biolinguistic diversity*.

In introducing the term language hotspot, Harrison hoped and expected that it would function as a predictive model, capable of revealing "previously unnoticed concentrations of diversity that is both highly fragile and threatened" (2010, 87). This assumption has proved correct as the number of language hotspots has grown significantly over recent years. Whereas in 2007 only 13 language hotspots occurred on the linguistic map published by *National Geographic Society* (e.g. Northwest Pacific Plateau, Eastern Siberia or Northern Australia), today there are more than 20 of them, divided according to the threat level into four categories: (1) severe threat level language hotspots, (2) high threat level language hotspots, (4) medium threat level language hotspots, and (5) low threat level language hotspots.

The particular threat level arises from the calculation of three key factors: (a) the average degree of linguistic diversity, (b) the average degree of endangerment, and (c) the average degree of prior research or documentation. The rating of the linguistic diversity (Genetic Index) takes into consideration not only the number of languages but also the number of genetic units represented (e.g. Germanic, Samoyedic, Tiwi, etc.). The rating of the endangerment (Endangerment Index) reflects the intergenerational language transmission (the average age of speakers). The rating of prior documentation (Documentation Index) assesses the accessibility of linguistic data and materials: texts with translation, scholarly articles, descriptive grammars, lexicons and/or dictionaries, audio/video materials with annotation.


## 2. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS, AIMS, AND METHODS

Out of the twenty plus world´s language hotspots only three (low level threat) language hotspots have been identified in Africa so far: Eastern Africa, Southwestern Africa, and the territory of today's Cameroon and Nigeria. It is quite surprising since war conflicts, ethnic cleansing, and (enforced) migration of large portions of African population in past years must have altered language diversity and modified the level of language endangerment. In this respect, I will provide evidence that also

the area of the present-day Senegal and the Gambia represents a distinguishable language hotspot as defined by Harrison (see above).

The evidence for my claim is based on the linguistic data extracted from the most recent editions of online language databases, catalogues, and archives, namely the *UNESCO Atlas of the World′s Languages in Danger*, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, and the interactive catalogue of *Endangered Languages Project*. It has further been backed by research findings acquired during my fieldwork in the Senegambia conducted in February 2019. The aims of my archive and fieldwork research were as follows:

(1) To map contemporary linguistic diversity in the Senegambia with respect to the number of languages as well as the number of genetic units.
(2) To document the degree of endangerment of the respective Senegambian languages.
(3) To assess the extent and quality of prior documentation of the Senegambian languages.
(4) To compare my findings with the data valid for regions which have already been identified as language hotspots.
(5) To conclude whether the Senegambia can or cannot be identified as another language hotspot.

Whereas the archive investigation proved beneficial especially during the process of calculating the number of languages spoken in Senegal and the Gambia and when searching for information on the accessibility of language resources, the fieldwork research proved crucially important as part of acquiring data about the current level of endangerment of lesser known languages. The main fieldwork method was a semi-structured interview (see, e.g., Sakel and Everett 2012), with questions eliciting information about the age of speakers of respective languages and their fluency. The main aim was to collect information about intergenerational language transmission which is generally viewed as the most important language vitality factor. During the research I had an interpreter at my disposal, who spoke English, French, and two ethnic languages (Wolof and Mandinka). Since multilingualism is a common phenomenon in sub-Saharan Africa, there was no language barrier that would hamper the research.

What is more, the expedition enabled the so-called participant observation of how the language situation and the national language policy in the Senegambia is manifested in everyday life. I was particularly interested in the present-day roles of English and French – the official languages of the Gambia and Senegal, respectively. The relevant data was obtained through the investigation of both official public texts (regulated by the governmental acts) and private signs (planted by private subjects, e.g. on shop windows) displayed in the Senegambian linguistic landscape (cf. Shohamy and Gorter 2009).

## 3. LANGUAGE SITUATION AND LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE SENEGAMBIA

The borders of the Senegambian zone are not unequivocally defined. Geographically speaking, the Senegambia is a small region which is located between the Senegal River in the north and the Gambia River in the south, with the western border of the Senegambia formed by the Atlantic Ocean and with an unclear eastern (inland) boundary line. However, throughout history, much larger territories have been viewed as part of the Senegambia, including the section of the present-day Guinea-Bissau as well as parts of Mauritania, Mali, and Guinea. Within this paper, the Senegambia is conceived as a territory which covers the modern states of Senegal and the Gambia, which for some time (during the 1980s) formed a loose political bloc, the Senegambia Confederation, dissolved in 1989.

The national language policies of both countries reflect their colonial histories. As mentioned, the official languages of the Gambia and Senegal are English and French, respectively. However, a large number of indigenous languages (Jola-Fonyi, Malinke, Pulaar, Serer, Soninke, or Wolof) have gained the legal status of national languages (Kadlec 2007, 53–58). Especially Wolof (and also Mandinka in the Gambia) is a strong language force which diffuses at the expense of many other languages, including French (cf. Drolc 2007, 81–94). This fact is recognizable in the local official and private signage. It seems that French as well as English are gradually transforming into languages used primarily for the purpose of tourism and international business,

although they still keep part of their importance in education and administration.

Code-switching (and also code-mixing) is a dominant feature of language behavior among the various ethnic groups of Senegal and the Gambia (see, e.g., Haust 1995) as well as multilingualism is characteristic of the Senegambian linguistic landscape, especially in the cosmopolitan cityscape of Dakar and other larger cities.


## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The results of my fieldwork investigation, supplemented with the data retrieved from relevant research archives, databases, and catalogues, such as the *UNESCO Atlas of the World′s Languages in Danger*, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, and *Endangered Languages Project*, are discussed in the four sections below. While the data on the number of languages (4.1), the genetic index (4.2), and the documentation index (4.4) have been obtained primarily from the secondary sources, the endangerment index (4.3) has been assessed with the help of fieldwork data, containing relevant information on the intergenerational language transmission (see Section 2).


## 4.1 NUMBER OF LANGUAGES

There seem to be 41 languages currently spoken within the territory of Senegal and the Gambia. It is only an approximate number as sometimes it is quite difficult to distinguish between a language and its dialect. Moreover, there is no agreement whether the calculation should include creoles and other mixed languages. Certain confusion may also arise as a consequence of the fact that languages appear in different sources under alternative names.

In the following list I offer the names of Senegambian languages in the form commonly used in English linguistic literature. The brackets contain information about the variant language designations and about the approximate number of speakers. If it is relevant, I append information on how many of the given speakers are

L1 users (native speakers) and how many of them are L2 users (who know the language but it is not their mother tongue).

1. Badyara (Badian, Badjara; 11 000)
2. Bainouk-Gunyaamolo (Bagnoun, Bainuk; 6000)
3. Bainouk-Samik (1700)
4. Balanta-Ganja (Balanda, Balant; 96 000)
5. Bandial (Banjaal, Eegima; 7000)
6. Bassari (Biyan, Oniyan; 18 000)
7. Bayot (Baiot, Bayotte; 17 000)
8. Bedik (Budik, Ménik; 2500)
9. Crioulo (Kriulo, Kriyol; 10 000 – L1, 20 000 – L2)
10. Ejamat (Ediamat, Felup; 2200)
11. English (1000 – L1, 40 000 – L2)
12. French (47 000 – L1, 4 250 000 – L2)
13. Gusilay (Gusiilaay, Kusilay; 14 000)
14. Hassaniyyna (Hasaniya, Hasanya; 162 000)
15. Jalunga (Dialonké, Jalonké; 10 000)
16. Jola-Fonyi (Diola, Dyola; 340 000)
17. Jola-Kasa (Bácuki, Diola-Kasa; 41 000)
18. Karon (Kaloon, Karone; 10 000)
19. Kerak (Her, Keerak; 15 000)
20. Kobiana (Cobiana, Guboy; 400)
21. Kuwaataay (Kwatay; 6000)
22. Lehar (Lala, Laalaa; 10 000)
23. Mandinka (Manding; 670 000)
24. Mandjak (Majak, Mandjak; 120 000)
25. Malinke (Malinké, Western Malinke; 1 300 000)
26. Mankanya (Bola, Uhula; 34 000)
27. Mlomp (Gulompaay; 5000)
28. Ndut (Ndoute; 40 000)
29. N'ko (the language has no native speakers, it is used as L2)
30. Noon (Non, None; 11 000)
31. Paloor (Falor, Palar; 10 000)
32. Pulaar (Peul, Peulh; 3 450 000)
33. Pular (Fullo Fuuta, Futa Fula; 150 000)
34. Saafi-Saafi (Saafen, Saafi; 200 000)
35. Serer (Sereer, Serer-Sine; 1 400 000)

36. Soninke (Sarakole, Sarakule; 1 450 000)
37. Vietnamese (300)
38. Wamey (Conhague, Conhagui; 21 000)
39. Wolof (Volof, Walaf; 5 210 000)
40. Wolof, Gambian (226 000)
41. Xasonga (Kasonke, Kasso; 10 000)


## 4.2 GENETIC INDEX

Based on the genetic typology, these languages can be divided into seven language groups. As I have already mentioned, the degree of language diversity reflects not only the number of languages as such, but their genealogical relationships as well. In other words, the more language groups/families represented, the higher language diversity.

1. Germanic (English)
2. Mande (e.g. Mandinka)
3. Romance (French)
4. Semitic (Hassaniyya)[1]
5. Mixed language (N´ko)[2]
6. Vietic (Vietnamese)[3]

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[1] Hassaniyya is a variety of so-called Maghrebi Arabic spoken in parts of Western Sahara.

[2] N'ko is usually defined as a mixed language which has arisen as a result of the contact and mixing of several Manding languages. It was codified by Solomana Kante who also invented an orthography for the language in 1949. The language is used primarily in writing, as a specific literary register, but there is a growing number of people who use N´ko in speech as their second language code. For more see, for example, Donaldson (2019).

[3] The explanation for the appearance of Vietnamese on the list is quite simple. As well as Senegal, Vietnam used to be a French colony. Many Senegalese soldiers participated in the Indo-China war as members of French army. In Vietnam they met Vietnamese girls, married them, and they brought them back to Senegal. Children born to these mixed families often speak two languages, an ethnic Senegalese language and Vietnamese. To put it differently, for many people in Senegal, Vietnamese is a native language.

7. Atlantic (e.g. Wolof or Pulaar)

According to Harrison's model of language hotspots, the genetic index is calculated when the total number of language groups is divided by the total number of individual languages. As for the Senegambia (7: 41), the genetic index is 0.170, which makes it more diverse than in already established hotspots in Southeast Asia (0.137), Southwestern Africa (0.092) and Eastern Africa (0.080), and a little bit lower than in the region of Pacific Northwest (0.226).

## 4.3 ENDANGERMENT INDEX

Based on my fieldwork and archive research, out of 41 Senegambian languages, 17 are endangered (see below). The level of endangerment has the form of a five-degree scale (1–5). The key factor deciding about the position on the scale is the intergenerational language transmission.

Five points are assigned to a language which prospers, it has a steady community of speakers in all age groups, and it is employed in most communicative situations. Four points are given to a threatened language whose community undergoes a gradual shift towards another tongue, but so far the language is not in direct danger. Three points go to an endangered language which has stopped to be transferred to next generations. Two points entail a highly endangered language, with youngest speakers over forty years of age, and one point refers to a moribund language with youngest speakers over sixty. No point is given to an extinct language.[4]

1. Badyara (threatened) – 4
2. Bainouk-Gunyaamolo (threatened) – 4
3. Bainouk-Samik (threatened) – 4
4. Bandial (threatened) – 4
5. Bassari (threatened) – 4
6. Bayot (threatened) – 4

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[4] For example, *kasanga* is an extinct language in Senegal. Nevertheless, it is still spoken in Guinea-Bissau by few last speakers.

7. Bedik (threatened) – 4
8. Ejamat (threatened) – 4
9. Gusial (threatened) – 4
10. Kobiana (highly endangered) – 2
11. Kuwaataay (endangered) – 3
12. Lehar (threatened) – 4
13. Mlomp (endangered) – 3
14. Ndut (threatened) – 4
15. Noon (threatened) – 4
16. Paloor (threatened) – 4
17. Wamey (threatened) – 4

The rating by threat level can be calculated – again in accord with Harrison's model – when the total sum of assigned points is divided by the total number of languages under scrutiny. As for the Senegambia, the threat level index is 4.48. It is a rather low threat level and resembles the one calculated for Eastern Africa (4.22 – low) or Western Melanesia (4.34 – low). It is clear that the situation is not as serious as in Eastern Siberia (2.1 – severe) or in Northern and Central Australia (1.94 – severe). On the other hand, many Senegambian languages are fragile, and a minute political, demographic or social change can shift the current language situation and turn in the detriment of language vitality.


4.4 DOCUMENTATION INDEX

Moreover, a thorough study of various language archives, catalogues, and databases has provided evidence that the level of documentation of some Senegambian languages is relatively low. High-quality grammar books, dictionaries, and collections of texts, audio and video materials as well as research monographs and scholarly articles are available only for selected languages, namely those with the legal status of national languages: Jola-Fonyi, Malinke, Pulaar, Serer, Soninke, or Wolof (for more see Kadlec 2012). There are even languages without any prior documentation, which is, unfortunately, often the case of the most endangered languages. For example, we have limited linguistic description of the language *kobiana* (cf. Moseley 2007, 618), and no orthography has so far been invented for the language known as *mlomp*.

If the situation does not change in a short period of time, it is quite likely that both languages will disappear without linguists getting to learn the significance of their structures and use.


## 5. DISCUSSION

It is important to emphasize that the presented research findings cannot and should not be accepted unconditionally.

Firstly, the level of language endangerment can never be measured precisely as there are so many factors deciding about the vitality of a language. The UNESCO methodology for assessing language vitality and endangerment takes into consideration nine vitality factors: (1) intergenerational language transmission, (2) community member´s attitudes towards their own language, (3) shifts in domains of language use, (4) governmental and institutional language attitudes and policies, including official status and use, (5) type and quality of documentation, (6) response to new domains and media, (7) availability of materials for language education and literacy, (8) proportion of speakers within total population, and (9) absolute number of speakers.

Out of these language vitality factors only five have been given particular attention within this study (1, 5, 7, 9), with the main focus put on the intergenerational language transmission and the type and quality of documentation.

Secondly, according to Harrison´s model of language hotspots, the level of documentation is also assessed on a five-point scale, with each language receiving a point for:

- Texts with translation
- Short scholarly articles
- Descriptive grammar
- Lexicon (word list) or dictionary
- Audio/Video materials with annotation

Since the number of Senegambian languages is relatively high, only a simplified version of the documentation index has been adopted. For the purposes of the present article, I have evaluated the accessibility of

sources from a general perspective (language resources are either rich or scarce), without any point giving and/or scale ranking.

Thirdly, any language situation is prone to changes, which means that some of the findings are highly unlikely to reflect the latest shifts and modifications.


CONCLUDING REMARKS

If we take into consideration the number of languages spoken in the Senegambia area, their genetic diversity, and the level of endangerment and linguistic documentation, and, moreover, if we compare the acquired data with the regions that have already been defined as language hotspots, we cannot but conclude that the Senegambia is another language hotspot and as such it should be marked and labelled in linguistic maps.

This endangered language territory may, in my view, further comprise Guinea-Bissau which was historically a part of the Senegambia. As mentioned above, one of its local languages (*kasanga*) is spoken by last few speakers, all of them above sixty, which indicates that the language will have become extinct within the following twenty or thirty years. It can be also presumed that other language hotspots will be identified in future, very likely in Africa. Based on available data and my fieldwork experience I would personally vote for Burkina Faso and the neighboring parts of Togo, Ghana, Benin, and Ivory Coast.

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INTERNET SOURCES

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www.endangeredlanguages.com
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www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/langhotspots.html
www.unesco.org
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# ON SOME ENGLISH TENNIS LOANWORDS USED IN CZECH TENNIS TERMINOLOGY

*Gabriela Entlová*

ABSTRACT: The present paper focuses on the contemporary state of Czech tennis terminology. It outlines how the currently used borrowings function in the Czech tennis vernacular and their level of adaptation to the Czech orthographic, phonological and morphological systems with some semantic peculiarities. The aim of this article is to show how these lexical items are being adapted to the Czech language on different levels. The vocabulary under investigation was primarily collected from the articles published in the Czech newspaper magazines and other online sources released during the summer Olympic Games 2020, though, due to covid-19 pandemic, taking place in Tokyo 2021. To supplement the topic, the introductory passages include some general notes on borrowings and Anglicisms in Czech, as well as information on this popular sport.

INTRODUCTION

The article deals with the topic of some borrowed words used in the field of Czech tennis terminology. In the study, these are called loanwords, borrowed words or simply loans and borrowings; those that come from the English language are called Anglicisms (English borrowings). All of the selected tennis term examples, which were previously collected from contemporary Czech online and newspaper magazine articles published predominantly during the summer Olympic Games 2021 in Tokyo, are presented with a brief analysis of their adaptation to the Czech orthographic, phonological, and morphological systems, as well as their semantic peculiarities. To this end, linguistic and professional sports publications and dictionaries containing, for example, Czech pronunciation and comprehensive definitions were

consulted.[1] Individual topics of interest in tennis terminology, such as their linguistic history in English and Czech, and fundamental information on acquiring new vocabulary items in both analysed languages, are also covered in this paper. With the rise of computers and information technology, corpus linguistics developed. Corpus linguistics is not a new theory of language; it examines texts that are understood as extensive products of the language system and the abilities of their authors, and learns more general language laws and rules from them. As a consequence, this article contains a limited quantitative analysis of selected synonyms from the obtained data that were compared to data from the Czech National Corpus syn2020.[2] The goal of this process will be to demonstrate how Anglicisms used in Czech tennis terminology are being adapted to the Czech language on various levels, as well as their user preferences in comparison to their Czech domestic counterparts if such exist. To support the topic's "cohesive ties", in the figurative sense, the introductory passages include concise information on the game of tennis.

## 1. GENERAL NOTES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROCESS OF LEXICAL BORROWING

The entrance of loan words in English has often been noted and commented on in the past, while also causing some anxiety and even hatred about the number of words borrowed, as was the case in the 16th century. Samuel Johnson released his Dictionary of the English Language, which was the first serious attempt to organize the vocabulary systematically while also providing some consistency to the language. This didn't mean he denied to include loan terms, which he

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[1] Cf. J. Höhm (1982), O. Maška and V. Šafařík (1985), J. Kraus (2007), J. Hůrková (1995), J. Vachek (1986).
[2] CNK includes more than 4 billion tokens of written contemporary Czech. See Křen, M., Cvrček, V., Henyš, J., Hnátková, M., Jelínek, T., Kocek, J., Kováříková, D., Křivan, J., Milička, J., Petkevič, V., Procházka, P., Skoumalová, H., Šindlerová, J. and Škrabal, M.: SYN2020: reprezentativní korpus psané češtiny. Ústav Českého národního korpusu FF UK, Praha 2020. Available at: http://www.korpus.cz.

described and depicted just like any other item of the lexicon, with the goal of "registering the language". Until Einar Haugen proposed his classification and categorization of linguistic borrowing in the twentieth century, the examination of linguistic borrowing tended to follow the same lines. His categories are still used to classify linguistic borrowings of all kinds today.[3] In the European context, M. Görlach (1994), R. Fischer and H. Pulaczewska (2008), E. Malá (2002, 2003, 2005), M. Ološtiak and L. Gianitsová-Ološtiaková (2007), L. Pinnavaia (2001) and P. Jesenská (2014) are all worth mentioning; C. Furiassi, V. Pulcini, F. R. González (2012) are concerned with Anglicization of the European lexicon, and P. Durkin (2014) is concerned with the incorporation of foreign elements in general. Although the Czech language system allows for the production of terms with a native origin, the English language enhances it when new objects, thoughts, or phenomena are required. I. Bozděchová (1994), F. Čermák (2009), F. Daneš (2002), M. Nekula (2017), J. Rejzek (1993), P. Mareš (2003), D. Svobodová (2007) and G. Entlová and E. Malá (2020), are some of the linguists whose works in the field of Czech linguistics deal with a partial or more systematic description of Anglicisms. A. Bičan, T. Duběda, M. Havlík, and V. Štěpánová (2020) and G. Entlová (2004) discuss the subject of pronunciation of Anglicisms in Czech.

The English language is of essential importance not only in Czech sports terminology because mainly of Great Britain and the United States being the cradle of many well-established as well as newly arising sports disciplines. Nevertheless, English is a language that provides loanwords either directly or as a mediator language, but also takes over lexical items from other languages, Czech being no exception, e.g. *howitzer, pistol, robot*. To name some sports terms, there are, e.g., the calque *spinning throw* from *hod s otočkou* for a technique introduced by the Czech discus athlete F. J. Suk at the Olympic Games in Antwerp in 1920 or, in association with football, we cannot miss the terms *panenka* for a penalty kick named after the Czech football player Antonín Panenka during 1976 UEFA European Championship final (*dloubák* in Czech). A recently created occasional exclamation *HOLY*

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[3] Cf. Aurélia Paulin and Jennifer Vince, "Introduction", *Lexis*, http://journals.openedition.org/lexis/624.

*SCHICK!!!*[4] used by a popular British journalist Piers Morgan who tweeted it after Schick's record-breaking 51-yard wonder-goal for the Czech Republic versus Scotland at Euro 2020 is a kind of a catch-phrase that proves that language is productive in the sense that it allows us to create an endless number of new utterances, even using items from foreign languages, by combining existing words in new ways.[5]

It is generally known that languages have been in contact for centuries because of historical, political, economic, social, cultural, academic and other reasons and, needless to say, sports reasons as well. As a natural consequence, linguistic interference in the borrowing process, either direct or indirect, appears in this process. The borrowing language introduces distinct foreign elements where the product, a borrowed word, is usually fully or partially adopted term that is subsequently adapted orthographically, phonologically, morphologically and/or semantically or, as the case may be, morphosemantically.[6] In the following paragraph, an effort will be made to define more precisely the terminology used in the linguistic analysis of borrowing processes. Several borrowings from non-tennis sports disciplines (even though they are frequently used not only in sports contexts) are also supplied for a better understanding of the process of borrowing in Czech tennis vernacular (here slightly modified for the present paper). The Oxford Learner's Dictionary online and the Collins Dictionary online were used to help with pronunciation and definitions in English.[7] The simplified Czech transcription in backward slashes "\\" is used for the transcription of various Anglicisms in Czech, while forward slashes "//" imply the English transcription (IPA). The signs ">/<" show the direction of adaptation (English to Czech and Czech to English), the symbol "="

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[4] Available at: https://www.sport.cz/fotbal/euro2020/clanek/2477113-oh-schick-gol-turnaje-zlomil-srdce-skotu-pisi-britska-media.html?utm_campaign=&utm_medium=z-boxiku&utm_source=www.seznam.cz#hp-sez.

[5] Cf. de Saussure, F., 1916. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Geneva. (Czech translation: *Kurs obecné lingvistiky*, Praha: Odeon, 1989.)

[6] The signifier is borrowed in morphological adaptation, the signified is borrowed in semantic adaptation, and the signifier and signified are borrowed in morphosemantic adaptation.

[7] See https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/, https://www.collinsdictionary.com/.

denotes interchangeable synonyms, i.e. neither partly interchangeable nor non-interchangeable synonyms are discussed in more detail here).


## 2. ADAPTATION OF ANGLICISMS ON THE PHONETIC-PHONOLOGICAL LEVEL

As previously stated, the process of borrowing English lexical units is connected to their full or partial adaptation to the orthographic, phonological, and morphological standards of the recipient language. The degree of adaptation is frequently determined by how long the English words have been used in the receiving language. Many English borrowings adopt an orthographic form that is equivalent to or comparable to the English phonetic form; for example, the consonant *j* in *jumping* is pronounced /ʤ/ in English and transcribed as *dž* in Czech, resulting in the orthographic form *džamping* (in a collocation *bungee jumping*), and conversely, pronounced as \dž\ in orthographically unadapted *jogging*. In Czech, the English grapheme *c* is spelt and pronounced \k\, as in *klub, aerobik, kouč* (< club, aerobics, couch). The English phonemes /ʃ/ and /ʧ/ are orthographically transcribed in Czech as *š* and *č*, respectively, with simplified pronunciation symbols \š\, \č\, e.g. *finiš* (< finish), *smeč* (< smash). The absence of English phonemes /θ, ð, w, ŋ, æ, ə/ in Czech demonstrates the major discrepancies between the phonemic systems of both languages.[8] The missing phonemes are replaced with those that most closely match the original English pronunciation, such as the English /æ/ is replaced either with \e\ in *backhand* \bekent\ or with \a\ in *draft*.[9] The English /ə/ (schwa) is substituted with the Czech \e\ or \é\ in words like *boxer, sprinter, startér* (< starter), with the syllabic \r̩\ in *centr* (< centre) and syllabic \n̩\ in *open*.[10] In nouns like *timing* and *trénink* (< training), the final *–ing/-ink* form, which is pronounced with velar nasal /ŋ/ in English, is spelt with either *g* or *k* in Czech, with the final *g* being pronounced with either \g\ or \k\ depending on the voiced or voiceless phoneme that immediately

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[8] Cf Entlová and Malá 2020, 141.

[9] NAmE pronunciation /dræft/, BrE pronunciation /drɑːft/.

[10] See Hůrková 1995, 50, cf. Entlová 2011, 225–226.

follows the final consonant, e.g. \tajmink\ but gen. \tajmingu\. The English phoneme /θ/ is mostly substituted with \t\ in Czech, as in a proper name *Thomas* \tomas\, the phoneme /w/ is replaced with \v\, e.g. *power play* \pavrplej\. The plosives \p\, \t\, \k\ are unaspirated in Czech in their initial positions.

The sound structure of Anglicisms in Czech, as seen above, incorporates characteristics of the underlying English word's phonetic and orthographic composition. It is thus feasible to distinguish between Anglicisms that have been phonetically or orthographically modified.[11]


## 3. ADAPTATION OF ANGLICISMS ON THE MORPHO-SYNTACTIC LEVEL

The analytical group of languages includes contemporary English, while the synthetic (inflectional) group includes Czech. Nouns taken from English acquire the grammatical categories that are used in word classes of the recipient language and the ability to produce derivatives is a feature of most Anglicisms in Czech, e.g. adjectives (*lajnový, liftovaný, tenisový* < line, lift, tennis) or verbs (*lobovat, riternovat, smečovat, servírovat* < to lob, to return, to smash, to serve). Anglicisms usually take one of the three grammatical genders in Czech, i.e. masculine, e.g. *aut, kurt, gem, lob, ritern, servis, set, volej* (< out, court, game, lob, return, service, set, volley), feminine, e.g. *lajna, raketa, smeč* (< line, racket, smash)*,* and neuter, e.g. *eso* < ace. Some morphological aspects of derivational morphemes are represented by masculine agent nouns, such as *tenista, volejbalista, ragbista, smečař* (< tennis/volleyball/rugby player, smasher), feminine agent nouns via gender shift, such as *tenistka, volejbalistka, smečařka* (< woman tennis/volleyball player, a woman tennis player hitting the ball downwards and very hard/woman smasher), and neuter deverbatives, such as *lajnování* (denoting the lines on a tennis court that define the area where the ball is allowed to land during the point) or *trénování* (< training). To minimize confusion between one and two (or more) matches performed by four players (two males and two females, one of each sex per side of the court), the Czech

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[11] Cf. Entlová and Malá 2020, 142.

simplifies the English collocation *mixed doubles* into *mix* (sg.) and *mixy* (pl.).

The above examples demonstrate that nouns adopted from the English language in Czech take on the grammatical categories that are specific to the word class, such as number, gender, and case. The majority of tennis Anglicisms are inflected in Czech, with only a few non-declinable borrowings. Following Czech grammar rules, the gender of a word is determined by its formal qualities. When Anglicisms, in turn, actively participate in the production of new terms, the process progresses even further. The derivational processes are mostly based on suffixation, with less emphasis on prefixation. Nominal compounds and phrases from English have found their way into the Czech tennis vernacular, with some changes based on different levels of adaptation, e.g. *backhand* and *forehand* (pronounced \*bekent*\ and \*forhent*\ in Czech)*, centrkurt, halfvolej, midlajna, stopvolej, tajbrejk, topspin* (<backhand, forehand, centre court, half volley, service line, stoopball, stop volley, tiebreak, topspin). Internationally renowned abbreviations and acronyms have been borrowed by the Czech language, such as ATP (in Czech also *Asociace tenisových profesionálů* or *Sdružení tenisových profesionálů* < Association of Tennis Professionals), ITF (in Czech also *Mezinárodní tenisová federace* < International Tennis Federation), US Open (pronounced \*jú es oupn*\[12] by its Czech users but known as *otevřený (tenisový) turnaj*, *Flushing Meadows* and/or *Forest Hills*, too), WTA (known as *ženská tenisová asociace* < Women's Tennis Association), and many others.[13]

Following Svobodová (2007, 26–36), in Czech we can identify examples of 1. <u>inflexible and unadapted English lexical units</u>, e.g. *Best of three, Best of five, fair play, know-how, Czech Open, US Open, Hawk Eye, Live,* 2. <u>adapted lexical units</u> on the morphological level but still preserving their original spelling and, partly, their pronunciation, e.g. *umpire* (adj. umpirový), *lift* (gen. liftu), *set* (gen. setu), *tiebreak* (gen. tiebreaku), *timing* (gen. timingu), orthographically adapted expressions, e.g. *aut, debl, djůs, fiftýn, gem, singl, teč* (< out, double, deuce, fifteen, game, singles, touch), orthographically variable expressions, e.g. *centre*

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[12] See Kraus 2007, 544.
[13] See also Entlová and Malá 2020, 143–144.

*court – centrkurt – centr kurt – centrální kurt, club – klub, umpire – empire – empajrový (adj), line – lajna, doubles – debl – dubl – doublé, fair – fér,* fully domesticated lexical units that are not felt as foreign anymore, e.g. *klub, start, hala, tenista, tenistka, atlet, atletka, akademie* (< club, start, hall, tennis player, woman tennis player, athlete, woman athlete, academy), hybrid expressions and phrases, e.g. *lajnový/umpirový rozhodčí, slajsový úder, útočný lob, fér hra,* (< line/chair umpire, slice serve, offensive lob, fair play), but also pseudo-anglicisms, e.g. *mečbol* (match point), 3. <u>loan translations/calques</u> that include word-forming calques as a result of translational process, e.g. *nejlepší ze tří, nejlepší z pěti, čárový rozhodčí, chyba nohou, šťastný poražený, základní čára* (< best of three, best of five, line umpire, foot-fault, lucky loser, baseline). The phraseological calque *dostat divokou kartu*, which is used in tennis to imply an opportunity for someone to play in a competition when they have not qualified in the traditional method, closely copies the English phraseme *get a wild card*.

## 4. ADAPTATION OF ANGLICISMS ON THE LEXICAL-SEMANTIC LEVEL

Fully domesticated lexical units that are no longer considered foreign describe ordinary phenomena, and Czech speakers have no difficulties with their orthographic, morphological, lexical, or stylistic usage. Some Anglicisms may move from one specialized field into another and become less specific as their meaning broadens and shifts, e.g., the tennis term *eso* (< ace), a word that originally denotes a die with one spot (analogically also a playing card or domino with one pip), is a semantic calque of the English *ace* in sense of a serve that is so good that your opponent cannot reach the ball. In English and Czech, the source of this figurative sense is a Latin word *as, assis* (in sense of *unit*) and in both languages, it can also be used informally for a person who is very good at doing something. Examples of Anglicisms that have been extended to new meanings in tennis vernacular include *servis* and *kurt*. The former one, *servis* (< service), originally dinnerware, made its way into Czech via German *Service*, which was influenced by French *service* and the figurative connotation in tennis terminology, i.e. hitting the ball to begin playing, came considerably later, thanks to English, while the

latter *kurt* (< court) is, on the other hand, strictly bound to sports terminology (e.g. in tennis or volleyball) in Czech. It is the evidence of a lexical difference between Anglicisms and their source words because it includes a semantic reduction, i.e., the polysemantic word in the source language is reduced to only one meaning in the receiver language: English *court* used in law, sport, for people, buildings and places is replaced with a domestic equivalent of Slavic origin *dvůr/dvorec/dvoreček/dvorní/dvorana* in Czech.[14] However, there are also obvious discrepancies where the Czech language prefers its domestic naming units over the English ones, for instance when the Czech language has adopted an Anglicism *drop shot* but still prefers its domestic naming unit *kraťas* for a soft hit that makes the ball land on the ground without bouncing much. A situation in which a player scores by unintentionally hitting the ball in such a way that it touches the upper cord of the net and rolls over to the opponent's side is, in Czech, called colloquially *prasátko*, pejoratively also *prase*.[15] In English, this situation is called *dead net* or *dead net cord* because the player who finds himself in this situation is considered lucky and is said to have caught a *dead net*. Tennis players apologize in this situation to show respect for the opponent that did not get a fair chance to return the shot by raising their hand or racquet to acknowledge a stroke of luck. Tennis has a reputation of tremendous sportsmanship, gallantry and professionalism, so

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[14] See Rejzek 2015, 174, 626, 357, 163–164.

[15] Because there is probably no serious explanation for using this naming unit in Czech tennis terminology (at least no reliable documented evidence), folk groundless interpretations among Czech tennis players may vary greatly, for example, "piggy" as a symbol of good luck, i.e. the player is lucky to have scored a point even though the ball touched the net, as well as its pejorative interpretations such as "play like a pig", i.e. poorly, unfairly. This simile corresponds to some of the entries in SČFI 1 (Čermák 2009:290), such as "psát jako prase" (*scrawl*, literally *scrawl like a pig*) or "držet něco jako prase kost" (*be like a duchess with a spade*, literally *to hold sth. like a pig bone*). According to PSJČ, the Czech slang term *prase* (less pejoratively also using a diminutive *prasátko*) denotes a *wrong ball that hit the net in the game of tennis*, vulgarly also *evil, dirty, shameless human* (Havránek 1935–1957, 1004).

admitting you were lucky is a part of that.[16] A common Czech designation for losing a set 6:0 is *dostat kanára* (loose translation would be *to get a canary*), a colloquial expression of unknown origin in Czech that is also known as *bagel* in colloquial English because the zero figure in the score resembles the round shape of a bagel. The Czech inaccurate multiword calque *jestřábí oko* (previously also known as *orlí oko*) for the English *Hawk Eye* named after Dr Paul Hawkins, one of its developers, is an example of incorrect translation of the computer system connected to cameras to track the path of the ball for replay purposes. The Czech naming unit is a mistranslation of the surname Hawkins, which means eagle's eye or hawk's eye in English. Although it was not named after this specific feature of the computer system gadget, this "nomen omen" (in the sense of being eagle-eyed) became highly popular in Czech, e.g. the popular phrase among the Czech tennis players during online tennis broadcasting *vzít si jestřába* (to take advantage of this computer vision system during the game).[17]

## 5. TENNIS ANGLICISM VS. THEIR DOMESTIC NAMING UNITS

The Anglicisms that enter the Czech language's vocabulary not only accurately name the new reality, but they also add new cultural attributes to the original denotation, making it ineffective to replace them with their domestic, sometimes misleading, paraphrases, especially in sports journalistic texts, where terms are not only terminologically but also stylistically bound. Anglicisms can serve as terminological synonyms that are created by the process of adapting the original English term or by subsequent calquing, e.g., *servis – podání*. *Referee, umpire*, and *judge* are all regarded synonyms in English because they all mean the same thing (i.e. a person who supervises a game and ensures that the rules are followed), and *rozhodčí/sudí/porotce* are their Czech counterparts. They are not interchangeable, however, because they are connected with different sports and, therefore, different contexts

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[16] For more information see https://tennispredict.com/why-tennis-players-apologizes-on-net-balls/.

[17] Cf. Entlová 2011, 55–56.

(football, basketball, ice hockey; tennis, volleyball, baseball; swimming, figure skating, and aerial skiing); sports experts always try to choose the most appropriate ones either by using domestic counterparts to foreign terms or by utilizing international terminology. Thus, terminological synonyms are frequently represented by pairs of loanwords and domestic/native words (e.g. *service > servis = podání, court > kurt = dvorec, singles > singl = dvouhra,* etc.), or a one-word term and two-(or more) word terms (e.g. *mix = smíšená čtyřhra < mixed doubles*).[18]

The tennis vocabulary under investigation includes borrowings from English for which there is no domestic equivalent in Czech, e.g. *tenis < tennis*, its derivatives e.g. *tenistka < woman tennis player*, compounds and slang terms, e.g. *tenisový míček/tenisák < tennis ball* and many others. The following tables and graphs show frequency and proportion in the usage of the selected tennis synonyms as they are displayed within the tennis context (and in the case of *servis* and *podání* also within volleyball context) in the Czech National Corpus syn2020. Selection of concordances, or as the case may be, KWICK (key words in context), of each single query was manually labelled according to text type and genre, i.e. limited to journalistic texts of the sports genre only. Table 1 shows the number of hits in the corpus and provides information on relative frequencies, i.e. instances per million positions (i.p.m.) related to the whole corpus, as well as the average number of borrowed terms used in comparison to their domestic equivalents, which is also shown in Figure 1. The proportions of certain synonyms used in Czech tennis terminology are shown in Table 2 and Figure 2.

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[18] Cf. Cocca, Kendzora, Řeřicha, Alvarado Martínez 2016, 22–23.

| Query: Borrowed terms | Hits | i.p.m. | Query: Domestic equivalents | Hits | i.p.m. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *servis* | 40 | 0.33 | *podání* | 41 | 0.34 |
| *servírovat* | 10 | 0.08 | *podávat* | 10 | 0.08 |
| *drop shot* | 1 | 0.01 | *kraťas* | 5 | 0.04 |
| *kurt* | 105 | 0.86 | *dvorec* | 7 | 0.06 |
| *mix* | 2 | 0.02 | *smíšená čtyřhra* | 1 | 0.01 |
| *singl* | 18 | 0.15 | *dvouhra* | 37 | 0.3 |
| *debl* | 32 | 0.26 | *čtyřhra* | 62 | 0.51 |
| | | ∑ 0,244286 | | | ∑ 0,191429 |

Table 1: Synonyms of tennis terms used in Czech
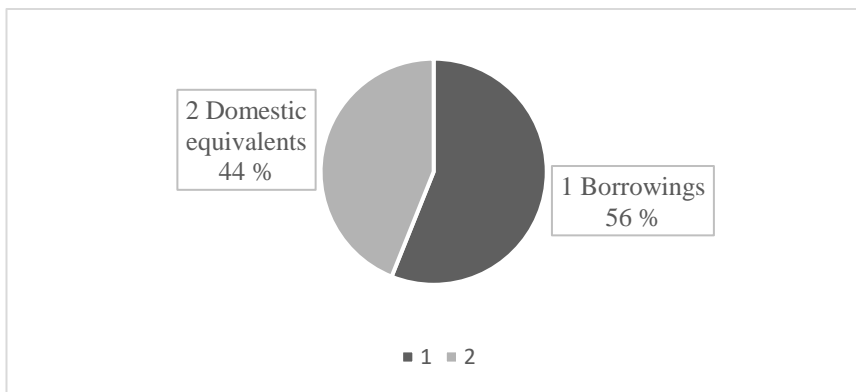


Figure 1: Borrowings vs. domestic equivalents in Czech

| Relative frequency in i.p.m. | servis podání | servírovat podávat | drop shot kraťas | kurt dvorec | mix smíšená čtyřhra | singl dvouhra | debl čtyřhra |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Borrowed term | 0.33 (19 %) | 0.08 (5 %) | 0.01 (1 %) | 0.86 (50 %) | 0.02 (1 %) | 0.15 (9 %) | 0.26 (15 %) |
| Domestic equivalent | 0.34 (25 %) | 0.08 (6 %) | 0,04 (3 %) | 0.06 (5 %) | 0.01 (1 %) | 0.3 (22 %) | 0.51 (38 %) |

Table 2: Proportions of the selected synonyms: Relative frequencies in i.p.m. supplied with a percentage figure.
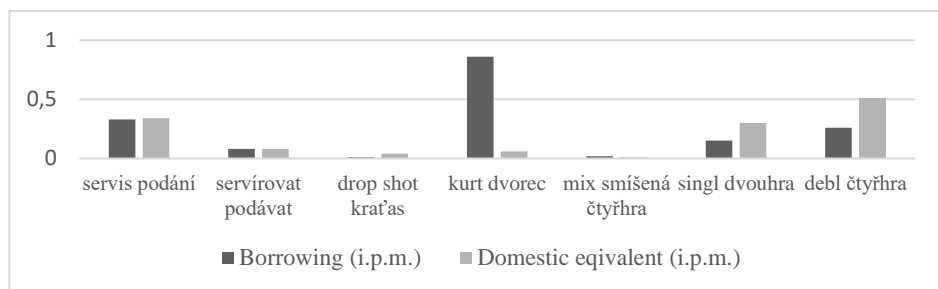


Figure 2: Borrowings vs. domestic equivalents – proportions of the selected synonyms bar chart

All of the above data support the reasons for the speakers of the Czech language to use Anglicisms on different levels of adaptation. It is their international character and consequent comprehensibility, e.g., *servis, singl, debl < service, singles, doubles*, language economy, e.g. *kurt, mix < court, mixed doubles* as opposed to their domestic polysyllabic character and paraphrases, e.g. *dvo-rec, smíšená čtyřhra*, ability to make derivations, e.g. *servírovat < to serve* and the fact that they function as synonyms, e.g. *servis – podání* and contribute where a Czech expression does not exist, e.g. *forhend, bekhend < forehand, backhand*. On the other hand, there are instances where domestic naming units are in advantage over the adopted Anglicism, e.g. *kraťas* vs. *drop shot*.

CONCLUSION

The development of the Czech language and its sports terminology was highly influenced by proximity factors and shared social contacts, the game of tennis being no exception. The trend of adopting Anglicisms has persisted to the present day, affecting many aspects of social life, owing to English's role as a global lingua franca. The study is a brief investigation into the occurrence of Anglicisms in Czech tennis terminology and the reasons why speakers of the Czech language use Anglicisms at various levels of adaptation. It is their international value, which results in comprehensibility, language economy, derivational ability, and the fact that they can be used as synonyms and also provide when a Czech phrase is lacking. There are instances, however, when a domestic naming unit outperforms the adopted Anglicism. The study shows that the English attribute is important in modern Czech tennis terminology, even though certain Anglicisms have their domestic equivalents and some borrowings have been replaced with a purely Czech naming unit. Czech has more sports borrowings from English than from any other language, with tennis terminology being no exception, and studies of other parts of the sports lexicon reveal many more examples of English influence.[19] Some claims have yet to be fully substantiated, while others are widely accepted. The process of borrowing new terms and adapting them in the Czech language is constantly changing and evolving, the current linguistic area of revealing the methods, reasons, and types of Anglicisms still requires more research and analysis to contribute to the development of human society and cultural diffusion.

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[19] Cf. Entlová 2011.

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# ON FURTHER EXTENSION OF CONTEXT DICTIONARY

*Miroslav Langer, René Kron*

ABSTRACT: In our previous research, we analyzed some types of contexts influencing translation of a word from the source to the target language. Namely we were discussing syntactic and semantic contexts. On the basis of this analysis, we defined data model of the contextual dictionary. In this paper, we provide short analysis of recent online and free access CAT (computer aided translation) tools with respect to the size of the language. We also discuss some basic issues of NLP (natural language processing) concerning the automated translation. We also propose further, not yet mentioned, contexts influencing the translation of a word. We discuss a time and social context.

KEY WORDS: syntax, semantics, contextual translation, computer aided translation, natural language processing, time context, social context

## INTRODUCTION

One of the biggest issues in natural language processing is a fully automatic translation of a piece of text from a source into a target language. Although we dispose of the various CAT (Computer-Assisted Translation) tools the final translation is always up to the user/translator. In the present globalized society is the need of translation of various texts a necessity, hence many translating tools are appearing.

The professional CAT tools owned by the translating companies are also their most valuable know-how. The databases of the tools contain phrases very often gathered for several years and they enable to provide professional, cohesive, coherent and of course homogenous translation, where the term homogenous means "the same translation of one word or a phrase through the whole text".

Except the professional tools, there are plenty of online dictionaries and even contextual dictionaries where the translating word can be more specified by a lexical context (see e.g. "bab.la", "GoogleTranslate", "Linguee", "Reverso"). Unfortunately, these tools are as good as their users, who can report mistakes, and still, these tools do not provide more, than a lexical context.

The user looking for a translation of any word in bilingual dictionary can be very often confused of many proposed synonyms. The choice of the correct translation from proposed synonyms is often a very difficult task, and even contextual dictionaries do not propose a clear solution. The correct translation is very often dependent on various types of contexts, not only the lexical one. The solution can be a bilingual contextual dictionary respecting several determining contexts of a translating word. We proposed a database structure of such dictionary in Langer 2018, and Langer and Kron 2019.

In this paper, we sum up already published results, and we propose further types of contexts which can be used to extend recent data structure.

## 1. RECENT STATE OF ART

Present internet contextual dictionaries are more or less based on the huge number of pieces of text translated into the several languages from various sources and of various origin ("About: Reverso"). The term "contextual" means that whole phrase entered by a user is looked up in the database and pieces of text in the source and target languages is presented to them. Such system does not focus on the word to be translated. These systems are rather some kind of translating memory (Strossa 2011, 199–204) than dictionaries in the true sense of this word, even though, most of these systems are continuously updated and developed, and they offer something, what can be called a standard bilingual dictionary as well. Such CAT systems are very handy and useful, but one must take into the consideration that sometimes the translation is not correct and sometimes it is even misleading while only two texts are given where the text in the source language contains the translating phrase and the texts in the target language should contain the translation of it.

Recent online contextual dictionaries cope with two main issues. The first one is automated translation based on huge number of texts in several languages, and the limited number of users willing to correct found mistakes. The number of users is, of course, also derived from the number of users of particular language. Considering e.g. Czech language, total number of the users of the Czech language is

approximately 13,200,000, where as a mother tongue it uses approximately 10,702,000 users ("Obyvatelstvo", Český statistický úřad") and as a second language, it uses approximately 2,500,000 users ("Czech", Ethnologue). From this point of view, the Czech language is not very interesting for developing online application as an investment. One must consider that such applications are mostly funded from commercials placed on the webpage. Once these applications exist, they are not improving as quickly as those with incomparably more users are.

We demonstrate mentioned issues of the contextual dictionaries on one simple example. The Reverso Context translates the Polish verb "widzieć", "to see" in English, as: "see", "meet", "sight", "see each other", "view", "perceive", "again", "back", "know", "watch", "dead", "look at", "pleasure", "watching", "anymore". Six of fifteen translations is absolutely wrong or misleading: "again", "back", "know", "dead", "pleasure", "anymore". Wrong or misleading translation follows from not really accurate and unverified text analysis (Langer 2018).

## 2. TRANSLATING CONTEXT

In the previous chapter, we mentioned main disadvantages of the online contextual dictionaries. In this chapter, we recall linguistic analysis, which we used to design of the database of the bilingual contextual dictionary. For more details we refer the reader to Langer 2018 and Langer and Kron 2019.

## 2.1 PART OF SPEECH AND SEMANTIC CONTEXT

Let us consider the English word "hate". According to the Cambridge dictionary, it has two meanings ("Hate", Cambridge Dictionary):

- "to dislike someone or something very much"
- "an extremely strong dislike"

To translate this word correctly, we need to know the **part of speech** (**or word class**) of the word "hate" in our phrase. It is either noun – "an

extremely strong dislike" or the verb – "to dislike someone or something very much".

The previous example is very easy one. Many common words have more or less different meanings even in the same part of speech. Let us consider the English word "head" and its translation with respect to the part of speech ("Head", Cambridge Dictionary):

- Verb
  - o "to go in a particular direction"
  - o "to be in charge of a group or organization"
  - o "to be at the front or top of something"
  - o "to hit a ball with your head"
  - o "to lead or control something"
- Noun
  - o "the part of the body that contains the eyes, nose, mouth, ears, and the brain"
  - o "A head is also the approximate length of a head used as a measurement"
  - o "the mind and mental abilities"
  - o "a position or part at the top, front, or beginning"
  - o "someone who leads or is in charge of an organization or group, or this position of leadership"
- Adjective
  - o "main or most important"

One can see that, except the adjective, the word class is insufficient to determine the correct translation. Let us consider phrase "head the ball". The word class is not sufficient to determine the correct translation, while the verb "to head" has several meanings. Nevertheless, the word "ball" provides enough information to determine the meaning as "to hit a ball with your head". The "ball" is the **semantic context** of the word "head".

## 2.2 LEXICAL CONTEXT AND SEMANTIC CATEGORY

In some cases, it is not necessary to examine the phrase so much. Let me consider simple Czech phrase "Vařit snídani". Verb "vařit" can be

translated in several ways, the basic meaning is "to cook" or "prepare meal", then it can be translated as "boil" or even "make" in the particular context. Word "snídaně" has the only meaning which is "breakfast". In this case, given **lexical context**, the word breakfast, provides us enough information for translating mentioned phrase as "Cook breakfast."

Lexical context or word class is not always providing us with sufficient information about the meaning of the word and consequently correct translation. Let me consider another simple Czech phrase "Vařit čaj". The meaning of the word "vařit" is already known. The "čaj" is "tea" in English. If one takes into the consideration that "tea" can be beverage or meal, there is not enough information to translate mentioned phrase. It can be translated as "Make tea." As well as "Cook tea." This is one of many examples where the word class and even semantic and lexical context is not sufficient for the correct translation. One needs to know whether the "tea" is a beverage or meal; one needs to know the **semantic category** of a subject.


## 2.3 SPECIFYING PHRASE AND LIST OF SPECIFYING WORDS

**Specifying phrase** can be e.g., the definition from the monolingual dictionary. The correct translation is chosen according to specifying phrases in both languages. Considering the word "knight", I can choose the correct translation into e.g., Czech language as the "rytíř", using the specifying phrase which can be e.g., "a man of high social position trained to fight as a soldier on a horse" ("Knight", Cambridge Dictionary), or as the "jezdec", using the specifying phrase "in the game of chess, a piece in the shape of a horse's head that moves two squares in one direction and then one square at an angle of 90°" ("Knight", Cambridge Dictionary).

Another option that can be used instead of semantic category or specifying phrase is a **list of specifying words**. The list of specifying words is the list of words of the same semantic category, synonyms, or in other way related to the word. Let us consider again the word "knight". List of specifying words for this word can be "castling", "pawn", "bishop", etc., i.e. the words related to chess, and for the other mentioned meaning of this word the list can be "horse", "weapon",

"armor", etc., i.e. the words related to the chivalry. The list of specifying words can be used as the searching criteria.


## 2.4 THE WORD ORDER OF ENGLISH

The word order is another context factor that affects the translation. Let us describe the basic sentence structures in English and some deviations as well. There are five basic sentence structures in the English language:

1. Subject (S) – Verb (V)
2. Subject (S) – Verb (V) – Object (O)
3. Subject (S) – Verb (V) – Adjective (Adj)
4. Subject (S) – Verb (V) – Adverb (Adv)
5. Subject (S) – Verb (V) – Noun (N)

The above-mentioned basic structures can be expanded, or lengthened, by adding adjectives, adverbs, objects, etc., where the order is rather fixed.

Apart from the mentioned word orders, one must take into the consideration constructions of interrogative and imperative sentence, and also instances of an irregular word order. By applying an irregular word order, one can achieve a change in the information structure of a sentence, giving prominence to certain information, what must be considered in the translation. Let us only list possible irregularities in English word order:

- Cleft Constructions
- Proper Pseudo-Clefts
- Inverted Pseudo-Clefts
- There-Constructions
- Fronting
- Inversion
- Left-Dislocation
- Right-Dislocation
- Extraposition (End-Focus)

The word order can help us to determine the meaning of the translating word in several ways. Except already mentioned prominence, syntactic context and the word order can help to determine the part of speech of the translating word or even the meaning. Syntactic context or determining the part of speech is very helpful in the case of homographs in the written language, homophones in the spoken language, or true homonyms in both cases.

Unfortunately, there are cases, where the word has several meanings even as the same word class. Consider the following sentence: "Peter lies." The meaning can be either that Peter is in the horizontal position or he is not telling the truth. To determine the correct meaning of this sentence without knowing any more context is impossible.

The word order must be also considered while translating whole sentence, one must take into consideration emphasized words, and use corresponding structure in the target language.


## 3. FURTHER CONTEXTS AND TOOLS

Two major types of contexts, syntactic and semantic contexts can provide additional information about the translated word, which can simplify the translation of it from the source to the target language. Mentioned contexts give us a wide range of ways to restrict many possibilities given by the non-contextual dictionary. Yet still, there may be more possible translation presented to the user. Each of the translations can form a pack of the information, which can be obtained from the database for the particular word in both, the source and the target language and it can be a matter of further investigation.

If the restriction given by various contexts are not sufficient, still other tools can provide more additional information. Statistical information contained in the language corpora of the target language followed by the examples of use can significantly help with the translation. However, the use of the corpus brings up at least one more question about the context of the translating text, and the user must consider various aspects of the particular corpus. Not concerning e.g., the origin of the texts in the corpus, or its time period can provide misleading or false information.

The texts forming the corpus can be taken from various sources. Table 1 gives an overview of the basic information about some of the English corpora. In the table, there are two pieces of very important information. The first one is the "Genre", i.e., the source of data, and the second one is the "Time period". The Genre tells the user what kind of data they can expect in the particular corpus.

One should be very careful when using web-based corpora. The process of creating such corpora is, of course, fully automated. Special software robots search the internet for English texts. These texts are downloaded and indexed. Manual revision of the content is, in the number of words exceeding billion or even ten billion, logically impossible. One cannot be sure, whether the source of data is correct. The other problem connected to the web-based is the "type of English", in the table described as the "Dialect". The more countries are mentioned in the Dialect column, the more unwanted deviations of use of the particular word or phrase can occur. Some significant differences can be found in American English, British English, Indian English, etc. The differences are not only in the particular words describing the same things, but also in the spelling, grammar and in the use of the language in general.

The News based corpora can also bring some issues. The language of the news is often very specific, especially in the headlines. A less experienced user may unwillingly use wrong sentence constructions.

| Corpus | # words | Dialect | Time period | Genre(s) |
|--------|---------|---------|-------------|----------|
| iWeb: The Intelligent Web-based Corpus | 14 B | 6 countries | 2017 | Web |
| News on the Web (NOW) | 12.4 B+ | 20 countries | 2010– | Web: News |
| Global Web-Based English (GloWbE) | 1.9 B | 20 countries | 2012–13 | Web (incl blogs) |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wikipedia Corpus | 1.9 B | (Various) | 2014 | Wikipedia |
| Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) | 1.0 B | American | 1990–2019 | Balanced |
| Coronavirus Corpus | 978 M+ | 20 countries | Jan 2020– | Web: News |
| Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) | 475 M | American | 1820–2019 | Balanced |
| The TV Corpus | 325 M | 6 countries | 1950–2018 | TV shows |
| The Movie Corpus | 200 M | 6 countries | 1930–2018 | Movies |
| Corpus of American Soap Operas | 100 M | American | 2001–2012 | TV shows |
| Hansard Corpus | 1.6 M | British | 1803–2005 | Parliament |
| Early English Books Online | 755 M | British | 1470s–1690s | (Various) |
| Corpus of US Supreme Court Opinions | 130 M | American | 1790s–present | Legal opinions |
| TIME Magazine Corpus | 100 M | American | 1923–2006 | Magazine |
| British National Corpus (BNC) | 100 M | British | 1980s–1993 | Balanced |

| Strathy Corpus (Canada) | 50 M | Canadian | 1970s–2000s | Balanced |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CORE Corpus | 50 M | 6 countries | 2014 | Web |
| **From Google Books n-grams (compare)** | | | | |
| American English | 155 B | American | 1500s–2000s | (Various) |
| British English | 34 B | British | 1500s–2000 | (Various) |

Table 1: Language corpora overview ("English-Corpora")

The mentioned corpora are used as a source of statistical data for analysis of possible translations. In the following text, as well, Cambridge Dictionary ("Cambridge Dictionary") is used as a source of standard British and American English, Merriam-Webster dictionary ("Merriam-Webster") is used as a source of standard American English. As we already mentioned, the purpose of the following examples is to show potential problems and misuse of corpora.

Let us consider the Czech word "ovce", plural "ovce", English "sheep". The bilingual dictionary offers the translation from Czech to English ovce -> sheep. But what if the user wants the plural? There is no way to distinguish first person singular from the plural in Czech. The standard formation of plural in English guides one to add "s" at the end of the word. Let us backtrack the word "sheeps". First hint gives the Microsoft Word. The word is underlined red, hence misspelled, wrong, or unknown. There is no record for "sheeps" in slovnik.cz, bab.la, Cambridge Dictionary. Merriam-Webster provides following information: "Definition of sheeps: present tense third person singular of sheep".

GoogleTranslate is one step forward. The "sheeps" is translated into Czech as "ovce" ("GoogleTranslate"). Reverso translates "sheeps" into Polish as "owce" and "owiec". It gives also the following examples:

| | |
|---|---|
| All the sheeps, they get together. | Wszystkie owce razem i się zaczyna. |
| When they encounter an obstacle, sheeps always turn on their right. | Kiedy owce spotykają przeszkodę, zawsze skręcają w prawo. |
| Every day they have to shepherd and milk 400 sheeps. | Każdego dnia muszą wypaść i wydoić 400 owiec. |
| Sheep Cull Try to hit 50 sheeps with your 50 bullets. | Owce selekcjonowania Postaraj się trafić 50 owiec z 50 kul. |

The following tables give an overview of information from the corpora.

| Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) | |
|---|---|
| ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100  200  500 | FREQUENCY |
| SHEEPS | 98 |
| 1. | themselves from those, whose misconduct threatens the group and to frame them as black **sheeps**, who pose an exception to the otherwise proper group members. |
| 2. | somebody has got a weak heart, he will collapse. You see goats and **sheeps** all over. See the heads of those who were killed here and there. |
| 3. | forces of all types. I think she is right on target. Beware of the wolf in a **sheeps coating**. To arms we should go! # Socialism Marxism and Communism are all different degrees |
| 4. | Ian had said stuck in her spirit the way briars and nettles stuck in the **sheeps' wool** and the callused fingers of the shearers – especially that bit about her |
| 5. | impressive, I admit. They're cross fertilizing pears with apples and goats with sheeps, tobacco plants with lightning bugs? – Now, that's just stupid. |

Table 2: Sheeps, source: Corpus of Contemporary American English ("COCA")

| Corpus of Global Web-Based English (GloWbE) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Country | | FREQUENCY |
| All | | 461 |
| US | United States | 81 |

| CA | Canada | 15 |
|----|--------|-----|
| GB | Great Britain | 69 |
| IE | Ireland | 40 |
| AU | Australia | 46 |
| NZ | New Zealand | 18 |
| IN | India | 28 |
| LK | Sri Lanka | 12 |
| PK | Pakistan | 45 |
| BD | Bangladesh | 8 |
| SG | Singapore | 26 |
| MY | Malaysia | 16 |
| PH | Philippines | 12 |
| HK | Hong Kong | 2 |
| ZA | South Africa | 5 |
| NG | Nigeria | 17 |
| GH | Ghana | 6 |
| KE | Kenya | 3 |
| TZ | Tanzania | 5 |
| JM | Jamaica | 7 |

Table 3: Sheep, source: Corpus of Global Web-Based English ("GloWbE")

| British National Corpus (BNC) | |
|---|---|
| **ALL FORMS (SAMPLE): 100  200  500** | **FREQUENCY** |
| SHEEPS | 8 |
| 1. | Very, very good! (SP:PS1AF) Sheep. (SP:PS1AA) More sheeps. What's that? (SP:PS1AF) Doggy. (SP:PS1AA) A doggy. (SP:PS1A9) A |
| 2. | 'd like one between the p and the s of **sheeps**, yes, I would agree with you there. (SP:PS4T3) Erm (pause) erm |
| 3. | of Mallards, and the p and the s of **sheeps**. Did anyone put, did anyone put apostrophe after the s of **sheeps** |
| 4. | put, did anyone put apostrophe after the s of **sheeps**. No. Cos it's one of these words where the plural does |
| 5. | more than five horses on (unclear) I think I think **sheeps** out of |

| | the bargain anyway, because we're both, sounds that we |
|---|---|
| 6. | of the irregular plural /s/ with irregular nouns ("**sheeps**"; "mouses") suggests that children overgeneralise simple rules to non-appropriate |
| 7. | of irregular forms (e.g. "goed", "**sheeps**"); and the systematic "errors" that Bowerman (1972) |
| 8. | or Silver, or other than what is made of **Sheeps Wooll** only". As it happened, not everyone was willing to kowtow |

Table 4: Sheeps, source: British National Corpus ("BNC")

Let us analyze obtained results. Even though some of the bilingual dictionaries and the official monolingual dictionaries do not provide any information about the sheeps, besides, each noun has also information about the plural, Google Translate and Reverso know this form. BNC gives only eight results.

The first one is a transcription of a conversation. While there is only one "sheeps" in 3 hours 38 minutes 41 seconds of recordings, it maybe was only a slip of the tongue ("BNC Text KBC").

Results two, three, and four are from a lecture and there is a question about putting an apostrophe between p and s in the word sheeps stated. Hence, this is not a plural form of sheep. Results six and seven are very similar. It is a text from the chapter of the book. The text discusses the topic of mistakes in irregular forms of plural.

Result number five is a transcription of the training session of Commercial Union. Hence, this may be considered as a first result of intentional use of the sheeps.

In result number eight, the sheeps is used as a genitive/possessive case.

The Results from the COCA and GloWbE tell that the regular form of plural of sheep is, especially in the United States, used. This confirms not only the Google Translate and Reverso but also our personal experience with Americans.

Mentioned research opens another question, context, which has to be taken into consideration while the translation. It is the context of the place/origin of the reader. The question can be stated as: "Who is the audience, in the sense of nationality?" Let us consider the Czech word "výtah". Translation "lift" is for the British audience. In American

English, it is an "elevator". The lift, in American English, except of the device for rising or lifting things has the following meaning: "an organized movement of people, equipment, or supplies by some form of transportation" ("Lift", Merriam-Webster).

Let us consider the English word "gay" and the phrase "A poet could not but be gay," from the poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" by William Wordsworth and "I'm gay." From the song "I'm gay" by Shayd ("Shayd: I'm gay"). Wordsworth wrote his poem between the years 1804 and 1807, and the mentioned song is from the year 2018. While in the first phrase, the meaning of the word gay is "happy", in the second phrase it means "sexually attracted to people of the same sex and not to people of the opposite sex" (Gay). The shift of the meaning during the time can be observed e.g., in the Corpus of Historical American English ("COHA"). The **time context** is another form of context, which must be taken in to the consideration, the meaning of the word may change during the time.

The language corpora can provide a wide range of information that can help with the proper translation. One can follow the shift of the meaning of the word, during the time, the use of the regular form of formerly irregular form of the plural of the nouns, or of the irregular verbs. The corpora hold also the information about the word class, word order, and use of the word in the language in general. The corpora containing the texts from the particular form of the language can guide which synonym to use, or what the meaning of a particular word can be in a particular area.

The analysis of the corpora shows, that the list of the contexts mentioned in the previous chapters is not final, and it can be extended by at least two more context, **time context** and **place/area context**. Further and deeper analysis can provide even more information and more context, like the **social context**, i.e., the colloquial language, slang, technical language, etc.


CONCLUSION

The online (multilingual) contextual dictionaries are very helpful tools. The biggest advantage is that these dictionaries are updated continuously. Unfortunately, dictionaries based on texts translated into

several languages, like international treaties, EU documents, multilingual websites, etc. do not always provide correct translations and examples. This is because some of the translations are obtained automatically. We showed and explained the reasons of some of the problems of these dictionaries, but we also mentioned the advantages.

One of the biggest disadvantages of the online (multilingual) contextual dictionaries is the absence of the possibility to specify the context of the word which has to be translated. As the analysis of the various contexts shows, there are many factors affecting the translation of a particular word. Taking into consideration this analysis, the database model of the contextual bilingual dictionary was designed in Langer and Kron 2019. Even though the work may seem to be complex, there are some aspects, which are not considered in the model. As we mentioned in this paper, there are at least three more contexts, which may be taken into the consideration. It is the time context, place/area context, and social context.

The time context has to describe the meaning of the word during the particular time period. The language is a living organism and it is changing over time. Some words are getting lost, some new are arising and some are changing their meaning. The shift of the meaning can be so radical, that it is necessary to take this context into the consideration, especially when translating some historical texts, or when the goal is to create the text from a particular period.

The place/area context provides additional information about the meaning of the word or phrase in the particular region. It is well known, that some words have different meanings in British and American English. Such a phenomenon is not only an aspect of English.

The social context can guide one to use a proper word with respect to the audience, or the source of the text. The word can be from the standard language, slang, colloquial, technical language, etc. In some cases, the word can by widely used and it may be considered as a standard, but it is not standard yet. The example is the word "sheeps" in the American English. One can expect, that this word will be included into the standard American English, and maybe, later on even in British English. Other examples are the regular past forms and past participles of some irregular verbs.

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# THE LINGUIST'S TOOLKIT FOR STORING, VALIDATION AND PRESENTATION OF LEXICOGRAPHIC DATA

## *Pavel Heisig*

ABSTRACT: The present study aims at exploring viable options for underlying formats of lexicographic databases, standards for data structuring, and the means of consistency checking and quality assurance thereof during electronic lexicography projects. Proper implementation of the proposed standards and principles allows linguists to eliminate inconsistencies in their data, pool and share them efficiently with other linguists, and even choose the format for self-publishing the final lexicographic output. To illustrate the recommended structures, procedures and techniques, a case-study project is referred to at times to demonstrate specific steps and alternatives for maintaining the lexicographic database in sufficiently good shape that would eventually allow its transformation into an electronic dictionary in several electronic formats.

KEYWORDS: practical lexicography, electronic lexicography, data storage, data validation, data presentation, XML, relational database, TEI

## INTRODUCTION

Even with the most advanced approaches to (semi)automatic extraction of term-candidates, lexicographic studies still rank among the most labour-intensive endeavours in linguistics. The present contribution will discuss several approaches to practical lexicography, namely the final stages of any successful lexicographic project – efficient data storage and meeting the requirements for successful presentation of the final content in a user-friendly manner that allows for reaching maximum audiences.

Over the years, especially due to the rapidly developing information communication technology and personal computers that provided the necessary infrastructure for collaborative networks of linguists, numerous successful modes of lexicographic data preparation, processing and presentation emerged. The approaches to the final stage of the dictionary-making process, however, could be said to rely on one

of the two easily discernible umbrella technologies which is either some type of a relational database system, or an XML-based data structure. Once the choice is made the selected technology determines the ecosystem of compatible software tools for data handling, transformation, sharing and presenting.

Practical lexicography is a craft of making the comprehensive lexical knowledge available to wide audience. Its primary goal is to apply "practical methodologies for transforming raw language data into dictionaries" (Atkins and Rundell 2008, 1), i.e., to present in printed or electronic form what has been gleaned from usually long-term meticulous research undertaken by either an individual, or more likely a team of linguists in a manner that is consistent and transparent for everyone involved. Irrespective of the type of the target dictionary, i.e., mono-, bi- or multilingual, or its focus – a narrowly defined LSP or broad general language, the challenges associated with dictionary macrostructure, entry microstructure, as well as the issues pertaining to lexicographic data preparation, manipulation and formatting, are to a large extent similar in all lexicographic projects.

Since the 1987 and the success of the first Collins-COBUILT dictionary (Collins 2021), lexicographic efforts have relied on computers as the primary means of analysis and synthesis, in all project stages, starting with the pre-lexicography tasks involving gathering resources for the reference corpus, its formation and enrichment with annotation, through data extraction and analysis, and over to the final stage of dictionary compilation, typesetting and distribution (Atkins and Rundell 2008, 5).

The focus of the present study is to outline and discuss options a linguist or a team composed thereof have to store their lexicographic data, so as to assure its quality and consistency that would eventually allow them to produce the final dictionary in a format accessible to the intended users at minimal cost.


1. ELECTRONIC LEXICOGRAPHY

In the 1960s, when computers started to be used, lexicographers kept their paper-based notes on cards that had to be fed into main-frame computers by skilled typists (Atkins and Rundell, 3). Twenty-odd years

later, the first iteration of the most prominent project was successfully completed, the Collins-COBUILT LGP dictionary, which revolutionised dictionary-writing and set a benchmark for a slew of other similar endeavours to follow (Collins 2021). Though, in the context of precipitous developments in technology and personal computers, 20 years might seem as eternity, the availability and affordability of computers was significantly lower in the times of prevalent mainframe computing, and the same applied also to their performance and software that could be run on them.

Despite rapid developments in electronic lexicography observable from the first decade following the turn of the millennium, it is obvious that printed dictionaries shall prevail in the future, but in terms of their usefulness, they have already been overtaken by reference works on electronic media. According to Tarp (2012, 109) we are experiencing "transition from p-lexicography [referring to printed dictionaries] to e-lexicography . . . with electronic platform[s] and the corresponding new options for lexicography". Though it is unlikely that lexicography would spur the formation of a new general lexicographic theory, which according to lexicographers of the Anglo-Saxon tradition never existed (Atkins and Rundell 2008, 4), this shift in paradigm in favour of e-lexicography and e-tools will bring about "specific theories related to the new media, for instance specific theories about data processing, data presentation, data access and data linking" (Tarp 2012, 108–109).

## 1.1 THE REFERENCE PROJECT

Despite the lack of any general theory of electronic lexicography, numerous approaches and procedures to lexicographic data preparation, storage, structuring, interchange, and data presentation have evolved over the years. To introduce some approaches to data handling in the final few stages preceding publishing of the final dictionary, a reference project will be used.

The aim of the project is to compile a modest corpus-based LSP dictionary of key terms and typical vocabulary contained in the conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) which have been ratified in the Czech Republic, for which there exist universally

respected English to Czech translations. The project, therefore, hinges on a parallel corpus consisting of 65 international ILO conventions that were all ratified and transposed into the Czech national legislation, which should provide a sufficiently robust sample of LSP vocabulary of labour standards in the context of promoting decent work policies across the globe.

The English sub-corpus consists of 130,000 tokens and approximately 4,000 types, the Czech sub-corpus consists of 104,000 tokens and close to 9,000 types. The initial lexicographic data extracted from the corpus consisted of English keywords and the statistically significant multi-word units. These lemma-candidate words are then to be paired with the respective Czech counterparts.

## 2. DATABASES

Nowadays, nearly all dictionary projects start with collection of large amounts of authentic language texts that are kept in the form of reference corpora from which lexicographic data are extracted. The output of corpus querying and analyses usually takes the form of a series of large data tables that are exported either as comma separated values (CSV) text files or into a conventional spreadsheet format. Though there are several proprietary lexicographic tools such as TshwaneLex or Lexonomy into which the work-in-progress could be fed into, it is equally possible to make use of an open-source relational database management system.

The first description of a relational model, a basis for relational database system, emerged in 1969 in a seminal paper by E.F. Codd,[24] a researcher working for IBM (Owens 2006, 47). In essence, a database consists of a set of interconnected tables that can be manipulated by SQL (Structured Query Language) commands in combination with scripts written in a suitable programming language such as Python or Java in order to reveal the output in a form required by the target

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[24] A year later, an updated version of the paper, titled "A Relational Model for Large Shared Data Banks," gained recognition among the expert community (Owens 2006).

platform (e.g., Android, a website, desktop/laptop computer, or a printout). In the context of our sample project, the relational SQLite database was at first filled with the entire parallel corpus that was aligned at sentence level, and at a later stage also with the machine-extracted candidate terms and n-grams with the respective frequency statistics.

However, due to the microstructure complexity and the intention to publish the final product as a website offering a possibility to generate printer-friendly downloadable files in PDF format, the XML seems better suited. Yet, for the purpose of storage and data manipulation, it may be suitable to store the XML-structured entries in the project database, provided that it supports this format.


3. THE EXTENSIBLE MARKUP LANGUAGE

The Extensible markup language evolved from the SGML (Standard Generalised Markup Language) as its successor supporting comparable operations, i.e., to furnish any data with descriptive information, referred to as metadata, but in a simpler manner, which made it easier to use. As opposed to the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML), the language of the web that has all elements and properties fixed and rigorously checked by browsers, nothing is cast in stone, and everything can be defined by the user in the XML. For its flexibility, it became popular after the year 2000, when it captured the attention as a medium suitable for data exchange (Fawcett, Quin and Ayers 2012, 3).

        As the XML, similarly to the HTML, evolved from the SGML, it uses identical paired-tag notation with a start tag and an end tag that are used to wrap data of any kind. This manner of enriching data with descriptors is what, initially, may render comprehension of the XML structure challenging. But once the nested structure of elements with attributes, and the basic rules of syntax are understood, it becomes clear that this underlying feature is exactly the reason that makes the XML readable by not only computers but also humans (Fawcett, Quin and Ayers 2012, 4). However, the latter is true only on condition that an XML-aware editor is used which adds indentation as demonstrated in Sample 1.

```xml
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<entries>
  <entry xml:id="labourer" type="mainEntry" xml:lang="en">
    <form type="lemma">
          <orth>labourer</orth>
          <hyph>labour|er</hyph>
          <pron>ˈleɪbərə(r)</pron>
    </form>
    <gramGrp>
          <gram type="pos">n</gram>
    </gramGrp>
    <sense xml:id="labourer.1">
          <cit type="translationEquivalent" xml:lang="cs">
                <form>
                   <orth>dělník</orth>
                </form>
          </cit>
          <cit type="example">
                <quote>ordinary adult male labourer</quote>
                <cit type="translation" xml:lang="cs">
                   <quote>
                        dospělý nekvalifikovaný dělník Muž
                   </quote>
                </cit>
          </cit>
    </sense>
  </entry>
  ...
</entries>
```

Sample 1: XML entry microstructure

## 3.1 XSL STYLESHEETS

In order to display the database of our project on any screen, it is
necessary to pair the data with a stylesheet written in the XML
Stylesheet Language (XSL), the purpose of which is to transform
customised descriptive markup to a form that is understood by specific
software that processes text-encoded content. As the name suggest, such
stylesheets are written in the XML and their purpose is to map
individual source elements to common HTML tags, so that the XML
markup may be read and interpreted correctly by conventional internet
browsers. Though immensely useful, stylesheets have no bearing on the
source data, i.e., potential errors in the XML would be neither identified,
nor corrected. To that end the XML Schema or other validation
techniques must be employed.

## 3.2 XML VALIDATION

In order to solve any potential structural issues and design flaws in the lexical database, and to keep the structure of the tailor-made entries used for storing the project data and metadata clean and free of any inconsistencies, it is advisable to implement some means of automatic checks, and validation.

In principle, when there is a large number of cooperating linguists working towards a common goal, over a long period of time, with a highly complex lexicographic database, then it is prudent to implement an automated self-control mechanism that alerts the linguist, whenever they wish to create a new or update an existing dictionary entry element, or its attribute, which is not allowed in a given context.

Furthermore, as every lexicographic project follows a certain Style Guide that except for the rules for writing definitions also contains internal structure requirements for dictionary entry articles, and describes how the content should be arranged, a validation schema is in fact a reliable vehicle for its practical implementation. For, irrespective of the clarity and precision with which such a guideline governs both the dictionary macrostructure and entry microstructure, the real challenge is to ensure its effective enforcement, and no pair of eyes can be as watchful as a machine.

In the following sections, three such options for implementing data quality controls will be outlined. Each has its pros and cons, therefore, the choice should be made after the project goal, complexity, and requirements of the ensuing process leading to the final product are all factored in.


## 3.2.1 DTD – DOCUMENT TYPE DEFINITION

The oldest approach towards XML validation is the so-called Document Type Definition. Compared to the newer and more elaborate means of enforcing compliance with the structural, nesting and advanced restrictions on our XML-encoded data, it is less limiting, and, as a consequence, less effective in safeguarding overall data integrity. For instance, with DTD, it is not possible to limit the structure and mutual embedding of elements, as it does not do much more than enumerate all

permissible elements and attributes. The upside is that it is relatively user-friendly and more concise than the XML-based schemas (Kosek 2014).


## 3.2.2 XML SCHEMA

The schema approach became a generally accepted standard for validation of markup languages to such a degree that in 2001 it earned endorsement from the W3C, i.e., the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) - an international community that writes web standards, with a mission "to lead the World Wide Web to its full potential by developing protocols and guidelines that ensure the long-term growth of the Web" (The World Wide Web Consortium 2008).

The raison d'être of any schema is to provide a formal definition of a particular markup language structure, in the present context, the XML. As opposed to a definition of an entry component worded in a specific natural language, a schema definition does not allow for any ambiguity in interpretation as it is comparably stricter. As the schema defines the structure of a particular XML document, it can be used for validation purposes. The validation process relies on specialised software that checks whether a given document complies with the format required by a software tool that is used for processing thereof, i.e., a dictionary writing system, internet browser, e-book reader, or a mobile app.

Another use of a schema resides in the precision with which it describes the data from various angles, therefore, it may serve as a documentation for the XML it defines. For instance, a datatype may be assigned to individual elements and attributes, restricting its contents to text strings, numeric values, dates, etc. (Kosek 2014).

The XML Schema starts from the topmost element which is declared in the initial tag, with its name declared as an attribute value. Afterwards, the nested elements treated in the same manner follow suit, usually with another attribute declared in their start tags, the purpose of which is to assigns a suitable datatype (e.g., a text string, number value, etc.). An undisputed strongpoint of this schema variety is the possibility to define customised datatypes, where for instance maximum permissible length and values can be set. It is even possible to use

conventional regular expressions to precise each character of individual element values.

Unfortunately, despite powerful features through which the schema could restrict the content of individual elements in our sample dictionary microstructure, to have them all implemented is perhaps too difficult for a linguist without a background in IT. Therefore, there will be no sample quoted in order to reserve space for the comparably newer and less intimidating Relax NG schema.


### 3.2.3 RELAX NG AND RELAX NG COMPACT

The newest schema language available is the Relax NG that "specifies a pattern for the structure and content of an XML document" (Clark 2003) which in the context of the reference project serves as a universal electronic blueprint for entry articles of varying degrees of complexity. When the schema is implemented, it enforces a standardised structure in documents that are matched against it. Its strongpoint is that from its original XML syntax a significantly less verbose text-based notation evolved that was termed "compact" as it occupies significantly less space than the original notation.

In both notations of Relax NG (full and compact), the pattern definition starts with the topmost element that serves as a container object for all the other elements, with attributes and values, contained within. The lower-level element definitions are then listed and cascaded from top to bottom, as they are nested in the XML source file, whereas in the compact notation the same effect is achieved with multiple pairs of curly braces, and commas in between functioning as separators.

The schema for the entire lexicographic database would start with the root "entries" element, after which representation of all sub-elements and attributes would be nested, each demarcated by a pair of "element" and "attribute" tags with the respective names inside the start tags. The actual wording of the data/metadata content is in most cases represented by a shortened XML representation of the datatype, e.g., <text/>.

Despite the relative simplicity of our sample entry, in reality, with increasing number of dictionary entries, more deviations from the skeleton schema in Sample 2 is to be expected. In order to incorporate

any variations introduced by different word-classes recorded in the dictionary, such as alternative spelling, different number of senses, evidenced with multi-word units illustrating various collocational and colligational preferences, the original schema will have to be expanded. Fortunately, the more advanced features of the Relax NG would render the necessary adjustments to the schema possible to implement even to an informed layperson.

For instance, certain elements and attributes could be marked as optional by wrapping them in tags of the same name, or by typing a question mark in the compact notation. Elements that may or may not be repeated are placed between "oneOrMore" and "zeroOrMore" elements in the full mode, or marked with the plus sign and asterisk in the compact syntax. Another pattern allowing deviation from otherwise rigid structure supports inclusion of specific XML elements in any order, or addition of useful context notes to more than one element in our entry word article, and still keep the document structure compliant with the schema. Such flexible elements are contained in an 'interleave' element or joined by an ampersand symbol ('&') in the compact syntax. This element can be used in mixed-content situations, i.e., when text content of a certain element is interspersed with words referring to other dictionary entries, or the importance of which has to be noted and differentiated by formatting (Kosek 2014).

Relax NG also enables imposing various content restrictions in cases when there is a link between the final XML structure and the underlying or backup relational database. It is, for instance, possible to limit the length of specific content elements, and their data type by making use of the "param" element with set "minLength" or "maxLength" attributes. The schema users would then be alerted whenever the text did not fit a particular field in the database and thus prevent potential loss of lexicographic data during backup procedure (Kosek 2014).

In addition, as our reference microstructure contains numerous items such as abbreviated descriptors of word-classes and relevant grammatical categories, the permissible values can be defined by a combination of the aforesaid features, and the "choice", with "value" paired tags, and possibly also a container "list" element.

Sample 2 provides a comparison of the two Relax NG variants, both describing the XML structure shown in Sample 1. Since the full

XML-based notation is too long, only the treatment of the initial element cluster is provided.

In spite of the well-deserved praise of this schema language, it should be noted, that in large lexicographic projects with tens of thousands of entries, not even the Relax NG, nor any other schema language in isolation, would be sufficient to "enable users to completely specify the rules that a document must follow before it is said to be valid" (Fawcett, Quin and Ayers 2012, 175). Therefore, it is advisable to implement more than one validation techniques in combination.

Relax NG Compact: (schema in full)

```
default namespace = ""                    }
start =                                  }
  element entry {                      form =
    attribute id { text },               element form {
    attribute lang { text },               attribute type { text }?,
    attribute type { text },               element orth { text },
    form,                                  (element hyph { text },
    element gramGrp {                       element pron { text })?
      element gram {                     }
        attribute type { text },       cit =
        xsd:NCName                       element cit {
      }                                    attribute lang { text }?,
    },                                     attribute type { text },
    element sense {                        (form
      attribute id { text },               | (cit
      cit+                                    | element quote { text }) *)
```

Relax NG: (initial elements only)

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding =             <data type="text"/>
"UTF-8"?>                                 </element>
<grammar ns="" xmlns=""               </element>
datatypeLibrary="">                   <element name="sense">
  <start>                                <attribute name="id">
    <element name="entry">                 <data type="text"/>
      <attribute name="id">              </attribute>
        <data type="text"/>              <oneOrMore>
      </attribute>                         <ref name="cit"/>
          …                              </oneOrMore>
      <element name="gramGrp">           </element>
        <element name="gram">          </element>
          <attribute name="type">    </start>
            <data type="text"/>           …
          </attribute>                </grammar>
```

Sample 2: Comparison of Relax NG and Relax NG Compact schema[25]

## 3.3 THE TEXT ENCODING INITIATIVE

The Text Encoding Initiative or TEI is a consortium of practitioners of humanities that has been active since the 1980s and that established itself as one of the key players in text encoding. Their primary focus has centred around XML annotation of texts with a view of their enrichment with descriptive information, i.e., metadata, by means of their encoding into machine-readable form in a manner that is transparent and ensures that the texts will be decipherable even by platforms that do not yet exist (TEI Consortium 2021).

Among its primary objectives is setting standards for defining XML-based markup specification elements for various genres that as opposed to other markup language schemes focuses on the semantic, rather than formal aspects of text. During its existence the TEI published several versions of their Guidelines. In the context of lexicography, Chapter 9 titled "Dictionaries" is especially relevant as it focuses on encoding lexical resources, for which numerous XML components are recommended (TEI Consortium 2021). The TEI also offers several web-based tools for XML data validation, template writing and dictionary-making. One such tool called TEI Roma generates customised schema, which allows linguists use only those TEI-recommended XML elements that are recognised as suitable for a given genre (Mittelbach and Rahtz 2019).

The TEI issues recommendations applicable to entire corpora or lexicographic databases, which, if implemented correctly, makes it possible to share our reference project and cooperate with a growing community of linguists capable of understanding the XML structure of the lexicographic database. Apart from recommendation for elements encoding of the content data, the TEI developed a comprehensive "header" element reserved for description of the encoded document, its author(s), resources, statistics, and plenty of other descriptive data, which, in our sample project, would appear in the final dictionary front or back matter.

In addition, the TEI Consortiums offers prospective users a pathway for making their data TEI conformant. The definition of conformity in this context poses a set of requirements to XML document(s), the most important of which include that the XML is: well-formed, validated against a TEI Schema or its derivative, uses the

TEI Abstract Model[1], and is documented in the so-called ODD[2] which serves as input for TEI-aware tools to make them able to work with customised schemas, and potentially also produce the final output – a finished dictionary (TEI Consortium 2021).

Even though the TEI offers numerous options in terms of recommendations for various genres both written in natural language, and encoded in all the above schema notations, there is an interesting alternative for specialised lexicographic projects, called TEI Lex-0. This new initiative, which is an offshoot of the TEI Consortium, has produced "both a technical specification and a set of community-based recommendations for encoding machine-readable dictionaries" that were developed from the TEI Guidelines, and which can be implemented as a customization of the TEI schema (Tasovac, Romary, et al. 2021). Our Sample 1 above, which demonstrates a rather simple entry article, is in fact designed in line with this new set of rules and recommendations.

Within the confines of reasonable expectations, supported by virtually limitless potential of XML encoding constricted with the TEI Guidelines recommendations, a feasible goal for our reference project could include referencing the headwords with samples from the parallel corpus. In that manner, specific entry microstructure elements could be linked to individual provisions of the ILO Conventions, and if the data source is properly integrated into an interactive medium, users may on top of the dictionary access also the underlying corpus concordances directly by interacting digitally with a particular lemma (Wills, Johannsson and Battista 2020).

CONCLUSION

The present contribution first discussed the two main approaches towards lexicographic data storage, i.e., the relational database systems,

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[1] I.e. "the conceptual schema instantiated by the TEI Guidelines. These Guidelines define, both formally and informally, a set of abstract concepts such as 'paragraph' or 'heading', and their structural relationships, for example stating that 'paragraph's do not contain 'heading's" (TEI Consortium 2021).
[2] An abbreviation for: "One Document Does it all".

and the extensible markup language. Having read the respective sections, it might have appeared that the first, and much older technology of relational databases, was dismissed too quickly, while the latter was heralded as a panacea to all troubles related to efficient data storage and portability. Especially so because of the host of related tools and specifications available that included the three established methods of XML validation, which over the years have been improved on and endorsed by expert communities. Their current popularity grew to such a degree that it earned them the status of the perceived "gold standard" in the context of text-encoding consistency checking mechanisms.

However, such perception of relational databases and the XML would be far too crude for two reasons. Firstly, on mobile phones, and other handheld devices, an integrated database is a precondition for smooth functioning of most applications, including our unfinished reference ILO dictionary (provided that eventually, it will have been moulded successfully into a mobile app). Secondly, the use of the XML would not even be necessary for running a dictionary application on Android or other mobile platforms, as shown on Figure 1, where the reference project stages are illustrated, as it is possible to draw data directly from the relational database and display it in a suitable format.
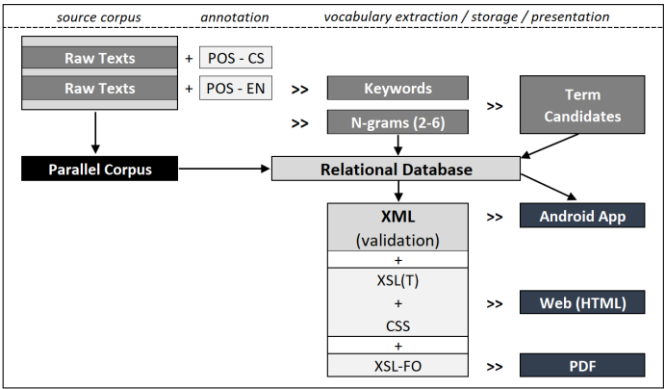


Figure 1: The reference project life-cycle[3]

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[3] Figure 1 is to be read from the upper left corner with boxes representing the reference corpus. The two light grey boxes in middle section identify the two

On the other hand, without having an XML-annotated lexical database, it would be extremely challenging to achieve sufficient level of consistency and complexity required in electronic lexicography. And as Michael Rundell put it: "just as there is no such thing as a perfect dictionary, there is, equally, no 'right' way to produce a dictionary . . . because there are many different ways of reaching the same goal" (Atkins and Rundell 2008, 2). Therefore, irrespective of the medium through which the final dictionary is distributed, e.g., a website, mobile phone, or a book, the best course of action should aim at integrating both technologies in the project, i.e., the relational database and the XML, in case the other media option becomes more viable in the future.

technologies for storage and manipulation of the relevant LSP vocabulary, and finally the 3 boxes in the bottom right corner mark 3 viable alternatives for the final lexicographic product.

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# CAN'T SEE THE PHRASE FOR THE WORDS: ATTENTION AND LEXICAL ACQUISITION

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ABSTRACT: The present contribution focuses on the question of whether lexical items can be recorded in memory incidentally, without conscious awareness. In keeping with cognitive-linguistic usage-based models of language learning, it is assumed that the acquisition of language relies heavily on input, whose elements must be memorized. Elements of input are any language forms found in input to which learners are exposed. These forms include not only single words but also longer phrases, and these pose a particular learning challenge, as they do not tend to be as inherently salient as individual lexical items. Because most formulaic phrases do not normally attract attention, extracting them from the input cannot rely on conscious awareness. Learning formulaic sequences will be demonstrated to be contingent on unconscious perception sensitive to frequency effects. A brief discussion of memory retention will be given to explain how even a single encounter of a lexical item, whether or not mediated by conscious attention, lays down a lasting trace in memory.

KEYWORDS: formulaic language, memory traces, noticing

## INTRODUCTION

An important question in studies of second language acquisition has been how people commit new language forms to memory. How many encounters of a lexical item are necessary for a learner to learn it? Why is it that some learners seem to be more successful in lexical memory retention than others? An interesting approach to these questions was proposed by Schmidt (1990, 1994, 1995) in his *Noticing Hypothesis*. According to Schmidt, close attention is key: it is only by paying conscious attention that one can learn new words, expressions, and constructions. Thus, the Noticing Hypothesis in its strong form predicts that people will fail to learn what they do not pay attention to (Logan, Taylor and Etherton 1996). So-called incidental learning, the argument goes, is not a realistic proposition. The possibility of learning without

conscious awareness (or perception "sub rosa") has been scrutinized, but according to Baars (2002, 50), no robust evidence is available to support the idea that such learning is even possible. If the Noticing Hypothesis is valid, the secret of successful learners may consist in the mindful ability to direct what Schmidt (1990, 132) called "focal awareness" to new elements of the input. In other words, in order to learn a new language form, it is not enough to understand its meaning or get the gist to which that meaning contributes. Rather, the learner must focus specifically on the physical form of the new word or expression. He or she must mindfully register the spelling (or take notice of the pronunciation) associated with the meaning just encountered.

At first glance, Schmidt's conjecture makes compelling sense. After all, inattentiveness is hardly conducive to learning. Consciousness, on the other hand, carries powerful benefits that support memory retention. Research in cognitive neuroscience has revealed that conscious focus extends the time of activation of the neurons involved in the processing of new information. As Dehaene (2014, 89) puts it, "[s]ubliminal information is evanescent, but conscious information is stable – we can hang on to it for as long as we wish". Thus, it just stands to reason that learning is all but guaranteed via conscious attention, in Schmidt's "noticing mode".

However, do the benefits of conscious learning really rule out the possibility of subliminal perception? Human cognition relies on unconscious processes whose complexity we are only beginning to understand. This point is made by Dehaene (2014, 59), who suggests that "many of our mental operations occur sub rosa, . . . consciousness is only a thin veneer lying atop sundry unconscious processors".

Conscious awareness as a prerequisite of learning has been challenged both on theoretical grounds and based on experimental data. Perhaps most famously, Krashen (1981) hypothesized that successful acquisition involves subconscious processing of comprehensible input, with conscious processing being mobilized in the learner's monitoring of his or her production. Also, as Truscott (1998, 109-110) points out, it is many people's experience to discover being familiar with expressions that they do not recall learning. This suggests that at least some of these expressions must have been retained subconsciously. Taylor (2010, 214) observed that "every feature of the input language – syntactic, lexical, morphological, and phonological" is recorded in the learner's lexical

representations. It is rather beyond belief that the learner could pay attention to all these features simultaneously.

This is not to downplay or deny the role of conscious attention. Successful acquisition is contingent on what Swain (1985) termed "comprehensible output". Whatever forms have been extracted from the input must eventually be put to meaningful use. In order to make them part of his or her communicative competence, the learner must use these forms to "create precisely and appropriately the meaning desired" (Swain 1985, 252). Because production is more demanding than exposure to the input, it is fair to suppose that it will require more conscious effort and attention to form.

However, when it comes to exposure to the input, the potential of noticing is more limited for reasons to be discussed below. The main hypothesis being proposed here is that conscious perception of all linguistic input is implausible because it would require close attention to form (spelling or pronunciation) practically non-stop.

## 1. INFORMATION-RICH INPUT

The main problem with the Noticing Hypothesis is that learning a lexical item involves much more detail than can be processed consciously. First, a word seen on a page (or heard in speech) is the proverbial tip of an iceberg. Underneath the surface of its spelling (or pronunciation) is a profusion of information of diverse kinds exceeding the capacity of conscious attention. This information is recorded in the form of so called exemplars:

> Exemplar representations are rich memory representations; they contain, at least potentially, all the information a language user can perceive in a linguistic experience. This information consists of phonetic detail, including redundant and variable features, the lexical items and constructions used, the meaning, inferences made from this meaning and from the context, and properties of the social, physical and linguistic context. (Bybee 2010, 14)

To illustrate what contextual information is available for a language user to perceive, Taylor (2012, 3) hypothesizes that the "context may include

the characteristics of the speaker (her accent and voice quality, for example), and features of the situation in which the utterance is encountered." For instance, consider how a person learns the interjection *meh*. This conventional expression of apathy is normally uttered with a flat or falling intonation, a fact that is part of this word's normal usage. The challenge is to perceive this intonation pattern among many other accompanying features of use. While this particular detail can be noticed consciously, the list of such features is much longer. They are too numerous to keep track of consciously: relevant to the use may be things like the speaker's mood, facial expression, attitude toward the topic, and many other kinds of information. The richness and diversity of the information available in any usage situation go far beyond what a person can consciously attend to at the same time. That is because conscious attention is constrained by limitations of short-term memory (Miller 1956), such that people can only focus on a small number of stimuli at a time (e.g. Kahneman 1973, Szcześniak forthcoming); the remaining information is registered subconsciously.

Of all the information available in the input surrounding a word use, perhaps the least likely to be attended to consciously is that word's collocability. One may focus on the spelling of a word and even on some of the situational details (to do with the semantics and pragmatics), but that focus on the word obscures the neighboring words, if not those found right next to the word in question, then certainly those more than two places away. This information is especially important in discovering formulaic expressions found in the language. These include a wide array of multiword units ranging from collocations (e.g. *answer the door, fall into place*), fixed phrases (*better late than never*), proverbs, non-transparent idioms (*kick the bucket*), and discontinuous patterns (such as V TIME *away*: e.g. *dance the night away, nap the morning away*). These expressions are learned and used as prefabricated wholes – they are *not* assembled from individual words. If people had to compose phrases like *better late than never* by combining the component words one by one, fluency would be compromised. Indeed, reliance on prefabricated expressions has been shown to be behind a proficient and fluent command of a language (e.g. Bybee 2010, 34; Ellis 2002, 157).

To appreciate the implausibility of learning fixed expressions consciously, let us consider the following collection (1).

| with *and* | | with *or* | with *but* |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Adam and Eve* | *love and hate* | *all or none* | *last but not least* |
| *alive and well* | *man and wife* | *all or nothing* | *sad but true* |
| *alive and kicking* | *mom and pop* | *dead or alive* | *slowly but surely* |
| *back and forth* | *paper and pencil* | *do or die* | *small but strong* |
| *between you and* | *peace and quiet* | *give or take* | *strange but true* |
| *me* | *pen and ink* | *he or she* | |
| *black and white* | *research and* | *his or her* | |
| *black and blue* | *development* | *hit or miss* | |
| *bread and water* | *skin and bone* | *life or death* | |
| *cat and dog* | *snakes and* | *make or break* | |
| *cat and mouse* | *ladders* | *more or less* | |
| *family and* | *sticks and stones* | *right or wrong* | |
| *friends* | *sweet and sour \** | *sink or swim* | |
| *hide and seek* | *track and field* | *sooner or later* | |
| *husband and wife* | *tried and true* | *take it or leave it* | |
| *ladies and* | *up and down* | *trick or treat* | |
| *gentlemen* | *up and running* | *yes or no* | |
| *law and order* | *wine, women and* | | |
| *loud and clear* | *song* | | |

The above list includes a small sample of what Malkiel (1959) termed irreversible binomials. Expressions of this type are fairly numerous in English, running in the hundreds, and most of them are familiar to proficient speakers. What the examples listed above have in common is that little about their form is likely to inspire much interest or attract attention. An expression such as *black and white* is so unassuming that, if anything, it is more likely to go unnoticed than cause a person to pause and devote much "focal awareness" to it, let alone write it down. And yet most (if not all) proficient speakers, native or foreign, are familiar with the form *black and white*; furthermore, they would also judge the reverse ?*white and black* as rather unnatural. That means the sequence *black and white* functions as a formulaic unit in the mental lexicons of most English speakers. Crucially, it is not compiled by combining the three words together according to the ADJ *and* ADJ pattern (if it were, the reverse variant would sound just as natural as *black and white*. The same is probably true of all the examples listed above.

What needs to be underscored is that the orderings seen in the selection are arbitrary. This is important because the alternative – combinations that are somehow logical – would make it possible to guess the ordering without prior experience. For example, if there were a logical reason why the expression is *more or less* (and not *less or more*), say if the form were dictated by some underlying bias (to the effect of "put bigger before small"), it would be possible to produce the right form without ever having heard it. However, in Polish the order is actually reversed (*mniej więcej*, lit. "less more"). While the English arrangement is found in Czech and Slovak (*více méně* and *viac menej*, respectively), in these two languages the phrase has no conjunction.

Of course, in the case of many such combinations, the ordering can in fact be motivated. For example, many English expressions such as *flip-flop, tick-tack, King Kong,* or *ping pong*, clearly follow the frequent "i-before-a/o" pattern. This pattern is found in binomials such as *gin and tonic* or *spick and span*. This is a mnemonic aid helping get the form right, even without much experience with such expressions. However, it is certainly not the case that all binomials carry such mnemonic properties.

It is for this reason that the above selection only includes those examples that do not bear any distinctive marks. Not included in the above list are expressions whose form might attract attention. For example, *fight or flight* and *friend or foe* are not listed because they are relatively salient thanks to their elegant alliteration. Also excluded are those expressions where the order of the words is not entirely arbitrary, as in the case of chronologically arranged words such as *seek and destroy, hit and run, bed and breakfast, before and after, front to back, trial and error, question and answer,* or *lost and found*. Another category not included are expressions that might catch the eye due to their unusual form, as in the case of *by and large* (coordination of two incongruous grammatical categories). Not listed are also expressions characterized by varying degrees of opaqueness, such as *spick and span*, *touch and go*, and *part and parcel* (note the archaic sense of *parcel*, "integral part"). The list does not include examples of phrases where the order is not free, as is the case of *everything but the kitchen sink*, where *but* is used in the sense of "except".

Nevertheless, after such cases have been stricken from the record, enough sequences are left to be a problem for the Noticing

Hypothesis. Considering that the list in (1) is far from exhaustive, language users face a considerable challenge. They are exposed to great numbers of lexical combinations that, at first glance, do not look like potential candidates for formulaic expressions to be retained. Still, these expressions nevertheless somehow make it into the mental lexicons of language users. How are they learned? It is rather beyond belief that all of them (or even most of them) could be mastered by means of conscious attention. Unlike individual words, fixed expressions do not stand out by virtue of their novelty. When faced with a piece of text, a person does not know ahead of time which expressions are fixed (to be learned) and which ones are one-off combinations (to be ignored). The only way to find out is to store each encountered sequence provisionally and hold it in memory for some time until it is encountered again. There is considerable evidence (discussed shortly) that this is precisely what happens. However, for this mode of memory retention to be feasible, it has to be subliminal, in operation "in the background," while the person's conscious attention is focused on content. While it is of course possible for a person to shift focus to a fixed expression's form occasionally, doing so more frequently would overtax his or her attentional resources. It is certainly not the case that a person reading a book could pay attention to the spellings of all newly encountered sequences. This would require focusing on form practically non-stop, as any new sequence could be a potential candidate for a fixed expression to learn.

So far in making a case for the inevitability of subliminal learning, I have made two important assumptions, which I have kept implicit until this point. One is that formulaic language is indeed a pervasive feature of language. (If it were not, if the share of formulaic expressions were relatively modest, then there would be no real need for subliminal learning.) The other assumption is that people can commit to memory new pieces of information following a *single* encounter. We will address these two assumptions in turn next.


## 2. THE INCOSPICUOUS NATURE OF FORMULAIC LANGUAGE

What is particularly intriguing about formulaic language is its relative invisibility. For decades the role of formulaic language was not

appreciated because it did not seem to be an especially frequent or significant presence in language use. While some authors did stress its importance in the second half of the twentieth century (e.g. Firth 1957, Becker 1975, Pawley and Syder 1983), these were minority views, which did not find as much empirical vindication as has become available in the last two decades. According to the dominant school of thought at the time, Chomsky's generativism, formulaic language was, just like all idiosyncratic matter in language, a thing of periphery, of negligible relevance to language competence: "It is evident that rote recall is a factor of minute importance in ordinary use of language" (Chomsky 1964, 78).

However, Chomsky's dismissal of formulaic language has turned out to be unjustified. Currently, phrases like *black and white* are known to be prefabricated expressions – sequences stored in speakers' mental lexicons as wholes. As could be expected, their numbers are staggering. According to one estimate, they exceed tens of thousands of lexical sequences (Jackendoff 1997). These great numbers are evident in two ways. First, the lexicon of any competent language user contains most of the tens of thousands of extant expressions that are part of the language. Second, most of what people say and write is primarily formulaic. Prefabricated sequences may make up as much as 80 percent of spoken language production (Altenberg 1998).

Paradoxically though, formulaic language hides in plain view, partly because it is camouflaged among loose expressions generated by rule. This inconspicuousness of formulaic language is also very telling and directly relevant to our discussion. Ironically, Chomsky himself relies on prefabricated phrases in his own language use. Below is an extended version of the quote of his opinion on rote recall. In brackets are those expressions that I find to be formulaic and relatively inflexible in the sense that there is little freedom in the choice of words that can be used to substitute the component items of these expressions; e.g. *learnt by heart* cannot be altered by substituting *by heart* with phrases like *through (the) heart* or *by cardio* or other synonyms. The fixed words in these expressions are in bold.

[**It is** evident **that**] rote recall is a factor [**of** minute **importance**] [**in** ordinary [**use**] **of language**], that [**a minimum of**] the sentences which we utter is [**learnt by**

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**heart] [as such]** – that **[most of them], [on the contrary]**, are composed **[on the spur of the moment]**. (Chomsky 1964, 7–8)

There are a number of observations to be made here. For instance, it would be difficult to produce even short stretches of text without relying on a vast store of prefabricated material to choose from. However, the main purpose of the above demonstration is to illustrate how unassuming formulaic language tends to be. It is perfectly possible for a person to draw on a store of fixed expressions, all the while denying doing so. Now, if it does not occur to a leading expert in the field how many prefabricated expressions are present in his own brief paragraph, it is unlikely that an average learner of a foreign language will be any more perceptive. It is safe to assume that most expressions like *as such* or *on the contrary* will not attract the attention of most language users. Items like *black and white*, *more or less*, *most of them*, *what's the matter with*, and countless other such unassuming lexical combinations do not seem worthy of being noticed or written down. How do we know that such combinations do not attract attention? Because neither do even more salient ones, such as *on the spur of the moment* (more salient thanks to the low-frequency item *spur*). It is safe to speculate that Chomsky treated that expression as a free combination, a loose phrase consistent with the syntactic pattern [*on* NP *of* NP] found in other phrases like *on the eve of the elections* or *on the nature of the universe* (or countless other such phrases). What is the reason why Chomsky and most people assume that fixed expressions are assembled out of individual words? A likely reason is that there is a natural bias (Sinclair 2008) to view the word as the central unit of communication. It is naturally tempting to think of the lexicon as consisting primarily of single lexical items. These are then inserted into empty slots in the phrase structure. This precedence of words over larger combinations is even more pronounced in writing, where words – unlike phrases – are separated by spaces. Any piece of text is, at first glance, populated by words; phrases do not reveal themselves until after a closer look. Often people can't see the phrase for the words.

If that is the case, many fixed phrases cannot be learned by paying conscious attention to them. Rather, when they are encountered,

they are registered and filed away behind the veil of conscious attention. Then, those that are reencountered can be flagged as likely formulaic expressions, and therefore good candidates for "keepers". If a second language learner is not yet familiar with it, coming across this expression again is likely to reinforce its trace in that learner's memory, consolidating its place in the lexicon. This brings us to the second assumption I signaled above, namely that single encounters are registered and their memory traces are not (at least immediately) lost.

## 3. TRACES OF EXPOSURE TO INPUT

How many times should a person come across a new language form? The ideal frequency is notoriously difficult to quantify, but it is estimated (e.g. González-Fernández & Schmitt 2017, 288) to range from a couple to over a dozen encounters. At this point, it is easy to commit a logical fallacy. That is, it is tempting to assume that traces of single encounters are quickly erased from memory. However, rather paradoxically, it is the very need for repetition that suggests strongly that every single encounter is recorded and retained in some form until the next attestation. As Bybee (2010) and Goldberg (2019) point out, erasing such traces would make it impossible to keep count of subsequent exposures. Without some record of the first experience, each subsequent encounter would appear to be the first one. As far as we know, the trace of the first encounter is never really erased and it must remain present in memory in some form. This much follows from seminal observations by Hermann Ebbinghaus (1885) made in his pioneering studies of learning and forgetting. Ebbinghaus experimented on himself as he memorized sequences of syllables; he noticed that although he seemed to have forgotten a given sequence, on the next attempt it took him less time to learn and its memory lasted longer. This suggests that the first experience with a piece of information leaves a trace. That trace, however faint or feeble, persists even when a person is under the impression of having forgotten the corresponding information that the trace subserves.

What is relevant here is that the possibility of learning lexical sequences following a single experience has been investigated and confirmed experimentally. In a widely-quoted study, Gurevich, Johnson,

and Goldberg (2010) show that people have the potential for verbatim recall of specific expressions encountered in the input even when they do not seem to have paid attention to form. In this contribution, after listening to a story, the subjects were given a surprise quiz about the expressions they just heard and were found to display above-chance recall of their exact wording. These and similar findings by others (Sampaio and Konopka 2012, Bordag et al. 2021) suggest that some retention of multiword sequences without conscious awareness is possible.

Of course, once a trace has been laid in memory, it may be too weak to subserve active vocabulary use. Its permanent place in the mental lexicon is contingent on a number of factors. They include a lexical item's relevance to the listener (Dąbrowska 2009), emotional impact otherwise found in so-called flashbulb memories of gripping events (Brown and Kulik 1977), or its being reencountered in different contexts. Repeated exposure is especially critical in learning lexical sequences, which are not inherently salient enough to attract attention. Their main chance of being recorded in memory is through being registered as recurring combinations of words.

A rather obvious example of how this can happen is the learner's experience with a word or expression witnessed on multiple occasions in various contexts, which serve to supply different aspects of meaning. Also obviously, a word can be witnessed when it is used repeatedly on the same occasion, in speech or in writing. Apart from these two common-sense scenarios, there is an additional interesting, previously ignored, opportunity to increase the frequency of a language form. Namely, a given form can be re-encountered in the same input event by being "revisited" through anaphoric reference (e.g. Szcześniak, forthcoming). This happens when, following the first encounter of an expression, the hearer is instructed by the speaker to focus on it again. The speaker's use of an anaphoric expression, ranging from pronouns like *he* to specific descriptions like *that man*, is a signal for the hearer to locate the corresponding target intended by the speaker. In neural terms, this means the reactivation of the memory trace – the networks of neurons encoding the target. In other words, anaphora can be assumed to stimulate all the neuronal networks involved in the processing of the target, its form, meaning, and related information held in long-term memory. When the intended target is a newly learned language form (a

single word or a lexical sequence), an instance of anaphoric reference can be taken to result in the strengthening of the corresponding network in the learner's brain.


CONCLUSIONS

This contribution has focused on the role of attention in learning new language forms and consolidating previously encountered forms. One of the main obstacles to our understanding of attention in learning has to do with disagreements about conscious attention and subliminal (incidental) processing. While conscious attention is likely conducive to better memory retention of new language forms, conscious "focal awareness" of these forms is not an absolute prerequisite. There is simply too much information to keep track of consciously. Although we can posit the correlation "The more attention mobilized, the greater the chances of successful learning," ample evidence suggests that people can and often do retain elements of input without apparently attending to their spelling or pronunciation.

Generally, key to continued activation is sufficient frequency of exposure. If the learner encounters a given language form on multiple occasions, that form is more likely to have its memory traces reinforced, whether or not the learner attends to its formal aspects. This is especially relevant to multiword expressions, transparent collocations, lexical bundles (such as *the fact that*), and other "bland" sequences that are not likely to attract the learner's conscious attention. Such forms are among those that rely on unconscious detection of repetition. What makes unconscious processing a necessity is the very nature of the target lexicon to be acquired. That is, because "bland" sequences used routinely by proficient speakers make up the bulk of formulaic sequences found in the input, most sentences will contain at least several such sequences. It would be downright implausible to envisage the learner pausing to notice each new lexical combination. While people do occasionally notice that a given lexical sequence is something they have come across before, that would not be possible without the first encounter being registered without conscious report.

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# THE ARBITRARINESS IN STYLE
# IN SEMI-FORMAL SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

*Michaela Hroteková*

ABSTRACT: Messages, emails, chats, and social media posts have become an inseparable part of many people's lives. As communication has moved into cyberspace, language has adapted to the needs of new communication platforms. The violation of grammatical and stylistic rules has been observed across the informal e-registers. Certain deviations from traditional punctuation and capitalization can also be observed in, predominantly formal, news outlets' posts on social media, which are otherwise expected to be as stylistically neutral as possible. This article describes and analyses travel blogs on social media, as representatives of a semi-formal register with focus on punctuation, capitalization and emojis. It partially confirms that punctuation and capitalization rules are not likely to be followed in semi-formal and informal internet posts, which tend to use greater variety of punctuation (including a lack of it), a deviation from capitalization, and an overuse of emojis. The punctuation in analysed posts varied but the capitalization was used correctly, which proves the hybridity of the internet registers and genres.

KEYWORDS: internet linguistics, blogs, social media, punctuation, capitalization, emojis, media stylistics

## INTRODUCTION

The activity of looking for information online, has accelerated even more in the past two years. Besides, instead of visiting traditional websites, people are more likely to look for information on social media. Influencers and bloggers are now highly sought-after professions. Despite their casualness in social media posts, it is of great interest if influencers and bloggers adhere to the standard rules of punctuation and capitalization, or they tend to overuse punctuation and emojis in their microblogs. With the main focus on media stylistics (Lambrou and Durant 2009) the following study will attempt to answer these peculiarities.

# 1. LANGUAGE AND THE INTERNET

Virtual reality and cyberspace are no longer science fiction stories. Regardless of age, social class, status, gender, or location, people have moved online. This phenomenon has been accelerated by current socio-cultural events, and language has responded and adapted to the circumstances and needs of language users. As David Crystal (2001) stated, new varieties of language are constantly emerging due to technological development. Some traditional genres of communication have found their online version; business letters have become business emails, and the print media has increasingly been replaced by news websites. In addition, new genres, including social media posts, have emerged.

There are several categories of social media content: e.g., written posts, blogs, articles, guides, e-books, links to external content, images, videos, video stories, live videos, infographics, testimonials and reviews, announcements, and contests. In terms of target group and audience, social media can be divided into social networks (Facebook and Twitter); media sharing networks (Instagram and Snapchat); discussion forums (Reddit); bookmarking and content curation networks (Pinterest); consumer review networks (TripAdvisor); blogging and publishing networks (Tumblr); social shopping networks (Etsy); and interest-based networks (Goodreads) (Kakkar 2022). Each social media platform has its basic features. There are certain rules, such as the number of characters, the formatting of links, and the use of emojis. For marketing purposes, there are many style guides that help businesses and individuals in promoting and getting better reach for their brand. On the internet, several genres can be present at the same time e.g.: blogging via posts on social networks, which is known as "microblogging". Blogging and vlogging are becoming increasingly popular. Writers can make their voices heard, and they can earn money from this activity. In addition to linguistic factors such as word choice or punctuation, there are external factors that influence the structure of the posts such as photos, videos, and GIFs.

Along with the new or renewed genres and e-registers (Biber and Conrad 2009), new communities, and professions (e.g., blogger and vlogger) have emerged. "Influencer": a person who "has established credibility in a particular industry, has access to a large audience, and

can convince others to act on their recommendations" (Digital Marketing Institute 2021) is one of the most popular jobs today. Despite using social network patterns, each influencer brings a certain authenticity and an individual idiolect. They influence the audience in terms of content and in terms of language by using neologisms, unusual punctuation, spacing, and emojis.

The language used on the internet depends on the type of medium and the degree of formality. Many genres can move freely along the continuum of registers. A blog can be completely informal and use many colloquial words and incomplete structures, or it can be very formal and use technical vocabulary and complex sentence structures. Many linguists argue that online communication, especially informal communication, is characterized by deviations from standard orthography and other stylistic features (Busch 2021, Crystal 2001, Sung Hong Mei 2010).


## 2. DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a continuation of previous research (Hroteková 2021) where four mainstream news media outlets (the BBC, the New York Times, Forbes, and the Daily Mail) were analysed as examples of formal language use on the internet to see whether formal texts retained the appropriate structure and style even when they were published on new communication platforms such as social media resulting in partial inconsistency in style when posting online.

The current study used blog posts as the representatives of informal or semi-formal internet genre, which were selected in search for an objective source attempting to convey information and reach a wide audience as an analogy to the formal news outlets. Therefore, blogs presented themselves as the most appropriate genres and registers for such purposes. There was a ready assumption that travel influencers would have a similar choice of words and pay attention to the use of punctuation and spelling, which are otherwise often distorted in informal communication. Moreover, attention was paid to whether there are different graphemes due to multimodality.

Various websites with the best bloggers (all of them must be native speakers of either English variety) in the world listed according

to their number of followers (or, in the case of vlogs, the number of views) were consulted. Another criterion was to select two men and two women who were active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. They needed to be active on all three platforms. One hundred and fifty social media posts were then randomly selected as a sample from each blogger, (fifty for Instagram, fifty for Facebook, and fifty for Twitter). A total of six hundred posts were analysed and evaluated. All samples were from 2021 or late 2020. Each set of posts was coded based on similarities: e.g., a "short post (max. twenty words) followed by a question mark", or "a short post, one paragraph (max. fifty words) ending with an exclamation mark". For a more detailed categorization, see Section 3.

In attempt to answer if the informal register uses incorrect punctuation or omits it, we focused on punctuation in general, however more attention was paid to the last sentences, in case of multi-sentence posts, assuming that the closing sentence would contain punctuation combined with emojis, solely emojis or no punctuation. Further, capitalization and use of emojis are considered as well.


## 3. ANALYSIS

Writing consistently can be easy (copy and paste) or difficult (adapting the text to a particular platform). Style guidelines are usually used for more formal writing. When writing a blog, the author maintains a subjective voice. This applies for either personal journal or filter (Herring and Paolillo 2006), when discussing a general topic. The following paragraphs analyse four bloggers and their use of punctuation as well as other characteristics. The bloggers are presented in random order. For each blogger, the relevant professional and personal backgrounds are given.


*Louis Cole*

There are two online personalities with this name. One is a singer, and the other one is a Youtuber. Although both have YouTube channels and

other social media accounts, the subject of this investigation is the British-born Youtuber and vlogger Louis Cole. Currently living in the United States, Cole is known for the FunForLouis channel. According to influencematchmaker.co.uk, he has more than 1.3 million Instagram followers, more than two million YouTube followers, and more than 924 thousand followers on Twitter. In 2017, he was listed as one of the top travel influencers and vloggers by Forbes magazine (Influencematchmaker.co.uk, 2021). He actively promotes his work on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. The frequency of his posts can be seen in Table 1.

Cole is very active on his social media accounts. His posts are not very consistent in form, and the length varies alongside the punctuation and use of emojis. There is no preferred style for him. This proves that Cole still creates his own posts, whereas some popular figures have stopped managing their accounts and hired community managers instead due to work overload. On Cole's Twitter account, twelve different post styles were observed:

1. A sentence ending with an emoji but with no punctuation;
2. A short post of one paragraph ending with an exclamation mark;
3. A short post of one paragraph ending with three full stops;
4. A paragraph containing links and tags ending with no punctuation;
5. A paragraph ending with an emoji;
6. A paragraph ending with an exclamation mark and an emoji;
7. A shared link with no punctuation or emojis;
8. A short post of one sentence and a question followed by a link-
9. A photo caption ending with an emoji;
10. Comments on a retweeted post ending with a full stop
11. Comments on a retweeted post ending with an emoji
12. Comments on a retweeted post ending with punctuation and an emoji.

The last three (10, 11, 12) have a "filter" function rather than the personal journal type of a blog, because some people retweet without commenting on a retweeted post or comment on it just by an emoji.

There is no pattern in the Twitter posts. Cole's tweets are random in outline, and the choice of punctuation marks and emojis is simply based on his utterances. It seems that he follows the standard rules of capitalization, however this aspect, when considered the first grapheme at the beginning of the sentence, appears to be the research limitation, as most devices have automatically pre-set the first letter capitalization. The punctuation varies when there is a declarative sentence or similarly sounding statement, this is followed by a full stop in only 10 % of cases. In 24 % of cases, the sentence ends with an emoji. In 32 % of cases, there is one or two exclamation marks; the double exclamation marks are used randomly, so either they can pragmatically be used as intensifiers of the exclamation, or they may be a typo. Further research would be needed to determine Cole's precise intentions.

The Twitter posts do not correspond with the Facebook ones. Although the posted photos are the same on both accounts, Cole attempts to target his posts at the respective audiences (see Table 1). There are also multiple styles employed on Facebook that use variable punctuation, emojis, and length.

The Facebook posts were divided into the following categories:

1. A paragraph ending with a question mark followed by a photo;
2. A paragraph ending with a question mark and emoji followed by a photo;
3. A paragraph ending with an exclamation mark and an emoji followed by a photo;
4. A paragraph ending with an emoji and no punctuation followed by a photo;
5. A photo caption with a title and emoji;
6. A photo caption ending with ellipses;
7. A photo caption ending with an exclamation mark;
8. A photo caption with a link and hashtag but with no punctuation;
9. A photo caption with no punctuation;
10. Text only: a paragraph with no punctuation;

11. A paragraph ending with a full stop followed by a photo;
12. A four-paragraph text.

Based on the Facebook data, it is evident that rather than ending the sentence or a paragraph with a full stop, an exclamation mark (36 %) or no punctuation and an emoji (32 %) is used instead. However, his style is generally inconsistent and arbitrary.

On Instagram, there is more consistency in the posts' style:

1. A photo or video description: a paragraph and a sentence end with a full stop;
2. Posts ending in an exclamation mark and an emoji
3. Posts ending in a full stop and an emoji;
4. Posts without punctuation ending with an emoji or a series of emojis;
5. A photo caption with no final punctuation and only an emoji;
6. A photo caption with punctuation and an exclamation mark;
7. A photo caption ending with a full stop.

About 30 % of the Instagram posts are identical to the Facebook posts due to their common purpose and the ability to share the same posts on both social networks. As the photos were taken either by Cole or his fiancée, the crediting section (as seen in news outlet posts) is missing.

Cole's outline style and punctuation is arbitrary. In 32% of his posts, he ends sentences with punctuation followed by an emoji and in 40% he does not. As was suggested earlier, the emojis might replace punctuation; however, Cole's posts show that the emojis have more of a descriptive function as they either reflect or allude to the content of the blog and the accompanying photo. Generally, influencers add many tags, hashtags, and metareferences to their posts. Peculiarities such as the occasional use of two question marks and exclamation marks were also observed.

Cole tends to end a sentence either with an exclamation mark, a question mark, or an emoji. Full stops at the end of paragraphs are scarce. The emojis at the end might have an informative function; they are round like full stops (when it is a smiley face or heart shaped), and

so a full stop is not necessary. Also, emojis look more exciting. They attract more attention, allowing one to read Cole's posts with some added emotional value. Although the punctuation and length vary, Cole's posts look uniform because 90 % of them are accompanied by a photo.

*Chris Burkard*

The California-based artist Chris Burkard is "an accomplished explorer, photographer, creative director, speaker, and author" (Chris Bukard n.d.). Burkard has won several prestigious awards, he has given TED talks, and he has collaborated with many brands. Taking a photojournalistic approach to his work and using multiple media, Burkard is a "professional blogger" who promotes his work on social media. He has more than 3.6 million followers on Instagram. Indeed, the best promotion of his work is on Instagram as a social media platform for sharing photos.

Unlike Cole, Burkard uses a more uniform pattern for his posts, which resemble formal newspaper articles. There were eight posting styles identified on Twitter:

1. A photo without any text;
2. A text without a photo ending in a hashtag but with no punctuation;
3. An invitation to click on a link that ends with a colon;
4. A paragraph ending with an emoji but with no punctuation;
5. A paragraph ending with an exclamation mark;
6. A paragraph ending with a full stop;
7. A paragraph ending with two exclamation marks;
8. A photo caption with no punctuation.

The Twitter posts have certain patterns. The use of the question mark is absent, and there is frequent use of the colon to make a reference.

Despite the various styles employed by Burkard on Facebook, the most prevalent one is a standard paragraph ending with a full stop (50 %). Interestingly, his photo captions are descriptive sentences

ending with a full stop rather that a title with no punctuation. In total, six styles were identified:

1. A paragraph ending with a hashtag (or hashtags) but with no punctuation;
2. A paragraph ending with an emoji but with no punctuation;
3. A paragraph ending with an exclamation mark
4. A paragraph ending with a full stop;
5. A photo caption: a sentence ending with a full stop;
6. A link ending with an emoji.

Burkard's Instagram posts are an excellent example of microblogging. Besides giving the photo caption, his photo descriptions give the story behind the photo or video. In two of Burkard's posts, representing 4 % of his Instagram corpus, he uses a nonstandard way of spacing between letters: e.g. "E a s t f j o r d s" (Chrisburkard n.d.). The types of post on Burkard's Instagram account are as follows:

1. A photo caption followed by a paragraph (about fourteen lines) ending with a full stop;
2. A photo caption followed by a paragraph (about fourteen lines) ending with an exclamation mark;
3. A photo caption ending with a full stop;
4. A photo caption ending with an exclamation mark;
5. A paragraph ending with a full stop followed by an emoji;
6. A paragraph ending with a link and with an emoji but with no punctuation ;
7. A paragraph ending with a hashtag but with no punctuation;

As Burkard's style is the closest to a journalistic and more formal register, most of his posts (72 %) end with a full stop. The use of emojis or omitted punctuation is very rare.

Whereas Cole uses a short description when he creates vlogs, Burkard uses a more organized textual style on Instagram. The crediting section and the tags are not part of the text. A deviation in spacing before the punctuation was observed, as there were two posts where there was a space left before the full stop. Whether this was a typo or

intentional is a matter for further investigation. The capitalization is standard. Only one post contained an emphasis through the use of capital letters. For referencing, Burkard uses a link in the bio followed either by an emoji or by no punctuation; rarely is there punctuation on its own. When a post is intended to be humorous, there is no smiley face emoji but rather the interjection "hahah".

Clearly Burkard's posts tend to be as neutral as possible when using correct punctuation and capitalization; however, there is some variety in the final sentence or paragraph. He is consistent in the posts' typology as well as in the repetition of his style, which can be seen in Table 2.

*No Back Home (Karilyn Owen)*

Like Burkard, the No Back Home account by Karilyn Owen promotes her work on social media. No Back Home is a family travel blog. Owen is a freelance writer and blogger who travels with her son, and she encourages other parents to travel the world with their children. Although she is active on all social media, her preferred platform is Instagram; she uses Instagram in a very structured way.

Owen knows the purpose of social media in marketing, and she uses these strategies well. Facebook and Twitter serve as tools to share links to her blog (No Back Home 2021). Her tweeting style is very homogenous, and there were only two types of post observed:

1. A sentence with no punctuation at the end that is followed by a link;
2. A sentence ending with a hashtag but with no punctuation.

Owen uses a typical social media style; the sentences are full of hashtags and social tags with many references. There are multiple styles and registers used on her Facebook account that show a different way of communication with the audience through punctuation:

1. A paragraph ending with a question mark followed by a photo;

2. A paragraph ending with a question mark and an emoji followed by a photo;
3. A paragraph ending with an exclamation mark and an emoji followed by a photo;
4. A paragraph ending with two exclamation marks;
5. A paragraph ending with a full stop and an emoji;
6. A paragraph ending with no punctuation;
7. A paragraph ending with an emoticon.

Although it is not common to see emojis in her Facebook posts, a deviation was observed in the use of a colon and a parenthesis to create a smiley face.

Owen's Instagram posts can be characterized as multiple paragraph texts, where each paragraph starts with an emoji that functions as a bullet point as well as a symbolic topic sentence and an interconnection with the text; however, only 16 % of the posts end with an emoji. This phenomenon is subject to social media aesthetics; the primary interest herein is in there being proper punctuation at the end of the posts.

The types of posts on Owen's Instagram account include:

1. A paragraph ending with a question mark;
2. A paragraph ending with one exclamation mark;
3. A paragraph ending with two exclamation marks;
4. A paragraph ending with a full stop;
5. A paragraph ending with a full stop and an emoji;
6. A paragraph ending with an emoji but with no punctuation.

The appearance of two exclamation marks emphasizes the importance of the post. What is interesting is that Owen uses a full stop after the tags, which is a very uncommon practice on social media. She also finishes sentences with a full stop and uses an emoji afterwards. Indeed, 85 % of her posts use emojis as the final symbol in sentences.

Overall, Owen is very consistent and organized in her Instagram posts. For the crediting section, she uses a camera with a flash emoji followed by a colon. The emojis in her posts appear at the beginning of sentences as replacements for bullet points, and each emoji represents the topic that is discussed in the paragraph. There is also an interlacing

of an image with the text; this is one of the latest marketing strategies. While it is not very common to use punctuation after hypertexts or tags, Owen does so in her Facebook posts. The use of capital letters is standard; however, capitalization for emphasis can be observed in 10% of her posts.

*Sorelle Amore*

Originally from Australia, Sorelle Amore started her career as a travelling blogger and vlogger. Today she lives in Iceland and is an investor, CEO, and artist (Sorelle Amore n.d.). Her social media content focuses on her photos, where she models in different countries. She uses a large variety of punctuation, and her posts on social media are not uniform.

Amore's Twitter posting style is as follows:

1. A quotation containing quotation marks ending in a full stop;
2. A quotation with no quotation marks ending in a full stop;
3. Sharing a link ending in a full stop
4. A sentence ending in an exclamation mark and an emoji;
5. A paragraph ending with a question mark;
6. A paragraph ending with a full stop;
7. A paragraph ending with an exclamation mark;
8. A paragraph ending with an emoji;
9. A paragraph ending with an emoticon;
10. A paragraph ending with a question mark and an exclamation mark.

The capitalization follows the standard rules. She capitalizes the names of the cities and countries. She also uses all CAPS for particular words to emphasize them. The punctuation and the use of emojis in her posts is diverse. While the punctuation on Twitter is more arbitrary, Amore is more consistent on Facebook. The dominant punctuation mark is a full stop (in 52 % of posts). Her Facebook posts have the following characteristics:

1. A paragraph ending with a question mark;
2. A paragraph ending with a full stop;
3. A paragraph ending with an exclamation mark;
4. A paragraph ending with an emoji;
5. A photo caption ending with no punctuation;
6. A photo caption ending with a full stop;
7. A photo caption ending with a question mark.

Despite the popular use of emojis to emphasize the text and draw the attention of readers, Amore opts for punctuation marks, e.g.: --> <--. (When creating arrows, Microsoft Word automatically changes them to the symbol → ←; the same happens when trying to create a smile face emoticon with the use of colons and brackets.) This is an old-fashioned way of using punctuation online, and it was common in the early 2000s. Some of these techniques are still present; however, when considering the economization and condensation principle, this practice is contra-productive.

Amore's Instagram posts follow these patterns:

1. A paragraph ending with a question mark;
2. A paragraph ending with a full stop;
3. A paragraph ending with an exclamation mark;
4. A paragraph ending with an emoji;
5. A paragraph ending with an emoji and a full stop;
6. A question.

Unlike Burkard, who uses colons to make a reference to a link or a video, Amore uses colons and semi-colons as parts of emoticons. A full stop appears after the tag @somebody. While not very common, Amore's posts are proof that this is acceptable. As the only one of the selected bloggers, Amore tends to use emoticons instead of emojis. She thus uses the punctuation to give the text a different tone. The used emoticons look very neat in the text and could form an alternative to a full stop in friendly formal writing.

| Blogger's name | | Twitter | Facebook | Instagram |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Louis Cole* | #followers | 791.6K | 61,572 | 1.1M |
| *(FunForLouis)* | # posts | 9,430 | N/A | 2,219 |
| *Chris Burkard* | #followers | 30.6K | 662K | 3.6M |
| | # posts | 4,520 | N/A | 4,038 |
| *Karilyn Owen* | #followers | 21.9K | 2,764 | 34.4K |
| *(No Back Home)* | # posts | 24.6K | N/A | 2,617 |
| *Sorelle Amore* | #followers | 81.1K | 43K | 510K |
| | # posts | 6,065 | N/A | 1,272 |

Table 1: The number of followers (# followers) and total posts (# posts) since creating social media accounts (data from September 2021)

| | Louis Cole | Chris Burkard | Karilyn Owen | Sorelle Amore |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Full stop** | | | | |
| Facebook | 4 % | 72 % | 32 % | 52 % |
| Twitter | 10 % | 18 % | 0 % | 24 % |
| Instagram | 10 % | 76 % | 16 % | 54 % |
| **Exclamation mark** | | | | |
| Facebook | 36 % | 12 % | 32 % | 8 % |
| Twitter | 32 % | 28 % | 0 % | 14 % |
| Instagram | 28 % | 0 % | 22 % | 6 % |
| **Question mark** | | | | |
| Facebook | 8 % | 2 % | 28 % | 10 % |
| Twitter | 14 % | 0 % | 0 % | 32 % |
| Instagram | 10 % | 8 % | 62 % | 32 % |

| Emoji or no punctuation | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facebook | 32 % | 4 % | 2 % | 22 % |
| Twitter | 24 % | 16 % | 100 % | 26 % |
| Instagram | 54 % | 6 % | 6 % | 16 % |

Table 2: The use of punctuation in social media posts

Compared to news outlets register, which maintain a more uniform style and preserve formality, bloggers uniformly use the informal register and individual style. There is a wide variety of bloggers using a broad degree of formality on the register continuum. Punctuation in blogs is therefore subject to a pragmatic perspective and requires further research. It is common practice not to use any punctuation after hashtags or links. From a grammatical perspective, this is an unfinished sentence; however, if the hashtag, link, or salutation @somebody appears in the middle of the text, the punctuation is used in a standard fashion. A full stop should not follow metatext, social tags, or hashtags, because this can lead to confusion as to whether the character belongs to the tag or not. The above-mentioned results lead to a formulation: If a paragraph ends with a hashtag, crediting, @somebody, or a link then punctuation is omitted.

As seen in tabloid news to express emotion (e.g. a smiley face, tears of joy, an angry face, or a heart), the use of an emoji in social media posts is supposed to connect the text to the published image. Emojis are within the text, but they can act as a bridge between the image and the text due to the multimodal representation of the message. Formal posts hardly ever use emojis, but they are gradually appearing. Today emojis can have a positive function in connecting text and images. They are not only used for marketing purposes; they also help shape the text.

Although biased application of the punctuation was expected – more specifically, its omission or excessive use – the selected sample did not confirm this hypothesis. Even influencers, who tend to use less formal language than the media, generally use punctuation correctly. There are some variations, such as ending a sentence with an emoji

rather than a full stop. It is still questionable why there is usually no full stop after an emoji (one post out of 600). In some posts, emojis appear at the beginning of the paragraph as a symbol of the topic to be discussed; their function is lexical and announces the topic sentence.

Despite blogs being highly personal register and the inconsistency in compared samples (among and within) was expected, there are certain patterns such as replacing punctuation by emojis or emoticons or not using punctuation after hashtags, shared by bloggers and social media users. As for the capitalization at the beginning of the sentences that could have been used correctly due to auto-correct, this aspect concludes one of the limitations of the research, which could be further developed by interviewing bloggers and asking them about their metalinguistic perspective.

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# LINKING ADVERBIALS USED
# BY F. S. FITZGERALD IN *THE GREAT GATSBY*

*Eva Leláková, Beatrix Bačová and Jana Pálfyová*

ABSTRACT: The present paper deals with the study of coherence/clause textual relations formed by linking adverbials (LAs) and used in the novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Detailed observation, classification, and analyses of dominant semantic categories and positions of LAs enable a subsequent discussion of the author's reasons of their applications in the novel. The stated research hypotheses are based on the literary sources and findings by Liu 2008, Pipatanusorn and Wijitsopon 2019, Biber et al. 1999, and Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999, as well as on the descriptions of Fitzgerald's language and writing style (Prigozy 2005). The research results suggest that the diversity of linking adverbials leads to many different coherence relations but does not affect the rate of frequency of occurrence within a given semantic category.

KEYWORDS: linking adverbials, cohesion, semantic categories, *The Great Gatsby*

## INTRODUCTION

Communicative competence and desired objective of communication can be achieved only when people produce a text which is understandable, meaningful, and intelligible. Clarity of its expression, i.e. coherence is then created by the grammar and lexis through cohesion. Cohesion is generally defined as the text analysis beyond the sentence level. According to Halliday & Hasan (1976, 5), relations of meaning that exist within the text can be created by reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical chains, cohesive nouns, and conjunctions. Oshima & Hogue (1998, 18) claim that linking sentences to each other meaningfully can be achieved by using of a variety of organizational patterns as well as a wide range of cohesive devices. In the present study we analyse coherence/clause relations which F.G. Fitzgerald made explicit in his novel especially by linguistic markers, so called connectives. We have the ambition to confirm that sentence/linking

adverbials contributed largely to the way how the author compressed the longer texts and innovatively experimented with cause, contrast, sequence, result, addition, and apposition.

The basic function of linking adverbials is "to state the speaker/writer's perception of the relationship between two units of discourse" (Biber 1999, 765). As Gardezi and Nesi (2010) observe, linking adverbials are simple concrete items, easily taught and useful in drawing learners' attention to the importance of logical coherence. Linking adverbials are also referred to as *sentence adverbials* (Leech and Svartvík 2002, 187), *connective adjuncts* (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 775), *conjuncts* (Dontcheva-Navratilova et. al, 2012, 44, Burton-Robert 1986, 106, Finch 2000, 91, Wales, 2001, 77), *conjunctive adjuncts* (Gardezi and Nesi 2010), *conjunctive adverbials* (Bussmann 1996, 95, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999, 522, Kaplan 1995, 160), and *discourse connectives* (Degand et al. 1999). Linking adverbials are the types of cohesive devices that may add little or no propositional content by themselves, but they serve to specify the relationships among sentences in oral or written discourse (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman 1999, 522). Dontcheva-Navratilova et al. (2012, 35) state that they play the cohesive role that enables the addressee to understand how one idea implies another. Burton-Robert (1986, 106) claims that conjuncts define the relation between the sentence and its contextual meaning. They do not provide any function to any sentence element which they modify and are frequently used in discourse, where partners in communication do not share either spatial or temporal contexts. In such cases writers have to rely on linguistic units to create propositional links in texts while readers need indications of relationship between propositions to interpret the message properly. Discourse connectives facilitate readers' comprehension of texts in that they provide explicit cues about the logical relationships among referents, propositions, and clauses, and thus help readers to construct online mental representations of the meaning of a text (Degand et al. 1999, Lacková 2012). There exist varieties of classifications of semantic categories of LAs presented by different scholars (Biber et al. 1999, Quirk, Greenbaum et al. 1990). We will deal with the classification provided by Liu (2008, 505). He presents the division into *additive LAs* (with emphatic, appositional/reformulation, and similarity comparative subcategories), *adversative LAs* (with proper adversative/concessive,

contrastive, correction and dismissal subcategories), *causal/resultative LAs* (with general causal and conditional causal subcategories), and *sequential LAs* (with enumerative/listing, simultaneous, summative, and transitional subcategories).

Linking adverbials' position in a sentence or clause may be initial, medial, or final one. Biber et al. (1999, 891) emphasize that the usage of initial position of linking adverbials allows them to mark the connection between units of discourse, between clauses or units larger than clauses. The adverbial identifies for the reader or hearer exactly how the subsequent discourse is to be understood in relation to the previous discourse. Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999, 537) agree that conjunctive adverbials occur in different positions in a sentence. They claim that the placement in sentence-initial position makes them most salient. The second most salient position according to them is the final one. In relation to fiction, Biber et al.'s (1999, 880) conclusions show that the most used category of linking adverbials it that of *contrast/concession.* Less frequent is that of *result/inference* and then the category of *enumeration/addition/summation* follows. Liu's (2008, 499) study corresponds with Biber et al.'s findings confirming that the frequency of LAs is lower in fiction than in other registers. As regards to the semantic category that prevails within the Liu's research, it is that of *adversative type*. Less frequent is the category of *causal/resultative LAs* and then, *adversative, and additive types* follow. As to the register of fiction, Liu states that "while fiction's overall use of LAs across the register is indeed lower, its use of the sequential type is actually higher." In fact, it is the highest of all the registers. He adds that it is probably due to the character of narrative that is characteristic by the sequence of events (Liu, 2008, 501).


## 1. LANGUAGE OF AMERICAN LITERARY MODERNISM

Specific features of American literary modernism are ambiguity, incompleteness, and multiple interpretations of events, innovations in style, experimentation with forms, points of view, narrative structure, voices, and means of language, whatever manipulation with time; experimentation with techniques such as interior monologues, stream of consciousness, fragmentations, and flashbacks (Anderson 2010, 66).

*The Great Gatsby* can be regarded as an example of modernism particularly if we agree that the revolutionary changes in narrative style and structure or language are not the sole determinants of modernist fiction (Prigozy 2005, 342–343). Many of the early reviewers of the novel praised Fitzgerald's style, language, rhythmic sentences, and use of symbolism and imagery, his great ability in compressing the text, and usage of colours in a way, that "author's rhetoric of color responds to the culturally and racially charged implication" (ibid., 140). The novel consists of nine chapters and is one hundred and eighty-two pages long. It is written from the first-person point of view. Fitzgerald's language and style of writing is also marked by fluency, illusiveness, and rhythm. He perfectly portrays the era of Jazz Age by authentic description of settings, lifestyle, events, and personality of main characters represented by their speech, behavior, desires, dreams, values, and their emotional world. Except of romantic features, there are a lot of suspense and mystery symbols as well.

## 2. RESEARCH AIM AND HYPOTHESES

The main research aim is to study coherence/clause relations in F.S. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* by observing and defining dominant semantic categories and positions of linking adverbials and subsequently discuss the reasons of their applications by the author. The research hypotheses are based on the findings described by Biber et al. (1999), Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) and on Liu's classification (2008, 492) of adverbial linkers that presents the features of LAs as elements that connect spans of discourse semantically at different lengths providing only *semantic connections*.

> H1: LAs of all semantic categories can be found in *The Great Gatsby.*
> H2: The most frequent category of LAs used in *The Great Gatsb*y is the adversative category.
> H3: The majority of LAs occurring in *The Great Gatsby* has an initial position within a sentence.

The first hypothesis (H1) results from the fact that the studied piece of writing is rather complex; there is a great number of complex sentences and long syntactic structures. This indicates that with a high probability all the linking adverbial categories will be present in the novel. The second hypothesis (H2) is based primarily on the Liu's findings (2008) regarding to register of fiction, stressing the fact that the use of adversative type of linking adverbial is the highest of all the registers. The third hypothesis (H3) refers to the findings of grammarians Biber et al. (1999) and Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) who claim that the most dominant position of linking adverbials is that of initial position.

## 3. RESEARCH AND ITS METHODOLOGY

After observing, gathering, and classifying all types of LAs into semantic categories based on Liu's classification (2008), quantitative and qualitative analyses of the linguistic data have been carried out. They dealt with the description as well evaluation and explanation of the research processes and results and were supported by the transparently formed and logically arranged tables. The total number of all LAs being found in the research sample is 303 (= 42 different types). The pairs of linking adverbials *yet/and yet, then/and then, so/and so* are counted as one and the same lexical unit because they belong to the same semantic category.

The most frequently used LA being identified in the novel is *then/and then* belonging to the sequential category. It is used 87 times and represents the most prevailed LA used by the author. Its occurrence represents 29 % of the total amount of linking adverbials. The reason of such a high predominance lies in the type/register of the research sample. Events in fiction are narrated in the order. Therefore, it is natural that this linking adverbial is used for the purpose of establishing the sequence in the narration. In this point our findings correspond with Liu's ones – they show that within the register of fiction the use of sequential linking adverbials plays an important role. The second most used LA is *so/and so* with the frequency of occurrence equal to 39, which represents 13 % of the total number of identified LAs belonging to the causal/resultative category. The third most used linking adverbial

is *then/and then* included within causal/resultative category. It occurs 24 times within the research sample and forms 8 % of the total number of LAs.

When we studied the occurrence of each semantic category of linking adverbials in the novel, we have concluded that all of them are involved in the research sample. Undoubtedly, the most frequent semantic category is represented by sequential LAs with 40 % occurring rate. Both adversative and causal/resultative types have got the same occurrence of 22 %. The lowest frequency of occurrence was shown within the additive type representing 16 %.

The research results correspond with the Liu's (2008) findings concerning the most frequent occurrence of sequential linking adverbials in the register of fiction. This category includes subcategories of enumerative/listing, simultaneous, summative, and transitional adverbial linkers. The enumerative/listing subcategory prevails with 35% occurrence; then transitional subcategory (3 % occurrence) follows. The simultaneous (1.5 %) and summative subcategories (1 %) are even less frequent.

When it comes to adversative linking adverbials, the proper adversative/concessive subcategory prevails (11 %) and is followed by dismissal (6 %) and contrastive subcategories (2 %). As to causal/resultative type of LAs, the general causal subcategory includes more portion (14 %) than the conditional clausal type (8 %). Regarding the additive linking adverbials category, the highest occurrence is represented by an emphatic subcategory (14 %) and then the subcategory of appositional/reformulation linking adverbials (2 %) follows.

| Linking adverbials | Overall frequency | Percentage % |
|---|---|---|
| *Additive* | **50** | **16** |
| emphatic | 44 | 14 |
| appositional/reformulation | 6 | 2 |
| *Adversative* | **67** | **22** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| proper adversative/concessive | 33 | 11 |
| Contrastive | 6 | 2 |
| Correction | 10 | 3 |
| Dismissal | 18 | 6 |
| *Causal/resultative* | **66** | **22** |
| general causal | 41 | 14 |
| conditional causal | 25 | 8 |
| *Sequential* | **120** | **40** |
| enumerative/listing | 106 | 35 |
| Simultaneous | 3 | 1,5 |
| Summative | 1 | 0,5 |
| Transitional | 10 | 3 |

Table 1: Semantic categories and subcategories of LAs in *The Great Gatsby*

Linking adverbials within each semantically different category are ordered according to their frequency from the most frequent to the least frequent ones. As regards diversity of LAs, 15 different linking adverbials were found in the adversative category, 14 of them in the additive category, 9 in the sequential, and only 5 in the causal/ resultative category. The frequency of occurrence of LAs of each individual category does not correspond with the diversity of linking adverbials. As to the author's choice of LAs, he seems to prefer using a few dominant linking adverbials within each category.

The results of the research show that the category of sequential linking adverbials outnumbers other three categories. Their share is 40 % of the total amount of the LAs, which represents 120 out of all 303 linking adverbials. As to diversity, 9 different LAs included into 4 subcategories have been found. The most frequent subcategory is represented by enumerative/listing one (35 % of the total amount of the

sequential type with 5 different LAs). The most frequent LA within this subcategory is *then/ and then* with the sequential relation. This linking adverbial is also the most frequent linking adverbial within the literary work.

E.g., *Miss Baker's lips fluttered, she nodded at me almost imperceptibly,* **and then** *quickly tipped her head back again.* (p.10) *"I was in the drug business* **and then** *I was in the oil business.* (p.70)

The second most frequent LA within the sequential type is *now* belonging to the transitional subcategory and representing 8% of the total amount of sequential linking adverbial category.

E.g., *The music had died down as the ceremony began and* **now** *a long cheer floated in at the window, followed by intermittent cries of "Yea-ea-ea!"(p. 98) He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go — but* **now** *he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail.* (p. 115)

Sequential linking adverbials play an important role when it comes to make a logical sequence and order of events within narration and are characterized by the high occurrence within the fiction. In the research process there have also been identified adversative and causal /resultative linking adverbials. Both represent 22% of the whole research sample and the second most frequent categories of linking adverbials. As to adversative type, 67 linking adverbials (15 different ones) were gathered from the novel. The most frequent are *however* (12 %), *though* (12 %), *yet/and yet* (12 %), *instead of* (10 %), and *anyhow* (10 %).

E.g., . . . *implied that he had got what he deserved.* **However,** *that was my fault, for he was one of those who used to sneer most bitterly at Gatsby . . . .* (p. 129–130)

*I doubted that,* **though** *there were several she could have married at a nod of her head.* (p. 135) *It was a random shot,* **and yet** *the reporter's instinct was right.* (p. 75) **Instead of** *taking the short cut along the Sound we went down the road and entered by the big postern. (p.70) "How long are you going to wait?" "All night, if necessary.* **Anyhow,** *till they all go to bed."* (p. 111)

This type of LAs deals mainly with concessive and contrastive semantic relations within the discourse used to convey contrast and opposition between propositions. Liu's study shows that an adversative

type of LAs is the most common category in fiction, and so we have to conclude that our findings differ from his results.

Causal/resultative linking adverbials occur in the novel with the same frequency as the adversative ones (21 %). They incorporate 5 different LAs (used 66 times) and are divided into two groups. The first group is represented by general causal subcategory with a dominant LA *so/and so* used 39 times within the novel and covering 59 % of the whole category of the causal/resultative type. E.g., *She told me it was a girl, **and so** I turned my head away and wept.* (p. 16)

The second group includes only 2 causal/resultative linking adverbials with the most frequent representative *then/and then* occurring 24 times and covering 36 % of this category. E.g., *At first, I was flattered to go places with her, because she was a golf champion, and everyone knew her name. **Then** it was something more.* (p. 46)

The subcategory of emphatic linking adverbials comprises 9 LAs and the appositional/reformulation subcategory includes 5 LAs. As to frequency, it can be noticed that there are two linking adverbials with a relatively higher extent of occurrence: *too* representing 32 % (used 16 times) and *of course* representing 24 % (used 12 times). E.g., *I don't think anybody saw us, but **of course** I can't be sure.* (p.110) *"I suppose Daisy'll call **too**."* (p. 118)

Our findings correspond with the Liu's (2008) ones in a way that the additive linking adverbial category is the category with the lowest occurrence of LAs out of the four main categories. Moreover, the dominance of *too* and *of course* is in line with such a dominance within Liu's findings. On the other hand, his findings show a high frequency of *also,* which does not match with our findings.

As to additive LAs in general, they are more common in academic prose than in other text genres. They are used for illustrating and introducing new points in discussion. This can explain the reason why they are less common within fiction.

It has been investigated that the most common placement of LAs within the sentence is that of medial position. Out of the total number of linking adverbials (303) identified within the research sample, there are 168 LAs which have been observed in medial position (56 %). The most frequent linking adverbial *then/and then* with the sequential relation occurs 53 times in medial position and 34 times in initial position. We did not find its final position within the research

sample. The second most frequently used linking adverbial *and so/so* occurs 25 times in medial position and 14 times in initial position.

| Linking adverbial | Total number | Initial position | % | Medial position | % | Final position | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *then/and then – sequential* | 87 | 34 | 40 | 53 | 60 | 0 | 0 |
| *so/ and so* | 39 | 14 | 36 | 25 | 64 | 0 | 0 |
| *then/and then – resultative* | 24 | 9 | 38 | 15 | 62 | 0 | 0 |
| *too* | 16 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 56 | 7 | 44 |
| *of course* | 12 | 8 | 66 | 2 | 17 | 2 | 17 |

Table 2: Position of most frequently used LAs in *The Great Gatsby*

All linking adverbials occur in medial position (see Table 2). Medial position is generally dominant within our research; there are LAs whose medial position covers more than 50 % (*so/and so*, *then/and then*, *and too*). On the contrary, the linking adverbials *of course* and *then/and then* with sequential relation are more frequently used in initial position. It can be concluded that our findings regarding position of LAs in the sentence/clause are not in line with the Biber et al.'s ones as according to Biber et al. (1999, p. 891), the most common position for linking adverbials is that of initial one. They also claim that *then* typically occurs in final position.


CONSLUSION

We assume that all semantic categories of LAs can be found in the novel *The Great Gatsby*. The number of LAs differs within each semantic type. Similarly, this counts for the frequency of occurrence of each adverbial. The most frequently used type of LAs is that of

sequential type (120 LAs). The highest frequency is characteristic for *and then/then* with sequential relation that occurs 87 times within the novel and covers 29 % of the total amount of LAs. The most frequent position of linking adverbials within the novel is the medial one. The research results show that out of 303 LAs identified in the research sample, 168 LAs have been observed in medial position (56 %).

The first hypothesis was formulated on the supposition that the selected novel is a complex piece of writing with a high rate of probability of occurrence of different semantic categories of linking adverbials. It has been shown that all four semantic categories have been used in the novel. For this reason, it can be concluded that the first hypothesis has been proved.

The second hypothesis, which was based on the prior study (Liu 2008) referring to the distribution and occurrence of LAs in several registers, has not been proved. It has been calculated that the most frequently used category is that of sequential type (not an adversative one) which includes LAs that create the sequence or order between statements, utterances, or events. For the fiction, it is of high importance to form sequence in narration and story to be more understandable and marked with logic relations. It should be also noticed that in spite of the fact that the adversative category with the 22 % occurrence was not prevailing within our research sample, this category together with the category of casual/resultative LAs is the second most frequently used category of linking adverbials.

The third hypothesis was formulated on the ground of findings of scholars Biber et al. (1999) as well as Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1999) claiming that initial position of LAs is the most frequent one. This hypothesis was not confirmed. The research results showed that the majority of LAs within the novel occur in medial position. The high occurrence of linking adverbials in medial position might be a logical consequence caused by the structure of sentences. There are number of long and complex sentences within the novel, so there was a necessity to link ideas between the parts of such sentences to create a coherent discourse.

The research findings also confirmed the complexity of relational coherence devices used by F.S. Fitzgerald in his fictional work *The Great Gatsby*. By applying all types of sentence adverbials

(predominantly sequential ones in a medial position) he could have comprehensibly presented his narration techniques.

As regards the practical application of the present research results, we believe they can become a valuable study material for university students of philological study programmes. The research findings can be also applied in the subsequent comparative study of LAs used within the period of modernism and for comparison of linking adverbials used in the modernist era and in present day literature.

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# II. LITERATURE

# "WHERE GENIUS DIES":
# THE DEBATE OVER "LITERARY DELINQUENCY" IN THE EARLY UNITED STATES

## *Jeff Smith*

ABSTRACT: For nearly a century, from the Revolution until after the Civil War, both foreign critics and anxious American men and women of letters debated the question of when and how America would establish a national literature of its own. This essay examines that debate and its various sub-questions, noting its key figures and arguments and its connections with larger issues of textual authority, national "genius," and the cultural implications of American democracy.

America had not yet won its War of Independence when Thomas Jefferson found himself pressed to answer a number of questions about his sprawling state, Virginia, and by extension the United States. Among other things, the French ambassadors who questioned him wanted to know when this new nation would show signs of greatness. Jefferson was well aware of the theories of French naturalists that America's "productions" were inherently stunted and unimpressive – that nature was somehow less energetic in the New World, making the fauna there smaller and scrawnier. To this Jefferson replied with scientific data, including tables comparing the weights and measures of various animal species, as well as a lively account of the woolly mammoth, an enormous creature known to have thrived in America in times past and rumored still to be alive somewhere.[1] Later, as president, he would assign the Lewis and Clark expedition to hunt for living specimens, and would have mammoth bones sent to the White House

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[1] See Thomas Jefferson, "Productions mineral, vegetable and animal," in *Thomas Jefferson: Writings*, ed. Merrill D. Peterson (New York: Viking/Library of America, 2011), 165–182, *Electronic Text Center,* University of Virginia Library, http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/JefVirg.html.

for his closer examination.[2] Meanwhile there was no reason, he showed, for supposing that nature was a "partisan" of any continent when it came to "productions mineral, vegetable and animal."[3]

On productions *cultural,* however, Jefferson found himself on shakier ground, obliged to concede some criticisms while pinning his hopes on the future. The French had also lodged racist criticisms of America's aborigines, arraigning them for weakness and a lack of vigor that were alleged further signs of the continent's *rapetissement*, its shrinking effect. Against this, Jefferson spoke up not only in defense of the natives but "for the honor of human nature," though not without some racial stereotyping of his own. The demands of their tribal councils produced great Indian orators, he said, but they were not yet literate, which meant the fair comparison was not with modern Europeans but with northern European tribes in Roman times. One must allow, Jefferson argued, that cultural development was the work of centuries.[4] Likewise for America's white civilization: it was already giving "hopeful proofs" of genius in scientific and military affairs in the likes of Franklin and Washington, and if it still lagged in other arts, this was easily explained. Though perhaps not wrong, strictly speaking, the French critic who had written in 1774 that "America has not yet produced one good poet" was unkindly comparing it to much larger and older countries. With just three million people and "though but a child of yesterday," America was already producing its full share of geniuses *per capita*.[5]

It has long been clear that Jefferson's scientific assessment was, if anything, still too pessimistic. America would prove a fertile seedbed of literary production, not over centuries but much sooner. It is all the more remarkable, then, to review the debates of the time and observe how long-lived were the anxieties about America's cultural development. For about a hundred years, from the Revolution until sometime after the Civil War, these questions weighed heavily on

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[2] See Phil Edwards, "Thomas Jefferson's secret reason for sending Lewis and Clark West: to find mastodons," *Vox,* April 13, 2015, https://www.vox.com/2015/4/13/8384167/thomas-jefferson-mastodons.

[3] Jefferson, "Productions mineral, vegetable and animal," 189.

[4] Jefferson, "Productions mineral, vegetable and animal," 182–189.

[5] Jefferson, "Productions mineral, vegetable and animal," 190–191.

American men and women of letters: When would the United States begin producing great literature? Why, allegedly, was it not doing so? And what were its prospects, then, for finding its footing and establishing itself on world's cultural stage? Attempts at answers yielded a variety of theories of what constitutes a nation's "genius" and how it might be made to manifest itself.


## 1. "LITERATURE HAS NO CAREER IN AMERICA"

That America in the early national period was a cultural backwater was not just the condescending view of many foreign observers but, often, of chagrined Americans themselves. Similar critiques and alibis were offered on both sides of the Atlantic. The country, one American poet had lamented in 1799, was "Where Fancy sickens, and where Genius dies."[6] However impressive its economic growth, "Liberty and competition have as yet done nothing to stimulate literary genius in these republican states," a British critic wrote in 1810. "The destruction of [America's] whole literature would not occasion so much regret as we feel for the loss of a few leaves from an antient classic."[7] Perhaps part of the problem was that Americans spoke English. In the first issues of *The North American Review*, founded in 1815 as a step toward cultural improvement, Walter Channing, a pioneering physician and polymath, regretted that the "Babel of the revolution" had not included "a confusion of tongues." The Indian languages had poetic integrity, but a long history of "colonial existence" meant that for England's American progeny, "there is no national character, unless its absence constitute one."[8] In a follow-up, Channing spoke bluntly of the nation's

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[6] William Cliffton, quoted in Samuel L. Knapp, *Lectures on American Literature, With Remarks on Some Passages of American History*, ed. Richard Beale Davis and Ben Harris McClary (Gainesville, FL: Scholars' Fascimiles & Reprints, 1961), 189.

[7] "Art. XI" [review of Thomas Ashe's *Travels in America*], *The Edinburgh Review,* 2nd ed., XV, 30 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1810), 445–446, spelling as in the original.

[8] Walter Channing, "American Language and Literature," *The North-American Review* 1, 3 (September 1815): 310-314.

"literary delinquency," excoriating America's "listless" lack of "intellectual courage." Sharing English with an established literary powerhouse, Great Britain, and having a large output of ephemera, such as newspapers and pamphlets, too many Americans were inclined to ask, "what *need* have we of a literature?"[9]

Abroad, where there was a "relish" for the topic of the "insignificance of American literature,"[10] Sidney Smith of *The Edinburgh Review* also suggested that Americans could import all the "sense, science and genius" they needed from Britain, and would be busy with economic development "for centuries to come." Then at last, when they reached the Pacific, would "the elegant gratifications" flourish. [11] In a follow-up, Smith plunged the dagger in further: Against the "ludicrous" boasts of its "orators and newspaper scribblers," he charged that America had "hitherto given no indications of genius" and should stick to boasting instead of its roots in England. There was "no parallel" to English achievements anywhere in "the whole annals of this self-adulating race":

> In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book? or goes to an American play? or looks at an American picture or statue? . . . Who drinks out of American glasses? or eats from American plates? or wears American coats or gowns? or sleeps in American blankets? – Finally, under which of the old

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[9] Walter Channing, "Literary delinquency of America," *The North-American Review* 2, 4 (November 1815): 33–43 (emphasis original). For further discussions of these worries then and later, see Earl L. Bradsher, "Nationalism in Our Literature," *The North American Review* 213, 782 (January 1921): 113, and Robert E. Spiller, ed., *The American Literary Revolution 1783–1837* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1967).

[10] Robert Walsh Jr., *An Appeal from the Judgments of Great Britain Respecting the United States of America,* Part 1 (Philadelphia: Mitchell, Ames, and White, 1819), 228.

[11] Sydney Smith, "Art. VI: Travellers in America," , *The Edinburgh Review: Or Critical Journal* 31 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1819):144.

tyrannical governments of Europe is every sixth man a Slave, whom his fellow-creatures may buy and sell and torture?[12]

Smith's catalogue also included scientific fields in which Americans were allegedly derelict. The literary gap, in other words, was part of a more general intellectual, cultural and even political failure, of a piece with America's notorious failure to live out its professed ideals by abolishing slavery.

Reacting to their foreign critics, American writers in the 1820s were equal parts alarmed and indignant.[13] Sarah Hall, a Philadelphia author, conceded that "literature has no career in America. It is like wine, which we are told must cross the ocean, to make it good. We are a business-doing, money-making people."[14] One reviewer of Samuel L. Knapp's *Lectures on American Literature* scoffed that a history of American literature "might, without sarcasm, be ranked among the 'Histories of Events which have never happened.'"[15] In fact, Knapp easily showed that under the prevailing, broad definition of "literature" that included nonfiction, Americans had already contributed importantly to various fields, but he gave conspicuously little attention to American poetry and almost none at all to fiction or drama. Still, he lamented Americans' continued willingness to accept the taunting libel that "there was no such thing as American literature."[16] John Neal, an ambitious writer of "North-American Stories," promised in 1828 that "another DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, in the great REPUBLIC OF LETTERS" would soon be forthcoming, and defiantly asked that Smith's question "WHO READS AN AMERICAN BOOK?" be inscribed on his own

[12] Sydney Smith, "Art. III: America" [book review], *The Edinburgh Review: Or Critical Journal* 33 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1820): 78–80, *sic.*
[13] Looking back a century from 1921, Earl L. Bradsher said that Smith's "appalling" judgments had "come ringing down the decades," provoking both "[w]rathful answers" and "servile reflection" (Bradsher, "Nationalism in Our Literature," 114).
[14] Sarah Hall, , *Selections from the Writings of Mrs. Sarah Hall, Author of Conversations on the Bible, With a Memoir of Her Life,* ed. Harrison Hall (Philadelphia: Harrison Hall, 1833), xxix.
[15] Quoted in Davis and McClary's introduction to Knapp's *Lectures,* ix.
[16] Knapp, *Lectures*, 4.

tombstone.[17] And in a treatise on *The Importance and Means of a National Literature,* the Unitarian leader William Ellery Channing, like his brother Walter, granted that the nation sadly deserved its "current apologies," but argued that young and practical-minded America could not settle for importing its higher literature, as Smith had suggested. As the "nurse" of genius, literary expression was essential to its emergence, and would especially benefit the "nation's mind" in a democratic society where great writing could "bring its higher minds to bear upon the multitude."[18]

In a period without international copyright laws, American authors could justly complain that part of the problem was that their work was not protected against foreign competition and, therefore, not financially supported (and also, added Sarah Hall, female authors were overburdened with domestic duties). James Fenimore Cooper, for one, struggled with publishers unwilling to take risks on American books.[19] Further, however, Cooper suggested that America was uncompetitive in another sense. It suffered from a "poverty of materials," an undramatic "baldness" in its life and a lack of poetic traits in its characters: "I have never seen a nation so much alike in my life, as the people of the United States."[20] Here was another of the larger debate's many epicycles. Walter Channing had earlier noted that America had no long history, and therefore lacked the literary raw material that older countries found in their ancient legends and romances.[21] John Neal insisted it contained "abundant and hidden sources of fertility" – though unspecifically, like uncharted underground springs and mineral deposits. On the surface, he

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[17] John Neal, "Unpublished Preface to the North-American Stories," in *Rachel Dyer: A North American Story* (Portland, ME: Shirley and Hyde, 1828), xvi–xx (emphases original).
[18] Williiam Ellery Channing, *The Importance and Means of a National Literature* (London: Edward Rainford, 1830), 30, 8–9, 13.
[19] Hall, xxix-xxx; Bradsher, "Nationalism in Our Literature," 112–114.
[20] James Fenimore Cooper, *Notions of the Americans: Picked Up by a Travelling Bachelor*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1828), 108, 114.
[21] Bradsher, "Nationalism in Our Literature," 113; Walter Channing, "Literary delinquency," 39–40.

granted, American earth might seem "barren."[22] Alexis de Tocqueville, having made his famous grand tour of Jacksonian America, claimed to have found a paucity of great literary subjects. As a nation, America had as yet "witnessed no great political catastrophes" – not a shortage that would last much longer, as it turned out – but in a country whose people "spend every day in the week in making money, and Sunday in going to church," how much really was there to write about?[23]

Tocqueville, moreover, was not alone in drawing a particular contrast: "The inhabitants of the United States have, then, at present, properly speaking, no literature. The only authors whom I acknowledge as American are the journalists. They indeed are not great writers, but they speak the language of their country and make themselves heard." In general, democratic styles of writing would lack order and regularity and "frequently be fantastic, incorrect, over-burdened, and loose," with "more imagination than profundity" and "an untutored and rude vigor of thought." A democracy's authors will seek "to astonish rather than to please, and to stir the passions more than to charm the taste."[24] Harriet Martineau, another foreign fact-finder whose tour shortly followed Tocqueville's, saw rudeness of this kind as pervasive in the country's thinking, but took it as a kind of adolescent phase. Developing essentially like a person, America as of the mid-1830s had the kind of young mind that "burns with convictions" but struggles for ways to express them, "not yet knowing how to utter itself." The occasional "ephemeron" was from time to time mistaken for the first work of genius, but the true "creator" might take a long time to arrive: "there are infinite diversities to be blended into unity before a national character can arise; before a national mind can be seen to actuate the mass of society." The first great work would be a "powerful instrument" of such blending, and it was not entirely a bad thing, but a sign of future promise, that America "applies herself to the produce of her press, to

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[22] Neal, "Unpublished Preface," xvi.

[23] Alexis de Tocqueville, "Some Observations on the Drama Among Democratic Nations," (vol. 2, chapter 19) in *Democracy in America,* trans. Henry Reeve, *American Studies Hypertexts,* University of Virginia, https://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/ch1_19.htm.

[24] Tocqueville, "Literary Characteristics of Democratic Times" (Vol. II chapter 13), https://xroads.virginia.edu/~Hyper/DETOC/ch1_13.htm.

find the imperishable in what is just as transient as all that has gone before."[25]

The national "genius" so often invoked in this conversation was seldom clearly defined, but was universally understood to be something that every nation was supposed to have: some distinctive, elemental national talent, a certain spirit it could channel more fully than other nations and perhaps to the benefit of the rest of the world. One large question, then, was whether America's democracy was also in some sense its genius, its unique gift, or instead an obstacle to it. What if democracy inevitably meant a lowering of standards? Edward S. Gould, a critic who would later write a popular handbook on correcting one's English, thought that efforts to encourage the national genius had already gone too far. As of 1835, they were creating a "mania" to overpraise "*every thing American*." The "corruption on the public taste" had reached the point that "books are multiplying like mushrooms; and the monstrous opinion is gaining currency, that *any body can write a good novel*." What American authors needed was less flattery and more of "the Spartan firmness and valour of sound criticism."[26]

On 3 October 1836, when a Boston-based circle of intellectuals launched the series of "Symposium" discussions that would become Transcendentalism, the very first topic on their copious agenda of cultural concerns was "American Genius: The Causes Which Hinder Its Growth, Giving Us No First-Rate Productions."[27] Implied here was the anxious premise that Americans might not simply lack a suitable body of written works, but were having trouble with the "growth" of American Genius itself – as if national genius were another of the many organisms that in America would necessarily be stunted. Apologists for America in this era typically praised the country's common-schools movement as an historically unprecedented effort to raise the general

[25] Harriet Martineau, *Society in America*, Vol. 2 (New York: Saunders and Otley, 1837), 300–303.

[26] Edward S. Gould, "American Criticism on American Literature," (29 December 1835) in *Lectures Delivered Before the Mercantile Library Association* (New York: Mercantile Library Assoc., 1836), 7–10, 24–25 (spelling and emphases original).

[27] Barry Hankins, *The Second Great Awakening and the Transcendentalists* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 24.

level of public literacy, but Margaret Fuller, the Transcendentalists' literary editor, also noted that democratic education might tend "to vulgarize rather than to raise the thought of a nation." On launching the Transcendentalists' literary magazine, *The Dial,* in 1840, Fuller said she hoped to uplift a "superficial, irreverent" and "slight literary culture" that mostly "consists in a careless reading of publications of the day." This utilitarian bent, pervasive amid "the commercial and political fever" of America since the Revolution, made for a "hasty way of thinking and living."[28]

Fuller argued that thoughtful Americans, having "been formed by the European mind," still had much to "unlearn."[29] Here she echoed others who, unlike Harriet Martineau, feared that America's condition was not a youthful phase to be outgrown, but a dangerously widening corruption.[30] Explaining *Why a National Literature Cannot Flourish in the United States of North America* in an 1845 book of that title, Italian-born novelist Joseph Rochietti denied that America was a young nation at all. "Unitedstatians," as he proposed calling them, already had the cultures of the countries they came from. The problem was that they lacked virtue, did not reward people of character, and were prejudiced, uncharitable and sometimes violent, especially toward Catholic immigrants like himself. Rochietti also blamed a literary market given over to newspaper-type sensation and scandal: "Such scribblers who live by writing the *interesting* murders of the day, and all the awful – excuse the epithet! the *interesting* calamities, I wanted to say, of this unpitying globe, are the only individuals who can make money out of their pen."[31] Writing at the same time, William M. Reynolds, a Lutheran minister and professor of Latin, looked more favorably than Rochietti on some of these same developments: America had already produced some fine poets, he wrote, and its hybrid "Anglo-saxo-norman race" was incorporating immigrants and Catholics toward a new national

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[28] Margaret Fuller, writing in 1840, quoted in R.W. Emerson et. al., *Memoirs of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, vol. 2 (Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1852), 26–27.
[29] Fuller in R.W. Emerson et. al., *Memoirs*, 25–26.
[30] Fuller in R.W. Emerson et. al., *Memoirs*, 28.
[31] Joseph Rocchietti, *Why a National Literature Cannot Flourish in the United States of North America* (New York: J.W. Kelley, 1845), 69, 73, emphases in original.

character and genius. Directly disputing Alexis de Tocqueville, who trafficked too much in "theory," Reynolds saw plenty of material at hand for American writers in the "glorious" saga of finding and settling a continent and founding a nation on it. There would be a great and "true *American* poet, and "for all that I know, he may be already here," and "AMERICAN LITERATURE has before it a career as long and as glorious as its commencement has been brilliant and vigorous." Yes, a democratic culture was necessarily utilitarian, but the solution to that was the study of Greek and Latin, not as a step toward mimicry but as useful discipline for a people "disposed to do everything with railroad speed."[32]

Yet in 1846, on giving up *The Dial* to sail to Europe as a foreign correspondent, Margaret Fuller still worried that to write of American literature is "to write of that which has, as yet, no existence." America still awaited its "fusion of races," and in order for its Europe-dependent "transition state" to end, "an original idea must animate this nation and fresh currents of life must call into life fresh thoughts along its shores." This need, however, posed another conundrum. Originality, by definition, could not be achieved by imitation, but the models of literary greatness all seemed to lie abroad and in the past. Even acclaimed poetry, drama or fiction, if it won praise through conformity with received standards and models, would be a kind of failure, because it would still be mimicry and therefore inauthentic. Seemingly higher levels of refinement might be as bad as excessive vulgarity, in fact might even be a form of it.[33]

To write with the real "author/-ity" that would convey the nation's genius, then, American writers would need not just uniquely American thoughts and experiences but a uniquely American mode of expression. It was a question of both message and medium: An authentic American literature would be one that did what other national literatures did, yet somehow by and through a considered effort *not* to

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[32] William M. Reynolds, *American Literature* [address at Pennsylvania College], 17 September 1845 (Gettysburg, PA: H.C. Neinstedt, 1845), 5-32, emphases in original.

[33] [S.] Margaret Fuller, "American Literature; Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for the Future," in *Papers on Literature and Art*, Part 1 (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846), 122–124.

do what they did but something else entirely. In practice, what would that mean?

## 2. "NO DEAD LETTER BUT A PERPETUAL SCRIPTURE"

The formula that most directly addressed this problem was Ralph Waldo Emerson's. What Americans needed, said this godfather of Transcendentalism, was "no dead letter but a perpetual Scripture."[34] Indeed the world needed this, and it needed this new and pathbreaking nation to supply it. Emerson was a lapsed Unitarian minister whose frustrations began but did not end with the Bible, which carried a very high authority that could also make it a dead weight – one of the "sepulchres of the fathers" that people were sadly confined within, as Emerson put it in another of his memorable phrases.[35] Its writings might be, as they are literally called, the testaments to a divine outpouring, but from an earlier time, not present experience, and they no longer carried the original divine energies as such. Reverence for the Bible, therefore, was both the prototypical and the worst instance of the over-valuing and potential tyranny of the past, of old authorities, traditional forms and received texts.[36]

      If these were the forces that stood in America's way culturally, then the new American synthesis would need to produce writings with the authority of Scripture, yet somehow *perpetual,* with their vitality continually replenished. As to how that might be done, the frequent juxtaposition of literary production with newspapers was one clue. The "news revolution" of this period was rapidly spreading mass-marketed,

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[34] Albert R. Ferguson, ed., *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1964), 77, 93-94 [entries of July and October 1833].

[35] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," in *Complete Works*, vol. 1 [Nature addresses and lectures], 3 [unnumbered], University of Michigan, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/emerson/4957107.0001.001/1:9?rgn=div1;view=fulltext.

[36] This briefly summarizes arguments from various writings of Emerson's. See especially his famous "American Scholar" and Divinity School addresses, *Complete Works*, vol. 1, http://name.umdl.umich.edu/4957107.0001.001.

daily and hourly updated news brought from long distances and sometimes, literally, at lightning speed via telegraph. Perhaps the most characteristic American expression was not its higher literature but the impassioned, untutored "scribblings" of its press, as well as the vigorous culture of political argument these conveyed. Here, after all, was no dead hand of ancient written authority. The explosive growth of an industrial-scale print culture produced masses of text intended only for the moment. It was not meant to be spiritually enriching – often just the opposite – and was awash not in timeless truths but in timely, contentious debates. Readers themselves might even argue back before tossing the paper aside, making way for a new edition next day. In all these respects, news was the opposite of Scripture, but as a constantly renewing stream it was, in a sense, perpetual. A perpetual Scripture, then, might be a kind of writing that somehow had the key features of both Bibles and newspapers – the imperishable in the transient, as Martineau had suggested, or a dialectical relationship in which each enabled the other.

Emerson himself was never quite that specific, but he did emphatically answer those who said that American society was inherently un-literary. His first manifesto, *Nature,* had called for seeing "the miraculous in the common,"[37] and it was in the common life, the ordinary phenomena of a busy, politically rambunctious, money-making society, that he saw the makings of great literature. These were also, as it happens, the kinds of things one reads about in newspapers. In the right hands, such seemingly mundane facts would prove as poetic and elevated as any. And those hands would not be those merely of writers; Emerson called poets "liberating gods" and voiced a hope for new prophets, even some "new Teacher" of a quasi-Messianic kind – a "reconciler" who would embody American Genius and produce a scripture that was somehow perpetual, while also making the timely somehow scriptural.[38] Walt Whitman, the former journalist who seems

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[37] Emerson, "Nature," 74.

[38] Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet," *Complete Works*, vol. 3 [Essays, 2d series], 30, 32, 34–35, 37–38,
http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/emerson/4957107.0003.001/1:5?rgn=div1;view=fulltext. The phrase "new Teacher" is from the conclusion of the Divinity School address.

to have aspired to be the Teacher and scripture-maker that Emerson described, likewise claimed poetic possibilities for the everyday and, more importantly, based his transformative art on it, at one point describing his own poetic aim as "the Great Construction of the New Bible."[39]

As the collective anxiety over a national literature stretched into its seventh and eighth decades, others also looked to "homely" values and topics as a way forward. That was the message of one *North American Review* writer who warned that novels from England might teach young readers to disdain the American "spirit of republican virtue." Fortunately, the writer said, the novel form lent itself to stories exemplifying such virtue, and Americans had already shown that if suitably protected by an international copyright law, they could write works that would ably secure national stability and "go further than any parchment Bill of Rights to perpetuate our political blessings."[40] Herman Melville, reviewing a collection of Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories in 1850, attacked "this absolute and unconditional adoration of Shakespeare" that "has grown to be a part of our Anglo Saxon superstitions":

> But what sort of a belief is this for an American, a man who is bound to carry republican progressiveness into Literature, as well as into Life? Believe me, my friends, that Shakespeares are this day being born on the banks of the Ohio. And the day will

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[39] Walt Whitman, *Notebooks and Unpublished Prose Manuscripts,* Vol. 1, ed. Edward Grier (New York: NYU Press, 1984), 353. See my further discussion of Whitman's project in Jeff Smith, "Things Appearing, Every Day: Walt Whitman and the Ubiquity of News," *ESQ: A Journal of Nineteenth-Century American Literature and Culture* 66, 1 (2020), 1–45.

[40] "Art. VIII" [review of a petition for a copyright law], *The North American Review* no. 116 (July 1842), 260–262. That essay was extensively quoted 14 years later, in a literature survey that worried that republican tastes were not fully developed, with too many of the young preferring novels of the "fashionable" and "aristocratic" sort over "tales of true life in the backwoods." Joseph Gostwick and Margaret E. Foster, *Hand-Book of American Literature, Historical, Biographical, and Critical* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, London and Edinburgh: W. and R. Chambers, 1856), ix, 111.

come, when you shall say who reads a book by an Englishman
that is a modern?

It is not certain to what extent Melville, speaking here through a
fictional persona, was voicing his own real views.[41] Still, it is clear that
Sidney Smith's taunt about reading American books still hung in the air
after more than thirty years. Melville's essay favorably compared
Hawthorne to Shakespeare, suggesting the two were at least in the same
league, and Melville himself, it soon emerged, was already developing
*Moby-Dick* as an American tragedy on Shakespearean lines. Before
long, then,

> if Shakespeare has not been equalled, he is sure to be surpassed,
> and surpassed by an American born now or yet to be born. For it
> will never do for us who in most other things out-do as well as
> out-brag the world, it will not do for us to fold our hands and
> say, In the highest department advance there is none.[42]

When Harriet Beecher Stowe published *Uncle Tom's Cabin* soon
thereafter, it too was admiringly likened to Shakespeare, "in a lower
sphere" but still "the greatest novel ever written," as one British critic
put it. Another praised it as "free from all that hapless second & third-
hand Germanism, & Italianism, & all other unreal-isms which make me
sigh over almost every American book I open" – and while on tour there
in 1853, Stowe heard a speaker in Scotland credit her with disproving
Britain's long-held mix of "contempt" and "patronizing wonder": "Let
us hear no more of the poverty of American brains, or the barrenness of

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[41] Herman Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (1850), in *Herman Melville:
Pierre, Israel Potter, The Piazza Tales, The Confidence-Man, Billy Budd,
Uncollected Prose,* ed. Harrison Hayford (New York: Library of America,
1984), 1161. On whether the literary nationalism was Melville's own or a
sardonic critique, see Ida Rothschild, "Reframing Melville's 'Manifesto':
'Hawthorne and His Mosses' and the Culture of Reprinting," *The Cambridge
Quarterly* 41, 3 (September 2012): 318–344.
[42] Melville, "Hawthorne and His Mosses," 1162.

American literature," which her book alone had made "forever illustrious."[43]

Later, nearly twenty years after the Civil War, which he witnessed first-hand and wrote about extensively, Walt Whitman would hold up that massive conflict as the great drama that American artists needed, "far more grand" even than the wars in Homer and Shakespeare. Abraham Lincoln, too, was literary gold, a character to outrank the heroes of classical tragedy and epic.[44] The issue that Tocqueville had raised, a seeming lack of great subjects, had been settled, and nearly a hundred years after his *apologia* to the French, Jefferson was vindicated: American literary production and its essential bases were not victims of any *rapetissement.*


## 3. IN SEARCH OF AMERICAN "PARASCRIPTURES"

Even Whitman's usual optimism, however, was tempered. The great project still ahead, as he saw it in the 1870s, was a synthesis of the spiritual and political, a next and higher level of cultural development that he labeled "Religious Democracy" – another phrase that seemed to mix the timeless and ultimate with the transient and ordinary. This very high aspiration was among the "terrible duties" the Founders had left to later Americans. American literature and arts would be its means and expression, but even at this late date, with Whitman himself and other fixtures of the eventual canon well established, the prospect was unachieved: America, said Whitman, was still a nation "ignorant of its genius, not yet inaugurating the native, the universal, and the near, still importing the distant, the partial, and the dead."[45]

In that sense, the larger problem still seemed unsolved. All along, the search for some new or re-founded textual authority had extended beyond the question of a national literature to include related

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[43] Quoted in Joan D. Hedrick, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 233–234.
[44] Whitman, "Democratic Vistas," in *Walt Whitman: Complete Poetry and Collected Prose,* ed. Justin Kaplan (New York: Library of America, 1982), 976–978; Whitman, "Death of Abraham Lincoln," in Kaplan, ed., 1041, 1046.
[45] Whitman, "Democratic Vistas," 976–978.

developments in religion and politics. Nineteenth-century Americans had been producing other "new bibles," most famously but not only the Book of Mormon; and after an uncertain start and much controversy, the Founding charters – the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, and later, Abraham Lincoln's brilliant epitomes of these in his greatest addresses – would become a new canon of national "parascriptures." The Founding had been text-intensive, and the new nation more reliant than most on these essentially literary products. Comparisons between them and the Bible eventually became a kind of commonplace, and it predictably followed that political and legal debates would be vexed and contentious in many of the same ways as conflicts over religion.

Put another way, the antebellum republic's great political, literary and religious projects were of a piece. All of them centrally involved the problem of finding or creating authority in written works, even as the culture of print was undergoing a rapid change and, it seemed, an obvious cheapening. The question of textual authority was not a new one in a human affairs, but it engaged numerous Americans as both an especially puzzling and a distinctively national problem, one that needed their urgent attention if their remarkable new enterprise, a very large and consequential experiment in deliberate nation-making, was not to fail – as seemed all too possible in the decades of escalating crisis leading to the Civil War.

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# DREAMING OF JOE HILL: FOLK SONGS BY AND ABOUT THE GREATEST HERO OF THE AMERICAN LABOUR MOVEMENT

## *David Livingstone*

ABSTRACT: Joe Hill, born Joel Emmanuel Hägglund, was literally larger than life, achieving immortality through song. Born in Sweden in 1879, he immigrated to the United States and became a prominent labour activist as a member of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), also known as the Wobblies. Hill wrote a number of classic labour songs, usually giving new politicized lyrics to well-known Christian hymns, as was the established practice amongst the organisation, with the songs even published and widely circulated in their so-called *Little Red Songbook*. Hill was arrested and executed in Utah in 1915 for a murder, which was generally interpreted as a political assassination and which resulted in him becoming a martyr for not only the American, but also for the world, labour movement. This paper will look at some of his most well-known songs (*The Preacher and the Slave*, *The Tramp*, *Casey Jones the Union Scab*). There will also be a focus on songs inspired by Hill's life and death, most famously, *I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night* based on the poem by Alfred Hayes and immortalized by the singer and activist Paul Robeson.

KEYWORDS: Joe Hill, the Wobblies, folk music, labour movement, Salvation Army

Very little is actually known about Joel Emmanuel Hägglund or Joe Hill (1879–1915) as he became known in union circles. We know he was born in Sweden and immigrated to the United States as a young man. We know he spent time in various parts of the United States: New York, California, Washington state, among others. And we know he was arrested and executed (despite an appeal for leniency from President Woodrow Wilson) in Salt Lake City, Utah. His death, of course, made him not only into a martyr, but also a legend.

We also know, or think we know, that he was the author of some of the most well-known English language labour songs of all time. He wrote the songs as part of his activity as a labour organizer with the anarchist union organization, the Industrial Workers of the World

(IWW), popularly known as the Wobblies. The practice among the Wobblies was to write songs using the melody and song structure of well-known Christian hymns, often sung at Salvation Army (or the Starvation Army as the Wobblies called them) gatherings or revival meetings. Many of the songs were published and widely circulated in their *Little Red Songbook*, which was the Wobblies' cheaply available secular version of a hymnal and where many of the songs have been preserved for posterity. Franklin Rosemont in his insightful book, emphasizing Hill's relationship with the union organization, comments aptly: "What made the IWW *Song Book* so different was its passionate anti-capitalism, its free-wheeling humor, and the vision it projected of a new society without exploitation, bosses, cops or jails."[1] In one of his letters, very much in line with what is described above, Hill describes his approach to songwriting and the rationale behind it: "If a person can put a few cold, common sense facts into a song and dress them — up in a cloak of humor to take the dryness off of them, he will succeed in reaching a great number of workers who are too unintelligent or too indifferent to read a pamphlet or an editorial in economic science."[2]

This popular approach is exemplified with one of Hill's most famous songs *The Tramp*, which was based on the children's Christian song *Jesus Loves the Little Children* from 1913, which was in turn written to the melody of an even earlier Civil War song *Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching* written by George F. Root in 1864. The original is a cry of hope from a Union prisoner of war, pinning his hopes on a rescue or at least an eventual positive outcome to the struggle.

> Tramp! Tramp! Tramp! The boys are marching,
> Cheer up comrades they will come,
> And beneath the starry flag we shall breathe the air again,
> Of the free land in our own beloved home.[3]

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[1] Franklin Rosemont, *Joe Hill the IWW & The Making of a Revolutionary Working Class Counterculture* (Oakland: PM Press, 2015), e-book, 21.

[2] Jeremy Harmon, "The Defiant Power of Song", *The Salt Lake Tribune*, https://local.sltrib.com/charts/joehill/music.html.

[3] Discussed in more detail in Nicholas Smith, *Stories of Great National Songs* (Milwaukee: The Young Churchman Co., 1899).

The Christian version by C. Herbert Woolston, which followed chronologically is the most famous and one of the earliest songs I can personally remember in my own life. Instead of the fairly insipid, cliché lyrics:

> Jesus loves the little children
> All the children of the world
> Red and yellow, black and white
> They are precious in his sight
> Jesus loves the little children of the world.[4]

Hill wrote the following:

> If you all will shut your trap,
> I will tell you 'bout a chap,
> That was broke and up against it, too, for fair
> He was not the kind that shirk,
> He was looking hard for work,
> But he heard the same old story everywhere:
> [Chorus]
> Tramp, tramp, tramp, keep on a-tramping,
> Nothing doing here for you;
> If I catch you 'round again,
> You will wear the ball and chain,
> Keep on tramping, that's the best thing you can do.[5]

The song portrays the newly prominent figure of the tramp or hobo, an increasingly common phenomenon starting in the post Civil War period, in a sympathetic light.[6] In contrast to the popular stereotype of the lazy,

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[4] "Hymnary.org," https://hymnary.org/text/jesus_loves_the_little_children_all_the.

[5] All of the lyrics by Joe Hill are taken from the following website: "Songs of Joe Hill," https://joehill100.com/songs-of-joe-hill/.

[6] For a discussion of the history and concept of hobo songs, see David Livingstone, "Hallelujah I'm a Bum: Rejection of Capital in Hobo Music and Culture," *Od folkloru k world music* (2021): 104–112.

indolent tramp, the protagonist in the song is ready and willing to earn his keep, but meets with skepticism and mistrust everywhere he goes.

> He walked up and down the street,
> 'Till the shoes fell off his feet,
> In a house he spied a lady cooking stew,
> And he said, "How do you do,
> May I chop some wood for you?"
> What the lady told him made him feel so blue:
> [Chorus]

The song also implicates the Christian church and therefore the Salvation Army in the critique.

> 'Cross the street a sign he read,
> "Work for Jesus,' so it said,
> And he said, 'Here is my chance, I'll surely try,"
> And he kneeled upon the floor,
> 'Till his knees got rather sore,
> But at eating-time he heard the preacher cry:
> [Chorus]

The political authorities are no less sympathetic or understanding.

> Down the street he met a cop,
> And the Copper made him stop,
> And he asked him, "When did you blow into town?
> Come with me up to the judge."
> But the judge he said, "Oh, fudge,
> Bums that have no money needn't come around."
>  [Chorus]

Contrary to the promises of eternal rewards in heaven, the unfortunate tramp is rejected not only in heaven, but even in hell.

Finally came that happy day
When his life did pass away,
He was sure he'd go to heaven when he died,
When he reached the pearly gate,
Santa Peter, mean old skate,
Slammed the gate right in his face and loudly cried:
[Chorus]
In despair he went to Hell,
With the Devil for to dwell,
For the reason he'd no other place to go.
And he said, "I'm full of sin,
So for Christ's sake, let me in!"
But the Devil said, "Oh, beat it! You're a 'bo!"
[Chorus]

The song uses humour and wit to hit home the message of the endless, forced wandering of the lonesome hobo as Bob Dylan famously sang. Having said that, Hill valourizes and celebrates the never-say-die spirit of this eternal outcast and outsider. Despite the omnipresent obstacles he faces, the hobo perseveres and triumphs in song, becoming a template for the beatniks and hippies who follow him as cultural icons and social rebels. Perhaps most importantly, from the perspective of the Wobblies, the song portrays the plight of itinerant labourers who are ready and willing to earn their keep, but who face constant rejection and animosity.

Another Joe Hill classic, *The Preacher and the Slave* parodies the Christian hymn *In the Sweet By-and-By* by Sanford F. Bennett from 1868, with its promises of eternal rewards and solace in the afterlife.

In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.
In the sweet by and by
We shall meet on that beautiful shore.[7]

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[7] "Hymnary.org," https://hymnary.org/text/in_the_sweet_by_and_by_we_shall_meet_on.

Hill's song, in contrast, viciously attacks the naivety and dishonesty of the sentiments of the hymn, particularly when addressed to working class laborers living hand to mouth. This song actually gifted the English language with the phrase "pie in the sky", with labour scholar Archie Green even referring it as "the most significant Wobbly contribution to the American vocabulary".[8] The song's force is enhanced by making use of call and response, inspired by African American musical traditions, and by the surprise, concluding alternative version of the chorus which takes an opposite approach in response to the so-called grafters (opportunists, corrupt officials).

> Long-haired preachers come out every night
> Try to tell you what's wrong and what's right
> But when asked about something to eat
> They will answer with voices so sweet:
> [Chorus]
> You will eat (You will eat) bye and bye (Bye and bye)
> In that glorious land above the sky (Way up high)
> Work and pray (Work and pray), live on hay (Live on hay)
> You'll get pie in the sky when you die (That's a lie!)
>
> And the starvation army they play
> And they sing and they clap and they pray
> 'Till they get all your coin on the drum
> Then they tell you when you are on the bum
> [Chorus]

This song makes explicit reference to the Salvation Army or the wittily phrased Starvation Army and sharply critiques its musical tradition and money-raising approaches.

> Holy Rollers and jumpers come out
> They holler, they jump and they shout
> Give your money to Jesus they say

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[8] Archie Green, "John Neuhaus: Wobbly Folklorist," *Journal of American Folklore* 73 (1960): 210.

He will cure all diseases away.

[Chorus]
If you fight hard for children and wife
Try to get something good in this life
You're a sinner and bad man, they tell
When you die you will sure go to hell
[Chorus]

In line with the socialist doctrine of the Wobblies, the song calls for a common, international front on the part of the working class against the capitalist establishment.

Working folk of all countries unite
Side by side we for freedom will fight
When the world and its wealth we have gained
To the grafters we'll sing this refrain:

You will eat (You will eat) bye and bye (Bye and bye)
When you've learned how to cook and how to fry (and bake a pie!)
Chop some wood, 'twill do you good
And you'll eat in the sweet bye and bye (That's no lie!)

The call and response of the final altered version of the chorus turns the tables and holds the hope that the exploitative types will finally, either by force or by choice, abandon their dishonest practices and finally put their shoulder to the wheel.

*Casey Jones the Union Scab* makes use of the traditional folk song *The Ballad of Casey Jones* from around 1909 about a historical railroad engineer who died in 1900 while sacrificing himself in order to save his passengers. The final verse of the original song encapsulates the venerative tone.

Casey Jones, he died at the throttle,
Casey Jones, with the whistle in his hand.

Casey Jones, he died at the throttle,
But we'll all see Casey in the promised land.[9]

Hill's version depicts him in a much more different light with a great deal of humor and ingenuity. Hill turns him into a scab who ends up getting his just deserves, both on earth and in heaven. The song was apparently inspired by an actual strike on the Illinois Central Railroad in 1911.[10]

The Workers on the S. P. line to strike sent out a call;
But Casey Jones, the engineer, he wouldn't strike at all;
His boiler it was leaking, and its drivers on the bum,
And his engine and its bearings, they were all out of plumb.
Casey Jones kept his junk pile running;
Casey Jones was working double time;
Casey Jones got a wooden medal,
For being good and faithful on the S. P. line.
The workers said to Casey: "Won't you help us win this strike?"
But Casey said: "Let me alone, you'd better take a hike."
Then some one put a bunch of railroad ties across the track,
And Casey hit the river bottom with an awful crack.
Casey Jones hit the river bottom;
Casey Jones broke his blessed spine;
Casey Jones was an Angelino,
He took a trip to heaven on the S. P. line.
When Casey Jones got up to heaven, to the Pearly Gate,
He said: "I'm Casey Jones, the guy that pulled the S. P. freight."
"You're just the man," said Peter, "our musicians went on strike;
You can get a job a-scabbing any time you like."
Casey Jones got up to heaven;
Casey Jones was doing mighty fine;

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[9] "Johnny Cash Lyrics,"
https://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/johnnycash/caseyjones.html.
[10] Thomas S. Marvin, "Joe Hill and the Rhetoric of Radicalism," *The Journal of American Culture* 34, 3 (2011): 252.

Casey Jones went scabbing on the angels,
Just like he did to workers of the S. P. line.
They got together, and they said it wasn't fair,
For Casey Jones to go around a-scabbing everywhere.
The Angels' Union No. 23, they sure were there,
And they promptly fired Casey down the Golden Stairs.
Casey Jones went to Hell a-flying;
"Casey Jones," the Devil said, "Oh fine:
Casey Jones, get busy shovelling sulphur;
That's what you get for scabbing on the S. P. Line."

Hill's version met with a great deal of popularity, being covered most famously by Pete Seeger, who interestingly was known to play both versions of the song. To take nothing away from the original song, Hill's version displays a remarkable ear for vernacular language (especially considering Hill was not a native speaker of English) and, once again, shows no mercy in mocking the promises of heavenly reward offered up by the Christian church.

The song *The Rebel Girl* was inspired by his friend and fellow organiser Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who Hill corresponded with and even met once while in prison. We have a preserved copy of a telegram Hill sent from prison to Flynn, informing her about the song written for and about her and expressing his admiration for her spirit and dedication to the cause: "Composed new song last week with music dedicated to the dove of peace its coming and now goodbye Gurley dear I have lived like a rebel and I shall die like a rebel. Joe Hill".[11] The song is novel in terms of the stress placed on the importance of women in the union movement and the labour cause.

There are women of many descriptions
In this queer world, as everyone knows.
Some are living in beautiful mansions,
And are wearing the finest of clothes.
There are blue blood queens and princesses,
Who have charms made of diamonds and pearl

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[11] "JoeHillLSLC.org," http://joehillslc.org/history/elizabeth-gurley-flynn/.

But the only and thoroughbred lady
Is the Rebel Girl
[Chorus]
That's the Rebel Girl, the Rebel Girl!
To the working class, she's a precious pearl.
She brings courage, pride and joy
To the fighting Rebel Boy
We've had girls before, but we need some more
In the Industrial Workers of the World.
For it's great to fight for freedom
With a Rebel Girl.
Yes, her hands may be hardened from labor
And her dress may not be very fine
But a heart in her bosom is beating
That is true to her class and her kind.
And the grafters in terror are trembling
When her spite and defiance she'll hurl
For the only and thoroughbred lady
Is the Rebel Girl.

Although, not surprisingly, a heavily male-dominated organization, the Wobblies were fairly liberal for the time and supportive of women's rights and involvement. Hill explicitly made reference to the need to create a better balance between the sexes and mobilize and utilize women in the movement in one of his letters: "we have created a kind of one-legged, freakish animal of a union".[12] Flynn, a truly remarkable figure in her own right, returned the words of praise and admiration with the following tribute to his person and song-writing: "Joe writes songs that sing, that lilt and laugh and sparkle, that kindle the fires of revolt, in the most crushed spirit and quicken the desire for fuller life in the most humble slave."[13]

Another popular Hill song entitled *There is Power in a Union* is based on Lewis E. Jones' 1899 hymn *There Is Power in the Blood Of the Lamb*. The song does not hold back in its critique of the empty

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[12] "JoeHillLSLC.org," http://joehillslc.org/history/elizabeth-gurley-flynn/.
[13] "JoeHillLSLC.org," http://joehillslc.org/history/elizabeth-gurley-flynn/.

promises of Christianity and instead celebrates the secular power of unity and cooperation.

> Would you have freedom from wage slavery,
> Then join in the grand Industrial band;
> Would you from mis'ry and hunger be free,
> Then come, do your share, like a man.
> (Chorus)
> There is pow'r there is pow'r in a band of workingmen,
> When they stand hand in hand,
> That's a pow'r, that's a pow'r
> That must rule in every land –
> One Industrial Union Grand.

The first verse and chorus should suffice to get the point across. This is, of course, one of the classic examples of the usage of the phrase "wage slavery", so popular within the Wobblie movement.

One of Hill's only modest requests, while in prison, was that he not be buried in Utah, having been treated so inhospitably, to put things lightly. Despite facing execution, Hill did not lose his sense of humour and ear for witty language, writing the following to his fellow Wobblie William Heywood: "I don't want to be caught dead in Utah".[14] His last will, written in prison, is moving in its simplicity and authenticity.

> My Will is easy to decide,
> For there is nothing to divide
> My kin don't need to fuss and moan
> "Moss does not cling to rolling stone"
>
> My body? – Oh! – If I could choose
> I would to ashes it reduce
> And let the merry breezes blow
> My dust to where some flowers grow

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[14] Quoted in Tony Semerad, "Reduced to Ashes, Joe Hill Still Inspires," The Salt Lake Tribune, http://local.sltrib.com/charts/joehill/ashes.html.

Perhaps some falling flower then
Would come to life and bloom again
This is my Last and Final Will
Good Luck to All of you – Joe Hill[15]

After his execution, his corpse was shipped to Chicago where a funeral/memorial took place on 25 November 1915. His body was cremated the following day, but instead of being released into the air his ashes were distributed amongst the Wobblie offices around the country. "Six hundred envelopes, each bearing a share of the ashes of Joe Hill's body, will go to the ends of the earth."[16] The ashes from the envelopes were consequently either privately or ceremonially released. Some of the packets of ashes were seemingly confiscated during raids carried out by the Ministry of Justice in order to crack down on the "subversive" activities of the Wobblies. Some of the surviving ashes were finally found at the US National Archives in the 1980s and returned to IWW activists, including the folk singer Utah Phillips, one of the most prominent persons to have kept Hill's musical legacy alive, who actually placed some of the ashes inside his guitar. The story with the ashes gets even stranger from here on. Prior to his death, the activist and "yippie" Abby Hoffman came up with the idea that the remaining ashes should be eaten by kindred folk singers to keep Joe Hill alive, in an obvious Christ-like analogy. The British singer-song-writer Billy Bragg eventually agreed and even passed some of the ashes on to a folk singer of the next generation Otis Gibbs.

Returning to the music, the most famous Joe Hill song was not written by him but about him, *I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night*. It was originally a poem by Alfred Hayes from 1930 and was put to music by Earl Robinson in 1936. The song was eventually covered by Pete Seeger, Joan Baez, Bruce Springsteen and many others. The most famous version, however, became that of the African-American actor, singer and activist Paul Robeson who was instrumental in popularizing

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[15] "Joe Hill's Last Will," https://joehill100.com/joe-hill-songs/joe-hills-last-will-1915/.
[16] Semerad, "Reduced to Ashes".

the song in the UK, amongst other places. Some would argue that this is actually the most popular labour song of all time in the UK.[17]

> I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
> Alive as you and me
> Says I "But Joe, you're ten years dead"
> "I never died" says he
> "I never died" says he
>
> "In Salt Lake City, Joe," says I, in standing by my bed
> "They framed you on a murder charge"
> Says Joe "But I ain't dead"
> Says Joe "But I ain't dead"
>
> "The Copper Bosses killed you Joe;
> They shot you Joe" says I
> "Takes more than guns to kill a man"
> Says Joe "I didn't die"
> Says Joe "I didn't die"
>
> And standing there as big as life
> And smiling with his eyes
> Says Joe "What they could never kill
> Went on to organize
> Went or to organize"
>
> From San Diego up to Maine
> In every mine and mill
> Where workers defend their rights
> It's there you find Joe Hill
> It's there you find Joe Hill!
>
> I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night
> Alive as you or me

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[17] See the article by Sam Richards, "Joe Hill: A Labour Legend in Song. Folk Music Journal," 4, 4 (1983): 367–384.

> Says I, But Joe, you're ten years dead
> I never died, says he
> I never died, says he[18]

The song clearly depicts Hill as a Christ figure who has been resurrected in his fellow union members as well as in the protest singers who have followed in his footsteps. The song about the wronged outsider, Joe Hill, has become a moving rallying cry for the oppressed and downtrodden. Joe Hill in the song has become a martyr for the worldwide labour cause.

This is only one of a number of songs inspired by Joe Hill's life, legacy and songs. Phil Ochs, a self-proclaimed 'topical' singer and the author of the classic *I Ain't Marching Anymore*, among other songs, penned *The Ballad of Joe Hill* in 1968 played to the tune of the classic anonymous murder ballad *John Hardy*. This is a quite long song with twenty verses, summarizing Hill's life from his arrival in the States to his death and legacy. His approach to songwriting based on his union activism is dealt with in the following verses.

> Now the strikes were bloody and the strikes were black
> As hard as they were long
> In the dark of the night Joe would stay awake and write
> In the morning he would raise them with a song
> In the morning he would raise them with a song
>
> And he wrote his words to the tunes of the day
> To be passed along the union vine
> And the strikes were led and the songs were spread
> And Joe Hill was always on the line
> Yes, Joe Hill was always on the line[19]

Ochs clearly expresses his debt to the older songwriter and activist and obviously views himself as a disciple and kindred spirit.

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[18] "Joe Hill Chords," https://tabs.ultimate-guitar.com/tab/joan-baez/joe-hill-chords-802522.

[19] "Joe Hill," https://genius.com/Phil-ochs-joe-hill-lyrics.

One of Woody Guthrie's lesser known songs *Joe Hillstrom* from 1947 focuses on Hill's framing for the murder, his imprisonment and his final execution. Guthrie makes reference to Hill's desire to not be buried in Utah and his affection for Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

> It's a hundred miles to the Wyoming line,
> Could you arrange to have my body hauled,
> Past that old state line before you bury me at all,
> I just don't want to be found dead here in Utah.
> Hey, Gurley Flynn, I wrote you a song,
> To the dove of peace. It's coming along.
> I lived like a rebel, like a rebel I die.
> Forget me. Organize these copper mines.[20]

Woody Guthrie is often considered the first American protest singer and the model for the figure of the modern singer-songwriter, but here acknowledges clearly his inspiration from his predecessor and model.

Although there may be doubts concerning the veracity of the legend of Joe Hill (the Pulitzer prizewinning Wallace Stegner even writing a version of his story depicting him as guilty of the murder charges, amongst other things),[21] there is absolutely no doubt as to the impact he has had on not only the labour movement, but on the singer-songwriters who followed after. Harry McClintock, a fellow Wobblie and the author of the hobo classics *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* and (according to some sources) *Hallelujah I'm a Bum* performed Hill's songs and followed in his footsteps. Hill was arguably the first protest singer ever, inspiring not only Guthrie, but Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and many others. Hazel Dickens, the ground-breaking female bluegrass musician, has written an up-dated version of *The Rebel Girl*. The multi-talented hobo singer Utah Phillips has, in my mind, been the most faithful to the spirit and philosophy of Hill and the Wobblies, with his performances almost always having included one or more of

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[20] "Protest Song Lyrics Net,"
http://www.protestsonglyrics.net/Historic_Songs/Joe-Hillstrom.phtml.
[21] Wallace Stegner, *Joe Hill: A Biographical Novel* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969).

Hill's compositions. The earlier mentioned English singer-songwriter and labour activist Billy Bragg is also a self-avowed follower.

Hill and his fellow Wobbly songwriters revolutionized folk music,using words and song to further their political agenda. Hill himself describes this new-found approach in one of his letters: "A pamphlet, no matter how good, is never read more than once, but a song is learned by heart and repeated over and over."[22] Rosemont aptly summarizes the impact and artistry of Hill's songs, arguing that they were aimed

> not so much at the literary-minded individual as the hard-pressed crowd, his bold and vigorous verses tend to avoid the contemplative, private, and subjective, and instead tell stories, poke fun, provoke laughter or (less often) tears, and all along the way convey fundamental Wobbly aims and principles.[23]

Joe Hill's songs, memory and legacy are still very much alive and kicking, not only in our minds and hearts, but also in at least (temporarily) some people's stomachs.

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[22] Quoted in Kim Kelly, "The Protest Songs That Drove the Wobblies a Century Ago Are Still Lighting Fires," *Chicago Reader*, https://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/little-red-songbook-iww-wobblies-joe-hill-may-day/Content?oid=46456670.

[23] Franklin Rosemont, *Joe Hill the IWW & The Making of a Revolutionary Working Class Counterculture* (Oakland: PM Press, 2015), e-book, 21.

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# "AS HIGH AS WE HAVE MOUNTED IN DELIGHT / IN OUR DEJECTION DO WE SINK AS LOW": SENSIBILITY, POLARITY AND FLUX IN WILLIAM WORDSWORTH'S "RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE"

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ABSTRACT: This paper broaches the ambivalent relationship between sensibility and reason under romanticism, with specific reference to William Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence". Originally titled "The Leech Gatherer" (1802), the poem confronts the romantic anxiety of nature's overwhelming dynamism, its immediacy and unavoidable influence upon the romantic subject. In this way, the poem functions as an origin narrative for Wordsworth's "organic sensibility", as set out in his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), and can be seen to connect the logic of sense conditions with the imagination. The poem tracks the subject's observations and the possibility of participatory harmony with its object, to advance an understanding of life when faced with radical empiricist epistemology. By doing so, the poem gives way to flux, which concerns the relationship between subject and object, and comes to share aspects of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's understanding of the "law of polarity".

KEYWORDS: Wordsworth, sensibility, sense, empiricism, Coleridge, reason, imagination, organicism, polarity, flux, motion, participation, subject, object

In this paper I discuss the notion of sensibility as it pertains to seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers, to examine William Wordsworth's notion of "organic sensibility" as set out in his preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), and how his poem "Resolution and Independence",[1] originally titled "The Leech Gatherer" (1802), functions as an origin narrative for his aesthetic project. To this end, I offer a reading of "Resolution and Independence" in combination with

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[1] William Wordsworth, *The Poems of William Wordsworth: Collected Reading Texts from Cornell Wordsworth Series*, vol. 1, ed. Jared Curtis (New York: Cornell University Press, 2014), 624–628.

Wordsworth's description of his poetry in his prose writing. In this, I broach three interrelated aspects of Wordsworth's poetic vision: firstly, the apparent epistemological ambiguity of "organic sensibility", secondly, the emergence of polarity and flux as key concepts in romantic aesthetics and rhetoric, and thirdly, how these concepts are produced as a result of romanticism's negotiation of empiricist epistemology, which then allows for a relational dynamic between subject and object.

In the preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Wordsworth writes:

> For all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of *powerful feelings*; but though this be true, Poems to which any value can be attached, were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility had *also thought long and deeply*. For our *continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts*, which are indeed the representatives of all our past feelings; and as by *contemplating the relation of these general representatives* to each other, we discover what is really important to men, so by the *repetition and continuance of this act* feelings connected with important subjects will be nourished, till at length, if we be originally possessed of much organic sensibility, such *habits of mind* will be produced that by obeying *blindly and mechanically* the impulses of those habits we shall describe objects and utter sentiments of such a nature and in such connection with each other, that the understanding of the being to whom we address ourselves, if he be in a *healthful state of association*, must necessarily be in some degree enlightened, his taste exalted, and his affections ameliorated.[2]

In this dense and lengthy passage, the notion of "organic sensibility" functions somewhere between the real and ideal, sensibility and reason.

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[2] William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, ed. R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones (London: Routledge, 1991), 237–238 (emphasis mine).

The organic, it can be said, evokes the concept of the transcendental, to something higher than the sum of its parts, while sensibility is empirical and denotes the immediate sensations and their affects upon an individual sensory subject. In his book *The Truth about Romanticism*, Tim Milnes distinguishes between Socratic, empirical romanticism and German, idealistic romanticism.[3] In this distinction we can see a parallel with Wordsworth's own notion of "organic sensibility"; the apparent contradiction and opposition of sensibility and reason. Wordsworth, however, suggests that these diametric concepts are, in fact, interrelated, so much so, that they are dependent upon one another.

In this, Wordsworth positions sensibility and reason – "powerful feelings" found in one who has "thought long and deeply" – as connected processes of a seemingly harmonious relationship. The creative act then flows from the dynamic interrelationship between impression, sensation, on the one hand, and critical, imaginative, on the other. Yet, in saying this, the passage nonetheless tends towards the rhetoric of the mechanism rather than that of the organic. Wordsworth says, when explaining the operation of such "habits of mind", that poetic sensibilities should arise "blindly and mechanically" from the man who has a "healthful state of association". Such a statement makes it somewhat tenuous to suggest that there is anything but empiricist epistemology in the Wordsworthian aesthetic. The preface's emphasis of a mechanical, associationist principle in the act of creation potentially delimits the imaginative powers, by making poetry purely memetic rather than a generative relationship between subject and object. But, as evidenced in "Resolution and Independence", there persists this "leading from above",[4] to which the poet makes recourse throughout his wanderings upon the wild moor.

At its most basic, Wordsworth appears to be making a distinction between perception and the intentionality of perception. Intentionality can be seen as the orientation of attention, an aboutness or awareness of an object or subject beyond our immediate experience, that directs the mind towards representations, and, in this way, the mind

[3] Tim Milnes, *The Truth about Romanticism: Pragmatism and Idealism in Keats, Shelley and Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 194.
[4] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, line 51.

stands in for things in the world. In contradistinction, empiricist epistemology, where there is no aboutness of things but only the mind as acting upon externalities, where there can be no certain knowledge, limits the representations of things to the mechanism of mind. It is not a dynamic relationship but one of limited response. In *The Epistemology of Metaphysics*, Wilfrid Sellars states that "thinking of" as it relates to an object (whether of first or second class existence) shows that we can "believe in things that are not a fact". Consequently, we bring in the "fact idea", a second class existence, "to allow the use of a relational picture". Sellars notes that 'we bring in second class existence so this mind now can believe a fact idea, e.g. that the sun is shining"[5]. In the context of empiricist epistemology, the idea of meaning in these representations, or as Sellars might say, "relational picture", which are socially evolved through language and literature, are redundant expressions and do not provide any knowledge to those who use them.

Kant, in contrast to Lockean epistemology and psychology, posits that judgement, which is the "imagination" that "stands in for intuition by transfiguring a sensory input into something we respond to with contemplative attention" must, at root, be "communicable".[6] Kant's system is dependent on an intuited spatial-temporal reality, which Coleridge believed conceded too much to empiricism. To elaborate, as far as human cognition can be said to be the basis of epistemology, the perennial problem of the naturally determined subject and self-determining moral subject becomes less dependent on perspective, that is, participation and response with one's object, than it does on form. In this, the potential for sensibility (impression, sensation) to harmonize with reason (critical, imaginative) cannot be realized. Hence, for Coleridge, there is no avoiding the dilemma of the real-ideal dichotomy in Kantian metaphysics.

From this, the overwhelming influence that nature impresses upon the poet, at first, denotes *a thing observed*, rather than an object of his attention. This is most pronounced in the opening stanza:

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[5] Wilfrid Sellars, *The Epistemology of Metaphysics*, ed. Pedro V. Amaral (California: Ridgeview Publishing Co., 1989), 22.
[6] Fiona Hughes, *Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgement: A Reader's Guide* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 45.

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove broods;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.[7]

Here, images are contrasted to offset the poet's lack of participation with the processes of nature while making recourse to his observations. The elements of nature – the wind, sun, birds and waters – appear contained as a set of observations rather than something experienced. There is no figurative or indexical "I". This aims to highlight the lack of participation between subject and object. The cyclical movement of the stanza indirectly suggests the presence of an observing "I" through absence, which, in turn, speaks to the alienation of the purely cognitive subject. Gilles Deleuze goes so far as to suggest, in *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, that no theory of the subjective experience can be successful if based solely on the cognition of the subject.[8] Such a conception of the subject stems from the romantic inheritance of Lockean psychology. G. S. Rousseau notes that John Locke's philosophy, in sum, applies "crucial aspects of the physical sciences" to non-scientific phenomena, that is, "ethics and politics".[9] In consequence, all knowledge comes from experience and potentially subsume ideas to impressions, as if to reduce thinking to thought and *seeing* to *knowing*. In other words, Locke insists upon the notions of cause and effect in the precipitation and justification of beliefs – a supplanting of our concepts and intuitions of higher forms by the

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[7] Wordsworth, *Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 1–7.

[8] Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. and intro. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 16.

[9] George S. Rousseau, "Nerves, Spirits, and Fibres", in *Nervous Acts Essays on Literature, Culture and Sensibility* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 139–140.

observations of nature, for the construction of our more complex and abstract notions.

The sublimating of sense (impression, sensation) into reason (critical, imaginative), moreover, changed interest and emphasis from being to becoming. The difference, here, is nestled in the distinction between the real and ideal qualities, which come to figure in romantic aesthetics through a form of participation. The inverse of the creative senses is that, as Coleridge points out, the mind can be enslaved by the eye, that is, the immediacy of perception subverts any relationship of subject and object that attempts to move beyond the present. Coleridge writes that this "arises wholly out of That Slavery of the Mind to the Eye and the visual Imagination or Fancy under the influence of which the Reasoner must have a *picture* and mistakes surface for substance".[10] This harkens back to Coleridge's own critique on Wordsworth that appears in *Biographia Literaria*, in which the distinction of fancy and imagination stands in for the difference between the empiricist framework, the issue of sensibility, and that of imagination. The latter ultimately unifies while the former combines and arranges fragments of perception.[11]

Locke's approach to the physical world, I might add, is different to *physis*, that is, nature naturing. In contrast, intentionality places observation closer to participation. Goethe's "The Experiment as Mediator of Object and Subject", is a good example of the immersion of a subject in its perception, so that a relational dynamic emerges, rather than a mere spectator of the empirical. He writes: "since everything in nature, especially the more common forces and elements, is in eternal action and reaction, we can say of every phenomenon that it is connected to countless others, just as a radiant point of light sends out its rays in all directions."[12]. An approach to observing, in this manner, allows for the participation of the observer and marks an evident awareness of a relational dynamic not only between object and object, i.e. phenomenon and phenomenon, but also subject and object. As

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[10] Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought* (Oxford: Barfield Press, 2014), 26.
[11] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (Project Gutenberg, 2004), ch. 4.
[12] Johann Wolfgang Goethe, "The Experiment as Mediator of Object and Subject", *In Context* 24 (2010): 22.

Arnold Berleant points out, when the environment is perceived "from within" , we are "looking not at it but being in it", and, in this way, it is "transformed into a realm in which we live as participants, not observers."[13]

The rhythmic but isolated opening stanza is followed by an evident intrusion of an observing subject. Instead of advancing us into the scene, however, the subject's intercession potentially separates the reader from the scene described: "All things that love the sun are out of doors"[14]. From this, it is difficult to know whether man is included in this statement, even though it is clearly an observation made by him, its rhetoric continues to alienate. The empirical paradigm here employed neglects response and affect. The statement implicitly dissociates the self from its environment through an objectivity which precludes the "I AM". I believe that the romantics generate their own anxieties and cycles of belatedness because of this division. The relational dynamic found in the aesthetics of romanticism is tied into linguistic usage through the recognition of the "I" subject, and is summarised by Roger Scruton thus: "I have no special privilege as to what is going on *here* and *now*, other than those privileges that depend on the use of 'I'. On the other hand, it is clear that there is no place for these indexical terms ['I', I AM] in science".[15] In this way, romantic aesthetics and rhetoric form an uncomfortable boundary with empiricist epistemology. For Coleridge, in particular, the creative principle connects the individual spirit with the creative act or divine *logos*, as a repetition of the finite man in the infinite "I AM", which preserves the potential for participatory harmony of the subject with its object.

Wordsworth employs an image of a hare running around the moor, its motion almost suspending the animal in time through a continuation of the mist that appears bound to the creature and its movements:

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[13] Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 170.

[14] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, line 8.

[15] Roger Scruton, *The Soul of the World* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), 31 (emphasis mine).

The hare is running races in her mirth;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist, that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth run.[16]

The mist forms part of the hare's very motion. Her actions are instinctual yet there appears to be a sense of freedom, indicated by the "wherever". The hare is immersed in her surroundings, rather than a mere spectator. The mist, moreover, connotes the crossing of real and ideal planes, a blurring point of opposite poles of a related whole. This crossing relies on sensation as it brings together "the operations of receptivity and redirection at a single point".[17] The image of mist appears in Book VI of *The Prelude* (1805) as an imaginative force, that "unfather'd vapour",[18] which, again, seems to indicate a higher power. These images transpose the temporal into the eternal, representing both the divisibility of matter and dynamism of nature. In this regard, the act of thinking is brought to share in the processes of matter. As Godwin asserts: "Of thought, may be said, in a practical sense, what has been affirmed of matter, that it is infinitely divisible."[19] The image of the imagination as mist and vapour then comes to bridge the oppositional of sensibility and reason, by connecting matter and mind in a relational dynamic. Mark S. Lussier, in his book *Romantic Dynamics*, says that "Romantic poetry thematizes this dynamic [i.e. actions of forces on bodies, with particular respect to the motions produced] to complexify purely mechanical visions of inner and outer phenomena, allowing the term to apply equally to the motion or movement of mind and matter."[20]

It is only after the poet experiences the hare does the explicit "I am" emerge as an index of the experiencing subject. This is evidenced in the poem by a reiteration of the past tense "I am": "I was a Traveller

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[16] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 11–14.
[17] Nail Thomas, *Lucretius I: An Ontology of Motion* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 88.
[18] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, vol. 2, 94–114, line 527.
[19] William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*, ed. by Isaac Kramnick (London: Penguin, 1985), 370.
[20] Mark S. Lussier, *Romantic Dynamics: The Poetics of Physicality* (Hampshire and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 16–17.

then upon the moor; / I saw the hare the raced about with joy; / I heard the woods and distant waters roar".[21] In comparison to the hare, however, the poet is only capable of formatting his experience through memory, not immediate sensation. Notably, at this point in the poem, Wordsworth remembers his boyhood: "I heard the woods and distant waters roar, / Or heard them not, as happy as a boy".[22] The reiteration of the past tense is clear throughout this stanza, but the cognitive forgetting or rather forgoing suggested by the "or heard them not", raises many interesting questions about what it is to be unified with nature. The boy here is like the hare, he does not hear the waters but feels them as temporal flow, like those "representatives of all our past feelings". His resort, at this crucial point of his narrative, to memories of childhood does indeed testify to the importance that Wordsworth, along with other romantics, attributes to the child and the child's mode of experiencing the world. This highlights a common theme throughout the poem, one of belatedness, forgetting and separation. Later, the figurative aspect of water arises in relation to the Leech-gatherer: "But now his voice to me was like a stream".[23] Interestingly, time does not sit neatly in the past tense, destabilized by the "now", in conjunction with "was". Yet, it remains that the water possibly keeps its previous association, that of silence, that "heard them not", which seems to represent complete immersion in experience.

The polarity of sense and reason, matter and mind are the principle of growth and differentiation. Barfield's understanding of Coleridge's polarity is interesting as he highlights reality's gradations, saying that our "tendency to individuate" emerges in the second gradation, from first order polarity to second order irritability, or sensibility.[24] Thus the capacity to individuate and the sensible are distinct yet inseparable in our perception of the world and self. It also reveals the relational dynamic between real and ideal aspects of experience. Abrams, in reference to *Essay Supplementary to Preface* (1815), notes that Wordsworth's "task is difficult because his poetry

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[21] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 15–17.
[22] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, line 18.
[23] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, line 107.
[24] Owen Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought* (Oxford: Barfield Press, 2014), 73.

cannot appeal to a ready-made, hence passive, sensibility, but must communicate to the reader an active 'power'".[25] This "active power" appears throughout "Resolution and Independence" in the form of creative vision, signified by the creative force of the eye. The active, spontaneous power is found in the "yet-vivid eyes"[26] of the Leech-gatherer, making the old man the originating figure and influence for Wordsworth's "organic sensibility". The creative force of the senses are those that "half create, / And what perceive".[27] This relationship between intentionality and perception is explained by Lucretius as the interplay between mind and matter, when he says of the "eye, torn from the socket" that it "can see nothing, / And neither, by themselves, can mind and spirit / Have any power."[28] Power can be seen to link different aspects of the polarity, sense and reason; matter and mind. The notion of power finds a place also in Coleridge's "law of polarity". "Polarity is, according to Coleridge, a 'law'; it is a law which reigns through all Nature; the duality of the 'opposite forces' is the manifestations of a prior unity; and that unity is a 'power.'"[29]

In the third edition of William Godwin's *Political Justice* (1798) he writes: "ideas are to the mind nearly what atoms are to the body. The whole mass is in a perpetual flux; nothing is stable and permanent".[30] This aspect of flux departs from a strictly associationist explanation of the formation of ideas, neither does Godwin stay within the recognizable parameters of cause and effect. He elects, instead, for a more complex causality which goes beyond what we think of as straightforward kinetics. Lucretius, in his *De Rerum Natura*, sees motion as *swerve*, that is, a moment of divergence, "ever-so-slight", in an otherwise determinate order.[31] Wordsworth appeals to something similar to that of Godwin and Lucretius when he asserts, in his preface

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25 Meyer Howard Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company Inc., 1973), 397–398.
26 Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, line 91.
27 Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, 113.
28 Lucretius, *The Way Things Are*, 102.
29 Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, 47.
30 Godwin, *Enquiry*, 104.
31 Lucretius, *The Way Things Are*, 60.

quoted earlier, that "our continued influxes of feeling are modified and directed by our thoughts". This is well exemplified through the rapid shift in emotional state: "As high as we have mounted in delight/In our dejection do we sink as low".[32]

Suddenly, emotion seems to change, or more accurately, flux. An evident unfolding and becoming overtakes the purposiveness of being itself. The predicate that is form is now preceded by motion, or to extend the term, to work within its etymology and historical understanding, the predicate that is form is preceded by *emotion*. The role of observer is now belated in his response to what he sees, as he depends upon an epistemology which sublimates *seeing* to *knowing*. By placing emotion in a state of flux, Wordsworth can represent a relational dynamic between him and his object, one which interacts not only with what he sees, but also with what he feels. The speaker of the poem then turns away from outward experience, that which is immediately visible, and towards the inward emotions, those "blind thoughts" he cannot name.[33] The blindness of his emotions, that is, his lack of knowledge or certitude towards their meaning, functions not as an obstacle to his understanding, but rather as a presence in absence, like the *swerve* itself.

Hume's interpretation of subject and object relations allows for uncertainty and error, which are important features of polarity and flux. He writes:

> When both the objects are present to the senses along with the relation, we call *this* perception rather than reasoning; nor is there in this case any exercise of the thought, or any *action*, properly speaking, but a mere admission of the impressions through the organs of sensation.[34]

What Hume distinguishes between is the *presence* of perception and the *absence* (or belatedness) of reasoning, and shares similarities with the

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[32] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 24–25.
[33] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, line 28.
[34] David Hume, *The Essential Philosophical* Works, ed. Tom Griffith, intro. Charlotte R. Brown and William Edward Morris (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2011), 70 (emphasis mine).

distinctions made by Coleridge between thinking and thought.[35] In this way, imagination is closer to perception than reason, and so, the subject can be seen to have creative senses.

Motion, too, comes to form a central force in *The Prelude* (1805). In Book IV, motion and flux form part of the unfolding of experience, and also advance towards a relational dynamic of subject and object:

> Of a slow-moving boat upon the breast
> Of a still water, solacing himself
> With such discoveries as his eye can make
> Beneath him in the bottom of the deeps,
> . . .
> . . . now is crossed by gleam
> Of his own image, by a sunbeam now,
> And motions that are sent he knows not whence,
> Impediments that make his task more sweet;
> Such pleasant office have we long pursued
> Incumbent o'er the surface of past time.[36]

In tracking the movement of the processes of nature, time, especially past time, becomes an ever-imposing presence in the Wordsworthian aesthetic, as he approaches the emergence of self-knowledge from the thing observed. Unlike the first stanza of "Resolution and Independence", however, there is an evident relationship between subject and object in this passage of *The Prelude*. Sensations seem to flow from the experiencing subject, creating time itself, which then passes away in a glimmer of light, like the young poet's face in the ebbing water. What Wordsworth successfully captures here is the ordered sensation that gives us the experience of time, or as Thomas Nail puts it, time is here presented as "the product of ordered sensations and not the fundamental or transcendental condition in which all

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[35] Barfield, *What Coleridge Thought*, 16–27.
[36] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 2: 62–76, lines 248–263.

sensations occur".[37] In other words, time is the flow of our sensation of things, of objects that we participate in and respond to.

Wordsworth, in an effort to advance a relational dynamic, begins to communicate with the Leech-gatherer: "My question eagerly did I renew, / How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"[38] Here the poet reiterates his former question: "What occupation do you there pursue? / This is a lonesome place for one like you."[39] These questions have often been explained away through concerns of the protestant work-ethic or the impending poverty that accompanies most poets. It can be argued, however, that such questions relate information about motion and our experience of motion as change. The need to work, its relationship with future conditions, stabilizes flux in the mind of the subject and abates a certain amount of anxiety. It is this realization that allows the poet-speaker of the poem to renew his creative pursuit and, ultimately, find solace in his resolve. The Leech-gatherer, moreover, poses a strange problem for the poet. Initially, the old man is described as something outside of time, unmoving, unchanging: "Such seemed this Man, not all alive nor dead".[40] The Leech-gatherer is displaced from normative forms of experience. He is, in fact, "Motionless as a cloud".[41] The cloud, here, derives figurative significance from its association with "mist" and "vapour". These temporal and yet recurring modes of various forms of water seem to be given a sense of permanence through their association with higher powers, ones that are not easily discerned or explained.

At first, the poet describes the Leech-gatherer as "a thing endued with sense: / Like a sea-beast".[42] The rhetoric employed is that of empiricist epistemology. The old man is decidedly distanced from the poet, a mere "thing" without relation. This is further emphasised by the defamiliarization of the old man as a "sea-beast". Yet, it also ascribes a majesty to his form. He is a thing of a higher order, something not ever seen or properly experienced. It is interesting to note that Wordsworth

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[37] Nail, *Lucretius I*, 111.
[38] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 118–119.
[39] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 88–98.
[40] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, line 64.
[41] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, line 75.
[42] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 68–69.

does not give a more detailed description of the old man; "thing" and "sea-beast" are generic, categorical descriptors rather than something inimitable. This changes upon communication with the Leech-gatherer, revealing in the intersubjective moment someone who speaks with "choice word, and measured phrase; above the reach / Of ordinary men".[43] Although Wordsworth's treatment of the Leech-gatherer initially falls short of this dynamic, he later urges the immediacy of the I–You paradigm of the intersubjective experience. Like polar opposites, we look into each other's eyes to find a horizon, a sacred line of being which we cannot cross and yet are intrinsically attached to. The result of this realization is that relations are of a moral nature, and it is this moral aspect which complicates Wordsworth's assessment of the purpose of poetry and his personal pursuit for recognition as a great poet. The relational identity in the I–You paradigm brings about a crisis of meaning in "Resolution and Independence". The poem reads:

> My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
> As if life's business were a summer mood;
> As if all needful things would come unsought
> To genial faith, still rich in genial good;
> But how can He expect that others should
> Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
> Love him, who for himself will take no heed at all?[44]

This point in the poem deviates from the dynamism of nature and instead focuses on the ethics of poem writing, the quality of life it grants and its benefit to others. I see this as an anxiety of action which organizes human relations and recognizes the inwardness of words and thought, or what Harold Bloom calls the "inward-non-phenomenality of words".[45]

The charge of pantheism is a common one in Wordsworth scholarship, yet this does not account for the aspects of personal duty and moral responsibility which pervade "Resolution and Independence".

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[43] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 102–103.
[44] Wordsworth, *The Poems*, 1: 624–628, lines 36–42.
[45] Harold Bloom, ed., *William Wordsworth* (New York: Infobase, 2007), 146.

It has also been said that the poem marks a retreat from political engagement towards a more Christian ethic. Yet, such a transition is far from straight-forward nor does it indicate an outright rejection of his feelings during the previous decade. The example of the Leech-gatherer allows the poet to renew his pursuit: "I could have laughed myself to scorn to find/In that decrepit Man so firm a mind".[46] The emotional state shifts again, now allowing for a cathartic turn. Sympathy, as far as it is Wordsworthian, is dependent on the potency of flux, as when we are moved by sympathy for another, the awareness of the changeability of our emotions through our relationship as subjects becomes embodied and self-evident. In this way, we are not mere spectators but participants.

An acceptance of uncertainty, an embrace of flux and our perceived instability of it, transposes the subject from "a punctual subjectivity constituted by a manifold of atomized experience", to an experience of "trial and experiment".[47] The relationship to the Leech-gatherer then becomes an avenue to restore the possible participatory harmony of subject and object. Wordsworth deals with radical empiricist epistemology through an intersubjective moment, the ultimate moment being one with God. In the final lines of the poem, the reader is turned toward the face of God, to communicate belief, not through cause and effect, but through the intersubjective moment: "'God,' – said I, 'be my help and stay secure; / I'll think of the Leech-gatherer on the lonely moor!'"[48] The poet moves away from the immanence of his immediate experience of the Leech-gatherer, as delineated by empiricist epistemology, toward a transcendentalized relationship of subject and subject, which stands in for the possibility of a harmonious relationship between subject and object. Furthermore, communication with the Leech-gatherer allows the poet to approach the old man not as a distant, indeterminate object, an atomized thing, but as a subject beyond the point of empiricist epistemology. The Wordsworthian aesthetic, therefore, approaches sensibility and reason as a relational dynamic, which joins matter and mind, the real and ideal aspects of experience.

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[46] Wordsworth, *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, 1: 624–628, lines 217–218.
[47] Milnes, *Testimony of Sense*, 4.
[48] Wordsworth, *The Poems of William Wordsworth*, 1: 624–628, lines 219–220.

From this, a creative connection links the logic of sense conditions with that of the imagination, which then generates its own transports and transumptions by way of polarity and flux. In the end, the flow of observations must rest in something higher than the sum of its parts, the ultimate polarity and intersubjective relationship, that of man and God.

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# THE HAUNTING LODGE: HOW BARRY HANNAH EXORCISED THE SPIRIT OF WILLIAM FAULKNER IN "NICODEMUS BLUFF"

## *Brad Vice*

ABSTRACT: For most of his career, Mississippi author Barry Hannah was deemed the postmodern heir to William Faulkner, a moniker only intensified by Hannah's association with Oxford, Mississippi, Faulkner's hometown. Though Hannah was increasingly resistant to this label, and earlier sought to distance himself from Faulkner's mythopoetic architecture, Hannah's later fiction frequently addresses themes concerning the Mississippi landscape that can only be described as Faulknerian. In "Nicodemus Bluff," Hannah summonses the central theme of Faulkner's coming-of-age story in "The Bear," then banishes this influence with his own absurdist and surrealist style – indebted partly to the supernatural tales of Edgar Allan Poe. Underneath this stylistic renovation, Hannah maintains a certain resistance to commercialism, to the concept of ownership, and specifically the concept of inheritance when it comes to wilderness and the natural landscape, values at the heart of the "The Bear" and *Go Down, Moses*.

KEYWORDS: Barry Hannah, William Faulkner, Edgar Allan Poe, Southern Literature

Mississippi novelist and short story master Barry Hannah is often referred to as a postmodern William Faulkner by critics and reviewers. Because he sported a fast and loose style that often played with space and time, it is easy to see why Ruth Weston's *Postmodern Romantic*[1] labeled him as such, though Hannah often denied being consciously postmodern, claiming in several interviews not to understand the meaning of the word; once labeling himself merely an "elder

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[1] See Ruth Weston, *Barry Hannah: Postmodern Romantic* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1998).

modernist."[2] There is far less Hannah criticism than is deserved, especially considering his superstar status in the late 70s and 80s when, along with Raymond Carver, the author created a renaissance of interest in the American short story in the pages of *Esquire*. His later career in the 90s was more subdued, and yet, with less fanfare, Hannah crafted a trove of short fiction and novels. "Nicodemus Bluff" was first published in book form in the unconventionally dense *Bats Out of Hell* (1993), heralded as something of a comeback for Hannah. "Nicodemus Bluff" was selected by Anne Tyler for *Best of the South* (1996), a best of the best anthology of Southern literary fiction that curated a decade's worth of the *New Stories from the South* anthologies.[3] In "Nicodemus Bluff", Hannah seems to be jousting with Faulkner, subverting the mythopoetic elements of Faulkner's famous coming-of-age story. No legendary bear inhabits the big woods that surround the hunting lodge in "Nicodemus Bluff," though the hunters themselves much resemble the characters in "The Bear," and their attitudes toward money, power, and race have as much to say about Hannah's attitude to Faulkner as it does to the themes that haunted most of Hannah's career, namely violence and addiction.

Faulkner's story "The Bear" has a complex publication history. Its earliest version, first published in *The Saturday Evening Post* as "A Bear Hunt" (February 10, 1942), differs substantially from the *Go Down, Moses* (1942) version.[4] A third version was published in Faulkner's collection of hunting stories, *The Big Woods* (1955), but this version lacks the more serious Faulknerian themes of racial identity.[5]

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[2] Wells Tower, "Barry Hannah in Conversation with Wells Tower," in *Conversations with Barry Hannah*, ed. James G. Thomas, Jr. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 229.

[3] Barry Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," in *Bats Out of Hell* (New York: Grove Atlantic, 1993), 363–382; Barry Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," in *Best of the South: From Ten Years of New Stories from the South,* ed. Shannon Ravenel, intr. Anne Tyler (Chapel Hill: Algonquin Books, 1996), Kindle.

[4] John Padgett and Stephen Railton, "Faulkner's 'A Bear Hunt'." Added to the project: 2017. Additional editing 2019: John Corrigan. *Digital Yoknapatawpha*, University of Virginia, http://faulkner.iath.virginia.edu; William Faulkner, "The Bear", *Go Down, Moses* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 189–331.

[5] William Faulkner, "The Bear," *The Big Woods: The Hunting Stories* (New York: Vintage International, 1994), Kindle.

"The Bear" in *Go Down Moses* is broken up into five sections. The first three, set in the late nineteenth century, focus on Isaac (Ike) McCaslin's coming-of-age story in the Mississippi wilderness as he learns to become a hunter and woodsman from Sam Fathers, son of a Chickasaw Indian Chief and an African-American slave. Sam Fathers keeps the hunting camp for Major de Spain, Ike's deceased father's fellow officer in the Civil War. The last two sections explore the economics of exploitation: first human exploitation in the form of slavery, and how Ike's forbears came to own their slaves (notably by winning them in card games), and later the heady mix of incest and miscegenation that also constitute Faulkner's masterpiece *Absalom, Absalom!* (Major de Spain's lodge is set on land that originally belonged to Thomas Sutpen.) The fifth section explores the exploitation of the natural landscape. After the death of Old Ben, the legendary titular Bear, Major de Spain sells the wilderness to a logging company, which hauls the lumber away on the same train Ike used to ride to Memphis to fetch whiskey for the men. Thus, the abundant Mississippi wilderness is despoiled for profit, and the land where the mythic bear once roamed is stripped bare.

"The Bear" begins as a narrative of psychological formation. Ike is set up to be a monomythic hero, a fatherless orphan, who seems to be born out of his own imagination, as he is indoctrinated into the ways of the wilderness as well as manhood:

> It seemed to him that at the age of ten he was witnessing his own birth. It was not even strange to him. He had experienced it all before, and not merely in dreams. He saw the camp – a paintless six-room bungalow set on piles above the spring high-water – and he knew already how it was going to look. He helped in the rapid orderly disorder of their establishment in it and even his motions were familiar to him, foreknown. Then for two weeks he ate the coarse rapid food – the shapeless sour bread, the wild strange meat, venison and bear and turkey and coon which he had never tasted before – which men ate, cooked by men who were hunters first and cooks afterward; he slept in harsh sheetless blankets as hunters slept. Each morning the gray of dawn found him and Sam Fathers on the stand, the crossing, which had been allotted him. It was the poorest one, the most barren. He had expected that; he had not dared yet to hope even

to himself that he would even hear the running dogs this first time.[6]

Faulkner introduces Ike as a humble initiate, who like the reader, seeks to discover the "orderly disorder" of the Faulknerian world he first aims to observe rather than master.

Like Faulkner, Hannah had been interested in of male coming-of-age narratives since his first novel *Geronimo Rex* (1972). To quote Ruth Weston:

> That Hannah is still concerned with adolescent initiation in *Bats Out of Hell* is apparent in "Nicodemus Bluff, . . . it presents a parody of that quintessential southern story of a boy's initiation in manhood – Faulkner's "The Bear." The narrator of "Nicodemus Bluff," Harris Greeves, looks back from mid-life on the events that transpired when he was ten-year-old "little Harris" who had been allowed to accompany a group of men to a deer camp in Arkansas. The men do hardly any hunting, since it rains almost constantly during the days at camp, but a lot goes on in the mind of little Harris as he watches his father's obsessive behavior, including a bizarre personality change (wherein the elder Greeves becomes possessed by an aggressive female spirit and voice) during a marathon chess game that is somehow related to satisfying Gomar Greeves' business debts to his opponent, Garland Pool. In this story of nineteen pages, Hannah manages to include the themes of initiation and of the relations between races, classes, genders, and generations. In addition, contemporary problems – drugs, war, corruption in business, and sin in general – are raised.[7]

Hannah presents little Harris as timid and perplexed, while Faulkner's Ike is competent and self-assured. The scope of Hannah's story is much compressed as compared to Faulkner's: years of high adventure are reduced into one incredibly gloomy, four-day weekend. While Ike will

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[6] Faulkner, "The Bear," *Go Down, Moses*, 195–196.
[7] Weston, *Postmodern Romantic*, 24.

follow in the footsteps of Sam Fathers and become a capable woodsman, Ike is so self-reliant he gives up his inheritance on principle, as he considers his family fortune the ill-gotten gains of human bondage. In comparison, little Harris will grow up to be decidedly dependent, an addict, who even as an adolescent is so drug-addled, he claims he knew not whether he was in "church or jail."[8] Only late in life, as he tries to remain sober, can he recall the traumatic events in the woods that set him towards his sorry fate: "What I wanted to be away from I believe was the memory of my father and his friends years ago at that deer camp in Arkansas. Something happened out there."[9]

The parallel construction of the story does not end with Ike and Harris. Almost every character in "The Bear" is reincarnated in "Nicodemus Bluff" to act as a sly counterpoint to Faulkner's cast of "knights" and "squires." These are categories set up by Herman Melville in *Moby Dick* (1851), with which "The Bear" is often compared. Like the crew of the Pequod, Faulkner's hunting lodge mirrors the nineteenth-century social matrix in both its plurality and hierarchy, or as Michael Wainwright observes in his article "Ecological Issues: Rousseau's 'A Stag Hunt' and Faulkner's 'A Bear Hunt,'": "The major's camp, as a microcosm of late-nineteenth-century Mississippian life, is a majoritarian construct. Hunt conventions clearly discriminate according to social class and race: bears provide prize game for the camp patrician, deer for his friends and acquaintances, while chipmunks, racoons, and squirrels suffice for adolescents and African Americans."[10] In *Moby Dick*, Ishmael terms Captain Ahab and the First Mate Starbuck as "knights" and lower-class/caste shipmates like the harpooners on the racial margins such as South Pacific Islander Queequeg (though prince in his own country) and native-American Tashtego and African Daggoo as "squires." Similarly, in "The Bear," perhaps we can safely categorize General Compson and Major de Spain as "knights," while characters like mixed-race Sam Fathers and Boon

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[8] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 363.
[9] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 363.
[10] Michael Wainwright, "Ecological Issues: Rousseau's 'A Stag Hunt' and Faulkner's 'A Bear Hunt,'" *The Mississippi Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (2014): 298. Though Wainwright's observation is made about "A Bear Hunt" it is equally true of "The Bear".

Hoganback, as well as the African-American cook, Ash, constitute a supporting cast of "squires" to the more aristocratic hunters whose status is derived not only as plantation aristocrats but also from their ranking as Southern officers in the Civil War. Though by birth, Ike belongs to the class of landed plantation "knights," as an adolescent he of course feels solidarity with the "squires," and thus later refuses to accept his birthright to become a knight as he concludes that the patrician status only comes at the exploitation and expense of those below.

This dichotomy can also be applied to "Nicodemus Bluff," as Harris says of his drugged past that he had little agency and thus became a follower rather than a leader: "I was a devoted accomplice, accompanier, associate, minion, and stooge. The term *et al.* was made for me."[11] On the other hand, Major de Spain is recast as Garland Pool as they share the profession of banker. Pool is depicted as something of a loan shark or Shylock, who not unlike a drug dealer, addicts his victims to easy money in order to make them his slaves. Harris's father Gomar (a name that has come to mean a slur for an unsophisticated country person)[12] has come under Pool's thrall. Gomar has a seemingly prosperous existence, as Harris's family possesses all the trapping of the American dream, "the lawn, the porch, two cars, the nice fishing boat, the membership to the country club," but all paid for by Pool and Pool's partners, insurance agent Mr. Hester and lawyer Colonel Wren.[13] The "agricultural rates of interest" on these class markers of success are considered very low, an investment in "young men from the county who want to better themselves," but in return, Gomar is expected to "aid these men at some business schemes" and to be at their "beck and call".[14] Thus Gomar uses his country upbringing to swindle other poor country people, acquire their land for cheap, and turn it over as investment property to his creditors who think Harris's father "admirable the way he tried to sell real estate out in the country where

[11] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 363.
[12] The *Urban Dictionary* defines Gomar as: "An extreme brand of redneck/hillbilly found in the deep south," https://www.urbandictionary.com /define.php?term=gomar.
[13] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 365.
[14] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 365.

the dead farms were. He knew them when they were dying and could be had."[15]

Though Gomar has no education to speak of ("I don't think he had finished high school really," says Harris), his father attempts to fit in with the educated elite at the country club, which proves a miserable failure.[16] Anxious about his inability to play golf, Gomar drinks too much and passes out in the lounge. In addition to this faux pas, Gomar feels ill-treated by Pool, who is becoming more and more demanding about the repayment of Gomar's loan: "my father thought he had considerably reduced the debt" by acquiring a piece of land Pool and his business partners later converted to a prosperous turkey farm and thus has lowered his debt by "several thousands of dollars" and also "felt easy about the lateness of his payment."[17] Though Wren and Hester feel unconcerned about Gomar's debt, Pool is not so easily mollified.

Years later, Harris learns more of his father's debts and his relationship to Pool through Mr. Kervochain, the town pharmacist, a kind man, who incidentally is partly responsible for Harris's drug addition by providing him with copious tranquilizers and painkillers. Still Harris has a kindly remembrance of Kervochain, and sits with the old pharmacist on his deathbed years after Gomar's demise. Here Harris learns that Pool thought himself, in Kervochain's words, as "a peer of the realm," with his "law degree and bankership," superior at "hunting, golf, chess," he fancied himself to be a "Renaissance man, a Leonardo of the backwater," who owned much property like the "lodge and midway" and in his affairs began to think "he owned people too."[18] According to Kervochain, Pool had a "dormant serfdom in his head" and would grow demanding "like an old Czar."[19] In Kervochain's assessment there was a "creature in Mr. Pool" that compelled him to "'own' several people, and this was his delight," and when Pool sought repayment he "was calling in all his money and the soul attached to it."[20] Just a few days before Gomar's death, Gomar and Harris are

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[15] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 366.
[16] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 366.
[17] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 366.
[18] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 370.
[19] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 370.
[20] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 370.

invited by Pool to join the town gentry: Hester, Wren, Kervochain, the aged but eminent doctor, Dr. Harvard, and assorted others. The call for both Gomar's money and soul comes during a rainstorm at the hunting lodge, where the familiar Faulknerian frame story undergoes an uncanny frameshift to something more reminiscent of a gothic horror story.

In the bulk of Hannah's interviews, the author was hounded for his opinion of Faulkner, for whom Hannah clearly had ambivalent feelings. In the anthology *Conversations with Barry Hannah*, Faulkner comes up in every interview in the book, and according to reviewer Joan Wylie Hall, this is "often to Hannah's annoyance. While he calls Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying* a 'marvellous' book that he has reread several times, Hannah says that he is attracted to "the *mysterious*" in Faulkner rather than "the abstruse."[21] Hall rightfully points out that while all of the interviews in the collection ask Hannah about the influence of Faulkner, "Interviewers seldom asked him about the Romantics."[22] But often Hannah would volunteer information about his romantic aesthetics, for instance, his adherence to Keats' negative capability or that he wrote his master's thesis on William Blake. Hannah often said he ascribed to Poe's conviction that a work of literature should have a galvanizing compression and a unity of effect, keeping most works short enough to read in one sitting.[23]

Hannah's desire for brevity has always been a source of dissatisfaction with Faulkner scholars, the circle of academics traditionally most interested in Hannah. Fred Hobson in his book *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World* (1991) seems to accuse Hannah of having a want of literary heft, when he writes, "Hannah does not seem to be a direct descendent of Faulkner. Lacking the tragic sense, devoid of Faulkner's high seriousness and social consciousness, he is not the *moralist* that Faulkner, in the broadest sense of that term, often

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[21] Joan Wylie Hall, "Barry Hannah's Bright Keyboard: A Reprise," *The Mississippi Quarterly*. 67, 4 (2014): 633–640.

[22] Hall, "Barry Hannah's Bright Keyboard," 636

[23] "It appears evident, then, that there is a distinct limit, as regards length, to all works of literary art – the limit of a single sitting," Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition", in *The Harper American Literature*, vol. 1, ed. Donald McQuade et al. (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 1625.

is."[24] Hobson's book was published a couple of years before *Bats Out of Hell* and the critic would not have been aware of "Nicodemus Bluff," a story in which Hannah *is* making moral judgments and embracing a more solemn if not tragic vision, which may indeed be lacking in the zany romps depicted in *Geronimo Rex* (1972), *Airships* (1978), and *Ray* (1980).

And yet, Hobson does admit that both Hannah and Faulkner have an "attraction to the grotesque, and a penchant for the *tour de force*."[25] Hobson sees Hannah as "one of the leading practitioners of a sort of neo-Southern Gothic," who writes about "living creatures, haunted, violent, both frightened and frightening."[26] Finally, a short interview done to help promote a Hannah reading in New York may articulate Hannah's right relationship to Faulkner and actually bring the Faulknerian tension in "Nicodemus Bluff" into perspective. When asked, "Did your writing always have a personal voice or did it develop over the years?" Hannah responds, "I don't know. I do know that I love voice and early terror stories by Edgar Allen Poe and Faulkner's baroque successes. I was also very influenced by the plain-spoken men such as Hemingway. I was never for obscurity and ornament. Who knows how your voice grows? You read a bunch of books, you go to church, play jazz and it all comes together in a way that you hope is fresh."[27] Here we can see that the themes of Faulkner are very influential on Hannah's development but he is suspicious of the "obscurity and ornament" of an "abstruse" style, preferring the shorter "plain-spoken" style of Hemingway. But it is Hannah's mention of Poe that gives us the key to understanding the construction of "Nicodemus Bluff." Why turn a hunting yarn like "The Bear" into a tale of gothic madness, possession, and horror? In an interview with radio personality Don Swaim, Hannah says, "I kind of go back to Poe—I like something that will just really knock you on the head in one sitting, I think it is the

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[24] Fred Hobson, *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 34.

[25] Hobson, *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World,* 34.

[26] Hobson, *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World*, 33.

[27] Neil Gladstone, "20 Questions: Barry Hannah," *My City Paper* (November 28–December 5, 1997), https://mycitypaper.com/articles/112896/article001.shtml.

best experience available."[28] Thus, the supernatural elements of "The Bear" that exist outside the lodge in the "big wood," are brought inside the hunting lodge, transforming the manly sanctuary into a haunting lodge, a veritable House of Usher.

To accomplish what Hobson termed Hannah's penchant for the "*tour de force*" in "Nicodemus Bluff," Hannah reaches for Poe's "knock you on the head" supernatural power. Faulkner imbues Old Ben with a kind of preternatural intelligence and perhaps even supernatural life span. Like the ghostly whale in *Moby Dick*, Old Ben is at once a flesh-and-blood creature but also the stuff of legend. But Hannah removes the legend outside the lodge and replaces it with a haunting inside the lodge, in fact, inside Harris's father. We are told Gomar is possessed by a feminine spirit, one as aristocratic and devious as any of the "knights" that usually inhabit the lodge; "[m]y father when he played chess, became the personality of a woman, a lady of the court born in the eighteenth century (said Mr. Kervochain). The woman would 'invest' Dad and he would win at chess with her character, not his own man's person at all."[29] Given the theme of usury in the story, "invest" is likely a keyword for Hannah to use when describing the woman. The aristocratic "creature" inside Pool has invested in Gomar, and thus owns him, but when this feminine spirit "invests" Gomar as well, Gomar is empowered to nullify his debt to Pool, but at an equally terrible cost to himself.

The female spirit not only imbues Gomar with the ability to play chess, but it also gives him the aristocratic manners he normally lacks. Indeed, in contrast to Gomar's lack of education, and incompetence as a golfer, he is singularly talented at chess. No one knows where he learned the game, nor where he picked up the feminine personality that possesses him when he plays, "maybe from one month in the army during the Korean conflict," Kervochain ponders, or he "might have picked up the woman from somebody in the army," or "from a circuit-riding preacher whose religion had its strange parts, its 'dark

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[28] Don Swaim, "Barry Hannah Interview," in *Conversations with Barry Hannah*, ed. James G. Thomas, Jr. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 87.

[29] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 368.

enthusiasm.'"[30] Regardless of the entity's origin, according to the dying Mr. Kervochain, Gomar's demonic talent, "led to that long rain of four days at the deer camp, the matter of the owed money, and Mr. Pool, the banker who professed himself a superior, very superior chess player."[31]

Gomar's "woman" elevates him to an aristocratic status equal to Pool and eventually dominates Pool in his own court, the lodge, but at the same time the spirit unmans Gomar and brings a feminine presence to this ultra-masculine domain: "He began sitting there like a plain man, but at the end of the game . . . his voice went up, and his arms and hands were set in a sissy way. He was all female as the climax of his victory neared."[32] Harris concludes the effect of "the crafty woman" was unsettling for all who witnessed her possession of his father with her "giggles" and the "pursing" of his father's lips, "It wasn't something you want to look at and those he defeated didn't want to remember it."[33]

Pool and Gomar play high-stakes chess for four days straight as the rest of the hunters develop cabin fever, especially Harris, who is, after all, only ten, the same age as Ike when "The Bear" begins its narrative. Harris is reduced to reading volume R of the encyclopedia and the *Reader's Digest* condensed novels of Somerset Maugham some former guest of the lodge has abandoned. When Harris interrupts the chess game to tell his father he is bored, his father collects all the guns in the house and orders him to clean and oil them, and immediately returns his concentration to the board. The other hunters play poker, drink whiskey, and slowly show signs of fatigue and mental irritation. Throughout the four days, Harris has nightmares and witnesses minor scenes of blood and gore. One of the hunters, the oilman Mr. Ott, goes to the woodshed to chop stove wood and injures his hand badly with an ax. Dr. Harvard is awakened from sleep and Harris watches with fascination as the doctor sews up Ott's hand over the sink. On another occasion, Colonel Wren, determined to go hunting despite the rain, brings back a slaughtered and bleeding, underweight doe in the rain, even though it is not yet doe season: "That's all the wood's gave up,

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[30] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 368–369.
[31] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 369.
[32] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 368.
[33] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 368.

help of this spotlight," says Colonel Wren. The spotlight is an illegal way to hunt as well, and we can see Colonel Wren, though a World War II war veteran, is far from the honorable, aristocratic hunters depicted in "The Bear."[34]

Years later, Colonel Wren will be responsible for the destruction of the lodge. Again, on Kervochain's deathbed, the druggist tells Harris of how, late in life, Wren's face and skin developed some terrible wasting disease, about the same time Wren started using the lodge as a place to rendezvous with numerous women. Wren's wife discovered her husband's deceptions and burns the lodge down. Finally, Wren's reputation is ruined forever, when he is discovered to be a fraud, writing letters to the editors of an American history magazine under a pseudonym in order to embellish his war record at the Battle of Wake Island. If we read "Nicodemus Bluff" as a response to "The Bear," we can't help but read this as a kind of condemnation of General Compson and Major de Spain as frauds as well.

Somewhat in the middle of Harris's nightmares, scenes of blood, and vast boredom (around day two), Kervochain decides to take Harris on a walk in the woods when the rain slacks off. During the first walk, Harris nearly tumbles down a steep bluff; Kervochain saves him in the nick of time though very drunk himself. He warns Harris that the woods are haunted, and the bluff is a place of particular peril: "Something's in that bluff under us. It's haunted. This would be a very bad place to fall off. . . . Nicodemus is under the bluff, son."[35] Apprehending that Kervochain is drunk, little Harris tells Kervochain he is scaring him so Kervochain ceases his ghost story.

On the fourth day, as Pool and Gomar continue their marathon chess tournament, Harris and Kervochain set out into the wet woods again, and Harris asks a more sober Kervochain to revisit the story of Nicodemus and why he haunts the bluff. Kervochain explains that Nicodemus was a black man who served Pool's family as a general factotum. He is described much as the character Ash in "The Bear," who is Major de Spain's loyal cook and "squire", but is reduced to something of a minstrel show character when he petitions to be given a gun and

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[34] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 377.
[35] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 374.

allowed to go hunting with the "knights." Like Gomar, Nicodemus was deeply into debt to the Pool family when he died, and thus at "the beck and call" of the Pools. Toward the end of the story, Kervochain confides Garland Pool inherited Nicodemus as a type of generational property from his father, like a slave, and the Pools are rumored to be responsible for the black man's death. Nicodemus suffered from cancer, but because he was in debt to the Pools, there was no money for doctors, hospitals, or even a funeral: "He asked Pool to shoot him and so they did. I don't know which one."[36] Pool (or his father) euthanized Nicodemus in the woods, much like a hunter would put down a dog grown long in the tooth and unable to keep up with the pack. Kervochain blames Pool not only for the death by shooting, but sees him as the cause of the cancer in the first place, "You can blame Pool for the cancer too. The way he gave, then hounded. Nicodemus, that man, still wanted to 'keep it in the family.'"[37] This shows that the prosperous bankers, the Pools, still see Nicodemus as chattel, and thus very little has changed in the Mississippi Delta since the time of the Civil War.

Though Garland Pool carries no military rank as Colonel Wren, Pool is again described as having a gray mustache that resembles that of a "hefty soldier, 'of a Prussian sort,' said Mr. Kervochain, "You could picture him ordering people around."[38] His military bearing makes him sensitive to his sense of dignity, and of course, he interprets Gomar's feminine transformation, not as a supernatural occurrence, but as evidence that Gomar is mocking him. Throughout the four-day chess tournament, Harris is frequently awakened to Pool shouting things like, "Stop it. Stop it. Stop it . . . Don't mock me with that white-trash homo voice!"[39] Finally on the fourth day, as Harris and Kervochain come back from their final walk together in the rainy woods, they find Harris's father kneeling in the flooded yard of the lodge, with Mr. Pool above him, beating him absurdly with a stick of pepperoni. Though bruised and in terrible pain, Gomar is laughing: "'It's all mine, free and clear. I

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[36] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 378.
[37] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 378.
[38] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 372.
[39] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 372.

won it, I won it!' my father was shrieking, in that woman's voice."[40]
What happens next emasculates Gomar in the eyes of his son forever.
Pool hauls Gomar up from the mud and turns him to face Harris, "Show
him. Talk for your son. Let him see who you are."[41] Harris says, "you
could tell he didn't want to, but couldn't help it. He spilled out in that
cracking, cackling female voice, 'I won! I won!'"[42] Satisfied, Pool
thrusts Gomar's face into the flooded ground and walks away in disgust:
"What Garand Pool had done seemed awful, but my father almost
canceled it out."[43] Though Gomar emancipates himself from Pool's
control via chess, he has disturbed the natural order of things by
bringing the demonic female spirit into the halls of the lodge, a place
considered a refuge from women; he has shamed his son with his
feminine voice and mannerisms, as the gender norms of the mid-
twentieth century South differ little from mid-nineteenth century South.
Kervochain shares his own theory of gender with Harris during his
deathbed confession, "The state is very proud of its men's men. It's a
tough football playing, tough rough whiskey-drinking men."[44] But now
according to Kervochain, in these degenerate times, half the boys at the
local Methodist college are "epicene – leaning toward the womanly. The
new Southern man is about half girl in many cases, Harris. Their mother
raised them. Their father didn't get in it at all."[45] But this familiar
lament of generational degeneracy is a rationalization as to how Gomar
acquired the feminine spirit inside him. Later Kervochain contradicts his
own theory, the "woman" was not the mere side effect of a softer South,
as she possessed an aristocratic speech that Gomar did not, "But it was –
I watched and heard closely, closely – a brilliant courtly woman who
invested him, a spirit –".[46] Within one week of his victory over Pool,
Gomar dies, a car accidentally swerves into him as he walked the
perimeter of the golf course at the country club – perhaps peering into a
world where he would never belong. Harris and his mother are left with

[40] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 379.
[41] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 379.
[42] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 379.
[43] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 379.
[44] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 381.
[45] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 381.
[46] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 381.

plenty of money and property, debt-free, which will become the source of the boy's drug addiction in the coming years.

If in "Nicodemus Bluff," Garland Pool inhabits the position of a rapacious Major de Spain, and the ghost of Nicodemus serves as his most subservient "squire" Ash, with little Harris as the narrator Ike observing and commenting on the whole spectrum of the social hierarchy, it could be argued that Gomar is the Boon Hoganback of the story. In "The Bear," Boon is yet another mixed-race "squire," part black, part Native-American, who often sleeps like an animal with the hunting dogs and like Gomar is viewed to be something of an incompetent, at least with a pistol or rifle. But it is he, not Ike, nor one of the other "knights" of the story, that fells Old Ben. He does so with only a hunting knife, with which Faulkner transforms him into a kind of Nordic berserker, jumping on the bear's back and cutting its throat in the woods. Gomar is similarly transformed by the "courtly woman" and thus defeats Pool inside the lodge. In "The Bear," we last see Boon, years after he has slain Old Ben, sitting under a solitary tree, the only tree left whole by the lumber company for the purpose of shade. It is the last remaining vestige of the "big wood," and it is covered with a maelstrom of squirrels, the only game left from the superabundance of the primeval, mythic Mississippi forest. Boon is hammering the breech and barrel of his smashed gun together with the "frantic abandon of a madman" and he obsessively repeats, "Don't touch them! Don't touch a one of them! They're mine!"[47] Hannah seems to echo this refrain, when in a similarly mad "frantic abandon" Gomar repeats, "It's all mine. Free and clear. I won it! I won it!" and then directly to Harris, "I won! I won!"[48] What has been won, what is possessed? It is the inheritance, whether it be Ike's plantation or Harris's American-dream style suburban home, that neither narrator will be able to enjoy with pride, and both will reject in their own fashion.

If Fred Hobson laments Hannah to be lacking Faulkner's "tragic sense" and devoid of his "high seriousness and social consciousness,"

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[47] Faulkner, "The Bear," *Go Down, Moses*, 331.
[48] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 379.

and more over not the "*moralist*"[49] that Faulkner often is, then Faulkner scholar Noel Polk sees this as a strength in Hannah. Polk argues that from the start of Hannah's career he has attacked the arch seriousness of old guard modernism, specifically Faulkner, "[f]or example in his first novel *Geronimo Rex* (1972), wherein his young more or less autobiographical hero shoots and kills a neighbor's peacock – a peacock not incidentally named Bayard – thereby scoring a palpable hit not just on Flannery O'Connor but also on William Faulkner."[50] Polk writes "Hannah is thus out to destroy the legends and the legending, to free the spirit of illusion at whatever cost to peace and order."[51] Unlike "Faulkner and Warren" who revere the past, Hannah "treats history . . . pretty much with the back of his hand" and Faulkner right along with it.[52]

"Nicodemus Bluff" may come the closest to homage that Hannah has ever gotten, but at the same time it turns the whole coming-of-age story on its head, by recasting Faulkner's famous characters as drug addicts, frauds, coercive usurers, modern days slavers, and even murderers. The legend of Old Ben is dispensed with, altogether, snuffed out as surely as Bayard the peacock. The bear in Hannah's story is the "creature" that lives inside Garland Pool or perhaps the "courtly woman" that "invests" Gomar. These bugbears haunt the interior lodge, as well as the interior of the human heart, and both are vicious and vengeful. Polk more or less agrees with Hobson when he says "[t]here's no tragic vision in Hannah's fiction, though there's plenty that's awful; not even, really, a comic vision though there's plenty that's funny. His

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[49] Hobson, *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World,* 34. (Hobson's italics.)

[50] Noel Polk, "Even Mississippi: Legending in Barry Hannah's *Bats Out of Hell*," in *The (Un)Popular South: Proceedings of the Southern Studies Forum Biennial Conference*, *September 6–9, 2007, Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic*, ed. Marcel Arbeit and M. Thomas Inge (Olomouc: Palacký University Press, 2011) 139.

[51] Polk, "Even Mississippi: Legending in Barry Hannah's *Bats Out of Hell*," *The (Un)Popular South*, 145.

[52] Polk, "Even Mississippi: Legending in Barry Hannah's *Bats Out of Hell*," *The (Un)Popular South*, 145.

work is rather imbued with a profound pervasive melancholy."[53] Polk goes on to say that through Hannah's fiction, "we get access to a completely uncorralled imagination and so to a brand new southern landscape and cast of characters; we get the artistic courage of a sort I haven't seen since William Faulkner, the courage to risk misunderstanding and failure."[54]

At this, the highest of all compliments from a scholar who dedicated his career to Faulkner, we may still feel Hannah wince. In 2003, taking place on the grounds of Rowan Oak, Faulkner's house, now turned museum/tourist attraction by the University of Mississippi, speaking to the journalist Shawn Badgley, Hannah uttered a blasphemous tirade concerning his relationship with Faulkner, telling Badgley, "I'm doing this because you didn't ask me the same dumb question that everybody asks me, thank God. 'What's it like writing in Faulkner's shadow? Well fuck it, fuck Faulkner's shadow. It's not a shadow, anyway, it's a goddamned ghost. And it is a good town for a ghost. He scared me when I was younger, maybe, but not anymore."[55] When the author Wells Towers (also at Rowan Oak) asked Hannah about Faulkner in the last year of his life, 2010, Hannah responded more calmly, with something like resignation, "When I first came here, I just heard Faulkner, Faulkner, Faulkner. His kinfolk and all of it – I was just bored by it. But then I grew to like to have these ghosts around."[56] If "Nicodemus Bluff" is indeed a dark mirror held up to "The Bear," it is logical that Hannah might choose to haunt the hunting lodge that is shared by both "The Bear" and "Nicodemus Bluff" via Poe, his other admitted childhood influence, just as Hannah himself has described feeling haunted by Faulkner while living in Oxford, Mississippi.

The ending of "Nicodemus Bluff" as Polk might predict, is neither tragic nor comic; Harris has taken up jogging and works at an

[53] Polk, "Even Mississippi: Legending in Barry Hannah's *Bats Out of Hell*," *The (Un)Popular South*, 150.

[54] Polk, "Even Mississippi: Legending in Barry Hannah's *Bats Out of Hell*," *The (Un)Popular South*, 150–151.

[55] Shawn Badgley, "Southern Destroyer," in *Conversations with Barry Hannah*, ed. James G. Thomas, Jr. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2016), 195.

[56] Wells Tower, "Barry Hannah in Conversation with Wells Tower," in *Conversations with Barry Hannah*, 228.

animal shelter to help with his recovery. As he jogs, he passes an old woman sitting on a porch that used to be one of his teachers. At first glance, Harris can remember nothing about her. He takes another lap and when he passes the porch again, he envisions the "crone" with a "smoother face," "a happy smile, instructing the young cheerfully and with love."[57] Harris concludes his tale, "Now there is something for tomorrow. What are women like? What is time like? Most people, you might notice, walk around as if they are needed somewhere, like the animals out in the shelter need me. I want to look into this."[58] Harris we can presume has missed out a lot in life, including women – maybe especially women.

Because of the awful "courtly woman" that invested his father Harris has always been alone, but as Harris runs toward the future, he is curious, if not determined, to explore what was once robbed of him in the hunting lodge, not only his American-dream patrimony (the house, the cars, the fishing boat) but even the possibility of connection with members of the opposite sex.

If Faulkner created "The Bear" as a mythic world completely devoid of women, then one of Hannah's corrections to that masculine "legending," is to bring the feminine (first embodied as a demonic intruder, then as something cheerful and loving) to his own fictional world, a fiction that has often been criticized as being hostile to women with misogynistic humor and pervasive violence. "Nicodemus Bluff" is the final story in *Bats Out of Hell*, and thus, the final word of the book; Hannah is facing his ghosts, while at the same time promising to venture into territory that is inhabited not only by the "frightened and frightening"[59] as Hobson has described his early fictions, but into a fictive world that can also instruct "cheerfully and with love" without falling into cliché or "legending".

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[57] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 382.
[58] Hobson, *The Southern Writer in the Postmodern World*, 34.
[59] Hannah, "Nicodemus Bluff," *Bats Out of Hell*, 382.

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# *THE SELLOUT*: REACTIONARY PANOPTICISM IN PAUL BEATTY'S NOVEL

## *Jakub Ženíšek*

ABSTRACT: The paper deals with the topic of panoptical anxiety as thematically rendered by Paul Beatty in *The Sellout*. This critically acclaimed novel ironically and ostentatiously feeds off the self-vigilant communal reflex that has been a steady presence in African American literature, given that black writers from the late 18$^{th}$ through the mid-20$^{th}$ century communicated primarily to a presumed white readership. The ubiquitous panopticism thematized by Beatty's novel is used to fuel a fragmentary polemic with Kenneth E. Warren's contention that African American literature arose in response to specific historical circumstances and, with these historical realities no longer present, it has lost its fundamental *raison d'etre* as a distinctly demarcated phenomenon.

KEYWORDS: panopticism, Paul Beatty, The Sellout, Michel Foucault, African American literature

## INTRODUCTION

*The Sellout* is the fourth and latest novel by African American novelist Paul Beatty, which happened to be the first American novel to win the Man Booker prize in 2016. Given its relative prominence in the past five years, the novel has garnered considerable scholarly attention. Perhaps the most obvious point of contention revolves around its elementary diagnostics. The novel can certainly be read as a noteworthy installment of caustic African American literary satire in the vein of George Schuyler's *Black No More*. However, Beatty seems rather ambivalent about this characterization, as the label "satirist" may gloss over the real mimeticism in *The Sellout* and some of his earlier novels. He has occasionally intimated that what seems like a hyperbolical satire may in fact be a straightforward rendition of reality.[1]

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[1] Paul Beatty, "Paul Beatty on 'The Sellout', with Lola Okolosie," London Review Bookshop, December 4, 2019,

The novel flaunts an array of allusions, some predicated on the insider knowledge of the reference frame of African American and Hispanic Angelenos. Contrasted to this, the theme of panoptical inducement towards communal self-vigilance is a theme that resonates across cultures. Analyzing the panoptical communal neurosis in Beatty's novel amounts to a blinkered reading, which willfully ignores many other facets of Beatty's *tour de force* and somewhat myopically combs the novel for panoptical situations. This cherry-picking is a deliberate effort to find a singular thematic linchpin by way of trimming down the "improbably multitudinous" appeal of the novel, to use a phrase which Leland Cheuk uses for Beatty's main characters.[2] That is why the paper first seeks to clarify what is meant by panoptical thinking, both as a generic concept and as a descriptive simile applicable to the African American community and its literary endeavors. After introducing this theoretical prism, we proceed to sum up the central conceit of Paul Beatty's novel and then look at various situations therein which lend themselves to panoptical readings. Frequently, it seems sufficient to briefly characterize the given situation to make its panopticism immediately apparent. In closing, the paper draws attention to the fact that some of the motifs revisited in *The Sellout* can be found in Beatty's previous works of fiction, and experimentally pitches *The Sellout* as yet another imaginative response to Kenneth E. Warren's contention that African American literature as a distinctly demarcated cultural category has outlived its usefulness, thereby reiterating George Blaustein's analysis of Beatty's earlier novels.

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https://shows.acast.com/londonreviewbookshoppodcasts/episodes/paulbeattyandlolaokolosie;

https://www.londonreviewbookshop.co.uk/podcasts-video/video/paul-beatty-on-the-sellout-with-lola-okolosie.

[2] Leland Cheuk, "Review," *Prairie Schooner* 90, (2016): 174.

## 1. THE PANOPTICON AS A PHYSICAL ENTITY AND AS INTELLECTUAL VIGILANTISM

Michel Foucault abstracted his panopticon from Jeremy Bentham's late eighteenth-century (unrealized) concept of a circular prison system whose inmates, aware of the invisible monitoring gaze of the guards, reflexively keep watch over each other. Jeremy Bentham conceived this prison as a physical entity, yet it yields itself to Foucauldian abstraction quite easily, as it was clearly born out of the neoclassical conviction that a rectifying communal gaze curbs people's passions and keeps them from giving in to their brutish natures.

This is also the basic line of argument pursued by Michel Foucault in his seminal work *Discipline and Punish* (1975), where the physical prison concept is re-fashioned as a metaphor or metonymy. However, prior to drawing his own figurative conclusions, Foucault first scrutinizes the Benthamian panopticon in its original setting, making a serious inquiry into the origins and ideological underpinnings of 18th through 19th century European thinking on ways to police the unruly population, whose insurgency was partly due to the adverse effect of the industrial revolution, as epitomized, for example, by the Luddite movement.[3]

After that initial inquiry, Foucault extrapolates the "visibility is a trap"[4] motto away from its original context (a self-surveillance prison system) and deploys it perhaps most canonically as a metaphor for the manner in which widespread public and ideological assumptions shape the intellectual discourse of their time, in which case the semantics of the original maxim should be updated to "(in)visibility is a trap," denoting Foucault's contention that the venues of intellectual discourse are pre-selected, i.e. unwelcome topics are rendered invisible in advance.

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[3] Charles F. Bahmueller, *The National Charity Company: Jeremy Bentham's Silent Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981) 86–88, 104–113.

[4] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 198.

The Foucauldian panoptical reflex can be used across a wide range of social and literary scenarios. Generally speaking, panoptical paranoia may be regarded as a legitimate preemptive stance by any underprivileged or maligned group as a response to the fact that, as Foucault points out, "all the authorities exercising individual control function according to a double mode; that of binary division and branding."[5] That is also why the principle seems applicable to the historical development of the African American community and its literary production.

## 2. THE PANOPTICON AND ITS BEARINGS ON AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

The term *panopticon* as employed within this paper is meant as an analogy of the ubiquitous white gaze as a formative influence that tends to create a defensive knee-jerk reflex within the African American community. In a historical perspective, it can be argued that the normative self-disciplining gaze has typically been internalized by the African American middle class, whose values and anxieties align with mainstream American values by means of (real or imagined) assimilationism and gentrification. In the early development stage of postbellum America, this middle-class segment dominated the African American literary output. It is also easy to surmise that virtually all literature written by African Americans from the late 18th through the early 20th century communicated primarily with a presumed white readership. What further exacerbates this panopticism vis-à-vis African American literary production is the tendency on the part of the white readership to read black fiction as sociology, presumably due to the "relative paucity of an intellectual archive through which to understand" the black race in the 19th and early 20th century, as hypothesized by Kenneth E. Warren.[6] This effectively meant that novelistic creations were overtly experienced as rare mimetic entry points to the realities of

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[5] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 199.
[6] Kenneth W. Warren, "The End(s) of African American Studies," *American Literary History* 12, 3 (2000): 644.

the African American community. The tendency to perceive imaginative literature as a surrogate for a virtually nonexistent sociology pertaining to the black community was endorsed by influential classics such as Robert Park's "Negro Race Consciousness as Reflected in Race Literature" (1923) and William T. Fontaine's "The Mind and Thought of the Negro of the United States as Revealed in Imaginative Literature" (1942). This relative pedestalization of black poetry, drama and fiction, Warren concludes, can therefore be described as "an attempt fill the void" and "an unfortunate result of the foreclosing of other avenues for black self-realization in politics and other disciplines."[7] Cornel West offers a complementary explanation, arguing that the "puritanical Protestantism of black religion has not been conducive to the production of pictures," and instead endorsed the "belief in the power of the word, in literate acumen." As a result of this, he surmises that "writers are sometimes given too much status and become 'spokespeople' for the race," a tendency which he finds deplorable.[8] With this uneasy awareness that white readers might conflate black fiction with sociology, African American intellectuals repeatedly exhorted African American novelists and poets to harness the power of their art for the purposes of black social uplift. "I do not care a damn for any art that is not used for propaganda," W.E.B. Du Bois famously exhorted his fellow African American writers in the mid-1920s.[9]

One of the most recent and poignant echoes of these panoptical overtones in the African American communal psyche and the arts is Kenneth W. Warren's suggestion that African American literature as a distinct cultural phenomenon has come to an end, given that it "was a political reality shaped by disfranchisement in which the publication of a poem, whatever its subject matter might be, could plausibly be taken as speaking to and for "the race" as a whole as it struggled against constitutionally sanctioned racial segregation." Since this segregationist reality was legislatively vanquished in the 1960s, the central premise

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[7] Warren, "The End(s) of African American Studies," 644.

[8] Anders Stephanson, "Interview with Cornel West," in *Universal Abandon? The Politics of Postmodernism*, ed. Andrew Ross (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 284.

[9] W.E.B. Du Bois, "Criteria for Negro Art," *The Crisis* 32 (October 1926): 296.

that had midwifed black American literature does not seem to hold up any longer, Warren concludes.[10]

Due to his recent literary renown and the topics of his four novels, even Paul Beatty has occasionally had to fend off suggestions that he to some degree speaks for his race.[11] It can also be argued that this "spokesmanship" for the race as an overt theme is given a considerable attention in his first novel, *The White Boy Shuffle* (1994).


## 3. PANOPTICAL NEUROSIS IN *THE SELLOUT*

It can be summarily argued that Paul Beatty's most acclaimed novel *The Sellout* (2016) leans towards both Foucault's and Bentham's panopticons. In a deft proleptic feat of delayed delivery, the novel opens with the main character lighting up a reefer while being tried at the US Supreme Court for "a crime so heinous" that getting arraigned "for possession of marijuana on federal property would be like charging Hitler with loitering,"[12] as the main character puts it. After twenty pages it finally transpires that the main character, a farming member of an urban agrarian community in LA county, is facing charges because he has resuscitated slavery and racial segregation.

Mr. Me, aka "the Sellout", lives in Dickens, a predominantly African American and Latino city which has recently been wiped off the official map after "a blatant conspiracy by the surrounding, increasingly affluent, two-car-garage communities." In an orchestrated act of geographic obliteration, the road signs demarcating the city of Dickens, the erstwhile unofficial world capital of crime, were removed at the behest of these gentrified communities that wished to keep "their property values up and blood pressures down" (*S*, 57). This is accompanied by the shutting down of the police and fire stations and

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[10] Kenneth W. Warren, "On 'What Was African American Literature?'" *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 55, 4 (2010): 742.

[11] Stephen Sackur and Paul Beatty, "HardTalk, Paul Beatty, Author," BBC News Channel, January 4, 2017, video, 24:34, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ycuW55kI1-o.

[12] Paul Beatty, *The Sellout* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2016), 7. (Hereafter cited in text as "*S*.")

other administrative facilities. The official obliteration seems to be accepted with indifference or even relief by many Dickensians, given its criminal stigma. One of the few exceptions is Hominy Jenkins, a local African American celebrity who starred in the Little Rascal movies, shot prior to the 1960s. With the city of Dickens officially ceasing to exist, Hominy has been deprived of the steady influx of nostalgic admirers coming from afar to see the last surviving star of their favorite childhood film. The glaring and overstated irony resides in the fact that Hominy's performance in these movie shorts consisted exclusively of getting accidentally electrocuted or covered in flour, cream, paint and other white substances. i.e., voluntarily subjecting himself to demeaning treatment with obnoxious racist overtones. The oxymoronic tension that ensues from Hominy's ill-earned fame makes him an absurdly overblown example of internalized racialist self-deprecation, which earns him the epithet of "race reactionary" from the narrator (*S*, 169). Finding it hard to bear his sudden irrelevance, Hominy tries to commit suicide, staged as an act of self-lynching, from which he is saved by the narrator, thus becoming his personal liability. On the perverse whim of his masochistic nostalgia for the good old (obnoxiously racist) days when he felt relevant, Hominy coaxes the narrator into becoming a nominal slave-owner, with Hominy Jenkins being his only slave, thereby presumably exercising his freedom to be enslaved, to use his own rationale.

To humor his slave, the narrator creates a theme park replica of a segregated bus driven by his love interest. As a birthday present for Hominy, the narrator replaces the standard sign which says, "PRIORITY SEATING FOR SENIORS AND DISABLED" with a sinister Jim Crow update which demands "PRIORITY SEATING FOR SENIORS, DISABLED AND WHITES" (*S*, 128). Eventually, a "rare white lioness" does board the bus and makes Hominy vacate his seat. She is actually a struggling actress whom the narrator pays out of his own pocket as a birthday present for Hominy (*S*, 131).

This reenactment of segregated public transportation eventually turns into a party, as a result of which the narrator and his accomplices forget to dismantle the "whites only" signs. To the narrator's astonishment, the temporally extended prank improves the behavior of the passengers, as the bus becomes "the safest place in the city" to the

point that children go there to do their homework. The local school principal furnishes an explanation.

> It's the signs. People grouse at first, but the racism [m]akes them realize how far we've come and, more important, how far we have to go. On that bus, it's like the specter of segregation has brought Dickens together. (*S*, 163)

Surreal as it may be, the scenario can be aligned with the Benthamian as well as the Foucauldian panopticon. From the way the story is pitched, there is virtually no law enforcement in Dickens, with the local municipality having been dismantled in the process of wiping Dickens off the map. Nevertheless, if we are to believe the mimetic veracity of the situation, this phantomic specter of white-on-black segregation has been enough to make the passengers mind their manners. In addition to the abstract reminder of segregation times (the Foucauldian panopticon), the bus also happens to be a real, secluded space where the latently coercive notion of communal vigilantism is palpably introduced by the signs (Benthamian panopticon).

Inspired and emboldened, the narrator uses a similar panoptical motivation for the local primary school, run by a friend of his would-be girlfriend. He creates the illusion that a prestigious white school, Wheaton Academy, is going to be built in the vicinity of the local school. The ostentatiously lily-white implant in a predominantly African American and Hispanic (Mexican) neighborhood was just a two-dimensional phantom created by the narrator, who had blown up an artist's rendition of another school and attached it to a gate with a chain lock (*S*, 192). This segregationist hint does seem to galvanize the local pupils and their parents. Perhaps more importantly, the infamy of these segregationist phantoms, plus the by now notorious enslavement of Hominy, puts the city of Dickens back on the US map. This geographic reemergence is eventually confirmed by a weather report which inconspicuously lists the temperatures recorded in Dickens that morning, alongside all the other principalities of LA County (*S*, 284).

This eclectic synopsis alone strongly insinuates panopticism as a leitmotif of Beatty's novel. Let us now examine several other passages with panoptical overtones. A very distinct thematic appropriation of preemptive panopticism is the opening sequence of the novel.

> This may be hard to believe, coming from a black man, but I've never stolen anything. Never cheated on my taxes or at cards. . . . I've never burgled a house. Held up a liquor store. Never boarded a crowded bus or subway car, pulled out my gigantic penis and masturbated to satisfaction with a perverted, yet somehow crestfallen look on my face. But here I am, in the cavernous chambers of the Supreme Court of the United States of America. (*S*, 3)

The opening tirade immediately lends itself to panoptical interpretations. The narrator seems to find it necessary (and/or amusing) to preemptively distance himself from several racist stereotypes, namely those of the black criminal delinquent and an oversexed "black rapist bogeyman." The narrator's mockery of the criminal propensity preconception becomes painfully obvious by the time we have reached the "boarding a crowded bus" part, yet it can be argued that it is the deliberately neutralizing "crestfallen" take on the rapist bogeyman trope which crowns the panoptical resonance.

The collective panoptical psyche induced by the white gaze is a recurrent theme in the protracted courtroom scene. A "teacher poet" wearing a "Toni Morrison signature model pashmina shawl" finds the (as yet unrevealed) reactionary deeds of our narrator so repulsive that she slaps him right in the courtroom, because, the narrator presumes, she is infuriated that he does not seem to feel guilty and she has to endure "the embarrassment of sharing [his] blackness" (*S,* 16-17). This nudges the narrator into an introspective inner monologue, during which we learn that he is "no longer party to that collective guilt," having realized that "the only time black people don't feel guilty is when we've actually done something wrong, because that relieves us of the cognitive dissonance of being black and innocent." Reflexively aware that he is dragging his race into ill-repute, as the panoptical wisdom suggests, and feeling "uncomfortable with being so comfortable," the narrator "makes one last attempt at being at one with [his] people" by burying his face in the crook of his arm and summoning, in his mind's eye, "scratchy archival footage of the civil rights struggle" (*S*, 18) in order to summon emotions that would fit the occasion. And yet, he cannot maintain the focus and the images do not foster the reverence he sought. "If I am

indeed moving backward and dragging all of black America down with me, I couldn't care less," the narrator muses. After all, "the only tangible benefit to come out of the civil rights movement is that black people aren't as afraid of dogs as they used to be," he concludes irreverently (*S*, 19).

The panoptical neurosis that undergirds the entire inner monologue seems fairly self-explanatory, and even the omnipresent sarcasm does not blunt its poignancy. The supreme paradox of *The Sellout* resides in the fact that virtually all the African American characters who judge the narrator's segregationist practices (which overtly employ the Caucasian panoptical phantom), are themselves under the panoptical spell of the ubiquitous white gaze, which induces their collective embarrassment on behalf of the narrator.

Instead of dwelling on the many other episodic panopticisms of the courtroom scene, let us instead revisit the crowning example of panoptical neurosis invoked and (presumably) satirized in the novel - the Wheaton Academy simulacrum built by the narrator by way of snapping the local school kids into a more competitive mindset. The local school principal, Charisma, presumably understood "the colored person's desire for the domineering white presence," represented by the Wheaton Academy.

> Because she knew that even in these times of racial equality, when someone whiter than us, richer than us, blacker than us, Chineser than us, better than us, whatever than us, comes around throwing their equality in our faces, it brings out our need to impress. . . . I did sympathize with . . . Charisma's need for an on-call Caucasian panopticon. (*S*, 208–209)

This is the one instance in the novel where the narrator actually uses the word "panopticon", thereby explicitly punctuating a leitmotif that has implicitly permeated the entire narrative.

The hermeneutics of Beatty's novel makes it slightly easier for us to digest this notion of a segregationist panopticon as a performance booster, because the clinching point is actually foreshadowed by the narrator's musings over the "reenergizing codes" of various ethnic groups, which he shares with us in the introductory part of the novel.

> Every race has a motto. Don't believe me? You know that dark-haired guy in human resources? The one who acts white, talks white, but doesn't quite look right? Go up to him. Ask him why the Mexican goalkeepers play so recklessly [.] Prod him. Rub the back of his flat *indio* skull and see if he doesn't turn around with the *pronunciamento ¡Por la Raza–todo! ¡Fuera de La Raza–nada!* (For the race, everything! Outside the race, nothing!). (*S,* 10–11)

Most of the events of the novel are sandwiched between the last two quoted passages, which appear on pages 10 and 209, respectively. It can therefore be argued that the story comes full circle in presenting a flippant and irreverent argument that flies in the face of raceless commonality in its various utopian reincarnations ("utopia" being Beatty's own word).

## 4. A RIPOSTE TO THE "END OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE" ARGUMENT

In his 2019 interview with Lola Okolosie, Beatty expresses his bewilderment when people ask him whether he can envision some universal panacea to race-related problems. He wonders what that utopia should look like, exactly, adding that this raceless fantasy would probably be imagined very differently by different people.[13] Though likely ironic and deliberately overblown, *The Sellout* insistently foregrounds regressive racialism as an organizing principle with some merit to it. This negation of the progressive developmental trajectory in the historical plight of African Americans is a theme that echoes Beatty's previous novels. In his cursory reading of *The White Boy Shuffle* and thorough analysis of *Slumberland* (2008), George Blaustein

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[13] Paul Beatty, "Paul Beatty on 'The Sellout', with Lola Okolosie," London Review Bookshop, December 4, 2019, video, https://shows.acast.com/londonreviewbookshoppodcasts/episodes/paulbeattyandlolaokolosiehttps://www.londonreviewbookshop.co.uk/podcasts-video/video/paul-beatty-on-the-sellout-with-lola-okolosie.

points out that Beatty's earlier work can be readily perceived as an anticipation of and a riposte to Warren's claim that African American literature as a distinctly identifiable cultural phenomenon came into existence largely as a creative response to the legal and customary impositions of a segregationist system and, after the removal of the Jim Crow laws, African American fiction has inevitably leaned towards anachronistic narratives. This does not just extend to the topics found in black fiction, but also to recognizably black tropes and literary vernacular codified in writing, as all of these have arguably been coaxed by the constraints and distortions of slavery and Jim Crow. In other words, the energy and thematic reservoir of late 20th and 21st century African American literature is largely a creative holdover from a very twisted period in the past. Blaustein consequently argues that even the best black art may still result from that same creative impetus, yet it "rejects the familiar progressive moral arc (from slavery to freedom, from Jim Crow to Civil Rights)."[14] African American postmodernists like Ishmael Reed, Charles Johnson and Paul Beatty deliberately destabilize this trajectory, e.g., by deconstructing the binary opposition of slavery versus freedom. As Blaustein puts it, "nominal freedom might lead to other forms of servitude" while "nominal bondage might carry with it a considerable power."[15]

Such an "enabling burden,"[16] whose weight forges an idiosyncratic community, is imaginatively recreated in Beatty's novel *Slumberland*, Blaustein argues. The novel overtly juxtaposes jazz (an art form whose idiosyncrasies and energy were fermented by the racial oppression in the US) and East Germany (whose idiosyncrasies were fermented while being walled-off from the presumably free western world and subjected to the oppressive Communist regime). In Blaustein's reading, the novel can be thus understood as a partial nod to Warren's claim about the noble "enabling burden" whose origins may gradually become irrelevant and anachronistic in the absence of the oppressor. On the other hand, the relativism of the juxtaposition (not to

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[14] George Blaustein, "Flight to Germany: Paul Beatty, the Color Line, and the Berlin Wall," *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 55, 4 (2010): 728.

[15] Blaustein, "Flight to Germany," 727–728.

[16] Blaustein, "Flight to Germany," 732.

mention its postmodern eclecticism) is playful and irreverent enough to earn Beatty the "best black art" label for jazzing up traditional African American tropes.

The scope of Blaustein's analysis does not extend beyond the publishing of *Slumberland* in 2008, yet *The Sellout* can be seen as the most recent variation on the theme. The arguable leitmotif of the *The Sellout* is the re-erection of segregational boundaries and overtly racist hierarchies, albeit as a panoptical phantom. This is akin to the resuscitation of historical racial travesties that we encounter in Beatty's earlier novels. When Hominy Jenkins defends his freedom to be enslaved, Beatty is revisiting a motif from his first novel, *The White Boy Shuffle* (1996), where an early ancestor of the main protagonist, dancer and choreographer Swen Kaufman, decides to move to slaveholding North Carolina in order to reinvigorate his artistry by exposure to slave work songs, and perhaps to choreograph "a hand dance based on the dexterity needed to remove cotton balls cleanly from the stem."[17] Indeed, the perverse freedom to choose slavery over freedom, paired with Hominy's suicide attempt, is also evocative of Gunnar Kaufman, the protagonist of *The White Boy Shuffle*, who inadvertently triggers a suicidal spree among his fellow African Americans. Another predecessor of the main character, Wolfgang Kaufmann, works for the "Department of Visual Segregation" in Jim Crow Tennessee as a stencil artist who paints the segregation signs,[18] which allusively resonates with the PRIORITY SEATING FOR WHITES signs fashioned in *The Sellout* (and by "the Sellout").

It is easy to agree with Blaustein's contention that Beatty's earlier novels creatively engage with (and ironically destabilize) the notion of the structural demise of African American literature as a coherent cultural phenomenon. It is also easy to see how *The Sellout* pushes the envelope even further. The developmental thematic trajectory across the referenced triplet of Beatty's novels can be eclectically summed up as a crescendo. The choreographer in *The White Boy Shuffle* celebrates the regenerative cultural spinoff of a degenerate social system (slavery). *Slumberland* in part suggests that cultural

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[17] Paul Beatty. *The White Boy Shuffle* (New York: Picador, 1997), 14.
[18] Beatty, *White Boy Shuffle*, 19.

separation (Jim Crow or the Berlin Wall) can produce cultural artifacts of value whose artistic merits transcend their oppressive origins. *The Sellout* arguably carries this polemic to a more extreme form, as Mr. Me's anachronistic actions seem to elevate even the non-artistic merits of a communal self-policing born out of an irredeemable racist system, thereby giving the "enabling burden" a more vicious spin.

In her journal article published in fall 2016 (thereby coinciding with the publishing process of *The Sellout*), Lisa Guerrero draws attention to the African American postmodern conundrum in the aftermath of Barack Obama's election. "If Americans had seen it fit to elect a black man to run the country," she surmises, "then it must logically follow that the country was now beyond race." The emblematic promise of Barack Obama in the Oval Office presumably ushered in the era of racial atonement, wherein "the nation no longer needed to be concerned with bearing responsibility for its racial pasts, its racial present, or racial presence at all."[19] And yet this presumably "post-racial age" was immediately followed by the overtly racist lexicon that entered the mainstream public discourse in an unprecedented manner during the Trump administration, punctuated by a surge in everyday racism, which eventually culminated in the reciprocal surge of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Nevertheless, Guerrero finds even the pre-Trump "colorblind racism"[20] very challenging, as she concludes that black satirists confronting "a sociopolitical landscape eager to erase the profundity of race" need to resort to more resourceful artistic strategies in order to "give shape to a racialized black subject who has been denied legitimacy in this new era."[21] The idea of an on-call resuscitation of segregated schooling and public transport is absurd, even within a fictitious universe, so absurdist hyperbole may indeed be one of the writerly strategies that Guerrero envisions. Beatty clearly does not

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[19] Lisa Guerrero, "Can I Live? Contemporary Black Satire and the State of Postmodern Double Consciousness," *Studies in American Humor* 2, 2 (2016): 268.
[20] Guerrero, "Can I Live?," 269.
[21] Guerrero, "Can I Live?," 270.

consider an absurdist aesthetic to be an end-in-itself.[22] To reduce a topic or argument *ad absurdum* is a legitimate defamiliarizing strategy, useful for what it may accomplish in the face of racialist hierarchies which are in themselves absurd. What was good enough for George Schuyler in the early 1930s seems good enough for Paul Beatty almost a century later, in postmodern garb that rises to the occasion.

Beatty himself does not seem to subscribe to Warren's premise of the end of African American literature as a distinct and finite historically induced phenomenon. Several months into Donald Trump's presidential campaign, he noted that the notion of a post-racial United States was most typically invoked in reference to black art, not actual reality on the ground, yet he himself did not even endorse the notion of "post-racial post- Civil-Rights art."[23]

In response to Kenneth E. Warren's thesis about the structural end of African American literature, Walter Benn Michaels argues that black writing of the Jim Crow period itself was "oriented toward the goal of a future in which Jim Crow would be overcome" while more recent African American literary output is "occasionally nostalgic for the racial solidarity achieved during (actually enforced by) segregation itself, and usually committed to remembering the abuses of the past as the key to understanding and overcoming those of the present."[24] And this nostalgia may have indeed fueled the appeal of Beatty's last novel and made readers gloss over its scandalous central premise. If we accept Warren's finite trajectory of the African American literary narrative whose fundamental goal was the dissolution of racial segregation, then Paul Beatty's last and most critically acclaimed novel can be read as a deliberately far-fetched reactionary riposte to that eschatological claim.

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[22] In his 2000 interview with Ron Shavers, Beatty insists that absurdity can sometimes be "very authentic". See Rone Shavers and Paul Beatty, "Paul Beatty," *BOMB* 72 (2000): 69.

[23] Tom Donkin and Paul Beatty, "BBC interview with Paul Beatty, author of *The Sellout*," October 24, 2016, video, 6:13, https://www.youtube.com /watch?v=rlDwkfIYUgc.

[24] Walter Benn Michaels, "What Was African American Literature? A Symposium," Los Angeles Review of Books, June 13, 2011, https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/what-was-african-american-literature-a-symposium/.

The recent canonicity of *The Sellout*, and the similarly pedestalized novels by Colson Whitehead and others, seem to fly in the face of the notion that African American literature as a historically induced cultural phenomenon has ceased to be a relevant category of identification and self-identification. *The Sellout*, along with Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (2016), can be seen as a very recent "reenergizing of codes" whose instant canonicity both endorses and belies Warren's argument.

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# THE ETHICS OF GOING NORTH: MORAL GEOGRAPHY IN LOUIS MACNEICE AND WYSTAN HUGH AUDEN'S *LETTERS FROM ICELAND*

## *Ladislav Vít*

ABSTRACT: Louis MacNeice and Wystan Hugh Auden travelled to Iceland in the summer of 1936. This paper features an analysis of their *Letters from Iceland* (1937), one of the most innovative and contentious travel books of the interwar period, in terms of the popularity of travelling and travel writing between the wars. I argue that Louis MacNeice and Wystan Hugh Auden's portrayal of Iceland, its culture, and landscape can be read as a product of the poets' conscious "tactic of resistance" to the prevalent fascination of the 1930s public and intelligentsia with the "open-air" ethos and travelling south. Besides identifying mutual analogies in the authors' poetic treatment of Iceland, I also place Auden and MacNeice's sense of the island within the broader context of their "moral geography," views on insularity, and approach to escapism.

KEYWORDS: Louis MacNeice, Wystan Hugh Auden, Iceland, North, place, insularity, islandness

## 1. THE "OPEN-AIR ETHOS" AND THE "SOUTHERN GAZE"

Among the profound and complex consequences of the 1930s economic crisis, Britain saw an unprecedented growth of mobility and expansion of leisure culture spurred by the desire shared across classes to find at least a temporary relief from the political and economic malaise. MacNeice provides an authentic commentary on the pervasive presence of the travel urge and tourist industry in his play *Out of the Picture* (1937), bidding the audience to "Look at these tourist agencies where money will buy you distance, / Miles and miles of distance for your money."[1] The Holiday with Pay Act was passed in 1938 and local as well as national governmental institutions invested into infrastructure to make inland and coastal regions more accessible and enticing.

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[1] Qtd. in Valentine Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 349.

Moreover, interwar social tourism policy empowered lower social ranks hitherto excluded from tourist activities,[2] and encouraged their mobility through subsidized public transport. There were the four main rail operators whose revenue reflected their ability to lure the public to indulgences in leisure excursions and holidays.[3] In addition, inexpensive bicycles, charabancs, and coaches had expanded the possibilities of transport for more than 40 million passengers by 1939. The travellers also found assistance in the boom of non-profit organizations institutionalizing free-time activities and bringing diverse members of the public together for the first time. Besides the 3,500 cycling clubs, the Ramblers' Association (1935), and the Workers' Travel Association (1921−1966),[4] there was Youth Hostel Association offering accommodation to more than 80,000 lower-end-market members.

Rural spaces now proved irresistible for the urban masses. Founder of the Scout Movement Robert Baden-Powell observed in 1933 how city dwellers were able to escape to the countryside "from the depressing conditions of work in the squalid surroundings of bricks and mortar."[5] Three years later Clive Rouse began to doubt his focus in *The Old Towns of England* (1936) on urban spaces, asking "why one should write on the subject of towns at all, when every weekend sees an ever increasing rush away from them into the country."[6] The popularity of the countryside was also reflected in the public acknowledgement of the benefits of rural rides for the relaxation, acculturation and education of the public across classes.[7] The "open-air ethos"[8] also penetrated

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[2] John. K. Walton, "'Social Tourism' in Britain: History and Prospects," *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events* 5, 1 (2013): 47.

[3] V. T. C. Middleton and L. J. Lickorish, *British Tourism: Remarkable Story of Growth* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2007), 2.

[4] Christine, Collette, "'Friendly Spirit, Comradeship, and Good-Natured Fun': Adventures in Socialist Internationalism," *International Review of Social History* 48, 2 (August 2003): 225−244.

[5] Robert Baden-Powell, *Lessons from the Varsity of Life* (London: C. Arthur and Pearson Ltd., 1933), 273.

[6] Quoted in John Stevenson, "The Countryside, Planning, and Civil Society in Britain, 1926−1947," in *Civil Society in British History: Ideas, Identities, Institutions*, ed. Jose Harris (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 193.

[7] Middleton and Lickorish, *British Tourism*, 5−9.

interwar political discourse. Numerous politicians such as Stanley Baldwin in "What England Means to Me" equated the countryside to identification with the nation. Prose writers also participated in promoting the association of one's familiarity with the English countryside with citizenship and Englishness. H. V. Morton in *In Search of England* (published more than twenty times between 1927 and 1937), C. H. Warren in *England is a Village* (1940) as well as Harry Batsford aligned their work with this tendency to forge what David Matless calls a "moral geography" of the English countryside.[9]

Moreover, the coastline resorts in Brighton, Blackpool, and Weymouth lured the interwar public mainly through railway posters offering sunny breaks. Naturally, the radius of travels reflected the economic situation of the participants. Besides the local coastline and the countryside, more remote destinations attracted the more affluent segments of society. As Louis MacNeice mockingly comments in *Out of the Picture*: "Schedules of the White Star Blue Star Green Star Red Star Black Star lines, / This way for the belles of Andalusia and the garlands of Tahiti / And the steam of Victoria Falls."[10] Although travelling through Africa, China, and Mexico was possible, the majority of the upper and upper-middle classes opted for the less exotic but more easily accessible southern fringes of Continental Europe. The Mediterranean proved irresistible for many interwar writers. Norman Douglas and D. H. Lawrence journeyed to Italy. Somerset Maugham bought a villa in Cap Ferrat, and Roy Campbell lived for a while in Toledo. Cyril Connolly, Evelyn Waugh, and Anthony Powell chose Toulon and Sainte Maxime, while Rex Warner travelled to Cairo and Wyndham Lewis to Morocco. In 1926 Robert Graves settled in Deià, Mallorca, and in March 1935 Lawrence Durrell and his wife moved to Corfu. While some of these journeys to southern European and other "exotic" destinations were brief sojourns, others resulted in long-term and even permanent changes of residence. The fascination with the south, which

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[8] David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1998), 74.

[9] Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* 14, 169.

[10] Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, 349.

Tony Sharpe refers to as the interwar "hegemonic southern gaze,"[11] finds a reflection in the vast amount of fiction and travel writing produced at the time. Following Norman Douglas, who explored the Italian south in *South Wind* (1917), D. H. Lawrence transformed his travels into *Sea and Sardinia* (1921). In the 1930s, publishers grew willing to cover travel expenses in return for manuscripts. Hence, Evelyn Waugh related his travels through Cyprus, Egypt, Spain and other places in *Labels: A Mediterranean Journey* (1930). Despite his calls for attention to the English landscape, H. V. Morton recorded his travels through Greece, Italy and Israel in *In the Steps of St Paul* (1936).

The impulse to escape from England relates to the desire for compensation and relief from the distressing social and political situation. In his fittingly titled *Goodbye to All that* (1929), Robert Graves explains his determination to turn his back on England, "resolved never to make England [his] home again."[12] Osbert Sitwell enticed the readers of his *Escape With Me! An Oriental Sketch-Book* (1939) into an imaginative journey through Asia, especially Peking. Valentine Cunningham sums up the feeling of disenchantment as a sign "an extraordinary craving to achieve escapist interludes. Shangri-La, peaceful parentheses within the extremely unpeaceful interwar parenthesis," adding that anywhere seemed better than England for an intelligentsia "leery of patriotism" and convinced that "almost everything they cared about seemed to be done better somewhere else."[13] To them, travelling through Asia or to the sunny south offered a welcome alternative to the stifling regulatory laws and pervasive presence of poverty, unemployment and the rise of fascism. As Paul Fussell sums up, after 1918 England and its climate became almost "uninhabitable to the imaginative and sensitive" intellectuals who echoed the sentiment "I hate it here."[14] Especially the southern European periphery offered a desirable alternative through its promise

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[11] Tony Sharpe, "'The North, My World': W. H. Auden's Pennine Ways," in *The Literary North*, ed. Katharine Cockin (New York and Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 114.

[12] Robert Graves, *Goodbye to All That* (1929; London: Penguin, 1960), 279.

[13] Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, 377, 341−342.

[14] Paul Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 21, 16.

of good weather, freedom, leisurely *otium* atmosphere, and an escapist interlude – a desire for a relief that found its way even to the title of Cedric Belfrage's *Away from it All: An Escapologist's Notebook* (1937).

The infusion of the south with such positive meanings illustrates the position of contemporary cultural geographers such as Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, for whom space is "a representational strategy" inseparable from social practice.[15] The "southern gaze" of the English interwar travellers, along with the positive connotations they associated with it, are to some extent mirror reflections of the ways in which northern regions were imagined and mapped. Katharine Cockin provides a summation of the ways in which the north, especially northern England, was defined through flawed negations of the affluent and abundant South: abject, lacking, static, polluted, dehumanizing and degraded.[16] The "identification of the North with the strange and primitive," she explains, "often implies that it is culturally bereft in order to preserve for the South not simply cultural prestige and dominance but indeed the natural possession of civilization and humanity as a matter of evolutionary fact."[17]

## 2. IN THE CROW'S NEST OF THE EARTH

Clearly, the contrasting moral connotations of the North-South divide were reified by writers. It is in this context that on 9th August 1936 MacNeice joined Auden in Iceland, the European epitome of a northern region. Their *Letters from Iceland* (1937) has become one of the contentious literary products of the decade. Stacy Burton has recently examined the desire of interwar travel writers to shed off "rigid conventions," including narrative authority in a strategy to lend a veracious feel to the text. The new trend was to find new ways of representing travel experiences with an emphasis on the "subjectivity,

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[15] Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift, *Thinking Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 1.

[16] Katharine Cockin, "Locating the Literary North," in *The Literary North*, ed. Katharine Cockin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 6, 245.

[17] Cockin, "Locating the Literary North," 7−9.

fluidity and contingency of points of view."[18] MacNeice and Auden appropriated such trends through the voice of subjective correspondents, combining photos, poetry and prose into an assemblage which continues to aggravate many critics by the discontinuity and putative rawness of the text.[19]

The book can also be approached as a conscious opposition to the cultural trends privileging the south as outlined above. Michael A. Moir has recently suggested that *Letters from Iceland* was intended to be a pastoral idyll, yet it only succeeds in recording the poets' search for "freedom from worry and responsibility"[20] before "fail[ing] to find" it. Moir assumes that Auden in particular was "disappointed by his inability to truly escape from Europe, and, by extension, from responsibility,"[21] as realizing the Icelandic trip was merely "an insufficient balm for the pain that the decade had already given them."[22] Moir reads MacNeice's contributions as "more somber" pieces which provide a "counterweight"[23] to Auden's "flippant optimism," display of "optimistic escapism," and insistence on "pastoral detachment."[24] While acknowledging differences in Auden's and MacNeice's poetics, in what follows *Letters from Iceland* is approached not as a volume of "counter-songs"[25] suggesting disharmony and disunity. Rather than divergences, this paper seeks analogies in the poets' engagement with Iceland. It shows that *Letters from Iceland* can be examined through what Tony Sharpe, in connection with Auden's "northerliness" (his preference for the northern climate), calls "consistent and deeply felt tactic of

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[18] Stacy Burton, *Travel Narrative and the Ends of Modernity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 30−31.

[19] See Cunningham, *British Writers of the Thirties*, 391; Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars*, 219−20; Jeffrey Hart, "How Good Was Auden?" *New Criterion* 15, 6 (February 1997): 59−60.

[20] Michael A. Moir, Jr., "'The Pause before the Sufflé Falls': MacNeice, Auden, and the Travel Book as Idyll," *Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* 39, 2 (2016): 162−171.

[21] Moir, "'The Pause before the Sufflé Falls'," 168.

[22] Moir, "'The Pause before the Sufflé Falls'," 165.

[23] Moir, "'The Pause before the Sufflé Falls'," 169.

[24] Moir, "'The Pause before the Sufflé Falls'," 162, 169, 171.

[25] Moir, "'The Pause before the Sufflé Falls'," 162.

resistance"[26] to the prevalent literary tradition and the "hegemonic southern gaze." I will trace the overlaps in Auden's and MacNeice's poetics, but not as results of their disillusionment in Iceland stemming from their feeling that escapism and search of the rural idyll are unethical, irrelevant and inconsequential. Their sober approach to Iceland is shown to be consistent with their more general effort in the 1930s to assume a critical position *vis a vis* the interwar fascination with the open-air ethos, escapism, insularity, and the southern gaze.

In drawing the Icelandic landscape, MacNeice and Auden rely on essential attributes of the island topos and treat it as a self-enclosed otherness preserving its unmatched *genius loci*.[27] MacNeice calls Iceland a "vertiginous" "Crow's-nest of the earth,"[28] turning its remoteness and insularity into barriers that quarantine the local landscape and culture from external influences. Unlike most other Continental regions, especially in its southern parts, Iceland is a land "the Romans missed;" a place offering neither trains nor awe-inspiring architectural marvels "like Stonehenge" (*LfI* 191) as mementoes of former civilizations. Instead, in line with Cockin's assertion that the north is often imagined as "underdeveloped and distant from the main action,"[29] MacNeice reinforces the sense of Iceland's backwardness by collating a series of rural features associated with islands even today. Besides the "silicate stream," lakes "full of trout," "unpolluted hills," and glaciers (*LfI* 268−70), there are "volcanic rocks," (*LfI* 191) and basins from which "Loops of steam uncoil and coil" (*LfI* 375). In "Letter to Graham and Anne Shepard," the "scarcity of population" (*LfI*

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[26] Tony Sharpe, 'Auden's Northerliness,' in *W. H. Auden in Context*, ed. Tony Sharpe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13.

[27] See Godfrey Baldacchino, "Islands: Objects of Representation," *Geografiska Annaler* 87, 4 (2005): 247− 251; Philip Conkling, "On Islanders and Islandness," *Geographical Review* 97, 2 (2007): 191−201; Pete Hay, "A Phenomenology of Islands," *Island Studies Journal* 1, 1 (2006): 19−42.

[28] Wystan Hugh Auden and Louis MacNeice, *Letters from Iceland* (1937), in Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose and Travel Books in Prose and Verse*, *Vol. I: 1926−1938*, ed. Edward Mendelson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 195. Hereafter cited in text as *LfI*.

[29] Cockin, "Locating the Literary North," 10.

191) and absence of man-made structures in the landscape obfuscate the sense of a linear historical time, helping MacNeice fashion Iceland as an isolated, pre-modern, rural and tranquil sanctuary of constancy. Auden relies on the same pastoral attributes of the insular trope. In "Journey to Iceland," positioned right before MacNeice's "Letter to Graham and Anne Shepard," Auden lets a traveller arriving in Iceland hope for "the glitter / Of glaciers, the sterile immature mountains," "waterfalls brushing the / Rocks," and "the issue of steam from a cleft" (*LfI* 185).

Such images emphasizing purity and cleanliness provide a setting for an unhurried, unintrusive, and ponderous otium. Auden's traveller, "the lover / Of islands," is brought to Iceland by the desire to find there "natural marvels" and tranquilizing immutability in a place where "for ever" and "everywhere" "the cold fish is hunted" while "birds flicker and flaunt" (*LfI* 185). In "Eclogue from Iceland" MacNeice contributes to this therapeutic atmosphere and allows Auden and himself, disguised as Craven and Ryan, to ride horses, "explore the country" and fish. Elsewhere the travellers rejoice in the possibility of "sleep[ing] in sheepskin" by a brook that feeds a lake abounding in fish. They relish the prospect of rusticity when, like "placid brute[s]," they expect not having to shave (*LfI* 268−69). In "Epilogue" MacNeice depicts a similar experience in a retrospective manner. He recalls how Auden and himself "rode and joked and smoked," unobtrusively watching the rural scenery, which made them "happy" because no "happenings at all" (*LfI* 375) disturbed the peace. The emphasis in "Letter to Graham and Anne Shepard" on the "the necessity of the silence of the islands" (*LfI* 192) aligns with Edna Longley's observation that MacNeice was supremely attentive to sound.[30] In *Letters from Iceland*, this shows particularly when the aural qualities of his description of life in England and in the south are considered. MacNeice contrasts the tranquillity and slow-motion existence of Iceland with the hectic and throbbing world he has left behind. Iceland offers a break from an England treated as "this desert in disguise" (*LfI* 376), epitomizing the materially abundant yet excessively strenuous life in

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[30] Edna Longley, "Louis MacNeice: Aspects of his Aesthetic Theory and Practice," in *Studies on Louis MacNeice*, ed. Jacqueline Genet and Wynne Hellegouarc'h (Caen: Caen University Press, 1988), 51.

Continental Europe. Because of its austerity, the north offers a relief from the "noise, the radio or the city," "grinding gears," "cruel clock," and "newsboys' yells." In addition, the preindustrial and scarcely populated landscape shields the traveller from the "Traffic and changing lights" as well as people "Always on the move" (*LfI* 192−94) whose mechanical life consists in "Clocking in as a wage-slave." Iceland is an antidote to such pulverizing familiarity and repetitiveness dictated by the "sour alarum clock" (sic) and bills to be paid (*LfI* 269). Auden's travellers, "pale" from "too much passion of kissing," look to the Icelandic desert as a place to "feel pure" (*LfI* 185) and find a remedy for excessive bodily indulgence. In Auden's letters, distance and insularity also give Iceland the status of what MacNeice calls a "vertiginous" nest, a remote sanctuary with the potential to purify, heal, and appease as it allows the observer to slow down and to remain "far from any / Physician" as the damaged body and soul finds solace. Both poets structure their ethical stances along the North-South divide. For Auden's traveller, "North" means "'Reject!'," with Iceland offering therapeutic relief from "the abnormal day of this world" since "Europe is absent" (*LfI* 185). MacNeice treats the northern-most European country in equally privileging terms as a superior alternative, one not only to England, which is "the usual mess" (*LfI* 191), and Ireland, where "Things are bad" because "nothing stands at all" (*LfI* 270). The austere, rural and unpopulated Icelandic landscape beneath the "northern skies" is "Better" not only because its insularity and remoteness save it from the fate of the more complex, progressive and materialist parts of Europe, but also because it frees the arrivals from the strains and pressures of life in such a "desert in disguise" (*LfI* 376).

The treatment of Iceland as a rural, privileged and liberating place recalls the escapist and "open-air ethos" characterization of the interwar period. It also echoes the tone of many a travel book which emerged from what Paul Fussell calls the interwar "British Literary Diaspora"[31] of writers praising foreign destinations as therapeutic hideaways from an England both monotonous and distraught. In "Letter to Graham and Anne Shepard" MacNeice also states how he came north "gaily running away" (*LfI* 194), while in "Eclogue from Iceland" he

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[31] Fussell, *Abroad: British Literary Traveling between the Wars*, 11.

calls their trip "Our latest joyride" as he has Auden's persona Craven call themselves "exiles" who "Gad the world for comfort" (*LfI* 270−71). At the same time, MacNeice remembers Auden saying that their "ascetic guts require / Breathers from the Latin fire" (*LfI* 375). Besides Auden's life-long predilection for the northern climate and his pronounced hatred of the south, this citation gestures towards their coordinated "tactic of resistance" to the interwar fascination with the "nearer," sunnier, and more civilized south epitomized in *Letters* by "Cyprus and Madeira" (*LfI* 191).


## 3. THE NEST ON THE GROUND, THE FABULOUS COUNTRY IMPARTIALLY FAR

MacNeice and Auden's similar indulgence in the otium and pastoral motifs, however, is tongue in cheek. They create such an idyll in order to deflate it through a down-to-earth realism and sincerity, which reflects Auden's claim that every author should be "a reporting journalist."[32] One of their overlapping strategies is to dispel the romanticized notion of Iceland as a flawless insular otherness. In clear contrast to the plentiful sunshine and cuisine of the Mediterranean, they fashion the island as deficient. Iceland offers murky "grey air" and an "insufficient" diet (*LfI* 191). Besides the fish and birds, recalling an Arcadian landscape, there are in MacNeice's version of Iceland echoes of *Et in Arcadia Ego* as ravens hover above rotting whales as reminders of the "Judgement day" (*LfI* 375). Similarly, Auden dispels any romantic atmosphere as he recollects a long, tedious "scramble in gumboots" (*LfI* 345) to watch whales only to find fishermen dismembering their dead bodies, the experience of which gave him a "vision of the cold controlled ferocity of the human species" (*LfI* 288). The motif of *memento mori* reappears in the second of the two poems which make up Auden's "Letter to William Coldstream, Esq." There a local fisherman and farmer draw reassurance regarding the transgenerational sustenance of their livelihood made from the "native shore and local hill." Nevertheless, life brings "Empty catch" and

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[32] Auden, *The Complete Works*, *Vol. I*, 132.

"harvest loss," while Death mocks their wishful imaginings and advises them to "dance while [they] can" (*LfI* 350−51).

Moreover, in "Letter to Graham and Anne Shepard" MacNeice deems local narratives to be "all about revenge" (*LfI* 191), which in fact matches the tone of his "Eclogue from Iceland," in which Ireland is also said to have been "Built upon violence and morose vendettas" (*LfI* 270). Auden blemishes the sense of purity, as Iceland's "sterile" and "immature" landscape becomes a setting for the "jealousies of a province," a place where jazz is played in local huts and the blood of an "indigenous" horse rider "moves *also* by crooked and furtive inches" (*LfI* 186, emphasis added). Moreover, MacNeice makes several references to the historical presence in Iceland of Christianity and "Latin-chattering margin-illuminating monks" (*LfI* 192). Both also remark on the presence of Nazis in Iceland. When Auden, who had married Erika Mann in 1935 to help her flee from Germany, recalls encountering Nazis on the bus looking for the uncontaminated Aryan type, "Ein echt Germanischer Typus" (*LfI* 277), it is obvious that any sense of Icelandic insularity and superiority has been erased. "Tears fall in *all* the rivers" and the local horse rider "Asks *all* your questions" (*LfI* 186), Auden assumes, including Icelanders in the general *condition humaine*. Iceland is no island of bliss, nor a sanctuary. Perhaps hinting at Plato's view of imitation, for MacNeice the place becomes a mere "surface," another "copy" (*LfI* 271), simply an example of what Auden calls "the world with its mendicant shadow" (*LfI* 186).

Time does not enter *Letters from Iceland* merely through the *memento mori* images of dismembered whales. The travel book shows a full awareness of holiday transitoriness and the inevitability of returning home, back to "the world with its mendicant shadow." MacNeice has the persona Craven call the travellers "exiles" in response to the assumption of the ghost of the Icelandic outlaw Grettir Asmundson; like this fugitive, they are also "on the run" (*LfI* 269). In MacNeice's "Eclogue," Craven and Ryan rejoice in the prospect of happy moments of fishing, hunting, and sleeping in sheepskin without the dictate of the "clock." At the same time, MacNeice uses the conditional mood "That would be life" (*LfI* 269), implying full recognition of the fact that such moments of simplicity and freedom are but a mere temporary "fancy turn" "Sandwiched in a graver show" (*LfI* 374). MacNeice may write of their rustic situation in Iceland as an "enviable terminus" (*LfI* 268), but

he also reminds readers: *memento tempori*! He calls holidays in the northern regions "Breathers from the Latin fire," yet their indelible rootedness in Continental culture(s) transpires from their passages in Latin, references to Blake, Aristotle, Florence, the Spanish Civil War, Nazism and the whole of Auden's "Letter to Lord Byron." In "Letter to Christopher Isherwood, Esq." Auden mocks the attempts of travellers to evade the pressures of their quotidian existence, perhaps because he too feels "too deeply involved with Europe to be able, or even to wish to escape" (*LfI* 190). The transience of the holiday and the inevitability of return is echoed in MacNeice's "Eclogue from Iceland" when Craven informs Grettir's ghost that "We shall be back there soon," immersed in the cycle of "queues / For entertainment," "work at desks," and "Soho menus" (*LfI* 272). All such anti-escapist proclamations are summed up by Grettir, who because he remains in Iceland although he is a "hounded" fugitive, bids Auden and MacNeice "Go back to where [they] belong." Instead of trying to "keep crossing the road to escape," the two should return home, as the "assertion of human values" is their "only duty" (*LfI* 275−77).

Geographically, Iceland might be a "vertiginous" and disconnected "Crow's-nest of the earth," yet both poets bring it down on a par with the "world below" (*LfI* 195). Iceland does not emerge from the travel book as an isolated preserve of unmatched authenticity. Auden may assert that "Europe is absent," but MacNeice and himself level out differences between the island and the Continent, consequently rendering both Iceland and themselves as irreducibly enmeshed in the history and culture of the Old Continent. Auden frames their unromantic attitude to insularity when he asserts that Iceland "is an island and therefore / Unreal" because "fabulous" places are "impartially far" and the present "has no favourite suburb" (*LfI* 185−86) in which to find relief.

4. THE ETHICS OF INSULARITY

Like William Morris, who came to Iceland and wondered "What came we forth for to see[?],"[33] in *Letters from Iceland* MacNeice asks: "what am I doing here?" To sidestep reader misinterpretations of their trip as an act of escapism, he assures them that Auden and himself are "not changing ground to escape from facts." MacNeice strives to justify "reasons for hereness" and explain them in moral terms by outlining the "ethics of Going North" (*LfI* 191–92). As a result, *Letters from Iceland* displays more than the desire to probe the fluidity of the travel-book genre. The book also reflects the determination of its authors to deflate the myth of insularity in its scorn for the tendency to idealize distant places. The travellers use the image of an island to assess the ethical ramifications of cosy withdrawals from the unpleasant interwar situation.

Such sobriety about escapism, insularity, and spatial myths can also arguably be detected in Auden and MacNeice's other interwar works. Christina Britzolakis describes one of the hallmarks of MacNeice's sensibility as his "scrupulous realism" and "fastidious reluctance" to form judgments in an absence of "reflection on the extent to which the observer's prejudices affect the status of his observations." She illustrates MacNeice's insistence on empiricism as exemplified by his restrained and unromantic sense of insularity. As a child of a Church of Ireland Bishop in Northern Ireland, she suggests that MacNeice learned to be well aware of the "constrictions" of "sectarian bigotry" and "dour insularity."[34] Eamon Grennan goes further, describing a concomitance in MacNeice's sense of insularity of "grime," and "negative visions" in parts dealing with the "social and political realties" offset by "paradisal versions" of Ireland in passages set in rural landscape offering "a pastoral refuge from the unpleasant aspects of the world of history."[35] A similar approach can be found in MacNeice's

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[33] William Morris, *Poems by the Way* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891), 37. Morris visited Iceland in 1871 and 1873.

[34] Christina Britzolakis, review of *The Selected Prose of Louis MacNeice*, *Notes and Queries* 39, 2 (1992): 239.

[35] Eamon Grennan, "In a Topographical Frame: Ireland in the Poetry of Louis MacNeice," *An Irish Quarterly Review* 70, 278/279 (1981): 147−153.

Icelandic letters, in which escapist and pastoral motives coexist with a temperate outline of flaws and calls for social commitment.

For Auden, Iceland served as a life-long source of topophilic sentiment and a rare epitome of his idea of "holy ground," one imbued with "the most magical light of anywhere on earth."[36] Should he ever be forced to exile, Auden admitted, Iceland would be his flawless site of "idyllic life."[37] Nevertheless, in the Icelandic letters Auden follows MacNeice in replacing such a spatial myth with equally abstemious poetics. Islandness, as a set of values associated with islands, received extensive attention from him both in critical prose and in poetry. Auden later asserted that islands provide only a "temporary refreshment for the exhausted hero;" they represent a place of "an illusion caused by black magic to tempt the hero to abandon his quest."[38] Although he later voiced such views in lectures in 1949, the transitoriness and futility of escapism, together with the danger of the "black magic" in the form of the illusory and enticing spatial myths about islands, had occupied his mind already in Iceland and in his other earlier works. Moir argues that MacNeice is satirizing escapism, locating "weak spots" in the rural idyll while Auden displays "carefree optimism"[39] and indulgence in holiday otium. The starkest dose of satire of the pastoral idyll in *Letters from Iceland*, however, comes in *Part III* of "Letter to Lord Byron," in which Auden mockingly derides rural rides. Here the pastoralization of the countryside becomes merely a construct fashioned by the urban masses escaping the city, who are treated as the offspring of William Wordsworth, the "old potato," a group thriving on pretence in taking pleasure in spurious rusticity, unshaven faces, torn clothes, and uncomfortable accommodation (*LfI* 251). Auden wrote several other poems in the 1930s in which the human figures have "separate sorrows"

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[36] Auden, *The Complete Works, Vol. I*, 801.

[37] Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Complete Works of W. H. Auden: Prose 1939−1948, Vol. II*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 2002), 336.

[38] Wystan Hugh Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood* (New York: Vintage Books, 1950), 18−19.

[39] Moir, "'The Pause before the Sufflé Falls'," 175.

but "a single hope"[40] uniting them in a quest for a better place, especially in the rural space and on islands. In "O Love, the interest itself in thoughtless heaven" (1932), a group of children leave the urban space to picnic on the top of Moel Famau. Yet Auden dismantles their hope of finding a rural respite and idyll. Instead, he places them sitting in the shade of the Jubilee Tower, a reminder of the humanized landscape they had wanted to leave behind. Similar intimations of the inseparability from the urban lifespace and futility of temporary escapism appear in his denigrating commentaries on Scouting[41] and in "The third week in December frost came at last" (1932). In the latter work, the first-person speaker leaves Helensburgh to find solitude atop a hill. The tranquillity of the rural space is soon disturbed, however, and the speaker's attention is drawn to a surreal gathering in the prospect below. Feeling anxious and insecure, people amass like an "army" to be entertained and to receive deliverance from their leaders. To their dismay, the venue turns into a "vanity fair" as the politicians deliver speeches but no relief to their misfortunes. The public return to their usual lives, leaving the speaker reflect upon the "dingy and difficult life of our generation."[42] Examples of Auden's effort to deflate spatial myths, especially those romanticizing the countryside and islands as sites of quarantined innocence and bliss, are plentiful in his interwar writings. In "I have a handsome profile" (1932), "The month was April" (1933), and the canonical "Hearing of harvests rotting in the valleys" (1933), Auden traces the imaginings forged by travellers escaping a "world that has had its day." They set out to sea in order to find a better place and innocent love on islands of "Milk and Honey" where trees perennially blossom. All three poems, however, intimate the unattainability of solace in such destinations and the ultimate inconsequentiality of seeking escapism. A poignant image of the island also appears in "Dover" (1937), a work in which groups of placid

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[40] Wystan Hugh Auden, *The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings 1927−1939*, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 118.

[41] See Auden's reviews "Life's Old Boy" (1934) and "A Good Scout" (1937) commenting on the works and ideas of Robert Baden-Powell and F. Haydn Dimmock.

[42] Auden, *The English Auden*, 451.

holiday makers and soldiers idle on the beach and lay about in pubs. Confident about the protective power of insularity, they ignore the aeroplanes above their heads, possibly reminders of recent bombing of Guernica and premonitions of an oncoming war. When Auden recalls the presence in Dover of a Norman castle and Roman lighthouse as mementoes of England's historical enmeshment in external processes, the protective power of insularity becomes, as in the case of Iceland, an empty spatial myth.

## 5. ESCAPING CANNNOT TRY

In *Letters from Iceland*, Auden and MacNeice exemplify one of the most widely accepted attributes of the pastoral. From William Empson through Paul Alpers to Ken Hiltner, the pastoral has been regarded as a mode of "veiled" writing that uses the pleasant atmosphere of a simple life in a pristine landscape to cast critical commentaries on the structure and values of more developed societies.[43] Auden and MacNeice do toy with pastoral images and escapism, but the letters cannot be taken as regretful dirges reflecting the poets' ultimately disappointing revelation of the inability to attain freedom in the rural idyll. For slightly different reasons, MacNeice and Auden assume a critical position to insularity, subverting it into an image of the interwar ethos of withdrawal, especially in relation to the southern regions and rural spaces. Corresponding with their broader interwar strategy to deflate spatial myths along with the potential of these illusory images to entice citizens away from social commitment, the authors finally deem escapism a naïve strategy due to the transitory, ineffective, and socially irresponsible nature of such avoidance of responsibility. Through their focus on the negative connotations of insularity and detachment, both writers illustrate the shibboleth of social commitment associated with the 1930s writers. MacNeice puts it well in his Preface to *Modern Poetry* (1938), in which he argues that poets of his generation are

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[43] Ken Hiltner, *What else is pastoral?: Renaissance Literature and the Environment* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2011), 1.

"working back from luxury writing and trying once more to be functional" since, in Auden's words, "Escaping cannot try."[44]

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[44] Louis MacNeice, *Modern Poetry: A Personal Essay* (1938, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 197; Auden, *The English* Auden, 451.

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# PARALLEL SPACES OF OTHERNESS
# IN VLADIMIR NABOKOV'S SHORT FICTION

*Rudolf Sárdi*

ABSTRACT: Set in the tropical hell of fictional Badonia, Vladimir Nabokov's early short story, "Terra Incognita" (1931) can be read as a precursor to the construction of his more elaborately thought-out fantasy worlds of Zembla (*Pale Fire*, 1962) and Zoolandia (*Ada or Ardor: A Family Chronicle*, 1969). Drawing on the extant critical evaluation of Nabokov's short fiction (Parker 1991, Sisson 1994, Shrayer 1999, Meyer 2006, Hetényi 2015), the present paper seeks to examine afresh how the merging of various layers of reality in "Terra Incognita" creates parallel fictional universes, where dreams, hallucinations, and delirium constitute the very foundations of the author's oft-debated otherworldly realm. Furthermore, the paper will claim that the fictional world of "Terra Incognita" cannot be fitted into D. Barton Johnson's "two-world model" (1985); instead, it will be demonstrated that the short story can be read as an unknown textual zone. This zone will be shown to function both as the coveted transcendental realm of the preternatural as well as a narrative space awaiting further probing and textual explorations. In the end, it will also imply that the metaphysical and philosophical associations of the short story can be linked to Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, according to which the parallel spaces of otherness are neither *here* nor *there* but exist in simultaneity, "inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are . . . not superimposable on one another" ("Of Other Spaces" 1967).

KEYWORDS: space, alternate worlds, reality, heterotopia

In his prefatory chapter to *Lectures on Literature*, Vladimir Nabokov famously maintains that "[g]reat novels are above all great fairy tales . . . literature does not tell the truth but makes it up."[1] The author's censorious remarks, expressed with the draconian rigor that characterizes the entire system of Nabokov's private convictions, lay bare the overarching importance of artistic originality as the most important feature in his construction of *terrae incognitae*, hitherto

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[1] Vladimir Nabokov, *Lectures on Literature,* ed. Fredson Bowers (San Diego: Harvest Book, 1982), 78.

uncharted and unexplored fictional universes. It is commonly known that Nabokov would open his lectures at Cornell University by underscoring that "[w]e should always remember that the work of art is invariably *the creation of a new world*, so that the first thing we should do is to study that new world as closely as possible."[2]

One remarkable fact about the Russian-born author's prolific literary output is that his "art grows out of Romanticism in the Platonic tradition; because he sees this world as a pale reflection of another, his novels abound in doublings, mirrorings and inversions,"[3] and the world we inhabit is but the sham imitation, the imperfect replica of Plato's well-ordered ideal state. With respect to the pervasive theme of otherworldliness in the author's work, one of his commentators points out that in Nabokov "there exists, beyond the scope of the intellect, another, more real world, and that what man sees before him is but a shadow and echo of that true reality."[4] The various levels of realities that Nabokov creates in his works strikingly diverge from the Ian Watt's model of formal realism, which is built on the notion that the novel desires to appear close to human experience, and therefore must focus on characters grounded specifically within the novel's unique world rather than general archetypes. The aim of the present paper is to subject to analysis Nabokov's early short story, "Terra Incognita" (1931) by demonstrating how the merging of and constant shifting between various layers of reality construct a highly elusive otherworld of nightmarish hallucination and delirium. Through the close-reading of the short story, it will be concluded that "Terra Incognita" functions as an unknown textual zone, which can be read either as a coveted transcendental realm of the supernatural or a narrative space awaiting further probing. Furthermore, the paper will also argue that the narrative complexity of "Terra Incognita" anticipates and contrasts with the creation of parallel spaces and more sophisticated alternative universes in Nabokov's later fiction, including *Invitation to a Beheading* and *Pale*

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[2] Nabokov, *Lectures*, 25.

[3] Priscilla Meyer and Jeff Hoffmann, "Infinite Reflections in Nabokov's *Pale Fire*: The Danish Connection (Hans Andersen and Isak Dinesen)," *Russian Literature* 41 (1997): 197.

[4] Barton D. Johnson, *Worlds in Regression: Some Novels of Vladimir Nabokov* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1985), 3.

*Fire* both of which are said to share commonalities with this early short story.

Scholars have long been intrigued by the fact that Nabokov's fictional characters contemplate the existence of *at least* two possible realities, one of which is frequently perceived as a metaphysical otherworld, where "art (curiosity, tenderness, kindness, ecstasy) is the norm."[5] It has been repeatedly underscored that one of the central dynamics of Nabokov's imaginary universe is the relentless yearning of the solitary hero to liberate himself from the confining artificiality of the transparent, unimaginative, dreary world that holds them captive. Instead of envisaging the world as a garden of paths, forking into mundane reality and the ecstatic, as D. Barton Johnson's "two-world" cosmology suggests, the majority of Nabokov's works center around the author's attempts to unify these two universes during moments of spiritual revelation, described as "aesthetic bliss"[6] in the famous epilog of *Lolita*. Instead of depicting the otherworld as a domain of idealized memories which is desperately coveted by characters who are made privy to the author's worldview, "Terra Incognita" represents a mode of expression different from those found elsewhere in Nabokov's fiction. It offers no solace for the restless soul in pursuit of the perfect alternative to his mind-numbing earthly existence, and the otherworld here comes to represent a land of horror, an unknown geographical and textual zone that awaits to be explored by the reader and the protagonist alike.[7]

It has been repeatedly underscored that the central dichotomy between the world of the 'here' and the imagined otherworldly 'there,' which stands in sharp contrast to one's earthly existence, has been in the focal point of Nabokov's works and, at first glance, also lies at the very heart of "Terra Incognita," an early short story, published in Russian in 1931. While the story received unjustifiably meager academic attention, the various narratological and thematic devices it employs have prepared the ground for the development of the themes which would

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[5] Vladimir Nabokov, *The Annotated Lolita,* ed. Alfred Appel, Jr. (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), 315.

[6] Nabokov, *Annotated Lolita*, 314.

[7] Maxim Shrayer, *The World of Nabokov's Stories* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 62.

preoccupy Nabokov's mind at the time of writing *Invitation to a Beheading* and his even more audacious enterprises securing the author his place in the literary pantheon.

In "Terra Incognita," Nabokov attributes a special role to the interplay of imagination, time, and space, prefiguring some of his finest and most enduring themes incorporated in his later fiction, which "contain more than one world in varying degrees of presence"[8] and pitting various spatial and temporal planes against one another. In the short story under analysis, Nabokov positions the fictional land of Badonia on the world atlas and conceives fragments of a self-contained language—including the invention of Latinate taxonomical designations of the land's flora and fauna—only to enhance the atmospheric portrayal of an exotic rainforest. It is not by serendipity that Nabokov's manipulation of narrative conventions and the occasional integration of arbitrarily coined words into the text serve as an anticipatory device in the construction of the complex worlds of Zembla in *Pale Fire*, Zoorlandia in "Tyrants Destroyed" and Terra/Antiterra in *Ada*, all of which are seen as amplified versions of the microcosm that the unknown geography and textual zone of "Terra Incognita" encapsulates.

In "Terra Incognita," Valliere, the first-person narrator of the entomological expedition that Nabokov, a first-class lepidopterologist himself, would have also willingly joined, provides a written account of the tropical hell of the imaginary land of Badonia, where he is accompanied by his friend Gregson, the faint-hearted Cook, and eight local porters. The theme of the unknown land is turned into *terror incognitus*, that is, into a nightmarish locus of absurdity,"[9] as Valliere develops a terminal illness, the porters vanish, and his two companions kill each other in the ensuing scuffle. The high fever casts Valliere into a delirious state, inducing a series of strange visions, whose intensity increases as the expedition penetrates deeper into the fetid marshland. Once the reader realizes that the credibility of the narrator can be called into question, it seems that his narration too gradually slips out of grasp, causing a feeling of uncertainty at a narrative level. Valliere visualizes two simultaneous scenes incorporated into one another as part of a

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[8] Johnson, *Worlds in Regression*, 11.
[9] Shrayer, *The World of Nabokov's Stories*, 112.

single integral world that allows for the peaceful coexistence of two opposing realities: as the narrator describes the lush and exotic scenes of the tropical rainforest, he begins to be tormented by strange hallucinations, which creates an air of ambivalence and indeterminacy for the reader. In a story that appears to be Nabokov's maiden effort to employ an entirely unreliable narrator, Valliere fills the tropical scenery with the ill-fitting accoutrements of a European middle-class apartment. Window curtains, an armchair, a crystal tumbler, a teaspoon, and other objects, all incompatible with the verdant locus of a jungle, emerge intermittently in the narrative, making it impossible to determine whether the protagonist is being afflicted by a horrible nightmare about the tropics while being treated in hospital, or rather, the inverse of it is true.

> I gazed at the weird tree trunks, around some of which were coiled thick, flesh-colored snakes; suddenly I thought I saw, between the trunks, as though through my fingers, the mirror of *a half-open wardrobe with dim reflections* . . . I, however, was much more frightened by something else: now and then, on my left (always, for some reason, on my left), listing among the repetitious reeds, *what seemed a large armchair but was actually a strange, cumbersome gray amphibian,* whose name Gregson refused to tell me, would rise out of the swamp.[10]

The passage raises the question of how one can conceive of two such strikingly different spaces as an exotic rainforest and a European middle-class apartment being absorbed into one single space. It is refreshing to find in Michel Foucault the philosopher whose concept of heterotopia can be straightforwardly applied to "Terra Incognita" as one illuminating example of how worlds of entirely conflicting structures can be juxtaposed on one single narrative plane. In *Postmodern Fiction*, Brian McHale further discusses the nature of heterotopias, describing them as a problematical world, or rather, a "kind of space [that is] capable of accommodating so many incommensurable and mutually

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[10] Vladimir Nabokov, *The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov* (New York: Vintage Books, 2002), 300 (emphases mine).

exclusive worlds."[11] Instead of designating it as the confrontation, superimposition, juxtaposition, misattribution, or interpolation of worlds (in line with Umberto Eco, who also refused to call this a "world"), McHale designates heterotopias as "the zone." In relation to the short story, heterotopias can be thought of as a "space of overlapping subjectivities, including shared fantasies and nightmares"[12] instead of representing any clear demarcation line between one world and another. Through the concept of "the zone" it becomes clear that the coexistence of different realities and perceptions blurs the distinction between worlds; instead, it offers an in-between space where logic is no longer ruled by binary oppositions. Here, differences are not highlighted but come into contact with one another to unsettle all fixed identities and meanings constructed around oppositions. It is worthwhile to compare this theory to Homi Bhabha's introduction of the notion of the "third space" in "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," where communities cease to form homogenous entities, and texts become shapeshifting, vibrant tissues. McHale quotes that

> heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they destroy "syntax" in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and also opposite to one another) to "hold together."[13]

The "mirror of a half-open wardrobe with dim reflections"[14] is utilized in the short story not merely as an indiscriminate device found in an ordinary bedroom; nor is it meant to represent an object that mirrors the existence of another world (or rather, its purported existence) and symbolically distinguishes the real from the phantasmagorical. In its

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[11] Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 44.

[12] McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, 44.

[13] McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, 44.

[14] Nabokov, *Stories*, 298.

ability to reflect a "placeless place,"[15] the mirror can be thought of in light of a Foucauldian heterotopia in his essay. He writes that

> in the mirror, I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over here, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself where I am absent: such is the utopia of the mirror. But it is also a heterotopia in so far as the mirror does exist in reality, where it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy.[16]

One of the oft-recurring fictionalizing devices in Nabokov is the mirror itself or any other physical surface which reflects undiffused light to create an image of an object placed in front of it. The use of the mirror reinforces the idea that the author conceives the world of reality as a pale reflection of the universe in a Platonian sense, emphasizing that the physical world is but a shadow of the world of form. For example, in his metaphysical short story, "Music" (1932), the doubles of the pianist's hands "are engaged in a ghostly, intricate, even somewhat clownish mimicry" as they are reflected in the "lacquered depths of the open keyboard lid."[17] During his mysterious wanderings in the museum, the narrator of "The Visit to the Museum" (1931) is reluctantly transported back to Soviet Russia: the corridor that bridges the coveted yet unattainable otherworld is pictured as a storehouse of "a thousand musical instruments; the walls, *all mirror*, reflected an enfilade of grand pianos, while in the center there was a pool with a bronze Orpheus atop a green rock."[18] Not only the mirror, but also the statue of the classical mythological figure of Orpheus, who descended into the underworld to regain his dead wife, is a clear indication that mirrors, reflections, shadows, and the like establish a dialogue between this world and worlds apart, and as such transcend the limitations of a textual object

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[15] Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, 1 (1986): 24.

[16] Foucault and Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," 24.

[17] Nabokov, *Stories*, 298 (emphasis mine).

[18] Nabokov, *Stories*, 283 (emphasis mine).

that emulates, reproduces, or distorts the original image. In "Terra Incognita," vision plays an excessively important role: several natural objects in the story cast reflections, allowing the reader to catch a glimpse of yet another layer of reality. Acreana bushes deceptively glimmer, enormous marches shimmer, the hills appear as a mirage, clusters of soap bubbles create a mirror-like effect, characters become transparent and multiply, and the protagonist is offered an insight into another world as he observes the sky. The existence of another dimension is also emphasized by a deliberate string of alliterative words: "I tried not to look up; but in this sky, at the *very verge* of my field of *vision*, there floated, always keeping up with me, whitish phantoms of plaster, stucco curlicues and rosettes, like those used to adorn European ceilings."[19]

The semiotic potentials of the mirror have been pinpointed by almost all commentators, especially in relation to *Despair*, the novel also known for being "the mother of all mirror scenes."[20] The role of mirroring, mimicry, and the models of polarized vision are a corollary of Nabokov's view, and despite the fact that the mirror as an object is mentioned only once in "Terra Incognita," reflections occupy a central role in the story's structure by creating a balance between two separate loci as though a "two-world model" were applicable in the story. However, the subsequent descriptions of the geographical setting begin to render such an equilibrium unstable. "The branches of *porphyroferous* trees intertwined with those of the black-leafed limia to form a tunnel, penetrated here and there by a ray of hazy light."[21] The intertwining of the tree branches appropriately demonstrates how the two levels of reality are obfuscated. Such interpenetrations at the textual level of "Terra Incognita" are not uncommon, because locations and characters deliberately flow in and out of one another.

Intimately related to mirroring is Nabokov's treatment of the double topos. Zsuzsa Hetényi (*Nabokov Regényösvényein*, Budapest:

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[19] Nabokov, *Stories*, 299 (emphasis mine).
[20] Warren Motte, "Reflections on Mirrors," The Johns Hopkins University: Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, November 29, 2005, http://lion.chadwyck.co.uk.
[21] Nabokov, *Stories*, 299.

Kaligramm, 215) highlights in her seminal monograph the relevance of mirroring as a unique quality of Nabokov's oeuvre, concluding that the various forms of doubles, including Doppelgangers and mirror-structures, draw attention to the schematic, intangible, and ambiguous nature of reality. She posits that doubling in *Invitation to a Beheading* has the potential to both emulate and distort. In a broader context, Hetényi builds her argumentation on the Lacanian notion of self-consciousness and claims that the mirror is a constantly recurring object of émigré literature, where it represents the unresolved identity and the false interpretation of the Self. Furthermore, she claims that the mirror also functions as a narrative tool, which demarcates the threshold of metafiction and metalepsis.[22] Mirror-structures and doubling occupy a central role in the monograph and deserve further explorations. Valliere's two fellow-explorers on his expedition are presented, time and again, as antagonistic doubles of each other, corresponding to the split and shared types of doubling: "At times Gregson and Cook seemed to grow transparent, and I thought I saw, through them, wallpaper with an endlessly repeated design of reeds."[23] It cannot go unnoticed that before the protagonist loses his consciousness (or dies) at the closure of the story, he witnesses the fierce, lethal scuffle between the porters, which uncannily resembles the final, farcical fight between Humbert and Quilty in *Lolita*. In "Terra Incognita" Gregson and Cook

> [c]lutched each other and started rolling their embrace, panting deafeningly . . . Cook's broad back would grow tense and the vertebrae would show through his shirt; but suddenly, instead of his back, a leg, also his would appear covered with coppery hairs, and with a blue vein running up the skin, and Gregson was rolling on top of him. . . . From somewhere in the labyrinth of their bodies Cook's fingers wriggled out, clenching a rusty but sharp knife; the knife entered Gregson's back as if tit were clay, but Gregson only gave a grunt, and they both rolled over several times[.][24]

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[22] Zsuzsa Hetényi , *Nabokov regényösvényein* (Budapest: Kaligramm, 2015), 111.
[23] Motte, *Reflections*, 297.
[24] Nabokov, *Stories*, 302.

It is the constant rolling of the two bodies and the repeated confusion of their body parts that creates a hitherto unidentified intrartextual link between the two works. Likewise, it requires arduous work from the reader to tell apart Quilty from Humbert in the last but one chapter of *Lolita*; even the protagonist himself struggles to establish his own identity by doing away with his evil "shadow."[25] As their scuffle commences "the two are merged in a muddle of interchangeable pronouns as Humbert assimilates Quilty's body of ordinary experience."[26] Humbert describes the scene as follows:

> We fell to wrestling again. We rolled over the floor, in each other's arms, like two huge helpless children. He was naked and goatish under his robe, and I felt suffocated as he rolled over me. I rolled over him. We rolled over me. They rolled over him. We rolled over us.[27]

Thus far we have seen that in presenting two simultaneously existing worlds, Nabokov deliberately complicates the ontological horizon of the shorty story, which J. B. Sisson aptly compares to Henri Rousseau's painting *Le rêve* (1910), in which a woman is lying on the sofa as she is transported to a forest in her reveries. In his well-known discussion of examining paintings and reading texts, Nabokov argues that "in a sense, we behave towards a book as we do towards a painting."[28] The fantastic and unrealistic aspects of the painting express Nabokov's genuine interest in Romanticism. The exhaustive analysis of "Terra Incognita" that Maxim Shrayer offers is very much in keeping with Nabokov's observation of "reading a verbal text as a pictorial text" (*The Worlds* 50). Equally compelling is the story's possible connection with the ontological uncertainty associated with the famous butterfly dream of the influential Chinese sage Zhuangzi, whose philosophical reasoning

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[25] Nabokov, *Lectures*, 58.
[26] Anthony R. Moore, "How Unreliable is Humbert in *Lolita*?," *Journal of Modern Literature* 25, 1 (Fall, 2001): 80.
[27] Nabokov, *Lolita*, 299.
[28] Nabokov, *Lectures*, 3.

was a source of inspiration for many authors, including Lőrinc Szabó, the Hungarian poet. Upon awakening from his dream, Zhuangzi begins to wonder whether it was he, Zhuangzi, who dreamed he was a butterfly, or a butterfly dreamed that he was Zhuangzi.[29]

With its nonexistent geographical settings and the taxonomical designations of fictitious plants "Terra Incognita" consistently calls attention to its own construction, in which the reader, who is introduced to the minutiae of a tropical rainforest as the story opens (and therefore associates the primary level of reality with the jungle), might be given the impression that the world of the tropical rainforest is ludicrously unreal and clearly overridden by a more realistic middle-class apartment. In light of the main theme elaborated in "Terra Incognita," it is now a simple matter to pronounce that the intersection of time (*past* versus *present*) and space (*here* versus *there*) is a fundamentally important quality of the Nabokovian text – a quality with which the author had been long concerned, and eventually found a way to voice in *Ada*, at the consummation of his novelistic career. Foucault explains that "[w]e do not live in a void that could be colored with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delineates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another."[30] In his exposition of heterotopia, Foucault says that the garden is one of the most illustrative examples of a heterotopia with its ability to "juxtapose in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible."[31] The tropical rainforest of Nabokov's story can be taken to represent the microcosm that Foucault considers the "smallest parcel of the world and . . . the totality of the world"[32] at the same time. With its lush vegetation and abundant wildlife, the rainforest (originally associated with threat and perils) of the story functions in a similar manner to the garden (normally standing, with its purity and innocence, in opposition to the forest): it stands as a microcosm of reality that resembles, in many of its components, the jungle known to most readers, while it also seeks to represent the

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[29] Shrayer, *The World of Nabokov's Stories*, 49.
[30] Foucault and Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," 23.
[31] Foucault and Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," 25.
[32] Foucault and Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," 26.

wholeness of the world. Everything inside a garden varies considerably from the immediate surroundings. Likewise, the rainforest creates a parallel impression by allowing the readers to alternate between two strikingly dissimilar loci. Just as the garden appears as a manmade construct as regards its arrangement of flowers and plants, the rainforest of the story also *seems* to contain a variety of species from all around the world. In addition to orchids, acreana bushes, racemes, Nabokov's jungle is home to several fictitious plants, such as "porphyroferous trees,"[33] "black-leafed limia,"[34] and the fragrant *Vallieria mirifica*, whose apparently Latinate origin automatically reminds the reader of the story's protagonist. Even if some components of the textual rainforest are incongruous with those of a real-life jungle, one cannot but agree that the imaginary world depicted in the short story appears neither impossible nor less real than the European middle-class apartment. Welcoming as it may seem for the reader to opt for the latter location as a more real setting, the bewilderment that the story continues to raise at its closure is to confirm that both loci enjoy their legitimate existence and can be said to be on a par with one another. Foucault concludes that the role of heterotopias is "to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled."[35]

The juxtaposition of two conspicuously dissimilar loci and the visions of the febrile protagonist establish a unique Nabokovian universe to foreground a nightmarish otherworld. It is this world that prohibits the infiltration of the beauty, desire, and magnetism with which Nabokov's idealized realm of the hereafter is usually connected in other short stories. While Nabokov scholars have been prone to discuss how reality blends with illusion, it may also be worthwhile to underscore that "Terra Incognita" cannot be conceived of as a short story consisting of two levels of existence set against one another. Several works of Nabokov have been noted for what the author calls "cosmic synchronization" in *Speak, Memory*, his semi-autobiographical novel. Nabokov's concept refers to the simultaneous perception of two

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[33] Nabokov, *Stories*, 297
[34] Nabokov, *Stories*, 298.
[35] Foucault and Miskowiec, "Of Other Spaces," 27.

worlds in an instant of time, representing, as Sisson argues, the "posited desire of the artist to apprehend the entire universe by an awareness expanding rapidly outward from the artist's consciousness to coalesce ostensibly unrelated fragments in one single moment."[36] Nabokov stimulates metaphysical suspense as he stands narrative conventions on their head and complicates the ontological horizons of the short story to create a world *sui generis*, which possesses the ability to compress time and space as a single continuum as though the actions, settings and temporal dimensions of the narrative were flowing into one another, providing outlets into sections of an otherworld. In the closing line of "Terra Incognita" uncertainty and instability rise to their acme as the narrator grapples for his blanket and lets his notebook slip out of his hand: "I absolutely had to make a note of something; but alas [the notebook] slipped out of my hand. I groped all along the blanket, but it was no longer there."[37] Various interpretations of this crucial line have been entertained with the aim of explaining the narrative logic of "Terra Incognita" and reconciling the antagonism of what Andrew Field calls "the simultaneous cofunctioning of two distinct worlds."[38] The conclusion of the story creates an air of further ambivalence as it challenges the reader to determine whether it is the unnamed European city that one should regard as a *terra cognita* and the tropical rainforest as *terra incognita* or the inverse of the situation also stands to logic. Also, how can the narrator register the events of the story if he drops out of the game at its very closure?

The spatial and temporal speculations that the short story gives rise to are not unique to Nabokov's early prose but anticipate, as it were, several salient themes which prove sufficient to be elaborated on in his later novels. The title of "Terra Incognita" serves both as a depository of the popular theme of juxtaposing reality with its otherworldly counterpart a sequence of eerie hallucinations. Shrayer is correct in concluding that the *terra incognita* of the story, apart from referring to a

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[36] J. B. Sisson, "Nabokov's Cosmic Synchronization and "Something Else,"" *Nabokov Studies* 1 (1994): 155.

[37] Nabokov, *Stories*, 128.

[38] Andrew Field, *Nabokov: His Life in Art* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), 76.

"hitherto unexplored region"[39] also brings to mind a "textual space that Valliere's narrative creates for the reader to enter and explore."[40]

In this context, it is worthy of mention that the story bears a marked resemblance to *Invitation to a Beheading*, which beckons to the reader to consider the novel as the extension of "Terra Incognita" from various perspectives. Valliere is imprisoned in an exotic world that strikes him as an unfamiliar 'otherspace' in the composition of its details, yet the European middle-class apartment seems equally fictitious. He tries to escape the menacing world that the central character associates with the lackluster and apparently sham settings of Europe. In like manner, Cincinnatus C., the protagonist of *Invitation to a Beheading*, makes repeated attempts at transcending the reality of the world that holds him captive by allowing him to conjure up a picture of an enchanting, idealized realm of the imagination, a place to which he is transported during his mental excursions. Valliere admits that "the obtrusive room was fictitious . . . an imitation of life *hastily knocked together*, the furnished rooms of non-existence."[41] Likewise, Cincinnatus's cardboard universe, created *ex tempore* by an invisible auctorial hand, collapses at the end of the novel, providing an opportunity to the imaginative individual to make his escape towards a world "where stand beings akin to him."[42] In both works, one will discover themes which demonstrate further analogies, such as the transparent nature of characters: "Gregson and Cook [seem] to grow transparent"[43] while in *Invitation* everyone, except Cincinnatus, emerges as a shadow, unrealistic, intangible and plastic.[44]

Interestingly, both "Terra Incognita" and *Invitation to a Beheading* use imagery that reflect the artificiality and the theatricality of a realm that is destructive because of its power to prevent the unfettered human imagination from breaking free from the limits imposed upon it by the world of reality. The bedroom world—whose

[39] Naboov, *Stories*, 297.
[40] Shrayer, *The World of Nabokov's Stories*, 47.
[41] Nabokov, *Stories*, 298 (emphasis mine).
[42] Vladimir Nabokov, *Invitation to a Beheading* (London and New York: Penguin Classics, 2001), 223.
[43] Nabokov, *Stories*, 298.
[44] Hetényi, *Nabokov regényösvényein,* 428.

dimly marked silhouettes shine through the canopy of the rainforest—is different from the world described in *Invitation to a Beheading*. In general, Nabokov thought of reality not so much in terms of something inhospitably dismal and antagonistic (unless it was a prototypical police state with its distinctly oppressive machinery crushing free will and creativity); instead, he saw reality as a highly stimulating subject-matter to write about. It seldom appears humdrum with the intertwining of reality and the otherworld because neither Nabokov nor his characters are determined to escape from it. In *Lolita*, for example, he takes pleasure in boldly painting the image of America in the 1950s with all its elements of the real.

While Nabokov may have meant to attach special significance to "Terra Incognita" as anticipatory to *Invitation to a Beheading* and a series of his later fictional works, Connolly's interpretation that the two works are intimately connected to one another seems convincing only to the extent that the entire Nabokovian *oeuvre* is an attempt to demonstrate how human imagination can be cut loose from its limitations. One must thus conclude that "Terra Incognita" occupies a special position among all the short stories, because it does not only herald the emergence of the otherworldly as a theme and its reversal in his later works, but also because its suggestive title is also an indication that Nabokov's works require the active participation of the reader, an intrepid explorer, as it were, to enter what might be termed as textual "otherspaces".

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# "WHO WOULD SUSPECT A TRANSVESTITE OF MURDER?": ED WOOD AS A CRIME FICTION WRITER

*Jozef Pecina*

ABSTRACT: Edward D. Wood Jr. is primarily known as one of the weirdest (and worst) directors in the history of Hollywood. However, his low-budget films such as *Glen or Glenda* (1953) or *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (1959) have been long cherished as cult classics and Ed Wood was immortalized in Tim Burton's 1994 eponymous biopic. Not much, though, is known in academic world about Wood's career of a writer. The fact is that during the 1960s, Wood wrote dozens of pulp novels for quick money. Published by low-profile publishing houses and often having autobiographical elements, they included wild plots full of sex, violence, teenage gangs and cross-dressing. My paper considers Wood's sleazy crime novels such as *Devil Girls* and *Killer in Drag* in the context of cheap crime fiction of the post-war era.

KEYWORDS: Ed Wood, sleaze paperbacks, crime fiction, cross-dressing, angora, teenage gangs

Cheap paperback novels published from the 1950s onwards have never been associated with great literature. Sold in drugstores, train stations, and airports, they were intended for quick reading and quick disposal. Many of them were outright pornographic, and they distinguished themselves from one another mainly by their sensational and lurid covers and their shocking taglines. The chief motivation of the authors was to make a buck. This was also the case of Edward D. Wood, Jr., a low-budget filmmaker who eventually became one of the most prolific authors of sleaze fiction. The aim of this paper is to shed some light on his crime novels in the context of cheap pornographic literature in the post-war era.

Books bound in paper date back to the nineteenth century, but what gave the paperback market in the United States an enormous boost was the Second World War. To satisfy the hunger among US servicemen for something to read, cheap editions of popular titles were produced free of charge that were specially trimmed to slip easily into

the pockets of battle fatigues.[1] They were distributed in the millions, and many men and women in uniform who had never read for pleasure before thus developed a taste for literature and returned home wanting more. Most of the published books were reprints of classic literature, but increasingly publishers began to specialize in Westerns, mysteries, crime, and, last but not least, pornography. What these original paperbacks shared with comic books and pulp magazines, who were their partners in crime of low-brow cheap entertainment for masses, was not just their ephemeral nature but also the scorn of the respected publishing houses, ignorance by critics, and attempts by religious and civic groups to censor or ban them.[2]

Soft-core sleaze paperbacks which appeared in the early 1960s are, in the words of Adam Parfrey, "the forgotten black sheep of the publishing industry," uncollected and unreferenced by the Library of Congress.[3] Their publishers, distributors and booksellers faced social stigma, harassment from police and community moralists, legal trials and, in a number of cases, time in jail. This is how James Kirkpatrick attacked the publishers of sleaze paperbacks in his *Smut Peddlers* (1960):

> What is the narcotic in which these traders deal? It is raw sex, stripped of all beauty and poetry. Their purpose is to treat the sexual act as no more than the gratification of animal passions; their object is to stimulate a prurient desire for the sex without love that is lust. The marriage relationship, when it is treated at all, is a relationship to be violated; infidelity is fun, and adultery no more than a harmless pastime. It is a big business, a cynical business, a dirty business. And though pornography often is marketed in the form of "art nudes" or "pamphlets of medical

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[1] See Paula Rabinowitz, *American Pulp. How Paperbacks Brought Modernism to Main Street* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 115.

[2] See Louis Menand, "Pulp's Big Moment. How Emily Bronte met Micky Spillane." *New Yorker*, January 5, 2015, https://www.newyorker.com/magazine /2015/01/05/pulps-big-moment.

[3] Adam Parfrey, "The Smut Peddlers" in *Sin-a-Rama: Sleaze Sex Paperbacks of the Sixties,* ed. Brittany A. Daley and Stephen J. Gertz (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2016), 8.

instruction," or "realistic contemporary writing," the sordid intention of the distributors gives their ugly game away. Behind a flimsy mask of culture lies the leer of the sensualist.[4]

The publishers catered to the needs and desires of largely white, male, middle-class audiences. According to *The Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography* from 1970, the majority of pornographic books were "written for heterosexual males, although about 10 % are aimed at the male homosexual market and a small percentage (less than 5 %) are fetishists. Virtually none of these books is intended for a female audience."[5] Sleaze paperbacks were sold in newsstands, kiosks and through mail order catalogues, but the primary point of sale in the 1960s was the adult book store, where, besides soft-core paperbacks, a patron could find 8 mm films, erotic playing cards, sex toys and peep booths.[6] The 1970 *Report* estimated that there were around 850 self-labelled adult book stores across the country, with additional 1400 outlets that provided a restricted section with adult material. Most of them were located in downtown areas of large cities.[7] The paperbacks sold in large quantities and their popularity cannot be underestimated: "Combining all sources of information, the Commission estimates that 25 to 30 million 'adults only' paperback books were sold in 1969 for a total retail value of $45 to $55 million . . . The best estimate is that 'adults only' material in the U.S. accounted for between $70 and $90 million in retail sales in 1969."[8]

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[4] Qtd. in Parfrey, "The Smut Peddlers," 8.

[5] President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, *The Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography*. William B. Lockhart et al. (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1970), 15–16.

[6] See Jay Gertzman, "Softcore Publishing: The East Coast Scene," in *Sin-a-Rama: Sleaze Sex Paperbacks of the Sixties,* ed. Brittany A. Daley and Stephen J. Gertz (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2016), 20–21.

[7] President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, *Report,* 16. The patrons of adult book stores and at the same time the primary readers of sleaze paperbacks were characterized as "predominantly white, middle-class, middle-aged married males, dressed in business suit or neat casual attire, shopping alone." President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, *Report,* 21.

[8] President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, *Report,* 17.

Ed Wood, one of Hollywood's earliest cross-dressers, was a native of Poughkeepsie, New York. At the age of seventeen, he joined the Marines, saw action at Tarawa and in the Marshall Islands, and was honourably discharged in 1944. This is how John Robertson, a film producer and fellow Marine, remembered Wood during the invasion of Tarawa:

> 4000 Marines came in . . . 400 came out. He was one of the 400. He was wearing pink panties and a pink bra underneath his battle fatigues. And he said to me, "Thank God Joe I got out, because I wanted to be killed, I didn't want to be wounded, because I could never explain my pink panties and pink bra."[9]

Regarding Wood's cross-dressing, Earl Kemp, editor for Greenleaf Classics (a publishing company which published Wood's *Orgy of the Dead* and *Side-Show Siren*) remembers that "Every time I saw him, without fail, even though I wasn't interested, he would tell me what female garments he was wearing at the moment, in case they weren't visible (like nylons). He would also offer to show me that he was really wearing them, especially the panties; he always wanted to show off the panties."[10]

After the war, Wood briefly travelled with a carnival, playing the part of half man/half woman, and then he moved to Hollywood to pursue a career in the film industry. Within a few years, he had managed to make a number of important contacts, including one with the fading 1930s horror legend Bela Lugosi (who he would later cast in a number of his films). The period between 1953 and 1960 is known as Wood's "classic period", since this is when he directed his most famous films such as *Jailbait*, *Bride of the Monster*, and *Plan 9 from Outer Space*. Often branded as some of the worst motion pictures ever made, they earned Wood a reputation as the worst director of all time as well as

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[9] Rudolph Grey, *Nightmare of Ecstasy: The Life and Art of Edward D. Wood, Jr.* (London: Faber & Faber, 1995), 20.

[10] Qtd. in Earl Kemp, "Ed Wood," in *Sin-a-Rama: Sleaze Sex Paperbacks of the Sixties,* ed. Brittany A. Daley and Stephen J. Gertz (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2016), 53.

garnering him a small cult following that started in the late 1970s. The advent of home video introduced Wood's films to larger audiences in the 1980s, but genuine interest in his works appeared only after the publication of Rudolph Grey's oral history *Nightmare of Ecstasy* (1993) and the subsequent release of Tim Burton's biopic *Ed Wood* starring Johnny Depp in 1995.[11] Wood's status as a cultural icon has been recognized since then and his films have been reassessed in a number of scholarly works including Rob Craig's *Ed Wood, Mad Genius* (2009).

      For the purpose of this paper, the most important contribution of Grey's biography was the discovery of Wood's career as a prolific author of sleazy novels. At the beginning of the 1960s, finding himself in financial difficulties caused mainly by his raging alcoholism, Wood needed a quick income. The solution was provided by low-profile publishing houses in Hollywood. In the mid-1960s, a paperback written for the adult market could earn Wood about one thousand dollars.[12] He wrote his first novel, *Killer in Drag*, in 1963 and continued writing novels, short stories, and pieces of non-fiction until his death from an alcohol-induced heart attack in 1978. Wood's literary oeuvre is quite impressive. His works range from educational books on obscene subjects (*Bloodiest Sex Crimes in History*, 1967, which covers Elizabeth Bathory; *The Love of the Dead*, 1967; *A Study of the Sons and Daughters of Erotica*, 1971; and *Sexual Practices in Witchcraft and Black Magic*, 1971), transgender and gay novels (*Drag Trade*, 1967; *It Takes One to Know One*, 1967; and *Young, Black and Gay*, 1968) to straight pornography (*Side-Show Siren*, 1966, and *Forced Entry*, 1974, where an unsatisfied wife learns to love anal sex). It is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of works he wrote since he used a number of pseudonyms (one of his better ones was Ann Gora), but it is believable that he penned seventy-five novels and hundreds of short stories. Grey claims that, contrary to other authors of sleaze fiction, Wood was proud of his works and often gave them out as Christmas gifts.[13]

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[11] See Rob Craig, *Ed Wood, Mad Genius: A Critical Study of the Films* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2009), 276.
[12] See Grey, *Nightmare of Ecstasy*, 141.
[13] See Grey, *Nightmare of Ecstasy*, 75.

Wood was a natural for the paperback market because of two strengths – his talent for typing fast and his ability to provide vast amounts of text in a brief amount of time regardless of the circumstances.[14] Paul Marco, an actor from *Bride of the Monster*, remembers that Wood would "have a chicken leg in one hand, a cigarette in his mouth, a bottle of vodka, the television in front of him. He'd watch television, look at me, get nagged by his wife, drink, and then, still talking, with a cigarette in his mouth, walk into the other room, take a bite of the chicken leg, put it on the coffee table, wash it down with the vodka, pick up the lit cigarette, pick up a manuscript page, bang away on the typewriter, hold a conversation and repeat everything I said to him."[15] His tempo was murderous – between 1967 and 1968 he wrote no less than twenty-two titles.

Wood's novels have been lost and long forgotten, and most of them remain inaccessible for present-day readers and scholars of pornographic fiction. On eBay, *Young, Black and Gay* is offered for $280 and *Orgy of the Dead* (1966) for $500. Only in the mid-1990s, thanks to the success of Tim Burton's motion picture, were some of his works reprinted and made available for wider audiences. Nowadays, the largest known collection of Wood's pornographic material is held at Cornell University's Human Sexuality Archive (boo-hooray.com).

*Devil Girls* (1967, reprinted in 1995) was written during Wood's most productive period, and it tapped into the juvenile delinquency novel, which was a genre that appeared in American popular fiction in the early 1950s. Hundreds of cheap paperback novels were published in that era that presented the misdeeds of American youth. As McIntyre observes, these novels brimming with brutality "were spawned by a combination of the social, economic, and political shifts that were transforming post-war America and revolutionizing the world of US publishing."[16] *Devil Girls* is set in the fictional coastal

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[14] See Sol Yurick, "The Typewriter Was His Camera. Devil Girls and the Shadowy Literary Career of Edward D. Wood, Jr.," in *Girl Gangs, Biker Boys, and Real Cool Cats: Pulp Fiction and Youth Culture, 1950 to 1980,* ed. Iain McIntyre and Andrew Nette (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2017). Kindle.

[15] Qtd. in Grey, *Nightmare of Ecstasy*, 140.

[16] Bill Osgerby, "The Pulp Delinquents. The Teenage Crime Wave and 1950s Pulp Fiction," in *Girl Gangs, Biker Boys, and Real Cool Cats: Pulp Fiction and*

Texas town of Almanac, a bleak place close to the Mexican border and therefore an entry point for drug traffickers. It is plagued by teenage gangs, and Buck Rhodes, the local sheriff, is not able to stop violence and mayhem from happening. Rhodes tries to prevent a drug-trafficking operation which is about to take place where Lark, a ruthless smuggler, is going to use girls from the Chicks, a local gang, to carry heroin and marihuana in custom-tailored bras and panties from his boat to the town. Given Wood's lifelong fixation on women's lingerie, the plan is not surprising at all.[17] Rhodes learned about the operation from a lovely schoolteacher "who had overheard the information while she was being raped and fatally mutilated by a gang of sadistic juvenile delinquents."[18] The Chicks' members include Dee, a heroin junkie; Babs, a lesbian; and Rhoda, whose sister Lila used to lead the gang but who was now in jail for murdering their father.

Contrary to other Wood's novels, *Devil Girls* does not include many autobiographical features. There are no transvestites and only one reference to an angora sweater, for which Wood had a strong fetish. On the other hand, the novel is brimming with unprecedented violence. In order to earn her fix, Dee must suffer through a violent lesbian orgy with local prostitutes where she is forced to "strap on the dildo and take on the snaggle-toothed bitch called Mazie."[19] The Chicks do not hesitate to murder anyone who would interfere with their plans – Rick and Lonnie, members of the town's boys' gang, are brutally blown to smithereens after they light up a stick of dynamite in the dark instead of a candle as they are preparing their shot of heroine. Lila escapes from the prison, hitchhikes a car, lets the driver have sex with her, and then kills him with a whisky bottle afterwards: "…with a scream of delight, Lila could hold it no longer…she exploded, and she exploded again and her little ass was flying up and down on the seat…and when the last of the heat subsided and he was still working at her titties, she slammed the bottle hard across his left ear. He sunk to the floor with only a slight

*Youth Culture, 1950 to 1980,* ed. Iain McIntyre and Andrew Nette (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2017). Kindle.

[17] See Yurick, "Typewriter was his Camera."

[18] Ed Wood, Jr., *Devil Girls* (London: Gorse, 1995), chap. 1, Kindle.

[19] Wood, *Devil Girls*, chap. 6.

moan."[20] It is clear that thanks to the 1960s sexual liberation movement, publishers could afford to publish explicit sex scenes that could barely be imagined just ten years earlier without the fear of censorship.

McIntyre and Nette claim that the level of sexual violence in some of the paperback novels can be disturbing, even to the modern reader.[21] However, the combination of sex and violence was nothing new in the 1960s. Since the mid-nineteenth century, it was a staple of popular crime fiction in the United States. Some of the best-selling novels of the nineteenth century, such as George Lippard's *Quaker City* and George Thompson's *City Crimes*, fused sexual perversity with brutality. Furthermore, during the heyday of pulp magazines in the 1930s, a company ironically named Culture Publications launched a series of titles which took elements from well-established genres such as detective, adventure, and mystery pulps and spiced them up with lechery, lust, and bare bosoms. The formula proved to be a huge success, and *Spicy Detective*, *Spicy Mystery*, and *Spicy Adventure* become some of the best-selling pulps of the era. The covers of the new titles suggested that something new had appeared on the magazine racks – they usually depicted attractive women with their clothes in shreds being menaced by all types of evil-eyed villains. The plots featured "pretty young women threatened with being stripped, beaten, tortured, or even mutilated by any number of merciless gangsters or violent criminals."[22] These damsels in distress were eventually rescued by hard-boiled private dicks who, as a reward, could enjoy the charms these girls had denied their tormentors.[23]

Ed Wood's first novel, *Killer in Drag* (1963), was originally called *Black Lace Drag*. The main protagonist is Glen Marker/Glenda

[20] Wood, *Devil Girls*, chap. 5.

[21] See Iain McIntyre and Andrew Nette, "Savage Streets and Secret Swingers. The Longed-for World of Pulp Fiction and Youth Culture," in *Girl Gangs, Biker Boys, and Real Cool Cats: Pulp Fiction and Youth Culture, 1950 to 1980,* ed. Iain McIntyre and Andrew Nette (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2017). Kindle.

[22] Peter Haining, *The Classic Era of American Pulp Magazines* (Chicago: A Cappella, 2001), 82.

[23] However, due to censorship restrictions, there was still a boundary that the publishers in the 1930s would not cross. Sex was never explicit and authors were advised to avoid complete nudity of female characters.

Satin, most likely the first transgender assassin in the history of American crime fiction.[24] Working for "the Syndicate", Glen becomes Glenda when he is on the job. By killing for money, he is hoping to earn enough money for sex change surgery and then plans to quit the Syndicate afterwards: "The Syndicate had a long arm, but after the operation which would make Glenda a real girl, she could well disappear forever from their grasp. Oh the ecstasy of it. The love of life Glen felt when he realized, soon it would be possible to be the girl he had always dreamed of himself being. Never again would he have to attire himself in the horror of men's attire."[25] The problems begin when he is accused, ironically, of a murder he did not commit. Then the plot becomes rather chaotic. Glen finds himself on the run through the entire country, often donning full drag and becoming Glenda to evade the police. Through a backwater Colorado town, where he buys a carnival as a cover, Glen finally escapes to California. The novel ends with the Syndicate sending another transgender killer, Paul/Pauline, to take care of Glen/Glenda.

*Killer in Drag* contains extremely detailed descriptions of female clothing, and the novel is probably the greatest homage to angora sweaters ever written: "'Angora,' she said aloud. 'What a delightful sound. What a magnificent feeling.' She opened one hook on her fur coat and let her right hand enter the opening. A pleasant sensation surged through her body as the hand felt the soft angora fur which surrounded her left breast. She squeezed harder – she rubbed it – the sensation overwhelmed her – She sighed aloud."[26] And Glenda is not the only character with a weakness for angora. Her sweaters are appreciated by straight male protagonists as well: "Four more words. Jake had heard four more words from those beautiful lips, from that lovely face, from that exotic creature. Jake's wife would surely catch hell that night. Jake even considered buying one of those fuzzy sweaters like Glenda was wearing, for his wife. Just considered it however,

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[24] *Glen or Glenda* is also a title of a 1953 faux documentary about sex change which Wood wrote and directed and in which he played the role of Glen.
[25] Ed Wood, Jr., *Killer in Drag* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1999), chap. 5, Kindle.
[26] Wood, *Killer in Drag*, chap. 5.

because almost immediately he had a mental picture of his wife wearing such a sweater – all two hundred pounds of her. Jake was shaking the horrible thought from his mind as Mouse spoke to him."[27] Wood also wrote a sequel, *Death of a Transvestite* (1967), which finds Glen on death row. It is there that he agrees to narrate the story of his last weeks in California in return for his last wish: to be electrocuted in full drag.

Paperbacks revolutionized reading habits by making the public "comfortable with the idea that a book could contain writing that got some readers titillated or aroused and made other readers squirm or blush" and they "helped to make the book world safe not only for sex but for the gross, the shocking, and the transgressive."[28] Although badly written, the themes in many of them reflected various anxieties of the 1950s and 1960s, be it juvenile delinquents, biker gangs, homosexuals, heroin junkies, or sometimes all of these at once. Nowadays they are cherished and collected for their lurid covers, and they remain important cultural artifacts of a remarkable era.

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[27] Wood, *Killer in Drag*, chap. 3.
[28] Menand, "Pulp's Big Moment."

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# NOT A CRITICAL FAILURE: ON THE IMMEDIATE CRITICAL RECEPTION OF ARTHUR KOESTLER'S *THE AGE OF LONGING*

## *Zénó Vernyik*

ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the immediate critical reception of *The Age of Longing* (1951), Arthur Koestler's penultimate novel, in reaction to recent claims alleging that the novel was a "critical failure." As this paper shows, however, these statements are either based on second-hand information, or a handful of reviews not constituting a representative sample of the whole reception. Therefore, an attempt has been made at reconstructing the reception on the basis of 59 reviews. The results show a balanced general reception, a positive reception in the UK, and a very negative one in the US. The latter is shown to be strongly biased, however. Three specific types of bias are identified: (1) emotional reaction to the book's criticism of Americans and the US in general; (2) hardline, Comintern-conform total rejection of any criticism of Communism; (3) Orientalist rejection of the novel's alleged "Eastern" way of thinking.

KEYWORDS: Arthur Koestler, novel, critical reception, biased, Orientalism

## INTRODUCTION

The present article analyzes the immediate critical reception of Arthur Koestler's *The Age of Longing* (1951), the sixth of the seven novels published in his lifetime and the third one written in English.[1] Rarely

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[1] Arthur Koestler, *The Age of Longing* (New York: Macmillan, 1951). His first two novels were written in German and translated into English for publication: *The Gladiators*, trans. Edith Simon (London: Jonathan Cape, 1939); *Darkness at Noon*, trans. Daphne Hardy (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940). Subsequent translations into other languages had to be made from the English edition since the German original MSS were lost during WWII. This situation has changed only recently with the rediscovery of a copy of the original MS of *Darkness at Noon* in Zurich by Matthias Weßel in 2015, and his subsequent retrieval of the MS of *The Gladiators* from Moscow (following up on a hint of Michael Scammell's).

discussed these days, those sources that do refer to this novel, even if only in passing, tend to classify it as one of his least successful literary texts. A survey of these sources shows that they mostly base this position on their perception of the novel's critical reception at the time of its publication, as well as on Koestler's own negative attitude about this novel.

Yet, an actual analysis of the whole critical reception, or at least what is possible to reconstruct of that reception more than sixty years later, shows that any understanding which talks of a "critical failure"[2] or "largely negative critical responses"[3] is essentially mistaken. A careful classification of fifty-nine reviews shows a rather balanced reception, at least as long as all reviews published in English are considered. A comparison of the novel's British and US reception, however, shows a large contrast between the book's criticism in these two countries: British reviews provide the majority of all appraisals published, and the general picture of the reception in the UK is positive; in contrast, there is a surprisingly low number of reviews published in the US (fourteen only) and the general picture there is very negative.

Based on an analysis of the book's US reviews, I show that their position is biased, and thus their negative verdicts are mostly based on fallacious grounds and have little or nothing to do with the novel's merits and weaknesses. In fact, three distinct types of bias could be identified in those reviews: (1) an emotional reaction to the book's criticism of the United States' role in the Cold War and its critical portrayal of Americans; (2) a hardline, Comintern-conform total rejection of its criticism of Communism; and (3) an Orientalist rejection of the novel's 'Eastern' way of thinking.

## 1. THE NOVEL'S STATUS IN KOESTLER STUDIES

In German and Hungarian, Koestler's oeuvre has consistently attracted attention over the past decades. A cursory glance at the German

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[2] Edward Saunders, *Arthur Koestler* (London: Reaktion Books, 2017), 92.
[3] Michael Scammell, *Koestler: The Literary and Political Odyssey of a Twentieth-Century Skeptic* (New York: Random House, 2009), 393.

scholarly output, even if artificially limited to the last fifteen years and to Koestler-themed books only, finds monographs by Joseph Peter Strelka,[4] Elisabeth Prinz[5] and Matthias Weßel[6] and an essay-collection.[7] Recent Hungarian reception is also very similar, with Mihály Szívós' volume aiming at analyzing Koestler's oeuvre as a whole, literary and non-fiction texts alike,[8] Tamás Staller's monograph discussing Koestler as a consistently Jewish intellectual,[9] and two recent biographies attempting to provide extended analyses of his novels in their intellectual contexts besides reconstructing their author's life story.[10]

The situation in English, however, is radically different. While a new volume of essays was published in late 2021,[11] the last similar volume appeared in 1977,[12] and that one merely reprinted older texts, most of which were originally published in the 1930s and 40s, with only one of them dating from the 1970s. Similarly, the last monograph in English on Koestler's fiction was published in 1984.[13] Besides these, three biographies form the backbone of Koestler's 21st century reception in English.[14] Yet none of these three volumes takes the effort to attempt

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[4] Joseph Peter Strelka, *Arthur Koestler: Autor – Kämpfer – Visionär* (Tübingen: Francke, 2006).

[5] Elisabeth Prinz, *Im Körper des Souveräns: politische Krankheitsmetaphern bei Arthur Koestler*, Wiener Arbeiten zur Literatur 25 (Wien: Braumüller, 2011).

[6] Matthias Weßel, *Arthur Koestler: Die Genese eines Exilschriftstellers* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2021).

[7] Robert G. Weigel, *Arthur Koestler: Ein Heller Geist in Dunkler Zeit* (Tübingen: Francke, 2009).

[8] Mihály Szívós, *Koestler Arthur: Tanulmányok és esszék* (Budapest: Typotex, 2006).

[9] Tamás Staller, *Menekülés az emlékezetbe: A zsidó Koestler tudásszociológiai portréja* (Budapest: Logos, 2007).

[10] László Márton, *Koestler, a lázadó* (Budapest: Pallas, 2006); Zsuzsanna Körmendy, *Arthur Koestler: Harcban a diktatúrákkal* (Budapest: XX. Század Intézet, 2007).

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[13] Mark Levene, *Arthur Koestler* (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1984).

[14] David Cesarani, *Arthur Koestler: The Homeless Mind* (London: Heinemann, 1998); Scammell, *Koestler*; Saunders, *Arthur Koestler*.

to analyze any of Koestler's literary texts in detail – unlike Strelka, Márton and Körmendy (2007).[15] Articles and chapters published in English in the same period have rarely ventured beyond commentary on *Darkness at Noon*, and even when they have, as Uwe Klawitter or Stephen Ingle,[16] they have done so to comment either on *The Gladiators* or *Arrival and Departure*,[17] but certainly not the rest of Koestler's oeuvre.

Fortunately, this decades-long hiatus in Koestler Studies seems to have come to an end recently, with an almost torrential wave of interest. Starting sometime around 2012 and the trend growing especially strong since 2015, new contributions in the English language on Koestler's fiction have appeared in print by James Duban,[18] Henry

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[15] Strelka, *Arthur Koestler*; Márton, *Koestler, a Lázadó*; Körmendy, *Arthur Koestler: Harcban a Diktatúrákkal*. In fact, Saunders' text is little else than a short summary of the work of earlier biographers, above else Michael Scammell's text and Christian Buckard's definitive German biography, *Arthur Koestler: Ein Extremes Leben 1905–1983* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2004), with frequent references to that of Cesarani's tome as well as Iain Hamilton's text written shortly before Koestler's death: *Koestler: A Biography* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1982). While this assessment might sound unnecessarily harsh and critical, not only the text's references evidence this fact, but Saunders himself also admits this much: "It is based on existing bibliographical information and is indebted to the studies by Michael Scammell and others" *Arthur Koestler*, 13.

[16] Uwe Klawitter, *The Theme of Totalitarianism in "English" Fiction: Koestler, Orwell, Vonnegut, Kosinski, Burgess, Atwood, Amis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), 29–56; Stephen Ingle, *Narratives of British Socialism* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 65–76.

[17] *Arrival and Departure* (New York: Macmillan, 1943).

[18] "Arthur Koestler and Meyer Levin: The Trivial, the Tragic, and Rationalization Post Factum in Roth's 'Eli, the Fanatic,'" *Philip Roth Studies* 7, 2 (2011): 171–186; "'That Butcher, Imagination': Arthur Koestler and the Bisociated Narration of Philip Roth's *Indignation*," *Philip Roth Studies* 8, 2 (2012): 145–160; "Sartre and Koestler: Bisociation, Nothingness, and the Creative Experience in Roth's *The Anatomy Lesson*," *Philosophy and Literature* 41, 1 (2017): 55–69; "Narrative Self-Absolution and Political Tyranny in *Moby Dick* and *Darkness at Noon*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 54, 3 (2018): 237–60; "Philip Roth, Arthur Koestler, and the Varieties of Indignation," *Philip Roth Studies* 14, 2 (2018): 51–65.

Innes MacAdam,[19] Axel Stähler,[20] and Zénó Vernyik,[21] with further contributions by Howard Gaskill,[22] Sissy Helff,[23] David Herman,[24]

[19] "Dramatizing Roman History: Spartacus in Fiction and Film," *The RAG* 10, 2 (2015): 1–5; "How *Der Sklavenkrieg* Became *The Gladiators*: Reflections on Edith Simon's Translation of Arthur Koestler's Novel," *International Journal of English Studies* 17, 1 (June 28, 2017): 37–59; "Illustrating *The Gladiators*: Edith Simon's Lost Sketches for Arthur Koestler's Spartacus Novel. Part 1.," *The RAG* 12, 1 (2017): 10–13; "Illustrating *The Gladiators*: Edith Simon's Lost Sketches for Arthur Koestler's Spartacus Novel. Part 2.," *The RAG* 12, 2 (2017): 11–15; "New Light on Translating Arthur Koestler's *The Gladiators*: Unpublished Correspondence from the Edith Simon Archive," *Translation and Literature* 29, 2 (July 1, 2020): 220–232. MacAdam also has an earlier piece published in a relatively little-known Polish journal: "Arthur Koestler's *The Gladiators* & Hellenistic History: Essenes, Iambulus & the 'Sun City', Qumran & the DSS," *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia* 4 (2006): 69–92.

[20] "'Almost Too Good to Be True': Israel in British Jewish Fiction, Pre-Lebanon," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Modern Jewish Fiction*, ed. David Brauner and Axel Stähler (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 237–252; "'Historical Argument' or 'Cowboys and Indian'? Arnold Wesker's TV Screenplay of Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*," *Jewish Film & New Media* 5, 2 (2017): 199–226; "Making Peace or Piecemeal? Arnold Wesker's Screenplay and Wolfgang Storch's TV Adaptation of Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*," *Jewish Film & New Media* 6, 1 (2018): 28–66. Stähler also has an earlier publication in German. He discusses Koestler's *Thieves in the Night: Chronicle of an Experiment* (London: Macmillan, 1946) in his *Literarische Konstruktionen Jüdischer Postkolonialität. Das Britische Palästinamandat in Der Anglophonen Jüdischen Literatur* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2009).

[21] "'He Is Not English, He Is Not a Novelist; And How Far Is He Even Likeable?' On the Critical Reception of Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*," *Atlantis. Journal of the Spanish Association for Anglo-American Studies* 38, 1 (June 21, 2016): 71–88; "'Straight out of the Button-Molder's Own Ladle': On the Complexity of Characters in Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*," *International Journal of English Studies* 16, no. 2 (December 12, 2016): 25–43; "'We Are Trained to Be Cynical': Arthur Koestler's *The Call-Girls* as a Campus Novel," *Brno Studies in English* 44, 2 (2018): 157–175; Zénó Vernyik, "'Exceptionally Feeble'? The Role of Circumcision in Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*," *Ostrava Journal of English Philology* 11, 2 (2019): 25–41.

Elizabeth M. Holt,[25] Jeremy Salt,[26] Shalini Satkunanandan,[27] Richard Shorten,[28] Mihai I. Spariosu,[29] Matthias Weßel,[30] and Gianna Zocco.[31] In fact, in retrospect, the year 2021 might easily be remembered as a momentous year in Koestler-studies, because besides the already mentioned new volume, *Arthur Koestler's Fiction and the Genre of the Novel: Rubashov and Beyond* and the articles of Elizabeth M. Holt and Jeremy Salt, Henry Innes MacAdam's recent volume, *Outlook and Insight*, offering a significant contribution to the discussion of Koestler's *The Gladiators* also appeared in that year (in October 2021 with a 2022 copyright),[32] alongside *The Gladiators vs. Spartacus*, a

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[22] "Back-Translation as Self-Translation: The Strange Case of *Darkness at Noon*," *Translation and Literature* 29, 3 (2020): 372–390.

[23] "The Representation of Refugees in Arthur Koestler's *Arrival and Departure* and Caryl Phillips' *A Distant Shore*," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century British and American War Literature*, ed. Adam Piette and Mark Rawlinson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 317–325.

[24] "'Yesterday's Man'? In Defense of Arthur Koestler," *Salmagundi* 170–171 (2011): 260–276; "Jewish Émigré and Refugee Writers in Britain," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Modern Jewish Fiction*, ed. David Brauner and Axel Stähler (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 188–98.

[25] "Resistance Literature and Occupied Palestine in Cold War Beirut," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 50, 1 (2021): 3–18.

[26] "'Hebrew Tarzans' from Arthur Koestler's *Thieves in the Night* to Netflix and *Fauda*," *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies* 20, 1 (2021): 45–61.

[27] *Extraordinary Responsibility. Politics Beyond the Moral Calculus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[28] *Modernism and Totalitarianism: Rethinking the Intellectual Sources of Nazism and Stalinism, 1945 to the Present* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[29] *Modernism and Exile: Liminality and the Utopian Imagination* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[30] "'Becoming Anglicized?' The Increasing Importance of English Characters in the Exile Novels of Robert Neumann and Arthur Koestler," *Moravian Journal of Literature and Film* 5, 2 (2014): 41–50.

[31] "The Hot-House Atmosphere of Cell Number 40[4]: Space and Identity in Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*," *Arcadia* 49, 1 (June 1, 2014): 139–157.

[32] *Outlook & Insight: New Research and Reflections on Arthur Koestler's* The Gladiators (Coesfeld: Elsinor, 2022).

definitive, two-volume treatment of Hollywood's failed effort to film Koestler's novel (published in 2021 with a 2020 copyright).[33]

Yet, practically none of those sources have anything to say on Koestler's penultimate novel published in English, *The Age of Longing*.[34] A brief survey of Koestler's biographies and the few volumes available in English on his writing would similarly leave one with the impression that *The Age of Longing* was one of Koestler's least interesting and least complex novels. Mark Levene, for example, introduces the novel in these terms:

> Whatever their individual merits or flaws, the novels considered thus far [i.e. *The Gladiators* (1939), *Darkness at Noon* (1940), *Arrival and Departure* (1943), and *Thieves in the Night* (1946)] all possess an undeniable vitality. In these works, Koestler lays just claim upon the reader's admiration for the imaginative shape he makes of history and political ideas. . . . But with *The Age of Longing* (1951), . . . intellectual vigor and literary control fall away.[35]

For him, although "Koestler never found it easy to reconcile art and politics," it is only in this novel that "the task became insurmountable or simply trivial compared with his need to punish actual individuals and an entire culture,"[36] leading to a novel where "[v]irtually all life . . . suffocates under Koestler's vision of the rot at the core of European civilization."[37] Michael Scammell likewise has little appreciation for the novel: for him, it seems "rather dated now."[38] He stresses that "Koestler

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[33] Henry Innes MacAdam, Duncan Cooper, and Fiona Radford, *The Gladiators vs. Spartacus: Dueling Productions in Blacklist Hollywood*, 2 vols. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2021).

[34] The one exception is Zénó Vernyik, "Can There Be Multiple Keys? *The Age of Longing* and the Genre of the Roman-à-Clef," in *Arthur Koestler's Fiction and the Genre of the Novel: Rubashov and Beyond*, ed. Zénó Vernyik (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), 33–57.

[35] Mark Levene, *Arthur Koestler* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1985), 113.

[36] Levene, *Arthur Koestler*, 114.

[37] Levene, *Arthur Koestler*, 118.

[38] Scammell, *Koestler*, xix.

*rightly* had serious misgivings about the novel," and concludes with the statement that "*The Age of Longing* was 'not a novel,' for its characters possessed little flesh and blood of their own,"[39] essentially repeating a favorite critical remark of British reviewers regarding Koestler's fiction.[40] Although much more appreciative than Levene and Scammell, Michael J. Ward also claims that "the novel falls short of the standard attained in the ethical trilogy."[41] David Cesarani has virtually the same opinion:

> *The Age of Longing* set out to create a mood of ennui and doom. Whereas Chekhov could do this with humour and pathos, Koestler's jokes are as flat as his characters. The novel feels contrived and disastrously ill-judged, for all the craftsmanship poured into it.[42]

Mihály Szívós also considers this book one of Koestler's weakest and least interesting. For him, it is a mere *roman-à-thèse*, with weak characters. In his opinion, the novel "is no longer based on such rich personal experience as those supporting the writing of *Darkness at Noon* or *Arrival and Departure*, this is why the novel's artistic execution is also weaker, less authentic"[43] than those of his other works. For Szívós, the novel is clearly "the product of writer's crisis, and Koestler had to face the fact that he was burnt out as an author of fiction."[44] László

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[39] Scammell, *Koestler*, 377 (emphasis mine).

[40] For more on this aspect see Vernyik, "'He Is Not English, He Is Not a Novelist; And How Far Is He Even Likeable?'"; Vernyik, "'Straight out of the Button-Molder's Own Ladle.'"

[41] "God and the Novelists 7: Arthur Koestler," *Expository Times* 110, 5 (1999): 136.

[42] Cesarani, *Arthur Koestler*, 381.

[43] Szívós, *Koestler Arthur: Tanulmányok és esszék*, 95: "már nem támaszkodhat olyan gazdag, személyesen is megélt tapasztalatokra, mint amilyenek a *Sötétség délben* vagy az *Érkezés és elindulás* megírását támogatták, ezért a művészi kivitel is gyengébbre, kevésbé hitelesre sikerült" (English translation mine).

[44] Szívós, *Koestler Arthur*, 96: "írói válság terméke, és Koestler kénytelen számot vetni azzal, hogy irodalmi alkotóként kimerült" (English translation mine).

Márton has a view that is hardly any more positive of the book's merits. As he explains:

> *The Age of Longing*, unlike his three previous novels, is hardly taken into consideration by literary criticism. Maybe because – to use Orwell's phrase – it is indeed a political novel. As all works, it shows the influence, or if one prefers, stigma, of its time, but hardly offers much more. It is a faithful document of the Cold War, an engaged work in the noble sense of this expression, but it also makes apparent the unsurmountable boundaries that political activity creates for creativity, enchaining it. Koestler . . . far overreached these boundaries on countless occasions in 1949 and 1950.[45]

Even Koestler's most recent biographer, Edward Saunders, does nothing else but join the condemnatory tone of others, even if with some reservations, when he assesses the novel thus: "Although not without redeeming aspects, it was a thin novel which became a critical failure."[46]

The expressions "critical failure"[47] and "hardly taken into consideration by literary criticism"[48] seem key in these judgments, and a similar view of the novel's reception seems to have influenced Michael

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[45] Márton, *Koestler, a Lázadó*, 217: "*A sóvárgás korát*, előző három regényétől eltérően, alig tartja számon a kritika. Talán, mert – Orwell kifejezésével – valóban politikai regény. Mint minden mű, korának bélyegét, ha úgy tetszik stigmáját viseli, de nem sokkal többet. A hidegháború hű kordokumentuma, a szó nemes értelmében elkötelezett mű, de megjeleníti a határokat is, melyeken túl a politikai cselekvés már bilincsbe foglalja az alkotóerőt. Koestler . . . 1949–1950-ben számtalanszor és messze túllépett ezeken a határokon" (English translation mine).

[46] Saunders, *Arthur Koestler*, 92. There are a few exceptions, however. Sidney A. Pearson, Jr. and Zsuzsanna Körmendy both consider *The Age of Longing* (1951) an unjustly underrated novel, the latter even opining that it is one of his best works. Cf. Sidney A. Pearson, *Arthur Koestler*, Twayne's English Authors 228 (Boston, MA: Twayne, 1978), 85; Körmendy, *Arthur Koestler: Harcban a Diktatúrákkal*, 49–50.

[47] Saunders, *Arthur Koestler*, 92.

[48] Márton, *Koestler, a Lázadó*, 217: "alig tartja számon a kritika" (English translation mine).

Scammell's assessment as well, since he supports his negative assessment with the book's "largely negative critical responses."[49] And although his interpretation of the critical reception is milder, David Cesarani also finds it important to mention the novel's "mixed reviews in Britain and the US."[50] That is, one could say that not only do Koestler's commentators seem to have a virtually complete agreement on the book being the weakest one to have come from Koestler's pen, but they also appear to base this judgment, at least partially, on their perception of the novel's critical reception, which, with the exception of Cesarani, they all see as an essentially negative one.

This view, in fact, is not far from how Koestler himself saw his novel for a rather long time. It is true that straight after the novel's publication and the appearance of the first reviews he was merely laconic and objective about its reception when he wrote: "Age of Longing out next Monday. Reviews good to tepid to bitchy; but we are accustomed to worse."[51] Yet, this objective view changed completely over the years. In retrospect, the novel seemed positively a failure to him, and this did not change until decades later:

> He [Arthur Koestler] worked on Age of Long. & reached page 180 – half way.[52] . . . He finds that The Age of Longing is not the bad novel he always thought it was. It had such bad reviews in America. I [Cynthia Koestler] always told him he was wrong in disliking it.[53] I'm glad that he has to read it now, because I feel it will help him with the novella.[54]

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[49] Scammell, *Koestler*, 393.

[50] Cesarani, *Arthur Koestler*, 382.

[51] Entry for February 23, 1951 in diary labeled "June 1949 – March '51," MS2305, Koestler Archive, Center for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh Library.

[52] He was reworking the novel at the time for a new edition to be published by Hutchinson in their Danube Edition of Koestler's collected work.

[53] Koestler stopped writing his own diaries when Cynthia moved in with him and asked her to write them for him instead.

[54] *The Call-Girls*. He was working on several projects simultaneously. Entry for February 2, 1970 in diary labeled "Dec '69 – Nov '70 DIARY," MS2305,

His negative feelings were so strong that he was reluctant to even talk about the book: "Mark Levene, a young Canadian doing a thesis on political writing[,] came to see A. Talked about the Age of Longing which A not keen to discuss."[55] There is also strong evidence that after the publication of *The Age of Longing*, Koestler started to seriously doubt his own abilities as a novelist, since there are several entries in his diaries voicing such a view: "this time my chronic doubts whether I was meant to write novels have lead [sic] to an inner showdown. The Vienna novel I abandoned, . . . the characters didn't come to life in me. One should only write novels which, if unwritten, would leave a hole – I couldn't see that this would be the case."[56] He even goes as far as to state his general lack of talent as a novelist: "impotent as a novelist, too bored to write essays."[57] In other words, one could even speculate that the more than twenty-year-long hiatus in his literary work between *The Age of Longing* and *The Call-Girls*[58] was, at least partially, a direct result of the former's negative reviews and Koestler's full acceptance of their verdict, a view that Michael Scammell seems to share:

> the largely negative critical responses to *The Age of Longing* had deeply depressed him, while the wrangling with Kingsley had poisoned even the success of the play of *Darkness at Noon* in New York. At the age of forty-six, he sensed he was at a crossroads. He hadn't written an artistically successful novel in

Koestler Archive, Center for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh Library.

[55] Entry for March 10–16 in diary labeled "Dec. 68 – Dec. 69," MS2305, Koestler Archive, Center for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh Library.

[56] Entry for July 24, 1954 in diary labeled "29.IV.1954 – 19.VI.1955," MS2305, Koestler Archive, Center for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh Library.

[57] Entry for July 29, 1954 in diary labeled "29.IV.1954 – 19.VI.1955," MS2305, Koestler Archive, Center for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh Library.

[58] Arthur Koestler, *The Call-Girls. A Tragi-Comedy with Prologue and Epilogue* (London: Hutchinson, 1972).

ten years, and he began to consider turning the panoramic autobiographical novel he had planned in Paris into straight autobiography. . . . He was beginning to realize that autobiography, with its mixture of introspection and documentary reportage, actually suited his talents better than fiction, which required a depth of psychological insight into other characters that he found hard to achieve.[59]

This view, i.e. that Koestler had a negative opinion of the novel, and that this opinion was the result of the massive amount of negative reviews, is also shared by Zsuzsanna Körmendy who otherwise disagrees both with the reviews and with those who see the novel as a failure:

> I mention this only in parentheses, but it seems Koestler's interpretations of his own works were at times dishonest in the sense that he did not undertake to make a commitment against the criticism he received. In other words, he did not "defend" himself. In fact, he at times repeated the claims of the critics in an exaggerated form. This is what we are to see in the case of *The Age of Longing* as well, although that novel is his best after *Darkness at Noon.*[60]

In fact, Koestler's own comments on the novel and his actions as a writer after the book's publication, as phrased in *Bricks to Babel*, completely support this view:

> *The Age of Longing* is . . . the only one of my novels which I dislike (except for a few chapters) . . . It also made me realise

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[59] Scammell, *Koestler*, 393.

[60] Körmendy, *Arthur Koestler: Harcban a Diktatúrákkal*, 49: "Csak zárójelben jegyzem meg, hogy Koestlernek a saját műveire vonatkozó értelmezései némelykor mintha nem lennének eléggé őszinték abban az értelemben, hogy nem vállalja az őt ért kritikával szembeni állásfoglalást, azaz nem 'védi' magát. Sőt, néha szinte túlzóan megismétli a kritika állításait. Ezt látjuk majd a *The Age of Longing*nál is, amely pedig a *Sötétség délben* után a legjobb regénye" (English translation mine).

that to carry on in the same vein would be repetitive and might become an obsession. To go on repeating oneself may be permissible, and even necessary, for a politician; for a writer it is fatal. . . . [It also] meant a turning away from politics towards a renewed interest in science and philosophy, which was to dominate the second half of my life as a writer.[61]

And that it had a lot to do with the critics is also acknowledged, even if only between the lines: "To refer to oneself as a 'hoarse Cassandra' may sound presumptuous, but so many hostile critics had called me that name so insistently that I felt justified in adopting it for once."[62]

Thus, it seems safe to say that both for the author himself, and for the majority of his posthumous commentators, *The Age of Longing* is Koestler's weakest and least interesting novel, and they all seem to have reached such a view based on the *allegedly* negative reviews.

## 2. THE NOVEL'S RECEPTION IN NUMBERS

It is genuinely surprising, based on the above, that an actual survey of the novel's critical reception[63] paints a radically different picture from

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[61] Arthur Koestler, *Bricks to Babel* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), 277–278.

[62] Koestler, *Bricks to Babel*, 278.

[63] The basis of the analysis is Koestler's own collection of the book's reviews. These documents are accessible as part of the Koestler Papers held at the Special Collections Centre of the University of Edinburgh. This list was then checked against the two published Koestler bibliographies: Reed Merrill and Thomas Frazier, *Arthur Koestler: An International Bibliography* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1979); Frank Day, *Arthur Koestler: A Guide to Research*, Garland Reference Library of the Humanities 612 (New York: Garland, 1987). This updated list was then further verified and extended using the newspaper and journal content of EBSCO, Proquest, JSTOR, and Project MUSE databases, the British Newspaper Archive, as well as compared to Koestler's available biographies and Hans Wagener's article on Koestler's reception in the US: "Die Koestler-Rezeption in den Vereinigten Staaten," in *Arthur Koestler: Ein heller Geist in dunkler Zeit*, ed. Robert G. Weigel (Tübingen: Francke, 2009), 203–218. This has been done to ensure that my coverage is as complete as possible. While one can never say with full conviction that no item could have possibly

the one suggested by the phrases "not a novel,"[64] "critical failure"[65] or "bad novel."[66] In order to be able to classify the reviews, I have applied the scale used in an assessment of the critical reception of Koestler's *Thieves in the Night*:

> In order to be able to provide a general picture of the reception, I created a scale of five categories from *overwhelmingly positive* (+2) to *overwhelmingly negative* (-2), the remaining values being *generally positive* (+1), *neutral* (0) and *generally negative* (-1). The two extremes of the scale stand for reviews that contain few or no statements contradicting the otherwise strongly negative or positive assessment, while balanced reviews, with an even mixture of praise and criticism[,] are situated at the origin. Reviews were assigned the intermediate values of +1 and -1 where it was easy to detect whether they were negative or positive in their final judgment of the novel, yet they nevertheless contained a mixture of praise and criticism.[67]

Using these categories on the 59 reviews published in 1951 that I could find,[68] one ends up with seven overwhelmingly positive reviews (11.9 %), 15 generally positive ones (25.4 %), 13 that can be considered neutral (22 %), nine assessments that are generally negative (15.3 %), and 15 overwhelmingly negative ones (25.4 %). While it is true that

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been left out, there are nevertheless ample grounds to consider that the overview is reasonably representative: it provides a critical assessment of a total of 59 reviews, published between February 25, 1951 and August 1951, 42 of which are British, 14 American, 1 South African, and in 2 cases I could not identify the country of publication.

[64] Scammell, *Koestler*, 377.

[65] Saunders, *Arthur Koestler*, 92.

[66] Entry for February 2, 1970 in diary labeled "Dec '69 – Nov '70 DIARY," MS2305, Koestler Archive, Center for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh Library.

[67] Vernyik, "He Is Not English," 74.

[68] See the Appendix for a complete listing of all reviews. The bibliography only lists directly referenced texts.

there are twice as many reviews on the negative extremity of the scale as those on the positive one, a collapsing of the distinction between the two types of positives, and also between the two types of negatives, shows that there were almost as many positive assessments as negative ones: 22 positive (37.3 %) and 24 negative verdicts (40.7 %) with 13 neutral ones (22 %). That is to say, only around two fifths of the reviews had a negative opinion of the novel, and there were many more positive ones than undecided. Put differently, less than half of the reviews were negative. The novel thus certainly was *not* "a critical failure,"[69] and even Michael Scammell's more cautious claim that the reception was "largely negative"[70] is also unwarranted. If anything, the reception was mixed with a very minimal prevalence of the negative side.

At the same time, Scammell also hints at a slight difference between the novel's British and American reception, opining that the former was "a little better, but not much."[71] In trying to check the truthfulness of this statement, what strikes one first is that of the 59 available reviews, only fourteen were published in the United States. That is, even before one would attempt to compare how positive the receptions were in the two countries, it seems conspicuous in itself that the book received so much less critical attention in the US than in the UK, even more so if one takes into consideration that Koestler's publisher at the time was an American company, and before publishing the book, Koestler even flew over the Atlantic Ocean "to make a quick visit to the United States to confer with his publisher and work on the proofs."[72] And one certainly cannot blame the publishing house for not taking all efforts necessary to make the book visible on the American market: "Advance publicity for the novel was good. Macmillan had printed 100,000 copies, and individual chapters had appeared in *Harper's Magazine* and *Partisan Review*."[73] And those hundred thousand copies did not stay unsold either: "the sales were healthy

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[69] Saunders, *Arthur Koestler*, 92.
[70] Scammell, *Koestler*, 393.
[71] Scammell, *Koestler*, 378.
[72] Scammell, *Koestler*, 370.
[73] Scammell, *Koestler*, 377.

enough and for a while it was number four in the US best-seller lists. It even outstripped *From Here to Eternity*."[74]

To return to the comparison of the novel's British and American reception, it is safe to say that there was indeed a difference between the two, and a much stronger one than Michael Scammell's comment suggests. Of those fourteen reviews published in the United States, one is overwhelmingly positive (7.1 %), two are generally positive (14.3 %), one of them is neutral (7.1 %), four are largely negative (28.6 %), and six are overwhelmingly negative (42.9 %). Or with fewer categories: three of them are positive (21.4 %), one is neutral (7.1 %) and ten reviews are negative (71.4 %). This is certainly a much more negative picture than that of the general reception, and one could, indeed, justifiably call it a "critical failure."[75] The contrast is even stronger if the American reception is not compared to the general picture, but the situation in the United Kingdom only. Of the 42 reviews in total,[76] six are completely positive (14.3 %), 11 are positive in general (26.2 %), 11 are neutral (26.2 %), five are negative in general (11.9 %), and nine are completely negative (21.4 %). With fewer categories this looks as follows: 17 positive reviews (40.5 %), 11 neutral ones (26.2 %), and 14 negative assessments (33.3 %). With only a third of the reviews being negative, and significantly more of the remaining positive than neutral, this can be considered a positive reception.

In other words, a comparison of the novel's British and American receptions leads not to a picture where the former is "a little better, but not much,"[77] but one where the British reception is essentially positive, while the American one is clearly disastrous. This is more or less the opposite of what happened in the case of Koestler's previous novel, *Thieves in the Night*, where "while the novel's American reception was relatively balanced, its British one was overwhelmingly negative."[78]

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[74] Cesarani, *Arthur Koestler*, 382.

[75] Saunders, *Arthur Koestler*, 92.

[76] One of the total number of 59 reviews was published in South Africa, and in two cases I was not able to identify the country of publication.

[77] Scammell, *Koestler*, 378.

[78] Vernyik, "He Is Not English," 72.

At the same time, the reception of *The Age of Longing* mirrors that of the earlier book in a different aspect: reviewers based in the country that is critically portrayed in the novel in question pay considerably less attention to that publication than one would normally expect based on other factors (such as topicality, copies sold or the popularity of the author). In this manner, despite the fact that the theme of *Thieves in the Night* was highly topical from a British point of view, the novel was a best-seller in Britain, and the publisher did invest considerable money and energy in making the book visible on the British market, the British critical press paid subjectively little attention, and objectively less than it did in America.[79] Likewise, although *The Age of Longing* features a plot that touches heavily on the role of the United States in the Cold War, the book was very successful with American readers, and considerable resources were spent on its marketing, nevertheless there was little critical attention to the book in the US, especially in comparison to the British reception.

## 3. AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEGATIVE RECEPTION IN THE UNITED STATES

Given the fact that *Thieves in the Night*'s negative British reception was demonstrably "an angered and biased reaction to its topic and its explicit criticism of Britain's policies,"[80] it seems logical to suppose that a similar American reaction might be lurking behind the excessively negative American view of *The Age of Longing*. After all, even though the novel's plot takes place in Paris and it features a whole range of French intellectuals, one of its main characters, Hydie, is American, and there are a handful of other ones, as well. Perhaps even more crucially, this is a book in which Koestler "dramatised . . . his thoughts and feelings about the deepening crisis in the West,"[81] and Hydie's nationality is crucial here, since "[t]hrough Hydie and her father, [Koestler] also expressed his doubts about the resolve of the Americans

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[79] Vernyik, 74.
[80] Vernyik, 72.
[81] Hamilton, *Koestler*, 162.

in the face of the Communist threat and about the West's ability to stand up to the Russians"[82] in the Cold War. In other words, if *Thieves in the Night* was painful for the British in its criticism of their policies in Palestine and in its sympathetic portrayal of the Jewish settlers' cause, even if that cause involves anti-British terrorist acts, *The Age of Longing* gives just as many reasons for Americans to feel hurt, as this novel openly doubts their ability, if not to stand their ground against the Soviet Union, at the very least to protect Western Europe in the process.

And, in fact, there is strong evidence in the reviews themselves that something like that might be the case. Some reviewers profess to this in a completely frank and explicit manner, admitting that their dislike of the book is based on the novel's lack of belief in the ability and/or willingness of the United States to save Western Europe in case there was a Soviet invasion attempt. Alfred Kazin discusses "the 'pessimism' – about America particularly – that has so outraged some reviewers" and admits that "it certainly has a self-consciously destructive quality that is quite ugly."[83] *Time*'s unnamed reviewer concludes that, in Koestler's view, "the U.S., offering military power without intellectual or moral power, can never command Europe's respect,"[84] while Louis Simpson claims that "Hydie is the daughter of an American colonel, whose task it is to save Europe for democracy,"[85] and he notes that "[i]t is a pity that Koestler could not have let Hydie succeed"[86] at killing Nikitin, the Soviet cultural attaché/spy.

Others, like Anthony West, are more circumspect and implicit, yet similar patterns of thinking are relatively easy to detect. West himself claims that the novel's characters are all Slavic in the disguise of other nationalities, and are thus not representative not only of American values, characteristics and positions, but of those of any other Western nation either: "In fact, all of Mr. Koestler's characters,

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[82] Scammell, *Koestler*, 377.

[83] Alfred Kazin, "Ideology vs. the Novel," *Commentary* 11, 4 (1951): 398.

[84] "Allegory of the '50s," *Time*, February 26, 1951, 109.

[85] Louis Simpson, "Hydie and the Communist," *American Scholar* 20, 3 (1951): 378. This is not factually correct: the colonel's actual task in the novel is much simpler, down to earth and less messianic: to create a list of important cultural figures who would be airlifted from France in case of a Soviet attack.

[86] Simpson, "Hydie and the Communist," 378.

Europeans and Americans alike, are thinly disguised Slavs, trapped in Slav dilemmas and racked by Slav longings. About real Westerners . . . he has nothing to say."[87] This claim is noticeably based on his decision to identify the views expressed in *The Age of Longing* with the views and values of Slav culture, or rather what he takes Slav culture to be:

> The reason Koestler cannot break the hold Communism has on his mind begins to be obvious; he is divided by an unbridgeable gulf from the conception of the individual developed in the West since the Renaissance. . . . The Slav peoples, for a variety of reasons – the split between the Greek Orthodox and the Western churches, the Turkish occupation of the Balkans, and so forth – were largely untouched by all Western cultural developments from the Renaissance onward. They received the humanist tradition, and with it the post-Renaissance idea of the individual, wrapped up in one stunning parcel with industrialism, just as the Japanese did, and after just as much preparation, in the nineteenth century.[88]

Visibly, this categorization paints the picture of a world which is clearly divisible into a developed, culturally superior West, and an inferior, primitive East, the latter delayed by hundreds of years in its development compared to the former. He also sees this East as basically homogenous, confounding Slavs, Greeks, Turks, people of the Balkans, and the Japanese into one backward East. By so doing, he interprets Koestler's novel in an Orientalist framework:

> Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between "the Orient" and (most of the time) "the Occident." Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West as the

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[87] Anthony West, "Some Conceptions of Man," *The New Yorker*, March 17, 1951, 122.
[88] West, "Some Conceptions of Man," 122.

starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, "mind," destiny, and so on.[89]

As Said goes on to explain, in this framework, the West is always taking the superior position, and the East the inferior one. "Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand."[90] It is a strategy clearly identifying the East both with a position of intrinsically lower standing and the position of the "other" at the same time:

> Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying "us" Europeans as against all "those" non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures.[91]

Anthony West's review does exactly this: identifying Koestler's position with that of the East and, as a result, claiming thus its intrinsic and inevitable inferiority, rendering it irrelevant and non-representative.[92] The issue that Said talks of European identity while I

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[89] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 2–3.

[90] Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

[91] Said, *Orientalism*, 7.

[92] It is also worth pointing out that West's claims about Slavic countries having been untouched by the Renaissance is demonstrably factually incorrect. For more on this see e.g. György Endre Szőnyi, "Broadening Horizons of Renaissance Humanism from the Antiquity to the New World," *Primerjalna Književnost* 41, 2 (2018): 5–34; Rolland Paulston, "Imagining Comparative Education: Past, Present, Future," *Compare* 30, 3 (2000): 353–367; Ennio Stipčević, "Renaissance Music in Croatia: Some Introductory Remarks," *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 47, 1 (2006): 99–110; Lindsey Hughes, "Cultural and Intellectual Life," in *From Early Rus' to 1689*, ed. Maureen Perrie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 640–662;

am analyzing an American review is of relatively little concern here. As Said himself explains, Orientalism is only "mainly, [but] not exclusively, . . . a British and French cultural enterprise."[93] What is more, "since World War II America has dominated the Orient, and approaches it as France and Britain once did."[94] Thus, a review published in post-WW II America could readily be just as Orientalist as one would expect from a European source.

At the same time, of course, not all allegations of the novel's American characters not being realistic are Orientalist in nature. For example, for Richard H. Rovere, not only is Hydie not representative of Americans, but no such American as Hydie could exist:

> The American – a middle-class, convent-bred girl in her twenties, intelligent, guilt-ridden and briskly erotic – is Koestler's greatest misfortune. She is, as she appears here, a most improbable young woman, and for her manifest improbability no cheerful justifications can be found.[95]

Why such a combination of characteristics should be improbable, or why improbable would have to automatically mean a failure in characterization is, unfortunately, not explained. Likewise, for Louis Simpson, "[n]either Nikitin [the novel's main Russian character] nor Hydie comes alive,"[96] while *Time*'s anonymous reviewer sees "silly Americans"[97] in the novel. It *is* visibly possible to be upset about the

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Andrzej Walicki, *The Flow of Ideas: Russian Thought from the Enlightenment to the Religious-Philosophical Renaissance*, trans. Jolanta Kozak and Hilda Andrews-Rusiecka (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015); Jonathan Israel, "The Polish and Wider Central European Enlightenment: Was There a Radical Tendency?," *European Review* 23, 3 (2015): 309–20; Ljubinka Trgovčević, "The Enlightenment and the Beginnings of Modern Serbian Culture," *Balcanica* 37 (2006): 103–10.

[93] Said, *Orientalism*, 4.

[94] Said, *Orientalism*, 4.

[95] Richard H. Rovere, "When the Will to Resist Is Gone," *New York Times Book Review*, February 25, 1951, 1.

[96] Simpson, "Hydie and the Communist," 378.

[97] "Allegory of the '50s," 108.

novel's criticism of Americans without making sweeping generalizations about the inferiority of the East.

Finally, the exception to the rule also deserves a mention. Yet another American review, Patrick Goldring's text, while certainly biased, is not a result of Koestler's negative portrayal of American characters. Goldring's assessment was published in the *Daily Worker*, the "official organ of the CPUSA [Communist Party USA]," which "reflected Party policies," and covered events "always with an emphasis on radical movements, on social and economic conditions in working class and minority communities, on labor struggles, racial discrimination, right-wing extremism, and, *of course, the Soviet Union* and the worldwide Communist movement."[98] In fact, although the paper aimed to "practice journalism," it "attracted a number of very good contributors,"[99] and "attempted to speak to a broad American Left that included labor, civil rights, and peace activists, as well as a general audience of unaffiliated progressives,"[100] it nevertheless had a tendency of "echoing the Party line from Moscow and touting a global Marxist ideology."[101] In other words, a novel which is explicitly anti-communist and anti-Soviet could hardly expect a positive review from this paper. And, indeed, the *Daily Worker*, and Patrick Goldring, produced the scolding treatment that one would expect. Goldring portrays the book's critical remarks as an easy and shallow negativism without any answers or solutions:

> The ex-progressive has a much easier time in conversation than he had in the days when he believed in something and had to defend his beliefs. He can now join with the rest of his comfortably-off friends in denouncing the wickedness of the

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[98] Erika Gottfried, "Shooting Back: The *Daily Worker* Photographs Collection," *American Communist History* 12, 1 (2013): 42.
[99] "Take It As Red," *On the Media* (WNYC, January 11, 2008), https://web.archive.org/web/20080821121821/http://onthemedia.org/transcripts/2008/01/11/06.
[100] Gottfried, "Shooting Back: The *Daily Worker* Photographs Collection," 42.
[101] "Take It As Red."

Communists without having to put up anything positive himself.[102]

He also alleges that Koestler is both boring and terror-struck, through the image of urine: "Koestler's pathological hatred of the Soviet Union seems to have overflowed into a stagnant pool round his own feet."[103] And he predictably has a problem with the fact that the book's characters are mostly not from the working class and do not mingle with people from that class; in his view, the novel:

> Revolves round a set of seedy emigres and expatriates who move from salon to night-club and from night-club to hotel bedroom, arguing furiously about politics and religion and life and never coming even remotely into touch with the real life of Paris, of France, or of Europe.[104]

The rest is either not about the novel but about anti-communist intellectuals in general, or is a selection of *ad hominem* attacks.

## CONCLUSION

This paper, similarly to some articles on the reception of Koestler's *The Gladiators*,[105] *Thieves in the Night*[106] and *Arrival and Departure*[107]

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[102] Patrick Goldring, "And Now He Even Hates Himself," *Daily Worker*, 1951.

[103] Goldring, "And Now He Even Hates Himself."

[104] Goldring, "And Now He Even Hates Himself."

[105] Henry Innes MacAdam, "Arthur Koestler and Reception of *The Gladiators*," in *The Gladiators vs. Spartacus: Dueling Productions in Blacklist Hollywood*, by Duncan Cooper, Fiona Radford and Henry Innes MacAdam, 2 vols. (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2021), 1: 11–29.

[106] Vernyik, "He Is Not English"; Vernyik, "Straight out of the Button-Molder's Own Ladle"; Vernyik, "Exceptionally Feeble?"

[107] Zénó Vernyik, "'One of Koestler's Best': An Analysis of the Immediate Critical Reception of *Arrival and Departure*," *Reception: Texts, Readers, Audiences, History* 14, 1 (2022): 5–21.

showed that it is beneficial for an understanding of Arthur Koestler's oeuvre to carry out critical analyses of his books' reception at the time of their publication. This can help overcome the views perpetrated by recent biographies, seeing Koestler's lesser-known novels as unequivocal failures, propounding categorical statements extrapolated from an unrepresentative sample of a handful of cherry-picked reviews,[108] or worse, simply taking over other biographers' verdicts without checking their sources and their validity.[109] Furthermore, since there is very little published on these novels, and even less in English, these reviews can serve as the foundation of attempts at interpreting these books both in a negative sense (i.e. showcasing fallacies and biases that need to be avoided or corrected) and in a positive sense (since they also contain a wide range of insightful remarks). While the theoretical revolution(s) in literary studies might have made such traditional, philological studies as the present one look bookish and old-fashioned, they are nevertheless necessary before any major attempt at understanding Arthur Koestler's contribution to British or World Literature can be undertaken.

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[108] This is the case of Michael Scammell's *Koestler*. Scammell had access to the same reviews in the Koestler Archives that I did, yet consistently made his judgements about the critical reception on the basis of a few selected reviews and his own impressions only, instead of carrying out systematic analyses of the receptions.

[109] This has happened in more than one case, e.g. Márton, *Koestler, a lázadó*; Staller, *Menekülés az emlékezetbe: A zsidó Koestler tudásszociológiai portréja*. Yet the most pronounced case is Edward Saunders' *Arthur Koestler*. In there, as explained above, Saunders turns Scammell's qualified statement about the reception of *The Age of Longing* into a completely unequivocal one without consulting any other sources than Scammell himself.

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APPENDIX: A LIST OF REVIEWS PUBLISHED AT THE TIME OF THE APPEARANCE OF THE NOVEL AND THEIR CATEGORIZATION

The reviews below are categorized based on their place of publication and their general attitude, using five categories ranging from overwhelmingly positive (+2) to overwhelmingly negative (-2). This classification reflects the absolute number of value judgements in the reviews. Those that contain few or no statements contradicting the otherwise strongly negative or positive assessment are classed as the positive and negative extremes of the scale. Balanced reviews, with an even mixture of praise and criticism, are listed under the label "0". Reviews mixing praise and criticism, yet with an easily detectable negative or positive spin, are assigned the intermediate values of +1 and -1.

US

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# THE POST-WAR NETHERLANDS
# OF INSPECTOR VAN DER VALK

*Lenka Žárská*

ABSTRACT: The post-war British crime fiction has seen a turn from the Golden-Age clue puzzle story towards an international context, as well as a change of location from the isolated mansion to the big city. Nicolas Freeling's Inspector Van der Valk series, set in Amsterdam and featuring a Dutch detective, is a great illustration of this development. However, on the example of three novels from the series, *Double-Barrel* (1964), *Because of the Cats* (1963) and *Tsing-Boum* (1969), this article argues that despite the Dutch setting, the novels tell the reader more about the European and British post-war society than they do about the Dutch one, as especially in the cases of class and the attitude towards the Second World War, Freeling tends to project the British society onto its Dutch neighbours.

KEYWORDS: Nicolas Freeling, Van der Valk, detective novel, British literature, post-war society, the Netherlands

INTRODUCTION

From the early American detective story in the form of Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) to Christie's famous Belgian detective Hercule Poirot in the Golden Age, foreign spaces and border crossing have been closely intertwined with the genre of crime fiction.[1] Post-war novels are no exception, with more and more British crime fiction being situated abroad or in an international context. At the same time, the British post-war crime fiction has seen a turn from the traditionally isolated location of the Golden Age clue-puzzle story towards the big city, more typical of the hard-boiled private-eye tradition.

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[1] David Madison, "If It's Tuesday, There Must Be a Murder in Belgium," *World Literature Today* 83, 4 (July−August 2009), 9.

A prominent example of both these trends is the author Nicolas Freeling (1927–2003) with his Inspector Van der Valk series (1962–1989). The series revolves around a Dutch police inspector and is predominantly set in the post-war Netherlands. With the exception of a short story by Leslie Charteris written in 1953,[2] it is in fact the first British detective story set in the Netherlands, and the very first one which makes use of a local detective.[3] Freeling thus has the advantage of introducing the country and its people to British crime fiction readers for the first time. However, this article argues that despite the fact that Freeling was well acquainted with the country, his portrayal of the Netherlands relies much stronger on the British and the European post-war reality than it does on the Dutch one, and throughout the novels, Freeling in many ways projects the British society onto its Dutch neighbours.

## 1. NICOLAS FREELING AND INSPECTOR VAN DER VALK

Nicolas Freeling, an English author of detective fiction, was born in 1927 in London, but spent most of his adult life living in other European countries, including the Netherlands, France, and Ireland.[4] This is strongly reflected in his writing, as his stories are frequently set on the continent: Inspector Van der Valk series primarily in the Netherlands and Henri Castang series in France. But despite the fact that his detectives are native to their countries, Freeling does not focus on the situation in the Netherlands or France respectively: instead, Winston and

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[2] "Amsterdam: The Angel's Eye" published as part of a short story collection *The Saint in Europe*, ed. Ian Dickerson (Seattle: Thomas & Mercer, 2014).

[3] Although we cannot exactly talk about Freeling starting a new trend, especially after 2010 we see a number of British authors publishing crime series situated in the Netherlands, very often featuring a Dutch detective, such as David Hewson with his Detective Pieter Vos series (2015–present) or Jake Woodhouse's Jaap Rykel Amsterdam Quartet (2015–present).

[4] Ann D. Garbett and Fiona Kelleghan, "Nicolas Freeling," in *Critical Survey of Mystery and Detective Fiction*, ed. C. E. Rollyson (Pasadena: Salem Press, 2008), 671.

Mellerski argue, he uses these settings to investigate "a broader European perspective on post-war social and cultural development."[5]

Freeling's interest in the socio-cultural situation of post-war years already hints at the fact that he was a rather unusual writer of detective genre of the time (Freeling's first novel was published in 1962). While frequently compared to his French colleague Georges Simenon, according to Garbett and Kelleghan, Freeling's novels offer more interesting readings than those of his predecessor,[6] dealing for instance with the way that tradition and modernity find place in the post-war era.[7] This is no way means that his novels would not fall under the category of crime fiction; it is the combination of the crime fiction formula with the commentary on the society of the time which makes Freeling's novels especially compelling.

Freeling's Inspector Van der Valk series best falls under what Dove calls "the Great Policeman school"[8] which appeared in both Britain and the United States after the Second World War as a more realistic development of the clue-puzzle story.[9] While Van der Valk is part of the police force and throughout the series even rises through its ranks, we cannot yet talk of the police procedural as such, as the detective frequently works alone and is not quite interested in the inner workings of the police system; in fact, he frequently ignores it.

In its name, the Great Policeman school of course refers to the older tradition of the Great Detective, such as Sherlock Holmes or Hercule Poirot. Although Freeling rejects the classic formula in which the crime becomes a puzzle disconnected from the outside world, his sleuths follow the Great Detective tradition in being highly intelligent as well as eccentric, Van der Valk for instance being described as

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[5] Robert P. Winston and Nancy C. Mellerski, *The Public Eye: Ideology and the Police Procedural* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), 92.

[6] Garbett and Kelleghan, "Nicolas Freeling," 672.

[7] Carol Shloss, "The Van der Valk Novels of Nicolas Freeling: Going by the Book," in *Essays on Detective Fiction*, ed. Bernard Benstock (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1983), 161.

[8] George N. Dove, *The Police Procedural* (Bowling Green: Popular Press, 1982), 159.

[9] Stephen Knight, *Crime Fiction, 1800-2000: Detection, Death, Diversity*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004): 136.

"obstinate, brutal, pragmatic"[10] as well as "unorthodox" and "irreverent."[11]At the same time, and especially in regard to the topic of otherness, Freeling continues the tradition of clue-puzzle novels by making both the detective and the villain outsiders to the community, and what is more, the detective frequently arrives to this community only with the purpose of solving the crime and subsequently leaves. Finally, an essential aspect which connects Freeling's novels to the classic detective fiction is that this community is very often upper or upper middle class.

This is in strong contract to the American hard-boiled private-eye tradition, in which the sleuth is necessarily part of the community which he investigates, moves among the lower classes, and is frequently even involved in the crime itself. However, Freeling does not ignore this tradition completely – in fact, in several novels, Van der Valk makes explicit comments on the private-eye tradition and once even rather ironically compares himself to Chandler's Phillip Marlowe. But, most importantly, Freeling's novels do not ignore the social context of the era (which was commonplace criticism of the Golden Age clue-puzzle novels), but instead engage with it, and bring forth social questions which do not have a solution, something which is typical for hard-boiled narratives. Overall, throughout his work, Freeling shows that he is very well aware of the conventions of the different crime fiction sub-genres and is deliberately playing with them.

Inspector Piet van der Valk, the first of Freeling's detective figures, appears in ten of his novels, nine of them published between 1962 and 1972. He is a middle-aged Dutch police officer with a French wife and two grown-up sons, who hates bureaucracy and does not quite fit within his police squad, being considered rather eccentric. However, at the same time, he is very intelligent and exceptionally well-read, and knows how to interpret both crime scenes and people, which makes him into a successful detective. According to his own words, Freeling wanted a detective "who would be a recognizable human being, a

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[10] Nicolas Freeling, "Inspector Van der Valk," in *The Great Detectives: The World's Most Celebrated Sleuths Unmasked*, ed. Otto Penzler (A MysteriousPress.com, 2021), e-book.
[11] Garbett and Kelleghan, "Nicolas Freeling," 671.

member of society,"[12] unlike the unrealistic detective figures of the Golden Age.

Most of the novels in the Van der Valk series take place in the Netherlands, although quite often, Van der Valk leaves his native country in pursuit of a criminal.[13] However, despite being "intensely Dutch,"[14] Van der Valk often seems to be an outsider to his own country and people. The first alienating factor is his French wife, Arlette. On the one hand, she provides him with a broader perspective, helping him "often enough to remember not to be quite so Dutch when [he tries] to understand things."[15] On the other, she alienates him from the Dutch society and is even suggested to be the reason why Van der Valk was not chosen for a deserved promotion, as in Freeling's portrayal of the Netherlands, having a French wife seems to be generally frowned upon.

Further, Freeling emphasizes Van der Valk's separation from the rest of the Dutch characters by constantly placing him outside of both his natural setting in Amsterdam, as well as his social circle. So is Van der Valk clearly an outsider to the newly built middle-upper class town of Bloemendaal in *Because of the Cats* (1963), as well as to the small Calvinist provincial town Zwinderen in *Double-Barrel* (1964). In *Criminal Conversation* (1966), he gets to stay in Amsterdam, but investigates a murder in the world of the rich elite, with whom he cannot identify, and in *Strike Out Where Not Applicable* (1967) he is not only sent away from Amsterdam to a small town called Lisse, but again finds himself among the upper class. This allows Freeling to introduce the place and society to the English reader for the first time, but also to focus on "the conflicts between the individual and modern bureaucracy, clashes among social castes, contrasts among national types, and the social structures that allow, even encourage, the committing of crime."[16]

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[12] Nicolas Freeling, "Inspector Van der Valk."

[13] As will be discussed in the last section of this paper.

[14] Nicolas Freeling, "Inspector Van der Valk."

[15] Nicolas Freeling, *Double-Barrel* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), part 1, chap. 1, e-book.

[16] Garbett and Kelleghan, "Nicolas Freeling," 672.

## 2. ECHOES OF THE WAR

During the 1950s and at the beginning of 1960s, where most of the novels are situated, both England and the Netherlands were still strongly influenced by the Second World War. Both countries suffered greatly in the conflict, with being bombed, and losing many of its young men in the war. Unlike Britain, however, the Netherlands was directly occupied by the Nazi Germany. The Netherlands was also the country with the highest number of Jews deported or killed in Western Europe, which has been for decades experienced as a serious trauma[17] and led to a continued discussion on the questions of collaboration and guilt.

Although there are many echoes of the War in the Van der Valk novels – in fact, Winston and Mellerski suggest that in Freeling's novels, "the face of contemporary Europe is only comprehensible through the memory of the War"[18] – the most striking presence of the conflict can be found in the fourth novel of the series, *Double-Barrel* (1964). In the novel, Van der Valk and his wife Arlette are sent to a provincial town Zwinderen, because someone has been sending suspicious letters which have been connected to two suicides. One of the suspects in the case is a man called Besançon, a Jewish intellectual who is shunned by the rest of the Zwinderen population, as he lives hiding in a cottage behind the walls of an old lunatic asylum. Throughout the novel, a sort of professional friendship develops between Besançon and Van der Valk, who repeatedly goes to him for advice. However, at the end of the novel, Van der Valk realizes that Besançon is in fact the SS Lieutenant-General Heinrich Müller, who has gone into hiding in the small provincial Dutch town. Van der Valk struggles with the realization and his own role in the situation, but despite his own instincts which tell him not to turn Besançon/Müller in, he eventually does so. When handing him over to the police, Van der Valk asks the war criminal for forgiveness and offers to shake his hand.[19]

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[17] Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, "The Netherlands: The Highest Number of Jewish Victims in Western Europe," *Anne Frank House*, September 9, 2018, https://www.annefrank.org/en/anne-frank/go-in-depth/netherlands-greatest-number-jewish-victims-western-europe/.

[18] Winston and Mellerski, *The Public Eye*, 92.

[19] Freeling, *Double-Barrel*, part 5, chap. 6.

Starting with the moment of realization, Freeling seems to use Van der Valk to delve into a philosophical discussion with the reader and himself, considering the (non-)existence of justice, communal and personal responsibility, forgiveness, and punishment. In the words of Van der Valk: "I did not care for the idea that I was the instrument chosen by God to bring Gestapo Müller to justice. What justice? Justice, with somebody who has committed crimes like these, does not exist."[20] This is in strong contrast with the Dutch post-war literature and social discussion, where the question of history and guilt is very often central.[21] In *Double-Barrel*, Freeling does not dwell on the past or the question of guilt – it is more than clear that Besançon/Müller *is* guilty – instead, he starts a discussion on what we the readers as contemporaries of Van der Valk (and as individuals) can do with this past, and what its further social consequences are. By disregarding the question of individual guilt and turning the situation into a commentary on general social disruption, he therefore seems to turn away from the Netherlands to a much broader European context.

## 3. THE ISSUE OF CLASS

Although it is unclear where exactly to draw the lines between individual social classes,[22] it is without doubt that class played a significant role in both the pre- and post-war British society. In the late 1940s, most individuals had no issue allocating themselves to a social class,[23] based not only on their income or financial situation, but also depending on their ancestry, on where they lived, what education they received, or how they spoke. And while the War brought some positive changes for the working class, in the 1950s and 1960s, there still existed a strong horizontal division in the society.

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[20] Freeling, *Double-Barrel*, part 5, chap. 6.

[21] Probably the most famous post-war Dutch literary work which deals with the question of guilt is a 1982 novel *De aanslag* (published in English in 1985 as *The Assault*) by Harry Mulisch.

[22] Arthur Marwick, *British Society since 1945* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1996), 34.

[23] Marwick, *British Society*, 44.

This was not quite the case in the Netherlands. While especially before the First World War class had its place in the Dutch society, with the growing prosperity that came after the Second World War, the differences between the classes became much less obvious.[24] And although there of course remained financial differences among the population, rather than the horizontal division among classes, the society was divided vertically. Although this arrangement had its roots in the nineteenth century, it was especially after 1918 that the Dutch found themselves divided into four pillars (*zuilen*) which spread across the classes: Catholic, Protestant, Socialist and Liberal. While not all agreed with this development, most of the population identified with one of the pillars, which held significant consequences for their everyday life. Each of the pillars had their own political parties, trade union movements, forms of social care, youth movements, broadcasting stations, press, and education; an individual could therefore quite easily live only within his or her own pillar.[25] Although it seemed like this structure was broken by the Second World War, the change was only limited: after the war ended, the majority of the population automatically fell back into the familiarity of their pillar,[26] and it was only in the course of the 1960s that the pillarization began to fade[27] and eventually disappeared.

Even though social class was by the 1950s a very minor issue in the Netherlands, most of the Van der Valk novels deal with it in some way. As mentioned earlier, many of the novels take place in the upper or middle upper class, an environment that is unfamiliar (as well as uncomfortable) to Inspector Van der Valk. And as Garbett and Kelleghan suggest, the upper-class society is not just part of the setting in these novels: it very often plays a significant role in the nature and design of the crime as well.[28] For instance, in one of the novels, the killer is a successful professional, who murders a poor artist, among

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[24] J. J. Woltjer, *Recent Verleden: De Geschiedenis van Nederland in de Twintigste Eeuw* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2012), part 5, chap. 4, e-book.
[25] J. C. H. Blom and E. Lamberts, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden* (Baarn: HB Uitgevers, 2012), 343–344.
[26] Blom and Lamberts, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden*, 354.
[27] Blom and Lamberts, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden*, 357.
[28] Garbett and Kelleghan, "Nicolas Freeling," 672.

other things over the jealousy of his simple bachelor life; in another of Van der Valk's cases, the motive for a murder and a suicide turns out to be an attempt to escape the confines of the upper-class society. Garbett and Kelleghan further point out that

> [s]ignificantly, when Freeling's characters suffer real damage, it is done by members of the upper classes. At the end of *The King of the Rainy Country*, Van der Valk is seriously wounded by one such aristocrat, and in *A Long Silence* he is killed by a privileged madman. In *Wolfnight*, Castang's apartment is attacked and his wife is kidnapped by the upper-class members of a political conspiracy. The representatives of social order seem to have greater power to harm than the thugs and peasants can ever obtain.[29]

However, for our purposes, the most interesting inquiry into the issue of class is the second novel of the series, *Because of the Cats* (1963).

In the novel, Van der Valk travels to a newly built prosperous little sea town, Bloemendaal aan Zee, because he suspects a group of local teenagers of a set of robberies and brutal rape that have taken place in Amsterdam. Despite his superiors suggesting other, bigger cities as more probable places for a youth gang to originate, Van der Valk becomes convinced that it is the acutely bourgeois town that has produced the perpetrators. Soon, he indeed discovers a group of well-off kids who meet above the local bar owned by a European figure called Hjalmar Jansen, who seems to be somehow involved in their activities. However, instead of looking for evidence as such, Van der Valk begins what could be called a sociological investigation into the population of the town, in which he does not so much look for an answer to *who* has committed the crime, but rather *how* and *why* it could happen that these sons and daughters of the middle upper class, who seemingly have all they could wish for, have turned into criminals. And while in the end it is Hjalmar Jansen who gets the blame for radicalizing the kids, there are many other elements at play. Firstly, Freeling blames society: it is, he writes, "a fermenting mass, like a huge farmer's-pot of pig-swill, boiling

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[29] Garbett and Kelleghan, "Nicolas Freeling," 673.

on fires of hatred and envy, of bad education and war and outrage, of poverty and starvation, homelessness, joblessness,"[30] tormented by one "plague" after another, be it the mines, fascism, or the atomic bomb.[31] Further, it is of course the parents, who have managed to enter the upper class with their successful businesses but have at the same time become alienated from their children, and who in the spirit of the age of materialism would rather buy them gifts or pay for lawyers than dedicate time and effort to them. But ultimately, it is the class which has made these privileged kids develop deep contempt for other people and led them to believe that they are better than anyone else. In fact, they even create a small upper-class society within the (middle) upper class, taking Jansen's raven as their symbol:

> "They form the committee, one might say; they make the rules. Self-government—it's quite a society in miniature; amuses me to study it. Antics if you like, but the ravens, as they call themselves, are the coming rulers of Bloemendaal, really. All sons and daughters of the most influential figures in this town."
> "Where's your bird today?"
> "He's in the flat; … Yes, the bird. They took it as a symbol, call it that, for this, uh, top layer of aristocracy."[32]

Despite Freeling's open comments on the rotten post-war society and his criticism of the new, *progressive* family model (which Freeling advertises as becoming thoroughly Dutch), it is still mainly this sense of being aristocracy that allows and encourages the teenagers to rob and attack innocent people – something which is encouraged by Hjalmar Jansen, which is why he gets the blame in the end. But unlike the new family model, this is not presented as Dutch at all, but again, rather as a European issue. Jansen himself has, after all, lived in several European countries – this being one of the first things that is reported about him – and is from the beginning suggested to have "something faintly foreign

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[30] Freeling, *Because of the Cats*, 73.
[31] Freeling, *Because of the Cats*, 73.
[32] Freeling, *Because of the Cats*, 78

about him."[33] Together with the fact that the Dutch society of the time was divided more vertically than horizontally, this only confirms that the issue is being taken away from the Dutch context: not only is the class society virtually non-existent in the Netherlands of the time, when compared to Britain; the blame for the crime is again put on a foreigner. In fact, when it comes to class, Freeling seems to use the Dutch small town as a substitute for a British background, possibly because introducing the problem directly in the British context might not meet with an understanding from his readership, as in Britain, "various class assumptions would still, in the 1960s, need to be negotiated."[34]

## 5. CONNECTIONS ABROAD

The last element that makes the Van der Valk novels into a European endeavour rather than focused on the Netherlands, is the frequent movement of the characters across European borders,[35] or their (often historical) connection to foreign countries. This appears from the very first novel – although the main character of *Love in Amsterdam*, Martin, is of Dutch origin, he has lived in England and France, and it was also in France that he has met the woman he is suspected of murdering. Furthermore, Van der Valk's wife is of course French, which has already been introduced as an obstacle to his career. Indeed, a certain distrust of the Dutch towards the French appears in a number of the novels, and several criminals throughout the series are also of French origin. In fact, almost all villains in the series are somehow "'tainted' by their foreignness,"[36] although Winston and Mellerski argue that this is not a continuation of a tradition from the Golden Age, where it was ethnical and racial otherness which defined the villain, but an inversion

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[33] Freeling, *Because of the Cats*, 7.
[34] Martin Priestman, *The Cambridge Companion to Crime Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 176.
[35] Throughout the ten novels, Van der Valk travels to Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Ireland. Interestingly, he never goes to England, although we know that he spent some time living there when he was younger.
[36] Winston and Mellerski, *The Public Eye*, 210.

of this formula, in which "the outsiders, foreigners and exiles who play all the roles in Freeling's fiction provide a pan-European lens through which the post-war history of that continent is explored."[37] This is only confirmed by the fact that in a number of Van der Valk novels, we also find a friendly foreigner who helps the inspector with his investigation, although even those tend to be somewhat villainised.[38]

One of the Van der Valk novels which makes a strong foreign connection is *Tsing-Boum* (1969). In the novel, a housewife, Esther Marx, is shot to death in her apartment in The Hague, and the investigation of her murder sends Van der Valk to France and Belgium. Eventually he discovers that the woman was of Yugoslavian origin, had French nationality, and took part in the First Indochina War on the side of the French. The novel provides a detailed description of the conflict, particularly of what happened in the valley of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, where Esther was stationed as a nurse, and this history plays an important part in understanding the case. We also find out that it is this foreign past that got the woman killed – she was shot by one of two men that she met in Vietnam, a Frenchman or a Belgian.

In this context, it is again especially interesting to consider not the portrayal of France, Belgium or Vietnam, but of the Dutch and the Netherlands, which in comparison to the other countries seems to have gained a different connotation than in the previous novels. Firstly, from the beginning of the story, it is made clear that the murder with seven shots from a machine gun is entirely "un-Dutch", as "[e]ven one gunshot is a rarity in Holland. Seven is exaggerating."[39] And indeed, Van der Valk soon finds out not only that Esther was not Dutch, but neither was her killer. However, there is one Dutch person involved – Esther's husband, sergeant Joseph Zomerlust, whom Freeling repeatedly describes as thoroughly Dutch, "a good sound Dutch boy."[40] Zomerlust married Esther shortly before the birth of her child despite knowing very

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[37] Winston and Mellerski, *The Public Eye*, 93.
[38] For instance, in *Because of the Cats* (1963) Van der Valk receives help from an Eastern-European prostitute, and in *Double-Barrel* (1964) he becomes friends with a Jewish intellectual Besançon, who however turns out to be the wanted SS officer Heinrich Müller in hiding.
[39] Freeling, *Tsing-Boum*, chap. 1.
[40] Freeling, *Tsing-Boum*, chap. 4.

little about her past and never asking about the father of the baby. Although Zomerlust insists that Esther was happy with her role of a housewife, Van der Valk eventually finds out that Esther was prone to day-drinking and cheated on her husband, and had possibly married Zomerlust out of convenience rather than affection – Van der Valk even calls her marriage to this "very ordinary kind of Dutch boy" the "one bizarre thing" about her, and considers her coming to live with him in Holland "so plain and unexciting a fashion that it seems deliberate."[41] Thus, with her complicated past and an illegitimate child on the way, the Dutchman had provided Esther and her daughter with a safe haven.

Same as Zomerlust serves as an insurance of a safe life for Esther, so is the Netherlands portrayed as a sanctuary, a secure, remote and boring place to run to from her past. Specifically the Van Lennepweg street in The Hague, where Esther lived with her husband and daughter, is isolated and anonymous, which provides Esther with a chance of a new beginning, away from her foreign past. The block of flats which they live in is also newly built, with no history, in strong contrast to France, where upon his arrival Van der Valk finds "enormous buildings in the really blood-boltered bad taste of the mid nineteenth century."[42] Contrarily to the newly built quarter of the Netherlands, in France, everything seems to breathe with its (colonial) past. Esther's initial contact with the two men and the subsequent murder then feel like an invasion of the past into this new safe space, with the first and then second man appearing unannounced at the door of her flat, both driving in from outside of the country, and leaving directly afterwards. Although we have already seen that there is a lot of foreign influence in the Van der Valk novels – with especially the villains being very often foreign –, this is the first novel of the series which introduces the Netherlands as a place of peace, which has been only briefly disrupted by the foreign violence, but ultimately, it is purely the outside world that is to blame. Despite putting the Dutch detective at the centre of investigation, Freeling thus uses the novel to comment much more on France and its foreign involvement, than on the

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[41] Freeling, *Tsing-Boum*, chap. 10.
[42] Freeling, *Tsing-Boum*, chap. 14.

Netherlands itself, and in this sense follows the same pattern as we have seen with the issues of history and class.


CONCLUSION

Nicolas Freeling's Inspector Van der Valk novels are known especially for their setting in the Netherlands, which gives them an exotic context. However, Freeling does not use this exoticism as a form of imaginative tourism, as foreign setting in popular fiction has sometimes been described; instead, he uses the Netherlands to comment on the broader European post-war situation, very often disregarding the Dutch society and its post-war realities. As we have seen in the analyses of the three novels, he presents the Dutch society as one that has been affected by the war, but not by the Nazi occupation; as a society strongly reliant on social class, but not on the four Dutch social pillars; and, in the last novel, as an idealistic sanctuary from the past, which seems to have escaped the colonial past of (the rest of) Western Europe. It is especially the first two portrayals which seem to rely heavily on the English rather than the Dutch or the continental experience, and it is in this way that the novels, despite their setting, tell us more about the English post-war society than they do about the Dutch one.

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# DECEITFUL JOURNALS IN NEO-VICTORIAN FICTION

## *Jana Valová*

ABSTRACT: This paper looks at journals as a source of information and misinformation in two neo-Victorian novels, *Possession* by A. S. Byatt and *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* by Peter Ackroyd. Both books rely on textual evidence which is used to uncover past secrets, satisfy the need for knowledge and manipulate the audience. The paper explores the term romances of the archive and its key characteristics and then moves on to a closer examination of journals and their use in the selected works. Special attention is placed on the meaningful omissions and silences that the diary medium portrays and the reasons behind their often deceitful contents.

KEYWORDS: neo-Victorian literature, journals, A. S. Byatt, *Possession*, Peter Ackroyd, *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*

## INTRODUCTION

Written correspondence and journals were an essential aspect of Victorian life, communication and literature. Similarly, many neo-Victorian revisitations of the nineteenth century continue in the epistolary tradition and use these resources to reveal crucial information. However, while the books are still utilising the epistolary tools to advance the story, they also often emphasise the (un)justified paranoia of characters whose written accounts are restricted in fear of being revealed to someone else. This paper uses examples from A. S. Byatt's influential work *Possession* and Peter Ackroyd's dark London novel *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* to illustrate how journals in literature often intensify the confusion and mystery rather than aid in the explanation of the plot.

In *Possession*, the intruders of one's private writings are not only the readers of the book but also the twentieth-century scholars obsessed with uncovering the secrets of two Victorian poets and their closest friends. The characters in the novel question this invasion of privacy, however, their initial concern succumbs to the consuming desire to know more about the lives of Randolph Henry Ash and his

lover Christabel LaMotte. In *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*, the author of the diary expects her writing to be read and thus, she uses it as a tool to clear her name while simultaneously turning herself into a martyr. Despite the different approaches to journal writing and their importance in the two novels, both works highlight the problematic relationship with the truth in the medium that is intended to encourage openness. These journals contain omissions, secrets and tricks that confuse contemporary readers and other characters in the novel. They mirror the duality of the depicted era, in which what was seen on the surface rarely reflected the truth beneath, and as a result, each journal entry requires careful reading and rereading.

## 1. ROMANCES OF THE ARCHIVE

The selected works belong to a category that Suzanne Keen calls "romances of the archive." Among other things, these books "have scenes taking place in libraries, . . . they feature the plot action of "doing research" in documents. They designate a character or characters at least temporarily as archival researches, . . . [and] [t]hey unabashedly interpret the past through its material traces."[1] The obsession with the materials belonging to the past is especially prominent in Byatt's novel. The literary scholars spend a lot of time searching through other people's diaries, letters and documents. This quest for knowledge becomes overpowering as the lives of the main twentieth-century characters, Maud Bailey and Roland Michell, change due to their desire to uncover the secrets of the past.

The importance of further knowledge and the determination to access it becomes a significant part of the story, constantly reminding the readers that curiosity and desire to possess the information about one's predecessors can be potent motivators. As Keen goes on to specify, there are several key characteristics often found in romances of the archive, with Byatt's work being a very good representative for many of them. Among other things, the noteworthy features of this

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[1] Suzanne Keen, *Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 3.

novel include sexual gratification, which is achieved as a result of the quest the characters undertake and also "material traces of the past revealing the truth."[2]

The narrative achieves its climax once the secrets of Victorian poets Christabel LaMotte and Randolph Henry Ash are revealed. Similarly, the contemporary scholars also manage to satisfy their overpowering desire by concluding their research and embarking on their relationship. Nevertheless, the secrets of the past are not revealed entirely and thus, the relatively happy ending Byatt decides to give to her Victorian protagonists remains hidden. "*Possession* consistently works to undermine its characters' assumption that given access to enough documents, the scholar can attain complete knowledge of his or her subject."[3] The elusiveness of this novel and the impossibility of completely possessing knowledge of the past reflects the postmodern doubt when it comes to the authentic depiction of history. Consequently, while the various written accounts about the Victorian era serve as a source of information, it is questionable whether their primary purpose is always to reveal the truth, as Keen suggests.

Byatt's novel also employs another trope typical for romances of the archive. The two contemporary scholars, Roland and Maud, are placed in opposition to more successful and resourceful academics. "An academic outsider makes a better truth-finder than a 'qualified' researcher"[4] and thus, the reader happily roots for the underdogs who are underprivileged in their journey towards truth. Furthermore, the difficulties that are placed in the characters' way might detract from the questionable ethics of examining and revealing private journals and letters.

Although *Possession* serves as a model example of the romance of the archive, Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* also presents some key features belonging to this category. The British Museum Reading Room in London plays a crucial role in the book, where the reader can observe writers and journalists researching other

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[2] Keen, *Romances of the Archive*, 35.

[3] Dana Shiller, "The Redemptive Past in the Neo-Victorian Novel," *Studies in the Novel* 29, 4 (Winter 1997): 548, http://www.jstor.org/stable/29533234.

[4] Keen, *Romances of the Archive*, 30.

people's works and working on their texts. Just like in Byatt's novel, where research and academic curiosity become constant and important parts of the story, Ackroyd describes the Reading Room as a place where people get lost in their thoughts. They are "sealed in separate chambers,"[5] and their silent voices carry through the room as "the fog of London."[6] Such depiction adds to the attractiveness of textual research in the environment of like-minded people yearning for further knowledge.

Another substantial detail worth mentioning is Ackroyd's tendency to include real-life figures in his works. In *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem,* characters such as George Gissing and Karl Marx can be seen sitting in close proximity studying works of other well-known authors of the era. Ackroyd's "representations of archival quests can be expected to be accurate about the mechanisms and practices of scholarship."[7] His personal experience with conducting research should make him a trustworthy source, however, Ackroyd approaches the portrayal of the past and historical figures in his fictional works through the lens of playful scepticism. As previously mentioned, postmodern works often question the reliability of past depictions and Ackroyd, continuing in this tradition, intensifies the paranoia in readers who are expected to critically evaluate what they read. Examples of his changes include Marx's seat in the Reading Room or the birthday of Dan Leno. In an interview, Ackroyd notes that the decision to alter these details is motivated by his "loose hold on the truth."[8] He goes on to add that he sees no "real sacrosanct quality about so-called facts and so-called truths. . . . [E]verything is available for recreation or manipulation."[9] Although these changes might seem unimportant as they do not change the story in any significant way, they work as stepping stones to the more elaborate deceit that forms the basis of this neo-Victorian novel.

[5] Peter Ackroyd, *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (London: Vintage, 2007), 46.

[6] Ackroyd, *Dan Leno*, 47.

[7] Keen, *Romances of the Archive*, 121.

[8] Susana Onega, "Interview with Peter Ackroyd," *Twentieth Century Literature* 42, 2 (Summer 1996): 214.

[9] Onega, "Interview with Peter Ackroyd," 214.

## 2. DULL AND SUSPICIOUS: JOURNALS IN *POSSESSION*

A. S. Byatt's novel *Possession* can be described as a scholarly detective story where contemporary academics uncover long-lost accounts of fictional Victorian poets Christabel LaMotte and Randolph Henry Ash. This chase for information is not devoid of questions about integrity and morality when reading something that was likely meant to remain hidden. Nevertheless, Maud Bailey and Roland Michell, together with other curious scholars, prove that the desire for knowledge and the inherent need to feel closer to one's predecessors is stronger than such concerns. Kate Mitchell asserts that this "novel refigures the relationship between past and present as that between the literary text as medium and an ideal reader who is willing not only to possess the text, but also to be possessed by it, to allow its voices to speak. It is a relationship not of ownership, nor even primarily of intellectual knowledge. Rather, it is a relationship of desire."[10] The texts that the readers access are various journals and letters, many of which lead to more questions than answers. As a result, they awaken an even stronger desire for truth and discovery.

The ever-present longing for knowledge is combined with the neo-Victorian objective to criticise the nineteenth century and the contemporary era. As Kym Brindle also writes in her work *Epistolary Encounters in Neo-Victorian Fiction*:

> Epistolary scenes organise voyeuristic styles of reading with simulated private confessions by diarists and letter writers who struggle or fail to conform to nineteenth-century social norms and cultural codes. In this way, contemporary writers continue entertaining readers as original sensational novelists did whilst simultaneously addressing a knowing cultural critique of the Victorians and their secret lives.[11]

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[10] Kate Mitchell, *History and Cultural Memory in Neo-Victorian Fiction: Victorian Afterimages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 94.
[11] Kym Brindle, *Epistolary Encounters in Neo-Victorian Fiction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 32.

Brindle notes that the need to uncover the secrets of Victorians is connected with the desire to be entertained. Consequently, when exposing these letters and diaries, readers might slip into excessive theorising in an attempt to add validity to their curiosity. This issue is criticised by Byatt in her novel as well. One of the characters in the book, Leonora Stern, is described as a scholar who limits the source texts she examines into representations of sexuality. However, her excessive theorising also secures her success when compared to another scholar Beatrice Nest "whose work . . . resists the tools of feminist scholarship."[12]

Beatrice Nest studies the journal of Ellen Ash, wife of the Victorian poet Randolph Henry Ash. Although separated by more than a hundred years, the two women share many similarities. Both their works, Beatrice's research and Ellen's journal, are often dismissed as unimportant. Ellen's writing might indeed come across as secondary compared to other journals and stories in the novel, however, it is precisely this dismissal that makes Ellen's written accounts worth noting. Her "endless journal"[13] has already been studied and examined, resulting in the conclusion that Ellen was "*dull*."[14] This boringness leads to theories that behind the uninteresting façade there is a woman filled with rebellion which her husband suppressed. "[N]o one wanted self-denial and dedication any more, they wanted proof that Ellen was raging with rebellion and pain and untapped talent."[15] Thus, even though the journal is considered to be lacking any entertainment value on the surface, its dullness also makes it more interesting.

Although Ellen's suggested rebelliousness is never proven, it eventually comes out that there are hidden messages in her writing implying that her life was not as uneventful and tedious as it seemed at first. Beatrice Nest is the first one who "became aware of the mystery of privacy, which Ellen, for all her expansive eloquence, was protecting."[16] Ellen remains careful when recounting her daily life, suggesting the fear

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[12] Mitchell, *History and Cultural Memory*, 97.

[13] A. S. Byatt, *Possession: A Romance* (London: Vintage, 1991), 31.

[14] Byatt, *Possession*, 31.

[15] Byatt, *Possession*, 31.

[16] Byatt, *Possession*, 115.

of her thoughts being accessed by someone else as well as her own inability to express her concerns and desires openly. Furthermore, the question of the purpose of this journal arises as well. Beatrice Nest theorises that maybe she used the journal as an outlet to satisfy her need to be creative and a way to deal with the fact that she was reduced to the shadow of her husband. Nonetheless, her entries cannot be categorised as profound or revealing, and their artistic function is rather questionable.

Overall, Ellen's journal can be described as a work of someone who "evades, crafts, elides and wilfully deceives, yet also sifts clues and hints at secrets untold."[17] This marginal diary, belonging to a woman who is studied only because of her connection to the poet Randolph Henry Ash, demonstrates the duality that permeates the lives of these Victorian characters. On the pages of her journal entries, Ellen is a respectable woman and a wife whose marriage is happy and normal. What is hidden is her fear of sexuality, inability to consummate the marriage, her husband's extramarital affair and possible disappointment with the lack of tangible accomplishments in her life. "Framing a voice as a diary suggests this will be confiding, sincere, and confessional, but also potentially self-deceiving,"[18] and it is the self-deceit that influences the writers as well as the readers of these written accounts. Because of the journal's seeming emptiness and vagueness, it remains open to various interpretations. It becomes a reflection of the other scholars' desires and theories. In Beatrice's case, for example, she sees her own failure to succeed. A feminist scholar, such as Leonora Stern, sees a woman's potential stifled by a man.

Another journal in the novel belongs to Christabel's cousin Sabine de Kercoz. Even though she initially uses this medium to work on her writing skills, it becomes a crucial source of information about Christabel's life. Unlike some of the other characters in the novel, Sabine shares her thoughts fairly freely. Nevertheless, even she faces the question of whether the journal is written only for her own eyes or if she expects her cousin Christabel to read it too. At times, the young woman is frustrated by the lack of information and Christabel's unwillingness to

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[17] Brindle, *Epistolary Encounters*, 62.
[18] Brindle, *Epistolary Encounters*, 35.

share more of her own life. Her journal writing eventually becomes joyless as well, as she mostly discusses her cousin and the mystery surrounding her and her pregnancy. She, similarly to the contemporary scholars, acknowledges the inappropriateness of prying into these personal matters. However, unlike Maud and Roland, she manages to step back, at least momentarily, to evaluate her motivation and the purpose of the journal.

The third journal that the contemporary scholars examine belongs to Blanche Glover. Blanche is Christabel's friend and housemate who starts writing the journal on the day the two women move in together in their Richmond house. This place is a haven where they can be creative and unbothered by the roles and duties they are expected to take on due to their gender. Thus, they both share the same lifestyle, focusing on art "and scholarly pursuits and spared the ignominy of becoming possessions."[19]

Similarly to Ellen and Sabine, Blanche is a minor character in the novel, and her writing does not have "the magnetic feel"[20] of some of the other written accounts the scholars look into. Nonetheless, her journal plays a significant role. "Blanche's spare diary entries relate the damage that the dramatic epistolary affair imposes on her relationship with LaMotte. Epistolary exchange delivers the public into private and proves an intrusion that, in Blanche's view, undoes LaMotte's artistic integrity."[21] It leads to a barrier between them as Christabel's secrecy prohibits Blanche from the information she feels entitled to. The gaps in her knowledge cause bitterness and uncertainty that are reflected in the diary as well.

Thus, even without Christabel's journal, her private life is still examined through the entries of her family and friends. The main Victorian character cannot escape the curiosity of academics who desire to fill in the gaps left by her secrecy. While the journals studied in the novel often receive unflattering descriptions, and their authors are considered to be of secondary importance, they still manage to stir up intrigue. These works are examined more carefully because of their

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[19] Mitchell, *History and Cultural Memory*, 109.
[20] Byatt, *Possession*, 43.
[21] Brindle, *Epistolary Encounters*, 62.

evasiveness, and as a result, the revelations bring more satisfaction to the researchers as well as the readers closely following the story.

## 3. WRITING FOR AN AUDIENCE: ELIZABETH CREE'S MISLEADING DIARIES IN *DAN LENO AND THE LIMEHOUSE GOLEM*

The second neo-Victorian novel discussed in this paper approaches privacy and reading someone's diary differently. The main protagonist, Elizabeth Cree, is not afraid of her diary being read, on the contrary, she requires it in order to fulfil her plan of being viewed as an unfairly treated individual who saved the world from a bloodthirsty serial killer. The journal entries are written under her husband's name, so Elizabeth can describe the gruesome murders she commits while passing the guilt onto someone else.

What makes *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* unique is its play with information, both authentic historical facts and fictional, adapted knowledge used to trick the characters in the novel as well as the contemporary readers. Petr Chalupský notes that this combination of fictional and factual makes Ackroyd's work "more interesting, and perhaps even more plausible, for the readers."[22] Elizabeth's story is placed within the backdrop of significant nineteenth-century personages, and she is directly connected to the Victorian performer Dan Leno with whom she also shares her birthday.

Ackroyd's London novel also deals with many issues often discussed in neo-Victorian literature related to the occupancy of the society's margins. Elizabeth is born out of wedlock to a religious fanatic who substitutes a loving upbringing for threats of eternal condemnation and physical abuse. Nevertheless, she is not a character that arouses sympathy as her conduct throughout the book is appalling. She becomes known to the reader as the feared Limehouse Golem who terrorises the streets of London, killing men and women alike.

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[22] Petr Chalupský, *A Horror and a Beauty: The World of Peter Ackroyd's London Novels* (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2016), 120.

Elizabeth is a cunning character who rarely allows other people to see her true self and instead transforms into different characters who enable her to escape the limiting rules of the Victorian era. The Music Halls, where she finds a safe space, present an opportunity to indulge in pretence while entertaining others. "It is no wonder that she is so strongly lured into this world, which offers her the chance to forget her unfortunate fate by allowing her to experience the illusion of being someone else through a series of gags, sketches and stand-up comedy."[23] Among her numerous roles, both on and off-stage, are that of a dutiful daughter, innocent girl, respectable wife, Little Victor's daughter and the Older Brother. The latter is one of her most significant roles, which is not restricted to her gender, thus opening up a world filled with even more opportunities.

The London murderess carries out her deception not only via her characters but also in a diary purposefully written under her husband's name. She uses the fact that the diary medium evokes the feeling of intimacy and secrecy and instead writes with the intent to mislead. The readers of the novel belong among those who are lied to as it is only at the end of the book that Elizabeth confesses to the priest, revealing that she has been the murderess all along:

> Did you ever see that wonderful drama, *The London Phantom*? . . . I don't believe you have, Father, because I am composing it at the moment. . . . It has ever such an interesting story. It is all about a woman who poisons her husband. . . . I forgot to tell you the rest of the story. I gave my play its title. I am the London phantom. . . . The husband is not poisoned until the third act, when he threatens to reveal my little secret to the world. No one in the audience had managed to guess it, you see, and so it comes as rather a surprise to them.[24]

Elizabeth continues her confession by naming some of the victims and the reasons behind their death. While initially, she is hiding behind her theatricality, dancing around her cell and making fun of the priest, as

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[23] Chalupský, *A Horror and a Beauty*, 208.
[24] Ackroyd, *Dan Leno*, 271–172.

she proceeds, she puts the charade aside and exposes her crimes. However, this grand reveal is bound by the sanctity of the confessional, therefore it is only her lies that become publicly available via the journal.

During her last confession, Elizabeth also explains that she views morally fallen people as deserving of punishment. Passing judgement on others becomes her way of dealing with a society obsessed with appearances. Ironically, she considers her sins less damning than those of London prostitutes or people who do not share her mother's religious faith. Nevertheless, Elizabeth's murders also include those that are done for her gain and not to clear the world of unworthy individuals. She kills to advance, remove witnesses, secure wealth and good social standing. And she writes a diary under her husband's name so she can "[lay] the guilt upon him" as she states: "Why should I bear any blame when I know that I am pure still?"[25]

Seemingly pure is also her own account of what happens throughout the book. While Elizabeth shares some of her negative thoughts about her mother and schemes in her marriage, she does not admit to any of the murders in her diary. Susana Onega points out that at times "it requires an attentive reader to realise that the newly-wed Mrs Cree had poisoned her father-in-law in order to speed up her husband's access to his inheritance."[26] In her journal, she only notes that he became ill and ultimately died. Thus, even the bulk of information that recounts the main character's life and inner thoughts cannot be fully trusted and requires careful reading between the lines to reveal the secrets that were intentionally obscured from the text. This phenomenon of using diaries and written accounts to confuse rather than to tell more is something Kym Brindle also acknowledges:

> Unlike the nineteenth-century trend for embedding documents to expose and explain secrets, contemporary writers tend not to

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[25] Ackroyd, *Dan Leno*, 273.

[26] Susana Onega, "Family Traumas and Serial Killing in Peter Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*," in *Neo-Victorian Families: Gender, Sexual and Cultural Politics*, ed. Marie-Louise Kohlke and Christian Gutleben (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 280–281.

emphasise uncovering of "truths", but rather deconstruct how investigatory reading and interpretation take place. . . . [N]eo-Victorian novelists stress that material traces of the past are fragmentary, incomplete, and contradictory.[27]

The goal of these written records is not to simply reveal everything and eventually reach a neat conclusion. On the contrary, the cryptic notes, unclear outcomes, and fragmentation appear more authentic when portraying the past and its uncertainties. While confusing messages can lead to the reader's frustration, they often become a crucial part of a neo-Victorian work, which has the advantage of revisiting the nineteenth century with the knowledge of a later era. The unreliable narrator, whose diaries are the primary source of information, does not offer a simple resolution but rather highlights the importance of reading and understanding the given information.[28] Elizabeth's diaries create an image of who she is, however, she lets the readers come to their own conclusions and piece the given excerpts together by themselves.

In order to offer an authentic version of her husband's diary, she studies his language in an unfinished theatre play. Nevertheless, the reader is provided hints throughout the book that suggest that the entries written under the name John Cree are not really his. Aspects of Elizabeth's life experiences, her own opinions and beliefs come through when she describes the London scenes and the people there. After she finds her first victim, she writes in the diary: "This was to mark my entrance upon the stage of the world."[29] Her love of the performative is also articulated in a later diary entry. When Elizabeth's murders become public knowledge, she is given the name Limehouse Golem. This title solidifies the position of her new role and gives it credibility:

Perhaps the identity which the public prints have given me is appropriate; after all the 'Limehouse Golem' has a somewhat spiritual connotation. I have been named after a mythological creature, and it is reassuring to know that great crimes can

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[27] Brindle, *Epistolary Encounters*, 3–4.
[28] Brindle, *Epistolary Encounters*, 24.
[29] Ackroyd, *Dan Leno*, 28.

immediately be translated to a higher sphere. I am not committing murders. I am invoking a legend, and anything will be forgiven me as long as I remain faithful to my role.[30]

Elizabeth views her deceit as part of a performance. Although she signs her husband's name after this entry, John Cree has no theatre background, and for that matter, he is also not someone whose interest in different roles and their portrayal would come across as entirely believable. On the other hand, Elizabeth is a method actor. Allowing herself to be consumed with the role she is currently portraying is how she experiences freedom and new opportunities. She is convinced that as long as her actions have a performative function, they serve a higher purpose and therefore, the horror and gore she causes is entertainment and hence forgivable. Comparably, the lies contained in the diary are supposed to be overlooked as the insincerity and schemes related to them are not the primary aspect the reader should pay attention to. Elizabeth uses the written records of her days as another theatre play to be read after she dies. Ashleigh Prosser notes that "not only does the diary provide an insight into the murderer's perverse motivations for producing their art, but its fabrication is itself quite literally a work of fine art composed by Elizabeth." Furthermore, its existence also "legitimise[s] her actions"[31] as it becomes another aspect of the performance left for the public to discover and enjoy.

As a result, the diary entries in *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* can be considered a crucial source of information and misinformation. Nevertheless, even when the main heroine is trying to confuse the future readers, hidden messages and hints reveal who the real writer of John Cree's diary is. Additionally, although her diary suffers from many omissions, Elizabeth also decides to share experiences that can be considered private and therefore a typical content of someone's journal. The selectiveness emphasises that not

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[30] Ackroyd, *Dan Leno*, 126.

[31] Ashleigh Prosser, "'Here we are, again!': Neo-Gothic Narratives of Textual Haunting, from Peter Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* to *The Limehouse Golem*," in *Neo-Gothic Narratives: Illusory Allusions from the Past*, ed. Sarah E. Maier and Brenda Ayres (London: Anthem Press, 2020), 99.

everything can be revealed and explained as the era and people this work depicts led discreet lives.


CONCLUSION

Neo-Victorian works which use letters, journals and other written accounts as their source of knowledge highlight the significance of how information is perceived and accessed. The fact that journals mentioned in this paper are full of inaccuracies, lies and secrets strengthens the notion of the impossibility of entirely uncovering someone's life story and their experience, even in the medium that often suggests such possibility. Both Byatt and Ackroyd use journals to offer a look into the lives of their characters, but, at the same time, they also constantly emphasise the issues of credibility, morality and fabrication. Byatt illustrates the pitfalls of research when obsession and subjectivity can affect the reliability of the results. Furthermore, the diaries of Ellen Ash, Sabine de Kercoz and Blanche Glover show how even personal accounts are edited for the possible audience that might access these writings. While the potential audience is viewed in negative terms in *Possession*, Ackroyd depicts the examination of Elizabeth's diary entries as a part of entertainment and performance. The main character enjoys the control her diary gives her, and she also uses it to manipulate the readers and the inhabitants of London. Additionally, through her writing, Elizabeth aptly demonstrates the power of stories and rumours that spread through the city's streets and how the lies and deceit can continue her legacy even after her death.

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# "IT'S A TOWN EAT TOWN WORLD": EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITIES OF YOUNG ADULT FICTION AND STEAMPUNK IN PHILIP REEVE'S *MORTAL ENGINES*

## *Petr Anténe*

ABSTRACT: While some literary critics suggest young adult fiction is not particularly stylistically complex, some of its representative texts employ rather intricate literary techniques. For example, Philip Reeve's novel *Mortal Engines* (2001) is associated with steampunk, a subgenre of alternate history showing how the future might have been imagined in the Victorian era. *Mortal Engines* portrays a violent world characterized by the concept of Municipal Darwinism, as big cities move on wheels and devour the smaller ones. Besides an anti-war message, the novel provides a critical commentary on a strictly hierarchical society, where the poor live in slums on the lower tiers. As a typical young adult novel, *Mortal Engines* may be characterized as a Bildungsroman, as it focuses on psychological growth of four complex characters of various social background. This paper thus contextualizes the novel as a significant contribution to young adult fiction as well as the steampunk subgenre.

KEYWORDS: steampunk, young adult fiction, Philip Reeve, *Mortal Engines*

The recent success of young adult fiction among other than teenage readers has often been explained by adult literary fiction having become overly complicated. For instance, Rachel Falconer argues "adult literary fiction suffered a fall into disabling self-consciousness, and in order to recover its power to grip and entertain, it had to turn back to its origins which survive in children's literature because child readers are unimpressed by literary sophistry."[1] It follows that critics such as Sandra McKay suggest young adult fiction "tends to be stylistically less complex"[2] than adult literary fiction. However, some texts written

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[1] Rachel Falconer, "Crossover literature," in *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature*, ed. David Rudd (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 159.
[2] Sandra McKay, "Literature in the ESL Classroom," *TESOL Quarterly* 16, 4 (1982): 532.

primarily for young adult readers employ rather intricate literary techniques. For example, Philip Reeve's novel *Mortal Engines* (2001), the first part of the *Mortal Engines Quartet*, also published as *Predator Cities Quartet* in the UK and *Hungry City Chronicles* in the US,[3] is associated with steampunk, a subgenre of alternate history showing how the future might have been imagined in the Victorian era.

As Barry Brummett explains, "Steampunk resituates aesthetic elements from the Age of Steam into our world. It imagines an aesthetic that would occur had steam and electricity remained the primary industrial sources of power."[4] David Beard adds that "Steampunk derives from at least three root systems: the nineteenth century's own fantastic representations of the changes that transformed its social and cultural fabric, some key science fiction works of the mid- and late twentieth century, and the DIY aesthetic of the punk and postpunk eras."[5] Steampunk has thus elements of both alternate history and futurism associated with science fiction. The creativity and playfulness of steampunk is manifested not only in literary texts, but also in creating costumes or designing various gadgets.[6] The scope of this paper, however, only permits us to consider steampunk as a literary subgenre, which has recently become associated with young adult fiction authored by writers such as Philip Reeve. This paper thus contextualizes Reeve's *Mortal Engines* as a significant contribution to young adult fiction as well as the steampunk subgenre.[7]

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[3] The other parts of the series are *Predator's Gold* (2003), *Infernal Devices* (2005), and *A Darkling Plain* (2006). *The Fever Crumb* series (2009–2011) is a trilogy written as the prequel series to the quartet.

[4] Barry Brummett, "Editor's Introduction: The Rhetoric of Steampunk," in *Clockwork Rhetoric: The Language and Style of Steampunk*, ed. Barry Brummett (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), ix.

[5] David Beard, "Introduction: A Rhetoric of Steam," in *Clockwork Rhetoric: The Language and Style of Steampunk*, ed. Barry Brummett (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), xvi.

[6] See e.g. Brummett, "Editor's Introduction," xxii.

[7] *Mortal Engines* has not received a lot of scholarly attention. The novel has been briefly mentioned in articles on young adult science fiction by Elaine Ostry (2004), and Farah Mendlesohn (2004), and has been analysed in depth by Janis Dawson (2007), Elizabeth Bullen and Elizabeth Parsons (2007), Robyn

It has been suggested that the view of technology may differ in various works associated with Steampunk. For example, John Grant observes that James P. Blaylock's and Tim Powers' novels of the 1980s and 1990s "share an essentially nostalgic vision of a crowded, hyperreal 19th-century London in which science, still mostly pursued by amateurs, has not yet lost its innocence to mechanized warfare, the Holocaust and the atom bomb."[8] However, other critics argue a distinction should be made between the portrayal of professional scientists and tinkerers who embody the concept of steampunk. For instance, John M. McKenzie writes that steampunk "consistently implies that tinkerers create useful or beneficent inventions, whereas scientists – often mad ones – invent technologies of destruction."[9] The latter observation is reflected in *Mortal Engines*, as the novel portrays a violent world characterized by the concept of Municipal Darwinism, referring to Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, introduced in the Victorian era. Big European cities such as London, "the great Traction City,"[10] thus move on wheels and devour the smaller ones. Whenever London captures a smaller city, a public celebration ensues; the novel opens with a celebration of the capture of Salthook, a fictional mining town. As one of the characters of the novel says, Municipal Darwinism can be characterized as "a town eat town world" (*ME*, 59). Reeve, who grew up in Brighton, explains "watching [his hometown] expand into

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McCallum (2009), and Adam Lovasz (2018). While some of these analyses deal with the whole tetralogy, none of them approach it in the context of steampunk.

[8] John Grant, "Steampunk," in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, ed. John Clute and John Grant (London: Orbit, 1996), 895. Grant names James P. Blaylock's novels *The Digging Leviathan* (1984), *Homunculus* (1986) and *Lord Kelvin's Machine* (1992), and Tim Powers' titles *The Anubis Gates* (1983), *On Stranger Tides* (1987) and *The Stress of Her Regard* (1989).

[9] John M. McKenzie, "Clockwork Counterfactuals: Allohistory and the Steampunk Rhetoric of Inquiry," in *Clockwork Rhetoric: The Language and Style of Steampunk*, ed. Barry Brummett (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 136.

[10] Philip Reeve, *Mortal Engines* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 2001), 3. Hereafter cited in text as *ME*.

the little towns and villages around it that I had known as separate places when I was a kid"[11] inspired the core concept.

In the futuristic world of *Mortal Engines*, set millennia into the future, the cities that keep the old practice of living on the bare earth are united as the Anti-Traction League. This alliance controls "the old Indian subcontinent and what was left of China" (*ME*, 58), and its members are considered barbarians by Londoners. At the time of the story proper, London has been running out of prey, and the Lord Mayor wants to attack the Shield-Wall that protects the League by using MEDUSA, a post-20th-century update of the nuclear bomb that he had secretly reconstructed. As the deadly weapon is one of the few post-Victorian inventions London's leaders have rediscovered, Lord Mayor and the scientists in his services represent mad people who spread destruction, as McKenzie suggests. The post-Victorian inventions that are not widely known to the general population of Reeve's fictional London are referred to as Old-Tech, and the people that used to use them are called the Ancients. The Ancients are said to have "destroyed themselves in that terrible flurry of orbit-to-earth atomics and tailored-virus bombs called the Sixty Minute War" (*ME*, 7), a conflict that severely damaged both China and the American continent. As London plans on attacking the Anti-Traction League, the present state of the world seems to lead to another case of widespread violence. To help Lord Mayor destroy the Shield-Wall, one of the prominent Londoners, Dr Evadne Twix, builds so-called Stalkers by bringing dead warriors back "to a sort of life by wiring weird Old-Tech machines into their nervous systems" (*ME*, 93). The advantage of using Stalkers as security guards or to attack London's enemies is that they do not need feeding or housing and can be easily switched on and off whenever needed.

Besides an anti-war message, the novel provides a critical commentary on a strictly hierarchical society. The inhabitants of London are socially stratified according to the tiers they live on; while the upper classes are referred to as High London ladies and gentlemen,

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[11] Qtd. in David Owen, "*Mortal Engines*: What Philip Reeve's Predator Cities Tell Us about Our World," *Guardian*, December 12, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/dec/12/mortal-engines-what-philip-reeves-predator-cities-tell-us-about-our-world

the slums are located on the lowest tiers, closer to the noise and pollution of the city's engines. Besides, every individual has been assigned a specific function in the society, as all people are divided into four professional groups called Guilds. Thus, the Navigators are responsible for steering the course of London, and the Merchants oversee London's economy. However, the most powerful group at the top of social hierarchy are the Engineers who control the scientific developments leading to the use of MEDUSA or Stalkers. The first great engineer Nikolas Quirke had even been declared a god and a saviour of London, largely replacing earlier religious beliefs. In contrast, the Historians are the most traditionalist members of the population in charge of collecting and preserving highly prized artifacts in London museums. In fact, the only building that has been left in London from previous eras is St Paul's Cathedral, and even various museum exhibits are occasionally taken away from the Historians and used as fuel for London's engines. The novel thus highlights a lack of concern with history in the violent and excessively pragmatic society.

It may be argued that the novel's focus on mad scientists' misuse of technology extends the steampunk's basis of *Mortal Engines* towards a dystopia.[12] Joan L. Knickerbocker and James A. Rycik suggest that dystopian works "provide visions of future societies that are characterized by inequality, immorality, and government oppression."[13] In *Mortal Engines*, inequality stems from the Engineers' power over the rest of the population, and the use of dead bodies to create Stalkers defies any concept of morality. The widespread disrespect for and ignorance of history is another common trope of dystopian novels. It is not a coincidence that dystopias are very common and popular in contemporary young adult literature. Yvonne Shiau suggests young

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[12] Both Lovasz and McCallum analyse the novel as a dystopia. While Lovasz concentrates on the machinic aspect of Reeve's dystopia, McCallum focuses on the utopian impulses whose failure led to the occurrence of Reeve's postapocalyptic world. Similarly, Bullen and Parsons compare the dystopian features of *Mortal Engines* and *Feed* (2002), a young adult novel by American writer M. T. Anderson.

[13] Joan L. Knickerbocker and James A. Rycik, *Literature for Young Adults: Books (and More) for Contemporary Readers* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 206.

adult readers can find several interrelated themes to identify with in these texts, "themes of self-discovery, of one young person pitted against the whole terrible world,"[14] and Karen Coats adds that "contemporary YA dystopian novels continue to explore anxieties over new technologies, invasive and authoritarian political structures, and environmental devastation through plots that position teenagers as society's only hope."[15] Indeed, as a young adult novel, *Mortal Engines* focuses on four adolescent characters, following their psychological development.

One of these characters is Tom Natsworthy, a fifteen-year-old Apprentice Historian who is an orphan, as his parents died in a catastrophic event called the Big Tilt when he was six years old. The first chapter shows Tom being bullied by another Apprentice Historian, Herbert Melliphant: "[Herbert] enjoyed picking on Tom, who was small and shy and had no friends to stick up for him – and Tom could not get back at him, because Melliphant's family had paid to make him a First Class Apprentice, while Tom, who had no family, was a mere Third" (*ME*, 8). The text thus introduces universal themes of competition and conflicts between peers, in this case in the context of their privilege or lack thereof, deriving from their different social status. As an orphan of low social background, Tom admires his superior Thaddeus Valentine who is known to have risen from humble origins to London's Head Historian. One could suggest that Valentine functions as a role model for Tom, who misses his father. At the beginning of the novel, Tom is introduced to Valentine's beautiful teenage daughter Katherine, the only other member of the Head Historian's family, as Valentine's wife died when Katherine was five years old. As Katherine has only one parent and Tom has none, *Mortal Engines* extensively deals with the theme of

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[14] Yvonne Shiau, "The Rise of Dystopian Fiction: From Soviets Dissidents to 70's Paranoia to Murakami," *Electric Lit*, July 26, 2017, https://electricliterature.com/the-rise-of-dystopian-fiction-from-soviet-dissidents-to-70s-paranoia-to-murakami/?fbclid=IwAR0RxYeLXm68Ij3V3qJ676L0l-OleS2Qpc_SrBxMbVo42WYInOf5SHFqBDU

[15] Karen Coats, *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Children's and Young Adult Literature* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 33.

incomplete families. When Tom meets Katherine, he is impressed not only by her appearance, but also by her personality: "She was as lovely as one of the girls in his daydreams, but kinder and funnier, and he knew that from now on the heroines he rescued in his imagination would all be Katherine" (*ME*, 22). Tom thus dreams of overcoming his marginal social status and becoming a hero who saves damsels in distress.

Accidentally, early in the novel, Tom seems to have a chance to fulfill his dream by saving Valentine rather than Katherine; however, an unexpected turning point ensues. When Tom accompanies Valentine on an inspection of the pieces of Old-Tech from the devoured city of Salthook, the Head Historian is suddenly attacked by a girl with a black scarf wrapped across her face. As the girl approaches Valentine with a knife, Tom grabs her arm and chases her when she tries to run away. When the girl's face is finally revealed to Tom, the omniscient narrator describes it in the following way: "She was no older than Tom, and she was hideous. A terrible scar ran down her face from forehead to jaw, making it look like a portrait that had been furiously crossed out. Her mouth was wrenched sideways in a permanent sneer, her nose was a smashed stump and her single eye stared at him out of the wreckage, as grey and chill as a winter sea" (*ME*, 26). The girl's description is thus in sharp contrast to Katherine's beauty.[16] The girl manages to shout at Tom her name is Hester Shaw and Valentine is responsible for her disfigurement, before she escapes the police through a chute. A moment later, Tom tells Valentine her name, and Valentine immediately reacts by pushing him down into the chute.

From the moment when Hester and Tom fall out of London and land on the bare earth, the process of Tom's psychological and moral growth begins. While at first, Tom is not even willing to believe that Valentine had tried to get rid of him, he is gradually confronted with the complex reality concerning the Head Historian, as well as the wider society. At the beginning of the novel, Tom is convinced that Municipal Darwinism is a "noble, beautiful system" (*ME*, 147). As Janis Dawson notes, "Readers with an interest in history and current events will

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[16] Hester's facial disfigurement is largely diminished in the 2018 film adaptation of the novel, directed by Christian Rivers, and staring Hera Hilmar as Hester Shaw.

readily associate Reeve's sympathetic young protagonist, Tom Natsworthy, with politicians, economists, and well-intentioned individuals in the present era who shut their eyes to the dark side of a system that is driven by competition, consumption, and the savage exploitation of human beings and natural resources."[17] However, with Hester's help, Tom moves to the realization that Municipal Darwinism leads to the destruction of huge parts of the world.

Moreover, as Tom and Hester are looking together for a way to get back to London, Hester gradually tells Tom her life story. Tom is shocked to hear Valentine had killed Hester's parents so that he could appropriate her mother's rediscovery of MEDUSA to impress Lord Mayor and consequently rise on the social ladder and become Head Historian. Hester witnessed Valentine's killing her parents and only survived by accident, yet with a limp and a disfigured face, which she tries to hide from people. At the beginning of Hester's and Tom's journey, she tends to be the more active one based on her independence and experience living on the bare earth; unlike her, Tom had never seen a horse or a road. As Hester seems to take after her skilled and knowledgeable mother, the novel confirms there are many strong female characters in steampunk; as Beard observes, "Steampunk promises gender relations that allow the individual woman to achieve heroic roles."[18] Hester's abilities are also appreciated by Tom, who notices a "quick, clever, likable girl whom he sometimes sensed peeking out at him from behind that scarred mask" (*ME*, 42), although he continues to be "in love with the image of Katherine Valentine, whose face had hung in his mind like a lantern through all the miles of his adventures" (*ME*, 147). The themes of losing one's illusions about an ideal world and falling in love for the first time are universal in young adult literature; the alternate future of *Mortal Engines* only makes them the more striking.

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[17] Janis Dawson, "'Beneath their cheerful bunny faces, his slippers had steel toe caps': Traction Cities, Postmodernisms, and Coming of Age in Philip Reeve's *Mortal Engines* and *Predator's Gold*," *Children's Literature in Education* 38, 2 (2007): 142.

[18] Beard, "Introduction," xxiv.

As Lord Mayor is afraid that Hester may have learned too much about MEDUSA from her mother, he sends a Stalker named Shrike to track down Hester and Tom. Rather than a thoughtless monster, Shrike is a solitary figure and a former friend of Hester whom she met after her parents' murder; as Dr Twix says, Shrike is "far more complicated than is good for him; he has almost developed his own personality" (*ME*, 54). Once he finds Hester and Tom, Shrike suggests Hester could let herself get killed to be resurrected as a Stalker and reunited with him. After Tom kills Shrike when trying to defend her, Hester gets angry, as if she seriously considered putting Shrike's plan into practice. When Tom objects that Shrike would have turned Hester into a monster, she shrieks: "I'm already a monster!" (*ME*, 179). This scene illustrates that while Tom is learning to see her in a new light, Hester still struggles with accepting her appearance. Also, Tom has mixed feelings about having killed Shrike: "He didn't feel like a hero, he felt like a murderer, and the feeling of guilt and shame stayed with him, staining his dreams" (*ME*, 193). While Shrike was technically already dead, the Stalker's hopes and dreams made him uncomfortably similar to an alive human being.

Besides this episode, Tom and Hester undergo other adventures that strengthen the bond between them; at one point, Tom realizes Hester is "the closest thing he had to a friend in this huge, confusing world" (*ME*, 196). For instance, in the small town of Speedwell, the impoverished mayor Mr Wreyland tries to sell them as slaves, as some traction cities use slaves to work in their engine rooms. Fortunately, Tom and Hester manage to escape by air, aided by the pilot Anna Fang, whose airship is called *Jenny Haniver* and belongs to the Anti-Traction League. Anna, whose parents had died as slaves, presents another strong female character in the novel. Besides, meeting Anna makes Tom accept the fact that not all Anti-Tractionists are savage barbarians and his enemies; rather, they may be ordinary people dealing with the same hardships as himself: "Tom felt a rush of sympathy for poor Miss Fang, his fellow orphan. Was that why she smiled all the time, to hide her sorrow? And was that why she had rescued Hester and himself, to save them from her parents' fate?" (*ME*, 87). Travelling on board of *Jenny Haniver* thus forces Tom to question some of the beliefs he had taken for granted. As Dawson notes, the name of Anna's airship itself is significant, as *Jenny Haniver* is "a general term for fake creatures or

'monsters' constructed from the carcasses and body parts of different animals"; consequently, Dawson employs this fact as a metaphorical reference to Reeve's novels as an "eclectic, sometimes bizarre, blend of genres and forms."[19]

Meanwhile in London, Katherine secretly tries to find out why Hester attacked Valentine. To track down Bevis Pod, an Apprentice Engineer who witnessed Hester's attempt at killing Valentine, Katherine visits London underdecks for the first time in her life, comparing the experience to "walking into a wall of wet sewage" (*ME*, 121). Besides seeing the convicts do hard manual work there, she is horrified to find out they are fed food based on human excrements. Katherine, Valentine's only child who has been brought up as a lady, thus extends her social awareness beyond her privileged surrounding. Bevis also helps Katherine discover the truth about her father's involvement in the Mayor's plans and shares his specialized knowledge with her. The character of Bevis may be interpreted as a well-intentioned tinkerer embodying the spirit of steampunk when he criticizes the abuse of the Engineers' skills: "I never expected to get assigned to the experimental prison. Keeping people in cages and making them work in the Gut, and wade about in those turd-tanks – that's not Engineering. That's just wicked" (*ME*, 143). Besides, Katherine finds Bevis "unexpectedly handsome, with big, dark eyes and a perfect mouth" (*ME*, 125), although he has no hair, as he explains that "in the Guild they use chemicals on us when we're first apprenticed, so it never grows back" (*ME*, 217). This subplot thus provides a parallel to Tom becoming close to Hester, suggesting Bevis may become Katherine's future partner, although he may not be considered particularly attractive by High London ladies and gentlemen.

In their attempts to find out more about the current state of events, Katherine and Bevis are supported by the Historians, who also disagree with wide-scale destruction, as they believe the remnants of ancient cultures the Anti-Traction League developed from should be preserved. When Katherine confronts Valentine with her findings, he justifies his behavior by wanting to improve her social status, as he had begun his career as a mere scavenger, digging up Old-Tech machinery

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[19] Dawson, "Beneath their cheerful bunny faces," 143.

wherever he could. Valentine even admits Hester may be Katherine's half-sister, as he and Hester's mother were in a relationship at a time. While Valentine may love Katherine, he has been willing to sacrifice anybody else for his selfish goals. In addition, as he is too obedient to Lord Mayor, Katherine feels the necessity to distance herself from her father and "make amends for the things he's done" (*ME*, 244), particularly to prevent Lord Mayor from launching MEDUSA.

At least to a degree, Valentine is influenced by his conversation with Katherine; he even asks Lord Mayor whether the widescale destruction of the Anti-Traction League is necessary. However, shortly before the planned attack of the Shield-Wall, it is revealed that this assault is only the first step in Lord Mayor's plans. After that, he will not hesitate to destroy the whole universe, as he announces to Valentine: "When we have devoured the last wandering city and demolished the last static settlement we will begin digging. We will build great engines, powered by the heat of the earth's core, and steer our planet from its orbit. We will devour Mars, Venus and the asteroids" (*ME*, 271). Valentine thinks Lord Mayor is "as mad as a spoon" (*ME*, 271), and he regrets not having opposed him earlier.

Although unexpected circumstances prevent the planned attack, the closure of the novel does not provide a happy ending for all major characters, as some of them even die by the end. While such an ending may be unexpected for some readers, Karen Coats argues that "the stories teens tend to be interested in are usually more focused on how things break rather than how they work."[20] After Hester and Tom return to London, Hester is captured by Stalkers and presented to Lord Mayor at the very beginning of the public launch of MEDUSA. When Valentine proceeds to kill her, Katherine saves Hester's life by flinging herself between Hester and her father's knife. To Lord Mayor's anger, the severely injured Katherine falls against MEDUSA's keyboard, making the machine go out of order. In the following turmoil, Hester is the only one who tries to nurse Katherine rather than repair the machine; nevertheless, Katherine dies soon thereafter. Moved by Hester's behavior, Valentine lets her and Tom escape. However, Tom does not

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[20] Coats, *The Bloomsbury Introduction to Children's and Young Adult Literature*, 73.

feel like a hero, as he realizes a rocket he targeted at an airship that followed *Jenny Haniver* resulted in innocent people's deaths. In the final scene, Hester tells Tom: "You aren't a hero, and I'm not beautiful, and we probably won't live happily ever after. […] But we're alive, and together, and we're going to be alright" (*ME*, 293). While the novel provides a hopeful ending for these two major characters, the closure suggests they may be faced with other challenges in the future.

In conclusion, *Mortal Engines* uses many tropes of both young adult fiction and steampunk. As a Bildungsroman, the novel focuses on four adolescents' search for their identity, and the related themes of orphanhood, bullying, lack of self-confidence, and falling in love for the first time. While getting to know themselves, the teenage characters gradually reach a deeper understanding of the complex world, and some of them find themselves in additional demanding situations, such as complicity in another person's death. While these themes are rather universal, the original fictional world of Reeve's novel makes them the more striking. Associated with steampunk, *Mortal Engines* features a possible vision of how distant future may have been imagined in the Victorian period. A general feature of steampunk is the portrayal of an alternate history according to which steam and electricity have remained the bases of industry. Moreover, referring to Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, which was introduced in the Victorian era, Reeve coins the term Municipal Darwinism to depict a violent world where big cities move on wheels and devour the smaller ones. In this world, a strictly hierarchical society has persisted since the Victorian era, as the poor live in slums on the lower tiers. Besides voicing a critical commentary on this rigid social hierarchy, the futuristic society described in the novel presents an anti-war message as well as a skeptical view of technology, as the earth has already been severely damaged by earlier wars, and a gradual destruction of the universe may come once all the resources are consumed. While this warning against undesirable and threatening future developments of the world may be generally associated with the subgenre of dystopian fiction, in the context of steampunk, it may be related to the portrayal of mad scientists whose obsession with knowledge and power eventually leads to destruction. For all these reasons, the blend of young adult fiction and steampunk in the novel results in a text that is accessible to readers of various ages, but also rather complex and thought provoking at the same time.

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# THE IMAGE OF THE UNITED STATES
# IN MEREDITH TALUSAN'S *FAIREST*

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ABSTRACT: The paper discusses the ways in which the United States as a new homeland is approached and portrayed in Meredith Talusan's 2020 memoir *Fairest* and how Talusan's queerness impacts this portrayal. After introducing the image of the United States as a new homeland for queer immigrants, the paper moves on to the analysis of Talusan's depiction of the United States. It demonstrates the complex situation of an immigrant protagonist who is aware of the postcolonial reality yet still adopts and reproduces some of the Western and white-centrist views. Drawing on the theories of Jasbir Puar and Sara Ahmed, the paper demonstrates how the protagonist becomes the right kind of migrant and the right kind of queer, displaying dedication and perseverance. Finally, the paper concludes that this also makes Talusan a good autobiographical subject who narrates her story of trauma in a culturally sanctioned and celebrated way.

KEYWORDS: Meredith Talusan, *Fairest*, the United States, American Dream, queer, immigrant, albino, memoir

## INTRODUCTION

The description of the expectations and reality of the country of destination traditionally belongs to the immigrant life writing. Experiencing what William Boelhower calls "dream anticipation,"[1] the authors often imagine the new country as a place where they will be able to live a fulfilled life in freedom, safety, and prosperity. Queer immigrant authors, who may come from countries that persecute gender and sexual minorities, are no exception. Diaspora has long been a part of queer experience and "the idealization of migration as necessary to the

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[1] William Q. Boelhower, *Immigrant Autobiography in the United States: (Four Versions of the Italian American Self)* (Madison: Essedue Edizioni, 1982), 28.

fulfillment of the true homosexual self"[2] is often found in queer immigrant life writing. The image of the contemporary United States as politically and socially liberal makes it an ideal candidate for this imagined country of destination. However, Jasbir Puar in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007) argues that this image is deliberately created and maintained for political purposes, and only certain queer immigrant identities have access to the privileges of acceptance and safety. This contradiction is one of the reasons why it is relevant to examine the ways in which the United States as a new homeland is approached and portrayed in the works of queer immigrant authors.

The present paper discusses the 2020 memoir *Fairest* by Meredith Talusan, who arrived in the United States from the Philippines at the age of fifteen and went on to graduate from Harvard and Cornell to become a multi-genre artist and journalist. She is an albino transgender woman, and her work is influenced by the intersection of her queerness, immigrant status, and disability. *Fairest* deals primarily with her childhood and young age before the transition.[3] This paper concentrates on the portrayal of the United States in *Fairest*, specifically on how Talusan's queerness influences this portrayal. It shows that while being aware of the role of the United States in the postcolonial reality in the Philippines, Talusan in her memoir nevertheless perpetuates many values associated with the so-called American Dream. And while she admits that to live a fulfilled and safe life with her gender identity in the United States required her to undergo a gender transition, she nevertheless presents it as a better alternative to life in her country of origin. *Fairest* testifies to the situation in which immigrant male-bodied individuals with a feminine gender expression often find themselves – though the scale and forms may differ, ultimately, the

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[2] Anne-Marie Fortier, "Making Home: Queer Migrations and Motions of Attachment," in *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, ed. Sara Ahmed et al. (London: Routledge, 2003), 118.

[3] Currently the author identifies as a woman and uses either female or gender-neutral pronouns. In this paper, the female pronouns she/her will be used, also for the discussion of the content of the primary text *Fairest* (even though at the time described in the text, the author identified as a gay man Marc).

discrimination and marginalization are not something they can easily leave behind in their country of origin.

To provide background for the analysis of *Fairest*, the paper firstly demonstrates how and why the United States positions itself as a multicultural liberal democracy welcoming queer subjects and which queer subjects are included in this conditional acceptance. The paper draws primarily on the works of Jasbir Puar (2007) and Sara Ahmed (2004, 2010). Puar's theories provide the context, as her concept of "homonationalism" explains how certain queer subjects are used for political purposes, included in and excluded from an imagined idealized nation, and what the properties of the right kind of a queer subject are. Ahmed's theorizations of happy objects and happiness in relation to immigrants and queer individuals further inform the interpretation of the ways in which the protagonist Meredith becomes a good immigrant and a good queer. Finally, the paper also shows that together with becoming the right kind of immigrant and the right kind of queer, the protagonist Meredith also becomes a good autobiographical subject who narrates her potentially traumatic life story in a palatable and culturally sanctioned way.

## 1. QUEER MIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES: POLITICS AND IMAGE

The contemporary United States promotes both among its inhabitants and to the outside world its image as a liberal democracy, where members of different minorities can live openly with their identities. Cultivating this image is not uncommon in Western countries: Sara Ahmed in *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004) discusses how the United Kingdom comes to be "imagined as an ideal through the discourse of multiculturalism, which we can describe as a form of conditional love."[4] This multicultural nation imagines itself "as 'being' plural, open and diverse; as being loving and welcoming to others."[5] Importantly, this love is conditional, given to individuals who assimilate

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[4] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 133.

[5] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 133.

and contribute to the image of functioning multiculturalism. Puar evokes similar language when arguing that due to "liberal discourses of multicultural tolerance and diversity," a small group of "homosexual, gay and queer bodies may be the temporary recipients of the 'measures of benevolence.'"[6] Reimaging one's country as plural, open, and diverse serves dual political purposes – not only it promotes this country, but it also allows establishing a contrast with other countries and their nationals, consequently justifying their mistreatment spanning from discrimination against individuals to military intervention in a country.

The originally colonial Western strategy of portraying the countries from the Global South as "uniformly hostile"[7] towards gender and sexual minorities in order to depict these countries as barbarian (and Western countries as saviors and liberators) has been highlighted by postcolonial scholars,[8] yet it continues to be employed to present days. Jasbir Puar in *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007) coins the term "homonationalism" and argues that the United States and other Western nations started presenting themselves as tolerant towards sexual minorities to establish a contrast to those who persecute these minorities, in this case specifically Muslims. However, she claims that they simultaneously portray Muslims "as queer, nonnational, perversely racialized other."[9] Thus they draw a line between homonormative[10] "properly queer subjects,"[11] who in fact do

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[6] Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), xii.

[7] Gabeba Baderoon, "'I Compose Myself': Lesbian Muslim Autobiographies and the Craft of Self-Writing in South Africa," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 83, 4 (2015): 899.

[8] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory. A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman, orig. pub. 1988 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 93; Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 127.

[9] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 37.

[10] Lisa Duggan defines "homonormativity" as a politics that "upholds and sustains" the "dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions" and promises a "privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption." "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of

not challenge the neo-liberal heteronormative white nationalist values and can be abused for political purposes, and those who are outside of both this normative queerness and heteronormativity. Such a system does not undermine heteronormativity; on the contrary, the narrative of the country as "a properly multicultural heteronormative but nevertheless gay-friendly, tolerant and sexually liberated society"[12] is only "bolstered by homonormativity."[13] Instead of becoming truly inclusive, the United States only shifts the line of "normality" to reflect the trends already happening in society. In Ahmed's words, the love for those gender and sexual minorities continues to be very much conditional, which is precisely the treatment that the protagonist of *Fairest* experiences in the United States.

What aids the United States and other Western countries in employing such rhetoric is that "queer" is a Western concept, and the related discussions and activism are set in a Western context and informed by Western values and beliefs. As Natalie Oswin points out, today it is the "Western queer who, not incidentally, is largely synecdochically read as *the* global queer."[14] This movement towards the "global queer" is widely understood as liberating the queer individuals in other parts of the world,[15] specifically in the so-called third-world countries. However, as explicated above, this movement can also be read in the context of the strategic attempts to produce a binary of "gay-friendly and not-gay-friendly nations."[16] Furthermore, applying the Western concepts of sexuality to non-Western sexual minorities leads to

Neoliberalism," in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, ed. Russ Castronovo and Dana Nelson (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 179.

[11] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages,* xiii.

[12] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 39.

[13] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xxv.

[14] Natalie Oswin, "Decentering Queer Globalization: Diffusion and the 'Global Gay,'" *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24, 5 (2004): 779 (emphasis original).

[15] Dennis Altman, "On Global Queering," *Australian Humanities Review* 2 (1996), australianhumanitiesreview.org/1996/07/01/on-global-queering.

[16] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xvi.

their continuing exoticization and promotes the perception of these sexualities and their social position in original countries as regressive.

This view of the Western queer as the global queer, together with the lack of attentiveness to differences within sexual minorities among different cultures and highlighting only a particular kind of a queer migrant also contribute to the invisibility of minority sexualities in the immigrant discourse. This is often the case specifically for Asian Americans, among whom Meredith Talusan belongs. Within certain Asian American communities, queerness may continue to be a taboo topic. Outside the communities, Asian Americans are typically viewed as heterosexual.[17] When they come out as queer, their gender and sexual identities may be misunderstood, which is one of the aspects of the queer immigrant experience Talusan portrays in *Fairest*.


## 2. PORTRAYAL OF THE UNITED STATES IN *FAIREST*

The protagonist of *Fairest* Meredith is since childhood presented with the idea of American superiority. America[18] is the utopianized future homeland. One grandfather already lives there and both Meredith's parents had applied for the visas even before she was born. Meredith's relationship to America both as imagined and real new homeland and her queerness are undoubtedly among the main themes of the text, making it a suitable source for the present study.

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[17] Mark Tristan Ng, "Searching for Home Voices of Gay Asian American Youth in West Hollywood," in *Asian American Youth: Culture, Identity, and Ethnicity*, ed. Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou (New York: Routledge, 2004): 271; Li-Anne, "Absences and Archives: Queer Asian (In)Visibilities and Histories," North Carolina Asian Americans Together, August 5, 2021, ncaatogether.org/2021/08/05/absences-and-archives-queer-asian-invisibilities-and-histories; A. C. Ocampo and D. Soodjinda, "Invisible Asian Americans: The Intersection of Sexuality, Race, and Education Among Gay Asian Americans," *Race, Ethnicity and Education* 19, 3 (2016): 480–499, dx.doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2015.1095169.

[18] The term "America" for the United States is used in *Fairest,* and it will therefore be used also in this part of the paper.

Because of her albinism, Meredith is always perceived as visibly other in her community, "an affront against nature,"[19] and is unable to socialize with other children and play with them due to her poor vision. She is, however, also viewed as white, which is celebrated and perceived as a proof that Meredith is "destined to live in America, the richest of countries,"[20] where "everything seemed easier."[21] Sara Ahmed in *The Promise of Happiness* claims that in certain works of popular culture with immigrant protagonists we can see how "freedom takes form as a proximity to the whiteness."[22] In *Fairest*, Meredith's perceived whiteness allows her to make more decisions on the trajectory of her life than those around her.

Meredith's childhood is impacted by this contradiction – the constant assurance from her grandmother about being "beautiful, intelligent, better, more special,"[23] and the difficulties to socialize in the community. She turns to American television and convinces herself that "[she] was not the aberration other people wanted [her] to be, but was instead practically the same as the Americans [she] watched on TV."[24] She spends hours watching an American television show about a privileged white family and mimics the behavior and gestures of a son from the show. Meredith also fantasizes that "maybe [her] Mama had an affair with an American, and [she] would some day find him in a giant house in the United States, where [she] could have as many books and games as [she] wanted."[25] These images of America, together with presents the grandfather occasionally sends, serve as what Sara Ahmed calls "happy objects;"[26] as something one moves towards in order to reach happiness. Meredith describes that when opening the box of presents, she could smell that they smell differently than things they had. She thought that that was a smell of America and she wanted to be wherever the smell came from. The images and the word "America"

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[19] Meredith Talusan, *Fairest* (New York: Viking, 2020), 23.

[20] Talusan, *Fairest*, 23.

[21] Talusan, *Fairest*, 26.

[22] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness,* 135.

[23] Talusan, *Fairest*, 33.

[24] Talusan, *Fairest*, 20.

[25] Talusan, *Fairest*, 46.

[26] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 21–49.

itself keep reappearing in the text mostly with positive associations: there are "American movies played in cinema;"[27] grandmother is finally being able to afford a western-style house "like in America;"[28] and American television program is the one telling the truth during a political turmoil in the Philippines.

Meredith also reads avidly in English, which serves as another point of her exceptionalism within her family. Through reading, she starts better understanding the postcolonial reality of the Philippines and grows critical towards the United States. Meredith starts viewing her grandmother's love as "a product of [grandmother's] own fantasies as a dark peasant farmer born into poverty, who may have loved [Meredith] regardless but favored [her] over everyone else because she connected [her] color to the wealthy, powerful Americans who conquered [their] land."[29] Meredith also claims that she realized that "Filipinos were brainwashed to believe that Americans were superior."[30] However, she admits that she recognized this belief in herself too and felt shame. These contradictory feelings contribute to the ambivalent portrayal of America in the memoir.


## 3. (IN)ACCESSIBILITY OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

In her criticism of America, Meredith nevertheless continues to embrace the values traditionally associated with the American Dream[31] – her hard work, education, and independent thinking are what differentiates her from the others who are unaware of the postcolonial reality. She understands this reality because she can read about it in English. The tools of the oppressor allow her to see the oppression.

When Meredith later "found [her] own American dream to fulfill," it was a dream that depended "on [her] own industry and will."[32]

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[27] Talusan, *Fairest*, 84.

[28] Talusan, *Fairest*, 83.

[29] Talusan, *Fairest*, 92.

[30] Talusan, *Fairest*, 65.

[31] David A. M. Peterson, Jennifer Wolak, "The Dynamic American Dream," *American Journal of Political Science* 64, 4 (2020): 968–970.

[32] Talusan, *Fairest*, 151.

The values of individualism and hard work as conditions of success are strongly present in the text. She stresses that her "brain and will got [her] to Harvard,"[33] which is one of the multiple references in the text to the prestige and exclusivity of the "most famous school in the world."[34] Furthermore, she describes the "overwhelming freedom of being able to study whatever [she] chose, become whoever [she] wanted" and the positive emotions connected to being "free to find [her] own way" and "independent, with no obligation to [her] parents or even to [her] grandmother . . . because [she] already far exceeded [her grandmother's] expectations."[35] As Anne-Marie Fortier explains, for many queer authors, moving out is a part of a coming out,[36] as a family home is a place that by its designation reproduces heteronormativity. We see how Meredith's feelings of freedom and potential are connected to the distancing from her roots and family.

Meredith's need to differentiate herself from her family, whom she calls "derelict immigrants,"[37] reveals in an argument with her father regarding the studies. Her father claims that had he been white, he could have also gone to Harvard. Meredith angrily responds that "lazy people like him don't go to Harvard,"[38] refusing to ascribe her success to her albinism. Her individualism further shows when she decides not to invite her addicted and mentally ill brother to live with her, claiming that she "couldn't drown with [her] brother, . . . [she] needed to reach the bank of American success before [her] family dragged [her] down."[39] She also claims that her brother would be better off staying in the Philippines, suggesting that only those more educated/white like her can succeed in America.

The dissatisfaction of Meredith's relatives with life in the United States is another link to Sara Ahmed's work. Ahmed in *The Promise of Happiness* highlights the connection of unhappiness and other negative affects with migrants. She analyses the societal narrative

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[33] Talusan, *Fairest*, 12.

[34] Talusan, *Fairest*, 134.

[35] Talusan, *Fairest*, 134.

[36] Fortier, "Making Home," 115.

[37] Talusan, *Fairest*, 2.

[38] Talusan, *Fairest*, 144.

[39] Talusan, *Fairest*, 162.

regarding migrants: they bring unhappiness because they remember and remind us of the existence of negative matters such as racism. She argues that the migrants today have a "happiness duty;"[40] they are expected to be happy in order to not remind us of the racism and discrimination of the past and present. For the colonial subjects in the past and likewise for the migrant today, happiness lies in "mimicking the white men" and thus acquiring "good habits."[41] The members of Meredith's family do not manage to acquire the good habits, only the "bad" ones: addiction and "laziness." Meredith, who literary practiced mimicking the white man since childhood, is more successful in acquiring good habits and becoming the right kind of migrant.

Ahmed's concept of the "happiness duty" helps us understand why Talusan in the narrative of her life foregrounds her success as opposed to the failures of her family members. Another contributing factor is the "duty" Talusan has as an autobiographer. The events discussed in *Fairest* – childhood exclusion, immigration, gender-related issues – carry parallels with a common content of trauma narratives. The trauma narratives of unsuccessful immigration are often characterized by incoherence, circularity, and negative emotions.[42] This creates a paradox for autobiographers like Talusan because these properties, typical for a therapeutic form, become undesirable in a published autobiographical narrative. Autobiographers describing traumatic events find themselves under pressure regarding not only what events they share but also how these events are narrated. Kate Douglas reminds us that "autobiography is a genre that values good subjects" who demonstrate their "resilience and recovery."[43] While literary trauma narratives are valuable as "a counter-discourse to the historical muting or erasure"[44] of violence and marginalization, the acceptance of these

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[40] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 158.

[41] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 129.

[42] Maya Benish-Weisman, "Between Trauma and Redemption: Story Form Differences in Immigrant Narratives of Successful and Nonsuccessful Immigration," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 40, 6 (2009): 960–963.

[43] Kate Douglas, *Contesting Childhood: Autobiography, Trauma, and Memory* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 109.

[44] Leigh Gilmore, "Trauma and Life Writing," in *Encyclopedia of Life Writing*, ed. Margaretta Jolly (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001), 885.

narratives depends on them reflecting societal norms of narrating a life.[45] The available cultural ways of speaking about struggles and trauma, together with the additional pressure as an immigrant to represent oneself as a happy and successful person, contribute to the character of the narrative Talusan presents, and that is common for self-narratives of successful immigration[46] – a narrative in which obstacles are overcome through the culturally celebrated means of individualism, hard work, and resilience.

## 4. AMERICA THROUGH THE QUEER LENSE

Becoming the right kind of migrant is the first step, but there are other elements of Meredith's identity that prevent her from becoming a good American subject. Sara Ahmed discusses that queer people are another group that is often perceived as "unhappy" one, due to their inability to approximate the typical sources of happiness such as family life and children.[47] She argues that the idea that in our society queer people can "come out, be accepted, and be happy"[48] is very much conditioned by whether the person is the right kind of queer, whether they "become acceptable to a world that has already decided what is acceptable."[49] The right kind of queer is the one who is "depositing their hope for happiness in the right places."[50] In parallel with the theories of Jasbir Puar and Lisa Duggan, these "right places" are those that do not threaten the heteronormative idea of what a queer person should aim for and desire. Just like it describes Meredith's attempts at approximating whiteness, *Fairest* also documents how she becomes the acceptable kind of queer.

When living as a gay man, Meredith learns that the gay community in the urban university setting in the nineties has a hierarchy that deems only certain identities attractive and worth validation in the

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[45] Douglas, *Contesting Childhood*, 110
[46] Benish-Weisman, "Between Trauma and Redemption," 957–960.
[47] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 88–120.
[48] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 106.
[49] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 106.
[50] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, 106.

form of attention and sexual opportunities. Meredith sees that her being Asian and skinny makes her unattractive. Furthermore, she realizes that the gender expression that is viewed as appropriate for a man in the Philippines is read as effeminate in the United States. She systematically works to change her body and behavior in a way that would better fit the ideals of beauty held in the gay community, and she succeeds in this, becoming muscular and masculine. She also adopts the racist values pervasive in the community, admitting that she "only slept with white men, because [she]'d been brainwashed to want them even when [she] resented their attractiveness."[51] In the section of the memoir titled "Lady Wedgwood," Meredith describes living in a long-term relationship with an older, British aristocrat, philosopher, and gay activist with whom they formed "such a handsome couple."[52] At that point, she becomes the kind of gay man that American society accepts and even celebrates.

In the other areas of life, Talusan says that she could well live her life also in the Philippines; however, this becomes more nuanced when the topic is her gender and sexuality. She mostly suggests that to live a realized life with her sexuality and gender identity is more accessible in the United States than in the Philippines. We see a comparison of her frustration in hiding her feelings for her friend in the Philippines with her active sex life as a gay man in the United States. While often criticizing the American gay scene and pointing to its concentration on masculinity, whiteness, and attractivity, she still claims that in the Philippines, she "would be less likely to live openly."[53] Meredith feels that there the only option for her would be to be a *bakla*. In a contemporary context, the Tagalog term *bakla* refers to men with feminine gender expression and typically with homosexual preference. Meredith describes seeing *baklas* in television as "creatures that were tolerated but never wanted," because "no one ever wanted to love a bakla." [54] She tells herself that she "wasn't like them," that she was a "serious accomplished person, not a bakla who worked in her salons and

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[51] Talusan, *Fairest*, 147.

[52] Talusan, *Fairest*, 245.

[53] Talusan, *Fairest*, 96.

[54] Talusan, *Fairest*, 29.

florist shops."[55] While individuals with this identity have a place in society, in Talusan's perspective that is a place of shame and ridicule, a place where she does not want to find herself.[56]

However, neither in the United States is Meredith free to "become whoever [she] wanted"[57] in terms of her gender and sexual identity. She understands that because of the ideals of masculinity in the gay community and society in general, there is little place for gay men with feminine expression.[58] Furthermore, as Puar reminds us, the disdain for femininity more strongly targets ethnic and racialized bodies, because "emasculation is unseemly and unpatriotic."[59] Learning that the "benevolence toward sexual others is contingent upon ever-narrowing parameters of white racial privilege . . . , gender and kinship normativity, and bodily integrity,"[60] Meredith understands that if she wants to live her life as a person with feminine expression, the transition is necessary. Meredith clearly states that "had [she] lived in the world where men were allowed to dress and behave like women without being scorned or punished, [she] wouldn't have needed to be a woman at all."[61] This is a comment on the society where such individuals are in greater danger of being discriminated against, persecuted, and assaulted. Meredith explains this to her grandmother who does not understand her transition:

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[55] Talusan, *Fairest*, 222.

[56] For the discussion of the sources of *baklas*' low societal status in the contemporary Filipino society, see J. Neil C. Garcia, *Philippine Gay Culture: Binabae to Bakla, Silahis to MSM* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009), xviii–xxiv.

[57] Talusan, *Fairest*, 134.

[58] For the discussion of the prejudice against effeminate gay men, see e.g., Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay," in *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 154–64; Sadie E Hale and Tomás Ojeda, "Acceptable Femininity? Gay Male Misogyny and the Policing of Queer Femininities," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 25, 3 (2018): 310–24.

[59] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, 43.

[60] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xii.

[61] Talusan, *Fairest*, 166.

> I tried to explain to her that bakla did not exist in America, that it was a lot harder to just dress in women's clothes and wear makeup on the street, or to be feminine like my cousin Jembong or the hairdressers in the salon. In America, doing that would get you beaten or even killed. In America, I had to become a woman.[62]

Only certain queer identities, among which effeminate gay men do not belong, have access to becoming the right kind of queer. Trans women who pass as both women and white have a better opportunity to live a realized and safe life; thus, the transition comes up as a necessary solution. Due to Meredith's "aversion of feeling inferior," this solution is preferable to living in the Philippines as a "second class"[63] member of society. This testifies to a complex position of a queer individual who finds that there is not a place for their identity in neither their culture of origin nor their new home culture.


CONCLUSION

Talusan's memoir *Fairest* is an open and self-reflecting portrayal of immigrating to and living in a country that has been utopianized to the author since her early childhood. It also narrates the realization of the limits of this utopia that become ever more prominent through the lens of Meredith's queerness. In many areas of life, Meredith admits the option of living happily also had she not moved to the United States. Still, regarding her queerness and homosexual desire, she does not see an opportunity to live a fulfilled life of dignity in the Philippines. Simultaneously, she acknowledges the high cost of living that life in the United States. Meredith undergoes a transition, demonstrating the inaccessibility of a safe and realized life for male-bodied individuals with feminine gender expression and homosexual desire both in the Philippines and in the United States.

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[62] Talusan, *Fairest*, 299.
[63] Talusan, *Fairest*, 139.

The memoir demonstrates how being aware of the societal Western-centrist, white supremacist, and heteronormative values does not equal being immune to them. While Meredith expresses criticism towards her new homeland of the United States, she nevertheless represents and reproduces many ideals and values of the so-called American Dream. The themes of individualism, exceptionalism, freedom, and the value of hard work are strongly present in the text of the author, who makes clear that the life position she achieved is a result of a combination of her exceptional talent and dedication, and her perceived whiteness. In terms of Sara Ahmed's theory, Meredith's "happiness" is a result of her systematic approximation of the conventionally happy objects and of becoming an exemplary queer. As Jasbir Puar explains, this concept of the right kind of queer is a result of "homonormative ideologies that replicate narrow racial, class and gender national ideals."[64] Meredith learns how narrow this script of homonormative identity is. Nevertheless, instead of becoming what she despises – an unassimilated complaining migrant like her parents and brother – she perseveres. She becomes a good migrant, a good queer, and a good autobiographical protagonist, including the obstacles and trauma in her life narrative only to highlight her eventual success.

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[64] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xxv.

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# THE *WORLD OF WARCRAFT* GENOCIDE: CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY IN A FICTIONAL GAMING UNIVERSE

## *Laura Škrobánková*

ABSTRACT: The last four to six decades have seen an immense development of video games in which they grew from literally nothing to a behemoth equal to or larger than the film or television industries.[1] Narrative-driven computer games with rich story-telling and extensive lore have become a viable source of literary research. This article specifically examines how one such narrative-driven video game, *World of Warcraft,* and all of its related literature deal with the topic of crimes against humanity, noting important factors such as the reasons behind committed crimes and the subsequent impact and changes in the fictional world and society, as well as comparing them with real-life events, seeking similarities and dissimilarities alike.

KEYWORDS: video games, young adult fiction, fantasy, virtual world, wars, genocides

*World of Warcraft* or *WoW* for short, a massively multiplayer online roleplaying game (MMORPG), started its narrative journey as a successor of the critically acclaimed *Warcraft* real-time strategy (RTS) game series. The development of a more sophisticated 'multiplayer' *Warcraft*[2] was a reaction to other multiplayer games of the time such as *Ultima Online* (Electronic Arts, 1997) and *EverQuest* (Daybreak Game Company, 1999). In comparison, *World of Warcraft* was supposed to bring something new when it was first announced in 2001, a breath of fresh air in the world of multiplayer online games.[3] The highly expected

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[1] See Michael Clarke, "The Digital Revolution," in *Academic and Professional Publishing*, ed. Robert Campbell, Ed Pentz and Ian Borthwick (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2012), 79.

[2] Multiplayer modes were present in *Warcraft III: Reign of Chaos* and *The Frozen Throne* but still operated as an RTS not MMORPG.

[3] See Mike Williams, "How World of Warcraft Was Made: The Definitive Inside Story of Nearly 20 Years of Development," USGamer.net, last updated

MMORPG promised new experience within the fictional universe Blizzard Entertainment established. It took roughly five years of development until players gained access to *World of Warcraft*'s main world Azeroth in 2004.[4] Since then the game has been continuously growing in size with newly introduced content, eventually becoming one of the Big Five multiplayer video games of the era.[5]

*World of Warcraft* was born with the idea of being a place where players may experience everything they enjoyed in *Warcraft* and more. The fictional universe, inspired by those of J. R. R. Tolkien and H. P. Lovecraft, is not rated PEGI12[6] just for the violence and language; it has much darker history filled with genocides, continuous wars, biological warfare and racial violence. This is the reason why Blizzard Entertainment markets *World of Warcraft* as a universe of "neverending war,"[7] because the war in Azeroth never truly ends.

Considering the number of active players,[8] it is obvious that people do enjoy a good fight, because their avatar does not die; it simply re-spawns and continues in its journey. This, however, does not happen to the fictional characters;[9] they suffer, feel pain and die just like regular people, often in rather graphic depiction in the game and novels alike. The amount of killing, wars, suffering and violence may raise some questions. How does the fictional society react to the madness of

September 26, 2022, https://www.usgamer.net/articles/how-world-of-warcraft-was-made-the-inside-story.

[4] See *World of Warcraft*, https://worldofwarcraft.com/en-us/.

[5] See Bree Royce, "Massively Overthinking: The second big five MMOs," MassivelyOverpowered, June 23, 2022, https://massivelyop.com/2022/06/23/massively-overthinking-the-second-big-five-mmos/.

[6] Pan-European Game Information 12: games that show slight violence towards fantasy or human-like characters, may include mild bad language, sexual innuendos and gambling.

[7] See "Races," Game, World of Warcraft, https://worldofwarcraft.com/en-us/game/races.

[8] MMO Populations tracks subscriber count, active players and populations of all the top MMOs, ranking World of Warcraft #1 out of 138 tracked MMOs in terms of aggregate server and player population, https://mmo-population.com/r/wow.

[9] Some characters are brought back as a part of the narrative but it does not happen often.

kings/warchiefs and slaughters of the innocent? What is the player's role in such events? Are the warfare and genocides depicted in the game and novels different or are the players experiencing the Earth's history through a mirror in the form of a virtual world? What led to such acts of violence in the fictional narrative and what are the consequences? The article attempts to find the answers, analysing selected crimes against humanity and gruesome acts of violence depicted in the game, the novels, or both.

## 1. AZEROTH: THE WORLD OF NEVERENDING WAR

"Welcome to Azeroth, a world of magic and limitless adventure"[10] is how Blizzard Entertainment introduces new players to their immersive world. Geographically, Azeroth consists of several independent continents, such as Pandaria, Northrend, Broken Isles, Kul Tiras, and Zandalar, which were implemented into the game during the years with newly released downloadable content (DLC). The main two continents, The Eastern Kingdoms and Kalimdor, are divided between two allied blocks. Factions, as they are often called in MMORPG, are based on the workings of the real world: the need for protection from other countries, the mutually beneficial friendship, the similar goals and territorial expansion. When projected into a video game universe, faction choice is one of the first things the player does while creating their avatar, in case of *WoW*, it is choosing between the Horde and the Alliance:

> Azeroth is home to a large variety of races, some native to its lands and some hailing from other realms. Whether as a stalwart defender of the Alliance or a fierce guardian of the Horde, deciding which race to play will define who you'll fight for in this neverending war.[11]

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[10] "Start," New to WoW, World of Warcraft, https://worldofwarcraft.com/en-us/start.
[11] "Races," Game, World of Warcraft, https://worldofwarcraft.com/en-us/game/races.

Vast majority of races of *World of Warcraft* currently reside in Azeroth, other can be found in different realms (such as *WoW*'s version of the underworld called Shadowlands), in far-away planets (Outland), and even in alternative time-lines (Draenor). Nonetheless, all 'playable' races[12] joined one of the two allied blocks over the course of Azeroth's history in order to secure their own survival during various conflicts. The steadfast Alliance is driven by tradition and controls majority of The Eastern Kingdoms; the united force of humans, dwarves, night elves, worgen (a werewolf-like race), gnomes, and draenei (blue satyr-like race originating from another planet) with High King as their primary leader is stalwart defender of justice and duty who protects the realm of Azeroth against any aggressors, including the savage Horde.[13] In contrast, the indomitable Horde is driven by unity and its headquarters can be found in Kalimdor; orcs, tauren (bull-like race), trolls, goblins, blood elves, and undead, lead by an elected Warchief, are fervent keepers of freedom and hope, relentlessly opposed to any who threaten these ideals, including the stringent Alliance.[14]

　　*World of Warcraft* is a place where any form of war is possible. The creators of this universe are not afraid to implement even the worst forms of violence as demonstrated in the following sections of the article.

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[12] Meaning they can be chosen by the player unlike the non-playable races that are usually hostile or neutral.

[13] See "Races," Game, World of Warcraft, https://worldofwarcraft.com/en-us/game/races.

[14] See "Races," Game, World of Warcraft, https://worldofwarcraft.com/en-us/game/races.

## 2. GENOCIDE OF THE DRAENEI

> "How easily the mind can be turned to hate from a place of fear…"[15]

The story of the massacre known as the "Genocide of the Draenei" has never been properly addressed within the game. Instead, the award-winning author of fantasy and sci-fi novels, Christie Golden has been recruited by Blizzard and tasked with writing a novel describing this crime against humanity from start to finish. *Rise of the Horde*, published in 2006, explains what led the orcs to the construction and opening of the Dark Portal[16] and invasion of the mostly human world Azeroth. Originally, orcs and draenei lived alongside each other for centuries in the world previously known as Draenor,[17] two contrasting cultures that did not interact. Everything changed when a third party entered the picture and manipulated the orcs into believing the draenei were standing in their path for glory and world domination. Said third party promised the orcs immense power and a new, better world to conquer (Azeroth) as long as they keep obeying and killing the draenei. Essentially, one nation was used as a tool to annihilate the other while the puppeteer never even needed to show their face.

Thus, the orcs united, gained power from the mystical creatures, and started a bloody purge that eventually involved not only the draenei but all the other races on Draenor. The orcs were merciless in their bloodshed, taking prisoners only to use them as sacrifices to fuel the construction of the magical gateway. Blood of a draenei child was spilt in a mystical ritual for "[b]lood is a pure offering to those who give us these vast powers. And the blood of a child is purer still. With the life fluid of our enemies, we will open the Portal and step into a glorious new world – a new page in the history of the Horde!"[18]

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[15] Christie Golden, *Rise of the Horde* (New York: Pocket Star Books, 2006), 131.
[16] A magical gateway that allowed the orcish army to enter the mostly human-controlled world Azeroth.
[17] Now an in-game location known as Outland, a destroyed version of Draenor
[18] Golden, *Rise of the Horde*, 287.

When the Horde[19] went through the portal, it left behind a destroyed, desiccated husk of a world once lush with life. The proof of this act of mass slaughter is still present within the game and it is called "The Path of Glory,"[20] a long stretch of road trampled with draenei bones and skulls, a grotesque memento of a horrible crime. The orcish war veterans, however, cannot be saved from their own memories and conscience as suggested by the following dialogue that can be overheard in the game:

> "I think it was the sounds of the draenei children that unnerved most of them… You never forget… Have you ever been to Jaggedswine Farm? When the swine are of age for the slaughter… It's that sound. The sound of the swine being killed… It resonates the loudest." [Varok Saurfang to Garrosh Hellscream][21]

The orcs slaughtered over eighty percent of the draenei race; approximately nine of every ten individuals.[22] There never was a proper trial for a war crime of this magnitude. The first war trials appeared in Azeroth many years later, during the insane rule of a villain character Garrosh Hellscream. The orcs were partially manipulated, some openly refused to take part in the honourless killing of children and women, yet there is no denying that certain characters revelled in the bloodshed. There was essentially no reason for the slaughter if only the few leading figures did not give in to their hatred and the temptation of power.

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[19] Not to confuse with the playable faction Horde that was established by a former warchief Thrall, often called the New Horde.
[20] Accessible in the zone Hellfire Peninsula, Outland; see Blizzard Entertainment, *World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade*, Blizzard Entertainment, PC, 2007.
[21] Dialogue accessible within Warsong Hold, Northrend; Blizzard Entertainment, *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King*, Blizzard Entertainment, PC, 2008.
[22] See "Path of Glory," Wowpedia.com, accessed December 18, 2022, https://wowpedia.fandom.com/wiki/Path_of_Glory.

The term genocide was coined by Raphael Lemkin, and has been used to recognise the actions of a state-sponsored attempt to destroy a particular group of its people since 1946. It was, in part, developed by Lemkin in response to atrocities committed against Armenians between 1915 and 1923.[23]

Today's society laws claim that to proclaim something genocide, a trial in an international criminal court is needed.[24] That has not been always the case, especially during the century of conquer. The treatment of Native Americans during the colonisation of North America, accompanied with the destruction of the Maya, Aztec, and Inca civilisations in the South and Central America, further including the Muisca Confederation in Colombia during Gonzalo Jiménez de Quesada's search for El Dorado can be named as great examples of ruthless, unpunished murder. The killing does not stop even after the horrors of the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust; the atrocities committed in Cambodia (1975–1979), Rwanda (1994), and Bosnia (1995) should be enough of a proof.

The orcs may not have had state-sponsoring; however, they were promised power and new lands to conquer which does sound familiar to the real world promise of wealth and new land during the "colonisation" of America. The differences in such cases become trivial at most. One of the greatest heroes of the Horde, Varok Saurfang, considered genocide of the draenei and the existence of the Path of Glory the greatest shame in orcish history because he saw no honour in those killings, something that is fundamental in the orcish culture.

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[23] "Before the Holocaust," What is Genocide?, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, https://www.hmd.org.uk/learn-about-the-holocaust-and-genocides/what-is-genocide/before-the-holocaust/.

[24] See "Before the Holocaust," What is Genocide?, Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, https://www.hmd.org.uk/learn-about-the-holocaust-and-genocides/what-is-genocide/before-the-holocaust/.

# 3. ORCISH INTERNMENT/CONCENTRATION CAMPS

> "I believe every orc your age remembers being imprisoned for years in filthy camps, wallowing in despair, and surviving on human scraps. I believe every human remembers the tales of the terrible Horde that caused so much destruction in its first invasion, and I believe they blame every orc for that, no matter what your people have done to redeem yourselves." [Sylvanas Windrunner to Varok Saurfang][25]

The imprisonment of the orcs follows closely after the genocide of the draenei. When the orcish army invaded Azeroth, humans were the primary race to fight them, eventually forging allegiances with other races such as dwarves and elves to secure their victory. After two wars, the newly formed Alliance defeated the savage Horde and destroyed the Dark Portal. The Alliance itself started falling apart when the decision what to do with the defeated orcs was being made. The king of the Lordaeron region believed the orcs would one day lose their lust for conquest, while the rulers of Stormgarde and Gilneas demanded immediate execution of all captured orcs.[26] In the end, everyone settled on a life-long imprisonment in selected camps and thus the Alliance created the so called Alliance Internment Act, or in other words, decided to send all the orcs into concentration camps where they were supposed to wither and die.

A debate could arise, a philosophical question. The Alliance was hurt deeply by the orcs, cities ransacked; many humans lost their lives in the cruel machinations of war. Nonetheless, is the Alliance different from the Horde? Placing prisoners into cramped camps, letting them with almost nothing but scraps of food, using them for heavy work because orcs are born stronger than humans, creating slavery otherwise frowned upon by the members of the Alliance.

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[25] Robert Brooks, *A Good War* (US: Blizzard Entertainment, 2018), 10.

[26] See Cyberlore Studios, *Warcraft II: Beyond the Dark Portal*, Blizzard Entertainment, PC, 1996.

"My name is Thrall. The word means 'slave' in the human tongue, and the story behind the naming is a long one, best left for another time."[27]

The story is told in a novel *The Lord of the Clans* (2001) written by Christie Golden. Thrall is a hero in the eyes of his people. Raised by humans, he learnt their language, their customs, served as a gladiator to amuse his master, coincidentally an owner and leader of one of the internment camps. Eventually, Thrall escaped and freed his people from the camps, leading all the orcs away from the Eastern Kingdoms peninsula into Kalimdor, where they created their city Orgrimmar and gave the word "Horde" a new meaning.

The Alliance remembers what the orcs have done but so do the orcs; they do remember their friends dying in front of their eyes, corpses lying on the ground and then put into graves with no names. The situation obviously was different from the case of the Nazi concentration camps where everything escalated into a mass state-organized murder. The similarities are in the loss of freedom, of being seen and treated as something "less" than human. The orcs, understandably, are not human by figure; they are a different race after-all. This fact gave the human members of the Alliance a feeling they could treat the orcs as animals, or even worse than that.

After the escape of the orcs, all the camps were abandoned, losing their purpose. The role of the camps was to contain the orcs, to make them "disappear" from the eyes of Azeroth's society. As a result, like a butterfly effect, the orcs grew stronger and created new allies in Kalimdor, forging the New Horde with several other races and, ironically, made their presence known even stronger than before. Meanwhile, the Alliance did not stay unchanged; some humans realised the treatment of the orcs was not right and agreed they need to find new ways of dealing with the invaders.

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[27] Golden, *Rise of the Horde*, 1.

## 4. GARROSH HELLSCREAM AS FÜHRER AND ORCISH RACIAL SUPREMACY

> The "new Orgrimmar" represented domination. Conquest. Subjugation. Its hard, jagged metal was a threat, not a comfort. He did not feel safe here. He did not think anyone who was not an orc could feel safe here.[28]

Conquest. Subjugation. Orcish dominance. Christine Golden's novel *Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War* (2012) certainly reverberates the pre-World War II Germany atmosphere. The dark history of Azeroth has been steadily getting darker with each expansion and *Mists of Pandaria* (2012) gave birth to *WoW*'s own version of Adolf Hitler. Interestingly, players were given signs something like this might happen several times but truthfully had no way of stopping the character's inevitable fall to fanaticism and madness.

Garrosh Hellscream is, as had been already suggested, a notoriously known figure in *World of Warcraft*'s universe. Taking the mantle of a Warchief from Thrall, he quickly turned from a stubborn, yet righteous orc into a power obsessed maniac. Garrosh blamed Thrall for being weak, for seeking peace with the Alliance instead of taking everything by force. He blamed the Alliance for the Horde's misfortunes and despised weakness in general.

> "Chipping away at our resources and sullying the very earth with their presence! They are crippling us, preventing us from growing, from reaching the heights that I know – I know – we are capable of achieving! For I believe in my heart that it is not our fate to bow and scrape and sue for peace before the Alliance. It is our right to dominate and control this land of Kalimdor. It is ours, and we will claim it as such!"[29]

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[28] Christie Golden, *Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War* (New York: Gallery Books, 2012), 23.

[29] Christie Golden, *Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War* (New York: Gallery Books, 2012), 29.

Garrosh's demeanour, beliefs, and opinions overlap with those of Adolf Hitler. The paragraph above is Garrosh's speech during one of the Horde's generals' meetings, while the paragraph below is an extract from Hitler's speech from March 15, 1929, in Munich:

> One is either the hammer or the anvil. We confess that it is our purpose to prepare the German people again for the role of the hammer. We admit freely and openly that if our movement is victorious, we will be concerned day and night with the question of how to produce the armed forces, which are forbidden us by the peace treaty. We solemnly confess that we consider everyone a scoundrel who does not try day and night to figure out a way to violate this treaty, for we have never recognized this treaty...We will take every step which strengthens our arms, which augments the number of our forces, and which increases the strength of our people. We confess further that we will dash anyone to pieces who should dare hinder us in this undertaking.[30]

The similarities go further than the idea of being hindered by an unfair peace treaty or the thirst for territory. Garrosh created his own personal elite guard called the Kor'kron, strikingly similar to the Nazi Germany's *Sturmabteilung* (meaning "Assault Division") paramilitary wing. Eventually, he started spreading the belief that orcs are the superior race not only within the Horde but on entire Azeroth and got immense support from the orcish population. When challenged by the leaders of the other races, most notably by the chieftain of the tauren Cairne Bloodhoof, Garrosh invoked the ancient orcish custom of *mak'gora* meaning "duel of honour." This ritualistic duel has been often invoked to obtain leadership as it traditionally used to be a combat to death which changed under the rulership of Thrall. Nonetheless, combat to death could still be willingly chosen as happened in this case.[31]

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[30] "Nazi Ideology," GlobalSecurity.org, https://www.globalsecurity.org /military/world/europe/de-nazi-ideology.htm.
[31] See Chris Metzen, Matt Burns, and Robert Brooks, *World of Warcraft: Volume 3* (US: Dark Horse Books, 2018), 196.

After Cairne's death, Garrosh focused on the trolls and forced them to move into Orgrimmar's slums. Orcs that opposed Garrosh disappeared, either imprisoned or killed by the Kor'kron. Garrosh's elite guards were also patrolling the city, listening, and looking for anyone who might be against their leader; shops were being closed, shopkeepers beaten or arrested without a proof. Fear was spreading within Orgrimmar's walls, quoting Vol'jin, chieftain of the Darkspear trolls, that he "be more scared of Orgrimmar these days dan de darkest voodoo."[32]

Garrosh lead Horde into another war with the Alliance, attacking important Alliance landmarks on Kalimdor, such as the Isle of Theramore. As the war progressed, he got more paranoid and deranged, hiding in the tunnels beneath Orgrimmar while issuing a call to arms for every Horde citizens – male and female. Children and elderly were to forge weapons and armour.[33] He was eventually defeated in his hideout beneath the city under siege by the joined forces of the Horde members opposing his dictatorship, the Alliance, and the players themselves,[34] which is yet another resemblance to Adolf Hitler who refused to leave Berlin at the end of WWII and hid in a bunker instead.

There is little doubt that Garrosh's crusade started out of political, racial, and territorial reasons. Similarly to Adolf Hitler, Garrosh was infuriated with the treatment the Horde was receiving from the Alliance, mimicking Germany's situation after World War I and the Great Crash of 1929. The idea of racial supremacy is timid compared to the real-world events, but it is nonetheless present, chiefly in the segregation of the trolls and proclaiming the orcs as the supreme race on Azeroth. Garrosh was subjected to a trial not unlike the Nuremberg trials of 1945–1946. His demeanour did not change and was as arrogant and self-assured as before, openly laughing at the court and deeming it ridiculous, going as far as comparing it to a circus.[35]

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[32] Christie Golden, *Jaina Proudmoore: Tides of War* (New York: Gallery Books, 2012), 71.

[33] Golden, *Jaina Proudmoore*, 344-345.

[34] See Blizzard Entertainment, *World of Warcraft: Mists of Pandaria*, Blizzard Entertainment, PC, 2012.

[35] See Christie Golden, *War Crimes* (US: Pocket Books, 2015).

The results of this war were devastating to both sides: the military tension between the Horde and the Alliance got stronger, a status quo at this point in Azeroth's history. It turned into a fictional cold war where both sides desperately race to overpower each other in all fields. Turmoil within the Horde was tangible, the trolls, tauren, and even blood elves wary of the orcs out of fear the opinion about orcish superiority was not culled with the defeat of Garrosh Hellscream. It most certainly was not the last time Azeroth has endured war.


## 5. THE NIGHT ELVEN HOLOCAUST

> The tree has fire for leaves / And skeletons for branches, / And its roots feed only upon / The ashes of the dead. / The winds that sigh through it now are the cries of the dying / And this song, / This lament / For horrors unspeakable, / For cruelty unimaginable, / For this life and the beauty and the grace that once were / And shall never be again.[36]

The Holocaust was one of the most gruesome acts of violence and crimes against humanity in the world's history. It was deliberate, state-sponsored persecution and machine-like murder of approximately six million Jews and at least five millions of other victims (political prisoners, Romani, Slavs, homosexuals), all orchestrated by the Nazi Germany, especially Adolf Hitler's inner circle. Throughout the history, there were many attempts of systematic elimination (of a nation, a minority) but they never reached the hardly imaginable numbers of victims nor the number of supporters of an agenda which in elaborate letters propagated one thing only: murder.

Different portrayals of the terrifying atrocities committed during World War II are not literature and movie industry exclusives; in this age, it is the video games that often perform the educational re-telling, letting players "experience" the fear and dread, not necessarily in the same setting; it can be fantasy, sci-fi or horror genre. Example given, *Wolfenstein: The New Order* (2014) is set in an alternative 1960s where Nazis have won the war and the player is send into a prison camp where

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[36] Christie Golden, *Elegy* (US: Blizzard Entertainment, 2018), 78.

they encounter Jews, people of colour, minorities, and see gas chambers, crematoriums, and burning bodies. And then there is *World of Warcraft*.

The "War of Thorns," a Horde-Alliance conflict acting as a catalyst for the fourth war players got to experience in *World of Warcraft: The Battle for Azeroth*, was started by the Horde warchief Sylvanas Windrunner under the false pretence of securing Kalimdor for the Horde and eliminating any remaining Alliance forces residing on the continent – essentially the same propaganda Garrosh Hellscream used few years prior. The biggest threat and target simultaneously was the main city Darnassus of the old night elven race, dwelling within the insides of the world tree Teldrassil.[37] Sylvanas' plan was to divide the Alliance forces: the elves would want to take their homeland back should the Horde seize it, the worgens would oppose that when their homeland was taken by the undead no one in the Alliance lend any aid whatsoever, and humans would most likely retaliate by attacking Horde's strongholds in the Eastern Kingdoms.

> "You destroy the Alliance from within. Their military might counts for nothing if their members stand alone. Then we strike peace with the individual nations and carve them away from the Alliance, piece by piece." [Varok Saurfang to Sylvanas Windrunner][38]

"If you want your enemy to bleed to death, you inflict a wound that cannot heal,"[39] thus Sylvanas made the orcish High Overlord Saurfang believe starting a new war would be most beneficial for the Horde. In comparison, Adolf Hitler told his followers in 1922 that "no salvation is possible until the bearer of disunion, the Jew, has been rendered powerless to harm."[40] In that sense, Sylvanas' and Hitler's thinking could be considered similar. She intended to launch a brutal attack on a

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[37] Literal meaning; the night elves, deeply connected to nature, made home in a gigantic, magical tree residing on an island not far away from the shores of Kalimdor

[38] Robert Brooks, *A Good War* (US: Blizzard Entertainment, 2018), 14, PDF.

[39] Brooks, *A Good War*, 14.

[40] "The Holocaust," The War, The National WWII Museum New Orleans, https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/holocaust.

city filled with the main enemy of the Horde on Kalimdor: the night elves. No one knew what her real intentions with the world tree really were until it was too late. Saurfang, as described in the novella by Robert Brooks, believed the Horde was to take the city hostage so the Alliance would not attempt to destroy and harm their people on the other continent.

The War of Thorns had several stages, and the Horde was moving quickly towards its goal – the grand finale that will be forever remembered in Azeroth's history as 'The Burning of Teldrassil.' Blizzard Entertainment released a short video depicting the final stage of the war from Sylvanas' point of view where she shares a short conversation with one of the dying night elves in front of the world tree. She is asked why continue marching on when only innocents remain within the tree to which she coldly replies that in war innocent also die. The dying night elf disagrees: "No, this is *hatred*. Rage. Windrunner, you were defender of your people. Do you not remember?"[41] Sylvanas remembers her own people dying, remembers her own death and suffering, she does not remember mercy. Thus, she gives the order to burn the tree. However, the Horde soldiers present hesitate, this was not what they have agreed upon, but in the end, everyone obeys the Warchief.

While Blizzard Entertainment has never released an official statement regarding Sylvanas' actions strikingly similar to Adolf Hitler's rise to power and Holocaust practices, there is definitely room for assumptions and guessing. Firstly, Sylvanas' has not been on friendly terms with the night elves ever since they let her own race of high elves (their blood line is connected) be decimated and almost wiped out by the Lich King.[42] Adolf Hitler chose the Jews to blame for all the misfortune that has befallen Germany. Raised as an undead elf, Sylvanas' actions have been ruled by hate, anger, and revenge. After becoming the Warchief, she immediately decided to start a war against the Alliance, using clever persuading methods to get the other members

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[41] "Warbringers: Sylvanas," World of Warcraft, YouTube, uploaded July 31, 2018.

[42] A once human prince corrupted by power and turned into a powerful ruler of the armies of mindless undead.

of the Horde on her side – again, almost similar to what happened after the Reichstag elections in July 1932 where the Nazi Party got the most votes and when Hitler was appointed the chancellor in 1933.[43] Both Sylvanas and Hitler then used state finances to fulfil their own twisted agendas, starting wars and killing innocent people.

The Holocaust comparison becomes clearer if the etymology of the word itself is taken into consideration:

> The word Holocaust is derived from the Greek *holokauston*, a translation of the Hebrew word ʿolah, meaning a burnt sacrifice offered whole to God. This word was chosen, and gained wide usage, because, in the ultimate manifestation of the Nazi killing program – the extermination camps – the bodies of the victims were consumed whole in crematoria or open fires.[44]

Sylvanas set ablaze an entire tree with all its citizens inside; she created a burning sacrifice that was, in fact, meant to be an offering to a god. All the burnt, suffering souls of the elves went into Shadowlands, or underworld, where they served as power for a twisted, evil pseudo-god that had been banished by other members of the pantheon aeons ago.[45]

The result of Sylvanas' betrayal forced the Horde into a radical change where all the remaining leaders decided never to appoint a Warchief again, creating a democratic council instead. Once again, Azeroth was plunged into chaos and the members of the Horde are still blamed for the deaths of the elves, despite all their attempts to stop Sylvanas to the point of creating a resistance that was working with the Alliance. Sylvanas Windrunner faced trial in Shadowlands, version of the underworld in the *World of Warcraft* universe, after her defeat and capture. Unlike Garrosh Hellscream, who managed to escape during his

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[43] Alan Bullok, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (UK: Odhams Press Limited, 1952), 187-255. https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.507192/page/n5/mode/2up
[44] "What Is the Origin of the Term Holocaust?" *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed April 28, 2022, https://www.britannica.com/story/what-is-the-origin-of-the-term-holocaust.
[45] See Blizzard Entertainment, *World of Warcraft: Shadowlands*, Blizzard Entertainment, PC, 2020.

own trial, Sylvanas accepted her fate of a hero turned villain on a path to redemption.


CONCLUSION

The article introduced four examples of crimes against humanity and war crimes appearing in a fictional universe of a video game *World of Warcraft* and its literature. Examination of these events in relation to the fictional society showed that there are always repercussions from which the races may or may not learn. Considering the number of wars Azeroth has been exposed to, no amount of casualties and bloody events can stop nations or individuals from their greed and personal goals.

Unlike other video games, *World of Warcraft* does not re-tell the factual story of the Holocaust, wars, or genocides. Instead, the game developers use the premise of these events to create their own, altered version which the players can either experience directly within the game or read about it in the books. Nonetheless, there are hints that can be used as indicators to connect the fictional event with its real-world counterpart and submit it through analysis as has been done with Garrosh Hellscream and Sylvanas Windrunner. Furthermore, the players do experience the war and in case of Sylvanas had a choice to either side with her or with the resistance created by Varok Saurfang during the main story line of *The Battle of Azeroth*. This fact creates an opportunity for further research bordering with sociology; how many players chose to side with Sylvanas Windrunner percentage wise and what are the inclinations? How many players, on the opposite, selected Saurfang in order to stop Sylvanas' madness? Do players feel compelled to choose the morally "good" side or do they prefer to experience the "evil" from its perspective?

Video games create alternative worlds where war is often just as important. The field of research is vast and open to multitude of interpretations; not only in *World of Warcraft* specifically but in any game with rich story line. On that note, there certainly are video games that, unlike *World of Warcraft*, are directly focused on the topic of mass murder, the Holocaust, and genocide, be it *Call of Duty: World War II* (2017), *Wolfenstein: The New Order* (2014), *Never Again* (2017), and so on. The possibilities of further research are available and probably

much needed to understand and explain how big the impact of such games on the audience in the sense of morality and education is.

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# TOM STOPPARD'S *LEOPOLDSTADT* (2020) AS ENCYCLOPEDIA

## Tomáš Kačer

ABSTRACT: The article looks at Tom Stoppard's latest (and, possibly, last) play *Leopoldstadt* as encyclopedia. It presents the notion of encyclopedic fiction as introduced by Mendelson (1976) and developed by others, such as Clark (1992) and most recently O'Meara (2021), who applied it to autobiography. It considers two aspects of literary encyclopedia: the descriptive content and the self-reflexive nature of such writing. It studies themes included in *Leopoldstadt*, such as the Jewish identity and antisemitism, which constitute the descriptive element of the historical encyclopedic work, as well as various typical features of Stoppardian drama and stagecraft, which represent the self-reflexive nature of *Leopoldstadt* as a literary encyclopedia.

KEYWORDS: drama, history play, encyclopedic writing, Tom Stoppard

In his seminal 1976 article, Edward Mendelson introduces a notion of an encyclopedic narrative as a genre.[1] He only identifies a few – not more than seven – literary works that meet criteria he identifies "in terms that are both historical and formal",[2] all of them classic texts in the center of the canon of a respective Western national literary tradition, and proposes Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* as the latest addition to the list. Mendelson views encyclopedic narratives as attempts "to render the full range of knowledge and beliefs of a national culture, while identifying the ideological perspectives from which that culture shapes and interprets its knowledge."[3] For the purpose of this article, this notion of encyclopedic writing will be modified from a universalist to a more specific one, which will present Tom Stoppard's latest play so far, *Leopoldstadt* (2020) as encyclopedia of a narrow sort: that of Tom Stoppard's own oeuvre.

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[1] Edward Mendelson, "Encyclopedic Narrative: From Dante to Pynchon," *MLN* 91, 6 (1976): 1267–1275, https://doi.org/10.2307/2907136.
[2] Mendelson, "Encyclopedic Narrative," 1267.
[3] Mendelson, "Encyclopedic Narrative," 1269.

Stoppard is one of the most prominent and celebrated contemporary British playwrights. Ever since his 1966 first full-length play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, Stoppard has been recognized as an entertaining as well as intellectually stimulating author. He is often labelled a writer of comedies of ideas, since "the entertainment is always enriched with an element of intellectual probing."[4] He has developed an original voice, having earned him an iconic status that "has led to the coining of the word 'Stoppardian', putting him among the ranks of modernist and contemporary theatre innovators."[5] Among the most distinctive features of his style is the ability to mix a wide scope of themes, ranging from history, philosophy, and science to romance and sexuality, which are then intertwined in a specifically theatrical environment self-aware of its illusionist ontology. By reflecting the theatrical nature of his art, Stoppard's plays give us "the chance to think about the multiple roles we all play in real life."[6]

*Leopoldstadt* premiered in London's Wyndham's Theatre on 25 January 2020, directed by Patrick Marber. Despite the Olivier prize for best play and several five-star reviews, the production suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic when it had to shut down for several months, interrupting an otherwise successful run. Its first non-English production premiered at the Mahen Theater in Brno, Czechia, on June 19, 2021, directed by Radovan Lipus.

The play adds a dimension that is rare (although not absent) in Stoppard's oeuvre: a looming presence of autobiography. The play's dominant tone is serious – this feature is also rare (although not absent). It covers a long stretch of time in a history of a fictional Viennese Jewish family, the Merzs. It opens in December 1899 when the family meet in an "apartment, spread over one floor of a grand high-ceilinged block"[7] to celebrate Christmas as an opportunity to meet their relatives and non-Jewish family members. While the children are playing, the head of the family and an entrepreneur Hermann discusses recent

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[4] William W. Demastes, *The Cambridge Introduction to Tom Stoppard*, Cambridge Introductions to Literature (Cambridge, [England] ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 2.
[5] Demastes, *The Cambridge Introduction to Tom Stoppard*, 3.
[6] Demastes, *The Cambridge Introduction to Tom Stoppard*, 3.
[7] Tom Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt* (New York: Grove Press, 2020), 3.

changes in the social conditions of the Austrian Jewry. The family is well-off and looks into the future with hope. It seems that their Jewishness will no longer be an obstacle in achieving their goals. Ludwig is a mathematician in hope to finally become professor, Hanna aspires to become a concerto pianist, and Hermann wishes to confirm his businessman status with memberships in social clubs. Members of the next generation identify rather as Austrians than Jews and the society as a whole also grows more tolerant, especially in the 1920s. Antisemitism seems to be a relic of the ossified past – until Anschluss. The rise of the Nazi party and the arrival of Germans have dire consequences on the family, where everyone suffers a loss and their future is shattered definitely when they are moved to the Viennese ghetto, Leopoldstadt, in November 1938.

There are only a few survivors of the Holocaust from the Merz family in 1955. Leo, who moved to England as a small child before World War II, returns to Vienna and meets his aunt Rosa, who lives in the United States, and his cousin Nathan, who has survived the war presumably in the ghetto and camps. Together, they can recollect names and deaths of their relatives and match these with the family photo album. The Merz family becomes a survivor in memories and does not vanish forever, because "[it]'s like a second death, to lose your name in a family album."[8] The saga of the Merzs ends with a long list of murdered Holocaust victims and a flashback scene back to a family Seder party in 1900 when the century that would become the end of them was just born.

*Leopoldstadt* presents a symbolic closure to the body of Stoppard's work and as such, it makes use of virtually all thematic and stylistic devices that can be found in Stoppard's earlier plays. The play says what there was left for the prolific author of dozens of plays, screenplays and adaptations for the stage and film, to add in order to come to terms with his origin, including his "secret Holocaust history."[9] For a long time after the completion of the play, Stoppard considered it

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[8] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 16.
[9] Josh Glancy, "Tom Stoppard: My Secret Holocaust History," *The Times*, September 5, 2021, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/tom-stoppard-my-secret-holocaust-history-5k58ns9b8.

to be his last play, a summary of his life's work.[10] And even though now, "he's not so sure,"[11] the play was written with an intention to sum up the playwright's life and career. Thus, a view of the play as an encyclopedia of Stoppard's work is justifiable. At the time when it was being written, the author would not have expected any further additions to his oeuvre.

Encyclopedias are attempts to capture in its entirety the current state of knowledge about the world in a written form. Literary encyclopedias, or encyclopedic narratives as Mendelson calls them, are such – typically, singular – works of fiction that meet the same purpose in each and every one of the respective national literary traditions. These literary works go beyond an individual experience when telling a story to that of the culture itself. Moreover, since they are works of fiction, such encyclopedic work is also an "encyclopedia *of* narrative, incorporating, but never limited to, the conventions of" nearly all genres and characters typical of various genres. [12] Further below, I will argue that *Leopoldstadt* in a parallel fashion incorporates nearly all distinctively Stoppardian traits.

Several studies have applied Mendelson's ideas beyond his proposed list of seven encyclopedic narratives. While a crucial feature of a lot of encyclopedic texts is their unreadability, which cannot be expected from the "audacious project of encompassing all that can be known."[13] In other words, these massive volumes containing the knowledge do not invite the reader to sit down to read it for the story.

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[10] Bryan Appleyard, "Interview: Tom Stoppard -- Is His New Play, Leopoldstadt, His Last?," *The Times*, January 19, 2020, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/interview-tom-stoppard-is-his-new-play-leopoldstadt-his-last-0zf32fwnn.

[11] Christiane Amanpour, Emmet Lyons, and Ken Olshansky, "'Shakespeare in Love' Screenplay Writer Tom Stoppard Said 'Leopoldstadt' Would Be His Last Play – Now He's Not so Sure," *CNN*, October 27, 2021, https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/tom-stoppard-playwright-interview-amanpour/index.html.

[12] Mendelson, "Encyclopedic Narrative," 1270.

[13] Hilary A. Clark, "Encyclopedic Discourse," *SubStance* 21, 1 (1992): 95, https://doi.org/10.2307/3685349.

And yet there are works, which involve these encyclopedic qualities, that are highly readable. Hilary A. Clark turns approaches the question of encyclopedic writing around when she asks: "How can discourse be said to be 'encyclopedic'?"[14] Literary encyclopedias display a "rhetorical process,"[15] such that presents the knowledge and at the same time reflects upon the way that this knowledge is produced and arrived at. They are self-reflexive of their own status as encyclopedias and literary works. They "must speculate on its own discursive processes of discovery and arrangement, and on the limitations of these processes, given the fact of time and change."[16] These formal criteria have been applied to the autobiography as a genre. Lucy O'Meara studies two autobiographies, Roland Barthes's *Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes* (1975) and Amy Krouse Rosenthal's *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life* (2004), and observes that these "authors of encyclopaedic autobiography tend to foreground the fabulistic quality that is inherent in memory."[17] The two works consciously combine the necessary fictional element of autobiography and the non-fictional aspect of encyclopedic writing. On the one hand, memory is unreliable and it creates rather than reproduces facts of the past; it is the ultimate fictional author. On the other hand, the encyclopedia allows to include the full range of a life's richness into the highly subjectivized (and thus selective) world of autobiography.

It is, thus, in this light that I discuss Stoppard's *Leopoldstadt*. It is a "partly"[18] autobiographical play, "in which [Stoppard's] actual Czech family are fictively relocated to Vienna in the early twentieth century."[19]

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[14] Clark, "Encyclopedic Discourse," 97.
[15] Clark, "Encyclopedic Discourse," 98.
[16] Clark, "Encyclopedic Discourse," 105.
[17] Lucy O'Meara, "Encyclopaedic Autobiography in Roland Barthes's Roland Barthes (1975) and Amy Krouse Rosenthal's Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life (2004)," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 57, 2 (April 2021): 225, https://doi.org/10.1093/fmls/cqab014.
[18] Hermione Lee, *Tom Stoppard: A Life* (London: Faber, 2020), 858.
[19] John Bull, "Ideology," in *Tom Stoppard in Context*, ed. David Kornhaber and James N. Loehlin, (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 157, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108303736.025.

It contains both the subjective and totalizing descriptive elements, becoming an attempt at a full and complete depiction of the middle-class Viennese Jewry in the first half of the 20th century, spilling over to a bit afore and beyond. Simultaneously, it self-reflexively includes Stoppardian elements of plot construction and dramatic devices. As for the totalizing documentary quality of the encyclopedic genre in *Leopoldstadt*, the play covers the historical, socio-cultural, artistic, and educational aspects of the life of Jews in Vienna between 1899 and 1955.

In an encyclopedic fashion, it presents the cultural context of the turn of the century, as well as developments in the course of history. Hermann is now, in the opening scene of the play, the up-and-coming young entrepreneur. His company has been growing. This entails that it has entered the national market in a successful competition with Austrian-owned businesses – a great achievement. He also hopes to rise socially, such as join prestigious social clubs, through his marriage with Gretl, who is Catholic. Hermann explains that "fifty years ago you […] couldn't travel without a permit, or get a bed for the night in village or town except in the Jewish quarter […] and of course you couldn't up-sticks to come and work in Vienna."[20] This description is in a contrast to the present situation. The family now live in a gentile, middle-class neighborhood. Hermann notes that in the past, if Jews "lived in Vienna [they] lived in Leopoldstadt,"[21] the historical Viennese Jewish ghetto, after which the play bears its title. Jews were also visibly marked by having been required to wear "a yellow patch."[22] The stage presents a completely different image of the present-time Viennese Jewry: self-confident, well-off, and dressed according to the latest Viennese fashion. In other words, intertwined with and indistinguishable from the non-Jewish characters.

After all, the play presents the city of Vienna at that time as a multi-national and multi-cultural center. A presence of various nationalities, living peacefully together, makes the city a cozy, yet vibrant place with a vibe of multiculturalism and tolerance. In

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[20] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 17.
[21] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 17.
[22] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 17.

Hermann's words, it is the "seat of six-hundred years of accumulating Poles, Czechs, Magyars, Romanians, Ruthenians, Italians, Croats, Slovaks and God knows what else, from the Swiss frontier to the Russian Empire, parliaments and parties in I don't know how many languages, stitched together by the same black-and-yellow livery of postboxes from Salzburg to Cernowicz."[23] It is, further, the city of supreme culture and education, "where Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven overlapped . . . Philosophers. Architects. A city of art lovers and intellectuals like no other."[24] Besides culture and knowledge, the city is also a place with a great past-time atmosphere, as Ludwig points out: "Yes, and don't forget the cafés, the cakes…"[25] Not only do these historical add the necessary context for the play's plot and the dramatic contrast between the expectations of a further emancipation then and the tragic reality of the 1930s and the Holocaust in Act Two of the play, they also constitute an encyclopedia of the turn of the century Vienna.

But *Leopoldstadt* is not just a simple history play with encyclopedic features. As the rest of his oeuvre, the play employs intertextuality as well as various postmodernist and deconstructivist devices to challenge the idea of a "strict causality, chronological order, organized sequence, and intelligible relationships that could ignore the fact that reality itself is discontinuous, unpredictable, untimely, and random."[26] Musings about the past of the Viennese Jewry is brought into contrast with characters' onstage visual features, as well as the shared knowledge of the Holocaust future, inevitably born by the audiences. Martin Middeke observes about the humanistic appeal of Stoppard's employment of history:

> Stoppard's plays recreate fictional as well as historical lives and shift the attention from the mere representation of events in a

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[23] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 17.
[24] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 17.
[25] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 17.
[26] Martin Middeke, "History and Biography," in *Tom Stoppard in Context*, ed. David Kornhaber and James N. Loehlin, (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 105, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108303736.017.

particular life to the meta-level of reflection on how these lives can be appropriated and reconstructed in history or biography.[27]

The historical commentaries in the play do not serve merely to tell a moving (auto?)biographical story, but to make the audiences reconsider the agency of each human being in the wide scope of historical situations.

*Leopoldstadt* presents various forms of the Jewish identity in the historical context in an encyclopedic way as well. Hermann's sister Eva sarcastically comments on their secularism: "We're Jews. Bad Jews but pure blood sons of Abraham, and [my husband] Ludwig's parents would have nothing to do with us if their grandson didn't look Jewish in his bath."[28] She means that despite their secular way of life, they still had Pauli, their son, circumcised to make appearances in the eyes of the older, presumably more religious, generation of their parents.

The contrast between the modern, integrated, secular Viennese Jewry and the more traditional Jews in the other regions of the Austro-Hungarian empire is a frequent theme in Act One. Hermann's sister-in-law Wilma scolds him: "You're snobby about Grannie and Grandpa Jakobovicz . . ., about their accent and using Yiddish words, and dressing like immigrants from some village in Galicia."[29] Hermann has no other option that to admit that indeed, he is. His self-irony illustrates the modern spirit when one's identity (racial, cultural, and religious) could be created in line with one's wishes and worldviews, rather that inherited and enforced.

Antisemitism is presented in multiple forms. The play covers the issue in a chronological development and in an international comparative perspective. In the opening scene, Hermann returns to the past of fifty years ago, when he describes that back then, Jews "stepped off the pavement to make way for an Austrian."[30] Blatant antisemitism may be gone from everyday situations, but Hermann still encounters it.

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[27] Middeke, "History and Biography," 106.
[28] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 6.
[29] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 6.
[30] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 17.

It still remains an integral part of many of the country's institutions, such as exclusive social clubs and the army. When Hermann learns that Fritz, a Dragoons officer, insulted his wife at a party for being married to a Jew, he visits Fritz to confront him. Fritz admits the insult but refuses to fight with Hermann: "In my regiment, an officer is not permitted to fight a Jew."[31] He further explains the radically antisemitic rationale for this prohibition: "We had a manifesto, which declared, I'm afraid, that since a Jew is devoid of honour from the day of his birth, it is impossible to insult a Jew. A Jew cannot therefore demand satisfaction for any suffered insult."[32] Out of frustration, Hermann curses: "And damn your regiment!", upon which Fritz slaps his face.[33] The slap remains unreturned. Hermann's humiliation is completed when he finds a booklet his wife Gretl once owned at Fritz's place and figures out that Fritz is his wife's lover. Upon his departure, Fritz's attendant refuses to help Hermann get dressed and Hermann thus has to literally bend over before the two gentiles.

Besides the historical and institutional antisemitisms, the play also depicts Nazi antisemitism. It is November 1938 – after the Anschluss of Austria by Nazi Germany. The Merz family, transformed by the forty years that have passed, have once again assembled in their Viennese apartment to be relocated to the Leopoldstadt ghetto upon an order. A Nazi Civilian enters to check upon the family and set them moving. While he administers the paperwork and identifies individual family members, he routinely humiliates them for being Jewish. The scene is a moving, emotionally charged one, displaying abuse of power over innocents of all ages who remain defenseless in the face of the dehumanized brutal force embodied by the authority. The following is an overview of various expressions of antisemitism in the scene, since a closer reading of the scene in order to stay within the topic of viewing the play as encyclopedia – this time, one of Nazi antisemitism.

Upon his arrival, the civilian spots Percy, who stands out from the assembly of characters with his unmistakably English looks and attire. Referring to Percy's fiancée Nelly, the civilian comments, "Race

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[31] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 29.
[32] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 30.
[33] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 29.

defilement runs in the family,"[34] referring to the Nazi concept of the *mischling*, the mixing of the races where, according to the Nazi racial theory, the superior Aryan race is defiled by a cross with another considered inferior, such as Slavonic or, most crucially, Jewish. The civilian does not have any respect for a service to the nation such as making uniforms for the Austrian army, if it comes from Jews. He says to Hermann's sister Eva, referring to Hermann's business activities: "A profiteer Jew making uniforms for soldiers to die in. Did you think you were Austrians, you old parasite bitch?"[35] He also dehumanizes the family by calling the twin baby sisters Sally and Rosa "litter" and "piglets."[36] There are many more instances of similar insults and humiliations based on the racial prejudice and abuse of power.

The scene culminates in a legal act of signing documents, by which Hermann is stripped of the family business based on the false premise that he, as a Jew, owes the German nation for all his success. This perverse logic is translated into the legal language whereby Hermann confesses, so to speak, to alleged crimes, and voluntarily gives up his entire property. The civilian thus instructs Hermann: "Read and sign. . . . You don't need your glasses. Just sign it. You agree that the Merz Company, the mills, the factories, the entire business, owes its existence to your practice of fraud, tax evasion and theft, and you further agree that ownership is transferred to the state, without compensation."[37]

In a witty twist of fate, Hermann had anticipated this development and outplayed the Nazis by having had passed the property to his son, whom he had officially recognized as an Aryan pure-blood, born from his wife's infidelity. The moment when this twist is revealed is one of the last comical moment of the play, yet a significantly Stoppardian one – a mixture of a postmodern play with history, cause and effect, and emotionality of the human mind, which defies expectations and accepted norms.

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[34] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 66.

[35] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 67.

[36] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 67.

[37] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 70.

The last instance of antisemitism or rather, a striking lack thereof in Great Britain, appears in Act Two with the arrival of Leo to Vienna in 1955. Leo is "a descendant of the family . . . who like Stoppard had his name stripped of its Jewish origin."[38] Instead of Leonard, he is now Leo, and his last name is Chamberlain.[39] As he explains to his aunt Rosa, being of Jewish descent in Britain meant for him "a little bit of a distinction, a … an exotic fact from [his] life gone by."[40] In other words, he encountered no antisemitism in Britain, which is also why he still feels proudly British rather than Jewish. So, the overview of antisemitisms in the play concludes with a non-presence of it, offering an optimistic outlook into the future.

As Clark explains, an encyclopedic work must also reflect upon its own creative process.[41] In case of *Leopoldstadt*, the play contains various features of the author's oeuvre, thus becoming an encyclopedia of Stoppardian drama – including its typical themes, stylistic features, and compositional devices. Demastes identifies several such qualities that permeate Stoppard's works. These are, namely, his specific use of language in all his plays, his approach to staging as "thought experiments" mainly in *Hapgood*, *After Magritte*, and *Jumpers*,[42] redefining the status of "what is art" and allusion to, as well as direct quotations from, various works of art from literature, painting, and architecture, such as in *Travesties*, *Artist Descending a Staircase*, *The Real Thing*, and *The Coast of Utopia, Part One: Voyage*.[43] Furthermore, Demastes identifies politic, more specifically human rights, as a central theme of plays such as *Rock'n'Roll*, *Squaring the Circle*, *Cahoot's Macbeth*, *Professional Foul*, *Every Good Boy Deserves Favor*, and *The*

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[38] Bull, "Ideology," 157.

[39] It is certainly not by chance that the surname Chamberlain has been chosen by Stoppard to represent Britishness in the play. Given the theme of the play, the reference to the pre-WWII British PM, Neville Chamberlain, a proponent of the failed Appeasement policy towards Nazi Germany, is a commentary on the indirect, yet historically tragic, role that Chamberlain played in the conflict, which involved atrocities such as the Holocaust.

[40] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 85.

[41] Clark, "Encyclopedic Discourse," 105.

[42] Demastes, *The Cambridge Introduction to Tom Stoppard*, 32–34.

[43] Demastes, *The Cambridge Introduction to Tom Stoppard*, 34–38.

*Coast of Utopia*.[44] The recent book *Tom Stoppard in Context* presents a more concise overview of influences on and themes of Stoppard's oeuvre.[45] While it includes all the areas from Demastes, it further specifies them and adds others to the list. There are clear literary influences on Stoppard's work such as William Shakespeare, other English and Russian classics, and the writers Oscar Wilde, Samuel Beckett, and Václav Havel. Stoppard's works abound with references to them and their works. They incorporate their ideas and reshape them into a playful postmodernist cocktail of intertextual wordplay.

*Leopoldstadt* does not contain a direct reference to any of the above mentioned writers, yet it is does involve a literary-historical discourse. The opening scene contains several literary references. Hermann "is fulminating over a thin 'book', a pamphlet of 80 pages."[46] The pamphlet is later revealed to be *Der Judenstaat* by Theodor Herzl, the founder of the Zionist movement who suggested a founding of a Jewish state in Africa. In an ahistorical dialogue, Hermann and his family discuss Herzl's ideas of a Jewish state in a perspective of future displacement plans, proposed by the Nazis in an uncanny resonance of Herzl's ideas in the 1930s, before the Holocaust.

The other book discussed in the opening scene is *The Interpretation of Dreams* by Sigmund Freud, the Jewish founder of psychoanalysis. In line with Freud's findings, various family members apply some of the concepts developed by Freud, such as "hysteria and neurosis,"[47] to the current condition of the Jews in the modern world. Moreover, Freud is discussed also because the characters find a parallel between his career and that of Ludwig, the family mathematician. Ernst observes that Freud "has no connections and no followers. He [Freud] should have been extraordinarius by now."[48] Ernst thus says that Freud qualifies for professorship but due to institutional antisemitism, he remains in obscurity. The mathematician Ludwig's fate in Austrian

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[44] Demastes, *The Cambridge Introduction to Tom Stoppard*, 41–44.

[45] David Kornhaber and James N. Loehlin, eds., *Tom Stoppard in Context*, Literature in Context (Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

[46] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 2.

[47] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 4.

[48] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 4.

academia will be very similar to Freud's early career. Freud returns symbolically in Act Two with Rosa's post-WWII return from New York where she is a prosperous and respected psychoanalyst. In another twist of fate, psychoanalysis, the form of psychotherapy which was ignored and pushed to obscurity because its Jewish founder, becomes a trend and a respected method.

Stoppard's plays are often called comedies or "plays of ideas,"[49] because they employ various ideas from a broad spectrum of fields of knowledge. Besides philosophy (and especially, moral philosophy) and science (especially physics and neuroscience), Stoppard uses ideas from mathematics. Ludwig is the mathematician in *Leopoldstadt*. He is obsessed with Riemann's hypothesis, a lasting problem of number theory, which is a part of pure mathematics. He dreams he has "proved"[50] (*sic*) the hypothesis. Various exercises and algebraic mind twisters from number theory are presented in the course of the play. Besides the Riemann Hypothesis, it is mainly the method of solving a sum total of a progression of numbers. He asks young Jacob to calculate the sum total of numbers from one to ten. After a while, Jacob announces the result, which is fifty-five. It is correct, but Ludwig is unimpressed as it took Jacob too long: instead of coming up with a general way of adding up numbers, he added them one after another. Ludwig explains his disappointment: "He [Jacob] answered correctly but he failed the test. Carl Friedrich Gauss when he was seven years old was asked to add all the numbers from one to a hundred. With barely a pause he answered 'Five thousand and fifty'."[51] He then explains how Gauss calculated it by adding up the lowest and the highest number and multiplying it by the number of pairs in between.

Collecting available knowledge and its explanation is a typical feature of all encyclopedias and in the case of science, Stoppard's work are encyclopedic on two levels: the content as well as the form, as scientific ideas often determine characters' behavior in a metaphorical treatment of the scientific issue. Perhaps, Stoppard's own view of the potential of mathematics to be used in drama is expressed by Ludwig in

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[49] Demastes, *The Cambridge Introduction to Tom Stoppard*, 38.
[50] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 10.
[51] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 14.

Act One: "Numbers are a huge toy box, we can play with them and make amazing, beautiful things."[52] In *Leopoldstadt*, Ludwig becomes the embodiment of the unproven hypothesis himself when he loses his mind due to geriatric dementia. Stoppard's "writing conveys the excitement of discovery or the beauty of equations . . . conjuring up a mathematical reality through words alone," says Liliane Campos about Stoppard's ability to incorporate mathematics into his plays as an inherent part of the plot.[53]

Another common feature of Stoppard's plays is an interplay with other works of art, not only plays but also other media. For example, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* is heavily dependent in its structure on *Hamlet* and *Waiting for Godot*, while *Travesties* is a palimpsest of *The Importance of Being Earnest*. It is especially "aesthetic concerns [that] have been a central feature of Stoppard's *oeuvre*."[54] Modernist painters have a similar prominence in Stoppard's work to that of the writers, although this may not be evident at first sight due to the different media (such as those of the written/spoken word and the visual arts). Stoppard's works often contain negotiations of traditional and modernist aesthetic conceptions of art: "Aesthetic debates populate many of Stoppard's plays."[55] This discussion is present in *Leopoldstadt* when University of Vienna decides to send the painting "Philosophy" by Gustav Klimt to Paris to represent it at the World Exhibition. Ludwig is excited, because he views the painting as an expression of the new, modern world. Gretl is also glad because Klimt is currently painting her portrait (which turns out to be a fictional counterpart of *Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I – The Lady in Gold*). Yet Ludwig also acknowledges a strong resistance against this painting by traditionalists:

[52] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 13.

[53] Liliane Campos, "Mathematics," in *Tom Stoppard in Context*, ed. David Kornhaber and James N. Loehlin (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 97, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108303736.016.

[54] John Fleming, "Art and Aesthetics," in *Tom Stoppard in Context*, ed. David Kornhaber and James N. Loehlin, 1st ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2021), 123, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108303736.020.

[55] Fleming, "Art and Aesthetics," 129.

LUDWIG: And we're sending the "Philosophy" painting for the University to show the Parisians. I was asked to sign a petition got up against it by the philosophy faculty.

GRETL: . . . My painter is going to be exhibited at the World's Fair in Paris!

LUDWIG: The faculty wants Plato and Aristotle discussing ideas in an olive grove, they don't want modern art stuck up on the ceiling of the University and calling itself "Philosophy".[56]

These references to the well-known artefacts of the era have several purposes. They establish the cultural-historical context of the plot of the play and co-create the visual aesthetics of the stage. Further, they help to bring in ideas, which are in the background of these works, onstage: the radically modernist, avant-guard aestheticism, which is so often a feature of Stoppard's plays. The portrait of the lady in gold has a specific history. It was stolen by the Nazis and the family spent years in a legal battle to become its owner again. A similar storyline develops in *Leopoldstadt*. Nathan explains in Act Two that they know the whereabouts of the painting: it is in the Belvedere. But that is not enough, since legally, the painting now has no owner and thus there is nobody who could give it back to the family: "Gretl's portrait is in legal no man's land. If it's to be given back, it's not enough to know where it is. It's necessary to know who's got it to give back."[57] Thus, the portrait plays an intermedial role when it is quoted in the play, but the quotation is distorted and serves both aesthetic and plotting purposes, which is another feature typical of Stoppard's drama.

The article in its present form is not exhaustive but rather illustrative of the point that *Leopoldstadt* can be seen as encyclopedia of Stoppard's works. There are more examples in the play, which may illustrate the main line of argument. It would be inevitably repetitive to continue in this fashion, since all the main claims have been raised. As the allegedly last play by Stoppard, and one that has a strong personal, even confessional quality for the acclaimed author, *Leopoldstadt*

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[56] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 10–11.
[57] Stoppard, *Leopoldstadt*, 83.

includes a vast array of themes and dramatic devices both in the descriptive realm (as a history play) and the self-reflexive style (as a Stoppardian work), that make a good case for a its treatment as Stoppardian encyclopedia.

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# "THE FORM OF FAUSTUS' FORTUNES, GOOD OR BAD": MARLOWE'S *DOCTOR FAUSTUS* AND THE MULTI-GENRE THEATRE OF THE LONG ENGLISH RESTORATION[1]

*Filip Krajník and Anna Hrdinová (Mikyšková)*

ABSTRACT: While Restoration and early-18th-century English theatre tends to be associated predominantly with comedies of manners, this period was in fact a time of great theatrical innovation, when new possibilities of stage action were explored and old dramatic material often received a distinct new take. The present article shows how the pre-Interregnum story of Doctor Faustus was revived multiple times after 1660 and how each new reiteration of the work testifies to the then recent developments in London theatres. The post-1660 dramatic versions of *Doctor Faustus* show how versatile the theatre of the period was and how one particular subject could easily oscillate between genres, as well as entire cultural spheres.

## 1. MARLOWE'S *DOCTOR FAUSTUS* BEFORE 1660

The pre-Restoration stage history of *Doctor Faustus*, one could argue, is almost as sketchy as Marlowe's play-text itself.[2] The earliest production of the play was recorded by the Lord Admiral's Men's manager, Philip Henslowe: "30 of septmbʒ 1594    Rd at docter ffostose . . . . . iij$^{li}$xij$^s$" (i.e., received 3 pounds and 12 shillings – the largest sum for any play

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[1] This study is dedicated to Kateřina, whose face would launch a thousand ships.

[2] Roma Gill, the editor of *Doctor Faustus* for the Oxford *Complete Plays of Christopher Marlowe*, has suggested that Marlowe never finished the play and the rather uneven text that was ultimately produced in the 1590s was patched together only after Marlowe's death in 1593 by another playwright (see Roma Gill, Introduction, in *Dr Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), xviii–xxi).

that year).[3] Between that date and 11 October 1597, Henslowe lists twenty-five performances in his diary, testifying to the play's ongoing popularity in the late Elizabethan period. On "22 of novmbʒ 1602," Henslowe furthermore paid a considerable sum of 4 pounds to "wᵐ Bvrde & Samwell Rowle" (William Birde and Samuel Rowley) for "ther adicyones in docter fostes,"[4] possibly those that survive in what we nowadays call the B-text of the play. This was the first time that Marlowe's tragedy, despite its popularity, needed to be updated for another era, the Jacobean one, to fit the changing tastes of London theatregoing audiences. Constant references to *Doctor Faustus* throughout the first half of the seventeenth century (such as in John Melton's *Astrolagaster* or William Prynne's *Histrio-mastix*)[5] show that the play was not only a staple of English public theatres of the time, but had also become deeply embedded in English early-modern cultural consciousness.

While all the contemporaneous records assign *Doctor Faustus* to the sphere of public dramaturgy rather than the aristocratic one, it cannot be ruled out that it enjoyed a court performance before the Civil Wars. Roy Eriksen has recently pointed out that especially the B-text, which is more spectacular and contains more anti-Papal and anti-Spanish references, could have been staged at the royal court "during the hectic months before the Spanish attack in 1588."[6] Whether this hypothesis is correct or not, already in the first years of *Doctor Faustus*'s stage-life we can discern two tendencies: to update the play (perhaps even multiple times) better to serve its changing audiences, and, potentially, the play's oscillation between popular and "elite"

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[3] R. A. Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 24.

[4] Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, 206.

[5] Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, ed. David Scott Kastan (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 180–181.

[6] Roy Eriksen, "Multiple Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus* and Court Performance," in *Performances at Court in the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. Sophie Chiari (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 63. This assessment, of course, requires the chronological primacy of the B-text over the A-text, assuming that the "Rowley-Birde additions either remained in manuscript or belong to a now-lost C-version" (Eriksen, "Multiple Marlowe", 54).

cultures. As we shall see, both of these trends, besides others, fully manifested themselves during the Restoration period several decades later.


## 2. REVIVALS AND REWRITINGS AFTER 1660

On Monday, 26 May 1662, Samuel Pepys, an English politician, avid theatregoer and, most importantly, a diligent diarist, had to finish his dinner at the Trinity House in London early, because he had to "take my wife to the Redd Bull, where we saw 'Doctor Faustus,' but so wretchedly and poorly done, that we were sick of it."[7] This was just two years after the restoration of the monarchy and the re-opening of London theatres after the 18-year hiatus. In the first years of the Restoration period, only a handful of new plays were staged and the newly appointed theatre managers had to rely on pre-Interregnum dramaturgy.[8] While, out of Renaissance playwrights, Christopher Marlowe was certainly not as much in demand in the period as the John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont team, William Shakespeare or Ben Jonson,[9] his *Doctor Faustus* gained special currency in the new regime.

Indeed, as Meghan C. Andrews points out, the comparison between Oliver Cromwell and the rise and fall of Doctor Faustus had been a staple of royalist literature since the Interregnum, and the play was probably received as a political allegory ending with the restoration of divine order. Furthermore, the Restoration alterations in the play, including the removal of Faustus's visit to the court of the Pope and its substitution by the visitation of the court of Suleiman (a scene based on another play by Marlowe, *The Jew of Malta*), catered both to King

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[7] Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley, vols. 1–3 (London: G. Bell and Sons Ltd., 1923), 1: 229–230.

[8] In the first three years following the re-opening of the theatres, the London companies "performed more than eighty old plays but only nine new ones" (Gary Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare: A Cultural History from the Restoration to the Present* (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1989), 24).

[9] Sandra Clark, "Shakespeare and Other Adaptations," in *A Companion to Restoration Drama*, ed. Susan J. Owen (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2001), 275.

Charles's pro-Catholic sympathies (in 1662, he married the Catholic Catherine of Braganza) and the anti-Dutch sentiments of the time (Dutch Protestants were associated with Jews).[10] Moreover, the only Restoration edition of the play, the 1663 quarto, was printed for William Gilbertson, a distinctively Royalist bookseller, who published a number of works sympathetic to the Cavalier cause during the Interregnum, as well as openly pro-Royalist texts after the Restoration.[11] Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, with certain necessary changes (another example might be an inclusion of a drinking song in the fourth act, a popular element of Restoration comedies), thus proved to be a versatile story, capable of absorbing its cultural and social context to address new generations of audiences (despite Pepys's dismissive remarks about the early production). That *Doctor Faustus* kept its appeal for at least another decade might by demonstrated by the King's presence at the Duke's Company's September 28, 1675 production of the play.[12] While there is no direct evidence to support Eriksen's aforementioned assumption that *Doctor Faustus* was a courtly drama in the Renaissance, in the Restoration era its appeal to the country's political elites cannot be denied.

　　We can only speculate as to how the Duke's Company produced *Doctor Faustus* in the later years of the Restoration period. Even in the early 1660s, the company famously revived Shakespeare's *Macbeth* "drest in all it's Finery, as new Cloath's, new Scenes, Machines, as flyings for the Witches; with all the Singing and Dancing in it."[13] The Dorset Garden Theatre, where the company staged *Doctor Faustus* in the 1670s,[14] was a new playhouse that had only opened in 1671 and was

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[10] Meghan C. Andrews, "The 1663 *Doctor Faustus* and the Royalist Marlowe," *Marlowe Studies* 1 (2011): 51–53.

[11] Andrews, "The 1663 *Doctor Faustus*", 44–49.

[12] Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of Restoration Drama, 1660–1700*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1928), 310.

[13] John Downes, *Roscius Anglicanus*, ed. Montague Summers (London: The Fortune Press, [1928]), 33.

[14] The 1660s *Doctor Faustus* was not staged by the Duke's Company, but probably by the acting company of George Jolly or that of John Rhodes (Richard H. Perkinson, "A Restoration 'Improvement' of *Doctor Faustus*," *English Literary History* 1, 3 (1934): 307–309).

"elaborately equipped for spectacle," leaving its visitors "impressed by the magnificence of the scenes and machines."[15] The fact that, over this time, more and more focus was placed on the "spectacular" part of *Doctor Faustus* might be conjectured from late-17th-century assessments of the work. While decades earlier, performances of Marlowe's play had to be stopped because both the actors and the audience genuinely feared that real devils were raised during the production,[16] in the 1680s, the opinion was held that "none [of Marlowe's dramatic works] made such a great Noise as his Comedy of *Doctor Faustus* with his Devils, and such like tragical Sport, which pleased much the humours of the Vulgar."[17] Marlowe's play was no longer a serious dramatic piece contemplating the natural and divine limits to Man's action and staged in the presence of royalty, but a mere "Comedy", full of "Noise" and "Sport" that, above all, appealed to "the Vulgar". By the end of the century, *Doctor Faustus* had apparently lost a great deal of its former prestige; and what is more interesting, it also migrated between genres, being newly considered a comedic piece.

The culmination of this development gave birth to William Mountfort's adaptation of Marlowe's play, first staged between 1684 and 1688[18] and published in 1697 under the title *The Life and Death of Doctor Faustus, Made into a Farce. With the Humours of Harlequin and Scaramouche: As They Were Several Times Acted by Mr. Lee and Mr. Jevon, at the Queens Theatre in Dorset Garden.* The term "farce" in the title refers to a low comedic genre that was appearing during the Restoration period and would become a staple of London stages by the beginning of the 18th century, when theatres were more and more resorting to "lesser" or "popular" genres to attract audiences.[19] Farces

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[15] William Van Lennep, ed., *The London Stage, 1660–1800*, Part 1: 1660–1700 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1965), xl.

[16] Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, 181.

[17] William Winstanley, *The Lives of the Most Famous English Poets or the Honour of Parnassus* (London: printed by H. Clark for Samuel Manship, 1687), 134.

[18] Elizabeth M. Butler, *The Fortunes of Faust* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania University Press, 1998), 57.

[19] While the term "farce" was used throughout the 17th and 18th centuries in the theatrical context (often with negative connotations), it was applied rather

were usually shorter than regular comedies and were based on fantastical, improbable situations, whose purpose was to elicit laughter. Tonya Howe defines them as "shorter pieces, typically mined from other plays" containing "[d]isguise, 'grimace,' buffoonery, trickery, and intense theatricality, often enabled through (momentary) social inversion."[20] Indeed, while even Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* contained a comedic subplot of a kind, vaguely mirroring the events in the main storyline, in Mountfort's farcical treatment the main story is radically reduced (with the omission of the original "high" dramatic elements, such as the Prologue, the Epilogue and the commentary of the Chorus) to give more space to the tricks of Harlequin and Scaramouche, who newly dominate the piece.

The inclusion of well-known buffoons from the Italian *commedia dell'arte* completely changed the stage dynamics and distracted the audience from the legend of Faustus, which almost became an excuse or background for the then fashionable comedic elements. Although Judy A. Hayden argues that the comedic strand of the piece addressed the religious strife in the country during the Exclusion crisis (1679–1681),[21] it is predominantly the farce's elaborate spectacle, combined with popular Continental dramatic patterns, that paved the way for how the story of Faustus would be presented on English stages in the following decades. Especially the second act employs the possibilities of the Restoration stage to the fullest: When Harlequin and Scaramouche are starving because Doctor Faustus has left for his travels and has not provided them with any food, they ask Mephostopholis for some meal. What follows is an elaborate comical banquet in which both the clowns and the table are flying over the stage; at one point even living birds are used when Harlequin takes off the lid

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loosely to a variety of comedic pieces and no universal definition was provided (see Leo Hughes, *A Century of English Farce* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956), 3–20).

[20] Tonya Howe, "Abject, Delude, Create: The Aesthetic Self-Consciousness of Early Eighteenth-Century Farce," *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Theatre Research* 25, 1 (2011): 26.

[21] See Judy A. Hayden, "Harlequin, the Whigs, and William Mountfort's *Doctor Faustus*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 49, 3 (2009): 573–593.

of a pot. After Faustus's demise at the end, which follows the Marlowe version of the story, the stage direction says: "Scene changes to Hell. Faustus Limbs come together. A Dance, and Song."[22] Although the last quatrain of the piece, pronounced by the Old Man, instructs the audience "whatsoever Pleasure does invite, / Sell not your Souls to purchase vain Delight,"[23] it is primarily the delight, rather than any serious lesson, that Mountfort's piece obviously seeks to convey.

## 3. FAUSTUS IN THE EARLY-18TH-CENTURY PANTOMIME

The early 18th century saw a considerable transformation of London theatre business due to the rising number of playhouses in town. The traditional Theatre Royal in Drury Lane gained a serious rival in the newly rebuilt Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, which was opened by John Rich in 1714, and several other unlicensed theatres entered the business in the 1720s and 1730s.[24] This led to a fierce struggle for audiences among the playhouses that was manifested in the diversification of theatre repertories. It was no longer sufficient to offer one play and additional singing and dancing entertainments or harlequinade scenes, which had become widely popular since the time of Mountfort's 1680s employment of Harlequin and Scaramouch in his Faustus farce. By the 1720s, theatres began to offer afterpieces, i.e., short comical plays that followed the main piece of the evening. Their function was similar to that of the Renaissance jig, although, unlike their predecessors, the afterpieces were fully-fledged dramatic works independently advertised in the play bills. It was also the immensely popular category of the

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[22] [William] Mountfort, *The Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* (London: Printed and sold by E. Whitlock, 1697), 26.

[23] Mountfort, *The Life and Death of Doctor Faustus*, 26.

[24] A more detailed overview of London playhouses' development at that time can be found in Emmett L. Avery (ed.), *The London Stage, 1660–1800*, Part 2: 1700–1729, vol. 1 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960), xxii–xxxvi.

afterpiece into which most of the innovative energy of English playwrights of the time was invested.[25]

The first afterpieces were mostly farces and musical masques. In the late 1710s, however, Drury Lane dancing master John Weaver came up with a new genre that would shake the London theatre scene for the next two decades – pantomimes. While exploring the legacy of ancient pantomimes, he experimented with a dramatic form based on dance which would fully express the dramatic action.[26] At Drury Lane, Weaver staged several elaborate dancing pieces inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, such as *The Loves of Mars and Venus* (1717) and *Orpheus and Eurydice* (1718), which he called "Dramatick Entertainments of Dancing after the Manner of Ancient Pantomimes." The Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, led by John Rich, a famous Harlequin performer, immediately responded with pantomimes called "Entertainments in Grotesque Characters," with titles such as *Harlequin Executed* or *Harlequin Turn'd Judge* (both 1717), in which the "grotesque characters" were the widely popular *commedia dell'arte* types. However, the turning point in the popularity of English pantomimes came in 1723 when the new theatrical genre deployed, once again, the story of Faustus.

The starting point of what would later be called "the Harlequin Faustus Mania of 1723"[27] came on 20 November 1723, when Drury Lane premiered a new afterpiece entitled *Harlequin Doctor Faustus: with the Masque of the Deities*, which was composed by the dancing master John Thurmond. In less than a month, on 30 December,

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[25] For more information of the development of the afterpiece, see Richard W. Bevis, Introduction, in *Eighteenth Century Drama: Afterpieces* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), vii–xvi.

[26] For more information on the beginnings of the English pantomimes, see Virginia P. Scott, "The Infancy of English Pantomime: 1716–1723," *Educational Theatre Journal* 24, 2 (1972): 125–134. For more on Weaver's views on pantomime, see Richard Semmens, "A Sorcerer's Apprentice? John Weaver's Comic Muse," in *Studies in the English Pantomime, 1712–1733* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press 2016): 1–20.

[27] Kristina Straub, Misty G. Anderson and Daniel O'Quinn, eds., *The Routledge Anthology of Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Drama* (London: Routledge, 2017), 462.

Lincoln's Inn Fields responded with their own Faustus pantomime, called *The Necromancer: or, Harlequin Doctor Faustus*, designed by dancing master Lewis Theobald and manager John Rich. Their success inspired another playhouse, the Haymarket Theatre, to revive Mountfort's late-17th-century farce in January 1724. The three Faustus titles thus ran concurrently for the rest of the theatre season.

Whereas the "pre-Faustian" pantomimes consisted of an attractive mixture of English opera, masque, farce, *commedia dell'arte* scenes and theatrical song and dance,[28] the two aforementioned afterpieces based on the Faustus story revolutionised the genre. Next to dance, singing and buffoonery, the two Faustus entertainments employed elaborate spectacle, sophisticated machinery and lavish scenery. For example, in Drury Lane's *Harlequin Doctor Faustus*, the devil Mephostophilus "flies down upon a Dragon, vomiting Fire;"[29] at the wave of Harlequin Faustus's wand, objects fly and appear out of thin air, and devils and ghosts are summoned; and, at the end of the piece, two Fiends "seize the Doctor, and are sinking with him headlong thro' Flames."[30] The entertainment is then concluded with a lavish masque of "Poetical Heaven," in which Roman gods and goddesses perform several elaborate dances and rejoice over Faustus's deserved punishment. To compete with this rival's success, John Rich's *The Necromancer* offered similar tricks with flying objects, transformations and sudden appearances, and finished with a grand finale, in which

> a monstrous Dragon appears . . . the Doctor is seiz'd by the Spirits and thrown into the Dragon's Mouth, which opens and shuts several times, 'till he has swallow'd the Doctor down, belching out Flames of Fire, and roaring in a horrible Manner.[31]

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[28] Scott, "The Infancy of English Pantomime: 1716–1723," 125.

[29] Thurmond, John, *Harlequin Doctor Faustus: with the Masque of the Deities* (London: W. Chetwood, 1724), 5.

[30] Thurmond, *Harlequin Doctor Faustus: with the Masque of the Deities*, 13.

[31] *An Exact Description of the Two Fam'd Entertainments of Harlequin Doctor Faustus with the Masque of the Deities, and The Necromancer or Harlequin Doctor Faustus* (London: T. Payne, [1724]), 35.

As the preface to the 1734 pantomime *Merlin, or The Devil of Stone Henge* states, "Custom, in *Pantomimes*, has made it a Sort of Necessity, in order to give *Tricks* some Air of Probability, that *Harlequin* should be a Piece of a Magician,"[32] and it was Faustus who stood at the beginning of that custom. Since the Restoration, the "Air of Probability," i.e., the narrative probability of magical effects on stage – or what Andrew R. Walkling calls "diegetic supernaturalism"[33] – had been an important issue for English playwrights, who strived to unite new possibilities of stage machinery with the principles of dramatic plot. Incorporating the well-known story of Faustus and his magical powers into pantomimes opened new opportunities for spectacular stage effects, which became a key characteristic of English post-1723 pantomimes.

In the long run, the Faustus pantomimes, which consisted of a string of episodes in which Harlequin Faustus with his students Scaramouch, Punch and Pierrot play tricks on people, initiated a trend that would continue for more than two decades. Not only were the two Harlequin Faustus entertainments regularly staged (with *Harlequin Doctor Faustus* being staged into the early 1770s), but similar pieces were further produced. Drury Lane staged *Harlequin Sorcerer* in 1725 and *The Miser; or Wagner and Abericock* in 1727, a sequel of a kind in which the Devil is commanded by Faustus's servant Wagner, who had already appeared in the Marlowe version of the story. Yet another notable appearance of Faustus on the British stage was the aforementioned 1734 Lincoln's Inn Fields pantomime *Merlin, or the Devil of Stone Henge*, in which Merlin plays the role of the devil and tempts Harlequin, here called Faustulus, who is warned in vain by the ghost of Doctor Faustus.[34]

The period reception of the Faustus pantomimes was divided. The authors succeeded in adapting the Faustus legend into a genre that

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[32] Lewis Theobald, *The Vocal Parts of and Entertainment call'd Merlin, or the Devil of Stone Henge* (London: J. Watts, 1734), 5.

[33] For more information on diegetic supernaturalism, the "versatile tool for the introduction of music, dance, and other elaborate performative elements", see Andrew R. Walkling, *English Dramatick Opera, 1661–1706* (London: Routledge, 2019), 21.

[34] Lewis Theobald, *The Vocal Parts of and Entertainment call'd Merlin, or the Devil of Stone Henge* (London: J. Watts, 1734), 13–14.

consisted of all the fashionable elements that were popular with the increasingly bourgeois theatre audiences of the time.[35] Spectators immediately fell in love with the mischievous Harlequin Faustus and flocked to see his tricks repeatedly. As the publication with the self-explanatory title *An Exact Description of the two fam'd Entertainments Harlequin Doctor Faustus with the Masque of the Deities, and The Necromancer or Harlequin Doctor Faustus* (1724), whose aim was to mediate in print the new theatrical experience to provincial audiences, claims in its preface, there were "scarce any in the Country, especially young People . . . that do not long as much for the Sight of the Doctor, as a French Head or a new Suit of Cloaths."[36] Some period reviews were favourable too. For instance, according to the 11 December 1723 issue of the *Universal Journal,* the "celebrated Dance" *Harlequin Doctor Faustus* was "received with so much Applause," praised for its music and machinery, and especially the last "grand Scene" was considered "the most magnificent that ever appear'd upon the English stage."[37]

Nevertheless, quite a few reviews, whose number increased in the course of the 1720s, were not at all complimentary. On 7 December 1723, *The Weekly Journal* complained that "bringing of Devils and Heathen Gods upon the Stage in the same Entertainment, where they have no Parts but to appear and dance" was "altogether silly and ridiculous." By arguing that "these Things are being shewn only for the sake of shewing them," the author raised the subsequently often repeated objection that pantomimes were spectacular nonsense with the aim to only please the eye. Moreover, not only were they nonsensical and pleasure-seeking, but critics felt that Faustus pantomimes (and other pantomime titles that followed) were, in their opinion, not culturally suitable for London Theatres Royal. As *The Weekly Journal* reviewer pointed out, "there is something in the legend of Dr. Faustus too mean for the Stage. The Theatre should not descend to borrow its Entertainment from the Puppet-Shew."[38]

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[35] Bevis, Introduction, viii.

[36] *An Exact Description of the two fam'd Entertainments Harlequin Doctor Faustus with the Masque of the Deities, and The Necromancer or Harlequin Doctor Faustus* (London: T. Payne, [1724]), Preface.

[37] *The Universal Journal*, December 11, 1723, 2.

[38] *The Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*, December 7, 1723, 1585.

It is important to realize that, by the early 1720s, the story of Doctor Faustus was not primarily associated with Marlowe but with lesser modes of public entertainment. The majority of the audiences knew the story from broadside ballads[39] and printed narratives of the legend, which circulated among common people. It was clear to the reviewer writing within three weeks after the premiere of *Harlequin Doctor Faustus* that "every Circumstance of this Dance is taken from the old History of Doctor Faustus."[40] Subsequently, the vocal parts of Rich's *The Necromancer* were in 1724 published with a short summary of Faustus's legend, even including references to relevant sources on the subject.[41]

Moreover, as the 1720s newspaper commentaries on pantomimes make clear, the story of Doctor Faustus was a popular subject of puppet shows presented at annual fairs all over the country.[42] The *Weekly Journal* issue quoted above complains repeatedly that the pantomime's story was taken from a "country puppet show."[43] The connection here rests not only on Faustus, but on the *commedia dell'arte* figures Scaramouch, Punch and Pierrot. Especially Punch, who took over the English puppet stage during the 18th century and entirely replaced Faustus (although retaining the latter's contract with the devil), was another reminder of the entertainment of London fairs.[44] Alexander Pope expressed the shared sentiment of the London men of letters when

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[39] The Renaissance broadside ballad "The Judgement of God shewed upon one John Faustus, Doctor of Divinity" was widely published, especially in the 1690s, if one can judge from the number of extant copies.

[40] *The Universal Journal*, 2.

[41] Moreover, the vocal parts of *The Necromancer* were published in 1727 together with the Faustus history as *The Surprizing Death and Life of John Faustus to which is now added The Necromancer: or Harlequin Doctor Faustus. As Perform'd at the Theatre Royal in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Likewise, The whole Life of Fryar Bacon, the Famous Magician of England* (London: A. Bettesworth and C. Hitch, 1727).

[42] In London one such puppet show, entitled *Faustus' Trip to the Jubilee,* is recorded at Punch's Theatre in 1712. See Avery, *The London Stage, 1660–1800*, 358.

[43] *The Weekly Journal*, 1585.

[44] Butler, *The Fortunes of Faust*, 64.

in 1727 he lamented that "Smithfield Muses," i.e., Bartholomew Fair entertainments, "whose shews, machines, and dramatical entertainments" used to be "agreeable only to the taste of the Rabble," have been "brought to the Theatres of Covent-Garden, Lincoln-Inn Fields and the Hay-Market, to be the reigning Pleasures of the Court and Town."[45]

At the bottom of the numerous complaints about the London theatres' indulgence "in low Buffoonery, Mountebank Tricks and *Bartholomew Fair* Foolery" and about the degraded taste of the town lay a deep anxiety about the mixture of "high" and "low" modes, which Faustus pantomimes embodied and which compromised the theatre's desired function to "instruct, convince and reform."[46] So long as the genres were more or less clearly defined, the aesthetic and, implicitly, the social value of each theatre experience were preserved. Although Michael D. Bristol correctly points out in his chapter on early modern popular culture that Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* is, in its episodic mischievous clowning, an example of carnivalized English drama,[47] it was still perceived as a tragedy. The Restoration adaptation strategies started to capitalise on that carnival aspect, with Mountfort eventually relegating the tragedy's story to the background to give space to the farcical elements.

In pantomimes, however, all generic rules have been abandoned: Faustus literally becomes Harlequin the trickster and the legend completely merges with the comical unruly action which stands at the forefront. As Scott Cutler Shershow demonstrates in his study on puppetry and popular culture, popular modes, and puppet plays especially, are a site where the categories of high and low, literary and popular, are constantly questioned, redefined and appropriated.[48] Similarly, the Faustus pantomimes, whose status was likened to that of a

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[45] Alexander Pope, *Dunciad*: *with Notes Variorum, and the Prolegomena of Scriblerius* (London: L. Gilliver, 1727), 69, note to line 2.

[46] *The British Journal*, March 18, 1726–1727, 1.

[47] Michael D. Bristol, "Theatre and Popular Culture," in *A New History of Early English Drama*, ed. John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 235–236.

[48] Scott Cutler Shershow, *Puppets and "Popular" Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 1–9.

puppet play, called the genre distinction into question by mixing high elements such as the courtly masque, the baroque dance and classical motifs with buffoonery, slapstick and grotesque spectacle. For people interested in the institutional integrity of London Theatres Royal, where the nuances of cultural distinction were expected to be stable, this was naturally unacceptable and alarming.

Although the Faustus pantomimes have been analysed from several insightful perspectives – for instance, some scholars read them as a political allegory between pro-Whig Drury Lane and pro-Tory Lincoln's Inn Fields,[49] others see them as a reaction to the scientific development of popular Newtonianism[50] and as an embodiment of the emerging modern entertainment[51] – it was their ambiguous cultural status that concerned the period commentators the most. As we have seen, the high and low elements had been intertwined in the story of Doctor Faustus from the very beginning, but the attractive discrepancy came to its fullest with the help of the spectacular possibilities of early-18th-century dramaturgy.


CONCLUSION

The well-known story of Doctor Faustus's dangerous ambition, which had been embedded in English early-modern cultural consciousness since the Renaissance period, proved to be fruitful material for the English stage even during the Restoration and early-18th-century periods. The comical potential and long-lasting popular appeal, which constituted an integral part of Marlowe's serious tragedy, gained in dominance during the post-Interregnum spectacular revivals, leading up to Mountfort's farcical adaptation in the 1680s. The rich stage history of

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[49] See Judy A. Hayden, "Of Windmills and Bubbles: Harlequin Faustus on the Eighteenth-Century Stage," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 77, 1 (2014): 1–16.

[50] See Al Coppola, "Harlequin Newton: John Rich's *Necromancer* and the Public Science of the 1720s," in *"The Stage's Glory": John Rich, 1692–1761*, ed. by Berta Joncus and Jeremy Barlow, 238–252 (Newark: University of Delaware Press), 2011.

[51] See John O'Brien, *Harlequin Britain*: *Pantomime and Entertainment, 1690–1760* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2004).

Doctor Faustus's legend, which can be characterized by flexible appropriation of new cultural and political contexts, and prompt absorption of lesser elements so as to cater to the changing tastes of theatregoing audiences, culminated in the 1720s when the London stages were overwhelmed by the new genre of pantomimes. The character of Faustus then assumed the chequered coat of Harlequin that soon became his unmistakeable attribute. It could be argued that with every new theatre revival and adaptation, the story of Doctor Faustus had taken one step down the cultural hierarchy. At the same time, however, it is often through artistically low expressions (such as 18th-century pantomimes) that the category of "high" cultural forms receives new creative impulses and, as we have seen, is defined anew by its supporters and protectors.

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# SOME RECENT TRENDS IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH HISTORICAL DRAMATURGY INTO CZECH

*Anna Hrdinová (Mikyšková)*

ABSTRACT: The present article discusses the recent developments in translating English drama from historically distant periods into Czech. The first major endeavour that the text introduces is the Czech Science Foundation funded project concerned with the translation of selected plays from the Restoration period (1660–1737) into Czech, many of them for the first time. The project employs a new method of translating old drama devised by the research team, so-called dramaturgical translation, whose nature and mechanisms are described in detail. Subsequently, the article discusses two recent translations of Shakespeare's plays into Czech, namely Pavel Drábek's *Romeo and Juliet* (2021) and Filip Krajník's *Hamlet* (2022), in an attempt to extrapolate from them what the future of (not only) Shakespearean translation into Czech will look like and what young translators will face when trying to produce both a semantically accurate and theatrically effective translation of an old drama.

KEYWORDS: translation of drama, dramaturgical translation, collaborative translation, Restoration theatre, William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*

The translation of English drama from historically distant periods into Czech has always been dominated by translations of plays by Shakespeare. As Pavel Drábek's monograph on the subject has demonstrated, Shakespeare has been translated for the Czech stage since the late 18th century, often playing a significant symbolic role for the Czech nation in times of cultural, political or social crises.[1] Krajník and Kyselová have argued that, by the mid-19th century, Shakespeare had become "a national author of a kind" for Czechs and "a proxy for expressing their political positions,"[2] a status that has served as a strong

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[1] See Pavel Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara* (Brno: Větrné mlýny, 2012).

[2] Filip Krajník and Eva Kyselová, "Shakespeare at Four Castles: Summer Shakespeare Festival in Prague, Brno, Ostrava (Czech Republic) and Bratislava

impulse for new Shakespearean translations for every new generation of readers, theatregoers, and theatre practitioners. In the course of the 20th century, translating Shakespeare had also become a matter of personal prestige and influential individuals appeared who, with little competition, dominated the field of Shakespearean translation into Czech in their lifetimes (such as Josef Václav Sládek at the turn of the 19th century, Erik Adolf Saudek in the mid-20th century, and Jiří Josek and Martin Hilský at the end of the 20th and in the early 21st centuries). The last significant non-Shakespearean translation of early-modern drama into Czech was the three-volume anthology *Alžbětinské divadlo* (Elizabethan Theatre), which was published in the late 1970s and early 1980s, containing fifteen Renaissance English plays translated by a collective of authors. However, although some of these translations were ultimately staged, the anthology was primarily intended for readers rather than theatregoing audiences.[3]

With respect to drama written in the Restoration and 18th-century periods, the tradition of its rendition into Czech is rather modest. This is, besides other factors, because of the fact that while Czech Shakespeare and Renaissance scholarship firmly established itself in the 19th century, no book-length study of post-Interregnum English theatre has been published to date in Czech and there is only limited awareness of English Restoration and early 18th-century dramaturgy among Czech theatre practitioners and theatregoing audiences. While Restoration plays were first staged in the Czech lands in German as early as the 1750s,[4] the first attempts at Czech translations

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(Slovakia)," in *Shakespeare on European Festival Stages*, edited by Nicoleta Cinpoes, Florence March and Paul Prescott (London: Bloomsbury, 2022), 56, 57.

[3] An exception proving the rule is Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, which was translated into Czech four times and has been staged multiple times by Czech theatres (see Filip Krajník and Aneta Mitrengová, "Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus in Three Czech Translations," in *Interchange between Languages and Cultures: The Quest for Quality*, edited by Jitka Zehnalová, Ondřej Molnár and Michal Kubánek (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2016), 151–176).

[4] Klára Škrobánková, "From Otway to Singspiels: Early Performances of Restoration Drama in the Czech Lands" (presentation at How to Do Things

appeared only in the early 1900s. In the course of the 20th century, about a dozen Restoration plays were translated into Czech;[5] however, most of these translations are already outdated and cannot be staged nowadays.[6] An exception is John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), which has been translated into Czech three times and whose latest version by Jiří Záviš was staged recently (in March 2019) at the Silesian Theatre in Opava. However, given that *The Beggar's Opera* is, in terms of its form, close to the modern musical, a popular genre among current Czech theatregoing audiences, and that the Czech dramatist and politician Václav Havel adapted the play in 1972 (there is even a 1991 film version of Havel's adaptation directed by Jiří Menzel), it could be argued that Gay's play has a special status for Czech audiences and hardly sets a precedent for translating or staging Restoration dramaturgy in Czech in general.

Perhaps the most pressing reason for the scarcity of new stageable Czech translations of English historical dramaturgy, be it the Renaissance, the Restoration, or the 18th-century kind, has been a lack of skilled translators. According to Drábek, translating historical drama (from any language) requires a number of competences that are "close to insuperable for an individual," including knowing the historic variant of the foreign language, knowing the original historical theatrical culture, knowing present-day theatrical culture and being able to contribute to it actively, and having a substantial measure of playwriting talent.[7] There are several possible solutions to this problem. A rather

with Early Modern Words Conference, Loughborough University, Loughborough, UK, July 14–16 2022).

[5] Filip Krajník, Anna Mikyšková, Klára Škrobánková, Pavel Drábek and David Drozd, "English Restoration Theatre in Czech: An Ongoing Research Project Conducted at the Department of English and American Studies and the Department of Theatre Studies in Brno," *Theory and Practice in English Studies* 8, 1 (2019): 124.

[6] Susan Bassnett, for instance, has argued that "the average life span of a translated theatre text is 25 years at the most" (Susan Bassnett, "Translating for the Theatre: The Case against Performability," *TTR: traduction, terminologie, rédaction* 4, 1 (1991): 111).

[7] Pavel Drábek, "Translating Drama: A Methodology for a Dramaturgical Translation. Prolegomena to a Transnational Research Project" (presentation at

naïve and not entirely realistic one would be to try to train such translators – something that would probably take decades and would lead to an uncertain outcome. Several translation cultures, including that prevalent in the UK, employ a two-tier system, in which a play is first translated by a philologist and then adapted by an established playwright, who usually takes the credit for the final product. Based on the methodology devised by Drábek, Krajník et al. have proposed a new approach to translating for the theatre – "a pattern of collaboration based on systematic interaction between the spheres of academia, translation and theatre practice," called *dramaturgical translation* for short.[8]

The idea behind dramaturgical translation is mixing the expertises of a collective of contributors (the word "translators" would perhaps not be apposite here), usually a translator, a philologist, and a theatre dramaturge, who join efforts to produce a translated version of the source play that would display all the aforementioned competences required of a translator for the theatre. In this respect, this method differs from the aforementioned two-tier (or indirect) translation, where the collaboration is sequential, not simultaneous. The first large-scale venture to demonstrate the potential of dramaturgical translation is the Czech Science Foundation (GA ČR) funded project "English Theatre Culture 1660–1737," which seeks to produce a three-volume anthology of stageable translations of English plays from the late-17th and early-18th century into Czech. While cooperation between the translator and theatre professional has been suggested by translation theory for several decades,[9] in the Czech environment, such instances, as Krajník et al.

14th ESSE Conference, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic, August 29–Septmber 2, 2018).

[8] Filip Krajník, Anna Mikyšková and Pavel Drábek, "Dramaturgical Translation as a Means of Training a Young Generation of Translators for the Theatre," in *Teaching Translation vs. Training Translators: Proceedings of the Translation and Interpreting Forum Olomouc*, ed. Michal Kubánek, Ondřej Klabal and Ondřej Molnár (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2022), 73.

[9] See, for instance, Susan Bassnett, "Ways through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts," in *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, ed. Theo Hermans (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1985), 87–102; or Susan Bassnett, "Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre," in *Constructing Cultures:*

maintain, have been "exceptions rather than the rule."[10] What is even more distinctive about the "English Theatre Culture 1660–1737" project is its ambition to collaborate in order not to put together a specific production, but to produce a text that would preserve the theatrical quality of the original and could easily be employed for a scenic realisation at any future point.

This is ensured not only by collaboration between translators, scholars and dramaturges, but also by the participation of hired theatre actors, who deliver the draft versions of the translations aloud in actors' reading workshops, with the translator and the dramaturge present, and provide their input regarding the speakability of the translation, as well as its dramaturgical qualities. Simona Hájková, who audited one of the workshops that took place in December 2021 as part of the aforementioned research project, has stressed the uniqueness of the actors' observations, which stem from "real experience from the theatrical business."[11] On the basis of her own experience as a student of English philology and an observer of the workshop, Hájková maintains that "only regular theatre practitioners have the ability to consider the text in its depth and spot even the smallest pitfalls which might eventually cause complications during the performance," emphasising that this phase of the translating process is "invaluable for the translator and the whole team, as the aim is to create a theatrically effective text."[12]

The practical results of the project will be published first in printed form in 2023. Since the research team collaborates with several theatres and theatre practitioners from all over the country, it is expected that the first productions of some of the translations will follow shortly.

Besides the Restoration project, another current issue in translating into Czech for the theatre is the translation of Shakespeare. Despite the long history of staging Shakespeare in Czech (as mentioned above), the Czech tradition of theatre translation – and, by extension, Czech culture in general – have found themselves in an unprecedented

*Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. Bassnett, Susan and André Lefevere (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), 90–108.

[10] Krajník, Mikyšková and Drábek, "Dramaturgical Translation", 71.

[11] Simona Hájková, "Dramaturgical Translation for the Theatre as a New Method: A Case Study," MA thesis (Masaryk University, 2022), 10.

[12] Hájková, "Dramaturgical Translation," 101.

situation. While for most of the two and a half centuries of "Czech attempts at Shakespeare" (to borrow the title of Drábek's study), each new generation of Czech translators of Shakespeare either seamlessly followed the previous one, or even overlapped with it for some time,[13] after the 2011 single-volume edition of Martin Hilský's translations of Shakespeare's collected works (making Hilský only the second Czech to translate single-handedly the entire Shakespeare canon, after František Nevrla in the 1960s),[14] no new translation of Shakespeare from a younger translator appeared for a decade and Czech stages were dominated by Shakespearean translations either by Hilský or Josek (some of which were more than 30 years old).

This hiatus was only broken in 2021, when Drábek's new version of *Romeo and Juliet* premiered at the Theatre of Moravian Slovakia (Slovácké divadlo) in Uherské Hradiště (dir. Lukáš Kopecký), which commissioned the translation for their planned production. While Drábek's text has not yet been published and thus a thorough description of its individual features is not possible here, certain trends in his approach to translating Shakespeare can be observed. Most importantly, for the scenic production, Drábek decided to opt for the 1597 edition of Shakespeare's play. While literary history has traditionally preferred the second quarto version of *Romeo and Juliet* (on which the folio text is also based), dubbing the 1597 edition as a "bad quarto," from the perspective of theatre practice, the first edition offers a more clear-cut play text. The Czech dramaturge and theatre scholar Milan Lukeš has observed that the first quarto version of *Romeo and Juliet* presents the plot in a more straightforward way, foregrounding the play's comical elements, while reducing the high level of poetic stylisation and the "literary expression, heightened to mannerist extremes."[15] Indeed, in an interview, Drábek, himself a theatre practitioner, stressed that his intention was to "go for the down-to-earth poetry and strip the story of the anachronistic Romantic veneer

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[13] Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 20–21.

[14] Pavel Drábek, "František Nevrla's Translation of *Hamlet*," *Brno Studies in English* 31 (2005): 119.

[15] Milan Lukeš, *Základy shakespearovské dramaturgie* (Praha: Univerzita Karlova), 90 (working translation mine).

it has acquired in the popular imagination."[16] Rather than showcasing the literary qualities of Shakespeare's language, Drábek focused on its dramaturgical aspects, such as its ability to distinguish between the speaking rhythms of individual characters in different situations. Contrary to the popular view, Drábek thus treated Shakespeare as a man of the theatre in the first place and only secondarily as a poet. This approach might be seen in sharp contrast to the one of Martin Hilský of the previous generation of Shakespearean translators, who has often stressed the poetic power – "magical, pre-scientific, mystical, creative, and ultimately religious" – of Shakespeare's works.[17]

That Drábek's new version of *Romeo and Juliet* might indeed have started a new wave of Shakespearean translations into Czech could be supported by Filip Krajník's recent translation of *Hamlet*, which premiered at the South Bohemian Theatre (Jihočeské divadlo) in České Budějovice in spring 2022 (dir. Jakub Čermák) – the first new staged translation of the play into Czech since 1999. Unlike Drábek, who had been actively doing theatre for several decades, Krajník's experience with theatre practice was very limited when working on his translation. To produce a theatrically effective play text (again, the translation was originally commissioned by Prague City Theatres, Městská divadla pražská, to be later finished for the South Bohemian Theatre),[18] Krajník thus collaborated with a whole team of dramaturges and theatre practitioners, who provided the necessary procedural knowledge to make the final translation stageable and open to new dramaturgical

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[16] Filip Krajník, "An Interview with Pavel Drábek on Translating Shakespeare in Theory and Practice," *Theory and Practice in English Studies* 11, 1 (2022): 181.

[17] Martin Hilský, "Shakespeare's Theatre of Language: Czech Experience," in *Renaissance Shakespeare/Shakespeare Renaissances: Proceedings of the Ninth World Shakespeare Congress*, ed. Martin Procházka, Michael Dobson, Andreas Höfele and Hanna Scolnicov (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014), 180.

[18] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Anna Mikyšková (Kolín: Filip Krajník, 2022), 9.

interpretations.[19] Unlike Drábek, however, Krajník had a printed edition of his translation in mind from the very beginning (see Klára Čampulková's review of the book edition of Krajník's *Hamlet* in this volume), which is why he based his text on the 1604/5 edition of the play (the so-called second quarto, the longest version of *Hamlet* that we have and that was almost certainly never staged in Shakespeare's lifetime), which he complemented with a number of passages from the 1603 quarto and 1623 folio. As a literary historian, Krajník thus never resigned from offering a literary text as well as a theatrical one.

An example of a (seeming) clash between the literary-historical and theatrical-practical worlds in Krajník's translation might be the delineation of the characters in the play. In his essay "Svár rozumu a emoce v Shakespearově *Hamletovi*" (The Struggle between Reason and Emotion in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*), prefaced to his translation in the printed book, Krajník reads the eponymous protagonist of the story "on the basis of Shakespeare's text, without later interpretative layers and generally accepted stereotypes."[20] For him, Prince Hamlet – as well as other characters in the play – are "character types rather than fully fledged individualities."[21] And, indeed, even in Krajník's translation, the Danish Prince is markedly less distinct as a person, his contemplative side and his madness being toned down and his overall character being more defined by the situations in which he finds himself rather than by attempts at any psychological consistency. This understanding of a dramatic character is more in line with the Elizabethan theatrical tradition than ours. Director Jakub Čermák, however, wanted to make his *Hamlet* "very contemporary – in terms of the visual aspect, in terms of the acting expression, in terms of the overall message or even the concept of the characters."[22] His production is obviously aimed at younger audiences, who demand contemporary delineation and

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[19] Jan Duchek, "Žádný překlad Hamleta by neměl být kánonický [sic]," *Zpravodaj Divadelního pikniku, Celostátní přehlídky amatérského činoherního a hudebního divadla 2022* 3 (3 July 2022): 1.

[20] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 35 (working translation mine).

[21] Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, 34 (working translation mine).

[22] Michal Zahálka, "An Interview with Jakub Čermák on *Hamlet*, Depressive Children and the Difference between Official and Independent Czech Scenes," *Theory and Practice in English Studies* 11, 1 (2022): 194.

psychologically believable motivations of the characters. As Kateřina Fürbachová, a young art student who illustrated the book edition of Krajník's translation, stated in an interview when asked what was most appealing about *Hamlet* for younger audiences, "there are a number of characters with whom you create an emotional bond, which is what we teenagers like to do."[23] Although the modern psychologization of Renaissance dramatic characters might be something that Krajník, as a literary historian, sees as anachronistic, his text is, thanks to his translation method, dramaturgically open enough to yield to such an approach if the director decides to adopt it. When asked for his opinion on Čermák's production as a literary scholar, Krajník acknowledged this aspect of his text, claiming that it is "an absolute honour for me if my translation serves as a basis for a production that I myself could not even imagine but still works on the stage. I am happy to be able to open new possibilities of interpretation."[24] Although each approaches the translation of Shakespeare from a different perspective, both Drábek and Krajník thus stress the importance of the dramaturgical potential of the target text and strongly link their versions with theatre practice – either combining their experience as a philologist and theatre practitioner, such as Drábek, or working collaboratively in a team, like Krajník.

It is perhaps too early to pass any definite judgements about how the Czech tradition of translating historical drama will develop. From the ongoing projects and recent translations mentioned above, it can, however, be assumed that more emphasis will be put on collaboration between the academic and theatrical spheres and on the combination of various expertises that are necessary to create a philologically accurate and theatrically effective dramatic text. Consequently, the gap between the "page" and the "stage" might be somewhat narrowed, as theatre practice will enter the process that has been until very recently largely seen as the domain of philology and theatre history (that is, the world of academia). This might lead to opening up the translation of drama from historically distant periods to more translators and teams of collaborators and to fostering a new

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[23] Michaela Weiss, "O překládání a ilustrování Shakespearova Hamleta," *Protimluv, revue pro kulturu* 21, 3 (2022): 28 (working translation mine).

[24] Duchek, "Žádný překlad Hamleta", 1 (working translation mine).

generation of translators and dramaturges that will increase the interest of both current Czech theatre practitioners and Czech theatregoing audiences in historical dramaturgy, especially in authors and dramatic pieces that have been, quite unjustly, neglected so far.

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# III. REVIEW

# BOOK REVIEW: A CZECH *HAMLET* FOR THE 21st CENTURY

## *Klára Čampulková*

William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*, translated by Filip Krajník, illustrated by Kateřina Fürbachová, edited by Anna Mikyšková. Kolín: Filip Krajník, 2022.

According to the on-line database of the Theatre Institute in Prague, *Hamlet* has been the second most produced play by Shakespeare in Czech since 1945 (after, of course, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which appears to be the most popular Shakespeare play not only among Czech audiences, but all around the world).[1] Yet, until recently, Czech theatregoers had to be content chiefly with two translations of Shakespeare's greatest tragedy, by Jiří Josek and Martin Hilský, both of which premiered in 1999, representing the late-20th-century generation of Shakespeare translators.[2] This only changed on 22 April 2022, when – symbolically on the eve of Shakespeare's birthday – the young director Jakub Čermák presented in the studio theatre of the South Bohemian Theatre in České Budějovice *Hamlet* in a new version by the literary historian and translator Filip Krajník, to positive critical reaction.[3] Only a few months later, Krajník's translation was published in book form, with the translator's critical apparatus and an informative introductory essay.

It would require more than a short review fully to describe Krajník's translation of *Hamlet* and how it differs from those of his

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[1] Dan Kopf, "What Is Shakespeare's Most Popular Play?" Priceonomics, September 22, 2016, https://priceonomics.com/what-is-shakespeares-most-popular-play/.

[2] Pavel Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara* (Brno: Větrné mlýny, 2012), 263–302.

[3] Jiří Landa gave the production 75 %, arguing that Čermák's *Hamlet* is a "modern production that lends new meaning to many situations of the play, uncovering additional possibilities of their interpretation. . . . While the play has undergone significant modifications, its story remains intact and, most importantly, it speaks to the present" (Jiří Landa, "Tak trochu jiný Hamlet, upravený je text i postavy," *Mladá fronta Dnes: Jižní Čechy*, May 14, 2022, 14, working translation mine).

predecessors. Let us thus mention just some key aspects of it. First of all, the edition openly declares that the Czech version of Shakespeare's play is not the work of a single author, but rather the result of a collaborative effort. While Krajník is a skilled philologist and translator (his previous work includes Czech renditions of poetry by Geoffrey Chaucer and John Keats), *Hamlet* was his first translation for the stage. To compensate for his lack of first-hand experience with theatre practice, Krajník collaborated with four theatre scholars, theatre practitioners, and dramaturges to produce not only a suitable literary version of Shakespeare's play, but also a theatrically effective text with the potential to open itself to new interpretative and dramaturgical possibilities. This approach is in the vein of *dramaturgical translation* – a new collective method of translating "historical dramaturgy" that Krajník and his colleagues have presented elsewhere.[4]

Some of the features of the text stemming from this approach are outlined in the translator's note at the very beginning of the volume: Krajník's translation seeks to present *Hamlet* in its original semantic ambiguity, emphasising the play's action rather than its possible literary qualities, foregrounding its comical elements, and stripping it from the interpretative layers that were added to Shakespeare's work centuries after his death. A small example of this might be the distinction between the original "you" and "thou" in the Czech version, which often contributes to the dramatic mood on the stage (for instance in the character of Claudius, who frequently manipulates people through a sense of distance or intimacy) and which Czech translators often tended to homogenise in their renditions. Another noteworthy feature of Krajník's *Hamlet* is his work with blank verse, a traditional dilemma facing translators of Shakespeare into Czech, which is a notoriously uniambic language that requires more space than is needed for the equivalent expression in English. Krajník's *Hamlet* is probably the first Czech translation of Shakespeare since the 19th century that abandons

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[4] See Filip Krajník, Anna Mikyšková and Pavel Drábek, "Dramaturgical Translation as a Means of Training a Young Generation of Translators for the Theatre," in *Teaching Translation vs. Training Translators: Proceedings of the Translation and Interpreting Forum Olomouc*, ed. Michal Kubánek, Ondřej Klabal and Ondřej Molnár (Olomouc: Palacký University, 2022), 69–77.

the strict ten- to eleven-syllable line in favour of rhythmised free verse that oscillates between ten and fifteen syllables. Thus, Krajník creates more space for what he calls "verbal gesture," which allows him to capture nuances in the delineation of characters and semantics of their speeches.

Much of how Krajník views Shakespeare's play and its individual components can be seen in his introductory essay entitled "Svár rozumu a emoce v Shakespearově *Hamletovi*" (The Struggle between Reason and Emotion in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*). As declared on the back cover of the volume, the edition primarily aims at student readers (the volume is even designated as a "Student Edition" on the title page, probably inspired by English series of Renaissance drama such as Revels Student Edition or New Mermaids). Krajník's essay thus serves both as a proposed reading of the play and its key situations, and an introduction to the early-modern cultural and intellectual contexts in which *Hamlet* was originally staged. While limited to some 30 pages, the text touches on issues such as the basics of Elizabethan popular theology, the Tudor concept of kingship, and the Elizabethan tradition of delineating dramatic characters compared to our modern ways of staging them. The essay cites a number of classic works of Shakespeare criticism, such as J. Dover Wilson's *What Happens in Hamlet* and Charles A. and Elaine S. Halletts' *The Revenger's Madness*, but does not shy away from also going into 16th-century Anglican sermons or moral and theological treatises of Shakespeare's time whenever they provide a suitable background to Shakespeare's work. While arguably a work of serious scholarship, the text provides a compact and easily digestible introduction to the world(s) of *Hamlet* for any reader interested in the subject.

The last aspect of the book that needs to be mentioned here is its presentation and format, which are in line with the overall ethos of Shakespeare for the 21st century, especially the younger generation of readers. The volume adopts the size of the Arden edition of Shakespeare (13 × 20 centimetres) and, with its conservative length (240 pages) and the light paper on which it is printed (the book only weights about 360 grams), this *Hamlet* can be easily carried and read, for instance, on a bus or train. The graphic layout of both the play and the accompanying textual material combines traditional elements (again, inspiration from Arden Shakespeare or Norton Shakespeare is discernible) with

distinctively modern takes that make the overall design both easy to navigate and visually appealing. What significantly contributes to the volume's presentation is its cover design and the pair of inside illustrations by the young artist Kateřina Fürbachová, for whom the illustrations were her first commission and who offers a unique vision of the story of Shakespeare's tragedy that lends the volume a distinct, incommutable personality.[5]

      All in all, this new edition of *Hamlet* is a valuable contribution to both Czech Shakespeare scholarship and the Czech theatrical tradition. While it does not seek to replace the already established versions of the play, it boldly shows a new direction which the new generation of Shakespeare translators could follow.



Ophelia's flowers by Kateřina Fürbachová

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[5] For more on the illustrations and their sources of inspiration, see an interview with Kateřina Fürbachová in Anna Mikyšková, "An Interview with Kateřina Fürbachová on Illustrating *Hamlet* (and Ophelia), Fashion and Ecological Activism through Art," *Theory and Practice in English Studies* 11, 1 (2022): 205–211.

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